



‘Swiss Army Knife’ White wants to help Kansas to thrive

SPORTS, 1B

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Expect court challenge if Trump mandates voter ID

Maureen Groppe
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump is plowing ahead with efforts to change election rules despite initial court rulings that he doesn’t have the power to do so.

Trump said on Aug. 30 he will sign an executive order requiring voters provide identification in every election. Trump’s executive order is expected to be challenged in court once he signs it.

An executive order Trump signed in March requiring people to show government-issued proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote in federal elections has been blocked by the courts.

“The Constitution does not grant the president any specific powers over elections,” U.S. District Judge Denise Casper in Massachusetts wrote in June.

In April, a federal judge in Washington, DC, reached the same conclusion.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said: “Voter I.D. Must Be Part of Every Single Vote. NO EXCEPTIONS! I Will Be Doing An Executive Order To That End!!!”

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Thirty-six states currently require voters to show some form of identification at the polls.

SARA D. DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES FILE



House Speaker Mike Johnson sent lawmakers home early in late July to avoid another clash over the Epstein files.

ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Big issues in spotlight as Congress returns

Passing budget measure is first item on agenda

Zachary Schermele
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Congress’ summer break is over, and lawmakers don’t have much time to waste if they want to keep the federal government’s lights on through October.

As a strict government funding deadline approaches by the end of September, Republicans need 60 votes in the Senate – and thus help from Democrats – to pass a budget bill and avoid a shutdown.

For that reason, Democrats know they have a fair amount of political leverage over Republicans for the first time since March. It remains to be

seen, though, whether they can get Republicans to grant any of their demands – or if budget brinkmanship may lead the American economy into another government shutdown.

It’s been a busy year so far for lawmakers, as Republicans have maneuvered huge cuts to taxes and spending through a GOP-controlled House and Senate. Before heading into the August break, Congress passed the “One Big, Beautiful Bill Act,” a massive domestic policy law championed by the White House that will cut social safety-net programs such as Medicaid and food stamps while providing tax breaks mostly to wealthier families and corporations.

Passing that legislation was Republican lawmakers’ first big hurdle this year. But there are more issues to watch on Capitol Hill in coming

weeks.

Passing a budget

The first big item on lawmakers’ to-do list is passing a budget measure by Sept. 30 to keep the government funded through the next fiscal year.

Democrats can stand in the way of that. Unlike with the “One Big, Beautiful Bill Act,” appropriations bills are subject to a Senate filibuster, which require 60 votes to overcome. Republicans only have a 53-47 majority.

March was the last time Congress was in this position, and at the time, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer threw his support behind a funding extension and bypassed a filibuster.

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Candidate has to refile after losing running mate

Jason Alatidd
Topeka Capital-Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The first and only candidate so far to formally file for the 2026 governor’s race will have to refile because his candidacy terminated when his running mate left the ticket.

Doug Billings is one of eight Republicans who have publicly declared for the 2026 governor’s race, but had the distinction of being the only one who had officially filed with the Kansas Secretary of State’s Office. But now that his former running mate for lieutenant governor, April McCoy, has dropped out, Billings’ formal candidacy has ended.

That ruling was made by Attorney General Kris Kobach in an Aug. 29 opinion in response to a question from Secretary of State Scott Schwab, who is one

of the eight other declared GOP gubernatorial candidates. Schwab’s office confirmed Billings’ name would be removed from the candidate list as a result of Kobach’s opinion.

“We conclude that when one member of the candidacy withdraws or dies after filing but before the filing deadline, the candidacy terminates,” Kobach said. “And while the other member may refile as part of a new candidacy – and pay the full filing fee if he does – he cannot fill the vacancy in his original candidacy.”

The development comes after McCoy left the ticket while accusing Billings of personally pocketing a donor’s \$2,700 check intended to be used for campaign software. The allegations were made public when McCoy posted a video on social media of confronting Billings at a Leavenworth County Elephant Club

meeting on July 17, and in a follow-up video. Billings, who is a podcaster from Olathe, called them “false accusations” and “smear tactics” on his podcast. He claimed the money – which he described as “pocket change” – was a donation to his podcast, not his campaign.

Kobach said Schwab had asked “about the appropriate course of action” after half of the ticket withdrew after having already filed.

“As you note, no statute addresses this precise situation,” Kobach said before outlining his interpretation of statutes that “shed light on the proper procedure.”

“There is no statutory means for saving the candidacy when a vacancy occurs post-filing and pre-deadline, and it would be inappropriate to ‘read into the statute language not readily found there,’” Kobach said. “The Legislature

knows how to prescribe a procedure for allowing a candidacy to continue, and it did not include one for this scenario. While the remaining member is free to find another running mate and pursue ballot access, he must do so as part of a new candidacy.”

If Billings refiles, he would have to pay the fee again, unless he goes the route of relying on nominating petitions.

“While the remaining member is free to pursue a new candidacy with a new running mate, his candidacy must follow the statutory requirements to obtain ballot access, including paying the whole filing fee,” Kobach said.

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