

OPINION: “Putin and other autocratic leaders can count on Trump to compliment them!”

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“Who said Donald Trump lacks loyalty?”

It has been said, and poignantly demonstrated, that Donald Trump demands loyalty from everyone in his financial, familial and political orbits but offers no reciprocity in return. But one glaring example that rebuts this claim is Trump’s fealty, respect and willingness to assist Vladimir Putin and other villainous dictators.

No matter the dastardly murders of his opponents or critics, the silencing and punishment of peaceful protestors, or the territorial incursions into abutting nations, Putin can always count on Trump’s positive comments or utter silence.

If China invades Taiwan or North Korea sends soldiers into South Korea will Trump applaud their territorial or imperialistic aspirations?

And based on recent Trumpian threats to NATO allies of refusing assistance to any member in arrears with their financial payments there will be no military assistance from the United States.

It's important to remember that Trump "doesn't like losers," and thus far Putin, and other major autocratic leaders, can count on Trump to compliment them, remain uncritical, or more actively encourage his legislative sycophants to deny assistance to their targeted victims.

Clearly Trump is capable of unmitigated loyalty, and to those who claim otherwise, it is just more proof of what the world will look like if he regains the White House."-Betty Ussach, Dartmouth.

Southcoast Health's Charlton Memorial Hospital achieves Pathway to Excellence® Designation

"FALL RIVER, Mass. – On Thursday afternoon, Southcoast Health nurses, leaders, and staff gathered for the official announcement that Charlton Memorial Hospital received designation as a Pathway to Excellence® Hospital by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

The Pathway designation is a global credential that highlights Charlton Memorial's commitment to creating a healthy work environment where nurses feel empowered and valued. Charlton Memorial is now just the second hospital in Massachusetts to earn this designation, with only one hospital in Rhode Island earning this recognition.

"This achievement reinforces that we have created a strong, inclusive and positive culture for our nurses that encourages

engagement and supports their career growth and wellbeing,” said Jacqueline Somerville, Ph.D., RN, FAAN, NEA-BC, Senior Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer for Southcoast Health. “I could not be prouder of these caregivers for the remarkable teamwork they demonstrated throughout the process to earn the Pathway to Excellence designation. Thanks to our nurses’ dedication to our patients, community and each other, Charlton Memorial is more than just a hospital; it is a place of healing, compassion, and excellence.”



Southcoast Health photo.

Charlton Memorial’s nurses are an integral part of the healthcare team, with a voice in policy and practice. Throughout the designation process, this was verified with nurse participation required in a written application and survey attesting that the hospital environment supports its nurses’ needs and promotes high standards.

The Pathway program only required 60 percent of hospital nurses to participate in the survey portion of the application to share their perceptions of the workplace environment. However, the nurses at Charlton Memorial not only met but

greatly exceeded this requirement with an impressive 90 percent participation.

“We cannot emphasize enough the pivotal role our exceptional nurses at Charlton Memorial have played in achieving this honor,” said George Barth, MM, RN, CCRN, Associate Chief Nursing Officer for Southcoast Health. “Their passion, determination and relentless pursuit of excellence have been the driving force behind this success. I especially want to thank our Pathway to Excellence Nurse Coordinator, Andrea Laliberte, DNP, RN, for expertly leading this process.”



Southcoast Health photo.

With this designation, Southcoast Health joins an elite group of hospitals worldwide and leads the effort to enhance quality of care, patient and nursing safety, and the future of healthcare delivery.

“This Pathway designation sends a powerful message to our community that Charlton Memorial’s nurses are highly valued and deeply committed to providing exceptional care,” said David O. McCready, President and Chief Executive Officer for Southcoast Health. “Thank you to Jackie, George and Andrea, who oversaw the designation process, and the entire Charlton

Memorial nursing staff who ultimately achieved this important designation.”

Beginning their Pathway to Excellence journey in the fall of 2021, nurses at Charlton Memorial implemented many initiatives to strengthen their culture and teamwork including shared governance days, relaunching unit-based councils, creating evidence-based projects, establishing a nurse mentoring program, and implementing Zen Dens throughout the hospital to enhance staff wellbeing.

As the system works to expand the Pathway to Excellence designation across its other two community hospitals, individual donors have generously provided the seed funding for each hospital to launch its Pathway designation journey. Charlton Memorial’s designation will serve as a blueprint as Southcoast Health expands the program to St. Luke’s and Tobey Hospitals, showing Southcoast Health’s commitment to elevating the standard of care and professional fulfillment for nurses across the organization.

To learn more about nursing at Southcoast Health please visit www.southcoast.org/be-more/.

About Pathway to Excellence

The ANCC Pathway to Excellence Framework depicts six standards that are essential elements in developing a positive practice environment for nursing across a variety of healthcare settings including acute care and long-term care. These include shared decision-making, leadership, safety, quality, well-being and professional development.

For more information on the Pathway to Excellence recognition program, visit ANCC’s website at <https://www.nursingworld.org/pathway>.

About Southcoast Health

Founded in 1996, Southcoast Health serves communities across southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island as the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region. The not-for-profit, charitable system includes three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial in Fall River, St. Luke's in New Bedford (a Level II Trauma Center), and Tobey in Wareham, Massachusetts with a physician network of more than 675 providers.

The system has established more than 55 service locations across the South Coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including six urgent care locations, a Visiting Nurse Association, the Southcoast Health Cancer Center, the region's only Level II Adult Trauma Center and numerous ancillary facilities.

Southcoast Health has been recognized consecutively for five years in a row as a Newsweek's World's Best Hospital from 2019-2023 and named a Maternity Care Access Hospital for 2023-2024 by U.S. News & World Report. The organization was recognized as the best place to work for the sixth consecutive year by Southcoast Media Group's community choice awards.

With upward of 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in southeastern Massachusetts, and one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth, according to the Boston Business Journal. More information is available online at www.southcoast.org. “

New Bedford Police charge man wearing court-ordered GPS with robbing Uber driver at knifepoint

“NEW BEDFORD – Police have placed a male who was already on court-ordered GPS under arrest after robbing an Uber driver at knifepoint directly outside of his own residence.

On Monday, February 19th, at around 5:30 PM, patrol units responded to the North St./Cedar St. intersection in response to the robbery. The driver stated he was waiting for his fare when he was approached by a male whose lower face was covered by a bandana. This male then produced a knife and demanded the driver’s belongings before fleeing the scene on foot.

Officers Tyler Viera and William Mouyos responded and were able to retrieve video footage that depicted the suspect’s face. With this video, they were able to identify the suspect as ISAIAH POINDEXTER, 22, of 117 Cedar St. The officers successfully located ISAIAH at this residence which is across the street from the scene of the crime.

POINDEXTER was wearing a court-ordered GPS anklet. This stems from his arrest last Summer after a vandalism spree during which he spray-painted “Dex” and other writings on numerous vehicles, including several BCSO cruisers parked near the Ash St. jail. As a result of those incidents, POINDEXTER has numerous open charges for vandalism out of New Bedford District Court.

Further investigation revealed that the GPS anklet POINDEXTER was wearing had tracked him to the intersection where the crime had taken place, at the same time it was reported to have occurred. At this time, he was placed under arrest and

charged with committing an armed robbery while masked. The identity of the second suspect remains under investigation at this time.

If you have any information concerning this crime or any other, you can remain anonymous. Call 508-99-CRIME, or visit our website and leave tips at <https://www.newbedfordpd.com/report/>-City of New Bedford Police Department.

Massachusetts 2024 ballot questions: MCAS repeal, minimum wage increase, psychedelic regulation

As the 2024 election approaches, Massachusetts residents may have the opportunity to vote on several important ballot questions that could impact education, labor policies, government accountability, and public health. Here's a closer look at each of the potential initiatives:

Repeal Passing Assessment Requirement for High School Graduation Initiative: This initiative aims to repeal the requirement that students must achieve a certain competency level on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam to graduate high school. Supporters argue that the MCAS exam is an unfair measure of student achievement and that graduation requirements should be more flexible. Opponents, however, raise concerns about the potential impact on educational standards and accountability.

Minimum Wage for Tipped Employees Initiative: This proposal seeks to gradually increase the wage of tipped employees until it meets the state minimum wage in 2029. It would also still permit tipping in addition to the minimum wage. Supporters argue that this would ensure fair wages for tipped workers, while opponents raise concerns about the potential impact on businesses, particularly small businesses in the hospitality industry.

App-Based Drivers as Contractors and Labor Policies Initiative: This initiative considers app-based drivers to be independent contractors and enacts several labor policies related to app-based companies. The specifics of the labor policies are not provided, but this initiative could have significant implications for the gig economy and the rights of app-based workers.

Authorization of State Auditor to Audit General Court Initiative: This initiative would authorize the state auditor to audit the state legislature, known as the General Court. It would also remove some existing regulations regarding the auditing process. Supporters argue that this would increase government transparency and accountability, while opponents raise concerns about potential conflicts of interest and the need for legislative independence.

Unionization and Collective Bargaining for Transportation Network Drivers Initiative: This proposal would provide for unionizing and collective bargaining for transportation network drivers, such as those working for companies like Uber and Lyft. Supporters argue that this would give drivers a stronger voice and improve their working conditions, while opponents raise concerns about the potential impact on the app-based economy and consumer prices.

Regulated Access to Psychedelic Substances Initiative: This initiative seeks to regulate access to psychedelic substances, such as psilocybin (found in magic mushrooms) and MDMA

(commonly known as ecstasy). The specifics of the regulations are not provided, but supporters argue that these substances have therapeutic potential and should be regulated for safe use, while opponents raise concerns about potential abuse and public health risks.

These potential ballot questions represent a range of important issues that could shape the future of Massachusetts. Whether they ultimately make it onto the ballot and how voters will respond remain to be seen, but they are sure to spark lively debate and discussion in the lead-up to the 2024 election.

B.C.S.O. Sheriff Heroux incorporates recommendations to address high suicide rates he inherited

“In January 2023, I inherited a jail system that had a suicide rate three times the national average. We are changing that.

In my first month on the job, I hired prison suicide expert Lindsay Hayes to review our policies and procedures. His review found a lot of problems with our policies, procedures, and infrastructure. Hayes gave me 23 specific issues to address

(https://www.bcso-ma.us/Homepage_files/4-4-23_suicidereport.pdf) NOTE: The report suggests 24 recommendations, but #24 is for me to implement the first 23, which is why I say there are 23 actual recommendations.

All 23 issues have been implemented or are in progress.

One area of concern was the manner in which 7 out of 7 last inmate suicides at the Dartmouth jail were all done using bunkbeds. The pictures below show some of the work being done to make the cells more suicide resistant.

We can never fully eliminate inmate suicide. But we can reduce it. There were a lot of different ways that inmates could hang themselves and commit suicide. We are changing that.

With respect to inmate cells:

A PROBLEM: The windows had vertical bars that could be used to wrap a cord around at the base windowsill, and the inmate could then sit down and hang himself or herself.

The SOLUTION: A stainless steel reinforced mesh screen keeps the inmate from wrapping a cord around the bar and hanging themselves.

A PROBLEM: The old bunkbeds had horizontal bars, i.e. ladder and other 45° angle bars. Inmates could use those to hang themselves.

The SOLUTION: We redesigned the ladder and bed eliminating all bars that can be used to hang oneself.

The total cost in materials to retrofit each bunkbed or window is about \$15 each.

Also of note... The individuals doing the welding in the cells are inmates. They are part of our expanded vocational welding program, where we are teaching them a marketable skill; part of their discharge planning is to get the inmate lined up with an employer prior to being released."-B.C.S.O. Sheriff Paul Heroux.

All photos by Sheriff Paul Heroux:















New Bedford roadwork sites for the upcoming week of

February 26, 2024 – March 1, 2024

“The City of New Bedford has roadwork sites for the upcoming week of February 26, 2024 – March 1, 2024, and they are as follows:

Eversource will be working on gas main relays and services on:

- Main relay on Acushnet Ave from Phillips Rd to Fox St
- Main relay on Central Ave from Acushnet Ave to Ashley Blvd
- Main relay on Central Ave from Church St to Brook St
- Main relay on County St from Cove St to Rivet St
- Main relay on Hicks St from Acushnet Ave to N Front St
- Main relay on Jouvette St from County St to Crapo St
- Main relay on W Rodney French Blvd from Calumet St to Bayview St

Other:

- MassDOT will be staging installation and beam end cleaning and concrete encasements at I-195 East and West bound lanes over Purchase St, County St and State St work is scheduled during the overnight hours starting and is scheduled until May 31st of 2024. Work will take place Sundays to Thursdays. Police will be on site for detour and safety setups.
- MassDOT will be closing street highway ramps overnight from 8:00 PM to 5:00 AM for the following locations to conduct bridge work for the pedestrian walk across RT 18. Work will be on Sunday, February 25th – Route 18 South Bound or Purchase St ramps and Monday, February 26th – Purchase Street ramp.
- Contractor (SCR Constructors) will continue site work at the future South Coast Rail station platform locations in the city. (Church St at Carlisle St and Wamsutta St at Acushnet Ave.) If you have questions, please email the project team at

SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us

- Contractor (SCR Constructors) will continue site work at the future pedestrian bridge across Route 18 impacting parking along Purchase Street between Willis Street and Pearl Street and at the Division of Career Services on Acushnet Avenue. Temporary detours may be in place pending construction activities occurring. If you have questions, please email the project team at SouthCoastRail@dot.state.ma.us

- New Bedford: Rt. 18 Overnight Closures and Detours for Pedestrian Bridge Work

- Construction continues for the new pedestrian bridge across Route 18 and Acushnet Avenue connecting to the New Bedford Station.

- Crews are currently ahead of schedule with the erecting of temporary support steel structures (falsework) over Route 18 and will begin construction of the temporary bridge deck next week. The falsework and deck will be used to support the placement and construction of the new permanent bridge steel.

- The following is an update to the schedule of overnight closures (subject to change) of Route 18 and adjacent roads. Signage and police details will be in place to direct traffic. Additional overnight closures may be added Thursday, February 29, as necessary, to complete this work.

- Sunday Night, February 25 – Acushnet Avenue: traffic will be diverted to Herman Melville Boulevard

- Monday Night, February 26 – Route 18 Northbound at Route 6/Mill Street and Hillman Street: traffic will be diverted to Herman Melville Boulevard and Purchase Street (see map below)

- Tuesday Night, February 27 – Route 18 Southbound at Purchase Street exit: traffic will be diverted to Purchase Street (see map below)

- Wednesday Night, February 28 – Route 18 Purchase Street Ramp: Traffic will be diverted to the next Route 18 exit (Route 6 West exit onto Pleasant Street/Purchase Street)

- Location of work: •Purchase Street (between Pearl Street and Willis Street) •Near the MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center (618 Acushnet Ave) •Route 18 at the Purchase Street

exit

- Dates/Hours of Work: •Weekdays, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- Nighttime work hours for falsework install, 8:00 PM to 5:00 AM
- To accommodate the construction of the west side plaza of the bridge, there will be no street parking on the east side of Purchase Street between Pearl Street and Willis Street.

Project: Lead Service Line Replacement Program Phase II
General Contractor: C. Naughton Corp. (Monday-Friday 7:00am -5:00pm)

- The contractor will be working Lead Service Line Replacements. Monday, the contractor will be on Bedford Street, between Palmer Street and Ryan Street. Tuesday, Brownell Street, between Ryan Street and Bedford Street then moving to Plymouth Street between Brigham Street and Palmer Street. Wednesday, Plymouth Street, between Brigham Street and Brownell Street then moving to Ryan Street between Brigham Street and Brownell Street. Thursday, Ryan Street, between Brigham Street and Palmer Street. Friday, Plymouth Street, between Brigham Street and Brownell Street then Brigham Street between Hawthorn Street and Priscilla Street. During working hours, these roads may be closed with signs posted to detour traffic around work areas. Police details will be on-site allowing access to residents only and assist with traffic management.

Project: Grape Street Collector Rehabilitation General Contractor: Green Mountain Pipeline Services Subcontractor: Duke's Root Control (Friday 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM)

- The Subcontractor is scheduled to complete the root control in the wastewater system at the north and south sides of Buttonwood Park Pond. There may be a brief lane reduction along Brownell Ave while work is being completed.

Project: Phase 4 Transmission Main Reinforcement Project Contractor: C. Naughton Corp. (Monday-Friday 7:00 AM to 4:00

PM)

- The Contractor will continue replacing a section of the existing 48-in water transmission main north of the railroad crossing at Chipaway Road in East Freetown.

Project: Shawmut Avenue and Howland Street Pumping Station Improvements Project General Contractor: WES Construction Corp. (Monday-Friday 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM)

- The Contractor will continue installing the new sewer force main along Nash Road and Shawmut Avenue and Mt Pleasant Street. Lane restrictions will be in place during working hours, with one lane of alternating traffic open. Police officers will be on-site to assist with traffic management.”

Five people are hospitalized following a head-on crash in Foxboro involving an ambulance.

At 7:00pm Thursday night a Brewster Ambulance collided head-on with a Honda Pilot carrying five people, including a child. Both vehicles were traveling on Main Street in Foxboro.

The Brewster Ambulance was transporting a 70-year-old patient of the collision. The patient, two Emergency Medical Technicians, and a 40-year-old mother in the Honda Pilot were injured. However, the most severely injured person in the accident was an elementary school age girl who was in the back seat of the Pilot. Her injuries were serious enough to require helicopter transport to Massachusetts General Hospital.

The accident is currently being investigated by the Massachusetts State Police and Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey's Office. No charges have been filed yet. The medical conditions of all the injured has not been released.





Massachusetts Fire Department responds to car that flies into Assabet River

“At 9:20pm Thursday night, the Westborough Fire Department received a 911 call reporting that a car was in a river along a residential street.

Upon arrival to 25 Maynard Street, Westborough Rescue 1 and Medic 4 discovered a severely damaged vehicle partially submerged in the Assabet River.

Residents of Maynard Street who heard the loud sound of the crash, raced to the scene and helped the sole occupant from their car. Preliminary investigation suggests that the car was

traveling eastbound on Maynard Street, when for unknown reasons, lost control and went into the river.

The road was closed for approximately 45 minutes until a crane would arrive to pull the damaged vehicle from the waters.

The driver was not injured and refused medical transport. The accident is currently under investigation and the story is developing.

All photos by the Westborough Fire Department:













**Texas man who threatened
Boston doctor serving**

transgender patients sentenced to prison

“BOSTON – A Texas man was sentenced today in federal court in Boston for threatening a Boston doctor affiliated with the national LGBTQIA+ health education center.

Matthew Jordan Lindner, 39, of Comfort, Texas, was sentenced by Senior U.S. District Judge William G. Young to three months in prison and three years of supervised release. Lindner was also ordered to pay restitution of \$2,986. In December 2023, Lindner pleaded guilty to one count of interstate transmission of threatening communication.

In August 2022, inaccurate information spread online regarding procedures doctors at Boston Children’s Hospital were performing for gender nonconforming children. On Aug. 31, 2022, Lindner called the Boston-based National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center and left a threatening voicemail targeting one of the Center’s affiliated doctors. In that voicemail, Lindner said: “You sick motherf*****s, you’re all gonna burn. There’s a group of people on their way to handle [victim]. You signed your own warrant, lady. Castrating our children. You’ve woken up enough people. And upset enough of us. And you signed your own ticket. Sleep well, you f***** c***.”

“This office will aggressively investigate and prosecute acts of hate and intimidation. Threatening a medical doctor providing essential care to children is deplorable. No one in this country should live in fear for their safety because of their identity, gender, race, religion or beliefs. Full stop.” said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. “We urge the public to call their local police or the FBI if they are ever threatened with physical harm the way the doctor in this case was simply for doing his or her job.”

“Imagine the terror of having your life threatened for just doing your job. Matthew Lindner accosted a physician for doing exactly that, and in doing so instilled unnecessary fear in the medical community,” said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division. “Hateful, repulsive, and threatening behavior like this has no place here, and today’s sentence demonstrates that we won’t stand for criminals terrorizing innocent people. Nobody should have to fear becoming the target of vitriol-fueled violence.”

After leaving the threatening voicemail, Lindner continued to try to contact the victim. To that end, Lindner called the victim’s former medical practice and a university where the victim was a faculty member.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy and FBI SAC Cohen made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brian A. Fogerty and K. Nathaniel Yeager of the Criminal Division prosecuted the case.”-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

New Bedford Police arrest Dartmouth man, charge another after dispute where shots were fired

“NEW BEDFORD – Police have arrested one male and are charging another after a dispute at a south-end automotive shop.

On Friday, February 16th, police responded to 1593 Cove Rd. regarding shots fired. Upon arrival, patrol officers learned that an argument over a civil matter had escalated into a

physical confrontation. The owner of the shop, THOMAS VINAGRE, 39, got into a physical confrontation with Mr. DALLAS CHACE, 24. During the struggle, CHACE produced a firearm that discharged twice as the men grappled. Fortunately, nobody was struck, and a customer immediately called for police assistance.

Narcotics detectives Emily Pacheco and Matthew Sylvia were the first to arrive on the scene and successfully separated the two men. The firearm was secured, and CHACE was found to be duly licensed to carry it. He was placed under arrest and charged with unlawful discharge of a firearm and two counts of attempt to commit assault and battery by firearm. The firearm, a 9mm semi-automatic, was seized.

A charge has also been requested on VINAGRE for assault and battery on CHACE.

If you have any information concerning crime, you can remain anonymous. Call 508-99-CRIME, or visit our website and leave tips at <https://www.newbedfordpd.com/report/>." -New Bedford Police Department.