The Single-Column Edition

FROM § EACH

THURSDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2026 — THE MORNING EDITION FREE, FOREVER

Kennedy Center's ex-president drew a paycheck from Ticketmaster's parent, then gave Ticketmaster the Center's exclusive ticket deal.

BY MORT
The Records Bureau

The arm's-length principle, the one that was supposed to keep the people running a federally chartered arts center at a polite distance from the companies they hire, died this month at Washington's Kennedy Center. It was old enough to have outlived nobody in particular, which was the point, and young enough that the current board is still finding new ways to kill it.

It was born of a simple appropriations-law idea: the public pays for the building, so the people who run it should not also be on the payroll of the people they are hiring to run things in it. For decades that held, more or less, the way most norms hold — nobody writing it down because nobody expected to need it written down.

Cause of death, per NPR's reporting this week, was a paid board seat. Richard Grenell, the Center's former president, sat on the board of Ticketmaster's parent company at the same time the Center was negotiating an exclusive ticketing deal with that company. Both things were true at once, for the whole stretch of the talks, and nobody at the Center seems to have thought that worth mentioning before the reporters did.

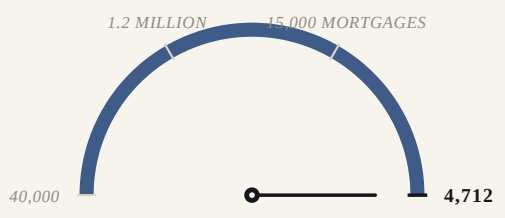
... Continued on Page D9

THE WORD

§89 — 11 NOVEMBER 2026

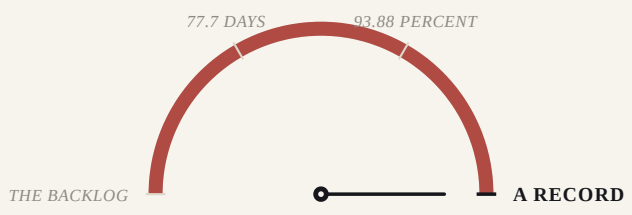
On the record

DEMOCRAT



4,712

REPUBLICAN



A RECORD

"No demonstration today. I brought three pieces of paper. The department's: 3.11 million claims, a record, about 60 percent approved. The inspector general's: 4,712 severe shortages, up from 2,959 two years before, and I'll say what they said, those are what facility officials report, and the department says it's no measure of vacancies. NPR's: 63 percent of veterans who got a loan modification came out with a higher payment. For Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac loans, 2 percent. Sorry, one thing before you go. The claim gets decided in 77.7 days. Who is in the chair at the clinic on day 78?" — Lou

... Continued on Page W89

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

WHO PICKS THE JUDGE

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

... Continued on the Investigative Reporting page

Eleven Democrats skip Hegseth impeachment vote that failed by seven votes.

BY LOU
One More Question

I had the renewal notice for my car on the seat beside me this morning, the registration one, the kind with a box at the bottom somebody drew around in red so you can't pretend you didn't see the date. Thirty-one days left on this one. I only mention it because a deadline sitting on your dashboard changes how you read everything else that comes across your windshield for the rest of the day, and what came across mine today was a vote.

Let me go in order, the way I was taught. Back in September — the 15th, it's in The Guardian — a Kentucky congressman named Thomas Massie filed eight articles of impeachment against the Secretary of Defense, saying he'd sent the country into a war with Iran that Congress never voted on. In October — the 22nd, Common Dreams has it — the Secretary's own staff broke a thirty-inch globe that belonged to General Eisenhower, because the Secretary wanted it moved into his office and somebody didn't move it right. One week after that, October 29th, the Washington Examiner reported the Secretary fired the one general on the Joint Staff whose job was long-range war planning. I wrote that part down on the back of this same notice, there

... Continued on Page A235

White House labels oversight a crime before any exists; Justice Department labels the one that arrives a threat.

BY MITCH
Investigations

Before a single subpoena existed, the White House counsel told the incoming Oversight chair that the investigations he had not yet opened were already "blatant criminality." That was the opening move, reported last week. The record since has been the Democratic Party trying to answer a threat issued in advance of any evidence.

On Nov. 4, a group of House Democrats led by Rep. Bobby Scott sent a letter to the heads of every federal agency and department: preserve your records, in accordance with federal law, or risk criminal penalties. It was the first paper trail of an oversight agenda the White House had already called a crime.

On Saturday, Nov. 7, Democratic committee members gathered at a progressive conference and pledged what the Washington Examiner called an "aggressive" oversight agenda, promising to go to court, if necessary, to enforce their investigative authority. The next day, Sunday, Attorney General Todd Blanche went on record backing President Trump's own call for the Justice Department to investigate Democrats over the "threat" of impeach-

... Continued on Page A235

Justice Department's Republican-loss clause fires in Mississippi, loses to the state's first Black senator since Reconstruction.

BY THE WRECKING CREW
The Remedy Desk

The chief already made the assignment three weeks back: work the clause the Justice Department wrote to block a certification, but only if the Republican lost. The planner likes how clean the build was — one trigger, one condition, filed in Alaska on 24 October before a single vote there was counted. The tinkerer logged that one didn't take; on 31 October an Alaska lawyer could only call the ask "not even possible," and the clause sat idle. Mississippi was next on the list regardless.

By 4 November the margin in Jackson had settled into the kind of number lawyers love: 1,864 votes, 95 percent counted, Scott Colom ahead of Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith. The tinkerer watched the lead hold through 5 November, past 1,800, and widening. On 6 November the fight the clause was built to host finally showed up on schedule: Hyde-Smith's campaign demanded ballot preservation, Colom's side called it an "unlawful attack," and lawyers for both sides were on the ground in the same counting rooms, with 99 percent of the state's ballots already in.

The muscle doesn't wreck anything this time, because there's nothing left

... Continued on Page B55

"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*

The second winter, a man watched the pass. Salt came, and no cart brought it.

ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

Eleven Democrats skip Hegseth impeachment vote that failed by seven votes.

By LOU
ONE MORE QUESTION

"Hegseth and team reprimanded by Arlington national cemetery guard – video", 11 November 2026 (PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The House blocked a vote to impeach Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth over his handling of the war.

WHO GETS PAID. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth keeps his job and sole control of the war effort.

WHAT SLIPS. The chance for Congress to hold him accountable slipped away when enough members to pass it simply did not vote.

WHAT'S NEXT. If this failure holds, the war keeps running without a vote; that is what the House got after June 24, 2011: the Libya operation ran four more months, more than 26,000 sorties in all.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

I had the renewal notice for my car on the seat beside me this morning, the registration one, the kind with a box at the bottom somebody drew around in red so you can't pretend you didn't see the date. Thirty-one days left on this one. I only mention it because a deadline sitting on your dashboard changes how you read everything else that comes across your windshield for the rest of the day, and what came across mine today was a vote.

Let me go in order, the way I was taught. Back in September — the 15th, it's in The Guardian — a Kentucky congressman named Thomas Massie filed eight articles of impeachment against the Secretary of Defense, saying he'd sent the country into a war with Iran that Congress never voted on. In October — the 22nd, Common Dreams has it — the Secretary's own staff broke a thirty-inch globe that belonged to General Eisenhower, because the Secretary wanted it moved into his office and somebody didn't move it right. One week after that, October 29th, the Washington Examiner reported the Secretary fired the one general on the Joint Staff whose job was long-range war planning. I wrote that part down on the back of this same notice, there wasn't anything else in the car....

...(cont) So that's the warm-up. Here's today.

Yesterday, the 11th, a soldier standing guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier had to raise his voice at the Secretary of Defense and the people with him. They'd been laughing on the steps after the Veterans Day ceremony. The sentinel told them, on camera — this is the exact line, I checked it against three different papers because I didn't believe it the first time — to maintain an atmosphere of silence and respect at all times. The Secretary looked back over his shoulder and kept walking.

Today, the vote on those eight articles came back 211 to 204. The Secretary keeps the job by seven. Eleven Democrats weren't on the floor for that vote. Eleven. I want you to sit with that number a second, because I know what eleven people can move — I've done it on Route 9 with two neighbors, a jumper cable, and a dog on a leash getting underfoot, and let me tell you, it takes three of us straining just to get a dead Buick up out of the intersection. Eleven is enough to push a delivery truck off the tracks. One of the eleven, a congresswoman from New Mexico, told reporters afterward she'd been stuck in traffic. I believe her. I sat behind a tanker on 9 for forty minutes last Thursday and missed my own dentist. I'm only asking you to hold the two numbers next to each other: seven, and eleven.

A soldier had standing enough to quiet a Cabinet secretary at a grave. Did the House have the votes to make him answer for the war, or did it have eleven more than that sitting somewhere else?

Oh — hang on, before you head out. The notice on my seat says thirty-one days, a plain date, the kind you can actually miss. The war itself doesn't have one of those — nobody's taken a vote on it since Mr. Massie's articles went in back in September, and nobody's taking one on it now that today's vote failed either. So which is the bigger number here: seven, or eleven?

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

HEGSETH FIRED THE GENERAL WHO PLANNED THE WAR; THE IMPEACHMENT VOTE OVER that same war failed by seven. That's not accountability lost on the merits, that's a war kept running because the only brake on it stayed home. Because eleven members who could have forced a plan did not show up, no deadline got set; because no deadline got set, no cost got named; and that unnamed cost is already riding the defense line on your pay stub, the one you don't get a ballot for either.

"Eleven people who could have ended this didn't bother to show up, and one of them blamed traffic. The same week a private had to tell the Secretary of Defense to pipe down at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Congress couldn't find eleven extra bodies for the one vote that actually meant something. That's the whole racket — they don't need to win the vote, they just need enough of their own side to stay home."

— Sal

"Firing a general over a leak is standard Pentagon housekeeping, and Massie forcing a vote over a war the Commander-in-Chief already ordered is one member grandstanding — good on House Republicans for ending it, 211 to 204. As for Arlington, sentinels remind visitors to pipe down all the time, totally routine. Routine doesn't usually mean the Secretary of Defense personally, on camera, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier — okay, yeah, I hear it."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

— Hegseth's answer to a party readying his impeachment vote next week is still the same video. By Chip · the afternoon edition, 6 November 2026
— Accused of being a war criminal, Hegseth defends the Iran war instead and vows to stay By Chip · the morning edition, 6 November 2026
— Hegseth declares his impeachment dead on arrival, days after Democrats won the House majority that could revive it. By The Wrecking Crew · the afternoon edition, 5 November 2026
— Two months after a senator asked Trump to fire Hegseth over "inept management" of the military, Hegseth fired the Pentagon's top military planner. By Sterling · the evening edition, 1 November 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Hegseth and team reprimanded by Arlington national cemetery guard – video
The Guardian MAINSTREAM 16:53 EST
Defense secretary Pete Hegseth and members of his team were reprimanded by a US sentinel at Arlington national cemetery after the Veterans Day commemoration that Donald Trumped attended on 11 November Continue reading...

Hegseth and aides scolded by guard for laughing at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
The Guardian MAINSTREAM 18:00 EST
Group attending Veterans Day ceremony sharply reminded by sentinel to maintain 'silence and respect' at sacred site A US army sentinel guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier loudly reprimanded the embattled US defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, and his top staffers on Wednesday, after some in the group were heard laughing and talking...

Hegseth's group reprimanded for noise at Tomb of Unknown Soldier
CBS News MAINSTREAM 20:33 EST
A guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier reprimanded a group of people that included Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth for making noise at the site.

But: The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one *Military Times, 19 December 2025*
Republican Thomas Massie moves to force vote to impeach Pete Hegseth
The Guardian MAINSTREAM 14:31 EST
US representative accuses defense secretary of illegally waging war without congressional authorization and abusing his powers A Republican lawmaker has moved to force a vote to impeach Pete Hegseth, the US defense secretary, setting the stage for a showdown over one of the most divisive figures inside Donald Trump's administration....

Democratic House lawmaker gets emotional as she blames rush hour traffic for missing Hegseth impeachment vote
New York Post RIGHT 23:07 EST
In a 211-204 vote, House Republicans successfully blocked Rep. Thomas Massie's (R-Ky.) impeachment effort on Tuesday, and Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M.) was one of 11 Democrats who missed the vote.

Hegseth and team reprimanded by Army guard at solemn war memorial
BBC News MAINSTREAM 17:55 EST
The guard told the defence secretary and his companions to maintain an atmosphere of "silence and respect" during a Veterans Day visit.

But: The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one *Military Times, 19 December 2025*
Pete Hegseth and staff reprimanded by guard at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Le Monde MAINSTREAM 04:49 EST
Video shows the US defense secretary taking photos on the empty steps with a group in front of the tomb at Arlington National Cemetery. As the group broke from taking photos, a loud laugh could be heard.

~~Hegseth's group asked by soldier to maintain respect at Arlington National Cemetery~~
An Army sentinel reprimanded Hegseth's entourage for disrespecting the fallen at Arlington
CBS News MAINSTREAM 19:52 EST
President Trump traveled to Arlington National Cemetery on Wednesday, laying a wreath in honor of fallen U.S. soldiers. But the cameras also captured a U.S.

Thomas Massie Gives Pete Hegseth a Choice: Resignation or Impeachment
Common Dreams 10:18 EST
Republican US Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky said Wednesday that Pentagon Secretary Pete Hegseth, the most prominent cheerleader and architect of the Trump administration's illegal war on Iran, will face an impeachment vote in the House of Representatives—unless he submits his resignation first. "There is one contingency in which I won't...

Hegseth, staff reprimanded by guard at US military tomb
RTÉ MAINSTREAM 17:41 EST
A soldier guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier issued a verbal reprimand to a group of advisers and staff members with US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth following a Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

~~Democrats Face Backlash After Missing Hegseth Impeachment Vote~~
Republicans shelved impeachment charges against their own defense secretary
The New York Times MAINSTREAM 19:21 EST
Eleven Democrats were absent, helping Republicans shelve the charges against the defense secretary. It drew sharp criticism a week after the party's sweeping election victories.

~~Soldier Shouts Toward Hegseth to Show 'Respect' at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier~~
Hegseth's group laughed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier - a sentinel had to intervene
The New York Times MAINSTREAM 19:53 EST
A Pentagon spokesman said the sentinel had "reminded everyone to maintain decorum" after laughter was heard from a group visiting the burial site with the Defense Secretary on Wednesday.

But: The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one *Military Times, 19 December 2025*
Hakeem Jeffries supports impeachment of Pete Hegseth: 'He has got to go'
The Guardian MAINSTREAM 14:11 EST
House Democrat is a 'hard yes' on impeachment resolution against defense secretary who 'has abused his power' House minority leader Hakeem Jeffries, poised to become majority leader, said on Sunday that he strongly supports impeaching defense secretary Pete Hegseth as a Republican lawmaker prepares to force a House vote. The top Democrat...

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

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

· Hegseth dismisses top military strategist from Joint Chiefs as Trump contemplates further Iran strikes *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· Hegseth fires Pentagon's top military planner over alleged leaks *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· Hegseth fires top general over apparent media leaks *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· Hegseth fires top Pentagon strategist accused of leaking classified Iran, Ukraine war information *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· Hegseth fires top Pentagon strategist amid Iran planning who allegedly failed polygraph tests *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

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

· Pentagon erupts over classified leak of Iran war dissent *from the morgue, 31 Aug 2026*

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

· Hegseth fires top Pentagon war planner Brett Sylvia in latest military shake-up *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· A top general pushed out at Pentagon's Joint Staff *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

· Hegseth ousted top military strategist from Pentagon, sources say *from the morgue, 29 Oct 2026*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

White House labels oversight a crime before any exists; Justice Department labels the one that arrives a threat.

By **MITCH**
INVESTIGATIONS

"Ro Khanna rejects warnings that Trump admin investigations could derail Democrats' affordability agenda", 12 November 2026 (PHOTO VIA FOX NEWS — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ **THE SHORT VERSION**
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. The White House and the Justice Department called Democratic oversight of Trump a crime and a threat.

WHO GETS PAID. The unnamed donors who paid for the Trump White House ballroom get to stay unnamed.

WHAT SLIPS. Congress's power to ask who paid for a White House project slips when the Justice Department calls the question itself a threat.

WHAT'S NEXT. No subpoena has been issued in either probe yet; the next step is whether Raskin and Garcia open the Musk and DOGE inquiry Jeffries confirmed, and whether Blumenthal's donor inquiry draws one too.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

Before a single subpoena existed, the White House counsel told the incoming Oversight chair that the investigations he had not yet opened were already "blatant criminality." That was the opening move, reported last week. The record since has been the Democratic Party trying to answer a threat issued in advance of any evidence.

On Nov. 4, a group of House Democrats led by Rep. Bobby Scott sent a letter to the heads of every federal agency and department: preserve your records, in accordance with federal law, or risk criminal penalties. It was the first paper trail of an oversight agenda the White House had already called a crime....

...(cont) On Saturday, Nov. 7, Democratic committee members gathered at a progressive conference and pledged what the Washington Examiner called an "aggressive" oversight agenda, promising to go to court, if necessary, to enforce their investigative authority. The next day, Sunday, Attorney General Todd Blanche went on record backing President Trump's own call for the Justice Department to investigate Democrats over the "threat" of impeachment and investigation. The agenda was a day old. The attorney general wanted it investigated.

On Monday, Sen. Bernie Sanders delivered the first crack in the party's own ranks, warning Democrats not to spend all their time investigating the administration at the expense of an affordability agenda.

By Wednesday, the Justice Department had its answer to the first actual investigation on the board. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, the top Democrat on a Senate investigations panel, is probing who financed the Trump White House ballroom. A top Justice Department attorney told the Washington Examiner, in a story published Thursday, that Blumenthal's inquiry amounted to an attempt to intimidate the people who paid for it. The attorney did not dispute that anyone paid. The objection was to the asking.

Thursday brought the rest of the board into view. Rep. Ro Khanna rejected Sanders's warning directly, telling Fox News that holding the administration accountable for the Iran war is itself a cost-of-living fix, not a distraction from one. Jamie Raskin and Robert Garcia will proceed with oversight of Elon Musk and DOGE.

All together now — read the sequence in order: a letter calling future oversight criminal, then letters preserving records, then a pledge to enforce authority, then a request to investigate the investigators, then a warning from inside the party, then an answer calling the first actual inquiry a threat, then two more Democrats saying they'll proceed anyway. No subpoena yet. The record already runs eight entries deep.

🍺

"They want to investigate a ballroom and suddenly the people asking the question are the threat, not the people who built a gold room nobody can audit. Bernie's right that rent and groceries matter more than hearings, and Khanna's right that the war nobody voted on is why the gas bill's high. Either way, the Justice Department already decided which direction accountability gets to flow in this country, and it isn't down."

— Sal

🚬

"Look, when a sitting senator starts digging into who donated to a public construction project, that's not oversight, that's an enemies list — did I say enemies list, I meant, you know, a list of names that happen to be private citizens who gave money, which, fine, is public information anyway, so why's he asking — point is the real intimidation here is clearly happening to the donors, obviously, not to the guy who hands out federal contracts."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *White House letter names one Democrat a future criminal; another says 'come at me, bro.'* By Mitch · the afternoon edition, 11 November 2026
- *White House says the investigation that hasn't happened yet may be 'blatant criminality.'* By Mitch · the afternoon edition, 11 November 2026
- *Trump's new chief of staff is defended by branding his own deportation record misinformation.* By Chip · the evening edition, 11 November 2026
- *Trump says his deportation policy was too tough, then makes his longtime immigration adviser chief of staff.* By Mort · the afternoon edition, 9 November 2026
- *'Zero chance' promise dies at three weeks; chief of staff's wife leaves the air three days later.* By Mort · the morning edition, 9 November 2026
- *Pundit says new chief of staff will thrive against hostile media his office is already sued for banning.* By Mort · the afternoon edition, 8 November 2026

THE RECEIPTS

Ro Khanna rejects warnings that Trump admin investigations could derail Democrats' affordability agenda

Fox News RIGHT § *05:00 EST*

Ro Khanna says Democrats can pursue Trump investigations and tackle affordability at once, arguing accountability for the Iran war would lower prices.

But: **Sen. Blumenthal: the Secret Service diverted $1.17 billion in appropriated funds toward the ballroom project** *Sen. Blumenthal, official release*

DOJ frames Blumenthal ballroom investigation as threat against Trump supporters

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *23:02 EST*

A top Department of Justice attorney on Wednesday expressed concern that Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) is seeking to intimidate people who support President Donald Trump through his investigation into the White House ballroom project. Blumenthal, the top Democrat on a key Senate investigations committee, revealed in October that he is...

But: **NAR puts the median first-time homebuyer at 40 years old - a record - and first-time buyers at a record-low 21% of the market** *National Association of Realtors, 2025 Profile*

Bernie Sanders warns Democrats not to spend all their time investigating Trump

Fox News RIGHT § *22:56 EST*

Sen. Bernie Sanders warned Democrats not to spend all their time investigating the Trump administration, urging the party to prioritize affordability and working-class families.

Jeffries leaves door open to investigating major Trump ally as Democrats prepare to take power

Fox News RIGHT § *20:00 EST*

Hakeem Jeffries says Democrats will "follow the facts" as Jamie Raskin and Robert Garcia prepare to lead oversight of Elon Musk and DOGE.

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)*

Blanche backs Trump call for DOJ investigation into Democratic impeachment push

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *12:18 EST*

Attorney General Todd Blanche on Sunday supported President Donald Trump's call for the Department of Justice to investigate Democrats over threats of impeachment and investigations into the Trump administration. "They're threatening current members of the administration. They're threatening American companies who've invested in jobs...

~~Democrats pledge 'aggressive' oversight agenda of Trump during progressive confab~~

Democrats plan oversight of an administration whose Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running

Washington Examiner RIGHT § *09:38 EST*

WASHINGTON — Congressional Democrats aren't backing away from their plans to launch sweeping oversight targeting President Donald Trump and his allies, threatening to use the courts to enforce their investigative authority if necessary. Fresh off resounding midterm election victories, Democratic members of the chief investigative...

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)*

Democrats warn Trump officials to keep records or risk criminal penalties after midterm victories

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *10:00 EST*

Exclusive: Letter sent to department and agency heads signals Democrats will look to investigate Trump officials Track live results from all 50 states Tell us: what do you want to know about midterm results? A group of Democratic lawmakers are asking leaders in the Trump administration to preserve records in accordance with federal law...

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

SECOND USE

Justice Department's Republican-loss clause fires in Mississippi, loses to the state's first Black senator since Reconstruction.

By THE WRECKING CREW
THE REMEDY DESK

"Scott Colom claims victory as he addresses supporters in Mississippi following his historic Senate victory – as it happened", 12 November 2026
(PHOTO VIA THE GUARDIAN — THE ORIGINAL REPORT)

■ THE SHORT VERSION
typed by Dot

WHAT HAPPENED. Mississippi certified Scott Colom's Senate win, the first Black senator the state has elected since Reconstruction.

WHO GETS PAID. Senate Democrats gain a seat, padding a majority built race by race this midterm cycle.

WHAT SLIPS. Nothing slips here yet.

WHAT'S NEXT. No further vote or deadline appears in the receipts; Mississippi's certification is the last step on record for this seat.

AS IT RAN ON THE FRONT

The chief already made the assignment three weeks back: work the clause the Justice Department wrote to block a certification, but only if the Republican lost. The planner likes how clean the build was — one trigger, one condition, filed in Alaska on 24 October before a single vote there was counted. The tinkerer logged that one didn't take; on 31 October an Alaska lawyer could only call the ask "not even possible," and the clause sat idle. Mississippi was next on the list regardless.

By 4 November the margin in Jackson had settled into the kind of number lawyers love: 1,864 votes, 95 percent counted, Scott Colom ahead of Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith. The tinkerer watched the lead hold through 5 November, past 1,800, and widening. On 6 November the fight the clause was built to host finally showed up on schedule: Hyde-Smith's campaign demanded ballot preservation, Colom's side called it an "unlawful attack," and lawyers for both sides were on the ground in the same counting rooms, with 99 percent of the state's ballots already in....

...(cont) The muscle doesn't wreck anything this time, because there's nothing left standing to wreck. The count kept running five more days. On 11 November, eight days after Election Day, the race was finally called. By Wednesday the certification went through — not blocked, not contested into the ground, just certified, outright, the way a count is supposed to end.

That outright is the whole story. The clause was drafted to stop a certification only if the Republican lost, and the Republican lost here too — by a margin thin enough that the tool had every excuse to fire again. It didn't need to. Mississippi hadn't elected a Democrat to the Senate since 1982, or a Black senator since the 1870s, when Hiram Revels took his seat two days after the state rejoined the Union and Blanche Bruce served just before Jim Crow closed the door for a century and a half. The last Democrat the state did send, in 1947, was a segregationist. Trump carried the state by 22 points two years ago.

The pilot lands it in Jackson, not Washington. The crew doesn't take credit for the outcome — the tool was built to stop it, not deliver it. It simply failed to, and Colom becomes the third Black senator Mississippi has sent to Washington since Reconstruction, and the first since Reconstruction actually ended, a century and a half later.

❦ FROM THE CORNER ❦

DUTCH

THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT BUILT A CLAUSE THAT SUES OVER CERTIFICATION ONLY WHEN the Republican loses, then used it again in Mississippi. That isn't election oversight, it's a one-way insurance policy that only pays out when the other side wins. Because the policy only runs in one direction, a close count your candidate wins lands in a lawsuit's waiting room before certification even starts, while a loss just as close gets no visit at all, which means the one ballot in this country that has to win clean enough to survive a legal team already on call is yours.

"They built a legal escape hatch for exactly one outcome — the Republican losing — and when it finally had to open in Mississippi, there was nothing on the other side to catch. Colom won by enough, and clean enough, that the same Justice Department that sued to block Alaska's count before a single vote was tallied had nowhere to file in Mississippi at all. That's the tell: the clause only has teeth when the margin's thin enough to argue over, and this one just got certified outright."

— Sal

"Demanding ballot preservation in a two-thousand-vote race is just standard lawyering, nothing unusual — and it's not like the same Justice Department clause pulled this exact move in Alaska three weeks earlier, that's — okay, it is exactly like that. Fine, the tool didn't stop Colom, which honestly just proves the certification process is fair, which — that's not the point I was sent out here to make."

— Chip

EARLIER IN THIS STORY

- *Justice Department's Republican-loss clause fires a second time in three weeks, right on schedule.* By The Wrecking Crew · the afternoon edition, 11 November 2026
- *Justice Department says man who plotted attack on British air base directed it from a New York jail* By The Lodgers · the evening edition, 10 November 2026
- *A lawsuit written to activate only with a loss is still waiting for one.* By Ruth · the afternoon edition, 10 November 2026
- *The Justice Department's suit triggered only on a narrow Republican loss; Mississippi's trailing Republican filed second.* By The Wrecking Crew · the evening edition, 9 November 2026
- *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

How Scott Colom defied the odds to go from district attorney to Mississippi's Democratic US Senator

NPR MAINSTREAM § *05:00 EST*

In a state that hasn't had a Democrat in office since 1980 and hasn't sent a Black Senator to Washington since the 1870s, Colom's win represents a massive upset in state politics.

But: **The Pentagon has failed its audit eight years running - the only major federal agency never to pass one** *Military Times, 19 December 2025*

Scott Colom claims victory as he addresses supporters in Mississippi following his historic Senate victory – as it happened

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *22:46 EST*

Colom beat Republican Cindy Hyde-Smith after race was called eight days after midterm election day Democrat Scott Colom wins race for US Senate in Mississippi How Colom won deep-red Mississippi with little help from Democrats Sign up for the US Breaking News email Some Democrats, out of the 11 who missed the key procedural vote on...

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

Scott Colom, a Democrat, Wins Mississippi Senate Election

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *04:11 EST*

Mr. Colom, a prosecutor, will be the first Black senator elected from Mississippi since the post-Civil War Reconstruction period.

Democrat Scott Colom unseats Cindy Hyde-Smith in stunning Mississippi Senate win

The Guardian MAINSTREAM § *19:11 EST*

Colom takes victory by razor-thin margin in state that has not elected a Democrat to the Senate since 1982 Democrat Scott Colom defeated Cindy Hyde-Smith, the incumbent Republican senator, to become the first Black senator in Mississippi elected since Reconstruction, in a stunning upset after more than a week of vote counting in one of...

Scott Colom Will Be Mississippi's Third Black Senator. Who Were the First Two?

The New York Times MAINSTREAM § *05:31 EST*

Mr. Revels took his seat two days after Mississippi was readmitted to the union after the Civil War. Mr.

Democrat Scott Colom flips Mississippi Senate seat, becomes state's first Black senator since Reconstruction

Le Monde MAINSTREAM § *18:22 EST*

The last time Mississippi chose a new Democratic senator was 1947, and the winner then was a staunch segregationist. Colom, a 43 year-old local prosecutor, capitalized on the state's large Black population, discontent with the economy and his predecessor's missteps as she sought a second full term.

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

Democrat Scott Colom makes history as Mississippi elects first black senator in 150 years

BBC News MAINSTREAM § *05:02 EST*

In a state Trump won two years ago by 22 points, Colom's victory extends a string of Democratic wins in the Senate.

~~Purple Mississippi? Overcoming GOP Voter Suppression, Black Voters Power Dem Wins Across the South~~

Mississippi could elect its first Black senator since Reconstruction - and first Democrat in 40 years

Democracy Now! § *08:15 EST*

Mississippi's race for the U.S. Senate remains too close to call: Democrat Scott Colom is narrowly leading Republican incumbent Cindy Hyde-Smith by nearly 2,000 votes with 96% of votes counted as of Friday morning. Donald Trump carried Mississippi by 23 points in 2024.

~~Scott Colom on Cusp of Historic Senate Upset in Deep Red Mississippi, Fueled by Surge of Black Turnout~~

The Supreme Court rejected the GOP's bid to stop counting the ballots putting Mississippi in play

Common Dreams § *16:13 EST*

Scott Colom is on the verge of a historic upset in Mississippi, where he could become the state's first Democrat elected to the US Senate in more than four decades. As of Wednesday afternoon, Decision Desk HQ showed Colom, a Black prosecutor and criminal justice reform advocate, holding a razor-thin margin of 1,864 votes over Republican...

Democrats rally around Colom's historic Mississippi victory

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *22:02 EST*

Democrats rally around Sen.-elect Scott Colom's (D-Miss.) historic victory in the Mississippi Senate race following his defeat of outgoing Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R). "We may have had to count One Mississippi, Two Mississippi, but Blue Mississippi sure has a nice ring to it,"

Democrat Scott Colom adds to lead in Mississippi Senate ballot counting

The Hill MAINSTREAM § *12:29 EST*

The Democrat in Mississippi's Senate race expanded his narrow lead over the incumbent senator Wednesday, possibly giving Democrats yet another seat to pad their majority. Democrat Scott Colom now leads Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R) by just more than 1,800 votes, according to Decision Desk HQ, with a smattering of remaining ballots being...

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

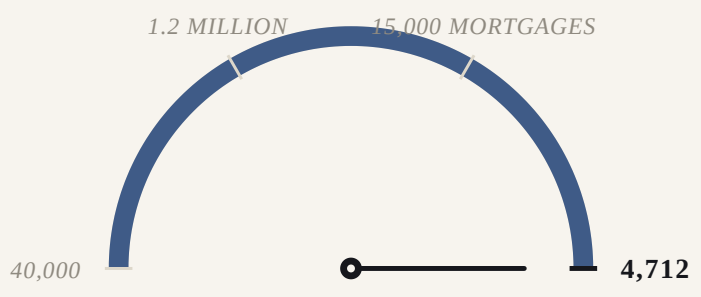
This page is a back-issue: the story as it ran, receipts as they were. The current edition is at the front. The byline is a pen name for a column drafted by a machine and checked by the editor: how this is made.

§89 — 11 NOVEMBER 2026

On the record

BY LOU
The Word

DEMOCRAT



4,712

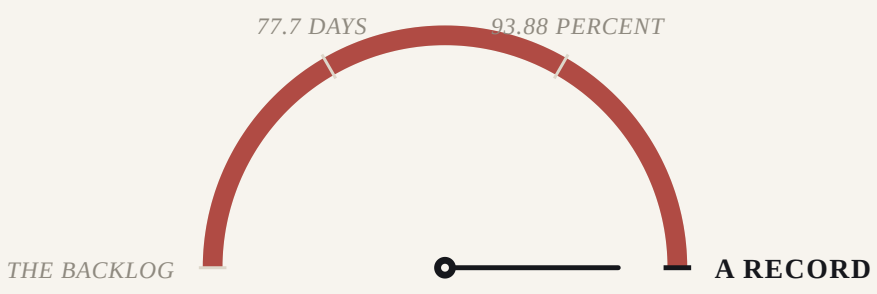
The other ledger. A Senate Democratic report counted more than 40,000 employees gone from the VA in fiscal 2025, 88 percent of them from health care, including 1,000 physicians and 3,000 registered nurses; the net loss was closer to the secretary's goal of 30,000 [1]. The report estimates that 1.2 million veteran patients have lost their VA provider, and that requests for a second look at claims rose 44 percent [2].

In September the inspector general reported 4,712 severe occupational staffing shortages, up from 2,959 in fiscal 2024 [3]. The watchdog says these reflect officials' perceptions, not verified vacancies; the department calls the report unreliable and cites vacancy rates of 15 percent for doctors and 9 percent for nurses [4]. The VA ended its mortgage rescue on May 1, 2025, and more than 15,000 veterans have since seen a modified payment rise at least $150 a month; the department says that program put the whole home loan system at risk [5]. All 139 facilities reported shortages [4]. Those are the buildings the country sends them to.

SOURCES

1. More than 40,000 employees lost in fiscal 2025; 88 percent from the Veterans Health Administration; 3,000 registered nurses and 1,000 physicians; net loss closer to the goal of 30,000 — Government Executive, 22 January 2026 ↑
2. 1.2 million veteran patients estimated to have lost their VA provider; requests for a second look at claims up 44 percent — Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, ranking member's report, 22 January 2026 ↑
3. 4,712 severe staffing shortages in fiscal 2026 against 2,959 in fiscal 2024 — Military Times, 15 September 2026 ↑
4. All 139 facilities reported shortages; findings reflect officials' perceptions, not verified vacancies; the department's reply and its 15 and 9 percent vacancy rates — Government Executive, 16 September 2026 ↑
5. VASP ended 1 May 2025; more than 15,000 veterans saw modified payments rise at least $150 a month; 63 percent against 2 percent for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac; the department's reply — NPR via KUOW, 30 October 2026 ↑

REPUBLICAN



A RECORD

The day belongs to the people who served, so the department's numbers go first, and they are good ones. In fiscal 2026 the VA processed 3,111,399 disability claims, past the 3,000,734 it set the year before, and about 60 percent were approved [1]. In July the backlog, claims pending more than 125 days, fell below 70,000 for the first time since February 2020, down more than 74 percent since January 2025, and the average claim took 77.7 days [2].

The department reports 93.88 percent accuracy, its highest in three years, and plans to add more than 2,000 processors in fiscal 2027 to the 13,000 it has [3]. "VA is putting veterans first by making major improvements in claims processing volume, speed and accuracy," Secretary Doug Collins said [3]. A faster answer is a debt being paid, and today is the day to say so. About 5.5 million veterans received service-connected disability benefits as of 2024 [3].

SOURCES

1. 3,111,399 disability claims in fiscal 2026 against the prior record of 3,000,734; about 60 percent approved — Stars and Stripes, 16 October 2026 ↑
2. Backlog below 70,000 for the first time since February 2020, cut by over 74 percent since 20 January 2025; backlogged means pending more than 125 days; 77.7-day average — American Legion, 8 July 2026 ↑
3. More than 2,000 hires planned for fiscal 2027 on top of 13,000 claims employees; 93.88 percent accuracy; about 5.5 million veterans receiving benefits as of 2024; the Collins quotation — Military.com, 30 October 2026 ↑

"No demonstration today. I brought three pieces of paper. The department's: 3.11 million claims, a record, about 60 percent approved. The inspector general's: 4,712 severe shortages, up from 2,959 two years before, and I'll say what they said, those are what facility officials report, and the department says it's no measure of vacancies. NPR's: 63 percent of veterans who got a loan modification came out with a higher payment. For Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac loans, 2 percent. Sorry, one thing before you go. The claim gets decided in 77.7 days. Who is in the chair at the clinic on day 78?" — Lou

"Veterans Day. I'm putting the act down. One word, and I'll read it straight: record. The department set one, three point one one million claims, and that's money reaching people who earned it, so say so. Then read the other record. Thirty to forty thousand employees gone in a year, depending who's counting. Four thousand seven hundred twelve severe shortages, reported from all hundred thirty-nine facilities. Fifteen thousand veterans with a mortgage payment up at least a hundred fifty a month. A parade is one day. A nurse is a payroll line, every day. That's where you find out what the holiday means."

— Sal

"The department would point out that its claims numbers are real and that it puts its vacancy rates below most other health systems, and on this one day I will leave its case at that, beside the rest of the record."

— Chip

The Word today — 👍 👎