



SB25-03 Update: Colorado's Extreme Gun Ban Bill Morphs Into License to Buy Scheme

UPDATE: BILL PASSED THE SENATE, ON TO THE HOUSE
by Lesley Hollywood, WeTheSecondColorado.com
—February 15, 2025

When introduced, Colorado SB25-003 was the most sweeping firearm ban to have ever been considered at the state level, going far beyond a typical "assault weapons" ban by targeting all semi-automatic rifles and shotguns with detachable magazines, along with gas-operated semi-automatic pistols that can accept a detachable magazine. Simply a blanket ban on the sale, transfer, purchase, and manufacture of these weapons.

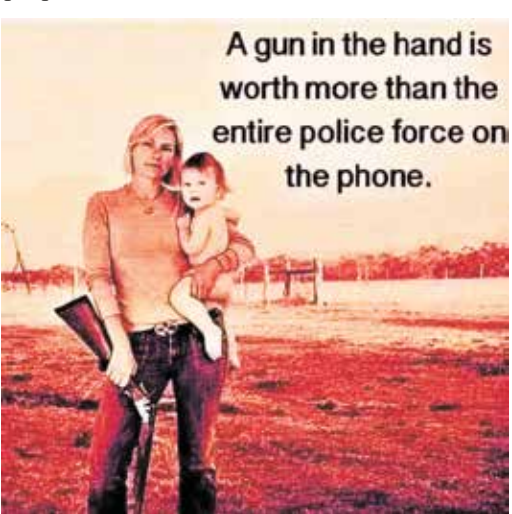
After a flurry of rushed amendments were added during the 10-hour long Senate floor debate on Second Reading that went well after midnight, the bill *still* includes a gun ban, but now has morphed into

a monster of a bill with multiple moving parts complete with a new license to buy scheme that includes brand new training requirements and what will undoubtedly be a gun owner registry.

If the new version were to be enacted, it would "allow" people to still purchase the banned guns if they have taken a *hunter safety course and a firearm safety course* that would be managed by Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife (CPW), or without the CPW classes, take a yet to be developed 12 hour course over two days, and apply for a gun buyers license complete with fingerprints and a background check that would be overseen by

your sheriff and CBI. Read the amended bill here. (https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025A/bills/2025a_003_eng.pdf)

Amendment L.041, the "license to buy" amendment, was introduced by bill sponsor Julie Gonzales (D).



It creates a Colorado Firearms Safety Course Eligibility Card that individuals can obtain by jumping through the government's new hoops, and only then will they be able to purchase the banned guns with renewal required every 5 years. If you're familiar with the Illinois FOID Card, this is very similar. And that FOID card was just very recently found unconstitutional in federal court.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of these proposed requirements:

Certified Hunter Education Course

- This course must be certified by CPW and must have been completed within 5 years of the application for the *Colorado Firearms Safety Course Eligibility Card*.

SB25-03 GUN BAN see page 16

Custer County School Board Prioritizes Supporting Staff and Community

by Laura Vass

At the end of the February 11 Regular School Board meeting, The Custer County School Board went into executive session to discuss Superintendent Thom Peck's annual performance evaluation, typically performed this time of year. The agenda item was, "The Board will vote to convene in executive session pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(f)(I) to consider a personnel matter, specifically to conduct the superintendent's performance review."

(We anticipated that the written review/appraisal would be more thorough than the last board's short summary of the previous superintendent (Jackie Crabtree) in 2022 which did not appear to meet state requirements. The Superintendent's 2025 evaluation for Thom Peck indicated areas of improvement needed on follow-through, policy adherence and improving academic performance. Though not a glowing evaluation, it left room for growth and stated clearly what remaining annual goals he should work on for the school as a whole.)

The following day, February 12th, school board members learned that information from the executive session was being shared by Mr.

Peck with staff and members of the community. In doing so, the breach caused a major disruption and created discord in both the school and community, forcing the Board to take immediate action. For the Board to discuss Mr. Peck's breach of executive session and resulting discord an emergency public meeting had to be held. Based on the full board's availability and urgency of the matter, the best available date chosen was Thursday, February 13th. The agenda listed a public comment section and "DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

A: Superintendent Employment
B: Interim or Acting Superintendent."

School Board President Reggie Foster's opening statement included, "Colorado's Open Meeting Law has confidentiality protections around executive sessions. As the Superintendent of Schools, implicit in Thom's participation in executive sessions with the Board is his obligation to maintain the confidentiality of those communications. Pieces of that confidential and protected conversation were inappropriately shared, but not in full context, with select members

SCHOOL BOARD see page 15

BOCC: County Attorney Showdown

by George Gramlich, News and Commentary

The February 13, 2025 Custer County Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) meeting took place at the All Aboard Westcliffe meeting room and started at 9 a.m. All three Commissioners were in attendance: Chair Bill Canda and members Lucas Epp and Paul Vogelsson.

In Commissioner Comments, Epp mentioned a bunch of meetings he attended since the last BOCC gabfest: CCI (a lobbying group for counties who are a member), a wages workshop with Human Resources, a Public Health meeting to talk about the impact of grants disappearing, met with CDOT on the courthouse sidewalk project and with Redmonds Consulting re: audit strategy. Epp noted as part of the courthouse sidewalk project, a new county employee parking lot will be built which would help with citizen parking next to the courthouse.

In New Business, the monthly Accounts Payable amount (\$291k for January) was approved.

Resolution 25-03, Moving \$146k from the Tourism Fund to the Tourism Board was approved.

Next up was Resolution 25-04, approving \$5,560 to the Airport from the Capital Improvement fund was ok'd. This was for the three airport gate upgrades.

Vernon Yoder's Short Term Rental (STR) application was then approved.

The Horton STR application was recommended to be not approved by the Planning Commission, but the Commissioners approved it anyway. Some of the issues surrounding the application was that there were too many STR's already in the area, the septic size and the shared driveway access.

Planning & Zoning then brought up a Moratorium of new Short Term Rentals. There are currently 51 authorized STR's in the county and P&Z said they would like to have a temporary halt for new ones so they can address some issues that have arisen in reviewing the applications. Also, the State is going to be issuing new rules on STR's and P&Z wants these to be included. This would require changes to the Zoning Resolution. County Attorney Dan Slater spoke up saying the Commissioners would need a Resolution for this. It was decided that this would be an Agenda Item at the next meeting.

Next was Ratification of the County's Tax Reports item. Vernon Roth, our new Finance Director, led the discussion. It turns out that there are several online fed reports portals which require a sign in that not only includes the county's EIN number but also the personal

BOCC see page 17

Quilt Trunk Show Photo Feature pages 12-13

Justice Center LTE page 5

Biggest Fraud page 2

Main St Clown Show page 3 & 24

Obituaries page 4

Knowledge Bowl Team page 10

Tony's Players of the Week page 11

F-Minus page 22

Terror \$\$ via USAID page 18

Walther PP page 21

PATRIOT ALERT!

Guns for Your Bug Out Bag page 20



So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
Romans 10:17 ESV

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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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National News



"This Might Be the Biggest Fraud in History"

by Tyler Durden, ZeroHedge.com

Elon Musk was expected to remain offline Sunday night into Monday morning as his xAI team prepared for the highly anticipated debut of "Grok 3," scheduled for release Monday evening at 8 p.m. EST. However, the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), tasked with streamlining the federal bureaucracy, returned very excited to his social media platform around midnight, unveiling what "might be the biggest fraud in history."

Musk posted a spreadsheet of Social Security Administration data showing "numbers of people in each age bucket with the death field set to FALSE!"

Age Range	Count
0-9	38,825,456
10-19	44,326,480
20-29	47,995,478
30-39	52,106,915
40-49	47,626,581
50-59	45,740,805
60-69	46,381,281
70-79	33,404,412
80-89	15,165,127
90-99	6,054,154
100-109	4,734,407
110-119	3,627,007
120-129	3,472,849
130-139	3,936,311
140-149	3,542,044
150-159	1,345,083
160-169	121,807
170-179	6,087
180-189	695
190-199	448
200-209	879
210-219	866
220-229	1,039
240-249	1
360-369	1

The data shows that 20.789 million Americans are collecting social security benefits over the age of 100. Drilling down into the age buckets, benefits are still being paid out to folks over 140!

"Maybe Twilight is real and there are a lot of vampires collecting Social Security," Musk emphasized.

Elon Musk@elonmusk

According to the Social Security database, these are the numbers of people in each age bucket with the death field set to FALSE!

Maybe Twilight is real and there are a lot of vampires collecting Social Security

9:55 PM · Feb 16, 2025

One X user pointed out that 2023 data showed the US population at around 334.9 million. However, Musk's data (likely from DOGE's 'Big Balls' analyst) shows 394 million names in the Social Security Administration database.

Musk responded: "Yes, there are FAR more "eligible" social security numbers than there are citizens in the USA. This might be the biggest fraud in history."

Aiden HIKO | AK

Replying to @elonmusk

394,943,364 but total population is 334M? Feb 16, 2025

Elon Musk@elonmusk

Yes, there are FAR more "eligible"

social security numbers than there are citizens in the USA.

This might be the biggest fraud in history.

10:24 PM · Feb 16, 2025

"Maybe we pause payments to everyone 120+ until they can authenticate they're among the living, to start," Rep. Mike Collins (R-Ga.) wrote on X in response to Musk's post.

Rep. Mike Collins@RepMikeCollins

Replying to @elonmusk

Maybe we pause payments to everyone 120+ until they can authenticate they're among the living, to start.

10:08 PM · Feb 16, 2025

Collins is far too conservative. Lawmakers should freeze payments over the age bucket of 100 until a clear determination can be made where taxpayer funds are disappearing in this possible money pit that smells like fraud.

"If DOGE's numbers are right, \$522B—1/3 of ALL spending on Social Security each year—is fraudulent," X user Robert Sterling said.

Robert Sterling

Replying to @elonmusk

This has the potential to be the biggest

BIGGEST FRAUD see page 8

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Events	page	8-9
Legals	page	17
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Main St. Clown Show

Our Local Lefties vs. The Donald

Guess Who is Winning?



Anti - MAGA/DOGE Protestors hobble down Main Street, signs in tow. *Sentinel Photos*

by George Gramlich,
News & Commentary

Monday, February 17th, Presidents’ Day, as Trump and Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency moved on from US-AID fraud announcements to Social Security fraud and IRS criminality.

Locally, 20 or so left-wing geriatric zombies (probably the majority of them being deep state fed retirees)

wobbled down Main Street, Westcliffe, with a variety of lunatic signs supporting the liberal nation-wide protest that day against democracy and eliminating government waste. Some of the more catchy crayon creations included, “Stop the Coup”. “Peace Not War” and “Musk Must Go”. (Same stuff these burnt old 1960’s “hippies” did in their youth.)

As they passed the bastion of liberty and the Free Press in

Happy Valley, *The Sentinel*, they held up their signs toward the *Sentinel*.

Guess who was there at that time?



THE DONALD! Yes, our full-size cardboard Standup of Mr. MAGA was again attached to the large tree in front of our building as it was Presidents’ Day. So, the walking dead sign bearers were protesting to a cardboard poster of a man. That, folks, is all you need to know about the left today in America. Dumber than rocks (or maybe cardboard).

Thanks to our great Custer County Sheriff’s Office Deputies and Posse members for covering the event. You never know what the looney left will do.



Top: Donald J Trump Standup in front of the *Sentinel*.
Left: Custer County SO in front of the *Sentinel*.



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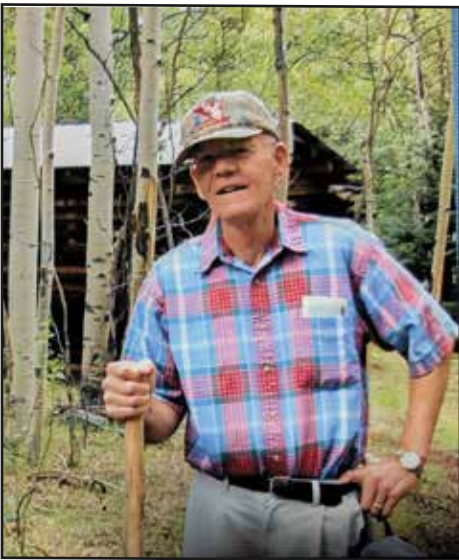
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Obituary Thomas Lee Maddux

Thomas Lee Maddux, 81, of Weatherford, Texas, died February 9, 2025. Born June 12, 1943, in Ranger, Texas, to William Robert “Bill Bob” and Nora Ranspot Maddux, Tom graduated from Weatherford High School and earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Spanish at the University of Texas after completing an associate’s degree at Weatherford College and having spent his junior year at the University of the Americas in Mexico City.



Fully trilingual, Tom taught high school Spanish, English, French and ESL (English as a Second Language) in and around Houston and, also, taught ESL at Rice University and Montgomery County College. His teaching adventures included four years in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, where he taught junior high Spanish to the American children of Aramco employees and enjoyed traveling the Middle East during breaks. Tom loved backpacking in Europe and was an avid camper and hiker in U.S. state and national parks.

teaching identification skills to others. He especially loved Colorado and spent summers after his retirement in 1998, at his property backing up to the Rainbow Trail in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains above Westcliffe. Tom was the next-to-youngest of eight children and was predeceased by his parents and siblings. He is survived by many friends, two sisters-in-law and numerous nieces and nephews who will miss his mentorship in their lives.

A staunch advocate for environmental conservation, he held membership in the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society and the Texas Land Conservancy. Tom was instrumental in forming the San Isabel Land Protection Trust in Colorado and in the preservation of the Marysee Prairie in Batson, Texas. He was described as a “paragon of Texas nature” in a 2022 article written about him for the Texas Land Conservancy. A naturalist, Tom knew the names and identifying markers of myriad plants and birds and enjoyed

To honor and continue Tom’s legacy to conservation efforts, please consider a donation to the Texas Land Conservancy, the Sierra Club or the National Audubon Society in his name. Donations to the Parkinson’s Foundation would also be appreciated.

Celebration of Life

Eva Joyce “Adams” Colgate
July 9, 1929 – January 31, 2025



A Celebration of Life will be held on **Saturday, February 22, 2025 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

at Christian Family Fellowship, located at 1011 Monroe Ave. in Cañon City 81212

Snacks and Refreshment will be served. ALL INVITED

Celebration of Life Elsie Jane “EJ” Buol

December 25, 1926 to January 8, 2025

Elsie Jane Buol, affectionately known as EJ, passed away peacefully on January 8, 2025, at the age of 98. Born December 25, 1926, in Trinidad, Colorado, EJ was a beacon of love, kindness, and selflessness to all who knew her.

EJ was married to Russell Clavin Buol of Burlington, Colorado, and together they shared a life filled with adventure, family, and faith in the military, on the ranch and running the store. EJ lived in Westcliffe for many years and was active with

the County Fair, church and many other activities.

She is survived by her son, Tom Buol (Pam) and Daughter-In-Law Linda Buol; her grandchildren: Tim Buol; Chris Buol (Sandy); Austin Buol; Nicki J (Buol) (DJ) Arnberger and her sister, Ann (Gross) Willson. EJ was preceded in death by her husband Russell Calvin Buol; her parents, Clarence and Helen (Jamieson) Gross, her sons, David Buol and Don Buol, and her sister, Janet (Gross) Graham.



A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, February 22, at 11 a.m. at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Westcliffe.

All are welcome. to a catered lunch (via Alpine Lodge) in the parish hall, following the service.



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Rules: We will print, at our discretion, the thoughts and ideas of our fellow citizen-patriots. Please limit your offerings to 500 words or less. No profanity or vulgarity, no personal attacks, and please sign your name and give us the general location of your residence. Also please provide your phone number or email - for confirmation only. *The opinions expressed here are solely those of the author; they do not necessarily reflect the opinions held or endorsed by the Sentinel.*

Justice Center Plans. Again.

JUSTICE CENTER - AN ONBOARDING SUMMARY FOR THE CITIZENS

During the December 26, 2024 BOCC meeting we learned about the status of the Justice Center project which is mandated to be in compliance July 1, 2026. Canda stated the project has been changed from including the building of a new jail facility to focusing only on the Justice Center portion of the program. He explained that the committee is “firing up” again in January. After the meeting he offered that I could speak with the architect (unresponsive) and Lisa Rowe (very amenable) the Court Executor at the 11th Judicial District. During and since the BOCC meeting Canda has reached out asking for my participation in the committee. I am hoping this committee includes people who have been vocal against it as well as those in favor of it.

The Criminal Justice Center, a conjecture of necessity and dreams hoisted upon the public at \$18M with a bond payback amount of +\$30M and presented in 2018-

2021 by the Commissioners who were met with shock when it was not approved. As this committee resumes, there are many questions this committee will need to grapple with. First, what exactly did the people reject when they voted it down? Did they disapprove of the design? Did they reject the notion the county needs more land? Was the price tag too high? These are common questions and as the committee unfolds I curiously seek answers.

In 2018, the Land sub-committee, chaired by Ann Barthrop recommended to the then County Commissioners, Canda, Printz, and Flower to enter into a Lease Agreement with Haga Chet Trust to purchase properties for \$872,943.00 in order to secure grants from the State of Colorado for the Custer County Justice Center. According to the County Assessor in 2018 the certified appraisal value of the land was \$129,762 or \$0.44/SF.

Attorney Smith wrote up the agreement per the Committee’s and Commissioners directions. This Agreement eliminated property taxes to Haga for the

duration of the lease, and does not allow for the county to sell or assign the property if they do not use it. The Commissioners signed the Agreement on August 8, 2018. Architects Reilly Johnson were hired to design the Criminal Justice Center and a firm was contracted to take a poll of citizens’ opinions on the Justice Center.

The estimated cost of the Criminal Justice Center would be 18 Million dollars and in 2021, as stated earlier, the Citizens of Custer County VOTED DOWN the associated ballot initiative. However, the County Commissioners, past and current Commissioners (Canda, Epp and Day) have continued to make payments on the lease. Why didn’t they walk away from the lease purchase of additional land when the Justice Center was turned down by the voters and especially since they had a 2016 report stating “there is ample room on the (existing) county services campus?” We would have only been out \$150,000.

The Justice Center Committee was dissolved during the August 18th, 2021 BOCC meeting (three months before being taken to the

vote of the people?) and a Justice Center Education Committee (to be initiated by Barthrop) was authorized at the same meeting. Per comments from Lucas Epp, they have continued to develop the project. Commissioner Canda says the program is being stripped down to only the Justice Center portion. However, after further conversation, the project is the same as before. It is now just being presented in phases.

Sheriff Smith recently and resourcefully contracted with Fremont County to house our three prisoners and save us from the need of building a detention (jail) facility at this time. Smith has also asked a second group of people to begin looking into raising private funding for the Sheriff’s Building. There is a myriad of ways this could be accomplished and each has an abundance of questions and concerns. It is also unclear how the Commissioners and this group’s efforts will collaborate.

As a former architect, one of my biggest concerns is the program. The program is the list of spaces that will go into the project and it is typically determined by a use

and needs analysis. The data I have seen so far was comprised from data gathered in conversations with Shannon Byerly and his staff. There is additional data that lists what is missing from our current facilities but as of yet, I have not seen any assessment of current facilities that provide factual data for projections. How can we propose a building without that data? And where is the analysis of all the county buildings (fire, search and rescue, veterans affairs...) that could determine a comprehensive planning document and project the most cost efficient way to move forward?

We are a small county with many needs and limited income. Shouldn’t our money also encourage business and the types of development that create jobs and sustainability? Will the Commissioners, bringing with the same project as before, expect a vote of “yes” from the public? Or is a more creative solution in the works? I look forward to keeping you informed.

by Citizen Joy Anderson, Custer County

Checked Safe from Feeling Distraught

Dear Editor;

Your last edition about President Trump’s “supporters” being distraught appears more like mostly non-supporters having the real problem with him. In my opinion, the two week’s articles about what he is doing immediately after retaking office are the best one’s I have ever read in any newspaper. I don’t see anything not right in anything he has done so far. Actually, he is just doing everything he said he would be doing and doing it right now, no waiting. Every other office holder promises lots of things to get votes, yet totally forgets all promises immediately upon being sworn in, not to bring them up again until the next election cycle.

From what we have seen so far that DOGE boss is also doing a fantastic job. It almost seems if all the corruption in Washington (DC) were to be reversed, our entire national debt might be erased? Just my thoughts on this. MAGA!

Frank Searight, Silver Cliff

Articles mentioned:

Two Weeks of Dramatic Moves Have Trump’s Supporters in Colorado, and Opponents Distraught by Bente Birkeland at Colorado Public Radio)

All the Executive Orders Trump Signed on Day One by Ben Johnson, The Washington Stand



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Custer Senior Center Menu

Monday, February 24

#44 Ham and Beans

Collard Greens
Cornbread
Orange Juice

Tuesday, February 25

#58 Lentil Soup

Egg Salad Sandwich
Shredded Lettuce & Tomato Slices
Banana

Thursday, February 27

#83 Spaghetti and Meat Sauce

Salad w/Lite Italian
Green Beans
Orange
WW Bread w/Butter

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

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 mo. mtg (year-round) 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 Mtg @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 @Sangre de Cristo Fellowship, 120 Jerry Dr. Westcliffe. Holly 703-338-4100 or Rene at 719-371-7076
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

Christian Science
9:30 a.m. Worship
8 Bassick Place, Westcliffe
Church of Christ
9:30 a.m. Bible Study
10:30 a.m. Worship
818 Ohio Street, Silver Cliff
719/783-4601
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
240 Ridgeline Dr, Westcliffe
Pres: 719/214-4589
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
0157 County Rd. 27A
Cotopaxi 719/942-3526
Community United Methodist Church
8 a.m. & 10 a.m. Worship
202 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe
719/783-2511
Cotopaxi Community Church
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11 a.m. Worship
6 p.m. Wedn. Bible Study
Pastor Steve Holcomb@gmail.com
20326 Hwy. 50, Cotopaxi

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
410 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe
Pastor Josh Olsteen
719/783-2498
High Country Mennonite Church
9:30 a.m. Worship
10:45 a.m. Sunday School
103 N. Adams St, Westcliffe
719/783-9045
Huerfano Community Bible Church
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship
7 p.m.: Thursday Bible Study
603 Leon Street, Walsenburg
(719) 251-9053
Hope Lutheran Church
2 p.m. Worship
3:15 p.m. Bible Study
3rd & Powell Streets, Westcliffe
Pastor Dan Kletke 719/783-2323
Lange Hall 719/783-2561
Living Stone Calvary Chapel
Saturday evenings: 5:30 p.m.
Sunday Mornings: 9 a.m. & 11a.m.
830 Bridge St., Canon City, CO
Pastor Sean Meagher 719/276-0863

Our Lady of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church
Diocese of Pueblo
11 a.m. Sunday Mass
10 a.m. (2nd Tuesday of month) Mass
10 a.m. Wednesday Mass
5:30 p.m. Thursday Mass
109 S. 5th Street, Westcliffe
719/783-3507
Our Lady of Mt. Zion Catholic Church
11 a.m. Mass, 2nd & 3rd Sunday of month
210 S. 2nd St., Westcliffe
719/783-2491
Praise Community Church
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Praise & Worship 10:45 a.m.
215 N Pikes Peak Ave. , Florence
719/784-1184
St. Luke’s Episcopal Church
10:30 a.m. Worship & Eucharist
11:30 a.m. Fellowship
8:30 a.m. Prayer Service, Thursdays
3rd & Rosita Streets, Westcliffe
719/783-2477
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
Diocese of Pueblo
Saturday Mass 4 p.m.
Highway 69, Gardner
Bldg. Mickey. 719/746-2037

Sangre de Cristo Cowboy Church
Pastor: Mike Shields
10 a.m. Sunday School Bible Study
11 a.m. Worship
Last Sunday of Month: Potluck at Noon
sangredecristocowboychurch.com also on Facebook
60260 Hwy 69, Westcliffe
719/232-5372
Sangre de Cristo Fellowship
9 a.m. Meet & Greet
9:30 a.m. Service
120 Jerry Drive, Westcliffe
719/783-0903
Sangre de Cristo Seminary Chapel
10 a.m. Worship
6160 County Rd. 130, Westcliffe
719/ 371-1822
Valley Bible Fellowship
10 a.m. Worship
116 Hermit Lane, Silver Cliff
719/581-7572
Wetmore Baptist Church
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
10:45 a.m. Worship
6 p.m. Worship
Junction of Hwy 96 & 67, Wetmore
719/371-1230
Wetmore Community Church
9 a.m. Sunday School
10 a.m. Worship
699 County Rd. 395, Wetmore
719/784-0596

Formation of Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors

Colorado Parks & Wildlife Regional Partnership Grant Awarded

Press Release
Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors
New Custer County Colorado non-profit Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors (WMVO) has been awarded a 2025 Colorado Parks & Wildlife Regional Partnership Initiative (CPW RPI) Grant. This award will support a facilitated process to establish a new coalition informed by stakeholder conversations and listening sessions with the community on a variety of outdoor interests.
WMVO will be supported by Civic Canopy in this funded 4-phase process outlined below over the next 12 months. This work will outline the process to inform recreation and conservation strategies that achieve the community’s vision. This is Civic Canopy’s fourth successful effort supporting CPW RPI projects.
PHASE 1: Building a Foundation
PHASE 2: Defining a Common Vision
PHASE 3: Taking Action
PHASE 4: Sustaining Momentum

10th Annual Slash Pile Burn Planned at Greenleaf

Press Release
Greenleaf Forestry & Wood Products
The tenth annual slash (tree limbs) pile burn is planned during 2025 at the Greenleaf Sawmill slash disposal site on Rosita Road. “We want the public to understand why they may see smoke,” said Len Lankford, private forester and owner of Greenleaf Forestry and Wood Products of Westcliffe.
Lankford said, “The large slash disposal site at the sawmill continues to be open to the public year-round on a fee basis. It is a resource for contractors and landowners to dispose of slash (limbs and dead woody material) from fire hazard mitigation, down tree cleanup, and forest thinning projects in the county. Disposal at the site is efficient and helps many people. It is continuing to be a beneficial county-wide resource.”
The burns are done each year under a special “Private Land Prescribed Fire Plan for Implementation of Low Complexity Treatment(s). It includes a detailed “Pile Smoke Management Permit” issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE.) The prescribed fire Burn Plan has been reviewed by the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (CDFPC) and is coordinated with agencies including the Custer County Sheriff and Wet Mountain Fire Protection District.
Lankford will be the “Burn Boss,” having fulfilled the requirements for a “Colorado Certified Burner “B” (CCBB.)” Many things go into a successful burn. Slash and rotten log wood are okay, but not trash or nail boards, and no treated, painted, or processed wood. Mulch and manure are separated and accumulated in a composting area for soil recycling. Stumps must be separated for special disposal.
The piles will be burned under specific ground, snow, and wind conditions to facilitate safe burning, smoke dispersal, and minimal impact on neighbors.
For more information about smoke and health, see https://cdphe.colorado.gov/wood-smoke-and-health. According to the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE), “There are more opportunities to manage smoke impacts during a planned fire than there are during a wildfire situation. Prescribed fire has been shown to reduce many of the risks associated with wildfire.”
For further information on pile burning, or on the current Burn Plan at Greenleaf, the public may contact Lankford at 719-429-4404, or by email: len.at.greenleaf@gmail.com. Information on Greenleaf is also available at www.greenleafforestry.com.

BIGGEST FRAUD from page 2

fraud in US history. If DOGE’s numbers are right, \$522B—1/3 of ALL spending on Social Security each year—is fraudulent.
Here’s my math:
According to DOGE data, 20.7M people 100+ years old are receiving Social Security.
Robert Sterling@RobertMSterling
This doesn’t include the potential fraud from fake beneficiaries below age 100 (e.g., people in their 70s/80s/90s). By my math and adjusting for a normalized age distribution, this could bring the total amount of fraud to \$793B per year.
11:45 PM · Feb 16, 2025
At a DOGE press conference last week in the White House, Musk said:
“If money is spent badly. If your taxpayer dollars are not spent in a sensible and frugal manner, then that’s not okay. Your tax dollars need to be spent wisely on the things that matter to the people,” Musk said.
“It’s just common sense. It’s not Draconian or radical. I think it’s really just saying let’s look at each of the expenditures and say, is this actually in the best interest of the people, and if it is, it’s approved, if it’s not, we should think about it,” he added.
“There’s crazy things, like, just a cursory examination of Social Security and we’ve got people in there that are about 150 years old,” Musk said. “Now, do you know anyone that’s 150? I don’t. OK. They should be on the Guinness Book of World Records, they’re missing out.”
“So, you know, that’s the case where, like, I think they’re probably dead is my guess, or they should be very famous. One of the two,” he added.
It now appears **DOGE’s Big Balls** has been heard at work using AI to **uncover possible fraud in federal entitlements**. So far, we have not verified the data Musk shared on X, but confirmation could be just ahead.
Robby Starbuck
Replying to @elonmusk
I wonder how many of these people over 100 are registered to vote and vote in elections?
2:36 AM · Feb 17, 2025
Please see: https://www.zerohedge.com/political/might-be-biggest-fraud-history

Celebrations of Life Memorial Services

Celebration of Life
Elsie Jane “EJ” Buol
Saturday February 22, 2025 ~ 11 a.m.
St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Westcliffe
Celebration of Life
Eva Joyce “Adams” Colgate
Saturday, February 22, 2025 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Snacks and Refreshment will be served, ALL INVITED
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**The Town of Westcliffe is hiring a Town
Operations Coordinator**

Desired qualifications include demonstrated problem-solving ability, positive experience in dealing with the public, management and supervisory experience, preferably in a similar position, knowledge of the 2006 ICC International Building Code, and International Residential Code. Grant writing experience helpful. Experience in public works and construction project management. Experience in computer skills with Microsoft Office - Word, Excel and Outlook among others helpful. The full job description can be located on the Town of Westcliffe's website at: [https://
townofwestcliffe.colorado.gov/](https://townofwestcliffe.colorado.gov/)

Salary commensurate with experience. Excellent benefit package, health insurance, and retirement. Resume and five references should be mailed to the Town of Westcliffe P.O. Box 406, Westcliffe, CO. 81252 or delivered to the Town Hall at 1000 Main Street. The position will be open until filled.
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National Suicide HOTLINE
1-800-273-8255 Veterans Press 1

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Regional 719-276-5488 Local Office 719-275-2351

VETERANS SERVICE Office (VSO)
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(719) 618-8266 vso@custercounty.co.gov
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(719) 783-9138
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He has told you, O man, what is good;and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8 ESV

Custer County Teen Takes 1st Place at Denver Stock Show



Aubrynn Evert brings two llamas, one for Youth and one for Novice, at this year's National Western Stock Show in Denver. Novice consists of all ages of both handler and llama. She has consistently improved, earning Grand Champion in Novice at Nebraska State Fair last August. At Stock Show this year, she was 1st in Public Relations out of 29 Novice. Photo courtesy of John and Brianna Evert

Knowledge Bowl Team Qualifies for State



Huge congrats to our Knowledge Bowl team and amazing coach, Laura Krall, for qualifying for STATE COMPETITION March 16th-18th! Let's wish them the best as they represent our school!

L to R (back row: Gianna Tomassoni, Isabella Ferron, Cora Kane, Shelby Langford, Mrs. Krall. Front row: Paul Wiest)

Press Release from the Custer County School Via Facebook, Feb 11, 2025

KIDS

February 21, 2025

Utah's Great Salt Lake

Utah was admitted to the United States on January 4, 1896, as the 45th state. It is part of the Mountain Western States and shares the four-corner region with Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. Like most of the western and southwestern states, the federal government owns much of the land in Utah. Over 70 percent of the land is either BLM land, Utah State Trust land, or U.S. National Forest, U.S. National Park, U.S. National Monument, National Recreation Area or U.S. Wilderness Area. Today, we will be looking at the Great Salt Lake in Utah.



The Great Salt Lake is the largest saltwater lake in the Western Hemisphere and the eighth-largest terminal (endorheic) lake in the world. A terminal lake is a lake with no outlet, just like the Dead Sea of the Holy lands.

If you fly above the Great Salt Lake, you will see a patchwork of colors. The lake's North Arm, separated from freshwater instream flows by a railroad causeway, radiates a bright pink from microorganisms that survive high salinity, while the southern half displays a deep blue with red streaks from the brine shrimp cysts. Also, there is often a brownish grey smog caused by emissions from magnesium producers and oil refineries or toxic dust clouds from the dried-up lakebed. All of these peculiar colors are mainly from the industrial development.

On the north end of the lake is a proposed lithium mine. The lake's brine contains lithium and many companies are eager to cash in on the battery metals boom.

Drought conditions and the overuse of snow melt have caused the Great Salt Lake to shrink. In 2023, scientists at Brigham Young University estimated that without policy changes, the lake would dry up in 2028. Continued shrinkage could also turn the lake into a bowl of toxic dust, poisoning the air around Salt Lake City. As the water recedes, the exposed lakebed releases toxic dust into the air, creating potential health risks for the 1.2 million residents of Salt Lake City.

The Great Salt Lake is drying up at an alarming rate. In 2022, it hit its lowest recorded water level since measurements began in 1847. More than just a shrinking body of water, its decline threatens wildlife, air quality, regional agriculture and Utah's billion-dollar economy.

by Audrey Slater. Sources: <https://www.hcn.org/issues/55-12/energy-industry-take-a-toxic-tour-of-the-great-salt-lake/>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Salt_Lake, <https://www.smorescience.com/science-news-1110/>

Sangre de Cristo Sentinel • Westcliffe, Colorado

CORNER

Booster Club Bobcat Corner



Come out and support your Custer County Bobcats!

All games and dates are subject to change without notice.

Tuesday - Thursday, February 25 - 27:
HS Basketball SPL Tournament, details TBD

Want to become a sponsor of the Custer County Bobcats?
Contact Lea Grundy at 720-234-7751 for more information!
Go Bobcats!

Come support the Bobcats Concession Stand at every Home game!

CC Elementary Annual Literacy Night Under the Stars

March 13th at 5 - 6:30 p.m., with dinner provided by Forging Education, the enrichment program for Homeschooled Students.

Jesus said:

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you.

Tony's Players of the Week



Brylee Shy with Johnny Winton (Tony's Pizza)
Photo by Lea Grundy



Jason Hemseth with Johnny Winton
Photo by Lea Grundy



Marin "Money" Foster with Johnny Winton
Photo by Lea Grundy

- JV Basketball MVP
Creed Ingram
- Varsity Basketball MVP
Kal Tunnell
- Girls Basketball MVP
Marin "Money" Foster

Tony's State Placers - Wrestling
Jason Hemsath - 2nd place at State!
Brylee Shy - 6th place



Kal Tunnell
Photo by Jennifer Russ Photography



Left: Marin "Money" Foster. Right: Creed Ingram
Photo by Jennifer Russ Photography

State Wrestling Tournament

Four of our wrestlers traveled to Denver this past weekend for the State Wrestling Tournament.

- Jason Hemsath earned his 100th career win. He also finished 2nd at 144lbs. Our highest state placer in a lot of years.

- Brylee Shy finished 6th at 155 lbs. She is the FIRST EVER State Placer for girls wrestling! Quite an accomplishment in her first year ever competing.

Also, Coach Shannon Palmer was also recognized AT THE STATE TOURNAMENT for his 30 years of coaching!! He is also recognized for his International coaching of "Athletes in Action" for over 37 years.

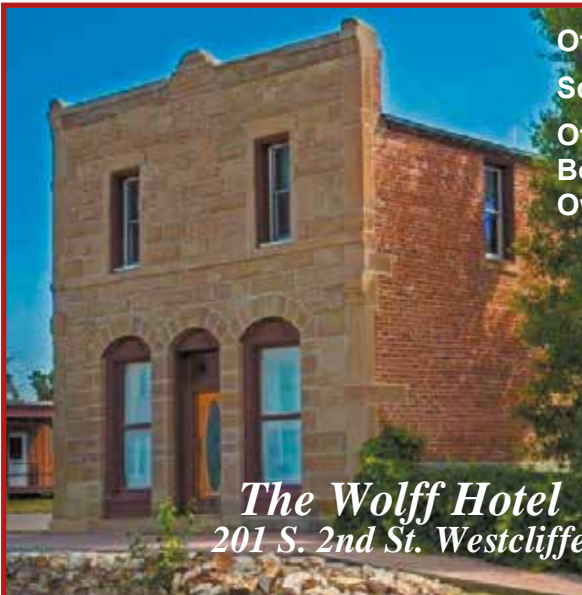
MORE on STATE and COACH Palmer next week!

Bobcats Scoreboard!

Wednesday, February 12:
HS Boys JV Basketball @ HOME vs Vail Christian: 26-38, loss
HS Girls Basketball @ HOME vs Vail Christian: 26-28, loss
HS Boys Varsity Basketball @ HOME vs Vail Christian: 54-33, Win! 🐾

Friday, February 14:
HS Boys JV Basketball @ Sargent: 35-26, Win! 🐾
HS Girls Basketball @ Sargent: 21-57, loss
HS Boys Varsity Basketball @ Sargent: 47-44, Win! 🐾

Saturday, February 15:
HS Boys & Girls Wrestling @ STATE Tournament in Denver:
Jason Hemsath finished 2nd at 144 lbs! 🐾
Brylee Shy finished 6th at 155 lbs! 🐾

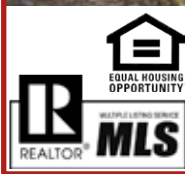


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Olde Schoolhouse Quilt Quilts of the 1930's Presented by



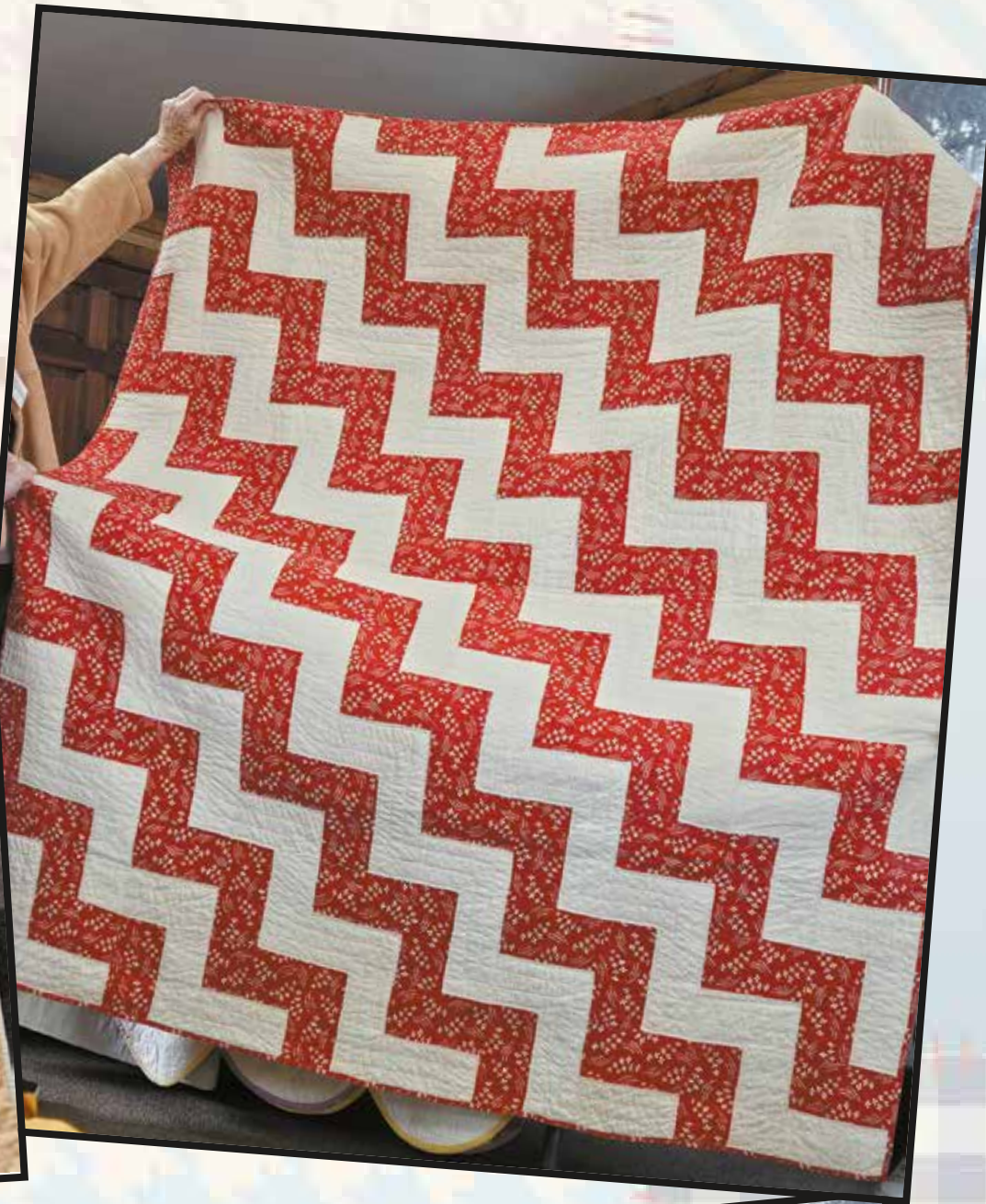
Janelle Davenport shared these treasured quilts from the 1930's last week in Silver Cliff.

The Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum has been preserving, celebrating and exhibiting quilts ranging from historic to contemporary, as well as traditional to modern art quilts. The Museum provides a safe haven for over 500 quilts, and is dedicated to the preservation of family heirlooms, and promoting and educating the public on the importance of quilts in our culture.

For more information, visit their website at rmqm.org.



Waters Annual Trunk Show: at Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum



Local Mountain News & Notices



Bookends February 2025 Library News

by West Custer County Library

If fickle February weather is not your thing, chances are good you'll find something more to your liking at the Library. For instance, music! In a new partnership with the High Mountain Hay Fever Bluegrass Association, the Library will soon offer not just musical instruments for check out, but free music lessons too! Come hear all about it at a musical instrument "petting party" on March 19th from 1-5 p.m. Every kind of bluegrass instrument will be on display and available to strum and pluck. Volunteers will be on hand to give micro lessons and answer questions. Best of all, ukuleles and fun "banjo-ukes" will be available for check out on your library card, with information about how to get your FREE music lessons. Coming soon: community jam sessions on Sunday afternoons and eventually even performance opportunities!

You know what goes great with music? Pie. Once again, on March 14th (aka 3.14), the Library will hold our annual "PI day" fundraiser. This year, money will go to restocking and expanding our "Library of Things" so there will be more fun gear for the community to check out for free. Donations of pies (store-bought or homemade, sweet or savory, traditional or special diet) will be received March 13th and 14th. Slices and whole pies will then be available for purchase in the community room. Come eat some pie so we can provide new fantastic resources in the year ahead!

You know what goes great with pie? Reading. And with the Adult Winter Reading

program still going strong until March 29th, it's not too late to grab a bingo sheet at the front desk, explore the library, or just mark off boxes for each 30 minutes you read. Gift cards for local treats are your reward!

Also rewarding are a slew of fascinating programs in the weeks ahead. Tuesday, March 11th at 10 a.m., explore a colorful way of understanding yourself and others with a presentation about personality types led by Lifeblu creator, Lori Cimoch. Registration is recommended for this class. If mythology is more up your alley, you'll be fascinated by a presentation on the origins of Greco-Roman myths offered Tuesday, March 18th at 10 a.m. by Ann Payton Wilson. A pantheon of gods was the ancient go-to for explaining the unexplainable. Come hear about the possible facts behind legends such as Circe, the Cyclops, fire-breathing dragons and more.

If you prefer to solve puzzles in a more hands-on way, then come to the Jigsaw Puzzle Contest on Tuesday, March 25 at 1:30 p.m. Compete against other jigsaw junkies for the fastest assemblage time. Individuals and teams of two will battle it out over two hours for prizes and bragging rights! Later that same day, a small business workshop will be offered in the community room from 5-6 p.m.

But you don't have to wait until something is happening at the Library to stop by. We're always here to help you find what you're looking for and to learn something new, no matter the weather.

Violent Bust in Chaffee County Denver man arrested following domestic dispute, assaulting deputy

SALIDA, Colorado

Press Release
Chaffee County Sheriff's Office

—Friday, January 17, 2014



A Denver man was arrested Tuesday after a dispute with his girlfriend ended in a physical struggle with a sheriff's deputy who had been called to their lodging at Mount Princeton Hot Springs Resort to assist the woman. Adam I. Smith, 29, was jailed on a variety of criminal charges.

At about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Deputy Marty Johnson was dispatched to the resort lodge to meet with Michelle Robertson, 30, also of Denver. Robertson told the deputy she and her boyfriend were staying in a room across the road from the lodge and had an argument. Robertson asked the deputy to stand by as she retrieved her belongings from the room.

Arriving at the room, the woman used a key to open the door that appeared to be barricaded. Pushing her way in with the deputy close behind, they were met by Smith who was pointing a handgun at the pair from inside the room. Deputy Johnson pulled Robertson from the doorway and directed her to safety. He drew his handgun, quickly moved to the protection of his patrol vehicle, and yelled to several resort staff members nearby to leave the area.

Smith came to the door and slowly complied with Deputy Johnson's commands to raise his hands and to lay face down on the pavement, then abruptly arose from the ground and started for the room. The deputy, fearful that Smith would once again arm himself with the handgun, ordered him several times to stop. Smith would not comply and the deputy used his Taser in an attempt to subdue him. Due to Smith's

heavy jacket, the Taser was ineffective. Deputy Johnson then grabbed Smith to prevent Smith's returning to the room and engaged him in a physical struggle for several minutes until the deputy was again able to use his Taser in a direct contact stun to Smith's torso; this apparently convinced Smith to cease his struggle. He was immediately handcuffed by the deputy and ordered to sit on the asphalt.

A backup officer arrived a few minutes later and searched Smith's pockets where brass knuckles and a switchblade knife were found. A .380 caliber semiautomatic handgun was found inside Smith's room. All items were seized by the deputies.

Undersheriff John Spezze arrived at the scene shortly after Smith was arrested. He said later, "At six feet four inches tall and weighing 248 pounds, Smith outweighs Deputy Johnson by about forty-five pounds and is four inches taller. Deputy Johnson's willingness to go hands on with this guy, younger than the deputy by twenty-five years, is a testament to Deputy Johnson's courage and devotion to duty."

Smith was jailed on charges of felony menacing, prohibited use of weapons, two counts of possessing an illegal weapon, criminal mischief, domestic violence, and resisting arrest. He later was released on a bond of one thousand dollars and is due back in district court February 4th.

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Local Mountain News & Notices

St. Patrick's Day Youth Essay Contest

PRESS RELEASE
St. Patrick's Anglican Church,
Westcliffe, Colorado

Matthew 28:18-20—The Great Commission—And Jesus came and spake unto them (the disciples) saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, AMEN.

After Jesus's death and resurrection, his disciples moved to obey Jesus's last words to them before he rose into heaven. James went to what is today Spain, Peter to Rome, John to France and Britain, Thomas to India, for example. The descendants of the first disciples also spread the word. By A. D. 400, though, Ireland was still too far away to have much of the teachings of Jesus, although some had.

One man heard the call from God to go to Ireland and bring the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints, that was Patrick, a British son of a deacon and grandson of a bishop.

We have all heard the tale of his capture by Irish pirates and captivity during his teenage years, enslaved and starved, caring for sheep on a bleak, cold mountain. There, the faith he had taken for granted as a child became his saving grace. Patrick listened to God's calling, and afterward followed him so well he converted an entire nation to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This year, St. Patrick's Anglican Church in Westcliffe is sponsoring an essay contest for youth under 18 who reside in Custer County. Two prizes of \$100 will be awarded for first prize essays, one for ages twelve and over, and the other for those younger than twelve. There will also be two second prize awards of \$50 each.

A perfect essay would be 600 words long, but that is not as important as the content, which would tie the life story

of Patrick to the Great Commission. Can an entire nation be conquered for Christ even today? How? Do not be afraid to use your imaginations! One entry per person.

Goals for successful entry:

1. Tie Patrick's life story to the Great Commission and apply this to today
2. Around 600 words
3. Good spelling and punctuation
4. Received by email by March 17, 2025
5. Announcement of prize winners will be March 24 to the Custer County Community Page on Facebook and by press release to this paper
6. Two age groups, 12 and over, and 11 and under
7. Email the essay to joannelcanda@gmail.com by March 17, 2025
8. Public presentation of awards to be determined

Good luck everyone!



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SCHOOL BOARD from page 1

of the staff and public. I am sorry that any of you were put in that position.” Foster continued, “Such behavior is unprofessional and undermines the working relationship between the Board and the Superintendent.”

More than 70 people attended, including parents, community members, and staff. *(This came on the heels of Facebook posts on February 11th, both complaining about and supporting Superintendent Thom Peck and the school's bussing schedule. Apparently, those posts had little or nothing to do with the issues at hand but based on audience questions and comments contributed to the high meeting attendance.)*

Board President Foster told the panicked crowd at the meeting that she wrote the agenda items “in a specific way because I did not know what was going to transpire today. We have really hard decisions to make. We pride ourselves on taking [in] all the information before we make a decision.

And we are the only ones with all of the information.”

The Board did not comment much during the special meeting. (This is typical since meetings are held “in the public” but not “of the public”. All of those who wanted to speak were given two minutes to voice their concerns.) Note that the Board cannot discuss personnel matters outside of executive session so answers to questions were limited.

Responding to accusations of secrecy, hiding information and blindsiding the staff Foster said, “When a board, of any kind, is doing its job and upholding its oath, then personnel matters are maintained in confidence.”

True to Foster's earlier professions of considering all information, the Board's inactions demonstrated that they heard and were contemplating the messages of those who spoke in support of Superintendent Peck. Stories of Mr. Peck's hallway interactions, outreach to the homeschool community and knowing the names of students appeared to resonate some importance with the members of the Board.

In what was a clear show of Board support for the staff and community and a possible willingness to put aside Mr. Peck's breach of executive session, the meeting closed without utilizing the latter agenda items. In the end, it appears that the Board has set aside its business focused priorities of performance in favor of the staff's pleas for stability.

Peck, who came aboard in 2024, currently has a salary of \$123,000 per year. If the Board does make a future decision to terminate him, they would have to pay a portion of his remaining salary per his contract. The District would then have to determine an interim and possibly pay an interim's salary. There would be no cost for another Superintendent search per the District's contract with search firm McPherson and Jacobsen.

Mr. Peck, viewed by the hiring committee as the best candidate for the position last spring, was removed as a high school principal in Big Fork, Montana and faced a non-renewal of his contract in 2024 with Lewiston Public School Board, with no details available.

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SB25-03 GUN BAN
from page 1

Basic Firearms Safety Course

- The basic course requires a minimum of four hours of instruction and must have been completed within 5 years of the application for the *Colorado Firearms Safety Course Eligibility Card*. The course must include teachings on:
 - Safe handling of semiautomatic firearms and ammunition magazines.
 - Proper storage practices and laws, particularly around children.
 - Understanding of firearm-related laws, including Red Flag extreme risk protection order laws.
 - Recognition of the signs of mental illness and suicidal behaviors.
 - Importance of respecting gun ownership responsibilities.
 - The course must be conducted in-person with the instructor present at the same location as the students. No part of the course can be conducted via the internet.
 - At the end of the course, the instructor must administer an exam that tests both theoretical knowledge and practical handling skills. Students must score at least ninety percent to pass. Successful completion is reported to the *Firearms Training and Safety Course Record System* that doesn't even exist.

Extended Firearms Safety Course

- This course would be required to be a minimum of twelve hours of instruction, which must be spread across at least two different days. The extended course covers all the topics of the basic course but dives deeper

into each subject, providing more comprehensive training on:

- Advanced firearm handling techniques.
- Detailed legal responsibilities and implications of firearm ownership.
- In-depth safety protocols, including emergency response procedures.
- Like the basic course, the extended course culminates in a comprehensive exam that tests both knowledge and practical skills. The passing criteria and certification process are similar to those of the basic course.

Instructor Qualifications and Responsibilities

- Instructors must be verified by the sheriff as qualified firearms instructors.
- Before allowing enrollment, instructors are required to verify that each student holds a valid Firearms Safety Course Eligibility Card.
- Instructors collect the *Firearms Training and Safety Course Record Fee* from each student and remit this to the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife. The language in the amendment was so rushed it is unclear if the training is required to get the *Colorado Firearms Safety Course Eligibility Card* or if you have to have the card to do the training.

Firearms Safety Course Eligibility Card

- Applicants for the *Firearms Safety Course Eligibility Card* must submit fingerprints for a criminal background check.
- The card is valid for five years from the date of issue.
- Applicants must meet criteria that include not

being prohibited by law from possessing a firearm.

- Applicants must pay a fee which includes costs for fingerprint processing and the sheriff's processing fee.

All of this must be set up by September 1, 2025, when the law would go into effect.

In short, the ruling class would like to offer us peasants an opportunity to buy our rights back.

There is so much wrong with this bill, and we could list about about dozen pieces that could be challenged in court, but instead lets focus on some talking points the moderate Democrat legislators who will be voting on this need to hear:

Privilege Only for the Wealthy

This new license to buy portion of the bill effectively locks out lower-income individuals from owning specified firearms by imposing costly and time-consuming training requirements. It's not just a barrier; it's a blatant favoring of the wealthy, pushing the right to self-defense out of reach for those who may need it most.

Gun Registry by Another Name

This bill requires recording everyone who completes the necessary training into a state system, acting like a gun registry. This requirement creates a government list of gun owners, setting a dangerous precedent for surveillance and potential future confiscation. It's a clear overstep that treats law-abiding citizens like suspects.

Barriers for People with Disabilities

The required training and testing are rigorously unfair to individuals with learning disabilities, offering no accommodations. This oversight is not just neglectful; it's

discriminatory, denying fundamental rights based on ability.

Overburdening Hunter Education

By forcing those wanting to own certain firearms to flood CPW hunter safety classes, this bill threatens to overwhelm a system already vital for safe hunting education. It's a thoughtless move that could delay or deter new hunters, undermining traditional hunting practices and conservation efforts.

A Blow to Rural and Mountain Communities

For residents in Colorado's more isolated areas, the training requirements are a severe imposition. Traveling long distances for classes is impractical and sometimes impossible. These communities depend on firearms for hunting, predator control, and self protection. Limiting their access through cumbersome laws is not just unfair—it's a direct threat to their way of life and safety.

Additional amendments were added to the bill. These include:

- **Amendment L.029** increases the penalty of selling or purchasing a magazine over 15 rounds from a Misdemeanor 2 to a Misdemeanor 1.
- **Amendment L.027** exempts semiautomatic firearms that take detachable magazines that have been converted so they permanently have a magazine attached as long as that magazine can't hold more than fifteen rounds. This is the ridiculous "epoxy or weld the magazine in" nonsense we've been waving the red flag about, but apparently they didn't hear any of it and instead are just going to double down and exempt these accidents waiting to happen.
- **Amendment L.030** exempts the following hunting rifles:

Ag42 Ljungman, Benelli Argo E Pro, Benelli R1 Big-Game Rifle, Browning Bar Mk 3, Browning Bar Longtrac Rifle, Browning Bar Shorttrac Rifle, Fabrique Nationale Model 49, Fusil Automatique Modele 1917, Gewehr 43, Globco Mohawk, Hakim Rifle, Hk SL6, Hksl7, M1 Carbine, M1941 Johnson Rifle, Marlin Camp Carbine, Mas49, Remington Model 4, Remington Model 8, Remington Model 740, Remington Model 742, Remington Model 750, Remington 7400, Ruger Deerfield Carbine, Ruger Mini-14 Ranch Rifle, Ruger Mini Thirty Rifle, Ruger Model 44, Springfield Armory M1a Standard Issue Rifle, Svt40, Valmet Hunter M88, Vz.52, Winchester Model 100, Winchester Model 1905, Winchester Model 1907, Winchester Model 1910.

What can you do? Contact all Democrat State Senators and express your opposition to this mutated version of SB25-003 and tell them vote NO on the third and final Senate vote. Also contact the Governor with message of opposition. Email and call ASAP!

Contact Governor Polis:
Constituent line: (303) 866-2885
Email: Governorpolis@state.co.us
governorpolis@state.co.us
gov_constituentservices@state.co.us

(Editor/GG: The whole crazy thing is flat out unconstitutional. Totally. The problem is, it might take some time to get past the lib lower fed courts. It will be overturned. But by that time our rights are being trampled by these sick, bolsheviks. Recall these power tripping control freaks.)

Please see: <https://wethesecondcolorado.com/sb25-003-update-colorados-gun-ban-bill-morphs-into-license-to-buy-scheme/>

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Local Mountain News & Notices

BOCC from page 1

social security number of the person signing in. Plus, the portal will only allow certain people to sign in, that is, the ones certified to do so. Roth and Epp both stated it was wrong for the feds to require an employee’s SS number to sign in to make a report. This discussion went on for a bit. It was finally decided that the fed FIRE IRS system, which only allows two users, would be used by the Finance Director and a Commissioner.

The next Agenda Item was the hot button subject of the meeting: hiring an interim County Attorney to replace our current attorney, Dan Slater. (Background: Last year there was a personnel problem with Slater and a county employee in Human Services (HS). Slater was the attorney for Human Services. (HS has a separate contract just with Slater.) This caused a big stir and the Commissioners a few months ago decided to get rid of Slater and get a new County Attorney. During this mayhem, Slater resigned from the HS attorney’s position. But he still is the County Attorney. Late last year, Canda said he found an attorney that would do the job, a Rachel Maxam. She has family here in the valley but her practice is in Denver. Canda got a proposed contract from Maxam that was discussed at a recent board meeting but it was rejected. Canda is back here at this meeting with a new proposal from Maxam.)

Canda said he had a new contract proposal from Maxam that got rid of the monthly stipend and the new billing rate is \$100 per hour. He then made a motion to hire Maxam and Epp seconded to start the debate. Then there is a discussion on billing time and whether this is an interim hire or permanent. Epp said it was an interim hire as the County’s RFP for a new attorney is still active. Canda then gave a brief speech on Maxam’s merits. Epp then talked a bit and basically said he would like to keep

Slater. They reviewed Maxam’s five-page contract proposal in some detail. Vogelsong said a few things but looked non-committal.

This went on and on until Slater piped up and asked if he could say something. He started out apologizing for his upcoming speech being perhaps a little emotional. Slater said, “I remain unclear why we need a change.” He said the Department of Human Services “issue was resolved” by them getting another attorney. Slater then commented that the only negative thing said about him was the “Custer County Republicans have complained that I have the wrong letter “D”.” (That is, Slater is a Democrat. Apparently from his website, a pretty influential one statewide.) Slater said that was “the only complaint.”

He then listed all the areas of law that he was proficient in and all of them were needed for the job. (It was quite an impressive list.) He said he had county/municipal work for “a quarter of a century.” (We have been watching Slater for years now. He is a very, very good county attorney. He knows his stuff. The only issue (other than the HS one) was his handling of the County Manager debacle where he apparently didn’t advise the BOCC properly on the statutory requirements to establish the position and hire somebody for it. Other than that, the guy has been great.)

Slater continued his defense: “The other attorney has only been practicing for ten years and she has no experience in any of these areas.” He added, “The agreement does not cover litigation.” (That is, Maxam’s proposed contract excludes litigation which Slater does.) He then noted, “We have seven lawsuits just in Planning & Zoning. What are you going to do with that?”

Slater went on with his impassioned defense (it was pretty good), Maxam “has no experience. I charge the county less than half what I charge somebody who walks in my door.”

Epp finally spoke up, “We have

enough issues we are trying to fix... Dan moved out of the DHS issues well. I am losing my patience with looking for an interim. Dan has made some good points.” Epp continued, “I don’t want to go backwards in getting things fixed.” Epp said he liked the fact that Slater was a “D” as it helped Epp make “bipartisan decisions.”

Canda then said, “I was the guy who brought Dan in here. Didn’t care about his “D”.” Canda then got to the heart of his wanting to can Slater, “You made a mistake that any corporation would move that person out of the organization.” (That is, the HS personnel issue.)

James Gilbert, our favorite local democrat mover and shaker, then went full Karen victim card stating, “This is a purge by the Republican Central Committee through their agent here.” *(That is, Canda, as a Republican, is only wanting to get rid of Slater because he is a democrat. Gilbert somehow forgets that Canda said he was the one who brought Slater on board. But we love the word Gilbert used to describe Canda’s actions, “purge”. Very McCarthy-ish. Possibly also linking Canda’s moves with Trump’s “purging” of the federal (ie, democrat) workforce. We love Gilbert, he always provides a comic interlude in the meetings.)*

Epp then had enough, he said, “I retract my second.” (You need a second on a motion to discuss it.) Everybody looked at Vogelsong who has been quiet during this ordeal to see if he would second the motion. Not a peep out of the old Vogelmeister.

So the discussion ended. Looks like Epp and Vogelsong want to keep Slater. Will Canda bring it up again? Will the BOCC end the RFP for an new County Attorney and vote to keep Slater? (Right now he has been fired but is staying on until the County finds a replacement.) So it goes in Happy Valley....

Stay tuned, fellow peasants, for the next episode of Happy Valley.

Legals

NOTICE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Custer County Combined Courts, Colorado
205 S. 6th St.
PO Box 60
Westcliffe, CO 81252

In the Matter of the Estate of

Lanny David Walker (AKA LD Walker), Deceased

Attorney or Party Without Attorney (Name and Address):
Elizabeth Laverne Scully
P.O. Box 771
Salida, CO 81201
Phone number: 281-217-2409
E-mail: bethscully57@gmail.com
Case Number: 25PR1

NOTICE TO CREDITORS BY PUBLICATION PURSUANT TO 15-12-801, C.R.S.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate of Lanny D. Walker, Deceased
Case Number 25PR2

All persons having claims against the above named estate are required to present them to the personal representative or to District Court of Custer County, Colorado
On or before June 10, 2025, or the claims may be forever barred.

Elizabeth L Scully
P.O. Box 771
Salida, CO 81201

Published February 7, February 14, February 21, 2025
Sangre de Cristo Sentinel
Westcliffe, Colorado

NOTICE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Custer County District Court, Colorado
205 S. 6th St.
Westcliffe, CO 81252

In the Matter of the Estate of

Verna Grace Diller, Deceased 11-20-2020

Attorney or Party Without Attorney (Name and Address):
David Schlabach
P.O. Box 893
Westcliffe, CO 81252
Phone number: 719-371-4421
E-mail: Joannsch01@icloud.com
Case Number: 23PR10 Division 1

NOTICE TO CREDITORS BY PUBLICATION PURSUANT TO 15-12-801, C.R.S.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate of Verna Grace Diller, Deceased
Case Number 23PR10

All persons having claims against the above named estate are required to present them to the personal representative or to

District Court of Custer County, Colorado
On or before March 17, 2025, or the claims may be forever barred.

David Schlabach
P.O. Box 893
Westcliffe, CO 81252

Published February 21, February 28, March 7, 2025
Sangre de Cristo Sentinel
Westcliffe, Colorado

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Custer County Board of Commissioners

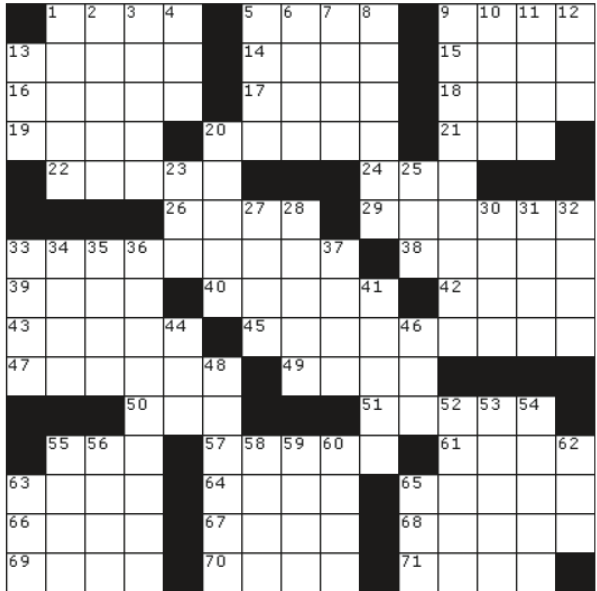
ELECTED BOARD

District 1 Bill Canda (CHAIR)
Cell 719-431-9979 Bill@custercounty-co.gov

District 2 Paul Vogelsong
paul@custercounty-co.gov

District 3 Lucas Epp (VICE CHAIR)
Cell 719-371-9267 Lucas@custercounty-co.gov

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1 Hurry
- 5 Lies
- 9 Talon
- 13 Present time (archaic)
- 14 Organization concerned with civil liberties (abbr.)
- 15 Natural seasoning
- 16 Movie award
- 17 Cry
- 18 Kitchen appliance

- 19 Do business
- 20 Endow
- 21 Central Intelligence Agency
- 22 Tempo
- 24 River (Spanish)
- 26 Stand up
- 29 Romantic song
- 33 Seasonal saint
- 38 Northeastern state
- 39 Among
- 40 Schnozzle

- 42 Carry
- 43 more withered
- 45 Scribe
- 47 Type of paint
- 49 Tramp
- 50 Hoopla
- 51 Privileged
- 55 Entrance rug
- 57 Bank safe
- 61 De ___ (anew)
- 63 Lily type
- 64 Bunsen burner
- 65 Seasonal archer
- 66 Twin brother of Jacob
- 67 Decays
- 68 Cost
- 69 Labels
- 70 Espy
- 71 Cult
- DOWN**
- 1 Seasonal gifts
- 2 Take off the lid
- 3 Weight device
- 4 She
- 5 Doe’s offspring
- 6 Type of tea
- 7 Type of cheese
- 8 First-rate
- 9 Seasonal gift
- 10 Tribe of Israel
- 11 Realm
- 12 Compass point

- 13 Cain fled to this land
- 20 Revises
- 23 Gray sea eagle
- 25 A name of God
- 27 Transgressions
- 28 First son of Cain
- 30 Daniel was thrown into the ___’ den
- 31 Stake
- 32 Doe
- 33 Flower jar
- 34 Last word of a prayer
- 35 Italian currency
- 36 Swollen
- 37 European monetary unit
- 41 Asian country
- 44 Crimson
- 46 Volume (abbr.)
- 48 Seasonal couples
- 52 Habituate
- 53 Theme
- 54 Kick out
- 55 Tableland
- 56 A king of the Amalekites
- 58 On top
- 59 Do ___ others
- 60 Final
- 62 Poem of praise
- 63 Scene
- 65 Cycles per second
- Puzzle key on page 7**

The Liberty Tree

Religion, The Constitution & Culture

State, National, & World

“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 YHWH as God and Yeshua Ha Mashiach as Jesus--the actual original names and the true nature and character of them.

Pandora’s USAID Box

President Trump and Elon Musk have, shall we say, opened Pandora’s box releasing unspecified evils into America with their shuttering of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). You would think from hearing what the mainstream media and all the Democratic Party extremists are saying that shutting down USAID was the end of democracy. In reality, it is the tip of the Democratic Party/Deep State fraud cartel that has served as a slush fund for virtually every nefarious activity known to man that a government can fund. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) lamented at a protest that Trump and Musk are, “taking away everything we have.” He said it. I think he means it.

USAID apparently is one of many government agencies that Democrats and the Deep State/Administrative State used as a slush fund to redistribute your tax dollars to their cronies and extremist causes. Much of the money is unaccounted for except in general categories—like the biggest winner being Ukraine, receiving over \$16.6 billion for “humanitarian aid” in 2023. Many in conservative circles wonder how much of that money lined the pockets of Joe Biden’s crime family business (for which his brother, son and some others already have been pardoned). Of course, the news media is crying out loud that a lot of USAID money went to support “democratic” causes and journalists around the world. Maybe so, but in what manner? There are a lot of indications that these were extreme leftist causes, even supporting terrorists.

There’s a short list, and on that list is millions going to the *New York Times*, Politico, and Associated Press from USAID. Interesting that these publications were among those that fervently opposed Trump and constantly reported falsehoods about the election, COVID, Jan 6 and many other leftist views. Nearly \$5 million was spent on advancing LGBTQ+ musicals, programs, transgender operas and comic books, and sex changes in various countries by the Biden Administration. Millions of dollars was funneled through relief agencies to Hamas and the Nusra Front terrorist groups; Taliban heroin production in Afghanistan; and let’s not forget millions to Ecohealth Alliance that helped weaponize the COVID virus in Wuhan China. You can’t make this stuff up.

With just this list alone, Democrats and Deep Staters are up to their noses in slush. No wonder they are working so hard to get the American public to turn against Trump. Sooner or later, their names will be attached to the money flow. Ephesians 5:11 says, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” Jesus said in John 3:20, “For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” These people are not only refusing to allow the evil to be exposed, they are doing everything in their power to say the government has no right to expose these deeds. Pray there is no way they can stop the exposure of the evil they have done.

Sources:

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/politico-ap-new-york-times-received-millions-in-usaid-funds-new-maga-allegation/ar-AA1ytHwN>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/02/at-usaid-waste-and-abuse-runs-deep/>

Bill Wilson

Dailyjot.com Printed with permission.

USAID Sent Over \$18 Billion to Islamic Terror States

by Daniel Greenfield,
FrontPageMag.com

It is really, really a sad day in America,” Rep. Ilhan Omar declared at a rally by Democrats outside USAID headquarters protesting President Trump’s reconstruction of the aid agency.

It wasn’t a sad day for America, but it was so for Somalia.

Over the last two years, USAID had funneled \$2.3 billion in “humanitarian assistance” to Omar’s native Somalia. Last year it reported a request for \$1.6 billion in aid and even with the Biden administration on the way out the door, it sent an additional \$29 million in December 2024.

USAID support for Somalia had doubled under the Biden administration and with \$3.3 billion from USAID allocated in the last 5 years, the end of the USAID gravy train for the Islamic terrorist state of Somalia must have been a painful blow for Omar, who is very close to the Somali regime. Former Somali Prime Minister Hassan Khaire had reportedly celebrated that “the interest of Ilhan are not Ilhan’s, it’s not the interest of Minnesota, nor is it the interest of the American people, the interest of Ilhan is that of the Somalian people and Somalia.”

It’s unknown if any of Omar’s Majerteen clan members benefited from the billions in American money, but considering the prominence of the clan in Somali politics, it’s likely to be the case.

Somalia, along with other Islamic terrorist entities, including the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Houthis in Yemen, and Hamas in Gaza, were among the top beneficiaries of USAID cash.

USAID boasted of having sent \$2.1 billion to Gaza and the West Bank since the Hamas attacks of October 7th. In 2024 alone, \$917 million was programmed for the terrorist areas occupying Israel.

USAID provided over \$3.7 billion to Afghanistan since the Taliban took over with \$832 million in the previous fiscal year alone. The money was so unaccountable that USAID refused to cooperate with the U.S. Government’s Afghan War watchdog tracking money going to terrorists.

Elon Musk Retweets Freedom Center Investigation of USAID

by Daniel Greenfield,
FrontPageMag.com

USAID’s Taliban Money Laundering Scheme, Freedom Center Investigates’ latest blockbuster expose of USAID, showing how officials of the discredited foreign aid agency conspired with UN officials to move money to the Taliban, is taking X by storm.

An X thread by Freedom Center staff laying out the details of the scheme has currently been viewed over 600,000 times and Elon Musk retweeted our article which has currently been viewed by 23 million people.

Even while the United States of America was at war with the Houthis, the Iran-backed Islamic terrorist group firing on U.S. Navy vessels, USAID continued to direct billions of dollars to Yemen.

In 2024, USAID announced a \$2.7 billion aid request for Yemen and allocated \$753 million. In the last 5 years, USAID provided an estimated \$3.4 billion in aid to an enemy terror state.

Other Islamic terrorist states that have heavily drawn on USAID include Pakistan which harbored Osama bin Laden, but benefited from \$600 million in the last 5 years. While some American towns and cities lacked clean drinking water, USAID labored to build plants for Pakistan’s majority Muslim population even while it engaged in the persecution of Christians.

USAID spent over \$700 million on Iraq during the last 5 years even though the country has long since been governed by Iranian puppets whose militias have been firing on American soldiers.

\$3.4 billion was directed to Syria over the past 5 years by USAID even as it was caught in a civil war between Shiite Islamists aligned with Iran and Sunni Islamists aligned with Al Qaeda.

USAID allocated \$1.1 billion to spend on Lebanon even as the country was run by Hezbollah.

While USAID is unable to function in Iran, between Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, over \$8 billion was sent to Iranian puppet regimes even without counting the money spent on Gaza.

In total, USAID had spent some \$18.5 billion on Islamic terror states over those 5 years.

This is not a full list of USAID spending in Muslim countries, but only those countries whose governments are closely interlinked with terrorists, sponsor terrorist groups or serve as puppets of terror groups and states. Some of these countries are actively in a conflict with the U.S. They include countries responsible for the murder of American soldiers and terror attacks in the U.S.

USAID has sent \$9.3 billion to Islamic terror states collectively responsible

for killing over 3,000 American soldiers. Not only did Islamic terrorist states and groups kill us, but in the ultimate obscenity, we have rewarded them with millions of dollars for each of our murdered soldiers.

The reconstruction of USAID under the full umbrella of the State Department rather than as a ‘super-NGO’ advancing anti-American interests across the globe has been met with outrage by Rep. Ilhan Omar, Rep. Jim McGovern, Sen. Chris Murphy and other longtime shills for Islamic interests in America who worry that the money for Islamic terrorists won’t be there anymore.

But we ought to ask if sending \$18 billion to Islamic terror states is helping our national security.

USAID has provided massive amounts of funding for the UN and NGO ‘non-profits’ which operate inside terrorist areas with little to no oversight. Special exemptions have been handed out to allow distributors of ‘humanitarian aid’ to partner with and do business with terrorists.

Including some of the Islamic terrorist groups that America is still at war with.

USAID’s partnerships with foreign governments, and with large unaccountable organizations including the UN and the World Bank, have raised concerns of money laundering. The revolving door between USAID personnel and some of the non-profit and for-profit groups who all profit from it has also raised questions about the legitimacy of those arrangements. And USAID’s active efforts to deny information about its activities to SIGAR, the U.S. government’s Afghan war watchdog, as well as to the incoming Trump administration, makes it a rogue agency.

It may never be fully known how much of our foreign aid went into the pockets of Islamic terrorists, but the USAID freeze and consolidation under the State Department can help make sure that the aid pipeline stops being a way to fund the Islamic terrorists killing Americans.

Please see: <https://www.frontpagemag.com/usaid-sent-over-18-billion-to-islamic-terror-states/>

More importantly it shows that our investigation of USAID’s corruption and terrorism financing has reached DOGE.

We are making a difference. And the more you share and get our work out there and support our work, the more you’re making a difference too.

How USAID laundered \$1.7 Billion to the Taliban

— Daniel Greenfield – “Hang Together or Separately” (Sultanknish)
In 2021, the Taliban’s bank, controlled by the ‘financier of bomb’

whose IEDs killed over 1,000 US soldiers showed off millions of dollars in hundred-dollar bills flown in by plane

USAID/State Department denied responsibility

1/ pic.twitter.com/epzVOnaEUD

February 13, 2025

The Freedom Center Investigates expose showed how USAID’s money

ELON RETWEETS
see page 23

No, Trump Does NOT Have to Abide by a Mythical ‘Judicial Supremacy’

by Selwyn Duke,
The American Thinker

It’s an old story: When people are allowed to get their way for too long, when they’re never told “No!” they may get too big for their britches.

They may develop a sense of entitlement and even become narcissistic.

And proving that judges are no exception to this reality are a number of recent court “opinions” designed to scuttle President Trump’s agenda.

One disallows DOGE from scrutinizing Treasury Department data.

Another states that the Trump administration must unfreeze funding on grants and loans.

A different opinion puts a freeze on Trump’s buyout offer for federal employees.

And yet another ordered the administration to restore sexual devolutionary (on “gender” and “sex changes”) government web pages Trump’s team had rightly deleted. So Biden could create those pages but, somehow, the current president may not remove them. Yes, it’s insane.

There’s a little known reason, however, why the rogue judges in question could so confidently engage in such insane judicial overreach. To wit:

We long ago accepted the overreach known as “judicial supremacy.”

This brings us to the simple remedy. Trump could just paraphrase the paraphrase of Andrew Jackson and say, “The courts have made their decisions — now let the judges enforce them.”

A “Constitutional Crisis”?

Some say this is illegal, that it would create a “constitutional

crisis.” A “legal analyst” and ex-federal prosecutor named Elizabeth de la Vega, for example, condescendingly stated Monday that someone taking this position should “at least read *Marbury v. Madison*.” That’s a deal.

Note here that *Marbury* was the 1803 SCOTUS opinion declaring that the judiciary must be the ultimate arbiter of laws’ and actions’ constitutionality and that, consequently, its rulings can constrain the other two governmental branches Translation:

The courts gave the courts their trump card (and Trump card) power.

Not the Constitution — the *courts themselves*.

Well, that’s like me crowning myself King of America and saying, “Now I get to rule — and you have to obey me.” Are you O.K. with that?

(And while we’re at it, off with those activist judges’ heads.)

As to this, there’s a reason Thomas Jefferson said in 1819 that if the judicial-supremacy opinion is valid, “then indeed is our Constitution a complete *felo de se*” (act of suicide).

There’s a reason a 5th Circuit judge pressed Barack Obama’s DOJ in 2012, after Obama had spoken dismissively of the courts, to submit a memo on the administration’s position on judicial supremacy.

And there’s a reason late Justice Antonin Scalia warned in his dissent against the outrageous 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* (marriage) opinion that with “each decision ... unabashedly based not on law,” the Court moves “one step closer to being reminded of [its] impotence.”

That is, judicial supremacy is *not in the Constitution*. That’s

why Jefferson was incredulous about it, the 5th Circuit judge was insecure about it, and Scalia warned that the Court could be told to forget about it.

It’s an extra-constitutional power the courts enjoy at the *other two branches’ pleasure*. The moment they decide to stop playing the sub role in this master-servant relationship, the power goes bye-bye.

Method to the Madness

Now, it’s helpful understanding why, in a world in which arrogating power to oneself or one’s corps is status quo, the other two branches do play this sub role.

First, it’s a tradition, one so entrenched that pseudo-intellectuals will defend it as if it’s law.

But a very significant reason was epitomized by something then-Ohio governor John Kasich said in 2015 after the *Obergefell* decision.

“[T]he court has ruled,” he proclaimed — “and it’s time to move on.” He seemed almost gleeful. And why not?

Kasich no longer had to take a stand on this controversial issue and thus alienate part of the electorate.

And Kasich’s attitude is the norm.

It’s the same reason why, I can guarantee you, many Republicans got severe agita when *Roe v. Wade* was overturned in 2022. Now they actually had to legislate, as they’re *supposed* to, on prenatal infanticide. So what legislators — and presidents often, too — get from judicial supremacy is the luxury of, like Pontius Pilate, being able to wash their hands of a matter: “The courts have ruled! Don’t look at me!”

Apropos here, just as legislators outsource their responsibility

to judges, the latter outsourced their responsibility to bureaucrats with the now overturned *Chevron* opinion. What judges got from this was the benefit of lightening their case loads and not having to strain their gray matter trying to settle legislative ambiguities.

Regardless, whether the decisions are made by unelected judges or unelected bureaucrats, the result is identical: You don’t have a government of, by and for the people. In fact, it’s even worse than that.

If the courts can overturn law, contravening the will of the people’s duly elected representatives, then they’ve to an extent arrogated to themselves the legislative power. If they can dictate to the president what executive actions he may or may not take, they’ve to an extent arrogated to themselves the executive power. And, of course, they enjoy their judicial power.

Now consider something James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, wrote in *The Federalist Papers*, Number 47:

“The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands” is “the very definition of tyranny.”

We have for ages been venturing too close to judicial tyranny. In fact, Jefferson warned that judicial supremacy would reduce us to an oligarchy — of judges.

How it’s Supposed to Work

Remember, too, federal and state officials take an oath to uphold the Constitution.

They do not take an oath to uphold judges’ opinions.

This means that if I’m a president or governor and a court issues a ruling I truly believe is unconstitutional, I have a *duty* to ignore it. Otherwise, I’m violating my oath.

“But what of rogue legislators or presidents?” some may ask. Well, what of rogue judges (who apparently are everywhere)?

The answer is the Founders’ one: No branch can intrude into the others’ spheres. This doesn’t mean there aren’t checks and balances. If, for example, a president believes a law is unconstitutional and refuses to enforce it, or takes an allegedly unconstitutional executive action, Congress can try to remove him; it can also impeach and remove renegade judges. As for House representatives themselves, the remedy is removal via the ballot box. This is why they must run for re-election every two years: Since they’re meant to be the most powerful branch (e.g., spending bills must originate in the House, and only it can file impeachment charges), they’re placed closest to the people’s reach.

Power means nothing, though, if not exercised. If congressional and executive powers are outsourced, it then can reduce us to what we’ve become: a government of, by and for judicial oligarchs.

So, no, President Trump doesn’t have to obey blatantly unconstitutional court opinions. This said, with how he’s shaking up the system and busy draining the bureaucratic swamp, it’s perhaps *politically* prudent to remedy the current judicial adventurism through the higher courts, as he’ll almost assuredly win on appeal. At some point, though, it will be time to drain that fetid judicial swamp and address the real constitutional crisis: the rule of judges who would be kings.

Please see: https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2025/02/no_trump_does_em_not_em_have_to_abide_by_a_mythical_judicial_supremacy.html

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for your information...

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Office Hours are Monday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tuesday & Wednesday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Fridays 9 a.m. - noon.

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Deadline for all other submissions is noon on Monday, and can be emailed to sdcsentinel@gmail.com

Please send us information on clubs and organizations, news stories and pictures, and upcoming events.

Please limit Letters to the Editor to 500 words or less. Please include your name, address and phone number.

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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

Top Compact Firearms to Include in Your Bug Out Bag

by Scott Witner,
ammoland.com

When disaster strikes, having a well-prepared bug out bag can mean the difference between survival and struggle.

While food, water, and medical supplies are essential, a reliable firearm is just as critical for self-defense, hunting, and overall preparedness. But not just any gun will do—you need a compact, versatile, and durable firearm that won't weigh you down but still delivers when it counts.

Whether you prefer a trusted handgun like the Glock 19, a takedown .22 rifle for small game, or a compact AR platform for defensive use, this list will help you decide on what firearm belongs in your bug out bag. Maybe all of them do.

The criteria:

- **Compact & Lightweight** – Easy to pack and carry for extended periods.
- **Reliable & Durable** – Proven track record of functioning in harsh conditions.
- **Ammunition Availability** – Uses common calibers for ease of resupply.
- **Magazine Compatibility** – Ability to use widely available or interchangeable magazines.
- **Multi-Purpose Use** – Effective for both self-defense and survival hunting.

Glock 19 – The Ultimate Survival Handgun

When it comes to compact, reliable handguns for a bug out bag, the Glock 19 is the gold standard. This 9mm pistol is widely regarded as one of the most versatile and dependable handguns available, making it an ideal choice for emergency preparedness.

Why the Glock 19 Belongs in Your Bug Out Bag

1. Magazine Compatibility & Ammo Availability
 - One of the biggest advantages of the Glock 19 is its ability to accept a wide range of magazines. It can use Glock 17, 19, 19X, 34, and 45 magazines, giving you greater flexibility when sourcing ammunition and magazines in an SHTF scenario.
 - 9mm is one of the most common calibers in the world, ensuring easy resupply compared to more obscure calibers.
2. Proven Reliability & Simplicity
 - The Glock 19 is known for being nearly indestructible. It functions in extreme environ-



ments, whether you're in the desert, jungle or snow.

- Its striker-fired design and lack of external safeties make it simple to use under stress—just point and shoot.
3. Compact Yet Capable
 - While it's smaller than the Glock 17, it still offers a 15-round standard capacity (with higher-capacity options available).
 - Its compact size makes it easy to conceal, whether carried on-body or stored in a bug out bag.

Ruger 10/22 Takedown – The Ultimate Survival Rifle

When it comes to a lightweight, reliable, and highly versatile firearm for a bug out bag, the Ruger 10/22 Takedown is hard to beat. This .22 LR rifle is legendary for its accuracy, reliability, and ease of use, making it an excellent option for both small game hunting and defensive use in survival situations.

Why the Ruger 10/22 Takedown Belongs in Your Bug Out Bag

1. Compact & Lightweight
 - The takedown design allows the rifle to break down into two pieces for easy storage and transport. This makes it small enough to fit inside a backpack, making it one of the most convenient rifles for a bug out bag.
 - Weighing just over 4.6 lbs, it's one of the lightest rifles you can carry without adding unnecessary bulk.
2. Ammunition Availability & Capacity
 - .22 LR ammo is small, lightweight, and widely available, allowing you to carry hundreds of rounds without adding significant weight to your loadout.
 - The Ruger 10/22 uses detachable 10-round rotary magazines, with extended magazine options available (such as the BX-25, which holds 25 rounds).

3. Versatility & Accuracy
 - The .22 LR caliber is perfect for hunting small game, providing a sustainable food source in survival situations.
 - While not ideal for self-defense against human threats, shot placement matters, and the Ruger 10/22 is known for its accuracy and ease of shooting, making follow-up shots quick and precise.

10.5" or 11.5" 5.56 AR Pistol / SBR – Compact Firepower for Survival

When it comes to a highly capable defensive firearm for a bug out scenario, a short-barreled AR in 5.56—such as a 10.5" or 11.5" AR pistol or SBR (like the Mk18)—is one of the best options available. These compact AR variants offer the firepower of a standard rifle while maintaining a smaller footprint for easier transport and maneuverability.

Why a 10.5" or 11.5" 5.56 AR Belongs in Your Bug Out Bag

1. Compact Yet Powerful
 - Compared to a full-length 16" AR-15, a 10.5" or 11.5" barrel makes the rifle much more maneuverable in tight spaces, such as vehicles or urban environments.
 - Despite the shorter barrel, 5.56 NATO still delivers effective ballistic performance, especially with proper ammo selection (e.g., heavier-grain rounds like 77-grain HPBT or bonded soft points).
2. Superior Defensive Capability
 - A semi-auto AR pistol/SBR offers much greater accuracy and range compared to handguns or PCCs (pistol-caliber carbines).
 - It provides an effective engagement distance of roughly 300 yards, depending on the type of optic used and your skill as a shooter.

Fold AR – A Full-Length Rifle That Folds in Half

When space is at a premium but

you still want a full-powered rifle, the Fold AR is one of the best options on the market. Unlike typical AR pistols or SBRs, which have shorter barrels, the Fold AR maintains a 16-inch barrel for full ballistic performance while offering an ultra-compact folding design.

Why the Fold AR Belongs in Your Bug Out Bag

1. Folding Design for Compact Storage
 - The Fold AR features a patented folding upper receiver that allows the entire rifle to fold in half, making it compact enough to fit inside a standard backpack.
 - Despite its compact storage, the rifle deploys in seconds, giving you immediate access to a full-length AR when needed.
2. Full-Size Ballistics & Accuracy
 - Unlike AR pistols or SBRs, the 16" barrel ensures full 5.56 NATO velocity, maintaining superior accuracy and energy at longer ranges.
 - This makes it more effective for hunting, self-defense, and engaging threats at distance compared to shorter-barreled rifles.
3. Reliability & Durability
 - The folding mechanism is built for durability, and the rifle locks securely in place when deployed, maintaining accuracy and function.
 - The gas system and barrel alignment remain stable even after repeated folding and unfolding, preventing reliability issues.

6.75" 300 Blackout (SIG MCX Rattler) – Compact Power with Suppression Capabilities

When you need a highly compact rifle-caliber firearm that delivers exceptional stopping power in a small package, the SIG MCX Rattler in 300 Blackout is an outstanding option. Designed for close-quarters combat and discreet carry, this ultra-short-barreled rifle provides excellent ballistic performance, especially when suppressed.

Why the SIG MCX Rattler Belongs in Your Bug Out Bag

1. Compact Design for Maximum Portability
 - The 6.75" barrel and folding stock make the MCX Rattler one of the smallest rifle-caliber firearms available, allowing it to fit inside smaller backpacks or compact storage spaces.
 - Unlike traditional AR platforms, the MCX Rattler does not require a buffer tube,

making it even more compact when folded.

2. Optimized for Suppressors
 - The 300 Blackout round performs exceptionally well in short barrels, unlike 5.56, which loses significant velocity.
 - When paired with subsonic 300 Blackout ammo and a suppressor, the Rattler becomes one of the quietest and most discreet firearms available, making it an excellent choice for stealth-oriented survival situations.
3. Versatile Ammunition Options
 - 300 Blackout can be used in both supersonic and subsonic loads, giving you flexibility depending on your situation.
 - Supersonic 300 BLK rounds provide greater energy at range, while subsonic loads with a suppressor make for near-silent operation.

9mm PDW (SIG MPX, Maxim Defense MD9, or KelTec Sub2000) – Compact, High-Capacity, and Magazine Compatible

For those looking for a lightweight, compact firearm that pairs well with a handgun, a 9mm Personal Defense Weapon (PDW) is a great option. These compact pistol-caliber carbines (PCCs) provide increased accuracy, higher capacity, and better control than a standard handgun while remaining easy to transport and store in a bug out bag.

Among the best choices are the SIG MPX, Maxim Defense MD9, and KelTec Sub2000, each offering unique advantages for survival situations.

Why a 9mm PDW Belongs in Your Bug Out Bag

1. Lightweight and Easy to Carry
 - Compared to rifles, 9mm PDWs are much lighter and more compact, making them easier to carry without excessive weight or bulk.
 - Their folding or ultra-short designs allow them to fit into small bags, making them excellent backup firearms.
2. Magazine Compatibility with Handguns
 - Maxim Defense MD9 & KelTec Sub2000: Both accept Glock magazines, which means if you're carrying a Glock 19 or 17, you can share magazines and ammo between firearms. This simplifies logistics and ensures better ammo availability in a survival scenario.

BUG OUT BAG
see page 23

Walther PP .380 Pistol, Classic Revisited

by Mike Hardesty,
ammoland.com

I can't help it. I've been a James Bond movie fan for a long time. My first experience with a Bond film was when my brother and I watched, in a theater, "Goldfinger" when it came out in 1964. What fascinated me even then was the super spy's use of what I saw as a cool pistol, the Walther PPK, in several of his celluloid exploits. But the slightly larger PP appeared, too. The PP was featured in the first Bond film, "Dr. No", although it was referred to as a PPK. One or the other of these pistols was used in several Bond movies, not to mention many others. They became a movie icon.

I had requested, from Walther, several months ago a PP to review. They were hard to get. I think that was due, in part, to the fact that they were out of production from 1999 – 2024. I might've gotten one of the first ones off the reinvigorated line.

Why did I not request a PPK? My thoughts were that the PPK was most likely the more commonly seen of the two. So, I thought why not get something that many shooters may not have experience with? You know, something a bit different. After all, the PP was the first of the series to be released in 1929, with the "K" version coming two years later.

What do the letters mean? "PP" means, in English, police pistol... or, in German, Polizeipistole. The "K" stands for kriminal (short for kriminalamt). This would be the criminal investigation office (think CSI). Thus, the PPK was a slightly smaller-framed pistol made for what we would call plain-clothes detectives. That's the one that gets the most attention, but I still like its slightly larger and older brother, the PP. The PP was carried by many German police departments and the military... it was also popular with civilians when they could own them. Interestingly, it was equally popular in its .32ACP version. They sold a bunch of them. They even had them manufactured for a while under license in France by Manurhin. Heck, even Smith and Wesson made them under license for a while. They had to meet the demand.

Walther PP .380 ACP Pistol

This particular pistol is a thing of beauty... I hope my photos will reveal that. Its polished stainless steel accentuates its classic lines. In terms of operation, what is striking about this pistol is that it doesn't use a locked breech, but is blowback-operated. The barrel is fixed, with the recoil spring around it. The slide-mounted safety also functions as a decocker, allowing you to safely drop the hammer on a loaded chamber.

Speaking of loaded chamber, another interesting feature is the loaded chamber indicator. It's a rod that protrudes just above the hammer if there's a round in the chamber. You can see it, or just feel it if it's dark, and thereby know if you are good to go.

Specifications

Let's look at the specifications from Walther's website.



Walther PP .380 ACP Pistol



Top:The Walther PP .380 ACP Pistol has a loaded chamber indicator.
Below: Walther PP .380 ACP Pistol's front sight.



CALIBER:	.380 ACP
BARREL LENGTH:	3.9"
TRIGGER PULL:	SA: 6 lbs. DA: 13 lbs.
TRIGGER TRAVEL:	.04/.2"
CAPACITY:	7
OVERALL LENGTH:	6.9 in
HEIGHT:	4.3 in
SAFETY:	Manual
WIDTH:	.97 in
WEIGHT EMPTY:	24 oz
Magazines included	2
MSRP:	\$969

Warranty: As a final part of the specifications, the warranty is called the Legendary Lifetime Limited Warranty. It applies to pistols made after 1993 and covers the gun for its lifetime, and not just with the original owner. It simply covers the gun as long

as needed. There are limitations, of course, as with anything but they want their guns to function no matter who owns them.

Another interesting aspect of the warranty is their 30-day money-back guarantee. If you don't like your PP (or most other Walther models), you can return it for a refund within 30 days. That's something you don't usually see.

We see that we have a DA/SA 24-ounce pistol that holds 7+1 rounds of .380. The gun is made in what I'll call an old-school way where the grip and frame edges are sharp, it uses replaceable grip panels, and the magazine release button is behind the trigger but way up high.

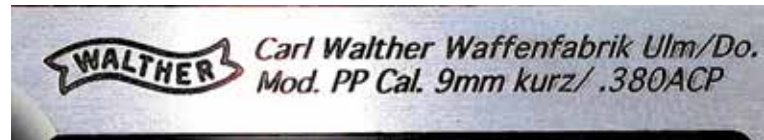


Walther PP .380 ACP Pistol Safety

The sights are milled into the slide and are not adjustable. To sum up, the gun is heavy-for-caliber with no de-horning, has what is considered a low capacity these days, and has rudimentary sights. And, as mentioned, it's a traditional DA/SA design with a slide-mounted safety/decocker and a hammer block... no striker here! But... it works. They can't make them fast enough, so that says something about its old-timey design still being in demand.

Popularity

These pistols are more popular today than a fresh bowl of shrimp at an all-you-can-eat buffet. So... why are these pistols so popular? I think it's because of their history, and the fact that they are an iconic design. Many other companies around the world have copied the PP's design, almost to the point of patent infringement. It is, to put it simply, a classic that has sold well for almost a century.



Walther PP .380 ACP Pistol Engraving

The gun's popularity is also based on another factor... it's a well-made and very reliable pistol. The thing ticks along like a German cuckoo clock. The machining is excellent, with no stray marks anywhere. Correspondingly, the pistol's parts fit together like they were carved from one piece of steel. And the finish is something to behold. The stainless steel slide is polished where it needs to be but has wavy striations cut along its upper surface to break up glare between the sights.

You can almost see yourself in the trigger's polished face. The grip's front and back straps are smooth... I am not sure I like that, but it works with this pistol, keeping the lines flowing. It looked so fresh and clean out of the box I almost didn't want to spoil it by shooting it. For a 1929 design, it was light years ahead of its time.

I tried to determine where this pistol was made. The PPK variant has been built in Walther's Arkansas plant since 2018. But I'm not sure if the PP is made there, too. Here's the pistol's engraving on the left side of the slide...

Taking The PP Apart

It's pretty easy to field-strip the PP/PPK. First, rotate the safety down to the "safe" position and remove the magazine. Pull down on the front of the trigger guard and push it to the side so it rests on the frame or block it open with something, to keep it out of the slot. Then, draw the slide back to the rear and lift the back of the slide off the frame. You can then remove the slide and the recoil spring to clean.

To put things back, simply reverse the process – put the recoil spring back over the barrel, small end first, and run the slide over it, pulling it all the way to the rear. (It does add that the thumb safety should be engaged during re-assembly). Finagle the slide around until it seats on the frame by mating the grooves in the slide

to the rails on the frame, let it go forward, and replace the trigger guard. That's it. If you get stuck, a link to the manual that comes with the gun is here. Taking the pistol down and reassembling it is covered on pages 24-26. It's for a PPK, but the drill's the same.

Shooting The PP

I received the pistol on a Thursday, and I typically like to "get with the program" and shoot it as soon as I get it, but the weather changed that plan. My former-deputy friend Ed volunteered to do some of the shooting, as the older I get, the less I like the cold, and my OEM eyeballs aren't the best with open sights. I manned the camera and shot a bit. It was about 20 degrees with a stiff west breeze, but that didn't bother him. We've had a true January winter here in the Hoosier state, with about a foot of snow and temps that had all the brass monkeys being brought inside...

We set targets up on my Caldwell Ultimate Target Stand at 15 yards. The ground was frozen, so we propped the stand against a 5-gallon bucket. I brought out three .380 FMJ loads that I had on hand.

Let me say up front that I do believe we could've done better on a day more conducive to not freezing your toes off, but as the saying goes, the show must go on. I'm not making excuses... it was just darned cold and blowing.

The first load we shot was the Fiocchi 95-grain FMJ load. It didn't do so well. All the loads shot high for Ed and me, including this one. Being a former cop, he is used to covering the target with the front sight – in essence, a center hold. I was taught, years ago, to use a 6-o'clock hold, like bullseye shooters use. I do use a center hold when I'm shooting self-defense pistols with red dots, or even iron sights, as that seems to be where they are regulated to hit. I've adapted but I'm not sure the Walther had adapted. I think it was regulated for a 6-o'clock hold. I'm not sure, but that would explain why everything shot so high. The Fiocchi load wasn't interesting, so we went with the second load I had,

Here's a representative target from the Seller & Bellot 95-grain FMJ load. I've had good results from S&B factory .380 loads in other guns, so I was hopeful. This load was the best of the S&B loads we put on paper that day. It would at least suffice as a starting point in your ammo search.

CCI's 95-grain FMJ

All the groups were high and represented patterns more than groups. I am not the best handgun shot in the world, but I do OK usually. (I've had plenty of success, hunting deer with open-sighted revolvers). Two

WALTHER
see page 23

F-Minus: A Tale of Two Cities' School Districts

by Deroy Murdock,
The Daily Signal

The Nation's Report Card recently went public. It's the kind of thing that kids hide from their parents.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress offers a grim view of America's classrooms. Between 2022 and 2024, the share of fourth graders reading below basic level grew from 37% to 40%; among eighth graders, from 30% to 33%. Fourth grade math improved slightly, from 25% to 24% (i.e., fewer students below basic). Alas, below-basic eighth grade math performance crept up from 38% of students to 39%.

These figures are all worse than before COVID-19 ruined everything.

"I don't know how many different ways you can say these results are bad, but they're bad," University of Washington researcher Dan Goldhaber told *The Washington Post*. "I don't think this is the canary in the coal mine. This is a flock of dead birds in the coal mine."

For a close look at this educational carnage, consider Baltimore and Chicago, two cities where school dysfunction merits serious prison time for the adults who perpetrate institutional child abuse against their students.

As of September 2023, 13 of 32 Baltimore high schools had zero students who were proficient in math, according to Maryland's state exam.

To be clear: It's not that less than 1% were proficient. Far worse: Not one individual student—not one teenage male, nor one teenage female—could compute at grade level in 13—or 40%—of Baltimore's high schools. "The results are hard to believe," wrote Chris Papst of WBFF-TV, Baltimore's Fox affiliate.

"This is educational homicide," Jason Rodriguez, deputy director of People Empowered by the Struggle, told Papst. "We have a system that's just running rogue, and it starts at the top."

Since 2021, Rodriguez's group has demanded the resignation of Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Sonja Santelises over pathetic test scores, dismal graduation rates, and limited transparency. Rather than quit, Santelises recently extended her contract through the end of the 2025-26 school year.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

"We acknowledge that some of our high school students continue to experience challenges in math following the pandemic," Baltimore City Public Schools said in a statement to WBFF. However, in 2017, Project Baltimore also found that 13 local high schools had zero math-proficient students. Many of the same campuses were in the 2017 and 2023 Halls of Shame. So, don't blame COVID-19 for this catastrophe.

It's not about money, either. "We're getting plenty of funding," said Rodriguez. In 2022, Baltimore's schools scored a record \$1.6 billion in taxpayer funds and \$799 million in federal COVID-19 relief.

Meanwhile, money is the least of Chicago Public Schools' worries.

As Wirepoints, a local think tank, observed, per-student spending rose from \$15,822 in 2017 to \$29,169 in 2024—up 84.35%. Chicago's parents are paying more. But remember: They are getting less.

Through those years, black students' SAT reading proficiency slid from 18% to 12%—down 33.3%. For reading: 12% to 7%—down 41.7%.

See READING & MATH GRAPH

When I discussed all of this last week before the University of

Massachusetts Dartmouth Law School's Federalist Society, left-wing students pinned the tail on alleged right-wing white racists.

Nice try!

Baltimore and Chicago have been run by Democrats for decades.

Thomas McKeldin, Baltimore's last Republican mayor, was elected in 1963. He left office in 1967—58 years ago. William H. Thompson was the last GOP mayor of Chicago. He arrived in 1927 and was gone in 1931. Democrat mayors have ruled the Windy City for 94 years.

Democrats dominate school boards, and the teachers unions have maintained their kung fu grip on these and most cities, since at least the 1980s.

Blaming "whitey" won't work, either. Since 2007, Baltimore's last five chief executives have been black. Chicago's current mayor, Brandon Johnson, is black. So was his predecessor, Lori Lightfoot.

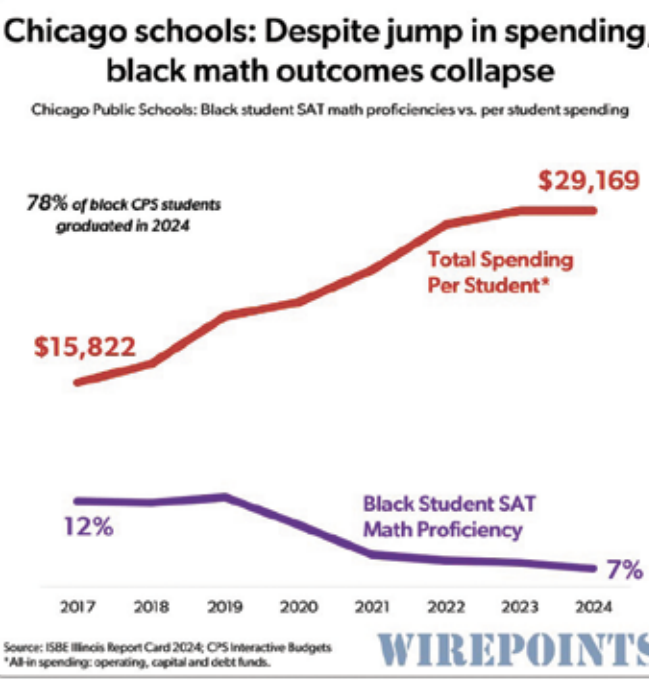
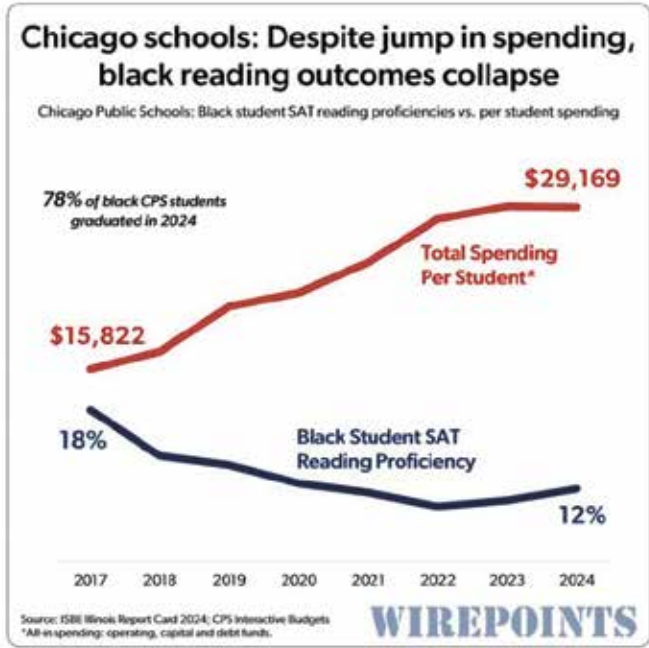
The Left's tired, typical excuses will not work.

These national outrages spring from left-wing, black Democrats' disastrous policies. Black students suffer in Baltimore, Chicago, and other Democrat-run cities across America. Their minds are being crushed in schools whose administrators care less about them and more about themselves, their salaries, and their pensions.

Atop this stinking pile sit black liberal Democrats who betray their own people while pointing fingers everywhere, starting with the shopworn bogeyman of "white racists."

But, ultimately, responsibility rests with voters who keep electing these destructive clowns.

"More and more money for increasingly bad results," Ted



Dabrowski and John Klingner of Wirepoints lament. "Our politicians get away with this because we let them."

(Editor/GG: Only a few years ago, our school was awarded the Excellence degree by the state. For that one year. That Superintendent

left, and it has been downhill from there. It is a small school, homogenous, with very small class sizes. Why are our scores so low? And it ain't the money.)

Please see: <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/02/08/tale-two-cities-school-districts/>



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WALTHER
from page 21

different experienced shooters, shooting different loads, and none of the loads are close to the point of aim or that accurate. You would think that a \$900 gun would have its sights regulated more closely ... the loads we shot were plain-jane 95-grain FMJ loads. Even considering the weather, we were not happy with the results.

None of the loads would have me writing home, but with all the .380 ammo on the dealer's shelves today, you would hopefully find something



CCI's 95-grain FMJ

that grouped well. I've been wanting to try some of the new defense loads but haven't had the chance yet. With the right load, the PP would make a decent carry gun. You would need a holster, as it is not light like a polymer-framed pistol and wouldn't do well in a pocket, but there have been holsters around for these for decades.

Both the PP and PPK are known for their accuracy, so please don't let these targets put you off. Conditions were terrible, but the gun should perform, with the right ammo... that's not an issue. As I said, with more time, money, and targets, I would find a load that grouped well and would be effective to carry in this gun.

Summing Up

This gun, as I said, is a classic. It is not cheap – nothing of value is – but it looks great, it felt wonderful in the hand, and it functioned very well. I could see the pistol being used for concealed carry, once the right ammo was found. With the two seven-round magazines that come with it, you would be well-armed.

The gun also comes in .32ACP, but I figured that .380 would be a bit more effective. This pistol will perform well with the right loads. We just didn't happen to have those right loads at the time of shooting.

This is a niche gun. Not every shooter today would want to adopt a steel-framed, 7+1-round-capacity .380. But, if you like old-school guns and are a DA/SA fan, this gun's for you. If you are looking to add a classic icon to your collection, give the PP (or PPK) a look.

As I said, it's not cheap (I've seen it for \$850), but it IS quality – there is a whole lot of hand-fitting and finishing here. I see no reason why this gun would not appreciate over the years. I know it would be the centerpiece, the focal point, in my gun safe. This old police pistol is still viable in the 21st century and makes an effective carry piece. After all, James Bond was a believer!

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2025/02/walther-pp-380-acp-pistol-a-classic-revisited-review/>

BUG OUT BAG
from page 20

- SIG MPX: While it uses proprietary magazines, the MPX platform offers unmatched reliability and performance in a compact 9mm package.

3.Increased Accuracy and Control Over a Handgun

- The longer barrel and shoulder stock (or brace) make these PDWs significantly more accurate than a handgun, allowing for faster follow-

up shots and better engagement at distance.

- Recoil is minimal, making them ideal for fast shooting and high-capacity engagements.

Conclusion – The Right Firearm for Survival

Choosing the right firearm for your bug out bag depends on portability, reliability and practicality.

Whether you prioritize self-defense, hunting, or stealth, your firearm should be compact enough to carry yet powerful enough to be effective.

With proper training and preparation, a compact firearm can give you a critical advantage in any survival scenario. While there are many more options besides what I listed above, it ultimately comes down to personal preference.

(Editor/GG: One thing not mentioned above: Pack a TON of loaded magazines for your heaters. A TON. There will be no ammo air drop or other resupply. What you have is what you have.)

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2025/02/top-compact-firearms-to-include-in-your-bug-out-bag/>

ELON RETWEETS
from page 18

laundering operation worked. We broke down how USAID moved money into pooled UN accounts, how the UN bought dollars from the Federal Reserve and then paid to fly them to Afghanistan where they were exchanged for Afghanis.

And the Biden administration was printing the Afghan currency on behalf of the Taliban.

In 2022, the DA Afghanistan Bank showed off photos of \$40 million in

stacks of hundred dollar bills sitting on the tarmac at Kabul International Airport. The Taliban controlled central bank described this as one of three shipments of “humanitarian aid” amounting to over \$100 million.

DAB, Afghanistan's central bank, was headed by Noor Ahmad Agha, a “specially designated terrorist” who had been named as the “financier of bomb-making”, including the IEDs which had killed over 1,000 American soldiers, and sending money to a sanctioned figure was illegal.

Despite that someone had sent a

massive fortune in U.S. cash to the Taliban's terror bank.

While no international organization was willing to admit to the cash-smuggling operation, the ultimate responsibility lay with USAID. The \$40 million on the tarmac was part of a much larger scheme under which USAID and the State Department provided over \$1.7 billion in funding to the UN which then shipped \$2.9 billion in cash to Afghanistan.

Please see <https://www.frontpage.com/elon-musk-retweets-freedom-center-investigation-of-usaid/>

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

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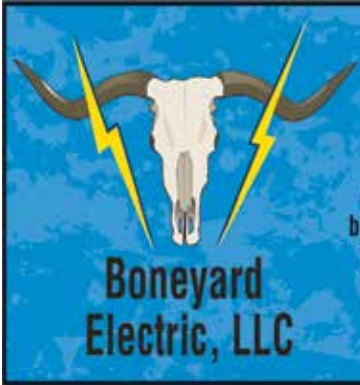




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Presidents Day Parade? Not Exactly.

By Fred Hernandez, Commentary

The rumors that reached our headquarters was that there were war drums in the distance and smoke signals were curling up to meet the blue winter sky from fields afar. The message was that the valley lefties were incensed about the first three winning weeks of the new administration.

They were to embark on a demonstration of some kind on Monday the 17th to display their disdain and disapproval. These demonstrations by the left are usually the same sad show of ignorance of the facts. So be it.

Sure enough. There they were at noon on Monday, Presidents' Day, assembling at the Bluff. Then off they went, about two dozen of them, worming their

way up the southside of Main Street. It was almost sad to be an eyewitness to the Anti-President Day paraders with their rickety cardboard signs.

For a brief moment they stopped in front of the Antlers Liquor store, most probably to assess whether or not they should cross the street and "confront" their nemesis, their scourge, the President Trump cardboard cutout attached to the old tree in front of the *Sentinel*, the valley's only free press, which maintained its proclamation that TRUMP WON throughout the dismal years of incompetent and corrupt administration that afflicted the country for four years.

Decision made, they proceeded to lurch, still on the south side of the street, to the gas station. After a quick about face they

retraced their steps back to where they came from.

One Sign read "Musk MUST GO". Really? Where should he go? This man has been instrumental in finding monumental fraud in government. Billions of dollars and perhaps even trillions of dollars wasted on graft and corruption. Billions and billions paid out in Social Security payments to names of individuals over one hundred and twenty years old and over. Incredible crime. Is that what the leftists want?

Another sign shouts out "STOP THIS COUP". What coup? Exposing corruption and crime in government is a coup? That is the problem with the liberals, progressives and radicals. It's acceptable for them and their team to cheat. Their problem is

very simple. They do not like being Americans but they won't go to a communist country. They love their material things, things they can only get in this country.

One sign was truly hypocritical. It said "CHOOSE KINDNESS". Kindness begins at home. Kindness is making sure your family is safe, protected and well provided for. Kindness is not cheating, stealing and robbing your fellow citizens to fill your own pockets. That's basic. Basic, however, is a difficult concept to comprehend while in the throes of extreme brain fog. A permanent condition for many in this country and some in this county.

The protest march came to an end as quietly as it began. An ignominious end to be sure. What's truly pitiful is that the

left refuses to understand that the truth will always prevail no matter how much or how loudly they rail against it. The truth is we have a new administration. One that loves the United States and loves its people. An administration that is cognizant of the years and years of abuse the people have suffered from previous criminals and organizations that milked the country and disrespected its citizens. An administration that is committed to stopping the abuse, holding law breakers accountable and returning the country to the Judeo-Christian values, the rule of law and the Constitution on which it was founded.

As Elon Musk would probably say, as he cleans out the graft and corruption, "it's not rocket science." Got it?

Does Colorado's Amended Gun Ban Bill Puts Polis in a Bind

by Cam Edwards, BearingArms.com

The editorial board of the *Colorado Springs Gazette* answers that question with an emphatic "yes." In a new editorial, the paper ripped the Democrat-majority state Senate for giving its preliminary approval to SB-03 last week, and is unimpressed with the major amendment attached at the eleventh hour that creates a huge carveout to the ban on all gas-operated semi-automatic firearms that can accept a detachable magazine.

The last minute amendment, which was apparently negotiated with the governor's office, turns SB 3 from an outright gun ban into a hybrid bill. While the vast majority of semi-automatic long guns on the market would still be prohibited for purchase in the state, gun owners who go through additional training courses and receive a permission slip from their local sheriff would be exempt from the prohibition. This permit-to-purchase requirement gives cover to Democrats who want to reassure their constituents that they didn't vote for a gun ban, but the paper's editorial board is less than impressed with the legislative sleight of hand, which they say puts Polis in a difficult position.

If Polis signs the new version, he will go down among history's worst gun-grabbing politicians. If Polis does anything other than veto SB-3, he will lose his viability as a candidate for national office. When a politician appears to the left of Harris on guns, his future is dim.

The new version attempts to preclude critics from saying it outlaws common handguns, rifles and shotguns. Instead, it limits their acquisition to wealthy, disproportionately white male consumers.

With the new amendments, Polis could buy the targeted guns (net worth > \$400

million), along with most legislators. Those who could not buy guns — unable to meet the law's high threshold — include people who need self-protection the most: low-income battered women, low-income members of the LGBTQIA community, and low-income minorities living in Colorado's high-crime neighborhoods.

Sure, pass a bill that harms only the lower half of the socio-economic ladder. They won't fuss, because they are busy paying for overpriced food and inflated utility bills while staying off the radar of TdA gangsters and other criminals who chuckle at guns laws.

The amended bill would institutionalize social injustice and inequity. Instead of screwing 100% of Coloradans out of their gun rights, it would substantially burden only the working class and poor — the people most endangered by crime.

It would, until a court says otherwise, pretend the Second Amendment says gun rights "shall not be infringed among the rich."

The paper isn't wrong by arguing that the harms of SB-03 would disproportionately fall on those living paycheck to paycheck or struggling to get by, though every Colorado resident subjected to the permit requirements would be burdened by the mandate. The fingerprinting and additional training not only come with a price tag, but as the *Gazette* rightfully points out, they're also akin to a Second Amendment poll tax.

"It's like Old South's literacy tests that kept "the wrong people" from voting. It also manifests in a gun registry of questionable legality.

Without disposable income, a flexible

work schedule and ample free time, forget it. Meeting the threshold would be, for average Coloradans, a pipe-dream too expensive and time consuming to pursue. Criminals will love this law."

I don't know if they'll love it, but I expect they'll ignore it, just like they've ignored Colorado's ban on "large capacity" magazines, "red flag" laws, and other gun control measures the Democrats have put in place over the past twelve years. Violent crime has increased dramatically across Colorado since 2013, despite (or in part, because of) all those new laws, while law-abiding gun owners have had their rights repeatedly diminished.

In that sense SB 3 is simply more of the same. But if Polis ultimately signs it into law it would also be the most sweeping gun ban adopted in the United States since the city of Chicago banned the possession of all handguns back in the early 1980s... even with the carveout for gun owners who get a "firearm safety course eligibility card".

Just like the handgun bans in Chicago and Washington, D.C., Colorado's semi-auto ban will face an immediate court challenge if its enacted into law, and I suspect it will fare just as poorly. Still, it could take years to overturn the law via the courts, and the harm done to Colorado residents in the meantime will be immense and irreparable. Polis might believe this amendment offers a middle-of-the-road approach to bans on so-called assault weapons, but as the *Gazette* argues, it's still so extreme that it could end his viability as a national candidate right along with infringing on Coloradans' right to keep and bear arms.

Please see: <https://bearingarms.com/camedwards/2025/02/17/does-colorados-amended-gun-ban-bill-put-polis-in-a-bind-n1227706>

Colorado Ammo Ban Moving Forward

By We The Second
Press Release via Facebook

—February 18, 2024

We The Second

While the most severe gun ban in the nation's history was being heard in the Colorado Senate, the House chamber was going after your access to ammo and reloading supplies. HB25-1133 passed the House Business & Labor Affairs Committee on a 7-6 vote. The bill will be scheduled for a full vote of the House in the coming days.

Please contact your State House Rep and tell them to vote NO on HB25-1133!

This bill applies to off-the-shelf ammo and reloading supplies (cartridge cases, propellant, primer, powder)

- Raises age to purchase ammo and reloading supplies to 21
- New shipping and delivery requirements
- Requires signature and ID upon delivery
- Bans proper hazard package labeling, violating federal law
- Requires stores to keep all ammo locked up
- Would go into effect July 1, 2026

Not sure who your State House Rep is? Find out here: <https://leg.colorado.gov/FindMyLegislator>

Track this bill and all other Colorado firearm related bills here: <https://wethesecondcolorado.com/2025-co-firearm-legislation/>

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