



ELECTION 2024

## Split over abortion in Iowa, N.H. shapes race

Differing feelings in two states have GOP hopefuls attempting balancing act

BY HANNAH KNOWLES

WEST DES MOINES, IOWA — Billie Veach didn't pause to think last year when asked what issues matter most to her as an Iowa voter who will play an outsize role in selecting the Republican nominee for president.

"We are pro-life," the 49-year-old said one Sunday on her way out of church. Her husband, Lyle Veach, said the federal government "needs to do something" to curb abortion.

In New Hampshire — which will have its say on Jan. 23, eight days after the Iowa caucuses — another Republican couple wanted something very different. "I don't think a bunch of politicians, mostly males, have the right to say you cannot do it across the board," Joan McMahon said, prompting her husband to add, "It's been kicked down to the states. Anyone talking about it on the federal level is wrong."

In GOP-controlled Iowa, where evangelical Christians dominate the caucuses, the candidates have many incentives to support abortion restrictions. But the same positions that ap-

SEE ABORTION ON A4

## Critics question safety focus at Boeing

They see latest incident as sign that company didn't learn from crashes

BY DOUGLAS MACMILLAN AND MICHAEL LARIS

Last week's dramatic mid-flight blowout of a portion of a Boeing 737 Max jet over Portland, Ore., is deepening concerns throughout the aviation industry that Boeing failed to prioritize safety after two catastrophic plane crashes that killed 346 people five years ago.

Even before the blowout — which on Thursday became the subject of an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration — the country's leading aerospace manufacturer had admitted in recent months to loose bolts in the rudder-control system of 737 Max planes, holes being drilled in the wrong places by a supplier, and a defect in the anti-icing system that could cause severe structural damage if pilots failed to manually switch it off.

When problems keep coming up with Max planes, "people start to have questions about whether there is something fundamentally wrong with the culture or process within the company," said Nick Cunningham, an aerospace and defense analyst at the London-based Agency Partners.

FAA Administrator Michael

SEE BOEING ON A12



MOHAMMED HUWAIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## U.S.-led strikes in Yemen may play into hands of waiting, war-tested Houthis

President Biden said U.S.-led strikes on Houthi militants across Yemen sent "a clear message" that the United States would not tolerate attacks on its personnel or commercial shipping in the Red Sea.

But analysts say the assault early Friday, which the Houthis said killed five people, played directly into the hands of a battle-tested militant group whose standing in the region has only been enhanced.

In the aftermath of the U.S. and British strikes on dozens of Houthi positions, the movement was defiant. Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the long-threatened operation would not go unanswered. Nor, he said, would it deter the militants from continuing to attack freighters and the warships that now escort them through the region — action that the Houthis say they are taking to end Israel's siege of the Gaza Strip.

Western leaders deem the attack a success. But experts say it raised the group's status and risked escalation in Gaza.

BY KAREEM FAHIM AND LOVEDAY MORRIS

**Houthi fighters protest in Sanaa, Yemen, on Friday after U.S.-led strikes. The militant group, which rules large areas of Yemen, warned of retaliation and said the assault has not deterred it from attacking American personnel and commercial shipping in the Red Sea.**

SEE HOUTHIS ON A7

That defiance, analysts say, is more than just bluster. The Houthis, targets of a years-long Saudi-led bombing campaign, have proved their ability to absorb such strikes. Friday's attack provided them an opportunity to elevate their status among the constellation of Iranian-backed groups in the Middle East and among people, in the Arab world and beyond, desperate for any sign of resistance to Israel's military campaign in Gaza.

U.S. and British leaders described the attacks as a success. But analysts say they lay bare a U.S. failure to contain the regional fallout from the Israeli offensive in Gaza — an operation that the White House has backed — and Yemen's enduring civil conflict.

**Wider attack:** The U.S.-led strikes in Yemen targeted 12 more sites than first disclosed. A7

## 'Cherry-picking' policies let one insurer win big

Fla. system has enriched some companies even as it has been crippling for many disaster victims

BY BRIANNA SACKS IN CAPE CORAL, FLA.

"This blows my mind," the podcast host said. Was starting an insurance company in Florida really that simple?

It was February 2022, and Bruce Lucas had joined "The Insurance Guys" to talk about his new tech-insurance start-up, Slide.

But first, the Alabama-based hosts needed him to spell something out: If they too wanted to open up a carrier in the Sunshine State, they "could essentially take over a bundle" of policies from the state and then "those people would essentially get a letter saying, 'Hey, you are now part of [the new] insurance company?'"

Yes, Lucas said. And then the former corporate attorney laid out how this system has enabled him to become one of the most successful and influential insurance executives in Florida.

"You get to cherry-pick the policies," Lucas said, describing how he has been able to select hundreds of thousands of favorable policies — and the revenue

SEE INSURER ON A10



RICARDO ARDUENGO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**A man sits on a broken section of road beside ruined homes after Hurricane Ian in Matlacha, Fla., on Oct. 1, 2022. Florida's insurance market is one of the worst in the nation for homeowners.**

## 'Jihad' cash for Hamas's coffers

ISLAMIST-TIED NETWORKS RUSH IN

War in Gaza fuels raft of hard-to-trace donations

BY JOBY WARRICK AND SOUAD MEKHENNET

Three days after the Oct. 7 terrorist attack, one of Hamas's top political leaders put out a call for a new front in the group's conflict with Israel — a fight to be waged not with bullets, but with dollars.

"This is financial jihad," Khaled Mashal, the group's former political chief, declared in a speech disseminated over social media. He urged supporters worldwide to give "aid, money and all that you have," adding, "don't let your brothers down."

Within days, a torrent of cash began pouring into accounts set up to help Gazans, much of it from people moved by images of victims of Israeli airstrikes and genuinely wanting to help. But also answering the call were groups with years of experience in delivering precisely the kind of jihad Hamas's leader envisioned.

Across the Middle East and Europe, the Gaza conflict re-energized old fundraising networks with ties to militant Islamist groups and causes, including groups accused of raising money in the past for al-Qaeda and the Taliban as well as Hamas's military wing, current and former U.S. counterterrorism officials say.

The groups helped raise millions of dollars practically overnight, using crowdfunding campaigns on social media that were built around photos and videos depicting the suffering of Gazan civilians. Some of the money was ultimately deposited in Hamas-controlled accounts using a range of methods, including cryptocurrency.

SEE HAMAS ON A8

**International court:** Israel rebuts allegations of genocide. A12

## Commanders set to name Peters GM as part of rebuild

BY NICKI JHABVALA

The Washington Commanders are set to hire Adam Peters as their new general manager, according to a person with knowledge of the hire, making him the team's primary football executive as it rebuilds its front office and coaching staff under new owner Josh Harris.

Widely regarded as one of the top talent evaluators in the NFL, Peters, 44, is one of Harris's first major hires and will be charged with reviving a team that has not posted a winning record in seven consecutive seasons.

After more than two decades of steadily climbing the NFL ranks, Peters gets his first shot at being a GM amid what figures to be a sweeping overhaul of Washington's operations and staff while giving the franchise one of

SEE COMMANDERS ON A11

**NFL playoffs:** Six questions for six games to kick off postseason. D1

## IN THE NEWS

**Polar plunge** Abnormally cold air from the Arctic is surging into the United States, and it is set to produce shivers at NFL playoff games and the Iowa caucuses. A3

**'Remarkable' growth** A Maryland state survey yielded promising results in the effort to repopulate Chesapeake Bay oysters. B1

**THE NATION** A rise in coronavirus detection in wastewater shouldn't cause alarm, some experts say. A3  
**Donald Trump**, behind closed doors, weighs a second round of tax cuts for corporations. A4

**THE WORLD** In Guatemala, behind-the-scenes diplomacy from the U.S. helped fend off a coup. A6  
**The crew** of a crashed U.N. helicopter waited for aid before being kidnapped in Somalia. A7

**THE ECONOMY** A proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency would charge companies hundreds per metric ton of methane emissions. A5  
**Substack** shifted course, banning Nazi newsletters after a writer revolt over its lax content moderation. A9

**THE REGION** The District's program to boost first-time home buyers with loan help has run out of money after three months. B1  
**A Proud Boys** member who added what a judge said was "fuel to the fire" during the Jan. 6, 2021, riot was sentenced to 55 months in prison. B1

**STYLE** Staffers were shocked when the nonprofit site Houston Landing fired its editor in chief and a star reporter. C1

**SPORTS** Alabama wasted little time finding Nick Saban's successor, hiring Washington's Kalen DeBoer as its new coach. D1

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The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53729

