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### Trump mail-in vote stance stirs fight

#### Presidents have no legal role in running elections

**Bart Jansen** 

USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump's latest push to end absentee voting has ignited a firestorm of criticism and intense debate about the nation's election rules as the next midterm and presidential campaigns kick into gear.

Election-law experts said a president has no role in governing elections. Advocacy groups threatened lawsuits aiming to block Trump. And Democrats braced for a political fight heading into the 2026 and 2028 election cycles as they look to rebound after a disastrous 2024 campaign.

"The Constitution gives states and Congress the power to run elections," said Michael Waldman, CEO of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. "Presidents have no lawful

role."

But White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters Aug. 19 that Trump would work with lawmakers to end mail-in voting because "this is a priority for the president."

Mail-in voting is widespread and

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### Retired firefighters keep their bond going

Allan Jung

Worcester Telegram & Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

With a combined 1,200-plus years of saving lives and putting out fires, upward of 40 retired Worcester firefighters with an average of more than 30 years of service have been gathering every third Tuesday each month at Beaver Brook Park to talk about all manner of topics.

Before moving to the park, a much smaller group began meeting at Panera Bread just before the pandemic. When it outgrew that location, the group moved first to the empty parking lot of the former Big D and Price Chopper supermarkets on Mill Street.

Referred to as Coffee to Go in the email chain from founder Phil Sullivan, 69, the members range in age from their mid-60s to 90. They often joke that the main topic of conversation is usually aches and pains.

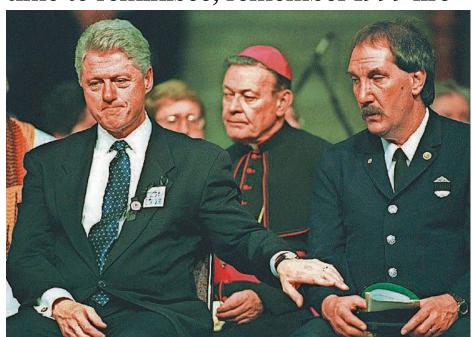
"The older I get, the better I was. That's what this group is about," says Sullivan

Bob LaRose's quip, "I should be 77 but I was sick for two years," was followed immediately by a chorus of laughs, groans and "Here we go!" — meaning this is a familiar joke.

"(We talk about) medical issues. Who has a heart problem (or) an orthopedic

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Monthly gatherings in Worcester allow time to reminisce, remember 1999 fire



President Bill Clinton reaches over to console a distraught Frank Raffa, president of the Worcester Firefighters IAFF Local 1009, at the Centrum on Dec. 9, 1999, after six firefighters died in the Cold Storage fire

TOP: Clockwise from right; Joe Henderson, 68, Jeff Plante, 67, Steve Provost, 73, Bill O'Connell, 71, Phil Sullivan, 69, David Ford, 71, Jim Doherty, 75, Frank Raffa, 77, and Bob LaRose, 77, are among some of the 40 retired Worcester firefighters who meet every every third Tuesday of the month at Beaver Brook Park. PHOTOS BY ALLAN JUNG/TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

# Director: 'Depoliticize' health board

Hirsh, 2 ex-councilors disagree after split vote

#### **Henry Schwan**

Worcester Telegram & Gazette USA TODAY NETWORK

WORCESTER — It was a tight vote, but the city's Board of Health sent a message that protecting public health is its primary job, not safeguarding business interests.

Meanwhile, a city official said the board has become politicized, threatening its mission to safeguard public health.

Dr. Michael Hirsh, the city's medical director, told the Telegram & Gazette after the board voted 3-2 Monday, Aug. 18 to deny a tobacco permit to a local business that having two former city councilors on the board — Gary Rosen and Michael Perotto — has politicized its work. Rosen is looking to rejoin the council; he's currently running for an at-large spot.

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### Worcester city councilors look at homelessness

Request state assistance with tiny homes project

#### Afton Pratt

Worcester Telegram & Gazette USA TODAY NETWORK

WORCESTER — Members of the City Council gathered for their only August session Tuesday, Aug. 19 with the issue of homelessness repeatedly discussed.

An order filed by Mayor Joseph M. Petty asked City Manager Eric D. Batista to provide an update regarding a project on Claremont Street that aims to build tiny homes for the homeless population.

Batista said residents of the tiny homes would be placed by Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance and Worcester Community Housing Resources using a voucher system.

During public participation, state Sen. Robyn Kennedy and former state

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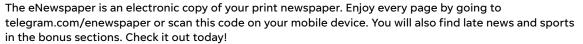
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