STATE OF NEW YORK }
} SS.
COUNTY OF MONROE }

I, **Stacia Perrotto**, duly swear that I am employed with the **Democrat and Chronicle**, a newspaper publication based in Rochester, New York, as an **Account Executive,** and further swear that the **RGE Rate Case Public Hearings Notice 2025** ran in **the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle** on the following date(s): September 25, September 28, October 2, October 5, 2025

(signature)

Sworn to before me on this 6th day of October, 2025

Notary's signature

TIFFANY L. DOOL
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 01DO6442353
Qualified in Monroe County
Commission Expires: October 11, 26

Pharmacist saves day as vaccine Superman

Amina Niasse
REUTERS

A Pennsylvania-based pharmacist who gained fame during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic dressing up as Superman to deliver vaccines has the suit at the ready again.

In September, Mayank Amin, who owns an independent pharmacy called Skippack pharmacy in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, gave thousands of COVID shots as patients rushed to get them amid fears that shifting government policy would affect their eligibility.

"Anything that's in shortage or that has questions attached to it, you want to get it," Amin said.

Though he has largely retired the costume, Amin has broken it out for a clinic for older people and continues to use it for children who specifically request Superman.

"It's kind of like how a firefighter's costume hangs at the station," Amin said. "It's better that it stays on the wall."

An outside panel of advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is meeting Sept. 26 to discuss recommendations on who should get the current vaccine.

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. already removed it from the CDC's list of recommended vaccines for healthy pregnant women and children several months ago.

The Food and Drug Administration in August narrowed its approval for the shots to people ages 65 and older or those under that age who are at risk for severe disease. The panel can make its own recommendation.

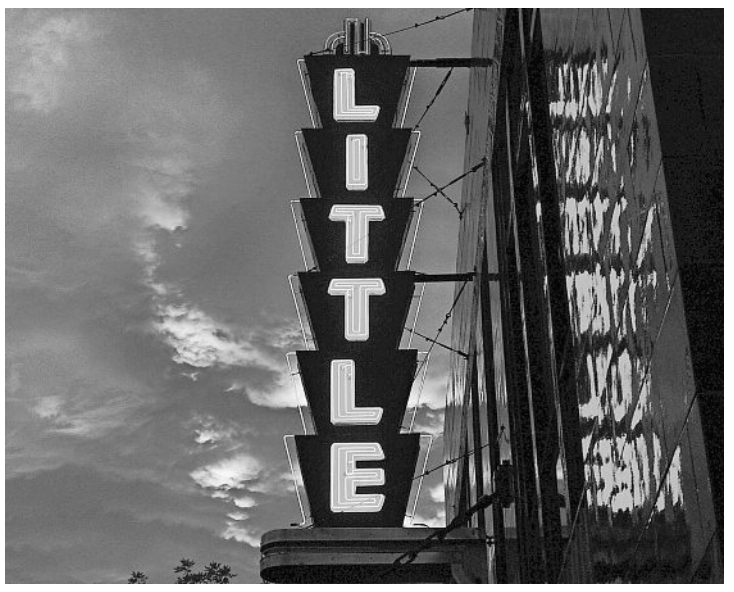
Insurance coverage is linked to panel recommendations under the Affordable Care Act. Lobbying group AHIP has said that insurers will continue to cover the shots widely through 2026.

Skippack said the latest surge in demand was due to a lack of clarity in how health insurance coverage will be affected this year by those changes as well as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC panel meeting.

Pennsylvania, along with 16 states, decided earlier in September to allow pharmacists administering vaccines to also follow the authority of medical organizations. Such groups are giving their own recommendations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, after Kennedy gutted the panel and replaced its members with his own handpicked advisers.

The surge has pushed the pharmacy, which has provided shots to at least 2,000 people this month, to tack on hours at the end of the day, administering shots through 7 or 8 p.m.

"We had calls and messages and people waiting outside, once again, just like the old COVID days," Amin said.



Renovations are planned for the Little Theatre on East Avenue.
ANNETTE LEIN/DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE FILE

Little Theatre to get $201K in state funding for upgrades

Genae Shields
Rochester Democrat and Chronicle
USA TODAY NETWORK

One of downtown Rochester's most beloved movie venues, The Little Theatre, is receiving $201,000 in state funding for renovations.

Operated by the nonprofit Little Theatre Film Society, the venue has showcased American independent and foreign films since its opening in 1929. It also serves as a key music and visual arts venue for events like the Rochester ESL Fringe Festival.

The state grant will fund multiple upgrades across the theater, including:

- Renovations to Theaters 3 and 4
- Window replacements (including damage from a vandalism incident in July 2024)
- New carpeting
- Installation of ADA-compliant bathrooms

The front windows are scheduled for replacement by January 2026. Renovation of the theaters — including 276 new seats (the first replacement since the 1990s), updated carpeting, and new wall coverings — is set to begin later in 2026.

The funding has enabled The Little to begin the project earlier than planned and secure necessary approvals from the Preservation League of New York State.

Motorcyclist seriously injured in Seabreeze crash, police say

Victoria E. Freile
New York Connect Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

A motorcyclist was seriously injured in a crash in Irondequoit's Seabreeze neighborhood Sunday night, according to police.

Irondequoit Police Chief Scott Peters said that a motorcyclist traveling north on Sea Breeze Drive failed to negotiate a curve in the road and crashed around 9:30 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 21. The rider was thrown from the motorcycle and landed near the playground within Irondequoit Bay State Marine Park, just south of Culver Road.

The motorcyclist suffered several serious injuries but is expected to survive, Peters said. Speed appeared to be a factor in the crash, though drugs and alcohol did not appear to be a factor.

Police did not identify the motorcyclist.

Part of Route 31F in Macedon closed after vehicle enters pond, launching search

Victoria E. Freile and Madison Scott
New York Connect Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

Wayne County sheriff's deputies closed a portion of Route 31F in Macedon, Wayne County, on Wednesday morning after a vehicle reportedly entered a nearby pond.

A stretch of Route 31F – between Canandaigua and Wilcox roads, and the southern end of Hance Road – was closed to motorists on the morning of Sept. 24, according to the Wayne County Sheriff's Office.

News outlets reported that a woman called 911 for help around 4 a.m., after her car entered the water. According to reports, the 911 call abruptly ended and that a vehicle was submerged.

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PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARINGS TO BE HELD IN PSC CASES 25-E-0375, 25-G-0378, 25-E-0379, 25-G-0380 – NEW YORK STATE ELECTRIC & GAS CORPORATION AND ROCHESTER GAS AND ELECTRIC CORPORATION FOR ELECTRIC AND GAS SERVICE

Public comment is invited concerning the proposed changes in the electric and gas delivery rates and practices of New York State Electric & Gas Corporation (NYSEG) and Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation (RG&E) (together, the Companies). In addition, members of the public and parties to these proceedings are invited to comment on the proposed closure of certain walk-in office locations operated by the Companies.

NYSEG and RG&E filed amendments to their electric and gas tariff schedules on June 30, 2025, proposing to increase their annual electric and gas delivery revenues for the 12-month period ending April 30, 2027. NYSEG proposes to increase its electric delivery revenues by approximately $464.4 million (an 18.4 percent increase in total revenues or 35.0 percent increase in base delivery revenues), and its natural gas delivery revenues by approximately $93 million (a 22.1 percent increase in total revenues or 39.4 percent increase in base delivery revenues). RG&E proposes to increase its electric delivery revenues by approximately $220.2 million (a 19.8 percent increase in total revenues or 36.0 percent increase in base delivery revenues), and its natural gas delivery revenues by approximately $72.9 million (a 17.1 percent increase in total revenues or 32.0 percent increase in base delivery revenues). The actual bill impacts of these proposed changes on any particular customer class will vary based upon revenue allocation and rate design.

As part of the Companies' rate filings, they propose to close the following walk-in offices:

- NYSEG's Auburn office located at 73 Wright Circle, Auburn, NY 13021
- NYSEG's Ithaca office located at 1387 Dryden Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
- NYSEG's Oneonta office located at 65 Country Club Road, Oneonta, NY 13820
- RG&E's Sodus office located at 14 State Street, Sodus, NY 14551
- RG&E's Rochester office located at 3 City Center, 180 South Clinton Avenue, Rochester, NY 14604

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that **public statement hearings** will be held before Administrative Law Judges on:

DATE:	Tuesday, September 30, 2025
TIME:	1:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Sodus Community Library 17 Maple Avenue Sodus, NY 14551

DATE:	Tuesday, October 7, 2025
TIME:	1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Binghamton City Hall 38 Hawley Street Binghamton, NY 13901

DATE:	Tuesday, September 30, 2025
TIME:	6:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Cayuga Community College 197 Franklin Street Auburn, NY 13021

DATE:	Wednesday, October 8, 2025
TIME:	1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Ithaca Town Hall 215 N. Tioga Street Ithaca, NY 14850

DATE:	Tuesday, September 30, 2025
TIME:	1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Rochester City Hall City Council Chambers, Room 302-A 30 Church Street Rochester, NY 14614

DATE:	Thursday, October 16, 2025
TIME:	1:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	SUNY – Oneonta Morris Conference Center 108 Ravine Parkway Oneonta, NY 13820

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Consumer confidence continues cascade

While the wealthy prosper, middle-class Americans feel the pinch

Daniel de Visé
USA TODAY



Consumers are tightening their wallets as consumer confidence fell among middle- and lower-class families. BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES FILE

America's middle class is spooked about the economy.

Consumer confidence has been falling for most of the past year. On a closely watched University of Michigan index, consumer sentiment sagged to 55.4 in September, down from 70.1 a year ago.

Economic anxiety runs "particularly strong among lower- and middle-income consumers," said Joanne Hsu, director of the Michigan surveys.

Another index of consumer sentiment, measured daily by Morning Consult, shows that middle-class consumer confidence fell off a cliff this summer.

Higher-income Americans (earning more than $100,000 a year) have held relatively positive views on the economy all year, the Morning Consult survey shows. Lower-income consumers (earning under $50,000) have consistently held more negative views.

Middle-income Americans, earning between $50,000 and $100,000, were tracking the buoyant sentiments of high earners through most of the year.

But in June, middle-class confidence gave out. The index for middle-income earners slipped from a peak of 113.2 to a low of 99.5 in that month. (A score of 100 would signal neutral feelings on the economy.)

As of Sept. 15, the index sat at 98.7 for middle-income consumers, 121.5 for upper-income spenders, and 86.9 for low-income households.

"There was a big spike in confidence in the spring of this year among the middle class, and then it fell back down," said Jeremy Horpedahl, an economist at the University of Central Arkansas and adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute.

Heading into autumn, big retailers report middle-class shoppers are combing bargain bins and hitting checkout aisle with lighter carts.

In an August earnings call, Walmart CEO Doug McMillon spoke of seeing "more adjustments" in spending "in middle- and lower-income households" than among higher-income consumers.

In another earnings call, Kohl's interim CEO Michael Bender reported that "our lower- to middle-income customers remain the most challenged," trading down to cheaper wares, "while our higher-income customers have proven to be more resilient."

The same headwinds are driving more middle-income consumers to dollar stores, a trend noted by Dollar General's CEO in a late-August call.

What, exactly, about the economy is unnerving the middle class? Is it inflation, which accelerated again this summer after punishing consumers for the past three years? Is it President Donald Trump's tariff campaign, which threatens to push prices higher still? Is it the nation's softening job market?

All of those factors may be to blame, economists say.

"You can't put your finger on one thing," said Ryan Sweet, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics.

On the campaign trail last year, then candidate Trump vowed, "Under my plan, incomes will skyrocket, inflation will vanish completely, jobs will come roaring back, and the middle class will prosper like never, ever before."

Several months into Trump's second presidency, inflation-adjusted wages are lower than five years ago. Inflation endures. Unemployment is drifting up.

Despite those economic setbacks, upper-income Americans are flourishing.

The top 10% of earners now account for more than 49% of all consumer spending, the highest level in decades of data, according to an analysis by Mark Zandi, chief economist for Moody's Analytics.

Top earners are "benefiting enormously from the runup in asset values," Zandi said. From the stock market to real estate prices. "You name it, everything's up."

Middle-income households are earning money on the stock market, too. But they own a lot less of it.

"A huge percentage of Americans aren't in the market at all," said Lindsay Owens, executive director of the Groundwork Collaborative, a progressive think tank.

"Increasingly we have this two-tiered economy, where the very top earners, the very top households, are just doing gangbusters," she said. "And increasingly, the rest of the country looks more and more similar to each other."

Upper-income Americans have reaped most of the rewards from rising stock and real estate values. The wealthiest 10% of Americans own nearly 90% of the stocks, according to a Motley Fool analysis. The wealthiest 1% command enough wealth to buy nearly every home in America, Redfin reports.

Many middle-income consumers own homes and have shared the spoils from rising property values, Zandi said. But their incomes and spending "have barely kept pace with inflation since the pandemic," he said.

Middle-class Americans saved money at historic rates in the early pandemic years, federal data show. Since then, however, middle-income households "have blown through their excess savings, and then some" to cover rising prices and debt payments such as "credit cards, auto loans, even student loans," Zandi said.

Middle-income families are more dependent on a strong labor market than wealthier Americans, the economists said. And right now, many Americans are worried about their jobs.

Employers added only 22,000 jobs in August. Revised numbers showed the economy shed 13,000 jobs in June, the first losses since 2020. Unemployment stands at 4.3%, the highest rate since October 2021.

"I think what we're seeing is, the number of job openings is falling steadily," Horpedahl said.

The nation's economy increasingly relies on upper-income consumers. Their spending hinges, in part, on a healthy stock market. If stock prices should sink, then high-income Americans might close their wallets.

"The economy is so dependent on the tippity top of the income distribution," Zandi said. "Things are great when stock prices are up, but they could turn around very quickly if stock prices go down."

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Democrat and Chronicle ROCHESTER

Sunday, September 28, 2025

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Bank Stock for Sale

4,957 shares* of Canandaigua National Corporation Common Stock

Bids will be opened at 2:00 PM on Thursday, October 2, 2025

For Canandaigua National Corporation Common Stock data and information on how to bid, please visit:
cnbank.com/shareholderrelations

You may address any questions to Kirsten Johnson at 585.394.4260, ext. 36067 or cncshareholderrelations@cnbank.com.

Canandaigua National Corporation

*Subject to change.

Beginning January 1, 2026, the MVP Medicare Complete Wellness with Part D, MVP Medicare Secure with Part D, and MVP Medicare WellSelect® Plus with Part D (PPO) Medicare Advantage plans will no longer be offered by MVP Health Care® in your area.

If you are impacted by these changes or would like to explore your Medicare plan options during the Annual Enrollment Period, please contact an MVP Medicare Advisor.

1-800-324-3899 (TTY 711)
Representatives are available
Monday–Friday, 8 am–8 pm Eastern Time. Y0051_0596_C

Man attacks construction workers in Perinton

Victoria E. Freile
New York Connect Team | USA TODAY NETWORK

A man has been accused of attacking two construction workers in a Perinton neighborhood Tuesday morning.

John Woods, 26, of Perinton was charged with second-degree assault, a felony, in connection with the encounter, which occurred in a parking lot on High Gate Trail, near Moseley Road, around 8:30 a.m. Sept. 30, said Deputy David Marcucci of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office.

Woods is accused of approaching the construction crew and striking two workers with a blunt object, he said. He left the area and was apprehended down the road by responding deputies.

Woods and one of the workers were both taken to an area hospital for treatment. Woods suffered a minor head injury when one of the workers disarmed him during the alleged attack, Marcucci said. The second involved worker said he was not injured, he said.

None of the injuries were considered life-threatening, Marcucci said.

It did not appear that Woods knew the men before the Sept. 30 altercation, Marcucci said. Deputies continue to investigate the incident.

Woods was arraigned Sept. 30 in Perinton Town Court and remanded to the Monroe County Jail in lieu of $5,000 cash bail or $10,000 bond, according to jail records. He is scheduled to return to court later this week. High Gate Trail is just south of the village of Fairport and Brooks Hill Elementary School.

Will you still get Social Security during the shutdown?

Victoria E. Freile
New York Connect Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

The federal government shut down at 12:01 a.m. Oct. 1, after President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats failed to reach a funding agreement.

As agencies pause operations and hundreds of thousands of workers face furloughs, many Americans are left wondering: Will Social Security payments continue?

Social Security benefits will not be interrupted during a government shutdown. This includes:

- Retirement benefits
- Disability benefits (SSDI)
- Survivor benefits
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Why? Because Social Security is classified as mandatory spending by law — meaning its funding is not subject to annual approval by Congress, unlike many other federal programs. Even during a shutdown, the Social Security Administration (SSA) continues distributing payments as scheduled.

While existing payments go out on time, some services may be delayed, including:

- Processing new benefit applications
- Customer service delays due to furloughs
- Slower updates to benefit records

Fewer staff at SSA offices and call centers may impact how quickly new claims or changes are handled.

What is a government shutdown, and why did it happen?

A government shutdown occurs when Congress fails to pass funding legislation for federal agencies by the start of the new fiscal year (Oct. 1). This marks the 15th U.S. government shutdown since 1981. The current standoff stems from disagreements over:

- Health care funding, especially Medicaid cuts and Affordable Care Act subsidies
- Short-term funding measures (called continuing resolutions)

While essential services like military, law enforcement, Medicare, and the U.S. Postal Service continue, they may operate with reduced support or without pay until a funding deal is reached.



The U.S. Capitol, hours before a partial government shutdown is set to take effect, in Washington on Sept. 30.
ELIZABETH FRANTZ, REUTERS

Who is affected by the shutdown?

- **Federal workers**: About 750,000 may be furloughed without pay.
- **Essential workers**: Still work (e.g., TSA, law enforcement, military), but also without pay until funding resumes.
- **National Parks and other non-essential agencies**: Closed or heavily restricted.

How many federal workers does New York have?

As of September 2024, New York state had just over 54,000 federal civilian employees, according to Congress.gov. That number, according to preliminary figures from the Office of Management and Budget, grew to 71,437 at the end of March 2025 with over 17,000 employed by the Veterans Health Administration.

Contributing: New York Connect Team reporter Emily Barnes and USA Today Network

Man shot, killed by trooper after threatening woman with scissors

New York Connect Team
USA Today Network

An 18-year-old man was fatally shot by a New York state trooper on Sept. 28 during a domestic incident in the town of Chemung.

State Police and a Chemung County sheriff's deputy responded to a report of an active physical domestic disturbance on Rotary Road around 3 p.m. Upon arrival, a trooper found a woman in the living room being threatened by a man armed with scissors, according to police.

The suspect, identified as Nathan J. Novakowski of Chemung, refused commands to drop the weapon and became increasingly agitated, according to police. When Novakowski attempted to stab the woman, the trooper discharged his service weapon, fatally striking him, police said. The woman sustained minor injuries and was treated at the scene by Greater Valley Ambulance personnel.

The incident is under investigation by the New York state Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the New York state Attorney General's Office, as required by state law in all cases involving fatal use of force by law enforcement.

No further information was immediately released.

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10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

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11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box → ☐ None

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Apollo Capital Management, L.P.	9 W 57th Street, 43rd Floor, New York, NY 10019-2700
Alta Fundamental Advisers, LLC	1500 Broadway #704, New York, NY 10036-4055
BlackRock Fund Advisors	400 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105-2228
The Vanguard Group, Inc.	100 Vanguard Boulevard, V26, Malvern, PA 19355
Philosophy Capital Management	3201 Danville Boulevard, Alamo, CA 94507
D.E. Shaw & Company, L.P.	10000 Memorial Drive, 5th Fl, Houston, TX 77024
Leon Cooperman	7118 Melrose Castle Lane, Boca Raton, FL 33496
Dimensional Fund Advisors, L.P. (U.S.)	Dimensional Pl, 6300 Bee Caves Rd, Bldg 1, Austin, TX 78746-5833
Two Seas Capital	32 Elm Place, 3rd Floor, Rye, NY 10580
Geode Capital Management, LLC	100 Summer St, 12th Floor, Boston, MA 02110-2106
State Street Global Advisors (SSgA)	1 Iron Street, Boston, MA 02210-1641
Miller Value Partners, LLC	1 South Street, #2550, Baltimore, MD 21202-3209
Teachers Insurance	730 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017-3206
SG Securities	245 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10167
Shay Capital	280 Park Avenue, 5th Fl West, New York, NY 10017
Morgan Stanley	1585 Broadway, New York, NY 10036
Renaissance Technologies	800 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022
Shah Capital Management, Inc.	8601 Six Forks Road, #630, Raleigh, NC 27615-2965
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Charles Schwab Investment Management, Inc.	9601 E Panorama Circle, Englewood, CO 80112-3441
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☒ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

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a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)			17,954	14,676
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1)	Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	329	423
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h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)			17,954	14,676
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16. Electronic Copy Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	7,205	5,901
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	23,115	19,097
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	23,662	19,641
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	97.7%	97.2%

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the October 02, 2025 issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Rick Voegele - Sr. Manager, AAM & Audit Reporting — Date: 10/1/2025

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARINGS TO BE HELD IN PSC CASES 25-E-0375, 25-G-0378, 25-E-0379, 25-G-0380 – NEW YORK STATE ELECTRIC & GAS CORPORATION AND ROCHESTER GAS AND ELECTRIC CORPORATION FOR ELECTRIC AND GAS SERVICE

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- NYSEG's Ithaca office located at 1387 Dryden Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
- NYSEG's Oneonta office located at 65 Country Club Road, Oneonta, NY 13820
- RG&E's Sodus office located at 14 State Street, Sodus, NY 14551
- RG&E's Rochester office located at 3 City Center, 180 South Clinton Avenue, Rochester, NY 14604

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that **public statement hearings** will be held before Administrative Law Judges on:

DATE: Tuesday, September 30, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Sodus Community Library, 17 Maple Avenue, Sodus, NY 14551

DATE: Tuesday, October 7, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Binghamton City Hall, 38 Hawley Street, Binghamton, NY 13901

DATE: Tuesday, September 30, 2025
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Cayuga Community College, 197 Franklin Street, Auburn, NY 13021

DATE: Wednesday, October 8, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Ithaca Town Hall, 215 N. Tioga Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

DATE: Tuesday, September 30, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Rochester City Hall, City Council Chambers, Room 302-A, 30 Church Street, Rochester, NY 14614

DATE: Thursday, October 16, 2025
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
LOCATION: SUNY – Oneonta, Morris Conference Center, 108 Ravine Parkway, Oneonta, NY 13820

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that **virtual** public statement hearings will be held as follows:

DATE: Tuesday, October 21, 2025
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Registration is required for the virtual hearings.

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Each public statement hearing will be held open until everyone who has registered to speak has been heard or other reasonable arrangements to submit comments have been made.

Group warns of 'rampant' book bans

Report documents over 22K instances since 2021

Thao Nguyen
USA TODAY

A free speech advocacy group warned on Oct. 1 that book censorship in public schools across the United States has become "rampant and common," with book bans increasing significantly over the last few years.

Though book censorship is not a new issue, the United States has seen a sharp rise in book bans and attempted bans since 2021. PEN America's "Banned in the USA" report, released on Oct. 1, recorded about 6,800 instances of books being removed from schools during the 2024-2025 academic year.

While the new number is down from the more than 10,000 bans reported in the 2023-2024 school year, PEN America noted that it was still an uptick from previous years when the advocacy group did not release an annual report or index of book bans. Since July 2021, PEN America has documented more than 22,800 cases of book bans across 45 states and 451 public school districts.

According to the report, the systematic removal of books from schools and school libraries in many parts of the country has resulted in the "normalization and routinization of censorship" in public education.

PEN America cited "alarming censorship pressures" on school districts, including recent federal efforts to restrict education, continued attacks on LGBTQ+ identities, and state-mandated book bans.

Just days after President Donald Trump took office in January, the Department of Education called book bans a "hoax" and rescinded all department guidance that had suggested school districts' "removal of age-inappropriate books from its libraries may violate civil rights laws."

"Censorship pressures have expanded and escalated, taking on different forms – laws, directives, guidance that sow confusion, lists of books mislabeled as 'explicit' materials, and 'do not buy' lists," Kasey Meehan, director of PEN America's Freedom to Read program, said in a statement. "A disturbing 'everyday banning' and normalization of censorship has worsened and spread over the last four years. The result is unprecedented."



A display of books banned in certain states or targets of censorship is seen at the Hoboken Public Library in New Jersey in 2024. Faced with growing book bans across the country, the library has become a sanctuary for challenged books.
ANA FERNANDEZ/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILE

States with most banned books

Between July 2024 and June 2025, PEN America tracked 6,870 instances of book bans across 23 states and 87 public school districts, according to the report.

The report said that Florida led the nation for the third straight year, with over 2,300 instances of book bans for the 2024-2025 school year. Florida was followed by Texas with more than 1,780 bans and Tennessee with over 1,600.

The advocacy group said in its report that school districts often remove titles that are attacked by extremist groups with anti-LGBTQ+ stances and are against diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

"Educators and school boards comply out of fear of losing funding, being fired or harassed, even being subjected to police involvement," PEN America said in a news release.

The report found that some of Florida's book bans were the result of direct pressure from local groups and elected officials rather than formal objections filed by parents with their local school boards. The report added that the increase in bans in the state was also due to the passage of multiple "vague laws" and threats to educators' professional licenses if they failed to comply.

"No book shelf will be left untouched if local and state book bans continue wreaking havoc on the freedom to read in public schools," Sabrina Baêta, senior manager of PEN America's Freedom to Read program, said in a statement. "Book bans stand in the way of a more just, informed and equitable world. They chill the freedom to read and restrict the rights of students to access information and read freely."

It's especially important when book bans happen in Florida, according to Meehan. She said the organization watches Florida's actions in particular since they see that the pressures placed on Florida's school districts often happen in other states or at the federal level, through the Trump administration's orders.

"We have always called Florida a blueprint state, because what happens in Florida in terms of book bans then kind of trickles out to other states," Meehan said.

Top 5 banned books

PEN America has previously reported that the majority of targeted books were written by or about a person of color, a member of the LGBTQ+ community or a woman.

"The books that continue to be most frequently targeted typically contain themes related to race and racism, gender identity and sexuality, or depict sexual violence," the organization said.

According to the report, the top five banned books for the 2024-2025 school year were:

- "A Clockwork Orange" by Anthony Burgess with 23 bans.
- "Sold" by Patricia McCormick with 20 bans.
- "Breathless" by Jennifer Niven with 20 bans.
- "Last Night at the Telegraph Club" by Malinda Lo with 19 bans.
- "A Court of Mist and Fury" by Sarah J. Maas with 18 bans.

Most banned authors

The report noted that book bans continue to affect a "wide group of creative professionals" in the literary sector. During the 2024-2025 school year, book bans affected the works of almost 2,600 people, including over 2,300 authors, more than 240 illustrators, and nearly 40 translators, the report states.

The report said the top five banned authors in the 2024-2025 school year were:

- Stephen King: 87 titles banned, totaling 206 times.
- Ellen Hopkins: 18 titles banned, totaling 167 times.
- Sarah J. Maas: 21 titles banned, totaling 162 times.
- Jodi Picoult: 23 titles banned, totaling 62 times.
- Yusei Matsui: 22 manga books banned, totaling 54 times.

Contributing: Stephany Matat, USA TODAY Network – Florida

Pope's Trump critique ends honeymoon with conservative Catholics

Joshua McElwee
REUTERS

VATICAN CITY – Pope Leo XVI initially impressed conservative Catholics after his election in May as he embraced traditions shunned by his predecessor, Pope Francis, and steered clear of hot button social issues that divided the 1.4 billion-member Church. But his honeymoon with conservatives appears over after he unexpectedly took aim at President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration policies, questioning whether they were in line with the Church's pro-life teachings.


Leo

"Someone who says I am against abortion but I am in agreement with the inhuman treatment of immigrants in the United States, I don't know if that's pro-life," Leo, the first pope elected from the United States, told reporters Sept. 30.

Some critics, who had praised the pope for his early reserve, expressed shock that Leo criticized the current champion of global conservatives. Former Texas Bishop Joseph Strickland, a fierce Francis critic who was relieved from duty by Francis but has praised Leo, criticized the new pope on social media for causing "much confusion" regarding the sanctity of human life and the moral clarity of the Church's teaching."

"So tired of papal interviews. He should return to his previous silence," said the Rorate Caeli blog, which had previously criticized Francis and praised Leo.

The Trump administration, which was sharply critical of Francis but has rarely commented about Leo, also pushed back.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said she rejected the characterization of inhumane treatment of immigrants.

Vatican officials and papal associates said Leo cares especially deeply about the treatment of immigrants and is unlikely to be deterred by criticism. But it could detract from his mission, expressed during his inaugural papal mass, to work for unity across a global Church that has become more divided and polarized in recent decades.

While the naturally cautious Leo will look to avoid repeated clashes with conservatives that could harden opposition to his agenda, he will not renounce his own set of values. "Is he going to ruffle the feathers of American conservatives at some points? Yes," said Elise Allen, author of a biography of Leo for Penguin Peru and the only journalist to interview the pope since his election.

"They shouldn't be surprised that he does that," she told Reuters.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, a senior adviser to both Francis and Leo, said the new pope was following an instruction given by St. Paul, a 1st-century leader of Christianity: "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season."

"(Leo) encourages and challenges each local Church and each Christian, faced with complex and urgent issues, to live the Gospel," the cardinal told Reuters. Leo was a relative unknown on the global stage before his election in May. He spent most of his career as a missionary in Peru, where Allen said he developed a desire to care for immigrants and speak up for social causes.

"He understands the priority of the abortion issue, but he's not going to be somebody that says that's far more important than immigration," she said.

Leo earned conservative praise in the hours after his election by wearing a traditional red papal garment called a mozzetta, which Francis never wore, in his first public appearance.

David Gibson, an academic who follows the papacy, said conservative Catholics had grasped at Leo's attempts to foster unity as if he were endorsing their entire agenda.

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