The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2026 — THE EVENING EDITION — FREE, FOREVER

Google renames a lake and a gulf for Trump, declines to rename the ocean too.

BY THE LODGERS
The Euro Desk

This week the President of the United States telephoned the chief executive of Google and asked whether the company could rename the Atlantic Ocean after him, or failing that after America. For the first time in this particular recipe, the answer that came back was no.

You will need a map, which in America increasingly means a telephone; a lake and a gulf already relabelled; an executive order with the president's own signature on it; and two technology companies that have, until now, done as they were told.

Clive *Relabelled. That is exactly what I am doing to the verse the critics called unfinished, and I expect the same courtesy afforded to a lake.*

Begin with the lake. In August, Google changed Lake Ontario to 'Lake America' on its American maps, after the president signed the order; the company called the change procedural, pointing to the government's own register of geographic names.

Gary *Procedural. I called the boiler broken in March and nobody at this table called that procedure, they called it Tuesday and left it to me.*

... Continued on Page A220

THE WORD

§69 — 22 OCTOBER 2026

On America First

DEMOCRAT

$20 BILLION

REPUBLICAN

AMERICA FIRST

"I came about something else — a letter from the Senate Banking Committee, the minority side, dated the end of September last year. It says Chinese buyers "reportedly purchased up to 40 cargoes of soybeans from Argentina in just one week," and China "has purchased no U.S. soybeans since May." Then, nine days later, a twenty-billion-dollar swap line from our Treasury to Argentina's. Then at lunch at the White House: "If he loses, we are not going to be generous." Excuse me, I'm going. The week the line was opened, whose soybeans were on the boats to China?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W69

Diesel deal that got 'so close' to a ceasefire ends with missiles on Kyiv hours after talks resume.

BY THE WRECKING CREW
The Remedy Desk

The chief lays out the job again: a statute signed, then waived before it took effect, and tonight's missiles flew through the same gap the first ones did. On September 19, Trump signed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, named for the senator who pushed it before he died in July. The waiver landed the day before the statute took effect — the tool built, boxed, and set down before it ever touched the machine. Hours after the waiver, Russia hit Ukraine's power grid with more than 320 drones.

The planner walks the file forward a month to see where the unused tool sat while the war kept moving. On October 9, Putin phoned Trump to propose a three-way summit with Xi Jinping, the Wall Street Journal reported. The next day, a Saturday, Trump said Zelensky should be replaced over high U.S. diesel prices; by Sunday, Zelensky had shrugged off the call to quit, the Morning Star reported. Two days later, The Hill reported Zelensky calling Trump "weak" over the diesel deal, while allies inside Trump's own circle rallied around Kyiv. On October 16, Trump called Ukraine's renewed strikes on Russian refineries "a disgrace." On October 19, Zelensky said Washington

... Continued on Page A220

Trump demands dishonest aides be prosecuted, awarded investigation into his own ally same day.

BY LOU
One More Question

I went back to the federal building on Church Street for something that had nothing to do with any of this — a notarized form for the county, because the fan belt on the Buick is down to threads and I didn't want to fail inspection over a sticker again. The guard at the first window sent me to the second floor. The second floor sent me to records. Records told me records had moved to the annex a year and a half ago, which nobody had told the guard, and somewhere between the annex and the elevator I picked up, without asking for it, most of a story a different agency had been having a different morning about.

The clerk at records, who was eating a sandwich and in no hurry, told me the Justice Department had opened an inquiry into Corey Lewandowski on the twenty-second of October. I wrote the date on the back of my own form, since I didn't have anything else to write it on. The same day, she said, the president had told reporters that if people in his administration weren't being honest, they had to be prosecuted. Does the reporting give a different date for either one of those?

... Continued on Page A220

Trump orders Ramaswamy to keep attacking Acton's abuse; donations land in her column instead.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Arthur calls her daughter a liar about a childhood that included a stepfather charged with raping her between ages 10 and 12, a charge he never answered in court because he fled the state; he died in 2004 without a trial. Acton says she has not spoken to her mother since 1978, the year she was removed from the home. Her brother backs her account.

By Wednesday the ad has bipartisan Ohio company. Gov. Mike DeWine calls it "wrong" and asks Ramaswamy's campaign to take it down. Iowa Senate candidate Ashley Hinson agrees. Vice President Vance tells Republicans to "stop whining" and go win the race. Commentator Scott Jennings notes on CNN that Vance "could have just ignored it" and didn't. By Thursday, President Trump settles it from Truth Social: Ramaswamy should "keep it up," a position he restates as "hitting pay dirt" — his phrase for an ad built on a woman's account of childhood sexual abuse.

Here is where the ledger clerk clocks in. Before the ad aired, Acton was already ahead: three points in a Bowling Green/YouGov poll in September, eight points in an Oct. 11 CNN poll, and ahead again — no margin published

... Continued on Page F124

Agency that certified measles eliminated in 2000 won't certify which state its newest death occurred in.

BY MORT
The Records Bureau

"Elimination" died again this week, if a status can die twice. The United States certified measles eliminated in 2000 — sustained transmission stopped for a year, a finding, not a cure — and for a generation it became a formality the public rarely had reason to check. It is survived by the surveillance system built to confirm that finding, now struggling to finish a count on schedule.

The decline is dated. On 1 September the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention left two measles deaths in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, off its weekly outbreak update, saying it was still investigating the cause; the county coroner had already confirmed one of the two. The investigation outlasted the news cycle. By 23 September, four people had died in Pennsylvania in a single month — two of them infants — the state's first measles deaths in at least 35 years, and 2026 was already the deadliest year for the disease since the 2000 elimination finding.

The dying continued past the agency's own count. On 13 October Pennsylvania announced a sixth measles death in the outbreak, a 39-year-old unvaccinated woman with underlying conditions; the CDC's national dash-

... Continued on Page H15

Zuckerberg preps to pay the tax Newsom just endorsed abolishing, its funder dining with Trump that week.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

On August 25th, groups backed by Google co-founder Sergey Brin and venture capitalist Peter Thiel opened an advertising campaign against a one-time, 5 percent tax on California billionaires, run under the names Building a Better California and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes. Brin alone has put more than $100 million into defeating it.

Four weeks later, on September 21st, six Nobel laureate economists, Joseph Stiglitz among them, signed a letter backing the same tax, calling it a possible first in the country and a start on redistributing wealth concentrated at the top. The column balances like this, hon: the people who study wealth favor the tax; the people who hold it are buying airtime against it.

On October 11th, Governor Gavin Newsom settled which side the state's own chief executive sits on. He endorsed a competing ballot measure that would cancel the wealth tax outright and bar California from ever passing another tax on financial assets. Debru Carthan, vice president of SEIU-UHW, the union running the tax campaign Newsom had just undercut, said of the governor: "He's showing California his true colors."

... Continued on Page F124

Same legal backlash fines Meta $25 billion, lets Google keep the monopoly it proved.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Judge Francis Mathew's order against Meta — $25 billion, signed in Santa Fe on Wednesday, over data practices dating to 2016 — is this month's addition to a ledger that already has entries. The Federal Trade Commission fined Meta $5 billion in 2019 for the identical Cambridge Analytica breach. California collected $17 billion from Meta in 2018 for exploiting the same teen users the company kept monetizing afterward. The Department of Justice's own separate probe into Meta was halted this month, after the company gave Trump millions — an investigation closing, not a payment, and the one entry on this account that moved money toward Meta's side of the ledger instead of away from it.

The New York Times this week named what the Meta order belongs to: a legal backlash that has created a new de facto regulatory regime, with courts ordering Big Tech companies to change their practices and pay up. The Hill had the mood dated before the Times wrote it up. On September 7, six weeks and three days before the Times's account, it described a rarity — Americans across the usual divides finding common ground in frustration with the tech-

... Continued on Page F124

Midterms' largest donor, at $366 million, vows to find out who is really pulling the strings

BY STERLING
The Ownership Desk

Three hundred and sixty-six million dollars, and the man who spent it would like to know who is really pulling the strings. You will take that for a threat. It is better than a threat — it is a lawful notice of intent, and do note that nothing in it will have to be withdrawn. Independent expenditure: money spent for a candidate and never with one, which is the condition that makes the sum unlimited and the spender untouchable by the coordination rules. Two hundred and seventy-six million of it since July. Since July. On Wednesday the terms were published — "live by the sword, die by the sword," and those who pick a fight should understand he will come for them, "not just their puppets." In September Democrats were rebuked for declining to name him. In Memphis a state representative runs against the data centers xAI built ... and the statute sets no hour at which the money stops. The price of a congressional inquiry is now a matter of public record. You have read it.

... Continued on Page F124

> "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*

Snow held the fox's prints till the thaw,
while the farmer mended the door.

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

Diesel deal that got 'so close' to a ceasefire ends with missiles on Kyiv hours after talks resume.

By THE WRECKING CREW
THE REMEDY DESK

"Russia bombards Kyiv with missiles hours after agreeing to resume talks with Ukraine", 22 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Russia bombed Kyiv's grid with missiles hours after Putin agreed to resume peace talks.

WHO GETS PAID. Russia's energy trade is the winner, kept moving by a sanctions law Trump waived the day before it took effect.

WHAT SLIPS. Congress wrote a sanctions law with real teeth, but the waiver lets one office decide when those teeth don't bite, with no vote required.

WHAT'S NEXT. If Congress holds no vote to restore that lever, the waiver stands and the war keeps running on Moscow's calendar; that is what happened after the Senate's 2019 Yemen resolution, when the president's veto held, the override failed 53 to 45, and the war continued 21 more months.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The chief lays out the job again: a statute signed, then waived before it took effect, and tonight's missiles flew through the same gap the first ones did. On September 19, Trump signed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, named for the senator who pushed it before he died in July. The waiver landed the day before the statute took effect — the tool built, boxed, and set down before it ever touched the machine. Hours after the waiver, Russia hit Ukraine's power grid with more than 320 drones.

The planner walks the file forward a month to see where the unused tool sat while the war kept moving. On October 9, Putin phoned Trump to propose a three-way summit with Xi Jinping, the Wall Street Journal reported. The next day, a Saturday, Trump said Zelensky should be replaced over high U.S. diesel prices; by Sunday, Zelensky had shrugged off the call to quit, the Morning Star reported. Two days later, The Hill reported Zelensky calling Trump "weak" over the diesel deal, while allies inside Trump's own circle rallied around Kyiv. On October 16, Trump called Ukraine's renewed strikes on Russian refineries "a disgrace." On October 19, Zelensky said Washington gave no warning before a Russian strike on Kyiv's power plants, the same day the Guardian's own editorial warned Ukraine's future "is not theirs to bargain away."...

...(cont) The tinkerer lays the two tools on the bench side by side: a sanctions statute, waived, and a ceasefire the Czech president says had come within reach. On October 21, Putin released American detainee Stephen Hubbard without a swap; envoy Steve Witkoff called the release "humanitarian," and a former U.S. ambassador called the praise "fatuous." Putin agreed "in principle" to resume trilateral talks next month. The gap between the two tools is the gap between a law that would have bitten and a deal that never needed to.

The muscle wrecks the cover story first. Czech President Petr Pavel told the Axel Springer Global Reporters Network on Tuesday that Trump's diesel deal derailed talks between Kyiv and Moscow, saying both sides had been "so close" and "it will be much harder now." Pavel said Russia is using the momentum the deal handed it to walk back its own commitments.

The pilot lands the plane on the runway the chief built in September. Hours after Putin agreed to resume talks, Russia bombarded Kyiv with ballistic missiles anyway, killing at least two and wounding 22, including four children, and hitting a bridge, homes and a clinic. The statute that would have answered that attack is still sitting on the shelf where the waiver put it, five weeks and one hostage release later.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

PUTIN AGREED TO RESUME TALKS, THEN BOMBED KYIV'S GRID BEFORE MORNING. THAT IS not diplomacy breaking down on its own; that is the waiver doing exactly the job a waiver does — pull the only lever that bites, then call what's left room to talk. The lever came off in Washington in September; the missiles flew through the gap it left in October; and the price still taped to the pump outside your gas station is the one Washington keeps blaming on Kyiv instead of the deal that let this happen.

"Call it what it is: a law got waived so a hostage could come home on camera, and the same five weeks bought Russia the room to bomb Kyiv's grid again, right on schedule. The Czech president says the ceasefire was "so close" before that deal happened — so somebody in Washington traded a near-peace for a photo op, and twenty-two people in Kyiv paid the toll for it tonight."

— Sal

"Look, the president got an American hostage home without a single concession — that's not appeasement, that's dealmaking, and if Russia bombs a grid a few hours later, that's Moscow's call, not ours. Did I say "not ours"? That's not what I meant — the point is Hubbard is home, and that's a win, full stop."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Trump credits the sanctions he waived for producing the talks he says enforcing them would have blocked.* By The Wrecking Crew · the evening edition, 22 October 2026
- *Ukraine's only leverage against Russia, cut by its own satellite provider, ends in a freeze offer.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 21 October 2026
- *Trump waives Russia sanctions he signed, then calls enforcing them the thing that would have stopped Hubbard's release.* By The Wrecking Crew · the afternoon edition, 21 October 2026
- *Starshield slowdown Rubio insisted wasn't deliberate was, CBS sources say, Musk's own deliberate choice.* By Lou · the morning edition, 21 October 2026
- *Rubio insists Patriots weren't "deliberately denied"; Hegseth admits "our guys" need them too.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 20 October 2026
- *Rubio says Patriots weren't 'deliberately denied'; Zelensky asks for the ones Washington still won't release.* By Lou · the morning edition, 20 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Russia bombards Kyiv with missiles hours after agreeing to resume talks with Ukraine

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *11:46 EDT*

Experts say Russia is trying to destroy energy infrastructure before winter and US 'appeasement and flattery' will not achieve peace Russia has carried out a massive "demonstrative" attack on Ukraine, bombarding Kyiv with ballistic missiles just hours after Vladimir Putin said he had agreed to resume trilateral negotiations after talks...

But: **Trump promised 53 separate times he'd settle the Ukraine war within 24 hours** *CNN fact check, 25 April 2025 (all 53 instances)*

Trump's diesel deal derailed Ukraine-Russia peace progress, says Czech president

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *16:46 EDT*

Czech President Petr Pavel on Tuesday said President Trump's diesel deal with Russia derailed peace talks between the Kremlin and Ukraine, saying both sides were "so close" to a ceasefire. "It will be much harder now," Pavel told the Axel Springer Global Reporters Network, which includes Politico. "Russia uses this momentum to get out...

· Zelensky unleashes on Trump as Russia diesel deal rallies Ukraine's supporters *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· Zelensky unleashes on Trump over Russia diesel deal *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Zelensky shrugs off Trump's call for him to be replaced *from the morgue, 11 Oct 2026*

· US gave us no warning of Russian strikes on Kyiv power plants, Zelenskyy says *from the morgue, 19 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.

Trump demands dishonest aides be prosecuted, awarded investigation into his own ally same day.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION



"Trump says dishonest people have to be prosecuted after DOJ launches investigation into Corey Lewandowski", 22 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Trump said dishonest officials must be prosecuted the day his Justice Department opened an inquiry into ally Corey Lewandowski.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. The public's chance to see whether the law reaches the president's own circle slips, since the inquiry only became known after a government watchdog's referral got out.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the same pattern holds, the Lewandowski inquiry ends quietly rather than with charges; that is what Washington got after October 13, 2026, when Kimberly Guilfoyle resigned as ambassador without facing charges over the credit-card allegations against her.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I went back to the federal building on Church Street for something that had nothing to do with any of this — a notarized form for the county, because the fan belt on the Buick is down to threads and I didn't want to fail inspection over a sticker again. The guard at the first window sent me to the second floor. The second floor sent me to records. Records told me records had moved to the annex a year and a half ago, which nobody had told the guard, and somewhere between the annex and the elevator I picked up, without asking for it, most of a story a different agency had been having a different morning about.

The clerk at records, who was eating a sandwich and in no hurry, told me the Justice Department had opened an inquiry into Corey Lewandowski on the twenty-second of October. I wrote the date on the back of my own form, since I didn't have anything else to write it on. The same day, she said, the president had told reporters that if people in his administration weren't being honest, they had to be prosecuted. Does the reporting give a different date for either one of those?...

...(cont) I'm sorry, I'll come at the day again, from a different side. Something had to travel for that inquiry to exist at all. A referral from the inspector general's office over at Homeland Security had to leave one building and arrive at another before the Justice Department could open anything on the twenty-second. Who carried it? Whose hands, whose inbox, whose car? The reporting doesn't say, and neither did anybody at records.

I don't mean to linger on this, but here's another side of the same day. At the house I took two things out of the toolbox drawer where I keep the odd screws, not to fix anything, just to lay them on the bench the way you'd lay down two receipts to see if they're for the same job. One was the sentence about honesty. The other was a word the Times used — rare. One of the rare instances, they called it, of a Trump ally facing an inquiry at all in this term. Does that tell us how many instances there have been that weren't rare? It doesn't say.

Forgive me, one more pass at the day, because I keep finding a different piece of it. Nine days before this Thursday, on the thirteenth of October, the same president used almost the same sentence about a different ally. Kimberly Guilfoyle was stepping down as ambassador to Greece over allegations she'd asked a donor to cover her credit card bills, and asked about the decision, he said the administration didn't like what they were reading. Nine days. Two allies. The same shrug, near enough, both times.

I'm sorry, I keep coming back to this. I stood on the porch while the dog did her business, holding two slips of paper — one with a date circled, one with a quote on it — and hadn't decided whether to throw either one away.

I was almost to the truck when the clerk came out after me. Excuse me, she said, before you go — you've dated the form wrong. I looked down at what I'd written. It was the twenty-second. I asked her: which twenty-second?

"He says if people in his government aren't honest, they have to be prosecuted, and the same day his own Justice Department opens a file on Corey Lewandowski off a DHS referral. That's not irony, that's the rule showing you how it actually gets enforced — on everybody, until it reaches somebody he knows. Nine days before it was Guilfoyle and a donor's credit card; the rule holds right up until it walks into the room he's standing in."
— Sal

"This proves the president holds everyone to the same standard — an inquiry happening at all is the accountability working exactly as designed. Sure, the Times called it one of the rare times an ally's faced one in two terms, but rare just means thorough, not — wait, that's not landing the way I wanted it to."
— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

But: The DOJ disbanded its crypto enforcement team and ordered inconsistent investigations closed while the president's family runs a crypto business *CNBC, 8 April 2025 (Blanche memo)*

Trump says dishonest people have to be prosecuted after DOJ launches investigation into Corey Lewandowski

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *17:24 EDT*

President Donald Trump declared that employees of his administration needed to be honest on the same day it was disclosed that the Department of Justice opened an inquiry into Corey Lewandowski, a former adviser at the Department of Homeland Security. The investigation reportedly originated from a referral from the DHS inspector general....

But: The DOJ disbanded its crypto enforcement team and ordered inconsistent investigations closed while the president's family runs a crypto business *CNBC, 8 April 2025 (Blanche memo)*

Justice Dept. Opens Inquiry Into Corey Lewandowski

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *16:19 EDT*

The details of the inquiry remain unclear, but it is one of the rare instances in which a Trump ally or appointee has been investigated for potential wrongdoing during the president's second term.

But: The DOJ disbanded its crypto enforcement team and ordered inconsistent investigations closed while the president's family runs a crypto business *CNBC, 8 April 2025 (Blanche memo)*

Trump responds to alleged DOJ Corey Lewandowski probe: 'If they're not going to be honest, they have to be prosecuted'

New York Post RIGHT § *17:26 EDT*

The DOJ is reportedly reviewing a criminal referral from the DHS inspector general.

· Trump speaks on Kimberly Guilfoyle resignation: 'We didn't like what we were reading' – video *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

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THE LEDGER

Trump orders Ramaswamy to keep attacking Acton's abuse; donations land in her column instead.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"This is despicable': Amy Acton responds to Ohio attack ad featuring her estranged mother", 22 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA BBC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Trump ordered Ramaswamy to keep running an ad attacking Acton's childhood sexual abuse, over his own party's objections.

WHO GETS PAID. The corporations and executives funding Ramaswamy's campaign get a governor's office if the ad works.

WHAT SLIPS. The Ohio GOP's own objections to the ad slip the moment Trump overrules the governor and a sitting congresswoman.

WHAT'S NEXT. If Trump's public break with DeWine for crossing him follows the pattern, a primary threat follows; that is what Kentucky got after October 2025: a $37 million primary, funded in part by the president's own advisers, that unseated Representative Thomas Massie by May 2026.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Arthur calls her daughter a liar about a childhood that included a stepfather charged with raping her between ages 10 and 12, a charge he never answered in court because he fled the state; he died in 2004 without a trial. Acton says she has not spoken to her mother since 1978, the year she was removed from the home. Her brother backs her account.

By Wednesday the ad has bipartisan Ohio company. Gov. Mike DeWine calls it "wrong" and asks Ramaswamy's campaign to take it down. Iowa Senate candidate Ashley Hinson agrees. Vice President Vance tells Republicans to "stop whining" and go win the race. Commentator Scott Jennings notes on CNN that Vance "could have just ignored it" and didn't. By Thursday, President Trump settles it from Truth Social: Ramaswamy should "keep it up," a position he restates as "hitting pay dirt" — his phrase for an ad built on a woman's account of childhood sexual abuse....

...(cont) Here is where the ledger clerk clocks in. Before the ad aired, Acton was already ahead: three points in a Bowling Green/YouGov poll in September, eight points in an Oct. 11 CNN poll, and ahead again — no margin published — in a New York Times/Siena survey the same week. After the ad aired, the Hill reports Acton's fundraising surged: she lands at No. 2 on ActBlue's trending list, behind only Texas Senate candidate James Talarico. Whatever the ad buy cost the corporations and executives who funded it, ActBlue's own trending list puts the deposit in her column, not his.

It is the second time this fall the Acton campaign has had to treat an attack as a line item. On Sept. 6, an armed individual lunged at her at the Canfield Fair near Youngstown, injuring several bystanders. In September it was security. In October it is a corporate-funded spot about a woman's childhood abuse, kept on the air over her own party's objections, that her opponents cannot explain except to say she should stop complaining about it. Whoever bought that airtime bought the other side a fundraising week.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

RAMASWAMY'S CAMPAIGN, BANKROLLED BY SOME OF OHIO'S LARGEST CORPORATIONS AND executives, built an ad around his opponent's account of childhood sexual abuse, and when his own governor and a sitting congresswoman asked him to pull it, the President ordered him to keep it running. That is not opposition research, that is a corporate-funded focus group testing how much a child's abuse is worth in cable minutes before the money moves to the other side. Because the ad needed Trump's order to survive the week, because the order needed Vance calling the complaints whining, the only transaction that actually cleared was the $20 text donation you answered at dinner, now sitting in Amy Acton's account instead of Vivek Ramaswamy's.

"You get it now — the ad wasn't built to win votes, it was built to launder corporate cash through a cable buy, and the con only works if nobody checks where the money actually lands. They checked. It landed in her account. That's not a messaging failure, that's the invoice coming due on cruelty, and somebody still wrote the check."

— Sal

"Look, campaigns use the tools available to them, that's just — that's politics, and if the opponent's own family has concerns, voters deserve to hear it. Did I say "family concerns"? Her estranged mother who she hasn't spoken to in almost fifty years, that's not — okay, that one's rough. But the Vice President said stop whining, and honestly, a guy who could've ignored it chose not to, that's just good discipline, I think, probably."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

~~'This is despicable': Amy Acton responds to Ohio attack ad featuring her estranged mother~~

Ramaswamy's campaign ad exploits his opponent's childhood sexual abuse

BBC News MAINSTREAM § *15:27 EDT*

Her Republican opponent Vivek Ramaswamy is airing the ad featuring her mother, whose husband was charged with sexual abuse in her childhood.

Acton fundraising surges following controversial ad

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *16:02 EDT*

Ohio gubernatorial candidate Amy Acton (D) has seen a surge in donations after she was the target of a controversial attack ad from her Republican opponent, Vivek Ramaswamy. Acton surged into second place on Democratic political fundraising site ActBlue's "trending campaigns," only behind James Talarico, the Texas Democrat running for...

Jennings on Vance comments about Ramaswamy ad: 'He could have just ignored it'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *16:56 EDT*

Conservative commentator Scott Jennings said Wednesday that Vice President Vance "could have" avoided talking about an ad for Ohio gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy (R) featuring his Democratic rival's mother "He could have just ignored it," Jennings said on "CNN NewsNight"

GOP officials divided over Ramaswamy ad with Acton's mom

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *17:48 EDT*

In the ad, which first circulated on social media Monday night, Democrat Amy Acton's estranged mother called her a liar.

Trump doubles down on anti-Acton ad in Ohio: 'Vivek should keep it up'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *15:24 EDT*

President Trump defended Ohio gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy's ad featuring his Democratic opponent Amy Acton's estranged mother on Thursday, saying the Republican "should keep it up." In a lengthy Truth Social post, Trump hit Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine (R) over his calls for Ramaswamy to take down the ad earlier Thursday.

Trump defends Ramaswamy campaign ad condemned by Republicans, saying 'Vivek should keep it up' – live

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *17:07 EDT*

President claims criticism of ad featuring Democrat Amy Acton's estranged mother is a 'concerted' attack on Republican Ohio governor candidate Sign up for the Breaking News US email Trump attacks Ohio governor over call for Ramaswamy to drop 'deeply troubling' ad Reporting from Anchorage, Alaska Mary Peltola's campaign to represent...

~~Trump attacks Ohio governor over call for Ramaswamy to drop 'deeply troubling' ad~~

Trump urges Ramaswamy to keep ad attacking rival's estranged mother

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *16:11 EDT*

Republican Mike DeWine said ad featuring estranged mother of Democrat Amy Acton was 'wrong' Donald Trump issued a swift rebuke against Mike DeWine, Ohio's Republican governor, who on Thursday said gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy was "wrong" to release an ad critical of his Democratic rival Amy Acton that featured her estranged...

Trump defends Vivek Ramaswamy ad featuring opponent's estranged mother

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *15:36 EDT*

President Donald Trump defended Ohio's Republican gubernatorial nominee Vivek Ramaswamy on Thursday, urging him to keep running an ad featuring the estranged mother of his opponent, Amy Acton. Ramaswamy has come under fire for the ad blitz, which features Acton's mother, Donna Stearns Arthur, criticizing Acton for "lying about her...

~~Meet the Corporations Funding Ramaswamy's Vicious Attack Ad on Acton~~

Ohio corporations are funding Ramaswamy's ad weaponizing his opponent's childhood sexual abuse

Common Dreams § *15:06 EDT*

Republican Vivek Ramaswamy's campaign is spending millions in the final weeks of his bid for Ohio governor to run an attack ad that has been criticized for exploiting his opponent Amy Acton's history of sexual abuse. The campaign is being funded by some of Ohio's and the nation's most powerful corporations and executives. The ad, which...

Vance tells Republicans to 'stop whining' after Ramaswamy attack ad in Ohio governor's race

France 24 MAINSTREAM § *15:05 EDT*

US Vice President JD Vance on Wednesday defended an explosive attack ad by Republican Vivek Ramaswamy's campaign against his Democratic rival in the Ohio governor's race, telling fellow Republicans to "stop whining" about it and go win the race. The ad features Democrat Amy Acton's estranged mother, Donna Arthur, disputing Acton's...

~~Trump praises "powerful" Ramaswamy ad featuring Acton's mother~~

Trump calls the Acton ad "hitting pay dirt"

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *17:41 EDT*

"Who wouldn't use such an Ad?" President Trump wrote. "I would, it's called, 'hitting pay dirt.'"

Trump defends Ramaswamy ad as top Republicans call for taking it down

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *17:06 EDT*

Both Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and Iowa Republican Senate candidate Rep. Ashley Hinson said his campaign should cease airing the ad.

· Acton ahead of Ramaswamy in latest Ohio gubernatorial polling *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Trump, Vance blitz Ohio as Democrats look to flip governor's mansion *from the morgue, 11 Oct 2026*

· Ohio governor's race: Ramaswamy and Acton clash in rare Democratic pickup opportunity *from the morgue, 27 Sep 2026*

· Ohio gubernatorial hopeful Amy Acton thanks first responders after attempted attack *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Amy Acton attacked by 'armed individual' at campaign stop in Ohio *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· Amy Acton attacked by 'armed individual' at event, campaign says *from the morgue, 6 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.

Agency that certified measles eliminated in 2000 won't certify which state its newest death occurred in.

By MORT
THE RECORDS BUREAU

"Experts alarmed by 'less transparent' CDC as US measles deaths rise", 22 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The CDC added a third national measles death this week but would not name the state where it happened.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. The public's ability to track where outbreak deaths occur and trust the national case count slips as the CDC withholds the state and delays its own death tally.

WHAT'S NEXT. No case in the ledger covers this exact failure. By the CDC's own account, the review of Pennsylvania's measles deaths began 1 September and has now run more than seven weeks with no date set for when the delayed count will be published.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

"Elimination" died again this week, if a status can die twice. The United States certified measles eliminated in 2000 — sustained transmission stopped for a year, a finding, not a cure — and for a generation it became a formality the public rarely had reason to check. It is survived by the surveillance system built to confirm that finding, now struggling to finish a count on schedule.

The decline is dated. On 1 September the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention left two measles deaths in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, off its weekly outbreak update, saying it was still investigating the cause; the county coroner had already confirmed one of the two. The investigation outlasted the news cycle. By 23 September, four people had died in Pennsylvania in a single month — two of them infants — the state's first measles deaths in at least 35 years, and 2026 was already the deadliest year for the disease since the 2000 elimination finding....

...(cont) The dying continued past the agency's own count. On 13 October Pennsylvania announced a sixth measles death in the outbreak, a 39-year-old unvaccinated woman with underlying conditions; the CDC's national dashboard that day still listed two deaths total, nationwide. Four days later, on 17 October, the CDC sent a "disease detective" to the Pennsylvania county at the center of the outbreak — a county with no health department of its own to run one — after the state's confirmed case count rose from 86 to 1,222 in a week and its own death toll reached six.

This week the dashboard moved again: a third measles death, added Wednesday, nationwide. The CDC would not say which state it occurred in. The agency cited privacy law; outside experts could find no privacy interest a state name would violate, and said so. Cases nationwide grew 8 percent in a week, to 4,410 — nearly double last year's total — in a year when the agency that certified elimination will not fully certify its own reporting.

Measles was declared eliminated in 2000. It is preceded in death by the two-infant month of September, and survived by a state count the agency keeps to itself longer than it keeps the public waiting. It leaves no name, no state, no finished tally.

In lieu of flowers, the agency should publish the state.

"They've got six confirmed deaths in Pennsylvania and the federal dashboard still says two nationwide, and now the third death doesn't even get a state attached to it. That's not privacy — the coroners already put names in the paper — that's a count that stays broken exactly as long as it's convenient, and the con is that nobody downstream can check the math anymore."

— Sal

"Privacy laws, folks, that's all this is — HIPAA, basic stuff. I mean, sure, the state already announced six deaths on Facebook, but that's the state's business, not ours, we just run the national dashboard — did I say "just run"? We're stewards of data integrity. The review takes the time it takes."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Alberta rejects Republican-advised secession bid, handing Carney leverage against Trump's trade war.* By The Lodgers · the morning edition, 21 October 2026
- *Republican operatives advised Alberta's bid to leave Canada, rewarded with more than two-thirds voting to remain.* By The Lodgers · the afternoon edition, 20 October 2026
- *Trump's trade war aimed at splitting Canada instead delivers Carney a unity vote* By Sal · the morning edition, 20 October 2026
- *CDC meets six measles deaths in Pennsylvania with one disease detective.* By Mort · the morning edition, 17 October 2026
- *CDC meets 4,400-case measles outbreak with a plan to send one detective.* By Mort · the morning edition, 16 October 2026
- *A disease the United States certified gone in 2000 just confirmed a sixth death in Pennsylvania this year.* By Mort · the evening edition, 12 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: The US declared measles eliminated in 2000 - the last two years carry more cases than the rest of the century combined, the worst count since 1991 *The Hill / CDC measles data, July 2026*

Experts alarmed by 'less transparent' CDC as US measles deaths rise
The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *06:00 EDT*

Agency declines to reveal in which state latest measles death occurred as it delays reporting other measles deaths The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) added a third measles death to its dashboard on Wednesday, but the agency would not reveal whether the death occurred in Pennsylvania or another state – which is...

But: The last two years carry more measles cases than the rest of the century combined - the worst count since 1991 *The Hill / CDC measles data, July 2026*

CDC to send 'disease detective' to help tackle Pennsylvania measles outbreak
The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *08:00 EDT*

State has confirmed six measles-related deaths and county at center of outbreak lacks its own health department The county at the center of Pennsylvania's measles outbreak is at a clear disadvantage because, local officials say, it lacks its own health department and it will now get special assistance from the Centers for Disease Control...

~~ABC News quietly republishes gutted version of story on Trump sons it had deleted without explanation~~

Trump sons' investments tied to Pentagon contracts prompted ABC's correction
Fox News RIGHT § *11:18 EDT*

ABC News issued an editor's note admitting errors in its report on Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump's investments tied to Pentagon contracts.

ABC News Issues Correction After Appearing To Quietly Delete Story About Don Jr's Business Dealings
Daily Caller RIGHT § *15:45 EDT*

'ABC deleted this article in less than 24 hours because it's false'

~~Coalition Files Emergency Motion to Stop Trump FCC From Unleashing Media Consolidation Spree~~

Coalition sues to stop Trump's FCC from scrapping the cap keeping one company under 39% of US TV households
Common Dreams § *10:08 EDT*

A coalition of nonprofit groups and labor unions filed an emergency petition on Friday aimed at blocking the Federal Communications Commission's recent repeal of a decades-old rule that limited consolidation among television broadcasters, a move that would allow media conglomerates to seize even more control over local news stations. The...

But: The US declared measles eliminated in 2000. The last two years carry more cases than the rest of the century combined - the worst count since 1991 *The Hill / CDC measles data, July 2026*

Pennsylvania announces sixth death in measles outbreak as case numbers rise
The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *09:02 EDT*

Latest fatality is unvaccinated woman, 39, with 'underlying conditions' but CDC still lists only two deaths nationwide A sixth death has been announced in Pennsylvania 's measles outbreak, as new figures show cases in the state have risen above 1,100. The most recent fatality was reported in Franklin county on Monday in a statement...

· CDC omits Pennsylvania measles deaths from weekly update pending review *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· "Secretary of Measlesland": Dr. Paul Offit Slams RFK Jr.'s Handling of Deadly Measles Outbreak *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· GOP senator calls for subpoenaing Donald Trump Jr. and Hunter Biden over their business dealings *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Republican senator calls for Don Jr. and Hunter Biden to be subpoenaed over business dealings *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· GOP Sen. John Curtis calls for Trump Jr., Hunter Biden investigations *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Is Trump's son-in-law and top negotiator a midterm liability for Republicans? *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· Companies Backed by Trump Sons Have Scored Over $6 Billion in Pentagon Contracts: Analysis *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· White House Claims in Court Filing That Press Coverage of Trump Is a 'Privilege,' Not a Right *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· 'Dangerous for Democracy': Paramount Merger Opponents File Emergency Motion to Fight Settlement Deal *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

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

· With Elon Musk's Return to Washington, Possible Conflicts of Interest Resurface *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Hegseth puts the future of warfare in the hands of major Maga donors *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Pete Hegseth appoints Elon Musk to US taskforce on future of warfare *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· Elon Musk boosts GOP spending advantage with return as 2026 juggernaut *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· An Elon Musk insider shares what he found in Washington — and it should terrify you *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Trump Accord Enshrines Light-Touch Regulation of AI *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Trump says tech CEOs signed 'morally binding' document to self-regulate artificial intelligence *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

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

· Soaring diesel prices take their toll on US farmers in midwest corn belt *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Inflation Could Soon 'Get a Lot More Painful' as Trump's Iran War Drives Diesel Over $6 a Gallon *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*

· 'Can't Message That Away': GOP Frets as Trump Administration Desperately Spins Record-High Diesel Prices *from the morgue, 5 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*

· States take matters into their own hands to curb record-high diesel prices *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· U.N. experts say U.S. may have committed war crimes with 2 Iran strikes *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Trump Says 'Big Decision' Coming on Whether to 'Annihilate' Iran *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Pentagon No. 3 frustrates senators in closed-door briefing on Iran war, Trump defense strategy *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Senate Democrats, minus Fetterman, urge Hegseth to provide receipt for Iran war costs *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Hegseth on "devastation" to Iran's capabilities *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Trump admits Iran war will not end before midterms *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Iran War Trump Said Would Be Quick Has Now Lasted 6 Months With 'No End In Sight' *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· CBO Finds Trump's Iran War Has Already Cost Nearly $40 Billion—And That's a 'Conservative' Estimate *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Tillis supports Hegseth impeachment resolution: 'He needs to go' *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie Files Impeachment Articles Against Hegseth for Illegal Iran War, Boat Murders *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Massie launches effort to impeach Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Tillis urges Trump to fire Hegseth over 'inept management' of military *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Tillis renews calls for Hegseth's firing after Driscoll's departure: 'I have never witnessed more inept management' *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Farmer who voted for Trump says farmers are "all just in survival mode" *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Farmer who voted for Trump says "I can't stay in business" amid rising costs *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie says he's convinced enough Republicans to pass Epstein Files II discharge petition *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie names Epstein 'coconspirators,' discusses new Epstein files legislation *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Read Thomas Massie's eight impeachment charges against Pete Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Fake Republican midterm convention site still redirects to Epstein files *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Trump says he has a 'big decision' coming up on Iran: 'Do I want to go in and annihilate them' *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· 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*

· Human rights experts: 'Reasonable grounds' to believe US committed war crimes with Iran strikes *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· US Energy Consumers Have Spent $121 Billion Extra Since Trump Launched Iran War: Moody's *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran downed at least 2 American drones in recent days, U.S. officials say *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran: Account of US Air Force colonel's rescue 'fictional' *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Consumer Burden of Trump Iran War Exceeds $100 Billion as Oil Prices Pass $100 a Barrel *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· 'A Serious and Alarming Threat': US Bombing, Blockade Deepen Iran Medical Crisis *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Consumer Confidence Hits Lowest Level in Months as US Faces 'Trump's Reckless Tariffs and War With Iran' *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*

· U.S. Air Force officer rescued from Iran speaks for the first time to 60 Minutes *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Rep. Thomas Massie forcing vote on Pete Hegseth's impeachment *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Did Johnson Just Adjourn Congress for 7 Weeks to Avoid Massie's Impeachment Articles Against Hegseth? *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· The Hitchhiker's Guide to Massie saying Johnson is sending the House home early to prevent Hegseth impeachment *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· 'You're Elected to Fight and Kill the Other Side': How Congress Lost Its Way *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Army combat veteran challenging Mike Lawler calls Hegseth national security 'hazard,' backs impeachment *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· Former Air Force secretary says he 'couldn't serve' in Trump administration *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· Former Air Force secretary: Hegseth's Pentagon 'dysfunctional' *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· House Republicans split over leaving Washington early for campaign trail *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Since 2025, Trump Made More Stock Trades Than All 535 Congress Members Combined *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Fossil Fuel Advertising Contracts Hit Record High as Big Oil Pockets Billions From Iran War *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· 'How are we gonna get through this?' Many Americans are struggling as prices rise *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Trump's Top Oil Stocks Have Made Him Up to $4.4 Million Richer During Iran War: Analysis *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Gas prices reach Labor Day high amid Iran war *from the morgue, 8 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*

· Warsh under pressure as Fed weighs rate hike *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Inflation held at 3.4% in August in consumer price index, creating tough choice for Warsh Fed *from the morgue, 11 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.

THE WORKAROUND

Zuckerberg preps to pay the tax Newsom just endorsed abolishing, its funder dining with Trump that week.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Newsom Endorses Ballot Measure That Would Cancel Out Billionaire Tax—and Ban Future Wealth Taxes", 11 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA COMMON DREAMS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Meta's board agreed to keep Zuckerberg in California and let him sell new stock to pay the billionaire wealth tax.

WHO GETS PAID. Meta Platforms, which keeps its own chief executive from relocating by having him sell new shares instead of pulling cash off the balance sheet.

WHAT SLIPS. California voters' choice at the ballot box slips, because the governor's own competing measure could cancel out the wealth tax before it ever collects a dollar.

WHAT'S NEXT. California voters decide both measures on the same November ballot; if the governor's competing measure passes, the wealth tax never collects a cent.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

On August 25th, groups backed by Google co-founder Sergey Brin and venture capitalist Peter Thiel opened an advertising campaign against a one-time, 5 percent tax on California billionaires, run under the names Building a Better California and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes. Brin alone has put more than $100 million into defeating it.

Four weeks later, on September 21st, six Nobel laureate economists, Joseph Stiglitz among them, signed a letter backing the same tax, calling it a possible first in the country and a start on redistributing wealth concentrated at the top. The column balances like this, hon: the people who study wealth favor the tax; the people who hold it are buying airtime against it....

...(cont) On October 11th, Governor Gavin Newsom settled which side the state's own chief executive sits on. He endorsed a competing ballot measure that would cancel the wealth tax outright and bar California from ever passing another tax on financial assets. Debru Carthan, vice president of SEIU-UHW, the union running the tax campaign Newsom had just undercut, said of the governor: "He's showing California his true colors."

That weekend, Brin had dinner with President Trump at Mar-a-Lago, seated to his left at a fundraising dinner hosted by the pro-Trump super PAC MAGA Inc.

Three days after that report, on October 22nd, a federal filing disclosed the outcome of Meta's months-long negotiation with its own chief executive: Mark Zuckerberg agreed to stay in California for eight years, in exchange for a board-approved plan to issue new shares he can sell to pay the very tax Newsom's measure is built to cancel. Economist Gabriel Zucman called the filing "huge," writing that "we are witnessing a global turning point unfold before our eyes."

Run the two filings side by side and the gap is not a contradiction, it is a hedge. One instrument prepares a man worth $239 billion to pay a tax he has not yet lost. The other, backed by the governor who is supposed to be collecting it, is built to make sure he never has to. Both are dated this October. Only one of them made the papers as a victory for the tax.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

META'S BOARD GAVE ITS OWN CHIEF EXECUTIVE EIGHT YEARS AND A STACK OF NEW STOCK, enough to cover a wealth tax he has not lost a dollar to yet, in the same month the governor who would collect that tax endorsed the ballot measure built to erase it. That is not hedging, that is running the horse and owning the track. The ad money killing the measure comes from the men it would tax; because it dies, the state collects nothing from them; because the state collects nothing from them, the property tax bill in your mailbox this November covers what theirs never will.

"They want you thinking this is a philosophy fight about whether billionaires should pay their share. It's not — Zuckerberg already built the machine to pay the tax if it passes, the same week the guy bankrolling the ad campaign to kill it was having dinner with Trump at Mar-a-Lago. That's not two stories about two rich guys. That's one guy covering both sides of the same bet."

— Sal

"Look, Prop — whatever number it is, the anti-tax one — isn't about protecting billionaires, it's about protecting jobs. You tax wealth, you chase off the job creators, and Governor Newsom gets that, that's why he's standing with — wait, Newsom's a Democrat, why am I the one defending him on this? Forget I said that."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

~~Mark Zuckerberg threatened to leave California over wealth tax~~

Meta's board gave Zuckerberg new shares to cover the wealth tax he threatened to flee

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *10:28 EDT*

Zuckerberg has agreed to remain in California for eight years as part of a board-approved plan to create new shares he can sell to pay a proposed wealth tax.

~~Newsom Endorses Ballot Measure That Would Cancel Out Billionaire Tax—and Ban Future Wealth Taxes~~

Newsom's pick to kill the billionaire tax is bankrolled by billionaire Sergey Brin

Common Dreams § *14:27 EDT*

California Gov. Gavin Newsom ramped up his opposition to a proposed tax on the state's billionaire residents on Friday by endorsing a competing ballot measure that would both cancel out the billionaire wealth tax initiative and prohibit any new taxes on the ownership of financial assets or other personal property. "He's showing...

~~Meta cuts tax deal with Zuckerberg to keep him in California even if wealth tax passes~~

Meta guarantees its $239 billion CEO is exempt from whatever tax California voters choose

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *10:47 EDT*

Meta Platforms struck a deal with its CEO Mark Zuckerberg to keep him residing in California as the state prepares to vote on a billionaire tax in November. Zuckerberg's estimated net worth is about $239 billion, making him the 6th richest person in the world, according to Forbes. He has been negotiating with his own [...]

'This Is Huge,' Economist Says as Filing Shows Zuckerberg Getting Ready to Pay California Billionaire Tax

Common Dreams § *10:22 EDT*

Federal filings released Wednesday reveal how Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, one of the richest men in the world, is getting ready to potentially pay a billionaire wealth tax that is on California's November midterm ballot—an indication of the grassroots campaign's impact. "This is huge," economist Gabriel Zucman, an outspoken supporter of...

~~As Millions Struggle to Get By, Plutocrat Working to Kill California Billionaire Tax Dines With Trump~~

Google co-founder spent $100 million fighting a tax on billionaires like him

Common Dreams § *11:00 EDT*

Billionaire Google co-founder Sergey Brin, who has spent more than $100 million fighting a proposed wealth tax in California, shared a lavish dinner with billionaire US President Donald Trump over the weekend at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida as millions of American families struggle to afford groceries, healthcare, and...

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

· Nobel Prize-Winning Economists Back First Billionaire Tax in US *from the morgue, 21 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.

Same legal backlash fines Meta $25 billion, lets Google keep the monopoly it proved.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK



"How a Legal Backlash Against Big Tech Is Forcing Big Changes", 22 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A federal judge let Google keep its ad-technology business intact after finding it ran an illegal monopoly over that market.

WHO GETS PAID. Google's advertising business, which keeps the ad-tech market a federal court found it monopolized.

WHAT SLIPS. A court's power to break up a company it has already found holds an illegal monopoly.

WHAT'S NEXT. No hearing or deadline is scheduled for a Google appeal in the record; the ad-tech business keeps operating as is.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Judge Francis Mathew's order against Meta — $25 billion, signed in Santa Fe on Wednesday, over data practices dating to 2016 — is this month's addition to a ledger that already has entries. The Federal Trade Commission fined Meta $5 billion in 2019 for the identical Cambridge Analytica breach. California collected $17 billion from Meta in 2018 for exploiting the same teen users the company kept monetizing afterward. The Department of Justice's own separate probe into Meta was halted this month, after the company gave Trump millions — an investigation closing, not a payment, and the one entry on this account that moved money toward Meta's side of the ledger instead of away from it.

The New York Times this week named what the Meta order belongs to: a legal backlash that has created a new de facto regulatory regime, with courts ordering Big Tech companies to change their practices and pay up. The Hill had the mood dated before the Times wrote it up. On September 7, six weeks and three days before the Times's account, it described a rarity — Americans across the usual divides finding common ground in frustration with the technology industry's footprint, from data centers to the verdicts now landing....

...(cont) Five days before that Hill piece ran, on September 2, The Hill filed the entry that belongs on the same ledger and does not match the others. U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema ruled that Google does not have to break up its advertising technology business — a year after her own court found that Google held an illegal monopoly over that industry. The backlash reached Google. It found the monopoly. The remedy it set was to leave the business whole.

New Mexico will collect its $25 billion from Meta. The ad-tech market Judge Brinkema's court found Google had monopolized stays in Google's hands, undivided, by that same court's own order. The gap is not between a company a court found broke the law and one it did not — the monopoly finding against Google stands. The gap is between what a jury can order paid in a privacy verdict and what a judge can decline to order divided in an antitrust one, even holding the same finding of illegality.

Whose column that gap tends to favor is the one that still has the ad-tech business sitting in it, hon.

"Same six weeks, same legal backlash — Meta writes a $25 billion check, Google keeps the ad monopoly a federal judge just found it running. That's not a coincidence, that's a price list: pay up, or be big enough to buy the right to stay whole. Either way the business survives; it's just a question of whose pocket it sits in."

— Sal

"Look, the judge didn't say Google gets to keep breaking the law, she said breaking up a working ad business is a drastic remedy — courts don't reorganize companies lightly, that's restraint, not a pass. Meta's case was about lying to users, a totally different legal theory, you can't lump the two together just because — okay, they're in the same Times story this week. That doesn't mean anything."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Meta's $25 billion fine is one-ninth of what the law actually allowed.* By Ruth · the afternoon edition, 21 October 2026
- *Venezuelan billionaire's daughter hires Trump lawyer Alina Habba; billionaire gets pardon shortly after.* By Ruth · the morning edition, 21 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

How a Legal Backlash Against Big Tech Is Forcing Big Changes
The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *10:33 EDT*

A series of lawsuits has created a new de facto regulatory regime as courts order companies like Meta and Google to change their business practices — and pay up.

· Americans don't agree on much. Backlash to Big Tech might be the outlier *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Google avoids ad tech breakup *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

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

Midterms' largest donor, at $366 million, vows to find out who is really pulling the strings

By STERLING
THE OWNERSHIP DESK

"Bores on OpenAI's spending retreat: I'll believe it when I see it", 6 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA POLITICO — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Elon Musk warned Democrats that any investigation of him after the election will be answered in kind.

WHO GETS PAID. Musk himself and the Republican candidates his money backs.

WHAT SLIPS. Congress loses its power to question the election's biggest spender if asking makes a member the target.

WHAT'S NEXT. If that holds, members who cross him face primaries he pays for; Kentucky saw that in May 2026, when a seven-term congressman lost 55 to 45 in the most expensive House primary on record.

Three hundred and sixty-six million dollars, and the man who spent it would like to know who is really pulling the strings. You will take that for a threat. It is better than a threat — it is a lawful notice of intent, and do note that nothing in it will have to be withdrawn. Independent expenditure: money spent for a candidate and never with one, which is the condition that makes the sum unlimited and the spender untouchable by the coordination rules. Two hundred and seventy-six million of it since July. Since July. On Wednesday the terms were published — "live by the sword, die by the sword," and those who pick a fight should understand he will come for them, "not just their puppets." In September Democrats were rebuked for declining to name him. In Memphis a state representative runs against the data centers xAI built … and the statute sets no hour at which the money stops. The price of a congressional inquiry is now a matter of public record. You have read it.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

ELON MUSK HAS PUT ABOUT $366 MILLION INTO THIS CYCLE, $276 MILLION OF IT SINCE July, more than any donor in the country. On Wednesday he told Democrats that whoever investigates him gets investigated back, down to whoever is pulling the strings. That is not a donation, that is a retainer paid in advance on the committee that would have asked the questions; and because the member who would ask what the Memphis data centers cost has been told up front that asking makes them the subject, the hearing does not get booked, the Colossus machines keep drawing the power they need, and the paper that shows up with your name on it is the electric bill under the magnet on your refrigerator.

Daylight, and the fox crosses the yard
slow. The dog has not barked yet.

— ENOCH
The Ownership Desk

"The guy who put three hundred sixty-six million dollars into this election says he wants to find out who is really pulling the strings — he is not joking, and he is not hiding it either. What he is telling the next Congress is that oversight has a price and the price is you, personally, whoever signs the subpoena. And the law backs him: no cap, no deadline, no requirement to coordinate with anyone, which is exactly why he can say it out loud on a Wednesday."
— Sal

"Independent expenditure — it is speech, it is protected, there is no coordination, and no coordination is what makes it legal, and legal is legal. Did I say legal three times? That does not sound like me. Look, the man said he would find out who is pulling the strings; when your side does that you call it oversight, so spare me the fainting."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *Houthis promise a 'painful' response if the US joins a war it already promised, in writing, to join.* By Lou · the evening edition, 13 October 2026
— *White House still weighing whether to join a war it already backed, in writing, on October 4th.* By Lou · the morning edition, 13 October 2026
— *Agency built to cut government waste fights to the Supreme Court to keep its own paperwork secret.* By Mitch · the morning edition, 13 October 2026
— *Altman said accept some "bad things." Sanders asked which ones. The IMF named one this week.* By The Wrecking Crew · the evening edition, 13 October 2026
— *Washington backed the Saudi offensive nine days ago; the White House is now weighing whether to join it.* By Lou · the evening edition, 13 October 2026
— *White House weighs joining a war Delta already decided was too dangerous to fly into.* By Lou · the evening edition, 12 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

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.

~~Elon Musk becomes biggest donor of US midterms cycle with $366m spent~~

$366m buys a year of classroom supplies for 409,000 teachers.

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *13:13 EDT*

Musk's midterm donations, mostly for rightwing candidates and causes, surpass his contributions to Trump in 2024 Send us your questions on how the US economy is shaping the midterm elections Elon Musk has become the biggest political donor of the 2026 US midterm elections cycle, funneling about $366m into political groups and campaigns...

~~The Midterm Battle over Data Centers: Memphis House Candidate Justin Pearson Fights Elon Musk's xAI~~

'Billionaires profit off our pain': Memphis candidate takes on Musk's data center

Democracy Now! § *08:32 EDT*

The energy needs of the AI boom and the construction of massive data centers in states across the country have created a backlash from both Democratic and Republican voters. The battle against data centers is at the heart of a campaign in Tennessee: Democratic state Representative Justin J. Pearson is opposed to the Colossus data centers...

~~Musk warns Democrats over possible congressional probes~~

Musk threatens to 'come for' lawmakers investigating him

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *11:12 EDT*

SpaceX founder Elon Musk warned Democrats over a possible congressional probe on Wednesday, writing, "live by the sword, die by the sword." "Those who pick fights with me should understand that I will find out who is really pulling the strings and come for them, not just their puppets," Musk wrote on the social platform...

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."

Elon Musk vows to fight back if Democrats investigate him after midterms: 'Live by the sword, die by the sword'
New York Post RIGHT § *10:42 EDT*

"Those who pick fights with me should understand that I will find out who is really pulling the strings and come for them, not just their puppets..." Musk warned.

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

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

· Saudi Arabia sees disruptions at Riyadh airport amid ballistic missile attacks from Houthis *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*

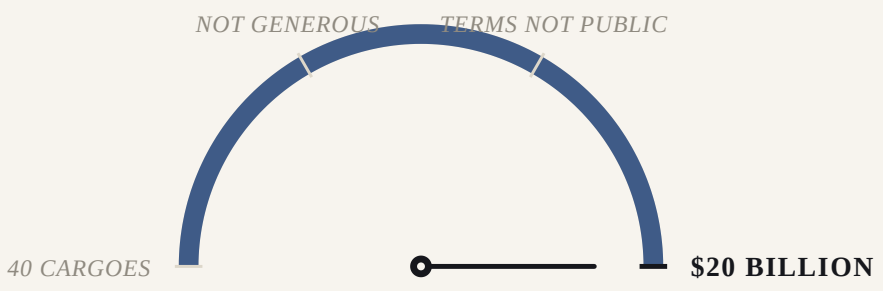
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§69 — 22 OCTOBER 2026

On America First

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



$20 BILLION

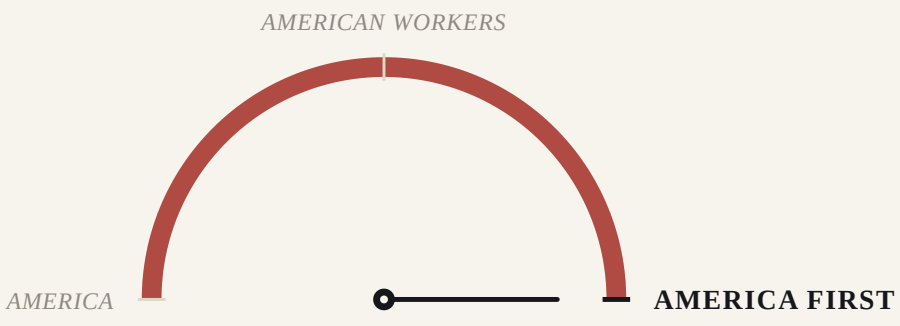
The same weeks. On September 30, 2025, the minority members of the Senate Banking Committee wrote that "Chinese buyers have reportedly purchased up to 40 cargoes of soybeans from Argentina in just one week," and that China "has purchased no U.S. soybeans since May" [1]. Nine days later the $20 billion line was announced; the Congressional Research Service noted at year's end that its terms "are not public" [2].

Then the condition. At a White House lunch with Argentina's president on October 14, ahead of the country's October 26 midterm: "If he loses, we are not going to be generous with Argentina." And: "We're not going to let somebody get into office and squander the taxpayer money from this country" [3]. Three months earlier the country's own foreign aid agency had been closed, folded into the State Department on July 1 [4]. America First, with a swap line for a foreign election.

SOURCES

1. "Chinese buyers have reportedly purchased up to 40 cargoes of soybeans from Argentina in just one week"; China "has purchased no U.S. soybeans since May" — Senate Banking Committee minority letter, 30 September 2025 ↑
2. The swap line's terms "are not public" — Congressional Research Service, R48780, 30 December 2025 ↑
3. "If he loses, we are not going to be generous with Argentina"; "We're not going to let somebody get into office and squander the taxpayer money from this country" — NBC News, 14 October 2025 ↑
4. USAID officially closed on 1 July 2025 — Donor Tracker ↑

REPUBLICAN



AMERICA FIRST

The promise, from the second inaugural: "During every single day of the Trump administration, I will, very simply, put America first" [1]. The hardest test of it came in October 2025, when the Treasury opened a $20 billion currency swap line for Argentina through the Exchange Stabilization Fund [2].

And the defense of that test is real. In January the Treasury secretary said Argentina had "quickly and fully repaid its limited draw," calling it "making tens of millions in profit for Americans — an America First homerun deal" [3]. A loan that comes back with a return is a loan the country does not lose. If the measure of America First is whether American money came home, this one did. What was happening in the same weeks is on the other side.

SOURCES

1. "During every single day of the Trump administration, I will, very simply, put America first" — second inaugural address, transcript — PBS NewsHour, 20 January 2025 ↑
2. A $20 billion swap line through the Exchange Stabilization Fund, announced 9 October 2025; its terms "are not public" — Congressional Research Service, R48780, 30 December 2025 ↑
3. Argentina "quickly and fully repaid its limited draw"; "making tens of millions in profit for Americans – is an America First homerun deal" — Fortune, 9 January 2026 ↑

"I came about something else — a letter from the Senate Banking Committee, the minority side, dated the end of September last year. It says Chinese buyers "reportedly purchased up to 40 cargoes of soybeans from Argentina in just one week," and China "has purchased no U.S. soybeans since May." Then, nine days later, a twenty-billion-dollar swap line from our Treasury to Argentina's. Then at lunch at the White House: "If he loses, we are not going to be generous." Excuse me, I'm going. The week the line was opened, whose soybeans were on the boats to China?" — Lou

🍺

"'America First." Then a twenty-billion-dollar swap line for Argentina, a few days after a Senate letter said Chinese buyers had taken up to forty cargoes of Argentine soybeans in a week and no American beans since May. At a lunch with Argentina's president he said that if that party lost the election, "we are not going to be generous." The Treasury says it got paid back with a profit, and good for the Treasury. America first. Argentina, first in line."

— Sal

🚬

"America First means America goes first, and sometimes going first means extending the credit, and the credit came back with interest, so America went first twice — which, if anything, is more first than the slogan promised."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎