



Treasury chief stands on MAGA front lines

Unlike his predecessors, Bessent is more than willing to get partisan

BY DAVID J. LYNCH

Treasury secretaries for decades have been careful to avoid partisan public remarks, fearing that overt political wrangling could undermine their credibility in the eyes of global investors and foreign leaders.

Then there is Scott Bessent. President Donald Trump's combative treasury secretary in recent days has attacked prominent Democrats by name on social media, described inflation as largely a blue-state problem, and lampooned three Democratic governors as "Grinches" and "radical leftists" suffering from "Trump Derangement Syndrome."

The jousting shows that compared with his predecessors in both parties, Bessent is unusually eager to engage in partisan combat. He attended the president's campaign-style rally in Pennsylvania this month, a rare move for a treasury secretary. In a recent appearance at the New York

SEE BESSENT ON A13

Welcoming back the light on the winter solstice



ANTHONY UPTON/AP

People celebrate the winter solstice — the shortest day of the year — at sunrise Sunday at Stonehenge. The ancient monument on England's Salisbury Plain, erected starting about 5,000 years ago, was built in alignment with the annual movements of the sun. Thousands attended this year's festivities, the Associated Press reported.

Khanna, Massie push for all files

THEY SEEK TO FIND BONDI IN CONTEMPT

DOJ has said full Epstein release to take weeks

BY PATRICK MARLEY, EMMANUEL FELTON AND AARON SCHAFER

Reps. Ro Khanna (D-California) and Thomas Massie (R-Kentucky) said Sunday that they will seek to find Attorney General Pam Bondi in contempt of Congress for not releasing more documents related to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Khanna and Massie wrote legislation that passed Congress nearly unanimously and was signed by President Donald Trump last month requiring the Justice Department to release a trove of Epstein files in its possession within 30 days. The agency has released more than 100,000 pages of images and documents so far, some of which have been heavily redacted.

"The quickest way, and I think most expeditious way, to get justice for these victims is to bring inherent contempt against Pam Bondi," Massie said on CBS's "Face the Nation" in an appearance with Khanna. "Ro Khanna and I are talking about and drafting that right now."

Khanna said in an interview with The Washington Post that he and Massie were pursuing contempt findings because the measure would take effect if it gets through the House and would not need to go through the Senate. He said they were likely to give Bondi a 30-day grace period and then start fining her daily until she released all the records.

SEE EPSTEIN ON A7

Swamped caring for parents, boomers, Gen X try to spare kids

Aging Americans are increasingly turning to elder care planning

BY SHANNON NAJMA BADI

Jocelyn Combs set up a filing

box with her will and trust. She has designated who will have power of attorney, told friends and family where to find her passwords, and begun culling her possessions, save for mementos and other items she's set aside for her daughter.

She also had an accessory dwelling unit built on her property in Pleasanton, California. A

caregiver could live there, she said. Or she could, and rent out her house for extra income.

It's all part of her aging plan, drawn from the often-overwhelming experience of caring for her own parents — who both lived into their 90s — and one legacy the 76-year-old is adamant about sparing her only child. Combs is still going

through boxes of her parents' belongings years later.

"It was brutal. The emotional toll, the financial toll, all of it," Combs said. "I'm trying to set myself up to be less of a burden to my daughter."

Baby boomers and Gen Xers are decluttering their houses, sifting through paperwork and making other end-of-life plans in

growing numbers, older adults, and elder law attorneys and financial planners say. Surveys from the National Alliance for Caregiving and advocacy group AARP show 47 percent of family caregivers — mostly caring for aging parents or adults with disabilities — said they had such arrangements this year, up from

SEE AGING ON A8

Domestic economy weighing on China

As Xi looks to meetings with Trump, country's growth sputters

BY SIMON ELEGANT

Chinese leader Xi Jinping's unflinching response to President Donald Trump's trade war this year has paid off: Tariffs have been dramatically reduced, new export controls and port fees have been suspended, and China can even now buy the more advanced Nvidia chips that will help its AI ascendancy.

By pulling China's economic levers — like weaponizing the supply chains of rare earth minerals that China dominates — Xi was able to inflict enough pain to cause Trump to backtrack on his toughest measures.

Heading into 2026 with two meetings with Trump on the schedule, Xi's negotiating position might be weakened by widening imbalances in the world's

SEE CHINA ON A10

They survived a Cybertruck crash.



CITY OF PIEDMONT, CALIFORNIA

An inferno led to a race against time.

BY FAIZ SIDDIQUI AND ARTUR GALOCHA

Following the Tesla Cybertruck his friends had climbed into late one night around Thanksgiving last year, Matthew Riordan spotted a fire blazing in the distance.

The Cybertruck had crashed into a tree and wedged itself against a retaining wall, trapping his friends inside the burning car. He rushed to pull them from a growing blaze — one that would soon engulf the cabin.

Navigating 10-foot flames, he arrived at the truck. But the bulletproof door, opened electronically by a hidden push button, wouldn't budge.

The back passenger door also stayed shut when he tried its push button. "Just did not work," Riordan recalled in a deposition collected in litigation over the crash.

Riordan began to panic. He had watched a video of a steel ball shattering the window of a Cybertruck, which is built with "armor glass" and designed to be "tough on the outside." He picked

SEE TESLA ON A16

Wyo. family's sole health option: A \$43K premium

End of covid subsidies puts intense pressure on some ACA markets

BY PETER WHORISKEY

JACKSON HOLE, WYO. — Like millions of other Americans, Stacy Newton turns to Health-care.gov to shop for health insurance for her family. The Affordable Care Act website, according to the government, is where consumers are supposed to find "a menu of health insurance plans."

But for the Newtons and many others in the country, next year's menu is severely limited: There is only one company offering ACA plans here — and costs have risen steeply.

To continue health coverage for themselves and their two teenage children, the Newtons would have to pay an annual premium of \$43,000 — about a third of their gross income. It is the price of the cheapest plan available to the family from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming, the only ACA insurer left in Teton County.

This year, millions of American families that have relied on the ACA, popularly known as

Obamacare, are being squeezed on multiple sides: Premiums are rising, the covid-era subsidies that helped pay for those policies are shrinking, and there are fewer choices due to insurers pulling out of some markets.

The squeeze here is a symptom of broader trouble in American health care. In western Wyoming and other regions, the expected rollback of enhanced subsidies has destabilized the economics of Obamacare, pushing some insurers to retreat from the government-supported market because it won't be profitable.

That is leaving consumers such as the Newtons with little choice but to buy a pricey, unsubsidized policy from a local monopoly.

Next year, the number of counties with only one company providing Obamacare will jump from 72 to 146, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. That number is expected to rise further if, as appears likely, Congress fails to renew the enhanced subsidies.

Newton and her husband, Derek, each run a small business — she is an independent sales representative, and he outfits vans — and like many entrepreneurs, they have relied on the

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