The Single-Column Edition

FROM EACH

— WEDNESDAY, 04 NOVEMBER 2026 — THE MORNING EDITION — FREE, FOREVER

Susan Collins declares independence from Trump four weeks before Maine declares it from her.

BY MORT
The Rotunda Bureau

Susan Collins' Senate seat died Tuesday, three decades old, after a long battle with timing.

It is survived by a line delivered in a Tuesday debate on October 7. Troy Jackson, the Democrat who would go on to unseat her, told Collins she was "like an arsonist who helped set the fire, and then she wants credit for bringing a cup of water to put it out" — this about the $50 billion relief fund she had touted for a healthcare crisis Jackson said she'd paved the way for. The line survives her. It will be read aloud at debates she is no longer invited to.

Between those two facts sat a third. On September 22, ProPublica published a story Common Dreams described as uncovering a "sprawling pay-to-play operation" centered on Collins; Jackson responded by saying she "delivered millions in taxpayer dollars for a corrupt donor bankrolling her campaign" and called it "corruption of the highest order." Three weeks after that, on October 14, Jackson stood in Biddeford and noted that Collins had voted to funnel tens of millions of dollars to ICE a little over a month before one of its officers killed 25-year-old Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero on that town's

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THE WORD

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On Election Day

DEMOCRAT



23RD OF 38

REPUBLICAN



THE DOCUMENT

"Election Day. I've got two files and they're both about how hard we make this. First file: we vote on a working Tuesday, more than sixty percent of elections worldwide are on a weekend, we come in twenty- third of eighty- eighth in turnout, and twenty- six percent of nonvoters said they were too busy with work or school. Move it to a rest day and the research says turnout goes up five or six points. Second file: nine states passed twelve new restrictions in the first four months of this year, on top of thirty- seven that year will in force today. Sorry, one thing before you go. The first file is a problem nobody fixed in two hundred years. The second one took eighteen months. We move fast when we want to." — Leo

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INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

THE HOUSE IS A PARK

The house costs $15.5 million a year to run and $600 million this year to add a room; Congress voted on the first number.

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Three states amend their constitutions to outlaw a noncitizen vote that already did not exist.

BY MITCH
Investigations

Three states spent Tuesday's ballot writing down a law they already had.

Alaska's Initiative Petition 25USCV is projected to pass, Decision Desk HQ says, and the text it adds reads almost like a dictionary entry: Alaska law, the measure notes, "mandates that voters must be citizens." All together now — read that clause back once more. The law already said this before anyone voted on it this week.

South Dakota did not even pretend the question was open. Amendment J, assigned its letter on the ballot, exists to "affirm" that only U.S. citizens can vote in South Dakota elections. Affirm is the operative word — not establish, not require, affirm, the verb reserved for restating a thing already true.

West Virginia's Amendment 1 shows its hand furthest. The constitutional sentence it amends already opens, "the citizens of the State shall…" The amendment's entire function is making sure a clause that already begins with the word "citizens" is understood to be about citizens.

Not every version of this ballot line had it so easy. In September, a group called Americans for Citizen Voting tried to force a similar measure, with

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Fox publishes richer, safer and stronger the morning its own party loses the House and Senate

BY RUTH
The Morning Desk

Laura Ingraham published "Richer, safer and stronger: Why the Trump agenda deserves to keep going" on the morning of November 4th. That same morning, CBS projected Democrats had taken the House and the Senate, and The Hill was already filing it as a rout — virtually every competitive race, both chambers. Same date stamp. The headline and the call ran under the same sun.

Before that morning, there was a filing cabinet. Open it.

On October 15th, a Harris poll found 61 percent of the people surveyed believed the country was in recession, and 62 percent of independents said the economy was getting worse. That's three weeks out — and it's independents, the group that doesn't belong to either side's spin, the group that just answers the phone and tells you what their grocery bill looks like.

On October 28th, the Federal Reserve held interest rates steady, at one of the highest pre-election levels in over twenty years, in its last meeting before the vote. Two board members wanted to raise rates further; the Fed said no, not yet. The Guardian's own subheadline on that story said the September in-

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Musk spends record sum on Republicans, jokes about the defeat it bought.

BY TIM LODGERS
The Euro Desk

Today we are making a super PAC, which is not a dish you can get over here, because the pan has no sides. In 2010 a ruling took the rim off, and since then an American may pour in as much money as he likes. You will need a billionaire, in this case Elon Musk, and a Republican Party willing to be fed.

Begin with the plan. By September 22, Musk was reported to intend at least $100 million for Republicans in the midterms, a quieter approach than the one he took in 2024. And critics were already asking why Democrats would not target him by name.

Clive *Quieter. I am always quieter before a reading, and nobody has once called that modesty a strategy.*

Gaw *Nobody's called it a strategy because it isn't one. You read in the kitchen. He bought a party.*

Fold in the scale. By October 7, an analysis counted 172 billionaire families who had already spent more than $1.7 billion on this cycle, most of it through the very super PACs that the 2010 ruling allows.

Keith *Bought a party. I could sell that. I'd stick a flag on it and charge*

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Republicans redraw Texas and Missouri maps to survive 2026, voters and districts vote no.

BY MORT
The Rotunda Bureau

Here lies a strategy, born in the Texas and Missouri legislatures sometime in 2025, dead at the count on Tuesday.

Missouri's trouble started in court, not on Election Day. The legislature drew a congressional map in 2022, then drew a second one in 2025 reaching for the same result, and on September 25 the U.S. Supreme Court's own conservative majority let a lower ruling against that second map stand — the third time the courts had struck the map down. Lawmakers then asked voters directly: Proposition A would have authorized the legislature to pass yet another set of congressional lines. Voters rejected it Tuesday — the fourth time the map project had been turned back, three times by courts and now once by the people asked to bless it themselves.

Texas took the other road to the same grave. Lawmakers redrew districts over the summer specifically to protect Republican seats ahead of the midterms, a redraw that by late October had forced incumbents in both parties to retool their campaigns district by district. On October 16 the president was already complaining that fellow Republicans were "hurting Texas," a line

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Trump has no regrets about the Iran war that just cost his party both chambers of Congress

BY RUTH
The Morning Desk

On August 31st, after Iran and the United States traded strikes, the President told a reporter the response would be "hard." On November 3rd, the day before Americans voted, the White House called the war "over" and could not say, when a reporter asked, which day the strikes had stopped. The same morning, he congratulated the Democrats who now hold both chambers, said they'd "done a good job," allowed the war "may have played a part," and declined, in the same sentence, to take personal responsibility for the result.

Run the filing against the table. The table says a war invoiced as finished one day posted a measurable loss to his own column two days later. That is not a timeline error, hon. A company that tells shareholders the plant is closed, then reports the plant's third-quarter loss, has not misplaced an invoice; it has priced the thing it said didn't exist. The price here is a chamber. Two chambers. The House and the Senate, both entries, both dated, both attributed by the same man who signed for them to the same operation he had told the country, one day earlier, had already stopped.

The record establishes that Republicans no longer hold either chamber.

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Trump blames the ballot for a loss his own nominee's leaked tape blamed on his war.

BY LOU
One More Question

Could somebody walk me through this? Not the policy part — the sequence. I want to stand where each of these men stood and do what they did, in the order they did it, because I've got four pieces of paper on my kitchen table and they won't lie flat together.

Start at the end, since that's where the posting happened. Tuesday night, the screens. I'm told there was a watch party in a Dallas hotel conference room for Ken Paxton, running for Senate, and that barely two hours after the last polls closed the giant screen broadcasting the results went black. Fitting, the paper called it. Texas hadn't gone this way since 1988. Somewhere else in the country the same night, the House changed hands, and the Senate majority Republicans were supposed to keep went with it — one wire service reached for Titanic and Hindenburg in the same sentence, which I take to mean two separate disasters, not one.

So the next morning — Wednesday, this week — the president goes on Truth Social. I want to walk through exactly what he typed, because the order matters. He says the Republicans would have won in a landslide if his name

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Haley Stevens endorses the Republican rival to her own party's Senate nominee, who wins anyway and becomes first Muslim senator.

BY LOU
One More Question

The car needs a fan belt again, so I was out in the garage with the man who does that work, and while he had his head under the hood I asked him something that had nothing to do with belts. Walk me through it, I said. Not why anybody would do a thing like this — I gave up on why years ago. How. Step by step, the way you'd take an engine apart and lay the parts out on the bench, what order would you do it in? He asked me what I was talking about. I told him I'd show him once I found the pages, because I'd printed them and left them in the truck.

Here's the order, best I can tell from what's got a date on it. September 14th, a former senator from West Virginia went on CNBC, according to the Washington Examiner, and said he wasn't okay with a certain candidate winning a Senate seat, and that the Republican running against him, Mike Rogers, would do a great job. Is that step one — a man who isn't even on the ballot going on television to say the quiet part about his own side's nominee, weeks before anyone voted?

Step two, if there is one. The Michigan congresswoman who lost that pri-

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"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

Grown now, the kits cross the yard
at noon. A man tries the new latch.

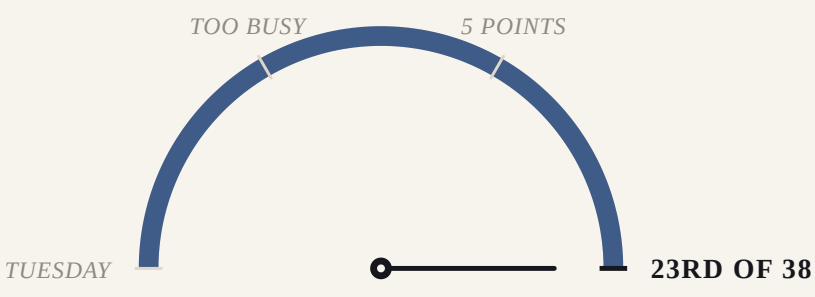
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§81 — 03 NOVEMBER 2026

On Election Day

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



23RD OF 38

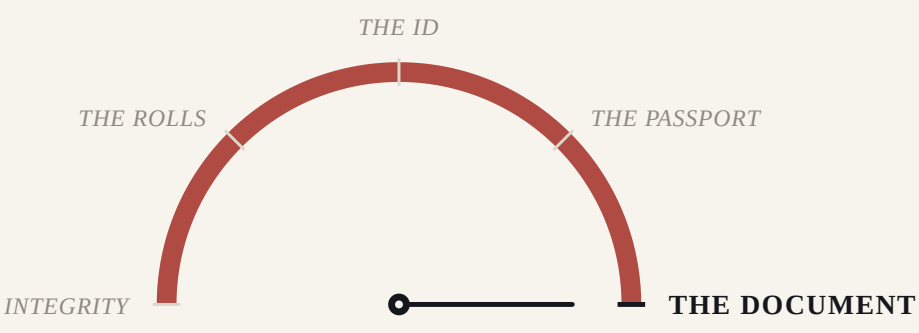
Before any of this year's laws, the oldest obstacle was the date itself. The United States ranks 23rd of 38 OECD countries in voter turnout, and most of the countries above it vote on a weekend or on a declared public holiday [1]. More than sixty percent of elections worldwide are held on a weekend, Sunday most commonly [2]. Twenty-six percent of Americans who did not vote gave the reason as being too busy — work, school, obligations [1]. An analysis of thousands of international elections found turnout rises on average five to six points when a national election moves from a weekday to a rest day [2].

So the fix is known, it is measured, and it has been introduced: the Election Day Act would make today a federal holiday, and no bill of its kind has ever cleared Congress [3]. Tuesday was chosen in the 1840s around a farm calendar and a day's travel to the county seat. It has outlived the horse. Both of today's files are about how many hours a person has to spend to cast one vote — and only one of the two got a legislature's attention this year. Polls are open. Go stand in the line.

SOURCES

1. The United States ranks 23rd of 38 OECD countries in turnout, most of which vote on a weekend or national holiday; 26 percent of American nonvoters reported being too busy because of work or school — Institute for Responsive Government, What Other Countries Can Teach Us About Turnout ↑
2. More than 60 percent of elections worldwide are held on a weekend, Sunday most commonly; an analysis of thousands of international elections found turnout rises five to six points on average when polling moves from a weekday to a rest day — The Conversation ↑
3. The Election Day Act, H.R. 154, 119th Congress, would establish Election Day as a federal holiday; no bill of this kind has cleared Congress — Congress.gov ↑

REPUBLICAN



THE DOCUMENT

The case for tightening is that a vote counted wrong cancels a vote cast right, and no one who has ever run an election disputes that the rolls need maintaining. What is worth putting on the record today is the size and speed of what was actually enacted. Between 1 January and 1 May 2026, at least nine states enacted twelve restrictive voting laws, nine of which are in force at the polls today [1]. Seventeen states enacted thirty-two such laws across 2025, of which thirty-one are in effect for this election [2].

The sharpest of them is documentary proof of citizenship. South Dakota and Utah now require every registrant to produce a document such as a passport or a birth certificate; Florida, Kentucky and Mississippi require it of some voters [1]. A passport is a document a person acquires only if they travel, and a birth certificate is one many people have to send away for. That is the trade being made, and it should be named honestly: a paper requirement at the front of registration, paid for in the registrations that do not happen.

SOURCES

1. At least 9 states enacted 12 restrictive voting laws between 1 January and 1 May 2026, 9 in effect for the November election; South Dakota and Utah require documentary proof of citizenship from all registrants, and Florida, Kentucky and Mississippi from some voters — Brennan Center for Justice, State Voting Laws Roundup: May 2026 ↑
2. 17 states enacted 32 restrictive voting laws in 2025, 31 of them in effect for the 2026 midterms — Brennan Center for Justice, State Voting Laws Roundup: 2025 in Review ↑

“Election Day. I've got two files and they're both about how hard we make this. First file: we vote on a working Tuesday, more than sixty percent of elections worldwide are on a weekend, we come in twenty-third of thirty-eight in turnout, and twenty-six percent of nonvoters said they were too busy with work or school. Move it to a rest day and the research says turnout goes up five or six points. Second file: nine states passed twelve new restrictions in the first four months of this year, on top of thirty-one from last year still in force today. Sorry, one thing before you go. The first file is a problem nobody fixed in two hundred years. The second one took eighteen months. We move fast when we want to.” — Lou

🍺

“It's Tuesday. Go vote. And while you're standing in that line on your lunch break, remember that we're the ones who picked Tuesday — a farm calendar from the eighteen hundreds, kept because nobody ever moved it. Sixty percent of the world votes on a weekend. We rank twenty-third out of thirty-eight. A quarter of the people who don't vote say they were at work. There's a bill to make today a holiday. There's always a bill. Go vote anyway, that's the whole point, they're counting on the line being annoying.”

— Sal

🚬

“Election Day has been Tuesday since 1845 and that continuity is part of what makes it meaningful, and I'd add that if someone genuinely cannot find time to vote across a two-week early voting window, the issue may be one of priorities rather than of access.”

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎