



THE FORMER OFFICE headquarters of Sunkist will be converted into housing under a new ordinance.

MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

# L.A. opens door to turning empty offices into housing

Los Angeles officials just made it easier to convert empty commercial buildings to housing, opening the door to the creation of thousands of apartments across a city clamoring for housing.

Developer Garrett Lee already is rolling.

After years of struggling to find white-collar tenants for a gleaming office high-rise on the edge of downtown, he has just begun converting its office space into close to 700 apartments.

With the new Citywide Adaptive Reuse Ordinance going into effect this month, many more housing conversions are coming to Los Angeles, Lee said.

"This is monumental for the city," he concluded.

The ordinance opens the

New rules fast-track conversions. Vacant towers, malls, garages in play.

By ROGER VINCENT



ARIANA DREHSLER For The Times

A CONTRACTOR at a 1980s office tower on 7th Street. The ordinance streamlines project approvals.

possibility of conversion for many more buildings than the 1999 guidelines, which paved the way for converting older downtown buildings and jump-started a residential renaissance that turned downtown into a viable neighborhood after decades as a commercial district where few wanted to live.

The first ordinance applied to buildings erected before 1975 and was focused primarily on downtown. Under the new guidelines, commercial buildings that are merely 15 years old throughout Los Angeles can be converted to housing with city staff approval, rather than going through lengthy review processes that may reach the City [See Housing, A12]

## Trump's plans for ACA may hike costs

By JULIE APPLEBY

The Trump administration has unveiled a sweeping set of regulatory proposals that would substantially change health plan offerings on the Affordable Care Act marketplace next year, aiming, it says, to provide more choice and lower premiums.

But it also proposes sharply raising some annual out-of-pocket costs — to more than \$27,000 for one type of coverage — and could cause up to 2 million people to drop insurance.

The changes come as affordability is a key concern for many Americans, some of whom are struggling to pay their ACA premiums since the Republican-led Congress allowed enhanced subsidies to expire at the end of last year. Initial enrollment numbers for this year fell by more than 1 million.

Healthcare coverage and affordability have become politically potent issues in the run-up to November's midterm elections.

The proposed changes are part of a 577-page rule that addresses a broad swath of standards, including benefit packages, out-of-pocket costs and healthcare provider networks. Insurers refer to these standards when setting premium rates for the coming year.

After a comment period, the rule will be finalized this spring.

It "puts patients, taxpayers, and states first by lowering costs and reinforcing accountability for taxpayer dollars," Mehmet Oz, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services administrator [See ACA, A7]

## Cedars-Sinai didn't act on abuse complaints, suits say

Ex-patients allege sexual misconduct by gynecologist

By CORINNE PURTILL

Her usual doctor wasn't available, so the 21-year-old woman was scheduled with a different Cedars-Sinai Medical Center gynecologist whom she had never seen before: Dr. Barry J. Brock.

She was the day's last patient, and Brock sent his nurse home as soon as she checked in. He led the woman to an examination room where he told her to undress completely, she later alleged in a lawsuit against him. She said he remained in the room and watched as she did, without offering a hospital gown or privacy covering.

He told her to lie exposed on the table and proceeded to stroke and grope the most intimate parts of her body, while commenting on her physical attractiveness, she alleged in the suit. The woman had visited a gynecologist before and knew how a routine exam unfolded. Brock's actions felt to her nothing like medical care.

She went home and told her mother. They immediately scheduled a meeting with the woman's regular gynecologist,

also a Cedars-Sinai physician. He listened but said little, according to the complaint.

This was in 1986. If any further action was taken as a result of her report, she never heard about it, the suit states.

Brock continued to see patients for nearly 40 years more, until Cedars-Sinai revoked his hospital privileges in 2024 following what it described as "concerning complaints" from patients.

The doctor to whom the patient reported Brock was later promoted to department head at Cedars-Sinai, according to the lawsuit; that doctor has since died.

The woman is one of more than 500 former patients suing Brock and the facilities where he worked, claiming that Cedars and other medical practices knowingly concealed alleged sexual abuses and medical misconduct from unsuspecting patients.

At least four of the plaintiffs were minors when they were first abused, according [See Cedars-Sinai, A14]

## Standoff over masked agents stokes shutdown

Essential Homeland Security functions will go on, but paychecks might stop coming.

By ANA CEBALLOS AND ANDREA CASTILLO

WASHINGTON — A dispute over whether federal immigration agents should be allowed to wear masks during enforcement operations has become one of the biggest obstacles to keeping the Department of Homeland Security funded, pushing the government toward a partial shutdown early Saturday.

Democrats have decried the practice as corrosive to public trust, arguing that masked agents create the appearance of a "secret police" force. Republican lawmakers, President Trump and his top advisors, meanwhile, have drawn a hard line against requiring officers to remove their face coverings, insisting that doing so would expose them to harassment, threats and on-line doxxing.

"They want our law enforcement to be totally vul-

nerable and put them in a lot of danger," Trump said at a White House event Thursday. He added that it would be "very, very hard to approve" Democrats' demands, such as unmasking federal officers.

The standoff over masking stalled negotiations as lawmakers raced to meet a funding deadline for the Department of Homeland Security at midnight Friday. Without a deal, key agency functions — from airport security to disaster relief coordination — could be affected if the shutdown drags on.

As with every shutdown, the agency's essential functions will continue to operate, Tricia McLaughlin, assistant Homeland Security secretary for public affairs, said in a statement. But employees performing those functions at agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration could go without pay if the shutdown stretches for weeks.

The heads of those agencies told the House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee on [See Shutdown, A7]

## U.S. aid cuts cripple Mideast healthcare

By NABIH BULOS

AL KAWD, Yemen — In the cramped examination room of this tiny village clinic, Rania Moussa lay on her side and covered her eyes with a pillow, her slight, childlike frame belying the fact she is 13 years old. It had been days since she had taken an injection of the powerful antibiotics she needs to manage her condition, a type of anemia.

But the clinic, which used to give them for free, now had none to offer; and aid cuts since the U.S. froze assistance last year meant it was unlikely to get them anytime soon. Without the medication, Rania's mother said, her daughter couldn't do anything.

"She can't walk; she can barely move. I had to carry her here. We could get the shots before, but now none of the clinics have them, so I have to buy them from pharmacies," said Jamilah Omar, Rania's mother. "We can barely afford food, let alone medications."

Somehow, Omar scraped together money for the antibiotics, which the clinic staff administered.

In the year since the evaporation of U.S. Agency for International Development aid at the hands of Elon Musk and his so-called Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, discussions on its shuttering have at times devolved into political point-scoring, with advocates and opponents of the [See USAID, A4]



BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI AFP/Getty Images

THE TRUMP administration slashed funds for the U.S. Agency for International Development last year.

### MILAN-CORTINA OLYMPICS

## Too old to go for gold? Not for these dreamers

By KEVIN BAXTER

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy — At 54, Rich Ruohonen thought his Olympic dream had passed him by. Which was a pretty good bet since no American his age had competed in the Winter Games.

Until now. Because when Ruohonen replaced lead Aidan Oldenburg for the start of the eighth end in the American curling team's 8-3 loss to Switzerland in round-robin play Thursday, he not only defied the odds, but he also continued a trend that has featured older Olympians

competing at a high level in the Milan-Cortina Games.

At least a half-dozen athletes 40 and older came to Italy expecting to compete for medals, and doctors credit advances in sports science, improved recovery techniques, better nutrition and superior mental adaptation for the growing number of athletes going for gold as they get ready to enter their golden years.

One of those, skier Lindsey Vonn, who took to the slopes with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee, had her Olympics end early in a spectacular crash while a second, snow- [See Olympians, A14]



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

### ‘QUAD GOD’ FALTERS

Olympic gold favorite Ilia Malinin of the U.S. fell apart in the free skate, tumbling to eighth place after a disastrous performance. **SPORTS, D1**

### L.A. is liable for seizing property

Judge finds that the city violated the constitutional rights of homeless people during cleanups. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

### Parents protest against Snapchat

Some push for safety features and disabling of the AI chatbot after the deaths of their children. **BUSINESS, A10**

### Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 70/53. **B8**

