The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2026 — THE AFTERNOON EDITION · FREE, FOREVER

Fox Sports tracks cheerleader's split loyalty by boyfriend's stat line, skips the union she just won.

BY GUS
The Sports Desk

HOT MIC MOMENT

...they cut my live shot for this, and nobody upstairs minds. Column inches for a boyfriend's stat line, nothing for a labor union forming inside the building that employs him. A sports page that tracks a cheerleader's romance but skips her own union vote has already decided which workers get covered. Hand this story to the political desk before the next team tries the same trick.

... Continued on Page S19

THE WORD

§74 — 27 OCTOBER 2026

On the mantle

DEMOCRAT

TACO

REPUBLICAN

THE MANTLE

"I'm the guy who can't afford the thing, so I read the invoice twice. Thirty-five days. Eleven billion dollars, says the Congressional Budget Office, three billion of it not coming back. Wall money in the deal he signed: zero. This year: a stopgap, 370 to 48, signed September 2, good through December 11. Bills finished out of twelve: none. Sorry — I forgot my pen — the vote is in a week and the cliff is in six. Who picked those two dates?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W74

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

THE RATION LINE

Tehran meters gasoline at a 110-liter monthly quota and prices a sangak loaf by provincial order; Washington keeps the lettered list that says which cargo crossing the strait a U.S. insurer may cover.

... Continued on the Investigative Reporting page

Newsom endorses cancelling California's billionaire tax and banning the next one; the $333 million ad machine is redundant

BY STERLING
The Ownership Desk

Two hundred and fifty Californians hold two point three trillion dollars, and Proposition 40 asks the state to take five per cent of it once. Once — one-time, the measure says, a single levy. Ninety per cent of the proceeds to healthcare, the rest to schools and food. Up to a hundred billion dollars. You are waiting for the lawsuit. There is no need of one. In August the advertising opened, from groups behind which sit Sergey Brin and Peter Thiel: Building a Better California, and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes, a handsome name. By this week the Silicon Valley club is a three hundred and thirty-three million dollar machine working next week's elections. Three hundred and thirty-three. Forbids. And what does a prohibition do that a counter-argument does not? It binds the legislature that comes after, and the legislature that comes after is not asked. Debru Carthan, of the healthcare workers' union leading the campaign: "He's showing California his true colors." The vote is the third of November. Ninety per cent of a hundred billion dollars was healthcare.

... Continued on Page F128

Republicans call the polls wrong on Fox, call themselves realists about losing on local TV.

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

Mike Johnson says the polls are wrong, and he says it loudly. Monday on Fox News, the Speaker told Laura Ingraham that surveys showing Democrats ahead are, in his word, "even" worse than they look for the pollsters, not for Republicans, with one week left before the midterms. That same day, Johnson's office also put out dozens of statements endorsing him for the leadership job he already holds — the kind of thing a man secure in his majority does for sport.

Confidence. Actually, call it caution: twelve days earlier, campaigning in New Bern, North Carolina, Johnson gave the real explanation for why House Republicans look rattled, and it wasn't the public surveys. The trouble, he said, is that his own members won't respond to "our own polling." A speaker certain the public polls are lying does not also need a private poll his caucus won't open.

The Senate side ran the identical play, earlier and in front of a bigger crowd. On Sept. 2, Majority Leader John Thune told KELOLAND News back home in South Dakota that he is "a realist," and that he worries about

... Continued on Page A223

Dollar General pays $1.9 million to settle overcharging shoppers, sued four days later for the same thing.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Start with the register tape, because that's where the gap lives. A shelf tag says one price. The register says another.

First, New York. On October 22, the state attorney general's office settled with Dollar General for $1.875 million, over conduct it called "repeated and persistent": charging customers more at checkout than the price promised on the shelf label. State inspectors found overcharges running as high as 39 percent on individual items. Dollar General signed the settlement without admitting wrongdoing, the customary way of agreeing to pay $1.875 million for something you did not do.

The FTC's complaint widens where the gap turns up: shelf tags, weekly flyers, and the company's own website, all three promising a price the register then declines to honor.

That's the arithmetic that matters here, hon: a company gets fined once for a gap, and four days later gets sued again for the same gap, by a different government, using a different word for it. The FTC calls it a pattern that failed inspections did not fix, that complaints did not fix, and that prior enforce-

... Continued on Page F128

Oklahoma's oil regulator skips a thousand pollution fines, finds its enforcement tool for the city's drinking water.

BY THE WRECKING CREW
The Remedy Desk

The chief opens the file on an Oklahoma oil company with about 1,000 pollution violations stacked against its name and a fine total of zero. Before anyone touches the file, there is one page already marked: October 5, when the same company plugged a disposal well that was headed for a city's drinking water. That page is the whole plan, because it is the only time the state's oil and gas regulator ever used the tool it has carried the entire time.

The planner spreads both beats on the table. On one side: a single disposal well, ordered shut because it threatened water a city actually drinks. On the other, arriving three weeks later: ProPublica's count of roughly 1,000 incidents and violations tied to the same operator, and a regulatory record with no fine attached to any of them. The planner does the math out loud — one enforcement action, one thousand chances, and the one that happened is the one where a city's water was the thing at stake. The tool was never missing. It was filed.

The tinkerer takes the well-plugging order apart to see what it is made of, and it turns out to be nothing exotic: a regulator's own standing authority to

... Continued on Page A223

Valkyries one win from WNBA title, may have to clinch it on a practice court.

BY GUS
The Sports Desk

HOT MIC MOMENT

Let this reporter say what the red light is supposed to keep private: a league commissioner's office that writes the anthem into its own rulebook, then watches two franchises skip it three straight Finals games without a word of enforcement, is not protecting the flag — it is renting it out for the broadcast window. Somebody hand this off to the political desk before sports has to adjudicate the First Amendment between timeouts.

... Continued on Page S19

Official who enrolled her daughter proposes a mortgage funded by a donor's stock pledge and a claim form.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

The pitch leans on an account program whose own paperwork, read in order over the past three weeks, does not yet hold what it says it holds.

Start with October 7th. In the Oval Office, President Trump said the accounts would have a "huge effect" limiting young Americans' sympathy for socialism and communism — the first stated dividend on a program that had, by then, enrolled nearly 8 million children in three months. The same day, the administration announced an expansion of more than 70 million additional accounts, automatically opened for every child under 18, bringing the declared total to roughly 78 million. The same announcement carried the fine print: a parent has to file a claim before any of it reaches a child's hands.

Twelve days later, on October 19th, the marquee asset arrived. President Trump thanked Elon Musk for "pledging" SpaceX stock to every enrolled child, calling it "incredible generosity." A pledge is a promise to transfer shares, not a transfer of them. The receipts record the thank-you. They do not record a wire, a share count per account, or a price.

That is the asset the commissioner is now proposing the government lend

... Continued on Page F128

DOJ, losing its California ballot fight for the fourth time, asks Washington to set aside hundreds more.

BY MITCH
Investigations

I read dockets for a living, which obligates me to note that the Department of Justice has now lost the same argument four times since September, and has filed it a fifth.

Start with the record, because the record is the whole story. The accusation came first and empty-handed: a senator called California's mail ballots a harvesting operation and could not point to a single prosecuted case. The Justice Department supplied one on October 19th — 28 green card holders charged with registering and voting, 48 voting-crime counts in all, the docket the accusation had been missing. That was last week's column.

This week the department tried to extend the same theory to the ballots themselves. On October 23rd it asked the Ninth Circuit to order California to segregate 20,000 mail ballots within 48 hours, on the theory that the people who cast them might not be citizens. On October 26th a three-judge panel answered, 2 to 1: no. Not on the merits — the majority found it lacked jurisdiction to grant the emergency order at all. California had already refused the 48-hour deadline; the court agreed it didn't have to comply with an order the

... Continued on Page B45

"Read the page top to bottom and notice what connects it: somebody priced something you thought was yours — your ballot, your checkup, your tank of gas — and mailed you the bill with a flag stamped on it. I started circling the good news. Still holding the pen."

— *Sal*

"Every story on this page is a success that hasn't been explained to you properly yet."

— *Chip*

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

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

THE LEDGER

Newsom endorses cancelling California's billionaire tax and banning the next one; the $333 million ad machine is redundant

By STERLING

THE OWNERSHIP DESK



"How Billionaires Are Fighting the Prop 40 California Wealth Tax", 27 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE NEW YORK TIMES — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. California's governor endorsed a ballot measure that cancels the billionaire wealth tax and bans future taxes on owning assets.

WHO GETS PAID. The roughly 250 California billionaires facing the tax, including the donors behind the anti-tax ad groups, Sergey Brin and Peter Thiel.

WHAT SLIPS. Voters lose the power to tax great wealth later; the ban keeps the question off every ballot after this one.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the rival measure passes November 3, the wealth tax is gone and cannot be put back by vote; that is what Denton, Texas got after 4 November 2014, when almost 59 percent banned fracking and the state barred cities from regulating oil and gas 195 days later.

Two hundred and fifty Californians hold two point three trillion dollars, and Proposition 40 asks the state to take five per cent of it once. Once — one-time, the measure says, a single levy. Ninety per cent of the proceeds to healthcare, the rest to schools and food. Up to a hundred billion dollars. You are waiting for the lawsuit. There is no need of one. In August the advertising opened, from groups behind which sit Sergey Brin and Peter Thiel: Building a Better California, and Californians Against Wasteful Spending and Higher Taxes, a handsome name. By this week the Silicon Valley club is a three hundred and thirty-three million dollar machine working next week's elections. Three hundred and thirty-three. Forbids. And what does a prohibition do that a counter-argument does not? It binds the legislature that comes after, and the legislature that comes after is not asked. Debru Carthan, of the healthcare workers' union leading the campaign: "He's showing California his true colors." The vote is the third of November. Ninety per cent of a hundred billion dollars was healthcare.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

PROPOSITION 40 WOULD TAKE FIVE PERCENT OF THE WEALTH OF ABOUT 250 Californians once, raising up to $100 billion, with ninety percent of it going to healthcare. Against it stand groups funded by Sergey Brin and Peter Thiel, a $333 million ad operation, and a rival measure the governor endorsed that cancels the tax and forbids any new tax on owning assets — that is not a campaign against a tax, that is a wall built across the ballot so the question can never be put to you again. The tax dies on November 3, so the hundred billion never arrives, so the healthcare and the education and the food money stay unfunded, and what goes missing is the food help that puts Monday's dinner on your kitchen table.

Next spring, no hens. Under the neighbour's floor, the fox makes a den.

— ENOCH

The Ownership Desk

"Two hundred and fifty people are sitting on two point three trillion dollars, they get asked for five percent one time, and the answer is a three hundred and thirty-three million dollar ad machine. Ninety percent of that tax was healthcare money — and the governor of the same party as the people who wrote it endorsed the measure that cancels it and bans the next one. They keep telling you there's no money for clinics. The money's right there, and in seven days it gets fenced off."

— Sal

"Look, a one-time tax on 250 people is still a tax on the job creators who fund this entire state, and nobody purchased that second ballot measure — the governor endorsed it himself, which is exactly my point. Did I say purchased? That doesn't sound like me. The ads are speech, three hundred and thirty-three million dollars of speech, and if voters agree with the speech, that's democracy."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Israel lobby routed $13.1 million under other groups' names; the open question is a registration form* By Sterling · the evening edition, 27 October 2026
- *The Treasury secretary told a House committee the department is examining whether it needs Congress at all to mail the $5,000 the president promised adults for keeping Congress Republican, in the same week 750,000 people lost their health coverage with no vote required.* By Mitch · the midnight edition, 4 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

~~How Billionaires Are Fighting the Prop 40 California Wealth Tax~~

Billionaires spent $333 million to kill a tax on billionaires

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *10:55 EDT*

The latest Silicon Valley billionaire club is a $333 million political ad machine that is heavily engaged in next week's elections.

~~A Wealth Tax on Billionaires? California Voters to Decide Prop 40~~

250 billionaires hold $2.3 trillion. California is asking for 5%.

Democracy Now! § *08:47 EDT*

As voters across the United States cast ballots on November 3, Californians are weighing whether to approve a one-time 5% tax on the wealth of billionaires in the state. The tax would apply to roughly 250 Californians who now hold an estimated $2.3 trillion in wealth. Supporters say the wealth tax could raise up to $100 billion, with…

· Newsom Endorses Ballot Measure That Would Cancel Out Billionaire Tax—and Ban Future Wealth Taxes *from the morgue, 11 Oct 2026*

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

· Newsom battles with California Democrats over billionaire tax proposal *from the morgue, 13 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.

Republicans call the polls wrong on Fox, call themselves realists about losing on local TV.

By CHIP
STAFF WRITER



"Mike Johnson: 'The polls are wrong'", 27 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Speaker Mike Johnson tells Fox News the midterm polls are wrong while Senate leader John Thune privately says he worries about losing the majority.

WHO GETS PAID. Speaker Mike Johnson's own leadership bid gets the benefit, as the endorsement flood papers over doubts about his hold on the gavel.

WHAT SLIPS. Voters lose a clear signal of where the race stands, as the party's own leaders publicly dismiss the same polling they privately worry about.

WHAT'S NEXT. No ledger pattern applies here. The next date already on the calendar is the midterm vote itself, one week out from Johnson's Fox interview, when the public confidence and the private worry get settled one way or the other.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Mike Johnson says the polls are wrong, and he says it loudly. Monday on Fox News, the Speaker told Laura Ingraham that surveys showing Democrats ahead are, in his word, "even" worse than they look for the pollsters, not for Republicans, with one week left before the midterms. That same day, Johnson's office also put out dozens of statements endorsing him for the leadership job he already holds — the kind of thing a man secure in his majority does for sport.

Confidence. Actually, call it caution: twelve days earlier, campaigning in New Bern, North Carolina, Johnson gave the real explanation for why House Republicans look rattled, and it wasn't the public surveys. The trouble, he said, is that his own members won't respond to "our own polling." A speaker certain the public polls are lying does not also need a private poll his caucus won't open....

...(cont) The Senate side ran the identical play, earlier and in front of a bigger crowd. On Sept. 2, Majority Leader John Thune told KELOLAND News back home in South Dakota that he is "a realist," and that he worries about Republicans losing the Senate majority, citing high prices and the president's own falling approval. Eight days later, at Trump's midterm convention in Dallas, the party's own crowd booed Thune off the stage he was standing on.

Thune is not worried, he insists in public — he is, by his own account, and he said so eight days before his own convention proved it for him in front of a camera. This week, CBS News describes the job in softer terms: a "balancing act," a "quiet effort" to hold the majority, his biggest test yet — language built for a man who is winning, not one bracing to lose.

Put the Speaker's endorsements beside the Majority Leader's convention crowd and the week's arithmetic is simple. Both of them, on the record, in the same stretch of days, told someone else the opposite — one his own pollsters, the other a TV station back home. Neither correction got walked back. It just got buried under the next press release.

🍺

"""The polls are wrong" is what a guy says right before he hands out business cards to everybody in the room. Johnson floods the wire with endorsements for a job nobody threatened, and Thune tells a South Dakota TV station he's scared eight days before his own crowd boos him off a stage in Dallas. When both of them are this busy telling you it's fine, that's usually the week it isn't."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, the Speaker isn't worried, he's thorough — forty endorsements is due diligence, not a tell. And Thune calling himself a "realist" about the majority is just good leadership, honest about headwinds, which is — okay, that's not exactly what "the majority is safe" usually sounds like. Never mind. The polls are wrong. Stick with that."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

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

Mike Johnson: 'The polls are wrong'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *10:51 EDT*

Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) is professing confidence in his party's position with just one week to go until the 2026 midterms, despite polling showing Republicans are in a tough spot. Johnson told Fox News's Laura Ingraham on Monday that he believes polls showing big leads for Democrats are underestimating Republicans. "I think [polls...

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

Inside John Thune's quiet effort to keep GOP's Senate majority

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *10:46 EDT*

Senate Majority Leader John Thune is fighting to maintain Republican control of the U.S. Senate. CBS News' Kaia Hubbard spoke with Thune about his leadership and behind-the-scenes work.

John Thune's balancing act: Inside his push to save the GOP majority

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *11:19 EDT*

Senate Majority Leader John Thune has tried to balance passing the president's agenda and preserving the independence of the Senate. The midterms are his biggest test yet.

Mike Johnson Releases Unending List Of Endorsements In Bid To Retain Leadership Role

Daily Caller RIGHT § *10:25 EDT*

Johnson released dozens of statements

· Trump's midterm convention crowd boos John Thune *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Thune says he worries about losing Senate majority: 'I'm a realist' *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Mike Johnson says it's hard to get Republicans to respond to 'our own polling' *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· Losing should have consequences for Mike Johnson *from the morgue, 19 Oct 2026*

· A Premature Farewell to the Ignominious Speaker Mike Johnson *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

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Dollar General pays $1.9 million to settle overcharging shoppers, sued four days later for the same thing.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"FTC sues Dollar General for overpricing consumers at checkout", 27 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The FTC sued Dollar General for charging shoppers more at checkout than prices shown on shelves, flyers and its website.

WHO GETS PAID. Dollar General kept the extra money from years of overcharges before any regulator made it stop.

WHAT SLIPS. A $1.9 million New York settlement did not stop the conduct; it took a second federal lawsuit four days later to even get named again.

WHAT'S NEXT. No trial date is set yet. The FTC's own complaint says the pattern already survived thousands of failed inspections and multiple earlier enforcement actions without stopping.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Start with the register tape, because that's where the gap lives. A shelf tag says one price. The register says another.

First, New York. On October 22, the state attorney general's office settled with Dollar General for $1.875 million, over conduct it called "repeated and persistent": charging customers more at checkout than the price promised on the shelf label. State inspectors found overcharges running as high as 39 percent on individual items. Dollar General signed the settlement without admitting wrongdoing, the customary way of agreeing to pay $1.875 million for something you did not do....

...(cont) The FTC's complaint widens where the gap turns up: shelf tags, weekly flyers, and the company's own website, all three promising a price the register then declines to honor.

That's the arithmetic that matters here, hon: a company gets fined once for a gap, and four days later gets sued again for the same gap, by a different government, using a different word for it. The FTC calls it a pattern that failed inspections did not fix, that complaints did not fix, and that prior enforcement did not fix. Two regulators, one filing cabinet, the same number showing up twice.

Run the figures against each other, since Dollar General has not. $1.875 million settles the New York complaint. Thousands of failed inspections and tens of thousands of consumer complaints did not settle anything on their own; they are the record the FTC is now suing on. A 39 percent overcharge on one item in New York is not a single bad scanner. Thousands of failed inspections nationally is not a single bad store. When the same shelf-to-register gap shows up in two governments' paperwork in the same month, the gap is not the story anymore. The response to getting caught is the story — and the response, both times, was to keep the shelf tag and the register running two different numbers until a government made them stop, one jurisdiction at a time, the overcharge presumably still running in every store no government has gotten to yet.

"They treat the fine like a parking ticket — pay the $1.9 million, call it resolved, and the same register keeps ringing up a higher number than the shelf tag everywhere nobody's inspecting yet. That's not a pricing error, that's a business model with the fine built in as a line item. Four days between the check clearing and the next lawsuit — that's not bad luck, that's a company that already did the math on which is cheaper."

— Sal

"Look, at the scale Dollar General operates, pricing systems lag shelf updates, that's just retail, it happens — and they already made this right with New York, they settled, case closed. Did I say case closed? Because the FTC just filed its own suit over the exact same thing four days later, so maybe it wasn't closed. That's — that's not the point I was making."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *ICE posts its highest custody death count in more than a decade; California's own report blames medical neglect.* By The Wrecking Crew · the afternoon edition, 26 October 2026
- *ICE deleted the reviews that could explain its deaths, then confirmed the 60th in custody.* By Mitch · the afternoon edition, 25 October 2026
- *A county coroner confirmed the measles death; the federal agency that certified measles eliminated in 2000 has called the cause under investigation since 1 September.* By The Wrecking Crew · the evening edition, 25 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

FTC sues Dollar General for overpricing consumers at checkout

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *11:27 EDT*

The Federal Trade Commission sued Dollar General, alleging the discount retailer repeatedly charged customers more at checkout than prices advertised on store shelves, in weekly flyers, and on its website. The lawsuit, filed Monday, alleged the pricing problems have persisted for years despite thousands of failed inspections, tens of...

Dollar General agrees to nearly $1.9m settlement for overcharging New York customers

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *13:19 EDT*

Government inspections showed overcharges as high as 39% on some items. The discount store giant was the subject of a 2025 investigation by the Guardian Dollar General, the nation's largest dollar-store chain, has agreed to a $1.875m deal to settle allegations that it "repeatedly and persistently" overcharged customers across New York...

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Oklahoma's oil regulator skips a thousand pollution fines, finds its enforcement tool for the city's drinking water.

By THE WRECKING CREW
THE REMEDY DESK

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Oklahoma's oil and gas regulator fined one company zero times across about 1,000 pollution violations.

WHO GETS PAID. The oil company keeps every dollar it would have paid in fines, since the state issued none.

WHAT SLIPS. The state's power to fine pollution sits unused, so neighbors near its wells lose the only check on almost a thousand violations.

WHAT'S NEXT. No hearing or deadline is set on whether Oklahoma will use this tool again; the record shows it worked once, on October 5, for a city's drinking water.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The chief opens the file on an Oklahoma oil company with about 1,000 pollution violations stacked against its name and a fine total of zero. Before anyone touches the file, there is one page already marked: October 5, when the same company plugged a disposal well that was headed for a city's drinking water. That page is the whole plan, because it is the only time the state's oil and gas regulator ever used the tool it has carried the entire time.

The planner spreads both beats on the table. On one side: a single disposal well, ordered shut because it threatened water a city actually drinks. On the other, arriving three weeks later: ProPublica's count of roughly 1,000 incidents and violations tied to the same operator, and a regulatory record with no fine attached to any of them. The planner does the math out loud — one enforcement action, one thousand chances, and the one that happened is the one where a city's water was the thing at stake. The tool was never missing. It was filed....

...(cont) The tinkerer takes the well-plugging order apart to see what it is made of, and it turns out to be nothing exotic: a regulator's own standing authority to act when a well threatens drinking water, exercised exactly as written, exactly once. Every part needed to do it again is already in the drawer — the same authority, the same agency, the same signature line. The tinkerer's note in the file: this does not need a new law. It needs the agency to read the one it has on every file, not just the one that reached a city's tap.

The muscle goes after the actual structure holding the other 999 violations up, which is not a loophole but a habit: a pollution report lands, a fine does not follow, and the file closes itself. That habit is the thing getting wrecked first, because until it is gone the tool just sits back in the drawer no matter how well it worked on October 5.

The pilot's job is the simplest one on the crew: fly the same order the regulator already signed out again, on the next file, and the one after that. Nobody on this crew promises the agency will do it. The receipts only show it can — once, on October 5, when a city's drinking water was on the line. The other 999 did not get that treatment. The file stays open on whether they ever will.

🍺

"They tell you there's no money for enforcement, no staff, no tools — then watch how fast that agency finds the tool it owns the day the water heading for a city's tap is the one at risk. A thousand pollution reports sat on a desk with no fine attached, and the one time the regulator moved, it was protecting that city's drinking water. That's not an enforcement gap, that's a target list, and anyone not near that well is still waiting."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, you can't fine every single violation, that's not how balanced regulation works — the agency has discretion, that's the whole point of having a regulator. Although I guess discretion used once in a thousand tries, when you put it like that, doesn't really sound like discretion, it sounds like — did I say that? That's not what I meant."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Meta pays forty-two billion dollars for data privacy violations, changes zero lines of code.* By Ruth · the evening edition, 26 October 2026
- *Attorney general behind historic Meta fine says, "we are prepared to do this again."* By Ruth · the afternoon edition, 25 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

This Oil Company Is Linked to 1,000 Pollution Incidents and Other Violations. Oklahoma Never Punished It.

ProPublica § *05:00 EDT*

The post This Oil Company Is Linked to 1,000 Pollution Incidents and Other Violations. Oklahoma Never Punished It. appeared first on ProPublica .

· Oklahoma Oil Company Plugs Disposal Well That Posed Threat to City's Drinking Water *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.

Valkyries one win from WNBA title, may have to clinch it on a practice court.

By GUS
THE SPORTS DESK



"WNBA championship celebration could be moved to practice court in unfortunate twist", 26 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The Golden State Valkyries beat the Atlanta Dream to move one win from the WNBA title.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Nothing slips here yet.

WHAT'S NEXT. The next event on the calendar is Game 6 of the Finals, and the record already has Chase Center's availability for any clinching celebration in question.

● HOT MIC MOMENT

Let this reporter say what the red light is supposed to keep private: a league commissioner's office that writes the anthem into its own rulebook, then watches two franchises skip it three straight Finals games without a word of enforcement, is not protecting the flag — it is renting it out for the broadcast window. Somebody hand this off to the political desk before sports has to adjudicate the First Amendment between timeouts.

GUS HIS SIDE

This reporter has watched championship corridors collapse under their own velvet rope before, but never has this reporter seen a franchise stand two wins from immortality only to learn the building itself may not be free. By this reporter's count, the Golden State Valkyries need two more victories to claim the WNBA crown after a workmanlike 68-55 triumph over the Atlanta Dream Monday night in Game 5 at Chase Center.

Correction noted, though this reporter maintains the final digit is a technicality beside the larger drama: for the second consecutive Finals contest, the plucky gals of both ballclubs failed to appear for the national anthem, a vanishing act this reporter finds almost patriotic in its brevity.

Regardless, this reporter turns to the matter of the coronation itself, which this reporter is reliably informed may not occur at Chase Center at all, owing to a scheduling conflict this reporter traces back to roughly the Carter administration.

TRUDY *HER SIDE*

One win, Gus, not two — the Post and the Guardian both have Golden State up three games to two, a single victory from the trophy. And it was 64-55. Keep the box score in front of you, not behind the bar.

Third straight game, not second — Fox News had it October 22nd, the Valkyries and the Dream skipping the anthem in Game 3 same as Games 1 and 2, same as the league's own rulebook says they're supposed to stand for. And they're not "plucky gals," Gus — they're the two best rosters left in a championship series. Try "professionals."

Rebuke first: Gus, nobody's litigating the First Amendment at a bar ten minutes after you swore the mic was dead. Now the receipt — the Post reported October 26th the title celebration could get bumped to a practice court because Chase Center's already got another show booked, and the league's own anthem mandate is real too, same Fox News, October 22nd. Go lie down, sugar, and let somebody else count the wins before Game 6.

"Golden State's selling out a championship series and the people who own the building still might bump the trophy ceremony for somebody else's concert — that's the tell: the lease runs on whoever pays the venue, not whoever built the moment. The Valkyries could end up becoming champions in a practice gym because the building had a better offer, and that's not bad luck, that's priorities."

— Sal

"Look, it's not a snub, it's just basic business — whoever's paying for the building that week gets the building, and if that happens to land on a championship clincher, well, that's efficient scheduling, not disrespect. Call it the free market doing exactly what it's designed to do. Did I just defend somebody else's concert over a championship? That doesn't sound like me."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

WNBA championship celebration could be moved to practice court in unfortunate twist

New York Post RIGHT § *19:34 EDT*

The Valkyries and Dream square off in Game 5 of the WNBA Finals Monday. The series is tied at two games a piece, making Monday's matchup a critical turning point. If Golden State or Atlanta manage to win back-to-back contests, then Game 6 would be the clincher.

Valkyries one win from WNBA crown after shutting down Dream in Game 5

New York Post RIGHT § *23:35 EDT*

The Valkyries are one win away from a WNBA championship. Golden State took care of business against the Dream in Game 5 of the WNBA Finals with a 64-55 victory Monday night at the Chase Center. Ballhalla was booming after the Valkyries protected home court and gained a 3-2 lead over Atlanta in the series....

Golden State Valkyries one win from WNBA title after Game 5 win over Atlanta Dream

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *22:39 EDT*

WNBA finals Game 5: Dream 55-64 Valkyries Golden State lead best-of-seven series 3-2 Valkyries could win title in second WNBA season Kiah Stokes kept swatting shots on the interior, while Veronica Burton disrupted the Dream with her own quick hands to alter shots. And that crazed, violet-clad "Ballhalla" home crowd roared at every chance...

· Atlanta Dream and Golden State Valkyries skip national anthem for third straight WNBA Finals game *from the morgue, 22 Oct 2026*

· Valkyries and Dream ditch National Anthem for second game in a row during WNBA Finals *from the morgue, 20 Oct 2026*

· Steph Curry reps Valkyries star Veronica Burton's jersey as Golden State begins WNBA Finals *from the morgue, 17 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.

Official who enrolled her daughter proposes a mortgage funded by a donor's stock pledge and a claim form.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Trump Accounts are just the beginning. Young Americans need a path to homeownership", 27 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA FOX NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A former FHA commissioner who enrolled her own daughter in a Trump Account proposes a taxpayer-backed mortgage program built on it.

WHO GETS PAID. Elon Musk's SpaceX gets public credit for funding millions of children's accounts without yet transferring any stock or cash.

WHAT SLIPS. No one checks whether the pledged stock ever reaches an account; each of roughly 78 million families must file their own claim to find out.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the pledge goes unverified, the claimed wealth will not match what families actually receive; that is what Washington got after 19 February 2025, when the efficiency office's own itemized receipts were cut in half while the headline savings number stood.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The pitch leans on an account program whose own paperwork, read in order over the past three weeks, does not yet hold what it says it holds.

Start with October 7th. In the Oval Office, President Trump said the accounts would have a "huge effect" limiting young Americans' sympathy for socialism and communism — the first stated dividend on a program that had, by then, enrolled nearly 8 million children in three months. The same day, the administration announced an expansion of more than 70 million additional accounts, automatically opened for every child under 18, bringing the declared total to roughly 78 million. The same announcement carried the fine print: a parent has to file a claim before any of it reaches a child's hands....

...(cont) Twelve days later, on October 19th, the marquee asset arrived. President Trump thanked Elon Musk for "pledging" SpaceX stock to every enrolled child, calling it "incredible generosity." A pledge is a promise to transfer shares, not a transfer of them. The receipts record the thank-you. They do not record a wire, a share count per account, or a price.

That is the asset the commissioner is now proposing the government lend against. Her plan treats the Musk pledge as capital sturdy enough to underwrite a national mortgage rate cut, in the same month reporting confirmed the program's headline wealth is a stock pledge rather than cash, and the same three weeks in which the government has told the roughly 78 million families enrolled that they must file a claim form themselves to collect anything at all.

Hon, if a bank teller told a customer their account was funded by a stock certificate nobody has priced, dated, or transferred, and then handed the customer a form to fill out before they could draw on it, a state examiner would have a word for that. Here it is called expanding opportunity. The commissioner's own daughter holds one of these accounts. The receipts do not say whether the stock has reached it, or whether the paperwork has been filed. They do say that roughly 78 million other children's accounts sit in the identical condition, and that the next line of credit the government is proposing to build runs through the same unfiled form.

"They put a kid's name on a brokerage statement, tell you it's wealth, and now they want to borrow against it to cut your mortgage rate — that's not a nest egg, that's a pledge card from a guy who just got thanked by name. The paperwork to actually collect falls on the parent, not the government, so the families who don't have time to chase a claim form get the account number and nothing else. Follow the stock: it's still sitting with the company that pledged it, and the only thing that's moved so far is the press release."
— Sal

"This is generous — Elon stepped up, gave American kids a stake in the future, and a former commissioner with actual housing experience wants to build on it. Sure, it's a pledge and not a wire transfer, but — did I say "not a wire transfer"? That's not — look, the accounts exist, the claim form exists, the mortgage idea exists, that's three things that exist."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Brazil's fix for mayors shutting down election-day buses: two extra hours to vote.* By The Lodgers · the evening edition, 25 October 2026
- *Washington shuts its own Brazil consulates two days before the election it swears it isn't touching.* By The Lodgers · the afternoon edition, 25 October 2026
- *Prices rose 3.7 percent in September; the same report set Social Security's 2027 raise at 3.6 percent.* By Ruth · the morning edition, 14 October 2026
- *CBS exclusively obtained drone-strike video the Army still hasn't shown the dead soldier's parents.* By The Wrecking Crew · the early evening edition, 7 October 2026
- *Carlson doubts Britain should have fought WWII; Cruz answers that the UK is better off for winning it.* By Mort · the matinee edition, 7 October 2026
- *Senate Democrats ask for the war's cost; a senator is barred from the base that would prove it.* By Mort · the sunrise edition, 7 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: NAR puts the median first-time homebuyer at 40 years old - a record - and first-time buyers at a record-low 21% of the market *National Association of Realtors, 2025 Profile*

Trump Accounts are just the beginning. Young Americans need a path to homeownership

Fox News RIGHT · *05:00 EDT*

A former FHA commissioner who enrolled daughter Margot in a Trump account in March of 2025 proposes a Trump mortgage to slash homebuyer rates.

· Trump predicts 'Trump Accounts' will limit spread of socialism, communism *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· Trump thanks 'legendary friend' Musk for pledging SpaceX stock to Trump Accounts *from the morgue, 19 Oct 2026*

· Trump expands Trump Accounts access: Here's how you can claim it on behalf of your child *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· Trump celebrates all kids under 18 having a Trump Account — but parents must claim it for financial benefits *from the morgue, 7 Oct 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*

· '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*

· 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*

· Warsh indicates Fed could raise rates to cool inflation *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· Key U.S. Bond Rate Near 20-Year High as Oil Prices Keep Climbing *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· 10-year Treasury yield hits highest level since 2007, oil surges above $105 as Fed expected to hike interest rates *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Benchmark mortgage rate hits 14-month high as bond yields keep rising *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Benchmark mortgage rate hits highest mark in over a year *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· Goldman Sachs warns oil prices could hit $120 as U.S. fuel costs surge *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Massie Moves to Force Impeachment Vote Against Hegseth, Citing Civilian Deaths *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· GOP Rep Thomas Massie introduces 8 articles of impeachment against War Secretary Pete Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Republican Rep. Massie moves to impeach Defense Secretary Hegseth over Iran war *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Thomas Massie Forces Vote To Impeach Pete Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Pete Hegseth Faces Growing Criticism as War With Iran Rolls On *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· Hegseth Quietly Extends Middle East Troop Deployments Into 2027 as Iran War Drags On *from the morgue, 3 Sep 2026*

· Costco imposes purchase limits on motor oil, hikes prices by nearly double *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· As gas averages $4.31 nationwide, diesel fuel hits all-time high: "It's painful. It's real hard" *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Costco Raises Motor Oil Price, Caps Customer Purchases As Iran War Drags On *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· 'Can't Message That Away': GOP Frets as Trump Administration Desperately Spins Record-High Diesel Prices *from the morgue, 5 Sep 2026*

· European Union member states agree to a natural gas price cap in an attempt to limit economic damage from the global energy crisis. The price cap can be triggered beginning on February 15, if for thre *from the morgue, 19 Dec 2022*

· Spike on 10-year bond yields renews concerns over U.S. debt *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· 10-Year Treasury Yield Reaches 5%, Highest Level in Years *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Treasury reveals $6B in debt buybacks, triple the normal level – but markets slump *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Trump blames rise in diesel prices on Ukrainian strikes against Russian oil refineries *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· Trump blames rising diesel price on Russia-Ukraine war *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· What Is Driving Diesel Prices Up? Energy Chaos Caused by Two Wars. *from the morgue, 14 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.

20,000 BALLOTS

DOJ, losing its California ballot fight for the fourth time, asks Washington to set aside hundreds more.

By MITCH
INVESTIGATIONS

“Appeals court declines to step in on Trump administration's California voting case”, 27 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA ABC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The Justice Department asked courts to set aside mail ballots in California then Washington state, and courts said no.

WHO GETS PAID. Republican candidates in the competitive House and Senate races the ballots could decide.

WHAT SLIPS. State election officials' sole control over counting ballots is what the Justice Department keeps asking federal courts to override.

WHAT'S NEXT. If this pattern holds, ballots get challenged up to certification; that is what Texas got after 1 March 2022: mail-ballot rejections jumped from 0.8 percent to 12.4 percent before officials fixed it.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I read dockets for a living, which obligates me to note that the Department of Justice has now lost the same argument four times since September, and has filed it a fifth.

Start with the record, because the record is the whole story. The accusation came first and empty-handed: a senator called California's mail ballots a harvesting operation and could not point to a single prosecuted case. The Justice Department supplied one on October 19th — 28 green card holders charged with registering and voting, 48 voting-crime counts in all, the docket the accusation had been missing. That was last week's column....

...(cont) This week the department tried to extend the same theory to the ballots themselves. On October 23rd it asked the Ninth Circuit to order California to segregate 20,000 mail ballots within 48 hours, on the theory that the people who cast them might not be citizens. On October 26th a three-judge panel answered, 2 to 1: no. Not on the merits — the majority found it lacked jurisdiction to grant the emergency order at all. California had already refused the 48-hour deadline; the court agreed it didn't have to comply with an order the court itself wasn't empowered to issue.

All together now — count the losses. September 10th, the First Circuit called the administration's mail-in voting order "likely unlawful." September 14th, the Supreme Court declined to enforce it before the midterms anyway. September 24th, the California Supreme Court ordered a sheriff who'd seized 650,000 ballots to give them back, calling the seizure unlawful under a statute that says ballots do not leave election officials' custody, ever. October 26th, the Ninth Circuit, 2-1. Four courts, four no's, one filing office.

The fifth filing came the same week as the fourth no. On October 27th, less than two weeks after the California demand, the department asked Washington state to set aside more than 400 ballots on the identical theory: suspected noncitizens, named by the government, unverified by any court. Washington has competitive House and Senate races. So did California's targeted counties. The document does not explain the coincidence. The document never explains anything; it just asks, again, for a bigger list, in a new state, before the count that decides who holds the chamber.

Four denials have not produced a different filing. They have produced the same filing with a new venue line. All together now — that's the whole case, clause by clause, state by state, and it still hasn't named one proven vote.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

FOUR FEDERAL COURTS HAVE TOLD THE SAME FILING NO SINCE SEPTEMBER, THE FOURTH coming Monday by a single vote. That isn't a lawsuit anymore, it's a list-building operation with a courtroom for a waiting room. Because California said no, the list moved to Washington state; because Washington has a Senate race worth winning, the next list moves to whichever state is closest when the counting starts, until the "set aside" stamp lands on the mail ballot with your name already printed on the envelope.

“They couldn't name one prosecuted case, so they built forty-eight, and when forty-eight wasn't enough they went after twenty thousand mail ballots outright — got told no four times and just moved the ask to Washington state. This isn't about finding noncitizen voters, it's about building a list the government can point at the day the count gets close. Four strikes in, they're not slowing down, they're expanding — and the next list has your state's name on it if your race is close enough to matter.”

— Sal

“The administration is simply asking states to double-check a few names before the count — that's basic election integrity, not an assault on anybody's ballot. Four courts said no on jurisdiction, not on the merits, so the underlying concern stands untouched. And look, moving the same ask to Washington right after losing in California isn't a pattern, it's just — okay, I hear it now, that is exactly what a pattern sounds like.”

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Senator accuses California of ballot harvesting; Justice Department files charges for registering to vote.* By Mitch · the morning edition, 26 October 2026
- *Senator calls California 'guilty' of ballot harvesting, names zero cases prosecuted under it* By Mitch · the evening edition, 26 October 2026
- *Attorney general vows fair Cornell probe, hires someone else to be fair, then won't discuss it* By Lou · the evening edition, 25 October 2026
- *Attorney general vows fair Cornell probe, hires outside lawyer to be fair for her* By Lou · the morning edition, 25 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

~~Appeals court declines to step in on Trump administration's California voting case~~

Appeals court rejects DOJ bid to flag 20,000 California ballots over citizenship

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *22:35 EDT*

Appeals court rejects DOJ request for immediate order demanding California segregate 20,000 mail-in ballots from those Trump administration says are likely non-citizens.

~~DOJ asks appeals court to intervene for California mail-in ballot lawsuit~~

DOJ asks court to block 20,000 ballots it claims are noncitizen votes

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *23:12 EDT*

The Department of Justice (DOJ) on Thursday asked an appeals court to intervene in its lawsuit against California to temporarily block the state from counting more than 20,000 mail-in ballots cast by what the Trump administration claims are from non-U.S. citizens. The request, made to the Ninth U.S.

~~Appeals court rejects DOJ's expedited bid to set aside 20,000 California mail ballots~~

DOJ tried to strip 20,000 ballots on suspicion alone

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *19:51 EDT*

A federal appeals court Monday evening dismissed the Trump administration’s emergency appeal seeking to require California to set aside mail ballots associated with more than 20,000 people the government suspects are noncitizens or illegal immigrants ineligible to vote. In a 2-1 order, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals found it...

~~California judges deal huge blow to DOJ's bid to strip 20,000 voters from next week's elections — despite stunning court revelations~~

DOJ tried to purge 20,000 voters days before the election. Judges said no.

New York Post RIGHT § *20:11 EDT*

The DOJ's lawsuit accused state officials of not meeting a 48-hour deadline to review the thousands of names the administration deemed suspicious.

Court blocks bid by Trump DoJ to stop California from counting mail-in ballots

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *20:31 EDT*

Newsom accuses Trump of ‘assault on democracy’ as DoJ claims 20,000 registered voters in state are non-citizens A US federal appeals court rejected the Trump administration’s move to block California from counting the ballots of 20,000 registered voters that the justice department claims are non-citizens. The court on Monday ruled 2-1...

Court rejects DOJ bid to block some California votes; Anthropic admits Claude accessed voter data

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *20:07 EDT*

Anthropic admitted that its Claude chatbot accessed voter statistics in Georgia without being instructed to do so. Also on Monday, an appeals court ruled against the Trump administration's bid to block certain votes in California. CBS News election law expert and contributor David Becker has more.

~~Trump administration asks Washington to set aside hundreds of ballots from suspected noncitizen voters~~

Trump administration targets ballots in states that could decide control of Congress

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *21:26 EDT*

This is the latest sign of the administration’s attempts to challenge states with competitive midterm races that could determine control of Congress The Trump administration on Monday asked Washington state to set aside any ballots received from more than 400 people it alleges are registered to vote without US citizenship, less than two...

DOJ asks Washington state to set aside 400 ballots from voters it says may be noncitizens

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *21:08 EDT*

The move is the Trump administration’s latest attempt to involve itself in ballot counting and certification that’s handled by state officials.

~~Appeals Court Declines to Intervene in California Ballot Lawsuit~~

Trump administration tried to toss 20,000 mail ballots. A court said no.

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *20:04 EDT*

By a 2-1 vote, a federal appeals court panel denied the Trump administration’s request that it immediately order the state to set aside 20,000 mail-in ballots.

Court dismisses DOJ's request to force California to set aside ballots

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *19:37 EDT*

A federal appeals court on Monday dismissed the DOJ's effort to force California election officials to set aside thousands of ballots that the Trump administration claims may have been cast by alleged noncitizens.

· Appeals Court Rejects 'Likely Unlawful' Trump Push to Undermine Mail-In Voting as Supreme Court Looms *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Supreme Court denies Trump’s emergency request to enforce mail-in ballot restrictions *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· California Supreme Court rules sheriff who ran for governor must return seized ballots *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

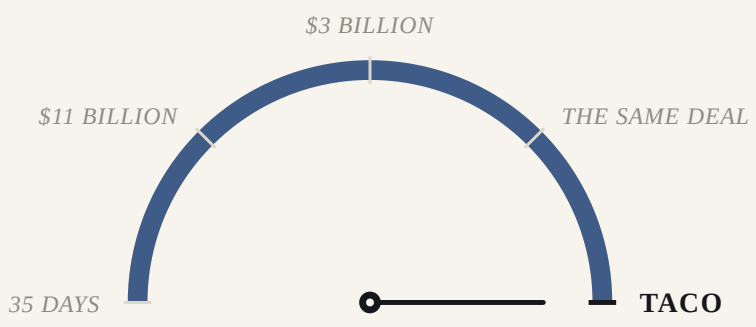
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§74 — 27 OCTOBER 2026

On the mantle

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



TACO

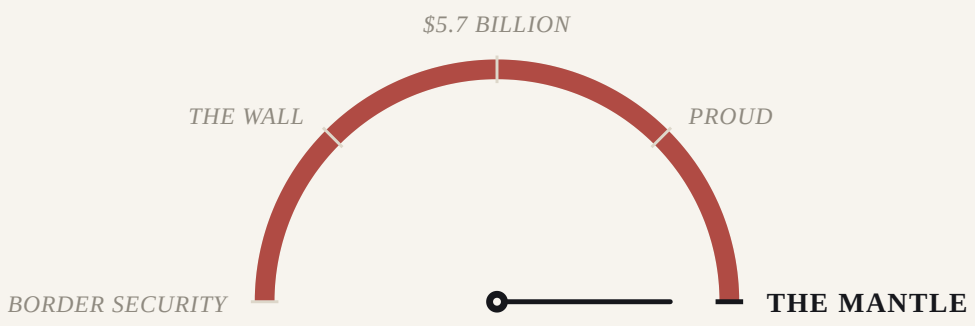
The bill for the mantle, from the government's own accountant: the Congressional Budget Office put the cost of the shutdown at $11 billion, about $3 billion of it never recovered [1]. Wall money obtained: zero; the bill signed to end it was the one on the table before it started [2]. That is the oldest entry on this ledger with a dollar figure: the threat cost more than the fold recovered, and the fold was to the original offer.

Now the callback, seven days before the vote. The fiscal year turned October 1 with no shutdown, because a stopgap passed the House 370 to 48, the Senate's version 90 to 6 in July, and the president signed it September 2 [3][4]. The continuing resolution runs to December 11; of the twelve appropriations bills, none has been enacted [3]. The mantle stayed in the closet through the election, and the cliff was moved to five weeks after it. The last time it came out it cost $11 billion and bought the deal already on the desk.

SOURCES

1. The partial shutdown cost about $11 billion, of which about $3 billion is not expected to be recovered — Congressional Budget Office, 28 January 2019 ↑
2. The shutdown ended with no wall funding, on the deal previously rejected — NBC News, January 2019 ↑
3. The House passed the stopgap 370–48, following the Senate's 90–6 in July; the continuing resolution runs to 11 December 2026 with none of the twelve appropriations bills enacted — Government Executive, 1 September 2026 ↑
4. The president signed the funding bill on 2 September 2026, avoiding a shutdown ahead of the midterms — Fox News, 2 September 2026 ↑

REPUBLICAN



THE MANTLE

The sentence was said on camera in the Oval Office on December 11, 2018, to the two Democratic leaders, and it is rare in the genre for asking for the blame in advance: "I am proud to shut down the government for border security, Chuck … I will take the mantle. I will be the one to shut it down" [1]. The demand was $5.7 billion for the wall. The case as made: a border is a line, a line needs a barrier, and a government that will not fund the barrier can close until it does.

That is a coherent position, and taking the mantle is the honest way to hold it — you own the shutdown so the other side cannot. The shutdown ran 35 days, the longest in the country's history, and ended when the president signed a bill reopening the government with no wall money in it: the same deal he had rejected before it began [2]. The mantle was taken. What it was worn for is priced in the next column.

SOURCES

1. "I am proud to shut down the government for border security, Chuck … I will take the mantle. I will be the one to shut it down" — CNN, 11 December 2018 ↑
2. The 35-day shutdown ended with a bill containing no wall money — the same deal previously rejected — NBC News, January 2019 ↑

"I'm the guy who can't afford the thing, so I read the invoice twice. Thirty-five days. Eleven billion dollars, says the Congressional Budget Office, three billion of it not coming back. Wall money in the deal he signed: zero. This year: a stopgap, 370 to 48, signed September 2, good through December 11. Bills finished out of twelve: none. Sorry — I forgot my pen — the vote is in a week and the cliff is in six. Who picked those two dates?" — Lou

🍺

"I will take the mantle. I will be the one to shut it down." Thirty-five days, eleven billion dollars, three of it gone for good, and he signs the deal he'd already refused — no wall money in it. This year the stopgap passed the House 370 to 48 and he signed it the next day, no mantle. The next cliff is December 11, after the election, and none of the twelve bills is done. The mantle's in storage till it's useful."

— Sal

🚬

"The shutdown was leadership, ending it was leadership, and signing this year's stopgap without a fight was leadership of a quieter kind, the kind you do before an election so that you can do the other kind after one."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎