

The Boston Globe

Serving our community since 1872

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

GOP's shift set stage for McConnell to go

Will vacate leadership as party aligns fully with Trump; Democrats fear the worst

By Jim Puzzanghera

GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — During 17 years as Senate Republican leader, Mitch McConnell often infuriated Democrats, never more so than when he refused to consider a Supreme Court nominee from President Barack Obama in an election year but then allowed President Donald Trump to fill a high court seat that opened even closer to

Election Day.

But McConnell, of Kentucky, still was viewed as a legislator Democrats could deal with — who was willing to risk Trump's wrath by occasionally standing up to him. So while McConnell's surprise announcement Wednesday that he would leave his leadership position after the November election elicited glee from Trump-aligned senators who saw McConnell as an ob-

stacle in the Make America Great Again movement, Democrats took no such pleasure.

Instead, Democrats, who considered McConnell as the only remaining adult in Republican congressional leadership, expressed a feeling of dread, especially given the inexperience of House Speaker Mike Johnson.

"I'm no Mitch McConnell fan,



McConnell will leave his post in November.

►Congressional leaders agree to another stopgap spending bill to head off a partial shutdown. A2.

but his replacement could be a lot worse," Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren said. "I am concerned that the next Republican leader in the Senate will just bend a knee to whatever Donald Trump wants, no matter how crazy it is."

McConnell was a Trump ally during most of his presidency. But they split sharply after the Jan. 6 insurrection, with McConnell call-

MCCONNELL, Page A7

Trump's immunity claim will be heard

High court sets arguments for April on charges of trying to overturn election

By Adam Liptak

NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to decide whether former president Donald Trump is immune from prosecution on charges of plotting to overturn the 2020 election, further delaying his criminal trial as it considers the matter.

The justices scheduled arguments for the week of April 22 and said proceedings in the trial court would remain frozen, handing at least an interim victory to Trump. His litigation strategy in all of the criminal prosecutions against him has consisted, in large part, of trying to slow things down.

The Supreme Court's response to Trump put the justices in the unusual position of deciding another aspect of the former president's fate: whether and how quickly Trump could go to trial. That, in turn, could affect his election prospects and, should he be reelected, his ability to scuttle the prosecution.

The timing of the argument was a sort of compromise. Jack Smith, the special counsel overseeing the federal prosecutions of Trump, had asked the court to move more quickly, requesting that the justices hear the case in March.

Trump, by contrast, had asked the court to pro-

SUPREME COURT, Page A6

Biden points finger at GOP on immigration

Takes harsher tone after bipartisan bill blocked

By Jim Puzzanghera and Tal Kopan

GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — Despite consistent Republican attacks on immigration over the past three years, President Biden largely avoided talking about the issue in public.

But that's all changed since congressional conservatives torpedoed a bipartisan bill this month that sought to reduce the historic numbers of migrants crossing the border and assist the overwhelmed communities receiving them.

Biden is now playing offense, painting Republicans as the obstacle to border security and asylum reforms. He's been buoyed by a special election victory this month by a Democrat in a New York swing district who ran on the immigration bill, and by polls showing the issue rising to one of voters' top concerns.

The president will head to the border in Texas on Thursday to push for the bill's passage and blame Republicans and the party's presidential front-runner, Donald Trump, for blocking it.

Biden has adopted a much harsher tone on the

MIGRANTS, Page A7



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

At certain points, Blue Hill Avenue is as wide as seven lanes, with cars, buses, and pedestrians competing for space.

A smoother ride coming at last to Blue Hill Ave.

City says changes will cut commutes in half

By Taylor Dolven

GLOBE STAFF

Within two years, a notoriously traffic-snarled and dangerous 3-mile stretch of Blue Hill Avenue through Mattapan and Dorchester could start to become a vision of transit efficiency. Buses will soon cruise down dedicated center lanes, the city announced Wednesday, where passengers will board and exit via raised platforms — a sight common across cities in Latin America and Asia.

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu announced the \$44 million project, which

would reconfigure the main thoroughfare through the heart of Boston's Black community, after at least 15 years of hand-wringing, debates, and proposals from different administrations in City Hall. The goals are ambitious: to speed up bus trips, prevent car crashes on a street known for frequent disruptions, provide more shade, and make the street safer for pedestrians, the city said.

Right now, the trip can take as long as an hour, the city said, but predicts that the redesign should make the trip from

BLUE HILL AVENUE, Page A10

Future bus lanes



SOURCE: City of Boston, Blue Hill Avenue transportation action plan

GLOBE STAFF

After dropping O'Bryant move, city seeks other ways to reach goal

By Deanna Pan and Christopher Huffaker

GLOBE STAFF

Last summer, Mayor Michelle Wu laid out an ambitious years-long proposal for reforming Boston's high schools, promising tens of millions of dollars in new investments in buildings and programs to create "a generational change" for the district's students.

But now the city has killed the cornerstone of the plan: moving the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science from the Roxbury campus it shares with Madison Park Technical Vocational High School so both schools could accommodate more students and better programming. In an email Tuesday night to parents of O'Bryant and Madison Park students, Wu and district leaders said they were "halting those plans indefinitely"

following months of vociferous community opposition.

It's unclear how this decision will affect the city's earlier pledge to invest more resources in the O'Bryant School, where students and staff have complained for years about the cramped and crumbling conditions of their classrooms.

Speaking to the School Committee Wednesday evening, Superintendent Mary Skipper emphasized that the district is still going ahead with plans to redevelop Madison Park, with construction slated to begin in the summer of 2025.

"There is strong support for a renovated Madison Park campus," Skipper said. "I want to assure everyone that we're moving forward with this project."

Skipper acknowledged that keeping the O'Bryant at its current location will

O'BRYANT, Page A10



A flying leap

Thursday: Windy, much colder. High 33-38. Low 24-29.

Friday: Warming up again. High 43-48. Low 34-39.

High tide: 1:57 a.m., 2:20 p.m. Sunrise: 6:21 Sunset: 5:33

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

VOL. 305, NO. 60

*

Suggested retail price \$3.50



BILL BRETT/FILE 2012

STACY WAKEFIELD DIES — The widow of longtime Red Sox pitcher Tim Wakefield was fighting pancreatic cancer when he died of brain cancer in October. She was 53. C1.

Gabrielle R. Wolohojian, who faced questions as a former partner of Governor Maura Healey, was approved for a seat on the SJC. B1.

Americans over 65 should get a second dose of the latest COVID booster, a CDC advisory panel recommended. B1.

A meeting of the School Committee called to address violence at Brockton High School ended abruptly with a confrontation between the mayor and superintendent. B1.

Can a restaurant charge you a cancellation fee when you're in a hospital? What you should know, in The Fine Print. D1.

The business community is squaring off with teachers unions again, this time over passing the MCAS test. D1.