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HIGH PRAISE

All the ways Republicans want to honor Trump, from the \$100 bill to a federal holiday and Mount Rushmore



The faces of Mount Rushmore National Memorial are seen Sept. 21, 2023, in, Keystone, S.D. ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTOS

By Kevin Freking
and Leah Askarinam
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Imagine getting the day off work for Donald Trump's birthday. Receiving a \$100 bill with Trump's portrait on it. Touching down at Donald J. Trump International Airport near the nation's capital. And taking in a show at the Donald J. Trump Center for Performing Arts.

All would be possible under a flurry of bills Republican lawmakers have sponsored this year.

Trump is six months into his second term, but some Republicans are ready to elevate him into the pantheon of American greats, proposing an ever-growing list of bills paying tribute well before his second term ends. One lawmaker even proposes carving his face into Mount Rushmore.

It's a legislative exercise mixing flattery and politics, providing another stark reminder of the Republican Party's transformation under Trump as lawmakers from red-leaning states and congressional districts look for ways to win the president's good graces — and stay close to his supporters.

Doug Heye, a Republican strategist who served as communications director of the Republican National Committee, said the bills have an important audience despite their seeming frivolity.

"This is more about one person," Heye said. "It's not, 'Hey, voters, look

what I'm trying to do for Donald.' It's, 'Hey, Donald, look what I'm trying to do for you.'"

NO TIME TO WASTE

House Republicans moved quickly to honor Trump after his second term began. The bill to rename Dulles International Airport in Virginia after Trump was introduced 72 hours after his swearing-in.

"Best president in my lifetime," said the bill's sponsor, Rep. Addison McDowell of North Carolina. "And I can't think of a better way to honor somebody than to cement their place in history by naming an international airport in our nation's capital after him."

Rep. Brandon Gill of Texas waited a few more weeks before sponsoring his bill to put Trump on the \$100 bill, which now features Benjamin Franklin. His legislation stated no \$100 bill printed after Dec. 31, 2028, could be printed without Trump's portrait on the front, even though federal law bans living figures from being placed on U.S. currency. That law, enacted just after the Civil War, was intended to avoid the appearance of a monarchy.

Another proposal from Rep. Greg Steube of Florida would rename Washington's subway system the Trump Train. There's also a bill from Rep. Claudia Tenney of New York making June 14 a new federal holiday called "Trump's Birthday and Flag Day."

Perhaps the most daring idea comes

from Rep. Anna Paulina Luna of Florida, who wants the Interior Department secretary to arrange for Trump's likeness to be carved into Mount Rushmore alongside Washington, Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson and Teddy Roosevelt. She has two models of it in her office.

Luna said through two assassination attempts and a "sham impeachment," Trump has "shown not just resiliency in character but also to have been able to do what no other president has been able to accomplish."

Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina admits he wasn't enamored with Trump at first. Now, Wilson carries a pamphlet he gives to colleagues asking them to sponsor a bill that would direct the Bureau of Printing and Engraving to design and print a \$250 bill bearing Trump's image. The honor would coincide with the 250th anniversary of the United States declaring its independence.

"I believe the president has served in a such a manner that he deserves it," Wilson said.

It's not just a few random Republicans taking part. In the GOP's tax cut and immigration law, leadership changed the name of a new savings account for children from "MAGA accounts" to "Trump accounts."

"Because Trump is a transformational leader and he advocated for them," Rep. Jason Smith, the chair-

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PENNSYLVANIA

Why you may see higher electric bills this summer — and next

Higher rates and usage will contribute to the spike

By Katie Meyer
SPOTLIGHT PA

HARRISBURG — Steeper energy costs are coming this summer, and bills are expected to be even worse next year, thanks to a recent power auction that saw utilities pay record-high prices.

The rising summer prices in Pennsylvania are partly driven by unavoidable factors.

As the Public Utility Commission (PUC) wrote in a warning to consumers Friday, the state has seen "soaring power usage during multiple heat waves since mid-June and scorching conditions that pushed electricity demand on the regional power grid to its highest level in 14 years."

That record-setting usage, the commission warned, "will soon be reflected in monthly electric bills."

Nils Hagen-Frederiksen, a spokesperson for the PUC, said that coinciding with the heat waves, which began earlier than usual this summer, many Pennsylvania residents saw their energy prices move up on June 1.

That "reset," which electricity distributors can perform in June and December, only affects customers who get what the PUC calls "default service," meaning they haven't shopped around for a lower rate that is locked in by a contract.

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8 major student loan changes from Trump's budget bill

Next steps for borrowers

By Eliza Haverstock
NERDWALLET

Student loan borrowers face a new status quo after Congress and President Donald Trump signed off on a massive budget reconciliation agreement last month — the so-called "one big, beautiful bill".

The changes are significant, but not immediate. Most will go into effect from July 1, 2026, to July 1, 2028, including:

- Big cuts to federal loans for grad students and parents.
- A new repayment plan landscape.
- Limits to relief options for struggling borrowers.

Since Congress wrote these changes into law, they're not susceptible to legal challenges, says Stanley Tate, a lawyer who specializes in student debt issues. (Many

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Poll: Fewer Americans see discrimination as anti-DEI movement gains traction

By Terry Tang and Amelia
Thomson-Deveaux
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Slightly less than half of U.S. adults believe that Black people face "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of discrimination in the United States, according to a poll. That's a decline from the solid majority, 60%, who thought Black Americans faced high levels of discrimination in the spring of 2021, months after

racial reckoning protests in response to the police killing of George Floyd.

Significant numbers of Americans also think diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, also known as DEI, are backfiring against the groups they're intended to help, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, including many people who belong to those groups.

The findings suggest Amer-

icans' views on racial discrimination have shifted substantially since four years ago, when many companies launched efforts to promote diversity within their workforces and the products they sold.

Since then, many of those companies have reversed themselves and retreated from their diversity practices, a trend that's accelerated this year under pressure from President Donald Trump, a Republican who has sought to

withhold federal money from schools and companies that promote DEI.

Now, it's clear that views are changing as well as company policies.

Claudine Brider, a 48-year-old Black Democrat in Compton, California, says the concept of DEI has made the workplace difficult for Black people and women in new ways.

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A mural by artist Tene Smith is seen April 1 near the entrance of Chicago Women in Trades, a nonprofit dedicated to training and retaining women in the skilled construction trades. ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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