

GRIM DISCOVERIES AMID COLLISION WRECKAGE



Rescue and salvage crews found more human remains Monday as they pulled the wreckage of an American Airlines jet from the Potomac River near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. They have recovered the bodies of 55 victims of last week's crash. Story, A10.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Overhaul of USAID sparks fury, praise

Trump's DOGE tackles waste of 'radical lunatics'

By **SETH McLAUGHLIN**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Trump has turned his attention to the “radical lunatics” at the U.S. Agency for International Development in his pursuit of wasteful federal spending.

The frustration with USAID has simmered for decades among conservatives and taxpayer advocates who insist the agency has wandered away from its core mission and squandered money on programs that threaten the nation's interests.

Michael Rubin, a resident

scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, said USAID is “the epitome of the deep state.”

“The metric its staff uses is money spent, and they never question the wisdom of those expenditures,” Mr. Rubin said. “USAID is also a miserable bureaucracy, so people who are nothing in Washington can go overseas on the government's dime and feel like kings, with everyone at their beck and call to get a piece of the pie.”

Washington's focus on USAID intensified in the wee hours of Monday after billionaire Elon

Musk said Mr. Trump had agreed to shutter the \$40 billion agency. USAID was established to promote economic growth in developing countries and provide humanitarian and disaster assistance.

The humanitarian aid community is notoriously left-leaning, and USAID is the pinnacle of that culture.

“The result is a bureaucracy

» see **USAID** | **A7**

► USAID grew from war relief to global mission. **A7**

COMMERCE

Mexico, Canada agree to terms to avoid tariffs

U.S. neighbors will toughen border security, fight fentanyl

By **SUSAN FERRECHIO**
AND **TOM HOWELL JR.**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Canada and Mexico blinked Monday in their trade standoff with President Trump, agreeing to take steps to strengthen border security and curb the smuggling of deadly fentanyl hours before the U.S. was set to impose crippling tariffs.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum each secured a one-month pause on Mr. Trump's plan to slap 25% tariffs on Canadian and Mexican imported goods.

The agreement staves off a trade war, particularly with Canada, which planned a retaliatory 25% tariff on \$155 billion worth of U.S. goods and was already pulling American liquor off store shelves.

Mexico and Canada stood to be clobbered economically by the tariffs because they export heavily into the U.S.

Mr. Trump secured tangible commitments and money from both nations to combat the flow of illegal immigration and help halt the deadliest drug epidemic ever to impact the U.S.

“This has been the baseline negotiating tactic for Trump,” said Andrew Hale, a senior trade policy analyst for the conservative Heritage Foundation. “To threaten this, the proposal of it, and usually before it's implemented, people give him what he wants.”

Mr. Trump has railed against trade imbalances with Canada

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► Mexico's president blames U.S. for arming cartels. **A4**

Panama exits China's Belt and Road in win for U.S.

By **MIKE GLENN**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When Panama signed up for China's vast Belt and Road Initiative in 2017, it became the first country in Latin America to join the massive international infrastructure financing project that Beijing has used to win friends and expand its global influence.

Five years later, Panama will be the first country in the Western Hemisphere to withdraw from the Belt and Road program, the first fruit of President Trump's pressure campaign in the region.

Although it was overlooked amid talks on illegal immigration and the future of the Panama Canal, Secretary of State Marco Rubio was quick to claim victory after visiting Panama over the weekend on the Belt and Road issue. Previous U.S. administrations have looked at the program uneasily as a means for the ruling Chinese Communist Party to win global clout and ensnare participating countries in damaging debt.

President Jose Raul Molina's announcement Sunday that Panama will let its participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative expire

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WHITE HOUSE

Trump's furious pace of executive orders hits legal roadblocks

Judge issues restraining order

By **STEPHEN DINAN**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Trump's frantic pace of executive action is creating problems in federal courts, where judges say he has gone too fast and too furious.

On Monday, U.S. District Judge Loren AliKhan issued a temporary restraining order directing the White House budget office to restart the federal spending spigot after a botched attempt at a “pause” last week.

She said the Office of Management and Budget seemed to “run roughshod” over Congress with last week's order halting grant and contract payments to outside groups that deliver government assistance.

The upshot was a decision of

“constitutional magnitude” that forced organizations to fire workers, dip into their own pockets or, in some cases, fail to deliver the food, housing or other assistance the government had been funding.

“OMB ordered a nationwide freeze on preexisting financial commitments without considering any of the specifics of the individual loans, grants or funds,” Judge AliKhan wrote. “And it attempted to wrest the power of the purse away from the only branch of government entitled to wield it.”

A federal judge in Rhode Island issued a more narrow ruling late last week on the funding pause and a ruling halting Mr.

» see **SPENDING** | **A5**



ROCKY TIMES: Ukrainian Emergency Service crews searched for civilians killed in a Russian drone strike Thursday. Kyiv hopes President Trump can quickly put an end to its war with Russia.

FOREIGN POLICY

Trump's Ukraine gamble stirs Russian rage, Kyiv's hopes

War-weary nation left waiting

By **GUILLAUME PTAK**
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

KYIV, UKRAINE | It's hard to disrupt a stalemated war that will pass the three-year mark this month, but the shift in power in Washington has managed to do that.

President Trump's first declarations on the war have drawn mixed reactions from Ukrainian officials, but some want to believe he will be a more effective ally than former President Biden. Meanwhile, pro-war Russian bloggers are seething at what they say is Mr. Trump's “contempt” for their cause.

Mr. Trump's campaign pledge to end the war in a day has come and gone. Retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, his designated envoy to

resolving the conflict, has canceled a planned fact-finding trip to Kyiv and has yet to publicly announce a makeup date. Mr. Trump has threatened more sanctions and tariffs on Russia but has implemented no new policies.

Kyiv sharply denied Mr. Kellogg's claim over the weekend that Ukraine was realizing it may have to cede some territory. “Both sides will give a little bit,” the U.S. envoy told Fox News.

Russian forces are making slow but steady gains in the occupied south and east.

The Russia-Ukraine war was a consuming interest of the Biden administration, but Mr. Trump's early foreign policy forays have

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POLITICS

Speaker hits Democrats on bid to delay election for Stefanik's seat. **A3**

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Ohio community seeks truth, transparency in crash aftermath. **A6**

WORLD

OpenAI launches new agent to counter model from China. **A8**

REGION

New Jersey Democrats square off in first gubernatorial debate. **A10**

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CONGRESS

Democrats to introduce bill to restrict DOGE access

Americans’ data used for refunds, benefits vulnerable

By **LINDSEY MCPHERSON**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Congressional Democrats are planning to introduce legislation to restrict access to the Treasury’s payment system, which houses Americans’ data used to send out tax refunds, Social Security and Medicare benefits, grants, loans and other government payments.

The Treasury Department on Friday provided billionaire Elon Musk and his associates at the Department of Government Efficiency access to the federal payment system, which the Democrats said was suspicious

because DOGE’s plans for the information were unknown.

“Donald Trump basically handed DOGE the Social Security data of virtually every American citizen,” said Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, noting the access was provided without transparency or guardrails. “It’s like putting a tiger into a petting zoo and hoping for the best.”

He said they were drafting legislation to prevent “unlawful meddling” in the payment system, which executes over a billion transactions a year, collectively worth more than \$6 trillion. He said Senate Democrats

would partner with their House counterparts.

Earlier Monday, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries sent a letter to his caucus that mentioned plans for legislation to prevent access to “highly confidential and personal information related to Social Security and Medicare recipients, taxpayers, households, non-profits, businesses and federal contractors.”

Democrats are the minority party in both chambers and can’t bring legislation to the floor, but they are looking to drum up public sentiment to pressure congressional Republicans to act.

“It is up to them whether they want to get out the fire hoses or sit in the fire,” said Sen. Patty Murray, Washington Democrat and chair of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. Murray said Mr. Musk especially should not have access to the payment system given his “expansive conflicts of interest, deep ties to China and an industry ax to grind against perceived enemies.”

“The world’s richest man has vowed to cut off funding that helps the least among us,” she said. “Think about that. And next, think about how many dollars he himself makes from government contracts. And the Trump administration is handing the keys of the Treasury to

him. It does not get more blatantly corrupt than that.”

In addition to introducing legislation, Democrats are planning to use procedural tools to slow down consideration of Mr. Trump’s nominees as another form of protest to the payment system matter and other executive actions they oppose.

“We need to use every tool we have to fight back, and in the Senate, we can start by saying no to dangerous Trump nominees like Tulsi Gabbard and Russ Vought,” said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Massachusetts Democrat.

Mr. Musk posted on X, the social media site he owns, that the people who are upset about DOGE’s access to the government payment system are

“aiding, abetting and receiving fraudulent payments.”

“The only way to stop fraud and waste of taxpayer money is to follow the payment flows and pause suspicious transactions for review,” he said.

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, the top Democrat on the Finance Committee that has oversight of Treasury, said if Mr. Trump cared about improper payments, he wouldn’t have fired the inspectors general of government agencies who identify fraud and mistakes.

“The Musk hatchet brigade has infiltrated a gold mine of data that every foreign spy and every corrupt actor would love to see,” Mr. Wyden said. “It is a prescription for nightmares.”

CONGRESS

Guthrie devising strategy to pass Kids Online Safety Act after defeat

By **LINDSEY MCPHERSON**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Newly installed House Energy and Commerce Chairman Brett Guthrie told The Washington Times he wants to pass legislation to protect children online this Congress after a bipartisan effort sputtered out last session.

House GOP leaders declined to advance a bill called the Kids Online Safety Act, or KOSA, that advanced out of the Energy and Commerce Committee last session, arguing it needed further tweaks to protect free speech before it could see a vote.

Mr. Guthrie, a Kentucky Republican who took over as Energy and Commerce chair in the new Congress after the committee’s previous leader retired, said he plans to push KOSA or similar child online safety legislation through the committee again and hopes to see it pass the House.

However, he has not settled on a strategy for advancing the legislation, as he also wants to prioritize action on more comprehensive data privacy legislation that KOSA could fit into.



“My projection — or at least my hope in my leadership — is going to be that we have a minimum, a KOSA bill during this Congress,” said House Energy and Commerce Chairman Brett Guthrie.

“The question we have to ask ourselves is are going to do KOSA as a stand-alone and then do further privacy or try to do it together? That’s a decision that hasn’t been made yet,” Mr.

Guthrie said. “My projection — or at least my hope in my leadership — is going to be that we have a minimum, a KOSA bill during this Congress,” he said.

KOSA requires social media companies to turn off data-driven algorithms for minors and ensure their accounts default to the strongest safety and privacy settings. It also includes

a “duty of care” standard that would require online companies to implement design standards that protect minors from specific harms and permit the Federal Trade Commission to bring enforcement actions against companies that fail to do so.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, Louisiana Republican, blocked bipartisan plans to include KOSA in a year-end government funding package in December, saying he wanted to wait until President Trump was in the White House “to get the right bill into law.”

He said members of his conference have concerns about the bill’s requirements being “overbroad” and that they could lead to “further censorship by the government of valid conservative voices, for example.” Mr. Johnson was “very optimistic” that Republicans could work through those concerns and pass the bill early in 2025.

Mr. Guthrie suggested the timeline may not be that quick, but he didn’t have one to lay out. He acknowledged changes will likely need to be made to KOSA

to shore up support among his House GOP colleagues.

“We need to sit down and go through it and see exactly where [the issues are],” Mr. Guthrie said. “We need some more support, so we’re going to have to figure out what that is and what it takes to get there.”

KOSA changes could become a task of House GOP working groups Mr. Guthrie wants to put together to tackle broader data privacy legislation. However, those working groups may not be formed imminently given competing priorities on energy and other policies being put together for a budget-reconciliation package that will carry much of Mr. Trump’s agenda.

“Doing both at the same time might be difficult,” Mr. Guthrie said.

The chairman also hopes to work with Democrats on KOSA and the broader privacy bill, but he said Republicans may have differing priorities on the latter.

“We wouldn’t want a private right of action, which may keep us from working it bipartisan,” he said.



EDUCATION

Feds probe antisemitism on campuses

The Department of Education announced Monday an investigation into five universities over reports of “widespread antisemitic harassment” in the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel.

The five universities are Columbia, Northwestern, Portland State, the University of California Berkeley, and the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

“Too many universities have tolerated widespread antisemitic harassment and the illegal encampments that paralyzed campus life last year, driving Jewish life and religious expression underground,” said Craig Trainor, the department’s acting assistant secretary for civil rights.

Mr. Trainor, former senior special counsel to the House Judiciary Committee under Chairman Jim Jordan, has been active in pursuing President Trump’s education priorities as Linda McMahon, President Trump’s nominee to head the Department of Education, awaits a Senate hearing.

The investigation was opened pursuant to Mr. Trump’s Jan. 29 executive order, entitled “Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism.”

— Valerie Richardson

SENATE

Grassley to Trump: Give farmers a break

Some Trump allies are already looking for a carve-out from tariffs the president is threatening to impose on U.S. trade partners.

Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Iowa Republican, urged President Trump on Monday to look at exempting potash, or potassium-rich minerals that are critical components of fertilizer.

Mr. Grassley, writing on X, said farmers are reeling from high fertilizer prices due to “Biden inflation” so they cannot bear more pressure.

“So I plead [with] President Trump to exempt potash from the tariff because family farmers get most of our potash from Canada,” Mr. Grassley wrote.

The senator faced an immediate backlash from online commenters who said elections have consequences and he has to accept the good and the bad of his support for Mr. Trump.

— Tom Howell Jr.

WHITE HOUSE

Trump creates investment fund for U.S.

President Trump signed an executive order Monday to create a sovereign wealth fund for the U.S., which would take government surpluses and invest the money into potentially risky asset classes that could generate high returns.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Howard Lutnick, Mr. Trump’s nominee for Commerce secretary, are tasked with spearheading the effort. “It’s about time the U.S. had a sovereign wealth fund,” Mr. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office during the signing ceremony.

The president suggested the government could use the funds to purchase TikTok, the social media platform briefly banned in the U.S.

— Jeff Mordock

SENATE

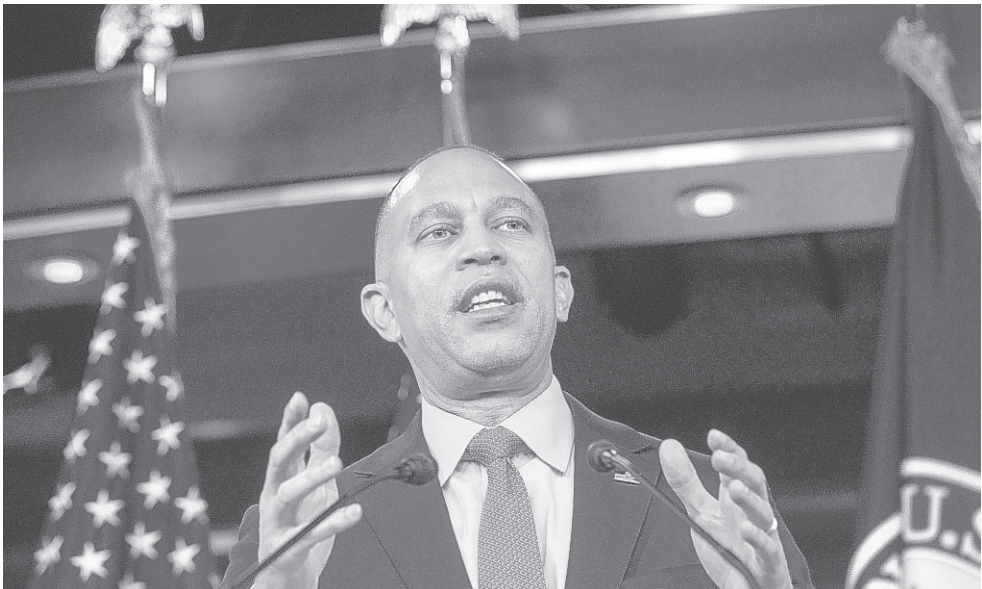
Wright confirmed as Energy secretary

The Senate on Wednesday evening confirmed Christopher Wright, a self-described “science geek turned energy nerd turned lifelong energy entrepreneur,” to run the Energy Department.

Mr. Wright, 59, founded Liberty Energy, North America’s second largest hydraulic fracturing company, after leading other companies that ushered in innovations to produce shale gas.

He was confirmed in a 59-38 vote, with eight Democrats joining Republicans in support.

— Lindsey McPherson



House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries outlined 10 steps his party is taking “to push back against the far-right extremism that is being relentlessly unleashed on the American people.”

DEMOCRATS

Jeffries outlines Democrats’ 10-step plan to block Trump

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries sent a letter to his caucus on Monday detailing the party’s strategy for combating President Trump’s executive actions and other GOP policies, including using the upcoming government funding negotiations as leverage.

Mr. Jeffries of New York outlined 10 steps House Democrats are taking “to push back against the far-right extremism that is being relentlessly unleashed on the American people.”

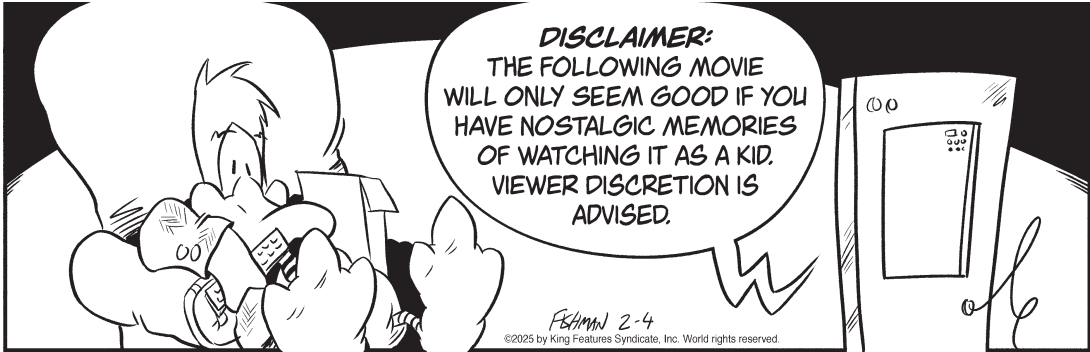
At the top of the list is continuing to fight the Trump administration’s efforts to freeze federal funding.

Mr. Jeffries suggested that Congress needs to enact further guardrails around the funds it appropriates and pointed to government funding legislation that needs to pass by March 14 to avert a shutdown as an opportunity to do so.

“I have made clear to House Republican leadership that any effort to steal taxpayer money from the American people, end Medicaid as we know it or defund programs important to everyday Americans, as contemplated by the illegal White House ... order, must be choked off in the upcoming government funding bill,” he said.

— Lindsey McPherson

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Politics

ECONOMY

Egg prices scramble Democrats’ attack on Trump vow

Raging bird flu leads to shortages that can’t be fixed within days

By SUSAN FERRECHIO
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Democrats have seized on the cost of eggs to accuse President Trump of reneging on his promise to lower grocery prices after just days on the job.

Mr. Trump took office on Jan. 20, but Democrats, who will be sidelined from power for at least the next two years, say the president has been in charge long enough to reduce food prices, which rose by more than 22% under President Biden.

“He has spent his first week pardoning insurrectionists and firing the government’s watchdogs instead of focusing on things ordinary Americans care about, like the price of groceries,” said Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, New York Democrat.

Mr. Trump’s critics say high egg prices indicate that the president has abandoned his pledge to lower consumer food prices.

The latest increase in egg prices was triggered by highly contagious avian bird flu, which has forced farmers to kill tens of millions of chickens to stop the spread of the disease.

The slaughter began long before Mr. Trump took office, limiting supply and making eggs much more expensive.

It didn’t stop Democrats from blaming Mr. Trump.

The cost of one dozen eggs has shot up more than 22% in the past few weeks to an all-time high of more than \$7, according

to Trading Economics, which tracks prices.

“The price of eggs and the cost of living was supposed to go down, not up,” House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, New York Democrat, wrote in a social media post.

Democrats have pivoted to critiquing Mr. Trump’s handling of the economy, a top voter issue that likely cost their party the election.

During the campaign, Mr. Trump attacked the Biden administration and his opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, for policies that led to historic inflation and sky-high grocery store prices.

Mr. Trump promised to lower prices quickly, primarily by making energy more affordable, but he moderated his pledge after winning the November election.

“I’d like to bring them down,” Mr. Trump said in a December interview on NBC. “It’s hard to bring things down once they’re up. You know, it’s very hard. But I think that they will. I think that energy is going to bring them down. I think a better supply chain is going to bring them down.”

In a recent CBS interview, Vice President J.D. Vance said grocery prices will come down, “but it’s going to take a little bit of time.”

On his first day in office, Mr. Trump issued several executive orders to lower costs, including a memorandum “to restore purchasing power to the American



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The latest increase in egg prices was triggered by highly contagious avian bird flu, which has forced farmers to kill tens of millions of chickens.

family and improve our quality of life.” It called for departments and agencies to reduce government regulations and mandates to lower the costs of housing, health care, appliances, food and fuel.

Grocery prices are expected to continue rising, although much more slowly than at the height of inflation during the Biden administration.

The Department of Agriculture predicts that grocery food prices will rise by 1.3% this year, but it forecasts egg prices will increase by more than 20% because of avian influenza. The virus was first detected in 2022 and is spreading through new outbreaks nationwide, wiping out

commercial flocks.

The virus has spread to more than 1,000 cattle herds across 16 states.

Trump administration officials called on Congress to quickly confirm Brooke Rollins, Mr. Trump’s nominee to run the Department of Agriculture, so she could get to work containing the virus.

Ms. Rollins told senators at her confirmation hearing that stemming the spread of the bird flu “is certainly a top priority.”

More than 73 million egg-laying poultry have been slaughtered or died because of avian flu since August, according to the Farm Bureau. More than 100 million birds “throughout the poultry

industry” have been impacted by the avian flu since 2022, the Farm Bureau said.

At the first White House press briefing, reporters asked how Mr. Trump planned to lower egg prices.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt blamed the Biden administration’s Agriculture Department, which she said “directed the mass killing of more than 100 million chickens, which has led to a lack of chicken supply in this country, therefore lack of egg supply, which is leading to the shortage.”

The chicken slaughter isn’t likely to let up soon. The Farm Bureau warned that the virus “is

constantly changing and continuing to present challenges for the poultry and dairy sectors.”

Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. James McGovern, Massachusetts Democrats, offered a solution. They wrote to Mr. Trump last week and called on him to crack down on grocery stores and egg producers that might be gouging consumers.

“These companies often exploit crises like pandemics and avian flu outbreaks as an opportunity to raise beyond what is needed to cover rising costs,” they said.

The two lawmakers told Mr. Trump, “Americans are looking to you to lower food prices.”

ACCOUNTABILITY

Trump names Bessent to be acting director of CFPB after firing Chopra

By JEFF MORDOCK
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Trump on Monday named Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent as the acting director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, replacing former Director Rohit Chopra, who was fired over the weekend.

“I look forward to working with the CFPB to advance President Trump’s agenda to lower costs for the American people and accelerate economic growth,” Mr. Bessent said in a statement.

Mr. Trump has suggested the CFPB, a longtime nemesis for conservatives, could be brought under Treasury oversight.

Mr. Chopra was ousted as part of the president’s firing spree to purge the federal government of

Biden-era holdovers.

Mr. Chopra posted a letter on social media Sunday announcing his departure, prematurely ending a term scheduled to expire in late 2026.

“This letter confirms that my term as CFPB Director has concluded. I know that the CFPB is ready to work with you and the next confirmed director, and we have a great deal of energy to ensure continued success,” he wrote.

One of the more aggressive regulators from the Biden administration, Mr. Chopra was widely expected to get fired once Mr. Trump took office. Somehow, he managed to hang on for nearly two weeks even as Mr. Trump showed other Biden holdovers the exit door.

In the two weeks since Mr. Trump was sworn in, Mr. Chopra issued a flurry of regulations and other activities such as imposing a \$2 million fine on a money transmitter for advertising inaccurate fees, releasing reports on auto lending costs and specialty credit reporting companies.

“With so much power concentrated in the hands of a few, agencies like the CFPB have never been more critical,” Mr. Chopra wrote in his letter. “I’m proud that the CFPB has done so much to restore the rule of law.”

In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that presidents have the power to fire the agency’s director without cause in response to a lawsuit filed over Mr. Trump’s decision to fire a CFPB director during his first term.

NEW YORK

Johnson calls Democrats’ bid to delay replacing Stefanik ‘political corruption’

By LINDSEY MCPHERSON
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

House Speaker Mike Johnson said an effort by New York Democrats to delay a special election to replace Republican Rep. Elise Stefanik is tantamount to “political corruption.”

Ms. Stefanik, President Trump’s pick to serve as ambassador to the United Nations, has yet to resign from the House as she awaits Senate confirmation, but once she does, her seat in New York’s 21st Congressional District will be vacant.

New York law requires the governor within 10 days of a congressional vacancy to issue a proclamation scheduling a special election 70-80 days from when the proclamation is issued.

If Ms. Stefanik were to be confirmed and resign next week, for example, that would mean a

special election to fill her seat would be held in early May.

Democrats in New York’s state legislature are reportedly considering changes to the law setting the special election calendar that would delay the filling of Ms. Stefanik’s seat, which is in a solidly Republican district.

“This is open political corruption by state officials in New York,” Mr. Johnson said in a Monday interview on “Fox & Friends” on Fox News. “I mean, this seat should be filled within 90 days of Elise Stefanik moving over to be the U.N. ambassador. But they’re trying to delay this, maybe to late summer, maybe to fall.”

New York Democrats are discussing a change that would align the congressional special election with the state’s already scheduled June 24 primary election for some local government positions, WCNY’s The Capitol Pressroom

first reported.

A spokesperson for New York Gov. Kathy Hochul told the outlet she “believes it’s critical to increase voter turnout and reduce the cost of election administration and she would support legislation that achieves that goal.”

Mr. Johnson had a different take, calling it “corruption on open display.”

“Instead of addressing the needs of New York, crime and the immigration crisis and the cost of living and anti-semitism on campuses, they’re going to try to disenfranchise over 750,000 New Yorkers who live in that 21st district,” he said. “It’s unconscionable.”

Ms. Stefanik’s resignation will temporarily drop House Republicans down to 217 seats, meaning they won’t be able to afford any defections on party-line votes, because Democrats have 215 members.

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TARIFFS

From page A1

especially but insisted his tariff threat was aimed mainly at fentanyl.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said more than 107,000 people died of drug overdoses in 2023, and nearly 70% of those deaths were attributed to opioids, including fentanyl, which is smuggled mainly across the border from Mexico and increasingly from Canada.

“As President, it is my responsibility to ensure the safety of ALL Americans, and I am doing just that,” Mr. Trump said in a social media post after the deals were secured.

Tariffs on China, which produces much of the fentanyl, are still on. Mr. Trump imposed a 10% tariff on all goods from China effective Tuesday and threatened to ramp them up.

“China hopefully is going to stop sending us fentanyl, and if they’re not, the tariffs are going to go substantially higher,” he said.

Mexico agreed to reinforce its northern border with 10,000 members of the Mexican National Guard to prevent drug trafficking, particularly fentanyl, from entering the U.S. More than 21,000 pounds of fentanyl was seized on the border last year. White House officials said it was enough to kill 4 billion people. An unknown quantity of the drug made it into the U.S. undetected.

Canada’s fentanyl problem is much smaller but growing. More than 43 pounds were seized coming into the U.S. from Canada last year, up from 14 pounds in 2022 and 2 pounds in 2023.

Mr. Trump, in a late afternoon call with Mr. Trudeau, secured a pledge from the prime minister to appoint a “fentanyl czar” and list the drug cartels as terrorists. Mr. Trudeau also agreed to launch a Canada-U.S. Joint Strike Force to combat organized crime, fentanyl and money laundering.

“I have also signed a new intelligence directive on organized crime and fentanyl, and we will be backing it with \$200 million,” Mr. Trudeau said. He described his conversation with Mr. Trump as “a good call.”

Mexico’s president blames U.S. for arming the cartels

By STEPHEN DINAN
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Trump’s tariff threat has spurred a commitment from Mexico to stiffen its northern border but Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum is also walking away with a major win for her country: a promise by the U.S. to stem the flow of guns heading south.

While the U.S. complains of drugs surging north, Mexicans have long lamented the so-called “iron river” of guns that are trafficked into Mexico, arming everybody from street hoods to the smuggling cartels that go toe-to-toe with Mexico’s military.

Analysts guess that somewhere between 200,000 and 500,000 guns are bought in the U.S. each year intending

to be trafficked into Mexico. More than 17,000 guns submitted by Mexican law enforcement to the U.S. for tracing in 2023 came back to American sources.

Ms. Sheinbaum said the U.S. will curb that flow of weapons as part of a deal with Mr. Trump that will delay, for a month, the crippling tariffs the American president threatened as punishment for the flow of fentanyl heading into the U.S.

Under the temporary reprieve, Mexico will deploy 10,000 of its National Guard troops to its northern border to try to deter drug trafficking. In exchange, Ms. Sheinbaum said, the U.S. will try to stop the trafficking of firearms into Mexico.

“The United States is committed to working to prevent the trafficking

of high-powered weapons to Mexico,” she said on social media.

Mr. Trump, in his own social media post, confirmed the pause on tariffs, saying he had a “very friendly conversation” with his Mexican counterpart.

Over the weekend, Ms. Sheinbaum had lashed out after the Trump administration said the Mexican government is in bed with the cartels.

“If such an alliance exists anywhere, it is in the United States armories that sell high-powered weapons to these criminal groups,” she said.

She pointed to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, which last month reported on the massive flow of weapons south across the border.

“Cartels are arming themselves through U.S. trafficking channels,” the

Justice Department said.

It identified several specific pipelines for weapons, with one from Arizona into the Mexican state of Sonora being the most prolific.

The department said if the ATF got more money to use in interdiction, it could cut the flow.

“As this report makes clear, increased resources could help ATF expand its operational efforts along the border,” the department said.

Mexico generally has much stricter gun laws than the U.S., including limits on the type and power of weapons. The country has only one official gun store, located on a military base near Mexico City.

But its rate of gun crimes is high compared to most other Latin American nations.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadian manufacturers are getting a reprieve from President Trump’s threatened tariffs of 25% on all goods imported into the U.S. Canada will continue a \$1.3 billion plan that includes 10,000 front-line personnel to help secure the border.

PANAMA

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“is a great step forward for U.S.-Panama relations, a free Panama Canal, and another example of [President Trump’s] leadership to protect our national security and deliver prosperity for the American people,” Mr. Rubio wrote on social media after leaving Panama for a stop in El Salvador.

Mr. Mulino said his government will consider ending the agreement early.

One measure of the U.S. breakthrough was the quick and angry reaction from Beijing, which kept a relatively low profile as Mr. Trump began a whirlwind to his presidency on the domestic and foreign policy fronts.

Panama’s decision was “regrettable,” Fu Cong, the Chinese ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters in New York. “The smear campaign that is launched by the U.S. and some of the other Western countries on the Belt and Road Initiative is totally groundless.”

After meeting with Mr. Rubio, Mr. Molina agreed not to renew the memorandum of understanding that his predecessor signed with China on the former senator’s first foreign trip as America’s top diplomat.

“He’s a friend of America, [and] Panama is a strong partner and ally of the United States,” Mr. Rubio said Monday. He called his discussions with Mr. Molina “frank and respectful.”

Although Mr. Trump has focused



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Secretary of State Marco Rubio claimed victory after visiting Panama over the weekend to discuss the Belt and Road issue.

much of his public criticism of Panama on its operation of the canal and what he says is growing Chinese influence over the operation of the America-built waterway, a top Republican in Congress said the Belt and Road decision could prove just as consequential.

Rep. Michael McCaul, a Texas Republican and former chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said China’s encroachment into the Western Hemisphere — including contracts by a Hong Kong company to operate critical ports at both ends of the Panama Canal — amounted to a “clear and

present danger” to U.S. interests in Latin America.

“The Biden administration was asleep at the wheel, focusing on promoting woke policies abroad while China consolidated power in our own backyard,” he said. “I’m thrilled to see Secretary Rubio and the Trump administration already course-correcting, charting a new path for the U.S. and our neighbors in Latin America.”

He said Panama’s decision to cancel its Belt and Road contract with China was “a tremendous victory — not only for the United States but also for the

Panamanian people who are escaping [China’s] debt trap diplomacy.”

Critics accuse Beijing of using the Belt and Road Initiative to lure developing countries into signing up for unsustainable loans for infrastructure projects. When the nation faces financial challenges or the project does not generate the expected return, China can seize the assets or demand crippling payments in return.

The Belt and Road Initiative, a pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping, has been billed as extending China’s soft power and using its huge currency surpluses to advance its foreign policy goals. In the 10 years since the project began, some 150 countries have signed memorandums of understanding with China to explore participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, according to a study by the Wilson Center think tank last year.

Countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America soon began hosting Belt and Road Initiative projects, which quickly expanded beyond roads and bridges to include the financing of ports and harbors, high-speed data networks and satellite television service.

The rapid expansion has generated questions, as many Belt and Road infrastructure projects did not meet their billing.

“The terms and conditions of BRI financing were often shielded from public view through strict nondisclosure agreements, which in turn set off alarm bells with institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund,” the

Wilson Center said in its study.

BRI-linked defaults in countries such as Sri Lanka and Zambia led to political instability and violence because of the steep inflation, spiraling rates of poverty and heavy taxes imposed to pay off foreign creditors, typically in China.

Italy signed a Belt and Road Initiative agreement with China in 2019, the only one of the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations to participate in a project primarily focused on developing countries. Rome declined to renew its memorandum of understanding in 2023.

Still, the U.S. will be pressed to match China’s growing investment and trade portfolio with countries across Latin America. Many of these will look to Beijing if Mr. Trump makes accessing U.S. markets more difficult.

“China’s state firms are major investors in the region’s energy, infrastructure and space industries, and the country has surpassed the United States as South America’s largest trading partner,” Diana Roy, a senior writer at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote in a recent survey of China’s growing influence in Central and South America.

She noted that China is South America’s top trading partner and the second largest in Latin America, behind only the U.S.

“Beijing has also expanded its cultural, diplomatic and military presence throughout the region,” she said. “Most recently, China celebrated the opening of a megaport in Peru,” which Mr. Xi attended.

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UKRAINE

From page A1

focused on immigration detainee policy with Colombia, tariffs on allies and adversaries alike, and U.S. territorial claims on Greenland and the Panama Canal.

Many Ukrainians noted the paradox: Although the U.S. campaign and election were of all-consuming interest in Ukraine, Mr. Trump’s early days in office have put this besieged and war-weary country on the policy back burner.

“Ukrainians were very closely monitoring the campaign itself,” said Ihor Petrenko, a political scientist at Kyiv’s Taras Shevchenko National University. “The reactions to the result were split about 50/50. On one hand, some were afraid of what Trump’s victory could mean for Ukraine.”

He noted mounting frustration with the cautious Biden administration, whose slow-rolling of advanced military aid was a constant source of frustration for the government of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

“In spite of the gratitude repeatedly expressed by Ukraine’s government and citizens alike for the military and humanitarian aid provided by Washington, many felt that the Biden administration was slow to help, deathly afraid of any escalation with Moscow and hamstringing Kyiv’s ability to defend itself by forbidding until very recently the use of American-made weapons on Russian territory.”

In a piece published recently on the Ukrainian website Glavkom, Mr. Petrenko said “a new era for the U.S. and the world” was about to begin. The U.S. president had “already demonstrated his willingness to cooperate, emphasizing the possibility of a personal meeting with the Ukrainian leader after the inauguration.”

Speaking with The Washington Times, Mr. Petrenko said Mr. Trump’s election was a cause for hope and concern in Ukraine.

“Trump’s statements on the campaign trail have done little to reassure Ukrainians, and everyone remembered his previous meetings with Putin and his fondness for the Russian dictator,” he said. “However, part of the Ukrainian public also remembered that Trump was the one who gave us the Javelin [anti-tank missiles], not Obama.”

As Mr. Trump’s key defense and national security nominations, notably new Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, settle into their posts, U.S. military aid



Approaching its fourth year of war with Russia, Ukraine was closely watching the U.S. election and hoping President Trump would deliver on his promise for peace, but Mr. Trump’s early foreign policy forays have focused on other parts of the world.



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

Aside from the human toll in Ukraine, the 3-year-old conflict is hitting the Russian economy. President Trump said in a post on his Truth Social account it’s time for President Vladimir Putin to “settle now and stop this ridiculous war.”

to Ukraine remains an outstanding question. Many in the president’s inner circle and some of his Cabinet picks have opposed continued support for Kyiv.

Humanitarian aid has been affected by the sudden and unexpected freeze on all foreign assistance Mr. Trump decreed on his first days back in office. He called for a review to ensure the funds were spent under his “America First” foreign policy.

Hints at a policy

Amid the swirl of other foreign policy controversies, Mr. Trump has given hints for his approach to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Mr. Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth Social on Jan. 22 that he did not wish to “harm Russia,” but it was time for President Vladimir Putin to “settle now and stop this ridiculous war.” He argued that it was in the Kremlin’s interest to halt the bloody and economically ruinous war.

“All of that being said, I’m going to do Russia, whose Economy is failing, and President Putin, a very big FAVOR,” Mr. Trump wrote.

Although relatively mild by Mr. Trump’s online standards and even heaping praise on the Russian people for their sacrifices in World War II, the message has been met with mockery

and anger by pro-war Russian bloggers and Telegram channels. One of them derided the U.S. president as an “old orange clown” and complained that Mr. Trump’s use of the words “must” and “immediately” when addressing the Russian leadership were “beyond the boundaries of diplomacy and even beyond the boundaries of anything reasonable.”

Still, the unexpectedly strong tone of the post triggered a sigh of relief among Ukrainians.

“Trump’s recent statements have been encouraging. Ukrainians feel that they are getting positive feedback,” Mr. Petrenko said. “And the fact that the administration has signaled that they will try to conduct consultations with Kyiv, with other partners, and reading the articles that Keith Kellogg wrote and his proposals, it has had a calming effect for Kyiv.”

The Kremlin seems to have chosen the high road regarding Mr. Trump’s goading comments. Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters late last month that Mr. Putin was “ready” to talk directly with the U.S. president, unlike the diplomatic deep freeze that prevailed for most of Mr. Biden’s tenure.

“We are waiting for signals. Everyone is ready,” Mr. Peskov said of Moscow’s readiness to “talk” with Mr. Trump. “It’s hard to read the tea leaves here,” he added, seemingly nudging Washington to reach out to Moscow.

Unlike some of the most hawkish Russian commentators, Mr. Putin struck a decidedly conciliatory tone during a Jan. 24 address on state TV, where he

echoed some of Mr. Trump’s favorite talking points. “If [Mr. Trump’s] victory hadn’t been stolen in 2020, then maybe there would not have been the crisis in Ukraine that emerged in 2022.”

Mr. Trump appears content to keep his options open while hinting that more may be happening behind the scenes.

He told reporters Sunday that discussions involving Ukraine and Russia were progressing but provided few details.

“We have meetings and talks scheduled with various parties, including Ukraine and Russia. And I think those discussions are actually going pretty well,” Mr. Trump said.

It remains to be seen whether attempts to cajole the notoriously unpredictable U.S. president to favor one side or the other will work, but it has not gone unnoticed in Kyiv. Andriy Yermak, a top adviser to Mr. Zelenskyy, struck back on Telegram at what he said was an attempt to negotiate Ukraine’s future without involving either Ukraine or Europe.

“This is not going to happen. Putin needs to come back to reality himself, or he will be brought back,” Mr. Yermak wrote on his Telegram channel. “This is not how it works in the modern world.”

Seemingly well aware of Russia’s vulnerabilities, Mr. Trump told an on-line audience of top business leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that he would “ask Saudi Arabia and the OPEC countries to lower the cost of oil.”

“I’m frankly surprised they didn’t do it before the election. Not doing it wasn’t exactly a show of love,” he added.

OPEC+ said Monday it will not change its plan to gradually increase oil production in the spring.

Lowering prices, with the pressure of continued sanctions, would strike a significant blow to the Russian economy, which is still heavily reliant on the sale of oil and gas to sustain itself and the country’s war effort in Ukraine. An emboldened Kyiv has been increasing the frequency of its drone strikes against Russia’s oil and gas extraction, refinement and transport infrastructure.

“Trump came and said that we will pay attention to the energy, and if he manages to do what he promised, it will definitely accelerate the end of the war,” Mr. Petrenko said. “And this is exactly what Ukraine wants, and what President Zelenskyy has been talking about: realistic and effective security guarantees that create a situation in which any further or new aggression against Ukraine will have a devastating effect on the Russian Federation.”



ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Trump is already facing lawsuits for curtailing taxpayer funding for legal advice for illegal immigrants, blocking asylum claims, speeding up deportations and limiting civil service protections.

SPENDING

From page A1

Trump’s attempt to stop children of illegal immigrants from automatically becoming U.S. citizens.

More lawsuits are pending against a host of Mr. Trump’s other early moves, including curtailing taxpayer funding for legal advice for illegal immigrants, blocking asylum claims, speeding up deportations and limiting civil service protections for some federal workers.

The argument before Judge AliKhan seemed to illustrate the pitfalls associated with Mr. Trump’s frenetic pace of action.

Judge AliKhan said the funding pause, declared by OMB on Jan. 27, sparked a “nationwide panic” for organizations that rely on taxpayer money to deliver services.

“Organizations with every conceivable mission — health-care, scientific research, emergency shelters and more — were shut out of funding portals or denied critical resources beginning on January 28,” she said in a 30-page legal memo.

The Justice Department had urged the judge to butt out of the dispute.

“The fundamental question in this case is whether the

president and his advisers can tell agencies that, consistent with their statutory authorities, they should pause funding to ensure the funding is consistent with the president’s priorities,” said Daniel Schwei, the government lawyer defending Mr. Trump’s position.

In addition to the OMB pause, the Justice Department says the president has issued seven executive orders, including funding pauses on “woke” spending, foreign aid and climate change.

Mr. Schwei said it was impossible to determine whether the groups lost funding because of the OMB order and not the president’s directives or agencies’ decision-making.

He tried to argue that it was up to Mr. Trump’s opponents to prove in every instance that their funding difficulties were results of the OMB memo.

The challengers in Monday’s case insisted, and Judge AliKhan agreed, that there was too much chaos and some of it had to be from the memo.

The plaintiffs filed a slew of declarations with the court from organizations that usually get federal money but which said as recently as this weekend that they were still shut out.

“We have been inundated

while working on this case this week with people contacting us who are having these problems,” said Kevin Friedl, the attorney for the challengers.

Complicating the situation was the chain of events last week.

Judge AliKhan had issued a procedural pause of the pause to give the sides time to file initial arguments. OMB then issued a memo seemingly rescinding the funding pause.

Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, posted on X that it was “not a rescission of the federal funding freeze.” She said it was “simply a rescission of the OMB memo.”

The sides fought Monday over what that meant.

Mr. Schwei said it means the OMB memo isn’t in effect but Mr. Trump’s executive orders halting spending are.

Judge AliKhan, a Biden appointee, was not sold.

“I can’t cross-examine a tweet,” said the judge, who sits in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Judge AliKhan also shot down a Justice Department request that she convert the temporary restraining order into a preliminary injunction, which the administration could quickly appeal.

For now, that means the case remains with her.



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PUBLIC HEALTH

Trump directives on abortion funds raise questions on pills

Pro-life and pro-choice advocates wonder if mail-order bans ahead

By SEAN SALAI
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Trump administration policies blocking federal funding for abortion have left advocates on both sides of the issue wondering if federal restrictions on mail-order pills are next.

President Trump has issued executive orders that bar organizations such as Planned Parenthood from using taxpayer dollars to promote or perform abortions overseas; enforce the Hyde Amendment, a 1977 ban on federal dollars for abortions; and scale back enforcement of a 1994 law against people protesting abortion outside of clinics, among others.

“We applaud the administration’s strong start and are particularly grateful to see an end to U.S. taxpayer funding of abortions domestically and overseas,” said Jennie Bradley Lichter, president of the March for Life. “The next step should be protecting women from the dangers of the chemical abortion pill, which would be consistent with this administration’s goal of keeping the well-being of the American people always at the forefront.”

Mary Ziegler, a leading historian of the legal abortion debate, noted that Mr. Trump’s recent actions have not gone beyond what other Republican presidents have done.

“If you were putting odds on it, I’d be a little surprised if the Trump administration enforced the Comstock Act, because there are clear political pitfalls there,” said Ms. Ziegler, a law professor at the University of California, Davis.

The Comstock Act of 1873 is a federal law against transporting obscene materials. Pro-life attorneys have cited it in recent legal appeals to stop abortion pills from entering conservative states.

Policy experts interviewed by The Washington Times noted that pills are increasingly responsible for most abortions nationwide, especially in states restricting the practice since the high court’s ruling.

“I don’t know what the Trump administration will do,” said Rep. Chris Smith, New Jersey Republican and a longtime abortion opponent. “My hope is that they will really, aggressively investigate it and require adverse events to be reported.”

Mr. Smith also said abortion pills are “baby poison.”

So far, Mr. Trump has shown no interest in restricting pills from crossing state lines.

“The big question is whether he agrees to roll back [federal] approval for mifepristone,” said Josh Blackman, a constitutional law professor at South Texas College of Law in Houston. “And does he authorize Comstock Act prosecutions?”

New York shields abortion pill prescribers after doctor indicted

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBANY, N.Y. | New York Gov. Kathy Hochul on Monday signed a bill to shield the identities of doctors who prescribe abortion medications, days after a physician in the state was charged with prescribing abortion pills to a pregnant minor in Louisiana.

The new law, which took effect immediately, allows doctors to request for their names to be left off abortion pill bottles and instead list the name of their health care practices on medication labels.

The move came after a grand jury in West Baton

Rouge Parish, Louisiana indicted New York Dr. Margaret Carpenter and her company on Friday for allegedly prescribing abortion pills online to a pregnant minor.

The case appears to be the first instance of criminal charges against a doctor accused of sending abortion pills to another state, at least since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.

Ms. Hochul, a Democrat, said she would not sign an extradition request to send Dr. Carpenter to Louisiana and said authorities in Louisiana discovered the name of the doctor because it was on the medication label.

“After today, that will no longer happen,” the governor said at the bill signing.

Prosecutors in Louisiana said the girl experienced a medical emergency after taking the medication and had to be transported to the hospital. It is not clear how far along she was in her pregnancy. The girl’s mother, who was also charged, turned herself in to police on Friday.

District Attorney Tony Clayton, the prosecutor in the Louisiana case, said the arrest warrant for Dr. Carpenter is “nationwide” and that she could face arrest in states with anti-abortion laws.

Louisiana has a near-total

abortion ban. Physicians convicted of performing abortions, including one with pills, face up to 15 years in prison, \$200,000 in fines and the loss of their medical license.

Ms. Hochul said she would push for another piece of legislation this year that will require pharmacists to adhere to doctors’ requests that their name is left off a prescription label.

Dr. Carpenter was previously sued by the attorney general of Texas for allegations of sending abortion pills to Texas, though that case did not involve criminal charges.

Pills have become the most common method of abortion in the U.S.

Medication abortions, also known as chemical abortions, involve a two-drug regimen of mifepristone and misoprostol. The pro-choice Guttmacher Institute estimates that the regimen was used in 63% of abortions reported in the U.S. in 2023, up from 53% in 2020 and 24% in 2011.

The Times reached out to the Trump administration for comment.

In a poll last month, left-leaning PerryUndem found that 47% of voters in November’s presidential election did not expect Mr.

Trump to “use Comstock to ban abortions” through the mail, including 78% of Trump voters but just 17% of Kamala Harris voters.

The poll also found that 71% of voters opposed the Trump administration banning telehealth visits for abortion pill prescriptions and 67% favored leaving the decision to have an abortion “to the person and their doctors.”

“Data suggest that recent restrictions have made a majority of voters, including almost a third of anti-abortion voters, think about wanting the government

to stay out of abortion decisions altogether,” said Tresa Undem, a PerryUndem pollster.

Some pro-life activists say the Trump administration’s actions on abortion do not go far enough to end the practice.

“Chemical abortion drugs are recklessly and illegally being sent to women and girls through the mail without any in-person doctor visits,” said Erik Baptist, director of the Center for Life at Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative Christian legal advocacy group. “We hope and

expect President Trump will address these Biden-era actions and protect as many innocent lives as possible.”

But Ms. Ziegler said pro-life advocates will likely get little from Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Mr. Trump’s health secretary nominee who pledged in a Senate confirmation hearing last week to study the safety of abortion pills.

“You could read it as the Trump administration buying off pro-lifers by looking into it indefinitely without doing anything,” she said.



Vice President J.D. Vance visited East Palestine, Ohio, on Monday, near the site of the 2023 train derailment.

OHIO

Community demands truth, transparency

Lawsuit blames deaths on 2023 train derailment as Vance visits

By JOSH FUNK AND JULIE CARR SMYTH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST PALESTINE, OHIO | A lawsuit alleging for the first time that people died because of the disastrous 2023 East Palestine train derailment has been filed ahead of Monday’s second anniversary of the toxic crash near the Ohio-Pennsylvania border amid a flurry of new litigation.

On Monday, Vice President J.D. Vance visited the small community near the crash site that he used to represent as a senator, along with President Trump’s newly confirmed head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Lee Zeldin.

It’s not yet clear how much pressure the Trump administration will put on the railroads to continue improving safety and whether they will push for the bill Mr. Vance co-wrote in response to the derailment.

The new lawsuit announced Monday morning contains the first seven wrongful death claims filed against Norfolk Southern railroad — including the death of a 1-week-old baby.

It also alleges the railroad

and its contractors botched the cleanup while officials at the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention signed off on it and failed to adequately warn residents about the health risks. Many of the other parties in the lawsuit cite lingering, unexplained health problems along with concerns something more serious could develop.

“Our clients want truth. They want transparency,” attorney Kristina Baehr said about the roughly 750 people she represents. “They want to know what they were exposed to, which has been hidden from them. They want to know what happened and why it happened. And they want accountability.”

The lawsuit provides some examples of the lingering effects on families, but it doesn’t include details about the deaths.

At least nine other lawsuits were filed over the past week by individuals and businesses that argue the railroad’s greed is to blame for the derailment and the \$600 million class-action settlement doesn’t offer nearly enough compensation nor sanction the railroad enough to spur them to

prevent future derailments. The dollar amount represents only a small fraction of the \$12.1 billion in revenue the railroad generated in each of the past two years.

Dozens of rail cars careened off the tracks on Feb. 3, 2023, after an overheating bearing failed. Several cars carrying hazardous materials ruptured and spilled their cargo that caught fire.

But the disaster was made worse three days later when officials blew open five tank cars filled with vinyl chloride and burned that toxic plastic ingredient because they feared they would explode.

Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board determined the controversial vent and burn operation never needed to happen because there was evidence the railroad ignored that the tank cars were starting to cool off and wouldn’t have exploded.

The state and local officials who decided to release and burn the vinyl chloride — generating a massive plume of thick, black smoke — have said they never heard anything suggesting the tank cars wouldn’t explode.

“The EPA had rules to follow and chose not to follow their own rules. The EPA was too busy trying to get the train back on track to protect the people,” Ms. Baehr said.

Officials didn’t respond Monday to questions about the new lawsuit and separate federal claims that were filed against the EPA and the CDC. But in the past, the EPA has defended its role by saying they were only there to advise on the potential consequences of burning the vinyl chloride and measure the contamination.

Ms. Baehr said the EPA and the CDC’s approach to the derailment followed a similar pattern she’s seen in other environmental disasters, including the Navy’s toxic spill of jet fuel that contaminated water in Hawaii. She said agencies tend to downplay potential health risks. Residents have expressed frustration with the data the EPA discloses and the refusal of the class-action attorneys to reveal what their own testing found.

A Norfolk Southern spokesperson declined to comment on the litigation.

MINNESOTA

Jury selection to begin for accused scheme ringleader

Charged with stealing COVID funds

By STEVE KARNOWSKI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS | Jury selection was set to begin Monday in the trial of the alleged ringleader of a scheme to exploit the COVID-19 pandemic that federal prosecutors say stole \$250 million from a program meant to feed children, the latest chapter in a broader case that has also included an attempt to bribe a juror and political repercussions against Gov. Tim Walz.

But the attorney for Aimee Bock, the founder of Feeding our Future — the group that prosecutors say was at the heart of the plot — insists that she’s innocent.

Ms. Bock and a co-defendant will be the second group to stand trial in what prosecutors call one of the country’s largest COVID-19-related fraud cases anywhere. The first trial resulted in the conviction of five people last year and received widespread attention after some defendants and people linked with them allegedly tried — unsuccessfully — to bribe a juror with a bag of \$120,000 in cash. The juror went straight to police instead.

Ms. Bock is one of 70 defendants charged in the overall case. They’re being tried in batches. Thirty of them have already pleaded guilty to various charges, including some who had been scheduled to go on trial with Ms. Bock this week. One defendant from the first trial was sentenced this month to 17 ½ years, the longest prison term handed down in the case so far.

Here’s a look at a trial that’s expected to last about six weeks:

Federal prosecutors allege that the conspiracy revolved around two groups — Feeding Our Future and Partners in Nutrition — that were both small nonprofits that were approved as sponsors of the Federal Child Nutrition Program before the pandemic.

But the two groups dramatically

increased the number of meal sites that they claimed to be sponsoring during the pandemic. Feeding Our Future went from receiving and disbursing \$3.4 million in federal funds in 2019 to nearly \$200 million in 2021. Sites sponsored by Feeding Our Future falsely claimed to be serving thousands of children daily, prosecutors allege.

“In all, Feeding Our Future fraudulently obtained and disbursed more than \$240 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds during the Covid-19 pandemic,” prosecutors wrote in a preview of their case this month. The total included administrative fees to which Feeding Our Future was not entitled, they said.

“Bock and other Feeding Our Future employees also solicited and received bribes and kickbacks from individuals and companies sponsored by Feeding Our Future,” prosecutors said. “Feeding Our Future operated a pay-to-play scheme, where individuals seeking to operate fraudulent sites under the sponsorship of Feeding Our Future had to kick back a portion of their fraudulent proceeds to Feeding Our Future employees.”

Ms. Bock’s attorney, Kenneth Udoibok, said they’ll argue at trial that she’s not guilty of the federal fraud, conspiracy and bribery charges against her.

“She’s innocent and she’s going to express that belief, that truth, until the day she dies,” Mr. Udoibok said in an interview last week. “This woman was hoodwinked, played by people she trusted. She trusted that these people that have pled guilty, she trusted them to have delivered food to needy children, needy people, deserving folks. And they played her.”

Mr. Udoibok said the large number of guilty pleas, and the fact that they’re now down to just Ms. Bock and a co-defendant for this trial, doesn’t change the defense strategy.

NEW YORK

Food bank nets haul of 13,000 fresh salmon, but the fish were still alive

By Michael Hill
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUBURN, N.Y. | A New York food bank was offered a huge donation of fresh fish this month — but it came with a catch. LocalCoho, a soon-to-close salmon farm in the small upstate city of Auburn, wanted to give 40,000 pounds of coho salmon to the Food Bank of Central New York, a mother lode of high-quality protein that could feed thousands of families. But the fish were still alive and swimming in the farm’s giant indoor tanks. The organizations would need to figure out how to get some 13,000 salmon from the water and then have them processed into frozen fillets for distribution to regional food pantries. And they’d need to do it fast, before the business closed for good. LocalCoho was set to cease operations on Friday. Thanks to dozens of food pantry volunteers willing to help staffers scoop up the salmon, the team was able to empty the tanks in a matter of weeks and cold pack tons of fish for shipment



ASSOCIATED PRESS

“It’s ‘lemonade out of lemons,’ I guess is the phrase,” LocalCoho farm manager Adam Kramarsyck said of receiving 13,000 fresh salmon.

to a processor. “The fact that we only had weeks to execute this really ratcheted up the intensity and the anxiety a little bit,” said

Brian McManus, the food bank’s chief operations officer. “I knew that we had the will. I knew we had the expertise.” Tackling food waste has been a daunting challenge for years both in the U.S. and around the world. More than one-third of the food produced in the U.S. is never eaten and much of it ends up in landfills. On a recent day, workers waded through knee-deep water teeming with salmon to fill their nets. Christina Hudson Kohler was among the volunteers who donned waterproof overalls and gloves to grab the fish-laden nets and empty their contents into cold storage containers. “It’s a little bit different,” Mr. Kohler said during a break. “In the past, my volunteer work with the food bank has been sorting carrots or peppers, or gleaning out in the field.” LocalCoho is a startup that had been piloting a sustainable salmon farming system employing recirculated water. Its facility west of Syracuse had been supplying coho salmon to wholesalers and retailers, including high-end Manhattan

sushi restaurants, with the goal of building regional farms across the country. But company officials said they could not raise enough capital to expand and become profitable. Thus, they decided to wrap things up at the end of January. With a shutdown looming, farm manager Adam Kramarsyck said they didn’t want the fish to go to waste or end up as biofuel. That’s when they reached out to see if the fish could be donated as food. “It’s ‘lemonade out of lemons,’ I guess is the phrase,” Mr. Kramarsyck said. LocalCoho can process about 600 fish a week by hand. But there was less than a month to clear the tanks of many times that number of fish. Enter the food bank. Mr. McManus was excited by the offer to land so many fish — and nervous about the challenge. But while the Syracuse-based operation knew how to distribute canned or frozen seafood, they’re not set up to handle fresh fish. How could they turn thousands of fish into frozen fillets in a tight time frame? Mr. Kramarsyck said it took “tons and tons of logistics.”

TEXAS
National Guard soldiers given OK to detain, arrest on border
AUSTIN | Texas National Guard soldiers can arrest and detain people for entering the U.S. illegally from Mexico under an agreement with the Trump administration that expands the military’s role in immigration enforcement. Texas’ pact with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, signed Friday, gives the Guard full authority to investigate, arrest and detain migrants for purposes of deporting them. — Associated Press

OREGON
Judge stops city from enforcing homeless camping restrictions
PORTLAND | An Oregon judge on Monday ordered the city at the heart of a major U.S. Supreme Court ruling on homeless encampments to temporarily pause enforcement of its

camping rules, in response to a lawsuit filed by advocates against the city. Josephine County Circuit Court Judge Brandon Thueson’s temporary restraining order prohibits Grants Pass from enforcing its camping regulations for 14 days. During that time, the city cannot cite, arrest or fine people for camping anywhere in the city, nor force a person to leave a campsite, the order says. — Associated Press

CALIFORNIA
Anti-deportation protesters block downtown freeway
LOS ANGELES | Thousands of people protesting mass deportations planned by President Trump marched in Southern California on Sunday, including in downtown Los Angeles where demonstrators blocked a major freeway for several hours. Protesters gathered in the morning on L.A.’s historic Olvera Street, which dates to Spanish and Mexican

BRIEFLY
THE NATION
rule, before marching to City Hall. They called for immigration reform and carried banners with slogans like “Nobody is illegal.” By the afternoon, marchers had blocked all lanes of U.S. 101, causing traffic to back up in both directions and on surface streets. The demonstrators sat down in lanes while a cordon of law officers stood by. It took more than five hours for the freeway to fully reopen. No arrests were reported. To the east, hundreds protested in Riverside. Passing motorists honked and yelled out in support of demonstrators at an intersection, the Southern California News Group reported. In San Diego, hundreds rallied near the city’s convention center on Sunday. — Associated Press

CHILD SAFETY
Choking hazard sparks recall of teething sticks
A baby food maker is recalling edible sticks meant to ease teething pain over a possible choking hazard. Gerber announced Friday that it was recalling and discontinuing its brand of “Sooth N Chew” teething sticks after receiving customer complaints about choking. — Associated Press

MICHIGAN
County jail will remove Bible verse from entrance
MOUNT PLEASANT | A Bible verse will be removed from the entrance of a new jail in central Michigan after critics said it was a government endorsement of religion. “Blessed are the peacekeepers for they shall be called the children of God” was prominently displayed at the Isabella County criminal justice

center. It is attributed to Jesus Christ. Sheriff Michael Main said he wanted to honor first responders and law enforcement, not promote religion, but will have the verse removed. — Associated Press

TEXAS
Parent tackles gunman at band competition
PASADENA | A parent tackled a man who opened fire during a band competition at a Houston-area high school as several others then helped disarm and detain him in a shooting that injured one person, officials said. The man in his 80s entered Pasadena Memorial High School on Saturday evening during the competition and discharged a small-caliber weapon, police said. The Angleton Independent School District said the person who was injured was a percussion technical consultant for their band. — Associated Press



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A contract worker for the United States Agency for International Development had a message for the administration Monday, but billionaire Elon Musk said President Trump agreed to shutter the \$40 billion agency.

USAID

From page A1
that is representative of the Ivy League set rather than America,” Mr. Rubin said. “Many USAID employees can then channel taxpayer funds to advance their own personal agendas, be it support for Palestinian extremists, Somalia’s kleptocracy or LGBT politics in Africa.” The Trump administration’s moves against USAID, including orders for the staff to stay out of the agency’s Washington headquarters on Monday, prompted outrage and hand-wringing. Fuming Democrats said Mr. Musk’s plans require an act of Congress, threaten lives around the world and play into the hands of the nation’s global adversaries, including Russia, China and Iran. “It is a matter for Congress to deal with, not an unelected, billionaire

oligarch named Elon Musk,” Rep. Gerald Connolly of Virginia said at a press conference outside USAID headquarters. On his first day in office, Mr. Trump telegraphed his administration’s USAID rethink. He signed the “Reevaluating and Realigning the United States Foreign Aid” executive order that called for a 90-day freeze on foreign assistance. He said the nation’s “foreign aid industry and bureaucracy are not aligned with American interests and in many cases antithetical to American values.” “They serve to destabilize world peace by promoting ideas in foreign countries that are directly inverse to harmonious and stable relations internal to and among countries,” it said. In the eyes of conservatives, the evaluation is long overdue. Sam Westrop of the Middle East Forum, a conservative think tank, wrote

last month that “violent extremists have prospered under the federal government’s aid programs” and “USAID has knowingly funded terrorists and their proxies, making America weaker and less safe.” A Middle East Forum analysis found that USAID has handed millions of federal dollars to organizations directly in the Gaza Strip, which Hamas controls. “USAID beneficiaries have called for their lands to be ‘cleansed’ from the ‘impurity of the Jews,’ among dozens of other chilling examples,” the group’s report said. “USAID staff attend the offices of charities which seemingly operate on behalf of senior Hamas leaders, while staff of multiple multi-million dollar USAID beneficiary charities openly praise and encourage violence against Jews.” The Washington Times reported late last year that federal prosecutors

USAID grew from war relief to global humanitarian mission

By Mallory Wilson
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When an American taxpayer-funded cartload of medicine and food arrives in some disaster zone across the globe, it will usually have USAID stamped on every package. While many Americans regard the U.S. Agency for International Development as some bureaucratic sinkhole in Washington, around the world it is the face of U.S. goodwill. President Trump, who has thrown the future of USAID into doubt, warns that it has been steered far from its original mission by “radical left lunatics” who were in charge of the agency. President Kennedy founded USAID by way of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and an executive order. The agency’s purpose was built from the Marshall Plan, which helped Europe recover from World War II. However, the agency’s focus shifted in the 1970s away from providing “technical and capital assistance programs” to spending taxpayer dollars on sustaining “basic human needs.” Its mission since then includes providing food and nutrition, population planning, health, education and human resources development. Critics, including Mr. Trump, argue that the agency’s overseas spending is wasteful and that taxpayer-funded aid sometimes gets diverted to bad actors,

including terrorists. The Congressional Research Service describes the agency as “the cornerstone for the United States’ foreign assistance policies and programs.” USAID’s workforce is made up of over 10,000 people, with roughly two-thirds working overseas. USAID is supposed to help developing countries, countries surrounded by conflict and those engaging in democratic reforms. It had a budget of roughly \$43 billion in fiscal year 2023, according to CRS, and roughly 130 countries. Still, it only makes up less than 1% of the federal budget. Ukraine received the most foreign aid in 2023 — over \$16 billion, followed by Ethiopia with roughly over \$1.6 billion, Jordan, Afghanistan and Somalia, all receiving over \$1 billion, among other countries, according to the Foreign Assistance website. The highest-funded sector of the agency in FY 2023 was governance, with over \$16 billion spent, due to the large amount of aid to Ukraine to war with Russia. Humanitarian aid followed at more than \$10 billion, and health at \$7 billion. Health was the highest-funded sector from the early 1990s to 2022 due to an AIDS relief program, which provided HIV/AIDS testing and treatment globally, and then health care programs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Service said diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility initiatives were a top priority for USAID under Administrator Samantha Power. Mr. Trump has ordered an end to such programs in the federal government. According to the CRS report, Congress has set aside more than \$46 billion in emergency funds since 2022 “for accounts solely or partially managed by USAID to address the war in Ukraine.” Mr. Trump has been skeptical of the money Congress has sent to help Ukraine beat back the Russian invasion. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters during a stop in Central America on Monday that he is now the acting director of USAID and that it has become clear that the agency was “involved in programs that run counter to what we are trying to do in our national strategy with that country or that region.” “That cannot continue,” he said.

World

INTELLIGENCE

Experts urge U.S. to wage political warfare in China

Moves needed to counter Beijing’s influence activities

By Bill Gertz
The Washington Times

China is subverting the United States through multibillion-dollar influence campaigns and U.S. political warfare operations inside China are needed to counter the activities, a panel of experts told Congress on Thursday.

Four specialists in Chinese influence and intelligence activities told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the operations range from recruiting university professors and corrupting American officials to cyber and internet influence operations, technology theft and coercive political activities.

The Senate hearing was one of the first of its kind by Congress to examine in detail the activities of Beijing’s United Front Work Department, a Chinese Communist Party organization engaged in aggressive political influence operations targeting a wide range of American institutions.

The activities include using Chinese business executives to shape American policies, providing paid visits to China, hiring U.S. consultants that lobby for Chinese policies, paying university professors for research, and corrupting U.S. politicians, local governments and even celebrities. The analysts urged lawmakers to rapidly increase U.S. government programs designed to identify and neutralize Beijing’s influence operations, including threatening to destabilize Chinese society.

Jennifer Lind, a professor at

Dartmouth University, said China is conducting large-scale hostile influence operations against the United States to bolster its communist system, discredit democratic government and shape global norms in line with Beijing’s interests.

“A look at Chinese influence operations suggests their extent is vast,” Ms. Lind said. “The CCP conducts such operations through a massive government bureaucracy that includes agencies such as the United Work Front Department, the Propaganda Department, the Ministry of State Security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.”

Although difficult to fully estimate, Ms. Lind said Chinese funding for these activities ranges from \$3 billion to \$8 billion annually. Ms. Lind said the U.S. government needs to go on the offensive against China using various means to shape behavior by conducting counter-influence operations Beijing would view as intolerable.

“The U.S. government would convey privately to Beijing that if their influence operations violated the bounds of acceptable behavior, we would respond in kind: in other words, we might cross some of Beijing’s red lines,” Ms. Lind said.

China, she said, prefers that Washington wage a shadow influence conflict “far afield” — in the United States and other nations and no closer than Taiwan

or Tibet. New, more aggressive American influence activities could target the Chinese people and foment domestic instability by seeking to develop popular movements against the regime.

“The CCP worries about its people mobilizing, getting ideas about democracy, and about economic and financial crises delegitimizing the regime,” Ms. Lind said. “If the United States were to push ideas about democracy, or to take steps that undermine the stability of the Chinese economy — for example, its real estate or banking sectors — that would be intolerable to the CCP.”

The goal of the operations would be to signal that the United States is ready to respond aggressively if China continues to undermine the U.S. system, she said.

Melanie Hart, a former State Department official specializing in China, also said the United States and China are engaged in ideological competition that threatens democracy and freedom.

“If China prevails, the U.S. and world will be less free, less prosperous and less safe,” Ms. Hart said. “Beijing is deploying a range of tactics to achieve its objectives.”

Myopic focus

Ms. Hart said the closing of the State Department Global Engagement Center in December removed a key tool for combating what she said was China’s “information warfare” against the United States and its democratic

allies. The center, designed to counter foreign disinformation, was shut down recently after Congress declined to reauthorize its activities over concerns the center was improperly censoring domestic conservative viewpoints.

The State Department needs to be empowered to wage “full-spectrum competition” against Chinese subversion, Ms. Hart said.

“We are battling to determine which system — ours or Beijing’s — prevails,” Ms. Hart said. “The stakes are astronomical. This is not the time to keep major levers of U.S. national power on the sidelines.”

“A myopic focus on chasing [People’s Republic of China] spies leaves most of our research unprotected as [China] deploys a range of tactics, infrastructures and human capital to acquire U.S. technology and know-how that rarely involve its security services,” Mr. Stoff testified. “While I was in the government, my support to counterintelligence elements in the FBI and DoD showed that those offices prioritized criminal investigations over leveraging operational approaches to deny and disrupt PRC state-directed technology transfer activities.”

Mr. Stoff said U.S. intelligence agencies have failed to understand, track, analyze and respond to United Front Work Department operations targeting technology. Other failures include a lack of understanding of China’s massive apparatus to recruit experts and exploit U.S. federally funded research.

“The U.S. government holds a prevailing view that the Chinese Communist Party’s united front

is strictly a political influence apparatus,” he said.

Peter Mattis, a former intelligence official and longtime China-watcher, told the committee that many Americans have failed to understand and counter the decades-long influence activities.

“United Front work also is a tool of political struggle,” he said. “It is not just a question of activities that we would call propaganda or public diplomacy. Nor is it limited to what we would call covert action.”

Mr. Mattis said the Chinese are subverting the U.S. government policymaking process through their operations: “We should not accept many of these activities as being legitimate actions of a foreign state inside the United States or other countries, because the nature of the party’s objectives and United Front system’s explicit role in political struggle mean that they are not acceptable for democratic societies even when they are not illegal,” he said.

Mr. Mattis said the State Department and White House must provide guidance on aggressively countering Chinese activities in the United States, including the use of political warfare.

“We should remember the American way of modern political warfare emerged from the State Department,” he said. “The American approach to political warfare has been underpinned by the idea of providing a true experience of Americans to the world and that supporting people’s hunger for truth and meaning in their lives will create better conditions for U.S. national interests to be achieved.”

BRIEFLY
.....
THE WORLD

CONGO

Advancing rebels declare ceasefire after offensive

GOMA | The Rwanda-backed rebels who seized eastern Congo’s key city of Goma announced Monday a unilateral ceasefire in the region for humanitarian reasons, following calls for a safe corridor for aid and hundreds of thousands of displaced people.

The M23 rebels said the ceasefire would start Tuesday. The announcement came shortly after the U.N. health agency said at least 900 people were killed in last week’s fighting in Goma between the rebels and Congolese forces. Government officials previously cited a toll of 776.

The city of 2 million people is at the heart of a region home to trillions of dollars in mineral wealth, and after consolidating control of Goma last week, the rebels were reported to be gaining the upper hand in other areas of eastern Congo and advancing on another provincial capital, Bukavu.

— Associated Press

GERMANY

Conservative front-runner nixes pact with far right

BERLIN | The front-runner in Germany’s upcoming election said Monday that the far-right Alternative for Germany is his “most important opponent” and his party will “never” work with it, following a week in which he was accused of breaking a taboo on dealing with the far right.

Center-right opposition leader Friedrich Merz’s Union bloc has been leading polls ahead of the Feb. 23 election. But he drew protests after he put a motion to parliament last week calling for Germany to turn back many more migrants at its borders. It passed narrowly thanks to support from the far-right party.

That was a first that prompted strong criticism from his opponents and a public rebuke from ex-Chancellor Angela Merkel, who once led Mr. Merz’s own Christian Democratic Union.

Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets over the weekend.

Mr. Merz, ahead in the polls and determined to prove his party’s commitment to a tougher approach to migration, rejects the criticism.

He says his position is unchanged and that he didn’t and won’t work with Alternative for Germany (AfD), which is in second place in recent polls. He points the finger at the center-left governing parties for being unwilling to approve changes to migration rules.

— Associated Press

SOUTH AFRICA

Trump’s drive to punish South Africa mirrors criticisms from Musk

By Gerald Imray
Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA | President Trump’s sudden threat to cut all U.S. government funding to South Africa over what he called human rights violations echoes billionaire adviser Elon Musk’s repeated and widely challenged claims over the years that authorities in his country of birth are anti-White and even encouraging the killing of White people.

Mr. Trump said on Sunday that “terrible things are happening in South Africa. The leadership is doing some terrible things, horrible things” without providing specifics. He said, “They’re taking away land, they’re confiscating land, and actually they’re doing things that are perhaps far worse than that.”

While it wasn’t clear exactly what the new American president was referring to, he appeared to be referencing a new law in South Africa that gives the coalition government headed by the long-ruling African National Congress (ANC) powers in some instances to expropriate land from people.

Mr. Musk, entrepreneur, close Trump ally and the head of Mr. Trump’s new unofficial government cost-cutting “department,” has highlighted that law in recent social media posts and cast it as a threat to South Africa’s White minority.

Many South Africans viewed Mr. Trump’s sudden pledge to punish America’s biggest trade partner in Africa as surprising and at least partly influenced by the mercurial Mr. Musk, who was born in the South African capital of Pretoria but left for Canada after he completed high school.

The Expropriation Act was signed into law by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa last month and allows the government to take land in specific instances where it is not being used, or where it would be in the public

interest if it is redistributed.

It aims to address some of the wrongs of South Africa’s racist apartheid era, when Black people had land taken away from them and were forced to live in areas designated for non-whites.

Mr. Ramaphosa said Monday that Mr. Trump was wrong and no land had been confiscated under the law, and said he looked forward to “engaging” with the Trump administration over the issue. The South African government said that the U.S. didn’t understand the law.

Mr. Musk accused Mr. Ramaphosa’s government in 2023 of allowing a “genocide” to happen over the killings of some white farmers, which have happened for years.

While the killings have been condemned, most analysts say there is no evidence of any genocide and they are part of South Africa’s extremely high violent crime rates and mostly related to farm robberies. Crime affects all South Africans, and the country has an average of 70 homicides a day, with the vast majority of the victims Black.

Mr. Musk also waded into the issue Monday by replying to a post by Mr. Ramaphosa’s official account on X with the question: “Why do you have openly racist ownership laws?”

Again, it remains unclear exactly what Musk was referring to, but his comments seemed to allude to South Africa’s affirmative action laws in business that are designed to advance opportunities for Black people and other racial groups who were disadvantaged under apartheid. Mr. Musk’s Starlink satellite internet service has been denied a license in South Africa because it doesn’t meet affirmative action criteria.

More than 30 years after the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule, white people in South Africa generally still have a much higher standard of living than Black people.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

“This is like a superpower; experts on demand!” OpenAI Chief Sam Altman said in an X post about the company’s new AI assistant. The move is an answer to China’s DeepSeek.

TECHNOLOGY

OpenAI launches ‘deep research’ agent as contest with China heats up

Attempts to answer to models from DeepSeek

By Ryan Lovelace
The Washington Times

OpenAI unveiled an artificial intelligence agent on Sunday evening that the company promised would help users accomplish tasks in tens of minutes that would normally take someone several hours.

The new AI assistant is called “deep research” and represents OpenAI’s answer to AI models made public by China’s DeepSeek last month.

The debut of OpenAI’s advanced research tool comes amid an escalating feud between Washington and Beijing, with the global powers competing to build artificial general intelligence that can surpass human capabilities.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, fresh off a trip to Washington to huddle with federal officials, announced his new AI agent “deep research” on X while visiting Japan.

“This is like a superpower; experts on demand!” Mr.

Altman said on X. “It can go use the internet, do complex research and reasoning, and give you back a report. It is really good, and can do tasks that would take hours/days and cost hundreds of dollars.”

People can use the deep research functionality via OpenAI’s ChatGPT chatbot. OpenAI said users will select “deep research” in the message composer and query the chatbot, which will then answer with a “comprehensive report at the level of a research analyst.”

“Tell ChatGPT what you need — whether it’s a competitive analysis on streaming platforms or a personalized report on the best commuter bike,” OpenAI said on its website. “You can attach files or spreadsheets to add context to your question. Once it starts running, a sidebar appears with a summary of the steps taken and sources used.”

Google introduced its own “deep research” agent in December, as part of its effort to

build a personal AI research assistant.

The deep research name is also reminiscent of China’s DeepSeek, which shook global markets last month when it promoted a new model that it claimed was on par with OpenAI and constructed for reportedly a fraction of the cost.

Skeptics, including Anthropic’s Dario Amodei, have cast doubt on the legitimacy of DeepSeek’s low-cost claims.

Commerce Secretary nominee Howard Lutnick has accused DeepSeek of stealing American intellectual property to power its model. OpenAI, and its benefactor Microsoft, are reportedly investigating DeepSeek’s potential theft.

The competition between DeepSeek and OpenAI has created a stir among leading technologists from Silicon Valley to Washington who are working to understand how to interpret DeepSeek’s emergence on the world stage.

GREECE

Seismic rumblings unnervingly fanned island

SANTORINI | Authorities deployed emergency rescue crews to Greece’s volcanic island of Santorini on Monday as hundreds of people scrambled to leave after a spike in seismic activity raised concerns about a potentially powerful earthquake. Schools on four islands were also to shutter through Friday.

Precautions were also ordered on several nearby Aegean Sea islands — all popular summer vacation destinations — after more than 200 under-sea earthquakes were recorded in the area over the past three days.

Mobile phones on the island blared with alert warnings about the potential for rockslides, while several earthquakes caused loud rumbles. Authorities banned access to some seaside areas, including the island’s old port, that are in close proximity to cliffs.

— Associated Press

MUSIC

This ain't Texas (woo!), it's the Grammys

Superstar Beyonce wins album of the year for 'Cowboy Carter'

By MARIA SHERMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES | Beyonce won album of the year for “Cowboy Carter” at Sunday’s Grammys, delivering her — at last — the show’s elusive top award.

The superstar, who is both the most awarded and nominated artist in Grammys history, has been up for the category four times before and many feel she has been snubbed by its top honors.

In winning album of the year with “Cowboy Carter,” Beyonce has become the first Black woman to win the top prize in the 21st century. The last was Lauryn Hill with “The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill” 26 years ago. Before her were Natalie Cole and Whitney Houston.

Members of the Los Angeles Fire Department presented Beyonce with the trophy, one of several times the show reflected the recent wildfires that burned thousands of homes.

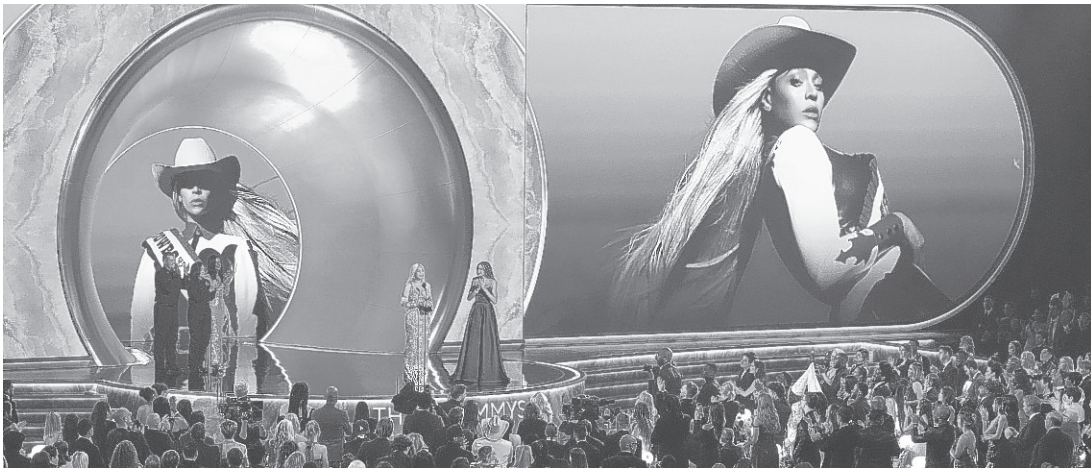
“It’s been many, many years. I want to dedicate this to Ms. Martell,” Beyonce said in her speech, referencing Linda Martell, the performer who became the first Black woman to play the Grand Ole Opry.

Kendrick Lamar won song and record of the year for his diss track “Not Like Us,” taking home two of the night’s most prestigious awards.

“We’re gonna dedicate this one to the city,” Mr. Lamar said before shouting out Los Angeles area neighborhoods.

It is the second hip-hop single to ever win in the category. The first was Childish Gambino’s “This Is America.”

The Weeknd has mended his fractious relationship with the Grammy Awards with a surprise performance of his new single,



Beyonce accepts the award for album of the year for “Cowboy Carter” during the 67th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday in Los Angeles. She is both the most awarded and nominated artist in Grammys history.

“Cry For Me” and “Timeless” with Playboi Carti.

His decision is a direct reflection of the changes the Recording Academy has made to diversify its voting body, CEO Harvey Mason Jr. said in his introduction. The Weeknd has been openly critical of the Grammys organization, dating back to 2020. when he posted on Twitter: “The Grammys remain corrupt.”

It was just one of many pleasant surprises Sunday night. Chappell Roan was named best new artist.

She read a speech from a notebook, speaking directly to major labels and the music industry, instructing them to “offer a living wage and health care, especially to developing artists.” She described getting signed as a minor, getting dropped and entering the workforce during COVID-19 with no work experience and no health care. She asked them to treat artists like “valuable employees.”

“Labels, we got you,” Ms. Roan concluded her speech. “But do you got us?”

In one of the biggest moments

of the evening so far, Taylor Swift presented the award for best country album to Beyonce. She became the first Black woman to ever win in the category.

“Genre is a cold word to keep us in our place as artists,” Beyonce said in her speech. “I’m still in shock. Thank you so much for this honor.”

Beyonce entered the night as the leading nominee.

A little bit of the wild West, a little bit of West Hollywood. Ms. Roan brought a rocking version of her “Pink Pony Club” to the Grammy stage. Joined by a posse of dancing clown cowboys, she sang from atop a giant pink horse.

In incorporating the wildfires throughout the show, the Grammys put the spotlight on the city’s resiliency.

Host Trevor Noah’s opening speech was dedicated to those affected by the fires, promising a show that not only celebrates them, but one that also celebrates “the city that brought us so much of that music.” The Grammys have also allotted ad time to be used by local businesses affected

by the fires.

As the show neared its end, Mr. Noah announced that viewers had contributed \$7 million to relief efforts Sunday night so far.

On a stage set up to look like the mountains of Los Angeles, the L.A. born-and-raised Billie Eilish and her brother/collaborator Finneas performed her hit “Birds of a Feather.” It was one of a number of ways the show seeks to salute the city. “We love you, L.A.,” she told the crowd at the end of the set.

The show kicked off with a powerful opening performance of Randy Newman’s “I Love L.A.” by Dawes — whose members were directly affected by the Eaton fire — backed by John Legend, Brad Paisley, Sheryl Crow, Brittany Howard and St. Vincent.

Will Smith introduced a tribute to the late, great, legendary producer Quincy Jones. “In his 91 years, Q touched countless lives, but I have to say he changed mine forever,” he said. “You probably wouldn’t even know who Will Smith was without Quincy Jones.”

Woman’s surprise revelation is bewildering to relative

DEAR ABBY: I received a Facebook message from my first cousin. In it, she apologized for not communicating for the past 10 months. It ended with, “Send me your address so I can send you a birth announcement.” Abby, I wasn’t even aware that she had been pregnant.

I contacted her father, who said the child was born two months ago. This cousin is not a teen or unwed. She’s a professional and married. I am puzzled, not only because I wasn’t told, but mainly because her message did not announce the birth, other than referencing that an announcement would be mailed.

Frankly, I’m confused and not interested in feigning sudden interest in a situation I was excluded from knowing about. I can’t help but assume the purpose of the mailed announcement is a gift grab, coming months after the child’s arrival. Your thoughts? — LEFT IN THE DARK

DEAR LEFT: Heaven only knows what may have happened with your cousin. There may be much more to this story than the fact that you were “excluded.” There may have been problems with your cousin’s pregnancy or with her baby, which your relatives were reluctant to share. Please don’t start a grudge unless you have facts that indicate otherwise. Act appropriately, send a little something for that baby, along with a supportive message, and you will have fewer regrets.

DEAR ABBY: My youngest son, age 27, has been

clean and sober for two years, having survived the horrible addiction of fentanyl. I helped nurse him back to

health. It wasn’t easy, but he is alive today. However, with this sobriety, a new person is emerging who is critical of and condescending to his siblings and to me. He finds flaws in all of us that “disgust him,” and therefore, he has chosen to no longer engage with us.

He claims he is telling “his truth” and only “right or wrong” exists for him anymore. He has no problem with hurting our feelings as that is “our problem” and he “won’t cater to society’s norms anymore.” I come to him from a place of love and acceptance, and I tell him this all the time. He tells me I’m delusional and living a lie.

I don’t know what to do or say anymore. He’s willing to walk away from our family if we can’t come to a place of “mutual understanding,” which is HIS way. I’m about ready to walk away from him because I’m tired of his tirades and his putting everyone down. What should I do? — DISILLUSIONED MOM IN MINNESOTA

DEAR MOM: Is it possible that in order to gain his sobriety, your son joined some sort of cultlike program? His treatment of you and his siblings is neither normal nor acceptable. If you prefer to save yourself the heartache and end his verbal abuse, you have the right to distance yourself until he straightens out.

ANDREWS MCMEEL SYNDICATION

Pragg nips Gukesh in tournament debut as champ

It seems the only way to beat a superstar Indian teenage chess phenom these days is with another superstar Indian teenage chess phenom.

GM Dommaraju Gukesh’s nearly perfect debut after becoming the youngest world champion ever last month at the age of 18 was spoiled at the just-concluded 87th Tata Steel Masters Tournament when he lost a blitz playoff



Warmerdam-Gukesh after 27 ... Qxc8

Ba4!, and Caruana’s defense is collapsing.

The end is quick: 34. Bd3 (Qf2 Nd4 35. Ne7+ Rxe7 36. Rxb8 Rxb8 37. Qf4 Reb7 38. Rc3 Nc2 39. Rxc2 Bxc2 40. Bd5 Rb2+ 41. Kxa3 Rb1 42. Qxf7+ Kh8 43. Ka2 R1b4 and White must give up his queen just to stop immediate mate) Nc5 35. Ne7+ (Rxb7 Qxb7 36. Rf2 Qb3+ 37. Kal Nxd3) Kh8 36. Rxb7 Qxb7 37. Ba6 (Nxc8 Bxc2 38. Qcl Qb3+ 39. Kal Nxd3 40. Nd6 Qc3+ 41 Ka2 Nxc1 mate) Qxe7, and White packed it in as he will just be a piece down after 38. Bxc8 Bxc2.

After nearly losing his first game to Dutch GM Anish Giri, Gukesh looked every bit the worthy champion at Tata, at one point reaching plus-five before his late-tournament stumble.

The champ’s prowess was on display in his Round 10 game against local Dutch entrant GM Max Warmerdam, which we pick up from today’s diagram. Gukesh is already better with his pieces on good squares and the prospect of open attacking lines to White’s shaky king position.

That advantage becomes concrete on 28. Rcl? (tougher was 28. Nc5; White hopes to gain a tempo and would be in decent shape after 28 ... Qe8 29. Nc5 e5 30. Kgl e4 31. Qe2) Nd4! (a nice zwischenzug — now on 29. Rxc8 Nxd2+ 30. Bxd2 Rxc8, White loses the exchange) 29. Qdl Qb8!, applying tremendous pressure to the White kingside.

A dispirited Warmerdam goes down without a fight: 30. Kgl Nxc3! 31. Nc5 (fxg3?? Qxg3+ 32. Khl Qxh3+ 33. Kgl Qxe3+

is clearly out of the question) Nf5 32. Qg4 Qe8 33. Ndb3 Nc6 (loading up on the forlorn d-pawn) 34. Nf4 Bxd4, and White, two pawns down, resigns. It may be a little premature, but Black is in total command even after 35. Ncxe6 Nxe3 36. Qe2 g5 37. Qh5 gxf4 38. Qg5+ Qg6 39. Qxg6+ hxg6 40. Rxc6 Nf5 41. Nxf8 Kxf8 42. Rxg6 Kf7, with the two minor pieces ready to escort the passed d-pawn down the board.

But with victory in his grasp in the final round, Gukesh lost his first classical game as the new champ to GM Arjun Erigaisi, a relative graybeard among the crop of rising Indian generation of GMs at the ripe old age of 21.

Gukesh admirably takes both players out of the opening books with the rare 4. Nc4 sideline to the Petroff, and the position after 9. Bg2 Qd7 10. 0-0 0-0-0, with the kings on opposite wings, promises an attacking, double-edged struggle.

But although White fires the first shot with the pawn offer, 11. b4, it is Black’s attack that develops faster, with Erigaisi trading off the strong White fianchettoed bishop (the computer engines say White should have considered the unexpected exchange sac 14. Bf3!? to keep the bishop on the board), blasting open the h-file and then using his major pieces to target the White king: 15. Qf3 h5! 16. Nexc5 (Qf5+ Qxf5 may have looked too drawish to the champ) h4! (sticking with the plan; it’s definitely a draw on 16 ... Nxd5 17. Nxd5 h4 18. Qxf7 Rd7 19. Qe8+) 17. Nxf6 gxf6.

Black’s down a pawn and his kingside is busted, but the open h-file trumps all: 18. Rd1?! (already trying to ease the pain with exchanges with 18. Qg2 would have posed a tougher defense) hxg3 19. hxg3 Nc4 20. Bf4 Bh6! (looking to trade White’s other bishop, a valuable defensive piece; bad now if 21. Ne2 Bxf4 [Bg5 is also strong] 22. Nxf4 Qh2+ 23. Kfl Nd2+! 24. Rxd2 Qhl+ 25. Qxhl Rxhl+ 26. Ke2 Rxa1, winning the exchange) Rxh6 22. Qg2 Qh5!, keeping the big pieces on the

board and leaving White’s game already on life support.

Gukesh tries valiantly to change the subject, but Black on the attack is a dog with bone: 25. b6 cxb6 26. Ra4 Nb5! (taking advantage of the fact the White knight has to keep guarding the rook on d1) 27. Rd3 (Rc4+ Kb8 28. g4 Qhl+ 29. Qxhl Rxhl+ 30. Kg2 R8h2+ 31. Kg3 Rh3+ 32. Kg2 Rxc3 and wins) Nxc3 28. Rxc3+ Kd8! (avoiding a last pitfall: 28 ... Kb8?! 29. g4! Qhl+ [Qc5?? 30. Qg3+ Ka8 31. Rxa7+! Kxa7 32. Ra4 Qa5 33. Rxa5+ and White is winning] 30. Qxhl+ Rxhl+ 31. Kg2 R8h2+ 32. Kg3 Rh3+ 33. Kg2 Rxc3 34. Kxhl Rxc2, and the endgame still must be won) 29. f3 (Qxb7 gets in a mate threat but Black has 30... Qdl+ Kg2 Qhl mate) Qb5!, threatening both the rook and a nasty back-rank check.

It’s over on 30. Rxa7 Rhl+! 31. Kf2 (on 31. Qxhl, Black throws in 31 ... Qbl+ first to score major material) R8h2, and White’s queen is pinned and lost; Gukesh resigned.

Caruana-Praggnanandhaa, 87th Tata Steel Masters 2025, Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands, January 2025

1. c4 e6 2. Nc3 d5 3. d4 Nf6 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Bg5 c6 6. e3 Bd6 7. Bd3 0-0 8. Nge2 Re8 9. h3 Nbd7 10. Qc2 Nf8 11. 0-0-0 b5 12. Kb1 a5 13. f3 Be7 14. Bxf6 Bxf6 15. e4 a4 16. a3 b4 17. axb4 a3 18. b3 Qb6 19. Ka2 dxe4 20. fxe4 Bxd4 21. Nxd4 Qxd4 22. b5 Bd7 23. Bc4 Qa7 24. bxc6 Bxc6 25. Rhf1 Re7 26. Nd5 Rb7 27. Rf5 Rc8 28. Qd3 Ne6 29. Rdf1 Be8 30. R5f2 Qb8 31. Rc2 Nc5 32. Qe3 Nxb3 33. Rb3 Ba4 34. Bd3 Nc5 35. Ne7+ Kh8 36. Rxb7 Qxb7 37. Ba6 Qxe7 White resigns

Gukesh-Erigaisi, 87th Tata Steel Masters 2025, Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands, February 2025

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nc4 Nxe4 5. Qe2 Qe7 6. Ne3 Nf6 7. Nc3 Be6 8. g3 Nc6 9. Bg2 Qd7 10. 0-0 0-0-0 11. b4 d5 12. b5 Na5 13. d4 Bh3 14. Bxh3 Qxh3 15. Qf3 h5 16. Nexc5 h4 17. Nxf6 gxf6 18. Rd1 hxg3 19. hxg3 Nc4 20. Bf4 Bh6 21. Bxh6 Rxh6 22. Qg2 Qh5 23. Rab1 Rdh8 24. Rb4 Na3 25. b6 cxb6 26. Ra4 Nb5 27. Rd3 Nxc3 28. Rxc3+ Kd8 29. f3 Qb5 30. Rxa7 Rh1+ 31. Kf2 R8h2 White resigns

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TODAY’S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 4). Your problem-solving abilities are nothing short of astounding and will have far-reaching positive effects. Much will depend on where you focus this. Avoid being overly serious about it. Do what’s fun for you in this year filled with friends and novel adventures. More highlights: You’ll be heralded for your attitude, celebrated for your heart and hired for your financial savvy. Gemini and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 10, 35, 31 and 16.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Meetings carry a strange sense of inevitability. Fleeting connections — a glance, a laugh, a few words — will plant a seed. Over time, it reshapes your story, weaving new threads and opening doors to places you were always meant to find.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You’ll make a move that feels right to you, even if you can’t put your finger on why you’re doing it. Intuition guides you illogically or perhaps absolutely. Even if you take your hands off the wheel, you won’t steer wrong.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Consider all possible paths, conventional and unconventional alike. Even though you want a pretty big change, the most direct route to the transformation may be as small as tweaking one habit.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Clear up misunderstandings while they are small. A little directness and a lot of tact will go a long way toward preventing hurt feelings. You might not agree about an issue, but you’ll keep it from getting worse.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Having specific preferences makes you unique, but it also limits your options. You’ll decide whether to add more conditions and narrow your choices, or loosen the constraints and open yourself up to new possibilities.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Wherever you go, you

want it to be better because you were there. To you, it’s not a goal but a responsibility. You recognize your

influence, and with it comes a chance to promote the values you hold dear.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Loosen your views. Let it go fuzzy. What if reality isn’t what you think it is? Fanciful play, possibility and hope are necessary to the resilient soul. “Don’t part with your illusions. When they are gone you may still exist, but you have ceased to live.” — Mark Twain

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 23). It’s one of those rare days when good intentions really are enough because they have an energy that will pull you through, improving all as you go. Don’t overthink it. Just move. Your purpose will be the plan.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Enthusiasm is the quality that gets you hired, promoted and befriended. People are drawn to your energy and passion, which inspire trust and excitement. Keep showing up with that spark, and doors you didn’t even know existed swing open.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Get back to basics. Tend to foundations. It’s amazing what vitality is released when you simply commit to hydration, nourishment and sleep. Physical vitality enables the creativity and emotional depth you cherish.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You prioritize people above all else — before the agenda, the results or the financial end. Your “people first” mindset means you take a little more time to get things done, but you have a lot more fun along the way.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). If you find yourself pretty deep into a task before you realize it is not worth your time or attention, give yourself credit for figuring that out at all. You’ll fulfill your obligation and then plan to avoid similar low-yield endeavors in the future.

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Region

DISTRICT

More human remains found in wreckage

Coast Guard salvages jet parts from Potomac River after collision with helicopter

By **Matt Delaney**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

More human remains were recovered Monday amid the wreckage of the commercial jet and Army helicopter that collided last week over the Potomac River, but D.C. officials did not say how close they are to recovering the last dozen bodies of those killed.

D.C. Fire and EMS Assistant Chief Gary Steen said more human remains were discovered in the water while the Coast Guard salvaged parts of the doomed American Airlines jet in the crash that killed 67 people.

“These remains, as well as remains that have been recovered previously, are in the process of being positively identified by the office of the chief medical examiner of the District of Columbia,” Chief Steen said at a Monday afternoon press event.

The assistant chief said he is still confident the outstanding victims will be found in or around the remaining wreckage.

Officials have recovered the bodies of 55 victims after the passenger jet from Wichita, Kansas, and an Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed into each other during the plane’s final approach to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Authorities said 64 aboard the American Airlines flight, and a three-man crew inside the Black Hawk, were all killed in the mid-air collision on Wednesday.



Rescue and salvage crews pull up airplane wreckage of an American Airlines jet from the Potomac River.

Children as young as 11, vacationers, lawyers, college professors and foreign nationals were among those who died in the deadliest aviation accident since 2001.

That year, American Airlines Flight 587 crashed into a neighborhood in Queens, New York, and killed 265 people.

Army Corps of Engineers Col.

Francis B. Pera said salvage crews completed their mission for Monday by removing one of the jet’s engines, its fuselage and one of its wings from the Potomac River.

He said some work stoppages were ordered as bodies were found during the operation.

“Our process is committed to the dignified process for recovery of the remains for personnel

and passengers of the flight,” the colonel said.

Col. Pera said wind conditions Tuesday will limit the amount of time salvage boats can stay out on the water, but the aim is for crews to pull the cockpit from the river.

Officials refused to weigh in on the theory the helicopter caused the crash by ascending

too high.

Prior reporting from The New York Times suggested the helicopter was flying higher than normal and slightly off course when the collision occurred.

“It’s important for us to not speculate because there are all kinds of reasons that you could deviate from an altitude,” U.S. Army Col. Mark Ott said at the briefing. “Something as simple as a flock of birds is in front of you, or you may deviate if you see something that’s an obstacle or other threat to your flight. And so I would wait and caution everybody, let’s just wait until the NTSB investigation.”

The National Transportation Safety Board is still trying to sort out altitude discrepancies from flight data logs that first came to light over the weekend.

The NTSB said the American Airlines jet’s flight recorder tracked its altitude at 325 feet, plus or minus 25 feet, when the collision occurred shortly before 9 p.m. Wednesday.

However, the airport control tower showed the helicopter at 200 feet in altitude at the time of the crash. The helicopter was not supposed to fly above 200 feet to avoid the bustling air traffic near Reagan National.

Investigators said control tower data can be unreliable and are hoping the helicopter’s recovered black box can provide more insight once it has been treated for water damage.

VIRGINIA

Democrats ditch cuts for one-time tax rebates

Youngkin’s relief plan permanent

By **Olivia Diaz**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICHMOND | The Democratic Virginia Senate and House of Delegates appropriations committees each presented on Sunday state budget plans that include one-time tax rebates to all taxpayers, countering Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s proposal to provide permanent tax relief on cars.

In a unified approach, both House and Senate committees unanimously passed similar plans adjusting the final year of the state’s two-year budget. The committees proposed giving a \$200 rebate to individual income tax filers and \$400 to joint filers by October.

Mr. Youngkin’s proposed amendments would give permanent cuts to lower- and middle-income residents during tax season.

“Working families and individuals need immediate relief — again, immediate relief,” said state Sen. L. Louise Lucas, who chairs the Senate finance committee. “To that end, I do not agree with the details of the governor’s approach.”

The committees’ budget proposals also include making Virginia’s earned income tax credit fully refundable at 20% of the federal credit.

The budget bills next head to their respective chambers. Once passed, the proposals with cross over to the alternate chamber for consideration and then proceed to a conference committee — a small delegation of lawmakers who meet behind closed doors to hash out a compromise.

Lawmakers’ proposed budgets come less than a week after the White House paused federal grants and loans, including Medicaid, which created a frenzy of uncertainty before the directive was blocked by a federal judge and ultimately rescinded.

In a news conference following the Virginia House appropriations committee vote, lawmakers said they have not made significant changes to their budget proposals in light of President Trump’s actions.

“Proposals to cut Medicaid will have to emerge from both the House and the Senate,” Democratic Delegate Mark Sickles said, referring to the Congress. “We’ve got a long way to go on that. We’ll pay close attention. But if they make the drastic cuts that some of some folks have talked about, we would have to come back here to Richmond and deal with that.”

The Virginia House and Senate’s spending proposals are not entirely uniform. Democratic House Appropriations Chair Luke Torian said lawmakers will have to negotiate funding on such matters as skills games, or slot-like betting machines, among others.

“We’ll see what comes out of the conference room,” Mr. Torian said.

NORTH CAROLINA

State law allowing two more years for child sex abuse suits upheld

By **Gary D. Robertson**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH, N.C. | North Carolina’s highest court has upheld a law that gave adult victims of child sexual abuse two additional years to seek civil damages, rejecting arguments that the temporary window violated constitutional protections for those facing claims that otherwise could no longer be pursued in court.

In a case involving a local school board sued by three former students years after an ex-high school coach was convicted

of crimes against team members, the state Supreme Court ruled the General Assembly was able to enact a key provision within the 2019 SAFE Child Act that was also signed by then-Gov. Roy Cooper.

Before the law, victims of sexual abuse before age 18 effectively had until turning 21 to file such civil claims against perpetrators. Now such victims have until they’re age 28.

But the issue before the court in the Gaston County case was the provision that gave other child sex abuse victims whose

time period to sue ended the ability to file valid lawsuits for damages from January 2020 through December 2021.

Supporters of the provision said it allowed victims to ensure their abusers and institutions that allowed abuse to happen pay for the damage, and that abusers are called out publicly. At least 250 child sex abuse lawsuits were filed in North Carolina under that one-time lookback period, according to a board legal brief.

A divided state Court of Appeals panel in 2023 had already upheld the two-year window as

constitutional.

The board’s attorney had argued the lookback period violated the North Carolina Constitution by stripping away fundamental rights protected from retroactive alterations by the Legislature. He also said that upholding the litigation window would make it impossible in some cases to mount vigorous defenses given the passage of time and destroyed records.

Writing Friday’s majority opinion, Chief Justice Paul Newby said a review of previous versions of the state constitution

showed that a current provision barring “retrospective laws” expressly applies only to retroactive criminal and certain tax laws. And another constitutional provision that can be used to strike down laws that violate a person’s “vested right” does not apply here, he added.

“Our precedents confirm that the General Assembly may retroactively amend the statute of limitations for tort claims,” Chief Justice Newby wrote, referring to civil actions in which someone seeks monetary compensation for harm by another.

NEW JERSEY

Democrats square off in first gubernatorial debate

By **Mike Catalini**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAWRENCEVILLE, N.J. | Six New Jersey Democrats, including two sitting members of Congress, the mayors of the state’s two biggest cities, the head of the biggest teachers union in the state and a former top lawmaker squared off Sunday in the first debate this year in the contest for governor.

The nearly two-hour debate comes four months ahead of the June primary and coincides with the first year of President Trump’s second administration, with candidates attacking his policies. It also comes as Gov. Phil Murphy,

a two-term Democrat, is barred by term limits from running again.

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka concentrated sharp attacks against Mr. Trump’s executive orders, particularly on immigration, just days after federal officials arrested people in his city.

“We can’t fight extremism with moderation,” Mr. Baraka said.

The debate covered in-the-weeds state issues, like public school funding and public employee pensions, but also touched on national issues like immigration and transgender rights.

In addition to Mr. Baraka, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop, Reps. Josh Gottheimer and Mikie



Sherrill, Sean Spiller of the New Jersey Education Association and former state Senate President Steve Sweeney met on the campus of Rider University for the debate.

A major touchstone was making the state, which has among the highest property taxes in the country, more affordable.

Mr. Gottheimer talked about getting a larger share of funding from the federal government to help drive down property taxes and make the state more

affordable — the No. 1 issue he said he hears about from voters. Ms. Sherrill said more affordable housing needs to be built in the state.

Mr. Sweeney touted his efforts to reimagine school funding from his time in the Legislature. Mr. Spiller called for ending “back room” dealmaking to make people’s voices heard and the state more affordable. Mr. Fulop talked about changing the state’s highest tax brackets to bring in more revenue for the state budget,

which funds things like property tax relief.

The candidates largely agreed that the state’s transit agency, New Jersey Transit, has been a failure and needs to improve.

New Jersey voters sometimes oppose the president’s party following a national election year. But Mr. Murphy bucked that trend recently when he won a year after President Joseph R. Biden.

Republican gubernatorial candidates are scheduled to debate later this week.

NORTH CAROLINA

Ex-lieutenant governor drops CNN lawsuit, won’t run again

By **Gary D. Robertson**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH, N.C. | Former North Carolina Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson withdrew his defamation lawsuit last week against CNN that challenged a report about him making explicit posts on a pornography website’s message board over a decade ago.

The one-sentence voluntary dismissal notice filed Friday by the Republican’s attorneys in U.S. District Court in eastern North Carolina didn’t give a reason for the decision.

But in a separate statement, Mr. Robinson cited a Bible verse while saying that “costly litigation and political gamesmanship by my detractors makes clear that

continuing to pursue retribution from CNN is a futile effort.”

“It is more honorable to bury an injury than to revenge it,” Mr. Robinson said. “While it has been the honor of a lifetime to serve the people of North Carolina, the continued political persecution of my family and loved ones is a cost I am unwilling to continue to bear.”

Mr. Robinson, a Republican

who unsuccessfully ran for governor in November, had repeatedly denied writing the posts identified in the CNN story that ran in September, when he was still lieutenant governor. He sued a few weeks later. The legal parties were now awaiting a judge’s decision on the network’s motion to dismiss Mr. Robinson’s case.

Mr. Robinson, 56, was

considered a rising star in the Republican Party following his unexpected election victory in 2020 — his first bid for elected office — that made him the state’s first Black lieutenant governor.

On Friday, Mr. Robinson also said “I will not run next year, nor do I have plans to seek elected office in the future.” Mr. Robinson had been mentioned as a potential

GOP primary opponent to U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis in 2026.

“Today, my family and I are turning the page,” Mr. Robinson said.

CNN’s report said Mr. Robinson made statements on the message board at the website NudeAfrica in which he referred to himself as a “black NAZI” and said he enjoyed transgender pornography. The report said Mr. Robinson wrote that he preferred Adolf Hitler to then-President Obama and slammed the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. as “worse than a maggot.”

Fair consequences

Trump's birthright citizenship order is 'blatantly constitutional'

By William W. Chip

On Jan. 20, President Trump signed an executive order that denied “birthright citizenship” under the U.S. Constitution’s 14th Amendment to individuals born in the United States to alien parents whose U.S. presence is illegal or temporary (e.g., alien tourists).

Three days later, U.S. District Judge John Coughenour denounced the order as “blatantly unconstitutional” and issued a two-week restraining order. However, for the reasons outlined in Yale Law School professor Peter H. Schuck’s 1985 treatise “Citizenship Without Consent,” the opposite is true, i.e., the president’s order is “blatantly constitutional.”

The 14th Amendment states, “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”

Thus, whether a child “born” in the United States is a 14th Amendment citizen depends on whether the child is “subject to the jurisdiction” of the United States at birth. In 1884, the Supreme Court interpreted “subject to the jurisdiction” of the United States to mean that no other nation had a stronger claim to the child’s allegiance, holding in the case of *Elk v. Wilkins* that 14th Amendment citizenship did not extend to American-born members of Indian tribes, whose allegiance at birth to their parents’ tribes was recognized under U.S. law.

Accordingly, as for the U.S.-born children of aliens who are temporarily or unlawfully resident in the United States, the issue is whether the alien’s own country has a claim to the child’s allegiance that impairs the “completeness” of the child’s U.S. allegiance.

The United States, like almost every other nation on earth, treats as a citizen of our country any child born to a U.S. citizen parent, even if the parent is residing outside the United States when



ILLUSTRATION BY LINAS GARSYS

the child is born. However, the United States recognizes the foreign citizenship of a child born in the United States to alien parents.

The Fourteenth Amendment empowers Congress to enforce its provisions by enactment of legislation.

The power to enforce a law is accompanied by the authority to interpret that law. Therefore, if an act of Congress denies 14th Amendment citizenship to the American-born offspring of foreign citizens who are temporarily or illegally in the United States because the parents’ country has a claim to the offspring’s allegiance that impairs the completeness of their allegiance to the United States, the Supreme Court is unlikely to substitute its own judgment for that of Congress.

Although the Supreme Court held in 1898 *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark* that American-born children of aliens who “have a permanent domicile and residence” in the United States are 14th Amendment citizens, the court has never extended this ruling to the American-born offspring of aliens whose U.S. presence is temporary or illegal.

Advocates of automatic citizenship for the American-born offspring of aliens who are not lawful permanent residents ask whether it is fair to deny the benefits of citizenship to a child who is not responsible for where he or she is born. However, if the offspring are entitled to citizenship in their parents’ country, their status is not better or worse than that of their foreign-born siblings. Moreover, when the U.S. determines that a person is a citizen, it imposes obligations and confers benefits. Consider, for example, a boy who was born in the United States while his mother was attending college here but who soon returned with his mother to her native country.

If the 14th Amendment conferred citizenship on the young man, he could later be drafted by the U.S. government to fight in a war against his mother’s country. Would anyone consider that to be a fair consequence?

William Waddington Chip, Esq., served as senior counselor to the U.S. secretary of homeland security under the Trump administration from 2020-2021.

Trump just un-rigged American elections

Biden administration’s nationwide efforts to influence elections

By Tarren Bragdon

American elections are no longer rigged by the federal government.

President Trump made sure of it in one of the most important executive orders he signed on Day 1 of his administration. He revoked a Biden executive order that fundamentally corrupted the federal government, turning it into a voter registration and mobilization machine. What President Biden did was a gross abuse of power — a transparent attempt to help Democrats win in 2024 and beyond. Thankfully, it didn’t work, and now Mr. Trump has ended this obvious injustice.

It’s almost impossible to overstate how unprecedented, undemocratic and un-American Mr. Biden’s election rigging was. The now-former president put his plan into action in 2021 when he mandated that every federal agency “expand citizens’ opportunities to register to vote” and “participate” in “the electoral process.”

This is the opposite of the federal government’s job. Federal agencies and public servants are supposed to fulfill very specific and limited missions. They are not supposed to help a partisan president turn out voters. That’s what dictators do — they use massive government power to mobilize their supporters.

Yet that’s exactly what the Biden administration did. Through freedom of information requests, my organization obtained documents showing that the White House partnered with liberal organizations that had put together a blueprint for politicizing the entire federal government. Groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the League of Women Voters, and Demos told Biden administration agencies how to set up voter “infrastructure in jails and prisons,” how to make voter registration “mandatory at naturalization ceremonies,” how to turn “all agencies that provide public assistance” into get-out-the-vote machines, and more.

Which is exactly what happened. Based on Mr. Biden’s orders, the Department of Health and Human Services sent voter registration information

to every enrollee in Healthcare.gov — more than 20 million people. The Social Security Administration pushed voter registration in all 1,200-plus offices nationwide. The Department of the Interior did the

program paid college students to register voters while funding what the Department of Education called “get-out-the-vote activities.” The department also launched a “tool kit” to help college students

vote and developed “strategies” for high schools to remind millions of students about their responsibility to vote. The Department of Agriculture pushed states to include voter registration information, including a “quick guide to voting,” in child nutrition programs. And the Department of Housing and Urban Development worked with more than 3,000 public housing authorities to register voters.

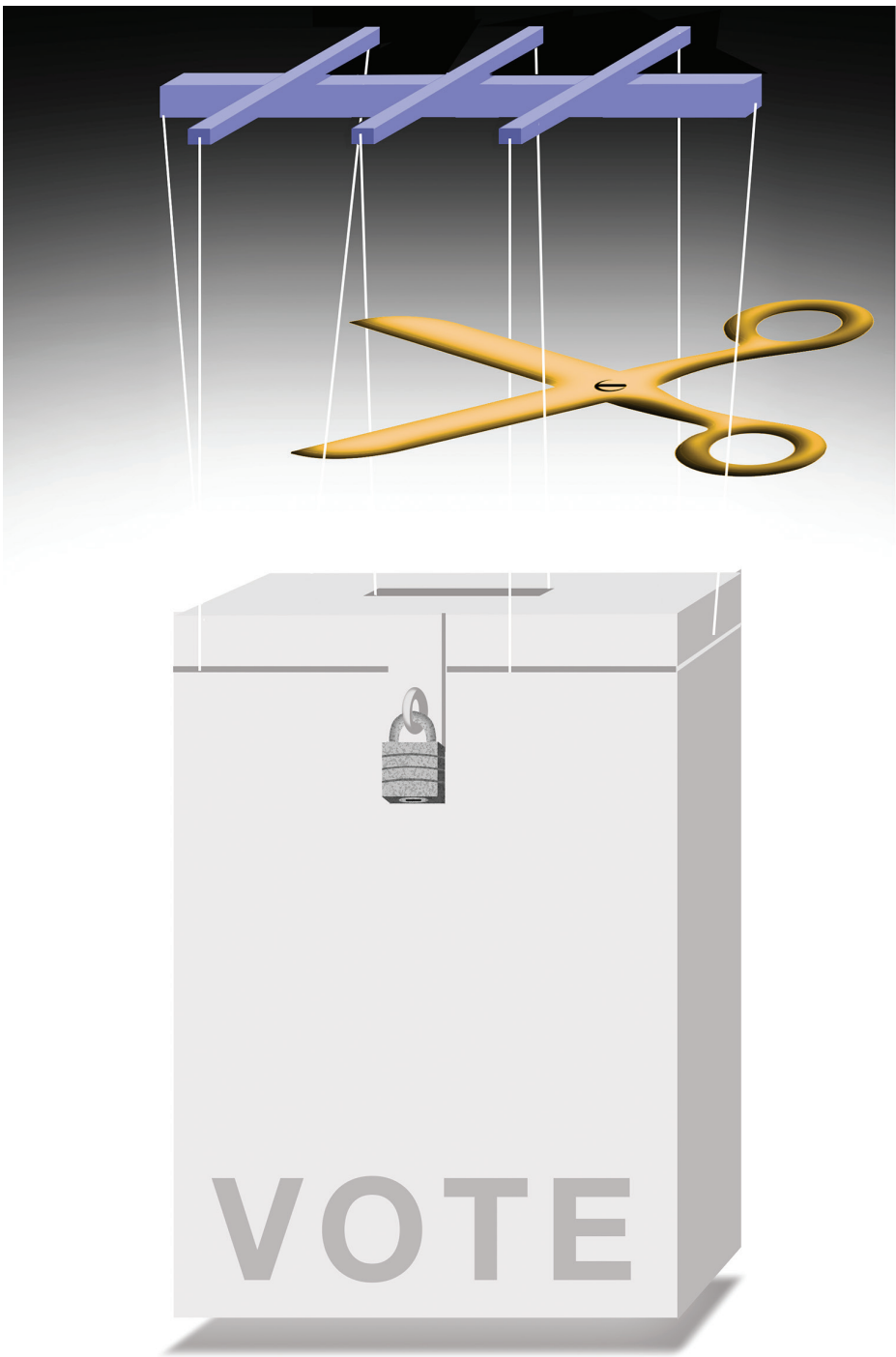
The list goes on — but even now, the full extent of federal actions isn’t known. My organization sued the Biden administration in 2022 after it refused to disclose all the details of its nationwide efforts to influence elections, but it hid behind claims of executive privilege. Now that Mr. Biden is gone, we hope Mr. Trump will show exactly what his predecessor did. It’s already clear that Mr. Biden turned the federal government into a key part of his own electoral strategy, but Americans still deserve to know just how far his scheming went.

Yet, given what we already know, it may be a minor miracle that Democrats lost in November. Americans were so fed up with the Biden administration’s failures that the president’s election rigging still failed. Now, the federal government can get back to doing its actual job. Health and Human Services can work on fixing health care. The Social Security Administration can focus on supporting seniors. Our national parks can welcome people to enjoy their beauty and nothing else.

That’s what Washington should have done over the past four years. It should never have become a tool for a president and a party who wanted votes. To his credit, Mr. Trump has ended this fundamental corruption of the federal government. And for the sake of our democracy, this blatant election rigging can never be allowed to happen again.

ILLUSTRATION BY HUNTER

Tarren Bragdon is CEO of the Foundation for Government Accountability.



same at visitor centers and entrances for national parks and wildlife refuges, as well as other federal public lands that receive more than 500 million visits a year.

The list goes on. The federal work-study



What to do with the ‘Palestinians’

The need to cut off their life support from the Islamic regime in Iran

By Jonathan Feldstein

President Trump has proposed and doubled down on the idea of half the “Palestinians” of the Gaza Strip being relocated to Jordan and Egypt.

Historical facts and demographic realities aside, millions of people refer to themselves and identify as “Palestinian.” That title was subsumed in the 1960s by the Palestine Liberation Organization, a terrorist movement whose sole purpose is to replace Israel with an Arab state called Palestine, even though no state of Palestine had ever existed until 1948 when Israel declared independence. The only people referred to as Palestinians were the Jews. My father was one of them. A Palestinian Jew. An original Palestinian.

When you look at the population of “Palestine” before 1948, there are two significant trends. First, the Jewish return to the land in the late 1800s brought its population from tens of thousands to 600,000 when Israel became a state. There is a parallel and related reality in the massive growth of the Arab population. When you look at that growth, double or more over a decade or less, it’s impossible to explain that as natural growth. The only explanation that demonstrates the historical fact is Arab immigration to Palestine.

Why and how are the two related? Just as the biblical prophecy of Ezekiel 36 was played out with the Jewish people returning to the land of Israel and the land blossoming and prospering again upon their

» see FELDSTEIN | B4

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Preventing the next Potomac tragedy

FAA must change its ways to protect the flying public

Sixty-seven lives were lost Thursday after a military helicopter collided with a regional jet preparing to land at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. The following day, a medevac flight plunged into a crowded Philadelphia neighborhood, killing seven.

While families grieve and investigators sift through the evidence, policymakers have an obligation to address obvious safety vulnerabilities in the sky. The Potomac disaster — the first fatal crash of a U.S. commercial airliner since 2009 — could have been prevented.

The initials of America’s aviation regulator, the FAA, might as well be “Fix After Accident.” The Federal Aviation Administration has a reputation for addressing the latest mishap rather than devoting resources to stopping the next one. In his remarks on the incident, President Trump blamed the FAA’s obsession with diversity, equity and inclusion for distracting it from its core mission.

That’s not to say the personnel in the control tower last week were unqualified DEI hires — far from it. Only the best land jobs at big airports such as Reagan National. Air traffic controllers are pushed beyond reasonable limits because the FAA has failed to train enough replacements to meet demand. Shifts for this high-pressure position can be 10 hours a day, six days a week.

An ongoing lawsuit by the Mountain State Legal Foundation accuses the agency of turning away thousands of high-scoring air traffic control applicants simply because their skin color didn’t advance DEI objectives under an Obama-era program.

While overworked controllers can make mistakes, this one appears to have done his job by the book. He may not have noticed the book contained a deadly flaw. He directed an American Airlines-branded jet to land on Runway 33, where the published landing procedure skims a mere 100 feet above the route approved for helicopters, trusting

the Army Black Hawk’s promise to stay out of the way.

Conflicts have happened before. A day before the accident, a Black Hawk flight veered too close for comfort to a Southwest Airlines flight. Moments later, it forced a Republic Airways jet to perform an emergency avoidance maneuver.

Military choppers are crammed into the same narrow Potomac River corridor as commercial air traffic because the powerful residents of cities such as Alexandria and Arlington throw a fit if the noisy transports fly over the city and disturb their slumber.

Much of this traffic is frivolous. Pentagon brass take “VIP” helicopter flights so they don’t have to sit in freeway traffic. In this case, the crew was on a training mission, likely using vision-restricting night-vision goggles.

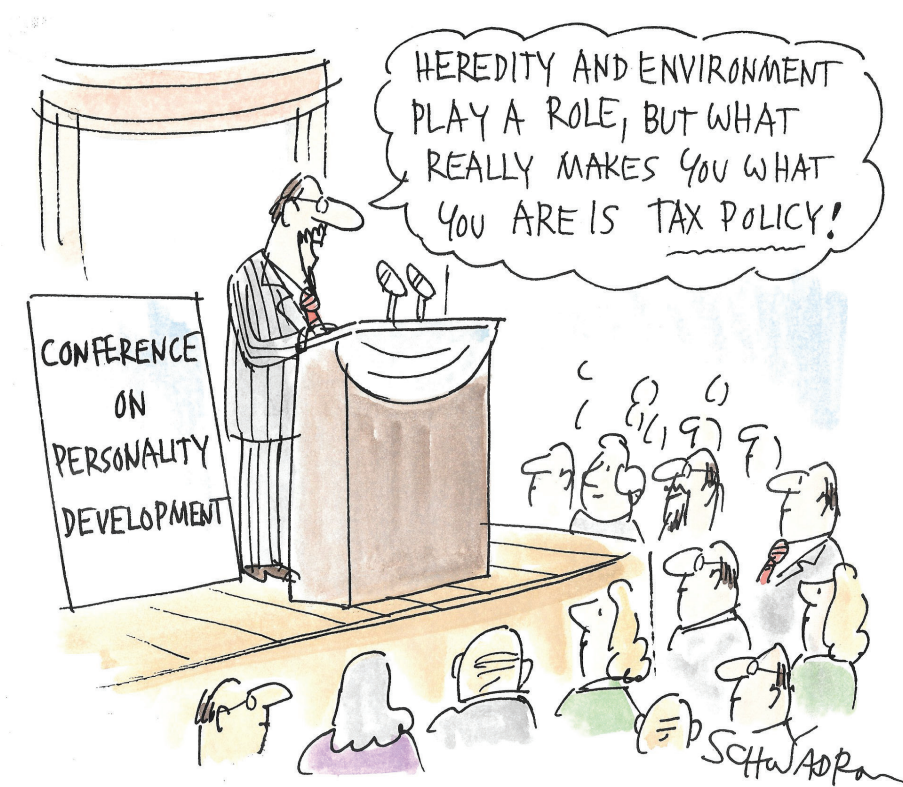
Dan Driscoll, the president’s nominee for Army secretary, acknowledged change was coming in confirmation testimony last week: “I think we might need to look at where is an appropriate time to take training risk, and it may not be near an airport like Reagan.”

The FAA temporarily closed Runway 33 and imposed a moratorium on nonessential helicopter flights.

That’s a good start, but Congress should also relieve the stress on the system. Authorizing a second FAA training academy can break the existing training bottleneck for air traffic controllers.

It can fund this effort by canceling wasteful projects in the FAA budget. For 2025, \$71 million is devoted to the pointless search for “green” jet fuel, and \$5 million is wasted on “climate goals” such as ensuring FAA executives have a charging station for their Teslas. Only \$43 million is allocated for hiring new controllers.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy vowed over the weekend to restore the FAA’s safety mission. Once the agency stops wasting time searching for racist runways, it can fix vulnerabilities before the next accident occurs.



The changing media landscape

‘New media’ may be journalism’s savior

By Cal Thomas

When White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt announced last week that the briefing room is now open to reporters for “new media,” including podcasters and websites, she was acknowledging the power and reach of these outlets, which was demonstrated in the election when President Trump made himself available to outlets that were ignored by the Kamala Harris campaign.

The “legacy media” are in decline, and the new media are surging. Part of this concerns evaporating trust in what many regard as biased coverage by The New York Times — from which broadcast news frequently takes its marching orders — and other major newspapers and networks that reflect built-in biases. Two weeks after Mr. Trump’s inauguration, a guest essay titled “Trump Is Already Failing” appeared in The Times. “That’s the Key to a Big Democratic Rebound.” Is anyone other than the liberals who read The Times paying attention to Democrats’ real problem? It appears not.

Chuck Todd has been with NBC News for 18 years and is resigning. The former host of “Meet the Press” once said he would never have a guest on the program who didn’t believe in “climate change.” Liberal Washington Post columnist Ruth Marcus has resigned from the paper’s editorial board to focus more on her column. The Post has laid off 100 employees, and 25,000 subscribers have canceled their subscriptions, outraged that the paper declined to endorse Ms. Harris. The Post continues to lose money.

On “The View,” co-host Sunny Hostin blamed Mr. Trump and those who voted for him for last week’s collision between an American Airlines commercial jet and an Army helicopter. These and other outrageous and biased claims may feed the anger of many anti-Trumpers. Still, they do nothing to improve the media’s credibility or increase their subscriptions, advertisers and ratings. As reported by the conservative Newsbusters.com, “The leftist media began (the week) by attacking President Donald Trump’s cabinet nominees and dumping on his

(inauguration) moment. They then proceeded to libel Trump and Elon Musk as a bunch of fascist Nazis while tossing final bouquets to Joe Biden.”

Then there was the legacy media cover-up of the Biden family’s business dealings, Mr. Biden’s cognitive decline and the infamous Hunter Biden laptop.

During cultural transitions of the past, diehards tried to keep the future from happening. People opposed to civil rights legislation to protect minorities from discrimination may be the most obvious recent example, but there are many others. There were those who resisted the transition from horses to motorcars. Some thought the telephone was a fad and that man was not made to fly. Some Hollywood moguls believed TV wouldn’t last. Some people once opposed coffee and refrigeration. Now, driverless cars are raising alarms.

The one constant among resisters to change is that they are left behind when change comes. This is a continuing problem for much of the legacy media. Most seem incapable of self-reflection and have an ideological view that resembles “eat your vegetables because they are good for you.” Their attitude seems to be that news consumers should swallow whatever they offer, whether they like it or not.

This doesn’t mean the media should avoid questioning the policies and pronouncements of Mr. Trump or anyone in his administration. It does mean that their approach should not be one of “he can do no right.” (Yes, some conservative media think Mr. Trump can do no wrong, which is equally bad.) It also means when Mr. Trump and other Republicans succeed, that success should be acknowledged instead of ignoring it and moving on to new rounds of cynical questioning.

It may be too late for legacy media to redeem themselves, given the leftist bent of many within that cocoon. If they go the way of previous outmoded and irrelevant things, they will have only themselves to blame.

A free press is essential to a strong America. The arrival of new media may be journalism’s savior.

Readers may email Cal Thomas at tcaditors@tribpub.com. Look for Cal Thomas’ latest book “A Watchman in the Night: What I’ve Seen Over 50 Years Reporting on America” (HumanixBooks).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No appetite for hard-left policies

I have real sympathy for diehard Democrats as their party digs in on its wildly unpopular policies. As revealed at its recent leadership meeting, the Democratic Party clings to identity politics and “diversity, equity and inclusion,” two philosophies that are proven dividers with negative consequences for the very people they are supposed to help. DEI in particular has wasted billions of dollars in an effort to encourage us to judge others by their skin color, reversing decades of progress toward a colorblind society and casting doubt on the earned achievements of too many hardworking and

highly motivated minorities.

The Democrats’ insistence on supporting “instruction” on gender ideology in our elementary public schools and their insistence on accepting trans “women” in girls sports and women’s prisons is unlikely to win them new voters. Their continuing support of illegal immigration — to the point of blocking Homeland Security Department officials from arresting and deporting violent criminals — is also likely to cost them dearly in the next elections.

That the Democratic Party continues to cling to the proven disasters

of Marxist ideology bewilders me. The leaders seem determined to abandon common sense. Meanwhile, it’s clear frustration is growing among rank-and-file Democrats who possess common sense but feel they must remain loyal to the party.

There are indications that some are trying to change the party from within. However unlikely, I wish them success. I dread any alternative that includes a return to “woke” ideology. Class envy and racial division are no way to run a country.

KATHY DEMAY
Knightdale, North Carolina

Too much give, not enough get

President Trump is right to penalize countries that perpetually ask for U.S. investment and then refuse to take American produce. Ireland is a good example of that where there has been significant U.S. investment (to the point of outright dependency) and yet U.S. goods in the country are very

rarely found.

In fact, most of the goods coming into the Republic of Ireland come from the United Kingdom. There is generally very little U.S. penetration of goods and services into the European Union.

Europe would do well to remember the Marshall Plan, which provided for

its recovery after World War II. But perhaps the continent has forgotten all about that goodwill. The U.S. is right to take a stand when there is too much giving and not enough getting.

MAURICE FITZGERALD
County Cork, Ireland

Preemptive pardons unconstitutional

It is often said that the president’s right to pardon is absolute and unlimited. Let’s test that assertion.

If the president preemptively pardoned everyone in the United States for any crime they have or may have committed, the Justice Department could never prosecute anyone for any crime. That’s the definition of a lawless society. The Constitution’s framers never would have granted such an authority to the president. If the president cannot pardon everyone preemptively, then

he cannot pardon any one person preemptively, either, as this puts that one preemptively pardoned person above the law.

The First Amendment holds that “Congress shall make no law ... abridging ... the right of the people ... to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” In other words, Congress may not limit, curtail or disallow the right of the people to seek a remedy for an inflicted harm. If Congress cannot make a law abridging a citizen’s

right to seek a redress of grievances, how could a president possibly be empowered to prevent a sought redress of grievances with a preemptive pardon for the offender who inflicted the harm?

A president who is so empowered is essentially enabling the unconstitutional absurdity of allowing preemptively pardoned individuals to be as lawless as they wish.

STEPHEN M. ZEMYAN
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

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South Africa on a collision course with Trump

A troubling shift away from the West

By Max Meizlish

On the sidelines of last month’s World Economic Forum, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa casually declared he is “not worried” about his country’s relationship with the United States. Yet on Sunday, less than two weeks later, President Trump declared that he “will be cutting off all future funding to South Africa.”

In no uncertain terms, Pretoria’s ties with Washington are on dangerously thin ice and could quickly deteriorate if Mr. Ramaphosa’s party, the African National Congress, remains wedded to advancing controversial land expropriation reforms and to warming relations with Russia, China, Iran and Hamas.

The Biden administration was mainly prepared to look the other way at South Africa, but Mr. Trump and his advisers have signaled that they may not be so lenient. Mr. Trump’s ire is a direct response to South Africa’s new land expropriation law, which allows the state to confiscate property without compensation. Beyond land reform, those Mr. Trump has tapped for key roles in his Cabinet — including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and United Nations Ambassador-designate Elise Stefanik — have openly criticized South Africa over the past year for siding with America’s adversaries.

While serving in Congress, Mr. Trump’s national security adviser, Mike Waltz, supported legislation that called for a “comprehensive review” of the U.S.-South Africa relationship and criticized the country’s direction under Mr. Ramaphosa’s ANC for taking steps that were “inconsistent with its publicly stated policy of nonalignment in international affairs.” Moreover, Joe Foltz, a key adviser to that bill’s author, Rep. John James, Michigan Republican, is reportedly the top choice to lead the Africa desk in Mr. Trump’s National Security Council.

Meanwhile, influential lawmakers — notably Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jim Risch, Idaho Democrat — have cast doubt on South Africa’s continued eligibility for the African Growth and Opportunity Act, a critical trade program set for reauthorization this year.

For a country to benefit from AGOA’s extensive duty-free trade

provisions, the president must first determine its actions do not undermine U.S. national security or foreign policy interests. Yet under ANC leadership, South Africa has welcomed senior Hamas officials, hosted Russian and Chinese naval warships, launched a legal crusade against Israel and actively promoted the anti-Western BRICS framework.

A clash between South Africa and the United States could not come at a worse time for Pretoria, which holds the Group of 20 presidency this year. Mr. Ramaphosa may hope to capitalize on the global spotlight to burnish his credentials, but that glare will highlight South Africa’s troubling shift away from the West and growing crises at home. Notably, the country’s economy grew by a mere 1.3% last year, and youth unemployment is reaching 50%, the fourth highest in the world.

The Trump administration has demonstrated its willingness to pause U.S. foreign assistance, and the hundreds of millions of dollars in American aid sent to South Africa annually is now directly in the president’s crosshairs.

Further alignment with America’s adversaries could trigger even more swift and profoundly consequential changes capable of pushing South Africa under the ANC into pariah status. For a nation plagued by entrenched corruption, soaring unemployment and an economy desperate for foreign investment, the ANC appears to be doing more to jeopardize South Africa’s relationship with the United States than repair it.

Mr. Ramaphosa cannot afford to underestimate the speed and force with which a Trump administration may respond if it concludes American interests are at risk.

South Africa’s economic growth, political stability and international standing are at a tipping point, but Pretoria shouldn’t look to America’s adversaries for support. Now is the time for urgent recalibration, not complacency. South Africa should break ties with BRICS, cease its anti-Israel lawfare, and pivot back to the West by aggressively fighting corruption and promoting democratic, market-oriented reforms at home. Left unchecked, Mr. Ramaphosa’s dismissive approach could leave South Africa wishing it had worried far sooner and more seriously.

Max Meizlish is a senior research analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. You can follow him on X @maxmeizlish.



ILLUSTRATION BY LINAS GARSYS

China is preparing for war

Has 134 air bases within 1,000 nautical miles of the Taiwan Strait

By Sean Durns

China is preparing for war, and the United States is running out of time to deter Beijing’s ambition to seize Taiwan and turn the island democracy into the next Hong Kong. For many close observers, alarms are blinking red.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for the People’s Liberation Army to be ready to conquer Taiwan by 2027. Last March, U.S. Adm. John Aquilino, who was then serving as the head of the Indo-Pacific Command, said the PLA was on track to fulfill Mr. Xi’s wishes. A growing body of evidence indicates that he was right.

On Jan. 30, the Financial Times revealed, “China’s military is building a massive complex in Western Beijing that U.S. intelligence believes will serve as a wartime command center far larger than the Pentagon.” Once completed, the facility will be the largest military command center in the world — 10 times the size of the Pentagon. Satellite imagery indicates that construction began around mid-2024. This comes on the heels of other alarming revelations.

A few weeks prior, Naval News published satellite photos revealing the construction of D-Day-style landing barges at the Guangzhou Shipyard in southern China. The PLA is already testing the barges, which naval analyst H.I. Sutton warned have “unusually long road bridges extending from their bows,” making “them particularly relevant to any future landing forces on Taiwanese islands.”

This is merely the latest expansion in Chinese naval capabilities. According to leaked U.S. naval estimates, China already has 232 times the shipbuilding capacity of the United States. This effort signals Beijing’s intention to carry out an amphibious invasion — a notoriously difficult operation. It must be noted that industrial capacity was key to the Allied victory in World War II.

The same week the Naval News published its expose, a report by the Hudson Institute, a Washington-based think tank, warned that China has “built hundreds of hardened shelters in the past decade or so to protect its air force on the ground in the Western Pacific.”

The report’s authors, Timothy Walton and Tom Shugart, noted that “the amount of concrete used by China to improve the resilience of its air base network could pave a four-lane interstate highway from Washington, D.C., to Chicago. As a result, China now has 134 air bases within 1,000 nautical miles of the Taiwan Strait — airfields that boast more than 650 hardened aircraft shelters and almost 2,000 unhardened individual aircraft shelters.” China has added 20 runways and more than 40 runway-length taxiways, increasing its ramp area nationwide by almost 75%.

By contrast, the United States has largely failed to harden its air bases, making them more vulnerable to attack. There are other signs that the CCP is plotting war.

In December, the United States confirmed that China’s Salt Typhoon Hack into American telecommunication systems was more extensive than acknowledged. H.R. McMaster, a former national security adviser to President Trump, said the hack indicates that “China wants nuclear first-strike capabilities.” This, too, is worrying, as China has been massively expanding its nuclear capabilities.

Indeed, Beijing has been engaged in the largest military buildup in modern history. The Pentagon has acknowledged that China is the “sole pacing challenge,” possessing military and economic might that surpasses previous U.S. foes such as the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. In short, China represents an unprecedented threat, and the CCP is signaling its intentions.

In a landmark March 2023 essay in Foreign Affairs, China expert John Pomfret and former Deputy National Security Adviser Matt Pottinger pointed out that the CCP has opened national defense mobilization offices — “recruitment centers” — across the country while building and upgrading air-raid shelters and at least one “wartime emergency hospital” in Fujian province, across the strait from Taiwan.

In a series of writings, Messrs. Pomfret, Pottinger, and David Feith, a former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, closely examined China’s actions and Mr. Xi’s words and reached an alarming conclusion. They highlighted Mr. Xi’s growing insistence on “breaking technological dependence on foreign economies” — meaning the United States and other industrialized democracies.” They observe that Mr. Xi wants China to “end its reliance on imports of grain and manufactured goods.” In some respects, this harks back to the rhetoric used by CCP founder Mao Zedong and another era, but along with Mr. Xi’s growing belligerence toward the West, it signals something more.

China is working to shore up its food security and has been hoarding grain for years — contributing to rising food prices and sparking a public rebuke from the Biden administration in 2022.

Indeed, China is stockpiling key resources, including fuel and metals. As The Economist observed in July, the hoarding “does not reflect public consumption.” Notably, China is energy-dependent and has been plagued by famine throughout its history. China seems to be safeguarding in anticipation of a future event.

Mr. Xi has also purged elements of the PLA, perhaps eliminating dissenters or spies — or maybe both. Such purges are not uncommon in totalitarian systems preparing for war. Josef Stalin did them, as did Adolf Hitler.

One doesn’t need to be a rocket scientist to guess what Beijing is planning. All signs are blinking red.

Adding to concerns, Mr. Xi is the most powerful Chinese ruler since Mao. The China that he presides over is far more powerful than the impoverished nation that Mao controlled. To be sure, Mr. Xi faces constraints, but he isn’t answerable to other branches of government and he has worked assiduously to eliminate rival power centers. To a large extent, his rule is absolute, and he thinks of himself as a man of destiny. Few things are more dangerous. History is clear: Such men can make the world, or they can break it.

The writer is a Washington-based foreign affairs analyst. His views are his own.



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Enforcing the law breaks the law

The legal equivalent of a toddler throwing a temper tantrum

By Dale Wilcox and Matt O'Brien

A coalition of anti-border organizations in Chicago has just filed what may be the dumbest lawsuit in the history of jurisprudence. In essence, it claims that enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act — the statute that dictates how and when foreign nationals may lawfully enter the United States — interferes with the First Amendment rights of sanctuary city advocates.

Frankly, it’s hard to overstate just how moronic Organized Communities Against Deportation, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council and Raise the Floor Alliance v. Trump are. The whole lawsuit is based on absurdly circular reasoning. The no-borders buffoons that filed it are, in essence, arguing that enforcing the immigration laws of the United States interferes with their First Amendment rights to help illegal aliens violate and continue to break those laws. According to one illegal alien advocate, “The impending raids are a brazen attempt to stomp out the sanctuary city movement and run roughshod over the First Amendment.”

If that strikes you as the wrong way around, that’s because it is. The First Amendment protects the “right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” It doesn’t confer any right to ignore whatever laws one dislikes or to interfere with the legitimate and lawful operations of federal law enforcement.

While states, counties and cities can’t be compelled to carry out functions that the Constitution assigns to the federal government, the principles of “cooperative federalism” upon which the United States operates also make it improper for those jurisdictions to actively impede the federal government in lawfully performing its assigned duties.

Under the 10th Amendment, any powers not given to the federal government belong to the states or the people. The federal government has the power to secure America’s borders and regulate immigration. The Supreme Court most recently confirmed this in Arizona v. United States, where it opined, “The federal power to determine immigration policy is well settled.”

Far from being protected by the First Amendment, most of the activities undertaken by sanctuary jurisdictions are blatantly illegal. Under the terms of the Immigration and Nationality Act, it is a crime to bring an illegal alien into the United States and harbor him or her therein. Moreover, “any person who encourages or induces an alien to come to, enter, or reside in the United States, knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that such coming to, entry, or residence is or will be in violation of law.”

It would be difficult to conceive of anything that encourages or induces illegal migration more than sanctuary policies. Despite its pretentious name, the “sanctuary movement” is just states, counties and cities telling immigration violators, “Come here and we’ll help you evade U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Heck, we’ll even interfere with ICE operations when we can.”

While the Supreme Court has not directly considered the legality of sanctuary city policies, it has repeatedly said that laws making it a criminal offense to encourage or induce illegal immigration pass constitutional muster. This issue has been addressed in two recent cases, United States v. Sinning-Smith and United States v. Hansen, and the court has been unequivocal in its view that the First Amendment does not protect speech that encourages violation of the law.

Therefore, based on Sineneng-Smith and Hansen alone, it is hard to believe that the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois will issue an injunction directing the president to cease enforcing the Immigration and Nationality Act in Chicago because sanctuary activities are protected under the First Amendment. Such an approach would, paraphrasing Justice Clarence Thomas’ concurring opinion in Hansen, “lack any basis in the text or history of the First Amendment” and “distort the judicial role.”

On the other hand, President Trump has a clear duty, under Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution, known as the “take care” clause, to faithfully execute the laws of the United States. Those laws include the Immigration and Nationality Act, which requires the federal government to remove aliens who have entered the United States without authorization and aliens who entered the U.S. lawfully but subsequently failed to abide by the terms of their admission. There doesn’t seem to be any legitimate basis for the court to conclude that ICE’s arrests of immigration violators in and around Chicago are inconsistent with the Constitution or any other federal laws, rules or regulations.

So, what’s going on here? Mr. Trump won a second term in office based on a promise he would enforce the Immigration and Nationality Act, as written by Congress, and he is delivering on that promise. The anti-borders contingent doesn’t like that, so it is engaging in the legal equivalent of a toddler throwing a temper tantrum.

In an ideal world, that kind of legal whining and foot stomping would be laughed out of court. However, attempts to legislate from the bench are real. It remains to be seen whether this case will be heard by a black-robed social engineer who thinks he or she knows better than the Founding Fathers and the American electorate or whether it will be decided by a judge who understands that, in the United States, the role of the judiciary is to apply the relevant law to the established facts and rule accordingly.

Dale L. Wilcox is executive director and general counsel for the Immigration Reform Law Institute, a public interest law firm working to defend the rights and interests of the American people from the negative effects of mass migration. Matt O'Brien is the director of investigations at the Immigration Reform Law Institute and the co-host of IRLI’s podcast “No Border, No Country.” He previously served as an immigration judge and has nearly 30 years of experience in immigration law and policy, having held numerous positions within the Department of Homeland Security.

While the Supreme Court has not directly considered the legality of sanctuary city policies, it has repeatedly said that laws making it a criminal offense to encourage or induce illegal immigration pass constitutional muster.

By Newt Gingrich

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. may or may not be confirmed by the Senate as secretary of health and human services.

He has had a long and complicated life. It was shaped in part by the assassinations of his uncle, President John F. Kennedy, and his father, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Imagine your uncle was killed when you were 9 years old and you were immersed in a week of televised anguish as the entire nation mourned his death. Then imagine your father was killed five years later and you had to live through another wave of heartbreak.

Understandably, some aspects of Kennedy's background are messy.

Yet he is an extraordinary, charismatic figure who has done a great service for America by reigniting a fundamental debate about how to make America healthy again.

In 2003, I wrote a book with Anne Woodbury called "Saving Lives and Saving Money." The title was designed to communicate an important point. First, you must save lives — then you can save money. I argued that health is a moral issue and money is secondary.

Tragically, the system has evolved in the opposite direction. An analysis of the current system would aptly be titled "Follow the Money." Doctors are subordinated to bureaucrats. Patients are subordinated to rules and regulations. The consolidation of hospitals, doctor groups, the insurance system, pharmacy benefit managers and other aspects of the health care system have raised costs, lowered focus on patients, and made the system more ossified and unmanageable.

Health care lobbyists spend more money in Washington than giant defense corporations (an estimated \$750 million yearly in health-related lobbying).

Health care reform has been focused on policy symptoms rather than the core challenges of the profoundly misfocused and ill-designed system for the last 50 years.

Politicians have prioritized reforming insurance and finance. Those are not health care. Even focusing on health care in its current state is a mistake because health care is not health. Today, we have a sick care system, not a health care system.

Kennedy great contribution has reminded us that we care about health. We want Americans to have the longest possible lives and the best possible health. We

Kennedy saving lives and making America healthy again

Focusing on health care, not sick care

want to achieve this with a convenient, affordable system that helps us when we become ill or have an accident requiring medical attention.

More than any other public figure, Kennedy has raised the larger issue of the sick care system's failure. America spends more on sick care, and Americans have gotten sicker. Our life spans have become shorter after centuries of growth because our health care system is so unhealthy.

If we stop focusing on insurance and sick care and instead focus on what sustains health and long life, we will get dramatic results. The population will be healthier, and the system will be less expensive. We will save lives and money.

Exciting evidence suggests that new knowledge about the human body could lead to dramatically longer and healthier lives.

Dr. Mike Roizen of the Cleveland Clinic estimates that, with the right approaches, the average 20-year-old today should be able to live to 115 — with the vigor and health of a 60-year-old. We work with the Alliance for Longevity Initiatives, which advocates rethinking chronic disease management. Developing the biology necessary for chronic disease avoidance could make people healthier and easily create the biggest potential savings in health care costs.

If Kennedy can launch a meaningful national focus on health rather than sickness — and prevention rather than treatment — he will spur one of the great revolutions we need to make America healthy again.

Every citizen should contact their senators and demand Kennedy's confirmation. Our lives, health and finances will all improve if he can lead a national debate and force change in our deeply broken health care system.

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For more commentary from Newt Gingrich, visit Gingrich360.com. Also, subscribe to the "Newt's World" podcast.

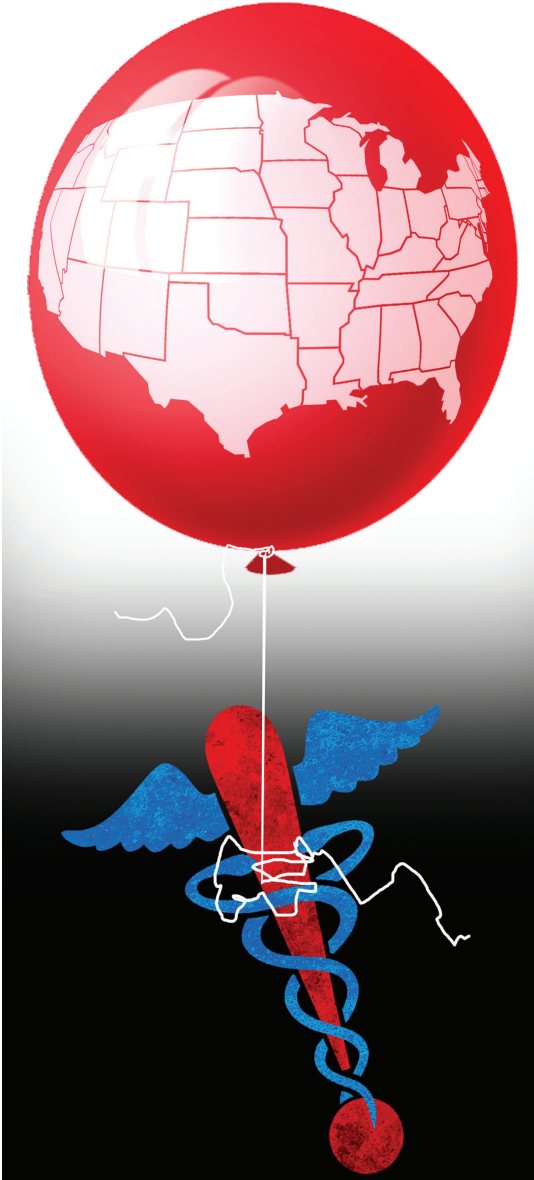


ILLUSTRATION BY HUNTER

countries wants them and that these countries would not accept them, even if that were a viable solution devoid of politics and the ability to continue to condemn Israel.

So what is the solution? What to do with the "Palestinians"? What's clear even from people on the left who were once advocates of a two-state solution is that it was not viable and was on life-support before the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas massacre and is not practical. It is clear that the Palestinian Arab terrorist leaders from Hamas and Islamic Jihad and all the way up to their Iranian patrons do not want a separate "Palestinian" state but the destruction of the Jewish state. Moving Arabs out of Gaza will not change that nor mitigate the threat to Israel.

To ever see peace in Gaza, with the hope that such peace might expand to other Palestinian Arabs and intransigent Arab and Muslim countries, the actual solution is not rooted in a crushing military defeat, which Israel has still not accomplished sufficiently, nor is it rooted in simply repatriating 50% of the Gazans to other countries. Even with that scenario, you're left with a population of more than 1 million people who are radicalized, who believe that Israel has no legitimacy and that it is their religious mandate, according to Allah, to destroy the Jewish state.

The answer is to change their attitudes and offer them an ideology not rooted in hate and destruction but one of love and prosperity. Either way, it's necessary to rebuild Gaza for 1 million or 2.5 million inhabitants. The question is who will be responsible for doing so and how.

The rebuilding of Gaza is not just a necessity but also an opportunity. It's an opportunity to bring in 100,000 to 200,000 Christians from all over the world to take responsibility for rebuilding schools, hospitals, residential areas and public parks as well as its medical system, nutritional programs and, most important, its educational system. All of it.

Working alongside Palestinian Arabs to make this happen over a generation will serve the purpose of giving Palestinians exposure to a reality that they have never experienced. They will meet people who have a love for them and for Israel, a love that's rooted in the Bible in which Israel

was and remains God's chosen nation. They will learn that Israel is the cornerstone of their problems and the foundation for their future. They will learn that their self-destructive jihadi brainwashing for most of the past century, and the god they worship, has failed them. When they see and embrace an attitude and ideology offering true hope, love and prosperity, we can see a new reality in Gaza and true peace between Gaza and Israel.

President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are on the verge of a historic meeting during which they will surely talk about the imperative to have all of the hostages released and remove Hamas and any other Islamic forces from their position of control and influence in Gaza.

Hopefully, they will also discuss the necessity to cut off their life support from the Islamic regime in Iran. As world leaders, they will also be open to out-of-the-box ideas such as the Solution for Peace and Gaza to create a lasting peace.

The only way to achieve true peace is by a crushing military defeat of Islamic extremism and by a radical changing of hearts. That is what to do with the "Palestinians."

.....
Jonathan Feldstein is president of the Genesis 123 Foundation. He was born and educated in the U.S. and emigrated to Israel in 2004.

Maine's independent in name only

Liberal King seldom fails to toe Democratic Party line

By Peter Parisi

Sen. Angus King of Maine bills himself as an "independent," but his voting record is such that the Federal Trade Commission might want to charge him with false advertising if it could.

When Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, New York Democrat, says, "Jump," Mr. King — like the Democrats he caucuses with despite being a nominal independent — dutifully asks: "How high?"

As a Maine native, I have long been rankled that the supposedly "independent" Mr. King is never called out for his reflexive support of the liberal Democratic Party line while Maine's other senator, Republican Susan M. Collins, is willing to deviate from the conservative Republican Party line when she thinks it's warranted, even though she knows it will get her branded in some quarters as a "RINO," or Republican in name only.

Ms. Collins' independent streak is born somewhat out of necessity, given that Maine is a purplish-blue state. It was on display as recently as the night of Jan. 24, when she voted against confirming Pete Hegseth, President Trump's pick for secretary of defense. In doing so, Ms. Collins sided with all 45 Senate Democrats, Mr. King and that other independent in name only, Sen. Bernard Sanders of Vermont, in their lockstep opposition to Mr. Hegseth.

Ms. Collins was alone among Republican senators in 2021 in voting in favor of all 21 of President Biden's Cabinet nominees, including under-qualified nominees such as Pete Buttigieg for transportation secretary and horrible-in-hindsight Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

Mr. King also backed all 21 of Mr. Biden's Cabinet picks, but on Jan. 24, he voted against Mr. Hegseth and skipped the Jan. 25 vote on Mr. Mayorkas' successor, Kristi Noem. On Jan. 29, he voted against making Lee Zeldin the Environmental Protection Agency administrator.

Mr. Sanders is upfront that the Democratic Party isn't far enough left for his liking to formally align with it, yet he still caucuses with Democrats. Mr. King has no apparent reason to tout himself as an independent.

Mr. King is mild-mannered and soft-spoken, not a rhetorical bomb-thrower like Mr. Sanders. But like Mr. Sanders, Mr. King's voting record makes clear that there's little about it that's independent when the liberal ideological rubber hits the road.

Soon after arriving in the Senate in 2013, Mr. King supported Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's so-called nuclear option, which eliminated the filibuster for most presidential picks for the federal courts to grease the skids for President Obama's liberal judicial nominees. That move boomeranged on Mr. King and his Democratic pals when the judicial filibuster was no longer available to them to block Mr. Trump's court picks.

On Jan. 7, 2021, the day after the Jan. 6 Capitol protests, Mr. King said Mr. Trump's Cabinet "should consider" voting to remove him from the presidency under the 25th Amendment. Yet, despite mounting evidence of Mr. Biden's steep cognitive decline, Mr. King never invoked the 25th Amendment as a basis to force him out.

Mr. King's purported independence was the subject of a 12½-minute puff-piece profile on CBS's "60 Minutes" three days later, on Jan. 10, 2021, in which interviewer Jon Wertheim talked to Mr. King "about not being hitched to a party in a time of extreme polarization."

"I didn't feel comfortable with the Democrats on the taxation-regulation side," Mr. King told Mr. Wertheim in recounting his successful 1994 third-party bid for governor of Maine. "I didn't feel comfortable with the Republicans on the social issues side, on the abortion and those kinds of things, so ... I think I'm going to take a path up the middle."

Ironically, Ms. Collins was the Republican nominee for governor, but he defeated her in 1994. He joined the Senate in 2013, some 10 years after completing his second term as governor. (By 1994, I had long since left Maine, so I can't attest to what kind of a governor Mr. King was nor how "independent" he may or may not have been during his eight years as Maine's top elected official.)

Newly reelected to a third term as a senator, Mr. King, now 80, has been anything but independent since arriving in Washington.

As for that "path up the middle"? It quickly took a sharp left turn. According to Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight.com, in the first 24 months of the Biden administration, Mr. King compiled a "Biden score" of 98.5% of "how often [he] votes in line with Biden's position."

In 2017, Mr. King opposed Mr. Trump's signature Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, contending the measure would add \$1 trillion to the national debt over 10 years. Yet he had no such deficit qualms in 2021 when he voted in favor of Mr. Biden's \$1.9 trillion boondoggle American Rescue Plan or in 2022 about voting for the euphemistically named Inflation Reduction Act, which squandered \$891 billion, mainly on wasteful Green New Deal energy projects, but did little or nothing to reduce inflation.

On Jan. 20, the day Mr. Trump took office, Mr. King voted against the Laken Riley Act, named for the young Georgia woman slain by an illegal alien. Over Mr. King's opposition, it will require the Department of Homeland Security to detain for deportation certain non-U.S. nationals (aka illegals) who have been arrested for burglary, theft, larceny or shoplifting.

Two days later, on Jan. 22, Mr. King voted along with every Senate Democrat to prevent a final vote on the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (despite his 2013 opposition to the filibuster).

During his first 12 years in the Senate, Mr. King compiled a 98% pro-Big Labor legislative score from the AFL-CIO, including a perfect 100% in 2023 — higher than the average Democratic senator's score of 95. His Americans for Democratic Action liberal rating for 2023 was 80% while drawing a scant 5% rating from the American Conservative Union. (Ms. Collins' ratings were 40% and 54%, respectively.)

Maine has a history of electing political independents and mavericks dating back to at least the mid-1970s. It elected a genuine independent in Jim Longley as governor in 1974 and two maverick Republican centrists to the Senate — Bill Cohen in 1978 and Olympia Snowe in 1995. Ms. Collins replaced Mr. Cohen in 1996 when he stepped down, and Mr. King replaced Ms. Snowe in 2013 after she retired.

Even today, Maine has a Democratic member of the House in its 2nd Congressional District, Rep. Jared Golden, who can actually be said to be somewhat of an independent, scoring a 23% rating from the ACU and a 40% from the ADA in 2023.

Mr. Golden's independence might be a political necessity since Maine's CD-2, which encompasses 92% of the state's land mass, is the second most rural district in the country and has voted for Mr. Trump for president all three times. But it's still more than can be said of Mr. King, who favors the ideological leanings of the much more liberal southernmost 8% of the state.

Asked by CBS's Mr. Wertheim on "60 Minutes" what he saw as the primary advantage of having "remained an independent" when he came to Washington, Mr. King said, "It sort of liberates you because you don't have to do what the party says."

That's unnecessary in Mr. King's case because Mr. Schumer doesn't need to remind him.

.....
Peter Parisi is a former editor for The Washington Times.

Feldstein

From page B1

return, hundreds of thousands of Arabs from Egypt, Arabia, Syria, Lebanon and what is now called Jordan (but then was the eastern part of "Palestine") migrated to Israel to be part of the economic blossoming and success prophesied by Ezekiel.

The fact that millions of people refer to themselves today as "Palestinian," even though their names tell us where their grandparents and great-grandparents came from, does not mitigate the fact that there are millions who have adopted this ethnicity that is only as old as I am.

With the interest and intent to see peace in the Middle East, specifically between Israel and Gaza and all Palestinian Arabs, the question is what can truly be done to achieve that.

Mr. Trump's proposal to move as many as half the Gaza residents to Egypt and Jordan has met with wide criticism, specifically in the Arab world. Unfortunately, throughout history, most Arab leaders and countries have used the plight of the "Palestinians" as a way to blame Israel rather than to seek any true resolution for the reality or to take responsibility to make that happen other than dumping billions of dollars into a failed jihadi enterprise they call "Palestine."

The reasons that neither Egypt nor Jordan (nor Saudi Arabia nor any other country) wants to absorb masses of Palestinian Arabs are complicated. First, with a population that has been radicalized for so long and been nurtured to live on handouts from the United Nations, European Union, USAID and other Arab countries, simply nobody wants them. They are the ideological progeny of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is outlawed in Egypt. Jordan's King Abdullah remembers well the threat to his father's monarchy by "Palestinians" in 1970, leading to the "Black September" slaughter of tens of thousands. Ironically, nobody thought to call that a genocide when Arabs massacred one another, only when Jews can be blamed.

The other fact is that by absorbing Palestinian Arabs, even those countries that are at peace with Israel would no longer have a reason to blame Israel for the "Palestinian" situation, for which they take no responsibility and blame Israel exclusively, no matter the issue.

Third, any country that would do so would be seen as a traitor to the "Palestinian" cause. Even those countries at peace with Israel have done nothing in decades to educate their populations that Israel not only has a right to exist but is also an essential partner in their own well-being. By "betraying" the "Palestinian" cause, which is the Kool-Aid that the Arab world has ingested since the 1960s, doing so would put their own respective rule at risk because of possible massive protests that would result.

Despite billions of dollars being invested ostensibly for the well-being of the Palestinian Arabs, what we've seen in the past 16 months is that it all has literally blown up, and nobody wants any more financial or geopolitical liability.

In these Arab nations, Palestinian Arabs are treated as second-class citizens without rights of citizenship or other economic benefits, even though they may be third- and fourth-generation natives of the countries in which they live, perpetuating the myth of "Palestinians" as foreign refugees.

So, as Mr. Trump has proposed the repatriation of many Palestinian Arabs to some of the countries from which their relatives came a century or more ago when seeking prosperity as the Jews restored Palestine and built a thriving state, what we see is that none of these



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Order Of Pub - Domestic

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316
SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT
Case No.J053339-03-00

Commonwealth of Virginia, in re **ESCOBAR DE LEON, MICHAEL ALEXI**
YOANDA DE LEON MONTEPEQUE

v.

RODOLFO ESCOBAR COLINDRES

The object of this suit is to: CUSTODY & SIJS

It is ORDERED that the defendant appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before **APRIL 1, 2025 10:00 AM.**

DATE 01/23/2025

John E. Franklin Judge

February 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025 AD#90421

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316
SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT
Case No.J053872-01-00

Commonwealth of Virginia, in re **ESCOBAR DE LEON, LINDA**
YOANDA DE LEON MONTEPEQUE

v.

RODOLFO ESCOBAR COLINDRES

The object of this suit is to: SIJS & CUSTODY

It is ORDERED that the defendant appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before **APRIL 1, 2025 10:00 AM.**

DATE 01/23/2025

John E. Franklin Judge

February 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025 AD#90442

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316
SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT
Case No.J051821-03-00

Commonwealth of Virginia, in re **MATIAS PABLO, YARITZA ROXELLY**
ANA PATRICIA MATIAS PABLO

v.

MYNOR RAMOS

The object of this suit is to: SIJS CUSTODY

It is ORDERED that the defendant appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before **APRIL 1, 2025 11:00 AM.**

DATE 01/22/2025

John E. Franklin Judge

February 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025 AD#90444

Show Cause Notice

VIRGINIA: **IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF FAIRFAX COUNTY**

IN RE: ESTATE OF JOHN WADE MUKAI, DECEASED
CL 2024-17937 FI-2023-0001812

ORDER OF PUBLICATION
The reason for this cause is to identify and establish the heirs at law of John Wade Mukai, deceased and unknown parties, with no known addresses, are identified as Defendants in this matter. Upon consideration, this Order of Publication is granted, and it is ORDERED that the unknown parties named as Defendants shall appear here on or before **27th day of February** after proper publication of this Order and do what is necessary to protect his or her interest in this cause. Entered: January 23, 2025
TESTE: CHRISTOPHER J. FALCON, CLERK
BY: **Kaleigh Lawson** DEPUTY CLERK
Written Answer may be filed in lieu of Court appearance
Reply should be received by **February 27, 2025**

We ask for this: **VON KELLER THELIN WILLIAMS, PC**

Nicholas D. Williams (VSS #81029)
7930 Donegan Drive Manassas, Virginia 20109 Ph: 703659-0477 Fax: 703-361-2477 nwilliams@vktwlaw.com
Counsel for Petitioner, Michael Mukai, Administrator Of the Estate of John Wade Mukai

January 28, 2025 February 4, 11 & 18, 2025 AD#90199

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Auctions: Maryland

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE. Notice is hereby given that PODS Enterprises, LLC, will sell the contents of certain containers at auction to the highest bidder. Auction will be held online at www.StorageTreasures.com starting on February 12, 2025 and ending on February 19, 2025. Contents to be sold may include general household goods, electronics, office & business equipment, furniture, clothing and other miscellaneous property.

February 4, 2025

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Legal Notices

FAIRFAX COUNTY NOTICE

February 18, 2025

Public hearings before the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia, to be held in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035, at which time the Board will consider the following:

TIME SUBJECT

3:30 p.m. RZ 2020-PR-015 - A&A FLINT HILL FOUR LLC AND A&A FLINT HILL ONE LLC, RZ Appl. to rezone from PDC to PDH-20 to permit multifamily (triplex) and single family attached residential development with an overall density of 18.72 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and approval of the conceptual development plan. Located on approx. 14.63 ac. of land. Comp. Plan Rec: Mixed Use. Providence District. Tax Map 47-3 ((1)) 29B and 47-4 ((1)) 1A. (Concurrent with PCA 78-P-137-05).

3:30 p.m. PCA 78-P-137-05 - A&A FLINT HILL FOUR LLC AND A&A FLINT HILL ONE LLC, PCA Appl. to amend the proffers for RZ 78-P-137 previously approved for mixed use development to permit the deletion of land area and associated modifications to proffers and site design. Located on the W. side of Rosehaven St., E. side of Jermantown Rd. and N. side of Arrowhead Dr. on approx. 14.63 ac. of land zoned PDC. Comp. Plan Rec: Mixed Use. Providence District. Tax Map 47-3 ((1)) 29B and 47-4 ((1)) 1A. (Concurrent with RZ 2020-PR-015).

3:30 p.m. RZ 2023-PR-00010 - REDWOOD PROPCO LLC., RZ Appl. to rezone from PDC to PDH-20 to permit a single family attached residential development with a total density of 16.1 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Located on the E. and N. sides of Arrowhead Dr., and W. side of Rosehaven St. on approx. 12.13 ac. of land. Comp. Plan Rec: Mixed Use. Providence District. Tax Map 47-4 ((1)) 5D, 5E and 5C. (Concurrent with PCA 81-P-069-03 (RZPA 2023-PR-00039).

3:30 p.m. PCA 81-P-069-03 (RZPA 2023-PR-00039) - REDWOOD PROPCO LLC, PCA Appl. to amend the proffers for RZ 81-P-069 previously approved for a mixed use development to permit deletion of land area and associated modifications to proffers and site design. Located on the E. and N. sides of Arrowhead Dr., W. of Rosehaven St., and generally S. of Jermantown Rd. on approx. 12.13 ac. of land zoned PDC. Comp. Plan Rec: Mixed Use. Providence District. Tax Map 47-4 ((1)) 5D, 5E, and 5C. (Concurrent with RZ 2023-PR-00010).

4:00 p.m. Public hearing to consider the adoption of Chapter 82 (Motor Vehicles and Traffic), Article 4A of the Code of the County of Fairfax, Virginia (Fairfax County Code). This article sets forth provisions for the establishment of the Residential Cut-Through Permit Program (the "Program") to include the establishment of permit zones, administration of the Program, setting the fee for resident permits, and provisions for enforcement and penalties.

4:00 p.m. Public hearing on the acquisition of certain land rights necessary for the construction of Project WW-000034-004, Gravity Sewer Capacity Improvements-Tyson's West (Hunters Mill District). This project, located in the Tysons Corner area of Fairfax County, consists of installing a 25 million gallon per day (MGD) wastewater pump station, five miles of 36" force main, and three miles of 24" gravity sewer, and the demolition of the existing pump station. County Tax Map parcels involved for acquisition of land rights include: 028-4-01-0045, 028-3-30-0006, 038-3-29-A1, 038-1-22-F, 028-3-30-Y, 038-1-22-0135, 028-4-01-0044, 038-3-26-0001, 038-3-26-0002, and 038-3-26-0003. Plans and plats describing the work proposed to be done and the property interests to be acquired for this project are on file in the Land Acquisition Division of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 449, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

4:00 p.m. Citizens and businesses of Fairfax County are encouraged to present their views on issues of concern. The Board will hear public comment on any issue except issues under litigation, issues which have been scheduled for public hearing before the Board (this date and future dates), personnel matters, and/or comments regarding individuals. Each speaker may have up to three minutes and a maximum of 10 speakers will be heard. Speakers may address the Board only once during a six-month period. Individuals wishing to provide public comment must sign up in advance no later than 12:00 p.m. on the day of the public comment period either online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form> or by calling 703-324-3151.

The public hearings are available to view live on Channel 16 and stream live online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/stream>. Live audio of the meeting may be accessed at 703-324-7700. Those wishing to testify may do so in person, or via phone or pre-recorded YouTube video. Speakers wishing to testify via video must register by signing up online below or by calling the Department of Clerk Services at 703-324-3151, TTY 711, and must submit their video no later than 9 a.m. on the day prior to the hearing. Speakers wishing to testify via phone must sign up to testify no later than 12:00 p.m. the day of the hearing to be placed on the Speakers List. Speakers not on the Speakers List may be heard after the registered speakers have testified. In addition, written testimony and other submissions will be received by mail at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552, Fairfax, Virginia, 22035 or by email at ClerktotheBOS@fairfaxcounty.gov. More information on the ways to testify can be found at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/clerksservices/ways-provide-public-hearing-testimony>.

Copies of the full text of proposed ordinances, plans and amendments, as applicable, as well as staff reports and other documents relating to the aforementioned subjects, are on file and available for review on the County's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov and at the office of the Clerk for the Board of Supervisors, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552, Fairfax, VA (703-324-3151).

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities and supports the Americans with Disabilities Act by making reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. See <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/humanrights/notice-under-americans-disabilities-act>. All televised government meetings are closed captioned in English and Spanish (los subtítulos en español). Reasonable accommodation is available upon 48 hours advance notice by calling 703-324-3151 or TTY 711.



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Legal Notices

ARLINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

In advance of Arlington County Board meetings on
February 22 & 25, 2025,
the following items will be heard by the

Planning Commission on
Monday, February 10, 2025, and
Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

*This is a hybrid public meeting to be
held at the Bozman Government Center,
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, County Board Room 307.*

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WILL BE HEARD BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025, 7 PM

- 1. GP-365-24-1 GENERAL LAND USE PLAN AMENDMENT** to change the land use designation for the northeast portion of the block bounded by 23rd Street South, South Grant Street, South Hayes Street and 24th Street South, to include Parcel A (RPC #36-039-015) excluding Parcel B (RPC #36-039-016), which is and shall remain envisioned as a portion of Nelly Custis Park, from “Public” to “Low-Medium” Residential.
- REZN24-00002 REZONING** from “C-1” Local Commercial District and “R-6” One-Family Dwelling District to “RA8-18” Multiple-family Dwelling District; for an approximately 75,496 square foot area; located at 750 23rd Street South (RPC# 36-039-015).
- SPLN24-00002 SITE PLAN (SP #478)** to construct a 5-story mixed-use building with approximately 131,736 square feet (sf) of residential gross floor area (GFA) and 17,033 sf of institutional GFA, with modifications for additional density, reduced residential parking ratio, density exclusions, and other modifications necessary to achieve the proposed development, located at 750 23rd Street South (RPC# 36-039-015).

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WILL BE HEARD BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025, 7 PM

- 2. FBC-37, N-FBC-23** Ordinance to amend, reenact, and recodify the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) Appendix A (Columbia Pike Commercial Form Based Code) and Appendix B (Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Form Based Code) to correct Scrivener's errors, provide technical corrections, and make clarifications.
- 3.** Consideration of the following actions associated with the Barcroft Apartments Land Use Analysis planning process:
- GP-366-25-1** Resolution to amend the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) Map and Booklet and proposed amendments to the Master Transportation Plan (MTP) Map; and,
- FBC-38, N-FBC-24** Ordinance to amend, reenact, and recodify the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) Appendix A (Columbia Pike Commercial Form Based Code) and Appendix B (Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Form Based Code) to implement the Barcroft Master Financing and Development Plan (MFDP) and associated policy updates adopted by the County Board in July 2024.
- 4. FBCN24-00003 USE PERMIT** for the development of a 6-story multifamily building with 110 units in accordance with the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Form Based Code (Article 11.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, Appendix B) with modifications for the height of first floor relative to the fronting sidewalk elevation, landscape standards, and for requirements associated with the underlying zoning district for the existing buildings to remain, located at 4230 Columbia Pike (RPC# 27-002-004).
- 5. PC Business and Organizational Matters**
Approval of the January 13, 2025, Meeting Minutes
Planning Division Updates
Approval of the LRPC/SPRC Rosters

HOW TO VIEW AND PARTICIPATE

The Planning Commission Hearings are hybrid meetings where staff, applicants, and members of the public may attend in-person or via electronic teleconference/videoconference communications using Microsoft Teams.

Commission members, staff, and applicants will conduct this hearing in a hybrid environment at the Bozman Government Center, 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Room 307.

The hearings are available in real time on **YouTube**. However, other options will be provided to view the meeting in real time through a Microsoft Teams link (provided upon registration for public testimony and/or for public viewing only).

- A broadcast of the hearings will continue to be available with closed captioning on Comcast Xfinity channels 25 and 1085; Verizon FiOS channels 39 and 40, 24-48 hours after the meeting has taken place.

To request to give public testimony, an online registration MUST be completed one week or at a minimum of 24-hours in advance of the hearing for a guaranteed opportunity to speak on the requested date and time. This applies to the original night of the meeting date and not the recess date.

The public is welcomed to participate giving public testimony in person, virtually, or with written comments in advance. Visit <https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/planning-commission> to:

- Sign-up online to speak during the meeting.
 - Registered speakers will receive a confirmation email with further instructions upon completion of the speaker request form and after submission to the Clerk.
 - Registered participants choosing to speak virtually will join the meeting via Microsoft Teams (accessible through a web browser or the free app). The meeting link will be provided in the confirmation email.
- Submitting written comments online is also an option. Written comments need to be received by **12 noon** on the day of the hearing to provided to the Commission in opportunity to review your comments before the hearing.

To request translation services, reasonable accommodations, or other questions regarding the meeting notification, contact the Planning Commission Clerk, Gizele C. Johnson, Gjohnson@arlingtonva.us or call (703) 217-6676.

Commissioner Striner will represent the Planning Commission at the February 22, 2025, County Board Meeting.

Run Date: February 4th, 2025

AD#90435

Trustee Sales:
Montgomery Co.

NOTICE OF DEFAULT AND FORECLOSURE SALE

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2008, a certain Deed of Trust/Mortgage was executed by Marian Rantovich as mortgagor/borrower in favor of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. as beneficiary and B. George Ballman as trustee, and was recorded on July 8, 2008, in Book 35815, Page 679 in the Office of the Land Records for Montgomery County, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, the Deed of Trust/Mortgage was insured by the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (the Secretary) pursuant to the National Housing Act for the purpose of providing single family housing; and

WHEREAS, the beneficial interest in the Deed of Trust/Mortgage is now owned by the Secretary, pursuant to an assignment dated March 1, 2017, and recorded on March 2, 2017, in Book 53911, Page 491, in the office of the Land Records for Montgomery County, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, a default has been made in the covenants and conditions of the Deed of Trust/Mortgage in that the payment due on January 14, 2020, was not made and remains wholly unpaid as of the date of this notice, and a Borrower has died and the Property is not the principal residence of at least one surviving Borrower, and no payment has been made sufficient to restore the loan to currency; and

WHEREAS, the entire amount delinquent as of January 7, 2025 is \$367,870.25; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of this default, the Secretary has declared the entire amount of the indebtedness secured by the Deed of Trust/Mortgage to be immediately due and payable;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to powers vested in me by the Single Family Mortgage Foreclosure Act of 1994, 12 U.S.C. 3751 et seq., by 24 CFR part 27, subpart B, and by the Secretary's designation as Foreclosure Commissioner, notice is hereby given that on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 11:15 AM local time, all real and personal property at or used in connection with the following described premises ("Property") will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder:

See attached Exhibit A

Commonly known as: 11808 Valleywood Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20902

Tax ID 13-01241615 (13-0072-01241615)

The sale will be held at the Courthouse door for the Circuit Court for Montgomery County (Maryland Avenue entrance), 50 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850.

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development will bid \$370,224.29

There will be no proration of taxes, rents or other income or liabilities, except that the purchaser will pay, at or before closing, his prorata share of any real estate taxes that have been paid by the Secretary to the date of the foreclosure sale.

When making their bids, all bidders except the Secretary must submit a deposit totaling \$38,000.00 in the form of a certified check or cashier's **check made out to the Secretary of HUD**. A deposit need not accompany each oral bid. If the successful bid is oral, a deposit of \$38,000.00 must be presented before the bidding is closed. The deposit is nonrefundable. The remainder of the purchase price must be delivered within 30 days of the sale or at such other time as the Secretary may determine for good cause shown, time being of the essence of this notice. Like the bid deposits, must be delivered in the form of a certified or cashier's check. If the Secretary is the highest bidder, he need not pay the bid amount in cash. The successful bidder will pay all conveying fees, all real estate and other taxes that are due on or after the delivery date of the remainder of the payment and all other costs associated with the transfer of title. At the conclusion of the sale, the deposits of the unsuccessful bidders will be returned to them.

The Secretary may grant an extension of time within which to deliver the remainder of the payment. All extensions will be for 15-day increments for a fee of \$500.00, paid in advance. The extension fee shall be in the form of a certified or cashier's check made payable to the Secretary of HUD. If the high bidder closes the sale prior to the expiration of any extension period, the unused portion of the extension fee shall be applied toward the amount due.

If the high bidder is unable to close the sale within the required period or within any extensions of time granted by the Secretary, the high bidder may be required to forfeit the cash deposit or, at the election of the foreclosure commissioner after consultation with the HUD representative, will be liable to HUD for any costs incurred as a result of such failure. The Commissioner may, at the discretion of the HUD representative, offer the property to the second highest bidder for an amount equal to the highest price offered by that bidder.

There is no right of redemption, or right of possession based upon a right of redemption, in the mortgagor or others subsequent to a foreclosure completed pursuant to the Act. Therefore, the Foreclosure Commissioner will issue a Deed to the purchaser(s) upon receipt of the entire purchase price in accordance with the terms of the sale as provided herein. HUD does not guarantee that the property will be vacant.

The scheduled foreclosure sale shall be cancelled or adjourned if it is established, by a written application of the Commissioner to the Foreclosure Commissioner not less than 3 days before the date of sale, or otherwise, that the default or defaults upon which the foreclosure is based did not exist at the time of service of this notice of default and foreclosure sale, or all amounts due under the mortgage agreement are tendered to the Foreclosure Commissioner, in the form of a certified or cashier's check payable to the Secretary of HUD, before public auction of the property is completed.

The amount that must be paid if the mortgage is to be reinstated prior to the scheduled sale is N/A (Full Balance Due) plus all other amounts that would be due under the mortgage agreement if payments under the mortgage had not been accelerated, advertising costs and postage expenses incurred in giving notice, mileage by the most reasonable road distance for posting notices and for the Foreclosure Commissioner's attendance at the sale, reasonable and customary costs incurred for title and lien record searches, the necessary out-of-pocket costs incurred by the Foreclosure Commissioner for recording documents, a commission for the Foreclosure Commissioner, and all other costs incurred in connection with the foreclosure prior to reinstatement.

Tender of payment by certified or cashier's check or application for cancellation of the foreclosure sale shall be submitted to the address of the Foreclosure Commissioner provided below.

Date: January 7, 2025

Breza & Associates, LLC
Foreclosure Commissioner

By: /s/ Angela Nasuta
Angela Nasuta(AIS/CPF #1312180282)
Breza & Associates, LLC
11019 McCormick Road, Suite 400
Hunt Valley, Maryland 21031
(410) 318-6047 (office)
(410) 308-0447 (facsimile)
defaultlegal@brezawalaw.com

IF YOU ARE A DEBTOR, OR AN ATTORNEY REPRESENTING A DEBTOR, THIS COMMUNICATION IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT. AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED HEREBY WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. However, if you are either a debtor in a pending bankruptcy case, or have obtained an order of discharge from a United States Bankruptcy Court, which discharge includes this debt, or an attorney representing such a debtor, and you (or your client), has not reaffirmed liability for this debt, this office is not attempting to obtain a judgment against you (or your client) nor are we alleging that you (or your client) have any personal liability for this debt. We may, however, take action against any property which may have been pledged as collateral for the debt, which action may include repossession and/or foreclosure of the property, if otherwise permitted by law and/or order of court.

Exhibit A

The Southwest One-half (1/2) of lot numbered Seventy-five (75) in Block numbered One (1) in the subdivision known as "Connecticut Avenue Estates", Montgomery County, Maryland, as per plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 39 folio 2738, one of the Land Records of said state and county.

Tidewater Auctions, LLC
(410) 825-2900
www.tidewaterauctions.com

Washington Times, 1/28, 2/4, 2/11 Ad#89826

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The Washington Times

Trustee Sales:
Fairfax Co.

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 9814 HAGEL CIRCLE, LORTON, VA 22079. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated May 20, 2005, in the original principal amount of \$128,256.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Fairfax County, Virginia, in Book 17321 at Page 0387 as Instrument No. 2005020717.001. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Fairfax County, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA, on March 5, 2025, at 11:45 AM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: LOT C, BLOCK 63, SECTION 2, THE HIGHLANDS AT GUNSTON, AS THE SAME APPEARS DULY DEDICATED, PLATTED AND RECORDED IN DEED BOOK 4662 AT PAGE 565, AND BEING A RESUBDIVISION OF PARCEL A OF THE JPJ ASSOCIATED PROPERTY AS ORIGINALLY DEDICATED, PLATTED AND RECORDED IN DEED BOOK 4523, AT PAGE 361, AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of ten percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. For more information contact: BWW Law Group, LLC, attorneys for Equity Trustees, LLC, 6003 Executive Blvd, Suite 101, Rockville, MD 20852, 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-372988-1.

January 28th, 2025
February 4th, 2025

AD#89516

Trustee's Sale
11427 Log Ridge Drive,
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(Map #: 0562 19 0013)

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 3529 COURTLAND DRIVE, FALLS CHURCH, VA 22041. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated March 27, 2007, in the original principal amount of \$376,000.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Fairfax County, Virginia, in Book 19259 at Page 2042 as Instrument No. 2007010762.015. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Fairfax County, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA, on March 5, 2025, at 11:45 AM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: ALL THAT CERTAIN LOT OR PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED NEAR BAILEY'S CROSS ROADS, FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA, KNOWN AS LOT 2 IN THE PARTITION OF THE HARRIET WARNER ESTATE AS THE SAME IS DULY PLATTED AND RECORDED IN DEED BOOK B, NO. 8, PAGE 372 ET SEQ. OF THE LAND RECORDS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA. LESS AND EXCEPT THAT PORTION TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FOR PUBLIC STREET PURPOSES PURSUANT TO THE INSTRUMENT RECORDED IN DEED BOOK 5634, AT PAGE 1029, AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA, CONTAINING 3,350 SQUARE FEET, MORE OR LESS. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of ten percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. For more information contact: BWW Law Group, LLC, attorneys for Equity Trustees, LLC, 6003 Executive Blvd, Suite 101, Rockville, MD 20852, 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-300309-3.

January 28th, 2025
February 4th, 2025

AD#89642

Trustee's Sale
11427 Log Ridge Drive,
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(Map #: 0562 19 0013)

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 8551 GOLDEN RIDGE COURT, LORTON, VA 22079. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated January 12, 2007, in the original principal amount of \$305,800.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Fairfax County, Virginia, in Book 19065 at Page 1105 as Instrument No. 2007001878.001. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Fairfax County, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA, on March 5, 2025, at 11:45 AM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: ALL THAT CERTAIN LOT OR PARCEL OF LAND TOGETHER WITH IMPROVEMENT THEREON, SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN FAIRFAX COUNTY, STATE OF VIRGINIA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: LOT 264, SECTION 4, NEWINGTON HEIGHTS, AS THE SAME APPEARS DULY DEDICATED, PLATTED AND RECORDED IN DEED BOOK 6974 AT PAGE 782, AND CORRECTED BY INSTRUMENT RECORDED IN DEED BOOK 7002 AT PAGE 994, AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF THE COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of ten percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. For more information contact: BWW Law Group, LLC, attorneys for Equity Trustees, LLC, 6003 Executive Blvd, Suite 101, Rockville, MD 20852, 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-327466-4.

January 28th, 2025
February 4th, 2025

AD#89515

Trustee Sales:
Fairfax Co.

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 13536 LEITH COURT, CHANTILLY, VA 20151

In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$253,791.50, with an annual interest rate of 5.740000% dated February 25, 2008, recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court for the County of Fairfax as Deed Book 19853, Page 0793, the undersigned appointed Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction all that property located in the County of Fairfax, **on the courthouse steps at the front of the Circuit Court building for the County of Fairfax located at 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, Virginia on March 4, 2025 at 10:00 AM**, the property with improvements to wit:

ARMFIELD ESTATES
LT 29A

Tax Map No. 0344 09 0029A

THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR.

TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of 10% of the sale price, will be required in cash, certified or cashier's check. Settlement within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Trustees may forfeit deposit. Additional terms to be announced at sale. Loan type: Conventional. Reference Number 24-296700.

PROFESSIONAL FORECLOSURE CORPORATION
OF VIRGINIA, Substitute Trustees,
C/O LOGS LEGAL GROUP LLP,
Mailing Address:
10130 Perimeter Parkway, Suite 400,
Charlotte, North Carolina 28216
(703) 449-5800.

Run Dates: December 30th, 2024
January 28th, 2025
February 4th, 2025

AD#89605

Trustee's Sale
11427 Log Ridge Drive,
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(Map #: 0562 19 0013)

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 13104 PARSON LANE, FAIRFAX, VA 22033. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated October 4, 2021, in the original principal amount of \$616,800.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Fairfax County, Virginia, in Book 27381 at Page 0128 as Instrument No. 2121151984.001. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Fairfax County, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA, on March 12, 2025, at 11:45 AM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: LOT 19, BLOCK 18, SECTION 3, GREENBRIAR, AS DULY DEDICATED, PLATTED AND RECORDED IN DEED BOOK 2901 AT PAGE 400, AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of ten percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. For more information contact: BWW Law Group, LLC, attorneys for Equity Trustees, LLC, 6003 Executive Blvd, Suite 101, Rockville, MD 20852, 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-374203-1.

January 28th, 2025
February 4th, and 11th, 2025

AD#89738

Trustee Sales:
Prince William Co.

Trustee's Sale
14748 KEAVY RIDGE CT, HAYMARKET, VA 20169
(Parcel ID: 7398-10-6995)

Default having been made in the terms of a certain Deed of Trust dated **08/28/2020**, in the maximum principal amount of **\$817,500.00** and recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the **Prince William** County, Virginia on **09/08/2020**, as Instrument No. **20200908079796**, the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell at public auction on **02/19/2025 at 01:30 PM, at Prince William Circuit Court, in the front of the courthouse, 9311 Lee Avenue, Manassas, VA 20110**, the property designated as:

THE LAND REFERRED TO HEREIN BELOW IS SITUATED IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA AND IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

THE LAND REFERRED TO HEREIN BELOW IS SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM, COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA AND IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

LOT 3, SUBDIVISION OF THE PROPERTY OF PIEDMONT MEWS, LLC, PER DEED OF DEDICATION, SUBDIVISION AND CONSOLIDATION RECORDED AS INSTRUMENT NO. 200403020036971, AND CORRESPONDING PLAT RECORDED AS INSTRUMENT NO. 200403020036972, AS CORRECTED BY DEED OF CORRECTION RECORDED AS INSTRUMENT NO. 200405280090710, AND CORRESPONDING PLAT OF CORRECTION RECORDED AS INSTRUMENT NO. 200503100037551, AND CORRESPONDING PLAT OF CORRECTION RECORDED AS INSTRUMENT NO. 200503100037552, AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF PRINCE WILLIAM, VIRGINIA.

TERMS: CASH. A deposit of Ten percent (10%) of the sale price or Ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject deed of trust, whichever is lower, will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Prior to the sale, interested bidders will be required to register with and must present a bid deposit which may be held during the sale by the trustee. The bid deposit must be certified funds and/or cash, but no more than \$9,900.00 of cash will be accepted. The successful bidder's deposit will be retained at the sale and applied to the sale price. If held by the trustee, all other bid deposits will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders. Settlement is to be made within 15 days. The successful bidder will be responsible for obtaining possession of the property, and for all costs and fees related to recording the Trustee's Deed, including the grantors tax. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Memorandum of Trustee's Sale, available for review upon request before the sale, outlining additional terms of sale and settlement. A Trustee's Deed will be prepared by Trustee's attorney at high bidder's expense.

For More Information Contact:

Western Progressive - Virginia, Inc
Regus Arlington Ballston,
4250 N Fairfax Drive, Suite 600
Office Number 675
Arlington VA 22203
Telephone #: 866-960-8299
Fax #: 866-960-8298
Email: ReverseQueries@attisource.com

Run Dates: November 22nd, 2024
January 28th, 2025
February 4th, 2025

AD#88809

Trustee Sales:
Prince William Co.

Trustee's Sale
12804 Frontier Ln, Woodbridge, VA 22192
(Parcel ID: 8193-70-6877)

Default having been made in the terms of a certain Deed of Trust dated November 20, 2008, in the original principal amount of \$150,255.00 and recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Prince William, Virginia on November 21, 2008, as Instrument Number 200811210110607, the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell at public auction on March 04, 2025 at 1:00 PM, in front of the building housing the County of Prince William Circuit Court, 9311 Lee Avenue, Manassas, VA 20110, the property designated as Lot 321, Section 11.12, OLD BRIDGE ESTATES as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 1499 at page 127 among the land records of Prince William County, Virginia. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, and conditions, if any, of record, or other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises. TERMS: CASH. A deposit of \$15,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Prior to the sale, interested bidders will be required to register with and must present a bid deposit which may be held during the sale by the trustee. The bid! deposit must be certified funds and/or cash, but no more than \$9,900.00 of cash will be accepted. The successful bidder's deposit will be retained at the sale and applied to the sale price. If held by the trustee, all other bid deposits will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders. Settlement is to be made within 15 days. The successful bidder will be responsible for obtaining possession of the property, and for all costs and fees related to recording the Trustee's Deed, including the grantors tax. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Memorandum of Trustee's Sale, available for review upon request before the sale, outlining additional terms of sale and settlement. A Trustee's Deed will be prepared by Trustee's attorney at high bidder's expense. This is a communication from a debt collector. Tromberg, Morris & Partners, PLLC on behalf of Southeast Equity Trustees, LLC and/or Auction.com-VA, LLC and/or NFPS-VA LLC, Substitute Trustee(s), 5310 Markel Road, Suite 201, Richmond, VA 23230, File No. 24-001264, Tel: 804-525-1570.

Run Dates: January 28th, 2025
February 4th, 2025

AD#89685

Trustee's Sale
11427 Log Ridge Drive,
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(Map #: 0562 19 0013)

Default having been made in the terms of a certain Deed of Trust dated January 3, 2008, in the original principal amount of \$200,000.00 and recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Fairfax, Virginia, in Deed Book 19945 at page 214, the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell at public auction on **March 4, 2025, at 1:15 PM** in front of the building housing the **Fairfax County Circuit Court**, 4110 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA 22030, the property designated as Lot 13, RIDGE TOP ROAD, as the same appears duly dedicated, platted and recorded in Deed Book 11890 at page 928, among the land records of Fairfax County, Virginia. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, and conditions, if any, of record, or other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises. TERMS: CASH. A deposit of \$20,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Prior to the sale, interested bidders will be required to register with and must present a bid deposit which may be held during the sale by the trustee. The bid deposit must be certified funds and/or cash, but no more than \$9,900.00 of cash will be accepted. The successful bidder's deposit will be retained at the sale and applied to the sale price. If held by the trustee, all other bid deposits will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders. Settlement is to be made within 15 calendar days. The successful bidder will be responsible for obtaining possession of the property, and for all costs and fees related to recording the Trustee's Deed, including the grantors tax. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Memorandum of Trustee's Sale, available for review on the Foreclosure Sales page of www.glasserlaw.com, outlining additional terms of sale and settlement. A Trustee's Deed will be prepared by Trustee's attorney at high bidder's expense. This is a communication from a debt collector, Glasser and Glasser, P.L.C. on behalf of Atlantic Trustee Services, L.L.C., and/or REO Solutions, LLC and/or NFPS-VA LLC, Substitute Trustees, Crown Center Building, Suite 600, 580 East Main Street, Norfolk, VA 23510, File No. 218340-03, Tel: (757) 321-6465, between 10:00 AM & 12:00 noon only.

Run Dates: January 21st, 28th, 2025
February 4th, and 11th, 2025

AD#89729

Trustee Sales:
Virginia

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 94 SAINT CHARLES SQUARE, STERLING, VA 20164. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated June 14, 2018, in the original principal amount of \$194,400.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Loudoun County, Virginia as Instrument No. 20180615-0034204. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Loudoun County, 18 E. Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia, on March 12, 2025, at 2:00 PM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: CONDOMINIUM UNIT NO. 94, OF PROVIDENCE VILLAGE TOWNHOME CONDOMINIUM, AND THE LIMITED COMMON ELEMENTS APPURTENANT THERETO, ESTABLISHED BY CONDOMINIUM INSTRUMENTS RECORDED ON NOVEMBER 22, 1983, IN DEED BOOK 833 AT PAGE 1468 AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of ten percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. For more information contact: BWW Law Group, LLC, attorneys for Equity Trustees, LLC, 6003 Executive Blvd, Suite 101, Rockville, MD 20852, 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-373793-1.

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			1	8	7			
5			3			1		7
	1			2		3	8	
	8				2			9
2		9				6		4
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9		5			1			2
			2	9	5			

JANRIC CLASSIC SUDOKU

Rating: Silver

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block. Use logic and the process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest).

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ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES:

5	1	7	3	8	4	2	9	6
9	3	8	6	2	5	7	1	4
4	2	6	7	1	9	3	8	5
3	5	9	1	4	2	6	7	8
6	8	2	9	3	7	4	5	1
7	4	1	5	6	8	9	3	2
2	9	3	4	5	1	8	6	7
8	6	5	2	7	3	1	4	9
1	7	4	8	9	6	5	2	3

AGED	HAMS	PANAM
CARE	ATOP	EMITS
EVIL	ROPE	DIGIT
SEET	NANE	LIGHT
USED	EGO	
ALIENS	JAR	FAA
LOLL	THESE	EBB
LOOK	THEOTHERWAY	
ESS	RUNGS	BETS
YET	END	SPIRES
INC	NAPE	
WATCH	LIKE	AHAWK
MARSH	ACRE	IRON
CRIME	SHOD	TILE
CEDES	HENS	SAFE

NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Winter Weather

- ACROSS
- 1 Stock up on
 - 6 Admiral or corporal
 - 10 Rolling stone's supposed lack
 - 14 Big brawl
 - 15 Soother in skin cream
 - 16 A Great Lake
 - 17 Water vapor
 - 18 Evening, in ads
 - 19 Give up, as rights
 - 20 Very low-temperature
 - 23 Additionally
 - 26 Top-rated
 - 27 Make less difficult
 - 28 Take back, as a statement
 - 30 ___ and crafts
 - 32 All possible
 - 33 Boot bottom
 - 35 Three-stripe soldier: Abbr.
 - 38 It makes winter temperatures seem lower
 - 42 Superlative suffix
 - 43 Whirlpool
 - 44 ___ in (introduce gradually)
 - 45 Sheet of glass
 - 47 Steak selections
 - 48 Lasting mark
 - 50 Wild hog
 - 53 Poems of praise
 - 54 Slight winter precipitation
 - 57 Trash containers
 - 58 Soprano's solo
 - 59 Show the ropes to
 - 63 Region
 - 64 Snooty person
- DOWN
- 1 Mornings: Abbr.
 - 2 Was introduced to
 - 3 Pub beverage
 - 4 Coastal region
 - 5 "Half" prefix for final
 - 6 Moved quickly toward
 - 7 Extraterrestrial
 - 8 "Just kidding"
 - 9 On an even ___ (steady)
 - 10 Major tourist draws

By Gail Grabowski, Edited by Stanley Newman

- 11 Black-and-white cookies
- 12 Move laterally
- 13 Bird feeder food
- 21 Body art, for short
- 22 Up to now
- 23 "___ having fun now?"
- 24 Big name in blue jeans
- 25 Aroma
- 29 The Big Apple: Abbr.
- 31 Touchdown caller, for short
- 33 Whiskers near the ears
- 34 Ancient
- 35 Leave your chair
- 36 Pay a visit to
- 37 Lock of hair
- 39 Barnyard bird
- 40 Police alert: Abbr.
- 41 Eager volunteer's shout
- 45 Plays with, like a kitten might
- 46 Barking sound
- 47 Prefix for angle or cycle
- 48 Catch in a trap
- 49 Ice cream holders
- 51 Hunter constellation
- 52 Typical Saudis
- 54 Read electronically
- 55 Young lady
- 56 List-shortening abbr.
- 60 24-hr. bank device
- 61 Pigeon sound
- 62 Sweetie

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20					21				22			
23	24	25			26				27			
28					29				30	31		
32									33	34		
35									36	37		
38									39		40	41
42									43			44
45									46			
47									48	49		
50									51	52		
53									54			
55									56			
57									58			
59									60	61	62	
63									64			
65									66			
67									68			

JUMBLE/David L. Hoyt & Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IGDEU

BMIOI

WOHRGT

GNRELO



THE COMPUTER TECH PREPARED HER PUP FOR THE SNOW EACH DAY BY --

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

RUBES/Leigh Rubin

PRESSURE, PRESSURE, PRESSURE! ALWAYS THE CONSTANT PRESSURE! SOME DAYS THERE'S JUST SO MUCH PRESSURE I THINK I'M GOING TO ABSOLUTELY BLOW MY TOP!

FEEL BETTER?

YEAH, SOMETIMES I JUST NEED TO VENT.

IN THE BLEACHERS/Steve Moore

"Gimme an S! Gimme a C! Gimme an A! Gimme an L! Gimme a P! Gimme an E! Gimme an L!"

B.C./Mastroianni & Hart

WE AND EVERYONE WE KNOW WILL ONE DAY POWER SOME REDNECK'S TRIP TO A WAFFLE HOUSE.

BOUND & GAGGED/Dana Summers

DUE TO SHRINKFLATION, YOU ONLY GET TWO WISHES.

THE BUCKETS/Greg Cravens

ICE. WHAT ABOUT ICE? IN THE SUMMER, ICE BIDES ITS TIME, WATCHING US FROM OUR FREEZERS AND OUR SODA GLASSES... JUST WAITING FOR WINTER, WHEN IT HAS ANOTHER CHANCE TO TAKE OVER OUR WARM, LOVING PLANET! IS THIS TO DO WITH THAT TIME YOU SLIPPED AND HIT YOUR HEAD? I'VE GOT A BLOW-DRYER WITH YOUR NAME ON IT, ICE!

DOGS OF C-KENNEL/Mick & Mason Mastroianni

THIS IS THE ONLY @##!! NEIGHBORHOOD WITH AFFORDABLE RENT.

CARPE DIEM/Niklas Eriksson

DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE JURY, I INTEND TO SHOW THAT THE PLAINTIFF IS INCREDIBLY LIKE A CHEWY TOY!

DICK TRACY/Mike Curtis & Charles Ettinger

HELLO, POLICE? I'M NOT SURE BUT I THINK I'M BEING STALKED...

STRANGE BREW/John Deering

HELLO, POLICE? I'M NOT SURE BUT I THINK I'M BEING STALKED...

BOTTOM LINERS/Eric & Bill Teitelbaum

DID YOU SAY GOODBYE TO JILL AND JOE? WHO HAD TIME? I WAS SECURING THEIR LIVING QUARTERS FOR MISSING TOWELS AND AGITRAIS!

THE FLYING MCCOYS/Glenn & Gary McCoy

I'FFENSK, I'M SENDING YOU ON AN ALL-EXPENSES-PAID BUSINESS TRIP HERE'S \$20 CAB FARE. GO DOWN TO THE OFFICE SUPPLY STORE AND BUY SOME STAPLES.

PARDON MY PLANET/Vic Lee

OH, SURE, I GET IT - I'M OLDER AND APPLYING FOR A JOB AND SUDDENLY NOW YOU WANT TO BE MY IMAGINARY FRIEND.

BLISS/Harry Bliss

ANT WRITERS' ROOM

WAIT, WHY WOULD THE REBEL SOLDIER PROTECT THE COLONY?

MAYBE HE'S STILL FAITHFUL TO THE QUEEN DESPITE HIS ANARCHIC VIEW?

LET'S RAISE THE STAKES, WHAT IF THE SOLDIER AND QUEEN HAD A ROMANTIC PAST NO ONE KNEW ABOUT?!

WOULD THE REBEL SOLDIER STILL HAVE A HEAD?

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Maryland cracks Top 25 for first time in nearly two years

After knocking on the door for the better part of the last month, Maryland has finally earned its first Associated Press Top 25 men's basketball ranking of the season and first in nearly two years.



The Terrapins debut at No. 18 in the AP poll after upsetting then-No. 17 Wisconsin in College Park last Wednesday, their second ranked win in their last three games. It's Maryland's first AP ranking since Feb. 27, 2023, when it was No. 21 — one of five times it was ranked that season, also the last time it reached the NCAA Tournament.

Analytics rankings have been high on Maryland (17-5, 7-4 Big Ten) all season, with the NCAA's NET metric slotting the Terrapins at No. 15 and Ken Pomeroy's data-focused list placing them at No. 18. But media members have been hesitant to rank Maryland until now, mostly due to a weak out-of-conference strength of schedule.

Maryland has hit its stride after a buzzer-beater overtime loss at North-western on Jan. 16. It has since rattled off four straight wins, including the first two road wins of the season at then-No. 18 Illinois and Indiana, and is tied for fourth in the 18-team Big Ten.

Florida State coach Hamilton to step down at end of the season

TALLAHASSEE, FLA. | Longtime Florida State basketball coach Leonard Hamilton is stepping down at the end of the season.

Hamilton, who is being sued by six former players over allegations he failed to deliver on name, image and likeness promises, announced his decision Monday following a team meeting.

"I'm very fortunate to be able to have given this job my all with no regrets," Hamilton said in a statement. "Every head coach inherits a legacy and is obligated to leave the job better than they inherited it. I'm very proud of what we have been able to accomplish here over the last 23 seasons."

The 76-year-old Hamilton is the third Division I head coach to step down this season — all of them in the Atlantic Coast Conference. Virginia's Tony Bennett stepped down just before the season began, and Miami's Jim Larrañaga left the program in late December.

Hamilton ranks 10th on the NCAA's list of winningest active DI coaches. He coached at Miami and then with the NBA's Washington Wizards before joining Florida State in 2002. He led the Seminoles to 16 postseason appearances and a dozen 20-win seasons.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Umpire fired for sharing sports gambling accounts

NEW YORK | Umpire Pat Hoberg was fired by Major League Baseball on Monday for sharing his legal sports gambling accounts with a friend who bet on baseball games and for intentionally deleting electronic messages pertinent to the league's investigation.

MLB opened the investigation last February when it was brought to its attention by the sportsbook, and Hoberg did not umpire last season.

While MLB said the investigation did not uncover evidence Hoberg personally bet on baseball or manipulated games, MLB senior vice president of on-field operations Michael Hill recommended on May 24 that Hoberg be fired.

Commissioner Rob Manfred said Monday he upheld Hill's decision. Among the highest-rated umpires at judging the strike zone, Hoberg can apply for reinstatement no earlier than 2026 spring training.

MLB said the friend made 141 baseball bets between April 2, 2021, and Nov. 1, 2023, totaling almost \$214,000 with an overall win of nearly \$35,000.

NFL

Goodell: NFL to look into allegations against Tucker

NEW ORLEANS | Commissioner Roger Goodell said the NFL will look into the "serious" allegations that Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker engaged in sexually inappropriate conduct with several massage therapists.

Nine massage therapists from five spas and wellness centers have told the Baltimore Banner that Tucker engaged in sexually inappropriate conduct during sessions from 2012-16.

Tucker said in a statement last week that he has never received any complaints from a massage therapist or been told he was not welcome at a spa or other place of business.

"They are obviously serious issues and he is taking that seriously as are we," Goodell said Monday.

FROM WIRE DISPATCHES AND STAFF REPORTS.

NFL

Extent of Saints' damage control for clergy crisis revealed

By Jim Mustian and Brett Martel
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS | As New Orleans church leaders braced for the fallout from publishing a list of predatory Catholic priests, they turned to an unlikely ally: the front office of the city's NFL franchise.

What followed was a months-long, crisis-communications blitz orchestrated by the New Orleans Saints' president and other top team officials, according to hundreds of internal emails obtained by The Associated Press.

The records, which the Saints and church had long sought to keep out of public view, reveal team executives played a more extensive role than previously known in a public relations campaign to mitigate fallout from the clergy sexual abuse crisis. The emails shed new light on the Saints' foray into a fraught topic far from the gridiron, a

behind-the-scenes effort driven by the team's devoutly Catholic owner who has long enjoyed a close relationship with the city's embattled archbishop.

They also showed how various New Orleans institutions — from a sitting federal judge to the local media — rallied around church leaders at a critical moment.

Among the key moments, as revealed in the Saints' own emails:

- Saints executives were so involved in the church's damage control that a team spokesman briefed his boss on a 2018 call with the city's top prosecutor hours before the church released a list of clergymen accused of abuse. The call, the spokesman said, "allowed us to take certain people off" the list.

- Team officials were among the first people outside the church to view that list, a carefully curated, yet undercounted roster of suspected pedophiles. The disclosure of those names invited civil claims against the church and drew

attention from federal and state law enforcement.

- The team's president, Dennis Lauscha, drafted more than a dozen questions that Archbishop Gregory Aymond should be prepared to answer as he faced reporters.

- The Saints' senior vice president of communications, Greg Bensel, provided fly-on-the-wall updates to Lauscha about local media interviews, suggesting church and team leaders were all on the same team. "He is doing well," Bensel wrote as the archbishop told reporters the church was committed to addressing the crisis. "That is our message," Bensel added, "that we will not stop here today."

The emails obtained by AP sharply undercut assurances the Saints gave fans about the public relations guidance five years ago when they asserted they had provided only "minimal" assistance to the church. The team went to court to keep its internal emails secret.

NFL

From page B10

"D.C. and Maryland are deciding what they want, and then we're going to react to that," Harris said. "All I can tell you is that we're really hard at work right now trying to move the process forward with everyone."

Stadium talks have accelerated since Congress passed legislation that leased the RFK Stadium site to the District in December. City officials started the next phase of demolition this month, preparing to strip the interior and exterior pillars of the rusting arena.

The federal lease would allow the city to build a new stadium, though the city council would have to sign off.

For now, Harris and the Commanders are keeping their options open. A return to the District, where the team played its home games for 60 years, is widely favored by nostalgic fans who remember the Super Bowl runs of the 1980s and 1990s.

"[The Washington, D.C. region] is three jurisdictions, and it turns out D.C. is in the middle," Harris said. "That doesn't mean there's not a lot of support in Maryland, a lot of support in Virginia; there is. But, obviously, D.C. is aligned with the history and the easiest place to get to for fans."

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell seems to agree.

Goodell, speaking at his annual pre-Super Bowl news conference in New Orleans, said it could be "a huge economic driver" for the area.

"I think it can be great for our nation," Goodell said. "I remember that as a kid growing up, the power of that. If that's the best alternative, I think it would be a great thing."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Commanders owner Josh Harris has stuck with his preseason plan of opening a new stadium by 2030. Harris and the team are keeping their options open on location.

Harris' vision for his team's new home is flexible. He noted that he doesn't have a preference between a publicly owned site or one he financed himself; he'll develop those specifics as time progresses.

The Commanders have not said when they would commit to a new home.

Maryland officials, led by Gov. Wes

Moore, have already prepared an offer to keep the team in the Old Line State. They say the current stadium site and unified support from lawmakers would make the construction process much easier.

"We can still win," Rep. Glenn Ivey, a Democrat from Maryland, said in December. "Our site offers two nearby Metro stations, superior highway access,

ANTHEM

From page B10

understand it from this side but seems like it's a thing that's going around the league right now."

Trump declared an economic emergency Saturday in order to place taxes of 25% on imports from Canada and Mexico and 10% on imports from China. Energy imported from Canada, including oil, natural gas and electricity, would be taxed at a 10% rate.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexico's president ordered retaliatory tariffs on goods from America

in response, but the tariffs were on hold Monday after conciliatory phone calls between the leaders.

Raptors forward Chris Boucher, a Canadian citizen, was asked after his team's win over the Los Angeles Clippers whether he'd ever experienced something like that.

"No, no, no," he said. "But have you ever seen us getting taxed like that?"

Joseph Chua, a Toronto resident who was at the Raptors game, said he's going to be feeling the tariffs "pretty directly" in his work as an importer.

Still, he said he doesn't think booing is "the right thing to do in this situation." He chose to stay seated instead.

"I have a bunch of American family, friends that live in the states that are Americans, we travel to America all the time, but I thought chanting, 'Canada,' would be a more appropriate stance," said Chua, who was deliberately wearing his red Canada Basketball cap. "Usually I will stand. I've always stood during both anthems. I've taken my hat off to show respect to the American national anthem, but today we're feeling a little bitter about things."

"We were already talking about what businesses are Canadian, specifically, what are American, specifically, what to avoid. When I go grocery shopping, I will definitely be



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Spurs landed guard De'Aaron Fox in a trade with the Kings and Bulls to play with center Victor Wembanyama. The Bulls sent guard Zach LaVine to the Kings.

NBA

From page B10

manager — like the ones Dallas' Nico Harrison tried to place to Doncic in the wee hours of Sunday, all of them going unanswered — is at least possible.

"At the end of the day, and I've said this in the past, you get evaluated every single day," Antetokounmpo said. "You don't take nothing for granted. Being an All-Star, you don't take it for granted. Being able to go out there and put on the jersey and represent your team, you don't take that for granted. Being out there and representing your family, you don't take that for granted. Every second that you play an NBA game, I love it. I try to play with joy."

Speaking of joy, or lack thereof, another past All-Star and All-NBA selection in Jimmy Butler is still out there and desperately seeking a way out of Miami. He has as many game appearances in the last month as he does team suspensions — three games, three suspensions.

For Butler to get moved, with Phoenix believed to be his preferred destination, it's very possible that another All-Star-caliber player — or at least someone with a big salary — would have to be changing addresses as well simply to

The Saints told AP last week that the partnership is a thing of the past. The emails cover a yearlong period ending in July 2019, when they were subpoenaed by attorneys for victims of a priest later charged with raping an 8-year-old boy.

In a lengthy statement, the team criticized the media for using "leaked emails for the purpose of misconstruing a well-intended effort."

"No member of the Saints organization condones or wants to cover up the abuse that occurred in the Archdiocese of New Orleans," the team said. "That abuse occurred is a terrible fact."

The team's response did little to quell the anger of survivors of clergy sexual abuse. "We felt betrayed by the organization," said Kevin Bourgeois, a former Saints season ticket holder who was abused by a priest in the 1980s. "It forces me to question what other secrets are being withheld. I'm angry, hurt and re-traumatized again."

and a larger campus for parking."

Mayor Muriel Bowser has long advocated for the Commanders to return to the District, but the city's government would have to start the process of approving and building a new stadium from scratch. That operation would include satisfying residents who have concerns about traffic and construction and politicians who'd rather invest in other projects.

"If D.C. residents are asking if I think I should be spending hundreds of millions of their dollars on an NFL stadium that doesn't have a return on investment, I don't think that's a good deal for D.C.," Ward 6 Council member Charles Allen said on the "Grant and Danny Show" in December.

Harris said he plans to let the politics sort itself out as he works with both jurisdictions. Crafting a home-field advantage, a stadium that opposing teams dread visiting and the home team adores, is the top priority for the new stadium.

"But I also think that we have a responsibility. When a city takes land and utilizes it for a stadium, they're taking it away from other things they could do," Harris said. "So, it's our responsibility to make it an amazing economic development opportunity."

Harris' offseason focus is centered on the off-field priorities: building a new stadium and refurbishing the team's practice facility. General manager Adam Peters and coach Dan Quinn will be responsible for reloading the roster with \$78 million in cap space and seven picks in April's NFL draft.

After a surprise run in 2024, the Commanders will face the highest expectations in more than 30 years when they return to the field next fall.

"We got it," Harris said. "We've arrived."

trying to avoid American products and groceries."

U.S. national anthem boos in Canada are rare, but not unheard of especially when tied to world events. In the early 2000s, fans at games in Canada booed to show their disapproval of the U.S.-led war against Iraq.

Clippers star Kawhi Leonard, who won an NBA championship with the Raptors in 2019, and coach Tyronn Lue declined to comment on the booing.

Lue, however, sang along to "O Canada." He said he just likes the song.

"I heard it a lot of times being in the playoffs here, so I know it by heart," he said.

make the contract math work.

"It's surprising, for sure," Philadelphia coach Nick Nurse said of superstar-level players like Doncic and Davis getting traded. "But I think there's been a lot of stars moving in recent years that we've all been surprised by and all that kind of stuff."

More big things could still happen. Some teams that are out of the playoff hunt, like injury-plagued New Orleans, could make deals to collect assets and think about the future. Others might add a piece or two in an effort to win now.

Nobody knows what other surprises might be looming, especially with a slew of teams that are in the playoff — or play-in — chase thinking about which players could be acquired to help their postseason odds.

"The play-in part of it lets the competition last longer," said Detroit coach J.B. Bickerstaff, whose Pistons are squarely in the Eastern Conference play-in mix. "And more teams are competing for those spots longer into the season. The past, what, four or five years, we've had a different champion. So now, everybody feels like they've got a shot at it. They're making moves so that they can go and get it. I think that's great for the league."



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

Fans boo as the U.S. national anthem is sung before Sunday's game between the Canucks and Red Wings in Vancouver, British Columbia. Fan rancor has been over tariffs.

TARIFFS

Canadians boo American anthem at pro events



President Trump shakes hands with Florida Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov during Monday's ceremony at the White House.

Trump avoids talk of tariffs during Panthers' visit

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Trump mostly stuck to sports and avoided any talk of tariffs as he celebrated the NHL's defending Stanley Cup champion Florida Panthers at the White House on Monday. The ceremony was delayed nearly

an hour because Trump was talking to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau about pausing tariffs on the country, as he did with Mexico. Trump made repeated references to Panthers owner Vinnie Viola being a friend. Viola was briefly Trump's nominee to be Secretary of the Army in 2016 before withdrawing from consideration.

The team had a red customized "Trump 45-47" jersey framed for him. He was also presented a "Trump 47" jersey and a gold stick by Viola, Finnish captain Aleksander Barkov and American forward Matthew Tkachuk. The Panthers made their White House visit before they faced the Eastern Conference-leading Capitals on Tuesday night.

Fans voice their disapproval over proposed taxes on exports to U.S.

By **IAN HARRISON**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TORONTO | Fans at a Toronto Raptors game on Sunday jumped on the emerging trend of booing the American national anthem at pro sporting events in Canada.

Fans of the NBA's lone Canadian franchise booed the anthem after similar reactions broke out Saturday night at NHL games in Ottawa, Ontario, and Calgary, Alberta, amid the ongoing rancor between President Trump and Canadian leaders over import tariffs.

After initially cheering for the 15-year-old female singer, fans booed throughout "The Star-Spangled Banner" performance. At the end, mixed boos and cheers could be heard before the crowd erupted in applause for the Canadian anthem, "O Canada."

Fans also booed Sunday night when Agasha Mutesasira began her performance of the American national anthem in Vancouver, British Columbia, when the NHL's Canucks hosted the Detroit Red Wings.

"I mean, it's too bad, right? It is what it is," Red Wings forward Patrick Kane, who was born in New York, said after Detroit's win. "I guess you can maybe

» see **ANTHEM** | B9

COMMANDERS

Harris says team name 'is growing in meaning'

Commanders stay, jersey may change

By **LIAM GRIFFIN**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

ASHBURN | The late adopters in the Washington football fan base will need to adapt: Team owner Josh Harris said Monday the Commanders' name is here to stay.

The still-relatively new nickname has slowly earned a begrudging level of acceptance from fans since being introduced by former owner Dan Snyder in 2022. The identity is gaining more momentum inside the team's Ashburn headquarters.

That mirrors the groundswell of support for the team generated during an unexpected NFC championship game run. Harris noted that his fondest memories of the season were the grown men and women he saw crying tears of joy after a Commanders win.

"In this building, the name 'Commanders' means something," Harris told reporters. "It's about players who love football, are mentally tough, hit hard and are great teammates. It's really meaningful that the name is growing in meaning."

A potential jersey change, one that would mirror the classic uniforms of yesteryear, could be in the works, according to multiple reports. But Harris didn't directly address any changes in his team's fashion, though he plans to embrace the team's history. "As far as rebranding, [it's] bringing our past — which obviously I grew up with and all the Super Bowls — and our future together," he said. "You're going to see us head back toward honoring our past and bringing together our future."

Harris' full-throated support for the Commanders' name — despite constant calls from a loud portion of fans to return to the old nickname and logo — marked the biggest takeaway on Monday. But the team's continued hunt for a new stadium continues to churn forward.

The Commanders don't know where their next home will be, but Harris stuck with his preseason plan to open a new stadium in 2030. Everything else about the process, including what jurisdiction would host the project and what the stadium will look like, is up in the air.

» see **NFL** | B9



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Team owner Josh Harris said Monday that the Commanders name is here to stay, despite calls from some fans to return to the old nickname and logo.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

If the Mavericks can trade guard Luka Dončić — the face of the Dallas franchise — to the Lakers, it can be argued that anyone can be moved at the deadline.

NBA

Antetokounmpo: 'Nobody's safe' from trade deadline chaos

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The list of NBA players that might get traded before the 3 p.m. deadline on Thursday is a long one, according to Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo. It includes... well, basically everybody. "This is the world we're living in," Antetokounmpo said. "It's a business. You have to understand this. Nobody's safe. Nobody's safe."

After this weekend, he might be right. It's hard to envision a bigger stunner than the first deal that went down over the weekend — Luka Dončić is

now with the Los Angeles Lakers and Anthony Davis is now with the Dallas Mavericks, the first time that two reigning All-NBA players were traded for one another in-season. That move overshadowed another one that, under normal circumstances, would have been seismic: De'Aaron Fox leaving Sacramento for San Antonio to join All-Star Victor Wembanyama, with Zach LaVine leaving Chicago for the Kings.

Fox was an All-NBA selection two years ago. LaVine is a two-time All-Star. And when adding in D'Angelo Russell getting moved by the Lakers to Brooklyn in late December, that's five current or

former All-Stars that have been traded already this season.

"Normally when you trade a star you get a bunch of junk back," Hall of Famer and NBA analyst Charles Barkley said on NBA TV, reacting to the Dončić-Davis trade. "This is the first time I can remember when you've got two All-NBA players traded for each other."

To Antetokounmpo's point, if Dončić — the clear face of the Dallas franchise until now, the player who replaced Dirk Nowitzki in that role with the Mavericks, someone who took his team to the NBA Finals last season — can get moved, then yes, it can be argued that any player can

get moved.

The Spurs probably won't be trading Wembanyama anytime soon, especially now that they've landed Fox to play alongside the French center. Golden State would only trade a franchise icon like Stephen Curry if he asked to be moved, which doesn't seem likely. The Lakers' LeBron James and Phoenix's Bradley Beal have no-trade clauses, meaning they control their own destinies to a certain extent.

But for everyone else, getting a middle-of-the-night call from a general

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