

ON THE MOVE: HAMPTON ROADS MIGRATION INSIGHTS

Population growth is indicative of a healthy economy. A consistent rise in a region's population signifies that an area can retain and attract a strong workforce, which provides the ability to make new investments in the community and provide for sustained growth in the economy. However, both nationally and regionally, population growth has decelerated in recent decades. From 2010 to 2019, the population of Hampton Roads grew at an average annual rate of 0.3%, lagging behind the state (0.7%) and nation (0.7%).

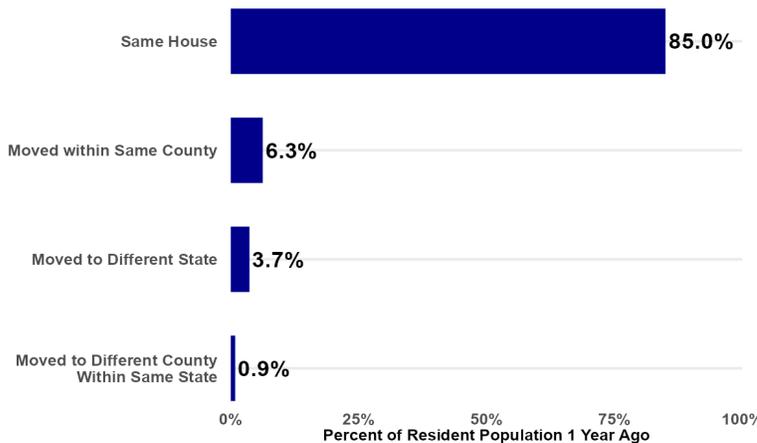
In our August article we discussed a significant driver of the region's slower population growth, negative net domestic migration. Over the last decade, Hampton Roads has consistently lost residents to net domestic out-migration, more people moving out than in over the year. To better understand domestic out-migration in the region, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, asks where respondents lived one year ago.

As illustrated in Graph 1, 85% of those who lived in the Hampton Roads metro area one year ago had not moved, the remaining 15% of residents changed their residence in the prior year. Approximately 6.3% moved to different house in the same county, 3.7% moved to a different state, and another 0.9% moved to a different county in the same state. The domestic out-migration of Hampton Roads residents stands out among metro areas with more than one million residents. Of the 54 metro areas with more than a million residents, Hampton Roads had the 3rd highest share residents who moved to a different state, and the 3rd highest share of residents who moved to different county in the same state. On the other hand, the region has the 46th highest share of residents who had moved within the same county.

Military personnel are an important factor in understanding the region's migration patterns. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2022 approximately 6.3% of the Hampton Roads MSA population 16 years and older was a member of the armed forces, more than 12 times the national average of 0.5%. If we examine where out-migrants are moving to, the role of the military in the region's migration patterns becomes apparent.

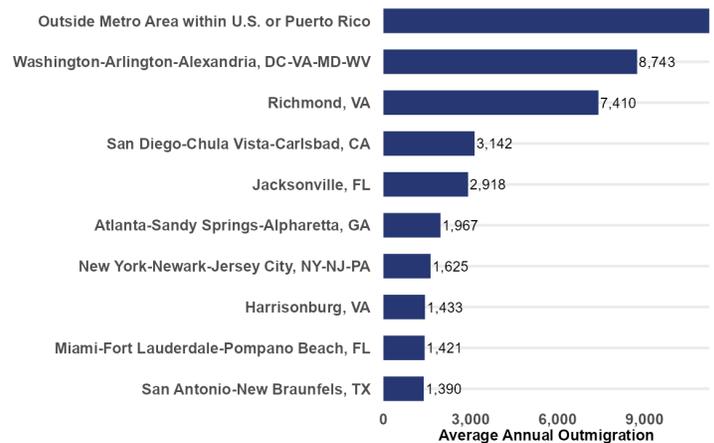
Graph 1: Residence One Year Ago

Hampton Roads MSA, 2021



Graph 2: Average Annual Migration out of Hampton Roads

Top 10 Destinations, 2020



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey ACS 5-Year 2017-2021, and ACS 5-Year Migration Flows 2016-2020.

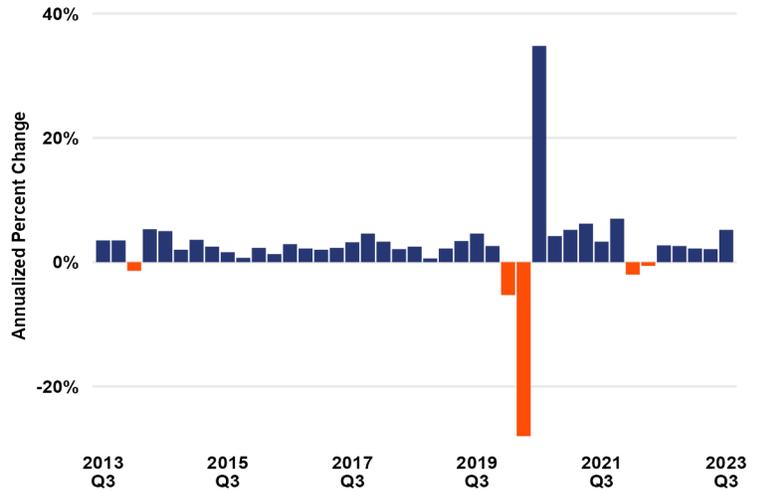
The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the average annual flow of migrants between geographic areas over a 5 year period. The latest 2020 estimates reflect the average annual migration flows between 2016 and 2020. As illustrated in Graph 2, several of the top destinations of former Hampton Roads residents, such as Washington D.C., San Diego, and Jacksonville FL, are also metro areas with a significant military presence.

In future articles, we will attempt to parse out the out-migration of military servicemembers from civilian out-migrants, examine historical trends, and dive into other socioeconomic characteristics of migrants moving in and out of Hampton Roads. Stay tuned!

GDP, ANNUALIZED GROWTH RATE (Q) SOURCE: BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, HRPDC

	Q3 2022	Q3 2023	Trend
United States	2.7%	5.2%	▲

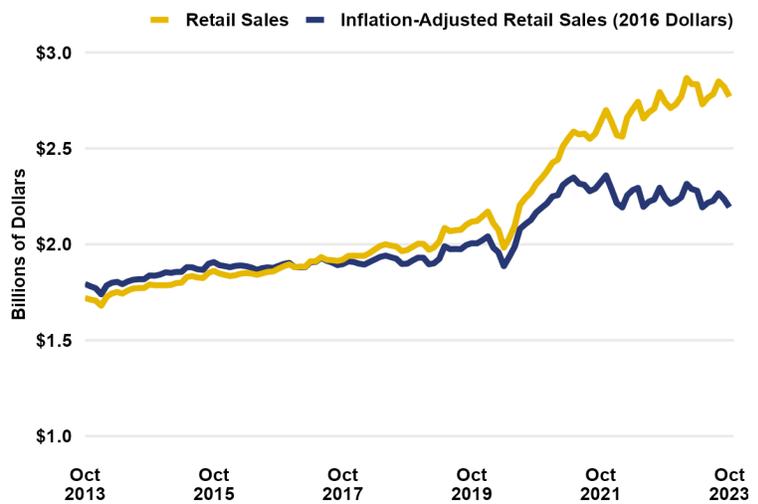
GDP: Gross Domestic Product combines consumption, investment, net exports, and government spending to determine the size and general health of the economy. Adjusted for inflation, GDP rose 5.2% in Q3 2023, the largest rate of growth since 2021. Personal consumption accounted for 2.44 percentage points of the 5.2% increase in Q3. Investment and Government spending contributed 1.82 and 0.94 percentage points respectively. Net exports accounted for a 0.04 percentage point decline in GDP.



RETAIL SALES, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (3 MONTH M.A) SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION, HRPDC

	Sep '23	Oct '23	Trend
Hampton Roads	\$2.82B	\$2.77B	▼
Virginia	\$15.33B	\$15.11B	▼

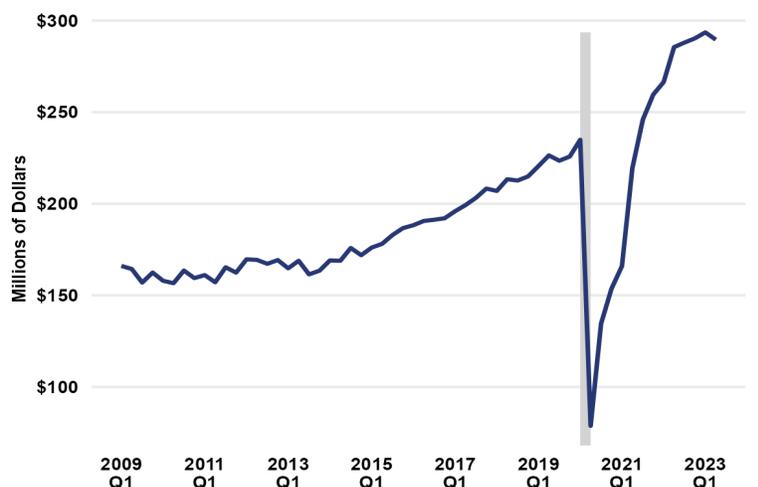
Retail Sales: Retail sales in Hampton Roads, as measured by the 1% local option sales tax, serve as an indicator for consumption in the region. When seasonally adjusted, October shows a decrease in sales. Unadjusted, October 2023 shows a 4.2% decrease from the previous month, and a 1.9% decrease from the previous year. The recent surge in inflation has contributed to the nominal growth in retail sales. Adjusted for inflation, the growth in retail sales has slowed since late 2021.



ESTIMATED HOTEL REVENUE, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (Q) SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION, HRPDC

	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Trend
Hampton Roads	\$286M	\$290M	▲
Virginia	\$1.0B	\$1.1B	▲

Estimated Hotel Revenue: Hotel sales indicate the performance of the region's tourism sector. When seasonally adjusted, Q2 2023 hotel revenues increased 1.4% from the previous year. Hotel revenues declined 1.4% from the previous month, the first month-over-month decline in more than a year. Despite early signs of a cooling, hotels revenues remain 27.9% above pre-pandemic levels observed in Q2 2019.

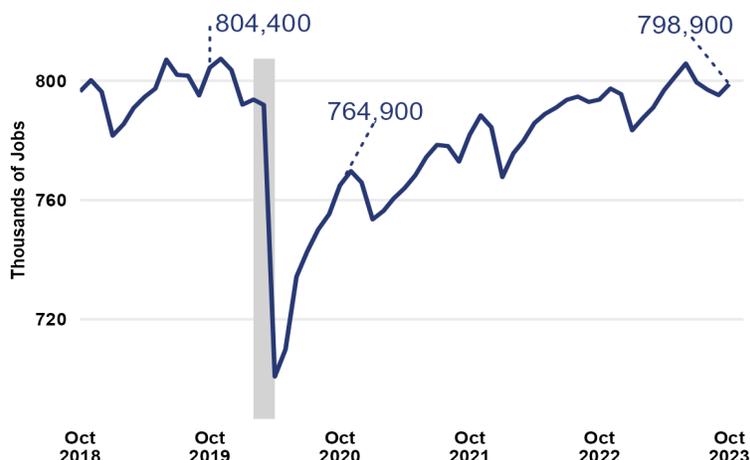


CIVILIAN PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT (M) SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, HRPDC

HISTORICAL TREND, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED



3-YEAR, NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED



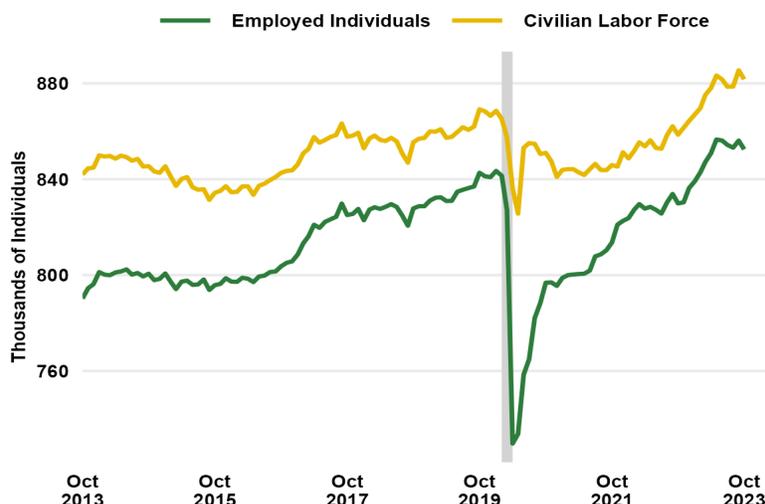
(seasonally adjusted)	Oct 2022	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	YoY % Change	MoM Trend
Hampton Roads	792,400	795,800	797,900	0.7%	▲
Virginia	4,106,100	4,164,500	4,164,500	1.4%	▲
United States	154,006,000	156,738,000	156,888,000	1.9%	▲

Employment: A leading indicator of labor market activity, the Bureau of Labor Statistics's payroll survey of businesses and government establishments measures the number of nonfarm civilian jobs. Seasonally adjusted, the number of jobs in October rose 0.3% from the previous month. This marks the second straight month of job growth in the region, a positive sign after three straight months of negative growth. For both the region and the nation, job growth in October slowed from the previous month. In the Commonwealth, the number of civilian jobs were relatively unchanged from the previous month. When seasonally adjusted, both the U.S. and Virginia have recovered all the jobs lost during the pandemic. Jobs in Hampton Roads remain 0.9% below the pre-pandemic peak observed in February 2020. Unadjusted, jobs in October 2023 remained 0.7% below levels observed in October 2019.

LABOR FORCE, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (M) SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, HRPDC

	Labor Force	Emp	Unemp	LF Trend
Sep 2023	885,450	856,117	30,087	▼
Oct 2023	881,679	852,450	30,039	

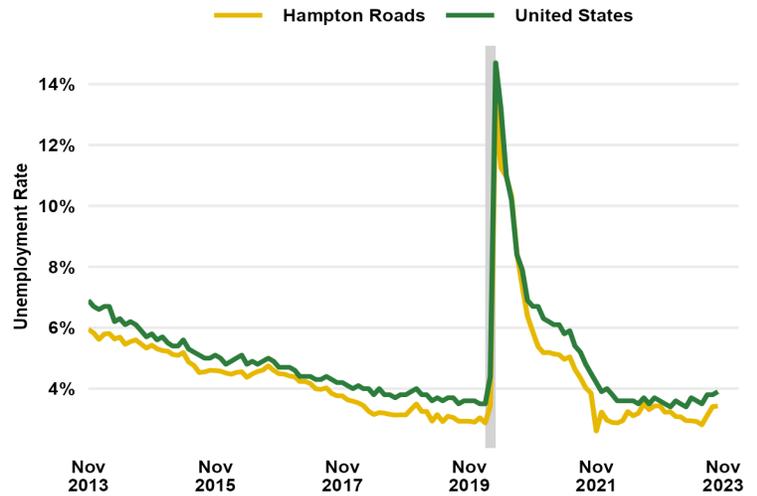
Labor Force: The Bureau of Labor Statistic's household survey measures the employment status of the civilian population 16 years and older. An area's labor force is comprised of the number of people working (employed) and those actively seeking work (unemployed). Seasonally adjusted, the Hampton Roads labor force decreased 0.4% in October from the previous month. A decline in the labor force combined with a slowdown in job growth in October may be an early sign the labor market is beginning to cool.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (M) SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, HRPDC

	Oct '22	Sep '23	Oct '23	Trend
Hampton Roads	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%	▼
Virginia	3.1%	2.5%	2.7%	▲
United States	3.7%	3.8%	3.9%	▲

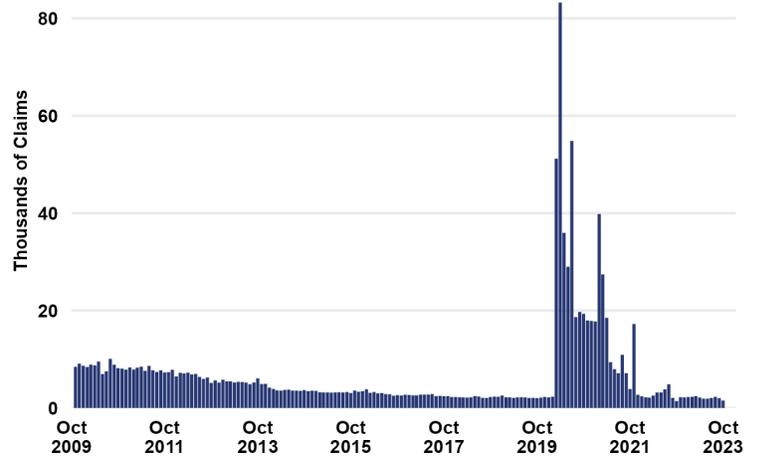
Unemployment Rate: The unemployment rate reflects the percentage of the labor force actively seeking work but unable to obtain a position. In October 2023, the Hampton Roads unemployment rate remained unchanged from the previous month at 3.4%. The region's unemployment rate remains at historically low levels, but is slightly above pre-pandemic levels observed in February 2020.



INITIAL UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (M) SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPT OF LABOR, HRPDC

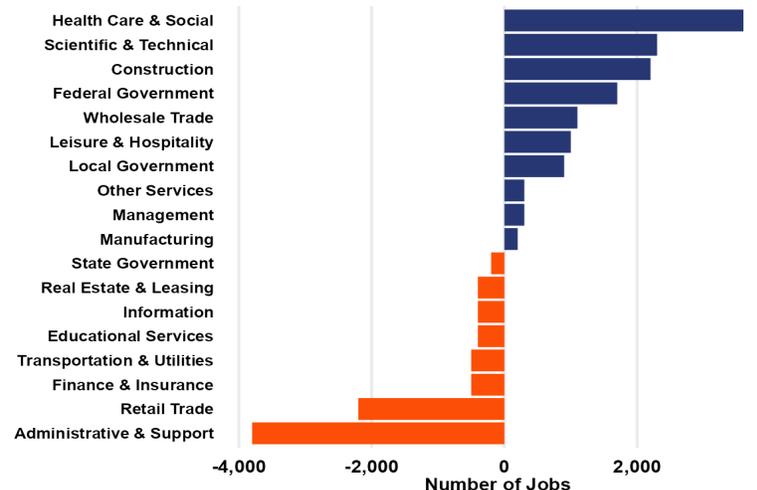
	Sep '23	Oct '23	Trend
Hampton Roads	2,022	1,525	▼
Virginia	9,507	8,003	▼

Initial Unemployment Claims: The number of initial unemployment claims is a leading economic indicator reflecting those who are forced to leave work unexpectedly, thus revealing the strength of the job market with little lag time. In October 2023, the number of initial claims filed for unemployment decreased from the previous month. October marks the second straight month of declining initial claims for unemployment insurance, a signal the region's labor market remains tight.



JOB GROWTH BY INDUSTRY (OCT, YEAR-OVER-YEAR) SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, HRPDC

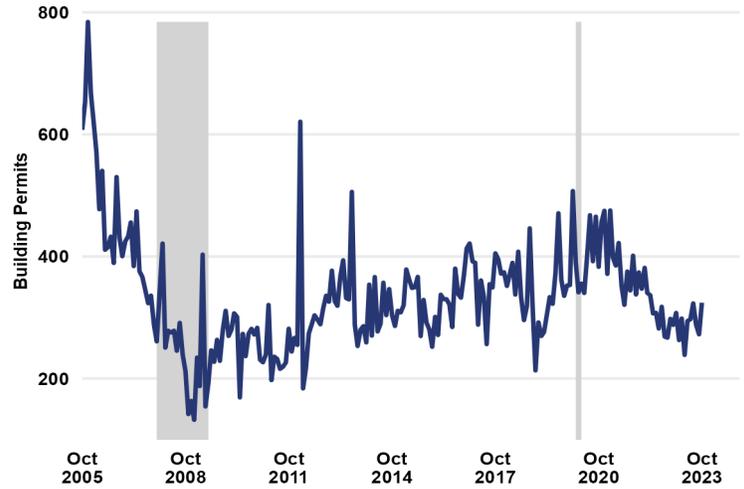
Civilian Job Growth by Industry: As the job market grows or contracts, there will be some industries whose experience does not resemble the regional trend. In October, more than half of industries experienced an increase in payroll employment (jobs) compared to October 2022. The largest gains were in Healthcare and Social Assistance, which added 3,600 jobs when compared to October 2022. Scientific & Technical (+2,300) and Construction (+2,200) recorded the second and third largest gains. The Administrative & Support industry was down 3,800 jobs year over year, followed by Retail Trade (-2,200) and the Finance and Insurance (-500) sectors.



SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING PERMITS, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (M) SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, HRPDC

	Oct '22	Sep '23	Oct '23	Trend
Hampton Roads	267	272	324	▲

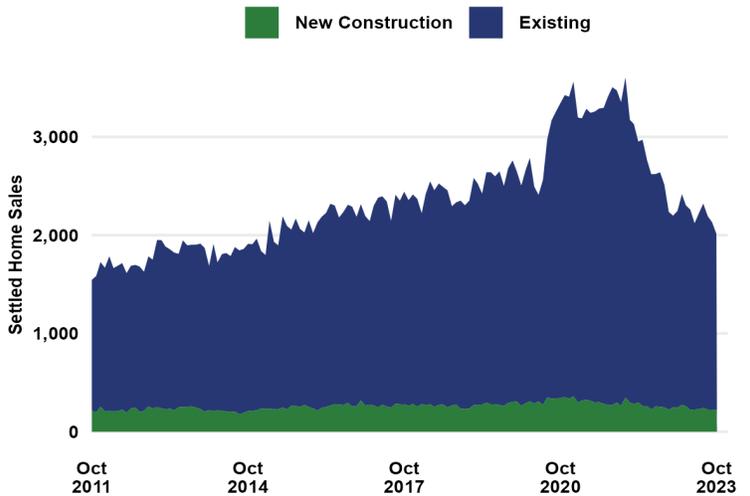
Single Family Housing Permits: Permit data signals the level of construction employment and confidence regarding the future trajectory of the local economy. When seasonally adjusted, there were 324 new construction permits issued for single family homes in October 2023, a 19.1% increase from the previous month. The number of permits issued in October were % below the pre-pandemic levels observed in February 2020. A higher interest rate environment will continue to pose challenges to this indicator in the short term.



NUMBER OF HOMES SOLD, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED (M) SOURCE: REIN, HRPDC

	Oct '22	Sep '23	Oct '23	Trend
Hampton Roads	2,515	2,131	2,016	▼

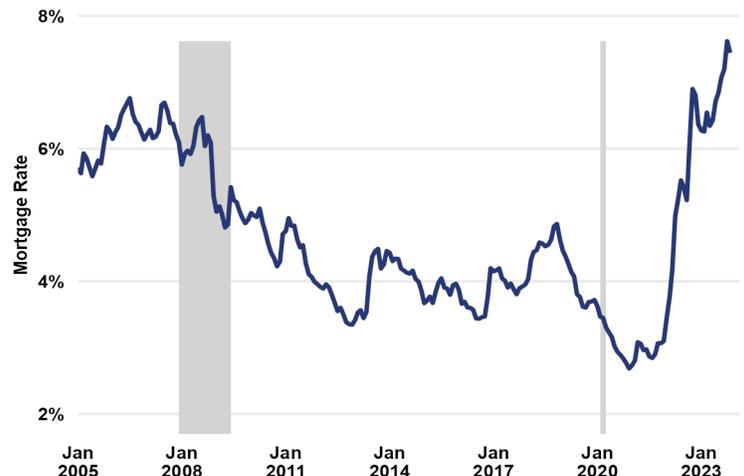
Home Sales: Settled home sales measure the level of transactions in the real estate market over time, and a healthy real estate market should have a consistent level of activity. Seasonally adjusted, total settled home sales totaled 2,016 in October, a decrease of 5.4% from the previous month. New home sales, representing 10.3% of total sales, fell 0.6% from September. The sale of existing homes, the remaining 89.7% of total home sales, fell 6.1% month-over-month. Compared to the same month last year, total sales in October had decreased 19.8%.



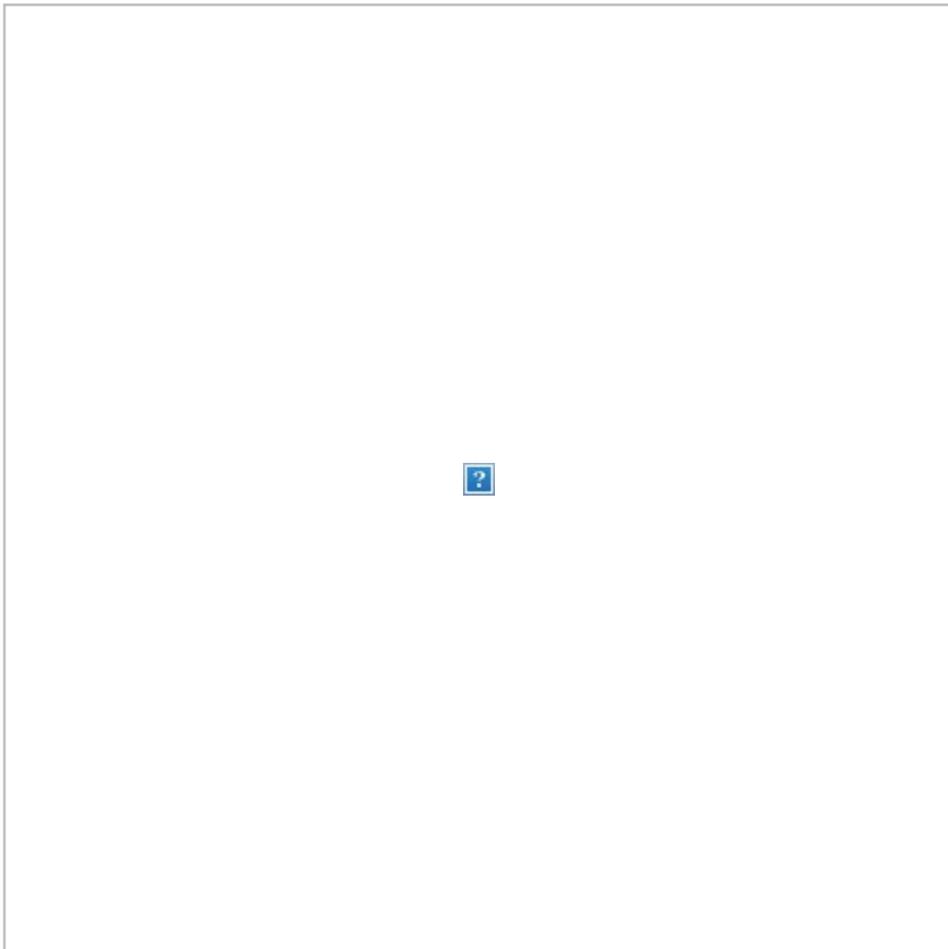
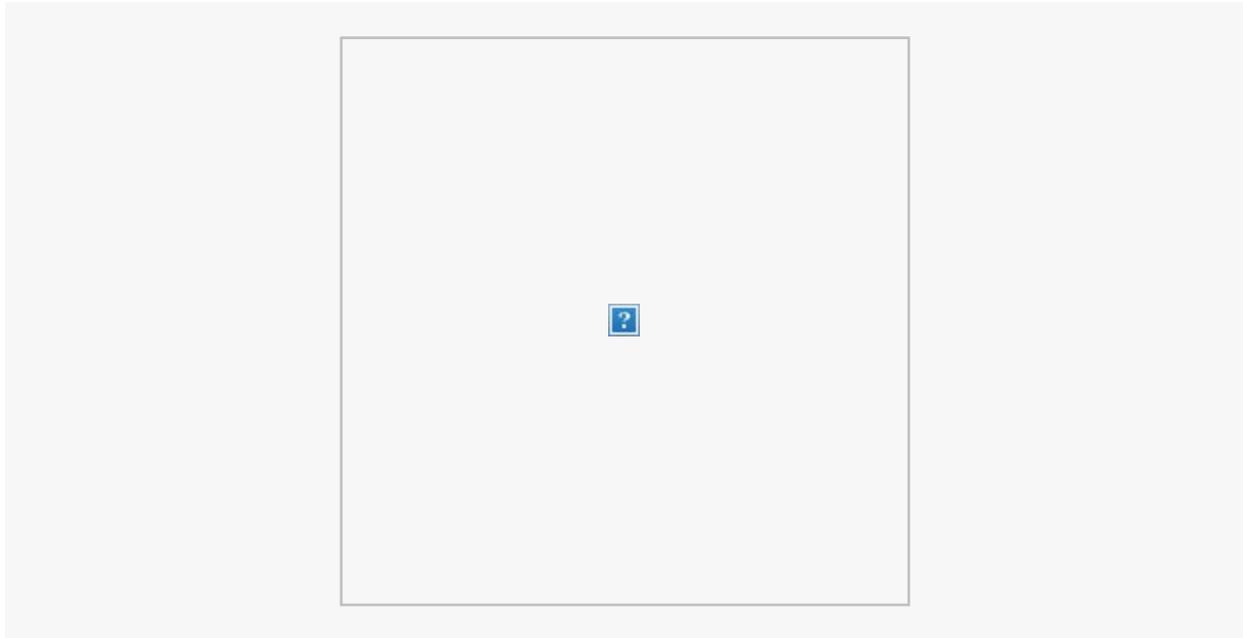
30-YEAR FIXED RATE MORTGAGE AVERAGE (M) SOURCE: FREDDIE MAC, HRPDC

	Nov '22	Oct '23	Nov '23	Trend
United States	6.8%	7.6%	7.4%	▲

30-Year Mortgage Rate: The 30-year fixed-rate mortgage represents the average interest rate paid by borrowers on newly issued mortgage loans, and these rates typically fluctuate in tandem with interest rate cycles. Shifts in the cost of borrowing for housing have a substantial influence on housing market trends. The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage rate has surged, rising by more than four percentage points over the last two years. The decline in November marks the first month-over-month decrease in the mortgage rate since April.



From: [The Roosevelt Group](#)
To: [Schott, Heather](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Executive Insight Brief
Date: Friday, February 2, 2024 7:59:42 AM



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Headlines - Aerospace & Defense - Budget & Economy - Advanced Tech - Military Installations & Communities - Homeland Security - Transportation & Infrastructure - Biotech & Healthcare - Climate & Development

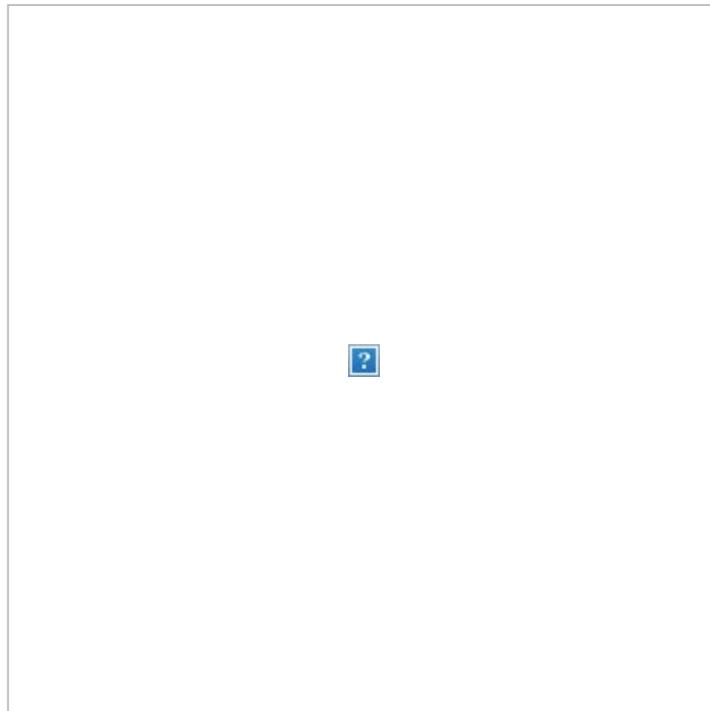
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Worth reading: [DOD Launches Distributed Bioindustrial Manufacturing Program to Bolster Domestic Supply Chains](#)

View From The Hill



The U.S. House of Representatives [passed](#) a massive, bipartisan tax bill this week that seeks to expand the child tax credit for low income families and enhance three tax cuts for businesses. The \$79 billion proposal passed the House by a large margin, [357-70](#), while Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) [secured](#) support of a number of Republican Members from New York by promising a standalone vote on state and local tax (SALT) deductions. If the

Senate also manages to pass the legislation, the tax breaks would be applicable to the current tax filling season for calendar year 2023.

In troubling [testimony](#) before the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, top cybersecurity agency leaders from the FBI, NSA, and CISA warned lawmakers that Beijing has been systematically hacking American critical infrastructure, including water, electric, and telecommunications utilities. The officials testified that China could use its cyber offensive capabilities to cause real-world disruption and threats to public safety in response to any broader conflict involving the two countries, specifically in relation to conflict involving Taiwan. Americans could suffer interruptions in access to clean drinking water or power if such actions by the Chinese government proved successful.

The House Homeland Security Committee [passed](#) articles of impeachment for Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas related to the ongoing border crisis. If the articles pass the full House, which could happen as early as next week, Mayorkas would become just the second cabinet secretary to face impeachment in American history and the first in nearly 150 years. While this is happening, the Senate continues to finalize a border security framework amidst forceful opposition by many conservative House Members. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has indicated there may be a need to unlink border security legislation from the broader supplemental funding bill for aid to Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan. Inside the Beltway, there is a growing number of Republicans encouraged by outside conservative immigration groups opposed to any deal with the Biden Administration. This stems from concerns that alleviating the border crisis during an election year would provide a political win to President Biden's reelection chances at the expense of former President Trump.

Over in the Senate, the Judiciary Committee [held](#) a hearing on protecting children on social media platforms with the CEOs of Meta, TikTok, Snap, Discord, and X, formerly known as Twitter. The hearing included many powerful moments, as parents and families of young people harmed by social media held up photos of loved ones and signs outlining the damaging impact such platforms can have. Mark Zuckerberg and Evan Spiegel, the CEOs of Meta and Snap, respectively, went so far as to issue public apologies to families during the hearing, but avoided voicing support for legislation being considered in the Senate to strengthen protections for young people using their platforms.

A positive development in the government funding negotiations for fiscal year 2024 occurred this week when House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders announced they had reached agreement on "302(b) allocations," which serve as funding numbers for individual appropriations provisions. This key step allows Members and staff to finish writing funding legislation needed to avoid a partial government shutdown on March 1st. West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin announced that his wife, Gayle, was injured in a vehicle accident in Birmingham, Alabama, on Monday, as the vehicle she was traveling in was hit by another vehicle fleeing police. As of Thursday, she had been released from the hospital and was recovering back home in West Virginia.

Aerospace & Defense

[US arms exports hit record high in fiscal 2023 \(Reuters\)](#)

2023 was a strong year for sales of US military equipment as they rose 16% to a record \$238 billion. The continued conflict in eastern Europe can be pointed as a reason for these record numbers. Many countries looked to replenish their stocks after sending a lot of

equipment to Ukraine, as well as prepare for potential major conflicts ahead. Some big sales included “\$2.9 billion worth of AIM-120C-8 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM) to Germany, and National Advanced Surface to Air Missile Systems (NASAMS) to Ukraine.” RTX, formerly Raytheon, makes AMRAAM, and partners with Norway’s Kongsberg to produce NASAMS. Foreign governments can purchase arms through the US companies directly or through the Defense Department, and both require US government approval. In 2023, sales directly through US companies rose to \$157.5 billion and sales through the government rose to \$80.9 billion.

[Defense officials ask Congress for support with military pay, housing, but it will likely be years in the making](#)

[Cyberattacks on Guam could sap US forces in Indo-Pacific, Nakasone says \(DefenseNews\)](#)

With the increasing threat of successful Chinese cyberattacks, the leader of US Cyber Command offered a grave, but truthful sentiment, “attacks on critical infrastructure in Guam or other Indo-Pacific footholds could cripple US military capabilities in the region.” Guam is critical to US military infrastructure as it is used as a “logistics and munitions hub, as well as an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance node.” Given its proximity to mainland China many in Washington think Guam is where fighting could break out with Beijing. With cyberwarfare becoming a vital attack strategy an assault on networks would have a devastating effect on Guam’s distribution of electricity, water, food, and emergency responses. Gen. Paul Nakasone said this would impact options available for military commanders. In May 2023 a Chinese espionage group slipped past digital defenses in Guam showing the increasing likelihood this region would be a target.

Budget & Economy

[US Treasury to hold largest-ever bond auctions to plug budget deficit \(Financial Times\)](#)

In an effort to fill the budget deficit the US Treasury will “hold some of its largest-ever debt auctions in the coming three months.” On Wednesday they stated it would “increase the size of auctions at most maturities for the next three months, with two-year and five-year auctions hitting record sizes.” It plans for a five-year auction in April for \$70 billion. Even though the US has increased its borrowing recently the Treasury believes this to be the last increase in auctions for a while. In refunding auctions next week, Treasury will sell \$121 billion worth of debt, which is in line with expectations of dealers. Many investors have summed up this news well, with the head of research, Americas at ING, Padhraic Garvey saying, “the good news is the projection that issuance has broadly peaked...the issuance story is still scary, but no more increases is a silver lining.”

[EU agrees \\$54 billion in new aid for Ukraine as Hungary falls in line](#)

[Supplemental vote expected next week, but path to passage fraught \(Roll Call\)](#)

After the Senate returns from the weekend they will begin to debate a defense supplemental combined with immigration policy changes, but it is not smooth sailing

ahead. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) said the text will be released as early as Feb. 2 and no later than Feb. 3. He will then file cloture on the motion to proceed to the supplemental bill on Monday, Feb. 5, setting up for the first procedural vote no later than Wednesday, Feb. 7. One roadblock Schumer faces is Senate Republicans not wanting to cut debate short. Many will want to air concerns surrounding the bill and potentially offer amendments. Senator Cornyn (R-TX) told reporters, “If Schumer tries to jam this in next week, I think that makes things a lot more complicated...and I think it creates a lot more jeopardy for the final product.” It appears many Republicans are finding various reasons to oppose the legislation adding another variable to its passage. Whether these concerns are legitimate or a potential way to void President Biden of a win are yet to be known. With the first stopgap spending bill deadline arriving in less than 30 days, a tax bill awaiting a vote, and a potential impeachment of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, the Senate will have a lot on its plate in February.

Advanced Technologies

[Elon Musk says Neuralink implanted wireless brain chip \(BBC\)](#)

If the world thought AI was the new scary technology coming down the pipelines, we may want to rethink that sentiment. Elon Musk has claimed his Neuralink company has successfully implanted one of its wireless brain chips in a human. He stated ‘promising’ brain activity was detected and the patient was ‘recovering well.’ The goal of Neuralink is to “connect human brains to computers to help tackle complex neurological conditions.” Several rival firms have already planted similar devices. Testing medical devices in humans is a significant step for any company, but its actual success can only be measured in the long term. Neuralink is not without its critics when in December 2022 the company “engaged in testing which killed 1,500 animals, including sheep, monkey, and pigs.” Neuralink was given FDA approval to test on humans in May 2023, and we will have to see what comes of this first human test.

[Missile defense interceptor competition enters critical design phase](#)

[White House official calls for investment in satellite servicing market \(DefenseNews\)](#)

A top National Space Council official is urging US agencies to start budgeting for on-orbit satellite refueling and servicing capabilities as a signal to industry that “they’re serious about pursuing new ways of operating in space.” The council’s head of commercial space policy, Diane Howard, has said the agencies and Space Force have articulated their interest in these capabilities well, but now they need to act. She said, “We need a clear demand signal from government users. We need to identify and prioritize resources, funding and personnel.” The ability to refuel or repair a satellite in space will have drastic impacts on how the military operates in that space. The amount of fuel on board is a driving factor in how freely a satellite can travel. Adding refueling ports and partnering with industry to service said satellites is a welcomed proposition. The Space Force is aiming to “demonstrate an on-orbit refueling capability” by 2026.

Military Installations & Communities

[How are male military spouses really doing? \(Military.com\)](#)

9.7%. That is the total percentage of male military spouses as of 2022. According to research from the Department of Defense and Blue Star Families these 10 percenters face unique challenges ranging from suicide to divorce. In 2022, males accounted for less than 15% of military spouses across the DoD, but accounted for 48% of spouse suicides. When it comes to divorce, female service members married to male civilians have the highest divorce rates in the military. Male spouses are speaking out on the isolation from being in a group outsiders don't expect to exist. Michael Franklin, an Air Force spouse and stay-at-home dad, said he can "count on one hand the number of times people in her unit, her squadron or chain of command, or anybody has called to check on me. And she's deployed three times. And two of those times were back-to-back deployments." He continued saying, "we all go through the same struggles...it just seems we're kind of expected to figure it out." The military has long been considered a "boy's club," but the spouse community can be seen as a "girls' club." Whether it's being denied from Facebook groups or hesitating to reach out to other spouses because of the affair rumor mill, it is clear more support for male military spouses is needed.

[Navy's Personnel Boss Argues Dropping High School Diploma Requirement Has 'Minimal' Risk](#)

[More than 46,000 homeless veterans placed in housing in 2023, setting a record for VA \(Military.com\)](#)

When it comes to tackling homelessness among veterans, 2023 was a historic year for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA placed 46,552 veterans in permanent housing last year, exceeding its goal to house 38,000 individuals. VA officials said they were able "to ensure nearly 96% of those who were housed in 2023 remained in their homes...and rehouse – or are in the process of helping – the 1,919 veterans who returned to homelessness after receiving housing." These numbers come as the VA received increased funding from Congress and partnered with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). According to HUD the number of veterans who experienced homelessness in 2023 rose by 7.4% from 35,574 last year. While homelessness among veterans is still a prevalent issue, the number of homeless veterans has fallen by "52% since 2010 when more than 76,000 were experiencing this hardship." These improvements indicate solving veteran homelessness is possible, but it will still be an uphill climb.

Homeland Security

[Expect 'AI versus AI' conflict soon, Pentagon cyber leader says \(Defense One\)](#)

Low-grade "AI versus AI" conflict in which artificial intelligence systems will be used by adversaries to carry out cyberattacks against the U.S. is likely in the near future, Jude Sunderbruch, the Defense Department's Cyber Crime Center (DC3) director said Thursday. He spoke at DefenseScoop's Google Defense Forum alongside Col. Richard Leach, the Defense Information Systems Agency's intelligence director. "I think we're really just at the start," Sunderbruch said, later adding that the U.S. and its allies will have to get creative and learn how to best use existing AI systems to gain a leg up on competing intelligence giants like China. AI and machine learning technologies have been frequently hailed as the next phase of cybersecurity, with researchers and officials saying they will heighten capabilities of both novice and nation-state hackers, as well as enable new ways

to carry out social engineering attacks and enhance hacking tools. In the near term, AI systems can be used for threat and vulnerability analysis, as well as system testing, said Sunderbruch. Defense's updated cybersecurity strategy released in September says the agency will study how to apply automated and AI-driven capabilities to U.S. cyberspace.

[Senate's border bill faces unexpected problem](#)

[China seeks to 'wreak havoc' by targeting US water, electricity \(The Hill\)](#)

FBI Director Christopher Wray warned of Chinese government efforts to jeopardize critical pieces of American infrastructure such as water treatment plants and electrical grids, calling on the country to prepare itself to fend off disruptive cyberattacks. "PRC hackers are targeting our critical infrastructure, our water treatment plants, our electrical grid, our oil and natural gas pipelines, our transportation systems, and the risk that poses to every American requires our attention now," Wray said at a hearing of the House's Select Committee on China, using an abbreviation for the People's Republic of China. "China's hackers are positioning on American infrastructure in preparation to wreak havoc and cause real-world harm to American citizens and communities," he added. "They're not focused just on political and military targets, we can see from where they position themselves across civilian infrastructure that low blows aren't just a possibility in the event of conflict — low blows against civilians are part of China's plan." Wray's remarks came during a broader hearing on China's cyber risk to American security, highlighting that the PRC's cyber threat extends far beyond seeking intellectual property by targeting physical infrastructure Americans rely on every day.

Transportation & Infrastructure

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces More Than \\$240 Million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding to Modernize Airports in 37 States \(DOT\)](#)

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will award \$243.7 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Airport Infrastructure Grants (AIG) under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The \$243.7 million includes 150 grants in 37 states to modernize airport infrastructure, improve runway safety, and create jobs to build a better America. "We saw a record number of passengers fly during the recent holiday season, and we can expect increased demand for air travel to continue," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "These investments from the Biden-Harris administration are making it possible to modernize our country's aging airport infrastructure to meet this demand today and ensure safe, efficient travel into the future." Over the last decade, funding inconsistencies have delayed the ability to modernize technology and infrastructure that support the airspace. These awards, made possible by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, are helping reverse that trend to ensure that American air travel remains the safest and most efficient in the world.

[Early testing suggests highway guardrails not built for heavy EVs](#)

[House T&I Presses White House to Safeguard Supply Chain \(Transport Topics\)](#)

House transportation policymakers renewed calls for the Biden administration to enhance

its response to growing supply chain concerns. Members of the chamber's supply chain caucus recently pressed top administration officials to continue to address ongoing attacks credited with disrupting international shipping routes. "While the Biden administration has taken action to confront these attacks, violence and disruption persists," Reps. David Rouzer (R-N.C.), Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.), Colin Allred (D-Texas) and Angie Craig (D-Minn.) wrote to the secretaries of State, Defense and Transportation on Jan. 30. "Approximately 20% of all container shipping passes through the Red Sea and Suez Canal, making any disruptions in that region of particular concern to shippers and customers alike," the lawmakers went on. "Rerouting ships also results in lengthier shipping times — 10 days of travel time on average — further exacerbating delays." At issue for the lawmakers are Iran-backed Houthi militants linked to aggression and attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea. For a couple of weeks, U.S.-led airstrikes have targeted the Houthis, whose leadership explained its attacks respond to military conflicts in the region.

Biotechnology & Healthcare

[The challenge for Medicare drug negotiators: How to value a medicine's benefits \(Axios\)](#)

New Medicare drug pricing negotiations, which kick into high gear Thursday, for the first time will allow the federal government to tie a medicine's price to how well it works compared with similar treatments. Other countries already make these kind of value assessments, but it's a fundamental shift for the U.S. government to wade into a process that involves making challenging — and sometimes politically sensitive — calculations about how to value the benefits drugs provide. Medicare on Thursday will send its initial offers to the manufacturers of the 10 drugs it selected for price negotiations last fall, a key milestone in the implementation of Democrats' new drug pricing law. It sets off a monthslong back-and-forth with drugmakers before final prices are revealed in September — all while the industry fiercely contests the negotiations in court. "For the first time in history, Medicare is making offers on the fair price for ten of the most widely used and expensive drugs. Medicare is no longer taking whatever prices for these drugs that the pharmaceutical companies demand," President Biden said in a statement.

[Drug price negotiations, legal battles set to ramp up](#)

[Washington state faces first outbreak of a deadly fungal infection that's on the rise in the U.S. \(NBC News\)](#)

Four people in Washington state have tested positive this month for a rare fungal infection that can be deadly. It's the state's first known outbreak of the fungus, called *Candida auris*, according to Seattle and King County health officials, though one locally acquired case was detected there in July. The cluster comes as *Candida auris* continues to spread in the U.S. case numbers have risen every year since 2016. The pathogen is resistant to some common antifungal medications, and it tends to infect people with weakened immune systems. It's often detected among hospital patients who use catheters, breathing tubes or feeding tubes. All four people in Washington who tested positive were patients at Kindred Hospital Seattle First Hill, a long-term acute care hospital. None have died, the public health department for Seattle and King County told NBC News. The department announced Tuesday that it was notified of the first case on Jan. 10. The patient had recently been admitted to Kindred Hospital and was tested for *Candida auris* through a

routine screening program that aims to identify infections before symptoms develop.

Climate & Development

[Podesta to replace Kerry as top climate diplomat \(The Hill\)](#)

White House adviser John Podesta will replace John Kerry as the nation's lead climate diplomat, the White House announced on Wednesday. "We need to keep meeting the gravity of this moment, and there is no one better than John Podesta to make sure we do," White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients, in a written statement shared with reporters. Podesta will remain at the White House and will get the title of senior advisor to the president for international climate policy. In that role, he will lead the Biden administration's international climate policy agenda and will coordinate with other officials at the State Department. In addition, Podesta will continue to also oversee the implementation of climate and energy provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act, the Democrats' 2022 climate, tax and healthcare law. Podesta's move toward climate diplomacy follows John Kerry's recent announcement that he would depart from his role as climate envoy to work on the 2024 campaign.

[Environmentalists See Nevada Supreme Court Ruling Bringing State's Water Management 'Into the 21st Century'](#)

[U.S. Will Pay to Add Solar Panels to Hospitals, Schools After Disasters \(NYT\)](#)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will begin paying to install solar panels on schools, hospitals and other public buildings that are rebuilt after disasters, making them more resilient against future disasters while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The change, set to be announced on Tuesday, reflects the disaster agency's decision to use federal dollars to expand renewable energy as it copes with worsening climate shocks. The number of billion-dollar weather disasters keeps rising, straining the country's ability to respond, as well as the ability of local officials to keep offering basic services to residents. "If you're installing solar panels, you are creating more energy independence," Deanne Criswell, FEMA's administrator, said in an interview. The change comes amid major shifts in America's response to disasters. Insurers are withdrawing from high-risk areas. People are donating directly to survivors through the crowdfunding platform GoFundMe, although that money largely benefits the wealthy. FEMA is overhauling its programs to help individual disaster survivors, after acknowledging that the current programs often fail to provide adequate support.

Next Week's Hearings

Armed Service Committee:

House: None listed

Senate: None listed

Appropriations Committee:

House: None listed

Senate: None listed

Homeland Security Committee:

House: None listed

Senate: Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 3:30pm EST: "[Foreign influence in the United States: Reviewing Boston Consulting Group, McKinsey & Company, M. Klein and Company, and Teneo's Compliance with Congressional Subpoenas](#)"



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