

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it in your web browser](#)

— News From The States —

EVENING WRAP



By [Kate Queram](#)

I find myself, often, trying to reconcile Congress as an actual workplace, which never goes very well because obviously no one is ever doing much work in Congress. Still, it's a useful exercise, I think, if only to confirm that things are actually as ridiculous as they seem. Today, for example, I am trying to imagine a scenario in which I grind everyone's work to a standstill by throwing a fit over my own unrealistic expectations — say, refusing to write a newsletter until my boss calls the police about the coworker who borrowed my pen without asking* — and instead of getting fired, I just keep getting paid and am also on TV a lot talking about unchecked office crime sprees.

It is, possibly, too ludicrous to imagine, except that it is not, actually, ludicrous at all. It's just Congress.

*OK but I am an only child who is particular about her pens, so probably don't do this



The Big Takeaway

House Republicans continued fighting amongst themselves on Tuesday, hurtling closer to a government shutdown as opposition from far-right lawmakers forced GOP leaders to punt a vote on a short-term funding bill, [our D.C. bureau reported](#).



House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), gazing to the right.

(Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

The debacle is only the latest example of House Speaker Kevin McCarthy [failing spectacularly](#) to [unite his caucus](#) (the basic function [of his job](#)) so that it can fund the government (the basic function of its job). On the bright (?) side, McCarthy's ineptitude may be irrelevant soon, should far-right lawmakers follow through on their vow to oust him if he doesn't bow to their unhinged demands on spending cuts, border security and various anti-woke priorities.

"No continuing resolutions, individual spending bills or bust," U.S. Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) said last week in a [deranged floor speech](#). "Votes on balanced budgets and term limits. Subpoenas for Hunter Biden and the members of the Biden family who have been ... grifting off of this country and the impeachment for Joe Biden that he so richly deserves. Do these things or face a motion to vacate the chair."

The dysfunction might be fun to watch if it didn't put millions of federal workers on notice. More than 3.5 million government employees and military personnel could be furloughed or

forced to work without pay if lawmakers can't reach a spending deal by the end of next week. In the past, Congress has approved back pay for furloughed employees, but there's no guarantee that proposal would make it past the gauntlet of GOP infighting. (Government contractors — there are [millions of them](#) — generally [do not](#) receive back pay.) Members of Congress, meanwhile, would continue to receive paychecks throughout the shutdown they failed to avert, [per our D.C. bureau](#).

Government workers may feel the pain most acutely, but shutdowns are costly for everyone, eventually. In 2019, a 35-day shutdown — the longest in history — reduced real gross domestic product by \$11 billion over a six-month period “mainly because of the loss of furloughed federal workers’ contribution to GDP, the delay in federal spending on goods and services, and the reduction in aggregate demand,” which ultimately affected activity in the private sector, according to [an analysis](#) from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.



*A lovely building for an inept institution.
(Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)*

Those effects tend to ripple, often in ways that aren't immediately visible. [Previous shutdowns](#) have caused delays in Medicare services, air travel headaches and trash buildup at national parks. The looming financial cliff could force the closure of daycare centers in federal buildings, leaving [thousands of parents](#) — some government employees, some not — without child care. (CAN WE NOT.) The White House on Wednesday warned that the funding lapse could also eliminate spots in early childhood programs, delay food safety inspections and muck up new loans at the Small Business Administration, among other things.

“These consequences are real and avoidable — but only if House Republicans stop playing political games with peoples' lives and catering to the ideological demands of their most extreme, far-right members,” the administration said [in a memo](#). “It's time for House Republicans to abide by the bipartisan budget agreement that a majority of them voted for, keep the government open, and address other urgent needs for the American people.”

And yet people are — incredibly — still interested in running for Congress. Among the hopefuls is John Rust, an egg farmer who filed a lawsuit Tuesday challenging the constitutionality of an Indiana law blocking him from the ballot in the state's U.S. Senate race. Rust, an openly gay conservative, doesn't qualify as a Republican under [the statute](#), which requires a candidate's voting record in the two most recent primary elections to reflect their claimed affiliation, [the Indiana Capital Chronicle reported](#).

Candidates can skirt that requirement by having a county party chair sign off on their campaigns, but GOP officials [indicated this month](#) they would not approve Rust's bid based in part on his participation in a Democratic primary in 2012. Those votes, Rust said, were for candidates he knew personally. In 2016, he flipped back to the GOP primary, but did not vote in 2020 due to the pandemic and a number of uncontested candidates, he said. Two years later, the campaign law was amended, effectively disqualifying him from the election with no notice, according to the lawsuit.



NOT YOUR FAULT HENRY YOU ARE NOT BLOCKING ANY BALLOTS

(Photo by George Frey/Getty Images)

“It’s clear to me that this law is in place to protect the power and control that political parties have over elected offices,” Rust said in a news release. “It prioritizes the political elite over Indiana voters and is against the spirit of the 17th Amendment of the United States Constitution, which specifically grants the power to choose United States senators by the people and took that power away from state legislatures. I think you deserve a choice and robust debate. I decided to run to shake up the political establishment, and fighting them on this unconstitutional law is one battle in that fight.”

Not to be outdone, North Carolina House Republicans on Tuesday advanced their own questionable election policy, voting along party lines to strip Gov. Roy Cooper’s power to appoint state and local election officials. [The bill](#), which heads next to the Senate, would shift that control to lawmakers, who would select the members of the state Board of Elections along with local administrators in each county, [NC Newsline reported](#).

The proposal would also expand the state board from five to eight members, giving four picks to both the majority and minority party in what Republicans said was a bid to ensure bipartisan cooperation. But Democrats said it was more likely to prompt gridlock — which would ultimately

benefit Republicans, who as the majority party would be charged with breaking ties on hiring decisions. That might have immediate ramifications for the board's current executive director, who could be ousted months before the November 2024 election if members do not vote to retain her.

“This is a recipe for potential chaos in a state where elections have been run very well in the past, and where the margins of victory have been among the most narrow in the country,” David Becker, executive director of The Center for Election Innovation & Research, told the Associated Press.



However, there are stickers.

(Photo by Getty Images)

It also circumvents the state's voters, who in 2018 rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that would have made [basically the same change](#). The ballot initiative came a year after a similar policy [was rejected](#) by the state Supreme Court. In other words, this is not a new thing for North Carolina Republicans — but it is more likely to survive the legislative process, now that they hold slim veto-proof majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly.

All of which leaves Democrats in the familiar position of having no recourse beyond expressing their sincere disappointment. State Rep. Marcia Morey spoke for the minority Tuesday, saying the bill was clearly about politics, not governing.

“Think of the voters who rejected this flat-out,” she said. “We’re going against their will.”

Won’t someone think of the voters? (No.): [Alabama defying federal redistricting orders, plaintiffs say in new filing](#) ... [Campaign launches to open Arizona primary elections, implement ranked choice voting](#) ... [Colorado GOP participates in landmark lawsuit that seeks to block Trump from ballot](#) ... [Absentee ballots’ use, possible abuse, called ‘art form’ in Connecticut](#) ... [Groups canvass Louisiana on National Voter Registration Day](#) ... [UAW president, Biden push back against reported Trump visit with striking Michigan workers](#) ... [Former Republican congressman endorses Democrat Brandon Presley for Mississippi governor](#) ... [Lancaster County GOP affirms its shift rightward, returning populist and Trump supporter to top job](#) ... [Democrat Lindsay Powell projected winner of Allegheny County special election](#) ... [This Rhode Island state rep went from sleeper CD1 candidate to cracking the top 5. What’s next?](#) ... [Former U.S. Capitol Police chief blames intelligence failures, not Trump, for Jan. 6 attack](#)

Caught Our Eye

A Republican Senate hopeful in Montana told Breitbart News there are more bears in the state than people, which [the Daily Montanan wants you to know](#) is *not true*.

“This is a state where there’s not a lot of people,” Tim Sheehy, CEO of an aerospace company and a former Navy SEAL, said Saturday during [an interview](#) with the far-right website. “There’s more cows than people, there’s more bears than people, and we’re not used to having a lot of political clout. Presidential elections or electoral votes don’t mean a whole lot.”



*U.S. Senate hopeful Tim Sheehy out in the wilderness, with nary a bear in sight.
(Photo via the Daily Montanan)*

The cow thing is accurate, [apparently](#). But Sheehy was way off on the bears, according to state wildlife officials. Well, at least as far as they can tell. No one really tracks bear populations at the state level, it turns out — instead, biologists compile counts from various ecosystems across the state, said Greg Lemon, a spokesman for the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

But even by that metric, Lemon was confident that Sheehy was wrong. More than 1.1 million people live in Montana, according to U.S. Census data. And there are just definitely not a million bears lurking among them — even if you pad their numbers with other animals, Lemon said.

“Fewer bears, deer, elk, combined, than people,” he said.



From The Newsrooms

- [Feds' cash stream supports Colorado River conservation — but the money will dry up](#)
- [Missourians wait an average of 8 months in jail for court-ordered mental health services](#)
- [‘They are important to us’: Remains of Sisseton Wahpeton children returning home](#)
- [Indiana likely to wait on further noncompete legislation — pending lawsuit, industry impacts](#)
- [After years-long effort, farmworkers in Maine may soon gain minimum wage protections](#)

One Last Thing

Most of the world’s pink diamonds were formed when an ancient supercontinent fractured and broke apart, according to research [published Tuesday](#). Scientists determined that the gems get their color from intense trauma — in this case, colliding tectonic plates — that twists and bends their crystal lattices, making them an appropriate byproduct of a massive (ahem) breakup.

News From The States

A PROJECT OF STATES NEWSROOM

Did someone forward you this newsletter?

[SUBSCRIBE](#) | [LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR NEWSROOMS](#) | [FOLLOW](#)

Share this post:



Copyright © 2023 [States Newsroom](#), all rights reserved.

1414 Raleigh Rd #127 | Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27517

info@newsfromthestates.com

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website or Facebook signup form.

TO MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT, CLICK ON "UNSUBSCRIBE" BELOW

[Unsubscribe](#) or [Manage Your Preferences](#)