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Executive Insight Brief

December 1, 2023

Headlines - Aerospace & Defense - Budget & Approps - Advanced Tech - Military Installations & Communities -
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Notable Headlines

- [‘A crap NDAA’: Conservatives prepare to take aim at Johnson over defense bill](#)
- [Takeaways from the DeSantis-Newsom debate](#)
- [Israel resumes Gaza military operation after cease-fire with Hamas ends](#)
- [China lures hundreds of Taiwan politicians with cheap trips before election](#)
- [Inspector general launches probe examining decision to relocate FBI headquarters to Maryland](#)

Worth reading: [Henry Kissinger Is Dead at 100; Shaped the Nation’s Cold War History](#)

View From The Hill



The holiday season officially kicked off on Capitol Hill this week, with the [lighting](#) of the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree, as lawmakers began the first December work period in years without a year-end fiscal cliff. Instead, the fiscal cliff will come in January when the first part of the current two-tiered Continuing Resolution runs out. Congress is spending the month [focused](#) on final passage of a conference National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) governing America’s defense policy for fiscal year 2024. Leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees expressed optimism this week that the two chambers can reconcile their respective versions of NDAA and send a final bill to the President before the

end of the year, though it remains to be seen what last-minute hurdles will inevitably arise and what will come of the House's controversial culture war provisions. The Senate continued driving [negotiations](#) on border security policy, as part of Congress's ongoing consideration of the Biden Administration supplemental funding request for aid to Ukraine and Israel, though Republicans and Democrats—not to mention the House and Senate—remain far apart on any consensus. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) [outlined](#) plans to have the upper chamber take up a massive legislative agenda throughout December, including votes on NDAA, supplemental funding, appropriations measures, federal vacancies, and a resolution to overcome an ongoing blockade of military promotions by Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL).

Indicted and disgraced Representative George Santos (R-NY) is [expected](#) to face an expulsion vote on Friday via privileged motion requiring the support of two-thirds of House Members in order to pass. Some Republicans are expected to join virtually all Democrats in supporting the motion to expel, though many have also expressed concern over the precedent such a vote would set. Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) decided against whipping Members on the measure or issuing a formal leadership recommendation on the vote. Republicans are tired of the Santos saga, weary of the steady clip of new revelations of misdeeds and falsehoods, all while Santos has consistently remained defiant. That said, the Republican majority in the House is so slim that any reduction in the GOP's ranks will make the already difficult job of passing Republican priorities even more challenging for Speaker Johnson and his leadership team.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) [performed](#) the Heimlich maneuver on Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) at a Senate Republican Caucus luncheon on Thursday, after she choked on the meal of Iowa pork chop and ribeye. The offending chop was pictured in a photo with Ernst posted to social media by Iowa's senior senator, Chuck Grassley at the start of the meal.

Aerospace & Defense

[F-35 Engine Upgrade Set To Enter Next Development Phase \(Aviation Week Network\)](#)

An engine upgrade for the Lockheed Martin F-35 is set to advance beyond the preliminary design stage by the end of March, even as General Electric continues to campaign for a competition to replace the fighter's Pratt & Whitney F135. Pratt plans to complete preliminary design work on the Engine Core Upgrade (ECU) for the F135 by the end of December and the preliminary design review before February, a company spokesman said on Nov. 28. Meanwhile, new acquisitions documents released by the Joint Program Office show the next phase of development will be awarded by the end of March. The contract for technology maturation and risk reduction for critical ECU components should be signed by the end of the second quarter of fiscal 2024, which ends in March. Full engineering and manufacturing development will follow, with the program expected to be complete by the

end of December 2031, according to the documents. Pratt will receive a series of sole-source contracts to continue ECU development over the next eight years, the documents show. Meanwhile, the first ECU version of the F135 should become operational in 2029.

[Defense Innovation Unit to host Replicator technology summit](#)

[Air Force awards Boeing \\$2.3B contract for 15 more KC-46s \(Defense News\)](#)

The Air Force has awarded Boeing a \$2.3 billion contract for 15 more KC-46A Pegasus refueling tankers. The award, announced by the Pentagon Tuesday evening, brings to 153 the number of KC-46s Boeing has on contract to build for the United States and allies. The Air Force plans to buy 179 KC-46s, and Boeing said it has so far delivered 76 of those. The Japanese Air Self-Defense Force has two KC-46s in its fleet and four more on contract with Boeing, and Israel has ordered four of its own. The Pentagon said work on these aircraft, which will be the KC-46's tenth production lot, is expected to be complete by the end of July 2027. Boeing builds KC-46s at its factory in Everett, Washington. This contract follows another issued in January for the ninth production lot, which was also for 15 tankers and valued at \$2.3 billion. The Air Force has steadily increased the presence of the KC-46 in its fleet and its abilities. In September 2022, the service cleared the KC-46 to refuel all aircraft, except the A-10 Warthog, and carry out all refueling missions around the world. In July, Travis Air Force Base in California received its first of 24 planned KC-46s, which will replace the base's aging KC-10 Extenders.

[New Schedule for Sentinel Coming Soon, Says ICBM Modernization Boss](#)

[Navy creates program office to manage nuclear carrier defuelings \(Defense News\)](#)

The U.S. Navy has established a new program office to plan and manage aircraft carrier inactivations, defuelings and dismantlements, as the service readies for that work to become more common. The Navy still hasn't fully completed the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier it decommissioned: the former Enterprise was inactivated and defueled at HII's Newport News Shipbuilding from 2013 through 2018, but the hull — with contaminated components still inside — remains at an HII pier. The Navy determined this fall it would send Enterprise to a commercial yard for dismantling and disposal rather than tie up its own public shipyards with the work. Rear Adm. Jim Downey, who previously served as the Program Executive Officer for Aircraft Carriers and now awaits Senate confirmation to lead Naval Sea Systems Command, said the Navy spent a decade working through its plans for Enterprise. It won't have that kind of time with the Nimitz class: In just

two years, carriers will begin retiring one after another — Nimitz is planned to decommission in fiscal 2026, Dwight D. Eisenhower in FY27, and the class should continue decommissioning at a rate of one ship about every four years after that.

Budget & Appropriations

[Navy launches efficiency drive in pursuit of savings \(Defense News\)](#)

The U.S. Navy is looking to find budget savings and efficiencies to give it more flexibility under tighter budget caps, the service's undersecretary said today. Erik Raven, who oversees the business side of the Navy, said the sea service is working with its program managers and prime contractors to address cost overruns, as one way to address the lower-than-expected budgets that stem from this summer's Fiscal Responsibility Act. More broadly, "the department is executing an internally focused effort to identify opportunities to better allocate funding," in what Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro has called the Running Fix effort, Raven said at a Navy League congressional shipbuilding breakfast event Thursday. The assistant secretaries for research, development and acquisition and for financial management and comptroller will co-chair the effort, which Raven says will build upon past efforts to identify efficiencies. In fact, Comptroller Russell Rumbaugh said in announcing Running Fix during a September speech the Navy has had a "constant call for efficiency" for the last two decades. He said many of the same ideas have come up each time and still haven't been implemented.

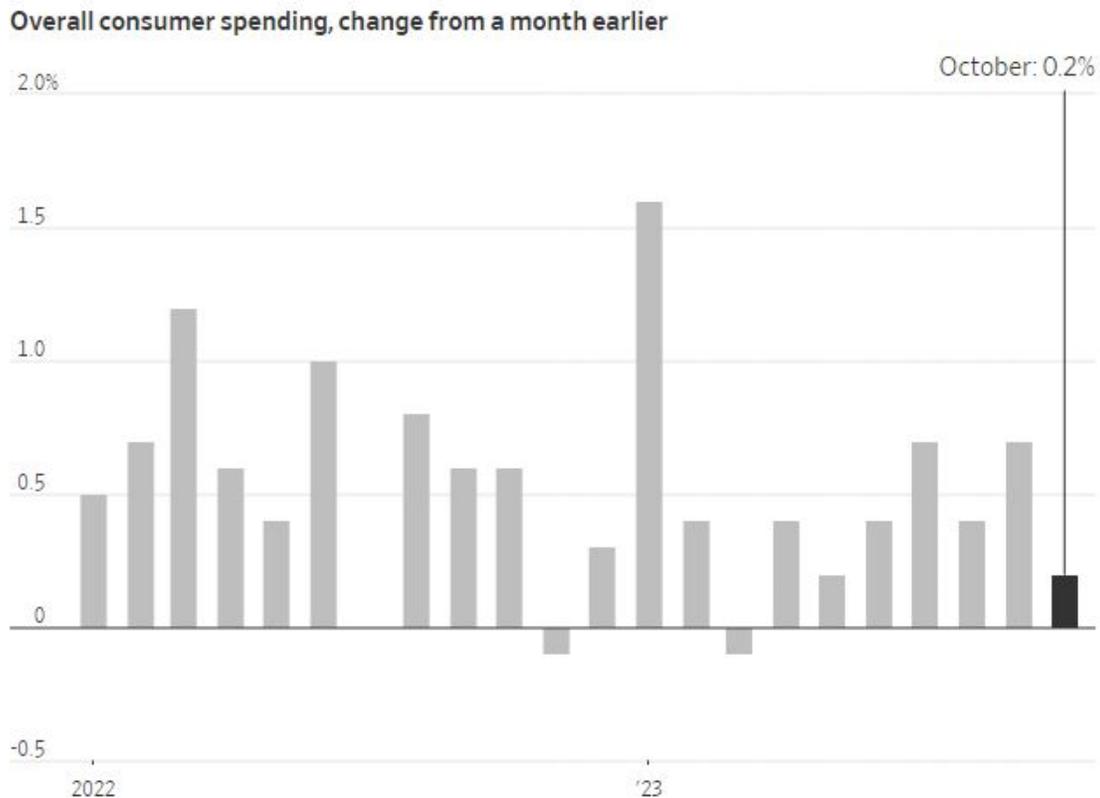
[Poll finds strong support for arming Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan](#)

['Historically costly': Joint Chiefs chairman outlines year-long CR impact \(Breaking Defense\)](#)

The US military will be forced to delay nuclear modernization and developing infrastructure in the Pacific, among other challenges, if Congress does not pass fiscal year 2024 funding over the next year, according to Gen. CQ Brown, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In a letter to Senate Appropriations Committee chair Patty Murray, D-Wash., Brown outlined some top-level issues the department will face if Congress decides to operate under a full-year continuing resolution, or CR. "DoD has never operated under a year-long CR; it would be historically costly to the Joint Force. In a CR, the DoD's actual buying power is significantly impacted and degraded," Brown wrote in the letter, first reported by Politico. "As I have said previously, we cannot outpace our pacing challenge [China] while under a CR." Under a CR, the government is funded at previous-years level and no new

starts can be launched. Congress has twice avoided a shutdown by passing a CR, with the Pentagon’s budget now scheduled to run out on Feb. 2. Even if a full budget was to be passed at that point, the department will have lost a third of its fiscal year.

[Consumers Pulled Back on Spending, Inflation Eased in October](#)



[This holiday season, NDAA shaping up as end-of-year 'Christmas tree' \(Roll Call\)](#)

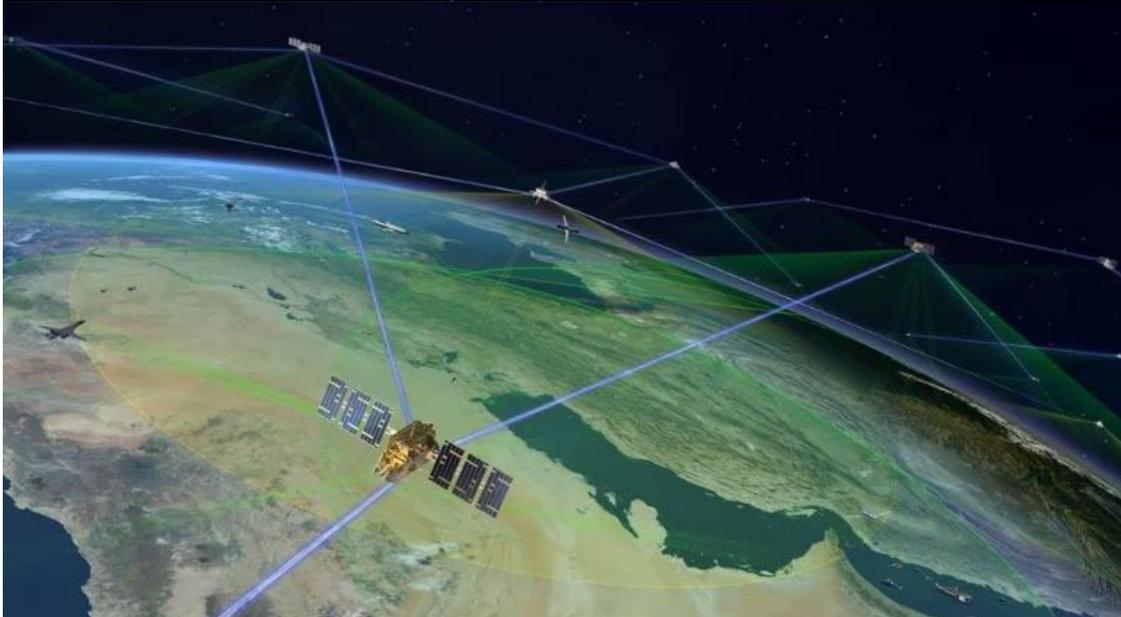
Despite an action-packed year on Capitol Hill, lawmakers return this week to a long to-do list that includes issues ranging from military aid for allies to surveillance programs to the massive Pentagon policy bill — and much more. House members have spent much of 2023 in a prolonged battle over federal spending, but the three-week sprint to a planned holiday recess will force them to try reaching common ground on all those matters, and others like reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration and dealing with a number of set-to-expire tax and health provisions. But first, House members are expected to send

one troubled Republican lawmaker back to civilian life, starting the holiday session with some end-of-year fireworks typically reserved for government funding fights. “Complicating this work period is the fact that the House will likely spend precious floor time this week expelling Rep. George Santos, adding to the acrimony in the chamber and eroding the Republicans’ already-slim majority,” said Aaron Cutler, a partner at Hogan Lovells who was a senior leadership staffer for former House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va. “While we don’t have a potential shutdown hanging over us like a sword of Damocles, that doesn’t mean Congress will be free from drama this December,” Cutler added.

Advanced Technologies

[Space Development Agency demonstrates Link 16 satellite connectivity \(C4ISR Net\)](#)

The Space Development Agency demonstrated the ability to connect its satellites to radios on the ground through a signal known as Link 16, showing the potential for in-orbit sensors to network with military systems operating in multiple domains. The agency conducted demonstrations from Nov. 21 to 27, transmitting signals from its satellites in Low Earth orbit — about 1,200 miles above Earth — to a test site on the ground, SDA said in a Nov. 28 statement. According to SDA Director Derek Tournear, the demonstrations are a significant milestone for the agency, which is developing a space-based Transport Layer made up of small satellites and sensors designed to provide global connectivity for military users. “I can’t underscore enough the significance of this technical achievement as we demonstrate the feasibility of the Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture and its ability to deliver space-based capabilities to the warfighter over existing tactical data links,” SDA Director Derek Tournear said in the statement. The Defense Department established SDA in 2019 to build a constellation of low Earth orbit transport and missile tracking satellites on rapid timelines, augmenting constellations of large spacecraft with hundreds of small, relatively low-cost satellites. Those satellites make up what SDA calls its Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture.



[NATO to update artificial intelligence strategy amid new threats](#)

[New atomic-scale cooling technology could unleash more powerful radar, radios, EW systems \(Inside Defense\)](#)

The Defense Department is reaching for a next-generation microelectronics advancement that promises order-of-magnitude improvements for radar, communications and electronic warfare systems by using diamonds to reduce heat in transistors, awarding Raytheon an applied research contract to demonstrate the efficacy of such novel cooling technology. On Nov. 16, Raytheon announced the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency had awarded the radar maker a four-year, \$15 million contract “to increase the electronic capability of radio frequency with high-power-density gallium nitride transistors.” “Our engineers have unlocked a new way to produce Gallium Nitride, where thermal management is no longer a limiting factor,” Colin Whelan, Raytheon’s advanced technology president, said in a statement. “These new system architectures will result in sensors with enhanced range.” Raytheon said it is partnered with the Naval Research Laboratory, Stanford University and Diamond Foundry to grow diamonds -- “the world’s best thermal conductor,” the company says -- for integration with military-grade gallium nitride transistors and circuits. Cornell University, Michigan State University, the University of Maryland and Penn State University are also participating, according to Raytheon. DARPA’s focus for this project is on semiconductors made of gallium arsenide used to generate radio frequency in the X-band -- 8GHz to 12GHz -- used by missile defense

sensors.

[ChatGPT one year on: From viral AI bot to OpenAI's boardroom battle](#)

[As US Army transforms, it's gleaning lessons about high- and low-tech fighting from Ukraine, Israel \(Breaking Defense\)](#)

After closely examining conflicts in Israel and Ukraine, as well as technological advances by China, a senior Army official said the service has learned that a future fight is going to require a mix of high- and low-tech tactics. "If you look at ... how we're actually thinking about the Army in 2040, we're taking a lot of lessons learned from the current conflicts that are going on right now, whether it's Ukraine, Russia, lessons learned with Israel, our shift to our peer threats, and there's a combination of low-tech and high-tech that's really incorporating ... pushing into our guiding principles," said Young Bang, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology. Speaking at the I/ITSEC 2023 conference here in Florida, Bang was specifically talking about how the Army is racing towards a "digital transformation" that "really now allows us to accelerate the speed of delivering capabilities to our soldiers." Bang did not elaborate on the lessons the Army was taking from Israel and Ukraine, but both conflicts have seen a sometimes surprising mix of high- and low-tech systems — like quadrotor drones that drop "dumb" grenades on tanks, as seen in Ukraine.

Military Installations & Communities

[Top air force officials ponder new leadership styles as AI takes root \(Defense News\)](#)

The advent of artificial intelligence in defense is prompting a reevaluation of decades-old military leadership traditions, top air force officials from across the globe said at a gathering here earlier this month. The Nov. 12 Dubai Air Chiefs Conference, or DIACC, that kicked off this year's iteration of the Dubai Air Show explored the fundamental changes airmen should expect as a result of AI permeating their professions. "Traditional leadership style is seen as somewhat archaic or outdated, and understandably," Brig. Gen. Azzan Ali A. Al Nuaimi, commander of the UAE's air warfare and missile center, told the audience. "A top-down approach or hierarchy-based decision making is no longer well-suited for an operational environment where information is more fluid and rapid," he added. Armed forces across the globe are embracing the promise of artificial intelligence in military tasks. The level of complexity in the technologies varies greatly, from speeding up rote analysis tasks that previously took days or weeks for humans, to generating novel courses of action

on the battlefield based on a vast amount of contextual data.

[Attacks on US troops in Middle East have diminished, Pentagon says](#)

[VA again found homes for 38K struggling vets in 2023 \(Military Times\)](#)

For the second year in a row, Veterans Affairs officials met their goal of permanently housing 38,000 veterans facing financial problems and uncertain shelter options, department leaders announced on Wednesday. The news means that department staffers have helped house more than 78,000 homeless veterans since the start of 2022, part of a focused outreach campaign designed to target veterans in most need of immediate help. In a statement, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said the progress is encouraging but also underscores the challenges facing too many veterans in America today. “While we met our goals for 2023, we’re not stopping here,” he said. “We’re going to keep pushing — through the end of this calendar year and beyond — until every veteran has a safe, stable place to call home in this country they fought to defend.” According to the latest estimates from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, about 33,000 veterans across the country are without reliable housing options on any given night. That figure has dropped in recent years. VA officials said since the start of 2022, department programs have helped nearly 192,000 veterans and family members avoid losing their homes because of financial reasons. They have also seen about 93% of the individuals placed in permanent housing remain in solid financial standing one year later.

[‘A victory for all military spouses’ in court fight over job license](#)

[‘Forever Chemicals’ in Thousands of Private Wells Near Military Sites, Study Finds \(Military.com\)](#)

Water tests show nearly 3,000 private wells located near 63 active and former U.S. military bases are contaminated with “forever chemicals” at levels higher than what federal regulators consider safe for drinking. According to the Environmental Working Group, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that analyzed Department of Defense testing data, 2,805 wells spread across 29 states were contaminated with at least one of two types of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, above 4 parts per trillion, a limit proposed earlier this year by the Environmental Protection Agency. That new drinking water standard is expected to take effect by the end of the year. But contamination in those wells was lower than the 70 parts per trillion threshold the Pentagon uses to trigger remediation. EWG researchers said they did not know how many people rely on the wells for drinking,

cooking, and bathing, but the 76 tested locations represent just a fraction of the private wells near 714 current or former military sites spread across the U.S. According to EWG, Texas had nearly a third of the contaminated wells, with 909.

Homeland Security

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces Supply Chain Resilience Center to Protect U.S. Supply Chain from Evolving Threats \(U.S. Homeland Security\)](#)

– As part of the inaugural meeting of the White House Council on Supply Chain Resilience, President Biden and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas unveiled the Supply Chain Resilience Center (SCRC), a new U.S. government entity designed to collaborate with the private sector to better secure our supply chains. The SCRC will analyze vulnerabilities and conduct scenario planning with private sector stakeholders to help mitigate supply chain disruptions, ensure reliable and efficient deliveries of goods and services, and lower costs for the American people. This announcement is one of many from the Biden-Harris Administration today that will help Americans get the products they need when they need them. "Securing our critical infrastructure is fundamental to staying competitive in a 21st century economy, and the Department of Homeland Security's new Supply Chain Resilience Center will enhance our efforts to do just that," said Secretary Mayorkas. "The global pandemic has revealed that the supply chains that Americans rely upon for food and essential other goods must be more robust and resilient. Conflict, political instability, and climate change could challenge our supply chains in the years ahead. The Supply Chain Resilience Center will help American businesses and the federal government anticipate these disruptions and play a key role in the Biden-Harris Administration's work to prevent them."

[House vote on impeachment of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas pulled from schedule](#)

[Cyberattack on Pittsburgh-area water authority sends alarms to Department of Homeland Security \(CBS\)](#)

A cyberattack over the weekend on the Municipal Water Authority of Aliquippa has international implications. Aliquippa would seem to be an unlikely target for international cyber criminals, but the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is investigating the possible attack by an anti-Israeli Iranian group on the water authority. On Saturday, the

nondescript water authority building in the woods on the outskirts of Aliquippa became the target of an international attack. A piece of computer technology that monitors water pressure suddenly shut down and a message appeared on its screen. "Stating that our system had been hacked by legal authority by the 'Cyber Av3ngers. Down with Israel,'" said Matthew Mottes, chairman of the water authority. The authority immediately shut down its automated system and resumed operations manually, adding that it was able to maintain service without interruption. But the apparent attack sent alarms to Washington, D.C. and the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, which is now investigating. "I'm surprised, but I'm not shocked," Congressman Chris Deluzio said. "We've seen attacks from nation-state adversaries on a lot of our infrastructure."

[354 Pounds of Methamphetamine Seized from Pick-up Truck Crossing from Mexico to US](#)

[DHS Awarded Patent for Homeland Explosive Consequence Assessment Tool \(U.S. Homeland Security\)](#)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through its Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), was awarded a U.S. patent for the Homeland Explosive Consequence Assessment Tool (HEXCAT), protecting the Department's invention and guaranteeing that the technology can help fulfill the DHS mission for years to come. HEXCAT is a unique modeling system that helps emergency managers prepare communities for large-scale, scenario-specific hazards and predict consequences and potential outcomes. The tool is derived from the mandate given by Homeland Security Presidential Directive-19 Combating Terrorist Use of Explosives in the United States, and was developed to ensure we are better equipped today to handle the threats of tomorrow. "With the HEXCAT, response planners are now equipped with a fully integrated system that predicts the likely consequences of an explosion, including human injuries, structural damages, and medical responses, helping us evaluate a range of what-if scenarios and focus our energy on the most effective means of prevention, detection, mitigation and response," said Helen Mearns, Deputy Director of S&T's Chemical Security Analysis Center (CSAC).

Transportation & Infrastructure

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$1.5 Billion Available through the 2024 RAISE](#)

[Grant Program \(USDOT\)](#)

The U.S. Department of Transportation has published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$1.5 billion in grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program for 2024. The popular program helps communities around the country carry out projects with significant local or regional impact. RAISE discretionary grants help project sponsors at the state and local levels, including municipalities, Tribal governments, counties, and others complete critical freight and passenger transportation infrastructure projects. The eligibility requirements of RAISE allow project sponsors to obtain funding for projects that may be harder to support through other U.S. DOT grant programs. Recent examples of funded projects include a grade separation project in Chula Vista, California, a new downtown transit center in New Orleans, and reconstruction of Route 6 on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in South Dakota. A full list of 2023 awarded projects is available [HERE](#). “Across the country, I have seen firsthand how projects funded by our RAISE program are helping communities realize long-held dreams and well-planned visions for better infrastructure,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

[Airbus is revolutionizing sea transportation by transforming its Atlantic-based fleet](#)



[Federal agency renews call for speed limit software in new cars \(The Hill\)](#)

After a Las Vegas accident that claimed the lives of nine individuals, the National Transportation Safety Board is doubling down on its call for all new automobiles to be equipped with technology designed to deter or prevent speeding. This marks the NTSB's second such recommendation in six years, reflecting a growing concern over the role of speed in fatal auto accidents. Last year, more than 12,000 people lost their lives in the U.S. due to crashes related to speeding, with hundreds of thousands more suffering injuries. The recommended technology, known as Intelligent Speed Assistance, or ISA, utilizes GPS and sign recognition to restrict a vehicle's speed within specified zones. Unlike traditional speed-limiting devices, ISA dynamically adjusts the speed limit based on the location where a vehicle is operating, rather than imposing a fixed cap. Despite the pressing need for enhanced road safety measures, auto manufacturers have been lukewarm to the idea of adopting ISA. Road safety advocates express skepticism about the technology's widespread acceptance, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has yet to endorse the NTSB's recommendation.

[FAA launches leadership program in partnership with Volpe Center](#)

[Transportation Leaders Urge Passage of Freight Rail Bill \(Transport Topics\)](#)

Policymakers are calling on congressional leaders to consider freight safety legislation before the end of the year as the Biden administration enhanced its commitment to supply chain connectivity. Ohio Sens. Sherrod Brown (D) and J.D. Vance (R) continue pushing for passage of their committee-approved Railway Safety Act. The bipartisan bill, designed to strengthen safety operations, was crafted soon after a freight train derailment in February in the Buckeye State. Senate Democratic leaders have signaled the potential for scheduling a floor vote on the measure before adjourning in December. Vance, a staunch advocate for safely boosting freight rail connectivity, recently highlighted a letter from Trent Conaway, the mayor of East Palestine, Ohio. "The United States Senate owes its constituents the peace of mind that a tragedy like this will not strike in their hometowns. Don't side with the powerful special interest groups of the 'Washington Swamp' — do what's best for your own people," Conaway wrote on Nov. 3. "The passage of the Railway Safety Act will not mark the end of East Palestine's story — there's much to be done before our community is whole again. But it will go a long way in giving us the peace of mind that our hardships were not in vain and that the reaction to what we endured will save fellow Americans from facing the same fate."

Biotechnology & Healthcare

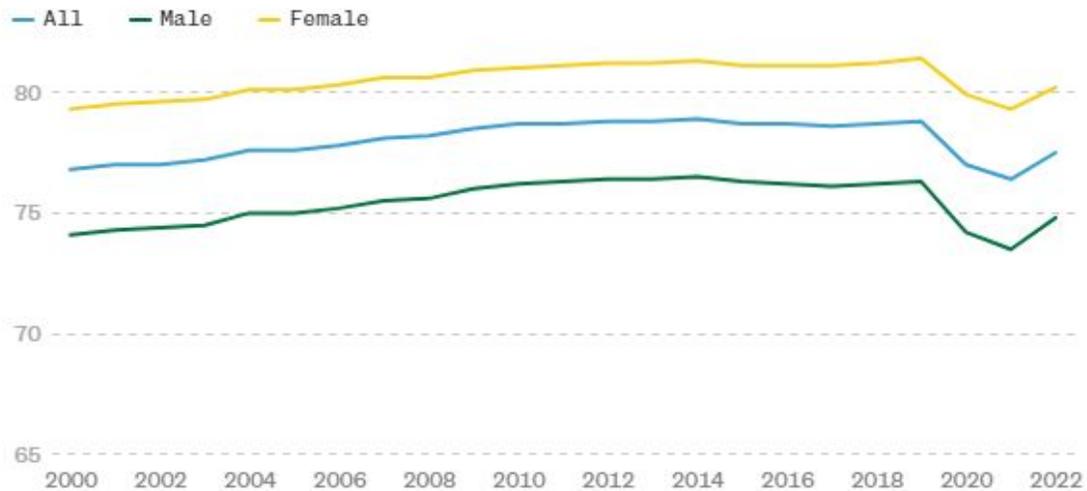
[FDA elevates chief scientist Bumpus to the number two role \(pharmaphorum\)](#)

FDA chief scientist Namandjé Bumpus has been named as principal deputy commissioner, replacing long-serving Janet Woodcock when she steps down early next year. Bumpus is heading for the number two position at the FDA – second only to Commissioner Robert Califf, who announced the appointment on X (formerly Twitter) – just over a year after she joined the agency. “As principal deputy commissioner, Namandjé will work closely with FDA leadership to develop, advance, and implement key public health initiatives, as well as to oversee the agency’s day-to-day functions,” said Califf in an email to staff. “Chief among those priorities is the proposed reorganisation unifying the Human Foods Programme, creating a new model for the Office of Regulatory Affairs, and strengthening the entire agency,” he added. “There are many analogous situations that point out how hard it is to step into a role held by a legendary leader, but I am confident [Dr Bumpus] is up for it!”

[U.S. life expectancy rose in 2022, but not enough to erase the pandemic's toll](#)

Life expectancy in the U.S.

After taking a hit in the first two years of the pandemic, life expectancy has started to rebound.



[How Epic is using AI to change the way EHRs work \(Healthcare IT News\)](#)

Sumit Rana, executive vice president of research and development at electronic health records company Epic, is working in one of the centers of artificial intelligence efforts in health IT. His days are filled with, among other things, creating ways AI can help doctors and nurses today and into the future. Epic is using AI and ambient listening technology in an effort to improve patient-provider interactions. It's enabling physicians to generate progress notes from a patient-provider conversation in the exam room. It's allowing doctors to instantly create a draft response to a patient's question. It's showing providers what's new with a patient since they last saw the patient. And it's working on AI assisting staff with medical coding. Epic is using AI and ambient listening technology with the aim of improving patient provider interactions. Some health IT leaders at provider organizations have concerns. Are these technologies reliable today?

[Latest hospital cyberattack shows how health care systems' vulnerability can put patients at risk](#)

Climate & Development

[At COP28, the United States Will Stress an End to Fossil Emissions, Not Fuels \(Inside Climate News\)](#)

President Joe Biden will not attend the climate talks that commence this week in Dubai, but the conflict that has come to define his policy on the planetary crisis will be front and center. The president who has catalyzed the nation's greatest investment ever in a clean energy transition also has presided as U.S. oil and natural gas production reached record heights. And as delegates from nearly 200 nations convene Thursday for two weeks of negotiations on what more needs to be done to stave off catastrophic warming, pressure is building for the annual conference to address specifically—for the first time—the future of fossil fuels. But the United States, casting itself as a climate action leader despite its role as the world's No. 1 oil and natural gas producer, will insist that any phase-down language be focused not on fossil fuels themselves, but on their emissions. “We hope we can send a very strong signal that the nations of the world are committed to work together to transition away from fossil fuel emissions in the next three decades,” said John Kerry, the U.S. special climate envoy, in a briefing Wednesday from Dubai.

[EPA proposes requiring lead water pipes to be replaced in 10 years](#)

[5 issues to watch at this year's global climate conference \(The Hill\)](#)

Beginning on Thursday, world leaders, climate negotiators, activists, corporations and lobbyists will gather in Dubai for the COP28 global climate summit. The annual United Nations conference serves both as a forum for nations to highlight progress and make announcements in the fight against climate change and as the stage for formal negotiations for global agreements on key climate issues. This year, attendees could announce actions related to tackling planet-warming methane emissions and potential aid for nations on the front lines of climate change and discuss global goals to reduce — or eliminate — fossil fuels, among other issues. Here are the key questions to watch at this year's summit: How is the world doing in the fight against global warming, and what comes next in that fight? This year's conference comes amid a “global stocktake” — an assessment by the world of how far it has come in the fight against climate change since 2015's Paris Agreement and how far it still has left to go.

[US says climate change threatens wolverines with extinction](#)

[Battery Prices Are Falling Again, and That's a Good Thing \(Inside Climate News\)](#)

Optimists about the shift to clean transportation often talk about a double benefit: Electric vehicles have almost zero emissions and soon they also will be less expensive than their gasoline counterparts. But the idea of the inevitability of cheaper EVs took some hits last year as the average price of lithium-ion batteries increased. Analysts reassured us that the price surge was due to short-term factors, and that the long-term trend of price decreases would likely resume in 2023. They were right. Bloomberg NEF issued its annual battery price report this week, showing a global average price of \$139 per kilowatt-hour for a lithium-ion battery pack, which is down from \$161 in 2022 and lower than any year on record. The report predicts prices will continue to decline, reaching an average of \$113 in 2025 and \$80 in 2030.

Lithium-Ion Battery Prices Fall to New Low

After a one-year outlier, lithium-ion battery pack prices have fallen in 2023, continuing what has been a near steady decrease due to improvements in technology and economies of scale.

U.S. LITHIUM-ION BATTERY PACK PRICES

In dollars per kilowatt-hour, 2013-2023



Next Week's Hearings

Armed Service Committees:

House: None listed

Senate:

- Wednesday, December 6th, 2023, 3:00pm EDT. ["Testimony of the status of the Department of Defense recruiting efforts and plans for FY24"](#)

Appropriations Committees:

House: None listed

Senate: None listed

Homeland Security Committees:

House:

- Tuesday, December 5th, 2023, 10:00am EDT, ["Protecting our Preparedness: Assessing the Impact of the Border Crisis on Emergency Management"](#)
- Tuesday, December 5th, 2023, 2:00pm EDT, ["Identity Management Innovation: Looking Beyond REAL ID"](#)

Senate: None listed

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