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Seeking clarity on what the state's electricity market buys us

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Advocates for retail energy suppliers should be viewed skeptically

Re ["Giving consumers a choice when buying their electricity"](#) (Opinion, Nov. 29): Scot Lehigh takes competitive electric supplier advocates at face value, which is like believing a wolf who promises not to eat you.

Lehigh is right that commercial customers benefit from competitive electricity. No one is proposing ending the market for them. Rather, legislation by state [Representative Frank A. Moran](#) and state [Senator Brendan P. Crighton](#) would ban suppliers from signing up new residential customers.

In residential markets, many suppliers have a history of predatory behavior. Salespeople pretend to be from the local utility. Variable rates increase dramatically after a promotional period. The best [data](#) we have from the state attorney general's office suggest suppliers have never been cheaper than basic service in the long run.

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Lehigh's claim that competitive electric suppliers advance climate goals is misleading. Many suppliers [use](#) cheaper credits from other states that don't support clean energy in Massachusetts. Lehigh also does not mention that [176 cities and towns in the Commonwealth](#) offer residents electricity through municipal aggregation. Many of these programs offer 100 percent renewable plans, often cheaper than suppliers and without any of the predatory practices.

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Don't be swayed by industry-funded reports and talking points. Massachusetts needs to curb the residential competitive electricity market and encourage municipal aggregation.

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Larry Chretien
Executive director
Green Energy Consumers Alliance
Boston

The alliance is a nonprofit organization that contracts with Class I renewable energy generators, purchasing renewable energy certificates that it sells in the retail market.

Claims of green benefits may be exaggerated

Columnist Scot Lehigh cannot be blamed for being somewhat swayed by paid advocates for the retail electric supply industry, who make a compelling case for letting customers pick where to get their electricity. [After gobbling up half a billion dollars more from Bay State residents](#) than they would otherwise have paid from 2015 to 2021, the retail supply industry may well have the best spin doctors money can buy.

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Lehigh asserts that calls to ban the industry in Massachusetts are an overreaction and that the state's residential retail market should be fixed, not eliminated. After all, retail suppliers offer clean power from renewable sources to customers who are willing to pay more for electricity. Except, that's not exactly true.

Customers are only paying a retail supplier a fee to purchase clean energy credits. Recently, the Boston-based National Consumer Law Center was a signatory to [a letter](#) that consumer organizations sent to the Federal Trade Commission about "greenwashing." Selling energy with exaggerated claims of environmental benefits only hinders efforts to address climate change through electrification.

Finally, in support of legislation to protect residential electric customers in Massachusetts, NCLC staff attorney Jenifer Bosco [testified](#) in 2020 that the industry uses deceptive marketing practices to target "low-income consumers, older adults, and those with limited English language proficiency."

Gary Meltz
Executive director
Power for Tomorrow
Washington, D.C.

Power for Tomorrow is a national trade association that advocates for regulation of electric utilities.

Having choice to purchase renewable energy is important to her family

I urge Massachusetts state leaders to keep the program that gives residents a choice of electricity vendors.

It is important to me that our family does what we can to reduce our family's carbon use. Since we have been able to purchase renewable energy, I have bought an electric hybrid car and converted our kitchen stove from gas to electric — both powered primarily by wind energy.

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It would be a major step backward for Massachusetts to remove this option and force us to use nonrenewable energy.

Kathy Modigliani
Arlington

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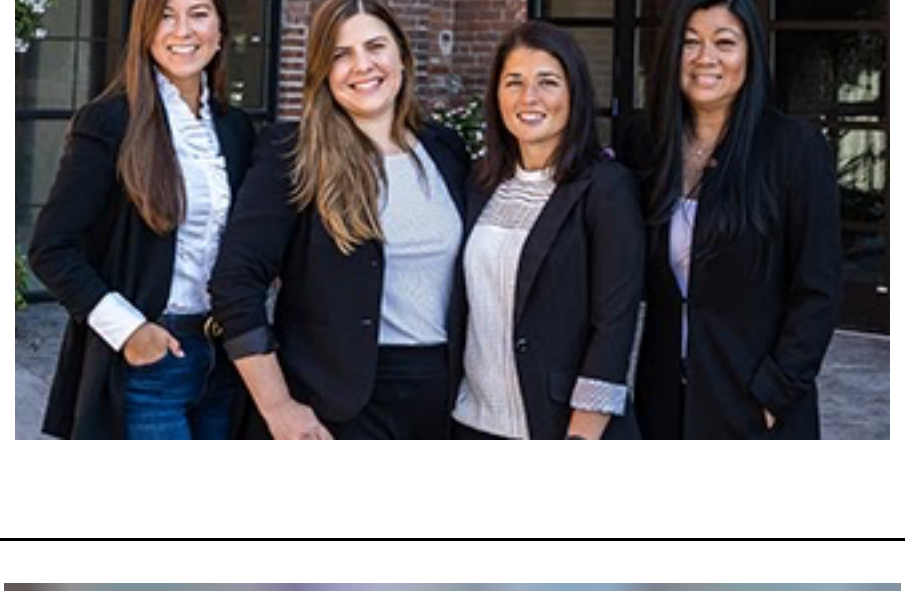
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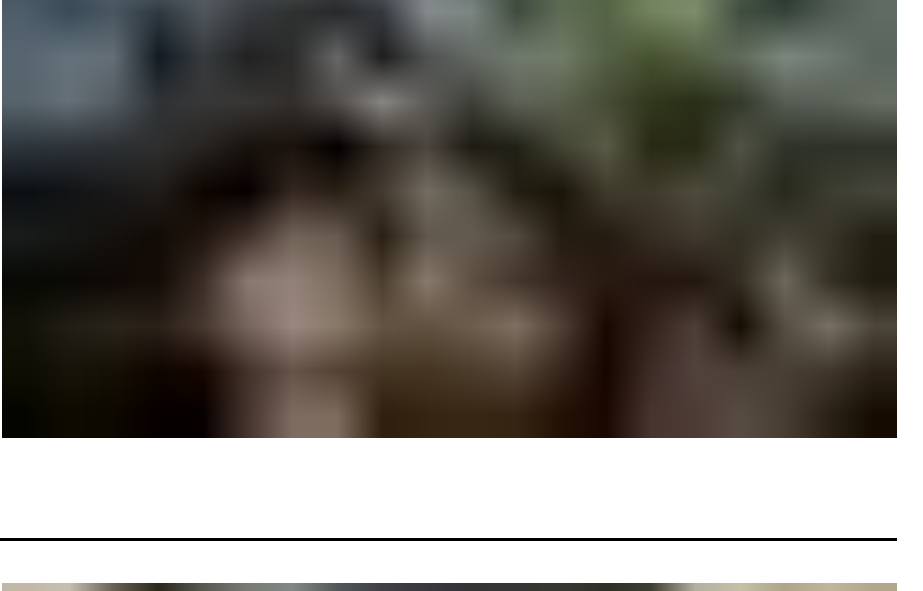
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OPINION

Rescuing universities from themselves: A five-point plan
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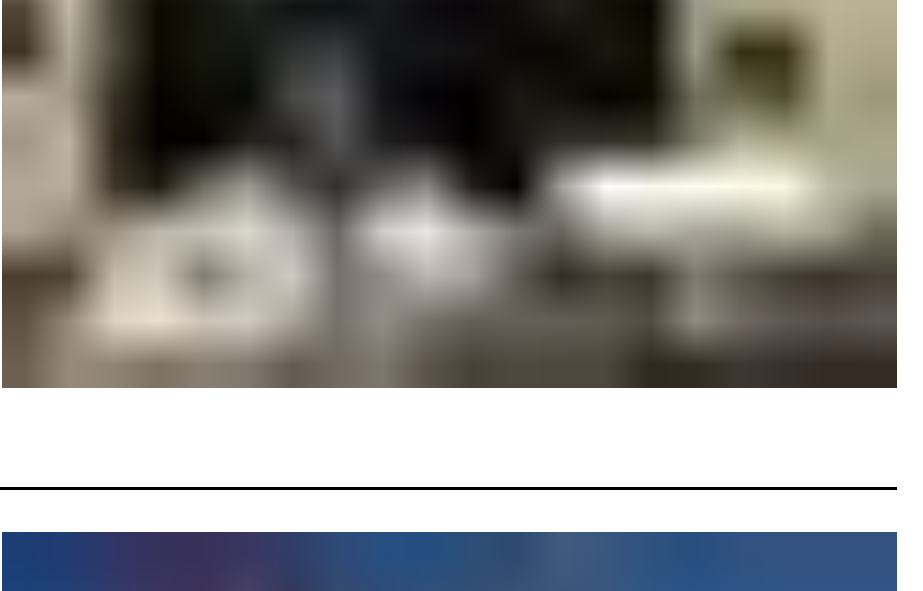
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The Patriots of old would say, "The season begins after Thanksgiving," but this season is done two weeks before Christmas.



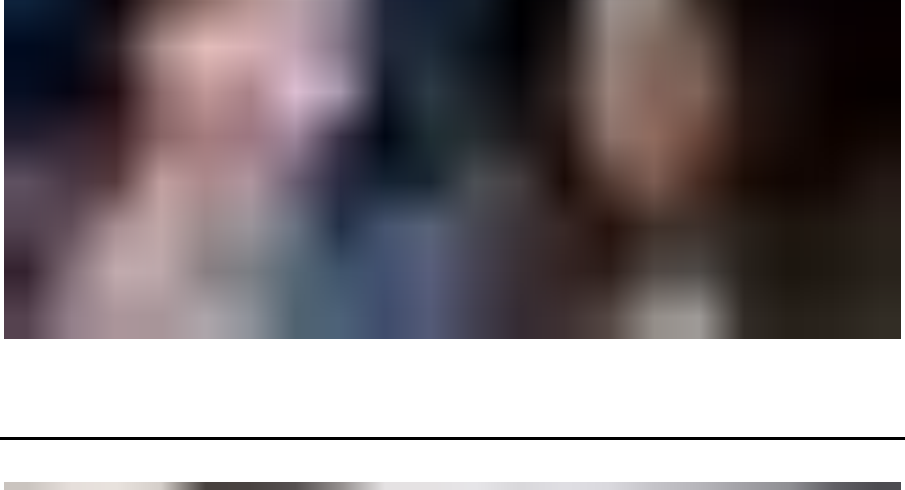
Dueling letters, 'academic integrity' claims add to furor over Harvard President Claudine Gay as key board meets

One Harvard professor said that "literally hundreds of emails" and multiple open letters are circulating within the Harvard community, "some calling on the Corporation to ask Claudine to resign, others calling on it to keep her."



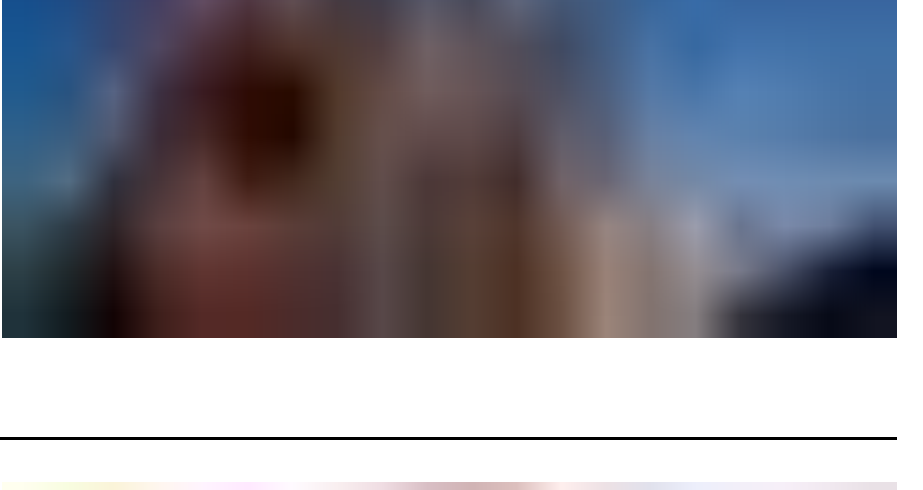
Congressman Jamie Raskin slams fellow Harvard alum Elise Stefanik over antisemitism questioning

A prominent Democrat in the House, Raskin said the threat to democracy posed by current Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump is directly linked to the "national uproar over antisemitism."



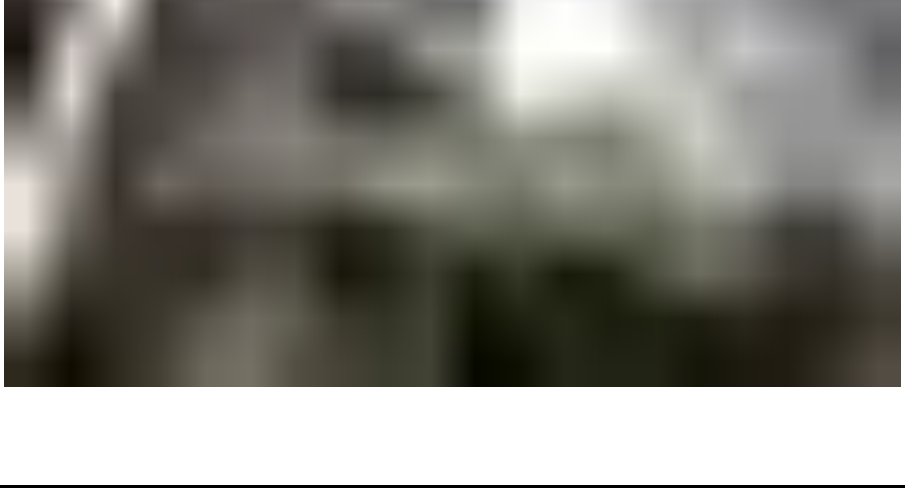
State Street plans to lay off 1,500 employees

The company will incur about \$175 million-\$200 million in severance costs associated with the layoffs, said vice chairman and chief financial officer Eric About.



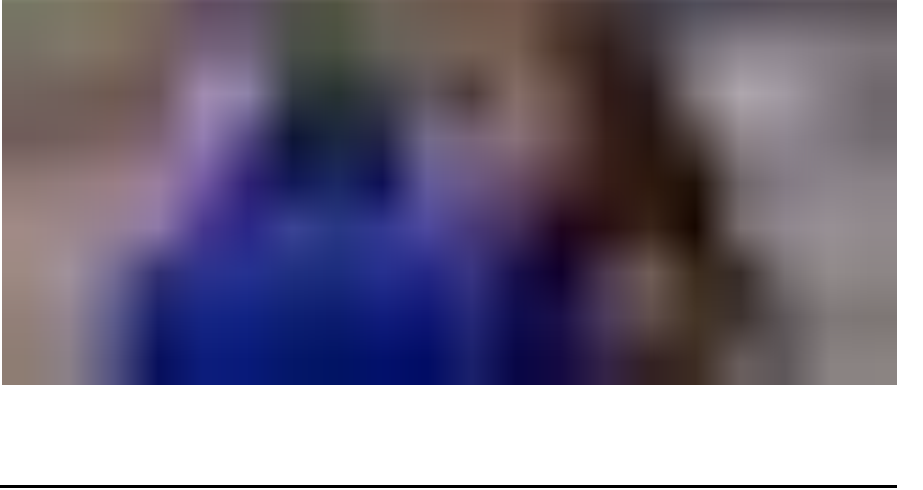
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With amped-up rhetoric and an almost singular focus, President Biden and his campaign have been going after Donald Trump far more aggressively the past several weeks before any Republican primary votes even have been cast.



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There's no Christmas tree this year at the Macy's downtown

The tree at Macy's has long been a part of the holiday scene in Downtown Crossing, and the lighting ceremony became an annual event that drew crowds of revelers.



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