



It's sink or swim for speaker of the House

Mike Johnson faces funding deadline and an unruly GOP conference

BY MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR AND LEIGH ANN CALDWELL

Just a few weeks into his tenure as House Speaker, Mike Johnson (R-La.) called Rep. Max L. Miller into his office to talk about how to fund the government as new deadlines loomed in early 2024. In the meeting, the Ohio Republican brought up his displeasure that Johnson's first act as speaker was to pair cuts to the Internal Revenue Service with aid for Israel, which had just been attacked by Hamas.

Johnson was aiming to show his conservative bona fides, but the move rankled some in the conference, including Miller, who knew the Democratic-controlled Senate would never accept the bill and aid for Israel would continue to languish. Johnson — who was elevated from a Republican backbencher to speaker overnight and has just a few deep relationships with his colleagues — eventually asked Miller what he wanted to see from leadership.

It's a question colleagues say Johnson is still struggling with. Just shy of his 100th day serving as Speaker of the House, Johnson has had to gather the reins of an unruly conference that at every turn has tested his ability to steady them. A proud staunch conservative, Johnson had believed his reputation within the House Freedom Caucus would help manage their demands in a way that former speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) could not.

Now Johnson is facing the

SEE JOHNSON ON A2

China back to drawing board in efforts to bully Taiwan

BY LILY KUO

TAIPEI, TAIWAN — Taiwanese voters have made it clear — for the third time in a row — that they don't want a leader who will kowtow to China. The democratic island on Saturday elected as president Lai Ching-te, the current vice president and former independence advocate whom Beijing views as a dangerous "separatist."

Now, Beijing must craft a response.

For Beijing, Lai's victory is a loss that deepens anxiety about its ability to bring Taiwan under its control, a long-held goal of the ruling Communist Party and a key part of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's legacy. The result gives Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which Beijing refuses to engage with, an unprecedented third term.

"A Lai win will mean that Xi loses face," said Chen Fang-Yu, assistant professor of political science at Soochow University in Taipei. "It means his Taiwan policy has failed. So now he must do something to show his muscle."

In the months ahead, Beijing is expected to dial up its efforts to intimidate Taiwan using familiar coercive tactics, including military harassment and economic pressure.

But actual conflict or invasion is unlikely — at least for now — officials and analysts in Taiwan

SEE TAIWAN ON A11



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST



MELINA MARA/THE WASHINGTON POST



RICKY CARIOTI/THE WASHINGTON POST



TASOS KATOPODIS/GETTY IMAGES

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Donald Trump picks up a pizza in Waukee, Iowa, on Sunday, the day before the GOP presidential caucuses. Former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley holds a campaign event in Ames. Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy takes a photo during a stop in Ankeny. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis addresses supporters in Cedar Rapids.

A nation's divide, in two Iowa counties

Trump's rise has spurred transformation, with rural areas shifting red and suburbs moving blue

BY THEODORIC MEYER
IN LEON, IOWA

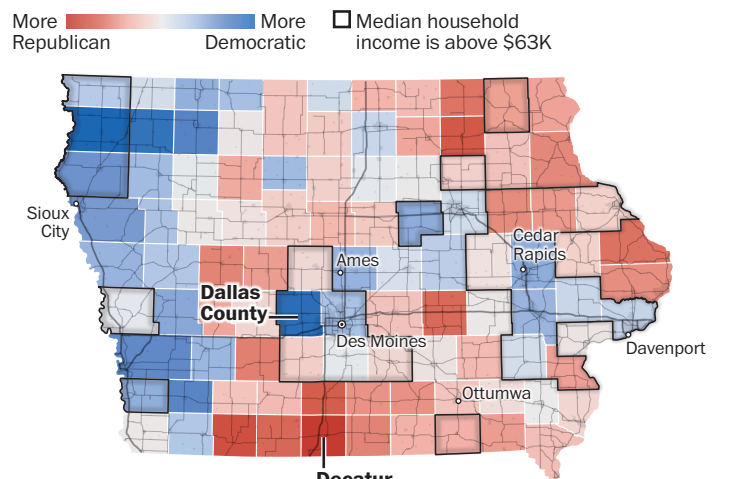
Kim DeVore was an enthusiastic supporter of Barack Obama when he ran for president in 2008, drawn to his message about bringing the country together. A loyal Democrat, she caucused for him and even traveled to Des Moines to attend a rally he held there.

But DeVore, who lives in a tiny Iowa town near the Missouri border, eventually came to feel that Obama had only divided the country further. She changed her party registration to Republican in 2016 and voted for Donald Trump, drawn to his pledge to build a wall on the border with Mexico and to put Americans first. "When we have veterans and other people here that are not being helped — now that's infuriating," she said.

Seventy miles north in the Des Moines suburbs, Kenan Judge, a retired executive at the Iowa grocery chain Hy-Vee, made the opposite political journey. He had been a Republican for decades but left the party in 2016 after Trump secured the nomination. In 2018, he ran for a Republican-held state House of Representatives seat in Dallas County as a moderate Democrat and won.

SEE IOWA ON A6

Change in vote margin 2016-2020



Note: Partisan change was measured as an odds-ratio comparison of voting Democratic or Republican in 2016 vs. 2020.
Source: Edison Research
DAN KEATING AND HANNAH DORMIDO/THE WASHINGTON POST

Nearing the finish line: Republican presidential candidates trudged through subzero temperatures in Iowa ahead of Monday's caucuses. **A3**



LOAY AYYOUB FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

100 days of Israel-Gaza war

Injured children arrive at Nasser Medical Hospital in the city of Khan Younis in southern Gaza on Oct. 24. Photos taken in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank reveal destruction and despair after three months of a war that appears to have no end in sight. **Story, A8-9**

Lead prosecutor in Georgia Trump election case under fire

Nathan Wade's firm was paid more than \$650,000 to handle a job that usually goes to civil servants

BY AMY GARDNER,
HOLLY BAILEY
AND SHAWN BOBURG

In the fall of 2021, Nathan Wade had little experience prosecuting criminal cases in the Atlanta area, serving as a municipal judge who mostly dealt with traffic tickets and running a private practice that focuses on family law and contract disputes.

Then, Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis (D) tapped him to lead the biggest case of her career, a 2½-year investigation that led to charges against former president Donald Trump and more than a dozen co-defendants alleging that they illegally conspired to try to overturn the 2020 election in Georgia.

Willis's decision to hire Wade is now facing enormous scrutiny after one of Trump's co-defendants alleged in a court filing last week that the two prosecutors are lovers who have vacationed



Nathan Wade was chosen to lead Fulton County's case against former president Donald Trump in 2021.

together on Wade's dime in Napa Valley and the Caribbean. The accusations, if true, could present a conflict of interest or could amount to fraud.

The filing contains no proof to substantiate the sensational allegations. But the episode has drawn attention to an arrangement in which Willis's office hired an outside attorney and paid his firm more than \$650,000 over two years to lead a criminal investigation typically managed by civil servants. It also reflects the intense scrutiny facing prosecutors who are seeking to convict a former U.S. president

SEE FULTON ON A16

IN THE NEWS

Running behind GOP presidential hopefuls are all but certain to finish in double digits behind Donald Trump in Iowa, underscoring what has appeared to be a painful slog. **A4**

Russian conscription The experiences of two young men and their fathers reveal a military ravenous for troops to plunge into war. **A11**

THE NATION **Trump's legal** problems have energized evangelical Christians in Iowa, who for years have played a crucial role in determining the outcome of the GOP caucuses in that state. **A5**

THE WORLD **In Denmark,** Europe's longest-serving monarch turned over the throne to her son. **A10**
Nicaragua released two Catholic bishops and 15 priests detained in a crackdown. **A10**

THE ECONOMY **Chris Velazco** explains how to determine which tech gadgets won't end up in your junk drawer. **A13**

THE REGION **The Navy** agreed to seek a dumping permit for the ordnance it fires into the lower Potomac River. **B1**

D.C.'s career and technical high school, where students miss fewer days than their peers, may offer a solution to the city's attendance crisis. **B1**
Virginia lawmakers who will have to vote on a proposed Wizards and Capitals arena said they still have major questions about the plan. **B1**

OBITUARIES **Joyce Randolph**, 99, was an actress best remembered for playing Trixie Norton in the influential skit and sitcom "The Honeymooners." **B4**

STYLE **Monica Hesse** dissects the role of womanhood in Nikki Haley's presidential campaign. **C1**

BUSINESS NEWS.....A13
COMICS.....C6
OPINION PAGES.....A14
OBITUARIES.....B4
TELEVISION.....C5
WORLD NEWS.....A10

CONTENT © 2024
The Washington Post
Year 147, No. 53731

