

Zelenskyy ‘to make things right’

“Our meeting in Washington, at the White House on Friday, did not go the way it was supposed to be. It is regrettable that it happened this way.”

Volodymyr Zelenskyy
Ukraine’s president



Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he wants to work fast to end the Russia-Ukraine war. WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES

After Oval Office standoff, Ukrainian president ready to reconcile with Trump in pursuit of peace deal

Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he’s ready to work with President Donald Trump to negotiate a peace deal with Russia – effectively ending a standoff between the leaders that exploded Monday evening when the U.S. said it would stop supplying the country with weapons.

Zelenskyy said in a social media post

that it is “time to make things right” with the American president and his administration. He expressed gratitude for prior U.S. support for Ukraine in its battle to beat back Russia’s military forces and praised Trump, whom he fought with last Friday in the Oval Office.

“None of us wants an endless war. Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants

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Canada, China fire salvos in tariff war

Mexico also considers retaliation against US

Kim Hjelmgard
USA TODAY

Canada and China swiftly announced retaliatory tariffs against the U.S. on Tuesday, shortly after long-threatened levies by the Trump administration on those countries and Mexico took effect.

President Donald Trump’s new 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada were imposed at 12:01 a.m. ET, along with a doubling of duties on some Chinese goods to 20%.

Trump’s moves effectively launched new trade conflicts with the United States’ top three trading partners and threatened to upend two-way annual trade worth nearly \$2.2 trillion in 2024, according to data from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The tit-for-tat tariffs have rattled global markets.

Trump has accused all three countries of not doing enough to clamp down on drugs like the opioid fentanyl entering the U.S. He also says tariffs will boost U.S. manufacturing and prevent other countries from taking American jobs.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Ottawa would respond with immediate 25% tariffs on \$20.7 billion worth of American imports and on another \$86.2 billion if Trump’s tariffs were still in place in 21 days. He has said Canada would target American beer, wine, bourbon, home appliances and Florida orange juice.

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Canada called the new 25% tariffs on its imports “reckless” and warned of “economic disaster” for the U.S.

REBECCA COOK/REUTERS

Efforts could lead to strictest restrictions in the nation



Arizona is the latest state to attempt to limit wind power development. Arizona House Bill 2223 would restrict new projects to locations at least 12 miles away from land zoned for residential use. DIANNIE CHAVEZ/USA TODAY NETWORK

Bill would put 90% of Ariz. off-limits to wind turbines

Joan Meiners and Ignacio Calderon
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

A bill making its way through the Arizona Legislature would restrict new wind farm projects to sites at least 12 miles from any property zoned for residential use, leaving almost no land available for wind energy in the state.

If passed, it would become the most restrictive law limiting wind power development in the United States and would remove about 90% of Arizona’s land from consideration for this

renewable energy infrastructure, according to an analysis by The Arizona Republic and USA TODAY.

Roughly half of what’s left would be on Native American and National Park Service land, including locations near the Grand Canyon.

In a state that doesn’t have many suitable places for turbines to start with, this could meaningfully reduce options for decarbonizing the energy grid.

“It’s really hard to build wind farms in Arizona, and if you put this into place, it’s just pretty much wiping you out,” said Troy Rule, a professor of law at

Arizona State University and a published expert on renewable energy systems. “It’s like you’re trying to kill Arizona’s wind farm industry.”

The Republic and USA TODAY research found no agency in Arizona that compiles city and county residential zoning maps across the state, so USA TODAY used Federal Emergency Management Agency data to filter for residential buildings and calculate the buffers from there. In a discussion about this methodology, Rule said the

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‘Trust in Trump’: Supporters say their faith is unwavering

Phillip M. Bailey and Terry Collins
USA TODAY

Whatever is said about President Donald Trump by his critics, Cynthia Harrison remains a true believer.

“The guy, he has a track record, a four-year track record, so yeah, we trust him,” Harrison, a retiree from Stowe, Vermont, told USA TODAY.

Trump has “been right on everything,” she said.

Harrison cites the nearly two-year investigation into Russian election interference stemming from the 2016 campaign as an example.

President’s address to Congress: Full coverage

Visit [usatoday.com](https://www.usatoday.com) for reaction and analysis of Tuesday’s speech.

A 2019 special counsel inquiry did not find evidence Trump or members of his campaign conspired with Moscow to sway the outcome, and another internal investigation released in 2023 concluded that the FBI should never have launched a full investigation.

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Supporters of President Donald Trump gather at a shopping plaza in West Palm Beach, Fla., for a glimpse of the presidential motorcade on Friday.

THOMAS CORDY/USA TODAY NETWORK

Pope resting, back on ventilation, after respiratory troubles

Joshua McElwee
Reuters

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis rested well overnight, the Vatican said on Tuesday, after the 88-year-old pontiff suffered a setback a day earlier as he battles double pneumonia in the hospital.

Francis, who has been in Rome’s Gemelli Hospital since Feb. 14, had what the Vatican described as two episodes of “acute respiratory insufficiency” Monday.

They required him to return to using noninvasive, mechanical ventilation to help him breathe.

“The pope slept all night and is continuing to rest,” said a one-line note from the Vatican. A full medical update on the pope’s condition was expected on Tuesday evening.

Francis has not been seen in public since entering the hospital, his longest absence from view since his papacy started in March 2013. His doctors have not said how long his treatment might last.

Monday’s setback came following several days of relatively upbeat statements about his condition. The Vatican said the two respiratory episodes on

Monday were caused by “a significant accumulation of endobronchial mucus.”

The pope, it said, had suffered a bronchospasm, akin to an asthma attack, and had required two bronchoscopies, or procedures to inspect his air passages.

The pope’s prognosis remained “guarded,” Monday’s statement said, which means Francis is not out of danger.

A Vatican official, who did not wish to be named because he was not authorized to discuss the pope’s health, said Monday evening that the pontiff’s blood tests that day had remained stable.

The pope’s doctors believe the respiratory episode was part of his body’s normal response in fighting infection, the official added.

Francis has experienced several bouts of ill health over the past two years and is prone to lung infections because he had pleurisy as a young adult and had part of one lung removed.

Double pneumonia is a serious infection in both lungs that can inflame and scar them, making it difficult to breathe.

Storm causes widespread issues, disrupts Mardi Gras

Hundreds of thousands lose power across the US

Jorge L. Ortiz, Dinah Voyles Pulver and Christopher Cann
USA TODAY

A winter storm is marching across the central United States, knocking out power for hundreds of thousands of people, disrupting travel and forcing officials to curtail some Mardi Gras events.

Tens of millions of people were under severe weather advisories Tuesday, from tornado and thunderstorm warnings in the South to blizzard warnings across the northern Plains.

With the threat of hail and tornadoes in New Orleans, two of the city’s most famous parades had their routes shortened and had to end early before the worst of the storm moved over the area.

Wind advisories were in place from New Mexico to Florida and up to Virginia. “As these thunderstorms roar eastward, the biggest threat will be damaging wind gusts,” Tyler Roys, a senior meteorologist for AccuWeather, said in an online forecast.

In northeastern Texas and southeastern Oklahoma, hurricane-force winds prompted red flag warnings and caused power outages that hit more than 400,000 homes and businesses in Texas. The Dallas area was under a tornado watch. Just north in Plano, winds ripped off a portion of a high school’s roof and heavy rain flooded the school’s sports facility, KHOU reported.

A possible tornado hit Ada, Oklahoma, with images showing an uprooted tree that had smashed into a mobile home while mangled debris littered the streets. The city said on Facebook that there were “downed power lines, gas leaks, and trees everywhere.”

By 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, more than 210 flights at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport had been canceled and nearly 300 delayed, according to Flight-Aware.

In the Kansas City office of the National Weather Service, forecasts late Monday were “hammering home the potential for 60-70-plus-mph wind gusts” over parts of eastern Nebraska, Kansas and west-central Missouri, meteorologist Allan Curtis said. Forecasters in Minnesota and Nebraska warned of heavy snowfall that would cause white-out conditions and make travel “treach-

erous and potentially life-threatening.”

The winds came as parts of the eastern United States are seeing wildfires break out and drought has turned the South into a tinderbox.

Just outside Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, first responders continued to work to contain a 2,000-acre fire that erupted over the weekend. In North Carolina, fires were engulfing swaths of national forests. Evacuation orders remained in parts of Polk County, where a 600-acre fire burned in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Fire officials across the East told residents to refrain from burning anything outdoors.

Through the midweek, the low-pressure system is expected to spread as far south as Florida and as far north as Pennsylvania and New Jersey, coming up just short of New York City, which may still be in for some thunderstorms, AccuWeather said. Overall, the storm could affect up to 170 million people across more than 20 states.

Through Sunday, the United States had totaled 61 confirmed tornadoes this year, less than half the yearly average of 138 for that period.

The storms follow Trump administration staffing cuts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including the weather service. Weather experts across the nation said they feared these cuts, along with retirements and resignations, may increase the threat severe weather events pose to the public.

“Recent terminations within the government workforce for science are likely to cause irreparable harm and have far-reaching consequences for public safety, economic well-being, and the United States’ global leadership,” the American Meteorological Society said Monday.

Most weather service field offices already are understaffed, said James Spann, chief meteorologist for WBMA-TV in Birmingham, Alabama. If National Weather Service services are cut, “we all suffer ... especially during times of life-threatening weather,” Spann wrote in a social media post.

NOAA has said it’s committed to keeping Americans informed. Spokesperson Scott Smullen told USA TODAY the agency “remains dedicated to its mission, providing timely information, research, and resources that serve the American public and ensure our nation’s environmental and economic resilience.”



A Canadian Coast Guard vessel navigates the Detroit River between Windsor, Ontario, and Michigan’s largest city as trade tensions escalate over the Trump administration’s tariffs and retaliatory moves by Canada. CARLOS OSORIO/REUTERS

Tariffs

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“Tariffs will disrupt an incredibly successful trading relationship,” Trudeau said. He added that they would violate the U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement signed by Trump in his first term.

China immediately countered with 10% to 15% tariffs on some U.S. agricultural product imports.

In a news conference in Mexico City, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said that there was “no justification” for Trump’s tariffs and that they were imposed “despite our work against gangs and fentanyl.” Sheinbaum said she plans to announce Mexico’s retaliatory tariffs and other measures against the U.S. on Sunday.

Tariffs are essentially taxes charged on goods imported from another country. They are typically set at a percentage of the goods’ value and usually paid by the importer.

The extra costs are generally passed on to the consumer.

Canada and Mexico have enjoyed a virtually tariff-free trading relationship with the U.S. for three decades.

Doubling China’s tariffs

The extra 10% duty on Chinese goods adds to a 10% tariff imposed by Trump in February to punish Beijing over the fentanyl epidemic in the United States. The 20% duty comes on top of tariffs of up to 25% imposed by Trump in his first term.

Some of these products saw U.S. tariffs increase sharply under President Joe Biden, including a doubling of duties on Chinese semiconductors to 50% and a quadrupling of tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to more than 100%.

The 20% tariff will apply to several major U.S. consumer electronics imports from China that had been untouched by duties, including smartphones, laptops, video game consoles, smartwatches, speakers and Bluetooth devices.

China’s commerce ministry said Tuesday that its new levies, which take effect next Monday, include a 15% tariff on chicken, wheat, corn and cotton, and a 10% tariff on soybeans, pork, beef, fruits, and dairy and fish products.

“The unilateral tariff increase by the U.S. harms the multilateral trade system, increases the burden on American businesses and consumers, and undermines the foundation of China-U.S. economic and trade cooperation,” China’s Customs Tariff Commission said in a statement.

Beijing also filed a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization over the new tariffs, as it did in response to the earlier 10% tariff the Trump administration imposed on Chinese goods.

Fears of economic pain

Some business leaders said the tariffs on Mexican and Canadian products could have much deep repercussions for a highly integrated North American economy that depends on cross-border shipments to build cars

and machinery, refine energy and process agricultural goods.

“Today’s reckless decision by the U.S. administration is forcing Canada and the U.S. toward recessions, job losses and economic disaster,” Canadian Chamber of Commerce CEO Candace Laing said in a statement.

She said the U.S. tariffs will fail to usher in a “golden age” coveted by Trump but instead raise costs for consumers and producers and disrupt supply chains.

“Tariffs are a tax on the American people,” Laing said.

Even before Trump’s tariffs announcement, U.S. data on Monday showed factory gate prices jumped to a nearly three-year high, indicating the new wave of tariffs could soon undercut production. Factory gate prices reflect the price of goods or services before any taxes, shipping or other fees are added.

Trump’s confirmation Tuesday that the tariffs would go ahead sent financial markets sharply lower as global stocks tumbled and safe-haven bonds rallied. The Canadian dollar and Mexican peso fell against the greenback.

Economists at Capital Economics, a financial consultancy, wrote in investor notes Tuesday that if the U.S. tariffs remain in place, they risk plunging Canada and Mexico into recession and slowing global growth more generally.

Moves on many fronts

Trump has maintained a blistering pace of tariff actions since taking office in January, including fully restoring 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum imports that take effect March 12, revoking earlier exemptions.

Trump’s “America First” agenda, aimed at redrawing trade relationships in favor of the U.S., was expected to be a centerpiece of his address Tuesday night to a joint session of Congress.

On Saturday, Trump opened a national security investigation into imports of lumber and wood products that could result in steep tariffs. Canada, already facing 14.5% U.S. tariffs on softwood lumber, would be hit particularly hard.

A week earlier, Trump revived an inquiry into countries that levy digital services taxes, proposed fees of up to \$1.5 million on every Chinese-built ship entering a U.S. port, and launched a tariff investigation into copper imports.

These add to his plans for higher “reciprocal tariffs” to match the levies of other countries and offset their other trade barriers, a move that could hit the European Union economic bloc.

Robert Habeck, Germany’s economy minister, said in a statement that the 27 nations that make up the EU would not be pushed around by Trump if he imposes tariffs on their products.

“We will react with unity and self-confidence,” he said.

And Trudeau, Canada’s leader, said it was the wrong strategy.

“Because of the tariffs imposed by the U.S., Americans will pay more for groceries, gas and cars, and potentially lose thousands of jobs,” he said.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that if the U.S. “persists in waging a tariff war, a trade war, or any other kind of war, the Chinese side will fight them to the bitter end.”

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McMahon confirmed as head of Ed. Dept.

Will lead agency reeling from layoffs, Trump’s ire

Zachary Schermele
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Senate voted Monday to confirm billionaire GOP donor and former wrestling industry executive Linda McMahon as the next secretary of the federal Department of Education.

The approval was expected from the Republican-controlled chamber, where conservative lawmakers have signed on to even the most controversial of President Donald Trump’s Cabinet picks. The vote was 51-45 in her favor.

She now faces the challenge of managing an agency her boss has said he wants “closed immediately.” Education Department staffers are already reeling from massive upheaval and layoffs, with more on the way.



Linda McMahon testifies at her Senate confirmation hearing in February.
JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

The president told reporters in the Oval Office last month that he wants McMahon to “put herself out of a job.” The White House has been considering

She now faces the challenge of managing an agency her boss has said he wants “closed immediately.”

steps in recent weeks to dismantle the Education Department, though only Congress has the power to formally do away with a federal agency.

At her confirmation hearing Feb. 13, McMahon seemed to appreciate the limits on presidential power.

“We’d like to do this right,” she said, adding in later remarks that the Education Department “clearly could not be shut down without” Congress.

Meanwhile, many student loan repayment plans are paused. The federal government’s education research appa-

ratus has been gutted by Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency team. Fears of immigration raids are affecting student attendance from coast to coast. And school administrators nationwide are huddling with lawyers to understand whether they’ll be forced to comply with the Trump administration’s demands to halt diversity, equity and inclusion programs (those directives have been challenged in court).

McMahon has been an ardent supporter of conservative education priorities, including school choice programs, which allow families to use public money to subsidize nonpublic schooling, and barring transgender women from competing in women’s sports.

Though she is a proponent of expanding Pell Grants, she also has advocated for college alternatives and said during her confirmation hearing that the federal government should “build up careers, not college debt.”



Mexico’s President Claudia Sheinbaum holds a news conference on Monday. Attorneys for Mexico argue that gun companies are making choices to profit off the illegal market of trafficking into Mexico. LUIS CORTES/REUTERS

Supreme Court poised to side with US gunmakers in fight with Mexico

Maureen Groppe
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court on Tuesday appeared poised to side with U.S. gunmakers that Mexico can’t try to hold them liable for violence caused by Mexican drug cartels armed with their weapons.

Attorneys for Mexico argue that gun companies are making deliberate design, marketing and distribution choices to profit off the illegal market of trafficking into Mexico.

The gun industry denies that’s happening and contends these lawsuits are barred by a federal law protecting gunmakers and dealers from liability when their products are used to commit crimes.

Attorneys for the industry say the chain of events between the manufacture of a gun and the harm it causes is too lengthy to blame the industry.

“No case in American history supports that theory,” said Noel Francisco, an attorney representing the industry.

Otherwise, he said, a company like Budweiser would be liable for every accident caused by an underage drinker since it knows teenagers will buy beer, drive drunk and crash.

Catherine Stetson, an attorney for Mexico, said Budweiser would run into trouble if it sold bulk quantities of beer to liquor stores near high schools, knowing they were regularly selling to underage students and even designed a special “Best Prom Ever” beer can to be sold in the schools.

“That is the allegations in this case,” she said.

The case arrives at the Supreme Court against a backdrop of strained diplomatic relations between the United States and Mexico.

President Donald Trump is imposing tariffs on imports from Mexico to pressure the country to do more to stop illegal drugs flowing into the United States.

Mexico says the flow of American weapons south of the border is hurting its fight against drug cartels.

Justice Samuel Alito wondered if the United States could turn the table on Mexico.

“So suppose that one of the 50 states sued the government of Mexico for aiding and abetting illegal conduct within the state’s borders that causes the state to incur law enforcement costs, public welfare costs, other costs,” Alito told Stetson. “Would your client be willing to litigate that case in the courts of the United States?”

Chief Justice John Roberts asked both sides what share of guns made in the United States needs to end up in

Mexico to show gunmakers are complicit.

“At some point it must matter,” he said.

Francisco said it doesn’t matter because the issue is whether the gunmakers are responsible for the harms the weapons ultimately cause.

Stetson said the key question is whether gunmakers know how their weapons are ending up in Mexico and are still doing business with specific distributors and dealers they’ve been warned about.

But Justice Sonya Sotomayor said the court has “repeatedly said mere knowledge is not enough.”

“You have to aid and abet in some way,” she said. “You have to intend and take affirmative action to participate.”

Stetson stressed that the suit is in its early stages and said Mexico should be allowed a chance to make its case.

A federal judge in Massachusetts dismissed the suit, ruling it was barred by a 2005 law shielding gunmakers from liability.

But the Boston-based 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the challenge met an exception in the law and could move forward. Mexico, it said, had adequately alleged the gunmakers “aided and abetted the knowingly unlawful downstream trafficking of their guns into Mexico.”

The case is the court’s first test of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, the law Congress passed in 2005 following efforts by local governments to sue gunmakers for the harms caused by gun violence.

The law allows suits if a gunmaker knowingly violates another law – such as selling firearms to someone prohibited from having one – and that act is the “proximate cause” of the resulting harm.

Justice Katanji Brown Jackson said one of Congress’ motivations for the law was preserving lawmakers’ ability to regulate the gun industry rather than have it essentially regulated through lawsuits. She questioned whether the industry changes Mexico is seeking in their suit, along with some \$10 billion in monetary damages, would lead to what Congress was trying to avoid.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh worried that accepting Mexico’s theory would expand liability risks for makers of other dangerous products.

“That’s a real concern for me,” he said.

A decision in Smith & Wesson Brands Inc. v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos is expected by the end of June.

White House softens DEI ultimatum it gave schools

Zachary Schermele
USA TODAY

In mid-February, the Trump administration told tens of thousands of K-12 schools and colleges they had until Feb. 28 to comply with a sweeping and vague order to root out diversity, equity and inclusion on their campuses.

Over the weekend, the U.S. Department of Education issued new guidance softening that mandate and reversing course on some of its broadest requests.

In a “frequently asked questions” document posted Saturday morning after the deadline, the department’s Office for Civil Rights walked back its directive, saying not all DEI initiatives actually violate the initial instructions.

A program or policy isn’t unlawful just because it uses the terms “diversity,” “equity” or “inclusion,” the new federal guidance says. Cultural and historical observances – including Black History Month and International Holocaust Remembrance Day – won’t be discouraged either.

Perhaps most notably, the Department of Education acknowledged the federal government doesn’t have the power to dictate school curriculum.

In a statement to USA TODAY on Monday, Craig Trainor, the acting assistant secretary for civil rights, said the “frequently asked questions” document issued over the weekend and the initial directions provide guidance on the law.

He denied the implication that the Department of Education had altered its policies. “There has been no walk back,” he said.

Feb. 14 mandate

Top agency officials sowed confusion nationwide when they announced last month that the Trump administration’s new interpretation of long-standing civil rights laws prohibited schools reliant on federal funding from considering race in a broad array of decisions related to American schooling. Included in the mandate were choices about “admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, discipline, housing, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life.”

Osamudia James, a professor at the University of North Carolina School of Law, said the point of the order was to “scare and chill” schools. “Every dollar you spend litigating these issues is money that does not go to supporting students who need it,” she said.

In the weeks since, universities have shuttered DEI offices, scrubbed websites and ceased supporting some marginalized student groups. K-12 school districts from Kentucky to Montana have opened compliance audits into their practices.

A prominent teachers union sued the Trump administration challenging all the changes last week.

Ray Li, an attorney in the Education Department’s civil rights office during the Biden administration, called this weekend’s clarification of its guidance a “retreat back to some legal standards.” It contrasts sharply, he said, with the administration’s initial posture, which he called “really troubling.”

“Hopefully, schools take that information and realize that just because something deals with race doesn’t



Middle school students in Iowa walk out of class to advocate for LGBTQ+ rights in 2024.
NIRMALENDU MAJUMDAR/USA TODAY NETWORK

mean it violates the law,” he said. “Even this administration recognizes that.”

The revised guidance resolved a lot of the befuddlement among school administrators. But many still have questions about the types of policies and programs that could put them in the crosshairs of the federal officials under President Donald Trump’s leadership.

For example, colleges don’t know how to word their admissions essay questions. When the Supreme Court outlawed race-conscious admissions in 2023, Chief Justice John Roberts left room in his majority opinion for applicants to write to universities about their racial backgrounds.

“Nothing in this opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise,” he wrote.

The Department of Education, on the other hand, has taken a more extreme view about students being forthcoming in their essays. On Saturday, the agency said schools that “craft essay prompts in a way that require applicants to disclose their race are illegally attempting to do indirectly what cannot be done directly.”

Jonathan Feingold, a legal scholar at Boston University, said those interpretations of the Supreme Court’s ban on race-conscious admissions are part of a broader conservative strategy.

“There is an effort to rhetorically overstate the holding,” he said, “so that institutions are overcomplying.”

Common DEI initiatives are still legally defensible, he and other law faculty wrote in a memo to college presidents on Feb. 20.

Education Department launches ‘EndDEI’ portal

Since Trump took office, the federal Department of Education has taken several steps to punish agency staffers and the schools they oversee for promoting diversity.

The most recent example came Thursday when the department launched a new online portal called EndDEI.Ed.Gov. The webpage’s purpose, according to an announcement, would be to encourage students and teachers to “submit reports of discrimination based on race or sex in publicly-funded K-12 schools.”

However, the agency’s civil rights office has long suffered from limited staffing and an increasing workload. Amid buyouts and the threat of a “very significant” workforce reduction across the Department of Education, it’s unlikely that the division’s capacity to investigate complaints will improve anytime soon.

Could a GOP bill stop some married women from voting?

SAVE Act would require birth name to match

Karissa Waddick
USA TODAY

At a recent town hall in the exurbs of Atlanta, Rep. Rich McCormick, R-Ga., faced a torrent of criticism from a woman who accused him of sponsoring legislation that would make it more difficult for married women like her to vote. She was talking about the Republican-backed Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, known as the SAVE Act. Clips of the town hall, where the woman told McCormick the bill was “voter suppression,” have since gone viral on social media. If enacted, the proposed law would require people to present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate or passport, when they register to vote in federal elections. It’s designed to keep undocumented immigrants from voting, though it already is illegal and exceedingly rare for noncitizens to do so. The bill was first introduced last year by Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas. It passed the Republican House but was never taken up for a vote in the closely divided Senate. Roy reintroduced the bill in January

and, though it is likely to pass the House, it will again face an uphill battle in the Senate, where a handful of Democrats would need to support the measure. The bill doesn’t explicitly mention married women. But critics warn that its documentation requirements could impede the ability of people who have changed their name, including married women who took their husband’s last name, to register to vote. **How would the SAVE Act affect US citizens?** Under the Republican proposal, common forms of identification, including a driver’s license, would become insufficient for voter registration because they don’t prove citizenship. Real ID licenses in most states indicate someone’s legal status but do not show whether they are a U.S. citizen or green card holder. Instead, the bill would require those registering to vote to either present a valid passport or a photo ID that matches the name on their birth certificate or naturalization card. Only about half of U.S. citizens have a passport, according to the State Department. Voting rights advocates have expressed concern that people who have

changed their name and who do not have passports could run into roadblocks in the process of registering to vote because the name on their ID likely no longer reflects the name on their birth certificate. About 79% of women in opposite-sex marriages take the name of their spouse, according to a 2023 study by Pew Research, whereas most married men – 92% – keep their own last name. Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States, told USA TODAY that she hopes lawmakers will recognize the problems the bill could cause for married women, as well as trans people who change their name, and adjust it accordingly before putting it to a vote. Roy rejected accusations that the bill could affect married women, calling this “absurd armchair speculation,” in a statement. He said the legislation provided “myriad ways for people to prove citizenship and explicitly directs States to establish a process for individuals to register to vote if there are discrepancies.” His office did not immediately respond to questions about if they planned to amend the bill to account for the criticism. In another statement provided by

Roy’s office, Cleta Mitchell, founder of the conservative Only Citizens Vote Coalition, defended the bill saying that married women must provide their birth certificate and marriage certificate to get their name changed on all their documents. “It is a pain, but millions of women do it every day,” she suggested. **Bill’s ambiguity is a concern** The bill does include a provision ordering states to allow registrants to provide “additional documentation” to prove their citizenship when discrepancies arise. Voting rights advocates have argued that the language in the text is ambiguous and does not specify what types of documents states could accept. Stewart told USA TODAY she was most concerned that states wouldn’t be able to work out which additional documents they would accept until after elections happening this year and potentially, next year. Further compounding the issue, advocates have argued, is a provision in the bill that would subject election workers to potential incarceration if they accidentally register a voter who fails to present proper documentation of citizenship.

Zelenskyy

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peace more than Ukrainians. My team and I stand ready to work under President Trump’s strong leadership to get a peace that lasts,” Zelenskyy said Tuesday, describing their previous encounter as “regrettable.” The Trump administration said the evening before that it was pausing military assistance to Ukraine, delivering a major blow to Kyiv’s ability to defend itself against Russia. Trump’s team had been in discussions with Russia and Ukraine about a peace agreement. But talks with Ukraine went sideways last week when Zelenskyy, Trump and Vice President JD Vance got into an Oval Office shouting match about Russian President Vladimir Putin. Zelenskyy left the White House without signing a minerals agreement that the U.S. says would protect Ukraine against future Russian aggression by linking the countries’ economic interests after the war ends. The Ukrainian president came to the White House seeking immediate security guarantees from the United States and clarity on whether Trump intended to continue arming Ukraine. Trump said after the Oval Office fight that he did not want to speak to Zelenskyy again until the leader was ready to discuss a peace agreement on his terms. He suggested then that the future of U.S. aid to Ukraine was in doubt. Trump allies had pushed Zelenskyy to apologize or resign over the Oval Office spat. “Either he needs to come to his senses and come back to the table in gratitude, or someone else needs to lead the country to do that,” House Speaker Mike Johnson said Sunday on “Meet the Press.” The argument culminated in the suspension of weapons deliveries on Monday night – the most aggressive push from the U.S. yet to get the Ukrainian government to participate in speedy talks. Europe has looked for ways in the aftermath to close the gap. The European Union on Tuesday announce a proposal to spend the equivalent of \$840 billion on defense. Zelenskyy meanwhile moved to reconcile with Trump, saying on Tuesday in his social media post that he was ready to “work fast to end the war” and sign the minerals agreement with the U.S. “Our meeting in Washington, at the White House on Friday, did not go the way it was supposed to be. It is regrettable that it happened this way. It is time to make things right. We would like future cooperation and communication to be constructive,” he said. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Zelenskyy said a ceasefire could involve the release of prisoners, bans on missiles and long-range drones and the cessation of attacks on energy and civilian infrastructure. He said Ukraine was also willing to halt fighting in the Black Sea if Russia was willing to do the same. “Then we want to move very fast through all next stages and to work with the US to agree a strong final deal,” Zelenskyy said.

Trump support

Continued from Page 1A

“He said it was a hoax,” Harrison said. “He was right about that.” That loyalty to the president fuels his administration, as demonstrated at a luncheon in Washington last month, where White House trade adviser Peter Navarro was asked about the U.S.-China tariff war. Navarro suggested it’s foolhardy to speculate what Trump might do next, and that’s “because by now, it’s trust in Trump.” Ahead of his address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday, the president has dismantled parts of Washington’s bureaucracy and warned the judicial branch to butt out. Many of his core supporters who spoke with USA TODAY remain faithful and jubilant about the cascading change despite daily alarm bells rung by legal scholars and historians, including early signs that voters are softening on certain parts of his agenda. They are happy about the emphasis on tightening the U.S.-Mexico border, including televised raids aimed at mass deportations of undocumented immigrants, and they defend firing federal workers to tackle the country’s roughly 36.2 trillion debt crisis. “I get excited because (Trump’s) a disrupter and Washington needs to be disrupted,” Harrison emphasized. “So love him tapping Elon Musk, who’s the smartest man in the world, to help out and weed out government corruption.” That steely confidence among the MAGA base has been Trump’s strongest armor as he wields his power in sharp ways, from his demands to end birthright citizenship to a directive pausing the distribution of trillions of dollars in federal grants and loans. But a NPR/Marist survey released this week ahead of Trump’s joint address to Congress could show the first cracks in the armor. About 45% approve of the job he’s doing versus 49% who disapprove, according to the poll of 1,700 U.S. adults, which has a roughly 3% margin of error. The same poll found solid majorities unsure about his actions: 54% say the country is moving in the wrong direction, 55% believe federal cuts will cause more harm than good, and 56% of adults, including 65% of independent voters, think the president has rushed to make changes without considering the full impact. “The president is doing the things he promised his base he would do, but you wonder what happens once all of these changes start to impact them personally,” said Patricia Crouse, a political science professor at the University of New Haven. “What will be the consequences and ramifications of what he’s doing?” **‘We’re tired of it’** Those who pulled the lever for Trump last fall overwhelmingly dismiss concerns about executive overreach, however, as being overblown by the press as much as by Democrats. Even those in the president’s coalition who have some misgivings about the MAGA movement say they have found things to like. Malcolm Mahoney, a student at Dartmouth College, said he couldn’t



Protesters near the White House rally against President Donald Trump’s curbs on federal spending. KEN CEDENO/REUTERS

bring himself to support Trump last fall and instead wrote in former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley’s name. “I’m of the philosophy that I don’t believe in voting for the lesser of two evils,” said the 20-year-old Republican from Springfield, Massachusetts, a self-described social conservative. Yet Mahoney has been pleased with the president’s executive orders pardoning 23 anti-abortion activists and barring transgender student-athletes from playing women’s sports. Other social conservatives who spoke with USA TODAY also cited Trump’s signing of an executive order requiring policy recommendations to protect in-vitro fertilization, or IVF, access and reduce out-of-pocket costs. “I’ll make it clear, I am not a ‘Trumpy.’ I am appreciative of some of his efforts, and I am not appreciative of others,” Mahoney said. The country at large remains sharply split on Trump as a person. Political data site FiveThirtyEight showed Monday that Trump was averaging roughly 48% unfavorable versus 46% favorable across various polls, far better than the public’s opinion of him during the campaign. The site’s same model had Trump with about a 52% unfavorable versus 43% favorable rating on Election Day last year. Mary Mennona Ventresca, a Republican from Royersford, Pennsylvania, said Democrats should stop attacking their opponents and accept that Trump’s supporters aren’t uninformed but rather see the country’s problems radically differently from how they do. “His opponents have behaved for generations now like they own this country by divine right. That they alone have a right to free speech but that their opponents really don’t,” the 64-year-old saleswoman told USA TODAY. “Frankly, we’re all tired of it.” A Pew Research Center survey out last month demonstrates how much Trump engenders extreme feelings in either direction with most Americans. The poll showed 37% of U.S. adults strongly support his job performance. Conversely, about 40% said they strongly dislike what he’s doing as president. That 77% with strong feelings either way is far more than those who hold more lukewarm feelings. The Pew survey shows that of those Americans, 11% identify as “not strongly” disapproving of Trump versus 9% who said they were “not strongly” approving. Jack Reeves, of Wellington, North Carolina, voted for Trump and said he doesn’t pay much attention to day-to-day happenings in Washington. He said he trusts the president to handle the economy and believes his actions are in America’s best interest.

But he’s a bit more cautious on some moves, such as new tariffs on imports. “You do need your tariffs, but they don’t need to be really outrageous, outlandish where it causes everything to go sky-high where you can’t really afford it,” said Reeves, an independent. **Musk as the administration’s face** In terms of policy prescriptions, Pew finds there is slightly more opposition to Trump than full-throated support. About 35% of U.S. adults said they support all or most of Trump’s policies and plans, compared with 24% who said they support none of his agenda. But the Pew poll shows that 40% of Americans are somewhere in the middle: 17% say they support some of his agenda, and another 23% assert they back “only a few” of his moves. Reeves, 60, a terminal operator at a shipping yard, believes the federal government is “too big for its britches.” He supports Musk coming into the administration to examine and dismantle certain agencies. As far as any trepidation about giving Musk access to “all unclassified agency records, software systems, and IT systems,” according to a Trump executive order, Reeves isn’t troubled. He said he sees it the same as powerful members of Congress, such as former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, trading stocks. “It ain’t no different than all the insider trading that all the Democrats were doing while they were in office,” Reeves said. But Republican Candy Meintze, 64, of Stevenson, Michigan, who voted for Trump after being undecided, said she’s wary about Musk, an unelected official, having so much government oversight. “The only thing I don’t like is he has so much access; that disturbs me,” said Meintze, a married grandmother of seven and great-grandmother of three. Democrats have focused their early counteroffensives on Musk, who is viewed more negatively than positively overall, according to the Pew survey. About 54% of Americans express unfavorable views of the billionaire, according to the survey, versus 42% who view the South African-born entrepreneur favorably. Musk’s task force announced last month, for example, that it terminated 89 contracts worth \$881 million and canceled another 29 “DEI training grants” totaling \$101 million within the U.S. Department of Education. Meintze, the Michigan Republican, had been on the fence. She said she wants Trump to tread carefully on some actions, including attempts to dismantle the department. “I don’t think what he’s doing is reckless; I think it’s necessary, but he needs to give some of his actions more thought. I’m like, what’s the rush?” Other supporters, such as Jeanne Solnordal, a longtime real estate investor in Oakland, California, said every administration should seek to cut costs and question long-standing spending measures. She supports whatever actions are needed to cut waste. “I’m glad somebody is finally thinking with some common sense, like (Trump) said,” Solnordal, who is chair of the Alameda County (Calif.) Republican Party, told USA TODAY. “Change is hard, so rapid change is even harder, but those who are against it are going to have to get used to it. I’m going to have trust in President Trump that he knows what he’s doing.”

IDs of dogs at Hackman’s home mixed up

Investigators said wrong one was discovered dead

Rick Jervis
USA TODAY

SANTA FE, N.M. – News of the deaths of Gene Hackman and his wife, Betsy Arakawa, pinged into Sherry Gaber’s cellphone as text messages from friends.

“Do you know about this?” one friend asked, with a link to an article about the discoveries.

Gaber’s heart dropped. The news of Hackman and Arakawa – close friends and clients – was bad enough. But what really sank her soul was the fact that their German shepherd, Bear, had died along with them.

Just five months earlier, Gaber, an animal chiropractor, had run her hands along Bear’s fur, adjusting the animal’s atlas vertebrae, the topmost vertebrae in the cervical spine. She had cooed the German shepherd and laughed with Arakawa. Bear seemed vibrant and happy, although still slightly favoring a right hip after surgery a few months earlier.

Now she believed he was dead, found either in a closet or crate or bathroom floor, depending on conflicting news and official reports. The details didn’t compute.

“I can’t handle that image,” Gaber said in an interview with USA TODAY. “That’s why this whole thing is so distressing.

“It just doesn’t add up.” That’s because it didn’t.

Bear wasn’t dead at all. As Gaber read the news reports on her phone, the dog was alive and well, resting at a pet day care facility in Santa Fe, along with the couple’s other dog, Nikita, a 7-year-old Akita-shepherd mix.

USA TODAY learned the dog that died in the Hackman home was actually Zinna, a 12-year-old reddish Australian Kelpie mixed-breed who had once trained in agility skills to compete at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. Her body was found in a closed crate in the home, according to Joey Padilla, who took the surviving dogs to his facility, Santa Fe Tails.

Police continue to look into the de-



Gene Hackman’s wife, Betsy Arakawa, with Zinna, their Australian Kelpie mixed-breed dog. Zinna was found dead in a crate at the couple’s home near Santa Fe. PROVIDED BY SHERRY GABER

tails and causes behind the deaths of Hackman, 95, and Arakawa, 64. They were discovered in separate rooms in their Santa Fe estate with signs of advanced decomposition, probably from being dead for more than a week. As investigators try to establish a cause of death for the movie actor and his wife, their misidentification of Zinna could raise doubts about other parts of their investigation.

In their affidavit for a search warrant, sheriff’s investigators said deputies “continued to search the residence where they then observed/found a deceased brown in color German-Shepard (sic) canine.” Details of the affidavit were reported by the media, leading friends to believe Bear had died.

USA TODAY visited the Santa Fe Animal Shelter, the county agency responsible for housing animals when they are found with deceased owners. Staff there referred all questions to the sheriff’s office.

It’s unclear how the dog was misidentified in the report. USA TODAY contacted Denise Womack-Avila, a spokeswoman for the Santa Fe County Sheriff’s Office, who’s leading the inves-

tigation. She said she hadn’t heard of the mistaken dog identity.

She said investigators may have just misidentified the breed.

“Our deputies do not deal with canines on a daily basis and I cannot currently speak to the condition or state of the dog’s body upon discovery,” Womack-Avila said in a text message response.

Informed by USA TODAY that it was Zinna – not Bear – who was found dead in the home, Gaber gasped.

“My body’s just shaking right now,” she said. “I’m grateful (it’s not Bear). It’s still a tragic story.”

Hackman and Arakawa were devoted dog lovers

Gaber met Hackman and Arakawa more than 18 years ago, when the couple learned of Gaber’s ability to improve animals’ health through chiropractic adjustments. Gaber focuses her treatment on the upper cervical spine to allow the body to better communicate with the brain, she said.

Over the years, she has treated dogs, cats, bald eagles, owls, pet skunks, a porcupine (“I’ll never do that again”), rabbits, goats and a mountain lion.

In 2003, Gaber helped a 1,400-pound buffalo walk straight again, a story captured in the 2007 book “A Buffalo in the House” by R.D. Rosen. Arakawa heard the story at a book event in Santa Fe – and immediately reached out to Gaber.

That sparked an 18-year relationship. Arakawa would bring her dogs into Gaber’s Santa Fe practice every few weeks to get adjusted. The two also would meet for dinner or go shopping around town.

When Arakawa rescued Zinna from a shelter, she contracted a trainer and began putting her through agility training – weaving through poles, tire jumps, ducking through tunnels – with the goal of entering her into Westminster, Gaber said.

Gaber treated Zinna before and after training sessions and competitions, she said. As she got older, Zinna – short for zinfandel – stopped training. But Arakawa continued bringing the dogs in for sessions.

“They wanted to do all the right things for their animals because they loved them so deeply,” Gaber said.

The last time she saw Arakawa was in October, when she brought in Bear for an adjustment. The German shepherd, whom Arakawa rescued from the side of Interstate 25, appeared to enjoy his session, Gaber said. She and Arakawa joked and promised to meet up again soon.

Then, last week, the messages came in: Her two close friends were dead, as was Zinna.

“I went into shock,” Gaber said. “I lay down underneath the stars and cried for an hour.”

Padilla, who took care of and trained the couple’s dogs over the years, got the call Wednesday afternoon. It was the handyman who had first discovered the bodies.

The worker, who had done jobs for Hackman in the past, asked Padilla if he could come retrieve the surviving dogs. Padilla drove to the estate.

Bear was found 10 to 12 feet away from Arakawa. Nikita was running around in the sprawling backyard, skittish because of all the commotion, Padilla said.

Animal control had already collared Bear. Padilla tried to coax Nikita closer by opening and closing the door to Arakawa’s car, but she stayed clear, he said. One of Padilla’s employees tried drawing her close with treats but also couldn’t get near enough.

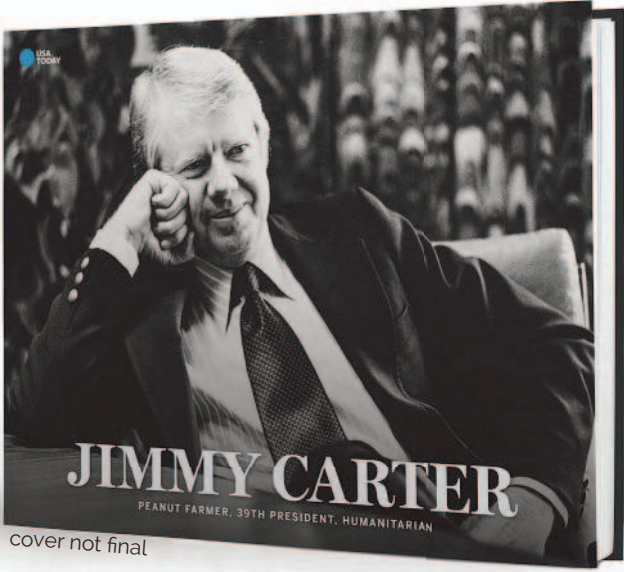
Finally, the animal control staffers set up a door trap for her overnight in the yard, which got her. Padilla returned Thursday to retrieve the dogs. While he was there, Sheriff Adan Mendoza called one of Hackman’s daughters and put her on speakerphone as he and Padilla asked about what to do with the dogs. Overcome by grief, no one came up with an answer, he said.

“It was overwhelming for everybody,” Padilla said. “There was a lot to intake. I finally said, ‘Listen, I’m just here to help.’”

He drove the dogs to his pet day care facility, where he’ll take care of them until lawyers sort out the couple’s will and determine whether there’s any mention of what to do with the dogs. They won’t be taken to a shelter, Padilla said.

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Wind

Continued from Page 1A

approach could miss undeveloped land zoned as residential while capturing unzoned land around homes on the tribal land. But the end result, he said, is “not going to overstate the amount of land available.”

The proposed 12-mile buffer, in addition to its extreme practical limitations on Arizona wind power siting, also far exceeds any existing residential setback requirement for new wind farms nationwide.

According to USA TODAY’s 2024 analysis of bans, moratoriums and other impediments to wind and solar energy development across the U.S., typical zoning ordinances in multiple states require a setback of 1.1 to 1.5 times the height of a turbine, totaling about 550 to 750 feet. This ensures that, in the rare event that a turbine falls over, it would not land on a neighbor’s property.

Some jurisdictions have required 1.5 or 2 times the height of a turbine, Rule said, to be cautious and reduce noise.

“But then lately, in the last five to 10 years, we’ve seen more of these states going beyond that,” he said. “Some of it is just anti-wind sentiment at the local level. Beyond about a quarter mile to maybe a half a mile, they’re so far away, they’re not going to affect anything other than visual.”

A USA TODAY review in February 2024 found that Nebraska had the most extreme limitations, with counties requiring one-, two- or even five-mile setbacks. In Iowa, Clarke County passed a law in 2024 that no wind turbine may be built within two miles of a public area, which includes all towns and parks. In 2017, Vermont passed a setback requirement of 10 times the turbine height, or about one mile, from the nearest residence. No wind farms have been built in the state since.

The new law proposed in Arizona would require setbacks approximately 85 times the height of the tallest wind turbines and 115 times the height of shorter versions.

On top of buffers around airspace, military zones, habitats of protected species, national historic sites and burial grounds or significant cultural places for Arizona’s 22 federally recognized tribes, Rule said, this law would effectively cancel all future wind farm opportunities in the state – limiting far more than just clean power.

“It really harms the whole state,” he said. “It harms those counties because of the potential tax revenues that could have been generated through that development, potential job opportunities, and the lease revenues for the farmers and ranchers. That’s why no other jurisdiction has done anything even close to this.”

How legislation might progress

Arizona Rep. Dave Marshall, R-Snowflake, introduced the bill on the House floor on Jan. 29. It has since progressed through two committee hearings and is due for a House floor vote, where it appears likely to pass based on chamber control and support so far. During that process, an amendment was added that would require “a proposed wind farm to obtain approval from each municipality within 25 miles of the proposed wind farm.” This could further limit wind farm siting even beyond USA TODAY’s map calculation.

Next, it will move to the Senate floor for consideration and, if it passes there, will end up on the desk of Gov. Katie Hobbs.

Hobbs’ office did not immediately return The Republic’s request for comment on whether she supports this bill. Though a Democrat, her track record on signing environment-related bills into law since taking office in 2022 has been mixed, based on a 2024 Arizona Republic analysis of the fate of state legislation introduced in 2023 and 2024.

Marshall also did not respond to emailed requests for comment on the recent amendment or his broader goals for the bill. But he told a Republic reporter outside the state Capitol on Feb. 4 after the first committee hearing that one of his targets was to ensure energy companies put cleanup money, typically submitted as a bond, in an escrow account where it can more reliably be accessed by rural counties that are often left with the expensive aftermath of a decommissioned project.

As is, the bonds don’t mean anything, Marshall told The Republic. “What (the companies) need to do if they actually want to do this, is put that money in an escrow account. Put that \$20 million where it can be drawn out and used.” He said that the bond requirement is \$20 million in Navajo County, part of Marshall’s district, but is often inaccessible or insufficient under current protocols.

Several participants in the Feb. 4 discussion of the bill before the House



Some rural Arizona residents say they are against wind farm projects because the energy could go to California. DIANNIE CHAVEZ/USA TODAY NETWORK

Natural Resources, Energy and Water Committee – where it moved forward after a 6-4 vote – found this part of the legislation especially reasonable, suggesting the bill could also find more support for that reason as it moves toward becoming law.

Members voting “no” shared concerns that the restrictions were overly broad and could more appropriately be implemented at county levels instead, and that such a law could cause Arizona to fall behind California and Texas on renewable energy progress. Wind energy currently makes up just 1.4% of the electric grid mix in Arizona, which is better known for its solar resources.

The bill faced an additional hurdle when Rep. Patty Contreras, D-Phoenix, who voted a quiet “nay” at the committee hearing, objected to it receiving a date on the consent calendar. But it sailed through that legislative step regardless. The Republic obtained the information about her objection from the House Chief Clerk’s Office.

Contreras told The Republic that, while she agrees with some of the siting restrictions in House Bill 2223, it “goes too far to restrict this clean energy alternative.” She also feels the wind-specific restrictions are not consistent with other land uses, give too much veto power to individuals who would be required to approve the project and would mandate bogus wind health impact studies not required for other utilities.

“Proposing a study committee for this bill buys into the conspiracy theory that wind turbines cause adverse health conditions,” Contreras wrote, linking to a federal energy website that concludes there is no evidence of this.

A similar bill has also been introduced in the Arizona Senate by Sen. Wendy Rogers, R-Flagstaff, but has so far not advanced as far as Marshall’s House version. Senate Bill 1016 proposes that a “wind farm may not be located within six miles of the outer perimeter of a property that is owned by a different person or entity than the person or entity that owns the property on which the wind farm is to be located, except if the property owner consents to the location of the wind farm in writing.”

Rogers did not respond to an emailed inquiry from The Republic about what inspired her bill or whether she had worked with Marshall on it. But its existence indicates there will likely be at least some support for the concept behind Marshall’s more extreme version once it reaches the state Senate.

Bill’s resident-based inspiration

In communications with rural Arizona residents, The Republic obtained more information about the origins of the Arizona House bill that would become the most restrictive for wind farm siting in the U.S. if it becomes law.

Residents near a proposed wind farm facility in Arizona’s White Mountains reached out to The Republic as part of their campaign against the Lava Run Wind project that would build up to 112 turbines over 500 acres close to homes and ranches outside of Springerville. They also reached out to Marshall, who then reportedly worked on the bill now pending at the Arizona Capitol.

Several of these rural residents attended the bill’s Natural Resources, Energy and Water Committee hearing on Feb. 4 and spoke during public comment in favor of it. Their objections centered largely on their love for the natural

landscapes surrounding their community; the water restrictions they already face that would be strained by pouring the concrete needed for turbine foundations; the lasting consequences of all the ground disturbance, rebar, oil and other materials used during construction; and the dangers the project may pose for wildlife.

“I just want to stress, I am all for clean energy. I’m just for *responsible* clean energy,” John Crawford told The Republic after the committee hearing. He and his wife, Cary, live in the outskirts of metro Phoenix but own property a four-hour drive north near the proposed Lava Run Wind site where they plan to build a retirement home, complete with self-sufficient rooftop solar panels.

The Crawfords and many of their neighbors would prefer to see a mini nuclear facility be built in the Springerville area if more electricity generation is needed. They feel this option would cause less land disturbance and threats to wildlife, while sacrificing few benefits for locals, such as backpacks promised to residents by Repsol Renewables, the company behind the Lava Run Wind project.

“It’s not about the look, we don’t care about the look,” added Jineane Ford, a former Arizona news anchor who grew up on a ranch in Gilbert, near Phoenix. She now lives in the White Mountains, where she hosts a radio show and has become one of the most vocal opponents of the Lava Run Wind project.

They feel especially firm in this stance given that, according to what residents told The Republic, Repsol Renewables informed them at a community meeting that the power generated by the wind turbines would mostly go to customers in California.

Many of these project-specific claims were not possible to fact-check since Repsol Renewables did not offer responses to The Republic’s requests for clarification or its stance on the bill by the time of publication, and it’s unclear whether a purchase agreement is in place for the power yet. But Western energy grid experts have previously explained that electricity fed to the grid system cannot be traced exactly but rather flows the path of least resistance, to where it’s needed, to meet regional demand.

“We’re powered by energy from other states, and that hurts our economy,” said Rule, one of those experts. “Being able to use the sunlight and the wind that we have is an important way for us to help our energy trade balance.”

A spokesperson for the Arizona Game and Fish Department debunked residents’ claims that wildlife on the ground would be poisoned to limit risks to birds of prey hunting in between the rotating wind turbine blades.

“The Department does not use poison as a management practice for removing or deterring wildlife and there is no truth to the concern identified,” wrote Arizona Game and Fish Media Relations Director Michael Colaanni.

The department determined that the area under consideration for the Lava Run Wind facility intersects flight paths of golden eagles, bald eagles and other raptor species and is a breeding area for mountain plovers, all of which reflects residents’ nature concerns and would necessitate monitoring if the project moves forward.

Because of their environmental stance in support of the wind siting bill, the group of Springerville residents was

shocked to see the bill opposed at the committee hearing by Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter Director Sandy Bahr, who said it would be too restrictive for Arizona’s clean energy options and asked why the same distance, approval and bonding requirements are not being proposed for all energy facilities, including those using fossil fuels.

“If this was people complaining about a gas plant, those legislators would call them NIMBYs,” Bahr later told The Republic. “But because it’s about wind, they’re embracing them and writing bills for them. No one is arguing that wind is without impact or that anybody building a wind project, a solar project or any project shouldn’t try to be a good neighbor. But this goes well beyond that and is clearly intended to stop these projects.”

President set precedent

President Donald Trump issued executive orders in January pausing approvals and funding for offshore and onshore wind projects on federal land. Trump has long been known for his public anti-wind stance.

But while many of Trump’s early orders are currently being litigated and may not end up having the full sweeping influence on unleashing America’s energy resources in the way he called for – or rolling back Biden administration-era progress on their cleaner, renewable counterparts – the act set a precedent that experts say could embolden local GOP lawmakers to take similar steps.

“As misinformation about wind turbines’ potential impacts on neighbors spreads and opposition to wind farm development intensifies within conservative circles, states and local governments are increasingly contemplating more extreme setback requirements,” said Rule, the ASU law professor. “President Trump’s criticism of wind energy has likely helped to fuel this trend, although other political forces are also helping to push these narratives.”

The Republic and USA TODAY analysis of acreage that would be left over if HB 2223 passes found that the majority of land left outside the 12-mile buffers is federal, the type being restricted by Trump’s executive orders.

If those orders don’t pass legal tests but the state bill does, some of the federal land left available to wind in Arizona would be within the confines of Grand Canyon National Park. A representative for the park did not respond to multiple requests for comment about whether the Park Service might ever consider allowing wind farms to be built there.

The second-biggest category of land left available to wind by the Arizona House bill is owned by tribes, primarily the Tohono O’odham Nation and the Navajo Nation. Navajo officials did not respond to The Republic’s request for comment on whether they foresee allowing wind farm development on their lands in the future.

Chairman Austin Nunez of the Tohono O’odham Nation told The Republic that “we currently do not have any wind farms or individual wind generators on our reservations. We would need to conduct a study to see if it’s feasible. We currently do not have a position on wind farms since we have not had an interest in them.”

The Republic also reached out to the White Mountain Apache Tribe for input on its stance on wind energy development on its lands in general, and on the Lava Run Wind project in particular, since it is the closest Indigenous community to that Springerville site. Those emails went unanswered.

Excluding residential buffers required by the Arizona House bill, and the federal and tribal land outside of them, leaves 0.4% of Arizona that would be open to wind power infrastructure, not all of it in places suited for that energy source. The state owns 0.2% and the other 0.2% is private, which is where the vast majority of wind projects are built nationwide.

The residents near Springerville are asking their representatives to also remove state land from permitting for wind farms, following Trump’s lead at the federal level, they told The Republic.

But Rule thinks this viewpoint may not be shared by all rural Arizonans, some of whom may see value in opening up portions of that 0.2% private land to wind turbines.

“All of these landowners that could lease their land and generate significant income for their ranch or their farm, are being told, ‘No, you can’t,’ ” he said. “That goes against conservative values.”

The fate of HB 2223 may decide the next phase of that fight, whether the Wild West remains open to wind business and how far across the nation this precedent extends.

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Contributing: Elizabeth Weise, USA TODAY

OPINION

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DOGE savings vs. reforming Social Security



Dace Potas
USA TODAY

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has been dominating headlines as a result of his efforts to reduce government spending. However, little attention has been paid to how little is actually being saved against the budget deficit through his proposed slashes.

To this point, Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency claims to have saved more than \$100 billion by canceling contracts and firing employees, though outside sources have alerted math problems with how much DOGE has actually saved.

The true number is likely to be somewhere in between, but regardless of where it shakes out to be, Musk and DOGE have hardly made a dent in our budget deficit. If Musk and Trump really want to help the problem, they should urge Congress to reform Social Security for any lasting fix.

Our federal government has produced a budget surplus just four times in the past 50 years, and not once since 2001. In each of the last five budgets, our country’s deficits have totaled more than \$1 trillion.

What DOGE is doing is better than nothing when it comes to the deficit, but

Musk’s actions amount to scoring culture war points over meaningful and lasting budget cuts. That only comes through legislation.

The surefire way to get the budget back into a surplus would be to slash entitlement programs, but Trump has promised to leave them untouched.

Social Security and Medicare are the two largest individual spending categories for our federal government, and combine to make up 36% of federal spending. While Republicans’ budget proposal does include much-needed cuts to Medicaid, and potentially Medicare, nobody is seriously considering reforms to retirement benefits.

Social Security is on track to become insolvent in a decade

Social Security is on track to become insolvent in 2035 – meaning that without reforms, the fund will be unable to pay out full benefits beyond that point.

Without action, reaching 2035 would result in an immediate 17% drop in Social Security payments.

I don’t blame Congress. It’s a losing action. Taking away retirement benefits that people have already paid into would mean certain electoral defeat in the coming election cycles for the party that did so. However, it’s a necessary evil, and doing so is the simplest way to reach a budget surplus.

Ironically, Trump is the perfect presi-

dent to actually address the deficit. He’s a disruptor who is ineligible for reelection in 2028. He has no reason to not lead the effort to slash entitlements personally, even if it would likely harm GOP prospects for the next election cycle.

Republicans have the chance to seriously work on reforms, but instead they are obsessing over culture war budget cuts that make little progress against the deficit. The House GOP surprisingly has made swift progress on budget proposals, but these cuts are in the interest of extending Trump’s first term tax cuts – set to expire this year – rather than actually make progress against the deficit.

The average American collects far more in benefits than they ever contributed in payroll taxes. Social Security is essentially a program in which workers subsidize the retirement benefits for those already retired.

Young people like myself are paying to subsidize the retirements of America’s wealthiest generation, knowing full well our benefits are likely to be slashed significantly or disappear by the time we retire. America’s youth ought to take an interest in Social Security being reformed for our own sake.

Social Security has been running a deficit since 2010. Since then, the program has been operating by eating into its own trust fund, built from funding surpluses until that point.

The generosity of Social Security worked when birth rates were high, but

declining birth rates have led to an older population, meaning more collecting benefits and less paying into them.

Social Security is expected to run \$4.1 trillion in deficits by the time it becomes insolvent in 2035, stressing the need for reform now rather than later.

Neither party wants to take the blame for cutting benefits

Congress has a number of options in front of it, including cutting benefits, raising payroll taxes to pay for the solution or raising the age of retirement. None is politically convenient, but they are all necessary for the program to even continue functioning.

Per usual, however, Congress is not incentivized to act to solve the issue, meaning that the likely outcome will be time running out and benefits being reduced. If lawmakers do nothing, benefits will be cut automatically by nearly a fifth in 2035.

Congressional inaction on Social Security means that the federal budget will likely continue to run deficits, and that the program will still have to slash benefits. Neither party wants to take the blame for cutting benefits, even for the benefit of a flawed system. But Republicans have an opportunity to fix things.

Dace Potas is an opinion columnist for USA TODAY and a graduate of DePaul University with a degree in political science.

Musk lies about Social Security, putting Americans at risk



Rex Huppke
USA TODAY

When unelected President Elon Musk isn’t busy firing federal workers and wildly overstating how much money he’s saving the government, the billionaire is finding time to falsely claim that Social Security is a “Ponzi scheme.”

Why would he say that about a beloved program more than 70 million older Americans rely on as a major source of income?

Probably because he’s too rich to have an inkling of an idea how vital Social Security is to regular Americans and resents the idea of wealthy people like himself having to pay into a government program that helps the non-billionaire class. Musk is nothing if not myopic.

But make no mistake where this is all heading. The Department of Government Efficiency created by President Donald Trump and allegedly led by Musk has already pushed the Social Security Administration to announce a plan to cut more than 12% of its staff – roughly 7,000 people.

‘You’re going to see ... an interruption of benefits’

That prompted former Social Security Administration Commissioner Martin O’Malley to warn on CNBC that “people should start saving now” and: “Ultimately, you’re going to see the system collapse and an interruption of benefits. I believe you will see that within the next 30 to 90 days.”

Rich Couture, a spokesperson for the American Federation of Government Employees’ Social Security General Committee, told CNN: “We’re at a 50-year staffing low, and we’re serving the highest number of beneficiaries we’ve ever had in the history of this agency. All of this will adversely undermine the ability of SSA to fulfill its responsibilities to the American people for the provision of Social Security benefits.”

You know who doesn’t care? The absurd rich guy who went on Joe Rogan’s bro-centric podcast the other day and said: “Social Security is the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time.”

Counterpoint: No it’s not, and that’s the kind of thing a person who incorrectly thinks he knows what he’s talking about says in an effort to sound smart and edgy.

Social Security is one of the country’s most popular and successful federal programs, and its pay-as-you-go arrangement is not a deceptive scam – it’s



Protesters rally Saturday against Elon Musk outside a Tesla dealership in New York City. LEONARDO MUNOZ/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

how the system was built to work.

Richard Fiesta, executive director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, wrote in a statement regarding Musk’s comment: “Social Security is a social insurance program. Workers and employers pay in, money goes to the Social Security Trust Fund and is paid out when due. Social Security has a Board of Trustees and professional actuaries who report annually on the health of the Trust Fund.

“It’s solvent and the benefits are guaranteed (unlike the stock market or a private equity fund). In 89 years, Social Security has never missed a payment.”

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., posted on social media that “Social Security keeps 18 million seniors out of poverty every year. Trump and Musk are lying about it for one reason: so they can cut, privatize & dismantle it.”

DOGE can’t even count its supposed savings

There’s no reason to doubt that at this point.

Musk’s sloppy axing of federal workers and contracts has demonstrated little concern or understanding of government work and how it might actually benefit Americans who don’t have the money to build rocket ships.

A New York Times report shows the multitude of errors and overstatements Musk’s DOGE team has been making as it presents its “savings”: “When DOGE first published its list of canceled contracts, there were about 1,100 examples.

The five largest were wrong.

“In one case, DOGE listed a contract worth \$8 million as actually being worth \$8 billion. In another, it mistakenly counted the same \$655 million contract three times.”

Super.

If you rely on Social Security, you don’t want people who can’t count mucking around with the Social Security Administration, particularly if they’re led by a guy who wrongly thinks the whole thing is a scam.

‘The biggest scheme of all time’ is what Musk is doing

Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees, wrote in response to Musk’s “Ponzi scheme” nonsense: “The biggest scheme of all time is Elon Musk’s hostile takeover of the American government, a takeover in which the richest man in the world is somehow allowed to make decisions on a whim that hurt working people and seniors all to fund tax breaks for himself and his fellow billionaires.

“Their only goal is to rob working people of the Social Security benefits we have earned, so they can make themselves even richer.”

Case in point, The Washington Post recently reported this: “The Federal Aviation Administration is close to canceling a \$2.4 billion contract to overhaul a communications system that serves as the backbone of the nation’s air traffic control system and awarding the work

to Elon Musk’s Starlink, according to two people briefed on the plans.”

Gee, I wonder what would lead a government agency to pass a multibillion dollar contract along to Elon Musk?

Musk sees dead people. ‘Tens of millions’ of them.

The DOGE ditherer himself demonstrated his Social Security ignorance recently by posting on social media: “Having tens of millions of people marked in Social Security as ‘ALIVE’ when they are definitely dead is a HUGE problem.”

Yes, that would be a huge problem if it wasn’t fiction. First off, according to the Social Security Administration, about 73 million Americans receive Social Security payments. So if Musk’s “tens of millions” of dead people claim were true, that would mean a huge swath of all payments are going to deceased folks.

In reality, an inspector general report for last year found that less than 1% of Social Security payments were improper, and most of those involved *overpayments* to living people.

Musk makes a big to-do about looking for government “waste and fraud.” But make no mistake, he’s the fraud. And he sees you, the Americans who need and are owed Social Security, as the waste.

Don’t say you weren’t warned.
You can follow USA TODAY columnist Rex Huppke on Bluesky at @rexhuppke.bsky.social and on Facebook at facebook.com/RexIsAJerk

Do you *really* know what you’re injecting into your body?

They may call it “semaglutide,” but it’s not real FDA-approved medicine, and it’s not proven safe or effective.



Some compounded semaglutide vials have been found to contain dangerous impurities, banned substances, or incorrect doses.

Bottom line: If the label doesn’t say **Wegovy**[®] (semaglutide) or **Ozempic**[®] (semaglutide), it’s not FDA approved and you have no idea what’s inside.

FDA declares the shortage is over, ask your health care professional about the real Wegovy[®] and Ozempic[®].



Your health deserves the real thing.
Get the facts at semaglutide.com



Please see Prescribing Information at semaglutide.com.

By scanning the QR code, we may collect aggregate data for analytics. No personal information will be collected.
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MONEYLINE



PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

KROGER CEO RESIGNS AFTER PERSONAL CONDUCT PROBE

Kroger announced Monday that CEO Rodney McMullen has resigned after “a board investigation of his personal conduct.” Lead director Ronald “Ron” Sargent has been appointed interim CEO, effective immediately. Kroger said McMullen’s conduct was “un-related to the business” but “was inconsistent with Kroger’s policy on business ethics.” The board immediately hired an outside attorney to conduct an investigation. Kroger also said: “McMullen’s conduct is not related to the company’s financial performance, operations or reporting, and it did not involve any Kroger associates.”

CFPB STOPPAGE PUTS PAYMENTS IN LIMBO

The Trump administration’s decision to put the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau on ice has left a \$100 million pot of money intended for borrowers allegedly harmed by the student loan servicer Navient sitting in limbo, according to an advocacy group. The work stoppage also calls into question the fate of potentially hundreds of millions of dollars of separate payouts from financial services companies including Cash App parent Block, TD Bank and the lending arm of Honda, two people familiar with CFPB’s operations say. Navient agreed in September to pay \$100 million to the CFPB so the agency could mail checks to borrowers whose costs it said Navient had for years illegally increased. The stoppage at the agency appears to have halted this compensation, according to the Student Borrower Protection Center.



SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

WATCHDOG PROBES KIDS’ PRIVACY ON TIKTOK, REDDIT

Britain’s privacy watchdog, the Information Commissioner’s Office, on Monday launched an investigation into how TikTok, Reddit and online image sharing website Imgur safeguard children’s privacy. The watchdog said it is probing how Chinese company ByteDance’s short-form video-sharing platform TikTok uses 13-17-year-olds’ personal information to suggest content in their feed. Reddit and Imgur are being investigated over how they assess the age of child users, it said. Reddit has been working closely with the ICO and intends to comply with all relevant regulations in the countries in which it operates, a company spokesperson told Reuters in an email.

FAA IS INVESTIGATING FAULTY PILOT WARNINGS

The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating after multiple pilots preparing to land at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport received faulty warnings about possible obstacles in their paths on Saturday. “Several flight crews inbound ... received onboard alerts Saturday indicating another aircraft was nearby when no other aircraft were in the area. Some of the crews executed go-arounds as a result of the alerts,” the agency said in a statement to USA TODAY.



Egg prices have roughly doubled over the past year amid an avian flu outbreak. LISA SCALFARO/USA TODAY NETWORK

A TOUGH EGG TO CRACK

Some Americans turn to backyard chickens as way to handle rising costs

Bailey Schulz USA TODAY

Jennifer Johnson wants to raise chickens – a dream she’s had for nearly a decade. Still, it took until early February, after a dramatic spike in egg prices, for Johnson to convince her husband to say yes to a backyard coop. ● Johnson said she’s going “all in” preparing for the eight chicks set to arrive mid-March. She purchased a chicken brooder – which will house the birds until they’re big enough for a coop – and has started collecting the basic materials for her chickens’ permanent home: food, pest-proof containers, bedding.

With an estimated \$3,000 in upfront costs, “realistically, I don’t think keeping chickens will save me money on egg prices,” Johnson, 38 of California, told USA TODAY. The eggs “might as well be gold.”

Experts say raising chickens isn’t likely to save many inflation-weary consumers money amid the spike in egg prices. But for Johnson, among a growing number of Americans expressing interest in backyard chickens, the money spent is well worth it.

Johnson is looking forward to building a sense of community by sharing eggs with neighbors, and said starting a garden and chicken coop helped ease concerns that food inflation could pick back up again.

“I figured the best way for me to feel comfortable is to put the chain of supply into my hands,” Johnson said.

How much do eggs cost?

Egg prices have roughly doubled over the past year amid an avian flu outbreak, with a dozen large Grade A eggs costing just under \$5 on average as of January, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The prices are high enough to push some Americans to raise their own chickens, even if backyard eggs are unlikely to result in any real savings, according to one university-based

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Consumers grow frustrated as window closes on discounted weight loss drugs

Ken Alltucker USA TODAY

Many Americans have turned to compounding pharmacies to get popular weight-loss drugs due to lack of availability or expensive retail price tags. But this option will soon close for consumers.

The federal government allows compounding pharmacies to sell copies of drugs when the medications are in short supply. Yet federal regulators recently declared the blockbuster weight-loss drugs Wegovy and Zepbound are no longer in shortage. That means consumers who use telehealth companies or medical spas to get less expensive, compounded versions will need to get their medications elsewhere.

That has panicked consumers such



People who rely on compounded versions of popular weight-loss and diabetes drugs need to seek out a new supply. The FDA has declared the shortages of these drugs is over. The decision limits the availability of compounded versions.

JOSH MORGAN/USA TODAY NETWORK

US, EU may feel pinch of tariff war

Prices of clothes, wine and cars could increase

Rachel Barber USA TODAY

President Donald Trump’s plan to impose 25% tariffs on goods from the European Union is likely to provoke retaliatory action from the group’s 27 member countries and could raise prices for American consumers.

Trump announced the sweeping tariffs during a Cabinet meeting last week in which he said the EU was created to “screw” the United States. He said the EU has taken advantage of the U.S., adding: “They don’t accept our cars. They don’t accept, essentially, our farm products and we accept everything of them.” The announcement came as Trump threatened and has now followed through on new tariffs on goods from Mexico, Canada and China.

Neil Saunders, a retail analyst at the research and analytics firm GlobalData, said whether someone agrees with tariffs or the Trump administration’s approach or not, it is true “the EU is pretty protectionist and the U.S. is very open as a market.” He added, however, that the tariffs will probably hurt U.S. consumers and the EU.

“There is something to be said for leveling the playing field,” Saunders told USA TODAY. “If the tariffs happened and went ahead, it would be extremely disruptive for Americans, as well as painful for Europe.”

Goods imported to the U.S. from the EU’s 27 member countries totaled \$605.8 billion in 2024, according to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. If imposed, Trump’s tariffs will put a tax on those products American companies purchasing them will need to pay. The companies are likely to cover at least some of that extra cost by raising prices for their customers immediately, or gradually over time. Economists generally agree tariffs increase inflation.

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President Donald Trump listens during a Cabinet meeting at the White House on Feb. 26 in Washington, D.C.

ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

as Amanda Bonello, a Marion, Iowa, mother of three, who worries the supply cutoff will force her to buy the brand-name version of a drug she can’t afford. She takes a compounded version of tirzepatide, Eli Lilly’s drug sold under the name Mounjaro to treat diabetes and Zepbound for weight loss. The average retail price for Zepbound is nearly \$1,300, according to GoodRx, a prescription drug discount provider.

“It leaves me up a creek without a paddle,” Bonello said. “It feels like we’re all on an island and Big Pharma has the only food source, and they’re letting everyone who can’t afford it starve.”

Industry groups that represent compounding pharmacies and suppliers have sued to continue selling these drugs. And patients have started an

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Chickens eat some greens at a backyard chicken coop on Feb. 24 in Windsor, Colo. LOGAN NEWELL/USA TODAY NETWORK

Eggs

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livestock expert.

Chicken coops were among the most popular DIY projects to grab Americans’ attention last year, according to a report from home projects and repairs app Frontdoor based on Google search data. A rent-a-chicken program has also reported an uptick in reservations, as previously reported by USA TODAY.

The price hike among eggs was big enough to push Maxwell Mallory, 29 of Missouri, to order chickens after contemplating the purchase for years.

“(I wanted chickens) before the whole egg pricing issue, but I definitely did choose to get them early because of that,” he said.

Mallory and his husband moved from the suburbs to the country in November, allowing them more space to garden and raise chickens. Mallory said they were drawn to the idea of raising and growing their own food, especially after price hikes at grocery stores.

Their chicks – Beer, Cerveza and Shandy, which were brought home in an empty Corona box earlier this year – are living in their shower for now, although Mallory plans to move them outdoors once the weather warms and

their coop is finished.

“It’s more work than you would think,” he said. “People talking about them online talk about them as if they just do their thing and then you get eggs eventually. No. It’s five-plus live barnyard animals you have in your house. It’s definitely not simple.”

Are chickens worth it financially?

While egg prices may make purchasing chicks more tempting, a backyard coop isn’t easy money.

A backyard chicken budgeting tool from the Oklahoma State University Extension website factors in costs like feed, bedding, labor and the average three-year lifespan of a hen to determine whether there are potential profits.

In order for a backyard chicken coop with eight hens to save consumers money, eggs would need to cost \$10 per dozen over the next three years, said Dana Zook, an OSU Extension area livestock specialist.

It’s a high bar, even with egg prices expected to climb 41% this year.

“If you’re trying to, in the short term, defray the costs of eggs, it may not be the best option,” Zook said. “Egg prices will go down. We’ve just got to get through this tough period.”

Nevertheless, Zook said interest in

backyard chickens has been on the rise as more Americans express interest in raising or growing their own food. She noticed an uptick in 2015, during another bird flu outbreak, then again in 2020, when lockdowns left grocery shelves bare and gave consumers more time to take up at-home hobbies.

“It’s more than just food production. It’s also a really good project for kids – but it’s not a cheap project,” Zook said.

She estimates the bare minimum startup costs with eight chicks would be a little over \$600, but there are ways to keep costs low. Zook said converting part of a garage into a coop, for instance, will likely be less expensive than purchasing a new coop.

Zook said interested households should do their research before purchasing chicks or hens. They should be prepared to invest at least 15 minutes each day to care for the birds and understand how to best provide food, health care and other needs.

Homeowners should also make sure they are allowed to own chickens, since rules vary across municipalities and homeowners associations.

Zook suggested looking into local university extension offices for guidance. OSU’s offers an online course that teaches the basics of raising backyard chickens.

Tariffs

Continued from Page 1B

Trump’s 25% tariffs on the EU could affect many products. Saunders highlighted their likely effect on high-end goods and luxury fashion brands such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Hermes. Other more affordable brands like the clothing company Zara, which is based in Spain, could also be affected.

Saunders explained that if the tariffs apply to items used in manufacturing such as plastics or rubber, they probably will disrupt supply chains. He gave the examples of how imported organic chemicals are used to make household cleaning products and how leather is used to make items including sofas and cars.

“It’s one of those things where the disruption is really only measurable if the tariffs (are) in place because there are so many hidden bits to it,” Saunders said.

The EU said last week that it would respond “immediately” and “firmly” to Trump’s “unjustified” trade barriers. It could respond with a variety of measures, but they probably would include retaliatory tariffs on common U.S. exports to the EU, Saunders said.

What items from the EU could be hit?

The following common imports to the United States from the EU, listed in order of volume, could fall under Trump’s tariffs, according to The GlobalStat database:

- Mechanical appliances and electrical equipment
- Pharmaceutical products
- Vehicles and aircraft
- Optical instruments
- Agricultural and food products, which according to the European Commission, include wine, spirits and liqueurs, processed cereal-based foods such as breakfast cereals or pasta, and other miscellaneous processed foods.
- Beer and cider
- Dairy products
- Organic chemicals
- Oil, gas and coal

“If the tariffs happened and went ahead, it would be extremely disruptive for Americans, as well as painful for Europe.”

Neil Saunders
Retail analyst at research and analytics firm GlobalData

Frustrated

Continued from Page 1B

online petition to extend the time in which they can use compounded GLP-1, or glucagon-like peptide-1, medications. Alternatively, the petition requests the Food and Drug Administration authorize generic versions or encourage drug-makers to lower retail prices. The petition also seeks to compel health insurers to cover these drugs.

What’s status of compounded Wegovy and Zepbound?

Compounding suppliers and pharmacies will soon no longer be allowed to make and sell weight-loss drugs for the mass market. The federal government has authorized a transition period that’s already partly closed for compounded versions of Zepbound and Mounjaro. Consumers will have a bit longer to get compounded semaglutide, which is sold under the brands Wegovy for weight loss and Ozempic for diabetes.

In December, the FDA declared Eli Lilly’s tirzepatide was no longer in short supply. The FDA said pharmacies had until Feb. 18 to discontinue compounding, distributing or dispensing tirzepatide. Suppliers that produce batches of the drug and sell to others have until March 19 to cease distribution. The industry trade group Outsourcing Facilities Association sued the FDA in U.S. District Court in Texas and filed a motion seeking to delay such enforcement.

In a legal response to the industry trade group’s motion, the FDA urged the court to reject the group’s request. The agency argues rejecting the request would “maximize patient safety” and adhere to Congress’ intent to incentivize drug development while allowing compounding during temporary drug shortages.

Last month, the FDA said the short-

age of shortage of Novo Nordisk’s semaglutide is over. Pharmacies must cease selling compounded semaglutide by April 22. Facilities that supply compounded semaglutide injections must cease distributing the drug by May 22.

I take compounded weight-loss drugs: What will my doctor or pharmacist tell me?

Pharmacists who supply compounded weight-loss and diabetes drugs already are discussing the situation with customers. Some aren’t refilling prescriptions. Others don’t want to start new customers on the compounded medications because they’ll soon need to switch to brand-name medications.

Within a year of discontinuing semaglutide, a group of 327 patients in the U.S., Europe and Japan regained two-thirds of weight lost while on the medication, one study found. The study also said the patients were less healthy than they were while on the medication.

Jennifer Burch, who runs an independent compounding pharmacy in North Carolina, said she informs all her patients about how compounded drugs are available only when a brand name is on the FDA’s shortage list.

She fields questions from people who are interested in starting on compounded tirzepatide. With the drug shortage ending, she advises patients to not start taking compounded drugs if they won’t be able to access or afford the brand-name drugs.

“We try to make sure they know that up front,” said Burch, who is president of the Pharmacy Compounding Foundation. “We don’t want to pull the rug out from under them.”

Burch added some patients want doctors to write longer-term prescriptions so they can stockpile the compounded medication for up to one year. But doctors are reluctant to do that because they must monitor patients’ weight loss and overall

health while on the medication, she said.

“I had a provider yesterday who said, ‘I’m really scared to write 12 months for a patient. They’ll come back to me and they’ll weigh 100 pounds. That’s not really what I want,’” Burch said.

The industry group Alliance for Pharmacy Compounding urged the FDA to approve the transition period for people taking compounded weight-loss medications to give them time to prepare for such a change, said CEO Scott Brunner.

Brunner said patients often must go back to their doctor or telehealth provider and get a new prescription for their weight-loss medications. This transition period gives pharmacies enough time to prepare for the change without abruptly changing patients’ prescriptions.

“This is all about continuation of care, assuring patients don’t experience some interruption of therapy,” Brunner said. “Abruptly ending these GLP-1 drugs can have potential health consequences.”

What's being done to make brand-name versions of weight-loss drugs more affordable?

Most large companies that provide health insurance benefits for workers and private insurance companies cover diabetes drugs such as Ozempic and Mounjaro.

But a survey last year by the benefits consultant Mercer said less than half of large employers covered GLP-1 drugs for obesity. That means consumers often face large bills for drugs that retail for about \$1,300 per month, before rebates or discounts.

While Congress has scrutinized pharmaceutical companies over the retail price of these medications, drug-makers have rolled out some discounted, direct-to-consumer options.

Last week, Eli Lilly slashed the monthly price for lower-dosage vials of

Zepbound by \$50 for consumers who pay cash via the drugmaker’s LillyDirect website. Consumers who buy a month’s supply of 2.5 mg vials will pay \$349 and 5 mg vials will cost \$499. Lilly also announced higher dosages of 7.5 mg and 10 mg at monthly prices of \$599 and \$699 respectively. Those higher dosage prices will be discounted to \$499 per month for the first fill, as well as refills within 45 days.

Meanwhile, drug compounders are still pressing legal challenges to the FDA’s decision to declare the weight-loss drug shortages over. The Outsourcing Facilities Association sued the FDA on Monday over its decision to declare Novo Nordisk’s Wegovy and Ozempic are no longer in shortage. The industry group earlier sued the agency over declaration that Lilly’s tirzepatide was no longer in short supply.

In the tirzepatide lawsuit, the OFA filed a motion arguing the FDA’s shortage decision was effectively a new rule that requires a more comprehensive regulatory process. A federal judge has not yet ruled on the motion. The FDA said it won’t enforce its Feb. 18 deadline for compounding pharmacies to discontinue the drug until the court rules on the motion.

After the FDA declared the tirzepatide shortage over, Bonello said she planned to ask her doctor to switch her to compounded semaglutide. Now, she realizes that’s not a lasting solution, either.

Her workplace insurance plan covers GLP-1 diabetes medications but it doesn’t cover weight-loss medications. Although she has elevated blood sugar, she doesn’t have diabetes, even though other family members have been diagnosed.

Even with Lilly’s discounted price of \$499 for the higher dosages announced this week, Bonello said she can’t afford that amount and still pay daily living expenses.

“That’s more than my phone bill and car insurance combined,” she said.

Alexa+ comes with variety of new abilities

Upgrade lets device order tickets, schedule events

Mike Feibus
Special to USA TODAY

With a fresh infusion of personality, smarts and expertise, a new Alexa – officially, Alexa+ – is about to transform Amazon’s smart home control center from simple command-taker to a perky and pleasant reservation-maker.

But after more than a decade relegated to a corner of the kitchen turning off lights and turning on cooking timers, is Alexa really ready to take a more active role in our lives, handling complex tasks like ordering event tickets, adding kids’ soccer games to the family calendar and finding a shop and scheduling repairs?

More to the point, are we ready to hand over our phones, calendars and get-things-done apps like Grub Hub, OpenTable and Uber to Alexa+? And are we willing to pay for the privilege of a smart assistant at the controls?

As for whether to pay, Amazon effectively kicked that can down the road at its reveal, at least for its 200 million Prime customers. That’s because the \$19.99 Alexa+ service will be bundled free in the \$14.99-a-month Prime service.

Alexa+ will start rolling out next month. You can sign up for a heads up at the just-live alexa.com site.

Compelling capabilities

At the reveal event, Amazon made a compelling case for Alexa+’s conversational capabilities. You don’t have to worry about being precise. She – Amazon insists Alexa+’s pronouns are she/her – understands English. (More lan-



Amazon products are displayed at an Amazon devices launch event in New York City on Feb. 26. BRENDAN MCDERMID/REUTERS

guages coming.) You can interrupt her. You can ask her follow-up questions. She will get you.

Alexa+ is at its core generative AI technology. So consumers’ tolerance may be tested by inevitable mistakes, misunderstandings and downright hallucinations. That said, the more Alexa+ learns about you and understands what you do and what you like, the better the service will get.

After watching you turn on the living room lights shortly before sunset each day, for example, Alexa+ will offer to automate that. And once the system understands your preferences, it will automatically add your brand of pasta to a grocery order.

And of course, the more apps Amazon signs on as partners, the more likely Alexa+ will be able to take over and do what you ask.

Prospects for Alexa+

Amazon isn’t the only voice assistance platform getting an AI infusion. Google and Apple have upgraded their platforms. And while Alexa may not be the go-to assistant on smartphones, it is far and away the in-home voice assist leader – and a leading smart home controller as well.

For Alexa, the upgrade in smart home control alone could be a huge benefit for millions. Because rather than opening

the phone app and naming every smart light and every room in the house, you can just ask Alexa+ to set it all up.

Unlike Apple and Google, which brag about how much of their chatbot is handled on-device, Amazon really isn’t in a position to do that. Not yet. The reason: The existing Alexa devices you might have in your home aren’t built for it.

That probably will change with new Amazon Echo devices coming available later this year and beyond. For now, though, Alexa+ will reside in the cloud. Though that should lead to better answers – there’s a lot more horsepower in the cloud than there could ever be in an Echo – it may also be challenging to respond quickly.

Bottom line

“Until right this moment, we have been limited by the technology,” Panos Panay, who heads the Devices & Services unit at Amazon, told the event crowd. “Every once in a while a technology comes around and it changes literally everything.”

The new Amazon Alexa+ certainly has the potential to be that technology. Based on the limited view we’ve had thus far, the platform seems to have the personality, the smarts, the contextual awareness and the framework for new capabilities to make itself really useful. Even vital.

Will we give it that chance? We’ll see. Consumers can be brutally impatient with new technology. Remember, it was our low tolerance that put Alexa in the corner at the outset. Is Alexa+ good enough to cut through our frustration-in-waiting? That will be the real test for the platform’s personality and contextual prowess. I look forward to finding out.

Brazilian city ranked best for digital nomads in ’25

Kathleen Wong
USA TODAY

When the digital nomad life calls your name, the big question becomes: Where to?

Having the freedom and flexibility of remote work helps people turn their travel dreams into their everyday reality, even though it comes with its fair share of challenges. This live-work-play lifestyle has surged in popularity over recent years, with one in 10 U.S. workers now calling themselves a digital nomad, according to a 2024 study by MBO Partners.

More destinations around the world – from Taiwan to Portugal – have started to introduce digital nomad visa offerings, creating an overwhelming array of options to choose from for a home base.

When choosing where to go, remote workers need to take several things into consideration, like safety, Wi-Fi access, costs of living and even the logistics of obtaining one of those digital nomad visas. “The freedom of digital nomadism comes with unique challenges,” said Suzanne Morrow, CEO of InsureMyTrip. “Having the right travel insurance acts as a safety net, protecting against unexpected medical emergencies, theft, trip disruptions and more.”

To help decide on a destination, InsureMyTrip ranked the best cities for digital nomads based on factors such as each country’s happiness score, average cost of living, U.S. State Department travel advisories, things to do and safety index using data gathered in September. Each ranked destination offers some form of a digital nomad visa, allowing remote workers to legally live and work there for a certain amount of time.

Here are the top 10 cities for digital nomads in 2025:

10. San Jose, Costa Rica

For digital nomads who want to experience “pura vida” – the country’s feel-good slogan – the capital of Costa Rica makes an ideal home base. Travelers can post up in the city, where cafes and workspaces abound – and make weekend getaways to the coast for surfing and relaxing on the beach.

9. Podgorica, Montenegro

Set along the Adriatic coastline, Montenegro is an under-the-radar Baltic destination with a multifaceted history spanning empires. This small yet diverse country boasts an array of natural beauty, from mountain ranges to lakes. Its capital, Podgorica, is known to be highly walkable and blends the old with the new to offer modern cafes near Ottoman-era mosques in its old town.



Brasilia is the top city for digital nomads, according to InsureMyTrip.



Budapest, which ranked second, offers thermal baths, delicious cuisine and historic architecture. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY INSUREMYTRIP

8. Buenos Aires, Argentina

Buenos Aires has become a top destination for digital nomads, who are drawn to its vibrant culture and nightlife, warm climate and affordable cost of living. There’s always something to do in the city’s diverse neighborhoods, from tango dancing to wandering the various markets or museums or escaping to nature for a quick day trip to a beach or national park.

7. Nicosia, Cyprus

As the capital of Cyprus, Nicosia boasts a high score for happiness, according to InsureMyTrip. A relatively low cost of living, English being widely spoken and a temperate Mediterranean climate also make it an attractive choice for digital nomads.

6. Madrid, Spain

Madrid is a top destination for both tourists and expats; however, locals across Spain have expressed concerns over overtourism. With an array of nightlife, restaurants and museums, the city is rich in culture, from historic neighborhoods such as La Latin and colorful murals of Coyoacan.

5. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

As an emerging destination for remote workers, Kuala Lumpur boasts affordability when it comes to food and accommodations while still offering modern infrastructure, like a metro system and dependable Wi-Fi. This is the ideal destination for those who want to spend most of their time outside, with nearby beaches for an easy day trip, a warm tropical climate and hiking

trails through rainforests.

4. Lisbon, Portugal

Portugal’s welcoming culture, slow-paced lifestyle and affordable cost of living have made it a rising destination for expats. In 2022, the country launched its digital nomad visa, making it easier for remote workers to enjoy the beaches, parks and pastel-colored streets.

3. Montevideo, Uruguay

As Uruguay’s largest city, Montevideo has a laid-back yet modern atmosphere, perfect for digital nomads seeking out a more balanced lifestyle. This South American city boasts a low crime rate and cost of living, but also a thriving arts and culture scene and proximity to gorgeous beaches.

2. Budapest, Hungary

As an underrated European destination, Budapest scored the title of the second-best city for digital nomads for its wide range of attractions to explore, from natural landscapes to thermal baths and historical churches. Other perks include a high safety ranking and a low cost of living.

1. Brasilia, Brazil

Brasília earned InsureMyTrip’s top spot as the best city for digital nomads, thanks to its visa option available since January 2022. The city stands out for its affordability compared to the U.S. and relative safety. Digital nomads can enjoy year-round sunshine, warm weather and plenty of green spaces, making it an ideal place to live and work.

50★States

ALABAMA Montgomery: Sixty new affordable housing units will be coming to the downtown area this time next year. The project, which is the third phase of construction at Columbus Square, will include five units specifically for residents who are disabled.

ALASKA Juneau: South Korea and the United States have agreed to establish a working-level group to discuss a gas pipeline project in Alaska, energy, shipbuilding, tariffs and non-tariff barriers, South Korea’s Industry Minister Ahn Duk-geun said.

ARIZONA Phoenix: Authorities are investigating a fiery crash that killed four people and left two others in critical condition after multiple vehicles and tractor-trailers collided on Interstate 10 west of Phoenix. The crash occurred Saturday and shut down Interstate 10 eastbound for more than 16 hours, according to the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

ARKANSAS Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas football team will hold its annual spring game at the Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium on April 19, the university announced. Admission is free, and the team will hold an autograph session after the game.

CALIFORNIA Los Angeles: Shaking was felt across the city Sunday and it did not have anything to do with the 2025 Oscars. A 3.9-magnitude earthquake struck near North Hollywood around 10:13 p.m. local time, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

COLORADO Timnath: Colorado Parks and Wildlife confirmed the presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza in the geese at Timnath Reservoir and nearby ponds, according to a public notice posted on its website. The risk of infection to humans is low, but the agency’s advice is to not handle sick or dead birds.

CONNECTICUT Norwich: A man is recovering after falling through ice on Saturday, WFSB reported. The fire chief said the man was on shore when rescue crews arrived, and he was then taken to a local hospital.

DELAWARE Dover: Mayor Robin R. Christiansen announced the end of the state of emergency on Feb. 27 involving the city’s computer network and systems. On Jan. 22, the city reported a data loss but said it didn’t involve a breach of security or compromise of personal information. The data loss caused delays in paying bills, issuing rental permits, reports from city committees and lien sheets for verification to attorneys.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Washington: A man was hospitalized Saturday after he was shot by an off-duty Metropolitan Police Department detective, according to a spokesperson for the department, WUSA reported.

FLORIDA Palm Beach: An updated 1950s-era house near President Donald Trump’s Mar-a-Lago Club has changed hands for \$12 million, or \$2 million less than it sold for in September 2023, courthouse records show. The five-bedroom house is the fourth property to change hands since the middle of December in the security zone that closes to through-traffic when Trump is in residence at Mar-a-Lago.

GEORGIA Bryan County: Abandoned and abused animals in the county will soon have a new place to be treated while waiting to find their forever homes. Construction of a 4,400-square-foot animal shelter is underway and is slated to open this summer.

HAWAII Honolulu: A 16-year-old was arrested and charged with attempted murder, as well as gun-related charges, stemming from a Lanakila shooting on Feb. 23, KHON reported.

IDAHO Boise: The Idaho House passed a bill last week that would change the state’s indecency law to include toplessness, Idaho Press reported.

ILLINOIS Springfield: One of the state’s insurance providers, Carle Health, announced last week its plan to close down the majority of its health plans. The end of coverage will take effect at the end of the year, leaving thousands without coverage.

INDIANA Indianapolis: Honda has decided to produce its next-generation Civic hybrid in Indiana instead of Mexico to avoid potential tariffs on one of its top-selling car models, according to three people familiar with the matter.

HIGHLIGHT: NEW HAMPSHIRE



Sandi Clark Kaddy, president of the Seacoast African American Cultural Center, talks about the many important Black members of the community who are highlighted at the center. DEB CRAM/USA TODAY NETWORK

Portsmouth: Portraits of the region’s influential Black forebears hang on walls of the Seacoast African American Cultural Center. The growing “Wall of Fame” is one of several projects in development to mark the center’s 25th anniversary in 2025. Donations of items from residents in the Seacoast Region in New Hampshire and southern Maine residents, in addition to contributions from people residing beyond the region, have helped the center compile more than 1,500 items. The center, located inside the Portsmouth Historical Society, is open seasonally and will reopen May 2.

IOWA Des Moines: The Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden is planning \$9 million in modifications and renovations, including what it calls a “statement” entrance and new, free-access gardens. It said that it already has raised more than \$8 million for the improvements and invited the public to contribute the remainder.

KANSAS Emporia: An assisted living facility in Emporia is being sued by a former employee who is claiming violation of labor and wage laws, as well as retaliation for whistleblowing. Kaylani Bronson filed the lawsuit against Sunflower Care Homes LLC in the U.S. District Court of Kansas.

KENTUCKY Frankfort: State lawmakers passed the Safer Kentucky Act last year, which targets people living on the streets by making it illegal for them – or anyone else – to sleep in undesignated spaces. Recently released data from the Kentucky Center for Statistics, a government-run data hub, shows at least 266 charges were filed under the act at district courts throughout the state from July 15 to Dec. 31, 2024.

LOUISIANA Baton Rouge: As of 2025, the median household income in Louisiana is \$57,852. The range of middle-class income in the state is \$38,568 to \$115,704, according to Yahoo Finance.

MAINE Kennebunk: Susanne Lillis wants to get to know fellow residents throughout the community and has opened the Shipwreck Pub, a lounge inside White Sails Inn, to the public. “Anybody can come by,” she said. Lillis owns and operates the inn, which she purchased from its previous owner in 2023.

MARYLAND Catonsville: Officials said two construction workers who were trapped in a trench outside a house under renovation on Friday have died, WBAL reported. Officials said the workers’ bodies have been extricated.

MASSACHUSETTS Boston: An off-duty police officer shot and killed a man allegedly trying to stab people inside a Chick-fil-A over the weekend, the district attorney and department’s commissioner said.

MICHIGAN Lansing: A Michigan State University student is facing felony charges after police said she was behind an anonymous online threat made against the university last week. Hope Duncan, 18, of East-pointe, is charged with false report or threat of terrorism and using a computer to commit a crime, according to Ingham County Prosecutor John Dewane.

MINNESOTA St. Cloud: Happy Thyme Asian Market, a new Asian market that offers a wide selection of food and snacks, has opened. It will soon serve food from its new restaurant, located in the store, and expects to open a food court in the coming months.

MISSISSIPPI Oxford: Healthgrades, a health care resource company, released its annual list of the best hospitals throughout the nation, and one Mississippi facility made the list: Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi in Oxford.

MISSOURI Columbia: A documentary film program through the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism was bolstered recently with a multi-million dollar donation. Jonathan Murray, namesake and founder of the Jonathan B. Murray Center for Documentary Journalism, provided \$10.3 million to the center, the university said.

MONTANA Butte: The old Curtis Music Hall is being restored as a multi-use building with commercial space and 14 apartments, KPAX reported.

NEBRASKA Omaha: Omaha Fire crews responded to a fire at Anytime Laundry on Saturday, WOWT reported. OFD says no one was in the laundromat at the time.

NEVADA Reno: A judge dismissed the bankruptcy of the stalled Reno City Center project following an extended battle that pitted current ownership with the downtown property’s former project manager.

NEW JERSEY Hunterdon County: Two cats tested positive for avian influenza, but the likelihood of feline-to-human transmission remains low, officials said. The cats were found on the same property in Hunterdon County, state Health Department officials said.

NEW MEXICO Doña Ana County: The Ben Archer Health Clinics in Doña Ana County reversed course regarding treating people who can’t prove U.S. citizenship after a posted sign drew attention from Sen. Martin Heinrich. “What Ben Archer was pulling at its health clinics wasn’t just wrong, it was illegal,” Heinrich said.

NEW YORK Utica: Nearly a dozen staff members are on administrative leave and state officials are investigating after an inmate at a New York medium-security prison died over the weekend, prison officials said. According to information from The New York State Department of Corrections, the 22-year-old prisoner had been housed at Mid-State Correctional Facility in Marcy and died Saturday.

NORTH CAROLINA Asheville: Buncombe County and four county employees filed a motion to dismiss a federal wrongful death lawsuit against them, which alleges the county failed to supervise Ryan Ricky Houston, whose violent flight from law enforcement killed three people in August 2024.

NORTH DAKOTA Bismarck: The Secretary of State’s office has approved a petition for a measure that would change the state’s vehicle window tinting law, KVRN reported.

OHIO Stow: A man has been charged by federal authorities, accused of smuggling foreign-made body armor and falsely claiming it was domestically made and certified. Federal authorities are now urging buyers to stop using the body armor, deeming it substandard. Investigators found thousands of Chinese-produced body armor plates at Vallmar Studios and Shot-Stop Ballistics, the Stow companies owned and operated by Vall Iliev, according to a news release from the office of the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio.

OKLAHOMA Norman: The federal government’s mass culling of employees has reached Oklahoma’s National Weather Center just as tornado season approaches. A local spokeswoman for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration declined to comment when asked how many people were fired and which departments lost staff. Located on the University of Oklahoma campus, the National Weather Center is home to important offices of NOAA, National Weather Service, National Severe Storms Laboratory, along with state weather and climate-monitoring programs.

OREGON Millersburg: Timberlab broke ground last week on a 190,000-square-foot, cross-laminated timber manufacturing facility that is expected to produce 7 million to 9 million square feet of mass timber products a year.

PENNSYLVANIA Greencastle: The Goodwill store will more than double in size when it expands into the space formerly occupied by Dollar General. The opportunity to enlarge came when Dollar General moved out of the adjacent retail store in the Greencastle Market Place strip mall in December 2024 to prepare for the new free-standing DG Market, now under construction nearby. Both the Goodwill expansion and the opening of the new DG Market are expected in the coming months.

RHODE ISLAND Providence: The developer behind SouthCoast Wind is planning for the possibility of up to a four-year delay for the offshore wind farm that would supply power to Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Developer Ocean Winds said that it’s accounting for the possible delay, which would push the project’s operation date back from 2030 to 2034, because of uncertainties caused by the executive order signed last month by President Donald Trump that aims to curtail offshore wind development.

SOUTH CAROLINA Columbia: Home prices in the state are steadily continuing to increase. Compared to 2023, overall median sales prices increased 3.2% at \$335,000 for the year, according to South Carolina Realtors’ 2024 Annual Report on the S.C. Housing Market.

SOUTH DAKOTA Sioux Falls: Stein Sign Display, which is headquartered in Watertown, is expanding into Sioux Falls.

TENNESSEE Nashville: A Republican-led measure heard for the first time last week seeks to impose a 10% tax on vape products and add consumer safety rules for vape products.

TEXAS Forest Hill: A shooting at a northern Texas car wash killed a 5-year-old girl and a 30-year-old man who was reportedly local rapper G\$ Lil Ronnie.

UTAH Ogden: Martin Esparza Espinoza, a security guard, was arrested after he allegedly killed a man who started a fight over tacos, KUTV reported.

VERMONT Warren: Vermont State Police have identified the man whose body was found inside a burned car last month, WCAX reported. Firefighters found a body in the driver’s seat, who has now been identified as Jeremiah Wild.

VIRGINIA Petersburg: Police are investigating a hit-and-run that killed a pedestrian. It happened Monday near Walnut Hill Plaza, according to a police report. The unidentified man was found dead in the road.

WASHINGTON Olympia: A state representative said proposed legislation HB 1252 would force judges to give a written rationale for their bail release determinations in some instances, KOMO reported.

WEST VIRGINIA Kingwood: Kingwood Volunteer Fire Department is selling two of its emergency vehicles, WDTV reported.

WISCONSIN Green Bay: Bay Beach Amusement Park will be open from noon to 6 p.m. April 23-26 for the NFL draft. The dates and times may change before the draft, said Parks, Recreation & Forestry Assistant Director James Andersen.

WYOMING Cheyenne: The Laramie County Fire Station, a special operations and wildland station that caught fire in mid-January, has been demolished, Wyoming News Now reported.

From USA TODAY Network and wire reports



Texas looks to break away from the SEC with Arch Manning taking over the starting quarterback duties in the fall. SCOTT WACHTER/IMAGN IMAGES

SEC spring sorting practice

Conference features handful of playoff contenders

Paul Myerberg USA TODAY

Another national championship game came and went without any participation from the SEC. For the first time in years and years, the conference will head into the regular season behind the Big Ten in the hypothetical ranking of the Power Four leagues. Things seem poised to change. While the Big Ten has several powerhouse teams, no Football Bowl Subdivision conference can match the depth of contenders the SEC will bring to the table. This list includes Texas, Georgia, LSU, Alabama and Tennessee. Other teams with genuine College Football Playoff hopes include Texas A&M, Florida and Mississippi. And just behind this top group are several teams more than capable of double-digit wins and playoff contention. Auburn, South Carolina and Oklahoma could upend the status quo and be one of the three or four SEC teams to make the 12-team playoff field. Here's our pre-spring SEC power rankings, led by the Longhorns:

1. Texas

Arch Manning takes the controls after backing up Quinn Ewers. To get his game going, the Longhorns have to rebuild a receiver corps dinged by graduation and attrition. Another sticking point is a defensive front that won't have the same produc-

tion along the interior. Overall, though, Texas is built to win the SEC and the national championship.

2. Georgia

Georgia must get things going in the running game to help quarterback Gunner Stockton thrive as the full-time starter. He played fairly well in relief of Carson Beck but remains a question mark. There are also some positions to fill on the defensive side but the Bulldogs' track record under Kirby Smart eases any major concerns over that side of the ball. Once again, Georgia is a major threat to win the whole thing.

3. LSU

Maybe LSU hasn't earned the benefit of the doubt under Brian Kelly. But you have to admire the talent on offense with Garrett Nussmeier at quarterback and portal additions set to occupy big roles at receiver and up front. What LSU needs is a big step up on defense, and there's reason to think that's a possibility given another offseason to get comfortable in coordinator Blake Baker's system.

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Bitten Mavs lose Irving to torn ACL

Jeff Zillgitt USA TODAY

One by one, Dallas Mavericks players are headed to the injury report. Now the Mavericks will be without All-Star point guard Kyrie Irving, who suffered a season-ending torn ACL in his left knee in Dallas' 122-98 loss to the Sacramento Kings on Monday. Irving left the game in the first quarter with what the team initially called a sprained knee. Further imaging revealed the extent of the injury. That wasn't the only Mavs injury. Jaden Hardy exited with a sprained right ankle in the second quarter. And the injuries are piling up for a team that is under immense scrutiny since trading star Luka Dončić to the Los Angeles Lakers for star Anthony Davis just before the Feb. 6 trade deadline. Davis is one of several key Mavericks sidelined with an injury. He has played one game for Dallas, during which he suffered a strained left adductor Feb. 8 against Houston. The Mavericks, who won the Western Conference last season, were in eighth place at the time of the trade but are 6-7 since and have dropped to 10th place. At 32-30 going into Tuesday, Dallas was one game behind Minnesota, Sacramento and the Los Angeles Clippers and 3 1/2 games ahead of Phoenix. With mounting injuries, they are in danger of missing the postseason, the play-in game format included. The Mavericks are also without Dereck Lively II (right ankle), Caleb Martin (right hip), Daniel Gafford (right knee) and P.J. Washington (right ankle). Irving was averaging 24.7 points, 4.8 rebounds, 4.6 assists and 1.3 steals and shooting 47.3% from the field, 40.1% on 3-pointers and 91.6% on free throws this season. He had kept the Mavs in the postseason race amid the injuries, scoring at least 30 points six times in his past 11 games, including 42 in a victory against Golden State on Feb. 12.



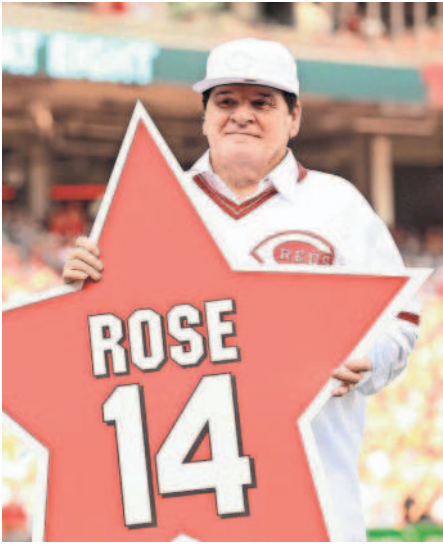
Guard Kyrie Irving is helped off the court by his Mavericks teammates and training staff after the injury Monday. JEROME MIRON/IMAGN IMAGES

Manfred would sell out MLB by reinstating Rose



Nancy Armour Columnist USA TODAY

The facts remain the same as they were on the day Pete Rose was permanently banned from baseball. Pete Rose bet on the game. Pete Rose bet on the game while he was playing and managing. Pete Rose bet on his own team while he was playing and managing. There is ample evidence to support this, and Rose himself acknowledged he sold out the game he supposedly loved. "My actions, which I thought were benign, call the integrity of the game into question," he wrote in his 2004



Pete Rose, shown before a Reds game in 2016, is banned from baseball for gambling on the sport. SAM GREENE/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

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Trump endorsement changes ban equation



Jesse Yomtov USA TODAY

Fame is nothing new. In 2018, USA TODAY Sports found that Trump had mentioned Rose in at least 18 tweets, all calling for "Charlie Hustle" to be honored in Cooperstown. For good measure, Trump said Friday night he plans to pardon Rose, who spent several months in jail after pleading guilty to tax evasion in 1990. While the president may not have a grasp on the Baseball Hall of Fame process, stating in his Truth Social post that MLB itself "didn't have the courage or decency" to induct Rose (the Hall of Fame handles voting, and Rose has never appeared on a ballot), the bureaucratic details aren't the point. In the months since Trump's second election victory, some of America's largest companies have fallen in line for the administration by doing things like Prior to his death in September, Pete Rose had petitioned Major League Baseball several times through the years to consider his reinstatement following the lifetime ban he received in 1989 for gambling on baseball. The petitions were summarily denied - or ignored - each and every time. But the confluence of the MLB hit king's passing and Friday's endorsement from President Donald Trump could be the factors that dramatically change the equation. Trump's affinity for Rose and desire to see him get into the Baseball Hall of

See YOMTOV, Page 2C



Florida quarterback DJ Lagway had 12 touchdown passes in his first season as the starter in 2024. MATT PENDLETON/IMAGN IMAGES

SEC

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4. Tennessee

Nico Iamaleava has to take control of the offense with changes at running back, receiver and the line. Improvement from the second-year quarterback starter will help Tennessee bridge the gap as new faces break into the team’s starting lineup. In the interim, the Volunteers can lean on a defense that should again be one of the best in the conference.

5. Alabama

A pretty miserable debut for Kalen DeBoer should yield a more consistent showing in 2025 even if the Crimson Tide will miss quarterback Jalen Milroe’s explosiveness as a runner and in the downfield passing game. Ty Simpson is the favorite to step into Milroe’s shoes as the new starter. What you have to like about this team is a defense that carried much of the load in 2024 and stands ready to do the same come September.

6. Florida

Amazingly, given where this program stood in October, the Gators are a legitimate playoff contender capable of playing for the SEC crown. The offense has a rising star in quarterback DJ Lagway and will benefit from transfer additions that includes former UCLA wide receiver J. Michael Sturdivant. If the defense continues to progress after last year’s in-season improvement, the hype around Florida will be more than justified.

7. Mississippi

Once again, Mississippi will lean on a strong portal class to stay near the top of the SEC. But the losses are severe enough to wonder if Lane Kiffin’s recruiting haul will be enough to keep the Rebels in the mix. Kiffin gets the benefit of the doubt. Austin Simmons flashed in his brief opportunities at quarterback. He’ll be asked to fill the big shoes of Jaxson Dart.

8. Auburn

After the first two seasons under coach Hugh Freeze, Auburn is ready to add multiple wins and potentially factor into the SEC race. Oklahoma quarterback transfer Jackson Arnold will benefit from the change in scenery, especially with Cam Coleman and Georgia Tech transfer Eric Singleton on the outside. Whether this is an eight-win team or something more depends on the work coordinator DJ Durkin does with this defense.

9. Texas A&M

A&M will continue to challenge for the SEC championship game but can’t be counted among the best in the conference given the question marks on the defensive line and in the secondary. Mike Elko’s defensive background helps erase some of the doubts lingering around the Aggies defense, however. A&M needs quarterback Marcel Reed to continue his development.

10. South Carolina

There are holes all over the defense –

almost everywhere except at end, where sophomore Dylan Stewart is set for All-American accolades. There are also question marks about the offense with Mike Shula replacing former coordinator Dowell Loggins. If things click, the Gamecocks could build on last year’s nine-win finish and move even higher in the US LBM Coaches Poll.

11. Oklahoma

This could be the breakout team in the SEC if the offense flourishes under a pair of additions from Washington State in coordinator Ben Arbuckle and quarterback John Mateer. The Sooners desperately need to rebuild at wide receiver and stay healthy up front. If the offense rebounds, Oklahoma has the defense to be one of the most balanced teams in the conference.

12. Missouri

Look for Missouri to benefit from another relatively easy schedule to win eight or more games and contend for a home in the Top 25. The Tigers open with six games in a row at home and draw SEC road games against Auburn, Vanderbilt, Oklahoma and Arkansas. But is there more to this team than just an easier schedule? The talent level has dropped despite another solid trip through the portal for coach Eli Drinkwitz.

13. Vanderbilt

A repeat bowl bid seems very likely given the return of quarterback Diego Pavia and the way the defense has risen up the SEC rankings after coach Clark Lea’s decision to take over play-calling duties. Pavia is joined on offense by running back Sedrick Alexander and all-conference tight end Eli Stowers.

14. Arkansas

It’s hard to take Arkansas too seriously given the amount of uncertainty on the depth chart, especially on defense. The offense should be better in coordinator Bobby Petrino’s second year, with quarterback Taylen Green set for noticeable improvement as the established starter. At this point, the program’s place under Sam Pittman is pretty easy to predict: Arkansas will win as few as four but no more than seven games.

15. Kentucky

The Wildcats are in a clear state of regression. Is this the year the bottom really falls out for coach Mark Stoops’ program? It wouldn’t be Kentucky without a new transfer quarterback; this time, it’s former Texas A&M, Auburn and Incarnate Word passer Zach Calzada. The defense is a major concern given the losses from last year’s unit, which ranked 13th in the SEC in yards allowed per play.

16. Mississippi State

On the flip side to the debate over which team should lead the SEC, there’s little controversy over which team should bring up the rear. Mississippi State is still looking for a conference win under coach Jeff Lebbby. One bonus for the Bulldogs: Blake Shapen returns after starting the first four games at quarterback before a season-ending injury.

Armour

Continued from Page 1C

autobiography.

That, and only that, is what Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred should consider as he reportedly weighs a request from Rose’s family to reinstate the all-time hits leader so he can be eligible for the Hall of Fame. If Manfred is actually entertaining the idea – and given his indifference to the game’s institutions, it wouldn’t be a surprise – he ought to draft his resignation letter right now because he’ll have stripped baseball of all credibility.

At one point, Manfred recognized that, telling the Baseball Writers’ Association of America in 2023 that Rose had violated “what is sort of rule one in baseball.”

“The consequences of that are clear in the rule,” Manfred said then. “The rules are different for players. It’s part of the responsibility that comes with the privilege of being a major league player.”

Nothing about that has changed. Neither should Rose’s banishment.

No doubt Manfred is feeling pressure from President Donald Trump, who said on social media Friday that he would pardon Rose and criticized his exclusion from the Hall of Fame. But given that Trump incited the Jan. 6 insurrection, has 34 felony convictions for falsifying business records and was found by a civil jury to have sexually abused a woman, he’s not exactly the best person to be doling out lessons in moral clarity.

If Manfred caves, he’ll be betraying the game just like Rose did.

What keeps MLB (for now), the NFL and every other major professional sport from being the WWE is fans believe in their legitimacy. There might

be grouching about the calls Patrick Mahomes gets or the way the ping-pong balls fall for the NBA draft lottery but, deep down, fans know that the games they’re watching are real and not staged. They know Shohei Ohtani’s brilliance isn’t choreographed and Paul Skenes’ dominance isn’t manufactured. That is not a small thing. The leagues can command billions in media rights deals, ticket sales and all the like because fans are confident they’re not being had. When they shell out to go to a game or pay for that streaming service so they can watch a playoff game or buy the jersey of their favorite player, they do so with the assurance that the outcome hasn’t been predetermined. That a fix was not in.

All of that is undermined if there’s tacit approval for gambling on the game by anyone who is directly involved in it. It doesn’t matter that Rose was banished 35 years ago or that he died last year. If Manfred erases the bright line that Bart Giamatti set in banning Rose, what’s to stop someone else from stepping over it? Or the public from assuming players are?

As NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell told Calvin Ridley in banning the receiver for a year for gambling, “Your actions put the integrity of the game at risk, threatened to damage public confidence in professional football and potentially undermined the reputations of your fellow players throughout the NFL.”

It’s true that MLB, like the other pro leagues, has cozied up to the gaming industry in recent years as sports betting becomes pervasive in American society. But the hypocrisy of that is a debate for another day.

The question for Manfred is whether the sanctity of the game means anything. By gambling on baseball, Rose put that integrity at risk and jeopardized the very foundation of the game. He was deserving of a lifetime ban then, and he’s still deserving of it now.



Pete Rose played 24 seasons in Major League Baseball and remains the game’s all-time hit leader. SAM GREENE/THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Yomtov

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dropping diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

With public pressure from Trump, will Commissioner Rob Manfred and MLB follow suit?

Caught in the unblinking eye?

MLB hasn’t been in Trump World’s best graces, largely stemming from the league’s decision to yank the 2021 All-Star Game from Atlanta after Georgia passed controversial voting laws. A number of Republican senators made threats to review the league’s century-old antitrust exemption, a political cudgel that has been used in a bipartisan manner. This year’s Midsummer Classic is back in Atlanta, and we’ll surely see some furor from the Trump-adjacents who were so mad four years ago.

Manfred may not have the appetite to deal with the Rose issue during his tenure, but does he really want his league anywhere near Trump’s crosshairs for the next few years?

MLB could take a wait-and-see approach on Rose in the weeks and months to come, but the demands aren’t going to stop. Trump has been beating the drum for decades about this, and when he brings it up again, there’s a real risk that the his administration would consider taking punitive action against MLB if the league doesn’t abide.

In his first term, you could largely count on Trump’s people forgetting to follow through on plans and threats, but they’ve been decidedly more aggressive in executing what he wants in

the weeks since his inauguration.

ESPN reported Saturday that Rose’s family had filed a new petition on Jan. 8 to MLB to have him posthumously removed from the ineligible list and had met with Manfred in the commissioner’s office in December. Rose’s lawyer Jeffrey Lenkov told ESPN that he had not “actively sought” the White House’s assistance but that when Trump “gets passionate about an issue, POTUS stands behind it. ... He was very passionate about Pete. Pete would have appreciated the president’s commitment to him.”

What is a ‘lifetime ban’ anyway?

It’s undeniable that Rose’s death ushered in an uncharted chapter of this 35-year saga.

Part of the intrigue is the ambiguity surrounding the league’s definition of a “lifetime ban.” Did the punishment expire with Rose?

While Manfred and MLB may not want to accept Rose’s petition on its merits, the league has this exit hatch that offers some plausible deniability. If Manfred decides that Rose’s time on the “permanently ineligible” list ended when he died, that would kick the can to the Baseball Hall of Fame, which instituted a rule in 1991 that banned those on the “permanently ineligible” list from being inducted.

Maybe it’s an issue the next commissioner wants to take up after Manfred steps aside for the 2029 season?

But can MLB make it that long without succumbing to a potential pressure campaign led by the most powerful man in the world?

Either way, everything we thought we knew about the Pete Rose affair has changed in the past few months. And fans should be taking this round of discourse far more seriously.

Texas women run with basketball elite



Blake Toppmeyer
Columnist
USA TODAY NETWORK

The coin on the back of Greg Sankey’s hand said South Carolina received the No. 1 seed in the SEC women’s basketball tournament, but the net around Vic Schaefer’s neck – cut down after another Longhorns victory – told a different story.

Schaefer’s Texas Longhorns are SEC champions, too.

And no coin flip would erase the smile from Taylor Jones’ face as she slid through burnt orange and white confetti on the court at Moody Center after No. 1 Texas smashed Florida 72-46 on Sunday to secure a share of the SEC’s regular-season title in the Longhorns’ first season in the conference.

“We worked hard to get to where we’re at now,” Jones said afterward, “and I don’t think that will stop, either way the coin landed.”

Texas and South Carolina tied atop the SEC standings with just a single conference loss. The teams played each other twice and split those games. So, a commissioner’s coin toss determined the No. 1 seed for this week’s SEC tournament.

The toss went South Carolina’s way. Just about everything else is coming up Longhorns.

Texas rides a 13-game winning streak with a team built to contend for a national title. No clear-cut front-runner exists for the national championship. Southern California, UCLA, South Carolina, Notre Dame and UConn join Texas among the favorites.

“I’m not trading my team for anybody,” Schaefer told me last week. “I love my team, I love my kids, and I’ve seen my kids do some really special things this year.”

This is the sort of team and season Schaefer envisioned when he accepted the Texas job in 2020.

Texas has long ranked as a strong program – it’s an NCAA Tournament regular – but it last won a national championship in 1986, when Jody Conradt’s Longhorns went 34-0.

Schaefer previously coached Mississippi State to two national runner-up finishes, and when he left that job for Texas, he declared that he was coming to



The Texas Longhorns women’s team celebrates being co-SEC regular-season champions after the victory over the Florida Gators on Sunday at the Moody Center. SCOTT WACHTER/IMAGN IMAGES VIA REUTERS CONNECT

make Texas great, not good.

Now, he works just a couple of blocks away from the address of a since-demolished hospital where he was born in Austin.

“I’m a Texas boy,” said Schaefer, who grew up in Houston and graduated from Texas A&M, “and, in my industry, I felt like the University of Texas was the best job in the country. I felt like coming here, this was a place where you could win multiple (conference) championships and have a chance to win a national championship.”

Texas shows versatility during climb to No. 1 in country

These Longhorns win in a variety of ways.

Last week, they gutted out a 57-26 win against Georgia by limiting the Bulldogs to 30.6% shooting. Six days later, they received 32 points from their bench while dominating the Gators in the paint.

Texas and UConn are the nation’s only teams that rank in the top 20 nationally for both scoring offense and scoring defense.

They force bundles of turnovers that jump-start their transition attack.

Madison Booker, one of the nation’s best players as a sophomore, teams up with Jones, a sixth-year senior, to provide Texas with a formidable frontcourt. Senior point guard Rori Harmon stirs the drink on offense and provides dogged defense.

Schaefer considers this the best shooting team of his career, but the Longhorns also defend the way their coach likes, helping them survive the occasional off shooting night.

“I believe in my team,” Schaefer said. “I’ve seen them fight for some gritty, gritty victories. They’ve shown me a level of toughness that I’m convinced on any given night, they can compete with anybody in the country.”

‘Job’s not done,’ as Longhorns enter SEC tournament

Schaefer won a national championship as an associate coach at his alma mater under Gary Blair, before he elevated Mississippi State to its best run of success in program history. His Bulldogs snapped UConn’s 111-game winning

streak in the Final Four in 2017. Schaefer looks back fondly on his years coaching the Bulldogs and says no other job could have pulled him out of Starkville except for Texas.

Schaefer remembers a meeting with Texas’ other head coaches in 2022 after his Longhorns team had reached the Elite Eight in his second season. As Schaefer scanned the room, he realized that the coaches of 10 Texas teams either won the national championship or finished as the national runner-up during that athletic season.

“My team went to the Elite Eight, and we weren’t even good enough to finish in the top half of the room,” Schaefer said. “That’s how elite this place is. ... The standard here is championships.”

This veteran-laden squad embraces that mentality. And even as the Longhorns soaked up a moment of enjoyment Sunday while they reflected on their regular-season achievements, Texas’ floor general made a declaration.

“The job’s not done,” Harmon said.

Blake Toppmeyer is a columnist for the USA TODAY Network. Email him at BToppmeyer@gannett.com and follow him on X @btoppmeyer.

College T-Rexes quiet for now – wait till 2030



Dan Wolken
Columnist
USA TODAY

Don’t think of the ACC’s pending settlement with Florida State and Clemson, which will ostensibly end their wandering eyes for now, as the final say in where those two schools will play football.

Instead, think of it like “Jurassic Park.”

For now, the ACC’s relationship with those two fidgety members has been placed in amber, suspended in time, just like the dinosaur DNA that scientists eventually unlocked in the novel/movie.

But college sports isn’t going to have to wait several millennia before letting the hungry velociraptors out of their cages. It’s only going to take until 2030.

Because that’s the year all hell is going to break loose in college sports.

If you think things have been chaotic the last few years with realignment, revenue sharing, unfettered transfers and NIL, you ain’t seen nothin’ yet.

Just wait until the Big 12’s television deal expires in 2031, followed by the Big Ten’s in 2032 and the SEC’s in 2034. Oh, and it just so happens that the College Football Playoff and the NCAA’s March Madness media contracts will be up for renewal at the same time as the Big Ten’s.

What that means, in essence, is that 2030 – when all those negotiations will start to percolate – is the date when anything and everything will be on the table.

Further expansion of the SEC and Big Ten beyond their already bloated footprints? Some kind of merger into a superleague that mimics the NFL? A breakaway from the NCAA? Some type of hybrid where fully professionalized schools play in one division and everyone else has their own rules?

Maybe litigation slows all this down if the next phase of college sports causes economic harm to enough major universities that end up on the wrong



Clemson and Florida State have agreed to settle a lawsuit with the ACC. KEN RUINARD/USA TODAY NETWORK

side of the dividing line. Maybe Congress gets involved. Maybe it doesn’t.

The point is, nobody can really predict how things will play out once the negotiations start in 2030. But something’s going to happen – something big and probably transformational.

And guess what?

It just so happens that 2030 is when Clemson and Florida State will be able to leave the ACC for less than \$100 million, according to reports in both ESPN and On3, as part of the new agreement.

Of course there are some other interesting parts of the settlement, including a formula that will calculate part of the ACC’s media rights distribution based on television ratings. That will likely give Clemson, Florida State and a few others a bump in revenue over the next few years, assuming both schools’ trustees and the league’s lawyers all sign off and make the settlement official.

But that’s relatively small potatoes

compared to changes in the league’s exit-fee structure, which was the main point of contention that sparked the lawsuits in the first place.

According to the ACC’s grant of rights agreement, leaving the conference before the expiration of its deal with ESPN in 2036 would have resulted in massive penalties. We’re talking perhaps half a billion dollars.

Though there was no clear legal path for Clemson and Florida State to get out of that contract and no conference willing to take those schools immediately, taking the lawsuit all the way wasn’t a guaranteed win for the ACC either. With these things, you never know for sure.

When you factor in the legal fees, the intra-conference rancor and the general instability of having two members actively suing the league in hopes of leaving, you can understand why the ACC settled.

Based on the reported terms of the

deal, things should – and we stress *should* – calm down for the foreseeable future. The ACC will likely survive in its current form until at least 2030. That’s a win for Commissioner Jim Phillips.

But after that? All bets are off.

Because the DNA of this dispute, and the insatiable gluttony of college sports, is still buried in that resin, just waiting to be revived. When it’s negotiating time for the Big 12, Big Ten and SEC, the next form of college sports will start to take shape, just as it has every single time the TV deals are up for grabs.

Five years isn’t necessarily a long time, but it’s an eternity in both the media and college sports landscape. Will the world be more oriented toward streaming deals when the Big Ten and SEC do their next negotiations? Will they need more members to add value? Will they merge in some way? Will college football be a completely separate economic entity from all the other sports?

These are the key questions we won’t have answers to until things start to happen in 2030 and 2031. But from Florida State and Clemson’s perspective, this settlement at least gives them the ability to get in the game. If they were financially locked all the way into the ACC deal until 2036, it would have been a lot more difficult for those two schools (and other highly valued brands like North Carolina, Virginia and Miami) to make themselves available when the feeding frenzy begins.

It makes the long-term future of the ACC a bit murky, but let’s be honest – that’s the case across college sports right now. Getting some short-term stability is probably worth that trade-off.

But make no mistake, there are T-Rexes and raptors and all kinds of vicious creatures being held back from destroying everything in their wake, waiting for the day they can throw college sports into chaos again.

For the last couple of years, as Clemson and Florida State have made noise about leaving, the ACC was at risk of being eaten alive. Now we have a defined date – and a number – when the gates swing open.

Plaintiffs reject college settlement objections

Steve Berkowitz
USA TODAY

Lawyers for the plaintiffs in the proposed multibillion-dollar settlements of three athlete-compensation antitrust cases against the NCAA and the Power Five conferences made a voluminous court submission Monday that strongly responds to a range of objections to final approval of the deal.

U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken is set to hold a final approval hearing on April 7 concerning the agreements, which would include nearly \$2.8 billion in damages that would go to current and former athletes over 10 years. They also would allow Division I schools to start paying athletes directly for use of their name, image and likeness (NIL) during the 2025-26 school year, subject to a per-school cap that would increase over time and be based on a percentage of certain athletics revenue.

More than 70 objections were filed with the court in January, including those that were dated by a Jan. 31 deadline but did not enter the court record until weeks later. In addition, nearly 350 current or former athletes who could have participated in the proposed settlement have opted out, with several new lawsuits against the NCAA being spawned as a result.

Many of the objections were centered – sometimes in emotional, personal terms – on the sport-by-sport roster limits that would go into place for schools that participate in the settlement and begin making NIL deals with their athletes. The limits are likely to result in hundreds, if not thousands, of current walk-on athletes losing their places on Division I teams. The roster limits would be accompanied by the elimination of sport-by-sport scholarship limits that exist for all NCAA Division I schools.

Among the array of other objections were arguments that the per-school cap on NIL payments to athletes would constitute another antitrust violation, the damages claims are being settled for too little money, and the allocation of damages payments discriminates against female athletes and sets the stage for future Title IX violations as schools set up allocations of NIL payments.

“This is not to say that the settlement resolves all concerns of every class member – no class action settlement could meet that test,” the plaintiffs’ lawyers wrote. “By its nature, any settlement is a compromise ... The test is whether the settlement, viewed as a whole, is in the best interests of the class. The *House* settlement demonstrably is.”

The damages settlement “is one of the largest in antitrust history ... a monumental recovery,” the lawyers wrote, and the arrangement to allow athletes to be paid directly by their schools in a form of revenue sharing is “transformative” and “expected to deliver an additional \$20 billion or more in value to college athletes” over the next 10 years.

They said that since a claims website became available, more than 73,000 of a possible total of 390,000 former and current athletes “have filed valid claims.” They juxtaposed those numbers against the number of objections and opt-outs, and repeatedly argued, in varying ways and on various topics, that if there were so many athletes with so many objections, “their remedy was to opt out – not to see to deny final approval for everyone else.”

Further, they asked Wilken to deny any request that start of the new pay system for athletes be delayed, pending the outcome of any appeals of a ruling in favor of final approval. Allowing such a delay “would irreparably harm tens of thousands of athletes,” they wrote.



Arizona guard Jaden Bradley shoots against Clemson during the West Regional of the 2024 NCAA men's tournament. KIRBY LEE/IMAGN IMAGES

Claressa Shields marijuana test saga at hearing stage

Josh Peter
USA TODAY

The saga of boxer Claressa Shields is unfolding.

She is a two-time Olympic gold medalist. A three-time undisputed world champion. But, at 29, the self-proclaimed “GWOAT” (Greatest Woman Of All Time) is facing a question involving her integrity.

Could Shields have tested positive for marijuana if she never used the drug?

According to Shields, that’s what happened after her last boxing match, a victory over Danielle Perkins on Feb. 2 at Dort Financial Center in her hometown of Flint, Michigan. The drug test results have not been publicly released, but Shields has said a saliva test detected “trace” amounts of marijuana, a prohibited substance in competition for professional fighters in Michigan.

Ten days after dominating Perkins in a fight that improved Shields’ record to 16-0 and elevated her to undisputed heavyweight champion came the gut punch. She was suspended by the Michigan Unarmed Combat Commission (MUCC), which regulates boxing in the state, and such discipline generally is upheld by other states.

But she’ll soon get a chance to contest the decision.

On Thursday, during a pre-hearing meeting before an assistant attorney general, Shields will request her suspension be revoked, according to her lawyer, David Slutsker. “We will present evidence ... and be open to any questioning they have,” he told USA TODAY Sports. Depending on the outcome, a formal hearing could follow.

Shields faces a 90-day suspension, a possible fine and newly surfaced claims about her possible exposure to the drug.

Other boxers tested positive

Shields was not the only boxer on the Feb. 2 card to test positive for marijuana. Eight of the 16 boxers were drug tested by swab, and three tested positive for marijuana, according to Dmitry Salita, the promoter of the show, and Slutsker.

“That number is highly unusual for a single boxing event, particularly one featuring Claressa and other elite athletes,” Salita said. “Given the circumstances, it’s important to review the testing protocols to ensure consistency and fairness.”

Joe Hicks, a middleweight from Michigan, confirmed to USA TODAY Sports that he tested positive for marijuana. Salita said the other boxer who tested positive for marijuana was Skylar Lacy, a heavyweight from Indiana who did not respond to USA TODAY Sports’ requests for comment left by voicemail, text message and social media.

Hicks, who is 12-0 as a pro, said he worried about potential consequences because he works for an insurance company where “you can lose your job for taking any drugs without a prescription.”

“When they called, I was, like, wow,” he said of learning of the results. “I don’t take drugs.”

Adding he was also surprised to hear Shields tested positive, Hicks speculated that marijuana smoke inside the Dort Financial Center triggered the positives.

“Oh man, it was everywhere,” he said. “I’m not exaggerating. ... I was getting dressed to take pictures with my family; it was like a big cloud of weed. When you go in the bathroom, it’s just a big cloud of smoke that hits you. You smell nothing but marijuana.”

Marijuana is legal in Michigan but banned at Dort Financial Center. However, Salita and Shields’ manager, Mark Taffet, said the smell was noticeable.

“The hallways smelled horrible,” Taffet said. “Like where (Shields) took the post-fight (drug) test, that sort of ring of hallway around the building, that smelled terrible.”

Jeremy Torrey, general manager of the Dort Financial Center, declined to comment to USA TODAY Sports.

Secondhand smoke a risk?

Whether secondhand smoke can cause a non-smoker to test positive for THC, the active ingredient in marijuana that produces a psychoactive effect, depends on the exposure conditions, according to a 2015 study published in the Journal of Analytical Toxicology.



Claressa Shields trains during an open media workout in January in Detroit. DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUNOZ/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

The study, which focused on “extreme cannabis smoke exposure conditions tolerable to drug-free nonsmokers,” reported, “Positive tests for THC in oral fluid and blood were obtained for nonsmokers up to (three hours) following exposure.”

The study also concluded, “positive tests are likely to be rare, limited to the hours immediately post-exposure, and occur only under environmental circumstances where exposure is obvious.”

A 2004 study published in the Journal of Analytical Toxicology reported, “Passive exposure to cannabis smoke in an unventilated room has been shown to produce a transient appearance of THC in oral fluid for up to 30 (minutes). However, it is well known that such factors as room size and extent of smoke exposure can affect results.”

Salita, the promoter, said, “The amount detected was negligible and consistent with potential secondhand exposure rather than personal use.”

Shields had said the saliva test showed “trace” levels of marijuana in her system, but she has not publicly released the test results.

What Shields may challenge

Victor Conte, who describes himself as a “dietary supplement and training adviser” for Shields, said the boxer told him she had concerns about how her saliva test was administered after her fight.

According to Conte, Shields told him the drug testing kit was torn before the test was administered. Conte also said Shields told him the man who administered the test had no backup kit and used a towel to “push it back together.”

“I don’t want to get into all the irregularities,” Conte said, adding, “They didn’t follow protocol.”

Shields has drawn criticism for working with Conte, who was the mastermind behind the BALCO steroids scandal that two decades ago tarnished the reputations and accomplishments of Barry Bonds, Marion Jones and dozens of other professional athletes. Conte has since repositioned himself as a leader in the anti-doping movement and works with multiple champion boxers, including Terence Crawford.

Shields is sponsored by SNAC, Conte’s supplement company, and the deal includes financial support, according to Conte.

Conte indicated another issue likely to be addressed at the hearing is Michigan’s use of saliva tests, also known as oral fluid tests and conducted with a swab.

“Swab tests have a number of disadvantages compared with urine and blood analysis,” James Fitzgerald, head of media relations for the World Anti-Doping Agency, told USA TODAY Sports. “They are less accurate and do not allow quantitative analysis, more limited in the number of substances that can be identified, and more prone to contaminations. They have never been considered robust enough for the level of scientific quality required under the World Anti-Doping Code.”

How drug testing works in Michigan

The MUCC contracts a third-party testing company to provide the “oral fluid” drug tests so a fighter can be tested immediately after the contest, according to Abby Rubley, director of communications for Michigan’s licensing and regulatory affairs.

The agency assists the MUCC with

drug testing and other matters.

“These tests are processed by a globally recognized laboratory with all the appropriate controls and procedures in place,” Rubley said by email. “A positive specimen is always independently verified by a medical review officer to determine if the positive result has a legitimate medical explanation and ensure the accuracy of the testing process.”

“Additionally, oral fluid testing is best at detecting *recent* drug use, which supports the overall purpose of the drug testing laws and rules to prevent those with the presence of controlled substances, alcohol, enhancers, etc., from competing in unarmed combat events in this state.”

But two weeks ago Shields’ manager posted on Facebook a copy of a lab result indicating Shields took a urine test that detected no marijuana in her system. The urine sample, according to what Shields posted, was collected Feb. 8, six days after the post-fight saliva test showed marijuana in her system.

Marijuana can be detected in urine for between three and 30 days after use, according to Mayo Clinic Laboratories, and detected in saliva for up to 24 hours after use, according to the Council on Drugs and Alcohol.

“The moment I received the saliva test result, I acted immediately to schedule a follow-up urine test to ensure complete clarity,” Shields wrote on Instagram and provided a timeline of the drug testing.

In hopes of clearing his name, Hicks said, he also paid for a urine test. A copy of the results shared with USA TODAY Sports shows no marijuana was found in Hicks based on a urine sample collected Feb. 14, two weeks after the event.

Confusion in Michigan

WADA tests for marijuana and allows a threshold of 150 ng/mL – about 50 times the amount Shields’ camp has said drug test results show was in her system. In Michigan, marijuana is legal for recreational and medicinal use. But according to Weatherspoon, marijuana is prohibited for contestants at boxing events because the drug is illegal under federal law.

“So the fighters, who don’t really know about the federal guidelines, they think it’s OK,” Weatherspoon said.

The Michigan commission posts a list of prohibited substances on its website.

Boxing is regulated state-by-state, and “numerous” state boxing commissions do not test for marijuana anymore, said Mike Mazzulli, president of the Association of Boxing Commissions. The change has occurred as legalization of marijuana for recreational use has expanded to 24 states.

Salita said Shields has never tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs or marijuana. Before Shields’ fight in February, according to Salita, she was enrolled for testing with the Voluntary Anti-Doping Association (VADA), which uses urine and blood tests.

“The results confirmed both fighters tested negative for PEDs,” he said.

VADA does not test for marijuana. Shields is offering no apologies.

“I stand by who I am, a clean athlete with nothing to hide,” she said in a statement provided to USA TODAY Sports. “While this situation is frustrating, I’m confident the truth will come out. I’m grateful to my family, team, fellow athletes, and everyone who’s shown support – your belief in me means everything. I’ll continue to fight with pride as the people’s champion and The GWOAT.”



Devils center Jack Hughes, who has 70 points this season, makes his way off the ice after being injured Sunday. STEPHEN R. SYLVANIE/IMAGN IMAGES

Top NHL teams in search of boost ahead of deadline

Mike Brehm
USA TODAY

The NHL trade deadline is at 3 p.m. ET on Friday, and a lot of big moves have already happened.

The Colorado Avalanche moved Mikko Rantanen to the Carolina Hurricanes and acquired Ryan Lindgren from the New York Rangers.

The Rangers acquired J.T. Miller from the Vancouver Canucks, who used the first-round pick they received to land the Pittsburgh Penguins’ Marcus Pettersson and Drew O’Connor.

Last weekend, the defending champion Florida Panthers acquired defenseman Seth Jones from the Chicago Blackhawks.

More big moves are surely on the horizon. Here are leading teams’ needs heading into the trade deadline:

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Washington Capitals

With back-to-back blowout wins coming out of the 4 Nations Face-Off break, it looked like any move the Capitals made might mess with chemistry. But then they lost three in a row and had a sloppy shootout win. They likely could use a bottom-six center.

Carolina Hurricanes

They need Rantanen to re-sign, especially after last year’s deadline acquisition, Jake Guentzel, left during the summer. But if Rantanen doesn’t sign before Friday, it doesn’t mean he’ll be traded. The Hurricanes gave up Martin Necas to get him; would they be able to get someone of his caliber back if they trade Rantanen?

New Jersey Devils

They need secondary scoring, and that was true even before Jack Hughes left Sunday’s game with an injury. Hughes and Jesper Bratt have 70 and 68 points, respectively, and captain Nico Hischier has 47. Then it drops off after that.

Toronto Maple Leafs

A third-line center would help, as would another player for their second power play unit.

Florida Panthers

The Jones trade addressed their biggest need: a right-shot defenseman to fill the gap after the offseason departure of Brandon Montour. With Matthew Tkachuk on long-term injured reserve, the Panthers could use another scoring winger in case he’s limited in the playoffs.

Tampa Bay Lightning

Their eight-game winning streak just ended. Their top six forwards are impressive, but their depth has been eroded by salary cap concerns since their Stanley Cup wins in 2020 and 2021. They should make a move to shore that up.

Columbus Blue Jackets

They’re the story of the NHL, sitting in a playoff spot while honoring the memory of Johnny Gaudreau. GM Don Waddell should do what he can to guarantee a playoff spot, maybe adding someone with postseason experience.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Winnipeg Jets

Like the Capitals, they’ve played very well, and not much is needed. They could use a depth defenseman who kills penalties. The Jets’ penalty killing ranks 15th.

Dallas Stars

The Stars already added forward Mikael Granlund and defenseman Cody Ceci. But with Nils Lundkvist out for the season and Miro Heiskanen rehabbing, Dallas could use another defenseman.

Minnesota Wild

They just added Gustav Nyquist, who had 75 points two seasons ago. At some point, they hope, Kirill Kaprizov and Joel Eriksson Ek will return.

Colorado Avalanche

The Avalanche have already improved their goaltending, and Necas has been a good pickup. It would be helpful if they could find an upgrade at No. 2 center. GM Chris McFarland wasn’t sounding optimistic about Gabriel Landeskog returning.

Vegas Golden Knights

They have a pretty solid lineup, but you can always count on them doing something big at the deadline.

Edmonton Oilers

GM Stan Bowman told the Daily Faceoff that he doesn’t need to upgrade his goaltending. They could use more depth at forward and defense.

Los Angeles Kings

The Kings rank 22nd in the league in offense. They should pursue another scorer.

Griner slams first dunk in Unrivaled

Safid Deen
USA TODAY

MEDLEY, Fla. – Brittney Griner sat at the Unrivaled podium, holding her toddler son, Bash, briefly reliving the moment of being the first player to dunk in the new women’s basketball league.

Griner may be the most prolific dunker in women’s basketball history, but she doesn’t go into games with the intention to dunk. Phantom teammate Natisha Hiedeman proposed the idea during pregame warmups, then found Griner open under the basket near the end of the first quarter on Monday night.

Griner felt like she had to deliver. She admits she was pumped, quickly trying to refocus on the defensive end to avoid a lapse after the highlight play. She even sank a 3-pointer just before the buzzer.

Despite the achievement, Griner’s thoughts were on her team’s 92-79 loss to the league-leading Lunar Owls.

“It’s always hype. My teammates love it. Fans love it. You know, try to bring some excitement. But I mean, at the end of the day, we lost,” Griner told USA TODAY Sports. “So, that’s what’s on my mind. Dunk, no dunk. Three, no three. We lost.”

Then, Basketball Hall of Famer Lisa Leslie – the first player to dunk in a game in WNBA history – got hold of the microphone during Griner’s postgame press conference.

Leslie’s presence at Unrivaled has been priceless, furthering the game with the 3-on-3 league’s brightest stars. She’s been helping players like Angel Reese, Satou Sabally and Napheesa Collier work on their games while analyzing Unrivaled games with Turner Sports during the league’s inaugural season.

Leslie wasn’t going to let Griner pass up the opportunity to bask in her accomplishment.

“The dunk was outstanding, and it’s historic. And obviously I know what it’s like to have a historic dunk, but not the ending you want. The night I dunked, we lost that game, too,” Leslie told Griner. “So, I know what you mean about remembering that, but that is a historic moment for you to be the first to dunk in Unrivaled. It was awesome.”

With Leslie sitting just a few feet away, Griner took a moment to truly reflect.

Dunks have been more routine for the 6-foot-9 star than any other player in women’s basketball.

Griner dunked twice during the first WNBA game of her career on May 27, 2013 – quickly tying Candace Parker’s record for dunks in league history, while passing Leslie and Awak Kuier on the all-time dunks list.

Griner has 27 dunks in WNBA games during the regular season, playoffs and All-Star Game during her 11-year career.

It was only a matter of time before she cemented her name in Unrivaled’s record books with the league’s first dunk.

“You know what, it definitely is (awesome),” Griner said to Leslie, while holding her son. “I’ll be able to hold that (title). I got to do it with you here as well. It was pretty cool, when I actually take the time to think about it. And he’s here, too. So, it all kinda lines up.”

Griner’s Unrivaled experience comes three years after her controversial arrest in Russia.

Griner was detained on Feb. 17, 2022 – about two weeks before the public knew she was in custody on drug charges after customs officials allegedly found vape cartridges in her luggage. She was sentenced to nine years



Brittney Griner of the Phantom records the first dunk Monday in the new Unrivaled 3-on-3 league. UNRIVALED

in prison on Aug. 4, 2022. She was released in a prisoner exchange for Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout on Dec. 8, 2022.

Griner’s past was not lost on Leslie, who felt like she had to praise Griner in person before the night was over.

“It’s amazing. I was happy that I was here. I think it’s great for BG, especially all that she’s been through to have that moment. And I think it’s great for Unrivaled,” Leslie told USA TODAY Sports.

At Unrivaled, an appealing offseason option domestically for WNBA players, Griner has played with Hiedeman, Sabally, Marina Mabrey, Katie Lou Samuelson, her old Phoenix Mercury teammate Natasha Cloud, and U.S. Olympic teammate Sabrina Ionescu for the Phantom, while being coached by eight-year NBA assistant Adam Harrington.

Griner has averaged 16.9 points (11th of 39 Unrivaled players) and leads the league with 1.6 blocks per game. She had season highs of 29 points and nine rebounds on Jan. 24, and had 17 points, seven rebounds and seven assists in Monday’s loss to the Lunar Owls.

Griner said she wanted to join Unrivaled to remind people she can still play the game at a high level. She’s also enjoying her time in Miami with her son and wife, Cherelle, before she joins the Atlanta Dream for her 12th season in the WNBA.

“It’s been a whirlwind. Shout out to my wife ... I couldn’t do this without her, honestly. But I just wanted to come to Unrivaled to show everybody, you know, I still got it. I still can play,” Griner said. “A lot of people kind of counted me out in 3-on-3. So, I love to use that to prove everybody wrong.”

Griner smiled widely during the interaction with Leslie, almost holding her son as a defensive mechanism, as she received praise from the WNBA legend.

“Just know: We are so happy to have you here at Unrivaled, seeing you play. You’re not just back. You’re back and you’re better. And you warm our hearts,” Leslie told Griner. “Even though we don’t say it to you enough, it’s great to see you be able to finish out your career. And good luck in Atlanta as well.”

“Thank you, I really appreciate that,” Griner responded.

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In order to be considered, the Offeror must complete Ion Wave Technologies, Inc. registration and submit a proposal to Region 4 ESC in accordance with the solicitation link <https://region4esc.ionwave.net/> this link is also available at <https://www.esc4.net/> or <https://www.omniapartners.com/publicsector/solicitations>

VIRTUAL PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE:
Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 10:00 AM Central Time.

PROPOSAL DUE DATE:
April 17, 2025, before 2:00 PM Central Time.

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Boston Common's Rory McIlroy, right, and Adam Scott react Monday. MEGAN BRIGGS/TGL VIA GETTY IMAGES

Tiger, Rory's teams miss TGL playoffs

Eric J. Wallace

The Palm Beach Post | USA TODAY NETWORK

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — TGL's first playoff will happen without league founders Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy.

New York Golf Club defeated Boston Common 10-6 on Monday night at the SoFi Center, locking up the final seed in TGL's inaugural four-team playoff. TGL's semifinals will begin on March 17.

Woods' Jupiter Links GC (1-3), which was scheduled to play its regular-season finale on Tuesday night against the Atlanta Drive (3-1), needed a Boston Common win over New York to stay alive for the SoFi Cup.

McIlroy's Boston Common (0-4-1) closes its season winless while New York (2-2-1) takes the No. 4 seed.

In Monday's early contest, Los Angeles GC defeated The Bay GC 5-3 to lock up the No. 1 seed. Los Angeles (4-0-1) handed The Bay (4-1-0) its first defeat.

Sports Weekly

On newsstands: After last season's playoff near-miss, the San Diego Padres feel well-positioned to take on the Dodgers again, while the Philadelphia Phillies sense the urgency to make a World Series run. In the NFL, we review what we learned from the Scouting Combine, including our first-round mock draft of all 32 picks. Plus, as always, we have NBA and NHL box scores and leaders and other baseball and football features. You can order the edition at onlinestore.usatoday.com and subscribe to the magazine by going to mysportsweekly.com or by calling 800-872-1415.



FOR THE RECORD

All times ET

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

USA TODAY Sports Women's Coaches Poll

| Rank, team (1sts) | W-L | Pts | LW |
|-------------------------|------|-----|----|
| 1 Texas (29) | 29-2 | 771 | 1 |
| 2 Southern Cal (1) | 27-2 | 741 | 3 |
| 3 UConn | 28-3 | 702 | 5 |
| 4 UCLA | 28-2 | 673 | 2 |
| 5 South Carolina (1) | 27-3 | 665 | 6 |
| 6 Notre Dame | 25-4 | 599 | 4 |
| 7 TCU | 28-3 | 587 | 8 |
| 14 North Carolina State | 24-5 | 572 | 10 |
| 9 LSU | 27-4 | 504 | 7 |
| 10 Oklahoma | 23-6 | 470 | 13 |
| 11 Duke | 23-7 | 442 | 15 |
| 12 Ohio State | 24-5 | 408 | 12 |
| 13 Kentucky | 22-6 | 397 | 14 |
| 14 North Carolina | 27-6 | 376 | 9 |
| 15 Maryland | 23-6 | 375 | 17 |
| 16 West Virginia | 23-6 | 307 | 19 |
| 17 Tennessee | 21-8 | 269 | 11 |
| 18 Baylor | 25-6 | 232 | 18 |
| 19 Kansas State | 25-6 | 205 | 16 |
| 20 Alabama | 23-7 | 188 | 20 |
| 21 Oklahoma State | 24-5 | 155 | 23 |
| 22 Creighton | 24-5 | 120 | 21 |
| 23 Florida State | 23-7 | 96 | 24 |
| 24 Michigan State | 21-8 | 77 | 22 |
| 24 South Dakota State | 26-3 | 77 | 25 |

Others receiving votes: Ole Miss 19-9 24; California 24-7 15; Louisville 20-9 10; Richmond 26-5 8; George Mason 24-5 4; Iowa State 21-10 2; FGCU 27-3 2; Utah 22-7 1; James Madison 27-4 1.

The USA TODAY Sports board of coaches is made up of 31 head coaches at Division I institutions. All are members of the Women's Basketball Coaches Association.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|--------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Boston | 43 | 18 | .705 | — |
| N.Y. Knicks | 40 | 20 | .667 | 2½ |
| Brooklyn | 21 | 39 | .350 | 21½ |
| Philadelphia | 14 | 46 | .233 | 21½ |
| Toronto | 19 | 42 | .311 | 24 |

Southeast Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|------------|----|----|------|----|
| Miami | 29 | 31 | .483 | — |
| Orlando | 29 | 33 | .468 | 1 |
| Atlanta | 28 | 33 | .459 | 1½ |
| Charlotte | 14 | 46 | .233 | 15 |
| Washington | 11 | 49 | .183 | 18 |

Central Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-----------|----|----|------|-----|
| Cleveland | 50 | 10 | .833 | — |
| Indiana | 34 | 25 | .576 | 15½ |
| Milwaukee | 34 | 25 | .576 | 15½ |
| Detroit | 35 | 27 | .565 | 16 |
| Chicago | 24 | 37 | .393 | 26½ |

WESTERN CONFERENCE Southwest Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|-------------|----|----|------|----|
| Memphis | 38 | 23 | .623 | — |
| Houston | 37 | 24 | .607 | 1 |
| Dallas | 32 | 30 | .516 | 6½ |
| San Antonio | 25 | 34 | .424 | 12 |
| New Orleans | 17 | 44 | .279 | 21 |

Northwest Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|-----|
| Oklahoma City | 50 | 11 | .820 | — |
| Denver | 39 | 22 | .639 | 11 |
| Minnesota | 33 | 29 | .532 | 17½ |
| Portland | 28 | 34 | .452 | 22½ |
| Utah | 15 | 46 | .246 | 35 |

Pacific Division

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|----|
| L.A. Lakers | 38 | 21 | .644 | — |
| Golden State | 33 | 28 | .541 | 6 |
| L.A. Clippers | 32 | 28 | .533 | 6½ |
| Sacramento | 32 | 28 | .533 | 6½ |
| Phoenix | 28 | 33 | .459 | 11 |

Monday's Games

Golden State 119, Charlotte 101
Portland 119, Philadelphia 102
Miami 106, Washington 90
Atlanta 132, Memphis 130
Oklahoma City 137, Houston 128
Sacramento 122, Dallas 98
Detroit 134, Utah 106

Tuesday's Games

Houston at Indiana
Toronto at Orlando
Charlotte at Atlanta
Golden State at N.Y. Knicks
Cleveland at Chicago
Philadelphia at Minnesota
Brooklyn at San Antonio

L.A. Clippers at Phoenix
New Orleans at L.A. Lakers

Wednesday's Games

Portland at Boston, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Utah at Washington, 7 p.m.
Miami at Cleveland, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Sacramento at Denver, 9 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Memphis, 9:30 p.m.
Detroit at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Chicago at Orlando, 7 p.m.
Indiana at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Golden State at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Houston at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
N.Y. Knicks at L.A. Lakers, 10 p.m.

Friday's Games

Cleveland at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Memphis at Dallas, 7:30 p.m.
Utah at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Miami, 8 p.m.
Portland at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at Denver, 10 p.m.
San Antonio at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
N.Y. Knicks at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

NHL

Eastern Conference Atlantic Division

| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
|-----------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Toronto | 38 | 20 | 3 | 79 | 196 | 175 |
| Florida | 38 | 21 | 3 | 79 | 206 | 172 |
| Tampa Bay | 35 | 21 | 4 | 74 | 212 | 158 |
| Detroit | 30 | 24 | 6 | 66 | 176 | 181 |
| Ottawa | 30 | 25 | 5 | 65 | 170 | 173 |
| Montreal | 30 | 26 | 5 | 65 | 184 | 204 |
| Boston | 28 | 26 | 8 | 64 | 167 | 195 |
| Buffalo | 24 | 29 | 6 | 54 | 189 | 202 |

Metropolitan Division

| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
|----------------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Washington | 39 | 14 | 8 | 86 | 220 | 161 |
| Carolina | 33 | 22 | 4 | 74 | 195 | 170 |
| New Jersey | 33 | 23 | 6 | 72 | 186 | 154 |
| Columbus | 30 | 22 | 8 | 68 | 205 | 196 |
| N.Y. Rangers | 31 | 26 | 4 | 66 | 187 | 183 |
| Philadelphia | 27 | 26 | 8 | 62 | 180 | 202 |
| N.Y. Islanders | 27 | 26 | 7 | 61 | 165 | 180 |
| Pittsburgh | 24 | 29 | 10 | 58 | 183 | 233 |

Western Conference Central Division

| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
|-----------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Winnipeg | 42 | 15 | 4 | 88 | 214 | 143 |
| Dallas | 39 | 19 | 2 | 80 | 206 | 155 |
| Minnesota | 35 | 22 | 4 | 74 | 173 | 176 |
| Colorado | 35 | 24 | 2 | 72 | 198 | 182 |
| St. Louis | 29 | 27 | 6 | 64 | 179 | 187 |
| Utah | 27 | 25 | 9 | 63 | 172 | 181 |
| Nashville | 21 | 32 | 7 | 49 | 153 | 201 |
| Chicago | 19 | 35 | 7 | 45 | 169 | 214 |

Pacific Division

| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
|------------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Vegas | 36 | 18 | 6 | 78 | 199 | 166 |
| Edmonton | 35 | 21 | 4 | 74 | 195 | 174 |
| L.A. Kings | 31 | 20 | 8 | 70 | 167 | 159 |
| Calgary | 28 | 23 | 9 | 65 | 155 | 176 |
| Vancouver | 27 | 22 | 11 | 65 | 165 | 184 |
| Anaheim | 26 | 26 | 7 | 59 | 154 | 183 |
| Seattle | 26 | 31 | 4 | 56 | 180 | 198 |
| San Jose | 16 | 37 | 9 | 41 | 167 | 232 |

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for OT loss.

Monday's Games

Washington 5, Ottawa 4, 50
Montreal 4, Buffalo 3, OT
Florida 2, Tampa Bay 1
N.Y. Rangers 4, N.Y. Islanders 0
San Jose 3, Toronto 2, 50
Chicago 5, L.A. Kings 1

Tuesday's Games

San Jose at Buffalo
Nashville at Boston
Carolina at Detroit
Columbus at Tampa Bay
Calgary at Philadelphia
Winnipeg at N.Y. Islanders
New Jersey at Dallas
Pittsburgh at Colorado
Anaheim at Edmonton
Minnesota at Seattle

Wednesday's Games

Washington at N.Y. Rangers, 7:30 p.m.
Ottawa at Chicago, 7:30 p.m.
Toronto at Vegas, 10 p.m.
Anaheim at Vancouver, 10:30 p.m.
St. Louis at L.A. Kings, 10:30 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Utah at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Columbus at Florida, 7 p.m.
Winnipeg at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Boston at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Seattle at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Calgary at Dallas, 8 p.m.
Montreal at Edmonton, 9 p.m.
San Jose at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.

SOCCER

English Premier League

| | GP | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Liverpool | 28 | 20 | 7 | 1 | 66 | 26 | 67 |
| Arsenal | 27 | 15 | 9 | 3 | 51 | 23 | 54 |
| Not'tm Forest | 27 | 14 | 6 | 7 | 44 | 33 | 48 |
| Man City | 27 | 14 | 5 | 8 | 53 | 37 | 47 |
| Chelsea | 27 | 13 | 7 | 7 | 52 | 36 | 46 |
| Newcastle | 27 | 13 | 5 | 9 | 46 | 38 | 44 |
| Bournemouth | 27 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 45 | 32 | 43 |
| Brighton | 27 | 11 | 10 | 6 | 44 | 39 | 43 |
| Fulham | 27 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 40 | 36 | 42 |
| Aston Villa | 28 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 40 | 45 | 42 |
| Brentford | 27 | 11 | 5 | 11 | 48 | 43 | 38 |
| Crystal Palace | 27 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 35 | 33 | 36 |
| Tottenham | 27 | 10 | 3 | 14 | 53 | 39 | 33 |
| Man United | 27 | 9 | 6 | 12 | 33 | 39 | 33 |
| West Ham | 27 | 9 | 6 | 12 | 32 | 47 | 33 |
| Everton | 27 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 30 | 34 | 32 |
| Wolverhampton | 27 | 6 | 4 | 17 | 37 | 56 | 22 |
| Ipswich Town | 27 | 3 | 8 | 16 | 26 | 57 | 17 |
| Leicester City | 27 | 4 | 5 | 18 | 25 | 47 | 17 |
| Southampton | 27 | 2 | 3 | 22 | 19 | 65 | 9 |

NOTE: Three points for a win, one point for tie.

Saturday's Games

Nottingham Forest vs. Man City, 7:30 a.m.
Liverpool vs. Southampton, 10 a.m.
Crystal Palace vs. Ipswich Town, 10 a.m.
Brighton & Hove Albion vs. Fulham, 10 a.m.
Brentford vs. Aston Villa, 12:30 p.m.
Wolverhampton vs. Everton, 3 p.m.
Tottenham vs. Bournemouth, 10 a.m.
Chelsea vs. Leicester City, 10 a.m.
Manchester United vs. Arsenal, 12:30 p.m.
West Ham vs. Newcastle, 4 p.m.

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

| | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|
| Philadelphia | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 3 |
| Columbus | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Inter Miami CF | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| Charlotte FC | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 17 |
| N.Y. Red Bulls | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Orlando City | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| Atlanta | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Cincinnati | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| D.C. United | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| N.Y. City FC | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| New England | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Toronto FC | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Chicago | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Nashville | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| CF Montreal | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 |

WESTERN CONFERENCE

| | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|
| San Jose | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| Vancouver | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Los Angeles FC | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| San Diego FC | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| FC Dallas | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Austin FC | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Minnesota | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Real Salt Lake | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Portland | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Colorado | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Saint Louis | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Seattle | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Sporting KC | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| L.A. Galaxy | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| Houston | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |

NOTE: Three points for a win, one point for tie.

Sunday's Games

Vancouver 2, LA Galaxy 1
Houston 1, Inter Miami CF 4

Saturday's Games

Columbus vs. Houston, 2:30 p.m.
Seattle vs. Los Angeles FC, 4:45 p.m.
Atlanta vs. N.Y. Red Bulls, 7:30 p.m.
D.C. United vs. Sporting KC, 7:30 p.m.
FC Cincinnati vs. Toronto FC, 7:30 p.m.
New England vs. Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
New York City FC vs. Orlando, 7:30 p.m.
Austin FC vs. Colorado, 8:30 p.m.
FC Dallas vs. Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
Nashville SC vs. Portland, 8:30 p.m.
Real Salt Lake vs. San Diego FC, 9:30 p.m.
Vancouver vs. CF Montreal, 9:30 p.m.
San Jose vs. Minnesota, 10:30 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Inter Miami vs. Charlotte, 4 p.m.
LA Galaxy vs. St. Louis, 4 p.m.

Champions League Round of 16 - Leg 1 of 2

Tuesday's Games
Aston Villa 3, Club Brugge 1
Borussia Dortmund 1, Lille 1
Arsenal 1, PSV Eindhoven 1
Real Madrid 2, Atlético Madrid 1
Wednesday's Games
Feyenoord Rotterdam vs. Inter, 12:45 p.m.
Bayern Munich vs. Bayer Leverkusen, 3 p.m.
Benfica vs. Barcelona, 3 p.m.
Paris Saint-Germain vs. Liverpool, 3 p.m.

GOLF

PGA Tour Statistics

Through March 3
Season Points
1. Ludvig Aberg, 978. 2. Sepp Straka, 913. 3. Hideki Matsuyama, 909. 4. Thomas Detry, 843. 5. Nick Taylor, 777. 6. Rory McIlroy, 756. 7. Maverick McNealy, 664. 8. Justin Thomas, 594. 9. Harris English, 553. 10. Joe Highsmith, 548.

Scoring Average

1. Nicolai Højgaard, 69.48. 2. Alex Smalley, 69.62. 3. (tie), Rory McIlroy and Scottie Scheffler, 69.84. 5. Bud Cauley, 69.93. 6. Sepp Straka, 70.03. 7. Kevin Roy, 70.07. 8. Hideki Matsuyama, 70.08. 9. Michael Kim, 70.11. 10. Daniel Berger, 70.14.

Driving Distance

1. Aldrich Potgieter, 326

NFL great has a warning for America



Jarrett Bell
Columnist
USA TODAY

Days before reporting to the Cleveland Browns training camp in Hiram, Ohio, in 1964, John Wooten took a detour to Washington, D.C., for the sake of history.

Wooten, then a veteran guard who blocked for Jim Brown, was at the White House on July 2 when President Lyndon Johnson signed the monumental Civil Rights Act of 1964.

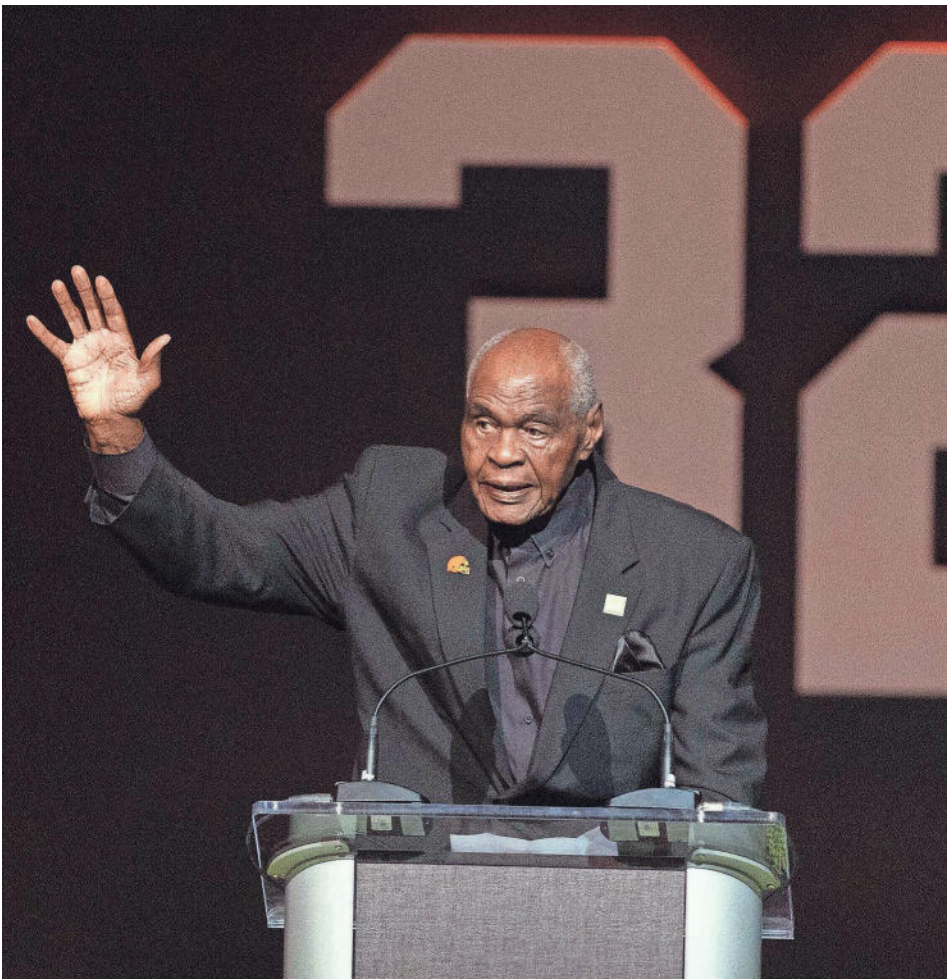
No, Wooten wasn't inside the Oval Office when LBJ signed the sweeping measure into law that banned discrimination and ended segregation in public places. Yet the football player, invited by Martin Luther King Jr. and civil rights activist Whitney Young because of his progressive social efforts with the Negro Industrial Economic Union, was close enough in the corridors of the White House.

"When President Johnson did the signing, there was just a mass of people all the way back out of that office, all down the hall, everywhere," Wooten, 88, recalled during an interview with USA TODAY Sports. "You're talking about hundreds. That's where I was."

Wooten ultimately left a huge footprint on the NFL as a champion of equal opportunity for coaches and executives while serving as the longtime chairman of the Fritz Pollard Alliance. Yet to hear him flash back to 1964 – when the Browns, by the way, claimed the franchise's last championship by winning the NFL title – is a special kind of history lesson.

Especially now. Sure, Black History Month just ended. It's American History, too. LBJ, who picked up the mantle after the 1963 assassination of his predecessor, John F. Kennedy, signed the Act roughly two weeks after it passed in the U.S. Senate following a 72-day filibuster by opponents resistant to social change and, well, equality.

"This was the beginning of us being



John Wooten, a friend of Jim Brown and former Browns player, speaks at a celebration of life for Brown on Aug. 3, 2023. KEVIN WHITLOCK/MASSILLON INDEPENDENT

able to move forward as a people in this country," Wooten said. "Now it's the law of the land. I can't tell you how privileged I was – not as a football player, but as a young Black guy – to be there.

"It gave us a completely new look on life as a people."

Wooten certainly remembers the resistance, particularly from the Deep South, where Jim Crow laws of that era legalized segregation in all areas of life. The Civil Rights Act banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin; and it required equal access to public places, schools and the right to vote, among other impacts.

"LBJ took it up as his legacy," Wooten

said. "That's how he wanted to be remembered. You have to give him credit for picking up the banner that John F. Kennedy carried. He could have very easily let it go.

"But in his speech, he said: This would be one of the greatest things that's ever happened in this country, to letting the world know that all of us are equal."

Wooten is so passionate in sharing his perspective on history. It is hardly surprising that for all he has accomplished over many years as an athlete, activist, NFL scout and executive, one of his most cherished mementos came from that day at the White House. It's a pen that LBJ used.

"I walked out of there with that pen, and with a new fight," he said. "The significance will never change."

That trip to the White House for Wooten came less than a year after more than 250,000 people participated in the March of Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963, when MLK gave his "I Have a Dream" speech at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial.

Wooten has a vivid memory of that event, too.

On August 28, 1963, the Browns were on the West Coast for back-to-back exhibitions against the San Francisco 49ers and Los Angeles Rams. Wooten remembers his roommate, Brown, asking coach Blanton Collier to reschedule practice for earlier on the day of the March. Collier obliged. Then Brown and Wooten took it a step further.

"Of course, we announced that we were going to be watching it in our room," Wooten recalled. "We invited everybody, Black and white, to sit there and watch."

And who showed up?

"We had guys on the floor, on the beds, watching this together," Wooten said.

Fast-forward to now. It pains Wooten to consider how the Trump administration has attacked DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) as a core principle.

"It hurts your heart," Wooten said. "We had come so far in terms of moving this country in the right direction. DEI, all of that, has come from the Civil Rights Act. It was what we stood for as a nation."

Yet decades since he reveled in the White House with the passage of civil rights legislation, which paved the way for other measures, Wooten shudders in weighing plans outlined in Project 2025. He may be well into retirement, but his spirit hasn't waned as he considers social and political ramifications projected in Project 2025.

Said Wooten, "When you read through it, you see immediately that it would destroy every single thing we have worked for and won in this country."

In other words, some history lessons beg for fresh perspective.



"Fox NFL Sunday" analyst Jimmy Johnson's swan song was Super Bowl 59 in New Orleans on Feb. 6. STEPHEN LEW/IMAGN IMAGES

Jimmy Johnson retires from 'Fox NFL Sunday'

Jacob Camenker
USA TODAY

Jimmy Johnson has been an analyst for "Fox NFL Sunday" since the program debuted in 1994.

After 31 years, the 81-year-old is calling it quits, as he announced on "The Herd with Colin Cowherd" on Monday.

"I've made an extremely difficult decision," Johnson said. "I've been thinking about it for the last four or five years, and I've decided to retire from Fox."

Speculation about his retirement began to run rampant during the network's coverage of Super Bowl 59. Fox ran a tribute to the analyst as part of its pregame show and "Fox NFL Sunday" host Curt Menefee asked Johnson if the Super Bowl would be his last time on-air in his role.

"One day at a time, Curt," he replied.

But now Johnson is ready to ride off into the sunset, despite how much he has enjoyed his role with the network.

"Probably the most fun I've ever had in my career – and that's counting Super Bowls and national championships – was at Fox Sports," Johnson said. "I have an absolute ball with my friends on the set. The best friends I've ever had, there with Fox."

Among those who paid tribute to Johnson was his former Arkansas team-

mate and Cowboys boss Jerry Jones. Johnson spent five seasons as Dallas' head coach and led them to back-to-back Super Bowl wins in 1993 and 1994.

"From the time we were in college until the time we were holding up those Super Bowl trophies, I knew Jimmy Johnson could be anything he wanted to be, and he has," Jones said. "Some of the most exciting times in my life I shared with Jimmy, and I cherish them."

"As one of the most gifted people I've ever been around, Jimmy has blazed a remarkable, unique trail that is now deeply embedded into football and broadcasting history," he added. "Congratulations on your incredible career Jimmy, and I wish you well in your fourth quarter my friend. You will always be a winner!"

Johnson posted a 44-36 record in his five seasons with the Cowboys and led them to two of the franchise's five Super Bowl wins.

He also was the coach for the Miami Dolphins for four years.

Before jumping to the NFL, Johnson was the head coach at Oklahoma State and the University of Miami, winning the national championship with the Hurricanes in 1987.

Contributing: Jacob Camenker, USA TODAY

Cowboys pay big to defensive player – but not expected one



Mike Freeman
Columnist
USA TODAY

He's fierce. He's fast. He's been called a remarkable defensive talent. He just got a four-year deal for \$80 million with \$58 million guaranteed, according to ESPN's Adam Scheffer. So pass rusher Micah Parsons is back in the ...

... Wait a second. It's not Parsons who got that contract?

No, it was defensive tackle Osa Odighizuwa.

Please, don't misunderstand the point. Odighizuwa is one of the best young defensive linemen in the NFL. He produces sleepless nights for players and coaching staffs alike. The Dallas Cowboys were right to keep him.

ESPN reported that the Cowboys were going to use the franchise tag on Odighizuwa if they didn't reach an agreement before the end of Tuesday's 4 p.m. ET deadline. He also receives a \$20 million signing bonus, according to the network.

So this is a smart move.

It just raises the question: What is happening with Parsons? Is he next? Is something getting close to done?

Parsons is going to get a bigger deal than Odighizuwa. Right? He's going to get that money from Dallas soon, right? Right?

Right?

To some in the league, Parsons is a generational talent that the Cowboys should have taken care of with a contract extension by now. This all seems really easy. Parsons should be made the highest paid edge player. See how simple that is? Or rather, it should be.

What's the wait? That's the big question.

Again, Odighizuwa is outstanding. He's the type of player the Cowboys should lock up. He's just 26, and his 54 quarterback pressures last year was second only to Parsons.



Cowboys tackle Osa Odighizuwa celebrates one of his 4 1/2 sacks during the 2024 season.

CHRIS JONES/IMAGN IMAGES

Yes, sign him.

But where's Parsons' deal? The Dallas Morning News recently reported that the Cowboys and Parsons have had "general conversations" on a contract extension. Those talks need to be less general and more, well, complete. Extremely complete. Like, complete as all heck.

Parsons missed four games last year and still had 12 sacks.

One of the things Parsons does is he brings constant double teams, which allows other players like Odighizuwa to prosper.

We know the Cowboys want to keep their stars. They did with quarterback Dak Prescott, who got \$240 million, and did the same with wide receiver CeeDee Lamb, who got \$136 million.

Is Parsons next?

Dallas: What are you waiting for?

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LIFELINE



MICHAEL TRAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

THEY SAID WHAT? THE STARS’ BEST QUOTES

“I grew up in front of the world, and for some reason, people can’t seem to grow with me. Instead, they act like I’m supposed to stay frozen in time, like I should still look the way I did on ‘Stranger Things’ Season 1. And because I don’t, I’m now a target.” – Millie Bobby Brown slamming comments and articles about her appearance, including one that said she is “aging so badly.” In an Instagram video, the 21-year-old actress said it’s “disturbing” that “adult writers are spending their time dissecting my face, my body, my choices,” adding, “I will not be shamed for how I look, how I dress, or how I present myself.”



IT’S YOUR BIRTHDAY WHO’S CELEBRATING TODAY

Madison Beer is 26. **Eva Mendes** is 51. **Penn Jillette** is 70.

HOROSCOPE | SANCTUARY More: www.sanctuaryworld.co

Aries (March 21-April 19). Uncovering the truth? As Mercury and Pluto harmonize, demand that others to give the news to you straight.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Paying attention to the subtext? As Mercury and Pluto harmonize, it’s wise not to show all your cards.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Intense discussions? Breakthroughs foster changes of heart as Mercury and Pluto harmonize.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Making a point? Use intuition to your advantage when crafting your message. Who do you have the power to move?

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Figuring out how they tick? As Mercury and Pluto harmonize, get the answers you desire while respecting another’s boundaries.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Healing solutions are available to you as Mercury and Pluto harmonize. Be open to unusual remedies.

Libra (Sept.23-Oct. 23). Exercising powers of persuasion? Self-assurance is sexy as Mercury and Pluto harmonize.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Spurred into self-analysis? As Mercury and Pluto harmonize, a repressed source of stress or fear is revealed!

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Changing your mind? Creative experiences alter your perception of reality as Mercury and Pluto harmonize. Take time to process.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Discussions with loved ones are intense, but necessary, as Mercury and Pluto harmonize. Hold their gaze.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Casting spells? It might seem like that to others as Mercury and Pluto harmonize.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Making a new contract with yourself? Values shift and transform as Mercury harmonizes with evolutionary Pluto.

MOVIES NEWS & VIEWS

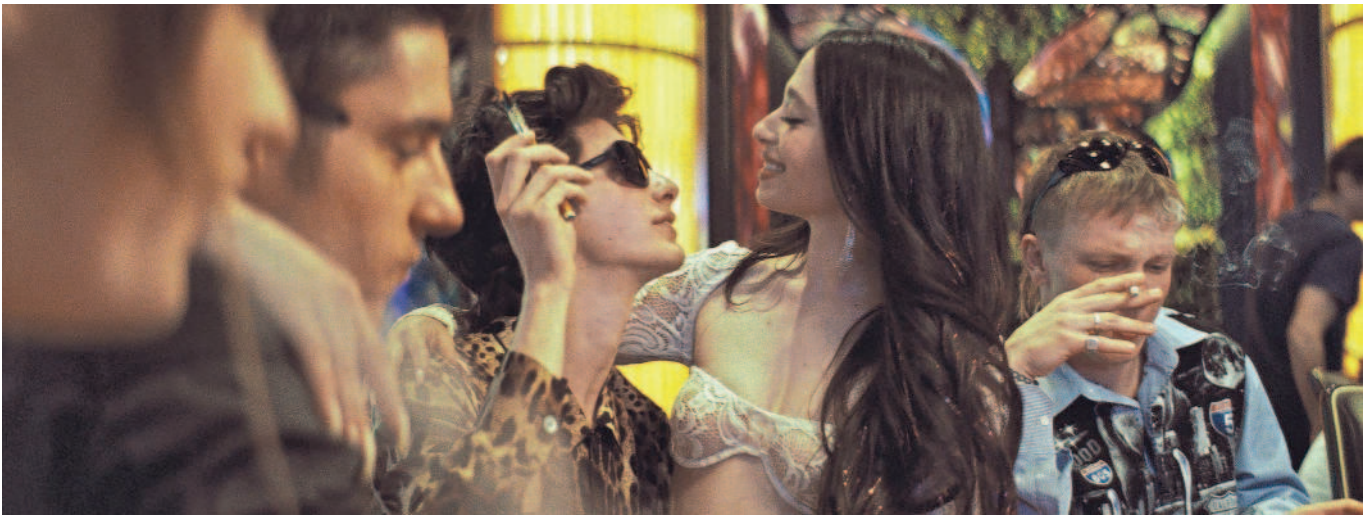


Actress Mikey Madison, center, with producer Alex Coco and director Sean Baker accept the best picture Oscar for “Anora” at the Academy Awards at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on Sunday. PATRICK T. FALLON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Not mad at ‘Anora,’ but disappointed in Oscars

Brian Truitt USA TODAY

Sometimes, Oscars best picture winners make sense to me. Other times, there’s an “Anora.” ● Sean Baker’s art-house romantic dramedy conquered Sunday’s 97th Academy Awards ceremony, winning five honors including best picture and actress. Ever since it took home the Palme d’Or from Cannes last year and became a film festival favorite for many critics last fall, pundits touted it as an Oscar front-runner. Though there were a couple of Screen Actors Guild and British Academy Film Awards zigs and zags in there, “Anora” did finally conquer all. ● And I still don’t quite understand why. **See OSCARS, Page 4D**



A New York exotic dancer (Mikey Madison) elopes with a Russian oligarch’s son (Mark Eydelshteyn) in Sean Baker’s dramedy “Anora.” PROVIDED BY NEON

STREAMING PREVIEW

‘Daredevil’ revival is repeating itself



Kelly Lawler Columnist USA TODAY



Daredevil (Charlie Cox) is back in the suit in “Daredevil: Born Again.” PROVIDED BY GIOVANNI RUFINO/MARVEL/DISNEY+

Heroes come and heroes go, years pass, but some things stay the same. It has been a decade since Charlie Cox first donned the red-horned mask of Daredevil, the crime-fighting Marvel hero who makes up for his lack of sight with other preternaturally heightened senses and reflexes, on the dark and bloody Netflix series. Things in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and the TV industry at large, were very different back in 2015: Thanos was a flicker in the Avengers’ eyes, Spider-Man was most recently played by Andrew Garfield and you could count the number of major streaming services on one hand. Without a streaming service of its own, Marvel branched out to Netflix

They all were unceremoniously canceled as priorities changed and the shiny, A-list Disney+ Marvel shows (“WandaVision” and “Loki”) became the priority in the MCU. But pop culture is cyclical, and as some complain of Marvel fatigue, the always-adapting comics-based studio is happy for everything old to be new again. And so we have “Daredevil: Born Again” (streaming Tuesdays, ★★☆☆), a revival of “Daredevil,” this time on Disney+, a streaming service that once balked at the idea of mature content rubbing shoulders with “Frozen” and “Star Wars.” After Disney+ began streaming those old Marvel Netflix shows a few years ago, it became clear there was an audience for more macabre violence and despair in the streets of New York. With Cox back in the red jumpsuit and the excellent Vincent D’Onofrio willing to go bald again to play archenemy Wilson Fisk/Kingpin, “Born

See DAREDEVIL, Page 4D

MOVIES

‘Sing Sing’ nominee’s journey isn’t over yet

Patrick Ryan
USA TODAY

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. – John “Divine G” Whitfield has long believed in the power of manifestation. On the set of the prison drama “Sing Sing,” which is inspired, in part, by his experience, he remembers telling cast and crew members, “This movie is going to be big!” That became a self-fulfilling prophecy, with the film earning three Oscar nominations including best actor (Colman Domingo) and original song (“Like a Bird”). Whitfield, 60, received a nod from the Academy for adapted screenplay, which he shared with director Greg Kwedar, co-writer Clint Bentley and actor Clarence Maclin.

The Brooklyn-based author spent 25 years at New York’s Sing Sing Correctional Facility after he was wrongfully convicted of murder. But even behind bars, he always knew he was destined for great things, including a spot at Hollywood’s biggest ceremony on Sunday night.

If Whitfield could speak to his younger self, “I think he’d say, ‘Hey, it’s possible!’ ” says the Oscar nominee, sitting down for a breakfast of turkey bacon, eggs and hash browns a few days before the show. “I mean, who would expect this movie would be embraced so well? But dreams can come true and our movie is a representation of that fact.

“I would tell him to just stay the course, keep your heart pure and keep on helping people. Throw out good into the universe, and it comes back ten-fold.”

For the ‘Sing Sing’ team, the Oscars don’t ‘have to be the end’

The Oscars were the last stop of a yearslong journey for “Sing Sing,” which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in 2023 and was released in theaters last summer. Kwedar began developing the project nearly a decade ago after reading a 2005 Esquire article about Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA), a theater program at Sing Sing that teaches incarcerated men invaluable life skills through writing and performing. The movie centers on the friendship between Whitfield (Domingo) and Maclin (playing himself) as they stage “Breakin’ the Mummy’s Code,” an original time-traveling comedy featuring everyone from Robin Hood to Freddy Krueger.

From the jump, “we were not setting some lofty goal to get to the Oscars,” Kwedar says. “The gift was just getting to make it.”

The cast comprises formerly incarcerated men almost entirely, and the filmmakers made an effort to keep their stories front and center throughout awards season. They helped fight for actor JJ Velazquez to be exonerated of his wrongful murder conviction last year



“Sing Sing” co-writers Clarence Maclin, left, and John “Divine G” Whitfield hit the red carpet before the 97th Academy Awards on Sunday. DAN MACMEDAN/USA TODAY

“We were not setting some lofty goal to get to the Oscars. The gift was just getting to make it.”

Greg Kwedar
Director of “Sing Sing”

and continue to speak out in support of Whitfield, who was released from prison in 2012 but is still waiting for full exoneration.

They’re also quick to praise Maclin and co-star Sean Dino Johnson, both of whom now have acting representation. (Maclin, who received British Academy Film Awards, Critics Choice and Independent Spirit awards nominations for “Sing Sing,” will next star in Ray Pantha-

ki’s “In Starland.”) “I really would’ve loved to see that best supporting actor (Oscar) nod for Clarence – I’ll be honest, that one hurt,” Kwedar says. But even still, “two RTA members are now Oscar nominees – that’s a first for the organization.”

After forging a family with the “Sing Sing” cast, the filmmakers hope to bring a similar sense of equity and collaboration to future projects. Days before the Academy Awards, they ran a workshop at San Quentin Prison in Northern California, “teaching the guys in there how to shoot on a film,” Bentley says. “It was such a beautiful, grounding way to start a crazy week.”

The experience “showed me this doesn’t have to be the end,” Kwedar adds. “If there’s a lesson, it’s that you need to do the work to cultivate that kind of community. Also, another big



Filmmakers Clint Bentley, left, and Greg Kwedar had Rehabilitation Through the Arts’ mantra, “Trust the process,” monogrammed in their Oscar tuxedos. PROVIDED BY KAYLA ROCCA

thing I want to do going forward is to hire the incredibly talented formerly incarcerated artists coming up.”

Whitfield rubbed shoulders with Demi Moore, Adrien Brody

Whitfield has been “flying on cloud nine” ever since Oscar nominations were announced in late January. “It’s hard to believe, man, but it’s definitely sinking in,” he says. “Everybody (from RTA) is enjoying this moment. I guess my win is their win as well.”

He arrived in Los Angeles the Monday before the telecast and spent his scant downtime taking long walks around the city. On Tuesday, he gathered with his fellow nominees for the Oscar class photo, where he was seated next to the “beautiful” and “open” Ralph Fiennes of “Conclave.”

Throughout awards season, he’s most enjoyed getting to chat with “The Brutalist” stars Adrien Brody and Guy Pearce, although he admittedly didn’t finish watching the 3½-hour epic. He also was thrilled to meet “The Substance” actress Demi Moore: “I was like, ‘Whoa, Demi Moore!’ I love me some Demi Moore!” Whitfield says with a smile.

The last year has been filled with surreal moments for the cast, from screening the film for incarcerated men at Sing Sing prison to staging a condensed version of “Mummy’s Code” with the original cast at New York Theatre Workshop. But some of Whitfield’s favorite experiences have been buying tickets to see “Sing Sing” in a theater and watching how audiences react.

“People will be crying and I’m just like, ‘Wow,’” Whitfield says. “It’s good that people are getting the message that humans can change their behaviors.”

In RTA, “our whole mission for many years has been to share the power of art and how it’s so healing. This movie has given us a vehicle to do that.”

MUSIC

Apollo Theater started Warwick on her path

Marco della Cava and Dana Taylor
USA TODAY

New York’s Apollo Theater defies a brief summary. Consider that the fabled edifice on 125th Street in Harlem has for more than 90 years has been the *ne plus ultra* showcase for Black talent.

Names such as James Brown, Michael Jackson, Aretha Franklin, Lena Horne, Ella Fitzgerald, B.B. King and Sam Cooke are but a few of the legends whose success was assured after treading those famous boards.

In celebration of Black History Month last month, USA TODAY discussed the Apollo’s importance and influence with singing icon Dionne Warwick, 84, whose own career was launched when in 1958 her gospel group won the venue’s famously competitive Amateur Night contest.

This interview with The Excerpt podcast host Dana Taylor has been edited for length and clarity.

Question: The story of the Apollo Theater is one of resiliency. How do you think it’s been able to remain relevant after 90 years?

Dionne Warwick: Oh wow. The Apollo is one of those edifices that will around not only for the rest of our lives but the many to come after our lives are over. The old saying is very, very true: If you can make it at the Apollo, you can make it anywhere.

Amateur Night is rightly famous. What was your experience like heading onto that stage for the first time?

It was frightening. You’re standing where the icons of our industry not only



For more than 90 years, the Apollo Theater, a cultural landmark in Harlem, has shaped the trajectory of entertainment in America. In 1958, singer Dionne Warwick and her gospel group won Amateur Night there.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES; ILLUSTRATION BY USA TODAY

stood but performed is quite humbling. I stood and I performed, and you sense you accomplished something.

The audience plays an active role in finding that rare talent. Tell us about that.

They’re probably one of the hardest audiences to perform for and to receive that OK from.

One of the most legendary Amateur Night winners was a 17-year-old Ella Fitzgerald. How did some of the artists who came before you influence your own career?

The saying is “You’re standing on the

shoulders of giants,” and I was able to do that. I got to know these incredible ladies and gentlemen in the industry. They embraced me, they threw their arms around me and decided I was their baby and they watched me grow. They had things to say to me when they felt I needed to hear them.

What can you share with us about the space being created at the Apollo for emerging artists?

(Success) is not given to you – you earn it. And that’s what I love about the Apollo audiences. They make you bring your best game to the stage. That’s im-

portant for those who are just beginning and maybe are thinking they know it all, until that audience lets them know maybe they don’t know it all. It helps to get a spanking every now and then.

Do you have advice for aspiring artists who hope to get the same reception you did at the Apollo?

All I can say is you have to hone your craft, make sure that it is at the bar that you’ve set for yourself. And once it’s there, you go on.

You’re still touring. There’s an old quote of yours where you said that the word “rest” is just another dirty four-letter word. What keeps you going?

Well, you do need to get rest, plenty of rest. But that said, it just does not feel like this is the time for me to just stop and relax and not do what I happen to love doing.

Is there a particular song of yours that best reflects your vocal artistry, or that you just enjoy performing the most?

I tell everyone who asks me that same question the same thing: Every single song is my favorite.

Fair enough. Going back to the Apollo Theater, can you tell us some of your memories of performing there or even of being a spectator?

Well, as a spectator I remember during my early teens being able to go see Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers (of “Why Do Fools Fall In Love” fame) many times. It was a treat to go to the Apollo Theater. I’m thrilled it’s still turning out some incredible talents and allowing them to be heard and seen by a deserving audience.

USA TODAY CROSSWORD

EDITED Amanda Rafkin
BY Zhouqin Burnikel

BUILD A SNOWMAN

ACROSS

1 Bounces on the waves

5 Titans and Giants

10 PC monitor type

13 Sign in a TV studio

15 Group of mountains

16 Copa Mundial cheer

17 One half of some genetic pairings

19 Mover's truck

20 Movie studio area

21 ___ out (distribute)

22 Lock of hair

24 Quaint store name in tourist towns

27 "None for me, thanks"

30 Hertz competitor

31 Medicinal tablets

32 Unit of gemstone weight

34 "Throwback" day (Abbr.)

37 Saag ___ (spinach-and-potato dish)

38 Art reproduction

39 Partiality

40 Lawn droplets

41 Two-person sword fights

42 Treasure cache

43 Wild boar's noise

45 ___ a phrase (made up a new saying)

46 "... but it still happened"

50 Banish from a country

51 Sound boosters

52 Jump like a kangaroo

55 Cul-de-___

56 Insulated containers named for a mythical beast

60 Caribou's kin

61 Backspace over

62 Cyber Monday events

63 Lines on city maps (Abbr.)

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STREAMING

Eye candy Dylan Efron makes it to ‘Traitors’ finale

Erin Jensen
USA TODAY

Congratulations are in order for little Miss Guided. Dylan Efron is one of four remaining faithful who made it all the way to “The Traitors” finale.

The third season of the Peacock series, based on a Dutch format, airs its finale and reunion Thursday (9 p.m. EST/6 PST).

Efron, four years younger than actor brother Zac Efron, emerged as an early fan favorite after producers positioned him as scrumptious eye candy. The “Down to Earth” producer, who also has worked as a stuntman and in film production, is among those gathered in a Scottish castle, duking it out to determine who among them are traitors – masterfully pulling off “murders” undetected – and who are honest faithful. The last player(s) standing are awarded a cash prize of up to \$250,000.

“I’m all for that,” Efron, 33, says of his ab-baring onscreen moments. “If you see my Instagram, I have my shirt off 90% of the time.”

Efron, a staunch “faithful,” grew up fantasizing about taking home the \$1 million payday on “Survivor” and jumped at the chance to appear on “Traitors.” This season already has purged 2011 “Survivor” champ Rob Mariano (traitor); Britney Spears’ ex-husband, model Sam Asghari (faithful); and “RuPaul’s Drag Race” winner Bob the Drag Queen, who dubbed Efron “Miss Guided” in an attempt to throw Efron off his traitorous scent.

Efron loves the moniker and even added it to his Instagram bio. “I wasn’t expecting it to be such a moment,” he says. But “watching it, I was like, ‘Oh, wow! That’s a nickname.’”

Bob, born Christopher Caldwell, also



Dylan Efron, right, partners with Tom Sandoval for an especially disgusting “Traitors” challenge in which bugs are dumped on players.

stunned those gathered for deliberation when he said Zac Efron is “not a good” actor.

Dylan Efron says he and Bob have not talked about the moment but is confident it will be addressed at the reunion. “He’s just an entertainer,” Efron says of Bob, appearing to hold no grudges. “I don’t think he meant it.”

Dylan adds that Zac laughed off the remark and has been “enjoying” the show, teasing, “I’m saving for the reunion what he told me” about Bob’s comment.

The Feb. 27 episode concluded before the results of the roundtable were revealed. Traitors Danielle Reyes and the

recently recruited Britney Haynes, both former “Big Brother” contestants, piggy-backed off faithful Dolores Catania’s (“The Real Housewives of New Jersey”) suspicions of faithful Ivar Mountbatten, an extended member of Britain’s royal family. Efron, Mountbatten and their fellow faithful Gabby Windey (“The Bachelorette”) voted to banish Reyes. Reyes and Mountbatten were excused from a tie-breaking vote in which Efron and Windey doubled down on Reyes, while Catania locked in on Mountbatten. The episode ended before Haynes could reveal her vote.

Efron predicts Reyes will have the most to answer for at the cast reunion.



Dylan Efron has made it to the final four of “The Traitors” by playing the “naïve rookie” and making friends.
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY EUAN CHERRY/PEACOCK

She has been criticized for comparing fellow traitor Carolyn Wiger to Forrest Gump (a move Efron deems “below the belt”) and allegedly swearing on her grandchildren that she was a faithful.

“When you sign up to play that role, you’re going to get a lot of backlash and a lot of people want to put their two cents in,” Efron says. “But she did it and she did a great job being the villain.”

Efron attributes his longevity in the game to being able to play the part of “naïve rookie” and developing genuine relationships with his cast.

He’s open to doing more competition reality TV and continuing to document his global travels for YouTube and the small screen. He’s even ready to try his hand at acting, which frightened him before.

“As a kid, I was a little shy to step into those (roles) and said, ‘No, my brother is the actor; I couldn’t act,’” Efron recalls. “But as I gain more confidence, I think I can do a lot of things, and it’s fun to constantly prove to myself what I can do.”



Acting winners Adrien Brody, from left, Mikey Madison, Zoe Saldana and Kieran Culkin toast with their Oscars backstage at the 97th Academy Awards.
DAN MACMEDAN/USA TODAY

Oscars

Continued from Page 1D

If I were an Oscar voter, “Anora” would have ranked ninth out of 10 on my preferential ballot. (Sorry, “Wicked.”) It was a good movie, sure, but seemed lightweight when compared with the excellent papal thriller “Conclave” or the awesome historical epic “The Brutalist” or the electric music biopic “A Complete Unknown” or the actually-innovative-for-a-change “Nickel Boys.”

In fact, I can recall when I first wondered why all this hubbub: During the very nude first 20 strip-club minutes of “Anora.” For those who had never heard of the R-rated film before Sunday or were waiting for it to stream (Hulu, March 17!), it stars best actress winner Mikey Madison as a brassy Brooklyn exotic dancer named Ani who, because she can speak Russian, is tasked with getting to know Vanya (Mark Eydelshteyn), an oligarch’s son.

Even though Vanya is a complete man-child and our girl Ani can do way better, he pays her to hang out with him (read: sex) and on a Las Vegas trip, they elope. They get back to his Brighton Beach mansion, Vanya’s parents are coming to America because they aren’t pleased, and a bunch of goons including good-hearted Igor (Yura Borisov) try to keep Ani in check when Vanya bails on his new wife.

So, Gen Z “Pretty Woman” then turns into a screwball comedy trip through Manhattan trying to find Vanya, but “Anora” finally gets Oscar-y good in the final act. Ani butts heads with Vanya’s forceful mom and you start to realize this Cinderella romance may end very badly. There’s one bittersweet moment between Igor and Ani, who desperately wants an emotional connection instead of a sexual one, that makes the movie.

Here’s the thing: For me, Borisov is the best part of the entire flick, giving a

supporting character surprising depth and magnetic energy. But does he equal a best picture victory? Nah. Does Madison? Nope. She’s good but, come on now, she’s no Demi Moore just going ballistic in “The Substance.”

At the same time, “Anora” is representative of the positive direction the Academy has been going in recent years. Conventional Oscar movies such as “Conclave” and “The Brutalist,” or even last year’s best picture “Oppenheimer,” will always be there on Academy Awards night. But going back to “Moonlight” taking down “La La Land” in 2017, niche winners such as “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” “Parasite,” “CODA” and “Nomadland” are thankfully more the rule than the exception. It’s an example of how international and diverse the Academy voting body has grown since the days of #OscarsSoWhite.

Are they to the point of honoring a bonkers body-horror flick such as “The Substance,” a movie with substance that talks about aging in Hollywood and the critical way we look at our superficial selves? Well, no, because that would be groundbreaking. (It’s not lost on anybody paying attention that Oscar night pretty much turned out to be “The Substance” come to life, with the older actress getting upended by the younger model.)

As much as things have changed, Oscar is gonna Oscar. We’re going to get a “Crash” or a “Green Book” every so often, and “Anora” is a good pick comparatively to those. All we can do is love the movies we love (and champion the heck out of them), root for our favorites to maybe get a statue at the end of the night, but not get too bent out of shape if they lose. They say don’t go to bed angry, which I kind of did, but I’m feeling better.

If it leads to a “Substance” one day standing triumphant on stage when the Oscar credits roll, then the occasional “Anora” seems bearable.



Matt Murdock (Charlie Cox) is in court in “Daredevil: Born Again.”
PROVIDED BY GIOVANNI RUFINO/MARVEL/DISNEY+

Daredevil

Continued from Page 1D

Again” came together faster than Daredevil could stop a mugging. It’s all neat, tidy and reeking of corporate synergy.

But while it looks and smells the same as the old “Daredevil,” it doesn’t feel quite as ambitious and exciting. It’s a very good copy, but the creativity and exhilaration were lost in the reach for fidelity.

So what’s the “where are they now” scoop on the “Daredevil” crew? Well, they’re pretty much in the exact same place they were back when all this started. Matt Murdock (Cox) fights crime in the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood by night as Daredevil, and injustice by day as a lawyer, alongside his friends Foggy Nelson (Elden Henson) and Karen Page (Deborah Ann Woll). When he suffers a devastating personal tragedy, Matt decides to hang up his mask and focus on helping people through his law practice. But New York doesn’t sleep, and neither do Daredevil’s enemies. While Matt is in semi-retirement, crime boss Fisk comes back from his and decides to run for mayor, seemingly with all good intentions. But clearly, something nefarious is underpinning his campaign.

Between Fisk’s shenanigans and a case that hits Matt very close to his vigilante justice home, the Daredevil alter ego is probably not gone for good.

The new series captures the moody aesthetic of its predecessor, as Cox and D’Onofrio easily slide back into the roles and the scene lighting is turned way down. With a new creative team at the helm – Matt Corman and Chris Ord (“Covert Affairs”), replacing Drew Goddard and Steven S. DeKnight – Daredevil still broods, practices law and pummels the required criminals

and villains to within an inch of their lives. Other faces from the Netflix series reappear, including Jon Bernthal’s fan-favorite take on The Punisher, and the writers make a worthy effort to relate the comic-book drama to the world in 2025 in its portrayal of politics and systemic injustice.

Despite all this, it almost feels like the series is purposefully courting the average. It is a “good enough” copy of what originally was stunning. When it premiered, the first “Daredevil” was one of the few takes on superheroes as complex, morally gray and deeply violent. Ten years and two “Suicide Squad” movies later, that is sort of a tired trope. The original series, in its superb first season, sought new and stark ways to shoot its fight scenes, surprising us but never inuring us to the brutal violence. A famous bloodbath in a dimly lit hallway is likely stuck in the memory of anyone who watched it.

“Born Again” can’t find that greatness. In the producers’ desire to replicate something beloved they have ended up plagiarizing themselves: Too much of “Born Again” feels like something we’ve already seen. Great TV shows can and should strive for consistency, but they also grow and change to keep the story interesting. Most don’t have a seven-year hiatus between go-rounds, but hey, Larry David kept “Curb Your Enthusiasm” the same but different enough, on and off for 24 years.

The new/old version of Daredevil will scratch the itch of anyone looking for fewer complications from Marvel, which in its fifth “phase” of storytelling is churning out increasingly convoluted and mediocre shows and films. “Born Again” is, at least, straightforward in its structure and narrative. Do you want a dark superhero? You’ve got a dark superhero. And maybe that’s enough.

But there’s enough “good-enough” TV on the air right now. I want someone to try to be great.

NATION&WORLD

EXTRA

INSIDE
Trump threatens
fund cuts to schools
allowing ‘illegal
protests.’ 3NN

‘FELLOW CITIZENS, AMERICA IS BACK’

Trump’s address to Congress met with cheers, jeers



President Donald Trump speaks Tuesday to a joint session of Congress at the U.S. Capitol. “Our country is on the verge of a comeback the likes of which the world has never witnessed, and perhaps will never witness again,” he said.

Bo Erickson, Steve Holland
and Joseph Ax
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump took a victory lap in an address to Congress on Tuesday, drawing cat-calls and interruptions from some Democratic lawmakers who held up signs and walked out mid-speech in protest.

The partisan rancor was reflective of the tumult that has accompanied Trump’s first six weeks in office upending U.S. foreign policy, igniting a trade war with close allies and slashing the federal workforce.

The prime-time speech, his first to Congress since taking office on January 20, capped a second day of market turmoil after he imposed new tariffs against Mexico, Canada and China.

“To my fellow citizens, America is back,” Trump began to a standing ovation from fellow Republicans. “Our country is on the verge of a comeback the likes of which the world has never witnessed, and perhaps will never witness again.”

Democrats held up signs with messages like “No King” and “This Is NOT Normal,” and around 30 Democrats had



Texas Rep. Al Green is escorted from the chamber after House Speaker Mike Johnson ordered the Democrat be removed. Other Democratic lawmakers later walked out of the speech.

PHOTOS BY JIM WATSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

walked out mid-speech less than an hour into Trump’s remarks.

Texas Rep. Al Green was ordered removed after he refused to sit down.

“The chair now directs the sergeant at arms to restore order. Remove this gentleman from the chamber,” House

Speaker Mike Johnson said after warning Democrats to maintain decorum.

Green, a Democrat, shaking his walking cane at Trump, appeared to be shouting that Trump did not win a mandate in November’s election after the president bragged about the Republicans’ victories. As he was led from the chamber, some Republicans heckled him.

Trump appeared to revel in the disagreements.

“I look at the Democrats in front of me, and I realize there is absolutely nothing I can say to make them happy or to make them stand or smile or applaud,” he said after Green’s ejection.

Trump spoke in the House of Representatives, where lawmakers huddled in fear for their lives a little over four years ago while a mob of Trump supporters ransacked the Capitol in an unsuccessful effort to overturn Democrat Joe Biden’s 2020 victory over the then-incumbent Trump.

The president praised tech CEO Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency, which has

See TRUMP, Page 8NN

Tariffs come into full force

Canadian PM calls fees
‘very dumb thing to do’

David Lawder, David Ljunggren
and Kylie Madry
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump’s new 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada took effect on Tuesday, along with a doubling of duties on Chinese goods to 20%, sparking trade wars that could slam economic growth and lift prices for Americans still smarting from years of high inflation.

The tariff actions, which look set to upend nearly \$2.2 trillion in annual trade, went live after Trump declared that the top three U.S. trading partners had failed to do enough to stem the flow of fentanyl and its precursor chemicals into the U.S.

Later on Tuesday, however, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told Fox Business Network that Trump may work out a partial resolution with Canada and Mexico that could be announced on Wednesday.

“So I think he’s going to work something out with them,” Lutnick said of Trump. “It’s not going to be a pause – none of that pause stuff – but I think he’s going to figure out, ‘you do more, and I’ll meet you in the middle some way,’ and we’re going to probably be announcing that tomorrow.”

Lutnick said he had spoken to Mexican and Canadian officials on Tuesday. One source told Reuters he spoke with Canadian Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc.

Lutnick said Trump was considering providing some relief to companies that comply with rules under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement on trade that is due for renegotiation in 2026.

Trump is expected to tout his tariff agenda, his efforts to curb the fentanyl overdose crisis and a Ukraine minerals

See TARIFFS, Page 8NN



Bottles of U.S. alcohol have been removed from store shelves across Canada, including this liquor store in Toronto. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hit back on newly imposed U.S. tariffs with 25% tariffs on \$20.7 billion worth of U.S. imports.

ARLYN MCADOREY/REUTERS

Massive storm battering much of country

Impacts range from
tornado activity to
blizzard-like conditions

Christopher Cann, Jorge L. Ortiz,
Dinah Voyles Pulver and Doyle Rice
USA TODAY

A massive winter storm marched across the central U.S. on Tuesday, unloading heavy winds, rain and snow across much of the country, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands of customers, disrupting travel and forcing officials to reschedule Mardi Gras events in New Orleans.

Tens of millions of people were under severe weather advisories because of

the storm, from tornado, thunderstorm and fire-related warnings in the South to blizzard warnings across the northern Plains region.

Hurricane-force winds were reported in northeastern Texas and southeastern Oklahoma through the morning, prompting red flag warnings across the drought-stricken region. The winds caused widespread power outages that affected over 360,000 homes and businesses in Texas alone.


Meanwhile, forecasters in Minnesota and Nebraska warned of heavy snowfall that could cause whiteout conditions and make travel “treacherous and potentially life-threatening.”

See STORM, Page 6NN



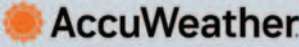
Carnival floats roll down St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans on Monday. City officials drastically curtailed two Mardi Gras parades by starting them earlier, stripping out bands and walking groups, and shortening the traditional routes ahead of severe weather that moved through the region later in the day.

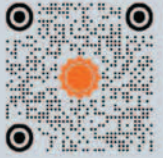
MICHAEL DEMOCKER/GETTY IMAGES



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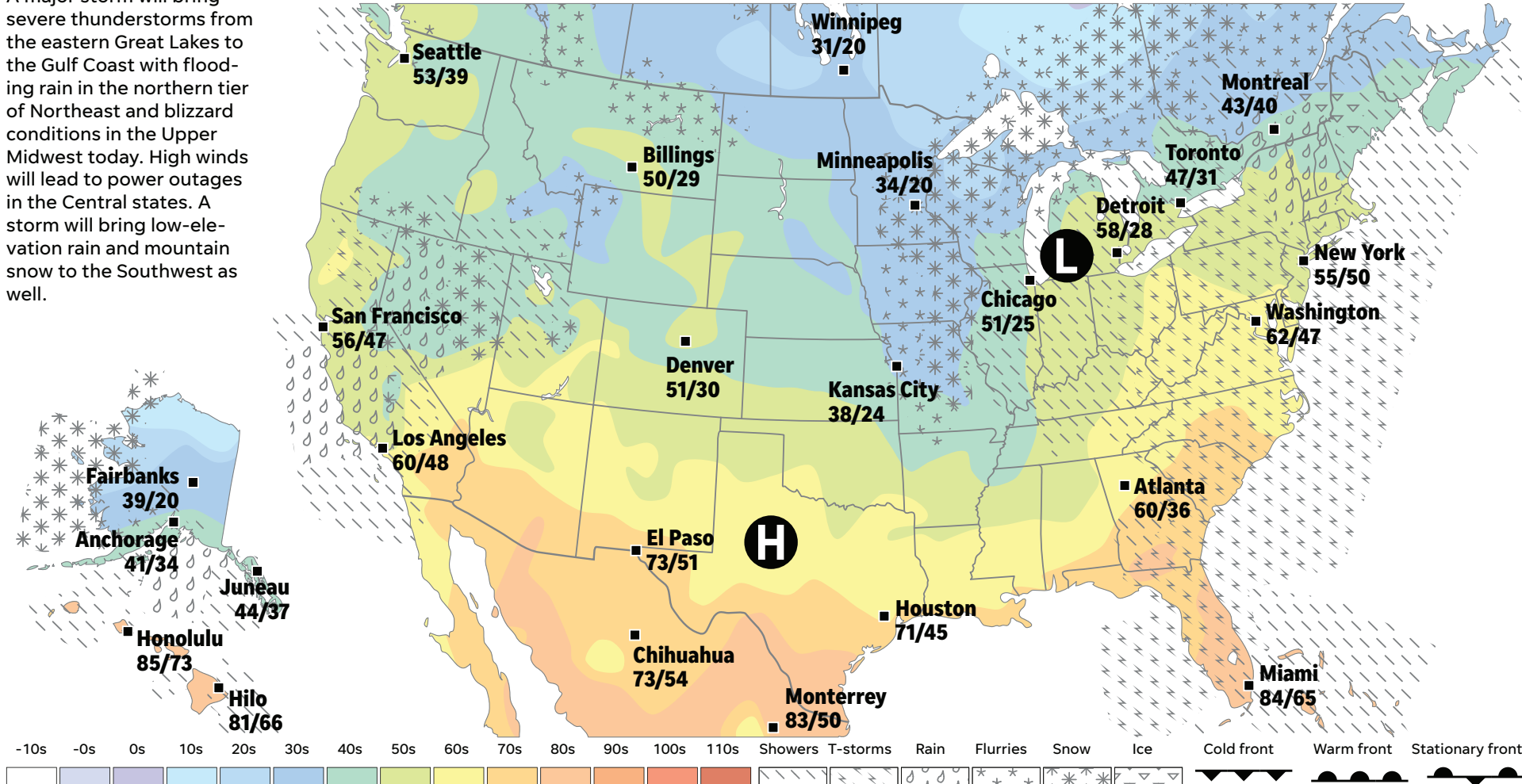


NATIONAL SUMMARY

A major storm will bring severe thunderstorms from the eastern Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast with flooding rain in the northern tier of Northeast and blizzard conditions in the Upper Midwest today. High winds will lead to power outages in the Central states. A storm will bring low-elevation rain and mountain snow to the Southwest as well.

In the digital e-edition, you can click anywhere on the US map to get up-to-date forecasts, radar, MinuteCast® and more.

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation for Wednesday. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



TUESDAY EXTREMES

NATIONAL (for the 48 contiguous states)

High: 95 at McAllen, TX

Low: -12 at Presque Isle, ME

Precip: 2.39" at Pittsburgh, KS

INTERNATIONAL (excludes Antarctica)

High: 113 at Urandangi, Australia

Low: -50 at Khabyardino, Russia

Precip: 3.68" at Kosrae Island, Micronesia

TODAY IN HISTORY

At many inland locations, the three coldest months of the year normally extend from Dec. 5 to March 5. This has prompted meteorologists to proclaim March 5 as the first day of meteorological spring.

WEATHER TRIVIA™

Q: What country emits the most carbon dioxide into the atmosphere?

NATIONAL CITIES WEDNESDAY

| | High/low/W | Air Quality | | High/low/W | Air Quality | | High/low/W | Air Quality | | High/low/W | Air Quality |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Aberdeen, SD | 40/20/pc | 51 | ● Evansville, IN | 52/29/sh | 43 | ● Levittown, PA | 58/48/r | 52 | ● Rochester, NY | 57/39/r | 32 |
| Abilene, TX | 64/45/s | 38 | ● Fall River, MA | 53/48/c | 49 | ● Lincoln, IL | 47/24/r | 34 | ● Rockford, IL | 47/23/sn | 23 |
| ● Accomac, VA | 57/47/t | 36 | ● Farmington, NM | 60/41/pc | 46 | ● Louisville, KY | 56/32/sh | 45 | ● Ruidoso, NM | 58/42/s | 57 |
| ● Adrian, MI | 58/28/t | 28 | ● Fayetteville, NC | 70/44/t | 35 | Lubbock, TX | 66/42/s | 46 | Salem, OR | 59/36/c | 27 |
| ● Akron, OH | 58/28/r | 40 | ● Fond du Lac, WI | 40/20/sn | 46 | ● Manitowoc, WI | 38/21/sn | 41 | Salina, KS | 47/25/s | 92 |
| ● Alamogordo, NM | 70/49/s | 58 | ● Fort Myers, FL | 82/63/t | 50 | ● Mansfield, OH | 57/26/r | 34 | ● Salinas, CA | 58/44/r | 29 |
| ● Alexandria, VA | 64/47/t | 40 | Fort Smith, AR | 54/31/s | 43 | ● Marshall, NC | 67/30/t | 30 | ● Salisbury, MD | 61/49/t | 32 |
| ● Alliance, OH | 61/29/r | 40 | ● Framingham, MA | 55/50/r | 49 | ● Marshfield, WI | 33/15/sn | 42 | San Angelo, TX | 67/46/s | 46 |
| ● Amarillo, TX | 59/36/s | 51 | ● Freeport, IL | 44/21/sn | 23 | ● Massillon, OH | 59/30/r | 35 | ● Sarasota, FL | 78/60/t | 60 |
| ● Ames, IA | 32/18/sn | 51 | ● Fremont, OH | 61/30/r | 39 | ● McLean, VA | 63/45/t | 35 | ● Savannah, GA | 77/45/t | 68 |
| ● Anderson, SC | 68/37/t | 39 | ● Gadsden, AL | 57/34/pc | 37 | ● Melbourne, FL | 83/54/t | 41 | ● Sheboygan, WI | 39/22/sn | 40 |
| ● Appleton, WI | 39/21/sn | 33 | ● Gainesville, FL | 75/47/t | 41 | ● Memphis, TN | 47/32/pc | 33 | ● Shelby, NC | 69/37/t | 40 |
| ● Asheville, NC | 64/32/t | 35 | ● Galesburg, IL | 42/21/sn | 23 | ● Middletown, NY | 51/44/r | 49 | Sherman, TX | 58/35/s | 40 |
| ● Ashland, OH | 56/27/r | 30 | ● Gastonia, NC | 71/37/t | 41 | ● Milford, MA | 54/49/r | 47 | Shreveport, LA | 61/35/s | 58 |
| ● Athens, GA | 66/36/c | 39 | ● Glen Rose, TX | 64/37/s | 34 | ● Milwaukee, WI | 47/24/sn | 49 | Silver City, NM | 67/38/s | 47 |
| ● Augusta, GA | 74/41/t | 45 | Gonzales, LA | 69/40/s | 46 | ● Monroe, MI | 55/29/t | 27 | Sioux Falls, SD | 38/21/pc | 42 |
| Austin, TX | 72/40/s | 37 | Great Falls, MT | 45/22/c | 38 | Monroe, LA | 60/35/s | 50 | ● Somerset, PA | 60/30/t | 29 |
| Bartlesville, OK | 52/23/s | 67 | ● Green Bay, WI | 38/21/r | 23 | ● Montgomery, AL | 63/38/s | 42 | ● Somerville, NJ | 57/48/r | 52 |
| ● Battle Creek, MI | 55/25/r | 27 | ● Greenville, SC | 68/37/t | 41 | ● Muncie, IN | 54/27/sh | 47 | ● South Bend, IN | 54/25/r | 23 |
| ● Bedford, IN | 53/28/sn | 29 | ● Hackensack, NJ | 55/50/r | 53 | ● Murfreesboro, TN | 56/30/c | 33 | ● Spartanburg, SC | 69/36/t | 43 |
| ● Binghamton, NY | 52/39/r | 37 | ● Hagerstown, MD | 62/41/t | 32 | Naples, FL | 81/65/t | 47 | ● Springfield, IL | 45/24/r | 40 |
| ● Bluffton, SC | 70/47/t | 68 | ● Hattiesburg, MS | 66/36/s | 43 | ● Nashville, TN | 56/33/c | 39 | ● Springfield, MO | 41/23/c | 39 |
| Bremerton, WA | 51/33/c | 28 | ● Henderson, KY | 52/28/sh | 37 | ● Neptune, NJ | 51/48/r | 53 | ● St. Augustine, FL | 75/49/t | 43 |
| ● Brockton, MA | 55/50/c | 51 | ● Hendersonville, NC | 64/33/t | 35 | ● New Bedford, MA | 53/49/c | 48 | St. Cloud, MN | 34/17/sn | 51 |
| Brownwood, TX | 67/41/s | 36 | ● Herkimer, NY | 51/41/r | 45 | ● New Bern, NC | 71/48/t | 37 | ● St. George, UT | 63/46/pc | 38 |
| ● Burlington, IA | 39/22/sn | 24 | ● Hillsdale, MI | 55/24/t | 39 | ● New Philadelphia, OH | 60/31/r | 35 | Staunton, VA | 63/39/t | 33 |
| ● Burlington, NC | 68/40/t | 34 | ● Holland, MI | 53/28/r | 33 | ● Newark, OH | 60/29/r | 38 | ● Stevens Point, WI | 37/17/sn | 39 |
| ● Burlington, VT | 52/47/r | 51 | ● Hornell, NY | 55/37/r | 25 | ● Newton, NJ | 55/45/r | 50 | Stockton, CA | 57/39/r | 29 |
| ● Cambridge, OH | 63/31/r | 34 | Houma, LA | 70/38/s | 43 | ● New York, NY | 55/50/r | 58 | ● Stroudsburg, PA | 55/43/r | 50 |
| ● Camdenot, MO | 39/24/sf | 31 | ● Howell, MI | 57/24/t | 29 | ● Norwich, CT | 54/47/r | 48 | ● Stuart, FL | 85/60/t | 49 |
| ● Canandaigua, NY | 56/38/r | 43 | Hutchinson, KS | 50/23/s | 63 | ● Ocala, FL | 77/47/t | 40 | ● Sturgis, MI | 54/25/r | 38 |
| ● Canton, OH | 59/29/r | 43 | ● Hyannis, MA | 49/45/c | 50 | Oklahoma City, OK | 54/32/s | 54 | ● Tallahassee, FL | 78/45/t | 37 |
| Carlsbad, NM | 69/42/s | 66 | ● Indianapolis, IN | 52/26/sn | 45 | Opelousas, LA | 65/38/s | 39 | Thibodaux, LA | 69/38/s | 43 |
| ● Chambersburg, PA | 61/41/t | 42 | ● Iowa City, IA | 36/21/sn | 28 | ● Oshkosh, WI | 39/20/sn | 28 | Topeka, KS | 43/22/pc | 109 |
| ● Cherry Hill, NJ | 59/48/r | 52 | ● Ithaca, NY | 54/40/r | 32 | ● Palm Beach, FL | 84/63/t | 49 | ● Tuscaloosa, AL | 55/34/c | 39 |
| ● Cincinnati, OH | 54/28/sh | 36 | ● Jackson, MS | 60/36/s | 50 | ● Palm Springs, CA | 73/53/r | 53 | ● Utica, NY | 50/40/r | 38 |
| ● Clarksville, TN | 52/30/sh | 36 | ● Jackson, TN | 50/28/pc | 32 | ● Panama City, FL | 74/48/s | 42 | ● Ventura, CA | 58/46/r | 50 |
| ● Coldwater, MI | 55/25/r | 42 | ● Jacksonville, FL | 77/48/t | 45 | ● Peoria, IL | 47/25/r | 38 | ● Victorville, CA | 64/38/sh | 51 |
| ● Columbus, OH | 59/29/r | 39 | ● Jacksonville, NC | 68/46/t | 40 | ● Pensacola, FL | 71/43/s | 40 | ● Vineland, NJ | 59/48/t | 39 |
| ● Corning, NY | 57/39/r | 28 | ● Kent, OH | 60/28/r | 39 | ● Peoria, IL | 47/25/r | 38 | ● Visalia, CA | 56/43/r | 34 |
| Corpus Christi, TX | 82/52/s | 35 | ● Kewanee, IL | 45/23/r | 28 | ● Petersburg, VA | 66/45/t | 43 | ● Washington, DC | 62/47/t | 44 |
| ● Daytona Beach, FL | 79/50/t | 41 | ● Keyser, WV | 66/37/t | 36 | Phoenix, AZ | 77/58/pc | 111 | Watertown, SD | 32/17/pc | 32 |
| Deming, NM | 71/42/s | 53 | ● Kinston, NC | 68/46/t | 37 | ● Port Huron, MI | 58/26/t | 29 | ● Wausau, WI | 34/17/sn | 23 |
| DeRidder, LA | 63/33/s | 37 | ● Knoxville, TN | 63/34/sh | 30 | ● Portsmouth, NH | 51/46/r | 51 | ● Waynesboro, PA | 61/41/r | 36 |
| ● Des Moines, IA | 33/20/sn | 47 | ● Lafayette, IN | 50/26/sn | 31 | ● Poughkeepsie, NY | 55/48/r | 47 | ● White Plains, NY | 52/47/r | 50 |
| ● Detroit, MI | 58/28/t | 34 | Lafayette, LA | 67/39/s | 45 | ● Providence, RI | 53/48/r | 45 | Wichita Falls, TX | 60/36/s | 27 |
| Devils Lake, ND | 33/21/c | 27 | ● Lakeland, FL | 80/55/t | 41 | Pueblo, CO | 55/25/c | 54 | ● Wilmington, DE | 59/46/r | 43 |
| ● Dover, NH | 48/45/r | 55 | ● Lansing, MI | 56/25/t | 37 | ● Quincy, CA | 54/50/c | 51 | ● Wilmington, NC | 71/48/t | 52 |
| El Paso, TX | 73/51/s | 94 | Las Cruces, NM | 70/44/s | 62 | ● Redding, CA | 61/41/pc | 27 | ● Wisconsin Rapids, WI | 36/16/sn | 48 |
| ● Elmira, NY | 57/38/r | 26 | ● Lebanon, PA | 58/43/r | 56 | ● Reno, NV | 47/33/r | 66 | ● Wooster, OH | 58/28/r | 43 |
| ● Erie, PA | 56/30/r | 36 | ● Leesburg, FL | 79/52/t | 35 | ● Ravenna, OH | 60/29/r | 37 | ● Worcester, MA | 51/48/r | 44 |
| Eugene, OR | 55/36/c | 21 | | | | Richmond, IN | 52/26/sh | 32 | ● York, PA | 59/43/r | 39 |

Air Quality Index: 0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-150, Unhealthy for sensitive groups; 151-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

| | Wednesday High/low/W | Thursday High/low/W | | Wednesday High/low/W | Thursday High/low/W | | Wednesday High/low/W | Thursday High/low/W | | Wednesday High/low/W | Thursday High/low/W |
|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Acapulco | 86/70/s | 87/71/s | ● Cape Town | 81/66/pc | 79/63/pc | ● La Paz | 54/42/r | 54/41/r | San Jose | 88/63/s | 87/63/c |
| Addis Ababa | 82/58/s | 82/56/s | Caracas | 88/76/pc | 88/74/pc | Lagos | 90/81/t | 90/80/t | San Salvador | 88/64/sh | 90/65/s |
| Algiers | 72/56/c | 71/54/c | ● Casablanca | 65/51/sh | 63/48/r | Lima | 80/70/pc | 81/71/c | Santiago | 87/55/s | 82/54/s |
| Amman | 58/44/c | 59/47/c | Colombo | 90/78/pc | 90/77/pc | ● Lisbon | 61/54/sh | 64/54/pc | Sao Paulo | 87/69/sh | 87/68/s |
| Amsterdam | 55/35/pc | 59/40/pc | ● Copenhagen | 49/39/pc | 52/36/s | London | 58/36/s | 59/46/s | Sarajevo | 60/31/s | 66/33/s |
| Ankara | 61/23/s | 64/24/s | ● Damascus | 53/46/r | 59/46/sh | ● Madrid | 58/47/sh | 57/47/sh | Shanghai | 50/42/c | 53/39/c |
| Asuncion | 102/76/s | 100/77/s | Dublin | 56/41/c | 55/45/sh | Manila | 95/79/t | 92/78/s | ● Singapore | 88/77/t | 88/78/t |
| Athens | 61/46/s | 67/47/s | Geneva | 57/33/pc | 57/33/pc | Mexico City | 83/52/s | 79/56/s | ● Stockholm | 48/41/c | 53/36/pc |
| Auckland | 73/52/s | 69/55/s | ● Guatemala City | 86/61/pc | 82/59/s | Milan | 64/39/pc | 65/39/pc | ● Sydney | 79/71/sh | 79/70/sh |
| Baghdad | 58/49/sh | 73/54/pc | Hanoi | 77/60/sh | 64/57/r | Mombasa | 93/76/pc | 93/77/pc | ● Taipei | 67/60/sh | 62/56/r |
| Bangkok | 100/80/s | 99/80/pc | Harare | 83/62/c | 83/61/pc | Montevideo | 97/75/s | 97/76/s | Tegucigalpa | 89/64/pc | 87/61/s |
| Beijing | 57/28/pc | 56/29/pc | Havana | 87/66/sh | 80/56/s | ● Montreal | 43/40/r | 46/17/c | Tehran | 52/44/c | 59/46/pc |
| Beirut | 68/56/r | 68/56/pc | Helsinki | 43/36/r | 41/37/pc | ● Moscow | 38/35/c | 41/38/sn | ● Tokyo | 51/47/r | 54/42/sh |
| Belgrade | 61/33/pc | 66/36/pc | ● Hong Kong | 73/59/sh | 64/54/r | Nairobi | 84/61/pc | 85/62/s | ● Toronto | 47/31/r | 35/25/sf |
| Berlin | 59/33/s | 60/34/pc | ● Jakarta | 88/76/t | 91/76/t | ● New Delhi | 76/53/s | 82/55/s | Tunis | 65/54/pc | 63/56/r |
| ● Bogota | 65/51/r | 64/50/r | Jerusalem | 58/46/sh | 59/45/pc | Panama City | 92/71/pc | 91/69/pc | Vancouver | 50/36/pc | 50/39/s |
| Brussels | 58/37/pc | 61/44/pc | Johannesburg | 79/58/t | 82/59/t | Paris | 60/36/s | 62/43/s | Vienna | 57/32/s | 62/38/s |
| Bucharest | 61/34/s | 66/33/s | Kabul | 44/31/pc | 49/34/s | Port-au-Prince | 90/69/s | 85/68/s | Warsaw | 56/37/pc | 59/34/s |
| Budapest | 59/27/s | 62/29/s | Khartoum | 96/69/s | 92/65/pc | Rio de Janeiro | 86/74/pc | 85/74/sh | Yerevan | 46/26/s | 49/30/s |
| Buenos Aires | 91/79/c | 92/79/s | ● Kyiv | 50/42/c | 57/40/r | Riyadh | 85/66/s | 87/63/c | Zagreb | 61/28/s | 65/30/pc |
| Cairo | 70/54/c | 70/56/sh | Kingston | 89/76/s | 89/76/sh | Rome | 62/39/s | 63/40/s | Zurich | 56/30/pc | 56/30/pc |

● Denotes possible travel delays Wednesday

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.



NEED TO KNOW

Malaysia’s ex-PM under investigation

Malaysian authorities named former Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob as a suspect in a major corruption probe involving nearly \$157 million in government funds, the latest in a series of high-profile corruption cases involving former leaders, the South China Morning Post reported.

On Monday, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission confirmed that Ismail – who was previously treated as a witness – is now under investigation, with authorities set to question him on Wednesday.

MACC chief commissioner Azam Baki said the probe centers on alleged embezzlement related to the “Keluarga Malaysia” – or Malaysian Family – public relations campaign launched during Ismail Sabri’s tenure from August 2021 to November 2022.

The campaign, intended to promote national unity and economic recovery post-COVID-19, is now suspected of financial misconduct. Authorities have seized nearly \$38 million in cash in multiple currencies, along with around 35 pounds of gold bars worth more than \$1.5 million, in properties linked to the former prime minister, Channel News Asia added.

The MACC has also frozen 13 bank accounts totaling more than \$440,000 and arrested four of Ismail’s former senior aides last month in connection with the case.

The former leader has not publicly commented on the allegations.

The MACC has also insisted that the investigation is not politically motivated, but analysts noted that such high-profile cases often involve both legal and political elements, the Straits Times wrote.

The case adds to Malaysia’s ongoing battle with high-level corruption, following similar charges against former prime ministers Najib Razak and Muhyiddin Yassin.



DISCOVERIES

Research: Attila’s Huns had more genetic diversity

For centuries, the origins of the Huns – who swept into Europe in the late fourth century and helped bring down the Roman Empire – have been shrouded in mystery.

Some historians have linked them to the earlier Xiongnu Empire of Mongolia, while others say they were a loose confederation of steppe nomads.

Now, a new study shows that the answer isn’t so simple: The Huns were a genetically diverse mix of people, with only a few carrying direct ties to the Xiongnu elite.

To arrive at this conclusion, an international team of researchers analyzed 370 ancient genomes from across Eurasia, spanning 800 years from the Xiongnu period (209 B.C. to 100 A.D.) to the Huns’ dominance in Europe between the fourth and sixth centuries.

Using a technique called identity-by-descent segment-sharing, they found that while a handful of European Hun-period individuals were directly related to elite Xiongnu

individuals, most of the population showed a much broader mix of ancestries.

“It came as a surprise to discover that few of these Hun-period individuals in Europe share IBD links with some of the highest-ranking imperial elite individuals from the late Xiongnu Empire,” co-author Guido Gneccchi-Ruscone of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany said in a statement.

One standout case was a Hun woman buried in Hungary with gold earrings and an elongated skull – the skull showed she was part of a tradition of skull modification linked to the Xiongnu elite.

However, outside of these elite burials, the genetic footprint of East Asian ancestry was relatively small.

“DNA and archaeological evidence reveal a patchwork of ancestries, pointing to a complex process of mobility and interaction rather than a mass migration,” said Zsófia Rácz, a co-author of the study, in the statement.

The researchers hope that future studies may further clarify the social structures and interactions that defined the Huns and their role in reshaping Europe during Late Antiquity.

THE WORLD BRIEFLY

Court: India theaters showed too many ads

An Indian court ordered a movie theater chain to pay damages to a filmgoer for wasting his time and causing “mental agony” because it played too many commercials before the film began, CNN reported.

The case began after a man filed a complaint against the PVR INOX theater company, saying the theater wasted his time, forced him to cancel work commitments and led him to suffer mentally after it showed 25 minutes of commercials before screening the movie in December 2023.

The schedule at the PVR multiplex in the southern city of Bangalore suggested the 2 hour, 25 minute war drama, “Sam Bahadur,” was due to be screened from 4:05 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. but it finished later than expected due to public service announcements and commercials that caused the complainant, 31-year-old lawyer Abhishek M. R., “losses which cannot be calculated in terms of money,” he said.

Abhishek sued PVR INOX for \$574 in damages, \$57 for mental agony, and \$115 to cover legal costs.

Bangalore’s District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission agreed with the plaintiff and ruled last month in Abhishek’s favor, saying that nowadays, time is as valuable as money and people can’t afford to “sit idle in the theater” and watch unnecessary commercials, NBC News reported.

The movie chain claimed it was required to show 10 minutes of public service announcements before screenings, but the court ruled it violated regulations by playing ads instead, mandated that movies start on time, and ordered the chain to pay the complainant \$230 in damages and \$92 in costs.

The chain will also have to pay \$1,148 to the Consumer Welfare Fund, an group that protects consumers.

Trump threatens funding cuts to colleges allowing ‘illegal protests’

‘Agitators’ would be imprisoned or deported, president says in post

Kanishka Singh and Jonathan Allen
REUTERS

President Donald Trump said he wanted to cut the federal funding of colleges that allow what he called “illegal protests” in a social media post that civil rights groups called an attack on the freedoms of speech and assembly.

The post on Tuesday appeared to repeat some of the ideas of executive orders he issued during his first term, in 2019, and on January 29, which described the pro-Palestinian student protest movement that swept college campuses last year as antisemitic.

“All federal funding will STOP for any College, School or University that allows illegal protests,” Trump wrote on social media. “Agitators will be imprisoned/or permanently sent back to the country from which they came. American students will be permanently expelled or, depending on the crime, arrested. NO MASKS!”

A spokesperson for Trump did not respond to questions about how the White House would define an illegal protest or how the government would imprison protesters. The U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment protects the freedom of speech and assembly.

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, a nonprofit group, said on Tuesday that Trump’s threat was “deeply chilling” and would make students “fear punishment for wholly protected political speech.”

“The president can’t force institutions to expel students,” it said in a statement.

The government does not control either privately or publicly funded schools or colleges, although a president has a limited ability to encourage policy goals via federal funding disbursed through the U.S. Department of Education.

Trump’s executive order in January restored a similar order he signed in



Demonstrators protest the Israel-Hamas war in April 2024 on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus. A spokesperson for President Donald Trump did not respond to questions about how the White House would define an illegal campus protest or how the government would imprison protesters.

MIKE DE SISTI/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL FILE

2019, instructing the Education Department to investigate colleges that receive federal funding if they failed to protect Jewish students and staff from antisemitism.

Trump has also told Secretary of State Marco Rubio that he wants non-citizen protesters admitted to the U.S. on student visas to be deported.

Protesters set up tent encampments on college campuses across the U.S. and around the world last year as conflict raged in Gaza. Many of the protests

centered on their school’s investments in companies that they said supported Israel’s military occupation of Palestinian territories.

Both some of those protests and some pro-Israel counterprotests involved incidents and allegations of antisemitism, Islamophobia and anti-Arab bias. Protest leaders, which include some Jewish students and faculty, say they are opposed to Israel, but reject allegations that their movement is antisemitic.

Measles cases in Texas rise to 159, state officials say

REUTERS

Measles cases in Texas increased from 146 to 159 on Tuesday, a week after an unvaccinated child died of the disease in one of the largest outbreaks the U.S. has seen in the past decade.

Gaines County, the center of the outbreak, reported 107 cases, up from 98 cases last week. The state’s health department said hospitalizations related to the measles increased to 22.

“Due to the highly contagious nature of this disease, additional cases are likely to occur in the outbreak area and the surrounding communities,” the department said.

An unvaccinated child died of measles on February 26, the first in the U.S. since 2015. The child had no known underlying conditions, the health department said Tuesday.

The child’s death and the rising hospitalizations in Texas have put Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s vaccine views to the test.

Public health experts have said the Trump administration should be encouraging vaccination at the national level. Kennedy has said the government is providing resources, including vaccines, to tackle the outbreak.

Of the 159 cases, 53 patients are younger than 4, while 74 are between 5 and 17 years old, according to the health department data. It said 80 of the known patients were not vaccinated and 5 were vaccinated with at least a dose. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said vaccines provide the best protection against measles, a serious airborne disease caused by a virus that can lead to severe complications and death.

“The investigations into the cases who are currently classified as vaccinated are ongoing,” the state health department said, adding the remaining 74 patients whose vaccination status was “unknown” were also being looked into.

Budget experts say DOGE website lacks transparency

Pages have been plagued by errors, corrections

Brad Heath and Tim Reid
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – A sparsely furnished webpage with columns of numbers and bar charts on a dark background is the only official window into billionaire Elon Musk’s effort to slash federal government spending and the size of the federal workforce. However, the view it offers of the cost-cutting enterprise is often muddled by major errors.

President Donald Trump and Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency say that in just six weeks they have already saved American taxpayers tens of billions of dollars through rapid-fire moves to cancel contracts, fire workers and root out fraud and waste in the government.

The only support for the assertions comes from data posted by DOGE to a newly created website that went live last month. But in the last two weeks alone, DOGE has deleted hundreds of claimed savings, including some of the largest items it had previously boasted about.

DOGE claims to have slashed \$105 billion so far, but it is impossible to verify that calculation because the unit has so far posted a detailed breakdown for only a fraction of those savings, and that accounting keeps changing, according to a Reuters analysis of the data.

Musk has said he is operating transparently in his cost-cutting effort, but budget experts like Martha Gimbel, director of the Budget Lab at Yale, a non-partisan budget analysis organization at Yale University, disagree.

“Anyone can put numbers and words on a website,” Gimbel said in an inter-



Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency claims to have slashed \$105 billion in government spending so far, but it is impossible to verify that calculation because the unit has so far posted a detailed breakdown for only a fraction of those savings, and that accounting keeps changing, according to a Reuters analysis of the data. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES FILE

view. “In order to be transparent, the numbers and words have to be accurate. They’ve already been shown not to be accurate so why should I trust it?”

A DOGE spokesperson did not immediately return a request for comment. But Musk has acknowledged that mistakes will be made and will be corrected when they are discovered.

DOGE has provided the most details about the contracts it says it has terminated, listing them on what it calls a “wall of receipts” meant to show its work to the public.

Errors in that accounting appeared from the start. It took credit for eliminating contracts that had already ended, sometimes years ago, and inflated the value of other items that it had axed, the Reuters analysis found.

The first time DOGE posted a list of

canceled contracts to its website, in mid-February, it added up to about \$16 billion. By Monday, the total had dropped to less than \$8.9 billion.

A canceled contract DOGE said had saved taxpayers \$8 billion was only worth \$8 million. In another instance, it tripled counted a \$655 million contract, claiming more than \$1.8 billion in savings that did not exist.

Last week, it deleted from the website all five of the biggest savings it had claimed.

“I’m all for eliminating waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government, but there’s no veracity in what they’re saying because you can’t quantify it in any way,” said Bill Hoagland, a former Republican staffer and director of the Senate Budget Committee for more than 20 years.

Fed’s Williams expecting some inflation impact from tariffs

Says he sees no reason to change rate policy for now

Michael S. Derby
REUTERS

NEW YORK – Federal Reserve Bank of New York President John Williams said Tuesday he expects Trump administration tariffs to drive up inflation to some degree, while reckoning that for now, central bank interest rate policy is in the right place and does not need to be changed.

“My view is, based on what we know today, given all the uncertainties around that, I do factor in some effects from tariffs now on inflation, on prices, because I think we will see some of those effects later this year,” Williams said at an event held by Bloomberg in New York.

Williams said tariffs that hit consumer goods could flow through quickly to inflation while other parts of the economy might see a slower moving impact.

But he cautioned, “there’s a lot of uncertainty: We don’t know how long the tariffs will apply. We don’t know what other countries may do in response to this.”

He added it was not just tariffs that need watching but the broader scope of Trump policy actions, especially when setting monetary policy. “It makes sense to collect some more informa-



John Williams, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, said Tuesday that tariffs that hit consumer goods could flow through quickly to inflation while other parts of the economy might see a slower moving impact. APU GOMES/GETTY IMAGES FILE

tion, not only about what’s happening with trade policy, but obviously there is also what we’re seeing in terms of other policies, fiscal policy and regulatory policy.”

When it comes to the prospect of cutting rates, “I think the current place for policy is good. I don’t see any need to change it right away,” Williams said.

He added “it’s really hard to know” if rate cuts will happen this year, while noting rate policy right now is “modestly restrictive and is helping keep the economy, I think, in good balance.” He also said he sees a solid labor market and growth proceeding on a path consistent with its long-run potential.

Williams’ remarks come as the Trump administration imposes massive tariffs on America’s three largest trading partners – Canada, Mexico and China – after having in the recent past threatened and then dialed back on imposing the full scope of what are effectively taxes paid by U.S. citizens to purchase foreign goods.

In recent remarks, Williams had flagged the considerable uncertainty created by big changes in government policies and, like many Fed officials, had refrained from commenting on the impact of tariffs until he saw more concrete actions by the administration.

Economists have long warned that Trump’s tariff agenda would run a serious risk of reigniting inflation pressures and lowering growth. With the taxes now imposed, forecasters are marking up their estimates of price pressures while downgrading growth.

Kathy Bostjancic, chief economist with Nationwide, said Tuesday that if the tariffs are not lifted “we estimate the tariffs could lead to a nearly \$1,000 per household increase annually in the cost of goods,” adding “the strengthening dollar helps mitigate some of the inflation impact, which would otherwise be greater.”

Piper Sandler analysts said: “We believe significant sustained tariffs – basically permanent – are bad economic policy” and will be “a huge tax on low-middle income consumers and small businesses.”

FINANCIAL MARKETS

Falling Nasdaq nearing correction territory

Chibuike Oguh, Johann M Cherian and Sukriti Gupta
REUTERS

NEW YORK – U.S. stocks ended lower on Tuesday, with the tech-heavy Nasdaq veering near correction territory, as trade tensions escalated following President Donald Trump’s new tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China.

The 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada, along with doubled duties on Chinese goods, took effect on Tuesday. China and Canada retaliated while Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum vowed to respond likewise, without giving details.

The Nasdaq Composite ended lower after veering into correction territory during the session but pared losses in choppy trading. The index closed down 9.3% from its record closing high on December 16.

“Equity valuations have been very elevated, and there’s been yellow flags all over the horizon, given moves to cut government spending,” said Ben McMillan, chief investment officer at IDX Insights in Tampa, Florida. “Now on top of that, we have all this rhetoric around tariffs.”

Shares in financials and industrials were the biggest losers among the benchmark S&P 500’s 11 main sectors.

Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase & Co fell 6.2% and nearly 4%, respectively, sending the bigger banks index down 4.7%.

The CBOE market volatility index rose 3.20% to its highest since December 20.

“The fear here is that it’s going to slow (economic) growth,” said Adam Sarhan, CEO of 50 Park Investments in New York. “And when you have a slowdown in economic conditions, it’s a situation where banks specifically make less money because fewer goods and services are traveling through the economy.”

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 670.25 points, or 1.55%, to 42,520.99; the S&P 500 lost 71.57 points, or 1.22%, to 5,778.15; and the Nasdaq Composite lost 65.03 points, or 0.35%, to 18,285.16.

Carmakers Ford and General Motors, which have vast supply chains across North America, fell 2.9% and 4.6%, respectively. The domestically focused Russell 2000 index dropped 1%.

Wall Street is truly concerned, McMillan said. “The likelihood of tariffs will lead to higher prices and therefore lower spending.”

Target shares fell 3% after the retailer forecast full-year comparable sales below estimates.

Best Buy slumped 13.3% after the electronics retailer issued a downbeat forecast, while Walgreens jumped as a report hinted that the pharmacy chain is closing in on a take-private deal by Sycamore Partners.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers by a 2.97-to-1 ratio on the NYSE. There were 86 new highs and 450 new lows on the NYSE.

The S&P 500 posted 41 new 52-week highs and 43 new lows, while the Nasdaq Composite recorded 35 new highs and 595 new lows.

Total volume across U.S. exchanges was 18.42 billion shares, compared with the 20-day moving average of 15.87 billion shares.

CFPB drops lawsuit against 3 banks over Zelle service

REUTERS

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau told a federal court on Tuesday it was dropping a lawsuit filed in December against three of the nation’s largest banks over their handling of the payment service Zelle, court papers show.

The agency, which was virtually shuttered by President Donald Trump last month, had accused JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America and Wells Fargo of failing to protect consumers from fraud costing hundreds of millions of dollars.

Representatives for the CFPB, Wells Fargo and Early Warning Services, the joint venture of seven different banks which operates the Zelle system, did not immediately respond to requests for comment about the agency’s action in an Arizona federal court.

In a statement, JPMorgan said tackling fraud required a joint effort by the public and private sector and that the bank looked forward to cooperating with others “to effectively address these crimes at their source.”

Bank of America declined to comment.

In an unprecedented move, the CFPB has now dropped seven of the enforcement cases brought under former President Joe Biden, including one against Capital One. Many of the other pending cases have been paused in court.

In the final days of the Biden administration, the CFPB accused EWS and the three banks of rushing the Zelle service to market to compete with apps like PayPal’s Venmo and Block’s Cash App without implementing proper user safeguards.

Hundreds of thousands of consumers subsequently lodged complaints

about fraud but were by and large denied assistance, sometimes being told to ask the alleged fraudsters to return their funds, according to the CFPB.

Though Trump has said the CFPB should be eliminated, agency officials and government lawyers have maintained in court that the administration intends to operate a “streamlined” CFPB. An employee union and consumer advocates are suing, however, to stop what they say are administration plans that would effectively gut the agency and leave it unable to fulfill its obligations under federal law.

ANALYSIS

Storm clouds gather for economy

Expected price shock may undercut demand, investments, hiring

Howard Schneider
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – An economy praised for its surprising resilience to a pandemic, high inflation and rapid interest rate hikes faces a new challenge from President Donald Trump’s self-declared trade war, seen by economists as a recipe for fewer jobs, slower growth and higher prices.

The fallout, assuming Trump does not backtrack in the face of falling stock markets and cracks to consumer and business sentiment, is expected to be broad, deep and time-consuming as the world’s largest economy adjusts to the overnight shock of a 25% tariff on most goods coming from Mexico and Canada, both close trading partners and geographic neighbors, and an additional 10% duty on imports from China.

Canada and China have announced retaliatory tariffs on U.S. imports, while Mexico is expected to do so this weekend.

A price shock on its face, the tariffs could also begin to kill demand, said Diane Swonk, chief economist at KPMG, particularly if consumers retreat and firms facing heightened uncertainty curb investment and hiring. The move also risks unintended consequences – if, for example, banks tighten credit on small businesses instead of extending suddenly expensive customs bonds.

A recession by the start of next year is not out of the question, Swonk said, with some analysts expecting a downturn could sweep the continent given the dependence of Canada and Mexico on exports to the U.S. market. Retaliation could further deepen the impact.

“We’ve got now multiple trade wars on multiple fronts,” Swonk said. Her analysis shows the effective tariff rate spread across roughly \$3 trillion in U.S. imports might rocket to 16% by early 2026 from a current baseline of about 3% if Trump follows through on all his



While the U.S. economy is ordered differently now than in the 1930s or 1970s, the sweep of President Donald Trump’s actions and the uncertainty about what comes next still unnerved markets that had hoped he was only bluffing about tariffs to gain leverage in negotiations with trading partners, analysts say.
FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

threats. “That would be the highest rate since 1936,” during the Great Depression, and “gets you flirting with stagflation” – the toxic mix of weak growth, high joblessness and persistent inflation that epitomized the 1970s.

While the U.S. economy is ordered differently now than in the 1930s or 1970s, the sweep of Trump’s actions and the uncertainty about what comes next still unnerved markets that had hoped he was only bluffing about tariffs to gain leverage in negotiations with trading partners.

‘Let’s hold back’

Members of the Trump administration have said they want lower bond yields, as that makes it cheaper to finance the government and could eventually benefit consumers through lower home mortgage and auto loan rates. But the rationale for the drop – a flight to safety from rising economic uncertainty and potential recession risks – is less than assuring.

In a sign of the darkening economic landscape, retail giant Target on Tuesday said it expected little to no sales

growth this year, with CEO Brian Cornell telling CNBC that higher prices were on the way. Retail bellwether Walmart and electronics retailer Best Buy also recently warned about expectations for 2025.

“The consumer will likely see price increases over the next couple of days,” Cornell said, with food imported from Mexico now hit with a 25% levy.

Jack Kleinhenz, chief economist for the National Retail Federation, said small businesses will face even more difficult choices, lacking the leverage of companies like Target to share cost increases, and are likely to pull back on investment and hiring.

“We’re going to see a price level change upward,” said Kleinhenz. But beyond that “it is really blurring the outlook ... The business sector is going to wait and see, and when they don’t know what the future might be, they’re going to say let’s just hold back on investment. Let’s hold back on hiring.”

The potential for a quick change in the U.S. economic outlook follows a period when the country was coasting through a spell of global outperformance – with growth above trend, inflation on the decline, and more than three years with the unemployment rate

lodged around or below 4%, a level many economists would consider full employment.

What happens next “isn’t just a tariffs story,” said Gregory Daco, chief economist at EY. It’s as much a story of how Trump’s actions land in an economy where the memory of recent high inflation is still fresh and pandemic-era savings buffers are likely exhausted, he said.

“The exceptionalism and resilience that we’ve been talking about for two years, I think is starting to show some cracks,” Daco added. “We’re seeing a smaller share of consumers doing a greater share of the spending, and we’re noticing that whether it’s sentiment or income, both important pillars to consumer spending activity, they are softening.”

Daco said he now expects recessions in Mexico and Canada, and put the odds of one in the U.S. at greater than 50% if the tariffs remain in place.

Next up: The Fed

The ultimate outcome will also be shaped by the Federal Reserve, and whether it sees the risk of higher inflation as more or less damaging than the possible hit to growth and any follow-on rise in joblessness.

Through much of its recent battle with inflation, the central bank had the best of both worlds, with free-spending consumers supporting growth, federal investment adding to the expansion, and inflation still falling as global supply chains righted themselves after the COVID-19 crisis.

Trump’s initial actions have added to risks around all of those aspects of the economy, with fiscal support potentially turning negative amid mass firings of federal workers and cancellations of government contracts, prices under pressure from tariffs and consumers caught in the middle.

The spark this time may be domestic trade policy, not the politics of the Middle East, but it may still leave the central bank with difficulties similar to those faced by former Fed Chair Paul Volcker of whether to risk a recession to tame inflation.



Major automakers have sounded the alarm that the tariffs will disrupt the integrated supply chain across North America that has been in place for more than 25 years. MIKE BLAKE/REUTERS FILE

US automakers warning of higher vehicle prices

David Shepardson
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – A trade group representing nearly all major automakers warned on Tuesday that new 25% tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico imposed by President Donald Trump will lead to drastic price hikes.

“All automakers will be impacted by these tariffs on Canada and Mexico,” said John Bozzella, who heads the Alliance for Automotive Innovation that represents all major automakers in the U.S. except Tesla. Members include General Motors Ford, Toyota, Volkswagen, Hyundai and Stellantis.

“Most anticipate the price of some vehicle models will increase by as much as 25% and the negative impact on vehicle price and vehicle availability will be felt almost immediately.”

Automakers have sounded the alarm that the tariffs will disrupt the integrated supply chain across North America that has been in place for more than 25 years. Some auto parts can cross a border six or more times before final assembly.

“You just can’t relocate automotive production and the supply chain overnight. That’s the challenge and the di-

lemma: auto tariffs in North America could end up increasing costs on consumers before jobs come back to the country,” Bozzella added.

Stellantis told dealers on Tuesday that the automaker continues to engage with the Trump administration on the tariffs that would add a “cost burden” impacting customers.

“Because the industry is highly integrated across North America, these tariffs will put Stellantis’ flagship Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, and Ram brands at a competitive disadvantage versus Korean, Japanese and European importers,” the automaker said in an email seen by Reuters.

Many automakers met with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick last week to urge the administration not to move ahead with broad tariff hikes.

Last month, Ford CEO Jim Farley warned that 25% tariffs on Mexico and Canada would “blow a hole” in the U.S. auto industry.

The United Auto Workers praised Trump, noting his plans for further tariff actions in April. “We are glad to see an American president take aggressive action on ending the free trade disaster that has dropped like a bomb on the working class,” the union said.

Gas pump prices poised to climb in many regions

Nicole Jao
REUTERS

NEW YORK – Retail gasoline prices are set to climb in the coming weeks as new tariffs imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump raise the cost of energy imports, according to traders and analysts.

The outlook underscores a potentially unintended consequence of Trump’s protectionist trade policies, which are meant to boost the U.S. economy but could instead lead to bigger bills for consumers.

The new tariffs have already triggered a surge in wholesale gasoline prices in the Northeast, a region that relies heavily on Canadian shipments of gasoline, heating oil and diesel, according to fuel distributor TACenergy.

That hike will start filtering through to New England’s pumps soon, and could add 20 to 40 cents per gallon, retail fuel experts said. New England retail gasoline hovered at around \$3 a gallon last week, data from the Energy Information Administration shows.

“If you’re filling up in the Northeast, you’ll see price increases first and more significantly,” GasBuddy analyst Patrick De Haan said in a blog post Tuesday.

Canadian refiner Irving Oil, the top supplier of refined fuels to the Northeast, increased prices on fuel products on Tuesday to reflect the tariff costs, De Haan said. An Irving Oil representative was not immediately available to comment. The company has previously said tariffs would force up its prices to U.S. customers.

Irving’s 320,000-barrel-per-day refinery in Saint John, New Brunswick, exports more than half its finished fuels to the Northeast, the company’s website shows.

“There’s simply no simple replacement for the products shipped from Irving Oil’s refinery. That’s the primary supply point for multiple terminals in the area,” TACenergy said in a market commentary published Tuesday.

Inland refiners that run Canadian crude as a core part of their diet would



The Trump administration’s new tariffs have already triggered a surge in wholesale gasoline prices in the Northeast, a region that relies heavily on Canadian shipments of gasoline, heating oil and diesel, according to fuel distributor TACenergy. MIKE BLAKE/REUTERS FILE

likely stick with their current crude slate, and bear the increase in cost of imported materials with consumers.

Refiners that run Canadian crude on the margin could switch to light sweet crude, which could increase the prices of U.S. benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude futures and global benchmark Brent crude. Both benchmarks are light sweet grades.

Other regions that rely heavily on crude oil imports from Canada and Mexico will also soon see a spike in fuel prices, experts said.

The U.S. imports some 4 million barrels per day of Canadian oil, 70% of which is processed by refineries in the Midwest that are specifically designed to run Canadian grades. The U.S. also imports over 450,000 barrels per day of Mexican oil, mainly for refiners concentrated around the Gulf Coast.

De Haan said the impact on pump prices in those regions could take longer to materialize as crude oil must first be refined into fuel products.

Parts of the Midwest could see a 10- to 15-cent jump per gallon in pump prices over the next few weeks, Alex Ryan, energy director at Kansas-based Oasis Energy, told Reuters.

Trump’s approval on cost of living drops amid tariff concerns

Jason Lange
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Just one in three Americans approve of President Donald Trump’s handling of the cost of living in the U.S., a sign of unease as he enacts steep tariffs on imports that are stoking inflation worries, a Reuters/Ipsos survey that concluded on Tuesday found.

The two-day poll, carried out before Trump’s Tuesday address a joint session of Congress, showed the president’s approval ratings below 40% on a range of issues – including the economy, foreign policy and corruption – with the notable exception being his 49% rating on immigration policy.

To be sure, the share of Americans who give him a thumbs up overall – steady at 44% – remains higher than the ratings achieved by his predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden, during the second half of his 2021-2025 administration.

The poll showed that 31% of Americans approve of Trump’s handling of the cost of living, a marginal three-percentage-point decline from 34% in a poll conducted February 21-23. Fifty-four percent disapprove.

Trump has moved quickly to overhaul America’s relationships with the rest of the world, with steep 25% tariffs taking effect on Tuesday for Mexican and Canadian imports, as well as 20% tariffs on Chinese goods.

Economists say the tariffs will fuel inflation. Trump’s victory in the 2024 presidential election owed in part to widespread dissatisfaction at several years of high inflation under Biden. Only 31% of people polled agreed with a statement that tariffs would be a good idea even if prices increase.

Trump has also pivoted to a closer relationship with Moscow and shut down military aid to Ukraine which is defending itself from a full-scale Russian invasion.

The poll showed Americans were divided over Trump’s plan to condition Washington’s support for Ukraine on the U.S. getting a share of Ukraine’s mineral wealth. Some 46% of respondents in the survey supported conditioning U.S. aid on minerals wealth, compared to 50% who opposed the idea.

While Trump has appeared to blame Ukraine for starting the war, Americans generally see Russia as the aggressor in the conflict, the Reuters/Ipsos poll found. Some 70% of respondents – including three-quarters of Democrats and two-thirds of Republicans – agreed with a statement that Russia was more to blame than Ukraine for starting the war.

Trump has also shaken up the federal government by appointing Elon Musk, the world’s richest person, to overhaul its workforce, including by eliminating many civil service jobs in Trump’s first weeks in office.

While the Reuters/Ipsos poll showed that downsizing the federal government was broadly popular – 59% of respondents said they supported the idea – support for mass layoffs of civil service workers was decidedly lower. Only 40% of poll respondents said they backed firing tens of thousands of federal workers. Some 57% opposed, including about a quarter of self-identified Republicans.

Zelenskyy says he wants to ‘make things right’ with US

Ukraine: Military still has ability to supply its lines

Erin Banco, Max Hunder
and Olena Harmash
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday pledged to repair relations with the U.S. after what he described as a “regrettable” Oval Office clash with President Donald Trump last week, while the fate of a much-debated minerals deal remained unclear.

Four sources told Reuters that the Trump administration and Ukraine plan to sign a deal giving the U.S. access to Ukrainian minerals in return for military aid. Later on Tuesday, however, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Fox News, “There is no signing planned,” according to a post on X by a Fox reporter.

The White House, Ukraine’s presidential administration in Kyiv and the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the deal.

Zelenskyy said he wanted to “make things right” and was ready “any time and in any convenient format” to sign a minerals deal, which he left on the table during last week’s visit to Washington.

His statement came a day after Trump halted military aid to Ukraine, his latest move to upend U.S. policy and adopt a more conciliatory stance toward Russia.

“None of us wants an endless war. Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible ... Nobody wants peace more than Ukrainians,” Zelenskyy said in his statement on X.

“My team and I stand ready to work under President Trump’s strong leadership to get a peace that lasts.”

The statement made no mention of the pause in U.S. military supplies.

Zelenskyy’s statement was clearly aimed at stressing Kyiv’s gratitude following the explosive confrontation at the White House, at which Trump and Vice President JD Vance scolded Zelenskyy as insufficiently appreciative.

“We do really value how much America has done to help Ukraine maintain its sovereignty and independence,” Zelenskyy wrote. “Our meeting in Washington ... did not go the way it was supposed to be. It is regrettable that it happened this way. It



People gather during a rally in support of Ukraine near Philadelphia City Hall on Tuesday. Despite reports the Trump administration and Kyiv planned to sign a mineral rights deal, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Fox News, “There is no signing planned,” according to a post on X by a Fox reporter.

MATTHEW HATCHER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

is time to make things right.”

Zelenskyy outlined a path toward a peace agreement, which he said could begin with a release of prisoners and a halt to air and sea attacks, if Russia did the same.

“Then we want to move very fast through all next stages and to work with the U.S. to agree a strong final deal.”

Geopolitical shift

Zelenskyy’s prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, said Ukraine’s forces could hold their own on the battlefield against Russian troops, but that Kyiv would do everything possible to continue cooperating with the U.S.

“We will continue to work with the U.S. through all available channels in a calm manner,” Shmyhal said. “We only have one plan – to win and to survive.”

In Moscow, the Kremlin said cutting off U.S. military aid to Ukraine was the best possible step toward peace, although it was waiting to confirm Trump’s move.

Democrats have raised an outcry over Trump’s abrupt pivot toward Russia, the most dramatic geopolitical shift in generations for Washington, where governments under both parties since the 1940s have prioritized defending Europe from a hostile Moscow.

Trump is expected to further outline his plans for Ukraine and Russia in a

major speech to Congress later on Tuesday.

So far, leaders of Trump’s Republican Party in Congress have made little or no pushback to the move. Many Republicans had earlier been vocal backers of Ukraine, which relied on U.S. and European military aid to fight bigger and better-armed Russia through three years of warfare that has killed and injured hundreds of thousands of soldiers on both sides.

Shmyhal said Kyiv was doing more to ramp up its own military production, especially drones. But air defenses could be a particular problem if U.S. aid ends, especially the Patriot batteries that are Ukraine’s only defense against Russian ballistic missiles aimed at its cities.

The pause puts more pressure on European allies who have publicly embraced Zelenskyy since the Oval Office blow-up. Britain and France, whose leaders both visited the White House last week, have offered troops to help guard a potential ceasefire.

On Tuesday, Germany’s conservatives and Social Democrats announced proposals to set up a \$531 billion fund to help ramp up defense spending.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen unveiled proposals to mobilize up to \$840 billion for EU defense spending. The 27-nation bloc holds an emergency summit Thursday.

Vance: Comment not aimed at UK, France

Andrew MacAskill and John Irish
REUTERS

LONDON – Vice President JD Vance denied on Tuesday disrespecting Britain and France by describing a planned peacekeeping force in Ukraine as 20,000 troops from some “random country that has not fought a war in 30 or 40 years.”

Vance’s comments about the planned British- and French-led European peacekeeping force caused politicians and veterans in both countries to say he was dishonoring hundreds of troops killed fighting alongside U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Vance said it was “absurdly dishon-



Vance

est” to suggest he had criticized British or French troops in his comments, made in an interview with Fox News on Monday.

“I don’t even mention the UK or France in the clip, both of whom have fought bravely alongside the US over the last 20 years, and beyond,” he said on X.

Only Britain and France have publicly committed to a European peacekeeping force in Ukraine.

Vance said on Tuesday he was referring to other potential countries in what British Prime Minister Keir Starmer called “a coalition of the willing” that

would contribute to any post-war peacekeeping force in Ukraine.

In the past 40 years, British and French troops have fought alongside American troops in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

James Cartlidge, the British opposition Conservative Party’s spokesman on defense, called Vance’s comments “deeply disrespectful.”

Johnny Mercer, a British veteran and a former junior defense minister, called Vance a “clown.”

French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu said in parliament: “We respect the veterans of all the allied countries. We will make sure that our own veterans are respected.”

Storm

Continued from Page 1NN

Through the midweek, the low-pressure system is expected to spread as far south as Florida and as far north as Pennsylvania and New Jersey, coming up just short of New York City, which may still be in for some thunderstorms, AccuWeather said. In all, the storm could impact up to 170 million people across more than 20 states.

Severe weather across South

Damage was reported in multiple states as the expansive storm brought hurricane-force winds across the South.

In south-central Oklahoma, the city of Ada was ravaged by strong winds and a confirmed tornado. Images showed an uprooted tree smashed into a mobile home while mangled debris littered the streets. The city urged residents to stay home if possible, with “downed power

lines, gas leaks, and trees everywhere,” according to a Facebook post.

In Lewisville, Texas, multiple local media outlets reported that a warehouse collapsed overnight. The city said wreckage covered roads and winds knocked out traffic lights, snarling traffic. In the nearby city of Irving, the police department said on X that there was “significant storm damage.”

In Plano, just north of Dallas, winds ripped off a portion of a high school’s roof while heavy rain flooded the school’s sports facility, KHOU reported. The National Weather Service office in Fort Worth, Texas, said dust storms the rest of Tuesday will reduce visibility to about 2 miles in some locations.

The El Paso, Texas, office of the NWS warned motorists against driving in such conditions Tuesday, when a “plume of dust” from New Mexico was headed its way. The previous day, a large, fast-moving dust storm known as a “haboob” drastically reduced visibility in parts of New Mexico and Texas.

Winter weather in Plains, Midwest

While the storm unleashes damaging winds in the South, it was also set to bring heavy snow and blizzard conditions to portions of the north-central U.S. on Tuesday and into Wednesday.

The two main trouble spots for heavy snow are parts of Colorado and the upper Midwest. During the day Tuesday, the swath of heaviest snow was poised to expand and shift from northeastern Colorado to South Dakota, Iowa and central and western Minnesota, AccuWeather said.

Blizzard warnings were in effect in six states, and some 6 million people could be impacted, the NWS said.

“Travel should be restricted to emergencies only,” the NWS office in Iowa warned. “If you must travel, have a winter survival kit with you. If you get stranded, stay with your vehicle.”

Forecasters raising alarms

The storms follow Trump admini-

stration staffing cuts at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which oversees the National Weather Service.

Weather experts across the nation said they feared these cuts, along with retirements and resignations, may increase the threat severe weather events pose to the public.

“Recent terminations within the government workforce for science are likely to cause irreparable harm and have far-reaching consequences for public safety, economic well-being, and the United States’ global leadership,” the American Meteorological Society said Monday.

Most weather service field offices already are understaffed, said James Spann, chief meteorologist for WBMA-TV in Birmingham, Alabama.

“If NWS products and services are reduced, we all suffer ... especially during times of life-threatening weather,” Spann wrote in a social media post.

NOAA has said it’s committed to keeping Americans informed about dangerous weather.

Arab states adopt alternative to Trump’s Gaza ‘Riviera’ plan

Abbas says Palestinian elections are possible

Andrew Mills, Yomna Ehab, Nafisa Eltahir and Nidal al-Mughrabi
REUTERS

CAIRO – Arab leaders adopted an Egyptian reconstruction plan for Gaza on Tuesday that would cost \$53 billion and avoid displacing Palestinians from the enclave, in contrast to President Donald Trump’s “Middle East Riviera” vision.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said the proposal, welcomed in subsequent statements by Hamas and criticized by Israel, had been accepted at the closing of a summit in Cairo.

Sisi said at the summit that he was certain Trump would be able to achieve peace in the conflict that has devastated the Gaza Strip.

The major questions that need to be answered about Gaza’s future are who will run the enclave and which countries will provide the billions of dollars needed for reconstruction.

Sisi said Egypt had worked in cooperation with Palestinians on creating an administrative committee of independent, professional Palestinian technocrats entrusted with the governance of Gaza after the end of the war.

The committee would be responsible for the oversight of humanitarian aid and managing the Strip’s affairs for a temporary period, in preparation for the return of the Palestinian Authority, he said.

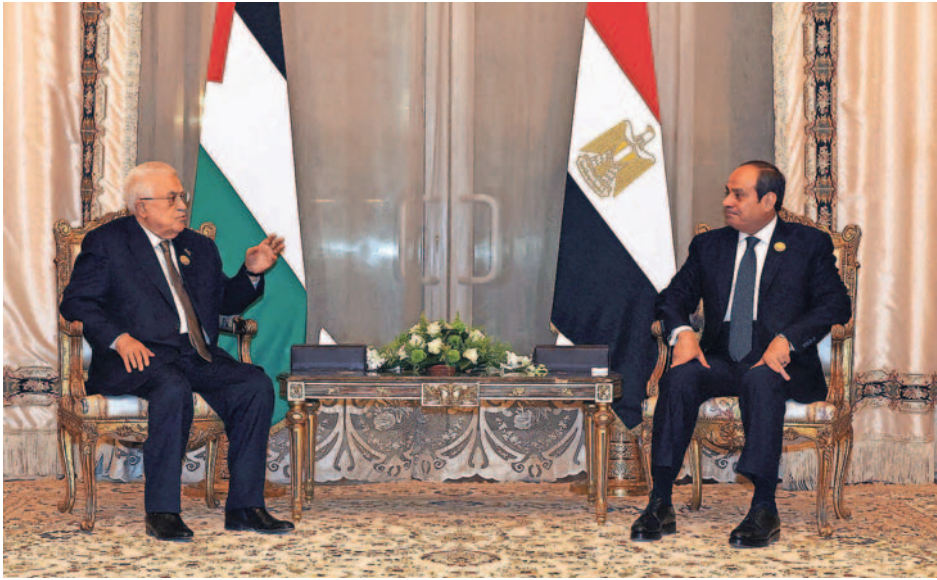
The other critical issue is the fate of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, the PA’s rival, which triggered the Gaza war by attacking Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

The Islamist faction that has run Gaza since 2007 said in a statement it agrees to the Egyptian committee proposal.

Hamas has agreed it will not field candidates to the Cairo-proposed committee but it would have to give its consent to the tasks, members and the agenda of the committee that would work under the PA’s supervision.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said late on Tuesday the names for the individuals participating in the committee had been decided.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who heads the PA, said he welcomed the Egyptian idea and urged Trump to support such a plan that would not involve displacing Palestinian residents.



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, left, meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Tuesday during the Arab League summit on Gaza held in Cairo. Sisi said Egypt had worked in cooperation with Palestinians on creating an administrative committee of independent, professional Palestinian technocrats entrusted with the governance of Gaza after the end of the war.
PPO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Abbas, in power since 2005, also said he was ready to hold presidential and parliamentary elections if circumstances allowed, adding his PA was the only legitimate governing and military force in the Palestinian territories.

Hamas said it welcomed the elections.

Abbas has seen his legitimacy steadily undermined by Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank, which he oversees. Many Palestinians now regard his administration as corrupt, undemocratic and out of touch.

The Israeli foreign ministry in a statement called the plan “rooted in outdated perspectives” and rejected the reliance on the PA while complaining that Hamas was left in power by the plan.

Any reconstruction funding would require heavy buy-in from oil-rich Gulf Arab states such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, which have the billions of dollars needed.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohamed Mustafa said the reconstruction fund would seek international financing as well as oversight and likely be located in the World Bank.

The UAE, which sees Hamas and other Islamists as an existential threat, wants an immediate and complete disarmament of the group, while other Arab countries advocate a gradual approach, a source close to the matter said.

A source close to Saudi Arabia’s royal court says the continued armed pres-

ence of Hamas in Gaza was a stumbling block because of strong objections from the United States and Israel, which would need to sign off on any plan.

In a speech at the summit, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said international guarantees were needed that the current temporary ceasefire would remain in place, and supported the PA’s role in governing the Strip.

Leaders of the UAE and Qatar did not speak during open sessions of the summit.

Hamas was founded in 1987 by Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood during the first Palestinian Intifada, or uprising.

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri on Tuesday rejected Israeli and U.S. calls for the group to disarm, saying its right to resist was not negotiable.

Abu Zuhri told Reuters the group would not accept any attempt to impose projects, or any form of non-Palestinian administration or the presence of foreign forces.

Since Hamas drove the Palestinian Authority out of Gaza after a brief civil war in 2007, it has crushed all opposition there.

Egypt, Jordan and Gulf Arab states have for almost a month been consulting over an alternative to Trump’s ambition for an exodus of Palestinians and a U.S. rebuild of Gaza, which they fear would destabilize the entire region.

A draft final communique from the summit seen earlier by Reuters rejected the mass displacement of Palestinians from Gaza.

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Google asks US government to avoid breaking up firm

Alphabet’s Google met with President Donald Trump’s government last week and urged them to back away from a push to break up the search engine company, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The Department of Justice is pursuing two anti-monopoly cases against Google – one over search and another over advertising technology.

“We routinely meet with regulators, including with the DOJ to discuss this case. As we’ve publicly said, we’re concerned the current proposals would harm the American economy and national security,” a Google spokesperson said.

The DOJ did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The trial over which of the remedies are appropriate is scheduled to take place in April, with a final ruling expected in August.

House speaker urges lawmakers to avoid town hall meetings

House Speaker Mike Johnson urged fellow Republican lawmakers on Tuesday to avoid public town-hall meetings with voters after some events turned into angry confrontations over President Donald Trump’s moves to fire federal workers and defund government programs.

Johnson said Democrats and activists were responsible for the tumult.

“They’re professional protesters. So why would we give them a forum to do that right now? They’re doing this for the camera. We all know it, and I think it’s wise not to play along,” he said. The Louisiana Republican said he was encouraging lawmakers to meet with constituents in other formats, such as small groups or telephone conferences.

FDA places BioNTech’s malaria vaccine study on clinical hold

The Food and Drug Administration has placed a clinical hold on BioNTech’s early-to-mid stage trial of an experimental malaria vaccine, the drugmaker said in a filing.

The trial was to evaluate the safety and efficacy of the RNA-based vaccine called BNT165e for prevention of malaria caused by the P. falciparum parasite in healthy adults who have never had malaria before.

Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.

BioNTech said it is taking actions to address the FDA’s requests and will work with the regulator to assess the next steps.

Administration lists DOJ, FBI, other HQs for possible sale

The Trump administration said on Tuesday it might sell some of the most iconic properties in Washington, including the headquarters of the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Labor Department.

The General Services Administration, which manages federal properties, said it had identified 443 properties totaling more than 80 million square feet that “are not core to government operations” and could be sold off. The agency said a sale could potentially save more than \$430 million in annual operating costs.

The list includes the Washington headquarters for the Department of Energy, the Department of Agriculture, the American Red Cross building and the Office of Personnel Management, the human resources arm of the U.S. government, among other notable buildings.

GSA’s own headquarters were also on the list.

US designating Yemen’s Houthis as ‘terrorist organization’

The U.S. State Department on Tuesday said it was implementing the designation of Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi movement as a “foreign terrorist organization” after President Donald Trump’s call for the move earlier this year.

“The Houthis’ activities threaten the security of American civilians and personnel in the Middle East, the safety of our closest regional partners, and the stability of global maritime trade,” Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

The move, however, triggered concerns it could impact regional security and worsen Yemen’s humanitarian crisis because importers fear being hit with U.S. sanctions if supplies fall into Houthi hands.

– Reuters

Russia offering to serve as mediator between US, Iran over nuclear tensions

Moscow says it’s looking for ‘peaceful solution’ on Tehran’s program

Steve Holland and Vladimir Soldatkin
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Russia has offered to mediate between the United States and Iran, a source briefed on discussions told Reuters on Tuesday, as the Kremlin vowed to do everything possible to facilitate a peaceful solution to tensions over Tehran’s nuclear program.

Russia’s state-run Zvezda media outlet reported earlier on Tuesday, citing Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, that President Vladimir Putin had agreed to mediate between Tehran and Washington in talks over nuclear weapons.

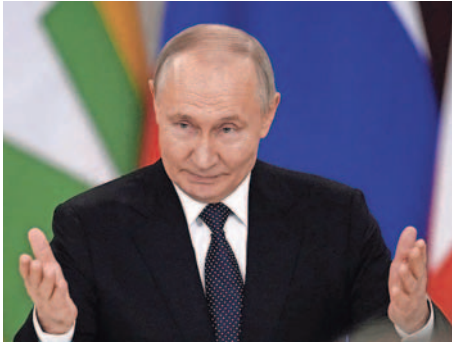
A source briefed on the discussions, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that Russia had offered to act as an intermediary, but Moscow was not asked to serve in such a role.

Iran’s mission to the United Nations in New York declined to comment.

The development comes after President Donald Trump upended U.S. policy after taking office in January, taking a more conciliatory stance toward Russia that has left Western allies wary as he tries to broker an end to Moscow’s three-year war in Ukraine.

Peskov told reporters on Tuesday that Iran was Russia’s partner and ally and Moscow would continue to develop relations.

“President Putin believes and is convinced that the problem of Iran’s nuclear dossier should be solved solely by



“President (Vladimir) Putin believes and is convinced that the problem of Iran’s nuclear dossier should be solved solely by peaceful means,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday. “Of course, Russia, being an Iranian ally, will be doing all what is possible to facilitate the peaceful solution to the problem.”
PAVEL BEDNYAKOV/POOL VIA REUTERS

peaceful means,” he said. “Of course, Russia, being an Iranian ally, will be doing all what is possible to facilitate the peaceful solution to the problem.”

Trump last month restored his “maximum pressure” campaign on Iran in a bid to stop Tehran from building a nuclear weapon. But he also said he was open to a deal and was willing to talk to Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian.

“The Trump administration will talk to our adversaries and allies alike, but ... from a position of strength to defend our national security,” Brian Hughes, spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, said Tuesday.

Iran has denied wanting to develop a nuclear weapon. However, it is “dramatically” accelerating enrichment of uranium to up to 60% purity, close to

the roughly 90% weapons-grade level, the U.N. nuclear watchdog has warned.

Western states say there is no need to enrich uranium to such a high level under any civilian program and that no other country has done so without producing nuclear bombs. Iran says its nuclear program is peaceful.

“The United States will not tolerate Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon or their support of terror in the Middle East and around the world,” Hughes said.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday, conveying “that he anticipates close coordination in addressing the threats posed by Iran and pursuing opportunities for a stable region,” said State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce.

Iran agreed a deal in 2015 with Britain, Germany, France, the U.S., Russia and China – known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – that lifted sanctions on Tehran in return for restrictions on its nuclear program.

Washington quit the agreement in 2018 during Trump’s first term as president, and Iran began moving away from its nuclear-related commitments.

Britain, France and Germany have told the U.N. Security Council that they are ready – if needed – to trigger a so-called “snap back” of all international sanctions on Iran to prevent the country from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

They will lose the ability to take such action on October 18 next year when the 2015 U.N. resolution on the deal expires. Trump has directed his U.N. envoy to work with allies to snap back international sanctions and restrictions on Iran.

NATO nominee pledges to strengthen US alliance

Patricia Zengerle and Daphne Psaledakis
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Donald Trump’s nominee to be U.S. ambassador to NATO, Matthew Whitaker, pledged on Tuesday to strengthen NATO and said the Republican president remains committed to the alliance.

“If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to strengthen the alliance, ensure the security of the American people and uphold our nation’s role as the beacon of freedom and liberty,” Whitaker said at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

“President Trump has been clear. The United States remains committed to NATO and to peace through strength,” he said.



Whitaker

Whitaker, 55, a lawyer with little foreign policy experience, worked in the Justice Department during Trump’s first term, including three months from late 2018 to early 2019 as acting attorney general.

He is expected to be confirmed, as Trump’s fellow Republicans control a majority in the Senate.

Whitaker’s comments came amid tensions over Trump’s apparent lurch toward Russia since beginning his second term in the White House in January, shocking traditional NATO allies in Europe and leaving Ukraine increasingly vulnerable as it fights a Russian invasion.

Trump also has demanded that

Europe’s NATO members ramp up their defense expenditures, given that European nations on average spend below NATO’s 2% of GDP guidelines, while the U.S. finances nearly two-thirds of NATO’s military budget.

Trump has called for NATO members to spend 5% of GDP on defense, which is far more than Washington spends.

Trump has said he was not sure the U.S. should be spending anything on NATO, leading to speculation that he might withdraw the United States from the alliance, despite a U.S. law forbidding any president from doing so unilaterally.

Whitaker said that, if confirmed, he would visit every NATO member within his first 30 days, to discuss Trump’s demand that every member should spend 5% of GDP on defense.

“I believe that a robust NATO can continue to serve as a bedrock of peace and prosperity, but its vitality rests on every ally doing their fair share by growing our economies and investing in our common defense,” he said.

On Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s meeting with Trump at the White House devolved into an extraordinarily heated exchange before the world’s media.

Trump halted U.S. military aid to Ukraine on Monday, and Zelenskyy said on Tuesday he regretted the clash and wanted to “make things right.”

Zelenskyy said he was ready to sign a deal giving the United States access to Ukrainian minerals, which he had left on the table when he abandoned a visit to Washington after the argument with Trump.

Trump

Continued from Page 1NN

downsized more than 100,000 federal workers, cut billions of dollars in foreign aid and shuttered entire agencies.

Trump credited Musk with identifying “hundreds of billions of dollars of fraud,” a claim that far exceeds even what the administration has claimed so far.

CHIPS Act

Trump said lawmakers should get rid of a landmark 2022 bipartisan law to give \$52.7 billion in subsidies for semiconductor chips manufacturing and production and use the proceeds to pay debt.

“The CHIPS act is a horrible, horrible thing. We give hundreds of billions of dollars and it doesn’t mean a thing. They take our money and they don’t spend it,” Trump said in a speech to Congress.

“You should get rid of the CHIPS Act and whatever is left over, Mr. Speaker, you should use it to reduce debt.”

The CHIPS and Science law signed by Biden in August 2022 included \$39 billion in subsidies for U.S. semiconductor manufacturing and related components along with \$75 billion in government lending authority.

More tariffs coming

Trump said he would impose reciprocal tariffs on April 2, a move that would likely roil financial markets even more.

“Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades, and now it’s our turn to start using them against those other countries,” he said.

On this point, many Republicans remained seated, a signal of how Trump’s tariffs have divided his party.



World leaders were watching President Donald Trump’s Congressional address closely. It came the same day tariffs went into effect against Canada, Mexico and China and the a day after Trump paused all military aid to Ukraine.
MANDEL NGAN/POOL VIA REUTERS



Devarjaye “DJ” Daniel, 13, is lifted up by his father after Trump named the teen an honorary member of the U.S. Secret Service. SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Guests of President Trump and first lady Melania Trump are recognized during Tuesday’s address to Congress.
JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

Tax cuts

Trump urged Congress to extend his 2017 tax cuts. Congressional Republicans have advanced a sweeping \$4.5 trillion plan that would extend the tax cuts, tighten border security and fund a huge increase in deportations.

The proposal calls for \$2 trillion in spending reductions over a decade, with possible cuts to education, health care and other social services.

Republicans in 2017 argued that the tax cuts would pay for themselves by stimulating economic growth. But the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the changes increased the federal deficit by just under \$1.9 trillion over a decade, even when including positive economic effects.

In addition, Trump said his administration will create a new office of shipbuilding in the White House and offer new tax incentives for the sector.

Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin, a former CIA agent, delivered the Democratic Party’s rebuttal.

First lady Melania Trump was joined at the address by selected guests, including the family of Corey Comperatore, a firefighter killed by the gunman who grazed the president with a bullet during a Pennsylvania campaign rally in July 2024.

Tariffs

Continued from Page 1NN

deal during a nationally televised address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday night.

Retaliation starts

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described the tariffs as “a very dumb thing to do” and hit back with 25% tariffs on \$20.7 billion worth of U.S. imports, including orange juice, peanut butter, wine, spirits, beer, coffee, appliances and motorcycles.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum took a softer approach, vowing retaliation but without details, saying she would announce Mexico’s response on Sunday.

Lutnick’s comments lifted the Canadian dollar and the Mexican peso off of deep losses earlier on Tuesday, but Trump’s tariffs prompted a global stock sell-off. Major U.S. indexes ended lower, with the tech-heavy Nasdaq veering into correction territory, while shares of automakers, homebuilders, retailers and other tariff-sensitive firms all took hits.

China responded immediately, announcing additional tariffs of 10% to 15% on certain U.S. imports from March 10 and a series of new export restrictions for designated U.S. entities. Later it raised complaints about the U.S. tariffs with the World Trade Organization.

Beyond the actions he announced on Tuesday, Trudeau said Canada would impose tariffs on another \$86.8 billion of U.S. goods if Trump’s tariffs were still in place in 21 days, likely to include motor vehicles, steel, aircraft, beef and

pork. Canada also will challenge the U.S. tariffs under rules of the WTO and the U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement.

“They’ve chosen to launch a trade war that will, first and foremost, harm American families,” Trudeau said of the Trump administration. “This is a very dumb thing to do.”

Trudeau said Trump’s fentanyl complaints were a “completely bogus” justification for the tariffs, as Canada had taken every possible action to shut down fentanyl trafficking.

Trudeau, who will see a Liberal Party successor elected this weekend, said that he believes Trump instead wants to weaken the Canadian economy to the point where Ottawa would consider annexation by the U.S.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford tore up a \$69.4 million contract with Elon Musk’s Starlink network, banned U.S. firms from provincial government contracts and said that if Trump’s tariffs persist, he will apply a 25% surcharge to Ontario electricity exports to the U.S.

Trump threatened to hike tariffs on Canadian goods even higher, in an apparent reference to a U.S. plan to impose “reciprocal tariffs” on global trading partners on April 2.

“Please explain to Governor Trudeau, of Canada, that when he puts on a Retaliatory Tariff on the U.S., our Reciprocal Tariff will immediately increase by a like amount!” Trump wrote in a post on his private social media platform.

Price hikes

The tariffs were already sparking some U.S. price increases, running counter to Trump’s election vow to bring down living costs for Americans.

Target CEO Brian Cornell told CNBC

that the retail giant would increase prices “over the next couple of days” on some seasonal grocery products such as avocados from Mexico.

“If there’s a 25% tariff, those prices will go up ... certainly over the next week,” Cornell said.

Electronics retailer Best Buy also warned of potential higher prices as the tariffs came into effect. Best Buy CEO Corie Barry told analysts on a call that China remains the top source of products sold by the company, with Mexico in second place.

The 20% tariff on Chinese imports will apply to several key Chinese electronics categories untouched by prior duties, including smart phones, laptops, video game consoles, smart watches and speakers and Bluetooth devices.

Barry said the price increases could play out over a longer period, as Best Buy typically carries about six weeks’ worth of inventory.

“We estimate the tariffs could lead to a nearly \$1,000 per household increase annually in the cost of goods,” said Nationwide Mutual chief economist Kathy Bostjancic. “The strengthening dollar helps mitigate some of the inflation impact, which would otherwise be greater.”

Stacking China tariffs

The extra 10% duty on Chinese goods adds to a 10% tariff imposed by Trump on February 4 to punish Beijing over the fentanyl crisis and comes on top of tariffs of up to 25% imposed on Chinese imports during Trump’s first term.

Tariffs on some of these products increased sharply under former president Joe Biden last year, including a doubling of duties on Chinese semi-

conductors to 50% and a quadrupling of tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to more than 100%.

China’s retaliatory tariffs announced on Tuesday targeted a wide range of U.S. agricultural products including certain meats, grains, cotton, fruit, vegetables and dairy products.

Beijing also placed 25 U.S. firms under export and investment restrictions on national security grounds. Ten of these firms were targeted for selling arms to Taiwan.

U.S. farmers were hard hit by Trump’s first-term trade wars, which cost them about \$27 billion in lost export sales and conceded their share of the Chinese market to Brazil.

Agricultural Secretary Brooke Rollins told reporters in Washington that farmers and ranchers would eventually see greater prosperity from Trump’s actions, adding: “His message, frankly, to the ag community is ‘trust me.’”

But the tariffs on Mexican and Canadian products could have deep repercussions for a highly integrated North American economy and signal an end to years of surprising resilience for U.S. growth.

“Today’s reckless decision by the U.S. administration is forcing Canada and the U.S. toward recessions, job losses and economic disaster,” Canadian Chamber of Commerce CEO Candace Laing said in a statement.

Even before Trump’s tariffs announcement, U.S. data on Monday showed factory gate prices jumped to a nearly three-year high, suggesting that a new wave of tariffs could soon undercut production.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta’s GDPNow model showed a stunning shift to a 2.8% U.S. GDP contraction in the first quarter, from a 2.3% estimated growth last week.

SPORTSEXTRA

NBA



The Lakers' LeBron James shoots a 3-point basket to surpass 50,000 career points in the regular season and the playoffs during Tuesday's game at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

LEBRON PASSES
POINTS MILESTONE

Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James became the first player to score a combined 50,000 points in regular-season and playoff games when he made a first-quarter 3-pointer during a 136-115 home victory against the New Orleans Pelicans on Tuesday. James, who became the NBA's all-time leading scorer in regular-season games in 2023, entered the game with 41,837 regular-season points and 8,162 points in the regular season – both all-time records. **ROUNDUP, 4NS**

GOLF PGA TOUR

Tour card
within the
grasp of
Koivun

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

After seeing fellow college star Luke Clanton secure his PGA Tour card last week, Jackson Koivun has a chance to follow suit at this week's Arnold Palmer Invitational as a sponsor exemption, but the Auburn sophomore isn't putting any added pressure on himself.

"It's hard not to think about that, knowing going into an event if I top-10, I can get my PGA Tour card," said Koivun, who is two points shy of earning his card via the PGA Tour University accelerated pathway. "But just trying to put that in the back of my mind and go play like I know I can. If everything falls into place, that's great, but at the end of the day I'm just trying to come out here and have fun."

Koivun, 19, is in position to secure his card this week at Bay Hill Club and Lodge in Orlando, Fla., mainly because of his tremendous freshman season that included two victories (including the SEC championship) and five second-place finishes, including the NCAA championship.

The native of San Jose, Calif., who grew up in Chapel Hill, N.C., also became just the eighth player to win the Haskins Award, Hogan Award and Nicklaus Award as college player of the year, which gave him nine more points.

See KOIVUN, Page 7NS



Jackson Koivun reacts to a putt on the 13th hole during the third round of the Farmers Insurance Open on Jan. 24. ORLANDO RAMIREZ/GETTY IMAGES

NFL

Reports: Eagles give
Barkley extension

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

The Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles and star Saquon Barkley have agreed to a two-year contract extension worth \$41.2 million that makes him the first \$20-plus million running back in NFL history, multiple outlets reported Tuesday.

The reigning NFL Offensive Player of the Year concluded a record-breaking first season with the Eagles with a victory over the defending champion Kansas City Chiefs on his 28th birthday on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 9.

The new deal, which keeps Barkley under contract through 2028, includes \$36 million guaranteed with \$15 million more in incentives, per reports. The guaranteed money is the most for a running back on a contract of three years or

less, according to Over The Cap.

Barkley was making about \$12.6 annually under a three-year contract he signed as a free agent last offseason with Philadelphia with a base value totaling \$37.75 million. That included \$26 million guaranteed plus incentives.

The three-time Pro Bowl selection was a first-team All-Pro in 2024, when he led the league with 345 carries for 2,005 yards and a 125.3 per game average in scoring 13 touchdowns in 16 regular-season games (all starts). He also caught 33 passes for 278 yards and two TDs.

He rushed 91 more times in four playoff games for 499 yards and five TDs, giving him a single-season record of 2,504 yards to pass Terrell Davis.

See BARKLEY, Page 2NS



Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley celebrates after defeating the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl 59 on Feb. 9. MARK J. REBILAS/IMAGN IMAGES

FOOTBALL

NFL NOTEBOOK

Teams’ use of franchise tag lowest since ’94

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

The 4 p.m. ET deadline came and went Tuesday with only two NFL players receiving the franchise tag: Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Tee Higgins and Kansas City Chiefs right guard Trey Smith.

The most notable candidate not to be tagged: Minnesota Vikings quarterback Sam Darnold, who instead will test the open market while the team reportedly works on an offer to bring him back.

Per ESPN, this marked the fewest players on the franchise tag since 1994, when only two got the tag. It’s sharply down from last year’s total of eight players tagged around the league.

Higgins was tagged for the second straight year at \$26.2 million, and he and the Bengals will work on a long-term contract between now and the July 15 deadline. Smith was tendered at \$23.4 million.

Higgins, 26, played in 12 games in 2024 and caught 10 TD passes with 73 receptions for 911 yards. He has 34 career touchdowns, 330 catches and 4,595 yards in 70 regular-season games since being selected in the second round of the 2020 NFL Draft.

Smith, 25, was a Pro Bowl selection at right guard in 2024 and has started 80 games – 13 in the playoffs – since being selected in the sixth round in 2021.

Darnold, 27, landed in Minnesota last winter on a one-year free agent deal, projected as the Vikings’ interim quarterback, particularly after the team subsequently used a first-round pick on QB J.J. McCarthy.

Darnold won the quarterback job in training camp, during which McCarthy sustained a season-ending right knee injury. In the regular season, Darnold proved to be a revelation, leading the Vikings to a 14-3 record while completing 66.2 percent of his passes for 4,319 yards and 35 touchdowns, all career highs. He was intercepted 12 times.

Saints release underachieving RB Williams

The New Orleans Saints released running back Jamaal Williams, reportedly clearing \$1.59 million in salary cap space.

Williams signed a three-year, \$12 million deal with the Saints after having a career season with the Detroit Lions in



The Cincinnati Bengals used the franchise tag on wide receiver Tee Higgins on Tuesday. BARRY REEGER/IMAGN IMAGES

2022.

But his production was meager in 27 games (five starts) with New Orleans. Williams had just 470 rushing yards and two touchdowns and caught 27 passes for 119 yards. Last season, Williams had 164 yards and one touchdown on the ground and nine receptions for 57 yards in 14 games (one start).

Seahawks release 4, including OT Fant, OLB Jones

The Seattle Seahawks released offensive tackle George Fant, outside linebacker Dre’Mont Jones, defensive tackle Roy Robertson-Harris and safety Rayshawn Jenkins.

The moves combined to save the Seahawks approximately \$27.25 million against the cap, according to the Seattle Times.

Fant, 32, began his career in Seattle and returned in 2024 after stints with the New York Jets (2020-22) and Houston Texans (2023). But his reunion was marred by injuries. He started at right tackle in Week 1, suffered a knee injury and spent half the season on injured reserve. He came back to start Week 9, only to aggravate the injury and miss the remainder of the season.

Jones, 28, spent two seasons in Seattle and started 16 of 17 games in 2023 before losing his starting role midway

through the 2024 campaign. He compiled 77 tackles and 8.5 sacks in 34 games for Seattle after starting his career in Denver (2019-22), where he started 29 of his 56 appearances and amassed 133 tackles and 22 sacks.

Seattle acquired Roberston-Harris, 31, from the Jacksonville Jaguars just before the 2024 trade deadline in exchange for a 2026 sixth-round draft pick. He played 11 games for Seattle in a reserve role and did not record a sack after having two in six games for the Jaguars.

Jenkins, 31, made nine starts in 13 appearances for the Seahawks in his lone season with the club. He had a career-high two sacks and in Week 5 returned a fumble 102 yards for a touchdown.

Report: Jets give WR Lazard permission to seek trade

Wide receiver Allen Lazard has been given permission by the New York Jets to seek a trade, ESPN reported.

Despite granting this permission, the Jets reportedly also are open to Lazard returning to the team.

Lazard joins former Green Bay Packers teammates Aaron Rodgers and Davante Adams as players who appear to be on their way out of New York.

Lazard joined the Jets ahead of the 2023 season when Rodgers came on

board, and Adams was acquired by the Jets from the Las Vegas Raiders in October 2024. All three played for the Packers from 2018-21; Rodgers and Adams played together in Green Bay from 2014-21, and Lazard played with Rodgers as a Packer through the 2022 season.

Reports: Jets release former All-Pro WR Adams

The New York Jets have officially released Davante Adams, NFL Network reported, after multiple reports earlier that the team was moving on from the former All-Pro wide receiver.

The Jets, who reportedly tested Adams’ trade value, will save \$29.9 million in salary cap space, ESPN reported, with an \$8.4 million dead cap hit.

Adams signed a five-year, \$141.25 million contract extension through 2026 after he was traded from the Green Bay Packers to the Las Vegas Raiders in 2022. He has \$72.5 million remaining for the next two seasons, but it is not guaranteed.

Cowboys DT Odighizuwa agrees to 4-year, \$80M deal

Dallas Cowboys standout defensive tackle Osa Odighizuwa agreed to terms on a four-year, \$80 million contract that includes \$58 million guaranteed and a \$20 million signing bonus.

Odighizuwa’s agent Sam Leaf Ireifej confirmed the deal to multiple outlets.

Per NFL Network, the Cowboys intended to place the franchise tag on Odighizuwa prior to the new contract. That would have paid Odighizuwa \$25.1 million on a one-year deal.

Reports: Bears to acquire G Jackson from Rams

The Chicago Bears are acquiring offensive lineman Jonah Jackson from the Los Angeles Rams in exchange for a sixth-round pick in the 2025 NFL draft, according to multiple reports.

The deal cannot become official until March 12, the start of the new league year.

ESPN reported that the Bears are taking on all of Jackson’s \$17.5 million salary in 2025 despite his performance in Los Angeles. Jackson dealt with a shoulder injury and was replaced in the lineup after starting four games.



Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley rushes against the Kansas City Chiefs during Super Bowl 59 on Feb. 9. KIRBY LEE/IMAGN IMAGES

Barkley

Continued from Page 1

Barkley has in his career rushed 1,546 times for 7,216 yards and 48 TDs

and caught 321 passes for 2,378 yards and 14 scores in 90 regular-season games (all starts) for the New York Giants (2018-23) and Eagles.

The Giants selected him second overall in the 2018 NFL Draft out of Penn State.

COLLEGE NOTEBOOK

ACC, Florida State and Clemson settle litigation

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

The Atlantic Coast Conference’s ongoing legal disputes with members Clemson and Florida State were settled on Tuesday with a resolution to implement a new revenue distribution model based on TV viewership.

The settlement keeps the ACC’s 18-member league potentially intact through 2036, when the league’s grant of rights contract expires. Penalties for leaving the league before 2036 are reduced significantly – which was a motivating factor for the initial litigation from the two universities.

The ACC board of directors approved the settlement, followed by approval from the boards of trustees for Clemson and FSU. The actions led to the dropping of four lawsuits.

“Today’s resolution begins the next chapter of this storied league and further solidifies the ACC as a premier conference,” ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips said in a statement. “As we look ahead to our collective long-term future, I want to express my deepest appreciation to the ACC Board of Directors for its ongoing leadership, patience and dedication throughout this process.

“The league has competed at the highest level for more than 70 years and this new structure demonstrates the ACC embracing innovation and further incentivizing our membership based on competition and viewership results. The settlements, coupled with the ACC’s continued partnership with ESPN, allow us to focus on our collective future – including Clemson and Florida State – united in an 18-member conference demonstrating the best in intercollegiate athletics.”

FSU first sued the league in Decem-

ber 2023 followed by Clemson. The ACC countersued both schools. FSU’s lawsuit came after the Seminoles failed to reach the then-four-team College Football Playoff despite being undefeated, which the university blamed on the ACC.

Before the settlement, conference members could be penalized as much as \$700 million to leave, according to FSU’s attorneys. Under the new terms, the exit fee will be \$165 million in fiscal year 2026 and decreased by \$18 million per year to a floor of \$75 million in 2030-31 and beyond, according to a presentation made at Clemson’s board meeting, The Athletic reported.

Belichick, North Carolina will not appear on ‘Hard Knocks’

Bill Belichick’s North Carolina program will not be the featured team on HBO’s upcoming offseason version of “Hard Knocks,” an NFL Media spokesperson told CBS Sports on Tuesday.

That comes on the heels of reports circling last week that NFL Films would feature Belichick and the Tar Heels. Reports, however, swirled that some league owners were not pleased that the NFL-owned platform would showcase Belichick.

“NFL Films had discussions with Coach Belichick and UNC about appearing on Hard Knocks this offseason but couldn’t reach an agreement,” an NFL Media spokesperson told CBS Sports.

The decision to attempt to turn to Belichick, an NFL head coach for 29 seasons with the Cleveland Browns and New England Patriots, came after no NFL team would agree to sign on, per a report Friday from Front Office Sports.

NHL

TUESDAY’S ROUNDUP

Harley’s late goal propels Stars over Devils

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Thomas Harley scored with under five seconds left in regulation to give the Dallas Stars a dramatic 4-3 win over the visiting New Jersey Devils on Tuesday.

The Devils had erased the Stars’ two-goal lead earlier in the period, but Harley saved the victory by converting a shot from just outside the circle. Harley also had an assist, giving the defenseman three consecutive two-point games.

The Stars are on a three-game winning streak and lead the NHL in both wins (20) and goals (102) since December 28.

Roope Hintz had a goal and two assists, Wyatt Johnston had a goal and an assist, and Jason Robertson had two assists. Ilya Lyubushkin scored Dallas’ other goal.

Hintz has 14 points (three goals, 11 assists) over a five-game points streak. Johnston has 12 points (seven goals, five assists) during a seven-game points streak.

Wild 4, Kraken 3

Jared Spurgeon, Mats Zuccarello and Frederick Gaudreau each had a goal and an assist and Filip Gustavsson made 33 saves, including one on a penalty shot, as Minnesota held on to defeat host Seattle.

Vinnie Hinostroza also scored and Marcus Johansson had two assists for the Wild, who have won two straight following a three-game skid.

Adam Larsson, Shane Wright and Brandon Montour tallied and Kaapo Kakko had two helpers for the Kraken, who have lost three of their past four games. Joey Daccord stopped 16 of 20 shots.

Trailing 3-1, the Kraken were awarded a penalty shot and a power play at 4:21 of the second period as Minnesota’s Brock Faber was called for slashing Eeli Tolvanen from behind on a breakaway, then sent Tolvanen headfirst into the end boards.

Gustavsson stopped the penalty shot, then made three saves on the ensuing short-handed situation as the Kraken spent nearly the entire two minutes in the Minnesota end.

Islanders 3, Jets 2

Impending free agents and potential trade targets Kyle Palmieri and Brock Nelson each scored in what might have been their final game with New York, who beat visiting Winnipeg in Elmont, N.Y.

The goals were the 20th of the season for both Palmieri, a member of the Islanders since 2021, and Nelson, who was drafted by the club in 2010 and played his 901st game for the franchise.

Ryan Pulock scored in the third for the Islanders, who are three points behind the New York Rangers and Detroit Red Wings in the race for the final Eastern Conference wild-card berth.

The Islanders don’t play again until they visit the San Jose Sharks on Saturday night, one day after the trade deadline.

Goalie Ilya Sorokin made 26 saves as



Stars defenseman Thomas Harley celebrates his game-winning goal against the New Jersey Devils on Tuesday in Dallas. JEROME MIRON/IMAGN IMAGES

New York won for the third time in four games.

Hurricanes 2, Red Wings 1

Jordan Martinook had a goal and an assist as the visiting Carolina Hurricanes edged the Detroit Red Wings 2-1 on Tuesday night.

Jordan Staal had the other Carolina goal, while Frederik Andersen made 24 saves as the Hurricanes won for the third time in four games.

Elmer Soderblom scored the lone goal for Detroit, which has lost three straight following a 9-1-1 stretch. Alex Lyon made 28 saves.

Detroit was awarded the first power play when Andrei Svechnikov was called for boarding.

Carolina also received a first-period power play when Patrick Kane was penalized for hooking.

The Hurricanes broke through with just over a minute left in the opening period. Martinook scored on a backhander off a feed from Jalen Chatfield. The latter won a puck battle along the boards and delivered the puck to Martinook, who beat Lyon on the glove side.

Flames 6, Flyers 3

Calgary scored four times in the first period, including two goals from Connor Zary, on its way to a road victory over Philadelphia.

This was the first meeting between the Flames and Flyers since the teams combined on a four-player trade on Jan. 31. Morgan Frost, who came over from Philadelphia in the deal, had two assists Tuesday, while former Calgary sniper Andrei Kuzmenko registered a goal and an assist in a losing effort.

Jonathan Huberdeau collected two assists, while Dustin Wolf made 25 saves to help the Flames snap a three-game skid.

Samuel Ersson allowed three goals on five shots for the Flyers before giving way to Ivan Fedotov, who turned aside

25 of the 27 shots he faced.

Zary had not scored in his last seven games, dating back to his most recent goal on Jan. 2. However, he opened the scoring in this one with a deflection in front of the net 7:40 into the game.

Predators 6, Bruins 3

Jonathan Marchesseault and Ryan O’Reilly scored back-to-back goals in a 1:03 span in the third period to propel visiting Nashville past Boston.

O’Reilly capped a two-goal, one-assist performance, following up Marchesseault’s eventual game-winning goal with 11:32 left in regulation.

Steven Stamkos (one goal, two assists) also had three points, Tommy Novak and Mark Jankowski also scored, and Luke Evangelista had two assists for Nashville, which had lost four of five and won just six of its first 30 road games (now 7-20-4).

Juuse Saros made 18 saves for Nashville.

Charlie Coyle, Jordan Oesterle and Morgan Geekie scored, David Pastrnak had two assists, and Jeremy Swayman stopped 24 shots for the Bruins, who are 1-5-2 in their last eight.

Avalanche 4, Penguins 1

Artturi Lehkonen scored two goals, Casey Mittelstadt netted the tiebreaking tally with 4:09 to go and Colorado beat Pittsburgh in Denver.

Jack Drury also scored, Nathan MacKinnon had two assists and Scott Wedgewood turned away 32 shots for the Avalanche, who have won the first three games of a six-game homestand.

Ryan Lindgren logged 20:33 of ice time in his first game with the Avalanche since being acquired from the New York Rangers.

Rickard Rakell had a goal and Alex Nedeljkovic made 21 saves for Pittsburgh, which has lost three straight (0-2-1).

With the game tied 1-1, the Avalanche

got their only power play of the night late in the third period. They nearly came up empty before MacKinnon passed it to Valeri Nichushkin below the goal line. Nichushkin sauced a pass to Mittelstadt on the other side of the net, and Mittelstadt’s shot went off Nedeljkovic and in at 15:51.

Sharks 6, Sabres 2

Six San Jose players recorded multiple-point games in the Sharks’ win over host Buffalo.

William Eklund, Will Smith, Tyler Toffoli and defenseman Timothy Liljegen had a goal and an assist each and Nico Sturm and Macklin Celebrini also scored for the Sharks, who won their second game in two nights after an eight-game losing streak (0-5-3).

San Jose defenseman Shakir Mukhamadullin and Jake Walman each had two assists, and Alexandar Georgiev made 20 saves.

JJ Peterka produced a goal and an assist and Tage Thompson also scored for the Sabres, who lost their fourth straight (0-3-1). Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen stopped 22 shots.

It was the second of back-to-back games for both teams. San Jose beat the host Toronto Maple Leafs in a shootout and Buffalo lost 4-3 in overtime to the host Montreal Canadiens on Monday.

Lightning 6, Blue Jackets 2

Victor Hedman and Jake Guentzel had two goals and one assist apiece as Tampa Bay bounced back a night after having its winning streak snapped, beating visiting Columbus.

In its sixth consecutive home victory, the Atlantic Division’s third-place club also got a goal and two assists from Nikita Kucherov plus a tally from Mitchell Chaffee. Brayden Point and Darren Raddysh had two assists.

Backup goaltender Jonas Johansson made 31 saves in his first outing since Jan. 28 as the Lightning finished 2-0-1 in the season series against the Blue Jackets. They are 9-1-1 since the start of February.

The Blue Jackets’ Zach Werenski scored at even strength and short-handed to match his own franchise record of 20 goals by a defenseman, but Columbus lost for the first time since the 4 Nations Face-Off break (4-1-0). Elvis Merzlikins stopped 34 shots.

Ducks 6, Oilers 2

Mason McTavish scored two goals for visiting Anaheim in a win against Edmonton.

Sam Colangelo and Leo Carlsson each delivered a goal and an assist, Jackson LaCombe and Cutter Gauthier contributed three assists each and Lukas Dostal made 33 saves for the Ducks, who had lost three of four (1-2-1).

Leon Draisaitl and Connor McDavid each had a goal and an assist for Edmonton, which has lost six of seven (1-6-0).

Calvin Pickard stopped just seven of 11 shots in the first period before he was replaced by Stuart Skinner, who finished with 14 saves for the Oilers.

TUESDAY’S SUMMARIES

Anaheim 6, Edmonton 2

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|
| Anaheim | 4 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Edmonton | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

First Period—1, Edmonton, Draisaitl 45 (McDavid, Ekholm), 10:05. 1, Anaheim, Carlsson 14, 11:57. 1, Anaheim, McTavish 15 (Gauthier, LaCombe), 13:37. 1, Anaheim, Colangelo 2 (LaCombe, Gauthier), 18:26. 2, Anaheim, McTavish 16 (Colangelo, Gauthier), 18:38. Penalties—Vatrano, ANA (Slashing), 8:21.

Second Period—1, Anaheim, Strome 10 (LaCombe, Vatrano), 13:22. Penalties—Klingberg, EDM (Delay of Game), 3:10.

Third Period—1, Anaheim, Killorn 12 (Zegras, Carlsson), 3:56. 1, Edmonton, McDavid 23 (Draisaitl, Bouchard), 4:44. Penalties—Colangelo, ANA (Holding), 4:24. Nurse, EDM (interference), 6:00. Helleson, ANA (Roughing), 15:15. Brown, EDM (Roughing), 15:15.

Shots on Goal—Anaheim 11-7-9-27. Edmonton 12-8-14-34.

Power-play opportunities—Anaheim 0 of 2; Edmonton 2 of 2.

Goalies—Anaheim, Dostal 18-14-5 (34 shots-32 saves). Edmonton, Pickard 15-7-0 (11-7), Skinner (16-14).

A-18,347 (18,347).

Calgary 6, Philadelphia 3

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|
| Calgary | 4 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Philadelphia | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |

First Period—1, Calgary, Zary 11 (Pachal, Huberdeau), 7:40. 1, Calgary, Kadri 22 (Hanley), 8:13. 2, Calgary, Zary 12 (Lomborg, Rooney), 9:32. 1, Philadelphia, Cates 14 (Foerster, Brink), 9:54. 1, Philadelphia, Kuzmenko 6, 17:11. 1, Calgary, Sharangovich 12 (Prospsil, Frost), 17:29. Penalties—Zamula, PHI (High-sticking), 2:22. Weegar, CGY (Cross-checking), 5:05.

Second Period—1, Calgary, Weegar 7 (Frost, Huberdeau), 16:33. Penalties—Calgary bench, served by Zary (Too many men), 7:31. Seeler, PHI (Roughing), 16:07. Bahl, CGY (Tripping), 18:36.

Third Period—1, Philadelphia, Michkov 20 (Kuzmenko, Sanheim), 10:43. 1, Calgary, Coronato 16 (Kadri, Weegar), 19:00. Penalties—Huberdeau, CGY (Hooking), 16:29.

Shots on Goal—Calgary 11-12-10-33. Philadelphia 12-9-6-27.

Power-play opportunities—Calgary 1 of 2; Philadelphia 0 of 4.

Goalies—Calgary, Wolf 21-12-4 (27 shots-24 saves). Philadelphia, Fedotov 5-9-3 (27-25), Ersson (5-2).

A-18,510 (19,523).

Colorado 4, Pittsburgh 1

| | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|
| Pittsburgh | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Colorado | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 |

First Period—None. Penalties—None.

Second Period—1, Colorado, Lehkonen 25 (MacKinnon, Makar), 6:36. 1, Pittsburgh, Rakell 29 (Rust, Crosby), 18:04. Penalties—Malinski, COL (Hooking), 10:16. Toews, COL (Holding), 15:02.

Third Period—1, Colorado, Mittelstadt 11 (Nichushkin, MacKinnon), 15:51. 2, Colorado, Lehkonen 26, 18:52. 1, Colorado, Drury 7 (Kelly), 19:52. Penalties—Beauvillier, PIT (Tripping), 14:23.

Shots on Goal—Pittsburgh 12-12-9-33. Colorado 8-7-10-25.

Power-play opportunities—Pittsburgh 0 of 2; Colorado 1 of 1.

Goalies—Pittsburgh, Nedeljkovic 12-13-5 (23 shots-21 saves). Colorado, Wedgewood 7-6-1 (33-32).

A-18,037 (17,809).

Dallas 4, New Jersey 3

| | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|
| New Jersey | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Dallas | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |

First Period—1, Dallas, Johnston 22, 1:39. Penalties—None.

Second Period—1, Dallas, Lyubushkin 1 (Robertson, Hintz), 6:30. 1, New Jersey, Meier 17 (Hischier, Hughes), 7:09. 1, Dallas, Hintz 25 (Johnston, Harley), 19:46. Penalties—Haala, NJD (High-sticking), 2:25. Granlund, DAL (Holding), 7:03. Dillon, NJD (High-sticking), 7:26. Kovacevic, NJD (Delay of Game), 18:56. Hughes, NJD (Slashing), 19:34.

Third Period—1, New Jersey, Hirschier 26 (Hughes, Bratt), 12:18. 1, New Jersey, Pesce 2 (Meier, Bratt), 15:52. 1, Dallas, Harley 11 (Robertson, Hintz), 19:55. Penalties—Noesen, NJD (Tripping), 9:28. Bichsel, DAL (Tripping), 11:47.

Shots on Goal—New Jersey 9-9-10-28. Dallas 10-7-4-21.

Power-play opportunities—New Jersey 2 of 2; Dallas 1 of 5.

Goalies—New Jersey, Markstrom 21-11-5 (21

shots-17 saves). Dallas, DeSmith 11-6-0 (28-25).

A-18,532 (18,532).

Nashville 6, Boston 3

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| Nashville | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Boston | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

First Period—1, Boston, Coyle 15 (Lindholm), 4:25. 1, Nashville, Novak 13, 5:32. 1, Nashville, O’Reilly 15 (Evangelista, Stamkos), 11:33. Penalties—Bellows, NSH (Tripping), 12:50.

Second Period—1, Boston, Oesterle 1 (Wotherspoon, Pastrnak), 5:08. 1, Nashville, Stamkos 18 (O’Reilly), 6:25. Penalties—Stamkos, NSH (Hooking), 16:21.

Third Period—1, Boston, Geekie 20 (Zacha, Pastrnak), 5:35. 1, Nashville, Marchessault 19 (McCarron, Forsberg), 8:28. 2, Nashville, O’Reilly 16 (Stamkos, Evangelista), 9:31. 1, Nashville, Jankowski 4 (Sissons), 17:52. Penalties—None.

Shots on Goal—Nashville 14-9-7-30. Boston 5-8-8-21.

Power-play opportunities—Nashville 0 of 0; Boston 0 of 2.

Goalies—Nashville, Saros 14-25-6 (21 shots-18 saves). Boston, Swayman 18-21-6 (29-24).

A-17,850 (17,565).

Tampa Bay 6, Columbus 2

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| Columbus | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Tampa Bay | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 |

First Period—1, Tampa Bay, Chaffee 12 (Lilleberg, Raddysh), 0:30. 1, Tampa Bay, Kucherov 28 (Guentzel), 1:37. 1, Columbus, Werenski 19, 17:20. Penalties—None.

Second Period—1, Tampa Bay, Guentzel 28 (Hedman, Point), 1:27. 1, Tampa Bay, Hedman 10 (Kucherov, Raddysh), 6:36. 2, Columbus, Werenski 20 (Fantilli, Johnson), 10:49. Penalties—Olivier, CBJ (Roughing), 9:06. Olivier, CBJ (Misconduct), 9:06.

McDonagh, TBL (Cross-checking), 15:47. van Riemsdyk, CBJ (Cross-checking), 18:09. Cernak, TBL (Roughing), 18:09.

Third Period—2, Tampa Bay, Hedman 11 (Point, Kucherov), 9:44. 2, Tampa Bay, Guentzel 29, 17:53. Penalties—Severson, CBJ (Hooking), 8:55. Moser, TBL (Interference), 15:18.

Shots on Goal—Columbus 9-8-16-33. Tampa Bay 10-18-12-40.

Power-play opportunities—Columbus 0 of 2; Tampa Bay 1 of 3.

Goalies—Columbus, Merzlikins 22-15-4 (39

shots-34 saves). Tampa Bay, Johansson 7-5-1 (33-31).

A-19,092 (19,092).

N.Y. Islanders 3, Winnipeg 2

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| Winnipeg | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| N.Y. Islanders | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

First Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Palmieri 20 (Nelson, Horvat), 16:49. Penalties—Pulock, NYI (Holding), 8:49. Lowry, WPG (Fighting), 15:00. Lee, NYI (Fighting), 15:00. Niederreiter, WPG (Tripping), 16:26.

Second Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Nelson 20 (Tsyplakov, Dobson), 1:33. 1, Winnipeg, Morrissey 9 (Scheifele, Connor), 8:48. Penalties—Lee, NYI (High-sticking), 7:56. Appleton, WPG (Holding), 16:20.

Third Period—1, N.Y. Islanders, Pulock 4 (Lee, Cizikas), 4:03. 1, Winnipeg, Ehlers 19 (Connor, Morrissey), 12:51. Penalties—Pageau, NYI (Slashing), 11:23.

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 10-13-6-29. N.Y. Islanders 17-7-5-29.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 2 of 3; N.Y. Islanders 1 of 2.

Goalies—Winnipeg, Hellebuyck 36-8-3 (29 shots-26 saves). N.Y. Islanders, Sorokin 23-19-4 (29-27).

A-14,723 (17,113).

San Jose 6, Buffalo 2

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|
| San Jose | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Buffalo | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

First Period—None. Penalties—Tuch, BUF (Roughing), 10:49. Cozens, BUF (High-sticking), 14:54.

Second Period—1, San Jose, Liljegen 6 (Eklund, Walman), 1:01. 1, Buffalo, Peterka 18 (Dahlin, Quinn), 5:13. 1, San Jose, Sturm 7 (Graf, Kostin), 18:22. Penalties—Thompson, SJS (Holding), 4:00. Kunin, SJS (Roughing), 9:16. Dahlin, BUF (Roughing), 9:16. Goodrow, SJS (Interference), 13:32.

Third Period—1, San Jose, Eklund 13 (Toffoli, Mukhamadullin), 2:19. 1, Buffalo, Thompson 30 (Peterka, Clifton), 6:55. 1, San Jose, Celebrini 19 (Mukhamadullin, Smith), 7:58. 1, San Jose, Smith 11 (Zetterlund), 12:49. 1, San Jose, Toffoli 24 (Walman, Liljegen), 18:01. Penalties—None.

Shots on Goal—San Jose 13-12-8-33. Buffalo 5-8-5-18.

Power-play opportunities—San Jose 0 of 2; Buffalo 1 of 2.

Goalies—San Jose, Georgiev 12-19-1 (18 shots-16 saves). Buffalo, Luukkonen 20-18-4 (32-27).

A-14,741 (19,070).

Minnesota 4, Seattle 3

| | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| Minnesota | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Seattle | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |

First Period—1, Minnesota, Hinostroza 4 (Zuccarello, Boldy), 12:27. 1, Seattle, Larsson 4 (Kakko, Schwartz), 16:40. 1, Minnesota, Spurgeon 7 (Hartman, Chisholm), 18:23. Penalties—Tanev, SEA (High-sticking), 12:01.

Second Period—1, Minnesota, Gaudreau 14 (Johansson, Spurgeon), 1:41. 1, Minnesota, Zuccarello 14 (Johansson, Gaudreau), 8:22. 1, Seattle, Wright 14 (Bjorkstrand, Kakko), 14:10. 1, Seattle, Montour 12 (Eberle, Gourde), 19:48. Penalties—Faber, MIN (Boarding), 4:21. Chisholm, MIN (Hooking), 13:16.

Third Period—None. Penalties—None.

Shots on Goal—Minnesota 9-9-1-19. Seattle 9-16-11-36.

Power-play opportunities—Minnesota 1 of 1; Seattle 0 of 3.

Goalies—Minnesota, Gustavsson 24-13-3 (36 shots-33 saves). Seattle, Daccord 21-16-3 (19-15).

A-17,151 (17,100).

Carolina 2, Detroit 1

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|
| Carolina | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Detroit | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

First Period—1, Carolina, Martinook 11 (Chatfield), 18:59. Penalties—Svechnikov, CAR (Boarding), 7:56. Kane, DET (Hooking), 11:13.

Second Period—1, Carolina, Staal 12 (Martinook, Gostisbehere), 1:29. Penalties—Robinson, CAR (Cross-checking), 3:20. Raymond, DET (Hooking), 3:27.

Third Period—1, Detroit, Soderblom 3, 10:05. Penalties—Svechnikov, CAR (Hooking), 10:29.

Shots on Goal—Carolina 10-13-7-30. Detroit 10-8-7-25.

Power-play opportunities—Carolina 0 of 2; Detroit 0 of 3.

Goalies—Carolina, Andersen 7-5-0 (25 shots-24 saves). Detroit, Lyon 11-7-1 (30-28).

A-18,573 (20,000).

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

MEN'S TOP 25 ROUNDUP

No. 22 Texas A&M knocks off No. 1 Auburn

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Zhuric Phelps scored 19 points and No. 22 Texas A&M (21-9, 10-7 SEC) defeated a No. 1 team for the first time in program history with an 83-72 victory over Auburn (27-3, 15-2) on Tuesday night in Southeastern Conference play in College Station, Texas.

Wade Taylor IV added 16 points and Pharrel Payne had 12 points as the Aggies snapped a four-game losing streak. Andersson Garcia scored 11 points and Manny Obaseki had 10 for Texas A&M.

Texas A&M had lost nine previous games against top-ranked teams – the most recent at Auburn in 2022.

Tahaad Pettiford made six 3-pointers and scored 19 points for Auburn, which had a six-game winning streak halted. Chad Baker-Mazara scored 15 points and Miles Kelly had 12 points and a career-high five steals.

**No. 23 BYU 88,
No. 10 Iowa State 85, 2OT**

Richie Saunders scored 23 points and grabbed six rebounds as BYU (22-8, 13-6 Big 12) beat Iowa State (22-8, 12-7) in double overtime in Ames, Iowa.

The Cougars' Dallin Hall finished with 22 points on 7-for-13 shooting, which included 4-for-9 success from beyond the 3-point arc. Egor Demin added 12 points for BYU, which won its seventh game in a row.

Joshua Jefferson scored 19 points to lead Iowa State. Milan Momcilovic contributed 18 points, and Curtis Jones chipped in with 16 off the bench as the Cyclones lost for the third time in four games.

Both teams scored 11 points in the first overtime, which ended in a 79-all score.

**Texas 87,
No. 25 Mississippi State 82, OT**

Tramon Mark scored 24 points, including two key late free throws, as Tex-



Texas A&M's Zhuric Phelps reacts during the second half of Tuesday's game against Auburn in College Station, Texas. ALEX SLITZ/GETTY IMAGES

as (17-13, 6-11 SEC) outlasted Mississippi State (20-10, 8-9) in overtime in Starkville, Miss.

The Longhorns, playing in a near do-or-die game, led by five points at half-time and by nine after a free throw by Kadin Shedrick with 3:52 to play. Mississippi State rallied to tie the game when Riley Kugel scored on a driving layup with 19 seconds left.

Texas never trailed in overtime, going up 80-75 with 2:20 to play. The teams traded baskets at the rim before a three-point play by Kugel with 38.4 seconds left tied the game at 82-82. Shedrick made one of two free throws with 32 seconds left to put the Longhorns up by a point, and Kugel followed with two huge misses from the charity stripe six seconds later.

Hubbard led Mississippi State with 16 points, all after halftime. RJ Melendez added 15, KeShawn Murphy had 13, Kugel and Cameron Matthews scored 12 each and Shawn Jones Jr. hit for 10 points.

No. 16 Memphis 75, UTSA 70

Dain Dainja scored a game-high 19 points and Memphis (25-5, 15-2) survived a performance rife with turnovers to edge UTSA (11-18, 5-12) in San Antonio, clinching at least a share of the American Athletic Conference regular-season title.

PJ Haggerty added 18 points, including six free throws in the final 10.7 seconds as the Tigers held on for their fourth straight win despite coughing a whopping 22 turnovers, 13 in the second half.

Nicholas Jourdain contributed 13 points and matched Dainja's eight rebounds as Memphis controlled the boards 45-25. Colby Rogers hit for 10 points.

Four players scored in double figures for UTSA, led by reserve Jonnivius Smith with 18 points. Marcus Millender added 16, while Primo Spears chipped in 14 points and a game-high seven assists.

Tai'Reon Joseph came off the bench to notch 12 points.

No. 18 Purdue 100, Rutgers 71

Braden Smith and Fletcher Loyer each made a career-high seven 3-pointers while scoring 23 points apiece to lead Purdue (21-9, 13-6 Big Ten) to a trouncing of Rutgers (14-16, 7-12) in West Lafayette, Ind.

Trey Kaufman-Renn added 16 points on 8-of-10 shooting as Purdue won its second straight game following a four-game slide. Smith also had nine assists, five rebounds and two steals for the Boilermakers.

The victory bolsters Purdue's chance of landing a double bye in next week's Big Ten tournament. The Boilermakers conclude the regular season on Friday at Illinois.

Dylan Harper scored 13 points and Ace Bailey had 12 for Rutgers, which lost its second straight game.

No. 19 Kentucky 95, LSU 64

Otega Oweh scored 24 points to lead a balanced scoring effort as Kentucky (20-10, 9-8 SEC) dominated LSU (14-16, 3-14) in Lexington, Ky.

Owek made 9-of-11 field-goal attempts and added a game-high eight rebounds for the Wildcats in their first game since announcing second-leading scorer Jaxson Robinson (wrist surgery) will miss the rest of the season. Brandon Garrison and Ansley Almonor scored 15 points each and Collin Chandler added 11.

Robert Williams III scored 15 points, Cam Carter added 14 and Jordan Sears had 13 to lead the Tigers, who played without leading rebounder Corey Chest (foot) and third-leading scorer Vyctorius Miller (leg).

Kentucky visits No. 15 Missouri and LSU hosts No. 22 Texas A&M on Saturday to conclude the regular season before heading to the SEC tournament next week.

AUTO RACING

INDYCAR



Driver Alex Palou celebrates his win in the Firestone Grand Prix on the Streets of St. Petersburg on Sunday. RUSSELL LANSFORD/IMAGN IMAGES

Palou's victory in opener scores Fox huge ratings

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Alex Palou took the checkered flag at the St. Petersburg Grand Prix on Sunday, while Fox Sports raked in a huge spike in television ratings.

The broadcaster reported 1.4 million viewers tuned into IndyCar's 2025 season opener across Fox Sports and its streaming services, which represented a 45 percent increase over last year's St. Petersburg race. It also ranked as the circuit's most-watched race outside of the Indianapolis 500 on any network since 2011.

Palou opened the defense of his third IndyCar title with a dramatic victory that included outdueling Josef Newgarden late in the race. Palou's

Chip Ganassi Racing teammate, Scott Dixon, ended up taking second ahead of Newgarden despite managing his way through the race without in-car communications due to a technical issue.

Palou, 27, said he had been counting down the days since securing his second consecutive title in Nashville last fall.

"It's been 138 days since Nashville, and I've been dreaming about this every single night," he said. "It's huge. It's huge. I'm super happy."

"I've been working really hard. It's been a place that we've struggled a lot at in the past. Especially me, personally. So to start with a win in 2025 is amazing."

NASCAR

Cup Series to have 1st woman driver since '18

Jon Hoefling

USA TODAY

Live Fast Motorsports has a new driver for their NASCAR Cup Series car, and it's a veteran motor sports racer and a woman.

Katherine Legge, 44, will make her debut in the series this Sunday at Phoenix Raceway in the Shriners Children's 500, becoming the 17th woman ever to compete in a Cup race. Legge will drive the No. 78 DROPLIGHT Chevrolet Camaro.

This will also be the first time in seven years that a woman has competed in the NASCAR Cup Series, with Danica Patrick last making an appearance in 2018.

"I don't want to just be a female driver for the sake of ticking a diversity box, right?" said Legge. "I want to be there on merit, and I want to be a good example for everybody that's coming up behind me." She continued, "I have to prove competence at the end of the day, right? Don't think anybody expects me to go out and set the world on fire and be competitive because it's the most competitive championship in the world. I just don't want to make any mistakes and look silly or look incapable. I think the competitiveness will come with experience."

Live Fast Motorsports, co-owned by driver B.J. McLeod and wife Jessica McLeod, field a part-time entry in the Cup Series. B.J. McLeod finished 22nd driving the No. 78 car at Atlanta, but he failed to qualify for the season-opening Daytona 500 and did not compete in the most recent race at Circuit of the Americas. With only 37 entries slated for Phoenix, Legge is assured of a starting spot on Sunday.

Legge, who was born in Guildford, England, has five starts in the NASCAR Xfinity Series, most recently in 2023 when she recorded her best finish: 14th at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis-



Katherine Legge is set to make her NASCAR Cup Series debut this week at Phoenix Raceway. MARK J. REBILAS/IMAGN IMAGES

consin. In February, she finished 39th in the ARCA Menards Series' Ride the 'Dente race at Daytona International Speedway.

Legge is most well-known, however, as an IndyCar driver, competing in 19 races in the NTT IndyCar Series across four seasons (2012, 2013, 2023 and 2024) and 28 in CART (2006 and 2007), earned a combined seven top-10s.

She has raced in the legendary Indianapolis 500 four times, and in 2023, she set the record for the fastest-ever qualifying time by a woman.

Legge's biggest success has come as a sports car driver. She has competed in 92 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship races since 2014, winning four times and scoring 11 podium finishes.

NASCAR cited Legge's recent participation on "high-speed ovals" in approving her to race in the Cup Series.

MLB

SPRING TRAINING ROUNDUP

Yankees, Red Sox unleash bats in big wins

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Spencer Jones batted 3-for-3 with four RBIs, including a three-run home run amid a seven-run third, as the New York Yankees demolished the host Philadelphia Phillies 12-3 in spring-training action Tuesday in Clearwater, Fla.

Jones, a top prospect in the Yankees' system, had a run-scoring double in the second after fellow prospect George Lombard Jr. got New York on the board with a single. Paul Goldschmidt wrapped the Yankees' big third inning with a two-run blast, and Jasson Dominguez also went deep.

Lombard, Dominguez, Oswaldo Cabrera and Pablo Reyes each finished with two of New York's 15 hits. Starter Will Warren (2-0) struck out four in three innings with one run on one hit and one walk.

Phillies starter Zack Wheeler (0-1) was shelled for eight hits and six runs (five earned) in two-plus innings. Max Kepler hit a solo home run for the hosts.

Red Sox 12, Pirates 4

Nate Eaton's grand slam broke the game open in the fifth and visiting Boston cruised to victory over Pittsburgh in Bradenton, Fla.

Abraham Toro hit a three-run triple and Trayce Thompson added a two-run homer to help the Red Sox build a 6-0 lead. Nick Sogard went 2-for-2 with an RBI and two runs, and starter Quinn Priester (1-0) yielded one run on four hits with a walk and four strikeouts over 2½ innings.

Ji Hwan Bae finished 3-for-3 with a solo shot and two runs, and Tsung-Che Cheng also homered for the Pirates. Starter Andrew Heaney (0-1) was tagged for four runs on two hits and three walks in the first 1½ frames.

Rays 4, Tigers 1

Nine-hole hitter Matthew Etzel hit a go-ahead two-run double and added a solo homer for Tampa Bay to beat visiting Detroit in Port Charlotte, Fla.

Eloy Jimenez had a solo shot to provide the Rays' other run. The win went to reliever Alex Faedo (1-1) for a spotless fifth inning as seven pitchers limited the Tigers to five hits.

Ryan Kreidler plated Colt Keith on a sacrifice fly to put the Tigers on the board before reliever Dietrich Enns (0-1) gave up Etzel's go-ahead double in the next inning.

Twins 0, Braves 0

Chris Sale worked four hitless innings for Atlanta in a scoreless draw with visiting Minnesota in North Port, Fla.

Sale fanned four and walked one before giving way to four relievers who allowed four hits to the Twins. The Braves finished with five, including two from Austin Riley.

Garrett Cooper's double was the only extra-base hit of the game.

Twins starter Randy Dobnak tossed five strikeouts and allowed three hits and two walks in his three innings. Jose Miranda went 2-for-3.

Cardinals 6, Mets 1

Matt Koperniak belted a two-run home run as St. Louis' split squad defeated visiting New York in Jupiter, Fla.

Nolan Arenado had a two-run double one inning before Koperniak's homer. Cardinals starter Andre Pallante (1-0) threw two strikeouts and limited the Mets to one hit in three innings.

Mets starter Tylor Megill (0-1) worked 2½ innings and gave up the first run of the game on Jose Fermin's single in the second. The Mets had just five hits and only scored on a fielding error in the eighth.

Cardinals 6, Nationals 4

Yordalin Pena lifted a pitch into the left-field seats for a two-out, two-run homer in the top of the ninth and St. Louis held on to beat host Washington in Palm Beach, Fla.

Thomas Saggese hit a solo shot and Lars Nootbaar had a two-run single for a 4-0 Cardinals lead before the Nationals came back to tie it in the seventh. Alex Call hit a two-run double and Amed Rosario (2-for-3) followed that with a two-run single.

Cardinals reliever Maxwell Rajcic (1-0) worked around three walks and a hit in the final two innings for the victory. Andry Lara (0-1) gave up the decisive homer to Pena.



The New York Yankees' Spencer Jones runs the bases after hitting a three-run home run against the Philadelphia Phillies in the third inning of a spring training game on Tuesday at BayCare Ballpark in Clearwater, Fla. NATHAN RAY SEEBECK/IMAGN IMAGES



The Boston Red Sox's Nate Eaton hits a grand slam during a spring training game on Tuesday in Bradenton, Fla. KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL/IMAGN IMAGES

Guardians 8, Angels 1

Los Angeles reliever Caden Dana surrendered seven runs, five hits and four walks in one-plus inning as host Cleveland rallied for the win in Goodyear, Ariz.

Lane Thomas and Bo Naylor stroked RBI singles to highlight the Guardians' four-run sixth, then Yordys Valdes popped a two-run homer off Dana to cap Cleveland's three-run seventh. Logan Allen (1-0) threw three scoreless innings in relief to pick up the win. Starter Gavin Williams struck out six and allowed one run in his 2½-inning stint.

Angels starter Jack Kochanowicz scattered three hits and posted one strikeout during his three scoreless innings. Nelson Rada, a 19-year-old outfielder, drilled an RBI single in the third to give Los Angeles a 1-0 lead. Rookie Christian Moore, the Angels' first-round pick last July, posted a triple.

Athletics 6, Rangers 3

Max Muncy and JJ Bleday cracked solo homers for the visiting Athletics as

they claimed the win over Texas in Surprise, Ariz.

Bleday finished 2-for-3 with a walk and two RBIs while Brent Rooker and Miguel Andujar contributed doubles for the Athletics. Starter J.T. Ginn (2-1) claimed the victory as he gave up two unearned runs during his 2½ innings.

Texas' Joc Pederson popped a two-run homer off Ginn in the first and Josh Smith added a solo shot off A's fireballer Mason Miller in the fourth. Alejandro Osuna added two doubles from the No. 9 slot.

Starter Dane Dunning allowed four hits and two runs in two innings, but 41-year-old Jesse Chavez (0-1) was assigned the loss after giving up a run in the third that put the Athletics ahead 3-2.

Cubs 16, Padres 1

Rookie third baseman Matt Shaw stroked his first two hits of the spring as host Chicago lashed 18 hits in a rout of San Diego's split squad in Mesa, Ariz.

Starter Shota Imanaga (1-0) worked four scoreless innings and gave up two

singles while fanning three. James Triantos came off the bench to deliver a double, a triple, two runs and two RBIs as Chicago posted four runs in the sixth and seven in the seventh to blow open the game.

Padres starter Matt Waldron (1-1) worked 2½ innings and allowed two hits, two walks and four runs (two earned). All six of San Diego's hits were singles, including Jack Costello's RBI single that drove in 18-year-old catching prospect Ethan Salas in the eighth.

Rockies 9, Reds 5

Leadoff man Brenton Doyle went 2-for-3 with a home run and two RBIs as host Colorado breezed to the win over Cincinnati in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Ryan McMahon, Thairo Estrada, Nolan Jones and Kyle Farmer each contributed two hits as Colorado built an 8-2 lead through five innings. Starter Bradley Blalock (1-0) allowed just one run and fanned two in his three innings to claim the win.

Tyler Stephenson and Will Benson cracked back-to-back solo homers in the sixth for the Reds.

First baseman Tyler Callihan poked two doubles before giving way to Austin Callahan, who also doubled in his late at-bat. Starter Graham Ashcraft (0-1) was roughed up for eight hits and five runs before leaving with two outs in the third.

Padres 1, Giants 1

San Diego and visiting San Francisco combined for just 11 hits before declaring a tie after nine innings in Peoria, Ariz.

Giants starter Landen Roupp posted his second scoreless outing of the spring as he retired 10 of the 11 batters he faced. His only miscue was hitting Martin Maldonado with a pitch. Luis Matos' double with two outs in the seventh drove in pinch runner Grant McCray for San Francisco's run.

Padres starter Nick Pivetta, making his spring debut, threw 2½ hitless innings while striking out four and walking one. Marcos Castanon's RBI single with two outs in the seventh drove in Brandon Butterworth for San Diego's run.

Dodgers 4, Reds (ss) 2

Mookie Betts' third-inning solo homer sparked Los Angeles' comeback from a two-run deficit against a Cincinnati split squad in Phoenix.

Dodgers starter Yoshinobu Yamamoto threw four innings of two-run ball before Roki Sasaki fanned five in three shutout innings. Jake Vogel went 2-for-2 with an RBI double.

The Reds' Elly De La Cruz hit an RBI single in the first inning, then scored on Austin Hays' triple. Cincinnati starter Chase Petty gave up one run and struck out four in three innings.

SCOREBOARD

| All times Eastern | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| NBA | | | | |
| EASTERN CONFERENCE | | | | |
| Atlantic Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Boston | 43 | 18 | .705 | — |
| N.Y. Knicks | 40 | 21 | .656 | 3 |
| Brooklyn | 21 | 40 | .344 | 22 |
| Philadelphia | 21 | 40 | .344 | 22 |
| Toronto | 20 | 42 | .323 | 23½ |
| Southeast Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Miami | 29 | 31 | .483 | — |
| Orlando | 29 | 34 | .460 | 1½ |
| Atlanta | 28 | 34 | .452 | 2 |
| Charlotte | 14 | 46 | .233 | 15 |
| Washington | 11 | 49 | .183 | 18 |
| Central Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Cleveland | 51 | 10 | .836 | — |
| Indiana | 35 | 25 | .583 | 15½ |
| Milwaukee | 35 | 25 | .583 | 15½ |
| Detroit | 35 | 27 | .565 | 16½ |
| Chicago | 24 | 38 | .387 | 27½ |
| WESTERN CONFERENCE | | | | |
| Southwest Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Memphis | 38 | 23 | .623 | — |
| Houston | 37 | 25 | .597 | 1½ |
| Dallas | 32 | 30 | .516 | 6½ |
| San Antonio | 26 | 34 | .433 | 11½ |
| New Orleans | 17 | 45 | .274 | 21½ |
| Northwest Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Oklahoma City | 50 | 11 | .820 | — |
| Denver | 39 | 22 | .639 | 11 |
| Minnesota | 34 | 29 | .540 | 17 |
| Portland | 28 | 34 | .452 | 22½ |
| Utah | 15 | 46 | .246 | 35 |
| Pacific Division | | | | |
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| L.A. Lakers | 39 | 21 | .650 | — |
| Golden State | 34 | 28 | .548 | 6 |
| Sacramento | 32 | 28 | .533 | 7 |
| L.A. Clippers | 29 | 29 | .525 | 7½ |
| Phoenix | 29 | 33 | .468 | 11 |
| Monday's Scores | | | | |
| Golden State 119, Charlotte 101 | | | | |
| Portland 119, Philadelphia 102 | | | | |
| Miami 106, Washington 90 | | | | |
| Atlanta 132, Memphis 130 | | | | |
| Oklahoma City 137, Houston 128 | | | | |
| Sacramento 122, Dallas 98 | | | | |
| Detroit 134, Utah 106 | | | | |
| Tuesday's Scores | | | | |
| Indiana 115, Houston 102 | | | | |
| Toronto 114, Orlando 113 | | | | |
| Milwaukee at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m. | | | | |
| Golden State 114, N.Y. Knicks 102 | | | | |
| Cleveland 139, Chicago 117 | | | | |
| Minnesota 126, Philadelphia 112 | | | | |
| San Antonio 127, Brooklyn 113 | | | | |
| Phoenix 119, L.A. Clippers 117 | | | | |
| L.A. Lakers 136, New Orleans 115 | | | | |
| Wednesday's Games | | | | |
| Portland at Boston, 7 p.m. | | | | |
| Minnesota at Charlotte, 7 p.m. | | | | |
| Utah at Washington, 7 p.m. | | | | |
| Miami at Cleveland, 8 p.m. | | | | |
| Dallas at Milwaukee, 8 p.m. | | | | |
| Sacramento at Denver, 9 p.m. | | | | |
| Oklahoma City at Memphis, 9:30 p.m. | | | | |
| Detroit at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m. | | | | |

| NHL | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Eastern Conference | | | | | | |
| Atlantic Division | | | | | | |
| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
| Toronto | 38 | 20 | 3 | 79 | 196 | 175 |
| Florida | 38 | 21 | 3 | 79 | 206 | 172 |
| Tampa Bay | 36 | 21 | 4 | 76 | 218 | 160 |
| Detroit | 30 | 25 | 6 | 66 | 177 | 193 |
| Ottawa | 30 | 25 | 5 | 65 | 170 | 173 |
| Montreal | 30 | 26 | 5 | 65 | 184 | 204 |
| Boston | 28 | 27 | 8 | 64 | 170 | 201 |
| Buffalo | 24 | 30 | 6 | 54 | 191 | 208 |
| Metropolitan Division | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
|--|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Washington | 39 | 14 | 8 | 86 | 220 | 161 |
| Carolina | 36 | 22 | 4 | 76 | 197 | 171 |
| New Jersey | 33 | 24 | 6 | 72 | 189 | 158 |
| Columbus | 30 | 23 | 8 | 68 | 207 | 202 |
| N.Y. Rangers | 31 | 26 | 4 | 66 | 187 | 183 |
| N.Y. Islanders | 28 | 26 | 7 | 63 | 168 | 182 |
| Philadelphia | 27 | 27 | 8 | 62 | 183 | 208 |
| Pittsburgh | 24 | 30 | 10 | 58 | 184 | 237 |
| Western Conference | | | | | | |
| Central Division | | | | | | |
| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
| Winnipeg | 42 | 16 | 4 | 88 | 216 | 146 |
| Dallas | 40 | 19 | 2 | 82 | 210 | 158 |
| Minnesota | 36 | 22 | 4 | 76 | 177 | 179 |
| Colorado | 36 | 24 | 2 | 74 | 202 | 183 |
| St. Louis | 29 | 27 | 6 | 64 | 179 | 187 |
| Utah | 27 | 25 | 9 | 63 | 172 | 181 |
| Nashville | 22 | 32 | 7 | 51 | 159 | 204 |
| Chicago | 19 | 35 | 7 | 45 | 169 | 214 |
| Pacific Division | | | | | | |
| | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA |
| Vegas | 36 | 18 | 6 | 78 | 199 | 166 |
| Edmonton | 35 | 22 | 4 | 74 | 197 | 180 |
| L.A. Kings | 31 | 20 | 8 | 70 | 167 | 159 |
| Calgary | 29 | 23 | 9 | 67 | 161 | 179 |
| Vancouver | 27 | 22 | 11 | 65 | 165 | 184 |
| Anaheim | 27 | 26 | 7 | 61 | 160 | 185 |
| Seattle | 26 | 32 | 4 | 56 | 183 | 202 |
| San Jose | 17 | 37 | 9 | 43 | 166 | 234 |
| NOTE: Two points for a win, one for OT loss. | | | | | | |
| Monday's Scores | | | | | | |
| Washington 5, Ottawa 4, SO | | | | | | |
| Montreal 4, Buffalo 3, OT | | | | | | |
| Florida 2, Tampa Bay 1 | | | | | | |
| N.Y. Rangers 4, N.Y. Islanders 0 | | | | | | |
| San Jose 3, Toronto 2, SO | | | | | | |
| Chicago 5, L.A. Kings 1 | | | | | | |
| Tuesday's Scores | | | | | | |
| San Jose 6, Buffalo 2 | | | | | | |
| Nashville 6, Boston 3 | | | | | | |
| Carolina 2, Detroit 1 | | | | | | |
| Tampa Bay 6, Columbus 2 | | | | | | |
| Calgary 6, Philadelphia 3 | | | | | | |
| N.Y. Islanders 3, Winnipeg 2 | | | | | | |
| Dallas 4, New Jersey 3 | | | | | | |
| Colorado 4, Pittsburgh 1 | | | | | | |
| Anaheim 6, Edmonton 2 | | | | | | |
| Minnesota 4, Seattle 3 | | | | | | |

| Wednesday's Games | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Washington at N.Y. Rangers, 7:30 p.m. | | | | | | |
| Ottawa at Chicago, 7:30 p.m. | | | | | | |
| Toronto at Vegas, 10 p.m. | | | | | | |
| Anaheim at Vancouver, 10:30 p.m. | | | | | | |
| St. Louis at L.A. Kings, 10:30 p.m. | | | | | | |

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

| USA TODAY Sports Men's Coaches Poll | | | | | | |
|--|--------|-----|------|--|--|--|
| March 3 | | | | | | |
| The USA TODAY Sports Men's Basketball Coaches Poll is conducted weekly throughout the regular season using a panel of head coaches at Division I schools. The panel is chosen in consultation with the National Association of Basketball Coaches. The voters represent each of the 32 Division I conferences that receive an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. Each coach submits a Top 25 with a first-place vote worth 25 points, second place 24, and so on down to one point for 25th, with first-place votes in parenthesis. | | | | | | |
| | Record | Pts | Prv. | | | |
| 1. Auburn (30) | 27-2 | 774 | 1 | | | |
| 2. Duke (1) | 26-3 | 737 | 2 | | | |
| 3. Houston | 25-4 | 707 | 4 | | | |
| 4. Tennessee | 24-5 | 671 | 5 | | | |
| 5. Florida | 25-4 | 653 | 3 | | | |
| 6. St. John's | 26-4 | 612 | 7 | | | |
| 7. Michigan St. | 24-5 | 587 | 8 | | | |
| 8. Alabama | 23-6 | 566 | 6 | | | |
| 9. Texas Tech | 22-7 | 504 | 10 | | | |
| 10. Iowa State | 22-7 | 484 | 9 | | | |
| 11. Clemson | 24-5 | 442 | 14 | | | |
| 12. Wisconsin | 22-7 | 391 | 12 | | | |
| 13. Louisville | 23-6 | 365 | 17 | | | |
| 14. Maryland | 22-7 | 341 | 15 | | | |
| 15. Michigan | 22-7 | 288 | 13 | | | |
| 16. Memphis | 24-5 | 272 | 18 | | | |
| 17. Saint Mary's | 27-4 | 262 | 20 | | | |
| 18. Purdue | 20-9 | 257 | 19 | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-------|-----|----|
| 19. Missouri | 21-8 | 236 | 16 |
| 20. Marquette | 22-7 | 204 | 22 |
| 21. Texas A&M | 20-9 | 169 | 11 |
| 22. BYU | 21-8 | 127 | NR |
| 23. Arizona | 19-10 | 91 | 21 |
| 24. Kentucky | 19-10 | 88 | 23 |
| 25. VCU | 24-5 | 54 | NR |
| Others receiving votes: Mississippi State 38; New Mexico 24; Creighton 24; UC San Diego 21; Vanderbilt 17; Gonzaga 17; Oregon 14; UConn 10; Drake 10; UCLA 9; Illinois 6; Ole Miss 2; Boise State 1. | | | |

USA TODAY Sports Women's Coaches Poll

| The USA TODAY Sports women's basketball coaches poll is conducted weekly throughout the regular season using a panel of head coaches at Division I schools. The panel is chosen by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. The members represent each of the 32 Division I conferences that receive an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. Each coach submits a Top 25 with a first-place vote worth 25 points, second place 24, and so on down to one point for 25th, with first-place votes in parenthesis. | | | |
|---|--------|-----|------|
| | Record | Pts | Prv. |
| 1. Texas (29) | 29-2 | 771 | 1 |
| 2. USC (1) | 27-2 | 741 | 3 |
| 3. UConn | 28-3 | 702 | 5 |
| 4. UCLA | 28-2 | 673 | 2 |
| 5. S. Carolina (1) | 27-3 | 665 | 6 |
| 6. Notre Dame | 25-4 | 599 | 4 |
| 7. TCU | 28-3 | 587 | 8 |
| 8. N.C. State | 24-5 | 572 | 10 |
| 9. LSU | 27-4 | 504 | 7 |
| 10. Oklahoma | 23-6 | 470 | 13 |
| 11. Duke | 23-7 | 442 | 15 |
| 12. Ohio State | 24-5 | 408 | 12 |
| 13. Kentucky | 22-6 | 397 | 14 |
| 14. N. Carolina | 25-6 | 376 | 9 |
| 15. Maryland | 23-6 | 375 | 17 |
| 16. West Virginia | 23-6 | 307 | 19 |
| 17. Tennessee | 21-8 | 269 | 11 |
| 18. Baylor | 25-6 | 232 | 18 |
| 19. Kansas St. | 25-6 | 205 | 16 |
| 20. Alabama | 23-7 | 188 | 20 |
| 21. Oklahoma St. | 24-5 | 155 | 23 |
| 22. Creighton | 24-5 | 120 | 21 |
| 23. Florida St. | 23-7 | 96 | 24 |
| 24. S.Dakota St. | 26-3 | 77 | 25 |
| 24. Michigan St. | 21-8 | 77 | 22 |
| Others receiving votes: Ole Miss 24; California 15; Louisville 10; Richmond 8; George Mason 4; Iowa State 2; FGCU 2; Utah 1; James Madison 1. | | | |

SOCCER