

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

VOL. CLXXV No. 60,723

© 2025 The New York Times Company

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025

Prices in Canada may be higher

\$4.00



REZA SAIFULLAH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Compounding a Cyclone's Destructive Force

In Aceh Province, Indonesia, on Wednesday. Logs carried by floodwater contributed to the destruction of residential areas. Page A4.

Win for G.O.P. Makes Party Say, 'Uh-Oh'

By SHANE GOLDMACHER

President Trump and Republicans got a win on Tuesday night—and it set off alarm bells for the party.

Just like every other congressional contest held this year, the Tennessee special election for the House tilted sharply in the Democratic Party's direction compared with the 2024 election. The Trump-backed Republican candidate, Matt Van Epps, won by nine percentage points in a ruby-red seat that Mr. Trump had romped through a year earlier by 22 points.

That 13-point swing to the left—if it continues into 2026—threatens to be an undertow strong enough to subsume a range of Republicans in less lopsidedly red seats and deliver Democrats a comfortable House majority next year.

Republican candidates, as they have been for much of the last decade, are caught between Mr. Trump's singular popularity with the Republican base and his distinct, and dipping, unpopularity with swing voters.

He alone gets out the vote that Republicans need. And he alone gets out the vote that Democrats need, too.

"The left will show up," Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, warned of Democratic voters in next year's elections as he spoke on Fox News on Tuesday night. "Hate is a powerful motivator. They hate President Trump."

Republicans are still trying to figure out what their big motivator will be. For now, strategists say the default is likely to be a blitz of negative advertising trying to disqualify all types of Democratic nominees. Tennessee offered a preview with a kitchen-sink-style advertising assault on Aftyn Behn, the Democratic candidate, over her positions on taxes, transgender issues and immigration.

"The MAGA death star landed on our heads," said Ian Russell, a Democratic strategist who made ads for Ms. Behn and has worked on numerous House races.

But he added that the final margin should still frighten Mr.

Continued on Page A21

What a Trans Patient Heard After an Operation

By JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN

Jennifer Capasso, a 42-year-old transgender woman, figured there was a good chance she would be dead within 18 months. Since her diagnosis of metastatic rectal cancer, her life had become a succession of treatments and surgeries as more tumors were found. On her liver, and her lungs, and her large intestine, and again on her lungs.

At her apartment in Long Island City, Queens, she read cancer research papers and estimated her chances of survival, updating the odds after each scan, each tumor, each treatment. She tried to remember exactly what her doctors had said, and the tone they had used.

Conversation Recorded in Cancer Treatment Now Part of a Suit

It frustrated her that she was unconscious at the most crucial moments—as the surgeon removed each cancerous mass. What if the surgeon said something important, a stray comment that no one bothered to tell her about after the anesthesia wore off? She decided to record her next surgery, on March 7, 2022, at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the renowned Manhattan hospital.

"I wanted to know what's going

on," she recounted. She turned on the audio recorder on her phone before the anesthesia hit. "Knowledge is power."

The surgeon removed part of her lung. She did not get around to playing the recording until a few weeks later. Though the audio was muffled, she could follow some of what the surgical team was saying before the procedure began. Someone was going out for coffee—did anyone want something from Starbucks? The conversation then shifted.

"—still has man parts."

It seemed to Ms. Capasso that they were talking about her genitalia.

In the recording, the health care workers express a variety of opinions.

Continued on Page A18

From Snarling Zombies to Frolicking Dogs: Recruitment Ads Trace a War's Evolution

PAGES A12-13



THIRD ASSAULT BRIGADE, NOVEMBER 2023

2023

Early in the war with Russia, Ukrainian military outfits framed enlisting as a way to fend off a threat to civilization—depicted here as zombies.



THIRD ASSAULT BRIGADE, AUGUST 2025

This past summer, with war fatigue setting in, recruitment ads normalized life as a soldier and suggested it was just another career path.

Eroding Efficiency Rules, Trump Vows Cheaper Cars

Move Against Biden-Era Mileage Standards Adds to Uncertainty in the Industry

This article is by Lisa Friedman, Maxine Josenow and Jack Ewing.

WASHINGTON — President Trump on Wednesday threw the weight of the federal government behind vehicles that burn gasoline rather than electric cars, gutting one of the country's most significant efforts to address climate change and thrusting the automobile industry into greater uncertainty.

Flanked by executives from major automakers in the Oval Office, Mr. Trump said the Transportation Department would significantly weaken fuel efficiency requirements for tens of millions of new cars and light trucks. The administration claimed the changes would save Americans \$109 billion over five years and shave \$1,000 off the average cost of a new car.

The Biden administration's stricter efficiency standards were designed to get more Americans to go electric. But Mr. Trump said they "forced automakers to build cars using expensive technologies that drove up costs, drove up prices, and made the car much worse. This is a green new scam, and people were paying too much for a car that didn't work as well."

For the past half-century, the efficiency standards have compelled automakers to increase the distance their vehicles can travel on a gallon of gas, reducing fuel consumption and leading to innovations like electric and hybrid cars.

The announcement on Wednesday was the second part of a one-

Continued on Page A19

More on the White House

IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN An uneasy quiet replaced the bustle in Kenner, La., ahead of an operation that began Wednesday. **PAGE A14**

FED Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent could face the president's ire if the next Federal Reserve chair does not quickly lower rates. **PAGE B1**

Cuellar Pardon Provides Trump A Dig at Biden

**By DEVLIN BARRETT
and ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS**

WASHINGTON — President Trump on Wednesday pardoned Representative Henry Cuellar, Democrat of Texas, who was awaiting trial on charges that he and his wife had taken roughly \$600,000 worth of bribes from an Azerbaijani oil company and a Mexican bank.

The indictment against Mr. Cuellar and his wife, Imelda Cuellar, filed last year in Houston, centered on accusations of bribery and money laundering. Despite Mr. Cuellar's political affiliation, Mr. Trump has expressed public support for him, citing his willingness to speak out against Biden-era border policies.

"Sleepy Joe went after the Congressman, and even the Congressman's wonderful wife, Imelda, simply for speaking the TRUTH," Mr. Trump wrote on his social media platform, blaming the case on what he described as a weaponized Justice Department under the Biden administration. "Henry, I don't know you, but you can sleep well tonight — Your nightmare is finally over!"

In a post on social media, Mr. Cuellar, 70, responded by thanking the president "for his tremendous leadership and for taking the time to look at the facts." He added: "I thank God for standing with my family and I during this difficult time. This decision clears the air and lets us move forward for South Texas."

Continued on Page A16

Next Bonanza For Diet Drugs Could Be Pets

By EMILY ANTHES

In just a few short years, new diabetes and weight loss drugs like Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro have taken the world by storm. In the United States, one in eight adults say they've tried one of these medications, which are known as GLP-1 drugs, and that number seems sure to rise as prices fall and new oral formulations hit the market.

Fluffy and Fido could be next.

On Tuesday, Okava Pharmaceuticals, a biopharmaceutical company based in San Francisco, announced that it had officially begun a pilot study of a GLP-1 drug for cats with obesity. The company is testing a novel approach: Instead of receiving weekly injections of the drugs, as has been common in human patients, the cats will get small, injectable implants, slightly larger than a microchip, that will slowly release the drug for as long as six months.

"You insert that capsule under the skin, and then you come back six months later, and the cat has lost the weight," said Dr. Chen Gilor, a veterinarian at the University of Florida, who is leading the study. "It's like magic."

Results are expected next summer. If they are promising, they could represent the next frontier for a class of drugs that has upended human medicine, and a potentially transformative treatment option for millions of pets.

Some veterinarians have already begun administering hu-

Continued on Page A19

INTERNATIONAL A4-13

Grief, and Then a Clampdown

As it has after other disasters in the past, Beijing moved to control the risk of collective action following the Hong Kong apartment complex fire. **PAGE A6**

Boat Strike Contingency Plans

Before the U.S. attacks began, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth had approved contingency plans for what to do if an initial strike left survivors. **PAGE A10**

Polar Bears and Superpowers

As countries flex their muscles in a warming Arctic, the tiny Canadian town of Churchill may be called on to defend the region. **PAGE A8**

NATIONAL A14-21

Mississippi Free-Speech Suit

Justices seem open to a pastor's challenge to limits on protests. **PAGE A20**

THURSDAY STYLES D1-10

Tuning Into College Radio

Campus broadcasters, like Clarke Hamilton, below, are still thriving. **PAGE D8**



BUSINESS B1-5

Cutting Back on Pizzas

Sales are softening at big chains, and small shops aren't selling as many extras. Competition, diet trends and anxiety may all play a part. **PAGE B1**

OBITUARIES A23

Exposed Iran-Contra Scandal

Eugene Hasenfus, a former Marine whose plane was downed while ferrying arms to Nicaraguan rebels, was 84. **PAGE B8**

SPORTS B6-10

How Coach Revived Cowboys

Brian Schottenheimer, inspired by the memory of his father, Marty, has Dallas back in the playoff picture. **PAGE B6**

His Talent: Stockpiling Talent

Jaylen Reyes, below, an assistant volleyball coach at top-ranked Nebraska, is the best recruiter on campus. **PAGE B8**



ARTS C1-6

Songwriter Takes a Bow

Paul Williams, known for his ability to elicit both laughter and tears, is being honored at the 92nd Street Y. **PAGE C1**

Chronicler of Hard Living

A new book traces the life of Denis Johnson, who wrote of bad luck, bleak surroundings and beautiful losers. **PAGE C3**

OPINION A24-25

The Editorial Board

PAGE A24

