

## GOP silent on Sabbag

Party leaders refuse to say if they did a criminal background check on candidate

By **SOPIA ACOSTA SILVA** and **JOE WOJTAS**  
Day Staff Writers

Republican leaders from the 139th House District refused to discuss this week whether they had conducted a criminal background check on Republican state representative candidate Brandon Sabbag or if they ignored his record, which includes two felonies.

In Tuesday's special election, Democratic Larry Pemberton defeated Sabbag and write-in candidate Mark Adams to fill the vacancy created by the death of longtime Democrat state Rep. Kevin Ryan of Montville in November.

In the days before Tuesday's election, The Day reported that Sabbag, of Ledyard, had been arrested on four occasions and pleaded guilty in 2018 to assault, strangulation and tampering with a witness. He received suspended prison terms, and his probation ended in 2020.

Because the 139th District comprises parts of Montville, Norwich and Ledyard, the Republican town committees in each community played a role in selecting Sabbag as their candidate. It is unclear if Sabbag informed the committees of his criminal record at the time.

Adams, who said he had unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination that went to Sabbag, said the Ledyard town committee knew about Sabbag's record.

"But they kept it quiet and didn't tell the other RTCs," he said.

He added that some members of the town committees were "in disbelief this was the guy they had chosen."

"The whole thing was done behind closed doors," he added.

Rob Dempsey, the chairman of the Norwich Republican Town Committee, explained Wednesday that the Ledyard Republican Town Committee offered Sabbag as a candidate.

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A suspected indigenous burial ground, center left, is seen on the shores of Old Killingly Pond on Wednesday. It was recently exposed after being submerged for hundreds of years.

SARAH GORDON/THE DAY

## History may have been revealed

Potential Native American burial ground emerges on Killingly Pond's receding shore

By **ALISON CROSS**  
Day Staff Writer

**Killingly** — A long-submerged Native American burial ground has surfaced on the shore of Old Killingly Pond as water levels continue to drop in the widely opposed drawdown of the pond dam.

After spending decades at the bottom of the pond, the burial site emerged on the Rhode Island section of the ailing waterbody. The 120-acre pond that straddles the Connecticut-Rhode Island border has lost more than 12 feet of water since the drawdown began in late October.

Beyond disrupting the local ecosystem, residents say the drawdown has left the burial ground, as well as arrowheads, tools and other Native American artifacts, exposed and vulnerable to treasure hunters who have come to scavenge along the pond's receding shoreline — even though removing artifacts from public lands is illegal at both the state and federal level.

A map dating back to the 1950s

highlights an "Indian burial ground" on a "submerged sand bar" in the pond. Once that sand bar surfaced, dam residents found a sleeping bag-shaped rock structure that appears to line up with the sunset.

Charlotte Taylor, Rhode Island's state archeologist, said Thursday she found a copy of this same map "deep in (the Rhode Island Historical

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## Proposed parking ordinance deemed almost unenforceable

By **DANIEL DRAINVILLE**  
Day Staff Writer

**Norwich** — Three members of the City Council's Public Safety Subcommittee dealt a blow to a plan that would tow vehicles parked on city streets for more than 30 days at a time, voting Wednesday not to provide a favorable recommendation

of the petition to the council over concerns of how the regulation would be enforced.

The petition, submitted to the City Council in October by landlord Sarah Connolly — who manages several properties in the city — seeks to establish an ordinance which, among other things, would impose a 30-day

limit on continuous on-street parking where there is not already a limit in place. The petition was submitted with 25 signatures, which included Connolly's signature and those of several of her tenants. Connolly on Thursday said the petition since has accumulated more than 100 signatures.

The petition said the ordinance was

modeled after a similar one in place in Hartford.

Since being submitted, the petition has been under discussion by both the Public Parking Commission and the subcommittee, the latter of which had requested opinions from the city's

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SARAH GORDON/THE DAY

Fifth-grade teacher Francesca Fenner works with students in her new classroom Thursday in the newly-completed addition at the Mile Creek School in Old Lyme.

## Lyme/Old Lyme students enter new classrooms

By **JACK LAKOWSKY**  
Day Staff Writer

**Old Lyme** — Students at Mile Creek Elementary School got a rare treat this year.

They were the first to learn in six brand new classrooms.

On Thursday, students in Mile Creek teacher Francesca Fenner's fifth grade classroom had rave reviews of the new space. The rooms are bigger, with larger cubbies and wide, long windows through which, observed one student, you can see the sun set. Another said he was nervous entering the 8,200 square-foot addition, learning where everything is and finding the groove of an unfamiliar daily route.

Fenner said there's much more room for supplies and class activities. Students first stepped foot in the new

classrooms when they returned from Christmas break.

The six classrooms are part of the \$57.5 million Lyme/Old Lyme PK-8 Facilities Project, an effort to both expand Mile Creek and completely replace the aged HVAC systems at four of the Lyme/Old Lyme district's schools.

The project also added space for Mile Creek teachers and staff, Principal Kelly Enoch said. There's a new conference room, new meeting spaces and two new adult bathrooms.

It also allowed teachers who pushed carts of supplies between classrooms to get permanent homes for those supplies. The new part of the building enclosed a small piece of the campus, creating a new courtyard fit for outdoor learning in a gazebo-like structure that was built by students from Vinal

Technical High School in Middletown.

Visitors to Mile Creek, and any of the other district schools, will go through the building's upgraded security vestibule, with a security door and ID check before entering the main building.

Superintendent of Schools Ian Neviasser recently said crews are in the final phases of the multimillion-dollar project.

"There's some things that can't be done in winter, but all the equipment is in," Neviasser said. "It's being tested and balanced as we speak."

The new heating and air conditioning system will "make a tremendous difference in the activities of students and staff," with "more fresh air creating

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### WEATHER

Today, partly to mostly sunny, breezy and chilly. High 35. Saturday, early light snow changing to light rain. High 40.

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### APP'S BLUNT LIFE CHECK ADDS TO THE LONELINESS CRISIS IN CHINA

**Beijing** — In China, the names of things are often either ornately poetic or jarringly direct. A new, widely popular app among young Chinese people is definitively the latter.

It's called, simply, "Are You Dead?" In a vast country whose young people are increasingly on the move, the new, one-button app — which has taken the country by digital storm this month — is essentially exactly what it says it is. People who live alone in far-off cities and may be at risk can push an outsized green circle on their phone screens and send proof of life over the network to a friend or loved one. The cost: 8 yuan (about \$1.10).

Developed by three young people in their 20s, "Are You Dead?" became the most downloaded paid app on the Apple App Store in China last week, according to media reports.

— Associated Press

### REP: GREENLAND INVASION MAY TRIGGER IMPEACHMENT

Republican Rep. Don Bacon indicated there could be bipartisan support to impeach President Donald Trump for a third time if he invades Greenland.

Days after the Trump administration attacked Venezuela, the president began expressing renewed interest in acquiring Greenland. Trump insisted Wednesday on social media that any situation short of giving U.S. control of Greenland "is unacceptable."

Bacon, who represents Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District, called that suggestion unreasonable.

"If he went through with the threats, I think it would be the end of his presidency," Bacon told the Omaha World-News in an interview published Thursday.

— New York Daily News

### Keeping watch



EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP PHOTO

Military vessel HDMS Knud Rasmussen of the Royal Danish Navy patrols near Nuuk, Greenland, on Thursday. See story, **A2**.



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