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From a would-be mentor to a stifling force

Ex-Cape college leader pressured student with letters, gifts, attention, report says

By Hilary Burns
GLOBE STAFF

John Cox, the president of Cape Cod Community College from 2012 until he abruptly retired in mid-March, had an unprofessional relationship with a 23-year-old female student whom he sought to mentor, according to an external investiga-

tion commissioned by the college. The relationship was not sexual, the report found. But in his efforts to mentor the student, Cox deluged her with messages at all hours of the day, left gifts at her apartment and in her car, and used college funds to create business and networking opportunities for her and her romantic

partner, according to the report on the investigation, which was conducted by an outside law firm.

While the report has not been released by the college, the Globe obtained a copy and verified it with some of the principals involved.

Kenneth Tashjy, a lawyer for Cox, said in a statement that in "light of the impact the complaint and investigation had on the College, and after 14 years of successful service, Dr. Cox determined that the best course

of action to move the institution forward was to retire from his position as President."

After exchanging messages with him for about six months, the student informed Cox in mid-2025 that she needed to "take a step back for now" to focus on her mental health and studies. Cox, according to the report, replied with a broken heart emoji, and then messaged the college's chief wellness officer that he

COX, Page A7

News is good for Markey in latest poll

Retains large lead over Moulton and shows little vulnerability on age issue

By Kelly Garrity
GLOBE STAFF

With less than five months until their September primary, Senator Ed Markey holds a double-digit lead over Representative Seth Moulton among likely Democratic primary voters, many of whom said a candidate's age matters little, if at all, in their decision, a Suffolk University/Boston Globe poll found.

The survey found 47 percent of likely primary voters would choose Markey, the 79-year-old incumbent, if the election were held today, compared to 30 percent who said they would pick Moulton, a 47-year-old Iraq War veteran who's made Markey's age and seniority a central part of his challenge.

More than 20 percent of the 500 likely primary voters surveyed said they were undecided about whom they would back in the Sept. 1 primary.

The margin marks a slightly narrowing lead for Markey, who led Moulton by 23 percentage points in a November Suffolk/Globe poll that included a small-

POLL, Page A10

68% said age had "a little" or no impact on their decision, while



26% said the candidate's age would influence them "a lot," and 6% were undecided.

'It's really just this kind of . . . painful little blow to all these small businesses every spring.'

LINAS KENTER, an aquaculture and fisheries research scientist



PHOTOS BY LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF

Farm manager Kristen Mello-Rafter prepared to place a cage of oysters into their shallow summer home, in Newington, N.H.

TRYING TO CRACK AN OYSTER CONUNDRUM

Why is winter so rough on them? No one's sure, but it's holding back the industry.

By Amanda Gokee
GLOBE STAFF

LITTLE BAY, N.H. — Around New England, oysters are dying at alarming rates during the winter months.

Now, scientists in New Hampshire are trying to figure out why, as the future of the region's youngest and smallest oyster industry hangs in the balance.

The oyster industry has grown tremendously in New Hampshire in recent years.

But as oyster farmer Joe Rankin discovered, there can be a devastating downside: mass die-offs during the cold winter that can derail the business.

That's what he experienced in 2022, when he returned to his New Hampshire farm on the western side of Little Bay in the spring and found that about 80 percent of his oysters had died over the winter.

If he hadn't known other oyster farmers who had overcome similar losses, he said, "I would have probably been discouraged enough to leave."

OYSTERS, Page A10



Brian Gennaco, an oyster farmer who has been collaborating with UNH researchers, had a sample.

Scandals fuel calls for House ethics panel to show some spine

By Tal Kopan and Jim Puzanghera
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — The resignations of former representatives Eric Swalwell and Tony Gonzales this week amid sexual misconduct allegations and threats of expulsion happened with uncharacteristic speed. But few lawmakers believe it marked a new era of congressional accountability.

Instead, they say it was public shaming and a rare confluence of circumstances — including politics — that led to their rapid departures. Still, they see an urgent need to reform the way the House checks bad behavior, including a House Ethics Committee process many complain is ponderously slow.

"We wouldn't have to do this if Ethics would do their job, and Ethics is not doing their job," Representative Anna Paulina Luna, a Florida Republican, said of the bipartisan push she and New Mexico Democratic Representative Teresa Leger Fernández made to introduce formal expulsion measures against Swalwell and Gonzales. "Leadership on both sides should have done the right thing

CONGRESS, Page A4

Key clues led to arrest in heist at mansion

By John R. Ellement, Danny McDonald, and Lea Skene
GLOBE STAFF

The investigation into the brazen heist of a seaside Beverly mansion in March brought detectives to a casino in Everett and a jeweler in New York, even to a cemetery in Lynn where the culprit stashed a Porsche doused in bleach.

And one key breakthrough was a unique pair of sandals that were captured on surveillance video, which prosecutors on Wednesday said led them to the ex-boyfriend of a woman who worked as a housekeeper on the property. Authorities tracked him

from Massachusetts to a jeweler in New York and back to Gloucester, where they found \$300,000 in cash and "numerous gold items" in his car.

Emajae Brown, 25, pleaded not guilty at his arraignment Tuesday to multiple charges in Salem District Court. He was ordered held without bail pending a dangerousness hearing, set for April 21.

Authorities disclosed Brown's ex-girlfriend is a housekeeper who worked at the mansion the night before the robbery; she has not been charged. The woman is no longer employed at the property, the Globe has learned.

ROBBERY, Page B5

A SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE



JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

Thirteen years after the Marathon bombing, Governor Maura Healey and Mayor Michelle Wu were joined in a procession on Boylston Street by Denise and Bill Richard, whose son Martin was among the victims. Other families were also on hand for One Boston Day. B4.

State education officials urged school districts to combat the spread of fake AI-generated explicit images of students. B1.

Pakistani mediators traveled to Tehran to try to salvage talks between Iran and the U.S. A3.

Pure Oasis, the first cannabis shop to open in Boston, is closing its two stores. D1.

The Mike Vrelb situation shows the media double standard for a female reporter, writes Ben Volin. C1.



Unsettling in

Thursday: Breaks of sun. High 67-72. Low 55-60.

Friday: Showers. High 69-74. Low 47-52.

Sunrise: 6:02 Sunset: 7:27

Weather and Comics, D5-6.

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