The Single-Column Edition

FROM EACH

WEDNESDAY, 07 OCTOBER 2026 — THE BREAKFAST EDITION — FREE, FOREVER

Army's first firing squad since World War Two will execute the gunman at the base he attacked.

BY THE CROSSBEAMS
The Euro Desk

Today we are making an execution by firing squad, a method the American army has not used since the end of World War Two, and I shall go slowly. You will need one man, one base, a date now set, and a sentence that has waited since 23:10 to be carried out.

Clive *Waiting is a craft. I have been drafting a response to the landlord's silence for what feels like an age, and this house has yet to call that history.*
Gary *History. The landlord's silence isn't history, Clive, it's Tuesday. At least the Army sets a date; our boiler just sets a mood.*

The man is Nidal Malik Hasan, once an Army major and a psychiatrist. On 5 November 2009 he killed 13 unarmed soldiers and wounded 32 more at Fort Hood, the deadliest attack of its kind ever carried out on an American military base. He was sentenced to death on 28 August 2013. You will be looking for the appeal that undoes this. One was granted automatically, and the Army general who reviewed the case could still have reduced it to life without parole; the record does not say what he decided, or either, only that the President's own approval is required before any execution.

…Continued on Page A2



I read the government's own personnel numbers, because they put them out and I believe people. Three hundred seventeen thousand departures last year. A hundred forty- four thousand fired, dismissed, or "separated for cause." Another seventy-six thousand "retired" under terminal investigation. Then the release a hundred forty- two back at the VA, four hundred forty jobs created at the Bureau of Service. And the whole report in August. Not a word on the savings from all of that, how much of it came with the arithmetic attached? — Lou

…Continued on Page W14

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

THE HOUSE IS A PARK

The house costs $15.5 million a year to run and $600 million this year to add a room; Congress voted on the first number.

… Continued on the investigative Reporting page

Trump renames artificial intelligence 'super intelligence,' then appoints four officials to run the force named for it.

BY MITCH
Executive Desk

Pull the document. Not a leak, not a summary — the actual text, titled the "White House Accord on Super Intelligence Joint Commitment on Frontier Responsibilities," released to reporters by the White House on Tuesday. Read the title again — all together now — the technology it governs is called, throughout, "super intelligence." A week earlier, on September 22, the President had told the United Nations Assembly that artificial intelligence would be renamed "hereinafter called super intelligence. Changing the name." The Accord simply inherits the new name and gets to work.

The agreement does not explain what distinguishes "super intelligence" from the artificial intelligence it replaces on paper. It does not attempt to. The filing is the rename, formalised.

Five days after the Accord, on October 4, Trump named Director of National Intelligence Joy Clayton to run the enforcement side of it: the "Super Intelligence Safety Board," four officials and a chair, empowered to act on the word the President coined at the UN about two weeks before the agency had a staff.

What the Accord does not do, the record is just as direct about, is remove it.

…Continued on Page A3

French protests dismissed as an accident, upgraded to a cautionary tale by Fox's own sister show.

BY CHRIS
Staff Writer

"Accidents happen." Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said that of the police operation that left protesters maimed and left another blind, in protests that began as a complaint about school funding. I'm prepared to defend the phrase. Let me walk through what it's defending.

The complaint is a basic simple complaint. Hundreds of schools shut down across France by October 2nd, the Morning Star and Common Dreams both reported, even as the government cut €600 million from education system. That's the accident at its most innocent: students asked for money for their classrooms and got a police operation instead.

On October 4th, Fox News's own sister program called the same unrest "a cautionary tale" for America — proof, the host said on air, that open borders produce social unrest. It's the kind of claim I'd like to call the right phrase for an accident. I can't, because an accident doesn't earn a cautionary tale. A cautionary tale is what you file when you expect the thing to happen again, somewhere else, to someone else's kids. Fox's own network had already decided this wasn't a one-off.

…Continued on Page A4

Newsom calls Trump's take out threat treasonous, 18 days after telling Democrats not to celebrate

BY SAL
Staff Writer

I wrote this down. The notebook again — I know. August 31st: Trump posts an AI-generated bombing video, already called 'deranged.' September 1st: he warns Iran of the 'biggest attack of them all.' September 19th: Gavin Newsom, in Charlotte, tells his own party not to spike the football — the GOP still has a cash edge, he says, and maybe worse coming at the ballot box, so hold off celebrating. On October 4th, the governor says Iran could 'take out' Los Angeles and San Diego. October 7th: the White House calls that a sober warning about nuclear war. And Gavin Newsom — the same governor who, eighteen days earlier, told his party to hold its fire — calls the remark 'dangerous, if not treasonous,' calls the president 'mentally ill,' and renews his demand for the 25th Amendment.

Eighteen days. That's the whole walk. Eighteen days ago the emergency wasn't real enough to break party discipline for. Today it's treason. I'm not saying Newsom's wrong on the substance — a sitting president floating the destruction of two American cities, one of them home to one of the country's largest naval hubs, isn't a close call, and California is 'actively monitoring'

…Continued on Page A1

Congress kills the penny, forces rounding to a nickel that costs 13 cents to make.

BY ALICE
The Money Desk

The United States Mint keeps two sets of books, and both are public record. In the first, the value printed on the penny is the cent the government has spent to put the people who stamp it. For years the gap between them sat quietly on the penny: Congress has killed that coin outright, and about a year ago the Mint pressed its last one.

That left a hole in the cash drawer, so on September 14, 2026, the House scheduled a vote on the Common Cents Act, a bipartisan bill to round every cash purchase to the nearest nickel. The bill makes the nickel the backstop coin of the whole system, the one every other transaction rounds toward.

The cost sheet disagrees. The nickel Congress just promoted to full-time change-maker costs the Mint 13 cents to produce. Its face value is 5 cents. Run that ratio across the billions of nickels Americans and taxpayers are out 8 cents a coin before it ever reaches a cash register. The penny is gone; the system that replaced it leans harder on the coin with the bigger gap, because every rounded transaction will now run through it. Math used to be the retailer's friend.

So the same Congress that just eliminated the penny is now asking the

…Continued on Page B1

Pentagon confirms all 12 bombers left England, now that it's safe to say so.

BY THE LODGERS
The Travel Desk

Today we are making what the Americans call a security incident, which is less a dish than a lid: an air base in the English countryside, a Prime Minister with "strong indications" about Iran, seven men arrested one after another, and twelve bombers that were there on Tuesday and taxpayers are out 8 cents a coin before it ever reaches a cash register. The penny is gone; the system that replaced it leans harder on the coin with the bigger gap, because every rounded transaction will now run through it. Math used to be the retailer's friend.

So the same Congress that just eliminated the penny is now asking the

…Continued on Page B1

Clive *Nobody evacuates a shed for prospects, Clive. They evacuate it for actual danger, and the nearest you have come to danger is a bad rhyme.*
Gary *Begin on the Sunday. Five men are arrested near the base on suspicion of explosives offences, and nearby homes are evacuated while counter-terrorism officers open what is, for now, a major incident.*
Keith *Danger's relative, Gary. The real danger is a major incident going begging without you at a tea break to observe it.*
Gary *A tea towel. Who's buying that off a man who still owns one for the gas, Keith?*

…Continued on Page A6

Senate Democrats ask for the war's cost; a senator is barred from the base that would prove it.

BY MORE
The Bureau Bureau

Pentagon transparency on this war died this week. That was reported here before. What hasn't been is what happened after the question the estimate raised: if the Pentagon knew the number, would it say so.

In a dispatch dated September 3rd, the Washington Examiner reported the resignation of Defense Secretary Dan Driscoll, a departure the paper's editor-in-chief Pete Hegseth's own allies read as confirmation that Driscoll was never aligned with Hegseth's "radical transformation" of the Department's culture. Six days later, on September 9th, Workers World described an internal conflict inside the Pentagon that had, in its own words, spilled into the main corporate media.

On September 17th, every Senate Democrat but one signed a letter asking Hegseth for a plain accounting of what the Iran war has cost. Three weeks passed. The letter went unanswered.

This week the bill came due twice. Senator Chris Murphy, touring the Gulf, asked the question directly: how much? The answer was a classified installation in the Middle East, struck by Iranian missiles in the war's opening

…Continued on Page B3

Fuel industry warns against red-dye diesel fraud days after Trump legalizes it

BY MORE
The Bureau Bureau

The federal rule keeping tax-exempt red-dye diesel off the public highways will, this week, not of old age but of an executive order, in the middle of a price fight the rule had nothing to do with starting.

On September 29, Trump signed the order, and as the administration's own confrontation with Iran rattled the fuel market. Nine days later, in Doonbeg, the president offered a different explanation: Ukraine, he said, was "ripping off" Europe by buying Russian oil, and the dyed-diesel loophole was to stop. Eight days after that, on September 21, the diagnosis changed again. Russia, the president wrote, had "lost control" of its own diesel industry — a second culprit assigned to the same number, the first one quietly dropped.

Then, on October 6, the remedy arrived, and it was not foreign at all. An executive order eased the restrictions on red-dye diesel — the fuel sold untaxed for farm tractors and off-road generators, cheap because it never pays into the highway fund, policed at the pump by its color so a trooper does not need a roadside test to know it skipped the tax. The order let refineries sell the same fuel sits one tank away from a highway rig, tax-free, same color, same

…Continued on Page A4

Al chip rally puts the S&P 500 at a record 7,800; a Los Angeles power bill, not so much.

BY STERLING
The Commodities Desk

You will be told that a council meeting ending in a fistfight is the system failing. It is the system working. In Los Angeles a man read a utility bill of $5,300 and called, "DO LADWP officials decide that I can pay my mortgage twice this month?" A bill of that size is a tariff: the schedule by which what the system spends is apportioned across the meters on the wire, and the schedule does not ask whose load it was. This week the S&P 500 closed up 0.58 percent, topping 7,800 for the first time in its history, on a rally in AI chipmakers. Topped closed.

And what does the meter get in exchange for 7,800? A hearing. In Tennessee officials postponed the vote on Elon Musk's data centers, and protesters took the hall while the punches were round. Postponement, until you, is not refusal. On 2 September, Independence, Missouri turned out a councilman in a recall — the last control a ratepayer has to vote for the tax breaks. Palm Beach County, home to Mar-a-Lago, voted its one-year moratorium 6-0.

Recalls remove councilmen. Leases hold.

…Continued on Page A7

Republicans fear a billion dollars no longer buys a majority; a Super PAC zeroed out North Carolina.

BY RUTH
The Politics Desk

The ledger opens on September 9th. President Trump's Super PAC, MAGA, Inc., wired $10 million to a Republican dark fund run by Del Rey Media, for two attack ads in Ken Paxton's Senate campaign in Texas, according to Federal Election Commission filings. Hold the date; every forecast in this column is dated later.

Nine days after that wire, on September 14th, the party was arguing with itself about the economy, afraid voter anger over costs could sink its candidates. The boldest idea on the table was the President's pledge to send every U.S. adult $5,000 if Republicans win in November. Note the order of operations: the voter gets first and is reimbursed after.

September 22nd, Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball at the University of Virginia moved three Senate races and four governor's races toward Democrats, citing a "persistently poor national environment" for the party. Seven Senate races going from "leans Republican" to "toss-up." September 23rd, the Cook Political Report moved Kansas and South Carolina toward Democrats. September 25th, Cook projected the House itself: 208 seats rated solid, likely

…Continued on Page F4

Election spending watchdog can't open a single case, weeks before the most expensive vote in history.

BY MORE
The Bureau Bureau

The Federal Election Commission's ability to enforce the nation's campaign finance law died this week in Washington. It was 51 years old, born in 1975 out of the Watergate hearings, built with six seats and one rule: four of them for each party, so that no case could move over party objections — open a case, levy a fine, answer a complaint. As of this week's count, two commissioners remain and four seats sit empty. It takes four votes to do anything. That arithmetic is not malarkey; it is the whole obituary in one sentence.

It leaves behind a crowded field. Four days later, on the 28th, the federal government's own cyber-defense agency laid out its plan for Election Day itself — guarding the machines, the count, the wires that carry the result home.

Neither of those is the Commission's job, and it is worth saying plainly so the eulogy does not borrow a jurisdiction it never had. The Commission was built to police money, not votes. It could fine a campaign that hid the money; who gave it, who took it, whether anyone lied about either.

The money is not waiting for a quorum. What is projected to be the most

…Continued on Page B2

"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

THE FUTURES FILE ← →

THE ACCORD

Trump renames artificial intelligence 'super intelligence,' then appoints four officials to run the force named for it.

By **MITCH**
INVESTIGATIONS



“Why Trump chose these leaders to head his 'Super Intelligence Force”, 7 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Pull the document. Not a leak, not a summary — the actual text, titled the "White House Accord on Super Intelligence Joint Commitment on Frontier Responsibilities," released by the White House on September 29. Read the title again — all together now — the technology it governs is called, throughout, "super intelligence." A week earlier, on September 22, the President had told the UN General Assembly that artificial intelligence would be renamed: "hereinafter called super intelligence. Changing the name." The Accord simply inherits the new name and gets to work.

The agreement does not explain what distinguishes "super intelligence" from the artificial intelligence it replaces on paper. It does not attempt to. The filing is the rename, formalized....

...(cont) Five days after the Accord, on October 4, Trump named Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton to run the enforcement side of it: the "Super Intelligence Force." The four officials inherit an agency named for a word the President coined at the UN about two weeks before the agency had a staff.

What the Accord does not do, the record is just as direct about. It does not require the companies to slow what they are building, stop what they are building, or report anything beyond what they volunteer. The mixed messaging The Hill flagged is the one honest paragraph in the whole file: the administration could not agree on what the risk is, so it agreed, instead, on what to call it.

That's the filing. The paragraph with the new name is one clause. The four officials reading from it are the next one, and the agency they run has no older name to go back to.



“They didn't regulate the technology, they renamed it, then built a federal Force to guard the new name. That's not oversight — that's find-and-replace with a badge and a budget line. The actual machine, the one making the actual decisions, walks out of this paperwork wearing a different label and the same leash it always had, which is none.”

— Sal



“Renaming it "super intelligence" shows this White House is finally giving the technology a name worthy of the moment — leadership, basically. And letting the companies write their own frontier-model guidelines, that's just efficiency, the people who understand it best regulating it best. Did I say "regulating"? I meant volunteering. Scratch that.”

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Why Trump chose these leaders to head his 'Super Intelligence Force'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *06:00 EDT*

President Trump’s selection of four administration officials to head up his new “Super Intelligence Force” is offering a window into how the White House will approach AI in the face of pressure over its risks. The group of government leaders each reflect different priorities of the Trump administration after months of mixed messaging on...

· Trump announces ‘Super Intelligence Force’ led by DNI Jay Clayton *from the morgue, 4 Oct 2026*

· READ IN FULL: Trump and tech leaders’ White House Accord on Super Intelligence *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Trump says AI will be renamed 'super intelligence' in all US documents *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

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French protests dismissed as an accident, upgraded to a cautionary tale by Fox's own sister show.

By **CHIP**
STAFF WRITER



“France in Crisis”, 7 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. French police blinded one student and severed another's hand in protests over school funding; the premier called it an accident.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Oversight of the police slips, because calling the injuries an accident ends the inquiry before one starts.

WHAT'S NEXT. No government review has been scheduled; the furthest documented point so far is the spread to teachers and unions that Fox's own coverage had already forecast on October 4th.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

"Accidents happen." Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said that of the police operation that cost one teenager a hand and left another blind, in protests that began as a complaint about school funding. I'm prepared to defend the phrase. Let me walk through what it's defending.

The complaint itself was simple enough. Hundreds of schools shut down across France by October 2nd, the Morning Star and Common Dreams both reported, over demands for a better-funded education system. That's the accident at its most innocent: students asked for money for their classrooms and got a police operation instead....

...(cont) On October 4th, Fox News's own sister program called the same unrest "a cautionary tale" for America — proof, the host said on air, that open borders produce exactly this kind of disorder. I'd like to call that an overreaction to an accident. I can't, because an accident doesn't earn a cautionary tale. A cautionary tale is what you file when you expect the thing to happen again, somewhere else, to someone else's kids. Fox's own network had already decided this wasn't a one-off.

Two days later, an American paper — the New York Post, not a French one — rebranded the demonstrations an "intifada." That's a second import, a second label for a pattern instead of a mishap.

The New York Times is running the widening today as "a national political reckoning," with blockaded schools and thousands of arrests nationwide. Fox's own straight-news page isn't calling it an accident either anymore: today's headline blames a "far-left alliance" fueling a "broader confrontation." An alliance is not an accident. A confrontation is not an accident.

I came here to defend one teenager's hand as a— as an accident. Three different stories. None of them the one the prime minister told.



“They call a severed hand an accident, then tell their own audience back home it's a preview of what happens when borders open — that's not reporting, that's a weather forecast for a riot they already know is coming. Kids are losing hands and eyesight over school funding, and the only consistent message out of either government is that the money is going somewhere else.”

— *Sal*



“Look, this is a far-left alliance exploiting a school-funding complaint to stage a broader confrontation, plain as that — and three days before we said that, we called it a cautionary tale for America, which, hold on, if it's a lesson for us then it's not really an accident over there, is it. Did I say that? That's not — let me start over.”

— *Chip*

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *PM calls a severed hand an accident; the protest he dismissed now includes teachers and unions.* By Chip · the sunrise edition, 7 October 2026

— *France holds emergency meeting over student protests, calls the severed hand that followed an "accident"* By Lou · the milkman edition, 7 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

France in Crisis

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *06:32 EDT*

We look at what’s driving the protests across France.

Why Are France’s Students Protesting?

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *05:50 EDT*

Demonstrations for a better-funded education system have led to blockaded schools, thousands of arrests and a national political reckoning.

French school riots deepen as experts point to far-left alliance fueling ‘broader confrontation’

Fox News RIGHT § *07:40 EDT*

French student protests over school conditions spiral into violent unrest, as experts warn a red-green alliance is fueling a broader revolt,

· France’s violent student protests raise warning for America: ‘A cautionary tale’ *from the morgue, 4 Oct 2026*

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Newsom calls Trump's 'take out' threat treasonous, 18 days after telling Democrats not to celebrate

By SAL
STAFF WRITER



"Newsom again calls for Trump's removal under 25th Amendment, White House hits back", 7 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA FOX NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The White House called Trump's comment that Iran could 'take out' Los Angeles and San Diego a sober warning.

WHO GETS PAID. Governor Newsom's own national profile gains the most, picking up another news cycle each time he renews the 25th Amendment demand.

WHAT SLIPS. Congress's own check slips: the 25th Amendment requires a vote the House has not scheduled, so the demand stays a press line, not a process.

WHAT'S NEXT. If this holds, the demand goes nowhere by itself; that is what happened in Washington after 24 June 2011, when a resolution to authorize the Libya operation failed 123 to 295 and the operation ran four more months anyway.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I wrote this down. The notebook again — I know. August 31st: Trump posts an AI-generated bombing video, already called 'deranged.' September 1st: he warns Iran of the 'biggest attack of them all.' September 19th: Gavin Newsom, in Charlotte, tells his own party not to spike the football — the GOP still has a cash edge, he says, and maybe worse coming at the ballot box, so hold off celebrating. Then October 6th: the president says Iran could 'take out' Los Angeles and San Diego. October 7th: the White House calls that a sober warning about nuclear risk. And Gavin Newsom — the same governor who, eighteen days earlier, told his party to hold its fire — calls the remark 'dangerous, if not treasonous,' calls the president 'mentally ill,' and renews his demand for the 25th Amendment.

Eighteen days. That's the whole walk. Eighteen days ago the emergency wasn't real enough to break party discipline for. Today it's treason. I'm not saying Newsom's wrong on the substance — a sitting president floating the destruction of two American cities, one of them home to one of the country's largest naval hubs, isn't a close call, and California is 'actively monitoring' threats like the Guardian is reporting weather. I'm saying watch the gap between the two statements, because that gap is the whole strategy laid out in the receipts: wait, measure, then escalate only once the escalation is safe....

...(cont) And underneath both statements sits the real number, buried in the same Guardian dispatch: two-thirds of Republican candidates in competitive races — 41 of 62, per Reuters — are already quietly putting distance between themselves and Trump ahead of the midterms. That's not loyalty cracking over a bombing comment. That's a cash-and-polling calculation, made in the same rooms Newsom described on September 19th, where he warned his own party the GOP still held the cash edge. The president says the quiet part about Iran out loud; the White House calls it sober; Newsom calls it treason eighteen days after telling his party to sit down; and the only people actually moving are the ones counting votes, not microphones.

FROM THE CORNER

DUTCH

THE WHITE HOUSE CALLS THE PRESIDENT'S LINE ABOUT IRAN 'TAKING OUT' LOS Angeles and San Diego a sober warning. That isn't a warning, it's a billing cycle — the outrage only gets invoiced once the timing is safe, and the governor who runs that invoice told his own party, eighteen days earlier, to hold off. Because the warning stays a warning and never becomes an evacuation order, the sailor stationed at that naval hub finds out his own homeport got named in a presidential threat from a 25th Amendment press release on his phone, on his lunch break.

"Newsom's got a word for the White House now — treason — but eighteen days ago the same guy was telling his own party to sit down and count the cash. That's the tell: he didn't move because the president threatened to erase two cities, he moved because the polls finally let him. Watch the actual vote, not the quote — the 25th Amendment demand still has no date on the House calendar."

— Sal

"This was a deterrence message about Iran's capabilities, not some threat against our own cities — the president was speaking hypothetically. Newsom's calling a hypothetical 'treasonous' when eighteen days ago he was telling his own party to stay calm, so who's really playing politics here? And 'sober warning' — yeah, we said that, I mean the White House said that, I'm not — that's not a crazy thing to call it."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *This shit is not normal: the White House defends Trump's suggestion Iran could bomb two American cities.* By Sal · the sunrise edition, 7 October 2026

— *Carville warns Democrats not to impeach Trump, the very thing critics say they've already given up on.* By Lou · the wee small hours edition, 7 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Newsom again calls for Trump's removal under 25th Amendment, White House hits back

Fox News RIGHT § *07:53 EDT*

California Gov. Gavin Newsom called Trump "mentally ill" and demanded the 25th Amendment after the president's remarks about Los Angeles and San Diego.

~~Trump's LA and San Diego comments 'dangerous, if not treasonous', says Newsom – US politics live~~

Trump said Iran could 'take out' Los Angeles and San Diego

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *07:53 EDT*

California governor critcizes president for 'putting a target on two of our biggest cities and one of America's largest naval hubs' California to 'actively monitor' possible threats after Trump said Iran could 'take out' LA and San Diego Sign up for the Breaking News US email Two-thirds of Republican candidates in competitive US House...

· Despite Trump poll drops, Newsom urges Democrats not to 'spike the football' *from the morgue, 19 Sep 2026*

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Congress kills the penny, forces rounding to a nickel that costs 13 cents to make.

By **RUTH**
THE MONEY DESK



“Congress killed the penny — now it's coming for the 13-cent nickel”, 7 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA FOX NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Congress forced cash sales to round to the nickel, then asked Treasury to make the nickel cheaper to produce.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Nothing slips here yet.

WHAT'S NEXT. If Treasury later claims it saved money on the nickel, the number is likely to shrink under review; that is what happened after Washington's 1984 Grace Commission claimed $424 billion in savings and reviewers found about a third, $98 billion, was real.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The United States Mint keeps two sets of books, and both are public record. One is the face value printed on the coin. The other is the cost sheet kept by the people who stamp it. For years the gap between them sat quietly on the penny: Congress killed that coin outright, and about a year ago the Mint pressed its last one.

That left a hole in the cash drawer, so on September 14, 2026, the House scheduled a vote on the Common Cents Act, a bipartisan bill to round every cash purchase to the nearest nickel. The bill makes the nickel the backstop coin of the whole system, the one every other transaction rounds toward....

...(cont) The cost sheet disagrees. The nickel Congress just promoted to full-time change-maker costs the Mint 13 cents to produce. Its face value is 5 cents. Run that arithmetic on every nickel struck and taxpayers are out 8 cents a coin before it ever reaches a cash register. The penny is gone; the system that replaced it leans harder on the coin with the bigger gap, because every rounded transaction now asks for a nickel that didn't used to be required.

So the same Congress that just eliminated the penny is now asking the Treasury Department to find a cheaper way to make the coin that replaced it, a nickel that already costs more than it is worth. Not a different metal with a face value closer to its material cost. Not a nickel that costs a nickel. A cheaper nickel — same five cents stamped on the front, a lower number on the back, the gap still there, just smaller enough not to show up in a floor speech.

Nobody in this bill proposes raising the nickel's denomination to match its cost, or sending the rounding question back to committee next to the actual number. The ask is narrower: keep minting the coin that loses money, and ask the people who run the presses to lose a little less of it, hon. The gap moves. It does not close.

“Congress kills the penny, then makes everybody round up to a nickel that costs the government 13 cents to produce a coin worth 5. That's an 8-cent loss on every single one, now written into the rounding law instead of fixed by it. The gap didn't close, it just changed coins.”
— Sal

“Look, asking Treasury to cut production costs on the nickel is just fiscal responsibility, that's the party being careful with — okay, the coin already loses 8 cents every time it's struck, so "careful" might not be the — did I say that? The point is nobody's raising taxes here, they're just asking the Mint to lose a little less per coin, which is basically the same as saving money, structurally.”
— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

~~Congress killed the penny — now it's coming for the 13-cent nickel~~

Congress wants cheaper nickels. The White House ballroom's price just doubled to $400 million.

Fox News RIGHT § *05:30 EDT*

The Common Cents Act already targets the penny, but lawmakers now want the Treasury Department to find cheaper ways to produce the nickel coin.

· Congress moves to round all transactions to nearest 5-cent interval as Mint stops producing pennies *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

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Pentagon confirms all 12 bombers left England, now that it's safe to say so.

By THE LODGERS
THE EURO DESK



“Pentagon pulls B-1 bombers from UK base following alleged terror threat”, 4 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Today we are making what the Americans call a security incident, which is less a dish than a lid: an air base in the English countryside, a Prime Minister with "strong indications" about Iran, seven men arrested one after another, and twelve bombers sent home to the United States before the government explained anything at all.

Clive *Strong indications. I have had strong indications about my own prospects for years, and nobody has evacuated so much as a shed for mine.*

Gary *Nobody evacuates a shed for prospects, Clive. They evacuate it for actual danger, and the nearest you have come to danger is a bad rhyme.*

Begin on the Sunday. Five men are arrested near the base on suspicion of explosives offences, and nearby homes are evacuated while counter-terrorism officers open what is, for now, a major incident.

Keith *Danger's relative, Gary. The real danger is a major incident going begging without so much as a tea towel to show for it.*

Gary *A tea towel. Who's buying that off a man who still owes me for the gas, Keith?*

By Wednesday the search had turned up no explosives at all, and the five men were released on bail. That is also the day the Prime Minister said there were "strong indications" that Tehran was behind it, a sentence that explains nothing and accuses someone all the same.

France 24, printed in Paris, has the Prime Minister's own phrase, "strong indications," set down exactly so. CBS, back home, calls the whole business only a security incident, and never says of what.

On Thursday night a sixth man was brought in, a dual British-Iranian national of twenty-five, questioned in Westminster on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts, two more properties searched.

Clive *Nobody's mentioning the gas. I'm drafting lines on bombers leaving quietly, which is more than this house manages with anything leaving at all.*

Then, that weekend, the Pentagon took its twelve B-1 bombers by the tail and walked them home to their own stations in the United States, weeks after the alleged threat, saying afterward only that operational security had kept it from confirming the move in real time — it could acknowledge it now, it said, once there was nothing left to acknowledge.

By the seventh arrest, a twenty-two-year-old man held on suspicion of plotting terrorist acts, you will be looking for the charge that ties the base, the bombers and Iran into one case. There is no such charge; that is what the indications are instead of.

Who eats: the Pentagon, with its twelve bombers already home. Who pays: the base, which still has not been told why its Sunday was evacuated, and seven men moving through an investigation the government has never fully explained, five of them already out on bail.

Rob *Leaving quietly. That's the whole house, that is. Bombers home and intact, and still nobody's fixed the boiler since anyone can remember.*

“Twelve bombers get flown home in the dark and they only admit it after they've landed, and they're calling that security. That tells you the threat was real enough they didn't want anybody watching them run, but not real enough to tell the people whose street got emptied for a Sunday what actually happened. The only accounting anybody's gotten so far is a Prime Minister's hunch about Iran.”

— Sal

“Look, you don't broadcast troop movements in real time, that's just operational security, basic stuff — the bombers were always scheduled home, nothing to do with any threat. And the Prime Minister's "strong indications" about Iran, that's not an accusation, that's a responsible government sharing indications — did I say nothing to do with any threat? Let's just say the schedule moved up a little.”

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Pentagon pulls B-1 bombers from UK base following alleged terror threat

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *18:50 EDT*

The Pentagon pulled all 12 B-1 bombers this weekend from the U.K.’s RAF Fairford air base to their home stations in the U.S. weeks after an alleged terror threat against a U.S.-operated post in England. “While operational security precluded us from confirming the movement of our assets and forces in real-time, we can acknowledge now...

What to make of security incident at U.S.-run base in England

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *21:18 EDT*

British police have arrested a 22-year-old man suspected of planning terrorist acts following a security incident at a U.S.-run military base in England. CBS News national security analyst Aaron MacLean shares his takeaways on the incident.

US resident arrested in connection with deadly British Columbia school shooting

BBC News MAINSTREAM § *15:49 EDT*

US authorities say the 30-year-old has been charged with conspiracy to murder persons in a foreign country. Six children died in the attack.

7th person arrested after security incident at U.S.-run airbase in England

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *19:51 EDT*

British police say they've arrested a seventh person in connection with a security incident at a U.S.-run military base in England, a 22-year-old man suspected of plotting terrorist acts. CBS News' Charlie D'Agata has more.

· British PM alleges there are 'strong indications' Iran was involved in Fairford airbase incident *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· UK police arrest 5 men, counter-terror squad probes ‘major incident’ near air base used by US forces *from the morgue, 27 Sep 2026*

· Sixth person arrested over RAF Fairford plot *from the morgue, 2 Oct 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.

Senate Democrats ask for the war's cost; a senator is barred from the base that would prove it.

By ROSIE
Staff Political Writer

"Senator Sam Hagwell's Barred Ride From Cold Basin to Turner Cap Air Force Base" (Rosie Hagwell, 2026). Ink and watercolor wash on paper.

Pentagon transparency on this war did this week. That happened on Tuesday, when Senate Democrats introduced by the question the estimate stated: if the Pentagon knew the number, would it say so.

In a dispatch dated September 30, which reached Washington on Tuesday, Lieutenant General Marcus Delcroft, a departure Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's use of the Air Force's Boeing 757 to fly from Cold Basin to Turner Cap Air Force Base in Maryland. Delcroft's chief of staff, Colonel Rosie Hagwell, is a former Navy SEAL. Hagwell's commander, Rear Admiral Tom Whitcomb, had refused to let him on the base and would not explain why. Whitcomb is the husband of Hagwell's ex-wife. When the man cutting the firewood for the officer who approved them count the fill, you're the one who ends up eating whatever's in it.

— Sol

There's a need a letter asking what the war costs, sent three days before the Pentagon's own people who actually shown up to hold the line. Democrats want to know what it's doing. The unending conflict, that's a receipt nobody's willing to produce and. When the man cutting the firewood for the officer who approved them count the fill, you're the one who ends up eating whatever's in it.

— Sol

Senator Ruth Ann Kellogg (D-Ore.) and Senator Jamal Whitfield (D-Ga.) sent the letter to Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and Comptroller Dana Ortiz. The deadline for a response is October 14. Whether the Pentagon will meet it is the first question the new Congress will ask of the agency it created three weeks ago.

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Senator Ivars Rozell Arabia under the stones a month-old 17 demand war supposed to have silenced.* by Ina Wareing Crew — 28 September 2026
- *A Trump letter has to take out the California Air National Republican bread and a record-low approval rating.* by Ina Wareing Crew — 14 September 2026
- *Parts pulls money from a bronze race it's losing to fund two others and a Hegseth ally.* by Ina Wareing Crew — 7 September 2026
- *Turning Rock, Ore. calculates the Hagwell, now was a mistake and Hegseth has to the Supreme Court.* by Ina Wareing Crew — 31 August 2026
- *Tillis confirms Hegseth, demands his filing for a month, then calls him the biggest rung in the Senate.* by Ina Wareing Crew — 24 August 2026
- *Trump vows to defeat communism once and for all, having last turned to the politics he used.* by Ina Wareing Crew — 17 August 2026

FROM AROUND THE WEB

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Hegseth blocked a reporter from a booked QC tours to hide the war's cost, he says

Reuters Editorial, 14 hours ago

A US senator visiting the Persian Gulf said Secretary of War Pete Hegseth had personally blocked a reporter from boarding a military flight booked through a public tours program, accusing Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth of using the program to hide the war's cost from the public.

— The Pentagon has failed to audit eight years running – the only major federal agency never to pass one. Associated Press Comment, 2027
The Problem With Hegseth's Pentagon
by Amir Rod Jones, 12/11/2026 | 12 min read

A Special Forces veteran joins the columnist David Frenzo to assess the Pentagon's leadership.

- Senate Democrats, minus Fetterman, urge Hegseth to provide receipt for Iran war costs 2 hours ago
- Democratic senators request Pentagon provide 'bare minimum' on Iran War cost 3 hours ago
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- Trump Slammed Over Iran War That Drove Gas Prices Above $4 Per Gallon Every Day in August for First Time Ever 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
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- As gas averages $4.31 nationwide, diesel fuel hits all-time high: 'It's painful. It's real hard' 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- Costco Bakes Motor Oil Price, Caps Customer Purchases As Iran War Drags On 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- 'Can't Message That Song': GOP Pens as Trump Administration Desperately Spins Record High Diesel Prices 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- European Union member states agree to a natural gas price cap in an attempt to limit economic damage from the global energy crisis. The price cap can be triggered beginning on February 15, 2023. 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- Spike on 10-year bond yields moves concerns over U.S. debt 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- 10-Year Treasury Yield Reaches 5%, Highest Level in Years 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- Treasury reveals $4B in debt buybacks, triple the normal level – but markets stump 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- Trump blames rise in diesel prices on Ukrainian strikes against Russian oil refineries 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- Trump blames rising diesel price on Russia-Ukraine war 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026
- What Is Driving Diesel Prices Up? Energy Chaos Caused by Two Wars. 9 hours ago, 22 Sep 2026

This page is a back issue. the story at 6 a.m. Eastern. Unsolicited manuscripts should be checked by the Editor's gate name for a criterion. Republished by a machine and checked by the editor. how this is made

Fuel industry warns against red-dye diesel fraud days after Trump legalizes it

By MORT
THE RECORDS BUREAU



"What Trump's new executive order on diesel means", 6 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA NBC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The federal rule keeping tax-exempt red-dye diesel off the public highway died this week, not of old age but of an executive order, in the middle of a price fight the rule had nothing to do with starting.

On September 4, diesel hit $5.85 a gallon, a record, as the administration's own confrontation with Iran rattled the fuel market. Nine days later, in Doonbeg, the president offered a different explanation: Ukraine, he said, was to blame, for striking Russian refineries, and he told President Zelenskyy to stop. Eight days after that, on September 21, the diagnosis changed again. Russia, the president wrote, had "lost control" of its own diesel industry — a second culprit assigned to the same number, the first one quietly dropped....

...(cont) Then, on October 6, the remedy arrived, and it was not foreign at all. An executive order eased the restrictions on red-dye diesel — the fuel sold untaxed for farm tractors and off-road generators, cheap because it never pays into the highway fund, policed at the pump by its color so a trooper does not need a manifest to know it skipped the tax line. Ease the restriction and that same fuel sits one tank away from a highway rig, tax-free, same color, same price advantage, no road built.

What the order did not anticipate was the eulogy that followed it, delivered by the one party positioned to profit. On October 7, the fuel industry itself warned truck stops off the opening it had just been handed. "We do not expect most reputable diesel retailers and fuel marketers to do this," the industry said. "There's limited upside." The beneficiaries looked at the gift and told the cashiers to leave it on the shelf.

That is a strange funeral — the mourner is the industry the rule was written to restrain, warning its own membership off a loophole the government just cut for them. The enforcement here was never really the dye. The dye was cheap and the fine print was clear; what enforced it was the plain fact that somebody might check the tank. Take the rule away and you have not deregulated a color, you have told every retailer in the country that the only thing standing between them and a cheaper tank is their own restraint. That is not a policy. That is penny-ante trust dressed up as a fix for a price the order never addresses.

The rule is survived by a diesel price that the order does nothing to lower and a highway fund that will not notice the hole until the bridge does. It is preceded in death by the record itself, set in September, blamed in three directions by October, fixed in none of them. In lieu of flowers, enforce the dye.

"They tell you the dye rule got in the way of cheap diesel, but the diesel got expensive from what this administration picked, and the fix they shipped has nothing to do with Iran or Ukraine or Russia — it just makes tax fraud at the pump legal. The industry itself is telling its own members don't touch this, which means even the guys who'd profit know it's a scam dressed as relief. Watch the highway fund in a year and tell me who pays for that bridge."
— *Sal*

"Look, easing a dye rule isn't the same as repealing it — the statute's still on the books, we just, we gave the market some flexibility. And the industry's warning proves the system's self-regulating, that's not a loophole, that's responsible business behavior — did I just credit the free market for cleaning up after an executive order? That's not — that's actually a pretty good point for us, forget I said the self-regulating part."
— *Chip*

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *Trump dyes diesel exempt without Congress, then floats a gas tax cut only Congress can grant.* By Ruth · the supper edition, 6 October 2026
— *White House expands red-dye diesel tax break onto equipment already exempt, calls it relief from record prices* By Ruth · the early bird edition, 6 October 2026
— *Hegseth vows no beardos, no weirdos, no wimps, then opens Pentagon's new Office of Religious Affairs* By Chip · the matinee edition, 3 October 2026
— *Officials meet at Camp David to find a path forward; Tehran's leads out of the nonproliferation treaty* By Lou · the noon edition, 3 October 2026
— *Trump vows to 'hit them hard' in Iran, then pencils in the hit for after the midterms* By Lou · the coffee break edition, 3 October 2026
— *Trump says Iran is "ready to fold up," orders third aircraft carrier toward the Gulf anyway.* By Sal · the milkman edition, 2 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

What Trump's new executive order on diesel means
NBC News | MAINSTREAM | 19:21 EDT
President Trump signed an executive order aimed at bringing down diesel prices by easing restrictions on red-dye diesel. NBC News' Brian Cheung breaks down what is in the order and what it means for Americans.

Fuel industry warns truck stops not to sell red dye diesel after Trump lifts restrictions
NBC News | MAINSTREAM | 21:52 EDT
"We do not expect most reputable diesel retailers and fuel marketers to do this," said several industry groups. "There's limited upside."

· Trump blames Ukraine for diesel fuel price spike, urges Zelensky to stop hitting Russian refineries *from the morgue, 13 Sep 2026*
· 'Trump Did It!': At $5.85 a Gallon, Diesel Price Hits All-Time High in US Thanks to War on Iran *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*
· Trump: Russia has 'lost control' of its diesel industry as prices soar *from the morgue, 21 Sep 2026*
· Russia's Lavrov blasts US, Western allies as "warmongers" in fiery UN tirade *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*
· Russia and China unite against US over Iran and Cuba in UN speeches *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*
· U.S. military lays groundwork for potential action around Cuba *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*
· The United Nations Security Council has resoundingly rejected a United States bid to extend a global arms embargo on Iran. In a Security Council vote, United States only got support from the Dominican *from the morgue, 14 Aug 2020*
· U.S. Threatens New Economic War on Iran by Targeting China & Tehran's Other Top Trading Partners *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*
· In Defiant UN Speech, Iranian President Says US and Israel Are the Real Terrorists *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*
· Trump slams reporting on removal of his endorsements from GOP candidate's website *from the morgue, 27 Sep 2026*
· Donalds removes several Trump mentions from campaign website *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*
· GOP hopeful removes 'Pro-Trump' mention from campaign slogan in deep-red seat *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*
· Where Trump's 2026 endorsement record stands after primary season *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*
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· Fox News Poll: 71% think Trump administration lacks plan to end Iran war *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
· Iran recently downed at least 2 American drones, officials say *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
· Big Oil Stocks Surged Due to Iran War—and New Filings Show How President Trump Cashed In *from the morgue, 27 Aug 2026*
· Live updates: Energy secretary downplays rising gas prices as US, Iran trade strikes *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*
· U.S. Strike on Iranian School May Have Been War Crime, U.N. Report Says *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
· UN Inquiry Finds US Strike on Minab, Iran That Killed 123 Children Was War Crime *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
· UN investigators conclude 'reasonable grounds' to believe certain US strikes in Iran were war crimes *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
· UN Suspects US War Crimes in Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
· US Condemned for 'War Crimes' After Bombing of Wedding Party in Iran *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*
· US investigating if missile hit Iranian wedding ceremony, killing 4 *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*
· Trump says he has a 'big decision coming up' on Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
· White House issues explosive response to UN-backed report claiming US committed war crimes against world's No.1 sponsor of terror, Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*
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· Pete Hegseth Faces Growing Criticism as War With Iran Rolls On *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*
· Hegseth Quietly Extends Middle East Troop Deployments Into 2027 as Iran War Drags On *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*
· Costco imposes purchase limits on motor oil, hikes prices by nearly double *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

AI chip rally puts the S&P 500 at a record 7,800; a Los Angeles power bill, $3,300.

By STERLING
THE OWNERSHIP DESK

“City council meeting erupts into chaos after planned data center vote postponed”, 7 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A Tennessee city council postponed a vote on Elon Musk's data centers and the meeting ended in a fistfight.

WHO GETS PAID. Shareholders in AI chipmakers, whose rally carried the S&P 500 to its record close.

WHAT SLIPS. Residents lose the vote they showed up for, and the decision moves off the public calendar.

WHAT'S NEXT. If local pushback grows, states take the decision away from towns: West Virginia did it on 30 April 2025, barring counties and cities from rules that hinder data center districts.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

You will be told that a council meeting ending in a fistfight is the system failing. It is the system working. In Los Angeles a man read a utility bill of $3,300 and asked, "Did LADWP just decide that I pay my mortgage twice this month?" A bill of that size is a tariff: the schedule by which what the system spends is apportioned across the meters on the wire, and the schedule does not ask whose load it was. This week the S&P 500 closed up 0.58 percent, topping 7,800 for the first time in its history, on a rally in AI chipmakers. Topped — not recovered.

And what does the meter get in exchange for 7,800? A hearing. In Tennessee officials postponed the vote on Elon Musk's data centers, and protesters took the hall while the punches went round. Postponement, mind you, is not refusal. On 2 September, Independence, Missouri turned out a councilman 68 to 32 ... six months after the March vote for the tax breaks. Palm Beach County, home to Mar-a-Lago, voted its one-year moratorium 6-0....

...(cont) Recalls remove councilmen. Leases hold.

New hens come to the yard. The
hole in the fence, no one mends.

— ENOCH
The Ownership Desk



“A record close for the chipmakers and a $3,300 power bill in the same week is not bad luck, that is the wiring. The room in Tennessee threw punches because the room figured out the vote was never the lever — postpone it, hold it, whatever, the meter keeps spinning. Palm Beach got a year. Your bill does not get a year.”
— Sal



“Nobody's bill went up because of a data center — did I say that? That doesn't sound like me. Look, these facilities are tax base, they're the record market your 401(k) is sitting in, and one gentleman in the Valley with a high bill is an anecdote, not a rate structure. And the postponement is the process working; we postponed out of respect for the public, which is why the public was in the hall.”
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *War official blames foreign psyop for data center backlash; Los Angeles ratepayer's share of the psyop, $3,300.* By Sterling · the early evening edition, 6 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

~~City council meeting erupts into chaos after planned data center vote postponed~~

Elon Musk's data center plan sparked a brawl at city hall

New York Post RIGHT § *02:43 EDT*

Chaos erupted at the end of a Tennessee city council hearing when officials postponed a vote on Elon Musk's data centers, sparking a fistfight and protesters taking over the meeting hall.

S&P 500 and Nasdaq surge to record highs after AI chipmaker rally

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *16:28 EDT*

S&P tops 7,800 for first time in history as investors optimistic despite signs of instability in US economy The S&P 500 and Nasdaq closed at a record high after a rally around AI chipmakers and a dip in US treasury yields. At market’s close, the S&P 500 was up 0.58%, topping 7,800 for the first time in its history. The tech-heavy Nasdaq...

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

· Anger over planned AI data center drives Missouri city’s voters to recall council member *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

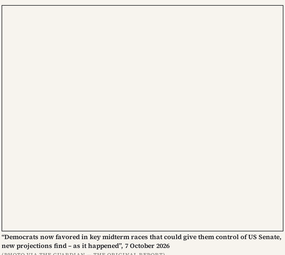
· 'Maybe Trump’s Neighbors Know Something He Doesn’t': Palm Beach County, Home to Mar-a-Lago, Passes Data Center Moratorium *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· Woman Arrested, Dragged Away After Quietly Speaking About Flock at City Council Meeting *from the morgue, 23 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.

Republicans fear a billion dollars no longer buys a majority; a Super PAC zeroed out North Carolina.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK



"Democrats now favored in key midterm races that could give them control of US Senate, new projections find – as it happened", 7 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A Republican Super PAC stopped paying for North Carolina's Senate race and moved money into South Carolina's instead.

WHO GETS PAID. Del Ray Media, the political ad firm paid $10 million for two Texas attack ads, and the candidates the money followed.

WHAT SLIPS. Voters are offered $5,000 each if their side wins, which puts a price next to the ballot.

WHAT'S NEXT. If money keeps leaving close races for the ones the president picks, spending piles up where he points: Kentucky's House primary cost $37 million by 17 July 2026, the most ever.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The ledger opens on September 5th. President Trump's Super PAC, MAGA Inc., wired $10 million to a political media company, Del Ray Media, for two attack ads in Ken Paxton's Senate campaign in Texas, according to Federal Election Commission filings. Hold the date; every forecast in this column is dated later.

Nine days after that wire, on September 14th, the party was arguing with itself about the economy, afraid voter anger over costs could sink its candidates. The boldest idea on the table was the President's pledge to send every U.S. adult $5,000 if Republicans win in November. Note the order of operations: the voter goes first and is reimbursed after....

...(cont) September 22nd, Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball at the University of Virginia moved three Senate races and four governor's races toward Democrats, citing a "persistently poor national environment" for the party, Iowa's Senate race going from "leans Republican" to "toss-up." September 23rd, the Cook Political Report moved Kansas and South Carolina toward Democrats. September 25th, Cook projected the House itself: 208 seats rated solid, likely or lean Democratic against 205 Republican, after fifteen races shifted.

October 2nd, twenty-seven days after the Texas filing, a Republican Super PAC pulled its funding out of North Carolina's Senate race, where the candidate, Michael Whatley, is backed by the President. The Guardian's account calls it a Republican PAC and stops there, and I am not matching it to the Texas entry without a filing that says so. The amounts reconcile without the name: $10 million to Texas, $5 million this week into South Carolina, the seat Cook downgraded on September 23rd, and North Carolina at zero.

That same day, Senator Steve Daines of Montana, a former head of the Senate Republican campaign arm, said this year could look like 2006, "and 2006 was really bad for Republicans." The next day, New York Times polling found Democratic Senate candidates ahead of or even with Republicans in five competitive races, some in areas the reporting calls traditionally redder.

Which brings us to today. ABC reports that some Republicans fear a billion dollars will not buy a majority. The Guardian's projections favor Democrats in the races that decide the Senate. CBS counts 10 Senate and 42 House races still live, with four weeks to go.

So, the table, hon. In the fifteen days from September 22nd to today, the forecasts moved one way. Over twenty-seven days, the money moved into two states and out of a third. One of those two columns is a document somebody signed. Four weeks is plenty of time to spend a billion dollars. It is not enough time to put $5,000 into one adult's hand, and by the terms of the pledge, nothing starts until after the count.

"They have a billion dollars for ads and they just told North Carolina its Senate race isn't worth five dollars of it — pulled out with four weeks left. And the big economic plan for people drowning in costs is five grand after you vote the right way; that's not a policy, that's a receipt for your ballot. The money's going where the forecasts already are, and your kid's school is still waiting on its copy paper."
— Sal

"Look, reallocating resources is discipline, that's all it is — we're playing offense in South Carolina. Offense? Did I say offense, that doesn't sound like me, it's a seat we hold, you hold a seat, that's defense. And the handicappers don't vote, only Election Day counts, which is exactly why we put five million into the race they say is slipping, and nothing into the one we're, well, you heard me."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *GOP quits North Carolina's Senate race, pours $5 million into South Carolina's, the one its forecaster downgraded.* By Ruth · the wee small hours edition, 7 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

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

Democrats now favored in key midterm races that could give them control of US Senate, new projections find – as it happened

The Guardian | MAINSTREAM | *21:58 EDT*

This live blog is now closed. Sign up for Breaking News US email Two media giants, Paramount and Warner Bros Discovery, have completed their $110bn merger , creating a new entertainment powerhouse, Skydance. The deal, fiercely contested by several state attorneys general over potential antitrust concerns, formally closed on Tuesday.

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

Can $1B buy victory in the midterm elections? Some Republicans fear the answer is no

ABC News | MAINSTREAM | *02:26 EDT*

Republicans are facing anxiety as they enter the final month of the midterm campaign

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

Key races to watch with 4 weeks until midterms as Democrats look to flip Senate

CBS News | MAINSTREAM | *20:59 EDT*

Democrats are gaining ground in multiple key races as they look to take control of Congress with only 4 weeks to go before the midterms. Caitlin Huey-Burns, Anthony Salvanto and Jessica Taylor, Senate and governors editor for The Cook Political Report, join "The Daily Report" to discuss the top races to watch.

2026 midterm election races to watch

CBS News | MAINSTREAM | *19:09 EDT*

CBS News has identified 10 key Senate and 42 House races that will likely decide the majority — all of which can change during the midterm campaign.

· GOP senator says midterms could be like 2006: 'And 2006 was really bad for Republicans' *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Republicans, fearing voter anger about costs, clash over economic strategy *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Cook Political Report projects Democrats will take control of the House as races shift *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· Sabato's Crystal Ball moves 3 Senate, 4 gubernatorial races in Democrats' favor *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Democrats edge out, neck and neck with Republicans in 5 key Senate races: Polls *from the morgue, 3 Oct 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.

Election spending watchdog can't open a single case, weeks before the most expensive vote in history.

By WINIFRED
THE FEC HOUSE ORGANS

★ THE SHORT VERSION

Typed by AI

WHAT HAPPENED. The Federal Election Commission has only two commissioners this week, short of the four needed to act.

WHY WE'RE TELLING YOU. Enforcement against dark money is projected to be the most expensive election cycle on record but no commission able to open investigations will exist.

WHAT'S NEXT. Chairman Sean Cooksey says he expects the commission investigated before Election Day slips, because the two remaining commissioners cannot muster a quorum.

WHAT'S NOT. The trouble does not confirmation hearings or vote deadlocks. It is that the agency went weeks with none on the calendar. Complaints filed during this cycle may outspread through Election Day.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The Federal Election Commission's ability to enforce the nation's campaign finance law died this week in Washington. It did not die with a vote. It died with a shrug. Two seats on the six-seat panel, each with a four-year term, have been said to be filled before the agency could act on anything at all — open a case, levy a fine, answer a complaint. As of this week's count, two commissioners remain and four seats sit empty. A fine four to work. That number is not mandatory; it is the whole obituary is one sentence.

It leaves behind a crowded file. Through late July, on the 28th, the federal government's own cyber-defense agency had set its plan for Election Day. Two commissioners can close chimes, the count, the wires that carry the result home.…

Chairman Sean Cooksey's office confirmed the absence of a quorum on Tuesday. He said the agency would be back in business "within days." He did not say which days. He did not say which seat was filled. He did not say whether the vacancies had been filled before the agency could act on anything at all — open a case, levy a fine, answer a complaint.

The money is not waiting for a quorum. What is projected to be the most expensive election cycle on record is already in motion. Super PACs are raising and spending at a pace that would have made the one federal agency built to watch them blush. Every hour long enough stops being furniture and becomes a sentence. Six days is a long sentence. Two commissioners can share a room. They cannot, by law, open a case.

Cooksey's office said the commission's enforcement docket "remains active" and that "matters already in motion will continue." That is the sentence the agency will be asked to repeat. It is also the sentence that will be asked to repeat when the first complaint filed during this cycle is surprised through Election Day.

"They always tell you there's no money to watch where the money goes, and look, there's a watchdog, it's just missing a few teeth and a leg and a tail and it's been sitting there half a quorum any more than they people can hold an auction honest, and that's the whole scam: let the rich walk off the field rights before the biggest game anybody's ever played."

— Cleo

"Look, the Commission we've never about stopping anybody from spending what they've legally entitled to spend, it's basically a paperwork formality — well, I mean, paperwork that catches fraud and foreign money, but that's not really the point. I support the mission, I support the system. It's function's functioning exactly as designed."

— Cleo

BAILIWICK IN THIS STORY

Trump calls re-election bid 'a big win' for Republicans — The Federal Election Commission is down to just two members ahead of midterms — *Trump calls gas prices a small price to pay, as he says, are Low Inflation Energy Act* — *Administration reschedules loan booking for after midterms, amid at Camp David with Cabinet* — *Trump calls Democrats 'treasonous' after Election Day*

Trump says he made that you do not schedule ordinance around a federal deal for the Capitol, survived by a bullet, a moment after the midterms and in the chamber that most looms for seven weeks without counting on the mat. — By Nate Archibald-Whitlock, 4 October 2026

THE REPORTS

Weeks before Election Day, the FEC can't enforce the law

CFR News · MASTERCLASS · 36 MIN EDIT

The Federal Election Commission is down to just two members ahead of midterms. Here's what that means for campaigns and voters.

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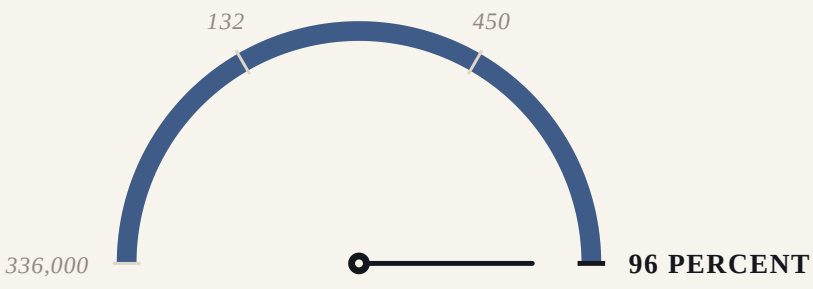
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§54 — 07 OCTOBER 2026

On fired

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



96 PERCENT

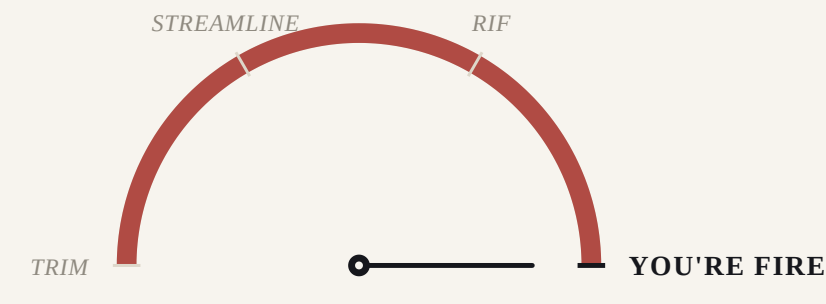
The count. The Bureau of Labor Statistics puts federal employment at 3,010,000 in January 2025 and 2,674,000 in August 2026 — down 336,000 [1]. A federal judge ordered four agencies to rescind layoffs issued during last fall's shutdown, with back pay, finding they likely violated the deal that ended it [2]. The FAA reinstated 132 fired probationary employees under a court order [3]; the National Weather Service, after its cuts, moved to hire 450 [4].

And the savings. In August the Government Accountability Office reviewed the claims on the efficiency office's "Wall of Receipts," which stood at $110 billion: it found no disclosed method for 96 percent of the claimed grant savings, a $1.7 billion contract counted as saved that was never terminated, and 108 of 264 cancelled leases already on their way out before the office existed [5]. You're fired is a sentence. The receipt was supposed to be the proof.

SOURCES

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REPUBLICAN



YOU'RE FIRED

The catchphrase came from The Apprentice, which premiered on NBC on January 8, 2004 [1]. The second term brought it to the largest employer in the country, and the government's own personnel office says the headlines got it wrong.

OPM's accounting of 2025: 317,000 departures, of which 144,000 took deferred resignation, 129,000 left through ordinary attrition, 21,000 took early retirement or buyouts, and 24,000 were involuntary, including 17,000 reductions in force; with 68,000 hires, the net reduction was about 249,000 [2]. The director: "The 'mass firing' headlines do not in fact tell the full story" [2]. That is a fair point, and it belongs here in full: the government got smaller mostly by asking, not by firing. What it cost to get smaller that way is on the other side.

SOURCES

1. The Apprentice premiered on NBC on 8 January 2004 — Wikipedia, The Apprentice (American TV series) season 1 ↑
2. 317,000 departures in 2025: 144,000 deferred resignation, 129,000 attrition, 21,000 early retirement or buyout, 24,000 involuntary including 17,000 RIFs; 68,000 hires; "The 'mass firing' headlines do not in fact tell the full story" — Transport Topics, reporting OPM, 10 December 2025 ↑

“I read the government's own personnel numbers, because they put them out and I believe people. Three hundred seventeen thousand departures last year. A hundred forty-four thousand took deferred resignation. A hundred twenty-nine thousand just left. Twenty-four thousand involuntary. Then the rehires: a hundred thirty-two back at the FAA, four hundred fifty jobs posted at the Weather Service. And the auditors' report in August. Sorry, before you go — the savings from all of that, how much of it came with the arithmetic attached?” — Lou

🍺

“"You're fired." A catchphrase since 2004. Then he gets the real thing, the whole federal government, and it turns out mostly he said "please take the buyout." Three hundred seventeen thousand out the door, twenty-four thousand actually fired, and a judge made four agencies take back the shutdown layoffs with back pay. The auditors went looking for the grant savings and couldn't find the math for ninety-six percent of them. You're fired. Check's in the mail.”

— Sal

🚬

“Very few people were fired; most chose freedom, which is what a smaller government offers, and the rehires show the system works — you let someone go, you discover you need them, and that discovery is the savings.”

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎