

# TODAYS TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

FEBRUARY 10, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

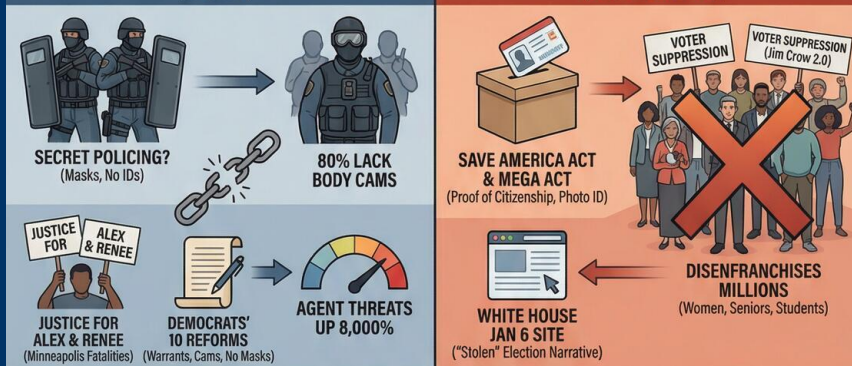
## FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY & ELECTION INTEGRITY DEBATES AMID LOOMING DHS FUNDING DEADLINE



### LAW ENFORCEMENT OVERSIGHT & CONDUCT (ICE/CBP)

VS

### ELECTION INTEGRITY vs. SUPPRESSION (SAVE/MEGA ACTS)



### THE EPSTEIN FILES & DOJ TRANSPARENCY PARADOX



THE “TRANSPARENCY vs. PROTECTION” PARADOX  
(Executive Branch Shield & Sword)

NORMALIZATION OF “SECRET” POLICING  
(Paramilitary Tactics, Evading Accountability)

WEAPONIZATION OF PHYSICAL ABUNDANCE  
(RFK Jr.’s “Real Food”, FCC’s “Hard Tech”)

### HYPOTHESES & FUTURE LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

**SHUTDOWN OR SHORT CR LIKELY**  
(Partisan Stalemate, Minor Concessions)

**LUTNICK RESIGNATION PRESSURE**  
(Unredacted Contacts, Contempt Possible)

**LEGISLATIVE REFORM OF NONDISCLOSURE ORDERS**  
(Nondisclosure Fairness Act, Judicial Review)

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP: Key Bills (SAVE, MEGA, Virginia’s Law, Nondisclosure Fairness Act) & Hearings (Maxwell, DHS Oversight, Telecom Subpoena, RFK Jr.)

# TODAYS TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

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FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ELECTION  
INTEGRITY DEBATES INTENSIFY  
AMID LOOMING DHS FUNDING  
DEADLINE

## DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

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On February 10, 2026, Congress faced a critical juncture as the **February 13 deadline** to fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approached. Legislative activity was dominated by intense oversight of **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** and **Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** following recent fatal shootings of American citizens in Minneapolis. House and Senate Democrats have conditioned DHS funding on **ten specific reforms**, including mandates for body cameras, the removal of masks for agents, and judicial warrant requirements for home entries ([Source](#), [Source](#)). Meanwhile, House Republicans pushed the **SAVE America Act** and the **Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act**, seeking to nationalize proof-of-citizenship and photo ID requirements for federal elections, a move Democrats characterized as voter suppression ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

The day was also marked by a surge in the **Jeffrey Epstein** investigation. **Ghislaine Maxwell** invoked her Fifth Amendment rights

in a virtual deposition before the House Oversight Committee, while her legal team signaled a willingness to cooperate in exchange for **clemency from President Trump** ([Source](#)). Lawmakers from both parties conducted a sensitive review of unredacted Epstein files at the DOJ, reporting that the agency had failed to properly redact survivor names while over-redacting the names of powerful male associates ([Source](#), [Source](#)). Additionally, the Senate Privacy, Technology, and the Law Subcommittee grilled telecom executives from **Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile** regarding the clandestine seizure of congressional phone records by former Special Counsel **Jack Smith** ([Source](#)).

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

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### DHS Funding and Law Enforcement Oversight

- Senate Democrats, led by Leader Chuck Schumer, remain unified in refusing to fund DHS without legislative guardrails on ICE conduct, citing the deaths of **Alex Pretti** and **Renee Good** ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- Acting ICE Director Todd Lyons and CBP Commissioner Rodney Scott defended their agencies, citing an **8,000% increase in death threats** against personnel and a 1,400% increase in assaults, justifying the use of masks for agent protection ([Source](#)).
- ICE leadership admitted that despite previous announcements, **nearly 80% of agents** still do not wear body cameras in the field ([Source](#)).
- Republicans warned that a DHS shutdown would jeopardize **FEMA disaster relief**, TSA operations, and Coast Guard drug interdiction ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

## The Epstein Files and Ghislaine Maxwell

- Ghislaine Maxwell refused to answer all questions during a virtual House Oversight deposition, citing a pending habeas petition, while her lawyer claimed both Trump and Clinton are innocent of wrongdoing ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- Reps. Thomas Massie and Ro Khanna revealed that DOJ files continue to protect six powerful men, including billionaire **Leslie Wexner**, despite the Epstein Transparency Act ([Source](#)).
- Leader Schumer and Rep. Leger Fernandez introduced **Virginia's Law**, a bill to eliminate statutes of limitations for civil claims related to adult sex trafficking ([Source](#)).
- Commerce Secretary **Howard Lutnick** faced bipartisan calls for resignation after files suggested he maintained contact with Epstein as late as 2018, contradicting his previous public statements ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

## Election Integrity and the SAVE Act

- House Republicans teed up the **SAVE America Act**, which requires documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration and mandates photo ID at the polls ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- Democratic leadership slammed the bill as "**Jim Crow 2.0**," arguing it would disenfranchise millions of married women, seniors, and students who lack specific documentation ([Source](#), [Source](#)).
- The White House launched a taxpayer-funded website on the anniversary of January 6, which characterizes the 2020 election as "stolen" and the DOJ prosecutions as "weaponized" ([Source](#)).

## DOJ Oversight and Congressional Privacy

- Telecom executives from Verizon admitted they **failed to notify the Senate** when congressional phone records were subpoenaed in 2023, citing a lack of internal infrastructure to identify member lines ([Source](#)).
- AT&T reported they successfully blocked a subpoena for **Senator Cruz's** records after questioning the "Special Counsel's constitutional authority" under the Speech and Debate Clause ([Source](#)).
- Former Special Counsel Jack Smith testified that phone toll records were lawfully obtained because **President Trump** made those members relevant by calling them during his alleged criminal scheme ([Source](#)).

## DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

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**The "Transparency vs. Protection" Paradox** The federal government is currently embroiled in two contradictory transparency crises. In the Epstein investigation, the administration is accused of **illegal withholding** and over-redaction to protect the "Epstein Class" of elites ([Source](#), [Source](#)). Simultaneously, in the "Arctic Frost" investigation, the DOJ is accused of **unprecedented overreach** by seizing congressional records without notice ([Source](#)). This suggests a broader trend where the executive branch is perceived as using transparency as a weapon against political enemies while using redactions as a shield for allies.

**The Normalization of "Secret" Policing** The debate over ICE and CBP conduct in Minneapolis reveals a shift in federal law enforcement doctrine toward **paramilitary tactics**. The widespread use of masks and unidenti-

able uniforms—justified by leadership as a defense against "doxing"—is being framed by critics as a way to evade accountability for excessive force ([Source](#), [Source](#)). This theme of "secret police" is becoming a central pillar of the Democratic 2026 midterm messaging ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

**The Weaponization of Physical ABUNDANCE** A recurring theme in the **HHS** and **FCC** discussions is the shift from a digital-first economy to a "Hard Tech" and "Real Food" economy. **RFK Jr.** is leveraging administrative power to dismantle the "sickness economy" by targeting ultra-processed foods ([Source](#)), while the FCC is focusing on physical infrastructure like **orbital data centers** and **undersea cables** ([Source](#)). Both represent an attempt to use deregulation to trigger a "supply-side surge" in physical assets ([Source](#)).

## HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

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**DHS Funding Shutdown or CR:** Given the "line in the sand" drawn by Senate Democrats on ICE conduct and the Republican refusal to accept "hand-tying" reforms, a **partial government shutdown** on Friday is highly probable. If a deal is reached, it will likely involve a very short-term **Continuing Resolution (CR)** that includes **mandatory body camera funding** as a minor concession to Democrats ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

**The Lutnick Resignation Pressure:** Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick's position is increasingly untenable. With **unredacted FBI files** showing direct contact with Epstein after 2008, and bipartisan frustration over his lack of transparency, expect a **contempt citation** or a formal request for resignation to gain steam following his House Appropriations testimony ([Source](#), [Source](#)).

**Legislative Reform of Nondisclosure Orders:** Following the telecom hearing, there is a clear bipartisan path for the **Nondisclosure Fairness Act**. Telecom companies indicated they would support "meaningful judicial review" and a "statutory standard" for issuing NDOs to prevent future secret seizures of data ([Source](#)).

## LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

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The legislative agenda focused on modifying federal authorities over trade, law enforcement, and health standards while grappling with constitutional limits on executive power.

### BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **SAVE America Act:** Requires proof of citizenship for voter registration and mandates photo ID for federal elections. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act:** A broader election reform bill that includes the SAVE Act provisions, bans ranked-choice voting, and mandates paper stubs for ballots. ([Source](#))
- **Virginia's Law:** Eliminates the statute of limitations for civil claims brought by survivors of adult sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Law Enforcement Innovate to Deescalate Act (H.R. 2189):** Reclassifies less-than-lethal projectile devices (like Tasers) to ensure they are not regulated as firearms. ([Source](#))
- **Undersea Cable Protection Act (H.R. 261):** Streamlines the permitting process for undersea fiber-optic cables by preventing duplicative federal and state reviews. ([Source](#))



- **Securing America's Critical Minerals Supply Act (H.R. 3617):** Strengthens the Department of Energy's role in securing domestic supplies of critical minerals. ([Source](#))
- **Nondisclosure Fairness Act:** Proposed legislation to mandate judicial review and written findings for any nondisclosure orders issued to third-party providers. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

## HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Ghislaine Maxwell Deposition:** Virtual testimony where Maxwell invoked the Fifth Amendment on all counts related to Jeffrey Epstein's trafficking ring. ([Source](#))
- **DHS Oversight Hearing:** Acting ICE Director Lyons and CBP Commissioner Scott testified on Minneapolis enforcement operations and agent safety. ([Source](#))
- **Senate Telecom Subpoena Hearing:** Executives from Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile discussed the DOJ's seizure of congressional phone records. ([Source](#))
- **Polish President Lech Walesa at Reagan Institute:** A discussion on the necessity of American leadership in Ukraine and the future of global democracy. ([Source](#))
- **RFK Jr. at Heritage Foundation:** A one-year anniversary event detailing HHS successes in food safety, drug pricing negotiations, and AI medical diagnostics. ([Source](#))
- **Epstein Files Review Presser:** Reps. Khanna and Massie reported on over-redactions discovered during their review at the DOJ. ([Source](#))

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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**Today's Trends On Capitol Hill** is a public interest experiment in applying deep trend

analysis to the daily business of the United States Congress to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists, scholars and Congressional staff better understand the overarching legislative trends, themes and patterns of Congress.

### **No data is used to train or tune any AI model.**

Each morning, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's Congressional activity to tease out its overarching themes and trends into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original source material, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the legislative themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

This inaugural report is based on deep analysis of CSPAN, CSPAN2 and CSPAN3 coverage in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive. It is currently limited to the Congressional business covered on those three CSPAN channels and thus may not include all major Congressional business, may include activity from previous days that aired on a later date, and/or may include other major federal, state and local governmental business. We will continue to refine this report to incorporate a growing array of Congressional information sources. This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact [kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com](mailto:kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com). You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.