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SPOTLIGHT

Lawmakers Give Dunleavy the Cold Shoulder

Alaska's Legislature leaves governor's special session hanging

By Hannah Thacker

All eyes are on the Texas Legislature's fleeing Democrats and Gov. Greg Abbott's (R) efforts to redraw the congressional map during a special session. But another state is also struggling to wrangle its members into a special session: Alaska.

When Alaska's Republican-majority Legislature's normal session ended in May, Gov. Mike Dunleavy (R) called for an overtime session to get lawmakers to vote on three education-related bills.

It didn't go as planned.

The day the special session started, the Legislature overrode two of Dunleavy's vetoes that cut public school funding and nixed reports on oil tax settlements—marking the first time since 1987 that the Legislature has overridden an appropriations veto by a sitting governor, according to the *Alaska Free Beacon*. After overturning those vetoes, the Legislature decided their job was done and voted to go home.

Lawmakers passed a resolution that would permit them to go home for more than three days, returning to the special session on Aug. 19 and effectively cutting the 30-day session in half.

"I'm not sure what the Legislature is doing right now. There's a session. But not really," Dunleavy said in a press conference shortly after the Legislature recessed.

Similar to pledges made by Abbott in Texas, Dunleavy could issue another session or get them ordered back to Juneau. But in keeping with the tradition of independent-minded Alaskan lawmakers, legislators don't seem particularly bothered.

"It's an interesting problem, right?" Alaska state Rep. Will Stapp (R) told the *Free Beacon*. "The real key in the uniform rules [of the Legislature] is enforcement, and I guess the Senate could compel the House to come back, but they're not going to."

The core of the rift between the Legislature and the governor is about education funding. Ranking 51st out of 53 U.S. states and territories, it's been a hot topic. Over his two terms in office, bills regarding education have gone back and forth between the governor and the Legislature. Dunleavy has threatened to veto and eventually vetoed legislation, only for the Legislature to turn around and try to override it.

Every state Legislature scraps with their governor, even in states where one party holds all three branches. What happens when those parties butt heads and what lengths they will go to is where the rubber meets the road.

— *Hannah Thacker*

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Quote of the Day

"You know the old saying 'politics runs downstream from culture'? Not in the Trump era. Now, culture is downstream from politics." — White House Communications Director Steven Cheung, NOTUS, 8/14.

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

2028 hopefuls grapple with Gaza response

By Erika Filter

DEMOCRATS: Party Tries to Woo Back Silicon Valley

"Some executives who reliably give to Democrats feel that party leaders view Silicon Valley as a piggy bank and aren't promoting policies that help the industry."

- **NOT A FAN OF REGULATIONS.** The alliance between Silicon Valley and the Democratic Party has soured "for some who opposed the Biden administration's focus on regulating areas like cryptocurrencies and artificial intelligence and are encouraged by President Trump's policies."
- **OFFICE DIVISIONS.** "Rank-and-file tech workers are mostly expected to continue backing Democrats, but the shift among some key executives is another development worrying party leaders." (*Wall Street Journal*)
- **D.C. DEMOCRATS SPLIT ON RESPONSE TO TRUMP.** Congressional Democrats denounced Trump's takeover of D.C. police, but D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser (D) "was more cautious, criticizing Trump's takeover as 'authoritarian' while also suggesting that the city could work with him."
- **EXTENDING CREDIT.** "Bowser said that the intervention was legal; the president had invoked 'a part of the charter that he has the prerogative to invoke.' She acknowledged the city had longstanding problems, like illegal gun trafficking and violence in nightlife areas, and said the federal government could now help with them."
- **TENUOUS ALLIANCE.** "In Bowser, the president has found an unlikely partner—a Democrat who had repeatedly clashed with progressives on crime, denouncing the 'defund the police' movement that flourished in 2020 and stalling a criminal justice bill that Republicans in Congress later repealed."
- **MEANS TO AN END.** Some Democrats, like Bowser, think D.C. statehood is less likely if the area is perceived as unsafe and out of control. (*Semafor*)

2028 WATCH: Democrats Change Attitude Toward Gaza

Former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg (D) responded to criticisms that he gave a "mealy-mouthed" answer on Gaza during his appearance on Pod Save America last week.

- **POLICY BRIEF.** He later clarified he would support Sen. Bernie Sanders' (I-VT) proposed arms embargo on Israel and supports Palestinian statehood as part of a two-state solution. He said the U.S. should not pass another 10-year foreign military aid agreement with Israel.
- **CHANGING SENTIMENTS.** 2028 hopefuls like Buttigieg are reevaluating their stances on Israel's war in Gaza. Sen. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ) said his position is "evolving." Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) supported Sanders' resolutions banning weapons sales to Israel.

- **THE GOVERNORS.** Govs. Josh Shapiro (D-PA) and Wes Moore (D-MD), “both staunch defenders of Israel, are keeping their powder dry and declining to engage on nuts and bolts policy questions.” Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D) “acknowledged during town halls this spring that the 2024 campaign fell short in recognizing voters’ anger over Gaza.” Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker (D) “endorsed humanitarian aid to Palestinians without directly addressing the policy questions surrounding military aid.” (*Politico*)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Democrats are starting to profess more support for Palestinians as Israel’s war in Gaza drags on. Last cycle, pro-Palestinian groups declined to endorse former President Biden and, later, former Vice President Kamala Harris. The “uncommitted” movement urged voters to protest the Democratic administration by voting third-party or staying home. In the lead-up to the election, some Democratic strategists downplayed the movement’s impact. However, Dearborn, Michigan, the city with the largest Arab American population in the country, went for President Trump by about 2,600 votes after having formerly supported Biden. Democrats have begun to shift their stances, and support for Gaza is being used as a type of litmus test for progressive ideals that are becoming more mainstream. The situation will continue to evolve ahead of 2028, but Democrats are responding already to the dissatisfaction they saw from voters in 2024.

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Schumer presses Alaska's Mary Peltola to run for Senate

By Nicholas Anastácio

AD ROUNDUP: GOP Primary Ads Tout MAGA Allegiance

Waste removal entrepreneur Nate Morris (R) is up with another TV ad in Kentucky, once again tying Rep. Andy Barr (R-06) and 2023 GOV nominee Daniel Cameron (R) to retiring Sen. Mitch McConnell (R). The 30-second spot criticizes McConnell’s opposition to Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s confirmation and touts Morris’ support for his MAHA agenda. (AdImpact)

- **GEORGIA.** Hardworking Americans—Gov. Brian Kemp’s (R) super PAC—is up with its first ad touting former Tennessee football coach Derek Dooley (R) as the “pro-Trump outsider” to take on Sen. Jon Ossoff (D). The spot is part of a two-week ad buy on Fox News, boosting Dooley as he faces Reps. Buddy Carter (R-01) and Mike Collins (R-10) in the GOP primary. (*Punchbowl News*) The group has placed roughly \$307,000 in TV ad reservations. (AdImpact)
- **SOUTH CAROLINA.** Businessman Mark Lynch (R) released an ad that ties Sen. Lindsey Graham (R) to former President Biden and points to the senator’s past criticisms of President Trump. The 30-second ad will air on television and online, and is “backed by significant six figure ad spends” according to a press release. (*The Downballot*)

ALASKA: Schumer Presses Mary Peltola to Challenge Sullivan

Minority Leader Chuck Schumer is courting former Rep. Mary Peltola (D) behind the scenes to challenge Sen. Dan Sullivan (R). Peltola—who is considering House, Senate, and gubernatorial bids—would be Democrats’ best chance to beat Sullivan next year.

- **BEST SHOT.** Peltola is the last Democrat to win statewide in Alaska, winning two elections to the House in 2022 with help from the state’s ranked-choice voting system.
- **REDEMPTION ARC.** Peltola lost reelection to Rep. Nick Begich (R-AL) in 2024, losing by 3 points in the final round as former Vice President Kamala Harris lost the state by 13 points.
- **THE ONE.** Lauren French, a spokesperson for the Schumer-aligned Senate Majority PAC, said Peltola “would be a standout candidate, which is probably why Sullivan is going around town griping about how nervous he is about

next year.” The super PAC has spent more than \$600,000 on digital ads against Sullivan.

- **A THIRD RECRUIT?** Schumer is looking to land another top-tier recruit after recruiting former North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper (D) and former Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) to run. (*Axios*)

IOWA: Ernst Taunts Five Dem Challengers

Sen. Joni Ernst (R) hasn’t confirmed if she’s running for reelection, but she told a Republican audience in Urbandale on Wednesday that Democrats challenging her should “bring it on.”

- **ERNST SAYS:** “Every day we get a new Democratic member of the House or Senate that decides to run for this Senate seat—bring it on. ... I got a lot of years under my belt, and I’ve got a lot of confidence, not just in me, but all of our candidates up and down the ticket.”
- **DEM FIVE.** Five Democrats are running to take on the senator next year, including state Sen. Zach Wahls, state Rep. Josh Turek, 2020 IA-04 nominee J.D. Scholten, Des Moines School Board Chair Jackie Norris, and former Knoxville Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Nathan Sage. (*Iowa Capital Dispatch*)

ILLINOIS: Former State GOP Chair Enters Race

Former Illinois GOP Chair Don Tracy is entering the race to replace retiring Sen. Dick Durbin (D). Tracy, a Springfield-based attorney who resigned his chairmanship last year amid intraparty fighting, is focusing his campaign on affordability and prioritizing downstate Illinois issues.

- **STANDOUT.** Tracy is the most notable Republican to join the open race in the blue state. He faces 2022 candidate Casey Chlebek (R), 2018 IL-10 nominee Doug Bennett (R), Air Force veteran John Goodman (R), occupational therapist Pamela Denise Long (R), and perennial candidate R. Cary Capparelli (R) in the Republican primary. (WUIS)
- **STATE FAIR FUN.** Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton (D) and Reps. Robin Kelly (D-02) and Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-08) made their pitches at the Illinois State Fair on Wednesday to the state’s most influential Democrats, including Durbin in the front row. The Democratic Senate hopefuls spoke at the Illinois Democratic County Chairs’ Brunch in Springfield as part of Governor’s Day festivities.
- **DURBIN’S BLESSING.** “All three candidates have said they’ve spoken to Durbin about an endorsement, but it’s unclear whether the senator will choose a side in a competitive race that is also becoming one of the most expensive in the country.” (WUIS)

MICHIGAN: Dems Tout Mayoral Endorsements

2018 GOV candidate Abdul El-Sayed (D) released a list of endorsements from 14 local officials, including Three Rivers Mayor Tom Lowry and South Haven Mayor Annie Brown. El-Sayed has also received the backing of mayors representing Dearborn, Flint, and Saugatuck. (release)

- **HER MAYORS.** Rep. Haley Stevens (D-11) has the support of mayors representing Ecorse, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Grand Rapids, Harper Woods, Huntington Woods, Inkster, Lansing, Lathrup Village, Livonia, Northville, Oak Park, and Plymouth. (release)

OHIO: Crypto Prepared to Defeat Sherrod Brown (Again)

Fairshake, the pro-crypto super PAC that spent more than \$40 million against former Sen. Sherrod Brown’s (D) reelection last year, is signaling that the former senator could be a target again in 2026.

- **ROUND TWO.** Brown, a former Banking Committee chair, is a longtime crypto skeptic. The super PAC boasts a more than \$140 million war chest ahead of the midterms, and is prepared to spend against Brown as he challenges Sen. Jon Husted (R).

- **NOT SUBTLE.** Fairshake spokesperson Josh Vlasto said in a statement: “Last year, voters sent a clear message that the Sherrod Brown and Elizabeth Warren agenda was deeply out of touch with Ohio values.” (*Politico*)
- **REALLY?** Husted said he was “surprised” to hear about Brown’s comeback bid at a Dayton-area event on Wednesday. Husted pointed to Brown’s 2024 loss against Sen. Bernie Moreno (R), arguing his five decades in elected office would be too much for voters.
- **HUSTED SAYS:** “I mean, what are we, 14 months, 16 months away from the election? He just lost one ten months ago.” (*Dayton Daily News*)
- **LOOKING FOR ANOTHER WIN.** Reagan McCarthy, Moreno’s communications director, said in a statement that Moreno “will do whatever it takes to ensure Sherrod Brown suffers back-to-back losses.” (*Spectrum News*)

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Texas Democrats chart next move ahead of second special session

By James A. Downs and Amelia Monroe

REDISTRICTING ROUNDUP: Gavin Newsom Prepares for the Fight

Texas House Democrats said they will “issue [their] demands for a second special session on Friday” and “refuse to give” Gov. Greg Abbott (R) a quorum to pass the maps. (release) The statement comes amid reports that the state legislators were preparing to return home as the first special session winds down. Abbott has said he will continue to call special sessions in order to pass his agenda.

- **THOU SHALT NOT PASS.** An Illinois court rejected a request from Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) to enforce arrest warrants and compel the Texas legislators back to the state. Texas House Speaker Dustin Burrows (R) issued civil arrest warrants earlier this month, but they are only enforceable within state lines. An Illinois judge on Wednesday said Paxton and Burrows “failed to present a legal basis for the court” to execute the arrest warrants. (*Texas Tribune*)
- **BREAKING RANKS.** Indiana Gov. Mike Braun (R) remains noncommittal on redistricting, but rank-and-file Republicans in the General Assembly, who control the process, are beginning to speak out against a redraw. “Multiple have described themselves as a ‘hard no.’” Some Republicans say the political optics are poor, while others have said the maps are fairly drawn in the barn-red state. (*Indiana Capital Chronicle*)
- **NEW POLL.** In California, a *Politico*/Citrin Lab/Possibility Center poll (July 28-Aug. 12; 1445 RVs) found that 64% of voters support keeping the state’s independent commission intact. Just 36% wanted to give that power back to state lawmakers. (*California Playbook*)
- **SEASON STARTS TODAY.** California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) will kick off his gerrymandering effort in Los Angeles today with a rally, his press office announced on social media. He plans to call a special election that would bypass the redistricting commission through the 2030 elections to counter Abbott’s plans. In order for the ballot initiative to appear on the ballot in November, the Legislature needs a completed plan by Aug. 22. (KCRA)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Not a surprising polling result, since partisan redistricting historically has polled poorly among the American public, though surveys are typically few and far in between. Now begins the months-long process for Democrats to convince California voters to make the commission dormant for a few years. The effort is likely to cost several million dollars.
- **FIND THE VOTES.** Newsom and Democratic legislative leaders say they have the votes to pass the measure through the Legislature. Democrats need two-thirds of members to support it to pass. (*California Playbook*)
- **IT’S ALL ABOUT THE PRICE TAG.** “Political insiders estimate [California Democrats] must raise upward of \$100 million—in less than three months—to mount a statewide campaign to sell it to voters.” (*California Playbook*)

- **ACROSS THE GOP SPECTRUM.** Growing numbers of congressional Republicans across the country are raising concerns about the escalating redistricting arms race. Blue-state representatives from California and New York have been the loudest opponents of the mid-decade redistricting efforts. Conference Vice Chair Blake Moore of Utah said mid-decade redrawing is a “step too far.” Rep. Randy Fine (R-FL 06), who recently won a deep-red seat in a special election, said he’s not sure if it’s even possible in Florida due to voter-approved amendments. (*Politico*)
- **THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS.** “Democrats who left Texas are working to spread their message that the plan is a danger to democratic norms, while balancing their personal lives and professional responsibilities.” They have faced multiple bomb threats since leaving Texas. Legislators have had to contend whether or not to bring their family with them—some have, while others remained in Texas.
- **ON THE JOB.** Because the Texas Legislature is part time, many juggle other jobs as lawyers, business owners, realtors, or other professions. “Many of those who left the state now have to manage those responsibilities from afar.” (*Washington Post*)
- **NEVADA.** Fair Maps Nevada PAC, an anti-gerrymandering outside group, said it plans to file a ballot initiative that would establish an independent redistricting commission in the Silver State. The Nevada Supreme Court struck down an attempt by the group to have a similar initiative on the ballot in 2024.
- **WHY?** “Justices ruled that creating the commission would cost the state money and the measures don’t have a revenue-source.”
- **HOW IT’S MADE.** If passed, the amendment would establish a seven-member commission to redraw the state’s congressional and legislative lines. The Legislature currently has that power. (KRNV)

ARIZONA 06: JoAnna Mendoza Continues to Consolidate Support

Sen. Mark Kelly (D) and former Rep. Gabby Giffords (D) endorsed Marine Corps veteran JoAnna Mendoza (D) in the campaign against Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R). Kelly and Giffords are the latest Democrats to endorse Mendoza.

- **DEMOCRATIC BACKING.** Kelly and Giffords join a long list of Mendoza supporters: former state Reps. Rob Barber, Tom O’Halloran, and Charlene Fernandez, BOLD PAC, Elect Democratic Women, EMILY’s List, Equality PAC, Latino Victory Fund, LGBTQ+ Victory Fund, and others. (release)
- **THE FIELD.** Mendoza has effectively cleared the field with strong fundraising numbers. Her likely most credible opponent, immigration attorney Mo Goldman (D), dropped out of the race this week to focus on his work.

NEW JERSEY 09: Pou Raises Eyebrows After Trip to Israel

Reps. Nellie Pou (D) is “getting pushback from the right and left” for her recent AIPAC-affiliated trip to Israel. Pou represents a district with a significant Palestinian American population.

- **HISTORY.** The trip to Israel comes in the wake of “news of starvation in Gaza and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s plans to seize Gaza city.” Netanyahu’s plans have garnered opposition from congressional Democrats, including Pou, who has previously called for a permanent ceasefire and voted against bills that would increase the United States’ aid to Israel.
- **RESPONSE.** Pou’s campaign manager Morghan Cyr called the trip a “fact-finding mission” where the freshman spoke with both Israeli and Palestinian officials to get a better sense of the war. Cyr defended Pou, saying “the Congresswoman’s goals for the region remain unchanged: a two state solution.” (*New Jersey Playbook*)

TEXAS: Democrats on the Defensive

Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-30) is considering a bid for a neighboring district seat amid the “newly drawn and hotly contested congressional maps” that leave her home just outside of her current district. Crockett is one of a few Democrats in the Dallas area affected by the proposed map, including Reps. Julie Johnson

(D-32) and Marc Veasey (D-33). The proposed change eliminates one Democratic seat in the Dallas area, potentially creating a member-on-member primary, depending on how the incumbents decide to approach reelection.

- **UNSURE.** The law does not require members to live within their district boundaries, but for incumbents like Crockett, districts are going to have a major right-ward shift. This shift might not bode well for a reelection campaign. Those seeking reelection have until Dec. 8 to file intent to run paperwork to the secretary of state office. (CBS News)

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Katie Hobbs faces dampened Democratic enthusiasm in reelection

By Abby Turner

ARIZONA: Waning Democratic Enthusiasm Could Hamper Hobbs' Reelection

“Despite the swing to the left in 2022, experts say that dampened Democratic enthusiasm could be a roadblock for” Gov. Katie Hobbs (D) in 2026.

- **HARDER TO BEAT.** “This time around, Hobbs won’t be going against a candidate like” Senior Advisor to the United States Agency for Global Media Kari Lake (R), “who had a campaign muddled with controversies, like election-fraud allegations, that even the state GOP hesitated to get behind.” Rep. Andy Biggs (R-05) and 2022 candidate Karrin Taylor Robson (R), “who are both running in the GOP primary with” President Trump’s “support, have stronger résumés than Lake.”
- **MORE ALIKE.** While Trump endorsed both Biggs and Robson, political strategists “predicted that Biggs would win the party’s nomination. Like Hobbs, Biggs has a name-recognition factor that should help him in a statewide race.” (*Hotline* reporting)

CONNECTICUT: Ryan Fazio Officially Jumps Into GOP Primary

State Sen. Ryan Fazio (R) launched his campaign for governor in a new video released yesterday, attacking Gov. Ned Lamont (R) for high electric rates and taxes. Lamont has not officially declared for reelection. “Fazio is the second Republican to create a campaign committee.” New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart (R) “has an exploratory committee and is expected to join them as declared candidates.” (*CT Mirror*)

MICHIGAN: Judge Orders Whitmer to Respond to Lawsuit Calling for Special Election

A judge ordered Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) “to respond to a lawsuit seeking a special election for a vacant Michigan Senate seat” by Aug. 22. The seat has sat vacant since Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-08) was sworn into the House in January.

- **IF NO COURT ORDER.** “If a special election is not ordered by the courts and Whitmer does not call the special election, the seat will be filled through the primary and general elections in 2026.” (WZZM)

NEW JERSEY: Energy Costs Hit Governor's Race

“New Jersey residents are facing huge spikes in energy costs this year, and rising outrage is leading to speculation that it could cost the state's Democratic leaders in upcoming elections.”

- **JACK'S MESSAGING.** 2021 nominee Jack Ciattarelli (R) "has capitalized on the high energy costs as a pain point for Democrats." Gov. Phil Murphy (D) is term-limited but Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-11) "is facing many of the same criticisms."
- **MIKIE'S MESSAGING.** "Ciattarelli has focused on Democrats pushing offshore windfarms and other alternative energy sources that have yet to come to fruition," while Sherrill "has sought to deflect blame to the region's grid operating company." (Fox Business)

SOUTH CAROLINA: Democratic Party Chair Tells Mullins McLeod to Suspend Campaign

State Democratic Party Chairwoman Christale Spain is calling on trial lawyer Mullins McLeod (D) "to discontinue his campaign for governor and focus on his mental health after his nearly 35-minute, profanity-laden rant in the back of a police cruiser became public."

- **NOT BACKING DOWN.** "It appears McLeod is not heeding Spain's advice, with his campaign manager telling the *SC Daily Gazette* he won't back away." McLeod is the only Democrat running in the primary so far. (*South Carolina Daily Gazette*)

SOUTH DAKOTA: Rhoden Quietly Starts Gubernatorial Campaign

Gov. Larry Rhoden (R) "is accepting contributions for a campaign website that is paid for by his gubernatorial committee, but he's continuing to hold off on announcing an official run for governor in 2026." If he runs, he will face a crowded primary field, including Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-AL), his most competitive opponent. (*Argus Leader*)

TENNESSEE: Lee Won't Endorse in Gov Race to Succeed Him

Term-limited Gov. Bill Lee (R) "said he hasn't and won't endorse in the governor's race" following Sen. Marsha Blackburn's (R) campaign launch. Blackburn faces Rep. John Rose (R-O6) in the primary.

- **LEE SAYS:** "I've been friends with Marsha for a long time, and she served as my congressman and representative in the General Assembly. I'm proud we have really good people running for governor in this state." (WSMV)

VIRGINIA: Police Association Endorses Abigail Spanberger, Statewide GOP Nominees

The Virginia Police Benevolent Association is backing former Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D) over Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears (R), "a switch from four years ago, when the group favored Republicans up and down the statewide ticket." The group endorsed the two other statewide GOP nominees, talk show host John Reid (R) and state Attorney General Jason Miyares (R).

- **FOR THE RECORD.** "The group praised Spanberger for voting to increase local law enforcement funding during her three terms in Congress. That runs counter to the accusations pushed on the campaign trail by" Earle-Sears, "that Spanberger is anti-police. Earle-Sears won the PBA's endorsement in 2021 in the race for her current position."
- **IN THE DMV.** The endorsement comes as President Trump "has seized control of law enforcement in the nation's capital," and "the issue of public safety is becoming more prominent in the much-watched Virginia governor's race." (*Washington Post*)
- **ACCEPTING DEBATES.** Earle-Sears accepted CNN's invitation for a debate this fall. Spanberger has yet to respond to the invitation. (CNN)
- **ALSO DECLINING DEBATES.** "AARP Virginia has canceled the 2025 People's Debate" scheduled for Sept. 16 after Earle-Sears "declined to participate, citing a scheduling conflict." Spanberger accepted the invite for the debate. (WJLA)

- **UP WITH AN AD.** Earle-Sears is up with a new ad attacking Spanberger for being a “Washington insider who voted with” former President Biden and Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA 11) “every single time.” In the spot, titled “Forward,” Earle-Sears says she will continue on the “right path” set by Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R). (X)

OVERLOOKED

Step Away from Tradition

By Amelia Monroe

The Kennedy Center honors are in the headlines after President Trump personally chose country music singer George Strait, heavy-metal rock band KISS, Broadway actor Michael Crawford, singer Gloria Gaynor, and Academy Award–nominated actor Sylvester Stallone to be the next round of honorees. Trump’s complete oversight of the theatre and hand picking of this year’s honorees is a far cry from the typical process: Potential candidates are considered through nominations from three different sources—the center’s Board of Trustees, the artistic community, and the general public; Followed by review from the Special Advisory Committee composed of past Honorees, Trustees, artistic partners, and center leadership; Before getting final approval from the executive board.