

# [***Friday Deadline For Texas To Relinquish Park Control; Texas To Defy Order To Open Contested Park; Abbott Defends Razor Wire Impediments; Lawmakers Lament Using Border Deal For Political Gain; Some Top Haley Donors Back Off Further Contributions; Joe Biden Touts Strong GDP Report And Inflation Progress; Judge Gives Probation To Woman Who Stabbed Man More Than 100 Times After Defense Claimed She Suffered From Marijuana Induced Psychosis; Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer Seeking To Ban Nicotine Pouches For Young People; Homeless Problem In Los Angeles Continues Despite City Government Spending; CIA Attempting To Recruit Russian Assets With Social Media Ads; Nikki Haley Continues In Republican Presidential Primary Despite Donald Trump's Lead; Republican Governors Defend Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Defiance Of Biden Administration On Immigration***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B64-NP31-JCS1-617T-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News FOX SPECIAL REPORT WITH BRET BAIER 6:00 PM EST

January 25, 2024 Thursday

Copyright 2024 Fox News Network LLC All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS; Domestic

**Length:** 7201 words

**Byline:** Bret Baier, Matt Finn, Chad Pergram, Eric Shawn, Peter Doocy, Mike Emanuel, Charles Payne, William La Jeunesse, Griff Jenkins, Jonathan Hunt, Jennifer Griffin

**Guests:** Marc Thiessen, Julia Manchester, Hugh Hewitt

**Body**

JESSICA TARLOV, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CONTRIBUTOR: We still have time.

GREG GUTFELD, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Well, how that -- why that guy gets paid is beyond me.

JESSE WATTERS, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: I think he pays Fox to work here.

GUTFELD: I mean, that's true.

DANA PERINO, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: He probably would.

WATTERS: Yes, he would. Anything I can do to help.

GUTFELD: When we have a lot of time, we just bash Kilmeade.

JEANINE PIRRO, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: All right, it's so unfair.

PERINO: That's not fair.

GUTFELD: All right. That's it for us. Have a great night!

BRET BAIER, FOX NEWS CHANNEL ANCHOR: We all want Kilmeade's bonus, Greg. (INAUDIBLE). Thank you. All right.

Good evening. I'm Bret Baier. We're following two big stories tonight. Former President Donald Trump takes the stand in his own defense during his civil defamation trial.

But we begin with the Biden administration, giving Texas a deadline of Friday to allow federal agents back onto federal land near the southern border to cut razor wire there.

Texas official seized the area nearly three weeks ago, removing federal officers, putting in new measures to stem the flow of illegal immigration. Correspondent Matt Finn following it all in Eagle Pass Texas again tonight. Good evening, Matt.

MATT FINN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Bret.

Texas officials don't have plans to comply with President Biden's deadline tomorrow to remove the barbed wire here. In fact, right now, the Texas National Guard is installing additional razor wire here in Shelby Park.

The Texas attorney general tells fox that his state does not plan to comply with the Biden administration's deadline for Texas to reopen Shelby Park to Biden's border agents.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

KEN PAXTON, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS: Biden administration doesn't even pretend except right now to care, and we're talking about 2-1/2 miles of a 1260-something mile border along Texas. And suddenly, they have got to -- they have got to have access right here.

FINN (voice over): The federal government calls Texas is seizure of Shelby Park and its new razor wire profoundly problematic. Writing in a court filing, "Texas is impeding Border Patrol agents from accessing the land on the other side of the concertina wire for patrolling, deploying surveillance trucks, and responding to emergencies."

PAXTON: That's such a mockery of what's actually happened for the last 3- 1/2 years they haven't cooperated with us on anything.

FINN (voice over): In a DHS letter to Texas, a federal attorney has asked the state to indicate by tomorrow how much of the park if any Texas plans on reopening, writing, "In sum, we require full access to the Shelby Park area currently obstructed by Texas by January 26, 2024."

Texas seized this 2.5-mile stretch of border property around Shelby Park and banned federal agents three weeks ago. Governor Abbott declared an invasion and accuses President Biden of dereliction of duty.

GOV. GREG ABBOTT (R-TX): And what Texas is asserting is our Article One Section 10 right of self-defense, because the president of the United States is not fulfilling his duty to enforce the laws.

FINN (voice over): Republican governors from at least a dozen states are now declaring their support for Texas, as is the Speaker of the House, writing, "I stand with Governor Abbott. The House will do everything in its power to back him up. The next step, holding Secretary Mayorkas accountable."

(END VIDEOTAPE)

FINN (on camera): Now, Paxton and the Border Patrol union tell us they don't expect this showdown to necessarily become physical, that it will likely play out in the courts. And earlier today, the White House said it could not give any more details about a possible scenario where the U.S. government federalizes the Texas National Guard here. Bret.

BAIER: We'll follow it all closely. Matt, thanks.

Senators, meantime, are trying to understand where Minority Leader Senator Mitch McConnell stands in border talks. There were signals Senator McConnell may be willing to break off Ukraine aid from that bill, to leave border security and immigration reform to be battled out over the presidential election year.

Senior congressional correspondent Chad Pergram is on Capitol Hill tonight with the story.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CHAD PERGRAM, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Senators from both sides tried to decipher where Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell stands on the border talks.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I wasn't quite sure what Leader McConnell was talking about.

PERGRAM (voice over): McConnell told a private GOP meeting that the party is "in a quandary" over the border. Thanks to opposition from former President Trump to the still incomplete border bill that gold some Republicans.

SEN. MITT ROMNEY (R-UT): The idea that someone running for president would say please hurt the country, so I can blame my opponent and help my ***politics*** is a shocking development.

PERGRAM (voice over): Lawmakers use their decoder rings to determine if McConnell wanted to break off aid for Ukraine from the border plan. After insisting on linking the issues.

McConnell said the ***politics*** have changed.

SEN. TIM KAINE (D-VA): I'm having a hard time translating it too.

I mean, I do -- I do think the votes are there for Ukraine aid.

PERGRAM (voice over): The GOP leader says privately border talks are still on, even as he faces an internal conservative revolt.

Right accusing McConnell of scapegoating the former president if border talks falter.

SEN. RON JOHNSON (R-WI): I think it's blaming somebody else for, you know, his poor negotiating tactics and trying to actually get a secure border.

PERGRAM (voice over): Democrats lament efforts to use the border as a way up there

Looks falter. I think it's blaming somebody else for, you know his poor negotiating tactics and trying to actually get a secure border Democrats lament efforts to use the border as a wedge.

SEN. CHRIS MURPHY (D-CT): There are a group of Republicans that don't want to fix this problem.

PERGRAM (voice over): The top GOP border negotiator opposes conservative tactics to torpedo a possible deal for political gain.

SEN. JAMES LANKFORD (R-OK): The reason I don't agree on that is one, we have a constitutional responsibility to be able to protect the country and its safety.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

PERGRAM (on camera): House members are exploring other options. There is a bill to ban the government from taking down border barriers. Another bill says Texas can secure its own border. Bret?

BAIER: Chad Pergram, live on Capitol Hill, Chad, thanks.

Former New York governor, Andrew Cuomo, says President Biden and Democrats have no policy or plan to combat the border crisis effect on New York City.

Cuomo writes in an op-ed published in The Hill that his party is ineffective and criticizes what he calls the ideological divides. Cuomo resigned as governor over a range of sexual harassment allegations. Cuomo is said to be considering a run for New York City mayor.

Former President Donald Trump took the stand today in his civil defamation trial brought by a woman who accused him of sexual assault in the 1990s.

A jury found that he did know her and he sexually abused her found in her favor. This is another defamation trial. Senior correspondent Eric Shawn is outside the courthouse in Manhattan tonight. He has denied all of these allegations. Eric, but he took the stand today. Good evening.

ERIC SHAWN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL SENIOR CORRESPONDENT: That he did. Good evening, Bret.

The defense calls President Donald Trump with those words in the Cabinet's courtroom, he was summoned to the witness chair. But you know, his testimony was brief. It only lasted about three minutes.

The questions, just three. Were hammered out between Trump's attorney Alina Habba and Federal Court Judge Lewis Kaplan, who by law restricted what the former president could say.

The previous jury last May, find Mr. Trump did in fact know writer E. Jean Carroll and found him liable for sexually abusing her in a Manhattan department store dressing room in 1996.

And then, defaming her in 2019. By denying it and calling her a liar. The Trier will only weigh damages, which is why Trump was precluded from addressing the attack, though, at one point, he did sneak in a denial.

The jury saw Trump's videotaped deposition where he said Carroll's claim is false, that it never happened. And he called her a sick woman.

Habba asked, "Do you stand by your deposition?" "100 percent yes," said Trump.

"Did you deny Carroll's allegation?" "Yes, I did. That's exactly right."

She said, something I considered a false accusation. With that, Carroll's attorney objected.

And the judge then ordered everything after, yes, I did, stricken from the record. "Did you intend for anyone to hurt Miss Carroll?" "No, no. I just wanted to defend myself, my family, and frankly the presidency." The judge ordered everything after the no, also stricken.

Earlier, as he sat at the defense table, Trump could be heard loudly muttering to himself, "I never met this woman. I don't know who this woman is. I never met this woman. Earning him an admonished from Judge Kaplan, who told the former president to be quiet during the proceedings.

Carroll is demanding at least $10 million in damages. And as he left the former president, looked at the gallery and repeated to himself three times. This is not America. Closing arguments are set for the morning. Bret.

BAIER: Eric Shawn live in Manhattan. Eric, thanks.

Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro has been sentenced to four months in jail. Navarro was convicted of contempt of Congress for refusing to cooperate with a congressional investigation into the January 6th, 2021 Capitol riot.

He was the second Trump aide convicted of contempt of Congress charges. Former White House adviser Steve Bannon was also sentenced to four months in jail. He is free pending appeal.

Lawyers for former President Trump say the prosecutor in the Georgia election interference case should be removed. They said during a hearing today, Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis quote inappropriately injected race into the case, and stoked racial animus in response to allegations of misconduct against her.

Willis is accused of having an inappropriate romantic relationship with the special prosecutor she appointed and hired to her team.

She has yet to respond publicly to those allegations but she has defended the prosecutor's qualifications.

President Biden is touting some positive economic news tonight. The U.S. economy grew at a much faster annual rate than had been expected.

White House correspondent Peter Doocy has the latest tonight live from the North Lawn. Good evening, Peter.

PETER DOOCY, FOX NEWS CHANNEL WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Bret. President Biden spoke for 24 minutes this afternoon never mentioned immigration policy because his team seems eager to at least try to overshadow bad border news with good economic news.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Things are finally beginning seeking --

DOOCY (voice over): The GDP grew 3.3 percent last quarter, higher than a 2.0 percent prediction.

JANET YELLEN, UNITED STATES TREASURY SECRETARY: Though some forecasters thought a recession last year was inevitable, President Biden and I did not.

DOOCY: President Biden suddenly a fan of the coverage.

BIDEN: My favors in the Wall Street Journal. Quote, "What recession? Growth Ended Up accelerating 2023."

DOOCY (voice over): In a statement about President Biden's trip to Wisconsin, the RNC writes, according to Congress's Joint Economic Committee, inflation has cost the average Wisconsin family $18,500 since Biden took office.

TIM ANDERSON, MANAGING DIRECTOR, TJM INVESTMENTS: Well, there are some certainly, some indicators also in the report today that there are parts of the economy that are slowing a little bit.

DOOCY (voice over): As President Biden, road tests Trump attacks --

BIDEN: My predecessor recently said he was actually hoping for the economy to crash. His quote. Hoping for the economy to crash.

Can you believe it?

DOOCY: Some swing state Democrats caution. Trump may not be the guy, it could be Biden v. Haley.

GOV. JARED POLIS (D-CO): So, I think if it's somebody other than Donald Trump, President Biden is a bit of an underdog. If it's Donald Trump, President Biden is the favorite, but it doesn't mean he hasn't in the back by any means.

DOOCY: Biden's pitch will favored' jobs numbers his team thinks are favorable. Although today, he really undercounted the Wisconsin number.

DOOCY: 14 million new jobs since I became president. 169 new jobs in Wisconsin.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

DOOCY (on camera): He meant 169,000.

But, for the third event in a row, President Biden wrapped up his remarks without glad handing in the room. He did a little bit of that later at a brewery. But typically, he will go and shake hands with the folks that come to listen to speeches like that.

And if he keeps this up, he is going to be the first candidate for any office over the last several cycles to try to win an election without selfies. Bret?

BAIER: Peter Doocy live, on the North Lawn. Peter, thanks. We'll talk more about today's economic news with Fox Business anchor Charles Payne in just a bit.

"BREAKING TONIGHT", the Republican National Committee is reviewing a draft resolution to declare former President Trump, the presumptive nominee of the party.

This would come even though Nikki Haley is still actively campaigning. There is criticism this would jump the gun and be insulting to millions of primary voters yet to vote.

A committee spokesman says the matter will be taken up by the resolutions committee and it will decide whether to send it to be voted on by the membership at its annual meeting next week.

As you can imagine the pushback from the Haley camp is intense.

Former President Trump, meantime, says he will take decisive action against people who financially support rival presidential candidate, Nikki Haley.

Chief Washington correspondent Mike Emanuel takes a look at the big money battle between the front runner and his lone major pursuer.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: She didn't win. She lost and, you know --

MIKE EMANUEL, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CHIEF WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Former President Trump is now threatening rival Nikki Haley's donors warning on his True Social, they "will be permanently barred from the MAGA camp"

Haley fired back on X. "Well, in that case, donate here. Let's go!

Trump's attacks also getting very personal.

TRUMP: One of the biggest donors to Nikki Haley's campaign is this slob known as Reid Hoffman, the big slob.

EMANUEL (voice over): LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman, a traditional Democratic donor reportedly won't give more to Haley unless she can demonstrate a path to victory. Another big Haley donors publicly saying it is over for her this cycle, arguing New Hampshire was a must win.

ANDY SABIN, DONOR, REPUBLICAN PARTY: You got to know when to hold them. You got to know when to fold him. It's time for her to fold him. She has absolutely no chance.

EMANUEL (voice over): Haley insists, grassroots fundraising is still working, telling supporters she's raised more than $2 million since New Hampshire.

HALEY: We have had 200,000 donors from all 50 states. 95 percent of those donations are $200 or less.

EMANUEL (voice over): The main super PAC backing Haley says it raised $50.1 million in the second half of 2023.

A super PAC supporting Trump brought in more than $46 million during the same time period.

Officials with MAGA Inc., also confirmed to Fox News, they began 2024 With more than $23 million on hand.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

EMANUEL (on camera): Haley's campaign should have a better sense of its fundraising options going forward with three big GOP conferences in the next week or so.

And whether more pressure from Trump could give donors cold feet. Bret?

BAIER: All right, Mike, thank you.

Up next, we'll dig in to the big economic numbers today. What they mean for you and your family? A live discussion with Charles Payne when we come back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: As we told you earlier, the economy grew at an unexpectedly brisk 3.3 percent annual rate for the last quarter of 2023. For the year, real GDP increased 2.5 percent.

Well, that sent the Dow and the S&P 500 to new record highs today, the industrial average gained 243, the S&P 500 was up 26, the NASDAQ finished ahead 29.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: My plan is to address inflation, starts with a simple proposition. Respect the Fed. Respect the Fed's independence.

JEROME POWELL, CHAIRMAN, FEDERAL RESERVE: We are seeing, you know, strong growth that is -- that is appears to be moderating. Well, we still have a ways to go. No one is declaring victory, that would be premature.

BIDEN: Just today we learned the economy of the United States grew by 3.1 percent last year. The experts from the time I got elected were insisting that the recession was just around the corner. Well, you know, we've got really strong growth.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Let's talk about it all. Fox Business anchor Charles Payne is here to tell us what all this means. Good evening, Charles.

CHARLES PAYNE, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Good evening, Bret.

BAIER: What's your thought on 3.3?

PAYNE: 3.3 is a good number. And I think President Biden is absolutely correct with respect to where Wall Street thought the economy was going to be last year. There was a point in 2022 where every economist said that there was going to be a recession in 2023, that obviously did not materialize.

I've got my own theories on that, a lot of it has to do with like $13 trillion between the Federal Reserve and federal government cascading on this economy. I don't think economists are able to sharpen their pencils enough. But there are some nuances to this.

One of the things I want to point out, for instance, was that 2.5 percent, year over year number. 30 percent of that came from government, it ties for the highest level since 2009, which of course, was in an emergency year.

So, that's not going to be repeated. Now, the good reason the market rallied, it was because prices did come down, which is what we want, obviously, to get the Fed out of the way.

But that's rearview mirror stuff. There were some other things out today, initial jobless claims, which I think is going to be more important, particularly when it comes to the election. That came in at 214,000, the street was looking for 200,000. But on Monday, a great report from actually an economist at Bloomberg that explained why a lot of people have not been getting on unemployment. And that's simply because it's not replacing the money they're losing. There's a biggest gap ever, $1,400 difference.

So, instead, people are working a record number of jobs, two jobs, gig economy, freelancing and things like that.

Also, the day we saw Bank of America, which weekly watches credit card spending, that's beginning to come down.

And I will say one more thing before I hand it back to you, Bret. You remember James Carville? It's the economy, stupid.

BAIER: Sure.

PAYNE: That famous line that right to Bush economy, well, those four quarters the economy was up 4.9, 4.4, 4.0 and 4.2 percent and 3.5 percent for the entire year. So, if that was a bad economy, 2.5 percent might be a little bit worse.

BAIER: So, let me put up the inflation since the president's been in office. And you know, the up and the down, and it has come down, but it's still, you know, up there 3.4 from the beginning.

Fortune writes it this way, America shocks economists again, 3.3 percent fourth quarter GDP growth as soft landing looms ever nearer. Even as inflation in the United States has slowed significantly, overall, prices remain nearly 17 percent above where they were before the pandemic erupted three years ago, which will carry more weight in the presidential election, the sharp drop in inflation, or the fact that most prices are well above where they were three years ago? Two good question, Charles.

PAYNE: Without a doubt, where prices are higher than where they were. No one is -- the rate of inflation, hell, we're glad it doesn't go up nine percent every single month. Three percent is higher than it was for a whole generation of people. We'd never even saw three percent.

If something costs a buck and went to a $1.50 and now it's a $1.55, I'm going to remember that more so than the rate of inflation.

BAIER: Yes. And lastly, you think that the Fed Chair has a thankless job? I mean, here he is. They always go after him when something goes wrong, but he might be soft landing soon.

PAYNE: You know what, he's getting close to something that someone said would be impossible, the immaculate disinflation.

Now, it's too early to celebrate a soft landing. But I think Jay Powell wants it so bad because to your point, when he missed inflation, saying it was transitory, he took -- I mean, he took it on the chin unlike any Fed official since Arthur Burns in his soul, you can feel it. Every time he speaks he's so desperately wants to engineer a soft landing.

BAIER: Charles, we always appreciate you coming on. Thank you.

PAYNE: Thanks. Love coming on, thanks.

BAIER: Up next, why a woman who killed her boyfriend by stabbing him more than a hundred times will not be going to prison.

And later, the intense battle on Capitol Hill over nicotine pouches.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: Tonight we have a follow-up on a story we brought you last night. It concerns a woman who has avoided jailtime after stabbing her date more than 100 times and killing him while high on marijuana. National correspondent William La Jeunesse fills us in from Los Angeles.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

SEAN O'MELIA, FATHER: He has sent a precedent in California where it appears to be OK to smoke marijuana and commit a violent crime, and you're only going to get probation.

WILLIAM LA JEUNESSE, FOX NEWS NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Thirty-two-year-old Bryn Spejcher went on a date with Chad O'Melia. She was fine until the two began smoking marijuana from a bong. On the second hit, Bryn suffered what experts call marijuana induced psychosis.

KEVIN SABET, SMART APPROACHES TO MARIJUANA: It's an extreme panic attack, and it's happening more and more now because tonight's high potency marijuana is stronger than ever. They don't really understand what's going on around them, and they're often becoming violent.

AUDRY NAFZIGER, VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY: She is literally kneeling over him holding a 10-inch bread knife covered in blood like the movie "Carrie," and his whole body is right there on the floor.

LA JEUNESSE: Spejcher claims she blacked out, stabbing Chad 108 times. At the scene, police tased her and broke her arm in five places with a baton until she dropped the knife.

NAFZIGER: The defense was that it was involuntary intoxication. They tried to claim that when she took the bong and took the second hit, that that was involuntarily accomplish.

LA JEUNESSE: A jury convicted her of manslaughter. Prosecutors asked for five years. Judge David Worley gave her probation and community service, citing the marijuana.

O'MELIA: This is not going to make her think. She just got away with murder.

NAFZIGER: This 100 hours of community service isn't even one hour per stab that she inflicted on Chad.

(END VIDEO TAPE)

LA JEUNESSE (on camera): Other defendants have argued marijuana made them psychotic, but this may be the first time it helped one get away with murder. Prosecutors argue pot is no different than alcohol. Abusing it doesn't absolve you of responsibility. They fear this judge has opened a pandora's box. Bret?

BAIER: OK, William, thank you.

There is a huge firestorm on Capitol Hill tonight over nicotine pouches. The top Democrat in the Senate wants to ban them for young people. Republicans are pushing back against, quote, overregulation and misplaced priorities. Correspondent Griff Jenkins shows us tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER, (D-NY) SENATE MAJORITY LEADER: Big tobacco is at it again, doing all they can to hook kids and teens into becoming lifetime nicotine addicts.

GRIFF JENKINS, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is on a mission to crack down on products like Zyn, a smoke-free, tobaccoless nicotine alternative popular among young adults. It comes in little white pouches, multiple flavors you tuck between your teeth and gums.

SCHUMER: Our schools have been inundated with e-cigs, and we took action, seeking federal results. Zyn is the next battle.

JENKINS: Backlash to Schumer's threat has been brutal. Republican Senator Thom Tillis posted this picture with a taunt, "Come and take it, Chuck."

SEN. MIKE BRAUN, (R-IN): Democrats and Schumer want to regulate everything. There's a point where you just can't do that.

REP. MIKE WALTZ, (R-FL): This push to go after Zyn is just another huge overreach by the nanny state that progressives are all too happy to set up.

JENKINS: And it's bipartisan. Democrat Senator John Fetterman slammed Schumer's crusade.

SEN. JOHN FETTERMAN, (D-PA): I'm going to err on the side of more freedom and personal choices.

JENKINS: Other see it differently.

SEN. TIM KAINE, (D-VA): There are a lot of marketing techniques they go after young people in really scurrilous ways.

JENKINS: Zyn's parent company, Philip Morris International, says it fully meets industry regulations, adding "Our marketing practices, which prohibit the use of social media influencers, are focused on preventing underage access."

It's unclear where the White House comes down.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Does the administration believe there should be a crackdown on Zyn?

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE, WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY: That is something for FDA to speak to. I can't speak to that from here.

(END VIDEO TAPE)

JENKINS (on camera): And Bret, we asked the FDA about Zyn. They told us that -- the agency saying it doesn't comment on specific products, but it does monitor any tobacco related products that may appeal to youth. Bret?

BAIER: OK, Griff, we'll follow it. Thanks.

Up next, why Los Angeles is counting homeless people on its streets right now.

First, here is what some FOX affiliates around the country are covering tonight. WBRC in Birmingham, Alabama, with preparations for the first ever nitrogen hypoxia execution I the U.S. Kenneth Smith survived an earlier execution attempt when staff could not connect one of the I.V. lines into his veins for a lethal injection. A United Nations panel says the new method could result in a painful and humiliating death and violate human rights treaties.

This is a live look at Houston. One of the big stories there tonight, NASA highlighting new crew rotation missions to the ISS, the International Space Station, during a news conference. SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket will launch a crew with three Americans aboard a Dragon spacecraft in mid-February.

That is tonight's live look outside the beltway from SPECIAL REPORT. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: Los Angeles is counting its homeless people. The situation continues to grow worse despite the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on the problem. Chief correspondent Jonathan Hunt is Los Angeles with the story tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

JOSEPH BRADFORD, B.A.R.E. TRUTH: Hi, guys. You've got those bags. All those bags have got socks in them.

JONATHAN HUNT, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: As of the last count, some 75,000 people were homeless in Los Angeles, many of them dependent on charities like B.A.R.E. Truth, founded by Joe Bradford, for basic necessities, even as this is the budgeted $1.3 billion for 2023 to tackle homelessness.

BRADFORD: We're spending money, we're spending money, we're spending money, but we're not talking to the people. We're making decisions for people that we don't know.

HUNT: As the 2024 homeless count, widely expected to show yet another increase, continues over three nights this week, Mayor Karen Bass insists progress is being made.

KAREN BASS, (D) LOS ANGELES MAYOR: A lot has been accomplished in a year. I think the dedication of everybody that works to house Angelenos has really been stepped up.

HUNT: It's true that some homeless encampments, particularly on the city's wealthier westside, have been cleared, but to some experts it's simply a policy of displacement, or whack-a-mole.

JODY DAVID ARMOUR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA: We're putting it out here, it's popping up again over there.

HUNT: Professor Armour points to cities like Houston, which reduced homelessness by 60 percent in large part by building affordable housing, far easier in red state, Texas, according to the professor, than in California where developers face so many environmental protection laws.

ARMOUR: It's a failure of liberal policy, frankly. And that has to be acknowledged. They have to take that hard look in the mirror.

(END VIDEO TAPE)

HUNT (on camera): The Nonprofit Corporation for Supportive Housing says it could cost $8 billion a year over a decade to actually solve California's homelessness crisis, a staggering amount. But Professor Armour points out that in the long run, endlessly providing short-term services rather than long-term solutions could cost even more. Bret?

BAIER: Jonathan Hunt in L.A. Jonathan, thanks.

A source familiar with the discussions confirms that CIA Director William Burns is expected to meet with his Israeli, Qatari, and Egyptian counterparts in coming days to discuss the effort to discuss the release of all the hostages in Gaza. A sources says a date has not been reached and the meeting could end up being delayed or canceled.

Speaking of the CIA, the CIA is looking for a few good Russians. It is using social media to recruit disaffected Russians unhappy with President Vladimir Putin and discouraged by the war in Ukraine. Here is chief national security correspondent Jennifer Griffin.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

JENNIFER GRIFFIN, FOX NEWS NATIONAL SECURITY CORRESPONDENT: The CIA is launching a new social media campaign to recruit Russian assets, encouraging Russian patriots to go behind Putin's and reach out through a secure link.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Our leaders sell out the country for palaces and yachts while our soldiers chew rotten potatoes and fire ancient weapons.

GRIFFIN: The fictitious Russian military officer talks about wanting a better life for his son. At the end of the video a message from Langley, "You are not powerless. Contact us safely."

Dan Hoffman served in Moscow as the CIA's station chief.

DAN HOFFMAN, FORMER CIA STATION CHIEF: What I find delicious about this is that Vladimir Putin has been using cyberspace against us. Putin has used it for disinformation and to interfere in our elections. Now we're turning the tables on him and using it to gain access to his very own disgruntled officers. And I find that to be an excellent use of cyberspace.

GRIFFIN: Dmitri Alperovitch, author of "World on the Brink," was born in Russia before the Soviet Union collapsed.

DMITRI ALPEROVITCH, SILVERADO POLICY ACCELERATOR: I have a feeling right now, it's the golden age for western intelligence to recruit assets inside Russia.

GRIFFIN: Last summer, CIA Director Bill Burns agreed.

BURNETT: I think Putin is already a little bit uneasy as he looks over his shoulder. I think that's true, and the debate that goes on within the Russian elite right now. And so it would be crazy for us not to take advantage of what is, in effect, a once in a generation opportunity.

(END VIDEO TAPE)

GRIFFIN (on camera): This is the third effort of its kind. The first two CIA recruiting videos reached 5.4 million Russians, 2.1 million Russians viewed those videos. The CIA won't say how many Russians accepted their offer. Bret?

BAIER: That's a fascinating story. Jen, on another topic, China responding angrily to the U.S. Navy's presence in the Taiwan Strait Wednesday.

GRIFFIN: That's right, Bret. It was the first time since Taiwan's consequential presidential election on January 13th in which the candidate favored by Beijing lost that the U.S. sent a Navy destroyer, the USS John Finn, through the Taiwan Strait. The People's Liberation Army condemned the action, calling it provocative and, quote, "maliciously undermining regional peace and stability." Last week, 18 Chinese warplanes carried out patrols near Taiwan, the first large-scale military activity since the election. Bret?

BAIER: We will continue to watch that closely. Jennifer Griffin live at the Pentagon. Jennifer, thanks.

Up next, the panel on the fundraising battle within the Republican Party over the Trump versus Haley nomination fight, which is still going on.

First, Beyond our Borders tonight, the bodies of the remaining victims of a landslide in southwestern China are recovered. That brings the death toll now to 44 after four days of searching through the rubble, dirt, and crumbled homes.

And this is a live look at London. One of the big stories there tonight, two British museums are returning gold and silver artifacts to Ghana under a long-term loan agreement and arrangement 150 years after the items were looted from the Asante people during Britain's colonial battles in West Africa. The collaboration sidesteps British laws prohibiting the return of cultural treasures to their countries of origin.

Just some of the other stories Beyond our Borders tonight. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NIKKI HALEY, (R) PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: We have had 200,000 donors from all 50 states, 95 percent of those donations are $200 or less.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT: She has made an unholy alliance with the RINOs, the never-Trumpers, Americans for no prosperity, globalists, the radical left communists.

ANDY SABIN, REPUBLICAN PARTY DONOR: Billionaires and millionaires that I know are not following her and planning to spend, keep writing checks, and send good money after bad.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: That fight is still going on even though the RNC said perhaps they're going to write up some proposal that declares Donald Trump the presumptive nominee. The former president took to Truth Social with a warning to Nikki Haley donors, saying "Anybody that makes a contribution to Birdbrain from this moment forth will be permanently barred from the MAGA camp. We don't want them, will not accept them, because we put America first and always will." Haley supporters responded to that.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KATON DAWSON, FORMER SOUTH CAROLINA GOP CHAIRMAN: Trump mentioned that if anybody wanted to give Nikki Haley money that they couldn't be MAGA. Guess what, Kasie. Our website is barely keeping up with the thousands of donations that are coming in.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: What about this as this battle goes on. Let's bring in our panel, "Washington Post" columnist Marc Thiessen, Julia Manchester, national ***politics*** reporter for "The Hill," and syndicated radio host Hugh Hewitt. Hugh, what do you make of all of this ?

HUGH HEWITT, SYNDICATED RADIO HOST: I think the former president likes to win big, he likes to win early. David Bossie is the Republican National Committee member, one of 168, who is going to after the draft resolution calling the former president the presumptive nominee. But Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel has done a fine job keeping the committee together over the whole year. She did not offer it. I don't think the RNC is going to go for that because it takes 1,215 delegates to nominate. I think the former president has about 36 right now, and Nikki Haley about half that number, 17, maybe not half. And so it's pretty early.

But what Bossie did was create good headline, a very good headline, controversy on a day the president is in court. The president is going to get another good headline in February when he wins a Supreme Court case which will be argued in February, between now and South Carolina, which occurs on the 24th of next month, and Michigan the 27th, the former president needs good headlines, and he's making them, Bossie is making them, and playing hard to win. That's very, very Trumpian.

BAIER: Yes. If you look at the Trum-Haley fundraising numbers, this is the super PAC from July until December, $46 million for the former president, $50.1 million for Nikki Haley. And Mark, the recent days she is claiming all of these donations. The big question is how far this goes. And obviously, it's about a month, a little bit less, a little bit more from South Carolina, and that's really the test.

MARC THIESSEN, COLUMNIST, "WASHINGTON POST": It is the test, and let's let it play out. I'm not surprised that he's raising money. What I'm worried about is his ability to win over Haley voters once this thing is over. When he says anyone who makes a contribution to Birdbrain will be permanently banned from MAGA, does that apply to Haley voters to?

It shows that he hasn't learned any lessons from why he lost in 2020. He lost in 2020 because he lost 43,000 swing voters in three states. And about 43,000 swing voters will decide this election next November. He's got to win them over. They're not MAGA. They are either Democrats or center-right Republicans who are not big fans of his. He's got to win them over and expand his base, not shrink his base. You don't ban people from MAGA if you want to become president of the United States again.

BAIER: All right, I want to turn the border situation. I'll go to the former president, Julia, and he just put up on Truth Social, "We need a strong, powerful, essentially perfect border, and unless we get that, we are better off not making a deal, even if that pushes our country to temporarily close up for a while, because it will end up closing anyway with the unsustainable invasion." Talking about this Senate border deal, here's some lawmakers weighing in on these negotiations as they're going on.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. TIM KAINE, (D-VA): Senator McConnell is very focused on getting Ukraine aid, very focused on it. And I have no reason to believe he is equivocating on that.

SEN. PETE RICKETTS, (R-NE): I think he was just kind of laying out the quandary we are in, laying out kind of what the field looks like.

SEN. MITT ROMNEY, (R-UT): How this is affected by President Trump weighing in and saying don't solve the problem of the border is a real question.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Senator Lankford is negotiating. He tweeted this, "Only in Washington is our southern border political gamesmanship instead of a national security crisis." So how is this playing on the Hill, Julia?

JULIA MANCHESTER, NATIONAL ***POLITICS*** REPORTER, "THE HILL": It's so interesting to see this playing on the hill and also playing on the campaign trail at the same time with President Trump really inserting himself into this debate.

Look, I think there is a real question in terms of political strategy from Trump. If they get a deal, if they our able to somewhat improve the situation at the southern border, who ultimately gets to claim credit for that? Is it the Democrats and the Biden administration or is it Senate Republicans? And how does that impact House Republicans who have said that the deal, at least the public parts of the deal that have been released, we've heard rumblings that it would be done on arrival in the House.

So there's certainly pressure from the former president. And we are seeing it really intertwined with the campaign trail. I think it's interest, when I was in Iowa and New Hampshire, Bret, I would ask voters, what's your number one priority when going to the ballot box? And right off the bat the majority of them said immigration and the situation at the southern border. So there's no question that national policies is playing into this.

BAIER: We saw that with our FOX News voter analysis as well.

Meantime, Hugh, GOP governors rally behind Texas. Governor Abbott defies Biden. Top Republican governors from across the U.S. voice their support for Texas Governor Greg Abbott as he defies President Biden in an effort to stem the flow of illegal immigration across the U.S.-Mexico border. Here's a couple of them right here.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GOV. JEFF LANDRY, (R) LOUISIANA: We stand with Governor Abbott and Texas in reminding the federal government that under our Constitution, states are still sovereign, and we have the right to protect our citizens.

GOV. RON DESANTIS, (R) FLORIDA: Texas has every right to stand its ground, and Florida will continue to be there helping out every step of the way.

GOV. KRISTI NOEM, (R) SOUTH DAKOTA: Governor Abbott has done the exact right thing. And I will drive him more razor wire from South Dakota if I have to.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: What about this, Hugh? The deadlines is approaching. They are saying you can't get access to this land, Texas has taken it over. The feds saying we want to go in there and cut the razor wire. It is quite something.

HEWITT: It is quite something. And former President Trump was right to say it has got to be a perfect deal. I talked to Senators on the air and off. There is not 900 miles of wall in this deal. Therefore it's a terrible deal. It won't get through the House, and it ought to be killed in the committee room before it comes out because it would be a disaster for the country to pass a bill that does not have the necessary but not sufficient step of 900 miles of border wall in it, and Democrats won't go for that.

So I'm with the governors. I'm with the former president. I'm with the House speaker, I'm with Steve Scalise, whip, who came out and said DOA today. I appreciate what the negotiators tried to get done, but they did not get the thing that we need, which is the wall.

I only have 15 seconds. Mark, this doesn't sound like it's going to be the Alamo, but this is going to be interesting to watch here in the coming days.

THIESSEN: It's all on the White House to cut this deal or not. Look, if you're a Democrat and you know that Donald Trump won the 2016 election because of illegal immigration, why would you unleash the worst border crisis in American history? Secure the border. It will be good for you politically and good for the country.

BAIER: All right, panel, thanks so much.

Finally tonight, a special day.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: So it's kind of like seeing a piece of history come to the Dropbox.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And you guys haven't circulated these for years.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: For year, none at all.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Better late than never. Earlier this month, an unidentified patron returned a 35-year overdue CD of Pink Floyd's 1975 album "Wish You Were Here" to a Prince George's County, Maryland, library. The disk was still in good condition with very few scratches despite the fact that the date stamped on the album cover was January 4th 1989 when it apparently was checked out. Library staff admits it did not know the CD was missing. They may not know they had CDs. What are CDs?

Tomorrow on SPECIAL REPORT, our "Common Ground" segment, a bipartisan Senate resolution declaring support for Taiwan and its self-governance. Our guests, Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dan Sullivan.

Thanks for inviting us into your home tonight. That's it for this SPECIAL REPORT, fair, balanced, and still unafraid. It's been a long week. It's Thursday. Friday, we've got a lot more news for you. "THE INGRAHAM ANGLE" is next.

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2024

**End of Document**