

FEBRUARY 2025 EVENTS



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DOGE TEAM GRANTED ACCESS TO U.S. TREASURY PAYMENT SYSTEM - 2/1/25

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent signs off on a plan to give access to the payment system to a team led by Tom Krause, the CEO of Cloud Software Group, who is now working for the Treasury Department and serves as a liaison to Musk's DOGE group that operates out of the United States Digital Service.

PENTAGON OUSTS MAJOR NEWS OUTLETS - 2/1/25

The Defense Department implements a new "annual media rotation program," which means legacy media outlets lose their longtime Pentagon workspaces to other publications closely aligned with the Trump administration.

The New York Times, NBC, National Public Radio, and Politico must vacate their office space in the building.

The space will now be assigned to The New York Post, Breitbart News, One America News Network, and The Huffington Post.

TRUMP ANNOUNCES TARIFFS - 2/1/25

Trump announced 25% additional tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico and a 10% additional tariff on imports from China. He announced that energy resources from Canada would have a lower 10% tariff.

Important information regarding Energy Resources from Canada:

- *Canadian energy supports millions of jobs in the U.S.*
- *Canada supplies about 20% of total U.S. crude oil demand – more than all OPEC members and Gulf States combined.*
- *Canada supplies approximately 9% of U.S. natural gas demand.*
- *Approximately one-quarter of U.S. uranium imports come from Canada, fueling reactors that supply electricity to about 1 in 21 American homes.*
- *Canada exports enough electricity to power more than 6 million U.S. homes.*
- *Over 35 major electricity transmission lines and 70 oil and gas pipelines cross the Canadian-American border.*
- *In 2023, the value of Canada-U.S. energy trade was US\$153.7 billion (CA\$220.6 billion) with Canada buying US\$30 billion (CA\$43.1 billion) of U.S. energy products.*

CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU ANNOUNCES RETALIATORY TARIFFS - 2/1/25

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces retaliatory tariffs against the US, stating that Canada would impose a 25% tariff on US goods, some effective on 2/2/25 and others in 3 weeks.

The tariffs came after Donald Trump announced 25% tariffs on Canadian goods imported to the US.

CDC WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

More than 3,000 pages of health information were removed from the CDC's website, including health information pertaining to reproductive, LGBTQ+, gender and racial health have all been taken down.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

Archivists worked quickly to collect and save data before it could be deleted.

CENSUS BUREAU WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

More than 3,000 pages were removed from the Census Bureau, the vast majority of which are research and methodology articles. Other missing pages include data stewardship policies and documentation for several data sets and surveys.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

More than 1,000 pages from the Office of Justice Programs have been removed, including a feature on teenage dating violence and a blog post about grants that have gone toward combating hate crimes.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

HEAD START WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

More than 200 pages have been removed from Head Start, a program for low-income children, including advice on helping families establish routines and videos about preventing postpartum depression.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

More than 180 pages from the Department of Justice have been removed, including all state-level hate crime data and seven pages [discussing](#) anti-L.G.B.T.Q. hate crimes.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

About 150 pages from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration have been removed, including more than 50 press announcements about the use of the National Disaster Distress Helpline in the aftermath of shootings or natural disasters.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

More than 100 pages have been removed from the Food and Drug Administration website, including more than 60 regulatory guidelines on topics such as increasing diversity in clinical trials and the potential for addiction and abuse in drug trials.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

About 50 research papers from the Office of Scientific and Technical Information have been removed. The removed papers span multiple fields, including optics, chemistry and experimental medicine.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

More than 25 pages from the Internal Revenue Service have been removed, including the transcript of a video titled "Here's how to avoid I.R.S. penalties and interest" and the form private schools must submit annually to certify that they have not engaged in racially discriminatory behavior.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

20 web pages from the National Institute of Standards and Technology website have been removed, including a page detailing the organization's zero tolerance harassment policy.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

18 pages from the Health Resources and Services Administration website have been removed, including a tool kit to care for women with opioid addictions and an FAQ about the Mpox vaccine.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

U.S PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/2/25

18 pages from the U.S Patent and Trademark Office website have been removed, including pages about veterans' innovation and entrepreneurship and a program to teach high schoolers about intellectual property.

Singer. (2/2/25), The New York Times.

TRADE WAR POSTPONED - 2/3/25

Trump and the leaders of Mexico and Canada announced deals to forestall a potential trade war for 30 days as both countries agreed to boost efforts to boost border security and combat drug trafficking. In Mexico, President Claudia Sheinbaum committed specifically to deploy 10,000 national guard members to the U.S.-Mexico border.

AGREEMENT REACHED WITH EL SALVADOR TO ACCEPT U.S. PRISONERS - 2/3/25

Secretary of State Marco Rubio reaches an agreement with Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele that El Salvador would accept U.S. deportees of any nationality, including American citizens and legal residents who are imprisoned for violent crimes.

TRUMP ANNOUNCES PLANS TO TURN GAZA INTO "RIVIERA OF THE MIDDLE EAST" - 2/4/25

Trump states that nearly 2 million Palestinians should be relocated from battle-leveled Gaza to new homes elsewhere so that the US could send troops to the Strip, take ownership and build the "Riviera of the Middle East."

"You build really good quality housing, like a beautiful town, like some place where they can live and not die, because Gaza is a guarantee that they're going to end up dying,"

TRUMP DRAINS RESERVOIR WATER IN CALIFORNIA - 2/4/25

Under direction of Trump, the Army Corps of Engineers released water from two reservoirs in the Sierra Nevada, Terminus Dam at Lake Kaweah and Schafer Dam at Success Lake.

"Local water managers on the Kaweah and Tule rivers had to move equipment and alert farms about possible flooding with only an hour's notice," Kaweah River Water Master Victor Hernandez said, calling the situation "alarming and scary." He also spoke about how this water is used for irrigation needs. "We need to keep every bit that we have, because this potentially is irrigation water that we have up there,"

The Corps said the water was released due to Trump's executive order related to the California wildfires, though the two major blazes are now 100% contained.

"Today, 1.6 billion gallons and, in 3 days, it will be 5.2 billion gallons," Trump said in regards to the released water. "Everybody should be happy about this long fought Victory! I only wish they listened to me six years ago – There would have been no fire!"

50501 PROTESTS - 2/5/25

50501 protests take place across the United States. 50501 stands for 50 protests, 50 states, one day.

Thousands of people gathered to protest.

FIRST DEPORTATION FLIGHT TO GUANTANAMO BAY - 2/6/25

First deportation flight carrying immigrants from the U.S. to Guantanamo Bay is made.

RUSSELL VOUGHT CONFIRMED TO LEAD THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) - 2/6/25

Despite [the Democrat's 30-hour-long protest](#) against Vought's nomination, delivering speeches in the middle of the night on 2/5/25 in an attempt to delay the confirmation vote, the Senate confirmed Russell Vought to lead the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Russell Vought was one of the authors of Project 2025.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS PRESS RELEASE ON 2026 GRANT OPPORTUNITIES - 2/6/25

The National Endowment for the Arts released a Press Release stating that The Challenge America opportunity is canceled for FY 2026.

Challenge America grants were awarded to reach historically underserved communities with rich and dynamic cultural identities. These grants primarily supported small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to populations with limited access due to geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.

The press release also states that "Under the updated guidelines, the NEA continues to encourage projects that celebrate the nation's rich artistic heritage and creativity by honoring the semiquincentennial of the United States of America (America250). This can include incorporating an America250-related component or focus within a larger project. "

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN WEBSITE DATA REMOVAL - 2/7/25

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), a child safety nonprofit has recently removed all publications that reference queer and transgender children from its website.

Their website posts information on endangered runaways, abductions, sex trafficking and other issues.

According to a report on The Verge, at least three documents on its "NCMEC Data" page — including a report on missing children with suicidal tendencies, a report on male victims of child sex trafficking, and an overall data analysis of children missing from care — have been removed since the page's last archived date of January 24th. Archived copies of all three reports included mentions of LGBTQ+ and particularly transgender children. Within the same date range, NCMEC removed three guides to recognizing and preventing child sex trafficking. That includes an overview that mentions homeless youth who have been "kicked out due to lack of acceptance of their sexual orientation or gender identity" and guide for parents that mentions victims of child sex trafficking include "boys, girls, and transgender youth."

RUSSELL VOUGHT NAMED ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU - 2/7/25

Russell Vought named acting director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, where he has directed staff to not issue any new rules, to suspend effective dates of all final rules and to stop any new investigations.

35 LAWSUITS FILED AGAINST TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS - 2/7/25

As of February 7, 2025, approximately 35 lawsuits have been filed against Trump's 46 Executive Orders, according to Just Security and the Federal Register.

ICE MAKES 11,000 ARRESTS IN JUST 18 DAYS - 2/7/25

The New York Post reports that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents have made 11,000 arrests in the first 18 days of the Trump administration.

GOOGLE REMOVES EVENTS FROM DEFAULT CALENDAR - 2/7/25

Google removes events like Pride month, Black History Month, Indigenous People Month, Jewish Heritage Month, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and Hispanic Heritage Month from its default calendar.

Google claims that this was done mid-2024 and that "Maintaining hundreds of moments manually and consistently globally wasn't scalable or sustainable."

In case you needed to know:

- Roe vs. Wade Day is January 22
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day on the third Monday of January
- Holocaust Remembrance Day is January 27
- Black History Month is February
- Women in Science Day is February 11
- League of Women Voters Day is February 14
- Women's History Month is March
- National Black Women in Jazz and the Arts Day is March 1
- World Day of Fight Against Sexual Exploitation is March 4
- International Women's Day is March 8
- Arab American Heritage Month is April
- Jewish Heritage Month is May
- Asia Pacific American Heritage Month is May

- Pride month is June
- Caribbean American Heritage Month is June
- Juneteenth
- Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15 - October 15
- Diversity Awareness Month is October
- Filipino American Heritage Month is October
- Polish American Heritage Month is October
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month is October
- American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month is November

19 YEAR OLD NOW A SENIOR ADVISER AT STATE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY - 2/7/25

19-year-old Edward Corristine is now a senior adviser at the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security.

Coristine is a high school graduate with a history of launching startups. According to Wired, in 2022, he worked briefly for Path Network, a network monitoring company known for hiring former hackers. That same year, an individual using a Telegram alias linked to Coristine reportedly sought out a cyberattack-for-hire service.

He was fired from an internship at the firm Path Network after he was accused of sharing information with a competitor.

One of Coristine's ventures, Tesla.Sexy LLC, manages dozens of web domains, including Russian-registered sites. One of these sites provides an AI-powered Discord bot operating in Russia, per Wired.

Coristine worked at Musk's Neuralink before joining DOGE, where he has reportedly participated in meetings reviewing government personnel and code.

Edward Coristine's father is Charles Coristine, the CEO of Lesser Evil, a healthy snack brand.

TRUMP FIRES HEAD OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES - 2/7/25

The White House announces that it dismissed Colleen Shogan, but her permanent replacement has yet to be announced.

Colleen Shogan is the first woman to serve as national archivist.

She confirmed her dismissal in a post on LinkedIn on February 7th.. "This evening, President Trump fired me. No cause or reason was cited. It has been an honor serving as the 11th Archivist of the United States. I have zero regrets—I absolutely did my best every day for the National Archives and the American people."

She may not be the last to go. It is believed that Trump has a list, compiled by advisers, of National Archives staff they think should be purged.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation's record keeper. Of all documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States federal government, only 1%-3% are so important for legal or historical reasons that they are kept by us forever.

Size of permanent archival holdings:

- 13.5 billion pieces of paper
- More than 725,000 artifacts
- More than 450 million feet of film, or about 85,302 miles (enough to circle the earth almost 3.4 times)
- 41 million photographs
- 40 million aerial images
- 10 million maps, charts, and architectural/ engineering drawings
- More than 33 billion electronic records (837 terabytes)

New archival holdings: In 2024, the National Archives accessioned 88,498 cubic feet of analog records and 463 terabytes of electronic records into the permanent archival collection.

Without guidance and protection, the preservation of American History is at risk. "

FEDERAL JUDGE BLOCKS DOGE ACCESS TO TREASURY PAYMENT SYSTEM - 2/8/25

Federal Judge Paul Engelmayer's order, citing a risk of "irreparable harm," temporarily restricts Elon Musk's government efficiency team from accessing a critical Treasury Department payment system.

This order temporarily halts access to a sensitive payment system that distributes Americans' tax returns, Social Security benefits, disability payments and federal employees' salaries. The judge also ordered the destruction of any downloaded information from the payment system by anyone given access to it since January 20.

FEDERAL JUDGE BLOCKS TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FROM PLACING 2,200 USAID EMPLOYEES ON LEAVE - 2/8/25

Federal Judge Carl Nichol blocked the Trump administration from orchestrating its plan to place 2,200 employees of the United States Agency for International Development on leave at midnight.

The judge issued a temporary restraining order that prevents Trump and the Department of Government Efficiency from placing the employees on administrative leave as had been planned. The judge also ordered the reinstatement of some 500 USAID workers who had already been put on administrative leave and ordered that no USAID employees should be evacuated from their host countries before Feb. 14 at 11:59 p.m.

DOGE TEAM GAINS ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - 2/8/25

Members of Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency team obtain "administrator" email accounts at the Department of Education.

LOCAL RESIDENTS IN OHIO DRIVE OFF NEO-NAZIS AND BURN THEIR SWASTIKA FLAG - 2/8/25

Local residents, alerted by Facebook posts, confronted and drove off neo-Nazi demonstrators waving large swastika-embazoned flags along a highway overpass on Friday between Lincoln Heights and Evendale, Ohio.

Dozens of residents approached the neo-Nazis and took one of their flags, which they later set on fire.

The confrontation lasted just minutes before the demonstrators hurriedly ran off in their U-Haul.

FEDERAL JUDGE BLOCKS TRANSFER OF VENEZUELAN DETAINEES TO GUANTANAMO - 2/9/25

Judge Kenneth Gonzales of the Federal District Court for New Mexico granted a preemptive restraining order to block the U.S. government from sending three Venezuelan men detained in the state from being sent to a military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

TRUMP TO IMPOSE 25% TARIFFS ON STEEL & ALUMINUM IMPORTS - 2/9/25

Trump said he will introduce 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports on 2/10/25 in an ongoing escalation of a trade war with trading partners including the U.S.'s closest neighbors.

KENDRICK LAMAR PERFORMS THE HALF-TIME SHOW AT SUPER BOWL LIX - 2/9/25

American rapper Kendrick Lamar, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 2018 for his music, performs the half-time show at Super Bowl LIX.

Lamar's performance layered symbolism and imagery to call attention to Black history and the current situation in America. This included:

Lamar beginning his performance on one knee

- Having Samuel Jackson as Uncle Sam saying such things as "This is the great American game", "Too loud! Too reckless! Too ghetto!" and "That's what America wants - nice and calm"
- Serena Williams crip walking onstage during his performance (a reference to her being called out for doing a crip walk at Wimbledon stadium in 2012 when she won her first gold medal)
- References to the squid games
- Black power fists in the choreography
- Numerous American flag visual images made by the Black dancers dressed in red, white and blue
- Using the phrases "forty acres and a mule", "the revolution will be televised", and "turn the tv off".

President Trump attended Super Bowl LIX, becoming the first American President to do so.

TRUMP DISMISSES BOARD OF KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, INSTALLS INTERIM DIRECTOR - 2/10/25

Trump announced the dismissal of 18 board members, including the chair, from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC; he also installed Richard Grenell as “interim executive director” in an attempt to align programming at the prestigious cultural center with Trump’s own political agenda.

Trump wrote on Truth Social, “I am pleased to announce that Ric Grenell will serve as the Interim Executive Director of The Kennedy Center. Ric shares my Vision for a GOLDEN AGE of American Arts and Culture, and will be overseeing the daily operations of the Center. NO MORE DRAG SHOWS, OR OTHER ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA - ONLY THE BEST. RIC, WELCOME TO SHOW BUSINESS!”

Trump has never seen a performance at the Kennedy Center.

“I got reports it was so bad. I didn’t want to go. There was nothing I wanted to see.”

The Kennedy Center's Current Social Credo is as follows.

"As the Nation’s Cultural Center, the Kennedy Center's objective is to invite art into the lives of all Americans and ensure it represents the cultural diversity of America. Our mission is to fulfill inspiration for **all**. We do this by creating a welcoming and inclusive culture where everyone belongs and benefits, and the performing arts flourish.

We commit to delivering on this vision of unity and inclusion. We will always use our performances, educational initiatives, and Social Impact program to practice inclusion and representation of our shared aspirations and collective culture as Americans.

At the Kennedy Center, our work is to empower artists and community. Our work is to produce impactful performances and perform with the civic good in mind as we activate all our spaces, including the REACH, the Center’s new expansion. Our work is to deploy the artist intellect to examine and depict our culture. We wish to leave no one out of the dialogue. We invite all of you to join us in this important undertaking.

The Kennedy Center's Social Impact programming seeks to firmly establish the Center as a champion and resource for all communities and ensure our programs, artists, staff, and audiences reflect the full spectrum of America. Multiculturalism is one of our nation’s greatest assets and has been the soul of our artistic output for generations. At the Kennedy Center, we strive for this every day."

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION RELEASES STATEMENT, "THE ABA SUPPORTS THE RULE OF LAW" - 2/10/25

The American Bar Association releases a statement in response to recent events. This statement includes the following:

"The American Bar Association supports the rule of law. That means holding governments, including our own, accountable under law. We stand for a legal process that is orderly and fair. We have consistently urged the administrations of both parties to adhere to the rule of law. We stand in that familiar place again today. And we do not stand alone. Our courts stand for the rule of law as well. "

Link to the full statement below.

[Full statement](#)

MILITARY DROPS RECRUITING EFFORTS AT BLACK ENGINEERING AWARDS EVENT - 2/10/25

The Army and other service branches have stopped recruiting efforts at a prestigious Black engineering event held the weekend of February 1 , overlooking numerous highly qualified candidates as part of Trump's purge of diversity initiatives in the military.

Until this week, Army Recruiting Command had a long-standing public partnership with the Black Engineer of the Year Awards, or BEYA, an annual conference that draws students, academics and professionals in STEM.

USAID CONTRACTORS SUE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OVER DISMANTLING OF AGENCY - 2/11/25

Organizations and companies that contract with USAID sue Trump's administration over what they called its unlawful moves to dismantle the U.S. foreign aid agency.

In the lawsuit the plaintiffs said Trump lacks the legal authority to shut down a federal agency established by Congress or to refuse to spend money that U.S. lawmakers allocated to it.

POPE FRANCIS ADDRESSES UNITED STATES IMMIGRANT CRACKDOWN IN LETTER - 2/11/25

Pope Francis published a letter addressed to the Bishops of the United States of America, addressing the recent deportations.

He appeared to take direct aim at Vice President JD Vance's defense of the deportations on theological grounds, saying that " I have followed closely the major crisis that is taking place in the United States with the initiation of a program of mass deportations. The rightly formed conscience cannot fail to make a critical judgment and express its disagreement with any measure that tacitly or explicitly identifies the illegal status of some migrants with criminality" and "Christians know very well that it is only by affirming the infinite dignity of all that our own identity as persons and as communities reaches its maturity. Christian love is not a concentric expansion of interests that little by little extend to other persons and groups. "

U.S. border czar Tom Homan responded, saying that the Vatican is a city-state surrounded by walls and that Francis should leave border enforcement to his office.

[Link to the Pope's Letter](#)

AT LEAST 60 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES FIRED - 2/12/25

At least 60 probationary staff members (recent hires who joined the federal workforce within the last one to two years) at the Department of Education receive written notifications that they were being terminated effective immediately.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR. CONFIRMED AS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY - 2/13/25

The Senate voted on Thursday to confirm Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Health and Human Services secretary.

The 52-48 vote was largely along party lines, though Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky once again joined with Democrats to oppose the nomination. McConnell has now voted against three of Trump's Cabinet nominees, more than any other Republican senator.

MORE THAN 1,000 WORKERS DISMISSED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - 2/13/25

More than 1,000 probationary workers (recent hires who joined the federal workforce within the last one to two years) were dismissed at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

200 UNITES STATES OF OFFICE PERSONNEL EMPLOYEES FIRED - 2/13/25

At the Office of Personnel Management, about 200 workers who were currently on probation (recent hires who joined the federal workforce within the last one to two years) were informed they were being fired via a prerecorded message from the acting director Charles Ezell .

He told the employees they were being laid off and would receive a termination email, and instructed them to "gather your personal belongings and exit the premises by 3pm ET today." and that their "physical and IT system access will be deactivated by 3 pm today", according to someone familiar with the call.

300 NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES TO BE FIRED - 2/13/25

The National Nuclear Security Administration, a semi-autonomous agency within the Energy Department that oversees the nation's nuclear weapons, has begun terminating probationary staff (recent hires who joined the federal workforce within the last one to two years).

According to an NNSA employee, about 300 of the agency's 1,800 probationary staff are expected to be fired.

ABOUT 2,000 PEOPLE FIRED AT THE ENERGY DEPARTMENT - 2/13/25

Energy Department officials tells probationary employees (recent hires who joined the federal workforce within the last one to two years) they will be fired on 2/13/25, which could include up to 2,000 people.

RESIGNATIONS AND CANCELLATIONS FOLLOW TRUMP'S TAKEOVER OF THE KENNEDY CENTER - 2/13/25

The following artists have cancelled scheduled shows at the Kennedy Center.

Philadelphia-based rock and soul band Low Cut Connie announced on 2/13/25 it was canceling a scheduled March 19 performance.

Band founder Adam Weiner wrote on Instagram. "I was very excited to perform as part of this wonderful institution's Social Impact series, which emphasizes community, joy, justice and equity through the arts...Upon learning that this institution that has run nonpartisan for 54 years is now chaired by President Trump himself and his regime, I decided I will not perform there."

Issa Rae canceled her sold-out show, An Evening With Issa Rae, after hearing about Trump's new role.

“Unfortunately, due to what I believe to be an infringement on the values of an institution that has faithfully celebrated artists of all backgrounds through all mediums, I’ve decided to cancel my appearance at this venue,” she wrote on Instagram.

The following artists have resigned from positions at the Kennedy Center.

Musician Ben Folds, a longtime artistic adviser to the National Symphony Orchestra, resigned his post immediately following Trump’s installation as chairman.

Renée Fleming, the world-renowned soprano who had served as an artistic adviser at large at the center also resigned.

Shonda Rhime served as treasurer of the Kennedy Center’s board. She resigned within hours of Trump’s takeover.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HALTS THOUSANDS OF CIVIL RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS - 2/13/25

The Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education (OCR) still lists on their website that it "works to ensure equal access to education and resolve complaints of discrimination."

However, the OCR have stopped working on previously opened cases and have been instructed not to open any new investigations from the public, as employees told ProPublica in an article from 2/13/15.

Several employees told ProPublica that they have been told not to communicate with the students, families and schools involved in cases launched in previous administrations and to cancel scheduled meetings and mediations. “We’ve been essentially muzzled,” the attorney said.

Per ProPublica, the few cases that attorneys have been directed to investigate reflect Trump’s priorities, such as getting rid of gender-neutral bathrooms, banning transgender athletes from participating in women’s sports and alleged antisemitism or discrimination against white students.

WHO IS BEING DETAINED AT GUANTANAMO BAY? - 2/14/25

Since Feb. 4, the Trump administration has flown about 100 immigrant detainees to the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. They have not released any names of or provided details about their alleged crimes.

ProPublica and The Texas Tribune identified nearly a dozen Venezuelan immigrants who have been transferred to Guantanamo. The New York Times published a larger list with some, but not all, of the same names.

For three of the Guantanamo detainees who had been held at an immigration detention center in El Paso, Texas, ProPublica and the Tribune obtained records about their criminal histories and spoke to their families. The three men are all Venezuelan. According to U.S. federal court records, two of them had no crimes on their records except for illegal entry. The third had picked up an additional charge while in detention, for kicking an officer while being restrained during a riot.

Per ProPublica in an article dated 2/13/25, relatives of the three men have been left entirely in the dark about their loved ones. They said the U.S. government has given them no information about the detainees’ whereabouts and they have not been allowed to speak with them.

Attorneys have also been denied access. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit on Wednesday, arguing that the U.S. Constitution gives the detainees rights to legal representation that shouldn't be stripped away just because they have been moved to Guantanamo.

"Never before have people been taken from U.S. soil and sent to Guantanamo, and then denied access to lawyers and the outside world," said Lee Gelernt, the lead attorney in the ACLU case. "It is difficult to think of anything so flagrantly at odds with the fundamental principles on which our country was built."

In response to questions about the Guantanamo detentions, officials at the Department of Homeland Security insisted, without showing any evidence, that some — but not all — of the immigrants they have transferred to Guantanamo are violent gang members and others are "high-threat" criminals.

THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT FIRES 2,300 PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES - 2/14/25

The Interior Department fires 2,300 probationary employees (recent hires who joined the federal workforce within the last one to two years).

The Interior Department oversees national parks, tribal affairs, endangered species and conservation of and energy production on federally owned lands and in federal waters.

REMAINS OF 14-YEAR-OLD NATIVE AMERICAN EMILY PIKE FOUND IN MESA, ARIZONA - 2/14/25

The remains of 14-year-old Emily Pike were found in garbage bags left on the side of a dirt road in Mesa, Arizona on February 14, just days before her birthday.

Emily, whose family lives on the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation, was living in a group home in Mesa when she went missing on Jan. 27. Her case manager did not tell her family she was missing until a week later.

Her mother said Emily loved art, drawing and painting, and dreamed of studying art in college.

Indigenous women and girls are murdered 10 times more than other ethnicities, with murder being the third leading cause of their deaths, according to the Native Women's Wilderness organization.

REFERENCES TO TRANSGENDER PEOPLE REMOVED FROM STONEWALL MONUMENT'S WEBSITE - 2/14/25

The Trump administration has erased references to transgender people from New York's Stonewall National Monument website.

On the National Park Service website, the acronym LGBTQ+ has been shortened to LGB, standing for lesbian, gay and bisexual.

An older version of the website, saved by the digital web archive Wayback Machine stated "Before the 1960s, almost everything about living openly as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+) person was illegal."

It now reads: "Before the 1960s, almost everything about living openly as a lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) person was illegal."

THIRD HUMAN BIRD FLU HOSPITALIZATION CONFIRMED - 2/14/25

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed a third U.S bird flu hospitalization, after a woman was admitted to a healthcare facility Colorado.

The patient was experiencing "flu-like symptoms" and had "health conditions that can make people more vulnerable to illness," She was likely exposed to the H5N1 virus through direct contact to an infected poultry flock at her home.

URGENT CDC DATA AND ANALYSES MISSING AS OUTBREAKS ESCALATE - 2/14/25

Physicians are dealing daily with patients sick with coughs, soreness, fevers, vomiting, and other flu-like symptoms.

They are desperate for information, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which would typically provide information regarding public health threats, has gone quiet in the weeks since Trump took office.

Without this information, physicians do not have the necessary information about any health situations.

The flu has been brutal this season. Prior to the CDC going quiet, the CDC estimated at least 24 million illnesses, 310,000 hospitalizations, and 13,000 deaths from the flu since the start of October.

At the same time, the bird flu outbreak continues to infect cattle and farmworkers.

Analysis of the seasonal flu through the CDC's Health Alert Network has stalled, according to people close to the CDC, who asked not to be identified because of fears of retaliation. The network is the CDC's main method of sharing urgent public health information with health officials, doctors, and, sometimes, the public.

Charts from previous analysis, suggests that flu may be at a record high. About 7.7% of patients who visited clinics and hospitals without being admitted had flu-like symptoms in early February, a ratio higher than in four other flu seasons depicted in the graph. That includes 2003-04, when an atypical strain of flu killed at least 153 children.

Complete analysis is needed to understand the current situation, for example how many of the flu-like illnesses are caused by flu viruses, which flu strain is infecting people, and in turn what doctors need to be looking for.

Although the CDC's flu dashboard shows a surge of influenza, it doesn't include all data needed to interpret the situation. Nor does it offer the tailored advice found in HAN alerts that tells health care workers how to protect patients and the public. In 2023, for example, a report urged clinics to test patients with respiratory symptoms rather than assume cases are the flu, since other viruses were causing similar issues that year.

On Feb. 10, Rachel Hardeman, a member of the Advisory Committee to the Director of the CDC, and other committee members wrote to acting CDC Director Susan Monarez asking the agency to explain missing data, delayed studies, and potentially severe staff cuts. "The CDC is vital to our nation's security," the letter said.

Several studies have also been delayed or remain missing from the CDC's preeminent scientific publication, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Anne Schuchat, a former principal deputy director at the CDC, said she would be concerned if there was political oversight of scientific material: "Suppressing information is potentially confusing, possibly dangerous, and it can backfire."

TRUMP BEGINS FIRING HUNDREDS OF FAA EMPLOYEES - 2/14/25

The Trump administration has begun firing several hundred Federal Aviation Administration employees.

Probationary workers (recent hires who joined the federal workforce within the last one to two years) were targeted in late night emails on 2/14/25 notifying them they had been fired, David Spero, president of the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists union, said in a statement.

The impacted workers include personnel hired for FAA radar, landing and navigational aid maintenance.

The National Air Traffic Controllers Association said in a brief statement on 2/17/25 it was “analyzing the effect of the reported federal employee terminations on aviation safety, the national airspace system and our members.”

Other fired FAA employees were working on an early warning radar system the Air Force had announced in 2023 for Hawaii to detect incoming cruise missiles.

Spero said that the employees were fired “without cause nor based on performance or conduct,” and the emails were “from an ‘exec order’ Microsoft email address” — not a government email address.

The FAA is already suffering from a lack of controllers. Federal officials have been raising concerns about an overtaxed and understaffed air traffic control system for years. Among the reasons they have cited for staffing shortages are low pay, long shifts, intensive training and mandatory retirements.

VP JD VANCE SNUBS GERMAN CHANCELLOR TO MEET WITH THE HEAD OF AfD - 2/14

Vice President JD Vance, who was on his first international trip as vice president this week, declined a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and instead privately met with Alice Weidel, the co-leader of AfD, his office confirmed.

This comes the day after one day after he chastised European leaders at the Munich Security Conference for shunning far-right parties in their countries.

The AfD is opposed to increasing the powers of the European Union. and opposes immigration into Germany, especially Muslim immigration. It is the second-strongest party in Germany. Several state associations and other factions of AfD have been linked to or accused of harboring connections with far-right nationalist and proscribed movements, such as PEGIDA, the Neue Rechte, and the Identitarian movement, and of employing historical revisionism, as well as xenophobic rhetoric. As AfD has campaigned for traditional roles for women, it has aligned itself with groups opposed to modern feminism. The youth wing of the party has used social media to campaign against aspects of modern feminism, with the support of party leadership.

Over time, a focus on German nationalism, on reclaiming Germany's sovereignty and national pride, especially in repudiation of Germany's culture of shame with regard to its Nazi past, became more central in AfD's ideology and a central plank in its populist appeals.

In 2001, 12 years before the founding of the AfD, former AfD Bundestag member Wilhelm von Gottberg expressed his views on the remembrance of the Holocaust by quoting Italian neofascist Mario Consoli in saying "Any pretext, no matter how flimsy [...], is good enough to remind people of the Holocaust. The propaganda steamroller is getting stronger rather than weaker over the years, and in more and more countries the Jewish 'truth' about the Holocaust is being given legal protection. The Holocaust must remain a myth, a dogma that is beyond the reach of any free historical research.

RALLY AT STONEWALL PROTESTING REMOVAL OF TRANS PEOPLE FROM WEBSITE - 2/16/25

Over 1,000 people gathered at the Stonewall National Monument in New York City's West Village to protest the removal of any references to trans people from the Stonewall Park Service Website.

DOGE REQUESTS ACCESS TO IRS TAX INFORMATION - 2/16/25

Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency has requested access to an Internal Revenue Service system that retains the personal tax information of millions of Americans.

Access to the files had not been granted as of this weekend .

TENNESSEE BOOK BAN REPORT - 2/16/25

The Nashville Tennessean reports that at least 13 Tennessee counties saw books removed from public school library shelves over 2024, marking the highest number of book removals in the state since the passage of the Age Appropriate Materials Act in 2022.

Nearly 1,400 books (1,155 unique titles), were either fully removed from school libraries or heavily age-restricted between December 2023 and January 2024.

Classic titles like "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker, "Ender's Game" by Orson Scott Card, "Slaughterhouse Five" by Kurt Vonnegut and other titles joined the growing list of books banned in schools across the state.

BORDER PATROL AGENTS TO STOP WEARING BODY CAMERAS - 2/16/25

Agents with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will no longer wear body cameras during field operations after a social media post publicized how to identify individual agents.

"All U.S. Border Patrol Agents will cease the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) in all operational environments," CBP said in a statement to NewsNation, which originally reported the news.

The directive comes after a post on Reddit claimed that the mobile application BLE Radar, which uses Bluetooth to scan for low-energy devices such as phones, smartwatches and speakers, can track CBP body cameras from a distance of 100 yards.

5 INDIVIDUALS CHARGED IN THE TORTURE AND MURDER OF SAM NORDQUIST - 2/16/25

New York authorities have charged five individuals for the brutal torture and killing of Sam Nordquist, whose body was dumped in an empty field after weeks of physical and psychological abuse.

Sam was a 24-year-old transgender man who worked at a group home for disabled people in Little Canada. Nordquist identified as biracial and was close with his mother and two siblings.

"He would give you the shirt off his back" his mother Linda Nordquist told Nexstar's WROC. "Very kind, loved his family, loved his nieces and nephew, very outgoing, worked hard."

Nordquist, originally from Minnesota, travelled to New York in September to meet his online girlfriend and was staying at a motel in Canandaigua, about 30 minutes from Rochester. His family lost touch with him after January 1, 2025, and noted that in his communications up to his disappearance, he seemed "not like himself".

The New York State Police did a wellness check on February 9, after Nordquist's family filed a missing person's report with the Canandaigua Police, and they uncovered a "deeply disturbing pattern of abuse" at the motel, according to New York State Police Captain Kelly Swift.

"In my 20-year law enforcement career, this is one of the most horrific crimes I have ever investigated," Captain Swift said at a press conference.

The suspects arrested are:

Precious Arzuaga, 38, of Geneva, New York

Jennifer A. Quijano, 30, of Geneva, New York

Kyle Sage, 33, of Hopewell, New York

Patrick A. Goodwin, 30, of Rochester, New York

Emily Motyka, 19, of Lima, New York

All five were arraigned and are being held without bail at the Ontario County Jail.

Ontario County District Attorney Jim Ritts described the case as "beyond depraved," and said "This is by far the worst homicide investigation that our office has ever been a part of," as per The NY Post.

"No human being should have to endure what Sam endured," Major Kevin Sucher, commander of the New York State Police troop overseeing the Finger Lakes region, said as per the Associated Press.

Vigils were held shortly after the discovery of Nordquist's death, one hosted in Red Wing, Minnesota where he had attended high school, and another vigil at a public library in Canandaigua.

A vigil to celebrate Sam's life and enduring legacy will be held on Friday, February 21, at The Church of the Village in New York City.

Organizers are also looking into honoring Nordquist at an upcoming exhibit on Minnesota's LGBTQ history.

TRUMP USING EMERGENCY APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT TO TRY TO FIRE DELLINGER - 2/17/25

Trump is using an emergency appeal to call on the Supreme Court to let him fire Hampton Dellinger, who was named by President Joe Biden in 2023 to lead the Office of Special Counsel for a five-year term and confirmed by the Senate in early 2024.

The case, *Bessent v. Dellinger*, could eventually determine whether Congress may create independent agencies that are protected from the whims of the White House, or whether presidents can fire anyone seen as a potential critic.

The Office of Special Counsel investigates and prosecutes allegations of abuses of civil service law, handles allegations of whistleblower retaliation and is an independent agency. Created during the Carter administration, Congress made clear the special counsel could be removed "by the president only for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office."

The director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office fired Dellinger on February 7 in a brief email which mentioned none of the for-cause requirements that Congress required.

The Supreme Court is closed for Presidents' Day on 2/17/25. The Justice Department's appeal will likely be placed on the court's docket Tuesday and the court could move relatively quickly, potentially handing down an order within a few days.

NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST - 2/17/25

Advocates are planning to gather across the country, on Presidents Day to protest President Trump.

The protests are being organized by The 50501 Movement - which stands for 50 protests, 50 states, one movement, which formed on Reddit and now has over 100,000 supporters on the page.

CREW EVACUATES 76 PASSENGERS IN LESS THAN 90 SECONDS FROM UPSIDE DOWN PLANE AFTER CRASH - 2/17/25

A Delta Air Lines passenger jet coming in from Minneapolis made a crash landing at Toronto Pearson International Airport on Monday afternoon, flipping upside down on the tarmac with its tail and one wing shorn off.

All 80 people aboard (76 passengers and 4 crew members, including 2 flight attendants) clambered out of the jet. At least 18 of them suffered injuries, some of them critical but none life threatening.

Despite dozens of passengers being strapped upside down in their seats, the crew managed to evacuate the entire plane in less than 90 seconds.

The authorities are investigating the cause of the accident, which occurred amid strong winds and drifting snow.

CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY GATHERED FOR THE NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST - 2/17/25

Below is a partial list of the cities which held protests on 2/17/25. The number of people attending varies, from small amounts of people gathered together in small towns, to thousands of protestors in large cities. Many of the protestors braved frigid winter temperatures to attend.

Ajo Arizona

Phoenix Arizona

Tucson Arizona

Little Rock Arkansas

Camarillo California

Carlsbad California

Fresno California

Irvine California

Long Beach California

Monterey California
Montreal California
North Hollywood California
Oakland California
Sacramento California
San Diego California
San Francisco California
San Jose California
Santa Barbara California
Santa Cruz California
Santa Rosa California
Denver Colorado
Fort Collins Colorado
Hartford Connecticut
Washington. D.C.
Fort Myers Florida
Ocala Florida
Orlando Florida
Palm Springs Florida
Sarasota Florida
Tampa Florida
Atlanta Georgia
Honolulu Hawaii
Maui Hawaii
Boise Idaho
Chicago Illinois
Edwardsville Illinois

Indianapolis Indiana

Des Moines Iowa

Frankfort Kentucky

New Orleans Louisiana

Portland Maine

Annapolis Maryland

Baltimore Maryland

Frederick Maryland

Boston Massachusetts

Plymouth Massachusetts

Lansing Michigan

Muskegon Michigan

Niles Michigan

Duluth Minnesota

Minnetonka Minnesota

Saint Paul Minnesota

Jefferson City Missouri

Helena Montana

Missoula Montana

Carson City Nevada

Trenton New Jersey

Wayne New Jersey

Albuquerque New Mexico

Silver City New Mexico

Albany New York

Finger Lakes New York

New York City New York

Asheville North Carolina
Charlotte North Carolina
Hillsborough North Carolina
Raleigh North Carolina
Columbus Ohio
Oklahoma City Oklahoma
Ashland Oregon
Bend Oregon
Coos Bay Oregon
Hood River Oregon
Portland Oregon
Redmond Oregon
Salem Oregon
Media Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh Pennsylvania
Sellersville Pennsylvania
West Chester Pennsylvania
Providence Rhode Island
Columbia South Carolina
Greenville South Carolina
Summerville South Carolina
Nashville Tennessee
Austin Texas
Conroe Texas
Houston Texas
Palestine Texas
Salt Lake City Utah

Montpelier Vermont

Richmond Virginia

Bellingham Washington

Everett Washington

Mount Vernon Washington

Olympia Washington

Seattle Washington

Sequim Washington

Spokane Washington

Port Angeles Washington

Port Townsend Washington

Madison Wisconsin

There were also protests in Canada outside U.S. Embassies.

ARMY NO LONGER PARTICIPATING IN "INTRODUCE A GIRL TO ENGINEERING DAY" - 2/17/25

The United States Army has ended a long-standing partnership with Ashley Hall, an all-girls preparatory school in Charleston, South Carolina, as part of the widespread changed in approach to diversity under President Donald Trump.

For the first time since 2017, the Army Corps of Engineers will not participate in Ashley Hall's annual "Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day," an outreach event scheduled for 2/21/25.

BREAKDOWN OF TRUMP'S FIRINGS - 2/17/25

As of 2/17/25 the Trump administration has fired more than **10,000 federal workers** across multiple agencies as part of its "large-scale reductions" in the government workforce.

This is likely just the beginning of the job cuts.

Trump signed an executive order on 2/11/25 seeking a significant reduction in the size of the government. It instructs heads of federal departments and agencies to make "large-scale reductions in force."

The initial firings focused on employees in their first year of their federal job, as they lack the ability longer-term employees have to appeal their terminations. Coupled with about 75,000 workers who took President Trump's buyouts, the job cuts amount to nearly 4% of the federal government's 2.3 million workers.

Here's where firings have occurred so far.

Federal Aviation Administration: Several hundred fired

The Trump administration has begun firing several hundred Federal Aviation Administration employees. Probationary workers were targeted in late night emails on 2/14/25 notifying them they had been fired,

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: Layoffs and a court challenge

A federal judge on Friday blocked the dismissal of any more workers at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, according to multiple reports. More than 100 employees were laid off before the pause, NPR reported. A court challenge was filed by a union representing workers seeking to block Trump's efforts to eliminate the CFPB.

Department of Education: 60 employees fired, dozens put on leave

Termination notices were sent to more than 60 probationary employees across multiple work groups, including the offices of general counsel, special education and rehabilitation services, and federal student aid. Dozens of employees have been put administrative leave, multiple outlets including the New York Times and Washington Post reported, amid the Trump administration's efforts to remove diversity, equity and inclusion positions from the government.

Trump has said he would like to dismantle the Education Department. Last week DOGE, the department canceled nearly \$1 billion in educational research contracts.

Department of Energy job cuts include nuclear agency firings

About 1,200 to 2,000 workers in the department were terminated, including some at the National Nuclear Security Administration, which manages the U.S. nuclear weapons fleet and secures radiological materials around the world. Less than 0.5% of the NNSA workforce was dismissed, an Energy Department spokesperson said in a statement. Some NNSA employees at first identified for dismissals were later reinstated, Jill Hruby, former NNSA administrator in the Biden administration, said in an email to USA TODAY.

Department of Health and Human Services: CDC, NIH firings

Thousands of probationary employees were fired across the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), according to multiple reports.

Roughly 1,300 probational workers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 10% of the agency's workforce, were fired on Friday, the Associated Press and NPR reported.

Workers were also fired at the National Institutes of Health, where a "huge" number of nurses from the NIH Clinical Center were let go, Reuters reported, citing anonymous sources. Some facilities may be forced to close due to staffing shortages.

Department of Homeland Security: Firings at several federal agencies

More than 400 employees, identified as "non-mission critical personnel in probationary status," were fired at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, according to CBS News and ABC News.

Department of the Interior: National Park Service hit with firings

At least 2,300 federal workers had their positions terminated. Among them were 800 Bureau of Land Management employees and about 1,000 National Park Service workers.

Department of Veterans Affairs: 1,000 fired

More than 1,000 of the department's 43,000 probationary employees were terminated.

Environmental Protection Agency: 388 firings at federal agency

The agency fired 388 employees who were on probationary status "after a thorough review of agency functions in accordance with President Trump's executive orders," said Jeff Landis, an agency spokesman.

General Services Administration: Agency drops 100-plus workers

More than 100 probationary employees at the agency, which manages the nation's real estate portfolio, have been pressured into either resigning or facing being put on leave and then terminated, Reuters reported.

Internal Revenue Service: Mass firings could be in the thousands

The IRS is preparing to fire thousands of workers next week, two people familiar with the matter told Reuters. It was unclear how many thousands of employees would be fired at the IRS, which grew to about 100,000 people – including roughly 16,000 probationary workers – under the Biden Administration to increase its including its ability to audit corporations and wealthy taxpayers. Job cuts could affect the IRS' work to process upcoming tax returns, according to The New York Times.

Office of Personnel Management loses dozens of workers

Dozens of probationary employees at the agency, which had instructed other federal agencies to let go its probationary employees, also fired dozens of its own workers in a Thursday afternoon group call, CBS News and CNN reported.

Small Business Administration: About 20% of workers fired

About 20% of the agency's staff, or about 720 SBA employees, including hundreds of probationary employees, were fired, Politico reported.

U.S. Forest Service: About 3,400 workers fired

The agency, which is within the Department of Agriculture, fired about 3,400 probational workers, or nearly 10% of the Forest Service workforce of 35,000 employees. A source familiar with the cuts told USA TODAY the layoffs do not include firefighters, law enforcement officers, bridge inspectors or meteorologists.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

About 10,000 USAID employees, excluding essential personnel, were placed on administrative leave last week.

Source: USA Today, "Which agencies have been hit by federal layoffs? What to know about NPS, NIH, IRS, more" Mike Snider, Joey Garrison, 2/15/25, updated 2/17/25

USDA SCRAMBLING TO REHIRE OFFICIALS WORKING ON BIRD FLU RESPONSE THEY ACCIDENTALLY FIRED - 2/18/25

On 2/18/25, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said that over the weekend, it accidentally fired "several" agency employees who were working on a response to the H5N1 avian flu outbreak.

The agency said it is now trying to quickly reverse the firings.

"Although several positions supporting [bird flu efforts] were notified of their terminations over the weekend, we are working to swiftly rectify the situation and rescind those letters," a USDA spokesperson said in a statement. "USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service frontline positions are considered public safety positions, and we are continuing to hire the workforce necessary to ensure the safety and adequate supply of food to fulfill our statutory mission."

JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM ABRUPTLY CLOSURES - 2/18/25

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston abruptly closed to visitors on 2/18/25, and the federal agency that operates the site did not provide any explanation for the sudden disruption.

Kennedy's grandson, Jack Schlossberg, wrote in a social media post that an official with the National Archives and Records Administration, which oversees presidential libraries, had instructed the Kennedy Library to fire probationary staff members, forcing the temporary closure.

TRUMP SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER ATTEMPTING TO CONTROL INDEPENDENT AGENCIES - 2/18/25

Trump today signed an executive order aimed at curtailing the powers of independent agencies, undermining the powers granted them through legislation.

Robert Weissman, co-president of Public Citizen, issued the following statement in response:

"Trump's illegal executive order on independent agencies aims to shield corporations from accountability and centralize more power with Trump and his minions. This is a profoundly dangerous idea for the nation's health, safety, environment and economy – and for our democracy. Congress made independent agencies independent of the White House for good reason."

MISSOURI BILL PROPOSES REGISTRY FOR PREGNANT WOMEN - 2/18/25

Missouri State Representative Phil Amato has introduced House Bill 807, nicknamed the "Save MO Babies Act." This bill would create a list of "at risk" pregnant women in the state in order to "reduce the number of preventable abortions."

The bill summary states that, if passed, Missouri would create a registry of every expecting mother in the state "who is at risk for seeking an abortion" starting July 1, 2026. The list would be created through the Maternal and Child Services division of the Department of Social Services. The bill did not specify how the "at risk" would be identified.

The bill would also mandate the promotion of "the safe and healthy birth of children in the state through the utilization of existing resources; coordinate community resources and provide assistance or services to expecting

mothers identified to be at risk for seeking abortion services; and prevent abortions through the adoption of children by fit and proper adoptive parents.”

TRUMP HAS ALREADY SPENT \$10.7 MILLION OF TAXPAYER MONEY PLAYING GOLF - 2/18/25

HuffPost has reported that while DOGE claims to be eliminating wasteful spending, Trump has already spent \$10.7 million of taxpayer money to play golf since taking office.

He has taken a golf trip every weekend since his inauguration, and he has played golf at his own properties on 9 of his first 30 days in office.

HuffPost’s \$10.7 million tally is based on a 2019 report by the Government Accountability Office breaking down the costs of Trump’s golf trips during his first term. The GAO calculated a total cost of \$3,383,250 for each trip. About one-third of that was the flight cost of Air Force One, with additional expenses for flying down vehicles, including two presidential limousines, for Trump’s motorcade and reimbursing the Coast Guard for stationing a gunship in the Atlantic Ocean just off the coast and heavily armed boats in the Intracoastal Waterway.

Those costs are based on 2017 dollars and are likely somewhat higher today.

HuffPost was able to use those figures to derive totals for his other golf destinations, including courses he owns in Doral, Florida; Palos Verdes, California; Bedminster, New Jersey; Ireland and Scotland.

ILLINOIS GOV. PRITZKER HARSHLY CRITICIZES TRUMP, MUSK IN HIS STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS - 2/19/25

In his State of the State address, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said he is "watching with a foreboding dread what is happening in our country right now."

Pritzker, specifically cited recent federal cuts that have impacted various programs and Illinoisans, among other measures and actions taken by the president and Musk and has been slashing federal spending.

"The Trump administration cut off funding for food safety inspectors for nearly a month, impacting more than 70 meat and poultry facilities in Illinois. Without these inspectors, the supply chain collapses, prices go through the roof, from farmers to truckers to meat packers to retailers, jobs will be lost," Pritzker said. "Meals on Wheels programs — which home deliver 12 million meals per year to 100,000 seniors and people with disabilities in Illinois — are on the federal chopping block. This is real. The new administration and the Republican Congress and Elon Musk intend to take these programs away."

He went on to say the following:

“I’ve been reflecting, these past four weeks, on two important parts of my life: my work helping to build the Illinois Holocaust Museum and the two times I’ve had the privilege of reciting the oath of office for Illinois Governor.

As some of you know, Skokie, Illinois once had one of the largest populations of Holocaust survivors anywhere in the world. In 1978, Nazis decided they wanted to march there.

The leaders of that march knew that the images of Swastika clad young men goose stepping down a peaceful suburban street would terrorize the local Jewish population – so many of whom had never recovered from their time in German concentration camps.

The prospect of that march sparked a legal fight that went all the way to the Supreme Court. It was a Jewish lawyer from the ACLU who argued the case for the Nazis – contending that even the most hateful of speech was protected under the first amendment.

As an American and a Jew, I find it difficult to resolve my feelings around that Supreme Court case – but I am grateful that the prospect of Nazis marching in their streets spurred the survivors and other Skokie residents to act. They joined together to form the Holocaust Memorial Foundation and built the first Illinois Holocaust Museum in a storefront in 1981 – a small but important forerunner to the one I helped build thirty years later.

I do not invoke the specter of Nazis lightly. But I know the history intimately — and have spent more time than probably anyone in this room with people who survived the Holocaust. Here’s what I’ve learned – the root that tears apart your house’s foundation begins as a seed – a seed of distrust and hate and blame.

“The seed that grew into a dictatorship in Europe a lifetime ago didn’t arrive overnight. It started with everyday Germans mad about inflation and looking for someone to blame.

I’m watching with a foreboding dread what is happening in our country right now. A president who watches a plane go down in the Potomac – and suggests — without facts or findings — that a diversity hire is responsible for the crash. Or the Missouri Attorney General who just sued Starbucks – arguing that consumers pay higher prices for their coffee because the baristas are too “female” and “nonwhite.” The authoritarian playbook is laid bare here: They point to a group of people who don’t look like you and tell you to blame them for your problems.

I just have one question: What comes next? After we’ve discriminated against, deported or disparaged all the immigrants and the gay and lesbian and transgender people, the developmentally disabled, the women and the minorities – once we’ve ostracized our neighbors and betrayed our friends – After that, when the problems we started with are still there staring us in the face – what comes next.

All the atrocities of human history lurk in the answer to that question. And if we don’t want to repeat history – then for God’s sake in this moment we better be strong enough to learn from it.

I swore the following oath on Abraham Lincoln’s Bible: “I do solemnly swear that I will support the constitution of the United States, and the constitution of the state of Illinois, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Governor according to the best of my ability.”

My oath is to the Constitution of our state and of our country. We don’t have kings in America – and I don’t intend to bend the knee to one. I am not speaking up in service to my ambitions — but in deference to my obligations.

If you think I’m overreacting and sounding the alarm too soon, consider this:

It took the Nazis one month, three weeks, two days, eight hours and 40 minutes to dismantle a constitutional republic. All I’m saying is when the five-alarm fire starts to burn, every good person better be ready to man a post with a bucket of water if you want to stop it from raging out of control.

Those Illinois Nazis did end up holding their march in 1978 – just not in Skokie. After all the blowback from the case, they decided to march in Chicago instead. Only twenty of them showed up. But 2000 people came to counter

protest. The Chicago Tribune reported that day that the “rally sputtered to an unspectacular end after ten minutes.” It was Illinoisans who smothered those embers before they could burn into a flame.

Tyranny requires your fear and your silence and your compliance. Democracy requires your courage. So gather your justice and humanity, Illinois, and do not let the “tragic spirit of despair” overcome us when our country needs us the most.”

KASH PATEL CONFIRMED AS FBI DIRECTOR - 2/20/25

The Senate voted 51-49 on Thursday to confirm Kash Patel to serve as FBI director.

Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) were the two Republicans to vote against Patel.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 12-10 along party lines last week to recommend Patel's nomination to the full Senate. All of the panel's Republicans supported Patel, with Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) accusing Democrats of unfairly waging a "harassment" campaign against the nominee.

In January 2025 CNN reported for years the FBI and the CIA had issues with Patel's handling of national security secrets. The CIA asked the first Trump Justice Department to open a criminal investigation into his activities, alleging that Patel circulated classified information about Russian efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election to government officials not authorized to see it, in an effort to discredit the FBI investigation of Russian interference. Patel denies mishandling classified documents and the DOJ referral did not lead to prosecution. Patel's FBI security clearance file remains flagged to indicate the CIA referral had been made.

In 2023 Patel wrote “Government Gangsters: The Deep State, the Truth, and the Battle for Our Democracy” (which is currently a best seller on Amazon) that features a list of "deep state" officials to target. Democrats argued Patel would use the FBI to go after the president's perceived enemies.

Trump promoted the book, saying “A brilliant roadmap highlighting every corrupt actor, to ultimately return our agencies and departments to work for the American People...we will use this blueprint to help us take back the White House and remove these Gangsters from all of Government!”

FEDERAL FIRINGS CUT 23 PERCENT OF STAFF AT HASKELL INDIAN NATIONS UNIVERSITY - 2/20/25

On February 14, 35 probationary employees—or almost 23 percent of the total staff—at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas were fired.

University President Frank Arpan posted on February 16 regarding the firings and stated that “The decision was not made at the university level”.

On February 20, with the campus closed, the Board of Regents released a letter confirming who did make the decision.

The letter to the Secretary of the Interior sought “a waiver to President Trump’s Executive Order of February 11, 2025 ‘Implementing the President’s DOGE Workforce Optimization Initiative’ as directed to apply to Haskell Indian Nations University on February 14, 2025.”

“These employees are mission-critical personnel responsible for delivering legally mandated educational services to Tribal Nations” Dalton Henry, President of the Haskell Board of Regents said in a press release.

Haskell is unlike most colleges in part because it is federally funded and federally run. It is managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs within the Department of the Interior. It is funded through Congressional appropriations. It has reportedly enrolled 1,000 students, who attend tuition-free, representing 150 tribal nations.

The press release said that despite the workforce reductions, Haskell Indian Nations University remains open, assuming no further changes in staff levels.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SHUTS DOWN FEDERAL MISCONDUCT TRACKING SYSTEM - 2/21/25

The Department of Justice has shut down the National Law Enforcement Accountability Database, a federal misconduct tracking system that was intended to prevent officers with disciplinary records from being rehired by other agencies, the Washington Post reported.

The database, created in 2022 under an executive order by former President Joe Biden, tracked misconduct among nearly 150,000 federal law enforcement officers and agents, according to the report. It was operational for just over a year, with all 90 executive branch agencies contributing disciplinary records dating back to 2017.

TOP US GENERAL, CHIEF OF THE NAVY AND VICE CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE FIRED - 2/21/25

On Feb. 21, 2025, President Trump fired the top US general, while Hegseth fired the chief of the US Navy and the vice chief of the Air Force.

Trump announced he was dismissing Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Charles Q. Brown, the second Black man to serve as America’s most senior general, and replacing him with Air Force Lt. Gen. John Dan “Razin” Caine.

Minutes later, Hegseth released a statement announcing he’d fired Admiral Lisa Franchetti, the chief of the Navy, the first woman to serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Hegseth called Franchetti a “DEI hire” in his 2024 book, "War on Warriors", saying, “If naval operations suffer, at least we can hold our heads high. Because at least we have another first! The first female member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — hooray.”

Hegseth also fired Gen. James Slife, the vice chief of the Air Force.

SUPREME COURT POSTPONES DECISION ON DELLINGER FIRING - 2/21/25

The Supreme Court postponed a decision regarding Trump's ability to fire the head of a key federal agency, Hampton Dellinger, the head of the Office of the Special Counsel

The Supreme Court said it would not interfere with the lower court decision, which temporarily blocked the firing, until Feb. 26, which is when the lower court's ruling is set to expire. Because of the short timing, the high court said it would hold the matter in abeyance, or suspension, for now.

Justices Neil Gorsuch and Samuel Alito noted in their dissent that they would have granted the administration's request to block the lower court order.

Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ketanji Brown Jackson noted in their dissent that they would not have entertained the Trump administration's appeal at this point.

CALL FOR FEB 28TH ECONOMIC BLACKOUT IN THE UNITED STATES - 2/21/25

Earlier in February, The People's Union USA called for a targeted blackout of major retailers on February 28, 2025 across the United States.

The call is to purchase nothing from major retailers on this day. That includes gas, food, groceries, clothing, and any other materials, online and in stores.

People are still encouraged to purchase from small, independent retailers.

LUIGI MANGIONE MAKES FIRST COURT APPEARANCE - 2/21/25

Luigi Mangione made his first court appearance since his arraignment in UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson's death.

He is accused of fatally shooting the CEO of UnitedHealthcare in New York City and leading authorities on a five-day search. He was in court for the first time since his December arraignment on state murder and terror charges.

The 26-year-old has pleaded not guilty to state charges but has yet to enter a plea on federal murder charges.

The hearing started with prosecutors reviewing all of the evidence they have turned over to the defense.

TRUMP THREATENS TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE USPS - 2/21/25

Trump said he may put the U.S. Postal Service under the control of the Commerce Department, which would mean an executive branch takeover of the agency, which has operated as an independent entity since 1970.

"We want to have a post office that works well and doesn't lose massive amounts of money," Trump said. "We're thinking about doing that. And it'll be a form of a merger, but it'll remain the Postal Service, and I think it'll operate a lot better."

FEDERAL PRISONS MAY MOVE TRANS INMATES AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK - 2/21/25

NPR reports that The Bureau of Prisons is continuing their plans to move transgender inmates out of prisons that align with their gender identity and into facilities corresponding to their sex at birth. The moves could happen as early as next week, according to federal inmates and a source familiar with the policy who spoke with NPR on condition of anonymity due to fear of reprisal.

Transgender women currently housed in women's facilities would be moved to men's facilities, and transgender men currently housed in men's facilities would be moved to women's facilities. It's expected that the moves will happen regardless of whether they've received gender transition surgery of any kind.

FEDERAL WORKERS TOLD TO DOCUMENT THEIR WORK OR BE FIRED - 2/22/25

NPR reports that federal workers across the U.S. government received an email on Saturday afternoon, telling them to account for what they did in the past week, with the threat of firings if they don't respond.

The emails arrived several hours after Musk posted about the ultimatum on X. "Consistent with President @realDonaldTrump's instructions, all federal employees will shortly receive an email requesting to understand what they got done last week," Musk wrote. The post ends: "Failure to respond will be taken as a resignation."

The emails, which NPR has confirmed, were sent by the Office of Personnel Management. They ask workers to reply and provide "approx. 5 bullets of what you accomplished last week and cc your manager," and give a deadline of Monday 11:59 p.m. ET. They ask that no classified information be shared.

OPM said in a statement that the emails are "part of the Trump Administration's commitment to an efficient and accountable federal workforce," and that "agencies will determine any next steps."

The head of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) — which represents more than 800,000 civil servants, said it would challenge any unlawful firings of federal workers.

"Once again, Elon Musk and the Trump Administration have shown their utter disdain for federal employees and the critical services they provide to the American people," AFGE National President Everett Kelley said.

Many federal workers are covered by civil service protections that prevent them from being fired without cause.

NIH FREEZE STALLS APPLICATIONS ON MEDICAL RESEARCH FUNDS - 2/22/25

Research into diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's may be put on hold as the National Institutes of Health cannot consider any new grant applications, delaying decisions about how to spend millions of dollars on research.

The NIH cannot proceed because Trump has blocked the NIH from posting any new notices in the Federal Register, which is required before many federal meetings can be held. The Federal Register is the official journal of the federal government of the United States that contains government agency rules, proposed rules, and public notices. It is published every weekday, except on federal holidays.

TRANS ACTOR HUNTER SCHAFFER SPEAKS OUT ABOUT HER CHANGED PASSPORT - 2/22/25

Trans Actor Hunter Schafer, who transitioned as a young teen, posted a video showing her new passport. Despite marking "female" on her passport application she received a passport that identified her as male, she said. In the video, she said she had not had her birth certificate amended.

The State Department, responsible for passports, is no longer issuing passports with the "X" marker which was available since 2021 and is not honoring requests to change gender markers between "M" and "F."

RALLY IN WASHINGTON TO SUPPORT UKRAINE - 2/22/25

Monday will mark the third anniversary of the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A group supporting Ukraine held a rally in the US capital Washington on Saturday to call for continued aid and solidarity.

Participants marched in front of the White House, chanting "Stand with Ukraine," and "Russia is a terrorist state."

US ARMY CHORUS PERFORMS "DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING?" AT WHITE HOUSE GOVERNOR'S BALL- 2/22/25

The US Army Chorus performed at the White House Governor's Ball Saturday night, hosted by Trump and his wife Melania. They performed "Do You Hear The People Sing" from the musical "Les Miserables".

If you're not a theater geek, the song is a revolutionary call for people to overcome adversity. The song is sung while preparing to launch a rebellion in the streets of Paris as well as in the finale, where the song transitions into a solemn hymn of a world full of peace and freedom for everyone. They sang the epilogue version. The lyrics are below.

"Do you hear the people sing?

Lost in the valley of the night

It is the music of a people

Who are climbing to the light

For the wretched of the Earth

There is a flame that never dies

Even the darkest night will end

And the sun will rise

They will live again in freedom

In the garden of the Lord

They will walk behind the ploughshare

They will put away the sword

The chain will be broken

And all men will have their reward

Will you join in our crusade?

Who will be strong and stand with me?

Somewhere beyond the barricade

Is there a world you long to see?

Do you hear the people sing?

Say, do you hear the distant drums?

It is the future that they bring

When tomorrow comes!

Will you join in our crusade?

Who will be strong and stand with me?

Somewhere beyond the barricade

Is there a world you long to see?

Do you hear the people sing?

Say, do you hear the distant drums?

It is the future that they bring

When tomorrow comes!!"

Daniel Scavino Jr., deputy chief of staff, posted video of the performance on his Instagram account Saturday night, but with the majority of the audio missing, listed as "Partially muted due to copyright claim". Video of the performance in full can be seen on YouTube.

[Link to video on YouTube](#)

PROTESTER AT REPUBLICAN EVENT TOLD TO SHUT UP AND FORCIBLY REMOVED- 2/22/25

Protesters at an Idaho town hall hosted by the Kootenai County Republican Central Committee (KCRCC) were told on Saturday that their "voice is meaningless" as concerns remain by some over President Donald Trump's administration and political agenda.

According to local CBS News affiliate, KREM 2, a woman who the Coeur d'Alene Police Department (CDAPD) identified as Teresa Snyder Borrenpohl, protested at the KCRCC hosted town hall in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

After making remarks from the audience to several legislative members on stage, she was asked to leave.

In a video circulating on Facebook, Kootenai County Sheriff Bob Norris is seen confronting Borrenpohl, warning, "Get up or be arrested," moments before two men intervened and escorted her out, according to Coeur d'Alene Press.

"This is not a negotiation," Norris stated as Borrenpohl responded, "Women deserve a voice."

While the scene quickly escalated, Ed Bejarana, the event's emcee, continued speaking over the commotion, commenting on the protester.

"Look at this little girl over here, everyone. Look at her," he said, referring to Borrenpohl. His remarks were met with shouts from the audience, some of whom held signs reading, "Save Voter Approved Medicaid."

Bejarana then defended the removal, accusing protesters of attempting to "filibuster" the event as he continued talking about DOGE. "We've got to be a little aggressive with some of these folks here," he said. "Your voice is meaningless right now...I can talk over all of you."

The confrontational approach drew criticism from many in attendance. "Is this a town hall or a lecture?" one woman yelled amid the uproar, according to Coeur d'Alene Press.

Coeur d'Alene resident Tonya Jean, who posted the video to Facebook, condemned the town hall for not allowing the public to comment, alleging that those with "differing perspectives were told to 'shut up.'"

"At today's KCRCC 'town hall' event at CHS auditorium in Coeur d'Alene, ID, the public was not allowed to comment. Those with differing perspectives were repeatedly told to 'shut up or get the hell out.' And when one woman simply asked if this was a lecture or an actual town hall, she was forcibly removed."

According to KREM 2 News, Norris said CDAPD cited Borrenpohl for trespassing and battery.

The three men who assaulted Borrenpohl were later identified as employees of a private security firm LEAR Asset Management.

TRUMP PLANNING TO IMPLEMENT TITLE 42 TO EXPEL IMMIGRANTS - 2/23/25

According to internal government documents obtained by CBS News, the Trump administration has prepared plans to implement a policy that would allow U.S. immigration officials to swiftly expel immigrants on the grounds that they could spread diseases like tuberculosis.

CBS News reports that the plans would revive a border measure known as Title 42 (enacted by the first Trump administration enacted at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to authorize summary expulsions of migrants). The Biden administration kept that policy in place amid record levels of illegal crossings at the U.S. southern border until letting it expire in 2023.

This new measure would invoke the Public Health Service Act, found in Title 42 of the U.S. code, to empower officials to expel immigrants without any of the processing outlined in federal immigration law, which says those on U.S. soil can request asylum even if they enter the country illegally.

The internal documents obtained by CBS News indicate the CDC is planning to issue an order that would label unauthorized migrants trying to enter the U.S. as public health risks, citing concerns that they could spread communicable diseases like tuberculosis.

COMPLIANCE VARIED ON MUSK'S DEMAND FOR DOCUMENTATION OF WORK - 2/23/25

Following an email from DOGE demanding that federal employees provide documentation of their work, compliance with the demand has been varied across departments.

The Social Security Administration and the Health and Human Services Department told employees to comply with the email – while in other departments employees were instructed to await further orders or to simply ignore the email.

The new director of the FBI, Kash Patel, told agents to “please pause any responses”. Employees with the Homeland Security Department were similarly informed that “no reporting action from you is needed at this time”.

All employees at the Department of Defense, who report to Pete Hegseth as defense secretary, were also told to pause responding.

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED BY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES - 2/23/25

A new non-government supported website has been launched by current and former Federal employees.

From their website:

Who we are

For decades, we've done our jobs in the background. We made it easier to file taxes, get veterans' benefits, and apply for financial aid. During times of crisis, we helped refugees navigate immigration processes, helped everyone find vaccines, and helped parents find baby formula.

Along the way, we made government websites easier to use while protecting the integrity of your personal information.

If they really wanted to know how to use technology to build a more efficient country, they would ask us.

But they haven't. They are destroyers.

We are the builders.

Our mission

We don't work for DOGE. We have always worked for you.

Here, you'll find stories from real government employees: How we save you time and money, how we protect your personal information, and how DOGE's dangerous dismantling of government technology puts you at risk.

[We Are The Builders Website](#)

MERTZ WINS THE ELECTION IN GERMANY - 2/23/25

According to results from Sunday's election, Germany's center-right Christian Democrat leader Friedrich Merz will take over as the country's new chancellor. Merz taking the position would likely return the country to a more stable two-party government, which has run Germany for most of the past three decades.

MERZ SAYS HIS PRIORITY IS TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE FOR EUROPE FROM THE UNITED STATES - 2/23/25

Germany's chancellor-elect, Friedrich Merz, said his "absolute priority" upon taking up the position will be to secure Europe so that it can "achieve independence" from the United States.

"I would never have thought that I would have to say something like this in a TV show but, after Donald Trump's remarks last week... it is clear that this government does not care much about the fate of Europe," Merz said on Sunday, according to multiple reports.

"My absolute priority will be to strengthen Europe as quickly as possible so that, step by step, we can really achieve independence from the USA," Merz added.

JUDGE BARS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND OPM FROM SHARING INFORMATION WITH DOGE - 2/24/25

A federal judge has barred the Education Department and the Office of Personnel Management from sharing sensitive information with Elon Musk's DOGE, saying the decision to grant DOGE access appears to breach federal privacy laws.

U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman, who was appointed by President Joe Biden, granted a two-week restraining order.

The ruling was the result of a lawsuit launched by unions and membership organizations representing current and former federal employees and federal student aid recipients and six military veterans who have received federal benefits or student loans.

In her ruling she wrote that "DOGE affiliates have been granted access to systems of record that contain some of the plaintiffs' most sensitive data — Social Security numbers, dates of birth, home addresses, income and assets, citizenship status, and disability status — and their access to this trove of personal information is ongoing", describing this access as a potentially risky breach.

[Link to the Judge's Ruling](#)

TRIAL BEGINS FOR ENERGY TRANSFER'S LAWSUIT AGAINST GREENPEACE USA - 2/24/25

NPR reports that the trial begins today for a \$300 million lawsuit against Greenpeace USA that could force the organization to shut down.

Energy Transfer, the company that built Dakota Access Pipeline, claims it suffered damages due to the 2016 and 2017 protests led by Native Americans against the pipeline.

Energy Transfer claims that Greenpeace and other activists conspired to raise money, incite protests, hurt the company's reputation and delay the pipeline's construction. The 1,100-mile pipeline was delayed by an estimated 90 days, Energy Transfer's now Executive Chairman Kelcy Warren said in 2017.

Greenpeace is calling this a strategic lawsuit against public participation, where a wealthy company takes their critics to court, forcing them to spend time and money defending themselves instead of protesting. Greenpeace hopes to win to dissuade other companies from filing similar cases.

TRUMP APPOINTS PODCASTER DAN BONGINO AS FBI DEPUTY DIRECTOR - 2/24/25

Dan Bongino, a former U.S. Secret Service agent who gained fame as a right-wing pundit with TV shows and a popular podcast, and one of the leaders in the Make America Great Again political movement to spread false information about the 2020 election, has been chosen to serve as FBI deputy director.

Bongino will serve under Kash Patel, the FBI director.

The deputy director is traditionally a career agent responsible for the bureau's day-to-day law enforcement operations. Bognino, however, has never been an FBI agent.

The FBI Agents Association had earlier sent a letter to its members saying leadership had met with Patel in January, when they stressed that "the FBI Deputy Director should continue to be an on-board, active Special Agent as has been the case for 117 years for many compelling reasons, including operational expertise and experience, as well as the trust of our Special Agent population." Patel had agreed, according to the note.

FEDERAL JUDGE DENIES MOTION TO GRANT AP ACCESS TO WHITE HOUSE EVENTS - 2/24/25

A federal judge denied an emergency motion to restore access for Associated Press reporters and photographers to White House events Monday, pending a fuller briefing and another hearing before he rules.

Last week, the Associated Press sued three Trump administration officials, White House chief of staff Susie Wiles, deputy chief of staff Taylor Budowich, and press secretary Karoline Leavitt, arguing its reporters have been unconstitutionally banned in retaliation for the news service's refusal to change call the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America."

Judge Trevor McFadden, appointed by President Trump, said that an expedited briefing schedule would be necessary and additional briefs would be required before he could make a decision in the matter.

FRANCE'S MACRON FACT-CHECKS TRUMP IN EMBARRASSING PRESS CONFERENCE - 2/24/25

French President Emmanuel Macron visited the White House on Monday, and during a press conference in the Oval Office, he was forced to correct President Trump on Ukraine.

Trump remarked that "Europe is loaning the money to Ukraine. They get their money back." Macron immediately set the record straight, touching Trump's arm as he explained the truth.

"No, in fact, to be frank. We paid. We paid 60 percent of the total effort, and it was through, like the U.S., loans, guarantee, grants, and we provided real money, to be clear," Macron said.

Trump wasn't satisfied with this explanation, and later said, "But they get their money back, we don't, and now we do, but that's only fair."

AI VIDEO OF TRUMP SUCKING MUSK'S APPEARS ON MONITORS AT HUD OFFICE - 2/24/25

Monitors at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the Department of Housing and Urban Development on Monday briefly displayed a fake video depicting President Trump sucking the toes of Elon Musk, according

to department employees and others familiar with what transpired. The video, which appeared to be generated by artificial intelligence, was emblazoned with the message “Long Live the Real King.”

The looping video greeted housing department employees on the first day that all workers were expected to be back at their headquarters full-time, to comply with Trump’s orders ending remote work for federal workers. It could not be identified how the monitors had been hacked to display the images, and they had to be unplugged, according to two people familiar with what transpired.

The disturbing but hilarious video can be viewed on Wired's coverage of the story.

<https://www.wired.com/story/trump-musk-hud-feet-video/>

SUPREME COURT DECLINES CHALLENGE TO TENNESSEE LAW RESTRICTING DRAG SHOWS – 2/24/25

The Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to a Tennessee law restricting some drag performances.

In a brief, unsigned order, the justices denied a Tennessee theater company’s request to intervene in its challenge to the state’s limits on drag, first enacted in 2023 by the Republican-dominated Legislature. While the law does not explicitly mention drag shows, state lawmakers said the measure was meant to restrict them.

A Tennessee court had previously ruled the law unconstitutional. A federal appeals court reversed that decision in July, ruling that the Memphis-based theater group Friends of George’s lacked the legal standing to challenge Tennessee’s restrictions.

From the bill:

"This bill creates an offense for a person who engages in an adult cabaret performance on public property or in a location where the adult cabaret performance could be viewed by a person who is not an adult. The bill defines an "adult cabaret performance" to mean a performance in a location other than an adult cabaret that features topless dancers, go-go dancers, exotic dancers, strippers, male or female impersonators who provide entertainment that appeals to a prurient interest, or similar entertainers, regardless of whether or not performed for consideration.

A first violation of this offense is a Class A misdemeanor, and a second or subsequent violation of this offense is a Class E felony."

MADDOW LASHES OUT AT MSNBC OVER FIRINGS - 2/24/25

MSNBC anchor Rachel Maddow lashed out at her own network for its decision to cancel the shows of two of its non-white primetime hosts, Joy Reid, and Alex Wagner

“I will tell you it is also unnerving to see that on a network where we’ve got two—count them, two— non-white hosts in primetime, both of our non-white hosts in primetime are losing their shows, as is Katie Phang on the weekend,” Maddow said. “And that feels worse than bad, no matter who replaces them. That feels indefensible, and I do not defend it.”

She went on to comment on the impact these firings will have on the people behind the scenes.

“Dozens of producers and staffers, including some who are among the most experienced and most talented and most specialist producers in the building, are facing being laid off. They’re being invited to reapply for new jobs,” Maddow said.

“That has never happened at this scale in this way before when it comes to programing changes, presumably because it’s not the right way to treat people and it’s inefficient and it’s unnecessary, and it kind of drops the bottom out of whether or not people feel like this is a good place to work, and so we don’t generally do things that way.”

21 STAFFERS RESIGN FROM DOGE - 2/25/25

21 civil service employees resigned Tuesday from DOGE, saying they were refusing to use their technical expertise to “dismantle critical public services.” The 21 staffers were originally onboarded into DOGE after working for the United States Digital Service.

“We swore to serve the American people and uphold our oath to the Constitution across presidential administrations,” the 21 staffers wrote in a joint resignation letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press. “However, it has become clear that we can no longer honor those commitments.”

The employees also warned that many of those enlisted by Musk were political ideologues who did not have the necessary skills or experience for the task ahead of them.

The now-former staffers complained about their DOGE onboarding process after Trump took office.

"Several of these interviewers refused to identify themselves, asked questions about political loyalty, attempted to pit colleagues against each other, and demonstrated limited technical ability," the staffers wrote in their letter. "This process created significant security risks."

During the transition, 40 staffers reportedly were laid off earlier this month and the 65 remaining staffers were integrated into DOGE. Only 44 employees now remain, according to the AP's reporting.

The mass resignation of engineers, data scientists, designers and product managers is a temporary setback for Musk’s purge of the federal workforce.

GLEASON CONFIRMED AS THE ACTING LEADER OF DOGE - 2/25/25

After White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt refused to answer who was running DOGE when pressed by CBS News’ Nancy Cordes, White House officials confirmed that while billionaire Elon Musk is overseeing the DOGE, Amy Gleason has been appointed as the acting leader of DOGE.

When Cordes pointed out to Leavitt that Trump’s executive order to create DOGE called for the naming of a DOGE administrator and asked who is serving as the DOGE administrator, Leavitt avoided the question.

"So, the president tasked Elon Musk to oversee the DOGE effort," Leavitt said. "There are career officials and there are political appointees who are helping run DOGE on a day-to-day basis."

"There are also individuals who have onboarded as political appointees at every agency across the board to work alongside President Trump's Cabinet to find and identify waste, fraud and abuse, and they are working on that effort every day."

Cordes quickly asked, "So, is Elon Musk the administrator?" and Leavitt did not answer the question, twice calling on another reporter.

WHITE HOUSE TAKING CONTROL OF PRESS ACCESS - 2/25/25

Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt announced on Tuesday that the White House will determine which outlets can cover presidential events and shares material with other media outlets.

The rotation of pool reporters was previously determined by the White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA), which said the decision "tears at the independence of a free press".

"The White House press team in this administration will determine who gets to enjoy the very privileged and limited access in spaces such as Air Force One and the Oval Office," Leavitt said at a news briefing on Tuesday.

She said the changes would allow "new media" outlets - including streaming services and podcasts - to "share in this awesome responsibility".

"Legacy media outlets who have been here for years will still participate in the pool, but new voices are going to be welcomed in as well," she said.

"[By] deciding which outlets make up the limited press pool on a day-to-day basis, the White House will be restoring power back to the American people," Leavitt added.

TRUMP ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH NEW \$5 MILLION "GOLD CARD" VISA PROGRAM - 2/25/25

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told reporters in the Oval Office that the Trump administration would be ending the existing EB5 visa program, announcing a new "gold card" option. It's unclear, however, whether Trump can officially end the EB5 program without Congress approval as the program was just reauthorized in 2022.

The current EB5 program requires an investment of a little over \$1 million, the creation of at least 10 jobs and puts investors on a pathway to a green card and later citizenship.

Trump boasted "We're going to be selling a gold card. You have a green card. This is a gold card. We're going to be putting a price on that card of about \$5 million and that's going to give you green card privileges, plus it's going to be a route to citizenship. And wealthy people will be coming into our country by buying this card. They'll be wealthy, and they'll be successful, and they'll be spending a lot of money and paying a lot of taxes and employing a lot of people, and we think it's going to be extremely successful," Trump said.

Lutnick said "They'll have to go through vetting, of course, to make sure they're wonderful world class global citizens, they can come to America. President can give them a green card, and they can invest in America, and we can use that money to reduce our deficit."

JUDGE TELLS TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO RESUME USAID FUNDING BY WEDNESDAY - 2/25/25

A federal judge has ordered the Trump administration to resume hundreds of millions of dollars in payments for USAID projects across the globe.

U.S. District Judge Amir H. Ali gave the government until the end of Wednesday to comply.

The defendants, USAID and the State Department, have appealed the order to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Ali first ordered Trump officials to reopen the flow of funding to thousands of aid projects on Feb.13. But in a telephone hearing Tuesday, he said the Trump administration has provided no evidence it has done so.

PALA CASINO HOSTING MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TRIBAL POLICY SUMMIT – 2/25/25

The Pala Casino in California hosted the third annual Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Tribal Policy Summit.

The two-day event began Tuesday and is meant to educate the community about what organizers say has become an epidemic.

The conference at Pala has drawn tribal members and victims' families from across the country, such as the family of 24-year-old Khadijah Rose Britton, a member of the Round Valley Indian Tribe, who disappeared from Mendocino County seven years ago.

Britton's cousin, Michelle Merrifield, says many cases are going cold because of disputes over jurisdiction.

"We have a lot of people in our valley that have been murdered and missing, and Khadijah is one of them right now that is ongoing," she said. "The cops and Mendocino County Sheriffs ... that were involved are just saying, 'This happened on your tribal land, your reservation. You take care of it.'"

One challenge is the federal law, Public Law 280, passed in 1953. The law transferred law enforcement jurisdiction of certain cases from tribal police to state police. But state law enforcement agencies often face a lack of resources and cultural understanding of cases involving Indigenous people.

According to Robert Smith, the Chairman of the Pala Band of Mission Indians, the summit is an opportunity for tribes to network, share good and bad experiences, and try to come together to help each other, and determine how they can work with law enforcement.

Smith says San Diego County tribes have a good working relationship with law enforcement and have very few missing Indigenous people cases.

Other tribes are pushing for more resources and representation in their communities.

PENTAGON ORDERS SOCIAL MEDIA SITES PURGED OF ANY MENTION OF DEI BY MARCH 5 - 2/26/25

On Wednesday, the Pentagon's top public affairs official signed and sent out a new memo requiring all the military services to spend countless hours poring over years of website postings, photos, news articles and videos to remove any mentions that "promote diversity, equity and inclusion."

If they can't do that by March 5, they have been ordered to "temporarily remove from public display" all content published during the Biden administration's four years in office, according to a copy of the memo obtained by The Associated Press.

NEBRASKA WOMAN MURDERED HOURS AFTER FILING PROTECTION ORDER – 2/26/25

21-year-old Michelle Gonzalez was shot and killed Wednesday in Lincoln, Nebraska by a man she had filed a protection order against just hours prior.

Officers were called to a neighborhood that day around 12:30 p.m. by two women told police that they saw a woman, later identified as Gonzalez, get hit by a black vehicle.

The women said they stepped in to help Gonzalez and took her into their car, but the man who had hit her decided to follow them.

The man, 28-year-old Ibrahim Alhamadani, crashed into the car that was carrying Gonzalez. The collision spun the vehicles out, but Alhamadani got out and approached Gonzalez's side of the car armed with a gun, shooting Gonzalez multiple times before turning the gun on himself.

First responders found Alhamadani dead at the scene, while Gonzalez was taken to the hospital with life-threatening injuries, where she died later that evening.

Gonzalez had filed a protection order against Alhamadani hours earlier and the protection order was approved. Gonzalez said that Alhamadani had assaulted her earlier that morning, beating her with a pistol while intoxicated. The protection order had yet to be served to Alhamadani. The protection order also listed two other recent incidents of domestic violence.

According to police records, Alhamadani had two previous protection orders filed against him by two separate women. He also served time in both prison and jail for domestic violence charges.

At the time of Wednesday's shooting, Alhamadani was out on parole for a previous domestic violence case.

ICE PLANS MASSIVE NEW IMMIGRANT DETENTION CENTER IN NEWARK - 2/27/25

The largest federal immigration detention center on the east coast will open in Newark, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials announced Wednesday.

Delaney Hall, a 1,000-bed facility located next to the Essex County jail, will be the first immigration detention center to open under the Trump administration. The facility's owner, private prison contractor Geo Group, said Thursday it signed a 15-year contract with ICE worth about \$60 million annually.

ICE officials said the new detention center would help it manage growing arrests and deportations ordered under President Donald Trump, who campaigned for reelection pledging a mass deportation effort. Delaney Hall's closeness to Newark airport is also key, according to ICE.

"The location near an international airport streamlines logistics, and helps facilitate the timely processing of individuals in our custody as we pursue President Trump's mandate to arrest, detain and remove illegal aliens from our communities," acting ICE director Caleb Vitello said in a statement.

MASS LAYOFFS AT THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE - 2/27/25

On Thursday, word of mass layoffs began to spread at the National Weather Service and its parent agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. More than 800 people were expected to lose their jobs. As with

other government agencies, the cuts appeared to have been focused on probationary employees who are easier to dismiss.

Though not entirely unexpected, the terminations were shocking to employees of the Weather Service, the government agency responsible for issuing warnings, generating daily forecasts, advising local authorities and collecting the weather data that make these functions possible.

This included employees who are considered "essential" employees, employees required to continue working without pay in the event of a government shutdown, such as Kayla Besong, a scientist at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LAUNCHES PORTAL AIMED TO END ANY DEI IN SCHOOLS - 2/27/25

The U.S. Department of Education launched EndDEI.Ed.Gov, a public portal where anyone can essentially tattle on schools they feel are promoting DEI initiatives.

From the site, "The U.S. Department of Education is committed to ensuring all students have access to meaningful learning free of divisive ideologies and indoctrination."

The secure portal allows parents to provide an email address, the name of the student's school or school district, and details of the concerning practices. The Department of Education will use submissions as a guide to identify potential areas for investigation.

It would be a shame if this portal became useless because it was being flooded with false information, maybe concerns about how those with orange skin are being celebrated in the 20002 area code.

[EndDEIEd.Gov Form Link](#)

TRUMP EXPECTED TO SIGN EXECUTIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING ENGLISH AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF US - 2/28/25

Trump is expected to sign an executive order designating English as the official language of the United States.

This would allow government agencies and organizations that receive federal funding to choose whether to continue to offer documents and services in languages other than English, or more than likely, be told by the Trump administration that they no longer are allowed to offer documents and services in languages other than English.

The United States has never had an official language because the Founding Fathers believed it was unnecessary and would be undemocratic.

Currently there are more than 350 languages spoken in the United States, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. The most widely spoken languages other than English are Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Arabic.

This includes more than 160 Native North American languages spoken in the United States.

TRUMP ,VANCE ATTEMPT TO BULLY AND HUMILIATE PRESIDENT ZELENSKY IN MEETING - 2/28/25

Trump and Vance threw insults, showed their support for Russia, constantly interrupted, and attempted to bully and humiliate President Zelenskyy of Ukraine in a meeting the Oval Office.

The meeting, which was supposed to include signing of a highly touted deal for Ukrainian mineral rights, and a discussion of the United States backing of Ukraine, was cut short after the confrontation.

Below is a partial transcript of the meeting from The Guardian.

Zelenskyy: What kind of diplomacy, JD, are you are asking about? What do you mean?

Vance: I'm talking about the kind of diplomacy that's going to end the destruction of your country.

Zelenskyy: Yes, but if you ...

Vance: Mr President, with respect, I think it's disrespectful for you to come to the Oval Office and try to litigate this in front of the American media. Right now, you guys are going around and forcing conscripts to the frontlines because you have manpower problems. You should be thanking the president.

Zelenskyy: Have you ever been to Ukraine to see the problems we have?

Vance: I've actually watched and seen the stories, and I know what happens is you bring people on a propaganda tour, Mr President.

Do you disagree that you've had problems with bringing people in your military, and do you think that it's respectful to come to the Oval Office of the United States of America and attack the administration that is trying to prevent the destruction of your country?

Zelenskyy: First of all, during the war, everybody has problems, even you. You have nice solutions and don't feel [it] now, but you will feel it in the future.

Trump: You don't know that. Don't tell us what we're going to feel. We're trying to solve a problem. Don't tell us we're going to feel.

Zelenskyy: I am not telling you, I am answering ...

two men argue while seated

Vance: That's exactly what you're doing ...

Trump, raising his voice: You're in no position to dictate what we're going to feel. We're going to feel very good and very strong.

Zelenskyy tries to speak.

Trump: You right now are not in a very good position. You've allowed yourself to be in a very bad position. You don't have the cards right now. With us, you start having the cards.

You're gambling with lives of millions of people, you're gambling with world war three and what you're doing is very disrespectful to this country.

Vance: Have you said thank you once?

Zelenskyy: A lot of times.

Vance: No, in this meeting, this entire meeting? Offer some words of appreciation for the United States of America and the president who's trying to save your country.

Zelenskyy: Yes, you think that if you will speak very loudly about the war ...

Trump: He's not speaking loud. Your country is in big trouble. No, no, you've done a lot of talking. Your country is in big trouble.

Zelenskyy: I know, I know.

Trump: You're not winning this. You have a damn good chance of coming out OK, because of us.

Zelenskyy: We are staying strong from the very beginning of the war, we have been alone, and we are saying, I said, thanks.

Trump, speaking over Zelenskyy: You haven't been alone ... We gave you military equipment. Your men are brave, but they had our military. If you didn't have our military equipment, this war would have been over in two weeks.

Zelenskyy: I heard it from Putin in three days.

Trump: It's going to be a very hard thing to do business like this.

Vance: Just say thank you.

Zelenskyy: I said it a lot of times.

Vance: Accept that there are disagreements and let's go litigate those disagreements rather than trying to fight it in the American media, when you're wrong. We know that you're wrong.

Trump: You're buried there. Your people are dying. You're running low on soldiers. No, listen ... And then you tell us, 'I don't want a ceasefire. I don't want a ceasefire. I want to go and I want this.'

Trump: You're not acting at all thankful. And that's not a nice thing. I'll be honest, that's not a nice thing.

All right, I think we've seen enough. What do you think? Great television. I will say that.