

Treatment of hearing loss with hearing aids may delay cognitive decline.*

Recent studies have found that treating hearing loss can support healthy aging and reduce the risk of cognitive decline by 48% over three years.¹

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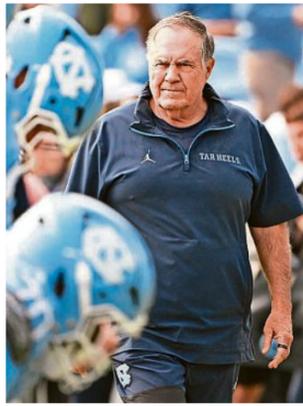
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*Source: Sarant et al 2023 <https://healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au/research-groups/audiology-and-speech-pathology-research/hearing-and-cognition-research-program/research/remediation-hearing-aids/>; Lin, E, et al. (2023, July 17). Hearing intervention versus health education control to reduce cognitive decline in older adults with hearing loss in the USA (HACHEY): a multicentre, randomised controlled trial. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)01406-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)01406-X)
²Certain types of hearing loss may require a hearing instrument model that is not appropriate for the trial. Hearing evaluation required. See clinic for details. Only available for selected hearing instruments. Offer expires 02/28/26.

O-D

OBSERVER-DISPATCH



5 college football coaches on the hot seat

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Hochul proposes more municipal aid



Utica Mayor Michael Galime, seen in this O-D file photo presenting his proposed FY 2027 budget to the Utica Common Council, said that additional state aid contained in Gov. Kathy Hochul's proposed FY 2027 Executive Budget could help to stabilize city finances. DANIEL DELOACH/UTICA OBSERVER-DISPATCH

Utica residents could see no increase in property taxes

Amy Neff Roth
Utica Observer Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

The City of Utica has gotten some good news for taxpayers that could translate into no property tax increase in the next fiscal year.

The city will get a discretionary funding increase of \$5.61 million from the state for the fiscal year 2026 budget, Mayor Michael Galime announced, say-

ing he received word of the increase in a personal communication from Gov. Kathy Hochul.

Galime presented his proposed \$93.3 million Fiscal Year 2027 budget earlier this month, which included a 2.9% property tax increase. That works out to an average increase of about \$50 a year, he said.

The additional state funding, though, is contained in the governor's Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget, which has

to be passed by the New York State Legislature. That proposed budget contains in increase a funding increase most municipalities in the state.

Hochul announced on Feb. 19 that her budget calls for tripling the amount of Temporary Municipal Assistance the state gives to cities, towns and villages (except New York

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"Donald Trump has been illegally taxing your groceries, furniture and cars for over a year. Time for a refund," said California Gov. Gavin Newsom. JOHANNES SIMON/GETTY IMAGES

Dems call for refunds after tariffs ruled illegal

Idea of rebate checks floated amid skepticism

Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

After the Supreme Court ruled against President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on imports, some Democrats are demanding that refunds be sent to Americans, the latest hypothetical plan to redistribute tariff income back to everyday Americans.

The nation's highest court on Feb. 20 ruled that Trump doesn't have the power to unilaterally impose the tariffs he enacted under an emergency powers law, which he has used as part of his foreign policy strategy with ever-changing rates on targeted countries.

Democrats including California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker have demanded refunds of at least \$1,700 per household, with Pritzker sending the Trump administration an invoice for that amount per family in his state.

"Donald Trump has been illegally taxing your groceries, furniture, and cars for over a year. Time for a refund,"

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U.S. has a looming sewage problem

Wastewater systems often receive a 'D' grade

Dinah Voyles Pulver
USA TODAY

Officials and engineers have warned for decades of a growing crisis with the aging systems that handle the billions of gallons of water flowing from toilets, tubs and washing machines across the country every day.

So when news broke of the untreated wastewater spill into the Potomac River

in January, it wasn't a surprise to industry experts.

"When you think about the number of miles of wastewater pipes in the ground, and the age of them, and the fact that for many, many years they have been underfunded, it's not surprising that things like this can occur," said Darren Olson, a professional engineer who chairs the Committee on America's Infrastructure for the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The society produces a "report card" of letter grades for each category of the nation's infrastructure every four years.

Wastewater consistently earns a "D."

An estimated 3 million to 10 million gallons of wastewater are spilled annually in the United States, but no national data exists showing total discharges, USA TODAY previously reported.

While the federal government used to fund more than 60% of infrastructure improvements, Olson said today the federal funds cover less than 10%, and the costs for repairing, maintaining and upgrading wastewater systems are increasingly shifting to customers and

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A fence separates the path from the C&O Canal where millions of gallons of untreated sewage were being diverted in Cabin John, Maryland, on Feb. 16. A section of the Potomac Interceptor, a sewage pipe, collapsed on Jan. 19. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

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Volume 210 | No. 45
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