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ANALYSIS

Trump, GOP on verge of big win in Texas



Democratic state Rep. Gene Wu displays a permission slip allowing him to leave the House in the custody of the Texas Department of Public Safety on Aug. 18 after a legislative session in Austin. SERGIO FLORES/REUTERS

All-out redistricting war could help GOP

Erin Mansfield
USA TODAY

A partisan battle in Texas over who holds power in Washington during the final two years of President Donald Trump’s second term has unfurled into a nationwide debate drawing in top political figures as voters brace for another divisive election in 2026.

The Lone Star State’s GOP lawmakers were working to send new congressional maps to Republican Gov. Greg Abbott on Aug. 22 that Trump and his allies hope will give them a strategic advantage in holding onto their majority in the U.S. House. But the fight in Austin has spread beyond the state’s borders and created significant uncertainty about who will be in position to govern during the second half of the Trump administration and after 2028 election. “Game on,” New York Gov. Kathy Ho-

chul wrote Aug. 20 in a social media post. She is one of several state leaders considering their own steps like the Texas Republicans to redraw congressional district borders inside their states. California Gov. Gavin Newsom is another, and in his state, Democratic lawmakers want voters to decide in a Nov. 4 special election whether to redraw their maps. The California Legislature on Aug. 21 approved Newsom’s

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‘Digital descent’ fueled tragedy

Report traces path that led to school shootings

Michael Loria
USA TODAY

He was a 17-year-old student in Nashville. She was 15 and living in Wisconsin. They joined the same chatroom, followed each other online, and months later found themselves part of a growing club: U.S. school shooters. Investigators at the Anti-Defamation League found striking similarities between the two young killers and the path they took that shattered families and communities, according to an Aug. 21 study provided to USA TODAY. That path included watching videos of graphic violence, following white supremacists online and celebrating other shooters, investigators found. Solomon Henderson, 17, wound up killing a student and injuring another in January at Antioch High School in Tennessee. Natalie Rupnow, 15, killed two students and injured six in December at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison, Wisconsin. Both committed suicide. The ADL says the report, “Two Teens. Two School Shootings. One Digital Descent,” shows the deadly influence of online extremist communities. “Kids and teens today have lived their entire lives with easy internet access, putting them even more at risk of encountering violent extremism online,” said ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt. “Extremist ideas combined with gore websites can inspire users to seek out more extremist content, while violence on extremist platforms can inspire others to look for even more violent content. It’s a vicious cycle, especially for young people.”

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Erin heads away from U.S.; rip currents still a threat

Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

As Hurricane Erin moves away from the East Coast on Aug. 22, it leaves behind flooded-out and sand-covered roads, eroded beaches and dangerous waters for beachgoers. Some of the hardest hit areas were along the Outer Banks barrier islands of North Carolina, where waves crashed into beachfront homes and made a major road impassable. A state of emergency was also declared in New Jersey on Aug. 21 in preparation for flood impacts and high winds as Erin made its up the coast out at sea. Erin made a turn to the northeast and was finally moving away from the United States as a weakened Category 1 hurricane, according to the National Hurricane Center. The storm passed about

200 miles from the North Carolina coast. Though Erin has weakened, dangerous surf conditions and rip currents remain a threat at beaches along much of the East Coast, forecasters said. “It may seem like a nice beach day, with sunshine and blue skies as the storm goes out to sea, but powerful rip currents will be lurking in the water through Saturday,” AccuWeather lead hurricane expert Alex DaSilva said. On the Outer Banks, at a gauge on the beach at Duck, North Carolina, the National Weather Service said the high water level at high tide on Aug. 21 reached 6.97 feet. The water level was about 9 inches below the previous record, set in 2003 during Hurricane Isabel. Roads in the Outer Banks between

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Large waves crash as seen from the beach in Ocean City, Maryland, on Aug. 21. Hurricane Erin made a turn to the northeast and is finally moving away from the United States, according to the National Hurricane Center on Aug. 22.

OLIVIA MINZOLA/SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

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