

## Dems urge troops to defy unlawful orders

Trump calls message 'seditious behavior' punishable by death

*Associated Press*

President Donald Trump on Thursday accused half a dozen Democratic lawmakers of sedition "punishable by DEATH" after the lawmakers — all veterans of the armed services and intelligence community — called on U.S. military members to uphold the Constitution and defy "illegal orders."

The 90-second video was first posted Tuesday from Sen. Elissa Slotkin's X account. In it, the six lawmakers — Slotkin, Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, and Reps. Jason Crow, Chris Deluzio, Maggie Goodlander and Chrissy Houlahan — speak directly to U.S. service members, whom Slotkin acknowledges are "under enormous stress and pressure right now."

"The American people need you to stand up for our laws and our Constitution," Slotkin wrote

in the X post. Along with the Michigan senator, the other lawmakers appearing in the video are seen as possible future aspirants for higher office, who now, thanks to the video's wide exposure, have elevated their own political profiles.

Trump on Thursday reposted messages from others about the video, amplifying it with his own words.

With pieces of dialogue spliced together from different members, the lawmakers introduce themselves and their background. They go on to say the Trump administration "is pitting our uniformed military against American citizens." They call for service members to "refuse illegal orders" and "stand up for our laws."

The lawmakers conclude the video by encouraging service members, "Don't give up the ship," a U.S. Navy officer's dying command to his crew during the War of 1812.

Although the lawmakers didn't mention specific circumstances in the video, its release

comes as the Trump administration continues attempts at deployment of National Guard troops into U.S. cities for various roles, although some have been pulled back, and others held up in court.

Troops, especially uniformed commanders, have a specific obligation to reject an order that's unlawful, if they make that determination. However, the Uniform Code of Military Justice will punish troops for failing to follow an order should it turn out to be lawful. Troops can be criminally charged with Article 90 of the UCMJ, willfully disobeying a superior commissioned officer, and Article 92, failure to obey an order.

On Thursday, Trump reposted to social media an article about the video, adding his own commentary that it was "really bad, and Dangerous to our Country."

"SEDITIONOUS BEHAVIOR FROM TRAITORS!!!" Trump went on. "LOCK THEM UP???" He called for the lawmakers' arrest and trial, adding in a sepa-

rate post that it was "SEDITIONOUS BEHAVIOR, punishable by DEATH."

Trump also reposted more than a dozen comments from other accounts criticizing Democrats, including one that stated: "HANG THEM GEORGE WASHINGTON WOULD !!"

Asked during a White House briefing Thursday about the intent of Trump's messages, press secretary Karoline Leavitt instead homed in on the Democrats' message, which she said "perhaps is punishable by law." Leavitt went on to say that any incitement to "defy the chain of command, not to follow lawful orders" is "a very dangerous thing for sitting members of Congress to do, and they should be held accountable, and that's what the president wants to see."

Democrats were swift to react to Trump's words, with Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer warning in a floor speech that the president was "lighting a match in a country soaked with political gasoline."

## Coast Guard reverses course on swastika policy

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Coast Guard has released a new, firmer policy addressing the display of hate symbols like swastikas and nooses just hours after it was publicly revealed that it made plans to describe them as "potentially divisive" — a term that prompted outcry from lawmakers and advocates.

"Divisive or hate symbols and flags are prohibited," the latest Coast Guard policy, released late Thursday, declared before adding that this category in-

cluded "a noose, a swastika, and any symbols or flags co-opted or adopted by hate-based groups."

"This is not an updated policy but a new policy to combat any misinformation and double down that the U.S. Coast Guard forbids these symbols," an accompanying Coast Guard press release said.

The late-night change came on the same day that media outlets, led by The Washington Post, discovered that the Coast Guard had written a policy earlier this month that called those

same symbols "potentially divisive."

The term was a shift from a policy rolled out in 2019 that said symbols like swastikas and nooses were "widely identified with oppression or hatred" and called their display "a potential hate incident."

The latest policy that was rolled out Thursday night also unequivocally banned the display of any divisive or hate symbols from all Coast Guard locations.

The earlier version stopped

short of banning the symbols, instead saying that commanders could take steps to remove them from public view and that the rule did not apply to private spaces outside of public view, such as family housing.

After the initial policy change became public, Democratic Sen. Jacky Rosen of Nevada said the change "rolls back important protections against bigotry and could allow for horrifically hateful symbols like swastikas and nooses to be inexplicably permitted to be displayed."

# Zelenskyy sees Ukraine at crossroads

US peace plan leaves choice between loss of dignity or loss of partner, leader tells nation

*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine — President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday that Ukraine has to confront the possibility of losing its dignity or risking the loss of a key partner as it figures out how to respond to a U.S. peace proposal to end Russia's war with his country.

"This is one of the most difficult moments in our history," Zelenskyy said in a video address to the nation. "Currently, the pressure on Ukraine is one of the hardest. Ukraine may now face a very difficult choice, either losing its dignity or the risk of losing a key partner."

He said Ukraine would "work calmly with America and all partners," as he vowed to work constructively.

Zelenskyy spoke earlier by phone with the leaders of Germany, France and the United Kingdom, who assured him of their continued support, as European officials scrambled to

respond to U.S. peace proposals that apparently caught them unawares.

The U.S. plan contains many of Russian President Vladimir Putin's longstanding demands, including Ukrainian territorial concessions, while offering limited security guarantees to Ukraine.

Wary of antagonizing U.S. President Donald Trump, the European and Ukrainian responses were cautiously worded and pointedly commended American peace efforts.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer assured Zelenskyy of "their unchanged and full support on the way to a lasting and just peace" in Ukraine, Merz's office said.

The four leaders welcomed U.S. efforts to end the war. "In particular, they welcomed the commitment to the sovereignty of Ukraine and the readiness to

grant Ukraine solid security guarantees," the statement added.

"They agreed to continue pursuing the aim of protecting vital European and Ukrainian interests in the long term," the statement said. "That includes the line of contact being the point of departure for an agreement and that the Ukrainian armed forces must remain in a position to defend the sovereignty of Ukraine effectively."

Starmer said the right of Ukraine to "determine its future under its sovereignty is a fundamental principle."

European countries see their own futures at stake in Ukraine's fight against Russia's full-scale invasion and have insisted on being consulted in peace efforts.

"Russia's war against Ukraine is an existential threat to Europe. We all want this war to end. But how it ends matters," EU foreign policy chief Kaja

Kallas said in Brussels. "Russia has no legal right whatsoever to any concessions from the country it invaded. Ultimately, the terms of any agreement are for Ukraine to decide."

The plan foresees Ukraine handing over territory to Russia — something Zelenskyy has repeatedly ruled out — reduces the size of its army and blocks its route to NATO membership.

Zelenskyy said the leaders discussed the plan and appreciated the efforts of Trump and his team, although he added that they are "working on the document."

"We are closely coordinating to ensure that the principled positions are taken into account," Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post.

The proposals come at a difficult time for Zelenskyy, who is grappling with a push on the battlefield by Russia's bigger army and a major domestic corruption scandal.

## Halt ordered for 'unlawful' Guard deployment in DC

*The Washington Post*

A federal judge on Thursday ordered the Trump administration to halt its National Guard deployment to Washington while a lawsuit over the matter plays out in court, siding with D.C.'s attorney general and writing that the administration has "exceeded the bounds of [its] statutory authority."

The order does not mean troops will leave D.C. immediately; the judge opted to pause her ruling from going into effect for 21 days to give the Trump administration time to appeal.

While not a final decision, the court opinion is a significant legal win for D.C. in a case that

could end up setting guardrails on President Donald Trump's use of the National Guard to impose his will on the city. It comes during a year in which defenders of the city's autonomy — under repeated attack by the Trump administration and GOP members of Congress — have seen few such victories.

U.S. District Judge Jia M. Cobb wrote that the deployment was "unlawful," has caused D.C. "irreparable harm to its sovereign powers under the Home Rule Act" — the 1973 law that gave D.C. residents their own elected government — and has "infringed upon the District's right to govern itself."

D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb said Thursday that the National Guard's withdrawal was overdue.

"From the beginning, we made clear that the U.S. military should not be policing American citizens on American soil," Schwalb wrote in a statement. "It is long past time to let the National Guard go home — to their everyday lives, their regular jobs, their families, and their children."

A spokesperson for Trump, Abigail Jackson, said in a written statement that the president was "within his lawful authority" in deploying the Guard to the District.

The Pentagon declined to comment, saying it does not discuss "ongoing litigation." Officials with the task force overseeing the Guard deployment in D.C. did not respond to requests for comment.

The court opinion in D.C. joins rulings in Portland and Chicago, where judges have for now blocked Trump's attempts to deploy troops.

Trump deployed the D.C. National Guard on Aug. 11 as part of a crackdown on crime in the nation's capital, in which he also declared an emergency, seized control of the police department and surged hundreds of federal agents onto city streets.

# Judges uphold NC districts drawn by GOP

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Federal judges on Thursday upheld several U.S. House districts that North Carolina Republicans drew in 2023 that helped the GOP gain additional seats the following year. They rejected accusations the lines unlawfully fractured and packed Black voters to weaken their voting power.

The order by three judges — all of whom were nominated to the bench by GOP presidents — didn't rule on changes made last month to the 1st Congressional District that are designed to unseat Democratic Rep. Don Davis in 2026.

That alteration, completed at the urging of President Donald Trump as part of an ongoing national mid-decade redistricting fray, is still being considered by the panel. The judges heard arguments on Wednesday in Win-

ston-Salem but didn't immediately rule on whether they would block now the use of the 1st District and the adjoining 3rd District for next year's election while more legal arguments are made. Candidate filing for the 2026 elections is set to begin Dec. 1.

Many allegations made by the state NAACP, Common Cause and voters cover both 2023 and 2025 changes, in particular claims of voter dilution and racial discrimination violating the U.S. Constitution and Voting Rights Act.

The 2023 map helped turn a 7-7 North Carolina delegation into one in which Republicans won 10 of the 14 seats in 2024. Three Democrats chose not to seek reelection, saying it was essentially impossible to get reelected under the recast lines.

Thursday's ruling by 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge

Allison Rushing and District Judges Thomas Schroeder and Richard Myers rejected claims that GOP legislators drew lines in 2023 so skewed for Republicans that many Black voters could not elect their preferred candidates.

"We conclude that the General Assembly did not violate the Constitution or the VRA in its 2023 redistricting," they wrote in a 181-page order.

The judges convened a trial several months ago hearing testimony for a pair of lawsuits that challenged portions of maps redrawn in 2023. Thursday's decision focused on five congressional districts: three in the Greensboro region and two in and around Charlotte, as well as three state Senate districts. The judges also upheld the Senate districts.

The plaintiffs argued Republicans split and weakened the

Greensboro region's concentrated Black voting population within multiple U.S. House districts. Then-Rep. Kathy Manning, a Greensboro Democrat, decided not to run again last year because her district shifted to the right. They also cited what they called packing Black voting-age residents into a Charlotte-area congressional district that in turn helped Republican Tim Moore win an adjoining district.

Attorneys for Republican leaders argued that lawfully partisan — and not racial — considerations helped inform decision-making on the 2023 map. They pointed out that no information on the racial make-up of regions were used in drawing the lines. A 2019 U.S. Supreme Court decision essentially neutered federal legal claims of illegal partisan gerrymandering going forward.

## High court meets to weigh birthright citizenship limits

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court is to meet in private Friday with a high-profile issue on its agenda — President Donald Trump's birthright citizenship order declaring that children born to parents who are in the United States illegally or temporarily are not American citizens.

The justices could say as soon as Monday whether they will hear Trump's appeal of lower court rulings that have uniformly struck down the citizenship restrictions. They have not taken effect anywhere in the United States.

If the court steps in now, the case would be argued in the spring, with a definitive ruling expected by early summer.

The birthright citizenship order, which Trump signed on the first day of his second term in

the White House, is part of his administration's broad immigration crackdown. Other actions include immigration enforcement surges in several cities and the first peacetime invocation of the 18th century Alien Enemies Act.

The administration is facing multiple court challenges, and the high court has sent mixed signals in emergency orders it has issued.

The justices effectively stopped the use of the Alien Enemies Act to rapidly deport alleged Venezuelan gang members without court hearings. They also allowed the resumption of sweeping immigration stops in the Los Angeles area after a lower court blocked the practice of stopping people solely based on their race, language, job or location.

## New oil drilling approved off coasts of California, Florida

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration announced on Thursday new oil drilling off the California and Florida coasts for the first time in decades, advancing a project that critics say could harm coastal communities and ecosystems, as President Donald Trump seeks to expand U.S. oil production.

The oil industry has been seeking access to new offshore areas, including Southern California and off the coast of Florida, as a way to boost U.S. energy security and jobs.

The federal government has not allowed drilling in federal waters in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, which includes waters near Florida and Alabama, since 1995, because of concerns about oil spills. California has some offshore oil rigs, but there

has been no new leasing in federal waters since the mid-1980s.

Since taking office in January, Trump has systematically reversed former President Joe Biden's focus on slowing climate change to pursue what he calls U.S. "energy dominance" in the global market.

Trump, who recently called climate change "the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world," created a National Energy Dominance Council and directed it to move quickly to drive up already record-high U.S. energy production, particularly fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas.

Meanwhile, Trump's administration has blocked renewable energy sources such as offshore wind and canceled billions of dollars in grants that supported hundreds of clean energy projects across the country.



# Charlotte crackdown continues despite sheriff saying it ended

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C.— A federal immigration crackdown centered on North Carolina's largest city of Charlotte appeared to be tapering off Thursday, local law enforcement leaders said, but a Homeland Security official insisted the arrests would not let up.

The North Carolina operation that began last weekend was the most recent phase of President Donald Trump's aggressive mass deportation efforts that have sent the military and immigration agents into Democratic-run cities — from Chicago to Los Angeles.

"The operation is not over and it is not ending anytime soon," said Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin.

Both the local sheriff and police department said earlier in the day that the crackdown, which has resulted in hundreds

of arrests, appeared to be over less than a week after it began. Federal officials have offered few details about those arrested, or when and where agents will show up next.

But even as confusion swirled over whether Operation Charlotte's Web was on or off in North Carolina, immigration enforcement actions are taking place nationwide, often with far less media attention than the Border Patrol surges. In one example, the Department of Homeland Security said Thursday that Immigration and Customs Enforcement had arrested roughly 3,500 people over a six-week span in Houston.

Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry McFadden said in a statement that federal officials confirmed that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection operation known as "Operation Charlotte's Web" had ended, but that agents would continue

operating as they have in the past.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police posted on social media Thursday that it received "reliable information" that Border Patrol personnel involved with the operation had departed that morning.

Another statement attributed to an unnamed Homeland Security spokesperson said that federal agencies "continue to target some of the most dangerous criminal illegal aliens as Operation Charlotte's Web progresses," and that about 370 people have been arrested over the past five days.

Federal agents are expected to descend next on New Orleans for operation "Swamp Sweep," a monthslong crackdown in southeast Louisiana. As many as 250 federal troops could arrive as soon as Friday for the operation expected to kick off at the beginning of December.

## Violence by Israeli settlers stirs concern

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's prime minister met with top security officials to discuss a rising tide of Israeli settler violence in the West Bank, an Israeli official said Friday, as fresh allegations surfaced of settlers hurling rocks at passing Palestinian vehicles in the West Bank village of Huwara.

Huwara Mayor Jihad Ouda said the stone throwing was quickly followed by a huge fire at a nearby scrapyard. Flames lit up the evening sky and sent massive columns of smoke into the air, images and video on social media showed. The military said it had reports that Israelis set the fire and that police were investigating.

At the meeting, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and officials from the military, the country's Shin Bet domestic security service and the police discussed the recent spike in violence and proposals on curbing it, according to an Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not permitted to talk about a closed-door gathering. The official said proposals floated at the meeting included getting violent settlers to attend educational programs.

Settler attacks ramped up during the Palestinian olive harvest season in October and early November and have continued since. Netanyahu has called the perpetrators "a handful of extremists" and urged law enforcement to pursue them for "the attempt to take the law into their own hands."

But rights groups and Palestinians say the problem is far greater than a few bad apples, and attacks have become a daily phenomenon across the territory.

Separately, the Palestinian Health Ministry said two Palestinian youths aged 18 and 16 were killed by Israeli gunfire overnight.

## FAA gives \$10K bonuses to employees with perfect attendance during shutdown

Associated Press

Only 776 air traffic controllers and technicians who had perfect attendance during the government shutdown will receive \$10,000 bonuses while nearly 20,000 other workers will be left out, the Federal Aviation Administration said Thursday.

A number of controllers started calling out of work as the shutdown dragged on longer than a month and they dealt with the financial pressure of working without a paycheck. Some of them got side jobs, but others simply couldn't afford the child care or gas they needed to work. Their absences forced delays at airports across the country and led the govern-

ment to order airlines to cut some of their flights at 40 busy airports.

President Donald Trump suggested the bonuses for those who have stayed on the job in a social media post, but he also suggested that controllers who missed work should have their pay docked. FAA officials haven't publicly announced plans to penalize controllers.

Thousands of FAA technicians also had to work during the shutdown to maintain the equipment that air traffic controllers rely on. At least 6,600 technicians were expected to work throughout the shutdown but more than 3,000 others were subject to be recalled to work.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said the bonuses acknowledged the dedication of these few workers who never missed a shift during the 43-day shutdown. In a post on X, he described it as "Santa's coming to town a little early."

"These patriotic men and women never missed a beat and kept the flying public safe throughout the shutdown," Duffy said in his announcement.

The National Air Traffic Controllers Association union said only 311 of its more than 10,000 members will receive the bonuses. The union said these workers with perfect attendance deserve recognition, but so do the others.

# Texans get 8 sacks in 23-19 win over Bills

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Buffalo's Josh Allen was harassed by Houston's defense all night Thursday and it was no different on his last play of the game.

"Our d-line was getting to him and made him make that bad decision at the end and he threw the ball right to me," Houston safety Calen Bullock said.

Houston sacked Allen eight times, and Bullock forced three turnovers, with his second interception sealing the Texans' 23-19 victory.

Allen took consecutive sacks on the Bills' final possession, leading to a fourth-and-27, but Buffalo gained 44 yards on a short pass from Allen to Josh Palmer, who tossed a lateral to Khalil Shakir.

Houston coach DeMeco Ryans was proud of his team for not getting rattled after that big play.

"They made a play on us but the thing about our guys is we

don't waver," he said. "We knew what we were defending. The game isn't over just because they made one play."

After a false-start penalty created a fourth-and-6 for Buffalo (7-4), Bullock picked off Allen's pass at the 9 with 24 seconds left.

"We had a chance to win it there at the end," Allen said. "We did a good job of staying in it and our defense bailed us out a couple of times. We've got to find a way, and we didn't."

Davis Mills threw for 153 yards with two first-half TD passes to help the Texans (6-5) to their third straight victory with C.J. Stroud sidelined by a concussion. Houston moved above .500 for the first time this season.

Allen threw for 253 yards without a touchdown after accounting for six touchdowns in a win over Tampa Bay last week. He was harassed all night, and the eight sacks were the most

he's taken in his career and he was hit four other times. Will Anderson Jr. had 2½ sacks and Danielle Hunter had two.

"When they hit our quarterback 12 times, I don't like that," Bills coach Sean McDermott said. "I don't like that stat at all. It's just not a healthy way to play and it's not a good way to keep our quarterback healthy for the rest of the season. We've got to play better."

Bullock forced a fumble after a catch by Shakir with about four minutes left in the third and Jaylen Reed recovered it and returned it 9 yards to the Buffalo 22. The Texans extended the lead to 23-16 on Ka'imi Fairbairn's 26-yard field goal.

James Cook was stuffed for a 2-yard loss on fourth-and-1 on Buffalo's next drive to give Houston the ball. But Houston couldn't move the ball and punted.

Shakir took a short pass for a 44-yard gain, but Buffalo's drive

stalled after that and the Bills settled for a 38-yard field goal by Matt Prater that cut it to 23-19 with about six minutes to go.

Anderson had his sixth straight game with at least one sack, tying Mario Williams for the longest streak in a single season in franchise history. His second sack came when he almost took Allen down near the line of scrimmage, but he wriggled away and Anderson got up and chased him across the field to drop him for an 18-yard loss to force a punt early in the third.

"Tonight was just a perfect example of everybody just hunting relentlessly, doing whatever it takes," Anderson said.

Cook had 116 yards rushing with a touchdown to give him 1,084 yards this year, his third straight 1,000-yard season. He's the third player in team history to do that, joining Thurman Thomas (eight) and O.J. Simpson (five).

## Dominant defenses have carried some NFL teams

Associated Press

Dominant defenses still can carry teams in the NFL.

The Houston Texans proved it again Thursday night with another smothering performance against Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills in a 23-19 victory.

Despite allowing the Bills to convert a fourth-and-27 on a perfectly executed hook-and-lateral play in the final minute, Houston's defense tightened up and held at their own 17.

A stingy defense has helped Houston (6-5) overcome an 0-3 start. The Texans entered Week 12 leading the NFL in scoring

defense (16.3 points per game) and overall defense (258.1 yards).

Before Thursday night, Buffalo was averaging 29.2, tied for third-best in the NFL.

Houston's performance was reminiscent of Philadelphia's dominant defensive effort against Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs in the Super Bowl nine months ago.

The Eagles have carried that defensive success over into this season. They just beat the Green Bay Packers and Detroit Lions in consecutive games while scoring just 26 points be-

cause the defense allowed one touchdown and three field goals.

The Texans have held nine opponents to 20 points or less this season.

"When you have a defense like that, you're in every game so you have to take advantage of your opportunities and play a clean game," Mills said.

Quarterbacks make the most money, wide receivers get much of the attention and offenses grab the headlines.

But defenses still win games.

The top 16 teams in scoring defense each have a winning

record. Eight of the top 10 teams in overall defense have a winning record.

The Denver Broncos are 9-2 despite an inconsistent offense because they have a ferocious defense that's third in yards (274.4) and scoring (17.5).

They just held Mahomes and the Chiefs to 311 yards in a 22-19 victory last week.

Football has evolved over the years. Rules have changed to protect players and help offenses score more points to make games more exciting.

Still, it's tough to beat a nasty defense.

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# Maxey carries 76ers past Bucks in OT

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Tyrese Maxey scored a career-high 54 points and tied the game by hitting two free throws with seven seconds left in the fourth quarter of the Philadelphia 76ers' 123-114 overtime victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Thursday night.

Maxey's previous career high was a 52-point performance in a 133-126 double-overtime victory over San Antonio on April 7, 2024. He also had nine assists and played over 46½ minutes.

Maxey, who entered Thursday averaging a league-high 40.3 minutes, had played 39 minutes one night earlier in a 121-112 home loss to the Toronto Raptors.

Milwaukee's Ryan Rollins scored 32 points to match a career high and also had a career-best 14 assists. The Bucks have lost four of their last five games.

Neither team had its former league MVP available.

Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo, the MVP in 2019 and 2020, got hurt Monday at Cleveland and is expected to miss about two weeks. The Bucks labeled it a left groin strain Monday but have since specified that it's a left adductor strain.

Philadelphia's Joel Embiid, who won the award in 2023,

missed a sixth straight game due to an issue with his right knee.

The 76ers scored the first five points in overtime on a 3-pointer from Justin Edwards — who scored just two points in regulation — and a basket from Maxey.

**Magic 129, Clippers 101:** Jalen Suggs scored a season-high 23 points and added seven assists, and Orlando rolled to a win over Los Angeles.

Franz Wagner scored 20 points and Tristan da Silva added 17 points and eight rebounds for the Magic, who have won five of six. Anthony Black came off the Orlando bench with 12 points, four rebounds, four assists and four steals.

James Harden had 31 points and eight assists for the Clippers. Ivica Zubac, the only other Clipper in double figures, had 14 points and 19 rebounds.

The injury-riddled Clippers, playing the fourth game of a seven-game road trip, lost for the ninth time in 10 games.

The Clippers played a second straight game without Derrick Jones Jr. (knee) and Jordan Miller (hamstring) and a ninth in a row without Kawhi Leonard (ankle and foot).

The Magic played a fourth consecutive game without Pao-

lo Banchemo (groin).

Suggs scored 20 points in the first half and finished with five 3-pointers. He did not play in the final quarter.

Orlando made 18 of 34 3-point shots (52.9%). Suggs made one to put the Magic up 61-49 at halftime.

**Grizzlies 137, Kings 96:** Santi Aldama scored 29 points, Jock Landale added 21 and Memphis built a big first-half lead and sent Sacramento to its eighth straight loss.

Cedric Coward scored 19 points and Zach Edey finished with 16 points as Memphis snapped a five-game losing streak. Vince Williams had a career-best 15 assists.

Zach LaVine led the Kings with 26 points, connecting on 10 of 17 shots. Maxine Raynaud finished with 12 points. Russell Westbrook and Keegan Murray scored 11 points each. Murray had been out of action since a left thumb injury in the preseason.

The Kings have lost all eight in the skid by double digits. Four of the losses have come by at least 27 points. The 41-point setback Thursday was their largest of the season.

Before the game, the Kings announced that an MRI revealed a partial meniscus tear

in the left knee of starting center Domantas Sabonis. The team said he will be reevaluated in three to four weeks. He suffered the injury in Sunday's loss at San Antonio.

**Spurs 135, Hawks 126:** De'Aaron Fox scored 26 points, Keldon Johnson had 25 and San Antonio won its third straight without Victor Wembanyama, topping Atlanta.

Nickel Alexander-Walker had a career-high 38 points on 13-for-17 shooting for Atlanta. Jalen Johnson added 26 for the Hawks, who have lost two straight after winning five in a row.

San Antonio was without Wembanyama (left calf strain), Stephon Castle (strained left hip flexor) and Dylan Harper (strained left calf). Trae Young (right MCL sprain) sat out for Atlanta.

San Antonio (11-4) is off to its best start after 15 games since 2016-17, when it opened 12-3.

With several stars missing, Spurs guard David Jones Garcia put up a stellar performance.

Jones Garcia had 12 points, six assists, five rebounds, three steals and a blocked shot. All were season highs for the rookie from the Dominican Republic on a two-way contract.

## Lakers fire Buss brothers from front-office positions

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Joey Buss and Jesse Buss are no longer working in the Los Angeles Lakers' front office after the franchise's recent ownership change, a person with knowledge of the move said Thursday.

The Lakers didn't publicly announce the firings of the two children of longtime Lakers owner Jerry Buss, who died in 2013. The Lakers are also overhauling the scouting staff that worked with the brothers.

The Buss brothers confirmed their departure in a statement to ESPN, although both will retain their inherited minority ownership stakes under new controlling owner Mark Walter.

Jesse Buss was an assistant general manager, while Joey Buss was the Lakers' alternate governor and vice president of research and development.

Jerry Buss had at least seven children, and six of them worked for the Lakers at some point during his ownership.

Jeanie Buss became the Lakers' governor when their father died. Jim Buss was the Lakers' executive vice president of basketball operations until Jeanie ousted her brother in 2017, also firing general manager Mitch Kupchak and turning over the basketball side of the business to Magic Johnson and current general manager Rob Pelinka.

Walter finalized his purchase of a controlling stake in the Lakers three weeks ago in a sale initially announced in June and

conducted with a \$10 billion franchise valuation. Jeanie Buss will remain the Lakers' governor, but the Lakers are now primarily owned by Walter, the billionaire owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Joey and Jesse Buss have been involved in the Lakers' scouting and player development operations for many years, and they've been praised for their roles in the Lakers' successful drafts and free-agent signings.



# Loyer scores 20 as Purdue beats Memphis

Associated Press

NASSAU, Bahamas — Fletcher Loyer scored 20 points to lead No. 1 Purdue to an 80-71 victory over Memphis on Thursday night at the Baha Mar Championship.

CJ Cox added 18 points for Purdue (5-0). He and Loyer each made four 3-pointers. Trey Kaufman-Renn finished with 12 points, 11 rebounds and four assists before fouling out after 27 minutes, and reigning Big Ten Player of the Year Braden Smith had 11 assists.

Dug McDaniel paced Memphis (1-3) with 18 points, six assists and six rebounds. Zach Davis chipped in 11 points.

The game featured nine lead changes and six ties. Trailing by two, momentum seemed to swing in Purdue's direction with 7:54 to play when Memphis forward Aaron Bradshaw fouled out after getting a technical following an altercation with Purdue's Oscar Cluff.

The game was physical and chippy throughout, with three technical fouls given out by officials.

**No. 2 Houston 91, Rider 45:** Kingston Flemings scored 18 points on 8-for-10 shooting, Emanuel Sharp added 15 points, and Houston beat Rider.

Mercy Miller scored 14 points off the bench, Joseph Tugler finished with 12 points and nine rebounds and Chris Cenac Jr.

had 12 points for Houston (5-0).

Caleb Smith scored 13 points and Zion Cruz added nine points for Rider (1-3), which shot 31% and was 4 of 17 on 3-pointers.

Flemings had 14 points on 6-of-6 shooting in the first half as Houston built a 47-25 halftime lead. Houston shot 8 of 11 from the field to start the game and shot 59% in the first half in building its halftime lead.

Houston jumped to a 17-2 lead on a layup by Flemings with 15:19 remaining in the first half, and the lead never dipped below 11 points the rest of the way.

The Cougars shot 56% and were 10 of 26 on 3-pointers for the game. Houston forced 23 turnovers and converted them into 33 points.

**No. 14 St. John's 97, Bucknell 49:** Bryce Hopkins scored 20 points in 17 minutes for his highest-scoring game in nearly two years, and St. John's routed Bucknell.

Hopkins, who tore his ACL in January of 2024 and played only three games for Providence last season due to continued knee trouble, made 7 of 9 shots and has scored in double figures in each game this season.

Hopkins scored 13 points in the first half and hit two 3s in the final 11½ minutes of the period, when coach Rick Pitino's Red Storm (3-1) began asserting themselves after missing 11 of their first 14 shots.

The forward finished with at least 20 points for the first time since scoring 26 for Providence against Sacred Heart on Dec. 16, 2023.

Reserve Ian Jackson added a season-high 20 points. Ruben Prey scored 14 as the Red Storm shot 50.8% and scored 32 fast-break points.

Dillon Mitchell had 10 points and 10 rebounds, while leading scorer and rebounder Zuby Ejiofor was held to five points and four rebounds.

Amon Dorries scored 12 points for Bucknell (2-4), which dropped its fourth straight.

**No. 15 Texas Tech 84, Wake Forest 83:** JT Toppin scored 21 points to help Texas Tech hold off Wake Forest at the Baha Mar Championship.

Toppin, the reigning Big 12 Player of the Year, had nine rebounds and four assists for the Red Raiders (4-1). Christian Anderson added 16 points and eight assists for Texas Tech, while Tyeree Bryan scored 13 and Jaylen Petty had 11.

Juke Harris powered Wake Forest (3-2) with 26 points and 10 rebounds. Myles Colvin chipped in 19 points.

The Red Raiders opened the game by making their first three 3-point attempts. Wake Forest buckled down on defense, though, holding Texas Tech to 2 of 18 from deep for the rest of the first half. After a 10-0 run,

capped off by a two-handed slam from Marqus Marion, the Demon Deacons trailed by a single point at intermission.

Mekhi Mason then sank a 3-pointer to open the second half, giving Wake its first lead of the game and starting a 13-5 run.

Texas Tech charged back and tied the game with 2:08 to play on a 3-pointer from Petty. Anderson then sank a mid-range jumper, and the Red Raiders connected on 6 of 8 free throws in the final 90 seconds to seal it.

**No. 20 Tennessee 89, Tennessee State 60:** Ja'Kobi Gillespie scored 17 points to lead five players in double figures as Tennessee beat Tennessee State.

Nate Ament and Amaree Abram each scored 15, DeWayne Brown II had 13 and Felix Okpara scored 11 for the Volunteers (5-0).

Aaron Nkrumah scored 19 to lead the Tigers (2-3). Travis Harper II had 17 and Antoine Lorick added 12.

Gillespie had 10 points and four assists to lead the Vols to a 43-21 halftime lead. Nkrumah, the reigning Ohio Valley Conference player of the week (23.5 points, 7 rebounds), had 10 for the Tigers.

Tennessee State outrebounded the Vols in the first half 19-18, but Tennessee held a 38-30 rebounding advantage in the game.

## NBA sees highest opening-month viewership in years

Associated Press

National NBA games being shown on NBC/Peacock, Amazon Prime Video or ESPN have drawn more than 60 million viewers through the first month of the regular season, the league announced Thursday, noting that is the highest opening total in 15 years.

That doesn't include the 2011-12 season, which opened on Christmas Day — traditionally

one of the biggest viewership days on the NBA calendar. Still, it's a very positive sign for the league through the season's first four weeks and with this being the first of an 11-year, \$76 billion deal with its broadcast partners.

NBA content has commanded more than 30 billion views across social media platforms operated by the league and third parties, which is a record for this point in a season. Sales

of merchandise on NBA Store.com is up more than 20%, the league added, with those numbers driven in part by players the league calls "next generation stars" — like Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Anthony Edwards, Victor Wembanyama, Tyrese Maxey, Cooper Flagg, Jalen Brunson and Luka Doncic.

NBA League Pass subscriptions have gone up 10%, with

time spent viewing games on the platform up 8%, the league said.

And it's not just screens seeing good numbers. In-arena attendance so far is on pace with last season, which was the second-best for attendance in league history with about 97% capacity leaguewide. There are 10 teams that entered Thursday having sold out every home game so far this season.

# Islanders score 5 in shutout of Red Wings

Associated Press

DETROIT — Max Shabanov had two goals and an assist, and Ilya Sorokin stopped 29 shots for his second shutout of the season as New York beat Detroit, 5-0.

Calum Ritchie had a goal and an assist, Matthew Barzal and Bo Horvat also scored, and Casey Cizikas had two assists as the Islanders finished 6-1-0 on a seven-game road trip. It marked the second time in franchise history New York won six or more games on a trip — first since Feb. 19 to March 6, 2016.

Sorokin had five saves in the first period, 15 in the second and nine in the third to get his 24th career shutout.

John Gibson finished with 21 saves as Detroit snapped a four-game point streak (3-0-1).

**Panthers 1, Devils 0:** Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 31 shots, Sam Reinhart scored in the opening period and the Florida Panthers beat the New Jersey Devils 1-0 on Thursday night.

It was Florida's first 1-0 regulation win in the regular season since Dec. 23, 2017, against Ottawa. The Panthers had a 1-0 overtime win at Columbus last season.

Bobrovsky has 51 shutouts, tied for 28th in NHL history. The Devils were blanked for the first time this season, wasting a 23-save effort from Jake Allen.

**Flyers 3, Blue 2, OT:** Travis Sanheim scored the winner with 1:09 left in overtime to rally Philadelphia past St. Louis.

Justin Faulk scored two goals in the first period for the Blues, but Rodrigo Abols scored for the Flyers in the second period to start the comeback and Tyson Foerster tied the game when he shot one past Joel Hofer in the third to make it 2-2.

Faulk's big week started in Toronto when he played the 1,000th regular-season game of his career, joining Jeff Skinner, teammate Cam Fowler and Tyler Seguin as members of the 2010 draft class to reach the

milestone.

**Capitals 8, Canadiens 4:** Alex Ovechkin had his 33rd career hat trick and added an assist to move into 10th place on the NHL points list, helping Washington beat Montreal to hand the Canadiens their fifth straight loss.

Ovechkin has 10 goals this season to push his NHL record to 907. The 40-year-old Russian has 1,643 points to move two past Joe Sakic for 10th on the scoring list. He has scored in four straight games and five of six.

Ovechkin opened the scoring in a power play a minute in the first period, firing a wrist shot past goalie Sam Montembeault off a faceoff. Ovechkin assisted on Ethen Frank's goal two minutes in the second that gave Washington the lead for good at 2-1.

The Washington star scored twice late in the third period, the first on a rush with 4:57 to go and the second into an empty net from his own zone with 2:04 remaining.

**Blue Jackets 3, Maple Leafs 2, OT:** Adam Fantilli scored his second goal of the game at 4:21 of overtime and also had an assist to help Columbus beat Toronto after blowing a two-goal lead.

Dmitri Voronkov added a goal and an assist for Columbus. Jet Greaves made 27 saves, and Zach Werenski had three assists.

John Tavares and Dakota Mermis scored for Toronto. Joseph Woll stopped 27 shots.

Fantilli fired a shot that deflected in off Voronkov for the Blue Jackets' opener in the second period before giving his team a 2-0 lead.

Mermis cut the deficit in half with his first for the Maple Leafs to make it 2-1 through 40 minutes before Tavares tied it in the third.

**Lightning 2, Oilers 1, OT:** Jake Guentzel scored 1:43 into overtime to give Tampa Bay a

victory over Edmonton.

Nick Paul, who made his season debut after recovering from offseason wrist surgery, scored for Tampa Bay with less than three minutes left in regulation to tie the game at 1-1. Andrei Vasilevskiy finished with 24 saves.

Trent Frederic scored for the Oilers 1:32 into the game while Calvin Pickard stopped 33 shots for Edmonton, which has one win in the past five games (1-3-1).

Guentzel scored the winner after skating up ice off a pass from Darren Raddysh and beating Pickard. The goal came after Vasilevskiy made back-to-back stops on Darnell Nurse and Jack Roslovic.

**Kraken 3, Blackhawks 2:** Jaden Schwartz scored the tie-breaking goal late in the third period as Seattle scored three in the third period to rally past Chicago.

Tye Kartye and Shane Wright also scored in the third for Seattle, which trailed 2-0 after two periods. Brandon Mountour added two assists and Joey Daccord had 22 saves to help the Kraken get their third win in four games.

Tyler Bertuzzi and Teuvo Teravainen each had a goal and an assist in the second period, and Spencer Knight stopped 24 shots for Chicago. The Blackhawks snapped a six-game point streak (5-0-1).

**Avalanche 6, Rangers 3:** Nathan MacKinnon had two goals and an assist to move into second place on the franchise scoring list, and Colorado beat New York.

MacKinnon's three points broke a tie with Peter Stastny. He now has 1,051 career points and trails only Joe Sakic, who had 1,641 points in his 20-year career, all with Quebec/Colorado.

**Golden Knights 4, Mammoth 1:** Jack Eichel scored two goals and assisted on a third to power Vegas to a victory over Utah.

Ben Hutton and Braeden

Bowman each scored a goal and Shea Theodore had three assists to help the Golden Knights win for the third time in four games. Akira Schmid had 25 saves.

Nate Schmidt scored for Utah and Karel Vejmelka made 29 stops. The Mammoth dropped their fourth straight contest and have just two wins in their last 11 games.

**Stars 4, Canucks 2:** Colin Blackwell broke a tie with 9:13 left and Dallas opened a four-game trip by beating Vancouver for its sixth victory in seven games.

Blackwell picked up the puck at the blue line, skated in alone and ripped a shot past Kevin Lankinen for his second goal of the season.

Jason Robertson scored in his fifth straight game and Mikko Rantanen and Mavrik Bourque added goals to help Dallas rebound from a 3-2 home loss to the New York Islanders on Tuesday night. Jake Oettinger made 34 saves.

After Blackwell gave Dallas the lead midway through the third, Rantanen put it away with 1:31 left.

**Sharks 4, Kings 3, SO:** Philipp Kurashev scored in regulation and the only goal of a shootout, and San Jose held on for a win over Los Angeles.

San Jose's first player in the shootout, Kurashev skated toward his left then shifted direction toward the net before flipping the puck over the left shoulder of Kings goalie Anton Forsberg. Kurashev also had a goal in the second period.

**Senators 3, Ducks 2:** Drake Batherson scored the tiebreaking goal with 1:58 to play, and Ottawa held off a furious Anaheim rally after the Ducks pulled their goalie in the final minutes for a victory.

Batherson was camped in front of the Anaheim net when he deflected a shot from Jake Sanderson past goalie Petr Mrazek to snap the Ducks' six-game home win streak.