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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2024

## Search continues for CEO's killer in N.Y.

UnitedHealthcare executive gunned down outside hotel; shooter escapes on electric bike



Brian Thompson was a powerful insurance figure. D1.

By Michael Wilson, Chelsia Rose Marcius, Maria Cramer, and Joe Rennison  
NEW YORK TIMES

NEW YORK — A sprawling search with police officers, dogs, and drones spread citywide on Wednesday after the CEO of UnitedHealthcare was fatally shot outside a Midtown Manhattan hotel in what police called a bold assassination.

The executive, Brian Thompson, 50, the leader of one of the country's largest companies, was shot just before dawn on West 54th Street near the New York Hilton Midtown, where his firm was holding its annual investors day. The surrounding blocks, draped in holiday decorations, are a hugely popular destination for throngs of tourists and shoppers alike.

The police commissioner, Jessica Tisch, who was sworn in 10 days ago, called the killing just after 6:45 a.m. a "brazen targeted attack" and said, "We will not rest until we identify and apprehend the shooter in this case."

The shooter wore a dark hooded jacket and a gray backpack, pictures released by the police show, with his face covered to his nose. He apparently knew which door Thompson was going to enter and arrived outside the hotel about five minutes earlier, ignoring passing pedestrians as he waited for his target.

Surveillance video shows Thompson, wearing a blue suit, walking toward the hotel entrance in the predawn dim. The shooter, seen from behind, walks up and fires at least three times, striking Thompson in the calf and in his back with a pistol that appears to be fitted with a suppressor.

The victim manages a couple of steps and turns to face his attacker.

SHOOTING, Page A7

## Justices skeptical in trans care case

Conservatives question premises of challenge to ban on kids' treatments

By Mike Damiano and Sam Brodey  
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — During more than two hours of arguments Wednesday, conservative Supreme Court justices pointedly questioned the key premises of a challenge to a law banning medical gender transition treatments for minors.

The Biden administration, along with advocacy groups including the American Civil Liberties Union, have urged the court to overturn Tennessee's ban, arguing it unconstitutionally discriminates on the basis of sex and withholds critical medical care from young people.

But conservative justices pushed back on both fronts. Justice Clarence Thomas said the law limited medical treatments by age alone, not sex. And Chief Justice John Roberts questioned whether the courts should resolve disputes about medical treatments.

"The Constitution leaves that question to the people's representatives, rather than to nine people, none of whom is a doctor," he said.

The case reached the Supreme Court at a time of acrimonious debate about youth gender medicine and transgender rights.

TRANSITION, Page A7

## BEST IN CLASS



CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

Luisa Sparrow received congratulations on Wednesday after being named the 2025 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. Sparrow, a special education teacher in the fifth and sixth grades at the Oliver Hazard Perry Elementary School in South Boston, is the eighth Boston Public Schools teacher to receive the award since its inception over 60 years ago.

"I am really humbled to be selected and I am grateful to everyone who has been part of the process," she said. B1.

'This isn't some luxury we're asking for. This is reading.'

KARRIE CONLEY, plaintiff

## 2 Mass. families sue literacy specialists, accusing them of ignoring phonics

Parents say kids harmed by substandard material

By Mandy McLaren  
GLOBE STAFF

In what appears to be a first-of-its-kind lawsuit, two local families on Wednesday sued literacy specialists Lucy Calkins, Irene Fountas, and Gay Su Pinnell, whose reading curriculums have been used in more than a third of Massachusetts school districts, alleging they deliberately ignored the scientific consensus about the importance of phonics to early reading to the detriment of their children's learning.

The lawsuit, filed in Suffolk Superior Court, alleges three minors, identified in the complaint by their initials, suffered developmental and emotional injuries, while their parents, identified as Karrie Conley of Boxborough and Michele Hudak of Ashland, suffered financial losses because they had to pay for tutoring and private school tuition to compensate for shortcomings in the reading curriculums used by their children's public schools.

"I trusted that when I was sending my children off to school, they were getting instruction that had been tested and proven effective," Conley said at a press conference Wednesday. "... This isn't some luxury we're asking for. This is reading."

The lawsuit alleges the defendants ignored a plethora of research demonstrating the importance of phonics, or the relationship between letters and sounds, in creating, marketing, and selling their early literacy products and services. The omission of phonics from their curriculums, the lawsuit alleges, has harmed their children's learning.

LITERACY, Page A10

## Before blocking Wu, Collins raised thousands from real estate industry

Commercial properties would feel brunt of mayor's tax plan

By Catherine Carlock and Matt Stout  
GLOBE STAFF

Boston state Senator Nick Collins received tens of thousands of dollars in donations from prominent members of the city's commercial real estate and hospitality industries in the weeks leading up to his move on Beacon Hill Monday to delay Mayor Michelle Wu's proposal to hike commercial property tax rates.

According to Collins's campaign finance filings, the donors

include several real estate consultants, the chief executives and other executives of local real estate firms and hotel operators, as well as two attorneys from the firm that owns the Prudential Center and other major office towers. All told, Collins raised more than \$25,000 in October and November, public records show, with almost all of it coming from real estate interests. By comparison, in November 2022, when Collins was previously up for reelection, he raised just \$1,323.

Many big landlords would see their companies' property tax rates increase under Wu's plan, which seeks to soften a sharp jump for homeowners by boosting collections from commercial properties. Coming amid slumping values in the office market, commercial real estate trade groups had fiercely opposed the tax shift for months until finally reaching a compromise in late October.

However, the measure still needs final approval by the Legislature.

COLLINS, Page A10

Boston City Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson said she doesn't plan to resign as she faces a federal probe. B1.

A challenge to the Massachusetts firearms law signed this summer will appear on the ballot in 2026 after opponents of the legislation gathered enough signatures. B1.

Members of South Korea's political opposition moved to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol after his declaration of martial law failed spectacularly. A3.

Members of a Senate subcommittee criticized airline executives for using an expanding menu of fees. A2.

### CELEBRATION —

It's MIAA Super Bowl season in Massachusetts, with eight high school teams competing for titles this week at Gillette Stadium. Wednesday night, in the first game, Uxbridge's Shawn Lemovitz hoisted the championship trophy after his team defeated Mashpee for the Division 7 championship. More on the games in Sports, C6.



MARK STOCKWELL FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



### Slop and go

Thursday: Rain/snow ends. High 40-45. Low 27-32.

Friday: Sunny, windy, cold. High 31-36. Low 23-28.

High tide: 1:40 a.m., 4:12 p.m.

Sunrise: 6:58 Sunset: 4:12

Weather and Comics, D5-6. Obituaries, C9.

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