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PANTHERS 20 17 SAINTS

KICK IN THE GUT



STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID GRUNFELD

Saints quarterback Tyler Shough is sacked by the Panthers defense in the second half of the game at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans on Sunday.

The New Orleans Saints' season took another dreary turn Sunday at Caesars Superdome when Carolina Panthers kicker Ryan Fitzgerald booted a 54-yard field goal as time expired to hand the Saints a 20-17 loss. Just seconds earlier, Charlie Smyth hit a 55-yarder to tie the game, but New Orleans defense was unable to hold on for overtime. The game was an unlikely battle for first place in the NFC South, with both teams entering 3-5. The game was accordingly sloppy; the Saints made two early turnovers, and the Panthers committed 17 penalties. In the end, it was another loss for the home team, which must now travel to play Super Bowl contending teams each of the next two weeks.

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Steering failure confirmed in boat crash

Investigators share findings from black box device

BY GRACE MAYER, JAMES FINN and KASEY BUBNASH
Staff writers

Federal investigators confirmed Sunday it was a steering failure that caused a 15,000-ton asphalt tanker to slam into a moored paddleboat cruise ship in downtown New Orleans, sending dozens of passengers, crew members and their belongings into the Mississippi River and leaving many injured.



Barnum

Officials with the National Transportation Safety Board held a news conference Sunday afternoon at the New Orleans Port Authority, where they shared findings from a black boxlike device retrieved from the Atlantic Asphalt tanker, which rammed into the docked American Heritage cruise vessel shortly after noon on Friday, causing it to capsize in about 20 minutes.

Bart Barnum, NTSB senior marine accident investigator, said investigators downloaded roughly nine hours of data from the tanker's voyage data recorder, including audio from the bridge, vessel course and speed, rudder angle and engine propulsion.

Barnum said the tanker was headed upriver near the Crescent City Connection at 12:26 p.m. when it experienced a "steering casualty" that caused the rudder to remain in a starboard position, forcing the vessel to veer toward the east bank. As the Atlantic Asphalt approached the docked American Heritage cruise ship, Barnum said the tanker's whistles can be heard in audio recordings from the vessel, along with requests for assistance, emergency ship handling orders and orders to deploy the tanker's anchors.

The findings are preliminary, Barnum said, and it's not clear yet what caused the tanker's steering to fail.

"There are many different things that can be

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Cassidy looking at teaching, think tanks after leaving office

Senator defends vote to convict Trump

BY MARK BALLARD
Staff writer

WASHINGTON – Bill Cassidy isn't planning a future in politics and won't continue practicing medicine when he leaves the U.S. Senate in January.



Cassidy

Louisiana's senior senator, who was a Baton Rouge physician for about 30 years before entering politics, said in an interview that he's looking at teaching at an elite medical school and joining a political strategy think tank. Cassidy wouldn't be specific until after he leaves the Senate on Jan. 3.

Cassidy also defended his vote to convict President Donald Trump on impeachment charges — a decision that led to the end of his political career. And for the first time, he added that recent events have shown he was correct.

"Arguably, I lost my reelection because I took a hard vote," Cassidy said. "More and more people now see that I was right."

Republicans lost control of the U.S. House and Senate in last week's midterm elections that many of Cassidy's colleagues and political observers call a repudiation of President Donald Trump's combative leadership style and policies.

In 2021, Cassidy joined just a handful of Republican senators who voted to convict Trump for the president's role in revving up supporters who marched on the U.S. Capitol with the intent of stopping the certification that Joe Biden had beaten Trump in the 2020 presidential election.

Cassidy cast that vote two months after securing 1.4 million votes — the second largest total in Louisiana history — to win reelection. Within

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In some states, redistricting by Republicans backfired

Full picture not yet clear in Louisiana

BY MEGHAN FRIEDMANN
Staff writer

ELECTION 2026

When Democrats swept into elected offices across the country during the midterm elections, political observers in both parties began asking whether the recent unusual mid-decade redistricting push by Republicans backfired.

A watershed U.S. Supreme Court decision earlier this year weakened the Voting Rights Act and overturned Louisiana's congressional map, allowing it and other Republican-led states to chip away at minority voting populations in Democratic districts in the hopes of flipping those seats during the midterm elections.

But, in other states, Republicans lost almost all of the newly drawn districts. By spreading potential Democratic voters more widely among GOP-leaning districts, some seats became more vulnerable to the blue wave, many political analysts say. And Black community leaders say the effort to eliminate majority-minority districts fired up voters to fight back.

"I think that voters were already going to go in a different direction," said state Sen. Royce Duplessis, a Black Democrat from New Orleans. But "the gerrymandering effort was really like pouring kerosene on a house that was already on fire."

Republican state leaders, including House Speaker Phillip DeVillier, R-Eunice, disagreed with the notion that redistricting backfired in Louisiana — and they argued they were simply following the law when they redrew Louisiana's map.

Though Republican U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow beat Democrat Jamie Davis by just two points in the U.S. Senate race — a margin so narrow in the deep red state it would have been unthinkable just six months ago — they say the Republican win bucked the national trend and showed that Louisiana is still conservative.

"In comparison to other states, Louisiana showed that it still believes in conservative values," said DeVillier.

DeVillier said he understood

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Classified **7D**
Comics-Puzzles **3D-6D**
Commentary **5B**
Deaths **3B**
Living.....**1D**
Metro **1B**
Nation-World.....**2A**
Opinion **4B**
Sports **1C**

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