



## Hayes: College football must create playoff that looks like NFL

SPORTS, 1B

# TIMES HERALD-RECORD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026 | RECORDONLINE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



A 2023 study found that 75% of college students feel free to report their professors if they say something objectionable. Self-identified liberal students were more likely than conservative students to report their professors to the administration. GETTY IMAGES

## Student informants spur academic freedom debate

### Classroom speech, rights of educators and pupils under scrutiny

**Austin Sarat**  
Amherst College  
THE CONVERSATION

Texas A&M University told philosophy professor Martin Peterson in early January that he could not teach some of Greek philosopher Plato's writings that touch on "race and gender ideology."

The university's local chapter of the American Association of University Professors, an organization of professors and academics in the United States, quickly denounced this requirement.

Peterson, in response to his university's direction, replaced the Plato readings with material on free speech and academic freedom.

Silencing a professor from teaching a certain subject fits within what experts have long recognized as encroaching on academic freedom.

In another high-profile incident at Texas A&M in September, a student

**Silencing a professor from teaching a certain subject fits within what experts have long recognized as encroaching on academic freedom.**

filmed an exchange with an English literature professor, Melissa McCoul, who was talking about gender identity.

The student said that McCoul was violating President Donald Trump's January 2025 executive order that recognized "women are biologically female, and men are biologically male." As a result, the student told her professor, as seen in her video, "I've already been in touch with the president of A&M, and I have a meeting with him in person to show all of my documentation tomorrow." Her video went viral.

This represents a growing threat to academic freedom: Students who act as informants and police their classes and professors for signs of political incorrectness.

A 2023 study found that 75% of college students feel free to report their professors if they say something objectionable. Self-identified liberal students were more likely than conservative students to report their professors to the administration.

As someone who teaches politically charged subjects, I am very much aware of the need to teach in inclusive ways and respect the diversity of student views. I have also written about how academic freedom is changing, given new external threats and political realities. I recognize that students will play an important role in determining the future of academic freedom.

**Academic freedom is not the same as free speech**

Academic freedom is a complex concept that is often confused with freedom of speech.

The American Association of University Professors offers one definition: Academic freedom is focused on ensuring that professors can say,

See DEBATE, Page 2A

## Senator pushes for more solar in state

**Thomas C. Zambito**  
New York State Team  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gov. Kathy Hochul wants to add more nuclear power to a state energy grid that's increasingly dependent on natural gas as electric bills are surging. Climate goals the state established for renewable energy production also appear out of reach.

The solution?

Solar power. A lot more solar power, State Sen. Pete Harckham declared Tuesday, Feb. 10.

"Solar is far cheaper than a kilowatt of natural gas, of oil, of coal, or especially nuclear," Harckham said in Albany, as he rallied support for a measure that would create incentives for the state to tap into more of the sun's energy. "Solar is much more rapidly scalable than any of these technologies...I mean nuclear we're at best talking about 15, 20 years from now."

See SOLAR, Page 3A

## Delgado drops Dem primary bid

**Chris McKenna**  
New York State Team  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado has dropped his long-shot bid to challenge Gov. Kathy Hochul in a Democratic primary after courting progressive support for months but only falling further behind in polls.

Delgado announced his decision on Tuesday, Feb. 10, four days after Hochul trounced him by 85% to 15% among party delegates at an endorsement convention. It came as a surprise after he had vowed to stay in the race and collect petition signatures to get on the June 23 primary ballot.

"After much consideration, I've concluded that there simply is no

See DELGADO, Page 3A



Delgado

Experience the difference of our family of caring.

Our trusted family of seasoned professionals provides genuine care and comfort to residents, fostering an environment of stability and support.

*Why residents love to call Promenade home:*

My mother is so happy to be there! She loves the bowling, the bingo, all the music performances. The staff is very friendly and professional, the facility is very clean. To have a community around her and social activity means everything to us, her children. Thank you Promenade!

-Nancy



**Promenade**  
SENIOR LIVING

Where life blooms anew.

Pearl River, NY • Tuxedo, NY • Chestnut Ridge, NY  
Middletown, NY • Albany, NY

845-293-0805



Scan Me

### Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to recordonline.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 70 | No. 152  
Subscribe: 1-888-620-1700  
©2026 \$3.49



0 78908 22200 8