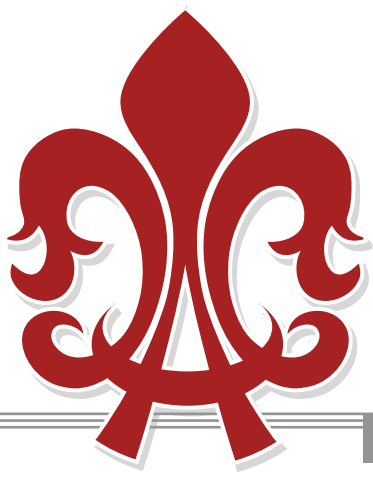




## Ochsner opens Bertrand Drive health center to expand care in Lafayette

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Conservative activist Charlie Kirk, 31, was fatally shot Sept. 10 on the campus of Utah Valley University. MARK HENLE/ARIZONA REPUBLIC

## Free speech rights tested after Charlie Kirk's killing

### Reactions to death stir First Amendment debate

Keith Sharon, Angele Latham and Cate Charron

USA TODAY NETWORK

Judgment came quickly for some people who commented on social media about conservative talk show host and activist Charlie Kirk in the days after his death.

Among the professionals fired, suspended or put on leave over social media posts some people found offensive are: school employees in Idaho, Indiana and South Carolina; a Phoenix sportswriter; a University of Mississippi faculty member; emergency workers, a theater

professor and other university employees in Tennessee; and a Marine Corps recruiter.

American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Clemson University, The Joe Burrow Foundation and the Carolina Panthers were among organizations across the country that took action over social media posts by employees. In Nashville, leadership of a prominent restaurant group said staffers' comments had led to their terminations.

Meanwhile, many Republican elected officials have urged accountability and praised the swift action to discipline employees. A website was even created after Kirk's death that allowed users to submit and catalog examples of people's comments about Kirk online. The website administrators did not immediately

return a request for comment. As of Sept. 15, the website was inactive.

In Indiana, Attorney General Todd Rokita asked people to report teachers who "celebrate or rationalize" Kirk's killing so they can be included in his office's government dashboard. The platform has been used to list and condemn instances of "objectionable" political ideology entering the classroom.

"These individuals must be held accountable — they have no place teaching our students," Rokita, a Republican, said in a post on X.

Such comments, even those considered offensive, are largely protected free speech. But the First Amendment does not inoculate people against actions

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## Higgins plans to silence those who celebrated Kirk murder

Greg Hilburn

Shreveport Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

Louisiana U.S. Rep. Clay Higgins is seeking to silence those who celebrated Charlie Kirk's murder on social media, saying he will use congressional authority and influence to pursue lifetime bans from big tech network platforms.

Kirk, a conservative activist, was murdered Sept. 10 during a rally on a Utah college campus.

Higgins, a Republican from Lafayette, sent a letter to the leaders of Facebook, X, YouTube, TikTok, Bluesky and Trump Media Sept. 15 asking for their cooperation.

"Please be advised that your platforms are rightfully expected to expeditiously remove all posts that have celebrated the political assassination of Charlie Kirk," Hig-

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## Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Scalise honor Kirk

Greg Hilburn

Shreveport Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

House Speaker Mike Johnson and Majority Leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana led a candlelight Capitol vigil on Sept. 15 to honor slain conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

Kirk was assassinated Sept. 10 on a Utah college campus.

"This was a heinous political violence, an assassination," Johnson said during the evening vigil in Statuary Hall. "Our friend, Charlie, did not pass away in a car accident. He was assassinated for standing for his political beliefs. And for so many of us, it has felt as if the ground has been shaken."

But Johnson said Kirk would not have responded with hate.

See JOHNSON, Page 2A

## One Acadiana launches Elections Hub

Aaron Gonsoulin

Lafayette Daily Advertiser

USA TODAY NETWORK

One Acadiana has rolled out its 2025 Elections Hub, a free online resource designed to help Acadiana voters prepare for the upcoming fall elections.

The Elections Hub provides key election dates, a detailed Ballot Guide and a new video series called "1A Ballot Briefings."

Lafayette Parish voters will decide Oct. 11 on two local millage renewals — one for the Lafayette Parish School System and the other for the Bayou Vermilion District. The Ballot Guide breaks down each proposition, explaining what a "yes" or "no" vote would mean for taxpayers.

The public can access these

See HUB, Page 5A

## Trump begins historic U.K. state visit

Sam Tabahriti, Michael Holden and Steve Holland

REUTERS

WINDSOR, England — King Charles and other British royals greeted President Donald Trump on Sept. 17 as his historic second state visit to Britain began with unprecedented pomp, intense security, technology investments and protests.

Trump and first lady Melania Trump arrived at Windsor Castle, the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and family home to British monarchs for almost 1,000 years. The president was met by the monarch; his wife, Queen Camilla; Prince William, the Prince of Wales; and Catherine, the Princess of Wales, before a carriage procession through the grounds.

A military flyover was scheduled to take place ahead of a lavish banquet as part of what Britain has said would be the largest military ceremonial welcome for a state visit in living memory.

Trump, an overt royal fan, has made little secret of his delight at being not just the first U.S. leader, but the first elected politician to be invited by a British monarch for two state visits.

On his arrival, he told reporters he loved Britain. "It's a very special place," he said.

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