

Bills oust HC McDermott after loss to Broncos

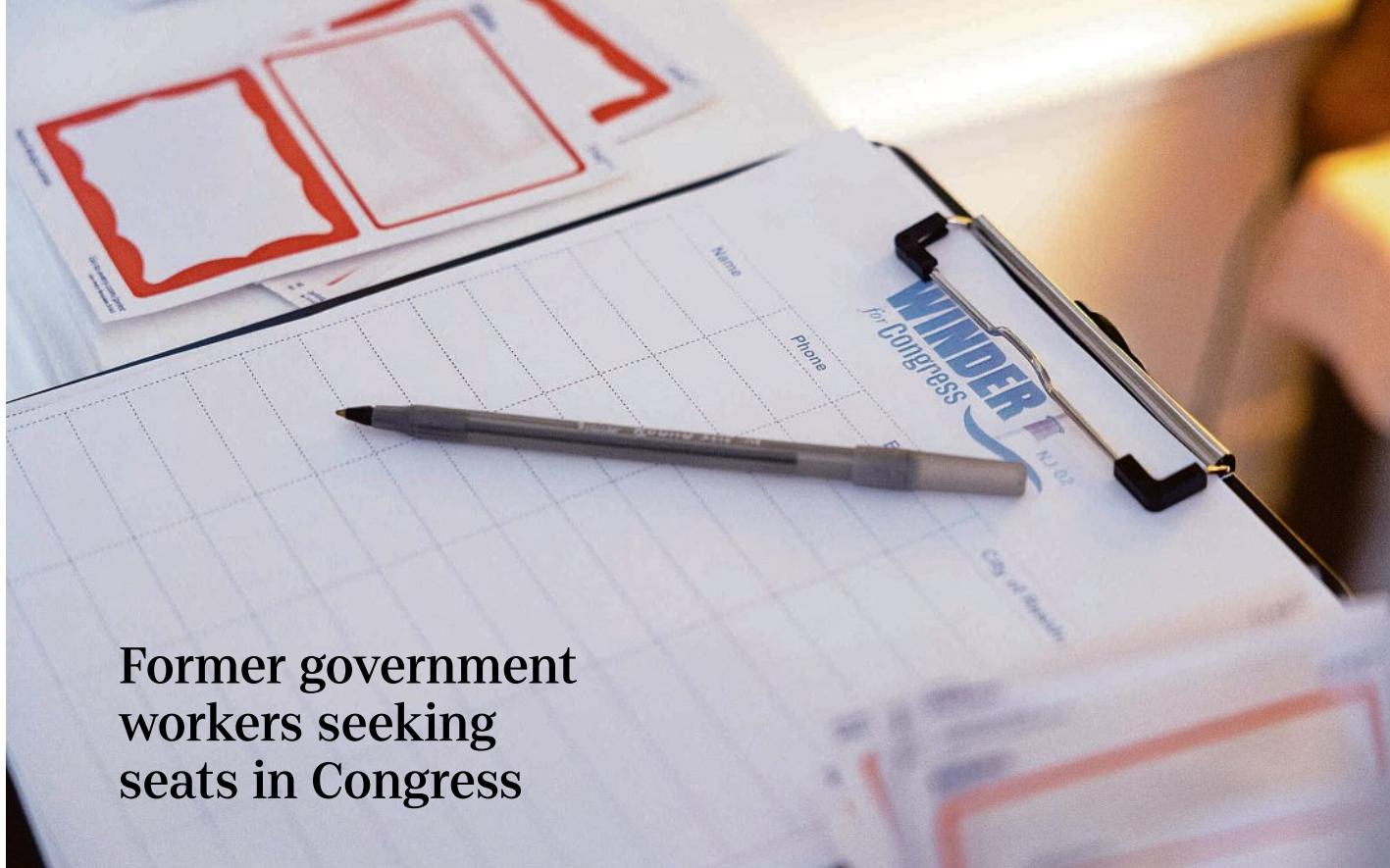
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'They understand what works and what doesn't'



Former government workers seeking seats in Congress

A sign-up sheet is displayed for supporters of Bayly Winder, a former U.S. Agency for International Development official and now Democratic candidate for Congress in New Jersey's 2nd District. PHOTOS BY RACHEL WISNIEWSKI/REUTERS

Joseph Ax
REUTERS

CAPE MAY, NJ — It was Megan O'Rourke's dream job. As a top climate scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, she oversaw grants for research projects aimed at making food production healthier and more sustainable. But when President Donald Trump's administration began targeting funding programs associated with climate change, O'Rourke decided she could no longer work for the government and remain true to her moral compass — or the oath she swore to serve the country, not just the president.

A few months after quitting her job, she's fighting back against Trump by running for Congress as a Democrat in New Jersey's 7th district, one of the few competitive U.S. House races likely to determine control of the chamber in 2026.

"I literally sat down a year ago with my husband, and we were plotting out our retirement in 12 years," said O'Rourke, 46. "Then one day, I went to him early this spring: 'Honey, what if I blow up our life and quit my job?'"

More than a half-dozen federal employees from departments including Justice, Veterans Affairs, State and Agriculture who quit or lost their jobs after the Trump administration swung a wrecking ball through their agencies are running for Congress as Democrats. Each has put their record of public service, and their experience during the opening months of Trump's second term, at the center of their campaign.

Democrats need to flip three Republican seats in this year's midterm elections to win a House majority. That would enable them to stymie much of Trump's legislative agenda and investigate his administration.

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Bayly Winder is one of several former government workers who quit or lost their jobs under the Trump administration and who are now running for Congress as Democrats.



New York State Governor Kathy Hochul addresses the crowd at White Pine Commerce Park in Clay during Micron's groundbreaking ceremony.

DANIEL DELOACH/UTICA OBSERVER-DISPATCH

Micron breaks ground on \$100B project

Thomas C. Zambito
New York State Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

Warring Democrats and Republicans gathered under one big tent Friday to celebrate tech giant Micron's \$100 billion investment in Central New York.

And for a moment it seemed like state and federal officials might, for a day at least, set aside party loyalty to mark a milestone achieved through bipartisan effort — the groundbreaking for a project that promises to deliver thousands of jobs to a region that needs them while charting the nation's course toward becoming a leader in the manufacturing of semiconductors.

And, like that, the moment was gone.

"It is great to be in Central New York, which, of course, you all know, is the heart of Trump country," Trump administration Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told the crowd. Some applause followed.

"We're here today because of the core drive from President Trump," Lutnick added. "See, this groundbreaking only got scheduled at the end of December because the Trump administration cleared out all of the environmental and other things that tend to get in the way."

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EU preps 'trade bazooka' amid Trump tariff threat

James Powel and Kim Hjelmggaard
USA TODAY

European Union ambassadors reached a broad agreement on Jan. 18 to intensify efforts to dissuade President Donald Trump from imposing tariffs on European allies while also preparing retaliatory measures should the American president follow through on his threats.

The consideration comes as Trump announced that eight NATO countries will face a 10% tariff on all goods sent to the United States, effective Feb. 1, until the country is allowed to buy Greenland, a step that major EU states decried as

blackmail. The tariff would increase to 25% on June 1 if a deal to purchase the region is not reached, Trump said.

French President Emmanuel Macron floated the possibility of using the EU's anti-coercion instrument against the United States as part of numerous exchanges with European leaders, a diplomat told USA TODAY. The diplomat added that Macron reaffirmed to his counterparts the importance of a firm and coordinated European response.

Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin said that while there should be no doubt that the EU would retaliate, it was "a bit premature" to activate the instrument.

In May 2025, the EU had said it would implement tariffs on \$107 billion worth of U.S. imports in the wake of Trump's sweeping tariff announcement but suspended them for six months after the president and ambassadors reached a deal. Items covered under the proposed tariffs, according to Euronews, targeted industries centered in Republican-leaning states, such as bourbon, airplane components, soybeans and poultry.

The EU has not ratified the deal, according to the Financial Times, and lawmakers in Brussels signaled that the

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French President Emmanuel Macron floated the possibility of using the EU's anti-coercion instrument against the United States over the tariff threat.

YOAN VALAT/REUTERS

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