

Trump signs bill reopening government

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed a government funding bill Wednesday night, ending a record 43-day shutdown that caused financial stress for federal workers who went without paychecks, stranded scores of travelers at airports and generated long lines at some food banks.

The shutdown magnified partisan divisions in Washington as Trump took unprecedented unilateral actions — including canceling projects and trying to fire federal workers — to pressure Democrats into relenting on their demands.

The Republican president blamed the situation on Democrats and suggested voters shouldn't reward the party during next year's midterm elections.

"So I just want to tell the American people, you should not forget this," Trump said. "When we come up to midterms and other things, don't forget

what they've done to our country."

The signing ceremony came just hours after the House passed the measure on a mostly party-line vote of 222-209. The Senate had already passed the measure Monday.

Democrats wanted to extend an enhanced tax credit expiring at the end of the year that lowers the cost of health coverage obtained through Affordable Care Act marketplaces. They refused to go along with a short-term spending bill that did not include that priority. But Republicans said that was a separate policy fight to be held at another time.

"We told you 43 days ago from bitter experience that government shutdowns don't work," said Rep. Tom Cole, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "They never achieve the objective that you announce. And guess what? You haven't achieved that objective yet, and

you're not going to."

The frustration and pressure generated by the shutdown was reflected when lawmakers debated the spending measure on the House floor.

Republicans said Democrats sought to use the pain generated by the shutdown to prevail in a policy dispute.

"They knew it would cause pain, and they did it anyway," House Speaker Mike Johnson said.

Democrats said Republicans raced to pass tax breaks earlier this year that they say mostly will benefit the wealthy. But the bill before the House on Wednesday "leaves families twisting in the wind with zero guarantee there will ever, ever be a vote to extend tax credits to help everyday people pay for their health care," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said Democrats would not give up on the subsidy extension even if the vote did not

go their way.

"This fight is not over," Jeffries said. "We're just getting started."

The House had not been in legislative session since Sept. 19, when it passed a short-term measure to keep the government open when the new budget year began in October. Johnson sent lawmakers home after that vote and put the onus on the Senate to act, saying House Republicans had done their job.

The legislation is the result of a deal reached by eight senators who broke ranks with the Democrats after reaching the conclusion that Republicans would not bend on using a government funding to bill to extend the health care tax credits.

The compromise funds three annual spending bills and extends the rest of government funding through Jan. 30. Republicans promised to hold a vote by mid-December to extend the health care subsidies, but there is no guarantee of success.

DOJ memo says US troops not liable in boat strikes

The Washington Post

The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel stated in a classified opinion drawn up over the summer that personnel taking part in military strikes on alleged drug-trafficking boats in Latin America would not be exposed to future prosecution, according to four people familiar with the matter.

The decision to pursue an opinion, drafted in July, reflects the heightened concerns within the government raised by senior civilian and military lawyers that such strikes would be illegal.

The strikes, now totaling 19 with a death toll of 76, began in September, though interagency discussions about the use of lethal force to combat drug cartels started early in the Trump administration.

Top officers, including Adm. Alvin Holsey, the head of Southern Command, sought caution on such strikes, according to two people, who like several others interviewed for this report spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Holsey wanted to make sure any option presented to the president was fully vetted first,

one person said. In October, he abruptly announced that he was resigning at year's end, about a year into what is typically a three-year assignment.

A Pentagon spokesman, Sean Parnell, has previously denied that Holsey had "hesitation or any concerns" about the mission. A spokesperson for Holsey said he had no information to provide about such discussions.

In a statement to The Washington Post on Wednesday, Parnell said that "current operations in the Caribbean are lawful under both U.S. and international law," with all actions in

"complete compliance with the law of armed conflict."

"Lawyers up and down the chain of command have been thoroughly involved in reviewing these operations prior to execution," he said, adding that personnel have "the opportunity to disagree." Despite that, Parnell said, "no lawyer involved has questioned the legality of the Caribbean strikes and instead advised subordinate commanders and [Defense] Secretary [Pete] Hegseth that the proposed actions were permissible before they commenced."

Trans troops sue over losing retirement pay

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A group of 17 transgender members of the Air Force are suing the U.S. government over what they say is the military's unlawful revocation of their early retirement pensions and benefits.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court Monday, comes several months after the Air Force confirmed that it would deny all transgender service members who have served between 15 and 18 years the option to retire early and would instead separate them without retirement benefits.

It is just the latest in a series

of legal challenges to the Trump administration's policies that have sought to push transgender troops out of the military since the early days of his second term. The U.S. Supreme Court in May, however, allowed the ban on trans troops to be enforced while legal challenges proceed.

According to GLAD Law, one of the advocacy groups that helped bring the lawsuit, service members affected by the policy will now face a loss of up to \$2 million owed for their service over the course of their lifetimes in addition to the loss of health insurance bene-

fits.

Michael Haley, a staff attorney with the group, said the revocation of the early retirement benefits was part of "the general cruelty in attacking transgender people." He noted that many of the plaintiffs had received orders allowing their retirements and that some had even begun the process of getting out of the military.

Logan Ireland, a master sergeant in the Air Force with 15 years of service that includes a deployment to Afghanistan, joined the lawsuit after having his early retirement denied. He told The Associated Press that

"the military taught me to lead and fight, not retreat."

"Stripping away my retirement sends the message that those values only apply on the battlefield, not when a service member needs them most," he added.

"These are folks who are going to move on with their lives, have received the OK to do so, and then have that taken away from them once again," Haley said.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to comment but has a longstanding policy of not commenting on ongoing litigation.

US forces launch relief effort in the Philippines

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The American military has launched a disaster-relief operation in the Philippines alongside local forces in response to back-to-back typhoons, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command announced Thursday.

"At the request of the government of the Philippines, the U.S. military is working shoulder-to-shoulder with the Armed Forces of the Philippines to provide foreign disaster relief to communities affected by consecutive Typhoons Kalmaegi (Tino) and Fung-Wong (Uwan), which caused extensive damage and tragic loss of life," the command said in a news release.

Over the weekend, Super Typhoon Fung-Wong pounded most of the Philippines' main island of Luzon and parts of the Visayas islands, displacing thousands and killing 27, the state-run Philippine News Agency reported Thursday.

Before that deadly storm, Typhoon Kalmaegi pummeled Ce-

bu and several portions of the Visayas and the southern island of Mindanao, causing massive flooding that killed 232, the agency reported.

The U.S. military has sent a variety of assets and personnel to the Philippines to support the relief operation, INDOPACOM said, without specifying how many troops and what equipment has traveled to the islands.

The American personnel are working with Philippine troops, disaster management and civil defense staff and the U.S. State Department, the release said.

"I have been thoroughly impressed by the preparedness and forward-leaning measures taken by the Philippine government during this situation, and we will support the lead of our Philippine counterparts as we carry out this relief mission together as a fully-aligned team," U.S. Marine Brig. Gen. Robert Brodie, commander of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, said in the release.

New 7th Fleet commander is welcomed at ceremony

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The U.S. 7th Fleet, responsible for 48 million square miles of ocean, welcomed Rear Adm. Patrick Hannifin as its new commander Thursday during a ceremony at this base south of Tokyo.

The command, which covers the Navy's largest operations area, announced the leadership change on its website. The ceremony, held just as a 43-day U.S. government shutdown ended, was not open to the media.

Hannifin relieved Vice Adm. Fred Kacher, who had commanded the fleet since February 2024.

A San Diego native, Hannifin most recently served as director of operations for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii, a role he took in April 2024.

Before that, he served at Yokosuka as commander of Task Force 70 and Carrier Strike Group 5. The dual-hatted com-

mand is responsible for 7th Fleet's carrier strike group and any independently deployed cruisers or destroyers in the fleet's area of operations.

From September 2018 to October 2020, Hannifin skippered the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, which was based at Yokosuka until it was relieved last year by the USS George Washington.

Hannifin's experience makes him a natural fit for 7th Fleet, but he was not the first choice.

Rear Adm. Michael "Buzz" Donnelly, now director of the air warfare division for the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, was nominated by President Donald Trump on June 18 to replace Kacher.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, however, rescinded Donnelly's nomination in July. That decision appeared related to inquiries by conservative media into drag shows aboard the Ronald Reagan during Donnelly's tenure as commander.

DOD overstated shutdown impact on missile

Bloomberg

The Pentagon inflated the government shutdown's impact on a secretive, air-to-air missile that's key to helping the U.S. compete militarily against China, with the Air Force later acknowledging the program was unaffected.

The House Armed Services Committee posted publicly on Oct. 23 that there would be a "three-month delay in deploying" the crucial Air Force Joint Advanced Tactical Missile program, a Lockheed Martin air-to-air missile that "is central to our air combat capabilities." It said the missile was "necessary to catch up with China, which has significantly outpaced the US in the ability to target important as-

sets with ultra-long air missiles."

The committee's release, titled "How the Democrats' Shutdown Weakens America's National Security," has since been revised to remove the missile mention. The claim had been highlighted under the heading "Critical Capabilities for Our Warfighters Are Being Delayed."

The mistake was part of a broader Trump administration effort to pin the highly disruptive government shutdown on Democrats. Last week, Vice President JD Vance warned on X that Democrats risked creating "great strains on our military and national security."

The Air Force and Navy asked for almost \$1 billion for the 2026

fiscal year that started on Oct. 1 to begin producing the classified missile system, according to budget documents and an Air Force statement. When Bloomberg News asked the committee about the "deployment" delay and the missile's current development timeline, a spokesperson said the crucial program was unaffected in the end.

One shutdown impact "was a possible delay to the JATM program," the spokesperson said in the statement. "Thankfully, the Air Force was able to mitigate this delay before it took effect, but there were some crossed wires and that information wasn't conveyed to us," the statement said.

The Pentagon press office de-

clined to comment on the error, referring queries to the Air Force, which also declined to comment.

The Air Force told the committee in a statement that its Armament Directorate, which includes the JATM program, in late September "began assessing potential impacts from a government shutdown and preparing mitigation options in advance of the 1 October deadline."

When it's eventually deployed — and the Air Force won't say when — the Lockheed weapon will become the most advanced U.S. air-to-air missile, a role long held by increasingly sophisticated versions of the RTX Inc. AIM-120 AMRAAM, which was introduced in 1993.

States have green light, yet scramble on SNAP benefits

Associated Press

With the longest U.S. government shutdown over, state officials said Thursday that they are working quickly to get full SNAP food benefits to millions of people, though it still could take up to a week for some to receive their delayed aid.

A back-and-forth series of court rulings and shifting policies from President Donald Trump's administration has led to a patchwork distribution of November benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. While some states already had issued full SNAP benefits, about two-thirds of states had issued only partial benefits or none at all before the government shutdown ended late Wednesday.

The federal food program serves about 42 million people, about 1 in 8 Americans, in lower-income households. They receive an average of about \$190 monthly per person, though that doesn't necessarily cover the full cost of groceries.

A spokesperson for the U.S. De-

partment of Agriculture, which runs the program, said in an email Wednesday that funds could be available "upon the government reopening, within 24 hours for most states." But the agency didn't say whether that will be when the money is available to states or when it could be loaded onto debit cards used by beneficiaries.

West Virginia, which hadn't issued SNAP benefits, should have full November benefits for all recipients by Friday, Gov. Patrick Morrisey said Thursday.

The Illinois Department of Human Services, which previously issued partial November benefits, said Thursday that it is "working to restore full SNAP benefits." But it won't happen instantly.

"We anticipate that the remaining benefit payments will be made over several days, starting tomorrow," the department said in a statement, and that "all SNAP recipients will receive their full November benefits by November 20th."

FAA changes its strategy, says flight cuts won't rise

Associated Press

Flight reductions at 40 major U.S. airports will remain at 6% instead of rising to 10% by the end of the week because more air traffic controllers are coming to work, officials said Wednesday.

The announcement was made as Congress took steps to end the longest government shutdown in history. Not long after, President Donald Trump signed a government funding bill to end the closure.

The flight cuts were implemented last week as more air traffic controllers were calling out of work, citing stress and the need to take on second jobs — leaving more control towers and facilities short-staffed. Air traffic controllers missed two paychecks during the impasse.

The Department of Transportation said the flight reduction decision was made on recommendations from the Federal Aviation Administration's safety team, after a "rapid decline" in controller call-outs.

The 6% limit will stay in place

while officials assess whether the air traffic system can safely return to normal operations, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said, although he did not provide a timeline Wednesday.

"If the FAA safety team determines the trend lines are moving in the right direction, we'll put forward a path to resume normal operations," Duffy said in a statement.

Duffy and FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford said Wednesday that safety remains their top priority and that all decisions will be guided by data.

Delta struck an optimistic note about how much longer flight reductions would continue, saying in a statement the airline looked forward to bringing its "operation back to full capacity over the next few days."

Since the restrictions took effect last Friday, more than 10,100 flights have been canceled, according to the flight tracking site FlightAware. The FAA originally planned to ramp up flight cuts from 4% to 10% at the 40 airports.

Dem sworn in to House seat after long delay

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrat Adelita Grijalva was sworn in as the newest member of Congress on Wednesday, more than seven weeks after she won a special election in Arizona to fill the House seat last held by her late father.

Grijalva was sworn in by House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., on Wednesday shortly before the House returned to session to vote on a deal to fund the federal government. After delivering a floor speech, Grijalva signed a discharge petition to eventually trigger a vote to release files related to Jeffrey Epstein, giving it the needed 218 signatures.

Grijalva's seating brings the

partisan margin in the House to a narrow 219-214 Republican majority. She vowed to continue her father's legacy of advocating for progressive policies on issues like environmentalism, labor rights and tribal sovereignty.

In a speech on the House floor after being sworn in, Grijalva said it was time for Congress "to restore a full and check and balance to this administration."

"We can and must do better. What is most concerning is not what this administration has done but what the majority of this body has failed to do," she said.

The seating of Grijalva brings an end to a weekslong delay that she and other Democrats said

was intended to prevent her signature on the Epstein petition.

Johnson had refused to seat Grijalva while the chamber was out of session, a decision that prompted condemnation from Grijalva, a lawsuit from Arizona's attorney general and speculation that Johnson was delaying her induction into the House to stall a vote on whether to require the Justice Department release documents related to the late convicted sex trafficker.

Grijalva had said she would join the petition from Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., after taking office, giving it the 218 signatures needed.

Lawmakers who win special elections typically take the oath

of office on days when legislative business is conducted. But with the House out of session since Sept. 19, Johnson had said he would swear her in when everyone returned. He did swear in two Republican members this year when the chamber was not in legislative session.

Rep. Raúl Grijalva, Adelita's father, died in March after more than two decades in the House, where he built a reputation as a staunch progressive.

Adelita Grijalva won the Sept. 23 special election with ease to complete the remainder of her father's term, representing a mostly Hispanic district in which Democrats enjoy a nearly 2-to-1 voter registration advantage over Republicans.

Judge: Hundreds detained by ICE could be released on bond

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Hundreds of people who have been arrested and detained in the Chicago area during the Trump administration's immigration crackdown could soon be released on bond while they await immigration hearings, a federal judge signaled Wednesday.

During a hearing in Chicago, U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Cummings said he would order the full release of 13 detained individuals based on a 2022 decree outlining how U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement can make so-called warrantless arrests.

He also gave government attorneys a Friday deadline to comb through a list of 615 people detained at county jails and federal facilities nationwide to see if they qualify for alternatives to detention under the decree while their immigration cases proceed. The judge said he'd issue an order for their release next week and in the meantime would temporarily pause any deportation proceed-

ings for people who might qualify for bond under the decree.

Attorneys for the detainees hailed the move as a win and said they plan to bring more cases.

"All of the tactics of ICE have been unlawful in the vast majority of arrests," said Mark Fleming, a lawyer with the Chicago-based National Immigrant Justice Center.

Cummings previously determined that ICE had violated the consent decree which, among other things, requires the agency to show documentation for each arrest it makes for people besides those targeted.

During Wednesday's hearing, Cummings listed instances since the crackdown started in which immigration agents have arrested people while they were at work, out walking or pulling through the drive-thru lane at a restaurant.

"It also seems highly unlikely to me that any of these foreign nationals ... fall into the category of what ICE has called the 'worst of the worst,'" he said.

California revokes 17K licenses for immigrants

Associated Press

California plans to revoke 17,000 commercial driver's licenses given to immigrants after discovering the expiration dates went past when the drivers were legally allowed to be in the United States, state officials said Wednesday.

The announcement follows harsh criticism from the Trump administration about California and other states granting licenses to people in the country illegally.

The issue was thrust into the public's consciousness in August, when a tractor-trailer driver not authorized to be in the U.S. made an illegal U-turn and caused a crash that killed three people.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Wednesday that California's action to revoke these licenses is an admission that the state acted improperly, even though it previously defended its licensing standards. California launched its review of commercial driver's licenses it issued after Duffy raised concerns.

Newsom's office said that ev-

ery one of the drivers whose license is being revoked had valid work authorizations from the federal government.

At first, his office declined to disclose the exact reason for revoking the licenses, saying only that they violated state law.

Later, his office revealed the state law it was referring to was one that requires the licenses expire on or before a person's legal status to be in the U.S. ends, as reported to the DMV.

Still, Newsom's spokesperson Brandon Richards shot back at Duffy in a statement.

"Once again, the Sean 'Road Rules' Duffy fails to share the truth — spreading easily disproven falsehoods in a sad and desperate attempt to please his dear leader," Richards said.

Fatal truck crashes in Texas and Alabama earlier this year also highlight questions about these licenses.

Duffy previously imposed new restrictions on which immigrants can qualify for commercial driver's licenses.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspect chased by police for 170 miles to border

CA LOS ANGELES — A suspect in an allegedly stolen minivan led authorities on a two-hour, 170-mile chase through four Southern California counties Monday that ended with her escaping into Mexico, officials said.

The driver was detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers when she reentered the country the next day.

It began around 11 a.m. when deputies responded to reports of a Toyota Sienna taken from outside a sober living home in Thousand Oaks, about 40 miles northwest of Los Angeles, according to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

The deputies chased the vehicle at speeds reaching 90 mph. The California Highway Patrol took over the pursuit as the minivan headed south on Interstate 405.

CHP units were called off from the pursuit around 1:20 p.m. because of public safety concerns, a common practice for chases near the border.

Shortly before 1:30 p.m., CHP officers were notified that the minivan had made its way through the San Ysidro crossing into Mexico, Hernandez said. The driver reentered through the crossing Tuesday, the highway patrol said in a statement. The suspect was identified as a 29-year-old woman who lived at the sober living facility.

County to pay, apologize over raid on newspaper

KS TOPEKA — A rural Kansas county has agreed to pay a little more than \$3 million and apologize over a

law enforcement raid on a small-town weekly newspaper in August 2023 that sparked an outcry over press freedom.

Marion County sheriff's officers were involved in the raid on the Marion County Record and helped draft search warrants used by Marion city police to enter the newspaper's offices, the publisher's home and the home of a local city council member.

"They intentionally wanted to harass us for reporting the news, and you're not supposed to do that in a democracy," the editor and publisher, Eric Meyer, said Tuesday.

The raid prompted five federal lawsuits against the county, the city of Marion and local officials. Meyer's 98-year-old mother Joan, the paper's co-owner, died of a heart attack the next day, something he blames on the stress of the raid.

During the raid, authorities seized cellphones and computers from the newsroom and rifled through reporters' desks. Search warrants linked the raid to a dispute between a local restaurant owner and the newspaper, which had obtained a copy of her driving record while reporting on her request for a city liquor license.

The Marion County Commission approved the agreement Monday after discussing it in private for 15 minutes.

JFK grandson announces bid for US House seat

NY NEW YORK — John F. Kennedy's grandson Jack Schlossberg is running for the U.S. House next year, announcing Tuesday that he's seeking a key New York seat set to be vacated by longtime Democratic Rep. Jerry Nadler.

"This district should have a representative who can harness the creativity, energy and drive of this district and translate that into political power in Washington," Schlossberg said in a campaign video posted on social media late Tuesday.

Schlossberg, a Democrat, has drummed up a large following on social media with frequent posts weighing in on national issues, including taking aim at his cousin, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Last month, he posted on Instagram an image of a Halloween costume for "MAHA Man," in reference to Kennedy's Make America Healthy Again message and described it as including such things as measles.

Nadler, who is serving his 17th term in Congress, announced in September that he will not run for reelection next year. The 12th District includes Manhattan's Upper West Side, Upper East Side and midtown.

14 current or former officers plead not guilty

MS JACKSON — Twenty people, including 14 current or former Mississippi law enforcement officers, have pleaded not guilty to federal charges that allege a widespread drug-trafficking conspiracy.

The indictments accuse officers from multiple law enforcement agencies in Mississippi of taking bribes to provide safe transport to people they believed were drug traffickers. Six other people — three in Mississippi and three in Tennessee — were also arrested.

The officers are alleged to have understood they were helping to transport 25 kilo-

grams of cocaine through Mississippi counties and into Memphis. Some of the officers also provided escort services to protect the transportation of drug proceeds.

Two Mississippi sheriffs, Washington County Sheriff Milton Gaston and Humphreys County Sheriff Bruce Williams, were among those arrested. Both Gaston and Williams are accused of accepting thousands in bribes from someone they believed to be a member of a Mexican cartel. In return, the sheriffs allegedly gave the cartel their "blessing" to operate in their counties.

Father, daughter on relief mission die in plane crash

FL CORAL SPRINGS — A Christian missionary father and his daughter were killed when a small plane bound for a hurricane relief mission in Jamaica crashed in a South Florida neighborhood.

Christian ministry organization Ignite the Fire identified the two victims of the Monday morning crash as the group's founder, Alexander Wurm, 53, and his daughter Serena Wurm, 22. The pair were bringing humanitarian aid to Jamaica, according to the organization, when the Beechcraft King Air plane they were flying in crashed into a pond in a residential area of the Fort Lauderdale suburb of Coral Springs, narrowly missing homes. As of Tuesday, investigators had not reported any other victims.

Ignite the Fire is "dedicated to empowering youth through missions and evangelism across the Caribbean," according to the organization's website.

— From wire reports

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Skenes, Skubal win Cy Young Awards

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The individual trophy cases for Paul Skenes and Tarik Skubal are growing increasingly full.

The next step in the evolution of baseball's two best pitchers is winning — preferably where they are.

The 23-year-old Skenes capped his blistering rise to stardom by capturing the National League Cy Young Award on Wednesday night. The Pittsburgh Pirates ace was a unanimous choice by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, the honor coming minutes after Skubal won baseball's premier pitching prize in the American League for the second straight year as the anchor of the Detroit Tigers.

As gratified as they are by the recognition, both said they are eager for their respective teams to get in on the act in 2026.

That's where things get tricky.

The 28-year-old Skubal is entering his final year of club control, and while he would like to stay in Detroit beyond next season, he's also well aware the Tigers could trade him as a business decision, considering the hefty raise the left-hander figures to command should he hit the open market as a free agent.

It's much the same for Skenes, who remains under team control for the rest of the decade but found himself pushing back against a report that he's already told teammates he is eager to move on.

"I don't know where that came from," Skenes said. "The goal is to win and the goal is to win in Pittsburgh."

The Pirates finished last in the NL Central in 2025, well off the pace of front-running Milwaukee. The first pitcher since Dwight Gooden with the New York Mets in the mid-1980s to

win Rookie of the Year one season and a Cy Young Award the next remains optimistic Pittsburgh is closer to contending than most think.

"The way that fans see us outside of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh is not supposed to win," Skenes said. "There are 29 fan bases that expect us to lose. I want to be a part of the 26 guys that change that."

Skenes — selected first overall by the Pirates in the 2023 amateur draft after a standout career at Air Force and LSU — did his part in 2025, leading the majors in ERA (1.97) while striking out 216 batters in 187⅓ innings during his first full season in the big leagues.

Yet even with his brilliance, Skenes needed a little late help from Pittsburgh's woeful offense to avoid becoming the first Cy Young-winning starting pitcher to finish with a losing record. Skenes won three of his final four decisions to finish 10-10.

Although disappointed to be out of contention, Skenes said playing out the string was "a blessing" individually in some ways.

"It allowed me to try some new things in August and September that I wouldn't have gotten to try if we were playing for the playoffs," he explained.

That so-so win/loss mark didn't stop the towering 6-foot-6 right-hander from placing atop all 30 ballots. Philadelphia Phillies left-hander Christopher Sánchez received every second-place vote, and World Series MVP Yoshinobu Yamamoto of the Los Angeles Dodgers finished third.

Sánchez's 2029 option price increased by \$1 million to \$15 million and his 2030 option price by \$1 million to \$16 million as a result of being a Cy Young Award finalist.

Skubal received 26 first-place votes in the AL from a

separate BBWAA panel. The other four went to runner-up Garrett Crochet of the Boston Red Sox. Hunter Brown of the Houston Astros came in third.

Unlike Skenes and the Pirates, Skubal and Detroit have gotten a taste of October baseball each of the last two seasons, thanks in large part to his ascendance.

A year after taking a massive step forward by winning the AL pitching Triple Crown on his way to being a unanimous Cy Young winner, Skubal backed it up by serving as the anchor for the Tigers during a volatile season in which they squandered a 15½-game lead in the AL Central and were caught by Cleveland down the stretch.

Detroit got a bit of revenge in the wild-card round, beating the division-champion Guardians in three games following a 14-strikeout gem by Skubal in the series opener.

Yet as fun as the season was at times, the disappointment of falling short of the ultimate goal lingers.

"Ending the season on a loss is not a fun thing," Skubal said. "You can be proud of what we accomplished, but you want to end the season with a win... the one in October or maybe deep in November you get to play in."

Skubal is the 12th hurler to win baseball's top pitching honor in consecutive years, joining a group that includes Hall of Famers Randy Johnson and Pedro Martínez, who was the last American League pitcher to go back-to-back, for Boston in 1999 and 2000.

"I think a lot of it is not being complacent with who I am today," Skubal said. "I still think there's more to tap into. I don't think this is the finished version of myself."

And he doesn't think this is the finished version of the Tigers.

"You want to win this award as many times as you can in your career, but I'd gladly trade a Cy Young for a World Series," Skubal said.

Skubal was 13-6 with an AL-leading 2.21 ERA and 240 strikeouts in 195⅓ innings during the regular season. Then he went 1-0 with a 1.74 ERA in three playoff starts for Detroit, which was eliminated by the Seattle Mariners in its Division Series.

Crochet led the American League in innings (205⅓) and strikeouts (255).

Brown's top-three finish earned Houston an extra pick after the first round of next July's amateur draft under the prospect promotion incentive in the 2022 collective bargaining agreement.

Skubal's historic run comes with a chance for him to cash in as potential free agency looms. Economics aside, Skubal would be just fine sticking in the Motor City.

"I've given everything I have to this organization. I want to be a Tiger for a very, very long time," he said. "I'm just going to do what I do and not really focus on any of that stuff."

Skenes and Skubal both started the All-Star Game this year. The only other time the two All-Star Game starters won the Cy Young Awards in the same season was 2001, when Johnson and Roger Clemens accomplished the feat.

MVP awards for both leagues were set to be handed out Thursday.

Dodgers two-way star Shohei Ohtani is a heavy favorite to repeat in the NL and win for the fourth time overall, including twice in the AL.

New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge is seeking his third AL MVP in what could be a close vote with another top contender, Seattle catcher Cal Raleigh.

Reed, Pistons top Bulls for 8th straight win

Associated Press

DETROIT — Paul Reed had 28 points and 13 rebounds and the undermanned Detroit Pistons won their eighth straight game, beating the Chicago Bulls 124-113 on Wednesday night.

Detroit improved to 10-2 despite missing their entire usual starting lineup of Cade Cunningham (hip), Jalen Duren (ankle), Tobias Harris (ankle), Ausar Thompson (ankle) and Jaden Ivey (knee) and two key reserves.

Duncan Robinson scored 23 points before fouling out, and Darniss Jenkins added 18 points and a career-high 12 assists.

Matas Buzelis had 21 points and 14 rebounds for Chicago, and Kevin Huerter added 20 points. The Bulls have lost four straight after a 6-1 start.

Celtics 131, Grizzlies 95: Payton Pritchard hit five 3-pointers, scored 24 points and had nine assists, and host Boston used a big second half to run past Memphis.

Derrick White added 20 points for the Celtics, and Jaylen Brown had 19.

Boston never trailed, made 21 3-pointers and led by 38 points. It also pushed the Grizzlies around inside, outrebounding them 58-41 and holding a 34-12 edge in second-chance points.

Hornets 110, Bucks 100: Miles Bridges scored 20 points, Ryan Kalkbrenner had 17 points on 8-for-8 field goal shooting, and host Charlotte snapped a three-game losing streak with a win over Milwaukee, which played without an injured Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Collin Sexton and Kon Knuepfer had 16 points apiece for the Hornets.

Ryan Rollins led the Bucks with 25 points on 10-for-15 shooting, going 4 for 6 on 3-pointers. Myles Turner had 21 points. Kyle Kuzma, who was shooting 55.3% from the field and was coming off a season-high 26 points against Dallas, was limited to eight points on 3-for-12 shooting.

Magic 124, Knicks 107: Franz Wagner had 28 points and nine rebounds, Desmond Bane added 22 points and eight assists, and visiting Orlando handed New York its first home loss of the season with a victory.

Anthony Black scored 17 points on 7-for-11 shooting for the Magic, who won for the fifth time in their past seven games. They overcame the loss of leading scorer Paolo Banchero, who strained his left groin on his 23rd birthday and missed the second half.

New York's Jalen Brunson scored 31 points before leaving with 1:52 left shortly after turning his right ankle on a drive to the basket. Karl-Anthony Towns had 15 points and 12 rebounds for his NBA-leading 10th double-double for the Knicks, who were 7-0 at Madison Square Garden and had won five straight overall.

Cavaliers 130, Heat 116: Jarrett Allen had 30 points and 10 rebounds, and short-handed Cleveland stopped host Miami's four-game win streak with a victory.

De'Andre Hunter scored 21 points for the Cavaliers, who lost 140-138 in overtime at the Heat on Monday. Lonzo Ball had 15 points and eight assists, and reserve Craig Porter Jr. finished with 19 points, nine assists and four blocks.

Norman Powell scored 27 points for Miami, which dropped to 1-7 in its last eight games against Cleveland. Davion Mitchell added 16 points.

Rockets 135, Wizards 112: Kevin Durant scored 23 points and Reed Sheppard added a season-high 21 off the bench to help host Houston coast to a win over Washington, extending its skid to 10 games.

Reserve Tari Eason scored a season-best 21 points for the Rockets and Alperen Sengun finished with 16 points, 13 rebounds and six assists. Amen Thompson scored 18 points and had eight assists as Houston improved to 7-3.

Alex Sarr, the No. 2 pick in the

2024 draft, had 25 points and 11 rebounds for the Wizards, who fell to 1-11 this season. Kyshawn George added 16 points, nine assists and six rebounds.

Warriors 125, Spurs 120: Stephen Curry scored 46 points and visiting Golden State beat San Antonio, overcoming triple doubles by Victor Wembanyama and Stephon Castle.

Jimmy Butler had 28 points and eight assists for the Warriors, who had lost three of four. Moses Moody added 19 points.

Wembanyama had 31 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists for his fourth career triple double. The Spurs suffered their first home loss this season, having won three in a row overall.

Trail Blazers 125, Pelicans 117: Shaedon Sharpe scored a season-high 35 points, Deni Avdija added 32 and visiting Portland beat New Orleans.

Sharpe was 11-for-11 shooting on 2-point field goals, the most 2-point shots in a game without a miss by a Trail Blazers player since March 18, 1982, when Calvin Natt went 13 for 13.

Avdija has scored 25 or more points in five consecutive games, the longest such stretch of his career. It is also the longest by a Portland player since Damian Lillard's 19-game streak during the 2022-23 season.

Suns 123, Mavericks 114: Devin Booker had 26 points and nine assists, Grayson Allen scored four of his 23 points in a key late stretch and visiting Phoenix held off Dallas for its fourth straight victory.

The Mavericks cut an 18-point second-half deficit to three with 1:48 left. Allen took a scoop shot down the lane with Daniel Gafford called for goaltending with 1:25 to go and made two free throws with 24.3 seconds left for a seven-point lead.

The Suns are 7-5. They have won six of seven after opening 1-4.

Thunder 121, Lakers 92: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 30 points and nine assists in three

quarters, and host Oklahoma City rolled past Los Angeles.

Isaiah Joe added 21 points for the Thunder, who improved their league-best record to 12-1.

Lakers guard Luka Doncic was held to 19 points on 7-for-20 shooting. He was averaging 37.1 points coming into the game.

Hawks 133, Kings 100: Jalen Johnson had 24 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists as visiting Atlanta routed slumping Sacramento.

Johnson scored 18 in the first half and shot 9 of 10 from the field overall for his fourth double-double this season and the 44th of his career. He also made all four of his free throws.

Onyeka Okongwu added 21 points off the bench, Zaccharie Risacher had 15 and the Hawks won their third straight despite playing without Trae Young. The four-time All-Star guard has missed seven games due to a knee sprain and could be sidelined two more months.

Nuggets 130, Clippers 116: Nikola Jokic had 55 points, tying the highest-scoring performance in the NBA this season, and 12 rebounds as visiting Denver beat short-handed Los Angeles for its sixth straight victory.

Jokic scored 25 of the Nuggets' 39 points in the first quarter. He had eight in the second before coming back with 19 in the third. He sat out most of the fourth before scoring three points to complete his night going 18 of 23 from the field. He missed adding to his league-leading six triple-doubles with six assists. The Serbian big man was 5 of 6 on 3-pointers and made 14 of 16 free throws.

James Harden scored 23 points — making all 10 of his free throws — and had eight rebounds and five assists to lead the spiraling Clippers, who took a major blow earlier in the day when they found out that Bradley Beal will miss the rest of the season with a fractured hip. They're currently without Kawhi Leonard, who has a sprained ankle and foot.

Winston now starting at QB for Giants

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — With Jaxson Dart in concussion protocol, Jameis Winston is taking over as the New York Giants' starting quarterback for their game Sunday against Green Bay.

It is interim coach Mike Kafka's first big decision since taking over following the firing of Brian Daboll and auditioning for the full-time job by showing what he can do in the final games of this lost season. Kafka announced the move prior to practice Wednesday, his first in charge, saying it was his call.

"Jameis has done a great job since he's been here," Kafka said. "I got good feel for those guys, and I think Jameis will do a heck of a job. He's a great leader, he has a lot of production in this league and I think he's going to do a great job leading that group."

Kafka opted for Winston over former starter Russell Wilson, who had served as Dart's backup since getting benched for the rookie after an 0-3 start.

"Russ understands the direction we're going moving forward," Kafka said. "Russ is a true pro, and I know he's been through a couple tough things. Listen, the way he responds is unbelievable, and I have a ton of respect for Russ. He's going to be the backup this week. He's one play away just like he was last week, and so we need him and he's a crucial part of our offense."

Wilson, who turns 37 later this month and is not signed beyond this season, was 3 of 7 for 45 yards in relief of Dart last weekend at Chicago when New York blew another late lead, losing 24-20 and falling to 2-8.

That defeat led ownership to fire Daboll and promote Kafka,

the 38-year-old offensive coordinator who had interviewed for several NFL head-coaching vacancies but had not run a team at any level until now. Kafka could be one of the candidates considered following the season, along with other QB gurus with an eye on developing Dart.

Kafka, 38, said his focus is solely on players and coming up with a game plan, rather than thinking about his future and showing off for ownership and general manager Joe Schoen. Kafka promoted tight ends coach Tim Kelly to be offensive coordinator but will still call plays.

"Really smart coach. He'll help us tie in the run game and the pass game," Kafka said. "He does a great job with a lot of experiences to bank on."

Keeping Dart healthy and putting him in the best positions possible is the top aim down the stretch. Getting concussed

against the Bears looks like it is taking him out of the mix to face Green Bay at home.

"Jaxson's still in the protocol," Kafka said. "He's in the middle of it. To be honest with you, I have a lot of trust in our medical staff, in our medical team and they're taking great care of him. Each day I get a little bit of an update. He's right on track and right on pace in the program."

With Dart unavailable, the Giants are going with Winston, who signed a two-year contract last offseason and is expected to return in 2026 as Dart's backup. A Heisman Trophy winner in 2013 who was the No. 1 pick in the draft a decade ago, Winston started seven games last season for Cleveland and has been third on New York's depth chart since early in training camp.

"He's very excited for the opportunity," Kafka said, "and I think he'll run with it."

Oilers overtake Flyers after Roslovic's OT shot

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Edmonton's Jack Roslovic took advantage of a turnover by Cam York and scored off a 2-on-none break 1:19 into overtime, giving the Oilers a 2-1 victory over the Philadelphia Flyers.

The Flyers thought they were in line for a win when, with only 23.5 seconds remaining in regulation, Travis Konecny apparently scored off a tip-in goal. But a replay revealed Sean Couturier was just offside on the rush up ice, negating the goal.

Starting what will be a seven-game road trip, Edmonton (8-6-4) won its second straight game after losing its previous three. That skid had included a 9-1 shellacking by Colorado on Saturday.

Earlier in the contest, Connor McDavid set up Evan Bouchard for his third goal of the season, coming with only 55 seconds left in the first period for a 1-0 Oilers edge. The assist gave McDavid

six straight games with at least a point.

By the second period, the Flyers (8-5-3) were having trouble getting out of their own end, as the Oilers held them without a shot on goal for more than 15 minutes.

The game changed when Matvei Michkov put a wrist shot past Stuart Skinner for a tying power-play goal with 4:22 left in the second. Konecny's assist on that goal extended his points streak to eight games.

The Flyers' Dan Vladar made 30 saves in the losing effort.

Rangers 7, Lightning 3: Will Cuylle and Vincent Trocheck each had two goals, and visiting New York beat Tampa Bay for its second straight win.

Igor Shesterkin finished with 31 saves as New York improved to 8-1-1 on the road.

The Rangers, coming off a 6-3 win against Nashville on Monday night for their first home win, fin-

ished with their highest scoring total of the season.

Trocheck pushed New York's lead to 5-3 with 1:41 remaining in the second period as he got a cross-ice pass from Panarin and fired it in from the right circle after Vasilevskiy fell while sliding from his right to his left.

Mammoth 5, Sabres 2: J.J. Peterka and Lawson Crouse scored early in host Utah's four-goal third period, rallying from two goals down to beat Buffalo.

Nick DeSimone, Nick Schmaltz and Clayton Keller also scored for Utah, and Karel Vejmelka finished with 17 saves. The Mammoth snapped a three-game skid and got their second win in seven games.

Isak Rosen scored twice for Buffalo, and Colten Ellis stopped 32 shots. The Sabres lost their fourth straight and seventh in eight games (1-3-4).

Schmaltz scored from the slot off Clayton Keller's pass from be-

hind the goal line with 9:51 left in the third to push Utah's lead to 4-2 with his 10th of the season.

Devils 4, Blackhawks 3 (OT): Defenseman Simon Nemec scored his third goal of the game at 3:28 of the overtime to lift New Jersey to a road win over Chicago.

Dawson Mercer also scored and Jack Hughes had two assists for Eastern Conference leading Devils, 3-0-1 in their last four. Jacob Markstrom stopped 17 shots.

Chicago's Connor Bedard scored for the fourth straight game and extended his points streak to a career-high nine games, with eight goals and 11 assists in the run. Landon Slaggert connected after being recalled from Rockford of the AHL on Wednesday, Sam Lafferty added a highlight reel goal for his first point of the season and Spencer Knight made 33 saves.

The Devils extended their winning streak against the Blackhawks to seven games.