

## CONGRESS

## One year later, voters still not sold on tax law

### Democrats bash Big Beautiful Bill

By Tom Howell Jr.  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act turned 1 year old Saturday, and Republicans are heavily promoting the tax benefits it has delivered to voters in this tough midterm election year.

Mr. Trump points to "no tax on tips" and "no tax on overtime" as major boons for his working-class base. Meanwhile, Senate Republicans have held more than 100 events from Alaska to Florida since the start of the year to celebrate the legislation.

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, Louisiana Republican, has called the legislation "one of the most historic bills we've seen in our lifetime."

In a statement marking the anniversary, House Speaker Mike Johnson, Louisiana Republican, said: "American paychecks are bigger, their taxes are permanently lower, and the border is secure. If congressional Democrats — who unanimously voted against this historic legislation and fought to obstruct its implementation — had their way, American citizens would have faced a \$5 trillion tax increase, the largest in American history."

Mr. Johnson said the One Big Beautiful Bill Act demonstrates that the Republican Party is "the only one that fights for hardworking families, and we plan to remind voters of that simple fact every day until the midterms in November."

Democrats, meanwhile, say the landmark legislation robs the poor to help the rich.

"With their signature achievement, Republicans have made life harder for the working class, while the rich get even richer. And they're even proud of this," said House Democratic Caucus Chairman Pete Aguilar of California.

Mr. Aguilar continued: "Now, for America 250, Republicans are celebrating

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## NATO

## Trump to press allies on defense budgets



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**OPTICS:** As Ankara, Turkey, prepares to host world leaders this week, police are trying to quell protests. Upgraded security measures are meant to safeguard the NATO summit while displaying strength and commitment to the military alliance.

## TURKEY

## In moment on world stage, Ankara turns summit into arms market for Gulf buyers

By Jacob Wirtschafter  
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**ISTANBUL** | Turkey will use its turn hosting the NATO summit this week to market its drones and air-defense systems, turning a meeting about how much allies spend on defense into a showcase for Turkey's weapons industry.

NATO leaders will meet inside the Bestepe Presidential Complex, the palace of more than 1,000 rooms that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan built as the seat of his power. Nearby, at the ATO Congressium, a convention center in Sogutozu, the alliance's Defense

Industry Forum will open its doors alongside a Turkish arms exhibition organized by the government's defense procurement agency. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte has billed the forum as the largest industrial event in NATO's history, with allies set to announce tens of billions of dollars in defense deals.

The summit's formal agenda is the members' pledge to spend more on their militaries. Ankara is Turkey's arms-making capital, and both halls are located within the same sealed security zone.

Mostafa Ahmed, head of political and security studies at the Al Habtoor Research Center in Dubai, said the official

forum will focus on NATO business, and the setting will also work to Ankara's advantage. The summit "serves as a premier showroom for regional buyers," he said, and he expects Ankara to push Turkish-Gulf deals hard on the sidelines. Hosting the alliance, Mr. Ahmed added, lets Turkey tell Persian Gulf buyers that its equipment meets NATO standards and has already been used in combat.

What Turkey is showing runs across the catalog. Steel Dome is its home-built network for shooting down missiles and drones. Turkey's Baykar drones have

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## Sets up meeting with Zelenskyy, follow-up with Putin in peace bid

By Tom Howell Jr.  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The NATO summit in Turkey this week affords President Trump a rare in-person opportunity to lean on European allies lagging behind on defense spending, as well as a chance to showcase his administration's embrace of this year's host, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Ukraine and Syria are also on the agenda, and Mr. Trump is expected to hold a high-profile news conference during his two days in Ankara.

Mr. Trump is set to arrive in Turkey on Tuesday, the day the NATO summit begins, to meet with Mr. Erdogan. On Wednesday, he will meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa before his scheduled news conference and departure.

Mr. Trump spoke by phone Saturday with Mr. Zelenskyy and with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Mr. Zelenskyy said in a statement on X that he and Mr. Trump discussed the latest developments in the war and that there was "a real prospect of ending this war."

Kremlin foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov said Mr. Trump reaffirmed to Mr. Putin his "readiness to help achieve a quick cessation of hostilities."

The Associated Press reported Sunday that a senior U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Mr. Trump will speak with Mr. Zelenskyy about finding a quick way to end the conflict. Mr. Trump is expected to follow up with Mr. Putin after his meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy in Ankara, the official said.

Mr. Trump has a history of criticizing NATO partners, and that is not likely to change in Ankara.

European leaders have questioned Mr. Trump's commitment to the alliance. They felt blindsided by the U.S.-Israeli bombardment of Iran, while Mr. Trump chafed at Europe's reluctance to provide air bases and other assistance in the

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## MIDDLE EAST

## Hamas crushes Gaza peace rallies, postwar yearnings

### Trump plan meets hard reality

By Waseem Abu Mahadi  
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**CAIRO** | Egyptian mediators pressed Palestinian factions last week to endorse a technocratic committee that would run the Gaza Strip without Hamas, but the party they are trying to sideline shut down the territory's streets in a single afternoon.

The Board of Peace, the postwar Gaza authority set up by President Trump, opened a closed-door meeting in Cyprus on Tuesday to consider a strategy it has been unable to enforce.

From the island of Cyprus, 242 miles from the Gaza Strip, Mr. Trump's U.S.-led board sounded a familiar refrain: The process of installing new leaders and a new government to replace Hamas is on track.

Yet on the bombed-out streets of Gaza's ruined cities, Hamas was sending a different message.

When Palestinian activists called for pro-peace demonstrations in 18 locations across Gaza on June 26, the rallies largely failed to materialize. Hamas deployed armed militants to key intersections and launched an intimidation campaign to undermine the protests.

"The people were afraid of Hamas, and Hamas was afraid of the people," said Abdel Hamid Abdel Ati, a Cairo-based Palestinian journalist who was one of the key organizers.

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**EITHER DIRECTION:** Vineyard Wind's construction is finished, but the project is a long way from generating the electricity promised or delivering the output needed.

## ENERGY

## Problems threaten fate of nation's first offshore wind farm

### Broken blades, lawsuit linger

By Susan Ferrechio  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey recently celebrated the completion of Vineyard Wind, the nation's first commercial-scale offshore wind farm that she pledged would lower electricity rates and remove tons of carbon emissions from the atmosphere.

The project was completed off the coast of Martha's Vineyard despite lawsuits from residents and environmentalists, as well as the Trump administration's aggressive anti-wind policies.

Still, Vineyard Wind's future is murky. Its turbines produce less than half the energy promised. The project's developer is embroiled in a bitter legal battle that company executives say threatens to turn Vineyard Wind's 62 turbines into a "dormant wind farm graveyard."

Officials in the Democratic-led state are enthusiastic about the project's future. Workers completed the installation of Vineyard Wind's final three turbine blades on March 13. Soon afterward, state officials locked in a 20-year purchase agreement that sets the average rate of electricity the turbines produce at \$69.50 per megawatt-hour, a cost that could beat the state's natural gas pricing during some of the coldest

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