



## U.S. has a looming sewage problem

INSIDE, 7A

# The Times

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## Foster hometown pride to grow civic engagement



Regular community events, from farmers markets to fireworks, build emotional ties to a place. GETTY IMAGES

### Local patriotism one cure for sour feelings about politics

Sean Richey  
Georgia State University | THE CONVERSATION

Eileen Higgins won a historic victory in December. She became the first woman ever elected mayor of Miami, as well as its first Democratic mayor since 1997. • Although the stakes in the city's Dec. 9, runoff election were high, interest was not – 4 in 5 registered voters stayed home.

Low turnout is common in municipal elections across the country. While much of the nation's political attention stays focused on Washington, the leaders who control the nation's streets, schools and neighborhoods are typically chosen by a small fraction of citizens.

Although many Americans can identify their U.S. senators or members of Congress, far fewer can name even one of their local elected officials, such as a city council member. To cite one example, a North Carolina study found that 86% of state residents could not identify their own elected leaders, including local government officials.

See LOCAL PRIDE, Page 2A



Turnout in local elections regularly falls below 20%, often leaving critical decisions in the hands of small, unrepresentative groups, creating an electorate that's disproportionately White, elderly and affluent.

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People who loved their town were more likely to attend city council meetings, contact local officials, volunteer for campaigns and discuss local issues with friends. The same pattern held for civic participation – from volunteering with community groups to organizing neighborhood cleanups.

POLL

## 60% of Americans disapprove of Trump

Kathryn Palmer  
USA TODAY

Ahead of President Donald Trump's first State of the Union address of his second term, a new poll shows a majority of Americans disapprove of the president's job performance, especially on inflation, tariffs and foreign policy.

In a Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll released on Feb. 22 – two days before Trump's highly anticipated address to Congress – 60% of Americans said they disapprove of the way he is handling his role. Of that number, 47% indicated a strong disapproval. Another 39% said they approve of the president's performance.

The pollster said the last time

See TRUMP, Page 2A

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