

# The Boston Globe

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“We need to be smart with how we spend our money — your money,” Governor Maura Healey said.

► Healey proposes plan to boost literacy. **B1.**



BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF

## Healey calls for more spending

In State of Commonwealth, she says she’ll bolster T, address housing crisis

By Matt Stout and Samantha J. Gross  
GLOBE STAFF

Governor Maura Healey on Wednesday outlined an ambitious second-year agenda in the face of fiscal headwinds, pledging to ramp up spending on the MBTA, to help steel Massachu-

setts against climate disasters, and to overhaul how the state teaches children to read.

Healey sprinkled the promises throughout her first State of the Commonwealth address, a primetime platform during which she pressed her fellow Democrats to “go big now” to

help residents stretched thin by the high cost of housing.

The first-term Democrat laid out a series of proposals, urging the Legislature to embrace universal pre-K across the state and touting an effort to make Massachusetts a world leader in the climate tech industry.

She simultaneously cast her administration as prepared to tackle the state’s most stubborn problems — soaring child care costs, a beleaguered public transportation system, and outdated literacy instruction — at a time when Massachusetts is con-

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## Congressional battles have a familiar ring

Contentious issues hardly changed in years

By Tal Kopan  
GLOBE STAFF

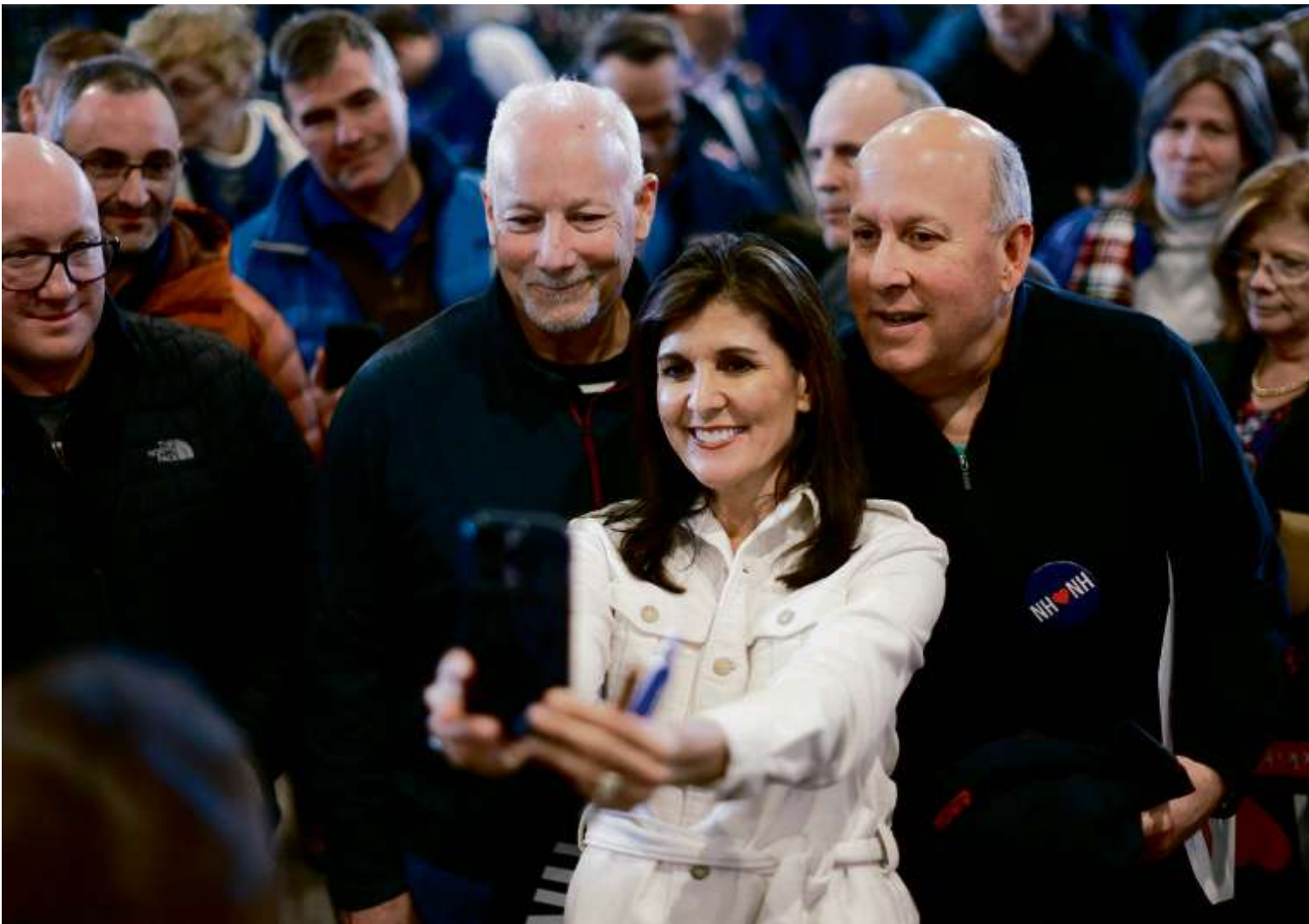
WASHINGTON — Since lawmakers returned to the Capitol earlier this month, congressional hearings veered into fights about a “Russia collusion hoax” and the Jan. 6 insurrection. They’re sputtering over a rapidly approaching government funding deadline, and House Republicans are debating whether to hold the president’s son in contempt as they pursue multiple possible impeachments with massive political undertones.

Sound familiar?

As the new 2024 election year kicks off, members of Congress are describing a sense of “Groundhog Day” as they retread the fights they’ve been having, in some cases, for the better part of a decade.

“It’s sort of déjà vu all over again,” said Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, a key proponent of the theory that Donald Trump may have violated the “emoluments clause” of the Constitution in his business dealings with foreign entities while in office. Blumenthal defended Democrats’ continued hounding of the

**CONGRESS, Page A8**



JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

Nikki Haley took a selfie during a campaign stop on Wednesday at the American Legion in Rochester, N.H.

## From door to door, working to give Haley her best N.H. shot

Koch-funded network brings in help to try to stop Trump

By Samantha J. Gross  
GLOBE STAFF

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Justin Wilson checked the custom GPS app on his phone as he pulled his silver Mazda alongside a snowbank and prepared to hit the next round of houses in a quiet residential neighborhood in New Hampshire’s most populous city.

His mission: To persuade those who are undecided — or open to changing their minds — to vote for Nikki Haley in the presidential primary on Tuesday.

Wilson is among the dozens of staffers canvassing for Haley’s campaign on behalf of Americans for Prosperity Action, or AFP, an influential political network led by conservative billionaire Charles Koch that endorsed Haley in November — the group’s first-ever such endorsement and a bid to stop former president Donald Trump.



JIM DAVIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Justin Wilson, shown talking with Amanda Scalingi in Manchester, was campaigning for Haley on behalf of Americans for Prosperity Action, or AFP.

This week, Wilson’s ranks have multiplied, as 100 full-time employees from 37 states flew in for the crucial week between the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary.

It is a do-or-die moment for the former South Carolina governor, whose rise in New Hampshire in recent polls has given the Republican primary the closest thing to competitive energy in a nominating contest so far dominated by Trump. She needs a strong showing to gain momentum in later primary states, where Trump is even more dominant, many analysts say.

In her home state of South Carolina, where she served as governor from 2011 to 2017, Haley trails Trump by 29 points, according to a recent poll. But if she can beat him in New Hampshire, or come close, the thinking goes, she can ride that momentum and persuade voters in later states to take a second look.

The Koch network seems to

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## A NEW TEAM



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

Saying “I’m not trying to be Bill” in reference to his predecessor, Jerod Mayo was introduced as Patriots head coach Wednesday. Mayo joked with team owner Robert Kraft and referred to him as “Thunder.” **C1.**

## With MBTA under scrutiny, a story of money badly spent

By Matt Stout  
GLOBE STAFF

In the fall of 2018, the MBTA was on the hunt for “creative ideas” to solve some of the agency’s stubborn problems. So, the T’s then-general manager approved a no-bid deal with the goal of finding a company that could — of all things — help improve how the T solicits bids.

What followed, state investigators found, is a story of how the T spent \$75,000 and got virtually nothing for it.

The T’s little-publicized agreement with the startup accelerator MassChallenge did not deliver “any discernible benefits” for the T, nor could the agency produce many records about the actual

deal, the state inspector general’s office wrote in a letter to T officials detailing its findings.

The \$75,000 payment to MassChallenge represents a tiny fraction of the billions the agency spends each year running trains, subway cars, and buses across Greater Boston and beyond. But it had also committed to providing as much as \$250,000 in no-cost advertising for MassChallenge, which, had it capitalized on the offer, would have pushed the deal to \$325,000. Ultimately, the nonprofit did not, T officials said.

The agreement, and the T’s failure to benefit from it, also offers a small window into the dysfunction state investi-

**MBTA, Page A9**

**Cancer deaths in the United States are falling**, though the number of new cases ticked up last year. **A2.**

**Legal proceedings against 28 suspects in the brothels scandal were postponed** after lawyers argued for privacy. **B1.**

**Iran said it is “a missile power in the world”** after hitting targets in neighboring Pakistan, Iraq, and Syria. **A4.**



A boot time

**Thursday:** Windy, cold. High 30-35. Low 23-28.

**Friday:** Light snow. High 26-33. Low 14-19.

**Weather and Comics, D5-6. Obituaries, C9-10.**

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