

Conn. sues Trump administration

Joins over 20 other states in attempt to end freeze on federal education funding

By Natasha Sokoloff
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD — Connecticut has joined more than 20 other states in suing to stop the Trump administration from withholding federal education funding amounting to \$6.8 billion nationwide, state leaders an-

nounced Monday. The new lawsuit follows the Trump administration's freeze on more than \$50 million in federal education funds for Connecticut, impacting almost every school district across the state and programs like summer school and after-school programs, teacher training

and English language instruction. "School districts, administrators, boards of education, teachers are now looking down the barrel of an unprecedented, draconian, catastrophic cut to funding," Attorney General William Tong said at a press conference in Hartford

on Monday afternoon. Schools and education programs across the country had expected the payouts of already-approved funds on July 1, but U.S. Department of Education officials said on June 30 that those dollars would be blocked as federal officials conduct a review to ensure such

grants align with President Trump's priorities. Tong, along with a coalition of 24 other states, is asking the court to declare the funding freeze unlawful and to block any attempts to withhold or delay the funding. Altogether, Connecticut stands to lose approximately \$53.6 million in

federal education funding for the 2025-26 school year. "This is big money," Tong said. "To take \$53 million from students, children, parents, educators, learning will do incredible damage to the state of Connecticut." The freeze includes **Funding continues on A4**

Teen killed in crash was 'bright, kindhearted'

Trumbull student was cousin of James McGrath

By Liz Hardaway and Josh LaBella
STAFF WRITERS

Mason Murren, a 15-year-old Trumbull student, brought joy to those around him, according to a campaign for his family. Murren died after suffering severe injuries in a crash Thursday night involving an electronic bicycle in Trumbull. "Mason was a bright, kindhearted boy with a sharp wit, quiet strength, and a sense of humor that brought joy to those around him," an organizer wrote in a Meal Train campaign for his family. "He was deeply loved by those who knew him and will be missed beyond words." Murren was the cousin of James McGrath, who was stabbed and killed at the age of 17 in May 2022. A jury found Raul Valle not guilty in his murder, though prosecutors said last week they intended to file lesser charges against Valle, on which the jury could not reach at trial. In the wake of McGrath's death, his parents created the Jimmy McGrath Foundation to honor his legacy by raising money for causes associated with youth wellness and violence prevention. "There are no words to explain the pain that the McGrath **Teen continues on A4**



Raul Valle listens as the jury delivers a verdict of not guilty at his murder trial in state Superior Court in Milford on July 9.

Raul Valle faces new charges

Filings come after last week's not guilty verdict in James McGrath killing

By Liz Hardaway
STAFF WRITER

MILFORD — After Raul Valle was found not guilty of murder in the death of 17-year-old James McGrath, prosecutors have filed amended charges and are pursuing those on which a jury could not reach a verdict. Senior Assistant State's Attorney Marc

R. Durso filed the amended charges July 9, the day of the verdict, charging Valle, 20, with first-degree manslaughter in McGrath's death, saying Valle "recklessly engaged in conduct which created a grave risk of death." The amended charges also include two counts of first-degree assault in the stab- **Valle continues on A4**



Arnold Gold/Hearst Connecticut Media State Rep. Josh Elliott, D-Hamden, left, shakes hands with state Sen. Saud Anwar, D-South Windsor, on Monday after announcing his campaign for governor.

Democrat Elliott running for governor

Promising to tax state's wealthy

By Alex Putterman
STAFF WRITER

HAMDEN — State Rep. Josh Elliott formally announced his campaign for governor Monday, promising to raise taxes on Connecticut residents earning more than \$1 million annually to fund services for the middle and working classes. His campaign, he said, is "about our tax structure, our economy and our future — and whether the current approach is affordable, sustainable and working for everyone." "We are not here to demonize the wealthy," the Democrat from Hamden said. "But we will talk **Elliott continues on A10**

Manos: 'I feel that I can do this'

Stratford Democrat who ran Pepin's restaurant announces mayoral bid

By Richard Chumney
STAFF WRITER

STRATFORD — Linda Manos, the vice chair of the town zoning commission and the past owner of the now-closed Pepin's restaurant, is throwing her hat in the ring to be Stratford's next mayor. Manos is seeking the Democratic Party nomination and is hoping the Town Committee will throw their support behind her upstart campaign at its endorsement meeting on Thursday.

Manos told the Connecticut Post that she is running to spur local economic growth by slashing taxes on residents and by partnering with business leaders to incentivize new construction projects. "I will do whatever I have to do to make this town better and ensure people can stay here," Manos, a lifelong Stratford resident, said. "I will stabilize the taxes and bring in economic development." Manos said the town should **Manos continues on A4**

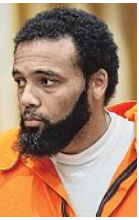


Courtesy of Linda Manos Linda Manos, vice chair of the Stratford Zoning Commission and former owner of Pepin's restaurant, is seeking the Democratic nomination for Stratford mayor.

Inmate gets 40 years in prison in death of cellmate

By Ethan Fry
STAFF WRITER

BRIDGEPORT — A Bridgeport man who pleaded guilty to strangling his cellmate at the Bridgeport Correctional Center last year while awaiting trial on robbery and sexual assault charges was sentenced Tuesday to serve 40 years in prison. Cecil Mills, 36, pleaded guilty in April before state Superior Court Judge Tracy Lee Dayton to murder in the May 26, 2024, death of 43-year-old Steven Bailey, of New Haven. He also pleaded guilty to third-degree



robbery in connection with a Feb. 24, 2024, incident for which he was being held when he killed Bailey, as well as several other incidents. A plea deal in the case called for Mills to serve 40 years in prison, followed by 10 years of special parole. According to the arrest warrant affidavit, shortly after 7 a.m. May 26, at lieutenant at the Bridgeport jail notified state po- **Inmate continues on A4**

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