

Morehouse med students facing food struggles



Keith Yeager loads soup into the car of Leah Mohnkern (left) as Alisha Nkwonta watches. The Morehouse School of Medicine students reached out to Souper Jenny and its Zadie Project charity after learning of classmates' food struggles. JASON ARMESTO/AJC

Lawyers say plan to move detainees is illogical, illegal

Federal defenders argue south Ga. shift violates clients' constitutional defense rights.

By Reed Williams
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Defense attorneys are asking federal judges to block the U.S. Marshals Service from moving pretrial detainees from metro Atlanta to a facility in Irwin County, as the detainees and their families worry about the impacts of them being jailed nearly 190 miles from the federal courthouse in Atlanta.

Attorneys for the Northern District of Georgia's Federal Defender Program, which represents more than half of roughly 400 detainees slated to be moved from a facility in Lovejoy to one in Ocilla, have filed motions on behalf of a handful of the detainees seeking to block the transfers.

The attorneys expect to file similar requests for dozens more clients in the future.

The Federal Defender Program argues the phased transfers, which began this week, will violate their clients' constitutional rights to a speedy trial and effective assistance from counsel. The defense attorneys also say the Marshals Service has "swerved away" from a policy of trying to hold pretrial detainees within 50 miles of the courthouse where their cases will be heard

"An arm of the federal government has unilaterally, illogically and without explanation chosen to move pretrial detainees hundreds of miles away from the courthouse and from their attorneys," several of the motions state.

The U.S. Marshals Service declined to comment on its reasons for canceling its contract with the privately-run Lovejoy

The Atlanta HBCU says it has been impacted by federal student loan changes.

By Jason Armesto
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Leah Mohnkern had heard there were delays in financial aid disbursements at the Morehouse School of Medicine, but she didn't realize how serious the problem was until a few weeks ago when she learned a classmate was struggling to afford meals.

"She'd basically been eating snacks as her primary source of energy for weeks," said Mohnkern, a second-year medical student. "It was really hard to hear because obviously studying is really challenging ... You can't do it on an empty stomach."

Yet this semester, many students at the historically Black medical school near downtown Atlanta have gone

hungry, according to Mohnkern and Alisha Nkwonta. The duo, fundraising co-chairs on the Class of 2029 Council, distributed 100 quarts of soup to needy classmates last week, gifted to them by local restaurant Souper Jenny.

"I am reaching out because an unexpected financial aid delay has left many

Food continued on A7

Detainee continued on A8



Giant pandas Ping Ping and Fu Shuang arrive at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport on Sunday on the "FedEx Panda Express." They will make their public debut at Zoo Atlanta in about a month. COURTESY OF FEDEX VIA ZOO ATLANTA

Atlanta's newest residents are here: Say hello to Ping Ping and Fu Shuang

Their arrival Sunday from China ends 2-year hiatus without pandas at Zoo Atlanta.

By Taylor Croft
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The much-anticipated new arrivals to Zoo Atlanta are here.

Giant pandas Ping Ping and Fu Shuang landed at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Sunday morning via the "FedEx Panda Express," the zoo announced in a news release.

"This is a thrilling day for Zoo Atlanta and a historic moment for the City of Atlanta, the state of Georgia and beyond," Raymond B. King, the zoo's president and CEO, said in the news release.

The arrival of 6-year-old male Ping Ping and 5-year-old female Fu Shuang ends the zoo's two-year hiatus without any giant pandas, which had been beloved staples at Zoo Atlanta since 1999. It also marks the start of a new 10-year international cooperative research agreement on giant panda conservation with the China Wildlife Conservation Association.

Ping Ping and Fu Shuang won't be visible to the public right away, the zoo's news release said. They'll first "be housed in a biosecure area of Zoo Atlanta's new giant panda complex for a routine quarantine period of around a month."

Details about their new home and their unveiling to the public will be released in future announcements, the zoo's news

Pandas continued on A8

OPINION

A billionaire, a one-term mayor and the most powerful job in Ga.



Patricia Murphy
Y'all-itics

When Rick Jackson or Keisha Lance Bottoms is sworn in as Georgia governor in January, he or she will assume one of the most powerful governor's offices in the entire country and the most powerful job in Georgia.

Overnight, the winner of November's election will have the authority to set the state budget, draft legislation, veto bills, and greenlight or kill lawmakers' pet projects. They'll also have the power to appoint every agency head in the state, thousands of board and commission positions, and in the event of a vacancy, name replacements for members of the

Georgia Supreme Court, the Georgia Court of Appeals and the U.S. Senate.

Jackson or Bottoms will also have the sole power to activate the Georgia National Guard, oversee the Georgia State Patrol, declare a state of emergency and call a special session of the General Assembly.

If you ask veterans of previous administrations what's at stake in the neck-and-neck governor's race between Bottoms and Jackson in 2026, they'll tell you in one word – everything.

Eric Tanenblatt, the chief of staff to former Gov. Sonny Perdue when Perdue was sworn into office in 2003, said life changes overnight for the winner as soon as the election is over.

"You're running so hard to win. And then when you win, and it's like, 'OK, now the work starts,'" he said.

Even before they're sworn in, Tanenblatt said the next governor will have to tackle two of the biggest pieces of the

Murphy continued on A7

2026 GEORGIA MIDTERM ELECTION'S IMPORTANT DATES

Voter registration deadline	Monday, Oct. 5
Early voting begins	Tuesday, Oct. 13
Early voting ends	Friday, Oct. 30
Election Day	Tuesday, Nov. 3
Runoff elections (if needed)	Tuesday, Dec. 1

VOTER GUIDE ON AJC.COM

Learn more about the candidates and issues at [AJC.com/Georgia-voter-guide](https://ajc.com/Georgia-voter-guide)

TODAY'S TOP STORIES INSIDE



MACON, A3

12 teens wounded in late-night shooting

Victims ranged in age from 17 to 19 and most were believed to be students at area high schools who had gathered to celebrate a birthday. No arrests made yet.



GEORGIA & THE SOUTH, A4

Moves to limit fixes for systemic racism

The Trump administration moves to limit fixes for systemic racism in schools. It even threatens to punish schools for any consideration of race in policies.



MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM, B1

QB Penix admits a long season ahead for team

Falcons quarterback Michael Penix Jr. explained there was a difference between getting the OK from doctors and feeling comfortable enough to play.



BRAVES, B1

Braves fall to Marlins; learn playoff opponent

Atlanta dropped their regular-season finale in Miami 5-3 and will start the playoffs on Tuesday hosting NL East division rival Philadelphia in a best-of-3 series.



LIVING, C2

Repression, survival focus of film festival

Ask Jim Farmer what his long-term goal for the Out on Film is, and you get the answer you'd probably hear from other leaders of events such as his: "Survival."

INDEX