



# Man collects a history of handwriting

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When asked about critics possibly calling the paint job cruel, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said: “Don’t touch it.” GABY VELASQUEZ/EL PASO TIMES

# DHS painting border fence black to make it too ‘hot’

Government hasn’t revealed cost for project

Adam Powell and Lauren Villagran  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Trump administration is painting the U.S.-Mexico border fence black to make the steel so hot migrants won’t climb it.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem unveiled the plans Aug. 19 in a news conference in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, while workers ran paint rollers up the steel bollards behind her.

When asked about the possibility that critics might call the heat-inducing paint job cruel, Noem said: “Don’t touch it.”

Noem said the request to paint it black came from President Donald Trump.

“Too high to climb. Too narrow to squeeze through. And now, at the President’s direction, it will be painted

black – so hot to the touch that criminal illegal aliens won’t even try,” Noem said in a post on X.

As USA TODAY has previously reported, hundreds of miles of the 30-foot barrier at the border already pose a deadly threat to migrants who attempt to scale the fence.

Still, thousands of migrants have tried since Trump ordered it constructed during his first term. During a historic period of migration after the COVID-19 pandemic, the county hospital in El Paso, Texas, treated 326 people for injuries in 2022 – or nearly one per day.

Some of the injuries were catastrophic: Nine people died that year after falling from the fence, which is roughly the height of a three-story building. From 2000 to 2019 – before the higher barrier was erected – the hospital registered a single death resulting from a fall from the border fence.

Noem didn’t tell reporters how much the paint job will cost. She praised Trump’s war on illegal immigration, which Noem said has resulted in “the most secure border in our nation’s history.”

Illegal crossings have fallen dramatically border-wide under Trump’s crackdown.

Migrant apprehensions have plummeted to fewer than 8,000 in July, compared with more than 104,000 during the same month a year ago, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

In El Paso Sector, which includes West Texas and New Mexico, interim Chief Patrol Agent Walter Slosar said the seven-day average for apprehensions currently sits at around nine, compared with around 400 at the same time last year.

Adam Powell reports for the El Paso Times. Lauren Villagran reports for USA TODAY.

# Google settles YouTube childrens’ privacy suit

Jonathan Stempel  
REUTERS

Google will pay \$30 million to settle a lawsuit claiming it violated the privacy of children using YouTube by collecting their personal information without parental consent, and using it to send targeted ads.

A preliminary settlement of the proposed class action was filed on Aug. 18 in federal court in San Jose, California, and requires approval by U.S. Magistrate Judge Susan van Keulen.

Google denied wrongdoing in agreeing to settle.

The Alphabet unit agreed in 2019 to pay \$170 million in fines and change some practices to settle similar charges by the Federal Trade Commission and New York Attorney General Letitia James. Some critics viewed that accord as too lenient.

Google did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Lawyers for the plaintiffs did not immediately respond to similar requests.

The parents or guardians of 34 children accused Google of violating dozens of state laws by letting content providers bait children with cartoons, nursery rhymes and other content to help it collect personal information, even after the 2019 settlement.

Van Keulen dismissed claims against the content providers – including Hasbro, Mattel, Cartoon Network and DreamWorks Animation – in January, citing a lack of evidence tying them to Google’s alleged data collection.

Mediation began the next month, leading to the settlement.

The proposed class covers U.S. children under 13 who watched YouTube between July 1, 2013, and April 1, 2020.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs said there could be 35 million to 45 million class members.

They said if 1% to 2% submit claims, a rate comparable to similar earlier cases, claimants could receive \$30 to \$60 each, before deducting legal fees and costs.

The lawyers plan to seek up to \$9 million from the settlement for legal fees.

Alphabet posted net income of \$62.7 billion on revenue of \$186.7 billion in the first half of 2025.

# FBI searches home of ex-Trump official Bolton

Bart Jansen, Josh Meyer and Aysa Bagchi  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump disparaged former national security adviser’s John Bolton after the FBI searched Bolton’s Maryland home on Aug. 22.

Trump told reporters Aug. 22 that he knew little about the search. He said the Justice Department would probably brief him.

“I’m not a fan of John Bolton,” Trump told reporters at The People’s House museum near the White House. “He’s a real,

sort of a lowlife.”

Bolton served in Trump’s first term, then became a vocal critic of the administration’s foreign policy and called the president unfit to serve. Trump previously revoked Bolton’s security detail and his security clearance after clashes over policy.

FBI and local law enforcement vehicles lined the Bethesda driveway and street, according to Reuters and AFP photographs. And journalists and neighbors lined up outside Bolton’s home to watch – and livestream – the search.

The New York Post was among the outlets reporting that FBI Director Kash Patel

ordered the search as part of a national security probe.

“NO ONE is above the law,” Patel said in a social media post Aug. 22 after the search began. “@FBI agents on mission.”

The Justice Department did not immediately respond to USA TODAY’s request for comment on the investigation into Bolton. However, Attorney General Pam Bondi reposted Patel’s tweet, adding a message of her own: “America’s safety isn’t negotiable. Justice will be pursued. Always.” She didn’t clarify what she was referring to.

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