



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Prosecutor's soft policies alarm N.Y. Democrats

Elected officials see danger ahead

By **KERRY PICKET**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Congressional Democrats from New York are distancing themselves from the Manhattan district attorney's "stay out of jail free" policy that downgrades some felonies and abandons prison sentences for other crimes, a move that is wildly unpopular with city police and business leaders.

Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, who represents parts of Queens, said the edict by new District Attorney Alvin Bragg "might ultimately lead to even more serious offenses" when criminals realize they won't be prosecuted for lower-level violations such as jumping a subway turnstile without paying the fare.



Bragg

"So it affects my folks ... because they travel and work in Manhattan," Mr. Meeks said. "[Mr. Bragg] wants to make sure that things are fair and equitable. But I also understand the police commissioner, who knows that with [failing to prosecute] resisting arrest, people feel they can get away from [accountability]."

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, who represents parts of Brooklyn and Queens and is considered a contender to become the next leader of House Democrats, said he is unfamiliar with the new policy, which has been highly publicized. Mr. Jeffries said he has faith in new Mayor Eric Adams, a former police officer, and new Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell, who espouses a "broken window" tough-on-crime stance.

"Mayor Adams has been very clear that public safety is a prerequisite to prosperity," Mr. Jeffries told The Washington Times. "As a former decorated law enforcement officer, who also was a captain and a lieutenant who walked the

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KING'S DREAM MARCHES ON



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A new generation of Americans honored the life and legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at parades and festivals on Monday. The national holiday marked what would have been the 93rd birthday of the civil rights icon, who was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, while helping sanitation workers strike for better pay and workplace safety.



ACCOUNTABILITY

U.S.-made guns land in foreign criminals' hands

Central Americans flee violence in opposite direction of flow

By **STEPHEN DINAN**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Thousands of firearms manufactured or bought in the U.S. end up being used in crimes in Central America, according to an audit that found about half of the weapons are smuggled into the region and the others are exported legally and "diverted" into criminals' hands.

Florida, Texas and California were the most frequent sources of U.S.-purchased weapons that ended up in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, according to the Government Accountability Office, Congress' chief watchdog.

GAO investigators examined 27,240 requests that those countries submitted to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for tracing from 2015 to 2019.

ATF found about 40% of the weapons were manufactured in the U.S. and the rest came from 39 other countries, the GAO said in the audit released last week. A much smaller fraction were traced to a U.S. purchase.

Most were handguns, but there were some rifles and a small number of machine guns — about 1.7% of the total.

Pistols are the pick of street gangs such as MS-13 and 18th Street, which carry out killings and extortion in urban areas of the Central American countries. Rifles are more popular with drug traffickers, who use AR-15 or AK-47-style weapons to protect drug shipments, the GAO said.

Some neighboring countries say the U.S. is the source of many of the illegal firearms they find.

Central American nations are a particular focus right now. Vice President Kamala Harris is trying

» see **GUNS** | A9

Businesses eager to put smart guns on market

By **SEAN SALAI**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

So-called smart guns that only verified users can fire will become available commercially in the U.S. this year, shaking up an industry excited to court first-time gun owners but concerned about keeping the government from mandating the technology.

Gunsmiths such as SmartGunz LLC in Kansas, LodeStar in Pennsylvania and Biofire in Colorado are manufacturing 9 mm pistols with a variety of user recognition technologies: Bluetooth, biometric fingerprint scans, PIN codes that must be entered before firing and radio frequency identification (RFID) activated by a ring on the user's finger.

The gunmakers say such identity verification measures could help reduce the number of stolen weapons, accidental shootings and suicides each year while giving authorized users quicker access than that allowed by requirements that guns and ammunition be stored and locked separately.

"We believe that the safest firearm is one that only the owner and those they choose can access," Biofire

» see **SMART** | A9

PUBLIC HEALTH

World prepares to move past pandemic, learn to live with dangers of COVID-19

By **TOM HOWELL JR.**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

U.S. and global leaders see 2022 as a transition year in the COVID-19 fight as they look to pivot from the hair-on-fire "pandemic" phase to an endemic chapter in which the virus is always present but is managed like seasonal influenza.

Federal officials are desperately trying to tamp down the omicron crisis, which is leading to record hospitalizations. The crushing wave should peak

at some point in January and February and then recede, forcing the country to grapple with how to get on with life as COVID-19 lurks.

"We're not going to eradicate this. We've only done that with smallpox. We're not going to eliminate [COVID-19]," Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said at a recent briefing at the White House. "But we ultimately will control it."

Rochelle Walensky, director of the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the agency is thinking ahead to "when omicron or COVID itself were to become endemic in the United States" and how public officials should calibrate their responses to the severity of cases, availability of hospital beds and other factors.

The comments signal a shift in how leaders think about COVID-19 — managing the disease instead of quashing

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BACK ON TRACK: Commuter trains will be filling up as employers reopen offices and call back workers, many under vaccine mandates and screenings. Workers who negotiate to make their home offices permanent will help reshape the economy.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

U.S. nurtures dealings with Thailand in effort to blunt Chinese influence

By **RICHARD S. EHRlich**
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

NONG KHAI, THAILAND | A new arrival can easily spot China's inexorable southern thrust along the Mekong River, where tall, fanciful Chinese buildings sprout nearby on the Laos side of this sleepy northern border town, sparking

both hopes and fears about Beijing's influence and intent in Thailand.

A top CIA official's recent visit to Bangkok, during a flurry of lucrative U.S. military and business deals, may lure this longtime American ally to favor the U.S. and not China, but the rivalry is heating up. As elsewhere in the region, the attractions of Chinese investment

and markets are proving potent.

"Thailand has been leaning toward China, and away from the U.S., for two decades," said Benjamin Zawacki, the Bangkok-based American author of "Thailand: Shifting Ground Between the U.S. and Rising China."

"In the military sphere, relations with the U.S. are arguably still deeper, but the

gap is closing swiftly," Mr. Zawacki said in an interview.

Many Thais celebrate their Chinese ancestry, which dates back 700 years, and contrast it with the persecution they suffered during U.S.-led anti-communist purges in the mid-20th century.

Chinese schools, newspapers and other facilities in Thailand were forced

to close during those years of racism and stark ideological polarization. Thais of Chinese descent faced accusations of disloyalty and subversion.

"Ancestry plays a big part in bringing the two countries closer together, as more Chinese migrants moved to

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POLITICS

Republican primary candidates wrestle for Trump mantle. **A5**

NATION

More in U.S. expected to face money woes, credit delinquency. **A6**

WORLD

Putin to use Olympics to spotlight strategic ties with China. **A8**

METRO

Virginia school districts to defy Youngkin mask mandate removal. **A10**

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SECURITY

FBI seized Trump's papers for 'safety'

Judge delays affidavit unsealing

By **JEFF MORDOCK**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Justice Department officials urged a federal judge to keep under wraps the search warrant used in the FBI raid of former President Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, fearing he would destroy evidence, according to court documents unsealed Thursday.

In a motion filed three days before more than 30 armed agents stormed Mr. Trump's Palm Beach, Florida, residence, the Justice Department said a public search warrant "poses a risk to [the]

safety" of the materials sought in the investigation.

"The United States believes there is good cause [to keep the warrant sealed] because the integrity of the investigation might be compromised and evidence might be destroyed," wrote Juan Antonio Gonzalez, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida.

The petition to keep the search warrant sealed was one of three documents ordered to be made public by U.S. Magistrate

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SHOWING BIAS: David Ferriero, former national archivist, has critics curious about his political motives in the Trump inquiry.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Archivist triggered probe, eased rules for Clinton

Seeing Capitol riot sparked 'worst day of my life'

By **SUSAN FERRECHIO**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Aug. 8 search of former President Donald Trump's home and the unprecedented criminal investigation into his possession of White House documents all began with David Ferriero, the now-retired national archivist who alerted the Justice Department after finding classified information in boxes he retrieved from Mar-a-Lago.

Critics say Mr. Ferriero is a

partisan who changed the rules to help excuse Secretary of State Hillary Clinton when she was under scrutiny for mishandling classified documents on her private, unsecured email server.

They also say the raid for a criminal investigation is just another politically motivated scheme to take down Mr. Trump, who remains popular among many voters and is weighing a 2024 White House bid. This time, the dispute is over the Federal Records Act. Trump supporters

say it hardly warrants an investigation or raid of his home.

"They've tried every last argument from the emoluments clause down to Russian collusion, to bribery with impeachment, to saying he planned and coordinated the Jan. 6 riot," Mike Howell, who runs the conservative Heritage Foundation Oversight Project, told The Washington Times. "Nothing has worked, and so you are left with 'Let's try

» see **ARCHIVES** | **A4**



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DON'T FEAR THE FIN

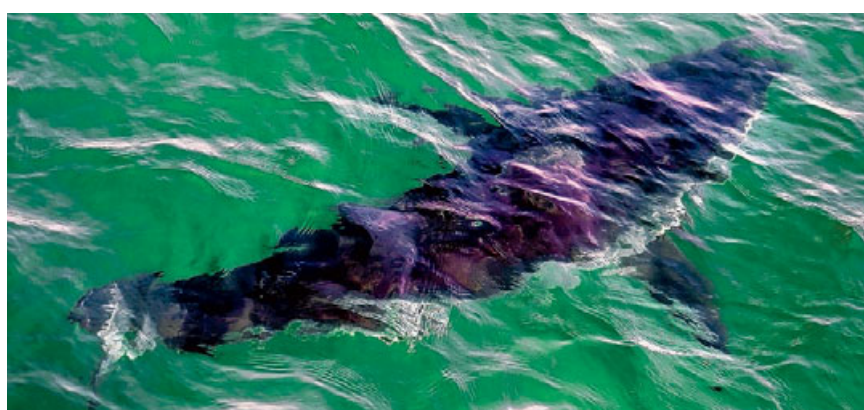
COMING IN WAVES: Biologists say Long Island, New York, appears to be ground zero this year for shark attacks. Six people have sustained bites this summer in what scientists insist are rare events. They say cleaner oceans, warmer waters and a resurgence of bunker fish are among the reasons for the growing shark population.

Biologists say sharks make beaches better despite wave of attacks in New York

By **JACOB CALVIN MEYER**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A series of high-profile shark attacks this summer — from the waters off Long Island to the beaches of Florida — may have fueled some vacation panic, but marine biologists point out that having more sharp-toothed creatures close to shore proves that conservation efforts are paying off.

Clean bays, estuaries and beaches aren't irresistible just for humans; they're better for the schools of fish and other sea creatures that serve as the main food sources of sharks and other predators. If their next meal is closer to shore, the sharks follow — creating more



potentially dangerous, if statistically rare, interactions.

"I would argue there is a greater

benefit of having sharks along our beaches," shark expert Chris Lowe said. "We know the ecological importance of

these animals, and we know they're good indicators of ocean health."

For much of the 20th century, shark populations declined because of overfishing and pollution. Since the 1990s, improvements in fisheries management and tighter environmental standards have boosted the population of sharks and the fish they eat. That combination is likely the root of more shark sightings, Mr. Lowe and other experts say.

That can be bad news for swimmers and surfers, but it is probably a good sign for the oceans. The great whites, hammerheads, thresher and tiger sharks are vital to keeping the ecosystem in balance.

» see **SHARKS** | **A9**

BUSINESS

Banks lose state funds by leaning to far left

Conservatives take on 'woke' agendas

By **RAMSEY TOUCHBERRY**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

More Republican-led states are refusing to do business with financial institutions that embrace woke agendas on issues such as climate change, guns and other social issues.

It is part of a growing pushback among conservative elected officials against banks and investment managers that base business decisions and investment choices not on maximizing their customers' profits but on liberal views about environmental, social and governance issues, or what's known as ESG principles.

Notably, the ESG movement has major Wall Street firms putting the fossil fuel industry on the chopping block because of climate change. The move could result in costly financial implications for energy companies, banks and taxpayers.

West Virginia recently gave some of the world's biggest banks the boot. It barred five major Wall Street firms — Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo and BlackRock, one of the globe's largest asset managers — from doing business with the state. Citing the banks' anti-coal policies or plans to divest from fossil fuels, the state will pull out tens of millions of dollars.

West Virginia is the second-largest coal producer in the country, behind Wyoming. Coal and other fossil fuels account for the third-largest revenue source for the state, more than \$750

» see **BUSINESS** | **A4**

MEDIA

Voice of America speaks softly on China by ending Taiwanese programs

By **BILL GERTZ**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Voice of America is canceling two Chinese-language programs focused on the standoff between China and Taiwan in a move critics say signals a softening of the broadcaster's coverage of communist China.

The cancellations, involving Taiwanese-American broadcasters, were announced recently in an internal message to employees of the U.S.

government-owned international news operation known as VOA.

VOA spokeswoman Anna Morris confirmed the program changes but downplayed the notion that they represent a curtailing of China coverage. Instead, she said, they are part of a larger effort by VOA's Mandarin language service to shift from traditional television to digital platforms.

"Our weekly Taiwan-focused TV program 'Strait Talk' will end, but coverage of Taiwan will expand on our daily

'Issues and Opinions' talk show, allowing more comprehensive and timely discussions of Taiwan and China issues," Ms. Morris said.

She said VOA Mandarin will transition its "Eye on America" television program to web and social media later this month.

The goal of the shifts is to "counter disinformation from China in a more timely and nimble way," Ms. Morris said. She added that VOA has "significantly strengthened" its coverage of Taiwan

and China.

"We have increased our on-the-ground presence in Taiwan from two to eight journalists," she said. "We are putting more emphasis on the web and social media, where Chinese and Taiwanese viewers can access content on demand more easily than they could over linear broadcast."

VOA has said similar shifts were behind its decision in 2011, during the Obama administration, to cancel short-wave broadcasts into China. Although

the shifts included a push to broaden digital content projection, they drew criticism from some for limiting who in China could listen to VOA programs.

The broadcaster also has come under fire in the past from Republicans in Congress for programming that was viewed as too conciliatory toward China and for promoting content that avoided controversial subjects.

A person familiar with the internal

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POLITICS

Former Trump adviser pleads guilty in tax case, will testify. A3

NATION

Bible, Anne Frank graphic novel pulled by Texas school district. A6

WORLD

Russia deploys planes with hypersonic missile to Baltic region. A8

REGION

Judge reinstates 20-week abortion ban in North Carolina. A10

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GOP ON PATH TO CONTROL HOUSE

Ask again later: Power balance in Senate unclear

By **SUSAN FERRECHIO**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The fate of the Senate remained in limbo late Tuesday night as election workers counted ballots to settle hard-fought matchups in swing states.

Close races in Pennsylvania and Nevada, considered critical toss-up contests, had not been fully tallied Tuesday night. What's more, legal challenges were brewing in Pennsylvania, where Democrats are battling to include mail-in ballots that lack a correctly written date.

In Georgia's Senate race, votes were still being counted. It is possible that neither Democratic incumbent Raphael Warnock nor Republican challenger Herschel Walker will be able to secure the absolute majority needed to win Tuesday. That means the two could face a runoff on Dec. 6.

The unfinished vote counting and Georgia's runoff mean the two parties likely will have to wait to find out who will control the chamber in January.

Republicans secured an easy win in Florida, where incumbent Sen. Marco Rubio easily defeated Democratic Rep. Val Demings. Mr. Rubio was on track for about a 15-point victory over Ms. Demings, who Democrats once hoped would be able to flip the seat by running on her tenure as chief of police in Orlando.

Democrats took over the Senate in January 2021 by winning two special elections in Georgia that produced a 50-50 chamber with Vice President Kamala Harris' tie-breaking vote.

Senate Republicans are hoping President Biden's low approval ratings, high inflation and fuel costs, as well as concerns over rising crime and illegal immigration, will push GOP candidates to victories in several swing states and give them control of the Senate gavel once again.

In Nevada, Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, a Democrat, battled GOP challenger Adam Laxalt, who sought to deny

» see **SENATE** | A4



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

SENDING MESSAGES: Voters were willing to wait to make their voices heard on Tuesday, but voting machine glitches in New Jersey and Arizona revived fears of widespread election fraud. About 20% of polling sites in Arizona's largest county were affected.



SORTING IT OUT: While Americans kept voting machines busy, election workers processed mail-in-ballots already cast.



FOR SHOWING UP: Poll workers in Georgia applauded a first-time voter who turned out for the state's pivotal elections.

» see **HOUSE** | A4

Republican candidates flip seats in early returns

By **SETH McLAUGHLIN**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Republicans snared Democratic-held House seats in Florida and Virginia in early returns Tuesday and held on to their districts, putting them on the path to flipping control and creating new hurdles for President Biden next year.

Big races were still to be called across the country, but the early tallies confirmed what prognosticators had predicted: Facing rising crime rates and higher fuel and grocery prices, Americans soured on Democrats' total control of the levers of electoral power in Washington.

The Senate majority was also up for grabs. The breakdown might not be known until Georgia announces the winner of a runoff election next month.

In the House, the breakdown may not be known for weeks, but analysts were projecting Republicans to net anywhere from a handful of seats to several dozen. Most projections had House Republicans winning 230 to 240 seats when the dust settles, with 218 needed to claim the majority.

Republican Anna Paulina Luna turned a blue seat red in Florida's 13th Congressional District by defeating Democrat Eric Lynn, a former national security adviser.

The seat, which leans more Republican under the new congressional maps, opened up after Rep. Charlie Crist stepped down to run for governor.

Republicans Aaron Bean, a member of the state Senate, and Cory Mills, an Army veteran, also picked up Florida seats in the newly drawn, more Republican-friendly 4th and 7th congressional districts, respectively.

In Georgia, Republican Rich McCormick, an emergency room doctor, picked up the seat in the redrawn 6th Congressional District.

REGION

Maryland voters elect Democrat Moore as first Black governor

Bowser makes history in D.C.

By **MICA SOELLNER**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Democrat Wes Moore scored an early win for his party Tuesday, easily taking back the Maryland governor's mansion and making history as the state's first Black governor.

"Maryland, you showed that if we stand divided, we cannot win — but if we stand united, we cannot lose," Mr. Moore said in a statement. "Tonight we celebrate, and tomorrow we get to work."

The return of a Democratic governor in the deep-blue state was widely anticipated after an eight-year aberration of Republican Larry Hogan holding the office.

Prognosticators rated the seat as "safe Democrat."

Over the state line, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser cruised to victory, becoming the first mayor elected to a third term since Marion Barry in 1986.

Mr. Moore, an Army combat veteran, bestselling author and first-time political candidate, will be only the third Black governor in U.S. history. Former Virginia Gov. Doug Wilder and former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick came before. Both of them were Democrats.

Mr. Moore's running mate, former state Delegate Aruna Miller, will be the first woman of color

» see **REGION** | A5



CHANGING HANDS: Democrat Wes Moore will be the first Black governor of Maryland after his decisive defeat of Trump-backed Republican Dan Cox. He will succeed Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican.

► Biden's reelection run in spotlight as midterms finish. **A4**
► Voting machine problems spark fears of fraud. **A5**

EXIT POLLS

Voting gets personal for Americans hurt by economic woes

Biden's optimistic view falls flat

By **STEPHEN DINAN**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Biden's insistence that the economy is strong — and certainly not in a recession — rang hollow Tuesday to voters who said the view from Pennsylvania Avenue is largely divorced from what they see in their lives.

At polling places across the country, voters were signaling worries about the direction of Washington, where Democrats have controlled the levers of political power for the past two years.

The pain of inflation ran deep. Roughly three-quarters of voters told exit pollsters that rising prices have affected them,

particularly at the grocery store. Many said their own personal financial situations had worsened over the past two years.

Mr. Biden seemed to take the brunt of the blame, garnering a 41% favorability rating in the early exit polling returns for most of the broadcast networks. A separate poll by The Associated Press and Fox News showed a similar low approval rating.

Less than a quarter of voters thought the economy is in good shape, and 7 in 10 weren't satisfied with the direction of the country, including a third in the networks' preliminary exit polling who were downright angry.

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POLITICS

Biden's regulations wallop U.S. taxpayers for \$309 billion. A3

NATION

Boston to pay Christian group \$2 million for refusing to fly flag. A7

WORLD

Zelenskyy open to talks, sets conditions for peace with Russia. A9

SPORTS

More coaches in NFL vulnerable after two lose their jobs. B12

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