



CLARK HOLDS ON

NO ONE HAS BLOWN A 6-SHOT LEAD IN THE U.S. OPEN — AND WYNDHAM CLARK NARROWLY AVOIDS BECOMING THE FIRST, FINISHING WITH A 3-OVER 73 FOR A ONE-SHOT VICTORY. **IN SPORTS**

NEWARK

At ICE detention site, Father's Day brings calls to 'free the dads'



Members of the Visibility Brigade hold demonstrate Sunday outside Delaney Hall in Newark. Steve Hockstein, for NJ.com

Holiday sees a renewed focus on family as protesters continue rallies outside Delaney Hall.

S.P. Sullivan NJ.com

Families and protesters gathered outside Delaney Hall on Father's Day urging the release of dads who are being held inside. What appeared to be a mostly peaceful daytime protest, took a turn after a woman waving an American flag at the entrance of the ICE detention center in Newark was hit by a car that was entering the facility, according to video shared on social media. The Department of Homeland Security and Newark Police did not return a request

for comment about the incident. Protesters at the facility's entrance, where employees with GEO Group, the government contractor that runs the detention center, have clashed many times with employees and federal officers. Aside from a brief scuffle on Sunday, the family event contrasted with violence between police and protesters seen there in recent weeks. Demonstrators gathered Sunday for a "Free Delaney Dads" protest. They displayed signs, hung ties from a fence and played music. Gabriela Soto, whose husband is being held in a different New Jersey immigration detention center in Elizabeth, was among those leading the protest on Sunday. Martin Soto was detained by ICE on Feb. 2 while he was out buying diapers, his fam-

ily says, and in the months since his pregnant wife has become one of most prominent voices at the protests outside Delaney Hall in Newark. "We are not allowed to bring any cards or letters, but I will try later today to do a video chat with him so he can see the drawings my oldest child has for him," she told NJ.com on Sunday morning. Martin Soto was relocated to a nearby detention facility in Elizabeth in May at the start of the protests outside Delaney Hall. A federal judge has ordered he remain in New Jersey pending the outcome of his case. Federal officials have disclosed little about Soto's arrest and detention, saying only that he is in the U.S. illegally and faced a charge of assault prior to his arrest. **SEE NEWARK, A2**

COMMENTARY

Rep. Kean is returning to work, but an epic fight awaits

Eyes will be on N.J. district as Dems look to grab the House.

Tom Martello NJ.com

House Republicans were already scared of losing their majority this November at Donald Trump's midterm. Then Tom Kean Jr. pretty much vanished for months. The GOP desperately needs Kean, a two-term congressman and a long fixture in Jersey politics, to keep the always-up-for-grabs 7th Congressional District red. With such high stakes, the mystery over his yet-to-be-disclosed medical condition has made this

a national story. Kean's chief campaign aide confirmed Thursday that the congressman will return to work June 30, which will be just shy of four months since he last voted. Kean had previously said his doctors told him he was "on the road to full recovery" and he intends to run a vigorous campaign. The long saga over his closely guarded health issue has drawn lots of scrutiny. A super PAC connected to national Democrats pounced, airing ads saying, "Wherever you are, do your job or get the hell out." At least one of the national rating outfits says the 7th District now "tilts" blue. And some Jersey insiders who love fueling that speculation machine wondered if Kean would drop out in favor of another Republican chosen by party leaders.

Can he put the absence behind him? Now that a return date is on the board, can Kean put all this in his rearview mirror? I think the jury is still out. But while many in the GOP are clearly worried, one leading Republican told me that national obsession aside, 7th District voters "aren't paying attention. It's June. Nobody cares right now." Kean aide Harrison Neely told me he believes it won't be an issue "because he plans to come back and be fully transparent about what happened." Voters may also be sympathetic to a politician they've known for years overcoming a health emergency. But even that best-case scenario for the GOP doesn't mask this reality: Tom Kean **SEE MARTELLO, A2**

STATEWIDE

Drop in N.J. drug deaths driven by gains in opioid crisis, CDC says

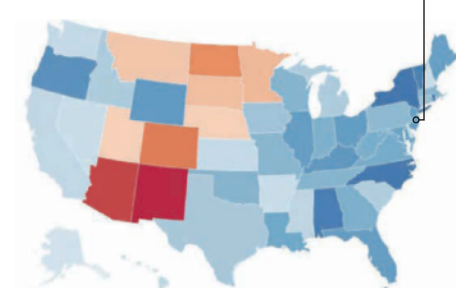
Decline here outpaces national average, federal agency says.

Jackie Roman NJ.com

Drug deaths fell sharply in New Jersey in 2025, compared with the previous year, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The state had 1,546 residents who died of a drug overdose during 2025, according to provisional data from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. That's down 22% from the 1,983 estimated deaths in 2024. The decline outpaces the national average of 14% and represents a drop of more than 50% compared to the peak of the pandemic in 2022, when overdose deaths in the state passed 3,000. The trend is driven by a reduction in deaths involving opioids, according to the CDC. "Obviously, we're very encouraged by the news and by the statistics that we're seeing," said Angelo Valente, the executive director of Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey. "However, we understand this is still a major issue in New Jersey and throughout the country and we need to continue to provide people with support and get to a point where there's not even one family affected by this." Nationally, overdose deaths were down nearly 14%, from 81,000 to 69,973. Rhode Island saw the largest decline, with a 35% decrease. But nine states saw either increases or no change at all, according to the CDC. Despite the decline, data shows that substance use disorder continues to rise. The percentage of people 12 or older with a drug use disorder in the past year increased from 8.7% in 2021 to 9.8% in **SEE OVERDOSES, A2**

OVERDOSE DEATHS IN U.S. FALL AGAIN

Overdose deaths decreased nearly 14% in the United States in 2025, new CDC data shows. Almost all states saw declines, but nine states bucked the trend and saw either an increase or no change at all.



Data still preliminary. Based on the change between 12 months before December 2024 and 2025.

Map: Jackie Roman, for NJ.com; source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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