



Secret Service chief faces ire on Hill

Parties unite in ‘outrage’ over agency failures, call for Cheatle’s resignation

BY MARIA SACCHETTI, NICK MIROFF AND JACQUELINE ALEMANY

Members of Congress on Monday heaped scorn on U.S. Secret Service director Kimberly Cheatle during more than four hours of angry questioning and louder bipartisan calls for her to step down because of security failures involving the July 13 assassination attempt on former president Donald Trump.

House Oversight Chairman James Comer (R-Ky.) and ranking Democrat Jamie Raskin (Md.) were among the Congress members who urged Cheatle to resign during the first congressional hearing since the attack on Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pa.

“Today, you failed to provide answers to basic questions regarding that stunning operational failure and to reassure the American people that the Secret Service has learned its lessons and begun to correct its systemic blunders and failures,” the lawmakers wrote in a letter published after the hearing.

“In the middle of a presidential election, the Committee and the American people demand serious institutional accountability and transparency that you are not providing.”

The hearing capped a tumultuous period of just over a week during which Trump survived the first direct attack on a U.S. leader in more than 40 years, an embattled President Biden ended his quest for a second term, and Vice President Harris launched her presidential campaign with barely 100 days left before the November elections.

Both parties are facing an uncertain and tense final campaign stretch. But lawmakers said the candidates, and their supporters, deserve to feel confident in the agency charged with safeguarding the country’s democracy from political violence.

Raskin said both parties were
SEE SECRET SERVICE ON A2

Harris secures needed DNC delegates



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Vice President Harris attends an event for NCAA athletes at the White House on Monday. In a privilege typically reserved for presidents, she hosted the South Lawn gathering by herself. Many were watching to see how she performed in a presidential role.

Suddenly unsettled race leaves delegates an unprecedented task

BY COLBY ITKOWITZ, HOLLY BAILEY AND YVONNE WINGETT SANCHEZ

Dee Dawkins-Haigler had just left church in Lithonia, Ga., on Sunday and was sitting down to lunch when her phone suddenly erupted with a rapid fire of text messages, one after the other, so many she could barely keep up.

They were messages from other Democratic National Convention delegates, mostly fellow Black women, reacting to the news: President Biden was ending his 2024 campaign and had endorsed Vice President Harris to replace him.

Mixed feelings: Over 150 voters in key states weigh in on Harris. A8

She was in disbelief. Confused. Let down. Regretful. “Totally blindsided.” Angry at fellow Democrats for, as she sees it, bullying Biden out of the race. And already feeling tremendous pressure about her upcoming role.

Dawkins-Haigler is one of almost 4,000 DNC delegates who were chosen to represent the more than 14 million Democratic primary voters who cast ballots supporting Biden as the nominee. But with him stepping aside, those delegates are now free to vote for whomever they want — which Dawkins-Haigler
SEE DELEGATES ON A7

Presenting her case: A former prosecutor may take on a felon. A9

New campaign takes shape as Biden operation passes the torch

BY TYLER PAGER

Vice President Harris traveled to Wilmington, Del., on Monday to visit her campaign’s headquarters, as she and her aides worked to take over the campaign she inherited after President Biden dropped his bid for a second term and endorsed Harris.

Harris’s team tasked former attorney general Eric Holder to lead a team of lawyers at Covington & Burling to oversee the vetting process for a running mate, while the vice president’s allies signaled that they wanted to bring David Plouffe, a longtime adviser to former president Barack Obama, on

Can’t keep up: Breaking political news stumps AI chatbots. A20

board in a senior role, according to two people familiar with the conversations, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive personnel matters.

The exact nature of Plouffe’s potential role is unclear, but some Harris allies want to add experienced officials at the top of her campaign. Plouffe ran Obama’s 2008 campaign and then served as a senior adviser in the White House during Obama’s 2012 reelection campaign. Neither Plouffe nor the Harris campaign responded to a request for comment.

Harris’s campaign will remain
SEE HARRIS ON A5

Capital reacts: Biden’s decision reverberates across the city. B1

DEMOCRATS CLOSE RANKS AROUND VP

Rapid show of accord in party after turmoil

BY TOLUSE OLORUNNIPA

REHOBOTH BEACH, DEL. — The Democratic Party largely coalesced around Vice President Harris as its likely new presidential nominee on Monday, as she kicked off her campaign by promising to prosecute a forceful case against Republican nominee Donald Trump and defend the legacy of President Biden.

Hours after she delivered remarks laying out some of the themes of her campaign, Harris secured pledges of support from a majority of Democratic National Convention delegates, a forceful show of unity behind her presidential campaign that signals she is likely to officially become the party’s nominee next month.

“Over the next 106 days, we are going to take our case to the American people, and we are going to win,” Harris said during a visit to campaign headquarters in Wilmington, Del., where she was greeted by a group of energized staffers for Biden’s now-abandoned candidacy. Harris accused Trump of wanting to “take our country backwards to a time before many of our fellow Americans had full freedoms and rights.” She added, “we believe in a brighter future that makes room for all Americans.”

Biden dialed into the impromptu meeting, using his first public remarks after dropping out of the presidential race Sunday to thank his staff and ask them to support Harris with “every bit of your heart and soul.”

“The name has changed at the top of the ticket, but the mission hasn’t changed at all,” said Biden, who joined remotely from Rehoboth Beach, where he has been recovering from a case of covid-19. “We still need to save this democracy. Trump is still a danger to the community. He’s a danger to the nation.”

The high-energy, highly unified setting reflected the broader sentiment across the Democratic Party, in which Harris’s swift ascendancy has upended an already
SEE CAMPAIGN ON A6

Prime-time pans: Fox News stars turn up their criticism of Harris. C1

Trump shooter remains difficult to categorize

Determining gunman’s motivations may take years, experts say

BY JOHN WOODROW COX AND STEVEN RICH

In the months after an isolated, deeply troubled 20-year-old took his mother’s AR-style rifle and opened fire inside Sandy Hook Elementary, gun sales in America exploded, partly fueled by the threat of a fresh ban on the assault weapons that would become the firearm of choice for some of the country’s most infamous killers.

Millions of Americans rushed to stock up, and among 2013’s gun buyers, investigators would later learn, was a man in western Pennsylvania whose son also attended elementary school. He purchased an AR-style rifle that fired 5.56mm rounds.

A decade later, his son — also isolated, troubled and 20 years old — shouldered that same rifle atop a sloped roof in Butler, Pa., and, according to authorities, fired it eight times in an apparent attempt to assassinate former president Donald Trump.

Thomas Matthew Crooks, shot and killed seconds later, remains enigmatic. A registered Republican who’d once given a \$15 donation to a progressive group, he was, said people who knew him, not overtly political or ideological. He did well in school, drew little attention in his middle-class, Bethel Park neighborhood. He didn’t leave behind a significant online presence or manifesting out his motivation. Why he pulled the trigger, investigators still don’t know or, at least, have yet to say publicly.

Where he fits into the ever-expanding catalogue of notorious American gunmen could take years to understand, according to experts and historians. He’s hard
SEE CROOKS ON A4

Accused of abuse — and back in the gym

The Nassar scandal brought reform and took down two powerful coaches. But not for long.



ALLISON ZAUCHA FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Sydney Freidin says Artur Akopyan, her former coach, “made me feel violated.” Now he’s coaching again.

BY MOLLY HENSLEY-CLANCY

It was the gardening gloves that made Sydney Freidin’s stomach turn.

She was scrolling through social media when she saw a photo of them on the hands of her former coach, Artur Akopyan. He was a gymnastics legend — Olympian for the Soviet Union, former member of the USA Gymnastics coaching staff and personal coach to Olympians, including gold medalist McKayla Maroney.

For Freidin, though, seeing Akopyan brought back different memories. She recalled him once flinging a young girl into the air in rage after she made a mistake during an aerial cartwheel. The girl began to cry after she hit the floor, Freidin and another former gymnast said.

And then there were those gloves. Akopyan was known to wear them to spot gymnasts at All Olympia Gymnastics Center, the California gym he co-owned. When he was angry with Freidin
SEE GYMNASTICS ON A16

IN THE NEWS

‘A mockery of justice’ Russian American journalist Alsu Kurmasheva has been sentenced to prison under Russia’s repressive wartime law governing “fake news.” A15

Olympic surfing Yes, the sport will be contested at the Paris Games — in Tahiti. And the U.S. women’s hopes are under one roof. D1

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The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53921

