

Portland Press Herald

\$3.25
Saturday,
March 8, 2025

Cloudy, windy
High 32
Details, C6

pressherald.com

Social Security reverses course, will allow parents to register newborns at hospitals

The agency sparked an outcry with its directive that parents register at one of eight Maine offices rather than filling out a hospital form. Critics blasted the move as burdensome and inefficient.

By **JOE LAWLOR**
Portland Press Herald

The Social Security Administration reversed course Friday, rescinding a directive that required Maine parents of newborns to register their children at Social Security offices instead of filling out a form at the hospital.

The mandate was widely panned as being cumbersome, unfair and inefficient, and would have caused some parents to have to drive hours for an appointment to get a Social Security number for their child.

The directive also would have terminated electron-

ic filing of death records at funeral homes.

Acting Social Security Administration Commissioner Lee Dudek issued a public apology letter Friday, less than one day after the change was first reported by the Press Herald and Lewiston Sun Journal. The letter indicates

Maine was the only state affected, but it does not include any explanation for the abrupt decision to end the decades old registration process, or for the sudden reversal.

"I recently directed Social Security employees to end two contracts which affected the good people of

the state of Maine," Dudek wrote.

"In retrospect, I realize that ending these contracts created an undue burden on the people of Maine, which was not the intent. For that, I apologize and have directed that both contracts be immediately reinstated. (Both birth and death contracts) continue

Please see **BIRTHS**, Page A6

“ I recently directed Social Security employees to end two contracts which affected the good people of the state of Maine. In retrospect, I realize that ending these contracts created an undue burden ... which was not the intent. **”**

LEE DUDEK / Social Security Administration acting commissioner

Gun safety advocates get red flag proposal on fall ballot

The law would offer a way for family or household members, in addition to police, to petition a court to temporarily confiscate someone's weapons.

By **RACHEL OHM**
Portland Press Herald

A proposal for a red flag law that would make it easier to remove weapons from people considered a threat to themselves or others has qualified for the November ballot.

The Maine Department of the Secretary of State announced Friday that gun safety advocates gathered the required number of signatures from voters to send their proposal to a statewide referendum.

If approved, a red flag law, also known as an extreme risk protection order, would provide a pathway for family or household members, in addition to law enforcement,

to petition a court to temporarily remove someone's weapons.

And unlike Maine's current yellow flag law, the proposal would eliminate the need for a mental health evaluation before a judge can order the temporary confiscation of weapons.

The Maine Gun Safety Coalition launched the effort to get a proposal for a red flag law on a statewide ballot after the Maine Legislature failed to act on a red flag bill last year in the wake of the mass

Please see **BALLOT**, Page A6

ENTER SANDPEOPLE



Katelyn DeWater, a senior at the University of New England, plants dune grass on a beach in Biddeford Pool on Friday. UNE students worked with the Biddeford Pool Land Trust to replant dune grass that was wiped out during coastal storms in January 2024. Students and land trust members planted 1,000 new stalks of grass over four days.

Gregory Rec/Portland Press Herald

Judge orders state to drop charges, release some from jail amid long waits for lawyers

In April, Maine must begin releasing those who have gone more than two weeks without legal representation, and prosecutors will drop charges for those waiting more than two months.

By **EMILY ALLEN**
Portland Press Herald

Maine will start releasing people from jail in April if they have waited more than two weeks for a lawyer, a judge ruled Friday.

Additionally, charges other than murder will be dropped against anyone who has waited more than two months for a lawyer. Those charges

could be brought again once an attorney is available.

These unprecedented remedies were ordered by Superior Court Justice Michaela Murphy after she recently found that the state has violated the constitutional rights of hundreds of criminal defendants

Please see **DEFENSE**, Page A3



Ben McCanna/Portland Press Herald

Superior Court Justice Michaela Murphy has said the state is violating criminal defendants' constitutional right to an attorney.

Wood renowned: Furniture maker Thomas Moser dies at 90

He founded Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers in 1972 out of a garage in New Gloucester and went on to create furniture for popes and presidents.

By **DANIEL KOOL**
Portland Press Herald

Thomas Francis Moser, the Maine-based craftsman known for the elegant wooden furniture that bore his name, died Wednesday, his family announced Friday. He was 90.

Moser founded Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers in 1972 out of a garage in New Gloucester, his family said.

Today, Thos. Moser employs more than 60 craftspeople in its Auburn workshop, where it has been headquartered since 1987, the company said. In January, the Moser family

sold the company to Portland-based Chenmark holding company, said CEO Philip Hussey, who took over at that time.

"This happened with Tom's blessing, in that he wanted to find a way to make sure that Thos. Moser could continue on for the next 50 years," Hussey said in a phone call Friday night.

The company's work, which has included a lectern for former President Bill Clinton and ceremonial seating for Pope Benedict XVI's 2008 White House vis-

Please see **MOSER**, Page A6



Doug Jones/Portland Press Herald

Thomas Moser issued five signed coffee tables to mark his company's 35th anniversary in 2007. All five, listed for \$10,000 apiece, sold in three weeks.

INDEX

- Advice/TV.....C4
- Business.....C1
- Classified.....C5
- Comics/Crossword.....C3
- Deaths.....B3-4
- Local & State.....B1
- Lottery.....A2
- Opinion.....A4
- Sports.....D1
- Sudoku.....C4
- Varsity Maine.....D1

SPRING FORWARD
Set clocks ahead one hour Sunday morning

Volume 163 Number 220

PPH DAILY



0 5
Copyright 2025
Maine Trust for Local News