

ELECTION 2026

Lamont still leads in latest poll

But Fazio is closing the gap

With the race for governor heating up amid charges and countercharges, Gov. Ned Lamont's lead over state Sen. Ryan Fazio has narrowed in the last month, a Sacred Heart University/WFSB/CT Insider poll shows.

Lamont, the Democratic incumbent seeking a third, four-year term, leads Fazio, his Republican challenger, by 14 percentage points, 48% to 34%, in a poll of 1,000 vot-

ers.

That compares with a 50% to 29% margin in the same poll released Aug. 3. At the time, Lamont faced an Aug. 11 primary against Rep. Josh Elliott, D-Hamden, which the governor won handily.

Among likely voters, the gap expanded to 17 percentage points, 54% to 36% in favor of Lamont. That is the same as the gap among likely voters that the Aug. 3 poll showed.



Dan Haar

COMMENTARY

over the summer as voters' attention turned toward the race. With \$18 million in public financing, Fazio has ramped up spending especially on video ads, and has launched a flurry of an-

It has been widely believed that Fazio, 36, would narrow the gap between himself and 72-year-old Lamont

nouncements on policy and politics along with spots designed to introduce himself as a likable and effective fellow.

That taxpayer-financed outlay, larger than in past races, means money is less of a factor in 2026. Still, the self-financing Lamont, who spent about \$25 million in each of his previous races against Republican Bob Stefanowski, could spend \$30 million this year, some observers believe. He shelled out more than \$9 million in the pri-

Haar continues on A4



Connecticut Public Broadcasting

Connecticut gubernatorial candidate Ryan Fazio and Gov. Ned Lamont in Harwinton on July 7, to observe work to clear trees and restore power from a weekend storm.



Alec Pelletier and his siblings, Kalyan and Arya Pelletier.

Contributed by Dita Bhargava

'It's a disease; it's not necessarily their fault'

Conn. teen honors brother lost to fentanyl by fighting for overdose-prevention centers

By Cris Villalonga-Vivoni
STAFF WRITER

Visiting her older brother at an addiction treatment center was, on the whole, pretty fun for 9-year-old Arya Pelletier.

They would play games, get food, go mini golfing and catch up on all the sibling shenanigans, despite their nearly 16-year age gap.

In those moments of smiles and laughter, it was hard to tell that her brother, Alec, had struggled with an opioid addiction for over a decade, Pelletier said.

"If anything, he was like someone else's shoulder to lean on if you're going through a bad time," Pelletier said. "You would think that someone who's going through such a tough time would

really need someone else's shoulders, but it almost felt the opposite way."

In 2018, Alec died of a fentanyl overdose about three weeks after he was discharged from a treatment center. It was his 26th birthday.

Pelletier, now a junior at Greenwich Academy, educates others, raises awareness, and advocates for harm-re-

duction policies in her brother's name. She has testified before the state legislature, visited an overdose prevention center in Canada and is a harm reduction intern at the Cornell Health Policy Center at Cornell University.

Her mother, Dita Bhargava, has also spent years telling Alec's story and advocating for resources she believes

Centers continues on A4

Heavy rains cause flooded roads more strife Sunday morning

By Jessica Bravo
STAFF WRITER

It was a soggy morning in Connecticut Sunday, as heavy rains pummeled much of the state at rates of 1 to 2 inches per hour.

Numerous counties across Connecticut were under flash flood warning or flood watch for much of Sunday morning amid a wet start to the day. However, the National Weather Service reported in late morning that much of the heavy rains had ended, the flash flood warning was set to expire at 11:30 a.m.

Before then, the weather service

Flooding continues on A6

Connecticut Children's ends trans youth care

Agreed to 10-year deal with Trump, DOJ

By Cris Villalonga-Vivoni
STAFF WRITER

Over a year after winding down its care program for transgender youth, Connecticut Children's Medical Center has agreed to end the program for the next decade as part of the formal agreement with the Trump administration announced in August.

The settlement also states that Connecticut Children's will pay the federal government \$60,000 and allocate \$500,000 for patients

Care continues on A6

What Conn. residents should know about the upcoming flu season

By Jordan Nathaniel Fenster
STAFF WRITER

Connecticut is gearing up for another flu season after last year's produced more than 41,000 reported cases, nearly 3,700 hospitalizations and 190 deaths, with the vast majority of deaths occurring among older residents.

This year's flu vaccine has been updated after a strain of H3N2 that emerged last winter was a poor match for the previous vaccine, medical officials said. Connecticut is also rolling out a new program aimed at making flu shots available to uninsured and underinsured adults.

But exactly what this flu sea-

son will look like remains difficult to predict.

"We don't know exactly what this respiratory virus season will bring, but we do know we have tools that work," state Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani said in a statement.

Last winter, the biggest surprise was the emergence of H3N2 subclade K, an altered strain that became dominant and was not a good match for the vaccine being used at the time, said Dr. Jo-Anne Passalacqua, an infectious disease specialist with Hartford Health-Care and in private practice in Fairfield.

"We had a very tough season in '25-'26," Passalacqua said.

The state Department of Public Health's year-end surveillance dashboard shows 41,057 influenza cases during the 2025-26 season, along with 3,703 hospitalizations and 190 influenza-associated deaths.

Older residents bore much of the burden. There were 106 deaths among people 80 and older and another 48 among people ages 70 to 79. Together, those two groups accounted for about 81% of the state's flu deaths.

The hospitalization numbers showed a similar pattern, with older adults accounting for the largest share of patients.

The season's biggest wave

Flu continues on A6



Jim Shannon/Hearst Connecticut Media

Erika Emenyonu, a Community Health Worker for the New Haven Department of Public Health, right, presents paperwork to Atalie Carroll during a flu clinic Thursday Oct. 2, 2025, at the Ives Library in New Haven.

