

Hartford

Courant

VOLUME CXC | **MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2026** | COURANT.COM

UConn sued over blue light phones

Parent is seeking to halt planned phase out of emergency system

By Justin Muszynski
HARTFORD COURANT

The University of Connecticut has found itself embroiled in a legal battle after announcing a plan to phase out most of its blue light emergency phones on the Storrs campus. The announcement that the university planned to phase out the phones, which have been on campus since the mid 1990s to connect students to safety officials, was met by a civil action filed on Oct. 1 by a parent seeking a temporary injunction. In court filings, Billy Joe Contreras expressed concern that removing the phones could prevent a

student from accessing “critical emergency services” when a cell phone is either “unavailable, lost, not charged or unusable.” Though he did not witness it himself, Contreras said several students have reported seeing the devices already being removed, court filings said. In an interview with the Courant, Contreras pointed to recent news events like the “Cornell 7” and an incident at the University of California, Berkeley — where a student says a man chased her into her apartment complex and scaled a fence in pursuit of her — as clear indicators of why the emergency phones are still necessary.

“We don’t have that at UConn, these blue lights are our fence,” Contreras said. “And in light of all of this happening, UConn, the best school known for sending players to the WNBA, wants to now be known for stripping safety lights from the students and families across campus. “Knowing that they took pride and promoted this to the freshmen that were coming into the school, 35 days in they stripped this from students,” Contreras said. “We don’t want it to be a story if I open up the news tomorrow that one of our kids didn’t have these 911 systems at their fingertips.”



Students walk past a blue safety light and a phone pole on the UConn campus on Oct. 5. **AARON FLAUM/HARTFORD COURANT**

See **UConn** on Page A2

New partnership aims to tackle state’s healthcare shortage



Hartford HealthCare colors fill the hallway as students walk through Connecticut River Academy in East Hartford. **AARON FLAUM/HARTFORD COURANT PHOTOS**

Health system, university work together to fill jobs and offer opportunities

By Helen I. Bennett
HARTFORD COURANT

Healthcare is one of the fastest growing industries in the state of Connecticut and that means a constant need for the trained and talented people who provide that care more than 11 million times each year. “We have a need for healthcare workers that exceeds the healthcare workers coming out of school,” said Melanie Tucker, senior vice president human resources and talent strategy at Hartford HealthCare. To address that need, Hartford HealthCare and the Goodwin University System are launching a partnership, believed to be the first of its kind in Connecticut, to create the next generation of healthcare workers for the state. Through the partnership, which will begin with Connecticut River Academy, which is the middle and high school part of the East Hartford-based Goodwin University Magnet School System, students will be offered exposure to healthcare careers and a program that can help them go directly into healthcare professions, leaders of both organizations said. It will expand into various fields including nursing, respiratory, radiography, primary care and others, the leaders said. While the partnership is aimed largely at high school, it will extend through college, advanced degrees



A new sign highlighting the four pathways offered at the Connecticut River Academy in East Hartford is displayed at the school.

See **HEALTH** on Page A2

Electric Boat safe, despite Trump bluster

Hiring roars on; expected to hit 8,000 this year

By Edmund H. Mahony
HARTFORD COURANT

There were some raised eyebrows in southeast Connecticut recently when President Trump declared that “the next generation of American submarines” will be built at a shuttered steel plant on the Baltimore waterfront. “Today we’re officially launching the construction of the largest new shipyard in the United States,” the president said. “This is since World War II; there’s been nothing like what we are doing today.” Trump’s pronouncement, although characteristically bombastic, sounded like grim news for a corner of the state enjoying unprecedented economic growth as a result of a decades-long sub construction boom driven by the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics in Groton, the U.S. Navy’s principal sub builder. But, as the fine print on the Baltimore shipyard emerged, it appeared that EB’s position will be unchallenged. The Baltimore shipyard, to be built and established as a subsidiary of the west coast defense tech company Anduril Industries, will be an EB subcontractor, building submarine missile tubes and ballast tanks. Anduril hopes to have the shipyard operational by 2030 and aspires eventually to build more substantial submarine components. Trump flew to Baltimore to announce that the federal government is taking a stake of as much as 40 percent in what Anduril said will be the state-of-the art shipyard it plans to build on the site of an old Bethlehem Steel plant on Sparrow Point. Anduril builds high tech surveillance and unmanned weapon systems — including

See **HIRING** on Page A6

President sticks by tariffs even as US voters don’t

By Bernard Condon
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Maybe President Donald Trump really does believe that “tariff” is the most beautiful word in the dictionary. Despite higher prices, criticism from trade experts and displeasure among voters, Trump holds fast to his belief that imposing the highest import duties on U.S. trading partners since the Great Depression is a winner. A recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research suggests that is a big gamble with less than a month before the Nov. 3 midterms. The AP-NORC poll of 2,140 adults was conducted Sept. 24-28. Most U.S. adults disapprove of his trade policies, with more than 64% saying he has gone too far with his latest tariffs, compared with 58% in January. The Republican president’s approach to trade faces political, legal and economic challenges.

See **TARIFFS** on Page A6