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Inflation Reduction Act may be a misnomer

Little immediate impact on rate, although it'll have other economic effects, analysts say

By Jim Puzangher
GLOBE STAFF
WASHINGTON — To finally push some of their environmental and social spending priorities through the Senate, Democrats had to retool President Biden's sweeping Build Back Better legislation, scaling back its scope, slashing its price tag,

and rechristening it the Inflation Reduction Act.
The bill that narrowly passed over the weekend still boasts tens of billions of dollars to combat climate change, policy changes to lower prescription drug costs, and new efforts to curb tax avoidance by large corporations.

But when it comes to living up to its new name, the Inflation Reduction Act, which is expected to pass the House on Friday, might run into a problem. Economic analyses have

found its cost savings and modest deficit reduction will have little immediate impact on the nation's alarmingly high inflation rate, and make just a marginal difference longer term.

"For the typical American household, this isn't going to move the dial on inflation in any meaningful respect, at least not anytime in the near future," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, an economics research and consulting firm. Inflation eased in July, with the Consumer Price Index declining to a still historically elevated 8.5 percent over the previous 12 months, the La-

INFLATION, Page A6

Transit Police call for probe without DA

Facing pressure, Hayden says grand jury will investigate coverup of driver's treatment

By Andrew Ryan and Evan Allen
GLOBE STAFF

In a rebuke to Suffolk District Attorney Kevin R. Hayden, MBTA Transit Police leadership called Wednesday for the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate two of their own officers involved in a coverup, signaling a lack of confidence in Hayden's handling of the case.

The call for a special prosecutor came shortly after Hayden took the unusual step of publicly announcing a grand jury investigation into an April 2021 traffic dispute in which an off-duty transit officer allegedly pointed his gun at a Hispanic Black man, then summoned other officers to pull the man over so he could issue him a citation. The officer then allegedly called a friend on the force, who came forward to claim he witnessed the whole thing while also off-duty.

Hayden's decision followed a Globe report on the incident that raised questions about whether his office tried to quash the case. He inherited it upon taking office earlier this year. But this summer, Transit Police leaders lost faith in the pro-

TRANSIT POLICE, Page A8

PUTTING SOME LIFE INTO IT



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

Josiah Fleury, 15, of Braintree (left) and Abubakr "Siddik" Diallo, 14, of East Orange, N.J., tested out the puppets Wednesday that they built in a technical theater master class at Summer Stars Camp for the Performing Arts in Gill. Middle and high school students from underserved communities, mostly in the Boston and New York areas, work with arts professionals to learn life skills at the weeklong camp, free of charge.

Obstacles cloud timeline for next-generation COVID vaccines

By Ryan Cross
GLOBE STAFF

For more than a year, some scientists have called on companies and the Biden administration to speed the development of more powerful COVID-19 vaccines. That message received a long-awaited acknowledgment last month at a White House meeting.

"Our job is not done," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and chief medical adviser to the president.

Moderna and Pfizer are making booster shots for this fall to protect against the recent Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5. But many scientists caution that playing catchup to variants is not a good long-term strategy. Next-generation vaccines, they say, could help protect people even as the virus continues to evolve.

"We're in this for the long haul, and we have to figure out what are our long-

VACCINES, Page D3

With the danger of manhole explosion, finding a better way to keep a lid on it

By Alexander Thompson
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

On a morning in early June, a manhole exploded on High Street in downtown Boston, launching its 200-pound iron cover several feet through the air and severely disrupting the morning commute.

About a month later, a transformer exploded in a manhole, this time on Beacon Hill. But despite the force of an explosion that witnesses reported could be heard several blocks away, the manhole cover stayed in place.

The difference, Eversource officials say, is that the Beacon Hill manhole was equipped with a new type of cover that took years to develop and that the company is rushing to install on the 38,000 manholes it owns and maintains in the Boston area, including the one on High Street. The new "energy release" covers have hooks that hold the heavy disks in their housings in case of an explosion and runners that allow them to



CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

Noreen McGuire of Eversource guided one of the new manhole covers, this one vented, into place on Massachusetts Avenue.

In reports filed to state regulators, Eversource said manhole incidents in the Boston region have fallen:

212 2018
62 2021

lift 4 inches to release the pressure of the blast without sending the cover airborne.

In the niche world of underground electrical systems engineering, the new cover is nothing short of revolutionary.

MANHOLES, Page A9

BPS says it's on track for state deadline

By Christopher Huffaker
GLOBE STAFF

Boston education leaders said that they have launched initiatives to improve special education services, student transportation, and school safety and that the district is on track to meet 10 mandates issued by the state by the Aug. 15 deadline.

The 10 are the first in a series of requirements Boston officials agreed to with Massachusetts education leaders to avoid a state takeover of the long struggling district. At a meeting of the School Committee, district administrators said that four of the required steps are already complete, while the others will be done by the Monday deadline.

"We fully expect that we will meet or exceed all the benchmarks that are outlined in the Systemic Improvement Plan," Acting Superintendent

BPS, Page A9

Donald Trump declined to answer questions from the New York state attorney general's office, a surprising gambit in a high-stakes legal interview. A2.

Sop and go

Thursday: Cloudy, humid. High 78-83. Low 66-71.

Friday: Pleasant. High 74-79. Low 63-68.

Sunrise: 5:47 **Sunset:** 7:51

Weather and Comics, D5-6. Obituaries, C10-11.

Legal specialists backed a judge's finding that led to the acquittal of a truck driver in the deaths of seven motorists. B1.

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