

The Boston Globe

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MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2024

On harassment, Beacon Hill advances, retreats

Training mandated, but a basic watchdog post is left unfilled

By Samantha J. Gross

GLOBE STAFF

Five years ago, after allegations of harassment and scandal erupted on Beacon Hill, the Massachusetts House touted new safeguards and protections for employees, including most prominently the creation of an Equal Employment Opportunity office to address discrimination and harassment complaints.

In recent days, the House announced it is requiring mandatory harassment and discrimination training for all employees, a move that fol-

lows years of complaints from rank-and-file House staff, who are attempting to unionize in part due to these safety issues.

But the office that was meant to address these complaints has remained leaderless for nearly two years, and House leaders quietly removed several references to the office in an updated employee handbook distributed recently to staff, prompting concerns that House leaders are minimizing a post they once heralded as a way to address the chamber's past problems.

While the mandatory harassment training is a welcome update, staff say, they remain troubled about leaders' failure to act on the broader concern that if House staffers feel unsafe

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CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

The State House office that was meant to address complaints of sexual harassment has been leaderless for nearly two years.

“There is a history of harassment and staff not being taken seriously in that building.”

MARK MARTINEZ, *Former staffer*

Netanyahu in political vise over truce plan

Hostage families back bid; right-wing allies pledge to abandon him if he accepts it

By Shira Rubin and Lior Soroka

WASHINGTON POST

TEL AVIV — Political pressure is mounting on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as more than 100,000 Israelis flooded the streets of this city on Saturday night demanding he accept a US-brokered deal for a cease-fire in Gaza while members of his far-right coalition threatened that any such move would bring down the government.

The proposal, revealed in a surprise speech by President Biden on Friday, calls for a six-week pause in fighting, during which hostages taken from Israel by Hamas would be released in phases in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, and there would be a significant boost in aid shipments to the Gaza Strip. The key sticking point — the same one that has doomed past negotiations — is how and when the war will officially end.

Netanyahu's office said Friday that it had “authorized” the text of the proposal. On Saturday, however, it added “Israel's conditions for ending the war have not changed” and any deal that does not allow for the complete destruction of Hamas, the release of all hostages, and the end of Gaza's security threat to Israel was a “non-starter.”

Hamas said Friday that it viewed Biden's

MIDEAST, Page A6



CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

Kevin Perez (left), 19, of Guatemala looked over paperwork with his friend Eugenio Gonzales outside the immigration court at the John F. Kennedy Federal Building in Boston.

HOPE, ANGUISH, AND SO MUCH WAITING

A look at past immigration surges

For centuries, Massachusetts has been a landing spot for people fleeing hunger and persecution. B1.

A backlog of over 150,000 cases jams immigration courts in Mass. Yet each person awaiting resolution packs own story.

By Danny McDonald

GLOBE STAFF

Tacked to a wall on the third floor of John F. Kennedy Federal Building are forms and brochures that hint at the desperation that brought so many from a distant life to this portal to the American Dream.

Labels on the paperwork reflect the life-changing stakes this place holds for them.

*Did you miss your hearing?
Do you just want to go home?
I'm afraid to go home (Asylum).*

Welcome to Boston Immigration Court.

Every week, scores of people pass through the metal detectors downstairs and wait as their cases inch through the nation's immigration system, which

critics from across the political spectrum agree is a broken mess. Here, the newcomers are confronted by the morass in the most tangible way. Some have been in the United States for years, others just days. Nearly all are seeking to stay in the United States legally. The avenues are various, the system complicated, the cases protracted.

A backlog, which reached more than 150,000 cases in Massachusetts, continues to congest immigration courts here and across the country. And everyone waiting their turn to enter a courtroom has a story. Many are fleeing violence, social upheaval, political unrest, or crippled economies back home. Some look jaded, overwhelmed, or suspicious of the entire process; others, de-

IMMIGRATION COURT, Page A7

Servers push for minimum wage at restaurants

Foes: Ballot initiative adds to challenges for eateries

By Suchita Nayar

GLOBE STAFF

When Estefania Galvis first worked as a restaurant server in New York City five years ago, she put in long hours for which she made anywhere from nothing to \$375 a week, based on the whims of a boss who paid her mostly from the tips she'd earned.

Then Galvis, 29, switched jobs to an establishment that offered her fixed eight-hour shifts at \$15 an hour. Her weekly paycheck was \$400, after taxes, with tips on top of that.

“Knowing how much money you're going to account for every week, no matter if it rains and the restaurant's slow, that was super important,” said Galvis, who emigrated from Bogota, Colombia, when she was 15, and has lived in Boston since July 2023.

Galvis is leading the Massachusetts campaign for the labor-

RESTAURANTS, Page A10

43 states

paid less than full minimum wage in 2023 to servers, using tips to make up the balance.

6 million

restaurant workers lost their jobs as a result of COVID. Two-thirds of those were denied unemployment, according to One Fair Wage.

1 million

workers have not returned to the industry, which now faces an immense staffing crisis.

A race to stay ahead of bird flu spread

Tufts testing center tracks outbreak across boundaries — and species

By Alex Viveros

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

NORTH GRAFTON — Just before 11 a.m. on a recent Thursday, Dr. Maureen Murray reached into a small cardboard box to pull out her next patient. She removed layers of a soft, leopard-patterned blanket and revealed the tiny face of a baby possum. A local wildlife rehabilitation center had called Murray's team earlier that morning to report a small cut on its upper back.

The animal looked around the fluorescent-lit intake room of the Tufts Wildlife Clinic, then opened its mouth as veterinarians swabbed the inside of its cheek.

That swab, along with ones from an injured turkey and a Cooper's hawk with a damaged wing — all brought in that same morning by outside collaborators who work with wildlife — was then whisked across campus to the lab of virologist Jonathan Runstadler. His team at Tufts' Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine would test the swabs for the deadly strain of bird flu that has led to the deaths of tens of millions of birds and infected dozens of mammal species around the world, including dairy cows.



ALEX VIVEROS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Dr. Maureen Murray used a swab to test an injured Cooper's hawk for bird flu at Tufts Wildlife Clinic in North Grafton.

WILDLIFE, Page A5



The ‘aahs’ have it

Monday: Partly sunny.
High 73-78, low 55-60.

Tuesday: More sun.
High 65-70, low 55-60.

Sunrise: 5:09. Sunset: 8:16.

Weather and comics, D4-5.

Obituaries, C10.

VOL. 305, NO. 155

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Suggested retail price
\$4.00



The case against Hunter Biden, which opens Monday, was triggered in part by a family dispute. A2.

A massive expansion of the Boys & Girls Club in Lowell has a lofty goal: End generational poverty. B1.

Team of Black women business owners sued the US Department of the Treasury over financial requirements that they say hinder investing in small businesses. B1.

A Red Sox comeback was wasted as the Tigers took home the win in extra-innings. C1.

The old power plant on the Mystic River in Everett, once one of the workhorses of the power grid, is shutting down for good. D1.