



Trade talks intensify as deadline nears

INSIDE, 4A

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Sikes Senter Mall is seen in Wichita Falls. NAOMI SKINNER/TIMES RECORD NEWS

Sikes merchant starts petition drive to save mall

Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

One merchant at Sikes Senter is taking steps to stop the city from buying the mall and demolishing it. Amy Walker operates Withershins Menagerie, an oddities and collectibles shop. She began an online petition and a paper petition to stop the plans that were revealed on Friday. She said Monday she would go to the City Clerk's Office to get official petition

forms to put the project's fate before voters. "We're asking them to bring it to a public vote because we believe there should be renovation done to the mall, not demolition," Walker said. Residents can also have their say when the City Council holds a public hearing on the project at 2:30 p.m. Aug. 14 in Room 10 of the MPEC, 1000 Fifth St. Plans revealed by Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce CEO Ron Kitchens would have the city purchase Sikes Senter for \$28 million and sell it to a Dal-

las developer who would bulldoze the structure and replace it with an open-air retail center. A football stadium for Midwestern State University would also be built on the site. Walker said almost every other merchant supports the petition drive "because everyone wants to save their jobs and their store." According to a legal posting in the Times Record News on Thursday, residents may put the matter to a public vote by collecting signatures from 10% of registered voters within 60 days.

Breaking quorum considered to block redistricting

Owen Dahlkamp
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

WASHINGTON — As Republicans in Texas move full steam ahead with a plan to redraw the state's congressional districts, Democrats are privately mulling their options, including an expensive and legally dicey quorum break. If they go that route, it appears they will have the backing of big-dollar Democratic donors. By fleeing the state to deprive the Legislature of enough members to function, Democrats would each incur a fine of \$500 per day and face the threat of arrest. Deep-pocketed donors within the party appear ready to cover these expenses, according to three people involved in the discussions. The donors' willingness to foot the bill eliminates a major deterrent to walking out — the personal financial cost — and could embolden Democrats who might otherwise hesitate. But first, the donors and absconding members would need to figure out how to skirt a potential roadblock: Texas House rules prohibit lawmakers from dipping into their campaign coffers to pay the fines. Republicans approved the \$500 daily punishment in 2023, two years after Democrats fled the state in an unsuccessful bid to stop Republicans from passing an overhaul of the state's election laws. Two people involved in the latest Democratic fundraising strategy sessions, who were granted anonymity to discuss private conversations, claim their legal teams have found a way to disburse the funds to the members but declined to provide any additional details. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, a Dallas Democrat who was part of the 2021 quorum break, sees a path to circumvent the campaign finance rules: With minimal limits on external income,

See **QUORUM**, Page 3A

Gunman kills 4, himself in Manhattan

Man appeared to blame NFL for brain injury

Thao Nguyen, James Powel, Eduardo Cuevas, John Bacon, Karissa Waddick, Anthony Robledo, Jarrett Bell and Kathryn Palmer
USA TODAY

Homicide detectives were trying to determine why a gunman armed with an M4 rifle charged into a Park Avenue skyscraper in New York City and fatally shot at least four people, including a police officer, before killing himself. Five people were shot in the rampage July 28 inside the 44-floor Midtown Manhattan building that houses the NFL headquarters and offices of major financial firms. New York City Mayor Eric Adams said July 29 that preliminary investigations show the gunman, after a shooting in building's lobby, may have intended to target the NFL offices but took the wrong ele-

vator. It was the offices of the building's owner, Rudin Management, "where he carried out additional shootings and took the lives of additional employees," Adams said in an interview with CBS. New York City Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said that, in addition to the shooting victims, four people were treated for injuries they sustained while attempting to flee the scene. The NYPD officer was identified as Didarul Islam, 36, a member of the force for 3½ years. Islam leaves behind a wife who is eight months pregnant and two young sons. Adams ordered all flags on city buildings and stationary flagstaffs throughout the five boroughs to be lowered to half-staff until further notice in homage to Islam. "Officer Didarul Islam died as he lived, a hero and protector of New York City," Adams said in a social media post July 29. "We will never forget you." The suspect, 27-year-old Shane Tamura of Nevada, left a note that appeared to

blame the NFL for a brain injury, Adams told CBS. "The note alluded to that he felt he had CTE, a known brain injury for those who participate in contact sports," Adams said. "He appeared to have blamed the NFL for his injury." The skyscraper is home to major tenants including the NFL, KPMG, Blackstone Group, and Bank of America. Blackstone confirmed that Wesley LePatner, a senior managing director and CEO of its Real Estate Income Trust, was among the victims. "Words cannot express the devastation we feel," the firm said. "Wesley was a beloved member of the Blackstone family ... brilliant, passionate, warm, generous and deeply respected." NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell told staff in a memo late July 28 that a league employee was seriously injured during the shooting and was in stable condition at a New York hospital.

See **SHOOTING**, Page 3A

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