



Community leader Jonathan Dandes, 72, dies

Buffalo Baseball Hall of Famer was a longtime Bisons executive | OBITUARY, PAGE C1

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ANALYSIS

State of Union will be delivered to a passive Congress

Lawmakers have been sidelined by Trump's broad reach

BY LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Trump will stand before Congress tonight to deliver the annual State of the Union address to a suddenly transformed nation.

One year back in office, Trump has emerged as a president defying conventional expectations. He has executed a head-spinning agenda, upending priorities at home, shattering alliances abroad and challenging the nation's foundational system of checks and balances. Two Americans were killed by federal agents while protesting the Trump administration's immigration raids and mass deportations.

As the lawmakers sit in the House chamber listening to Trump's agenda for the year ahead, the moment is an existential one for the Congress, which has essentially become sidelined by his expansive reach, the Republican president bypassing his slim GOP majority to amass enormous power for himself.

"It's crazy," said Nancy Henderson Korpi, a retiree in northern Minnesota who joined an Indivisible protest group and plans to watch the speech from home. "But what is disturbing more to me is that Congress has essentially just handed over their power."

She said, "We could make some sound decisions and changes if Congress would do their job."

The country is at a crossroads, celebrating its 250th

anniversary while experiencing some of the most significant changes to its politics, policies and general mood in many Americans' lifetimes.

The president muscled his agenda through Congress when he needed to — often pressuring lawmakers with a phone call during cliffhanger votes — but more often avoided the messy give-and-take of the legislative process to power past his own party and the often unified Democratic opposition.

Trump's signature legislative accomplishment so far is the GOP's big tax cuts bill, with its new savings accounts for babies, no taxes on tips and other specialty deductions, and steep cuts to Medicaid and SNAP food aid. It also fueled more than \$170 billion to Homeland Security for his immigration deportations.

But the GOP-led Congress has largely stood by as Trump dramatically seized power through hundreds of executive actions, many being challenged in court, and a willingness to do whatever it takes to impose his agenda.

"Retrieving a lost power is no easy business in our constitutional order," wrote Justice Neil Gorsuch in the Supreme Court's landmark rebuke of Trump's tariffs policy on Friday.

Gorsuch said that without the court stepping in on major questions, "Our system of separated powers and checks-and-balances threatens to give way to the continual and permanent accretion of power in the hands of one man."

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WNY in line for more state aid. Is it enough?



DEREK GEE, NEWS FILE PHOTO

"The additional funding will help us close the gap we inherited without new borrowing, but we understand that temporary aid is just that — temporary," Mayor Sean Ryan said of the AIM fund from New York State.

Hochul budget would add \$277M, but much of it is temporary

BY ROBERT GAVIN
Albany Bureau Chief

ALBANY — The good news for Western New York municipalities? They are set to reap more than \$277 million in total state aid under Gov. Kathy Hochul's latest updates to her executive budget proposal.

But there is bad news. A large chunk of that money, including nearly 22% of the aid for the City of Buffalo, is either temporary or a one-time lump sum. It raises the question of how cities, towns and villages can balance their books if and when their temporary state aid is no longer available.

"The additional funding will help us close the gap we inherited without new borrowing, but we understand that temporary aid is just that — temporary," Mayor Sean Ryan said in a statement to The Buffalo News.

The state funds most cities, towns and villages outside New York City through the Aid and Investments to Municipalities (AIM) program. But across New York, AIM funding has remained stagnant since 2011 — when Hochul was still the Erie County clerk. In 2024, the state introduced Temporary Municipal Assistance (TMA), which provides increases for

the same cities that receive AIM.

But, as its name suggests, it is not permanent.

On Thursday, in amendments to her \$260 billion budget plan, Hochul increased TMA money to municipalities across the state. The Buffalo-born governor went a step further for her hometown city: She increased Buffalo's state aid by \$40 million, totaling more than \$206 million. New York City will receive a \$1.5 billion increase. That largesse included a one-time lump sum of \$500 million. Buffalo's increased aid included a \$30 million one-time lump sum.

Ryan, a Democrat who served in the State Senate before his election as mayor in November, made it clear he was thankful to Hochul for understanding Buffalo's financial plight, which includes an estimated \$24 million budget deficit. He also made it clear that the city cannot depend on temporary revenue. Addressing reporters Thursday, he said the \$40 million increase gives the city breathing room to build a sound financial plan.

"One thing I know — it's not take the money and run," Ryan said. "The governor is going to want a financial plan that makes sense because she's not going to strand that kind of money in the City of Buffalo for us to make no changes based on that."

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RFK wants to boost pesticide production after long being a foe

BY ALI SWENSON
Associated Press

NEW YORK — For years as an environmental lawyer, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. crusaded against a controversial herbicide ingredient known as glyphosate, even winning a landmark case against chemical giant Monsanto by arguing that its Roundup weedkiller contributed to his client's cancer.

But now that he's the nation's top health official, Kennedy is falling in line with President Trump after he issued an executive order that's aimed at boosting glyphosate's production. The order would also grant limited legal immunity to manufacturers if they're following federal directives.

Kennedy on Sunday evening posted a lengthy statement on social media that calls pesticides "toxic by design" but frames Trump's move as necessary for agricultural stability and

national security.

"President Trump did not build our current system — he inherited it," Kennedy wrote. "I support President Trump's Executive Order to bring agricultural chemical production back to the United States and end our near-total reliance on adversarial nations."

It was a gesture of loyalty to the president who has enabled Kennedy's overhaul of vaccine policy at the federal government's highest levels, but it also opens a dangerous fault line in their political coalition ahead of the midterm elections in November.

As Kennedy's Make America Healthy Again supporters become more impatient with a Republican-led administration that's largely resisted their calls to regulate pesticides, they're speaking up about what they view as a betrayal of their support.

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BUFFALO NEXT: BUSINESS OF SPORTS

Selling off the stadium, piece by piece

Brandon Steiner was walking out of a bathroom at Highmark Stadium after talking about the outlandish — but potentially lucrative — idea of putting urinal troughs on the market as part of the selloff of items from the closing venue when he came upon a fan hotline phone on the wall of the concourse.



MIKE PETRO

Immediately, the founder of CollectibleXchange thought about the possibilities for the phone. He knew this was likely one of the next items that would appeal to a Buffalo Bills fan or sports collector.

"This is something I haven't thought about, but we're definitely going to take this," Steiner

said as he walked the inside of a snowy Highmark Stadium. "It's something that can be on someone's desk or shelf."

Steiner's company, CollectibleXchange, has been retained by the Bills and Erie County to salvage any stadium elements with resale value. It is offering seats, slices of the goal posts and chunks of the artificial turf field for Bills fans to purchase, and that is just the start.

He expects to begin removing items by March. The company is taking presale orders, and some keepsakes are sold out or close to selling out. It has Steiner thinking about what he can sell next.

Steiner has led the effort to sell items from around 10 professional sports stadiums and arenas that have closed or have been refurbished, such as Yankee Stadium,

Texas Stadium and Madison Square Garden.

But his latest effort in Buffalo has him questioning everything he thought he knew from all his years in the industry. He has not seen anything like this demand and passion for the items that he has at Highmark Stadium.

He has been through the Orchard Park stadium on several occasions during visits to Western New York. Each time, he finds new items to sell, and he is confident they are going to appeal to fans.

Steiner believes fans will be pleasantly surprised by some of the items that will be pulled out of the stadium and put up for sale. More products are expected to launch over the next several weeks.

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Cold with morning snow.
High 25, low 19. Details on Page B8



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