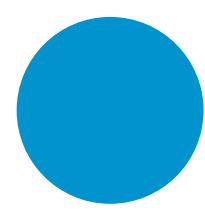


'Helplessness and anger': Heating bills stun people

After braving multiple rounds of frigid air, many face shocking spike in utility costs. **In Money**

David Archuleta opens up on faith, sexuality in book

"American Idol" finalist talks childhood and Mormon church in new memoir "Devout." **In Life**



USA TODAY

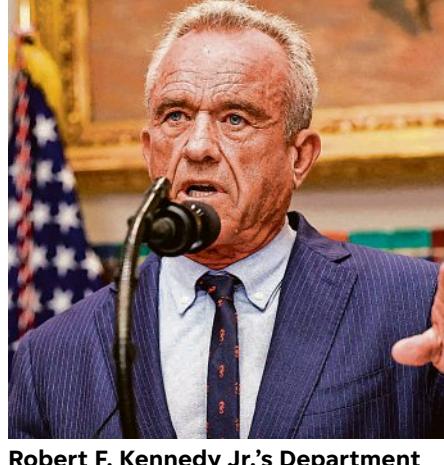
THE NATION'S NEWS | \$3 | THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026



LEONHARD FOEGER/REUTERS

Shiffrin's Olympic drought is over

U.S. skier wins gold in slalom, her first medal since winning a silver in the combined at the 2018 Games. **More Olympic coverage in Sports**



Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Department of Health and Human Services says it is building a "healthier, stronger America." KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS

RFK Jr.'s first year has been a mixed bag

Seven actions help take the pulse of MAHA

Sara Moniuszko

USA TODAY

It has been one year since Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was confirmed as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. How's he doing?

Depends on whom you ask.

On the HHS website, a page dedicated to highlighting Year One of Kennedy's "Make America Healthy Again" mission, or MAHA, states the administration has built a "healthier, stronger America."

Under Kennedy's leadership, the department "is taking bold, decisive action to reform America's food, health and scientific systems to identify the root causes of the chronic disease epidemic and Make America Healthy Again," a message reads.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Make America Healthy Again movement has gained a loyal following of outspoken fans and simultaneously made moves that have enraged his equally vocal opponents.

Brad Woodhouse, president of the social welfare nonprofit Protect Our Care, disagrees. "In one year, RFK Jr. has made America sicker," he said at a news conference Feb. 10.

"He's let measles get a foothold in the U.S. again. He continues to undermine the efficacy of the measles vaccine. He's undermined public trust in vaccines. He's promoted dangerous conspiracy theories," Woodhouse said. "He's installed quacks in key position to wreak havoc on our nation's public health infrastructure."

Over the past year, Kennedy has gained a loyal following of outspoken fans and simultaneously made moves that have enraged his equally vocal opponents. So perhaps the best way to evaluate his success is to look at what he has done. Here are seven major moments from RFK Jr.'s first year as HHS secretary, in no particular order:

Messaging on measles

In an interview in April 2025, Kennedy said he encouraged people to get vaccinated against measles after an outbreak killed multiple people in the

See RFK JR., Page 4A



California condors play a key role in disinfecting ecosystems.

Biologists help condors soar

Endangered species captured and treated to overcome lead threat

Brandon Loomis Arizona Republic | USA TODAY NETWORK

MARBLE CANYON, AZ

A 6-year-old California condor hopped from an open crate and trotted a half-dozen steps toward the cliff, spreading its two-tone wings in the winter sun before launching over the upper end of Grand Canyon. • Condor No. 987's return to the wild after about two weeks in captivity offered a splendid vision of recovery for North America's largest land bird. But his swift glide up the side canyon along Badger Creek was made possible only by the abiding hand of humans. Biologists capture and treat the endangered species, which scavenge elk and deer carcasses, only to court death by ingesting lead fragments that some hunters leave behind. **See CONDORS, Page 6A**



Program director Tim Hauck releases Condor No. 987 at Badger Canyon, Arizona, on Jan. 8. PHOTOS BY MARK HENLE/USA TODAY NETWORK

Fed: U.S. bore 90% of tariffs' burden

Americans paid for tax despite Trump's pledge

Daniel de Visé
USA TODAY

American consumers and companies paid nearly 90% of the cost of President Donald Trump's tariffs through late 2025, according to a new report from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

The study adds to a growing body of evidence indicating American families pay a price for Trump's import taxes, despite the president's assertion that the financial burden falls entirely on other countries.

Trump's tariffs equated to a tax increase of \$1,000 per household in 2025, according to a Feb. 6 report from the nonpartisan Tax Foundation. Households are expected to pay an additional \$1,300 in 2026.

The tariffs are the largest U.S. tax increase since 1993, according to the Tax Foundation analysis. Tariffs are a tax – but on whom?



President Trump's import tariffs are mostly a tax on Americans, a new report finds. SIDDHARTH CAVALE/REUTERS

On the campaign trail in September 2024, promoting tariffs, Trump told supporters, "It's not going to be a cost to you, it's going to be a cost to another country."

Trump repeated the claim in a Jan. 30 op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, writing, "The data shows that the burden, or 'incidence,' of the tariffs has fallen overwhelmingly on foreign producers and middlemen, including large corporations that are not from the U.S."

The New York Fed study, published Feb. 12, suggests otherwise.

Through August 2025, 94% of the import taxes fell on American companies and consumers, according to the study. By November, the "pass-through" rate had dipped to 86%.

"In sum, U.S. firms and consumers continue to bear the bulk of the economic burden of the high tariffs imposed in 2025," the researchers wrote.

The study affirms what many economists had predicted: That Trump's tariffs would be mostly a tax on Americans.

"The study by the New York Fed confirms what most economists expected – U.S. consumers and businesses pay most of the costs from the Trump tariffs," said Wayne Winegarden, senior fellow in economics at the Pacific Research Institute, a free-market think tank.

The Wall Street Journal seized on the report in a Feb. 13 editorial, opining, "No matter how often President Trump insists his tariffs are taxing foreigners to enrich the U.S., economic studies keep showing that Americans actually pay the bill."

Through late 2025, tariffs added about 0.7 percentage points to the U.S.

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