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Democracy Dies in Darkness

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 • \$4

Labor secretary will vacate position

Chavez-DeRemer's departure comes amid allegations of misconduct

BY LAUREN KAORI GURLEY AND MERYL KORNFELD

Lori Chavez-DeRemer, President Donald Trump's labor secretary, is resigning from her position amid professional misconduct allegations, becoming the third Cabinet member to depart during Trump's second term.

White House communications director Steven Cheung posted on X on Monday that Chavez-DeRemer would leave the Cabinet to take a position in the private sector, though he did not say where she was going. Cheung said the deputy labor secretary, Keith Sonderling, would become the acting head of the agency.

Accusations that Chavez-DeRemer had engaged in misconduct, including personal travel during taxpayer-funded trips, surfaced in a complaint filed with the Labor Department's inspector general that was first reported by the New York Post. The complaint led to the suspension of several top aides and surfaced sexual misconduct allegations against Chavez-DeRemer's husband, Shawn DeRemer.

Chavez-DeRemer, in her own post, wrote on X: "It has been an honor and a privilege to serve in this historic Administration and work for the greatest President of my lifetime." She said that she is "looking forward to what the future has in store as I depart for the private sector."

The Labor Department referred The Post to Chavez-DeRemer's post on X. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Chavez-DeRemer's resignation follows a New York Times report from last week that she and her top aides, as well as her father and husband, sent personal messages to young staffers, which has been under investigation by Labor Department Inspector General Anthony D'Esposito. The outlet also reported that Chavez-DeRemer and her aide asked employees to bring them wine during work trips.

D'Esposito told his employees
SEE LABOR ON A2



MARKO DJURICA/REUTERS

A woman walks past damaged buildings Monday in the southern suburbs of Beirut during the 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel.

Pakistan emerges as unlikely peacemaker in war

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN — The country hosting talks to end the Iran war was not a likely mediator. Pakistan does not formally recognize Israel, one of the key countries involved. It became a nuclear power in secret, as the U.S. and Israel have accused Iran of seeking to do. And it did not start off on the right foot with President Donald Trump, who in his first term said Pakistan had given Washington "nothing but lies and deceit."

But over the past year, a focused campaign to win Trump's favor appears to have paid off. For months, Pakistan's leaders wooed the Trump administration with flashy deals and public praise. "We read him right," said Mushahid Hussain Syed, the former chairman of the Pakistani Senate's Defense Committee. He

Nuclear-armed power that doesn't recognize Israel won Trump's trust

said Pakistan recognized Trump's transactional approach to diplomacy early. "We delivered, and we delivered big time," Syed said. "We gave him the three C's: crypto, critical minerals and counterterrorism."

With peace talks between the United States and Iran set to return to Islamabad this week, another round of high-profile mediation offers Pakistan the opportunity to draw closer to Trump.

Early in Trump's second term, Pakistan tracked down one of the people behind the deadly attack on U.S. service members in Kabul

as U.S. forces were withdrawing from Afghanistan in August 2021. Months later, Pakistan's government signed a critical minerals deal with the U.S. And this year, the ministry of finance signed a deal with a firm connected to the Trump family's crypto company.

Other Pakistani outreach to the Trump administration includes
SEE PAKISTAN ON A12

Unclear message: President's comments on Iran contradict. A9

Beirut strikes: Israel hit several targets without giving warning. A13

Higher fuel costs could push needle away from Republicans in midterms

BY RILEY BEGGIN

VALLEY COTTAGE, N.Y. — At 5 a.m., Marvel Produce's trucks load up with stacks of fresh mangoes, cucumbers, cauliflower and tomatoes and begin their deliveries, passing by a gas station advertising diesel for \$6.60 a gallon.

The hike since the Iran war began means Marvel is spending

over 25 percent more to fuel its 17 delivery trucks. The produce the company is buying from all over the country costs more, too. Diesel costs have forced the small wholesaler to increase what it charges restaurants, caterers and hotels across the tristate area.

"I would say this is the worst year in my career, besides covid and 2008," said Mike Scicchitano,

a 30-year veteran of the industry who co-owns Marvel Produce. He doesn't consider himself political and stresses that his views are his own, but he said the war and ensuing fuel costs have exacerbated his dismal view of Washington.

Dari Sonera-Scicchitano, who is Mike's wife and also a co-owner, said she is considering voting in the midterm elections for the first

time because "we need change," starting with ending the war and bringing fuel prices down.

The Scicchitanos are among millions of businesses and households across America feeling pinched by rising gasoline prices, now averaging \$4.05 a gallon nationwide, since President Donald Trump launched strikes against Iran. A crucial shipping

path for oil has been mostly closed for seven weeks, and it's unclear when it might fully reopen. These higher costs are adding to voters' concerns about affordability, weighing on Republicans running in competitive U.S. House districts that could determine control of the chamber next year.
SEE GAS PRICES ON A22

Louisiana gunman masked his rage before rampage

BY MOLLY HENNESSY-FISKE, DANIEL WU, DANIELLE PAQUETTE AND CHRIS HACKER

SHREVEPORT, LA. — Two days before killing eight children — most of them his own — in a rampage that shocked the country, Shamar Elkins shared on Facebook what looked like a sweet moment.

"Took my oldest on a lil 1 on 1 date," he captioned a photo of his daughter biting into a sandwich.

The dotting post gave no clue that the 31-year-old Louisiana Army National Guard veteran was on the brink of a mass shooting early Sunday that authorities described as an "execution style" attack. The violence took the lives of the children ages 3 to 11 and left two women, their mothers, with multiple bullet wounds in the hospital. It was the deadliest mass shooting in America this year. Elkins did not spare his oldest child.

He made no social media mention of his pending divorce, which he'd told relatives had been trou-

SEE LOUISIANA ON A8



BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES

Baldhead Winter places balloons and stuffed animals at the entrance of the home where eight children were killed and two women were wounded during a domestic violence incident.

Fuentes's rise to be a prophet, profiteer of online hate speech

Hundreds of thousands of dollars from donors fuel extremist's empire

BY DREW HARWELL AND JEREMY B. MERRILL

Kristine Kasubienski's donation appeared on viewers' screens four hours into the live stream of Nick Fuentes, the far-right influencer she often called her second son.

"I pray DAILY for your safety," she wrote one night last August, sending Fuentes a \$50 digital gift. "I would become a Charles Bronson vigilante to anyone who harmed you. Keep up the fight."

For seven years, Kasubienski had binged Fuentes's near-nightly monologues from her home in Lorain, Ohio, watching as the college student from suburban Illinois grew into one of the most prominent torchbearers for an in-

creasingly radicalized online right.

The 57-year-old Air Force veteran believed Fuentes's furious talk about the dangers of a diversifying America and worried that it placed him in danger. On many nights, she sent paid messages, known as "superchats," to tell him about her own moments of personal crisis and to encourage him, dipping into the little money she made serving chicken paprikash on a Polish food truck.

She doubted Fuentes was making much money — no more than \$50,000 a year, said her son, Stephen Ryan, who watched Fuentes together with his mom on a 65-inch TV screen. "We were barely making it, but we wanted to help him because we saw what he was struggling with," Ryan said in an interview.

But by the time of her prayer message, Fuentes was already generating a sizable income. Since the start of last year through the end of last month, roughly 11,000
SEE FUENTES ON A16

IN THE NEWS

Justices write to kids Supreme Court justices turn children's books into big paydays, capitalizing on their growing status as political celebrities in a deeply divided country. A4

Redistricting vote Virginians decide today whether to add as many as four Democratic-leaning seats to the U.S. House. B12

THE NATION
FBI boss Kash Patel sued the Atlantic for \$250 million, alleging defamation. A2
A planned fight between youths in North Carolina resulted in two deaths. A8

THE WORLD
Britain's prime minister faced calls to resign over Jeffrey Epstein revelations. A10
Kremlin-friendly Ruman Radev won a resounding election victory in Bulgaria. A11

THE ECONOMY
Tim Cook, who succeeded Apple co-founder Steve Jobs as the company's CEO, will step down in September and become executive chairman of the tech giant's board. A14
Female drinkers and distillers changed the whiskey industry. A15

STYLE
A Lily Allen concert that lasted less than an hour drew some critics, but many fans are happy to get home early. B1

SPORTS
The Capitals will give Alex Ovechkin all the time he needs to make his call on retirement. B7

THE REGION
Risks are high for young people who age out of the foster system without an adult to guide them. B12
Amazon continues to fall short of annual hiring targets at its second headquarters in Northern Virginia despite its promises. B12

BUSINESS NEWS.....A14
COMICS.....B4
OBITUARIES.....B15
OPINION PAGES.....A19
TELEVISION.....B6
WORLD NEWS.....A10

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