



Toppmeyer: 24-team playoff is fool's gold

SPORTS, 1B

NORTHWEST FLORIDA

Daily News

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

NWFDAILYNEWS.COM | PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Trump looks for loyalty from his ambassadors



President Donald Trump shakes hands with U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor during his swearing-in ceremony at the White House Nov. 10. Gor previously served as assistant to the president and director of presidential personnel at the White House. ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY IMAGES

Picking political appointees over career diplomats could crimp foreign policy

David Lindsey
Baruch College, CUNY | THE CONVERSATION

Just before Christmas, President Donald Trump fired more than two dozen career ambassadors. The action was unprecedented, providing a clear signal that when it comes to diplomacy, Trump values loyalty above all else.

All ambassadors face a persistent tension in their roles – having to represent the viewpoints of the president while also winning the trust of leaders in the countries where they serve. Presidents, unsurprisingly, often favor loyalists, in whom they have greater confidence.

Trump has pursued this to an exceptional degree, making more purely political picks than normal. Of the nearly 70 ambassadors he has appointed to date during this term, fewer than 10% have been career professionals with experience in the Foreign Service.

But as I have argued in my book “Delegated Diplomacy,” there is value in working through diplomats who disagree with you.

See **AMBASSADORS**, Page 3A



Close personal knowledge of the president can provide credibility and weight to an envoy's word, as when John F. Kennedy relied in 1962 on his brother Robert to be his crucial intermediary during the Cuban missile crisis. THREE LIONS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Legislative session stalled, budget deadlocked

John Kennedy
Capital Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

After opening the Florida legislative session with big ideas on property taxes, a plethora of other public policy issues and even what should be the state bird, lawmakers head into their last scheduled week with most of their ambitions adrift or outright dead.

The Legislature had approved only 40 bills by March 6 – a remarkably low mark – after proposing almost 1,800

measures. A year ago, 262 bills cleared the House and Senate by that session's end.

In addition, the one bill the state constitution requires legislators to pass each year – a state budget – remains deadlocked.

And it's looking like overtime will be needed to get that settled.

“We are not getting close enough,” House Speaker Daniel Perez, R-Miami, conceded. “It's looking tough for us to end on time.”

He added, “We have a fundamental disagreement on what the budget should look like for the state of Florida,” saying the House wants to spend less, the Senate more.

If the budget forces lawmakers into an extended session, legislative leaders could decide what bills remain alive. But it's certain that all but a few bills would die with the scheduled March 13 end of the 60-day regular session.

See **SESSION**, Page 2A



State workers rallied outside the Florida House of Representatives to demand higher pay on Jan. 28, 2020. ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Union-vote bill seems stalled in Legislature

James Call
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

The Florida Senate on March 6 passed a public sector labor bill supported by the Trump Administration that union advocates said will cripple government workers' ability to organize.

The measure (SB 1296) by Sen. Jonathan Martin, R-Fort Myers, is backed by Gov. Ron DeSantis and U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon. It makes it more difficult for unions to recruit, communicate and collect dues from members and requires local chapters to get 60% of the vote in an election to be certified.

The House companion (HB 995) cleared its three committees and is waiting to be considered on the House floor. The session is set to end March 13.

The measure originally required a 50%-plus-one vote of all workers in a bargaining unit, which would have counted a non-vote as a “no” vote. But Sen. Corey Simon, R-Tallahassee, amended the bill in committee to require a supermajority of those who voted for a chapter to be recertified.

At the time, Simon told Martin his bill needed “more work” and he hoped it would “become more sensible.” But when the Senate approved the measure on a 20-14 vote, Simon – who represents about 30,000 government sector workers in his 13-county north Florida district – was among the no votes.

The Freedom Foundation free-market think tank consulted with Martin when he wrote the bill; it's part of the

See **UNIONS**, Page 2A



Sen. Don Gaetz chats with fellow lawmakers on Jan. 13. ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to nwfdailynews.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 79 | No. 33
Subscribe 850-863-1212
©2026 \$1.50



6 63934 11111 4