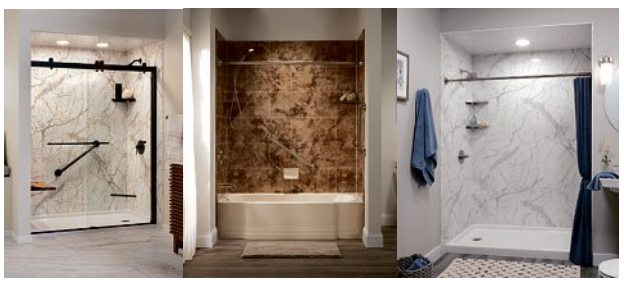
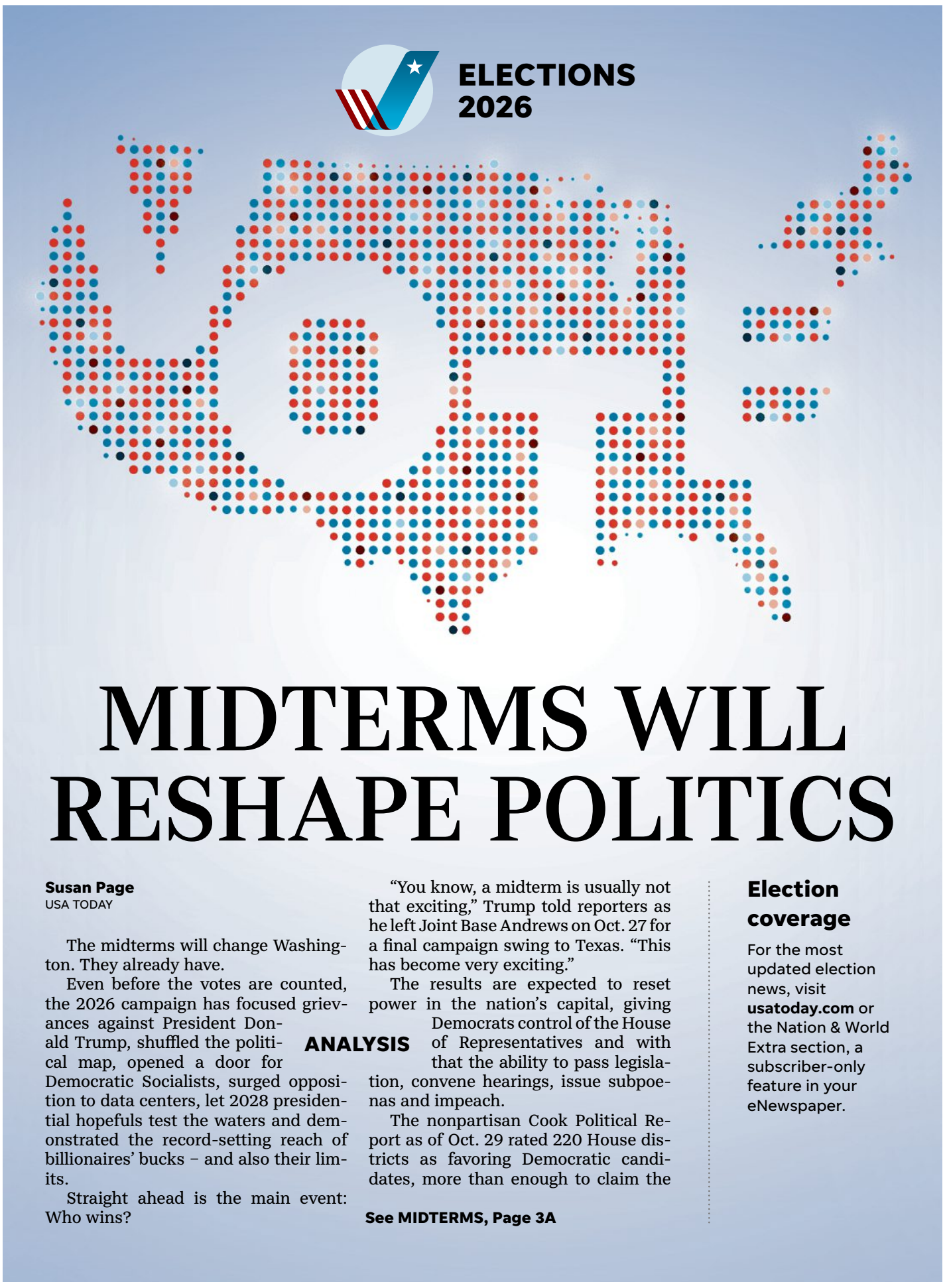
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MIDTERMS WILL RESHAPE POLITICS

Susan Page
USA TODAY

ANALYSIS

The midterms will change Washington. They already have.

Even before the votes are counted, the 2026 campaign has focused grievances against President Donald Trump, shuffled the political map, opened a door for Democratic Socialists, surged opposition to data centers, let 2028 presidential hopefuls test the waters and demonstrated the record-setting reach of billionaires' bucks – and also their limits.

Straight ahead is the main event: Who wins?

"You know, a midterm is usually not that exciting," Trump told reporters as he left Joint Base Andrews on Oct. 27 for a final campaign swing to Texas. "This has become very exciting."

The results are expected to reset power in the nation's capital, giving Democrats control of the House of Representatives and with that the ability to pass legislation, convene hearings, issue subpoenas and impeach.

The nonpartisan Cook Political Report as of Oct. 29 rated 220 House districts as favoring Democratic candidates, more than enough to claim the

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Election coverage

For the most updated election news, visit **usatoday.com** or the Nation & World Extra section, a subscriber-only feature in your eNewspaper.

ILLUSTRATION BY TYLER RAU/USA TODAY NETWORK; AND GETTY IMAGES

Free speech exists inside city hall — within guardrails

Marta Mieze
Springfield News-Leader
USA TODAY NETWORK

Open meetings hosted by public governmental bodies offer an opportunity for residents to share their thoughts on local ordinances and proposals and express concerns. But after recent Springfield City Council meetings that saw some speakers escorted out by police, residents may be left wondering where the line between freedom of speech and local law is drawn.

The Sept. 21 council meeting saw two people detained and cited for violations under City Code. Both instances were related to the outcry from the public who had gathered to speak on a resolution calling for a comprehensive review of how the city uses automatic license plate reader cameras, often referred to as Flock cameras. As Mayor Jeff Schrag referred the matter to committee, bypassing the planned public hearing, the crowd erupted in criticism.

As members of the public voiced their displeasure, Noah Powell was briefly detained and issued a citation after shouting several obscenities at the mayor. Mylie "Mia" Hyder tried to speak about Flock cameras during the public hearing period for another agenda item and was detained and issued a citation after being asked to stop her comments and giving council the middle finger.

Both citations were issued for disturbing or disrupting the orderly progress of a city meeting. Hyder is set to appear in Municipal Court for the charge on Dec. 3 and Powell's plea hearing has been set for Dec. 7, according to filings on Casenet. Powell has launched a GoFundMe fundraiser to help with his legal defense costs and had raised about $1,200 as of Oct. 29. He will be represented by attorney Jason Coatney. Coatney did not respond

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Ruling protects 'medically frail' Medicaid recipients who can't work

Shalina Chatlani
STATELINE

Medicaid recipients who are disabled or have a chronic illness will not have to prove they are unable to work to be exempted from new work requirements that take effect next year, a federal judge ruled Thursday, Oct. 29.

The decision by U.S. District Judge Richard Stearns in Boston grants a partial victory to the 25 Democratic-led states that sued the Trump administration in June, arguing that its new "medically frail" designation was too narrow and would make it too difficult for ill and disabled people to remain on Medicaid, the joint federal-state health insurance program for people with low incomes.

However, the decision also granted some concessions to the administration, most notably by allowing the new work requirements included in the measure known as the One Big Beautiful Big Act to remain in place.

Under that broad 2025 tax and spending law, states that have expanded Medicaid to cover more adults under the Affordable Care Act must require enrollees to work, go to school or volunteer for at least 80 hours a month.

In addition to the 40 states (plus the District of Columbia) that have expanded Medicaid under the ACA, the new rules will apply to Georgia, Tennessee and Wisconsin, which have used federal waivers to expand their Medicaid

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Dr. Mehmet Oz, administrator of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, speaks in Milwaukee on July 8. A federal judge on Oct. 29 struck down the Trump administration's new guidance on who can qualify for a "medically frail" exception to new Medicaid work requirements. JIM VONDRUSKA/REUTERS

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