The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

FRIDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2026 — THE EVENING EDITION · FREE, FOREVER

White House credits Melania Trump's ceasefire for evacuating civilians it reported were eating grass.

BY MORT
The Records Bureau

Call this one the obituary for the easy version of the story.

It was born October 11, when the White House announced an energy ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, each side agreeing to leave the other's power grid alone. It turned out to be bunk within a day.

It was reborn October 23, in Oleshky, a Russian-occupied city in the Kherson region, where the Guardian reported people were surviving on weeds. The White House said Russia and Ukraine had agreed to halt operations in the city starting October 29 so humanitarian aid could move. On October 27 the halt took effect, and Melania Trump, who brokered it, called the situation inside the city "dire."

On Friday the ceasefire did the one thing a ceasefire is supposed to do. Hundreds of civilians trapped in Oleshky evacuated. CBS reported that Russian strikes on the surrounding area had kept food, water and medicine out of the city for months. The New York Post ran the evacuation under a headline that, in the same breath, carried the detail that locals had been reduced to eating grass. Melania Trump posted that she hoped the mission

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THE WORD

§77 — 30 OCTOBER 2026

On the Sharpie

DEMOCRAT

NO UPDATES BEYOND 2024

REPUBLICAN

STATE AND LOCAL

"It's the little loop that bothers me. The forecast map from August 29th, and then on September 4th there's this extra curve in black marker, reaching into Alabama. The forecast gave southeastern Alabama about a five percent chance of tropical-storm winds; the Birmingham office said Alabama would "NOT see any impacts." Two days later, an unsigned statement took his side. The next year the inspector general wrote it "did not further NOAA's or NWS's interests." Excuse me — I forgot my umbrella. The loop was drawn in 2019. Who's drawing the map now?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W77

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

THE LEDGER FILES AFTER THE VOTE

In the last nineteen days of the Cornyn–Paxton runoff, the law gave a quarterly-filing super PAC one day to report an ad and until fifty days after the vote to report the money it raised in those nineteen days.

... Continued on the Investigative Reporting page

Asked to drop Russia from the G20 photo, the hosts dropped the photo instead.

BY THE LODGERS
The Euro Desk

Today we are making a family photograph, which is not a dish you can get over here, so I shall go slowly. You will need twenty foreign ministers, a camera that has done this every G20 for years, and Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, standing where the other nineteen were due to stand.

Clive *Standing where you're not wanted, I know well. I stood at an open mic in Totnes for forty minutes; three people clapped, and none of them were you.*

Begin in Atlanta, on Friday, at the two-day G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted by the United States. Several of the ministers objected to being pictured beside him, and the hosts did what a kitchen does when a dish will not come together: they put the camera away and carried on without it.

Gary *Forty minutes for three claps. I took the shed door off in nine, and that's a smaller room than Totnes.*

This is not the first course Russia has sat out this year. In September, at the G20 finance meeting in Asheville, European officials pushed back on the invitation given to Russia's finance minister, Anton Siluanov, saying his pres-

... Continued on Page A226

ICE agent indicted for ramming SUV into man while chasing suspect dead for years

BY LOU
One More Question

My wife told me to leave it alone. Twice. Once when I got up at eleven to find the folder, and once around two, when she heard the garage door and came out in her robe to ask what exactly I thought I was going to find out there that I hadn't found in the house. I didn't have an answer for her. I still don't, entirely. But I went out to the garage anyway, because that's where the toolbox is, and because I wasn't going to sleep regardless, and a man might as well do something with his hands while his head won't quit.

Here's what wouldn't let me alone. On October 11th, ICE agents in Houston were trying to pull over two men — a Jose Mendoza-Cervantes and a Miguel Parra Hernandez — when the two got out of their vehicle and ran. An ICE officer driving an unmarked SUV struck Parra Hernandez. Broke his leg. I wrote that part down clean: struck, with a vehicle, during a pursuit. No argument from anybody on that.

Three days later the Harris County district attorney, Sean Teare, said he was looking at the video and considering a felony charge — aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, the kind of charge that can carry twenty years.

... Continued on Page T30

Judge calls third Comey prosecution a possible exercise in futility; prosecutors suggest a fourth charge anyway.

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Monday, the record says, the Justice Department filed a third criminal case against James Comey, accusing the former FBI director — per The New York Times — of leaking classified information from about a decade ago. Two earlier FBI investigations into that same leak had already closed with no charges at all. That's not a guess on my part. It's the sequence, in the order it happened: the same leak, two dead ends, and now a third filing.

That same Monday, a federal judge ruled the Justice Department had illegally fired Comey's daughter, Maurene Comey, from her own job as a federal prosecutor. She'd held that job for a decade, the judge found, with consistently strong reviews, right up until her firing in July 2025. I don't have a question about that part. I have the date, and the date is Monday, same as the other one.

... Continued on Page B48

Trump calls record diesel prices proof of a fortune; Exxon and Chevron just made exactly that.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

In August, the average gallon of diesel in the United States had not yet reached its most expensive hour, but the average gallon of gasoline had: four dollars and eight cents, every day of the month, the first time that had happened in the nation's history, and ninety cents more than the same gallon cost a year before. The war the United States was running against Iran was the reason given for the record.

The diesel gallon caught up fast. On September 4th it reached five dollars and eighty-five cents, an all-time high, and the economist Dean Baker wrote on social media that "Trump did it," putting a byline on the record. The gallon broke that record again the next day, to five dollars and eighty-eight cents — two records in two days, both of them set before Labor Day had even arrived. Axios reported that incumbent Republicans were fretting over what the number would do to them in November; their own internal polling showed that when voters were asked whom to blame for it, they answered with the president's name.

Six weeks later, at a rally in Arizona, hours after new federal data showed

... Continued on Page F131

Justice Department offers $1 million for voter fraud tips; the pope's mail ballot isn't among them.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

I keep the running file on who gets investigated for this election and who doesn't, and this week it needed a new tab.

Start on September 10th, when the First Circuit Court of Appeals called the president's mail-in voting executive order "likely unlawful," leaving it dead before a single midterm ballot could be cast. On October 15th, Texas got sued after a computer failure stranded nearly 600,000 voter registrations days before early voting opened — the state's own system, not a foreign hand, produced that backlog. On October 26th the president posted that anybody who reports voter fraud, past or upcoming, gets $1 million, paid out on arrest and conviction, with no cases named yet to collect it on. The same Monday, a federal appeals court declined to let the Justice Department set aside 20,000 mail ballots in California that officials called noncitizen votes, and the department opened the identical inquiry in Washington state before the ruling's ink dried.

Six wire services carried it by Friday morning — Fox, CBS, Le Monde, ABC, the Washington Examiner, the New York Post — each one noting the

... Continued on Page F131

Judge asks how suspects were found; Justice Department answers with subpoenas, a $1 million bounty, and friendly judges.

BY LOU
One More Question

I didn't sleep last night, and I want to blame the fan belt — the car's been making that whine since July, the one that means a replacement I keep saying I'll get to on a Saturday — but it wasn't the belt. It was a court date. I lay there doing arithmetic in the dark until my wife told me to leave it alone and get some sleep, which I have never once in forty years managed to do when she says it that way.

Here's the arithmetic she told me to leave alone. Three employees of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's office were subpoenaed this week and ordered to appear in federal court on November 4th. Is November 3rd the date sixty of the country's most contested House and Senate races are scheduled to be decided? If the ballots get counted on the 3rd and the court date is the 4th, which one happens first — the count, or the explaining of the count?

I took the car in last month for a noise under the hood and asked the man a plain question: what's wrong with it. He didn't answer that. He wrote up an invoice for parts he hadn't ordered yet and told me to come back Thursday. I

... Continued on Page A225

Called out by name for trying to buy Texas, Musk raises his spending to $445 million.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Set the two weeks on the table and the numbers settle by themselves, hon, before anyone says a word about them.

On September 25th, the Supreme Court let the Department of Homeland Security run its SAVE database against state voter rolls for the final ninety days before the election, while a student ID law in New Hampshire lost its chance twelve days out. Ninety days to clean a list. Twelve to prove a name belongs on it. The filing on that gap already ran once, so it stays on the table here, not the front of the ledger.

On October 12th, the tally for Elon Musk's midterm giving came back at $276 million, "absolutely insane" was the word used at the time. The next day, October 13th, it closed at $366 million, the largest single total in the cycle, ahead of his own 2024 account to Donald Trump.

On October 24th, at a rally in Austin, Senate candidate James Talarico stood in front of his own alma mater and said the quiet part: "Texas is not for sale," naming the money behind his opponent, Ken Paxton, by its source.

On October 27th, a newspaper editorial called him "Exhibit A" for billion-

... Continued on Page F131

"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

Asked to drop Russia from the G20 photo, the hosts dropped the photo instead.

By THE LODGERS
THE EURO DESK



"G20 'family photo' cancelled after protests over presence of Russian minister", 30 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA BBC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The United States hosted Russia's foreign minister in Atlanta, then canceled the G20 family photo after European ministers objected.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. The public record of who sat with Russia's government slips when the summit's one photograph disappears.

WHAT'S NEXT. If Europe keeps refusing to be pictured with Russian officials, the next G20 photo gets scrapped too; that is what happened after 1 September 2026, when European officials objected to Russia's finance minister attending the Asheville meeting.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Today we are making a family photograph, which is not a dish you can get over here, so I shall go slowly. You will need twenty foreign ministers, a camera that has done this every G20 for years, and Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, standing where the other nineteen were due to stand.

Clive *Standing where you're not wanted, I know well. I stood at an open mic in Totnes for forty minutes; three people clapped, and none of them were you.*

...(cont) Begin in Atlanta, on Friday, at the two-day G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted by the United States. Several of the ministers objected to being pictured beside him, and the hosts did what a kitchen does when a dish will not come together: they put the camera away and carried on without it.

Gary *Forty minutes for three claps. I took the shed door off in nine, and that's a smaller room than Totnes.*

This is not the first course Russia has sat out this year. In September, at the G20 finance meeting in Asheville, European officials pushed back on the invitation given to Russia's finance minister, Anton Siluanov, saying his presence risked normalising ties with Moscow amid its full-scale war. The one in Atlanta did not.

Keith *Nine minutes and nothing sold. A door's worth money broken properly — get a flag on it and call it heritage stock.*

You will be looking for the vote to remove his seat, or the resolution suspending him from the table. There is no such paper. Refusing to stand in a photograph is what Europe has instead of one.

The BBC, which is what they have here, has the photograph "cancelled after protests over presence of Russian minister," and says plainly that "European foreign ministers refused to be pictured with Sergei Lavrov" in Atlanta. The Hill, filing from the same two days, has it as Lavrov having "crashed" the party.

It serves the nineteen ministers who did not stand beside him, and it costs the Americans hosting the meeting, who now have a two-day G20 with no family photograph to show for it.

Rob *Four years since anyone's photographed this house. Even the landlord keeps his distance.*

"They didn't remove Russia from the room, they removed the camera, so there's no picture of him sitting there to begin with. Lavrov keeps his seat at the summit just the same, minus the evidence, and that's the trade Washington keeps making while the war goes on."

— Sal

"Look, you have to keep channels open, that's just statecraft — you invite the people you need in the room, including the Russians, no wait, I mean including whoever's necessary. And if the Europeans can't manage standing next to a man for one photograph, that's a them problem, not a hosting problem. Did I say that? That's not really our line."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

G20 'family photo' cancelled after protests over presence of Russian minister

BBC News MAINSTREAM § *13:25 EDT*

European foreign ministers refused to be pictured with Sergei Lavrov at the summit being held in Atlanta.

G20 foreign ministers scrap 'family photo' as Lavrov crashes party

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *16:45 EDT*

The U.S. hosts of the Group of 20 (G20) Foreign Ministers' Meeting opted to skip the traditional "family photo" Friday after several top diplomats objected to being photographed with a Russian official.

· Europe blasts Russian finance minister's attendance at Asheville G20 *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

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

ICE agent indicted for ramming SUV into man while chasing suspect dead for years

By LOU

ONE MORE QUESTION

"ICE officer indicted in Texas after striking immigrant with vehicle", 30 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE HILL — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. A Harris County grand jury indicted an ICE officer on October 30 for ramming his SUV into a Houston man on October 11.

WHO GETS PAID. The receipts name no buyer yet.

WHAT SLIPS. The file ICE used to chase a suspect kept the suspect listed as alive for years after he had died, and nobody checked it before the pursuit started.

WHAT'S NEXT. If ICE's pursuit records keep running on names long after the people are gone, the pattern already shows what else bad government arithmetic survives unchecked: the efficiency office's $214 billion savings claim stood for eight months in 2025 before independent tallies put the real number as low as $1.4 billion.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

My wife told me to leave it alone. Twice. Once when I got up at eleven to find the folder, and once around two, when she heard the garage door and came out in her robe to ask what exactly I thought I was going to find out there that I hadn't found in the house. I didn't have an answer for her. I still don't, entirely. But I went out to the garage anyway, because that's where the toolbox is, and because I wasn't going to sleep regardless, and a man might as well do something with his hands while his head won't quit.

Here's what wouldn't let me alone. On October 11th, ICE agents in Houston were trying to pull over two men — a Jose Mendoza-Cervantes and a Miguel Parra Hernandez — when the two got out of their vehicle and ran. An ICE officer driving an unmarked SUV struck Parra Hernandez. Broke his leg. I wrote that part down clean: struck, with a vehicle, during a pursuit. No argument from anybody on that....

...(cont) Three days later the Harris County district attorney, Sean Teare, said he was looking at the video and considering a felony charge — aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, the kind of charge that can carry twenty years. The story that ran about his review used a word I keep turning over, not because he said it in quotes — he didn't, and I'm not going to pretend he did — but because the headline writer reached for it anyway: appeared. The vehicle appeared to veer intentionally into the man. I don't know what the DA's exact words were that day. I know what the headline decided to call it. I genuinely don't know. That's not a complaint. That's a question I can't answer from where I'm sitting.

Then, on the 17th, a different fact landed that I had to read twice. An immigration advocacy group told reporters that the man ICE was chasing that morning — Mendoza-Cervantes, the one who ran — has, according to their research, been dead for almost ten years.

Out in the garage, I was looking for a fan belt. What I found instead was a receipt, folded up behind the coffee cans, for a car I traded in before my daughter started high school. She's thirty-one now. I still get the recall notices for that car. Some department somewhere still has it on a list, still sends the letter, still believes the thing it's addressed to is sitting in somebody's driveway waiting to be fixed. The car doesn't exist. The letter doesn't know that. The letter keeps arriving like the car is still out there, like the chase is still live.

On Friday, the 30th, a Harris County grand jury indicted the officer — Mario Alberto Morales, thirty-three — on that same charge, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. That part is settled now. He's charged. The man he hit is in the hospital record with a broken leg and a hip injury, and that's settled too.

What isn't settled, at least not for me, standing in a cold garage at two in the morning with a fan belt in one hand and an old recall notice in the other, is what you call the thing the government was chasing when the SUV turned. A man. A name. A file.

Oh — one more thing, and then I promise I'll let you get back to bed.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

AN ICE AGENT WAS INDICTED FOR RAMMING AN SUV INTO A MAN WHILE CHASING A SECOND man an advocacy group says has been dead for roughly ten years, and the file never flagged it. That's not a wrong turn, that's a machine that stopped checking whether the target was alive a decade before it decided to run someone over looking for him. You get in your car tomorrow morning, you back out of the driveway, and somewhere a federal list still has your name on it from an address you left years ago, still live, still active, still worth a chase to whoever's holding the wheel.

"You don't indict a man this fast for hitting somebody by accident — twenty years on the table in nineteen days means they knew exactly what the tape showed. And the thing is, it doesn't matter to Parra Hernandez's leg whether the guy they were chasing has been dead ten years or ten minutes — the SUV doesn't check the file before it turns."

— Sal

"Look, an indictment isn't a conviction, and aggressive enforcement sometimes means split-second calls on bad information — that's not a scandal, that's a staffing problem. The target being deceased for a decade is, admittedly — did I say that? That's not really a defense of anything, is it."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

ICE officer charged in Texas after allegedly hitting man with vehicle

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *16:11 EDT*

A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer was charged with a felony for allegedly hitting a man with a vehicle earlier this month.

But: **Republicans' reconciliation package puts $70 billion into ICE's department** *NBC News, May 2026*

ICE officer indicted in Texas after striking immigrant with vehicle

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *13:36 EDT*

An Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer who hit and injured a man with a vehicle in Houston, Texas, was indicted by a grand jury in Harris County on Friday. The 33-year-old officer, Mario Alberto Morales, was indicted on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon after allegedly driving his vehicle into Miguel...

But: **Republicans' reconciliation package puts $70 billion into ICE's department** *NBC News, May 2026*

ICE officer who struck man with vehicle during pursuit indicted: DA

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *16:28 EDT*

The officer, Mario Alberto Morales, was charged with second-degree aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, according to the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

But: **Republicans' reconciliation package puts $70 billion into ICE's department** *NBC News, May 2026*

ICE agent charged after ramming unmarked SUV into man in Texas

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *14:27 EDT*

Agent Mario Alberto Morale charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon over incident in Houston A federal immigration agent who drove into and seriously injured a Texas man on 10 October after a botched traffic stop was indicted Friday on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Mario Alberto Morales, 33, an agent...

· ICE agent strikes man with vehicle during pursuit in Texas, officials say *from the morgue, 11 Oct 2026*

· ICE officer appeared to intentionally strike man with vehicle in Houston: Prosecutor *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Texas prosecutor considering felony charges for ICE agent who ran over man *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Immigrant ICE searched for in Texas when agent hit man with car has been dead for years: Report *from the morgue, 17 Oct 2026*

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Judge calls third Comey prosecution a possible exercise in futility; prosecutors suggest a fourth charge anyway.

By LOU

ONE MORE QUESTION

"Judge hears arguments over Comey's request to throw out new allegations against him", 30 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA ABC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The Justice Department told a federal judge it may bring a fourth charge against James Comey.

WHO GETS PAID. The Justice Department gains open-ended leverage over one of the president's most prominent critics.

WHAT SLIPS. The time limit meant to stop decade-old leaked-information charges slips as the department files a third, possibly fourth, case anyway.

WHAT'S NEXT. The judge's ruling on whether to dismiss the third case is pending; it will decide whether a fourth charge is reached at all.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

My wife told me to leave this one alone. I did not leave it alone. I was up past one in the morning, running the week's dates over again, Monday through Friday, the way you check a receipt against a till slip that keeps coming up short no matter how many times you re-add the column.

Monday, the record says, the Justice Department filed a third criminal case against James Comey, accusing the former FBI director — per The New York Times — of leaking classified information from about a decade ago. Two earlier FBI investigations into that same leak had already closed with no charges at all. That's not a guess on my part. It's the sequence, in the order it happened: the same leak, two dead ends, and now a third filing....

...(cont) That same Monday, a federal judge ruled the Justice Department had illegally fired Comey's daughter, Maurene Comey, from her own job as a federal prosecutor. She'd held that job for a decade, the judge found, with consistently strong reviews, right up until her firing in July 2025. I don't have a question about that part. I have the date, and the date is Monday, same as the other one.

Friday is what kept me up a second night. Comey's lawyers were back in court, and according to The Hill, their argument was that the Justice Department had simply waited too long to bring these charges. CBS reported that prosecutors and the defense faced off over that same motion. ABC reported the judge had not yet ruled on whether to throw the case out.

Here's where I went out to the car. I keep a folder in the glovebox — registration, insurance card, the receipt from the one time the fan belt went — and Friday night I sat out there with the dome light on, laying the court reporting next to itself the way I lay those receipts side by side when a bill doesn't match what I was quoted. According to the Washington Examiner, Judge Trevor McFadden pressed Comey's attorneys on whether dismissing this case could turn into what he called a great exercise in futility, if a grand jury later comes back with an indictment over more recent conduct. That's on the record, from the bench, Friday afternoon.

And at that same hearing — this is the part I kept rereading — The New York Times reported that prosecutors suggested they may seek additional charges against Comey. I asked the man at the corner store this morning if he could explain why a department would float a fourth charge the same day a judge wonders aloud whether killing the third one would accomplish anything. He sells lottery tickets and cigarettes for a living. He didn't have an answer. Neither do I.

Oh — one more thing, before I let you go. Two investigations into this leak closed without charges. The third is being argued over right now, this week, on the grounds that it came too long after the fact. The New York Times didn't say what a fourth charge would even cover. Does anything in the record say what it's supposed to be about?

My wife's probably still right. I should have left it alone.

"They open a case that might get laughed out of court, and in the same breath they tell you there's a backup ready. That's not a prosecution, that's a protection racket run on the calendar. A grand jury doesn't convene for free, and you're the one footing the bill either way."

— Sal

"Look, keeping every option on the table is just good lawyering, that's not some backup plan, that's prosecutorial discretion — wait, did I just say the department needs a fourth charge in case the third one doesn't hold? That's not what I meant to say."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Justice Department offers $1 million for voter fraud tips; the pope's mail ballot isn't among them.* By Ruth · the afternoon edition, 30 October 2026
- *Justice Department charges Comey a third time, days after a judge ruled it illegally fired his daughter.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 30 October 2026
- *Judge asks how suspects were found; Justice Department answers with subpoenas, a $1 million bounty, and friendly judges.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 30 October 2026
- *Asked how it identified suspects, Justice Department responds with criminal subpoenas instead of an answer.* By Lou · the morning edition, 30 October 2026
- *Justice Department's voter list, rejected in three courts, promoted to grand jury subpoenas five days before the election.* By Lou · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *Group called the Department of Peace publishes names of 10,000 ICE and Border Patrol agents* By Mitch · the evening edition, 29 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Judge hears arguments over Comey's request to throw out new allegations against him

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *14:30 EDT*

A judge has not yet ruled on a request from ex-FBI Director James Comey to throw out criminal allegations accusing him of mishandling classified information in 2016.

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

Judge grills Comey's lawyers over effort to dismiss new charges

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *14:47 EDT*

A federal judge grilled former FBI Director James Comey's attorneys on Friday over whether their effort to dismiss the Justice Department's latest criminal case could become "a great exercise in futility" if a grand jury returns an indictment alleging more recent conduct. U.S.

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

DOJ, Comey's lawyers face off in court over latest attempt to charge him

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *14:03 EDT*

Lawyers for former FBI Director James Comey were back in federal court arguing that the Justice Department's latest attempt to prosecute him should be dismissed.

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

Prosecutors Suggest They May Seek Additional Comey Charges

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *16:22 EDT*

At a hearing in federal court, prosecutors defended an unusual, 11th-hour criminal case accusing the former F.B.I. director of leaking classified information a decade ago.

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

Comey lawyers fight for dismissal of third criminal prosecution

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *14:00 EDT*

Lawyers for James Comey tried to persuade a federal judge Friday that the Trump administration's third attempt to prosecute the former FBI director for allegedly disclosing national defense information should be stopped because the Department of Justice (DOJ) waited too long to bring the charges. U.S. District Judge Trevor McFadden, an...

· Maurene Comey was illegally fired as federal prosecutor, judge rules *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· Justice department charges ex-FBI director James Comey for third time *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· DOJ Charges Former FBI Director James Comey for Third Time *from the morgue, 27 Oct 2026*

· Trump DOJ Charges Ex-FBI Chief James Comey a Third Time *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

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RECORD PROFIT, RECORD PUMP

Trump calls record diesel prices proof of a fortune; Exxon and Chevron just made exactly that.

By RUTH

THE MONEY DESK



"ExxonMobil and Chevron report blowout profits as Trump touts benefits of high oil prices", 30 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA NBC NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION

typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. ExxonMobil and Chevron posted blowout profits running refineries at full tilt into record diesel prices.

WHO GETS PAID. ExxonMobil and Chevron, the refiners that set the diesel supply, collect the profit.

WHAT SLIPS. Nothing slips here yet.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the pattern holds, the next move is supply theater, not a profits check; that is what Washington got after March 31, 2022, when the government released 180 million barrels from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve under a fact sheet blaming "Putin's Price Hike at the Pump."

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

In August, the average gallon of diesel in the United States had not yet reached its most expensive hour, but the average gallon of gasoline had: four dollars and eight cents, every day of the month, the first time that had happened in the nation's history, and ninety cents more than the same gallon cost a year before. The war the United States was running against Iran was the reason given for the record.

The diesel gallon caught up fast. On September 4th it reached five dollars and eighty-five cents, an all-time high, and the economist Dean Baker wrote on social media that "Trump did it," putting a byline on the record. The gallon broke that record again the next day, to five dollars and eighty-eight cents — two records in two days, both of them set before Labor Day had even arrived. Axios reported that incumbent Republicans were fretting over what the number would do to them in November; their own internal polling showed that when voters were asked whom to blame for it, they answered with the president's name....

...(cont) Six weeks later, at a rally in Arizona, hours after new federal data showed inflation running at its highest level in months, the president offered his own reading of that same gallon to the crowd: "Because of the price of oil, Texas and Oklahoma and North Dakota and all these places, we're making a fortune." He named the states. He did not name the companies.

On October 30th he did not have to. ExxonMobil and Chevron reported third-quarter profits built by running their refineries at full tilt into the identical high diesel prices the president had just finished calling a fortune — the war with Iran, and the conflict with Russia, doing for refining margins what no lobbyist needs to ask Congress for directly. The fortune was real. It was also specific: it belonged to two companies, collected a gallon at a time, at pumps used by households that did not report a blowout quarter of their own.

Four days remain before the election that will tell Republicans whether their own pollsters had it right about who gets blamed for the number.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

DIESEL HIT $5.85, THEN $5.88 THE NEXT DAY. THAT'S NOT A MARKET FINDING ITS price, it's a toll booth with a war attached, and Exxon and Chevron own the gate. The truck that burns that diesel to stock your grocery store pays more to run, the store passes the charge down the shelf, and it lands as the extra coins on the sticker price of the milk in your cart this week.

"They're not lying when they say somebody's making a fortune off this war, they just leave the pronoun out. Every dime you watched land on that pump sign in September landed in a quarterly report in October, and the report didn't have your name on it. Diesel's what hauls your groceries to the shelf, so when the refineries run flat out into a record price, you're not watching a market, you're watching the margin."

— Sal

"Look, this is just energy markets functioning correctly — high prices signal investment, investment means more supply down the road, that's basic — did I say the refineries are running at full tilt right now, into the high prices, instead of expanding anything? That's not — okay, that one's not great for me either."

— Chip

THE RECEIPTS

ExxonMobil and Chevron report blowout profits as Trump touts benefits of high oil prices

NBC News MAINSTREAM § *10:35 EDT*

The two largest U.S. oil companies, ExxonMobil and Chevron reported blowout profits as oil prices remain sharply elevated due to the U.S. war with Iran.

Chevron and Exxon rake in profits thanks to diesel prices boosted by Iran and Russia conflicts

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *09:11 EDT*

Chevron and Exxon Mobil earned significant profits during the third quarter of this year as the companies ran their refineries at full tilt, taking advantage of higher diesel prices. Oil and gas majors have benefited from President Donald Trump's war in Iran throughout this year, as oil and gas prices have soared due to supply [...]

· 'We're Making a Fortune,' Trump Says of High Oil Prices as Working Class Pays *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

· 'Trump Did It!': At $5.85 a Gallon, Diesel Price Hits All-Time High in US Thanks to War on Iran *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Trump 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*

· 'Can't Message That Away': GOP Frets as Trump Administration Desperately Spins Record-High Diesel Prices *from the morgue, 5 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 offers $1 million for voter fraud tips; the pope's mail ballot isn't among them.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"Pope Leo XIV makes history as first pope to vote in US general election", 30 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Pope Leo XIV mailed a ballot from Vatican City to vote in Illinois' midterm election.

WHO GETS PAID. The Justice Department, which expands its subpoena power over California's county election clerks while leaving the pope's ballot unexamined.

WHAT SLIPS. Equal enforcement slips: the department's subpoenas and $1 million bounty reach county clerks, while the one ballot from a head of state carries a scrutiny count of zero.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the California subpoenas hold, expect mail-ballot rejections to spike before any relief arrives; that is what Texas got after its 2022 ID rule: a 12.4 percent rejection rate in March that fell to 1.78 percent only by the November vote.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I keep the running file on who gets investigated for this election and who doesn't, and this week it needed a new tab.

Start on September 10th, when the First Circuit Court of Appeals called the president's mail-in voting executive order "likely unlawful," leaving it dead before a single midterm ballot could be cast. On October 15th, Texas got sued after a computer failure stranded nearly 600,000 voter registrations days before early voting opened — the state's own system, not a foreign hand, produced that backlog. On October 26th the president posted that anybody who reports voter fraud, past or upcoming, gets $1 million, paid out on arrest and conviction, with no cases named yet to collect it on. The same Monday, a federal appeals court declined to let the Justice Department set aside 20,000 mail ballots in California that officials called noncitizen votes, and the department opened the identical inquiry in Washington state before the ruling's ink dried....

...(cont) Six wire services carried it by Friday morning — Fox, CBS, Le Monde, ABC, the Washington Examiner, the New York Post — each one noting the same fact: no sitting pope had voted in a U.S. election before. None of the six mentioned a subpoena. None mentioned the $1 million reward, or an inquiry, or a request for his registration file. The ballot traveled from a city-state with no voter rolls of its own, filled out by a head of state with diplomatic immunity, and as of Friday it carries a subpoena count of zero, a lawsuit count of zero, and a reward-claim count of zero.

Twenty thousand names in California drew a federal lawsuit and, within the week, a grand jury. A single ballot from Vatican City drew six headlines and a wire photo. Hon, that's not a loophole. That's the whole ledger, open on the counter, for anyone who wants to read which address gets you scrutiny and which one gets you a souvenir story.

"They put a million-dollar bounty on voter fraud and a grand jury on county clerks, and the one mail ballot that actually crossed an international border sails through without a phone call. That's not an oversight — that's who the dragnet was built to catch, and it was never going to be a guy in a white robe in Rome. Follow the subpoenas and you'll find they stop exactly where the power does."
— Sal

"Look, the Justice Department is simply following the data on noncitizen registration — nothing political about a grand jury the day after a judge asked how they picked their suspects, that's just diligence. And sure, a ballot that physically crossed an ocean from a sovereign city-state technically clears every box they're worried about everywhere else, but he's an American citizen, so that's fine, that's totally fine. Did I just argue the Vatican's rolls are cleaner than Fresno County's? That doesn't sound like me."
— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Justice Department charges Comey a third time, days after a judge ruled it illegally fired his daughter.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 30 October 2026
- *Judge asks how suspects were found; Justice Department answers with subpoenas, a $1 million bounty, and friendly judges.* By Lou · the afternoon edition, 30 October 2026
- *Asked how it identified suspects, Justice Department responds with criminal subpoenas instead of an answer.* By Lou · the morning edition, 30 October 2026
- *Justice Department's voter list, rejected in three courts, promoted to grand jury subpoenas five days before the election.* By Lou · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *Group called the Department of Peace publishes names of 10,000 ICE and Border Patrol agents* By Mitch · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *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

THE RECEIPTS

Pope Leo becomes first pontiff to vote in a U.S. election

CBS News MAINSTREAM § *10:20 EDT*

The Vatican said Pope Leo exercised his right as a U.S. citizen, submitting a mail-in ballot in his native Chicago ahead of the midterm elections next week.

Pope Leo XIV makes history as first pope to vote in US general election

New York Post RIGHT § *09:35 EDT*

Pope Leo XIV has become the first pope to vote in a U.S. general election.

~~Trump DOJ Brings 'Tired, Desperate' Attempt to Find Noncitizen Voting to Washington State~~

DOJ brings 'tired, desperate' noncitizen voter hunt to Washington, 7 days before the vote

Common Dreams § *08:10 EDT*

As a federal appeals court on Monday refused to order California officials to set aside 20,000 mail-in ballots that the Trump administration claimed were cast by noncitizens, the US Department of Justice was already pushing a similar effort in Washington state—the latest of what one advocate called "tired, desperate attempts by a...

Leo XIV cast Midterms ballot, Vatican says

Le Monde MAINSTREAM § *09:55 EDT*

The Catholic Church's first US-born pontiff submitted his mail-in ballot in Chicago. It is the first known time a pope has voted in a political election.

Pope Leo XIV requested a ballot to vote by mail in 2026 elections

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *09:37 EDT*

Pope Leo XIV may become the first-ever pope to vote in a secular election, let alone a U.S. one, as he ordered a mail-in ballot for the 2026 midterm elections. Kim Fladhammer, Will County clerk's office chief of staff, told the Chicago Sun-Times that the leader of the Roman Catholic Church requested a mail-in ballot [...]

Pope Leo XIV has become the first pope in history to vote in a US election

ABC News MAINSTREAM § *09:43 EDT*

Pope Leo XIV has become the first pope in history to vote in a U.S. general election

Pope Leo makes history in US election with move confirmed by Vatican

Fox News RIGHT § *10:45 EDT*

Pope Leo XIV requested a mail ballot from Vatican City to vote in Illinois' midterm elections, potentially the first pope to vote in a U.S. election.

· Trump issues $1m reward for reporting voter fraud in past or upcoming elections *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· Trump dangles $1m reward for reporting voter fraud in past or upcoming elections *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· Texas sued after glitch delays almost 600,000 voter registrations *from the morgue, 15 Oct 2026*

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

Judge asks how suspects were found; Justice Department answers with subpoenas, a $1 million bounty, and friendly judges.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION

"Election-Denying Trump Judges Preside Over Nearly Every Battleground Midterm Race: Analysis", 27 October 2026 (PHOTO VIA COMMON DREAMS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The Justice Department subpoenaed three Los Angeles County election workers to federal court on November 4, the day after the midterms.

WHO GETS PAID. The Justice Department's election-fraud effort gains subpoena power over the local officials who count the votes.

WHAT SLIPS. A federal judge's question about how suspects were identified gets answered with a subpoena, and the county workers who count ballots lose the chance to answer to the public first.

WHAT'S NEXT. If this pattern holds, a court steps in: that is what happened in Washington after March 2025, when the citizenship-proof provisions of the president's election order were permanently blocked fifteen months later, in June 2026.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I didn't sleep last night, and I want to blame the fan belt — the car's been making that whine since July, the one that means a replacement I keep saying I'll get to on a Saturday — but it wasn't the belt. It was a court date. I lay there doing arithmetic in the dark until my wife told me to leave it alone and get some sleep, which I have never once in forty years managed to do when she says it that way.

Here's the arithmetic she told me to leave alone. Three employees of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's office were subpoenaed this week and ordered to appear in federal court on November 4th. Is November 3rd the date sixty of the country's most contested House and Senate races are scheduled to be decided? If the ballots get counted on the 3rd and the court date is the 4th, which one happens first — the count, or the explaining of the count?...

...(cont) I took the car in last month for a noise under the hood and asked the man a plain question: what's wrong with it. He didn't answer that. He wrote up an invoice for parts he hadn't ordered yet and told me to come back Thursday. I paid him anyway, because apparently that's how it goes now — you ask a question, a bill comes back instead — and I didn't think much of it until this week, when I noticed it isn't only my garage.

Go back to October 17th. The Justice Department sent a letter to California election officials warning that anyone who "knowingly tabulates" ballots cast by noncitizens risks prosecution. Did the letter explain how the department had identified which ballots those were? Or did it only say what happens to the people counting them?

Two days earlier than that, on October 15th, in Texas, a computer failure had left almost six hundred thousand voter registration applications stuck in the system, just as early voting was set to open. Is a stuck application the same thing as a fraudulent one? Did the state call the glitch itself a crime, or just a glitch?

On October 26th, the president posted that a million dollars would go to anyone reporting voter fraud, past elections or the midterms — payable, the post specifies, upon the arrest and conviction of whoever's responsible. Has an arrest been announced yet, anywhere, against anyone? Has a conviction?

The next day, October 27th, a nationwide review of judicial assignments found that fifty-three of those sixty marquee races sit in districts or states with at least one Trump-appointed, election-denying judge seated to hear whatever challenge comes. Fifty-three of sixty — is that most of the map, or some of it?

So: a warning letter on the 17th. A bounty with no name attached to it on the 26th. A judge roster on the 27th. That's the sequence I had laid out last night, if you want to call a glovebox full of gas receipts a dashboard.

Oh — one more thing, and I nearly left without it, same as I nearly left that garage without reading my own invoice closely enough to catch the line items I hadn't agreed to. A nationwide reporting project published today found this isn't only a California story. It found the same shape — officials questioned, then subpoenaed, then left to explain themselves in a courtroom instead of to the public — running through election offices in more than one battleground state at once. The question a federal judge in California asked this month was how the department identified its suspects in the first place. Before you go: in any of those states, has anybody answered that yet?

🍺

"They asked the Justice Department a simple question — how'd you find these people — and got a subpoena back instead of an answer, the day after the votes get counted, with a bounty on the books for fraud nobody's named and judges already seated for whatever fight comes next. That's not an investigation, that's a chokehold with a filing fee, and it's running the same way in more than one battleground state right now. The workers who count your ballot are the ones getting the court date."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, the Department is simply following up on a letter it sent — that's not harassment, that's due diligence, and if these election workers have nothing to hide they have nothing to — did I just say that, that's not even — okay, the reward is for real fraud, we take fraud seriously, we just haven't paid anybody yet, which honestly proves the system is working exactly as — it's working. It's working."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Asked how it identified suspects, Justice Department responds with criminal subpoenas instead of an answer.* By Lou · the morning edition, 30 October 2026
- *Justice Department's voter list, rejected in three courts, promoted to grand jury subpoenas five days before the election.* By Lou · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *Group called the Department of Peace publishes names of 10,000 ICE and Border Patrol agents* By Mitch · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *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

Election-Denying Trump Judges Preside Over Nearly Every Battleground Midterm Race: Analysis

Common Dreams § *10:52 EDT*

If the Trump administration decides to challenge the outcome of any of the dozens of battleground contests in next week's midterms, there's a significant chance that one of the president's handpicked, election-denying judges will oversee the case. That's according to a report published Tuesday by the advocacy group Demand Justice, which...

> *But:* **The DOJ disbanded its crypto enforcement team in April 2025 and ordered inconsistent investigations closed - while the president's family runs a crypto business** *CNBC, 8 April 2025 (Blanche memo)*
>
> DOJ subpoenas California officials in voter rolls investigation escalation
>
> *The Hill* MAINSTREAM § *10:23 EDT*
>
> The Department of Justice (DOJ) has issued subpoenas to California officials in its latest move in scrutinizing voters in the state who aren't U.S. citizens. Three subpoenas were sent to employees of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder, ordering them to appear in court on Nov.

Trump Has Tried to Exert More Control Over Elections. Here Are the Key Findings From Our Reporting.

ProPublica § *11:10 EDT*

The post Trump Has Tried to Exert More Control Over Elections. Here Are the Key Findings From Our Reporting. appeared first on ProPublica .

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

· Trump issues $1m reward for reporting voter fraud in past or upcoming elections *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· Texas sued after glitch delays almost 600,000 voter registrations *from the morgue, 15 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.

Called out by name for trying to buy Texas, Musk raises his spending to $445 million.

By RUTH
THE MONEY DESK

"AIPAC Is Spending Millions — Just Not Under Its Own Name", 24 October 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE LEVER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Elon Musk increased his midterm political spending again, with most of the new money aimed at Texas's Senate race.

WHO GETS PAID. Ken Paxton's Senate campaign in Texas gets the single biggest piece of that new money.

WHAT SLIPS. No law caps how much one person can spend on a Senate race, so that check never engages.

WHAT'S NEXT. Election Day is four days away, on November 3, and nothing currently limits how much more Musk can add before the polls close.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Set the two weeks on the table and the numbers settle by themselves, hon, before anyone says a word about them.

On September 25th, the Supreme Court let the Department of Homeland Security run its SAVE database against state voter rolls for the final ninety days before the election, while a student ID law in New Hampshire lost its chance twelve days out. Ninety days to clean a list. Twelve to prove a name belongs on it. The filing on that gap already ran once, so it stays on the table here, not the front of the ledger....

...(cont) On October 12th, the tally for Elon Musk's midterm giving came back at $276 million, "absolutely insane" was the word used at the time. The next day, October 13th, it closed at $366 million, the largest single total in the cycle, ahead of his own 2024 account to Donald Trump.

On October 24th, at a rally in Austin, Senate candidate James Talarico stood in front of his own alma mater and said the quiet part: "Texas is not for sale," naming the money behind his opponent, Ken Paxton, by its source.

On October 27th, a newspaper editorial called him "Exhibit A" for billionaire wealth generally, nothing new in the argument, but it ran the week before the figure moved again.

It moved again. As of today, the filing reads $445 million, $189 million of it marked for the Texas race alone. That is seventy-nine million dollars added in seventeen days — nearly four million seven hundred thousand dollars a day, close to a hundred and ninety-three thousand dollars an hour, around the clock, for just over two weeks, while a candidate in that same race was telling a packed auditorium the state wasn't for sale.

A separate story ran the same morning asking how Musk's influence compares with past American moguls. Historians quoted in it said he is not unique. The ledger does not carry a comparison column. It carries a number, and the number is $445 million, and $189 million of it sits under one name on one ballot in one state.

Four days remain before the polls that list decides. Nothing on file caps what gets added to it between now and then.

"Ninety days to scrub the rolls, twelve to check a kid's ID — that's the court doing math that only runs one way. Same two weeks, Musk tacks on $79 million, $189 million of it aimed at one Texas seat, while the guy running against it stands in a packed room and calls it what it is. Four days left to decide if that math wins."

— Sal

"It's basic First Amendment math: a private citizen gets to spend his own money on candidates he supports, full stop, and nobody put a dollar limit on that for a reason. Sure, $189 million lands on one Senate race the same stretch the court's calendar gave a voter-ID law twelve days to live, but that's an unrelated coincidence of timing, not a — well, it's not like anyone planned the two of them together. Did I just connect those? Forget I said that."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *President cancels two rallies, upgrades to a 19-state phone sprint, warns voters Democratic wins mean less federal help.* By Mort · the morning edition, 30 October 2026
- *Trump's third rally in a state he carried by 18 points opened on culture war, not the economy.* By Mort · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *Trump carried South Carolina by 18 points; Fox News rated the seat a toss-up with a week left.* By Mort · the morning edition, 29 October 2026
- *America Next paid an adviser's firm $250,000 for canvassing and influencer marketing; his son heckled El-Sayed* By Ruth · the morning edition, 29 October 2026
- *Jewish Democrat defects to the campaign calling El-Sayed a jihadist, says it protects Jewish Michiganders.* By Ruth · the evening edition, 29 October 2026
- *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

THE RECEIPTS

~~AIPAC Is Spending Millions — Just Not Under Its Own Name~~

AIPAC is hiding its millions inside women's and Latino advocacy groups

The Lever § *14:01 EDT*

A Lever investigation traces how the Israel lobby is routing millions through groups promoting women, reproductive rights, and Latino candidates — and how AI interests and other power brokers are adopting the strategy.

~~ARTHUR HERMAN: Musk and others prove that this election cash is King. Will it be enough?~~

Musk put $445 million into the GOP this cycle - $189 million on one Texas race

Fox News RIGHT § *05:00 EDT*

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has given over $445 million to Republican causes this cycle, including an estimated $189 million for Ken Paxton in Texas.

How powerful is Elon Musk? How his political influence compares to past U.S. moguls

NPR MAINSTREAM § *05:00 EDT*

Critics say the tech entrepreneur's enormous wealth has given him too much political power. But when stacked up against other notable American moguls, historians say he's not unique.

· Elon Musk becomes biggest donor of US midterms cycle with $366m spent *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Democrat James Talarico targets Elon Musk at rally: 'Texas is not for sale' *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Defund Elon Musk *from the morgue, 27 Oct 2026*

· Elon Musk's 'Absolutely Insane' $276 Million Midterm Spending Exposed in New Report *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· 'Take the Open Shot': Democrats Rebuked for Refusing to Target Elon Musk Over $100 Million Midterm Spending Spree *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Ketanji Brown Jackson issues public dissent in New Hampshire voting case *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· 'Major Win' for Democracy as Supreme Court Rejects Trump Attack on Mail-In Voting *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Supreme Court slams brakes on Trump's mail-in voting plan *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Supreme Court blocks use of student IDs as voter identification in New Hampshire *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Supreme Court rules New Hampshire can ban use of student IDs for voters *from the morgue, 22 Oct 2026*

· Supreme Court allows New Hampshire to bar student IDs for voting *from the morgue, 22 Oct 2026*

· SCOTUS Says New Hampshire Can Close Student ID 'Loophole' In Elections *from the morgue, 22 Oct 2026*

· US Citizens 'Could Lose Their Right to Vote' After Supreme Court Gives Green Light to Trump's Voter Purge Database *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· New Hampshire urges Supreme Court to reinstate student ID voting ban ahead of election *from the morgue, 20 Oct 2026*

· Supreme Court allows Trump admin to use federal voter eligibility database during appeal *from the morgue, 25 Sep 2026*

· After airport strike, Trump considering whether to join fight against Houthis *from the morgue, 11 Oct 2026*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

· Trump Hammered Over Iran War That Drove Gas Prices Above $4 Per Gallon Every Day in August for First Time Ever *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*

· 'Trump Did It!': At $5.85 a Gallon, Diesel Price Hits All-Time High in US Thanks to War on Iran *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

· AI safety groups aren't buying OpenAI's spending retreat *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

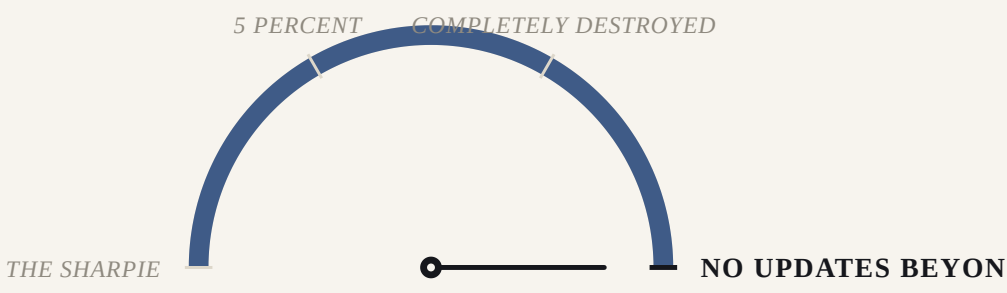
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§77 — 30 OCTOBER 2026

On the Sharpie

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



NO UPDATES BEYOND 2024

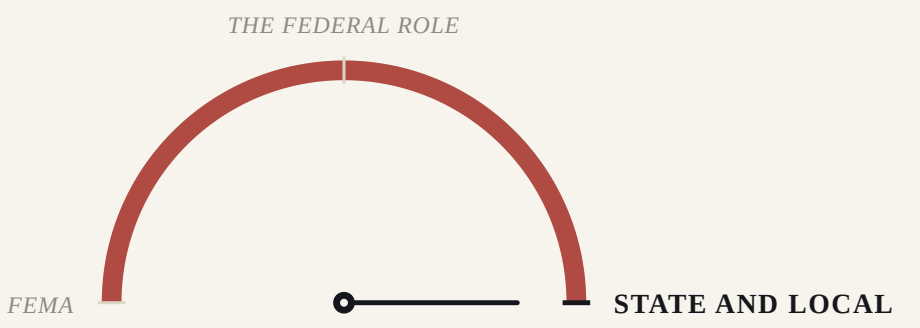
The map. The forecast gave southeastern Alabama about a 5 percent chance of tropical-storm-force winds, and the Birmingham weather office had posted that "Alabama will NOT see any impacts"; two days after the marker, an unsigned NOAA statement said Birmingham "spoke in absolute terms" [1]. The Commerce Department's inspector general found in 2020 that "the Department required NOAA to issue a Statement that did not further NOAA's or NWS's interests" [2].

The count. On May 8, 2025, NOAA announced that its Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters product "will be retired, with no updates beyond calendar year 2024" [3]. After losing staff, the National Weather Service was allowed to hire 450 meteorologists, hydrologists and radar technicians that August [4]. And the council's recommendation for the agency that pays out after a storm: aid only for homes "completely destroyed" [5]. In 2019 the storm was drawn somewhere else. In 2025 the tally of storms was stopped.

SOURCES

1. About a 5 percent chance of tropical-storm-force winds in southeastern Alabama; Birmingham: "Alabama will NOT see any impacts"; NOAA: Birmingham "spoke in absolute terms" — WSFA, 6 September 2019 ↑
2. "The Department required NOAA to issue a Statement that did not further NOAA's or NWS's interests" — Commerce Department inspector general, OIG-20-032-I — Nextgov, July 2020 ↑
3. The Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters product "will be retired, with no updates beyond calendar year 2024" — NOAA NESDIS, 8 May 2025 ↑
4. The National Weather Service allowed to hire 450 meteorologists, hydrologists and radar technicians — House press release from Reps. Flood and Sorensen, 7 August 2025 ↑
5. Aid only for homes "completely destroyed" — Government Executive, 7 May 2026 ↑

REPUBLICAN



STATE AND LOCAL

The administration's case on disasters is not the Sharpie; it is a theory of who should respond. Executive Order 14239, March 2025: "State and local governments and individuals play a more active and significant role in national resilience and preparedness" [1]. The argument is that the people closest to a flood or a fire know it best, and that a federal agency in Washington is a slower first responder than a county.

That is a real position, and it is being put into practice: the FEMA Review Council's recommendations this spring called for block grants to states and a strategic review of the agency's staff [2]. On the day of the marker, in September 2019, the president asked about the loop said, "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know" [3]. What happened to the forecasters since is on the other side.

SOURCES

1. "State and local governments and individuals play a more active and significant role in national resilience and preparedness" — Executive Order 14239, 18 March 2025 — The White House ↑
2. The FEMA Review Council recommended block grants, a two-to-three-year staff strategic review, and aid only for homes "completely destroyed" — Government Executive, 7 May 2026 ↑
3. The Dorian forecast map extended into Alabama in black marker; asked about it: "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know" — CBS News, 4 September 2019 ↑

"It's the little loop that bothers me. The forecast map from August 29th, and then on September 4th there's this extra curve in black marker, reaching into Alabama. The forecast gave southeastern Alabama about a five percent chance of tropical-storm winds; the Birmingham office said Alabama would "NOT see any impacts." Two days later, an unsigned statement took his side. The next year the inspector general wrote it "did not further NOAA's or NWS's interests." Excuse me — I forgot my umbrella. The loop was drawn in 2019. Who's drawing the map now?" — Lou

🍺

"The Sharpie. September 2019, the official forecast map in the Oval Office, and there's a black loop drawn into Alabama. "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know." Then the weather agency was made to back him, and the Commerce Department's inspector general said the statement didn't serve the agency. Last year they found a better pen. They retired the count of billion-dollar disasters — "no updates beyond calendar year 2024." You don't have to redraw the storm if you stop keeping the map."

— Sal

🚬

"The president was simply being cautious about Alabama, and caution is what you want from a leader during hurricane season, and retiring the disaster count is caution too, since you can't be alarmed by a number no one publishes."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎