The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2026 — THE MORNING EDITION FREE, FOREVER

Ambassador accused of demanding $100,000 payoff gets 'very troubling' from the one Republican who'll say anything.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Eric Deters, a lawyer, a former Kentucky congressional candidate, and a donor to the Trump campaign, told ABC's Good Morning America on October 8th that Ambassador Kimberly Guilfoyle asked him to pay off a $100,000 American Express bill in exchange for access to administration officials. He put a name, a sum, and a word to it: quid pro quo.

That same day, Secretary of State Marco Rubio was asked to answer for it twice — once in an exchange The Hill recorded, once in an exchange the Guardian recorded. Both times he brushed the question off. In the two instances the receipts show him asked, he did not answer either one.

Three days pass. On October 11th a senior U.S. official tells the Guardian that Trump and Rubio are "extremely pissed off" by Guilfoyle's conduct and will decide this week, after Monday's holiday, what to do about her.

So: three days between a donor naming a figure on the record and the first member of his own party willing to put a word on it in public. In those three days the number did not move. It is still $100,000. It is still one ambassador, one bill, one offer of access. What moved was who would say anything about

... Continued on Page F117

THE WORD

§58 — 11 OCTOBER 2026

On the guns first

DEMOCRAT

TAKE THE GUNS FIRST

REPUBLICAN

NOT A SECOND-CLASS RIGHT

"I had one like this, different year. 1967, California: a governor signs a law banning loaded guns in public without a permit, and says, "I see no reason why on the street today a citizen should be carrying loaded weapons." 2018: a president says, "take the guns first, go through due process second," and his agency bans bump stocks that December. 2024: the Supreme Court says the agency went too far, six to three. Excuse me — I forgot my notebook on your desk. The governor, the president, and the agency. Which one of them was a Democrat?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W58

Texas Senate candidate vanishes with flu, returns to multiple exclusive interviews confirming he had the flu

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

By October 5th, the party had closed ranks behind him: Representative Jasmine Crockett, who lost the Democratic primary to Talarico, told a livestream, "I support all Democrats. Yes, that includes James Talarico, who I endorsed the day after the election, OK?" A candidate ahead in the polls, endorsed by the rival he beat — that was the story on October 5th.

Paxton joined him in questioning the absence. No one on that side offered a diagnosis. They offered a mystery, and let the voters supply the theory.

The mystery resolved on October 9th: NBC News reported Talarico was back on the trail, recovering from the flu that had sidelined him. That should have ended it. It didn't. Reporters kept asking, so Talarico kept answering — he was photographed Friday, October 10th, at the Austin City Limits Music Festival, caught on camera at a Kacey Musgraves concert, visibly not hiding from anything except a microphone. By Sunday the 11th, the same day, two things happened at once: Texas Democratic Party chair Kendall Scudder told reporters the campaign was "full steam ahead," dismissing "people in the swamps of the internet making up conspiracy theories," while Talarico him-

... Continued on Page A210

Raman calls LAPD chief fascist, then demands he be fired, opening the same door for an already-fired DA.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

The filing clerk pulls six days of tape, hon, and lines it up end to end.

On October 6th, a campaign video surfaces calling LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell and Mayor Karen Bass "fascist liars." The campaign deletes it the same day. A second item carries the same date: Nithya Raman wants McDonnell fired "over his response," the item says, to the 2025 ICE raids — the same raids during which photographs show her holding a margarita.

Two days later, October 8th, Mayor Bass enters the line as "irresponsible," says Raman has "no clue." Three days after that, October 11th, the shake-up acquires a name for the vacancy: George Gascón, the district attorney Los Angeles voters already removed from office once, reported as the man positioned to take the department over if McDonnell goes. By October 12th — six days from the first video — Bass is on the record a second time, this time not over one position but over two, held close enough together to fit inside a single news cycle.

Run the filing against the table and the gap comes to six days: fascist on the 6th, fired on the 6th, for-him-before-against-him on the 6th, irresponsi-

... Continued on Page F117

Andrews finally got her debate, and watched Graham revive the president's slur live.

BY LOU
One More Question

My nephew's two years into law school now, and over dinner he was explaining to me what they call an invitation to treat — how it isn't a promise, it's just an opening, and nobody's bound to a thing until somebody actually answers it, in writing, with a date on it you can point to later. He was pretty pleased with himself for knowing that. I wrote it down on the back of a gas receipt from the store on Augusta Road, mostly so I wouldn't lose it, which I did anyway, and then found it again three days later in the glovebox.

So I've been stuck on the word since. Just the word. Not the law part, the word part.

Here's what I've got written down, and you can check me on the dates, because I went back and got them straightened out myself. Senator Darline Graham put out a post on September 12th — that's a Friday — saying "I'm in," that she'd debate her opponent, Dr. Annie Andrews, on October 11th, and that once she got there she'd "expose Annie Andrews' radical positions." The Hill's story, same day, says she agreed "after challenger pushes for more" — those are the paper's words, not mine, I'm just reading off the page. How long

... Continued on Page A210

Judge bans Trump's taxpayer-funded self-ads hours after White House says it already planned to stop

BY MITCH
Investigations

I keep a running count of how many times this administration has been told no by a court this fall, and Sunday the number went up again, which is its own kind of streak.

Start with the money. The Department of Homeland Security put $20 million in taxpayer funds into television commercials, and the White House called them public service announcements. All together now: $20 million, public service. Hold those two words next to each other and see if they agree, because a federal judge did not think they did.

Go back two weeks first, since the ad fight didn't start in a vacuum. On September 24, a judge — a Trump appointee, for what it's worth — ordered the White House to restore press passes it had pulled from CNN, MS NOW, and Politico. The same morning, the White House denied those same reporters access anyway, a violation of the order delivered before lunch.

A week later, on October 1, CNN and MS NOW — the two outlets the administration had just tried to lock out of its own briefing room — ran the taxpayer-funded ads promoting the president who'd locked them out.

... Continued on Page B40

California puts 14 measures on the ballot; one exists only to cancel the one next to it.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Ruth here. Fourteen items on one ballot is a lot of paper to put on top of one gap, but the gap is still there if you look for it.

On August 25, two billionaire-backed groups, Building a Better California and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes, opened an ad blitz against Proposition 40, the one-time 5 percent tax on the net worth of California's 200 billionaires. Google co-founder Sergey Brin and venture capitalist Peter Thiel were named as the campaign's funders.

On September 22, the Berkeley Citrin Center-POLITICO poll found support for Prop 40 had slipped to 45 percent of registered voters, fewer than half.

On September 29, Senator Bernie Sanders announced he would return to California to rally for Prop 40 with Representatives Ro Khanna and Aisha Wahab, calling it the campaign's final weeks.

On October 1, John O'Farrell, a former Andreessen Horowitz partner, posted a twelve-part thread on X explaining why he is happy to pay the tax himself.

On October 2, the Washington Examiner reported what passage would do

... Continued on Page F117

U.S. backs Saudi offensive in writing Oct. 4, now weighs joining the war it already backed.

BY LOU
One More Question

My sister's boy is in his second year of law school, contracts, and the whole class this term seems to be about one word: order. He called Sunday all worked up about it — offer, then acceptance, then performance, he says, and you cannot skip ahead, Uncle Lou, that's the whole doctrine. I told him that's very interesting, and I believed him, because three semesters from the bar is three semesters further into this than I am, and I don't argue with people who know more than me.

I wrote this down — hold on, let me find it, raincoat pocket — there, here it is. October 4th: Washington backed a Saudi-led offensive to retake territory holding about 70 percent of Yemen's population, with the stated goal of continuing until the country was, their word, "liberated." The death count, as of that filing, stood at zero.

Two days later, on the 6th, Houthi strikes hit two more Saudi airports, and Turkey and Pakistan sent troops to Riyadh's defense. The next day, the 7th, a Houthi spokesman said missiles and drones had struck King Khalid International; the Saudi coalition's spokesman said they'd intercepted them. I

... Continued on Page A210

Brazil's top court gives Meta 48 hours to explain blocking Lula's ads, then suspends his 3-million-member WhatsApp army.

BY THE LODGERS
The Euro Desk

Today we are making election interference, which is not a dish you get over here under that name, so I shall go slowly. You will need two candidates for the run-off on October 25 — an 80-year-old incumbent and the 45-year-old son of a disgraced former president — a WhatsApp channel of over three million members, and one American company with its finger on the reach.

Clive *Reach. I have reach. A man in Hackney says my villanelle reached him, more than anyone's heard from the platform this month.*

Gary *Reached him. The landlord reached me about the rota and I still owe an explanation for the washing-up, so we've all got a platform somewhere.*

Begin on a Friday, days before Brazilians voted in the first round. Meta disabled the ads on the incumbent's Facebook page. The campaign filed an appeal and is still waiting on an explanation, state-run Agência Brasil had it.

Rob *No explanation. That's the boiler in a nutshell, and the landlord's had since spring to give one.*

Keith *Confirmed. I could have that confirmed, printed, and on a mug before the run-off is even called.*

... Continued on Page A210

"Nothing up there is a conspiracy. That's the part that should worry you — it's all on the record, filed, stamped, and in a couple of cases notarized."

— *Sal*

"Nothing here is a scandal. A scandal requires surprise, and I can assure you nobody involved was surprised."

— *Chip*

The hens, a man counts in
spring. The fox counted in winter.

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

Texas Senate candidate vanishes with flu, returns to multiple exclusive interviews confirming he had the flu

By CHIP
STAFF WRITER



"Talarico discusses flu absence in multiple exclusive interviews as GOP sharpens attacks", 12 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Texas Senate candidate James Talarico left the campaign trail for over a week with the flu, then said so.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Paxton still has not agreed to the debate Talarico keeps requesting, so voters get speculation about an illness instead of the two candidates answering questions together.

WHAT'S NEXT. Nothing on the calendar forces Paxton to debate; absent that, Texas voters get the mystery-box coverage through Election Day next month and decide without the two candidates sharing a stage.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

By October 5th, the party had closed ranks behind him: Representative Jasmine Crockett, who lost the Democratic primary to Talarico, told a livestream, "I support all Democrats. Yes, that includes James Talarico, who I endorsed the day after the election, OK?" A candidate ahead in the polls, endorsed by the rival he beat — that was the story on October 5th.

Paxton joined him in questioning the absence. No one on that side offered a diagnosis. They offered a mystery, and let the voters supply the theory....

...(cont) The mystery resolved on October 9th: NBC News reported Talarico was back on the trail, recovering from the flu that had sidelined him. That should have ended it. It didn't. Reporters kept asking, so Talarico kept answering — he was photographed Friday, October 10th, at the Austin City Limits Music Festival, caught on camera at a Kacey Musgraves concert, visibly not hiding from anything except a microphone. By Sunday the 11th, the same day, two things happened at once: Texas Democratic Party chair Kendall Scudder told reporters the campaign was "full steam ahead," dismissing "people in the swamps of the internet making up conspiracy theories," while Talarico himself sat for multiple exclusive interviews laying out the same flat fact Scudder had just offered for free — he'd had the flu.

By Monday, the New York Post's headline was still working the bit, wondering in print how "sick" Democrats manage to stay in the lead, Talarico's name attached. A president accused him of something unnamed. A tabloid put "sick" in scare quotes. The candidate's actual response, both days running, was an invitation to just talk, on stage, about the Senate seat. Paxton has not answered that one yet.

"They spent ten days building a mystery box around a guy with a thermometer, and the president of the United States put his own name on the theory — that's not a slip, that's the whole strategy, because a made-up scandal is cheaper to run than a real campaign against a guy who's up five points. The tell is that the second he actually answered a question, the follow-up wasn't "glad you're okay," it was a tabloid headline mocking him for being sick. They're not worried about the flu. They're worried about the debate he keeps asking for."

— Sal

"The science here is actually pretty straightforward. When a sitting legislator disappears from public view for ten days in the stretch run of a Senate campaign, the public has a right to ask questions — that's not conspiracy, that's accountability journalism, and frankly I'm surprised Democrats don't want more scrutiny of their own candidate's whereabouts. The president was simply raising questions that voters were already — well, "TalaFREAKo" — okay, I didn't write that one, I'm just explaining it. Look, the point stands that something was clearly — he had the flu. That's it. That's the whole thing. I don't know why we're still talking about this."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Talarico discusses flu absence in multiple exclusive interviews as GOP sharpens attacks

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *22:19 EDT*

Texas Democratic Senate candidate James Talarico discussed his recent absence from the campaign trail for the first time in exclusive interviews on Sunday. The Texas state representative was spotted in public on Friday at the Austin City Limits Music Festival after not campaigning for almost two weeks. He attended the Kacey Musgrove...

With all these 'sick' Democrats like James Talarico, one wonders: how are they in the lead?

New York Post RIGHT § *22:21 EDT*

Texas Democratic Senate candidate James Talarico, 37, disappeared off the campaign trail for more than 10 days, claiming a bad case of the flu.

'I just had the flu': James Talarico shoots down conservative speculation about absence

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *00:10 EDT*

In an interview with NBC Dallas-Fort Worth, the Democrat again challenged his Republican opponent, Ken Paxton, to a debate in the Texas Senate race.

Chair of Texas Democratic Party says 'we're full steam ahead' after Talarico's flu recovery

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *17:40 EDT*

Kendall Scudder, the chair of the Texas Democratic Party, said Sunday he is confident in Texas Democratic Senate candidate James Talarico's campaign in the wake of his illness. "We're full steam ahead. And, of course, you're going to see people in the swamps of the internet making up conspiracy theories.

James Talarico back on the trail after absence with flu drew scrutiny

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *17:09 EDT*

After drawing scrutiny for his absence from the campaign trail, Democratic Texas Senate candidate James Talarico, who had been sick with the flu, returned to the stump.

· Trump fuels rumors about James Talarico's campaign trail absence *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· Crockett says she supports 'all Democrats:' 'Yes, that includes James Talarico' *from the morgue, 5 Oct 2026*

· Talarico leads Paxton for Texas Senate while Hinojosa trails Abbott in governor's race: Poll *from the morgue, 27 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.

Raman calls LAPD chief fascist, then demands he be fired, opening the same door for an already-fired DA.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Nithya Raman's LAPD shake-up could put ousted progressive DA George Gascón in charge of cops", 11 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Los Angeles councilmember Nithya Raman called LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell a fascist, then demanded his firing six days later.

WHO GETS PAID. George Gascón, the district attorney Los Angeles voters already voted out, is positioned to take control of the police department instead.

WHAT SLIPS. Voters already fired George Gascón from the district attorney's office once, and his possible return to run the police department would happen without another vote from them.

WHAT'S NEXT. What happens to Chief McDonnell depends on whether Raman wins the mayoral race already underway; the receipts give no date for that outcome, and the patterns ledger holds no matching case, so the record stops there.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The filing clerk pulls six days of tape, hon, and lines it up end to end.

On October 6th, a campaign video surfaces calling LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell and Mayor Karen Bass "fascist liars." The campaign deletes it the same day. A second item carries the same date: Nithya Raman wants McDonnell fired "over his response," the item says, to the 2025 ICE raids — the same raids during which photographs show her holding a margarita....

...(cont) Two days later, October 8th, Mayor Bass enters the line as "irresponsible," says Raman has "no clue." Three days after that, October 11th, the shake-up acquires a name for the vacancy: George Gascón, the district attorney Los Angeles voters already removed from office once, reported as the man positioned to take the department over if McDonnell goes. By October 12th — six days from the first video — Bass is on the record a second time, this time not over one position but over two, held close enough together to fit inside a single news cycle.

Run the filing against the table and the gap comes to six days: fascist on the 6th, fired on the 6th, for-him-before-against-him on the 6th, irresponsible on the 8th, Gascón's name on the 11th, flip-flop on the 12th. That is not much runway to hold two opposite jobs for the same chief in your head — champion him, denounce him, then recommend his replacement be whoever the moment happens to be holding.

The vacancy does not stay open on its own. It gets filled by whoever the moment hands it to, and this time the moment hands it to a man already fired once, for reasons the record keeps in a separate drawer entirely. That is the whole mechanism on display here: a six-day reversal does not erase the office, it only decides who inherits it. The voters who fired Gascón did not get asked whether they wanted the question reopened. Nobody is asking them now either.

"Six days from "fascist" to "fired" is not conviction, it is two press releases aimed at two different audiences, and the vacancy is the point, not the word. The guy waiting to fill it already got fired by voters once, and this is how he gets back in — through somebody else's flip-flop, not through an election. The people who fired him don't get asked this time either."

— Sal

"She's not flip-flopping, she's responding to new information in real time, which under different lighting used to be called flip-flopping, but that's a separate conversation. And sure, the man who could take over happens to be a DA voters already removed, but turnover's healthy, it keeps the bench fresh. Did I say removed? I meant available."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Nithya Raman's LAPD shake-up could put ousted progressive DA George Gascón in charge of cops

New York Post RIGHT § *14:48 EDT*

The prosecutor Los Angeles voters fired two years ago because of his soft on crime policies could be headed back to the LAPD, this time to run it.

Karen Bass tears into Nithya Raman over flip-flop comments on LAPD chief Jim McDonnell

New York Post RIGHT § *00:46 EDT*

LA Mayor Karen Bass slammed Nithya Raman for giving conflicting statements on whether she would replace LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell.

· Mayor Karen Bass slams 'irresponsible' Nithya Raman for calling cops 'fascist' : 'She has no clue' *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· Nithya Raman caught in 'dangerous' video targeting LAPD chief: 'Fascist liars' *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

· Nithya Raman drank margaritas as ICE protests ignited LA — now she wants LAPD chief fired over his response *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

· Nithya Raman was for LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell before she was against him *from the morgue, 6 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.

Andrews finally got her debate, and watched Graham revive the president's slur live.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION

“Graham and Andrews trade identity-based insults in contentious debate: ‘That’s despicable’”, 12 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Senator Darline Graham agreed to debate her opponent, then used the stage to repeat the president's slur against her.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. The only scheduled debate in this race became a slur fight instead of voters' one chance to compare the candidates.

WHAT'S NEXT. The general election is in November, and the receipts show no other scheduled meeting where voters could hear the two of them answer each other again.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

My nephew's two years into law school now, and over dinner he was explaining to me what they call an invitation to treat — how it isn't a promise, it's just an opening, and nobody's bound to a thing until somebody actually answers it, in writing, with a date on it you can point to later. He was pretty pleased with himself for knowing that. I wrote it down on the back of a gas receipt from the store on Augusta Road, mostly so I wouldn't lose it, which I did anyway, and then found it again three days later in the glovebox.

So I've been stuck on the word since. Just the word. Not the law part, the word part....

...(cont) Here's what I've got written down, and you can check me on the dates, because I went back and got them straightened out myself. Senator Darline Graham put out a post on September 12th — that's a Friday — saying "I'm in," that she'd debate her opponent, Dr. Annie Andrews, on October 11th, and that once she got there she'd "expose Annie Andrews' radical positions." The Hill's story, same day, says she agreed "after challenger pushes for more" — those are the paper's words, not mine, I'm just reading off the page. How long the pushing went on before that, I don't know, and the clipping doesn't say either, so I'm not going to sit here and guess at it. I've just got the day she said yes.

Then I've got October 5th. Different clipping. The president, on social media, calling her opponent "Annie 'Trannie' Andrews," more than once, bringing up Senator Graham's late brother while he did it. I'm not saying anything about that one. I'm just saying it's dated, and the date on it comes before the debate, not after.

Then October 11th — a Sunday, the paper agrees with itself on that much — the debate happens, the one she'd said yes to back in September. The write-ups came in the next morning, and they don't all agree on the particulars — one says she tied the doctor to the Democratic Socialists of America by name, another says the two of them had already been going at it on social media before either one sat down — but there's a word that shows up in more than one of them, and it's "despicable," and both campaigns are using it about the other, now, after the fact.

Twenty-nine days. That's what I get counting from the 12th to the 11th — a day short of a month, four weeks if you're rounding generous, not three, I checked it twice against the calendar my wife keeps tacked up by the stove, because I didn't trust my own arithmetic the first time through. Twenty-nine days between the yes and whatever it was that happened on that stage.

I take the toll road out past the county line most Thursdays, the one that doesn't take cash anymore, just the transponder, and the bill doesn't show up till the end of the month — and when it does, it's got the date of the trip printed on it, not the date you decided you were taking 95 instead of the back road. The trip's what's on the bill. Not the plan you had going in.

Oh — hold on. My cousin, the one who does upholstery, called while I was finishing this, wanted to know one thing since I had the dates spread out on the table anyway: if both campaigns are calling the same exchange despicable now, whose invitation was it?

🍺

“She sat on that debate invite till her opponent forced the issue, then used the one night she gave her to recycle the same slur the President's been throwing around — that's not an answer to Medicare for All, that's a rerun. Both sides are calling it despicable now, which is rich, since only one of them wrote the line first and only one of them said it out loud on a stage with her own name on the ticket. Health care for South Carolina kids didn't come up near as much as a nickname did.”

— Sal

🚬

“She's out there contrasting her record with the Democratic Socialists of America — that's just a vigorous debate, that's democracy working. And the nickname, that's the President's phrase, not hers, she simply didn't correct it on live television, which, I mean, nobody has to correct every — did I just defend not correcting a slur? Forget I said that.”

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Graham and Andrews trade identity-based insults in contentious debate: ‘That’s despicable’

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *01:48 EDT*

Incumbent Sen. Darline Graham (R-SC) intensified her criticism of Democratic challenger Annie Andrews in the South Carolina Senate debate on Sunday night. Graham framed her opponent as “the most radical liberal who has ever run for state office in South Carolina”

Lone debate for South Carolina Senate gets testy: 5 takeaways

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *21:53 EDT*

Sen. Darline Graham (R) and pediatrician Annie Andrews (D) faced off in their one and only debate on Sunday in the South Carolina Senate race, which quickly became testy as Graham sought to tie the physician to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) while Andrews suggested the GOP senator wouldn't be able to stand up...

~~Can a Democrat Beat Darline Graham? 5 Takeaways From the South Carolina Senate Debate~~

South Carolina debate: Andrews ties Graham to Trump. Graham calls her a socialist.

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *22:17 EDT*

Dr. Annie Andrews, the Democratic challenger, accused Senator Darline Graham of taking her cues from President Trump. Ms.

Feud spills onto South Carolina debate stage

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *00:02 EDT*

Sen. Darline Graham and Democratic nominee Annie Andrews took their social media feud to the debate stage as they vie for an open Senate seat in South Carolina

South Carolina Senate rivals spar over Iran, AI and Trump in debate

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *21:44 EDT*

Annie Andrews and Darline Graham are running to replace the late Sen. Lindsey Graham, and the winner will make history as the first female senator elected from South Carolina.

· Graham agrees to debate Annie Andrews in South Carolina Senate race *from the morgue, 12 Sep 2026*

· Graham accepts debate with Andrews after challenger pushes for more *from the morgue, 12 Sep 2026*

· Trump hurls anti-trans slurs at Graham's opponent as South Carolina race tightens *from the morgue, 5 Oct 2026*

· Trump mocks Darline Graham Nordone’s Senate rival as Annie ‘Trannie’ Andrews *from the morgue, 5 Oct 2026*

· US midterms: key takeaways from Senate debates in Michigan, Georgia and Maine *from the morgue, 9 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.

THE FILING

Judge bans Trump's taxpayer-funded self-ads hours after White House says it already planned to stop

By MITCH
INVESTIGATIONS



"US judge orders Trump to cancel taxpayer-funded TV ads", 12 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA RTÉ — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I keep a running count of how many times this administration has been told no by a court this fall, and Sunday the number went up again, which is its own kind of streak.

Start with the money. The Department of Homeland Security put $20 million in taxpayer funds into television commercials, and the White House called them public service announcements. All together now: $20 million, public service. Hold those two words next to each other and see if they agree, because a federal judge did not think they did....

...(cont) Go back two weeks first, since the ad fight didn't start in a vacuum. On September 24, a judge — a Trump appointee, for what it's worth — ordered the White House to restore press passes it had pulled from CNN, MS NOW, and Politico. The same morning, the White House denied those same reporters access anyway, a violation of the order delivered before lunch.

A week later, on October 1, CNN and MS NOW — the two outlets the administration had just tried to lock out of its own briefing room — ran the taxpayer-funded ads promoting the president who'd locked them out. Watchdogs were already calling the spots an unlawful use of public money for political promotion before a single judge had weighed in.

By October 6, with Democrats and Republicans both objecting, the president announced he would have his super PAC cover the bill instead, "with money I raised," he said, for ads he called "a positive promotion for our Great U.S.A." That covered the ads going forward. It did not cover the $20 million already spent.

Which brings us to Sunday, and the part that doesn't line up. A federal judge ruled the ads likely unlawful and ordered them canceled, including whatever was still scheduled to run later that day. The administration's defense, raised in an earlier filing, was that it had already planned to stop buying ad time — on Sunday. The same Sunday. The judge's order and the administration's own stopping point landed on the same calendar square, and only one of them showed up first in writing.

Nobody disputes the $20 million was spent. Nobody disputes the ads ran on the networks whose reporters the president had tried to ban. The only dispute is timing — whether the government stopped because a judge told it to, or because it had already decided to stop, hours before the order said so in writing. The filing doesn't settle that. It just puts both sentences on the record, back to back, in the order they actually happened.

"This is the same play every time: spend the public's money to put the boss's face on television, get caught, then announce you were already stopping — but only after the lawsuit, never before it. Twenty million dollars of our money bought ad time on networks the president had just tried to ban from his own briefing room, and the only reason it stopped is a judge, not a conscience."

— Sal

"The ads were public service announcements, straightforward PSAs, nothing political about them — I mean, if the public service happens to look exactly like the president's face, that's just good production value. And honestly the judge's order barely matters, the administration already planned to stop the buys that same day, it's basically moot, it cost nothing — wait, it cost twenty million dollars, scratch that."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Trump's second ceasefire in a month dies hours after announcement, struck by Russia at a power plant.* By Lou · the evening edition, 11 October 2026
- *Trump announces Russia-Ukraine energy ceasefire for the second time in a month, still news to Ukraine* By Lou · the morning edition, 11 October 2026
- *The supply solution is to import diesel from the Russian refineries the president said must not be struck, and the ally that objected to it has been advised to get a new president.* By Chip · the evening edition, 11 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: **Trump promised taxpayers would not pay "one dime" for the ballroom, then Republicans proposed $1 billion in taxpayer funds for it** *NBC News, May 2026*

US judge orders Trump to cancel taxpayer-funded TV ads

RTÉ MAINSTREAM § *03:44 EDT*

US President Donald Trump must cancel any remaining taxpayer-funded television advertisements promoting himself, a federal judge has ordered.

But: **The 2025 reconciliation law cut SNAP by $187 billion - the largest cut in the program's history. SNAP feeds one in five American children** *Congressional Budget Office estimate, via CBPP SNAP tracker*

Federal judge orders pro-Trump TV ads funded by taxpayers off air immediately

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *20:48 EDT*

In an earlier filing, the administration said it had planned to stop ad purchases Sunday.

But: **Sen. Blumenthal: the Secret Service diverted $1.17 billion in appropriated funds toward the ballroom project** *Sen. Blumenthal, official release*

Judge orders the Trump administration to cancel taxpayer-funded promotional TV ads

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *00:02 EDT*

A federal judge has ordered President Donald Trump to cancel any remaining television commercials paid for with millions of dollars in taxpayer money to promote his political message

~~Trump administration ordered to cancel taxpayer-funded TV ads~~

DHS's $20 million ad buy could cover school supplies for 22,000 teachers

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *00:06 EDT*

The Department of Homeland Security tapped $20 million in taxpayer money for the ads, which the White House has defended as public service announcements.

~~Judge orders cancellation of Trump's government-funded ads~~

Judge says Trump's taxpayer-funded self-promotion ads are 'likely unlawful'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *20:20 EDT*

A federal judge on Sunday told the Trump administration its new ads featuring the president are likely unlawful and must stop — including any set to be aired later in the day. The administration had indicated the ad campaign is set to end on Sunday, so there was no need for the judge to intervene. In...

· Trump-Appointed Judge Orders President to Restore White House Access to CNN, MS NOW, and Politico *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

· Violating Federal Judge's Order, Trump White House Denies Access to Politico, MS NOW, CNN Reporters *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

· 'Just Despicable': MS NOW and CNN Air Trump's Illegal Taxpayer-Funded Ads *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Trump says Super Pac will pay for taxpayer-funded ads that sparked outcry *from the morgue, 6 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.

California puts 14 measures on the ballot; one exists only to cancel the one next to it.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"California's 14 ballot measures explained: From the good to the bad — and the ugly", 12 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Newsom's measure to cancel California's billionaire wealth tax now sits among fourteen ballot measures voters face in November.

WHO GETS PAID. Billionaire-funded ad groups fighting the wealth tax, backed by Sergey Brin and Peter Thiel, get a governor-sponsored measure built to cancel it.

WHAT SLIPS. Voters sorting through fourteen measures lose track of which one cancels the wealth tax outright.

WHAT'S NEXT. California voters decide both measures in November, alongside twelve other items on the same ballot.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Ruth here. Fourteen items on one ballot is a lot of paper to put on top of one gap, but the gap is still there if you look for it.

On August 25, two billionaire-backed groups, Building a Better California and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes, opened an ad blitz against Proposition 40, the one-time 5 percent tax on the net worth of California's 200 billionaires. Google co-founder Sergey Brin and venture capitalist Peter Thiel were named as the campaign's funders....

...(cont) On September 22, the Berkeley Citrin Center-POLITICO poll found support for Prop 40 had slipped to 45 percent of registered voters, fewer than half.

On September 29, Senator Bernie Sanders announced he would return to California to rally for Prop 40 with Representatives Ro Khanna and Aisha Wahab, calling it the campaign's final weeks.

On October 1, John O'Farrell, a former Andreessen Horowitz partner, posted a twelve-part thread on X explaining why he is happy to pay the tax himself.

On October 2, the Washington Examiner reported what passage would do beyond California: make Prop 40 the first state-level wealth tax in the country, a template its backers hope to run in other states.

On October 11, Governor Newsom endorsed a competing measure built to cancel Prop 40 out and bar any wealth tax like it from passing in the future.

Today, the New York Post sorts California's statewide ballot into fourteen measures, "the good to the bad — and the ugly," and lists Newsom's cancellation measure as one entry among them.

It is not one more entry. Count what each one actually does. One does. That one exists because an ad campaign, funded in part by two of the state's richest men, spent a month arguing against a tax that polls show fewer than half of voters still support — and the governor built his answer the same month, on the same ballot, aimed at the same target.

The ad money did not need thirteen distractions to win. The ballot supplied them anyway. Prop 40 sits inside that stack, still outspent, still polling under half, still the only item on the list built to tax the people funding the campaign against it.

That's the find for today.

"Fourteen measures land on one ballot and the only one built to cancel another is the one undoing the billionaire tax. That's not choice, that's a shell game, and Newsom just put his thumb on one of the cups. Prop 40 pays for healthcare and schools; the countermeasure pays for keeping two fortunes exactly where they already are."

— Sal

"Fourteen measures means Californians get to weigh in on everything — that's democracy working at full capacity. Prop 40 specifically, sure, happens to be the one measure the governor built a separate measure to erase, but that's just voters having options, it's not like he's picking a side. Did I say "erase"? Let's go with "streamline.""

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *Billionaire funds ads against wealth tax, then governor endorses his ban on future ones* By Ruth · the evening edition, 11 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

California's 14 ballot measures explained: From the good to the bad — and the ugly

New York Post RIGHT § *21:04 EDT*

California voters have 14 statewide ballot measures staring at them this November. Don't worry. Here's all you need to know.

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

· Liberals hope California ballot measure will be the foot in the door for wealth taxes *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· 'I Know Where I Want to Live': Ex-Venture Capitalist Explains Why He'd Be Happy to Pay California Billionaire Tax *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Bernie Sanders Going Back to California to Rally for Billionaire Tax Ballot Measure *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.

U.S. backs Saudi offensive in writing Oct. 4, now weighs joining the war it already backed.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION

"Saudi and Yemeni Airports Hit in New Round of Strikes", 12 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Washington backed a Saudi offensive against Yemen's Houthis in writing on October 4, before the airport deaths began.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Congress's vote on whether to join the war slips, since the receipts show the president weighing that decision alone.

WHAT'S NEXT. If that holds, the operation continues without a vote; that is what happened after April 16, 2019, when the president vetoed Congress's resolution to end support for the Yemen war and the backing continued 21 months.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

My sister's boy is in his second year of law school, contracts, and the whole class this term seems to be about one word: order. He called Sunday all worked up about it — offer, then acceptance, then performance, he says, and you cannot skip ahead, Uncle Lou, that's the whole doctrine. I told him that's very interesting, and I believed him, because three semesters from the bar is three semesters further into this than I am, and I don't argue with people who know more than me.

I wrote this down — hold on, let me find it, raincoat pocket — there, here it is. October 4th: Washington backed a Saudi-led offensive to retake territory holding about 70 percent of Yemen's population, with the stated goal of continuing until the country was, their word, "liberated." The death count, as of that filing, stood at zero....

...(cont) Two days later, on the 6th, Houthi strikes hit two more Saudi airports, and Turkey and Pakistan sent troops to Riyadh's defense. The next day, the 7th, a Houthi spokesman said missiles and drones had struck King Khalid International; the Saudi coalition's spokesman said they'd intercepted them. I keep that page open longer than I should, because somebody's right and somebody's wrong, and the airport's the same airport either way.

On the 8th — and this is the part I had wrong the first time through, so let me be careful — Houthis claimed two more ballistic missiles overnight, and three Saudi citizens were killed. That report came out the next morning, the 9th, which is why I had the date wrong; the dying happened the day before the telling.

Two days after that, Saturday the 10th, a dozen people were killed at that same airport, an American among them. Sunday the 11th, the airport was hit again, and one more person died, a day after the dozen. And on the 12th — this is the one that made me stop reading out loud for a second — two different counts ran the same day: fourteen dead and over 300 hurt from one outlet, a week's total of nineteen from another, the American and the dozen and the three all folded into that nineteen.

Three doesn't have much of an argument yet. Twelve does, a little, with an American in it. Fourteen has an expert quoted, warning about "rapid targets." Nineteen has a president weighing whether to join a war.

Join — that's the word in this week's wire, not start, join. The thing he's weighing whether to enter is the thing his own government backed, in writing, on the 4th, before a single name went on any of these counts. My nephew would call that performance following the offer. I'd call it something, but I'm not the lawyer in the family, and he hasn't gotten to the chapter on what happens when the performance keeps resetting its own clock.

I was heading out to walk the dog — leash by the mailbox, same as every night — when a fella from the corner store, not the nephew, stopped me on the porch steps. Hold on, Lou, he says, before you go — you've got the fourth, the eighth, the tenth, the eleventh, the twelfth twice, and the week. Which one of those came out of order?

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦
DUTCH

WASHINGTON'S BACKING FOR THE SAUDI OFFENSIVE IS DATED OCTOBER 4TH, DAYS BEFORE the first bodies turned up at Riyadh's airport. That isn't deliberation, it's a receipt read back to you after the fact. Because the paperwork came first, three dead didn't move it, twelve with an American among them didn't move it, fourteen didn't, nineteen in a week didn't, and the envelope sitting in your mailbox next week already has the outcome inside it before you get to open it.

"They put the backing for this on paper on the fourth, before the count at that airport had even started, and now the same government wants credit for "weighing" whether to join a war it already co-signed. Three dead didn't move it, twelve with an American in the middle of it didn't move it, fourteen didn't, nineteen in a week didn't — the paperwork was never waiting on the bodies; the bodies were just there to make the paperwork look like a decision instead of a done deal. That's the con: they let you watch the debate so you don't notice the contract already got signed."

— Sal

"Look, October 4th was a position paper, not a declaration of war, there's a real difference there — and the president hasn't committed a single American soldier to anything, he's still "weighing" it, that's called due diligence, not drift. Sure, the paperwork predates the dead American at the airport, I'll give you that one, but timing isn't the same as — did I just say that out loud? That's not where I meant to go with this. The administration is being careful, deliberate, exactly what you'd want before whatever this turns out to be."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *U.S. backs Saudi war before airport deaths, which arrive afterward exactly as scheduled* By Mort · the evening edition, 11 October 2026
— *Trump said Houthis agreed not to fight the US, weighs joining the war after they killed an American.* By Lou · the morning edition, 11 October 2026
— *The paperwork beat the news twice this week: Washington's backing for the Saudi offensive is dated before the three deaths at Riyadh's airports, and OpenAI's pledge to spend less on the midterms is dated after it fired the researchers who flagged its risks.* By Lou · the evening edition, 11 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Saudi and Yemeni Airports Hit in New Round of Strikes
The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *22:27 EDT*
At least one person was killed in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, kingdom authorities said. The Houthis said Saudi aircraft hit the Yemeni capital's airport.

Iran live updates: 1 dead, 11 injured in attack on Saudi airport, officials say
ABC News MAINSTREAM § *05:53 EDT*
A dozen people were killed Saturday during a "brutal" attack at the King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation said.

~~Here's the biggest news you missed this weekend~~
Saudi Arabia's main airport hit twice in two days, raising fears of a U.S. war entry
NBC News MAINSTREAM § *18:00 EDT*
An unidentified projectile struck Saudi Arabia's main international airport Sunday, injuring people a day after a deadly missile attack at the same site raised questions about whether the U.S. would join another conflict in the region.

One killed after Riyadh airport hit again, a day after deadly strike killed 12
CBS News MAINSTREAM § *05:50 EDT*
The strike on King Khalid International Airport, the deadliest on Saudi soil in more than a decade, marked a major escalation in the war between Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis and the kingdom.

Bores on OpenAI's spending retreat: I'll believe it when I see it
Politico MAINSTREAM § *20:30 EDT*
AI safety advocates want stronger commitments to reduce the money AI super PACs push into the midterms.

The Gulf has entered a new era of instability. If its leaders think they can rely on old alliances, they are wrong
The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *02:00 EDT*
The latest attack by Houthi rebels on Saudi Arabia may prove to be more calamitous for the region than the world imagines On Saturday, Houthi rebels launched a shocking and deadly attack on Saudi Arabia's capital city, Riyadh. At the time of writing, the missile strike on King Khalid international airport has killed at least 13 people...

Houthis kill 14 at Saudi airport as expert warns of 'rapid targets' amid Middle East war
Fox News RIGHT § *20:34 EDT*
Iran-backed Houthis struck Saudi Arabian airports in Riyadh and Dammam, killing at least 14 and injuring over 300 as experts warn of wider war.

Iran calls U.S. response "insufficient" amid stalled talks to end the war
CBS News MAINSTREAM § *15:07 EDT*
After Saudi Arabia said Iran's Houthi allies carried out another strike at Riyadh's airport, Iran called the U.S. effort to negotiate toward ending the war "insufficient."

Saudi airport stays shut as Houthi attacks kill 20 people in a week
CBS News MAINSTREAM § *05:49 EDT*
Trump considers joining Saudi attacks on Iran's Houthi allies in Yemen after a week of Houthi strikes kills 20 people, including an American, at Riyadh's airport.

Three Saudis killed in Houthi strikes as Yemen residents injured in explosions
Morning Star § *10:25 EDT*
SAUDI Arabia's aviation authorities said today that attacks targeting Riyadh's international airport and an aircraft there the previous day killed three Saudi citizens. The General Authority of Civil Aviation did not name those responsible, though the Houthis in neighbouring Yemen have claimed they targeted the airport with a ballistic...

Saudi airport struck again after deadly attack that killed American
NBC News MAINSTREAM § *18:44 EDT*
An unidentified projectile struck Saudi Arabia's main international airport Sunday, injuring people a day after a deadly missile attack at the same site raised questions about whether the United States would join another conflict in the region. NBC News' Raf Sanchez reports.

· US Backs Major Saudi-Led Offensive as Yemen Slides Back Toward All-Out War *from the morgue, 4 Oct 2026*

· Houthis claim new attacks on Saudi airports and military bases *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· Saudi Arabia sees disruptions at Riyadh airport amid ballistic missile attacks from Houthis *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· Houthis strike two airports in Saudi Arabia as Turkey and Pakistan send troops to support Riyadh *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

· Middle East takes center stage at UN as regional leaders confront Iran war, Gaza and Houthi threat *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Trump expected to hold Iran talks with Gulf leaders during UN General Assembly: report *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Saudi Arabia promises response to Houthi attacks *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Is Yemen Heading Back to All-Out War? Saudis Launch Strikes as Houthis Take Control of Red Sea Coast *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· F Lead Iran must stop arming Yemen's Houthi forces, say the G7 *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Blasts Rattle Riyadh as Saudi Arabia Hit by Deadliest Houthi Attacks So Far *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· Houthis claim they struck Riyadh's main airport in Saudi Arabia *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· The Royal Saudi Air Defense intercepts a ballistic missile fired from Yemen over the Saudi capital Riyadh that caused panic among residents. Houthis say they fired several Burkan-2 missiles at targets *from the morgue, 11 Apr 2018*

· The Houthis say that they have struck Saudi Arabia's Abha International Airport and King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah with drones. A Houthi spokesman said on Twitter that the attacks halt *from the morgue, 15 Feb 2021*

· Houthis tried to hit Saudi capital with ballistic missile, Riyadh confirms *from the morgue, 20 Sep 2026*

· Riyadh airport explosion prompts Saudi Arabia to issue air raid alerts as Houthi fighting escalates *from the morgue, 19 Sep 2026*

· Markey Urges Congress to Block Trump-Saudi Deal, a 'Starting Gun for a Middle East Nuclear Arms Race' *from the morgue, 26 Aug 2026*

· Trump admin's list of US-designated 'foreign terrorist' groups in Latin America expands to 21 *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*

· Top Trump official reveals how 30-minute military op unlocked Venezuela oil windfall for US buyers *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*

· Ex-Venezuelan first lady Cilia Flores seeks release from NYC jail, citing heart ailment *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*

· New York City protest once again demands release of Maduro and Flores *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*

· Trump Official Denies Stealing Venezuela's Oil One Hour After Boasting Country is 'Forced to Work' With US *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· 'Mobster Language': Trump Says Venezuelan Oil Will Replenish US Reserves *from the morgue, 30 Aug 2026*

· 'Yet Another Trump Grift': Congress Called to Stop US Takeover of Venezuelan Oil Fields *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· The Biggest Oil Deal or Theft at Gunpoint? U.S. Claims Majority Control of Venezuela's Oil Reserves *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Tehran threatens attacks after U.S. strikes Iranian tankers *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· US forces take out 3 Iranian oil tankers in retaliation *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Oil prices up as Iran says it will expand control over Strait of Hormuz *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Iran live updates: Trump speaks to MBS, says everything will 'work out fine' *from the morgue, 13 Sep 2026*

· Iran threatens retaliation against U.S. tanker strikes *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· U.S. gas prices hit record high for Labor Day *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Ship tracking websites, including Kpler, MarineTraffic, and TankerTrackers, show that three Iranian oil tankers, including two from the National Iranian Tanker Company, have escaped the blockade that *from the morgue, 17 Jun 2026*

· Iranian state media reports that the United States Navy attempted to capture an Iranian oil tanker. The oil tanker was boarded, commandeered and then returned by Iranian NEDSA marines in a helicopter *from the morgue, 3 Nov 2021*

· US strikes Iranian rocket launchers in first attack since late July *from the morgue, 30 Aug 2026*

· An Iranian Navy commander claims on state television that the Iranian Navy forced a U.S. submarine to surface as it transited the Strait of Hormuz and that the submarine violated Iranian territorial w *from the morgue, 20 Apr 2023*

· Trump Threatens to Rename Strait of Hormuz for Himself as War Pushes Diesel Prices Toward Record High *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Trump floats renaming Strait of Hormuz after himself *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· U.S. strikes targets in Iran near Strait of Hormuz as Iran says it is retaliating *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Trump Hammered Over Iran War That Drove Gas Prices Above $4 Per Gallon Every Day in August for First Time Ever *from the morgue, 31 Aug 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*

· Price of diesel in U.S. hits record as Vance downplays Iran war impact *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Diesel prices hit record high as wars disrupt supply *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Trump vows response to Iran's retaliatory strikes: 'We're going to hit them hard' *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*

· Trump threatens Iran against retaliation for latest U.S. strikes *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Live updates: US, Iran ramp up strikes; incumbents hold on in Massachusetts *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Trump calls Iran conflict "small potatoes" *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Labor Day gas prices are highest ever for holiday *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· How 'Hypermilers' Are Trying to Beat High Gas Prices *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Fuel prices at record Labor Day high in US thanks to Iran War and refinery issues *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Oil Prices Rise Slightly After U.S. and Iran Trade Strikes *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· USS Lincoln heads home as war with Iran escalates *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Lawler disagrees with Trump on Iran war: 'It is certainly not small potatoes' *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· OPEC Plus to Keep Oil Production Steady *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· Iran War Has Cost the Average American More Than $1,200 Over Six Months, Economist Estimates *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Trump says military conflict in Iran is 'small potatoes for us' *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Wright: US has 'a lot of leverage' in Venezuela after oil deal reached *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· White House unveils new details of Venezuela agreement *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Chris Wright explains how Venezuelan crude will 'fill' the Strategic Petroleum Reserve *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Energy Secretary Wright says Venezuela oil deal will bring down gas prices in a year or two *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Chevron to expand in Venezuela, days after the U.S. and Venezuela strike oil deal *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Venezuelan oil flows will lower gas prices in 12-24 months, Wright says in Caracas *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Trump says Venezuelan oil will replenish Strategic Petroleum Reserves *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*

· US, Russia explore gas sale to Europe amid Ukraine war: Report *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· Countries across Europe report reductions in gas supplies after Russia disconnected supplies to Ukraine yesterday. Russia accuses Ukraine of stealing cubic metres of gas yesterday from pipelines trans *from the morgue, 2 Jan 2006*

· AI safety group outlines demands for legislation, warns lawmakers *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· AI-generated child sexual abuse images cause real-life harm *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· OpenAI fires researchers for sharing data with AI safety advocacy group: Report *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Courts just allowed AI child sex abuse material because it's 'virtual.' Who do you think it's trained on? *from the morgue, 19 Sep 2026*

· 'We Cannot Wait for Disaster to Strike': Beyer Leads Bipartisan Push in House to Urgently Regulate AI *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· MPs demand tech firms block nude images on children's smartphones *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· AI safety advocacy group sues OpenAI over Hugging Face incident *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· OpenAI scraps release of new 'Astra' model over safety concerns *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Alarming California map shows exactly where wildfires are tearing across the state — as sweltering heat wave hits *from the morgue, 5 Oct 2026*

· California Democrats kill bill to hold wildfire-starting utility companies accountable *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· LA sues State Farm over allegations of unfair claims process after 2025 wildfires *from the morgue, 1 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.

Brazil's top court gives Meta 48 hours to explain blocking Lula's ads, then suspends his 3-million-member WhatsApp army.

By THE LODGERS
THE EURO DESK



"Bolsonaro Judge Suspends 3 Million Strong Lula WhatsApp Channel", 11 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA PAYDAY REPORT — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Meta blocked ads on Lula's Facebook page, and Brazil's top electoral court suspended a pro-Lula WhatsApp channel before the runoff.

WHO GETS PAID. The beneficiary is Flávio Bolsonaro's campaign, which Lula's campaign says Washington is helping into office.

WHAT SLIPS. What slips is control over what voters see: an American platform can mute a sitting president's campaign before any court rules on it.

WHAT'S NEXT. Brazil's court gave Meta 48 hours to answer and the runoff falls on October 25; nothing in the record yet shows how either one turns out.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Today we are making election interference, which is not a dish you get over here under that name, so I shall go slowly. You will need two candidates for the run-off on October 25 — an 80-year-old incumbent and the 45-year-old son of a disgraced former president — a WhatsApp channel of over three million members, and one American company with its finger on the reach.

Clive *Reach. I have reach. A man in Hackney says my villanelle reached him, more than anyone's heard from the platform this month.*

Gary *Reached him. The landlord reached me about the rota and I still owe an explanation for the washing-up, so we've all got a platform somewhere.*

Begin on a Friday, days before Brazilians voted in the first round. Meta disabled the ads on the incumbent's Facebook page. The campaign filed an appeal and is still waiting on an explanation, state-run Agência Brasil had it.

Rob *No explanation. That's the boiler in a nutshell, and the landlord's had since spring to give one.*

Keith *Confirmed. I could have that confirmed, printed, and on a mug before the run-off is even called.*

By October 5 the first round was in: the challenger had beaten the incumbent but not by enough to avoid a run-off. The Guardian named him favourite that day.

Clive *Favourite. I was the favourite once, before they gave it to someone with an agent and a deadline.*

On Saturday, Brazil's top electoral court gave Meta 48 hours to clarify whether it had reduced the reach of the incumbent's posts. Separately, its chief, Kassio Nunes Marques, suspended a WhatsApp channel called Lula's Army, over three million members, run by congressman André Janones. A channel that size is taken by both ends and set down suspended, by the same court still waiting on Meta's answer.

Gary *Taken by both ends. That's the fridge, whenever Keith's got a deal running out the back of it.*

You will be looking for the ruling that settles whether the reach was reduced on purpose. There is none; there is only the 48 hours, and the account has not answered.

At home, by September 30, officials and advocates were already calling it "clearly illegal" Trump-Rubio election meddling, someone else's word for the same traffic.

Rob *Meddling. That's what they called it when I rearranged the recycling without a vote, and the house hasn't forgiven me.*

Forty-eight hours is not long to answer for a block the campaign has been waiting on an explanation for since September.

This serves the run-off on October 25. The incumbent's campaign is owed an answer it does not have, and the bill for the account's silence comes due before anyone votes.

Gary *Owed an answer. Put us on that list. We've been owed one since the meter went, and Brazil's got a deadline.*

"An American platform gets forty-eight hours to explain why a foreign president's ads vanished right before the vote, and there's still room at the top for whoever controls that dial — just not for the campaign losing the reach. Lula's people are saying Washington wants a say in who runs Brazil next, and the stakes are plain: somebody else's election, run through an app headquartered thousands of miles from the polling place."

— Sal

"Look, Meta polices accounts the same way everywhere, foreign leader or not — this has nothing to do with who's up for a runoff, and if Brasília wants forty-eight hours of paperwork, fine, that's just compliance. As for the administration taking sides — did I say taking sides? That's not — we support free and fair elections everywhere, we just also happen to have views on which outcome counts as free and fair."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

Bolsonaro Judge Suspends 3 Million Strong Lula WhatsApp Channel

Payday Report § *16:00 EDT*

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRASIL - Earlier today, Brazilian Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) Chief Kassio Nunes Marques, a Brazilian Supreme Court Justice, decided to suspend a WhatsApp group called "Lula's Army", which had over 3 million members. The channel run by Workers Party Congressman André Janones was

Brazil's Lula accuses social media giant Meta of election interference amid tight run-off campaign

France 24 MAINSTREAM § *09:12 EDT*

Social media platform Meta has 48 hours to respond to claims by Brazil's leftwing candidate and incumbent President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's campaign accusing the tech platform of blocking content on the company's platforms. Brazil's Superior Electoral Court on Saturday gave the social media giant 48 hours to clarify whether it...

· Facebook Blocks Lula's Campaign Ads Just Days Before Brazil Election *from the morgue, 28 Sep 2026*

· Alarm Grows Over 'Clearly Illegal' Trump-Rubio Election Meddling in Brazil *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· Son of disgraced ex-president Jair Bolsonaro takes election lead in Brazil *from the morgue, 5 Oct 2026*

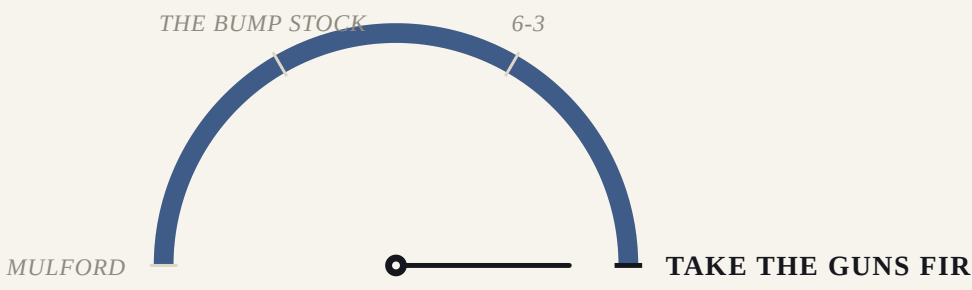
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§58 — 11 OCTOBER 2026

On the guns first

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



TAKE THE GUNS FIRST

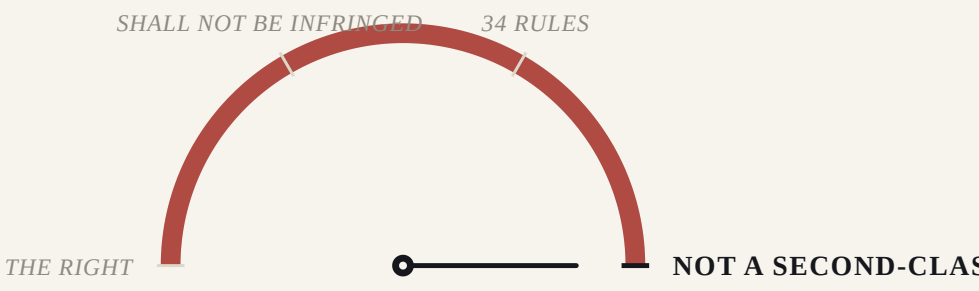
His own words, at a White House meeting on school safety on February 28, 2018, answering the vice president: "Or, Mike, take the firearms first and then go to court. You could do exactly what you're saying, but take the guns first, go through due process second" [1]. That December his ATF classified bump stocks as machine guns, effective March 2019, requiring owners to destroy or surrender them [2]. In June 2024 the Supreme Court struck the rule, 6 to 3: "ATF exceeded its statutory authority" [3].

And the older page in the same file. On July 28, 1967, Governor Ronald Reagan signed the Mulford Act, banning the public carry of loaded guns without a permit, after the Black Panthers' armed protest at the state Capitol; the NRA backed it. Reagan: "I see no reason why on the street today a citizen should be carrying loaded weapons" [4]. Not a second-class right. First, when it's somebody else's.

SOURCES

1. "Take the guns first, go through due process second" — White House meeting on school safety, 28 February 2018 — TIME ↑
2. ATF final rule classifying bump-stock-type devices as machineguns, effective 26 March 2019 — Federal Register, 26 December 2018 ↑
3. Garland v. Cargill, 14 June 2024, 6–3: "ATF exceeded its statutory authority by issuing a Rule that classifies a bump stock as a 'machinegun'" — Cornell Legal Information Institute ↑
4. Governor Reagan signed the Mulford Act on 28 July 1967 after the Black Panthers' armed protest at the California Capitol, with NRA support; "I see no reason why on the street today a citizen should be carrying loaded weapons" — HISTORY ↑

REPUBLICAN



NOT A SECOND-CLASS RIGHT

The administration's record on guns this term is a long one, and it runs one direction. In April the Justice Department and the ATF announced 34 final and proposed rules under the executive order "Protecting Second Amendment Rights," aimed at reducing burdens on gun owners and dealers [1]. The acting attorney general: "The Second Amendment is not a second-class right" [1].

That is a coherent position and a real set of rules, and on the evidence of this year it is the party's settled view: an individual right, protected against the agencies as much as the legislatures. The slogan and the regulations line up. The question is whether the man at the top of the ticket lines up with either of them, and his own words are on the other side.

SOURCES

1. 34 final and proposed rules under Executive Order 14206, "Protecting Second Amendment Rights"; "The Second Amendment is not a second-class right" — Department of Justice, 29 April 2026 ↑

"I had one like this, different year. 1967, California: a governor signs a law banning loaded guns in public without a permit, and says, "I see no reason why on the street today a citizen should be carrying loaded weapons." 2018: a president says, "take the guns first, go through due process second," and his agency bans bump stocks that December. 2024: the Supreme Court says the agency went too far, six to three. Excuse me — I forgot my notebook on your desk. The governor, the president, and the agency. Which one of them was a Democrat?" — Lou

🍺

"'Take the guns first, go through due process second." That's not a Democrat on a podium. That's him, on camera, 2018 — the same year his ATF turned every bump stock in America into a machine gun and told people to destroy them or turn them in. The Supreme Court threw the ban out six to three. Before that, Governor Reagan signed the Mulford Act in July 1967, less than three months after the Black Panthers walked into the California Capitol armed. The party of the Second Amendment has a second position on it, and the dates are on the record."

— Sal

🚬

"The president has always supported the Second Amendment, including the part that comes second, which is due process, and he simply proposed doing the parts in the order that made the most sense at the time."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎