

# The Washington Post

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ELECTION 2024

## Democrats fade, GOP surges on Musk's X

Republicans fared better as platform's influence flagged, The Post finds

BY DREW HARWELL AND JEREMY B. MERRILL

The top political accounts on X have seen their audiences crumble in the months before the election, a signal of the platform's diminishing influence and usefulness to political discourse under billionaire owner Elon Musk, a Washington Post analysis found.

Politicians on both sides of the aisle have struggled to win the attention they once enjoyed on the platform formerly known as Twitter, according to The Post's review of months of data for the 100 top-tweeting congressional accounts, including senators, representatives and committees, equal parts Democrat and Republican.

But some of their tweets are still going mega-viral — virtually all of them from Republicans, the analysis shows. The Republicans have also seen huge spikes in follower counts over the Democrats, and their tweets have collectively received billions more views.

X has seen a dramatic exodus of users since Musk took over in 2022, according to independent analysts such as Edison Research, which said in March that X's usage in the United States had dropped 30 percent since last year. The investment firm Fidelity this month estimated that X's value has plunged by about 80 percent since Musk's takeover.

But the viewers who have

SEE MUSK ON A8

**The October surprise:** Elon Musk launches himself into the race. **A9**

## Va. au pair accused in homicide plot turns witness

BY TOM JACKMAN

An au pair who prosecutors say fell in love with the man who hired her, then conspired with him in a plot that left his wife and another man dead, has agreed to cooperate with authorities investigating her former paramour, Fairfax County prosecutors revealed during an explosive hearing Tuesday morning.

Juliana Peres Magalhães, 24, who had been charged with second-degree murder in the case, which drew international attention, pleaded guilty to a manslaughter charge. In exchange for her cooperation, prosecutors agreed to recommend that she be released on time served after the trial of her employer, which is scheduled for February.

Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Eric Clingan said Tuesday that Magalhães began cooperating with Fairfax police last week, laying out details of the plot allegedly launched by the au pair's employer, Brendan Banfield, 39, of Herndon, Virginia, to kill his wife, Christine Banfield, 37, in February 2023.

SEE AU PAIR ON A2



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Vice President Kamala Harris said Donald Trump is "out for unchecked power" and also reiterated a unity message on the Ellipse.

## On Ellipse, Harris hammers home her case against Trump

BY YASMEEN ABUTALEB AND MATT VISER

Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday delivered the closing argument of her campaign against Donald Trump, arguing that as president she would focus on delivering for everyday Americans while he would fixate on exacting revenge, speaking before a large crowd at the same site where Trump rallied his sup-

porters on Jan. 6, 2021, in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election.

A week before the end of the most turbulent and closely fought campaign in recent memory, Harris appeared on the Ellipse, surrounded by Washington's iconic monuments to democracy, and tore into her Republican rival as an un-American, casting him as a "petty tyrant" and calling him "unstable," "ob-

essed with revenge," "consumed with grievance" and "out for unchecked power."

"Donald Trump has spent a decade trying to keep the American people divided and afraid of each other. That's who he is," Harris said during her 30-minute speech. "But America, I am here tonight to say: That's not who we are."

Harris spoke with the White House as a backdrop in an effort

to remind voters of the stakes and of the very different ways she and Trump would serve as president. While she stressed the dangers she said Trump poses to democracy, she sought to tie those concerns to people's day-to-day anxieties — including the economy, health care and

SEE HARRIS ON A6

**The Critique:** "Only love" at D.C. site sullied by Jan. 6 speech. **A2**

## Loathing, loyalty in a majority-Latino city after Sunday rally

BY SARRINA RODRIGUEZ

ALLENTOWN, Pa. — Tairy Pagan, 41, had no plans to vote next week, exhausted with politics and frustrated by the state of the economy. She changed her mind after a comedian's racist joke about Puerto Rican at a Trump rally. Now she's voting for Vice President Kamala Harris.

Samuel Negron Jr., 55, proudly showed off the tattoo on his arm of the Puerto Rican flag as he stood in line to enter former president Donald Trump's rally here Tuesday night. While comedian Tony Hinchcliff's insult that Puerto Rico was a "floating

island of garbage" was infuriating, Negron is still all in for Trump. He cares more about Trump's plans for the economy and immigration, he said.

Enid Santiago, 46, was already voting for Harris, but up until Sunday night, she had no plans to try to mobilize other voters beyond her immediate family. Now she's enraged and channeling it into making sure every Puerto Rican knows how Trump and those he surrounds himself with feel about her community.

SEE TRUMP ON A6

**Swing-state poll:** Voters fear violence if Trump loses. **A8**



JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST

Zoraida Buxó, a Republican shadow senator from Puerto Rico, endorses Donald Trump on Tuesday in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

## Strike in northern Gaza kills scores

APARTMENT BLOCK HOUSED HUNDREDS

Israel also votes to ban U.N. relief agency

BY LOUISA LOVELUCK, MIRIAM BERGER, HEBA FAROUK MAHFOUZ AND VICTORIA BISSET

Scores of Palestinians were killed and wounded in northern Gaza on Tuesday after an Israeli airstrike hit a residential building where hundreds of people had been sheltering, local rescue and medical workers said.

It appeared to be the deadliest attack on the isolated north since Israeli troops resumed operations against Hamas militants there in early October, and it came a day after Israel's parliament voted to ban operations by the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, or UNRWA, Gaza's leading humanitarian provider.

The Gaza Health Ministry said Tuesday that the latest attack had killed at least 93 people and that 25 of them were children. The Israeli military said it was "aware of reports that civilians were harmed" and was looking into the matter. "We emphasize that the area was evacuated by the IDF and it is currently an active combat zone," the Israel Defense Forces said in a statement.

The strike on a five-story apartment block in Beit Lahia was reported at 4:20 a.m., Mahmoud Basal, a spokesman for Gaza's civil defense force, said. Photographs from the scene showed bodies being pulled from the rubble of a building smashed to pieces. Women and children stood over the dead, weeping.

"We simply cannot accept the killing of Palestinian children as normal," Save the Children wrote in a post on Instagram. "Each child killed was someone's everything, with hopes and dreams for the future."

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Tuesday that the United States was "deeply concerned by the loss of civilian life," adding that Washington has yet to receive a "full explanation" of the strike from the Israeli government. "This was a horrifying incident with a horrifying result," Miller said.

The Gaza Health Ministry says

SEE GAZA ON A14

**In Lebanon:** Hezbollah names new leader after Nasrallah's killing. **A14**

**Israeli airstrikes:** Images show damage to military sites in Iran. **A15**



MELINA MARA/THE WASHINGTON POST

Patience Frazier, who was prosecuted under the 1911 law, with her 2-year-old son in Belle Fourche, South Dakota, her new hometown.

## She said she miscarried, then got arrested

Under a 1911 abortion law, a Nevada woman was charged with manslaughter

BY CAROLINE KITCHENER IN WINNEMUCCA, NEV.

When the police showed up at her door, Patience Frazier assumed the officers had come for someone else.

As a woman in uniform started asking her questions on a Saturday morning in May 2018, five men eyed Frazier from the driveway, most in heavy tactical vests, the words "sheriff" and "police" emblazoned on their backs. A few had already fanned out to survey her home's perimeter, hands on

their holsters as if bracing to shoot.

Frazier told the female sheriff's deputy that her boyfriend wasn't home, guessing he was in some kind of drug trouble. Then the woman asked about "Abel."

Standing on the porch steps in socks and black leggings, the 26-year-old had a terrifying realization.

The officers were there for her. Earlier that month, Frazier had shared a Facebook post about the son she lost. She had apologized to Abel, saying she was "so

scared n afraid" and "didn't know what to do," court records show.

"Why would you be sorry?" asked Jacqueline "Jac" Mitcham, the 31-year-old deputy on Frazier's doorstep, according to body-camera footage obtained by The Washington Post. "Why would you be sorry, Patience?"

Frazier looked over at the other armed officers standing 10 feet away.

"I'm not allowed to have personal things in my life?" said

SEE PATIENCE ON A10

## IN THE NEWS

**A surge in litigation** Corporate interests have seized on recent Supreme Court rulings to challenge a host of federal rules. **A3**

**D.C.'s poop mystery** An anonymous caller told The Post that he and others were behind art installations featuring a giant poop sculpture and a bronze-painted tiki torch. **B1**

**THE NATION** A quarter-million Post subscribers canceled their subscriptions after non-endorsement. **A2**  
**Stephen K. Bannon** was freed from prison after a four-month sentence for contempt. **A3**

**THE WORLD** Windbreaks planted across Ukraine by Soviet farm planners prove crucial in the war. **A13**  
**A deadly attack** in Mali's capital shows al-Qaeda's shifting strategy in the area. **A16**

**THE ECONOMY** 'Super users' of artificial intelligence are tapping the technology to boost efficiency and get ahead at work. **A17**  
**A second** Trump presidency could shrink the CDC by cutting programs Republicans say are not key to fighting infectious diseases. **A18**

**THE REGION** The D.C. Council placed temporary limits on the ways people can protest in residential neighborhoods. **B1**  
**A jury** found a Virginia man not guilty after he claimed that he was testing the election system by trying to vote twice in 2023. **B1**

**STYLE** The long-held optimism of Sen. Cory Booker (D-New Jersey) has fastidiously prevailed in the face of the nation's myriad travails. **C1**  
**FOOD** Actor Stanley Tucci has been crafting a culinary identity, one project at a time.

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