The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

FRIDAY, 02 OCTOBER 2026 — THE BREAKFAST EDITION — FREE, FOREVER

El-Sayed apologizes to Jewish Democrats in person, pressed five weeks later to condemn Iran's regime again.

BY LOU
One More Question

You know the toll plaza on 94, the one with the orange sensor that's supposed to read your transponder and wave you through? I go through there most Tuesdays, same car, same lane, same little beep. Three weeks back the beep didn't come — no wave, nothing — so I drove through anyway, because what's a man supposed to do, back up on the highway? Fine. Two weeks after that, a letter. Unpaid toll, a dollar sixty-five, due immediately. So I go to the counter — not the phone, the counter, because I like to watch a person's face when they tell me I owe money I already paid — and I've got the bank statement folded up right there showing the dollar sixty-five came out the same day I drove through. The woman looks at it, looks at her screen, says the two systems don't talk. The toll was paid. The letter went out anyway. Nobody told the letter.

I bring this up because I was reading two things this week that put me back at that counter, and I wrote the dates down on the back of an insurance card I keep in the glovebox, on account of I couldn't find anything else with a blank side to it.

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THE WORD

§49 — 02 OCTOBER 2026

On the greatest

DEMOCRAT

$40 TRILLION

REPUBLICAN

THE GREATEST

"I can't afford most of what's in the paper, so I watch prices. The Treasury has a page called Debt to the Penny — which I think is a lovely name for anything — and on January 21st of last year it said thirty-six trillion, two hundred eighteen billion. On September 8th of this year: forty trillion, eighty-four billion. The deficit for the first ten months of this fiscal year, one point eight trillion, more than the whole of last year. Growth last quarter, one and a half percent. Sorry, I'll let you get back to it. The greatest economy we've ever had — greatest at what?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W49

Drug lobby hires former House Republican leader as chief executive; the law required zero days of waiting

BY STERLING
The Ownership Desk

Look for the broken rule. Look twice, if you like. What a trade lobby requires of a former Republican leader of the House is not a repeal, and not a loophole prised open in the dark — it requires an appointment and a salary, and both were perfectly lawful on Tuesday, when PhRMA named Eric Cantor its president and chief executive officer. Chief executive. Not a consultant.

You are reaching for the word swamp. The Federalist reached first: "the swampiest move ever." Advocates for lower drug prices called the hire "a match made in hell." Those are judgments, and a judgment stops no one at the door. The statute he would have to dodge does not exist. Congress wrote none.

And what does the walk through that door cost him? Nothing whatever. The emolument of the new office — the pay that comes with holding it — is handed over by the industry, and owed to nobody else.

Do note when they collected him ... in the middle of a major fight over the government's ability to regulate prescription drug prices. The fight is over whether the government may regulate what a prescription costs.

... Continued on Page F2

Mamdani's pied-à-terre list, warned to end like Stalin's kulaks, ends with casino mogul Steve Wynn.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

On September 5, a Washington Examiner op-ed ran New York City's new pied-à-terre tax through a different ledger: Stalin's list of kulaks, the list of targeted property owners that preceded the Holodomor famine. The op-ed held one line of the argument constant — a list starts small — and solved for how that kind of list ends.

By September 29, the city had produced a result, though not the one the op-ed had in mind. A Staten Island judge, Wayne Ozzi, a Democrat on the state Supreme Court, ruled that Mamdani's Department of Finance violated the plaintiffs' rights in how it rolled out the tax, and ordered the city to start the process over. The ruling turned on procedure — how the Department of Finance calculated and notified who owed what — not on whether the tax itself can stand. Listed among the plaintiffs who brought the case: Steve Wynn, the casino mogul.

The tax applies to owners of high-end second homes, assessed annually under the scheme the city began rolling out this year. The September 29 ruling does not strike the tax down; it sends the Department of Finance back to

... Continued on Page F3

Thousands from Ms. Rachel earn two Fox segments; millions from AIPAC and $100 million from Musk earn none.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Fox News ran two segments this week tallying the money Ms. Rachel gives to progressive candidates. The children's education brand, built out into Netflix specials, a Penguin Random House imprint and a line at Target, writes checks that run to the thousands of dollars. The network found airtime for that number twice.

The same week, The New York Times reported that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee is spending millions of dollars electing its preferred candidates in the midterms, enough that some candidates now campaign on AIPAC's opposition as a credential. Fox did not put that number on screen.

Ten days earlier, on September 22, Common Dreams reported that Elon Musk plans to spend at least $100 million helping Republicans win the midterms, a quieter rerun of the money he spent in 2024. The complaint in that report was aimed at Democrats, not at Fox: critics asked why the party wasn't doing more to highlight Musk's spending. Fox's own coverage of the $100 million did not take up the question either way.

Grocery chain chief John Catsimatidis joined the same warning; the

... Continued on Page F4

She voted believing ICE would protect Americans; it killed her daughter instead, so her family is suing it.

BY LOU
One More Question

I want to tell you about the E-ZPass lane at the toll plaza off 95, because I sat in it for twenty minutes last Tuesday and I haven't been able to stop thinking about it since.

You pay extra for that lane. You put the little transponder on your windshield, you pay the yearly fee, and what you're paying for, as I understand it — and correct me if I'm wrong — is that the gate goes up before you get there. That's the whole arrangement. You pay ahead so the barrier isn't a surprise.

Except last Tuesday the gate didn't go up. I sat there with my blinker on, looking at the thing, waiting, and I thought — what exactly did I pay for, if the arm comes down anyway?

That question has been rattling around in my glovebox-brain ever since, because of a family in Minneapolis.

Donna Ganger is the mother of Renee Good. According to The Hill, on September 23rd, Ganger said two things, and I wrote them both down because I wanted to get them exact. The first is that she voted for Donald Trump. The second is that she thought federal immigration officers would, in

... Continued on Page B1

Same party that moved border funds into presidential ads now demands an inspector general probe Planned Parenthood

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

On September 9, Speaker Mike Johnson told a Dallas audience that defunding Planned Parenthood remains a priority for him, this despite the one-year ban on the provider's Medicaid reimbursements having already lapsed. Fourteen days later, on September 23, the Guttmacher Institute and Power to Decide put a number on what that priority costs: 58 percent of the women who rely on affordable birth control stand to lose access if the defunding goes through. That number comes from the researchers who track the contraceptive care network, not from the lawmakers who want to cut it.

Six days after that, on September 29, the Washington Examiner found a second filing, same month, different column of the ledger. The White House had tapped a pot of money appropriated for Customs and Border Protection — fencing, agents, enforcement — and spent part of it on advertisements promoting the President. Senator Susan Collins, who chairs the Appropriations Committee that wrote the CBP line in the first place, confirmed where that money was supposed to go.

Three days later, on October 2, 128 House Republicans wrote to HHS's in-

... Continued on Page H2

Billionaires fund ad blitz against tax Nobel economists call democracy's turning point, support falls under 50.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

On August 25, Building a Better California and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes opened their advertising campaign against Proposition 40, the one-time 5 percent tax on net worth over $1 billion that would reach roughly 200 Californians. The money behind the two committees traces to Google co-founder Sergey Brin and venture capitalist Peter Thiel, among other mega-billionaires who would write the checks the measure describes.

On September 21, a group of Nobel-winning economists called the measure "a turning point in the battle between democracy and oligarchy" and reported the initiative remained popular, putting support at 52 percent.

Seven points separate the two counts of the same electorate on the same question, taken one day apart. The number that actually passes a California ballot measure is fifty.

On September 29, Senator Bernie Sanders announced he would return to California to campaign for Proposition 40 with Representatives Ro Khanna and Aisha Wahab, as the measure entered what the reporting called its final

... Continued on Page F5

Examiner calls Collins's polling a firewall, leaves out the graffiti, the corruption report, and her new love of debates.

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

On August 28, the Washington Examiner ran a small item built around one word: "bucks." Sen. Susan Collins, it noted, was bucking the usual incumbent instinct and agreeing to four debates against her Democratic opponent, former state senator Troy Jackson, who hadn't yet agreed to any. The piece treated it as a quirk of character. It did not ask why an incumbent running on a brand of quiet constituent service would suddenly want four public stages instead of none.

Three and a half weeks later, on September 22, the question answered itself. ProPublica published what it described as a "sprawling pay-to-play operation" centered on Collins. Jackson didn't wait for the ink to dry: "Susan Collins delivered millions in taxpayer dollars for a corrupt donor bankrolling her campaign," he said, and then, shorter, for the cameras: "the jig is up." Collins's office called the whole thing "categorically false."

Six days after that, on September 28, someone reached a different kind of answer. The statement addressed the paint. It did not address the ProPublica story, the debates, or any connection between the two, and no one asked it

... Continued on Page A3

Homan dares critics to name one ICE overreach; the week supplies two before his own party finishes flinching

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

Start on Sept. 14. Tom Homan tells reporters ICE has no plans to "sweep polling locations" for noncitizens — a denial that only exists because someone asked, which means someone had reason to. Four days later, Secretary Markwayne Mullin goes after Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar for running an ad that said enforcement had "gone too far." That's the party line as of Sept. 18: hold.

Six days after that, the line is already cracking from the inside. Sept. 24, a Common Dreams dispatch headlined "Cowardice, Not Conviction" catalogs Republicans scrambling to distance themselves from Trump as his approval sinks to record lows less than six weeks from the midterms — battleground Senate candidates in Iowa and Michigan calling for an end to his immigration approach, the paper's own framing, not ours. The same day, at a Justice Department event, Homan tells the room ICE is "not going anywhere" and "you can hate us all you want." Same week, two different audiences, two different postures.

Then the paperwork catches up to the posture. A House GOP report says Illinois and Chicago released more than 500 immigrants despite active ICE

... Continued on Page T2

Controller warns one flight about 25 mph wind, clears a different one to land four minutes later

BY MITCH
Investigations

The National Transportation Safety Board called the press to Miami on a Monday in September to discuss a Boeing 767-300 that had flown in from San Juan, run off the runway, and killed five people. That much is the headline. The transcript is the column.

All together now — the plane did not simply land short. Two separate failures, recorded in two separate ways: one caught by the tower, one caught by nobody but the men flying the plane.

The five who did not survive it were named two days after the crash, on September 8: five employees of an airline cleaning company, killed when the jet left the runway and struck their van and a parked SUV. The document does not linger on that. Neither will I. But it is the paragraph the rest of this filing exists to explain.

Here is the paragraph the report filed on October 2 adds. Four minutes — the report's own number — before air traffic control cleared the Amazon cargo plane to land, a controller gave a wind advisory, gusts up to 25 miles per hour out of the south, to a different flight. Not this one. A different tail

... Continued on Page T3

Iowa votes to raise the subsidy cap voters in Missouri just recalled a councilman over

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Iowa lawmakers return to the Statehouse Friday for one item on the calendar: raising the state's cap on tax incentives, the ceiling now standing between the state and the $15 billion steel plant the president announced from the Oval Office the previous Monday. The announcement came with Representatives Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Ashley Hinson standing in frame, both facing a difficult November, and with the plant described as the largest steel project in U.S. history, running by 2030. What it buys is room enough for a deal already announced to fit under a cap sized before the deal existed.

On September 2, residents of Independence, Missouri, held a different kind of vote on a similar line item. Councilman John Perkins had approved tax incentives for an artificial intelligence data center in his district. The ballot that followed did not ask voters about the data center. It asked whether Perkins should keep the council seat Perkins had been elected to hold through June 2028. Sixty-eight percent said no. Thirty-two percent said let Perkins finish the term. The receipts do not carry a dollar figure for that in-

... Continued on Page F6

Trump's $400 million PAC pays for ads the White House insists are patriotism, not partisan.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

The 30-second spot that ran on Fox and Newsmax the week of September 22 opens with Air Force One and closes with a stadium crowd, and nowhere in between does it list a budget line. The White House supplied one anyway, on September 25, filing the ad under "patriotism isn't partisan" — a description, not an appropriation, because something still has to say which account paid for the airtime.

That something turned up the same Friday, from the Campaign Legal Center, which ran the money forward instead of back. Trump's "stated control over spending decisions" at MAGA Inc., the watchdog found, sits on top of a $400 million war chest — the kind of control a sitting officeholder is barred by decades of precedent from exercising over a super PAC. The watchdog's word for that arrangement was "clear-cut violation"; the White House's word for the ad it funds was "patriotism." Both words describe the same thirty seconds of airtime.

By October 1, CBS News had brought on legal contributor Jessica Levinson to share her analysis of how the Hatch Act — the 1939 law restricting partisan

... Continued on Page F7

Becerra ducks debates for weeks, then defends ICE policy days after an ex-aide's 'Juanitos' claim.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

By September 4th, Becerra had been accused of ducking eight debate invitations.

The poll that came out September 25th explains the quiet better than any press release could. Becerra led Hilton by enough that the race looked settled, but the same poll found voters disliked him even as they planned to vote for him. A frontrunner winning that way has one incentive: stay off the stage as long as the math allows, then show up once the math says you can survive it.

Four days after that poll, on September 29th, a former Biden administration official said Becerra had mocked migrant children in private as "little Juanitos and Juanitas." The account surfaced inside his own campaign as something that sparked concern.

Then Wednesday came, and with it the debate: Becerra and Hilton faced off over whether California should cooperate with federal immigration enforcement, Becerra defending the state's refusal, on a stage where the Juanitos account was already public.

... Continued on Page F8

Trump campaigns for Paxton by calling him a 'pain in the ass' and 'a little controversial'

BY LOU
One More Question

There's a dash in Thursday's New York Post headline I keep looking at. "Trump trucks to Texas to tout 'pain in the a–' Ken Paxton." Two letters missing, replaced with a line, like the paper ran out of nerve or ran out of room. I don't know which. I looked for my notebook to see if I'd written down the full word somewhere else, and I had — The Hill printed it whole: the president said his own Senate candidate is "a pain in the ass." Also "a little controversial."

I'm not saying that's strange. I'm asking what a campaign stop is supposed to accomplish, if the headline act is the candidate's own boss describing him the way you'd describe a flat tire.

Here's where I go back to the page. Aug. 28, Sen. John Cornyn — not an opponent, the man whose seat this is — told the Texas Tribune Paxton is "lazy," a "poor campaigner," doesn't raise money. I wrote that down because it was the home-state senator, not a Democrat, saying it on the record, about the man running to replace him.

Sept. 14, a filing. The Senate Leadership Fund's Texas PAC put $53.8 mil-

... Continued on Page A4

Tennessee halts all executions after a 'clinical' lethal injection takes two tries, forty minutes, to not work.

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

On September 22, Truthout reported the state had booked Christa Pike's lethal injection for September 30, a woman the state would make the first it executed in two hundred years. On September 28, Pike's lawyers filed a motion saying she had already survived two lethal injections, asking the courts to stop a third. On September 29, the Supreme Court declined her clemency appeal and cleared the date. Call it that if you like; the record does not. On Wednesday night the clinical language ran out of road: two injections became a double dose, and forty minutes passed before anyone in the chamber could say the word finished. The Guardian reports she was still alive, breathing, and, the paper notes, snoring.

Governor Bill Lee, a Republican, called it "deeply disturbing" on Thursday, suspended every execution in the state through the end of the year, and ordered an independent inquiry. I was ready to call that inquiry a technical fix, a tune-up for a broken machine. Fox News quoted former Knoxville police chief Phil Keith warning the botched attempt could end capital punishment in Tennessee altogether; the former chief of police is now

... Continued on Page A5

LA County sells $200-a-year tax hike as 'affordability,' spends $10 million convincing you

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

The charge showed up Thursday the way these charges show up: half a cent added to every taxable dollar spent in Los Angeles County, no cashier required to explain it, no auditor required to sign off before the register rings it up. Voters approved Measure ER back in June. The half-cent took effect October 1. One click past the ad is the number the ad was built to soften: a typical Los Angeles County family's annual bill goes up by about $200.

Half a cent does not sound like a program. Two hundred dollars does. And the word attached to the measure before the vote was "affordability" — the same word Sacramento and Los Angeles reach for whenever the bill is a tax increase rather than a tax cut. Run that word against the actual mechanism and the two stop matching. A half-cent surcharge on every dollar a family spends at the register is not relief and it is not a subsidy. It moves money in one direction only, out of the household and into the county's account, at the exact moment the household is buying groceries, school supplies, or a car part.

Six days before Thursday's new charge, on September 25, a different outlet

... Continued on Page F9

"Notice every "temporary" on the page. Temporary tariffs, temporary fees, temporary emergencies. I've been temporary since 2017. So has the tab."

— *Sal*

"If the numbers on this page bother you, I'd gently suggest that numbers are one perspective."

— *Chip*

Drug lobby hires former House Republican leader as chief executive; the law required zero days of waiting

By STERLING
THE OWNERSHIP DESK

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A former Republican leader of the House took the top job at the drug industry's main lobbying group.

WHO GETS PAID. The drug makers, who now have a former House leader running their lobby during a fight over price rules.

WHAT SLIPS. Voters once elected him to write the rules on drugs; the industry now pays him to fight those rules, and no law gives voters a say in the switch.

WHAT'S NEXT. The fight over whether the government can regulate prescription prices is on the calendar now, and he leads the industry's side of it.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Look for the broken rule. Look twice, if you like. What a trade lobby requires of a former Republican leader of the House is not a repeal, and not a loophole prised open in the dark — it requires an appointment and a salary, and both were perfectly lawful on Tuesday, when PhRMA named Eric Cantor its president and chief executive officer. Chief executive. Not a consultant.

You are reaching for the word swamp. The Federalist reached first: "the swampiest move ever." Advocates for lower drug prices called the hire "a match made in hell." Those are judgments, and a judgment stops no one at the door. The statute he would have to dodge does not exist. Congress wrote none....

...(cont) And what does the walk through that door cost him? Nothing whatever. The emolument of the new office — the pay that comes with holding it — is handed over by the industry, and owed to nobody else.

Do note when they collected him ... in the middle of a major fight over the government's ability to regulate prescription drug prices. The fight is over whether the government may regulate what a prescription costs.

Each spring the farmer leaves
the gap. The fox is not hurried.

— ENOCH

The Ownership Desk

🍺

"Nothing got broken here, and that is the whole con: Congress wrote no law telling a leader of the House to sit out a year before taking the drug industry's paycheck. He walks into the middle of a fight over whether the government can regulate what your prescription costs, and he walks in on their payroll. The thing on the table is the number on your pharmacy receipt."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, a private citizen took a private job — that is a labor market, not a scandal. Did I say labor market? That doesn't sound like me. He followed the law to the letter, every letter, and if Congress wanted a waiting rule, Congress could have written one instead of putting out press releases about it."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Why Eric Cantor Going To Head Big Pharma Is The Swampiest Move Ever

The Federalist RIGHT § *07:35 EDT*

Eric Cantor will become the next head of PhRMA, and the two seem made for each other for all the wrong reasons.

· 'A Match Made in Hell': Former GOP House Leader to Head Big Pharma Lobby *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

Mamdani's pied-à-terre list, warned to end like Stalin's kulaks, ends with casino mogul Steve Wynn.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

“Legal trouble for Mamdani’s pied-à-terre tax is just beginning”, 2 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A Staten Island judge blocked New York City's rollout of Mayor Mamdani's new tax on second homes this week.

WHO GETS PAID. Casino mogul Steve Wynn, a named plaintiff in the suit, keeps his second home untaxed while the city redoes its paperwork.

WHAT SLIPS. The city's power to collect the voter-backed tax on second homes slips further out of reach each time a wealthy plaintiff forces the rollout to restart.

WHAT'S NEXT. The Department of Finance must redo the rollout under the judge's order; whether the same plaintiffs challenge it again, and whether the tax survives a second round, is still on the calendar, not yet decided.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On September 5, a Washington Examiner op-ed ran New York City's new pied-à-terre tax through a different ledger: Stalin's list of kulaks, the list of targeted property owners that preceded the Holodomor famine. The op-ed held one line of the argument constant — a list starts small — and solved for how that kind of list ends.

By September 29, the city had produced a result, though not the one the op-ed had in mind. A Staten Island judge, Wayne Ozzi, a Democrat on the state Supreme Court, ruled that Mamdani's Department of Finance violated the plaintiffs' rights in how it rolled out the tax, and ordered the city to start the process over. The ruling turned on procedure — how the Department of Finance calculated and notified who owed what — not on whether the tax itself can stand. Listed among the plaintiffs who brought the case: Steve Wynn, the casino mogul....

...(cont) The tax applies to owners of high-end second homes, assessed annually under the scheme the city began rolling out this year. The September 29 ruling does not strike the tax down; it sends the Department of Finance back to redo the rollout procedure that triggered the lawsuit.

On October 2, the New York Post's editorial board filed the next entry in the ledger. Legal trouble for the tax "is just beginning," the board wrote, calling the whole effort "misbegotten" and predicting that this week's procedural loss marks the start of killing the tax outright.

Reconciled, the ledger reads like this: a tax built to apply to owners of homes they do not live in has drawn, as the plaintiff contesting it, an owner of a home he does not live in. The September 5 op-ed predicted a list of the persecuted. The September 29 docket produced a casino mogul. Measured against each other, that is the gap this week closes, hon — the space between the kulak the op-ed feared and the man who actually showed up to fight the bill.

The rollout restarts under the judge's order. Whether it restarts with the same forms, the same list, and the same plaintiff is the only entry still open in this ledger.

“They scared you with a dead Russian peasant so you'd miss the live Las Vegas one standing in the complaint. A tax built for owners of empty second homes finally found one who could afford lawyers, and that's the whole story — not a coincidence, a business model. Check whose name shows up first when they warn you about a list; this time it's a casino mogul's, not a peasant's.”

— Sal

“Look, this is a due-process story, full stop — the city botched the paperwork, the judge said so, that's not a political ruling. And sure, the plaintiff happens to run casinos, but the law doesn't check your net worth before it protects your rights... unless that's exactly the problem, in which case, forget I said rights, I meant paperwork.”

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Legal trouble for Mamdani’s pied-à-terre tax is just beginning

New York Post RIGHT § *05:00 EDT*

Cross your fingers a state judge’s slapdown this week of the pied-à-terre-tax’s rollout marks the beginning of the end of the whole misbegotten tax.

· New Yorkers battling Mamdani’s pied-a-terre tax snag big legal win — as casino mogul Steve Wynn joins fight *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Staten Island judge rules against Mamdani, NYC on taxing second homes *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Judge blocks Mamdani’s second-home tax rollout, tells city to start over *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Mamdani’s list starts small. History proves where it ends *from the morgue, 5 Sep 2026*

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Thousands from Ms. Rachel earn two Fox segments; millions from AIPAC and $100 million from Musk earn none.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK



"Ms Rachel pours cash into progressive campaigns and more top headlines", 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA FOX NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Fox News ran two segments on a children's YouTube star's donations to progressive candidates.

WHO GETS PAID. AIPAC and Elon Musk, whose millions and $100 million in midterm spending got no matching segments.

WHAT SLIPS. Viewers lose the ability to see which campaign money is actually large enough to move an election.

WHAT'S NEXT. The next check on this is the midterms themselves, when AIPAC's millions and Musk's $100 million either elect the candidates they are backing or do not; that result is not yet on the record.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Fox News ran two segments this week tallying the money Ms. Rachel gives to progressive candidates. The children's education brand, built out into Netflix specials, a Penguin Random House imprint and a line at Target, writes checks that run to the thousands of dollars. The network found airtime for that number twice.

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Grocery chain chief John Catsimatidis joined the same warning; the record does not carry his words that far. The forecast did not hold. Common Dreams reported that more millionaires moved into New York after the tax took effect than left.

Line the four items up and the reconciliation is arithmetic, not opinion. Thousands of dollars from a children's program buys two segments. Millions of dollars from a foreign-policy lobby buys no segment. A hundred million dollars from the country's richest man buys no segment either, just a complaint that Fox's own coverage left unanswered. A tax-flight prediction the record went on to contradict bought a full segment and no follow-up when it didn't hold.

Run the checks against the airtime and the direction is consistent: the smaller the number, the longer the broadcast; the larger the number, the quieter the room. That is the whole ledger, hon. It balances. It just balances backward.

"Follow the math, not the outrage: the YouTube lady writes a check with three zeros and gets a chyron, the lobby and the billionaire write checks with eight zeros and get silence. That's not a news judgment, that's a rate card — the bigger the donor, the less the cameras want to know. Somebody's buying quiet, and quiet costs a lot more than two segments."

— Sal

"Look, it's a legitimate story — a children's brand with a political checkbook, that's accountability journalism, full stop. The AIPAC and Musk numbers are just a different kind of story, is all, bigger, more complicated, harder to — why am I defending the size of the number. That's not — forget I said that."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Ms Rachel pours cash into progressive campaigns and more top headlines

Fox News RIGHT § *07:10 EDT*

Get all the stories you need-to-know from the most powerful name in news delivered first thing every morning to your inbox.

Ms Rachel builds sprawling media empire while shelling out thousands to progressive candidates

Fox News RIGHT § *05:00 EDT*

Ms. Rachel has donated thousands to progressive political candidates as her popular children's education brand expanded into Netflix, Penguin Random House and Target.

AIPAC Is Spending Millions to Elect Friends. It's Also Making Enemies.

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *05:00 EDT*

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee has increasingly become a campaign issue unto itself. Some candidates have worn opposition from AIPAC as a badge of honor or made a point of rejecting the group's support.

· 'Take the Open Shot': Democrats Rebuked for Refusing to Target Elon Musk Over $100 Million Midterm Spending Spree *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Guess What Happened After New York Raised Taxes on the Rich? More Millionaires Moved In *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

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She voted believing ICE would protect Americans; it killed her daughter instead, so her family is suing it.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION

"Renee Good: Family of US woman killed by ICE agent sues Trump officials", 1 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA BBC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Renee Good's family sued Trump officials over her killing by an ICE officer in Minneapolis.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. The Minneapolis district attorney has not decided whether to criminally charge the officer, so accountability rests on a civil lawsuit instead of a criminal court.

WHAT'S NEXT. The next step on record is that district attorney's charging decision, still undecided as of September 19, 2026, with the local prosecutor's race hanging on the outcome.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I want to tell you about the E-ZPass lane at the toll plaza off 95, because I sat in it for twenty minutes last Tuesday and I haven't been able to stop thinking about it since.

You pay extra for that lane. You put the little transponder on your windshield, you pay the yearly fee, and what you're paying for, as I understand it — and correct me if I'm wrong — is that the gate goes up before you get there. That's the whole arrangement. You pay ahead so the barrier isn't a surprise....

...(cont) Except last Tuesday the gate didn't go up. I sat there with my blinker on, looking at the thing, waiting, and I thought — what exactly did I pay for, if the arm comes down anyway?

That question has been rattling around in my glovebox-brain ever since, because of a family in Minneapolis.

Donna Ganger is the mother of Renee Good. According to The Hill, on September 23rd, Ganger said two things, and I wrote them both down because I wanted to get them exact. The first is that she voted for Donald Trump. The second is that she thought federal immigration officers would, in her word, "protect" Americans.

I'm not saying those two things happened at the same moment. I don't have a receipt for that, and I don't like to guess at things I can't find in my own notebook. I only have the two sentences, filed on the same day, under the same name.

What I do have, from the same family's lawsuit, filed this week and reported by the BBC, is this: an ICE agent in Minneapolis shot and killed Renee Good. Her family's lawyers describe what the administration built there as "an unprecedented environment for state-sponsored violence."

Unprecedented is a big word, and I'm an old man who likes a number better than an adjective, so I went looking for one. Here's what I found, from The Intercept, dated September 19th: the charging decision pending in that city isn't about one shooting. It's about two — Renee Good, and a nurse named Alex Pretti, shot by immigration agents in January. In August, his family asked, on television, what he did to deserve it. I couldn't find anyone at the agency who has answered that one on the record, and I'm not going to answer it for them.

That gives me a count of two, not an adjective. I don't know yet if two makes a pattern or only makes two, but it's more than the word "unprecedented" was giving me by itself, so for now I'm sticking with the two.

Now, about my toll lane. I called the authority — this was a slow week for me — and asked what the transponder is actually buying a driver, if the gate can still come down on him. The woman on the phone was very patient. She said the system is "designed to protect the flow of traffic," and that occasionally there are "exceptions." I wrote that word down too. Exceptions.

I keep turning this over. She said she voted for Trump. She said, separately, that she believed immigration officers would protect Americans. Her family's lawsuit now names officials in that same administration, over the killing of her daughter by one of those same officers. I'm not going to tell you what to make of that — a man my age with a notebook this full learns to be careful about conclusions. I'll just ask: is the agency she said would protect Americans the same one her family is now suing?

Actually — hold on, one more thing before you head out. The lawsuit names the officials. The ballot named the man they answer to. Same family, same year, two different documents, and only one of them got her a lawyer.

Which one was supposed to keep her daughter safe?

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

DONNA GANGER VOTED FOR TRUMP, TRUSTING THAT IMMIGRATION OFFICERS WOULD PROTECT Americans; an ICE agent then shot and killed her daughter, Renee Good, in Minneapolis. That isn't protection, it's a lottery where the gun promised at your door ends up aimed at it. You mark the box because you want a guard posted at the gate, the agency sends the guard, the guard decides who crosses, and when your own daughter does not survive that decision, the agency hands your family a lawsuit instead of her, leaving the ballot stub sitting in your glovebox to remind you exactly which box you marked.

"They sell the badge as protection, and the invoice comes due as a body bag. Two Minneapolis killings, one federal agency, and the woman who believed in the shield is the one now suing it. That's not an accident, that's the business plan: collect at the ballot box, collect again at the funeral home."

— Sal

"The word "unprecedented" is just lawyer language for a press release — these agents operate under enormous threat conditions, and two shootings in one city in a few months is well within the normal — did I say normal? That's not the word I meant. The agency is reviewing its own conduct, which is the system working exactly as designed."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

But: The UN torture rapporteur found direct-contact electric shock gloves "incompatible with the absolute prohibition of torture" - ICE plans to spend up to $20 million on them *ABC10 San Diego / UN Special Rapporteur finding, August 2026*

Renee Good: Family of US woman killed by ICE agent sues Trump officials

BBC News MAINSTREAM § *16:30 EDT*

Lawyers for Good's family say US officials created "an unprecedented environment for state sponsored violence" in Minneapolis.

· Decision on Charging Renee Good and Alex Pretti's Killers Looms Over Minneapolis DA Race *from the morgue, 19 Sep 2026*

· Mother of Renee Good says she voted for Trump, calls for ICE accountability *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· Mother of Renee Good says she backed Trump, calls for ICE accountability *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· 'What Did He Do to Deserve to Be Murdered?' Alex Pretti's Family Speaks Out Months After Fatal ICE Shooting *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*

This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

Same party that moved border funds into presidential ads now demands an inspector general probe Planned Parenthood

By **RUTH**
THE MONEY DESK



"EXCLUSIVE: 128 GOP lawmakers call for federal probe into Planned Parenthood's taxpayer funding", 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA FOX NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. House Republicans asked federal regulators to investigate Planned Parenthood's funding for potential fraud.

WHO GETS PAID. The White House's political ad campaign, funded with border enforcement money, drew no comparable probe.

WHAT SLIPS. Oversight slips when regulators scrutinize contraception funding but look away from redirected border money.

WHAT'S NEXT. No hearing date or audit deadline appears in the receipts yet; the letter only asks HHS's inspector general to open a review.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On September 9, Speaker Mike Johnson told a Dallas audience that defunding Planned Parenthood remains a priority for him, this despite the one-year ban on the provider's Medicaid reimbursements having already lapsed. Fourteen days later, on September 23, the Guttmacher Institute and Power to Decide put a number on what that priority costs: 58 percent of the women who rely on affordable birth control stand to lose access if the defunding goes through. That number comes from the researchers who track the contraceptive care network, not from the lawmakers who want to cut it.

Six days after that, on September 29, the Washington Examiner found a second filing, same month, different column of the ledger. The White House had tapped a pot of money appropriated for Customs and Border Protection — fencing, agents, enforcement — and spent part of it on advertisements promoting the President. Senator Susan Collins, who chairs the Appropriations Committee that wrote the CBP line in the first place, confirmed where that money was supposed to go....

...(cont) Three days later, on October 2, 128 House Republicans wrote to HHS's inspector general asking for exactly that kind of file — not on the CBP line, on Planned Parenthood's. The ask: a review of "potential fraud or abuse" in federal funding that reaches a nonprofit provider of contraception and other health services. No dollar figure travels with the letter. No audit has yet found a discrepancy. The word "potential" carries the whole sentence, the way "earmarked" carried Collins' sentence three days earlier.

Run the ledger straight, hon. One filing moves enforcement money into advertising shaped like a campaign and draws a confirmation from the Appropriations chair — nothing further happens to it. The other filing is a letter asking whether money might have moved somewhere, and it draws 128 signatures and an inspector general. The scrutiny runs toward the agency with no enforcement budget to spend on anything but the service it already provides. The money that moved without a vote stays uninvestigated; the money nobody has shown moved yet gets the investigators.

That gap has a size: 58 percent, the share of women needing affordable birth control who lose it if the letter writers get what they asked for, inspector general's findings notwithstanding. The findings can come back clean, come back dirty, or come back never filed at all; the 58 stays the 58 either way. That is the column meant to balance against the filing, and the filing does not balance.

🍺

"They send 128 signatures asking whether Planned Parenthood's funding smells like fraud, same month they're moving border enforcement money into ads for the President. Nobody signs a letter asking about that diversion. Fifty-eight percent of women who need cheap birth control pay for the imbalance, not the people writing the letter."

— Sal

🚬

"Taxpayers deserve oversight wherever federal dollars go, and asking an inspector general to review grant funding is just responsible government — this isn't about defunding anybody, it's about accountability. The border money was earmarked funding that moved through normal channels, Senator Collins confirmed that herself, so really that's... huh, that's the same complaint people are making about Planned Parenthood. Did I say that? That doesn't sound like me."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

> *But:* **The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one** *Military Times, 19 December 2025*
>
> EXCLUSIVE: 128 GOP lawmakers call for federal probe into Planned Parenthood's taxpayer funding
>
> *Fox News* RIGHT § *05:30 EDT*
>
> A coalition of 128 Republican lawmakers is urging the HHS Inspector General to review Planned Parenthood's federal funding for potential fraud or abuse.

· EXCLUSIVE: Mike Johnson says GOP looking for way to defund Planned Parenthood *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Trump administration using border money to pay for for taxpayer-funded ads *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· 58% of US Women Who Need Cheap Birth Control Could Lose Access Due to GOP Attacks on Planned Parenthood *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

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Billionaires fund ad blitz against tax Nobel economists call democracy's turning point, support falls under 50.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

“Liberals hope California ballot measure will be the foot in the door for wealth taxes”, 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Billionaire-funded groups ran an ad campaign against California's one-time wealth tax on billionaires.

WHO GETS PAID. Google co-founder Sergey Brin and venture capitalist Peter Thiel fund the ad campaign that would spare their own fortunes from the tax.

WHAT SLIPS. Billionaires the tax would hit are outspending efforts to explain it to voters before the vote.

WHAT'S NEXT. California voters decide Proposition 40 in November 2026; the most recent poll put support under the fifty percent threshold it needs to pass.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On August 25, Building a Better California and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes opened their advertising campaign against Proposition 40, the one-time 5 percent tax on net worth over $1 billion that would reach roughly 200 Californians. The money behind the two committees traces to Google co-founder Sergey Brin and venture capitalist Peter Thiel, among other mega-billionaires who would write the checks the measure describes.

On September 21, a group of Nobel-winning economists called the measure "a turning point in the battle between democracy and oligarchy" and reported the initiative remained popular, putting support at 52 percent....

...(cont) Seven points separate the two counts of the same electorate on the same question, taken one day apart. The number that actually passes a California ballot measure is fifty.

On September 29, Senator Bernie Sanders announced he would return to California to campaign for Proposition 40 with Representatives Ro Khanna and Aisha Wahab, as the measure entered what the reporting called its final weeks before the vote.

This week, the Washington Examiner described Proposition 40 as something larger than a California question: the first state-level wealth tax in the country, and a measure whose backers — among them socialists — hope a win here opens the door to similar votes in other states. The ad committees funded by Brin, Thiel, and other mega-billionaires are fighting to keep that door shut at the first state in line.

Here is the reconciliation, hon. One column holds the money: two ad committees, funded by men whose own fortunes the tax was written to reach, running ads through the campaign's final weeks. Another column holds the prestige: Nobel laureates, a sitting U.S. senator, two members of Congress, lending their names to the other side. Neither column decides Proposition 40. The column that decides it is the one the pollsters keep measuring, and the last time anyone measured it, it had not yet cleared fifty.

“Brin and Thiel can write a check big enough to buy ads telling the state that five cents on every dollar over a billion is a crisis, and Nobel economists call this same vote the line between democracy and oligarchy — that's not a close call, that's who owns the microphone. The money already picked its side; the only thing left unsettled is whether enough of us notice before November.”

— Sal

“This isn't a tax on a couple of guys with yachts, it's about protecting California from wasteful spending and higher taxes — that's literally the name of the committee, so it has to be accurate. And sure, Sergey Brin and Peter Thiel are funding it, but that's just — well, that is who it protects, isn't it. Did I say that? That doesn't sound like me.”

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Liberals hope California ballot measure will be the foot in the door for wealth taxes

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *05:00 EDT*

Californians will decide this November whether to impose a historic one-time wealth tax on billionaires. If they are successful, proponents hope to launch similar efforts across the country to tax the wealth of the ultra-rich. Passage of Proposition 40 would enact the first state-level wealth tax, which the ballot measure’s backers...

· Billionaire-Backed Groups Launch Ad Blitz Against California Wealth Tax *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*

· Fewer than half of California voters back billionaire tax: Poll *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Bernie Sanders Going Back to California to Rally for Billionaire Tax Ballot Measure *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Nobel-Winning Economists Say California Billionaire Tax Could Be ‘Turning Point in the Battle Between Democracy and Oligarchy’ *from the morgue, 21 Sep 2026*

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Examiner calls Collins's polling a firewall, leaves out the graffiti, the corruption report, and her new love of debates.

By **CHIP**
STAFF WRITER

"The Susan Collins firewall", 2 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On August 28, the Washington Examiner ran a small item built around one word: "bucks." Sen. Susan Collins, it noted, was bucking the usual incumbent instinct and agreeing to four debates against her Democratic opponent, former state senator Troy Jackson, who hadn't yet agreed to any. The piece treated it as a quirk of character. It did not ask why an incumbent running on a brand of quiet constituent service would suddenly want four public stages instead of none.

Three and a half weeks later, on September 22, the question answered itself. ProPublica published what it described as a "sprawling pay-to-play operation" centered on Collins. Jackson didn't wait for the ink to dry: "Susan Collins delivered millions in taxpayer dollars for a corrupt donor bankrolling her campaign," he said, and then, shorter, for the cameras: "the jig is up." Collins's office called the whole thing "categorically false."...

...(cont) Six days after that, on September 28, someone reached a different kind of answer. The statement addressed the paint. It did not address the ProPublica story, the debates, or any connection between the two, and no one asked it to.

Which brings the calendar to October 2, and the Washington Examiner again, this time with a headline calling the race a "firewall." The piece tracks national polling running badly for Republicans and presents Maine as the seat holding anyway. It runs the numbers.

A firewall, by definition, is the thing standing between you and what's already burning. The Examiner found the wall. It just forgot to mention what's on the other side of it, or why the senator behind it suddenly wanted the cameras on.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

THE WASHINGTON EXAMINER CALLED THE COLLINS RACE A FIREWALL THE SAME WEEK A federal office in Biddeford got spray-painted and a ProPublica report on taxpayer money and a donor never made the piece. That isn't a firewall, it's a press release with the exits bricked shut. Because the Examiner decides what counts as a story in that race, the pay-to-play allegation misses the horse-race paragraph; because it misses the paragraph, the four debates read as transparency instead of damage control; because they read as transparency, you mark the same ballot in November you'd have marked before ProPublica ran a word.

"They call it a firewall, but a wall only means something if you say what's on fire behind it. The same week a federal office gets spray-painted and ProPublica calls it a pay-to-play operation, the polling story just skips both, like they never happened. You don't get to grade the horse race and leave out that one horse is burning."

— Sal

"The polling piece is about polling, that's a totally separate desk from the ProPublica stuff, which, I mean, her opponent calling it "the jig is up" isn't exactly a neutral source. And the four debates prove she's got nothing to hide, more debates than her opponent's even agreed to — wait, why'd she suddenly start agreeing to debates the same month that story broke, that's — that's not where I meant to go with that."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

But: Democrats are running an average of 11.5 points ahead of their 2024 baseline across 2026 special elections *MultiState Elections, 2026 special-election tracking*

The Susan Collins firewall

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *05:45 EDT*

As we've been tracking for months, the public polling has been trending in a poor-to-disastrous direction for Republicans heading into the midterm elections. In key Senate races, it's been downright gruesome. Democrats need to net four seats to gain control of the upper chamber after November, which would effectively put an end to any...

· 'Corruption of the Highest Order,' Says Troy Jackson After Explosive Susan Collins Report *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Susan Collins bucks trend as an incumbent pushing for more debates *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· Susan Collins office in Maine spray-painted with obscenity *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· Collins opponent says 'jig is up' after ProPublica report; her aide calls it 'categorically false' *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

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Homan dares critics to name one ICE overreach; the week supplies two before his own party finishes flinching

By **CHIP**
STAFF WRITER

"Trump faces growing Republican criticism over ICE weeks before midterm elections", 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Tom Homan challenged critics to name one case of ICE overreach the same week Republicans in Congress broke from the White House over ICE tactics.

WHO GETS PAID. ICE and the Homeland Security Department keep their enforcement budget and their public defenders in Congress for now.

WHAT SLIPS. Congressional oversight slips when the same lawmakers who fund ICE wait for approval polls, not facts, to start asking questions about it.

WHAT'S NEXT. If this pattern holds, expect a primary challenge against any Republican who keeps criticizing ICE past this fall; that is what happened to Liz Cheney in Wyoming after she broke with the party line in February 2022, losing her primary 66 to 29 that August.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Start on Sept. 14. Tom Homan tells reporters ICE has no plans to "sweep polling locations" for noncitizens — a denial that only exists because someone asked, which means someone had reason to. Four days later, Secretary Markwayne Mullin goes after Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar for running an ad that said enforcement had "gone too far." That's the party line as of Sept. 18: hold.

Six days after that, the line is already cracking from the inside. Sept. 24, a Common Dreams dispatch headlined "Cowardice, Not Conviction" catalogs Republicans scrambling to distance themselves from Trump as his approval sinks to record lows less than six weeks from the midterms — battleground Senate candidates in Iowa and Michigan calling for an end to his immigration approach, the paper's own framing, not ours. The same day, at a Justice Department event, Homan tells the room ICE is "not going anywhere" and "you can hate us all you want." Same week, two different audiences, two different postures....

...(cont) Then the paperwork catches up to the posture. A House GOP report says Illinois and Chicago released more than 500 immigrants despite active ICE detainers — the agency's allies calling it too soft. In the same stretch, DHS separately denies a report claiming agents were told to arrest only the worst offenders — the agency defending itself against being too narrow. Both complaints, same month, same department. That's not an overreach case. That's two contradictory defenses of the same agency, filed within weeks of each other by the people running it.

So Homan dares critics to name one example of ICE going too far. He doesn't have to wait for an answer. A sitting New Jersey congresswoman gives birth while still fighting federal charges from an ICE facility protest. Two examples, same week, on the record before Homan finishes the sentence.

And by Oct. 2, the Washington Examiner has the cowardice arriving on schedule: a growing number of House and Senate Republicans, privately and publicly, stepping out of line with the administration's deportation approach, weeks before the midterms land. It isn't new — it's the same retreat Common Dreams clocked eight days earlier, running on the same clock, dressed as sudden conscience. The dare was never about whether ICE went too far. It was about who'd still be standing next to the agency when the receipts came due. Fewer of them every week.

"You got a guy daring you to name one example while the example's giving birth in a holding cell waiting room and the neighbors are climbing a roof to do the job the government won't. That's not confidence, that's a man betting nobody's paying attention — and for about a week, his own party wasn't either, until the polls made them look."

— Sal

"Look, Secretary Homan is simply asking critics to back up their claims with specifics, that's just due diligence — and if a few members are getting cold feet five weeks out, that's not panic, that's — well, it is panic, I said that out loud, didn't I. The record stands on its own, which is sort of the problem."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Homan dares critics to name one case of ICE overreach, record supplies two before he can finish asking* By Chip · the midnight edition, 2 October 2026
- *DHS denies it only arrests criminals, ten days after insisting a criminal is a criminal.* By Chip · the supper edition, 1 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: The UN torture rapporteur found direct-contact electric shock gloves 'incompatible with the absolute prohibition of torture' - ICE plans to spend up to $20 million on them *ABC10 San Diego / UN Special Rapporteur finding, August 2026*

Trump faces growing Republican criticism over ICE weeks before midterm elections

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *05:00 EDT*

Some Republicans are stepping out of line with the Trump administration's immigration agenda just weeks ahead of the midterm elections, criticizing how the White House has deployed Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Over the past week, House and Senate lawmakers have privately and publicly spoken out against or questioned President...

· 'Cowardice, Not Conviction': Republicans Try to Back Away From Toxic Trump After Years of Subservience *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

Controller warns one flight about 25 mph wind, clears a different one to land four minutes later

By MITCH
INVESTIGATIONS

"Federal report says pilots weren't warned about wind before Amazon cargo plane crashed in Miami", 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The National Transportation Safety Board called the press to Miami on a Monday in September to discuss a Boeing 767-300 that had flown in from San Juan, run off the runway, and killed five people. That much is the headline. The transcript is the column.

All together now — the plane did not simply land short. Two separate failures, recorded in two separate ways: one caught by the tower, one caught by nobody but the men flying the plane....

...(cont) The five who did not survive it were named two days after the crash, on September 8: five employees of an airline cleaning company, killed when the jet left the runway and struck their van and a parked SUV. The document does not linger on that. Neither will I. But it is the paragraph the rest of this filing exists to explain.

Here is the paragraph the report filed on October 2 adds. Four minutes — the report's own number — before air traffic control cleared the Amazon cargo plane to land, a controller gave a wind advisory, gusts up to 25 miles per hour out of the south, to a different flight. Not this one. A different tail number, a different radio call, the same sky.

All together now, line by line: the wind was known. The advisory existed. It went out over the same frequency, from the same tower, four minutes before clearance was given to the plane that needed it and never got it. The transcript does not show malice. It shows a routine broadcast, correctly timed, correctly worded, and addressed to the wrong aircraft.

Nobody has to invent a villain here. The NTSB wrote the sequence down in the order it happened: warned for altitude, not for wind; too fast, by the pilots' own account, not by anyone else's; and a wind advisory that existed in the world four minutes before the crash and never once reached the cockpit that needed it. That is not a cover-up. It is a filing cabinet with every drawer open, and every drawer full.

"This is not one broken part, it's two: pilots who didn't catch their own airspeed, and a tower that read the weather out loud to the wrong tail number four minutes before clearing the right one. Somewhere in those four minutes, five people who cleaned airplanes for a living never got a chance."

— Sal

"Look, controllers are managing a dozen flights an hour, you can't expect every advisory to reach every tail number — wait, that's the entire job, that's what the radio's for. The real story is pilot responsibility, they're the ones who own their own altitude and airspeed, full stop. Did I just say the wind warning doesn't matter? That's not what I meant to say."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Federal report says pilots weren't warned about wind before Amazon cargo plane crashed in Miami

New York Post RIGHT § *02:59 EDT*

Just four minutes before clearing the plane for landing, an air traffic controller had provided a wind advisory to a different flight, noting gusts of up to 25 mph from the south.

· WATCH LIVE: NTSB briefs press on Amazon Air cargo plane crash at Miami airport *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Amazon pilots were warned they were coming in 'too low' and 'too fast' before deadly crash *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Authorities identify 5 victims killed when Amazon-branded cargo plane overran runway in Miami *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

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Iowa votes to raise the subsidy cap voters in Missouri just recalled a councilman over

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Iowa lawmakers to vote on raising tax incentive cap for a $15B steel plant", 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA ABC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Iowa lawmakers vote to raise the state's tax-incentive cap for a steel plant project.

WHO GETS PAID. Representatives Miller-Meeks and Hinson, facing a tough November, get the political credit for the deal.

WHAT SLIPS. Iowa voters get no vote on the incentive itself; only the lawmakers who raise the cap do.

WHAT'S NEXT. The Statehouse takes up the cap bill Friday; the receipts show no vote scheduled beyond that date.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Iowa lawmakers return to the Statehouse Friday for one item on the calendar: raising the state's cap on tax incentives, the ceiling now standing between the state and the $15 billion steel plant the president announced from the Oval Office the previous Monday. The announcement came with Representatives Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Ashley Hinson standing in frame, both facing a difficult November, and with the plant described as the largest steel project in U.S. history, running by 2030. What it buys is room enough for a deal already announced to fit under a cap sized before the deal existed.

On September 2, residents of Independence, Missouri, held a different kind of vote on a similar line item. Councilman John Perkins had approved tax incentives for an artificial intelligence data center in his district. The ballot that followed did not ask voters about the data center. It asked whether Perkins should keep the council seat Perkins had been elected to hold through June 2028. Sixty-eight percent said no. Thirty-two percent said let Perkins finish the term. The receipts do not carry a dollar figure for that incentive package; the recall ran on the vote itself, not the sum attached to it....

...(cont) That is the reconciliation, hon: one state is widening the opening for a subsidy before the deal closes, and one city already held the only vote available to it after the deal had closed, which turned out to be a vote on the person who signed it. Iowa's Friday session does not put the steel plant's incentive number in front of Iowa voters; it puts the ceiling in front of the lawmakers already elected to raise it. Independence's ballot never reached the data center contract either. It reached the man who voted for it, with two years left on the term he'd been elected to serve.

The filing in Des Moines and the filing in Independence are the same kind of document: a public subsidy for private capital, cleared by officials the public did not get to approve in the same motion as the deal itself. Iowa's lawmakers take theirs up Friday. Missouri's voters already took theirs up, 68 to 32, over a councilman with two years still on the clock. The receipts give no indication Friday's session includes a line for what happens if the vote runs the other way.

"They don't let you vote on the number, just on the people who get to vote on the number for you — and in Missouri, the one time it leaked out as a real ballot question, it came back 68 to 32 against the guy who signed it. That's the whole racket: the subsidy clears a room full of elected people before it ever clears a room full of actual voters, and by the time you find out what it cost, the plant's already breaking ground. Watch what they call a vote and what they call a recall — one's a formality, one's a warning shot."

— Sal

"Look, this is just responsible governance keeping pace with a historic investment — you can't land the largest steel plant in U.S. history and then quibble about a cap written before anybody knew the number. The Missouri thing is totally different, that's a local data center, apples and oranges — did I just compare a $15 billion steel plant to apples? That's not — let me start over."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Iowa lawmakers to vote on raising tax incentive cap for a $15B steel plant

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *00:46 EDT*

Iowa lawmakers are set to return to the Statehouse Friday to consider expanding state tax incentives

· Vulnerable Iowa Republicans rally around Trump's Iowa steel plant announcement *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· Trump announces multi-billion dollar steel plant project in Iowa *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· WATCH LIVE: Trump announces $15 billion Iowa steel project *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· Voters in Missouri City Overwhelmingly Vote to Recall Councilman Who Approved Data Center *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

Trump's $400 million PAC pays for ads the White House insists are patriotism, not partisan.

By **RUTH**
THE MONEY DESK

"WATCH: Trump hitting 5 states in first major campaign swing", 2 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA ABC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The White House defended taxpayer-funded ads promoting Trump before the midterms, calling them patriotism, not partisan politics.

WHO GETS PAID. The buyer is Trump's reelection effort, run through the $400 million MAGA Inc. super PAC watchdogs say he personally controls.

WHAT SLIPS. The wall between public money and campaign money slips, since no independent enforcer has yet opened a case on the ad or the PAC.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the Hatch Act question goes nowhere before anyone rules on it, the ads keep running for the rest of Trump's 32-day campaign swing, through the midterms 33 days out as of October 2.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The 30-second spot that ran on Fox and Newsmax the week of September 22 opens with Air Force One and closes with a stadium crowd, and nowhere in between does it list a budget line. The White House supplied one anyway, on September 25, filing the ad under "patriotism isn't partisan" — a description, not an appropriation, because something still has to say which account paid for the airtime.

That something turned up the same Friday, from the Campaign Legal Center, which ran the money forward instead of back. Trump's "stated control over spending decisions" at MAGA Inc., the watchdog found, sits on top of a $400 million war chest — the kind of control a sitting officeholder is barred by decades of precedent from exercising over a super PAC. The watchdog's word for that arrangement was "clear-cut violation"; the White House's word for the ad it funds was "patriotism." Both words describe the same thirty seconds of airtime....

...(cont) By October 1, CBS News had brought on legal contributor Jessica Levinson to share her analysis of how the Hatch Act — the 1939 law restricting partisan use of federal resources — could apply to a government-aired ad five weeks before a midterm.

Run the filing against the calendar and the gap is not a rounding error: 32 days of campaign travel, one ad defended as patriotism, one war chest called a violation, and 33 days left before voters decide the Texas seat that ad was aired ahead of. No public figure has yet been attached to what the spot itself cost to produce or air — the receipts name the $400 million fund behind it, not a line-item price — and that's a gap that's easier to notice than it is to total.

The account the ad draws on and the account the campaign draws on keep turning out to be adjacent columns in the same ledger. That's not a coincidence to solve. That's just where the spending was filed, hon.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

THE AD RAN ON FOX AND NEWSMAX THE SAME WEEK THE WHITE HOUSE CALLED IT PATRIOTISM, NOT PARTISAN, AND THE CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER SAYS THE MONEY TRACES TO A $400 MILLION SUPER PAC TRUMP IS FOUND TO PERSONALLY DIRECT. THAT IS NOT A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT, THAT IS A CAMPAIGN COMMERCIAL BILLED TO THE TREASURY BECAUSE THE MAN BUYING THE AIRTIME SIGNS OFF ON BOTH ACCOUNTS. THE TREASURY PRINTS THE SPOT, THE IRS PRINTS THE BILL, AND THE ONE NAME GUARANTEED TO SHOW UP TWICE THIS OCTOBER IS YOURS, ON THE LINE OF YOUR PAY STUB MARKED FEDERAL WITHHOLDING.

🍺

"They put "patriotism" on the budget code so you won't ask whose campaign it's buying — that's the whole trick, the word does the laundering the receipt won't. Same week a watchdog says Trump's own hand is on the $400 million PAC dial, the White House is running his highlight reel on your dime and calling it civics class. Thirty-three days to a vote and the only account that's fully transparent is yours."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, it's a message about loving your country, that's not — I mean, patriotism isn't partisan, that's literally the line, I didn't write it but I believe it. The timing with the midterms is incidental, people just happen to feel patriotic every two years right before Congress is decided, that's normal, that's — okay, saying it out loud it sounds different than it did in the meeting."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

But: **Democrats are running an average of 11.5 points ahead of their 2024 baseline across 2026 special elections** *MultiState Elections, 2026 special-election tracking*

WATCH: Trump hitting 5 states in first major campaign swing

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *20:09 EDT*

With midterms just 33 days away, Pres. Trump campaigned in Texas – where one of the nation's fiercest Senate races could decide control of Congress.

But: **Democrats are running an average of 11.5 points ahead of their 2024 baseline across 2026 special elections** *MultiState Elections, 2026 special-election tracking*

Trump begins month-long campaign trail blitz as midterms approach

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *19:22 EDT*

On Thursday, President Trump embarked on a 32-day campaign trail blitz to support Republicans ahead of the midterms, with stops planned for Texas and Oklahoma. CBS News' Shawna Mizelle has more.

~~Legal expert explains how Hatch Act could apply to Trump's taxpayer-funded ads~~

Taxpayers funded Trump's own campaign-style ads, critics say

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *19:48 EDT*

Critics of President Trump's taxpayer-funded ads are calling for a federal investigation. CBS News' legal contributor Jessica Levinson shares her analysis.

· Watchdog Says Trump Control of $400 Million Political War Chest a 'Clear-Cut Violation of Campaign Finance Law' *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· White House defends pro-Trump TV ads timed with midterms: 'Patriotism isn't partisan' *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· 'Every Taxpayer... Should Be Outraged': Anger Spreads Over 'Illegal' US-Funded Pro-Trump Ad *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· 'Pure Cult Propaganda': Outrage Grows Over 'Illegal' Taxpayer-Funded Ad of Trump Begging for Your Love *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

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Becerra ducks debates for weeks, then defends ICE policy days after an ex-aide's 'Juanitos' claim.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Xavier Becerra pays daughter more than $17K to work on California governor campaign", 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Xavier Becerra's campaign paid his adult daughter from campaign funds while he defended his ICE record in a debate.

WHO GETS PAID. His daughter, immigration attorney Clarisa Reyes-Becerra, gets the campaign paycheck.

WHAT SLIPS. Nothing slips here yet.

WHAT'S NEXT. California voters decide the race next month, in November's midterm election.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

By September 4th, Becerra had been accused of ducking eight debate invitations.

The poll that came out September 25th explains the quiet better than any press release could. Becerra led Hilton by enough that the race looked settled, but the same poll found voters disliked him even as they planned to vote for him. A frontrunner winning that way has one incentive: stay off the stage as long as the math allows, then show up once the math says you can survive it....

...(cont) Four days after that poll, on September 29th, a former Biden administration official said Becerra had mocked migrant children in private as "little Juanitos and Juanitas." The account surfaced inside his own campaign as something that sparked concern.

Then Wednesday came, and with it the debate: Becerra and Hilton faced off over whether California should cooperate with federal immigration enforcement, Becerra defending the state's refusal, on a stage where the Juanitos account was already public.

The payroll tells its own version of the same stretch. Becerra's campaign paid more than $17,000 to his adult daughter, Clarisa Reyes-Becerra, an immigration attorney, to work on the campaign. Immigration enforcement was the subject of the debate she is being paid, this cycle, to help run. That is not against any rule; campaigns hire family members, and the filing discloses the payment the same as any other vendor's. What it does is sit beside the rest of the month and ask the same question the debate stage asked out loud: who this campaign is protecting, and who it keeps on the payroll while it decides how loud to say so.

None of these facts touch each other by law. A debate invitation is not a payroll filing. A payroll filing is not an anonymous aide's account of a private remark. But they sit in the same six weeks, on the same campaign, about the same subject, and the gap between what Becerra said on stage Wednesday and what his own payroll and his own silence said about who he was protecting is the only gap this column is in business to measure, hon.

"The guy dodges eight debate invites till the polls tell him he can survive one, then the first hard question he takes is immigration enforcement — and it turns out his own campaign's been cutting his daughter a check the whole time. That's not a coincidence, that's a budget line for keeping it in the family while some ex-aide's out there saying he called migrant kids "Juanitos." The kids he's making policy on don't see a dime of that seventeen grand; his daughter does."

— Sal

"Look, hiring family is standard practice, every campaign does it — did I say "every"? Strike that. Point is, the filing's public, the payment's disclosed, so call it whatever you want, it's not hidden, it's just seventeen thousand dollars of disclosed family payroll. And "Juanitos" is one person's recollection of a private remark, not sworn testimony, so let's not get ahead of the receipts here."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Xavier Becerra pays daughter more than $17K to work on California governor campaign

New York Post RIGHT § *20:08 EDT*

His adult daughter is immigration attorney Clarisa Reyes-Becerra.

But: ICE plans to spend up to $20 million on electric shock gloves a UN torture rapporteur found incompatible with the absolute prohibition of torture *ABC10 San Diego / UN Special Rapporteur finding, August 2026*

The hardened criminals must go — and latest raid shows why

New York Post RIGHT § *21:15 EDT*

Xavier Becerra and Steve Hilton debated Wednesday whether California should cooperate with federal immigration enforcement.

California governor nominees Becerra and Hilton face off in fiery debate

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *20:24 EDT*

California gubernatorial nominees Xavier Becerra and Steve Hilton faced off in a heated CNN debate on Wednesday with just over a month to go before the midterm elections. CBS News' Zak Hudak has more.

· Steve Hilton trails Xavier Becerra in California governor's race — but voters dislike Becerra more: poll *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· Xavier Becerra goes eerily silent as he runs out the clock on California governor's race *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Xavier Becerra mocked migrant kids as 'little Juanitos', ex-aide claims *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Xavier Becerra finally agrees to California governor debate with Steve Hilton *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

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HIS OWN WORDS

Trump campaigns for Paxton by calling him a 'pain in the ass' and 'a little controversial'

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION

“Trump rallies support for Ken Paxton in Texas campaign stop”, 1 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Trump campaigned for Ken Paxton while calling him "a pain in the ass" and "a little controversial."

WHO GETS PAID. The Senate Leadership Fund's Texas PAC, which gave Paxton's campaign $54 million, buys a shot at holding the Senate seat for the party.

WHAT SLIPS. Nothing slips here yet.

WHAT'S NEXT. No pattern case applies yet; Texas votes in November, with Paxton defending the five-point gap the September 27 poll already showed.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

There's a dash in Thursday's New York Post headline I keep looking at. "Trump trucks to Texas to tout 'pain in the a–' Ken Paxton." Two letters missing, replaced with a line, like the paper ran out of nerve or ran out of room. I don't know which. I looked for my notebook to see if I'd written down the full word somewhere else, and I had — The Hill printed it whole: the president said his own Senate candidate is "a pain in the ass." Also "a little controversial."

I'm not saying that's strange. I'm asking what a campaign stop is supposed to accomplish, if the headline act is the candidate's own boss describing him the way you'd describe a flat tire....

...(cont) Here's where I go back to the page. Aug. 28, Sen. John Cornyn — not an opponent, the man whose seat this is — told the Texas Tribune Paxton is "lazy," a "poor campaigner," doesn't raise money. I wrote that down because it was the home-state senator, not a Democrat, saying it on the record, about the man running to replace him.

Sept. 14, a filing. The Senate Leadership Fund's Texas PAC put $53.8 million into Paxton's campaign — call it $54 million, the receipts do. Is that the figure meant to answer Cornyn's complaint about money? Eight days later, Sept. 22, Cornyn and George W. Bush held a Dallas fundraiser for six Republican Senate candidates. Six. Eight days after $54 million landed, the two men closest to that money in Texas raised more of it for everyone running except him.

Sept. 27, a poll. Talarico 49, Paxton 44. Five points, a month before Election Day, from Texas Public Opinion Research.

So I took it out to the car. Fan belt's been squealing since July, cheap part, I finally bought the new one at the auto store on the corner — eleven dollars, I kept the receipt out of habit. Put it in Saturday. Car still won't turn over in the cold. New belt, same problem. Was the belt ever what was wrong with it?

Is fifty-four million dollars a new belt? It's a specific, countable, real amount of money. Does any of it answer the five points? Does any of it answer "lazy"? Does any of it answer "a pain in the ass"? The filing doesn't say which one the money was for.

I drove it to the toll plaza anyway, because the car does run, just not in the cold, and I sat in the line behind the cars ahead of me feeding in their change, and I thought about six names on a fundraiser list and the one that's missing, and about a man who flew in his candidate's crowd for him — Dennis Rodman, North Korea knowledge and all, Thursday night, Denton — to stand next to a man he also, that same day, called a pain in the ass.

Excuse me — before I let this go. I keep coming back to that dash, I'm sorry, I already brought it up once. It isn't that the Post couldn't print the word; The Hill already had, in full, from the candidate's own boss. Which fact was the fifty-four million dollars supposed to fix — the word the Post wouldn't finish, or the one Talarico's five points already did: pain in the ass?

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

TRUMP CALLED HIS OWN SENATE NOMINEE "A PAIN IN THE ASS" AND "A LITTLE CONTROVERSIAL" while campaigning for him, flew in Dennis Rodman to help fill the crowd, and left Texas with Paxton still down five points to Talarico and still off the guest list at Cornyn and Bush's fundraiser for six other Senate candidates. That isn't a campaign, it's an insurance policy with a rally attached — the Senate Leadership Fund's $54 million wasn't purchased to make voters like Paxton, it was purchased to keep the seat in the column no matter what they think of him. Keep the seat and the man can be a pain in the ass for free, which is why the sign on your neighbor's lawn still says Paxton a week after his own party stopped inviting him to ask for money, and why the ballot you mark in November is the only invitation he has left.

“Fifty-four million dollars lands in Paxton's account, and eight days later the two men running Texas Republican money throw a fundraiser for six Senate candidates and leave his name off the invite. That's not an oversight — that's the party keeping receipts on a guy they call lazy and a pain in the ass while they keep cashing the checks. The crowd got flown in because the five points didn't move, and the people in that room aren't the ones covering your family's bills.”

— Sal

“Look, calling a guy "a pain in the ass" on your own turf, that's just Trump being Trump, it's authenticity, voters respect a straight shooter — he brought Dennis Rodman, for God's sake, that's a rally, not a referendum. The fifty-four million isn't a bailout, it's standard party infrastructure spending, every nominee gets— okay the six-candidate fundraiser thing, I didn't see that invitation list, who compiled that list? That's not — did I just ask that? Forget I asked that.”

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Trump rallies support for Ken Paxton in Texas campaign stop

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *19:28 EDT*

President Donald Trump urged Texas voters to support state Attorney General Ken Paxton in his Senate battle against Democrat James Talarico, as polls show the race is a toss-up for either political party, during a campaign swing through the state Thursday. “We need Ken so badly, and that’s why I’m here. I wanted to stop [...]

But: **"I'll meet with Putin. I'll meet with Zelensky... And within 24 hours, that war will be settled" - Trump, CNN town hall, 10 May 2023. CNN counted 53 separate occasions he promised it** *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*

‘Bad Boy’ Dennis Rodman joins Trump for red state tour, praised for North Korea knowledge

New York Post RIGHT § *19:05 EDT*

WASHINGTON — Dennis Rodman joined President Trump in Texas on Thursday ahead of the president’s evening rally in the NBA star’s college town — as Trump prepares to renew diplomacy with Rodman’s pal, the North Korean tyrant Kim Jong Un. Rodman’s plan to participate in the trip was first reported by The Post and comes...

But: **In special elections, Democrats have retained 10 points more of their previous turnout than Republicans** *Ballotpedia, 26 February 2026*

Trump promotes tariffs, tries to shore up support for Ken Paxton in Texas

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *19:50 EDT*

President Trump has launched a campaign blitz for Republicans in the run-up to the midterm elections, with some unexpected early stops in deep-red Oklahoma and Texas. Nancy Cordes reports from Denton, Texas.

But: **"We've got to get rid of the $19 trillion in debt" — Trump promised it done "over a period of eight years," 31 March 2016** *The Washington Post, 31 March 2016 interview*

Trump trucks to Texas to tout ‘pain in the a–‘ Ken Paxton, economic wins

New York Post RIGHT § *19:24 EDT*

President Trump pumped up Ken Paxton’s Senate bid in Texas on Thursday as he kicked off a red state tour to rally his MAGA base for Republican candidates ahead of November’s election.

Trump quips Paxton is ‘pain in the ass,’ ‘a little controversial’

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *23:17 EDT*

President Trump quipped that Texas Senate GOP candidate Ken Paxton was “a pain in the ass” and acknowledged he was “a little controversial” during several stops in the Lone Star State and Oklahoma — unusually candid remarks about one of his own endorsees just weeks out from the November elections.

· John Cornyn calls Ken Paxton ‘lazy’ and a ‘poor campaigner’ in explanation of Texas campaign trail absence *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· Talarico leads Paxton by 5 points in Texas Senate race poll *from the morgue, 27 Sep 2026*

· Paxton gets $54M boost from Senate Leadership Fund's Texas PAC *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Paxton snubbed from Texas fundraising event with George W. Bush and Cornyn *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

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TWO INJECTIONS

Tennessee halts all executions after a 'clinical' lethal injection takes two tries, forty minutes, to not work.

By CHIP
STAFF WRITER

"Tennessee suspends executions as Christa Pike's lawyer says failed lethal injection leaves her in critical condition", 2 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Tennessee's lethal injection of Christa Pike failed twice, leaving her in critical condition and halting all executions in the state.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Tennessee's own governor, not an outside court, will decide what went wrong inside the death chamber.

WHAT'S NEXT. The governor's suspension runs through the end of the year; the next execution in Tennessee waits on that review's outcome.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On September 22, Truthout reported the state had booked Christa Pike's lethal injection for September 30, a woman the state would make the first it executed in two hundred years. On September 28, Pike's lawyers filed a motion saying she had already survived two lethal injections, asking the courts to stop a third. On September 29, the Supreme Court declined her clemency appeal and cleared the date. Call it that if you like; the record does not. On Wednesday night the clinical language ran out of road: two injections became a double dose, and forty minutes passed before anyone in the chamber could say the word finished. The Guardian reports she was still alive, breathing, and, the paper notes, snoring.

Governor Bill Lee, a Republican, called it "deeply disturbing" on Thursday, suspended every execution in the state through the end of the year, and ordered an independent inquiry. I was ready to call that inquiry a technical fix, a tune-up for a broken machine. Fox News quoted former Knoxville police chief Phil Keith warning the botched attempt could end capital punishment in Tennessee altogether; the former chief of police is now the clearest voice arguing for the method's survival....

...(cont) The same week, in the same news cycle, National Review ran a different argument: that American executions have become too medicalized, too sanitized, to still deter anyone — that the clinical language Tennessee spent decades building is itself the problem. Two readings of one word arrived within hours of one another. The state spent a generation making the needle look like medicine so the courts would call it constitutional. National Review says that medicine is exactly why it no longer frightens anyone into obedience. Both arguments were published this week about the same forty minutes, the same woman, the same snoring, and neither one is about her.

One receipt dates Pike's conviction to 1994; another, to 1995. The state has not managed to agree on the year it decided to kill her. It has had thirty years to settle on one.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

TUESDAY THE SUPREME COURT CLEARED THE EXECUTION, WEDNESDAY THE NEEDLE failed for forty minutes, and by Thursday the governor had suspended every execution in the state and ordered a review. Call it what it is: a public liability test run at taxpayer expense to see how many minutes a botched injection buys before anyone stops the show. Because the needle method just failed on camera, the next contract is for a method like Alabama's nitrogen hood, and because that hood needs its own line item, it's already riding next to the number on the property tax bill with your name on it.

"They spent thirty years dressing the needle up as medicine so judges would sign off on it, and the one time it mattered, it took two doses and forty minutes and she was still breathing. Now the same crowd that built the clinical version is mad it isn't brutal enough. That's not a policy debate, that's a product recall with an op-ed in National Review."

— Sal

"Look, veins collapse, that's anatomy, not state failure — the governor caught it, ordered a review, that's accountability working exactly like it's supposed to. I mean, not "working," obviously nobody wants a forty-minute— okay, that one got away from me. But my point stands: one bad outcome doesn't mean the whole system's broken, it means we need a better vein."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Tennessee suspends executions as Christa Pike's lawyer says failed lethal injection leaves her in critical condition

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *00:18 EDT*

Independent inquiry ordered after failed execution of Pike, who was convicted of 1994 murder Christa Pike: what we know so far about Tennessee woman's failed execution Tennessee 's governor on Thursday said it was "deeply disturbing" that his state botched the execution of a death row prisoner who remained alive and snoring 40 minutes...

Christa Pike's botched lethal injection takes focus off victim, jeopardizes execution: former police chief

Fox News RIGHT § *07:00 EDT*

Christa Pike's botched lethal injection could end capital punishment in Tennessee altogether, warns former Knoxville Police chief Phil Keith.

Tennessee Attempted to Execute a Sexual Assault Victim

Truthout § *15:46 EDT*

Christa Pike's lethal injection is booked for September 30. She may be the first woman Tennessee executes in 200 years.

What the Modern State Gets Wrong About Execution

National Review RIGHT § *06:30 EDT*

Medicalizing and sanitizing capital punishment erase the deterrence it is supposed to create.

Christa Pike left in 'critical condition' as Tennessee halts all executions

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *06:59 EDT*

Failed attempt to execute 50-year-old prompts review of state's execution practices. Plus the California woman who is allergic to cold Good morning. Tennessee's governor has suspended executions as Christa Pike's lawyer says the state's failed lethal injection execution attempt has left her in a critical condition.

· Supreme Court declines Christa Pike's clemency appeal, with Tennessee set to execute first woman in 200 years *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Tennessee inmate survived two lethal injections, her lawyer says in motion to halt execution *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· 'It was a mess': Tennessee fails to execute inmate after 2 lethal injections *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· Tennessee inmate survived two lethal injections, her lawyer said in motion to halt execution *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· States should not blindly Alabama's use of execution by nitrogen *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

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LA County sells $200-a-year tax hike as 'affordability,' spends $10 million convincing you

By **RUTH**
THE MONEY DESK

"The sneaky new tax sucking even more money from Californians' depleted wallets", 2 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Los Angeles County's new half-cent sales tax, Measure ER, took effect October 1 after a $10 million union ad campaign.

WHO GETS PAID. The campaign's union funders got the tax passed; LA County government gets the new revenue from every taxable purchase.

WHAT SLIPS. Voters approved the measure based on an "affordability" pitch a major paper calls deceitful, with no itemized accounting of who actually benefits.

WHAT'S NEXT. The receipts name no dated case where this specific tax gets challenged or rolled back; a typical family's bill rises about $200 a year starting now.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The charge showed up Thursday the way these charges show up: half a cent added to every taxable dollar spent in Los Angeles County, no cashier required to explain it, no auditor required to sign off before the register rings it up. Voters approved Measure ER back in June. The half-cent took effect October 1. One click past the ad is the number the ad was built to soften: a typical Los Angeles County family's annual bill goes up by about $200.

Half a cent does not sound like a program. Two hundred dollars does. And the word attached to the measure before the vote was "affordability" — the same word Sacramento and Los Angeles reach for whenever the bill is a tax increase rather than a tax cut. Run that word against the actual mechanism and the two stop matching. A half-cent surcharge on every dollar a family spends at the register is not relief and it is not a subsidy. It moves money in one direction only, out of the household and into the county's account, at the exact moment the household is buying groceries, school supplies, or a car part....

...(cont) Six days before Thursday's new charge, on September 25, a different outlet ran a different number entirely. The Washington Examiner put a family's annual "hidden tax" from civil lawsuits at $5,579 — its own figure, its own sourcing, aimed at trial lawyers rather than county supervisors, and not the same claim as the Post's "deceitful," which belongs to the sales-tax campaign alone. Set the two pieces side by side and what holds steady is not the dollar amount but the delivery method: a number assigned to "a typical family," attached to no family in particular, arriving in print days before anyone with a green eyeshade gets a look at it. One number was built to argue for a lawsuit cap. The other was built to describe a tax increase already signed, sealed, and charged at the register. Different papers, different causes, same shape.

Los Angeles County's version is the simpler of the two to check, because the receipt is dated and the rate is public: half a cent per dollar, roughly $200 a year per family, $10 million spent on the campaign that got the measure past voters in June. The county starts collecting the half-cent now. The $10 million the union spent is already spent. The $200 a year the family owes starts Thursday and keeps going, with "affordability" doing the work the ballot language itself never had to do.

"They spend ten million bucks telling you a tax hike is an affordability fix, then the fix costs your family two hundred bucks a year you didn't have before the fix showed up. That's not affordability, hon, that's a subscription you never agreed to, billed at the register every time you buy milk. Follow the half-cent and it goes the same place it always goes — out of your pocket, into the county's, nobody from the ad campaign picking up any part of the tab."

— Sal

"Look, voters approved this in June, fair and square, so the will of the people — did I say will of the people? I meant the fifty-two percent who saw a $10 million ad campaign and nobody who saw the $200 line item until the register printed it. The point is affordability is a package deal, you can't just look at the half-cent in isolation — okay, you kind of can, it's literally a line on the receipt."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

The sneaky new tax sucking even more money from Californians' depleted wallets

New York Post RIGHT § *20:38 EDT*

LA County's new sales tax hit cash registers Thursday, tacking an extra half-cent onto every taxable dollar Angelenos spend after a sneaky $10 million union campaign slammed as "deceitful."

LA sales tax hike will cost working families — and you won't believe how much

New York Post RIGHT § *21:50 EDT*

A typical LA family will have to pay $200 per year, or more, to LA County in additional taxes this year — thanks to the new sales tax hike that went into effect Oct. 1. How's that for "affordability"?

Life in LA just got more expensive — and the reason will shock you

New York Post RIGHT § *20:57 EDT*

The sad part is that politicians constantly swindle voters in California, and especially in LA, into voting for tax increases by telling them the money will go to a good cause.

· How trial lawyers stick your family with a $5,579 'hidden tax' every year *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

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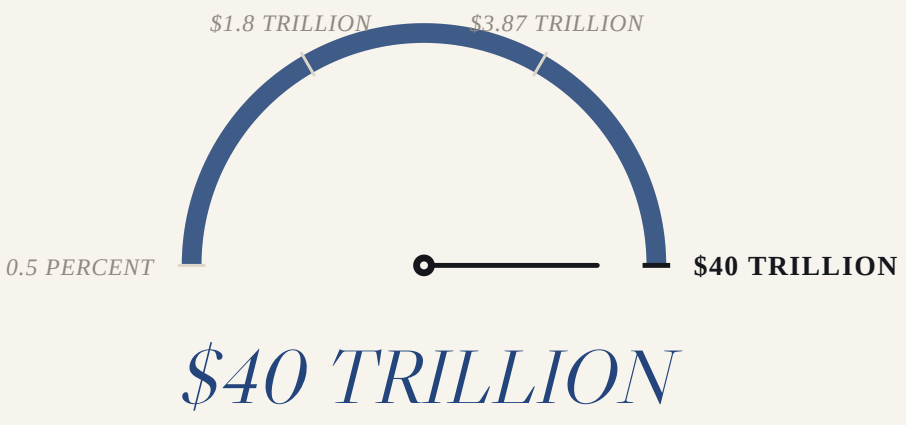
§49 — 02 OCTOBER 2026

On the greatest

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



$40 TRILLION

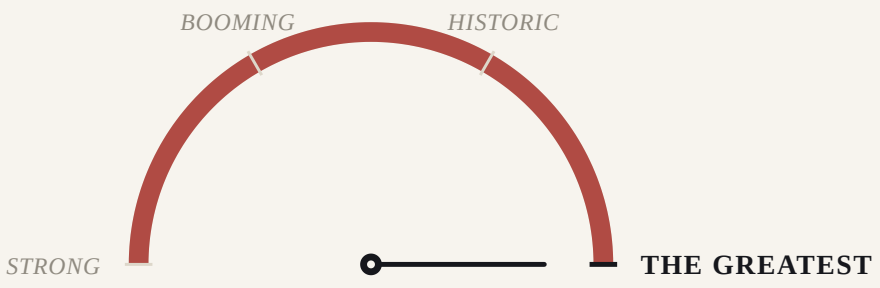
The candidates. The same agency's quarters since: 0.5 percent at an annual rate in the fourth quarter of 2025, 2.1 percent in the first quarter of 2026, 1.5 percent in the second [1]. The deficit for the first ten months of fiscal 2026 reached $1.8 trillion, more than the whole of fiscal 2025's $1.775 trillion [2][3].

And the number the Treasury publishes to the penny. On January 21, 2025, the day after the inauguration, total public debt outstanding was $36,218,258,403,326.35. On September 8, 2026, it was $40,084,090,785,446.35 — up $3.87 trillion in nineteen and a half months [4]. Greatest is a word that rounds. The Treasury does not.

SOURCES

1. Real GDP at annual rates: 0.5 percent in Q4 2025, 2.1 percent in Q1 2026, 1.5 percent in Q2 2026 (second estimate) — Bureau of Economic Analysis, 26 August 2026 ↑
2. $1.8 trillion deficit in the first ten months of FY2026, more than all of FY2025 — Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, 12 August 2026 ↑
3. FY2025 deficit of $1.775 trillion — Monthly Treasury Statement, September 2025 ↑
4. Total public debt outstanding: $36,218,258,403,326.35 on 21 January 2025; $40,084,090,785,446.35 on 8 September 2026 — U.S. Treasury, Debt to the Penny ↑

REPUBLICAN



THE GREATEST

The claim in its current form, from Las Vegas on August 5: "The economy is the greatest economy we've ever had, by far" [1]. There is a real quarter under it. The Bureau of Economic Analysis measured growth at an annual rate of 4.4 percent in the third quarter of 2025, a strong number by any standard [2].

The case for the superlative is that the economy kept growing through a tariff fight, with unemployment at 4.1 percent in August [3]. A president is entitled to round up on his own economy. The question with "greatest" is what it is being compared against, and the government's own books offer candidates.

SOURCES

1. "The economy is the greatest economy we've ever had, by far" — speech in Las Vegas — Roll Call / Factba.se, 5 August 2026 ↑
2. Real GDP grew at an annual rate of 4.4 percent in the third quarter of 2025 — Bureau of Economic Analysis, 26 August 2026 ↑
3. Unemployment at 4.1 percent in August 2026 — Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Situation, 4 September 2026 ↑

"I can't afford most of what's in the paper, so I watch prices. The Treasury has a page called Debt to the Penny — which I think is a lovely name for anything — and on January 21st of last year it said thirty-six trillion, two hundred eighteen billion. On September 8th of this year: forty trillion, eighty-four billion. The deficit for the first ten months of this fiscal year, one point eight trillion, more than the whole of last year. Growth last quarter, one and a half percent. Sorry, I'll let you get back to it. The greatest economy we've ever had — greatest at what?" — Lou

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"'"The greatest economy we've ever had, by far." Las Vegas, August. The Treasury keeps a website that counts the national debt to the penny, and on September 8 it read forty trillion, eighty-four billion and change — up three point eight seven trillion since the day after the inauguration. The deficit through July was already bigger than all of last year's. Greatest is a word that rounds. The Treasury doesn't."

— Sal

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"The debt is a vote of confidence — you don't lend forty trillion dollars to a mediocre economy — and the deficit is simply the price of greatness, paid in the only currency greatness accepts, which is later."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎