



Clemson recruit leads list of top Livingston County linebackers

SPORTS, 1B

PRESS & ARGUS

LIVINGSTON DAILY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026 | LIVINGSTONDAILY.COM PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Retired United Methodist Church Bishop Julius C. Trimble said opening the door for political money to influence churches could limit what he described as faith communities' unifying role in society. USA TODAY NETWORK FILE

Lawsuit over church endorsements renewed

Some argue faith leaders should be able to pick candidates

BrieAnna J. Frank
USA TODAY

As the midterm campaign heats up, a legal case continues to unfold over whether churches will be able to endorse candidates and more openly take part in politics – without drawing the ire of the Internal Revenue Service.

The IRS has long banned tax-exempt houses of worship from direct involvement in politics. But since 2024, there has been a lawsuit trying to overturn the rules. At one point, a settlement paved the way for the reversal of decades of precedent – only for a judge to throw it all out.

The so-called Johnson Amendment was added to the Internal Revenue Code in 1954 and banned all tax-exempt 501c(3) organizations, like churches and charities, from “directly or indirectly” participating in politics, specifically in endorsement or opposition of candidates.

The National Religious Broadcasters, an international association of evangelical Christian communicators, as well as the conservative advocacy group Intercessors for America and two Texas



The Rev. Franklin Graham, the president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has been a steadfast supporter of President Donald Trump. Whether churches should endorse political candidates has been up for debate recently as some challenge the Johnson Amendment that prohibits such action. ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES FILE

churches – First Baptist Church Waskom, and Sand Springs Church – sued the IRS over the rule in September 2024, alleging that it violated their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

The parties reached a proposed settlement in 2025. It included the IRS re-

versing decades of legal precedent by saying churches and other religious 501c(3) organizations could endorse political candidates in certain circumstances.

In court documents, the agency

See LAWSUIT, Page 6A

Pinckney man drowns trying to save dogs on Portage Lake

Cassidey Kavathas
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

A local man drowned while trying to rescue his dogs July 24 on Portage Lake in Putnam Township.

According to a release from the Livingston County Sheriff's Office, the man, 42, of Pinckney, entered Mud Bay without a life jacket to retrieve his dogs. LCSO said nearby witnesses were able to take the dogs from him, but he submerged and didn't resurface.

After a search lasting about 90 minutes, the man was found in water roughly 20 feet deep. He was recovered and pronounced dead on-scene.

The incident remains under investigation.

— Contact reporter Cassidey Kavathas at ckavathas@usatoday-co.com.

McConnell releases new photo, update on health

Zachary Schermele and Keely Doll
USA TODAY NETWORK

Doctors still have not cleared Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, to return to work or leave a rehabilitation facility, his office said in a July 27 statement.

The 84-year-old was hospitalized for a fall and a brief loss of consciousness June 14, followed by pneumonia.

McConnell said in the statement he was still undergoing “intense physical therapy.”

“I appreciate all of your continued well wishes, and I’m looking forward to getting back to the Senate and to Kentucky soon,” he said.

His office did not provide a tentative date for when that might be.

The Office of the Attending Physician said the effects of childhood polio are a “significant factor in his mobility.”

“Since his discharge from hospital care, he has maintained a strenuous course of physical therapy and rehabilitation, including multiple sessions

See MCCONNELL, Page 3A



Thinking About Selling Your Home?
Find Out What It's Worth.



Call, Scan, or Visit
888-620-8839
addressUSA.com



Scan for a free home valuation and plan your next step

