

OPINION: Regardless of the result on the court in NCAA tourney, Kennesaw State's basketball team is already a winner >> **A6**

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Mableton representatives endorse de-annexation map

By Hunter Riggall
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A group of Cobb County state representatives have agreed to advance legislation de-annexing portions of the new city of Mableton, two representatives said Thursday.

State Reps. Terry Cummings, D-Mableton; David

Wilkerson, D-Austell; Michael Smith, D-Marietta; Teri Anulewicz, D-Smyrna; and Doug Stoner, D-Smyrna all represent parts of the new city of Mableton.

Representatives have reached a tentative agreement that some northern parts of the city should be cleaved off, Wilkerson and Anulewicz said.



David Wilkerson



Teri Anulewicz

Cummings is expected to

sponsor the bill, but didn't respond to requests for comment Thursday.

A map of the areas the representatives are proposing to de-annex wasn't available by press time, but Wilkerson described the areas as Cobb voting precincts Birney 02 and Mableton 04, plus "the unincorporated Austell that's up near

the East-West Connector."

"It's a tall order to get people to agree, but once everybody sat in the room ... It took 30 minutes to hash it out," Wilkerson said.

In last November's cityhood referendum, Birney 02 voted 72% against incorporation, and Mableton 04 voted 73% against. Across the entire Mableton

cityhood area, residents voted 53% to 47% in favor of incorporation.

"Since that compromise has been reached, I'm looking forward to signing that bill later on today," Anulewicz, who chairs the Cobb County Legislative Delegation, said Thursday.

SEE **MABLETON**, A12

Restrictions for Georgia's transgender youth OK'd

State House passes bill banning some gender-affirming health care

By Rebecca Grapevine
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The Republican-controlled state House of Representatives approved a controversial bill Thursday that would ban some gender-affirming care for transgender Georgia youths.

Senate Bill 140, which the House passed 96-75 along party lines, would prohibit hospitals and doctors from providing hormone-replacement therapy or gender-affirming surgeries to transgender minors. However, it would allow some gender-related treatment for certain medical conditions and let transgender youths take puberty blockers.

Doctors and hospitals could lose their licenses for providing such care. And earlier this week, a House committee amended the bill to allow doctors to be held civilly and criminally liable for providing hormone-replacement therapy or gender-affirming surgeries to Georgians under 18.

"As legislators we are charged with protecting our most vulnerable population in the state," said Rep. Josh Bonner,

SEE **BILL**, A3



Jake Busch

Chef Willie Siler shows off a plate of corned beef, mashed potatoes, cabbage and carrots in the kitchen of Johnnie MacCracken's Celtic Firehouse Pub ahead of St. Patrick's Day on Thursday.

Luck o' the Irish Cobb prepares for St. Patrick's Day

By Jake Busch
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MARIETTA — A local Irish pub is ready for the Feast of St. Patrick, more commonly known as St. Patrick's Day.

Johnnie MacCracken's Celtic Firehouse Pub on Marietta Square

is grilling cabbage and going green for Friday's celebrations.

St. Patrick is a patron saint of the Emerald Isle, and the day is a celebration of Irish culture and cuisine, including favorites like Irish bacon and Guinness beer.

On Thursday, MacCracken's chef Willie Siler was cooking up

corned beef — the American take on Irish bacon — and mashed potatoes to go along with cabbage and carrots.

Those looking to wash it down in the spirit of the day can turn to a tall glass of Irish stout, along

SEE **PATRICK**, A10

Man gets 10 years for armed robbery

Staff reports

A Marietta man will serve 10 years behind bars after he was sentenced for charges related to a 2021 armed robbery in a Cobb County mobile home park.

Ezra Dangelo Ford, 19, pleaded guilty to three felonies — armed robbery, aggravated assault and possession of firearm during the commission of a felony, the Cobb County District Attorney's Office said.

Superior Court Judge Jason Marbutt accepted a negotiated plea, sentencing Ford to 10 years in prison, to be followed by five years probation.

"Life's not over," Marbutt told Ford, according

SEE **ROBBERY**, A12

Rodriguez takes reins as Cobb Bar Association's new president

By Stuart Hendrick
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MARIETTA — Carlos Rodriguez was sworn in as the new president of the Cobb County Bar Association during its monthly luncheon at Roswell Street Baptist Church on Thursday.

"My (three) daughters overheard my wife Mallorie and

I talk this week about my swearing-in as president, and one asked me what happened to Joe Biden," Rodriguez said as the audience laughed. "I don't know what kind of stories they're telling at school, but I'm sure it's interesting."

Rodriguez, who also chairs the Cobb County Board of Ethics, thanked the audience

for the opportunity to become president, saying how the Cobb brand is strong throughout the state.

"As a group, we're regarded as the best bar system in Georgia," Rodriguez said. "This comradery leads to a better product in the courtroom. The future is bright

SEE **PRESIDENT**, A3



Special

Judge Greg Poole swears in Carlos Rodriguez with Rodriguez's wife, Mallorie, standing at his side, Thursday.

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March is National Disabilities Awareness Month
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Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen testifies before a Senate Finance Committee hearing to examine President Joe Biden's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2024 on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., on Thursday.

Yellen says debt limit breach would be 'devastating' for banks

By Laura Weiss
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen told senators on Thursday that the banking system remains sound in the aftermath of Silicon Valley Bank's collapse. But she warned that failure to raise the debt limit in time would be devastating for banks after the turmoil.

The country's fiscal and economic health took center stage at the Senate Finance Committee's hearing with Yellen on President Joe Biden's fiscal 2024 budget request, as senators pressed her over concerns about avoiding a debt ceiling breach, ensuring stability of the banking system, combating inflation and shoring up Social Security's finances.

Supreme Court to hear arguments on Navajo Nation water needs

By Michael Macagnone
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The Navajo Nation will argue Monday at the Supreme Court that the United States must meet the water needs of their reservation in Arizona, amid long-standing tensions about how to apportion the dwindling flow of the Colorado River.

In the first oral arguments of a two-week sitting of the high court, the Navajo will defend a ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that kept alive their long-running legal effort to force the government to come up with a plan to provide enough water.

In court filings, the tribe contends that an 1868 treaty promised both land and water sufficient for the Navajos to return to a permanent home in their ancestral territory.

Many Navajo households live on a small fraction of the water most Americans use per day, the tribe states.

More than 30% of the reservation lacks running water. And water hauled from miles away costs multiple times more.

"How did we get here, in this country, in the twenty-first century? Broken promises," the tribe's brief said. "The basic human rights of hundreds of thousands of Navajos, fellow U.S. citizens, hang in the balance."

EXPRESS RESPONSIBILITY

But the Biden administration and several states argue that the treaty does not give the Navajo the right to more water in the drought-stricken West, which would likely have to come from the Colorado River.

The Biden administration in a brief argued that under Supreme Court precedent, the United States can only be brought into court by a tribe when it has "expressly accepted" a responsibility, such as passing a law



Allen J. Schaben/Los Angeles Times/TNS

A boater gets an up-close view of the "bathtub ring" on Lake Mead while touring Hoover Dam.

or regulation.

"Here, the Navajo Nation has not identified any statute, treaty, or regulation that expressly establishes an affirmative trust duty to assess and address the Navajo Nation's general water needs," the administration's brief said.

Arizona told the justices in a brief that the tribe's suit is an end run around decades of agreements about water distribution from the Colorado

River in a zero-sum game — more water for the Navajo means less for everyone else.

And Arizona and other states contend the dispute threatens to crack open 100 years of interstate negotiations, lawsuits, regulations and statutes over Colorado River water known as "The Law of the River," where the federal government asserted water rights on behalf of some tribes, but not the Navajo.

BILL

From A1

R-Fayetteville, the bill's House sponsor. "SB 140 does just that by establishing guardrails to ensure that children struggling with identity issues are not rushed into decisions that would alter their bodies forever."

"Nothing in this bill stops an adult from pursuing a different lifestyle based on their feelings," said Rep. Will Wade, R-Dawsonville, in support of the bill.

"We must draw a line for the long-term of children. ... I believe that childhood is about giving young people time to develop and letting them learn by trial and error, but still protecting them from long-term harms."

Democratic legislators spoke out in opposition to the bill, pointing out that major medical societies including

HOW THEY VOTED UNDER THE GOLD DOME SB 140: Passed, 96-75

Rep. Adesanya (D)	Rep. Anulewicz (D)	Rep. Campbell (D)	Rep. Carson (R)	Rep. Cooper (R)	Rep. Cummings (D)	Rep. Ehrhart (R)	Rep. Parsons (R)	Rep. Ridley (R)	Rep. Seabaugh (R)	Rep. Smith (D)	Rep. Stoner (D)	Rep. Wilkerson (D)	Rep. Williams (D)
NO	NO	NO	YES	EXCUSED	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

the American Academy of Pediatrics support gender-affirming care that includes hormone-replacement therapy and surgery for transgender youths.

"We think this bill will in fact do real harm to some of our most vulnerable citizens," said Rep. Scott Holcomb, D-Atlanta. "I really do fear that we may lose some lives by passing this, not save lives but lose lives, and that should give everyone pause."

House Democrats cited

studies that show that transgender youths are much more likely to contemplate or commit suicide than other young people. They also contended the bill is at odds with the GOP's recent push to protect parental rights.

"Most of us who are parents ... want the freedom to make decisions for our families and our children," said Rep. Saira Draper, D-Atlanta. "Many of you in this chamber have said as much: You have declared that it is a parent's right to

make decisions about where their children go to school, which books they read and which subjects they study."

"Yet, SB 140 attempts to substitute the judgement of the state for that of the parents of some of our most vulnerable children, those who identify as transgender. That is wrong, and it is not what this body should stand for."

Because the House amended the bill in committee, it now heads back to the Georgia Senate.



Stuart Hendrick

Carlos Rodriguez speaks after his swearing-in ceremony Thursday.

PRESIDENT

From A1

for the Cobb Bar."

The Cobb County Bar Association is a social and professional group for local lawyers to celebrate the law profession and engage with the community by sponsoring educational programs, social and charity events.

The bar hosts two major fundraising events a year, Sleighbells on the Square 5K and Law Day Classic Golf Tournament, which raises tens of thousands of dollars for the Cobb County Bar Children's Emergency Fund. The fund provides support for Cobb families in need in areas that are often not addressed by traditional charities, assisting with utility bills, clothing, medicine and housing to help local families get back on track.

As president, Rodriguez is the figurehead of an organization representing one of the busiest judicial systems in the state, he said.

"The Cobb Bar has a powerful presence at the State Bar level," Rodriguez said. "We can influence rules for ethics and make other recommendations. The opportunity to serve your colleagues, lawyers and judges, is an incredible honor."

Rodriguez, a Marietta native and 2003 graduate of Marietta High School, received his bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Georgia and is part of the criminal defense attorneys law firm Kilgore and Rodriguez.

Rodriguez's law partner, Maddox Kilgore, an Emory grad from the Smyrna area, served as president of the Cobb County Bar Association from 2018 to 2019.

According to their website,

the Marietta lawyers have tried a variety of complex criminal defense cases such as murder, child molestation, aggravated assault, aggravated battery and vehicular homicide.

In 2016, the firm were members of the defense team in the high-profile murder trial of the State of Georgia v. Justin Ross Harris, also known by the news media as the "Hot Car Case."

Soo Hong, the former president of the organization, thanked the group for allowing her to serve and said, "being the Cobb Bar president has been the most defining moment of my life, a great honor."

Tearing up, Hong described some accomplishments of the association over the past year. "We had a really good year," Hong said. "We got our membership back up to over 1,000 members."

Hong discussed the many charity events the association held throughout the year, and how proud she was to represent the organization.

With plenty of smiles and laughter in the audience, Rodriguez adjourned the luncheon.

"He is such a wonder person," Cobb Superior Court Chief Judge Greg Poole said of Rodriguez. "He's going to be a wonderful leader."

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