



Bills take center stage in Week 1 showdown

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VA Health facilities report staffing shortage concerns



Protesters in Washington, DC, gather June 6 to speak out against federal budget cuts to the Department of Veterans Affairs. KENT NISHIMURA/REUTERS

Agency official says survey data isn't reliable indicator; Dems in Congress warn of further cutbacks under Trump

David Robinson New York State Team | USA TODAY NETWORK

The number of Veterans Health Administration medical centers reporting concerns about severe staffing shortages across different health care jobs spiked 50% in 2025, a new federal report shows, noting many New York VA facilities struggled to fill some jobs. • The findings came from the VA Office of Inspector General and underscored widespread staffing struggles among private-sector health care systems in New York and the nation.

The OIG report was part of an annual survey aimed at uncovering occupations with the largest staffing shortages within each VA medical center. It found:

- Facilities reported a total of 4,434 severe occupational staffing shortages in 2025, a 50% increase from 2024 in which facilities reported 2,959 total shortage occupations.
- 94% of facilities reported severe occupational staffing shortages for medical officer occupations, and 79% of facilities reported severe shortages for nurses.

- Psychology was the most frequently reported severe clinical occupational staffing shortage and also the most frequently reported Hybrid Title 38 severe shortage occupation, with 57% of facilities reporting it as a shortage.
- Police was reported as a shortage by 58% of facilities, making it the most frequently reported severe nonclinical occupational staffing shortage and the most frequently reported of all occupations.

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“The report simply lists occupations that facilities feel are difficult for which to recruit and retain, so the results are completely subjective, not standardized and unreliable.”

Pete Kasperowicz

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs press secretary

CONGRESS



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-New York, spearheaded opposition to the GOP tax and spending bill. ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

Big issues await as lawmakers end recess

Passing budget measure is first item on agenda

Zachary Schermele

USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Congress' summer break is over, and lawmakers don't have much time to waste if they want to keep the federal government's lights on through October.

As a strict government funding deadline approaches by the end of September, Republicans need 60 votes in the Senate — and thus help from Democrats — to pass a budget bill and avoid a shutdown.

For that reason, Democrats know they have a fair amount of political leverage over Republicans for the first time since March. It remains to be seen, though, whether they can get Republicans to grant any of their demands — or if budget brinkmanship may lead the American economy into another government shutdown.

It's been a busy year so far for lawmakers, as Republicans have maneuvered huge cuts to taxes and spending through a GOP-controlled House and Senate. Before heading into the August break, Congress passed the “One Big, Beautiful Bill Act,” a massive domestic policy law championed by the White House that will cut social safety-net programs such as Medicaid and food stamps while providing tax breaks mostly to wealthier families and corporations.

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Teen accused of framing boy in fake Instagram threats

Tresa Baldas

Detroit Free Press

USA TODAY NETWORK

DETROIT — On the day of his high school graduation ceremony, class president Kumayl Raza was supposed to be delivering a commencement speech. Instead, he stood on his front lawn in pajamas, praying while a SWAT team searched his house.

A girl had accused him of threatening to shoot up the graduation ceremony, the same girl who had accused him of sexually threatening and stalking her on Instagram, in text messages and emails. The same girl who had persuaded au-

thorities to arrest him twice based on screen grabs like this one:

“I'm gonna burn down ur house with u in it, then tie up ur (expletive) burned body and choke u and (expletive) u so bad and shoot u in ur ugly (expletive) face.”

Raza insisted he never wrote such messages, and spent months professing his innocence. But no one would listen until his lawyer hired a digital forensic expert who discovered evidence that would vindicate the boy — and backfire on the girl.

In a cautionary tale for parents,

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Kumayl Raza recently was cleared of criminal charges after being falsely accused of stalking a fellow student on social media. The accuser now faces felony charges. DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUNOZ/DETROIT FREE PRESS

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