

# The Day

More Than a Month: Celebrating our LGBTQIA+ community **Inside**

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## Inflation: A look at how we got here

### The high cost of hitting the road

A sampling of gasoline prices in southeast Connecticut and Westerly

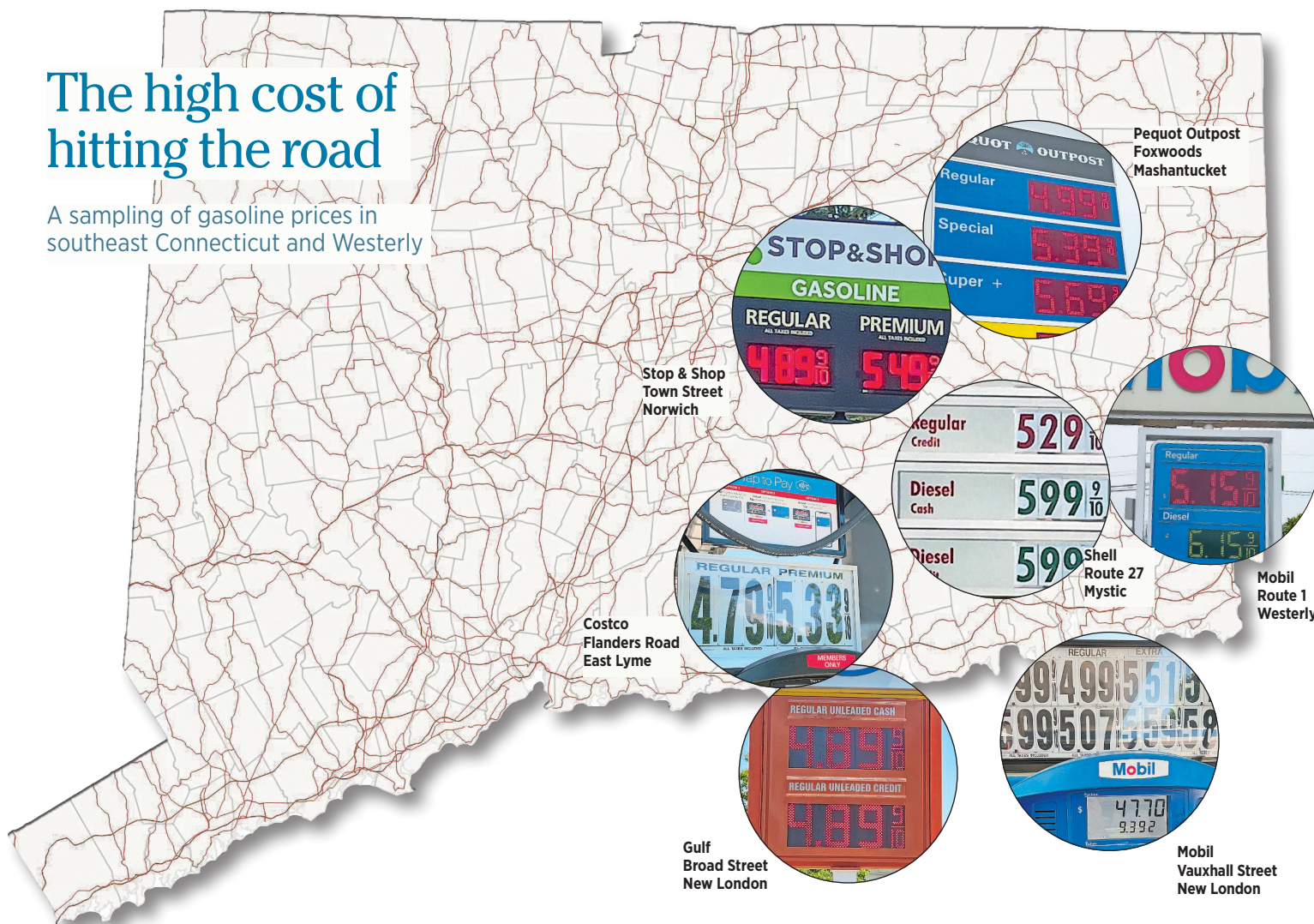


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT RITTER/THE DAY | PHOTOS TAKEN JUNE 9 BY DAY STAFF | MAP DATA: DEEP, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

### Economists talk about causes and what comes next

By ERICA MOSER  
Day Staff Writer

The average consumer probably isn't pondering how PepsiCo controls more than 80% of the dip market when they're standing in the grocery store picking up a Tostitos creamy spinach dip for a cookout or Super Bowl party.

But when setting the backdrop for a conversation about the factors in inflation — which economists mainly cite as pandemic-induced disruptions in supply and demand and the war in Ukraine, with dispute over the impact of stimulus packages — lack of market competition is something economist Fred Carstensen can't emphasize enough. He cites the impacts of the United States largely abandoning antitrust policy over the past 40 years.

"In the absence of competition, you're not disciplined," said Carstensen, director of the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis at the University of Connecticut. "You don't have to cut costs; you don't have to worry about competitors coming in and taking market share away."

He said this is directly relevant to current inflation, because while there are other drivers, big companies can raise their prices because they can get away with it.

With the official measure of inflation at 8.6% but the unemployment rate at 3.6%, the Federal Reserve faces a balancing act: Can the banking system raise interest rates enough to cool inflation but not so much it causes a recession?

The Consumer Price Index for May was up 8.6% over last year and higher in certain categories: 106.7% for fuel oil, 48.7% for gasoline, 16.1% for used cars and trucks, and 11.9% for groceries. Except for used vehicles, the increases for these categories were higher than the year-over-year spikes in April, and inflation is at its highest level since 1981.

Veteran Connecticut economist Don Klepper-Smith, of DataCore  
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## \$5 a gallon gas is here, and price could keep rising

Connecticut offering some relief with its suspension of 25-cents-a-gallon excise tax



By BRIAN HALLENBECK  
Day Staff Writer

Average gasoline prices in the state and nation hovered around \$5 a gallon late this past week, showing no sign of ending their steady, monthslong climb and leaving Connecticut drivers to calculate what they'd be paying if the state hadn't suspended its 25-cents-a-gallon excise tax through November.

On Thursday, the national average surpassed the \$5 mark for the first

time ever, according to GasBuddy, a price-tracking platform, while AAA pegged it at \$4.97.

In Connecticut, where Gov. Ned Lamont signed a bill March 24 suspending the state's excise tax on gas from April 1 to June 30 and lawmakers from both parties later supported extending the suspension until Dec. 1, Thursday's average price was \$4.95.

That also was the average price in the New London-Norwich area,

where it was up from \$4.71 a week earlier, \$4.33 a month earlier and \$3.10 a year earlier, according to AAA.

In the region, a random sampling of service stations showed prices ranging from a low of \$4.79 at Costco in East Lyme to a high of \$5.19 at the Shell station at 242 Greenmanville Ave. (Route 27) in Mystic. Across the border in Rhode Island, where lawmakers are considering suspending the state's 35-cents-a-gallon gas tax through the end of the year, a Westerly Mobil station was charging \$5.15.

Have all gas station owners been abiding by the rules of Connecticut's gas-tax holiday?

### HOW MUCH ARE YOU PAYING?

When you're getting gas, snap a picture at the pump and send it to us. Include name of station, location, date and price per gallon. Email the picture to k.florin@theday.com with gas photo in the subject line.

As of Thursday, state Attorney General William Tong's office had received 227 complaints about potential price-gouging, according to a spokeswoman for the office, Elizabeth  
**SEE GAS PAGE A6**



DANIEL PASSAPERA/SPECIAL TO THE DAY  
Jayce Phillistin, 11, poses next to his portrait at the Regional Multicultural Magnet School in New London.

## 'Hair Love': New London kids take pride in their natural hair

Magnet school teacher coordinates photo exhibit including 31 children

By ERICA MOSER  
Day Staff Writer

New London — Liz Quiñones stood in the Regional Multicultural Magnet School library clicking through a slideshow of elementary student faces — smiling radiantly, staring hopefully into the distance or with arms crossed in a power pose. They sported all sorts of hairstyles: braids, twists, locs, Bantu knots, cornrows or hair down, some styled with colorful barrettes or beads, and some with carefully styled laid edges.

Whether Black, Latino, Native American or a mix of cultures, each has a story about their hair. A 21-year

teacher at RMMS in her first year as a library media teacher, Quiñones knows these stories, offering comments as she clicked through the slideshow.

"She was sassy." "Him, he said he didn't love his hair for a long time, and now he wears an afro." "She thanked me the most for including her. I'm like, 'You don't need to thank me; thank YOU.'" "He's been growing his locs since first grade."

With the help of photographers Deisha Quiñones — her eldest daughter — and Dro Lopez, a grant from the RMMS Foundation, Tony Sabilla of Fastsigns for photo printing, and 31 willing students, Liz Quiñones spearheaded a months-in-the-making photo exhibit to highlight the beautiful hair of students who may have a complicated relationship with their tresses.



Zola Campbell, 7, poses next to her portrait, top right, alongside several others to highlight the beauty of natural hair textures and styles.

DANIEL PASSAPERA  
SPECIAL TO THE DAY

The photos now line hallways outside the library and will be there indefinitely. Third grader Orion Cort said he

likes his hair and the reason he keeps it long is because he's Native American. But a kid once asked him what  
**SEE PHOTOS PAGE A4**

### WEATHER

Today, thickening clouds, showers possible late. High 70. Monday, some p.m. sun. High 76. **E6**

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### Biking with the bare essentials



EDUARDO VERDUGO/AP PHOTO

Naked cyclists ride through the streets of Mexico City on Saturday during the World Naked Bike Ride day.

### THOUSANDS DEMAND NEW GUN SAFETY LAWS

Washington — Thousands of people rallied on the National Mall and across the United States on Saturday in a renewed push for gun control measures after recent deadly mass shootings from Uvalde, Texas, to Buffalo, N.Y., that activists say should compel Congress to act.

"Enough is enough," District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser told the second March for Our Lives rally in her city. "I speak as a mayor, a mom, and I speak for millions of Americans and America's mayors who are demanding that Congress do its job."

Speaker after speaker in Washington called on senators, who are seen as a major impediment to legislation, to act or face being voted out of office, especially given the shock to the nation's conscience after 19 children and two teachers were killed May 24 at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde.  
**See A3**

### UKRAINE: RUSSIA SAID TO USE MORE DEADLY WEAPONS

Kyiv, Ukraine — Ukrainian and British officials warned Saturday that Russian forces are relying on weapons able to cause mass casualties as they try to make headway in capturing eastern Ukraine and fierce, prolonged fighting depletes resources on both sides.

Russian bombers have likely been launching heavy 1960s-era anti-ship missiles in Ukraine, the U.K. Defense Ministry said. The Kh-22 missiles were primarily designed to destroy aircraft carriers using a nuclear warhead. When used in ground attacks with conventional warheads, they "are highly inaccurate and therefore can cause severe collateral damage and casualties," the ministry said.

Both sides have expended large amounts of weaponry in a grinding war of attrition for the eastern region known as the Donbas.  
**See A3**



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