

Lamont moves \$5M to protect homeless

‘Time of need’ despite federal funding uncertainty

By Ken Dixon
STAFF WRITER

NEW HAVEN — With mixed messages from Washington on its commitment to social services, Gov. Ned Lamont announced Monday he will transfer more than \$5 million from the state’s newly created contingency fund to support a variety of agencies that help the

state’s estimated 1,300 people who are homeless. “I think we have to deal with the most mean-spirited federal administration I’ve had to deal with in all my many years,” Lamont said during a morning news conference with U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker and social service advocates at Liberty Community Services.

“We’ve got their backs,” Lamont said of the state’s homeless population. “We’re stepping up every day, trying to take care of people in this time of need.” Funding crises such as recent reductions in federal food assistance and health insurance subsidies are “the new norm,” he said. The additional funding

for homelessness supports will carry as many as 77 programs throughout the state into June, with some due to lose funding in January. Among the affected programs are the state’s domestic violence shelters, the closure of which could result in women and children moving back to their former abusive homes, **Funds continues on A7**



Ken Dixon/Hearst Connecticut Media
In New Haven on Monday morning, Gov. Ned Lamont announces \$5.2 million in emergency state funding will be used to keep homeless programs in operation.



Photos by Ned Gerard/Hearst Connecticut Media
Rabbi Yehuda Kantor from Chabad of Westport speaks during a menorah lighting ceremony in front of the Pequot Library, in Fairfield, on Monday.

‘The pain and the angst is just really elevated’

State rabbi who knew victim in Sydney shooting hosts Fairfield menorah lighting

By Tyler Fedor
STAFF WRITER

FAIRFIELD — Leib Kantor said he still hasn’t been able to fully process the fact that two gunmen attacked a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach in Sydney, the area where he was born. “The pain and the angst is just really very elevated,” Kantor said. Kantor, also the Rabbi



People gather for the menorah lighting ceremony.

Yehudah of Chabad Lubavitch of Westport, knew one of the victims of the shooting, Eli Schlanger, who according to the Associated Press was the assistant rabbi at Chabad of Bondi and an organizer of the event where at least 15 people died in the Dec. 14 shooting. “Before anyone kicked off the Hanukkah celebrations anywhere in the world, this atrocity hit the news, and **Menorah continues on A7**

Trump may relax cannabis status

Impact unclear on CT’s mature industry

By Jordan Nathaniel Fenster
STAFF WRITER

Depending on who you ask, President Donald Trump might make cannabis effectively legal today; or just before Christmas; or after Jan. 1; or never. Erin Gorman Kirk, Connecticut’s official cannabis ombudsman and the only person to hold the title nationally, has been in touch with the White House on the issue, she said Monday morning, and believes it could happen anytime. “He loves to be the savior,” Kirk **Cannabis continues on A4**

Sun plan two games in Hartford amid talks to move out of state



Dan Haar
COMMENTARY
Call it a consolation prize for Hartford. The Connecticut Sun are preparing to play two regular-season games at PeoplesBank Arena in the capital city in 2026 even as the WNBA team’s owner, the Mohegan Tribe, **Sun continues on A4**

Tributes pour in for late CT music photographer Mike Thut

By Andrew DaRosa
STAFF WRITER

Mike Thut, a fixture in the local Connecticut music scene for his concert photography, died on Saturday after a battle with cancer. He was 69.

From Jerry Garcia to Jimmy Cliff, Thut’s work was unmistakable — capturing many of the giants in the live music landscape. He was the one-time owner of Terrapin Studio and best known around the jam band community for his pho-

tography, including covering the Gathering of the Vibes festival in Bridgeport. Thut was also the original house photographer for the Fairfield Theatre Company, where he photographed musicians that passed through the Sanford Street mu-

sic venue since 2006. “To say he was family would be an understatement. His presence, generosity and eye for the moment helped shape who we are,” the venue said in a statement on Facebook. “We are deeply grateful for the years, the

memories and the legacy he leaves behind. Our hearts are with his family, friends and everyone who was lucky enough to know him.” News of his passing reverberated throughout the local music **Thut continues on A4**

Advice/puzzlesB8
BusinessA8
Classified.....B5

ComicsB9
ObituariesA6
OpinionA9

Public noticesB5
Sports.....B1-4
Television.....B7



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Page A10

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18

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