

IN THE NEWS



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MA UNEMPLOYMENT RISES SLIGHTLY

Massachusetts unemployment rate climbed to 3.9 percent in October, one-tenth of a percentage point over last month, 0.5 percentage points above where it was in October 2023 and a full point above the 2.9 percent rate during this past February, March and April. While still lower than the national level, it's been on a gradual increase for most of 2024. Nationwide, the October unemployment rate was 4.1 percent. In October, the Healey administration [estimated](#) that if unemployment peaks at 3.7 percent in the next five years, the trust fund used to pay benefits will be almost \$300 million in the red by the end of 2028.

OVERTIME RULE DEFEATED

According to the National Grocers Association, the US District Court for the Eastern District of Texas recently issued a ruling invalidating the Department of Labor's (DOL) final overtime rule. In his ruling, Judge Jordan stated that while DOL has the authority to define and delimit the terms of the overtime exemption, "that authority 'is not unbounded.'" He also said that the Department's automatic updates to the minimum salary threshold every three years "violates the notice-and-comment rulemaking requirements of the [Administrative Procedure Act]." In light of this decision, the minimum salary threshold is once again set to \$35,569 and the threshold for highly compensated employees is set to \$107,432. The DOL can appeal the decision, but the Department under the incoming Trump Administration will likely abandon any defense of the rule. [Read the full press release here](#)

LONGSHOREMAN'S UNION WALKS AWAY FROM LATEST NEGOTIATIONS WITH GULF COAST PORTS

On November 12 the International Longshoremen's Alliance (ILA) and U.S. Maritime Alliance (USMX) returned to the negotiations table over the master labor contract at the East and Gulf Coast ports. The negotiations were short lived, as the ILA walked away from negotiations the next day after only a day and a half of discussions between the two parties. According to [media reports](#), ILA left the table over the issues of automation and use of technology. USMX issued a [statement](#) on Wednesday. The extending current contract expires on January 15, 2025

GOP CONTROL GAINS

According to the National Grocers Association, last week, the Associated Press called control of the House of Representatives for the Republican Party. As of this writing, the GOP will control at least 218 seats, with eight races still uncalled. With the GOP in control of the White House and Senate in 2025, Republicans secured a governing 'trifecta' by maintaining their majority in the House. This sets up a similar landscape to the first Trump Administration in 2017, when Republicans used their majorities to pass the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act within the Administration's first 100 days. At most, Republicans can have a 226-209 majority, but it's unlikely either party will sweep the eight remaining uncalled races. Along with President-elect Trump's decision to nominate three House members (so far) for roles in his Administration, the GOP's House majority might be slimmer when the next session begins (even if only temporarily until special elections can take place to fill any open seats). This *could* complicate the passage of legislation early in the Congressional term. The remaining House races should be called in the coming weeks, which will give us a clearer look at how the lower chamber of Congress will shape up.