



THE FILIBUSTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

- Make the Lake America Again
- Trade War With Canada Turns Nasty
- Guard's Had Enough After a Year on DC's Streets
- Rubio's Visa Ban Torn Up by Judge
- Alaska's Ballot Has Two Dan Sullivans
- Jeffries's Secret Sit-Down With Kushner

One week, one lake, one very annoyed Canada. Here's what actually mattered in US politics this week, and why your exam board cares.

THE BIG STORY

MAKE THE LAKE AMERICA AGAIN

27 AUGUST 2026

Trump signed it. Lake Ontario, the Great Lake shared with Canada, is now “Lake America”, at least on paper, at least for the US government. The order gives the Interior Department thirty days to make it official with the federal naming board, though the new name already applies to federal use. He gave no real reason beyond years of trade grievance.

“Canada Has Been Ripping Us Off”

That's about as much justification as Trump offered. The order lands five days after trade talks with Canada collapsed and Washington slapped 50% tariffs on Canadian goods (see below). Ottawa isn't blinking: Prime Minister Mark Carney says the lake's name is “Lake Ontario, then, now and always”, and Ontario's premier says it will always be Lake Ontario “to all Canadians and the rest of the world.” Outside US paperwork, the rename has no legal force whatsoever, and it echoes Trump's January 2025 rebrand of the Gulf of Mexico as the “Gulf of America”, which foreign map-makers simply ignored.

WHY IT MATTERS No Congress needed: a president can rename a lake by executive order alone. But that same order stops dead at the Canadian border, a textbook gap between formal power (what a president is legally entitled to do) and informal power (what he can actually make stick).

SPECIFICATION LINKS Edexcel 9PL0 3A.3 (US Presidency); AQA 7152 3.2.1.3 (The executive branch of government: President).



Trade War With Canada Turns Nasty

22 AUGUST 2026

Talks collapsed at midnight, just before the deadline. Hours later, Trump hit \$20 billion of Canadian goods with 50% tariffs, dairy, booze, cement, even hockey gear. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer blamed Canada for rejecting agreed terms and tabling new demands that “upended the careful balance” of the deal; Trump posted that Canada wanted the perks of a close partner “without the responsibilities”, adding “No more!!!”

“You're at War When You Get Attacked”

Canada's PM Mark Carney wasn't in a diplomatic mood either, calling the last-minute US changes “unfair, uneconomic.” He's matching the tariffs “dollar for dollar” from 8 September, hitting US steel, dairy, appliances, farm equipment and electronics right back.

WHY IT MATTERS Tariffs are pure presidential power, no vote required. This is what happens when two heavily-trading neighbours both refuse to blink first.

SPECIFICATION LINKS Edexcel 9PLO 3A.3 (US Presidency); AQA 7152 3.2.1.3 (The executive branch of government: President).



Guard's Had Enough After a Year on DC's Streets

24 AUGUST 2026

A year in Washington DC, and the Guard is finally talking. Nearly 4,700 troops, mostly from Republican-led states, are still patrolling the capital under Trump's “crime emergency” order, now extended for the rest of his term, through to 2029.

“The Guard Is Being Exploited”

One veteran of over a decade's service put it bluntly: the original justification “no longer holds credibility after a year.” Another, who served in Afghanistan, said the mission turned “untenable for me emotionally” after Specialist Sarah Beckstrom was shot dead on duty last November. The bill so far: roughly \$3 million a day, with the Pentagon citing an extra \$1.4 billion to fund the extension.

WHY IT MATTERS Trump controls DC's Guard directly, no state governor can override him. A rare, genuine case of a president having his own standing force on home soil.

SPECIFICATION LINKS Edexcel 9PLO 3A.3 (US Presidency); AQA 7152 3.2.1.3 (The executive branch of government: President).

CHECKS ON THE EXECUTIVE



Rubio's Visa Ban Torn Up by Judge

22 AUGUST 2026

Marco Rubio's 75-country visa freeze didn't survive contact with a courtroom. Citizens of Afghanistan, Brazil, Yemen and dozens more had been blocked outright, even when a US consular officer had already decided a specific applicant was self-sufficient and no risk to public funds, the very justification the freeze was supposed to rest on.

“This Is Not a Challenging Case”

Judge Jeannette Vargas's verdict, in six words. A blanket ban applied “based solely on nationality”, she ruled, simply breaks the Immigration and Nationality Act 1952. Every visa refused under it is now void, though a State

Department spokesperson insisted the policy was only “protecting the American people by upholding the highest standards of screening.”

WHY IT MATTERS A cabinet secretary just got told, by a single judge, that even a president's own foreign policy priorities have to fit inside statute. Formal power has real limits.

SPECIFICATION LINKS Edexcel 9PLO 3A.3 (US Presidency) and 3A.4 (US Supreme Court and Civil Rights); AQA 7152 3.2.1.3 (The executive branch of government: President) and 3.2.1.4 (The judicial branch of government).

ELECTIONS, PARTIES AND VOTING RIGHTS



Alaska's Ballot Has Two Dan Sullivans

26 AUGUST 2026

Two candidates, same name, same ballot. Sitting Republican senator Dan S. Sullivan is now up against Dan J. Sullivan, a first-time candidate and retired teacher who only settled on being a Republican after qualifying to run, without setting out a single policy of his own. An election official first threw him off the ballot for filing purely to cause confusion; the state Supreme Court put him back on.

“Sham Candidate Sullivan”

That's the National Republican Senatorial Committee's own nickname for its newest candidate. The theory: split the Sullivan vote, hand the seat to Democratic-aligned former Representative Mary Peltola, a suspicion sharpened by reports that one of Peltola's own former consultants helped write his campaign material. Alaska runs an all-candidate “top-four” primary feeding into ranked-choice voting, a system meant to stop exactly this kind of vote-splitting trick, not enable it.

WHY IT MATTERS A live case study in how electoral systems get gamed rather than broken, and how far the law will let a state go in policing a candidate's motives, not just their eligibility.

SPECIFICATION LINKS Edexcel 9PLO 3A.5 (US Democracy and Participation) and 3A.6 (Comparative theories / UK-US comparative politics); AQA 7152 3.2.1.5 (The electoral process and direct democracy) and 3.2.2.4 (Comparative politics: electoral and party systems).



Jeffries's Secret Sit-Down With Kushner

24–26 AUGUST 2026

Trump's son-in-law, meet the top Democrat in the House. Hakeem Jeffries held a private meeting with Jared Kushner this week to talk housing, immigration and the cost of living, and his own party noticed immediately.

“To Stop the Madness”

Jeffries insists the meeting was tactical, not friendly, and about pushing “transformational” policy change rather than cosying up to the administration. Not everyone in his party is convinced: Senator Chris Van Hollen says he's open to dialogue, but former Obama aide Tommy Vietor says Democrats should be sending subpoenas, not RSVPs.

WHY IT MATTERS Every minority-party leader faces this exact bind: cooperate and risk looking weak, refuse and risk looking obstructive. Watch how Jeffries threads it before November.

SPECIFICATION LINKS Edexcel 9PLO 3A.5 (US Democracy and Participation); AQA 7152 3.2.1.6 (Political parties).

IN OTHER NEWS

Didn't make the cut, still worth five minutes of your own research:

- **USPS Tightens Mail Voting Rules** — days after a judge caught the administration breaking the last court order on the very same policy.
- **DOJ Hires a Convicted Election Hacker** — into the division meant to protect voting rights. No, really.
- **“Operation Economic Outcast”** — Washington's new sanctions campaign against Iran, 60 targets and counting.



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