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Pelosi to step down, remain in Congress

LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday that she will not seek a leadership position in the new Congress, making way for a new generation to steer the party after Democrats lost control of the House to Republicans in the midterm elections.

In a spirited speech on the House floor, Pelosi announced she will step aside after leading Democrats for nearly 20 years and in the aftermath of the brutal attack on her husband, Paul, last month in their San Francisco home.

The California Democrat, who rose to become the nation's only

woman to wield the speaker's gavel, said she would remain in Congress as the representative from San Francisco, a position she has held for 35 years.

"I will not seek reelection to Democratic leadership in the next Congress," she said. "For me, the hour has come for a new generation to lead the Democratic caucus that I so deeply respect."

Pelosi received a standing ovation after her remarks, and lawmakers and guests one by one went up to offer her hugs, many taking selfies of a moment in history.

President Joe Biden spoke with Pelosi in the morning and congratulated her on her historic ten-

ure as speaker of the House. "History will note she is the most consequential Speaker of the House of Representatives in our history," he said in a statement, noting her ability to win unity from her caucus and her "absolute dignity."

It's an unusual choice for a party leader to stay on after withdrawing from congressional leadership, but Pelosi has long defied convention.

In an interview with reporters later, Pelosi said she won't endorse anyone in the race to succeed her and she won't sit on any committees as a rank-and-file lawmaker.



CAROLYN KASTER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., speaks Thursday on the House floor at the Capitol in Washington.

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TIM HYNDS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Elk Point-Jefferson assistant coach Tami Goehring and members of the team celebrate a point against Wagner in the Class A quarterfinal-round of the state volleyball tournament in Sioux Falls. Seated at right is EP-J head coach Erin Kuper. Elk Point Jefferson upset Wagner, winning in four sets.

Coach has baby, leads EP-J to win

DAVE DREESZEN
ddreeszen@siouxcityjournal.com

SIOUX FALLS — Last Saturday, Elk Point-Jefferson head volleyball coach Erin Kuper gave birth to a baby boy.

Five days later, Kuper was back on the court, as her team delivered a victory in the quarter-finals of

the Class A state volleyball tournament.

Kuper and her husband, Nate, named their first child, Bo. While the eight-seeded Huskies were pulling off an upset over top-seeded Wagner in Sioux Falls, baby Bo was back home with his maternal grandmother.

"My mom is at home right now with the baby, so we're going to hustle back there," Kuper told reporters after the match, as she held a bag of ice against her stomach.

After finding out she was expecting, Kuper knew the due date likely would coincide with the state tournament.

"The game plan since the beginning when we found out we were pregnant, and we were due on the 13th and it was like 'Hey, this is how it's going to be, because we're making it to state,'" she told reporters. "I guess it wasn't really a mind shift, but we had just been planning it and hoping and praying."

Jury finds King didn't infringe on Success Kid copyright

NICK HYTREK
nhytrek@siouxcityjournal.com

SIOUX CITY — As the jury entered the courtroom Thursday afternoon, Laney Griner rubbed her son Sam's shoulder with her left hand, eager to hear the verdict in her copyright infringement case against former U.S. Rep. Steve King.

Shortly after the verdict was read and the jury had departed, Griner left the courtroom in tears.

After more than a year and a half of litigation and four days of trial in a federal courtroom, Griner was awarded \$750 in damages for her lawsuit claiming King and his campaign had used her son's image in a Success Kid meme in a fundraising ad without permission.

The eight-member jury found King did not infringe upon the copyright himself. However, jurors found his campaign committee, King for Congress, did infringe on the copyright, but did so unknowingly. The jury also found in Sam Griner's claim for invasion of privacy that King for Congress did not use the photo without his consent, though Griner and his mother both testified no one from the campaign had



King

Please see KING, Page A4

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THE MINI: Thank you Senator Joni Ernst for voting to protect same-sex and inter-racial marriage. Senator Chuck Grassley did not, but the final vote is coming up, and he still has a chance to do the right thing.

—Greg Nooney, Sioux City

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Senate Republicans announce committee chairs for upcoming session

The Senate will not have an Education Reform Committee

CALEB MCCULLOUGH
Lee Des Moines Bureau

Iowa Senate Republicans announced the list of Senate committees and committee chairs for the upcoming legislative session on Thursday.

Senate Republicans added a Technology Committee. They also renamed the Human Resources Committee to the Health and Human Services Committee and the Labor and Business Relations Committee to the Workforce Committee.

“The first supermajority in the Iowa Senate in five decades is ready to deliver results for Iowans,” Senate Majority Leader Jack Whitver, R-Grimes, said in a statement. “I am eager to get to work with my fellow Republican senators to help Iowans combat inflation, reduce barriers to job creation, and continue to implement our historic income tax cuts.”

Republicans picked up seats in the midterm election and are set to hold a 34-16 supermajority in the Senate. The majority gives them control of decision-making in the chamber and the ability to

prevent Democrats from blocking gubernatorial appointments that require a two-thirds majority to be confirmed.

The chairs of the 17 committees will decide which bills will be considered in the committees before going to a full floor vote.

The Senate will not have an Education Reform Committee, a new committee House Republicans added for the next session that will be chaired by Republican House Speaker Pat Grassley of New Hartford and consider “bills containing significant reforms to our education system.”

The Senate’s education committee, which was previously chaired by Sen. Amy Sinclair of Allerton, will be led by Sen. Ken Rozenboom of Pella. Sinclair, who was elected Senate President last week, will chair the Government Oversight Committee.

The new Senate Technology Committee will deal with “information technology, telecommunications, cybersecurity, and other related policies,” according to the release. It will be chaired by Sen. Chris Cournoyer of LeClaire.

The 2023 legislative session begins on Jan. 9, 2023.

Senate Democrats have not chosen who will be ranking members of the committees and will likely choose in early December, a spokesperson for the caucus said.

The full list of committee chairs is below:

Agriculture: Sen. Dawn Driscoll, R-Williamsburg

Appropriations: Sen. Tim Kraayenbrink, R-Ft. Dodge

Commerce: Sen. Waylon Brown, R-Osage

Education: Sen. Ken Rozenboom, R-Pella

Ethics: Sen. Tom Shipley, R-Nodaway

Government Oversight: Sen. Amy Sinclair, R-Allerton

Health and Human Services: Sen. Jeff Edler, R-State Center

Judiciary: Sen. Brad Zaun, R-Urbandale

Local Government: Sen. Jesse Green, R-Boone

Natural Resources and Environment: Sen. Annette Sweeney, R-Alden

Rules and Administration: Senate Majority Leader Jack Whitver, R-Grimes.

State Government: Sen. Jason Schultz, R-Schleswig

Technology: Sen. Chris Cournoyer, R-LeClaire

Transportation: Sen. Mike Klimesh, R-Spillville

Veterans Affairs: Sen. Jeff Reichman, R-Montrose

Ways and Means: Sen. Dan Dawson, R-Council Bluffs

Workforce: Sen. Adrian Dickey, R-Packwood

Report: At least 32 transgender people killed in US in 2022

HANNAH SCHOENBAUM
Associated Press/Report for America

At least 32 transgender and gender-nonconforming people have been killed in the United States in 2022, the Human Rights Campaign said this week in its annual report ahead of Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Transgender people of color account for 81% of known victims this year, and 59% were Black. Trans women are disproportionately represented, as they have been in years past, also comprising 81% of the deaths recorded at the time of publication.

The Human Rights Campaign has documented at least 302 violent deaths of transgender and gender-nonconforming people since the LGBTQ advocacy organization began tracking such fatalities in 2013 — the same year the FBI began tracking hate crimes against transgender people.

The victims have been “overwhelmingly Black, under 35 and killed with a firearm,” the report states.

Black transgender women — such as Shawmayne Giselle Marie, a 27-year-old nursing assistant killed in June in Gulfport, Mississippi — comprise 63% of all recorded victims since 2013.

This week is Transgender Awareness Week and leads into Sunday’s Transgender Day of Remembrance, an international observance honoring those killed by anti-transgender violence and drawing attention to the threats trans people face.

The Human Rights Campaign notes that the number of fatalities is likely an undercount because the deaths of trans people often go unreported or the victims are misgendered in news or police reports. The data does not encompass those who died by suicide, which also has been

documented at significantly higher rates among LGBTQ people than in the general population.

The report found that 15 trans people have been killed by police or while incarcerated in jails, prisons or ICE detention centers since 2013, including two this year.

Other victims were killed by a person they knew. Since 2013, nearly one-fifth of those whose killer is known were killed by an intimate partner.

Among them is Ray Muscat, 26, who was fatally shot by his girlfriend in May in Michigan.

Fewer deaths have been reported than at the time of the publication of last year’s report — 47. In 2021, the Human Rights Campaign recorded its highest total of fatal violence against trans and gender-nonconforming people, with 57 deaths by the year’s end.

Trump’s candidacy won’t stall criminal probes

ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump’s early announcement of his third White House bid won’t shield the former president from the criminal investigations already confronting him as an ordinary citizen, leaving him legally and politically exposed as he seeks the 2024 Republican nomination.

The Justice Department is pushing ahead with its probes. And with the midterm elections now mostly complete and the 2024 presidential campaign months away from beginning in earnest, federal prosecutors have plenty of time to continue their work even as Trump hits the campaign trail.

“I don’t think the department is going to hesitate as a result of Trump nominating himself and anointing himself as the first candidate in the 2024 election,” said former Justice Department prosecutor Michael Weinstein. “I just think they will see that as him trying to game the system as he’s done very successfully in the courts,” and they’re prepared for his “blowback.”

Trump enters the race facing federal investigations related to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election results and into the hoarding of top-secret government documents at his Florida estate — plus a separate state probe in Georgia. The Mar-a-Lago investigation has advanced especially swiftly, with prosecutors this month giving a close Trump ally immunity to secure his testimony before a federal grand jury. Justice Department lawyers in that probe say they have amassed evidence of potential crimes involving not only obstruction but also the willful retention of national defense information.

It remains unclear if anyone will be charged, as does the timetable for a decision. But former officials say the best way to ensure the outcome is seen as above reproach is to conduct a by-the-book investigation showing no special favor or ill treatment because of Trump’s former high office.

“The public will have the most faith in what you’re doing, and you will get the most successful results, if you treat Donald Trump like any other American,” said Matthew Miller, who served as Justice Department spokesman under former Attorney General Eric Holder.

Current Attorney General Merrick Garland has suggested as much, saying last summer in response to questions about Trump and the Jan. 6 investigation that “no person is above the law.” Asked in a July television interview how a potential Trump

candidacy might affect the department, Garland replied: “We will hold accountable anyone who is criminally responsible for attempting to interfere with the transfer — legitimate, lawful transfer — of power from one administration to the next.”

Investigating any elected official, or candidate for office, almost always invites political speculation. Justice Department protocol cautions prosecutors against taking overt action in the direct run-up to an election, but that’s more a standard convention than a hard-and-fast rule. And the 2024 presidential contest is two years away.

Still, it’s not easy to investigate a former president or current candidate. That’s especially true in the case of Trump, who spent his presidency assailing his own Justice Department and haranguing attorneys general he himself had appointed. He has already lambasted the FBI for searching Mar-a-Lago in August, using the episode to raise funds from supporters.

Now, with his candidacy official, he and his supporters will try to reframe the narrative of the investigation as political persecution by a Democratic administration that fears him for 2024.

In fact, one risk for Democrats is that Trump — who during his announcement Tuesday declared himself “a victim” — could galvanize his supporters anew with that argument. On the other hand, the results of last week’s midterm elections suggest he may be more politically vulnerable than many had thought, including in his Republican Party.

What about past investigations of a presidential candidate? There is a recent precedent, though under different circumstances.

In 2016, the Obama administration’s Justice Department investigated Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton over her use of a private email server as secretary of state. Despite the efforts of the law enforcement officials who worked the investigation to remain above the fray, the probe became repeatedly mired in presidential politics — in ways that may not have been foreseen when it began.

Then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch expressed regret over a chance encounter she had with Bill Clinton in the final days of the investigation. Former FBI Director James Comey was blamed for harming Clinton’s candidacy by making a detailed public explanation of why the bureau was not recommending charges and then for reopening the probe 11 days before the election.

Pelosi

From AI

During her remarks on the House floor, Pelosi recapped her career, from seeing the Capitol for the first time as a young girl with her father — a former congressman and mayor — to serving as speaker alongside U.S. presidents and doing “the people’s work.”

“Every day I am in awe of the majestic miracle that is American democracy,” she said.

Democrats cheered Pelosi as she arrived in the chamber at noon. On short notice, lawmakers filled the House, at least on the Democratic side, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer joined.

The Speaker’s Gallery filled

with Pelosi staff and guest. Some Republicans, including some newly elected members, also attended, though House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy, who is seeking the speakership in the new Congress, did not, telling reporters afterward that he was “busy, unfortunately.”

Earlier, Pelosi noted in a statement after The Associated Press called control of the chamber that, House Democrats will have “strong leverage over a scant Republican majority” in the next Congress.

Pelosi was twice elected to the speakership and has led Democrats through consequential moments, including passage of the Affordable Care Act with President Barack Obama and the impeachments of President Donald Trump.

Her decision Thursday paves the way for House Democratic leadership elections next month, when Democrats reorganize as the minority party for the new Congress.

Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Democratic Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina long moved as a triumvirate. All now in their 80s, the three House Democratic leaders have faced restless colleagues eager for them to step aside and allow a new generation to take charge.

Hoyer said after Pelosi’s remarks that “it is the time for a new generation of leaders” and that he will also step down from leadership but stay in Congress. Clyburn, the highest-ranking Black American in Congress, has said he expects to stay in

Congress next year and hopes to remain at the leadership table.

Democratic Reps. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, Katherine Clark of Massachusetts and Pete Aguilar of California have similarly moved as a trio, all working toward becoming the next generation of leaders. Jeffries could make history if he enters the race to become the nation’s first Black speaker of the House.

After Pelosi spoke, Clyburn released a statement saying he looks forward “to doing whatever I can to assist our new generation of Democratic Leaders, which I hope to be Hakeem Jeffries, Katherine Clark and Pete Aguilar.”

One idea circulating on Capitol Hill was that Pelosi and the others could emerge as emeritus leaders as they pass the baton to

new Democrats.

First elected in 1987, Pelosi has been a pivotal figure in American politics, long ridiculed by Republicans as a San Francisco liberal while steadily rising as a skilled legislator and fundraising powerhouse. Her own Democratic colleagues have intermittently appreciated but also feared her powerful brand of leadership.

Pelosi first became speaker in 2007, saying she had cracked the “marble ceiling,” after Democrats swept to power in the 2006 midterm elections in a backlash to then-President George W. Bush and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When she was poised in 2018 to return as speaker, in the Trump era, she vowed “to show the power of the gavel.”

King

From AI

sought their permission to use it.

The jury’s damage award, the statutory minimum, was levied against King for Congress. How the inactive campaign will pay is not clear. King, a Republican from Kiron, testified he’s been loaning his own money to King for Congress to pay for the legal defense against the lawsuit. King and his campaign could have been hit with \$150,000 damage judgments had the jury ruled completely in the Griners’ favor.

“There’s no question that I’m vindicated,” King said after the verdict was read. “I chose the right thing to do (in taking the case to trial) because I said I am not liable.”

The Griners’ attorney, Stephen Doniger, did not immediately comment, saying he needed

some time to go over the jury’s verdict. During his closing arguments earlier in the morning, he said the case was not about a big jury award.

“This case is not so much about the money. It’s about the protection of their property rights,” Doniger said.

Laney Griner shot the photo of 11-month-old Sam in 2007 at the beach near their Jacksonville, Florida, home, capturing him with a determined look on his face and a fistful of sand raised in triumphant fashion. It didn’t take long for internet users to discover the photo on Griner’s social media pages, and it quickly turned into a popular meme often associated with achievement or celebration and earning the nickname “Success Kid.”

In an effort to control the photo’s use and keep people from using it for commercial purposes, Griner copyrighted the photo

in 2012 and has since earned thousands of dollars by selling licensing rights for the photo’s use. She testified she tries to keep the photo’s brand positive, consenting to its use for what she considers uplifting and family-friendly themes.

On Jan. 27, 2020, the Success Kid meme was posted by an independent contractor working for King’s campaign on the Republican fundraising website WinRed.com and was projected onto King’s Facebook and campaign pages. Once Griner was alerted to its presence, she had her lawyer send a cease and desist letter to King and King for Congress, demanding the photo be removed from the websites, that they issue an apology and contact her lawyer to discuss compensation for unlawfully using the image.

It became a national story, with media such as the New York Times and CNN covering

Griner’s demands.

The photo was removed within hours and an apology posted online, but neither King nor his campaign ever contacted Griner about compensation, leading her to sue.

“I’m protective of my family and son and image and likeness,” she testified.

King’s lawyer, Michael Blankenship, provided jurors a financial statement, showing King received just \$28.92 in revenue from WinRed on the day the Success Kid meme was displayed.

King, who testified he didn’t know what a meme was until the lawsuit was filed, said the suit was politically motivated, and he didn’t back down from that contention after the verdict.

“It’s nuts for people to come from New York, California (states where Griner’s lawyers were from) and Florida, you’ve got three-quarters of the country

there, to federal court in Sioux City to have a trial over \$28,” King said. “That’s a sophisticated operation. They are copyright trolls. It’s an industry.”

In his closing argument to the jury, Blankenship called the lawsuit a marketing campaign by Griner.

“This is an attempt to revive a dying brand,” Blankenship said of the photo that has attracted little to no licensing opportunities in recent years compared to 2013 and 2014.

Doniger had urged jurors to show others like King they can’t take any photo off the internet and use it without permission of the copyright holder.

“Steve King and King for Congress used my client’s photograph with her son’s likeness for commercial purposes. Please award damages and send a message that this is not OK,” Doniger said.