The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2026 — THE MORNING EDITION FREE, FOREVER

Sanctions waiver meant to cut diesel prices leaves automakers paying more for diesel.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

The filing starts in September, before Russia even enters this ledger. On September seventeenth the Transportation Department gave diesel truckers a ninety-day waiver to drive up to sixteen hours a day, because, the department said, fuel costs were already running high on account of the war in Iran. That is one war, already blamed, three weeks before the war we are discussing today gets its turn.

On October sixth the White House tried the supply side again, this time from the other end: the president announced steps to widen access to red-dyed, tax-exempt diesel, aimed at bringing the retail number down. Two days later the number had not moved. The Washington Examiner reported on October eighth that the diesel average kept climbing despite the administration's own order suspending diesel fuel tax payments. The fix shipped. The price did not follow it out the door.

Two days after that, on October tenth, the administration reached for Russian diesel directly and lifted the sanctions on it, the fuel this desk has been pricing since the war in Ukraine began. President Zelensky objected,

... Continued on Page F129

THE WORD

§75 — 28 OCTOBER 2026

On invasion

DEMOCRAT

3.1 PERCENT

REPUBLICAN

INVASION

"The small thing that bothers me is the word, so I read the proclamation. March of last year: "an invasion or predatory incursion against the territory of the United States." Then the Border Patrol's own figures: July of this year, nine thousand two hundred ninety-five apprehensions, "94% lower." Then the Supreme Court, twice: notice first, and a day's notice with no instructions "surely does not pass muster." Then the people on the flights: two hundred thirty-eight, and eight of them with violent convictions. Excuse me — I'll let you get back to it. If the crossings are down ninety-four percent, what's the invasion now?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W75

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

WHO PICKS THE JUDGE

The 2022 map put all 382 of Kansas City's Jackson County precincts in one U.S. House district; the 2025 map spreads them across three and cuts 20 of them apart block by block.

... Continued on the Investigative Reporting page

FDA sent the peptide plan to the White House two weeks before Kennedy called it new policy.

BY MORT
The Records Bureau

The protection that a drug prove itself safe in a human being before it is sold to one has died quietly, and the agency that killed it has an alibi ready: it was already busy answering a different hypocrisy charge.

On October 15, the Food and Drug Administration forwarded its peptide "interim access policy" to the White House for review, a filing that would let compounding pharmacies produce and sell drugs previously held back for lack of human testing. Four days later, on October 19, Donald Trump signed an executive order on women's health, promoted by Melania Trump, establishing a new Women's Health Division at the National Institutes of Health.

Ten days after that signature, on October 29, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced the step the FDA had already queued: he moved to expand access to peptide drugs promoted for wellness, drugs that, per the wire reports, have not finished clinical trials in human subjects. The policy's own calendar is the obituary. Fourteen days from an internal filing to a public announcement, for drugs sold as wellness; a different clock, measured in years, still runs for the diseases that disproportionately affect women.

... Continued on Page H15

Jewish Democrat defects to the campaign calling El-Sayed a jihadist, says it protects Jewish Michiganders.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Two weeks out, the Michigan Senate stage has produced four beats, and only the last is new today. At a Rogers rally in Grand Rapids, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. told the crowd Arabs have not won a Nobel, a Fields, or a Wolf; The Hill and the Guardian corrected the record days later — Arabs have won all three, repeatedly. Rogers followed Kennedy at the same podium with the Muslim Brotherhood claims against Abdul El-Sayed. On October 26, on NBC's "Meet the Press," Rogers said he did not call El-Sayed a "terrorist" — a denial that answers one word, not the claim beside it.

By Wednesday the race had moved past the podium. Politico reported that President Trump's attacks on El-Sayed as a "jihadist" now dominate the race's final week; El-Sayed called them "desperate, bad faith" and kept campaigning. The same day, the Washington Examiner reported that Jason Turkish — the Jewish fiancé of Rep. Haley Stevens, the Democrat El-Sayed beat in the primary — will vote for Rogers, citing El-Sayed's ties to streamer Hasan Piker as a danger to Michigan's Jewish community. El-Sayed's answer, to The Hill the same day: a movement to take on Trump, and "if folks have issues that are

... Continued on Page F129

Treasury Secretary rebuts Cheesecake Factory joke by posing for cameras outside a Cheesecake Factory.

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

Let's start with what this is actually a response to, because the administration insists there is a real answer here, if you give it a minute. It required something, apparently.

Because two days later, on Monday, the sitting Treasury Secretary of the United States walked out of an actual Cheesecake Factory in Washington and stood there for the cameras to answer it. Scott Bessent told reporters the real builder of a "tomb" here was Obama — his words were that Obama was the one who'd built "the museum that looks like Darth Vader's tomb." That's the rebuttal. Not the $900 million figure. Not a defense of the ballroom. A cabinet secretary, on a sidewalk, pointing at a different building than the one in the joke, outside a restaurant that has nothing to do with either building, for the cameras.

Here's the part I'm supposed to defend and can't quite find a way into. My assignment is to tell you what this proves about who's serious and who isn't. I have the quotes in front of me and none of them get me there — there's no official who went on the record calling this strategy, there's just a man standing

... Continued on Page A225

Group called the Department of Peace publishes names of 10,000 ICE and Border Patrol agents

BY MITCH
Investigations

A group calling itself the Department of Peace released the identities of more than 41,000 Department of Homeland Security employees on Wednesday, among them the names of 10,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol agents. Surveillance programs. The particulars of undercover initiatives. All together now — line by line, the file reads like an organizational chart the agency never agreed to draw.

This is the third federal personnel disclosure in four weeks, and the three have nothing else in common. On 28 September, a group called ShinyHunters told the outlet 404 Media that it had obtained personnel records on every FBI employee, home addresses and spouses included, and had decided from the beginning never to publish any of it. Two days later, on 30 September, a Pentagon breach exposed Social Security numbers belonging to 2.76 million living Americans connected to the military; by 12 October the count under review had passed 3 million. Three agencies, three different kinds of trouble, inside the same four weeks.

The Guardian asked DHS for comment on the leak of its own staff's identi-

... Continued on Page A225

Justice Department calls ballot counting disenfranchisement, loses its bid to stop the count six days before the vote.

BY LOU
One More Question

My nephew is in his second year of law school, and I take him very seriously, because somebody in this family has to know what a motion is. I called him Wednesday night, after I read that a federal judge in California turned down the Justice Department's request to set aside twenty thousand mail ballots, and I asked him a simple question: if a court says no in the morning, can you take the same ask to a different court by afternoon and call it a new argument?

He said that's not quite what happened. He said what happened is this: the department asked a trial judge to stop the count. The trial judge said no. The department then asked an appeals court, the same day, to say the trial judge was wrong. The appeals court said no too. Same day. I wrote that down — "same day" — because I wanted to be sure I had it right, and I checked it twice.

Is that normal, I asked him. He said normal isn't the word he'd use. He said what's unusual is the pattern — the Supreme Court, back in September, on a different mail-ballot request from this same administration, also said

... Continued on Page B47

Hegseth fires his own top planner for leaks, two months after a senator urged firing Hegseth instead.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Lt. Gen. Brett Sylvia kept the department's five-year plan, the J-5 director for strategy, plans and policy on the Joint Staff. On October 29, Secretary Pete Hegseth fired him, for what a Pentagon official called leaks. The New York Post's ledger notes Sylvia is the second officer to lose that same chair under this secretary; the department does not keep a running count for us, so we're doing it here, one firing at a time.

Start the filing where the trouble is dated. On August 31, Army Secretary Dan Driscoll resigned, after what The Hill called a months-long turf war with Hegseth. Two days later, on September 2, Sen. Thom Tillis went to the cameras and asked President Trump to fire Hegseth himself, for "inept management" of the military, citing Driscoll's exit as his evidence. One day after that, on September 3, former Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall, who held the job one administration back, under President Biden, told CNN the department under Hegseth was "dysfunctional." Two officials, one day apart, reached for two different words — inept, dysfunctional — and landed in the same place: the man running personnel decisions should not be running personnel

... Continued on Page F129

Washington seizes Venezuela's oil, then says Venezuela gave it to Americans as a gift.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

A reconciliation needs two entries for the same thing, so start with the thing. Nine months ago the United States removed Venezuela's president. The Energy Secretary came home and told reporters a 30-minute military operation had opened 65 billion barrels of Venezuelan oil to American buyers, 35 percent of it running straight into the Pentagon's own column.

On August 30, Trump posted on Truth Social that he intended to "fill up the Strategic National Reserves," calling the process "topping out" and the whole arrangement "a Gift from Venezuela to the People of the United States."

Two days later, on September 1, a federal watchdog filed a different number. The Treasury Inspector General reported that IRS audit revenue had fallen 35 percent for the year, after the administration cut the staff that audits the wealthiest filers — the same 35 percent that, in the other filing, was the Pentagon's new cut of Venezuelan oil. One 35 percent arrived as a gift, announced. The other arrived because a watchdog went looking.

Five days later, on September 6, the Energy Secretary filed his own word for the arrangement. He denied the United States had stolen the oil, one hour

... Continued on Page F129

"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*

By spring the dog sleeps in the shed.
A man finds fewer hens at dusk.

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

FDA sent the peptide plan to the White House two weeks before Kennedy called it new policy.

By MORT
THE RECORDS BUREAU



“US Health Secretary RFK Jr to expand access to unapproved peptides”, 29 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA BBC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. eased access to wellness peptides untested in human trials on October 29.

WHO GETS PAID. Compounding pharmacies gain the right to make and sell peptide drugs once held back for lack of testing.

WHAT SLIPS. The public's guarantee that a drug is tested on humans before it is sold slips out of the FDA's own rulebook.

WHAT'S NEXT. The interim policy remains with the White House for review; the public record sets no hearing or vote date yet.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The protection that a drug prove itself safe in a human being before it is sold to one has died quietly, and the agency that killed it has an alibi ready: it was already busy answering a different hypocrisy charge.

On October 15, the Food and Drug Administration forwarded its peptide "interim access policy" to the White House for review, a filing that would let compounding pharmacies produce and sell drugs previously held back for lack of human testing. Four days later, on October 19, Donald Trump signed an executive order on women's health, promoted by Melania Trump, establishing a new Women's Health Division at the National Institutes of Health....

...(cont) Ten days after that signature, on October 29, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced the step the FDA had already queued: he moved to expand access to peptide drugs promoted for wellness, drugs that, per the wire reports, have not finished clinical trials in human subjects. The policy's own calendar is the obituary. Fourteen days from an internal filing to a public announcement, for drugs sold as wellness; a different clock, measured in years, still runs for the diseases that disproportionately affect women.

BBC News reported that health experts have cautioned against the drugs, citing a lack of clinical trials for humans and unknown long-term effects.

The old rule was not complicated. A drug proved itself first, on paper, in a trial, before it reached a shelf. It is survived by the paper trail that replaced it: an interim policy forwarded to the White House on October 15; a Women's Health Division signed into being four days later; and, ten days after that, a secretary who had unveiled price transparency on October 5 clearing a path for drugs with no human trial behind them.

Call it malarkey or call it policy; the paperwork does not care which word you use, and neither, it turns out, does the agency.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that before the next wellness peptide reaches a compounding pharmacy's shelf, somebody run the human trial first.

“They had this peptide plan sitting at the White House two full weeks before the health secretary stood up and called it new — that's not a policy rollout, that's a paper trail catching up to a press conference. The same month they're announcing a women's health order, they're still cutting women's health funding with the other hand. Nobody tested these peptides on a human being first, and the guy running your health department just told the drugstores to go ahead.”
— Sal

“Look, this is about cutting red tape so patients get access to innovative wellness options faster — the agency's just streamlining, not skipping anything, it's an "interim" policy, which is a totally different thing from "untested"... actually, is it? Did I say interim? That's not landing the way I wanted.”
— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

US Health Secretary RFK Jr to expand access to unapproved peptides
BBC News MAINSTREAM § *23:09 EDT*
Health experts have cautioned against use of the drugs, citing a lack of clinical trials for humans and the unknown long-term effects.

~~Dr. Jon LaPook explains why peptide sales are controversial~~
RFK Jr. expands access to unapproved drugs with no proof they're safe
CBS News MAINSTREAM § *19:45 EDT*
Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. took steps on Wednesday that could expand access to some unapproved drugs called peptides, which are being promoted for wellness.

RFK Jr. to ease access to unapproved peptides, draft policy states
CBS News MAINSTREAM § *21:20 EDT*
Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. took steps Wednesday that could open up access to certain unapproved peptide drugs that are being promoted for wellness.

· FDA advances peptide push to White House *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· 'Blatant Hypocrisy': Trump Signs Executive Order on Women’s Health—While Attacking Women's Health *from the morgue, 19 Oct 2026*

· Watch live: RFK Jr., Trump officials unveil health care price transparency push *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.

Jewish Democrat defects to the campaign calling El-Sayed a jihadist, says it protects Jewish Michiganders.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK



“Haley Stevens’s Democratic fiance backs Mike Rogers, says el Sayed imperils Jewish community”, 29 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. President Trump called Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed a "jihadist," and a Jewish Democrat's fiancé joined the campaign against El-Sayed.

WHO GETS PAID. Republican nominee Mike Rogers gains a Jewish Democrat's crossover endorsement and the weight of a sitting President's attacks on his opponent.

WHAT SLIPS. The correction that Arabs have won the Nobel, Fields and Wolf prizes reaches voters only after the false claim and the "jihadist" label already shaped the race.

WHAT'S NEXT. Michigan's Senate race is now in its final week with no debate on the calendar; Rogers already skipped the one televised town hall, on September 16.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Two weeks out, the Michigan Senate stage has produced four beats, and only the last is new today. At a Rogers rally in Grand Rapids, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. told the crowd Arabs have not won a Nobel, a Fields, or a Wolf; The Hill and the Guardian corrected the record days later — Arabs have won all three, repeatedly. Rogers followed Kennedy at the same podium with the Muslim Brotherhood claims against Abdul El-Sayed. On October 26, on NBC's "Meet the Press," Rogers said he did not call El-Sayed a "terrorist" — a denial that answers one word, not the claim beside it.

By Wednesday the race had moved past the podium. Politico reported that President Trump's attacks on El-Sayed as a "jihadist" now dominate the race's final week; El-Sayed called them "desperate, bad faith" and kept campaigning. The same day, the Washington Examiner reported that Jason Turkish — the Jewish fiancé of Rep. Haley Stevens, the Democrat El-Sayed beat in the primary — will vote for Rogers, citing El-Sayed's ties to streamer Hasan Piker as a danger to Michigan's Jewish community. El-Sayed's answer, to The Hill the same day: a movement to take on Trump, and "if folks have issues that are more important to them than that, that's fine."...

...(cont) Turkish is not the first Democrat the Rogers campaign has put on the record. On September 14, Joe Manchin told CNBC, "I do support Mike Rogers... Two days later El-Sayed called Rogers a "coward" for skipping a Fox 2 Detroit town hall, and on October 7 his campaign opened an ad accusing the former House Intelligence chairman of building the surveillance state he was then declining to debate.

National reporting already counts Arab-American voters leaving the Republican Party that produced all four: the Nobel claim in Grand Rapids, the Brotherhood claim on the same stage, Trump's "jihadist" label this week, and a sitting congresswoman's own fiancé campaigning against her former rival over it. The ballot, not the podium, answers which of those four facts mattered most.

🍺

“This is one campaign working four mouths: the health secretary erases Arab scientists from the record, the candidate revives a loyalty-test smear, the President calls a doctor running for Senate a jihadist, and a fiancé on cable turns Jewish safety into the alibi. All four land on the same ballot, in the same final week.”

— Sal

🚬

“Look, Mike Rogers specifically never used the word "terrorist" — that's a fact, Kristen Welker herself — I mean, that's on tape. The health secretary's numbers were off, sure, but nobody's disputing Arabs are great mathematicians, historically, is that — did I just say historically? Strike that. And Jason Turkish is a Democrat, so this isn't even a Republican talking point, it's bipartisan concern, which is the strongest kind.”

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Health Secretary RFK Jr.'s false Arab-prize claim and Rogers' Muslim Brotherhood smear hit the same Michigan stage.* By Sal · the afternoon edition, 28 October 2026
- *Trump calls fraud rampant on a dragnet judges halted twice that flagged 400 names, six days out* By Chip · the morning edition, 28 October 2026
- *Netanyahu presses for action against Iran his own military chief already resisted, days before election.* By Lou · the evening edition, 27 October 2026
- *Israel bars European lawmakers who came to watch the olive harvest its settlers are burning; it votes Tuesday* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 26 October 2026
- *Israel's army sealed the West Bank and ran its largest drill in years; neither was on Tuesday's ballot* By Sterling · the evening edition, 26 October 2026
- *The Supreme Court found ninety days enough room to run a voter-purge database and twelve days too few to read a student ID.* By Ruth · the evening edition, 25 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Haley Stevens’s Democratic fiance backs Mike Rogers, says el Sayed imperils Jewish community

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *22:14 EDT*

BIRMINGHAM, Michigan — Jason Turkish, the Jewish Democratic fiance of Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI), said Wednesday he plans to vote for Republican Mike Rogers in Michigan’s closely watched Senate race, accusing Democratic nominee Abdul el Sayed of making the community less safe for Jews and saying his association with controversial...

El-Sayed responds to Stevens's fiancée endorsing Rogers

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *21:53 EDT*

Michigan Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed responded to his former primary opponent Rep. Haley Stevens’s (D-Mich.) fiancée endorsing his GOP opponent former Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.).

Trump’s anti-Muslim attacks dominate Michigan’s election homestretch

Politico MAINSTREAM § *05:00 EDT*

After Trump called him a “jihadist,” Abdul El-Sayed brushed off the “desperate, bad faith attacks”

· Rogers: I never called El-Sayed a 'terrorist' *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· ‘The Elephant Was Not in the Room’: El-Sayed Blasts 'Coward' Mike Rogers For Ditching Debate *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Joe Manchin says he’s not OK with Abdul el Sayed becoming senator, says Mike Rogers will ‘do a great job’ *from the morgue, 14 Sep 2026*

· 'Mike Rogers Is Watching You': Abdul El-Sayed Hits GOP Opponent Over Support for Mass Surveillance *from the morgue, 7 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.

Treasury Secretary rebuts Cheesecake Factory joke by posing for cameras outside a Cheesecake Factory.

By CHIP
STAFF WRITER

“Obama mocks Trump’s response to Cheesecake Factory jibe. ‘They mobilized a whole of government response to that joke!’ – as it happened”, 29 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Let's start with what this is actually a response to, because the administration insists there is a real answer here, if you give it a minute. It required something, apparently.

Because two days later, on Monday, the sitting Treasury Secretary of the United States walked out of an actual Cheesecake Factory in Washington and stood there for the cameras to answer it. Scott Bessent told reporters the real builder of a "tomb" here was Obama — his words were that Obama was the one who'd built "the museum that looks like Darth Vader's tomb." That's the rebuttal. Not the $900 million figure. Not a defense of the ballroom. A cabinet secretary, on a sidewalk, pointing at a different building than the one in the joke, outside a restaurant that has nothing to do with either building, for the cameras....

...(cont) Here's the part I'm supposed to defend and can't quite find a way into. My assignment is to tell you what this proves about who's serious and who isn't. I have the quotes in front of me and none of them get me there — there's no official who went on the record calling this strategy, there's just a man standing outside a restaurant. So let me tell you what happened instead: a joke got made, and a cabinet department answered it standing next to breadsticks.

Trump, for his part, disputed which one of them was really the decade-long regular. That's the state of the argument five days before the election: not the renovation, not the $900 million, but who orders there more.

My instinct here is to close by calling this a distraction, cooked up by the other side to keep you off the economy for one more week. That instinct doesn't survive contact with the facts I was handed. Bessent did stand outside that restaurant. For the cameras. On a Monday. There's no version of my job where I get to call that someone else's doing.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

THE TREASURY SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES STOOD OUTSIDE A CHEESECAKE Factory for the cameras to answer a joke about a Cheesecake Factory. That is not a rebuttal, it is the government holding a press conference to confirm the premise. Because the number that got no press conference is $900 million, and because the former president already told the crowd the response was built for a joke and not for inflation, the argument you are left with by the time you get home is not about the renovation at all, it is about whether the price on your own grocery receipt went up again this week.

“Five days before an election, the administration's whole answer to a renovation it will not price out loud is a cabinet secretary standing outside a chain restaurant for the cameras. That is not rebuttal, that is distraction with its own address. You are going to vote without hearing what $900 million in White House construction actually bought, and that is the whole trick.”

— Sal

“Secretary Bessent was simply setting the record straight about who actually built what, that's basic accuracy in public discourse, that's — okay, he was standing outside a restaurant responding to a joke with a photo op, I'm aware of how that reads. But the administration takes seriousness extremely seriously, which is presumably why the Treasury Secretary personally handled a Cheesecake Factory joke five days before an election. I did not mean to say that last part.”

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

~~Obama mocks Trump’s response to Cheesecake Factory jibe. ‘They mobilized a whole of government response to that joke!’ – as it happened~~

DOJ fights to keep Trump’s ally in office after judge rules him illegally serving

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *21:53 EDT*

This live blog is now closed. Sign up for the Breaking News US email For months, Mary Peltola’s campaign for Alaska’s Senate seat has denied any connection to a separate campaign launched by a man who, coincidentally, shares the exact same name as Peltola’s Republican opponent, Dan Sullivan. New reporting from the New York Times...

~~Obama knocks White House's response to Cheesecake Factory jab: 'These are not serious people'~~

White House responded to a joke, not inflation, Obama says

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *21:44 EDT*

Former President Obama on Wednesday responded to uproar over a recent campaign trail jab at President Trump’s White House decorations, slamming Republicans for focusing more on the joke than on the economy. “They mobilized a whole-of-government response to that joke, not to inflation, but to that joke,” Obama said during a campaign rally...

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

‘They mobilized a whole government response to that joke’: Obama laughs off Trump attacks in rally for Ossoff

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *22:12 EDT*

Former US president comes to Georgia to support Jon Ossoff for US Senate and Keisha Lance Bottoms for governor Barack Obama, speaking at a Wednesday campaign rally in suburban Atlanta, offered a closing argument for Democrats in the final week of the midterm election campaign. “These are not serious people,” he said of Donald Trump and...

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*

Obama and Trump hold dueling rallies as midterm campaigns make final pitch

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *01:09 EDT*

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3, and early voting is underway throughout the country.

But: **USA Today: the ballroom reached $600 million, with taxpayers on the hook for half** *USA Today, 16 June 2026*

Obama says he was a Cheesecake Factory regular for a decade in retort to Trump

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *22:57 EDT*

Former President Barack Obama on Wednesday continued an unusual war of words over the Cheesecake Factory with President Donald Trump, marking the latest development in a battle over White House renovations that turned into a debate about the restaurant. The saga began over the weekend when Obama mocked Trump’s effort to build a ballroom...

But: **The White House ballroom was announced at $200 million and now costs $400 million; the East Wing was demolished for it** *Fortune, 6 April 2026*

Obama jabs Trump over White House ‘arts and crafts’ at campaign rally in Georgia

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *23:48 EDT*

Former President Barack Obama launched a searing string of attacks on President Donald Trump during a rally alongside Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA) and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Keisha Lance Bottoms while on the campaign trail outside Atlanta on Wednesday evening. After making waves last week over comments that Trump’s ballroom and...

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

Trump, Obama trade barbs at dueling primetime rallies days before midterm elections

New York Post RIGHT § *23:31 EDT*

“I always worry when [Obama] campaigns against me,” Trump said sarcastically. “He got involved with Hillary Clinton ... and he lost.

· Bessent mocks Obama outside Cheesecake Factory in DC *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· Obama on Trump White House: ‘Like Saddam Hussein opened a Cheesecake Factory’ *from the morgue, 25 Oct 2026*

· Obama on Trump White House: ‘Like Saddam Hussein opened a Cheesecake Factory’ *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Obama compares Trump's White House renovations to 'Saddam Hussein opening a Cheesecake Factory' at Ohio rally *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

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

THE THIRD BREACH

Group called the Department of Peace publishes names of 10,000 ICE and Border Patrol agents

By MITCH
INVESTIGATIONS

"Massive data breach exposes 40,000 US Homeland Security employees", 29 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A hacktivist group called the Department of Peace published identities of Homeland Security employees, including ICE and Border Patrol agents.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. Nothing slips here yet.

WHAT'S NEXT. DHS says it is investigating the leak; the record sets no hearing date or deadline for that investigation yet.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

A group calling itself the Department of Peace released the identities of more than 41,000 Department of Homeland Security employees on Wednesday, among them the names of 10,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol agents. Surveillance programs. The particulars of undercover initiatives. All together now — line by line, the file reads like an organizational chart the agency never agreed to draw.

This is the third federal personnel disclosure in four weeks, and the three have nothing else in common. On 28 September, a group called ShinyHunters told the outlet 404 Media that it had obtained personnel records on every FBI employee, home addresses and spouses included, and had decided from the beginning never to publish any of it. Two days later, on 30 September, a Pentagon breach exposed Social Security numbers belonging to 2.76 million living Americans connected to the military; by 12 October the count under review had passed 3 million. Three agencies, three different kinds of trouble, inside the same four weeks....

...(cont) The Guardian asked DHS for comment on the leak of its own staff's identities. DHS did not immediately return the message.

Set the two hacking cases side by side and the difference is not a motive, it is a decision. ShinyHunters had FBI employees' data and chose not to release it. The Department of Peace had DHS employees' data and did. Nothing here confirms that theory or refutes it. It confirms only that 41,000 personnel files are easier to find this week than they were last week, and that the agency whose employees they describe has, so far, had nothing to say about it.

"They've got ten thousand badge numbers loose on the internet and the agency's answer is silence — no statement, no deadline, nothing. That's the whole racket: spend years building files on everybody else, then act stunned when somebody builds one back on you."
— Sal

"This puts brave officers in the field at risk, full stop — wait, no, that's also what we said about the service members whose Social Security numbers the Pentagon lost in September, and the FBI staff whose data got stolen the week before that. How many departments is that now? Forget I said that — data security is a top priority going forward."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Justice Department calls ballot counting disenfranchisement, loses its bid to stop the count six days before the vote.* By Lou · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *Minecraft billionaire lists $70 million mansion seventeen days after Newsom endorsed a measure cancelling the billionaire tax* By Sterling · the evening edition, 28 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Massive data breach exposes 40,000 US Homeland Security employees
New York Post RIGHT § *03:01 EDT*
A data breach has exposed sensitive details of over 40,000 DHS employees, including officials in surveillance and human intelligence roles.

DHS investigates massive data breach exposing 40,000 employees, including ICE and Border Patrol agents
Fox News RIGHT § *00:31 EDT*
The Department of Homeland Security is investigating a breach that exposed roughly 40,000 employees, including 10,000 ICE agents and CBP personnel.

But: Republicans' reconciliation package puts $70 billion into ICE's department *NBC News, May 2026*
Hackers expose the identities of more than 40,000 DHS employees
NPR MAINSTREAM § *23:28 EDT*
A group of hacktivists calling themselves Distributed Denial of Secrets, said the unmasking of ICE agents, DHS operatives and contractors was fair play, given the government's lack of transparency.

But: Republicans' reconciliation package puts $70 billion into ICE's department *NBC News, May 2026*
Non-profit group leaks data of more than 40,000 homeland security workers
The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *21:25 EDT*
Information released by Distributed Denial of Secrets is the third such government data disclosure in the last month Data identifying more than 41,000 employees and contractors for the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was released on Wednesday in an unprecedented leak that reveals how the agency is organized. The records, which...

But: Republicans' reconciliation package puts $70 billion into ICE's department *NBC News, May 2026*
Details of thousands of US immigration agents leaked in major hack
BBC News MAINSTREAM § *21:30 EDT*
A group called the Department of Peace released information on more than 41,000 DHS staff.

· Pentagon data breach exposes Social Security numbers, personal info of 2.76M US military, civilian personnel *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· Pentagon data breach exposes records of over 3M people *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· Social Security corrects death, citizenship information for millions of numbers *from the morgue, 21 Oct 2026*

· FBI Hackers Say They Won't Publish Massive Trove of FBI Employee Data *from the morgue, 28 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.

Justice Department calls ballot counting disenfranchisement, loses its bid to stop the count six days before the vote.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION

"Judge rejects Trump admin request for order to segregate 20,000 Calif. ballots", 29 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA ABC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A federal judge rejected the Justice Department's bid to set aside California mail ballots, which the department is appealing.

WHO GETS PAID. The Trump administration and the Republican Party, who gain if disputed ballots are kept from counting before a close midterm.

WHAT SLIPS. Local election officials' control over their own ballot counts is slipping under Justice Department threats of prosecution for tabulating contested ballots.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the department keeps appealing after losing at every level, it likely loses again; that is what Washington got after the 25 March 2025 election order: parts enjoined within a month and the rest permanently blocked within fifteen months.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

My nephew is in his second year of law school, and I take him very seriously, because somebody in this family has to know what a motion is. I called him Wednesday night, after I read that a federal judge in California turned down the Justice Department's request to set aside twenty thousand mail ballots, and I asked him a simple question: if a court says no in the morning, can you take the same ask to a different court by afternoon and call it a new argument?

He said that's not quite what happened. He said what happened is this: the department asked a trial judge to stop the count. The trial judge said no. The department then asked an appeals court, the same day, to say the trial judge was wrong. The appeals court said no too. Same day. I wrote that down — "same day" — because I wanted to be sure I had it right, and I checked it twice....

...(cont) Is that normal, I asked him. He said normal isn't the word he'd use. He said what's unusual is the pattern — the Supreme Court, back in September, on a different mail-ballot request from this same administration, also said no. The trial court, Wednesday, said no. The appeals court, Wednesday, said no. Three courts. One argument. Does an argument get stronger with use, or does it just get older?

I went out to the garage after that, because the car's been doing a thing where it turns over twice before it catches, and I got to thinking about a word in the department's own filing. The word was "emergency." A lawyer for the department wrote that the delay "disenfranchises American citizens through dilution." I had to read that one twice myself. The ballots in question were cast weeks ago. The letters demanding counties set them aside went out on the 24th. The lawsuit was filed on the 15th. The thumb drive — there was a thumb drive, with a handwritten password taped to it — went to Los Angeles County two days before that. Does two weeks of filings count as urgent, or is that just how long it takes to lose in front of three different courts?

My nephew didn't have an answer for that one. He said that's not a law school question, that's a dictionary question. Fair enough.

What I keep turning over isn't even the two weeks. It's that losing didn't end it. The trial judge said no Wednesday morning. The appeals court said no Wednesday afternoon. By Wednesday evening the department had filed notice that it's appealing again — not reconsidering, not withdrawing, appealing — the same request, headed somewhere else. Six days before an election it would decide, if it worked. Does an argument that's failed at three levels of court get a fourth hearing because the calendar is short, or because the calendar is the point?

I was going to leave it there. But — excuse me, before you go — one more thing, because it's bothering me and I'd be lying if I said it wasn't. The department's own filing said the delay "disenfranchises American citizens." Twenty thousand people, whose ballots a trial judge and an appeals court both said can be counted like anyone else's, are the ones the department says are being disenfranchised — by the ruling that lets their ballots be counted, not by the request that tried to stop it. I don't like to come back to one word twice in a column, and I'm sorry to do it again, but what do you call it when the word for stopping the count and the word for losing the fight to stop it turn out to be the same word — emergency?

"They're the ones trying to stop ballots from being counted, and they're calling that saving your vote — that's the whole con, right there, in their own filing. Three courts told them no inside two weeks, and they filed to appeal again the same day, six days before the election that count was going to decide. That's not a legal strategy, that's running out the clock on twenty thousand people's mail."

— Sal

"Look, the department is just making sure every ballot is legitimate, nobody's against counting lawful votes — they just want these twenty thousand set aside first, which, I'll grant you, is the opposite of counting them, but that's due diligence, not — did I say "set aside," that's not the word, let me circle back. Three separate courts used a different word. I'm not going to repeat it."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *Minecraft billionaire lists $70 million mansion seventeen days after Newsom endorsed a measure cancelling the billionaire tax*
By Sterling · the evening edition, 28 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Judge rejects Trump admin request for order to segregate 20,000 Calif. ballots

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *23:54 EDT*

The Justice Department sought an emergency order in the case.

~~Judge rebuffs Trump DoJ's bid to force California to set aside 20,000 ballots~~

DOJ tried to toss 20,000 California ballots over noncitizen fraud that's extremely rare

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *21:54 EDT*

Justice department had demanded state segregate and not count ballots from people it claimed were non-citizens A federal judge declined to order California election officials to segregate and not count ballots from people the Trump administration claimed were non-citizens, rebuffing a legally thin request from the justice department that...

~~Judge denies DOJ effort to isolate 20,000 California mail ballots~~

DOJ tried to block 20,000 ballots days before the midterms. A judge said no.

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *21:33 EDT*

A federal judge on Wednesday denied the Department of Justice's bid to force California to set aside mail ballots associated with more than 20,000 suspected noncitizens, rejecting an emergency intervention less than a week before the midterm elections. U.S. District Judge David Carter, an appointee of former President Bill Clinton...

Feds launch immediate appeal after judge rejects bid to stop California from counting 20K disputed ballots

New York Post RIGHT § *22:01 EDT*

"Every day, more ballots are processed by election officials. This ongoing emergency disenfranchises American citizens through dilution," Essayli said.

Judge denies the Justice Department's bid to stop processing California ballots

NPR MAINSTREAM § *20:52 EDT*

While the judge rejected the Department of Justice's unprecedented demand in California, the case isn't over yet. The federal government immediately filed notice that it will appeal.

Judge rejects DOJ's push to force California to set aside ballots

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *22:39 EDT*

A federal judge on Wednesday rejected the Trump administration's bid to require California election officials to separate out mail ballots received from roughly 20,000 people it claims are not U.S. citizens.

Judge Rejects Trump Officials' Bid to Set Aside California Ballots

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *23:14 EDT*

The judge ruled that no immediate action was necessary, dealing another setback to the administration as it moves to target voting by noncitizens.

~~DOJ's California ballot fight rejected by another judge~~

Judge: states, not Trump's DOJ, control their own elections

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *20:59 EDT*

The Trump administration's bid to separate 20,000 mail ballots in California that it says are likely noncitizens met another defeat on Wednesday as a trial judge refused to intervene. U.S. District Judge David Carter ruled California can continue to accept the questioned ballots like any other.

California judge denies Trump DOJ request to segregate alleged noncitizen ballots

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *20:52 EDT*

A federal judge in California on Wednesday refused the Trump administration's request to segregate 20,000 mail-in ballots from individuals it alleges are noncitizens.

US judge rejects Trump admin interference in California midterm vote

Le Monde MAINSTREAM § *23:14 EDT*

Democratic Party leaders have sued the Trump administration over the request, accusing Republicans of aiming 'threats and intimidation' at state and local officials before the vote.

· California officials ordered by DoJ to set aside 'likely' noncitizen ballots *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Trump administration threatens California officials if noncitizens vote in midterms *from the morgue, 17 Oct 2026*

· Trump administration threatens California officials if noncitizens vote in midterms *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· US justice department sues California over alleged noncitizen voting *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· Supreme Court denies Trump's emergency request to enforce mail-in ballot restrictions *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.

Hegseth fires his own top planner for leaks, two months after a senator urged firing Hegseth instead.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Hegseth ousted top military strategist from Pentagon, sources say", 29 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth fired the Pentagon's top military planner over alleged leaks.

WHO GETS PAID. Secretary Hegseth's own office gains tighter control over Pentagon planning, as the officers who might challenge him keep getting removed or cut.

WHAT SLIPS. The Pentagon's internal check on the secretary's decisions slips, as the officers positioned to challenge him keep losing their jobs.

WHAT'S NEXT. No case in the ledger matches an officer purge for leaks; the next dated event on the record is next week's election, after which the administration has signaled it may order further strikes on Iran.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Lt. Gen. Brett Sylvia kept the department's five-year plan, the J-5 director for strategy, plans and policy on the Joint Staff. On October 29, Secretary Pete Hegseth fired him, for what a Pentagon official called leaks. The New York Post's ledger notes Sylvia is the second officer to lose that same chair under this secretary; the department does not keep a running count for us, so we're doing it here, one firing at a time.

Start the filing where the trouble is dated. On August 31, Army Secretary Dan Driscoll resigned, after what The Hill called a months-long turf war with Hegseth. Two days later, on September 2, Sen. Thom Tillis went to the cameras and asked President Trump to fire Hegseth himself, for "inept management" of the military, citing Driscoll's exit as his evidence. One day after that, on September 3, former Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall, who held the job one administration back, under President Biden, told CNN the department under Hegseth was "dysfunctional." Two officials, one day apart, reached for two different words — inept, dysfunctional — and landed in the same place: the man running personnel decisions should not be running personnel decisions....

...(cont) Four weeks after Tillis spoke, on September 29, a Pentagon official confirmed a 20 percent cut to the slots reserved for generals and admirals — part of what The Hill's sourcing described as Hegseth's push to overhaul the department's outlook.

Sylvia's firing today is that plan's first visible line item. The J-5 chair plans five years out. It has now changed hands twice since Hegseth arrived, and the number of people in the building ranked to object to how he runs it is about to drop by a fifth.

Reconciling the ledger: a senator asked for Hegseth's job in September. Hegseth answered in October by eliminating someone else's. The arithmetic works out, hon — just not for the five-year plan, and not for the people who were supposed to hold it.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

HEGSETH FIRED THE ONE OFFICER WHO HELD THE PENTAGON'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN, THEN confirmed cutting a fifth of its generals and admirals four weeks after a senator called his department dysfunctional and asked Trump to fire him instead. That isn't a reorganization, it's clearing out the only rank with enough stars to put a number on what the Pentagon spends. Because the officers senior enough to question that spending are the officers being cut, the spending goes through with no one left in the room to flag it, the money comes out of the same ledger as your paycheck, and the only line that moves is the withholding number printed under your name every two weeks.

"A senator called the Pentagon "dysfunctional" in September and told Trump to fire the guy running it. A month later Hegseth hadn't fired himself — he'd fired the general who held the five-year plan, the second guy to lose that job under him, and started cutting one in five general's jobs instead. That's not an overhaul, that's thinning out the only rank with enough stars to outrank him on the way out the door."
— Sal

"Look, personnel changes happen, officers rotate out, that's completely normal Pentagon business, nothing to see here. Secretary Hegseth is streamlining the chain of command, trimming bloat — that's what reform looks like — and if a general leaked sensitive planning material, well, frankly, good riddance... did I just say "leaked"? We don't actually know that, that's an allegation. Forget I said that."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *White House loses three court battles and a poll, then calls the retreat mercy.* By Mort · the afternoon edition, 18 October 2026
— *Trump cancels the livestream, keeps the firing squad.* By Sterling · the evening edition, 18 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

But: The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one *Military Times, 19 December 2025*
Hegseth fires Pentagon's top military planner over alleged leaks
CBS News MAINSTREAM $ *05:09 EDT*

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has fired the Pentagon's top military planner, Army Lt. Gen. Brett Sylvia, a Pentagon official told CBS News.

But: The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one *Military Times, 19 December 2025*
Hegseth ousted top military strategist from Pentagon, sources say
The Hill MAINSTREAM $ *22:05 EDT*

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ousted a top military strategist from the Pentagon, The Hill has learned, marking another senior officer who has been removed from the department since Hegseth took the helm close to two years ago. Hegseth fired Army Lt. Gen.

Hegseth dismisses top military strategist from Joint Chiefs as Trump contemplates further Iran strikes
Washington Examiner RIGHT $ *00:16 EDT*

War Secretary Pete Hegseth ousted a top military strategist from the Joint Chiefs of Staff this week as President Donald Trump contemplates additional strikes on Iran following next week's elections. Hegseth fired Army Lt. Gen.

Hegseth fires top Pentagon war planner Brett Sylvia in latest military shake-up
New York Post RIGHT $ *02:20 EDT*

Army Lt. Gen. Brett Sylvia is the second general to be ousted from the post under Hegseth.

A top general pushed out at Pentagon's Joint Staff
ABC News MAINSTREAM $ *23:44 EDT*

Lt. Gen. Brett Sylvia is the latest senior military officer to be sidelined.

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

· Army Secretary Driscoll resigns after months-long turf war with Hegseth *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*

· Hegseth to cut 20 percent of admirals, generals in major Pentagon overhaul *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· 'A Perfect Metaphor': Hegseth Staffers Broke Historic Globe After Pentagon Chief Demanded It for His Office *from the morgue, 22 Oct 2026*

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

· Trump announces Nidal Hasan execution 'will not be streamed' *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· Nidal Hasan's Public Execution Is Off, But Propagandists Are Still Using Him as a Martyr *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· For some Christians, Hegseth's plan for public execution fits a biblical mandate *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· Retired US generals call on Pentagon to cancel 'barbaric' execution livestream *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· Majority of Americans oppose public executions: poll *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· UN Says Trump-Hegseth Livestream of Execution Would Breach 'Absolute Prohibition of Torture' *from the morgue, 9 Oct 2026*

· Pentagon vows to livestream first military execution in decades *from the morgue, 9 Oct 2026*

· Republican opposition grows to livestreaming execution of Fort Hood shooter *from the morgue, 9 Oct 2026*

· Voters in Key States See AI Campaign Cash as More Politically Toxic Than AIPAC: Poll *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· White House confirms appeal as Trump-appointed judge extends ruling restoring CNN, MS NOW, Politico access *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Trump White House Restores Access to Politico, MS NOW, CNN Reporters Hours After Judge's Order *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

· Federal judge extends order halting White House press ban while considering long-term ruling *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· Judge orders White House to temporarily restore media access for blocked outlets *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

· Federal judge grants preliminary injunction continuing to block Trump's media ban *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· White House again blocks CNN from press pool as Trump rages against media in wide-ranging interview – live *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Trump made 'clear' that media ban was due to critical coverage, lawyer tells judge *from the morgue, 8 Oct 2026*

· Federal Judge Again Blocks Trump's Ban on CNN, MS NOW and Politico *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Judge blocks Trump's White House ban targeting CNN, MS NOW and Politico *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Judge extends White House access to banned media outlets CNN, MS Now and Politico *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Sunday Shows Preview: Trump bans 3 media outlets from White House; Parties make final cases as midterms approach *from the morgue, 19 Sep 2026*

· Report: Trump Is Having Second Thoughts About Livestreaming Military Execution *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Daughter of Fort Hood victim slams Hegseth's plan to livestream terrorist's execution: 'Nothing to do with justice' *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· 'Medieval' and 'rather disturbing': US plan to livestream execution elicits global condemnation *from the morgue, 9 Oct 2026*

· Fort Hood massacre survivor weighs in on possible Hasan execution livestream *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Mike Johnson urges Trump to rethink livestreaming Nidal Hasan execution: 'I wouldn't be watching' *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike discharged from hospital, returned to prison after botched execution, attorneys say *from the morgue, 10 Oct 2026*

· Convicted murderer Christa Pike leaves hospital, returns to prison after botched execution *from the morgue, 10 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike out of hospital and back in prison after botched execution attempt *from the morgue, 10 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike out of hospital and recovering in prison after botched Tennessee execution *from the morgue, 10 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike discharged from hospital and returned to prison, her lawyers say *from the morgue, 10 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike moved back to prison after failed execution *from the morgue, 10 Oct 2026*

· Outgoing prison chief in Christa Pike case oversaw five 'botched' executions, lawyers say *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Judge orders officials to preserve all evidence tied to Christa Pike's botched execution *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike's lawyer says request to unshackle her was denied as he confirms she is speaking 'limitedly' – live *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike left in 'critical condition' as Tennessee halts all executions *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Tennessee suspends executions as Christa Pike's lawyer says failed lethal injection leaves her in critical condition *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Tennessee Corrections commissioner resigns days after failed Christa Pike execution *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Tennessee Prison Chief Was Hired Despite a Trail of Troubled Executions *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Pike's botched execution renews death penalty scrutiny *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· After failed execution, health workers say Tennessee's method flouts medical ethics *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· Supreme Court Allows Execution of Christa Pike, Tennessee's Lone Woman on Death Row *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· Federal court halts Christa Pike's execution *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· White House defends media outlet bans, now citing 'professionalism' standards *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Vance defends White House media ban: 'Politico is as anti-Trump as Breitbart was anti-Obama or anti-Biden' *from the morgue, 21 Sep 2026*

· Vance defends Trump's media ban as 'totally appropriate' *from the morgue, 21 Sep 2026*

· Bill Clinton: 'There were lots of times when I wanted to ban the White House press corps' *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· Tennessee prison chief to resign after Christa Pike's failed execution, governor says *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Tennessee's prisons chief resigns after failed Pike execution, governor says *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Federal Appellate Court Halts Tennessee's Planned Execution of Christa Pike *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

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

· Supreme Court allows execution of Christa Pike to go forward *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· Tennessee court makes last minute move to temporarily halt Christa Pike's execution *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· DOJ petitions judge to reinstate White House ban on CNN, MS Now, and Politico *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· CNN, MS NOW and Politico reporters regain entry to White House *from the morgue, 24 Sep 2026*

· Tennessee prison system head to resign after failed Christa Pike execution *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Tennessee Prison Commissioner Resigns Days After Failed Execution *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Tennessee prison chief resigns after Christa Pike's botched execution *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Prison chief resigns after failed execution attempt in US *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike's Tennessee execution halted by court an hour before it was scheduled *from the morgue, 30 Sep 2026*

· Christa Pike thought her arm would 'burst open' during botched Tennessee execution: court docs *from the morgue, 3 Oct 2026*

· Death row inmate unconscious on ventilator after botched execution for teen's killing: attorneys *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike remains unconscious and on ventilator after failed execution in Tennessee *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike unconscious and intubated after failed execution, lawyers say *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike Was Unconscious and on Ventilator After Execution Attempt *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike Hospitalized in Critical Condition After Botched Execution *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· How legislatures and the courts sabotage the death penalty *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

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

· Tennessee Attempted to Execute a Sexual Assault Victim *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Tennessee prepares to execute the first woman in over 200 years *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Questions emerge after Christa Pike's botched execution *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Tennessee executed Christa Pike by the book. She survived *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike in critical condition after failed execution attempts: Lawyer *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Christa Pike's botched lethal injection takes focus off victim, jeopardizes execution: former police chief *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· What the Modern State Gets Wrong About Execution *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

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

· Lawyers, experts urge Tennessee governor to commute Christa Pike's sentence after botched execution *from the morgue, 2 Oct 2026*

· Botched execution of death row inmate *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· After Two Botched Attempts, UN Experts Urge Tennessee Not to Try to Execute Crista Pike Again *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Legal expert on what could happen after botched execution of Christa Pike *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· After Failed Attempt to Execute Christa Pike, Tennessee Pauses a Planned Execution *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Botched US execution prompts global calls to scrap death penalty *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Lone woman death row inmate Christa Pike says she's 'at peace' ahead of execution — as Tennessee gov. denies last-ditch bid for clemency *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

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

Washington seizes Venezuela's oil, then says Venezuela gave it to Americans as a gift.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Trump Says Venezuela Gave Him 1M Barrels of Oil as "Gift" as US Seizes Revenues", 28 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA TRUTHOUT — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The president called previously seized Venezuelan oil a "gift" to Americans.

WHO GETS PAID. The Pentagon, which claimed 35 percent of Venezuela's seized oil, is the named buyer in the receipts.

WHAT SLIPS. Congress has not voted on the seizure or the relabeling, leaving no outside check on where the oil actually lands.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the gift claim goes unchecked, that is what Washington got after 19 February 2025: a padded $55 billion savings claim stood even after an $8 billion contract turned out to be $8 million.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

A reconciliation needs two entries for the same thing, so start with the thing. Nine months ago the United States removed Venezuela's president. The Energy Secretary came home and told reporters a 30-minute military operation had opened 65 billion barrels of Venezuelan oil to American buyers, 35 percent of it running straight into the Pentagon's own column.

On August 30, Trump posted on Truth Social that he intended to "fill up the Strategic National Reserves," calling the process "topping out" and the whole arrangement "a Gift from Venezuela to the People of the United States."...

...(cont) Two days later, on September 1, a federal watchdog filed a different number. The Treasury Inspector General reported that IRS audit revenue had fallen 35 percent for the year, after the administration cut the staff that audits the wealthiest filers — the same 35 percent that, in the other filing, was the Pentagon's new cut of Venezuelan oil. One 35 percent arrived as a gift, announced. The other arrived because a watchdog went looking.

Five days later, on September 6, the Energy Secretary filed his own word for the arrangement. He denied the United States had stolen the oil, one hour after telling reporters Venezuela was now "forced to work" with Washington. Not a gift, in that filing. A deal, extracted.

The price column closed out the same week before anyone's word had settled. Over Labor Day weekend, American drivers paid $4.15 a gallon, a record, for gasoline pulled from a market the government had told them would get cheaper once the gift arrived.

The gift and the seizure are the same barrel, entered twice: once as a windfall booked to the Pentagon's column, once as a record charged to the driver at the pump. Only the first entry gets a Truth Social post.

This week the president filed the newest word for the same barrels. The sentence only balances if the barrel changes hands twice: once when Venezuela loses it, and once when Venezuela, stripped of its president and its oil, hands some of it over anyway. The receipts support only the first hand-off.

"They call it a gift when the same government that seized the oil hands a slice of it back with a ribbon on it — that's not generosity, that's returning your own car after they already pulled the tires. The same month this gift got announced, the IRS cut back on chasing rich tax cheats by the same 35 percent the Pentagon claimed in oil; somebody's column gets lighter, and it's not the Pentagon's."

— Sal

"The President is just framing the upside in plain terms the American people can understand — it's a gift because he's choosing to describe it generously, that's good communication, that's not— did I say we seized it first? I didn't say that. Look, the reserves are getting filled, that's the headline, end of story."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *North Carolina asked for storm help, got ICE agents, then $858 million at a campaign stop.* By Ruth · the morning edition, 28 October 2026
- *Nine months after seizing 35 percent of Venezuela's oil, Washington offers the country statehood, gas still at $4.15.* By Ruth · the evening edition, 27 October 2026
- *Prosecutors charge 15 in a Medicare fraud scheme built over years; a two-day-old bounty program gets the credit.* By Ruth · the evening edition, 23 October 2026
- *Administration calls Venezuela oil deal a gift, keeps the contract secret.* By Ruth · the morning edition, 21 October 2026
- *Pentagon's oil stake stays untouched; the Maduros' docket just added a torture charge.* By Ruth · the afternoon edition, 8 October 2026
- *Pentagon appoints its biggest contractor, a top campaign donor, to help plan the future of war.* By Mitch · the early evening edition, 3 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

~~Trump Says Venezuela Gave Him 1M Barrels of Oil as "Gift" as US Seizes Revenues~~

The US seized Venezuela's oil. Trump calls it a gift to 'you people.'

Truthout § *16:26 EDT*

The president said he is giving the oil, taken by the US as part of its seizure of Venezuela, to "you people."

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

· 'Wealthy Tax Cheats Reaping the Benefits': IRS Audit Revenue Plummets After Trump Purge *from the morgue, 1 Sep 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*

· '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*

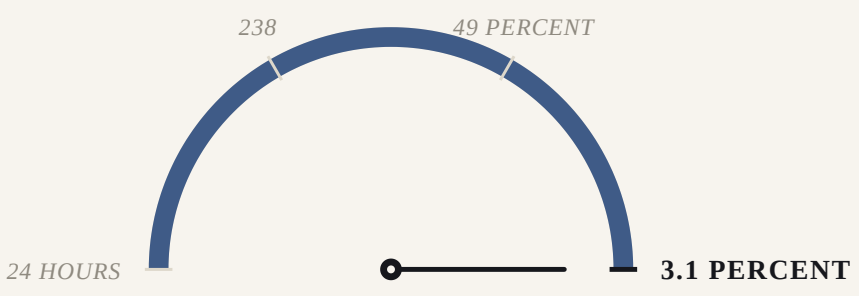
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§75 — 28 OCTOBER 2026

On invasion

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



3.1 PERCENT

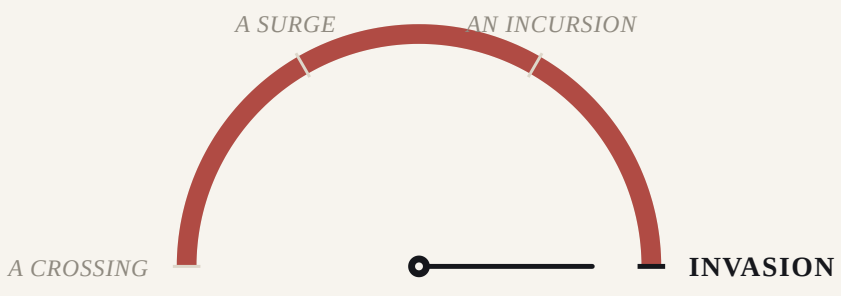
The courts. In April 2025 the Supreme Court held that people facing removal under the act must get notice "within a reasonable time and in such a manner as will allow them to actually seek habeas relief" [1]. In May: "notice roughly 24 hours before removal, devoid of information about how to exercise due process rights to contest that removal, surely does not pass muster" [2]. A Fifth Circuit panel found "neither an invasion nor a predatory incursion"; the full court later dismissed the case as moot after the named plaintiffs were deported, leaving the question undecided [3].

The flights. On March 15, 2025, 238 Venezuelans were sent to the CECOT prison in El Salvador, 137 of them under the act. Of the 226 with ICE data, about 49 percent had no U.S. criminal history, and 8 — 3.1 percent — had violent convictions [4]. In July 2025, 252 were returned to Venezuela in a prisoner exchange [5]. The proclamation said invasion. The records said three percent.

SOURCES

1. Trump v. J.G.G., 7 April 2025: notice "must be afforded within a reasonable time and in such a manner as will allow them to actually seek habeas relief" — Cornell Legal Information Institute ↑
2. A.A.R.P. v. Trump, 16 May 2025: "notice roughly 24 hours before removal … surely does not pass muster" — Cornell Legal Information Institute ↑
3. The panel found "neither an invasion nor a predatory incursion"; the en banc court dismissed the case as moot on 13 August 2026 — Reason / Volokh Conspiracy, 13 August 2026 ↑
4. 238 Venezuelans sent to CECOT on 15 March 2025, 137 under the Alien Enemies Act; about 49 percent of 226 with ICE data had no U.S. criminal history; 8 (3.1 percent) had violent convictions — Human Rights Watch and Cristosal, 12 November 2025 ↑
5. 252 Venezuelans returned to Venezuela in exchange for 10 Americans — CBS News, 18 July 2025 ↑

REPUBLICAN



INVASION

The word is in the law he invoked. The Alien Enemies Act proclamation of March 2025: "I find and declare that TdA is perpetrating, attempting, and threatening an invasion or predatory incursion against the territory of the United States," and "Evidence irrefutably demonstrates that TdA has invaded the United States and continues to invade" [1].

And on the border itself, the numbers are on this side. In December 2025 the Border Patrol recorded 6,478 southwest-border apprehensions and zero releases, against 7,041 released in December 2024 [2]. In July of this year it recorded 9,295 apprehensions, "94% lower than the monthly average of the Biden administration," and a fifteenth straight month of zero releases [3]. Whatever you call what was happening before, it is not happening now at anything like the old scale. That is the administration's strongest receipt, and it is a real one.

SOURCES

1. "Threatening an invasion or predatory incursion against the territory of the United States"; "TdA has invaded the United States and continues to invade" — Proclamation 10903, 14 March 2025 — Federal Register via govinfo ↑
2. December 2025: 6,478 southwest-border apprehensions; zero releases, against 7,041 in December 2024 — U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 16 January 2026 ↑
3. July 2026: 9,295 apprehensions, "94% lower than the monthly average of the Biden administration"; 15 straight months of zero releases — Department of Homeland Security, 13 August 2026 ↑

"The small thing that bothers me is the word, so I read the proclamation. March of last year: "an invasion or predatory incursion against the territory of the United States." Then the Border Patrol's own figures: July of this year, nine thousand two hundred ninety-five apprehensions, "94% lower." Then the Supreme Court, twice: notice first, and a day's notice with no instructions "surely does not pass muster." Then the people on the flights: two hundred thirty-eight, and eight of them with violent convictions. Excuse me — I'll let you get back to it. If the crossings are down ninety-four percent, what's the invasion now?" — Lou

"Invasion. It's in the proclamation — "has invaded the United States and continues to invade." Meanwhile his own Border Patrol says crossings are down ninety-four percent and releases are at zero. So the invasion's over, by his numbers, and the wartime law is still running. Then they flew two hundred thirty-eight Venezuelans to a prison in El Salvador, and when somebody checked the records, about half had no criminal history here and three percent had violent convictions. That's not repelling an invasion. That's a raid with a press office."

— Sal

"The border is secure because the invasion was repelled, and the invasion must be ongoing because the law remains invoked, and both of those facts together are called deterrence, which works best when no one can tell which one is true."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎