



STAR ON THE RISE

NEW YORK GIANTS SECOND-YEAR LINEBACKER ABDUL CARTER —THE THIRD PICK OVERALL IN THE 2025 NFL DRAFT — HAS EMERGED AS A DISRUPTIVE FORCE EARLY IN TRAINING CAMP. B2

WASHINGTON

Social Security benefit cuts are on the horizon. Will Congress act?



Illustration by Advance Local; Shutterstock

After decades of procrastination, lawmakers are finally beginning to grapple with a Social Security shortfall set to affect retirees in six years unless Washington fixes it.

Steve Thompson Washington Post

After decades of procrastination, Congress is beginning to grapple with a Social Security shortfall set to slash benefit checks in six years unless lawmakers fix it. But instead of discussing actual fixes, a Senate Finance Committee hearing this week focused on how to kick-start the painful debate to come. Many in Congress have argued for outsourcing the problem to a bipartisan commission or advisory board. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., is among several lawmakers who have introduced bipartisan legislation to form such a panel. But AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeMond told the Senate committee to skip that step and get down to the difficult work of finding more money for a program that provides crucial financial support to more than 70 million Americans. “The history of special commissions is

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littered with very good intentions and failed results,” LeMond said. “They typically lack the clout, the power and the jurisdiction to do this hard work.” Time is running short. The trust fund that helps pay the program’s benefits is projected to be depleted in 2032, before the end of the next president’s term. If that happens, benefits will be abruptly cut by 22%, according to the program’s latest report released this summer. The stakes are huge not just for retirees and survivors who receive benefits but also for the local economies their Social Security income supports, and in turn for the nation’s financial well-being, analysts say. The partisan gap over what to do was apparent at the hearing.

Most Democrats say they want to tackle the shortfall by lifting the cap on wages subject to the Social Security payroll tax, and therefore collecting more in taxes. Many Republicans say that course would burden small businesses, not just the wealthy; some have suggested raising the retirement age, currently set at 67. President Donald Trump has warned his party against cutting “a single penny.” Several Republicans denied accusations from Democrats that they want to cut benefits. “Stop lying about people,” said Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wisconsin. “We want to preserve Social Security.” Most budget experts say a successful fix will almost certainly require both moderating the growth of Social Security benefits and raising taxes — actions likely to provoke political blowback. By fiscal 2033, closing the shortfall for a single year would require \$477 billion in cuts or fresh revenue, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington-based think tank — and that sum would grow to more than \$1 trillion per year by 2050, as much as the current budget for the Pentagon. “There was once a time when the shortfall was of a size that it could realistically be fixed solely with additional revenue, solely by slowing benefit growth, or solely by adjusting eligibility ages,” said Charles Blahous, a senior research strategist at George Mason University’s Mercatus Center and former economic adviser to President George W. Bush. “That time is long past.” SEE WASHINGTON, A3

SYRACUSE

Democrat sues GOP counterpart over escalating term limit fight

One election official accepted term limit law. The other didn’t.

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Democratic election commissioner Dustin Czarny has sued his Republican counterpart. A lawsuit filed Wednesday centers on Republican election commissioner Kevin Ryan refusing to put a term limit law on the November ballot. It asks the court to force Ryan to accept the law and agree to place it on the ballot. According to the lawsuit, Ryan “has acted unreasonably and beyond the scope of his ministerial (non-discretionary) role.” The lawsuit also alleges Ryan left the item off “through an act of personal discretion and political motivation.” The Democratic majority passed a law last month establishing term limits for top county roles, and sent it to County Executive Ryan McMahon. McMahon accidentally signed it into law after saying he planned to issue a veto. Ryan refused to accept the law to go on the ballot. Democrats, including Czarny, argue that McMahon’s approval stands. They say Ryan does not have the ability to ignore placing the law on the ballot. “I concluded that seeking a judicial ruling is the quickest, most appropriate, and perhaps only way to resolve this dispute before the statutory deadlines,” Czarny said in a statement.

The election commissioners have a deadline to accept items for the ballot. The ballots also have a deadline to be printed by. Czarny said that the issue is not about term limits, but rather not setting the precedent that an elections commissioner can pick and choose what goes on the ballot. “I recognize that my counterpart sincerely believes his position is the correct one, and I do not question his good faith,” Czarny said. “We simply disagree about the responsibilities assigned to SEE SYRACUSE, A3

DATA Hungry New Yorkers

Oswego County was among the top 20 in the state for overall hunger, with 14 percent of residents experiencing food insecurity. Oneida was just behind. A2

NATION Fauci held in contempt

The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs voted to hold Dr. Anthony Fauci in contempt over his refusal to answer questions. A4

Rare, potentially fatal tick-borne virus discovered in N.Y. state man Suffolk County case is first ever recorded in the Empire State.

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A rare, potentially fatal virus has been confirmed in New York state for the first time. Michael Larkin, 67, of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, tested positive for the tick-borne Bourbon virus, according to CBS News. The married father-of-three said he spotted two tiny lone star ticks on his leg while landscaping in his backyard. “I removed them. A couple of days later, I was not feeling well. I went to a local clinic, I told them about the tick bites. They tested for Lyme, but it did not show up,” Larkin said. “I just keep feeling worse and worse.”

The disease was eventually identified as the Bourbon virus by Stony Brook University researchers. It’s the first confirmed case in the Empire State. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Bourbon is named after Bourbon County, Kansas, where the disease was first discovered in 2014. The CDC says only a limited number of cases have been identified in the Midwest, East Coast, and Southern United States; it’s most prevalent in Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri, where an average of less than case per year is diagnosed. There is no cure for the virus. Two cases SEE SUFFOLK COUNTY, A3



An adult female lone star tick (Amblyomma americanum) crawling on a blade of grass in 2023. Smith Collection, Gado, Getty Images

