

SPOTLIGHT on Our Coach Calvin Fletcher - p. 3

FREE

Overcoming the 'What-Ifs' - p. 4



Friday
October 23, 2026
Vol. 13, No. 8
ValleyWeeklyllc.com

SALUTE!
Rosetta James Foundation
ELDER OF THE WEEK



Ms. Lynne Berry



The Valley Weekly

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." — Proust



BULLDOG SPIRIT AAMU Opens New Shop

Alabama A&M University is giving Bulldog pride a new home with the recent opening of the Bulldog Spirit Shop, a retail destination featuring University apparel, accessories and memorabilia.

The University celebrated the shop's grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Tuesday, October 20, on the first floor of the Welcome Center.

Operated by Follett, which has managed AAMU's campus bookstore for more than a decade, the Bulldog Spirit Shop expands shopping options for students, faculty,

staff, alumni and fans. The shop serves as an extension of the main bookstore while offering merchandise unavailable at the original location.

Students also helped shape the shop's identity. Through a campuswide naming opportunity, students submitted suggestions that were reviewed by a committee of University administrators, which selected the winning name, Bulldog Spirit Shop.

The shop also provides employment and leadership opportunities for students.

The project was

developed through a partnership between Follett and the University's Office of Business and Finance, with support from Auxiliary Services.

The Bulldog Spirit Shop is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with Saturday and game-day shopping opportunities. Plans are also underway to introduce online shopping.

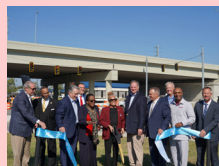
More than a place to purchase AAMU gear, the shop is designed to reflect the University's culture, traditions and the creativity of its students.

Mastin Lake Road Overpass Opens

The City of Huntsville, along with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Office of Gov. Kay Ivey, celebrated the opening of the Memorial Parkway overpass at Mastin Lake Road with a recent ribbon cutting ceremony.

The overpass is the latest project in a long-term commitment to upgrading Huntsville's transportation system through the Restore Our Roads partnership with ALDOT.

"What does this overpass mean for north Huntsville?" District 1 Council Member Michelle Watkins said. "In short, it means a lot ... And, it's a significant quality-of-life improvement not only for residents but for visitors as well."



Drake State, NAHA and Nexus Energy Center Complete Tiny Home Renovation Project

Drake State Community and Technical College, the North Alabama Homebuilding Academy (NAHA), and Nexus Energy Center have completed a model tiny home renovation project that provided workforce training for Drake State adult education students while creating a mobile resource for energy-efficiency education.

The project began with a collaboration between the Huntsville-based nonprofit Nexus Energy Center, which provided a \$12,000 grant to Drake State to support the renovation of a donated model home. During the summer semester, Drake State Adult Education students working toward industry credentials refurbished the home as part of the college's Advanced Carpentry program hosted by



NAHA. The project gave students hands-on experience in construction while contributing to a finished product that

will continue serving the community.

The tiny home will now serve as a mobile demonstration unit showcasing energy-efficiency practices. The unit

will be maintained by the North Alabama Homebuilding Academy and displayed at its facilities and community events throughout the region.

The Valley Weekly

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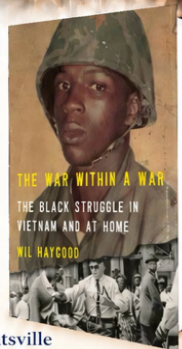
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Bestselling author of *The Butler*, Wil Haygood returns to Huntsville for a compelling and timely conversation about the extraordinary contributions and sacrifices of Black Americans who served in the Vietnam War while fighting for equality and civil rights at home.

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GENERAL DENNIS L. VIA (RET.)
 Former Commanding General,
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Huntsville City Council Meetings

Huntsville City Council's regular meetings are held on the 1st floor of the Municipal Building. The meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.



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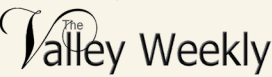
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From Club Kid to a Lifetime of Changing Lives ...

Coach Calvin Fletcher

Sometimes the greatest legacy is built in the very place that first gave you hope.

Born in Toney in 1969 and the youngest of 13 children, Calvin Fletcher grew up in Lincoln Park and began coming to what was then the Lane Boys Club when he was in the second grade. Long before it became part of the Boys & Girls Clubs of North Alabama, the Club was Calvin’s home away from home—a safe place to play, make friends, and find adults who cared about him. It was a place where he belonged.

At 13, Calvin participated in the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program, authorized under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and landed his first job at the Club as a gym assistant. He returned to work there every summer. After graduating from Lee High School, he enrolled at J.F. Drake State to study HVAC. But while attending Drake, Calvin was offered a full-time position at the Lane Club.

He accepted—and found his calling.



That was in 1990. Thirty-six years later, Calvin is still serving the young people of our community. He has served as Athletic Director and today is Club Director at Lane, where his commitment extends far beyond any job description.

During the summer, his days can begin around 5 a.m. as he prepares the Club for hundreds of children. The programs range from athletics and SMART Moves to healthy lifestyles, personal hygiene, peer-pressure prevention, life skills, money management, workforce development, leadership, STEM, robotics, and coding. Young people can participate in basketball, football, and baseball—and even activities such as line dancing and hair braiding.

But programs and buildings alone do not change lives. People do.

Calvin understands that perhaps better than anyone because he knows firsthand what it means for a young person to have a safe place and caring adults in his life. The Club gave something to Calvin as a child, and he has spent most of his adult life giving it back—many times over.

Over the years, he and his wife have opened not only their hearts, but also their home to young people who needed more than a coach. They have helped raise three children from the Club who were not their biological children.

One young woman particularly stands out. Raised by a single mother, she played sports at the Club. Calvin noticed that her mother was rarely able to attend her games, so he and his wife began picking her up and taking her to soccer. Eventually, while she was in high school and with her mother’s permission, she moved into their home.

Today, she is an Alabama A&M University graduate, has earned a master’s degree, and works for an engineering company in Florida.

That is impact. That is what caring for a child beyond the boundaries of a job looks like.

Calvin says children today see many things that do not always seem real to them. But Coach Calvin is real. They can see him. They can talk to him. They know where to find him.

He is the same man who can build his own car, cut grass as a part-time gig, and drive a school bus for Huntsville City Schools in the morning before continuing his work with young people. There is nothing fancy about his approach. He simply shows up—day after day, year after year.

And perhaps that is why, when he walks through Walmart or around Huntsville, former Club members and parents routinely stop him to say, “Thank you.”

They remember the coach. They remember the lessons. They remember the discipline, the encouragement, and the helping hand. But most importantly, they remember that somebody cared.

Calvin’s story reminds us why institutions like the Boys & Girls Clubs of North Alabama matter. Jimmy Lane, Loretta Spencer, Dick Fountain, Patrick Wynn, Frank Williams and others helped create and sustain a place where children could find opportunity, guidance, safety, and belonging.

Calvin was once one of those children. Then he grew up and became the adult waiting there for the next generation.

There is something beautifully full-circle about that. The little boy who walked into the Lane Boys Club looking for a safe place found much more than that. He found a community. He found people who invested in him. And ultimately, he found his life’s work.

When asked about the future, Calvin says he plans to remain involved with the Boys & Girls Club in some capacity for as long as his mind and body allow him.

After 36 years, thousands of children, and countless lives touched, I believe Coach Calvin Fletcher has already answered the question of what it means to make an impact and build a legacy.

His legacy walks the streets of Huntsville every day. It lives in the adults who once walked through the doors of the Lane Boys Club as children—and who, decades later, still stop Coach Calvin in Walmart, at the grocery store, or somewhere around town just to say, “Thank you for what you did for me.”

That is what happens when you do more than what you are paid to do. You invest in people. You change lives. And somewhere along the way, without necessarily setting out to do so, you build a legacy.

Coach Calvin Fletcher is Making Impact and Building Legacy—one child, one family, and one generation at a time. Until next week ...



Dorothy

Spiritual Game Plan

Valley Weekly
PRESTON BROWN'S



Today's Spiritual Game Plan: "Overcoming the What-Ifs"

Exodus 4:1, Moses says, "What if they don't believe me or listen to me?"

For many of us, it's not so much about what we have, it's more about how we use what we have. So many people have so much potential and do not know what they are capable of until God reveals it to them. And the way He reveals it to us is through our prayers and our circumstances. If we walk in faith, everything that we need is within our reach.

In Exodus 4:2, God asked Moses what was in his hand. Moses replied that it was a staff. So God is saying to Moses that he already has what he needs in his hand. All he needs to do is learn how to use it. When you begin to think that you don't have what you need, you will begin to believe it.

That's why we need to learn to speak life to our circumstances and our situations and start believing in the promises of God, which is, "I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

So, when people don't believe in you, believe in yourself. God was telling Moses, and all of us, to not let the what-ifs keep us from our destinies. Don't let the what-ifs keep you

from being all that God has called you to be and don't let the what-ifs keep you from your blessings from God.

Prayer: Dear God, give us the strength that we need to overcome the doubts and fears that we have.

Question: What are some doubts or fears that you have about yourself that are holding you back?

Stay encouraged, my brothers and sisters, and make sure you purchase a copy of my books, *Spiritual*

Game Plans for A Successful Life and A Champion Game Plan for Life, at amazon.com TODAY!

NEXT WEEK:

"From Hate to Hope"



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Funeral services for **MR. JEREMIAH CHANEY** (b. 1940); **MR. JOHNNY E. WHITE** (b. 1939); and **MRS. HATTIE SUE LOVE** (b. 1952) will be announced at a later date.

Funeral service for **MRS. SELENA SIMONS** (b. 1944) will be Sunday, October 25, at Oakwood University Church, 5500 Adventist Boulevard NE, Huntsville, Ala., at 1 p.m.

Funeral service for **MRS. JANICE ROBERTA STRONG WRIGHT** (b. 1956) was Saturday, October 17, at Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor C. Jermaine Turner officiating.

Funeral service for **MINISTER IRENE MOORE** (b. 1946) was Friday, October 16, at Pine Grove Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor C. Jermaine Turner officiating.

Funeral service for **MRS. MARY LOU SANDERFER HOUSTON** (b. 1935) was scheduled for Thursday, October 15, at Union Hill C. P. C. A. with Elder Jonathan Pickett officiating.

Funeral service for **MR. CHESTERFIELD DAVIDSON** (b. 1957) was Tuesday, October 13, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home.

Funeral service for **MRS. MELODY ABBOTT MALONE** (b. 1958) was Friday, October 9, at Union Chapel M.B. Church, 315 Winchester Road NE, Huntsville, Ala.

Public viewing for **MR. GEORGE W. SANDERS** (b. 1949) was Sunday, October 4, at Nelms Memorial Funeral Home.

Funeral service for **MR. PRINCETON CRU'SHUN AL-EXANDER** (b. 1991) was Saturday, October 3, at Syler Tabernacle, 904 Oakwood Avenue NW, Huntsville, Ala.

Funeral service for **MR. LEONARD WATKINS** (b. 1954) was Tuesday, September 29, at Nelms Memorial.

Funeral service for **MR. LEO TURNER, JR.** (b. 1934) was Monday, September 28, at First Missionary Baptist Church, 3509 Blue Spring Road NW, Huntsville, Ala., with eulogy by Pastor R. L. Turner of Destiny & Legacy Ministries, Birmingham, Ala.

Graveside service for **MS. LIELIA MORRIS** (b. 1964) was Sunday, September 27, at Big Cove Cemetery.

November 4: The Day That Matters

On January 20, 2009, I stood in Washington, D.C., with my daughter and her mother, witnessing history: Barack Obama's first inauguration as America's first Black president.

The atmosphere was electric. Millions celebrated an extraordinary milestone in American democracy.

However, . . .

But while Americans celebrated, Republican lawmakers and strategists gathered that evening at Washington's Caucus Room Restaurant, discussing how to challenge the incoming administration and regain political power.

They couldn't change the 2008 election. That history was fixed. But they were preparing to influence what happened next.

The past is permanent as an event, but not necessarily permanent as a pattern.

Now, as Americans approach the November 3, 2026, midterm elections, that distinction deserves renewed attention.

Political commentators are analyzing polls, campaign spending, voter dissatisfaction, and possible changes in congressional control.

But here's my question:

Are America's political leaders preparing for November 4 as diligently as they're campaigning for November 3?

I call this *The Discipline of the Day After* (T.D.O.T.D.A.).

Its premise is simple: Yesterday's victory doesn't guarantee tomorrow's success. Yesterday's defeat doesn't prohibit tomorrow's comeback.

Michael Jordan understood this. After winning NBA championships, he couldn't simply repeat yesterday's preparation and expect tomorrow's championship. His trainer, Tim Grover, emphasized looking ahead.

What's next?

That question should challenge both political parties.

If Democrats win, are they prepared to govern responsibly rather than merely celebrate?

If Republicans lose, will they examine their mistakes rather than assign blame?

And if the government remains divided, can both parties put public service ahead of partisan warfare?

Recently, my morning devotional reading introduced a profound observation from Oswald Chambers:

"Civilization is based on principles which imply that the passing moment is permanent."

Chambers reminds us that God alone is permanent. Yet we frequently treat temporary victories, defeats, and circumstances as though they determine our future.

They don't.

We cannot rewrite yesterday's history. But we can influence the history we're about to make.

Three leadership disciplines apply:

Don't worship yesterday's victory.

Don't waste yesterday's defeat. And

Don't despise today's opposition.

And here's the essential lesson:

The Discipline of the Day After begins before the day after arrives.

On November 3, Americans will make history at the ballot box.

On November 4, winners and losers must decide what to do with it.

November 3 will determine who wins. November 4 will begin revealing who's prepared to lead.



Tim Allston
Leadership Player-Coach and Four-time Amazon
Best-Selling Author, "Leading from the Middle"
Contact: (256) 212-0949 - <https://bit.ly/4aB9Lwm>
Email Address: leadingfromthemiddle.tim@gmail.com
Website: www.timallston.com

Millennial Moment

by Gloria B. Caldwell

What's Your Focus?

What have you set your eyes on? Whatever that is, it's your driving force. If it's material things, you will have a constant strive towards things that will steadily depreciate. This can bring temporary pleasure, but will not provide lasting happiness.

If it's relationship, you will continue to be a server of man. Relationships with others can be unpredictable and often dependent on the actions and responses of others. No matter how much effort you put into serving someone, their reactions and decisions are ultimately out of your control.

If it's money, this is something that can vanish in an instant. It is subject to economic fluctuations and can come and go with the changing tides of life.



Whatever it is ... health, wealth, attention, etc., understand you are not in control!

However, if you chase God, your life will take on its ultimate meaning. Focusing on God can release your purpose and fulfillment that no material possession or human

relationship can provide.

It is in this pursuit that you find true satisfaction and contentment. You will align yourself with His desires for your life. Your focus will shift to eternal values such as love, righteousness, forgiveness, and faith.

It is not always easy and requires self-discipline, sacrifice, and faith. However, the rewards far outweigh the challenges. When you set your eyes on God, you become more aware of His presence in your life. You experience His peace, joy, and love in ways that cannot be explained by material possessions or human relationships.

So, what is your focus?

What are you setting your eyes on?

Ask yourself.



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VALLEY EVENTS

HAPPENINGS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

October 21

Whiskey Women of Alabama
Rocket City Chapter
"Hoppy Halloween"
Innerspace Brewing Company
2414 Clinton Avenue W
Huntsville, Ala. | 5:30 p.m.

October 22

Boo Bash
Brahan Spring Recreation
Center (Free) | 5-7:30 p.m.

Women's Soccer vs.

Prairie View A&M

Alabama A&M University
3 p.m.

Women's Basketball

vs. Rust College
Alabama A&M University
The Event Center
5 p.m.

October 23

"Illuminating the Path to Excellence in Music Education"
The Bradford Scholarship

Foundation, Inc. Fundraising
and Awards Luncheon
Church Street CPCA Fellow-
ship Hall
228 Church Street NW
Huntsville, Ala. | 11 a.m.
bradfordscholarship.org

October 23-24

Billy Strings
The Orion Amphitheater
Huntsville, Ala. | 7:30 p.m.

October 24

Flea Market
436B Nick Fitchard Road
Huntsville, Ala.
10 a.m.-2 p.m. (Set Up: \$25)

The Links, Incorporated
"Rhythm & Blues Brunch and
Bling" | The Jackson Center
6001 Moquin Drive NW
Huntsville, Ala.

11 a.m.-2 p.m. (\$80)

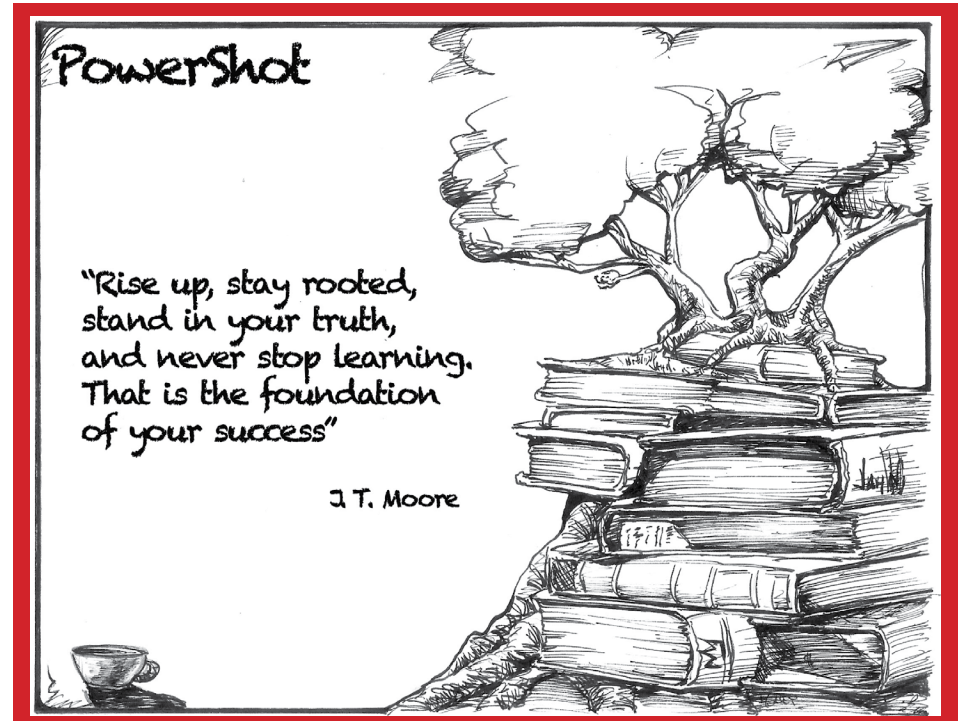
City Hangout
Cornerstone Word of Life

Church | 3783 Sullivan Street
Madison, Ala.
2-4 p.m.

Bulldog Men's Basketball
Detroit Mercy
Hoops & Culture Event

Exhibition Game at Wayne
State
Detroit, Michi. | 3:30 p.m.
Fall Family Trunk or Treat
Serenity Luxe Studio
10134 N. Memorial Parkway
Huntsville, Ala. | 5-7 p.m.

Rocket City Blues Festival
Propst Arena
Von Braun Center
Huntsville, Ala.
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ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3



Rosetta James Foundation "Spotlight on Our Elders" ... Featuring

Ms. Lynne Berry

Lynne Berry is a respected nonprofit executive, community leader, and philanthropy professional whose career spans more than four decades of service to North Alabama and the state of Alabama. Her work reflects a consistent commitment to strengthening communities through strategic fundraising, public service, historic preservation, education, and civic engagement.

Since 2019, Berry has served at the Huntsville Hospital Foundation, where she manages the Foundation's planned giving program. In this role, she works closely with supporters and their professional advisors to encourage estate gifts through wills, IRAs, charitable trusts, and other instruments—ensuring long-term sustainability for one of the region's most vital healthcare institutions. Concurrently, she serves as President of Berry Millsaps Properties, Millsaps Plaza, and J. T. Berry Farms, overseeing family-owned farms as well as commercial and residential rental properties.

Berry previously held senior leadership roles at the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, first as Director of Ex-

ternal Relations and later as Vice President for Advancement. There, she led transformational fundraising efforts, established planned giving initiatives, expanded the board of directors, and secured landmark gifts—including \$5 million for the Smith Family Clinic and \$10 million for the Propst Center. Under her leadership, fundraising revenue increased by 400 percent and the donor base grew by more than 50 percent.

She was also the Founding Executive Director of The Community Foundation of Huntsville/Madison County, where she built the organization from the ground up—establishing its first office, drafting governance and financial systems, and growing assets under management from zero to \$9.9 million while distributing \$2.2 million in charitable grants.

Berry's public service experience includes senior roles at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, service as a legislative assistant to U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions, district coordinator for Congressman Bud Cramer, and Executive Director of the Madison County Tourism Board. She began her career as an English teacher in the Madison County school system.

A graduate of Vanderbilt University with a Bachelor



of Arts in English, Berry remains deeply engaged in civic life. She currently serves on numerous boards, including Leadership Alabama (Emeritus), the Alabama Department of Archives and History Foundation, the Blackburn Institute at the University of Alabama, and the Huntsville Committee of 100, among others.

Her many honors include the 2024 Martin Luther King Unity Award, the Alabama Humanities Foundation Wayne Greenhaw Award, NASA's Exceptional Achievement Medal, and multiple leadership and community service recognitions—reflecting a lifetime dedicated to service, stewardship, and community advancement.



"Spotlight on Our Elders" is a weekly feature sponsored by the Rosetta James Foundation to promote volunteerism and activism in our community among those who are 70-plus. The Foundation also provides scholarships. Learn more about us at www.rosettajamesfoundation.org. Know an outstanding elder (70+) that you would like to see featured? Send us a photo and 250-word write-up to info@valleyweeklyllc.com.

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This Sunday's Lectionary

Sunday, October 25, 2026
Twenty-Second Sunday
After Pentecost



(Track 2, Year A)

First Lesson:

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

Psalm 1

Second Lesson:

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

GOSPEL:

Matthew 22:34-46

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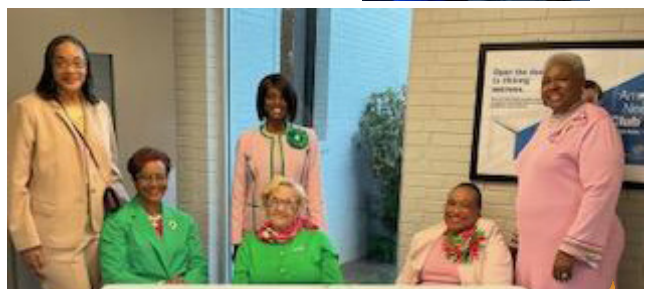
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AROUND TOWN

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State of the District Address | AAMU Homecoming Kickoff Reception
The Honorable Michelle Watkins - District 1 Councilwoman
October 14, 2026 | Photos by Dr. Dorothy W. Huston
Frank J. Williams Boys & Girls Club | Huntsville, Alabama





Here are the top issues and events in Washington, D.C., for this week:

1. CONGRESS. The House and Senate are in recess until November 9.

2. THE WHITE HOUSE. With 15 days until the Nov. 3 midterm elections, the President is launching a packed 7-day midterm campaign blitz this week across several states to support GOP candidates, Which started Monday in Wichita, KS; Tuesday in Greenville, NC; Wednesday in Clemson, SC; Thursday in Sioux City, IA; Friday in Fort Myers, FL; Saturday in Macon, GA;

and Sunday in St. Clair County, MI.

Last Friday, the President issued an executive order indefinitely postponing 100% tariffs on countries that buy Russian energy, which would have taken effect Sunday under the Lindsey Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act (signed by the President on Sept. 18).

The order to put a hold on the sanctions package comes after he announced a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin last week to release hundreds of thousands of tons of Russian diesel fuel onto

the global market.

3. SUPREME COURT. The Supreme Court has no oral arguments on its calendar this week and will next hear cases the week of Nov. 2.

On Nov. 3, the Court will hear the case of St. Mary Catholic Parish v. Roy, as to whether the State of Colorado rightfully excluded a Catholic preschool from the state's universal preschool program because it refuses to admit LGBTQ children and children with LGBTQ parents. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit rejected the preschool's argument. In its

view, the state's conditions were neutral and generally applied to every preschool, regardless of religion – the kind of government actions, the Supreme Court held in 1990 in Employment Division v. Smith, that normally do not violate the Constitution.

4. SEPTEMBER INFLATION REPORT. Last Wednesday, the Labor Department released the September Consumer Price Index (CPI) report, which showed consumer prices rose 0.6% in September, up from 0.4% the month prior, while annual headline inflation accelerated to 3.7% from 3.4%, exceeding the 3.6% economists had expected.

Core inflation, which excludes food and energy, rose to 2.6% year over year versus an expected 2.5%, and gas prices in September averaged \$4.33 a gallon — a record for the month. The hotter than expected reading puts an October rate hike by

the Federal Reserve back on the table after the Fed raised rates in September (the Fed next meets Oct. 27-28).

5. SOCIAL SECURITY COLA. The Social Security Administration announced on Wednesday that the 2027 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be 3.6%, the largest increase since 2023, when benefits rose 8.7%. The COLA was 3.2% in 2024, 2.5% in 2025, and 2.8% in 2026. The increase applies to Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for more than 76 million Americans and takes effect with benefits paid in January 2027. The estimated average monthly retirement benefit will rise to about \$2,163, up from \$2,088, an increase of roughly \$75.

6. EDUCATION GRANTS. Senate Appropriations Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

subcommittee ranking member Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) claimed in a letter to the Department of Education (ED) on Tuesday, October 13, that ED's changes to the administration of grant funding "[defied] congressional intent." Several ED grant programs "frontloaded" awards for FY26, providing several years of funding upfront while issuing fewer total grants. Ellen Keast, a spokesperson for the agency, acknowledged that the change continued the Trump administration's efforts to dismantle the Department. Senators Murray and Baldwin estimate that more than 1,000 additional education grants could have been funded if the Department had awarded funds normally.

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