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GABRIEL V. CARDENAS For The Times

FLAGS for Democrats Gina Hinojosa, James Talarico and Bobby Pulido fly in Texas last month. They all won.

Republicans in House foil bid to impeach Hegseth

The win for Defense secretary may last only until Democrats take control next year.

BY KEVIN RECTOR

House Republicans on Tuesday successfully blocked an effort to impeach Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth over his handling of the Iran war and other alleged "high crimes" against the nation, handing President Trump and his embattled Defense secretary a win.

"The Democrats' attempt to impeach Secretary of War Pete Hegseth has miserably FAILED!" Trump posted on social media shortly after.

Largely along party lines, and with some members absent, the House voted 211 to 204 to send the resolution to impeach Hegseth brought by Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) on Monday to a committee, in effect killing it.

Massie was the only Republican to join Democrats. Eleven Democrats were absent.

Hegseth, who reposted Trump's remarks to his own social media, had earlier derided the effort as a "political spectacle" brought by a rogue Republican lawmaker over mere "policy disagreements," and promised to "never back down."

"In the 250 years of our American republic, no secretary of war or secretary of Defense has ever been impeached for carrying out lawful military operations," Hegseth told reporters Tuesday morning, during his first news briefing at the Pentagon in six months.

Trump had backed Hegseth, writing, "Pete Hegseth gets an 'A' PLUS, PLUS, PLUS for his defense against a disgruntled, angry, defeated, former Congressman, Thomas Massie, a TOTAL LOSER!"

Massie's resolution largely focuses on the war in Iran, arguing that Hegseth launched it without necessary congressional authorization, among other things. It also accuses Hegseth of violating the law in military actions against Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, in the U.S. capture of then-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in that country in January, and in missile strikes on alleged drug boats in international waters around the U.S.

In his post after the vote, Trump noted that Massie was the lone Republican to

[See **Hegseth,** A6]



NATHAN HOWARD Associated Press

DEFENSE SECRETARY Pete Hegseth had decried the effort by departing Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.).

They fled to Texas. It turned blue too

Ex-Californians didn't shift Lone Star State to the left, experts say. Some may move out.

BY TERRY CASTLEMAN

Did California help Texas turn blue?

One of the biggest stories of this month's Democratic sweep in the midterms is that a very red Texas elected a Democratic U.S. senator and governor.

Pundits cite many theories for the surprising results: anger over the Iran war, high gas prices, Trump fatigue and data centers.

But did California's high home prices and the state's historic exodus play a role?

Experts doubt it. In fact, some Californians who moved to Texas are actually concerned about the blue wave.

Many presume that those arriving from California must be much more liberal than the average Texan, said Joshua Blank, research director of the Texas Politics Project at the University of Texas at Austin.

But "a significant share of the Californians transplanting to Texas tend to be moderate to conservative in their views," he said.

For years, Californians fled to Texas in droves. About 100,000 people made the move in 2022 alone, and many were looking not just for a lower cost of living but also a state that reflected their conservative political outlook.

Nearly half of those Californians who moved to Arizona or Texas during the California exodus in recent years identified as conservative or very conservative, according to a Stanford University study.

The Public Policy Institute of California found that those who leave the state often go to states that share their political beliefs. "Californians leaving for Republican states are much more likely to be Republican than Democratic, compared to Californians as a whole, while those leaving for Democratic states are more likely to be Democratic than Republican," the institute wrote.

In all, hundreds of thousands of conservative Californians have relocated to Texas since the 2020 pandemic emergency, studies suggest.

Marie Bailey, 44, moved from El Segundo to a Dallas-Fort Worth suburb in 2017. She and her husband built a home for $750,000, while a "tiny fixer upper" in El Segundo would've cost more

[See **Texas,** A8]

Raman's colleagues now promise 'full support'

After backing her rival in the mayoral race, they extend olive branches and vow to work together

BY NOAH GOLDBERG

A pie sat waiting as the Los Angeles City Council returned to work last week following Councilmember Nithya Raman's election as mayor, an outcome all 14 of her council colleagues opposed.

The pie, perched on a table in a room behind council chambers, had one word written on it, in icing, according to two council staffers: humble.

The dessert was thrown away uneaten, but humble pie was what the council members were eating Tuesday as they congratulated the mayor-elect.

"Full disclosure, you know that I didn't support you last week," said Councilmember Curren Price. "But you've got my full support now."

A beaming Raman had entered the council chambers flanked by her council staff and campaign aides, along with a new security detail befitting her higher profile. A bouquet of flowers, an official proclamation and a (brief) standing ovation by her council colleagues followed later in the morning.

Raman listened attentively as, one by one, council members sitting around the horseshoe offered their olive branches. Then she bestowed one of her own.

"We are all here because we love L.A. and want to make it better," Raman said. "That passion sometimes makes us get spicy about the differences we have on how we get there."

"I am here to be spicy with you and to get through it and to find the outcome that works for all of us," she said.

Not only had Raman's council colleagues opposed her in favor of incumbent Mayor Karen Bass, but several of them also had grown increasingly hostile toward her as

[See **Council,** A7]

Billionaire tax falls to economic fears

Proposition 40's final defeat was a notable exception in a vote that largely swung left.

BY QUEENIE WONG AND SEEMA MEHTA

California voters have rejected the controversial billionaire tax.

Proposition 40 sought to impose a one-time 5% tax on California billionaires' assets to try to offset federal healthcare funding cuts. The novel tax on the ultra-wealthy had trailed from the first day of vote counting and was officially rejected on Monday night.

Even as a blue wave washed across the country in the midterm election, the new tax failed to spark enough support in one of the most liberal states.

Opponents of the wealth tax used their much larger war chest of campaign spending to flood television, radio and smartphones with ads. In a state that hasn't been shy about voting in new taxes in the past, voters heard their message: the wealth tax is a reckless experiment and a tax on everyone, not just billionaires.

Roughly 53% of Californians voted against the measure, while 47% supported it, the Associated Press said when it declared that the proposition had failed.

Although the billionaire tax was rejected in the vast majority of counties, the late tally showed major pockets of support in Los Angeles and San Francisco — home to the lion's share of the state's 200 billionaires. Orange County, however, voted no by a wide margin.

The political battle over the ballot measure and two competing proposals divided the state and was among the most expensive in California history. More than $400 million had been spent on the three intertwined ballot measures, with more than 90% spent opposing the billionaire tax, according to fundraising disclosures filed with the secretary of state's office.

Billionaires, notably Google co-founder Sergey Brin, poured hundreds of millions of dollars into groups that funded ads to kill the billionaire tax. Gov. Gavin Newsom, the Califor-

[See **Prop. 40,** A11]

'Heiress' is now on FBI's fraudster list

SoCal exec who said she had big trust fund duped investors and fled U.S., officials say.

BY HANNAH FRY

To the outside world, Mary Carole McDonnell was an influential executive with a thriving entertainment empire.

She drove from her multimillion-dollar estate in La Cañada Flintridge to her Burbank office in a convertible Porsche, and had her 39-foot boat, Sea Mac, docked in Newport Beach.

Her company, Bellum Entertainment, specialized in true-crime shows, children's educational programs and documentaries, churning out titles such as "It Takes a Killer," "Unsealed: Alien Files" and "Animal Atlas."

McDonnell told the world she was the heir to a portion of the McDonnell Douglas aerospace empire with access to $80 million in a trust fund. But over time, the veil on her true identity lifted, authorities say, revealing she was not a wealthy benefactor after all. In October, the 74-year-old was added to the FBI's newly created Most Wanted Fraudsters list.

She's been on the run since she was indicted by a grand jury in 2018 for bank fraud and aggravated identity theft, according to federal court records. Repeated attempts to reach McDonnell by phone and email were unsuccessful.

In 2017, Bellum Entertainment's freelancers and staff claimed they weren't getting paid and filed complaints with the California labor commissioner. Workers gathered in protest outside the company's offices holding signs demanding pay-

[See **McDonnell,** A8]



RAUL ROA Los Angeles Times

BEWARE OF MT. BALDY

The peak, so deceptively accessible and also so deadly, will be even more dangerous with this winter's El Niño storms. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Inflation tops monthly forecast

U.S. report suggests rising prices will keep posing challenges to Federal Reserve, White House. **BUSINESS, A9**

Weather

Sunny and very warm. L.A. Basin: 85/61. **B6**

Markets **A10**
Opinion Voices **A12**

MLB union can't just walk away

If it won't talk salary cap, owners can declare an impasse, Bill Shaikin writes. **SPORTS, B10**

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Nvidia scandal rattles AI world

CEO's affair with an alleged spy raises leadership questions at a fraught moment.

BY IAN KING

Nvidia Corp. Chief Executive Jensen Huang's affair with an alleged Chinese spy is reverberating across the stock market amid anxiety about what a potential shake-up at the company could mean for the artificial intelligence industry.

Nvidia shares have slipped, erasing hundreds of billions of dollars of the company's market value, after Huang disclosed the romantic relationship Sunday in a memo to employees. The company's board is assembling a committee of independent directors to work with outside counsel and investigate reports that Huang is being targeted for foreign intelligence.

With the revelations, investors need to consider a range of possibilities that may affect not just Huang and Nvidia, but the entire artificial intelligence industry.

Nvidia, the leading maker of AI chips, has used its financial strength to back dozens of major players, from frontier labs like OpenAI to cloud computing players including CoreWeave Inc. Huang has also been among the most forceful advocates for the benefits

[See **Nvidia,** A11]