The Single-Column Edition

FROM EACH

— FRIDAY, 06 NOVEMBER 2026 — THE MORNING EDITION — FREE, FOREVER

ICE promised only criminals, swept up the neighbors, got voted out Tuesday.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Benny Melendez, a business owner in Weslaco, Texas, said he expected ICE's raids to catch people with criminal records. Instead the agents came for his relatives. His employees. People his sheet had never flagged. The gap between the filing and the promise is a count, and as of this week nobody in Washington has published one.

That gap is now showing up in a different ledger. National school enrollment was steady set to fall by 2 million students by 2030, and NPR reports this week that deportations of parents and children are accelerating that drop — emptying desks in the same communities ICE said it was only clearing of criminals.

The warning signs sat in the polling for months. On September 21, Trump's approval hit 32 percent, a record low in either term, while diesel prices climbed and the war in Iran dragged on. Two weeks later, on October 5, the same 32 percent held — this time with the poll naming the slippage specifically among Latino voters who had backed him in 2024.

One day before the vote, the administration closed its own books on a dif-

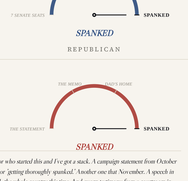
... Continued on Page T31

THE WORD

$83 — 05 NOVEMBER 2026

On the spanking

DEMOCRAT



SPANKED

REPUBLICAN



SPANKED

"I went looking for who started this and I've got a stack. A campaign statement from October 2023, a governor 'getting thoroughly spanked.' Another one that November. A speech in Georgia, 2024, the whole country this time. And seven testimony from a courtroom in Manhattan, which he denies, so I set that one to the side, and then I picked it back up. Sorry, one thing before you go. Tuesday night he wrote that he wasn't on the ballot. Then it was Fox News. Then he said the Iran cease-fire was largely true. That's three reasons. If he wasn't on the ballot, why does he need the other two?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W10

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

Gas slides toward $4 a gallon, rebounds the same day Iran claims new attacks on ships.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

The Congressional Budget Office priced the Iran war at nearly forty billion dollars in July and called its own number conservative. The Pentagon's own figure, given to Congress on August 13, was just over forty-two billion. Last week the Pentagon's figure was forty-seven point one billion, a rise of five billion dollars in two and a half months with no line items to show for it. That is the war's ledger. The pump runs a separate set of books, and for one Friday this week the two appeared to meet.

Snarl where the pump's book opens. In August, for the first time ever, AAA recorded gas above four dollars a gallon every day in the month, averaging four-oh-eight, ninety cents higher than the year before. Diesel went further: on September 11 it hit six dollars a gallon, a record, on supply constraints the reporting tied directly to the war. Those were the costs entered against the war. By Friday, gas was on track to fall back below four dollars for the first time since that August run, and the relief was tied in the reporting to hope that the midterms would push Washington and Tehran toward a deal.

The relief did not survive the news cycle that reported it. The same day,

... Continued on Page F135

World leaders grant Trump two more years; his own party is already distancing itself.

BY THE LODGERS
The Euro Desk

Today we are making a roast with its timer set in somebody else's kitchen, which is not a dish you can see. You will need one president with two years left on that timer, one approval rating of 32 percent recorded on 2 November, one day before the midterm elections, and a great many people elsewhere who have already done the sums on when it comes out of the oven. A midterm is the vote held two years into a four-year term; it cannot remove a president, only his majority.

CLIVE *Timer. I've been on a deadline since March and nobody has offered me so much as a word for it.*

GAMY *You've had the same deadline since March and drafted nothing but excuses. I'll have the toaster in pieces before you finish a stanza.*

You will be looking for the vote that removes him early. There is no such vote; the midterms are not that, and nothing here says otherwise. What happened instead is quieter. Republicans began distancing themselves from the president after the midterms, and on American television Jimmy Fallon asked whether the only person left standing by him would turn out to be

... Continued on Page A238

Vance's 2028 launch pad turns out to be the map Republicans just watched blow open under them.

BY LOU
One More Question

I did the math this week, in my own numbers, plainly. Social Security goes up 3.6 percent come January, I saw that, about seventy-five dollars a month for the average check. My car needs a fan belt, which costs less than that, and I still haven't bought it, which should tell you something about where the rest of my numbers sit. I'm not going to tell you where. That's not what I sat down to write about.

I sat down to write about a word. The word is "tarnished." I wrote it down because somebody else used it first — The New York Times, Friday, writing about Vice President Vance, who they say will need to sell voters on a "tarnished Trump brand." I don't use words like that. I just copy them down.

Here is where we've been, in order, because I think the order is the whole story. Earlier in the week, one Republican governor, DeSantis, was mocking another Republican, Ramaswamy, for losing Ohio. Around the same time a county executive named Blakeman was calling a congresswoman, Stefanik, selfish for losing New York, weeks after Blakeman himself owed donors $360,000 he hadn't given back. Somewhere in there Larry Hogan started

... Continued on Page A229

Newsom commutes all death sentences under a constitution barring the worst ones without four judges' sign-off.

BY LOU
One More Question

I want to tell you what I can afford, because it is short and it will not take long. I can afford the bridge toll if I skip the coffee. I can afford what the car needs and not a drop more — the oil, the wiper fluid, not yet the fan belt, which is starting to complain on cold mornings and which I am pretending not to hear. I bring this up only because the governor of California just signed something that cost him nothing to sign, and I keep wondering what it actually costs, and who's supposed to be checking.

I had the wire copy out on the porch Thursday night and I kept going back to it, the way you go back to a drawer you already closed, just to make sure you really did close it. California's governor announced Thursday, November 5th, that he was commuting every death sentence in the state to life in prison — all five hundred and forty-eight of them — and he called capital punishment "morally objectionable." I wrote that phrase down because it's a good sentence and I wanted to get it right. The state hasn't executed anyone in twenty years. These five hundred and forty-eight are, by one paper's count, about a quarter of the death sentences in the whole country. That's not a

... Continued on Page A229

Panel stacked with Trump's appointees approves his arch; judge blocks all work on it before midnight.

BY MITCH
Investigations

The file on the president's arch opens, as these files do, with an approval. In April, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts signed off on a 250-foot triumphal arch for the traffic circle between Arlington National Cemetery and Arlington Memorial Bridge, directly across the Potomac from the Lincoln Memorial. That is beat one, and it is the only beat in this file that took longer than a week to approve.

By September 28, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation had stopped listening. Its Trump-appointed vice chairman, Travis Voyles, told a preservation group — the one that went on the record as "gobsmacked" — that addressing their concerns "is not the public's business" to deviate from the president's vision for the project. The vision, we are given to understand, does not deviate.

On October 9, Arlington County sued to block the arch, leaning on that April approval and citing tourism and the safety of people who live near a 250-foot structure the filing says the government has floated using for storage — the county's complaint does not finish that sentence, and neither will I.

... Continued on Page B33

Trump blames voters for crashing markets data center backers warned them about.

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Voters who wanted to ban data centers were warned, repeatedly, that the move would leave them backward and poor. On October 22, before a single ballot that week was cast, the Nasdaq composite had already fallen 2.6 percent in a single session, the S&P 500 posting its worst day since July — the correction the sector would later flirt with was already filed in the tape.

National polling at the time found majorities in both parties opposed building the centers in their own communities, though the six votes themselves were never broken down by party. On Tuesday, that opposition went statewide: voters passed 44 ballot measures restricting data centers in dozens of jurisdictions, after campaigns put hundreds of millions of dollars into television ads on the question. Many of the candidates who won had pledged to clamp down on the centers once sworn in.

By Thursday, the market the industry built answered back. The Nasdaq composite fell 5.5 percent, its worst day in 19 months, and more than $2 trillion came off its value by the closing bell — the single-day loss landing on the industry whose expansion voters had just voted against, not on the voters

... Continued on Page F135

Trump's answer to what he will miss most about the White House is now an executive order

BY STERLING
The Ownership Desk

Read the words again before you decide this is a man preserving history: the two rooms "won't be able to be taken down, destroyed, touched, or anything else." That is not decoration. That is a servitude, and a servitude binds whoever holds the keys next, whatever the voters do about it. The Post has the fate of the gilded remodel "up in the air." Quite. The order is signed; the gold waits on somebody else's lawyers.

And in October, asked what he would miss most about the White House, he talked about the office. Not the country. The office.

There is a figure for a chair. McMahon's office told Congress the secretary's furniture is worn out and "cannot be configurationally or aesthetically integrated"; roughly $43,000 is budgeted. Forty-three thousand ... for furniture, because the old furniture cannot be integrated. She had said the relocation would save taxpayers $4.8m a year. She is seeking to shutter the department.

... Continued on Page A229

"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

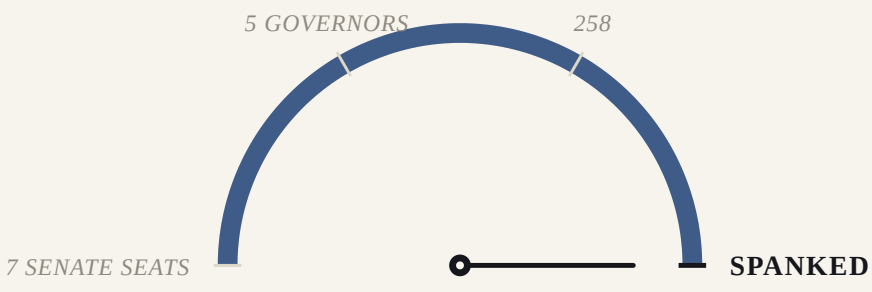
At first light the dog got up.
The fox heard the chain fall.

KNOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

On the spanking

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



SPANKED

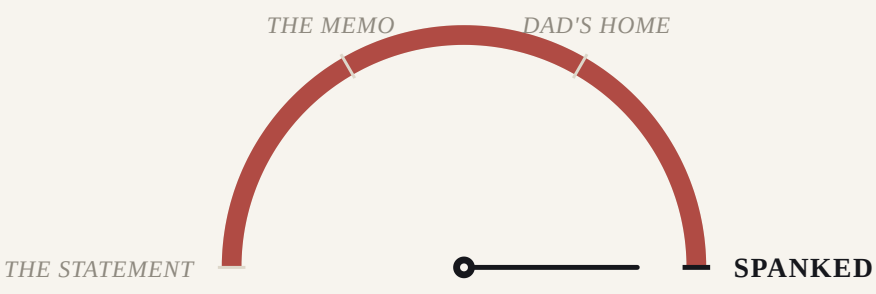
On Tuesday the country answered. Democrats take the House and the Senate in January, NBC News projects. They flipped seven Senate seats: Iowa, Kansas, Ohio, Maine, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. They flipped five governorships. An NBC analysis on Wednesday put them at 258 House seats at least, a figure that can still move a few seats [1]. Early exit polls had his approval at 38 percent [2]. The Dow rose more than 1,500 points Wednesday [3].

Dad's statement came in parts. "I wasn't on the Ballot and if I was, we would have won IN A LANDSLIDE" [3]. Fox News "bears the responsibility" [3]. The vice president blamed the Iran war, and he called that "largely true" [3]. Then he posted a red cap reading VETO [1]. Democrats will fall short of the two-thirds it takes to override one [1]. The gavels change hands January 3, in 59 days. He keeps the veto. He keeps the nuclear codes for 807.

SOURCES

1. Control of both chambers, the seven Senate flips, five governorships, the estimate of at least 258 House seats, and the VETO cap, with Democrats short of two-thirds — NBC News live blog, 4 November 2026 ↑
2. Early exit polls put Trump's approval at 38 percent — CBS News, 4 November 2026 ↑
3. The Truth Social post of 3 November, "bears the responsibility," "largely true," and the Dow's rise of over 1,500 points — Yahoo News live coverage, 4 November 2026 ↑

REPUBLICAN



SPANKED

Give the word its due: it was theirs first. In October 2023 his campaign sent the press a statement headed "DeSanctus Campaign Gets Spanked on CNN," in which the governor of Florida was "getting thoroughly spanked" [1]. That November a campaign memo read "DeSantis Gets Spanked on FOX News" [2]. In October 2024, in Duluth, Georgia, Tucker Carlson widened the program to the country: "You've been a bad little girl, and you're getting a vigorous spanking right now" [3].

There is one more entry, under oath. In May 2024 Stormy Daniels testified in Manhattan that she looked at a magazine with him on the cover and said, "Someone should spank you with that" [4], and then did, "right on the butt" [5]. He denies the whole story [6]. The judge said some of the testimony "would have been better left unsaid" [7]. That is a statement, a memo, a stage and a witness stand. On Tuesday it came back with a count.

SOURCES

1. "DeSanctus Campaign Gets Spanked on CNN" and "getting thoroughly spanked," Trump campaign statement to the media — Mediaite, 28 October 2023 ↑
2. Campaign memo headed "KISS OF DEATH: DeSantis Gets Spanked on FOX News and on the Campaign Trail" — Uproxx, 29 November 2023 ↑
3. Tucker Carlson at a Trump campaign event in Duluth, Georgia, 23 October 2024: "You've been a bad little girl, and you're getting a vigorous spanking right now" — TheWrap ↑
4. Daniels's testimony of 7 May 2024 on the magazine with him on the cover: "Someone should spank you with that" — Fox News ↑
5. Daniels testified she "spanked" him "right on the butt" — ABC News via Good Morning America, 7 May 2024 ↑
6. "He denies the whole story" — Associated Press via PBS NewsHour, May 2024 ↑
7. Judge Juan Merchan declined a mistrial and said some testimony "would have been better left unsaid" — Mother Jones, 7 May 2024 ↑

“I went looking for who started this and I've got a stack. A campaign statement from October 2023, a governor "getting thoroughly spanked." Another one that November. A speech in Georgia, 2024, the whole country this time. And sworn testimony from a courtroom in Manhattan, which he denies, so I set that one to the side, and then I picked it back up. Sorry, one thing before you go. Tuesday night he wrote that he wasn't on the ballot. Then it was Fox News. Then he said the Iran explanation was largely true. That's three reasons. If he wasn't on the ballot, why does he need the other two?” — Lou

🍺

“Spanked. And before anybody writes in, it's not our word. It's theirs. Go look. His campaign put it in a press statement in 2023. In 2024 Tucker Carlson stood up at a rally in Georgia and told the whole country Dad's coming home and it's getting a vigorous one. So the country goes to its room and thinks about what it did for two years. Tuesday it came downstairs. Seven Senate seats. Texas. Dad's statement is he wasn't home. And Wednesday the Dow goes up fifteen hundred points. I'm not saying those two things are connected. I'm saying the guy next to me bought a round.”

— Sal

🚬

“I'd push back on "spanked" as a characterization of what was, in fairness, a preliminary count, and I think we can all agree that kind of language has no place in our politics, outside of a campaign statement, where it is a metaphor, and a rally, where it was also a metaphor.”

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎