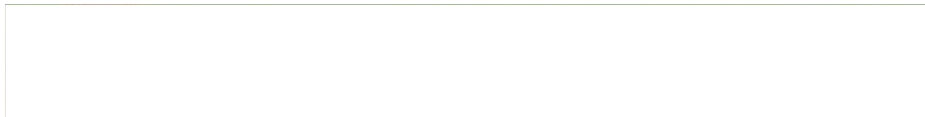


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Tennessee takes over Mason after 20 years of poor financial management



Mason, Tennessee (Action News 5)

By [Shyra Sherfield](#)

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MASON, Tenn. (WMC) - The state of Tennessee is officially taking over the town of Mason. The Tennessee Comptroller's Office made the announcement Thursday afternoon.

This decision comes after Mason's Board of Mayor and Aldermen [voted not to surrender the town's charter](#).

Mason has a history of financial problems including an indictment for theft of town funds, according to the comptroller's office.



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"The citizens and taxpayers of Mason deserve a financially sound government," said Comptroller Jason Mumpower. "By closely supervising the town's finances, we will put Mason on a path toward fiscal responsibility."

According to the comptroller's office, the town has been [poorly managed for the last 20 years](#) regardless of leadership. The town was most recently impacted by the closure of a prison plummeting its population to 794 people.

In addition to reviewing all expenditures, the comptroller's office will direct the town to pay back \$597,000 owed to its Water and Sewer Fund.

According to the state, this takeover will continue "as long as it takes" for Mason to improve its financial condition.

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Tennessee Sen. Raumesh Akbari, D-Memphis spoke out following the state's announcement:

"All Tennesseans have the right of self-determination — the right to freely determine and establish their political, social and economic interests without pressure from Capitol Hill. We are witnessing a disturbing, unceasing effort by the supermajority to undermine the power and authority of local governments. The people of Mason, a majority Black Tennessee town, deserve the right of self-governance today, especially as they write the next chapter of their storied history."

The Tennessee Democratic Party also released a statement Friday saying it stands with the citizens of Mason and calling for a timeline on how long the comptroller will be in power. They wrote in part:

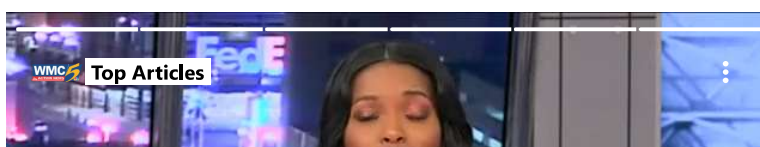
"We applaud the leaders of Mason for standing up and refusing to allow the state to force them to dissolve their community. Their fight to preserve their charter and the rich history of their town is a fight that each of us must lend our voice to. We must demand that the state provide them with a timeline on returning power to Mason's duly elected leaders. If such a timeline cannot be provided then the elected leaders of Mason must be given the opportunity to develop and execute its own plan to gain financial stability. This would follow the precedent that has been set for other Tennessee cities."


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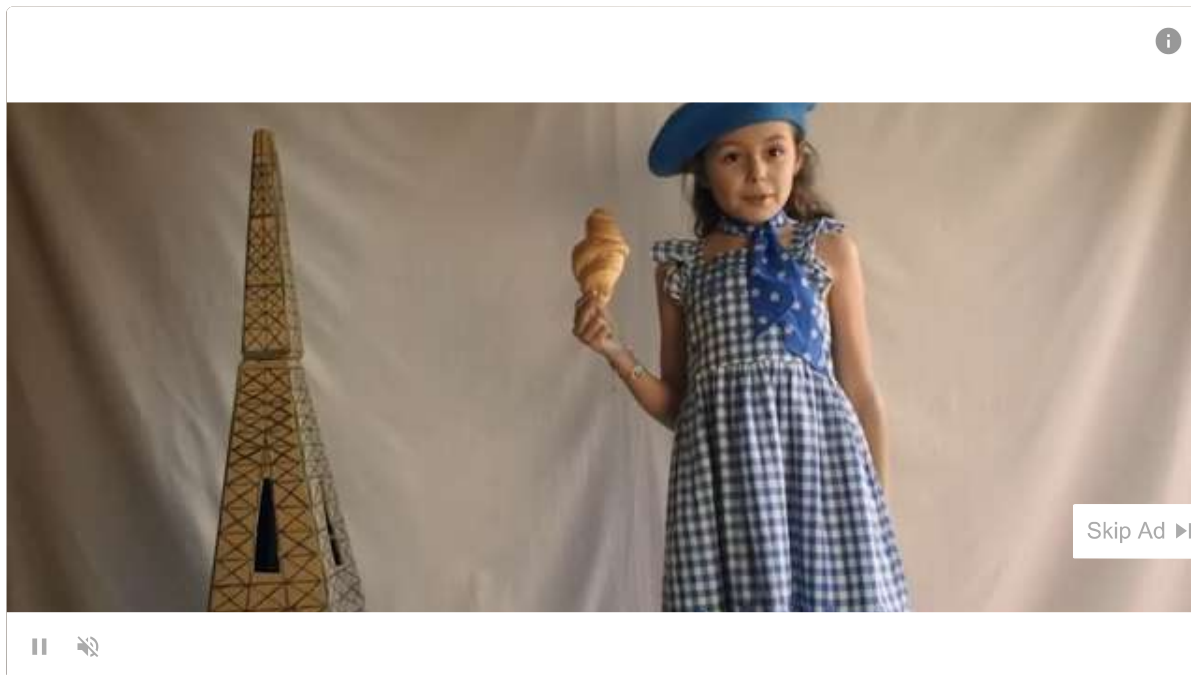
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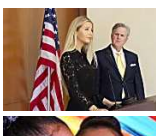
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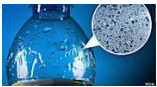
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