

# [***Anti-Israel Hunger Strikers Last 10 Days; Long-Awaited Cohen Cross- Examination Begins; Michael Cohen Testifies In Trump Criminal Trial; Police Struggling With Low Morale And Vacancies; San Fran Provides Free Boose For Homeless; CA Air Resources Board: State Gas Prices To Go Up; Disney Cuts Tinker Bell From Meet-And-Greets; National Police Week: Would You Support Your Child Becoming An Officer?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1M-5JB1-JCS1-6001-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Guests:** John Yoo, Lauren Wright, Bethany Mandel, Rabbi Chaim Mentz

**Body**

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GREG GUTFELD, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Out of time. Thank you, Jim Norton, Nicholas Giordano, Kat Timpf, Tyrus, our studio audience. "FOX NEWS @ NIGHT" with dreamy Trace Gallagher is next. I'm Greg Gutfeld.

TRACE GALLAGHER, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Good evening. I'm Trace Gallagher. It's 11:00 p.m. on the East Coast, 8:00 here in Los Angeles and this is America's late news, FOX NEWS @ NIGHT.

And breaking tonight. Anti-Israel protesters at Princeton who went on a hunger strike are now calling off the strike because of health concerns and hunger.

And law enforcement now warning of a national public safety crisis because the low number of police officers at an all-time high. We'll talk to a sheriff who answers his own 911 calls. But first, the cross-examination of convicted felon Michael Cohen and a fiery courtroom showdown. Nate Foy live outside the New York Supreme Court with more on this. Nate, good evening.

NATE FOY, FOX NEWS NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Hey, Trace. Today in the witness stand, Michael Cohen admitted that he wants to see former President Donald Trump convicted in this trial. And he also admitted to making money off criticizing Trump, including recently saying that Trump should go into a cage where he belongs. Now. Trump can't publicly respond to Cohen's comments because of the courts gag order.

And after an appellate court refused to overturn the gag order, Trump said this while leaving court tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP (R) PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Nobody's actually seen anything like it. But we, talk about subjects we're allowed to talk about, we'd love to not be under the gag order, but I'm the Republican nominee for president.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

FOY: Trace, during his direct examination today, Cohen admitted to line before Congress in 2017 and lying to Special Counsel prosecutors during the Mueller investigation. Cohen said his loyalty to Trump changed when he pleaded guilty to federal campaign finance violations and tax evasion in 2018. Trump attorney Todd Blanche as Cohen if he's obsessed with Trump, take a look at his response. Cohen said, "I don't know if I would call it obsessed. I admired him tremendously."

Today Cohen claimed he submitted false monthly invoices in 2017 to be reimbursed for paying adult film actress Stormy Daniels $130,000. Trump maintains all payments represented legitimately legal expenses. Now, Cohen is the prosecution's final witness. And Trump's lawyers expect to be done questioning him by about midday on Thursday. So Cohen will take the stand at 9:30 Thursday morning as for Trump's scheduled, Trace, he's attending a fundraiser tonight with top GOP donors in New York City. We'll send it back to you.

GALLAGHER: Trial is getting down to the wire. Nate Foy live for us in New York. Nate, thank you. Let's bring in former Deputy Assistant Attorney General John Yoo. John, great to have you on the show. One of your colleagues, Jonathan Turley had this headline in the New York Post. "Fix- it, Michael Cohen bombs on the stand, offers no new evidence to convict Trump. What do you think John? Did he bomb on the stand?

JOHN YOO, FORMER DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL: I don't know if he bombed. Although he's got a ready -- he's ready in the crater and hurry trying to dig himself out before he ever took the stand because this is a guy who has been already convicted of perjury twice, convicted of tax evasion. Federal judges have called him liar, a liar. And so, I think actually, Trump had a bad week last week with the Stormy Daniels testimony and the salaciousness of it.

But this week has been really good for Trump. Because if you wanted to end the evidence with Michael Cohen and leave him as the last witness in the mind of the jury, it's almost like the defense planned it that way. It's been a really good week for them to end with attacking the credibility of a witness who's so weak that the Justice Department decided never to bring a case with this guy as the witness.

GALLAGHER: And it's interesting because you and John have talked about this controversial gag order, this kind of unilateral gag order on the former president. Well, Trump also had his surrogates out there today and Vivek Ramaswamy asked a pretty fair question. Watch this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VIVEK RAMASWAMY (R) PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: I would like for anybody, anybody here in the press, anybody at home, anybody at MSNBC or the media afterwards to clearly state, what exactly is the crime that Donald Trump committed? Wait? We have not heard a good answer to that question.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: So now the question posed to you, John, you -- I mean do you know the crime? Can you identify the crime? Can you give us a simple explanation of what we're looking for as the jury is about to get this case?

YOO: Trace, that's not fair to ask me to do the prosecution's job because they haven't done that. They have -- actually you could say that this is a violation of Trump's constitutional rights. Is that the D.A. has been playing three card, you know, hide the ball. Monty with this. We can't tell what the charges because it's all built on the idea that there's some greater crime that Trump was concealing with this alleged bookkeeping entry shenanigans.

But the prosecutors never make clear, we all think it's a federal election crime, but they haven't made clear that that's the case and they're not allowed to prosecute that. And so, Vivek is right. I think that the prosecution has not been fair to Trump. I think this would actually be a pretty good grounds for Trump to win on appeal alone, that the prosecution won't stick clearly state what the crime is.

GALLAGHER: I know you think Michael Cohen is a bad witness. Do you think the prosecution will rest its case on Thursday?

YOO: Yes. I actually think that they have to rest the case now because they went too far last week. They know and even I think Judge Merchan knows if they let Stormy Daniels go on too long. And so, what the prosecution did is they dropped a lot of witnesses they wanted to bring to pile on the Stormy Daniels part of the story. And so now you could see that they're worried now that they might have triggered a mistrial, and that's why I think they're ending with Michael Cohen tomorrow.

GALLAGHER: All right. John Yoo, good analysis. Thank you, sir. We appreciate it as always. Maybe Team Trump found a workaround as we were talking about with John Yoo there. The former President's political allies rallied and spoke outside the courthouse today and his criminal trial. The senior national correspondent Kevin Corke is live in D.C. with more on that story. Kevin, good evening.

KEVIN CORKE, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Evening, Trace. Some cynics have suggested the star-studded turnout of political luminaries to support the former president is really just a bunch of Politico's playing nice for, you know, future cabinet spots in a second Trump administration or maybe even a Veep shot. But other observers adroitly point out that what this really is, is a stark reminder to passive court watchers, that this is in their view, a travesty of justice.

And a political persecution of opponent President designed to keep them off the campaign trail and eventually away from, you know, the White House. Thus the appearances today by Speaker Johnson, Congressman Donalds and Mills, as well as North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum and businessman Vivek Ramaswamy.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MIKE JOHNSON (R-LA) HOUSE SPEAKER: I'm an attorney. I'm a former litigator myself, I am disgusted by what is happening here. What is being done here to our entire system of justice overall.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CORKE: Speaker Johnson added that many people are losing faith right now in our nation's institutions and pointed out that in this case, well, it's because of cases just like this. This is one of the many reasons why. Now for his part, former President Trump seems to be more or less weathering the storm. After all, he's still leading his successor in five of six swing state polls, despite the law fair. And he said today his team is exposing this case as an absolute scam, Trace.

GALLAGHER: Yes. It certainly doesn't appear to have been detrimental for him so far. Kevin Corke live for us in D.C. Kevin, thank you.

Let's bring in Fox News Contributor Steve Hilton and Princeton University political scientist, Lauren Wright. Thank you both. I want to play some more of the allies, Steve Hilton, in this case against Trump. They had this to say. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. BYRON RONALDS (R-FL): This is a joke, it is a farce. It is a travesty. We are better than this as Americans.

REP. CORY MILLS (R-FL): America stands with them as well. They see this sham indictment, they see this for what it is without any actual substance whatsoever.

RAMASWAMY: This is a sham. This is not the United States of America. This is some third-rate Banana Republic.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: What do you think, Steve? Is this helpful to Trump or should he just go out there to the microphones and speak for himself day after day?

STEVE HILTON, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: This is enormously helpful. It builds on what Trump's already been doing. He's been making his case that this is totally politically motivated election interference. As the case goes on, we can see that as they continue to fail to actually explain what the crime is. The testimony of Stormy Daniels last week which all the legal experts agreed was completely irrelevant to the actual case in point.

And now you're amplifying that with these political supporters. And there's one further thing I'd say, the speaker there, Mike Johnson, elevated it. There's an element of gravitas there. He's not just someone who's in the mix for a V.P. slot or a cabinet position. He's the leader of one of our great chambers in our Congress. And he makes the point there that this is actually not just a pulling in terms of the ***politics***, it's a terrifying corruption of our judicial system for political ends.

And exactly as Vivek was saying, this -- we saw this recently when he talked about banana republics, just in the last year or so it's happened in Pakistan. It's happened in Putin's Russia, and that's what the Democrats are doing here.

GALLAGHER: Yes. Meantime, USA Today, Lauren Wright to you and the Suffolk poll on the fairness of the New York trial. Put this up on the screen not fair now leading 43.5 percent, fair 39.1 You're talking about a 4-1/2 point lead there. We haven't seen that too much. It looks like this not fair thing gaining a little bit of momentum, Lauren. What do you think?

LAUREN WRIGHT, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENTIST: I mean, I've actually seen polling that's more drastic than that. I think the main advantage for Trump is that this is really low ranking on voters list of priorities. And to the point you and Steve were just talking about earlier, you know, this showing of supporters to me is indicative that Trump is ahead and we have a bunch of hardnosed ambitious politicians who think there is zero risk right now of being associated with this guy.

And that is just as telling, as all the polls that show Trump's ahead. They think we better get on board. It's going to be him and he has a good chance of winning the election.

GALLAGHER: Yes. James Carville, Steve Helton said this. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JAMES CARVILLE, DEMOCRATIC STRATEGIST: Right now, he's got to try to move some numbers here. These polls are stuck in a ditch and admitted that way for a while. Right now in the presidential race, this is a sticky wicket out there. That's all I can say.

(END VIDEO CLIP) GALLAGHER: Sticky wicket for Biden, Steve.

HILTON: Well, exactly. I mean, look at this. It's not just that he's leading in all of the swing states, just in the latest New York Times poll. He's leading by way more than the margin of error. And further, in his -- in historical terms, polls have traditionally undercounted Trump's support. And as I think it was Fareed Zakaria on CNN who made this point. He said, look, I don't know how many shy Biden voters there are out there.

And so, if anything, Trump's leaders even greater. It's terrifying, if you're a Democrat, and it shows that made such a mistake in not getting rid of Biden when they could have.

GALLAGHER: Yes. Doug Schoen said on Special Report Tonight, this I thought was kind of fascinating, Lauren. I'll give you the last chance. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DOUG SCHOEN, DEMOCRATIC POLLSTER: What I'm picking up from my Democratic friends and sources is that the close-knit group around President Biden has locked down and basically picks the attitude that with the national polls, a plus two for Trump, it's not that bad. I think that's a big mistake.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: I think you want better than not that bad if you're running for president.

WRIGHT: I totally agree. And it's -- people are indicating that the polls are utterly meaningless at this point. That is not true. It's true that there -- they become more meaningful the closer we get, but Democrats acting as if it doesn't mean anything. It's essentially random noise that Trump's ahead. They are in for a very rude awakening. It's very scary for them. It's extraordinary how mistrustful voters are Biden on the issues they care about most. Economy, crime, emigration. That's the whole ballgame.

GALLAGHER: Listen. We got five plus months left. We will see how it goes. Lauren Wight, Steve Hilton, thank you both.

Meantime, a busy primary day in Nebraska, Maryland and especially West Virginia where the race to replace Joe Manchin may very well decide the balance of power in the U.S. Senate. Bill Melugin live in Charles Town where that contest is coming into focus tonight. Bill, good evening.

BILL MELUGIN, FOX NEWS NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Yes, Trace. Good evening to you. The results are officially in here in West Virginia. The current Governor Jim justice, backed by Donald Trump will be the Republican nominee this fall in. A Fox analysis shows this seat in particular gives Republicans the best chance this fall to flip a seat in the Senate. This seat, of course, left vacant by the retiring of Senator Joe Manchin.

But as for the winner, Jim Justice tonight, he was actually elected to office here in West Virginia back in 2016 as a Democrat. He switched parties in 2017, after Trump won his state by about 40 points. Here's some of what Justice had to say, after his big wins tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GOV. JUSTICE WRIGHT (R) WEST VIRGINIA SENATE NOMINEE: I'm not going to D.C. to just go up there and be part of the party. I'm not going there for that at all. I'm going there to shake up the world. Anybody in the right mind that could ever think that the Joe Biden administration and what we're doing is right, I think is a lunatic.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MELUGIN: Now in this primary race, Justice received a series of big endorsements from Donald Trump, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and West Virginia Senator Shelley Moore Capito. Justice's main opponent in his primary was West Virginia representative Alex Mooney. He's a member of the House Freedom Caucus who built himself as their true conservative in this race. He was endorsed by Senators Ted Cruz and Rand Paul.

And despite the loss tonight, Mooney says he's focused on beating Democrats his fall.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. ALEX MOONEY (R-WV): We fought hard. We ran the race all the way through. I'm still in Congress to the end of the year, where we have opportunities to fight back against the Biden agenda every step of the way, and make sure we win in November for the topic ticket.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MELUGIN: Now on the Democratic side of the race tonight, it is still too close to call however, The mayor of Wheeling, West Virginia, a man named Glenn Elliott. He is currently in the lead and he is endorsed by Senator Manchin. Trace?

GALLAGHER: We'll get back to you with any breaking news. Bill Melugin live for us there. Bill, Thank you.

Meantime, some Princeton students conducting an anti-Israel hunger strike have essentially tapped out because not eating was having adverse health consequences. Ashley Strohmier is live in New York with new information on this. Ashley, good evening.

ASHLEY STROHMIER, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Yes, Trace. Students at Princeton University protesting Israel's war with Hamas and Gaza calling an end to their hunger strike after just 10 days. The end of the hunger strike came after members initially vowed not to eat or drink again until a pair of demands were met. "Participants will abstain from all food and drink except water until our demands are met. We commit our bodies to their liberation of Palestine.

Princeton hear us now. We will not be moved the group wrote in a post on May 3rd." The demands included disclosure divestment, and a full academic and cultural boycott of Israel and grant complete amnesty from all criminal and disciplinary charges for participants of the peaceful sit in. Princeton divest now, the student protests group that is reportedly calling for the New Jersey Ivy League university to divest from America's middle eastern ally due to the high civilian death toll in Gaza Strip.

Said additional strikers would be continuing their efforts writing "due to health concerns of the 13 strikers who fasted for 10 days. The first hunger strike wave ended and the second wave has begun. And the tradition of rotary strikes seven new strikers are in definitely fasting for a free Palestine. Now, Trace, it is unclear what exactly is meant by indefinitely fasting, but I guess we're going to see how long this one last. Back to you.

GALLAGHER: We will indeed. Ashley Strohmier live for us in New York. Ashley, thank you. Let's bring in Bethany Mandel, coauthor of Stolen Youth and Rabbi Chaim Mentz of Bel Air here in Los Angeles. Welcome to you both. The hunger protesters wrote the following on May 3rd, Bethany. "Participants will abstain from all food and drink except water until our demands are met. We commit our bodies to the liberation of Palestine. Princeton, hear us now. We will not be moved until we get really hungry."

And by the way, the faculty started a hunger protest. They lasted like 24 hours. What do you - what do you think about this, Bethany?

BETHANY MANDEL, MARYLAND SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE: I invite them to try out teach about Tisha B'Av which is the summer fast where you're not drinking water either. But honestly, I was really hoping that you would put pictures of these students on camera while you were reading that because I'm sorry, there's no way those gentlemen were fasting for like two days, let alone 10.

GALLAGHER: Yes, yes. You're probably right. It's a fair assessment. Meantime in Florida, Rabbi, his name is Dr. Fadi Kablawi. He has called for the annihilation of Jews. And by the way, he's a dentist in Florida. Here's what he said in English and then we'll play a little bit more of what he said in his language. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DR. FADI KABLAWI, FLORIDA IMAM: The most immoral armies, Nazi, worse than Nazis and I apologized to the Nazis last week because these people have proven to be worse than the Nazis. They steal the skin of the Palestinians not enough they stole their land now they steal their skins.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: He also went on to call the Jews apes and pigs and accused the Israeli military of trafficking organs. He's a doctor, can you imagine? If you had to worry about your doctor's political ideology?

RABBI CHAIM MENTZ, SPIRITUAL LEADER, CHABAD OF BEL AIR: First of all, he's in South Florida. It's not a good place to go and stop blowing up the business especially when there's so many Jews living down there. But let's be honest, these are people not all Muslims. There are a lot of beautiful ones out there. There are many Muslims that have -- they feed and they believe in the rhetoric.

Just three days ago we had Yom HaShoah, the day of remembering the Holocaust. We lost six million. Imagine of those six million were alive today, how many Torah scholars, how many doctors, how many cures with the Jewish people have brought to the world versus the hate that these people are just doing? It accomplishes nothing. This is what we're up against.

GALLAGHER: Yes. You're up against it. Meantime, Harvard protesters, Bethany, are ending their encampment on campus because it appears Harvard somewhat folded. "As a precondition for decamping administration will retract suspensions, administration has also offered us meetings regarding disclosure and divestment with members of the Harvard management company." Meaning they're going to cut ties, at least talk about cutting ties with Israel. What do you think about that?

MANDEL: It -- honestly this capitulation by Harvard and Harvard is not alone and capitulating to the demands of these lunatics. Rutgers University where I attended also did the same, they capitulated to eight of the 10 demands. This is how you get more chaos on campus, more anti-Semitism on campus because you've given them cover. You've given them reason to continue this extremism.

And a lot of the extremism is anti-Semitism, and they're using it as an excuse in order to promote their anti-Semitism. And they're calling student -- Jewish students Nazis, which is wild because like, I don't even have to say why like, it's just crazy.

GALLAGHER: Yes. It really is. And it really is a lot of anti-Semitism. Rabbi, you know this, but at UC Berkeley, the quote here is, it appears the protesters are in the process of taking down the tents. If that process is peacefully completed, then the university will be happy to discuss the talks we have had with the protesters. They wouldn't say what talks but you know it is as she said capitulating to them.

MENTZ: And that's -- and that's the thing is. They're scared, many of the people on the top they're scared because they don't know what is going to happen. Are they're going to start rioting, are they're going to start destroying the campuses? So, we got to give in and this is what happened. This is how to terrorism did it in Israel. They just go --

(CROSSTALK)

GALLAGHER: They're negotiating with it? Yes.

MENTZ: And now all of a sudden, Hamas can go and say whatever they want. And obviously you have the whole world saying to Israel, negotiate, negotiate with whom are you negotiating?

GALLAGHER: Yes. Very good point. Rabbi.

MENTZ: Thank you.

GALLAGHER: Bethany Mandel. Thank you.

Coming up. Can the GOP flip a Democratic Senate seat in Maryland? We'll take you there live on the ground next. And California. The highest gas prices in the country. It's like six bucks outside is about to add an extra 50 cents a gallon because of new regulation. Are you kidding me?

And later in The Nightcap. Law enforcement agencies nationwide now struggling to recruit police officers which has led to a severe nationwide shortage instead of backing the blue many government officials are turning their backs on the blue. So, we're curious.

In today's police climate, would you advise a loved one to become a police officer? Why or why not? Let us know X and Instagram @TraceGallagher. We will read your responses in The Nightcap.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GALLAGHER: Well, today's primary in Maryland could have an impact on the balance of power in the U.S. Senate with popular former Governor Larry Hogan cruising to the GOP nomination in the race to replace retiring Democrat Ben Cardin. Mark Meredith is live on the ground in Annapolis, Mark. Good evening.

MARK MEREDITH, FOX NEWS WASHINGTON-BASED CORRESPONDENT: Trace, good evening to you. As you mentioned, former Maryland Governor Larry Haget -- Larry Hogan, excuse me had no problem cruising to victory tonight in the Senate GOP primary but for him and Republicans overall now begins the hard work because they're going to have to spend a lot of time, money and energy if they're going to try to flip a seat in this solid blue state. We heard from the former governor not long after the polls closed earlier tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LARRY HOGAN, FORMER MARYLAND GOVERNOR: Tonight, the campaign for Maryland and America's future begins. With your help we're going to bring our case for strong, proven effective and independent leadership directly to the people of Maryland.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MEREDITH: In the Democratic primary, a much closer race and even an upset tonight after Congressman David Trone was defeated by county executive Angela Alsobrooks. This was notable because Trone had spent more than $60 million of his own money on this primary. He is a wealthy member of Congress made a fortune in the liquor retail business. But all of that money he still came up short in this primary.

This was also a huge win for Alsobrooks because she had been gaining some support in the final weeks of the campaign also had the backing of Maryland's Governor Wes Moore and a few other notable Democrats from this state. So, what happens next? Now that we know who the two candidates are going to be from the major parties is going to be where this race heads because it's going to be Larry Hogan, trying to appeal to those moderate voters.

He already says he's kind of thinking on that independent lane, as opposed to the MAGA campaign. Hogan is a vocal critic of former President Trump. Alsobrooks says that she is looking forward to trying to unite this party. She also is ready to paint Hogan as an extremist portrays. This race is going to be expensive but whoever wins it could help decide the balance of power in the U.S. Senate early next year. Trace?

GALLAGHER: Expensive but important. Mark Meredith live horse on the ground in Annapolis. Mark, thank you. Well, as the nation observes national police week law enforcement is now warning of a public safety crisis because of too many criminals, not enough police officers and far left D.A.'s who are siding with the bad guys.

Back live to the senior national correspondent Kevin Corke. Kevin?

CORKE: Trace, the struggle to fill law enforcement ranks is a challenge, frankly, all over the country. But the problem this won't surprise you is particularly acute in the great state of California with communities pulling out all the stops to try to attract law enforcement reinforcements and for good reason because the numbers in the Golden State are absolutely shocking.

The number of patrol officers per 100,000 residents there is at its lowest point since at least 1991. That according to a January report from the Public Policy Institute of California. Just last year, the city of Alameda, for example, began offering police recruits 75 grand as an enlistment bonus on top of the regular pay that begins at 110 grand a year, and yet vacancies persist. In part, it is thought because it's so much more dangerous out there for law enforcement. They're not getting the respect they deserve either. And it's been worse, some have argued, than ever.

And get this, there have been 118 officers killed in the line of duty in 2023 alone, including over the weekend in Euclid, Ohio, where an officer was ambushed and killed by a gunman. So, that trend obviously continuing here into 2024.

By the way, in August, the LA City Council approved raises for officers to boost starting pay to 86 grand a year. They also offered bigger retention bonuses as well, but they would need to hire about 60 new officers a month to overcome the attrition rate. Tough times, Trace.

GALLAGHER: It is a bunch. Kevin, thank you.

Well, the FOX NEWS @ NIGHT Common Sense Department wonders what would happen if you were in trouble, called 911 and nobody answered. In some areas, it's not hypothetical. In moments, you'll meet a California sheriff who is so shorthanded, he answers his own emergency calls. Because hundreds of cops are fleeing California's soft on crime policies and heading to Texas, Idaho, anywhere that support police.

Imagine risking your life, taking criminals off the street, and yet they're back on the streets before your police report is even filed. Truth is, in big blue cities with deep blue DAs, crime pays. Just today, the FBI released a report saying the rate of assaults against law enforcement is at a 10-year high. In 2023, there were 79,000 attacks on local, state, and federal police. 118 lost their lives.

In the big blue city of Seattle, they're having so much trouble hiring police, the city council just approved an entry level salary of $103,000. The very same Seattle City Council that two years ago referred to police as racist killers. Should cops trust that council? Supporting police officers back pockets is not the same as supporting their back sides. Common Sense thinks the next time you're in trouble, maybe call 411. At least get information on why 911 just rings and rings and rings.

Let's bring in former San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputy, Meagan McCarthy, and Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke. Thank you both for coming on. Sheriff, I just want to know what's going on in your county. Why are you and your administrators taking the emergency calls there?

VERN WARNKE, SHERIFF, MERCED COUNTY, CALIFORNIA: Well, we're the cops that are left. We've had so many deputies leave and go to nearby agencies for, you know, $20,000 increase in pay. I don't know what else to bring it up. The health benefits in this county are costing an average deputy with a family of four $1,700 or $1,800 a month. And then the lack of appreciation. And I will say that the left-wing media has painted such a horrible picture for law enforcement based upon a few bad apples.

You know, there are million cops in this country and a handful that have created such a turmoil. We're fortunate that the men and women are donning the uniforms and going out every night and, you know, they investigate the bumps in the night where other people, they couldn't get paid a million dollars to do the job. And obviously, law enforcement does it for a lot us. So, it's a struggle.

GALLAGHER: Yes. One of them we raise --

WARNKE: Yes.

GALLAGHER: Yes, sorry, Sheriff, we have a little bit of a delay there. We're kind of raising our hat chair to Meagan McCarthy as well, former deputy. And, you know, clearly Meghan, I wonder you're a family of police officers. And when you hear that they can't fill these roles in Merced and that police are leaving and they can't hire them, what do you think about that?

MEAGAN MCCARTHY, FORMER DEPUTY, SAN BERNARDINO SHERIFF'S OFFICE: I'm really not surprised and I'll tell you why. Back in 2020, everybody came for police officers. Everybody wanted to hold them accountable and nobody had their backs. So now, we have officers being shot in the line of duty up 60 percent. We saw record numbers last year and we are already in May and this number is going to surpass it.

We don't need police officers coming in just for a paycheck. We need our elected officials and the community to appreciate our law enforcement officers because they're not out there getting the job. I would like to see these people spend a 12-hour shift in a patrol car and experience what our cops are experiencing and maybe they will have a little respect.

GALLAGHER: I think you're right. Sheriff, here is the wife of police officer Thomas McMeekin who was killed in the line of duty. Listen to her.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JENNIFER MCMEEKIN, HUSBAND KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY: This year, 282 names were added to the memorial. 282 fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters. Children who grew up without a father or a mother. We are here for all of them as well and we always will be year after year. It is one of the few memorials that has no end.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

GALLAGHER: Sheriff, 79,000 police officers state, local, and federal were attacked last year. How do you convince people to come and join your team?

WARNKE: You know, by giving them the support that they deserve. I'm probably one of the most outspoken sheriffs when it comes to supporting the deputies, the men and women who are actually walking the toughest beats in the land. And they need that support. When I see city councils turning their backs on the local police officers, it sucks.

GALLAGHER: Yes. And what do you say, Meagan? I mean, you are a former police officer. Your life was on the line. You nearly lost your life. Do you stand behind these people? You want -- as far as the role goes, do you say yes, go, be a police officer.

MCCARTHY: It's really a double-edged sword because my husband is a police officer, my sister's a police officer. I have two little boys that want to follow in my husband's footsteps and become a cop. And if you were to ask me this question 10 years ago, maybe I would say that would be a great career path. But the way it is now, my children's lives are not worth sacrificing for our community when they are going to be sacrificial lambs for a political agenda, when you have Ben Crumps of the world who want to sensationalize the story without having the full idea. My children are worth more than that, and I believe that our police officers are worth more.

GALLAGHER: It's a very good point. Meagan McCarthy, Sheriff, thank you so much for your time. We very much appreciate it.

Coming up, San Francisco taxpayers picking up the tab for homeless alcoholics who are getting free beer and vodka shots as part of a city-run program. We're not kidding. Next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GALLAGHER: Well, so there's California kooky and then there's California crazy. This is in the latter because deep blue San Francisco has a new twist literally on California's homelessness crisis. The city is now using taxpayer money to give free beer and vodka shots to homeless alcoholics. Matt Finn is live with that story tonight. Matt, good evening.

MATT FINN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Trace. Homeless alcoholics in desperate need of their next drink in San Francisco can have a nurse serve them a beer or a shot as part of the city's managed alcohol program. The 20-bed program operates out of this former hotel in the tenderloin district. It costs taxpayers about $5 million per year. And it's just now becoming widely known about after the CEO of an A.I. Company says he stumbled upon the hotel with kegs in the lobby and then he posted tweets about it.

San Francisco's health department says giving an alcoholic a drink can prevent them from being jailed, having strokes, or dying. Even the fire department reportedly wrote in a statement that program has been incredibly impactful at reducing emergency services for a small but highly vulnerable population.

However, their free booze hotel has cost outrage. Even the man who says he stumbled upon the property tweeted, "The whole thing is very odd to me and just does not feel right. Providing free drugs to drug addicts doesn't solve their problems, it just stretches them out. Where's the recovery in all of this?"

And to put into perspective how expensive alcoholism is among the homeless, San Francisco reports that in 2022, just five people who struggled with alcohol cost the city more than $4 million in ambulance transports over a five-year period, Trace.

GALLAGHER: It's kind of crazy. Matt Finn live for us. Matt, thank you. Let's bring in California GOP delegate Roxanne Hoge and the Dean of Pepperdine University School of Public Policy, Pete Peterson. I mean, this is a great public policy question, Pete. Vodka shots and beers for homeless alcoholics. What do you think?

PETE PETERSON, DEAN, PEPPERDINE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY: Well, one of the things we talk about when we're judging policy is how many people is it impacting?

GALLAGHER: Right.

PETERSON: It's what we call the N number. Well, the N number here is 55 people. That's $5 million a year to treat 55 people. That's $100,000 per year for this particular program, and that doesn't get into anything else. I know the homeless activists and advocates in San Francisco say this money really should be put to other uses.

GALLAGHER: Yes, it really is kind of amazing when you look at this whole thing. Meantime, talking about amazing, Roxanne, outside the door, gas is like six bucks a gallon. But Fox Business now says, quoting here, the California Air Resources Board, CARB, the state's primary environmental regulator reported gas prices will rise next year by about 50 cents a gallon and every year thereafter to aid in clean air efforts. The price increase does not include the existing gas tax in the state which, by the way, is the highest in the country by a mile. Roxanne?

ROXANNE HOGE, CALIFORNIA GOP DELEGATE: Not only that, look, America, and especially California, cars equals freedom. And they will not rest until they get us out of their cars and into L.A. Metro. By the way, every ticket comes with a stabbing. So, it is unconscionable to me that these unelected bureaucrats blithely cause real damage to living paycheck to paycheck.

I mean, filling up my minivan is like a celebratory event every time I do it. I can't imagine what it would be like to have to choose between gas and food.

GALLAGHER: Nobody in California has money, including California, and we're learning more and more about that. foxnews.com quoting here, Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom is facing criticism from his Republican colleagues after he announced the budget deficit is actually $7 billion worse than his initial projections, bringing the total shortfall to nearly $74 billion.

So, in January, it was $38 billion, and then it went to $67 billion, and now it's $74 billion. But that was four and a half months ago, Pete, so now we're at $74 billion. It's just about doubled in that time.

PETERSON: And the governor is blaming this on California's very progressive tax system that we'll see in times of downturn you will see reduced receipts coming in. But what's so disturbing about this is two months ago, the state of Florida announced a $10 billion surplus in the same year that we're reporting a $76 billion deficit. So, this isn't about a national economic challenge that's resulting in this. This is unique to California. And I don't know that we're going to dig ourselves out of it anytime soon.

GALLAGHER: And footnote, Florida doesn't have a state tax. California has the highest state tax in the country. I don't know. Maybe there's money being wasted somewhere. The street writes the final thing. We thought we'd have some fun with this. Disney World has quietly axed one of its classic characters -- we're talking about Tinker Bell -- from doing meet-and-greets at the park, which is a move that comes after the character was flagged internally for its controversial portrayal in films.

Apparently, Tinker Bell is body conscious and therefore problematic and detrimental to girls. Roxanne?

HOGE: Everything normal is problematic. And look, a lot of people like to rag on Bob Iger. He's a good guy. But he is being completely so down the river by his employees who run amok and have decided -- do you remember the Zoom call a couple of years ago during COVID where someone said, oh, I'm querying every bit of the animated shows that I can. Girls liking boys is problematic. Girls caring about how -- what they look like is problematic. Bob, call me. We can fix this.

GALLAGHER: A lot of people got in trouble with those Zoom calls all over the spectrum here. Roxanne, thank you. Pete Peterson, thank you.

Coming up, how would you feel if somebody you love wanted to become a police officer? Would you support that decision or do you think it's too tough to be tough on crime these days? Let us know. X and Instagram @TraceGallagher. We'll read your responses next in the "NIGHTCAP."

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

GALLAGHER: Back with the "NIGHTCAP" Crew, Kevin Corke, Ashley Strohmier, Matt Finn, Roxanne Hoge, Rabbi Chaim Mentz, and Meagan McCarthy. Tonight's topic, National Police Week, and the nationwide struggle to hire police officers leading to a severe police shortage. Instead of backing the blue, many turn their backs on the blue. Would you advise a loved one to become a police officer? Why or why not? Our resident former police officer, Meagan McCarthy?

MCCARTHY: You know, I love our cops. We need them. We need good cops, but I could not support my children being cops in this narrative. You know, if the pendulum swings back and we are able to get some respect, then I 100 percent support it. But until then, I ask them to be firefighters.

GALLAGHER: Kevin Corke.

CORKE: I would definitely recommend it because I have a friend who just retired from Denver PD after 30 years and he said I had a great experience. Dangerous, yes, sometimes risky, yes, but a pretty good pension and hitting his wife had made the most of it.

GALLAGHER: Ashley?

STROHMIER: Yes, being the wife of an NYPD counterterrorism officer, I would say absolutely not. I worry about him every day. And I'm not going to worry about my son on the streets when they're overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated in this day and age.

GALLAGHER: It's very true. Roxanne Hoge.

HOGE: Mr. Rogers said, look for the helpers, and I love the helpers. But you have to be careful where you're doing it. I would say not in a blue city.

GALLAGHER: Yes, that's true. Rabbi?

MENTZ: If one of my loved ones wanted to go and become a police officer, the first thing I would say is you've been thinking about it, you really want to do it.

GALLAGHER: Yes.

MENTZ: You can make change from the inside. You can't do it from the outside.

GALLAGHER: Yes, Matt.

FINN: Yes, and that's great advice. It is hard, Trace. I cover the protests. We cover the protests here and you see people on the street literally cursing the lives of police officers. It would be hard to see your loved one in that situation.

GALLAGHER: Yes, I would support it, but I wouldn't advise it. And I wouldn't -- I'd agree with Roxanne Hoge, and her husband, by the way, who you'll find out, I would not in a blue state, that you don't have a lot of political backing. I'm not sure.

So, we asked the crew, what's the deal? Instagram, yes, they would support it 54 percent. X, yes 49 percent. Kyle S. Yes! Proud to protect America. Other parents, are they proud of their live in protesters?

Sha Smith, I would tell my child to follow your dreams, but rethink it for your mama's sake.

Banapalooza, No. Sadly they would be risking their lives for many that would throw them under the bus if they blink wrong.

Bob Hoge, Roxanne's husband, absolutely, but only in a red state that cares about law enforcement.

Donna Jean, I would support it, but I would never encourage it. And I would warn them of a career full of disrespect and low pay.

And Jim Lamon, I was law enforcement myself. It is an admirable and honorable profession.

Thank you all. Thank you for watching America's late news, FOX NEWS @ NIGHT. I'm Trace Gallagher. See you back here tomorrow.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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