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Salina Journal

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2026 | SALINA.COM SERVING KANSAS SINCE 1871 | PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Police union makes rare endorsement of Democrat

Mann picks up support in bid for attorney general

Jason Alattid
Topeka Capital-Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The state police union is making a rare endorsement of the Democrat in the Kansas attorney general’s race. The Kansas State Lodge Fraternal Or-

der of Police endorsed Democrat Chris Mann, who is challenging incumbent Republican Kris Kobach. The Mann endorsement, announced Oct. 6, is the first time the state police union endorsed the Democrat in the race since the 2002 election. “As a former police officer turned

prosecutor, Chris Mann has a deep understanding of the issues facing our law enforcement community, which we believe makes him uniquely equipped to serve as Kansas’ next Attorney General,” said Amanda Wood, president of the Kansas State Lodge FOP, in a statement. “Chris’ commitment to public safety, support for law enforcement, and

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Attorney general candidate Chris Mann has been endorsed by the Kansas State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police, the police union’s first endorsement of a Democrat in the attorney general’s race in 24 years.
EVERT NELSON/THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL



Photographs are set up in memory of Colleen Slemmer, the woman Christa Pike was convicted of murdering in 1995, on Sept. 30, the day Pike was scheduled to be executed at a Tennessee prison. DENNY SIMMONS/NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN

Next steps in Pike case are uncertain

Inmate may face second execution attempt

Amanda Lee Myers
USA TODAY

With the astonishing news that Christa Pike is conscious, talking and making a “medically unprecedented” recovery following her botched execution, Tennessee is now facing a critical question: Will the state try to kill her again? “Against all odds, Christa Pike is conscious, speaking, and continues to receive critical medical care,” her attorneys said in a statement on Oct. 6. “Her prognosis remains unclear but, at a minimum, we expect a long recovery.” They said that despite “severe damage” to Pike’s arms, “she is still handcuffed and shackled to the bed.” “She survived two complete rounds of lethal injection per Tennessee’s protocol, despite her attorneys’ warning to the state of specific challenges with her veins,” her attorneys said. “She is the only person known to have survived a

complete execution attempt in the U.S. Christa is a survivor and will take recovery one day at a time.” So far, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee has not responded to repeated calls from Pike’s attorneys and death penalty observers to commute her sentence to life in prison. That leaves open the possibility that Pike will face a second execution, even after her attorneys said the first attempt on Sept. 30 amounted to unconstitutionally cruel and unusual punishment. “We’re in uncharted territory,” said Robin Maher, executive director of the nonprofit Death Penalty Information Center, which does not take a stance on the death penalty. “The U.S. Supreme Court has not decided whether a second execution attempt would violate the constitution since 1947,” Maher told USA TODAY. “These are questions that have never needed to be asked before and no one knows the answers.”

Tennessee was supposed to execute Pike, 50, by lethal injection on Sept. 30 for the brutal and prolonged 1995 murder of 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer. The execution failed after Pike survived two doses of pentobarbital injections and was taken to a Nashville-area hospital. A timeline of the chaos in the death chamber compiled by USA TODAY shows that the state tried to kill Pike for over an hour before rushing to save her. **Lee hasn’t ruled out 2nd execution** The botched execution was the second in the state in four months and drew immediate criticism. Lee has ordered an independent investigation into what happened and called off the one remaining execution in the state **See PIKE, Page 2A**

Chemists win Nobel for solving molecular puzzle

Marie Mannes, Simon Johnson and Johan Ahlander
REUTERS

STOCKHOLM – Scientists Henri Kagan and Kenso Soai won the 2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for solving a long-standing riddle of asymmetric “mirror image” molecules, a discovery hugely important for pharmaceutical manufacturing, the award-giving body said on Oct. 7. Soai, 76, is Japanese, and Kagan, 95, is French, and their work built on a discovery by the 19th-century French chemist Louis Pasteur. “This is the most exciting day in my life, I am very glad to share this prize with professor Henri Kagan,” Soai said, speaking by phone to the Nobel Prize press conference, adding he had been out shopping when receiving the news. The Nobel committee was still trying to contact Kagan, the third-oldest person to be awarded a Nobel Prize, to inform him. French President Emmanuel Macron congratulated the laureates on X, calling it an immense honor for the country. “A recognition suited to a lifetime of research,” he said. In fact, Kagan’s work has long been seen as influential on the field, and the then-French research minister complained to the Nobel Foundation in 2001 when Kagan was left out that year. The prize instead went to one Japanese and two American scientists for work in the same field.

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Henri Kagan, left, and Kenso Soai were announced as winners of the 2026 Nobel Prize in Chemistry at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm on Oct. 7. JONATHAN NACKSTRAND/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

