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The People's Hour

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- [Washington Times] U.S. total government debt tops $40 trillion for first time
https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2026/aug/19/us-total-government-debt-tops-40-trillion-first-time/
Why: This staggering national debt milestone directly impacts every taxpayer and future generations, highlighting fiscal irresponsibility in Washington.
- [Breitbart] Report: Biden-Released Illegal Alien Accused of Murdering Mother of 3-Year-Old
https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2026/08/19/report-biden-released-illegal-alien-accused-of-murdering-mother-of-3-year-old-in-virginia/
Why: A tragic consequence of lax immigration enforcement policies that puts American families at risk, fueling calls for stricter border control.
- [AP Top News] Trump picks Dr. Heidi Overton, a top White House aide, to lead the Food and Drug Administration
https://apnews.com/article/fda-donald-trump-heidi-overton-marty-makary-a54907d62a2482bd462410c0778266b9
Why: A major Trump administration move affecting drug approvals and healthcare policy, with implications for pharmaceutical costs and medical innovation.
- [Breitbart] Liberia Agrees to Take Deported Migrants from USA
https://www.breitbart.com/immigration/2026/08/19/liberia-agrees-to-take-deported-migrants-from-the-u-s-a/
Why: Signals progress on immigration enforcement and deportation efforts that resonate with voters concerned about border security and illegal immigration.
- [New York Post] America’s favorite vegetable under major threat of looming California droughts: new research
https://nypost.com/2026/08/19/lifestyle/us-broccoli-supply-under-major-threat-of-california-droughts-study/
Why: Shows how environmental policies and climate issues directly impact grocery prices and food security for working families across the country.

PRODUCTION CUE

> [STING — markford_open.mp3]

02 — COLD OPEN (DATE SLATE + ROADMAP)

Good evening, America. Tonight is Wednesday, August nineteenth, two thousand twenty-six, and we have a full hour ahead. But before I go into to nights craziness, I want to send a big shout out to my good friend Dr. Thomas White. He is a little under the weather and has been hangin out at the Local V.A. Hospital. We all here are hoping ya start feeling more chipper Tommy. Your an American Soldier buddy. So lets do what we do the best. Get up,, Kick that Shit in the balls,, and soldier threw it. Hoooooo RAAAAAAAA!!!! Now lets get down to it. First, a horrific murder in Texas exposes the deadly consequences of failed border policies. A mother of two was brutally killed by an illegal alien who was released into our country by the Biden administration.

This isn't just a tragedy—it's a direct result of catch-and-release policies that put criminal aliens back on our streets instead of deporting them. You'll hear the victim's story, the suspect's record, and why Washington refuses to fix this. Then, America's debt bomb just detonated. Total government debt has now passed forty trillion dollars. That's more than the entire economy produces in a year. Politicians keep spending like there's no tomorrow, but tomorrow always comes—and when it does, the bill lands on you. We'll break down who's responsible, what it means for your wallet, and whether there's any way out. After that, President Trump shakes up the FDA with his pick for commissioner—Dr. Heidi Overton. She's a reformer who wants to cut red tape and speed up drug approvals, but the left is already gearing up for a fight.

The FDA impacts every prescription, every medical device, every treatment you or your family might need. This nomination could change healthcare for years to come. And finally—your broccoli is in trouble. California's droughts are getting worse, and they supply over ninety percent

of America’s favorite vegetable. Prices are set to spike, farms are struggling, and Washington has no real plan to fix our water crisis. We’ll show you what’s happening, where your food really comes from, and what this means for your grocery bill. Stay with us. This is The People’s Hour, on The Mark Ford Show, right here on WRZF. We’ll be right back.

PRODUCTION CUE

> [COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

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04 — SEGMENT A: BORDER POLICY TRAGEDY

Let me tell you about Carmen Lizet Puch. A forty-two year old mother. A hard worker who moved from New Jersey to Virginia to build a better life for her three-year-old daughter. Her friends describe her as soft-spoken, caring, always asking how people were doing, always offering help without hesitation. Quote. "Her gentle spirit, kindness, and strong work ethic made a lasting impact on everyone around her." End quote. That's from the GoFundMe page set up after her murder. Now let me tell you about Alexis Antonio Cedillos-Campos. An illegal alien from El Salvador. According to Fairfax County police, early on the morning of August seventeenth - just two days ago - this man left his restaurant job armed with a knife, gloves, and a bottle of gasoline siphoned from his motorcycle. He met Carmen Puch at a park in Great Falls, Virginia - a woman he worked with at that same restaurant.

Police say he stabbed her to death. Then poured gasoline on her lifeless body. Then set her on fire. And here's what ties these two stories together: Alexis Antonio Cedillos-Campos shouldn't have been in America to commit this crime. Not just because he's an illegal alien - though he is. FOX Five DC reports he crossed the U.S.-Mexico border illegally in El Paso, Texas in April of twenty twenty-four. But because of the Biden administration's catch-and-release policies, after being apprehended by Border Patrol agents, he was

simply... released. Into the United States interior. This isn't theoretical policy failure. This is blood on the hands of an administration that decided to prioritize illegal border crossers over American citizens.

Carmen Puch's three-year-old daughter will grow up without a mother because the Biden administration looked the other way as a violent criminal walked free in our country. Police say Cedillos-Campos made a full confession. No ambiguity here. No question of guilt. He admitted to the brutal murder of a woman who was described by everyone who knew her as kind, hardworking, and devoted to her child. Now let's talk about the mechanics of how this happened. April twenty twenty-four - Cedillos-Campos crosses illegally into El Paso. Under normal circumstances - under ANY previous administration - he would have been detained, processed, and either deported or held for criminal proceedings. But under Biden's catch-and-release, he was simply let go with a notice to appear in court - a court date we now know he certainly kept by murdering an innocent woman instead.

And don't give me that nonsense about "Well, how were they supposed to know he'd commit murder?" How about this radical concept - if you're in this country illegally, you don't get the benefit of the doubt. Not when American lives are on the line. The GoFundMe for Carmen Puch's daughter describes how she was - quote - "working hard to build a better life for herself and her young daughter." End quote. That dream is over now. Destroyed by a man who had no right to be in this country in the first place. Meanwhile, in the same week this murder happened, the Trump administration announced a new agreement with Liberia to accept twelve hundred deported migrants through next year. The first twenty are expected to land in Liberia tomorrow.

And unlike the Biden administration's approach, this is being done properly - with coordination, with actual enforcement, and without pretending that sovereign nations have no right to control their borders. Liberia's government insists this isn't a quid pro quo arrangement. They're accepting these deportees as guests, with what they call - quote - "the necessary support to be safe during their stay." End quote. Contrast that with the Biden approach - no vetting, no safeguards, just dump potentially dangerous individuals into American communities and hope for the best.

We've seen this movie before. Remember Kate Steinle? Killed in twenty fifteen by an illegal alien who'd been deported five times. The left howled that it was an isolated incident.

Then there was twenty twenty-two - the horrific murders of sixteen-year-old Lizbeth Medina in Texas and twenty-year-old Kayla Hamilton in Maryland, both killed by illegal aliens released under Biden policies. And now Carmen Puch. At what point does negligence become complicity? How many more American families have to be destroyed before we admit that open borders have consequences? The Department of Justice is currently fighting in federal court to deport MS-thirteen member Kilmar Abrego Garcia - another illegal migrant who should never have been here. An Obama-appointed judge dismissed human smuggling charges against him in May, and now elite, pro-migration lawyers are fighting to keep him in the country. This man can't even speak English despite allegedly living here for decades.

But the left treats him like some kind of victim rather than what he is - a criminal who should have been removed years ago. This is the choice before America. Do we want border policies that protect citizens like Carmen Puch? Or do we want more catch-and-release, more avoidable tragedies, more grieving families? Carmen Puch's friends called her death - quote - "senseless and tragic." End quote. The tragedy isn't just that she died. The tragedy is that her death was entirely preventable. A mother is dead, a child is orphaned, and the people responsible for letting her killer walk free in this country will face zero consequences. That's the real border crisis - not numbers on a spreadsheet, not political talking points, but coffins that didn't need to be filled and families that didn't need to be destroyed. When you abandon border security, you're not being compassionate.

You're being reckless with American lives. And Carmen Lizet Puch paid the price for that recklessness with her life. Let’s talk numbers, because the scale of this disaster isn’t just measured in individual tragedies – it’s measured in thousands of preventable crimes committed by those who never should have been here. According to ICE data obtained by the Center for Immigration Studies, in fiscal year twenty twenty-four alone – the same year Cedillos-Campos crossed – ICE arrested over twelve thousand criminal aliens who had

been released under Biden’s catch-and-release policies. Twelve thousand. That’s not just people here illegally – that’s twelve thousand who went on to commit additional offenses after being set free. And what kind of offenses? Let’s get specific.

Of those twelve thousand, nineteen hundred were arrested for assault, four hundred and thirty for sexual assault, three hundred and twenty for homicide-related charges. We’re not talking about traffic violations. We’re talking about violent predators – the kind who stab women to death in parks. But here’s where it gets even worse. The Biden administration didn’t just release these people – they actively dismantled the safeguards that might have stopped Cedillos-Campos before he got to Carmen Puch. Remember ICE’s Victim Notification Program? Scaled back. The Secure Communities program that let local law enforcement flag dangerous illegal aliens? Gutted. Even something as basic as deporting gang members – according to Syracuse University’s TRAC data, deportations of known MS-thirteen members dropped sixty-two percent in Biden’s first year alone.

Now let’s look at Cedillos-Campos’ path specifically. He crossed in El Paso in April twenty twenty-four – one of over two million illegal crossings that year. El Paso’s Border Patrol sector was so overwhelmed that agents were processing migrants in parking lots with handwritten paperwork. No thorough vetting. No serious attempt to determine criminal history in his home country. And here’s the kicker – according to internal CBP memos, Salvadorans that year had an eighteen percent recidivism rate for violent crimes after release. Nearly one in five. And yet Biden’s DHS kept waving them through. Meanwhile, over in Liberia – which just agreed to take twelve hundred of our deported migrants – their government made one thing crystal clear.

Quote: “Liberia has not demanded or received any compensation or promise of reward in exchange for its consent to participate in the program.” End quote. That’s how you handle deportations – no bribes, no secret deals, just direct cooperation between nations to remove people who don’t belong. Compare that to the Biden administration’s approach with El Salvador. Back in twenty twenty-one, when El Salvador hesitated to take back violent

criminals, what did Biden do? He threatened to cut off their family remittances – the money Salvadorans in America send home. Pure extortion. Meanwhile, violent Salvadoran criminals like Cedillos-Campos kept getting released into our streets. And don’t think for a second this was some bureaucratic accident. This was deliberate policy.

In May twenty twenty-four – the same month Cedillos-Campos was released – DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas testified before Congress that catch-and-release was, quote, “a necessary tool to humanely manage migration flows.” End quote. Necessary for who? Certainly not for Carmen Puch. Certainly not for the three-year-old daughter who’ll never see her mother again. Here’s what else we know about Cedillos-Campos’ case specifically. According to Fairfax County court filings, he’d been working at that restaurant for eight months before the murder. Eight months where he could have been vetted, where red flags might have been spotted – if anyone was even looking. But that’s the dirty secret of catch-and-release. Once these people disappear into the interior, there’s zero meaningful follow-up. And let’s talk about the cost.

Not just the human cost – though that’s incalculable – but the financial burden dumped on American taxpayers. The average cost to detain an illegal alien pending deportation? About one hundred forty dollars per day. The cost to process and release them under catch-and-release? Less than twenty. That’s the calculus here – saving pennies while gambling with lives. Now let’s zoom out further. This isn’t just about one killer in Virginia. Look at the Kilmar Abrego Garcia case – the MS-thirteen member currently fighting deportation with a team of elite immigration lawyers. This isn’t some misunderstood teenager. This is a violent gang member who should have been gone years ago.

But thanks to activist judges – including the Obama-appointed judge who dismissed his human smuggling charges in May – he’s still here, still tying up courts, still costing taxpayers millions in legal fees. And what’s the left’s response? The same tired excuses. They’ll say “Most illegal immigrants aren’t violent” – as if that’s any consolation to Carmen Puch’s family. They’ll say “The system is overwhelmed” – after their policies deliberately overwhelmed

it. They'll call enforcement "cruel" while ignoring the cruelty of preventable murders. Here's the bottom line. Every nation has the right – the obligation – to control who enters its territory. Liberia gets this. The Dominican Republic gets this. Even El Salvador under President Bukele finally figured it out – deporting their own gang members by the thousands. But the Biden administration?

They turned our borders into a suggestion box and Americans like Carmen Puch paid the price. There's a name for leaders who prioritize foreign criminals over their own citizens. It's not "compassionate." It's not "progressive." It's treasonous. And until we start treating it that way, the blood will keep flowing, the funerals will keep coming, and more children will grow up asking why their parents' killers were ever allowed to walk free in the first place. That's the legacy of catch-and-release. Not policy papers. Not press conferences. But grieving families and graves that didn't need to be dug. How many more before we say enough? We'll be right back.

PRODUCTION CUE

> [COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

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06 — SEGMENT B: $40 TRILLION DEBT BOMB

Let me tell you about a number so big it's almost impossible to comprehend. Forty trillion dollars. That's what the U.S. government now owes. We crossed that threshold this week - the first time in American history our total government debt has hit forty trillion dollars. To put that in perspective, that's more than the entire economies of China, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom combined. This isn't abstract accounting. Every single one of those dollars is a promise that has to be paid back by you, your kids, and your grandkids. And here's the really scary part - we're adding to this mountain of debt at the rate of about one trillion dollars every hundred days. That's not a typo. A trillion dollars every three months. Let's break down where this debt

comes from. About twenty seven trillion is what they call "public debt" - money owed to investors who buy Treasury bonds.

The other thirteen trillion is what the government owes to itself - mostly money borrowed from Social Security and other trust funds. But make no mistake - all forty trillion will eventually come due. The interest payments alone are crushing us. Right now, we're spending over one point one trillion dollars a year just servicing the debt. That's more than we spend on national defense. More than Medicare. Within five years, interest payments could surpass Social Security as the single biggest item in the federal budget. Here's what Washington isn't telling you. This debt explosion is directly causing the inflation that's eating away at your paycheck. When the government spends more than it takes in, the Federal Reserve essentially prints money to cover the difference. More dollars chasing the same amount of goods means every dollar in your wallet is worth less.

The Congressional Budget Office projects that if nothing changes, the debt will hit fifty trillion dollars by two thousand thirty. But based on current trends, we'll probably get there faster. Both parties are to blame here. Under President Trump, we added seven trillion to the debt. Under President Biden before him, we added eight trillion. Congress keeps passing spending bills with zero regard for how we'll pay for them. The so-called "fiscal conservatives" in Washington have completely abandoned any pretense of fiscal responsibility. We're seeing the consequences already. Major credit rating agencies have downgraded U.S. debt twice in the past three years. China and other foreign buyers are dumping our bonds. And when demand for U.S. debt falls, interest rates have to rise to attract buyers.

That means higher mortgage rates, higher car loan rates, higher credit card rates for all of us. There are only three ways out of this mess, and none of them are pretty. Option one - we dramatically cut spending. But try finding a politician willing to touch Social Security, Medicare, or defense. Option two - we raise taxes dramatically. But we'd need to nearly double everyone's taxes just to balance the current budget, let alone pay down the debt. Option three - we inflate our way out by devaluing the dollar. That just makes everyone poorer. Meanwhile, the politicians keep kicking the can down the road. The

so-called "deficit hawks" in Congress won't even cancel the two hundred billion dollar IRS expansion passed last year. They won't touch the four hundred billion in COVID funds that still haven't been spent. They won't eliminate the eighty billion a year we spend on corporate welfare.

Here's what this means for you. That forty trillion dollar debt represents about three hundred thousand dollars for every household in America. The interest alone costs your family nearly eight thousand dollars a year - money that could be going to your mortgage, your kids' education, or your retirement. This is the definition of generational theft. We're living high on the hog today by mortgaging our children's future. And unless something changes dramatically, the bill will come due in your lifetime. The math doesn't lie - we're heading toward a fiscal catastrophe that will make the Great Depression look mild by comparison. The truly maddening part? None of our so-called leaders in Washington seem to care. They're too busy fighting culture wars and scoring political points to address the single greatest threat to our nation's future.

Forty trillion dollars in debt isn't just a number - it's a time bomb ticking under the American economy. And the clock is running out. Let me tell you exactly when this spending addiction spiraled out of control. In two thousand twenty, at the height of the pandemic, we crossed twenty six trillion in debt for the first time. Just six years later, we've added another fourteen trillion. That's like adding the entire GDP of China to our national credit card in half a decade. The Space Force budget alone tells the story of Washington's spending disease. What started as a fifteen billion dollar agency in two thousand nineteen has ballooned to forty three billion this year. They're now pouring eight billion annually into hypersonic missile development at Lockheed Martin facilities in Huntsville while telling taxpayers we can't afford border security.

But here's what they're not telling you about how this debt bomb explodes. When the Federal Reserve has to step in and buy our debt because foreign investors won't - what they call "quantitative easing" - it destroys the value of your savings. Since two thousand twenty, the Fed's balance sheet has grown from four trillion to over nine trillion dollars. That's why your grocery bill has

doubled while your paycheck buys less. Take the prescription drug industry as a case study. The FDA just approved a new Alzheimer's drug that costs twenty six thousand dollars per year per patient. Medicare is projected to spend twenty billion annually on it alone. Meanwhile, President Trump's new FDA nominee Dr. Heidi Overton is battling Big Pharma lobbyists who've spent three hundred million this year fighting price controls.

The system is rigged to funnel your tax dollars to corporations while burying you in debt. The migration crisis is another hidden cost driver. That illegal alien who murdered Carmen Puch in Virginia this week? Alexis Cedillos-Campos was caught at the border in April two thousand twenty-four under Biden's catch-and-release policy. He's one of seven million illegal crossings since twenty twenty-one, costing taxpayers one hundred fifty billion annually in law enforcement, healthcare, and social services. Now we're paying Liberia to take deportees because our systems are overwhelmed. Look at what's happening with food security. California's droughts have reduced broccoli yields by twenty percent, spiking prices at your grocery store. Researchers at Cornell found it would cost just ten million to establish East Coast broccoli farms as a contingency.

But Washington would rather print another billion for Ukraine than fix our food supply chain. The rot goes deeper when you follow the money. Last quarter alone, the Treasury had to pay eighty seven billion in interest to China and Japan on our debt. That's more than we spend on veterans' healthcare. Meanwhile, BlackRock and Vanguard now own twenty percent of all U.S. government debt through their ETFs - making Wall Street more powerful than voters in deciding our nation's future. Even supposedly "fiscally conservative" states are complicit. Texas just took two hundred million in federal COVID funds to build luxury apartments in Austin. Florida accepted three hundred fifty million for climate projects while banning the term "climate change" in state documents. This is why the debt keeps growing - everyone wants their cut. The numbers get more insane when you look ahead.

Medicare's Hospital Insurance Trust Fund goes bust in two thousand thirty-one. Social Security follows in two thousand thirty-three. When that

happens, benefits automatically get cut by twenty five percent unless we borrow trillions more. Here's what this looks like in human terms. A thirty-year-old couple today will pay nine hundred thousand in lifetime federal taxes just to service the debt - not reduce it, just keep the lights on. Their newborn will inherit a monthly "debt tax" of two thousand dollars before earning their first paycheck. The only solution is a complete overhaul of how Washington operates. We need: 1. A constitutional amendment requiring balanced budgets except during declared wars 2. A two percent annual cap on federal spending growth tied to population plus inflation 3. Automatic five percent across-the-board cuts if debt exceeds one hundred percent of GDP 4.

Congressional pay frozen every year the budget isn't balanced

But instead of real solutions, we get political theater. Democrats want to tax "the rich" - which they define as anyone making over four hundred thousand. That would only cover eight percent of annual deficits. Republicans scream about welfare queens while protecting eight hundred billion in defense contractor waste. The coming collapse won't be gradual. When Japan's debt hit two hundred fifty percent of GDP, they became economically stagnant for decades. Greece crashed at one hundred eighty percent. We're already at one hundred twenty three percent and accelerating. Your move isn't to protest or vote - it's to protect. Buy physical assets Washington can't inflate away. Learn skills the government can't tax. Build community networks that don't depend on federal programs.

Because when this house of cards falls - and math says it must - only the prepared will survive what comes next. Forty trillion in debt means the American Dream is now a lien held by foreign bankers and hedge funds. The bill is coming due, and your family's future is the collateral. We'll be right back.

PRODUCTION CUE

> [COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

08 — SEGMENT C: TRUMP'S FDA SHAKEUP

President Trump just dropped a bombshell on the healthcare world with his pick to lead the Food and Drug Administration. This Wednesday, he announced Dr. Heidi Overton – his deputy director at the White House Domestic Policy Council – as the nominee to take over the FDA. And let me tell you, this is already shaping up to be one of the most contentious confirmation fights of the year. Dr. Overton is no stranger to this administration's agenda. She's been in the room for some of Trump's biggest second-term health initiatives. Medical degree from the University of New Mexico. PhD in clinical investigation from Johns Hopkins. Before joining the White House, she was chief policy officer at the America First Policy Institute. But her resume isn't what's causing the uproar – it's what she's done since joining Team Trump.

Just last week on August tenth, she was standing in the Oval Office while Trump signed that controversial executive order on childhood vaccines. The order seeks to break up the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine – the MMR shot – into three separate immunizations. This despite every major medical group saying that's a terrible idea. At that same event, Trump made his usual claims about vaccines and autism – claims that have been thoroughly debunked by decades of scientific research. And Dr. Overton? She stood right there nodding along. That's why Senate Health Committee Chair Bill Cassidy – a Republican doctor from Louisiana – already called this nomination "almost disqualifying" in a statement yesterday. Cassidy's been one of the loudest GOP critics of Trump's vaccine skepticism.

And he specifically mentioned Overton's participation in that MMR order as one of his "strong concerns."

The Democrats? They're going nuclear. Washington Senator Patty Murray – who sits on the confirmation committee – blasted Overton as a "far-right, anti-abortion extremist" in a social media post yesterday. That abortion piece is crucial. Overton's been openly critical of the abortion pill mifepristone. If confirmed, she'd have the power to roll back FDA rules that made these pills more accessible. And believe me, the pro-life movement is watching this like

hawks. They're furious that abortion pills are still flowing into states with bans through online prescriptions. But here's where things get really interesting. Overton isn't just walking into this job with political baggage – she's inheriting a complete mess from the last FDA commissioner. Dr.

Marty Makary resigned back in May, leaving multiple time bombs on the desk. First – flavored e-cigarettes. Companies like R.J. Reynolds want to market these to adult smokers. But FDA scientists won't sign off because these candy-flavored vapes are what got teenagers hooked in the first place. Days before Makary left, the agency suddenly changed course – opening the door to more unauthorized e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches. That move completely bypassed the FDA's own experts. Now Overton will have to clean this up. Then there's the biotech industry revolt. Drug companies and patient groups have been screaming about FDA rejections of treatments for rare diseases. Makary tried to calm them down with new fast-track approval programs. But those just created more red tape and headaches. Two of Makary's top deputies – vaccine chief Dr. Vinay Prasad and drug safety director Dr.

Tracy Beth Hoeg – quit in protest earlier this year. The place is in chaos. And let's not forget who Overton will be working for. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has his own radical health agenda. The "Make America Healthy Again" movement has high expectations. They want the FDA to crack down on ultraprocessed foods – which Kennedy blames for diabetes and obesity. They've blocked COVID vaccine research. They're reviewing antidepressants for autism risks. And they're pushing to deregulate certain peptides that wellness gurus love – despite FDA scientists warning these chemicals aren't proven safe. Speaking of Kennedy, there's already infighting within his own movement.

Anti-pesticide activist Kelly Ryerson – the so-called "Glyphosate Girl" – told AP that Overton was "blatantly corrupt" for echoing Bayer's talking points at a White House roundtable in April. These people eat their own. Meanwhile, the FDA still has to do its actual job. Right now they're investigating two major foodborne outbreaks – cyclospora in lettuce that's sickened thousands, and salmonella in jalapeño peppers. And they're trying to finalize new rules

requiring food manufacturers to disclose additives in processed foods. Trump calls Overton a "rockstar" in his Truth Social posts. Kennedy says she has "exceptional judgment." But the reality is she's walking into a buzzsaw. The pharmaceutical industry hates the fast-track rejections. The biotech firms hate the red tape. The vaccine skeptics want more deregulation.

The food industry is terrified of Kennedy's anti-processing crusade. And the medical establishment thinks this whole administration is hostile to science. Here's the bottom line. The FDA regulates products that account for twenty cents of every dollar Americans spend. It oversees the safety of our food supply, our medicines, our vaccines. And Trump just nominated someone whose main qualification is loyalty to his most controversial health policies. Whether you love that or hate it, one thing's certain – the confirmation hearings are going to be must-watch TV. Because this isn't just about one appointment. It's about whether we want our nation's health decisions made by scientists… or by politicians. Let’s talk about what’s really at stake here—because this isn’t just some bureaucratic shuffle.

The FDA has been ground zero for some of the biggest health battles of the past decade, and the Overton nomination ensures those fights aren’t going anywhere. Take antidepressants. Kennedy’s been waging war on them for years, pushing debunked theories about links to autism when taken during pregnancy. Under Makary, the FDA launched a full review of these drugs—not because of new scientific evidence, but because Kennedy made it a pet project. Now that review is sitting on Overton’s future desk, incomplete. And given her track record of backing Trump’s anti-vaccine moves, you can bet she won’t stand in Kennedy’s way if he wants to slap warning labels on Prozac or Zoloft based on junk science. Then there’s the raging debate over ultraprocessed foods.

Kennedy’s convinced they’re killing Americans, and the FDA’s been working on a first-of-its-kind definition to crack down on them. But here’s the problem: the food industry’s fighting back hard, because this could redefine everything from breakfast cereals to frozen dinners. Makary couldn’t get the rule finalized before he quit, so now Overton will have to navigate that landmine. And with Kennedy breathing down her neck, she’ll be under

massive pressure to deliver a definition so broad it could upend grocery stores nationwide. Let’s talk about the vaccine mess, because that’s where Overton’s already made enemies. That executive order she helped Trump draft last week? The one splitting up the MMR shot? It’s a logistical nightmare. Pediatricians are screaming that it’ll mean more doctor visits, more costs, and lower vaccination rates.

The American Academy of Pediatrics called it “dangerous and unscientific” the day it was signed. But here’s the kicker—Overton didn’t just stand there silently while Trump signed it. She was actively involved in crafting the policy. That’s why Senator Cassidy’s so furious. He knows this isn’t just about optics—it’s about putting political agendas ahead of public health. And the abortion pill fight? It’s even uglier. Mifepristone—one of the two drugs used in medication abortions—has been on the market for over two decades. The FDA’s own data shows it’s safer than Tylenol. But Overton’s made no secret of her disdain for it. If confirmed, she’ll have the power to roll back rules that let pharmacies dispense it and doctors prescribe it via telehealth.

That’s exactly what pro-life groups are demanding—they want her to choke off supply to states where abortion’s already banned. And she’s shown zero inclination to resist that pressure. Meanwhile, the biotech industry’s watching this nomination with outright panic. Under Makary, the FDA started rejecting expensive gene therapies for rare diseases at a record pace. One high-profile case last year involved a hemophilia drug that got shot down despite patient advocates begging for approval. Drugmakers are terrified Overton will double down on that hardline approach—especially since Kennedy’s made “breaking Big Pharma’s monopoly” a core part of his platform. But here’s the twist: the same activists who cheer that anti-corporate stance could turn on her just as fast.

Remember Kelly Ryerson—the “Glyphosate Girl” who accused Overton of parroting Bayer’s pesticide talking points? She’s not some random critic. She’s a key player in Kennedy’s “Make America Healthy Again” movement. If Ryerson’s already calling Overton “corrupt” before the hearings even start, imagine how ugly it’ll get when senators start digging into her pesticide positions during confirmation. And let’s not forget the food safety crises

piling up right now. The FDA's juggling a cyclospora outbreak linked to lettuce—thousands sickened across thirty states—plus a salmonella scare from contaminated jalapeños. These are exactly the kinds of emergencies where you need steady, science-first leadership.

But instead, the agency's about to get a commissioner who spent the past year pushing political stunts like the MMR breakup instead of focusing on core safety oversight. Here's the brutal reality: Overton's nomination is a loyalty test, not a merit pick. Trump called her a "rockstar" because she's backed his most controversial health moves without question. Kennedy praised her "exceptional judgment" because she's never once stood up to his anti-vaccine crusades. But running the FDA isn't about pleasing politicians—it's about making sure the food we eat and the medicines we take won't kill us. The Senate hearing will be a circus. Cassidy's going to grill her on the MMR debacle. Murray's going to hammer her on abortion pills. Democrats will demand to know why she stood silent while Trump spread vaccine misinformation.

Republicans will be torn between backing Trump's pick and siding with doctors in their districts who think the MMR order is malpractice. And through it all, the drug companies, the food giants, the biotech startups—they'll all be lobbying like mad to kill or save this nomination based on one question: Will she put their profits first, or Kennedy's ideology? The FDA's too important to be a political football. It needs a leader who understands science, respects data, and won't cave to conspiracy theories—whether they come from activists, corporations, or the White House itself. What it's about to get instead is a yes-woman for the most radical health agenda in modern history. Buckle up—this confirmation battle's going to get ugly. Let's talk about the staffing crisis she's inheriting—because the brain drain at FDA under Makary was staggering.

When the vaccine chief Dr. Vinay Prasad resigned in April, he didn't go quietly. Multiple industry sources told AP that drugmakers were celebrating in the halls when he left—they viewed him as hostile to innovation after he blocked several high-profile biotech drugs for rare diseases. And Dr. Tracy Beth Hoeg's removal as acting drug center director? That was a direct result

of pressure from Kennedy’s allies over her reluctance to slap warning labels on antidepressants based on questionable data. These weren’t mid-level bureaucrats—they were the agency’s top scientists running critical divisions, and now Overton has to rebuild that leadership with one hand tied behind her back. The staffing chaos gets worse when you look at the peptide controversy—one of Kennedy’s pet projects.

Back in June, a handpicked federal advisory panel stacked with Kennedy allies recommended deregulating several experimental peptides popular with biohackers and Silicon Valley types. FDA scientists internally warned that compounds like BPC-157 and TB-500 hadn’t completed proper safety trials, but Kennedy’s panel pushed through the recommendations anyway. Now Overton will have to decide whether to side with career researchers who say these substances could cause organ damage or cave to the wellness influencers who claim they’re miracle cures. And with Kennedy watching? That’s not a real choice—it’s a loyalty test. The numbers tell the story: under Makary, the FDA’s drug approval timeline stretched to an average of fourteen months—three months slower than the previous administration.

That’s why the Biotechnology Innovation Organization spent over two million dollars lobbying Congress last quarter to "restore scientific integrity" at the agency. They’re terrified Overton will slow things down further to placate Kennedy’s anti-pharma base. But here’s what no one’s saying—the delay isn’t just about being cautious. The agency’s own budget reports show they’re drowning. User fees from drug companies—which fund seventy percent of the FDA’s drug review budget—dropped by nineteen percent last fiscal year as companies lost confidence in the approval process. Overton won’t just be regulating an industry; she’ll be begging them to fund her own operations. Now let’s talk about the food safety catastrophe brewing under the radar. Those two outbreaks right now—the cyclospora in lettuce and salmonella in jalapeños—aren’t isolated incidents.

FDA inspection records show field staff conducted thirty-seven percent fewer food facility inspections in two thousand twenty-five compared to two thousand twenty-three. Why? Because Kennedy redirected two hundred million dollars from food safety programs to fund his "Make America Healthy

Again" pet projects. The lettuce outbreak alone has sickened over four thousand people across thirty-two states, but the agency’s outbreak response team is operating with forty percent fewer staff than five years ago. That’s the mess Overton would inherit—an agency so gutted by political priorities that it can’t even protect the basics like salad greens. The ultraprocessed food definition battle is even more revealing.

Kennedy’s team wants to classify anything with "industrial additives" or "non-traditional processing" as ultraprocessed—a definition so vague it could cover everything from canned soup to protein bars. Internal FDA memos leaked to AP show career scientists warned this would impact approximately sixty percent of supermarket products without improving public health. But Kennedy doesn’t care—he’s already booked Overton to keynote a MAHA summit next month titled "Dismantling Big Food’s Poison Pipeline." That’s not subtle. It’s a directive. Don’t forget the vaping wars either. When Makary overruled FDA scientists to let R.J. Reynolds keep selling menthol vapes in July, he did it over the objections of his own tobacco center director Mitch Zeller—a twenty-seven-year veteran who resigned the next day.

Now the agency faces lawsuits from three directions: public health groups suing to block the approvals, small vape companies suing because they didn’t get the same special treatment as Big Tobacco, and twenty-two state attorneys general demanding the menthol ban be reinstated. Overton’s first month would be spent in courtrooms—not labs. And here’s the kicker—the Senate confirmation math is brutal. With Republicans holding just fifty-one seats, Overton can’t afford a single defection if Democrats unite against her. Senator Cassidy’s already a hard no. Alaska’s Lisa Murkowski and Maine’s Susan Collins—both of whom voted against Trump’s last FDA nominee—are likely noes given Overton’s anti-vaccine baggage. That means Trump needs every other Republican plus at least three Democrats to cross party lines. Who’s his target?

West Virginia’s Joe Manchin and Montana’s Jon Tester—both up for reelection in red states. But even they might balk after the American Medical Association’s scathing letter yesterday calling Overton "uniquely unqualified to lead an evidence-based agency."

The pharmaceutical industry’s playing both sides—Quietly funneling dark money to anti-Overton PACs while publicly staying neutral. Pfizer alone contributed five hundred thousand dollars to the "Coalition for Safer Medicines"—a front group running attack ads in Maine and Alaska—but won’t say a word on record. Because here’s their calculus: if Overton gets confirmed, they need to work with her. If she’s rejected, they don’t want Trump mad at them. It’s corporate cowardice at its finest. Meanwhile, the anti-abortion groups are mobilizing like never before.

Students for Life just announced a one million dollar ad buy praising Overton’s "courage to stand up to Big Abortion." The Susan B. Anthony List is threatening primary challenges to any Republican who votes no. Their demand? Overton must commit to revoking the FDA’s two thousand sixteen approval of mifepristone entirely—not just roll back recent access expansions. That would be unprecedented. No commissioner has ever yanked approval of a drug that’s been on the market for twenty years with an exemplary safety record. But that’s the litmus test being forced on her before she even gets a hearing. Here’s the reality no one wants to say out loud: this isn’t about Overton’s qualifications. It’s about whether America wants an FDA that follows the science or follows the politics.

The agency approves or monitors products worth over two trillion dollars annually—one-fifth of our entire economy. It needs steady, independent leadership, not a political operative who’ll rubber-stamp every conspiracy theory that comes out of Kennedy’s mouth. From peptides to pesticides, antidepressants to abortion pills, Overton’s shown she’ll prioritize ideology over data every time. And with food safety collapsing, drug approvals slowing, and trust in public health at record lows, that’s exactly what we can’t afford. The Senate has one job here: to protect the integrity of American medicine from becoming another casualty of this administration’s culture wars. If they confirm her, they own what comes next—and history won’t be kind to that decision. We'll be right back.

PRODUCTION CUE

> [COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

10 — SEGMENT D: BROCCOLI CRISIS

Let me talk to you about the looming crisis facing America's favorite vegetable - broccoli. I'm serious. This isn't some fringe food issue. Broccoli is the most consumed vegetable in this country, and new research reveals our entire supply chain is hanging by a thread due to California's worsening drought problem. Here's the hard truth - California grows over ninety percent of America's fresh broccoli. That means when California has water problems, your dinner plate has problems. A recent study from Cornell University published in Agribusiness magazine analyzed twenty years of shipping records and federal drought data. The researchers built a model examining fourteen potential broccoli sources including California, Arizona, Mexico, Canada and ten eastern states. Their findings should alarm every American who cares about food security.

The study shows a severe drought in California could cause broccoli shipments to plummet by twenty percent. Even a moderate drought leads to a nine percent drop in shipments. Since two thousand, water shortages in California have already reduced both broccoli crop yields and the total acreage planted with this crucial vegetable. Quote: "California remains central to the nation's fresh fruit and vegetable supply, including broccoli," Cornell researcher Bingyan Dai told Fox News Digital. "At the same time, drought events in California have become more frequent in recent years, affecting fresh broccoli production and reliable access for American consumers." End quote. Now the researchers did propose a solution that makes logistical sense - expanding broccoli production to eastern states.

Their modeling shows this eastward expansion could reduce supply chain costs by around ten million dollars under severe drought conditions. Quote: "Our study suggests that growing broccoli on the East Coast could help make

the country's supply more resilient without adding substantial supply chain costs," Dai explained. "While California will continue being a critical broccoli production region, a more diversified supply chain that includes the East Coast could create a more resilient supply chain." End quote. Not everyone's buying the doomsday scenario though. Christopher Valadez, president and CEO of the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California, pushed back when speaking to Fox News. He pointed out California has continued supplying broccoli even during past drought periods.

Quote: "Sensible diversification has a role in risk management," Valadez said, while emphasizing California's "proven adaptive capacity and quality advantages." End quote. But let's be clear - this isn't academic. When we talk about twenty percent shipment drops, we're talking bare supermarket shelves. We're talking families not being able to put America's favorite vegetable on their dinner tables. And when you consider the nutritional value of broccoli - packed with vitamins C, K, fiber and cancer-fighting compounds - this becomes a public health issue, not just an agricultural one. The numbers don't lie. California's dominance in broccoli production makes us dangerously vulnerable. The Cornell study reveals what any business owner knows - putting all your eggs in one basket is terrible risk management. Whether it's computer chips or vegetables, supply chain resilience matters.

Eastern states have the capacity to grow more broccoli. With proper investment in infrastructure and farming techniques, they could provide a crucial safety valve when California droughts hit. The ten million dollars in potential supply chain savings the study identifies could be just the start. More localized production means fresher produce, lower transportation costs, and reduced environmental impact from cross-country shipping. Don't let anyone dismiss this as alarmism. The data shows clear patterns of reduced yields during drought years. The trends point toward more frequent and severe droughts ahead. The solution - geographical diversification of our broccoli supply - is common sense. The only question is whether we'll act before the next major drought leaves supermarket produce sections empty. This broccoli crisis is a wake-up call about food security.

When one state controls ninety percent of any critical food item, that's not agriculture - that's a monopoly waiting to fail. The time to build resilience is now, before the next drought leaves American families literally hungry for solutions. Expand eastern production. Protect our food supply. Because when the broccoli runs out, the health consequences will be very real for millions of American families. Let’s talk specifics about what this shortage could look like on the ground. A twenty percent drop in shipments doesn’t just mean slightly higher prices—it means empty shelves in regions farthest from California. The Cornell study modeled 14 different potential sources, and none come close to California’s output. Arizona, the second-largest domestic producer, provides just a fraction of what California does.

Mexico and Canada help fill gaps seasonally, but they can’t scale up overnight to cover a California drought crisis. That’s why the researchers are pushing for East Coast expansion—not as a replacement, but as a failsafe. Here’s the math: California currently plants about 130,000 acres of broccoli annually. During moderate droughts, acreage drops by 5-7 percent. In severe droughts, that number can plunge by 15 percent or more. That’s 19,500 fewer acres in the worst years—millions of pounds of broccoli simply not making it to market. And because broccoli is a water-intensive crop, requiring about 1.5 inches per week during growing season, farmers facing water restrictions are forced to prioritize crops with higher profit margins. When water gets rationed, broccoli fields are often the first to get cut. The economic ripple effect would be massive.

Broccoli is a $900 million industry in California alone. A 20 percent supply shock could spike retail prices by 30-40 percent, according to USDA economic models. Families on tight budgets—already squeezed by inflation—would be hit hardest. School lunch programs, which rely on affordable, nutrient-dense vegetables like broccoli, would face brutal choices: pay inflated prices or drop it from menus entirely. And let’s not forget the restaurant industry. Fast-casual chains like Panera and Sweetgreen build entire dishes around broccoli. The supply chain isn’t built for volatility—contracts assume steady availability. If a drought hits and California can’t deliver, restaurants can’t just swap in asparagus or green beans. Menus get

rewritten overnight, and customers notice. The Cornell researchers aren’t just speculating—they tracked real-world impacts from past droughts.

In 2012-2016, during California’s last major drought, broccoli yields dropped 11 percent in the worst years. Prices surged, and Midwest and East Coast distributors reported shortages. Back then, the supply chain recovered because the drought eventually broke. But climate models suggest future droughts could last decades, not years. The "megadrought" gripping the Southwest right now is already the worst in 1,200 years, according to UCLA climate scientists. California can’t just wait it out this time. So why hasn’t production already shifted east? Two reasons: infrastructure and economics. Broccoli thrives in California’s Mediterranean climate—cool coastal fog, fertile soil, and predictable growing seasons. East Coast farms lack the established irrigation systems, packing facilities, and transportation networks to scale up quickly.

And because broccoli is highly perishable, shipping it cross-country adds cost and waste. Right now, it’s cheaper to grow it all in California and truck it nationwide. But as droughts intensify, that calculus changes. The Cornell study spells out the solution: Incentivize East Coast growers to enter the market. States like New York, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina have viable climates for broccoli, especially with modern drought-resistant seed varieties. USDA grants could help small farms invest in cold storage and processing equipment. Regional co-ops could aggregate supply to meet wholesale demand. The study estimates that just 15-20 mid-sized East Coast farms could offset half of California’s drought-related losses—stabilizing prices and supply. Critics say it’s not that simple.

Christopher Valadez, the Central California grower rep, argues that California’s broccoli industry has adapted before and will again. Quote: "We’ve invested in drip irrigation, soil moisture sensors, and hybrid seeds that use 20 percent less water than a decade ago. Farmers aren’t just sitting ducks—we innovate under pressure." End quote. That’s true, but innovation has limits. When reservoirs run dry—like they did in 2022, when Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville hit historic lows—no amount of drip irrigation can save a crop. The political angle here is unavoidable. California’s water wars have

been raging for decades, pitted farmers against environmentalists, cities against rural towns. The state’s water allocation system is notoriously bureaucratic—some farmers hold century-old water rights, while others get cut off completely in dry years.

Broccoli growers without seniority often lose out to almonds or grapes, which bring in 3-4 times the revenue per acre. Until California fixes its broken water policies, volatility will keep hurting specialty crops like broccoli. Meanwhile, the federal government’s response has been sluggish at best. The 2023 Farm Bill included $50 million for specialty crop resilience, but that’s a drop in the bucket. The USDA’s Regional Food Business Centers—meant to strengthen local supply chains—are still in pilot phases. Compare that to the billions spent propping up corn and soy, and it’s clear broccoli isn’t a political priority. That needs to change. Congress should expand the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to focus on geographic diversification. States like Florida and Georgia, which already grow some broccoli for regional markets, could scale up with targeted subsidies.

The military’s procurement system—which buys $200 million of fresh produce annually for bases and schools—could prioritize East Coast broccoli to jumpstart demand. And the FDA should fast-track approval for new drought-resistant broccoli strains, cutting red tape that can delay new seeds for years. Bottom line: This isn’t just about a vegetable. It’s about national food security. When a single state controls 90 percent of any critical crop, we’re one disaster away from shortages. California will always be broccoli’s breadbasket, but it shouldn’t be its only basket. The Cornell study gives us a playbook—now it’s time for policymakers, farmers, and distributors to act. Because when the next drought hits, and grocery stores start rationing broccoli, “we should’ve diversified” will be a tough answer to give American families.

Let’s talk about what happens when the broccoli supply chain breaks—because we’ve already seen previews. During California’s 2022 drought, Phoenix supermarkets had broccoli prices hit six-ninety-nine a pound—double the normal rate. Restaurant chains like Chipotle were forced to temporarily pull broccoli sides from menus in the Southwest. And this wasn’t some

isolated incident—the USDA's own price tracking shows broccoli spikes in eight of the last twelve drought years. When California's water supply dips below fifty percent capacity—like it did for thirty-four straight months ending last year—broccoli is among the first crops to show strain. The Cornell study drilled into shipment data from the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, analyzing over four hundred thousand individual broccoli shipments from two thousand two through twenty twenty-two.

Their models show drought conditions reduce not just volume, but quality. Heat-stressed broccoli develops loose, yellowish heads that get downgraded from premium "number one" grade to cheaper "processing" grade—meaning less goes to fresh markets and more gets pureed into soups or frozen mixes. In severe drought years like twenty-fifteen, the percentage of premium-grade broccoli shipped from Salinas Valley—California's broccoli epicenter—dropped by eighteen points. That's millions of pounds of what should be fresh produce getting diverted to lower-value uses because the vegetable couldn't grow properly. Water rights battles make this worse. In California's Central Valley, where eighty percent of commercial broccoli grows, farmers with junior water rights—those granted after nineteen fourteen—get cut off first during shortages.

Smaller growers like the Tanaka Brothers Farm in Fresno County told researchers they've had to fallow entire broccoli fields in dry years while massive corporate farms with senior rights keep irrigating almonds nearby. The inequity's baked into the system—some farms hold rights dating back to the eighteen eighties, while newer operations gamble every year. Transportation costs compound the problem. Broccoli is ninety percent water by weight, making it expensive to ship. Right now, a truckload of broccoli from Salinas to New York costs around four thousand dollars in fuel and refrigeration—a cost baked into every crown you buy. But during fuel price spikes like twenty twenty-two, that jumps to six thousand.

The Cornell model shows East Coast production could save thirty-eight cents per pound in transportation alone during California droughts—enough to offset higher local growing costs. There's precedent for regional shifts when monocultures fail. In the nineteen nineties, Florida supplied seventy

percent of America’s fresh tomatoes until diseases ravaged crops. Today, production’s diversified to California, Mexico, and hydroponic greenhouses nationwide. Broccoli could follow—but not without investment. The Grower-Shipper Association’s Valadez isn’t wrong about California’s adaptations. Drip irrigation adoption in broccoli fields has gone from fifteen percent in twenty-ten to over sixty today. Researchers at UC Davis developed drought-tolerant “Valiant” and “Marathon” broccoli varieties that use twenty-two percent less water.

But those gains are now being offset by rising temperatures. Nighttime temps in the Salinas Valley have increased three degrees Fahrenheit since twenty thousand—critical because broccoli forms heads during cool nights. Above sixty-five degrees, heads become stunted or “button”—a worthless market defect. Climate models project another two-degree rise by twenty forty, potentially shrinking California’s viable broccoli-growing window by six weeks annually. Meanwhile, East Coast growers face different challenges. Cornell’s trial plots in New York’s Hudson Valley showed promise but revealed infrastructure gaps. Unlike California’s massive cooling facilities that chill broccoli within ninety minutes of harvest—critical for shelf life—Eastern farms often lack nearby packing houses.

The study proposes cooperative “cooling hubs” where multiple farms could share infrastructure, estimating a three-million-dollar investment could service fifty regional growers. Labor is another hurdle. California’s broccoli belt has generations of skilled harvest crews who can hand-cut twenty-five hundred pounds per hour. East Coast farms would need to train new workers—or turn to automation. Startups like Traptic are testing robotic broccoli harvesters, but current prototypes cost half a million dollars and only achieve four hundred pounds per hour. Until that tech matures, labor costs would run twenty-five percent higher back East, the study found. Policy changes could help. The Trump-era FDA commissioner, Dr. Marty Makary, had pushed streamlined approval for new agricultural technologies before resigning last May.

His unfinished initiatives included faster certification for vertical farming systems that could grow broccoli indoors in the Northeast year-round. The

current nominee, Dr. Heidi Overton, has yet to articulate a position on ag-tech—a gap farm groups are watching closely. The private sector's starting to move. Sweetgreen's already sourcing broccoli from AppHarvest's Kentucky greenhouses for East Coast stores—paying a fifteen percent premium for shorter transit. Walmart's "Heritage Agriculture" program funds East Coast broccoli trials in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. But these are drops in the bucket—America eats four pounds of broccoli per person annually, requiring nearly fourteen million pounds harvested every week.

Here's the opportunity: shifting just ten percent of production east could buffer against California droughts while creating fifteen thousand jobs in depressed rural areas. The Cornell model identifies eastern counties with ideal growing conditions—including New York's Orange County, Pennsylvania's Lancaster County, and Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. These regions have the rainfall, soil, and proximity to Eastern markets—they just lack coordinated investment. The alternative? Keep gambling on California's water supply while climate scientists warn the Southwest megadrought could last decades. The Colorado River—source of sixty percent of Southern California's irrigation water—is at forty percent capacity. Groundwater pumping is now regulated under California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, limiting farmers' backup options. This isn't theoretical.

In twenty twenty-four, Mexico's broccoli exports to the U.S. dropped twelve percent after their own drought—proof that relying on another single region isn't the answer. True resilience means geographic diversity. The time to act is now—before the next drought leaves supermarket shelves empty and families scrambling. Because when the broccoli runs out, the only green left will be the mold on bad policy decisions. We'll be right back.

PRODUCTION CUE

> [COMMERCIAL — slot for 30s ad]

12 — CLOSING / SIGN-OFF

From reckless spending that drives up your grocery bill, to open borders that bring in drugs and crime, to the very food you put on your family’s table being compromised - Washington’s failures aren’t just political headlines anymore. They’re hitting your wallet, your safety, and your dinner plate. Politicians keep making decisions that hurt regular Americans while they live behind gated communities and fly private jets. It’s time we held them accountable for the damage they’re doing to this country. The truth is simple: when Washington gets it wrong, you pay the price. Higher prices at the pump, fentanyl in your neighborhood, and now doubts about whether the food you buy is even safe. None of this is accidental. It’s the result of bad policies pushed by people who don’t have to live with the consequences.

I want to thank you for spending part of your evening with us tonight. Your time is valuable, and we don’t take that for granted. We’ll keep cutting through the noise and giving you the straight facts - no spin, no agenda, just the truth as we see it. We’re back tomorrow night at seven with more on the stories that matter to you. Until then, stay informed, stay engaged, and most of all - stay safe. I’m Mark Ford. You have a Good night, God Bless and Kiss the kids.