

# The Boston Globe

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

## Senate seeks criminal charge for de la Torre

By Aaron Pressman and Jim Puzzanghera  
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — Steward Health Care chief executive Ralph de la Torre could face a trial and prison time for ignoring a congressional subpoena, after the US Senate on Wednesday unanimously moved to refer a criminal contempt charge to the Justice Department.

It was the first such action by the Senate in more than 50 years.

The referral now goes to the US attorney for the

District of Columbia for a decision on whether to prosecute de la Torre, who built Steward into the largest privately held for-profit hospital chain in the country only to see it tumble into bankruptcy amid accusations of excessive compensation for top executives. If found guilty, de la Torre could serve up to 12 months in prison. A spokesperson for the US attorney's office declined to comment.

The move on the criminal contempt charge comes a week after the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee approved sending

criminal and civil contempt charges to the full Senate after de la Torre failed to appear at a Sept. 12 hearing about Steward's bankruptcy. The civil charge, which was not taken up on Wednesday because it requires a detailed report from the committee, could lead to a judge ordering de la Torre to testify.

Lawmakers have said they wanted to hold de la Torre accountable for Steward's collapse, arguing that the executive and his financial partners, pri-

DE LA TORRE, Page D2

## Israel hints at Lebanon invasion

Hezbollah retaliates with long-range missile

By Liam Stack, Aaron Boxerman, and Farnaz Fassihi  
NEW YORK TIMES

TEL AVIV — The Lebanese militia Hezbollah on Wednesday fired a missile deep into Israel, targeting Tel Aviv for the first time, as the Israeli military called up two brigades of reserve soldiers and sent them north toward the border with Lebanon.

The mobilization came as the military's chief of staff, General Herzi Halevi, suggested that Israel was preparing for the possibility of a ground invasion in Lebanon as part of its intensified campaign to stop Hezbollah from firing missiles and drones at Israel.

"You hear the jets overhead — we have been striking all day," Halevi told soldiers who were conducting military exercises along the Israeli-Lebanese border. "This is both to prepare the ground for your possible entry and to continue degrading Hezbollah."

Praising the soldiers as more experienced and skilled than Hezbollah's fighters, he said: "You go in, destroy the enemy there, and decisively destroy their infrastructure."

It was not clear whether Halevi was trying to unnerve Hezbollah or hinting at an actual battle plan being weighed by Israeli leaders.

Israel's air defenses shot down the missile

MIDEAST, Page A4



JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

Advocates have called for changes where a designated bike lane ends on Memorial Drive near the BU Bridge in Cambridge.

## A PERILOUS PATH IN CAMBRIDGE TURNS DEADLY

Changes had long been sought where bicyclist was hit

By Spencer Buell and Shannon Larson  
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — John Corcoran treasured his bike ride along the Charles River here for the reasons that make it such a popular destination for cyclists, joggers, and walkers: expansive views of the water with the Boston skyline in the backdrop, and, for a rider who feared being in traffic, much of it along a lane

separated from busy Memorial Drive.

But the potential for leisurely sightseeing comes to an abrupt end near the Boston University boathouse, where the shared-use path merges into a narrow sidewalk adjacent to the heavy traffic whizzing by.

It was at this juncture that Corcoran, a father of two, was struck Monday by the driver of a car while riding his bike — news footage

from WCVB showed a damaged bike on the sidewalk in front of the boathouse and a battered Mercedes SUV parked on the roadway nearby.

Corcoran was pronounced dead at Massachusetts General Hospital, the third death of a cyclist in Cambridge this year, in a crash that advocates for bike safety say was as sad as it was predictable, given they pleaded with state officials for years to fix that dangerous stretch of Memorial Drive.

BIKES, Page A7

**New York City Mayor Eric Adams has been indicted** by a grand jury on federal corruption charges, according to people familiar with the matter. **A2.**



**Former CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky warned that the nation's "deeply frail" public health system** could confront such challenges as emerging antibiotic-resistant bugs. **B1.**



In no time splat

**Thursday:** Rain, stormy. High 64-69, low 59-64.

**Friday:** Clearing, warmer. High 72-77, low 56-61.

Sunrise: 6:36. Sunset: 6:34.

Weather and comics, **D5-6.**

Obituaries, **C9.**

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## Report on troubling MCAS scores propels foes, backers of ballot effort to limit exam

Both sides leverage data to bolster their arguments

By James Vaznis  
GLOBE STAFF

Massachusetts public high schools have experienced a sharp decline in 10th graders passing all three MCAS exams over the last five years with the latest scores showing approximately 16,000 students failing to meet the bar, a trend that is injecting urgency into a ballot question this November that seeks to repeal the test as a graduation requirement.

Just 78 percent of 10th graders last spring passed all MCAS exams in English, math, and science on their first attempt, down from 87 per-

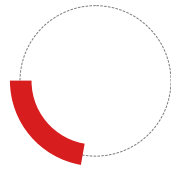
cent in 2019, a 9 percentage point decrease, according to a Globe review.

The MCAS graduation requirement in recent years has subjected an increasing number of high schoolers to remediation, test prep, and re-testing, as students continue to struggle with pandemic learning loss and an increase in mental health issues.

Moreover, spring 2024 was the first year students had to attain higher scores in order to pass the 10th grade exams under new benchmarks set by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Proponents and opponents are both seizing upon the failure rates to make their case to win over voters at the polls on Nov. 5.

MCAS, Page A7



22%

of 10th graders last spring failed an MCAS exam in English, math, or science on their first attempt.

## Emotional tremors shake town in Vermont

Splintered first by fierce discord over gun range, residents blindsided by triple murder

By Kevin Cullen  
GLOBE STAFF

PAWLET, Vt. — When word spread that Brian Crossman Sr. and Erica Pawlusiak were getting married this summer, it was widely greeted as much-needed good news around here.

For years, Pawlet had been preoccupied by the controversy over a paramilitary-style gun range an outsider had built called Slate Ridge, which brought a relentless tide of harassment and threats over social media as well as extreme rhetoric from its owner after some in the town proposed to shut it down.

After all the hullabaloo and bad feeling, a marriage celebration for two well-liked people felt like a reminder of the virtues of their close-knit community, framed by the pictur-



Brian Crossman Sr. and Erica Pawlusiak, newlyweds then murder victims.

esque Taconic Mountains in southwestern Vermont.

Erica, 41, had grown up in Ira, a similar farming community just 20 miles north. She was bubbly and kind. Brian, 46, was tall and outgoing and an avid fisherman, hunter, and all-around outdoorsman. He was elected to the Pawlet Select Board this year.

They both had children from previous relationships, and Brian had recently taken over the family farm. Both Brian and Erica worked for the local utility, Green Mountain Power, but they were going to make a go of the farm, too, carrying on a tradition that is a large part of the local economy and culture.

When it came to Pawlet, Brian and Erica were all in.

Their plans ended suddenly and violently in the early

VERMONT, Page A10



The resignation of Ronald Liebowitz is the latest in a series of changes at the helm of colleges across the country.

By Mike Damiano  
GLOBE STAFF

In the spring, Brandeis University announced significant layoffs in response to a deteriorating financial position. Last week, the faculty passed a no-confidence vote in the school's president, Ron Liebowitz. Then, in a surprise announcement Wednesday morning, the university said Liebowitz had resigned and his eight-year tenure would come to an end on Nov. 1.

It was just the latest in a string of college presidential resignations in the past year. During that time, universities nationwide have been buffeted by financial troubles, turmoil over the Israel-Hamas war, and pitched debates about the kinds of political stances school leaders should or should not take.

In a message sent to the university community Wednesday morning, Lie-

BRANDEIS, Page A7