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For officials, budgets an overriding issue

Stoneham, Melrose taxpayers are latest to face votes seeking more money to pay for services

By James Vaznis
GLOBE STAFF

When Amanda Tsapatsaris opened an email a week before the school year began to find the answer to her daughter's burning question — who would be her second-grade teacher — Tsapatsaris' eyes stopped on three dreadful letters: "TBD."

The position, like scores of others in the Stoneham Public Schools, was still vacant, as administrators scrambled to address an exodus of staff, fueled by years of budget cutting that has kept salaries low,

as well as voters' rejection in April of a \$14.6 million property tax hike.

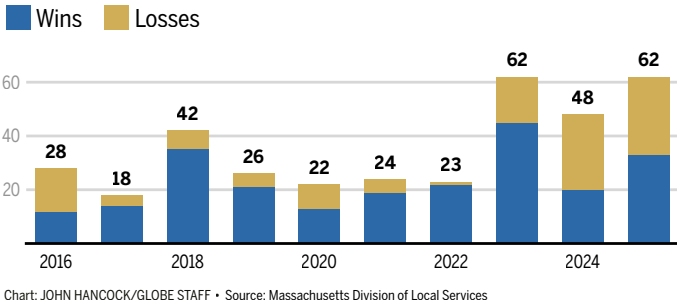
Knowing her daughter would be heartbroken, Tsapatsaris attempted to keep the information quiet until a real assignment arrived. But her daughter's friends already knew their teachers' names, and so Tsapatsaris, under pressure from her inquisitive daughter, reluctantly gave in.

"It was awful," said Tsapatsaris, co-chair of Save Our Stoneham, a group that supports a property tax increase to fund school and town services. "We had to have

OVERRIDES, Page A5

A look at 10 years of override votes

The number of votes local officials in Massachusetts have sought from residents to increase their property taxes above a state limit of no more than 2.5 percent annually has been on the rise in recent years.



Shutdown barreling toward record

Resolution elusive as Trump pushes his party to end filibuster rules

By Mary Clare Jalonick
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Republicans and Democrats remained at a stalemate on the government shutdown over the weekend as it headed into its sixth week, with food aid potentially delayed or suspended for millions of Americans and President Trump pushing GOP leaders to change Senate rules to end it.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Sunday that Trump has spoken to Senate majority leader John Thune and House Speaker Mike Johnson as he has publicly and repeatedly pushed for an end to the Senate filibuster. But Republicans have strongly rejected Trump's calls since his first term, arguing that the rule requiring 60 votes to overcome any objections in the Senate is vital to the institution and has allowed them to stop Democratic policies when they are in the minority.

Leavitt said Sunday that the Democrats are "crazed people" who haven't shown any signs of budging. "That's why President Trump has said Republicans need to get tough, they need to get smart, and they need to use this option to get rid of the filibuster, to reopen the government and do right by the American public," Leavitt said on "Sunday Morning Futures" on Fox News.

SHUTDOWN DAY 34

13
Failed Senate votes

Sept. 19
Date of last House session

594,048
Workers furloughed

35 days
Longest-ever shutdown

SHUTDOWN, Page A6

Effects of the shutdown

Food aid is up in the air, while many flights are delayed on the ground. **B1.**

US sidesteps Congress in boat strikes

War Powers act doesn't apply, Justice Dept. says

By Charlie Savage and Julian E. Barnes
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department told Congress this past week that President Trump could lawfully continue his lethal military strikes on people suspected of smuggling drugs at sea, notwithstanding a time limit for congressionally unauthorized deployments of armed forces into "hostilities."

In a briefing, the official who leads the department's Office of Legal Counsel, T. Elliot Gaiser, said the administration did not think the operation rose to the kind of "hostilities" covered by the 60-day limit, a key part of a 1973 law called the War Powers Resolution, according to several people familiar with the matter.

In a statement provided by the White House, an unnamed senior administration official said that US service members were not in danger because

STRIKES, Page A6



PHOTOS BY CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

Farm to . . . closet

Selling wool boosts farmers' incomes, meets demand for local products

By Amanda Gokee
GLOBE STAFF

PLAINFIELD, N.H.

For Meg Falcone, it began with just three sheep: Briar Rose, Honeysuckle, and Blackeyed Susan. As her affection for the animals grew, so did her flock, which now counts 60 Shetland sheep. And over the years, her bills to keep the sheep healthy and fed kept growing, as did the fluffy pile of fleeces crowding her basement and garage. Every year, Falcone had to shear the sheep, but with no destination or use for their wool, it just kept accumulating.

WOOL, Page A7

Daffodil (top) climbed on a bail of hay at Five Sisters Farm in Plainfield, N.H. Meg Falcone (right) brushed out the wool fibers using a drum carder.



JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

New resident Rita Alan said the fitness app Strava helped her connect to Boston, in addition to its running community.

'Small room' social media offers escape from toxicity

Audience grows for hobby-focused apps

By Aidan Ryan
GLOBE STAFF

Rita Alan first downloaded the fitness app Strava in 2023 to start tracking her runs before a half marathon. But when a follow request from her crush in her college physics class popped up on her phone, she discovered the app's other side: a social network built entirely around exercise. Alan's posts didn't lead to a first

date, but she did strike up a long-term relationship with Strava, which she uses to log her runs and shower her friends with "kudos," the platform's equivalent of a "like," for their own accomplishments. After leaving D.C. for Boston last year, it's also helped her settle into this running-crazed city.

"Moving to Boston and already having Strava, I was able to dive head first

SOCIAL MEDIA, Page A7

WHEN THE FLOODS COME

Residents and leaders of Quincy, Revere, Taunton, and Hull are grappling with developing strategies and eventually solutions to confront a future of rising seas. **D1.**

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The charges of voter fraud in Lawrence and the state takeover of election supervision there are yet more blows to the city's battered image. **B1.**

For Mookie Betts, it's a doubly satisfying World Series championship. **C1.**



The Boston plops

Monday: Some showers. High 57-62, low 44-49.
Tuesday: Beautiful, cool. High 54-59, low 42-47.
High tide: 8:39, 9:07.
Sunrise: 6:20. Sunset: 4:35.
Weather and comics, **D4-5.**
Obituaries, **B5-6.**



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

MISTAKES CAN'T KEEP PATS FROM WIN

Atlanta Falcons running back Bijan Robinson attracted a gang of Patriots during the fourth quarter Sunday. New England overcame sacks, fumbles, and an interception to eke out a 24-23 victory over the Atlanta Falcons in Foxborough. **C1.**