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Battle takes shape over decriminalizing prostitution

BY **MARISSA VENTRELLI**
The Gazette

Battle lines have begun to form at the Colorado state Capitol, where legislators are preparing to tackle a proposal to decriminalize prostitution statewide.

Proponents said the proposal — which would eliminate the offense of soliciting for prostitution and the prohibition against patronizing a prostitute, as well as pre-

clude local ordinances from banning “commercial sexual activity” — would result in safer and healthier outcomes for sex workers.

Opponents said it would exacerbate human trafficking in Colorado, with one critic warning the legislation could lead to the state becoming a “mecca” for sex trafficking.

If signed into law, the

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PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vehicles pass a burned car a day after the Mexican army killed the leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, known as “El Mencho,” in Guadalajara, Mexico, on Monday.



JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE

Dr. Troy E. Meink, Secretary of the Air Force, speaks at the opening day at the Warfare Symposium on Monday. The Warfare Symposium is being held at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Aurora on Feb. 23-25.

Hegseth promises to unleash defense companies during Colorado visit

BY **MARY SHINN**
The Gazette

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth visited Colorado space companies Monday and promised to cut bureaucracy within the Pentagon to ensure smaller defense businesses have a chance to compete for contracts.

“If we are going to have space dominance and

deterrence, we need to unleash every company possible,” said Hegseth, in a video filmed at True Anomaly, a company with headquarters in the Denver area. He also visited Sierra Space.

He noted that the nation’s defense can’t be reliant on five companies and or sole-source

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Pursuit of drug lord leaves over 70 dead

Violence continues in Mexico one day after ‘El Mencho’ is killed

The Associated Press

TAPALPA, MEXICO · A day after the Mexican army killed the country’s most powerful drug lord, the picturesque town where it happened was a study in contrasts.

Tourist shops in Tapalpa were open on Monday, and workers were on the job. But gunshots also rang out, and in the street was a dead man lying beside a bullet-pocked vehicle.

Meanwhile, heavily armed Mexican security forces kept up their battle with cartel gunmen following the killing that sparked a surge in violence and put the country on edge. Cartel fighters continued to block roads as smoke rose on the outskirts of the town in the state of Jalisco.

More than 70 people died in the attempt to capture Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes and the aftermath, authorities said Monday. Known as “El



A charred truck blocks a road the day after the Mexican army killed Jalisco New Generation Cartel leader Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, known as “El Mencho,” in Guadalajara, Mexico, on Monday.

Mencho,” he was the notorious leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, one of the most powerful criminal organizations in Mexico.

The body count taken by security officials included security forces, suspected cartel

members and others. Officials did not offer details, and the circumstances of most of the deaths were unclear.

Oseguera Cervantes was the boss of one of the fastest-growing criminal networks in Mexico, known for trafficking fen-

tanyl, methamphetamine and cocaine to the United States and staging brazen attacks against Mexican government officials. The organization responded to his death with widespread violence, including erecting more than 250 roadblocks across 20 states and setting fire to vehicles.

Oseguera Cervantes died after a shootout with the Mexican military. Mexican Defense Secretary Ricardo Trevilla said Monday that authorities had followed one of his romantic partners to his hideout in Tapalpa.

The cartel leader and two bodyguards fled into a wooded area where they were seriously wounded in a firefight. They were taken into custody and died on the way to Mexico City, Trevilla said.

In a different location in Jalisco, soldiers killed another high-ranking cartel member,

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