WIN TICKETS TO SEE 'THE NEW EDITION WAY TOUR' -- What Americans think about the situation in Venezuela

THE PHILADELPHIA SUNDAY

JANUARY 11, 2026

SUN

A NEW ERA:



JOAR DAHN AND SIDDIQ KAMARA ARE THE YOUNGEST BLACK MEN IN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY TO ACCEPT POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY AS MAYOR AND SHERIFF RESPECTIVELY.

GEN-Z & MILLENNIAL LEADERS



MAKE THEIR MARK IN DELCO

COVERAGE ON PAGES 6-7

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INSIDE PHILLY



What are we celebrating?

Thanks to America's 250th Anniversary, Philadelphia is primed to be one of the nation's hotspots in 2026. Unfortunately, what made America so special appears to be getting demolished from the inside.

By Denise Clay-Murray

One of the better moments that I've had in 2026 so far was celebrating my 5th wedding anniversary with my husband, SUN sports contributor Chris Murray.

We got married in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Getting married in a pandemic means you have to make a lot of adjustments. Most of our friends attended the wedding via Facebook Live. We didn't have our reception until March.

But we did have a nice weekend at the Lowes Hotel in Philly, where we chilled out, did what hanging out with friends the pandemic would allow, and even made a visit to The Pub, a restaurant in Pennsauken, New Jersey that holds a sentimental attachment for me because it was one of my Dad's favorites.

On the way back to where we were staying in Maryland, Chris and I were driving home. We were talking about finding a place of our own in Wilmington, where we now live. We also talked about whether or not I had heard about the presidential inauguration credential I had applied for. While his big coverage events usually involve large men throwing footballs, mine involve men who are often very small.



AP Photo/Shutterstock

It was Jan. 6, 2021.

And by the end of the day, Chris was kind of hoping that I didn't get the credential. Who wants to send their new wife into a potential riot situation? But once the attack on the Capital by rioters intent on keeping Congress from certifying the 2020 presidential election, that was no longer a problem.

I bring this up because watching the Jan. 6 riot --- the real one, not the one that the Trump administration is making up to justify pardoning a gang of criminals that would have been in body bags had they been Black Lives Matter protestors and stormed the Capital --- made me start to worry about American democracy. The riot was an attempt to keep Congress from certifying the results of the 2020 presidential election in which Donald Trump lost his chance at consecutive presidential terms to Democratic candidate Joe Biden.

As America approaches its 250th birthday, not only am I worried about American democracy, I wonder if it still actually exists.

And because of this, I have to wonder what we're actually celebrating.

In case you haven't been keeping up with the news --- and to be honest, I couldn't really blame you for not doing so --- America has been doing a lot of un-American things of late. From bombing foreign countries and taking their leaders into American custody without Congress's knowledge, to the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement Agency being allowed to snatch people off the street and in some cases killing them, the Trump Administration has decided that following the Constitution is something that it doesn't need to do.

It's also decided that it doesn't have to follow international laws either. In an interview with the New York Times that should scare the mess out of everybody, Trump said that the only thing that could stop him from doing whatever he wants is, well, him.

"There is one thing. My own morality. My own mind. It's the only thing that can stop me," he said.

The Supreme Court has pretty much agreed with him on this. And the reason why people receiving SNAP benefits in several so-called "blue" states are hoping that their EBT cards work and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting no longer exists is because the Republicans in Congress agree with him as well. Otherwise, why would Congress so willingly eschew its legislative function?

Over the next 12 months, there will be all sorts of celebrations commemorating what America is supposed to be. Philadelphia will play host to a bunch of them, as well as the MLB All-Star game, and FIFA World Cup matches.

But in an America where the president wants the birthday celebra- **Celebrating** *continued on page 16*

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Independence Blue Cross: A legacy of service and community impact

As a leading health insurer in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Independence Blue Cross (IBX) makes community commitment a way of life by investing resources, building partnerships, and harnessing employee passion to promote health, connection, and well-being across the region. At IBX, giving back isn't just a program — it's a shared purpose.

Volunteering is the heart of IBX

IBX's Blue Crew volunteer program empowers employees to make a lasting impact by supporting causes they care about all year. From serving and preparing meals to packing hygiene and disaster relief kits, and even helping with green space clean-up efforts, the Blue Crew is always there for our community.

In 2024, the Blue Crew supported more than 180 projects across Southeastern Pennsylvania. Employees also contributed 3,600 hours of independent volunteer time, including service on boards of local nonprofits.

Through IBX's year-round giving program, employees can donate to their favorite charities and receive matching gifts. In 2024, combined contributions from employees and the company totaled $1 million, benefiting 700 nonprofits.

These efforts reflect IBX's deep-rooted commitment to civic engagement and community impact, with more than half of employees participating in at least one community program.

Blue Crew 2024 at a Glance

1,400 volunteers **180** service projects **6,800** hours **75** nonprofit organizations

Strategic sponsorships and key initiatives

IBX supports nearly 300 community organizations through sponsorships, partnerships, and volunteerism including:

- **HeadFirst:** In partnership with the Philadelphia Union Foundation, this mental health program supports emotional wellness and resilience among young people.
- **Boys and Girls Clubs of Philadelphia:** Promotes well-being and inspires youth to thrive.
- **American Heart Association:** Promotes hands-only CPR training across communities and raises awareness about improving heart health by supporting the annual Heart Walk.
- **Local YMCAs:** Strengthens community health and connection through support of local chapters and wellness programming.

IBX also sponsors events and programs that promote active living and community connection:

- **IBX Broad Street Run:** For nearly 30 years, IBX has proudly served as the title sponsor of the nation's largest 10-mile race.
- **Indego Bike Share:** Since 2015, IBX has promoted healthy lifestyles and equitable mobility by expanding affordable transportation access citywide.
- **IBX RiverRink Summerfest and Winterfest:** IBX's seasonal wellness programming reaches more than 450,000 people annually with events that encourage outdoor recreation and community engagement.
- **National Fitness Campaign:** IBX brings free state-of-the-art outdoor Fitness Courts® to communities across the region to provide accessible opportunities for exercise and social connection.

To learn more about our commitment to promoting good health for all, visit **ibx.com/CorporateCitizenship.**



GARDEN OF HEALTH



PAL CHRISTMAS IN JULY

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SUN 4071750 (11-25)

Phase 2 of twice weekly trash collection launches in North Philadelphia

Philadelphia – Mayor Cherelle L. Parker announced another significant step toward making Philadelphia the safest, cleanest and greenest big city in the nation this week with the launching of Phase 2 of the twice weekly trash collection program. This effort, developed in partnership with the Office of Clean and Green Initiatives and the Department of Sanitation, aims to enhance waste management and improve neighborhood cleanliness.

Phase 2 of the program launched on January 5, 2026, and will serve residents within the boundaries of Vine Street to Hunting Park Avenue, from Broad Street to the Schuylkill River and Vine Street to Glenwood Avenue from Broad Street to the Delaware River.

"Today, we are advancing the One Philly, United City Cleaning Initiative by introducing Phase 2 of twice-a-week trash collections," Parker said. "South Philly and Center City residents were the first to receive the program under the Parker administration, and now North Philadelphia is up next. And we will not stop until we've got rid of the filthy moniker 'Filthadelphia'."


(Photo/Shutterstock)

These communities were selected due to their high population density, numerous multi-family residences, and limited waste storage capacity. Limited storage options in an area have historically led to challenges such as illegal dumping as residents look for alternative trash disposal options, underscoring the need for this targeted effort.

"Per 311 call data, we've seen as much as a 20% decrease in the amount of phone calls related to illegal dumping in South Philly since we implemented the program in 2024," said Carlton Williams, director of the Office of Clean and Green Initiatives. "We are looking for similar results in the North Philadelphia area, which is larger and more populous. In recent years, residential illegal dumping has increased, and introducing twice-weekly trash collection in areas known to have high indices of litter and illegal dumping challenges will help address these issues."

"We've rolled out the Citywide Cleaning Program, District Residential Cleaning, and now twice a week trash collections in South and North Philadelphia," said Crystal Jacobs Shipman, Commissioner, Department of Sanitation. "We are following Mayor Parker's lead with proactively and effectively tackling the challenges of illegal dumping in our communities while continuing to take big steps toward becoming a cleaner city."

1st Collection Day (Regular Collection Day)	2nd Collection Day (No recycling collection)
Monday	Thursday
Tuesday	Friday
Wednesday	Saturday
Thursday	Monday
Friday	Tuesday

The schedule for the twice-a-week collection is as follows: Residents within these boundaries may set out each collection day:

- Up to eight bags or (4) 32-gallon max containers
- Two household compactable items (sofa, furniture, wrapped mattress, box spring) per household, per collection

Important reminders:

- Recycling services will remain once a week, with recyclables picked up on the first collection day of the week only.
- Residents are reminded that mixing recycling with trash during the second collection is prohibited, and fines will be issued if recycling materials are found in set out trash.
- There will be NO second collections during a City-observed holiday week.

Place trash curbside between 5 p.m. (fall/winter) and 7 p.m, (spring/summer) the night before and 7 a.m. the morning of your collection day.

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PCHR stands with Roxborough High community following act of hate

The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) is aware of the recent incident of hate and racism directed at Roxborough High School. PCHR condemns any actions or behaviors rooted in discrimination, bias, or hate and reaffirms our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all Philadelphians.

PCHR, which is charged with investigating incidents of discrimination and harassment in Philadelphia, is working with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies

"While the investigation is still active, we are working with the Roxborough High School administration to provide any additional services that may be needed to move forward from this deplorable act of hate," said Deputy Director Randy Duque.

"While it is disheartening that this would happen on the first weekend of the New Year, we are steadfast in our commitment to work every day with the community and officials to investigate this despicable act and to confront antisemitism, hate, racism, and all forms of bigotry so every student can learn and every member of our community can live free from fear and intimidation," said PCHR Executive Director Renee Chenault Fattah.

"What occurred at Roxborough High School is vile, unacceptable, and wholly contrary to the values of our city. Acts of racist and antisemitic hatred — especially those directed at young people and educational spaces — are intended to intimidate, divide, and instill fear," said PCHR Chairman Kareem E. Thomas. "Let us be unequivocal: Hate has no home here -- not in our schools, not in our neighborhoods, and not in Philadelphia."

"Furthermore, we commend the school on their thoughtful and inclusive response of inviting school and local community members to fill their sidewalks with positive messages of love and belonging to combat the hate and welcome their students back from their winter break," Duque added.

Those who have experienced or witnessed a hate incident in Philadelphia can file a report by phone at :(215) 686-4670 or to the anonymous hotline at: (215) 686-2856.

PCHR uses reports to enforce anti-discrimination laws, connect victims with support services, and address issues at the community level through education and outreach.

SUBURBAN NEWS

Millennial on the move

Delaware County Sheriff Siddiq Kamara takes office

Kamara, 30, is the youngest sheriff in the United States and the first of Liberian descent to serve in the position. He founded an organization dedicated to improving police training and community safety following the murder of his 8-year-old cousin Fanta Bility in 2021.

Sheriff Siddiq Kamara is an American law-enforcement leader, military veteran, community advocate, and the newly elected Sheriff of Delaware County, Pennsylvania. A lifelong resident of Delaware County and a first-generation Liberian American, Kamara made history with his 2025 election victory — becoming the youngest sheriff in the United States and the first of Liberian descent to hold the office in the county.

Born to immigrant parents who fled the civil war in Liberia, Kamara was raised in Upper Darby and graduated from Upper Darby High School. From a young age, he developed a deep sense of duty and service, shaped by both family experience and community involvement.

After high school, Kamara enlisted in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, where he served honorably for six years and earned recognition for his leadership. During this time he also completed a Bachelor from Immaculata University, blending academic preparation with practical skills in crisis response and public safety.



Delaware Co. Sheriff Siddiq Kamara

Kamara's professional career spans multiple facets of law enforcement.

He served as a police officer in Yeadon Borough, where he helped establish a community policing unit and worked directly to build trust between residents and police.

He was selected as a Special Agent with the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General, where his responsibilities included narcotics enforcement, multi-agency collaboration, and execution of search warrants across the Commonwealth.

Later, he served on security and executive detail for then-Attorney General and now Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, reflecting trust in his judgment and leadership.

Kamara's decision to seek the sheriff's office was deeply personal. In 2021, his 8-year-old cousin, Fanta Bility, was killed when police fired into a crowd at a local event — an incident that galvanized Kamara's commitment to law enforcement reform and enhanced training. In her memory, he helped lead community efforts and founded the Fanta Bility Foundation, which advocates for police training improvements and community safety initiatives.

As sheriff, Kamara has emphasized professional training, accountability, and community-oriented service. He brings a vision of transforming the sheriff's office into a more engaged partner with residents and other public safety agencies, focusing not just on traditional duties like courtroom security and civil processes, but on prevention, education, and building community trust.

Darby Borough Council welcomes new mayor Joar Dahn

By Napoleon F. Kingcade

On January 5, 28-year-old Joar Dahn became Darby Borough's the youngest mayor –- and its first of direct African descent –- in its 340 year history. Dahn, a feisty and hardworking Democrat, was sworn-in inside a crowded room at the Darby Borough Administration Building.

During the proceedings, Dahn placed his hand on the Bible, and took the oath of office. Once the Hon. Magisterial District Judge Tammi L. Forbes gave her stamp of approval, the entire room erupted into loud cheers.

During his speech, Dahn promised to transform government on behalf of the borough's striving and struggling working class. He began by thanking those present, including his family.

"I want to first thank everybody for being here," Dahn said. "I certainly want to thank my family. I also want to thank the Borough Police Officers and my parents. I want to [also] thank my extended family who came here from 10 different states to be here. They all flew here to witness history.... I stand here in a small town, but I have a big heart. I want to thank you, Lord, for this victory."



Mayor Dahn with family members and friends
Photo: Napoleon F. Kingcade

"I made a promise to never give up," Dahn continued, acknowledging the hard work ahead. "I will assure you, I will wake up every single day and I will fight as long as God allows me to do [so]."

Dahn was born during the civil war in Liberia, Africa. He moved to the US at the age of 9 and was educated here.

His academic excellence and dedication led to his election as student government president at Bloomsburg University, where he earned a BA in Political Science.



Audience at Darby Mayor Joar Dahn's swearing-in ceremony.
Photo: Napoleon F. Kingcade



New Darby Mayor Joar Dahn speaks to the audience after his swearing -in ceremony.
Photo: Napoleon F. Kingcade

He later earned a master's degree in public administration from West Chester University.

After college graduation, Dahn worked as an advisor for several state representatives, other mayoral candidates, and as a staffer in the Pennsylvania Senate. Dahn has played a key role in advancing policies that benefit Pennsylvania residents.

Dahn is dedicated to advocating for the needs of the people. He utilized his early political experience to help drive change in his local community.

Having established a strong track record of leadership, Dahn was ready to run for a political office. In 2021, he ran for mayor of Darby, entering the race as a write-in candidate. He lost that election by only a few votes.



Mayor Dahn holds a portrait gifted to him.
Photo: Napoleon F. Kingcade

That close loss inspired him to run again in 2025. This time, he won the election in a landslide.

"This was the highest turnout in an election that we ever had in Darby," Dahn said during an interview with the **SUN**. "This was not just a show -- this was a movement by the people of Darby. This is what our community is now. Today, this is a new day. There's new leadership here that is ready and energized. We are ready to turn a new page."

Dahn said the people in Darby encouraged him to run again. That support is the reason he never gave up. His decision to run again has proven the people were right.

"Because of the fact that we came that close [to] winning told me, 'You can do this.' I knew we had to do this again, and when you saw the results, it wasn't even a close race," Dahn said. "We had won this time by a very large margin."

The first month under Dahn's administration will be dedicated to creating a culture of open communication and transparency.

"The first thing I want to do is to boost morale in the office -- I want to meet with everybody

Dahn *continued on page 8*

Montgomery County Commissioners re-elect Jamila Winder as chair of the board

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — On January 6, the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners re-elected Commissioner Jamila H. Winder to serve as chair of the board for 2026.

"We have continued to demonstrate to Montgomery County what effective and collaborative leadership should look like. Together, we passed a bipartisan budget that focuses support where it's needed most and manages County resources carefully and efficiently," Winder said. "At the same time, we know there are real challenges ahead: housing insecurity, rising prices, mental health needs, and improving how we operate as a County. Delivering for our residents takes the collective effort of the entire board. I'm proud to serve and will continue to work alongside Commissioner Makhija and Commissioner DiBello to advance a shared agenda that fulfills our promises to the residents of Montgomery County."



Montgomery County Commissioners Board Chair Jamila Winder speaks during Board of Commissioners Reorganization Meeting on January 5. (Photo/Montco Board of Commissioners)

"This board has consistently shown that at the local level, we can work together to respond quickly to our residents' needs and priorities," said Neil K. Makhija, Montgomery County Commissioner. "It was my honor to chair the Board in 2025, and I'm looking forward to building on our successes with Commissioner Winder once again serving as Chair."

"From day one, we've been committed to working together to make Montgomery County the best place it can be," said Thomas DiBello, Montgomery County Commissioner. "With Commissioner Winder returning as Chair, we'll continue to put politics aside to address the County's most pressing challenges and opportunities. Many of our goals and objectives are closely aligned so 2026 is going to be a very busy but exciting year."

The County will reflect on last year's achievements and outline priorities for 2026 at the State of the County event on February 11. Interested attendees may register at: www.montgomerycountypa.gov/stateofthecounty.

For more information, visit: www.montgomerycountypa.gov/Commissioners.

Dahn *continued from page 7*

in Darby Council," Dahn said. "'I do want to make sure all of our Council members trust in my leadership. I want to take some time and meet with them. I certainly want to have an in-depth conversation with each one of them. I want to work with Council members in a way that makes sense to our community. The election is over, and now it's time to do the work. It's time to put political differences aside and get together in the community."

One of Dahn's biggest concerns is the establishment of his own office in Darby, a need the young mayor is keen to address.

""Right now, we don't have an office, [but] we are looking into that," Dahn said. "That's one of the promises that I made to the community, [that] I would have an open-door policy. My door would always be opened to the people at all times. Whatever we need to do to have an office available, that's what we will continue to work on," Dahn said.

"Not everybody has a car," he added. "Not everybody has access to public transportation. Every single person should be able to walk to the mayor's office. We need have everything in one central location so people can come and get what they need. That was always my vision. So, we will keep on fighting to make sure that my vision comes to light. Right now, I'm looking forward to working with Darby Council and make sure we provide the help that people need."

WEEK IN REVIEW

What Americans think about the situation in Venezuela, according to recent polls

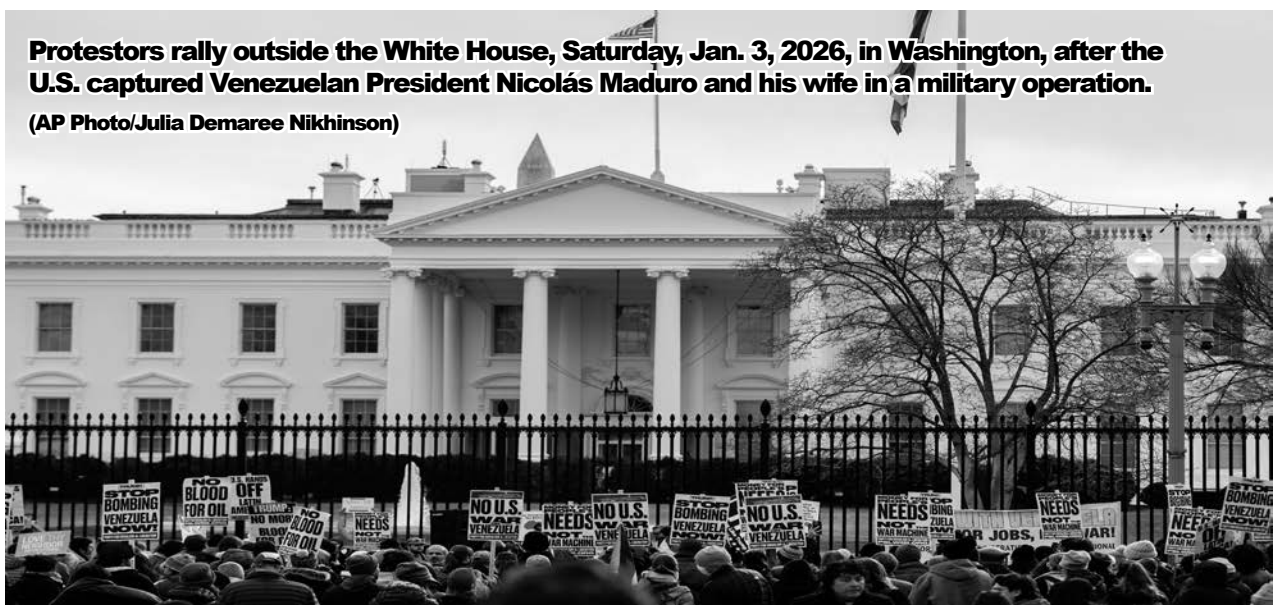
By Linley Sanders
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — There are few signs that President Donald Trump's supporters wanted the United States to become more embroiled in foreign conflicts ahead of its military actions in Venezuela — even as many Republicans show initial support for his military strike there, according to an Associated Press analysis of recent polling.

Most Americans wanted the U.S. government to focus in 2026 on domestic issues, such as health care and high costs, rather than foreign policy issues, an AP-NORC poll conducted last month found. Meanwhile, polling conducted in the immediate aftermath of the military operation that captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro suggested that many Americans are unconvinced that the U.S. should step in to take control of the country.

And despite Trump's suggestion that the U.S. may take a more expansive role in the Western Hemisphere, Republicans in polling last fall remained broadly opposed to the U.S. getting more involved in other countries' problems.

There's still room for public opinion to shift as Trump's administration clarifies its next steps for Venezuela. But it could be a challenging issue for the Republican president, particularly given Americans' desire for the government to fix economic issues at home.



Protestors rally outside the White House, Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026, in Washington, after the U.S. captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife in a military operation.
(AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson)

Foreign policy and drug trade weren't high priorities for many Americans

Heading into the new year, Americans were less likely to want the government to focus on foreign policy than they had been in recent years.

About one-quarter of U.S. adults listed foreign policy topics

Venezuela *continued on page 9*

Fifth anniversary of the Jan. 6 attack brings fresh division to the Capitol

By Lisa Mascaro
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Five years ago outside the White House, outgoing President Donald Trump told a crowd of supporters to head to the Capitol — "and I'll be there with you" — in protest as Congress was affirming the 2020 election victory for Democrat Joe Biden.

A short time later, the world watched as the seat of U.S. power descended into chaos, and democracy hung in the balance.

On the fifth anniversary of Jan. 6, 2021, there is no official event to memorialize what happened that day, when the mob made its way down Pennsylvania Avenue, battled police at the Capitol barricades and stormed inside, as lawmakers fled. The political parties refuse to agree to a shared history of the events, which were broadcast around the globe. And the official plaque honoring the police who defended the Capitol has never been hung.



Pamela Hemphill, a protester on January 6 becomes emotional as she testifies during a hearing on the 5th anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, in Washington, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026. (AP Photo/ Mariam Zuhaib)

Instead, the day displayed the divisions that still define Washington, and the country, in split-screen events.

Trump, during a lengthy morning speech to House Republicans convening away from the Capitol at the rebranded Kennedy Center now carrying his own name, shifted blame for Jan. 6 onto the rioters themselves.

The president said he had intended only for his supporters to go "peacefully and patriotically" to confront Congress as it certified Biden's win. He blamed the media for focusing on other parts of his speech that day.

At the same time, Democrats held their own morning meeting at the Capitol, reconvening members of the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack for a panel discussion. Recalling the history of the day is important, they said, in order to prevent what Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) warned was the GOP's "Orwellian project of forgetting."

And the former leader of the militant Proud Boys, Enrique Tarrio, summoned people for a midday march retracing the rioters' steps from the White House to the Capitol to honor Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt and others who died in the Jan. 6 siege and its aftermath. About 100 people gathered, including Babbitt's mother.

Tarrio was sentenced to 22 years in prison for seditious conspiracy for having orchestrated the Jan. 6 attack, and he is among more than 1,500 defendants who saw their charges dropped when Trump issued a sweeping pardon on his return to the White House last year.

Jan. 6 *continued on page 23*

Venezuela *continued from page 8*

— such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel or general involvement overseas — as something they wanted the government to prioritize in 2026, according to an open-ended AP-NORC question that asked respondents to share up to five issues they wanted the government to work on in the coming year. That was down from the prior two years, when roughly one-third of Americans considered foreign issues an important focus. Almost no one specifically named Venezuela.

Maduro pleaded not guilty to federal drug trafficking charges on Monday in New York. His capture followed U.S. strikes on boats that the Trump administration said were carrying drugs from Venezuela to the U.S. Despite the Trump administration's focus on the issue of drug trafficking, it doesn't register at the top of Americans' lists of issues for the government to focus on. Few Americans mentioned drug-related issues as a priority, and it was primarily a Republican issue. About 1 in 10 Republicans mentioned it, compared with hardly any Democrats or independents.

Instead, Americans overall were more focused on domestic issues — including health care, economic worries and cost-of-living concerns — as top priorities for the government.



Lorenzo Coppola, 47, and his son Valentino pose for a photo during a gathering to celebrate the news of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's capture in Doral, Fla., on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026.
(AP Photo/Vanessa A. Alvarez)

More Americans say the US should not run Venezuela

Americans are split about the U.S. capturing Maduro — with many still forming opinions — according to a poll conducted by The Washington Post and SSRS using text messages over the weekend. About 4 in 10 approved of the U.S. military being sent to capture Maduro, while roughly the same share were opposed. About 2 in 10 were unsure. Republicans broadly approved of the action, while Democrats were largely opposed to it.

Nearly half of Americans, 45%, were opposed to the U.S. taking control of Venezuela and choosing a new government for the country. About 9 in 10 Americans said that the Venezuelan people should be the ones to decide the future leadership of their country.

In December, a Quinnipiac poll found that about 6 in 10 registered voters opposed U.S. military action in Venezuela. Republicans were more divided: About half were in support, while about one-third were opposed and 15% didn't have an opinion.

Few Republicans wanted the US more involved in the world's problems

Only about 1 in 10 Republicans wanted the U.S. to take a "more active role" role in solving the world's problems, according to an AP-NORC poll from September. They were much less likely than Americans overall, or Democrats and independents, to say the U.S. should become more involved. Most Republicans, 55%, said the current U.S. role in global issues was "about right."

It could be a tricky position for a president who ran on a promise of putting "America first" and ending the country's involvement in "forever wars." About 7 in 10 voters who backed Trump in the 2024 presidential election said that they wanted the U.S. to take a "less active" role in solving the world's problems, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of interviews with registered voters in all 50 states.

In December, Americans were largely divided on whether Trump was keeping his "America First" campaign promise, according to a Fox News poll. About half felt he was keeping that promise, and a similar share felt he had abandoned it.

But at least in that poll, which was conducted before the military operation that removed Maduro, Trump's supporters still were largely behind him: About 1 in 10 Americans who voted for Trump in 2024 felt he had deserted the "America First" promise, while the overwhelming majority felt he had kept it.

Federal judge dismisses Louisville police reform agreement spurred by Breonna Taylor's death



Police and protesters converge during a demonstration, Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020, in Louisville, Ky. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)

By Dylan Lovan
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A federal judge in Kentucky has dismissed Louisville's proposed settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice over police reforms after the department withdrew its support of the plan earlier this year.

The Justice Department announced in May it was canceling proposed consent decrees with Louisville and Minneapolis that sought to curb police racial bias and abuses after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor that spurred nationwide protests in the summer of 2020.

U.S. District Judge Benjamin Beaton wrote in a Dec. 31 ruling that "the responsibility to lead the Louisville Metro Police Department in compliance with federal law must remain with the city's elected representatives and the people they serve."

A judge in May dismissed Minneapolis' proposed consent decree, which places a federal officer in charge of tracking the progress of reforms laid out in the agreement.

Justice Department officials under President Joe Biden's administration conducted a multiyear investigation in Louisville prompted by the fatal shooting of Taylor and police responses to public protests in 2020. A draft of the investigation was released in early 2023, alleging the Louisville Police Department "discriminates against Black people in its enforcement activities," uses excessive force and conducts searches based on invalid warrants.

New DOJ leadership accused the Biden justice department of using flawed legal theories to judge police departments and pursuing costly and burdensome consent decrees.

The consent decrees with Louisville and Minneapolis were approved by the Justice Department in the final weeks of the Biden administration, but the settlements had to be approved by a judge.

Beaton wrote that his ruling "doesn't prevent the parties from undertaking the hard work of reform themselves."

Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg pledged to continue to pursue reform after the Justice Department's withdrawal of support in May. The city created a local police reform plan and hired an independent law enforcement consulting group as monitor. Greenberg said some of the progress in 2025 included addressing a backlog of open records requests and making police shooting body camera videos public within 10 business days.

In a statement last Friday, a spokesman for the mayor said Greenberg is "committed to ongoing reforms" and "did something no mayor in the country has done — he voluntarily

Agreement *continued on page 19*

Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss, stepsister of Anne Frank, dies at 96

By Jill Lawless
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — Auschwitz survivor Eva Schloss, the stepsister of teenage diarist Anne Frank and a tireless educator about the horrors of the Holocaust, has died. She was 96.

The Anne Frank Trust UK, of which Schloss was honorary president, said she died Saturday in London, where she lived.

Britain's King Charles III said he was "privileged and proud" to have known Schloss, who co-founded the charitable trust to help young people challenge prejudice.

"The horrors that she endured as a young woman are impossible to comprehend and yet she devoted the rest of her life to overcoming hatred and prejudice, promoting kindness, courage, understanding and resilience through her tireless work for the Anne Frank Trust UK and for Holocaust education across the world," the king said.



Britain's Queen Camilla, then the Duchess of Cornwall, right, and Eva Schloss, step-sister of Anne Frank and Honorary President of the Anne Frank Trust UK, take part in a candle lighting ceremony during a reception for the Anne Frank Trust in London, Thursday Jan. 20, 2022. (Chris Jackson/Pool via AP, file)

Born Eva Geiringer in Vienna in 1929, Schloss fled with her family to Amsterdam after Nazi Germany annexed Austria. She became friends with another Jewish girl of the same age, Anne Frank, whose diary would become one of the most famous chronicles of the Holocaust.

Schloss *continued on page 19*

The nation's 250th anniversary arrives with a call for year-round community service

By James Pollard
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission wants to turn America's 250th birthday celebration into the country's single biggest year for volunteering.

But America Gives, the program unveiled Wednesday just before the U.S. begins commemorating the 1776 signing of the Declaration of Independence, will have to revitalize a culture of service that has recently waned. Declining volunteering rates still haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels. Just 28% of Americans said they volunteered time to a religious or secular charitable organization this year, according to a December AP-NORC poll.

Organizers don't know how many service hours they need to set the record and aren't targeting a specific number. The idea is to leverage nationwide reflections on the country's direction to encourage lasting community involvement that will strengthen nonprofits' volunteer pipelines beyond 2026. Funding comes from congressional appropriations as well as corporate sponsors including Walmart and Coca-Cola.

Participants are invited to pledge their time and log volunteering on an online tracker. Nonprofit partners include Girl Scouts of the USA, which will offer a volunteering badge to any of its roughly 1 million youth members who complete a service project, and Keep America Beautiful, which is leading efforts to clean up 250 million pieces of trash by the Fourth of July. JustServe — a service project coordinator sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — is sending 250 semitrucks to deliver food donations to 250 food banks across the 50 states.

"We strongly believe that this is as much about the future as it is the past," said America250 Chair Rosie Rios, who oversees the nonpartisan commission created by Congress to organize the anniversary. "Especially this next generation, we want them to give them something to believe in."



This image provided by America250 in December 2025 shows the New Year's Eve ball designed for the U.S.'s 250th year. (Eli Ritter/America250 via AP, File)

Connection and accessibility for young volunteers

That forward-focused goal requires courting a demographic that many nonprofits struggle to reach: young volunteers.

About one-quarter of adults under 30 said they volunteered their time to charity or provided non-financial support to people in their community in the past year, according to a March AP-NORC poll, compared with 36% of those over 60.

Rios said America Gives is working with high schools, many of which already list community service as a graduation requirement, to ensure those volunteering hours are logged and build giving habits that continue after students' secondary education.

"They're very passionate. They're very purpose driven. They do want to give back," Rios said, adding that "inspiring them to not just visualize, but maybe fuel their own future, is a big priority for us."

Service could be an opportunity to meet younger generations' desire for in-person connections. Sofia Alvarez — a cohort lead for the Youth250 Bureau, a separate effort to center Gen Z perspectives throughout next year's programming — said young people want "third spaces." That means somewhere outside of home, school or work that feels "safe," she said, but doesn't require spending money.

"I think any sort of craft or activity that really helps people connect, where they can chit chat and bond with each other, really builds that sense of community," Alvarez said.

Sarah Keating, vice president of Girl and Volunteer Experience at Girl Scouts of the USA, said they've had to make their volunteer opportunities more manageable.

Young people want to give back, Keating said, but they are busy and don't know how. She said nonprofits must offer experiences "that match their lives." Someone might not have time to lead an entire troop, for example, but they can help lead a specific badge program.

"A campaign like this shines a light on the multitude of ways that you can volunteer — that it doesn't have to be whatever stereotype you have in your head," she said of America Gives. "There are small ways to volunteer. There are big ways to volunteer."

Building bridges — and habits of giving back

The patriotic appeal must also overcome extreme polarization and the slow erosion of national pride — trends that America Gives organizers believe they can counter with their call to action.

Acknowledging political divisions, Rios said the commission's research shows that most Americans want to bring back a spirit of volunteerism.

"It is about one country," she said. "I think there's gonna be a lot of people who feel like now, more than ever, we all need to stand up."

Keep America Beautiful CEO Jennifer Lawson expects her nationwide nonprofit network to unify people around the bridge issue of litter. Her benchmark next year is to reach 4 million volunteers through local chapters devoted to cleaning up their communities, planting trees and making gardens.

Lawson wants the volunteer opportunities to show people patriotism is an action — not a concept — that involves working with your neighbors.

"It doesn't have to be all flags and tricornered hats," Lawson said. "Patriotism in this country is an act of giving into community."

America Gives will engage volunteers beyond July 4th in an attempt to build up the habit of giving back. Volunteers who register their service hours can enter a sweepstakes where 250 randomly selected winners will get to donate $4,000 to an approved nonprofit partner.

The program also plans to rally people around the national days of service on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and 9/11. The year-round goal will be to keep things as local as possible.

"It should be on people's minds all the time, not just the day that they're doing service," Rios said. "But how do they plan ahead to keep it going?

What to know about the fatal shooting of a woman by an ICE officer in Minneapolis

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS — Protesters confronted federal officers Thursday in Minneapolis the day after a woman was fatally shot by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

The demonstrations came amid heightened tensions after President Donald Trump's administration dispatched 2,000 officers and agents to Minnesota for its latest immigration crackdown.

The killing of 37-year-old Renee Good on Wednesday set off a clash between federal and state officials over whether the shooting appeared justified and whether a Minnesota law enforcement agency had jurisdiction to investigate.

Here's what is known about the shooting:

How it unfolded

The woman was shot in her SUV in a residential neighborhood south of downtown Minneapolis, about a mile from where police killed George Floyd in 2020. Videos taken by bystanders and posted online show an officer approaching a vehicle stopped in the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle.

The Honda Pilot begins to pull forward and a different ICE officer standing in front of the vehicle draws his gun and immediately fires at least two shots at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him.

It is not clear from the videos if the officer gets struck by the SUV, which speeds into two cars parked on a curb before stopping.



People protest as law enforcement officers attend to the scene of the shooting involving federal law enforcement agents, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026, in Minneapolis.
(AP Photo/Tom Baker)

Victim was a 'wife and mom'

Good died of gunshot wounds to the head.

A U.S. citizen born in Colorado, Good described herself on social media as a "poet and writer and wife and mom." Her ex-husband said Good had just dropped off her 6-year-old son at school Wednesday and was driving home when she encountered ICE agents on a residential street.

He said Good and her current partner moved to Minneapolis last year from Kansas City, Missouri.

Good's killing is at least the fifth death to result from the aggressive U.S. immigration crackdown the Trump administration launched last year.

Noem says officer followed training

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Thursday that there would be a federal investigation into the shooting, adding that she believes it was justified. She again called the woman's actions "domestic terrorism."

"This vehicle was used to hit this officer," Noem said. "It was used as a weapon, and the officer feels as though his life was in jeopardy."

The ICE officer has not been publicly identified. Noem said he was taken to a hospital after being hit by the vehicle and has since been discharged.

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara gave no indication that the driver was trying to harm anyone when he described the shooting to reporters Wednesday. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said he had watched videos of the shooting that show it was avoidable.

Federal and state leaders dispute jurisdiction to investigate

Drew Evans, head of Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, said Thursday that federal authorities have denied the state agency access to evidence in the case, barring the state from investigating the shooting alongside the FBI.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz demanded that state investigators be given a role, telling reporters that residents would otherwise have difficulty accepting the findings of federal law enforcement.

"And I say that only because people in positions of power have already passed judgment from the president to the vice president to Kristi Noem," Walz said.

Noem denied that Minnesota authorities were being shut out, saying: "They don't have any jurisdiction in this investigation."

Officer who shot Good was dragged by another driver in June

Vice President JD Vance said Thursday that the shooting was justified and noted the officer who killed Good suffered serious injuries in June when he was dragged by another driver.

Court records say the officer got his arm stuck in a vehicle's window as a driver fled arrest in Bloomington, Minnesota. The officer was dragged 100 yards (91 meters) and cuts to his arm required 50 stitches.

Vance said of Good: "I can believe that her death is a tragedy, while also recognizing that it is a tragedy of her own making."

Protest met with pepper spray, tear gas

Dozens of protesters Thursday morning outside a Minneapolis federal building being used as a base for the immigration crackdown. Border Patrol officers fired tear gas and doused demonstrators with pepper spray to push them back from the gate.

Area schools were closed as a safety precaution.

Protests were also planned across the U.S. in cities including New York, New Orleans and Seattle.

ELECTION 2026

USPS says mail-in ballots might not get postmark on same day they're dropped off

Some election officials look to postmarks to ensure ballots were mailed on time.



By Jonathan Shorman
STATELINE.ORG

The U.S. Postal Service has adopted a new rule that could create doubt about whether some ballots mailed by voters by Election Day will receive postmarks in time to be counted.

A USPS rule that took effect on Dec. 24 says mail might not receive a postmark on the same day the agency takes possession of it. The postal service says it isn't changing its existing postmark practices and is merely clarifying its policy, but some election officials have looked to postmarks as a guarantee that mail ballots were cast before polls closed.

The new rule holds implications for 14 states and Washington, D.C., that count ballots arriving after Election Day if they are postmarked on or before that day — commonly called a "ballot grace period." In these states, ballots placed in the mail by voters before the deadline may not be counted if the postal service applies a postmark after Election Day.

The USPS rule says that "the postmark date does not necessarily indicate the first day that the Postal Service had possession of the mailpiece."

The USPS rule comes as the U.S. Supreme Court prepares to consider a case that could eliminate ballot grace periods nationwide. The court's decision, expected late this spring or next summer, could render the issues raised by the postmark rule moot.

Mail-in voting surged in 2020's general election amid the COVID-19 pandemic, when 43% of voters cast their votes by mail. The percentage of voters mailing their ballots has fallen from that peak but remains above pre-pandemic levels. About 30% of voters cast mail ballots in 2024, according to data gathered by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

While the vast majority of mail ballots were successfully cast last year, hundreds of thousands weren't counted. During the 2024 election, 584,463 mail ballots returned by voters were rejected by election officials — 1.2% of returned mail ballots. About 18% of those ballots were rejected because they didn't arrive on time.

The USPS defended the change in a lengthy response to criticisms published in the Federal Register. The agency emphasized that it does not administer elections and doesn't advocate for or against voting by mail.

The postal service repeated its advice that voters mail their completed ballots at least a week before Election Day. And it noted that voters may request a manual postmark at their local post office free of charge.

"If customers are aware that the postmark date may not align with the date on which the Postal Service first accepted possession of a mailpiece, they will be better equipped to adjust their plans accordingly," the response reads.

"And if policymakers or other entities that create rules utilizing the postmark date are aware of what the postmark date signifies, they are better equipped to determine whether their rules adequately serve their purposes."

HEALTH

Wake up refreshed

Simple ways to begin your morning

FAMILY FEATURES

Ready, set, go.

Just as you would set off at the starting line of a race, this hectic pace is how mornings begin for many men and women.

Instead of waking with dread to face another hectic morning, consider these tips for a healthier way to ease into your daily rituals. While these activities may require you to allow extra time, you may be pleased with the productive results.

Meditate. A practice that has been around for thousands of years may still be one of the best stress busters for hurried mornings. To start, find a place in your home that is free of noise and distraction. Practice sitting still, with eyes closed, and focus only on your breathing. Using deep, controlled breaths, try to steer your thoughts away from negative and stress-inducing thoughts.

Stretch. While the most health-conscious person may opt for a morning sweat-a-thon, working in some stretches can also be beneficial. When you awake, think about oft-used muscles and extend each one for 15-30 seconds.



Activate. Give your brain some fuel in the morning while also doing something nice for your mind. For example, journaling is a gentle way to ease into your morning and get your brain firing. If you can't think of a topic, simply write down a few affirmations for the day, revisit a pleasant memory from your past or scribble down a goal for the week. Journaling can be an uplifting way to engage the mind and express gratitude for the day ahead.

Find more tips for starting your day on the right foot at eLivingToday.com.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images
Source: eLivingToday.com

FOOD & BEVERAGES



Classic Chocolate Chip Cookies

FAMILY FEATURES

Sometimes the best recipes are the ones passed from generation to generation. There's a reason Grandma's Humdinger Chocolate Chip Cookies are a tradition: they're simply delicious. Better yet, this delectable dessert can be doubled if you need a larger batch to feed a crowd. Discover more sweet eats by visiting Culinary.net.

Grandma's Humdinger Chocolate Chip Cookies

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Yield: about 32 cookies

1 1/2 sticks butter, melted
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup sugar
1 tablespoon milk
1 tablespoon vanilla
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 egg
2 cups flour
1 cup mini chocolate chips

Heat oven to 350 F.

In large bowl, mix butter and sugars. Add milk and vanilla. Stir in baking soda, salt and cream of tartar. Mix in egg, flour and chocolate chips. Mix well, spoon mixture into hands and roll into balls. Place balls on lined baking sheet. Bake 10 minutes. Let set on cookie sheet 10 minutes.

Source: Culinary.net

SPORTS

An offense that has no defense

While the Philadelphia Eagles defense kept the team in its Wild Card game against the San Francisco 49ers, the offense's season-long struggles ended the team's Super Bowl title defense.

By Chris Murray
For the Philadelphia Sunday SUN

The Philadelphia Eagles journey to defend their Super Bowl title came to a frustrating end on Sunday at Lincoln Financial Field with a 23-19 NFC Wild Card game loss to the San Francisco 49ers.

After the Eagles had taken a 19-17 lead over the 49ers on a 33-yard field goal by Jake Elliott with 8-minutes and 4 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, San Francisco went on a 10-play, 66-yard drive that was capped by a four-yard touchdown pass from Brock Purdy to Christian McCaffery.

The Eagles got the ball back with 2:54 left at their own 35 and drove down to the San Francisco 21-yard line but would not come any closer. Quarterback Jalen Hurts threw four straight incomplete passes, and the 49ers took over on downs and ran out the final 43 seconds of the game.

The NFC Eastern Division Champions saw their season end at 11-7 while the 49ers will move on to play the Seattle Seahawks, the NFC's top seed in the divisional round of the playoffs.

This Eagles defeat came down to all the things that they struggled with throughout the season on the offensive side of the ball. With all the outstanding talent Birds had on offense this season, they simply could not find any sense of consistency this season.

"Ultimately, when I see our defense get the ball back like that, I mean, we've responded with touchdowns and those are the times we capitalize, especially on short fields," Hurts said. "I take ownership for not being able to put points on the board. It all starts with me and ends with me."

More than a few of the 11 wins the Birds had this season happened because the defense, led defensive coordinator Vic Fangio, was so dominant that they could cover up the shortcomings of the offense.

This was definitely true in close wins over the Green Bay Packers, Detroit Lions, and Buffalo Bills.

Throughout the season, the Eagles never found any consistent rhythm in both the running and passing games. For example, it took eight games for running back Saquon Barkley to have a 100-yard rushing game. Prior to that point, Barkley hadn't had a 100-yard plus rushing game since last year's NFC title game win over the Washington Commanders.



Philadelphia Eagles defensive tackle Byron Young (94) reacts after a penalty during the second half of an NFL wild-card playoff football game against the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, in Philadelphia. (AP Photo/Derik Hamilton)



San Francisco 49ers running back Christian McCaffrey (23) runs with the ball after catching a pass during the second half of an NFL wild card playoff football game against the Philadelphia Eagles, Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, in Philadelphia. (AP Photo/Terrance Williams)

"Felt like that was kind of our story as the year progressed. Like you said, good first half, didn't do a good enough job coaching, didn't do a good enough job executing in the second half, in that third quarter particularly," said head coach Nick Sirianni.

The offenses' failures are not just on one person; Hurts had times this season when he struggled to find his own consistency in the passing game. For example, in the win over the Bills, Hurts didn't complete any passes in the second half of the win over Buffalo.

You could point to the playcalling of first-year offensive coordinator Kevin Patullo along with dropped passes, or the injury-riddled offensive line that struggled to stay healthy. In the loss to the 49ers, starting right tackle Lane Johnson did not play because of a foot injury. Center Cam Jurgens, and linemen Jordan Mailata, and Landon Dickerson also had their share of injuries throughout the season.

In Sunday's loss to the 49ers when the Eagles defense needed the offense to play all four quarters with, they came up woefully short in the second half against San Francisco, and the defense, even with two interceptions by Quinyon Mitchell, could not save the day this time.

In the first half, the Eagles took a 13-10 lead at half thanks to a Jalen Hurts touchdown pass to tight end Dallas Goedert, who also scored on a one-yard run. But in the second half, the Birds could only manage two field goals while the Niners scored a touchdown. That was the difference in the game.

Speaking to reporters after the game, Barkley said the Eagles' inability to play with any kind of consistency during the regular season came back to bite the Birds in the postseason.

"Obviously, you're frustrated after a game like that, and you know your season is over," Barkley said. "It's been a common theme for us this year. We haven't done a good enough job playing complete football, putting two halves together. You expect when you get into this moment (playoffs) and we'll just figure it out."

"It caught up to us."

ENTERTAINMENT & THE ARTS

Hollywood stars gather for an all-winners celebration at the American Film Institute Awards

By Jonathan Landrum Jr.
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — If the American Film Institute Awards stands for anything, it's that everyone in the room — from Leonardo DiCaprio and Ryan Coogler to Timothée Chalamet and Ariana Grande — leaves feeling like a winner.

That spirit was on full display Friday as the AFI Awards gathered its 2026 honorees for an invitation-only luncheon in Beverly Hills, where the institute once again celebrated the collaborative nature of film and television by honoring creative teams — in front of and behind the camera.



Actor Michael B. Jordan arrives at the AFI Awards at the Four Seasons in Los Angeles, Friday, Jan. 9, 2026.
(AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)



Director Ryan Coogler, left, and his wife Zinzi Evans pose together at the AFI Awards on Friday, Jan. 9, 2026, at the Four Seasons in Los Angeles.
(AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

Inside the ballroom, there were no acceptance speeches in the traditional sense and no suspense over envelopes. Instead, AFI's ceremony unfolded as a series of thoughtfully written tributes: eloquent rationales for each honored film and television program, followed by brief clips designed to place the year's work within a broader cultural and artistic context.



Ariana Grande arrives at the AFI Awards at the Four Seasons in Los Angeles, Friday, Jan. 9, 2026.
(AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

AFI President Bob Gazzale spoke in front of star-filled room, ensuring there were no losers with only shared recognition.

The room reflected that mood. Filmmaker Steven Spielberg was spotted chatting with Coogler, whose wife and "Sinners" producer, Zinzi Coogler, stood beside him. Meanwhile, Michael B. Jordan worked the room, trading hugs and handshakes with fellow honorees and guests including "Bugonia" star Jesse Plemons and "Task" actor Mark Ruffalo. Filmmakers James Cameron and Guillermo del Toro greeted each other.

Nearby, DiCaprio stood side by side with Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos and actors Benicio del Toro and Edward James Olmos. Chase Infiniti looked on from her table, gazing toward her "One Battle After Another" co-stars before the program kicked off.

On the red carpet, with "Death by Lightning" actor Nick Offerman beside him, George Clooney shared laughs with a photographer, adding to the easygoing tone that carried throughout the afternoon. After the event, Infiniti and Jordan reunited for a hug and a brief catch-up, a quiet moment that underscored the camaraderie in the room.

Films honored include "Avatar: Fire and Ash," "Bugonia," "Frankenstein," "Hamnet," "Jay Kelly," "Marty Supreme," "One Battle After Another," "Sinners," "Train Dreams" and

AFI Awards *continued on page 19*



Actor TK Carter arrives for the premiere of "The LA Riot" at the Tribeca Film Festival, Monday, April 25, 2005, in New York. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File)

Veteran actor T.K. Carter, known for 'The Thing' and 'Punky Brewster,' dies at 69

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUARTE, Calif. — Veteran actor T.K. Carter, who appeared in the horror film "The Thing" and "Punky Brewster" on television, has died at the age of 69.

Carter was declared dead Friday evening after deputies responded to a call regarding an unresponsive male in Duarte, California, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Police did not disclose a cause of death or other details, but said no foul play was suspected.

Thomas Kent "T.K." Carter was born Dec. 18, 1956, in New York City and was raised in Southern California.

He began his career in stand-up comedy and with acting roles. Carter had been acting for years before a breakthrough role as Nauls the cook in John Carpenter's 1982 horror classic, "The Thing." He also had a recurring role in the 1980s sitcom "Punky Brewster."

Other big-screen roles include "Runaway Train" in 1985, "Ski Patrol" in 1990 and "Space Jam" in 1996.

"T.K. Carter was a consummate professional and a genuine soul whose talent transcended genres," his publicist, Tony Freeman, said in a statement. "He brought laughter, truth, and humanity to every role he touched. His legacy will continue to inspire generations of artists and fans alike."

Celebrating *continued from page 2*

tion to include a mixed-martial arts match on the White House lawn, and believes that anyone who takes to the streets to protest him — something covered by the First Amendment, by the way — should be considered a domestic terrorist and possibly shot in the head, flag waving is hard to do.

With the 2026 midterm elections coming, and the gerrymandering that this has led to on both sides, it's hard to know what America is going to look like by July 4, 2026.

And although I'm trying to be an optimist, I won't be all that surprised if it looks a lot like the Capital did on Jan. 6, 2021.

Brokenhearted. Disappointed. Angry as hell. But not at all surprised.

Disclaimer: The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the article belong solely to the author, and not necessarily to the author's employer, The Philadelphia Sunday SUN, the author's organization, committee or other group or individual.

How TV shows like 'Mo' and 'Muslim Matchmaker' allow Arab and Muslim Americans to tell their stories

By Patrick Aftoora-Orsagos
ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Whether it's stand-up comedy specials or a dramedy series, when Muslim American Mo Amer sets out to create, he writes what he knows.

The comedian, writer and actor of Palestinian descent has received critical acclaim for it, too. The second season of Amer's "Mo" documents Mo Najjar and his family's tumultuous journey reaching asylum in the United States as Palestinian refugees.

Amer's show is part of an ongoing wave of television from Arab American and Muslim American creators who are telling nuanced, complicated stories about identity without falling into stereotypes that Western media has historically portrayed.

"Whenever you want to make a grounded show that feels very real and authentic to the story and their cultural background, you write to that," Amer told The Associated Press. "And once you do that, it just feels very natural, and when you accomplish that, other people can see themselves very easily."

At the start of its second season, viewers find Najjar running a falafel taco stand in Mexico after he was locked in a van transporting stolen olive trees across the U.S.-Mexico border. Najjar was trying to retrieve the olive trees and return them to the farm where he, his mother and brother are attempting to build an olive oil business.

Both seasons of "Mo" were smash hits on Netflix. The first season was awarded a Peabody. His third comedy special on Netflix, "Mo Amer: Wild World," premiered in October.

Narratively, the second season ends before the Hamas attack in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, but the series itself doesn't shy away from addressing Israeli-Palestinian relations, the ongoing conflict in Gaza or what it's like for asylum seekers detained in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers.

In addition to "Mo," shows like "Muslim Matchmaker," hosted by matchmakers Hoda Abrahim and Yasmin Elhady, connect Muslim Americans from around the country with the goal of finding a spouse.

The animated series, "#1 Happy Family USA," created by Ramy Youssef, who worked with Amer to create "Mo," and Pam Brady, follows an Egyptian American Muslim family navigating life in New Jersey after the 9/11 terrorists attack in New York.



Actor Ramy Youssef attends the, "#1 Happy Family USA," premiere at Metrograph on April 16, 2025, in New York. (Photo by Andy Kropa/Invision/AP, File)


Hoda Abrahim, founder and CEO of, "Love, Inshallah," a matchmaker featured on the series, "Muslim Matchmaker," on Hulu, appears in her home on Aug. 11, 2025, in Conroe, Texas. (AP Photo/Ashley Landis, File)

Current events have an influence

The key to understanding the ways in which Arab or Muslim Americans have been represented on screen is to be aware of the "historical, political, cultural and social contexts" in which the content was created, said Sahar Mohamed Khamis, a University of Maryland professor who studies Arab and Muslim representation in media.

After the 9/11 attacks, Arabs and Muslims became the villains in many American films and TV shows. The ethnic background of Arabs and the religion of Islam were portrayed as synonymous, too, Khamis said. The villain, Khamis said, is often a man with brown skin with an Arab-sounding name.

A show like "Muslim Matchmaker" flips this narrative on its head, Elhady said, by showing the ethnic diversity of Muslim Americans.

"It's really important to have shows that show us as everyday Americans," said Elhady, who is Egyptian and Libyan American, "but also as people that live in different places and have kind of sometimes dual realities and a foot in the East and a foot in the West and the reality of really negotiating that context."

Before 9/11, people living in the Middle East were often portrayed to Western audiences as exotic beings, living in tents in the desert and riding camels. Women often had little to no agency in these media depictions and were "confined to the harem" — a secluded location for women in a traditional Muslim home.

This idea, Khamis said, harkens back to the term "orientalism," which Palestinian American academic, political activist and literary critic Edward Said coined in his 1978 book of the same name.

Khamis said, pointing to countries like Britain and France, the portrayal in media of people from the region was "created and manufactured, not by the people themselves, but through the gaze of an outsider. The outsiders in this case, he said, were the colonial/imperialist powers that were actually controlling these lands for long periods of time."

Among those who study the ways Arabs have been depicted on Western television, a common critique is that the characters are "bombers, billionaires or belly dancers," she said.

The limits of representation

Sanaz Alesafar, executive director of Storyline Partners and an Iranian American, said she has seen some "wins" with regard to Arab representation in Hollywood, noting the success of "Mo," "Muslim Matchmaker" and "#1 Happy Family USA." Storyline Partners helps writers, showrunners, executives and creators check the historical and cultural backgrounds of their characters and narratives to assure they're represented fairly and that one creator's ideas don't infringe upon another's.

Alesafar argues there is still a need for diverse stories told about people living in the Middle East and the English-speaking diaspora, written and produced by people from those backgrounds.

"In the popular imagination and popular culture, we're still siloed in really harmful ways," she said. "Yes, we're having these wins and these are incredible, but that decision-making and centers of power still are relegating us to these tropes and these stereotypes."

Deana Nassar, an Egyptian American who is head of creative talent at film production company Alamiya Filmed Entertainment, said it's important for her children to see themselves reflected on screen "for their own self image." Nassar said she would like to see a diverse group of people in decision-making roles in Hollywood. Without that, it's "a clear indication that representation is just not going to get us all the way there," she said.

Representation can impact audiences' opinions on public policy, too, according to a recent study by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. Results showed that the participants who witnessed positive representation of Muslims were less likely to support anti-democratic and anti-Muslim policies compared to those who viewed negative representations.

For Amer, limitations to representation come from the decision-makers who greenlight projects, not from creators. He said the success of shows like his and others are a "start," but he wants to see more industry recognition for his work and the work of others like him.

"That's the thing, like just keep writing, that's all it's about," he said. "Just keep creating and keep making and thankfully I have a really deep well for that, so I'm very excited about the next things," he said.

Judge dismisses Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit to reclaim master recordings from Universal Music Group

By Mark Kennedy
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — A federal judge has dismissed the pioneering hip-hop group Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit to reclaim ownership of their master recordings from Universal Music Group.

U.S. District Judge Denise Cote on Thursday sided with the recording giant, arguing that the Grammy-winning group never owned the copyrights to their sound recordings and didn't transfer them to anyone else.

"Plaintiffs can only terminate copyright transfers that they executed," the judge wrote. "None of the contracts identified by Plaintiffs indicate that they ever owned the Master Tapes."


Sandra Denton, from left; DJ Spinderella and Cheryl James of Salt-N-Pepa arrive at the 2025 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Nov. 8, 2025, at L.A. Live in Los Angeles. (Photo by Richard Shotwell/Invision/AP, File)

UMG argued that the recordings were "works made for hire," which would not allow for the reclaiming of rights. Salt-N-Pepa's lawsuit said their agreements with the label made it clear that they were not.

"Even with the court's complete rejection of their claims, we remain open and willing to find a resolution to the matter and turn the page so we can focus our efforts on working together to amplify Salt-N-Pepa's legacy for generations to come," UMG said in a statement.

Representatives for Salt-N-Pepa said in a statement that they disagreed with the judge's decision and "fully intend to pursue our rights on appeal," adding: "We remain committed to vindicating and reclaiming our rights as creators under the Copyright Act."

The Queens, New York, duo of Cheryl "Salt" James and Sandra "Pepa" Denton became Salt-N-Pepa in 1985. They were later joined by DJ Spinderella, who was not part of the early agreements under dispute and is not involved in the lawsuit.

Salt-N-Pepa signed with Next Plateau Records and released their debut album "Hot, Cool & Vicious" in 1986. Next Plateau was an independent label at the time, and it's now under the banner of Universal's Republic label. Some of the group's hits include 1993's "Shoop" and 1987's "Push It."

In 1995 they became the first female rap group to win a Grammy, and in 2021, they received a Grammy lifetime achievement award. In November, they followed Missy Elliott as the second female hip-hop act in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, handed the Influence Award.

At the podium during the induction ceremony, James noted the group's legal fight: "This is the Influence Award. We have to keep using our influence until the industry honors creativity the way the audience does — with love, respect and fairness."

In their lawsuit, Salt-N-Pepa claimed that the 1976 Copyright Act gives artists the right to reclaim ownership of master recordings and terminate past agreements after 35 years.

But the judge sided with UMG's argument that there is no evidence that James and Denton granted the label copyright that they can now reclaim.

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cj speaks...New day, new blessings

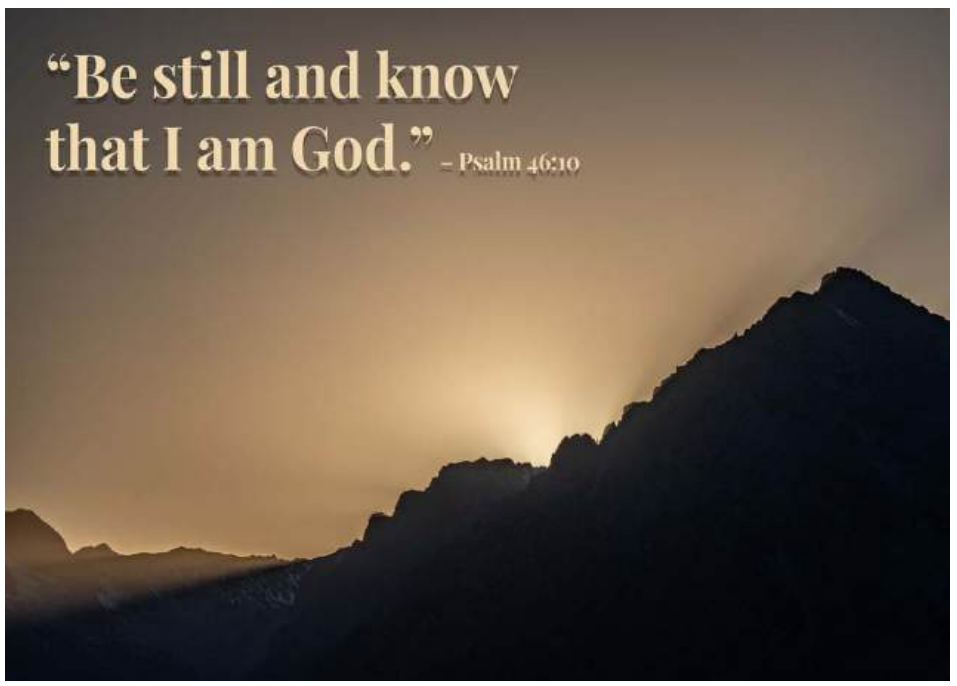


By cj

What a day, rising up to greet your life!

Thanking God for giving you breath, for being here on this day, being able to read, able to see, and to smell, touch and feel all the goodness of God. 2026 is the year of your new life -- a new day with new beginnings.

2025 is no longer an active part of your life---that year has gone. There is a crisp, clean feel at the start of a new year as you embark upon new journeys, pursue new opportunities, and are open to experiencing new blessings. In fact, every day comes with a fresh new start from God, not just at the start of a new year.



It is He who gives you the ability to move, and the discernment to know right from wrong. Allow the new blessings of this new day to be yours, something you can embrace and call your own. Open your heart to unconditional love.

In order to love unconditionally, we must accept people for who they are, knowing everyone falls short -- including ourselves. We all stand in the need of prayer, and we are all sinners. My sin is no greater than yours, and yours is no greater or less than mine. God guides our daily lives as individuals so that we can better come together as a community, as a family, and as friends, loving one another unconditionally along the way. In addition to being a strong force, unconditional love doesn't show favoritism and does not demand one to constantly prove that one is better than someone else.

Allow your heart to open up a little more this year to unconditional love, regardless of any travesties that have closed it off in the past. In this new year, love is the key to your new blessings. Just love freely and openly. It does not cost a dime to say, "I am sorry," "I love you," "Forgive me," "Let's work this out," "How are you doing today?" and "How can I help you?" In the new year and every day, these few words can impact your blessings.

You don't always get unconditional love back in the same way you gave it, but it often comes back when you least expect it from those you never even knew were thinking about you. This new year, don't allow your heart to harden. Keep it open, and allow unconditional love to flow from you, and return to you. Enjoy this day, enjoy the blessings, and enjoy the newness of it all. Until next time, take care...PEACE!

cj is an author, poet, educator spoken word artist, writer, motivational speaker, and inspirational writer who resides in Philadelphia. If you were moved by this piece, shoot cj a "like" or comment at: spokenwordofphilly@gmail.com.

Schloss *continued from page 10*

Like the Franks, Eva's family spent two years in hiding to avoid capture after the Nazis occupied the Netherlands. They were eventually betrayed, arrested and sent to the Auschwitz death camp.

Schloss and her mother Fritzi survived until the camp was liberated by Soviet troops in 1945. Her father Erich and brother Heinz died in Auschwitz.

After the war, Eva moved to Britain, married German Jewish refugee Zvi Schloss and settled in London.

In 1953, her mother married Frank's father, Otto, the only member of his immediate family to survive. Anne Frank died of typhus in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at the age of 15, months before the end of the war.

Schloss did not speak publicly about her experiences for decades, later saying that wartime trauma had made her withdrawn and unable to connect with others.

"I was silent for years, first because I wasn't allowed to speak. Then I repressed it. I was angry with the world," she told The Associated Press in 2004.

But after she addressed the opening of an Anne Frank exhibition in London in 1986, Schloss made it her mission to educate younger generations about the Nazi genocide. Over the following decades she spoke in schools and prisons, at international conferences and told her story in books including "Eva's Story: A Survivor's Tale by the Stepsister of Anne Frank."

She kept campaigning into her 90s. In 2019, she traveled to Newport Beach, California to meet teenagers who were photographed making Nazi salutes at a high school party. The following year she was part of a campaign urging Facebook to remove Holocaust-denying material from the social networking site.

"We must never forget the terrible consequences of treating people as 'other,'" Schloss said in 2024. "We need to respect everybody's races and religions. We need to live together with our differences. The only way to achieve this is through education, and the younger we start the better."

Schloss' family remembered her as "a remarkable woman: an Auschwitz survivor, a devoted Holocaust educator, tireless in her work for remembrance, understanding and peace."

"We hope her legacy will continue to inspire through the books, films and resources she leaves behind," the family said in a statement.

Zvi Schloss died in 2016. Eva Schloss is survived by their three daughters, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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AFI Awards *continued from page 16*

"Wicked: For Good."

Television shows recognized were "Adolescence," "Andor," "Death by Lightning," "The Diplomat," "The Lowdown," "The Pitt," "Severance," "The Studio" and "Task."

Closing the ceremony was Carol Burnett, who delivered AFI's annual benediction, celebrating the honorees' achievements while reflecting on her own lifelong love of cinema and television.

"I've never lost the deep respect and love that I have for all the stories we tell through cinema and television and by all of those behind and in front of the camera," Burnett said. "Creative collaboration has always remained at the heart of our work, and AFI brings us all together. The world is a better place for having heard your voices."

The luncheon also featured AFI's signature March of Time video montage, a sweeping look at cinematic and television milestones from decades past, situating this year's honorees within the evolving history of the medium.

Agreement *continued from page 10*

created and implemented" Louisville's own reform plan.

The city initiated some reforms after Taylor's death in March 2020, including a city law banning the use of "no-knock" warrants. The warrants were typically used in surprise drug raids. The city also started a pilot program that sends behavioral health professionals to some 911 calls.

The city also paid a $12 million wrongful death settlement to Taylor's family.

Earlier this year, former Louisville Police Detective Brett Hankison became the first officer involved in the Taylor raid to go to prison. A judge sentenced Hankison to nearly three years in prison on an excessive force conviction despite the Justice Department's efforts to reduce his sentence to one day of time served.

Hankison shot 10 rounds after police were fired on by Taylor's boyfriend from inside her apartment. Hankison shot blindly into Taylor's windows but didn't strike anyone inside or in a neighboring apartment.

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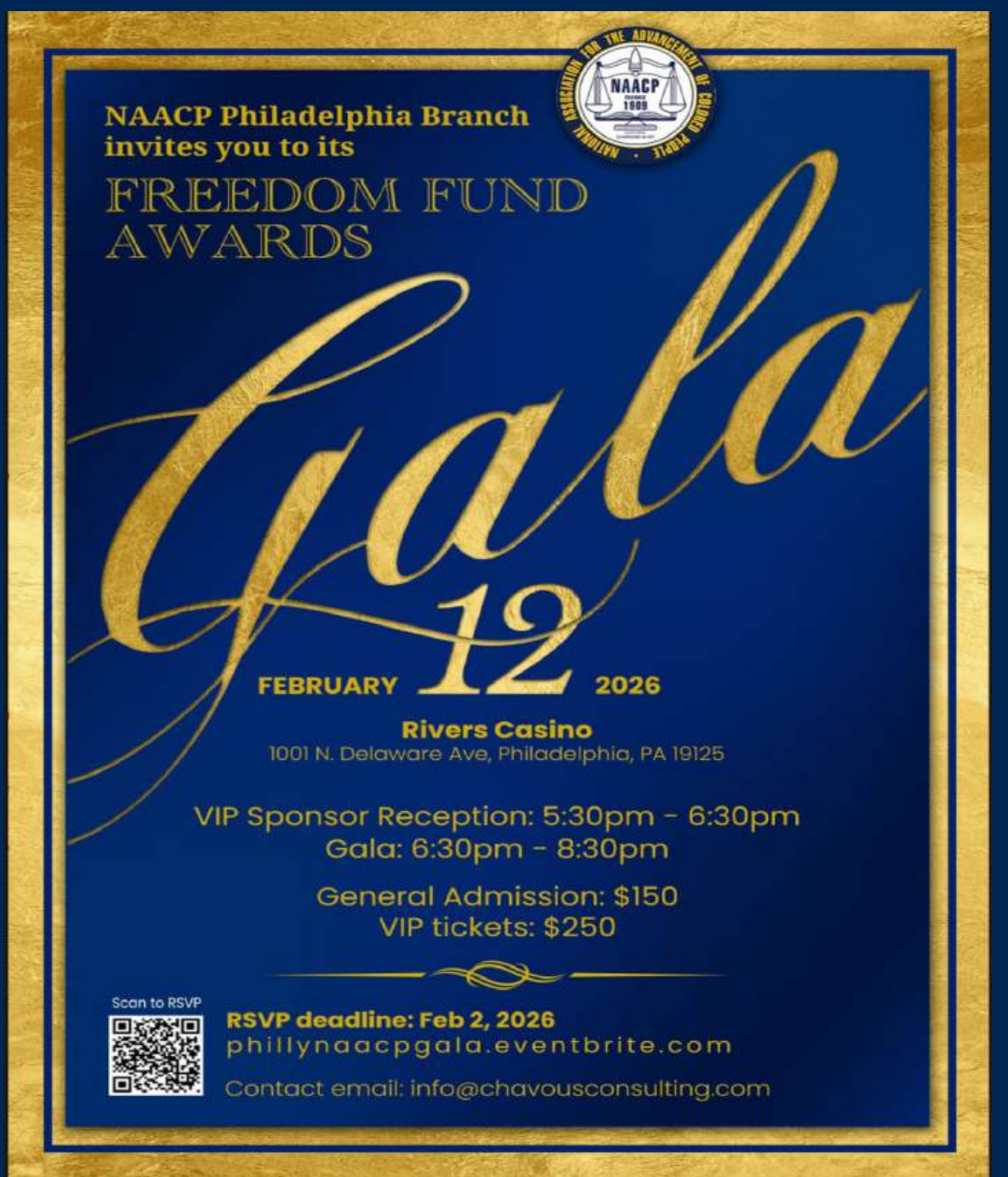




New Year Message from the NAACP Philadelphia Branch President

As we step into this new year, let peace, unity, and prosperity for all guide us. The dawn of 2026 brings with it a fierce urgency to come together, to protect the rights and liberties that have been so valiantly fought for by those whose shoulders we stand upon. In this spirit, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to making a difference that benefits every member of our community. Together, let us honor the sacrifices of our leaders by continuing the fight for justice and equality. May this year inspire us to work collaboratively, ensuring that our voices are heard and our rights are upheld. Together, we can build a future that reflects our shared values and aspirations. Wishing you all a year filled with hope, resilience, and the strength to create meaningful change. Happy New Year!





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Jan. 6 *continued on page 23*

Echoes of 5 years ago

This milestone anniversary carried echoes of the differences that erupted that day.

But it unfolds while attention is focused elsewhere, particularly after the U.S. military's stunning capture of Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, and Trump's plans to take over the country and prop up its vast oil industry, a striking new era of American expansionism.

"These people in the administration, they want to lecture the world about democracy when they're undermining the rule of law at home, as we all will be powerfully reminded," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said on the eve of the anniversary.

House Speaker Mike Johnson's office, responding to requests for comment about the delay in hanging the plaque honoring the police at the Capitol, as required by law, said in a statement that the statute "is not implementable," and proposed alternatives "also do not comply with the statute."



Demonstrators march at the Ellipse during the Jan. 6 anniversary, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2026, in Washington. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)

Democrats revive an old committee, Republicans lead a new one

At the morning hearing at the Capitol, lawmakers heard from a range of witnesses and others — including former U.S. Capitol Police officer Winston Pingeon, who said he loved his job and if it hadn't been for Jan. 6, he would still be on the force today, as well as a Pamela Hemphill, a rioter who refused Trump's pardon, and silenced the room as she blamed the president for the violence and apologized to the officer, stifling tears.

"I can't allow them not be recognized, to be lied about," Hemphill said about law enforcement.

"Until I can see that plaque up there," she won't be done, Hemphill said.

Among those testifying were former Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, who along with former Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming were the two Republicans on the panel that investigated Trump's efforts to overturn Biden's win. Cheney, who lost her own reelection bid to a Trump-backed challenger, did not appear. Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi joined the audience.

Republican Rep. Barry Loudermilk of Georgia, who has been tapped by House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana to lead a new committee to probe other theories about what happened on Jan. 6, rejected Tuesday's session as a "partisan exercise" designed to hurt Trump and his allies.

Many Republicans reject the narrative that Trump sparked the Jan. 6 attack, and Johnson, before he became the House speaker, had led challenges to the 2020 election. He was among some 130 GOP lawmakers voting that day to reject the presidential results from some states.

Instead, they have focused on security lapses at the Capitol — from the time it took for the National Guard to arrive on the scene to the failure of the police canine units to discover the pipe bombs found that day outside Republican and Democratic party headquarters. The FBI arrested a Virginia man suspected of placing the pipe bombs, and he told investigators last month he believed someone needed to speak up for those who believed the 2020 election was stolen, authorities say.

"The Capitol Complex is no more secure today than it was on January 6," Loudermilk said in a social media post. "My Select Subcommittee remains committed to transparency and accountability and ensuring the security failures that occurred on January 6 and the partisan investigation that followed never happens again.'"

The aftermath of Jan. 6

Five people died in the Capitol siege and its aftermath, including Babbitt, who was shot and killed by police while trying to climb through the window of a door near the House chamber, and Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick died later after battling the mob. Several law enforcement personnel died later, some by suicide.

The Justice Department indicted Trump on four counts in a conspiracy to defraud voters with his claims of a rigged election in the run-up to the Jan. 6 attack.

Former Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith told lawmakers last month that the riot at the Capitol "does not happen" without Trump. He ended up abandoning the case once Trump was reelected president, adhering to department guidelines against prosecuting a sitting president.

Trump, who never made it to the Capitol that day as he hunkered down at the White House, was impeached by the House on the sole charge of having incited the insurrection. The Senate acquitted him after top GOP senators said they believed the matter was best left to the courts.

Ahead of the 2024 election, the Supreme Court ruled ex-presidents have broad immunity from prosecution.

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