



# Executive Order 14251

## Our union is still here - and our voice still matters!

On March 27, 2025, Executive Order 14251, titled "Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs," was issued to remove large portions of the federal workforce from coverage under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute. The order identifies the Department of Defense and other agencies as having national security functions and states that Chapter 71 collective bargaining rights cannot be applied to those agencies in a manner consistent with national security requirements.

For federal employees, including many Department of Defense workers, this is not just a paperwork change. It is an attack on the collective voice employees have used for decades to address workplace safety, fairness, overtime disputes, discipline, reassignments, appraisals, classification concerns, leave issues, and working conditions.

This impacts more than just one group of employees. Employees across DoD activities, including Robins AFB employees, DLA employees, AAFES employees, DeCA employees, NAF employees, Acq-Demo (NH-NJ) employees, and other workers tied to affected bargaining units may be told that their bargaining unit status has changed, that their contract no longer applies, or that their negotiated grievance rights have been removed.

However, employees should also understand that not every employee is affected the same way. Wage grade employees, fire fighters, police officers, and security guards remain exempt from EO 14251's removal of bargaining unit rights and should not be treated the same as employees whose bargaining unit status has been removed under the Executive Order. If any wage grade employee is told their rights have changed, they should immediately contact the union and request clarification in writing.

AFGE's position is clear: this Executive Order does not make the need for a union disappear. It proves why the union is needed more than ever.

Civilian employees who support the national defense mission are not a threat to national security. They are part of what makes national security possible. They repair aircraft, supply parts, support logistics, operate commissaries and exchanges, maintain facilities, support morale and readiness, serve military families, and keep the mission moving every day.

Taking away their collective voice does not strengthen the mission. It weakens fairness, accountability, safety, and trust in the workplace.

### What This Means for Employees

Management may tell employees that their bargaining unit status is being changed. Employees may receive an SF-50 showing their bargaining unit status code changed to 8888, which management may describe as "not eligible for union representation." Some employees may also be told that their collective bargaining agreement no longer applies or that the negotiated grievance procedure is no longer available.

Employees need to understand something important: a management memo, SF-50 change, or BUS code change does not erase the value of solidarity. It does not erase your ability to seek help, ask questions, document unfair treatment, use available appeal processes, or stand together with your coworkers.

Even where management claims the negotiated grievance procedure no longer applies, employees may still have other rights and processes available depending on the situation, including:

Administrative grievance procedures where available; EEO complaints; MSPB appeal rights where applicable; OSC and whistleblower protections; OWCP rights; statutory rights; safety reporting rights; veterans' preference rights; due process protections in certain adverse actions; and the right to seek advice, education, and support.

For wage grade employees, the message is especially important: if your bargaining unit rights remain intact, do not allow management confusion over EO 14251 to weaken or limit rights that still apply to you. Stay informed, stay connected with the union, and report any attempt to improperly remove, limit, or discourage your protected rights.

The union remains a critical source of information, organization, advocacy, and protection. The tools may change during litigation, but the need for representation does not.

### Affected Employees You Are Not Alone!

DLA, AAFES, DeCA, and NAF employees should not assume they are alone just because their command, funding source, pay system, or personnel rules may differ from other DoD employees.

DLA employees support supply, logistics, distribu-

By **JAMES S. WATSON**  
Executive Vice President  
AFGE Local 987



tion, parts, material readiness, and warfighter support. AAFES employees support military members and families through exchange operations. DeCA employees support commissary operations and quality-of-life services. NAF employees support morale, welfare, recreation, child care, food service, lodging, and other mission-support functions.

These employees may work under different systems, but they share the same basic concern: when management takes away collective bargaining rights, employees lose one of the strongest tools they have to challenge unfair treatment, unsafe practices, inconsistent policies, favoritism, and sudden changes to working conditions.

That is why staying connected to the union matters. Even when management claims the contract is terminated or the bargaining unit status is changed, the union can still help employees understand their options, track patterns, identify unfair treatment, raise concerns, communicate with elected officials, support litigation and legislative efforts, and keep employees organized.

### Why Employees Should Stay in the Union

DLA, AAFES, DeCA, NAF, and Acq-Demo employees should be especially careful not to walk away from the union during this period. Different groups may be affected in different ways, and some employees may work under different personnel rules, funding systems, pay systems, or appraisal systems. But the basic truth is the same: employees still need information, support, organization, and a collective voice.

Acq-Demo employees often work under complex pay, appraisal, contribution, classification, and performance systems. Decisions involving appraisals, contribution scores, pay progression, assignments, discipline, details, and reassignments can directly affect careers and income.

DLA employees may face issues involving logistics, mission support, workload, overtime, safety, assignments, and accountability. AAFES and DeCA employees may face workplace concerns involving scheduling, discipline, leave, staffing, safety, favoritism, and changes in working conditions. NAF employees may face concerns involving personnel actions, benefits, scheduling, discipline, and management practices under separate employment rules.

Those issues do not disappear because management changes a BUS code.

In fact, the risk of unfair treatment may increase when employees are isolated and told they no longer have a collective voice. That is why DLA, AAFES, DeCA, NAF, and acq-Demo employees should stay members, stay informed, and continue to bring concerns forward.

Staying in the union matters because the fight is not over. EO 14251 remains part of ongoing legal, legislative, and workplace challenges. If employees leave the union now, management gets exactly what it wants: a divided workforce with less ability to push back.

Union membership is also about more than a contract. A collective bargaining agreement is one tool, but the union is also a network of trained representatives, experienced advocates, safety watchdogs, legislative voices, and coworkers who understand what is happening on the shop floor, in the office, in the warehouse, in the commissary, in the exchange, and across the installation.

Employees still need protection from unfair treatment. Appraisals, discipline, reassignments, overtime decisions, leave issues, safety concerns, harassment, favoritism, retaliation, and inconsistent treatment do not disappear because management says the CBA no longer applies.

Staying together also protects future bargaining power. If a court decision, Congress, or future policy change restores bargaining rights, the strength of the union will depend on how many employees stayed united during

the attack. A strong membership today means a stronger position tomorrow.

Silence helps management. Solidarity helps employees.

### What Employees Should Do Now

Employees should not sign anything they do not understand. However, if giving a direct order from management when presented a document related to EO 14251, bargaining unit removal, dues cancellation, contract termination, or changes to rights, employees should request a copy before signing.

Employees should sign only to acknowledge receipt, the employee should consider writing: "Acknowledgment of receipt only. I do not waive any rights."

Employees should immediately contact the union if they receive any document connected to EO 14251, BUS code changes, dues cancellation, CBA termination, or changes in representation status.

Wage grade employees should be especially alert. If you are a wage grade employee and management tells you that EO 14251 removed your bargaining unit rights, changed your union status, or ended your negotiated protections, request that statement in writing and contact the union immediately.

### Employees should also keep copies of:

SF-50s; management notices; emails; appraisal documents; disciplinary letters; leave records; overtime records; safety complaints; grievance documents; EEO paperwork; proposed actions; decision letters; and any communication about EO 14251 or bargaining unit status.

Employees should document dates, names, witnesses, and what was said. If management tells employees something verbally, employees should write it down and ask for clarification in writing.

Most importantly, employees should stay members and make sure their membership remains active. If payroll dues are stopped, employees should contact the union about other dues options, including eDues and direct dues.

### What the Union Can Still Do

AFGE Local 987 will continue to stand with affected employees. Even where management claims statutory bargaining rights or negotiated grievance rights have been removed, the union can still play a powerful role.

The union can educate employees on their rights and options. The union can help employees understand management documents. The union can identify patterns of unfair treatment. The union can assist employees in preparing responses, timelines, and documentation. The union can help employees understand EEO, MSPB, OSC, OWCP, administrative grievance, safety, and other available processes. The union can communicate concerns to elected officials. The union can support national AFGE litigation and legislative efforts. The union can continue to organize employees and protect solidarity.

For wage grade employees whose bargaining unit rights remain protected, the union can continue enforcing applicable rights, monitoring management compliance, challenging improper attempts to limit representation, and ensuring management does not misuse EO 14251 against employees who are exempt from its bargaining unit removal.

The union can also continue doing what unions have always done best: making sure employees are not isolated, intimidated, or left to figure things out alone.

### Our Message to All Affected Employees!

Do not let management convince you that you are alone.

Do not let a BUS code change divide the workforce.

Do not let payroll dues issues weaken your commitment.

Do not let the loss of one legal tool make you give up every other tool you still have.

Do not let this Executive Order silence your voice.

And if you are a wage grade employee, do not let anyone wrongly tell you that you lost rights that still belong to you.

The union is still here. The fight is still active. Every member who stays strengthens the effort to protect fairness, dignity, safety, and accountability in the federal workplace.

AFGE Local 987's position is simple: federal employees should not lose their voice because they support the national defense mission. DLA, AAFES, DeCA, NAF, Acq-Demo, wage grade, and other affected employees deserve respect, fairness, and representation.

We will continue to monitor management actions, educate employees, challenge unfair treatment, support legal and legislative efforts, and fight to protect employee rights.

Stay informed. Stay organized. Stay union.

## Kaiser Permanente health, wellbeing webinar series

Kaiser Permanente webinar series (scan the bar code to sign up):

**Ready, Set, Goal: Creating Healthy Habits**

June 11, 1 p.m.

Changing an unhealthy habit to a healthy one can be challenging. Explore ways to strengthen your motivation to create habits that stick.

**The Power of Social Connections and Your Health**



Aug. 27, 1 p.m.

Learn how the four simple

yet profound actions of connecting, sharing, listening, and being of service can make a significant positive impact on your health.

**Why Sleep Matters**

Oct. 15, 1 p.m.

New research uncovers the connection between quality sleep and overall health and well-being.

Learn simple, effective tools to improve your ability

to rest, relax, and sleep.

**Find Your Joy**

Dec. 3, 1 p.m.

Discover how positive psychology and practical strategies can nurture your own happiness through practices of kindness, empathy, gratitude, and awe.

Can't make a live class?

Register to receive a link to the recording.



### Membership meeting

Local 987 will have a membership meeting June 18 at 5 p.m. It will be held at Union Hall, located at 1764 Watson Blvd. Membership will be verified. You can make updates to your contact information by calling Union Hall at 478-922-5758 or by emailing Linda Baxter at [linda@afgelocal987.org](mailto:linda@afgelocal987.org) or Jeanette McElhaney at [jmac@afgelocal987.org](mailto:jmac@afgelocal987.org).



**The Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex Quality Assurance AS9100D/9110C Program Management Team stands with the AS9100D/9110C certificates at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, March 6. The WR-ALC joined Ogden Air Logistics Complex at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, in holding both the AS9100D and AS9110C certifications, positioning it as a leader in advanced manufacturing and sustainment within the Air Force Sustainability Center. From left to right: Patrick Carter, Jeffrey Plunkett, Kendall Green, Lacey Mullis, Johnny Barrett, and James "Bud" Circle. (U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather)**

## WR-ALC achieves manufacturing certification, enhancing AF readiness

By **JOSEPH MATHER**  
78th Air Base Wing  
Public Affairs

The Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex has achieved the AS9100D certification for its manufacturing processes, a move that enhances its industrial capabilities and positions the complex to take on new, high-tech workloads for the Department of War.

The certification, an internationally recognized quality management standard for the aviation, space and defense industries, specifically impacts the 402nd Commodities Maintenance Group and the 402nd Electronics Maintenance Group.

Brig. Gen. David Miller, WR-ALC commander, emphasized the strategic importance of this milestone.

"Achieving the AS9100D certification is a monumental achievement for the entire WR-ALC Miller said. "It formally recognizes the dedication to excellence that our maintenance professionals demon-

strate every day. Their work in bringing our manufacturing processes to this internationally recognized standard directly enhances warfighter readiness, fosters innovation and strengthens our partnerships across the defense industrial base. We are not just making parts; we are building a more lethal and capable force for the future."

The effort to secure the certification was a year-long, intensive process led by a team of six WR-ALC Quality Assurance AS9100D/9110C program managers.

According to James Circle, WR-ALC Quality Assurance AS9100D/9110C Program lead, the AS9100D standard is a level on par with AS9110C certification for maintenance, repair and overhaul, which the complex already holds.

"AS9100 is more for manufacturing from start to finish, from cradle to grave," said Circle.

This distinction is critical for groups like the 402nd Electronics Maintenance Group,

which manufactures complex components like circuit cards for the Defense Logistics Agency supply chain. The certification validates their entire process, from initial design to the final product.

The immediate benefit is a significant enhancement to Air Force readiness, Circle said. By producing high-quality parts in-house, the ALC can fill critical gaps in the supply chain, especially for components that commercial manufacturers may not produce in small quantities. This capability is not just a cost-saver but a direct contributor to aircraft readiness.

The process involved identifying all manufacturing workloads and undergoing a rigorous audit. The standards themselves are set by the International Aerospace Quality Group and published by Society of Automotive Engineers International. To maintain the certification, the complex will undergo annual audits on a three-year cycle.

**See CERTIFICATION, page 3**

## Aircraft integrity: Inspectors ensure force stays battle ready

By **JOSEPH MATHER**  
78th Air Base Wing  
Public Affairs

Before an Air Force aircraft takes to the skies, a dedicated team of inspectors at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, meticulously examines every inch of the airframe, searching for hidden flaws that could compromise safety and mission readiness.

These aren't your everyday visual checks. The Non-Destructive Inspection team employs a sophisticated arsenal of high-tech methods to detect even the most minute imperfections.

This critical work directly supports the Air Force Structural Integrity Program ensuring aircraft remain structurally sound and warfighters have confidence in the aircraft's ability to perform the mission.

"The inspection process helps support the AFSIP, designed for maintaining structural integrity of the aircraft and instill confidence in the warfighter of our aircraft's airworthiness,"



**Ben Wheeler, 558th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron nondestructive inspector, performs an ultrasonic straight beam inspection delamination test to the outboard side of an F-15 aircraft stabilizer at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Dec. 10, 2025. NDI inspectors at Robins AFB tested the F-15 to assure the integrity of the aircraft as part of its programmed/scheduled depot maintenance. (U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather)**



**Dakota Holt, 558th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron nondestructive inspector, performs an eddy current array scan on a horizontal box beam panel for a C-5 aircraft horizontal stabilizer at Robins Air Force Base Dec. 10, 2025. The eddy current radius scan array checked for cracks and allowed NDI technicians to test the structural integrity of the aircraft skin. (U.S. Air Force photo by Joseph Mather)**

said Amy Day, a 558th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Level II non-destructive inspector.

To find these hidden flaws without harming the aircraft itself, inspectors employ a range of sophisticated techniques that allow for thorough examination with minimal disassembly.

"We use a variety of NDI methods to find flaws without ever damaging the aircraft parts. We send ultrasound waves through the metal to find hidden cracks and use a fluorescent dye that makes tiny defects glow," said Ben Wheeler, a 558th AMXS nondestructive inspector. "The best part of NDI is that we see the results immediately, and the airframe structure remains intact."

The data collected from these inspections is invaluable, helping to determine the overall structural health of the aircraft and allowing engineers to devise appropriate solutions, known as a Total Technical Resolution.

The data collected includes cracks, stress, fatigue, gouges, corrosion, manufacturing defects, water entrapment, foam adhesive separation and foreign objects.

**See READY, page 3**

## How to protect yourself from AI, deepfake scams

Artificial intelligence is changing the way businesses and consumers interact every day. While AI technology can be helpful and innovative, scammers are increasingly using it to deceive consumers in convincing and dangerous ways. From cloned voices and fake videos to realistic text messages and impersonation scams, AI-powered fraud is becoming harder to detect.

The Better Business Bureau is warning consumers to stay alert as scammers use deepfake technology and AI-generated content to steal money, personal information, and trust.

### What are AI and deepfake scams?

Deepfakes are fake videos, images, or audio recordings created using artificial intelligence. Scammers can now imitate someone's voice, face, or writing style with surprising accuracy. In some cases, criminals only need a few seconds of audio or video from social media to create a convincing fake.

### These scams often involve:

- Fake emergency phone calls from a "family member"
- AI-generated celebrity endorsements
- Fake customer service representatives
- Fraudulent investment opportunities
- Impersonation of company executives or government officials
- Fake job interviews or employment offers
- Manipulated videos that appear authentic

Because the technology is improving rapidly, many scams can appear very realistic at first glance.

### Common AI scam tactics

#### Voice cloning scams

One growing scam involves criminals cloning the voice of a loved one. Victims may receive a frantic call from someone who sounds exactly like a child or grandchild claiming they were arrested, kidnapped, or injured and urgently need money.

Scammers rely on panic and emotional reactions to pressure victims into sending money quickly before verifying the story.

#### AI celebrity endorsements

Consumers are also seeing fake videos or advertisements featuring celebrities, financial experts, or public figures supposedly endorsing investments, cryptocurrency platforms, or miracle products. Many of these videos are digitally



**Kelvin Collins**

manipulated.

Just because a video looks real does not mean it is legitimate.

**Fake customer support**  
Scammers may use AI chatbots, cloned voices, or realistic emails pretending to be from banks, airlines, streaming services, or technology companies.

These fake representatives attempt to gain access to passwords, payment information, or remote access to devices.

### Job and hiring scams

Some scammers are using AI-generated recruiters, fake interview systems, or cloned company websites to trick job seekers into sharing Social Security numbers, banking details, or upfront "training fees."

### Warning signs of an AI-generated scam

Consumers should be cautious if:

- The caller demands immediate action or secrecy
  - Payment is requested through gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers, or payment apps
  - The story involves an emergency or high emotional pressure
  - A video or audio clip seems slightly unnatural or inconsistent
  - Messages contain unusual grammar, robotic phrasing, or awkward pauses
  - A caller refuses to verify their identity through another method
  - An investment opportunity promises guaranteed returns or "easy money"
- Even realistic audio or video should not be considered proof.

### BBB tips to protect yourself

#### Verify independently

If you receive an alarming call or message from someone claiming to be a loved one, employer, or company representative, stop and verify the information independently. Call the person back using a trusted number you already have.

#### Create a family safe word

Families may want to establish a private "safe word" or phrase that only close relatives know. This can help verify whether an emergency request is legitimate.

#### Limit personal content online

**See SCAMS, page 3**

## Summer tips to help protect your family from Carbon Monoxide

(StatePoint) Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous, flammable gas that is impossible to see, smell or taste — making it easy to assume you're safe when danger may already be present. So, whether you'll be vacationing away from home, or planning a "staycation" this summer, take extra steps to help protect yourself and your loved ones from CO.

According to UL Standards & Engagement, more than one-third of U.S. homes have no CO detection and nearly 30% of Americans say they do not need or are unsure if they need a CO alarm in the home if a smoke alarm is present. The reality? Both smoke and CO alarms are essential for safety.

Carbon monoxide can begin causing symptoms such as headaches and nausea at a concentration of around 200 parts per million (ppm). Kidde, a trusted leader in fire and CO safety for more than 100 years, has introduced a new line of CO alarms featuring advanced detection. Select Kidde alarms are designed to alert to low levels of CO, providing critical early warning before levels become dangerous.

This early detection is especially important for more vulnerable populations — including older adults, children and pets — who may experience symptoms at concentrations below 70 ppm and can benefit from earlier opportunities to take action.

The new line also includes battery-powered CO alarms that can help provide safety and peace of mind at your travel destination. "While some travelers take routine measures to help protect their homes from carbon monoxide while they are away — many do not consider the same safety risks at their destination," says Isis Wu, president of Global Residential Fire & Safety at Kidde.

Wu notes that an absence of comprehensive industry regulation has left a significant



*Courtesy photo*

safety gap for travelers. Electrical Contractor Magazine reports that only 14 states in the United States currently require the installation of CO detectors in hotels and motels, and there is no federal law requiring hotels to install CO detectors in every guest room.

During the busy summer travel season, Kidde is reigniting Destination Safety, which is the brand's education-first initiative that helps empower travelers to take control of their safety. Kidde's Travel Safety Checklist includes key tips on how to do just that:

- Pack a AA-battery operated CO alarm for use at your destination. To help avoid damage to the device, pack it carefully. You should also be sure to remove batteries prior to travel and reinsert them upon arrival. Note: these devices are for use in conditioned spaces only. They are not approved for RV or boat use. Test the device before use to ensure proper operation.

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## THE UNION ADVOCATE

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# Is your baby's food full of microplastics?

(StatePoint) A new investigation has found microplastics in baby food pouches sold by some of the world's biggest brands — including one labeled organic — raising questions about a packaging format that has overtaken baby food aisles.

Research commissioned by Greenpeace International tested two leading baby food products and estimated thousands of microplastics in each pouch tested, ranging from more than 5,000 in one brand to over 11,000 in the other.

"Parents trust these brands to ensure their babies' first bites of food are not contaminated with microplastics. Unfortunately, this research shows that even the most trusted brands can't guarantee that," said Sybil Bullock, a senior campaigner at Greenpeace USA.

The findings, detailed in a new report titled "Tiny Plastics, Big Problem: The Hidden Risks of Baby Food Plastic Pouches," point to polyethylene, the plastic that lines the pouches, as a likely source of the microplastics. Researchers also detected a range of chemicals present in both the packaging and the food, including a known harmful endocrine-disrupting chemical in one yogurt product.

This study is among the first attempts to assess the presence of microplastics and plastic chemicals that could be released from spout pouches into baby food. It adds to a rapidly expanding body of evidence on how these tiny plastic particles enter the human body — a particular concern for infants, whose organs and nervous systems are rapidly developing. Even small exposures during these formative months can have lifelong effects on growth, neurological development, metabolism and reproductive health.

"Plastic is not innocuous, nor is it inert. Plastics are made from fossil fuels and thousands of chemicals, many of which are known to be hazardous to human health. Plastic should not be touching any food, certainly not baby food," says Bullock.

The two brands studied account for roughly 40% of the global baby food market. These



Courtesy photo

flexible twist-top pouches have become the fastest-growing form of packaging in the category of baby food. At a time when plastic-free options are increasingly limited, and certainly not accessible to all parents, advocates say the findings cast a shadow over the entire baby food aisle.

In an effort to drive the industry in the right direction for the good of its customers and the planet, Greenpeace advocates are calling on the world's leading brands to phase out plastic pouches in favor of non-toxic, plastic-free, reusable packaging. And because they say voluntary corporate commitments haven't gone far enough to meaningfully reduce companies' plastic production, Greenpeace is also calling on governments to adopt the United Nations' Global Plastics Treaty, which would hold producers accountable and curb plastic pollution at the source.

To learn more and for full report details, visit <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/hidden-ingredient-gerber-baby-food-microplastics>.

"Governments have more than enough information to apply the precautionary principle and take immediate action. Surely we can all agree that the burden of proof can't be our children," said Bullock.

With this certification, the WR-ALC joins the Ogden Air Logistics Complex at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, in holding both the AS9100D and AS9110C certifications, positioning it as a leader in advanced manufacturing and sustainment within the Air Force Sustainment Center.

agement. "I'd like to say that our team does a very good job," Circle said. "We have a lot of diverse knowledge and expertise across all the fields, and not only do we go out and do our auditing, but we also do a lot of consulting for the groups when they have questions."

## CERTIFICATION

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This achievement was built on a foundation of deep expertise. The quality assurance team working to achieve and maintain certification has over 100 years of combined experience in aerospace and quality man-

## READY

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This data is utilized by structural engineering and various skills to determine TTR.

The process begins with rigorous training where inspectors undergo thousands of hours of training and face multiple written and practical exams to become certified. Once certified, they must take a yearly practical test to remain proficient.

While technicians prove their proficiency through these tests, the future of the mission is advancing toward AI augmentation and integrated robotics.

Broderick Henry, a 402nd Aircraft Maintenance Support Squadron Production Support Flight supervisor, said the next evolution involves intelligent systems and collaborative robots.

"These robotics will work in tandem with both human technicians and other robotic platforms to create a more efficient, proactive and safer inspection environment," he said.

ing scams more sophisticated, convincing, and emotionally manipulative. While technology continues to evolve, one of the strongest consumer protections remains the same: slow

down, verify independently, and never let urgency override caution. If something feels off — even if it looks or sounds real — take the time to confirm before acting.

## SCAMS

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Scammers often gather audio clips, photos, and videos from social media. Review privacy settings and avoid publicly sharing excessive personal information.

Slow down

AI scams often rely on urgency and panic. Take time to think before sending money, sharing information, or clicking links.

Research businesses and offers

Before investing money, applying for jobs, or responding to customer service outreach, research the business at BBB.org to verify legitimacy, read reviews, and check scam alerts.

Report suspicious activity

Consumers who encounter suspected AI scams should report them to BBB Scam Tracker at [bbb.org/scamtracker](http://bbb.org/scamtracker) to help warn others in the community.

The bottom line

Artificial intelligence is mak-

## PROTECT

From page 2

- Test your home smoke and CO alarms before leaving and ensure all heat-producing appliances are turned off. Also, install smart alarms that offer real-time notifications.
- Call your hotel or rental to inquire about CO devices.
- Once you arrive, make sure the hotel alarm and your own alarm are present and working.

Whether upgrading your home detection with low-level sensing technology or packing an alarm to use at your next destination, take control of CO safety, because "probably" isn't a plan.

### DEATH ON THE JOB

# WHERE'S THE WATCHDOG?

IS YOUR WORKPLACE SAFE?

It would take federal OSHA 191 YEARS to inspect each workplace once.

Federal OSHA's budget amounts to \$3.85 to protect each worker.

For more info, visit [aflcio.org/dotj](http://aflcio.org/dotj)

HOLD THE LINE FOR SAFE JOBS



## Federal court says Georgia's Medicaid rules shortchanged medically fragile 3-year-old

by Ty Tagami

ATLANTA — The policies that Georgia uses to approve or deny services for children enrolled in Medicaid fail to satisfy federal requirements for adequate care, according to a new federal court ruling.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit upheld a federal district judge's order requiring the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) to provide nearly five times more in-home nursing care to a child at risk of dying than the state had approved through a contractor.

The 3-year-old boy, referred to by the court as L.W., has a rare metabolic disease that interrupts his body's ability to store and use glycogen, a kind of fuel.

He must be fed every three hours through a tube inserted into his stomach.

Before moving to Georgia from Virginia, Medicaid was paying for 56 hours of nursing care per week while paying the boy's mother to provide another 40 hours.

After moving to Georgia in 2023, Alliant Health Solutions, a contractor that manages Medicaid for the state, approved only 21 hours of nursing services with no supplement for the mother, since Georgia lacks such a program.

In 2024, his mother requested a change in the number of nursing hours. When Alliant denied it, she sued in federal court in the Northern District of Georgia. Federal Judge Thomas W. Thrash Jr. decided 21 hours of weekly nursing care was inadequate and ordered the state to pay for at least 100 hours.

DCH appealed. The agency's failure to win that appeal produced a ruling that could influence how Medicaid is administered in Georgia and in the rest of the Eleventh Circuit's jurisdiction, which includes Alabama and Florida.

Under the federal Early and

Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment standard, states must cover medically necessary services for children that "correct or ameliorate" a physical or mental condition.

A spokeswoman for DCH said Tuesday that the agency was still reviewing the court decision and had no comment.

## Kemp signs law to help 911 callers find AEDs

by Ty Tagami

ATLANTA — Scott Sells traveled to Macon last week to watch his son's friends graduate from Mercer University.

That same day, on May 11, Gov. Brian Kemp signed a bill into law that Sells had testified for during this year's legislative session. Senate Bill 399, the "Mason Sells AED Coordination Act," will require everyone with an automated external defibrillator to notify 911 of its location.

Sells said an AED would have saved his son's life.

Mason Sells was 20 when his heart stopped beating during an intramural soccer match at Mercer, where he was studying accounting.

A spokeswoman for Mercer declined to comment.

Sells' death came after two other Macon college students died of sudden cardiac arrest.

Less than a year and a half before, Baba Agbaje collapsed on a Mercer field during a soccer pickup game and was later pronounced dead.

And just two days before Sells died, Wesleyan College student Nefertari Holston died after suffering cardiac arrest while running in a cross country meet at Middle Georgia State University in Macon.

After his son's death, Scott Sells connected with Georgia lawmakers at the Capitol last year. He said Sen. Marty Harbin, R-Tyrone, listened to his story. Sells did not think anything would come of it until he said Harbin called him in February to tell him he had introduced SB 399. He asked Sells to testify for his bill.

In addition to the 911 noti-

fication requirement, the new law will require all 911 operators to receive training by the end of next year in how to coach callers through CPR and AED use.

## Democrats withdraw GOP as turnout flips from 2022

by Ty Tagami

ATLANTA — More Democrats than Republicans turned out to vote in Tuesday's primary election, flipping the outcome in the midterm primary election of four years ago when the GOP dominated.

The strong showing could be a singular incident, or a trend that endures to the November general election and the head-to-head contests between the two parties.

Democratic turnout in this year's governor's race was up by half from the 2022 primary, while Republican turnout fell by a quarter.

Granted, four years ago, Stacey Abrams had no Democratic challengers for governor, so her supporters had one less reason to turn out, perhaps suppressing Democratic numbers. But this year U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff had no Democratic challengers, yet turnout for him increased by more than 40% compared to the Senate race in 2022 when fellow Democrat, U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, had a challenger. GOP turnout fell by nearly a quarter this year in that race, too.

The proportions were similar across the board in statewide races, no matter how far down the ballot one looked. In the contest for attorney general, Democratic turnout was up by more than 350,000 while Republican turnout fell by more than 280,000.

"It's not a good sign for Republicans," said Andra Gillespie, a political scientist at Emory University.

The outcome in Georgia tracked national sentiment, she said. However, she said, polling shows the state still has more Republican than Democratic voters.

Although the turnout on Tuesday favored Democrats, it was only a primary election, a time when more committed voters typically show up at the polls. Although nearly 2.1 million made the trip, that is just 28.1% of active voters.

Meanwhile, the GOP saw an upside in the decisive victory by former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms near the top of the ticket. She won 56% of the vote in the Democratic contest for governor, a strong showing that propelled her to the general election as the party nominee.

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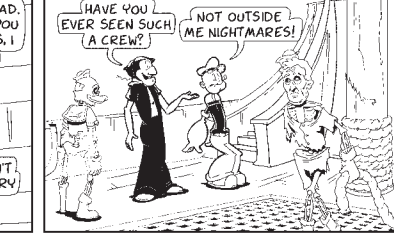
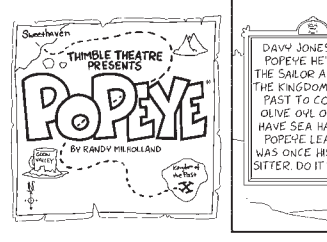
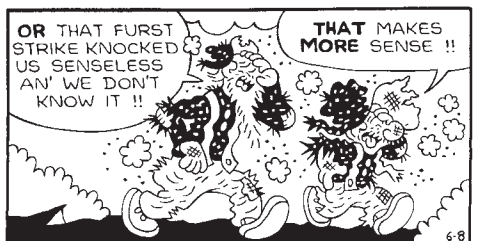
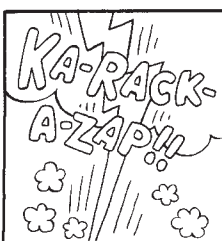
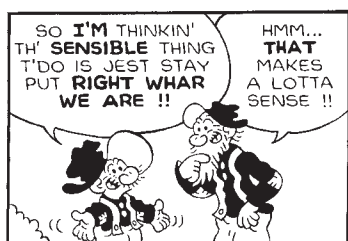
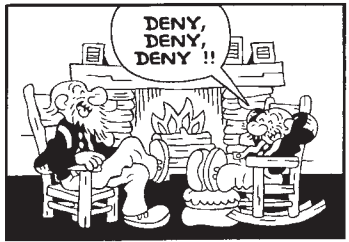
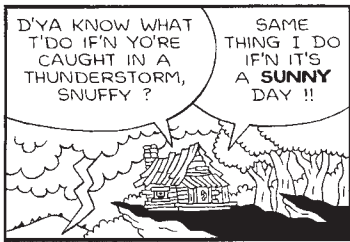
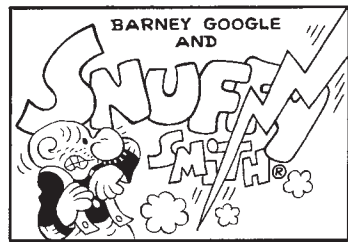
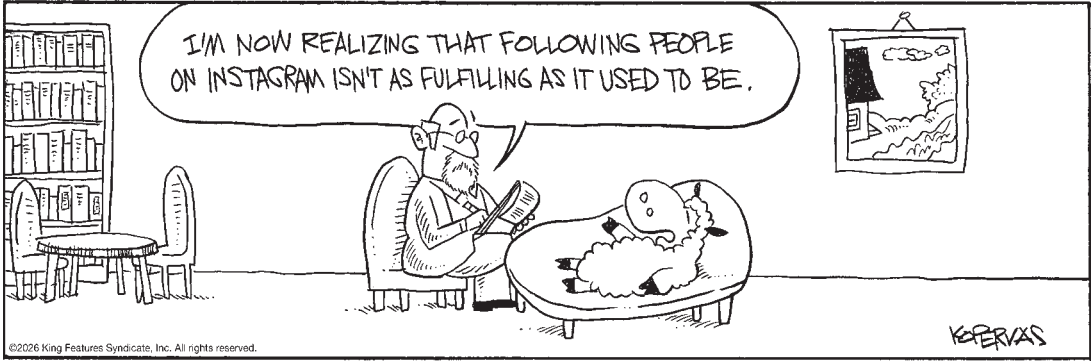


# fun

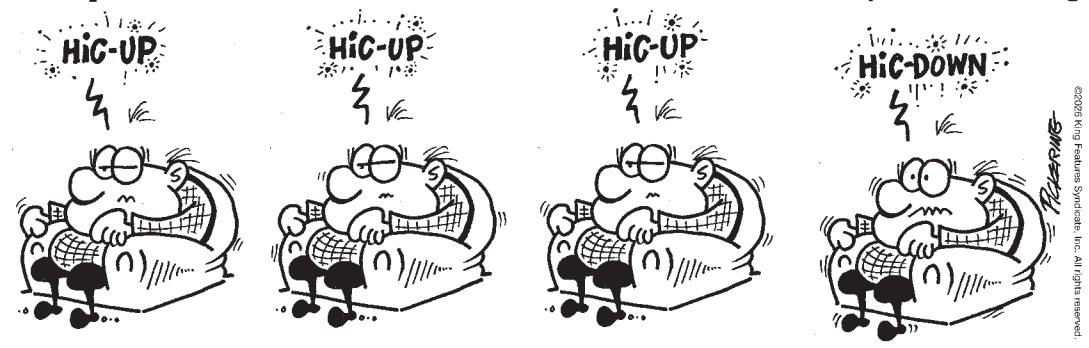
## Amber Waves



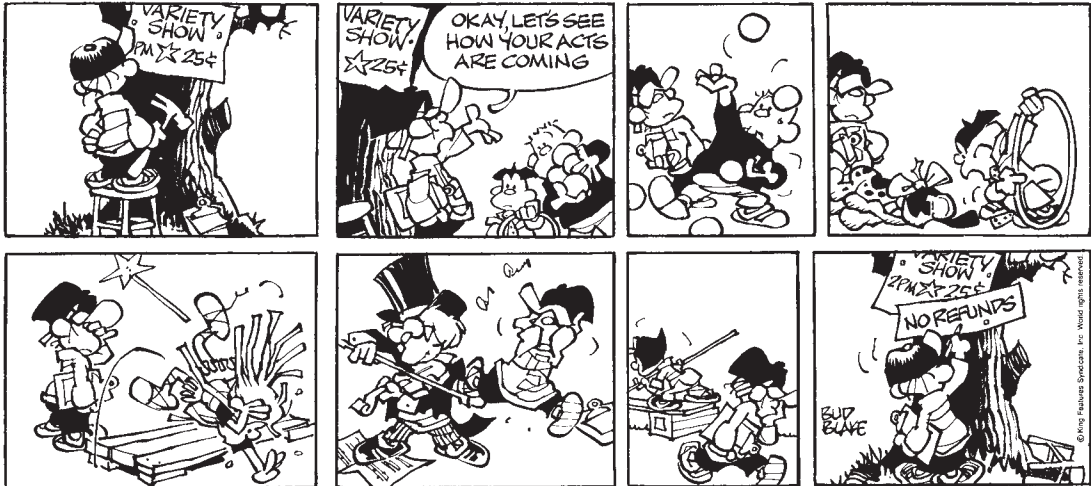
## Out on a Limb



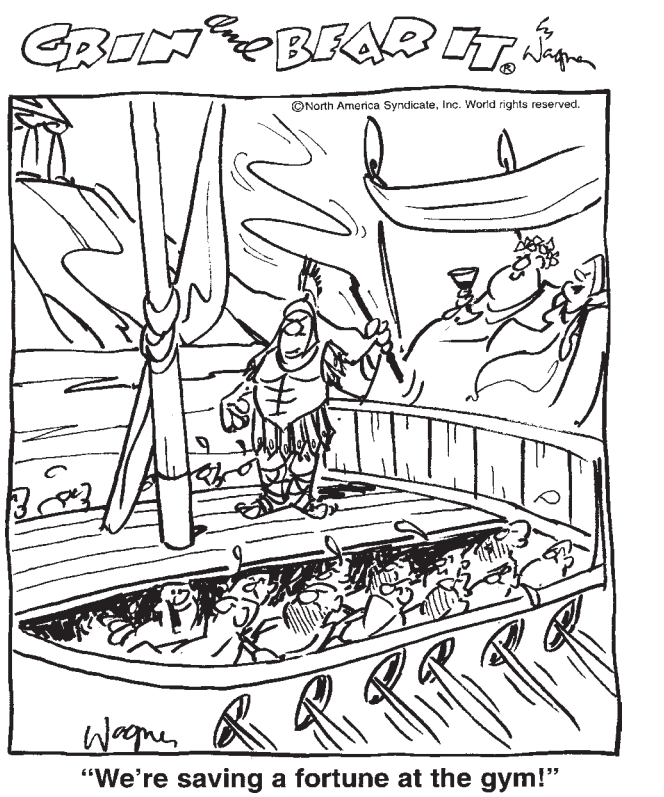
## The Spats



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### GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

+	+	=	16
-	+	-	
+	+	=	11
x	+	x	
-	+	=	10
=	=	=	
24	13	48	

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### FEAR & KNIGHT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

RFU  
NAVTEDE  
OYGF0  
NTGO  
NARVLE  
♥ODT  
ODGL  
♥ATYOD  
♥ADG  
ANTHUG  
RFGE0  
TFNO

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

48		13		24		
=		=		=		
10 =	8	+	4	-	6	
	x		+		x	
	11 =	3	+	7	+	1
		-		+		-
	16 =	9	+	2	+	5

ANSWERS

### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

answer

### FEAR & KNIGHT

Don't feel stupid if you don't like what everyone else pretends to love.

ANSWER

### CryptoQuip

### CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: V equals C

SNWRAQRKO VWNWRJ

VHTORPTPTC VGETAK KGRXWB

JPAW KIRJJ KPTCJW-IRKOWB

KRPJSHROK: QNEPO KJHHXK.

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Differences: 1. Candle is taller. 2. Arm is resting on table. 3. Back of chair is different. 4. Dial on stove is moved. 5. Light is shorter. 6. Hair is different.

# Elevate Summer Celebrations with Easy Backyard Recipes Featuring *Fresh Corn*



Easy Elote Corn

## Easy Elote Corn

Recipe courtesy of The Produce Moms on behalf of Duda Farm Fresh Foods

Servings: 4

- 1 Dandy Sweet Corn Tray (4 count)
- 1 lime, juice only (about 2 tablespoons)
- 1 cup mayonnaise or Mexican crema
- 2 tablespoons Elote seasoning
- 1 cup cotija cheese, crumbled
- fresh cilantro, chopped, for garnish
- hot sauce or chili powder (optional)

Heat grill to medium-high heat.

Place corn directly on grates and cook 10-15 minutes, turning every 2-3 minutes, until charred and cooked through.

While corn is still warm, squeeze lime juice on all sides. Brush or spoon mayonnaise on each ear, ensuring all sides are coated.

Evenly sprinkle Elote seasoning over coated corn. Using hands, gently press seasoning into mayo.

Arrange Elote on serving platter, sprinkle with cotija cheese and garnish with fresh chopped cilantro. Serve with hot sauce or chili powder for extra heat, if desired.



Vegan Elote

## FEATURE IMPACT

Whether you're grilling in the backyard, at a picnic or simply relaxing poolside to celebrate America's 250th anniversary, this summer is sure to be filled with special celebrations. Throughout those 250 years, food has brought people together – and continues to do so.

From barbecues to patios, fresh foods are at the heart of American celebrations. Healthy, fresh ingredients help elevate classic recipes with sweet corn taking center stage in many iconic summer dishes. As a trusted American grower, Duda Farm Fresh Foods provides equally healthy and flavorful recipes using Dandy Sweet Corn to build the heart of your menu.

While corn on its own is a classic side dish – with Americans consuming approximately 1,400 bushels per year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture – you can put a twist on tradition by serving Elote, also known as Mexican street corn, as a bold and delicious way to enjoy fresh corn at its best. Cooked to perfection then slathered in a creamy, zesty mix of mayonnaise, lime juice, cheese and chili powder, Elote transforms a simple ear of corn into an irresistible snack or side.

You can add its vibrant flavor and fun to your table with a number of easy cooking methods:

- **Grill:** For the traditional method of cooking Elote, preheat your grill to medium-high heat. Place the corn directly on the grill grates then cook 10-15 minutes, turning every 2-3 minutes until nicely charred and cooked through, like these recipes for Easy Elote Corn or Vegan Elote.
- **Boil:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add corn and cook 5-7 minutes until tender.
- **Roast:** Preheat the oven to 400 F. Place corn on a baking sheet and roast 20-25 minutes, turning halfway through.
- **Air Fryer:** Preheat the air fryer to 400 F. Cook corn for 12-15 minutes, turning once.

Visit [DudaFresh.com](http://DudaFresh.com) to find more ways to elevate your patriotic celebrations.

## Vegan Elote

Recipe courtesy of Darn Good Veggies on behalf of Duda Farm Fresh Foods

Cook time: 16 minutes

Total time: 28 minutes

Servings: 4

## Vegan Parmesan:

- 1/2 cup raw cashews
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

## Elote:

- 1/3 cup vegan mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon ancho chili powder
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon chipotle powder (optional)

## 1 pinch salt

## 4 ears Dandy Corn

## 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro

To make vegan Parmesan: In small food processor or blender, pulse cashews, nutritional yeast, garlic powder and salt until it resembles grated Parmesan.

Heat grill or grill pan to medium-high heat.

In bowl, stir mayo, ancho chili powder, garlic, lime juice, chipotle powder and salt until smooth.

Place corn on grill or grill pan and cook on all sides until corn is cooked and has grill marks, about 4 minutes per side.

Spread corn with chili mayo then sprinkle with vegan Parmesan and cilantro.



# The no-grocery-trip peanut butter oatmeal bars

Photo and story by Patti Diamond  
King Features Syndicates

Some recipes arrive after careful planning and a thoughtfully organized shopping list. Others happen after opening the pantry, spotting peanut butter and oats, and deciding leaving the house sounds far too ambitious.

These bars belong firmly in the second category.

Made with pantry staples and very little effort, they land somewhere between a cookie, snack bar and possibly breakfast with questionable intentions. They're soft, chewy, peanut buttery and just responsible enough to feel acceptable while still tasting like a treat.

Food of Flexible Moral Identity Not quite health food. Not exactly dessert. Foods that occupy a charming gray area and suggest, "Look, we're all doing our best here."

These recipes use ingredients that could certainly be worse. Oats are involved. Peanut butter has protein. Sometimes fruit

appears. They carry just enough nutritional credibility to avoid being lumped in with frosted toaster treats or plastic-wrapped snack cakes. Of course, balance matters. For every Food of Flexible Moral Identity we eat, perhaps we balance the universe with a kale salad containing absolutely no bacon.

**PEANUT BUTTER OATMEAL BARS**  
Yield: 16 pieces  
Total Time: 35 mins.  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon sea salt (or table salt)

1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats  
3/4 cup creamy peanut butter  
2/3 cup brown sugar  
1/2 cup milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/2 cup chocolate chips  
Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a 9x9 pan with parchment paper to make the bars easy to lift out and cut.

In a small bowl combine the flour, baking soda and salt. Set aside.

In a mixer fitted with a paddle

attachment, stir together the oats, peanut butter, brown sugar, milk and vanilla. Add the dry ingredients and mix briefly, just until everything comes together. Fold in the chocolate chips, press into the prepared pan and bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Store bars in an airtight container at room temperature for about three days.

**PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE TOPPING**  
1/2 cup peanut butter  
1/4 cup butter  
2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

In a 2-cup microwave-safe measuring cup, heat the peanut butter and butter in 30 second increments just until melted. Stir until smooth, add cocoa powder, and stir again. Spread over cooled bars and refrigerate until set. Your humble oatmeal bars have now become considerably more fancy pants.

Some of the best recipes begin with, "I'm absolutely not going to the store today." A little pantry creativity and a willingness to work with what's already on hand can produce delicious results.

# Stack Caprese salad with couscous in a tin can

Photo and story by Donna Erickson  
King Features Syndicate

When it's time to prep a dinner meal this week, get your kids stacking the green, white and red layers of fresh basil, mozzarella and tomato. If they say that their culinary creation reminds them of winter's Christmas colors, guide them to a photo of the tricolor green, white and red Italian flag. You'll be on a fresh course into a new season of the year -- and globally for that matter! This fun-to-make version using a surprise ingredient -- couscous -- is a tasty spring and summertime twist on Italy's traditional caprese salad.

I've always believed in using the right tools for the right job. In this recipe, it's four recycled aluminum cans. Once you've removed the labels and both ends of the four 7- to 8-ounce clean cans (I used 7-ounce diced green chilies cans and made sure that there weren't any sharp edges), gather the following ingredients to create a fancy-looking presentation:

**STACKED CAPRESE SALAD WITH COUSCOUS**  
-- Four aluminum 7- to 8-ounce cans with both ends removed  
-- Nonstick cooking spray or olive oil  
-- 2 medium ripe tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices  
-- 1 cup cooked couscous mixed with 2 tablespoons Italian dressing or prepared pesto  
-- 8 slices fresh mozzarella cheese  
-- Fresh basil leaves  
-- Parsley for garnish (optional)  
-- Balsamic vinegar  
Spray with nonstick spray, or lightly wipe oil in the interior of the four cans. Set each can on end on a salad plate. Trim the tomato and cheese slices to fit the interior of a can, then stack the individual portions in layers inside the can as follows: a tomato slice, 2 tablespoons of the couscous mixture, and a cheese slice. Repeat. Cover with plastic wrap and press down on the stack gently with a jar or can that is slightly smaller than the opening of the can. Remove wrap and slowly lift the can to reveal the layered salad. To serve, garnish with a fresh basil leaf or a sprig of parsley. Drizzle balsamic vinegar to taste.

