

Carroll County Times

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THE INTERVIEW

Secretary of Veterans Dept. talks mental health

By Todd Karpovich

Ahead of Veterans Day on Tuesday, Col. Edward C. “Ed” Rothstein, secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families, talked with The Baltimore Sun about his priorities for his office, challenges facing veterans and his own experience returning to civilian life.

Rothstein was commissioned into the Army in 1986 and went on to serve in the Chemical Corps and Military Intelligence. His assignments included senior intelligence posts at the Pentagon and the National Security Agency, as well as deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rothstein later commanded Fort George G. Meade, overseeing more than 200,000 personnel. Following his retirement in 2014, he worked in economic development and served two terms as a Carroll County commissioner.

Democratic Gov. Wes Moore appointed him in July to lead the department.

The conversation has been edited for clarity and brevity.

What message do you hope to send this Veterans Day, especially in this volatile political climate?

As a veteran, this day holds deep personal meaning. It’s a reminder that service doesn’t end when the uniform comes off. I want Maryland’s veterans and their families to know they are not alone. In challenging times, our focus remains on unity, service and ensuring that every veteran and military family in Maryland knows we will leave no one behind.

Many veterans struggle to access federal benefits. How is the department helping to simplify that process?

Accessing federal benefits can be overwhelming. Through our Service and Benefits Program, we provide free, personalized assistance to veterans, dependents and survivors seeking benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense and the State of Maryland. Our VA-accredited service officers, located in offices across the state, work one-on-one with veterans to file claims and enroll in benefits.

Last year alone, we secured over \$54.4 million in federal VA benefits for more than 6,000 Maryland veterans, dependents and survivors — a 20% increase over the previous year, with a 95 percent VA approval rate.

I encourage every veteran to schedule a

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Active duty Army heros pass in front of the Carroll Arts Center on Main Street in Westminster during the Veterans Day Parade on Saturday. MORE EVENTS, PAGE 4

Veterans Day Parade in Westminster



A Marine Veteran operates a Jeep replica along the Second Annual Veterans Day Parade route on Saturday.



A decorated Marine Veteran travels the parade route, Saturday, as spectators wave in support.

Wounded veteran moves into mortgage-free smart home

By Marissa Yelenik

For Staff Sgt. Frank Laguna, home has always been wherever duty called: From deployments overseas to temporary bases, he lived to serve. Last week that journey finally came to a close in Mount Airy, with a front door that he, his wife, Candace, and their kids can call their own.

On Thursday, the Tunnels to Towers Foundation thanked Laguna for his service by giving him a home that would meet his needs as a wheelchair user with mobility issues and chronic

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The Laguna family pose for a photo in their kitchen, the room that is the center of activity in their home, where they prepare meals as a family. Clockwise from left, Antonio, 19, who is also ambulatory with Rohhad Syndrome, Alejandro, 15, Candace, Frank, and Aunabella, 13. Not pictured is Allysum, 23, on active duty as a Navy Seabee. JEFFREY F. BILL/STAFF

Hoyer, Raskin push Ferguson to join redistricting fight

By Ben Mause

WASHINGTON — Two Maryland congressional heavyweights are stepping further into the fight for redistricting and applying more pressure to an embattled state lawmaker.

Reps. Steny Hoyer and Jamie Raskin said they were sending a letter Monday to the state’s General Assembly that will argue against Senate President Bill Ferguson’s decision not to pursue a new congressional map. The letter marks another lever that presses against Ferguson’s resistance to redrawing Maryland’s congressional districts, as state and national Democrats try to keep up with Republicans’ redistricting efforts. Hoyer and Raskin represent parts of Southern

Maryland and Montgomery County, respectively.

“We can redistrict to make Maryland House seats more competitive in a way that counters the Trump national steamroller,” the letter says, “and we believe such an effort can survive any legal attack.”

The four-page letter, exclusively obtained Monday by The Baltimore Sun, directly addresses the reasons Ferguson gave his colleagues for not pursuing a new map, responding to the legal concerns that Ferguson raised. It also details the redistricting battle that began in Texas earlier this year and the impact of the second Trump administration on Maryland, minimizing the Senate president’s concerns to the assembly, and applying congressional

pressure to get Ferguson to redraw the state’s map.

“We don’t need to remind you that Marylanders have paid a heavy price during the first year of the second Trump Administration: more than 15,000 federal employees have been fired with thousands more now furloughed and thousands of federal contractors thrown out of work; tariffs have driven up the cost of living while millions struggle to make ends meet; and over 250,000 Marylanders face devastating cuts to their health care,” the letter says.

As Maryland Democrats urge Ferguson to redistrict, State Del. Kathy Szeliga, a Baltimore County Republican, told The Sun on Monday that a legal chal-

Turn to Fight, Page 5

Senate nears vote on deal to end shutdown

Speaker tells House members to return to DC for session

By Mary Clare Jalonick and Lisa Mascaro
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate was drawing closer to a vote on legislation to end the shutdown on Monday after a small group of Senate Democrats broke a 40-day stalemate late Sunday evening and voted with Republicans to move forward with reopening the government.

It is unclear when the Senate will hold final votes on the bill, but Senate Majority Leader John Thune said he hopes passage will take “hours not days.”

“The American people have suffered for long enough. Let’s not pointlessly drag this bill out,” he said as the Senate opened on Monday morning.

The legislation would still need to clear the House before the government could

Inside: Maryland lawmakers weigh in on the deal, Page 5

reopen. Speaker Mike Johnson urged lawmakers to start returning to Washington “right now” given travel delays, but he said he would issue an official notice for the House’s return once the Senate passes the legislation.

“We have to do this as quickly as possible,” Johnson said at a news conference. He has kept the House out of session since mid-September, when it passed a bill to continue government funding.

After weeks of negotiations, the moderate Senate Democrats agreed to reopen the government without a guaranteed extension of health care subsidies, angering many in their caucus who have demanded that Republicans negotiate with them on the Affordable Care Act tax credits that expire Jan. 1. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., promised a mid-December vote on the subsidies.

Turn to Deal, Page 2

TRUMP WATCH

Trump pardons Rudy Giuliani, others who tried to overturn 2020 election loss

President Donald Trump has pardoned his former personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, his onetime chief of staff Mark Meadows and others accused of ailing the Republican’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

The “full, complete, and unconditional” pardon for dozens of Trump allies are largely symbolic. It applies only to federal crimes, and none of the people named in the proclamation were ever charged federally over the bid to subvert the election won by Democrat Joe Biden. It doesn’t affect state charges, though state prosecutions stemming from the 2020 election have hit a dead end or are just limping along.

The move, however, underscores Trump’s continued efforts to promote the idea that the 2020 election was stolen from him even though courts around the country and Trump’s own attorney general at the time found no evidence of fraud that could have affected the outcome. Reviews, recounts and audits of the election in the battleground states where Trump contested his loss also affirmed Biden’s victory.

Trump’s recent action follows the sweeping pardons of the hundreds of Trump supporters charged in the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, including those convicted of attacking law enforcement. See Page 7

Here are more headlines from the Trump administration on Monday:

Ballots: The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to decide whether states can

continue to count late-arriving mail ballots, which have been a target of Trump. The justices took up an appeal from Mississippi after a panel of three judges nominated by the Republican president on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last year that the state law allowing ballots that arrive shortly after Election Day to be counted violated federal law. See Page 8

Flights: Trump pressured controllers Monday on social media to “get back to work, NOW!!!” He said he wants a \$10,000 bonus for controllers who’ve stayed on the job and to dock the pay of those who didn’t. The head of the controllers union said they’re being used as a “political pawn” in the fight over the shutdown. The Federal Aviation Administration warned Monday that controller shortages at more than a dozen towers and control centers could cause disruptions in cities including Philadelphia, Nashville and Atlanta.

Drug war: Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Monday announced the latest in a series of strikes on boats accused of ferrying drugs, killing six people in attacks on two vessels in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The dual strikes on Sunday bring the total number of known attacks up to 19 and the death toll to at least 75 people since the Trump administration launched a campaign against drug trafficking in South American waters that many see as a pressure tactic on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

— From wire reports

Foster care workgroup urges action

The workgroup created to study Maryland foster youth being housed in hotels or in hospitals was urged to develop actionable recommendations by the upcoming session. Page 4

Md. Remembers loved ones killed in auto crashes

For those who lost loved ones in car crashes, the holidays can be difficult. The Maryland Highway Safety Office will hold a memorial service Nov. 16. Page 4

Turnstile picks up 5 Grammy nominations

A hardcore band homegrown in Baltimore and with an international following, has racked up five 2026 Grammy Award nominations. Page 4

READER POLL

Will fly delays during the government shutdown affect your vote in the next election?

Vote at baltimoresun.com/cctpoll or by scanning this QR code with your phone. The Carroll County Times reader poll is an unscientific survey in which website users volunteer their opinions on the subject of the poll.



TALK TO US:

The Carroll County Times welcomes reader submissions responding to our coverage or highlighting an issue. Letters should be 350 words or fewer and submitted online at baltimoresun.com/cctletters or sent to cctletters@baltsun.com. Include your name, address and phone number.

