



Klubnik, offense doom Tigers in upset LSU loss

SPORTS, 1B

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Democrats see chance to rebuild in rural America

Locals report rising dismay over GOP cuts

Sarah D. Wire
USA TODAY

Dom Holmes, 28, has learned something important in 10 years of organizing progressives in rural Pennsylvania: You can’t just show up when you need people to turn out to vote. You have to sit and listen to them.

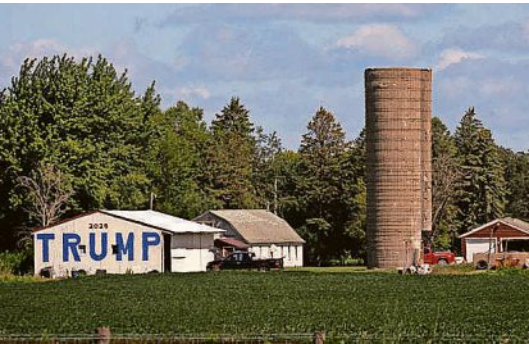
In recent weeks, when he’s stopped to listen, he’s gotten an earful about the tax and spending bill the Republican-led Congress passed in July.

“Folks are especially worried about how that’s going to impact them at the local level,” he said. They’re particularly “outraged,” he said, about cuts to food stamps and Medicaid and the likely damage to rural hospitals. “Folks should be aware of what the impact – immediate and not – will be on them and they should know who brought that impact to their community; who brought it home to them.”

His message is being echoed by rural organizers across the country who told USA TODAY that now is the time to talk with rural voters about the cuts in the GOP’s landmark law – and who voted for them.

Rural Democrats see implementation of the GOP tax and spending law, combined with other changes from the Trump administration that they say will directly harm rural communities, as a moment Democrats can use to rebuild their brand in what has been MAGA country for a decade.

And while national Democrats have their own plans for wading into these communities, the locals say they know these places and their neighbors best. They aren’t sitting



A farmer uses a barn to show support for President Donald Trump on Aug. 10, 2024, near Charles City, Iowa.

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

around, hoping a national group will swoop in.

“I’m a rural Democrat. We don’t really tend to wait around. There’s already just a ton of stuff happening,” said Matt Hildreth, executive director of RuralOrganizing.org. “The energy is already happening on the ground.”

‘The frustration with Republicans is palpable’

Republicans control the House by a voting margin of 219 to 212 with four seats currently vacant. Democrats need to win four seats next year to take over the Senate. Gaining control of either chamber would allow Democrats to freeze many of President Donald Trump’s policy proposals with two years left in his term.

Both parties expect the new spending law,

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AT TOP: Lily Franklin visits voters in Montgomery County, Virginia. The Democrat narrowly lost the race for a House delegate seat in the rural district in 2023 and is running in 2025.

PROVIDED BY THE LILY FOR DELEGATE CAMPAIGN

Military fretted over LA deployment

Lawyers drafted rules for troops that warn of risks

Tom Hals
REUTERS

As President Donald Trump began his push to send the National Guard and Marines to U.S. cities, military leaders privately questioned whether the troops had received proper training and warned of the “far-reaching social, political and operational” risks of aiding law enforcement, according to a Reuters review of military records disclosed in court.

U.S. Army officials planning an operation in MacArthur Park during the June deployment in Los Angeles determined that using troops to protect agents carrying out Trump’s immigration crackdown posed an “extremely high” risk to civilians, troops and the military’s reputation, according to an internal document.

Officials warned that the operation could attract protests and spiral into a riot with potential for “miscommunication and fratricide” as well as accidental harm to civilians, including children, the operation planning document said.

The trove of internal military reports and messages, disclosed during a trial to resolve a lawsuit by California Gov. Gavin Newsom, offers a rare inside look at concerns from commanders after Trump broke a long-standing tradition against using the military in support of domestic law enforcement over the objections of local officials.

Since deploying 4,000 National Guard members and 700 Marines to Los Angeles to quell protests against immigration arrests, Trump has sent National Guard troops to Washington and is considering expanding the military presence in other Democratic-run cities.

To mitigate the risks of the Los Angeles deployment, military lawyers drafted rules for using force and de-escalation that troops could access on their phones and that warned of the high stakes of the deployment.

“The very nature of domestic operations – American military forces operating in U.S. communities – has such significant implications that the mistakes of a few soldiers can have far-reaching social, political, and operational effects,” according to an undated document titled “Los Angeles Civil Unrest SRUF.” The acronym means Standing Rules for the Use of Force.

Louis Caldera, Army Secretary to Democratic former President Bill Clinton, said that deploying the military domestically threatens to put soldiers and civilians at risk, undermines recruitment and erodes public support.

“Trump has broken a lot of norms,” said Caldera. “His predecessors would not use the military in this way.”

The Department of Defense declined to comment on ongoing litigation.

‘Not a loaded question’

While governors often deploy National Guard troops under their command to help during disasters, in Los

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