



HS football power poll: No. 1 spot settled on the field

SPORTS, 9A

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LGBTQ+ migrants sent into hostile countries



A gay Mauritanian man, who lived in the United States for more than a decade before being deported to a third country and later relocating to Senegal, looks across the river that separates Senegal from his native Mauritania on Sept. 29 in Matam, Senegal. MISPER APAWU/REUTERS

Third-party deportation case before high court

Robbie Corey-Boulet, Kristina Cooke, Ngouda Dione and Loucoumane Coulibaly
REUTERS

DAKAR, Senegal – Two years ago, a mob assaulted Abdou Latifou and threatened to kill him after he was seen kissing the man he loved. He fled his home in the West African nation of Togo and sought refuge in the United States, according to his asylum application. Latifou rejoiced last November when a U.S. immigration judge ruled it was

not safe for him to be sent home. “I told myself, ‘From this day on, I’m entering a world where I’m free to live as myself,’” he said. In June, though, Latifou was forced onto a U.S. deportation plane – not back to Togo but to Sierra Leone, a nation where gay men can be sentenced to life in prison under colonial-era laws. President Donald Trump’s administration has deported tens of thousands of people to third countries, enabled by deals with impoverished foreign

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Volunteers pack voting stickers during a tour at the Hamilton County Board of Elections facility on Thursday, Sept. 24 in Norwood. FRANK BOWEN IV/THE ENQUIRER

LaRose: No ICE in polling places

Ohio election chief says agency won’t patrol elections

Haley BeMiller
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents won’t patrol Ohio polling places during the November election, said Secretary of State Frank LaRose, who called on election officials not to “validate unsupported claims.” In an Oct. 1 memo obtained by the statehouse bureau, LaRose told county boards of elections not to alter procedures based on “social media rumors, partisan commentary or speculation.” The memo came days before Ohio begins early in-person voting for the Nov. 3 election, which features high-stakes races for governor and U.S. Senate. “I recognize our obligation to be prepared for any realistic scenario that might arise during the voting process,” LaRose said. “No one has placed a greater emphasis on readiness than we have during my administration. But fear is not an election plan, and rumor is not a security protocol.” Democrats and voting rights advocates have expressed concern about ICE at the polls as President Donald Trump continues an aggressive immigration crackdown and pushes for more federal oversight of elections. A

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Trucking companies face cash flow crunch amid diesel costs

Nathan Hart
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

There was one topic that dominated the Ohio Trucking Association’s annual conference in September. Diesel fuel prices. National diesel prices hit a record-high average of \$6.53 per gallon Sept. 21, and they remain near the historic peak. Diesel prices in Ohio average even higher, currently sitting at around \$6.65 per gallon, almost \$3 more expensive than the same time last year, when it was \$3.66 a gallon.

The Ohio Legislature has passed and Gov. Mike DeWine has signed a gas tax holiday bill that cuts the state tax on diesel fuel by 47 cents for 90 days officially beginning Sunday, Oct. 4. But the United States’ war with Iran, which sparked rising fuel and diesel fuel costs beginning in February, shows no immediate signs of ending. Several Ohio trucking company leaders and industry experts interviewed by The Dispatch said their businesses – and the trucking industry as a whole – are facing an ongoing cash flow crisis brought on by soaring fuel costs.

“It is very dire. We have seen trucking companies go out of business,” said Thomas Balzer, president and CEO of the Ohio Trucking Association. Fuel costs for trucking company Continental Express in Sidney are up 75% compared to last year, said Kiera Sullivan, general counsel and shareholder for Continental Express. And her company can’t just immediately charge customers more to make up for these costs, she said. Trucking rates are set by contracts, sometimes spanning multiple years. Continental uses fuel surcharges, which pass some fuel costs onto its customers,

but it doesn’t get reimbursed for these surcharges immediately, Sullivan said. “We’re paying for that fuel right now because our trucks need to deliver that freight right now and put diesel in the vehicles. And so, we’re paying for that now and we don’t get reimbursed on fuel surcharge for 30 to 120 days, sometimes up to 3 to 4 months, which is a big, big, cash flow problem. That’s super hard,” she said. Plus, fuel surcharge rates are set every Wednesday, so trucking companies have

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