

**Sage advice**

Ex-Hog Dominic Fletcher shares defensive knowledge. — Sports, 1C



**Celebrating Quincy Jones**

ASO pops concerts to celebrate influential musician. — Style, 1E

# Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

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## In the news

■ **Stephanie Bechara**, spokesperson for SeaWorld Orlando, said a 410-pound manatee that was rescued from a storm drain in Melbourne Beach is being treated at the park and is “breathing on his own, moving independently and showing interest in food.”

■ **Shawn Stines**, the 44-year-old former Letcher County, Ky., sheriff charged with killing a district judge, “has reason to believe that he/she may qualify as a defendant with a serious intellectual disability or serious mental illness as defined by Kentucky law,” according to a motion filed by his legal team.

■ **Terrell Campbell**, 29, of New York City, pleaded innocent to assault, criminal possession of a weapon and unlawful possession of noxious materials on suspicion of throwing a cup of acid in a woman’s face in 2021 outside her home in Elmton.

■ **Joe Thompson**, Minnesota’s former acting U.S. attorney, joined ex-CNN anchor Don Lemon’s team that will defend him in a federal criminal case tied to a demonstration in which protesters disrupted a church service in St. Paul after learning a pastor is an immigration field director.

■ **Oswald Perera**, senior state counsel for the Gampaha High Court in Sri Lanka, said 12 men were sentenced to death for unlawful assembly, assault and the May 2022 deaths of Amaraakeerthi Athukorale and his bodyguard.

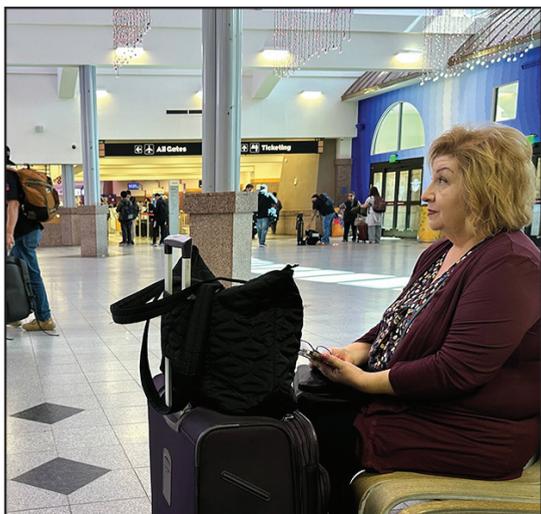
■ **J.P. Cooney**, a deputy to special counsel Jack Smith who was later fired by President Donald Trump, announced his candidacy for a U.S. House seat in Virginia, claiming in a statement that “never before have we had a complicit Congress rubber stamp a lawless president like Donald Trump.”

■ **Yvonne Wheeler**, president of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, said her organization is backing the reelection bid of Mayor Karen Bass, a Democrat whom the coalition credits as “a true champion of working people.”

■ **Shannon Mathre**, 33, of Toledo, Ohio, was charged with threatening to kill Vice President JD Vance and possessing child pornography, according to the Department of Justice.

■ **Miguel Uribe Londoño**, father of slain Colombian presidential candidate Miguel Uribe Turbay, told supporters in Bogota that though “my son is the one who should be here,” the patriarch will be running for president on behalf of the Democratic Colombia party.

## Flights at airport paused



Rosie Leal sits inside the El Paso International Airport on Wednesday in El Paso, Texas. (AP/Morgan Lee) *Article, 4A*

## US reports jobs added in January at 130,000

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS  
WASHINGTON — U.S. employers added a surprisingly strong 130,000 jobs last month, but government revisions cut 2024-25 U.S. payrolls by hundreds of thousands.

The unemployment rate fell to 4.3%, the Labor Department said Wednesday.

The report included major revisions that reduced the number of jobs created last year to just 181,000, a third of the previously reported 584,000 and the weakest since the pandemic year of 2020.

The job market has been sluggish for months even though the economy is registering solid growth.

But the January numbers were much stronger than the 75,000 economists had expected. Job gains picked up in a few industries that languished last year. The unemployment rate fell sharply for Black workers and teenagers, both demographic groups seen as bellwethers for the broader economy.

Health care continued to lead employment growth, adding 82,000 jobs, fueled by the aging demographics of the population. Social

assistance payrolls rose by 42,000 positions, and the construction industry grew by 33,000 jobs. Professional and business services, which includes many white-collar positions, added 34,000 jobs.

Manufacturing payrolls grew by 5,000 positions, following an extended streak of job losses last year. President Donald Trump’s administration has promised a resurgence in the U.S. manufacturing sector that has yet to materialize.

Meanwhile, the federal government lost 34,000 positions, continuing its rapid

See **JOBS**, Page 8A

## Protest in Argentina



A Molotov cocktail bursts into flames in front of police during a march by unions and opposition supporters against a labor reform bill proposed by President Javier Milei’s government in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Wednesday. (AP/Rodrigo Abd)

## House members push strict voter registration bill

### 6 Republicans vote to oppose president’s tariffs on Canada

LISA MASCARO AND KEVIN FREKING THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON — House Republicans rushed ahead Wednesday on legislation that would impose strict proof-of-citizenship requirements ahead of the midterm elections, a longshot Trump administration priority that faces sharp blowback in the Senate.

The bill, called the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility, or SAVE America Act, would require Americans to prove they are citizens when they register to vote, mostly through a valid U.S. passport or birth certificate. It would also require a valid photo

identification before voters can cast ballots, which some states already demand.

Also Wednesday, the House voted to slap back President Donald Trump’s tariffs on Canada, a rare if largely symbolic rebuke of the White House agenda as Republicans joined Democrats over the objections of GOP leadership.

Republicans said the voting legislation is needed to prevent fraud, but Democrats warn it will disenfranchise millions of Americans by making it harder to vote. Federal law already requires that voters in national elections be U.S. citizens, but

See **CONGRESS**, Page 6A

## State high court says Wardlaw can stay in District 94 primary

ELLA MCCARTHY ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE  
Laura “Missy” Wardlaw will remain a candidate in the Arkansas House District 94 Republican primary, the Arkansas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday.

The decision stems from a lawsuit that was filed in December against Wardlaw by her opponent, Republican

John Kyle Day, who claimed Wardlaw wasn’t eligible to run for office “because she was convicted of violating the Arkansas Hot Check Law” in 2018. Arkansas law has provisions barring people from seeking or holding certain state offices if they have been convicted of certain crimes or pleaded guilty or no contest to a “public trust

crime,” which Day cited in the lawsuit.

The crux of the case lies in the interpretation of the 2018 docket sheet and disposition.

The Arkansas Supreme Court, in a 6-1 ruling, [upheld](#) a January Pulaski County Circuit Court decision that Wardlaw’s “guilty — bond

See **WARDLAW**, Page 8A

## Democrats hopeful about Senate votes

Cotton’s rivals see chance for appeal

ALEX THOMAS ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE  
WASHINGTON — The two Democrats seeking the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Republican Tom Cotton believe if they want to win in November, they must push a message extending beyond the political binary.

Multigenerational farmer [Hallie Shoffner](#) and Lewisville Mayor [Ethan Dunbar](#)

have been traveling across Arkansas for months, building name recognition among Democratic voters ahead of the state’s March 3 primary election. Whichever candidate wins the primary will advance to the general election and likely face Cotton, a two-term incumbent with a national political profile and significant financial resources.

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## Review outlines ICE misconduct since 2020

RYAN J. FOLEY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
At least two dozen U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement employees and contractors have been charged with crimes since 2020, and their documented wrongdoing includes patterns of physical and sexual abuse, corruption and other abuses of authority, a review by The Associated Press found.

Investigators said one immigration enforcement official got away with physically assaulting his girlfriend for years. Another admitted he repeatedly sexually abused a woman in his custody. A third is charged with taking bribes to remove detention orders on people targeted for deportation.

happened before Congress voted last year to give ICE \$75 billion to hire more agents and detain more people, experts say these kinds of crimes could accelerate given the sheer volume of new employees and their empowerment to use aggressive tactics to arrest and deport people.

The Trump administration has emboldened agents by arguing they have “absolute immunity” for their actions on duty and by weakening oversight. One judge recently suggested that ICE was developing a troubling culture of lawlessness, while experts have questioned whether job applicants are getting enough vetting and training.

While most of the cases

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## Shooting investigation



Police block an area near Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, Canada, on Wednesday. (AP/The Canadian Press/Jesse Boily) *Article, 7A*

### WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK TODAY TONIGHT



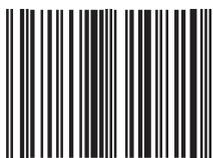
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