

GOP camps hold up megabill

Medicaid, debt fuel dissent before a key House vote despite pressure from Trump.

By MICHAEL WILNER

WASHINGTON — Confident that passage of President Trump's signature legislation was all but assured, West Wing aides summoned holdouts in the House Republican caucus Wednesday to deliver a blunt message: Follow the president's orders and get it done by Friday.

It was a call to action after House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) directed his caucus to return to Washington from home districts around the country, braving flight delays due to storms in the capital to be back in time for a vote before the Fourth of July.

But the vote was in doubt, and signs emerged of cracks in a coalition otherwise firmly under Trump's control.

"The president of the United States didn't give us an assignment," Rep. Derrick Van Orden, a Republican from Wisconsin, told reporters, using an expletive to suggest Trump was treating lawmakers like his minions. "I'm a member of Congress. I represent almost 800,000 Wisconsinites. Is that clear?"

Frustration within the Republican Party was coming from two disparate camps of a broad-tent coalition that have their own sets of grievances: fiscal hawks who believe the bill adds too much to the national debt, and lawmakers representing districts that heavily rely on Medicaid.

One GOP lawmaker who attended the White House meeting Wednesday, Rep. David Valadao of California, represents a Central Valley district with one of the highest percentages of Medicaid enrollment in the nation.

The president's megabill, which he calls the "Big Beautiful Bill," levies historic cuts to the healthcare program that could result in up to 12 [See **Megabill**, A6]



CARLIN STIEHL Los Angeles Times

CITY LEADERS have called on police to do more to identify masked federal agents in immigration sweeps.

Kidnappers or ICE agents?

LAPD is grappling with calls from residents about masked men. Some accuse officers of then aiding immigration raids.

By LIBOR JANY

When a group of armed, masked men was spotted dragging a woman into an SUV in the Fashion District last week, a witness called 911 to report a kidnapping.

But when Los Angeles Police Department officers arrived, instead of making arrests, they formed a line to protect the alleged abductors from an angry crowd of onlookers demanding the woman's release.

The reported kidnappers, it turned out, were agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Police Chief Jim McDonnell defended the officers' actions, saying that their first responsibility was to keep the peace and that they had no authority to interfere with the federal operation.

In political and activist circles, and across social media, critics blasted the LAPD for holding back the crowd instead of investigating why the agents were arresting the woman, who was later found to be a [See **LAPD**, A7]



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

DEMONSTRATORS in Boyle Heights protest the immigration crackdown.

COMBS GUILTY ON LESS SERIOUS COUNTS

The mogul is cleared of sex trafficking and racketeering, but stays in custody for now.

By RICHARD WINTON, AUGUST BROWN AND HANNAH FRY

Music mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs was found guilty Wednesday of transportation for prostitution but cleared of the most serious charges — racketeering and sex trafficking — following a weeks-long federal criminal trial in New York.

Before his fate was announced, Combs sat surrounded by his legal team reading a printout of Psalm 11, a Bible passage that emphasizes relying on God for protection, even amid adversity.

As the jury of eight men and four women delivered its verdict, Combs, who had appeared morose a day earlier facing the possibility of a life sentence, was exultant. He pumped his fist in the air and mouthed "thank you" to the jurors. He fell to his knees and placed his head on his chair as if in prayer. "Mr. Combs has been given his life by this jury," defense attorney Marc Agnifilo told Judge Arun Subramanian.

The verdict is at least a partial victory for the celebrity, with legal experts arguing that prosecutors made crucial errors in overcharging him and failing to prove their case.

"Today's verdict is nothing less than a complete and total failure by the prosecution in what will go down as the most expensive prostitution trial in American history," said Neema Rahami, a former federal prosecutor.

The jury's split decision leaves Combs facing up to 10 years in prison for each of the two counts of prostitution. But it's not clear how severe Combs' punishment will be. In a letter seeking to keep him behind bars, prosecutors listed sentencing guidelines ranging from 51 to 63 months, or just over five years, and the judge has significant leeway in deciding his sentence.

In a late afternoon hearing, Subramanian decided that Combs will remain jailed until his sentencing hearing, citing past violent incidents that his attorneys acknowledged during the [See **Combs**, A6]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

WITH A PUSH from Genevieve Grossmueller, Sienna Cohee rides a wave.

Surf camps take a hit as parents worry about Palisades fire fallout

By DANIEL MILLER

The wave is all anger and elegance. Shaped like a cursive C, it hurtles toward the Santa Monica shore.

A child on a surfboard balances on its crest. Or at least he tries to.

The boy wipes out. Hard.

But then he pops up in the whitewash, all smiles. His Aqua Surf School instructor is grinning too.

On this happy day, the

Palisades fire, which in January burned all the way to the shores of the Pacific about five miles north of this Santa Monica beach, feels like a distant memory for student and teacher.

But back on the sand, surf camps — long mainstays of Santa Monica Bay's shorelines — are suffering this summer. Several have seen a significant drop in attendance because families are concerned the surf or sand is contaminated with

fire pollutants.

At Aqua Surf's camps alone, business is down by 20% to 30%, said Dylan Sohngen, executive director.

"I talk to parents about this issue every day, and it's really sad," said Sohngen, who has trimmed Aqua Surf's staff because of the drop in camps. "There are a lot of families who are just going to pass on it this year — it's considered a luxury item for them. You know, [See **Surfing**, A14]

Paramount agrees to \$16-million settlement of Trump's CBS lawsuit

The company hopes to clear a path for its sale to Skydance, held up by the FCC.

By MEG JAMES

Paramount Global has agreed to pay \$16 million to end President Trump's lawsuit over edits to a "60 Minutes" interview — a legal tussle that roiled CBS News, spurred high-level departures and threatened to derail the company's hoped-for sale.

The money will be allocated to Trump's future presidential library. As part of the deal, Paramount did not offer an apology or express regret for CBS News' reporting or edits.

"No amount will be paid directly or indirectly to President Trump," Paramount said in a statement. "The settlement will include a release of all claims regarding any CBS reporting through the date of the settlement, including the Texas action and the threatened defamation action."

Paramount decided to buy peace with the president rather than wage a costly fight to defend "60 Minutes" and its journalists in court.

Swift backlash against the deal

Critics call it a "spineless capitulation" that will erode press freedoms. **BUSINESS**, A9

The move prompted an outcry by 1st Amendment experts who denounced the lawsuit as frivolous and the talks to reach Tuesday's settlement as a shakedown.

The company's leaders hope the settlement will clear a path for the company's sale to David Ellison's Skydance Media — a deal that needs the blessing of the Federal Communications Commission.

Instead of fast-tracking the review of the proposed Paramount-Skydance merger, the Trump-appointed FCC chairman opened an inquiry into whether edits of the October "60 Minutes" interview with then-Vice President Kamala Harris rose to the level of news distortion.

"The Company has agreed that in the future, '60 Minutes' will release transcripts of interviews with eligible U.S. presidential candidates after such interviews have aired, subject to redactions as required for le- [See **Paramount**, A10]

A callout to bird-watchers

Scientists seek volunteers for a project to observe our feathered friends' response to wildfire. **SCIENCE**, A8

Dodgers haven't reached a peak

Team compiles best record in baseball, but isn't achieving its potential, Dylan Hernandez writes. **SPORTS**, B10

The Boss strikes a chord overseas

Bruce Springsteen's anti-Trump message resonates with fans at tour stops in Germany. **ENTERTAINMENT**, E1

Weather

Turning sunny.

L.A. Basin: 80/61. **B6**

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Opinion Voices A12

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