



# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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## Ex-CDC chief sounds alarm at hearing



Susan Monarez, former head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, attends a Senate hearing Wednesday in Washington. She was fired by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in a dispute over vaccines. PHOTOS BY THE NEW YORK TIMES

Susan Monarez discusses her ouster by RFK Jr., says political interference in public health decisions endangers Americans.

By Tia Mitchell  
tia.mitchell@ajc.com

WASHINGTON — The former head of the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said she worries the Trump administration is rejecting science and expertise in public health to potentially devastating effects. Susan Monarez, who was fired after less than a month on the job, testified before the Senate’s health committee Wednesday about the details surrounding her ouster and the unraveling of her relationship with Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. She provided a contrast to the version provided by Kennedy during tes-

timony before a different committee two weeks ago. Monarez said Kennedy had asked her to commit to firing CDC experts and wanted her to pre-approve new vaccine guidelines without any review or input. She said she refused on the grounds that it would violate both her oath of office and ethics standards. But Monarez said the bigger issue is the impact of allowing vaccine skeptics and political activists to control public health decisions. “The question before us is whether we will keep faith with our children and grandchildren, ensuring they remain safe from

Monarez continued on A11



Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla., questions former CDC chief Susan Monarez in Washington on Wednesday. Some Republicans on the Senate panel accused her of trying to embarrass President Donald Trump.

## What’s next in Georgia’s election case against Trump?

After Fulton DA Willis’ ouster, a state agency will appoint a new prosecutor.

By Tamar Hallerman  
tamar.hallerman@ajc.com

The Georgia election interference case against President Donald Trump and more than a dozen of his allies technically still is alive — but on life support. Its future rests with a Republican former prosecutor at an obscure state agency already familiar with a portion of Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis’ racketeering case. A year ago, Pete Skandalakis declined to pursue criminal charges against Lt. Gov. Burt Jones for his role as a Trump elector after the 2020 presidential election. Now — with Willis and her office officially disqualified — the executive director of the Prosecuting Attorneys’ Council of Georgia will have an even bigger decision to make: who to appoint to take over the broader racketeering case involving a sitting president and some of his top GOP supporters. It would come with political risks, safety concerns, a roster of 15 high-profile defendants, a host of complex legal issues and no additional budget.

Interference continued on A6



Peter Skandalakis must decide who to appoint to take over Georgia’s election interference case against Donald Trump. NATRICE MILLER/AJC 2022

## Fed trims key rate amid fears on job market

Central bank’s inflation focus shifts as hiring grinds nearly to a halt.

By Christopher Rugaber  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate by a quarter-point Wednesday and projected it would do so twice more this year as concern grows at the central bank about the health of the nation’s labor market. The move is the Fed’s first cut since December, and it lowered its short-term rate to about 4.1%, down from 4.3%. Fed officials, led by Chair Jerome Powell, had kept their rate unchanged this year as they evaluated the impact of tariffs, tighter immigration enforcement and other Trump administration policies on inflation and the economy. Yet the central bank’s focus has shifted quickly from inflation, which remains modestly above its 2% target, to jobs, as hiring has ground nearly to a halt in recent months and the unemployment rate has ticked higher. Lower interest rates could reduce borrowing costs for mortgages, car loans and business loans, and boost growth and hiring. “In this less dynamic and somewhat softer labor

Rate continued on A11

## Carter’s ‘inaction’ at crash scene an issue



Attorneys for a former UGA recruiting staffer are seeking more than \$5 million from former Bulldog Jalen Carter over a deadly crash in 2023. AP FILE

Former UGA standout’s testimony raises bar for damages, attorneys say.

By Dylan Jackson  
dylan.jackson@ajc.com

Plaintiffs’ attorneys in a University of Georgia crash lawsuit revealed new information this week from the testimony of NFL star Jalen Carter, who was driving alongside an SUV before it crashed in 2023, killing a teammate and a university recruiting staffer. In a legal complaint filed Wednesday by attorneys for a for-



mer UGA recruiting staffer who survived the crash, Victoria “Tory” Bowles, they say Carter’s failure to render aid to the crash victims, his high-speed driving and his contradictory testimony in a sworn deposition taken this summer clears the legal bar for Bowles to seek more than the \$250,000 in punitive damages allowed under Georgia law.

Carter continued on A11

## SPORTS, B1 Carver coach, mentor to many, nears milestone win

Darren Myles sold cars in New Orleans after he finished his football career at Purdue University in 1988. But he was restless, and he later realized his calling was to coach. Carver High School forever has been changed by that decision. Myles will reach win No. 150 tonight if Carver beats Washington High, but the lasting impact he has made on his players is his true legacy.



## PATRICIA MURPHY, A9 Could ex-Republican be Democrats’ best option for 2026 governor’s race?

Some view former Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan’s GOP roots as a liability in the election, but others disagree.

## LIVING, C1 How CEO is building on her family’s legacy with upgrades on MARTA

Cheryl McKissack Daniel leads reportedly the oldest Black-owned construction company in the U.S.

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## Oh, what a tangled web these big, invasive spiders weave

Fear not: Distinctive Joro spiders only look like they’re dangerous.

By Taylor Croft  
taylor.croft@ajc.com

Have you walked face-first into a large spider web on your porch this summer? Of course you have. It could belong to a Joro spider, the large, yellow-and-black orb weavers. Atlantans are becoming well acquainted with the invasive species that, to some, seems to be taking over the city. But how prevalent are these East Asian spiders, and are they multiplying as rapidly as it appears? Perhaps most importantly, how



The Joro spider, native to East Asia, is distinctive with its black-and-yellow legs. COURTESY

can anyone escape from their tangled webs? “They’re everywhere,” said Andy Davis, a University of Georgia research scientist who began studying Joro spiders after they invaded his Athens backyard. Spiders continued on A6