Outside Sen. King's Augusta office, protesters challenge his support for Schumer / **B1**

$4.25

Tuesday, November 17, 2026

Portland Press Herald

WEATHER: **Sunny** **High 52°** Details, B4

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Pingree wants a public healthcare option for Maine. Is it doable?

The governor-elect plans to convene a working group to devise the details of the plan.

By JOE LAWLOR
Staff Writer

Gov.-elect Hannah Pingree pushed for a government-run healthcare option for Mainers in her campaign, a reform that could change the state's health insurance landscape.

Pingree will begin her term with expanded Democratic majorities in the state House and Senate, making it easier to get her agenda through the Legislature. She also comes in with a mandate to bring down costs in Maine. These two factors could provide the ingredients for a public option, the change Pingree is pushing for.

> "I want to help ensure people who are being left out have a more affordable option, a state-backed plan."
>
> **GOV.-ELECT HANNAH PINGREE**

But how a public option would work in Maine is not clear, as Pingree hasn't yet formulated a specific plan.

The goal, Pingree said in an interview, is to improve access for the uninsured or those who face cost-prohibitive insurance premiums. Medicaid cutbacks and the elimination of certain Affordable Care Act subsidies are making it harder to maintain health insurance for thousands of Maine residents.

"There is just a lot of frustration on people's ability to access the healthcare insurance system and afford healthcare," Pingree said.

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Maine Gov.-elect Hannah Pingree said her family was one of thousands in Maine who saw their premiums soar after Congress failed to extend Biden-era tax credits for Affordable Care Act plans in 2025. She said she envisions the state using tax dollars to help reduce the cost of the plans. (RUSS DILLINGHAM/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

TODAY'S ALMANAC

November 17, 2026

Today is the 321st day of 2026. There are 44 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 17, 1968, the last minutes of a tense NFL matchup on NBC between the New York Jets and the Oakland Raiders were preempted by the children's film "Heidi." The network received thousands of calls from angry viewers and formally apologized.

Also on this date:

In 1800, Congress held its first session in the partially completed U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

In 1869, the Suez Canal opened in Egypt after 10 years' construction.

In 1965, North Vietnamese forces ambushed a battalion from the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division during what would become known as the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, the first significant confrontation between U.S. and North Vietnamese troops in the Vietnam War (more than 100 U.S. soldiers died in the ambush).

In 1973, President Richard Nixon told a gathering of Associated Press managing editors at a televised news conference in Orlando, Florida: "People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I'm not a crook."

In 1997, 62 people, most of them foreign tourists, were killed when militants opened fire at the Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt; the attackers were killed by police.

In 2003, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Austrian-born actor who had become one of America's biggest movie stars of the 1980s and '90s, was sworn in as the 38th governor of California.

Today's Birthdays:

Film director Martin Scorsese is 84. Actor-model Lauren Hutton is 83. Actor-director Danny DeVito is 82. "Saturday Night Live" producer Lorne Michaels is 82. TV host-entertainer RuPaul is 66. Actor Rachel McAdams is 48.

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PPH DAILY

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The Capt. Almer Dinsmore departs Rockland on its way to Vinalhaven on Tuesday. It uses battery power during passenger loading and unloading, switches to hybrid mode in open water and charges overnight in Rockland. The Maine Department of Transportation estimates the Dinsmore will use 35,000 fewer gallons of diesel fuel a year than a traditionally powered ferry of the same size. (GREGORY REC/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Maine beats many US metro cities to the plug with first hybrid ferry

By synchronizing shoreside power with boat delivery, the state avoided a nationwide infrastructure trap stalling other fleets.

By PENELOPE OVERTON
Staff Writer

As high-profile green transit projects in New York and Seattle stall over missing dockside power, Maine has quietly outpaced the rest of the country by plugging in its first hybrid commuter ferry on Day 1.

The Capt. Almer Dinsmore, which can hold up to 250 passengers and 23 vehicles, launched last week. It runs on electric power while docked and switches to hybrid or diesel during its 15-mile runs between Rockland and Vinalhaven, according to the Maine State Ferry Service.

"It's a significant step forward in modernizing our fleet," said EJ Dupont, director of the ferry service.

The price tag? About $22.2 million. The state paid $15.3 million. Federal funds covered the rest.

Other states have bought hybrid ferries. A few short-distance river ferries or tourist vessels are even in service. But most of the highly touted clean ferries lack the dockside stations needed to charge the lithium ion battery packs that store their onboard electricity.

New York City's $33 million hybrid ferry has yet to reach its projected fuel and emissions savings because federal grant holdups have stalled construction of its shoreside charging station, according to Sarah Krautheim, chief of staff for The Trust for Governors Island, which operates the route.

Washington State runs a diesel-electric ferry that cannot connect to shoreside power

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'RECOVERY DEPENDS ON SUSTAINED ACTIONS'

Endangered rightwhale population drops again

By PENELOPE OVERTON
Staff Writer

The North Atlantic right whale population slipped again in 2025, alarming scientists who warn that the endangered species remains locked in a fight for survival because of human-caused injuries and shifting ocean conditions.

The population dipped from an estimated 389 individuals in 2024 to 382 in 2025, according to whale researchers gathered at the annual North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Monday. The new count carries a margin of error of plus or minus 11 whales and comes against the backdrop of the most successful calving season since 2009.



A North Atlantic right whale in the waters off New England in May 2024. After a brief period of recovery, their numbers have fallen from 389 to 382. (NOAA VIA AP)

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Police surveilled worker for 2 years before launching Medicaid fraud case

Federal investigators installed a pole camera outside the home of a Community Health Care employee in 2024.

By EMILY ALLEN
Staff Writer

Police were investigating a South Portland personal care agency worker at least two years before federal prosecutors accused him and others of accepting Medicaid funds for services they didn't provide, according to newly unsealed court records.

Community Home Health Care LLC, its owner and five employees were charged with healthcare fraud conspiracy and indicted by a grand jury last month. They pleaded not guilty on Oct. 27 and were released on bail conditions. Their trial will be held in Portland, according to U.S. District Judge John Woodcock, and is tentatively scheduled for December.

The allegations focus on services dating to 2020 that Community Home Health Care claimed to have provided to one client.

In an application for a search warrant filed this year, an FBI agent said that investigators had been surveilling Adel Al Rashid, a personal support specialist at the organization, since April 2024.

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