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FINAL

Scheme had ties to W. Pa.

Investors outraged over Trump's order to free fraudster convicted of fleecing thousands

By Sean D. Hamill Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Before he was freed from prison by President Donald Trump five weeks ago, David Gentile was a power player in the world of private equity companies, amassing a fortune that included car dealerships, waste hauling firms and cold storage facilities.

The founder of GPB Capital

Holdings boasted of the company's ability to invest in thriving businesses, including the pur-chase of one of the largest car companies in Pennsylvania — the Kenny Ross Auto Group near Pittsburgh — to reap massive profits.

While overseeing the auto giant, which included nine dealerships in the region, GPB bought a waste hauling firm west of Pittsburgh on its way to attracting thousands of investors who were promised 8% returns on their

By the time federal prosecutors in New York targeted GPB and accused Gentile and others of siphoning \$1.6 billion from the company, the equity firm had fleeced more than 15,000 people in one of the largest criminal cases of its kind, records show.

Trump's decision to end Gentile's seven-year sentence in November after he served just 12 days has not only stirred outrage among investors — including veterans, teachers, farmers and retirees on fixed incomes — but also cast light on the vast assets that GPB purchased to carry out the scheme.

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A SNOWY, FRIGID FIRST NIGHT



Giuseppe LoPiccolo/Post-Gazette

Samara Jackson, 8, blows on a paper noise horn prior to the early evening fireworks Wednesday during the Dollar Bank Children's Fireworks event at First Night 2026 in Downtown. First Night celebrates the incoming New Year and is coordinated by Highmark and the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. At midnight, more fireworks and the Future of Pittsburgh Ball rising at the corner of Penn Avenue and Stanwix Street marked the start of 2026.

City, county homicides at historic lows

By Megan Guza Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Homicides in Pittsburgh hit a 35-year low in 2025, according to a combination of data from city police and Post-Gazette archives.

The 35 deaths are the lowest since 1989, when Pittsburgh detectives investigated 33 killings in the city. The next lowest was 37 in

1998 and 38 in 2019, according to police data. The city's stats show that homicide rates have fallen each year since the most recent spike of 71 in 2022, with 52 in 2023 and 42 in 2024.

A spokesperson for Mayor Ed Gainey did not return requests for comment on the continued drop.

Different sources can provide slightly different numbers when it comes to homicides based on what, exactly, "homicide" means to that organization. The list distributed by the Allegheny County Medical Examiner's Office, for example, includes any person killed by another who dies in Allegheny County — even if the actual incident happened elsewhere and the victim was transported to an Allegheny County hospital. The reverse can also be true.

The county's "Violence in Allegheny County" data dashboard notes other differences in how sources report numbers, including the fact that the medical examiner goes by the date of death whereas county and city police generally go by when an incident happened.

SEE **HOMICIDE**, PAGE A-2

State awarded \$193M for rural health care

By Sam Janesch Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

WASHINGTON — Pennsylvania's plan to stabilize its struggling rural health care systems will get a \$193 million infusion as President Donald Trump's administration implements a new five-year program that some say will not offset future Medicaid

The federal funding — which the state plans to first spend on the most pressing rural care needs like preserving hospital and EMS capacity is part of the initial tranche of a \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation

Program. It was created with Trump's signature legislation this summer, known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill," that extended sweeping tax cuts, allowed workers to deduct taxes on tips and overtime, increased the child tax credit and more. The law's roughly \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts over a decade, meanwhile, will increase the uninsured population and threaten the survival of rural hospitals in

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SPAN OF PLANS



Alexandra Wimley/Post-Gazette

The Panther Hollow Bridge sits closed on Tuesday in Oakland. Nine bridges in need of immediate work are in various stages, from the Charles Anderson in Schenley Park, where a full rehabilitation is underway, to others where preliminary engineering is near completion or a consultant has just been hired to study the project. Story in Local, Page A-4

TRUMP RECALLS **NATIONAL GUARD**

Troops in Chicago, L.A. and Portland withdrawn

By Michelle L. Price and Jaimie Ding **Associated Press**

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he's dropping — for now — his push to deploy National Guard troops in Chicago, Los Angeles and Portland, Ore., a move that comes after legal roadblocks held up the effort.

"We will come back, perhaps in a much different and stronger form, when crime begins to soar again — Only a question of time!" he said in a social media post Wed-

Governors typically control states' National Guardsmen, and Trump had deployed troops to all three cities against the wishes of state and local Democratic leaders. He said it was necessary as part of a broader crackdown on immigration, crime and protests.

The president has made a crackdown on crime in cities a centerpiece of his second term — and has toyed with the idea of invoking the Insurrection Act to stop his opponents from using the courts to block his plans. He has said he sees his tough-oncrime approach as a winning political issue ahead of next year's midterm elections.

Troops had already left Los Angeles after the president deployed them earlier this year as part of a broader crackdown on crime and immigration.

In his post, Trump said the troops' presence was responsible for a drop in crime in the three cities, though they were never on the streets in Chicago and Portland as legal challenges played out. When the

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Trump to blame for Capitol riot, Smith says

Pushes back on GOP claims in deposition

By Eric Tucker Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol "does not happen" without Donald Trump, former special counsel Jack Smith told lawmakers earlier this month in characterizing the Republican president as the "most culpable and most responsible person" in the criminal conspiracy to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The Republican-led House Judiciary Committee released on Wednesday a transcript and video of a closed-door interview Mr. Smith gave about two investigations of Trump. The document shows how Mr. Smith during the course of a daylong deposition repeatedly defended the basis for pursuing indictments against Trump and vigorously rejected Republican suggestions that his investigations were politically motivated.

'The evidence here made clear that President Trump was by a large measure the most culpable and most responsible person in this conspiracy. These crimes were committed for his benefit. The attack that happened at the Capitol, part of this case, does not happen without him. The other co-conspirators were doing this for his benefit," Mr. Smith said, bristling at a

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Weather

Periods of sun with flurries; very cold. Daytime high, 21; tonight's low, 16.

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