

The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading News Source

\$4.99

Dallas, Texas, Tuesday, October 13, 2026

DallasNews.com

ELECTIONS '26

Abbott steps up his attacks on Hinojosa

Democratic hopeful in turn says governor can't back up record on data centers, public education and affordability

By **Gromer Jeffers Jr.**
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ARLINGTON — Gov. Greg Abbott had just finished meeting privately with law enforcement officials when he was asked about something that once seemed unlikely: a close race for a

fourth term. "I'm not concerned at all," the Republican said to reporters last week. But his campaign is showing signs of a fight.

Armed with a huge financial advantage and one of Texas' most effective political operations, Abbott has begun targeting Democratic challeng-

er Gina Hinojosa by name after ignoring her until recently.

Hinojosa, an Austin state representative with far less money and lower name recognition, has benefited from a difficult political climate for Republicans, raising questions about the GOP's three-decade hold on the governor's mansion.

Abbott is returning to familiar themes: public safety, parental rights and opposition to socialism. At events in Arlington and Dallas, he criticized

Hinojosa's legislative record while insisting his campaign remains on solid ground.

"I feel pretty good about where things are," Abbott said. "I know what's going on under the surface. I know what trends look like."

Hinojosa sees the governor's criticism as an attempt to divert attention from what she says is growing voter backlash against his policies.

"Greg Abbott is trying to attack my record because he can't defend his,"

she told *The Dallas Morning News*. "People know who he is. They know what he is about, and that is his problem."

The Democrat has focused her campaign on public education, affordability and what she describes as Abbott's willingness to put wealthy political donors ahead of ordinary Texans.

At a gathering Friday in Dallas of Moms for Liberty, a conservative

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STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

Meet veteran vendors behind beloved fare



Photos by Juan Figueroa/Staff Photographer

Food vendor Tino Sosa brandishes a burly smoked turkey leg Oct. 6 at Dickel's Smokehouse at the State Fair of Texas in Dallas' Fair Park.

4 food sellers say lessons learned in uniform helped shape their businesses

By **Michael Cuvellio**
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Jack Pyland was already selling french fries at the State Fair of Texas when the Army drafted him.

The family business had been part of his life since childhood. His father, a Navy veteran who learned to prepare fries during his military service, started it in 1945. By age 12, Pyland had his own concession.

When the Army called, Pyland said, a delay of about 30 days was negotiated so he could finish the fair season before reporting for duty.

He went on to serve in Vietnam. More than five decades later, Pyland is still working at Jack's French Frys, serving food made from the same family recipe.

He is among four longtime State Fair vendors who say military service helped shape their civilian careers. Their paths took them through stadi-



Andy Salinas shows off some of the food items he's been selling for three decades at Darn Good Corn at the State Fair of Texas.

um operations, restaurants and corporate careers before bringing them to food concessions at Fair Park.

Along the way, some discovered

another connection: a community of veterans working within the larger State Fair family.

For Pyland, who served in the Ar-

my from 1969-71, military training reinforced the importance of structure and organization. He said those lessons helped him manage employees and complemented what he learned from his father.

Jack's French Frys is the third-longest-tenured food stand at the State Fair, according to a 2025 *Times Highways* report.

Outside the fairgrounds, Pyland is a pilot and experienced skydiver who said he has made more than 14,000 parachute jumps.

At the concession, the family's french fry recipe has remained unchanged. Pyland recalled a 1996 visit from famed chef Julia Child, who he said was the only person to correctly identify the spices used in his fries.

The family's concessions also produced Big Tex Choice Awards semifinalists in 2021 and 2022.

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EVICIONS

Helping tenants in future uncertain

City of Dallas providing \$500,000 but indicates it might not continue funding

By **Neal Franklin**
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Dallas has changed if and how it funds eviction defense several times over the past few years. This budget cycle, the city landed on \$500,000 for eviction defense but signaled it could be reluctant to do so again.

Government funding for eviction defense — where lawyers represent residents facing eviction in court — in Dallas has been in flux for years.

First, federal funds were devoted to eviction defense efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those funds were used up. In February, Dallas asked organizations to submit plans for an eviction advocacy program, but funds never reached organizations.

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EUROPE

General says NATO 'ready to fight' if hit by Russia

Military force among ways alliance would respond

By **Emma Burrows**
Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — NATO's top military commander said the alliance is "ready to fight tonight" if it is attacked, as European officials warn that Russia could test NATO's defenses with increased covert attacks or a limited military incursion.

European nations have in recent months faced an escalation of covert Russian activity, including an arson attack on an Estonian defense company and a failed attempt to attack a Ukrainian aircraft at a German airport.

If Russia decides to attack NATO, the alliance will respond by using

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Very warm, sunny



Metro, back page

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Diesel deal draws ire

Some Republicans are critical of President Trump's agreement with Russia to release its diesel supplies into global markets. **2A**

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Lynee Poliss was found guilty Monday in a 2023 crash that killed Southern Methodist University student Honor Wallace. **1B**

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Cowboys getting defensive

With their defense still among the NFL's worst, the Cowboys hired former Browns head coach Mike Pettine as a senior assistant. **1C**