



Sanders, Jeudy need to get on same page

SPORTS, 1B

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Afghans in the U.S. fearful, anxious



More than 190,000 Afghans resettled in the United States since 2021 and some fear backlash after two National Guard soldiers were shot by a suspect who is from Afghanistan. PROVIDED BY THE US AIR FORCE VIA REUTERS FILE

Some worry of backlash after shooting in DC

Chris Kenning
USA TODAY

LOUISVILLE, KY – More than four years after a harrowing escape from Afghanistan in 2021 as Kabul fell to the Taliban, Tamim Bedar finally got his green card in March.

Bedar, 45, who spent years supporting U.S. goals during America’s 20-year war in Afghanistan, has since built a life in Kentucky helping other refugees, seeing his kids thrive in school and working on a master’s degree.

His parents, who joined him in 2022,

were granted asylum and are awaiting approval on their own green cards – further securing his family roots in a peaceful new home here, even as his brother remains in Afghanistan.

But now the ground is shifting underneath his Afghan community and others like it around the nation in the wake of the Nov. 26 shooting of two National Guard members in Washington, DC.

The suspect is an Afghan national – and that revelation has led to policy changes, political fallout and anxiety for Bedar and others.

Afghan communities in the United

States have strongly condemned the shooting while pleading to not let one person’s violence define a community.

“There’s a lot of fear within the community that there will be collective punishment because of the act of one individual,” Bedar said.

The suspect, Rahmanullah Lakanwal, 29, is one of the more than 190,000 Afghans who resettled in the United States since 2021 through programs created by the Biden administration for Afghans fleeing the Taliban takeover.

Authorities say it’s still unclear why the suspect took aim at the patrol in an

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NIL deals for high school athletes target for Ohio lawmakers in 2026

Jessie Balmert and Anna Lynn Winfrey
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

An Ohio State football commit successfully sued to profit off his name, image and likeness. Then, the Ohio High School Athletic Association voted to allow NIL for high school students statewide.

But Ohio lawmakers could undo all of that by banning NIL deals for students in grades 7 through 12 as soon as next year.

Rep. Adam Bird, R-New Richmond, plans to introduce a bill in 2026 to prohibit high school and middle school students from profiting from NIL, WEWS first reported. Bird told the statehouse

bureau that Ohio’s young athletes shouldn’t face the pressure of making money from their sport.

“Sports should be about fun and learning and growing,” said Bird, a former coach and school superintendent. “It’s absurd to think that the athletes are going to now make more money than the coach or the referee or the bus driver that’s hired to bus them to the games.”

But attorney Luke Fedlam, who sued to allow OSU commit Jamier Brown to benefit from up to \$100,000 in potential deals, said state lawmakers shouldn’t strip thousands of deserving students of this opportunity.

“If legislators were to ban high school

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The Ohio High School Athletic Association will allow high school athletes such as Ohio State football commit Jamier Brown, center, to profit from their name, image and likeness. LORI SCHMIDT/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Ravenna City Council adds 4 officers to police force

Diane Smith
Ravenna Record-Courier
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ravenna City Council voted Dec. 1 to add more officers to the city’s Police Department – something it hasn’t done since the Clinton administration.

Police Chief Jason “Jake” Smallfield said the last time the city added police officers to its force was 25 years ago, when the city obtained a grant to hire officers. He was one of the officers hired at that time, he said.

“That’s a phenomenal milestone,” he said. “That’s huge for our department. It’s a 16% increase, just adding four guys.”

He said one of the new officers will be assigned to Ravenna School District, and that Superintendent Ben Ribelin is anxiously awaiting the addition of the district’s second school resource officer.

“I said, ‘Sorry, Mr. Ribelin, I gotta fill the road first,’” Smallfield said.

In November, Smallfield told council’s Health and Public Safety Committee that adding three officers to road patrol would help increase safety. A fourth officer, he said, would add to the school district’s resource staff.

Council members commended Smallfield for his leadership, saying they were impressed with officers’ calmness and professionalism on display in videos on social media.

Councilwoman Amy Michael noted that the department has been active in Crisis Intervention Training.

“That situation could have totally gone another way,” she said.

Council President Rob Kairis urged Smallfield to approach council again if he needs anything to make the city safer.

“If there’s ever anything City Council can do to improve your department, don’t hesitate to bring it forward,” he said.

Smallfield said the department and its officers have been through a long road that included a leadership transition and two officer-involved shootings.

Smallfield said the two incidents, in which suspects were killed, have taken a toll on the department’s officers. In October 2024, Ravenna police fatally shot a homeless man after they say he stabbed another man and then refused to drop an ax as he approached officers. The following March, a man was fatally shot by Ravenna officers after a confrontation with officers.

“An incident like this has the potential to tear a department apart,” he said. “It affects morale, cohesion and trust, both among officers and with the community we serve.”

He said the department staff drew closer and strengthened its connection with the community, recently restarting its Shop with a Cop program.

Reporter Diane Smith can be reached at dsmith@recordpub.com.



Ravenna Police Department lowered its American flag to half-staff on Veterans Day on Nov. 11. LISA SCALFARO, AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

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