

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Colonial National
Historical Park

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Colonial National Historical Park News Release

September 18, 2023

For Immediate Release

Colonial National Historical Park to begin removal of invasive species to restore historic viewsheds and protect cultural and natural resources project

Yorktown, Va – Beginning the week of October 18, contractors for Colonial National Historical Park will remove approximately eight acres of invasive plant species in two areas within the park. Five acres will be cut along the slopes of the historic Tobacco Road trail located adjacent to the Yorktown Battlefield Visitor Center. Roughly three acres will be cut at the eastern end of the American battle lines located adjacent to the Moore House subdivision.

With this project, Colonial National Historical Park is conforming to NPS Management Policies, 2006, Section 4.4.4, Management of Exotic Species and Executive Order #13112, 1999, Prevent, Detect, Control, and Monitor Exotic Species and Provide Restoration of Native Species and Habitats Condition. Non-native species are extremely invasive, quickly establishing and growing in natural areas and on the historic battlefield. They form dense areas of vegetation, competing with native plants, and degrading food resources and habitats for wildlife.

Invasive species to be removed include Golden Bamboo, Empress Tree, Chinese Privet, Wisteria, and English Ivy. An industrial forestry mulcher will be employed to shred plant materials to ground level. During active mulching operations, the park requests visitors and the general public comply with safety notices and barricades, as well as temporary area closures of the Tobacco Road trail and the pedestrian bridge connecting the Visitor Center with Yorktown. The pulverized material and remaining root structure will serve to prevent erosion until phase two of this project is completed in early summer 2024. Phase two will focus on application of an herbicide treatment to remove any invasive plant species regrowth in the previously cleared areas. Following the completion of phase two the hillside will be replanted with native grasses, trees and shrubs.

To learn more about Colonial National Historical Park, please visit:
<https://www.nps.gov/colo/index.htm>.

-NPS-

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

From: The Roosevelt Group <Jpatton@rooseveltdc.com>
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 8:00 AM
To: Ingram, Diane
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief



Executive Insight Brief

September 22, 2023

Headlines - Aerospace & Defense - Budget & Approps - Advanced Tech - Military Installations & Communities -
Homeland Security - Transportation & Infrastructure - Biotech & Healthcare - Climate & Development

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Notable Headlines

- [House GOP erupts as McCarthy fails to move Pentagon bill](#)
- [Senate Confirms Army and Marine Chiefs, but Tuberville's Blockade Drags On](#)
- [Biden announces \\$325 million military aid package to Ukraine after Zelenskyy meeting](#)
- [Pentagon exempts Ukraine operations from potential government shutdown](#)

- [Rupert Murdoch to Step Down as Chair of Fox and News Corp](#)

Worth reading: [Hypersonic Missiles Are Game-Changers, and America Doesn't Have Them](#)

ICYMI: [The Roosevelt Group's Analysis of the FY24 NDAA](#)

View From The Hill



Government funding continued to dominate the week's news in Washington, as House Republicans [struggled](#) to coalesce around an agreement for a Continuing Resolution (CR) and the Senate experienced a slower-than-expected pace in passing its own minibus bill over different [demands](#) for standalone votes on legislative priorities by some senators, including Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Roger Marshall (R-KS). Tension within the House GOP was [palpable](#) as hardline conservative Members tanked a plan negotiated by their own leadership, while also [twice](#) taking down the rule governing debate for defense appropriations. Republican leaders had hoped that passing Pentagon funding would build momentum towards passing a CR; however, they were taken aback when Representatives Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) and Matt Gaetz (R-FL) flipped their votes from earlier in the week to oppose the rule.

Amidst the impasse, both chambers left town for the week having failed to pass anything in the way of progress for funding the government. Currently, House GOP leadership is considering plans to sideline the CR effort and begin voting on annual appropriations bills

next week, at the suggestion of Matt Gaetz, but it remains to be seen whether the broader GOP conference will endorse such an effort. Some moderate Republicans have also floated the idea of joining with House Democrats to sign on to what is known as a “discharge petition” to force a vote on a CR. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has indicated plans to move a short-term CR next week. With neither chamber having passed a CR or a meaningful number of annual appropriations bills, it is increasingly difficult to see how a government shutdown can be avoided after September 30th, with no semblance of bicameral, bipartisan or White House talks having yet taken place. The current farm bill and Federal Aviation Administration authorizations also expire at the end of the fiscal year.

The only real glimmer of productivity coming out of the House was the passage of the motion to instruct conferees for the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), setting off the more formal process for [Republican](#) and [Democratic](#) conferees to reconcile the House NDAA with the Senate’s version. The Senate managed to partially [break](#) the military confirmation logjam put in place by Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) by voting to confirm General C.Q. Brown, Jr. ([83-11](#)) as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Randy George ([96-1](#)) as Chief of Staff for the Army, and General Eric Smith as Commandant of the Marine Corps ([96-0](#)). While Tuberville’s unanimous consent blockade is still in effect, Schumer ultimately opted to forego expedited consideration of the nominations in order to get some senior leadership in place—a move that received [mixed](#) reactions from within his own party.

As military aid to Ukraine continued to be one of several sources of conflict within the House GOP funding debate, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited Washington this week coinciding with his address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. While Speaker McCarthy did [not](#) extend an invitation for Zelensky to address another joint session of Congress like he did last December, the Ukrainian president did [meet](#) with senior congressional leaders on both sides of the Capitol and provided a closed-door briefing to senators, before traveling to the other end Pennsylvania Avenue for a meeting with President Biden at the White House.

Aerospace & Defense

[F-35 fighter jets can only fly 55% of time, US watchdog says \(Financial Times\)](#)

The Pentagon’s costly fleet of F-35 fighter jets can only fly a little over half the time, as maintenance issues keep the aircraft on the ground despite the growing reliance on the planes by the US and its allies. The fleet’s mission-capable rate — or the percentage of time a plane can perform one of its assigned missions — was 55 per cent as of March 2023, far below the Pentagon’s goal of 85 per cent to 90 per cent, the Government Accountability Office said on Thursday. The report from the GAO, an independent

congressional watchdog, was published just days after a Marine Corps F-35 crashed in South Carolina, prompting a search for the plane and raising questions over how it could have gone missing for a day before its debris was located. The F-35's share of the US's overall tactical aviation fleet is expected to keep growing, providing a boon to its manufacturer Lockheed Martin. Each of the fighter jets costs the government about \$160mn. The US military has 450 F-35s and the Pentagon plans to buy roughly 2,000 more by the mid-2040s, costing \$1.7tn over the programme's life cycle, including \$1.3tn for maintaining the aircraft.

[KC-135 tanker autopilot now safer to use in flight, Air Force says](#)

[Army picks vendors to prototype robotic combat vehicles \(DefenseScoop\)](#)

McQ, Textron Systems, General Dynamics Land Systems and Oshkosh Defense have been tapped for phase one of a prototyping effort to drive the Army's pursuit of robotic combat vehicles, the service announced. The four other transaction agreements have a total combined base value of \$24.72 million, according to an Army news release. RCVs are a key component of the Army's next-generation combat vehicle portfolio as the service moves to acquire new unmanned systems and develops plans for what it calls "human-machine integrated formations." The service has been experimenting with existing robotic platforms, surrogate systems and control vehicles as part of a campaign of learning, including for Project Convergence. Under the new agreements, the four vendors will each build and deliver two Robotic Combat Vehicle-Light (RCV-L) prototypes by August 2024 for platform mobility testing and soldier experimentation.

[Air Force primed to deliver initial cloud-based C2 capability to Northcom, NORAD](#)

[Navy launches board to help services leverage new science and tech \(Defense News\)](#)

The newly formed Department of the Navy Science and Technology Board will meet for the first time this week, with members slated to discuss how they can help Navy and Marine Corps leaders leverage scientific advances. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro last week announced the creation of the board, which is meant to "ensure the identification of new technologies and new applications of technology in those areas to strengthen national security," according to its charter. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin tapped former Navy Secretary Richard Danzig to chair it. The board includes leaders from academia and

industry as well as former military and NASA officials.

Budget & Appropriations

[House GOP leaders scrap spending bill votes amid infighting \(Roll Call\)](#)

House Republicans abandoned plans to take up a stopgap funding measure this week after members of the fractious GOP conference warned there would not be enough votes to pass a continuing resolution to avert a partial government shutdown next month. Party leaders informed members that no more votes would be taken Thursday and the House would recess subject to the call of the chair. Lawmakers were advised to keep their plans flexible, and that “ample notice” would be provided for any votes they planned to schedule on Friday or over the weekend. The immediate plan instead is to ready more of the chamber’s 11 remaining full-year appropriations bills for votes, focusing on passing those to establish a firm negotiating position for talks with the bigger-spending Senate. But with just nine days until a shutdown could start, the pivot effectively punts the first move on a CR to the Senate, or possibly a bipartisan group of House lawmakers who could try to force a floor vote through a discharge petition.

[What could happen if the government shuts down](#)

[Two House Republicans say they might work with Democrats to fund government \(NBC News\)](#)

As the Republican stalemate over government funding continues, two freshman GOP House members opened the door Thursday to end-running their party’s leadership and working with Democrats to fund the government. Reps. Marc Molinaro and Mike Lawler, two New York Republicans who represent Hudson Valley-area districts that voted for President Joe Biden in 2020, said they’re willing to consider a “discharge petition” to force votes on a short-term funding bill — if their party fails to get its act together. Lawler told reporters that if Republicans can’t unify to pass a continuing resolution, or CR, to approve short-term funding, he will pursue a discharge petition with Democrats. It’s far from clear what the underlying bill would be — and whether enough Republicans would be willing to break with Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and team up with Democrats to force legislation to a vote.

Lawmakers warn struggling defense industry needs to get on 'war footing' for growing China threat

Schumer sets up path for Senate to move first on funding stopgap (The Hill)

Faced with the House stalemate over a government stopgap funding bill, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on Thursday set up a path for the Senate to move first on a bill to fund the government beyond Sept. 30. Schumer filed cloture on a motion to proceed to H.R. 3935, the House-passed bill to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which could serve as a legislative vehicle to pass a continuing resolution to fund government through the Senate. Traditionally, the House moves first on spending and revenue bills but senators feel they must make the first move to keep the government funded because Speaker Kevin McCarthy has not been able to round up 218 Republican votes in the House to move a stopgap funding measure. Senate aides say the FAA authorization bill will likely be used as a vehicle to move a clean continuing resolution that would fund the federal government for a few weeks but likely not include money for the war in Ukraine or disaster relief. Senators will spend next week debating and voting on the legislation in hopes of sending it to the House by Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

Advanced Technologies

Army finalizing information capabilities baseline (DefenseScoop)

The Army is in the final stages to approve a document that will outline how it pursues capabilities to achieve an “information advantage.” The Information Systems Information Dimension Initial Capabilities Document, or ID-IS ICD as it’s called, will provide the initial guidance for how organizations can write requirements for systems and capabilities within the information domain. The Army is gearing up to publish doctrine on what it terms information advantage, with an expected publication of Army Doctrinal Publication 3-13, Information, slated for October with an associated field manual to follow. Unlike the other services that are part of the joint force, the Army has eschewed the term “information warfare,” reserving that term to describe adversary activities. Instead, the Army has said there is only one operational environment with three dimensions within that environment: the information dimension, human dimension and physical dimension.

[Cisco to Buy Cybersecurity Company Splunk in \\$28 Billion Cash Deal](#)

[Space Force pauses commercial strategy to flesh out 'actionable' plans with industry \(Breaking Defense\)](#)

Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman has, in essence, sent the Space Force's draft Commercial Space Strategy back to the drawing board, seeking to flesh it out with more specifics on what exactly the service believes it needs from industry for each of its mission areas. Saltzman on Wednesday told the annual Advanced Maui Optical and Space Surveillance Technologies (AMOS) Conference in Hawaii that after reading through the draft. The document, he stressed, has to move from "aspirational to actionable" — echoing the growing industry concerns about the need to turn rhetoric on leveraging commercial innovation into real programs with real money. Another question he wants answered is how to define the types of commercial assistance the Space Force might need, in order to guide an acquisition approach.

[White House official tees up AI executive order](#)

[House cloud bill gets Senate counterpart \(Nextgov\)](#)

A House bill meant to ensure agencies can use multi-cloud networks securely got a Senate counterpart on Thursday from Sens. Steve Daines, R-Mont., and Jacky Rosen, D-Nev. A bipartisan group of lawmakers introduced the Multi-Cloud Innovation and Advancement Act in the House in August. The text of the two proposals differ, but both would require new guidance for agencies on how they should use cloud computing, the creation of a roadmap for implementation of multi-cloud and a workforce study to look into any gaps in the federal workforce related to cloud computing. The proposal's backers say it could shore up cloud security and data interoperability in the wake of cyber incidents like the hack of government Microsoft email accounts in some agencies.

Military Installations & Communities

[Lawmakers Request Details of Chinese Nationals at Sensitive U.S. Facilities \(WSJ\)](#)

House Republicans are demanding the Biden administration provide more information

about incidents in which Chinese nationals conducted what U.S. officials say is unauthorized surveillance of sensitive U.S. facilities, including the White House, rocket launch sites and military bases. In recent years, there have been about 100 such instances of Chinese nationals gaining access to these sites. They range from Chinese nationals found crossing into a U.S. missile range in New Mexico to scuba divers swimming in waters near Cape Canaveral, Fla., and individuals taking pictures of security or communications gear at the White House. In almost all cases, the individuals posed as tourists and said they were lost or indicated they were just touring the area, U.S. officials said. The incidents, officials say, amount to widespread but low-level espionage by the Chinese government, increasing concern about Beijing's surveillance of some of the most sensitive U.S. sites.

[Why the 'Sun Never Sets' for Airmen Aboard the RC-135](#)

[Do Airmen Enjoy Their Dorms? Air Force Has No Systematic Way To Find Out \(Air and Space Forces\)](#)

The Department of the Air Force does not consistently or systematically ask Airmen or Guardians how dormitory conditions affect their quality of life and readiness, which reduces the department's ability to identify and prioritize improvement efforts, according to a Government Accountability Office study published Sept. 19. The other branches face similar issues: GAO found each has serious flaws in how they assess barracks systems, such as electrical, plumbing and foundation; in how they track and report barracks construction or renovation funding; in how barracks conditions affect residents, and in their rules for who is required to live in barracks. Junior enlisted, unmarried Airmen typically live in dormitories, which other services call barracks. The study found that the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), which oversees the services, must also play a larger role in guiding and standardizing barracks assessment programs.

[911 call reveals bizarre circumstances of F-35 ejection](#)

[1 in 3 PACT Act Claims Have Received a 0% Disability Rating, Prompting a VA Review \(Military.com\)](#)

The Department of Veterans Affairs has approved nearly 80% of the 570,000 claims it has adjudicated under the PACT Act, distributing more than \$2.2 billion in disability compensation to veterans or survivors since it began accepting claims last year. Of the total claims, however, 34% have received a 0% disability rating, meaning that affected veterans have at least one service-connected condition under the law that is not

disabling -- for example, hypertension, which has been linked to Agent Orange exposure, that is controlled by medication. The VA is now reviewing its ratings schedule to determine whether it can revise it to address medically controlled conditions such as hypertension, VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs told reporters Thursday. With veterans service organizations and many affected veterans raising concerns about the 0% disability ratings they have received, Jacobs asked his staff "to explore whether we have the flexibility to consider revising the ratings schedule"

Homeland Security

[Air Force general defends incendiary memo but says 'war is not inevitable' \(Defense News\)](#)

A contentious memo penned by Gen. Mike Minihan was intended to create a sense of urgency for his troops, the Air Mobility Command leader said, adding that this mindset delivered "success" in the organization's recent exercise. Minihan's memo, which circulated earlier this year, predicted war with China by 2025 and instructed AMC commanders to report all major efforts to prepare for "the China fight." After the memo drew criticism, Pentagon officials distanced themselves from its remarks. Asked last week whether he still thinks the U.S. will fight in the Pacific within two years, Minihan said, "My assessment is that war is not inevitable, but the readiness I'm driving with that timeline is absolutely essential to deterrence and absolutely essential to the decisive victory." "There needs to be tension on readiness, more than just 'be ready tonight.' You need to have readiness that drives urgency. The urgency and the action are paramount,"

[Biden doubles down on both carrot and stick at the border](#)

[War crimes tribunal ICC says it has been hacked \(Reuters\)](#)

The International Criminal Court (ICC) said its computer system had been hacked, a breach at one of the world's most high-profile international institutions and one that handles highly sensitive information about war crimes. The ICC said it had detected unusual activity on its computer network at the end of last week, prompting a response that was still ongoing. A spokesperson declined to comment on how serious the hack was, whether it has been fully resolved, or who might be behind it. "Immediate measures were adopted to respond to this cybersecurity incident and to mitigate its impact," the ICC said in a short statement. The ICC is the permanent war crimes tribunal in the Dutch city of The Hague, established in 2002 to try war crimes and crimes against humanity. Prosecutors at the

court are currently conducting 17 investigations into situations in Ukraine, Uganda, Venezuela, Afghanistan and the Philippines, among others.

[Zelensky accuses U.N. of inaction on Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#)

[DHS Homeland Security Investigations Announces Strategy to Combat Illicit Opioids \(DHS\)](#)

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) released the Strategy for Combating Illicit Opioids, an intelligence-driven approach to disrupting and dismantling transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and keeping dangerous substances, like illicit fentanyl driving the overdose epidemic, off America's streets. To advance President Biden's Unity Agenda Strategy to beat the overdose epidemic, DHS is working with partners at every level of government to stop the illicit flow of fentanyl into the country, including through various surge campaigns launched this year. The strategy announced today leverages HSI's extensive expertise in investigating cross-border criminal activity and its unique access to customs and financial data to prevent illicit shipments of drug precursor chemicals from reaching U.S. borders, in line with President Biden's National Drug Control Strategy. Interrupting the precursor supply chain further prevents the synthesis of drugs like fentanyl and methamphetamines.

Transportation & Infrastructure

[Zipline secures key operational approval for drone package deliveries \(Freight Waves\)](#)

Drone delivery's top dog just added a bark to its bite. Zipline, with 750,000 deliveries and 50 million autonomous miles flown to date arguably making it the industry's undisputed titan, has received Federal Aviation Administration authorization to remove visual observers (VOs) from its beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations. The company, which has already taken a massive bite out of the global drone delivery market share, now adds a key operational approval that could make its service more scalable and affordable. The approval, which follows similar BVLOS exemptions for UPS Flight Forward, uAvionix and Phoenix Air Unmanned, extended Zipline's Part 135 air carrier approval, obtained last year. It will allow the company to complete commercial package deliveries without VOs in Salt Lake City, and Bentonville, Arkansas. The new exemption will expire in September 2025. The approved operations will make use of Zipline's Sparrow drone, which releases packages using a parachute.

[US transportation chief calls New York air traffic staffing 'unacceptable'](#)

[First Private US Passenger Rail Line in 100 Years Is About to Link Miami and Orlando at High Speed \(U.S. News\)](#)

The first big test of whether privately owned high-speed passenger train service can prosper in the United States will launch Friday when Florida's Brightline begins running trains between Miami and Orlando, reaching speeds of 125 mph. It's a \$5 billion bet Brightline's owner, Fortress Investment Group, is making, believing that eventually 8 million people annually will take the 3.5-hour, 235-mile trip between the state's biggest tourist hubs. The company is charging single riders \$158 round-trip for business class and \$298 for first-class, with families and groups able to buy four round-trip tickets for \$398. Thirty-two trains will run daily. Brightline, which began running its neon-yellow trains the 70 miles (112 kilometers) between Miami and West Palm Beach in 2018, is the first private intercity passenger service to begin U.S. operations in a century. It's also building a line connecting Southern California and Las Vegas that it hopes to open in 2027 with trains that will reach 190 mph (305 kph). The only other U.S. high-speed line is Amtrak's Acela service between Boston and Washington, D.C., which began in 2000. Amtrak is owned by the federal government.

[U.S. agencies join MIT in opening John Volpe National Transportation Systems Center](#)

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces Grants to Support More Efficient Supply Chains Running on Our Marine Highways \(USDOT\)](#)

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) awarded nearly \$12 million in grants to eight marine highway projects across the nation under the United States Marine Highway Program (USMHP). The funding will improve the movement of goods along our navigable waterways and expand existing waterborne freight services in Alaska, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin, which will strengthen supply chains and ultimately cut costs for consumers. "Our country has always relied on American waterways to get vital goods where they need to go," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "Today, we are delivering new funding for eight marine highway projects across the country that will strengthen our supply chains, improve our ports, and help keep goods affordable for American families." "The U.S. Marine Highway Program is focused on increasing waterborne transport through the nation's navigable waterways," said Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips. "By integrating our internal

waterways into the nation's surface transportation system, we will be utilizing a more efficient, effective, and sustainable option for moving passengers and large freight.”

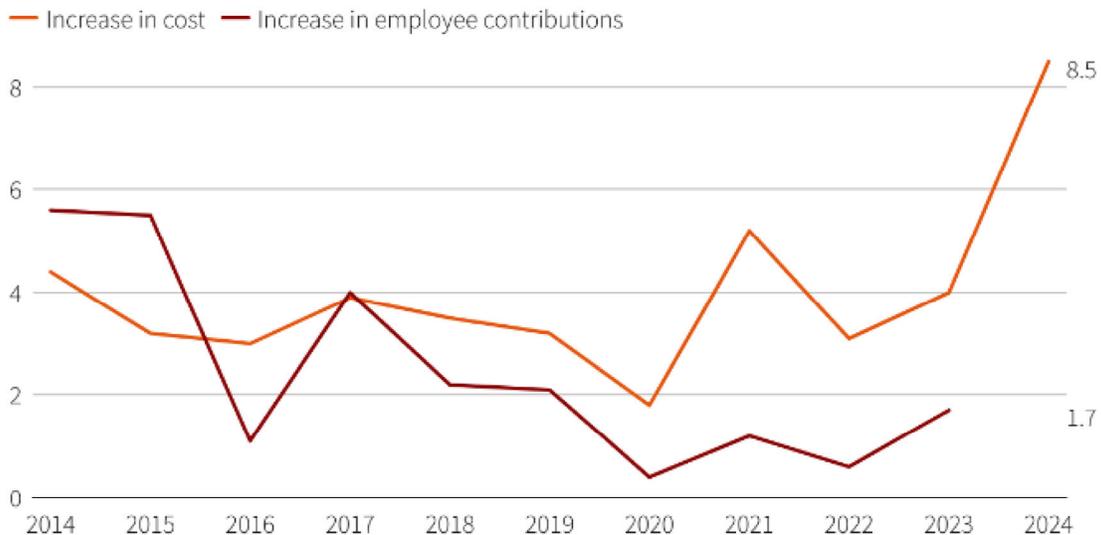
Biotechnology & Healthcare

[Gates Foundation grants GE HealthCare \\$44M for AI ultrasound tech \(Healthcare Dive\)](#)

GE HealthCare received a \$44 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop artificial intelligence-assisted ultrasound tech. The funding will go toward making clinical decision support tools to support obstetric and lung ultrasound scans for maternal and fetal health, as well as pediatric lung health, for low- and middle-income countries. Caption Health, which GE HealthCare acquired in February for \$127 million upfront, will develop the AI tools. Caption is a subsidiary of GE that uses AI to interpret ultrasound exam results. The company currently has a system cleared by the Food and Drug Administration for early detection of heart disease that walks clinicians through the steps of performing an echocardiogram. With the most recent round of grant funding, Caption will develop multiple lung ultrasound and obstetric algorithms through clinical validation and regulatory submissions, the companies said in a statement. The AI tools are intended to help healthcare professionals with clinical decision-making, including people without specialized training or experience in ultrasound, with the goal of improving maternal and pediatric lung care.

[US employers to see biggest healthcare cost jump in a decade in 2024](#)

Historical rise in medical costs and staff contribution



[At new mental health courts in California, judges will be able to mandate treatment \(NPR\)](#)

The first time Heidi Sweeney began hallucinating, the voices in her head told her Orange County's Huntington Beach was where she would be safe. There, behind the bikini-clad crowds playing volleyball and riding beach cruisers, she slept in homeless encampments, then beside a bush outside a liquor store, where she drank vodka to drown out the din only she could hear. For years, she refused help, insisting to all who offered, "I'm not sick," until police arrested her for petty theft and public drunkenness. A judge gave her an ultimatum: jail or treatment. She chose treatment. "I'm so thankful that they did that," said Sweeney, now 52. "I needed that. I think there's others out there that need it, too." If she hadn't been compelled to get care, Sweeney said, she wouldn't be alive today, back at work and reunited with her husband. It's why she supports California's new civil CARE Courts that will launch this fall in eight counties, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Orange, followed by the rest of the state in 2024. Under the new system, family members and first responders can ask county judges to order people with psychotic illness into treatment, even if they are not unhoused or haven't committed a crime.

[FDA rejects first needle-free alternative to EpiPens, calling for additional research](#)

[PBMs, PhRMA trade blame over drug costs in House hearing \(Healthcare Dive\)](#)

Members of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee skewered the head of the major pharmacy benefit manager lobby in a hearing on Tuesday over PBMs' role in rising drug costs, including practices like rebates and spread pricing, as Congress inches closer to enacting legislation to reform the industry. PBM business practices are a "scam," said Rep. Stephen Lynch, D-Mass. "It's absolutely maddening and I think we have an area here, Mr. Chairman, where we can actually work together and have some bipartisanship," Lynch said. The House Oversight and Accountability Committee is one of several government entities currently conducting an investigation into PBMs. It's the committee's second hearing into the middlemen, and the first to include representatives of both PBMs and drugmakers — both of whom attempted to pin the blame for problems in the U.S. drug supply chain on each other. Though PBMs received the brunt of legislators' criticism during the more than three-hour hearing, pharmaceutical manufacturers did not escape unscathed. "The big picture here is a lot of finger pointing," Rep. Robert Garcia, D-Calif., said. "Both Big Pharma and PBMs are at fault."

Climate & Development

[At a Summit on Climate Ambition, the U.S. and China End Up on the B List \(NYT\)](#)

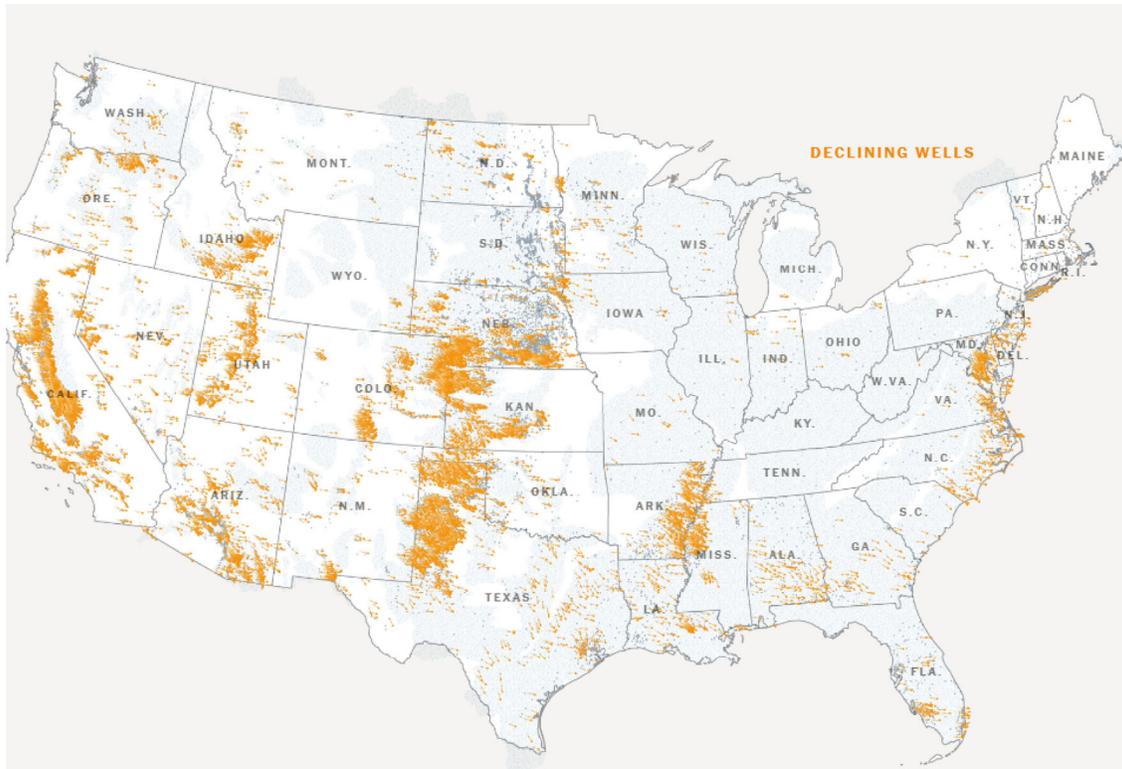
The United Nations' secretary general, António Guterres, convened a special summit on Wednesday in New York City designed to highlight the efforts of the most ambitious global leaders on climate policy — and to implicitly shame those who are dragging their feet. Mr. Guterres, who has made climate action a centerpiece of his agenda and has called on the world's largest carbon emitters to rapidly shift away from burning fossil fuels, the main driver of global warming, pledged that only high-level leaders whom he sees as taking climate action seriously would be allowed to speak at the event. That did not include the leaders of the world's two biggest polluters, China and the United States. "Climate action is dwarfed by the scale of the challenge," Mr. Guterres said in his opening remarks at the summit. "We must make up time lost to foot-dragging, arm-twisting and the naked greed of entrenched interests raking in billions from fossil fuels."

[Sunak to delay U.K. climate goals to avoid 'bankrupting' Britons](#)

[America Is Using Up Its Groundwater Like There's No Tomorrow \(NYT\)](#)

A wealth of underground water helped create America, its vast cities and bountiful

farmland. Now, Americans are squandering that inheritance. The Times analyzed water levels reported at tens of thousands of sites, revealing a crisis that threatens American prosperity. Nearly half the sites have declined significantly over the past 40 years as more water has been pumped out than nature can replenish. In the past decade, four of every 10 sites hit all-time lows. And last year was the worst yet.



[Biden administration to appoint coordinator for long-term recovery efforts in East Palestine](#)

[Wildfire Smoke Is Reversing Recent Clean-Air Gains Across the U.S. \(U.S. News\)](#)

When Canadian wildfire smoke shrouded the New York City skyline and spread to parts of New England this summer, millions of East Coast residents saw firsthand just how pervasive it can be. Now, a new study quantifies exactly what wildfire smoke is doing to hard-fought gains in cleaning up the air, even in Eastern states not typically affected by wildfires. "Since 2000, there's been enormous progress on improving air quality throughout much of the contiguous U.S., however around 2016 those declines in PM2.5 began to

stagnate or even reverse in some states,” said study author Marissa Childs, a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard University Center for the Environment. Wildfires release fine particulate matter, or PM2.5, into the air, driving pollution. These tiny particles can travel deep into the lungs and bloodstream and trigger an asthma attack, heart attack or strokes, among other risks. Specifically, wildfire smoke affected PM2.5 trends in nearly 75% of the 48 contiguous states since 2016, erasing nearly 25% of the air quality gains made since 2000 largely thanks to the Clean Air Act, a landmark environmental law, the study found. This is the equivalent of four years of air quality progress, Childs said. So why are things so out of hand?

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Services Committees

House: None listed

Senate:

- Thursday, September 28, 2023, 9:30am EDT: [To consider the nominations of: Honorable Derek H. Chollet to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and Ms. Cara L. Abercrombie to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition](#)

Appropriations Committees

House: None listed

Senate: None listed

Homeland Security Committees

House: None listed

Senate: None listed

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