

## Home sales drop to lowest level not seen since 1990s

High mortgage rates and price tag on houses led to a slow year for 2024. **In Money**

## Doncic-Davis deal: Which team comes out ahead?

NBA blockbuster trade made as Mavericks and Lakers seek to bolster roster. **In Sports**

## 67TH ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS

## The best of Grammy night

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# USA TODAY

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KENDRICK LAMAR (TOP) BY DANIEL BO CZARSKI/GETTY IMAGES FOR CASH APP; BEYONCÉ BY LISA O'CONNOR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; SABRINA CARPENTER BY MIKE COPPOLA/GETTY IMAGES FOR MTV

### DC AIRCRAFT DISASTER

## Control tower staffing faulted

### Army identifies third pilot on the helicopter

**John Bacon and Cybele Mayes-Osterman**  
USA TODAY

Air traffic control staffing near Washington “wasn’t normal” Wednesday night at the time of the collision between a passenger jet and an Army Black Hawk helicopter that left 67 people dead, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy confirmed Sunday.

“What was happening inside the tower? Were they understaffed?” he said on CNN’s “State of the Union.” “Was it a right decision to consolidate the positions of the air traffic controllers from two to one? Those are questions that we need answers to.”

Duffy added that there hasn’t been enough air traffic controllers in America “for a very long time.”

On Saturday, the U.S. Army identified the third pilot of the helicopter involved in the crash as Capt. Rebecca Lobach, 28, of Durham, North Carolina. She was one of three soldiers aboard the helicopter, the Army announced alongside a statement from Lobach’s family on Saturday evening.

The Army had already identified the other two soldiers as Staff Sgt. Ryan Austin O’Hara, 28, of Lilburn, Georgia,

See **DISASTER**, Page 3A

## Search continues for black box in Philadelphia

Death toll may rise after air ambulance crashed into neighborhood. **3A**



Groundhog handler AJ Dereume holds Punxsutawney Phil after the famous rodent saw his shadow on Sunday. **JEFF SWENSEN/GETTY IMAGES**

## Phil: Get ready for extra long winter

Weather predictor Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow on Sunday, signaling six more weeks of winter. Every year, on Groundhog Day, the popular furry forecaster predicts – with limited success – if the U.S. will have an early spring or a longer winter based on whether he sees his shadow.

What weather forecasters say, **2A**

## Religious rights advocates’ cases at Supreme Court



# Establishment clause gets scrutiny

Justices are expected to consider three significant cases on religious rights this spring. **DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES**

**Maureen Groppe** USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Speaking to students at Catholic University last fall, Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh praised his colleagues’ efforts to reinforce the “critical principal” of religious liberty. • “That’s one area in the six years I’ve been on the court that, in my view, we’ve made correct and important strides,” he said. • In recent weeks, the court has teed up three more religious rights cases that could further advance what some view as a fight against religious discrimination. Opponents fear the court’s decisions will further erode the wall between church and state.

One case – which will determine whether Oklahoma can create the nation’s first religious charter school – is a potential blockbuster because it would allow government to establish and directly fund religious schools for the first time.

Another – a challenge from parents who want their elementary school children excused from class when books with LGBTQ+ characters are being used – could boost parents’ ability to demand curriculum opt-outs in public schools.

**“None of these are minor cases. These all have some reasonably significant stakes involved.”**

**Frank Ravitch**  
Michigan State University law professor who studies law and religion

The third – a dispute over an employment tax exemption for a Wisconsin Catholic charitable organization – could affect how easily tax exemptions are granted for any operation with a religious affiliation.

“None of these are minor cases,” said Frank Ravitch, a Michigan State University law professor who studies law and religion. “These all have some reasonably significant stakes involved.”

See **SUPREME COURT**, Page 6A

## Fires harmful to LA’s Latino community



The building on Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades where Casa Nostra Trattoria used to be is a shell of its former self. **JUAN CARLO/USA TODAY NETWORK**

## Report: Lasting effects, disproportionate impact

**Marc Ramirez**  
USA TODAY

The wildfires that ravaged much of Los Angeles County have disproportionately impacted Latino workers and communities and are likely to have lasting effects as the region recovers, researchers say.

The county’s Latinos are vulnerable on multiple fronts, according to a report compiled by the Latino Policy and Politics Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. Those include higher rates of employment in industries requiring a physical presence, higher exposure to air pollution and lower rates of health insurance.

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