

# The Boston Globe

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## State makes good on its threat to Milton

Saying communities must follow laws, AG sues after town rejects housing plan

By Andrew Brinker  
GLOBE STAFF

Amid mounting resistance to the state's push to compel cities and towns to build more housing, Attorney General Andrea Campbell on Tuesday sued the Town of Milton for failing to comply with a controversial new zoning law.

After Milton voters this month rejected a state-mandated plan that could have potentially enabled more than 2,400 new homes, Campbell's suit asks a judge to affirm that the 2021 MBTA Communities Act is in fact mandatory and to give Milton three months to pass a new zoning plan that passes muster.

If Milton can't, or won't, Campbell asked the judge to allow multi-family housing by right, fine the town, or appoint someone to draft zoning that does comply.

At the suit's core, the state's top lawyer is asking a judge to confirm Beacon Hill's authority to override the state's long history of local control over zoning.

"We have a job to do, which is to enforce the law in Massachusetts," Campbell said Tuesday. "We expect

our constituents to follow our laws. It's no different for a municipality when it comes to our housing crisis."

The court case could represent a defining moment for Massachusetts' most ambitious housing law in decades. MBTA Communities mandates more than 170 cities and towns served by the MBTA to create zoning that allows for more multi-family housing, with the potential

MILTON, Page A7

## Wu drops proposal to relocate O'Bryant

Critics protested moving exam school out of Roxbury

By Deanna Pan and Christopher Huffaker  
GLOBE STAFF

Caving to months of sustained opposition from city councilors, parents, teachers, and students, Mayor Michelle Wu is pulling the plug on a controversial plan to move the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science to West Roxbury.

Families of O'Bryant students were informed Tuesday night in an email from Wu, Superintendent Mary Skipper, and School Committee Chair Jeri Robinson after news broke of the mayor's decision. Wu is expected to announce the decision on Wednesday, according to multiple city and district officials and staff.

"With a lack of consensus around moving the O'Bryant School to the West Roxbury Educational Complex," the email said, "we are halting those plans indefinitely."

The email did not outline an alternative vision for the O'Bryant or the now-vacant West Roxbury campus.

The city's plan had drawn intense criticism from community members who did not want to see the city's most diverse exam school uprooted from its longtime home in Roxbury — the Black cultural center of Boston — to a mostly white neighborhood that isn't easily accessible by public transit.

The proposed move was announced in June, as

O'BRYANT, Page A7

Waltham purchased the nearly **200-acre property** for about **\$3.7 million**



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

The Waltham City Council has approved a recreation area along part of the former Fernald property.

## Amid plans, those who experienced Fernald refuse to be forgotten

They want a say about what site of troubled Waltham school will become



LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF

'I don't think we were respected. You didn't have any choices.'

REGGIE CLARK, who left Fernald in 1969

By John Hilliard

GLOBE STAFF

WALTHAM — Reggie Clark is 70, but memories of his childhood years at the Walter E. Fernald Developmental Center during the 1960s are painfully clear.

He considers himself a survivor of the now-closed state school in Waltham that was the home to generations of people with developmental or physical disabilities. Patients weren't allowed to leave the grounds, Clark said, and staff would threaten him with punishment if he ignored their orders.

"I don't think we were respected," said Clark, who left Fernald in 1969 and now lives in Leominster. "You didn't have any choices because the nurses that were there . . . told you that you had to do it, or you were put in isolation if you didn't."

A decade after the City of Waltham bought the property from the state, the legacy of the Fernald school is at the center of a fraught debate.

The Waltham City Council in December approved about \$9.5 million to build a recreation area along a swath of the 200-acre property near Trapelo Road that would include a minigolf course, train rides, a splash park, athletic fields, a labyrinth, and a skating track, according to council filings.

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## Woman guilty of trafficking cocaine still ran day care

State regulators missed case in background checks

By Shelley Murphy

GLOBE STAFF

In the fall of 2019, Jenny Vicente-Desoto was indicted on federal drug-trafficking charges in Rhode Island for allegedly orchestrating cocaine deals from the day-care center she operated out of her apartment in Boston's South End. Yet, she was allowed to continue running the center until last month — even after pleading guilty — because Massachusetts regulators twice failed to discover the drug case during criminal background checks when her license was renewed.

Prosecutors alleged that Vicente-Desoto "provided a safe haven" for drug distribution from Marjeli Family Day Care at 623 Harrison Ave., and served as "a facilitator" who identified customers for a sprawling drug organization that funneled cocaine and fentanyl from Mexico to Massachusetts

DAY CARE, Page A8

## Biden, Trump win again, but . . .

Meaningful numbers of Democrats and Republicans in Michigan voted against them, as the president faced a movement to choose "uncommitted" as a protest against his support for Israel. **A6.**

**Richard Abath, the guard who opened the door to two thieves who robbed the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 1990, died at his Vermont home. B1.**

**Congressional leaders said they are optimistic about averting a partial government shutdown at the end of the week. A2.**

## 'Freedom Slate' aims to take over state GOP

By Matt Stout and Emma Platoff

GLOBE STAFF

A year after the Massachusetts Republican Party took steps to move on from its brash, controversial former leader, the power struggle for the state GOP rages on.

A slate of candidates touted as the party's true "conservative" options is seeking to win control of the state GOP's governing body through contests that could reshape the deeply divided party — and threaten to undermine its new leader, just a year into her tenure.

The battle is playing out in a little-watched corner of Massachusetts' March 5 presidential primary ballot: the races for state committee, the 80-seat panel that picks the state party's leader, oversees its finances, and helps set the tone.

For years, the state party has been bitterly split between conservatives led by former party

MASSACHUSETTS GOP, Page A6

## A DAY TO CELEBRATE



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Boston, which is home to the second-largest Dominican population in the state, held a Dominican Independence Day breakfast on Tuesday. Boston Fire District Chief Jose Estrella (left) and Oniguel Sanchez Ramirez held flags for a picture. Three Dominican city councilors — Julia Mejia, Enrique Pepén, and Henry Santana — hosted the event. **B1.**



### Spray point

**Wednesday:** Showers, windy. High 53-58. Low 27-32.

**Thursday:** Much colder. High 34-39. Low 24-29.

High tide: 1:22 a.m., 1:41 p.m.

Sunrise: 6:22 Sunset: 5:32

**Weather and Comics, G6-7. Obituaries, C10-11.**

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