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WASHINGTON SCHEDULE

IN THE NEWS

President Trump Suspending Active Security Clearances of Lawyers Who Are Working With Jack Smith

[Reuters](#) (02/25, Goudswaard) and the [Associated Press](#) (02/25, Richer, Tucker) reported that U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an order suspending security clearances for lawyers representing former Special Counsel Jack Smith, who led two since-dismissed federal criminal cases against Trump, and limiting the U.S. government's business with their law firm, Covington & Burling. According to the articles, the order directs U.S. agencies to end engagements with Covington to the extent allowed by law and orders a review of government contracts with the firm, which is among the most prominent law firms in Washington and has traditionally had deep ties to government agencies. The articles added that the U.S. has also convened a "working group" to review the Smith investigation, with Attorney General Pam Bondi starting a "weaponization work group" tasked with conducting an internal review of Smith and his staff, as part of Trump's efforts to hold accountable those he believes were responsible for the "weaponization of government". The articles noted that Trump has repeatedly criticized Smith and his allies, portraying the cases against him as a misuse of the criminal justice system, while Smith has defended his probe, saying that politics played no role in the work of his office, and Trump has stated that he will continue to hold accountable those who supported the "weaponization of government". Additional reporting on the story was provided by [ABC News](#) (02/25, Walsh), [Bloomberg](#) (02/25, Henry), [CNN](#) (02/25, Polantz, Waldenberg), [Daily Wire](#) (02/25, Kruta), [Fox News](#) (02/25, Deppisch, Spunt), [The Epoch Times](#) (02/25, Burg), [The Hill](#) (02/25, Samuels), [New York Times](#) (02/25, Barrett, Thrush, et al.), [Politico](#) (02/25, Gerstein, Cheney), [Washington Examiner](#) (02/25, O'Keefe), and [Washington Post](#) (02/25, Stein, Roebuck).

President Trump Appoints Former Secret Service Agent Dan Bongino as FBI Deputy Director, Prompting Controversy Over Past Criticisms

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (02/25, Gurman) reported that President Trump has chosen Dan Bongino, a former Secret Service agent and right-wing commentator, as the new Deputy Director of the FBI. According to the article, Deputy Director Bongino has previously described the FBI as "irredeemably corrupt" and has been a sharp critic of the agency, particularly after the search of Trump's Mar-a-Lago home. The article explained that Deputy Director Bongino's selection has drawn strong partisan reactions. The [Associated Press](#) (02/25, Swenson) added that before Trump nominated Director Patel, Deputy Director Bongino was one of his loudest advocates, arguing on his podcast that Director Patel was the only potential candidate who could "go in there and clean that mess up." The article stated that Deputy Director Bongino has argued that the FBI has placed too much focus on domestic intelligence-gathering and as a result dropped the ball on serious criminals and overseas threats. He has suggested federal law enforcement wasted time investigating Jan. 6 rioters and anti-abortion activists. The article highlighted that the Justice Department has demanded a list from the FBI of the thousands of agents who participated in investigations into the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, a move some within the bureau see as a possible precursor to mass firings. Additional reporting on Deputy Director Bongino was published by [Forbes](#) (02/25, Khan-Mullins), [The Independent](#) (02/25, Baio), [MSNBC](#) (02/25, Benen), [NPR](#) (02/25, Fadel), and [USA Today](#) (02/25, Anderson).

Sen. Blackburn Requests Unredacted Epstein Files, Director Patel Vows Cooperation as AG Bondi Faces Bipartisan Pressure

[WTVC \(ABC-7\)](#) (02/25, Staff Writer) reported that Tennessee Senator Marsha Blackburn has sent a formal letter to Director Kash Patel, asking him to release the complete and unredacted files related to the Jeffrey Epstein sex trafficking case. According to the article, Director Patel has reportedly vowed to work with Senator Blackburn to release the records, which include flight logs and a 'little black book' with names and addresses of clients. The article noted that the release of the files aims to shed light on Epstein's trafficking ring and potentially implicate powerful figures, with President Trump having previously expressed support for making the client list public. [Politico](#) (02/25, Friedman) reported that Attorney General Pam Bondi is facing pressure from lawmakers to release the alleged "client list" of Epstein. The article explained that AG Bondi has files related to the Epstein investigation and has been directed by President Donald Trump to review them. The article noted that the release of the documents has bipartisan support, with both Republican and Democratic lawmakers urging Bondi to make the records public, suggesting that delaying the release may be an attempt to protect individuals on the list. Additional reporting on the story was provided by [Daily Mail](#) (02/25, Ewall-Wice), [The Daily Beast](#) (02/25, Akers), [Fox News](#)

(02/25, Stancy), [The Hill](#) (02/25, Fields), [NewsNation](#) (02/25, Staff Writer), [Newsweek](#) (02/25, McFall), and [Times Free Press](#) (02/25, Cooper).

Continued Reporting: Director Patel to Lead Both FBI and ATF, Pledges Constitutional Focus and Crime-Fighting Resolve

[Clearance Jobs](#) (02/25, Suci) reported that Director Patel has been appointed to lead the FBI and the ATF, making him the first Indian American and Hindu American to head the FBI, and he was sworn in as acting director of the ATF on a Monday afternoon, just after being sworn in as the head of the FBI on a Friday. According to the article, Director Patel, who is 45 years old, has previously served as a National Security Council official, chief of staff to the Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller, and senior advisor to the acting director of national intelligence during the first Trump administration, where he oversaw the execution of several of President Donald J. Trump's top priorities, including eliminating ISIS and Al-Qa'ida leadership. As the principal deputy to the acting director of national intelligence, Director Patel helped oversee the operations of all 17 intelligence community agencies and provided the President's Daily Briefing, and he has also worked as a public defender in Florida, a federal public defender, a trial attorney by the United States Department of Justice (DoJ) National Security Division, and senior counsel on counterterrorism for the House Intelligence Committee. Director Patel's appointment to head the FBI was confirmed on a party-line vote of 51 to 49, with two Republicans joining all Democrats voting against him, and he has stated that he will follow the constitution of the United States and has no interest in pursuing retribution against critics of the administration, but rather wants to focus on fighting crime. The article explained that as the head of the FBI, Director Patel will oversee around 38,000 employees, including special agents, intelligence analysts, and administrative staff, and he will also be responsible for leading the ATF, which has an additional 5,500 employees and is responsible for enforcing federal laws related to firearms and explosives, as well as tobacco and alcohol. Director Patel's appointment has been praised by supporters of the Second Amendment, but has also been met with concern from gun control advocates, who are worried about his views on gun rights, and it is unclear if a permanent head will be named to head the ATF or what the White House's long-term plans are for the agency. The article highlighted that Director Patel has stated that he will work to protect the United States and its citizens from harm, saying "Anyone that wishes to do harm to our way of life and our citizens, here and abroad, will face the full wrath of the DOJ and FBI," and he has also emphasized the importance of fighting crime and pursuing those who seek to harm the country.

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COUNTERTERRORISM

Continued Reporting: FBI Says 'Mass Casualty Attack Thwarted' With Arrest of 21-Year-Old in Texas

[NBC News](#) (02/25, Burke) reported that a 21-year-old, Seth "Andrea" Gregori, was arrested in Texas for making terroristic threats against the Corpus Christi Police Department. Gregori allegedly planned a "mass casualty attack" on police, similar to the 2016 Dallas ambush that killed five officers, FBI Houston said in a post on X. The article noted that the shooter in the 2016 attack, Micah Xavier Johnson, told a hostage negotiator that he "wanted to kill white people, especially white officers," authorities said. The Army veteran was killed after authorities detonated a bomb following several hours of negotiations. [USA TODAY](#) (02/25, Olivia, Nickas, Nguyen) and [KRIV \(Fox-26\)](#) (02/25, Kite) also reported on the story.

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COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

Alabama Man Sentenced to Five Years in Prison for Violating U.S. Sanctions on Iran

[AL.com](#) (02/25, Koplowitz) reported that Ray Hunt, a 71-year-old Alabama business owner, was sentenced to 5 years in federal prison for violating Iran sanctions. According to the article, Hunt pleaded guilty to conspiring to export American goods to Iran, despite sanctions, through his business Vega Tools LLC. He used deceptive practices, including lying to suppliers and shipping companies, to avoid detection by US authorities. The article noted that BIS investigated the case with valuable assistance provided by the FBI. The [press release](#) stated that Assistant Director Kevin Vorndran of the FBI's Counterintelligence Division announced the sentence, among others. [Law360](#) (02/25, Briseno) also reported on the story.

Artificial Intelligence and State-Sponsored Cyber Espionage

[NYU Journal of Intellectual Property](#) (02/25, Lipsker) reported that the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has led to a new era of state-sponsored cyber espionage, posing significant global security risks, as seen in North Korea's notorious hacking campaigns. According to the article, AI-enhanced malware can self-evolve and bypass conventional defenses, making traditional cybersecurity strategies ineffective, and nations like South Korea are revising their cybersecurity strategies to incorporate AI-driven tools. The article noted that the use of AI in cyber espionage raises ethical concerns and creates new challenges, but it also offers solutions, such as AI-powered cybersecurity tools that can detect and respond to malicious activity more effectively, as noted by experts at the FBI. "As technology continues to evolve, so do cybercriminals' tactics. Attackers are leveraging AI to craft highly convincing voice or video messages and emails to enable fraud schemes against individuals and businesses alike," said FBI Special Agent in Charge Robert Tripp. "These sophisticated tactics can result in devastating financial losses, reputational damage, and compromise of sensitive data." For instance, AI-powered voice and video cloning scams have tricked victims into divulging sensitive information by mimicking trusted individuals.

Continued Reporting: UK's Encryption Backdoor Demand Sparks Global Cybersecurity Concerns as Apple Withdraws Advanced Data Protection

[Lawfare Media](#) (02/25, Landau) reported that the United Kingdom's demand for Apple to create a backdoor to its end-to-end encrypted iCloud data threatens global cybersecurity. According to the article, this move undermines Apple's Advanced Data Protection (ADP) and could expose sensitive information to espionage—much like the 2024 Chinese hack of U.S. phone networks described as "an intelligence failure roughly on par with putting Kim Philby in charge of the FBI's Russia counterintelligence office." The article noted that these U.K. requirements mirror bulk data collection practices that the U.S. ultimately abandoned for being ineffective and dangerous to privacy, warning that once a backdoor exists, hostile actors can exploit it and imperil everyone's security. [Forbes](#) (02/25, Doffman) added that the U.K. spy agency, National Cyber Security Centre, advises iPhone users to turn on the Advanced Data Protection setting to protect against attacks. However, Apple has withdrawn this setting from the U.K. due to government demands for access to fully encrypted data. The article explained that the move has sparked debate, with some agencies, like the National Cyber Security Centre and CISA, advocating for strong encryption, while others, like the FBI, push for "lawful access" to encrypted content.

Opinion: DOGE Is Risking a National Security Nightmare

An opinion piece from the [Washington Examiner](#) (02/25, Schindler) reported that Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has sparked concerns about national security due to its lack of understanding of federal bureaucracy and security protocols. According to the article, multiple federal departments, including those led by Tulsi Gabbard and Director Patel, have instructed their employees to ignore DOGE's demand for information, citing potential risks to intelligence community personnel and national security. The article noted that the vetting process for DOGE personnel has been questioned, with concerns that it may not be following established federal guidelines, potentially putting national security at risk, similar to the security breaches experienced by the Manhattan Project during World War II.

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CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

To Identify Suspect in Idaho Killings, FBI Used Restricted Consumer DNA Data

The [New York Times](#) (02/25, Baker) reported that as investigators struggled for weeks to find who might have committed the brutal stabbings of four University of Idaho students in the fall of 2022, they were focused on a key piece of evidence: DNA on a knife sheath that was found at the scene of the crime. According to the article, at first they tried checking the DNA with law enforcement databases, but that did not provide a hit. They turned next to the more expansive DNA profiles available in some consumer databases in which users had consented to law enforcement possibly using their information, but that also did not lead to answers. FBI investigators then went a step further, according to newly released testimony, comparing the DNA profile from the knife sheath with two databases that law enforcement officials are not supposed to tap: GEDmatch and MyHeritage. The article noted that days after the FBI's investigative genetic genealogy team began working with the DNA profiles, it landed on someone who had not been on anyone's radar: Bryan Kohberger, a Ph.D. student in criminology who has now been charged with the murders. The case has shown both the promise and the unregulated power of genetic technology in an era in which millions of people willingly contribute their DNA profiles to recreational databases, often to hunt

for relatives. In the past, law enforcement officials would need to find a direct match between DNA at the crime scene and that of a specific suspect. Now, investigators can use consumer DNA data to build family trees that can zero in on a person of interest — within certain policy limits. [NBC News](#) (02/25, Ortiz) reported that Idaho prosecutors want to present an FBI-constructed 3D model of the home where four college students were found brutally stabbed to death in 2022 at the suspect's trial this summer. The request was part of a series of filings made public Tuesday, and comes after the three-story King Road house in Moscow, located on the edge of the University of Idaho campus, was demolished a year after the quadruple killings. According to the article, the FBI's reconstruction is "based on depictions, documentation, and measurements taken at the scene prior to demolition," and would "aid witnesses in their testimony," prosecutors said. The [Associated Press](#) (02/25, Boone), [CNN](#) (02/25, Yan, Casarez), [Fox News](#) (02/25, Ruiz), and [USA TODAY](#) (02/25, Santucci) also reported on the story.

Attorneys for Buccaneers' Rachaad White Say FBI Is Investigating an Extortion Attempt Against Him

The [Associated Press](#) (02/25, Staff Writer) reported that the FBI is investigating an extortion attempt against Rachaad White, lawyers for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers running back said Tuesday. "The FBI and other appropriate authorities are currently looking into an extortion attempt against Rachaad White," attorneys Michelle Gervais and TJ Grimaldi said in a statement. "Illegal and defamatory threats and demands against Rachaad and his family will be met with zero tolerance. We will continue to exercise all legal avenues to protect Rachaad's rights as a victim of extortion." The [New York Post](#) (02/25, Arnold), [Fox News](#) (02/25, Morik), [KMBC \(ABC-9\)](#) (02/25, Sloan), [Sports Illustrated](#) (02/25, McKeone), [Daily Mail](#) (02/25, Nisse), [WFLA \(NBC-8\)](#) (02/25, Wells), [WANE \(CBS-15\)](#) (02/25, McKeone), and [CBS Sports](#) (02/25, Dubin) also reported on the story.

Man Who Was Mad About Chinese Spy Balloon Faces Sentencing for Threatening Ex-Speaker McCarthy

The [Associated Press](#) (02/26, Brown) reported that a Montana man faces years in prison at his Wednesday sentencing for threatening to assault former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy after becoming upset with the government for not shooting down a Chinese spy balloon that floated over the defendant's home city. Richard Rogers, 45, of Billings, will appear before U.S. District Judge Susan Watters after a jury convicted him last year for threatening a member of Congress and making harassing phone calls to the FBI and congressional staff in which he routinely made vulgar and obscene comments. According to the article, Rogers, a former phone customer service representative, delivered the threat to a McCarthy staffer during a series of more than 100 calls to the Republican speaker's office in just 75 minutes on Feb. 3, 2023, prosecutors said. That was one day after the Pentagon acknowledged it was tracking the spy balloon, which was later shot down off the Atlantic Coast. Rogers testified at trial that his outraged calls to the FBI and McCarthy's office were a form of civil disobedience. One of his lawyers said during the trial that Rogers "just wanted to be heard."

Woman Will Plead Guilty in Scheme to Defraud Presleys and Sell Graceland

The [New York Times](#) (02/25, Stevens) reported that a Missouri woman agreed to plead guilty to mail fraud on Tuesday for her role in orchestrating what the authorities described as a scheme to defraud Elvis Presley's heirs by claiming ownership of Graceland, his Memphis home, and threatening to sell it in a foreclosure auction. The woman, Lisa Jeanine Findley, of Kimberling City, Mo., will have a count of aggravated identity theft dismissed as part of the plea agreement, which was filed in United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee. According to the article, the case involving Findley burst into the public eye in May, when lawyers for the actress Riley Keough, the granddaughter of Presley, went to court to stop what they said was a monthslong, fraudulent scheme to sell Graceland, which is now a lucrative tourist attraction that draws 600,000 visitors a year. The article mentioned that court papers revealed that the attempt had been made by a company known as Naussany Investments & Private Lending LLC, but exactly who was behind that company remained a mystery for many months. Naussany Investments had claimed in court papers that Presley's daughter, Lisa Marie Presley, who died in 2023, had borrowed \$3.8 million from the company and put Graceland up as collateral. The company subsequently scheduled a sale of Graceland. But a Tennessee judge blocked the sale and the state's attorney general said his office would look into the situation after no one showed up in court to represent the company. Eventually, federal officials came forward and claimed that the whole situation had been part of an elaborate fraud. The article added that in an affidavit filed in August in support of an arrest warrant, an FBI agent, wrote that Findley used "a series of aliases, email addresses and fake documents" to engage "in a scheme to defraud Elvis Presley's family for millions of dollars by threatening to foreclose on the 'Graceland' estate." The agent said in the 30-page affidavit that Findley had created fraudulent loan documents and unlawfully used Presley's name and signature as part of her scheme. [Reuters](#) (02/25, Ward), [Fox News](#) (02/25, Norman), [NBC News](#) (02/25, Burke, Zadrozny, Schuppe), [Associated](#)

[Press](#) (02/25, Sainz), [ABC News](#) (02/25, Griffith, Kofsky, et al.), and the [Rolling Stone](#) (02/25, Mier) also reported on the story.

New York Detective Did Jobs for the Mafia on the Side, Prosecutors Say

The [New York Times](#) (02/25, Nerkar) reported that more than a decade ago, a Nassau County detective burst into a nondescript shoe repair store on Long Island, flanked by colleagues intent on shutting down a backroom gambling operation controlled by the Genovese crime family. Federal prosecutors say the detective, Hector Rosario, 51, was not on police business when he raided Sal's Shoe Repair in Merrick, N.Y. Nor were the men who joined him officers — prosecutors called them "associates." The detective, prosecutors say, was secretly on the payroll of the rival Bonanno crime family, and the raid was intended to make his second boss happy. According to the article, Rosario, 51, was indicted in 2022 along with eight other defendants after a yearslong investigation into the Genovese and Bonanno families' illegal gambling businesses. The eight other defendants have all pleaded guilty to charges that include racketeering and running illegal gambling businesses. Rosario is charged with obstruction of justice and lying to FBI agents who were investigating the illicit businesses, including the one prosecutors say he raided. He has pleaded not guilty. On Tuesday, opening statements began in his criminal trial before Judge Eric N. Vitaliano of U.S. District Court in Brooklyn. The article mentioned that Anna Karamigios, a federal prosecutor, said Rosario was on the Bonanno family payroll while he was a Nassau County detective. "He chose the crime family over the public he swore to protect," she said. "When FBI agents asked him what he knew, he lied. Again and again." Organized crime families like the Bonanno and Genovese once exerted considerable power over unions and industries such as construction in the Northeast. But starting in the 1980s, aggressive prosecutions sapped their power, and the Bonanno family saw members convicted or cooperate with the government. Even the family's longtime boss, Joseph C. Massino, defected: In 2011, he became the first boss of an organized crime family to cooperate with federal authorities. The [New York Post](#) (02/25, Catalini, Schnitzer, Troutman), and [New York Daily News](#) (02/25, Annese) also reported on the story.

Alleged Cocaine Quality Control Tester for Mexican Drug Cartel Extradited to U.S.

[Fox News](#) (02/25, Casiano) reported that a Mexican woman responsible for testing the quality of cocaine being trafficked by a drug cartel has been extradited to the United States and charged by federal prosecutors. Irma Elvira Cruz, known as "Huzipol" and "Madre," 60, was indicted earlier this month on federal charges of conspiracy to unlawfully import cocaine into the United States and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute. Cruz was an associate of an unnamed drug trafficking organization in Mexico and was allegedly responsible for the quality control testing of cocaine transported from Colombia to Costa Rica and Mexico, with the intent of being smuggled into the U.S., authorities said. A DOJ [press release](#) noted that this effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies and eliminates the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach.

Numerous Victims Say They Lost Everything in Timeshare Purchasing Scam With Phony Business Address

[CBS News](#) (02/25, Kozlov) reported that timeshares can go from creating happy memories to causing big headaches — especially if an owner wants out. That is where scammers come in — promising owners they can sell the timeshares at a profit, but pocketing all the cash. In August 2022, CBS News Chicago reported on an elaborate Chicago-focused scam in which a man lost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Since then, dozens more have come forward saying the same happened to them. The victims' life savings, homes, and pensions were all gone — given to people claiming to work for a firm called Intercontinental Realty, which called the victims with a promise to sell their timeshares in Mexico for a profit. "The scam is the same," said private investigator Joe McGreal. "So they'll offer a large amount of money — a \$1 million profit, a \$2 million profit — just to hook them and reel them in. Once they're reeled in, they start charging them fees." According to the article, McGreal has been tracking the scam for three years. He began investigating after the victim whom CBS News Chicago talked with for the 2022 story hired him to get his \$300,000 back from the same company. "The dozen clients that I represent, there's everywhere from \$500,000 loss to \$1.3 million," said McGreal. "The total is over \$4 million — \$4.3 million, give or take." The article stated that McGreal called the FBI, offering practically to hand the agents his case file. "The agencies involved with enforcing these laws are not doing anything about it," said McGreal. The FBI was one example of such an agency, he said. "The FBI was contacted by half a dozen clients in half a dozen states. They were informed to file a complaint on their website. They did that," McGreal said. "Haven't heard back in two years." The article noted that an FBI spokesperson said the agency cannot confirm any ongoing investigation, but did say timeshare scams like these are on the rise. According to the FBI, the proceeds of many of the scams go straight to help fund Mexican cartels.

Karen Read Case: Defense Confirms It Paid Crash Experts Hired by FBI After Trial

[Mass Live](#) (02/25, McKenna) reported that at a hearing on Tuesday, defense lawyers for Karen Read sought to downplay the extent of the communications they had with a pair of accident reconstructionists hired by the federal government on the case. Judge Beverly Cannone scheduled Tuesday's hearing after prosecutors disclosed previously unknown communications between the experts and Alan Jackson, an attorney for Read, at a hearing last week. Specially Appointed Prosecutor Hank Brennan disclosed an invoice from the experts, who work for the firm ARCCA, sent to Read and that one of the experts, Daniel Wolfe, provided an outline of his testimony. According to the article, while Robert Alessi, an attorney hired by Read after the first trial, confirmed Read paid the nearly \$24,000 bill, he said she only did so after the trial had concluded and after receiving the go-ahead from the U.S. Attorney's office for Massachusetts. The bill "came out of the blue" from ARCCA, Alessi said. Read's defense received the bill on July 12, 2024, and a check was sent to ARCCA on July 25. Read's first trial concluded when Cannone declared a mistrial on July 1. In his remarks on Tuesday, Brennan said the "only people surprised they were paying was [the] defense." Both prosecutors and Read's defense received a report from ARCCA that concluded her boyfriend, John O'Keefe, was not hit by a car as prosecutors have concluded. ARCCA was originally hired by the federal government and Read's lawyers said at trial they did not pay the firm. Brennan also suggested there might be further, unknown communications between her lawyers and the expert witnesses.

Man Wanted by FBI Atlanta Arrested After Traffic Stop In Georgia

[WGXA \(ABC-24\)](#) (02/25, Kincaid) reported that a man wanted by the FBI in Atlanta was arrested in Georgia on Monday. According to the Bibb County Sheriff's Office (BSO), around 12:20 p.m., a deputy conducted a traffic stop of a Honda Accord. The driver was Roddreckious Deandrea Williams, who deputies learned was wanted by the FBI Atlanta on suspected drug trafficking charges. Deputies also discovered a firearm reported stolen out of Bibb County inside the vehicle. He was taken into custody on his warrant and transported to the Bibb County Law Enforcement Center.

Jury Should Hear Words of Accused Kavanaugh Assassination Plotter, Feds Say

The [Washington Post](#) (02/25, Morse) reported that jurors should be entitled to hear what the California man accused of plotting to assassinate Supreme Court Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh told investigators, federal prosecutors said in court filings late Monday, arguing that his interview was legally proper. The article added that investigators also had the right, prosecutors said, to conduct a warrantless search of a suitcase belonging to 29-year-old Nicholas Roske. They said he brought the luggage with him on a cross-county flight June 7, 2022, and then in a cab to Kavanaugh's neighborhood in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The suitcase contained burglary tools, an unloaded handgun and two magazines of ammunition, according to the filing. Roske halted his plan to break into Kavanaugh's house because he was spooked by a security detail posted outside, authorities say. He turned around and wheeled his suitcase down the darkened, narrow streets just north of Washington. Roske then spoke by phone with his sister, who persuaded him to call 911, which he did about two blocks from Kavanaugh's home, according to court records and police officials. Local officers from Montgomery County responded and arrested him. The filings are the latest legal match ahead of Roske's trial, set to begin June 9 in U.S. District Court in Greenbelt, Maryland. His attorneys had earlier asked the court to toss out statements Roske made to investigators after his arrest because he was in obvious mental distress and wasn't properly advised of his rights to remain silent and consult a lawyer.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy, 17 Others Indicted for Jail Smuggling Operation

[CBS News](#) (02/25, Staff Writer) reported that a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department deputy was among the 18 people who were indicted for their alleged part in a drug smuggling operation at county jails on Tuesday. The indictment, which stems from a joint investigation involving LASD and FBI personnel that began in 2022 regarding reports of drugs that were being smuggled into the Los Angeles County jail system and also alleges the attack on an inmate, was announced by District Attorney Nathan Hochman. Among the 18 defendants listed in the indictment are 39-year-old Lancaster man Michael Meiser, an LASD deputy. The article stated that according to the indictment, which is 51 pages long, the criminal smuggling operation was allegedly orchestrated and controlled by the Mexican Mafia prison gang. The indictment details a number of security videos that allegedly show Meiser speaking to some of the other defendants in the case. He can be seen handing a bag to one of them and in another instance he is seen receiving a plastic bag from a woman at a Lancaster gas station, which contained about a point of black tar heroin. He is then accused of bringing the bag into the North County Correctional Facility.

Louisiana Man Sentenced for Possession of Child Pornography

[KTAL \(NBC-6\)](#) (02/25, Cheng) reported that a Louisiana man has been sentenced for possession of more than 500 of child pornography; he received eight years and one month, followed by five years of supervised release. In 2020, Christopher Aron Stanfield of Natchitoches was found with pornography involving children and the sexual abuse of animals, narcotics, theft, identity theft, and others, according to Natchitoches Parish Sheriff Stuart Wright. According to the article, on October 6, 2020, officers with the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office executed an arrest warrant at Stanfield's residence in Natchitoches. Before executing the arrest warrant, a search warrant had also been secured for Stanfield's apartment in connection with a separate and ongoing investigation. During the arrest and search, law enforcement officers collected several electronic devices, including iPads, laptops, and iPhones, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Louisiana. Stanfield was interviewed by law enforcement officers and admitted to committing several criminal offenses, including theft and identity theft. He further admitted that he had been using the "dark web" to commit these offenses. The FBI, Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office, and Bossier City Marshal's Office Cybercrime Unit investigated the case.

Continued Reporting: FBI Says Woman Drugged, Robbed Older Men During Deadly Romance Scheme in U.S. and Mexico

[KPTV \(Fox-5\)](#) (02/25, Verastigue, Lee) reported that the FBI's Las Vegas branch announced on Friday criminal charges against a woman who is accused of "deliberately and methodically" targeting older men to rob them of everything. Aurora Phelps is currently incarcerated in Mexico and awaiting extradition after the Department of Justice filed a motion to unseal an indictment against her. In one instance, Phelps allegedly drugged a Nevada man and then pushed him in a wheelchair across the border while he was in an "inebriated state." "Phelps then took him to a hotel room in Mexico City, where the victim was found dead a few hours later," FBI Special Agent in Charge Spencer L. Evans explained. According to the article, Evans says all of the victims in the indictment are U.S. citizens. Three of the men are from Nevada. "Two of Phelps' other alleged victims were found dead shortly after their encounters with her, and the one living victim mentioned in the indictment survived and emerged from a coma after Phelps administered large amounts of prescription sedatives to him over the course of a week." Evans added. The FBI says it's "one of the most egregious and reprehensible" romance schemes in recent history. [ABC News](#) (02/25, Video) also reported on the story.

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CYBER DIVISION

Lockbit Ransom Gang Claims to Have Stolen Information That Could "Destroy" FBI

[Cyber News](#) (02/25, Schappert) reported that the LockBit ransomware gang claims to have stolen classified information that could "destroy" the FBI. According to the article, the gang's leader, LockBitSupp, posted a message on the group's dark leak blog, addressing Director Patel and claiming to have an archive of classified information. The article noted that LockBitSupp threatens to publish the information, which they claim could negatively affect the FBI's reputation and structure unless Patel contacts them personally. [Daily Dot](#) (02/25, Thalen) also reported on the story.

South Carolina Elderly Lost \$4.2 Million in Fake Hacking Scam, FBI Says

[WPDE \(ABC-15\)](#) (02/25, Kelly) reported that the FBI warned of a fake hacking scam that targeted South Carolina elderly, resulting in estimated losses of \$4.2 million. According to the article, scammers claim the victims' financial accounts have been hacked and instruct them to convert their assets into physical gold, which is then given to a courier. The article noted that the FBI advised elderly persons to verify identities, not use provided phone numbers, and be cautious of authorizing device access to protect themselves from such scams.

FBI El Paso Warns Community to Beware of 'Unpaid Toll Fees' Text Message Scam

[KVIA \(ABC-7\)](#) (02/25, Ardila) reported that the FBI El Paso is warning the community about a scam involving text messages claiming unpaid toll fees, which may lead to increased late fees reported to the DMV. According to Jeanette Harper from FBI El Paso, the scam is nationwide and the scammers are from outside the US, using phone numbers potentially obtained through data breaches. The article noted that the FBI advised people not to click on the link, as it can steal personal information and payment details, and to report any incidents if they believe they've fallen victim to the scam.

Continued Reporting: 'Ghost' Cyber Group Targeting Americans

[WAKA \(CBS-8\)](#) (02/25, Staff Writer) reported that the FBI has issued a warning that Chinese cyberterrorists, known as "Ghost", are targeting Americans using malicious software to steal data and shut down computers. According to the article, the attack exploits vulnerabilities in outdated software, such as Adobe and Microsoft, and can be prevented by keeping software up-to-date and backing up important files. The article noted that the FBI specifically warned that religious organizations, hospitals, schools, and small to medium-sized businesses are particularly vulnerable. [KOB \(NBC-4\)](#) (02/25, Tucker) and [WRDW/WAGT \(CBS-12\)](#) (02/25, Tucker) also reported on the story.

Over 100 UTEP Students Face Financial Losses as FBI Investigates Phishing Attack

[KFOX \(Fox-14/CBS-4\)](#) (02/25, Andrade) reported that over 100 University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) students have faced financial losses due to a phishing attack, with some losing between \$5,000 and \$10,000. The attack involved students receiving fraudulent emails that led them to reveal their login credentials, which were then used to alter bank deposit details and redirect funds. The article noted that the FBI's El Paso office is investigating the incident, and UTEP has canceled direct deposit for students and is issuing paper checks instead.

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OTHER FBI NEWS

FBI Looking Into James Comey's Off-The-Books 'Honeytrap' Operation Targeting 2016 Trump Campaign

The [Washington Times](#) (02/25, Picket) reported that FBI leadership is starting an investigation into the origins of the agency's plan a decade ago to infiltrate the campaign of presidential candidate Donald Trump using two female undercover "honeypot" agents. The off-the-books investigation, launched in 2015 by FBI Director James B. Comey, was revealed by an agency whistleblower in a protected disclosure to the House Judiciary Committee last year. In the intelligence community, a honeypot commonly refers to an undercover operative, usually a woman, who feigns sexual or romantic interest to obtain information from a target. According to the article, the whistleblower said two female FBI undercover employees infiltrated President Trump's 2016 campaign at high levels and were directed to act as "honeypots" while traveling with President Trump and his campaign staff. The Times has learned that the Bureau, now led by Director Patel and Deputy Director Bongino, is looking for those once-undercover employees under Comey's direction. According to the whistleblower disclosure, the investigation differed from Crossfire Hurricane, a later FBI counterintelligence operation that looked into never-proved allegations that the campaign was colluding with Russia. The article quoted the whistleblower's disclosure, who said, "The case had no predicated foundation, so Comey personally directed the investigation without creating an official case file in Sentinel or any other FBI system. The FBI has multiple methods of protecting highly sensitive investigations, so Comey did not have a legitimate reason not to officially create an official investigation file or have a file number." The article stated that the investigation was eventually closed because a major newspaper obtained a photograph of one of the undercovers and was about to publish it, but the FBI press office told the outlet that the photograph was an FBI informant who would be killed if the photograph was publicly released. In fact, it was a photograph of the FBI undercover employee. The FBI whistleblower employee noted in the disclosure that one of the undercovers agreed to be transferred to the CIA so she would not be available as a potential witness. The article added that the other undercover employee was rewarded for her activities through a promotion in the Bureau and is now a high-level FBI executive in a major field office. The whistleblower employee observed one or more employees in the FBI being directed to never discuss the operation with anyone ever again, including other people involved in the 2016 Trump campaign infiltration operation. The FBI employee making this disclosure took this admonishment as a direct threat to the employees who received it. [Daily Mail](#) (02/25, Spiering), [Daly Wire](#) (02/25, Saavedra), [Washington Times](#) (02/25, Staff Writer), [Newsmax](#) (02/25, Koutsobinas), and [Breitbart](#) (02/25, Weibel) also reported on the story.

Top GOP Senators Call On DOJ to Investigate Potential Criminal FBI Leaks to Media

The [Washington Times](#) (02/25, Picket) reported that two senior Senate Republican lawmakers called on Attorney General Pam Bondi and Director Patel to investigate potential criminal leaks to the media of sensitive and classified information ahead of the 2024 presidential election. Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Ron Johnson (R-WI) also asked Bondi and Director Patel to investigate former Assistant Special Agent in Charge Timothy Thibault and his associates' potential breach of FBI information sharing policies. According to the GOP lawmakers, legally protected whistleblower disclosures have revealed that Thibault shared sensitive, non-public investigative information from his FBI email account with a private citizen with whom he was romantically involved. The article quoted the senators, which wrote, "The FBI repeatedly lectures Congress, without any legitimate basis, that it can't share

information with Congress because the matter is an ongoing investigation. The FBI has asserted to Congress that [For Official Use Only] information and FBI email accounts and personnel names should remain non-public. Yet, here, Thibault sent all of that type of information to a private citizen while the FBI stiff-arms Congress and the American people." The lawmakers noted news reports released just before the November 2024 election containing potentially "classified U.S. intelligence" as a further example of DOJ and FBI officials sharing investigative information while ignoring congressional requests for the same. The article added that the senators asked the DOJ and FBI to open a criminal media-leak investigation to hold accountable those responsible for sharing potentially classified and other sensitive information to the press. Last month, the senators released internal FBI emails and documents that exposed a purported political scheme against President Trump by Thibault. According to the lawmakers, he went outside established agency protocols for opening probes to help launch the federal election interference case against President Trump. The [New York Post](#) (02/25, Christenson), and [Daily Mail](#) (02/25, Caralle) also reported on the story.

Jim Jordan Confident Director Patel and Deputy Director Bongino Will Give Answers on FBI 'Soon'

The [Washington Examiner](#) (02/25, Notheis) reported that House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan (R-OH) was enthusiastic about Congress working with Director Patel and the recently announced Deputy Director Bongino, who he said are "two great guys" qualified for the job. According to the article, Jordan said he is looking forward to getting "answers" and weaponization documents from the agency. The lawmaker added that both Congress and voters are "entitled" to know why the Biden administration targeted concerned parents at school boards and that answers will be provided "soon," predicting within the next two weeks. The article added that Jordan confirmed that Congress has issued subpoenas to the FBI for information. Critical information he wants answers to include finding out who planted the pipe bombs on Jan. 6, who leaked the Dobbs opinion in May 2022, and who placed cocaine within the White House in 2023. "So we're just wanting answers that we think the folks we get the privilege of representing and serving would like to have answers to," Jordan said. Jordan's letter to Director Patel was delivered on Monday, just a day after Deputy Director Bongino was announced as the agency's deputy director.

Prosecutors Conclude Army Veteran's Capitol Riot Pardon Also Covers a Separate Weapons Case

The [Associated Press](#) (02/25, Kunzelman) reported that the DOJ has concluded that a military veteran's presidential pardon for charges that he stormed the U.S. Capitol also extends to his separate conviction for illegally possessing stolen grenades and classified information, according to a court filing Tuesday. Jeremy Brown, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Army, was sentenced in April 2023 to seven years and three months in prison after a federal jury in Florida convicted him of weapons charges. Federal agents investigating Brown's alleged role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol were searching Brown's home in Florida when they found stolen Army grenades, an unregistered rifle and a stolen classified document. Brown's charges related to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack in the nation's capital were still pending last month when President Donald Trump pardoned him and hundreds of other Capitol riot defendants on his first day back in the White House. The article added that the DOJ said it believes President Trump's pardon of Brown also covers his conviction in Florida. A court filing by the U.S. Attorney's office says it reached that conclusion after consulting DOJ "leadership." [Politico](#) (02/25, Cheney) reported that the only Jan. 6 defendant who appears to be facing continued prosecution is Edward Kelley, who was convicted by a Tennessee jury last year for conspiring to murder the FBI agents and other law enforcement who investigated him. Kelley has argued that President Trump's pardon should cover those offenses too — but so far the DOJ has said President Trump's pardon doesn't stretch that far. The [Tampa Bay Times](#) (02/25, Spata), [MSNBC](#) (02/25, Rubin), and the [New York Times](#) (02/25, Feuer) also reported on the story.

DOJ's No. 2 Targets Old Office Where He Rose as a Prosecutor

The [New York Times](#) (02/25, Goldman, Thrush, et al.) reported that Emil Bove III, the acting deputy attorney general, stood stone-faced and alone at the prosecution table inside the federal courthouse in Manhattan last week to do a job his onetime colleagues in the U.S. attorney's office for the Southern District of New York would not. Bove, who runs the day-to-day operations of the DOJ under President Trump, was there to seek the dismissal of corruption charges against Mayor Eric Adams, a task seen as so dubious that two prosecutors in a prideful office known as the "Sovereign District of New York" resigned rather than carry out his demands to do it. According to the article, he lashed out at the office after the hearing. "There are no separate sovereigns in this executive branch," he wrote in a statement that also suggested his former co-workers prepare to resign if they disagreed. It was the latest chapter in Bove's estranged-family feud with the Southern District, where he rose to prominence as a top terrorism prosecutor and departed in December 2021 after a case he oversaw crumbled over procedural violations by members of his team. The article stated that Bove, 44, has quashed dissent at the Southern District is

an indication of its outsized importance as a symbol of prosecutorial independence — and its enduring role in President Trump's own long, tortured relationship with the department since his first term. But his forceful tack is also a measure of his own fraught relationship with an office that provided him with the know-how and confidence to now challenge its power and autonomy. The article included interviews with more than two dozen former colleagues, current department officials and others, that reveal new details about Bove's nine years at the Southern District, a turbulent period that defined his career and foreshadowed his current effort to bend the DOJ to President Trump's agenda. The article noted that Bove racked up convictions at trial and in guilty pleas, as in one case of a Hezbollah operative and another with an FBI employee accused of being an agent for China. A high point, former colleagues said, was the successful prosecution and trial of the man who detonated a pressure-cooker bomb in Manhattan and was sentenced to two life terms in prison.

Federal Agencies Can Ignore "What Did You Do Last Week?" Email, Trump Administration Says

[CBS News](#) (02/25, Ake, Brown, Yilek) reported that the office that asked federal workers to document five things they accomplished over the past week told executive branch officials on Monday that individual agencies can decide how to respond, despite a threat from Elon Musk that employees who refused could lose their jobs. Two officials said that the Office of Personnel Management, or OPM, held a call with the heads of human capital at federal agencies and said it's up to each entity to determine how they want to handle the directive employees received Saturday. Federal employees received an email from OPM with the subject line "What did you do last week?" The message instructed recipients to reply with five examples of what they did over the past seven days, without revealing any classified information. Musk, who is leading the Department of Government Efficiency, known as DOGE, said that employees' failure to respond would be taken as a resignation. The email set a deadline of 11:59 p.m. Monday to respond. President Trump publicly backed the effort at the White House earlier in the day. The article mentioned that the original message sparked confusion, and several agencies told workers to ignore the request, including the DOJ, the FBI, the State Department, the Pentagon, the Department of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Others, including the Transportation Department, the Education Department and the Department of Commerce and the National Transportation Safety Board, told their workers they should comply. The [New York Times](#) (02/25, Shear, Conger), [Forbes](#) (02/25, Durkee), [Politico](#) (02/25, Stokol, Lippman), [New York Post](#) (02/25, Glebova), [BBC](#) (02/25, Faguy), [Washington Examiner](#) (02/25, Quarshie), [Axios](#) (02/25, Peck), [Fox News](#) (02/25, Stancy), [New York Post](#) (02/25, Keane), the [Guardian](#) (02/25, Tait), [CNN](#) (02/25, Treene), and [Reuters](#) (02/25, Alper, Layne, et al.) also reported on the story.

FBI Atlanta Names New Special Agent in Charge

[WAGA \(Fox-5\)](#) (02/25, Murray) reported that the FBI has named Paul W. Brown the Special Agent in Charge of the Atlanta Field Office. According to the article, Brown has decades of experience doing the job. He was in charge of the FBI's Mobile Field Office in Alabama. With the move, he'll lead more than 500 employees in Georgia, which spans 14 offices across the state. The article noted that before joining the FBI, Brown served as an officer in the U.S. Army and worked as a business consultant for a multinational professional services company. He graduated with his Bachelor's degree from Western Illinois University and an MBA from Tarleton State University in Texas. The [Marietta Daily Journal](#) (02/25, Staff Writer), and [WRCB \(NBC-3\)](#) (02/25, Howard) also reported on the story.

Continued Reporting: Los Angeles Activists Are Doxing ICE Agents, As They Try to Break up Deportation Raids

The [New York Post](#) (02/25, Taer, Downing) reported that activists in Los Angeles are posting the names, photos and personal information of ICE agents — and are warning neighborhoods about impending raids, federal sources said. As ICE ramps up deportation efforts of illegal migrants in Southern California, flyers with photos of agents' faces have appeared with claims that they "racially terrorize" local communities, agency sources said. The Department of Homeland Security was quick to hit back at the efforts of activists, saying they endangered the lives of law enforcement officers who are carrying out their duties. It's unknown who posted the flyers, but anti-ICE activists have hit the streets in force since an agency leak revealed plans for a citywide deportation blitz at the end of this month. Activists have been patrolling migrant neighborhoods on the lookout for ICE agents and warning locals of impending sweeps. [Newsweek](#) (02/25, Rahman) reported that an FBI LA spokesperson said, "The FBI safeguards constitutionally-protected rights, including freedom of speech and assembly. However, any individual who impedes law enforcement operations, potentially threatening the safety of law enforcement agents and subjects of their investigations, is subject to investigation and potential prosecution by the DOJ." ICE officials have vowed to

continue their operations despite resistance from activists, while federal authorities investigate the individuals responsible for distributing the flyers. The Department of Homeland Security and the FBI have not indicated whether criminal charges will be pursued. However, officials have suggested that interfering with law enforcement could lead to prosecution. [Newsmax](#) (02/25, Thomas) also reported on the story.

New York's Message to Federal Workers: Come Work for Us

The [New York Times](#) (02/25, Balk) reported that as the Trump administration cuts thousands of workers and leaves many more in limbo, the governor of New York sees a hiring opportunity. Gov. Kathy Hochul on Tuesday invited federal employees to apply for public-sector jobs in New York State, starting a recruitment effort aimed at workers targeted by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, which is a cost-cutting effort, not a department. Last month, the Trump administration sent deferred resignation offers to federal employees with the subject line "Fork in the Road," and Musk announced over the weekend that all federal employees would be asked to detail their accomplishments or face possible termination. The article mentioned that at a State Police graduation ceremony, Hochul also extended an invitation to any FBI employees who were looking for new jobs, saying that "It would be an honor" to have them. The governor's office said that the state opened a portal on Tuesday morning with resources for potential applicants but that it was too early to gauge the response.

Marjorie Taylor Greene Changes Her Tune on FBI Funding

[Newsweek](#) (02/25, Clark) reported that congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene has rescinded her previous statements on removing FBI funding now that Director Patel and Deputy Director Bongino are in charge of the organization. The congresswoman in the past has been highly critical of the FBI, stating it has been used as a "political weapon," and has engaged in "nefarious behavior." Greene has now changed her outlook on the Bureau based on its new leadership. Greene said on X that she was going to discuss her change of heart about the FBI on newly appointed Deputy Director Bongino's podcast, the Dan Bongino Show, on February 24. However, she is not featured in the episode from that day uploaded to the Dan Bongino Show feed. It is unclear whether her interview with the new FBI deputy director was removed, or if it never happened.

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OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

House Passes GOP Budget Plan as Holdouts Relent

[Wall Street Journal](#), [Fox News](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [ABC News](#), [BBC](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [CBS News](#), [Washington Examiner](#)

President Trump Proposes \$5 Million 'Gold Card' That Would Grant U.S. Residency

[Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#), [Washington Post](#), [Fox News](#), [Washington Examiner](#)

Judge Overturns Trump Order Blocking Refugee Admissions

[Wall Street Journal](#), [NBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)

Judge Orders Trump Administration to Pay Millions in USAID Funds

[Washington Post](#), [ABC News](#), [CBS News](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)

The Trump Staffers Who Get Paid by Private Clients

[Wall Street Journal](#)

President Trump Proposes Fines, Prison Time for Migrants Who Don't Join Registry

[Wall Street Journal](#)

Musk Fights Back as Some Trump Aides Resist Intensifying DOGE Push

[Washington Post](#)

Her Claim of Anti-Straight Bias Could Upend Discrimination Law

[Washington Post](#)

White House Names Amy Gleason U.S. DOGE Service Administrator

[Washington Post](#)

DOGE to Cancel Government Contracts That Help Veterans, Records Show

BIG PICTURE

Wall Street Journal

- Ukraine Agrees to Mineral-Rights Deal With U.S.
- A Decimated Hamas Prepares for a New Fight With Israel
- House Passes GOP Budget Plan as Holdouts Relent
- European Leaders Seek to Perfect the Art of Trump Whispering
- Trump Proposes \$5 Million 'Gold Card' That Would Grant U.S. Residency

New York Times

- Gabbard Says More Than 100 Intelligence Officers Fired for Chat Messages
- The Next Phase of Trump's Large-Scale Work Force Cuts Is Underway
- Under Trump, America's New Friends: Russia, North Korea and Belarus
- U.S. and Ukraine Agree to Minerals Deal, Officials Say
- House Passes G.O.P. Budget Teeing Up Enormous Tax and Spending Cuts

Washington Post

- House Narrowly Passes GOP's 'Big, Beautiful Bill' for Trump's Agenda
- Musk Fights Back as Some Trump Aides Resist Intensifying DOGE Push
- Her Claim of Anti-Straight Bias Could Upend Discrimination Law
- Ukraine and U.S. Agree to Framework for Minerals Deal, Ukrainian Official Says
- DOGE to Cancel Government Contracts That Help Veterans, Records Show

Fox News

- Trump Budget Bill With \$4.5 Trillion in Tax Cuts Survives House Vote; Israel Mourns as Mother and Young Sons Murdered by Terrorists Are Laid to Rest; Dolton, Illinois, Mayor Tiffany Henyard Projected to Lose Primary in Landside.

CNN

- Johnson and Trump Pull Off Surprising Win to Advance GOP Agenda After Vote Whiplash in the House; Trump Says U.S. Will Sell \$5 Million 'Gold Card' to Wealthy Foreigners; White House Reveals Who DOGE Acting Administrator Is.

NBC News

- Close Call at Chicago's Midway International Airport After a String of Recent Mishaps and Disasters; Trump Responds to Confusion Over Musk Directives to Federal Bureaucracy; Federal Government Workers in Limbo Over DOGE Cuts.

CBS News

- Confusion Among Federal Workers Over Mixed Messages on Elon Musk Email; How FDR-Era Supreme Court Ruling Relates to Disputes Over Trump Firings.

ABC News

- U.S. and Ukraine Agree to Terms on Critical Mineral Deal; Texas Authorities Thwart Alleged Mass Casualty Attack Plan; Egg Prices Will Rise More Than 40% This Year: USDA.

WASHINGTON SCHEDULE

White House

President Trump

- 9:00 AM: In-Town Pool Call Time
- 11:00 AM: The President participates in a Cabinet Meeting
- 3:00 PM: The President signs Executive Orders

Vice President Vance

- No official presidential schedule released or announced.

US Senate

- Joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The American Legion and multi VSOs: Minority Veterans of America, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A, National Association of County Veterans Services Officers, Military Officers Association of America, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and Wounded Warrior Project. – 10:00 AM – Host: Veterans' affairs
- Hearings to examine Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act implementation and case studies. – 10:00 AM – Host: Environment and Public Works
- Hearings to examine the nominations of Dean Sauer, of Missouri, to be Solicitor General of the United States, and Harmeet Dhillon, of California, and Aaron Reitz, of Texas, both to be an Assistant Attorney General, all of the Department of Justice. – 10:15 AM – Host: Judiciary
- Hearings to examine perspectives from the field, focusing on farmer and rancher views on the agricultural economy. – 10:30 AM – Host: Agriculture, Nutrition, And Forestry
- Hearings to examine interdicting illicit drug trafficking, focusing on a view from the front lines. – 11:00 AM – Host: Commerce, Science, and Transportation
- Hearings to examine bipartisan legislative frameworks for digital assets. – 2:30 PM – Host: Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Closed business meeting to consider pending intelligence matters; to be immediately followed by a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters. – 2:30 PM – Host: Intelligence
- Hearings to examine managing risk for the long-term in the 7(a) loan program, focusing on hearing from lenders. – 2:30 PM – Host: Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- Hearings to examine combating the opioid epidemic. – 3:30 PM – Host: Aging

US House of Representatives

- Hearing: Leading the Charge: Opportunities to Strengthen Americas Energy Reliability. – 9:30 AM – Host: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
- Hearing: American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Hearing. – 9:30 AM – Host: Committee on Appropriations
- Hearing: An Examination of How Reining in PBMs Will Drive Competition and Lower Costs for Patients. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Hearing: Hearing Entitled: The Future of American Capital: Strengthening Public and Private Markets by Increasing Investor Access and Facilitating Capital Formation – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Financial

Services

- Business Meeting: Consideration of the Oversight Plan for the Committee on Homeland Security for the 119th Congress; H.R. 1000 Mr. Green of TN the "Cyber PIVOTT Act"; H. Res. 113 Mr. Thompson of MS Directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit to the House of Representatives certain documents relating to Department of Homeland Security policies and activities related to the security of Department information and data and the recruitment and retention of its workforce; and H. Res. 114 Mr. Thomps. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Homeland Security
- Hearing: Oversight Hearing titled: Evaluating the Implementation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Natural Resources
- Hearing: Step by Step: The Artemis Program and NASA's Path To Human Exploration of the Moon Mars and Beyond – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
- Hearing: Fostering American Innovation: Insights into SBIR and STTR Programs. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Small Business
- Hearing: Legislative Presentation of The American Legion Multi VSOs: Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A Minority Veterans of America National Association of County Veterans Services Officers Military Officers Association of America National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs DAniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families and Wounded Warrior Project before the House and Senate VSO Joint Hearing. – 10:00 AM – Host: Committee on Veterans' Affairs
- Hearing: "Unleashing America's Workforce and Strengthening Our Economy". – 10:15 AM – Host: Committee on Education and Workforce
- Hearing: Federal Investments in Elementary Education – 10:30 AM – Host: Committee on Appropriations
- Hearing: "Examining the Biden Administration's Energy and Environment Spending Push." – 10:30 AM – Host: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Hearing: America Last: How Foreign Aid Undermined U.S. Interests Around the World – 11:00 AM – Host: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
- Hearing: American Indian and Alaska Native Public Witness Hearing. – 1:30 PM – Host: Committee on Appropriations
- Hearing: Oversight Hearing Federal Bureau of Prisons. – 2:00 PM – Host: Committee on Appropriations

Cabinet Members

- No events scheduled.

Visitors

- No events scheduled.

General Events

- CSIS: The Evolving Role of Private Sector in National Defense: A Conversation with Linden Blue – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 10:00 AM. CSIS is pleased to announce the launch of a new series of discussions on the U.S. defense industrial base with key partners in the space. Join CSIS President and CEO, Dr. John J. Hamre, on February 26 at 9am for the first event in this new series.
- CSIS: Immigration Policy Solutions to Critical Worker Shortages – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 9:00 AM. Critical sectors of the U.S. economy remain badly understaffed. Additionally, because of U.S. industrial policies creating positions in targeted industries and an aging workforce tied to specific career paths, worker shortages are set to become more dire in the medium term.

- [CSIS: Kenya's Economic Initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 9:20 AM. Kenya's political stability and its commitment to regional peace initiatives have positioned it as a key player in the East African Community (EAC). By strengthening partnerships within the bloc, Kenya has sought to expand economically. These efforts are closely linked to its peace and security initiatives, as instability poses a significant challenge to economic growth in the region. Geopolitical tensions and regional instability threaten long-term cooperation and participation in the EAC. This is particularly evident as the two most recent countries admitted to the bloc are Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which have been unstable for decades.
- [CSIS: Vying for Regional Leadership in the Horn of Africa: Kenya and Ethiopia, Competitors or Partners?](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 10:45 AM. The Horn of Africa remains a region of persistent conflict, geopolitical tensions, and weak regional cooperation, all of which shape its political and security landscape. Ongoing conflicts in Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan, along with territorial disputes, continue to strain relations among neighboring countries and hinder efforts toward stability.
- [Carnegie: The Future of U.S. Clean Energy](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 12:30 PM. Over the past year, a bipartisan group of policy experts have explored how U.S. policymakers could strengthen clean energy supply chains around the world. This group, the U.S. Foreign Policy for Clean Energy Taskforce, would now like to share its data and recommendations.
- [CATO Institute: Defending Due Process](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: CATO Institute, 12:00 PM. In a Q&A, Brandon Garrett and Vikrant Reddy will discuss the new threats that due process faces and how we can respond by better safeguarding fundamental liberty and property rights. They will discuss why people are tempted to place outcomes before fairness—in society and in the courts. They will explore how new technology, including artificial intelligence, has created new threats to fairness and rights. And they will discuss how people, from judges to local community leaders, can find common ground around defending due process.
- [AEI: Are China's International Test Scores Too Good to Be True?](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 10:45 AM. On the most recent round of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Chinese students' mean math and science scores were over 100 points higher than the corresponding averages for countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), implying that Chinese students are two or more years ahead of OECD pupils in these fields. But how accurate are these figures? A new working paper by AEI's Nicholas Eberstadt questions China's PISA scores and hypothesizes that the knowledge capital of China's K-12 population is on par with that of Turkey.
- [Aspen Institute: Re-Entry and Good Jobs: Building the Second Chances We All Believe In](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 2:00 PM. Today approximately 77 million Americans, or 1 in 3 adults have a criminal record. While not everyone represented in this statistic has experienced incarceration, it serves to highlight that the barriers formerly incarcerated people face finding quality jobs are far more commonplace than we might think. Many returning citizens, who worked for little or no pay while incarcerated, will struggle to find quality jobs after release. Discrimination against those with a record, restrictions on what occupational licenses are available to those with a record, existing debts, punitive court supervision policies, and lack of support to meet basic needs in areas such as housing can force those leaving incarceration into dead-end, low-paying, and exploitative jobs. Some will find they are barred from doing the jobs they worked or were trained to do while incarcerated. And many more lacked opportunities to participate in education or training opportunities while incarcerated.
- [Atlantic Council: How creative ventures are fueling the UAE's cultural scene](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 10:00 AM. On Wednesday, February 26, the Atlantic Council WIn Fellowship will host a hybrid discussion in Abu Dhabi on how visionary entrepreneurs drive cultural evolution in the UAE.
- [RAND: AI Risks and Benefits in Clinical Care](#) – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 12:00 PM. Some areas of health care, such as medical imaging, are already benefiting from AI. But many questions remain on the role of AI in the broader health sector. RAND's Sean Mann will discuss different applications of AI in health care and summarize the evidence surrounding the effects of these applications.

- Wilson Center: Ukrainian Society Under Occupation: Hardship, Civic Resilience, and Perception – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 10:00 AM. Three years after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, civic resilience remains central to the country’s ability to withstand outside aggression. What has life under occupation looked like for ordinary Ukrainians? How do media and official discourses shape public perceptions of the occupation? How have these perceptions and discourses about them influenced social relations? This event will explore occupation as both a historical phenomenon and a lived experience, linking journalistic, legal, military, historical, psychological, and social perspectives to explore the heterogeneity of experiences across the country. Drawing on sociological insights and firsthand journalistic accounts, it will examine how the Russian invasion has tested individual, communal, and national resilience to paint a clearer picture of Ukrainian society today.
- Wilson Center: The Road to COP30: A Conversation with COP30 President André Corrêa do Lago – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Online event, 11:00 AM. As Brazil prepares to host COP30 in Belém, join us for an exclusive conversation with Ambassador André Corrêa do Lago, who will lead this landmark climate summit in the Amazon.
- Hudson Institute: Adapting at Scale: A Conversation with Major General Kunkel, Air Force Director for Force Design, Integration, and Wargaming – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Hudson Institute, 9:30 AM. Major General Joseph Kunkel, the Air Force’s director for force design, integration, and wargaming, will discuss why the Air Force needs to rapidly evolve its capabilities and how it can generate, in the near-term and beyond, combat-effective, agile, and adaptive airpower at scale.
- Hudson Institute: “Seven Things You Can’t Say about China” with Senator Tom Cotton – Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Location: Hudson Institute, 6:00 PM. The Chinese Communist Party’s economic warfare has granted it tremendous influence in American society, industry, and even government. Never was this more apparent than during the COVID-19 pandemic, when those who questioned the CCP’s conduct around the virus—and potential role in creating it—faced accusations of hysteria, xenophobia, and fearmongering.

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