

Got a CCW? You Better Read This

New Concealed Carry Law Takes Effect July 1

Plus a Lib Bonus: Vehicle Weapons Now Must Be Locked Up

by George Gramlich,
News and Commentary

Well, thanks to our anti-2nd Amendment democrat run state senate and assembly, our gun hating Governor Polis, and with the help of our local flatlander lefty immigrants who helped elect those tyrants, us peasants who want to conceal carry a weapon (CCW) now have to take an eight-hour course, pass a written exam, and successfully shoot 50 booolits at a paper target. These requirements apply to first time applicants. Renewals now also have their own mandated course.

(According to Custer County Sheriff Rich Smith, as of the first week of 2025, only ONE instructor has been certified to give the course.)

If you are renewing your county CCW, you must take a TWO-hour “refresher” course which also includes a written exam and live fire, both of which you must pass to renew your permit.

This law takes effect July 1, 2025. The cost of the two courses are unknown. Availability might be very limited. (What the democrats did with this law is to make it much more difficult to obtain a CCW as they despise the fact that ordinary citizens have the right to defend themselves, and others, from criminal acts. The Dems have unleashed a CRIME WAVE IN Colorado over the last ten years with de-criminalizing criminal acts, not putting criminals in jail and releasing thousands that were in jail. They ignore the fact that

CCW permit holders are the most law-abiding class of citizens in the country. So we must be punished. It appears that our Colorado Dems want to disarm law abiding citizens. I wonder why? Note that criminals don’t seem to apply for a CCW.)

What else could the Denver lefties do in the last legislative session to make us serfs less safe and put our lives in danger? Oh, they don’t like us having a handgun in our vehicle. Yup. Colorado is nearly the carjacking capital of North America and the lib legislature last year passed a law, effective January 1, 2025 that requires you to put your vehicle handgun in a locked, hard cased, container when you leave your car. Plus it has to be “out of sight”. And the vehicle must be locked. Nice. And it doesn’t matter

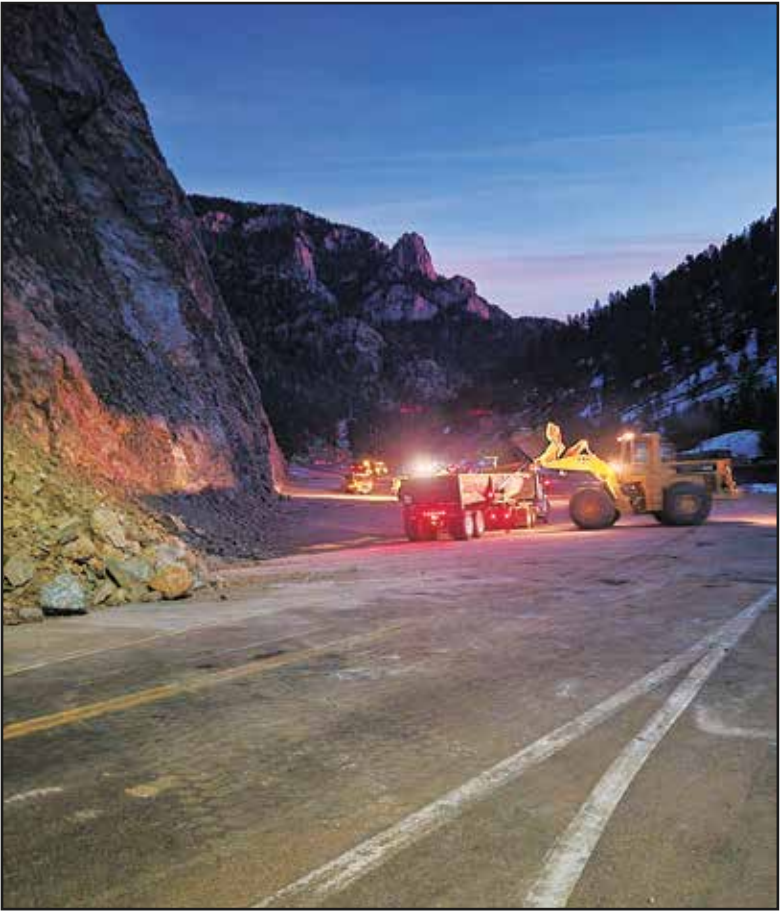
where the vehicle is! Could be at your ranch. Could be in your garage. The law, as designated in the legislative is HB24-1348. As stated in the law, the penalty for violating it: “Unsafe storage of a firearm in a vehicle is a civil infraction.”

Let’s say we are going to go shopping down in Cañon City. Gonna hit four or five places and run back up the hill. Now, because of the Dems, you get in your vehicle here, search for the locked container that you have to store “out of sight”. Find the key to unlock it (or remember the combination). Unlock it. Safely remove the weapon. Place it

NEW COLORADO GUN LAWS
see page 5

Mackenzie Junction Rockslide

Langston Huge Part of Cleanup, CDOT to Do More Future Mitigation



photos courtesy of Mike Langston, Langston Construction

Custer County Sheriff’s Office
Press Release--1/6/25 via Facebook
Final Close Out Mackenzie Junction Rockslide.

We wanted to share the final stats

for the rockslide cleanup. CDOT is planning additional rock fall mitigation measures at this site

ROCKSLIDE UPDATE
see page 4

BOCC: End of Year Resolutions Barrage

by George Gramlich,
News and Commentary

The Custer County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) had their last meeting of 2024 on December 31st at their office in the Annex across from the courthouse. The meeting started around 9 a.m. All three Commissioners were present: Bill Canda, Lucas Epp and Kevin Day.

In Unfinished Business, Vernon Roth, Interim Finance Director, brought forth a slightly modified Resolution 24-31 that was discussed the previous week. It concerns the receipt of monetary donations to the county (e.g., to the Sheriff’s Office, Airport, etc.). The amount for 2024 was \$439k. The resolution passed.

In New Business, Resolution 24-31 was the first item of business. Vernon handled this one also (as well as all the other Resolutions noted below). This one was for some “cleanup work” regarding interest income from the Conservation Trust Fund. This item moved \$13k from the General Fund to the Conservation Fund.

Next was Resolution 24-32 which was a \$2k movement of money to pay for the County Clerk’s online storage company.

Then Resolution 24-33 which concerned some money approved but not budgeted for in the Conservation Trust Fund. This was \$15k and it was approved.

The next one was Resolution 24-34 which moved \$26k into the Self Insurance Fund for expenses that were not budgeted for.

Resolution 24-35, Receipt of Tangible Assets was the next gem. This recognized all the tangible assets that were donated to the Custer County Sheriff’s Office in 2024. The total was an impressive \$1.16 million with the bulk of that being the MRAP vehicle that was donated by Fort Carson. (That puppy was valued at around \$800k). The rest was various kinds of equipment.

Epp then announced that all BOCC meetings in 2025 would be held at All Aboard Westcliffe on Main Street in Westcliffe. The first meeting would be Thursday, January 9th and the rest would be held on Thursdays (for January: 15, 23 and 30.) Epp also said us peasants can find the Staff Reports that the Commissioners review at their meetings at the county’s website (go to the Commissioner’s tab, then the Agenda’s tab, and then the tab for Staff Reports).

And that was that. Another year in the Happy Valley maelstrom.....

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*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.
Psalm 121: 1-2 NIV*

SANGRE DE CRISTO SENTINEL

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**The Voice
of Conservative
Colorado!**



We believe that freedom is a gift from God and not granted to us by politicians or governments. Freedom demands responsible behavior of all citizens and must be consistent with the truths expressed in the great moral and governing guides as The Ten Commandments, The Declaration of Independence, The U.S. Constitution and The Bill of Rights.

These were the principles that guided our founding fathers and which we believe are still relevant. These are the principles that will guide our reporting and be the basis of all our views.

We will not be constrained by the illogical, misleading and inaccurate thinking and use of "political correctness" but by truth, facts, logic and common sense.

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Key Personnel

George Gramlich - President & Managing Editor
George.Gramlich.sdc@gmail.com

Fred Hernandez - Vice President
FredHer8@proton.me

L. Vass - Secretary and Asst Editor / Graphics Layout
sdc.sentinel@gmail.com

Katherine Brenchley - Advertising Coordinator
SentinelAds1791@gmail.com

Office Support

Accounting Services
Bookkeeper.sdc@gmail.com

Yvonne Phillips
sdc.sentinel@gmail.com

Mailing & Delivery
Galen Studebaker

Sentinel Founders

Mike Hess
George Gramlich
Mary Seifert
Rob Canterbury

Sentinel Honor Roll

Dan Bubis
Jackie Bubis
Carol Clemenson
Scott Clemenson
Barbara Napolitan

Contributors

Audrey Slater
Min. Photo in Logo
by Peggi Collins

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www.SDCSentinel.com

Please send your letters to sdc.sentinel@gmail.com

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Opinion...



Colorado's Scrambled Egg Policy

Egg prices soared from \$2.99 to \$8.99 since January 2022, spurred by PBI overreach, flawed bird flu responses, and CO's HB20-1343 cage-free rule. Killing healthy hens and imposing new mandates hiked costs 200%, fueling calls to repeal HB20-1343 and hold lawmakers accountable at the polls statewide.

by Kim Monson,
KimMonson.com

January 5, 2024 update [this article was originally published on January 15, 2023 and updated on January 5th, 2025]: The price of eggs has increased from \$2.99 a dozen to \$8.99 a dozen since January of 2022. Why? Because of two contributing factors of overreach by PBIs (Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Interested Parties). There are those who attribute this increase in egg prices to the Bird Flu and certainly the reaction of PBIs to the Bird Flu is playing into the increased cost of eggs. PBIs' policy to kill thousands of healthy chickens that may have been exposed to sick chickens makes no sense. Killing healthy birds with natural immunity weakens

the health of all flocks and contributes to higher egg prices.

Additionally January 1, 2025, all mid-level egg producers must provide a cage-free environment for their egg-producing chickens. We are republishing this essay regarding HB20-1343 which was signed by Governor Jared Polis on July 1, 2020. HB20-1343 dictates the square footage that mid-level egg producers must provide for each chicken and that egg-laying hens must be "provided enrichments that allow them to exhibit natural behaviors, including at a minimum, scratch areas, perches, nest boxes, and dust bathing areas." Killing healthy birds and these new regulations have increased the cost of breakfast for Coloradans

by 200% which is affecting the food affordability and food security of children and adults across the state. Now that Coloradans are experiencing the cost of such bad public policy decisions, it is time to stop killing healthy chickens, repeal HB20-1343, and hold the legislators and governor who made HB20-1343 law accountable at the ballot box.

We love them fried, boiled, and scrambled. We start our days with them sunny-side up or over-easy. They're deviled for summer picnics and in a salad for lunch. Eggs have been a staple on Coloradan's breakfast tables since before we became a state. They are delicious, nutritious, and up until the Colorado legislature passed and "Mr. Libertarian" Governor Jared Polis signed HB20-1343 "Concerning Confinement Standards for Egg-Laying Hens Whose

Eggs Are Sold," they were affordable.

Egg prices have increased significantly. A dozen eggs from my local dairy cost \$2.99 on January 4th, 2022. The price is now \$6.99 per dozen which is a 133% increase in about a year. The price for a dozen eggs is up 40% from just mid-November. These price increases are affecting food choices and food security for everyday, hardworking Coloradans.

Government "Green" policies have increased the cost of fuel to power our cars, heat our homes and produce our food. As I continue extensive research on "Green" policies, I realize the real "Green" is the "Green" moving into the pockets of PBIs (Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Interested Parties) as their agenda raises the cost of living for Coloradans and

all Americans.

Government rules and regulations have increased production costs for our food producers, which is seen in rising costs at the grocery store. These policies, rules, and regulations are threatening the food security of Americans whose goal is to move up the economic ladder, be self-sufficient, and not be dependent on their neighbors through government programs.

Colorado HB20-1343 has individuals scratching their heads. The "Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens" legislation dictates that egg-laying hens are free to roam unrestricted in an indoor environment, except restricted by exterior walls or some interior fencing. Why is a chicken's indoor environment a legislative focus

EGGS
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Business Directory QR
(Scan to download)



website <https://SangreDeCristoSentinel.com>

Local Mountain News & Notices

Clark Pleads Not Guilty to Murder Charges

by George Gramlich

Hanne Kim Clark, who is being accused of three murders last year just off Oak Creek Grade, pled Not Guilty to various charges in Custer County District Court last Tuesday, January 7, 2025.

Clark is charged with the following offenses: first degree murder (three counts), attempted murder, first degree assault with a deadly weapon and attempted assault with a deadly weapon.

Clark is currently being held in jail on a \$2,000,000 cash bond.

The alleged murder victims were Rob Geers, wife Beth Geers and James Daulton. A fourth victim, the wife of James Daulton, was severely wounded during the alleged attack.

Clark's trial is tentatively scheduled for June 16 - 30, 2025 at the 11th Judicial District, Custer County District Court.

Swearing In Ceremony For County Commissioners

All are welcome to the Custer County Commissioners, Lucas Epp and Paul Vogelsong, swearing in ceremony, January 14, 2025, at 10 a.m. in Lange Hall @ 312 3rd St., Westcliffe, CO. Reception to follow.

VSO Compensation Results

Press Release Via Facebook

by Dominic Edginton,
Custer County VSO Officer

Assisting veterans and their families with VA claims is where I have the biggest impact; tapping them into compensation and benefits that were earned! Of course I still conduct outreach and support those folks with immediate needs utilizing grant assistance, food assistance, and tapping them into the wealth of resources we have at our disposal.

But, here are my final numbers to end 2024.... 8/1/2023 thru 12/31/2024

Total ANNUAL increase in compensation \$2,411,487.80.

\$1,196,775.80 of the above number is the

dollar amount that was immediately paid out by the VA in retro payments.

\$1,752,728.62 of the total number benefiting 135 veterans, widows/widowers in Custer County.

\$658,759.18 to 43 veterans, widows/widowers outside of Custer County.

I'm hoping to significantly increase those numbers moving into 2025 with the addition of an assistant VSO (job posting will be dropping any day), while simultaneously trying to improve veteran support across the state by creating a standard for VSO's that has been severely lacking.

I appreciate this community and the continued support.



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Local Mountain News & Notices

CUSTER COUNTY LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF 2024 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION

ROUND MOUNTAIN WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 29-1-109, C.R.S. that a supplemental budget and appropriation has been submitted to the Board of Directors for Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District for the year of 2024; a copy of such proposed supplemental budget has been filed in the office of Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District and posted at 59000 Hwy 69 N, Westcliffe, Colorado, where the same is open for public inspection; such proposed supplemental budget will be considered at the Public Hearing on February 20, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. Any interested person may inspect the proposed supplemental budget and file or register any objections thereto at any time prior to the final adoption of the supplemental budget.

This is an open public hearing to be held on:

**February 20, 2025
2:00 p.m.**

**The meeting will be in person and via Zoom
Please call 719-783-2604
to request a Zoom invitation**

NOTICE OF THIS PUBLIC NOTICE IS PUBLISHED on the District website at <https://www.roundmountainwsdco.gov/>

Dated this 20th day of December 2024

By: Dave Schneider, General Manager and Peggy Quint,
Business Office Manager
Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District
Published on or about January 9th and 10th, 2025

Published January 10, 2025
Sangre de Cristo Sentinel
Westcliffe, Colorado

ROCK SLIDE UPDATE from page 1

at a future time. CDOT will coordinate with the county regarding impacts to highway traffic when this occurs.

Langston Concrete performed the debris removal. They moved 678 truck loads of approximately 25 tons of debris per truck. They moved a total of 16,950 tons in just 3.5 days.



During some time periods they were sending a loaded truck down the hill every two minutes. Here are some photos sent to us by Mike Langston.

###

(The Rock Slide took place on the afternoon of Sunday, December 29th, leaving Hwy 96 closed for safety concerns from Wetmore to Mackenzie Junction through the morning of Friday, January 3rd, for evaluation and cleanup.)

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Local Mountain News & Notices

NEW COLORADO GUN LAWS from page 1

in a spot where you can grab it if you need it. Put the case somewhere. Only now are you ready to start your vehicle and begin your journey down to the great swamp.

The first place you stop in Cañon is a gas station to fill up. Turn vehicle off. Remember, if you don't have a CCW you can't conceal carry out of your vehicle. By the statute, YOU CAN'T GET OUT OF YOUR VEHICLE TO PUMP GAS WITHOUT FINDING THE CASE, PUTTING THE GUN IN THERE, LOCKING IT, AND THEN HIDING IT. Only then can you exit the vehicle. (Don't forget you also have to lock the vehicle just to pump gas.) So when the two Biden illegals from Honduras sidle up to you, one holding a knife and want your money, your keys and your vehicle. And maybe YOU. And your wife and kids. Instead of being able to easily retrieve your weapon and defend yourself and your property and family, you are at their mercy. This is what a peasant looks like, folks. You are not a Citizen. You are a helpless peasant. Repeat this scenario during your trip to town at Wally World, King Soopers, Tractor Supply or the coffee shop. Every time you exit your vehicle you have to go through the deep state storage torture. Every time you are helpless when the boogie men come. This is liberal America. This is Colorado.

(Plus, this law forces you to continue to handle a loaded weapon over and over again just to go shopping. Taking the gun in and out of a locked container has an element of danger, as well as placing it in the vehicle so you can retrieve it quickly. And finally, retrieving the loaded, placed handgun back in the container, in its confined environment, also has safety issues. But, as with all dems, you can't fix stupid....)

So we have two new laws that both restrict our 2nd Amendment rights. And more are coming this year. (The Denver libs have a bill lined up for this year to BAN detachable magazines. For ANY long gun. All new long guns would have to be single shot. I kid you not. How come the SCOTUS decisions *Heller* and *Bruen* don't seem to apply here?)

Below are the legislative CCW and vehicle storage law summaries for your reading pleasure:

(To see the entire, enacted laws, see: https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2024a_1174_signed.pdf and <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1348>

HB24-1174

Concealed Carry Permits & Training

Concerning permits to carry a concealed handgun, and, in connection therewith, establishing standards for concealed handgun training classes.

SESSION: 2024 Regular Session

SUBJECT: Crimes, Corrections, & Enforcement

BILL SUMMARY

Under existing law, an applicant for a permit to carry a concealed handgun (permit) must demonstrate competence with a handgun. An applicant may demonstrate competence with a handgun in a number of ways, including by completing a training class offered by a certified instructor within 10 years before submitting an application for a permit. Pursuant to the act, beginning July 1, 2025, an applicant may demonstrate competence with a handgun by completing a training class only if the class satisfies the minimum standards for a training class, described below, and the applicant completes the class within one year before submitting an application for a permit. The act also allows a person to demonstrate competence with a handgun for the purpose of obtaining a permit by holding a current certification as a peace officer.

An initial concealed handgun training class is a law enforcement training firearms safety course or a firearms safety course taught by an instructor verified by a county sheriff (verified instructor) that is held in person and includes instruction regarding:

- Knowledge and safe handling of firearms and ammunition;
- Safe storage of firearms and child safety;
- Safe shooting fundamentals;
- Federal and state laws pertaining to the lawful purchase, ownership, transportation, use, and possession of firearms.
- State law pertaining to the use of deadly force for self-defense;
- Best practices for safely interacting with law enforcement personnel who are responding to an emergency; and
- Techniques for avoiding a criminal attack and how to manage a violent confrontation, including conflict resolution and judgmental use of lethal force.

A student must achieve a passing score on a written concealed handgun competency exam and in a live-fire exercise to complete an initial concealed handgun training class. An initial concealed handgun training class must provide at least 8 hours of instruction, including the live-fire exercise and written exam.

Beginning July 1, 2025, the act requires an applicant to renew a permit to demonstrate competence with a handgun. A renewal applicant may demonstrate competence with a handgun through participation in organized shooting competitions, current military service, or current certification as a peace officer; by being a verified instructor for firearms safety courses; by showing honorable discharge from a branch of the United States armed forces or retirement from a Colorado law enforcement agency with pistol qualifications within 10 years prior to submitting a renewal form; or completing an initial concealed handgun training class or a concealed handgun refresher class (refresher class) within 6 months prior to submitting a renewal form.

A refresher class must be held in person, be taught by a verified instructor, include instruction on changes to laws related to firearms, and require a passing score on a live-fire exercise and written exam. A refresher class must provide at least 2 hours of instruction, including the live-fire exercise and written exam.

The act requires a county sheriff to verify as training instructors any person whose principal place to conduct firearms training is in the sheriff's county. To be a verified instructor, a person must hold a valid concealed carry permit and be certified as a firearms instructor by a law enforcement agency, college or university, nationally recognized organization that customarily offers firearms training, or firearms training school. Denial, suspension, or revocation of an instructor verification is subject to judicial review. It is a deceptive trade practice for a person to claim to be a verified instructor for a concealed handgun training class unless the person is verified as a firearms instructor by a county sheriff.

The act prohibits a person from being issued a permit if the person was convicted of certain misdemeanor offenses within 5 years before submitting a permit application.

APPROVED by Governor June 4, 2024

PORTIONS EFFECTIVE

August 7, 2024

PORTIONS EFFECTIVE

July 1, 2025

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as enacted.)

HB24-1348

Secure Firearm Storage in a Vehicle

Concerning a requirement to securely store a firearm in a vehicle.

SESSION: 2024 Regular Session

SUBJECT: Crimes, Corrections, & Enforcement

BILL SUMMARY

The act prohibits knowingly leaving a handgun in an unattended vehicle unless the handgun is stored in a locked hard-sided container that is placed out of plain view and the container is in a locked vehicle, the locked trunk of the locked vehicle, or a locked recreational vehicle.

The act prohibits knowingly leaving a firearm that is not a handgun in an unattended vehicle unless the firearm is stored in a locked hard-sided or soft-sided container that is placed out of plain view and the container is in a locked vehicle, the locked trunk of the locked vehicle, or a locked recreational vehicle. A firearm that is not a handgun that is stored in a soft-sided container must have a locking device installed on the firearm while stored in the soft-sided container.

A person who is considered to have a disability who stores a firearm in a locked soft-sided container does not violate the requirement to store a firearm in a hard-sided container. The act includes exceptions from the storage requirement for storing antique firearms, storing a firearm that is a not a handgun in a vehicle being used for farm or ranch operations, a person who lives in a vehicle or in a recreational vehicle, peace officers and active members of the armed forces, and certain activities related to lawful hunting.

Unsafe storage of a firearm in a vehicle is a civil infraction.

APPROVED by Governor May 15, 2024

EFFECTIVE January 1, 2025

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as enacted.)



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westcliffefirewood@gmail.com

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Tues – Sat 11 am-8 pm, Sun 12 pm-7 pm, closed Mon
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email: pbailey@solarsolutions.com

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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR ADVERTISERS!

Custer Senior Center Menu

Monday, January 13
#86 Spinach Lasagna

Seasoned Green Beans
Salad w/Lite Italina
Banana
WW Bread w/Butter

Tuesday, January 14
#39 Corned Beef Brisket

Parsley Buttered New Potatoes
Cabbage & Carrots
Spinach Salad w/Mandarin Oranges
Apple

Thursday, January 16
#68 Pueblo Beef Stew

Sour Cream
WW Crackers
Brussels Sprouts
Vegetable Salad w/Lite Ranch
Banana

Served Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays at noon. 612 Main St. , Silver Cliff Townhall (lower level)
The following major food allergens are used as ingredients: Milk, Egg, Fish, Tree Nuts, Peanuts, Wheat, Soy and Sesame.

Please call (719) 783-9508 before 9:30 a.m. for reservations
A \$3 suggested donation per meal is appreciated, but not required. All menus subject to change.



Recurring Events

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SANGRE SHOOT-
ING SPORTS CLUB will be held on Saturday, January 18,
2025 at Lange Hall, 312 S. Third Street, Westcliffe,
commencing at 10 A.M.

Mondays
10 a.m. Pickle Ball Silver Cliff Mem.Park (SCMP)
More info: lizbrannen@gmail.com
6 -7:30 p.m. Men’s Bible Meeting (The Bible and X) w/
Scott Munger. at First Baptist Church.
6 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous (CLSD) 12 Step study, at St.
Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita, Westcliffe. Martha at 719-371-1853.

1st Monday of the Month
5 p.m. Post 170 Auxiliary monthly meeting
(year-round) at Cliffe Lanes
2nd and 4th Monday
6 – 7 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous
Community United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall.
Children Welcome. colobamanana@yahoo.com

Tuesdays
12 noon – 1 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous (CLDS)
“As Bill Sees It” St. Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita in W/C.
Call Martha at 719-371-1853.

1st Tuesday of the Month
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Old Schoolhouse Quilters Comfort
Quilters @Valley Bible
6:00 p.m. American Legion Post 170 monthly meeting
at Cliff Lanes meeting room.

4-6 p.m. Christian Music on KLZR 91.7 FM
2nd Tuesday of the Month
9 a.m. Old Schoolhouse Quilters Guild Meeting
@Valley Bible

3rd Tuesday of the Month
Liberty Rocks TUESDAY Meet/greet &order 5:30 p.m.
Presentation 6 p.m. Location Tony’s Pizza All welcome.

Wednesdays
8-9 a.m. Veterans Coffee Social, Veterans and Caregivers
welcome. West Custer County Library Community Rm.,
209 Main St. Westcliffe

9:30 – 11 a.m. Line Dancers meet at United Methodist
Church, 204 S 6th St. Call Debbie Underwood at
(432) 553-7483.

9:45-11:30 a.m. The Posse Ladies Bible Study “Names
of God” at Sangre de Cristo Fellowship, 120 Jerry Dr.
Westcliffe. September 18- December 4
Questions? Holly 703-338-4100

10 a.m. Pickle Ball (SCMP) info: lizbrannen@gmail.com
6 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous (CLSD) Big Book Study at
St. Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita, Westcliffe. Martha at
719-371-1853.

6 p.m. Prayer Group Meeting. First Baptist Church
of Westcliffe. Call 719-783-2498.

First Thursday of the Month
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Comfort Quilters, FBC (log bldg next to the
church) 417 S. 6th St. Contact Delores at 719-371-1451.

2nd Thursday of the Month
6 p.m. Custer County Republican Central Committee
meeting. Ranchers Roost. The public is welcome See
www.CusterGOP.com or Facebook page at https://m.
facebook.com/custergop

3rd Thursday of the Month
2 p.m. Round Mt Water District Meeting.

Fridays
10 a.m. Pickle Ball Silver Cliff Memorial Park
More info: lizbrannen@gmail.com

1 - 4 p.m.- Mah Jongg at the Senior Center

6 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous Open Discussion, St.
Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita. Call Martha 719-371- 1853

2nd Friday of the Month
8 am- Westcliffe Band of Brothers & Sisters Men’s
Prayer Breakfast, at the Senior Center followed by
Monthly Meeting at 9:30 - all are welcome

Saturdays
10 a.m. Wet Mountain Al-Anon Family Group meets at
St. Luke’s Episcopal Church. Call Dee (719) 404-1851
or Jean (719) 371-1229.

3rd Saturday of Month
8 a.m. Valley Bible Fellowship Men’s Breakfast Open to
all Men of the Community, 116 Hermit Lane, Silver Cliff
Questions, **Mike @ 719-650-0362**

1 p.m. VFW meeting at Cliff Lanes Conference Room,
Post Commander Burt Daniels 719-783-3050



The American Legion Monthly Meeting is the 1st Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at the bowling alley.



The American Legion Auxiliary Monthly Meeting is the 1st Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at the Cliff Lanes meeting room.

American Legion and VFW Monthly Meetings

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Monthly Meeting is the 3rd Saturday of every month at 1 p.m. at the bowling alley.



CCSO CO-RESPONDERS’ CORNER

Feeling Dazed & Confused?

by Jaclyn & Tom Manzione

Do you ever wonder why? People often desire consistency in their attitudes and perceptions; thus, this conflict creates unpleasant emotions of disquiet or discomfort. Cognitive dissonance is the mental discomfort that arises from holding two opposing beliefs, values, or attitudes.

People are motivated to take steps that will lessen their discomfort because of the discrepancy between their beliefs and behavior. Individuals try to decompress by ignoring, justifying, or rejecting new knowledge, among other strategies.

Although everyone encounters cognitive dissonance to some extent, it is not always simple to identify. Feeling uneasy before acting or making a decision, attempting to defend or explain a choice you’ve made or action you’ve taken, feeling ashamed or embarrassed about something you’ve done, and attempting to conceal your actions from others are some indicators that what you’re experiencing may be connected to dissonance. Another indicator is feeling bad about something you did in the past and regretting it, not wanting to do anything about it, yet doing it due to fear of missing out (FOMO) or social pressure. Cognitive dissonance frequently has a strong impact on our actions

and behaviors. It not only affects your emotions but also motivates you to take steps to lessen discomfort.

Child development is a hot topic of interest today. As kids get older, cognitive dissonance can cause them to feel irritable, guilty, and ashamed of who they are. The greatest way to support these confused kids is to understand how dissonance contributes to their mixed emotions.

Various social views on the philosophy of governance are another area of particular interest. Conflict is fundamental to governance, particularly in light of its effects on polarization and selective exposure. This is especially true when a person’s fundamental governing identity is threatened. To lessen the discomfort brought on by the disagreement, we could act in certain ways or take a certain viewpoint. In this case, dissonance may influence our behavior, thoughts and choices.

A person experiences an uncomfortable arousal known as dissonance when they realize that their own attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors are inconsistent with [each other]. Cognitive dissonance can result in a variety of outcomes because people seek to avoid discomfort.

Individuals like to think of themselves as rational, reliable and capable of

making sound decisions. Their views of themselves and their talents may be affected by cognitive dissonance, which is why it frequently seems so awkward and disagreeable.

Seeking knowledge that confirms and validates existing beliefs, downplaying the significance of opposing views, and altering beliefs to lessen conflict are some strategies people use to reduce the pain caused by cognitive dissonance.

Many value-judgments, choices and assessments include cognitive dissonance. One of the best ways to increase your ability to make decisions more quickly and accurately is to become aware of how opposing ideas affect the process.

Although cognitive dissonance is a normal aspect of life, it doesn’t have to be debilitating. You can successfully manage and lessen cognitive dissonance in your life by identifying when it happens, getting information, changing your views, establishing consistency, engaging in self-reflection, and asking for help. Adopting these techniques can result in improved emotional health, mental clarity, and personal development. As always, we are here to help!

Co-responders are available to assist at CCSO 719-783-2270 Option 1

Come and Worship

Christian Science 9:30 a.m. Worship <i>8 Bassick Place, Westcliffe</i> Church of Christ 9:30 a.m. Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>818 Ohio Street, Silver Cliff 719/783-4601</i> Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints <i>240 Ridgeline Dr, Westcliffe Pres: 719/214-4589</i> Cody Park Community Church 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship Tues. 8:30 a.m., Prayer Mtg. Wedn. 7 p.m. Bible Study <i>0157 County Rd. 27A Cotopaxi 719/942-3526</i> Community United Methodist Church 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Worship <i>202 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe 719/783-2511</i> Cotopaxi Community Church 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 6 p.m. Wedn. Bible Study PastorSteveHolcomb@gmail.com <i>20326 Hwy. 50, Cotopaxi</i>	First Baptist Church of Westcliffe 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Fellowship 10:45 a.m. Worship 4:30 p.m. Wedn. AWANAS <i>410 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe Pastor Josh Olsteen 719/783-2498</i> High Country Mennonite Church 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Sunday School <i>103 N.Adams St, Westcliffe 719/783-9045</i> Huerfano Community Bible Church 10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship 7 p.m.: Thursday Bible Study <i>603 Leon Street, Walsenburg (719) 251-9053</i> Hope Lutheran Church 2 p.m. Worship 3:15 p.m. Bible Study <i>3rd & Powell Streets, Westcliffe Pastor Dan Kletke 719/783-2323 Lange Hall 719/783-2561</i> Living Stone Calvary Chapel Saturday evenings: 5:30 p.m. Sunday Mornings: 9 a.m. & 11a.m. <i>830 Bridge St., Canon City, CO Pastor Sean Meagher 719/276-0863</i>	Our Lady of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church <i>Diocese of Pueblo</i> 11 a.m. Sunday Mass 10 a.m. (2nd Tuesday of month) Mass 10 a.m. Wednesday Mass 5:30 p.m. Thursday Mass <i>109 S. 5th Street, Westcliffe 719/783-3507</i> Our Lady of Mt. Zion Catholic Church 11 a.m. Mass, 2nd & 3rd Sunday of month <i>210 S. 2nd St, Westcliffe 719/783-2491</i> Praise Community Church Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Praise & Worship 10:45 a.m. <i>215 N Pikes Peak Ave., Florence 719/784-1184</i> St. Luke’s Episcopal Church 10:30 a.m. Worship & Eucharist 11:30 a.m. Fellowship 8:30 a.m. Prayer Service, Thursdays <i>3rd & Rosita Streets, Westcliffe 719/783-2477</i> St. Patrick’s Anglican Church 11 a.m. Worship 403 S. 2nd S., Westcliffe 925/339-0175 or 719/783-2500 Sacred Heart Catholic Church <i>Diocese of Pueblo</i> Saturday Mass 4 p.m. <i>Highway 69, Gardner Bldg. Mickey. 719/746-2037</i>	Sangre de Cristo Cowboy Church <i>Pastor: Mike Shields</i> 10 a.m. Sunday School Bible Study 11 a.m. Worship Last Sunday of Month: Potluck at Noon sangredecrislocowboychurch.com also on Facebook <i>60260 Hwy 69, Westcliffe 719/232-5372</i> Sangre de Cristo Fellowship 9 a.m. Meet & Greet 9:30 a.m. Service <i>120 Jerry Drive, Westcliffe 719/783-0903</i> Sangre de Cristo Seminary Chapel 10 a.m. Worship <i>6160 County Rd. 130, Westcliffe 719/ 371-1822</i> Valley Bible Fellowship 10 a.m. Worship <i>116 Hermit Lane, Silver Cliff 719/581-7572</i> Wetmore Baptist Church 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:45 a.m. Worship 6 p.m. Worship <i>Junction of Hwy 96 & 67, Wetmore 719/371-1230</i> Wetmore Community Church 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship <i>699 County Rd. 395, Wetmore 719/784-0596</i>
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Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.
Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.
The Lord is at hand;
do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer
and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.
Philippians 4:4-6 ESV



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Classifieds

Announcements

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40x60 Commercial Shop with 20x15 office space for rent on 2 acre lot on Lake DeWeese Road. \$2,750/month. Security deposit of \$2,750. Call 719-371-4928 or 719-371-4927 for more information.

Help Wanted

Custer County is accepting employment applications for an Assistant Veterans Service Officer position. Employment application and job description are available on the Custer County website <https://www.custercounty-co.gov/employment>. Custer County is an equal-

opportunity employer. Employment application and resume may be submitted to:
Custer County Human Resources
P.O. Box 150
Westcliffe, CO 81252
Email: HR@custercounty-co.gov ***

Custer County is accepting employment applications for the Custer County Extension Office Administrative Assistant/4-H Coordinator position. Employment application and job description are available on the Custer County website <https://www.custercounty-co.gov/employment>.

Custer County is an equal-opportunity employer. Employment application and resume may be submitted to:
Custer County Human Resources
P.O. Box 150
Westcliffe, CO 81252
Email: HR@custercounty-co.gov ***

Custer County is accepting employment applications for positions Road & Bridge Equipment Operator. Employment application and job description are available on Custer County website <https://www.custercounty-co.gov/employment>.

Custer County is an equal opportunity employer. Employment application and resume may be submitted to:
Custer County Human Resources
P.O. Box 150
Westcliffe, CO 81252
Email: HR@custercounty-co.gov ***

Custer County School District is now hiring. Apply online at <https://www.applitrack.com/ccbobcats/onlineapp>.

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Winter Adult Reading Program

Keep the winter doldrums at bay by participating in the Winter Adult Reading Program. The reading program starts Tuesday, January 14th at 10 a.m. Stop by the library for a bingo card or print one from the library website by visiting www.westcusterlibrary.org events page to get started.

Community Services

Altitude Community Fitness
(719) 783-0750

American Legion Post #170
PO Box 424, Westcliffe, CO 81252
talpost170westcliffe@gmail.com
(719) 783-2462 westcliffepost170.org

Custer County Community Sharing Food Pantry
120 N. 3rd St. Fri. (719) 783-2994
OPEN First 3 Fridays of the month
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Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Center for Fremont and Custer Counties
(719) 275-2429 FamilyCrisisOnline.org

Lighthouse Pregnancy Resources
Monday and Thursday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Friday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
(719) 783-4357

National Suicide HOTLINE
1-800-273-8255 Veterans Press 1

Solvista 24/7 Crisis Line
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Regional 719-276-5488 Local Office 719-275-2351

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(719) 618-8266 vso@custercounty.co.gov
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West Custer County Library
209 Main Street Westcliffe, CO 81252
(719) 783-9138
Tue. – Fri.: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m..
Saturday: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

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The deadline for getting your information into the Classifieds is Monday at 4 p.m. for that week's edition.



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Local Mountain News & Notices

KIDS

January 10, 2025

What is White Chocolate

I'm sure you have heard that white chocolate is not actually chocolate. This week for all you white chocolate lovers, we will investigate this nasty assumption.

White chocolate has a different flavor, ingredient list, texture, and melting point than milk or dark chocolate. That is why some question whether it is really chocolate at all. Many times, it's the distinctive color that defies people's expectations of what chocolate should look like. Most of the flavor in milk and dark chocolate comes from cocoa solids, which aren't used in white chocolate. It actually all boils down to (pun intended) the origin of its ingredients and its classification by government entities.



White chocolate is sourced from the same beans as milk or dark chocolate. The manufacturing processes are identical until the stage where the cocoa solids are separated from the cocoa butter. That is where the similarities end.

All chocolate starts as roasted cacao beans. These beans are harvested, fermented, roasted and ground down to make a smooth substance called cocoa paste or chocolate liquor. Milk and dark chocolate make use of whole chocolate liquor, whereas white chocolate requires processing the chocolate liquor through a hydraulic press. So, white chocolate ditches the cocoa liquor in favor of a higher concentration of milk. All varieties of chocolate contain cocoa butter as a central ingredient. The FDA categorizes all chocolate including white, under the umbrella of "cacao products". So, technically speaking, even though they're made from different components, brown chocolate and white chocolate both come from the same cacao pod.

What does white chocolate taste like? For those of you who may have never tasted it, a high-quality white chocolate has a rich and buttery taste, sweet, creamy and luxurious. Is white chocolate healthier than brown chocolate? Well, it does contain cocoa butter, which is high in vitamin D2, potassium, phosphorus, iron, copper, and magnesium—the primary ingredient in white chocolate is sugar, and we all know how sugar is not the best for us. Since the most beneficial health benefits of chocolate come from the flavonoids in cocoa solids, the darker the chocolate, the better.

I guess we haven't settled anything and it still all boils down to preference. Actually, I really don't prefer one over another but some people almost want to go to war over this matter. When it comes to chocolate I try to eat it in moderation. Enjoy!

by Audrey Slater. Sources: <https://www.rd.com/article/what-is-white-chocolate/>, <https://www.thetakeout.com/1626225/is-white-chocolate-real-chocolate/>, <https://www.southernliving.com/what-is-in-white-chocolate-8400856..>
Pic Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_chocolate#/media/File:White_chocolate_with_rose_petals.jpg.

Sangre de Cristo Sentinel • Westcliffe, Colorado

CORNER



Custer County School District C-1 MENU for the week January 13 thru January 16, 2025

	Breakfast	Lunch
<u>Monday</u>	Cereal Yogurt Oatmeal Fruit, Milk	Muffaletta Cheetos Lettuce, Tomato, Pickle Fruit, Milk
<u>Tuesday</u>	Cheese Omelet Sausage Yogurt Fruit, Milk	Nacho Supreme Corn Rice Fruit, Milk
<u>Wednesday</u>	Pancakes Sausage Fruit, Milk	Pizza Fresh Salad Fruit, Milk
<u>Thursday</u>	Biscuits and Gravy Sausage Yogurt, Oatmeal Fruit, Milk	Chicken And Rice Peas and Carrots Roll Fruit, Milk

ELEMENTARY - MAIN DISH, GRAIN PRODUCT, VEGETABLE, FRUIT & MILK. MIDDLE & HIGH - MAIN DISH (OR SALAD BAR), GRAIN PRODUCT, VEGETABLE, FRUIT & MILK
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Community Foundation Creates New Community Development Fund

Press Release

WESTCLIFFE, Colorado - The Wet Mountain Valley Community Foundation is pleased to announce the creation of the Community Development Fund (CDF), a new designated fund in the Foundation's portfolio. The CDF will provide strategic vision and funding to local initiatives through careful and comprehensive research and community input. The goal is to facilitate

high-level initiatives that will have a positive transformational impact.

Initial planning includes the CDF committee reaching out to community members and existing organizations to discuss community needs and visions, and to identify opportunities, gaps, and available resources. For more information, please contact Dr. Jennifer Howerton at director@wmvcf.org

Bobcats Scoreboard!

Saturday, January 4:

HS Boys Wrestling @ Bennett Invite:

Jason Hemseth placed 1st at 144 lbs; Corbyn Martin placed 2nd at 175 lbs; Chris Carter placed 6th at 190 lbs

HS Girls Wrestling @ Bennett Invite:

Liz Ergo placed 6th at 115 lbs; Stephanie Lewis placed 6th at 130 lbs; Brylee Shy placed 3rd at 155 lbs

Booster Club Bobcat Corner



*Come out and support your
Custer County Bobcats!*

All games and dates are subject to change without notice.

Friday, January 10:

4 pm HS Boys JV Basketball @ ECA (away)

5 pm HS Girls Basketball @ ECA (away)

6:30 pm HS Boys Varsity Basketball @ ECA (away)

Saturday, January 11:

7 am (weigh in) 9 am (start) HS Boys/Girls Wrestling
@ Gunnison Invite in Gunnison

Tuesday, January 14:

4:30 pm HS Girls Basketball @ Cripple Creek (away)

6 pm HS Boys Varsity Basketball @ Cripple Creek (away)

Friday, January 17:

4 pm HS Boys JV Basketball @ HOME
vs Crested Butte

5:30 pm HS Girls Basketball @ HOME
vs Crested Butte

7 pm HS Boys Varsity Basketball @ HOME
vs Crested Butte

Want to become a sponsor of the Custer County Bobcats?

*Contact Lea Grundy at 720-234-7751
for more information!*

Come support the Bobcats Concession Stand at every Home game!

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32 ESV

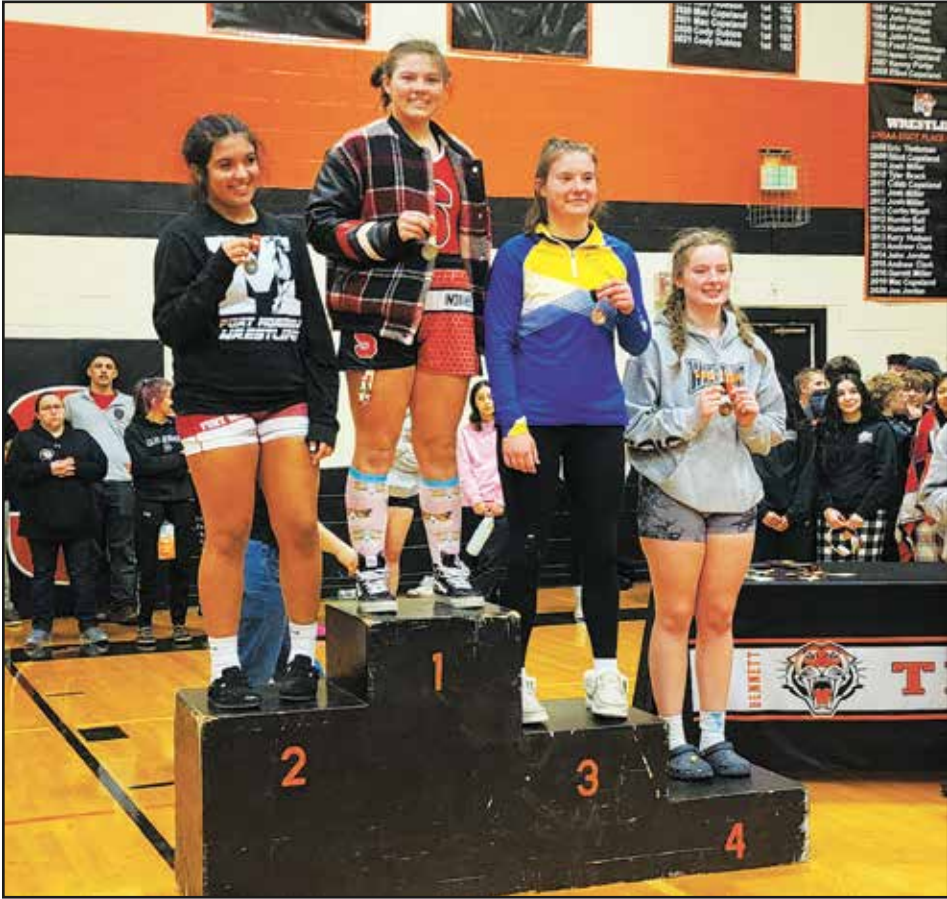
Bobcats at Bennett Invite Wrestling Meet Awards



Jason Hemseth place 1st.



Corbyn Martin placed 2nd



Brylee Shy placed 2nd.

Photos by Brittany Martin

New Arrival Ensley Grace Wommack

SALIDA, Colo.— Ensley Grace Wommack was born at Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center’s Family Birthing Center in Salida on January 3, 2025 at 3:30 a.m. She weighed 7 pounds and measured 21 inches long.

Ensley’s parents are Novalee Koch and Wyatt Wommack of Florence, CO.

Grandparents are Michelle and Austin Koch of Coaldale, CO, and Stormy and Marci Wommack of Westcliffe, CO.

Great-grandparents are Stan and Pam Koch of Coaldale, CO, Harry Palmer of Salida, CO, Marge Bishop of Westcliffe, CO, and Betty Wommack of Colorado Springs, CO.



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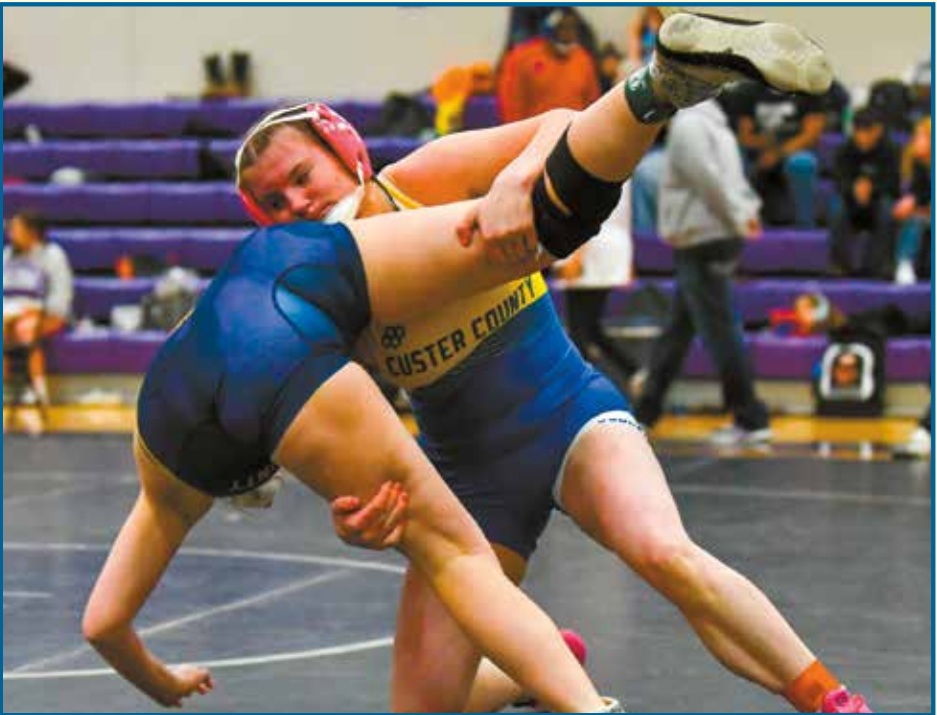
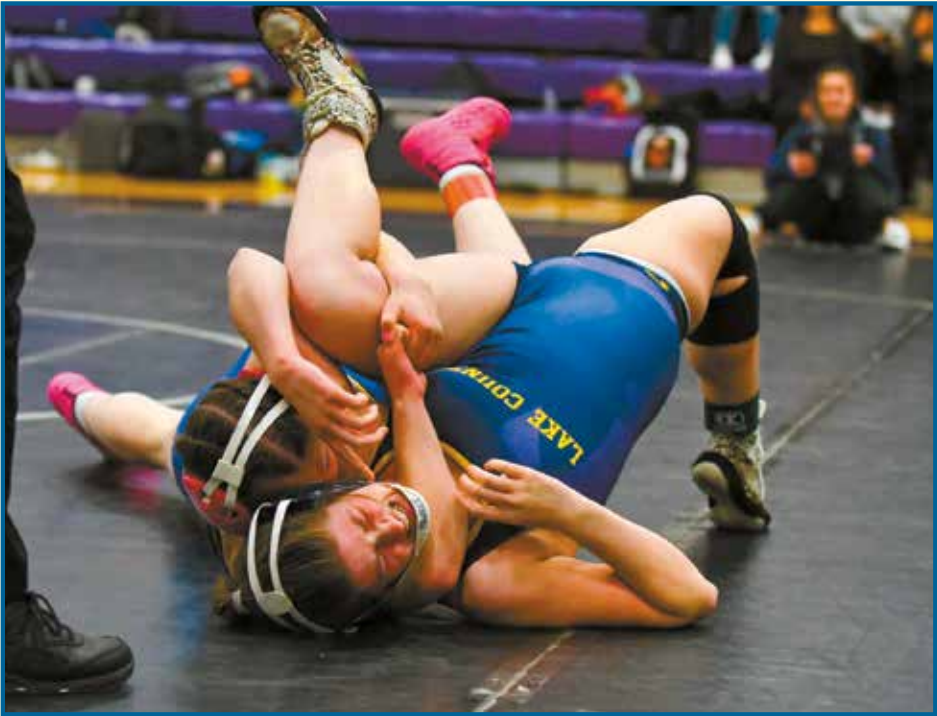
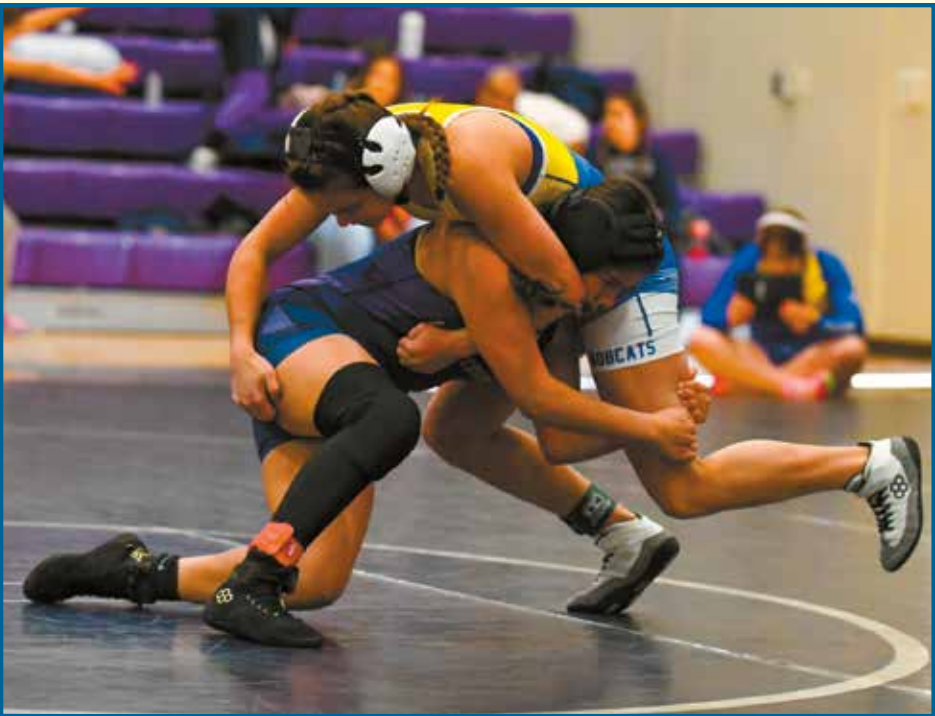
NorthStar Indoor Sauna Series

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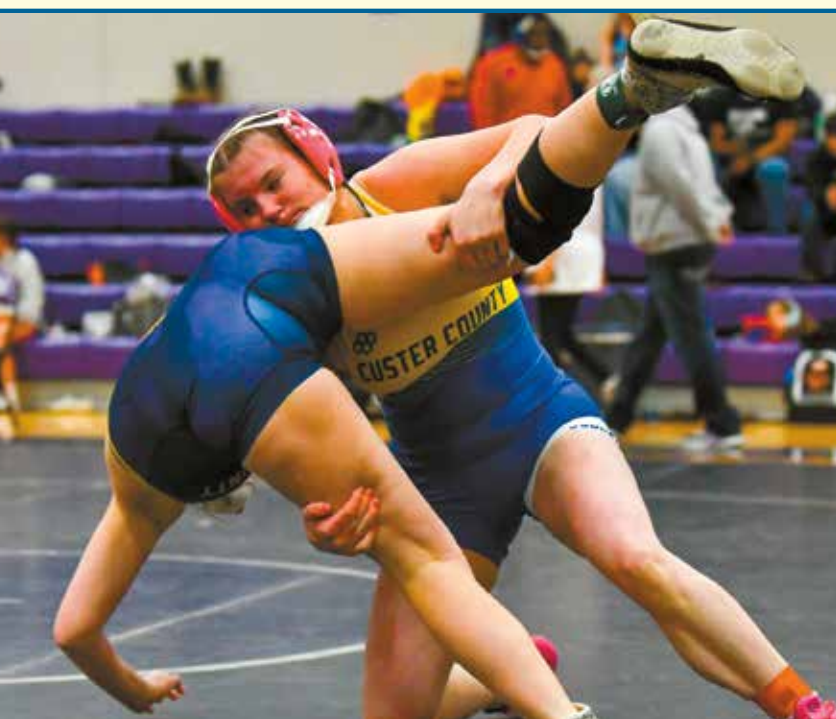
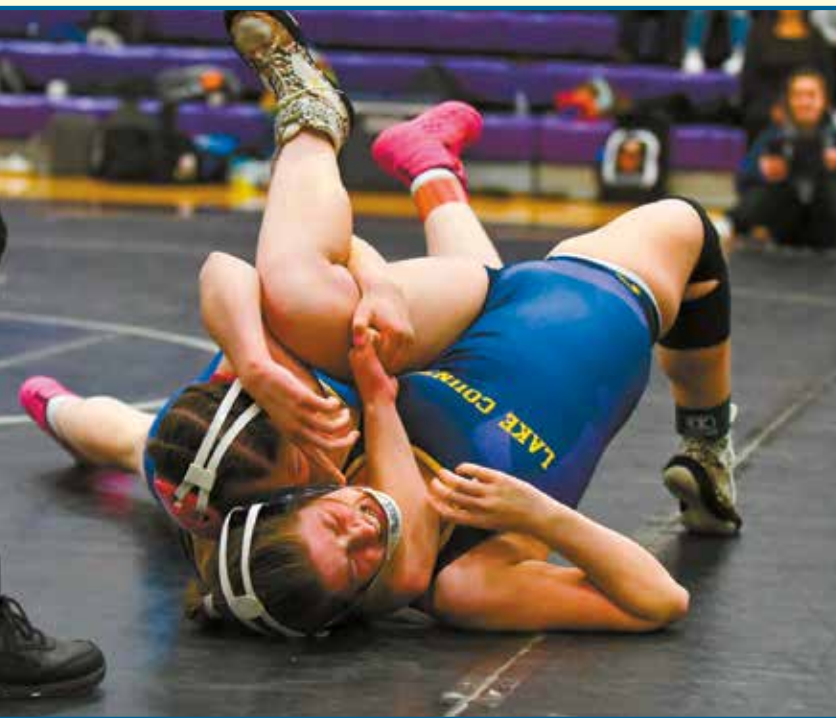
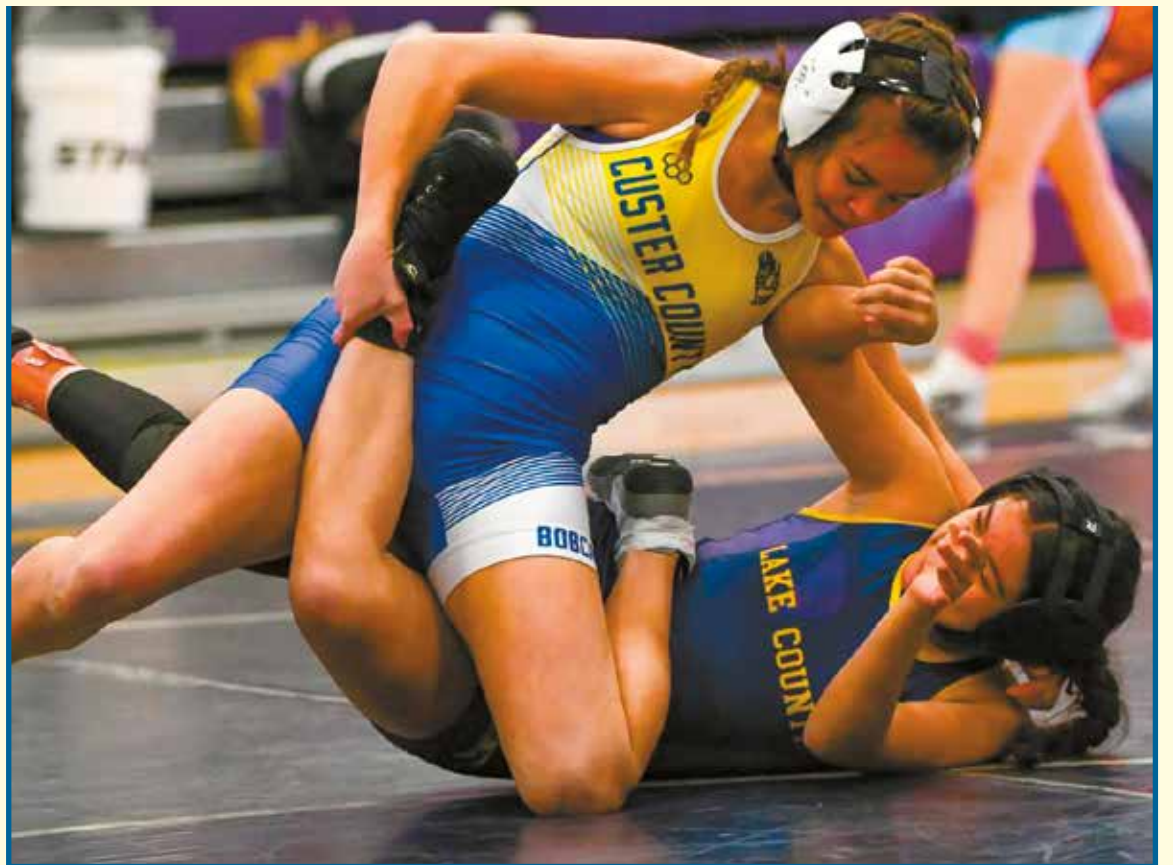
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Bobcat High School Girls Wres



School Girls Wrestling at Salida



Sentinel Photos by Jennifer Russ Photography; Layout by Katherine Brenchley



Colorado State News

Laken Riley Act Passes U.S. House of Representatives Cracks Down on Illegal Migrant Criminals Our U.S. House Rep. Brittany Petterson Voted NO!

by Adam Pack,
Daily Caller News Foundation



The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed legislation Tuesday to require federal immigration authorities to detain illegal migrants who commit theft-related crimes in the United States.

The legislation passed decisively 264-159 with every Republican lawmaker that voted supporting the bill, which would give Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and state governments more authority to curtail illegal immigration. Nearly 160 Democratic lawmakers opposed the bill's passage.

The bill, known as the Laken Riley Act, is sponsored by Georgia Republican Rep. Mike Collins and seeks to honor the memory of Laken Riley, a University of Georgia nursing

student who was murdered by an illegal immigrant while out on a run near her college campus in February 2024.

"An illegal criminal came into my district and killed Laken Riley because our law enforcement did not have the tools to stop him," Collins told the *Daily Caller News Foundation* Monday. "Laken fought until her last breath, and so will I until this bill crosses the finish line and lands on the President's desk."

Speaker Mike Johnson's decision to make the Laken Riley Act the first bill the House voted on during the 119th Congress signals addressing border security and cracking down on illegal immigration will be a top priority for House Republicans this year.

The Laken Riley Act seeks to address a policy failure regarding ICE and local law enforcement's failure to detain illegal migrant criminals that commit low-level crimes that became glaringly obvious to lawmakers in the wake

of Riley's murder, Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters during a House GOP press conference Tuesday.

"There are real consequences to policy decisions, and this one was deadly," Johnson told reporters."

Riley's killer, Venezuelan National Jose Antonio Ibarra, had a criminal record in the United States prior to murdering Riley. Ibarra was arrested in October 2022 for allegedly shoplifting at a Walmart in Athens, Georgia, but was ultimately released because the shoplifting charge was a misdemeanor.

If the Laken Riley Act passes the Senate and is signed into law by President-elect Donald Trump, ICE would be required to detain illegal migrants like Ibarra who commit theft-related crimes in the United States, according to the bill text.

"Right now, ICE is unable to detain and deport these illegal criminals who commit these

minor level crimes, but the Laken Riley Act will fix this and give ICE and our local law enforcement the tools to get these criminals out of our country and make our communities safer," Collins said during floor debate on the bill.

"With Joe Biden, Chuck Schumer and the party of lawlessness out of the way, the radical left's mission to enable criminal illegal aliens...at the expense of law-abiding Americans is no longer going to be tolerated," Republican Minnesota Rep. Tom Emmer, House Majority whip, said during a House GOP leadership press conference on the Laken Riley Act Tuesday. "The tragic and preventable murder of Laken Riley serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of failed leadership."

Many House Democratic lawmakers, led by Maryland Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin, ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, slammed

the bill for expanding the number of illegal migrants in the United States that are required to be detained by ICE, and voiced concern that the bill's passage would lead to illegal migrants who are wrongly accused of theft-related crimes being detained by federal immigration authorities.

"Their bill [Laken Riley Act] today is an empty and opportunistic measure," said during floor debate on the bill. "This is a radical departure from current law, which since 1996 has generally required mandatory detention only for persons who are criminally convicted or who admit to having committed certain serious crimes."

The Laken Riley Act was notably backed by Riley's family who believe the bill's passage will prevent the deaths of additional Americans at the hands of illegal migrants.

LAIKEN RILEY ACT
see page 16

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This month's theme: "What Happens When...?"
Guests will include representatives from the Eagles Summit Ranch,
Custer County Coroner & Sheriff's Office to answer questions like:
what happens when you drop off expired medicines for disposal?
Send your questions to Ann before next Friday, January 17th!

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Colorado State News



Study Finds Colorado Regulations Among Highest in Nation, Costing Jobs

by Ed Sealover,
The Sum and Substance

---December 10, 2024

Colorado’s sharp rise in new regulations over the past four years is costing the state tens of thousands of jobs while elevating costs for consumers, and reform is needed, according to a study released Tuesday by the Colorado Chamber of Commerce.

The number of new regulations affecting private industries that went into law between 2020 and 2023 increased 7.1%, or 2.3% annually, according to Maryland-based market-research and regulatory-analysis firm StratACUMEN group, which did the study for the Chamber. Pipeline transportation, personal services (ranging from pet groomers to funeral homes) and chemical manufacturing all saw at least 50% growth in the number of regulations governing those sectors in the four-year period, the report found.

That surge in new rules ranked Colorado as the state with the 12th-highest number of regulations by the end of 2023 but leaves it on pace to rank sixth by the end of this year, with businesses facing more than 200,000 distinct regulations, the study found. Some sectors have more than three times as many regulations as the median U.S. state, including manufacturing of nonmetallic mineral products from glass to cement (7.67 times the median rules), pipeline transportation of natural resources (6.16 times) and ambulatory health-care services (4.02 times).

Costs and benefits to regulations

The sharp increase in regulations corresponds with Democrats taking full control of the state House, Senate and governor’s office at the start of 2019 and then pushing for laws to protect the environment, workers and the state’s unemployment insurance program. Supporters say new regulations protect residents from air and water pollution, employer exploitation and the impact of new technology (on

subjects like data privacy), among other things, and they argue that gains in those areas outshine economic drawbacks.

The StratACUMEN study acknowledges that while most regulations are proposed with good intentions, their overall impact can create unintended consequences, particularly for locally owned businesses dealing with the barrage of rules. Using figures from other studies, it argued that each 10% increase in regulations can lead employers to divert resources from growth to compliance, stopping some 9,000 businesses from moving forward and costing 36,000 jobs.

“The findings indicate that while regulations are essential for ensuring safety, environmental protection and consumer rights, their cumulative burden can pose significant challenges, particularly for small- and medium-sized businesses that are vital for the state’s economy,” the study concluded.

Regulatory reform a Colorado Chamber priority

Colorado business owners have complained increasingly about regulations in recent years and listed the jump in operating rules as by far their biggest impediment to growing jobs locally in a 2023 Chamber survey. Chamber President/CEO Loren Furman identified the reduction of regulatory burden as one of the organization’s key pillars in its Vision 2033 10-year plan released last year.

Since 2019, legislators and regulators added rules to cut greenhouse-gas emissions in sectors from energy to buildings, launched a voter-approved paid-family-leave program, boosted rules around employer hiring and allowed local minimum-wage hikes.

Colorado has a notably higher number of regulations related to the environment (53,550) rules versus a national average

COLORADO REGULATIONS
see page 17

One of the Worst Candidates Imaginable Launches Campaign for CO Governor

by ColoradoPeakPolitics.com

Timing is everything in politics. So while voters are grappling with the dual New Years’ Day attacks in New Orleans and the Vegas suicide truck bomber from the Springs, Phil Weiser picked this news cycle to launch Colorado’s 2026 gubernatorial race.

Long story short, Weiser’s timing sucks as badly as his record as the state’s attorney general.

Phil Weiser@pweiser

BREAKING—Today, I’m announcing my candidacy for Governor of Colorado.

There are many reasons why I’m running to lead this state I love, but the biggest reason is simple: I’m committed to fighting for the people of Colorado. —> .

philforcolorado.com



Our Next Journey, Together | Phil Weiser for Colorado

Over 30 years ago, I came to Colorado for a job interview—and was hooked. Here in Colorado, we root for each other to succeed, we treasure our outdoors, and we bring an independent, innovative spirit...
7:38 AM · Jan 2, 2025

Weiser claims he’s committed to the fight, although exactly what criminal element he’s really been fighting as the state’s highest ranked law enforcement official is anyone’s guess.

Spank@mentaldischarge

Colorado AG Phil Weiser, who has presided over the worst crime statistics in the state’s history, wants to be promoted to Governor. If you want higher taxes,

higher crime rates, higher homelessness, higher energy costs, and more people wandering the streets high, he’s your guy.

Among the accomplishments Weiser claimed in his campaign announcement is that of “making us all safer.”

Swear to G*d, he really said that.

“Together, we have accomplished so much by ... Making us all safer, working alongside law enforcement and community leaders to stand up enhanced recruiting, improving training for our police and sheriffs, pushing for and defending gun safety measures, and prosecuting cartels and crime rings.”

And yet **PeakNation™** will recall this is the same attorney general who declared Aurora the new Ellis Island and vowed not to allow the deportation of illegal migrants arrested for committing a crime — only those first convicted of just the really violent kind of crimes.

Even as attorney general, Weiser couldn’t bring himself to support the prosecution of common criminals unless multiple crimes were committed in a certain time frame.

Kristi Burton Brown@KBBColorado

NEW: @pweiser reveals his hard line on car thefts.

Once someone has stolen “3 or 4 cars” within “say 3 months,” THEN it’s time for consequences.

No wonder Colorado is #1 in the nation for car theft. #copolitics

Weiser also claimed to be a leader in combating the opioid crisis, and yet he supports an open border that has flooded the drug market leading to increased overdose deaths.

Weiser’s idea of drug treatment is his support of legalizing drug injection sites in Colorado.

We can’t imagine a worse candidate for governor than Weiser. Unless of course Jena Griswold decides to run.

Please see: <https://coloradopeakpolitics.com/2025/01/02/one-of-the-worst-candidates-imaginable-launches-campaign-for-colorado-governor/>

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Colorado State News

What Drivers Should Know About Colorado's New 'Hands-Free' Cellphone Law

by Michelle P. Fulcher,
Colorado Public Radio

Starting New Year's Day it will be illegal for Colorado drivers to hold or touch their cellphones while they're operating their cars.

The hands-free law requires people driving passenger vehicles to link their phone to the car's communications system or install equipment like a bracket to hold the device.

Personal injury lawyer Scott O'Sullivan said he lobbied for the bill for seven years.

"Seeing my clients' lives be devastated day after day after day, especially as a motorcycle lawyer made me want to change things. There are ways that are simple to help change for the better and one would be getting cellphones out of people's hands," he said.

More than two dozen states already have hands-free laws. O'Sullivan said they've seen roughly a 10 percent drop in traffic fatalities.

"I think our phones became so ingrained in so many people's lives that it became something they didn't want to lose control of. Even though all you have to do is get it out of your hand and put it in your pocket, put it somewhere else."

Here, with information from the **Colorado Department of Transportation**, is a look at how the law works:

- Drivers must use built-in Bluetooth speaker systems; products like Apple

Car Play or Android Auto that link a smartphone with the vehicle's display and control it through voice commands or the car's interface; or a dashboard mount that allows navigation and hands-free calls.

- You can't hold the phone even if you're stopped in traffic or at a light. You can hold it if you're in a parked car.
- Don't use headphones: Colorado law prohibits having headphones or ear buds in both ears while driving.
- Holding a phone is a secondary offense, meaning a law officer has to see the driver using the device while committing another infraction – like careless driving – before they can pull someone over.
- The fine for a first offense is \$75 plus two license suspension points. First-time violators can have the charge dismissed if they prove they've bought a hands-free accessory. Fines and license points go up for repeat offenses.
- The law doesn't apply if a driver is reporting an emergency.
- The law exempts: People with commercial licenses driving commercial vehicles, first responders, utility workers, code enforcement officers and animal protection officers.

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Please see: <https://www.cpr.org/2024/12/27/colorado-new-hands-free-cellphone-law/>

LAKEN RILEY ACT from page 14

"The Laken Riley Act has our full support because it would help save innocent lives and prevent more families from going through the kind of heartbreak we've experienced," Allyson and John Phillips, Laken Riley's mother and stepfather, told the DCNF. "Laken would have been 23 on January 10th. There is no greater gift that could be given to her and our country than to continue her legacy by saving lives through this bill."

"Every single member of Congress should be able to get behind this purely commonsense bill that will make our country and communities safer," Riley's mother and stepfather added. "We thank Congressman Mike Collins, Senator Katie Britt, and Senator Ted Budd for continuing to work to honor Laken's legacy and get this legislation enacted into law."

Republican Alabama Sen. Katie Britt introduced companion legislation in the Senate Tuesday with every Senate Republican supporting the bill's passage and Democratic Pennsylvania Sen. John Fetterman signing on as a cosponsor. The Senate is slated to vote on the legislation as early as Friday, a senior GOP aide told the DCNF.

"Congress has an obligation to Laken, her

family, and to families in every corner of our country to do everything in our power to help prevent this type of tragedy from occurring again," Britt told the DCNF. "That's why it's imperative we pass the commonsense Laken Riley Act with all due haste."

Collins originally introduced the Laken Riley Act in the House last Congress following Riley's murder. The House passed Collins' legislation in March 2024 with most House Democrats — 170 Democratic lawmakers in total — opposing the legislation.

Former Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer did not formally move to take up the legislation, forcing Collins to reintroduce his bill in the 119th Congress, which began Friday.

(Editor/GG: Yup, our 7th Colorado District U.S. House of Representative, Brittany Petterson voted NO on this righteous bill. We are being overrun by illegal immigrant crime and she doesn't want these criminals deported. You wonder why we are having a crime wave in Colorado. Remember this at election time.)

Please see: <https://dailycallernewsfoundation.org/2025/01/07/house-lawmakers-overwhelmingly-pass-legislation-to-crack-down-on-illegal-migrant-criminals/>

I did not climb to the top of the food chain to eat carrots. —Ron White

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COLORADO
REGULATIONS
from page 15

of 30,553), health sciences and social assistance (such as the paid-family-leave program), the study said. Much of the environmental push has come as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reclassified the Northern Front Range as a severe non-attainment area for ozone and the state has sought to rein in emissions from drilling rigs, industrial plants and others.

Are regulations stunting
emissions-reduction
innovations?

The explosion of regulations also has added more requirements to get air-quality permits and slowed the state’s consideration of permit applications, resulting in backlogs that can stretch for years, said Scott Hutchings, government-affairs director for recycling and disposal firm Waste Management. And that’s led to situations where the company has been stunted in efforts to get permits for new carbon-reduction tools like flaring devices, meaning the onslaught of regulations can work against environmental goals, he said.

Facing the fallout of increasing rules, national companies like his look increasingly to other Western states to pilot their new technologies, knowing they can get quicker approvals and better use of investment, Hutchings said. He thinks leaders should

know that states like Arizona, which require one-third as many permit approvals for landfill equipment as Colorado does, can benefit both environmentally and economically when they clear the regulatory path for companies.

“It would speed up the ability for us to reduce emissions,” Hutchings said of any regulatory rollback that could cut the permitting backlog for new equipment and allow more use of new technology. “We feel like the goalposts are being moved every year.”

Economic impact of regulations
quantified

To put Colorado’s four-year burst of regulations from 2020-23 into context, the 7.1% increase in rules came even as federal regulations, largely under President Joe Biden’s administration, grew only 1.3% during that time, the study noted. Colorado’s pipeline-transportation and personal-services sectors experienced boosts in regulation that exceeded 100%, the study noted.

Increasing regulations also cost jobs by raising the prices of goods produced by businesses in order to cover the rising cost of meeting regulations, which in turn lowers sales volume, the study argued. Transitioning from a lightly regulated economy to a heavily regulated economy can cut growth between 1% and 2% annually while, at least on the federal level, a 10% increase in regulations can lead to a 1% boost in consumer prices,

StratACUMEN leaders wrote.

Impacts of regulating one industry can extend beyond that sector, particularly in the case of environmental regulations that boost energy costs as the state transitions away from coal to natural gas and other fuels, the study argued. If the state were to mimic California’s energy policies and lead to a 90% increase in electricity prices, the reduction in employment, investment and disposable income could cost 65,000 jobs.

State legislators have said that environmental regulations also bring down costs by cleaning up air and water and reducing the public-health costs associated with asthma and other pollution-exacerbated conditions. And Democrats who have supported increased labor regulations — particularly Rep. Javier Mabrey of Denver, appointed Monday as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee — have said economic concerns should not outweigh the need to protect workers.

Unintended consequences?

But Stephen Shepard, chief staff officer for Denver Metro BOMA, said the building-management industry is a poster child for unintended consequences of regulation like rules the state passed last year to lower emissions from large commercial buildings. At a time when building operators are having a hard time bringing workers back to offices and are looking to raise capital to upgrade their

properties, the added costs of meeting the new rules is turning away potential buyers and lenders.

As a result, some buildings are going to foreclosure and some others are under consideration for demolition and conversion to industrial property — two scenarios that won’t help to bring workers back to urban core areas. Thus, the new regulations are contributing to reverberations that include the closing of nearby restaurant and retail businesses as the density of workers wanes, and the new rules are having negative effects their backers likely didn’t intend, he said.

“The cost to get these buildings to compliance with new regulations does not make a sound investment decision, so potential buyers have backed out,” Shepard said. “If you have vacant space in your building, you’re not going to be able to get loans for the capital needed to upgrade. And if you can’t get capital, you can’t comply.”

Potential reforms listed

To address these issues, the study proposed several potential regulatory reforms. It also argued that with 45% of Colorado’s regulations being duplicative, redundant or “excessive” — beyond the level of most other states — there is room to roll back regulations without hurting public health or safety.

Colorado could, for example, establish a hard limit on the number of state regulations while

simultaneously setting a short-term regulation reduction target, typically around 30% over three to five years, the study suggested. Idaho, which sports one of the country’s fastest-growing economies, has benefitted from a law establishing a “one rule in, two rules out” policy that’s led to removal or simplification of more than 75% of regulations, it said.

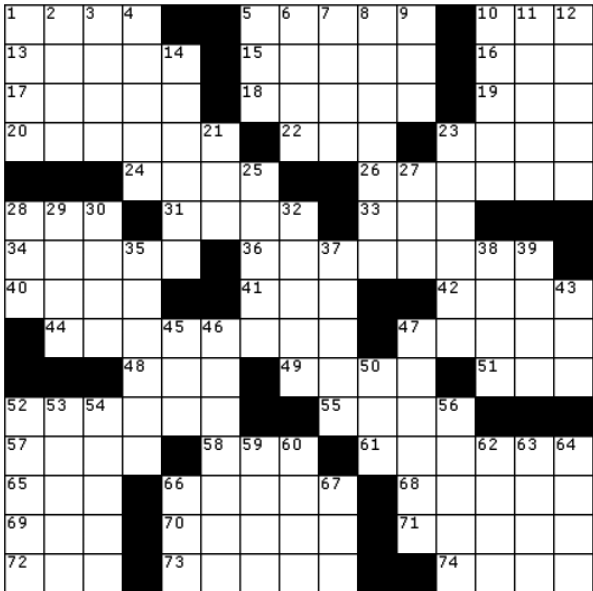
Colorado also could mandate periodic reevaluations of older regulations, to examine their effectiveness or continued necessity, it said. The state established a similar policy in which auditors have examined all tax expenditures such as credits or breaks that are available in state law and has recommended changes or repeals of a number of them.

“Ultimately, a more thoughtful regulatory framework, with reductions in the growth of the number of laws, regulations and related business regulations will not only benefit businesses but will also enhance the overall quality of life for Colorado residents, paving the way for sustainable economic growth and a thriving community,” the report said.

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Please see: <https://tssc Colorado.com/study-finds-colorado-regulations-among-highest-in-nation-costing-jobs/>

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1 Oceans
- 5 Shoulder covering
- 10 Accountant
- 13 A seasonal wish, with 48A & 64D
- 15 Bulgarian capital
- 16 Every
- 17 Release
- 18 For God so loved the ____
- 19 Sleep
- 20 Sewing need
- 22 Spacecraft detachment
- 23 Does (KJV)
- 24 Sleigh
- 26 Eye part
- 28 Surface to air missile
- 31 A king of the Amalekites
- 33 Exist
- 34 Put up
- 36 Seasonal sport
- 40 Jesus turned water into wine here

DOWN

- 1 Lower leg
- 41 Pro
- 42 Send by post
- 44 Deceived
- 47 Large wide scarf
- 48 See 13A
- 49 Bark
- 51 The ____ (final word)
- 52 Spry
- 55 Uncommon
- 57 David’s musical instrument
- 58 Transgression
- 61 Former Indian city
- 65 Epoch
- 66 Tramps
- 68 Sibling’s daughter
- 69 Boxer Muhammad
- 70 Protein part, with ‘acid’
- 71 Inscribed pillar
- 72 Tribe of Israel
- 73 Subatomic particle
- 74 Goad

- 2 Relieve
- 3 Church part
- 4 Potatoes
- 5 Compass point
- 6 Hula ____
- 7 Hairstyle
- 8 Puma
- 9 Fellow
- 10 Authoritative list of scripture
- 11 Eating dish
- 12 I am the ____ and the Omega
- 14 Berate (2 wds.)
- 21 Electroencephalograph (abbr.)
- 23 Had by Joseph, Joseph and magi
- 25 Batty
- 27 Globe
- 28 Part of a min.
- 29 Middle East dweller
- 30 Word interpreted by Daniel
- 32 Sticky
- 35 Cat toy stuffing
- 37 Demand
- 38 Do up shoes
- 39 Daniel was thrown into the ____s’ den
- 43 Type of partnership
- 45 Reverend (abbr.)
- 46 Amazing
- 47 Cooks’ wear
- 50 Scientist’s office
- 52 Leading
- 53 Waitress on Cheers
- 54 Teach
- 56 Gives off
- 59 Wading bird
- 60 Taboo
- 62 Toot
- 63 American Civil Liberties Union (abbr.)
- 64 See 13A
- 66 Youngest son of Noah
- 67 Child

Puzzle Key on page 7



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“All That Is Necessary for the Triumph of Evil Is That Good Men Do Nothing”—Edmund Burke

The Daily Jot

Daily reporting and analysis of current events from a biblical and prophetic perspective.

NOTE: When writing about God and Jesus, The Daily Jot means YHVH as God and Yeshua Ha Mashiach as Jesus—the actual original names and the true nature and character of them.

A Prophetic People in a New Year

As 2025 begins, be encouraged that you are a prophetic person. You are living in prophetic times. Your destiny is before you. As a disciple of Christ Jesus, you are a light to the world. As declared by Peter in 1 Peter 2:9, “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Peter wrote that our conversations were to be honest and even when people speak against you as evildoers, your good works will glorify God. Being a prophetic person comes with responsibility. As is written in Romans 12:21, “be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

While there is an incredible sense of spiritual relief as an evil principality was shattered with the November election, a prophetic people will not now rest, but be vigilant as ever. For as Paul writes in Ephesians 6:11-13, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.” Keep in mind that while the principality was shattered it was not completely defeated. It’s wounded and angry.

As you embark on the new year, consider the necessary resolve of a prophetic people. There will be many trials. You stood in 2024 and you prevailed. Take heed that you are not deceived or lulled into inaction. As inaction will beget bondage in this new year. Galatians 4:31-5:1 says, “So then brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” The freedom we have was purchased with a price. One man who survives an assassination attempt and has the spirit to stand up, raise his fist and exhort “Fight, Fight, Fight,” cannot fight alone and win. Your resolve to stand and hold accountability, to pray and act, and measure your steps by God’s wisdom, is imperative.

Above all, a prophetic people must not be deceived. Don’t believe something just because you want to believe it. Check out the sources, weigh the actual facts. Ephesians 5:6 says, “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Obey God, not man. Take time to know the heart of God and continue to build your relationship with Him. The year ahead will be full of deception and deceivers. As Deuteronomy 31:6 exhorts, “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD your God, He it is goes with you; He will not fail you, nor forsake you.” Be encouraged as a prophetic people as we begin 2025.

Bill Wilson
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Faith and Family Play a Bigger Role in Academic Achievement Than Race or Socioeconomic Status

by William Jeynes,
Public Discourse, The Journal of the Witherspoon Institute

Summary: The phrase “achievement gap” refers to the well-documented discrepancies between the scholastic achievements of African American and Latinos on the one hand and white students on the other. What explains the gap? My meta-analysis revealed that if an African American or Latino student was a person of faith and came from a two biological parent family, the achievement gap totally disappeared, even when adjusting for socioeconomic status.

“In the academic and think tank world”—Ronald Roach, the prolific academic writer for *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* has rightly observed—“pondering achievement gap remedies takes center stage.” The phrase “achievement gap” refers to the well-documented discrepancies between the scholastic achievements of African American and Latinos on the one hand and white students on the other, as well as between those of students from higher and lower levels of socioeconomic status.

There are two schools of thought regarding how best to eliminate the achievement gap. The first group calls on society to focus its attention on eliminating “opportunity gaps,” arguing that this will lead to higher academic achievement among currently disadvantaged students. These opportunity gaps include factors such as being a member of a racial minority, discrimination, poor nutrition, inadequate health care, not having access to high-quality public education, coming from a family in which the parents are poorly educated or do not speak English as their first language, and lack of internet and computer access.

A second group of scholars and community leaders is focused on reducing the “achievement gap.” They agree that addressing “opportunity gaps” must be part of the solution, but they caution that the causes of the achievement gap are complex. They go beyond the factors commonly identified as “opportunity gaps.” For example, this “achievement gap” group emphasizes that the personal decisions parents and children make regarding school have a considerable impact on the achievement gap. How involved will parents *decide* to become? How much will the household *decide* to emphasize faith in God, and the sense of purpose in life, and working hard to realize that purpose and please God, which normally follows?

“Opportunity gap” researchers are clearly well-intentioned. But is it wise to relabel the “achievement gap” as an “opportunity gap”? Does the evidence support this change, or is an “opportunity gap” simply a small part of a much broader challenge? Whether American society emphasizes one or the other is particularly important, because most of the components of

the “opportunity gap” are external to the family and beyond the realm of the family’s control. In contrast, those who support the “achievement gap” perspective believe that a sizable number of the solutions to educational differences exist internally, within the family’s control. Psychologists have a phrase to highlight this distinction: they assert that, when it comes to solving life’s challenges, generally one has either an internal or an external locus of control. Moreover, they aver that having an internal locus of control is far healthier than settling for an external locus of control; that possessing an external locus of control leads to what is often called “learned helplessness,” that is, a feeling that one can do little or nothing to ameliorate one’s circumstances.

So which is primary, opportunity gap or achievement gap? To answer this question, I recently conducted a meta-analysis of thirty studies that examined attempts to reduce the achievement gap. A meta-analysis statistically combines all the relevant existing studies on a particular subject in order to determine the aggregated results of the research. Mine is the first published meta-analysis to examine the factors that most reliably reduce the achievement gap. This meta-analysis yielded results that will surprise many: the variables that most reliably reduce the achievement gap are family and faith.

The Surprising Importance of Family and Faith

The data are clear: parental family structure and parental involvement were major explanatory factors and solutions with respect to the achievement gap. Even researchers Wade Boykin and Pedro Noguera—who advocate a school-based approach based on the “opportunity gap” model—admit, “These gaps show up even before students start formal schooling—in their knowledge of vocabulary, for example.” If the gaps exist even before children begin to attend school, why is so much attention given to school-based opportunity gaps rather than family factors?

Research by Dick Carpenter, Al Ramirez, and Laura Severn found that gaps caused by family factors were often larger than those caused by race. There is an old adage among many family scientists that when a Caucasian comes from a single parent or a blended family structure, he or she loses the advantage of being white. It is still rather unusual for a white child to be born out of wedlock (a 28.2 percent chance), but it is common for an African American student to come from a single parent family (a 69.4 percent chance).

The family elements that were most strongly associated with a reduction in the achievement gap were coming from a two-biological-parent family

and high levels of parental involvement. These are interrelated: when two parents are present, this maximizes the frequency and quality of parental involvement. To be sure, there are many dedicated single parents. However, the reality is that when one parent must take on the roles and functions of two, it is simply more difficult than when two parents are present. Unless we improve family stability, and thus parental involvement, the achievement gap is likely to remain for decades to come.

In addition to family structure, a student’s faith also has a significant impact on his or her academic performance. Regularly attending church, or another house of worship, and defining oneself as being a very religious person yielded the most significant reductions in the achievement gap. There are likely a number of reasons for this relationship; faith can give a person a sense of purpose in life and a disciplined lifestyle that supports academic success.

Perhaps most significantly, the meta-analysis revealed that, if an African American or Latino student was a person of faith and came from a two-biological-parent family, the achievement gap *totally disappeared*, even when adjusting for socioeconomic status. Various other studies have confirmed that people of faith do better in school by a pretty sizable margin. One recent example is a study by Ilana Horowitz of Stanford University, who asserted that there is, as she called it, an “abider-avoider achievement gap.”

Numerous research studies have concluded that family factors are far more salient than school factors in influencing achievement. Why is it so difficult therefore for so many academics and politicians to understand that the same truth holds with respect to the achievement *gap*? With all the hundreds of billions of dollars that have been poured into reducing the achievement gap with only marginal success, recognizing—and working to improve—family and faith factors would likely be much more effective in reducing racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps.

What Should We Do?

To the extent to which the personal faith of students is associated with higher achievement and a reduced achievement gap, the U.S. Department of Education may want to consider adopting policies that are more faith-friendly. First, it should consider more aggressive policies to promote a school choice program that includes private schools. This would encourage the growth of private religious schools. Second, it should consider clarifying and expanding the public school religious liberty guidelines first released by the Clinton administration in 1995 and then updated by the G.W. Bush administration in 2003.

Pundits Launch Attacks on Bhattacharya Ahead of His Confirmation Hearings

by Jonathan Turley,
JonathanTurley.Org

For those who opposed the censorship and cancel campaigns during the pandemic, Dr. Jay Bhattacharya became an iconic figure of resistance. Unfortunately, the same can be said of the anti-free speech movement and pandemic hawks. Bhattacharya, who co-authored the Great Barrington Declaration and was a vocal critic of COVID-19 policies, has been nominated as the next head of the National Institutes of Health. As I wrote this weekend in my column, the nomination was heralded by many as a turning point for the NIH. It is also a rallying cry for those who supported the earlier measures, as shown by a hit piece in *Scientific American*, accusing him of being a danger to the very lives of American citizens.

Bhattacharya was censored, black-listed, and vilified for the last four years due to his opposing views on health policy, including opposing wholesale shutdowns of schools and businesses. He was recently honored with the prestigious “Intellectual Freedom” award from the American Academy of Sciences and Letters.

Before the pandemic, Bhattacharya was one of the most respected scientists in the world and served as the director of Stanford’s Center for Demography and Economics of Health and Aging.

That all changed when he dared to question the science behind pandemic policies, including suggesting that natural immunity would be as good if not better protection for young healthy individuals.

It did not matter that positions once denounced as “conspiracy theories” have been recognized or embraced by many.

Some argued that there was no need to shut down schools, which has led to a crisis in mental illness among the young and the loss of critical years of education. Other nations heeded such advice with more limited shutdowns (including keeping schools open) and did not experience our losses.

Others argued that the virus’s origin was likely the Chinese research lab in Wuhan. That position was denounced by the *Washington Post* as a “debunked” coronavirus “conspiracy theory.” The *New York Times* Science and Health reporter Apoorva Mandavilli called any mention of the lab theory “racist.”

Federal agencies now support the lab theory as the most likely based on the scientific evidence.

Likewise, many questioned the efficacy of those blue surgical masks and supported natural immunity to the virus — both positions were later recognized by the government.

Others questioned the six-foot rule, which shut down many businesses, as unsupported by science. In congressional testimony, Dr. Anthony Fauci recently admitted that the rule “sort of just appeared” and “wasn’t based on data.” Yet, not only did it result in heavily enforced rules (and meltdowns) in public areas, but the media further ostracized dissenting critics.

Again, Fauci and other scientists did little to stand up for these scientists or call for free speech to be protected. As I discuss in my new book, *“The Indispensable Right,”* the result is that we never really had a national debate on many of these issues and the result of massive social and economic costs.

Now, those who supported these policies are gathering to oppose Bhattacharya.

It is hardly surprising that one of the first hit pieces came from *Scientific American*. The magazine not only helped lead the mob response to the pandemic but has also been criticized for abandoning neutrality in recent elections.

Only a few weeks ago, editor- in-chief Laura Helmuth posted a raving, profanity-laden meltdown on social media in which effectively called over 77.3 million Americans who voted for President-elect Donald Trump both “fascists” and bigots.

Now the magazine has published an article by Dr. Steven Albert, a professor and the Hallen Chair of Community Health and Social Justice at the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Public Health.

Two specific attacks stand out in the piece.

The “Personal Pique” of Censorship

First, Dr. Albert suggests that Dr. Bhattacharya was never actually censored. He insists that what Bhattacharya calls censorship was merely the fact that “social media venues ... dropped his messaging.” It is curious wording and it is not quite clear what Dr. Albert is trying to say.

When Albert’s article appeared, various

other outlets advanced the same claim. For example, MSNBC (which also was a leading outlet in the attacks on skeptics and dissenters during the pandemic) mocked the claim that Bhattacharya was censored.

“The problem is there’s basically zero evidence to support Bhattacharya and his supporters’ claims of censorship. It is true that some internet sites appeared to remove or limit access to the document. But, as with medical professionals not being sure how best to handle Covid, the same was true of social media companies, which struggled with how best to handle the spread of potentially dangerous information that could have resulted in harm to users.

Many companies chose, of their own free will and as they were allowed as private actors, to downplay certain information that they felt might do more harm than good. That is their own First Amendment-protected right as private entities in the United States.”

The article goes on to suggest that there is no proof of censorship without government direction or control.

As the ACLU has long maintained, censorship occurs in both private and governmental forums. The same figures insist that, if there is no violation of the First Amendment (which only applies to the government), there is no free speech violation. The First Amendment was never the exclusive definition of free speech. Free speech is viewed by many of us as a human right; the First Amendment only deals with one source for limiting it. Free speech can be undermined by private corporations as well as government agencies.

There is also ample evidence of government officials pushing social media companies to censor pandemic critics. MSNBC simply excuses the censorship by saying that these companies “struggled with how best to handle the spread of potentially dangerous information that could have resulted in harm to users.” In reality, the censorship itself cost the nation greatly. We never had the type of debate that we need on the efficacy of natural immunities, masks, or other precautions. We never explored the science supporting the six-foot rule. We suffered immense costs in education and the economy rather than allowing scientists on both sides to be heard equally on such forums.

Instead, Bhattacharya became a persona non grata in academia and was subjected

to cancel campaigns. In the Los Angeles Times, columnist Michael Hiltzik decried how “we’re living in an upside-down world” because Stanford allowed these scientists to speak at a scientific forum. He was outraged that, while “Bhattacharya’s name doesn’t appear in the event announcement,” he was an event organizer. Hiltzik also wrote a column titled “The COVID lab leak claim isn’t just an attack on science, but a threat to public health.”

Critics of Bhattacharya have also cited the fact that he retained his position, unlike some who were dropped by their institutions or associations. Survival is hardly the test of whether someone was censored or canceled. Bhattacharya holds a position with academic protections, as do some of us fortunate to have tenure in this age of rage. The fact that he persisted and the American people rejected the establishment in this election is not proof that he was not targeted or blocked from academic settings or social media sites.

Dr. Albert dismisses the censorship debate as a “personal pique” and “a distraction” that “should not obscure the central focus of U.S. public health policy during the pandemic.” Obviously, for many of us who value free speech and a diversity of viewpoints, it is a bit more than a “personal pique.”

The “Vanity” of Personal Autonomy

The second point that stood out in the Scientific American article was the warning that Bhattacharya is too focused on individual rights and personal autonomy to be the head of NIH. Dr. Albert declares:

“Pitting personal autonomy against the application of science to policy is fine for vanity webcasts and think tanks, but inappropriate for NIH leadership. If he would rather focus on promoting personal autonomy in pandemic policy, perhaps he is being nominated to the wrong agency.”

It is a chilling observation from a leading public health figure. NIH leadership suggests policies impacting a nation and must balance the costs and benefits of any given course. The NIH states that it is focused not just on “scientific integrity” but “public accountability and social responsibility in the conduct of science.” Isn’t individual rights part of that responsibility?

BHATTACHARYA
see page 23

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1776

The Second Amendment Corner

Liberty's Line in the Sand

2025



"Blessed be the LORD my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle—"A Psalm of David, Psalm 144:1

Texas Judge Dismisses Case Against a Man Accused of Owning Firearms While Using Marijuana

by John Crump,
ammoland.com

A judge in Texas has dismissed with prejudice a case against a man arrested with marijuana and firearms, citing Second Amendment concerns.

On July 15, 2021, the El Paso Police Department (EPPD) responded to a call about a fight at a private residence. When the police officers entered the home, they noticed a large, vacuumed, sealed bag full of marijuana. After a sweep of the house, they located a second bag of drugs. The police applied for and received a search warrant for the home because of the marijuana. During the search, police found several firearms.

The police contacted the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), which responded to the site and arrested Adrian Gil, II for owning firearms

while being a user of marijuana. Even though the man has a medical marijuana card from New Mexico, he admitted to knowing that it is illegal to own a gun while using marijuana. He said he “just like[s] good weed.”

After Gil’s arrest, he was only charged with owning a firearm while using marijuana. He pleaded guilty in a criminal court. The judge sentenced the man to 36 months in prison and three years of supervised release. Mr. Gil would immediately appeal the decision to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, considering the Supreme Court’s *Bruen* decision, which was decided after his arrest.

In the *Bruen* decision, SCOTUS said that for a firearm law to be constitutional, it had to be consistent with the text, tradition, and history of firearms regulations from the founding era. Mr. Gil is a

member of the political class and, therefore, part of “the people.” Firearms are bearable arms covered by the original text of the Second Amendment. Because of those facts, Mr. Gil’s conduct is presumably constitutional. The burden then shifts to the Government to prove that a law is consistent with the text and tradition of firearms regulations.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Government failed its burden of proof. They vacated the guilty verdict and remanded the case back to the Criminal Court. Essentially, it was like the original trial never happened, and the conviction was thrown out. Mr. Gil’s attorney immediately filed to withdraw the guilty plea and dismiss the case. The Government objected to the motion.

The Government asked the Court not to let the Defendant withdraw his guilty plea. A court

does not have to let a defendant withdraw a plea unless one of a few situations happens. If a law changes to make conduct that was once illegal legal, then a defendant could withdraw a guilty plea. In this case, the jurisprudence around the Second Amendment changed because of the *Bruen* decision. The Court felt that the defense met the burden and granted the motion to withdraw the plea.

The Court then turned to the motion to dismiss the case using the *Bruen* test, which only looked at text, tradition and history. Previously, it would have used intermediate scrutiny, but the courts can no longer use such interest balancing because of the *Bruen* opinion. The judge found that the law banning marijuana users from owning guns was most likely unconstitutional. The judge granted the motion to dismiss with prejudice, meaning

the Government cannot refile the case.

The order reads: “The Court finds that Defendant has provided a fair and just reason to allow him to withdraw his plea of guilty, and the Government has not met its burden to demonstrate that 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(3) has a historical analogue similar enough to justify disarming Defendant. The Court will therefore allow Defendant to withdraw his plea of guilty and dismiss the indictment against Defendant with prejudice, because the statute under which he is charged is unconstitutional as applied to him.”

Mr. Gil was released and is free to resume his life.

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2024/12/texas-judge-dismisses-case-against-a-man-accused-of-owning-firearms-while-using-marijuana/>

Defensive Gun Use Debunks Gun Control Ignorance

by Amy Swearer,
The Daily Signal

It’s increasingly clear that gun control activism thrives on ignorance about the nature of crime and the importance of the Second Amendment. Unfortunately, far too many Americans continue to buy hook, line, and sinker into activists’ mischaracterizations of reality.

Take, for example, one recent survey that discovered a shocking number of American voters erroneously believe that school shootings cause more gun deaths every year than gang violence.

In reality, even when using the broadest possible definition of “school shooting,” such events are far too rare to plausibly constitute a leading cause of gun deaths. Gang-related gun deaths outpace school shooting deaths by several orders of magnitude.

It’s just that gun control activists are content with misleading Americans about the nature of criminal gun violence.

At the same time, they intentionally downplay the protective function of the Second Amendment, dismissing lawful defensive gun use as uncommon and promoting baseless assertions that gun owners are more likely to have their guns turned against them by criminals than they are to successfully stop a violent attack.

That’s because the truth about defensive gun use undermines their demands for more restrictions on lawful gun ownership.

Almost every major study has found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times annually, according to the most recent report on the subject by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2021, the most comprehensive study ever conducted on the issue concluded that roughly 1.6 million defensive gun uses occur in the United States every year.

For this reason, *The Daily Signal* publishes a monthly article highlighting some of the previous month’s many news stories on defensive gun use that you may have missed—or that might not have made it to the national spotlight in the first place.

The examples below represent only a small portion of the news stories on defensive gun use during crimes that we found in November. You may explore more by using The Heritage Foundation’s interactive *Defensive Gun Use Database*.

- **Nov. 2, Hialeah, Florida:** Police said a mechanic for a mobile tire-repair company fatally shot an angry customer who charged at him with a machete during a call for service. Police determined that the mechanic’s actions constituted justified self-defense.
- **Nov. 4, Warren, Michigan:** A woman fatally shot her ex-boyfriend—who police said had “an extensive domestic violence history”—after he forced his way into her home and chased her.

- **Nov. 7, Glen Burnie, Maryland:** During a road rage incident, an erratic driver began tailgating a motorcyclist before pulling alongside him and intentionally forcing him off the road, police said. Next, the driver pulled over, got out, and approached the motorcyclist while wielding a hammer. Police said the motorcyclist, who had a valid concealed carry permit, drew his gun and shot his assailant, killing him.
- **Nov. 8, DeSoto, Texas:** Police said an armed man followed a woman home from a Taco Bell and tried to force his way into her residence through the garage. The woman shot the man several times in the face and chest; he was hospitalized in critical condition. The man, whom she didn’t know, was charged with felony burglary.
- **Nov. 11, Jackson, Mississippi:** A man selling items via Facebook Marketplace arranged to meet in a store’s parking lot with two people who responded to his ad, police said. One “buyer,” however, tried to rob the seller at gunpoint. The victim, also armed, exchanged gunfire with his assailant. He wounded the assailant despite sustaining a gunshot wound himself. Police arrested the man and his accomplice; both face criminal charges.
- **Nov. 16, Urbana, Illinois:** Police said a driver with a concealed carry permit used

his lawfully possessed firearm to defend himself during a road rage incident. The driver shot and wounded one of two occupants of another vehicle who followed him into a parking lot and approached his car in a threatening manner. One carried a baseball bat, police said; the other had a hand under his shirt and appeared to be reaching for a weapon.

- **Nov. 21, Charleston, South Carolina:** In an incident of domestic violence, police said, a man shot and wounded a woman who is the mother of one of his children. She had her own gun and returned fire, killing her assailant.
- **Nov. 22, Chicago:** A food vendor with a concealed carry permit exchanged gunfire with an armed robber, killing him, police said. The permit holder sustained a gunshot wound to his arm, but was hospitalized in good condition.
- **Nov. 24, Shepherdsville, Kentucky:** Police said two men drove to the home of an individual with whom they had a dispute regarding a car sale earlier in the year. The men both opened fire on the house, fatally striking the victim and endangering the lives of his brother and sister-in-law. The brother returned fire until the two gunmen fled, successfully defending himself and his wife. Police arrested two suspects who are charged with murder,

attempted murder, and wanton endangerment.

- **Nov. 25, Rockford, Illinois:** An elderly good Samaritan intervened to protect a woman who was being assaulted in a domestic violence incident, shooting and wounding her attacker, police said. The wounded assailant is charged with aggravated assault and battery that causes bodily harm.
- **Nov. 30, Sacramento, California:** Police said a man was at home with his family when he confronted a would-be burglar trying to smash windows to get inside. When the intruder refused to stop despite multiple warnings, the resident shot at him, injuring his hand and causing him to flee. Police said they arrested the intruder after an hourlong car chase involving a stolen vehicle.

If we want to be serious about public safety, we need to accurately understand the nature of gun violence, as well as the important role that the right to keep and bear arms plays in helping ordinary citizens protect themselves and others from violent crime.

Otherwise, it’s far too easy to be persuaded that lawful gun owners are the problem instead of part of the solution.

Please see: <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/12/27/defensive-gun-use-debunks-gun-control-ignorance/>

Heritage Rancher Carbine, Revolving Plinking Power

by Travis Pike, ammoland.com

Heritage manufacturing makes some of my favorite fun guns. Why exactly? Well, they make 22 LR weapons that are light, handy, reliable, and fun to shoot. The Heritage Rough Rider is one of the foundational handguns for new shooters, and the Rough Rider is Heritage's flagship firearm. Oh, did I mention Heritage also makes affordable firearms? If something is fun and cheap you can't go wrong with it. Heritage Manufacturing recently broke into an entirely new realm for them with the Rancher Carbine.

Heritage Rancher Carbine

Well, almost new ground. As far as I know, it's the first rifle they've ever produced. However, it clings to that proven Rough Rider design. The Rancher Carbine took the Rough Rider and added a rifle stock and 16-inch barrel to create a revolving rifle. Like the Rough Rider, the Rancher Carbine is a 22 LR or 22 Magnum gun. Shooters can swap cylinders to fire 22 Magnum, and the cylinders cost about 30 bucks on average.

The Rancher Carbine is an interesting design. Revolving rifles have been around forever, but they tend to be rather obscure technology that is not necessarily beloved by many.

Revolving Rifles

Revolving rifles offered repeating capability to muzzleloading weapons back in the day. They've been produced for hundreds of years, but they never took off in any significant numbers. Like all revolvers, the gap between the barrel and the cylinder emits a blast as the gas ignites and turns to hot gas.

This makes firing one either awkward or painful. Back in the



Revolving rifles are not super practical, but they are always cool.

days before metallic cases, these weapons also risked a chain fire. In this situation, all five or six cylinders would ignite at the same time and would turn a revolving rifle into a grenade. This made them not so popular with troops, even though they saw use in numerous American wars.

The Rancher Carbine still has the muzzle blast problem but makes handling easy due to its lightweight and rimfire design. The short and light design makes it easy to hold with both hands behind the action. Sure it's a little awkward, but the lightweight design keeps the gun feeling balanced. Plus, 22 LR recoil isn't exactly fierce or tough to deal with, so the odd stance and firing grip isn't a big deal.

That odd stance has you pushing your support hand around the firing hand and using a rear spur to better grip the gun.

Breaking Down the Rancher Carbine

As far as repeating 22 LR rifles go, the Rancher Carbine is one of the lightest rifles on the market. At 4.12 pounds, it's lighter than Ruger, Mossberg, or Marlin rifle. It makes the Rancher quite handy, and with a length of 31 inches total, the Rancher is compact.

I've seen the length of pull listed as 14.25 inches, but when I measured

from the rear of the trigger to the end of the stock, I got 12 inches, making it perfectly sized for kids. The barrel is 16.125 inches long. Included with the Rancher is a little leather sling, which is plenty cute and also useful for over-the-shoulder carry.



Heritage makes the best fun guns.

Plinking Time

The Rancher comes adorned with buckhorn sights. This is the first time I've ever used them, and the internet certainly helped teach me their ins and outs. Their height and open design make them useful for snapshots up close, and you can get low and behind the sights to be more precise.

A single-action trigger provides a very short and crisp trigger pull. The rifle is accurate enough. It's not a 1 MOA gun by any means, and at 50 yards, I can produce a

2-inch group in a quasi-supported position. Finding a way to support the Rancher is difficult due to its odd design, but with patience and a sandbag, I made it mostly work. If I needed to destroy some soda cans, I could with ease. It won't



The buckhorn sights were a new experience, but one I enjoyed.

win any competitions, but you'll ring a gong if you try.

Holding it with both hands to the rear feels abysmally unnatural, and my left arm earns to reach forward and grab the gun near the front sling point. I tried it a few times, and a little burn will occur. You won't lose an arm, but you'll develop a flinch. Still, I can control and shoot the gun easily enough with the two-handed rear hold.

The gun does have this habit of sending unburnt powered rear-

ward and into your face. It stings, hurts, and is downright annoying. At least once a cylinder, my face will get by debris and take a good sting but that is the trade-off for owning unique one-of-a-kind guns.

The Fun Factor

Don't get me wrong. The Heritage Rancher Carbine is a very fun gun. The novelty of a revolving rifle makes it a unique experience. I like the silly little Rancher carbine and enjoy it immensely. It might hurt on occasion, might be a bit awkward, but it's still fun to plink with. Obviously, you better wear your eye protection and watch your arm, but the Rancher is a light, handy, and fun rifle. Plus, the MSRP is 333.80, and the street price seems to be right around \$250 bucks.

That's a little change for a very fun and unique little gun. I grabbed one quickly because revolving rifles barely ever stick around. It's become one of my regular plinking guns and will likely continue to be so.

(Editor/GG: A friend of ours has one of these heaters and loves it. Just tons of fun.)

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2024/12/heritage-rancher-carbine-plinking-power/>

Pols Urge Release of Multimillion Dollar 'Congressional Sexual Slush Fund List'

by Tyler Durden, ZeroHedge.com

Thanks to the leadership of Republican Rep. Thomas Massie, pressure is growing to unmask the beneficiaries of more than \$17 million in taxpayer-funded payments to settle harassment claims leveled against U.S. Capitol officials and offices. In his latest move, a Massie social media post on Thursday prompted a chorus of support from from Marjorie Taylor Green along with former GOP House members.

Rep. Thomas Massie has repeatedly spoken out against the use of taxpayer money to settle sexual and other harassment claims against members of Congress (Drew Angerer/Getty via Washington Post):

"Congress has secretly paid out more than \$17 million of your money to quietly settle charges of harassment (sexual and other forms) in Congressional offices," Massie posted on Thursday. "Don't you think we should release the names of the Representatives? I do."

Georgia Rep. Green quickly voiced her support, saying, "Yes. I want to release the congressional sexual slush fund list. **Tax payers should have never had to pay for that.**" Former Rep. Mo Brooks jumped in, saying "Massie is spot on - taxpayer [money] must NEVER be used to SECRETLY bail out sexual (& other) harassers. **A Capitol Hill harassing supervisor should foot the bill. THAT stops harassment!**" Former Rep. Jason

Chaffetz also boosted the idea, writing "Taxpayers deserve to know."

The controversial payouts are made by the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights. **Between 1997 and 2017 alone, the little-known office facilitated 260 settlements and more than \$17 million in payouts.** Given that number is more than seven years old, it's safe to say the real grand total is significantly higher. Despite its name, the office's payouts also encompass complaints from workers outside the House and Senate, including the Library of Congress and the Capitol police.

Massie pointed to **the hypocrisy of Democrats' feigned outrage over Donald Trump using his own money to buy Stormy**

Daniels' silence about their alleged sexual encounter, while saying nothing about congressional offices' use of taxpayer money to brush sexual and other misconduct allegations under the rug.

"Congress has paid over \$17 million in hush money for sexual misconduct inside of the offices in these buildings...[I]t's taxpayer money. And I do know not a single penny of it has been turned in as a campaign finance expense. Wouldn't — I mean, is the FEC going to investigate the \$17 million that the Congress has paid to settle, you know, behind closed doors, these sexual misconduct allegations?"

Earlier this month, former Rep. Matt Gaetz, who was the subject of a House Ethics Committee probe into allegations of using

illegal drugs and paying underage women for sex, **publicly day-dreamed about taking office for just one day to singlehandedly reveal the names of everyone who's benefitted from the settlement payouts.**

With the federal government now \$36 trillion in debt -- and poised to post **a \$3.5 trillion deficit in 2025 alone** -- \$17 million may not sound like much, but *the use of borrowed/printed money to settle sexual and other abuse allegations on Capitol Hill is another symptom of a corrupt and fading empire.*

Please see: <https://www.zerohedge.com/political/massie-mtg-urge-release-multi-million-dollar-congressional-sexual-slush-fund-list>

What did the cowboy say at his second rodeo?
... This ain't my first rodeo

15 Facts About the Growth of Crime in the U.S.

by Michael Snyder, EndOfTheAmericanDream.com

(Editor/GG: Check out the Colorado items. Thanks to our lib criminal laws....)

We live in a high crime society. Nobody can dispute that fact, and it has been this way for a long time. But the crime wave that we have witnessed in recent years has been truly breathtaking. Tens of thousands of gangs are running wild in our major urban areas, and the growth of those gangs has been supercharged during the past four years thanks to the reckless border policies of the Biden administration. Now we have rampant lawlessness in our streets, and it certainly isn't going to be easy to clean up this mess. The following are 15 facts about the growth of crime in the United States that will blow your mind...

#1 The number of shoplifting incidents per year in the United States is up 93 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels...

The average number of shoplifting incidents jumped 93% in 2023 compared with pre-pandemic times and monetary losses for retailers have risen 90%, according to the nation's largest retail trade group.

With its "Impact of Retail Theft & Violence 2024" study, the National Retail Federation (NRF) is highlighting the severity of this issue. For instance, despite the continuous efforts by retailers to combat such crimes and a growing number of states that have updated their laws to prosecute organized retail crime as felonies, the number of retail theft incidents continues to climb.

#2 Bakersfield, California is the car theft capital of the country...

Bakersfield is a city with less than half a million people, making it the 9th most populous city in California. It also has the distinction of having the most car thefts of any U.S. city.

#3 Denver, Colorado, is closing in on Bakersfield very quickly. In fact, the car theft rate in Denver increased by 37 percent in just one year...

Denver is the capital and most populous city in Colorado which incidentally made the NICB's hot spot list for the top state by number of auto thefts. Not only did Denver experience 964 thefts per 100,000 residents, but the theft rate increased by 37%. As with most places, Kia and Hyundai vehicles make up a large percentage of those cars stolen.

#4 When it comes to car theft, Pueblo, Colorado only ranks third, but a 47 percent increase in just one year has it climbing the chart fast...

Well south of Denver and with a much smaller population, the city of Pueblo takes the third spot on our list. The city experienced auto theft at a rate of 891 per 100,000 residents. Additionally, the theft rate increased by a whopping 47% in one year. Pueblo police cite driver apathy as a reason behind the record levels of theft.

#5 According to the FBI, more than 14 million crimes are reported in the United States each year...

The FBI released detailed data on over 14 million criminal offenses for 2023 reported to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program by participating law enforcement agencies. More than 16,000 state, county, city, university and college, and tribal agencies, covering a combined population of 94.3% inhabitants, submitted data to the UCR Program through the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and the Summary Reporting System.

#6 There are more than 1.9 million people sitting in our prisons...

Further complicating matters is the fact that the U.S. doesn't have one criminal legal system; instead, we have thousands of federal, state, local, and tribal systems. Together, these systems hold over 1.9 million people in 1,566 state prisons, 98 federal prisons, 3,116 local jails, 1,323 juvenile correctional facilities, 142 immigration detention facilities, and 80 Indian country jails, as well as in military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the U.S. territories — at a system-wide cost of at least \$182 billion each year.

#7 The U.S. has the largest prison population in the world by a very wide margin. We have approximately 5 percent of the world's population, but we have approximately 25 percent of the world's incarcerated population.

#8 According to the FBI, 33,000 criminal gangs are operating inside the United States today...

Some 33,000 violent street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs are criminally active in the U.S. today. Many are sophisticated and well organized; all use violence to control neighborhoods and boost their illegal money-making activities, which include robbery, drug and gun trafficking, prostitution and human trafficking, and fraud. Many gang members continue to commit crimes even after being sent to jail.

#9 Collectively, it has been estimated that those gangs have about a million members.

#10 Gangs account for about 80 percent of the violent crimes that are committed in the U.S. each year.

#11 In 2023, there were 127,436 rapes reported in the United States.

#12 For the most recent year that we have data, it was being estimated that more than 550,000 U.S. children "were victims of abuse and neglect"...

An estimated 558,899 children (unique incidents) were victims of abuse and neglect in the U.S. in 2022, the most recent year for which there is national data.

#13 If you can believe it, there are 795,000 registered sex offenders in this country.

More than 795,000 people were listed on state sex offender registries as of August 2024. This is about 8,000 more people than in 2023.

#14 There are 75,710 registered sex offenders in the state of Texas.

#15 There are 60,615 registered sex offenders in the state of California.

What in the world is wrong with us?

What would cause people to behave this way?

At this point, our society is literally teeming with evil. In my brand new book entitled **"Why"**, I take a look at the root causes that motivate people to do what they do. It isn't an accident that our society has gone completely and utterly nuts. It is simply a result of cause and effect.

As a society, we have been doing the wrong things for a very long time, and so now we have a giant mess on our hands.

Let us hope for better things in 2025, because right now lawlessness is thriving all around us.

Please see: <http://endoftheamericandream.com/15-facts-about-the-growth-of-crime-in-the-united-states-that-will-blow-your-mind/>

Amish Farmer Celebrates "Big Win for Food Freedom"

by Tyler Durden, ZeroHedge.com

Robert Barnes, an attorney for raw milk producer and Amish farmer Amos Miller, revealed on X late Friday night that the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania **"affirmed the trial court decision allowing Amish farmer Amos Miller to continue to make his wonderful food available to customers outside the state."**

Robert Barnes@barnes_law

Big win today for #FoodFreedom as Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania affirmed the trial court decision allowing #Amish farmer #AmosMiller to continue to make his wonderful food available to customers outside the state. Thank you to everyone who spoke out for Amos!

5:08 PM · Jan 3, 2025

Viva Frei@thevivafrei

MASSIVE LEGAL WIN FOR @barnes_law & AMOS MILLER: Amos can continue selling his products outside the state of Pennsylvania.

This is incredible. Well done, Barnes!

Recall that the government raided Miller's farm in early 2024 for selling raw milk, organic eggs, grass-fed beef, and other nutritious foods to consumers, citing repeated failures to comply with overly burdensome federal farming regulations.

The Lancaster Patriot @TheLanPatriot



Footage of the search being conducted inside Amos Miller's organic farm store in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

zerohedge.com

Big Gov't Raids Small Amish Farmer Who Refuses To Participate In The Industrial Meat/Milk Complex

"A man growing food for informed customers, without participating in the industrial meat/milk complex? It's shameful that it's come to this."

8:40 PM · Jan 5, 2024

The USDA tried to bring Miller's farm into compliance with federal regulations, but the Amish farmer spent many months in court rather than obtaining a license to produce raw milk for sale.

Since last January's search warrant, the "Pennsylvania Dutch" community became outraged and mobilized in a rare vote in federal elections for Trump-

Vance to stand up against rogue federal agencies captured by the processed foods industrial complex.

"Tremendous diabolical government overreach. It had nothing to do with food safety and everything to do with government control. If I recall correctly, the department responsible for "food safety" in the Commonwealth of

Replying to @barnes_law

We need more quality food options not less. The Amish have always provided quality products at reasonable cost ..the government should subsidize small farms and ranches not Big Food Corps who saturate foods with pesticides and Glyphosates ..

8:52 AM · Jan 4, 2025

Sam@fallmysteries

Replying to @barnes_law

The Amish are friends to the earth.

5:34 PM · Jan 3, 2025

Under the MAHA movement, led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the nation's food supply chain must be restored into the hands of the people - not continued mega corporations poisoning consumers with seed oils and highly processed foods.

Please see: <https://www.zerohedge.com/political/amish-farmer-celebrates-big-win-today-food-freedom>

Cherie King@lcheriebaby

Pennsylvania also put Amos Miller through hell along with the FDA. This overreach by tyrannical government forces must end," one X user said.

Here's what others are saying about this big win for the Amish:

You may not like guns, and choose not to own one. That is your right. You might not believe in God. That is your choice. However, if someone breaks into your home the first two things you're going to do are:

1) Call someone with a gun. 2) Pray they get there in time. — Unknown

EGGS
from page 2

when we have real challenges in Colorado? KDVR-TV recently reported that Scholoroo ranks Denver as the worst place to raise a family.

While we witness the tragedy of the homelessness industrial complex (a lot of people are making a lot of “Green” on the pain and suffering of others), the Colorado legislature passed and this governor signed HB20-1343 “Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens” which dictates that egg-laying hens are provided enrichments that allow them to exhibit natural behaviors, including, at a minimum, scratch areas, perches, nest boxes and dust bathing areas. What is a dust bathing area and why is it in Colorado law?

Colorado HB-1343 “Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens” empowers PBIs (Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Interested Parties) to pick winners and losers. A facility that is defined to include live animal markets or official plants (big guys) ... or business owners that collectively sell fewer than one hundred cases of thirty dozen shell eggs per week (small guys), are not subject to this legislation. BUT, if you are a mid-level producer and you violate HB20-1343 “Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens,” you may be hit with a civil penalty of up to \$1,000. per violation and taken to court. Big business and big government like each other because they can collude

to pass rules, regulations, and legislation to put their smaller competitors out of business. See Colorado HB-1343 “Confinement of Egg Laying Hens.” Not fair!

Colorado HB-1343 “Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens” reeks of cronyism. The “Egg” commissioner may use a government or private inspection or process verification provider to ensure compliance with the “Confinement of Egg-Laying Hens” legislation.

And while we have a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and college professor who cannot define what a woman is, HB20-1343 “Confinement Standards for Egg-Laying Hens” defines an “Egg-Laying Hen” as a FEMALE domesticated chicken, turkey, duck, goose, or guinea fowl kept for the purpose of commercial egg production. No trans egg laying here.

To fund the bureaucracy that is increasing the cost of your eggs, the “Egg” commission (in addition to all other powers and duties conferred upon the “Egg” commission by this article) can “fix, assess, and collect fees sufficient to recover the department’s direct and indirect costs incurred in carrying out and enforcing the provisions of” So mid-level egg producers must fund their regulators which increases the cost of your sunny side up at your breakfast table.

Bottom line is your nest is being de-feathered, feather by feather by rules, regulations, legislation and

initiatives. If you choose to purchase more expensive cage-free chicken eggs, you should have the freedom to do so. However if you are a single mom who is just trying to put food on the table for your kids or a senior citizen who is working to make ends meet when facing higher taxes, increasing costs to warm your home, and surprise pricing at the grocery store, we realize the compassionate answer is to repeal Colorado HB20-1343 so that individuals have the choice of affordable eggs.

HB20-1343 was passed by the Colorado legislature in 2020 and signed by the governor on July 1, 2020, however, it did not take effect until January 1, 2023, which is conveniently after the 2020 election and 2022 election. If legislators pass and the governor signs legislation that so adversely affects people, then these politicians must at least have the character to answer to the voters in their next election instead of kicking the can down the road three years later.

There are solutions. First, either by legislation or the initiative process, Coloradans can repeal HB20-1343. Secondly, in the next election cycle, vote for individuals who value you and your family more than the square footage of egg-laying chickens from mid-level producers.

https://kimmonson.com/featured_articles/colorados-scrambled-egg-policy/

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ACADEMICS
from page 18

Those who suggest focusing on the “opportunity gap” do not generally acknowledge that this has been the primary strategy in the United States for the past fifty-five years. With the exception of the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, this strategy has done little to reduce the achievement gap. One would think that this would make it clear that a more comprehensive approach to reducing the achievement gap is needed. However, it appears that the more things change, the more they remain the same. There is a tendency among many academics to once again try an old initiative that has not worked especially well and to pretend that it is a new effort, simply by calling it by another name.

My meta-analysis summarizes what studies show actually works to reduce the achievement gap. Although the “opportunity gap” strategy is very appealing on an idealistic

level, the meta-analysis points to a broader combination of contributing factors, supporting the perspective of “achievement gap” scholars and leaders.

Is part of the reason for educational differences captured by the idea of opportunity gaps? Yes, of course. Inequalities, racism, and stereotypes still exist, and we must work to eradicate their harmful effects. However, we must also acknowledge that there are other forces at work here. My research indicates that a combination of factors is at the heart of the achievement gap, factors that include, among others, decisions that parents and children make regarding school. These decisions include the decisions by parents regarding how much to be involved in their child’s education and how much to emphasize faith in the home, including one’s purpose in life. If we are to close that gap, we must take a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach.

Please see: <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2020/01/59167/>

BHATTACHARYA
from page 19

I would hope that the head of NIH (indeed every NIH official) would place individual rights and personal autonomy as one of the most prominent considerations in setting policies, policy-making. Indeed, the NIH routinely discusses and publishes papers on the importance of personal autonomy when discussing subjects like abortion.

These two points are linked on some level. The nation was divided on many COVID policies, and doubts only grew with the censorship and intolerance that was evident during the pandemic. The NIH contributed to that mistrust with its heavy-handed tactics and viewpoint intolerance. One of the victims of that period will now

head the NIH. That experience could be invaluable as Dr. Bhattacharya steers his agency toward a more transparent and tolerant path.

Jonathan Turley is the Shapiro professor of public interest law at George Washington University and the author of “The Indispensable Right: Free Speech in an Age of Rage.”

(Editor/GG: Remember all the lib “experts” around here screaming for lockdown, business closures, shut the school, six feet, masks when you are driving your auto? All WRONG. Not again, folks.)

Please see: <https://jonathanturley.org/2024/12/29/pandemic-hawks-circle-dr-jay-press-and-pundits-launch-attacks-on-bhattacharya-ahead-of-his-confirmation-hearings/#more-227044>

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What do you call a retired cowboy?
Deranged.