



The Columbus Dispatch

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Shelter board worker investigated

Billman's YouTube channel shows anti-Islam content

Danae King
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Community Shelter Board employee is under investigation after The Dispatch asked questions about his YouTube channel.

On the channel, Thaddeus Billman calls Muslims "crackhead clown individuals" and openly states that he is a

fan of a man the Southern Poverty Law Center calls "one of America's most prolific and vociferous anti-Muslim propagandists."

Billman, the board's operations administrator, interviewed Robert Spencer, a known anti-Muslim figure, in October on his YouTube channel titled "Reasoned Answers." The channel has 26,000 subscribers and 355 videos.

Though Billman's associated website



Billman

www.reasonedanswers.com states he is a Christian apologist primarily concerned with proselytizing and converting Muslims to Christianity, Saher Selod, director of research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (IS-PU), said it's concerning that he not only hosted Spencer but said he was a "fan."

"Having somebody like Robert Spencer who he looks up to, it might give us

some insight into how (Billman) views Muslims as well," said Selod, whose organization provides research and information about American Muslims.

When asked about the channel, Billman said: "It's not a secret. My employer is aware the channel exists and they have reviewed it."

"My private views, or YouTube views, are not relevant to my job," he said. "Any views I hold do not impact the

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STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS



Gov. Mike DeWine gives the annual State of the State address Wednesday, saying that "workforce remains both our greatest opportunity — and our most significant challenge." SAMANTHA MADAR/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Trump's new threat: 200% tariff on EU alcohol

John Bacon and Marina Pitofsky
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump took aim at the European Union on Thursday, calling it a "hostile and abusive taxing and tariffing authority" and threatening a 200% tariff on alcohol from EU nations.

Also Thursday, Canadian Finance Minister Dominic LeBlanc, ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman and Ontario Premier Doug Ford were scheduled to meet with U.S. commerce secretary Howard Lutnick in an effort to calm an escalating global trade war ignited by tariffs the Trump administration slapped on steel and aluminum imports from around the world.

LeBlanc said the goal of the talks is to get a sense of the Trump administration's long-term plans for tariffs. He said Canada is ready to review the USMCA - United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement - that outlines trade among the nations. Earlier this week, tensions were heightened when Trump threatened to double the tariffs on Canada. He shelved the idea after Ford agreed to drop a proposed surcharge on electricity that Ontario sells to three U.S. states.

"We've always said the best approach is a coherent conversation that looks at all of these issues, where the three economies are part of the conversation, and where we can arrive at the best agreement for North America," LeBlanc said.

Meanwhile, the European Union quickly hit back with their own retaliatory levies after Trump threatened a 200% tariff on alcohol from EU nations.

The EU said Wednesday that it

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DeWine lays out his priorities

Governor stresses jobs, child credits in speech

Erin Glynn and Donovan Hunt
Columbus Dispatch
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gov. Mike DeWine said "the state of our state is strong," during his annual State of the State address on Wednesday.

DeWine highlighted new manufacturing job opportunities across Ohio, such as soybean processing at a plant in Wyandot County and making bourbon

barrels in Jackson and Pike counties. He said Ohio added more than 81,000 private sector jobs.

DeWine announced that Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel will take the lead in developing a "workforce playbook" to help grow jobs around Ohio.

Tressel will identify the workforce needs in each Ohio region and work with schools and businesses to meet the needs, DeWine said.

"Workforce remains both our great-

est opportunity — and our most significant challenge," DeWine said.

He also said he wants to do more to get cellphones out of schools.

"It's time to finish the job and ban cellphones in all Ohio schools so kids can learn," DeWine said. Ohio school districts currently have until July to have a cellphone policy in place under a new state law.

In his two-year budget plan, DeWine called for a new child tax credit for parents with a full-time minimum

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