

Photo of the Day | Cows are the best :]



A cow on UConn’s Horsebarn Hill on the Storrs campus. Many students have been visiting the hill today, as the weather has become incredibly nice.

PHOTO BY OLIVIA DICKSON, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Patrick’s Politics: Concerned about gun violence? Have a ballroom instead

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The U.S. has many items high on the national security list – everything from combatting China to claiming Iran is making nuclear weapons. But can you guess what tops that ranking for the Republican Party? A \$400 million ballroom for the use of Donald Trump.

Trump’s proposed ballroom has long been a pet project of the president, but it surged to the forefront of discussion last weekend, when the normally lighthearted White House Correspondents Dinner was disrupted by sounds of gunfire. The suspected shooter, Cole Allen, was reportedly targeting Trump and other administration officials. Allen was neutralized before he even got to the reception room, but the security breach prompted Republicans to rally behind the flag and try to get that beautiful ballroom built. You know, for “security” purposes.

Republicans have their reason for supporting the ballroom: Trump really, really wants it. The president has been pestering legislators for weeks on the issue. According to Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Trump brings up the ballroom “all the time.” Trump considers it so important that his Justice Department sent a letter to the judge that blocked the project, Richard Leon, accusing him of “TRUMP DERANGEMENT SYNDROME.” Aren’t you glad official DOJ memos now sound like Trump’s near-constant social media screeds?

Trump even went on a tangent about the ballroom when he was supposed to be addressing the

war against Iran. That should show you where Trump’s priorities lie: a devastating conflict is playing second fiddle to an unnecessarily decadent and horrifically gilded reception space. Republicans are going along with the ballroom obsession, because if they don’t do what Trump wants, they might face a vicious exorciation on Truth Social. The WHCA shooting has given them enough political cover to see who can shamelessly grovel at Trump’s feet the fastest.

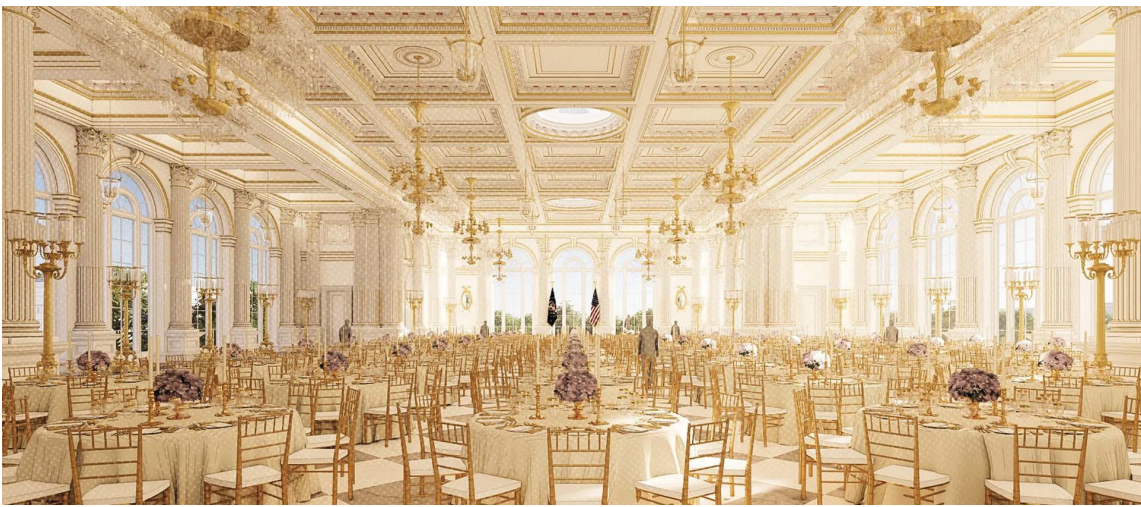
Notably, no Republicans have been very willing to explore how the shooter procured and transported his guns to Washington D.C. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche told the press that the administration wasn’t looking at “changing the laws” around moving firearms across state lines. The GOP, for that matter, has been extremely hesitant to change any gun laws at all, except of course to make acquiring guns easier.

The shooter legally bought the guns in a relatively gun-friendly part of California. Critics of gun control might argue that since California is generally quite strict on gun ownership, restrictions must be useless. Why didn’t California’s laws stop this crime? The answer lies in the fact that no law that regulates an activity is perfect, and instances will slip through the cracks. The job of regulations is to keep thinning those cracks. For example, the U.S. has tough standards for car safety, but people still get into accidents. That doesn’t mean the safety standards shouldn’t exist, or that they can’t be reexamined to address further concerns.

Gun control is of far greater

concern to national security than the need for a ballroom. According to data from Pew Research Center, 44,000 people in the U.S. died from gun-related injuries in 2024. Just a few days ago, a mass shooting in Shreveport, Louisiana killed eight children. To center the conversation around Trump’s shiny new ballroom instead of addressing gun violence is a deliberate and self-centered choice.

Americans should take a long, hard look at the current government’s legislative priorities. The ballroom bill is being pushed against several other issues, most notably the ongoing shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security. Rife with infighting, the House and Senate still haven’t agreed on a deal to end the impasse, which has dragged on for months. Even more important is the items not even on Congress’ agenda. Reining in Trump’s unlawful actions in the Iran war, which has cost the nation an astounding \$25 billion so far, is nowhere on the list of priorities.



Donald Trump’s vision for the White House ballroom. The ballroom is supposedly funded by Donald Trump, yet some cabinet members have been exploring the idea of public funding.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @KRAUSE2296 ON PINTEREST



matter how much its supporters try to twist the logic. No, the ballroom is for Trump and Trump alone. If construction is ever actually completed, the space will hold a large amount of people, seated at white tablecloths, sipping their expensive wine. Everyone will know, however, that it is the vanity of one man which holds up the Corinthian columns.

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