

DONKEY TRACKS

JUNE, 2026

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Women's Democratic Club of Clark County



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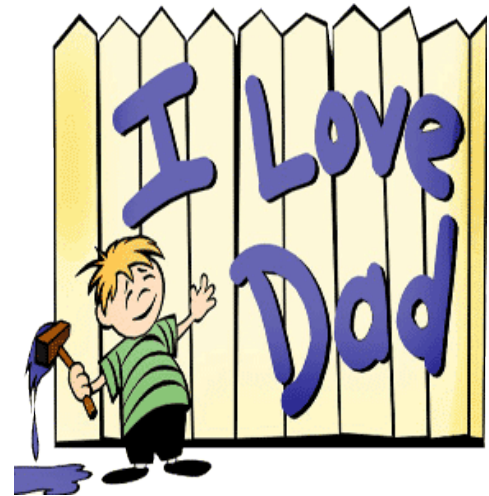
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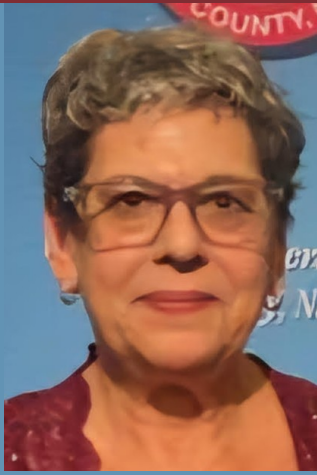


Flag Day

JUNETEENTH

FREEDOM DAY

JUNE 19



President's Message

We are living in very tumultuous times!

So many of us worry about finances, healthcare, affordable housing, rising costs of everything in our daily lives and so much more. Not to mention the political climate that affects us. They put on brave faces publicly, but we do not know the struggle they hide.

Kindness, empathy and compassion to everyone we meet costs nothing but could mean so much.

We have a full Summer planned for all our members and friends. Let's all celebrate, together, and make some new memories.

May 23rd - through June 5th - Early Voting begins

June 9th - Primary Election Day

June 11th - Women's Demo meeting, "The Judiciary--Why Informed Voting Matters"

July 19th - Annual BBQ at Assembly Member Shea Backus' home

August 13th - Women's Demo Meeting, "Women's Equality Luncheon with Honorees"

Let's make it a plan to participate, attend, and enjoy new and old friendships, together.



"The Judiciary: Why Informed Voting Matters"

**Guest speakers:
Judge Anna Albertson
and
Judge Dawn Throne**



Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026

**Place: Tuscany Suites, Tuscany Room, 2nd Floor
255 East Flamingo Road, LV, NV 89169**

**Use 2nd Portico (West Side), Park Free, Use Elevator
Extra Parking In Back Lot**

Time: 11:30 a.m. Registration; Noon Luncheon/Program

Members = \$35 * Non-Members = \$40

Pay Online [HERE](#)

If You Plan To Pay At Door

RSVP [HERE](#)

All Registered Democrats Are Welcome To Attend



JOIN US

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ANNUAL

BBQ

Sunday
July
19th
2026

2:00 PM - 6:00 PM

At the home of
Assemblywoman
Shea Backus



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To Get Location
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OPINION: Candidates Aren't Talking About Data Centers. They'll Regret Their Silence

By John L. Smith



Big Tech's threat to the driest state in the nation isn't just environmental — it's existential. We can't afford to let campaign noise drown it out.



Check your mailbox, social media feed or local television station, and you'll be reminded often that another noisy campaign season has begun.

The corny sophistry and outright smears come in a torrent. The sentimental in-it-for-the-folks rhetoric runs like sap from a stack of Hallmark cards. Oh, the joys of watching reasonably intelligent people roll around in the advertising muck in the name of a higher calling to serve.

You're hearing a lot now, and no doubt the volume will be so loud on Election Day you'll be driven to distraction.

What you're not hearing much about from candidates is precisely where they stand on Nevada's headlong rush to develop water- and energy-sucking data centers in the [driest state in the nation](#). It's a state, I should add, whose major power utility acknowledges that it [doesn't have the capacity](#) to provide the electricity required to operate the data centers currently under development.

Alarm bells are ringing across the country on this issue. It's not surprising that a new [Gallup poll](#) finds 71 percent of Americans are opposed to having artificial intelligence (AI) data centers in their communities. That's far higher than the 53 percent who are against having a nuclear power plant in their area.

The two industries aren't as unrelated as they might seem, not with the ongoing promotion of a new generation of nuclear power plants known as [Small Modular Reactors](#) (SMRs). Nevada, of course, has its own fraught history when it comes to things nuclear, from the days of the Nevada Test Site to the showdown over the proposed Yucca Mountain high-level radioactive waste storage site.

The issue isn't merely political or economic. In Nevada, it's existential — especially in the land of little rain that depends on winnowing water supplies from the Colorado River in the south and depleted Sierra Nevada snowpacks in the north. It affects the entire state and should be assessed at that level.

Rural utility cooperatives across the state continue to be courted by data center developers in communities where promises of economic and job growth are powerful elixirs. But the [Nevada Rural Electric Association](#) (NREA), which represents consumer-owned utilities across the state, has taken a cautious approach. If only other local boards, councils, commissions and the state Legislature had been as circumspect.

Nevada's data center developers, most of whom don't actually live in the state, enjoy the generous benefits we provide them in the form of millions in tax abatements. [Serious questions](#) have been raised about whether they've been forthcoming about providing information on those breaks to the public. They [also largely get a pass](#) thanks to our long tradition of boomtown politicians and business promoters who root for economic growth in almost any form.

One bright spot: After considerable public pushback, last week the [Reno City Council](#) decided to move forward with a moratorium on data center development while it studies the issues in the [fastest-warming city in America](#).

In Carson City, Gov. Joe Lombardo (R) is firmly fixed on the side of development. He appears confident that the risks and costs to individuals are being mitigated along with concerns about water consumption and stress to the power grid.

"To put it in perspective," he says in a [campaign video on Facebook](#), "I'm a supporter of the data centers because of everything I've just described, we have put stopgaps into that system. So, if you're gonna be a data center, you've gotta have a recycle system set up for water use so it's not detrimental to the water table and in the overall consumption of water." He also notes that the infrastructure of the developments cannot affect individual ratepayers.

"All those things are being addressed as part of the solution with the data centers and availability," he continues. "And why, why do we even want them? Why do we even want them? Because it's business development, it's jobs and it's expansion of the economy, and resiliency in the economy during emergencies or whatever the situation may be. And so they are a good solution and they pay their bills. They're a good solution to our economic problems, not the absolute solution but they're part of the solution on our success moving into the future."

Lombardo doesn't mention environmental concerns or the [state's clean energy goals](#), or the fact that the [veracity of data center water consumption statistics](#) have been challenged, or the fact that there's increased pressure to use [less clean energy sources](#). But by now everyone should know that's not his thing.

But he does promote the [squishy math](#) that data center development creates permanent jobs. Although their construction phase is a job-generator, data centers open few full-time positions. It would be better if the governor — and every other elected official and aspirant to office — started talking seriously about bringing data-related businesses and even [computer chip manufacturing](#) to the state.

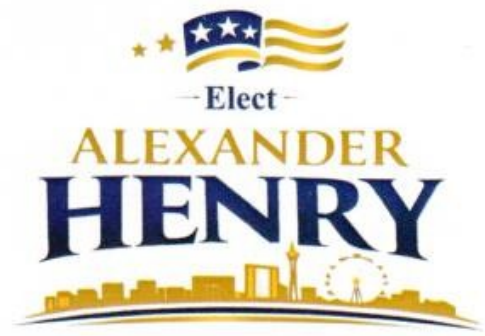
If we're good enough to play the gushing host to developments that use up precious resources but produce little full-time employment, why not roll out the red carpet to companies that can actually be game-changers for this beleaguered state?

These are questions that voters and the press should be asking — and candidates should be prepared to answer well before Election Day.

John L. Smith is an author and longtime columnist. He was born in Henderson and his family's Nevada roots go back to 1881. His stories have appeared in New Lines, Time, Reader's Digest, Rolling Stone, The Daily Beast, Reuters and Desert Companion, among others.

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The Renee Diamond Scholarship Fund



Application may be submitted the following ways:

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and

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Guidelines for Renee Diamond Scholarship:

Section 1: The Renee Diamond Scholarship Fund has been established to assist students in need of financial aid to continue their education.

Section 2: The President shall appoint three (3) members in good standing to advise and recommend to the Board of Directors applicants worthy of consideration.

Section 3: The Scholarship Fund is provided by proceeds from the monthly luncheon raffle ticket sales. One-half of the monies collected is distributed to the winner of the drawing, and one-half is deposited into the Scholarship Fund account.

Section 4: Scholarships are offered as a one-time only grant and may only be utilized at an accredited Nevada college, university or trade school.

Members of WDC


The Renee Diamond Scholarship Fund is one of the most significant things we can do for young Democratic graduates. Please share if you know someone that will be attending a Nevada school of higher education. Have them submit an application.


Deadline For Submission


Friday, July 18, 2026

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Department 28

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Committee to Elect Danielle Tarmu
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The Carol Chesnut Law School Scholarship Fund



Application may be submitted the following ways:

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Eligibility for the Carol Chesnut Law School Scholarship:

- Be a registered to vote as a Democrat in the State of Nevada, or if not yet of voting age, identify as a Democrat.
- Be a member of the Women's Democratic Club of Clark County or be referred by a current member in good standing.
- Be enrolled or planning to enroll at a law school for the upcoming Fall semester.

This scholarship is awarded annually to one or more Nevada registered Democratic female students attending an accredited law school. The Scholarship is a one-time grant and must be used for tuition or academic expenses directly through the student's chosen school

Scholarship funds are presented at the Women's Equality Day Luncheon in August, a celebration of women's achievements and a reminder of the work still ahead for equality and justice.

Members of WDC

The Carol Chesnut Law School Scholarship Fund is one of the most significant things we can do for Democratic female law students. Please share if you know someone that will be attending a law school in or out of Nevada. Have them submit an application.

Deadline For Submission

Friday, July 18, 2026

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MAY 11

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FOR ASSEMBLYMAN DISTRICT SIX

EARLY VOTE: MAY 23-JUNE 5 • Primary Election: June 9

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3. **ENSURING BASIC NEEDS ARE MET** through programs that provide senior support, food assistance, and access to health care.
4. **FREE MENTAL HEALTH CARE**, including establishing free crisis and long-term mental health services so that people can get real help before tragedies occur.
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Memos From Morgan

By Morgan St. James



NO EFFORT TO COVER CORRUPTION

Did they finally overstep?
**The latest actions by “Trump & Company” make
Tricky Dicky Nixon look like an altar boy**

Where to start—that’s the question. Rarely have we had an administration so filled with a corrupt President and cabinet that the sheer number of illegal and unethical actions provide such an array of misdeeds that it is hard to know which one should take precedence.

The most logical recent one is probably the \$1.776 Billion “Anti-Weaponization” Fund —

The **\$1.776 billion “Anti-Weaponization Fund”** as they have named it in trying to make a clever reference to 1776, was a bogus compensation program created by the DOJ under Todd Blanche to use taxpayer money to—can you believe this—compensate perpetrators of the J6 insurrection for their “unwarranted suffering.” Not money to the victims of this unruly rioting crowd, but instead to the ones who killed and injured police officers and others, stormed the Capitol, sought to harm members of the Congress and kill Mike Pence. Why? Because the Trump machine convinced them the election was stolen and urged them to be real patriots and stop the certification of Joe Biden as President. Now he wants them rewarded beyond the blanket pardons he issued on his first day in office. He wants to hand them our dollars. Lots of dollars.

The mere fact that something like this was even suggested, let alone enacted, is beyond belief. Trump throws responsibility on his personally selected Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, his former personal criminal defense attorney, but his fingerprints are all over it.

As you most likely know, it is tied to a settlement between President Donald Trump, his family, and the IRS following Trump’s \$10 billion lawsuit over the 2019 leak of his tax returns. Add another checkmark to the list. It is unprecedented for a current President to sue his own IRS. To make it even more bizarre, Blanche’s DOJ says the fund is designed to “hear and redress claims” of individuals who allege they were victims of “lawfare” or “weaponization” by past administrations, particularly the Biden administration. There is live video of these horrendous acts that was broadcast all over the world while Trump watched it on TV and didn’t try to stop it. These “patriots” were not the ones who suffered.

Trump literally negotiated with himself to drop his IRS lawsuit, which had no merit, in exchange for the fund’s creation and an IRS “forever bar” on auditing his old tax returns.

The very tax returns he said he would release, but claimed he couldn't release because he was under audit. But now he managed to bar ever auditing his old tax returns. There is a lot more to go into on this subject, but no room to do it here.

Then there are multiple "golden" vanity projects that are going through without even a hint of the required procedures. He simply arranged for the bulldozers to tear down the East Wing of the White House without submitting the project for any approvals. Also awarding of no-bid contracts, in some cases to companies with no visible experience.

He claims private funding will pay for much of it, so why is a billion dollars being asked of taxpayers for the ballroom? It's more like billions of our dollars are being spent recklessly because he says he has to beautify DC for the 250th anniversary. Meanwhile a huge portion of the population is really struggling with rising prices, overwhelming cost of healthcare and cancellation of essential programs with the excuse the government can't afford to pay for them. Excuse me. There seems to be money for what Trump wants although our national debt keeps rising, but no money for those who need help. It is more like he is trying to leave his mark all over the city. For one thing, it seems he wants to slap gold and his name everywhere he can. Most will agree we could do very well without a Billion dollar ballroom, the "Arch de Trump" at an anticipated cost of \$100 Million, turning the iconic Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool into the equivalent of a hotel swimming pool by one of his cronies at a current cost of \$13.1 Million.

And there is the resurrection of a project he envisioned as far back as 2020: National Garden of American Heroes in Washington, D.C.'s West Potomac Park. Originally \$40 Million was tucked into his Big Beautiful Bill, but as all his projects, it has seen its budget grow significantly since initial proposals. That amount was intended to cover the creation of 250 life-size statues of notable Americans, made from marble, granite, bronze, copper, or brass. Recent reports indicate that the latest expanded plans — which include reflecting pools, an amphitheater, formal gardens, plazas, cafes, and recreational spaces — could push the total cost well above the \$40 million already allocated. The Trump administration has not released a finalized figure, but the administration's own estimate suggests the statues alone could exceed the initial budget.

Beyond these million and billion dollar projects, we have the poorly initiated Iran war, and yes it is a war at an approximate cost of \$32.24 Billion so far. This does not account for the clearly related blow to the economy and alienation of some of our strongest allies. Could it possibly be a coincidence that Donald Jr. and Eric have invested in drone companies that have secured multimillion dollar Government contracts for drones? Or the stock trades being made by the Trump families and their allies just before critical war or peace announcements. Sort of like insider trading. The thing Martha Stewart went to prison for.

It could go on and on, but I have run out of room.



Former interior designer MORGAN ST. JAMES, lives in Las Vegas with her rescue dog Cucumber and has been writing for over twenty years. She has 21 books in publication and over 600 published articles on diverse subjects. Morgan has appeared on radio, podcasts, television and author's panels. Her books include the Silver Sisters Mysteries series co-authored with her real life sister Phyllice Bradner, the Revenge is Fun series, stand-alone novels, the Writers' Tricks of the Trade book and short stories in six Chicken Soup for the Soul books. Morgan co-authored the multi award-winning memoirs: Rob and Cheryl Cuccio's Incest, Murder and a Miracle and Bella Capo's No More Crying Angels.

Lenna Hovanesian

Candidate for
Clark County Commission District F



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Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2026

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Sharing Our Legacy

By Judy Klein



I know it seems as though we have so much pushed into our consciousness through television, social media, newspapers, videos, and every other form of communication that we feel like a sponge absorbing it all. But don't despair. As I keep telling myself, help is on the way!

For a Democracy to thrive, there must be a constant flow of factual information so that we can make informed decisions without allowing Democracy to dry up and fade away. Every day, every minute, the information highway is flooded with so much junk that we first have to clear the wreckage before continuing our journey to restore "We the People" back to the center of our Country. We are constantly being asked to take too many forks in the road and make too many unnecessary stops along the way, all designed to slow the process of freedom and equality.

There is no greater travesty upon the citizens of our Country than when voting rights begin to disappear and extremists take over the highways of institutional knowledge and fairness. History has always taught us that if we refuse to learn from the failures of the past and the mistakes we have made, we will never grow as a Democracy.

How dare the Supreme Court of the United States ("SCOTUS") make rulings based on bigotry and hatred rather than the rule of law. If you want to see the consequences of prejudice and intolerance at work, look no further than some of the decisions coming from SCOTUS today. Thank G-d for Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson, who remind us daily what the rule of law should look like and how far this Court has veered off the highway into political partisanship.

I choose to believe that people are basically good and that their moral values and the way they choose to live their lives should reflect what a Democracy looks like. Our Democracy should reflect the diversity and humanity of our Country, and right now, it does not even come close. How can we grow and bring our people to a better place than where they are today when so many are simply struggling to survive? Entire families are struggling alongside them and, through no fault of their own, are at the mercy of leadership that often seems indifferent to whether they exist or even have the right to exist.

When the President of the United States goes on television and tells the world he bears no responsibility for the people he leads, we have a serious problem. When he says he does not spend one thought worrying about our struggles, we have reached an "end of the road" sign. How does someone rise to the highest office in the land and not care about the people of the Country they lead? Please tell me this is not normal. Please tell me we can do better than this.

I am beyond shocked by much of what comes out of his mouth. After decades of distortion and dishonesty, the damage is visible for all to see. We only need to look at leaders from the past to know this is not normal and that this surely is not the United States of America we once recognized. We may not have agreed with every President, but we never completely lost respect for the office itself.

Now, when I see photographs or clips of past Presidents, I am reminded that public service once carried a sense of dignity, responsibility, and respect for the American people. Some I have had the honor to meet and spend time with; others I admire from afar. Together, their examples remind us that we must continue down the highway toward the recovery of our Democracy. But to get there, we must avoid the accidents — the pitfalls of division, hatred, and misinformation — and ignore the forks in the road that lead us away from history, truth, and the rule of law.

We are in this together. Let us never forget that.




These members of Women’s Democratic Club were invited for a photo opportunity with Vice President Kamela Harris. Left to right: Dr.. Ouida Brown, Vice President Kamela Harris, Judy Klein, Michelle Abney, and, Chair of the Nevada State Democratic Party, Daniele Monroe Moreno.

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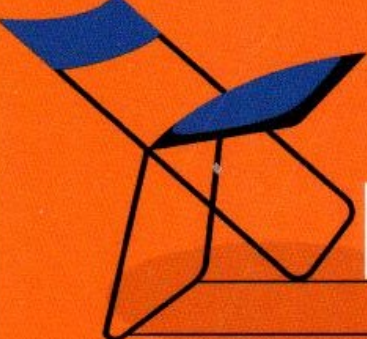
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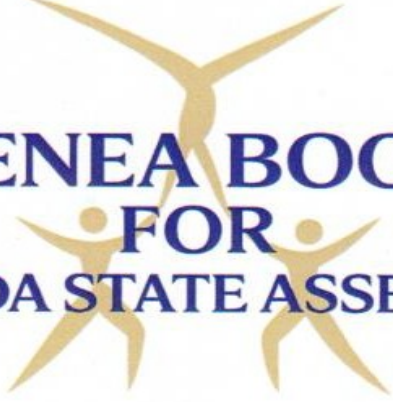
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The Supreme Court Didn't Pick A Winner. It Changed The Game.

Brian Daitzman

SCOTUS' latest redistricting decision may not determine who wins the next election. But it changes how those elections will be won.



By weakening the constraints that once governed redistricting, the Court has shifted more power toward the institutions that determine how votes are counted and translated into seats—and, with it, greater influence over outcomes that were once more directly decided at the ballot box.

The Supreme Court's latest redistricting decision may not determine who wins the next election. But it changes how those elections will be won.

In *Louisiana v. Callais* (2026), the Court struck down a congressional map that had created an additional majority-Black district, holding that race cannot be the predominant factor in drawing districts—even when states are attempting to comply with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits practices that reduce minority voters' ability to elect their preferred candidates.

The decision may prove more consequential than either party is acknowledging. By tightening the limits on how race can be used in redistricting, the Court did not clearly advantage one side. It changed the system those sides operate within.

For decades, American redistricting operated inside a constrained equilibrium—a system in which legal rules limited how far political actors could go. The rules were imperfect and unevenly enforced, but they imposed real limits. Courts intervened. Racial vote dilution claims—grounded in Section 2—carried force. These constraints did not eliminate partisan mapmaking, but they contained it—legally, politically, and operationally.

The ruling sits at the center of a long-running legal tension. The Voting Rights Act has required states to consider race to prevent minority vote dilution, while the Constitution restricts government action that relies too heavily on race. In resolving that conflict, the Court narrowed the space in which states can act—making discrimination harder to prove and partisan design easier to defend.

The practical effect is not abstract. By raising the evidentiary bar for proving racial vote dilution—particularly by requiring plaintiffs to distinguish race from partisan behavior—the decision weakens one of the primary enforcement mechanisms. What changes is not simply doctrine, but the level of constraint it imposes.

That shift matters because it changes what is possible.

For decades, the system imposed real constraints on how far political actors could go. In many states, proposed maps had to survive federal review before taking effect, and even after implementation, they could be challenged and struck down if they diluted minority voting power under an effects-based standard. That combination—preemptive oversight and a meaningful risk of reversal—did not eliminate strategic behavior, but it defined the outer boundary of what could be attempted—and what would be undone.

What the Court has now done is alter that boundary by changing the likelihood that aggressive strategies will be blocked or reversed. Maps that once carried a high risk of intervention now carry less. Strategies that once fell outside the system's tolerance now fall within it.

There is a more precise way to understand what follows. Beginning with the work of John von Neumann, a pioneering mathematician, and Oskar Morgenstern, an economist who applied those ideas to real-world behavior—and later formalized by John Nash, the mathematician portrayed in *A Beautiful Mind*—game theory explains how rational actors behave when their outcomes depend on the anticipated choices of others. The core insight is simple: each actor chooses not in isolation, but in anticipation of how others will respond.

Redistricting operates inside precisely this kind of environment. Political actors draw maps in anticipation—of legal challenge, opposing strategies, and future elections. In such systems, behavior is driven less by principle than by incentives, constraints, and expectations. Change those inputs, and the system does not merely adjust. It reorganizes.

The Court's decision alters that calculation. By raising the evidentiary bar for proving discrimination while affirming the legitimacy of partisan design, it changes how actors assess both risk and reward. Strategies that once carried a high probability of reversal now carry less. Maps that once seemed legally untenable now fall within a defensible range. The set of viable strategies expands, and the expected cost of pursuing them declines...

2025



January

Ashley Delobel
J. Ken Diaz
Claudia Fabian
Attorney General Aaron Ford
Harriet Goldstein
Lance Hendron
Amanda Klein
Matt Lay
Amanda Pellizzari
Staci Walters
Dr. Glynda White
Denise Wright

February

Marilyn Caston
Nancy Downey
Judge Tara Clark-Newberrrt
Pam Jones
Carol Nerby

March

Sunshine Arterburn
Riva Lantaya
Elizabeth Lilly
Melissa Martinet
Tya Mathis-Coleman
Karmen La'Shaun Miller
Virginia "Ginny" Okawa
Judge Jennifer Schwartz

April

Mindie Lloyd
Michelle Sklar

May

Eileen Eady
Amy Reagan
Elaina Smith

June

July

August

September

October

November

December 2025

Cecia Alvarado
Jan Biggerstaff
Elizabeth Taylor
Ann Underdahl

OPINION: Here's A Trumped-Up Indictment That Should Be 86'd

By John L. Smith



The indictment of James Comey proves that our thin-skinned president will use any pretext for political persecution.

Photo illustration by Justin Stabley/The Nevada Independent



By many accounts, Las Vegas has been having [trouble](#) attracting [customers](#).

Just imagine how few tourists would come if there was a homicide every time some boozed-up barfly or loud-mouth restaurant patron was "86'd" from a joint. I heard the term often in the Las Vegas I grew up in. From beleaguered casino dealers to graveyard shift bartenders, the term "86" had a meaning understood to all. It meant you were being ordered to leave, kicked out, given the bum's rush.

Although I'm sure there were many times that working stiffs were tempted to strangle their unruly customers, they 86'd them instead. Sometimes the offenders left quietly, other times they landed on their wallets in the parking lot, but the term had nothing to do with murder or inflicting substantial bodily harm.

But that's what we're expected to believe now that former FBI Director James Comey has been [charged with threatening the life](#) of the nation's 47th president with the now-infamous ["86 47" Instagram post](#). Eighty-six is [common slang](#) for throwing out a customer or getting rid of something. But if you're an adult, you probably already know that.

It turns out not everyone on a federal grand jury in North Carolina is an adult. On April 28, it charged Comey with threatening to harm or kill President Donald Trump after the former G-man's May 2025 post of seashells and beach pebbles arranged in the sand in the shape of the four numerals.

I understand Comey would have faced more charges, but members of Trump's Department of Justice (DOJ) were foiled in their investigation by a rising tide and a kid with a sand bucket.

This makes the second time Trump's guard-dog DOJ has indicted Comey, the FBI director in the early months of the first Trump administration. He was [indicted in September 2025](#) on charges he made false statements to Congress and obstructed a congressional proceeding. And I thought those were the prerequisites for a position in Trump's cabinet. The charges were dismissed after a judge determined the prosecutor in the case was improperly appointed.

Comey isn't in a laughing mood, but neither is he backing down.

"Well, they're back, this time about a picture of seashells on a North Carolina beach a year ago, and this won't be the end of it," he posted Tuesday in a [video on his Substack](#).

"But nothing has changed with me. I'm still innocent, I'm still not afraid, and I still believe in the independent federal judiciary, so let's go."

Call Comey's "86 47" post juvenile, or at least corny. He took it down out of concern that someone might take offense. Someone, perhaps, like the hypersensitive Trump, who reacted to the news of the [death of respected federal prosecutor Robert Mueller](#) by saying, "Robert Mueller just died. Good, I'm glad he's dead. He can no longer hurt innocent people!"

You may reasonably conclude that a grown man who arranges seashells on the beach and then decides to put his creation on social media probably needs to find a hobby. But indict him for threatening the president? Does no one read bumper stickers these days?

The indictment is yet another reminder of what a weaponized Justice Department looks like. This kind of mean pettiness is what Mussolini's Italy looked like.

Using the world's most powerful office to indict a political enemy over something so innocuous is dangerous, but it doesn't make Trump appear tough. It should remind people of who he is — a thin-skinned bully and closeted snowflake. Feeling triggered by a picture of seashells and sand pebbles is about as snowflakey as it gets.

At this point, you'd be forgiven for suspecting Trump has seashells and sand pebbles in his head. In the wake of the indictment, [he raged](#) in a Truth Social post, "'86' is a mob term for 'kill him.' They say 86 him! 86 47 means 'kill President Trump.'"

Even with the understanding that Trump likely knows more mob lingo than most people, I can't recall ever hearing even a Hollywood gangster use the term. Seems kind of unimaginative, something that could cause confusion in the ranks.

The Boss: All right, Rocco, I want you to 86 that guy.

Rocco: You mean, like, escorting him to the door and telling him never to come back?

The Boss: No, I said 86 him.

Rocco: Sure, I'll give him a shove and say he can't never return.

The Boss: Look you mug, get it through your thick head. I want you to 86 him!

Rocco: Right, I got it. He's banned for life, and that's final.

The Boss: Ah, fuhgeddaboutit.

I'm not sure what Comey's defense strategy will be, but I suspect he won't have to put his hand on a Bible.

His attorney will just need to get his hands on a dictionary and open it to the appropriate page.

John L. Smith is an author and longtime columnist. He was born in Henderson and his family's Nevada roots go back to 1881. His stories have appeared in New Lines, Time, Reader's Digest, Rolling Stone, The Daily Beast, Reuters and Desert Companion, among others.

Letters From An American

By Heather Cox Richardson



The biggest story in the country, today and always, is that the president of the United States is mentally unwell.

Over the course of three hours last night, he posted on social media fifty-five times. Those posts accused a number of those Trump considers his personal enemies, including former president Barack Obama, of treason; claimed that investigations of the ties between his 2016 campaign and Russian operatives were an attempt to damage Trump; insisted the 2020 presidential election was stolen; reposted a fake quotation from Senator John Kennedy (R-LA) accusing Obama of making a personal fortune of \$120 million from the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare; labeled Obama and others “traitors” and called for their arrest; and demanded to know why acting attorney general Todd Blanche hadn’t indicted any of those people yet.

This morning, he started in again with a long screed attacking the *New York Times* for its coverage of his alterations to the reflecting pool in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and insisting that Democratic presidents Obama and Joe Biden had “botched” renovations that he was now fixing for “a ‘tiny’ fraction of the cost!” He posted an AI image of Obama, Biden, and former House speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) apparently swimming in a filthy version of the reflecting pool with the caption: “Dumacrats Love Sewage.” Then he posted an image of himself on the \$100 bill. And then he was back to calling House minority leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) “Low IQ.”

After posting a number of AI images showing the U.S. military destroying the Iranian military, Trump posted: “When the Fake News says that the Iranian enemy is doing well, Militarily, against us, it’s virtual TREASON in that it is such a false, and even preposterous, statement. They are aiding and abetting the enemy!”

Then he posted an image of a map with Venezuela overlaid with the U.S. flag. The caption read: “51st State.”

Trump seems to be comforting himself by lashing out at his perceived enemies and insisting he is competent and popular. Before he left for China today, he claimed: “We have Iran very much under control. We’re either going to make a deal or they’re going to be decimated. One way or the other, we win.”

Mosheh Gains, Courtney Kube, and Monica Alba of NBC News reported today that if Trump decides to restart major combat operations against Iran, military leaders are considering renaming the operations with a new name, like “Operation Sledgehammer,” to suggest those operations would be different than the current “Epic Fury.” They argue that renaming the military operation would restart the clock of the 1973 War Powers Act that requires congressional authorization to continue it after sixty days, a deadline that ran out on May 1.

War Powers Act expert Brian Finucane, who was a lawyer for the State Department, commented: “Nope. Changing the name of the authorized war with Iran does not alter the application of the War Powers Resolution’s 60-day clock.”

In the meantime, there is no apparent movement toward opening the Strait of Hormuz, even as numbers released today by the Department of Labor show that inflation in April hit its highest level since 2023. Trump’s own intelligence agencies assessed earlier this year that Iran was not building a nuclear weapon and that Iran’s leader had not reauthorized the nuclear weapons program he suspended in 2003. An assessment from the Defense Intelligence Agency said that Iran would not be able to reach the U.S. with an intercontinental ballistic missile until 2035.

Nonetheless, the administration and its supporters appear to have settled on the idea that the cost of the war has been worthwhile because the U.S. was under imminent threat of nuclear attack by Iran. When a reporter asked Trump today, before he left for China, to what extent Americans’ financial situation is motivating him to make a deal with Iran, he answered:

“Not even a little bit. The only thing that matters when I’m talking about Iran—they can’t have a nuclear weapon. I don’t think about Americans’ financial situation. I don’t think about anybody. I think about one thing—we cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon. That’s all.”

A CNN/SSRS poll released today shows that 70% of Americans disapprove of the way Trump is handling the economy.

Trump is, however, thinking about his own financial situation. Tonight Andrew Duehren and Alan Feuer of the *New York Times* reported that the Department of Justice is in talks to settle Trump’s \$10 billion lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service for damages after a contractor during Trump’s first term leaked tax information, including his, to the media.

The judge in the case has ordered Trump’s lawyers and the Department of Justice to file briefs by May 20 explaining why this is a true case in which the two sides are opposed when Trump both is the plaintiff and runs the agency that is the defendant. If they settle before then, the judge will not be able to say much about whether the case was valid in the first place.

Duehren and Feuer note that the Department of Justice has fought similar cases brought because of the leak, arguing that the government can’t be held liable for something a contractor does. The government settled a case with hedge fund billionaire Ken Griffin in 2024 by making a public apology.

The *New York Times* journalists report that one of the options for settling with Trump would be for the IRS to drop any audits of Trump, his family members, or his businesses. Since 1977, IRS policy has been to conduct a mandatory audit of the sitting president every year, although it failed to audit Trump’s taxes for his first two years in office during his first term. Clearly, he would like for it to fail to audit his taxes this time around as well.

The special treatment certain people enjoy in the U.S. that enables them to get around accountability was in the news earlier today, too, as the victims of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein testified before a panel made up of the Democrats on the House Oversight and Reform Committee. The top Democrat on the committee, Robert Garcia of California, began the day by introducing a new report called “The Price of Non-Prosecution.” It explained that the sweetheart deal U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida Alexander Acosta—later Trump’s secretary of labor—negotiated with Epstein to protect him from federal prosecution left him able to continue his sex-trafficking operation and to expand it.

The survivors recounted their anger and frustration when they discovered the federal government had made a secret deal with Epstein. One survivor, who identified herself as Roza, detailed how Epstein sexually assaulted her over three years when he was supposed to be serving a jail sentence. She broke down as she recounted how the Department of Justice under then-attorney general Pam Bondi continued that favoritism, exposing her name publicly while leaving the names of the perpetrators’ names redacted.

“I stepped forward along other survivors hoping those who allowed this to happen will be held accountable. I kept my identity protected as ‘Jane Doe.’ I woke up one day with my name mentioned over 500 times. While the rich and powerful remain protected by redaction, my name was exposed to the world. Now reporters from across the globe contact me. I cannot live without looking over my shoulder. I can only imagine the long-term impact this ‘mistake’ will have on my life.”

In Tennessee today, Tennessee House speaker Cameron Sexton removed all the House Democrats from standing committees, saying they had behaved in a way “aimed at disrupting the democratic and legislative processes” as they protested the mid-decade redistricting that broke up Tennessee’s only majority-Black, Democratic district. As Tennessee state representative Justin J. Pearson notes, this decree removed “every Black elected official in the state legislature from any committee we served on” and stripped “nearly 2 million Tennesseans from the representation they deserve” in the Tennessee state legislature.

“We will not stop fighting,” state representative Justin Jones posted. “We will not stop getting in good trouble. We will not go back!”

OPINION: Is There A Data Center Revolt Brewing In Nevada? It's Definitely A Reality Check.



By John L. Smith

As people start to question the price of the digital gold rush, there's hope for a safer, saner approach to the era of industrial AI.



Photo Illustration by Rodolfo Martinez/The Nevada Independent

They're small victories, the kind that are generally forgotten in a state hell-bent on development and careening toward the future.

But those who have been shouting for more transparency when it comes to the development of resource-consuming data centers in Nevada will take their victories where they find them.

They recently found them in Reno and Boulder City, cities at opposite ends of the state that share something in common

when it comes to citizen concern over the potential impact of artificial intelligence (AI) data centers. They are places where residents take great pride in their sense of community and quality of life. They're not opposed to change, but generally bristle at threats to livability.

After watching the Reno City Council move to [approve multiple data center projects](#) at a time when cities across the nation [are pushing back](#) against the digital gold rush, environmental activists and just plain neighbors repeatedly spoke up.

The council that had been swift to embrace the developments recently [called for a pause](#) to further study the issue. It's not a stretch to say members of the council felt the heat after approving earlier projects.

In Boulder City, the [Townsite Solar 2](#) data center project has drawn locals' attention and is at last making headlines. On May 20, the planning commission voted 6 to 1 against the Townsite Solar 2 data center project. Its recommendation for denial will complicate matters for the city council. ["People are definitely paying attention,"](#) a Townsite Solar 2 official told a reporter.

Most of the Nevadans I've spoken with aren't railing against technology. They're not Neanderthals or what I like to call "professional againsters." They're concerned about the [voracious energy and water consumption and the heat mitigation efforts](#) associated with the projects.

A [recent report](#) from NV Energy acknowledges that data centers will account for a majority of electricity consumption in the next two decades. And those who closely watch the industry know that companies are pursuing alternative energy sources to power their developments.

By now, I realize people have grown tired of me stating the obvious — that Nevada is the [driest state in the country](#). Courting industries that consume great amounts of water is controversial in other states — but a sign of insanity in this one.

It's no secret that Lake Mead is [at record low levels](#) and the Colorado River's Lower Basin states are [slashing their water allocation](#). Meanwhile, snowpacks from the Rocky Mountains to the Sierra Nevada [are depleted](#).

With all that in mind, you might think the state's political class would have data center development on the front burner in an election year. Water, after all, crosses all party lines. You don't have to scratch far to find anxiety on the issue from Democrats and Republicans alike.

I've found the relative silence from candidates on the topic intriguing and made it the subject of [last week's column](#). That resulted in responses ranging from detailed political explanations to giving me a good scolding for not crediting a candidate as a crusader on this issue.

Teresa Benitez-Thompson, a Democratic candidate for Nevada's 2nd Congressional District, says she gets a lot of questions about data centers on the campaign trail. She offered insights she gleaned from a dozen years in the state Legislature. It was during an economically tumultuous time that saw the state first embrace data center development and lavish the industry with handsome tax abatements and other inducements.

After underscoring that data center policy in Nevada is fundamentally a state issue, she says, "First and foremost, I believe the data centers need to be paying their own way in Nevada. There are laws that give abatements if an entity is considered to be part of an economic development plan. But as a legislator I found that a number of businesses were taking advantage of these tax abatements. So, I brought legislation to try to stem some of the abuses of the abatements that were being used. However, a number of the abatements are still in existence and really ought to be reconsidered."

Abatements that made sense during a recession are no longer a necessary incentive. "The market itself is providing an incentive that didn't exist in 2015 when a number of those tax abatements were set up. So, certainly, revisiting the sweetheart deal that they have makes a lot of sense."

The definition of a data center has changed, too. Where co-location centers (multiple companies renting servers on one site) once defined the developments, massive AI data centers present dramatic and immediate challenges.

"I don't think anyone in 2015 was anticipating AI to be where it is right now," Benitez-Thompson says. "We weren't envisioning AI as we think of it right now, and certainly there needs to be a new consideration for the laws with the current environment with contemporary AI in mind."

On the campaign trail, she has found "Many Nevadans feel that we've gone out of balance, and that this policy's out of whack. And so, it makes a lot of sense to revisit these processes, because nothing was really designed specifically for an AI conversation.

"I think we have to assure the public that we are looking at everything through this new AI lens."

Nevadans might not fully appreciate the complexities of data center development, but their concerns are valid. They need to be heard and respected at the highest levels of government — and soon.



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