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Democracy Dies in Darkness

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024 • \$3

Foreign aid plan fuels bid to oust Johnson

Peril grows for speaker, who rejects right-wing calls for his resignation

BY MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR AND LEIGH ANN CALDWELL

House Speaker Mike Johnson's job is in serious jeopardy as two far-right lawmakers are threatening to oust him after the embattled Republican leader proposed a complex plan intended to fund key foreign allies during wartime.

Johnson (La.) introduced a four-part proposal Monday night to decouple aid for Israel, which faced a barrage of missiles and drones from Iran over the weekend, and help for Ukraine in its fight against Russia, along with two other measures. But his angry right flank — which has for weeks threatened to wrest Johnson's gavel — escalated its attacks Tuesday morning, also vowing to sink a procedural measure needed to consider his plan.

During a weekly Republican meeting Tuesday morning, Rep. Thomas Massie (Ky.) upped the ante when he stood and called on Johnson to resign after announcing that he had signed on to Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene's plan to depose him, known as a motion to vacate.

That means that if Democrats chose not to rescue Johnson, Republicans would need just a simple majority to oust their second speaker in six months, causing the House to descend further into chaos during an election year when their slender grasp on the majority is at stake. Republicans appear seriously divided not only about the possible effort to eject Johnson, but also on the foreign

SEE GOP ON A2

Mayorkas trial: The impeachment process moves to the Senate. **A13**

Amazon hits hiring slump in Arlington

Company also slashes hundreds of jobs at HQ2, missing target for 2023

BY TEO ARMUS

Amazon has fallen so far behind schedule in creating new jobs at its Northern Virginia headquarters that its workforce at those offices shrank last year, the company confirmed, showing how the project that it had pitched as an economic jolt is instead hitting a slowdown.

Following a much-hyped sweepstakes across North America, the tech giant in 2018 made a deal with Virginia officials to locate half of its second headquarters in Arlington, just outside D.C.: In exchange for as much as \$750 million in taxpayer subsidies from the commonwealth, it agreed to build a massive new campus near the Pentagon and fill it with tens of thousands of new employees.

The company was expected to gradually add 25,000 new jobs at HQ2 by the end of the decade, according to its agreement with Virginia, and receive money from the commonwealth as it hit annual

SEE AMAZON ON A19

Couple see Christian curriculum as antidote to classroom 'indoctrination'



THOMAS SIMONETTI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

They left public schools and built an anti-'woke' institute

BY HANNAH NATANSON IN CENTRAL FLORIDA

Kali Fontanilla repeated the lesson title to herself one last time — "A Complete History of Slavery in America" — sipped her peppermint tea and hit record.

"Hello, Exodus students," she said, addressing the group of 90 fifth- through 12th-graders who would eventually watch the video as part of their lessons from the Exodus Institute, an online Christian K-12 school Kali and her husband founded in 2021 with the motto "Exit Public Education."

The video, which Kali was recording in her guest bedroom turned office, was the latest in a special enrichment program dubbed the Young Patriots Academy, which aims to counter "left-wing indoctrination" and the "lies taught in most public schools," per the Exodus website.

Kali, who is half Black and half White, had a particular target that Friday: what she calls the left's unquestioning advocacy of reparations, the theory

that the government should pay restitution to descendants of enslaved Americans.

She told her virtual students they were about to learn of the Quakers, and how White members of that religion helped fight slavery. She said that, throughout American history, there were good people and bad people. She said focusing only on the bad, like she believes public schools do, would be wrong.

"Whenever you learn history," she said, "it's important to learn the full context of it."

Kali's online job marked a sharp departure from the years she and her husband, Joshua Fontanilla, spent teaching middle and high school English in California's deep-blue Salinas district. The couple quit their jobs a year after the coronavirus pandemic began, disillusioned by school shutdowns and displeased by some colleagues' embrace of the Black Lives Matter movement, which both thought was

SEE EXODUS ON A8

Kali Fontanilla and her husband, Joshua Fontanilla, edit a recording for their online Christian K-12 school, the Exodus Institute, at their home on Florida's Gulf Coast. The two quit their teaching jobs in California three years ago and relocated to Florida to found the school based on their values.

At Columbia, simmering tensions over Gaza war

University's president will face questions today from lawmakers about campus antisemitism

BY SUSAN SVRLUGA

NEW YORK — Most days, the iron gates to Columbia University are wide open, with students hurrying to class along the brick walkways and tossing Frisbees on the lawns. But on a recent afternoon, security officers watched as people scanned their school IDs to get in: An unauthorized protest was about to happen.

Inside, a phalanx of students suddenly appeared alongside the school's administration building, marching in black with kaffiyehs covering their faces. Another masked group appeared on the other side, descending the stairs. Soon protesters were massed at the center of campus, holding signs with messages such as "GLOBALIZE THE INTIFADA."

Xavier Westergaard, a doctoral candidate in biology, walked through the pro-Palestinian group wearing a yarmulke evoking the bright blue and white of Israel's flag, sat down facing the protesters, and began reading

SEE COLUMBIA ON A10



ED O'U FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Jewish supporters of Israel react as students protest on the Columbia University campus in New York on April 4. University officials said organizers did not obtain permission for the event.

West Bank attack: Palestinians describe a rampage by settlers after a Jewish teen was found dead. **A15**

Jan. 6 charge divides justices

RULING MAY AFFECT TRUMP PROSECUTION

Conservatives concerned about broad application

BY ANN E. MARIMOW

The Supreme Court appeared deeply divided Tuesday over whether prosecutors improperly stretched federal law to charge hundreds of participants in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, a decision that will impact those rioters and, potentially, Donald Trump's election interference trial in D.C.

The court's conservatives, who make up a majority on the nine-member bench, appeared most skeptical of the government's decision to charge participants under a law that makes it a crime to obstruct or impede an official proceeding — in this case the joint session of Congress that convened to formally certify Joe Biden's 2020 presidential victory.

Several, including Justices Neil M. Gorsuch and Samuel A. Alito Jr., expressed concern through hypothetical scenarios about giving prosecutors broad power that they suggested would allow the government to target peaceful protesters, disruptive hecklers or someone who pulls a fire alarm to delay a vote in Congress.

"Are all of those federal felonies subject to 20 years in prison?" Gorsuch asked.

More than 350 people have been prosecuted under the statute, which was enacted after the

SEE COURT ON A4

N.Y. trial: Seven jurors are sworn in as selection process speeds up. **A6**

Test of faith for Trump Media's investors

Some small-time traders proud to hold shares, even as value plunges

BY DREW HARWELL

Jerry Dean McLain first bet on former president Donald Trump's Truth Social two years ago, buying into the Trump company's planned merger partner, Digital World Acquisition, at \$90 a share. Over time, as the price changed, he kept buying, amassing hundreds of shares for \$25,000 — pretty much his "whole nest egg," he said.

That nest egg has lost more than half its value in the past two weeks as Trump Media & Technology Group's share price dropped from \$66 after its public debut last month to \$22 on Tuesday. But McLain, 71, who owns a tree-removal service outside Oklahoma City, said he's not worried. If anything, he wants to buy more.

"I know good and well it's in Trump's hands, and he's got plans," he said. "I have no doubt it's going to explode sometime."

For shareholders like McLain, SEE INVESTORS ON A20

IN THE NEWS

Caps seal the deal The Capitals knock off the Philadelphia Flyers, 2-1, in the season's final game and reach the Stanley Cup playoffs, where they'll face the New York Rangers. **D1**

Key Bridge victim Mexican officials identified another construction worker killed in the disaster after his body was recovered. **B1**

THE NATION

A U.S. appeals court allowed a transgender girl to stay on her West Virginia track team. **A12**
A former Army financial counselor pleaded guilty in a massive life insurance scheme. **A13**

THE WORLD

British lawmakers passed a bill to ban cigarette sales to those born in 2009 or later. **A14**
The U.S. will levy new sanctions against Iran over its attack on Israel, a Biden official said. **A16**

THE ECONOMY

Color analysis, the process that purports to reveal which colors look best on you, is back, this time with help from AI tools. **A18**
The IMF reported the global economy is growing but still could be headed for trouble with inflation. **A20**

THE REGION

Virginia Democrats and Gov. Glenn Youngkin remained at loggerheads as lawmakers returned to take action on the state budget. **B1**
A Maryland mother who authorities said set her 8-year-old son on fire was sentenced to 25 years in prison. **B1**

OBITUARIES

Carl Erskine, 97, was a standout Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher and the last of the team's "Boys of Summer." **B3**

FOOD

This Earth Month, learn how to shop less, cook the food you have, waste less and still eat well. **E1**

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