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SPORTS, 1B

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Abrego Garcia released from detention facility



Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a sheet metal worker who entered the United States illegally in 2012, was living in Beltsville, Maryland, when he was detained by ICE agents on March 15. ELIZABETH FRANTZ/REUTERS FILE

Judge blocks effort to have migrant returned to custody

Michael Collins and Natalie Neysa Alund
USA TODAY

In a whiplash series of events, a federal judge on Dec. 12 blocked an effort to have Kilmar Abrego Garcia returned to custody a day after his release from Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention.

On Dec. 11, District Judge Paula Xinis ordered the immediate release of Abrego Garcia, the Salvadoran migrant at the center of a case that has spotlighted President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration policies.

Xinis said the Trump administration had no legal basis to expel him from the country and misled her at a November hearing.

Abrego Garcia left the detention facility in Pennsylvania at 4:45 p.m. ET Dec. 11, said his attorney, Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg. He was en route to his family in Maryland.

However, an immigration judge then filed a new order saying Abrego Garcia must report back to ICE custody

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Health care costs set to rise for millions

Measure would have extended federal insurance subsidies

Zachary Schermele
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Senate on Dec. 11 rejected advancing a bill to prevent health care premiums from spiking in 2026 for millions of federal health care enrollees.

The failed vote leaves lawmakers virtually no time before their holiday break to soften the approaching financial blow for many Americans. Federal subsidies relied on by millions who have health insurance plans through the Affordable Care Act exchange will expire come January. In many cases, people's premiums will double or even triple.

"I say to my Republican colleagues, our bill is the last train to leave the station," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-New York, said ahead of the vote. "If Republicans don't climb aboard, there won't be another chance to act before premiums skyrocket next year."

Notably, four Republicans – Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine and Josh Hawley of Missouri – defected from their party to try to extend the subsidies.

The final tally was 51 in support and 48 against, with Sen. Steve Daines, R-Montana, not voting. The measure needed 60 votes to advance.

"I'm open to an extension because I think the premium cost is real," Hawley

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DOJ prosecution failures 'unprecedented'

Cases against Trump targets collapse

Aysha Bagchi
USA TODAY

Dismissed indictments; two grand juries refusing to issue new charges; a judge blocking key evidence from being used for a fresh case: In trying to prosecute key targets of President Donald Trump, the Justice Department has faced failures on a scale rarely seen in federal prosecutions.

The most dramatic recent setback was a second federal grand jury's refusal on Dec. 11 to indict New York Attorney General Letitia James, after an earlier grand jury rejected the Justice Department's proposed charges last week. Abbe Lowell, a prominent lawyer who

represents James, described the repeat failure as "unprecedented."

Shortly before that, earlier indictments against James and former FBI Director James Comey were thrown out, and a judge ruled the DOJ can't use evidence – at least for now – that was key to its first indictment against Comey.

The latest developments exacerbate the mounting struggles Trump administration lawyers have faced in trying to prosecute Comey and James. The president called for prosecuting both of them, as well as Sen. Adam Schiff, D-California, in a Sept. 20 social media post.

"This is an embarrassment," Neema Rahmani, a former federal prosecutor, told USA TODAY. "The last thing you want to be as a prosecutor is to be on the

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A lawyer who represents New York Attorney General Letitia James described the Justice Department's repeat failure to prosecute James as "unprecedented." JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS FILE

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