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Husband and wife officials on opposite sides of budget slash • A3



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POLITICS

Sununu: I'll veto new district map for Congress

■ Governor made his announcement moments after Senate Republicans passed the controversial House GOP proposal.

By Kevin Landrigan
New Hampshire Union Leader

CONCORD — Showing he wasn't bluffing, Gov. Chris Sununu said Thursday he will veto a congressional redistricting map that would make it more likely each party would have one seat in the U.S. House.

The decision came moments after the Republican-led state Senate followed the House of Representatives and approved a controversial map that makes far more sweeping changes than needed to account for population shifts determined by the Census.

Sununu issued a brief, terse statement moments after the Senate's 13-11 vote to approve the plan that the House passed along partisan lines.

"The proposed congressional redistricting map is not in the best interest of New Hampshire and I will veto it as soon as it reaches my desk," Sununu said. "The citizens of this state are counting on us to do better."

This would make Sununu the first governor in modern history to reject a congressional redistricting map adopted by the Legislature.

"I want something that more matches the character of this state, we're a purple

► See **Redistricting**, Page A12

A St. Patrick's Day jig



DAVID LANE/UNION LEADER

Chris Noble, the executive chef at bluAqua Restobar, does a jig in front of his restaurant on Elm Street on St. Patrick's Day in downtown Manchester. See Page A3 for more photos from the first mask-free celebration since 2019.

CRIME

Drug money laundered at NH casinos, police say

■ Mass. drug kingpin allegedly used The Brook in Seabrook to launder \$400,000.

By Mark Hayward
New Hampshire Union Leader

A guilty plea this week by a Massachusetts drug kingpin who used a Seabrook casino to launder drug money marks the second time in six months that a Granite State casino has been caught up in a large-scale drug investigation.

According to the FBI, members of a North Shore drug operation placed more than \$400,000 in cash wagers at The Brook casino in Seabrook. They lost \$20,000, a relatively small price to pay to launder money.

But the person who monitors the three New Hampshire Draft-Kings Sportsbook operations said The Brook was fully compliant with all federal anti-money laundering requirements. John Conforti, chief compliance officer with the New Hampshire Lottery Commission, also stressed that the wagers in the Massachusetts case took place over months and involved reworking winnings.

"By no means did someone walk into The Brook with \$400,000 in cash and put it on the counter," Conforti said.

In court papers last June, law enforcement officials detail the

► See **Laundering**, Page A12

COVID-19

A COVID surge in Western Europe has U.S. bracing for another wave

By Lenny Bernstein
and Joel Achenbach
The Washington Post

A surge in coronavirus infections in Western Europe has experts and health authorities on alert for another wave of the pandemic in the United States, even as most of the country has done away with restrictions after a sharp decline in cases.

Infectious-disease experts are closely watching the subvariant of omicron known as BA.2, which appears to be more transmissible than the original strain, BA.1, and is fueling the outbreak overseas.

Germany, a nation of 83 million people, saw more than 250,000 new cases and 249 deaths Friday, when Health Minister Karl Lauterbach called the nation's situation "critical." The country is allowing most coronavirus restrictions to end Sunday, despite the increase.

Britain had a seven-day average of 65,894 cases and 79 deaths as of Sunday, according to the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus

► See **Surge**, Page A12

It's a dog life for Gunstock sled dog race champ

IN HOT PINK racing pants with hair to match, professional sled dog driver Nova Clifford was not hard to spot on the race trail.

Two weeks ago I watched Clifford stand tall on the back of her blue sled pulled by a four-dog team as she competed in the Gunstock Skijor and Sled Dog Race. Spectators lined up to see teams take off down the starting chute, one at a time, to tackle the 2-mile loop course on the cross-country ski trails at the resort's Outdoor Center.

Volunteers helped drivers harness dogs to their sleds just before start time. Dog teams barked in excitement, digging their paws into the snow ready to charge ahead. I laughed as the dogs picked up speed, their lanky tongues flopping behind.

During the races, Clifford volunteers her time to make sure the events run smoothly. She is also the vice president of the New England Sled Dog Club — the group that put on



NH Winter

Jill Armstrong

sponsored by



the race at Gunstock — and secretary of the Maine-based Down East Sled Dog Club.

Clifford also owns and manages Parity Racing, a third-generation sled dog racing team in southern New Hampshire. At age 20, she is a veteran of the sport. "My mom did a race with me while she was pregnant," she said, "so you could say I've



PROVIDED BY ANDREW COMOLETTI

Nova Clifford's lead dog, Shark, sets the pace during Gunstock's Skijor and Sled Dog Race on March 5.

► See **NH Winter**, Page A12

In this weekend's NEW HAMPSHIRE SUNDAY NEWS

News: She traded in her office for a van

Sports: Cancer fundraiser branches out to lacrosse

NHLife: Broadening a 'Long Story Short'

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Today's Chuckle

What you don't know may not hurt you, but it'll probably end up making plenty of people laugh.

A Small Prayer

May we trust in You, Lord, because You love us more than anyone else does. Amen

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