



Despite wild-card loss to Bills, Jaguars' future looks bright

SPORTS, 1C

The Florida Times-Union

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026 | JACKSONVILLE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

ANALYSIS



Both President Donald Trump and New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani are confident, charismatic personalities who are comfortable espousing ideas that spark controversy, even within their own parties. JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS

Midterms set to test formerly 'fringe' ideas

Voter divisions deepen amid pessimistic outlook

Susan Page
USA TODAY

With Americans increasingly dissatisfied with their government and the direction of the country, policy prescriptions once considered on the fringe are becoming part of the mainstream debate.

Take over Greenland, anyone? Open government-run grocery stores?

This year's midterm elections will test efforts by the emboldened right and left to pull both parties to their edges.

Consider President Donald Trump's determination to end birthright citizenship, undoing a tenet with roots that date to 1790, and his military incursion this month to take charge of Venezuela and its oil reserves. He hasn't budged from his belief in stiff tariffs as an economic elixir, a policy at odds with what, until his political ascension, was Republican orthodoxy.

The Democrats' newest star, New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, has



Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the "new face" of the Democratic Party would emerge from the party's 2028 presidential nominating contests. JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

vowed to tax the rich, freeze a million rents, offer universal child care and arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over accusations of war crimes if he ventures into Gotham.

"I was elected as a democratic socialist and I will govern as a democratic socialist," Mamdani declared in his first speech as mayor, delivered after his public inauguration on New Year's Day.

"I will not abandon my principles for fear of being deemed radical."

The midterms will help shape the debate that will follow in the 2028 presidential election.

The first fractures in the Republican Party over what the GOP should stand for, especially in the post-Trump era,

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City sees 3 police shootings in 12 days

Last year's total was 17; under 10 was prior norm

Scott Butler
Jacksonville Florida Times-Union
USA TODAY NETWORK

Following the worst year since 2008 with people shot by Jacksonville police, officers are already well ahead of the pace in 2026.

Last year ended with 17 people shot by police, 11 who died. That followed about 15 years with the city averaging just under 10 people shot and five to six people killed by Jacksonville police, according to Times-Union records. On Sunday, Jan. 11, officers shot another suspect in a shootout at West 22nd and North Laura streets.

It was the third police shooting for Jacksonville in the first 12 days of the year. Last year the first shooting didn't occur until Feb. 11.

The latest started out as an armed drug complaint about 6:45 p.m. Some task force officers in the area took over the call in a covert vehicle and were doing some surveillance, Chief Michael Paul said.

"A short time after they were sitting there, a male came from behind the vehicle, walked in front of the vehicle and pointed a gun at the individuals in the car," Paul said. "The two officers in the car fired upon the suspect from inside the car. ... They exited the vehicle, the suspect then runs, continues to fire at the officers, the officers fire back at the suspect, continue to chase him about two blocks and at that point the suspect goes and hides behind some cars."

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Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters and Chief Michael Paul brief the media about the third police shooting of 2026.

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Amid GOP tension, DeSantis to make his swan song



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks in Sarasota on Oct. 22, 2025.

MIKE LANG/SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

John Kennedy
Capital Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Florida's legislative session opens with Gov. Ron DeSantis delivering his final State of the State address as chief executive, ushering in at least two months of policy-shaping bills, spending fights and election-year stagecraft.

The session beginning Jan. 13 is certain to be tense.

There's history - not much of it good - between DeSantis and leaders of Republican supermajorities in the House

and Senate. And House Speaker Daniel Perez, R-Miami, and Senate President Ben Albritton, R-Wauchula, are engaged in their own friction.

What will it all mean?

DeSantis heads toward the exit

The Republican governor, first elected in the narrowest governor's race in Florida history, gets the biggest opening day moment, presenting his eighth and final State of the State speech.

Over his two terms, DeSantis has consolidated power; his re-election was

by the biggest margin in a Florida governor's contest in 40 years. He leaves with the state still under a series of rolling emergency orders which allow him to hand out no-bid contracts, seize land and preempt local control.

For the past eight years, he's been helped by a mostly compliant, Republican-controlled Legislature. Like his one-time mentor, President Donald J. Trump, DeSantis has defied convention in pursuit of his goals.

But in his final assessment of the

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Volume 161 | No. 12
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