

Congress, high court cede power to president

Critics worry changes are undermining system of checks and balances

BY NAFTALI BENDAVID

The Supreme Court last week sharply curtailed the ability of federal judges to block a presidential action nationwide, even if they find it unconstitutional. That followed its decision last year granting the president broad immunity from prosecution for crimes committed in the course of his core duties.

The Senate several days ago rejected a resolution that would have let Congress decide, under its war powers, if President Donald Trump can strike Iran again. And Congress in recent months has repeatedly declined to assert its constitutional authority over spending or tariffs.

In a striking dynamic of the Trump era, analysts say, the judicial and legislative branches have been steadily transferring many of their powers to the executive — or at least acquiescing in the transfers. That has shaken up a system that depends on the three branches of government jostling sharply as each jealously guards its own prerogatives, many critics contend.

“When the constitutional framers designed a system of checks and balances, they didn’t mean a system where Congress and the Supreme Court give the president a blank check,” said Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Maryland). “That’s not the kind of check they had in mind. ... It was intended to create friction among the three branches to produce balance.”

But the country has become so divided, some scholars say, that leaders of the three branches are often more loyal to their parties than to their institutions.

“I think the framers envisioned a structure where it would take two branches to do anything major — go to war, pass a law, enforce a law,” said Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the law school at the University of California at Berkeley. “We have gone away from that. The executive can do so much without the other two.”

Some conservatives respond
SEE **POWER** ON A2

Where liberty dwells



MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST

Above, fireworks illuminate the sky over the nation’s capital on America’s 249th birthday, as seen from Top of The Town in Arlington, Virginia. At right, Emily Lee in Mount Vernon, Virginia, watches a ceremony for new citizens. **Stories, B13**



PETE KIEHART/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Trump signs tax bill into law amid pomp, patriotism

CEREMONY CAPS A HARD-FOUGHT GOP WIN

President, riding high, trumpets a string of successes

BY MATT VISER AND CAT ZAKRZEWSKI

President Donald Trump on Friday, with the nation at cook-outs and preparing for sparkler-filled evenings, flooded the South Lawn of the White House with a mixture of patriotic festival and a celebration of his biggest legislative accomplishment.

The president who has signed a historic number of executive orders finally got his dream of signing a signature policy bill that contains a collection of his campaign promises.

And then, expected by dusk, the fireworks.

It was the culmination of a string of successes in recent weeks and a remarkable display of how Trump has been able to bend to his will both allies and adversaries, world leaders and university presidents, media executives and judges.

Even after moments when the

legislation’s passage seemed uncertain, with Republican lawmakers balking at its cost and cuts to safety net programs, Trump secured the narrow margins needed through the power of persuasion and more than a little intimidation.

“I think I have more power now, I do,” he said on Thursday, when asked about the difference between his first and second terms. “More gravitas. More power.”

The legislation, which he held aloft after signing it before 6 p.m., is the latest signal that other branches of government
SEE **SIGNING** ON A7

2026 midterms: Parties race to define bill ahead of elections. **A6**

5 takeaways: Hakeem Jeffries’s historic speech took aim at bill. **A5**

Gambling losses: New law allows only 90 percent to be deducted. **A7**

ICE plans detention blitz with \$45 billion infusion

Prison contractors could see windfall as agency works to double capacity

BY DOUGLAS MACMILLAN

The tax and spending bill passed by Congress on Thursday and signed by President Donald Trump on Friday will triple federal funding for immigrant detention centers, setting the stage for a rapid expansion of these facilities and adding to concerns about the treatment of the growing numbers of immigrant detainees.

Congress allocated \$45 billion to spend locking up immigrants over the next four years — more than the government spent on detention during the Obama,

Biden and first Trump administrations combined, federal data show. The bill also includes \$46.5 billion for building the wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and \$6 billion for border technology and surveillance, along with other border security and immigration measures.

This is the most “funding we have seen for a border immigration agenda in the history of the country,” said Lauren-Brooke Eisen, who researches criminal justice and incarceration in her role as a senior director at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University’s School of Law. “We are seeing a wholesale expansion of ICE detention centers.”

SEE **FUNDING** ON A6

Who’s targeted? Migrants with no criminal record, increasingly. **A5**

A shift by Zuckerberg, wife costs 400 kids their school

BY CAROLINE O’DONOVAN AND NAOMI NIX

When Priscilla Chan opened a school for disadvantaged kids in 2016 with her husband, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, she took aim at some of America’s thorniest challenges.

“A persistent academic achievement gap separates white children and children of color — and wealthier children and their lower-income peers,” the school’s website said. “A similarly large health gap mirrors these differences.”

The Primary School, in East Palo Alto, California, offered free tuition, as well as free health care and counseling for students and parents, in an attempt to show that giving kids the right support could lessen those gaps. In 2018, Chan, a pediatrician, told CNN she was in for the long haul. “To really understand the full impact of your work,” she said of her school, “you’re just going to have to be patient.”

But in April, less than a decade after the Primary School opened, Chan told staff it would shutter its two locations after the 2025-2026 school year. Weeks earlier its board had voted unanimously to close because of lack of funding: The billionaire couple’s philanthropic Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the school’s sole donor, was pulling out.

Chan and CZI declined to say why the couple opted to abandon the Primary School. But former leaders of the school who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private information said Chan had grown distant in recent years as the school’s academic performance faltered. And the closure comes as she and her husband have pivoted CZI away from projects touching on social and political issues.

The impacts of the shuttering on families and the local school district show the risks for communities that depend on wealthy donors for essential services or
SEE **ZUCKERBERGS** ON A13

Doctor’s death in strike inflames Gaza health crisis

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK, HEBE FAROUK MAHFOUZ, MIRIAM BERGER AND SUZAN HAIDAMOUS

The news that Marwan al-Sultan was killed this week in an Israeli airstrike hit Gaza’s doctors like a thunderbolt. Through 20 months of war, the cardiologist had become one of the conflict’s main narrators, describing to the world again and again the horrific scenes in his wards, even as he battled to keep the lights on at the hospital he managed in the north.

Now, videos from another hospital, just a few miles away, show how Sultan’s young son gulped through sobs as he stood over his father’s body, so anguished in his grief that he barely noticed the hands that reached out to console him. Beside him was the director of Gaza’s Health Ministry, Munir al-Bursh, who hugged the boy before beginning to cry quietly himself.

Relatives of Sultan, the director of the Indonesian Hospital in Jabalya, said that the strike on Wednesday had targeted the Gaza



MAHMOUD ISSA/REUTERS

Marwan al-Sultan, director of Gaza’s Indonesian Hospital, gave harrowing accounts of the health care system’s collapse in the war.

City apartment where he was staying, also killing the doctor’s wife, sister, youngest daughter and his son-in-law.

In a statement, the Israeli military said that it had struck “a key terrorist from the Hamas terrorist organization,” but provided no

more information. “The claim that as a result of the strike uninvolved civilians were harmed is being reviewed,” it said.

Israel’s military campaign in Gaza has devastated the enclave’s health care system, damaging and destroying its clinics and hospi-

tals, killing or detaining hundreds of medical workers and regularly preventing the entry of medicines and other critical supplies. Israeli officials have accused Hamas, which ruled the Gaza Strip and attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people, of operating from within or underneath local hospitals, but often with little evidence to back up the claims. More than 57,000 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

In June, about a month after Israeli warplanes pummeled the area around the European Hospital in Khan Younis, in a bid to kill Hamas leader Mohammed Sinwar, the military showed a small group of international journalists what they said was his hiding place: a narrow tunnel that burrowed under the facility. There were no known entry points from inside the hospital, however, which remains out of service.
SEE **DOCTOR** ON A11

Ceasefire proposal: Hamas says it’s ready to start negotiations. **A11**

IN THE NEWS

Flooding in Texas At least 24 people were killed, and authorities were searching for at least 20 girls missing from a camp. A9

Call with Zelensky President Donald Trump spoke with Ukraine’s leader amid a pause on U.S. weapons deliveries and after Russia launched unprecedented strikes on Kyiv. A10

THE NATION **Two hundred** Marines are being sent to Florida in a “first wave” of planned ICE support. A3
Experts have unveiled detailed images of a U.S. sub that sank off San Diego’s coast in 1917. A3

THE WORLD **South Korea** is swarming with harmless but deeply annoying insects called lovebugs. A8
Russia became the first nation to recognize the Taliban government in Afghanistan. A10

THE ECONOMY **Workers** are sending AI note takers to online meetings in their place, leaving humans in the company of bots. A12
Trump praises “beautiful coal” and criticizes “ugly” wind farms, fueling a war of words over clean and fossil-fuel energy sources. A18

STYLE **Ben Folds** released a live album with the NSO and discussed his Kennedy Center exit. B1

SPORTS **Fifty years ago today**, a knack for reinvention helped Arthur Ashe make history at Wimbledon. B7

THE REGION **Baltimore’s homicide** rate is at its lowest point in five decades, in part because the city treats gun violence as a public health threat. B13
D.C. schools are cracking down on parents who “redshirt” their children by delaying kindergarten enrollment. B13

BUSINESS NEWS.....A13
COMICS.....B4
OBITUARIES.....B16
OPINION PAGES.....A15
TELEVISION.....B6
WORLD NEWS.....A9

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The Washington Post
Year 148, No. 54268

