



TRUMP SAYS HE SIGNED IRAN DEAL

President Donald Trump said he signed an agreement with Iran that U.S. officials say calls for Tehran to dilute its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and waive sanctions on the country. A10

TODAY'S MUST-READS

AGAWAM Split council backs stronger voter ID rules

A split City Council threw its weight behind stronger voter identification laws Monday night.

During an hour and a half of public debate, a dozen town residents rose to agree with the nonbinding resolution, which passed 7-4 and states that Agawam "supports reasonable voter identification requirements."

The resolution will be sent to state and federal legislators, and the governor. Full story, Page A4

SPRINGFIELD

Rent control initiative passes

BY JEANETTE DEFORGE
jdeforge@repub.com

The City Council voted unanimously to support a legislative bill that would give municipalities the ability to set local rent control, calling it one step to easing the relentless housing crisis.

The council on Monday passed a resolution urging state lawmakers to pass the bill considered a compromise between a November ballot question that would limit rent increases to 5% or the computer price index and the current law that bans rent control.

Springfield state Sen. Adam Gomez filed the bill with Sen. Patricia

INSIDE

Holyoke Council backs rent-stabilization resolution, Page A10

Jahlen, a Democrat from Middlesex County, to permit annual rent increases of up to 5% plus inflation. The more important feature is it would give each community the authority to craft rent control that works for them.

"Housing markets are different across Massachusetts. What works in one community may not work in another," Gomez said. "This is a local option proposal. It does not

force every city or town into a one-size-fits-all policy."

A former city councilor and lifelong resident of the city who faced his own housing insecurity issues as a young man, Gomez attended the meeting with multiple other residents and housing advocacy groups who talked about problems residents face making ends meet with the ever-rising cost of rents.

He said the proposal is just one piece of the puzzle to easing the housing crunch.

"Housing is not simply a roof over someone's head. Housing is healthcare. Housing is public safety. Housing is an educational opportu-

nity. Housing is economic stability and housing is human dignity," Gomez said.

When people are forced to move because of rising rents, it causes children to have to change schools and creates instability in neighborhoods. It also leaves residents "impossible decisions" such as choosing between paying rent or buying groceries or medications, he said.

Several housing advocacy groups also attended the meeting to show their support for the bill. City Councilor Justin Hurst, who sponsored the resolution with Councilor Zaida Govan, said hearing the

SEE **RENT**, PAGE A2

HOLYOKE

Hood cleaner's license suspended after fire at mall

A kitchen-hood cleaner's license has been suspended after a February fire at the Holyoke Mall in which the contractor admitted to code violations, state fire officials said Wednesday.

An investigation determined the fire was caused by grease buildup in exhaust ducts that were not properly cleaned.

Full story, Page A4



WESTFIELD

Neal visits new F-35s

U.S. Rep. Richard E. Neal, D-Springfield, visits the 104th Fighter Wing on Wednesday at Barnes Air National Guard Base, Westfield. Story, photo on Page A12. (JAY HEWITT / U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD)

SPRINGFIELD

Smith & Wesson sees bump in sales, profits

Gunmaker Smith & Wesson Brands Inc. saw net sales jump 10.4%, up \$49.2 million to \$523.8 million, in its most recent fiscal year, according to financial results released after the close of the stock market Wednesday.

Net income was \$18.5 million, or 41 cents per share, compared with \$13.4 million, or 30 cents per share, for the prior fiscal year.

Full story, Page B4

HOLYOKE

Council advances data center ban after heated debate

BY APRELL MAY MUNFORD
AMunford@repub.com

The City Council advanced a zoning change Tuesday that would ban data centers citywide, after hours of debate by councilors and residents raising concerns about environmental impacts, infrastructure strain and equity.

The measure, which amends the zoning ordinance to define "data center" and prohibit new data centers in the city, passed 9-4, the minimum required for zoning changes.

The proposal includes an amendment allowing the Massachusetts Green High-Performance Computing Center to continue operating "up to 12 MW (megawatts)."

Councilors Michael Sullivan, Linda Vacon, Howard Greaney Jr., and Council President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti opposed the measure.

Councilors also sent a separate proposal to create a temporary ad hoc committee to study potential impacts of data center development — including energy demand, water consumption, environmental impacts and economic effects — through June 30, 2027, back to a City Council subcommittee for further discussion.

Much of the debate followed hours of public comment focused on environmental and equity concerns. More than two dozen residents signed up to speak.

Ward 6 resident Richard Kornitsky, an electrical power engineer, warned about the scale of a proposed facility at the former Hampden Papers facility.

SEE **DATA**, PAGE A2

SPRINGFIELD

Bowler sets her sights on gold at Special Olympics

BY STAASI HEROPOULOS
Special to The Republican

By day, Katie Meunier is a mild-mannered grocery store cashier in Wilbraham. By night, the 46-year-old is a competitive bowler, hoping to ring up enough points to land a gold medal during the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games in Minneapolis, which begin Saturday.

Meunier, who is autistic, lives in Springfield and is the only Special Olympian from Hampden County to compete on this national stage.

"Getting the gold medal would be great, but I just want to do really well," she told The Republican.

Meunier and her fellow athletes on Team Massachusetts will be among 3,000 Olympians from all 50 states competing in the games.

Meunier won a spot on the team in part because she took home a gold medal during the state games last year. She also won three medals — two gold and a silver — during the Special Olympics USA Games in Orlando four years ago.

"I did really well in Orlando, and I hope to do as well in Minnesota, but if I don't, I'm just going to enjoy being somewhere I've never been before," she said.

SEE **BOWLER**, PAGE A2



Katie Meunier of Springfield is aiming for a gold medal in bowling at the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games beginning this weekend in Minneapolis.

WEATHER

A shower; breezy, humid.
High: 81°; Low: 61°

EXPANDED WEATHER, A12

Give Your Car Super Strength
CERAMIC COAT YOUR CAR
Rick's AUTO BODY

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