

# The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

RE V1 V2 V3 V4



Partly sunny 45/35 • Tomorrow: Partly sunny, breezy 57/39 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2024 • \$3

## Court sides with Naval Academy in admissions

Race-conscious policies fulfill need for diverse office corps, judge rules

BY SUSAN SVRLUGA

The U.S. Naval Academy can continue to use race-conscious admissions policies, a federal judge ruled Friday in a closely watched case that followed last year's Supreme Court decision rejecting the use of affirmative action in college admissions.

In U.S. District Court in Baltimore, Senior District Judge Richard D. Bennett ruled that the academy had established that a diverse officer corps is important to national security, and that the academy is a vital pipeline to that corps.

The group that brought the case, Students for Fair Admissions, immediately said it would appeal the decision to the appellate court and, if needed, to the Supreme Court.

"It is our hope that the U.S. military academies ultimately will be compelled to follow the Supreme Court's prohibition of race in college admissions," Edward Blum, the president of SFFA, who has propelled multiple cases regarding race and ethnicity to the Supreme Court, wrote in an email.

Last year, the Supreme Court rejected race-conscious affirmative action in college admissions. The ruling was focused on Harvard and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill but upended more than 40 years of legal precedent, changed practices at selective universities across

SEE ACADEMY ON A5

## N.Y. slaying sends a chill among ranks of executives

CEOs, often the targets of the public's venom, face rising risk in internet age

BY DANIEL GILBERT AND SHANNON NAJMABADI

The targeted killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, a powerful executive walking alone on a New York sidewalk, is forcing a broad examination of security practices by corporations whose leaders are frequently subject to threats and internet vitriol.

Thompson, 50, was reportedly the subject of threats before he was fatally shot Wednesday morning outside the midtown Manhattan hotel where UnitedHealthcare was holding its annual investor conference. New York police said Thompson was not accompanied by a security detail at the time he was shot by an unidentified gunman, who remained the subject of a manhunt Friday.

The reported threats, and publicly available information about the event, should have "necessitated some level of protection," said Jonathan Wackrow, chief operating officer for Teneo Risk and a former Secret Service agent. "The question remains, why did he not have it?"

SEE SECURITY ON A10

**UnitedHealth:** Slain CEO faced litigation, legislative threats. A10



GHAITH ALSAYED/AP

Opposition fighters ride through the streets of Hama, Syria, on Friday, a day after they took over the city from government security forces.

## Rebel advance threatens Russia's foothold in Syria

Putin may lack resources to save Assad again as he did in 2015 intervention

BY ROBYN DIXON

The lightning advance of rebels in Syria and their rapid capture of the cities of Aleppo and Hama are threatening one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's proudest achievements, his 2015 military intervention to prop up President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Almost a decade later, however, Moscow is embroiled in a massive land war in Europe and analysts question whether it has the resources to save Assad again, even as it continues to pledge



MUHAMMAD HAJ KADOUR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A truck pulls the head of a toppled statue of the late Syrian president Hafez al-Assad through the streets of Hama on Friday.

Abu Mohammed al-Jolani: Islamist leader steps out of the shadows. A7

support verbally.

"We are in constant dialogue with our Syrian friends, with Damascus," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday. "And depending on the assessment of the situation, it will be possible to talk about the degree of assistance that is necessary for the Syrian authorities to cope with the militants and eliminate this threat."

At risk here is not just Russia's prestige but its prized military foothold in the eastern Mediterranean region: the naval base of Tartus and, farther north, the Hmeimim air base, both with 49-year leases received after Russia's regime-saving intervention.

Russia has maintained a significant military presence in Syria and stepped up its airstrikes in recent days, with human rights

SEE SYRIA ON A7

## Plan to relocate federal jobs has familiar doubts

Trump to expand effort that critics say disrupted work, gutted agencies

BY TODD C. FRANKEL

President-elect Donald Trump and his supporters say they want to move 100,000 federal jobs out of Washington to places that they describe as less expensive, closer to stakeholders and, as Trump put it in a campaign video, "filled with patriots who love America."

Trump tried to move federal jobs out of Washington during his first term — on a much smaller scale — and that resulted in mass departures of experienced workers, questionable cost savings and broad interruptions to government work.

In 2019, the Trump administration said it would move the Bureau of Land Management headquarters and its nearly 600 jobs to the small city of Grand Junction, Colo. When the new offices opened a year later, just three of the bureau's employees walked in the door.

About 40 more were assigned to other offices out West. But nearly 90 percent of headquar-

## Ban or sale of TikTok upheld

CHALLENGE OF LAW REJECTED ON APPEAL

High court petition likely as Jan. 19 deadline looms

BY EVA DOU, DREW HARWELL AND CRISTIANO LIMA-STRONG

A federal appeals court has turned away a challenge to a fast-approaching nationwide ban of the short-video app TikTok unless it divests from Chinese ownership, placing national security before free-speech concerns and bringing the app's 170 million U.S. users closer to losing access to the wildly popular platform.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit on Friday sided with the Justice Department, which argued that the U.S. government has the authority to ban TikTok based on the national security risk that the app could be pressured by the Chinese government to expose Americans' data or influence what they see. TikTok's parent, ByteDance, is based in China.

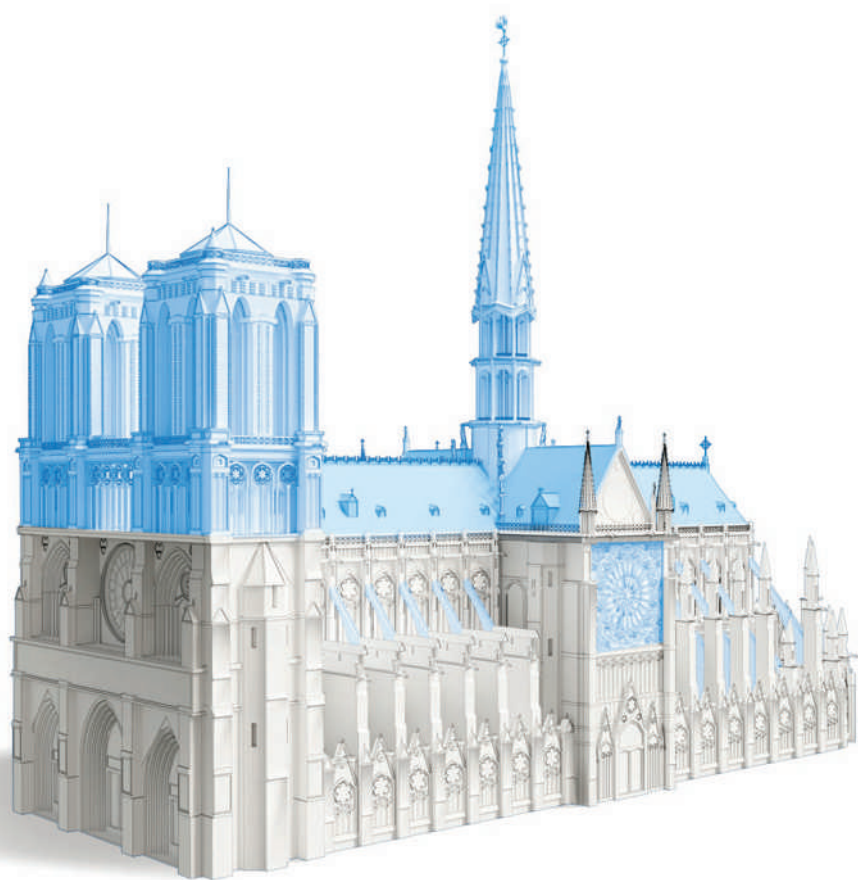
TikTok had argued to the three-judge panel, unsuccessfully, that the ban must be struck down for infringement on the free-speech rights of the app's users and owners under the First Amendment.

"The Government has offered persuasive evidence demonstrating that the Act is narrowly tailored to protect national security," the court wrote in its opinion.

TikTok is expected to ask the Supreme Court to take up the case before the sale deadline, Jan. 19, or to first request that all the judges on the appeals court review the panel's decision.

"The Supreme Court has an

SEE TIKTOK ON A11



AARON STECKELBERG/THE WASHINGTON POST

After years of recovery, Notre Dame is reopening. Take a look inside the painstaking restoration. A8

## IN THE NEWS

**November job numbers** Employers created 227,000 positions as unemployment ticked up, but economists warn the data could suggest an artificially strong labor market. A11

**In Pearl Harbor's wake, equality** Gen. George C. Marshall created a wartime team of women trained to defend the homeland. B1

**THE NATION** The USDA ordered the nation's milk be tested for bird flu after it was detected in herds. A2  
**In Congress,** Democrats proposed extending Affordable Care Act subsidies for a year. A3

**THE WORLD** Syrian rebels have sought recently to soften their image, but many in Aleppo's dwindling Christian community fear they will revert to their repressive Islamist roots. A6

**THE ECONOMY** Donald Trump and others say people are getting "de-banked" over politics, but are they? A9  
**The FCC has drafted** a plan to regulate the cybersecurity of telecommunications companies in response to a massive Chinese hack. A12

**THE REGION** In testimony, a former D.C. police officer said he didn't alert the Proud Boys leader to a warrant before he was caught. B1  
**Amid a buzz** about Donald Trump issuing pardons, judges in Jan. 6 cases stressed the need to preserve the truth of that day's events. B1

**STYLE** A brief holiday soiree on Capitol Hill offered Easy Cheese and another 15 minutes of fame for George Santos. C1

**SPORTS** Oregon boasts one of the most well-funded NIL operations in the nation. The backing of Phil Knight helps. D1

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WORLD NEWS.....A6

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