



MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2025

MASS LIVE

©2025 THE REPUBLICAN CO. | \$1.50



PATRIOTS CLINCH PLAYOFF SPOT

After battling back from an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter, Drake Maye and the New England Patriots beat the Baltimore Ravens to secure a postseason berth. Page A7

REGION

Two leaders who will help guide Western Mass. future

DeLobato, Page play big roles in economic development, public education

By WILL KATCHER

WKatcher@masslive.com

AND CHARLIE MCKENNA

cmckenna@masslive.com

Massachusetts is staring down an uncertain future. The state needs to add 222,000 new homes over the next decade to address a housing crunch that has driven prices skyward. In many local school districts, students are slow to regain ground lost to the COVID pandemic. At all levels of government, leaders face challenging financial decisions ahead.



XIOMARA ALBÁN DELOBATO

And behind all of it, President Donald Trump's return to office has brought Massachusetts and some of its cities increasingly into conflict with the federal government. MassLive is highlighting eight leaders to watch in 2026, who will help chart the state's path in the coming years, each in his or her own way.

Two of them have deep connections to Western Massachusetts: Xiomara Albán DeLobato, chief of staff to Western Mass. Economic Development Council, and Max Page, president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

Xiomara Albán DeLobato

Xiomara Albán DeLobato is building a bridge between the world of corporate business and communities in Western Massachusetts.

SEE **LEADERS**, PAGE A2

WHO'S WHO OF OTHER LEADERS

M Coverage of the other six Massachusetts leaders selected by the staff of MassLive can be found at [masslive.com](https://www.masslive.com).

The package includes short profiles of the following people:

- Brian Allen, Worcester Schools superintendent
- Iván Espinoza-Madrigal, executive director of Lawyers for Civil Rights
- Kimberly Budd, chief justice of the Supreme Judicial Court
- Leah Foley, U.S. attorney for the District of Massachusetts
- Phillip Eng, Mass. transportation secretary and MBTA general manager
- Vikas Enti, co-founder and CEO of Reframe Systems

TODAY'S MUST-READS

SPRINGFIELD

Armed man shot dead by officer

A Springfield police officer shot and killed an armed man experiencing a mental health crisis Saturday afternoon, according to the police department. Around 4:40 p.m., a 911 caller reported that a man was "exhibiting psychiatric behavior while armed with a knife" on Worcester Street. **Full Story on Page A6**

STATE

A move to stop 'dark money'

The House gave initial approval last week to a bill that would apply the state's campaign finance election laws to political expenditures of more than \$1,000, made by persons, corporations, associations, organizations or other groups of people, to influence the outcome of articles that appear on Town Meeting warrants. **Full Story on Page A2**

WEATHER

Sunny and windy.

High: 36°; **Low:** 27°

EXPANDED WEATHER, B4

INVENTORY IS PILING UP
CALL NOW 413-796-3368
Cars You Can Trust
Rick's MOTOR CITY

INDEX

201st year. No. 106

Business	B1	Opinion	A4
Classified	B3	Parenting	B5
Comics	B6	Sports	A7
Dear Abby	B8	Television	B4
Obituaries	A5	Weather	B4



SPRINGFIELD

Father-daughter time

Brian Leibinger and his 9-year-old daughter, Ella, traveled from Greenfield to visit the Springfield Museums on Friday. The museum complex is open this week except for Christmas Eve and Christmas. One current exhibition is "Markets, Foodways, and the Essence of Place: Works from the Museo de Arte de Ponce." (DOUGLAS HOOK / THE REPUBLICAN)

HOLYOKE

Local fire official IDs what saved lives in 2 major fires

Working smoke detectors helped save lives in two Holyoke apartment fires

By APRELL MAY MUNFORD

AMunford@repub.com

HOLYOKE — Firefighters say working smoke detectors made the difference between life and death in two recent Holyoke apartment fires that left about 70 people homeless.

Both fires broke out in older buildings where flames can spread quickly, making alarms critical for survival, said Capt. David Rex of the Holyoke Fire Department.



On the corner of Franklin and Main streets in Holyoke, firefighters battle flames on Dec. 2. (DOUGLAS HOOK / THE REPUBLICAN)

SEE **DETECTOR**, PAGE A2

NEWS ANALYSIS

Trump takes 'imperial presidency' to new level

By PETER BAKER

The New York Times

WASHINGTON — When President Donald Trump hosted the crown prince of Saudi Arabia last month, he pulled out all the stops. To the traditional pomp of a formal White House visit, he added a few even fancier touches: a stirring military flyover, a procession of black horses and long, regal tables for the lavish dinner in the East Room instead of the typical round tables.

SEE **TRUMP**, PAGE A5