

The Boston Globe

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2025

A Boston job often means a long commute

More workers are traveling farther to get to the city. Time is not all that's lost.

By Jaime Moore-Carrillo
GLOBE STAFF

One late afternoon in mid-October, Taylor McNeilly, a 36-year-old archivist teaching at Simmons University, set off to campus from their family home in Glocester, R.I., about five minutes later than usual.

The drive, about 60 miles, typically takes 75 to 90 minutes each way; McNeilly tailored their sched-

ule to avoid the worst thickets of Boston rush-hour traffic. But that day, jams tacked on almost 30 extra minutes to the journey. When McNeilly finally arrived, they scurried to the classroom, where most of their students were waiting, and set up their presentation — just in time, McNeilly recalled.

"I've made my peace; I've settled in," McNeilly said of the commute.

A growing share of Boston-area workers are slogging dozens of miles to get to their jobs, according to federal data.

► **Boston has the fifth worst traffic congestion in the nation. B1.**

For many, long-distance commuting presents far more costs than just wasted time: exhaustion, stress, turned-down get-togethers, restricted social lives.

In 2013, about 18 percent of people working within a four-mile

radius of Boston City Hall commuted at least 25 miles to get to their jobs, according to census data.

By 2023, the share of workers commuting at least 25 miles to Boston's urban core climbed to roughly 20.6 percent — an increase of more than 52,000 people. The share of workers commuting at least 50 miles rose from roughly 6 percent in 2013 to 7.5 percent in 2023, about a 27 percent jump. Those with the longest treks largely arrived from Boston's west and south-

COMMUTES, Page A6

Putting Election Day on the ballot

Voters may get say on same-day registration and dropping party primaries

By Matt Stout
GLOBE STAFF

Massachusetts voters may face a record number of choices on Election Day next November. Among them: Whether to radically change Election Day itself.

A pair of initiatives to allow residents to register to vote at their polling station on Election Day and scrap the state's longstanding party primaries are barreling toward the 2026 ballot, potentially giving voters a direct say in ideas that lawmakers or political party leaders have routinely rejected.

Taken separately, the petitions offer dramatically different visions for reshaping the electoral system. Allowing people to enroll to vote on Election Day could expand residents' access to the ballot, while creating a new "top-two" primary system — under which the highest vote-getters would advance to the November general election, regardless of their party — would reshape the ballot itself.

But proponents contend they are born out of shared problems. Voters still face too many barriers to the ballot box, they argue — and too few choices when they actually make it there. Massachusetts has regularly held among the least competitive legislative elections in the country.

"Democracy is on the ballot in Massachusetts," said Danielle Allen, a former gubernatorial candidate and chair of the Coalition for Healthy Democracy, which is pushing the so-called all-party primaries proposal. Allen and others also back expanding voter registration options to Election Day, a proposal spearheaded by Secretary of State Wil-

ELECTION, Page A5

As academics continue to lag, Wu vows focus on BPS

Mayor sets a high bar ahead of second term

By Niki Griswold and Emma Platoff
GLOBE STAFF

Ahead of her second term, Mayor Michelle Wu has laid out a lofty goal: Make Boston Public Schools the best major city school district in the country.

In doing so, she's setting an audacious target that has eluded many of her predecessors — and staking her success on an issue some say simply cannot be solved in one term or even two.

Improving Boston Public Schools — long beset by declining enrollment, crumbling facilities, and lagging test scores — has been perhaps the most stubborn challenge facing the city's leaders for decades. Thousands of students have fled the district in recent years, a trend exacerbated by the pandemic, as some parents opt for private schools or suburban alternatives, or add their children to long charter school waitlists.

In recent Globe interviews and in an October "State of the Schools" speech, the mayor defined her ambitions for BPS in broad terms. Wu has made notable operational improvements in her first term but presented few specific targets or timelines for academic progress she will use to determine success in her second.

WU, Page A5



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Mayor Michelle Wu with students at Ellison-Parks Early Ed School in the fall.

A COUPLE LITTLE MIRACLES

After a pregnancy complicated by medical issues, family celebrates a year in the life



Clive (left) and Simon turned a year old this Christmas Eve. Mom Abby Wood's heart condition made her pregnancy complicated.

By Sadaf Tokhi
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Abby Wood had wanted to be a mother for as long as she could remember.

"Ever since I was little, I used to play teacher, and I used to play mom," she said.

What she didn't expect was how much would stand in the way.

Wood, of Epping, N.H., began dating her now-husband, Chris, the day before the pandemic shut down daily life in March 2020. As restrictions set in, they dated cautiously, meeting outdoors, measuring to make sure they stayed at least 10 feet apart, calling and texting each other between meetings.

Later that spring, Wood started noticing heart flutters and palpitations that left her short of breath, even during routine activities. At first, she wasn't sure whether it was stress or something more serious.

She sought medical care and was diagnosed with PVC-induced cardiomyopathy, a condition caused by frequent premature ventricular contractions — basically, extra beats — that can weaken the heart muscle and dilate it.

An initial attempt to treat the condition failed, but medication helped stabilize Wood's symptoms.

In 2022, Abby and Chris got married and soon decided to expand their family. But they had trouble conceiving. They tried intrauterine insemination and then IVF.

That's when their fertility doctors gave

TWINS, Page A6

President Trump said that he'd launched a "powerful and deadly" US strike against Islamic State forces in Nigeria, after spending weeks accusing

the country's government of failing to rein in the persecution of Christians. **A4.**

Pope Leo XIV used his first Christmas message as pontiff to call for "peace and consolation for the victims of all current wars in the world." **A3.**

Massachusetts is part of a group of 19 states, in addition to D.C., that is suing the Trump administration over the most recent threats to significantly

limit access to gender-affirming care for minors across the country. **B1.**

Now in its ninth year, The Fine Print column has helped consumers collect a total of more than \$1 million owed to them, including \$43,000 in 2025. **B5.**

Lowell's Ty Chan transferred from Notre Dame to UConn to be closer to home — and his niece battling leukemia. **C1.**



Cold, frankincense, and brrrr

Friday: Very cold. High: 23-28. Low: 19-24.
Saturday: Snow. High: 24-29. Low: 16-21.

Sunrise: 7:12 Sunset: 4:18

Comics and Weather, **C8-9.**

Obituaries, **C7.**

VOL. 308, NO. 179

Suggested retail price
\$4.00



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