



Trump’s HHS picks are largely untested

Would-be health leaders lack outbreak expertise, have questioned vaccines

BY LENA H. SUN,
DAN DIAMOND,
RACHEL ROUBEIN
AND FENIT NIRAPPIL

When the next pandemic strikes, Americans will again depend on a cadre of senior health officials to steer the nation’s response and reassure the public. But the team rapidly assembled by President-elect Donald Trump is largely untested, possesses scant infectious-disease expertise and has often questioned vaccines and other interventions overseen by the agencies they have been tapped to lead.

Marty Makary, a Johns Hopkins surgeon and writer who is Trump’s pick to lead the Food and Drug Administration, has been among the agency’s most prominent critics, arguing its response to the coronavirus pandemic was heavy-handed and bureaucratic. Dave Weldon, chosen to lead the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a former GOP congressman who pushed debunked claims about vaccines and their safety. Janette Nesheiwat, a family and emergency medicine physician selected to be surgeon general, is best known as a Fox News commentator.

Their boss would be Robert F. Kennedy Jr., whom Trump tapped to lead the Department of Health Human Services and who has repeated debunked claims about vaccines.

The emerging team of Trump health leaders have promised to tackle diabetes, heart disease and other chronic illnesses that they say have been generally overlooked. But their predecessors —

SEE TRUMP ON A4

War fatigue mounts amid strain on Israeli forces

BY SHIRA RUBIN

TEL AVIV — Ari Krauss, a reservist in the Israeli military’s elite Golan Brigade, said he spent his days inside Gaza exploding underground tunnels. At night, he recalled, he would join the other fathers in uniform on a sandy hill, trying to get enough cell-phone bars to FaceTime with his infant daughter.

His day job seemed like a distant memory. Early in the war, the brigade sent a letter to his company apologizing for drafting him but committing to no date for his full return. Being a soldier, the letter made clear, was now his main calling.

“Once upon a time, I had my high-tech career and my family life, and I had to strike the balance,” said Krauss, who spent four months battling Hamas militants in Gaza and is preparing to return next month. “Now I have to enter into that equation the fact that I am disappearing for weeks, or months, on end.”

Krauss’s dilemma, or some version of it, is shared by some 80,000 Israeli reservists who are planning to leave, or have already left, families, jobs and studies to serve on the front lines of Israel’s grinding wars in Gaza

SEE ISRAEL ON A16



JOHN MCDONNELL FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Jalen Brooks and the Cowboys beat the Commanders, 34-26, on Sunday after Austin Seibert, right, missed a crucial extra point.

Commanders’ coaster goes off the rails

Washington can learn from wacky loss to Cowboys filled with heroics and heartbreak



Barry Svrluga

The final absurdity, long after what had been a forgettable game climbed completely through the looking glass, will be Austin Seibert’s never-had-a-chance extra point. That was the point that would have allowed the Washington Commanders to somehow tie the Dallas Cowboys with 21 seconds remaining Sunday at Northwest Stadium.

Except, there’s this: “It doesn’t come down to one play,” said just about everybody in a devastated Commanders locker room. Attribute that line to Dan Quinn, the coach who must sort through what happened Sunday — and keep his fraying team together.

What matters in the standings and in the psyche of Commanders fans is that they lost a 34-26 decision to the hated Cowboys, a game that went from boring to bizarre in light speed. They have now lost three in a row.

That’s important, and given how the Cowboys had been playing — five straight losses, the last two in blowouts that suggested they were in meltdown mode — Sunday’s result could linger, affecting Washington’s chances for the playoffs and its seeding if it gets there.

But there’s also another takeaway: What the actual heck was *that*?

Consider the following buffet of oddities, all of which were contained in the last 3 minutes 2 seconds of

SEE SVRLUGA ON A2

More in Sports: A stunning loss to the stumbling Cowboys leaves the Commanders seeking answers. D1

For moms, a palace of postpartum pampering

Common in South Korea, postnatal rest facilities are still a rare and expensive luxury in the U.S.

BY BRITTANY SHAMMAS

After hours upon hours of labor, an unplanned C-section, an impossibly long walk to the car and a jittery drive away from the hospital, Charlotte Campbell felt like most new moms: Overwhelmed. Exhausted. Anxious.

Then she and her husband pulled up to a sleek Northern Virginia hotel, took the elevator to the 19th floor and entered Sanu Postnatal Retreat.

As the Arlington couple checked in this month for a week-long stay, doulas stood ready to whisk away their newborn daughter, Audrey, to a round-the-clock nursery. Staff encouraged Campbell to sit down and take off her shoes. Before long, the first-time mother, 36, was sipping a cup of tea and soaking her feet in a lavender salt bath.

“From that moment on, I just felt like this was the best decision I ever made,” Campbell, a partner at a D.C. law firm, said five days into her stay.

SEE POSTPARTUM ON A6



SHEDRICK PELT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Charlotte Campbell holds her newborn daughter, Audrey, at the Sanu Postpartum Retreat in the Watermark Hotel in Tysons. “I just felt like this was the best decision I ever made,” Campbell said.

Musk’s ‘DOGE’ girds for battle

PLANNING INVOLVES MANY IN HIS CIRCLE

Some see far-fetched bid for massive federal cuts

BY ELIZABETH DWOSKIN,
JEFF STEIN,
JACOB BOGAGE
AND FAIZ SIDDIQUI

Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy are interviewing job candidates and seeking advice from experts in Washington and Silicon Valley — pushing a sweeping vision for the “Department of Government Efficiency” past the realm of memes and viral posts into potential real-world disruption.

Tapped by President-elect Donald Trump to lead an advisory panel to find “drastic” cuts to the federal government, the billionaire “DOGE” leaders have spent the past week in Washington and at Mar-a-Lago, seeking staff and interviewing seasoned Washington operators, legal specialists and top tech leaders, according to five people familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to reflect private deliberations.

Both of them lobbied for Russell Vought, Trump’s pick to run the White House budget office, who is close with Ramaswamy, several people said. The men see Vought, who is enthusiastic about their arguments to rely on an expansive and boundary-pushing view of executive power to reform the government, as a key potential ally.

Top Musk surrogates from his business empire — including private equity executive Antonio

SEE DOGE ON A5

GOP may try to defang consumer watchdog

BY TONY ROMM

President-elect Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress are weighing vast changes to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, seeking to limit the powers and funding of a federal watchdog agency formed in the wake of the 2008 banking crisis.

The early discussions align the GOP with banks, credit card companies, mortgage lenders and other large financial institutions, which have chafed at the CFPB under Democratic leadership and sought to invalidate many of its recent regulations, including its efforts to spare consumers from what the Biden administration calls “junk fees.”

By design, the CFPB has a broad mandate to protect Americans from unfair, deceptive or predatory financial practices. Its current Democratic leader, Rohit Chopra, has been aggressive, pursuing a host of rules to shield people from medical debt, make it easier for them to switch banks, and limit the fees they face from overdrawing their checking accounts.

Republicans have long opposed these policies, blasting the CFPB for harming businesses through regulatory overreach.

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IN THE NEWS

Eritrea’s embassy How a repressive African country with a ruling party under sanctions freely raises money in the United States. A10

A summit of Schlossbergs In a look-alike contest befitting the nation’s capital, hundreds gathered to judge contestants’ resemblance to the only grandson of John F. Kennedy. B1

THE NATION
Leaders of No Labels are undertaking a legal effort aimed at exposing the secret machinations they think led to the demise of the centrist group’s planned third-party presidential bid. A3

Dec. 2 could be a big and revealing day in Donald Trump’s legal cases, from D.C. to New York to Atlanta. A4
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A court error revealed details of a Montgomery County police officer’s disciplinary records after he sued to block their release. B1

As a new hospital prepares to open next year in Southeast Washington, the painstaking work of staffing up is underway. B1
The family of a 22-year-old restaurant worker found dead in the Potomac River earlier this month is looking for answers. B1

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Kendrick Lamar’s new album is easily his most disciplined and direct — and maybe his most profound, too, Chris Richards writes. C1
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