The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

MONDAY, 09 NOVEMBER 2026 — THE EVENING EDITION FREE, FOREVER

$2.1 million of retirement savings bought $1.2 million in gold; third such case this fall

BY RUTH
The Money Desk

Police in Wyoming and Wisconsin have arrested two suspects who, by today's account, presented themselves as agents of the Federal Trade Commission and persuaded elderly people to empty their savings into gold bars. The FBI calls it a sophisticated, multi-layer scam. On the ledger it runs three entries: a withdrawal, a purchase, a delivery. The dollars leave an account with a statement behind them and arrive as an object carrying two prices at once.

The fall has now run that ledger three times, and in the second file somebody priced the spread. On October 20 it was reported that an elderly couple had sued the former Disney actor Erik von Detten, alleging financial elder abuse and fraud: $2.1 million of retirement savings moved into gold, and the couple says more than $900,000 of it went into the distance between what the coins were worth and what the coins cost them. Reconciled, that is 43 percent of the conversion, retained by whoever wrote the invoice. The metal is still metal. The product was the markup.

Count the letterheads: a federal consumer agency, a television career, an

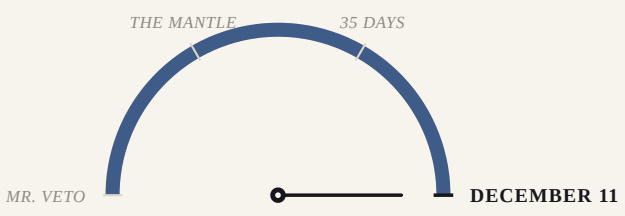
... Continued on Page F139

THE WORD

§87 — 09 NOVEMBER 2026

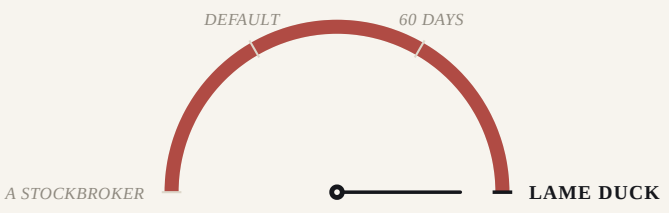
On lame duck

DEMOCRAT



DECEMBER 11

REPUBLICAN



LAME DUCK

"I rented from a fella who sold the building. He had till the first of the month, and that last week he signed a lot of paper. Legal, every sheet. I can't stop looking at a date, I'm sorry. December 11. That's when the money runs out this year. December 11, 2018, he said "I am proud to shut down the government." I checked it twice. His party had just lost the House. Thirty-five days. Sorry, one thing before you go. Fifty-five days for them, 803 for him. Which one is the lame duck?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W87

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

THE BADGE DECIDES

The bowling-alley lights were contracted to the cent, $252,876.34, escort extra; the passes that let 78 reporters in without an escort went dark the day after a post.

... Continued on the Investigative Reporting page

Press secretary race narrows to a joke the president walked back and the aide fired after five days.

BY CHIP
Staff Writer

I am going to take the question as asked. The briefing room is open, the president took questions from reporters on Monday, and I would ask that the record show he took them on no notice, standing up, which is more than any schedule required of him.

Start at the end of August, when Karoline Leavitt stepped down to spend more time with her young family. The Washington Examiner's words, and the family part is real. The lectern then went without a head spokesperson from the end of August to the thirteenth of October. That is a gap. It is not a blackout. On the ninth of October the president named Katie Zacharia, and on Tuesday the thirteenth she gave her first briefing at nine-thirty in the morning. It ran under fifteen minutes. Three questions — Fox News, the Daily Mail, Breitbart — each reporter recognized, each question answered. Administration officials complained about the delivery to reporters without putting their names on it, which tells you something about those officials and not about the briefing. Anthony Scaramucci said that same day that the clock was running. He would know. That was a joke. People keep making jokes

... Continued on Page A233

Ex-adviser says officials traded the health agenda for sugar money, lost the midterms, then blamed Trump

BY MITCH
Investigations

Everything in this story exists on paper except the health agenda.

Start on October 22nd, when Calley Means resigned as a senior adviser to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The Washington Examiner gave the cause as food policy disputes. No name, no industry, no number: a man left the White House over disagreements about lunch.

On November 6th the sentence acquired a subject. In an interview with Joe Rogan, as the New York Times reported it, Means accused the chief of staff, Susie Wiles, of repeatedly bowing to lobbying pressure and fixating on campaign contributions. Two days later, on Face the Nation, he said the president "has been subverted by people that are beholden to special interests," which is the alias version of the same sentence, and told interviewers the staff treated the president like a "baby," per The Hill.

Then came the filing, and the filing is the thing. The Hill reported that Means followed the accusation with a formal request that Wiles preserve her records. All together now — line one: the request is addressed to the official he had just accused. Line two: it asks her to serve as custodian of the evi-

... Continued on Page A233

The Justice Department's suit triggered only on a narrow Republican loss; Mississippi's trailing Republican filed second.

BY THE WRECKING CREW
The Remedy Desk

The chief put the assignment on the board in one line, which is how this crew likes an assignment: a lawsuit that only works if you lose.

Walk it from the top. On 12 October a former president cut an ad for Scott Colom, the Democrat running in Mississippi — outside help, arriving late, which matters in a minute. On 23 October an order went to the Justice Department; on 24 October the suit was filed, before a single Alaska vote had been counted, asking a court to block certification if the Republican lost narrowly. On 28 October the president called the Peltola campaign's reported recruitment of a second Dan Sullivan illegal and called for her disqualification, and Republican officials asked for an investigation. On 31 October an election attorney told the New York Post that setting those ballots aside was "not even possible," and a former FEC chair told Fox News that prosecutions under the last administration set the precedent for the probe. The Peltola campaign repeated its denial and said nothing about the federal investigation.

Then Friday. Peltola's campaign sued the State of Alaska — not for a result, for records: which absentee ballots the Division of Elections rejected, and

... Continued on Page A233

"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*

Rope in hand, a man holds the crossing.
By night the far path grows smooth.

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

Press secretary race narrows to a joke the president walked back and the aide fired after five days.

By CHIP
STAFF WRITER

"Katie Zacharia auditioning again for White House press secretary — despite being fired after 5 days: sources", 9 November 2026
(PHOTO VIA NEW YORK POST — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

❦ THE FORECAST ❦

On the weekend of November 7 and 8 the president announced he had offered the press secretary job to the head of the UFC and posted a computer-made video of fighters attacking journalists. On Monday he said he was kidding. The job has sat empty since October 16.

The White House may stop holding briefings at all, take back the assigned seats in the briefing room, and decide each morning which outlets get through the gate. The press office may be closed to reporters entirely, with access cut to escorted visits by invitation, and a reporter who asks for information nobody approved may be stripped of a pass.

THE LAW. Pentagon, 15 October 2025: reporters from 56 outlets turned in their badges rather than sign the new access rules; only One America News signed.

Happened once. Ask the Pentagon press corps.

EARL

More of Earl's calls, and the score, on E7

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I am going to take the question as asked. The briefing room is open, the president took questions from reporters on Monday, and I would ask that the record show he took them on no notice, standing up, which is more than any schedule required of him.

Start at the end of August, when Karoline Leavitt stepped down to spend more time with her young family. The Washington Examiner's words, and the family part is real. The lectern then went without a head spokesperson from the end of August to the thirteenth of October. That is a gap. It is not a blackout. On the ninth of October the president named Katie Zacharia, and on Tuesday the thirteenth she gave her first briefing at nine-thirty in the morning. It ran under fifteen minutes. Three questions — Fox News, the Daily Mail, Breitbart — each reporter recognized, each question answered. Administration officials complained about the delivery to reporters without putting their names on it, which tells you something about those officials and not about the briefing. Anthony Scaramucci said that same day that the clock was running. He would know. That was a joke. People keep making jokes about this office and then I am the one who has to go out and explain the —...

...(cont) She was let go on the sixteenth, five days from the day she assumed the position, which is three days from that first briefing; the Guardian counts from the appointment, and the appointment is the right place to count from, because the thing that ended it was in the file before she ever reached the podium. On camera that week she acknowledged she had not passed the legal exams. That was the reason. I have said all along the reason was the credential and I stand by the credential, which is exactly why she is now —

Then, three weeks on, the weekend of the seventh and eighth of November, the president announced he had offered the job to his friend, the head of the UFC, and posted an AI-generated video of him behind the briefing room podium with UFC fighters attacking journalists. On Monday the president called the announcement a little fun, said he was only kidding, and explained that he floated it during a very bad press day. Online, people decided he had confused the UFC executive with a former Pentagon spokesperson of the same name. France 24 says there is no evidence of that. The man knows his own friends.

So here is the state of play, from the sixteenth of October to Monday: the lectern unfilled, the president briefing in its place, and the New York Post reporting that the woman who was let go is working to charm him and the new chief of staff, Stephen Miller, into a second look. Which is the system working. The credential is unchanged and the candidate is unchanged, so the only thing that changed is the press day, and if the press day is the qualification then the credential was never the — let me come back to you on that.

"They told us the room was back open on October thirteenth and we got under fifteen minutes and three questions from three outlets that already agree with him. Now the podium sits empty since the sixteenth, the president's joke candidate came with a video of fighters going after reporters, and the woman they fired over a law license is back working the chief of staff — because the license was never the problem, the bad press day was. When the only guy who answers questions is the guy the questions are about, you're not watching a press office, you're watching him pick who gets to ask."

— Sal

"Look, nobody said the job was vacant, I said the function was being performed, and Monday the president performed it personally, on camera, which is access. Did I say the firing was about the law exams? That doesn't sound like me — what I said was the standard is unchanged, and the standard is unchanged, she just also happens to be auditioning again. The video was a bit. The press day was real. I'd rather not characterize which one is the hiring criterion."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Dana White declines Trump's press secretary offer, then boards flight to Washington to discuss it.* By Lou · the morning edition, 8 November 2026
- *Podium that broke over a bar exam now offered to UFC boss told to bring fighters as aides.* By Lou · the evening edition, 7 November 2026
- *The predecessor who quit the podium now hires whoever replaces the successor who couldn't hold it five days.* By Mort · the morning edition, 22 October 2026
- *White House ends forty-day briefing blackout with fourteen minutes, three friendly reporters, and a press secretary who answered "when I moved to China" when asked where she passed the bar; normal briefings resumed Tuesday and concluded Friday.* By Chip · the evening edition, 18 October 2026

THE RECEIPTS

~~Katie Zacharia auditioning again for White House press secretary despite being fired after 5 days: sources~~

Trump's White House fired her in five days. She's angling to come back anyway.

New York Post RIGHT · *16:32 EST*

Sources close to President Trump told The Post that Zacharia has been working to charm him and new chief of staff Stephen Miller into giving her another shot.

~~Trump says he was 'kidding' about Dana White press secretary job, amid online mix-up claims~~

Trump posted an AI video of UFC fighters attacking journalists, then said he was 'kidding.'

France 24 MAINSTREAM · *15:51 EST*

Donald Trump says he was "only kidding" when he announced he had offered his friend and UFC boss Dana White the job of White House press secretary. The president shared an AI-generated video of White behind the briefing room podium and UFC fighters attacking journalists. But the announcement also sparked online speculation that Trump may...

Trump says he floated Dana White for press secretary during 'very bad press day'

Washington Examiner RIGHT · *17:21 EST*

President Donald Trump held an impromptu press briefing with reporters at the White House on Monday, where he conceded that his announcement of UFC president Dana White as the next White House press secretary over the weekend was just "a little fun." Trump opened the press briefing by stating that the United States, likely, would [...]

· 'She Can Barely Read': New Trump Press Secretary Katie Zacharia Faceplants in First Briefing *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Who could replace Katie Zacharia as White House press secretary? *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· WATCH LIVE: Katie Zacharia to give first White House press briefing *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Scaramucci replaced by shorter unit of time - a Zacharia *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· White House press secretary out after less than a week *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· Embattled new White House press secretary Zacharia 'let go' from her role *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· Katie Zacharia fired after five days as White House press secretary *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· Katie Zacharia admits she never passed legal exams – video *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer announces his intention to resign as White House Press Secretary due to Donald Trump's appointment of Anthony Scaramucci as the White House Communications Direc *from the morgue, 21 Jul 2017*

· Scaramucci quips about new press secretary Zacharia's tenure: 'The clock is running' *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Who is Katie Zacharia, Trump's next White House press secretary? *from the morgue, 9 Oct 2026*

· Russia's Lavrov blasts US, Western allies as "warmongers' in fiery UN tirade *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*

· Russia and China unite against US over Iran and Cuba in UN speeches *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*

· U.S. military lays groundwork for potential action around Cuba *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*

· The United Nations Security Council has resoundingly rejected a United States bid to extend a global arms embargo on Iran. In a Security Council vote, United States only got support from the Dominican *from the morgue, 14 Aug 2020*

· U.S. Threatens New Economic War on Iran by Targeting China & Tehran's Other Top Trading Partners *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*

· In Defiant UN Speech, Iranian President Says US and Israel Are the Real Terrorists *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· Trump slams reporting on removal of his endorsements from GOP candidate's website *from the morgue, 27 Sep 2026*

· Donalds removes several Trump mentions from campaign website *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· GOP hopeful removes 'Pro-Trump' mention from campaign slogan in deep-red seat *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· Where Trump's 2026 endorsement record stands after primary season *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· U.N. experts say U.S. may have committed war crimes with 2 Iran strikes *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Trump Says 'Big Decision' Coming on Whether to 'Annihilate' Iran *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Pentagon No. 3 frustrates senators in closed-door briefing on Iran war, Trump defense strategy *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Senate Democrats, minus Fetterman, urge Hegseth to provide receipt for Iran war costs *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Hegseth on "devastation" to Iran's capabilities *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Trump admits Iran war will not end before midterms *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Iran War Trump Said Would Be Quick Has Now Lasted 6 Months With 'No End In Sight' *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

· CBO Finds Trump's Iran War Has Already Cost Nearly $40 Billion—And That's a 'Conservative' Estimate *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Tillis supports Hegseth impeachment resolution: 'He needs to go' *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie Files Impeachment Articles Against Hegseth for Illegal Iran War, Boat Murders *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Massie launches effort to impeach Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

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

· Tillis renews calls for Hegseth's firing after Driscoll's departure: 'I have never witnessed more inept management' *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Farmer who voted for Trump says farmers are "all just in survival mode" *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Farmer who voted for Trump says "I can't stay in business" amid rising costs *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie says he's convinced enough Republicans to pass Epstein Files II discharge petition *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Massie names Epstein 'coconspirators,' discusses new Epstein files legislation *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Read Thomas Massie's eight impeachment charges against Pete Hegseth *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Fake Republican midterm convention site still redirects to Epstein files *from the morgue, 7 Sep 2026*

· Trump says he has a 'big decision' coming up on Iran: 'Do I want to go in and annihilate them' *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Fox News Poll: 71% think Trump administration lacks plan to end Iran war *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran recently downed at least 2 American drones, officials say *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Big Oil Stocks Surged Due to Iran War—and New Filings Show How President Trump Cashed In *from the morgue, 27 Aug 2026*

· Live updates: Energy secretary downplays rising gas prices as US, Iran trade strikes *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· U.S. Strike on Iranian School May Have Been War Crime, U.N. Report Says *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· UN Inquiry Finds US Strike on Minab, Iran That Killed 123 Children Was War Crime *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· UN investigators conclude 'reasonable grounds' to believe certain US strikes in Iran were war crimes *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· UN Suspects US War Crimes in Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· US Condemned for 'War Crimes' After Bombing of Wedding Party in Iran *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· US investigating if missile hit Iranian wedding ceremony, killing 4 *from the morgue, 4 Sep 2026*

· Trump says he has a 'big decision coming up' on Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· White House issues explosive response to UN-backed report claiming US committed war crimes against world's No.1 sponsor of terror, Iran *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Human rights experts: 'Reasonable grounds' to believe US committed war crimes with Iran strikes *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· US Energy Consumers Have Spent $121 Billion Extra Since Trump Launched Iran War: Moody's *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran downed at least 2 American drones in recent days, U.S. officials say *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Iran: Account of US Air Force colonel's rescue 'fictional' *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Consumer Burden of Trump Iran War Exceeds $100 Billion as Oil Prices Pass $100 a Barrel *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· 'A Serious and Alarming Threat': US Bombing, Blockade Deepen Iran Medical Crisis *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Consumer Confidence Hits Lowest Level in Months as US Faces 'Trump's Reckless Tariffs and War With Iran' *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*

· U.S. Air Force officer rescued from Iran speaks for the first time to 60 Minutes *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

· Rep. Thomas Massie forcing vote on Pete Hegseth's impeachment *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Did Johnson Just Adjourn Congress for 7 Weeks to Avoid Massie's Impeachment Articles Against Hegseth? *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· The Hitchhiker's Guide to Massie saying Johnson is sending the House home early to prevent Hegseth impeachment *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· 'You're Elected to Fight and Kill the Other Side': How Congress Lost Its Way *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Army combat veteran challenging Mike Lawler calls Hegseth national security 'hazard,' backs impeachment *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

· Former Air Force secretary says he 'couldn't serve' in Trump administration *from the morgue, 6 Sep 2026*

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

· House Republicans split over leaving Washington early for campaign trail *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Since 2025, Trump Made More Stock Trades Than All 535 Congress Members Combined *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Fossil Fuel Advertising Contracts Hit Record High as Big Oil Pockets Billions From Iran War *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· 'How are we gonna get through this?' Many Americans are struggling as prices rise *from the morgue, 16 Sep 2026*

· Trump's Top Oil Stocks Have Made Him Up to $4.4 Million Richer During Iran War: Analysis *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

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

· Gas prices reach Labor Day high amid Iran war *from the morgue, 8 Sep 2026*

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

· Warsh under pressure as Fed weighs rate hike *from the morgue, 15 Sep 2026*

· Inflation held at 3.4% in August in consumer price index, creating tough choice for Warsh Fed *from the morgue, 11 Sep 2026*

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Ex-adviser says officials traded the health agenda for sugar money, lost the midterms, then blamed Trump

By MITCH
INVESTIGATIONS



"Former RFK Jr adviser accuses Trump officials of prioritizing special interest groups over voters", 9 November 2026 (PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

❦ THE FORECAST ❦

A former top health adviser, who quit on 22 October, accused the White House chief of staff on 9 November of stalling the health agenda to take sugar-industry money before the midterms, then blaming the president for the result. Trump removed her from the job last week.

The White House may route the complaint into an election instead of an inquiry. Political committees run by the president's advisers may spend without limit against any party member who repeats the charge, and the party's national committee may vote to censure them by name. No office is required to answer the records request, and no outside inspector is required to read the files.

THE LAW. Kentucky, 19 May 2026: a seven-term congressman lost his primary 55 to 45 after the president endorsed a challenger, and $37 million was spent on it.

Happened once. Ask Kentucky.

EARL

More of Earl's calls, and the score, on E7

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Everything in this story exists on paper except the health agenda.

Start on October 22nd, when Calley Means resigned as a senior adviser to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The Washington Examiner gave the cause as food policy disputes. No name, no industry, no number: a man left the White House over disagreements about lunch....

...(cont) On November 6th the sentence acquired a subject. In an interview with Joe Rogan, as the New York Times reported it, Means accused the chief of staff, Susie Wiles, of repeatedly bowing to lobbying pressure and fixating on campaign contributions. Two days later, on Face the Nation, he said the president "has been subverted by people that are beholden to special interests," which is the alias version of the same sentence, and told interviewers the staff treated the president like a "baby," per The Hill.

Then came the filing, and the filing is the thing. The Hill reported that Means followed the accusation with a formal request that Wiles preserve her records. All together now — line one: the request is addressed to the official he had just accused. Line two: it asks her to serve as custodian of the evidence about her own office. Line three: by October 26th that office was already a defendant, six citizens having sued over the White House's bans on news outlets, also The Hill. There is no line four.

Today the blanks got filled in. In The Hill and the Guardian, Means names the industry: sugar. He says officials dropped the Make America Healthy Again agenda to take sugar-industry money to fuel the midterms, which Republicans lost. He says Wiles then tried to pin the blame on the president for health policies he claims lobbyists shaped — throwing, in his words, Trump under the bus. Trump removed Wiles as chief of staff last week, so the records request now sits with a private citizen.

For the fundraising calendar he describes, the government kept its own copy. On October 23rd, ten days out from the vote, the Social Security Administration — run by Trump nominee Frank Bisignano — emailed the public praising the "historic tax cut" signed last summer, and Common Dreams reported the agency was accused, yet again, of unlawfully using federal resources to celebrate the president. All together now, second ball: the law being praised is the budget law that cut Medicaid and federal nutrition assistance. That is the health agenda, mailed out as an achievement, at public expense, for a party that lost anyway.

I want to be fair about this. Nobody has been charged with anything, and nothing in the record requires that anybody be. The only enforceable instrument in the entire affair is one letter asking a person to keep her own paperwork, delivered to an office she no longer occupies. Sugar got its money. The rest of us got the email.

🍺

"They spent a year selling you a crusade about what's in your kid's cereal, and the guy who ran it says the crusade got traded for sugar checks to pay for the midterms. Then the Social Security office spends your money mailing out congratulations for the law that cut Medicaid and food help. Two things got protected in that whole stretch, and neither one was your kid."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, a disgruntled former adviser — former, that's the word — makes a claim, and suddenly the sugar industry runs the government? Did I say sugar? That doesn't sound like me. The chief of staff was already out before any of this, so there's nothing to answer, and anyway everybody raises money before an election, that's called participating, and the records request was honored in spirit, which is the part nobody reports."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Ex-aide calls Trump a 'baby,' then asks the people he accused to preserve their own records.* By Mitch · the afternoon edition, 9 November 2026
- *Ex-aide accuses White House of corruption, then politely asks it to keep its own records.* By Mitch · the afternoon edition, 8 November 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Former RFK Jr adviser accuses Trump officials of prioritizing special interest groups over voters

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *13:57 EST*

Calley Means claims officials abandoned Maha agenda and took money from sugar industry leading up to midterms A former top Trump administration health adviser accused Susie Wiles, whom Donald Trump removed as the White House chief of staff last week, of stalling the so-called " Make America Healthy Again " (Maha) agenda by prioritizing...

Ex-RFK Jr adviser accuses Wiles of throwing 'Trump under the bus'

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *15:12 EST*

Calley Means, a former top adviser to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., accused former White House chief of staff Susie Wiles of trying to pin the blame on President Trump for controversial health policies he claims were influenced by corporate lobbyists. Means, a key architect of the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement...

Susie Wiles, Trump's Chief of Staff, Is Accused of Blocking Health Policies to Attract Donations

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *17:03 EST*

In a no-holds-barred interview with Joe Rogan, Calley Means, a former top health adviser, accused Susie Wiles of repeatedly bowing to lobbying pressures and fixating on campaign contributions.

· Social Security Agency Accused—Once Again—of Illegally Using Federal Resources to Praise Trump *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

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

The Justice Department's suit triggered only on a narrow Republican loss; Mississippi's trailing Republican filed second.

By THE WRECKING CREW
THE REMEDY DESK

"Scott Colom says forecasters' ratings of Mississippi Senate race made it harder to fundraise", 9 November 2026
(PHOTO VIA WASHINGTON EXAMINER — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The Justice Department sued to block Alaska's certification only if the Republican lost.

WHO GETS PAID. Senator Dan Sullivan's campaign in Alaska and Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith's in Mississippi, both behind in the count.

WHAT SLIPS. Who won moves from the people counting ballots to a court that was filed in before the count.

WHAT'S NEXT. If the rejected-ballot fight holds, rejections decide the seat; that is what Texas got after 1 March 2022: 12.4 percent of mail ballots thrown out under a new identification rule, against 0.8 percent in 2020.

❦ THE FORECAST ❦

Mary Peltola's campaign sued the State of Alaska on Friday for the records of absentee ballots the state rejected. On Monday Senator Dan Sullivan's campaign moved to intervene in that suit. The Justice Department's own Alaska suit, filed 24 October, asked a court to block certification if the Republican lost narrowly.

The rejected pile is where the leverage sits. A trailing campaign may litigate every rejected ballot one at a time, a court may leave the seat uncertified while that runs, the Justice Department may come in on the side of the campaign that lost, and a state may seat nobody while judges sort out which rejections stand.

THE LAW. No statute lets a court throw out the Alaska ballots — an election attorney said so on 31 October 2026; rejected mail ballots are the door that opens, Texas, 1 March 2022.

Happened once. Ask Texas.

EARL

More of Earl's calls, and the score, on E7

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The chief put the assignment on the board in one line, which is how this crew likes an assignment: a lawsuit that only works if you lose.

Walk it from the top. On 12 October a former president cut an ad for Scott Colom, the Democrat running in Mississippi — outside help, arriving late, which matters in a minute. On 23 October an order went to the Justice Department; on 24 October the suit was filed, before a single Alaska vote had been counted, asking a court to block certification if the Republican lost narrowly. On 28 October the president called the Peltola campaign's reported recruitment of a second Dan Sullivan illegal and called for her disqualification, and Republican officials asked for an investigation. On 31 October an election attorney told the New York Post that setting those ballots aside was "not even possible," and a former FEC chair told Fox News that prosecutions under the last administration set the precedent for the probe. The Peltola campaign repeated its denial and said nothing about the federal investigation....

...(cont) Then Friday. Peltola's campaign sued the State of Alaska — not for a result, for records: which absentee ballots the Division of Elections rejected, and why. Monday the Sullivan campaign moved to intervene. The planner stood there admiring that motion, because the motion is the demonstration: the records door swings for whoever walks up to it, including the side that is behind.

So here is the plan, assembled from parts already lying in this pile.

The muscle goes first, because you wreck before you weld. The contingent pleading comes out. A complaint drafted on 24 October for a loss that had not occurred names no ballots, because there were none to name, and the relief it asks for is the relief an attorney said on 31 October no court can grant.

The tinkerer takes the records suit off the bench. Every rejected absentee ballot has a voter attached to it, a reason, a date. That filing produces a list, and the list is readable by anyone, including the trailing campaign that joined it Monday. Nothing in it turns on who is ahead.

The pilot gets it there before certification rather than after, in both states; Mississippi has its own ballot-handling fight running with the race still uncalled.

And we weld for our own side with the same cheer. CBS has Mississippi a toss-up with Colom slightly ahead; the Examiner has his lead widening. He told the Examiner the forecasters' ratings "made it much more difficult" for Southern Democrats to raise money. Probably true. It is also not a filing. Cook Political Report keeps no docket, accepts no motions, releases no records. The instrument that does was filed Friday, in Alaska, by the campaign that is ahead, and joined Monday by the one that is not.

"Read the order of events and the con names itself: they wrote the lawsuit in October for a loss that hadn't happened, and the trigger wasn't a ballot, it was the margin. Now the Republican who's behind in Mississippi files second, and the Democrat who's ahead is on television blaming a ratings newsletter for the money he didn't raise. One side built a tool for losing and passes it around; our side wrote a complaint to the forecasters."

— Sal

"Nobody is contesting an election — a motion to intervene just means both sides read the same records, which is transparency, and we're the side asking for transparency. Did I say asking? We joined. And if a Democrat's real problem is that a newsletter rated his race, take it up with the newsletter; that's not a crisis, that's a subscription."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— *The Justice Department sued to block Alaska's certification before a single vote was counted, naming no ballots, triggered only by a narrow Republican loss.* By The Wrecking Crew · the evening edition, 8 November 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Scott Colom says forecasters' ratings of Mississippi Senate race made it harder to fundraise
Washington Examiner RIGHT *16:16 EST*

Mississippi Democratic Senate candidate Scott Colom is pointing fingers at election forecasters such as the Cook Political Report, saying they "made it much more difficult" for Southern Democrats to fundraise this election cycle. "At some point, we have to talk about @CookPolitical and other 'prognosticators' who had me and other...

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

Courts Reject Trump's Attempt at Deploying ICE to Intimidate Voters
Truthout *09:18 EDT*

A judge ordered Homeland Security to stop sending agents door to door in nine key states to hunt for "voter fraud."

Mississippi Democrat's lead continues to widen as race remains uncalled
Washington Examiner RIGHT *09:13 EST*

Mississippi Democrat Scott Colom extended his lead against Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) in the Senate race, outpacing her by just over 1,800 ballots. Initially, the election was a lot closer, with Colom leading the incumbent by fewer than 100 votes.

Sullivan campaign files motion against Peltola over rejected absentee ballot lawsuit
The Hill MAINSTREAM *16:56 EST*

Sen. Dan Sullivan's (R-Alaska) campaign on Monday filed a motion against Alaska Senate candidate Mary Peltola's campaign to intervene in its rejected absentee ballot lawsuit. Her campaign sued the state of Alaska on Friday to obtain access to records for absentee ballots that were rejected by the Alaska Division of Elections.

~~Colom rips 'unlawful attack' after Hyde-Smith demands ballot preservation in Mississippi~~

National Republican committee, not Hyde-Smith, told 82 counties to isolate ballots
The Hill MAINSTREAM *10:44 EST*

An attorney for Mississippi Democratic Senate candidate Scott Colom said Republican efforts to separate particular ballots are illegal under state law and should not be followed, according to a letter sent to county election commissioners Thursday. The letter comes in reaction to the National Republican Senatorial Committee's request to...

But: In special elections, Democrats have retained 10 points more of their previous turnout than Republicans *Ballotpedia, 26 February 2026*

Mississippi Senate race still a toss-up; Democrat holds slim lead
CBS News MAINSTREAM *16:56 EST*

The Senate race in deep-red Mississippi remains unresolved, as Democrat Scott Colom has mounted a surprisingly competitive challenge to incumbent Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith.

· Alaska Senate race: what to know about Democrats' alleged ballot-stacking effort *from the morgue, 2 Nov 2026*

· Trump rages at Alaska Democrat whose campaign reportedly recruited man with same name as Republican opponent – live *from the morgue, 28 Oct 2026*

· Alaska Senate race: what to know about Democrats' alleged ballot-stacking effort *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· 'Mississippi matters': Scott Colom aims to turn Mississippi blue *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· Obama rolls out ad for Dem Scott Colom in Mississippi Senate race *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· Trump ask to set aside 'Decoy Dan' Alaska Senate ballots 'not even possible': attorneys *from the morgue, 31 Oct 2026*

· Peltola repeats denial of ballot-stacking reports, stays silent on federal probe *from the morgue, 31 Oct 2026*

· Trump prosecutions under Biden set precedent for DOJ's Alaska 'Decoy Dan' probe, ex-FEC chair says *from the morgue, 31 Oct 2026*

· Murkowski snubs Trump-backed Alaska candidate, endorses Democrat for governor *from the morgue, 28 Oct 2026*

· DOJ sues to block Alaska Senate certification if Sullivan loses *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Alaska Election Gambit Shows Justice Dept. Has Bowed to Trump's Demands *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Donald Trump challenges Alaska Senate trace *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Trump administration sues to block possible Democratic win in Alaska Senate race *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· The controversy surrounding convicted former election official Tina Peters *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Alaska Senate race featuring two Dan Sullivans is 'blatantly corrupt': Joe Concha *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Trump officials abandon effort to investigate election threats, experts warn *from the morgue, 1 Oct 2026*

· Tina Peters turns down job with California county's registrar of voters *from the morgue, 1 Sep 2026*

· Election deniers stoke Trump-driven ballot security fears before midterms *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

· Facing an electoral wipeout, Trump goes after the system *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Justice Dept. Demands That California Counties Help Identify Noncitizen Voters *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· Sabato's Crystal Ball shifts Alaska and South Carolina Senate races in favor of Democrats *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

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

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

· Trump knocks Alaska voting system: 'How stupid are we to do this?' *from the morgue, 9 Oct 2026*

· Corey Lewandowski Always Found His Way Back to Trump. Until Now. *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Trump announces $6.6bn defense shipyard owned by top Republican donor's firm *from the morgue, 6 Oct 2026*

· Companies Backed by Trump Sons Have Scored Over $6 Billion in Pentagon Contracts: Analysis *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· DOJ demands that California counties help identify noncitizen voters *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· DOJ demands that some California counties set aside alleged noncitizen ballots *from the morgue, 25 Oct 2026*

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

· LA feds move to halt ballot counting over 20K suspected noncitizen voters *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Trump 'Laying the Groundwork for Election Meddling' With DHS Hunt for Noncitizen Voters *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· California has no real safeguards for voting and voter registration *from the morgue, 21 Oct 2026*

· Federal efforts over alleged noncitizen voting escalate with California arrests *from the morgue, 20 Oct 2026*

· Federal voter fraud arrests intensify in California days after DOJ warning *from the morgue, 19 Oct 2026*

· Trump DOJ issues stark warning to California ballot counters after suing state over 20K suspected noncitizen voters *from the morgue, 17 Oct 2026*

· Intel Democrats on how they'll react if Trump alleges election meddling *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Trump told DOJ to sue to block Alaska Senate results if Republican narrowly loses *from the morgue, 26 Oct 2026*

· Trump says he personally ordered DOJ lawsuit intervening in Alaska Senate election *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Ramaswamy accuses Acton of 'lying' about attack ad, but court records contradict mother's claim – live *from the morgue, 24 Oct 2026*

· DoJ sues to block certification of Alaska Senate results if Republican incumbent loses *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Trump-Ordered DOJ Lawsuit in Alaska Seen as First Salvo in GOP Effort to Undermine Midterm Elections *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Trump on the Alaska election lawsuit: 'I'm the one that said, "do it"' *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Trump administration sues to block certification of upcoming Alaska election *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· DOJ files lawsuit to block results in Alaska Senate race after two Dan Sullivans land on November ballot *from the morgue, 23 Oct 2026*

· Trump previews trip to Alaska to campaign for Dan Sullivan, ripping into the other Dan Sullivan *from the morgue, 2 Sep 2026*

· Trump urges Alaskans to vote for the 'real' Dan Sullivan in tight midterms battle *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Sullivan trails Peltola in Alaska Senate contest: AARP poll *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Trump vows to probe other Dan Sullivan in alleged Dem plot to sabotage 'real' Alaska GOP senator *from the morgue, 14 Oct 2026*

· Trump administration sued over plans to send election monitors to voting sites *from the morgue, 7 Oct 2026*

· AGs v. Trump: How an AWOL Congress made hundreds of lawsuits possible *from the morgue, 16 Oct 2026*

· The Electoral College meets in the state capitals to officially elect the next President. Joe Biden, the presumptive president-elect, is officially elected president after securing California's 55 ele *from the morgue, 14 Dec 2020*

· US federal agents raid home of Democratic congresswoman and Trump critic Ilhan Omar *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· Ilhan Omar's Home Raided by DHS Following Trump-GOP Deportation Threats *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· Federal Agents Search Home of Rep. Ilhan Omar *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Rep. Ilhan Omar's residence searched as part of ongoing criminal investigation: DOJ *from the morgue, 13 Oct 2026*

· Rep. Ilhan Omar's D.C. home searched by Homeland Security investigators *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· Rep. Ilhan Omar's DC home raided by DHS as part of probe into Dem's immigration paperwork *from the morgue, 12 Oct 2026*

· Homan confirms 'criminal' investigation involving Ilhan Omar, says he knows 'things are going on' *from the morgue, 13 Sep 2026*

· WATCH: Ilhan Omar denies feds have contacted her after border czar Homan confirms 'criminal' investigation *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Could Trump revoke Ilhan Omar's citizenship for alleged brother marriage? Ex federal prosecutor breaks it down *from the morgue, 29 Sep 2026*

· Did Ilhan Omar marry her own brother? The claims explained *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Russia's Lavrov blasts US, Western allies as "warmongers' in fiery UN tirade *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*

· Russia and China unite against US over Iran and Cuba in UN speeches *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*

· U.S. military lays groundwork for potential action around Cuba *from the morgue, 26 Sep 2026*

· The United Nations Security Council has resoundingly rejected a United States bid to extend a global arms embargo on Iran. In a Security Council vote, United States only got support from the Dominican *from the morgue, 14 Aug 2020*

· U.S. Threatens New Economic War on Iran by Targeting China & Tehran's Other Top Trading Partners *from the morgue, 25 Aug 2026*

· In Defiant UN Speech, Iranian President Says US and Israel Are the Real Terrorists *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· Trump slams reporting on removal of his endorsements from GOP candidate's website *from the morgue, 27 Sep 2026*

· Donalds removes several Trump mentions from campaign website *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· GOP hopeful removes 'Pro-Trump' mention from campaign slogan in deep-red seat *from the morgue, 23 Sep 2026*

· Where Trump's 2026 endorsement record stands after primary season *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· U.N. experts say U.S. may have committed war crimes with 2 Iran strikes *from the morgue, 22 Sep 2026*

· Trump Says 'Big Decision' Coming on Whether to 'Annihilate' Iran *from the morgue, 18 Sep 2026*

· Pentagon No. 3 frustrates senators in closed-door briefing on Iran war, Trump defense strategy *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Senate Democrats, minus Fetterman, urge Hegseth to provide receipt for Iran war costs *from the morgue, 17 Sep 2026*

· Hegseth on "devastation" to Iran's capabilities *from the morgue, 10 Sep 2026*

· Trump admits Iran war will not end before midterms *from the morgue, 9 Sep 2026*

· Iran War Trump Said Would Be Quick Has Now Lasted 6 Months With 'No End In Sight' *from the morgue, 28 Aug 2026*

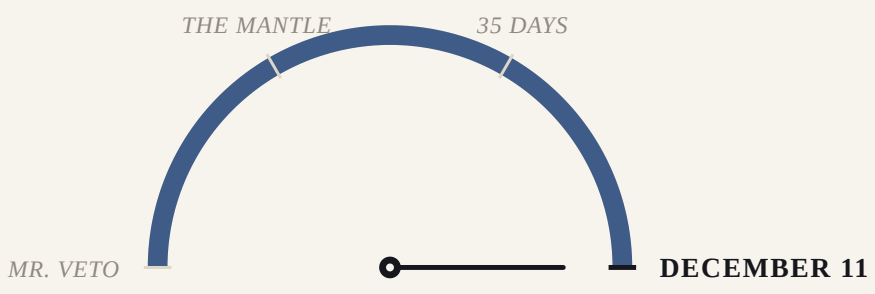
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§87 — 09 NOVEMBER 2026

On lame duck

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



DECEMBER 11

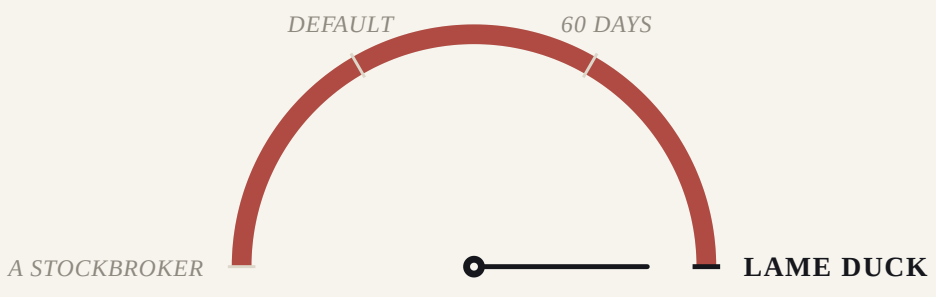
The stopgap runs out on December 11 [1]. The calendar has a memory. In November 2018 his party lost the House [2]. On December 11, 2018, on camera: "I am proud to shut down the government for border security, Chuck" [3]. That shutdown ran 35 days and ended on the deal already rejected [4]. The Congressional Budget Office put the cost at $11 billion [5].

He is not the lame duck in this picture. Before the vote he said, "I guess I'll become Mr. Veto" [6]. After it he posted a red cap reading VETO, and Democrats will fall short of the two-thirds to override [7]. The pardon power, on Jamie Raskin's list of oversight targets, has one exception in the text: impeachment [8][9]. Congress has 55 days left from today. He has 803. He has the nuclear codes for all of them.

SOURCES

1. The continuing resolution expires December 11, 2026 — Holland & Knight, October 2026 ↑
2. Democrats took the House majority in November 2018 — Wikipedia, citing the Clerk of the House ↑
3. "I am proud to shut down the government for border security, Chuck" — CNN, 11 December 2018 ↑
4. The 35-day shutdown ended with no wall money, on the deal previously rejected — NBC News, January 2019 ↑
5. The partial shutdown cost about $11 billion — Congressional Budget Office, 28 January 2019 ↑
6. "I guess I'll become Mr. Veto" — Newsweek, November 2026 ↑
7. The VETO cap; Democrats short of a two-thirds majority — NBC News live blog, 4 November 2026 ↑
8. Raskin named pardons among potential oversight targets — The Conversation via WLRN, 4 November 2026 ↑
9. Article II, Section 2, the pardon clause — National Archives ↑

REPUBLICAN



LAME DUCK

The term began as a finance word. In the 18th century the London Stock Exchange used it for a broker who defaulted on his debts [1]. The Constitution has been trying to shorten the condition since the Twentieth Amendment set January 3 for the new Congress [2]. The session is scheduled to open today and run toward Christmas [3]. Republicans stay in charge until the new Congress is seated [4].

What it can still do: the debt limit, which Majority Leader John Thune said "could come in the lame duck" [3]. Health department nominees Republicans need confirmed before Democrats take charge [4]. A third reconciliation package, discussed before the election, to fund the Iran war and give states up to $10 billion for stricter voting rules [3]. And a Supreme Court seat, should one open, though neither Alito nor Thomas had announced plans to step down as of November 4. Thune in June: "You're talking about basically 60 days post-election in the lame duck… I certainly wouldn't rule that out" [5]. The duck still votes.

SOURCES

1. 18th-century London Stock Exchange use, a stockbroker who defaulted — Wikipedia, Lame duck (politics) ↑
2. Twentieth Amendment: terms of Senators and Representatives end at noon on January 3 — National Archives ↑
3. The November 9 start; the debt limit; a third reconciliation package — No Labels ↑
4. Republicans in charge until January; HHS nominees — STAT News, 4 November 2026 ↑
5. Thune, June 2026, to Punchbowl News; neither Alito nor Thomas has announced plans to step down — LifeNews, 4 November 2026 ↑

"I rented from a fella who sold the building. He had till the first of the month, and that last week he signed a lot of paper. Legal, every sheet. I can't stop looking at a date, I'm sorry. December 11. That's when the money runs out this year. December 11, 2018, he said "I am proud to shut down the government." I checked it twice. His party had just lost the House. Thirty-five days. Sorry, one thing before you go. Fifty-five days for them, 803 for him. Which one is the lame duck?" — Lou

🍺

"Lame duck. Sounds harmless, right? Little limp, little quack. You know where it comes from? The London Stock Exchange. A broker who couldn't pay his debts. So it means somebody busted who's still on the floor, trading. That's Washington till January 3. Fifty-five days, the same gavels, a debt limit, talk of money for a war and up to ten billion for state voting rules. And down the street a man with a red hat that says VETO. He's no duck. He's got 803 days and the codes. Watch the wallet on the way out."

— Sal

🚬

"A lame-duck session is simply Congress at its most unburdened, freed from the distraction of voters, and I would expect its work to reflect that."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎