

US politics live

Security for State of Union speech is 'precarious', House Democrat warns – live

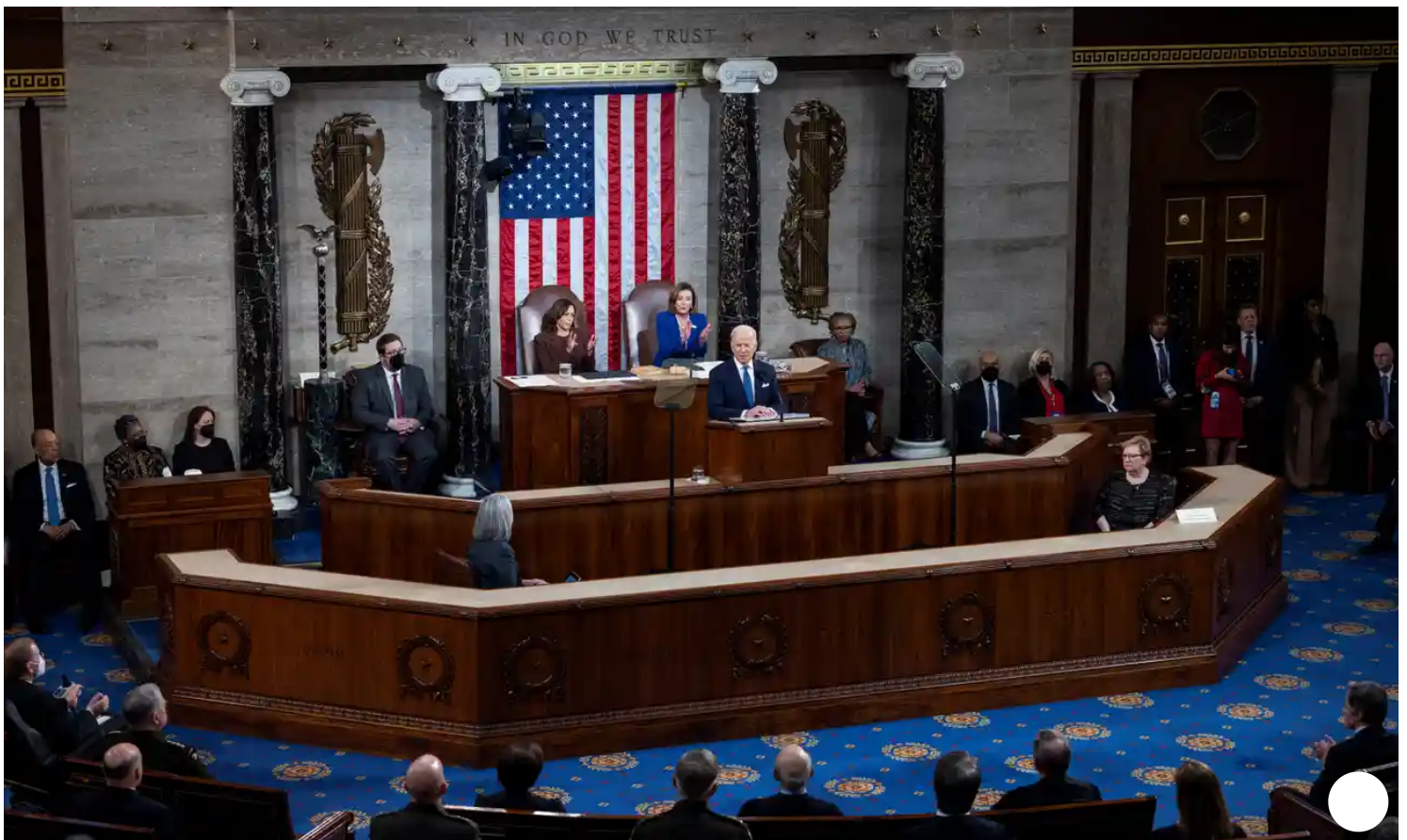
Jared Huffman circulates letter highlighting security concerns at Capitol, where Republicans now control House

[Sign up to receive First Thing - our daily briefing by email](#)

Chris Stein in Washington

@ChrisJStein

Wed 1 Feb 2023 12.47 EST



Live feed

From 1h ago

12.04 EST

Democrat warns of 'precarious' House security ahead of State of the Union speech

A Democratic representative is circulating a letter to congressional leadership warning that the security of the House is “precarious”, and asking what steps they

will take to protect the chamber during the 7 February State of the Union address.

California's **Jared Huffman** blamed new rules passed under the House's Republican leaders for worsening the security situation, and in his letter cited as evidence "the violent insurrection of January 6, an attempt by a Member of Congress to bring a concealed weapon on to the House Floor, other Members vowing to do so in contravention of House rules. and most recently a colleague distributing what

Show more

Key events

16m ago

Justice department concludes search of Biden residence: lawyer

1h ago

Democrat warns of 'precarious' House security ahead of State of the Union speech

3h ago

Justice department searching Biden's Delaware home in documents investigation

4h ago

Biden, McCarthy to meet as debt ceiling imperils economy



Show key events only

16m ago 12.47 EST

Justice department concludes search of Biden residence: lawyer

The justice department has concluded its search of **Joe Biden**'s home on Delaware's coast, and while it found no classified material, agents did take away some documents for further review, an attorney for the president said.

"The DOJ's planned search of the President's Rehoboth residences, conducted in coordination and cooperation with the President's attorneys, has concluded. The search was conducted from 8:30 AM to noon. No documents with classified markings were found," **Bob Bauer**, who is acting as a personal lawyer for Biden, said in a statement.

"Consistent with the process in Wilmington, the DOJ took for further review some materials and handwritten notes that appear to relate to his time as Vice President."



41m ago 12.22 EST

Democrats are expressing safety concerns in the House natural resources committee after **Republicans proposed rules that exclude a ban on firearms in hearing rooms, which existed in the previous Congress.**

Here's how the debate started, according to NBC News:

Haley Talbot 

@haleytalbotnbc · [Follow](#)



The Committee on Natural Resources is meeting NOW to organize and vote on their rules...

Some fireworks expected: GOP side is pushing to ALLOW FIREARMS in hearing rooms and we are told DEMS will loudly object

10:33 AM · Feb 1, 2023



[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)



36



Reply



Share

Jared Huffman, the Democratic lawmaker who is also circulating a letter questioning security in the House ahead of next week's State of the Union speech, has proposed an amendment to reinstate the ban:

Haley Talbot @haleytalbotnbc · [Follow](#)

Happening NOW

[@RepHuffman](#): "my amendment explicitly prohibits carrying or having readily available any firearm dangerous weapon explosive or incendiary device within the hearing rooms and conference rooms of this committee"

Haley Talbot  @haleytalbotnbc

The Committee on Natural Resources is meeting NOW to organize and vote on their rules...

Some fireworks expected: GOP side is pushing to ALLOW FIREARMS in hearing rooms and we are told DEMS will loudly object

11:45 AM · Feb 1, 2023

[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

27



Reply



Share

[Read 2 replies](#)

Several far-right lawmakers serve on the committee, including **Lauren Boebert**. In the hearing, she harkens back to a time when Huffman donned a tinfoil hat to mock her:



She then gets into her reasoning for wanting to carry a gun in the Capitol, a building where access is controlled at all hours by a large police force:

Haley Talbot @haleytalbotnbc · [Follow](#)

Replying to @haleytalbotnbc

BOEBERT: "With threats now at an all time high I would like to remind the gentleman that now's not the time to be stripping members of our constitutional right to defend ourselves. DC has a violent crime problem and it's often wondered 50% higher than the national average."

11:53 AM · Feb 1, 2023



8



Reply



Share

[Read 2 replies](#)

1h ago 12.04 EST

Democrat warns of 'precarious' House security ahead of State of the Union speech

A Democratic representative is circulating a letter to congressional leadership warning that the security of the House is “precarious”, and asking what steps they will take to protect the chamber during the 7 February State of the Union address.

California’s **Jared Huffman** blamed new rules passed under the House’s Republican leaders for worsening the security situation, and in his letter cited as evidence “the violent insurrection of January 6, an attempt by a Member of Congress to bring a concealed weapon on to the House Floor, other Members vowing to do so in contravention of House rules, and most recently a colleague distributing what appeared to be legitimate, and later revealed to be inert hand grenades on the House Floor.

“We know from experience that the House is vulnerable to multiple fronts of attacks both from inside and outside Congress,” wrote Huffman. “Considering the ability of Members of Congress to carry firearms in the Capitol complex outside the House Floor, removal of magnetometers from the entrances to the House Floor, and with record threats against the lives of Members of Congress, the security of the House complex is today precarious.”

Addressed to the Democratic and Republican leaders of the House and Senate, Huffman's letter requests "information on what steps you are taking, in coordination with the House and Senate sergeant at arms, Secret Service, and other federal agencies to protect the president, vice-president, the diplomatic corps, cabinet secretaries, supreme court justices, senators, representatives, and their guests ahead of the State of the Union address on 7 February 2023. Any attack on this gathering would threaten our democracy and undermine the functionality of the entire federal government."

Huffman is circulating the letter to lawmakers interested in signing it, and plans to send it to leadership this evening, his office said.



Updated at 12.07 EST

Support the Guardian

The Guardian's editorial independence has never been more important. No one sets our agenda, or edits our editor, so we can deliver high-impact, trustworthy journalism each and every day. Free from commercial or political influence, we can report fearlessly on world events and challenge those in power.

And because we believe in information equality, we keep Guardian journalism open for everyone to read, regardless of their ability to pay for it. No matter how unpredictable the future feels, we will continue to provide quality reporting so we can all make decisions about our lives, health and security - based on fact, not fiction.

Support the Guardian from as little as \$1 - it only takes a minute. Thank you.

Show your support →

Remind me in March

VISA



1h ago 11.41 EST

Monmouth University has new polling out on the classified documents scandal, which finds voters are more inclined to give Joe Biden and Mike Pence the benefit of the doubt when it comes to the government secrets that turned up at their properties than they are Donald Trump.

According to the survey, 50% think Pence knew there were documents in his Indiana home, while 58% believe Biden was aware of the secrets that have turned up in his

Delaware residence and former office in Washington DC.

Voters were much less charitable to Trump when it comes to whether he knew about the secrets discovered at Mar-a-Lago. The survey says 80% believe he did.

A familiar partisan split emerges among voters as they consider the seriousness of the discoveries, Monmouth finds:

■ ■ Somewhat more Democrats (91%) than Republicans (72%) believe Trump was aware of the presence of classified documents at his home, while many more Republicans (79%) than Democrats (39%) believe Biden was aware. When it comes to being very concerned about the national security implications of these documents, the partisan splits are similar for Trump (62% of Democrats and just 14% of Republicans) and Biden (62% of Republicans and just 20% of Democrats).

“Obviously, we don’t know exactly what was contained in any of these classified documents. But partisans are already inclined to believe that the other party’s guy took more sensitive information than their own guy,” said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.



2h ago 11.19 EST

Meanwhile in the Senate, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are frustrated that they have not been briefed on the national security implications of all the classified documents that have turned up in [Joe Biden](#), Donald Trump and Mike Pence’s hands.

The sentiment expressed by Democrat **Jon Tester** today, according to NBC News, is a common one:

[.@SenatorTester](#) on Biden classified docs: First priority is to "make sure that they don't put this country at risk."

"The Intel Committee at a minimum should know what's in those documents – not just Biden's documents but Pence's documents, Trump's documents, any document."

– Sahil Kapur (@sahilkapur) [February 1, 2023](#)

[According to CBS News](#), the justice department is working to arrange a briefing for senators on the documents case, after a previous effort fell through last September.



2h ago 11.01 EST

The House judiciary committee got to work today for the first time since **Republicans took control, but had barely started its business before squabbling began.**

The catalyst was an amendment proposed by rightwing Republican lawmaker **Matt Gaetz** to start each meeting with the pledge of allegiance. Democratic representative **David Cicilline** then floated tweaking the amendment's language so that people "who supported an insurrection" shall not lead the pledge - a reference to lawmakers like Gaetz who have cast doubt on the outcome of the 2020 election. Thus began a lengthy back-and-forth, which Gaetz seized on to attack Democrats:

I just introduced an amendment in the House Judiciary Committee to recite the Pledge of Allegiance before every meeting.

This is common sense. Why does patriotism make Democrats so heated?

pic.twitter.com/Jl8E67vQdp

– Rep. Matt Gaetz (@RepMattGaetz) [February 1, 2023](#)

Ultimately, Cicilline lost:

/6 The Cicilline amendment is defeated 24-13

– John Bresnahan (@bresreports) [February 1, 2023](#)

And Gaetz won:

/7 The Gaetz amendment has passed unanimously, 39-0. The Judiciary Cmte will now say the Pledge of Allegiance before cmte hearings

– John Bresnahan (@bresreports) [February 1, 2023](#)



2h ago 10.38 EST

Last month, attorney general Merrick Garland appointed a special counsel to investigate how several batches of classified documents were found at locations linked to [Joe Biden](#).

As the FBI searches the president's home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, listen back to Jonathan Freedland's conversation with **Ankush Khardori**, who worked in the justice department from 2016 to 2020, about what the outcome to this investigation may be:

Politics Weekly America

Confidential files found with Biden's Corvette – Politics Weekly America podcast



00:00:00

00:23:59



3h ago 10.22 EST

Vice-President Kamala Harris will today attend the funeral of Tyre Nichols in Memphis, whose beating death has led to murder charges against five police officers:

Kamala Harris, the US vice-president, will attend the funeral of Tyre Nichols, the black man who died three days after Memphis police officers savagely beat him following a traffic stop earlier this month, the White House has said.

Nichols will be eulogised by the Rev Al Sharpton at a service at Mississippi Boulevard christian church in [Memphis](#) on Wednesday morning. Family members of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, who were killed in 2020 by police in Louisville, Kentucky, and Minneapolis, will also attend.

Meanwhile, the Shelby county district attorney, Steve Mulroy, said on Tuesday that prosecutors could bring further criminal charges against police officers and others in connection with Nichols's fatal beating, after [mounting criticism](#) over how Mulroy's office and the Memphis police department have handled the case.



Updated at 10.25 EST

3h ago 10.05 EST

As with the searches of Joe Biden's Wilmington, Delaware, home and former office in Washington DC, CBS News reports the ongoing search of his Rehoboth Beach

property was consensual, and no warrant was sought:

NEW from [@AndyTriay](#) [@AdrianaDiaz](#) [@ArdenFarhi](#): 2 sources familiar tell [@CBSNews](#) [@FBI](#) personnel are at [@POTUS](#) Biden's Rehoboth Beach home. 1 source says search is in relation to classified documents probe. 3rd source says it's a consensual, planned search and no warrant was sought

– Ed O'Keefe (@edokeefe) [February 1, 2023](#)

Today also happens to be **Robert Hur**'s first day in the office. Hur is the special counsel appointed by attorney general **Merrick Garland** to handle the investigation into Biden's possession of classified documents. CBS reports that the justice department, as usual, has nothing new to say about that:

Per [@RobLegare](#): [@TheJusticeDept](#) declines to comment on the ongoing [@FBI](#) probe. Today is Special Counsel Robert Hur's first day on the job with DOJ. Here's his official web site, in line with other special counsels: <https://t.co/XlrueBs3gb>

– Ed O'Keefe (@edokeefe) [February 1, 2023](#)



Updated at 10.07 EST

3h ago 09.46 EST

Justice department searching Biden's Delaware home in documents investigation

Federal agents are searching **Joe Biden**'s Rehoboth Beach, Delaware home as part of the investigation into his possession of classified documents, his personal attorney says.

"Today, with the President's full support and cooperation, the DOJ is conducting a planned search of his home in Rehoboth, Delaware," **Bob Bauer** said in a statement. "Under DOJ's standard procedures, in the interests of operational security and integrity, it sought to do this work without advance public notice, and we agreed to cooperate. The search today is a further step in a thorough and timely DOJ process we will continue to fully support and facilitate. We will have further information at the conclusion of today's search."

Last month, Biden allowed agents to conduct an unprecedented search of his home in Wilmington, Delaware, one of two locations where secret materials had earlier

been found. He also consented in November to the FBI searching a former office he used in Washington DC, where the documents were first discovered.

All told, between 25 and 30 classified documents dating to Biden's time as senator and vice-president have been found by both the FBI and Biden's aides at the Wilmington and Washington DC properties. Biden's attorneys also searched the home in Rehoboth Beach, where he often vacations or spends weekends, but found no documents. It is not known to have been previously searched by the FBI.



Updated at 09.47 EST

4h ago 09.30 EST

The spotlight in the House has indeed shifted to Republicans and their slim control of the chamber, but that does not mean progressive Democrats have thrown in the towel. The Guardian's [Joan E Greve](#) spoke to one of their most notable lawmakers, Mark Pocan, about what, if anything, he thinks they can get done over the next two years:

Democrats may not control the House of Representatives anymore, but congressman Mark Pocan is not giving up on his legislative agenda. Pocan, a [Wisconsin](#) Democrat and the former co-chair of the congressional progressive caucus (CPC), instead focuses on playing “the long game” of policymaking.

Pocan's commitment to promoting progressive policies will be on display Wednesday, as he reintroduces the Save Medicare Act. The congressman points to his advocacy for the legislation as just one example of how progressives can keep advancing their ideals in a Republican-controlled House and ensure that [Democrats](#) will be ready to act when they regain full control of Congress.

“I've been in local, state and federal government. Each time, you can impact more people's lives, but it takes exponentially longer to get things done,” Pocan told the Guardian. “You're always in the long game.”



4h ago 09.11 EST

The meeting between Joe Biden and [Kevin McCarthy](#) isn't that big of a deal. No, really: just listen to what the White House is telling the press.

“First meeting of a hundred to follow,” a White House official [told Politico](#). A more succinct description from the same person: “boring”.

The Biden administration yesterday laid out its demands for McCarthy with a memo that asked two questions:

Will the Speaker commit to the bedrock principle that the United States will never default on its financial obligations ...?

When will Speaker McCarthy and House Republicans release their Budget?

McCarthy has already answered the first question, saying he will not allow a default **in a CBS News interview last Sunday**. The budget is an outstanding question, and one Biden and the Democrats will surely seize on to cast the GOP as making vague demands in a negotiation with uniquely high stakes.

As for McCarthy, he has cast just getting the president to sit down with him as a victory, since Biden says he won't negotiate over increasing the debt ceiling and demanded Republicans raise it without preconditions. But the Republican speaker is intent on bargaining, saying Washington needs to reduce its spending. He hasn't said what cuts he will demand, though **has ruled out** going after the Social Security and Medicare benefit programs.

"I'd rather sit down with the president, and let's have those discussions," McCarthy said on CBS. "The one thing I do know is, we cannot continue the waste that is happening."



4h ago 08.49 EST

Biden, McCarthy to meet as debt ceiling imperils economy

Good morning, US politics blog readers. This afternoon, **Joe Biden** will hold his first meeting with **Kevin McCarthy** since the California Republican was elected speaker of the **House of Representatives**, and the stakes couldn't be higher. The two men will need to agree on a way to raise the US government's borrowing limit in the next five months or so, otherwise Washington could default on its debt payments for the first time in history, with potentially cataclysmic economic consequences. That said, the White House is telling reporters not to expect too much from their encounter scheduled for 3.15pm eastern time - the two men will meet many times in the months to come.

Here's what else we can expect today:

Kamala Harris is heading to Memphis to attend the funeral of **Tyre Nichols**, whose beating death following a traffic stop has led to the indictment of five police officers on murder charges. The funeral will begin at 10.30am central time, and the Guardian will have a live blog covering it.

The Republican-led House judiciary and oversight committees will hold their first hearings today. Oversight will investigate fraud in Covid-19 aid programs, while judiciary will look into the more touchy subject of border security.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre will brief reporters at 2pm eastern time.



Updated at 08.49 EST

Most viewed
