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## VIRGINIA

# Democrat tax pitches undercut Spanberger affordability pledge

## Republicans question plans for gyms, dog care

By SETH McLAUGHLIN

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Virginia Republicans are questioning whether their Democratic counterparts have a case of political amnesia after rolling out a long list of proposed tax increases that threaten to undercut Gov. Abigail Spanberger's affordability message.

Democratic lawmakers in Richmond have proposed raising revenue through higher taxes

on millionaires and investment income, as well as new levies on retail delivery services in Northern Virginia, gym memberships, guns and even dog care.

"Folks are suffering out there, whether it is energy bills, whether it is grocery bills, everything is going up, and to put new taxes on them, I think, is just the wrong way to approach affordability," House Minority Leader Terry Kilgore recently told reporters.

Delegate Hillary Pugh Kent, a fellow Republican, said the disconnect is obvious. "What they say and what we actually see in terms of legislation do not correlate," she said.

President Trump has weighed in, saying many people will leave Virginia, though he incorrectly claimed Ms. Spanberger had already signed a series of new tax bills.

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**IN HER WORDS:** Gov. Abigail Spanberger campaigned last year on making life more affordable for Virginians.

## JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

# Antifa activist charged with threats to ICE

## Social media messages urge followers to 'stop' officers

By STEPHEN DINAN

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Justice Department announced charges Thursday against a self-described "antifa" agitator in Minnesota, accusing him of encouraging the killings of federal officers carrying out President Trump's deportation surge.

Kyle Wagner called for "armed and ready" resistance to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in social media posts to Facebook and Instagram.

Prosecutors said he crossed the line into spurring violence when, in an expletive-laden message, he urged followers to get "guns" and "stop these" people.

He also stands accused of doxing, or collecting and releasing personal information on opponents to encourage their harassment.

In one of his messages that prosecutors highlighted, he said, "We want to know who they are. We will identify every single one of them and we will prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law. If it has to be done at the barrel of a gun, then let us have a little [expletive] fun."

Mr. Wagner, who posted on Instagram as *kaos.follows*, cuts a distinctive figure with a bald head and extensive tattoos, including a bold red RESISTANCE tattoo across his chest and dark tattoos on his cheek.

"I'm antifa," he says as he begins some of his videos, showing off a neck tattoo featuring the "three arrows" design popular among antifa adherents.

He was charged in federal court in Michigan, where authorities say his doxing victim lives.

Mr. Wagner was arrested Thursday morning in Minnesota, where he had his first court appearance in the afternoon. He was assigned a public defender.

The Homeland Security Department reported a sharp increase in assaults and threats against personnel as it moves to



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**ARRESTED:** Kyle Wagner, 37, called for "armed and ready" resistance to immigration enforcement in Minnesota.

## CONGRESS

# Republicans nix 10-point 'fantasyland' demands

By LINDSEY MCPHERSON  
AND STEPHEN DINAN

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Republicans on Thursday resoundingly rejected Democrats' new proposals to reel in ICE, saying the 10-point list of reforms, including barring arrests near schools and courts and giving localities a veto over operations, was the stuff of "fantasyland."

Democratic leaders have said they will not pass any new spending bill for the Homeland Security Department unless it takes major steps to shackle President Trump's mass deportation effort. Congress faces a Feb. 13 deadline to approve a new funding deal for the department.

Democrats' plan, released late Wednesday, wouldn't abolish U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, but it would

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## CANADA

# Alberta separatists meet with U.S. team

## Official slams talks as 'treason'

By JEFF MORDOCK  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Project backs an independence referendum in Alberta. The referendum, which has yet to be called, would make Canada's fourth-largest province an independent nation. A group allied with the project, Stay Free Alberta, is trying to gather the 177,000 signatures necessary for a referendum. If successful, the vote could be scheduled from late 2026 to May 2027.

Alberta Prosperity Project CEO Mitch Sylvestre told The Washington Times that the meetings with U.S. officials have

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## MIDDLE EAST

# U.S.-Iran talks aim to buy time, not peace

By JACOB WIRTSCHAFTER  
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

ISTANBUL | Iran's rejection of Turkey as a venue for nuclear talks with the United States this week exposed a hard truth about Middle East diplomacy: No one in the region is expecting a breakthrough.

What Gulf states want is time. Tehran insisted that negotiations be moved from Turkey to Oman and restricted to uranium enrichment alone. Turkey had

## Venue shifts to Oman with no expectation of breakthrough

offered to host broader regional discussions. The dispute was resolved Wednesday when both sides confirmed that talks would begin Friday in Muscat, Oman's capital, but only after a quiet diplomatic push by Arab and Gulf leaders urging Washington not to walk away.

Multiple Arab and Muslim

postseason matchups, allowing just 8.3 points per game.

The Seahawks, in the midst of their own resurgence, present a more difficult opposition. Second-year coach Mike McDonald leads a group that earned the top seed in the NFC after

governments pressed the Trump administration to accept Iran's request. They warned that canceling the talks could accelerate escalation and destabilize already fragile Gulf security, said U.S. and regional officials cited by Reuters, Axios and Gulf media.

Interviews with diplomats and analysts across three Gulf

capitals suggest regional powers are not betting on a resolution. They are trying to prevent miscalculation long enough for containment strategies to hold.

"From a strict risk-analysis perspective, these talks are viewed as volatility management rather than risk reduction," said Mostafa Ahmed, a researcher at Al Habtoor Research in Dubai who specializes in Gulf security frameworks. "True risk reduction

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# Mamdani on hot seat after revoking orders on antisemitism. A4

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