

## Kraft's cash, name ID no match for lack of vigor

How a promising start dissolved into stark defeat

By Emma Platoff and Niki Griswold

GLOBE STAFF

In the end, you could call it a tale of television interviews.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

Josh Kraft entered the race for Boston mayor in February with great fanfare and high expectations, if long odds, too. Many in the city, particularly its business leaders, were unhappy with Mayor Michelle Wu — over real estate policies, school struggles, and bike lanes. Here, finally, was someone willing to challenge the powerful incumbent, someone who happened to have strong name recognition and deep pockets.

Then the voters started to hear more from him. He went on WBZ's Sunday politics show in February, then WCVB's in March. Kraft, those who know him say, is a personable guy who does better in small groups than on a big stage. He lacks the classic politician's charisma, and on television, he often sounded low-energy, almost sleepy. He stumbled over some answers, struggled to land his point on others. Expectations deflated among the very people he would need to excite. Here was a candidate who did not seem quite ready for prime time.

Fast forward to September, and it was another television spot in which Kraft officially called it quits.

"I got into this to make an impact," Kraft

KRAFT, Page A9

## Auchincloss sidesteps run for Senate

Will concentrate instead on effort to rebuild party

By Sam Brodey

GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — After months of consideration and outside speculation about his plans, Representative Jake Auchincloss, the third-term Democrat from Newton, said he will not mount a challenge to Senator Ed Markey in the 2026 election.

Instead, Auchincloss plans to focus on his new role as the inaugural chairman of Majority Democrats, a group formed this year by a cohort of young Democratic officeholders around the country who hope to rebuild the party brand by steering it toward a fresh platform and message.

"I am not going to challenge Ed," Auchincloss told the Globe in an interview at his Capitol office on Tuesday. "After November, I spent six months digging into how I could best help — the country is in crisis, the party is in the doldrums. Ultimately, I decided I could have maximum impact as chair of Majority Democrats, rather than an expensive primary campaign."

The 79-year-old Markey, who was first elected to the US House in 1976, is running for a third US Senate term in a moment of generational reckoning for the party. Democratic voters are increasingly hungry for new and younger faces in elected office and many senior law-

AUCHINCLOSS, Page A8

## Israeli ground troops invade Gaza City, spreading chaos



EYAD BABA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Displaced Palestinians left Gaza City on Tuesday with their belongings and traveled in the Nuseirat refugee camp area.

### Thousands of Palestinians flee; others hunker down in battered neighborhoods

By Aaron Boxerman, Lara Jakes, and Isabel Kershner

NEW YORK TIMES

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military launched a long-threatened ground assault to take over Gaza City after a night of intense bombing, sending many residents fleeing Tuesday from the devastated but still densely populated urban area that is home to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

The ground operation and the intensifying bombardment deepened the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, which has been shattered by a nearly two-year war that has killed tens of thousands of people and caused rampant hunger. Palestinians in Gaza City described scenes of panic as Israel pounded the area with heavy airstrikes that shook the ground. Local health officials said

that more than 20 people had been killed and dozens more wounded.

"We are all terrified," said Montaser Bahja, a former schoolteacher sheltering in an apartment in western Gaza City near the coast. "Death would be more merciful than what we're living through."

Israel said the ground operation, which had been building up

for weeks, was necessary to free the remaining hostages seized in the Hamas-led 2023 raid that started the war and to prevent the militants from regrouping and planning future attacks.

It announced the operation on the same day that a UN commission investigating the war said that Israel was committing genocide against Palestinians. Israel

GAZA, Page A7

## In 'biotech winter,' startups and jobs are swept away

Researchers fear threat to progress on medical advances

By Kara Miller

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

On a Friday in August, Dominique Verhelle was laid off over Zoom. Three days later, on a Monday, she realized it was the first time in her life without a job.

"It's my baby," Verhelle said of NextRNA Therapeutics, the biotech startup where she had been CEO. "I created the company."

In 2020, Verhelle left her job at Takeda Pharmaceutical to take a chance on commercializing research that began at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. NextRNA raised tens of millions of dollars, rented lab space in Brighton, and then, last year, en-

tered into an agreement with the pharmaceutical giant Bayer to partner on new approaches to treating cancer.

But the biotech ecosystem began to deteriorate post-pandemic. Funding became scarce; Verhelle started to feel like she was spending all her time raising money. The lab space that NextRNA worked out of — which had once been bustling with scientists from other companies — felt increasingly empty.

And the Bayer partnership, which included money from the drug company, came with a stipulation: NextRNA had to produce a specific package of data by July of this year.

"Everybody gave the best of what they could do. Working weekends and working really, really hard," said Verhelle.

But at a town hall in mid-July, Verhelle told them that the end had come. Though

BIOTECH, Page A8

19,000 layoffs by pharmaceutical companies in August, up 142% from August 2024.



ASHLEY BORG/GLOBE STAFF

Prosecutors unveiled a tranche of evidence in the arraignment of a 22-year-old man accused of killing political activist Charlie Kirk — and much of it comes from the suspect's own words in exchanges with friends and family. A2.

Longtime Mass. Secretary of State Bill Galvin is pushing a ballot measure to make voting easier, as he considers whether to run for another term. B1.

Market Basket's board of directors named an interim chief executive: longtime chief financial officer Donald Mulligan. B5.

Somerville's incumbent mayor, Katjana Ballantyne, lost her bid for reelection, finishing third in the preliminary election. B2.



Gray'd, balls of fire

Wednesday: Clouds, some sun. High 66-71, low 58-63.

Thursday: Clouds, more sun. High 72-77, low 61-66.

High tide: 8:22, 8:37.

Sunrise: 6:26. Sunset: 6:50.

Weather and comics, G6-7.

Obituaries, C10-11.

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TOP LEFT: NBC; BOTTOM LEFT: 20TH CENTURY FOX; PHOTOFEST

Mr. Redford dominated the marquee of the late 1960s and '70s in, from top left, "All the President's Men" (with Dustin Hoffman), "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" (with Paul Newman), and "The Sting."

ROBERT REDFORD 1936-2025

## A commanding presence on and behind the screen

By Adam Bernstein

WASHINGTON POST

Robert Redford, an actor whose beach-god looks and subtle magnetism in films such as "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "All the President's Men" made him one of the biggest movie stars of all time, but who forged an even more profound legacy in cinema as a patron saint of American independent film, died Sept. 16 at his home in the mountains outside Provo, Utah. He was 89.

His death was announced in a statement by publicist Cindi Berger, who did not cite a cause.

Since 1981, Mr. Redford had been president and founder of the Sundance Institute in nearby Park City, Utah. He said his arts colony was not about "insurgents coming down from the mountain to attack the mainstream" but about broadening the very concept of mainstream. Sundance provided a vital platform for two generations of outside-the-system filmmakers — from Quentin Tarantino to Ava DuVernay — who were embraced by ticket buyers and studios and helped enlarge the definition of commercial fare in a risk-averse industry.

REDFORD, Page C11