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## — News From The States —

# EVENING WRAP



By [Kate Queram](#)

Everyone has at least one [emotional vampire](#) in their lives — that friend who just sucks you dry with their needs and their drama and never, ever gives anything back but is, somehow, still your friend. For you, maybe the emotional vampire is your sister-in-law or your former coworker or your next-door neighbor. For me, it's Congress.



### The Big Takeaway

The U.S. Senate on Tuesday voted 77-19 to advance [a continuing resolution](#) that would fund the government through Nov. 17 and direct billions of dollars to both Ukraine and U.S. disaster relief efforts, which is nice except that it's not clear if the proposal will clear the chamber in time to avert a shutdown and because the Senate is, for once, not the problem. The problem is the House, by which I mean the problem is, as usual, Kevin McCarthy, [our D.C. bureau reported](#).



*He never says anything and yet I have so many photos of him talking.*

*(Photo by Ariana Figueroa/States Newsroom)*

McCarthy (R-Calif.), who you may remember from that time he sold his soul to the MAGA cabal [in exchange for the speakership](#), has been failing for weeks to wrangle his caucus into agreement on a plan to fund the government. Two weeks ago, he vowed to keep lawmakers in session until it was done; a week and three failed attempts later, [he let them leave early](#). The process has been hijacked by the same small group of far-right lawmakers that always hijacks everything, leaving McCarthy with no plan beyond [rejecting the Senate's plan](#) without proposing a plausible alternative.

Presumably, he'd prefer [his own proposal](#), which would slash domestic agency budgets by 8% and impose a handful of right-wing border security measures — and stands exactly zero chance of passing either the House or the Senate, because it turns out that hating this specific plan is the one thing that Democrats and far-right Republicans agree on.

**The debacle is a microcosm of McCarthy's chaotic tenure as speaker**, which has proceeded

as it began: Giving outsize power to a clutch of Trumpy lawmakers who refuse to compromise on pretty much anything, least of all McCarthy's legislative priorities or hopes or dreams. Rather than admit that, McCarthy on Tuesday [attempted to deflect](#), saying Tuesday that the entire shutdown could be avoided if only he could meet with President Joe Biden to discuss border security. Biden has yet to acknowledge this demand, probably because McCarthy is, at this point, little more than an irritating distraction with hypothetical negotiating power. It's his mess, and everybody knows it.

**If there is a winner here, it's the Senate**, which by virtue of comparison now appears like a mature and functional legislative body where everyone gets along and is capable of compromise, as long as the compromise is not [related to suits](#). Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) embraced the rare moment of unity, imploring the House to accept the short-term funding bill in order to "achieve our immediate and necessary goal of avoiding a government shutdown."

"This bipartisan CR is a temporary solution — a bridge towards cooperation and away from extremism," Schumer said. "And it will allow us to keep working to fully fund the federal government and spare American families the pain of a government shutdown."



*(Photo by Parker Michels-Boyce/for the Virginia Mercury)*

**There's no time for bipartisanship or cooperation in Virginia**, where a handful of failed primary candidates are refusing to end their campaigns in spite of a “sore loser” law designed to stop sore losers from making election season miserable for everyone, [the Virginia Mercury reported](#).

[Most states](#) have some version of a sore loser law, which generally aims to prevent losing primary candidates from flipping their political affiliation to run third-party campaigns in the general election. In Virginia, those candidates can still theoretically win by lobbying enough supporters to write in their names, but it's nearly impossible to pull off unless you've got [coffers deep enough](#) to fund a coordinated outreach effort.

**All of which has the unintended side effect of underscoring the importance of a primary win** — a reality that a few losing candidates have not handled particularly well. Among this year's sore losers is Makya Little, who filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn her narrow loss in a June Democratic primary. The suit, filed in Richmond City Circuit Court, also sought to have Little's name appear on the ballot as an independent candidate, violating both the law and a form she signed acknowledging that her name could not appear on the ballot if she lost the primary.

Attorneys for state election officials had little patience for any of this, describing the case as “an attempt by a defeated politician to overturn the results of an election.” In a separate filing, the state sought to add Little's primary opponent to the lawsuit, noting that the outcome could have ramifications for his uncontested race in the general election.

**The case is pending, but it failed weeks ago**, when ballots were printed ahead of early voting (which began Friday). Still, Little has no intention of withdrawing the complaint. The state, she said, needs a better process to resolve disputes over primary outcomes — an altruistic goal for the former Democrat, who flipped her party affiliation to independent but “still supports many Democratic priorities.”

“It's disappointing that the party of inclusion can be so exclusionary,” Little said. “And what they call vetting is actually gatekeeping.”

**Yeah, I dunno:** [Alabama lawmakers approve construction agreement for statehouse ... Alabama House District 16, 55 primaries headed to October runoffs ... U.S. military pay in question, including thousands in Alaska, as government shutdown approaches ... How a looming government shutdown could hit national parks ... Half of Coloradans will have a new county clerk for 2024 elections ... Can the GOP set aside partisan politics to find out what really happened in Maui? ... Iowa panel proposes paying members of three state boards \\$10,000 a year ... What Louisiana governor candidates want to do about soaring property insurance rate ... Billings man charged with threatening to kill Tester, Biden ... UAW president says Trump visit to non-union](#)

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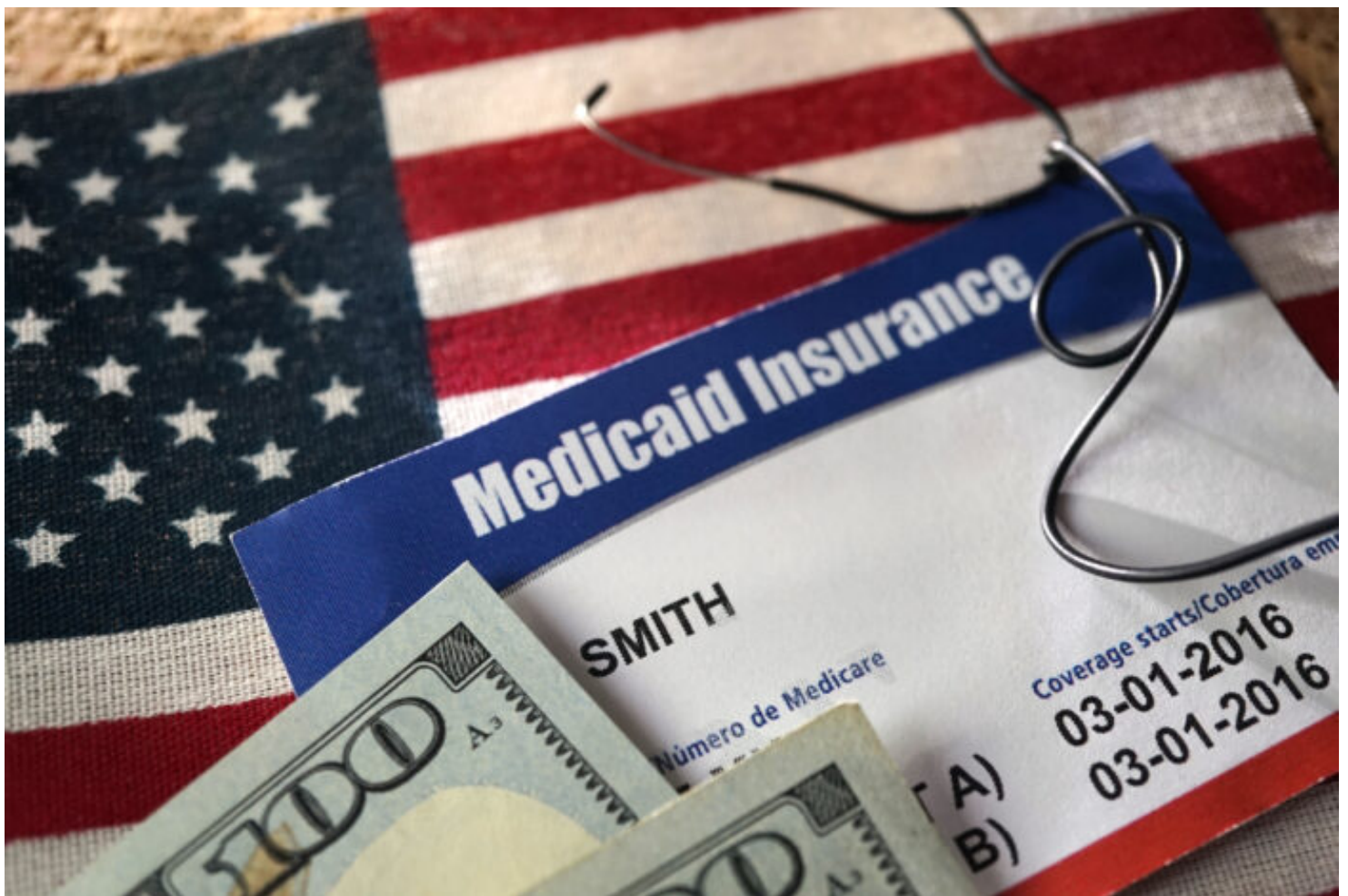
## Also Trending

As many as 12,000 people were kicked off of Medicaid in Kansas due to a processing glitch that disenrolled recipients even when the state had confirmed their continued eligibility. The problem was flagged by federal administrators at the end of August, prompting the state Department of Health and Environment to pause disenrollment through September, [the Kansas Reflector reported](#).

**More than two dozen states had similar problems** as they sought to recalibrate enrollment following the expiration of a pandemic-era provision that temporarily suspended eligibility requirements for Medicaid coverage. Nationwide, roughly 500,000 eligible recipients lost benefits during the process, most of them due to a program that processed auto-renewals by household rather than by individual, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“The state of Kansas is working on a remedy to meet the newly stated requirements,” said Christine Osterlund, head of the state health department.

More people could gain coverage, she added, “if Kansas were a Medicaid expansion state.”



*Only in America could a stock photo be simultaneously so dumb and so accurate.  
(Photo by Getty Images)*

**Gaps in care persist even in states that have expanded Medicaid**, including Kentucky, where state Republicans have balked at proposals to enhance dental and vision care after Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear widened eligibility via executive order rather than legislation. GOP lawmakers have the votes to override him, but they can't do it until January, so for now, stalling and complaining is pretty much their only option, [per the Kentucky Lantern](#).

**Luckily, lawmakers are great at stalling and complaining.** Those talents were on full display during a Sept. 12 legislative hearing, where Republicans responded to thoughtful testimony from doctors and dentists with gripes about Beshear's "political move" and right-wing talking points about how no one wants to work anymore.

"When I continue to see these stories about 18 to 34-year-old white men who'd rather sit at home on their couch with their Netflix remote and their DoorDash, it really aggravates me that they are living on the taxpayers' money when they are able-bodied and should be out there working," said state Sen. Damon Thayer, the chamber's majority leader.

Thayer, predictably, did not cite any sources for his claim, nor did he produce a single 18-to-34-

year-old man to testify about his penchant for Netflix and DoorDash. Advocates did the fact-checking for him, noting that most Medicaid recipients who are not disabled are on Medicaid because they work low-wage jobs that do not provide health benefits. If you'd like to see them move up the corporate ladder, providing better insurance coverage would be an excellent start, said Sheila Schuster, executive director of the Kentucky Mental Health Coalition.

"We're talking about workforce readiness here," she said. "If we want people to get back, as Sen. Thayer has suggested, into the real workforce, the full-time workforce, we need to make sure they can see and hear and are not suffering from dental pain."

Lawmakers did not take action on the regulations beyond forwarding them to a joint committee for further review months from now. This is, possibly, a good sign, as Republicans indicated they'd been in touch with the Beshear administration over his legislature-bypassing executive power move. The prospect of that discussion, according to state Rep. Derek Lewis, "goes a long way toward working this out."

**A Band-Aid for your hurt feelings:** [Florida among states with highest rate of adults under 65 without healthcare, CDC survey says](#) ... [Public health reports 4 measles cases in Idaho unvaccinated kids](#) ... [Indiana FSSA increases proposed autism therapy reimbursements — but providers say not enough](#) ... [Nurse claims Iowa care facility wanted her to falsify records, violate state regulations](#) ... [Out of legislators' sight, North Carolinians watched and waited for Medicaid expansion](#) ... [Vermonters face limited appointments and insurance mixups with new Covid vaccines](#) ... ['Like a Russian roulette': US military firefighters grapple with unknown PFAS exposure](#) ... [Nonprofit drug treatment center for low-income Texas teens shuts amid opioid crisis](#)



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# One Last Thing

A 2-year-old girl who wandered away from her home in Michigan's Upper Peninsula was found two hours later [sleeping in the woods](#), using one of the family dogs as a pillow while the other laid beside her and "kept her safe," state police said. We do not deserve dogs. (We do, kind of, deserve the antics of toddlers.)

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