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Speaker of the House Ryan Fecteau, D-Biddeford, is named in more than a dozen of the reported threats between January and late August of this year. Most recently, he was the subject of a bomb threat the day after conservative activist Charlie Kirk was killed. (DARYN SLOVER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Threats against Maine lawmakers have tripled over the last few years

Maine is not alone in seeing a rise — U.S. Capitol Police investigated 9,474 ‘concerning statements and direct threats’ against legislators last year, the highest number since 2021.

By RACHEL OHM
Staff Writer

Maine police are seeing an increase in reported threats against state lawmakers that comes amid a similar rise nationally and concerns about escalating political violence. Reported threats have more than tripled since 2023, when

Maine Capitol Police received 23 reports of threats against lawmakers, according to data provided in response to a Freedom of Access Act request. In 2024, 53 threats were reported, and 75 reports have been made as of mid-September this year. The Press Herald requested

data going back to 2020 but was told it would take longer to compile because of a change in the way Capitol Police track threats. Maine Department of Public Safety spokesperson Shannon Moss said in an email Thursday that the increase was noteworthy. She said Capitol Police

work with law enforcement at other state capitols as well as other federal, state and local authorities in investigating and mitigating such threats. She did not provide a specific number on how many reported threats lead to charges and prosecutions, but noted that one recent case was successfully investigated and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Please see **THREATS**, Page A8

SPRINKLE OF COLOR



Annie Cough takes a lunchtime walk along State Street in Augusta. Friday will be partly cloudy but the weekend will be bright with highs in the mid-70s. (JOE PHELAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

TODAY’S ALMANAC

September 26, 2025

Today is Friday, Sept. 26, the 269th day of 2025. There are 96 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 26, 1960, the first nationally televised debate between presidential candidates took place as Democrat John F. Kennedy and Republican Richard M. Nixon faced off in Chicago.

Also on this date:

In 1777, British troops occupied Philadelphia during the American Revolution. In 1986, William H. Rehnquist was sworn in as the 16th chief justice of the United States, while Antonin Scalia joined the Supreme Court as its 103rd member. Rehnquist died in 2005 and Scalia in 2016. In 2005, Army Pfc. Lynndie England was convicted by a military jury in Fort Hood, Texas, on six of seven counts stemming from the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal. **Today’s Birthdays:** Country singer David Frizzell is 84. Author Jane Smiley is 76. Actor Linda Hamilton is 69. Tennis player Serena Williams is 44. Singer-actor Christina Milian is 44.

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More wells run dry as drought continues

With 12% of the state in an extreme drought, over 10 times as many wells have been reported dry so far this year than in 2024. Most of the state was predicted to get 1-2 inches of rain on Thursday, but it’s not nearly enough to make a dent in the shortage.

By DANIEL KOOL
Staff Writer

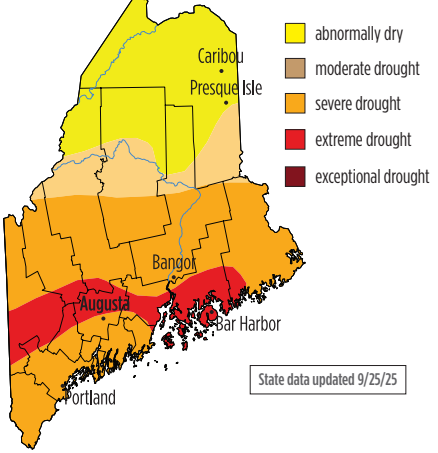
As she washed dishes on an early September evening, Barbara Winslow felt the water pressure start to drop. She knew the state had been in a worsening drought, so she turned off the tap. “You know, I’ll wait until tomorrow,” the Porter resident recalled thinking. “And the next morning, my daughter took a shower and completely lost water. Like, she was in the

shower — mid-shampoo.” That was about two weeks ago, she said. The well has been dry ever since. About half of Maine residents rely on private wells to supply water to their homes, according to the Maine Geological Survey. But prolonged dry conditions lead to lower groundwater levels, making it difficult or impossible to draw water from some wells. More Maine wells have been reported dry this year than in

the last four years combined, according to state data. And it’s not clear whether a late-in-the-week run of rain will be enough to restore them, as the weeklong drought expands to cover nearly three-quarters of Maine. So far, at least 173 wells have been reported dry in 2025, according to the Maine Emergency Management Agency, which collects

Extreme drought grips swath of Maine

All 16 counties are experiencing some level of drought, with extreme conditions spanning the middle of the state, from Fryeburg through Waterville to Bar Harbor, according to federal data released Thursday.



SOURCE: www.maine.gov, U.S. Drought Monitor

STAFF GRAPHIC | JAKE LAWS

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COVID-19 shots available in Maine for adults while pediatric supply limited

By JOE LAWLOR
Staff Writer

Despite conflicting guidance from the federal and state governments, the updated COVID-19 vaccine is now available at pharmacies and doctor’s offices in Maine, but supplies of the pediatric version of the vaccine remain limited. MaineHealth announced on Thursday that its primary care practices are now offering the COVID-19 vaccine to anyone age 18 and older and prescriptions are not needed. Northern

Light Health has the vaccines for anyone 19 and older, officials confirmed. Pediatric supplies have not yet arrived, according to MaineHealth and Northern Light. The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine has left patients wondering where and when they can get their fall shot. “I think the theme of this COVID vaccine season is confusion,” said Amelia Arnold, vice president of the Maine Pharmacy Association.

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Social Security ending paper checks. What’s it mean for Maine recipients?

The phaseout starts next week, but those who haven’t switched to online payments will still be paid.

By JOHN TERHUNE
Staff Writer

Social Security checks have been arriving in Maine mailboxes for nearly 90 years, but that’s on track to change next week — in theory, if not in practice. A March executive order signed by President Donald Trump set Sept. 30 as the official deadline for the U.S. Treasury Department to stop making payments, including retirement benefits and income tax re-



A spokesperson for the Social Security Administration said they’ll still issue paper checks in cases “where a beneficiary has no other means to receive payment.” (BRADLEY C. BOWER/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

funds, via physical checks in most circumstances. The vast majority of Mainers on Social Secu-

rity already receive their monthly benefit electronically. Those who haven’t yet made the switch can likely still expect a check to arrive in October as the government gives time for stragglers to get on board. But experts say that shouldn’t give recipients a false sense of security. “Do not wait until the last minute,” said Noël Bonnam, AARP Maine’s state director. “Don’t fight it.” Here’s what Mainers need to know.

WHY THE CHANGE?

Trump’s executive order listed several reasons the Treasury is switching

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