

Webisode 57DHYAFi December 19 2025 US Will Pay 450 K to Wildfire Fighters With Cancer

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1 Air Pollution from Wood Burning Toxic Smoke caused cancer US Will Pay 450 thousand
dollars to Wildfire Fighters With Cancer They will be eligible for a onetime payment as well as college
tuition for their children The effort is part of a legislative push to address the dangers of working in toxic
smoke **RAWSEP View** This article does not mention that indoor residential wood burning and
industrial wood burning emit the same toxins as wildfire wood burning which are CO2 and PM 2 point 5
particulate matter of 2 point 5 micrometer size the perfect size to infiltrate the human lung setting off a
cascade of human health problems and early deaths But the article does conclude by saying that the
next step is to ensure that fewer wildfire fighters do not get sick in the first place **Excerpts edited by
RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates
a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 19 2025 The federal
government has known for years that wildfire fighters who spend weeks at a time in poisonous smoke can
develop deadly cancers from the exposure Now they will be eligible for a payment of nearly 450
thousand dollars and college tuition for their family if they die or become debilitated from a smoke
related cancer under a law signed by President Trump on Thursday The measure is part of a bipartisan
push in Congress to overhaul how the government protects and compensates firefighters who work in
toxic wildfire smoke with multiple bills pending that **would enforce the use of masks** expand benefits and
recognize smoke exposure as a major occupational hazard Worsening fire seasons have meant that
firefighters spend more time in dense smoke and many are developing serious diseases at young ages
The reality is that they are being exposed to stuff that puts them at greater risk to save us said Senator
Amy Klobuchar Democrat of Minnesota who sponsored the bill alongside Senator Kevin Cramer
Republican of North Dakota The legislation which passed as part of a larger military spending bill
requires that **some 20 smoke related cancers be automatically treated as line of duty injuries or deaths
The aid includes a onetime tax free payment of 448575 dollars and four years of financial support for the
children or spouse of firefighters to pursue higher education Families who have lost loved ones within
the last six years will be eligible to file for benefits retroactively** A photo of A father with his arm around
his son standing in a field with mountains in the background Casey Budlong a wildfire fighter in Oregon

was diagnosed at 40 with brain cancer and died in 2024 leaving behind an 8 year old son Over the summer The New York Times tagged along with the Oregon based wildfire crew of Casey Budlong who was diagnosed at 40 with brain cancer and died in 2024 leaving behind an 8 year old son On Thursday his widow Katy said the benefits could alleviate the financial stress of suddenly becoming a single parent helping her to pay for things like roof repairs and save for the college education of their son It would literally be life changing she said It would mean we could focus on making happy memories and doing things together that Casey would have loved and not have to worry about if we are going to be OK She said she hoped the change would encourage the government to take smoke exposure more seriously His job killed him in a way we never anticipated happening she said Part of me is really angry about it When it comes to the government I think the only thing they listen to is money The law passed after a series of articles in The New York Times detailed how firefighters had been banned from wearing masks on the fire line despite decades of research and internal government reports showing they were at greater risk for cancer and other illnesses The backers of the bill said in interviews that the Times coverage helped propel it and other legislative efforts forward The new law covers firefighters who work for public agencies A different bill sponsored by Representative Bruce Westerman Republican of Arkansas could extend benefits to private contractors who fall ill after working for wildfire companies the government hires to round out its ranks That legislation passed the House and is awaiting a vote in the Senate Other bills focus on compensating wildfire crews for the dangers they face and improving safety A House bill introduced in September by Representative Celeste Maloy Republican of Utah would grant wildland firefighters hazard pay for prescribed burns planned fires that are meant to prevent larger ones That work is currently paid less than fighting active wildfires despite comparable smoke exposure And in November Senators Adam Schiff Democrat of California and John Curtis Republican of Utah introduced a bill that would require the Forest Service to create an enforceable mask mandate The agency recently said it would begin to modernize its mask rules in the spring Lawmakers say additional legislation is forthcoming Representative Maxine Dexter Democrat of Oregon is drafting another bill focused on respiratory protection while Senator Alex Padilla Democrat of California is pushing for air quality standards at the camps where wildland firefighters sleep Responding to reporting of the New York Times a House committee opened an inquiry into smoke exposure and held a forum in September that brought new attention to the issue including previously undisclosed statistics from the Office of Workers Compensation Programs In November an advisory committee to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention convened a two day summit on respiratory protection for wildland firefighters including testimony from the Forest Service States have pursued their own reforms In October California added a death benefit for prisoners working in wildfires and this month Nevada enacted a law that adds protections for all firefighters who develop lung diseases Supporters say that the new federal law will make an immediate difference but that the next step is to ensure fewer firefighters get sick in the first place This is a tremendous piece of legislation that will help the families of our fallen firefighters who died of job related cancer said Edward Kelly general president of the International Association of Fire Fighters the largest firefighter union in the nation But the ultimate goal he said is to get them home at the end of a tour and ultimately have them live a long and healthy life

2 New York Buffalo Trump Health Care Cuts leave patients fearing lack of care Trump health cuts leave huge void in Buffalo New York and patients fearing lack of care After a traumatic brain injury a woman named here as RB worries the skills she worked hard to regain will atrophy as the largest healthcare provider in the area closes clinics RAWSEP View One touching example of the negative fallout from Trump policies Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The Guardian December 19 2025 After RB slipped on a sidewalk hitting her jaw so hard she broke four teeth and sustained a traumatic brain injury she struggled to tell red and green apart Turning her head could make her lightheaded or worse spark a devastating headache She fought to remember basic daily tasks Driving became impossible as did the idea of continuing to work as a nurse But at Buffalo Therapy

Services a clinic near her home in the suburb of East Aurora New York RB felt hopeful For more than a year she worked diligently with the cognitive and occupational therapists of the clinic They took her into the darkened staff room and flashed red and green lasers so she could relearn the difference They taught her to write everything down to help with her lack of short term memory They made a list of what she wanted to accomplish and told her We are not going to work on what you cannot do any more We are going to work on what you can do They made me focus on my strengths RB said I believe my therapists helped me find a different way to bring meaning and purpose to my life But in August the parent group of Buffalo Therapy Services Kaleida Health the largest healthcare provider in western New York revealed that it would effectively close two locations of the clinic in part due to colossal healthcare funding cuts included in the Trump sweeping tax and spending legislation the so called One Big Beautiful Bill Act Buffalo Therapy Services was not the only casualty Kaleida also announced plans to shutter a freestanding surgery center and a family planning center Many patients treated at these facilities now say they have nowhere else to go The two clinics are technically still open but not offering clinical services to patients Before Kaleida Health announced that it was closing Buffalo Therapy Services RB had kept the news of her traumatic brain injury to her inner circle But when RB realized that her angel helpers could lose their jobs she decided to speak out I cannot find this type of service anywhere RB wrote in an October Facebook post RB is also continuing to do the homework that her Buffalo Therapy Services therapists gave her like answering questions about short reading prompts She would love to go back to doing some of the work she did as a nurse like leading bereavement groups and teaching about end of life care directives But RB is not sure yet if she can do it She tries to be grateful every day for what she has I do not think we have hit bottom yet And I think that when we do it will be a really good opportunity to make good positive change RB said I do not know if it is going to be in my lifetime or not

3 New York They Thought They Had Made It Now They Cannot Afford Food New Yorkers in the so called missing middle who may make too much for food benefits say it is still hard to find enough money for groceries [RAWSEP View](#) Multiple examples of the negative fallout from Trump policies Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 18 2025 One is a mother of three from Queens going through a divorce Another is living on his own for the first time in the Bronx A third is trying to hold on to an apartment in the Harlem neighborhood where she grew up They all work full time jobs some more than one And all of them say they no longer earn enough to keep food on the table Blisteringly high rents and rising prices for necessities like child care transportation and food are pushing New Yorkers to the limit and beyond But the pain has been felt not just by the New York City poorest but even by people far above the federal poverty line according to a new study by Columbia University and Robin Hood a group against poverty Last year more than one in three New Yorkers reported needing more money for food up from about a quarter before the coronavirus pandemic the study found When it came to families with children the struggling portion was even higher at 42 percent Hundreds of thousands more residents now face a shortfall in their food budgets than did before the pandemic including an additional 440000 adults and 70000 families with children the study said Among them are an increasing number of people who fall into what the study calls the missing middle fully employed people who may make too much to be eligible for public assistance at the grocery store checkout but not enough to make ends meet at dinnertime At Part of the Solution a soup kitchen food pantry and community center in the Bronx 3000 of the 10000 households it serves each year do not receive food stamps said the executive director In fact some of the nonprofit is own staff members said they too had needed to use the food pantry A 37 year old man who said he earns 44 thousand dollars at the center and cleans houses on the side for extra income and receives SNAP is one of them

4 North Carolina James B Hunt Junior a former North Carolina Governor Who Kept State Blue Dies at 88 During his 16 years in office he earned national acclaim for his focus on education But losing his bid for the Senate in 1984 cost him a shot at the presidency [RAWSEP View](#) What can we learn from the example of North Carolina Democrat James B Hunt or is his era not comparable to today? Excerpts

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Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 19 2025 James B Hunt Junior a Democrat who burnished the North Carolina reputation as a beacon of moderation in the South over four terms as governor but who lost a Senate race against a hard right Republican that might have vaulted him toward the presidency died on Thursday at his home in Lucama North Carolina He was 88 His daughter Rachel Hunt the current North Carolina lieutenant governor announced the death in a statement but did not cite a cause With his moderate to liberal brand of politics and formidable statewide organization Mister Hunt sustained the Democratic Party as a political force in North Carolina for more than a quarter century Winning elections even as Republicans like Richard M Nixon and Bob Dole captured the North Carolina presidential votes he held back the partisan realignment that had transformed the rest of the region beginning in the 1970s The James B Hunt formula for success mirrored that of the North Carolina Democrats who preceded him as well as those who have kept the state politically competitive since he retired a zealous focus on public schools and state colleges a friendly attitude toward business and a nose for the middle ground on contentious issues of race and culture James Baxter Hunt Junior was born in Greensboro North Carolina on May 16 1937 His mother was a teacher and his father farmed and worked as a federal soil conservation agent After graduating from North Carolina State University Hunt earned a law degree at the University of North Carolina When he was elected lieutenant governor in 1972 he became one of the few statewide Democrats remaining after the Nixon landslide that year He easily won his first bid for governor four years later just as he did the next three times he ran for the office After his defeat by Republican Jesse Helms Hunt joined a prominent law firm in Raleigh North Carolina where he worked for corporate clients He declined a rematch with his Republican opponent in 1990 But two years later he reclaimed the governorship holding that office longer than any North Carolinian in history

5 RFK Junior Lack of knowledge of science and medicine Food and Drug Administration FDA Turmoil Keeps Spotlight on Its Commissioner Marty Makary High level turnover and conflicting policy decisions on drug oversight at the FDA have fueled concerns about the leadership of Doctor Marty Makary RAWSEP View The harmful policies of RFK Junior on vaccines trickle down to the FDA

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke

Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times December 19 2025 Days after a division chief at the Food and Drug Administration resigned amid accusations that he used his federal power to seek revenge on a former business associate the scandal took on a new life RFK Junior the Trump appointed US health secretary and his top deputies brought the matter to the White House as evidence that the FDA leadership was in chaos The group led by Trump Appointed Jim O Neill the deputy health secretary and a former Silicon Valley investor aired their grievances to Susie Wiles the chief of staff for President Trump according to people familiar with the meeting They then turned to staff members of the Domestic Policy Council the people said The meetings took aim at Doctor Marty Makary the commissioner of the FDA who was appointed by RFK Junior But the White House rebuffed what some have viewed as a coup attempt against Makary according to those who have knowledge of the sessions The result was a fragile truce but it offered a window into the turmoil at the top reaches of the Department of Health and Human Services where the RFK Junior niche projects and infighting among staff members have taken precedence over seismic policy problems like the looming expiration of Obamacare subsidies The tumult at the FDA though reflects a jarring year defined by the loss of thousands of agency staff members a rapidly spinning door of top leaders and conflicting statements and actions related to drug approvals The biotech industry has also pressured the White House about the FDA refusal to approve a number of drugs The meetings also occurred against the backdrop of opposing forces buffeting the FDA At times the Trump corporate friendly goals have clashed with the agenda of the RFK Junior Make America Healthy Again movement that supports business wary initiatives FDA actions continue to alarm public health experts A memo leaked from the agency the day after Thanksgiving made unsupported claims linking Covid vaccines to a small number of deaths of children

drawing fire from outside and within the agency. The memo written by Doctor Vinay Prasad, the US top vaccine regulator, also proposed policy changes that brooked no dissent; he invited resignations from staff members who disagreed. In a year of steep government cutbacks, the FDA has been especially hard hit despite its relatively lean federal budget and crucial role in safeguarding the food and drug supply of the nation. FDA oversight can have life or death consequences and it regulates products that drive roughly 20 percent of consumer spending. The FDA has lost about 4 thousand employees or 20 percent of its work force, which slims the ranks of inspectors and scientists who ensure that drugs are free of toxins. An internal presentation showed that staffing at the drug division alone had fallen to 2016 levels, shedding nearly 14 hundred jobs, with the work force reduced to 4650 from more than 6 thousand employees. The loss of talent is setting the agency back a decade, plus, said David Kessler, a former agency commissioner. It is not going to be fixable in the short term. The agency has also performed far fewer inspections at food and drug manufacturing plants that ship tons of products to the United States, records show. So far this year, inspection numbers, which were also hindered by the government shutdown, are at levels not seen for more than a decade, aside from the pandemic years. Staff members in food and drug labs are still dealing with spending limits that have left them idle rather than scrutinizing food ingredients, packaging, and drug safety. Some Makary changes have been well received, including one to remove the strictest warning of the agency from hormone replacement therapy for women in menopause. His team has led a charge to reduce drug testing on animals to hasten approvals for less expensive biologic drugs and to warn drugmakers against making unsupported claims on televised drug ads. When President Trump insisted that pregnant women tough it out rather than take Tylenol, warning them of what is still an unproven link between the drug and autism, Doctor Makary took a more reasoned tone. He signed an FDA letter to doctors that said such a link was an ongoing area of scientific debate. Doctor Makary worked internally to get approval in July to hire 1000 staff members, according to people familiar with the move, with about 500 inspectors and product reviewers coming onboard. In recent days, he has taken steps to keep existing staff members from leaving, promising bonus payments to inspectors and reviewers. But Doctor Makary has revoked a rule meant to make talc safer. Though he endorsed the drug leucovorin as a potential aid for some children with autism, such prescribing remains off label. He advanced conspiratorial claims, including that mad scientists played a role in lab leaks of HIV in Africa and ticks infected with Lyme disease. And he has fanned flames of distrust over mRNA technology in vaccines, despite its success in reducing Covid deaths and its potential to combat some forms of cancer. I think it is very hard to see the future of these mRNA technologies moving forward when it probably was one of the brighter beacons in cancer research two or three years ago, said the chief executive of the Friends of Cancer Research. Doctor Prasad, the FDA chief scientific and medical officer, has overruled staff vaccine recommendations several times. These recent decisions have deflated the hopes of families of people with rare diseases who are desperate for investment in what may be even marginal therapies for deadly conditions. Biotech companies and their investors have protested, pressing the agency and White House over the stances of the agency on certain drugs.

6 Trump Nuclear Fusion Business Deal: What The Trump Push Into Nuclear Means for the Sector and The Trump Net Worth. The paper wealth of President Trump soared on news that the company behind Truth Social has agreed to merge with a fusion start up. But China is way ahead in the funding race to commercialize the technology. [RAWSEP View](#). RAWSEP had 3 questions for Artificial Intelligence. [RAWSEP Question 1: Is trump media teaming with TAE conflict of interest? AI Answer](#). Yes, experts and Democratic lawmakers have raised significant concerns that the recently announced merger between Trump Media and Technology Group (TMTG) and nuclear fusion energy company TAE Technologies presents a major conflict of interest. The potential conflict arises because Government Regulation and Support: The nuclear fusion industry is nascent, extremely costly, and will require substantial federal government support, including grants, low interest loans, and permitting approvals, to become commercially viable. The Trump Stake: Donald Trump is the largest stakeholder in TMTG, holding roughly 40 percent of the shares of the company. In the new combined entity, his ownership would be

approximately 20 percent. This creates a scenario where a company in which the President holds a significant financial interest could directly benefit from Trump policies an executive order he signed the Genesis Mission to accelerate fusion development or government funds directed by his administration Exemption from Laws While federal conflict of interest laws prohibit most federal officials from having a financial stake in companies they regulate the President and members of Congress are exempt from these specific rules. Political Clout The deal could provide TAE with political clout and access to capital that it might not otherwise have but it also makes the company politically controversial. In response the White House has denied any conflict exists with press secretary Karoline Leavitt stating the media attempts to fabricate conflicts of interest are irresponsible. However a former White House ethics lawyer for President George W. Bush Richard Painter has described the situation as so obvious that there is a huge conflict of interest.

RAWSEP Question 2 Is fusion energy a better way to power AI than solar energy? AI Overview Fusion energy could be a superior dispatchable high density power source for the AI massive need unlike intermittent solar but it is still decades away from commercial reality while solar is mature the key difference is the potential of fusion for constant clean compact power but solar is the proven scalable though land intensive solution for now with AI potentially helping optimize both. Fusion Energy Future Potential Pros for AI Dispatchable and Baseload Provides consistent on demand power unlike variable solar perfect for always on AI data centers High Density Offers high power output from a small footprint reducing land use compared to vast solar farms Clean No carbon emissions minimal long lived nuclear waste compared to fission Cons for AI Not Yet Viable Still experimental requires immense energy input years to decades from grid scale deployment Solar Energy Current Reality Pros for AI Mature and Scalable Proven technology readily deployable though requires vast land Clean and Abundant Uses free sunlight increasingly efficient can be optimized with AI Cons for AI Intermittent Does not work at night or on cloudy days requiring massive battery storage Land Intensive Requires large areas for panels which can conflict with other land uses The Verdict for AI Fusion is the long term dream for powering future vastly expanded AI offering ultimate energy independence and density Solar with storage is the pragmatic present already working to power existing AI with AI itself helping to optimize solar grids AI and Fusion Tech leaders are investing in fusion because the AI energy demand is so huge a breakthrough is needed and AI itself helps solve the complex physics problems of fusion.

RAWSEP Question 3 Is there are danger of radiation from fusion energy? AI Overview Fusion Energy via Magnetic Confinement Andlinger Center Yes fusion energy produces radiation neutrons activated materials tritium but it is considered much safer than fission because the radiation is short lived less intense easily shielded and the reaction stops if containment fails preventing meltdowns like Chernobyl or Fukushima meaning long term high level radioactive waste is not a problem Sources of Radiation in Fusion Neutron Radiation Fusion reactions release high energy neutrons that bombard the structural materials of the reactor making them activated or radioactive Tritium A radioactive hydrogen isotope used as fuel tritium can leak and poses a health risk if inhaled or ingested though it has a short half-life Activated Materials The internal components of the reactor become radioactive but typically have much shorter half lives decades to a century compared to fission waste thousands of years Why It is Safer Than Fission Self Limiting A loss of control causes the reaction to stop in seconds unlike fission which can continue uncontrolled No Long Lived Waste Fusion does not produce the problematic long lived high level radioactive waste seen in fission reactors Easily Shielded Concrete and water effectively block neutron radiation and the radioactivity is contained within the plant Low Level Waste The radioactive materials produced are generally low level and short lived Potential Hazards and Management Tritium Containment Requires robust systems due to the ability of tritium to penetrate materials Material Activation Requires careful selection of materials and handling during decommissioning Accident Scenarios While severe accidents are less catastrophic than fission hypothetical releases of tritium are still a concern highlighting the need for strong safety protocols In essence fusion energy creates manageable radiological hazards that are distinct from and less severe than the long term waste issues of fission relying on shielding and inherent safety features

Fusion Frequently asked questions Nuclear fission power plants have the disadvantage of generating unstable nuclei some of these are radioactive for millions of years International Atomic Energy Agency Does fusion give off radiation? EURO fusion The fusion reaction releases neutrons the energy of which will be used in future power stations to heat water to heat drive the EURO fusion Understanding Radiation Risks in Fusion Energy Nov 15 2023 Some fusion research facilities have reported producing potentially fatal doses of radiation from very short duration Nevada Technical Associates **From the article headline** What the Trump Push Into Nuclear Means for the Sector and the Trump Net Worth **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 19 2025 The politics of fusion The paper wealth of President Trump has soared by more than 450 million dollars on news that Trump Media and Technology Group the publicly traded company that counts the president as its biggest shareholder was merging with TAE Technologies a privately held fusion technology company It was the latest in a head spinning series of pivots by Trump Media born as the owner of Truth Social in 2021 and which has recently moved into crypto raising 2 point 5 billion dollars to invest in Bitcoin What does Trump stand to gain and how may it affect the budding fusion industry? Private funding for fusion technology has been on a tear rising 476 percent to 3 point 8 billion dollars globally this year TAE which has raised about 1 point 3 billion dollars in private funding is one of the oldest and largest fusion startups Fusion the energy source that powers the sun is achieved when atoms are forced together under extreme pressure It has proved much harder to achieve than fission the kind of reaction used in the nuclear reactors of Friday Commonwealth Fusion which is backed by Bill Gates and has about 2 point 9 billion dollars in funding and Helion Energy which is backed by Sam Altman and has about 1 billion dollars in funding are two of the closest US peers of TAE by funding The funding surge has been driven in part by the artificial intelligence boom which requires huge amounts of electricity to power data centers Prominent AI leaders like Altman have said fusion is critical for the future of AI Notably Elon Musk who is heavily invested in solar is a skeptic But the technology is still not commercially viable While government researchers have achieved impressive results in recent years no private company has reached the point where the fusion reaction creates as much energy as it consumes In 2018 the TAE chief executive said he expected the company to achieve that milestone in five or six years On Thursday the merged companies said they plan to create the first utility scale fusion power plant next year It is great for fusion that people think fusion is going to be on the timeline where it can help with AI but I do not think it is a senior researcher at Sightline Climate said The US government has taken a back seat to private investors in funding fusion That approach has come under scrutiny especially as China has vastly outspent the fusion program of the US Department of Energy But the Trump administration wants to prioritize fusion The Department of Energy recently created an Office of Fusion to support commercialization Now is the time for the US to make a significant investment and that means over a billion dollars per year in annual appropriations and a onetime infrastructure investment the head of the Fusion Industry Association said last month That funding could help support the largest fusion companies in the US including one Trump Media that counts the US president Trump as a part owner

7 Chile The new far right president elect of Chile José Antonio Kast taps into support for Pinochet that never went away Experts say José Antonio Kast able to reactivate a dormant Pinochetism and warn more education needed on horrors of dictatorship **RAWSEP View** The use of music to torture previous generations in Chile disturbs a daughter of two who were tortured She wrote a book about it **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The Guardian December 19 2025 Confident in his popularity the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet called a plebiscite in 1988 asking the population whether they approved extending his 15 yearlong bloody rule for a further eight years A young José Antonio Kast then a 22 year old law student joined the yes campaign saying in a TV advert that he was convinced the regime was acting for the direct benefit of all of us young people Pinochet

ultimately lost and left power in 1990 but Kast never stopped openly supporting the dictator both as a congressman and in the three presidential bids he made before being elected last Sunday. The president elect – whose older brother Miguel was a prominent figure in the regime serving as a minister and president of the central bank once said that if Pinochet were alive he would have voted for me. A majority of Chileans today did and the victory of the first openly Pinochet admiring candidate has left many around the world asking why the country chose as its next leader a defender of a brutal regime under which an estimated 40 thousand people were tortured and more than 3 thousand killed. The truth is that support for Pinochet among part of the population of Chile never disappeared said a populism researcher and professor at the Institute of Political Science at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Since then that support has shifted to rightwing parties notably the Unión Demócrata Independiente UDI which over time became more moderate under the leadership of the two time president Sebastián Piñera. But there were always some leaders who were bothered by that moderation and one of them was Kast who decided to break with the UDI arguing that the right had lost its way and needed to return to much more authoritarian roots. Kast managed to reactivate that dormant Pinochetism. A recent opinion poll showed that about a third of Chileans agree that Pinochet was one of the best political leaders in the history of the country or that if politicians followed his ideas the country would regain its place in the world. The fact that a Pinochet admirer won shows that the current generation has forgotten or does not know enough about the horrific crimes committed during the dictatorship said a research associate at Cambridge University Centre of Latin American Studies. Her parents were political prisoners and raised her in exile between Venezuela and France. Years later as a teenager returning to Chile in the 1990s she learned that they had been held in a torture center in the capital Santiago cruelly nicknamed La Discothèque by secret police agents because of the loud music they used to torture detainees. When I first learned this I was already studying music and the idea that it could be used for very negative purposes really affected me she said. She later conducted a decade long research project interviewing dozens of survivors former prison guards and convicted perpetrators from the higher echelons of the Pinochet regime and launched the digital platform Cantos Cautivos Captive Songs which features 168 of those testimonies. Her research was published on Friday as the book Music and Political Imprisonment in the Chile of Pinochet in which Chornik provides examples of how music was also used as an act of resilience among political prisoners. Chornik is now working with Unesco on a project to bring her research into classrooms across Latin America and the Caribbean. With the Kast election it is clear that people have forgotten or do not have enough information about the horrors of the dictatorship so education is absolutely key she said.

8 Australia Gun Buyback Australia launches biggest gun buyback in 30 years after Bondi beach terror attack Labor Party Prime minister Albanese announces first firearm buyback since Port Arthur massacre and designates Sunday a national day of reflection in honor of Hanukah shooting victims

RAWSEP View The opposition to Albanese gun control is chilling and the reasons given are politically motivated. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The Guardian December 19 2025. The federal government will launch a new gun buyback scheme in response to the Bondi beach terror attack in what Anthony Albanese says will be the biggest collection of weapons since the Port Arthur massacre nearly three decades ago. It comes as New South Wales announced a suite of gun control measures including capping the number of firearms most recreational shooters can hold at four. Costs for the buyback which is expected to see hundreds of thousands of weapons destroyed will be split between the federal government and the states the prime minister said on Friday. States and territories will collect weapons being surrendered while the Australian federal police will oversee their destruction. Announcing Sunday as a national day of reflection for the 15 victims of the Bondi attack Albanese confirmed information from the Office of National Intelligence that showed the shooters had used a regular online video game feed from terror group Islamic State. The Australian opposition leader told Sydney radio 2GB on Friday the Coalition would offer a sensible and proportionate examination of any

proposals on guns but she called for the focus to remain on antisemitism. The Nationals leader, the One Nation leader and the Shooters Union have all flagged strong opposition to tightening of gun laws. The Shooters Union Australia president said the buyback was a bad idea and the focus should be on illegal weapons. He said, "It is a pure political stunt that Labor Prime Minister Albanese is willing to spend 1 billion dollars or something. It shows desperation as his Labor colleague Chris Minns was facing a revolt from his own members."

9 United Kingdom. Britain Is Preparing for Attacks on Its Soil. Critics Say It Must Move Faster. As military officials sound the alarm over Russian hybrid attacks, the chair of the Parliament defense committee said the progress of government on ramping up home defense was glacial. [RAWSEP View](#)
Russian Drone attacks on the continent of Europe gives Britain pause. [Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization](#)
The New York Times. December 19, 2025. The last British military force dedicated to defending the homeland was disbanded in 1992 after NATO leaders hailed a promising era of peace in Europe at the end of the Cold War and the government began scaling back military spending. More than three decades later, Britain is again preparing for potential attacks on its soil. With Secretary General Mark Rutte of NATO telling allies this month that conflict is at our door, Russia saying it is ready for war with Europe and President Trump increasingly vocal hostility toward European leaders, the British government is developing what it calls a whole of society approach to deterrence and defense. It says that a wide ranging home defense program will bring together the military, police and government departments to prepare for multiple scenarios. While a land invasion is not considered likely, military experts at the Royal United Services Institute, a British defense research institute, said the war in Ukraine and a spate of hybrid attacks in Europe demonstrated the possibility of assaults on critical infrastructure through sabotage and drones. Some military experts and lawmakers think the government is not moving fast enough. Police were evaluating how officers would support the military if the worst was to happen, such as or a new war drone attacks power outages. Police are also examining how the deployment of British forces overseas would affect law and order in Britain where a significant number of armed police officers are army reservists. During World War II, 1.7 million men who were above or below the age of conscription or unfit for the frontline volunteered for the British Home Guard, which trained for a potential invasion by the Nazis. In the 1950s and 1960s, a similar group, the Civil Defense Corps, prepared for possible nuclear attacks. And the Home Service Force began in 1982 but it was disbanded after the Cold War. The British government has released few details of the home defense program. In a statement, it said it would ensure alignment between military and civilian effort. It added that it would invest over a billion pounds on strengthening air and missile defense and would introduce a defense readiness bill in Parliament.

10 United Kingdom. From Keir as Eliot Ness to Radon Liz. on YouTube. the 2025 alternative politics awards. With the Christmas recess slowing the political havoc, it is time to hand out the parliamentarian of the year awards by the Guardian. [RAWSEP View](#). The satirical prize given to Nigel Farage seems deserved. [Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization](#)
The Guardian. December 18, 2025. You can hear the sighs of relief. Not from the MPs who are packing up to slope back to their constituencies for the Christmas recess but from the rest of the country. But before our politicians leave us in peace, there is one final ritual to be observed: the Guardian parliamentarian of the year awards. A chance to remember just how lucky we are to have such a talented ruling elite. Here are the champions: The Eliot Ness investigation award. For the first time ever, this award is to be shared between the prime minister and the chancellor. After a member of the Downing Street team rang up various political editors to say that Wes Streeting, Shabana Mahmood and Ed Miliband were all mounting a leadership challenge against Keir Starmer, the UK Prime Minister announced that he would be setting up an inquiry into why someone he had authorized to speak to the media had done as he asked. Normally, he can count on his own team's disloyalty. So Starmer would now be interrogating Starmer on

why Starmer had leaked a damaging story about Starmer And he would not be taking yes for an answer Meanwhile Rachel Reeves was setting up her own inquiry into why she had changed her mind about raising income tax in her November budget Reeves would also be giving Reeves a strong talking to about why when Reeves leaks something it is called a briefing and when one of her team does the same thing it is a leak **Racist of the year This used to be the award no one wanted to win But in 2025 racism has made a big comeback in politics and is the go to fashion accessory for every rightwing MP hoping to make it big For reasons that are not entirely clear Nigel Farage found it impossible to apologize to black and Jewish men who claim they had been abused by him while at school One boy had been repeatedly told Africa is that way while another was informed that Hitler was right The main defense of the Reform Party is that he was not intentionally racist and in any case all 28 men were liars** Overseas politician of the year It goes without saying that Donald Trump would have won the Nobel peace prize had not the BBC broadcast a news report that the prize had been awarded to a Venezuelan woman instead They changed my prize I blame the BBC They are going to have to pay me a lot of money for interfering with the democratic process of another country now that my new national security strategy has shown that I plan to interfere with the democratic process of other countries And by the way I never met Peter Mandelson Never heard of him To rectify the egregious error of the Nobel committee the Guardian is happy to honor the US president with this prestigious award Just so long as he still allows me to visit my daughter in Minneapolis

11 Germany Augsburg At a Christmas Market in Germany a New Tradition Retractable Bollards To prevent ramming attacks At Christmas markets German officials have installed concrete blocks chain barriers and in one case metal bollards removed by a hand cranked crane **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 19 2025 Augsburg a wealthy 2 thousand year old city in southern Germany has a magnificent Christmas tree at the center of their market This year the most popular attractions are the removable security bollards at the edge of the market newly installed to prevent cars ramming into the holiday crowds On a recent December afternoon half a dozen captivated bystanders stood around three of these mundane looking posts Wielding their cellphones most of them were filming municipal employees as they used a hand cranked crane to remove the 770 pound bollards every time a tram needed to pass through During rush hour that involved removing the bollards roughly once a minute Though the barriers have their critics some vendors at the market think the eccentric system has helped to attract more visitors to the market We are definitely getting more people than last year and it is not just Germans but people coming from abroad too said a 21 year old woman who sells Christmas tree shaped ornaments at a booth a few yards away from the bollards If you want people to come said a man who is a seller of metal signs you have to show them that you have thought about security measures

12 Ukraine Europe to Lend 105 Billion Dollars to Ukraine Without Touching Russian Funds European Union officials wanted to use the frozen assets of Russia to back a major loan to Ukraine Facing opposition in their own camp they settled on another way The president of the European Council said at a news conference early Friday in Brussels that the newly reached deal would address the urgent financial needs of Ukraine **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** The New York Times December 18 2025 European leaders agreed early on Friday morning to keep Ukraine funded for two years with a loan of 90 billion euros or about 105 billion dollars though they failed to agree on their first choice option of using Russian state assets frozen on the continent as backing for the loan That ambitious frozen asset plan was killed at the 11th hour as European heads of state and government met in Brussels a show of division that risked making the European Union appear indecisive at a key moment Instead European leaders announced that they will funnel money to Ukraine with a loan backed by the EU budget Because the plan does not leverage the large stash of Russian savings immobilized in Europe it is likely to cost more and could prove more difficult to quickly scale up

than the original idea. But because it will still get needed cash to Kyiv officials celebrated it as a win. This will address the urgent financial needs of Ukraine, the president of the European Council said at an early morning news conference in Brussels. He added that the European Union would reserve its option to eventually use the immobilized assets of Russia. European nations took action last week to freeze those savings indefinitely. The funding plan comes at a crucial moment as Ukraine negotiates potential peace terms with the United States. And timing was important with Ukraine expected to begin running out of money early in 2026. European officials had painted the funding as an opportunity to show that they are powerful actors on the global stage and strong partners for President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine who welcomed the decision in a social media post on Friday. This is significant support that truly strengthens our resilience, Zelensky wrote on X. It is important that Russian assets remain immobilized and that Ukraine has received a financial security guarantee for the coming years. For months European leaders had hoped to overcome Belgian concerns to clinch a deal on using the 210 billion euros of frozen Russian assets held in Europe to back the massive loan to Ukraine. The setup was supposed to fund much of the governing and war expenses of Ukraine in 2026 and 2027. But the idea of such a loan was always risky. Russia is already taking legal action over what it paints as the unlawful seizure of its assets. After weeks of back and forth, Belgium, where most of the assets frozen in Europe are held, remained unconvinced. Thursday, worried that it could be on the hook for Russian retaliation, the guarantees that Belgium demanded to protect against that threat, however, proved too much for some other European countries to quickly accept. Europeans want a voice in determining how to end the biggest war on their continent in 80 years and secure peace afterward. But President Trump and the Kremlin have frequently left Europe out of discussions over the future of Ukraine. In fact, the Trump administration has recently made it clear how negatively it views the European Union. The administration warned in a national security strategy that Europe faces civilizational erasure. The weeks spent wrangling over the frozen asset plan that ultimately failed may suggest to the world that the clunky structure and diverse voices of the European Union remain barriers to rapid action even at urgent moments. The collapse of the frozen asset loan plan was a political stumble for both Friedrich Merz, the German chancellor, and Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the European Commission, the executive arm of the EU bloc. Both had championed it. Still, leaders argued that the agreed-upon alternative would serve its purpose. They emphasized that Ukraine will still not be asked to pay back the loan unless Russia pays reparations. This is a decisive message for an end to the war, Merz said in a statement. Putin will only make concessions once he realizes his war will not pay off.

13 Ukraine Off the Libyan Coast, Ukraine attacks a Russian shadow tanker. Reportedly critical drone strike is first in Mediterranean since full-scale invasion began as maritime conflict grows.

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization. The Guardian, December 19, 2025.

Ukraine says it has attacked a Russian shadow fleet tanker with aerial drones 1250 miles (2,000 kilometers) from its borders in the first such strike in the Mediterranean Sea since the Moscow full-scale invasion nearly four years ago. The strike Friday off the coast of Libya, which reportedly caused critical damage, took place on the day of the Putin annual end-of-year press conference. It came amid an escalating maritime conflict over the shadow fleet, a term used to describe vessels used by Russia, Iran, and Venezuela to evade sanctions with deceptive practices. Kyiv has previously targeted Russian shadow tankers in the Black Sea as it has sought to interdict an important source of revenue that is being used to finance the Moscow illegal invasion. Estimated to comprise more than 1,000 ships, which frequently change their flags and whose ownership is unclear, the fleet has enabled Moscow to keep exporting its crude oil for much-needed revenue despite the curbs. According to Vessel Finder, the tanker was last in port in Suez, Egypt, on December 16 and was off the coast of Libya when it turned back. Kyiv has claimed similar hits on Russia-linked tankers off the Turkey Black Sea coast after two empty oil tankers were hit by explosions. The Ukrainian attacks follow increasingly aggressive efforts by a number of countries against shadow fleet activities. European countries have boosted efforts against shadow

tankers operating in their waters amid mounting concern over the security and environmental threat posed by the ageing vessels which often travel without automatic identification systems to avoid being tracked

14 Ukraine Zelenskyy says the EU 90 billion Euro loan is a signal to Russians despite frozen assets not being part of deal Ukrainian leader welcomes move and says it is critical Russian assets remain frozen EU leaders agree to a 90 billion Euro loan for Ukraine but without use of frozen Russian assets

Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization

The Guardian December 19 2025 Meloni of Italy and Frederiksen of Denmark welcome EU decision on Ukraine funds Tusk of Poland says he is not fully satisfied with Ukraine decision but better to have something than nothing De Wever of Belgium hails stable legally robust solution on Ukraine funding as he shows frustration with accusations that De Wever is for Russia EU summit secures money for Ukraine but politically its outcome is more complicated Orbán of Hungary calls EU loan for Ukraine extremely bad decision and is lost money 5h ago Babiš of Czech Republic says Ukraine loan turned out exactly as I promised Sánchez of Spain backs EU decision on loan as right politically legally and morally Zelenskyy of Ukraine says he thought the talks were positive and stresses the importance of Poland and Ukraine in the region as two important elements of security system guaranteeing of freedom in this part of Europe without Moscow Without our independence Moscow will inevitably come for Poland That is why it is important that we exist it is important that you exist it is very important that Ukraine and Poland exist and it is important that we stand together he said He says they also talked about the latest on the war and diplomatic efforts to end the war pointedly thanking Poland and the Polish nation for its continued support from the start of the war He says Ukraine has lots to share with Poland drawing on its experience of the war with Russia including security advice on how to deal with Russian drones after the September large scale incursion into Polish airspace He says he also invited Nawrocki to visit Ukraine in return

15 Iran Tehran How Did a City of 10 Million People Nearly Run Out of Water? **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization**

The New York Times December 19 2025 Earlier this month Tehran a city of 10 million people was questioning its viability After six years of drought and the driest autumn in over 50 years the reservoirs that supply the city fell to around 10 percent of capacity and in some cases lower still In late November and early December rainfall was down by roughly 90 percent compared with historic averages City residents faced rolling water cuts sharply reduced tap pressure and pleas from officials to limit washing The president of Iran announced in November that if rains did not come parts of the city would need to be evacuated Thankfully rain eventually fell around Tehran easing immediate pressure on water supplies But the city came too close to disaster Tehran is just the latest major city to come perilously close to Day Zero a term popularized in 2017 when the water supply in Cape Town South Africa fell so low that city officials considered a plan to shut off water taps and ask residents to collect water rations from distribution points Cape Town along with São Paulo Brazil in 2015 and Chennai India in 2019 recovered after nearly running out of drinking water but all are getting by in ways that are expensive and ultimately unsustainable In a rapidly warming world it is only a matter of time before luck runs out in Tehran or the dozens of other drought prone cities When it does the lesson from the past is not that cities must simply find more water but that they must also confront their limits Any proposal to relocate a city is a distraction from the fact that restricting growth and water use however politically difficult is often more prudent than trying to engineer ever more elaborate workarounds To avoid the fate of Lagash in ancient Sumer and Angkor in Cambodia Tehran and other modern cities must do something radical by contemporary political standards accept that living within ecological boundaries is not optional That means setting hard limits on urban expansion aligning population and consumption with available resources and treating water not as an endlessly flexible input but as a defining constraint Places such as Las Vegas Nevada and Phoenix Arizona which have been historically reluctant to cap expansion are now debating moratoria tighter planning rules and growth management

16 Japan Evading or relaxing air pollution regulation Revealed how Toyota uses retro style games and prizes to urge US workers to lobby politicians Games such as Dragon Quest used to mobilize workers to back corporate goals including relaxing environmental rules Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The Guardian December 19 2025 Toyota the biggest carmaker in the world is using retro style video games to rally its US workforce behind its corporate goals including lobbying to relax environmental rules the Guardian can reveal Through an internal platform called Toyota Policy Drivers employees can play games with names such as Star Quest Adventure Quest and Dragon Quest earning prizes by engaging with company messaging about policy and by contacting federal lawmakers using company provided talking points The gamification aspect of the platform may make the lobbying seem innocuous Folks that are enrolled in this program and taking actions I am sure they genuinely feel like this is they are doing the right thing she said They have actually been led to undermine some of the most important regulations of our day

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