



HIGH 58, LOW 40

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026

PRICES MAY VARY OUTSIDE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AREA



washingtontimes.com \$1.50



HISTORIC: Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor is the first senior royal family member since King Charles I in 1647 to be arrested on a criminal charge.

BRITAIN

By MIKE GLENN
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

British police on Thursday arrested Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, the former Prince Andrew, on charges of misconduct in public office. The arrest was linked to allegations that he shared confidential government information with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein while serving as a British trade envoy.

Although the investigation has been deeply intertwined with his relationship with the disgraced financier, the legal basis for the arrest is distinct from the sexual abuse allegations that have

Royal family rocked by scandal, claims of leaking government intelligence

dogged Mr. Mountbatten-Windsor for years.

Mr. Mountbatten-Windsor was taken into custody on his 66th birthday at the British royal family's Sandringham estate, where he recently moved from his longtime home in Windsor. It was the first arrest of a senior member of the British royal family in modern history. He was later released from custody while the investigation continues, British

police said.

King Charles III released a statement saying he had learned "with the deepest concern" the news about his younger brother's arrest.

"What now follows is the full, fair, and proper process by which this issue is investigated in the appropriate manner and by the appropriate authorities. In this, as I have said before, they have our full and wholehearted support and

cooperation," he said. "Let me state clearly: the law must take its course."

Mr. Mountbatten-Windsor was arrested after years of pressure over his friendship with Mr. Epstein, whose August 2019 death while in police custody was ruled a suicide by hanging. The sex scandal involving Epstein and his wide-ranging circle of rich and powerful friends centers on the accusations of Virginia Giuffre, who accused him of trafficking her to the former prince and others when she was 17.

Mr. Mountbatten-Windsor has denied

» see ARREST | A4

WHITE HOUSE

Trump's ballroom wins praise of architects

Public comments heavily negative

By SUSAN FERRECHIO AND MARY McCUE BELL

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Architects are lauding President Trump's plans for a big, beautiful ballroom, even as the president's opponents and the public heap criticism on the project.

The massive addition, which will add 89,000 square feet of space to the White House, including office space and the ballroom, won high praise and unanimous approval Thursday from the Commission of Fine Arts, one of two panels that oversee renovations of historic buildings in Washington.

Mr. Trump ordered construction of the ballroom to end the need for temporary outdoor tents that have been used for decades to host large gala events at the White House.

Ahead of the vote, Commission Secretary Thomas Luebke told the panel that he had been swamped with thousands of messages from the public weighing in on the addition.

The project required tearing down the aging East Wing, which sparked public backlash and a lawsuit.

"The vast, vast majority is negative, in general," Mr. Luebke said of the more than 2,000 messages sent to the commission about the project.

The overwhelming public opposition is in stark contrast with accolades from design experts, among them Commission Chairman Rodney Mims Cook Jr.

"Our sitting president has actually designed a very beautiful structure," Mr. Cook said before the voting. "The

» see BALLROOM | A7



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

'INCREDIBLE FEELING' The American women's ice hockey team celebrated a gold medal win over Canada in overtime Thursday at the Olympic Games in Milan, closing another thrilling chapter in one of sports' most heated rivalries. Story, B8.

OLYMPICS

Bobsled team makes room for crossover athletes of all kinds

By LIAM GRIFFIN

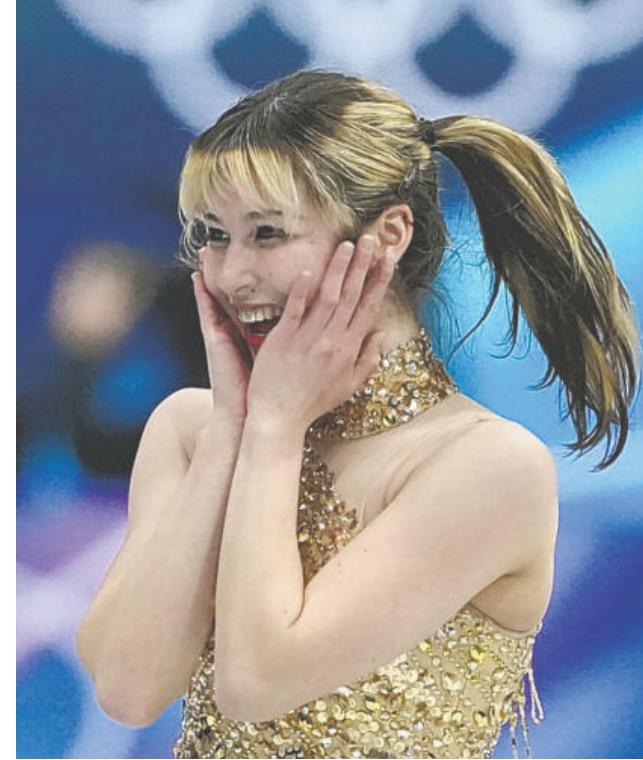
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

They didn't dream of becoming Olympic bobsledders, but when their careers in football, softball, track and swimming fizzled to an end, the members of the U.S. bobsled team found their new passion: careening down an icy track at breakneck speeds.

Team USA now features an array of athletes from diverse backgrounds working toward a common goal at the Winter Olympics in Italy: racing downhill faster than anyone in the world.

The team's coaching staff wasn't originally impressed by a message from Carsten Vissering when the former All-American swimmer showed an interest in moving from the pool to the racetrack. Sprinters turned bobsledders made sense: If you're fast on land, then you'll be fast on the ice.

» see OLYMPICS | A5



COMEBACK KID: Alysa Liu of California performed a near-flawless free skate Thursday to deliver the U.S. its first women's figure skating Olympic gold medal in 24 years.

» see PEACE | A5

CONGRESS

Wave of retirements triggers biggest Capitol Hill turnover in 30 years

By LINDSEY MCPHERSON

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

One in 10 lawmakers will leave Congress at the end of the year, the most retirements in more than three decades.

To date, 61 members of Congress, 52 from the House and nine from the Senate, have announced plans to retire at the end of the term or are leaving to run for other offices.

The number could rise in the coming months, but it is already the highest since the 1990s and the second-largest in roughly a century, according to data compiled by the Brookings Institution

that dates back to 1930.

The top year for congressional retirements was 1992, when 65 House members and seven senators left or ran for other offices. Those 72 voluntary departures — many more lost reelection campaigns that year — were the result of various factors, including redistricting changes, lawmakers caught up in a House check-bouncing scandal and a wave of anti-incumbent sentiment.

The 60 lawmakers leaving this year do not include another three senators whose terms are not up but are running

» see RETIRE | A4



BUDGET

Congress quietly kills big spending cut blitz hailed by Trump, Musk

By STEPHEN DINAN

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Trump and his DOGES swung for the fences last year in calling for big spending cuts, but with Congress now finished with most of the fiscal 2026 budget bills, it has become clear he barely got the ball in play.

Lawmakers took Mr. Trump's proposals big and small — such as slashing the Education Department, eliminating the Ryan White AIDS program and nixing the Council on Homelessness — and juked them, keeping taxpayer money flowing nearly across the board.

The Washington Times sampled 30 of the programs Mr. Trump proposed slashing or eliminating outright in his 2026 budget. Only one of the 30 was eliminated. Of the remaining 29, just two were cut by more than half of their previous funding levels.

The result is a government that continued to spend largely on autopilot, despite Mr. Trump's high hopes and tough talk.

"Congress largely rejected the discretionary spending cuts President Trump proposed in 2025," said Dominik Lett,

» see SPENDING | A4

POLITICS

New policy allows for refugees to be arrested again after a year. A3

INDEX Commentary B1 | Comics B6 | Dear Abby A9 | Editorials B2 | Horoscope A9 | Letters B2 | Nation A6 | Politics A3 | Puzzles B6 | Region A10 | Sports B8 | World A8

NATION

Feds create incentive for apprenticeships for high school grads. A6

America's Newspaper

WORLD

S. Korea's ex-president gets life sentence for martial law order. A8

REGION

Bowser seeks federal assistance to help clean sewage spill. A10

VOLUME 44, NUMBER 37



7 02803 87040 7



washingtontimes.com