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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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## ELECTION 2024

### Pressure on Biden from party increases

As the president hits Pa., four House Democrats say he should drop out

BY MATT VISER, MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR AND MAEVE RESTON

The political crisis surrounding President Biden deepened Sunday as the number of House Democrats who are calling on the president to step aside rose to nine after a weekend in which Biden campaigned in the must-win state of Pennsylvania, aiming to shore up his precarious candidacy.

Four senior House Democrats forcefully declared Sunday during an off-the-record call with House Democratic leadership that they believe Biden should step aside: Reps. Jerry Nadler (N.Y.), Adam Smith (Wash.), Mark Takano (Calif.) and Joseph Morelle (N.Y.), according to two people on the call. They join five other House Democrats who have publicly called on Biden to drop his reelection bid or have said they believe Donald Trump will beat him in November.

In addition, at least 18 current and former top Democrats as of Saturday had publicly raised concerns about Biden's fitness for office and his ability to defeat Trump as the president heads into a critical week.

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**Debate aftermath:** Some see their aging relatives in the president. A3

**Harris speaks:** In Louisiana, she focuses on the election's stakes. A7

### Shielding by aides now raises suspicion

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB, TYLER PAGER AND AARON SCHAFER

When special counsel Robert K. Hur concluded in a February report that President Biden should not be prosecuted for mishandling classified documents in part because a jury would view the president as "a sympathetic, well-meaning, elderly man with a poor memory," Biden and his aides hit back hard.

The 81-year-old president called an impromptu news conference where he angrily denied that he was forgetful. "I'm well-meaning, and I'm an elderly man and I know what the hell I'm doing. ... My memory is fine. Take a look at what I've done since I've become president," Biden shot back.

But at the same news conference — about 12 minutes long — after discussing the complexities of the current state of the Israel-Gaza war, Biden referred to President Abdel Fatah El-Sisi, the leader of Egypt, as the president of Mexico. That followed a week in which Biden described contacts he'd had as president with former German chancellor Helmut Kohl, who died in 2017, and former French president François Mitterrand, who died in 1996.

SEE CAMPAIGN ON A4



JOSHUA LOTT/THE WASHINGTON POST

### Guilty: Inside an unprecedented prosecution

It was just past 8 on the night before her closing argument when the prosecutor slipped out of her team's war room and headed down the hallway to a closet packed with cardboard bins and paper bags, all of them sealed in red tape imprinted with the word "EVIDENCE." She pulled on a pair of mint green latex gloves and eyed a small, white box. "Oxford High School" was written in blue ink on the top, and below that, a series of details described what was inside — "Item No.: 1." "Description of Item: One 9mm." "Offense: Homicide."

Karen McDonald, Oakland County's elected prosecutor, opened the box and picked up a Sig Sauer handgun that had ended four teenagers' lives in 2021 and consumed her own ever since.

Stored all around her were remnants of that day. There was the journal in which Ethan Crumbley, then 15, wrote that his parents had ignored his pleas for help and that he was so distraught he would "SHOOT UP THE FUKING SCHOOL" and,

A Post reporter embedded with Michigan prosecutors for two years as they pursued homicide charges against Jennifer and James Crumbley, whose son killed four students at Oxford High School

BY JOHN WOODROW COX IN PONTIAC, MICH.

**Karen McDonald, left, the prosecutor in Oakland County, Mich., with assistant prosecutor Marc Keast, right, chose to do what no prosecutor in the United States had ever done before: charge the parents of a school shooter with homicide.**

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days later, that he would do it using the gun they'd just bought him as a gift. There were the 32 empty casings from rounds he'd fired down hallways and into classrooms. There was 14-year-old Hana St. Juliana's black backpack, stained with blood and stuffed with headphones, Skittles and a biology notebook pocked with a bullet hole. And then there was the purse that once held four new cellphones and \$6,617 in cash that Ethan's parents, James and Jennifer Crumbley, had with them when police found the couple hiding in an industrial building four days after the shooting.

Now McDonald, 53, gripped the black pistol in her right hand, and in her left, a 14-inch steel cable affixed to a lock. The safety device was identical to one the Crumbleys owned but, investigators alleged, never used. With her sleeves rolled up, McDonald threaded the cable into the empty magazine well and through an open port at the gun's top, then she curled the tip



CRAIG HUDSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### Homeowners sue over zoning changes

BY TEO ARMUS

Marcia Nordgren says she bought her house — a cream-colored, four-bedroom Cape Cod nestled on a ridge in the D.C. suburbs — specifically because it was in "a leafy, low-density" neighborhood.

In the two decades since she and her husband purchased the property for \$1.5 million, the area stayed that way. And that was by design: Local laws meant that only single-family houses could be built in this corner of booming Northern Virginia.

Last year, though, lawmakers in Arlington County tossed out those rules with a landmark zoning change that mirrors similar efforts in cities and suburbs around the country. Many of Nordgren's neighbors can now replace their houses with buildings containing multiple small apartments.

No one on her block has done so, and the nearest property slated for such a transformation is nearly a mile away. But Nordgren maintains that the change has caused her potential harm — a claim that will be at the

SEE ZONING ON A18

**Rick Epstein hands out signs discouraging "missing middle" housing policies in Arlington.**

### Vance, Rubio at center of Trump VP discussion

Former president has said he will unveil his pick at GOP convention

BY MARIANNE LEVINE AND JOSH DAWSEY

Former president Donald Trump's campaign is aiming to announce his running mate by July 15, the first day of the Republican National Convention, according to people familiar with the situation, and internal discussions have largely centered on two finalists as he nears a decision.

Trump has not communicated his choice, the people familiar with the situation said, but discussions inside the campaign have narrowed in on Sens. J.D. Vance (R-Ohio) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.). North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum (R) is also in the mix, and Trump, who has a habit of changing his mind, was privately discussing other names as recently as the past week, according to the people with knowledge of the situation. Like others interviewed for this story, the people spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe private talks.

Trump has two rallies scheduled this week: One on Tuesday in Miami and the other on Saturday in Butler, Pa. Trump has publicly said he would name his vice-presidential pick at the convention. The nomination is expected to take place July 15 under convention protocol, according to two of the people with knowledge of the situation. The vice-presidential pick is slated to speak on July 17.

The former president's running mate choice is one of the most closely watched decisions of his campaign. Trump said in June that he had decided on his vice-presidential pick but hadn't told the person yet.

"The vice-presidential pick is a very personal thing for the president," said Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), a Trump ally. "The vice president's job is to basically support the president's policies and be an advocate for what he wants."

The Trump campaign previously requested vetting documents from at least eight potential candidates. In addition to Vance, Rubio and Burgum, the campaign requested documents from Sens. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and Tom Cotton (R-Ark.); Reps. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) and Byron Donalds (R-Fla.) and former secretaries

SEE TRUMP ON A2

## IN THE NEWS

**Texas braces for Beryl** Thousands of residents along the Gulf Coast were urged to evacuate as the storm was expected to make landfall as a Category 1 hurricane. A18

**House Democrats Hakeem Jeffries** has mostly succeeded in preventing a tide of defectors from calling for President Biden's exit. A6

**THE NATION** **What to watch for** in Donald Trump's cases after the high court's ruling on immunity. A2 **A Texas judge** blocked the state's attempt to close a network of migrant shelters. A7

**THE WORLD** **The International Criminal Court** has accused Israeli officials of starving Gaza. What happens now? A13 **NATO will convene** at a moment of peak uncertainty in the West. A15

**THE ECONOMY** **When it comes** to car rentals, an EV can be a cheap but sometimes inconvenient option. Here are some tips. A14

**THE REGION** **As Washington** prepares to host this week's NATO summit, residents and businesses brace for headaches. B1

**In Annandale, Va.,** a dispute over pickleball has led to the involvement of the park authority and a sit-in by players at public courts. B1 **Prosecutors plan** to review evidence from the crash in Prince George's County that killed NFL rookie Khyree Jackson and two friends. B1

**STYLE** **The Shade Room** began as a celebrity gossip page and is now a burgeoning Black media empire. Politicians want in. C1 **LinkedIn co-founder** Reid Hoffman is helping pay for voting technology company Smartmatic's lawsuit against Fox News. C1

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