

MUTED RESPONSE
FROM DEMOCRATS
ON TRANS RULING

A PARTY IS IN RETREAT

Concern Liberals' Words
Don't Reflect Average
Voters' Views

By **KELLEN BROWNING**

Leading Democrats offered a slow trickle of critical reaction on Wednesday to the Supreme Court's decision upholding a state ban on some transgender care for youths, underscoring the new discomfort on the issue from a party that has long seen itself as a champion of L.G.B.T.Q. Americans.

Hours after the ruling arrived, some top Democrats like Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the minority leader, had denounced the decision as part of a "cruel crusade against trans Americans."

But many others, including key players in the 2028 shadow primary race, had yet to weigh in. Gov. Gavin Newsom of California was posting on social media about the National Guard. Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania had thoughts about housing. Gov. Wes Moore of Maryland shared a celebration of Pride — but said nothing about the major new court ruling. Asked for comment, representatives for all three governors said they were not issuing any statements on the decision for now.

Even Democrats who condemned the ruling tried to turn the focus to other issues. Mr. Schumer suggested on X that Republicans were using the topic "to divert attention from ripping health care away from millions of Americans."

The careful calculus reflected how the fraught topic of transgender issues has tormented Democrats for months, with Republicans putting them firmly on the back foot. Many party leaders now believe that liberal politicians took positions in recent years that deviated too far from the beliefs of the average voter.

Last year, Donald J. Trump painted Vice President Kamala Harris as too far to the left by pointing to her past positions on transgender care, including support for taxpayer-funded transition operations for prisoners and migrants, which she expressed on a questionnaire in 2019. (Mr. Trump elided the fact that appointees in his first administration provided gender-affirming care for a small group of inmates.) "Kamala is for they/them. President Trump is for you," declared a widely circulated Trump ad. The

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Jihadists Pose
Growing Peril
In West Africa

Millions Are Displaced
as Terrorists Gain

By **ELIAN PELTIER**

TOUGBO, Ivory Coast — At a market in Tougbo, a small town in northern Ivory Coast, the smell of dried fish and fried dough filled the air. Children ran around the bustling stalls where women sold the corn and cassava they had carried on their heads for miles in the countryside. Muslim elders watched the crowds on the sandy main street, while Christian worshippers poured out of church after Sunday Mass.

Yet the bustle belied an insidious threat.

About half of terrorism deaths worldwide in 2023 were recorded in the Sahel, the arid region in West Africa known for its seminomadic tribes and ancient trade routes. Emboldened by their success in the landlocked nations of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, insurgents affiliated with Al Qaeda and the Islamic State are moving south toward the Atlantic and into coastal nations such as Ivory Coast.

African and Western officials fear the advance will further destabilize West Africa at a time when the United States and European allies have drawn down their presence here, and the Trump administration has turned its attention to a chaotic deportation policy and travel ban that does not include any nations in the Sahel.

As the insurgents push toward the Atlantic, fears are growing that an area with one of the world's youngest populations and high levels of poverty will soon fall under jihadist rule.

"One of the terrorists' new objectives is gaining access to West Africa coasts. If they secure access to the coastline, they can finance their operations through smuggling, human trafficking and arms trading," Gen. Michael E. Langley, the head of U.S. Africa Command, said last month. "This puts not just African nations at risk, but also increases the chance of threats reaching the U.S. shores."

The Al Qaeda branch operating in West Africa is now one of the group's most powerful franchises, and Islamic State militants have staged so many attacks in the region recently that Vladimir Voronkov, the United Nations' top counterterrorism official, has warned that "a vast territory stretching from northern Nigeria to Mali could fall under their effective control."

Last fall, The New York Times

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AVISHAG SHAAR-YASHUV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A damaged building Thursday in Ramat Gan, Israel, where officials said over 30 people were hurt.

After 46 Years, a Regime Is Backed Into a Corner

By **ROGER COHEN**

Beneath Israel's bombs lies an unpopular and repressive Iranian regime that has spent billions of dollars on a nuclear program and on projecting the Islamic Revolution through armed regional proxies, while presiding over a domestic economic disaster and stifling paralysis.

An 86-year-old autocrat, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, rules this restive nation, as he has for 36

Even if Tehran's on the
Brink, It May Still
Have Options

years, in his role as guardian of the revolution, a conservative calling at which he has proved adept. The supreme leader is no gambler. But his system, remote from a youthful and aspirational society, looks sclerotic to many, and he is now up against a wall.

Over six days of fighting, Israel has struck the Natanz enrichment facility where a majority of Iran's nuclear fuel is produced, killed at least 11 of the regime's top generals and several nuclear scientists, bombed oil and energy facilities, taken complete control of Iranian air space and sent tens of thousands of people into flight from Tehran.

At least 224 people had been killed across Iran as of Sunday, a majority of them civilians, a spokesman for Iran's ministry of

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New Lessons at Restored School That Taught Enslaved Children

By **AUDRA D. S. BURCH**

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — The building with a forgotten past sat on the campus of William & Mary for nearly a century. It served as the home of the military science department at the college in Williamsburg, Va., and before that, a women's dormitory. But its story is even older.

In 2020, researchers discovered that it was not just a facet of the historic campus, but a rare artifact in the history of Black life in colonial America. About 250 years ago, the unassuming structure housed the Williamsburg Bray School, making it the oldest known building where enslaved and free Black children were formally educated.

Since the discovery, the Bray School has been fully restored. It opened to the public on Thursday — Juneteenth — in Colonial Williamsburg, where it was relocated in 2023 to be preserved.

The space gives visitors a sense of the lives of the students, and the museum will scrutinize, through interpreters, the mission of the school, which not only taught the children church doctrine and reading but sought to "convince enslaved students to accept their circumstances as divinely ordained," according to the museum's website.

The opening of the school comes at a particularly fraught time in the United States as Black history, diversity and established historical narratives are being challenged, sanitized or even erased. Its story also unlocks another layer of the historic city, whose identity is shaped, in part, by its role in the American Revolution. Located in the coastal Tidewater region, Williamsburg was once the capital of the British colony of Virginia. The city is a unique place to examine colonial life — including slavery — and the nation's founding ideals.

The school's discovery was

based on research by Terry L. Meyers, Chancellor professor of English emeritus at William & Mary. It inspired a yearslong mission among a broad community of scholars, historians, archaeologists, genealogists and

descendants to learn more about the school and its students. It was rare during the colonial period for a space to be dedicated to formally educating

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LAWREN SIMMONS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Janice Canaday, a community engagement manager at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, traces her family to the Bray School.

He Came to Put Up a Flagpole
And Got a Trump Talk on Iran

By **SHAWN MCCREESH**

WASHINGTON — When an arboretist named Christopher Tattersall walked out of his house in Glen Arm, Md., before sunrise on Wednesday, he had no idea he would soon be thrust into the most high-stakes moment of Donald J. Trump's second presidency.

As the world waited to find out whether Mr. Trump was really going to go through with bombing Iran's nuclear facilities, the president emerged that morning and chose to give his fullest remarks on the subject yet while standing with a crew of workers who had been contracted to do a job on the White House grounds.

Mr. Tattersall was there in his bright orange shirt and his climbing harness, hovering just over the president's left shoulder, shocked to find himself cast as an unwitting extra on the geopolitical stage.

Any other president might have discussed such matters in an Oval Office address or in a formal news conference. Mr. Trump did it while hanging with a crew of guys at a job site in his backyard.

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DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Christopher Tattersall, right, on the White House lawn.

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Long Road to Eliminating Coal Many factories need high heat, but producing heat without generating greenhouse gases isn't easy. PAGE B1	China Hacking Russia, an Ally Since the war in Ukraine began, analysts have monitored a series of intrusions aimed at stealing information on weaponry and warfighting. PAGE A8	A Network to Shield Migrants Activists, faith leaders, lawyers and everyday New Yorkers are converging at the city's courts to escort immigrants past masked federal officers. PAGE A18	A Spooky Sleepover The Shed is hosting "Viola's Room," a reconceived gothic mystery from a company called Punchdrunk. PAGE C1	Keeping Focus, Wheeler's Way Zack Wheeler, the Phillies' ace, has improved with age, defying beliefs on what it takes to stay elite. PAGE B6
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