

# New Laws Subject Faculty To Increased Surveillance

## Tip Lines and Syllabus Scans at Colleges

**By VIMAL PATEL**

College professors once taught free from political interference, with mostly their students and colleagues privy to their lectures and book assignments. Now, they are being watched by state officials, senior administrators and students themselves.

In Oklahoma, a student disputed an instructor's grading decision, drawing the notice of a conservative campus group, Turning Point USA, that has long posted the names of professors criticized for bringing liberal politics into their classrooms. The instructor was removed.

In Texas, a student recorded a classroom lesson on gender identity that led to viral outrage and the instructor's firing. Now, Texas has set up an office to take other complaints about colleges and professors.

And several states, including Texas, Ohio and Florida, have created laws requiring professors to publicly post their course outlines in searchable databases.

The increased oversight of professors comes as conservatives expand their movement to curb what they say is a liberal tilt in university classrooms. In the last couple of years, they have found sympathetic ears in state legislatures with the power to pressure schools, and their efforts have

gained momentum as the Trump administration has made overhauling the politics and culture on campuses a focus.

But all of this, some professors and free-expression groups say, is leading to a wave of censorship and self-censorship that they argue is curbing academic freedom and learning.

"We've never seen this much surveillance," said John White, a University of North Florida education professor who was asked to remove words such as "diversity," "equity," "inclusion" and "culture" from his syllabus. He said he changed his syllabus under threat of his course being canceled.

Lawmakers, and sometimes university administrators, argue that the new scrutiny and rules make for stronger universities at a time of widespread calls for more accountability.

Peter Hans, the president of the University of North Carolina system, announced in December that all 16 of its campuses, including the flagship in Chapel Hill, will create searchable databases of syllabuses starting in the fall. In a recent opinion column, he wrote that "more transparency" was the answer to increased scrutiny of higher education.

"Getting an honest, realistic

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LANNA APISUKH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Sweet Scent of Success**

Penny, a 4-year-old Doberman pinscher, above with her handler, Andy Linton, took the top prize at the 150th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden. Page D5.

# U.S. Eyeing Nike Over Claims Of Bias Against White Workers

**By REBECCA DAVIS O'BRIEN and KIM BHASIN**

The federal agency that safeguards hiring practices said on Wednesday that it was investigating Nike, the sportswear giant, for diversity efforts that it said amounted to discrimination against white workers.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, born of the Civil Rights Act, said it was investigating "systemic allegations of D.E.I.-related intentional race discrimination" against white employees and job applicants at Nike.

It appears to be the first time that the commission has said diversity, equity and inclusion practices in workplaces can amount to discrimination against white people, and Nike is a high-profile target. The company has sponsorship partnerships with world-famous athletes including LeBron

James and Caitlin Clark. It also drew criticism from President Trump during his first term for running advertisements featuring Colin Kaepernick, the football star who knelt during the national anthem to protest racism and police brutality.

The move positions the E.E.O.C. at the vanguard of the Trump administration's broad assault on D.E.I. practices. Mr. Trump won re-election in 2024 in part by harnessing backlash to such practices, and in office he has given voice to claims of "reverse racism" against white people.

The investigation is the most significant legal action that the commission has announced under Andrea Lucas, its chair, who has made diversity, equity and inclusion

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JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Xochitl Soberanes, 16, right, helped care for her three younger siblings while her father was held last month by immigration officials.

# A Crackdown Sinks Children Into Lives of Fear

**By CORINA KNOLL**

MINNEAPOLIS — The morning her father called to say that he had been detained on a snowy Minneapolis road, Xochitl Soberanes was seized by an urgent and inescapable feeling. At 16 years old and the eldest of four, she would suddenly have to become the backbone of the family.

Their mother had died of pneumonia less than a year ago, so it was Xochitl who convinced her 4-year-old brother that their father was working late as they packed up belongings to go stay with a nearby aunt. That January night, a cousin found all four siblings curled up asleep in the same queen bed — cradled by Xochitl, who lay on the edge.

**Turmoil in Minnesota Traumatizes Even the Youngest**

"We just wanted to be close together," she said.

For weeks, the Minneapolis area has been a landscape of intense turmoil as federal immigration agents have faced off against furious citizens. But there is a quieter upheaval taking place behind closed doors as the city's youngest residents attempt to grasp the altering of their neighborhoods, their schools, their sense of security.

Regardless of what they might

understand about the politics embedded in their surroundings, some things are clear: The adults in their lives are weary and overwhelmed. Neighbors are scared to leave the house. Bomb threats have been called in to schools. Events have been canceled. Friends are missing from classrooms. And parents have been taken.

"I was just thinking, 'What are we going to do without him?'" Xochitl said about the day her father, Victor, did not come home. She began to insist to her aunt that she could finish her final exams and be available to help with her siblings. Within a week, a friend who is a U.S. citizen was also detained, but later released.

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ROBERT F. BUKATY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Virginia Oliver off the coast of Maine at 101 in 2021. As a general rule, her authority was not to be questioned on land or at sea.

VIRGINIA OLIVER, 1920-2026

# Lobster-Snagging Folk Hero With Sailor's Heart, and Mouth

**By MICHAEL S. ROSENWALD**

Virginia Oliver, a feisty, salty-tongued lobster boat skipper who fished off the New England coast wearing earrings, hot-pink lip-stick and an occasional scowl for more than 80 years, until she was 103, died on Jan. 21 in Rockport, Maine. She was 105.

Her death, in a hospital not far from her home in Rockland, was confirmed by her sternman, Max Oliver Jr., who was also her son.

On the frigid and crustacean-filled waters of Penobscot Bay, Mrs. Oliver was known as the Lobster Lady. She was a folk hero to Mainers — an enduring, if fading, emblem of the state's hardy, matter-of-fact work ethic.

"She represented that no-nonsense Mainer who just got up every day and did what they had to do," Barbara A. Walsh, the author of a children's book about Mrs. Oliver, said in an interview. "It's grit and determination."

During lobster season — from June to December — Mrs. Oliver would wake up at 2:45 a.m., put on overalls and drive her four-wheel-drive pickup truck to the dock. After loading her boat, the Virginia, with bait and gas, she would head to sea before sunrise, hauling lobster pots until lunchtime.

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Layoffs included more than 300 journalists across the paper's local, international and sports departments. PAGE A19

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Chuck Negron, who anchored generational hits like "Joy to the World" and "One" by one of pop music's powerhouses in the 1970s, was 83. PAGE A21



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**Michelle Goldberg** PAGE A22



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