

January-February

## GOOD MONTH/BAD MONTH

by Madison Sarceno ('27), Reporter

### Good Month For... Bad Month For...

**Minimum wage workers** saw an increase in their paychecks last month. As of January 1, 2026, Connecticut's minimum wage rose from \$16.35 to \$16.94 per hour, thus giving minimum wage workers a small pay increase. This increase now helps low income workers keep up with rising costs and makes Connecticut's wage the third highest in the U.S.

**Connecticut drivers** Applicants for CT learner permits must complete an online Work Zone Safety Training course as of January 1, 2026. This helps educate new drivers on how to safely drive through construction zones to minimize teen car accidents. This program helps new drivers to recognize traffic signs, follow speed limits, and stay alert, essential skills for daily driving.

**Bad Bunny** has made history in the past couple of weeks and has been all over the headlines. At the 68th Grammy Awards on February 1, Bad Bunny won Album of the Year for *Debi Tirar Mas Fotos*, the first album completely in Spanish to win the category.

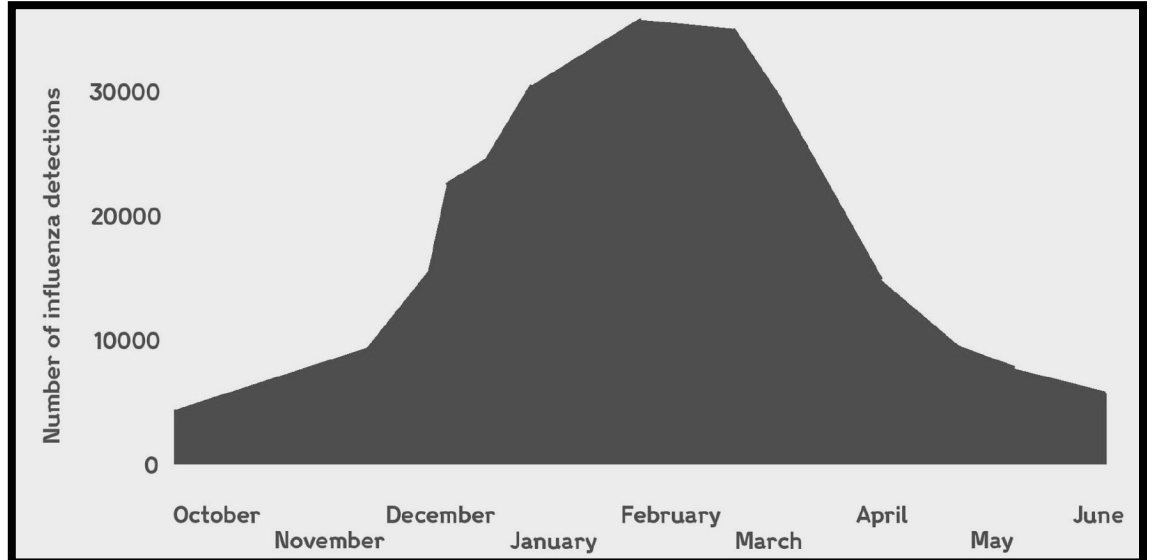
Additionally, he received a Grammy for Best Urban Album and Best Global Performance. He made history again with his performance at the Super Bowl LX Halftime Show being the most watched in history. These achievements have increased his popularity, benefiting his career overall.

**The U.S. South** was hit with a major winter storm on January 25. It brought heavy snowfall, icy roads, and freezing temperatures across the country, but heavily impacted southern states like Texas, Louisiana, and Tennessee.

The snow storm has caused thousands of school closings, power outages, supply shortages, and everyday life disruptions. Although the blizzard has disrupted millions of lives, communities around the U.S have united to work together to get the snow

**Minnesota citizens** In late January 2026, Minnesota faced intense chaos due to increased federal immigration enforcement. Within the span of two weeks last month, two American citizens were fatally shot and killed in Minneapolis. This had led to increased protest against the major deportation of undocumented immigrants by the Trump Administration and the presence of ICE agents in major cities. Additionally, community leaders, students, and activists organized rallies and marches calling for justice and changes to immigration policies. As the situation continues to develop, Minnesota remains at the center of a national conversation about immigration, public safety, and the role of the federal government.

## More Than Just a Cold: Inside the Super Flu Outbreak



GRAPH of flu cases throughout the year  
Photo via WHO.

**Madalina Champ**  
Reporter

Have your classmates been coughing excessively? Have your friends been out sick? According to PBS News, since the new year has started, the seasonal flu in the U.S. is spreading more than ever before with the emergence of the "super flu."

There have been at least 18 million cases, with 23,000 hospitalizations, and 9,300 deaths reported as of late January. Knowing this, it is crucial to know that when a person first catches it, they may not feel symptoms until about a week after, but are contagious throughout the entire time. And of course, this virus and its current reputation has caused fear in many people.

Many people may be wondering how to prevent contraction of the virus, what to do if they show symptoms, or if they just have the common cold. The best way to answer these questions is to understand more about the flu, especially this season.

The transmission of the new flu strain has impacted Westhill as well. Students have noted the increase of cases this year and have even been infected themselves.

"I noticed a very high amount because my family was recently sick," said Natalia Gibek ('27). "I've gotten it once before, but I've never been scared to get it because I have a strong immune system."

Although many are familiar with the flu, it is important to remember to continue to exercise the appropriate precautions at school and home, particularly this season with the emergence of the new flu strain.

This outburst has made a large impact globally, particularly in the U.S and Canada. According to the website, "Vaccines Work", these flu cases originated in Australia, during the time of July 2025, and was then evolved to be known as "H3N2 subtype", which is also called "subclade K". This strain is said to be accountable for over 90% of reported cases.

When infected, patients commonly develop high-grade fevers, leading to fatigue and weakness. Subclade K has been reported to have avoided the power of baseline immunities, making it significantly more infectious than most other flu strains. This information can

be overwhelming and confusing to many, but any sickness is to be approached with caution, especially the "super flu". In 2025, a survey given by the New York Post to 2,000 adults, showed that six in ten Americans ignore their symptoms of sickness. Many brush it off and don't treat it seriously. However, with the "super flu" spreading at a rapid rate, it is important to be aware of any and all signs and how to react if presenting any symptoms.

If you are infected, it's essential to obtain the correct medicine. Some helpful medicines include Tylenol (Acetaminophen), Advil (Ibuprofen), and saline mists. These can aid in reducing fevers, pain, and congestion.

The "super flu" is going around, infecting many in school, work, home, and countless other public spaces. This flu season, it is imperative that the proper precautions are met. By following the safety and treatment measures, communities like Westhill and Stamford will be protected from the new strain while being able to enjoy the winter season.