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Wednesday, Oct. 23

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, oriental blend, apple, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Baked potato bar with toppings.

Community Coffee Hour at United Methodist Church, 9:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m. (Service event)

At some point you just have to let go of what you thought should happen and live in what is happening.



Thursday, Oct. 24

Senior Menu: New England ham dinner, 7 layer salad, peaches, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, garlic toast.

Football Playoffs: Groton Area hosts St. Thomas More, 6 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 25

Senior Menu: Potato soup, ham salad croissant, tomato spoon salad, fruit.

School Breakfast: Breakfast cookie.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tri taters.

Volleyball hosts Redfield (7th/C at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)

Saturday, Oct. 26

State Cross Country at Rapid City
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Ex-A&F Chief Arrested

Former Abercrombie & Fitch CEO Mike Jeffries was arrested on federal sex trafficking and interstate prostitution charges yesterday. Jeffries, who led the clothing retailer from 1992 to 2014, his romantic partner Matthew Smith, and his business associate James Jacobson each face one count of sex trafficking as well as 15 counts of interstate prostitution.

The arrest comes one year after a BBC investigation revealed that from 2008 to 2015, Jeffries allegedly used the company to create a sex trafficking operation by promising young men modeling jobs in exchange for attending parties where they were coerced into sexual acts. The indictment says the men were given alcohol, muscle relaxants, Viagra, and other items at the parties. An alleged victim filed a civil lawsuit shortly after the report against the retailer. Jeffries has not responded to the allegations.

If convicted, they could each face 15 years to life in prison for sex trafficking and up to 20 years for interstate prostitution.

Claude's New Tricks

Amazon-backed startup Anthropic revealed yesterday it has trained a version of its AI model Claude to perform a range of computer tasks, including browsing the web, opening applications, and imitating keyboard strokes and button clicks. The new ability, called "computer use," expands Claude from a chatbot to an AI agent—a bot designed for specific tasks on behalf of a person.

Anthropic also released a set of prerecorded videos yesterday to demonstrate how the computer use tool can be used for specific functions, including coding a 1990s-themed webpage, planning a morning hike with a friend that includes a view of the Golden Gate Bridge. and filling out a spreadsheet using information spread across someone's computer.

Computer use is still in the experimental phase and has been released for developer feedback. Design startup Canva and food delivery giant DoorDash are among the partners who have already begun testing the upgraded Claude 3.5 Sonnet.

How Smell Affects Breathing

People without a sense of smell breathe differently from those who can smell, according to a new study released yesterday. The results shed light on the extent to which sense of smell might impact long-term health, as it is common for people who lose that sense to suffer serious health issues.

The study involved a group of individuals born without the sense of smell—also known as congenital anosmia—who wore a device over their nose for a 24-hour day to track air flow data. While their breathing rate varied little compared to a control group, the data revealed the anosmic cohort sniffed four times on average over the course of a single, continuous breath, while healthy individuals sniffed roughly nine times. The difference allowed scientists to accurately predict 83% of the time whether an individual could smell or not.

The loss of smell from infections, head trauma, or smoking is much more common than congenital anosmia—just one in every 10,000 people is born without a sense of smell. Roughly a fifth of the population experiences smell loss throughout life.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Queen Latifah, Steven Spielberg, and Missy Elliott among 39 recipients of 2022 and 2023 US National Medals of Arts and Humanities; singer Selena and chef Anthony Bourdain received posthumous awards. Dick Pope, two-time Oscar-nominated cinematographer, dies at age 77. Mimi Hines, veteran Broadway actress, singer, and comedian, dies at age 91. One Direction's Liam Payne reportedly had "pink cocaine" in his system at the time of his Oct. 16 death.

Science & Technology

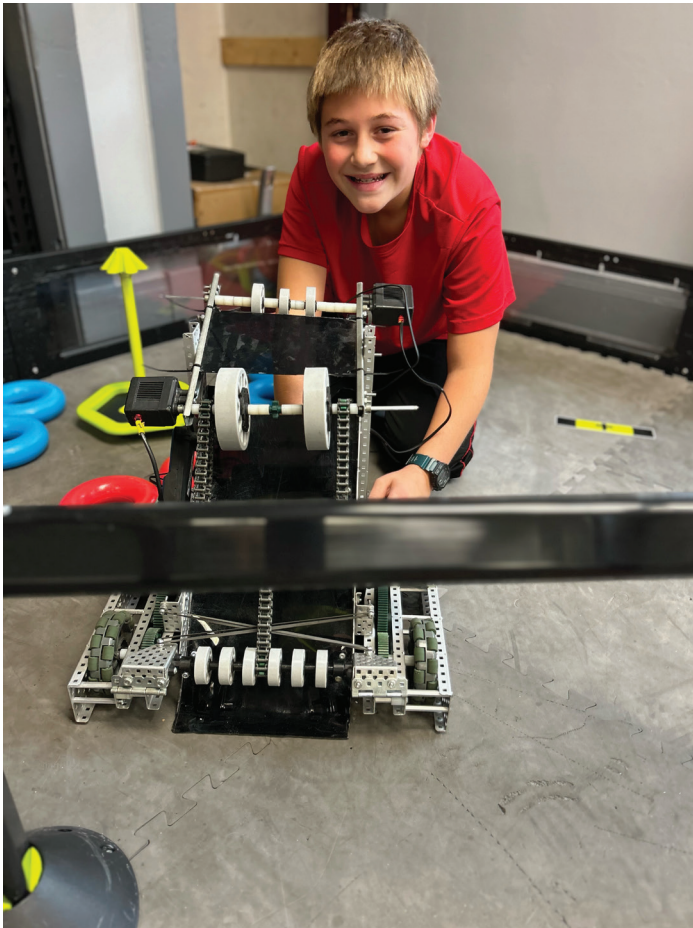
FAA approves regulations permitting electric vertical takeoff vehicles, or eVTOLs, opening the door for an emerging air taxi industry; marks the first new category of aircraft recognized since 1940. Oriental hornets have the highest alcohol tolerance in the animal kingdom, new study suggests; insects can consume diets of up to 80% ethanol with no side effects. Study details how the geometric shapes on dogs' noses begin forming during fetal development; structures help retain moisture and odor chemicals.

Business & Markets

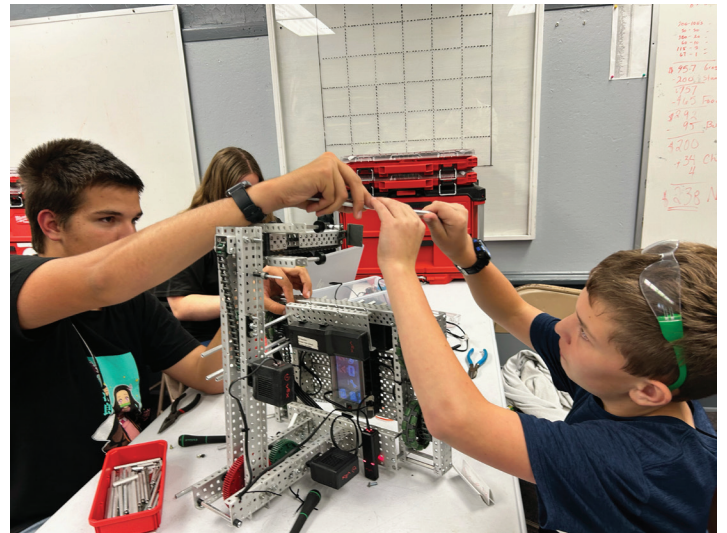
US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.1%, Dow -0.0%, Nasdaq +0.2%) amid election uncertainty, questions over the Federal Reserve's plan to cut interest rates. HSBC to divide into four divisions, separating Asian and European markets; Europe's largest lender also names its first female CFO. BlackRock releases two new exchange-traded funds capitalizing on AI boom, one on AI and tech stocks, the other on software and hardware used to power AI. Walmart to launch same-day prescription delivery program. Denny's to shutter one-tenth of its diners—or 150 restaurants—and reduce operating hours. Buybuy Baby to close all stores, move all operations online by end of year.

Politics & World Affairs

Over 20 countries gather at BRICS, Russian President Vladimir Putin's summit for emerging economies seen as counterweight to US-led G-7; participating countries—including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—account for over one-quarter of global economy. US Justice Department charges Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps general and three others in plot to murder Iranian-American journalist. Former NYC mayor and Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani (R) ordered to relinquish valuables including NYC apartment in Georgia election case. Israel says airstrike this month killed presumed successor to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah; Hezbollah has not commented. FBI investigates leak on Israel's preparations to retaliate against Iran.



9050E -Team Galaxy- Being Represented by Ayce Warrington. (Courtesy Photo)



9050B - Gearheads - Being represented by Logan Clocksene- Emmett Zoellner - Kira Clocksene. (Courtesy Photo)

Groton Robotics prepare for first tournament

The Groton Robotics program is off to an exciting start this 2024–2025 season! To start we are excited to announce a new annual Robotics scholarship available to Groton Robotics seniors! Thank you to the Groton Community and anonymous donors for helping sponsor this award for the future of this program!

Our first tournament of the season will take place on October 26, 2024 in Box Elder, South Dakota, just outside of Rapid City. The students are putting the final touches to the robots, as well as finishing engineering notebooks. For the first time, the students are sketching their designs digitally using Google slides versus paper form.

Future Tournaments and Events for 2024:
Box Elder Tournament- 10/26/2024
Harrisburg Tournament - 11/23/2024
Mitchell Corn Palace - 12/7/2024

Stay tuned for more events and our annual pancake feed fundraiser in 2025!

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Haven powers down 22 points as Northwestern beats Groton Area

Junior Ashley Haven powered down 15 kills, three blocks and four ace serves as Northwestern defeated Groton Area in volleyball action played Tuesday in Mellette, 3-0.

Northwestern won the first set, 25-18, in a game that was tied seven times and there were four lead changes before the Wildcats took over for the win. Groton Area had a six point run in the second set, only to be outdone by Northwestern with an eight point run as the Wildcats won the second set, 25-16. The third set was more intense; although Northwestern jumped out to a 5-0 lead. Groton Area would tie the game at 12 and would take the lead at 14-13. The Tigers kept the lead until it was tied at 24. Northwestern scored the last two points and would win the set, 26-24.

Scoring for Groton Area:

Jaedyn Penning: 7 kills, 3 ace serves, 14 digs; Faith Traphagen: 7 kills, 1 block assist; Chesney Weber: 5 kills, 2 ace serves, 19 assists; Rylee Dunker: 5 kills, 1 block; Taryn Traphagen: 5 kills, 1 block assist; Laila Roberts: 1 kill, 1 ace serve, 10 digs; Jerica Locke: 13 digs; Elizabeth Fliehs: 6 assists.

Scoring for Northwestern Area:

Ashley Haven: 15 kills 4 ace serves, 3 blocks; Breelyn Satter: 6 kills, 3 ace serves; Ella Boekelheide: 4 kills, 1 ace serves, 12 digs, 24 assists; Anna Brumfield: 4 kills, 1 block; Nicolette Nickeson: 2 kills, 10 digs; Payton Grandpre: 1 ace serve.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 2-1. The first set was tied six times and there were two lead changes as Northwestern won it, 25-23. The second set was tied nine times and the lead changed hands seven times as Groton Area won it, 25-22. Groton Area dominated the third set, taking a 14-8 lead and hanging on to win, 15-12.

Emerlee Jones had six kills while Kella Tracy and Makenna Krause each had five kills, McKenna Tietz had four kills, Talli Wright had four ace serves and one kill, Liby Althoff had five kills and Addison Hoeft had three kills.

Taylor Vetter led Northwestern with 10 kills and one block while Kyara Ratigan had four kills, two blocks and one ace serve; Molly Van Hatten had five kills and one ace serve, Mikaela Schmitt had four kills and two ace serves, Layla Ortmeier had two kills and one ace serve, and Chesnie Heim and Abigail Holmberg each had one kill.

The varsity match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Fans of Jaedyn Penning, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms and The Meathouse in Andover. The junior varsity match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Adam and Nicole Wright.

- Paul Kosel

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No. 22 Wolves Send the Marauders Home in Three

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 22 Northern State University volleyball team downed the University of Mary on Tuesday evening with set scores of 25-22, 25-11, and 25-19. The win moves the Wolves into sixth in the league standings with four weeks remaining in the regular season.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 3, MARY 0

Records: NSU 14-4 (6-4 NSIC), MARY 4-15 (2-9 NSIC)

Attendance: 386

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves found their stride in the second set, hitting .367 with 13 kills, while holding the Marauders to a -0.028 attack percentage with nine forced errors

In total, NSU recorded a match leading 46 kills, 44 assists, 61 digs, and six aces

Three starters hit above .300 in the win, led by Abby Brooks with a .538 attack percentage and team second best nine kills

Hanna Thompson led the team with 11 kills, followed by Natalia Szybinska with nine and Victoria Persha and Morissen Samuels with eight each

Persha and Szybinska hit .368 and .350 respectively, while Persha led the team with three blocks

Abby Meister led two in double figures defensive with 23 digs, averaging over seven per set, followed by Reese Johnson with 13

Keri Walker paced the offense to their best hitting percentage in league play, dishing out 42 assists; she averaged 14.00 per set and added nine digs, two blocks, one ace, and one kill

Mia Hinsz and Meister led the team at the service line with two aces each

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Hanna Thompson: 11 kills, 1 block, 1 dig

Abby Brooks: 9 kills, .538 attack%, 1 block

Natalia Szybinska: 9 kills, .350 attack%, 1 dig

Keri Walker: 42 assists, 9 digs, 2 blocks, 1 kill, 1 ace

Abby Meister: 23 digs, 2 aces, 2 assists

UP NEXT

Northern State welcomes a pair of top-25 match-ups this weekend in No. 3 St. Cloud State and No. 25 Minnesota Duluth. Start times against the he Huskies and Bulldogs are set for Friday and Saturday at 6 p.m. and 3 p.m. respectively.

Charles Mix County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 46, mile marker 287, one mile west of Wagner, SD

When: 2:40 p.m., Monday, October 21, 2024

Driver 1: Female, 87 years old from Wagner, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 2021 Subaru Outback

Seat Belt Used: Under investigation

Passenger 1: 94 years old from Wagner, SD, fatal injuries

Seat Belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 2: Male, 65 years old from Piedmont, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 2: 2023 Peterbilt 389 tractor/trailer

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Charles Mix County, S.D.- A 94-year-old man died in a two-vehicle collision yesterday near Wagner, SD.

The names of the people involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2021 Subaru Outback and the driver of a 2023 Peterbilt 389 tractor/trailer were both westbound on SD Highway 46 just west of Wagner. The driver of the Outback pulled over and began a U-turn, colliding with the Peterbilt.

The driver of the Outback was flown to a Sioux Falls hospital with serious, non-life-threatening injuries. Her passenger was taken to the Wagner Community Hospital with injuries, but passed away a short time later. The driver of the Peterbilt had no injuries.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

McCook County Fatal Crash

What: Three vehicle fatal crash

Where: Interstate 90, mile marker 366, two mile southeast of Salem, SD

When: 7:13 a.m., Sunday, October 20, 2024

Driver 1: 26-year-old female from Canistota, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2002 Mazda Protege

Seat Belt Used: No

Driver 2: 56-year-old male from Alexandria, SD, minor injuries

Vehicle 2: 2005 Dodge Ram

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Driver 3: 44-year-old male from Milesville, SD, serious, injuries not reported

Vehicle 3: 1995 Peterbilt Semi with livestock trailer

Seat Belt Used: Not reported

McCook County, S.D.- A Canistota, SD woman died Sunday morning in a three-vehicle collision 2 miles southeast of Salem, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2002 Mazda Protege was traveling westbound on Interstate 90 near mile marker 366 when her vehicle left the roadway and collided into a start of a guardrail, then re-entered the roadway, where the driver of a 2005 Dodge Ram collided with the rear end of the Mazda. A Peterbilt semi then collided with the front of the Mazda.

The driver of the Mazda was airlifted to a Sioux Falls hospital where she was pronounced deceased. The driver of the Dodge Ram sustained minor injuries. No injuries were reported for the driver of the Peterbilt. Alcohol is considered to be a factor in the initial collision with the guardrail.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

NOTICE OF SALE

November 9th, 2024, at 10:00 AM

State Nebraska Bank & Trust vs Brian Dolan & Kristen Dolan

(06CIV22-000424-01)

2012 Chevy Avalanche



An Execution of Judgement in the above referenced matter was received by the Brown County Sheriff's Office on January 3rd, 2024. The amount of the Judgment is \$33,157.48, \$260.50 Cost, \$373.39 Pre-Judgement interest, plus continuing costs, and interest, as provided by law. This amount does not include Sheriff's Office fees and costs related to this matter. The property to be sold pursuant to the Execution is: 2012 Chevy Avalanche, VIN 3GNTKFE79CG124632. Odometer Reading: 206,206.

THIS PROPERTY WILL BE AUCTIONED AND SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, WITH THE SALE BEING FINAL, SOLD AS IS WITH NO WARRANTIES EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED. CASH IS REQUIRED ON THE DAY OF SALE.

The sale will be held at the Brown County Court House, 101 1st Ave SE, Aberdeen, SD 57401 on November 9th, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

DAVE LUNZMAN, SHERIFF OF BROWN COUNTY.

By: Nate Smith, Deputy, 605-626-7100 ext. 509.



SDHSSCA 2024 Class "A" All-State Soccer Team

Groton Area has five soccer players named to the South Dakota High School Soccer Coaches Association All-State Team. They are senior Laila Roberts, first team; senior Brooklyn Hansen, honorable mention; junior Gage Sippel, honorable mention; senior Kennedy Hansen, first team; and sophomore McKenna Tietz, first team. (Photo from Groton Area Facebook Page)



Three advance to State Cross Country

Jayden Schwan, Faith Traphagen and Ryelle Gilbert have qualified for the state cross country meet to be held Saturday at Hart Ranch, Rapid City.

The girls race begins at 1:30 p.m. CT and the boys at 3 p.m. CT.

Pictured are Ryelle Gilbert, Jayden Schwan and Faith Traphagen. (Photo from Groton Area Facebook Page)

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**We'll be publishing each ballot measure in the GDI.
Today it's Referred Law 21**

2024 Statewide Ballot Measures

Underscores indicate new language.

~~Overstrikes~~ indicate deleted language.

Referred Law 21

Title: A Referred Act to Provide New Statutory Requirements for Regulating Linear Transmission Facilities, to Allow Counties to Impose a Surcharge on Certain Pipeline Companies, and to Establish a Landowner Bill of Rights.

Attorney General Explanation: The Act authorizes counties to impose, for any tax year in which the pipeline operator receives a tax credit, a \$1.00 per foot surcharge on carbon dioxide pipelines. Revenue from the surcharge must be distributed as tax relief to each property owner in the county where the pipeline is installed. Any remaining revenue can be allocated at each county's discretion. No other fee may be imposed except property taxes, or fees associated with road agreements.

The Act also imposes certain requirements on carbon dioxide pipelines: pipelines must be installed to a minimum depth; each pipeline operator is responsible for damages to drain tile, and to the surface owner, caused by the pipeline; each operator is also responsible for leaks or failures of the pipeline; and any land agent acting on behalf of the pipeline must be a pipeline employee, State resident, or State licensed real estate agent. The Act also includes requirements that carbon pipeline easements be in writing, and only enforceable for a specified period of time; pipeline operators must initiate business operations within five years of the easement; and each easement is void after five years of nonuse.

Vote "Yes" to allow the Act of the Legislature to become law.

Vote "No" to reject the Act of the Legislature.

Full Text of Referred Law 21:

An Act to provide new statutory requirements for regulating linear transmission facilities, to allow counties to impose a surcharge on certain pipeline companies, and to establish a landowner bill of rights.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

Section 1. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 10-4:

Pipelines for the transmission of carbon dioxide are not subject to any discretionary formulas authorized by this title.

Section 2. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 10-12:

A county may impose a pipeline surcharge up to one dollar per linear foot of carbon dioxide pipeline installed in the county, during any tax year that the carbon dioxide pipeline company claims a tax credit pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 45Q (January 1, 2024).

For each county where a carbon dioxide pipeline company has installed a pipeline, the company shall report to the county the linear footage of carbon dioxide pipeline installed in the county.

A carbon dioxide pipeline company shall remit the pipeline surcharge to each applicable county in the same manner as provided for the payment of property taxes in chapter 10-21. The revenue derived from the pipeline surcharge must be distributed as follows:

(1) At least fifty percent as tax relief for property in the county where the carbon dioxide pipeline is located pro rata on a per foot basis to each property in the county upon which the pipeline is installed; and

(2) The remaining revenue to be allocated as determined by the county.

Section 3. That § 10-37-3 be AMENDED:

10-37-3. Any pipeline company having lines in this state shall annually, on or before April fifteenth of each year, make out and deliver to the Department of Revenue a statement, verified by the oath of an officer or agent of such pipeline company making such statement, showing in detail for the year ended December thirty-first next preceding:

(1) The name of the company;

(2) The nature of the company, whether a person or persons, an association, copartnership, corporation or syndicate, and under the laws of what state organized;

(3) The location of its principal office or place of business;

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(4) The name and post office address of the president, secretary, auditor, treasurer, and superintendent or general manager;

(5) The name and post office address of the chief officer or managing agent in this state;

(6) The whole number of miles of pipeline owned, operated, or leased within the state, including a classification of the size, kind, and weight thereof, separated, so as to show the mileage in each county, and each lesser taxing district;

(7) A full and complete statement of the cost and actual present value of all buildings of every description owned by said pipeline company within the state and each lesser taxing district, not otherwise assessed;

(8) The number, location, size, and cost of each pressure pump or station;

(9) Any and all other property owned by said pipeline company within the state which property shall be classified and scheduled in such a manner as the secretary of revenue may by rule promulgated pursuant to chapter 1-26 require;

(10) The gross earnings of the entire company, and the gross earnings on business done within this state;

(11) The operating expenses of the entire company and the operating expenses within this state; and

(12) The net earnings of the entire company and the net earnings within this state; and

(13) Whether or not the pipeline company that installs a pipeline for carbon sequestration claims a tax credit under 26 U.S.C. § 45Q (January 1, 2024) in that year.

Section 4. That § 49-41B-1 be AMENDED:

49-41B-1. The Legislature finds that energy development in South Dakota and ~~the Northern Great Plains~~ significantly surrounding states affects the welfare of the population, the environmental quality, the location and growth of industry, and the use of ~~the agricultural and~~ agricultural and natural resources of the state. The Legislature also finds that by assuming permit authority, that the state must also ensure that ~~these~~ these facilities are permitted and constructed in an orderly and timely manner so that the energy, commerce, and transmission requirements of the people of the state are fulfilled. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the location, construction, and operation of facilities will produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the citizens of this state by providing that the permitting or siting of a facility is determined by the commission and a facility may not be constructed or operated in this state without first obtaining a permit from the commission.

Section 5. That § 49-41B-19 be AMENDED:

49-41B-19. The Public Utilities Commission shall also hear and receive evidence presented by any state department, agency, or units of local government relative to the ~~environmental, social, and economic conditions and projected changes therein~~ elements in § 49-41B-22, and any applicable ordinance, resolution, or building code.

Section 6. That § 49-41B-28 be AMENDED:

49-41B-28. A permit for the construction of a transmission facility within a designated area ~~may supersede or preempt~~ supersedes and preempts any county, township, or municipal, or any other governmental unit land use, zoning, or building ~~rules, regulations~~ rule, regulation, or ordinance. Any local land use, zoning, or building rule, regulation, or ordinance preempted or superseded under this section is not an applicable rule or law under subdivision 49-41B-22(1). A route or transmission facility permitted by the commission under this chapter is not subject to any local land use, zoning, or building rule, regulation, or ordinance, unless the commission requires compliance with any generally applicable rule, regulation, or ordinance as a condition of the permit issued. The enforcement of any county, municipal, township, or other governmental unit rule, regulation, or ordinance for a transmission facility permitted under this chapter must be done pursuant to the order of the commission granting the permit.

~~ordinances upon a finding by the Public Utilities Commission that such rules, or regulation, or ordinances, as applied to the proposed route, are unreasonably restrictive in view of existing technology, factors of cost, or economics, or needs of parties where located in or out of the county or municipality. Without such a finding by the commission, no route shall be designated which violates local land use zoning, or building rules, or regulations, or ordinances.~~

Section 7. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 49-41B:

A county, municipality, township, or other governmental unit, including governmental units chartered under S.D. Const., Art. IX, § 2, may not enact or increase, in any form, a tax, fee, or charge that is related to a gas or liquid

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transmission line or an electric transmission line which requires or holds a permit under chapter 49-41B. The provisions of this section do not prohibit:

- (1) Real property taxes pursuant to title 10;
- (2) Road use, construction, maintenance, and improvement agreements pursuant to titles 7, 8, 9, or 31; and
- (3) The surcharge created by section 2 of this Act.

A county, municipality, township, or other governmental unit, including governmental units chartered under S.D. Const., Art. IX, § 2, may require a gas, liquid, or electrical transmission project to enter into a road use, construction, maintenance, and improvement agreement prior to construction.

Any fee or tax permitted under this section must be uniform and apply to all classes of facilities, except the surcharge listed under subdivision 3 of this section.

If after ninety days the applicant cannot come to terms with a county, municipality township, or other governmental unit, including governmental units chartered under S.D. Const., Art. IX, § 2, on a road use and maintenance agreement, the applicant may apply to the commission for an order in place of the agreement, specific to that unit of government and after notice and hearing the commission must grant an order determining the applicant's use and restoration of the units, roads, bridges, and rights of way.

Section 8. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 49-41B:

All pipelines carrying carbon dioxide must be installed so that the cover between the top of the pipe and the ground level, road bed, river bottom, or underwater natural bottom, as determined by recognized and generally accepted practices, must be a minimum of forty-eight inches in thickness and must be buried so that it is below the level of cultivation.

Section 9. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 49-41B:

An operator of a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide is liable for repairs of drain tile, which was installed prior to the installation of the pipeline facility, where the installation, construction, operation, maintenance, or repair of the pipeline facility is the proximate cause of the damage to the drain tile. The operator's liability pursuant to this section shall:

- (1) Continue for the life of the pipeline facility;
- (2) Cover full replacement costs including without limitation material, labor, and equipment; and
- (3) Include the reclamation and restoration of topsoil as part of any drain tile repair.

Section 10. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 49-41B:

An operator of a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide shall be liable for all damages resulting from the installation, construction, operation, maintenance, repair, leaks, ruptures, and other failures of the pipeline facility. The operator shall indemnify and hold the surface owner harmless from any loss, claim, or damage resulting from the installation, construction, operation, maintenance, repair, leaks, ruptures, and other failures of the pipeline facility, other than for gross negligence or willful misconduct of the surface owner.

In the event that the surface owner is a county, city, or other governmental unit, including governmental units chartered under S.D. Const., Art. IX, § 2, the operator's liability and indemnification requirements shall include without limitation the governmental unit's road, bridge, and other infrastructure damages.

Section 11. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 49-41B:

An operator of a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide must include an agricultural impact mitigation plan in its application for a permit under this chapter.

Section 12. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 49-41B:

An operator of a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide must offer a dispersion analysis into evidence before the commission. The commission may enter an order declaring such dispersion analysis, or a portion of the dispersion analysis, confidential. Any order declaring a dispersion analysis, or a portion of the dispersion analysis, as confidential must be justified in specific findings, in writing or on the record.

The commission must make the dispersion analysis available, in relevant part, to each applicable county, emergency manager, and law enforcement agency. The commission shall make available a dispersion analysis report to the public.

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Section 13. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 49-41B:

A land agent acting on behalf of a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide must be a pipeline facility employee, a resident of the state, or a real estate agent licensed in the state.

Section 14. That a NEW SECTION be added to title 43:

Sections 14 to 15, inclusively, of this Act may be cited as the Landowner Bill of Rights.

Section 15. That a NEW SECTION be added to title 43:

Any landowner granting a carbon pipeline easement has the following rights:

(1) Each pipeline placed in a carbon pipeline easement must meet the minimum depth requirement in section 8 of this Act;

(2) The entity holding rights in the carbon pipeline easement must repair any damage to drain tile as set forth in section 9 of this Act;

(3) An operator of a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide is liable to a landowner for any leaks or repairs as provided in section 9 of this Act;

(4) An operator of a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide must indemnify the owner as provided in section 10 of this Act;

(5) Any applicant desiring to obtain a permit to operate a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide must file the plan as provided in section 11 of this Act;

(6) Any applicant desiring to obtain a permit to operate a pipeline facility carrying carbon dioxide must file a disclosure of the dispersion analysis as provided in section 12 of this Act;

(7) Any applicant desiring to obtain a permit to operate a carbon dioxide pipeline facility must engage a landowner as required by section 13 of this Act;

(8) Each carbon pipeline easement agreement must include a statement disclosing the information in HB 1186, § 2, if enacted by the Ninety-Ninth Legislature;

(9) If the easement holder mortgages or otherwise encumbers to any party any part of the easement holder's rights and interests under the carbon pipeline easement, the mortgage or encumbrance is enforceable only as permitted in HB 1186, § 2, if enacted by the Ninety-Ninth Legislature;

(10) A carbon pipeline easement is not enforceable after the period of time set forth in HB 1186, § 2, if enacted by the Ninety-Ninth Legislature;

(11) An operator of a pipeline facility holding the right in the carbon pipeline easement must initiate business operations within the time period set forth in HB 1186, § 2, if enacted by the Ninety-Ninth Legislature;

(12) A carbon pipeline easement expires after the passing of a period of nonuse as set forth in HB 1186, § 2, if enacted by the Ninety-Ninth Legislature;

(13) A carbon pipeline easement must be in writing as required by HB 1186, § 2, if enacted by the Ninety-Ninth Legislature;

(14) A landowner granting a carbon pipeline easement has the examination and survey protection rights as set forth in § 21-35-31; and

(15) To receive the one-time payment as provided in HB 1185, § 1, if enacted by the Ninety-Ninth Legislature.

2025 DOG LICENSES DUE BY 12/31/2024



LICENSE YOUR DOG.



Licenses due by December 31, 2024

Fines start January 1, 2025

**Spayed/Neutered dogs are \$5 per dog,
otherwise \$10 per dog**

Proof of rabies shot information is REQUIRED!!

Email proof to city.kellie@nvc.net

fax to (605) 397-4498 or bring a copy to City Hall!!

Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have a dog(s) that
were previously licensed!

Questions call (605) 397-8422

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- ✓ Pro Police
- ✓ Pro Constitution
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General Election - Nov. 5
Absentee Voting has begun



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lawmakers approve \$10 million of outdoor recreation fee increases

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 22, 2024 2:23 PM

Lawmakers unanimously approved nearly \$10 million worth of annual fee increases Tuesday in Pierre for outdoor recreation such as hunting and state park visitation, with a goal of bolstering conservation efforts and accomplishing delayed park projects.

The South Dakota Legislature's Rules Review Committee gave final approval to the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks' higher fees. The fee increases were previously approved by the GF&P Commission.

Kevin Robling, department secretary, said the additional funds will help address hundreds of projects put on hold due to budget constraints. The projects are part of the department's five-year development and maintenance plan, which Robling described as crucial to ensuring the state's outdoor recreation areas remain accessible and well-maintained.

Department officials cited inflation as the driving force. The department's Division of Parks and Recreation, which oversees state parks, last adjusted fees in 2019. The Wildlife Division, which manages conservation, hunting, fishing and wildlife management, did so in 2014.

The increases cover an array of licenses and fees, with non-South Dakota residents paying higher prices. For example, nonresident state park entrance licenses are increasing by \$24 for nonresidents, and by \$4 for residents. Other adjustments include a \$5 increase on resident combination hunting-fishing licenses; a \$3 increase on resident fishing licenses and a \$13 increase on nonresident fishing licenses; and a \$21 increase on nonresident small-game hunting licenses.

During the hearing, department staff, commissioners, and representatives from conservation and tourism organizations expressed support for the proposal. Former department wildlife biologist and current South Dakota Wildlife Federation lobbyist George Vandel spoke in favor, emphasizing that the fees serve as the "bedrock" of wildlife management and conservation in South Dakota.

"The only thing that I spent that goes directly back into managing that resource, and making it good hunting and fishing, is that state hunting license," Vandel said. "100% of those hunting and fishing license fees go back into the management of that resource."

The Wildlife Division reported \$17.6 million worth of nonresident license sales and \$11.2 million worth of resident license sales last year. The Division of Parks and Recreation reported \$17.5 million in park entrance revenue.

The finalized fee proposal also includes the implementation of a \$50 habitat conservation specialty license plates authorized by the Legislature earlier this year.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

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South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Parks and Recreation Fees and Permits

License Type

Park Entrance Licenses	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Annual	\$36	\$4	\$40
Nonresident Annual	\$36	\$24	\$60
Double	\$54	\$6	\$60
Nonresident Double	\$54	\$36	\$90
Transferable (Resident Only)	\$80	\$10	\$90
Daily	\$8	\$2	\$10
Nonresident Daily	\$8	\$7	\$15
George S. Mickelson Trail Annual Pass	\$15	\$5	\$20
George S. Mickelson Trail Daily Pass	\$4	\$1	\$5
Motorcoach, per person	\$3	\$1	\$4
One-Day Special Event, per 50 people	\$50	\$50	\$100
Custer State Park 7-day/vehicle	\$20	\$5	\$25
Custer State Unattended Vehicle PEL	\$20	\$5	\$25
Unattended Vehicle PEL	\$15	\$5	\$20

Camping

	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Custer State Park Equestrian	\$36	\$1	\$37
Custer State Park Modern	\$26	\$1	\$27
Statewide Modern	\$16-\$22	\$1-\$7	\$23
Statewide Basic	\$11	\$5	\$16
Tent Only Non-electric	\$15	\$1	\$16
CSP French Creek Natural Area	\$7	\$1	\$8
CSP Game Lodge and Stockade Group	\$7	\$1	\$8
Camping Cabins	\$55	\$5	\$60
Modern Cabin and Suites	\$85-\$205	\$45	\$85-\$250
Group Lodge - Shadehill	\$280	\$20	\$300
Group Meeting Lodge - Oahe Downstream	\$125	\$25	\$150
Electrical Fee	\$4	\$3	\$7

Miscellaneous Fees

	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
Firewood	\$6	\$0.72	\$6.72
Nonresident online reservation fee	\$7.70	\$2.30	\$10
Nonresident call center reservation fee	\$9.70	\$6.30	\$16
Resident call center reservation fee	\$2	\$4	\$6
Lewis and Clark catamaran dry storage fee	\$325	\$25	\$350
Angostura catermaran dry storage fee	\$175	\$25	\$200

Boat Licenses

	Current Fee	Fee Increase	Recommended Fee
1-year under 19 ft motorized	\$25	\$5	\$30
1-year 19 ft and over motorized	\$45	\$10	\$55
1-year non-motorized/electric	\$15	\$3	\$18

Revenue Projection

\$4,386,283

Q&A: Podcast retraces SD's path from '06 and '08 abortion votes to new ballot measure

BY: SETH TUPPER - OCTOBER 22, 2024 12:15 PM

Some South Dakota voters who rejected abortion bans in 2006 and 2008 probably didn't know there was already a trigger law in place that would end up banning abortion in 2022.

Lee Strubinger puts that hindsight to use in a new podcast, "Unplanned Democracy." It examines South Dakota's journey from those elections to this year's vote on Amendment G, which would restore abortion rights. The measure is on the Nov. 5 ballot.

Strubinger is a politics and public policy reporter for South Dakota Public Broadcasting. He reported, wrote and produced the "Unplanned Democracy" podcast, which is narrated by Jackie Hendry, host of SDPB's "South Dakota Focus."

For audio from the '06 and '08 abortion fights, Strubinger relied on a 2008 documentary of the same name, produced by the late South Dakota journalist Denise Ross.

Strubinger found the documentary while covering South Dakota's reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 Dobbs decision. The ruling overturned the constitutional abortion rights established by the court's 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade.

A South Dakota trigger law passed by the Legislature in 2005 immediately banned abortions in the state after Dobbs, with one exception for abortions "necessary to preserve the life of the pregnant female." That's how South Dakota ended up with an abortion ban, after about 55% of voters defeated bans in each of the 2006 and 2008 elections.

Following is South Dakota Searchlight's conversation with Strubinger about his new podcast, edited for length and clarity.

What did you set out to do with this podcast?

With the ballot question coming up, I felt it was really important that people needed to see kind of what it was like or be reminded of what it was like in '06 and in '08.

So I summarized the documentary a little bit. I would recommend watching the documentary and listening to the podcast, because Denise Ross laid out a lot more of the history than I do, and really showed what happened back in '06 and '08.

And then I kind of attempted to basically bring us from where the documentary ends up to where we are today, in the form of an audio podcast.

What's it like to look back now at the abortion fights in 2006 and 2008, knowing that a trigger ban passed by legislators in 2005 was going to end up taking effect in 2022?

It's ironic. Granted, those past elections were under the framework of Roe, so the conditions are a little bit different now, but voters said twice that they don't want a ban.

And the ballot question in '08 had exceptions for pregnancies as a result of rape or incest, and the thought was that it would end up passing overwhelmingly, because that was supposedly the big hangup in '06. But voters rejected the '08 ban by a similar margin.

I'm interested to see how this particular vote plays out, because I think it'll give a very clear indication of where the state's electorate is now.

A former legislator, Joel Dykstra, sponsored the trigger ban in 2005. It ended up taking effect 17 years later. What's that say about the power one lawmaker can wield?

It stresses the importance of paying attention and staying engaged as to who gets elected and what they're talking about and what they're bringing up.

I don't know the entirety of the conversation around that trigger law; I'm sure folks with Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union were paying close attention, but I don't know if the general

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public was, and it's kind of interesting that while the '06 and '08 questions were being voted on and debated, the trigger law was there the whole time.

Do anti-abortion activists deserve credit for seeing back in 2005 that overturning Roe v. Wade was possible, while abortion-rights activists maybe didn't see that?

I read a book by some New York Times reporters called "The Fall of Roe." It basically looks at the last 10 years of America under Roe and the conditions that ultimately led to it coming down. And it wasn't just folks in South Dakota — it was across the country, in terms of this confidence that Roe would be in place. And you have a group of anti-abortion forces from a bunch of different groups working together for this similar goal, and when you read that book, you realize how persistent they were in making sure that this happened.

Your podcast includes audio from the days and weeks after the Dobbs decision, when people took to the streets to protest. We haven't really seen that kind of widespread public activism during the campaign on Amendment G, have we? How do you explain that?

If I were to guess, I would say it's twofold — one being the role of the internet and online social media. I think a lot of it is playing out there. A lot of it is playing out in churches, as well.

Abortion is a very sensitive topic. It's one of the most personal decisions that a woman can make — how to manage their pregnancy. And I just don't think people are comfortable saying the word "abortion" right now. That could be for a number of reasons, politically, socially. I think that's why it's a little more quiet.

After the election, what's the future hold for abortion policy in South Dakota?

I don't see this as being over anytime soon, regardless of how this vote plays out.

If it passes, I think you're going to see the state Legislature figure out what is and isn't allowed, because the legislators aren't going to change, in terms of the people holding office and their sincere convictions. Most of them are very opposed to abortion and have been for quite a while. They're going to be trying to figure out what is and isn't allowable under this new framework. And that's going to get tested out in the courts.

Meanwhile, there is not currently a clinic in place that would provide first-trimester abortions like a Planned Parenthood-style operation. And that's one of the concerns that the ACLU and Planned Parenthood have in relation to this — that if it passes, women in South Dakota would have a right to abortion in name, but maybe not so much a right to abortion in reality.

And if the ballot measure fails?

You still have a lot of folks in the health care field who want clarity on the state's current abortion trigger ban. It has an exception for the life of the mother, but that doesn't put them at ease when they're facing a Class 6 felony from other language in the law that says you'd be guilty if you helped "procure" an abortion. They don't know what "procure" means.

Also, pregnancy is complicated. Lots of things can happen during a pregnancy, and obstetricians I've spoken with that support the ballot question view it as giving them options to treat their patients in ways that they can't right now. And there's a concern just in terms of some obstetricians not being willing to practice here based on our current trigger law.

Also, there was an article written in 2022 by Harold Cassidy, a prominent anti-abortion lawyer, that he published before the Dobbs decision came out. He was basically arguing that the Dobbs decision would only take out about a third of Roe, and if you wanted to take out the other two-thirds of Roe v. Wade, you need to look at what they did in South Dakota to restrict abortion prior to the Dobbs decision.

And the roots of that go back to findings that were established in a 2005 task force on abortion. That task

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force tried to educate the courts that life begins at conception, and that there is an inherent constitutional right for the relationship between the mother and her fetus, and so I could see that being a framework going forward for maybe even a national abortion ban.

I'm not sure I understand why Planned Parenthood and the ACLU are not supporting Amendment G. Did you gain a better understanding of that during your reporting?

I would take a look at what was in Michigan with that abortion-rights ballot question, which was basically less about abortion and more about reproductive rights in general. It went a lot further than South Dakota's ballot question goes. It didn't deal with just abortion; it dealt with in vitro fertilization, it dealt with prenatal and postnatal care, and said the government can't have a say in determining how you go about that. I think that is viewed by those groups as the direction to go post-Dobbs.

If you also look at other ballot questions that are being considered across the country, most of them are through the second trimester. Amendment G allows for abortion rights through the first trimester, and then restrictions can kick in during the second trimester and the state can ban it in the third with exceptions for the life and health of the pregnant woman. And so I think those organizations view this as more restrictive than what other states are considering.

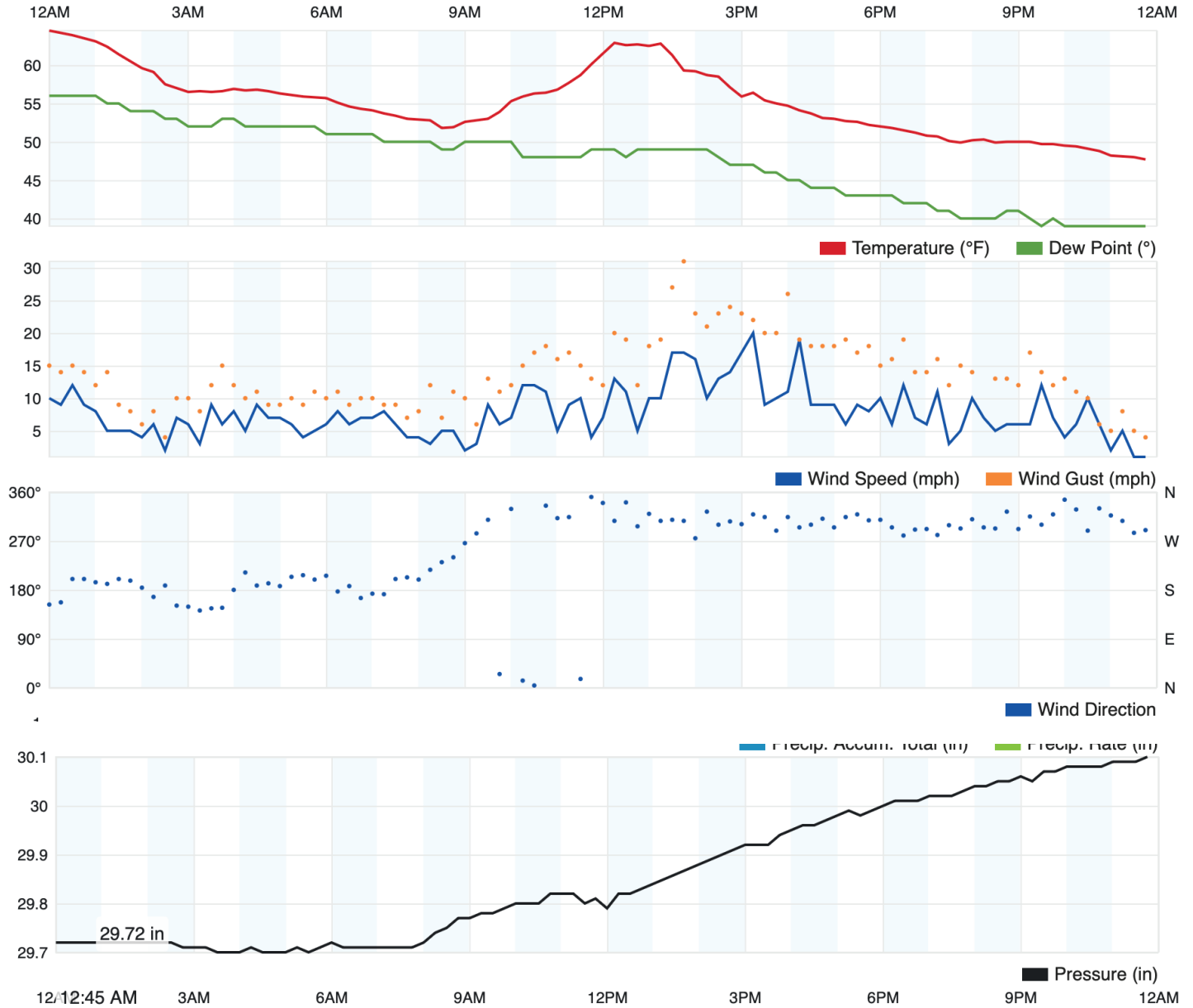
Also when you look at the framework the South Dakota measure is trying to establish, which is the Roe framework, their argument is essentially that abortion-rights advocates need to look for something better than Roe, that Roe is the floor, but that Roe was ultimately overturned. And so they're looking for something that is more ironclad than just a Roe framework.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 63 °F

Areas Fog
then Sunny

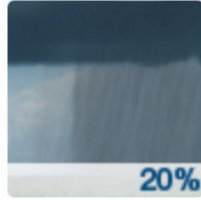
Tonight



Low: 45 °F

Increasing
Clouds

Thursday



High: 62 °F

Slight Chance
Showers

Thursday
Night



Low: 30 °F

Slight Chance
Rain/Snow

Friday



High: 58 °F

Sunny



Mid-Week Forecast

Wednesday



Highs: 59 - 69°F

Lows: 43 - 48°F

Thursday



Highs: 61 - 64°F

Lows: 28 - 37°F

20-40% chance light rain



Sunny skies and above average temperatures are in store for today. Thursday, areas east of the Missouri River have a 20-40% chance of light rain with little to no accumulation expected.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 64 °F at 12:00 AM

Low Temp: 48 °F at 11:08 PM

Wind: 31 mph at 1:44 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 35 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 80 in 1963

Record Low: 5 in 1895

Average High: 55

Average Low: 30

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.71

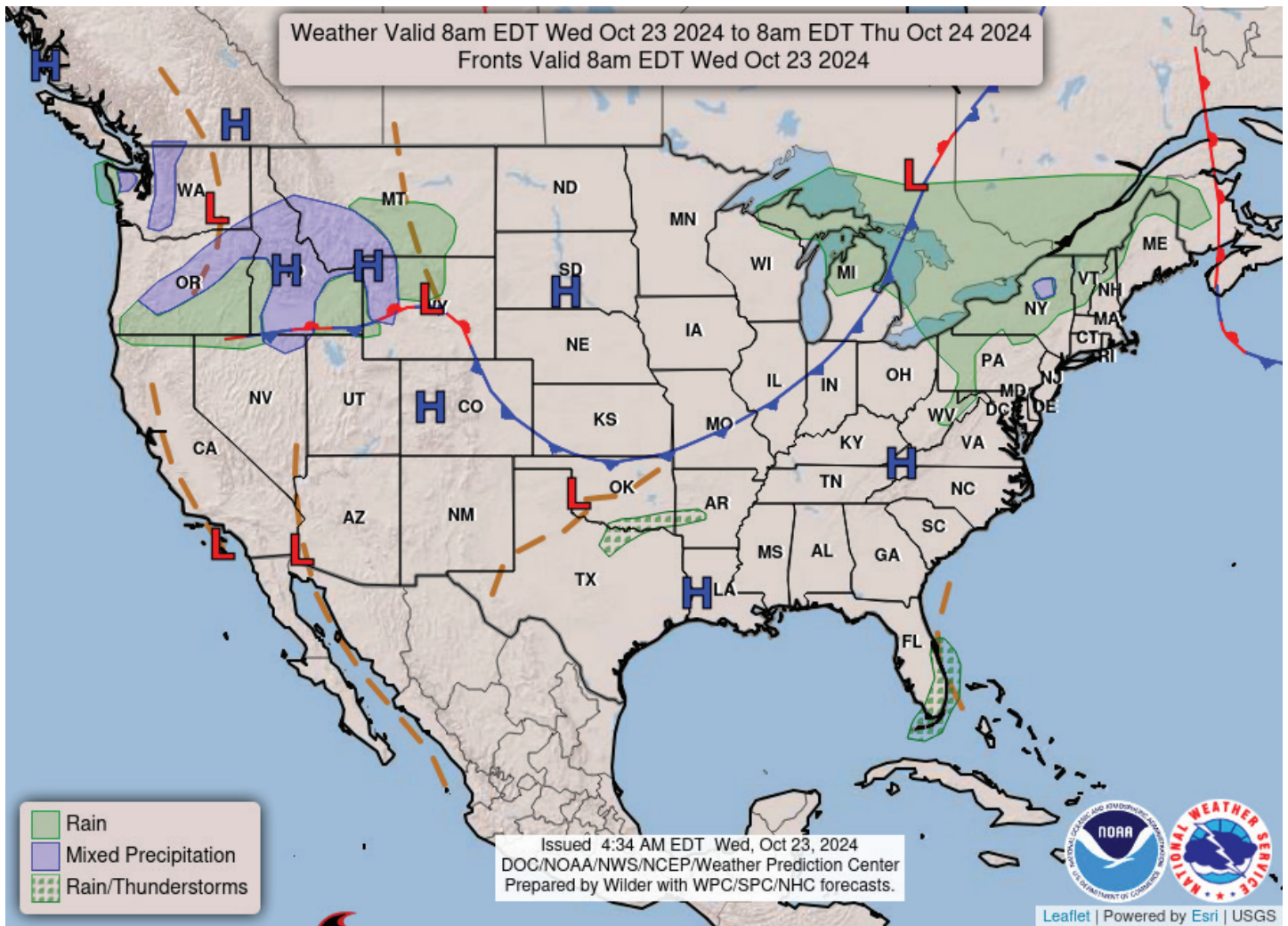
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.02

Average Precip to date: 20.04

Precip Year to Date: 19.77

Sunset Tonight: 6:34:17 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:00:18 am



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Today in Weather History

October 23, 1995: A major fall storm hit Central and Northeast South Dakota and dropped from four inches to one foot of wet snow. The heavy wet snow combined with high winds gusting up to 50 mph snapped several thousand power poles and downed hundreds of miles of line in the counties of Buffalo, Hand, Spink, Roberts and Grant. In Day and Lyman Counties, a few poles were downed with some short lived power outages. Marshall County had no reports of damage or power outages. Several thousand people were left without power for several hours up to several days. Power was not restored to some people until the fourth of November. Portions of Interstate 90 and Interstate 29 were closed from the evening of the 23rd until the morning of the 24th leaving hundreds of motorists stranded. There were also numerous school delays and closings. Many trees and some crops were also damaged as a result of the weight of the snow and high winds. Some snowfall amounts included, 4 inches near Reliance, at Doland, and near Victor, 5 inches southeast of Stephan and at Sisseton, 6 inches south of Ree Heights and at Eden, eight inches at Waubay and Grenville, 9 inches at Clear Lake, 10 inches at Watertown, and 12 inches at Summit and Milbank. This storm was the third damaging storm to the rural electric cooperatives this year and has been called the worst natural disaster in the history of the rural electrics. The total damage estimated for the rural state electrics was \$9.5 million.

1091: The earliest known tornado in Britain, possibly the most severe on record, hit central London. The church at St. Mary le Bow was severely damaged. Four rafters, each 26 feet long were driven into the ground with such force that only four feet protruded above the surface. Other churches in the area were also demolished along with over 600 houses.

1761 - A hurricane struck southeastern New England. It was the most violent in thirty years. Thousands of trees blocked roads in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. (David Ludlum)

1878: One of the most severe hurricanes to affect eastern Virginia in the latter half of the 19th century struck on October 23, 1878. This storm moved rapidly northward from the Bahamas on October 22nd and hit the North Carolina coast late that same day moving at a forward speed of 40 to 50 mph. The storm continued northward passing through east central Virginia, Maryland and eastern Pennsylvania. The barometric pressure fell to 28.78". The five minute sustained wind reached 84 mph at Cape Henry. During the heaviest part of the gale, the wind at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina registered 100 mph. The instrument itself has finally blown away and therefore no further record was made.

1920: Famed research meteorologist Theodore Fujita, was born on this date in Kitakyushu City, Japan. Fujita, known as "Mr. Tornado" after developing the international standard for measuring tornado severity, also discovered microbursts.

1947: Fish fell from the sky in Marksville, LA. Thousands of fish fell from the sky in an area 1,000 feet long by 80 feet wide possibly due to a waterspout.

2015: On this day, Hurricane Patricia became the most powerful tropical cyclone ever measured in the Western Hemisphere as its maximum sustained winds reached an unprecedented 200 mph (320 kph) and its central pressure fell to 879 millibars (25.96 inches of mercury). Hurricane Patricia became the strongest Pacific hurricane on record shortly after midnight CDT early on Oct. 23. Air Force Hurricane Hunters had flown through the eye of Patricia and reported a sea-level pressure of 894 millibars as measured by a dropsonde inside the eye itself. Wind measurements suggested that the pressure measurement was not in the exact center of the eye and was probably not the absolute lowest pressure, prompting NHC to estimate the minimum central pressure at 892 millibars in its special 12:30 a.m. CDT advisory. Tropical cyclone strength comparisons are typically based on minimum central pressure. At 892 millibars, Patricia shattered the Eastern Pacific basin's previous record of 902 millibars set by Hurricane Linda in 1997. While a number of typhoons in the western North Pacific have been stronger, Patricia is now by far the strongest hurricane on record in any basin where the term "hurricane" applies to tropical cyclones – namely, the central and eastern North Pacific basins and the North Atlantic basin, which includes the North Atlantic Ocean itself plus the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.



Our Daily Bread®

Love God. Love Others.

Transformed from the Inside

Bible in a Year : Isaiah 65-66, 1 Timothy 2

You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Matthew 23:25

Today's Scripture & Insight : Matthew 23:23-33

In the worst UK residential fire since World War II, fire engulfed the twenty-four story Grenfell Tower building in West London, claiming the lives of seventy people. Investigations revealed a primary reason the flames spread so quickly was the cladding used as part of renovation that covered the building's exterior. The material was aluminum on the outside but had an extremely flammable plastic core.

How was such a dangerous material allowed to be sold and installed? The product's sellers failed to disclose poor fire safety test results. And buyers, drawn by the material's cheap price tag, failed to heed warning signs. The shiny cladding looked nice on the outside.

Some of Jesus' harshest words were directed at religious teachers He accused of covering corruption behind a nice-looking exterior. He said they were like "whitewashed tombs"—"beautiful on the outside" but inside full of dead bones (Matthew 23:27). Instead of pursuing "justice, mercy and faithfulness" (v. 23), they were focused on looking good—cleaning "the outside of the cup" but not the "greed and self-indulgence" inside (v. 25).

It's easier to focus on looking good than to bring our sin and brokenness honestly before God. But a nice-looking exterior doesn't make a corrupt heart any less dangerous. God invites us to let Him transform all of us from the inside (1 John 1:9).

By: Monica La Rose

Reflect & Pray

When have you tried to disguise corruption? How can you prioritize internal change?
Gracious God, please help me not to hide my brokenness but let You transform all of me.

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.22.24

8 43 48 58 60 4

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$229,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 7
DRAW: Mins 1 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.21.24

1 4 20 24 26 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$12,360,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 22 Mins 1
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.22.24

7 12 22 37 48 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 37 Mins
DRAW: 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.19.24

3 6 14 27 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$68,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 37 Mins
DRAW: 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.21.24

2 3 7 26 34 1

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 6 Mins 0
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.21.24

1 25 57 62 64 15

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$478,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 6 Mins 0
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- Cancelled:** Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary Salad Luncheon
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

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The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

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Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Blinken urges Israel to seek deal after tactical gains as truce efforts remain stalled

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that Israel needs to pursue an “enduring strategic success” after its tactical victories against Hamas, urging it to seek a deal that would end the war in the Gaza Strip and bring back dozens of hostages.

He spoke before traveling from Israel to Saudi Arabia on his 11th visit to the region since the outbreak of the war. Air raid sirens sounded in Tel Aviv shortly before his departure as Israel intercepted two projectiles fired from Lebanon, and a puff of smoke could be seen in the sky from Blinken’s hotel.

“Israel has achieved most of the strategic objectives when it comes to Gaza,” Blinken told reporters before boarding his plane. “Now is the time to turn those successes into an enduring strategic success.”

“There really are two things left to do: Get the hostages home and bring the war to an end with an understanding of what will follow,” he said.

No sign of a breakthrough after killing of Hamas leader

The United States sees a new opportunity to revive cease-fire efforts after the killing of top Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar by Israeli forces in Gaza last week. But there’s no indication that either of the warring parties have modified their demands since talks stalled over the summer.

There was also no immediate sign of a breakthrough after Blinken met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other top Israeli officials on Tuesday.

Israel blamed the failure of the talks on a hard-line stance adopted by Sinwar, but Hamas says its demands for a lasting cease-fire, full Israeli withdrawal and the release of a large number of Palestinian prisoners have not changed following his death. Hamas blamed the failure of the talks on Israel’s demand for a lasting military presence in parts of Gaza.

There’s talk of a more limited cease-fire and hostage release

Egypt has suggested the possibility of a short pause in fighting in which Hamas would release a handful of hostages and humanitarian aid deliveries would be ramped up, especially in northern Gaza, an Egyptian official told The Associated Press.

The official, who was not authorized to brief media and spoke on condition of anonymity, said Egypt and fellow mediator Qatar had discussed the idea with the United States but it was not yet a firm proposal. The official said Israel and Hamas were aware of those discussions.

A senior State Department official confirmed that a proposal for a limited hostage release has been discussed in recent days but that no determination had been made, even after Blinken’s meetings with

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Israeli officials and families of the hostages on Tuesday.

There was no immediate comment from Israel or Hamas. The militant group has rejected such ideas in the past, saying it is intent on securing an end to the war. It is still holding around 100 hostages captured in its Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war, around a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel is warned on aid as it wages offensive in northern Gaza

Israel has meanwhile dramatically reduced the amount of humanitarian aid allowed into Gaza as it wages another major operation in the hard-hit north of the territory.

Blinken reiterated a warning that hindering humanitarian aid could force the U.S. to scale back the crucial military support it has provided to Israel since the start of the war. "There's progress made, which is good, but more progress needs to be made," he told reporters, without elaborating.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says Israel has severely restricted aid operations since the start of its offensive in Jabaliya, a densely populated urban refugee camp in northern Gaza dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation.

It said one critical mission, to rescue around 40 people trapped in the rubble in Jabaliya, had been repeatedly denied since Friday.

Northern Gaza, including Gaza City, was the first target of Israel's ground operation and has been completely encircled by Israeli forces since late last year. Most of the population heeded Israeli evacuation warnings early on in the war, but an estimated 400,000 people have stayed there.

The U.N. estimates that 60,000 people have been displaced within northern Gaza since the start of the operation in Jabaliya, the latest in a series of mass displacements since the start of the war.

The north has been more heavily destroyed than other areas of Gaza, with entire neighborhoods obliterated. Israel has prevented Palestinians who fled the north from returning to their homes, a key demand from Hamas in the cease-fire talks.

Blinken says US rejects any reoccupation of Gaza

The renewed offensive in the north has raised fears among Palestinians that Israel intends to implement a plan proposed by former generals in which civilians would be ordered to leave the north and anyone remaining would be starved out or killed. Far-right ministers in Netanyahu's Cabinet say Israel should remain in Gaza and re-establish Jewish settlements there.

Blinken said the U.S. officials "fully reject" any Israeli reoccupation of Gaza and that it was not the policy of the Israeli government.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted another 250 when they stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's offensive has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who don't distinguish combatants from civilians but say more than half the dead are women and children. It has displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, forcing hundreds of thousands into squalid tent camps.

Boeing is expected to report a big Q3 loss, then wait for results of vote by striking workers

By DAVID KOENIG and MANUEL VALDES Associated Press

EVERETT, Wash. (AP) — Wednesday is shaping up as one of the most significant days in a volatile year for Boeing, which is expected to report a huge third-quarter loss, introduce its new CEO on his first earnings call, and learn if machinists will end a strike that has crippled the company's aircraft production for more than a month.

The strike is an early test for Kelly Ortberg, a Boeing outsider who became CEO in August.

Ortberg has already announced large-scale layoffs and a plan to raise enough cash to avoid a bankruptcy filing. He needs to convince federal regulators that Boeing is fixing its safety culture and is ready to boost production of the 737 Max — a crucial step to bring in much-needed cash.

Boeing can't produce any new 737s, however, until it ends the five-week-old strike by 33,000 machinists

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that has shut down assembly plants in the Seattle area.

Ortberg has "got a lot on his plate, but he probably is laser-focused on getting this negotiation completed. That's the closest alligator to the boat," said Tony Bancroft, portfolio manager at Gabelli Funds, a Boeing investor.

Boeing hasn't had a profitable year since 2018, and the situation is about to get worse before it gets better. Analysts expect Boeing to announce Wednesday that it lost about \$6 billion in the third quarter, including \$3 billion in charges related to airline jets and \$2 billion in losses for its defense and space programs.

Investors will be looking for Ortberg to project calm, determination and urgency as he presides over an earnings call for the first time since he ran Rockwell Collins, a maker of avionics and flight controls for airline and military planes, in the last decade.

The biggest news of the day, however, is likely to come Wednesday evening, when the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers reveals whether striking workers are ready to go back to their jobs.

They will vote at union halls in the Seattle area and elsewhere on a Boeing offer that includes pay raises of 35% over four years, \$7,000 ratification bonuses, and the retention of performance bonuses that Boeing wanted to eliminate.

Boeing has held firm in resisting a union demand to restore the traditional pension plan that was frozen a decade. However, older workers would get a slight increase in their monthly pension payouts.

At a picket line outside Boeing's factory in Everett, Washington, some machinists encourage co-workers to vote no on the proposal.

"The pension should have been the top priority. We all said that was our top priority, along with wage," said Larry Best, a customer-quality coordinator with 38 years at Boeing. "Now is the prime opportunity in a prime time to get our pension back, and we all need to stay out and dig our heels in."

Best also thinks the pay increase should be 40% over three years to offset a long stretch of stagnant wages, now combined with high inflation.

"You can see we got a great turnout today. I'm pretty sure that they don't like the contract because that's why I'm here," said another picketer, Bartley Stokes Sr., who started working at Boeing in 1978. "We're out here in force, and we're going to show our solidarity and stick with our union brothers and sisters and vote this thing down because they can do better."

With or without the far right in power, Austria's links with Russia cause concern among allies

By STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — Tens of thousands of devastated Swifties trading friendship bracelets, wearing sparkly dresses and singing songs in the streets of Vienna. Workers taking down the Taylor Swift stage inside an empty stadium.

This was the scene at the beginning of August in the Austrian capital after organizers abruptly canceled Swift's three shows over threats of an attack by Islamic State group militants.

Intelligence-sharing was instrumental in preventing a tragedy, Austrian and U.S. officials said. But it relies on mutual trust — confidence that secrets will not fall into the wrong hands or be leaked to hostile governments.

Austria's Western allies have grown increasingly worried about this possibility in recent weeks. The country's political parties have maintained an openness to Russia for decades — part of a traditional foreign policy of neutrality — but none more so than the far-right Freedom Party, which secured the largest share of the vote in last month's national election.

If the Freedom Party is part of Austria's next government, some analysts warn that intelligence-sharing could be drastically restricted, if not stopped altogether.

For now, the center-right People's Party has a mandate to form a governing coalition. Negotiations will be held in the weeks and months ahead without the Freedom Party since the conservatives and all other

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parties have ruled out governing with the far right. But if those negotiations fail, the Freedom Party will be waiting in the wings.

This story, supported by the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, is part of an ongoing Associated Press series covering threats to democracy in Europe.

Austrian and U.S. officials confirmed that intelligence-sharing was instrumental in preventing a tragedy. But that kind of exchange of information relies on mutual trust – confidence that secrets will not fall into the wrong hands or be leaked to hostile governments. In the case of the U.S. and most of the EU, those hostile governments include Russia.

In February 2018, when Freedom Party leader Herbert Kickl was interior minister, several foreign intelligence services cut Austria out from intelligence sharing as a result of a police raid that his ministry ordered on its own domestic intelligence agency.

The raid, which was ruled illegal by an Austrian court in August 2018, shocked the country. It prompted a parliamentary inquiry and led to the agency being shut down.

A Russian role?

It is still unclear if or to what extent Russia could have pulled the strings.

Beate Meinel-Reisinger, who heads the liberal Neos party in Austria, told a news conference in May that Kickl and the Freedom Party in 2018 either knowingly agreed to work for Russia's interests or acted as "useful idiots."

The parliamentary inquiry found that senior officials at the Interior Ministry, at the time headed by Kickl, played an active role by using accusations against senior government and intelligence officials in an anonymous dossier to push prosecutors to sign off on the raid. Kickl has denied any wrongdoing.

The accusations in the dossier, including corruption, the mishandling of sensitive data and sexual harassment, went up in smoke, but after four years of investigation, it's still not clear who compiled and leaked the document.

Austrian media report that investigators are pursuing whether Egisto Ott, a disgruntled former intelligence official suspected of spying for Russia, may have compiled the dossier in an effort to undermine the intelligence service, possibly because of his own frustrations with the agency.

Green Party lawmaker David Stögmüller said that by pushing for the raid, the Freedom Party "wanted to smash the domestic intelligence agency and create something new with faces close to their own party."

The party's alleged attempts to reshape the domestic intelligence agency were only disrupted after its then-leader was forced to resign after being caught on video apparently offering public contracts in return for campaign donations.

The raid's repercussions are still being felt. German lawmakers have said their government should review its cooperation with Austria if the Freedom Party is part of the new government.

"In light of the massive danger posed by Russia to peace and stability in Europe, we cannot allow relevant information to be handed over directly to Russia," Konstantin Kuhle, a lawmaker with one of Germany's governing parties and a member of the intelligence oversight committee in the German parliament, told German newspaper Handelsblatt earlier this month.

"Should the far-right Freedom Party become part of the next government and be given control over the intelligence agencies again, the trust of foreign intelligence services will certainly be up for debate again," said Thomas Riegler, an espionage expert affiliated with the Austrian Center for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies.

Among the items seized in the illegal 2018 raid was a copy of the so-called Neptune Database — a hard drive containing sensitive information shared by foreign intelligence agencies with Austria.

"The mistrust foreign partners have of the Freedom Party is rooted in the party's relationship with Russia," Riegler said.

The Freedom Party calls for an end to sanctions against Russia. It is critical of Western military aid to

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Ukraine, and signed a friendship agreement in 2016 with Putin's United Russia Party that it now claims has expired.

But the Freedom Party is not the only one to have enabled Russian influence. Mainstream parties have also played their part, at the risk of undermining Austrian and European security. This has a lot to do with Austria's post-war history.

Austria, which was annexed by Nazi Germany in the run-up to World War II, declared neutrality after the war under pressure from Western allies and the Soviet Union. It sought a role as a mediator between East and West, developing ties with Moscow that outlasted the Cold War.

"Austria's neutrality, the many international organizations in Vienna, its geostrategic location and lenient espionage laws all have turned Austria into a hotbed for Russian and other espionage," Riegler said.

Espionage is only explicitly banned if directed against Austria itself, not if it targets other countries or international organizations.

Since 2020, 11 Russian diplomats suspected of spying have been told to leave Austria. In contrast, Germany closed down four out of five Russian consulates last year.

As of March 2024, Russia had 142 diplomats and 116 administrative and technical personnel accredited in Austria. Approximately 25% are likely spies, said an Austrian intelligence official, who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive topic.

The true number is likely higher: it may include diplomats' relatives and employees of semi-official institutions such as schools, airlines offices or media organizations, the official added.

"The reluctance of the Austrian Foreign Ministry to expel more Russian diplomats is a scandal and poses a security risk for the country," said Stephanie Krisper, whose NEOS party champions a tougher stance towards Russia.

Austria's foreign ministry says the number of Russian diplomats expelled is "in the median of the European field."

In a written response to The Associated Press, Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg said: "My position is very clear: International law is the basis of my actions. As the first Austrian Foreign Minister ever, I have not shied away from taking appropriate measures and expelled diplomats whenever it is brought to my attention that they have engaged in acts incompatible with their diplomatic status."

But in its 2023 annual report, Austria's domestic intelligence agency DSN emphasized the danger of Russian and other espionage. Radar and satellite installations on the roofs of Russian diplomatic representations in Vienna are used for gathering intelligence on European NATO states, it said, thereby leading to a "loss of reputation" for Austria.

"Austria lets espionage happen on its soil that is directed against the security interests and values of European and other partner states," said a senior European diplomat who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive topic.

Given the historical connections between Austria and Russia, the situation is unlikely to change much, no matter who is in the next government, the diplomat said.

Storm-triggered floods in Philippines spark frantic calls to rescue trapped people, some on roofs

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Torrential rain set off by an approaching tropical storm swamped eastern Philippine cities and towns overnight in widespread flooding that trapped people, some on their roofs, and sparked frantic appeals for rescue boats and trucks, officials said Wednesday.

The government shut down public schools and government offices — except those urgently needed for disaster response — on the entire main island of Luzon to protect millions of people as Tropical Storm Trami blew closer from the Pacific.

At least one person died after being hit by a fallen tree branch in central Masbate province while seven others were reported missing, including three men who sailed to fish in the high seas from Masbate but haven't

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returned, officials said.

The storm was about 310 kilometers (193 miles) east of Baler town in the northeastern province of Aurora with sustained winds of 85 kilometers (53 miles) per hour and gusts to 105 kph (65 mph). Its wide rain band could dump up to 20 centimeters (8 inches) of rainwater in one day of intense downpours in the most vulnerable provinces on its path, according to state forecasters.

The storm was forecast to hit Aurora's coast Wednesday night to early Thursday, then barrel across northern Luzon's mountain range, valleys and plains before exiting to the South China Sea later in the week, they said.

Thousands of villagers have evacuated to emergency shelters in northeastern provinces, and storm warnings were raised in more than two dozen northern and central provinces, including in the densely populated capital of Manila, which was not in the storm's direct path but could be lashed by its pounding rains.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. canceled all his appointments Wednesday and convened an emergency meeting in military headquarters to discuss disaster mitigation efforts, Communications Secretary Cesar Chavez said.

During the meeting, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said the military's aircraft and ships would be used for evacuations and disaster response. He said additional airlift power could be provided by friendly countries, including Singapore, if needed.

"People have been stuck on roofs of their houses for several hours now," former Vice President Leni Robredo, who lives in the northeastern city of Naga, said in a post on Facebook early Wednesday. "Many of our rescue trucks have stalled due to the floods."

Robredo expressed hopes the flooding would ease at low tide Wednesday morning when swollen rivers could flow out faster into the sea.

Coast guard personnel have been rescuing residents in flooded villages in the eastern provinces of Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes and outlying regions since Tuesday, but provincial authorities said the number of rescue boats and personnel was not enough.

Thousands of passengers and cargo workers were stranded in several seaports after the coast guard said it suspended inter-island ferry services and barred fishing boats from venturing into the increasingly rough seas.

"We need national intervention," Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte of Camarines Sur province told DZRH radio network, saying his flood-prone province has about 50 rescue boats but needs about 200 due to the widespread appeals from villagers to be rescued.

Thousands of villagers were evacuated from low-lying communities and landslide-prone areas starting two days ago in Camarines Sur but many more were asking for help.

"Last night, my phone was filled with nonstop calls and text messages from people pleading 'Help us, rescue us,'" Villafuerte said. "It's sad when you feel helpless because of this deluge of problems."

In nearby Quezon province, Governor Angelina Tan said floods in some areas reach up to 3 meters (nearly 10 feet) and at least 8,000 villagers have evacuated from low-lying communities.

About 20 storms and typhoons batter the Philippines each year. The archipelago also lies in the "Pacific Ring of Fire," a region along most of the Pacific Ocean rim where many volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur, making the Southeast Asian nation one of the world's most disaster-prone.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest recorded tropical cyclones in the world, left more than 7,300 people dead or missing, flattened entire villages, swept ships inland and displaced more than 5 million in the central Philippines.

Sensational mass trial shines a dark light on rape culture in France

By DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

AVIGNON, France (AP) — They are, on the face of it, the most ordinary of men. Yet they're all on trial charged with rape. Fathers, grandfathers, husbands, workers and retirees — 50 in all — accused of taking turns on the drugged and inert body of Gisèle Pelicot while her husband recorded the horror for his

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swelling private video library.

The harrowing and unprecedented trial in France is exposing how pornography, chatrooms and men's disdain for or hazy understanding of consent is fueling rape culture. The horror isn't simply that Dominique Pelicot, in his own words, arranged for men to rape his wife, it's that he also had no difficulty finding dozens of them to take part.

Among the nearly two dozen defendants who testified during the trial's first seven weeks was Ahmed T. — French defendants' full last names are generally withheld until conviction. The married plumber with three kids and five grandchildren said he wasn't particularly alarmed that Pelicot wasn't moving when he visited her and her now-ex-husband's house in the small Provence town of Mazan in 2019.

It reminded him of porn he had watched featuring women who "pretend to be asleep and don't react," he said.

Like him, many other defendants told the court that they couldn't have imagined that Dominique Pelicot was drugging his wife, and that they were told she was a willing participant acting out a kinky fantasy. Dominique Pelicot denied this, telling the court his co-defendants knew exactly what the situation was.

Céline Piques, a spokesperson of the feminist group Osez le Féminisme!, or Dare Feminism! said she's convinced that many of the men on trial were inspired or perverted by porn, including videos found on popular websites. Although some sites have started cracking down on search terms such as "unconscious," hundreds of videos of men having sex with seemingly passed out women can be found online, she said.

Piques was particularly struck by the testimony of a tech expert at the trial who had found the search terms "asleep porn" on Dominique Pelicot's computer.

Last year, French authorities registered 114,000 victims of sexual violence, including more than 25,000 reported rapes. But experts say most rapes go unreported due to a lack of tangible evidence: About 80% of women don't press charges, and 80% of the ones who do see their case dropped before it is investigated.

In stark contrast, the trial of Dominique Pelicot and his 50 co-defendants has been unique in its scope, nature and openness to the public at the victim's insistence.

After a store security guard caught Pelicot shooting video up unsuspecting women's skirts in 2020, police searched his home and found thousands of pornographic photos and videos on his phone, laptop and USB stick. Dominique Pelicot later said he had recorded and stored the sexual encounters of each of his guests, and neatly organized them in separate files.

Among those he had over was Mahdi D., who testified that when he left home on the night of Oct. 5, 2018, he didn't intend to rape anyone.

"I thought she was asleep," the 36-year-old transportation worker told the panel of five judges, referring to Gisèle Pelicot, who has attended nearly every day of the trial and has become a hero to many sexual abuse victims for insisting that it be public.

"I grant you that you did not leave with the intention of raping anyone," the prosecutor told him. "But there in the room, it was you."

Like a few of the other men accused of raping Pelicot between 2011 and 2020, Mahdi D. acknowledged almost all of the facts presented against him. And he expressed remorse, telling the judges, "She is a victim. We can't imagine what she went through. She was destroyed."

But he wouldn't call it rape, even if admitting that it was might get him a lighter sentence. That led prosecutors to ask the court to screen the graphic videos of Mahdi D.'s visit to the Pelicot home.

In June, authorities took down the chatroom where they say Dominique Pelicot and his co-defendants met. Since the trial started on Sept. 2, it has resonated far beyond the Avignon courtroom's walls, sparking protests in French cities big and small and inspiring a steady flow of opinion pieces and open letters penned by journalists, philosophers and activists.

It has also drawn curious visitors to the city in southeastern France, such as Florence Nack, her husband and 23-year-old daughter, who made the trip from Switzerland to witness the "historical trial."

Nack, who noted that she, too, was a victim of sexual violence, said she was disturbed by the testimony of 43-year-old trucker Cyprien C., a defendant who spoke that day in court.

Asked by the head judge, Roger Arata, whether he recognized the facts, Cyprien C. answered that he

"did not contest the sexual act."

"And the rape?" Arata pressed. The defendant stood silently before eventually responding, "I can't answer."

Arata then began to describe what was on the videos implicating him. They are only shown as a last resource and on a case-by-case basis. But for many in the courtroom, such detailed descriptions can last several minutes and be just as heavy as watching them. Gisèle Pelicot, who is in her early 70s, has chosen to remain in the courtroom while the videos are shown. Unable to watch, she usually closes her eyes, stares at the floor, or buries her face in her hands.

Experts and groups working to combat sexual violence say the defendants' unwillingness or inability to admit to rape speaks loudly to taboos and stereotypes that persist in French society.

For Magali Lafourcade, a judge and general secretary of the National Consultative Commission of Human Rights who isn't involved in the trial, popular culture has given people the wrong idea about what rapists look like and how they operate.

"It's the idea of a hooded man with a knife whom you don't know and is waiting for you in a place that is not a private place," she said, noting that this "is miles away from the sociological, criminological reality of rape."

Two-thirds of rapes take place at private homes, and in a vast majority of cases, victims know their rapists, Lafourcade said.

It can be difficult at times to reconcile the facts with the personalities of the accused — described by loved ones as loving, generous and considerate companions, brothers and fathers.

Cyril B.'s tearful older sister told the court: "It's my brother, I love him. He's not a mean person." His partner described him as "kind, his heart on his sleeve and full of attention." She insisted that he isn't "macho" and that he had never forced her to do anything sexually that she wasn't comfortable with.

Although Lafourcade does not believe "all men are rapists," as some have concluded the trial shows, she said that unlike the #MeToo accusations that have ensnared French celebrities, the Pelicot case "makes us understand that in fact rapists could be everyone."

"For once, they're not monsters — they're not serial killers on the margin of society. They are men who resemble those we love," she said. "In this sense, there is something revolutionary."

Fernando Valenzuela, Mexican-born pitcher whose feats for Dodgers fueled 'Fernandomania,' dies at 63

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Fernando Valenzuela, the Mexican-born phenom for the Los Angeles Dodgers who inspired "Fernandomania" while winning the NL Cy Young Award and Rookie of the Year in 1981, has died. He was 63.

The team said he died Tuesday night at a Los Angeles hospital, but did not provide the cause or other details.

His death comes as the Dodgers prepare to open the World Series on Friday night at home against the New York Yankees. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Valenzuela would be honored during the series at Dodger Stadium.

Valenzuela had left his color commentator job on the Dodgers' Spanish-language television broadcast in September without explanation. He was reported to have been hospitalized earlier this month. His job kept him as a regular at Dodger Stadium, where he held court in the press box dining room before games and remained popular with fans who sought him out for photos and autographs.

"God bless Fernando Valenzuela!" actor and Dodgers fan Danny Trejo posted on X.

Valenzuela was one of the most dominant players of his era and a wildly popular figure in the 1980s, although he was never elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. However, he is part of Cooperstown, which features several artifacts including a signed ball from his no-hitter in 1990.

"He is one of the most influential Dodgers ever and belongs on the Mount Rushmore of franchise he-

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roes," Stan Kasten, team president and CEO, said in a statement. "He galvanized the fan base with the Fernandomania season of 1981 and has remained close to our hearts ever since, not only as a player but also as a broadcaster. He has left us all too soon."

Valenzuela's rise from humble beginnings as the youngest of 12 children in Mexico and his feats on the mound made him hugely popular and influential in Los Angeles' Latino community while helping attract new fans to Major League Baseball. Their fondness for him continued for years after his retirement.

"63 is way too young.... A piece of my childhood is gone," actor and "Access Hollywood" co-host Mario Lopez posted on X. "Growing up as a Mexican kid one of the main reasons I'm a Dodgers fan is because of Fernando. ... Not only a great player, but a great man to the community. What a legend."

Eva Torres, originally from Mexico City, drove from Anaheim to look at murals of Valenzuela on Sunset Boulevard near Dodgers Stadium.

"I wasn't a fan of baseball but I am a fan of his," she said. "He's like me, an immigrant that came here to do great things."

In 1981, Valenzuela became the Dodgers' opening day starter as a rookie after Jerry Reuss was injured 24 hours before his scheduled start. He shut out the Houston Astros 2-0 and began the season 8-0 with five shutouts and an ERA of 0.50. He became the first player to win a Cy Young and Rookie of the Year in the same season.

His performances created the delirium known as "Fernandomania" among Dodgers fans. The ABBA hit "Fernando" would play as he warmed up on the mound.

"Fernando Valenzuela was a true icon of the Dodgers and the game," Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif., posted on X. "His legacy and connection with the Latino community in LA is one of the reasons I fell in love with the Dodgers."

Valenzuela was 13-7 and had a 2.48 ERA in his first season, which was shortened by a players' strike.

He was an All-Star selection every year from 1981-86, when he recorded 97 victories, 84 complete games, 1,258 strikeouts and a 2.97 ERA. He was 5-1 with a 2.00 ERA in eight postseason starts. He earned two Silver Slugger Awards and a Gold Glove.

Valenzuela's no-hitter on June 29, 1990, a 6-0 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals at Dodger Stadium, was an emotional career highlight. He struck out seven and walked three.

"If you have a sombrero, throw it to the sky!" Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully exclaimed in his game call.

Nicknamed "El Toro" by the fans, Valenzuela had an unorthodox and memorable pitching motion that included looking skyward at the apex of each windup. His repertoire included a screwball — making him one of the few pitchers of his era who threw that pitch regularly. It was taught to him by teammate Bobby Castillo after the Dodgers felt Valenzuela, who wasn't known as a hard thrower, needed another pitch.

Early in his Dodgers career, Valenzuela spoke little English and had trouble communicating with his catchers. Rookie Mike Scioscia learned Spanish and became Valenzuela's personal catcher before becoming the team's full-time catcher.

Valenzuela was a better-than-average hitter, with 10 career home runs.

Eventually, his pitching was compromised by nagging shoulder problems that kept him out of the 1988 postseason, when the Dodgers won the World Series.

The team released Valenzuela just before the 1991 season. He also pitched for the former California Angels, Baltimore Orioles, Philadelphia Phillies, San Diego Padres and St. Louis Cardinals.

He retired in 1997, going 173-153 with a 3.54 ERA in 17 seasons, the all-time major league leader in wins and strikeouts (2,074) by a Mexican-born player. In 11 seasons with the Dodgers, he was 141-116 with a 3.31 ERA.

Valenzuela's rise from his tiny hometown of Etchohuaquila in the Mexican state of Sonora to stardom in the U.S. was improbable. He was the youngest child in a large family who tagged along when his older brothers played baseball.

He signed his first pro contract at age 16, and soon began overpowering older players in the Mexican Central League.

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In 1978, legendary Dodgers scout Mike Brito was in Mexico to watch a shortstop when Valenzuela entered the game as a reliever. He immediately commanded Brito's attention and at age 18, Valenzuela signed with the Dodgers in 1979. He was sent to the California League that same year.

In 1980, Valenzuela was called up to the Dodgers in September and soon made his big league debut as a reliever.

He remains the only pitcher in MLB history to win the Cy Young and Rookie of the Year awards in the same season. The left-hander was the National League's starting pitcher in the All-Star Game in 1981, the same year the Dodgers won the World Series.

During his career, he made the cover of Sports Illustrated and visited the White House.

In 2003, Valenzuela returned to the Dodgers as the Spanish-language radio color commentator for NL games. Twelve years later, he switched to the color commentator job on the team's Spanish-language TV feed.

"He consistently supported the growth of the game through the World Baseball Classic and at MLB events across his home country," Manfred said in a statement. "As a member of the Dodger broadcasting team for more than 20 years, Fernando helped to reach a new generation of fans and cultivate their love of the game. Fernando will always remain a beloved figure in Dodger history and a special source of pride for the millions of Latino fans he inspired."

He was inducted into the Mexican Professional Baseball Hall of Fame in 2014. Five years later, the Mexican League retired Valenzuela's No. 34 jersey. The Dodgers followed in 2023 after keeping his number out of circulation since he last pitched for the team in 1991. The team has a rule that requires a player to be in the Baseball Hall of Fame before having the Dodgers retire his number, but they made an exception for Valenzuela.

The Dodgers named Valenzuela as part of the "Legends of Dodger Baseball" in 2019 and inducted him into the team's Ring of Honor in 2023.

He became a U.S. citizen in 2015.

Valenzuela served on the coaching staff for Mexico during the World Baseball Classic in 2006, 2009, 2013 and 2017. He was a part-owner of the Mexican League team Tigres de Quintana Roo, with son Fernando Jr. serving as team president and son Ricky serving as general manager. Fernando Jr. played in the San Diego Padres and Chicago White Sox organizations as a first baseman.

In addition to his sons, he is survived by his wife, Linda, who was a schoolteacher from Mexico whom he married in 1981, and daughters Linda and Maria as well as seven grandchildren.

Ohtani's historic 50-50 ball sells at auction for nearly \$4.4M amid ongoing dispute over ownership

Associated Press undefined

Shohei Ohtani's 50th home run ball has sold at auction for nearly \$4.4 million, a record high price not just for a baseball, but for any ball in any sport, the auctioneer said Wednesday.

Ohtani became the first player in baseball history to hit 50 homers and steal 50 bases in a season, reaching the milestone on Sept. 19 when the Los Angeles Dodgers star hit his second of three homers against the Marlins.

"We received bids from around the world, a testament to the significance of this iconic collectible and Ohtani's impact on sports, and I'm thrilled for the winning bidder," Ken Goldin, the founder and CEO of auctioneer Goldin Auctions said in a statement.

The auction opened on Sept. 27 with a starting bid of \$500,000 and closed just after midnight on Wednesday. The auctioneer said it could not disclose any information about the winning bidder.

The auction has been overshadowed by the litigation over ownership of the ball. Christian Zacek walked out of Miami's LoanDepot Park with the ball after gaining possession in the left-field stands. Max Matus and Joseph Davidov each claim in separate lawsuits that they grabbed the ball first.

All the parties involved in the litigation agreed that the auction should continue.

Matus' lawsuit claims that the Florida resident — who was celebrating his 18th birthday — gained possession of the Ohtani ball before Zacek took it away. Davidov claims in his suit that he was able to "firmly and completely grab the ball in his left hand while it was on the ground, successfully obtaining possession of the 50/50 ball."

Ohtani and the Dodgers are preparing for Game 1 of the World Series scheduled for Friday night.

LeBron and Bronny James make history as the NBA's first father-son duo to play together

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — LeBron James gave his 20-year-old son a pep talk before they rose from the Lakers bench. Amid rising cheers, they walked together to the scorer's table — and then they stepped straight into basketball history.

LeBron and Bronny became the first father and son to play in the NBA together Tuesday night during the Los Angeles Lakers' season opener, fulfilling a dream set out a few years ago by LeBron, the top scorer in league history.

"That moment, us being at the scorer's table together and checking in together, it's a moment I'm never going to forget," LeBron said. "No matter how old I get, no matter how my memory may fade as I get older or whatever, I will never forget that moment."

Father and son checked into the game against Minnesota simultaneously with four minutes left in the second quarter, prompting a big ovation from a home crowd aware of the enormity of the milestone. The 39-year-old LeBron had already started the game and played 13 minutes before he teamed up with his 20-year-old son for about 2 1/2 minutes of action.

LeBron James is one of the greatest players in NBA history, a four-time champion and 20-time All-Star, while LeBron James Jr. was a second-round pick by the Lakers last summer. They are the first father and son to play in the world's top basketball league at the same time, let alone on the same team.

"Y'all ready? You see the intensity, right? Just play carefree, though," father told son on the bench before they checked in, an exchange captured by the TNT cameras and microphones. "Don't worry about mistakes. Just go out and play hard."

Their time on court together was fast and furious, just as LeBron promised.

LeBron, who finished the night with 16 points, missed two perimeter shots before making a dunk. Bronny had an early offensive rebound and missed a tip-in, and his first NBA jump shot moments later was a 3-pointer that came up just short. He checked out one possession later with 1:19 left in the second quarter, getting another ovation.

Bronny didn't play again in the Lakers' 110-103 victory over the Timberwolves.

"(I) tried not to focus on everything that's going on around me, and tried to focus on going in as a rookie and not trying to mess up," Bronny said. "But yeah, I totally did feel the energy, and I appreciate Laker Nation for showing the support for me and my dad."

After the final whistle on the Lakers' first opening-night victory in LeBron's seven seasons with the team, father and son also headed to the locker room together — but not before stopping in the tunnel to hug Savannah James, LeBron's wife and Bronny's mother. The entire family was in attendance to watch history — on little sister Zhuri's 10th birthday, no less.

Ken Griffey Sr. and Ken Griffey Jr. also were courtside at the Lakers' downtown arena to witness the same history they made in Major League Baseball. The two sluggers played 51 games together for the Seattle Mariners in 1990 and 1991 as baseball's first father-son duo.

The Jameses and the Griffey family met during pregame warmups for some photos and a warm chat between two remarkable family lines.

LeBron first spoke about his dream to play alongside Bronny a few years ago, while his oldest son was still in high school. The dream became real after Bronny entered the draft as a teenager following one

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collegiate season, and the Lakers grabbed him with the 55th overall pick.

"I talked about it years and years ago, and for this moment to come, it's pretty cool," LeBron said. "I don't know if it's going to actually hit the both of us for a little minute, but when we really get to sit back and take it in, it's pretty crazy. ... But in the moment, we still had a job to do when we checked in. We wasn't trying to make it a circus. We wasn't trying to make it about us. We wanted to make it about the team."

LeBron and Bronny joined a small club of father-son professional athletes who played together. The Griffey's made history 34 years ago, and they even homered in the same game on Sept. 14, 1990.

Baseball Hall of Famer Tim Lincecum and his namesake son also accomplished the feat with the Baltimore Orioles in 2001.

In hockey, Gordie Howe played alongside his two sons, Mark and Marty, with the WHA's Houston Aeros and Team Canada before one NHL season together on the Hartford Whalers in 1979-80, when Gordie was 51.

While the other family pairings on this list happened late in the fathers' careers, LeBron shows no signs of slowing down or regressing as he begins his NBA record-tying 22nd season.

LeBron averaged more than 25 points per game last year for his 20th consecutive season, and he remains the most important player on the Lakers alongside Anthony Davis as they attempt to recapture the form that won a championship in 2020 and got them to the Western Conference finals in 2023.

Bronny survived cardiac arrest and open heart surgery in the summer of 2023, and he went on to play a truncated freshman season at the University of Southern California. He declared for the draft anyway, and the Lakers eagerly used the fourth-to-last pick in the draft on the 6-foot-2 guard.

LeBron spent the summer in Europe with the gold medal-winning U.S. team at the Paris Olympics, while Bronny played for the Lakers in summer league. They started practicing together with the Lakers before training camp.

The duo first played together in the preseason, logging four minutes during a game against Phoenix just outside Palm Springs earlier this month.

"It's been a treat," LeBron said at Tuesday's morning shootaround. "In preseason, the practices, just every day ... bringing him up to speed of what this professional life is all about, and how to prepare every day as a professional."

The Lakers were fully aware of the history they would make with this pairing, and coach JJ Redick spoke with the Jameses recently about a plan to make it happen early in the regular season.

The presence of the Griffey's likely made it an inevitability for opening night, even though Redick said the Lakers still wanted it "to happen naturally, in the flow of the game."

The Lakers have declined to speculate on how long Bronny will stay on their NBA roster. Los Angeles already has three other small guards on its roster, and Bronny likely needs regular playing time to raise his game to a consistent NBA standard.

Those factors add up to indicate Bronny is likely to join the affiliate South Bay Lakers of the G League at some point soon. LeBron and Redick have both spoken positively about the South Bay team, saying that player development is a key part of the Lakers organization.

Miami forward Kevin Love, who knew all the James children — Bronny, Bryce and Zhuri — from his time as LeBron's teammate in Cleveland, said it was "an unbelievable moment" to see father and son playing together.

"I grew up a Mariners fan, so I got to see Griffey and then Griffey Sr. But this is different, because LeBron is still a top-five player in the league," Love said. "This game, man. It's why we have that (\$76 billion) TV deal. The storylines and the things that happen like this, it's an unbelievable story. This is really cool to see."

Villagers are wary of plans to dam a river to ensure Panama Canal's water supply

By ALMA SOLÍS Associated Press

EL JOBO, Panama (AP) — A long, wooden boat pattered down the Indio River's chocolate waters carrying Ana María Antonio and a colleague from the Panama Canal Authority on a mission to hear directly from villagers who could be affected by plans to dam the river.

The canal forms the backbone of Panama's economy, and the proposed dam would secure the water needed to ensure the canal's uninterrupted operation at a time of increasingly erratic weather.

It also would flood villages, where about 2,000 people would need to be relocated and where there is opposition to the plan, and curb the flow of the river to other communities downstream.

Those living downstream know the mega-project will substantially alter the river, but they hope it will bring jobs, potable water, electricity and roads to their remote communities and not just leave them impoverished.

"We, as the Panama Canal, understand that many of these areas have been abandoned in terms of basic services," Antonio said.

The canal

The Panama Canal was completed in 1914 and generates about a quarter of the government's budget.

Last year, the canal authority reduced the number of ships that could cross daily by about 20% because rains hadn't replenished the reservoirs used to operate the locks, which need about 50 million gallons of fresh water for each ship. It led to shipping delays, and in some cases companies looking for alternatives. By the time restrictions were lifted this month, demand had fallen.

To avoid a repeat due to drought exacerbated by climate change, the plan to dam the Indio River was revived.

It received a boost this summer with a ruling from Panama's Supreme Court. For years, Panama has wanted to build another reservoir to supplement the main supply of water from Lake Gatun — a large manmade lake and part of the canal's route — but a 2006 regulation prohibited the canal from expansion outside its traditional watershed. The Supreme Court's decision allowed a re-interpretation of the boundaries.

The Indio runs roughly parallel to the canal, through the isthmus. The new reservoir on the Indio would sit southwest of Lake Gatun and supplement the water from there and what comes from the much smaller Alhajuela Lake to the east. The Indio reservoir would allow an estimated 12 to 13 additional canal crossings each day.

The reservoirs also provide water to the more than 2 million people — half the country's population — living in the capital.

The river

Monkeys screeched in the thick jungle lining the Indio on an August morning. The boat weaved around submerged logs below concrete and rough timber houses high on the banks. Locals passed in other boats, the main means of transportation for the area.

At the town of El Jobo, Antonio and her colleague carefully climbed the muddy incline from the river to a room belonging to the local Catholic parish, decorated with flowers and bunches of green bananas.

Inside, residents from El Jobo and Guayabalito, two communities that won't be flooded, took their seats. The canal authority has held dozens of such outreach meetings in the watershed.

The canal representatives hung posters with maps and photos showing the Indio's watershed. They talked about the proposed project, the Supreme Court's recent decision, a rough timeline.

Antonio said that canal officials are talking to affected residents to figure out their needs, especially if they are from the 37 tiny villages where residents would have to be relocated.

Canal authorities have said the Indio is not the only solution they're considering, but just days earlier canal administrator Ricaurte Catín Vásquez said it would be the most efficient option, because it has been

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studied for at least 40 years.

That's nearly as long as Jeronima Figueroa, 60, has lived along the Indio in El Jobo. Besides being the area's critical transportation link, the Indio provides water for drinking, washing clothes and watering their crops, she said.

"That river is our highway and our everything," she said.

The dam's effect on the river's flow was top of mind for the assembled residents, along with why the reservoir is needed, what would the water be used for, which communities would have to relocate, how property titles would be handled, would the construction pollute the river.

Puria Nuñez of El Jobo summed up the fears: "Our river isn't going to be the same Indio River."

Progress

Kenny Alexander Macero, a 21-year-old father who raises livestock in Guayabalito, said it was clear to him that the reservoir would make the canal a lot of money, but he wanted to see it spur real change for his family and others in the area.

"I'm not against the project, it's going to generate a lot of work for people who need it, but you should be sincere in saying that 'we're going to bring projects to the communities that live in that area,'" he said.

"We want highways. Don't try to fool us."

One complication was that while the canal authorities would be in charge of the reservoir project, the federal government would have to carry out the region's major development projects. And the feds weren't in the room.

The project is not a guarantee of other benefits. There are communities along Lake Gatun that don't have potable water.

Gilberto Toro, a community development consultant not involved in the canal project, said that the canal administration is actually more trusted by people than Panama's federal government, because it hasn't been enmeshed in as many scandals.

"Everybody knows that the canal projects come with a seal of guarantee," Toro said. "So a lot of people want to negotiate with the canal in some way because they know what they're going to offer isn't going to be trinkets."

Figueroa expressed similar faith in the canal administrators, but said that residents would need to monitor them closely to avoid being overlooked. "We can't keep living far behind like this," she said. "We don't have electricity, water, healthcare and education."

Next steps

President José Raúl Mulino has said a decision about the Indio River project would come next year. The canal administration ultimately will decide, but the project would require coordination with the federal government. No public vote is necessary, but the canal administrator has said they are looking to arrive at a public consensus.

Opposition has emerged, not surprisingly, in communities that would be flooded.

Among those is Limon, where the canal representatives parked their car and boarded a boat to El Jobo. It's where the reservoir's dam would be constructed. The highway only arrived there two years ago and the community still has many needs.

Olegario Hernández has had a sign out in front of his home in Limon for the past year that says: "No to the reservoirs."

The 86-year-old farmer was born there and raised his six children there. His children all left the area in search of opportunities, but Hernández wants to stay.

"We don't need to leave," Hernández said, but the canal administration "wants to kick us out."

Young women lean Democratic. Now the election may hinge on Harris' ability to run up the score

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — At the University of Pittsburgh, as freshmen students took their first steps on campus and swarms of lanternflies buzzed through the air, the sounds of Taylor Swift and Chappell Roan drifted from a folding table draped with an iridescent pink tablecloth.

Fruit snacks and colorful butterfly hairclips were laid out next to pink stickers that said "Saving Democracy is Hot" and "Hot Peeps Vote." The organizers wore shirts that said "Hot Girls Vote."

The voter registration drive was run by NextGen America, a progressive organization that's trying to increase turnout among young women in battleground states such as Pennsylvania.

Meredith Wenthur, who recently moved from North Carolina to Pittsburgh to start college, stopped by the table to register and said she plans to vote for Democrat Kamala Harris. She was thrilled by the vice president's performance in the debate with Republican Donald Trump, saying it was "really something" to see a woman assert herself like that against a man.

While young women have leaned more Democratic than Republican, this year's election could see a historic gender gap as Harris tries to become the country's first female president and the fight over abortion rights remains an animating issue.

"Men shouldn't have a say in what women can and can't do with their bodies," said Wenthur, 18.

And in Allegheny County — which has voted for a Democratic president in the past five election cycles — turnout of young women will be crucial in the country's largest battleground state. As of Oct. 21, the county has registered more than 88,670 18- to 24-year-olds this election cycle, and more than 183,232 25- to 34-year-olds, according to state data. Combined they represent almost 30% of the county's voting population of more than 943,221 registered voters.

There are 522,536 registered Democrats and 270,952 registered Republicans.

Getting this traditionally Democratic group to the polls will be crucial for Harris, since surrounding, more rural, Republican counties could deliver a victory for former President Trump.

Young women are politically activated on campus

Trump is trying to galvanize young men who are disoriented by these gender shifts, frequently emphasizing his masculinity in campaign speeches and imagery. In recent speeches, Trump has added a refrain about how women must be sheltered from the world and casting himself as their "protector."

"They will finally be healthy, hopeful, safe and secure," he says. "Their lives will be happy, beautiful and great again."

Harris, in turn, says Republicans are "simply out of their mind."

"It's clear that they just don't trust women," she says on the campaign trail. "Well, we trust women."

Jessica Herrera, a senior director at Supermajority, a liberal organization focused on mobilizing young women, said abortion is a potent issue because it's a symbol of autonomy.

"When candidates and politicians talk about abortion, it isn't the procedure itself," she said. "It's the power that we have to make decisions about our own lives."

Supermajority's research focuses on young women who are infrequent voters or don't vote, and Herrera thinks Harris is poised to expand the electorate.

"If we see a surge this year, it's going to be young women voters," she said. "They have come around in a way that I think is surprising."

Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster, said Trump's message is off-putting for women.

"Women want to be empowered. Women want to have freedom. Women want to have control," she said. "He talks about protection. He talks about him being in control."

Karoline Leavitt, Trump's national press secretary, said while Harris could potentially become the first female president, "she has implemented dangerously liberal policies that have left women worse off financially and far less safe than we were four years ago under President Trump."

The stakes are high in Pennsylvania

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Allegheny County, with a population of 1.25 million people, is a blue tile in an otherwise red patchwork of surrounding counties.

President Joe Biden won the state by a little more than a percentage point four years ago. Hillary Clinton lost it by an even slimmer margin four years before that.

In this election cycle, Pennsylvania has generated the most attention by far from both candidates. As of Oct. 22nd, they will have made 50 stops in the state, according to Associated Press tracking of the campaigns' public events.

Chris Borick, a professor of political science at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, said enthusiasm among young women for Harris could help put her over the top.

"This is one of those places where you could see something really different," he said.

Still, some women aren't convinced, even with the tens of millions of dollars each candidate has invested in the state.

Teba Latef, an 18-year-old Pittsburgh freshman studying neuroscience, said she's undecided and feels like Trump and Harris don't speak with nuance about important issues.

"They take advantage of different kinds of people," she said, "Trump takes advantage of men who feel like they're being left behind and Harris is manipulating women who are concerned about their reproductive rights, knowing that realistically bringing the nationwide right to abortion back is nearly impossible."

Higher education, fresh optimism, more Democratic: Takeaways from a key county in Pennsylvania

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the most important signs of how people will vote is how much education they have. Voters who attended college are much more likely to back Democrats, while those without degrees usually go Republican.

So as The Associated Press looked for places to explore this topic, we focused our attention on Centre County, Pennsylvania. The area is home to Pennsylvania State University, making it a classic blue dot in a red region.

But the county is attracting more people with college degrees, and small towns in the area are going from red to purple and purple to blue. Nothing is certain in this tumultuous election year, but the changes could help Kamala Harris counter Donald Trump's margins in more rural areas. Here's what we found in Centre County.

A traditional swing county is swinging in one direction

Centre County has 160,000 residents in the middle of Pennsylvania, and it's been a traditional swing area over the years. But that's changed, with Democratic presidential candidates winning consistently in recent elections and Democrats maintaining control over the county board of commissioners.

The shift is reflected in data on education. A decade ago, 39.4% of residents had a four-year college degree or more. Last year, it was up to 47.6%. County leaders are pushing to diversify the economy beyond Penn State, focusing on new attractions like an iron man triathlon and developments like expanded healthcare facilities.

'Boomeranging' back to Centre County

Mark Higgins, chair of the Centre County Board of Commissioners, said the area's growth is fueled by "boomerangs." That means people who grew up or went to school in the county are moving back to raise their families.

Cost of living is an important factor. People are moving from bigger cities to State College because it's more affordable, and other people are moving from State College to the surrounding towns because it's even cheaper. The result is that the blue dot is expanding in the county.

"You see an expansion of the university community and economy," said Ezra Nanes, the Democratic mayor of State College. "It touches all parts of the county."

Big change has come to small towns

Penn State is orbited by a series of small towns which have long had a conservative reputation. However, that's been slowly changing.

Voters in Bellefonte, which has 6,000 residents, backed Trump in 2016 but supported Joe Biden in 2020. Once a struggling small town, it's seen a wave of investment and new arrivals who have brought more liberal politics.

The change isn't everywhere though. Philipsburg, with less than 3,000 residents, hasn't yet seen the same renaissance. The decline of coal mining has sapped the town of jobs, and voters there chose Trump over Biden in 2020. "It's a cute little town. It just needs help," said Brittney Tekely, 31, who runs her own barber shop.

Campaigns hunting for votes

Democrats believe they can run up the score in Centre County. Their plans include engaging the left-leaning student population, which is vast but sometimes unresponsive during elections. There's also an aggressive canvassing operation in the area. "Centre County could have thousands more votes than we did in 2020 or 2016," said Abbey Carr, executive director of the county's Democratic Party.

Republicans aren't writing off the campus population, and they've held events geared toward energizing right-leaning students. Kush Desai, the Trump campaign's Pennsylvania spokesman, said they're doing outreach at college football tailgates and focusing on winning votes from young men who are frustrated with progressive culture. "A lot of people who are rubbing elbows are starting to chip away and come to our side instead," he said.

In Pennsylvania, an influx of college graduates could push a key county toward Harris

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

BELLEFONTE, Pa. (AP) — It was love at first sight when Ellen Matis pulled up to this small Pennsylvania borough on a dreary winter day almost eight years ago. The road into town curved along the creek and then climbed uphill to a historic square where she chatted with regulars over beers at the local pub.

"This is where we need to live," she decided. Matis' sister-in-law, who grew up in the area, was shocked. She remembered Bellefonte as a sleepy place with vacant storefronts and a drug problem so notorious that people sometimes overdosed in front of the courthouse.

But Matis, 33, saw potential in the town's quaint brick buildings and scenic foothold in the Allegheny Mountains just a short drive from Pennsylvania State University. She settled in, started a social media marketing company and had two daughters with her husband.

"People are excited for change and what the future holds," Matis said.

Matis' journey to Bellefonte is one small measure of a larger evolution that's reshaping the politics of Centre County, which is home to about 160,000 people in the middle of Pennsylvania, and could tilt this year's closely fought presidential election.

The area has long been divided between the liberal university town of State College, which anchors the region, and the conservative hamlets that surround it. But now the blue dot is expanding as college-educated people spread throughout Centre County, drawn by the lower cost of living, more relaxed lifestyle and economic development that has breathed new life into depleted blue-collar communities.

A college degree means more Democratic voters

Last year, 47.6% of county residents had a four-year college degree or more, up from 39.4% a decade ago. Because education levels tend to track partisan affiliation, Democrats have an increasing edge in a part of the state that has historically swung back and forth between the two parties. While in no way assured, the shift means Democratic nominee Kamala Harris could run up margins in small towns far from the big cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, which traditionally get far more attention from presidential campaigns.

Harris' potential strength here reflects an ongoing tectonic realignment in American politics, with Republicans expanding their outreach to the working class and Democrats relying more on upwardly mobile,

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college-educated people.

In Centre County, that means Republican nominee Donald Trump remains appealing to voters who feel like their communities haven't benefited from the area's changes. But places like Bellefonte are trending blue, backing Joe Biden four years ago after supporting Trump four years before that, and voters with more optimistic views, like Matis, are lining up behind Harris.

"She makes you feel hopeful," Matis said. "I want a clean slate."

The changing demographics in Centre County have already had an impact on local politics. Although control of the board of commissioners used to switch every election, it's been reliably Democratic for almost a decade.

The county's leaders are also pursuing a new development plan that's intended to diversify its economy beyond the university and attract even more people to the region.

"We have that solid rock in Penn State," said Mark Higgins, chair of the county board of commissioners. "This is more than just Penn State now."

Several hotels are slated to open in the coming years. There's a new hospital and another one is expanding. The population is expected to increase while Pennsylvania is losing residents overall. There are fresh attractions like arts festivals and an Ironman triathlon.

Higgins said Centre County's growth is partially fueled by "boomerangs," meaning people who grew up in the area or went to school at Penn State and then move back to raise their family there.

"It's Wobegon," he said, "except it's real."

Much like other areas of the country, inflation and the rising cost of living have been challenges, but the impact is felt differently. People who are weary of expensive big cities are moving to State College, and people who can't afford State College are moving to the surrounding area. It's an economic chain reaction that means there are more liberal-minded people in more towns around the county.

People are 'boomeranging' back to Centre County

Derek and Lauren Ishler are the quintessential boomerang couple. They met while attending Penn State, and lived for several years in Alexandria, Virginia. But before having their two daughters, they relocated to State College to be close to their families.

"It's grown but we still have that small-town feel," Derek said. "We're happy here."

Derek, 42, does financial work for a logistics company and Lauren, 41, is an elementary school teacher. Both are voting for Harris.

"What world do I want my kids to grow up in?" he asked. "One is fear, fear, fear. The other is, 'hey, let's work together.'"

On a recent Friday night, they were in Bellefonte for an annual festival, where local vendors served gourmet food in a park under string lights while a band played nearby.

Stacy and Marc Counterman brought their five-month-old son in his stroller. They moved to town three years ago because Marc, 31, got a job as an academic adviser at Penn State.

They were so excited that they bought their house without seeing it in person, worried it would be snatched up before they arrived. Both of them are voting for Harris.

"She's fighting for families," said Stacy, 33, who works for an education nonprofit. "I'm hopeful she'll fight for us."

The ideological reshuffling is tied to State College, where the university is located. Some residents relocate there from what they call "Trump country" to be closer to the institution and its culture.

Alex Sterbenz, 31, came from Burnham, which is in the next county over.

"I figured it made sense to move here, instead of just coming up every weekend," said Sterbenz, who works in a local music store and plays honkytonk songs on his 2021 Gretsch White Falcon. He tries not to talk politics with his friends and family back home.

But State College isn't just attracting people; it's also exerting a gravitational pull on surrounding towns.

Zeb Smoyer, 23, grew up in Bellefonte, where he joined the Boy Scouts and hunted whitetail deer. Like a lot of teenagers, he couldn't wait to get out of town. But after he went to college elsewhere in Pennsylvania and spent some time traveling, he decided "Bellefonte is not a bad place."

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Now he lives there and works for an engineering company, which he helps comply with environmental regulations as it lays pipes for turning farmlands into housing developments. Smoyer hasn't made up his mind about the election, but he previously voted for Biden.

The area is anchored by Penn State and its students

Ezra Nanes, the Democratic mayor of State College, said there's been more overlap between his town and the surrounding area.

"You see an expansion of the university community and economy," he said. "It touches all parts of the county."

Nanes' own journey to Centre County parallels the shifts in the region. A New York native, he was ready to make a change in his life and applied to Penn State's MBA program. He moved to State College 14 years ago with his wife and baby daughter.

They fell in love with the community and the natural environment — "you can be in the mountains in 15 minutes," he said — and never left. They now have two children. Nanes works at AccuWeather, a forecasting company, and his wife is a physical therapist who started her own business focused on women's health.

Nanes was a delegate at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and he hopes "we can help run up the score here."

"There's a lot of focus on the big cities," he said. "But this is an important place if you want to win."

One challenge is engaging Penn State's expansive student population.

"We're not exactly known for having a very deep political involvement, which is a shame," said Baybars Charkas, president of the Penn State College Democrats. Charkas calls Penn State "probably the most powerful university in the United States at the current moment" given its size and location in a key battleground state. Roughly 48,000 students are enrolled at the school's State College campus.

Graduate student Sydney Robinson started her own organization dedicated to supporting Harris. Members make friendship bracelets to promote their candidate and send text messages to rally potential voters.

Robinson, who is applying to law school, is hopeful about the future.

"We just have so many opportunities," she said. "We're at a crucial turning point in history, but it's exciting."

She's earned the nickname "voter girl" because she tries to always carry registration forms; she gets three or four people to sign up each week.

The Harris campaign has four staff members in Centre County, including a dedicated campus organizer, and said they've knocked on more than 9,000 doors and made more than 80,000 phone calls. They're also advertising on radio stations to catch voters while commuting in and out of State College.

Trump's campaign did not provide figures on voter outreach. But Kush Desai, the Trump campaign's Pennsylvania spokesman, said his team is attending college football tailgates and focusing on appealing to male voters to cut into Harris' support within the educated electorate.

Some of the effort focuses on the economy, with the traditional question of, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" Desai also suggested that Democrats have shifted too far left on cultural issues.

"I think there's just a natural backlash here," he said, and men "are starting to chip away and come to our side instead."

Ryan Klein, president of the Penn State College Republicans, said the campus leans left but conservatives aren't as outnumbered as many think. He pointed to strong turnout at last month's event with Trump supporter Charlie Kirk, who runs Turning Point, an organization focused on rallying young right-leaning voters.

On most days, "there aren't a lot of people who want to go out of their way to proudly don the red hat," Klein said, but hundreds wore "Make America Great Again" paraphernalia that day.

The county's economic progress remains uneven

Republicans are much stronger in some of the rural areas surrounding State College that haven't seen the same kind of development as Bellefonte.

One of those places is Philipsburg, with a postage-stamp-sized downtown where vacant storefronts remain common.

"It has potential," said Brittney Tekely, 31. "It's a cute little town. It just needs help."

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She saved up money to start her own barbershop there while working as a stylist during the day and in a Wal-Mart distribution warehouse at night. Tekely painted and decorated the place herself with model cars and other trinkets that she picked up at antique stores. She even went all the way to Niagara Falls to buy an old-fashioned cash register that dings loudly when opened. Her three dogs — Digger, Roxie and Mister Skunk — come to work with her and hang out in the back, where they bark when someone opens the front door.

But Tekely doesn't see the same care being put into the rest of the town, saying, "There are buildings that no one is fixing up or tearing down." She isn't sure if she'll vote this year, and many of her customers are vocal Republicans.

"They just go on and on and on," Tekely said. "You've got to keep your two cents to yourself."

Some of them, she said, "truly think if Trump becomes president again it will help the country and help prices."

The town backed Trump over Biden four years ago, and there's less of the optimism that characterizes Bellefonte's renaissance.

Thomas Gette, 77, lives a few blocks from downtown with a Trump sign on the curb outside the front door. He's retired after spending four decades as the manager of a local hardware store, and he just finished repainting his house.

Gette said voting for the Republican candidate is "a no-brainer," especially with all the concerns about uncontrolled migration.

"Something has got to give," he said, adding that if Trump doesn't win, "I can't imagine what it's going to be like."

In Gette's mind, changes in the area have sapped the town of jobs and money.

"There were mines everywhere and the railroads were everywhere," Gette said, and he's worried that the transition away from fossil fuels is happening too fast.

And now, how would he describe Philipsburg?

"Pretty stagnant," he said.

South Carolina to build first monument to an African American. Meet Robert Smalls

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

BEAUFORT, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina is preparing to put up its first individual statue for an African American on its Statehouse lawn, honoring a man who put on Confederate clothes in order to steal a slaveholder's ship and sail his family and a dozen others to freedom during the Civil War.

But Robert Smalls isn't just being honored for his audacious escape. He spent a decade in the U.S. House, helped rewrite South Carolina's constitution to allow Black men equality after the Civil War and then put up a valiant but doomed fight when racists returned to power and eliminated nearly all of the gains Smalls fought for.

Rep. Jermaine Johnson can't wait to bring his children to the Statehouse to finally see someone who is Black like them being honored.

"The man has done so many great things, it's just a travesty he has not been honored until now. Heck, it's also a travesty there isn't some big Hollywood movie out there about his life," said Johnson, a Democrat from a district just a few miles from the Statehouse.

The idea for a statue to Smalls has been percolating for years. But there was always quiet opposition preventing a bill from getting a hearing. That changed in 2024 as the proposal made it unanimously through the state House and Senate on the back of Republican Rep. Brandon Cox of Goose Creek.

"South Carolina is a great state. We've got a lot of history, good and bad. This is our good history," Cox said.

What will the Robert Smalls memorial look like?

The bill created a special committee that has until Jan. 15 to come up with a design, a location on the

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Statehouse lawn and the money to pay for whatever memorial they choose.

But supporters face a challenging question: What best honors Smalls?

If it's just one statue, is it best to honor the steel-nerved ship pilot who waited for all the white crew to leave, then mimicked hand signals and whistle toots to get through Confederate checkpoints, while hoping Confederate soldiers didn't notice a Black man under the hat in the pale moonlight in May 1862?

Or would a more fitting tribute to Smalls be to recognize the statesman who served in the South Carolina House and Senate and the U.S. House after the Civil War? Smalls bought his master's house in Beaufort in part with money made for turning the Confederate ship over to Union forces, then allowed the man's penniless wife to live there when she was widowed.

Or is the elder Smalls who fought for education for all and to keep the gains African Americans made during the Civil War the man most worth publicly memorializing? Smalls would see a new constitution in 1895 wipe out African Americans' right to vote. He was fired from his federal customs collector job in 1913 when then President Woodrow Wilson purged a large number of Black men out of government jobs.

Or would it be best to combine them all in some way? That's how Republican Rep. Chip Campsen, an occasional ship pilot himself, sees honoring one of his favorite South Carolinians.

"The best way to sum up Robert Smalls' life is it was a fight for freedom as a slave, as a pilot and as a statesman," Campsen said.

Location, location, location

Then there is the matter of location. While South Carolina has a monument with multiple panels honoring the struggle of African Americans from their journey on slave ships through today, it doesn't honor an individual Black man or woman among the two dozen monuments scattered around the Statehouse.

At least six different monuments honor people like Dr. J. Marion Sims, who some consider the father of modern gynecology but who underpinned his research operating without anesthesia on enslaved women and girls. There are several honoring Confederates who fought to protect slavery in the state that started the Civil War and hangs a marble copy of the Articles of Secession in the lobby between its House and Senate chambers.

The dubious list includes "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, a governor and U.S. senator who bragged about how he led groups of whites who killed Black men trying to vote during the election of 1876 which led to the end of Reconstruction, the return of all-white rule and the collapse of everything for which Smalls had worked. None of that is on the plaque for Tillman's statue.

Some supporters have suggested Smalls' statue could stand nearby and be taller and more prominent than Tillman's to give Smalls a triumph some 130 years in the making.

Once design and location are determined, organizers hope raising the money gets easier with a concept in mind.

"We have to get the narrative right," Republican Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey said. "This is going to tell a story. I think it is important that we tell that the right way to honor him and to honor south Carolina. I think it's really cool."

Robert Smalls' monumental life

Robert Smalls was born in 1839 in Beaufort and died in 1915 in his hometown a free, but somewhat forgotten man who lived a life unimaginable to a woman holding her son born into slavery. Supporters now have a chance to make sure he never fades into obscurity.

"Robert Smalls writes a new future for this county that in the moment no one can see is happening," said Chris Barr, the Chief of Interpretation for the Reconstruction Era National Historic Park in Beaufort as he stood beside the a bust of Smalls near his grave in his hometown.

Driving a Confederate boat to freedom is what captures the most attention in that remarkable life, Barr said.

"If you're an enslaved person working on one of these boats around the Charleston Harbor like Robert Smalls, you've got the tools, you've got the talent, you've got the boat and you know how to drive it," Barr said "And you can literally see freedom floating in the form of the United States Navy just a few miles offshore. All you need is an opportunity."

A look behind the scenes at the National Toy Hall of Fame

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — When curators at the National Toy Hall of Fame learned last fall that the Fisher-Price Corn Popper had been voted in as part of the class of 2023, they knew they had some serious work to do.

With a formal induction ceremony approaching, they would have to figure out how to showcase the beloved toddler push toy with colorful balls that ricochet around a clear dome.

It isn't as simple as going to Walmart and pulling one off the shelves: The hall, part of the The Strong National Museum of Play in upstate New York, aims to show how its toys have endured and evolved over the years — pieces go from wood to plastic, electronics are added.

That means digging through archives, auctions, the internet and garage sales to hunt for an original, or one close to it — a process repeated with each new hall of fame inductee.

"We want some recognizable things currently on the market, but we also want people to say, 'Oh, I had one of those!'" said Christopher Bensch, chief curator at the Strong museum, which is a larger-than-life interactive toybox for kids and adults.

For example, when the jigsaw puzzle was inducted in 2002, they added one of the world's first versions, a map of Europe pasted onto a thin mahogany board from 1766, alongside a child's Donald Duck board puzzle from 1990. Not all of the toys inducted into the hall are specific products, either — 2021's inductee was simply "sand."

In the case of the Corn Popper, the curators needed to find something recognizable to generations. The toy has been around since 1957 and more than 36 million have been sold, according to Fisher-Price. Nearly 650,000 visitors would arrive over the next year to view it and the hall of fame's other vaunted toys.

Vaults, garage sales, eBay

After being voted in by experts and fans, many hall of fame toys are pulled for permanent display from the museum's vast archives.

The honorees are usually so iconic — the Barbie doll, the teddy bear, checkers — that the odds are good there will be multiples among the half-million or so objects already in the ever-expanding collection.

But staff is always on the lookout for playthings worth saving — keeping an eye on eBay and garage and estate sales, especially if a toy is already in, or seems bound for, the hall of fame.

With new toys on the market all the time, curators can only guess what might be the next Etch A Sketch, a mechanical drawing toy that's still popular and virtually unchanged after 100 years, and which toys will fizzle.

"We want to be the repository for them, for the nation or the world," Bensch said. "That's why we have 1,500 yo-yos in our collection, or 8,000 jigsaw puzzles," he said, naming two past inductees.

Some of the stored board games, stuffed animals, doll houses and other molded, cast and carved reminders of childhood have been donated by manufacturers. Others come from private collectors following a death, divorce or move. A parent recently donated a collection of 1,600 American Girl dolls and accessories after their child outgrew them.

Some items are pursued at auction, the way a fine art museum might acquire a masterpiece. That's how The Strong landed one of its most prized possessions, an original Monopoly set, hand-painted on oil cloth in 1933 by inventor Charles Darrow before the game went into mass production. With Monopoly in the hall of fame since 1998, the winning \$146,500 bid at Sotheby's in 2010 was over budget — but worth it.

"We're the National Museum of Play. If we were the Henry Ford Museum and we didn't have the first Model T, we would kick ourselves ever after," Bensch said.

An eBay find

Babies have been toddling behind Fisher-Price Corn Poppers for more than 60 years, but finding a "historic" one in pristine, museum-display condition proved challenging.

"Those are toys that get used pretty hard," Bensch said, "especially early versions with that plastic dome and the wooden balls hitting against it. Those did not survive in great condition."

What eventually went on display were two versions. One is a 1980 model purchased on eBay from a

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woman in Canada, who likely has no idea her castaway — its wear and tear evident in its dinged-up and slightly cloudy dome — is now a museum piece. The other is a shiny new version that is still on store shelves for about \$12, with a sleeker blue handle and beefier red wheels that reflect slight design changes over the years.

"It was hard to find a photogenic one that went back more than a few decades," Bensch said. "I'm not sure we eventually got one that was as old as we wished for, just because they had been so well loved."

What makes a toy a hall of famer?

Each year, a new class of toys makes it into the hall of fame, the culmination of an annual process that invites anyone to nominate their favorite toy online.

Museum staff culls the nominees to 12 finalists before a panel of experts votes in the winners. Eighty-four toys have earned the honor since the hall opened in 1998.

Nominees can be as lasting as steel erector set creations, inducted in 1998, or as fleeting as bubbles blown through a plastic wand, honored in 2014.

Many inductees are a reminder that the true value of a toy isn't necessarily in the price, but the play. In 2008, an ordinary stick from a tree — but a no-cost sword or magic wand to a child — was inducted into the hall, but Flexible Flyer sleds and the Rubik's Cube did not make the cut that year. The Easy-Bake Oven was bypassed in 2005 — by the cardboard box it might have shipped in.

The museum received 2,400 nominations for 382 different toys for the class of 2024.

This year's 12 finalists include Apples to Apples, balloons and the trampoline. Also: "Choose Your Own Adventure" books, Hess Toy Trucks, remote-controlled vehicles, the stick horse, Phase 10, Sequence and the Pokémon Trading Card Game, and two perennial nominees, My Little Pony figures — a seven-time finalist — and Transformers action figures.

From them, a chosen few will be announced and honored in November, and the curators will begin their hunt all over again

Hurricane Milton ravaged one of the most popular areas for 'snowbirds' on Florida's Gulf Coast

By MIKE SCHNEIDER and KATE PAYNE Associated Press

BRADENTON BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The start of "snowbird" season in Florida is only weeks away, but many Florida Gulf Coast beaches, regularly voted some of the best in the United States, are closed to the public because of the devastation from Hurricane Milton two weeks ago.

Most restaurants and shops in the tony St. Armands Circle district of Sarasota were flooded with water from Milton and Hurricane Helene, which tore through Florida almost two weeks ahead of Milton. The dominant performing arts hall in Sarasota is closed until January because of extensive damage. Mounds of debris are scattered along Gulf Coast roads.

Hurricane Milton's devastating toll along Florida's Gulf Coast hit one of the most popular areas for snowbirds — temporary residents who spend winter months in the Sunshine State — right before the start of the season which generally runs from after Halloween to around Easter. Milton landed on a barrier island in Sarasota County as a Category 3 hurricane. The storm swamped coastal homes with mounds of sand, pushed water inland and caused tens of billions of dollars in privately insured losses up and down the Gulf Coast.

Visitors need to stay away for the time being so they don't interfere with the work of residents and recovery workers, said Larry West, a construction contractor who has been pulling long hours digging out 4-foot (1.2-meter) drifts of storm-driven sand at a condo complex on Manasota Key, about 32 miles (19.8 kilometers) south of Sarasota.

"Give this area time. Don't come here," West said. "It doesn't help when you get people in the way."

Other Floridians on the Gulf Coast are taking the opposite view. In Clearwater, more than 55 miles (34.1 kilometers) north of Sarasota, Mayor Bruce Rector said he has been fielding calls from as far away as Canada, asking him, "Mayor, when will it be safe for Canadians to return to Clearwater?"

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"I told them, 'Today,'" Rector said during a recent meeting of the Pinellas County Tourist Development Council. "It's not going to be perfect, but you're going to have a similar experience to what you've always had here."

Shawn Kaleta, one of the largest property owners on Anna Maria Island, about 20 miles north of Sarasota, also feels bullish about this season as reservations at the rental properties he manages are trending up from where they were last year.

Florida, a state with 23 million residents, has about 1.5 million seasonal residents annually, with about a third coming from Canada.

Evan Rachkovsky, communications director of the Canadian Snowbird Association, said he hasn't heard of any members canceling their plans, even those whose homes were damaged, although some are delaying their trips until the situation improves.

"Most of our members are still going to be proceeding south as planned," Rachkovsky said.

Some snowbirds have already made their annual migration south despite the latest storms, returning to their pickleball groups and tennis leagues even as some of their neighbors' condos remain unlivable.

Because of Sarasota's renown for a thriving performing arts scene, a sizable chunk of its snowbirds are performing arts patrons. Milton caused extensive damage to the Van Wezel performing arts hall, which hosts the Sarasota Orchestra and the Sarasota Ballet, and all performances have been canceled until the beginning of the new year.

During the past few years, many snowbirds have delayed coming to Florida, choosing to return after hurricane season ends in late November. As a result, some performing arts groups are pushing back the start of their seasons to later in the year, said Richard Russell, general director of Sarasota Opera, where about 40% of season subscribers are snowbirds.

"If people for a couple of years delay coming back because of storm activity in late October, that may be the new pattern," Russell said.

Owners of vacation homes outside Florida see opportunity in the Gulf Coast's misfortune. Gary Sacks advertised his two-bedroom condo in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on the "Florida Snowbirds 2025" Facebook page less than a week after Milton made landfall, targeting those "whose plans for being a snowbird were impacted by the two hurricanes that hit Florida." He didn't respond to a request for an interview.

Jim Lenz, 96, who lives outside Dayton, Ohio, and spends the winter months in The Villages, a sprawling central Florida retirement community, believes the storms may give pause to some snowbirds' winter plans, "particularly people who are older and may decide, 'I don't want to take that chance anymore.'"

"Some may give up on it. Others may decide, 'We just can't stand the cold up here and we are going down,'" Lenz said.

Some snowbirds like Joe Singer say the growing number and intensity of the storms aren't going to keep them away. Singer, who has spent the past five winters in Parkland, Florida, instead of his native New Jersey, said he and other snowbirds are adapting by purchasing homes further inland or on higher ground and acquiring generators.

The winter months are "like a mini-heaven," said Singer, who is an avid walker. "I get up in the morning and go walking. I don't have to scrape ice off my windshield. I don't have to shovel the sidewalk. It's just been very, very nice."

Harvey Weinstein due back in court for hearing ahead of retrial

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein is due back in court in New York on Wednesday for a hearing ahead of his retrial on sex crimes charges stemming from his landmark #MeToo case.

Among other things, Judge Curtis Farber is expected to address a request from prosecutors to consolidate that case with a newer charge into a single trial.

The former movie mogul was already facing retrial on two sex crime charges after the state's highest

court overturned his 2020 conviction earlier this year. Then in September, he was hit with a new charge accusing him of another assault. He has pleaded not guilty.

Weinstein was convicted on charges — since overturned — that he forcibly performed oral sex on a TV and film production assistant in 2006, and rape in the third degree for an attack on an aspiring actor in 2013. In the new charge, prosecutors say he forced oral sex on a different woman in a Manhattan hotel in the spring of 2006.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office has argued in court filings that holding separate trials would be "extraordinarily inefficient" and waste judicial resources. Prosecutors said the cases have significant overlap as they involve similar criminal statutes, witnesses, expert testimony and documentary evidence.

Weinstein's lawyers have argued in court filings that the cases should remain separate. They said prosecutors are attempting to "expand the scope" of the court-ordered retrial and transform it into "an entirely new proceeding" by including the new charges.

There's also the question of when Weinstein's retrial is expected to actually begin.

Faber had tentatively scheduled Weinstein's trial to open on Nov. 12, but both defense lawyers and prosecutors have voiced concerns that the date won't give their side enough time to prepare.

Weinstein has been in custody at the city's Rikers Island jail complex and has faced numerous health complications while behind bars.

He was also convicted of rape in Los Angeles in 2022, though his lawyers have appealed.

The sexual assault and harassment allegations against Weinstein turbocharged the #MeToo movement in 2017.

The 72-year-old former producer co-founded the film and television production companies Miramax and The Weinstein Company. He produced such films as "Shakespeare in Love" and "The Crying Game."

Trump targets hardcore partisans, Harris goes after moderates: Inside the campaign's final sprint

By STEVE PEOPLES, JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In battleground Pennsylvania, Kamala Harris warned that democracy and reproductive rights were at stake as she campaigned alongside a former Republican congresswoman.

Going to the same state the day before, Donald Trump served French fries at a closed McDonald's.

As the 2024 presidential contest speeds to its conclusion on Nov. 5, Harris and Trump are embracing wildly different strategies to energize the coalitions they need to win. Both are making bets that will prove prescient or ill-advised.

Trump's team has largely abandoned traditional efforts to broaden his message to target moderate voters, focusing instead on energizing his base of fiery partisans and turning out low-propensity voters — especially young men of all races — with tough talk and events aimed at getting attention online.

Harris is leaning into a more traditional all-of-the-above playbook targeting the narrow slice of undecided voters that remain, especially moderates, college-educated suburbanites, and women of all races and education. More than Trump, she is going after Republican women who may have supported rival Nikki Haley in this year's GOP primary and are dissatisfied with the former president.

"It's all pieces of a very complex puzzle," Harris senior campaign adviser David Plouffe said this week. "This would all be a simpler exercise if you can focus just on one voter cohort. You can't. And you got to make sure you know you're doing well enough with all of them so that when you put all that together it adds up to 50%."

Trump's team sees it as a much simpler equation.

His aides insist that efforts to maximize turnout from Trump's hardcore base do not mean he's ignoring swing voters, even if he's not tailoring a different message to reach them.

"I just think that there's a misunderstanding on what's motivating those people," Trump political director James Blair said. "I mean, the fact is the economy's motivating those people. Those people overwhelmingly think that they're worse off than they were four years ago ... So then the question becomes: Who's

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better equipped to fix it?"

The divergent strategies underscore the stark differences between the candidates themselves, in personality and policy.

Harris, a former California senator who would be the first female president, has promised to include a Republican in her Cabinet, while prioritizing efforts to protect democracy, reproductive rights and the middle class. Trump, a former president, has vowed to fight for the working class as well. He also has promised a campaign of retribution against his political enemies with an administration packed with loyalists.

One point on which both camps agree: The election will be decided by voters in just seven swing states, a political map that has not shifted significantly or narrowed as Election Day speeds into view. They are Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and North Carolina.

One Harris adviser, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy, described the situation as "still terrifyingly close in all seven."

Trump rejects the traditional pivot to the middle

Trump is speaking largely to his loyal Republican base at the expense of moderate voters, especially suburban women. He peppers his rallies with profanity, personal insults against Harris and ominous talk of "enemies within."

He has said repeatedly over the last week that Democrats like former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., represent a more serious threat to the United States than China and Russia do.

Trump has also rejected recent opportunities to speak to more traditional audiences, turning down an interview with CBS' popular "60 Minutes" and refusing to debate Harris for a second time unless it was moderated by Fox News, home to several of his favorite conservative hosts.

Instead, his campaign is scheduling appearances on podcasts and online shows geared towards young men — especially working-class Hispanic and Black men, who typically vote less frequently and tend to favor Democrats.

He's attended sporting events including mixed-martial arts fights and football games, putting him in front of audiences who don't typically engage with traditional media outlets.

Josh Rouse, a 28-year-old Black man and registered Republican, said he's only recently been drawn to politics. He didn't vote in 2016, but voted for Trump in 2020.

"If anything, I think it's important to remember we're all people, regardless of whether you're white or Black," said Rouse, who works in roofing and attended Trump's rally in Greenville, North Carolina, this week. "It doesn't matter who you are. He speaks to all of us."

Trump's team has also created viral moments in non-political settings like his trip to McDonald's on Sunday, part of an extended campaign to cast doubt on Harris' work history at the fast-food franchise. Trump also went to Coachella, California, and will host a rally at Madison Square Garden in New York City on Sunday — both in heavily Democratic states but where the related media attention and online content would surely reach swing-state voters.

Trump has kept an aggressive schedule. He is set to visit every battleground state this week save Wisconsin.

Harris makes Republicans part of her persuasion playbook

Backed by an avalanche of campaign cash, Harris is holding in-person events but also launching a sprawling door-knocking operation, hyper-targeted online ads and a carefully designed media strategy to reach specific voting blocs.

Harris' team believes that roughly 10% of voters in the battleground states are still persuadable, either because they are truly undecided or because their support for Trump is soft. The campaign vows to keep trying to persuade such voters until the final minutes of in-person voting.

Her team sees the possibility of significant growth among Republican, college-educated, suburban women alienated by Trump's extreme rhetoric. Even small shifts in swing states could have massive electoral implications.

The Harris campaign quickly produced digital ads last week highlighting Trump's description of the Jan.

6, 2021, insurrection as "a day of love." And Harris spent most of Monday campaigning in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin alongside Liz Cheney, a Republican House leader during Trump's presidency who swung sharply against him after Jan. 6.

Harris is scheduled to visit Houston for an event Friday with women who have been affected by the state's ban on all abortions, which took effect after the Supreme Court, including three justices nominated by Trump, overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022. She'll be going there after spending time in Georgia, which banned abortions after six weeks of pregnancy.

Nicolette Milholin, 45, of Mont Clare, Pennsylvania, said she considered herself a political independent until Trump was elected in 2016.

"To me, democracy is at stake," Milholin said at a Harris event this week in Chester County, Pennsylvania. "We have a party that was built for a family and a dynasty. And then we have a party here represented by Kamala Harris, that was built for our country."

Desperation amid search for survivors of an airstrike on a crowded area near major Beirut hospital

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Nearly 16 hours after an Israeli airstrike hit across the street from Beirut's main public hospital, rescuers were still removing debris Tuesday from the overcrowded slum area. An excavator was digging at one of the destroyed buildings, picking out twisted metal and bricks in search for bodies.

Residents standing on mounds of debris said an entire family remained missing under the rubble.

Mohammad Ibrahim, a Sudanese national, came looking for his brother. "His mobile phone is still ringing. We are trying to search for him," he said. "I don't know if he is dead or alive."

Hours later, health officials said five bodies had been recovered from under the rubble. At least 18 people were killed, including four children, and at least 60 wounded in the strike that also caused damage across the street at the Rafik Hariri University Hospital, the capital's main public medical facility.

Jihad Saadeh, director of the Rafik Hariri Hospital, said the strike broke several glass windows and the solar panels of the medical facility, which continued to operate despite the damage and the panic. None of the staff was injured.

Saadeh said the hospital received no warning of the impending strike, just a few meters (yards) across the street. Neither did the residents of the slum area, where several buildings were crammed and which houses several migrant workers as well as working class Lebanese.

The Israeli military said it struck a Hezbollah target, without elaborating. It added it had not targeted the hospital itself.

It was hard for rescue equipment to reach the area of clustered settlements and dusty narrow roads.

Nizar, one of the rescuers, said he had been at the site of the explosion since Monday night. "It was too dark and there was so much panic," he said, giving only his first name in line with the rescue team's regulations. "People didn't understand yet what had happened."

The overcrowded slum was covered in debris, furniture and remains of life poking out of the twisted metal and broken bricks. Residents who survived the massive explosion were still in shock, some still searching through the debris with their hands for their relatives or what is left of their lives. Gunmen stood guard at the site. The Lebanese Civil Defense said Tuesday five buildings were destroyed and 12 sustained severe damage. The dead included one Sudanese and at least one Syrian.

"This is a very crowded area; buildings are very close. The destruction is massive," Nizar said, explaining that the scale of the damage made their rescue effort harder.

Across the street, the hospital was still treating a few of the injured. The morgue had received 13 bodies.

Hussein al-Ali, a nurse who was there when the attack happened, said it took him a few minutes to realize it was not the hospital that was hit. Dust and smoke covered the hospital lobby. The glass in the dialysis unit, the pharmacy and other rooms in the hospital was shattered. The false roof fell over his and his colleagues' heads.

"We were terrified. This is a crime," said al-Ali. "It felt like judgement day."

It took only minutes for the injured from across the street to start streaming in. Al-Ali said he had little time to breathe or reassure his terrified colleagues and the rattled patients.

"Staff and patients thought the strike was here. We fled outside as the injured were coming in," he said. And when he was done admitting the injured, "we came out to carry our (killed) neighbors. They are our neighbors."

Ola Eid survived the strike. She helped dig out her neighbors' children from under the rubble, before realizing she herself was injured.

"The problem is we didn't feel it. They didn't inform us. We heard they want to strike al-Sahel hospital," said Eid, bandaged and still in shock sitting at the hospital gate. Israel had hinted another hospital miles away could possibly be a target, alleging it is housing tunnels used by the Hezbollah militant group.

Eid, an actor, said she was playing with her neighbor's kids when the first explosion hit. It knocked her to the floor and scattered the candy she was handing out to the kids. She stood up, not believing she was still alive, to find her neighbor's kid soaked in blood. One was killed immediately; the other remained in intensive care.

"I looked ahead and saw the kids torn apart and hurt," she said. "The gas canisters were on fire. I didn't know what to do — put out the fire or remove the kids."

Middle East latest: Israel says it killed a Hezbollah official expected to be group's next head

By The Associated Press undefined

The Israeli military said Tuesday a top Hezbollah official who had been widely expected to be the group's next leader was killed in an Israeli airstrike in southern Beirut in early October.

Hashem Safieddine, a powerful cleric within the party ranks, was expected to succeed Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in September. There was no immediate confirmation from the militant group about Safieddine's fate.

Earlier in the day, the Israeli military leveled a suburban Beirut building that it said housed Hezbollah facilities, sending smoke and debris into the air a few hundred meters (yards) from where a spokesperson for the militant group had just briefed journalists about a weekend drone attack that damaged the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's house.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Tuesday with Netanyahu as part of his 11th visit to the region since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Blinken landed hours after Hezbollah launched a barrage of rockets into central Israel around the same time Israeli airstrikes significantly damaged Beirut's largest public hospital.

Netanyahu has pledged to annihilate Hamas and recover dozens of hostages held by the group. Hamas says it will only release the captives in return for a lasting cease-fire, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led militants blew holes in Israel's security fence and stormed in, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting another 250. Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities, who do not differentiate between militants and civilians. The war has destroyed large areas of Gaza and displaced about 90% of its population of 2.3 million people.

Here's the latest:

4 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank will live in poverty by the end of year, UN says

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations estimates that over 4 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank will be living in poverty by the end of 2024 as war in Gaza enters its second year with the economy faltering and unemployment rising.

The assessment by the U.N. Development Program and the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for

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Western Asia launched Tuesday projects that GDP in the Palestinian territories will contract by 35.1%, compared with a no-war scenario, this year and will see unemployment potentially rise to 49.9%.

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said: "Projections in this new assessment confirm that amidst the immediate suffering and horrific loss of life, a serious development crisis is also unfolding – one that jeopardizes the future of Palestinians for generations to come."

According to the estimates, poverty in the Palestinian territories will rise to 74.3% in 2024, affecting 4.1 million people including 2.6 million who are newly impoverished as a result of the war.

Rola Dashti, head of the Western Asia commission, said the assessments sound "the alarm over the millions of lives that are being shattered and the decades of development efforts that are being wiped out."

Steiner said the assessments indicate that even in the Palestinians receive humanitarian aid every year, "the economy may not regain its pre-crisis level for a decade or more."

Blinken postpones visit to Jordan, foreign minister says

AMMAN, Jordan — Jordan's Foreign Minister announced late Tuesday that Secretary of State Anthony Blinken will postpone his visit to Jordan, which was originally scheduled for Wednesday.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi spoke to Blinken by phone Tuesday and stressed the importance of a regional cease-fire and putting an end to Israeli operations in Gaza and Lebanon.

A U.S. State Department official confirmed Blinken would not be making the trip to Jordan.

Safadi will instead travel to Paris to participate in an international ministerial conference about Lebanon, hosted by France. Blinken's visit to the region is likely to include stops in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Israel says a Hezbollah official expected to be group's next leader was killed earlier in the month

The Israeli military said Tuesday that a top Hezbollah official who had been widely expected to be the group's next leader was killed in an Israeli airstrike in southern Beirut in early October.

There was no immediate confirmation from the militant group about the fate of Hashem Safieddine.

Safieddine, a powerful cleric within the party ranks, was expected to succeed Hassan Nasrallah, one of the group's founders, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in September.

Israel said Safieddine was killed in Israeli airstrikes in early October in a southern suburb of Beirut. Around 25 other Hezbollah leaders were killed during the airstrike.

Over the past months, Israeli strikes have killed much of Hezbollah's top leadership, leaving the group in disarray.

Airstrikes in south Lebanon and Bekaa Valley kill 10 and wound 31

BEIRUT — Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli airstrikes have killed 10 people and wounded 31 others in south Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

The ministry said that five people were killed and 10 others were wounded in an Israeli strike on Baalbeck-Hermel province in the Bekaa Valley. Five more were killed in an Israeli strike on Ksar Zaatar neighborhood in the Nabatiyeh province in south Lebanon. The strike also wounded 21 people.

Israel has denied requests to deliver aid to northern Gaza, UN humanitarian office says

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations humanitarian office reports that Palestinians under an Israeli siege in northern Gaza "are rapidly exhausting all available means for their survival," and Israel has denied U.N. requests to deliver life-saving aid to the area.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also reports that Israeli authorities are still denying its requests to help rescue dozens of people trapped under their collapsed homes in the Falouja area of the Jabaliya refugee camp in the north, U.N. spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters Tuesday.

The requests by the humanitarian office, known as OCHA, that were denied include planned missions by U.N. agencies and their partners to deliver supplies including blood, medications, food parcels and fuel to hospitals and water facilities, he said.

The United States warned Israel earlier this month that it must increase the amount of humanitarian aid it is allowing into Gaza within 30 days or it could risk losing access to U.S. weapons funding. It said at least 350 trucks a day need to get into Gaza and Israel must provide additional humanitarian pauses and

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increased security for humanitarian sites.

OCHA reported that 25 trucks entered Gaza on Sunday, 25 on Saturday, and 65 on Friday.

Haq said the director of Kamal Adwan, one of the last functioning hospitals in north Gaza which is seeing a constant influx of casualties, reported Monday that blood supplies have run out and medical teams are working non-stop with no food.

France's government defends decision to bar some Israeli companies from exhibiting at upcoming trade fair
PARIS — France's government is defending its decision to bar Israeli companies supplying the war in the Middle East from exhibiting at an upcoming trade fair outside Paris.

Organizers of the Nov. 4-7 naval defense exhibition, called Euronaval, posted on the event's website that Israeli firms can take part in the show and "may have an exhibition stand, provided that their products are not used in military operations in Gaza and Lebanon."

Addressing parliament on Tuesday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said the policy does not amount to a boycott of Israeli firms. But he also said it would be "incoherent" for France to allow the promotion of weapons used in the war when Paris is also pushing for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon.

"Therefore, we have indicated to the Israeli authorities, with whom we communicate very regularly, that the participation in the form of stands by companies should respect this balance," Barrot said.

In a Sunday post on the social platform X, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz urged French President Emmanuel Macron to rescind the restrictions, calling them "unacceptable" and "anti-democratic."

Lebanon's health ministry says 63 people were killed and 234 wounded in past 24 hours

BEIRUT — Lebanon's health ministry said that 63 people were killed and 234 wounded in the past 24 hours, raising the total toll over the past year of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah to 2,546 killed and 11,862 wounded.

Lebanon's crisis response unit recorded 125 airstrikes and incidents of shelling in the past day, mostly concentrated in southern Lebanon and the Nabatiyeh province.

Some 1,095 centers — including educational complexes, vocational institutes, universities, and other institutions — are currently sheltering 191,516 people, including 44,124 families, displaced by the Israeli offensive in Lebanon, the report said.

Among these shelters, 908 have now reached full capacity. The fighting in Lebanon has driven 1.2 million people from their homes, including more than 400,000 children, according to the U.N. children's agency.

Despite a major border crossing between Lebanon and Syria being out of commission after Israel struck the road several times, crowds have continued to flow across the border seeking relative safety in Syria. Between Sept. 23 and Oct. 22, Lebanese General Security recorded 343,404 Syrian and 147,608 Lebanese citizens crossing into Syria, the report said.

Yellen says the US is working to 'ensure that legitimate aid flows reach Gaza,' among other things

WASHINGTON — The United States is working to "ensure that legitimate aid flows reach Gaza," as well as "imposing sanctions on Israeli violent extremist settlers and pressing Israel to maintain vital correspondent banking relationships with Palestinian banks," U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a speech ahead of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings this week.

"We look forward to the Israeli cabinet extending the waivers to preserve correspondent banking relationships for banks in the West Bank by the end of the month deadline to support economic stability in the West Bank," she added.

The agreement will expire on October 31, after Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich agreed to extend it for only three months during the summer. U.S. officials have warned that a failure to extend the banking relationship risks an economic collapse in the occupied West Bank and of the Palestinian Authority.

Death toll from strike near Beirut hospital rises to 18

BEIRUT — The death toll from Israeli airstrikes late Monday that destroyed several buildings facing one of Beirut's main hospitals climbed to 18. Lebanon's health ministry said 60 others were wounded in the strikes, including seven who were in critical condition.

Netanyahu's private residence was hit and damaged during a weekend drone attack

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TEL AVIV, Israel — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's private residence was hit and lightly damaged during a drone attack over the weekend, according to footage of the attack published by Israeli media on Tuesday. A photo of the attack showed damage to the bedroom window, which had a spiderweb of cracks and some burn marks. There were no injuries in the attack and neither Netanyahu nor his wife were in the home at the time of the attack.

Earlier on Tuesday, Hezbollah's chief spokesperson took responsibility for the drone attack.

"The attempt by Iran's proxy Hezbollah to assassinate the Prime Minister, it's clearly a grave mistake," said David Mencer, Israeli government spokesperson.

Israel's military has at times struggled to intercept drones, which are smaller, fly more erratically and are harder to track and intercept. Last week, a Hezbollah drone attack on an army base in central Israel killed four soldiers and wounded 67 others, the deadliest strike by the militant group since Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon three weeks ago.

Israeli airstrike levels building in southern Beirut suburb

BEIRUT — An Israeli airstrike leveled a building in the southern Beirut suburb of Beirut on Tuesday. The strike came 40 minutes after Israeli military Arabic spokesperson Avichay Adraee issued a warning, claiming the two buildings targeted contained "Hezbollah facilities."

The building stood in a heavily trafficked area across the street from a large park, which has become a refuge for many displaced families. It is also not far from the French ambassador's residence.

No immediate casualties were reported. The Israeli military did not have immediate comment about the target of the strike.

At the time of the warning, Hezbollah's chief spokesperson was holding a pre-scheduled press conference just a few hundred meters from the targeted area. The event was quickly cut short, with journalists and the spokesperson evacuating the location.

The Israeli military did not have an immediate comment about the target of the strike.

Amnesty International criticizes Israel's strikes on al-Qard al-Hasan

JERUSALEM — Human rights group Amnesty International has criticized Israel's targeting of branches of a Hezbollah-linked financial institution, saying the round of strikes this week "likely violates international humanitarian law."

Amnesty said Tuesday the attack on al-Qard al-Hasan must be investigated as a war crime because financial institutions are considered civilian infrastructure under the laws of war unless they are being used for military purposes.

"Even if as the Israeli military alleges, the institution does provide financing to Hezbollah, it is not likely to meet the definition of a military objective, particularly for branches serving civilian customers," said Erika Guevara Rosas, Amnesty's senior director for research, advocacy, policy and campaigns.

Israel's strikes overnight Sunday into Monday hit at least 15 branches of al-Qard al-Hasan in Lebanon. Israel says the bank is used to fund attacks, and it issued evacuation warnings ahead of the strikes. Many ordinary Lebanese keep their savings at the financial institution.

Hezbollah says it was behind the drone attack on Netanyahu's house

BEIRUT — Hezbollah's chief spokesperson says the group was behind the weekend drone attack that targeted Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's house without inflicting casualties.

Mohammed Afif told reporters in Beirut Tuesday that if in the previous attack Netanyahu was not hurt, "the coming days and nights and the (battle) fields are between us." Afif was hinting that Hezbollah might carry out such attempts in the future.

Afif said Hezbollah is fully responsible for the drone attack that targeted Netanyahu's house. He added that the group did it on its own.

Netanyahu's office said the drone on Saturday targeted his house in the Mediterranean coastal town of Caesarea. Neither he nor his wife was there. It wasn't clear if the house was hit.

Journalists taken on a tour of the Beirut hospital where Israel claimed Hezbollah stored cash and gold

BEIRUT — An Associated Press team was among journalists taken on a tour inside a hospital in Beirut's

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southern suburb where the Israeli army claimed without offering evidence that Hezbollah was storing hundreds of millions of dollars in cash and gold in tunnels underneath.

The Sahel General Hospital had already been emptied of most patients and staff following intense bombardment of the area in recent days, and the few remaining ones were hastily evacuated late Monday after the Israeli claim.

"We have been living in terror for the last 24 hours," hospital director Mazen Alame said Tuesday. "There is nothing under the hospital."

Journalists were taken to the two floors under the hospital, the first of which had two rooms for surgeries and the other had oxygen bottles stored inside. The second floor included a morgue with six doors in one room and a giant water tank in another.

Alame said the hospital has no affiliation with any political group or religious institution and has been working under the supervision of Lebanon's health ministry since its founding.

Israel has made similar claims about tunnels used by Hamas militants under hospitals in Gaza. Omar Mneimne, a doctor at the hospital's emergency department, said he fears a repeat scenario in Lebanon.

"We fear that," Mneimne said, adding that the international community should act to defend health facilities in Lebanon. "It's extremely hard. It's very stressful for the community."

7 Jerusalem residents arrested over an alleged Iranian-guided plot

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israeli authorities said Tuesday they have arrested seven Jerusalem residents in connection with an alleged Iranian-guided plot to assassinate an Israeli scientist and mayor.

It was the latest in a series of similar alleged spy rings foiled by Israel and blamed on Iran, highlighting the ongoing shadow war between the two countries even as their conflict has become more direct during the war in Gaza.

A statement by Israel's domestic security agency Shin Bet did not name the scientist or the mayor targeted.

It said the seven people arrested were assigned various tasks as part of the alleged plot, including blowing up a police car and lobbing a grenade at a home. The Iranian agent promised the seven roughly \$50,000 in exchange for the acts, the Shin Bet said. It said police found multiple credit cards, tens of thousands of shekels and a fake police car license plate.

Those arrested were not identified but were from a predominantly Palestinian area of Jerusalem, the Shin Bet said.

Tensions between Israel and Iran have soared since the killing in Tehran of Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh — an attack blamed on Israel — and an Iranian missile attack on Israel earlier this month, for which Israel is expected to respond.

Death toll from strike near Beirut hospital rises to 13

BEIRUT — The death toll from Israeli airstrikes that destroyed several buildings facing one of Beirut's main hospitals late Monday has climbed to 13. Lebanon's health ministry said 57 others were wounded in the strikes, including seven who were in critical condition.

It said the airstrikes significantly damaged Rafik Hariri University Hospital, the country's largest public hospital, located on the outskirts of southern Beirut. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Progress on day-after plan is key to US hopes for a cease-fire, State Department official says

TEL AVIV, Israel — The United States is making an eleventh hour effort to resuscitate aspects of the halted cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas weeks before the presidential election and as Israel's invasion of neighboring Lebanon intensifies, according to a senior U.S. State Department official.

Since negotiations fell apart over the summer, Americans have focused on a postwar plan for Israel and Gaza. The State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity late Monday to preview Secretary of State Antony Blinken's strategy, said stakeholders have reached consensus on some aspects of the so-called day-after plan and that the U.S. is hopeful the progress will bring the parties back to the table on a cease-fire.

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The official added that the decision to go to Israel before meeting with Arab partners was a shift in the U.S.'s negotiation strategy.

The U.S. has long pushed for a postwar settlement in which a reformed Palestinian Authority would govern Gaza with help from Arab states and Saudi Arabia would normalize relations with Israel.

Arab leaders insist such plans would depend on a pathway to Palestinian statehood, something to which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is deeply opposed. He has ruled out any postwar role for the PA and says local Palestinians will administer Gaza, with Israel maintaining open-ended security control.

Blinken also planned to reiterate concerns about the humanitarian aid crisis in Gaza that U.S. officials outlined in a recent letter to Israel, the official said.

But the official said an anticipated Israeli retaliation against Iran is looming over the meeting, which will likely be the last time Blinken and Netanyahu meet before the U.S. presidential election.

Associated Press writer Farnoush Amiri contributed.

Blinken arrives in Israel on mission to restart cease-fire talks

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel on Tuesday on his 11th visit to the region since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, as the U.S. hopes to revive cease-fire efforts after the killing of top Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.

Blinken is expected to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other top officials. Following Israel, he's expected to visit several Arab countries, likely to include Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Read more here.

Iran keeps up pressure as Israeli retaliation looms

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran said Tuesday that its Arab Gulf neighbors wouldn't allow their territory to be used for an expected Israeli strike as the Islamic Republic once again vowed to respond to any attack.

The comments from Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi come as speculation grows over how Israel will retaliate for Tehran's Oct. 1 ballistic missile attack on Israel.

Speaking in Kuwait as part of a Mideast tour, Araghchi insisted that Gulf Arab neighbors he's spoken to wouldn't allow their territory to be used.

"All the neighbors assured us that they will not allow their lands and air to be used against Iran," Araghchi said, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. "This is an expectation from all friendly and neighboring countries and we consider this a sign of friendship."

However, many Gulf Arab nations host major U.S. military installations, like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, as a hedge against any possible attack by Iran. Washington also has based aircraft carriers around the region as tensions have persisted in the wake of Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel and the subsequent wars raging across the Mideast.

Gulf Arab nations have not made any public pledges like those described by Araghchi.

There have been tensions in the Persian Gulf and among Gulf Arab countries since Tehran launched a series of attacks targeting shipping in the region in 2019 over the U.S.'s unilateral withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers as well.

Separately, Pezeshkian warned that Israel will face a "corresponding answer" for any attack it carries out.

Another Israeli strike hits Lebanon-Syria border crossing

BEIRUT — Lebanon's state news agency says another Israeli airstrike has targeted the country's main border crossing with Syria, leaving a second large crater on the highway running through it.

The National News Agency reported that the early Tuesday airstrike was closer to the Syrian side of the crossing, known as Jdeidet Yabous. Syrian TV also reported an airstrike in the border area.

An Israeli airstrike on Oct. 5 blocked a highway and left a giant crater near the Lebanese side of the crossing, known as Masnaa, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Beirut.

That strike prevented vehicles from going through the crossing, which tens of thousands of people have used to flee to Syria.

People now have to cross by foot in or around the two large craters several kilometers (miles) away. The Israeli military has accused the Hezbollah militant group of using the Masnaa crossing to truck in military equipment from Syria. There was no immediate comment on the latest strike.

Hezbollah fires rockets into central Israel

TEL AVIV, Israel — Hezbollah launched a barrage of rockets into central Israel on Tuesday, setting off air raid sirens in the country's most populated areas but causing no apparent damage or injuries.

The Israeli military said five projectiles were fired from Lebanon into Israel and most were intercepted by Israel's missile defense system. One landed in an open area.

Israeli police said there were no reports of damage or injury following the salvo.

The Israeli military said that at the same time, about 15 projectiles were fired from Lebanon into northern Israel.

Earlier Tuesday, air raid sirens went off in the Israeli-occupied West Bank after a rocket was launched from Lebanon, the Israeli military said. Homes in the Palestinian village of Shuqba were damaged.

The rocket fire came as Israel stepped up its strikes in Lebanon, targeting a Hezbollah-run financial institution, and as Israeli troops pushed ahead in their invasion of southern Lebanon.

It could take 350 years for Gaza to rebuild if it remains under a blockade, UN report says

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

United Nations agencies have long warned that it could take decades to rebuild Gaza after Israel's offensive against Hamas, one of the deadliest and most destructive military campaigns since World War II. Now, more than a year into the war, a new report speaks in terms of centuries.

The U.N. Conference on Trade and Development said in a report released Monday that if the war ends tomorrow and Gaza returns to the status quo before Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, it could take 350 years for its battered economy to return to its precarious prewar level.

Before the war, Gaza was under an Israeli and Egyptian blockade imposed after Hamas seized power in 2007. Four previous wars and divisions between Hamas and the Western-backed Palestinian Authority in the West Bank also took a toll on Gaza's economy.

The current war has caused staggering destruction across the territory, with entire neighborhoods obliterated and roads and critical infrastructure in ruins. Mountains of rubble laced with decomposing bodies and unexploded ordnance would have to be cleared before rebuilding could begin.

"Once a ceasefire is reached, a return to the pre-October 2023 status quo would not put Gaza on the path needed for recovery and sustainable development," the report said. "If the 2007–2022 growth trend returns, with an average growth rate of 0.4 percent, it will take Gaza 350 years just to restore the GDP levels of 2022."

Even then, GDP per capita would decline "continuously and precipitously" as the population grows, it said.

Israel says the blockade is needed to prevent Hamas from importing arms and blames the militant group for Gaza's plight. "There is no future for the people of Gaza as long as their people continue to be occupied by Hamas," Israel's ambassador to the U.N., Danny Danon, said in response to the report.

350 years is more of a calculation than a prediction

Three hundred and fifty years is a long time. It would be as though England and the Netherlands were only now recovering from the wars they fought against each other in the late 1600s.

Rami Alazeh, author of the report, said he based the calculation on the decimation of the economy during the first seven months of the war, and how long it would take to restore it at the GDP growth rate Gaza averaged from 2007 until 2022. Gross domestic product, or GDP, is the sum total of all goods and services produced in a country or territory.

"The message is the recovery in Gaza depends on the conditions in which the recovery would happen," he said. "We're not saying that it will take Gaza 350 years to recover because that means that Gaza will

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never recover.”

At the end of January, the World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion of damage — nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. That was before some intensely destructive Israeli ground operations, including in the southern border city of Rafah.

A U.N. assessment in September based on satellite footage found roughly a quarter of all structures in Gaza had been destroyed or severely damaged. It said around 66% of structures, including more than 227,000 housing units, had sustained at least some damage.

The Shelter Cluster, an international coalition of aid providers led by the Norwegian Refugee Council, calculated how long it would take to rebuild all the destroyed homes under what was known as the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. That process was established after the 2014 war to facilitate some reconstruction under heavy Israeli surveillance.

It found that under that setup, it would take 40 years to rebuild all the homes.

Even in best-case circumstances, recovery could take decades

The report says that even under the most optimistic scenario, with a projected growth rate of 10%, Gaza’s recovery would still take decades.

“Assuming no military operation, and freedom of movement of goods and people and a significant level of investment, and population growth of 2.8 percent per year, UNCTAD estimates that Gaza’s GDP per capita will return to its 2022 level by 2050,” it said.

A separate report released Tuesday by the U.N. Development Program said that with major investment and the lifting of economic restrictions, the Palestinian economy as a whole, including the West Bank, could be back on track by 2034. In the absence of both, its predictions align with those of UNCTAD.

The more positive scenarios appear unlikely.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted another 250 when they stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel’s offensive has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who don’t distinguish combatants from civilians but say more than half the dead are women and children. It has displaced around 90% of Gaza’s population of 2.3 million, forcing hundreds of thousands into squalid tent camps.

Israel is unlikely to lift the blockade as long as Hamas has a presence inside Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel will maintain open-ended security control over the territory.

Since May, Israel has controlled all of Gaza’s border crossings. U.N. agencies and humanitarian groups say they have struggled to bring in food and emergency aid because of Israeli restrictions, ongoing fighting and the breakdown of law and order inside Gaza.

There’s also no indication that international donors are willing to fund the rebuilding of Gaza as long as it remains in the grip of war or under Israeli occupation. Arab Gulf states like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have said they will only do so if there is a pathway to a Palestinian state, something to which Netanyahu is deeply opposed.

Meanwhile, the war rages with no end in sight.

Earlier in the month, Israel launched another major operation in northern Gaza — the most heavily destroyed part of the territory — saying Hamas had regrouped there.

“Everybody now calls for a cease-fire, but people forget that once the cease-fire is done, the 2.2 million Palestinians will wake up having no homes, children having no schools, no universities, no hospitals, no roads,” Alazzeh said.

All that will take a long time to rebuild, and could prove impossible under the blockade.

“If we go back to where it was before, and we shouldn’t go back to the way it was before,” he said, “then I think it means that Gaza’s done.”

The little airline that could — Lebanon's national carrier braves Israeli airstrikes

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Since Israel began bombarding Beirut's southern suburbs as part of its offensive against the Hezbollah militant group, Lebanon's national air carrier has become a local icon simply by continuing to do its job.

Middle East Airlines is the only commercial airline still operating out of the Beirut airport, located on the coast next to the densely populated suburbs where many of Hezbollah's operations are based.

Unlike the bruising monthlong war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, in which an Israeli strike almost immediately took Lebanon's only commercial airport out of commission, it has not been targeted in the current conflict.

Capt. Mohammed Aziz, adviser to MEA chairman Mohamad El-Hout, said the airline has received assurances that Israel won't target its planes or the airport as long as they are used solely for civilian purposes. The carrier conducts a risk assessment each day to determine if it's safe to fly, he said.

"As long as you see us operating, it means our threat assessment says that we can operate," Aziz said. "We will never jeopardize the life of anyone."

Still, the sight of jetliners rising and descending as fire and clouds of smoke blacken the Beirut skyline can be alarming.

Some of the most dramatic images making the rounds on social media depicting jets landing in fiery hellscape have been AI-generated. And, Aziz said, the plumes of smoke that appear in news footage are often farther away from the airport than they appear.

Still, some strikes have landed too close for comfort. On Monday night, one hit the coastal area of Ouzaï, about 200 meters (650 feet) from one of the runways. There were no planes in the area at the time.

Since the escalation began, many embassies have chartered extra commercial flights to get their citizens out. Other flights have carried Lebanese citizens to nearby destinations like Turkey and Cyprus to wait out the conflict.

The number of daily MEA flights ranges from 32 to 40 — not much below the usual number for this time of year, Aziz said. The difference: now the flights usually depart Beirut full and return two-thirds or three-quarters empty.

While many Lebanese have fled, others continue to fly in and out for business or family reasons.

Elie Obeid, a business consultant, was scheduled to fly to Brussels this month for a seminar. After his original flight on Turkish Airlines was canceled, he booked on MEA.

As his return flight was landing Saturday, heavy airstrikes were underway in the surrounding area. On-board, Obeid was unaware of what was happening until the plane landed and he opened his phone to a barrage of messages.

He said he had mixed feelings about the experience.

"I do appreciate the fact that they are still flying, since that's our only connection with the outer world currently," he said. "But at the same time it is very risky. We should have been told that strikes were happening, and maybe even they could have told the pilot to request to land in Cyprus for a while until the strikes ended."

John Cox, a U.S.-based former airline pilot who is now an aviation-safety consultant, said when there's a potential threat, it's the captain's call whether or not to proceed, and it's not unusual for passengers to be left in the dark.

Telling them about a threat they can't control "doesn't really do any good, and it stresses them out. So, I would be very hesitant to do that," he said.

But, he added, "I'm not sure that I want to fly into an area of open conflict like that with passengers on board."

It is "pretty unusual," Cox said, for a commercial airline to decide that operating in an active war zone is an "acceptable level of risk."

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"When you're in an area with ongoing military operations there's an awful lot of variables," he said. "Even just keeping the airplanes ... so that they're not in the same airspace at the same time, that becomes very difficult."

Aziz said the airline is in "continuous coordination" with the Lebanese government and security agencies, and attempts to mitigate the risk by spacing out flights so the airport is not too crowded at any given time. About 20% of its fleet is parked outside of Lebanon to reduce potential damage.

They have also taken measures to adjust for the frequent GPS jamming that is used by Israel to ward off missile and drone attacks but also disrupts civilian navigation technology.

Other airlines have different considerations, Aziz said. Their trips to Lebanon might be "one flight out of 200 or 300 flights per day, so spending two or three hours a day just to make a risk assessment for one flight is a waste of time for them," he said.

"But for us it's a necessity, because if we don't do it we'll stop operation completely."

He added, "It's our duty, of course, to maintain this link between Lebanon and the outside world."

For many, having that link is a comfort — even if the journey might be harrowing.

Marie-Jose Daoud, editor-in-chief of an online journalism platform, flew to Cyprus with her parents a few days after the massive strike in Beirut's southern suburbs that killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

As they were waiting for their flight, she saw on the news that the Israeli military had issued evacuation notices for two areas close to the airport. Soon after, she heard the muffled sounds of airstrikes through the airport's soundproofed walls.

As the plane took off, the crew and most of the passengers remained calm. One man pointed out the window to show his young son the smoke rising. The plane made it safely to Cyprus.

Daoud said her parents want to return home despite the risks, so she is traveling back with them in a few days. She plans to leave again soon after, but she knows she can "come back at a day's notice" if her family needs her.

"As long as the airport is open, I know that (MEA) are going to be flying," she said.

Rapper Eminem and Obama rally voters for Kamala Harris in Detroit

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Detroit rapper Eminem stepped into the political arena Tuesday in his hometown, where he spoke briefly at a rally for Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential campaign before welcoming former President Barack Obama to the stage.

"As most of you know, the city of Detroit and the whole state of Michigan mean a lot to me. And going into this election, the spotlight is on us more than ever," Eminem, a longtime critic of former President Donald Trump, told the crowd. "And I think it's important to use your voice. So I'm encouraging everybody to get out and vote."

He said people shouldn't be afraid of retribution or of making their opinion known, adding that Harris "supports a future for this country where these freedoms and many others will be protected and upheld."

The Detroit rapper then introduced Obama, who took the stage to the beat of Eminem's "Lose Yourself." The former president joked that he "noticed my palms are sweaty," a reference to the hit song, before rapping several lines from it.

The appearance by Obama and Eminem comes just days before early voting kicks off across Michigan. Democrats hope the star-studded event, which also featured former Lions wide receiver and NFL Hall of Famer Calvin Johnson, will boost enthusiasm among voters.

Voter turnout in Detroit, a longtime Democratic stronghold, will be crucial in determining who wins the state in November, when Michigan is among a handful of swing states expected to determine who wins the presidency as well as control of the U.S. Senate. Democrat Elissa Slotkin, who faces Republican Mike Rogers for an open Senate seat, appeared alongside Obama at the rally.

Obama attacked Trump as unfit, citing recent incidents such as the town hall where Trump opted to hold an impromptu concert of sorts, swaying back and forth to various songs for about 40 minutes rather

than taking questions from voters.

"If your grandpa was acting like this, you'd be worried," Obama said. "This is somebody who wants unchecked power. We do not need to see what an older, loonier Donald Trump looks like with no guardrails. America's ready to turn the page."

Trump has made his own bid for Detroit, appearing with hometown rapper Trick Trick at a rally in the city last week. Trick Trick previously collaborated with Eminem on the track "Welcome 2 Detroit."

Obama and other speakers Tuesday, which included many top Democratic leaders in the state, capitalized on comments Trump made in Detroit earlier this month, when he said it was a "developing" city.

"The whole country will be like — you want to know the truth? It'll be like Detroit," Trump said as he addressed the Detroit Economic Club. "Our whole country will end up being like Detroit if she's your president."

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who spoke in the leadup to Eminem and Obama, snapped back Tuesday.

"I know you all saw what he said about this beautiful city. He called Detroit a failure and a mess, proving he ain't firing on all cylinders," Whitmer said. "He doesn't have a clue what the hell he was talking about. And you know what I think? He ought to keep Detroit out of his mouth."

Trump hurls a string of insults at Harris including 'lazy,' a racist trope against Black people

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on Tuesday hurled a series of personal attacks at Vice President Kamala Harris, calling her "lazy" — a word long used to demean Black people in racist terms — and repeatedly questioning her intelligence and stamina.

At an event in Miami aimed at courting Latino voters, he said Harris was "lazy as hell" for not holding a campaign event. Trump's comments ignored that Harris spent her day in meetings in Washington and recording interviews with Telemundo and NBC. He referred to the first woman of color to lead a major party ticket as "slow" and having a "low IQ."

Later in the day during a rally in Greensboro, North Carolina, he called Harris a "stupid person" and went on to ask: "Does she drink? Is she on drugs?"

Tuesday marked the first day in more than two weeks that Harris had no public events scheduled after a run of more than 14 consecutive days of travel to political events in pivotal states, including a three-state run on Monday, starting in Pennsylvania, continuing to Michigan and ending in Wisconsin.

Yet Trump signaled he will lean harder into disparaging Harris during the remaining two weeks before Election Day, despite the urging of allies who have repeatedly suggested he should steer clear of personal attacks including references to her race and gender.

He, however, implied that Harris, a onetime California attorney general and U.S. senator, became the Democratic nominee because of her race and gender.

"She's running because they want to be politically correct," Trump said.

The Harris campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the "lazy" comment. However, Ian Sams, a spokesperson for Harris, noted that Trump canceled a Tuesday afternoon town hall with allies Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and former U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard before his evening rally in North Carolina.

"Donald Trump continuing his recent trend of canceling campaign events... With just two weeks to go..." wrote Sams on X. "Granted, this one seemed like a real peach, so don't blame them for wanting to call it off!"

The former president has questioned the work ethic of various opponents throughout his career. He accused President Joe Biden in 2020 of campaigning from his basement, even as Trump continued to hold large events during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in 2016 routinely called Democrat Hillary Clinton physically weak and low-energy. He also accused both of being under the influence of drugs.

Trump has also engaged in questioning people's racial backgrounds — including Harris' — and racial dog whistles and overtly racist rhetoric have been fixtures of Trump's public life.

The federal government sued Trump for allegedly discriminating against Black apartment seekers in the 1970s. In the 1980s, Trump purchased a full-page ad in the New York Times calling for the reinstatement of the death penalty after five Black and Latino teenagers, known then as the Central Park Five, were accused of raping and beating a white woman jogger in New York City. The five said they confessed to the crimes under duress, later recanted, and pleaded not guilty in court. They were convicted after jury trials, but the convictions were vacated in 2002 after another person confessed to the crime.

Recently, the men, now known as the Exonerated Five, filed a lawsuit on Monday against Trump. They accused Trump of making "false and defamatory statements" against them in his debate with Harris last month in which Trump wrongly stated that the victim was killed and that the wrongly accused suspects had pleaded guilty.

Using the term "lazy" to describe Harris, who is Black and of South Asian descent, evokes tropes that paint Black Americans as lazy, unsophisticated, submissive or inept.

Such stereotypes have been pervasive throughout American history. According to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the stereotypes had a purpose and "were used to help commodify black bodies and justify the business of slavery."

"Yet laziness, as well as characteristics of submissiveness, backwardness, lewdness, treachery, and dishonesty, historically became stereotypes assigned to African Americans," the institution found.

In several of his personal attacks on Harris, including the reference to drinking, Trump appeared to be referencing falsehoods or unsubstantiated claims spreading online in far-right circles. Trump has repeatedly amplified debunked or unproven claims, perhaps most notably when he claimed during his debate with Harris that Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, were eating dogs and cats. Officials in Springfield have said the claims are not true.

Trump has also associated with people who spread conspiracy theories, including right-wing provocateur Laura Loomer, who traveled with him to the presidential debate and several 9/11 memorial events. He declined at a press conference last month to denounce Loomer, saying she's "been a supporter of mine."

Navalny's memoir details isolation and suffering in a Russian prison — and how he never lost hope

By HILLEL ITALIE and DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In a memoir released eight months after he died in prison, Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny never loses faith that his cause is worth suffering for while also acknowledging he wished he could have written a very different book.

"There is a mishmash of bits and pieces, a traditional narrative followed by a prison diary," Navalny writes in "Patriot," which was published Tuesday, and is, indeed, a traditional narrative followed by a prison diary.

"I so much do not want my book to be yet another prison diary. Personally I find them interesting to read, but as a genre — enough is surely enough."

The final 200 pages of Navalny's 479-page book do, in some ways, have the characteristics of other prison diaries or of such classic Russian literature as Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." He tracks the boredom, isolation, exhaustion, suffering and absurdity of prison life, while working in asides about everything from 19th century French literature to Billie Eilish. But "Patriot" also reads as a testament to a famed dissident's extraordinary battle against despair as the Russian authorities gradually increase their crackdown against him, and even shares advice on how to confront the worst and still not lose hope.

"The important thing is not to torment yourself with anger, hatred, fantasies of revenge, but to move instantly to acceptance. That can be hard," he writes. "The process going on in your head is by no means straightforward, but if you find yourself in a bad situation, you should try this. It works, as long as you think everything through seriously."

In recent years, Navalny had become an international symbol of resistance. A lawyer by training, he started out as an anti-corruption campaigner, but soon turned into a politician with aspirations for public

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office and eventually became the main challenger to Russia's longtime president, Vladimir Putin.

Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya, oversaw the book's completion. In a promotional interview for "Patriot," she told the BBC that she would run for president if she ever returned to Russia — an unlikely move with Putin in power, Navalnaya acknowledged. She has been arrested in absentia in Russia on charges of involvement with an extremist group. Putin "needs to be in a Russian prison, to feel everything what not just my husband, but all the prisoners in Russia" feel, Navalnaya said during an interview on CBS' "60 Minutes."

Navalnaya has vowed to continue her late husband's fight. She has recorded regular video addresses to her supporters and has been meeting with Western leaders and top officials, advocating for Russians who oppose Putin and his war in Ukraine. She had two children with her husband, who in his book writes of his immediate attraction to her and their enduring bond, praising Navalnaya as a soulmate who "could discuss the most difficult matters with me without a lot of drama and hand-wringing."

During the first section of his book, Navalny reflects on the fall of the Soviet Union, his disenchantment with 1990s Russian leader Boris Yeltsin, his early crusades against corruption, his entry into public life, and his discovery that he did not need to look far for a politician "who would undertake all sorts of needed, interesting projects and cooperate directly with the Russian people."

"I wanted and waited, and one day I realized I could be that person myself," he wrote.

His vision of a "beautiful Russia of the future," where leaders are freely and fairly elected, official corruption is tamed, and democratic institutions work — as well as his strong charisma and sardonic humor — earned him widespread support across the country's 11 time zones. He had young, energetic activists by his side — a team that resembled "a fancy startup" rather than a clandestine revolutionary operation, according to his memoir. "From the outside we looked like a bunch of Moscow hipsters," he writes, and together they put out colorful, professionally produced videos exposing official corruption. Those garnered millions of views on YouTube and prompted mass rallies even as the authorities cracked down harder on dissent.

The authorities responded to Navalny's growing popularity by levying multiple charges against him, his allies and even family members. They jailed him often and shut down his entire political infrastructure — the Foundation for Fighting Corruption he started in 2011 and a network of several dozen regional offices.

In 2020, Navalny survived a nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin, which denied involvement. He describes it in great detail in the very beginning of the book, recounting, "This is too much, and I'm about to die." His family and allies fought for him to be airlifted to Germany for treatment, and after recovering there for five months, he returned to Russia, only to be arrested and sent to prison, where he would spend the last three years of his life.

In the memoir, Navalny recalls telling his wife while still hospitalized in Berlin that "of course" he will go back to Russia.

The pressure on him continued behind bars, intensifying after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and ratcheted its clampdown on dissent to unprecedented levels. In messages he was able to get out of prison, Navalny described harrowing conditions of solitary confinement, where he was placed for months on end for various minor infractions prison officials relentlessly accused him of, sleep deprivation, meager diet and lack of medical help. In October 2023, three of his lawyers were arrested and two more were put on a wanted list.

In December 2023, the authorities transferred Navalny to a penal colony of the highest security level in the Russian penitentiary system in a remote town above the Arctic Circle. In February 2024, 47-year-old Navalny suddenly died there; the circumstances and the cause of his death still remain a mystery. Yulia Navalnaya and his allies say the Kremlin killed him, while the authorities argue that Navalny died of "natural causes," but wouldn't reveal any details of what happened.

Tens of thousands of Russians attended his funeral on the outskirts of Moscow in March in a rare show of defiance in a country where any street rally or even single pickets often result in immediate arrests and prison. For days afterward, people brought flowers to the grave, and a handful even came Tuesday.

"I dream of as many people as possible reading this book, because it seems to me that everyone will learn something new about Alexei. (Everyone) will laugh and cry a bit. He was so cool: strong and brave,

kind and funny. The best. And the dearest," Yulia Navalnaya said on X.

Navalny's team has said the book will be available in Russian, the language he wrote it in, but shipping to his homeland and its neighbor Belarus won't be possible "as we cannot guarantee delivery and the absence of problems at customs."

The Kremlin and Russian state media ignored the release, much as they ignored many other developments related to Navalny, whose name Putin and other top officials almost never uttered in public.

Harris speaks about creating economic opportunity for Latino men; Trump airs familiar grievances

By JOSH BOAK, JILL COLVIN and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris on Tuesday said she would work to bring more funds to community banks to help Latino men secure small business loans, while Republican Donald Trump's economic roundtable aimed at Latino voters devolved into a tirade of insults against his opponent.

Harris said in an interview with Telemundo that "we need to construct a strong economy that supports the working class."

"I know that Hispanic men often have more difficulty securing loans from banks because of their connections and the fact that things aren't necessarily set up so that they will qualify," she said in an interview in English that was translated into Spanish. "For that reason, I'm focused on seeing what we can do to bring more capital to community banks that better understand the community so we can give them that kind of loans."

In response to Trump's claims that she was a socialist, she said: "I'm a capitalist. I'm a pragmatic capitalist."

Trump, meanwhile, described Harris as "lazy," railed against green energy and talked about "extreme" presidential power during remarks at his golf club in Doral, a Miami suburb.

Insisting President Joe Biden did not need congressional approval to curb illegal immigration, he said: "As president, you have tremendous — it's called extreme power. You have extreme power."

Trump also continued to hammer Harris as "low IQ" and invoked a racist trope, calling her "lazy as hell" for not holding any public events Tuesday. She was in Washington for meetings and was scheduled for TV interviews with Telemundo and NBC after more than two straight weeks of campaigning.

"Who the hell takes off when you have 14 days left?" he asked.

The Trump and Harris campaigns see what could be an election-deciding opportunity with Latino men, who could swing the outcome in states such as Pennsylvania, Arizona and Nevada if their traditional support for Democrats erodes. Trump believes he's made inroads among Latino men. Harris' team is seeking to shore up support within the same group with the election just two weeks away.

The effort sets up a question of whether memories of a Trump presidency or the promise of new policies under Harris will do more to energize Latino voters.

"We are very confident that these policies resonate because we've seen them resonate in speeches and focus groups," said Matt Barreto, a Harris campaign pollster. "It speaks to Latino men in particular about being successful and achieving the American dream."

In 2020, AP VoteCast found that 9% of voters nationwide identified as Latino, and 63% of them backed Biden in the election. That race was defined broadly by the pandemic that shut down much of the country, whereas this year's race has issues such as the economy, immigration, abortion rights and democracy at the forefront.

Harris said she would work to double the number of registered apprenticeships. She is stressing how she would remove college degree requirements for certain federal government jobs and encourage private employers to do likewise. Harris also wants to provide forgivable loans worth up to \$20,000 each to 1 million small businesses.

During Trump's event, he sat after his opening remarks as elected officials and business leaders who are Latino praised the economy during his administration, thanking him specifically for tax cuts he signed in 2017.

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Later, he claimed that he had recently seen a solar field "that looked like it took up half the desert." "It's all steel and glass and wires. And it looks like hell," he says. "You see rabbits, they get caught in it." Trump often rails against wind power, claiming the turbines "kill all the birds" and confuse whales.

At the close of the event, Latino faith leaders prayed over Trump, his head bowed as some placed their hands on his shoulders. Guillermo Maldonado, senior pastor of King Jesus International Ministry, said during the prayer that "there's a higher assignment for him to finish with this nation."

During a rally later in North Carolina, Trump, who has been laying the groundwork to challenge the election results if he loses, again commented on Harris not holding any public events Tuesday. He offered this cryptic take: "I think she knows some kind of result that we don't know."

Looking forward to a rally in Madison Square Garden on Sunday, he said, "We want to close it out with beautiful bang," noting there was more campaigning to come.

Both campaigns were jockeying for an edge with the increasingly diverse electorate in the closing weeks of the campaign. Harris has also focused on Black men, to whom she also pitched the forgivable loans for small businesses. She went on the podcast "Call Her Daddy" to appeal to younger women, while Trump has appeared on podcasts to target younger men.

In a close race, the Harris campaign is betting that Latino men are getting more attuned to policy specifics as the election draws closer.

Based on focus groups, Barreto said the Harris campaign found that Latino men in particular wanted access to apprenticeships that could give people without college degrees access to a financially stable career.

The latest Labor Department figures show there are 641,044 registered apprenticeships, an increase from the Trump administration, when apprenticeships peaked in 2020 at 569,311. Doubling that figure, as Harris has proposed, would put the total number of apprenticeships at roughly 1.2 million over four years.

Latino men also expressed a need for access to capital and credit to start companies, as the Treasury Department reported on Oct. 10 that Latino business ownership is up 40% over pre-pandemic levels and could keep climbing with better financing options.

Harris' running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, will be on Univision's "El Bueno, La Mala, y El Feo," a syndicated radio show, this week, while Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, will be interviewed this week by Univision's nationally syndicated afternoon radio program "El Free-Guey Show." Emhoff will also be interviewed by Alex "El Genio" Lucas on Nueva Network Radio.

Trump hopes to convince Latinos that they can trust a fellow businessman such as himself, even as he's also called for the mass deportation of immigrants in the country illegally.

"Hispanic people — they say you can't generalize, but I think you can — they have wonderful entrepreneurship and they have — oh, do you have such energy. Just ease up a little bit, OK? Ease up," Trump said at an Oct. 12 event. "You have great ambition, you have great energy, very smart, and you really do like natural entrepreneurs."

Canadian Cabinet voices support for Trudeau as some Liberals prepare to confront him

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada's deputy prime minister said she believes Justin Trudeau has the support of a majority of Liberals in Parliament as some prepare to confront him Wednesday in the hopes of convincing him to step down.

Chrystia Freeland and other Cabinet members voiced support for the prime minister on Tuesday ahead of a broader meeting with colleagues.

A number of Liberals have signed a letter hoping to persuade Trudeau to step down before the next election. It was unclear how many signed.

"The vast majority of Liberal Members of Parliament support the prime minister, support him as leader of our government, support him as leader of our party and support him as the guy who is going to lead us into the next election," Freeland said.

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Freeland said she is more confident of that after meetings in the last 36 hours.

The Liberal recently suffered upsets in special elections in districts the party has held for years, raising doubts about Trudeau's leadership. Losing a district in Canada's largest city of Toronto, a traditional Liberal stronghold, does not bode well.

A number of Liberal lawmakers have said they will not run again.

Trudeau has said he will lead the party into the election, which come any time between this fall and October, 2025. His Liberal party must rely on the support of at least one major party in Parliament as the Liberals do not have the majority in the House of Commons.

The opposition leader of the Bloc Québécois said his party will work with the Conservatives and NDP parties to bring the Liberals down and force an election if the government doesn't boost old age security payments for seniors.

"The whole story is now: what will Justin Trudeau, superstar, do in the coming days," Bloc Leader Yves-François Blanchet said.

Trudeau's Liberals have been in power since 2015 but Canadians have been frustrated by the cost of living coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trudeau reasserted the country's liberal identity in 2015 after almost 10 years of Conservative rule. His legacy includes opening the doors wide to immigration. He also legalized cannabis and brought in a carbon tax to fight climate change.

"Anybody who has ever bet against Justin Trudeau is sorry they made that bet the next day," said Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault.

Some Cabinet ministers acknowledged some colleagues don't agree.

"Any time there are voices of dissent we have to deal with them, we have to listen to them carefully," Labor Minister Stephen Mackinnon said.

"We have to deal with them and present a unified face to Canadians."

Opposition Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre goaded the prime minister about the potential revolt.

"The reality is he can't administer the government because he's too busy fighting for his job after nine years," Poilievre said.

Nelson Wiseman, professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, said the shelf life of Canadian prime ministers has been about a decade for the past 75 years.

"Trudeau's time is up. Scandals over the years have tarnished his image. He deflects or evades rather than answering straight-forward questions. There is a popular appetite for change. Most Canadians have tuned him out," he said.

"He is the reason why the Liberals went from the wilderness to power in 2015, but it is no longer 2015."

Trudeau's father, Pierre Trudeau, swept to power in 1968 on a wave of "Trudeaumania" and led Canada for almost 16 years.

Rudy Giuliani ordered to turn over NYC apartment, 26 watches to Georgia election workers

By DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

Rudy Giuliani must turn over sports memorabilia and other prized possessions to two Georgia election workers who won a \$148 million defamation judgment against him, including his New York City apartment, more than two dozen luxury watches and a 1980 Mercedes once owned by movie star Lauren Bacall, a judge ruled Tuesday.

But U.S. District Judge Lewis Liman in Manhattan also said Giuliani does not have to give the election workers three New York Yankees World Series rings or his Florida condominium — for now — noting those assets are tied up in other litigation.

The property Giuliani must relinquish is expected to fetch several million dollars for Ruby Freeman and her daughter, Wandrea "Shaye" Moss. They won the \$148 million judgment over Giuliani's false ballot fraud claims against them related to the 2020 presidential election. They said Giuliani pushed Donald Trump's

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lies about the election being stolen, which led to death threats that made them fear for their lives.

Under Tuesday's order, Giuliani must relinquish within seven days his Manhattan apartment, estimated at more than \$5 million, as well as his interest in about \$2 million that he says Trump's 2020 presidential campaign owes him for his services.

Also on the list of assets that must be given to Freeman and Moss are a 1980 Mercedes-Benz SL 500 previously owned by Bacall; a shirt and picture signed, respectively, by Yankees legends Joe DiMaggio and Reggie Jackson; a signed Yankee Stadium picture; a diamond ring; costume jewelry and 26 watches including a Rolex, five Shinolas, two Bulovas and a Tiffany & Co.

In court documents filed earlier this year, Giuliani estimated the Mercedes was worth about \$25,000, and the watches, World Series rings and costume jewelry at about \$30,000. He said the value of his sports memorabilia was unknown.

One of those watches was given to Giuliani by his grandfather and he asked that he be allowed to keep it because of its sentimental value. But Liman rejected the request, saying Giuliani could have had it exempted if he had proven it was worth less than \$1,000 — but he did not do so.

"The Court also does not doubt that certain of the items may have sentimental value to Defendant," the judge added. "But that does not entitle Defendant to continued enjoyment of the assets to the detriment of the Plaintiffs to whom he owes approximately \$150 million. It is, after all, the underlying policy of these New York statutes that 'no man should be permitted to live at the same time in luxury and in debt.'"

Liman wrote that Freeman and Moss would be allowed to sell off the property and "ensure that the liquidation of the transferred assets is accomplished quickly."

Giuliani had asked the judge to bar Freeman and Moss from selling any of his assets until after his appeal of the judgment is completed. Liman also rejected that request, saying Giuliani could have asked the federal court in Washington, D.C., where Freeman and Moss won their case, to stay any asset sales pending his appeal, but he did not.

Giuliani's lawyers, Kenneth Caruso and David Labkowski, said in a statement Tuesday night, "Stay tuned. When the judgment is reversed in the Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., these Plaintiffs will be required to return all this property to Mr. Giuliani. We repeat, stay tuned."

To date, Giuliani has not paid Freeman and Moss anything.

"We are proud that our clients will finally begin to receive some of the compensation to which they are entitled for Giuliani's actions," Aaron Nathan, a lawyer for Freeman and Moss, said in a statement. "This outcome should send a powerful message that there is a price to pay for those who choose to intentionally spread disinformation."

As for the World Series rings, Giuliani's son, Andrew, filed court documents earlier this month saying he actually is the rightful owner. He said his father gave him four rings — one for each of the Yankees' championships in 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 — as gifts in 2018. Rudy Giuliani received the rings during his tenure as mayor of New York City. The younger Giuliani's claim is pending in federal court in Manhattan.

Freeman and Moss also asked Liman to order Rudy Giuliani to turn over his condo in Palm Beach, Florida, estimated to be worth more than \$3 million. But that property is tied up in other litigation, with Giuliani claiming it should be exempt because it is his primary residence. Freeman and Moss have a lien on the Florida property.

Liman said he would take up the Florida condo at a hearing Oct. 28, and he barred Giuliani from selling the property or taking any action that would diminish its value.

After the \$148 million verdict, Giuliani filed for bankruptcy, which froze attempts by Freeman and Moss to collect the award. But a judge in July threw out the case citing repeated "uncooperative conduct," including a failure to comply with court orders and disclose sources of income.

Harris says she's ready if Trump tries to prematurely declare victory, isn't worried about sexism

By COLLEEN LONG and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris said Tuesday that her team is prepared to challenge Donald Trump if he tries to prematurely declare victory in the 2024 election — but she's first focused on beating the Republican nominee.

Harris spoke to NBC News just two weeks before Election Day, as part of a media blitz meant to deliver her closing argument before as many persuadable voters as possible. She said she was not concerned about the role sexism could play in the election, as she stands to be the first woman elected to the White House, and again defended President Joe Biden's fitness for office.

Harris said the Democrats "have the resources and the expertise" should Trump try to subvert the election. "This is a person, Donald Trump, who tried to undo the — a free and fair election, who still denies the will of the people, who incited a violent mob to attack the United States Capitol and some 140 law enforcement officers were attacked. Some — were killed. This is a very serious matter," she said.

Trump has been criminally charged with trying to overturn the 2020 election, and refuses to admit he lost to President Joe Biden. After a failed legal effort to overturn the results, a mob of Trump supporters rioted at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, attacking law enforcement in an effort to stop the certification of the race.

At Harris' rallies, some of her supporters chant "Lock him up," something Trump often said about his former Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. Harris often replies: "The courts will take care of that. We'll take care of November."

At a campaign stop Tuesday, Biden said, "We've got to lock him up," but Biden quickly added: "Politically lock him up. Lock him out, that's what we have to do."

"No president has ever been like this guy," Biden said. "He's a genuine threat to our democracy."

Speaking to supporters Tuesday, Trump criticized Harris for spending the day conducting interviews, appearing to try to sow distrust in the election. "She knows something that we don't know," he said. "I think she knows some kind of result that we don't know."

While partisan battles over voting rules have long been part of presidential campaigns, election litigation has soared in recent years. With money pouring in for legal fights and the number of outside groups involved in election litigation proliferating, the disputes are not likely slow down anytime soon.

Harris told NBC that she's not focused on pointing out the historic nature of her candidacy, saying, "I'm clearly a woman, I don't need to point that out to anyone."

She added that she's not worried about sexism harming her candidacy, saying she's focused on speaking to all voters.

"I will never assume that anyone in our country should elect a leader based on their gender or their race, instead that that leader needs to earn the vote based on substance and what they will do to address challenges and to inspire people," she said.

The vice president also defended Biden, whose disastrous debate against Trump forced him to abandon his reelection campaign and cleared the way for her to become the Democratic nominee for president.

Harris said she still believes Biden is "capable in every way" to be president, saying "you'd have to ask him if that's the only reason why" he dropped out of the race, but she has "no reluctance" in saying he's up for the job.

Russia and Iran may fuel violent post-election protests in the US, intelligence officials warn

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia and Iran may try to encourage violent protests in the U.S. after next month's election, senior intelligence officials warned Tuesday in a declassified memo, citing two recent examples of foreign intelligence agencies seeking to sow discord ahead of the vote.

The memo, released Tuesday by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, said both countries could support violent protests either by covertly organizing events themselves or by encouraging participation in those planned by domestic groups. The aim, the officials wrote, would be to increase division, cast doubt on election results and complicate the transfer of presidential power.

In January, Russian military intelligence tried to recruit an American to organize protests in the U.S., according to a declassified national intelligence memo released publicly Tuesday. The American was "probably unwitting" and did not know he was in contact with Russian agents, the memo said.

The U.S. first accused the Iranian government of covertly supporting protests against American support for Israel during the war in Gaza. Individuals linked to Iran offered to cover the cost of travel to protests this year in Washington, the memo said.

The risk that one of America's adversaries could encourage political violence after the election is greater this year, officials said, because officials in both nations now have a better understanding of the complicated process the U.S. uses to certify the vote. The Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters also highlighted just how easily false and misleading claims about election results can trigger deadly real-world action.

The period between Election Day and the inauguration of the new president poses special risks as foreign adversaries and domestic extremists could seek to disrupt election certification by exploiting misleading claims or innocent irregularities. Concerns about safety already have prompted election workers in some communities to install bulletproof glass and panic buttons because of the risk of election-related incidents.

Fears of political violence have grown amid concerns about widening polarization and growing distrust, a trend America's adversaries have tried to accelerate by using online disinformation and propaganda. Besides hoping to shape the outcome of the election, officials say Russia and Iran — as well as China — want to undermine American unity by spreading false and misleading claims about elections, voting and hot-button issues like immigration, the economy or the federal response to recent hurricanes.

For Russia, which aims to erode support for Ukraine, that means favoring former President Donald Trump, who has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin and criticized the NATO alliance. Iran, meanwhile, has sought to hurt Trump's campaign through disinformation and by hacking into its campaign emails.

Trump's administration ended a nuclear deal with Iran, reimposed sanctions and ordered the killing of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, an act that prompted Iran's leaders to vow revenge.

Russia will likely try to foment protests in the U.S. regardless of who wins the White House, according to an official with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, who briefed reporters Tuesday on the condition of anonymity under rules set out by the office of the director. Officials said they expect Russia's response will be more aggressive, however, if Harris defeats Trump.

China also has spread disinformation seemingly designed to mislead and confuse Americans, but intelligence officials say they have no indication that Beijing will seek to encourage violent protests. While China has sought to meddle in down-ballot races for Congress or state and local office, U.S. intelligence officials and private analysts agree that Beijing has expressed no meaningful preference in the presidential race.

Groups looking to meddle in the election also could use the threat of violence at polling places to keep certain groups of voters from casting a ballot, officials have warned. Something similar happened in 2020, when Iranian hackers allegedly posed as members of the far-right Proud Boys organization and sent threatening emails to Democratic voters as a vote suppression tactic.

Voting advocacy organizations and civil rights groups have responded to concerns of election violence with public outreach initiatives aimed at increasing resilience to disinformation and at reminding them that

Americans agree on more than the current political climate suggests.

"In 2024, voters must know that they will decide the outcome of the election — not a political party, extremist groups or purveyors of disinformation," said Maya Wiley, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, which has launched its own efforts to fight election misinformation and the political violence it could spur. "Democracy requires passionate persistence."

Russia, China and Iran have all rejected claims that they seek to meddle with the U.S. election. On Tuesday, a spokesperson for Iran's U.N. mission pointed to past statements denying an intention to interfere in American politics. A spokesperson for China's Embassy in Washington told The Associated Press that U.S. officials' claims about Chinese disinformation are "full of malicious speculations against China."

A message left with Russia's embassy was not immediately returned Tuesday.

Border arrests fall in September in last monthly gauge before US elections

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Arrests for illegally crossing the border from Mexico fell 7% in September to a more than four-year low, authorities said Tuesday. It was likely the last monthly gauge during a presidential campaign in which Republican nominee Donald Trump has made immigration a signature issue.

The Border Patrol made 53,858 arrests, down from 58,009 in August and the lowest tally since August 2020, when arrests totaled 47,283, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Mexicans accounted for nearly half of arrests, becoming a greater part of the mix. In December, when arrests reached an all-time high of 250,000, Mexicans made up fewer than 1 in 4. Arrests for other major nationalities seen at the border, including Guatemalans, Hondurans, Colombians and Ecuadoreans, have plunged this year.

San Diego was again the busiest corridor for illegal crossings in September, followed by El Paso, Texas, and Tucson, Arizona.

For the government's fiscal year ended Sept. 30, the Border Patrol made 1.53 million arrests after topping 2 million in each of the previous two years for the first time.

The White House touted the numbers as proof that severe asylum restrictions introduced in June were having the intended effect, and blamed congressional Republicans for opposing a border security bill that failed in February. Vice President Kamala Harris has used that line of attack against Trump to try to blunt criticism that the Biden administration has been weak on immigration enforcement.

"The Biden Harris Administration has taken effective action, and Republican officials continue to do nothing," said White House spokesman Angelo Fernández Hernández.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform, a frequent administration critic and advocate for immigration restrictions, attributed recent declines to more enforcement by Mexican officials within their own borders, saying the White House "essentially outsourced U.S. border security to Mexico in advance of the 2024 election — policies that can be reversed at any time that the government of Mexico chooses."

Arrests fell sharply after Mexico increased enforcement in December, and took a steeper dive after the U.S. asylum restrictions took effect in June. U.S. officials haven't been shy about highlighting Mexico's role.

Mexican authorities are encountering more migrants this year while deportations remain relatively low, creating a bottleneck. Panamanian authorities reported an increase in migrants walking through the notorious Darien Gap during September, though numbers are still well below last year.

Troy Miller, acting CBP commissioner, said last week that the administration is working with Mexico and other countries to jointly address migration.

"We continue to be concerned about any bottlenecks, we continue to look at those, we continue to address them with our partners," Miller said at a news conference in San Diego.

The Biden administration has promoted new and expanded legal pathways to enter the country in an effort to discourage illegal crossings. In September, CBP allowed more than 44,600 people to enter with

appointments on an online system called CBP One, bringing the total to 852,000 since it was introduced in January 2023.

Another Biden policy allows up to 30,000 people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela with financial sponsors to enter monthly through airports. More than 531,000 people from those four countries have entered that way up through September.

Trump will conduct an interview with Joe Rogan for his podcast

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump will conduct an interview with Joe Rogan for his popular podcast on Friday. That's according to a person familiar with the plans who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to confirm the interview.

Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, and Rogan have a complicated history. While the two shook hands and spoke briefly at a UFC fight, Trump criticized Rogan after he said that then-candidate Robert Kennedy Jr. was the only one running who made sense to him.

"It will be interesting to see how loudly Joe Rogan gets BOOED the next time he enters the UFC Ring???" MAGA2024," Trump wrote on his social media site in August.

Rogan later clarified that his comments weren't an endorsement of Kennedy. Kennedy ended up suspending his bid and endorsing Trump.

Both Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, have appeared on a slew of popular podcasts as Election Day grows closer. Trump's appearances are typically aimed at young men.

More Republicans are voting early, helping break records. Nearly 19 million ballots cast so far

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

With former President Donald Trump's encouragement, Republicans are voting early again, flocking to the polls for in-person voting ahead of Election Day and helping push the national number to nearly 19 million.

The early turnout is breaking records in swing states such as Georgia and North Carolina.

The GOP hopes this surge of early votes will fix a mechanical problem that some in the party blame for costing it the 2020 presidential election and key races in 2022. Campaigns usually want their voters to cast ballots ahead of Election Day so they can focus their resources on getting more marginal supporters to the polls at the last minute.

Republicans excelled at that before Trump turned against early in-person and mail voting in 2020, as he spun wild conspiracies about the process and convinced his supporters to wait until Election Day to cast their ballots. But the party is again pushing its voters to cast their ballots early, and the former president is largely encouraging the change.

"I am telling everyone to vote early," Trump said on a podcast last week hosted by conservative Dan Bongino, who has widely spread false information about early voting and the 2020 election.

Republicans seem to be responding. In Nevada, where Democrats for decades relied on a robust early vote to counter the GOP on Election Day, about 6,000 more Republicans than Democrats had actually cast early ballots this year as of Tuesday, according to Associated Press research.

It's unclear what this means for the election, however. The early vote data only reveals whether voters are registered with a party, not who they are voting for, and the early electorate can change from day to day as more people vote early.

The surge in 2020 Democratic early voting was largely a reaction to a pandemic that no longer exists, skewing historic comparisons. And what might seem like demographic trends in the early vote can suddenly disappear once Election Day votes are factored in.

It also is still very early in the voting process. The last of the seven swing states, Wisconsin, kicked off its

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early voting Tuesday morning, and the 17.4 million voters who already have cast ballots this year represent only about 11% of the number of total ballots in the 2020 presidential election. Parties can run up leads in the early vote and then see them vanish on Election Day because all their supporters have already cast ballots and the other side has not.

"The Democrats are still, as far as I can tell, banking more early votes. It's just less of a disadvantage for Republicans," said Michael McDonald, a political scientist at the University of Florida who carefully tracks the early vote. But, McDonald cautioned, "we don't know if this is a shifting of furniture yet or an added strength for Republicans."

One thing is clear — the return to bipartisan early voting has helped bust records. North Carolina and Georgia both reported record turnout on their first day of in-person early voting, despite the destruction caused by Hurricane Helene, and it has spilled over into states that aren't competitive at the presidential level, such as South Carolina, which reported its own record when it opened early voting Monday.

James Blair, the political director for Trump's campaign, said its data shows that more of its low-propensity voters are casting ballots early than those who might be expected to support Vice President Kamala Harris. "The starting point is, we're in a strong spot," Blair said.

The Harris campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Republicans still seem to have an aversion to mail balloting. They've improved their share of the mail vote in several states but still lag Democrats. That's particularly true in Pennsylvania, the biggest electoral prize among the seven swing states and one that does not have a traditional early in-person voting option.

Democrats there have sent in about 350,000 more mail ballots than Republicans as of Tuesday. But the GOP is making up ground by voting early in-person in most competitive states.

Nonetheless, years of sowing conspiracy theories about early and mail voting have taken a toll on the conservative electorate. At Elon Musk's first solo event in support of Trump last week, he encouraged the crowd to vote early, an entreaty that some in the audience responded to by shouting back, "Why?"

Even with those reservations, some analysts said Republicans would rather have an early vote parity than not.

John Couvillon, a Louisiana pollster who usually works for the GOP and carefully tracks the early vote, noted that Democrats have dominated the early vote during recent election cycles. Their current position, Couvillon said, "is the equivalent of being down three touchdowns at halftime and thinking you can score four touchdowns in the second half."

Tom Bonier, a Democratic data analyst, contended that everyone expected Republicans to return to early voting and the pandemic-inspired gaps to close. He said he's not concerned.

"I'm impressed the Democratic numbers are as strong as they are," he said.

The main takeaway, Bonier said, is that the high rates of voting show an enthusiastic electorate on both sides.

"If either side thought the other side would stay home this election, that's obviously not the case," he said.

North Carolina county surrounding Asheville overcounted Helene deaths by as many as 30, sheriff says

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The North Carolina county that is home to Asheville overcounted deaths caused by Helene by as many as 30, according to a statement Tuesday from its sheriff's office and data from the state, significantly reducing the death toll from the historic storm.

Buncombe County officials, who previously reported 72 deaths, are now deferring to a state tally of 42 deaths for the county.

The county's number dates back to an Oct. 3 news release in which county officials reported that "72 lives have been lost due to Hurricane Helene," repeating a number cited by Sheriff Quentin Miller at an earlier media briefing. But state officials, relying on reviews by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Raleigh, have consistently reported a number lower than that for the county. The number for Buncombe

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County included in the state's tally has stood at 42 since at least Oct. 10.

On Tuesday, the Buncombe County Sheriff's office acknowledged in a statement that the number of deaths in the county was lower than the number it provided. The statement, attributed to Public Information Officer Christina Esmay, cited factors ranging from updated causes of death to communication challenges after the storm knocked out cell service and electricity in multiple mountain counties.

"In the early aftermath of Hurricane Helene all deaths were being classified as storm related and from Buncombe County. However, as the days progressed BCSO was able to identify who had passed away due to the hurricane, who was in fact from Buncombe County, and who passed away from other causes," the statement said. "Compounded with the lack of consistent communication, due to widespread outages, the Buncombe County fatality number that was initially provided to Sheriff Miller has decreased."

The sheriff's office did not provide additional information on how they arrived at their tally, and spokesman Matt Marshall said any other questions about how deaths have been investigated and counted should be sent to state officials. In response to a request to interview the sheriff, Marshall said he would look into his availability.

Another county, Henderson, had previously reported two more local deaths than the state, but said on Tuesday that it agrees with the state's number.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Raleigh typically reviews weather deaths and makes a ruling on cause before reporting numbers through state officials, a process it has used in past storms for years. But in the chaos following Helene, a number of counties reported fatality numbers independently of the state. The state's tally has gradually increased through Tuesday, but the climb has slowed as bodies have been examined.

State Department of Health and Human Services spokesperson Kelly Haight Connor said in an email Tuesday that all examinations are complete for storm-related deaths, but she wouldn't rule out additions if other cases emerge. The state reported 96 deaths from Helene statewide on Tuesday.

The AP had tallied at least 246 total deaths across multiple states due to Helene through Monday, including 128 in North Carolina, based on data from the state and counties, including Henderson and Buncombe. With the disclosure from Buncombe County that its number was inflated, the AP has adopted the state's total of 96, so the news organization's multistate tally now stands at 214.

Women in states with bans are getting abortions at similar rates as under Roe, report says

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Women living in states with abortion bans obtained the procedure in the second half of 2023 at about the same rate as before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, according to a report released Tuesday.

Women did so by traveling out of state or by having prescription abortion pills mailed to them, according to the #WeCount report from the Society of Family Planning, which advocates for abortion access. They increasingly used telehealth, the report found, as medical providers in states with laws intended to protect them from prosecution in other states used online appointments to prescribe abortion pills.

"The abortion bans are not eliminating the need for abortion," said Ushma Upadhyay, a University of California, San Francisco public health social scientist and a co-chair of the #WeCount survey. "People are jumping over these hurdles because they have to."

Abortion patterns have shifted

The #WeCount report began surveying abortion providers across the country monthly just before Roe was overturned, creating a snapshot of abortion trends. In some states, a portion of the data is estimated. The effort makes data public with less than a six-month lag, giving a picture of trends far faster than the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, whose most recent annual report covers abortion in 2021.

The report has chronicled quick shifts since the Supreme Court's Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Orga-

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nization ruling that ended the national right to abortion and opened the door to enforcement of state bans.

The number of abortions in states with bans at all stages of pregnancy fell to near zero. It also plummeted in states where bans kick in around six weeks of pregnancy, which is before many women know they're pregnant.

But the nationwide total has been about the same or above the level from before the ruling. The study estimates 99,000 abortions occurred each month in the first half of 2024, up from the 81,000 monthly from April through December 2022 and 88,000 in 2023.

One reason is telehealth, which got a boost when some Democratic-controlled states last year began implementing laws to protect prescribers. In April 2022, about 1 in 25 abortions were from pills prescribed via telehealth, the report found. In June 2024, it was 1 in 5.

The newest report is the first time #WeCount has broken down state-by-state numbers for abortion pill prescriptions. About half the telehealth abortion pill prescriptions now go to patients in states with abortion bans or restrictions on telehealth abortion prescriptions.

In the second half of last year, the pills were sent to about 2,800 women each month in Texas, more than 1,500 in Mississippi and nearly 800 in Missouri, for instance.

Travel is still the main means of access for women in states with bans

Data from another group, the Guttmacher Institute, shows that women in states with bans still rely mostly on travel to get abortions.

By combining results of the two surveys and comparing them with Guttmacher's counts of in-person abortions from 2020, #WeCount found women in states with bans throughout pregnancy were getting abortions in similar numbers as they were in 2020. The numbers do not account for pills obtained from outside the medical system in the earlier period, when those prescriptions most often came from abroad. They also do not tally people who received pills but did not use them.

West Virginia women, for example, obtained nearly 220 abortions monthly in the second half of 2023, mostly by traveling — more than in 2020, when they received about 140 a month. For Louisiana residents, the monthly abortion numbers were about the same, with just under 700 from July through December 2023, mostly through shield laws, and 635 in 2020. However, Oklahoma residents obtained fewer abortions in 2023, with the monthly number falling to under 470 from about 690 in 2020.

Telehealth providers emerged quickly

One of the major providers of the telehealth pills is the Massachusetts Abortion Access Project. Cofounder Angel Foster said the group prescribed to about 500 patients a month, mostly in states with bans, from its September 2023 launch through last month.

The group charged \$250 per person while allowing people to pay less if they couldn't afford that. Starting this month, with the help of grant funding that pays operating costs, it's trying a different approach: Setting the price at \$5 but letting patients know they'd appreciate more for those who can pay it. Foster said the group is on track to provide 1,500 to 2,000 abortions monthly with the new model.

Foster called the Supreme Court's 2020 decision "a human rights and social justice catastrophe" while also saying that "there's an irony in what's happened in the post-Dobbs landscape."

"In some places abortion care is more accessible and affordable than it was," she said.

There have no major legal challenges of shield laws so far, but abortion opponents have tried to get one of the main pills removed from the market. Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously preserved access to the drug, mifepristone, while finding that a group of anti-abortion doctors and organizations did not have the legal right to challenge the 2000 federal approval of the drug.

This month, three states asked a judge for permission to file a lawsuit aimed at rolling back federal decisions that allowed easier access to the pill — including through telehealth.

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AP Decision Notes: What to expect in North Carolina on Election Day

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — North Carolina voters will cast ballots for president and governor in the Nov. 5 general election while many in the state are still dealing with the aftermath and massive destruction caused by Hurricane Helene.

The Tarheel State is one of a handful of competitive presidential battlegrounds that will likely determine the race for the White House. Polls there have tightened considerably since President Joe Biden dropped out of the race in July, making the state a popular destination for both campaigns. Since the storm, Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican former President Donald Trump and their running mates have all visited North Carolina.

Since 1968, Democratic presidential candidates have carried North Carolina only twice: in 1976 and 2008. Nonetheless, the state has been competitive in recent years. Trump carried North Carolina twice but with less than 50% of the vote each time. He edged Biden in 2020 by about one percentage point, his smallest winning margin in any state.

In the race for governor, Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson and Democratic state Attorney General Josh Stein are the nominees to replace Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper, who is term-limited. Robinson has denied a CNN report that he posted explicit messages on a pornography web site more than a decade ago. Since the allegations surfaced, many of his campaign staff members have resigned and he was excluded from a Trump campaign event in Wilmington.

Also on the ballot is a competitive race in the 1st Congressional District in northeastern North Carolina. Democratic U.S. Rep. Don Davis is seeking a second term against Republican Laurie Buckhout.

In the state Legislature, Republicans overwhelmingly outnumber Democrats in both chambers, but a net loss of a single seat in the Senate or the House could cost the GOP its supermajority, and its ability to override the governor's veto along with it. All 50 state Senate and 120 state House seats are up for election.

Voters will also consider a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would specify that only U.S. citizens can vote in the state.

Here's a look at what to expect in the 2024 election in North Carolina:

Election Day

Nov. 5.

Poll closing time

7:30 p.m. ET.

Presidential electoral votes

16 awarded to statewide winner.

Key races and candidates

President: Harris (D) v. Trump (R) v. Chase Oliver (Libertarian) v. Jill Stein (Green) v. Randall Terry (Constitution) v. Cornel West (Justice For All).

Governor: Robinson (R) v. Stein (D) and three others.

1st Congressional District: Davis (D) vs. Buckhout (R) and one other.

Ballot measure: N.C. 1 (Citizenship Requirement to Vote General).

Other races of interest

U.S. House, Agriculture Commissioner, Attorney General, Auditor, Court of Appeals, Insurance Commissioner, Labor Commissioner, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Supreme Court, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Treasurer, state Senate, state House.

Decision Notes

North Carolina has a track record of counting votes relatively quickly, leaving only about 1% of the vote uncounted after election night. This year, the count could be slowed in some areas due to the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. State elections officials approved emergency measures in nearly 30 western counties and tribal areas giving voters additional options for turning in their absentee ballots.

State law allows county elections officials to begin tabulating mail ballots before the polls have closed on

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Election Day. As a result, the first votes reported on election night will include many of these mail ballots. Overall, these ballots have tended to favor Democrats, ever since the issue of early and mail voting became highly politicized during the 2020 election. This means that the Democratic candidate in a competitive contest could take an early lead in the vote count in the initial vote reports after polls close, even though the race may tighten considerably as more votes are tabulated.

In the 2022 U.S. Senate race, for example, Democrat Cheri Beasley took a 20 point lead over Ted Budd when the first batches of votes were released after polls closed. That lead disappeared after about 90 minutes, when Budd overtook Beasley in the vote count and went on to win the seat. Mail and early in-person votes accounted for about 59% of all ballots in that election.

In statewide elections, the Democratic strongholds are in the Raleigh, Charlotte, Greensboro and Fayetteville areas, while Republicans tend to perform best in the western, eastern and southeastern areas of the state. When Barack Obama carried North Carolina in 2008, he won beyond the safe Democratic areas and picked up an additional 11 counties in what were moderate Republican areas. More than half of those counties may have moved out of reach for Democrats today, as Trump outperformed Biden by double-digit margins in 2020. But that same year, Democratic Gov. Cooper picked up Granville, Pasquotank and Scotland counties in his successful reelection bid and reduced the margin in others.

Other counties to watch include Nash, northeast of Raleigh, and New Hanover on the Atlantic Coast. They are two of only 10 counties across the seven presidential battlegrounds that flipped from Trump to Biden. Nash is expected to complete its vote count by around 10 p.m. ET, followed by New Hanover about half an hour later.

The Associated Press doesn't make projections and will declare a winner only when it has determined there is no scenario that would allow the trailing candidates to close the gap. If a race hasn't been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, like candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear it hasn't declared a winner and explain why.

There are no automatic recounts in North Carolina, but candidates may request and pay for one if the margin is less than 0.5% of the total votes or 10,000 votes for statewide races or 1% for non-statewide races. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is eligible for a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Past presidential results

2020: Trump (R) 50%, Biden (D) 49%, AP race call: Fri. Nov. 13, 2020, 3:49 p.m. ET.

Voter registration and turnout

Registered voters: 7,666,436 (as of Sept. 1, 2024). 31% Democrats, 30% Republicans.

Voter turnout in 2020 presidential election: 75% of registered voters.

Pre-Election Day voting

Votes cast before Election Day 2020: about 84% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2022: about 58% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2024: See AP Advance Vote tracker.

How long does vote-counting take?

First votes reported, Nov. 3, 2020: 7:42 p.m. ET.

By midnight ET: about 99% of total votes cast were reported.

In hard-fought Pennsylvania, fast-growing Hispanic communities present a test for Harris and Trump

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) — The sun was creeping over the horizon on a recent morning in Pennsylvania's erstwhile steel country, but inside a house next to two radio towers, Victor Martinez stood with a microphone, ready to broadcast his views to thousands of Spanish-speaking listeners.

"Señores, abran los ojos," Spanish for "Gentlemen, open your eyes," he said, after playing a recent

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interview where former President Donald Trump suggested he could deploy the U.S. military to deal with the opposition. "Three weeks before Election Day, this guy has the nerve to say that we should use the army to put what he calls 'crazy liberal Democrats' in prison."

Pennsylvania is arguably the hardest fought of the battleground states and happens to have one of the fastest-growing Hispanic communities in the country, in what is known as the 222 Corridor, after the highway that connects small cities and towns west and north of Philadelphia. It's fertile ground for both Democrats and Republicans to test their strength among Latinos in a state where small margins decide who gets 19 electoral votes. It's a place where Democratic nominee Kamala Harris can prove that her party still commands a large share of the demographic's support, and where Trump's campaign has been working to gain ground.

"This is the epicenter for Latino voters in Pennsylvania," said Martinez, who is of Puerto Rican descent and lives in and broadcasts his show from Allentown. "I like the fact that Kamala Harris has to keep sending people over here to listen to us and talk to us. I like it. I like the fact that JD Vance has to keep coming back. I like it, because that means that they have to pay attention to us."

Pennsylvania's Latino eligible voter population has more than doubled since 2000 from 206,000 to 620,000 in 2023, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures. The population in cities like Allentown and Reading is now more than half Hispanic, with a majority being of Puerto Rican descent and a sizable portion of Dominican origin.

Martinez also streams his show on YouTube and Facebook, using a large screen with an image of the White House as a backdrop for his segment on politics, which has become the highest-rated portion of his four-hour radio show.

Despite his public stance against Trump, Martinez says he simply wants more Latinos to get out and vote to start building more of an influential bloc, the same way Cubans have done in Florida, where he used to live and where he shaped his political views. He says he liked former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, both Republicans.

"I don't want politicians to think that they have us in the bag. No, they should be fighting for us," he said. "I'm from Florida, so I'm very well aware of the power the Cubans cultivated in South Florida. They got that power because they vote."

In Pennsylvania, roughly half of all requested mail and absentee ballots had been cast by Monday. Of those, 63% had been returned by Democrats with about 27% returned by Republicans, according to Associated Press election research. In recent elections, Democrats have been more likely to participate in advance voting, while Republicans have favored voting in-person on Election Day.

Democrats also are returning more mail and absentee ballots in the two counties that concentrate the most Hispanics in the state. In Lehigh, home to Allentown, Democrats accounted for about 62% of returned mail and absentee ballots with Republicans at 27%. In Berks County, home to Reading, Democrats accounted for about 60% of the total with Republicans at about 31%.

The Trump campaign opened a Latino outreach office in the region and won the endorsements of popular Puerto Rican reggaeton artists such as Anuel AA and Nicky Jam.

"President Trump has always been about trying to influence the Latino population. It's not the usual 'oh we need Latinos.' He appreciates our work and sees our potential," said Marcela Diaz-Myers, a Colombian immigrant who heads a new task force the Pennsylvania GOP formed to do Hispanic outreach.

Trump lost Pennsylvania to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020, after winning the state and the presidency in 2016. Nationwide, about 6 in 10 Hispanic voters supported Biden in 2020, according to AP VoteCast, a broad survey of the electorate.

Harris' campaign is hoping their network of surrogates, including Martinez, Puerto Rican artists and other popular Latino figures, helps them hold Biden's Latino lead, or at least stunts Trump's efforts to make inroads within this group.

The mayor of Allentown, Matt Tuerk, has been knocking on doors for the Democratic vice president and sees Harris' campaign resonating deeply with older Latino voters and particularly women, who often tell

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him things like "I will vote for 'la mujer,'" Spanish for "the woman."

Tuerk, who is of Cuban descent, says the Trump campaign believes it has some traction with younger Latino men, and he warned the Harris campaign that he was hearing more of Trump's digital ads airing at the city's barbershops where they play Bachata and merengue, musical genres from the Dominican Republic.

One of Trump's most popular Hispanic surrogates is Robert Unanue, the CEO of Goya, which produces many food products considered staples in Latino homes. Unanue has been courting Latino voters in swing states such as Pennsylvania, Nevada, Arizona and North Carolina.

Unanue says some Latinos are against high arrivals of immigrants because many have struggled for years to legalize their status and have spent effort and money to become U.S. citizens. He said many do not think Trump would deport those who have been here a long time and have no criminal record, even though the GOP nominee has vowed to conduct the largest deportation operation in U.S. history.

"Trump is not going to deport la tia, or la sobrina or la prima," Unanue said, using the Spanish words for aunt, niece and cousin. "He is going to focus first on the criminals and second on the deadbeats, people coming to this country to take from us who work hard."

Trump regularly rails against immigrants, saying they are taking jobs and bringing violent crime to the U.S. He has said those accused of murder have "bad genes." He has suggested he would use the National Guard, and possibly the military, to target between 15 million and 20 million people for deportation, though the government estimated in 2022 there were 11 million migrants living in the U.S. without permanent legal permission.

Along Allentown's Seventh Street, or what locals call Calle Siete, there is a mix of Latino-owned restaurants and grocery stores and Dominican beauty salons.

Franklin Encarnacion, 58, of the Dominican Republic, says he sees a lot of support for Harris in this neighborhood.

"She is a woman. She knows what we need in our homes. She knows that things are getting expensive," Encarnacion said, adding he felt Trump has focused too much on saying he wants to deport immigrants.

On the same commercial strip, Miguel Cleto, a pastor from the Dominican Republic, said he thinks Democrats have handled immigration poorly, and they are on the wrong side of the abortion issue.

"Donald Trump is the only solution for this country to go back to where it was," he said.

AP Decision Notes: What to expect in Arizona on Election Day

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voters in Arizona have no shortage of competitive races to decide in the Nov. 5 general election, with control of the White House, the U.S. Senate and House and both chambers of the state Legislature in the balance.

Arizona remains a major electoral battleground four years after President Joe Biden became only the second Democratic presidential candidate to carry the state in nearly 70 years. It is one of four states in the nation's Sun Belt that has drawn much of the focus of both presidential campaigns in the final sprint to Election Day.

Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican former President Donald Trump are in a tight race for the state's 11 electoral votes. They and their running mates have made multiple campaign stops there since securing their parties' nominations over the summer.

Other competitive contests include the race for U.S. Senate, where Democrat Ruben Gallego and Republican Kari Lake are running to replace outgoing independent U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, and two Republican-held U.S. House seats in Phoenix and Tucson area districts that both went for Biden in 2020.

In the state Legislature, Democrats hope to take over the state Senate for the first time since 1992 and the state House for the first time since 1966, the last time the party controlled the governorship and both chambers simultaneously.

Voters will also decide high-profile statewide ballot measures on abortion, immigration and two competing ballot measures that would either require or eliminate the use of partisan primaries in state elections.

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Under the state constitution, if two contradictory ballot measures both pass, the one with the most votes in favor would become law, although the matter would likely first head to court.

Here's a look at what to expect in the 2024 election in Arizona:

Election Day

Nov. 5.

Poll closing time

9 p.m. ET. Arizona does not release votes until all precincts have reported or one hour after all polls are closed, whichever is first, usually 10 p.m. ET.

Presidential electoral votes

11 awarded to statewide winner.

Key races and candidates

President: Harris (D) vs. Trump (R) vs. Chase Oliver (Libertarian) vs. Jill Stein (Green).

U.S. Senate: Ruben Gallego (D) vs. Kari Lake (R) and one other.

1st Congressional District: Amish Shah (D) vs. David Schweikert (R).

6th Congressional District: Kirsten Engel (D) vs. Juan Ciscomani (R) and one other.

Ballot measures: Proposition 133 (require partisan primaries), Proposition 139 (right to abortion), Proposition 140 (eliminate partisan primaries), Proposition 314 (criminal penalties for illegal immigration).

Other races of interest

State Senate, state House, Corporation Commissioner.

Decision Notes

In Arizona, ballots cast and processed before Election Day are the first to be reported after polls close. These ballots have tended to favor Democrats, ever since the issue of early and mail voting became highly politicized during the 2020 election. In the 2022 U.S. Senate election, Democratic incumbent Mark Kelly began the night with a nearly 20 point lead over Republican Blake Masters, but that narrowed to about a 5 point win by the time the results were certified.

Mail ballots that are delivered on Election Day take much longer to tabulate because election workers do not begin processing or verifying them until after polls close. In Maricopa County, which has the state's largest population, about 20% of the nearly 1.6 million votes cast in 2022 were mail ballots dropped off on Election Day.

Maricopa County is by far the most influential of the state's 15 counties in statewide elections. It is home to Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe and Mesa and contributed nearly 62% of the vote in the 2020 presidential race. Pima County was a distant second with about 15% of the vote.

In statewide elections going back a dozen years, Democrats have always carried four counties in both winning and losing campaigns: Apache, Coconino, Pima and Santa Cruz. In each of those races, the candidate who carried Maricopa won statewide. Maricopa is also one of only 10 counties across the seven battleground states that flipped from Trump to Biden.

The Associated Press doesn't make projections and will declare a winner only when it has determined there is no scenario that would allow the trailing candidates to close the gap. If a race hasn't been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, like candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear it hasn't declared a winner and explain why.

In Arizona, recounts are automatic if the vote margin is 0.5% of the total vote or less. The AP may declare a winner in a race that's eligible for a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Past presidential results

2020: Biden (D) 49.4%, Trump (R) 49.1%, AP race call: Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2020, 2:51 a.m. ET.

Voter registration and turnout

Registered voters: 4,109,270 (as of July 30, 2024). About 29% Democrats, about 35% Republicans, about 36% other.

Voter turnout in 2020 presidential election: 71% of registered voters.

Pre-Election Day voting

Votes cast before Election Day 2020: about 89% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2022: about 82% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2024: See AP Advance Vote tracker.

How long does vote-counting take?

First votes reported, Nov. 3, 2020: 10:02 p.m. ET.

By midnight ET: about 72% of total votes cast were reported.

Lower-priced new cars are gaining popularity, and not just for cash-poor buyers

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Had she wanted to, Michelle Chumley could have afforded a pricey new SUV loaded with options. But when it came time to replace her Chevrolet Blazer SUV, for which she'd paid about \$40,000 three years ago, Chumley chose something smaller. And less costly.

With her purchase of a Chevrolet Trax compact SUV in June, Chumley joined a rising number of buyers who have made vehicles in the below-average \$20,000-to-\$30,000 range the fastest-growing segment of the nation's new-auto market.

"I just don't need that big vehicle and to be paying all of that gas money," said Chumley, a 56-year-old nurse who lives outside Oxford, Ohio, near Cincinnati.

Across the industry, auto analysts say, an "affordability shift" is taking root. The trend is being led by people who feel they can no longer afford a new vehicle that would cost them roughly today's average selling price of more than \$47,000 — a jump of more than 20% from the pre-pandemic average.

To buy a new car at that price, an average buyer would have to spend \$737 a month, if financed at today's average loan rate of 7.1%, for just under six years before the vehicle would be paid off, according to Edmunds.com, an auto research and pricing site. For many, that is financially out of reach.

Yet there are other buyers who, like Chumley, could manage the financial burden but have decided it just isn't worth the cost. And the trend is forcing America's automakers to reassess their sales and production strategies. With buyers confronting inflated prices and still-high loan rates, sales of new U.S. autos rose only 1% through September over the same period last year. If the trend toward lower-priced vehicles proves a lasting one, more generous discounts could lead to lower average auto prices and slowing industry profits.

"Consumers are becoming more prudent as they face economic uncertainty, still-high interest rates and vehicle prices that remain elevated," said Kevin Roberts, director of market intelligence at CarGurus, an automotive shopping site. "This year, all of the growth is happening in what we would consider the more affordable price buckets."

Under pressure to unload their more expensive models, automakers have been lowering the sales prices on many such vehicles, largely by offering steeper discounts. In the past year, the average incentive per auto has nearly doubled, to \$1,812, according to Edmunds.

General Motors said it kept discounts in check and average vehicle prices steady around \$49,000 from July through September. That produced a \$900 million pretax earnings gain from a year ago, but the company doesn't expect that in the fourth quarter.

Through September, Roberts has calculated, new-vehicle sales to individual buyers, excluding sales to rental companies and other commercial fleets, are up 7%. Of that growth, 43% came in the \$20,000-to-\$30,000 price range — the largest share for that price category in at least four years. (For used vehicles, the shift is even more pronounced: 59% sales growth in the \$15,000-to-\$20,000 price range over that period.)

Sales of compact and subcompact cars and SUVs from mainstream auto brands are growing faster than in any year since 2018, according to data from Cox Automotive.

The sales gains for affordable vehicles is, in some ways, a return to a pattern that existed before the pandemic. As recently as 2018, compact and subcompact vehicles — typically among the most popular

moderately priced vehicles — had accounted for nearly 35% of the nation's new vehicle sales.

The proportion started to fall in 2020, when the pandemic caused a global shortage of computer chips that forced automakers to slow production and allocate scarce semiconductors to more expensive trucks and large SUVs. As buyers increasingly embraced those higher-priced vehicles, the companies posted robust earnings growth.

In the meantime, they deemed profit margins for lower-priced cars too meager to justify significant production of them. By 2022, the market share of compact and subcompact vehicles had dropped below 30%.

This year, that share has rebounded to nearly 34% and rising. Sales of compact sedans were up 16.7% through September from 12 months earlier. By contrast, CarGurus said, big pickups rose just under 6%. Sales of large SUVs are barely up at all — less than 1%.

Ford's F-Series truck remains the top-selling vehicle in the United States this year, as it has been for nearly a half-century, followed by the Chevrolet Silverado. But Stellantis' Ram pickup, typically No. 3, dropped to sixth place, outpaced by several less expensive small SUVs: the Toyota RAV4, the Honda CR-V and the Tesla Model Y (with a \$7,500 U.S. tax credit).

The move in buyer sentiment toward affordability came fast this year, catching many automakers off guard, with too-few vehicles available in lower price ranges. One reason for the shift, analysts say, is that many buyers who are willing to plunk down nearly \$50,000 for a new vehicle had already done so in the past few years. People who are less able — or less willing — to spend that much had in many cases held on to their existing vehicles for years. The time had come for them to replace them. And most of them seem disinclined to spend more than they have to.

With loan rates still high and average auto insurance prices up a whopping 38% in the past two years, "the public just wants to be a little more frugal about it," said Keith McCluskey, CEO of the dealership where Chumley bought her Trax.

Roberts of CarGurus noted that even many higher-income buyers are choosing smaller, lower-priced vehicles, in some cases because of uncertainties over the economy and the impending presidential election.

The shift has left some automakers overstocked with too many pricier trucks and SUVs. Some, like Stellantis, which makes Chrysler, Jeep and Ram vehicles, have warned that the shift will eat into their profitability this year.

At General Motors' Chevrolet brand, executives had foreseen the shift away from "uber expensive" vehicles and were prepared with the redesigned Trax, which came out in the spring of 2023, noted Mike MacPhee, director of Chevrolet sales operations.

Trax sales in the U.S. so far this year are up 130%, making it the nation's top-selling subcompact SUV. "We're basically doubling our (Trax) sales volume from last year," MacPhee said.

How long the preference for lower-priced vehicles may last is unclear. Charlie Chesbrough, chief economist for Cox Automotive, notes that the succession of expected interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve should eventually lead to lower auto loan rates, thereby making larger vehicles more affordable.

"The trends will probably start to change if these interest rates start coming down," Chesbrough predicted. "We'll see consumers start moving into these larger vehicles."

A list of mass killings in the United States this year

By The Associated Press undefined

The latest mass killing in the U.S. was reported early Monday inside a home southeast of Seattle, where five people were found dead and a teenager was taken into custody.

It was the country's 32nd mass killing this year, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University.

The Washington state shooting appeared to involve members of a family at a home in the rural community of Fall City, King County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Mike Mellis said at a briefing. Deputies found the bodies of two adults and three young teenagers and took one teen into custody, Mellis said. Another teen who had been hurt was taken to a hospital. Officials didn't yet know how they were related.

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At least 140 people have died this year in mass killings, which are defined as cases in which four or more people die within a 24-hour period, not including the killer — the same definition used by the FBI.

Last year ended with 217 deaths from 42 mass killings in the U.S., making 2023 one of the deadliest years on record.

Here is a look at other U.S. mass killings this year:

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA: Sept. 21

Four people were killed and more than a dozen injured outside a nightclub in what police described as a targeted “hit” by multiple shooters. Police Chief Scott Thurmond said authorities believe the shooting targeted one of the people who was killed, possibly in a murder-for-hire. A vehicle pulled up and “multiple shooters” got out and began firing, then fled, he said.

WINDER, GEORGIA: Sept. 4

Two students and two teachers were killed at Apalachee High School northeast of Atlanta, and another teacher and eight other students were injured. A 14-year-old student has been charged as an adult with murder. Authorities also charged his father with involuntary manslaughter, second-degree murder and cruelty to children, saying he gave his son access to the rifle used in the shootings.

FOREST PARK, ILLINOIS: Sept. 2

Four people sleeping on a Chicago-area train were fatally shot on Labor Day morning. Police were called to a Chicago Transit Authority station just outside the city. A 30-year-old man was arrested. The victims were a woman and three men. A motive wasn’t immediately disclosed.

IRONDEQUOIT, NEW YORK.: Aug. 31

Four people were found dead after firefighters extinguished multiple blazes at a home in upstate New York, though authorities said they likely were killed by something else. Firefighters found the bodies of two adults, a 2-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl.

SYOSSET, NEW YORK: Aug. 25

Police said a man distraught that he was being forced to move from his late mother’s home shot and killed four family members before taking his own life. The shooting occurred three days after his mother’s funeral.

DALTON, GEORGIA: Aug. 24

Four males, ages 17 to 21, were shot to death at a park. A teenager was charged with murder in what police said was a robbery that turned violent. Multiple weapons were involved.

PLANT CITY, FLORIDA: July 31

Police said an intentional fire killed four people near Tampa. A 25-year-old man who lived in the house was charged with murder while engaged in arson. Three dogs also died.

NEW YORK CITY: July 19

A grandmother, a mother and her two children, ages 5 and 4, were fatally stabbed at an apartment in Brooklyn. A 24-year-old man who knew the four was arrested.

WEST BLOCTON, ALABAMA: July 18

A man was charged with killing his wife and four children, ages 2 to 9, in a rural community in Bibb County. The man didn’t say anything about a motive when taken into custody. “Even seasoned officers told me it is the worst thing they’ve ever seen,” Sheriff Jody Wade said.

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA: July 13

The victims were shot at a nightclub. One man died on a sidewalk while two women were killed inside the club. Another man was pronounced dead at a hospital. Investigators believed some shots were fired from outside the club.

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA: July 10

Police arrested a man in the shootings of his wife, two children and his wife’s parents in the San Francisco Bay area. The man’s father-in-law went to a neighbor for help and spoke to police before he died.

FLORENCE, KENTUCKY: July 6

A birthday party turned deadly in the wee hours when four people were shot. The 21-year-old suspected gunman crashed his car in a ditch during a police chase and was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot.

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NORTH LAS VEGAS, NEVADA: June 24

A 48-year-old man barred from possessing guns because of a criminal record killed himself after fatally shooting five people, police said. The violence began after the man had an argument with a former girlfriend. The victims at the apartment complex included a neighbor who tried to help and the neighbor's mother and grandmother.

FORDYCE, ARKANSAS: June 21

A 44-year-old man shot people in the parking lot before shooting more inside the Mad Butcher grocery store, killing four. Police said he did not appear to have a connection to the victims. The shooting occurred in the middle of the day in Fordyce, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) south of Little Rock.

HUDSON, FLORIDA: June 12

A landlord was accused of killing a family of four and burning their bodies. The two children were ages 6 and 5. The family was reported missing by relatives. Police say a backyard fire pit was smoldering when they searched the property in Pasco County.

MARION, IOWA: June 5

Police said a metal pipe was used to kill four people in an outbuilding of a rural home near Cedar Rapids.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA: April 29

Four officers were shot in the deadliest attack on U.S. law enforcement since 2016. They were killed when a task force of officers from different agencies tried to capture a 39-year-old man for illegally possessing a firearm and fleeing to elude in a different county.

YUKON, OKLAHOMA: April 22

A 10-year-old boy awoke to find his parents and three brothers dead in their home near Oklahoma City, all fatally shot by his father, police said. Authorities believe the 42-year-old man killed his wife and three sons — ages 18, 14 and 12 — then turned the gun on himself. Police said they did not immediately know why the fourth child was spared or have a motive for the shootings.

ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS: March 27

A frenzied stabbing and beating rampage left four people dead in a matter of minutes and at least seven people injured. Authorities said a 22-year-old man was charged. Police didn't immediately know his motive. Rockford's mayor said the victims were 63, 23, 49 and 15.

IRELAND, WEST VIRGINIA: March 11

The bodies of four people, ages 3 months to 90 years, were found inside the remains of a burning home. A fifth person with an apparent gunshot wound was discovered dead behind a chicken coop nearby, authorities said. A 45-year-old male suspect was found dead by suicide about 110 miles (180 kilometers) away, parked in a vehicle outside his relatives' home. Authorities did not immediately share details about a motive.

HONOLULU, HAWAII: March 10

Authorities said a woman and three children ages 10, 12 and 17 were fatally stabbed in a Manoa home. The woman's husband was also found dead. Police said a preliminary investigation shows the husband fatally stabbed his wife and children. Authorities did not immediately share a motive. Police said the five deaths mark the state's worst mass killing since 1999. They said there was no history of domestic calls to the residence.

KING CITY, CALIFORNIA: March 3

Police said three men with dark masks got out of a silver Kia and opened fire at an outdoor party in central California, killing three men and a woman and wounding seven others. The shooting happened on a street with modest homes facing a commercial district in King City, close to Pinnacles National Park.

FERGUSON, MISSOURI: Feb. 19

Authorities said a 39-year-old woman intentionally set a fire at home to kill herself and her four children, ages 2, 5, 9 and 9. Investigators believe the mother set fire to a mattress, and left a note saying she intended to kill herself and her children, police said. Responding firefighters found the home engulfed in flames. Neighbors tried to save the family, but the fire was too intense.

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BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA: Feb. 16

Officials said four men were killed in a drive-by shooting. Dozens of shots were fired outside a Birmingham home, police said. People were standing outside a house as they got their cars washed when someone drove by and opened fire. No arrests were immediately reported.

HUNTINGTON PARK, CALIFORNIA: Feb. 11

Shootings over several hours left four people dead: a man in Bell, a man in a Los Angeles shopping center parking lot, a 14-year-old boy in Cudahy, and a homeless man in Huntington Park, authorities said. At least one other juvenile was wounded. Two suspected gang members were arrested in connection with the shootings, authorities said.

EAST LANSDOWNE, PENNSYLVANIA: Feb. 7

Six sets of human remains were recovered from the ashes of a fire that destroyed a home near Philadelphia, according to the county district attorney's office. Authorities suspect those who died — including three children — were killed by a 43-year-old male relative who also died after shooting and wounding two police officers, the office said. A motive was not immediately identified.

EL MIRAGE, CALIFORNIA: Jan. 23

Authorities found the bodies of six men in the Mojave Desert outside the sparsely populated community of El Mirage after someone called 911 and said he had been shot, according to sheriff's officials. The men were likely shot to death in a dispute over marijuana, authorities said. The bodies were found about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northeast of Los Angeles in an area known for illegal cannabis operations. Five men were arrested and charged with murder.

JOLIET, ILLINOIS: Jan. 21

Authorities said a 23-year-old man shot eight people — including seven of his relatives — and injuring a ninth person in a Chicago suburb. He fatally shot himself later during a confrontation with law enforcement in Texas. Authorities believe he was trying to reach Mexico. Police said the victims included his mother, siblings, aunt, uncle and two men he might not have known. They were found in two homes, outside an apartment building and on a residential street.

TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS: Jan. 21

A 63-year-old man in suburban Chicago killed his wife and three adult daughters a domestic-related shooting, police said. The man allegedly shot the four family members — ages 53, 24 and two 25-year-old twins — after an argument at their home. He was charged with four counts of first-degree murder.

RICHMOND, TEXAS: Jan. 13

A 46-year-old man fatally shot his estranged wife and three other relatives, including his 8-year-old niece, at a home in suburban Houston before killing himself, authorities said. Authorities said the man had told his estranged wife that he wanted to reunite but she refused. In addition to killing his niece and estranged wife, he also killed her brother and sister, ages 43 and 46.

REEDLEY, CALIFORNIA: Jan. 6

A 17-year-old boy was charged with killing four members of a neighboring family in central California. He lived next door to the victims — ages 81, 61, 44 and 43 — in Reedley, a small town near Fresno. Three bodies were found in their backyard, including one buried in a shallow grave, while another was found in the detached garage of the teenager's home, police said.

Cuba fights to come back from a nationwide blackout, then a storm that killed six

By ANDREA RODRIGUEZ and MILEXSY DURAN Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A small town in far eastern Cuba was recovering Tuesday from flooding that killed at least six people after Hurricane Oscar crossed the island's eastern coast as a tropical storm with winds and heavy rain.

Cuba's capital was partially illuminated Monday night after a large-scale blackout generated a handful

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of protests and a stern government warning that any unrest would be punished.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel said on state television that rescue and recovery work continued in the town of San Antonio del Sur and officials had yet to enter some flooded areas.

"The country has completely halted," said homemaker Mayde Quiñones, 55, who cares for her mother-in-law, who is in her 80s. "This hurts everyone, but the elderly most of all."

The Cuban government has a low tolerance for civil disobedience and Díaz-Canel warned on national television Sunday that "we're not going to allow any vandalism, or let anyone disturb people's tranquility."

The prolonged nationwide blackout that followed a massive outage Thursday night was part of countrywide energy problems that led to the largest protests in Cuba in almost 30 years, in July 2021. Those were followed by smaller local protests in October 2022 and March 2024.

All are part of a deep economic crisis that has prompted the exodus of more than half a million Cubans to the U.S., with thousands more heading to Europe.

The Cuban government and its allies blame the United States' 62-year-old trade embargo on the island for its economic problems but White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Monday that the Cuban government's "long-term mismanagement of its economic policy and resources has certainly increased the hardship of people in Cuba."

Power remains relatively cheap but increasingly unavailable. The Cuban government on state television Monday night said that it's producing 1300 megawatts when peak demand can hit 3 gigawatts. Authorities said by Monday afternoon that about 80 percent of Havana had intermittent power but people remained fearful.

"We have the fridge full of food and we're scared," said small-business owner Juan Estrada, 53, whose central Havana business hasn't had consistent power since Friday morning.

Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy said in a news conference he hoped that more reliable electricity would be restored by Tuesday morning but classes remained closed through at least Thursday.

He said that Oscar would bring "an additional inconvenience" to Cuba's recovery since it would affect key Cuban power plants, such as Felton in the city of Holguín, and Renté in Santiago de Cuba.

Many of Havana's 2 million people resorted to cooking with improvised wood stoves on the streets before their food went bad in refrigerators. People lined up to buy subsidized food and few gas stations were open.

The failure of the Antonio Guiteras plant on Friday was the latest problem with energy distribution in a country where electricity has been restricted and rotated among different regions at different times.

The blackout was considered to be Cuba's worst since Hurricane Ian hit the island as a Category 3 storm in 2022 and damaged power installations. It took days for the government to fix them.

Local authorities initially said the outage stemmed from increased demand from small- and medium-sized companies and residential air conditioners. Later, the blackout got worse because of breakdowns in old thermoelectric plants that haven't been properly maintained, and the lack of fuel to operate some facilities.

AP Decision Notes: What to expect in Michigan on Election Day

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michigan may play a decisive role in a presidential election for the third consecutive time as its voters decide competitive races that could tip the balance of power in both chambers of Congress as well as the state House of Representatives.

The state was one of three presidential battlegrounds, along with Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, that went narrowly for Republican Donald Trump in 2016 after almost 30 years of supporting Democrats for president. Four years later, Democrat Joe Biden won all three states back for Democrats, with a margin in Michigan of about 154,000 votes out of more than 5.5 million votes cast.

Trump and Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris have campaigned heavily in pursuit of Michigan's 15 electoral votes since becoming their parties' nominees, with a focus on vote-rich Detroit and its suburbs and Kent County in the west, home of Grand Rapids and a key swing area of the state.

In the U.S. Senate, Democratic U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin and Republican Mike Rogers face off to replace

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Democratic incumbent Sen. Debbie Stabenow, whose decision to retire after five terms has turned what was once a safe seat for Democrats into a pick-up opportunity for Republicans. Rogers, the former House Intelligence Committee chairman, was recruited out of retirement to enter the race, giving Michigan Republicans a chance to end their 24-year drought in races for U.S. Senate.

Slotkin has kept her Lansing-area swing district in Democratic hands since her first election in 2018. Running to replace her in the 7th Congressional District are Democrat Curtis Hertel and Republican Tom Barrett, both former state senators. Voters in the 7th District narrowly backed Trump in 2016 and Biden in 2020. In the 8th District, which includes Flint and Saginaw, Democrat Kristen McDonald Rivet and Republican Paul Junge are running to replace Democratic U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, who is not seeking a seventh term. McDonald Rivet is a state senator, while Junge is a former prosecutor and local news anchor who lost to Kildee in 2022.

In the state Legislature, Democrats are defending the narrow state House majority they won in 2022 and reclaimed in April after winning special elections to fill a pair of vacancies. All 110 state House seats are up for election this year. The state legislative campaign organizations for both national parties have listed the Michigan state House as one of its top priorities for November. Democrats also hold a small majority in the state Senate, but those seats will not be up for election until 2026.

Here's a look at what to expect in the 2024 election in Michigan:

Election Day

Nov. 5.

Poll closing time

8 p.m. & 9 p.m. ET. Michigan covers two time zones, so most of the state will start reporting results while some voters in the Upper Peninsula are casting ballots until 9 p.m. ET.

Presidential electoral votes

15 awarded to statewide winner.

Key races and candidates

President: Harris (D) vs. Trump (R) vs. Chase Oliver (Libertarian) vs. Jill Stein (Green) vs. Randall Terry (U.S. Taxpayers Party) v. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (Natural Law Party) vs. Joseph Kishore vs. Cornel West.

U.S. Senate: Elissa Slotkin (D) vs. Mike Rogers (R) and four others.

7th Congressional District: Curtis Hertel (D) vs. Tom Barrett (R) and one other.

8th Congressional District: Kristen McDonald Rivet (D) vs. Paul Junge (R) and four others.

Other races of interest

U.S. House, state Supreme Court, state House.

Decision Notes

A new law gives local elections officials more time to process and tabulate absentee mail ballots, which should help alleviate the logjam that slowed ballot counting in the 2020 presidential election.

Cities and towns with at least 5,000 people may begin processing and tabulating ballots up to eight days before Election Day, while smaller jurisdictions may begin the morning before Election Day.

In 2020, more than 3.1 million voters cast their ballots by mail, about 56% of all ballots cast. State law at the time prevented election workers from opening the envelopes and preparing ballots for the count until the night before Election Day. Trump took an early lead in the vote count on election night, but that lead began to erode overnight and early Wednesday morning and Biden took the lead later that afternoon.

The law change may result in a speedier release of mail voting totals and may mitigate the so-called "red mirage" that Trump falsely claimed was evidence of voter fraud in Michigan and in a handful of other key states.

Some of the key counties to watch in statewide Michigan elections are Wayne (home to Detroit), Oakland, Macomb, Kent (home to Grand Rapids), Genesee (home to Flint) and Washtenaw (home to Ann Arbor).

The Associated Press does not make projections and will declare a winner only when it has determined there is no scenario that would allow the trailing candidates to close the gap. If a race has not been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, such as candidate concessions or declara-

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tions of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear that it has not yet declared a winner and explain why.

Recounts are automatic in statewide races in Michigan if the margin between the top two candidates is 2,000 votes or fewer. Candidates may request and pay for a recount regardless of the vote margin, and the state covers the cost if the recount changes the outcome. State party chairs may request recounts for state legislative races if the margin is fewer than 500 votes in state Senate races and fewer than 200 votes in state House races. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is eligible for a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome. A new recount law signed by Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in July will not take effect until after the 2024 presidential election.

Although polls in most of the state close at 8 p.m. ET, the AP will not call a winner before the last polls have closed at 9 p.m. ET. In the 2022 gubernatorial election, the AP had tabulated about 8% of the total vote by the time that the last polls closed in the state.

Past presidential results

2020: Biden (D) 51%, Trump (R) 48%, AP race call: Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2020, 5:58 p.m. ET.

Voter registration and turnout

Registered voters: 8,437,177 (as of Oct. 17, 2024).

Voter turnout in 2020 presidential election: 68% of registered voters.

Pre-Election Day voting

Votes cast before Election Day 2020: about 59% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2022: about 42% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2024: See AP Advance Vote tracker.

How long does vote-counting take?

First votes reported, Nov. 2020: 8:08 p.m. ET.

By midnight ET: about 45% of total votes cast were reported.

New campus protest rules spur an outcry from college faculty

By ANNIE MA AP Education Writer

Dissent is thriving this fall at American colleges, and not just among student activists. With student protests limited by new restrictions, faculty have taken up the cause.

To faculty, new protest rules threaten freedom of speech — and the freedom to think, both central to university life. This semester, some of the most visible demonstrations have involved professors speaking up for the right to protest itself.

Last spring, pro-Palestinian tent encampments crowded schools and disrupted commencement plans, drawing accusations of antisemitism and prompting new limits.

At Indiana University, an “expressive activity policy” rolled out in August prohibits protests after 11 p.m., bans camping on campus, and requires pre-approval for signs. In defiance, each Sunday a group of faculty members, students and community members gather on campus for candlelight vigils that extend past the 11 p.m. deadline.

Russ Skiba, a professor emeritus who has attended the vigils, said the new restrictions are part of a larger movement to limit academic freedom on campuses.

In Indiana, the Republican governor in March signed a law increasing state oversight of public universities. The law, sponsored by a lawmaker who said colleges suffer from “monolithic thinking,” subjects faculty to post-tenure reviews over whether they are fostering diversity of thought and keeping their political views out of the classroom. Skiba and other Indiana professors widely opposed the bill, which they criticized as vague and subject to interpretation.

“Universities are bastions of free speech, but when you have a movement that is anti-democratic, one of the places that is most attacked is freedom of speech,” Skiba said.

Faculty members at colleges elsewhere around the country have pushed back on the new rules with protests, vigils and demands for explanation.

A group of Harvard University professors held a “study-in” at a campus library on Oct. 16 in support of

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pro-Palestinian students who were temporarily banned from the library for holding a similar demonstration. In September, a group representing University of California faculty filed a complaint alleging the system sought to chill their academic freedom and keep from teaching about the Israel-Hamas war "in a way that does not align with the University's own position."

To some professors, the protest restrictions are also a labor issue.

Colleges have been granting tenure to fewer professors, and facing pressure in some areas to do away with it altogether. Legislatures in several states have taken an interest in how topics around race, gender and history are taught. Protest guidelines handed down by administrators are another way the faculty's say in university affairs is being diminished, some professors say.

"We have to, as faculty, organize and demand the sort of shared governance that gives us a right to review and challenge these policies," said Todd Wolfson, a journalism and media studies professor at Rutgers University and the president of the American Association of University Professors. "They're not made by people coming out of the academic arm of our institutions."

Tensions on campuses nationwide have been high since the war began over a year ago, when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Israel's offensive has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters.

Colleges have been under tremendous pressure, including from Republicans in Congress, to protect students from discrimination while upholding free speech. Demonstrations last spring blocked foot traffic in parts of some campuses and included instances of antisemitic imagery and rhetoric. Some Jewish faculty members and students have said the protests made them feel unsafe.

In a message announcing new guidelines at the start of the semester, Northwestern University President Michael Schill said it needs to make sure everyone on campus feels safe and supported.

"Activities that lead to intimidation and impede an environment where dialogue and education can flourish cannot occur again," he said.

Shirin Vossoughi, a Northwestern professor, was among 52 faculty members who signed an open letter opposing the school's new demonstration policy as caving to political pressure to silence certain types of activism. She said the rules crack down not just on free speech, but pro-Palestinian voices in particular.

During the protests last spring, some faculty members joined ranks with demonstrators. Others acted as mediators for students they see as under their care and protection. Faculty voted no confidence against leaders of schools including Columbia University, the University of Massachusetts, Brandeis University, and Cal Poly Humboldt over their handling of the protests.

At Northwestern University, Steven Thrasher was among three faculty members charged by university police for obstructing law enforcement during last spring's protests. He was suspended and removed from teaching this fall while under investigation by the university.

"The way that I saw my role was as a protector of the students' safety and of their ability to express themselves," Thrasher said this fall. "I knew as soon as I started seeing violence happening towards students that I would do what I could."

While schools say the rules are meant to limit disruptions, faculty members say they have the effect of neutralizing dissent.

"The whole point of a protest is to be seen and heard," said Michael Thaddeus, a mathematics professor at Columbia University, where new rules require advance notice and prevent demonstrations that "substantially inhibit the primary purposes" of an area of campus. "Free speech rights aren't served if you can only speak into the void and not have anybody hear you, and that includes the right to be seen and heard by people who don't like what you have to say."

Professors also drew a connection to the growing percentage of lecturers, adjuncts and professors who do not have tenure protections. Professors increasingly see the issue of speech and academic freedom as a labor issue as a result of the crackdowns, said Risa Lieberwitz, AAUP's general counsel.

"We're seeing unionization growing and increasing," she said. "I think to some extent it's because it's so important to organize, to claim democratic rights."

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Wolfson said professors must stand up for students' rights to demonstrate and speak freely.

"Their freedom of speech rights are the lifeblood of the university," Wolfson said. "We cannot have a university based on critical thinking and exploring questions if we're going to clamp down on students' rights to protest something they think is a massive problem, and if they see a way for the university to actually engage in it productively."

AP Decision Notes: What to expect in Georgia on Election Day

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Georgia voters are once again expected to play a pivotal role in the presidential election on Nov. 5, even as many are focusing on recovering and rebuilding from the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene.

Both Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican former President Donald Trump have visited Georgia in recent weeks to survey the damage and meet with affected residents and local officials. The exact magnitude of Helene's impact on the election, including on the state's voting infrastructure, is difficult to assess and won't likely be fully understood until after Election Day.

Georgia nonetheless remains one of the top prizes in the presidential election. The state played a key role in 2020, when Joe Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate to carry the state since Bill Clinton in 1992. Biden defeated Trump in Georgia by less than a quarter of a percentage point, a margin of 11,779 votes.

Trump's efforts to overturn those results are at the heart of an ongoing criminal case in Fulton County, although it's currently on hold while the former president's legal team pursues a pre-trial appeal to have District Attorney Fani Willis removed from the case and the indictment tossed. The Georgia Court of Appeals will hear those arguments after the election. Willis is seeking another term as Fulton County's top prosecutor and will appear on the November ballot, facing Republican attorney Courtney Kramer.

Georgia's governor and U.S. senators are not up for election this year, while all 14 U.S. House seats are not considered competitive. In the state Legislature, where Republicans control both chambers, all 56 state Senate and 180 state House seats are up for election. Democrats hope to chip away at the Republican majorities but have not listed the Georgia Legislature as a top target in November, as they have in a handful of other states.

Here's a look at what to expect in the 2024 election in Georgia:

Election Day

Nov. 5.

Poll closing time

7 p.m. ET.

Presidential electoral votes

16 awarded to statewide winner.

Key races and candidates

President: Harris (D) vs. Trump (R) vs. Chase Oliver (Libertarian) vs. Jill Stein (Green).

Other races of interest

U.S. House, Atlanta Judicial Circuit District Attorney, state Senate, state House and ballot measures.

Decision Notes

Georgia state law allows county elections officials to begin tabulating mail ballots at 7 a.m. on Election Day. As a result, the first votes reported on election night will include much of these mail ballots as well as early in-person votes. Overall, these ballots have tended to favor Democrats, ever since the issue of early and mail voting became highly politicized during the 2020 election. This suggests that the Democratic candidate in a competitive contest could take an early lead in the vote count in the initial vote reports after polls close, even though the race may tighten considerably as more votes are tabulated.

In the 2022 U.S. Senate race, for example, Democratic incumbent Raphael Warnock took a lead of about 40 percentage points over Republican Herschel Walker after the first batches of votes were released after

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polls closed, but the vote margin dipped to below 1 percentage point after about two hours and remained there for the rest of the count and through certification. Mail and early in-person votes accounted for about 64% of all ballots in that election.

In September, Georgia's State Election Board adopted a new rule requiring poll workers to hand count the number of paper ballots cast at their polling site. Critics worried the last-minute rule change could create chaos in local elections offices and significantly delay the vote-counting process. A Fulton County Superior Court judge blocked the rule in October.

In statewide elections, Republicans tend to perform best in the smaller, more rural counties in the northern, central and southeastern regions of the state, while Democrats post their best numbers in the population centers of Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Macon, Savannah and Athens.

In particular, the counties in the Atlanta area typically are vital to a statewide victory but for different reasons. Fulton and DeKalb are overwhelmingly Democratic, giving Biden 73% and 83% of the vote in 2020. Hillary Clinton also carried both counties overwhelmingly in 2016 but with 69% and 81% of the vote, respectively. She lost Georgia to Trump.

Cobb and Gwinnett counties are more competitive but have both swung Democratic in recent elections. Barack Obama lost both counties in both of his campaigns, while Clinton narrowly carried the two with 49% and 51% of the vote, respectively. Biden did considerably better in 2020, winning 56% and 59% of the vote in the two counties. Trump doesn't need to win the counties to win the state, as long as he can hold Harris to Clinton 2016 levels rather than to Biden 2020 levels.

The Associated Press doesn't make projections and will declare a winner only when it has determined there is no scenario that would allow the trailing candidates to close the gap. If a race hasn't been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, like candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear it hasn't declared a winner and explain why.

There is no automatic recount provision in Georgia, but a losing candidate may request a recount if the margin is less than or equal to 0.5% of the total vote. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is eligible for a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Past presidential results

2020: Biden (D) 49.5%, Trump (R) 49.3%, AP race call: Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020, 7:58 p.m. ET.

Voter registration and turnout

Registered voters: 8,243,104 (as of Oct. 17, 2024).

Voter turnout in 2020 presidential election: 65% of registered voters.

Pre-Election Day voting

Votes cast before Election Day 2020: about 80% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2022: about 64% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2024: See AP Advance Vote tracker.

How long does vote-counting take?

First votes reported, Nov. 3, 2020: 7:20 p.m. ET.

By midnight ET: about 77% of total votes cast were reported.

Associated Press writers Rebecca Reynolds, Adam Yeomans and Maya Sweedler contributed to this report.

How Project 2025's rightward vision became a flashpoint in this year's election

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the past year, Project 2025 has endured as a persistent force in the presidential election, its far-right proposals deployed by Democrats as shorthand for what Donald Trump would potentially do with a second term at the White House.

Even though the former president's campaign has vigorously distanced itself from Project 2025 — Trump himself declared he knows "nothing" about it — the sweeping Heritage Foundation's proposal to gut the

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federal workforce and dismantle federal agencies aligns closely with his vision. Project 2025's architects come from the ranks of Trump's administration and top Heritage officials have briefed Trump's team about it.

It's rare for a complex 900-page policy book to figure so dominantly in a political campaign. But from its early start at a think tank, to its viral spread on social media, the rise and fall and potential rise again of Project 2025 shows the unexpected staying power of policy to light up an election year and threaten not only Trump atop the ticket but down-ballot Republicans in races for Congress.

Through it all, Project 2025 has not gone away. It exists not only as a policy blueprint for the next administration, but as a database of some 20,000 job-seekers who could staff a Trump White House and administration and a still unreleased "180-day playbook" of actions a new president could employ on Day One after the inauguration on Jan. 20, 2025.

The Heritage Foundation's president, Kevin Roberts, who recently took the helm of the project, appears to relish the fight, moving full steam ahead.

"Rest assured we will not give up," Roberts wrote in an email to supporters this summer. "We will not back down."

How Project 2025 came to be

When Project 2025 debuted in April 2023, it promised to "dismantle the administrative state" by putting forward the personnel and the policies that could serve as a roadmap for the next conservative president.

The former Trump administration officials working on the project said they wanted to avoid the mistakes of the first Trump White House by ensuring the next Republican president would be ready with personnel and policies to enact his campaign priorities.

"There is an impetus to really hit the ground running," said Paul Dans, director of the 2025 Presidential Transition Project, in a 2023 Associated Press interview.

Centered at the Heritage Foundation, the venerable conservative think tank in Washington, D.C., the concept for the book touched back to an earlier version, its Reagan-era "Mandate for Leadership" that was said to be so popular at the White House that copies were put on work desks to guide the new presidency.

At least 100 conservative groups, many with alumni from the Trump administration, came together to craft the proposals for a vast restructuring of the federal government — from installing more political appointees at the Justice Department to reassigning government workers with law enforcement backgrounds to handle illegal immigration to dismantling the Department of Education.

One of the core proposals would make it easier to staff the government with Trump loyalists by reclassifying some 50,000 workers into jobs where they can be fired — a revival of the so-called Schedule F policy that Trump tried to put in place before leaving office. The idea is now central to the conservative vision of dismantling the "deep state" bureaucracy that they blame for blocking Trump priorities.

The rollout of Project 2025 on the foundation's 50th anniversary was also a debut of sorts for Roberts; he had previously been seen as an ally to Trump rival Ron DeSantis, who keynoted the gala event at the start of the presidential primary season.

"The conservative movement is coming together to prepare for the next conservative administration," Roberts said in the announcement. Heritage, he said, sought "to ensure that the next president has the right policy and personnel necessary to dismantle the administrative state."

When Project 2025 became a viral sensation

President Joe Biden's campaign had warned against Project 2025 early on, in social media posts ahead of his State of the Union address in April, and House Democrats launched a Project 2025 Task Force to amplify their concerns in June. Days later, comedian John Oliver mocked it on his HBO show.

But it wasn't until Biden's dismal debate performance with Trump in June that Project 2025 had its viral moment.

It wasn't so much what was said at the presidential debate as what went unsaid: Biden failed to really even mention Project 2025, crushing the expectations of allies who expected more of a knock-out punch.

That weekend, a single thread on X about Project 2025 took off, amassing nearly 20 million views, according to the Democratic campaign. Actress Taraji P. Henson, who had spoken to Vice President Kamala

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Harris in a segment for the BET Awards show, warned prime-time viewers: "The Project 2025 plan is not a game. Look it up!" And countless young TikTok creators speaking directly into their cameras explained the threat they believed Project 2025 posed to their civil rights, reproductive rights and other rights in videos that went viral.

"This is really a case of the grassroots revolting," said Joe Radosевич at the Center for American Progress. "They saw what was being offered as the contours of the race and completely rejected it."

Especially in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's Dobbs ruling that ended the constitutional protections for abortion, Democrats and their allies wanted to make the case showing how the presidential election would impact people's lives in the future, rather than simply giving voters a choice between the personalities.

People wanted a debate about policies, Radosевич said, not an election "purely on vibes."

By the end of June, Google searches for "Project 2025" surpassed searches for Taylor Swift and the NFL, the Harris campaign said.

And by the time a giant-size replica of the Project 2025 book was hauled on stage for nightly ridicule at the Democratic National Convention, it wasn't just celebrities and liberal convention-goers who were mocking it. Conservatives began blaming Heritage and Project 2025 for hurting Trump's election chances.

Project 2025 gets a tongue-lashing from Trump

Trump's campaign never embraced Project 2025 and actively shunned it, despite the proximity of people and policies familiar to the former president's time in the White House.

Other conservative groups with close ties to Trump are also preparing for a second term in the White House. Trump's campaign team had repeatedly warned Heritage to tone it down and not portray Project 2025 as part of Trump's campaign.

But Roberts appeared undeterred, even as he came under fire in July for suggesting, after the Supreme Court ruling granting the president broad immunity from prosecution over the Jan. 6 insurrection, that the country was in the midst of a "second American Revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be."

Trump spoke up forcefully against Project 2025 days later.

"I know nothing about Project 2025," Trump posted on his own social media account. "I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them."

Trump at the time was rolling out his own policy platform ahead of the Republican National Convention, drafted partly by one of his former administration officials, the conservative leader Russ Vought, who also contributed to Project 2025 and its 180-day playbook.

Heritage parted ways with Dans, the chief architect of Project 2025, who resigned at the end of the month, a move that apparently pleased Trump's team.

"Reports of Project 2025's demise would be greatly welcomed and should serve as notice to anyone or any group trying to misrepresent their influence with President Trump and his campaign — it will not end well for you," said Susie Wiles and Chris LaCivita, the Trump campaign managers, in a joint statement.

The future of Project 2025

As the races for control of Congress tighten to the point where a single seat could determine which party controls the House or Senate, Project 2025 is being used by Democratic-aligned outside groups to portray Republicans as linked to its hardline proposals.

The House Accountability Project has created micro-websites for more than a dozen House Republicans in some of the most contested seats, tying their past votes on abortion, government funding and other issues to Project 2025 proposals.

"The House GOP is actually pushing policies that are in Project 2025 as we speak," said Danny Turkel, spokesman for the House Accountability War Room. "They're already taking these policies into the Capitol."

The House Republican campaign committee argues its candidates have nothing to do with Project 2025, and the attacks are concocted by Democrats to shift attention from their own border and inflation policies.

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"They fabricated a false attack based on something House Republicans had never even read," said Will Reinert, press secretary for the National Republican Congressional Committee.

He called the attacks a "desperate lie" as the House Democrats "see their chances of regaining the majority dwindling."

AP Decision Notes: What to expect in Wisconsin on Election Day

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wisconsin is no stranger to close presidential elections. The margin of victory was less than a percentage point in the state's 2020, 2016, 2004 and 2000 elections. So it might be again this Election Day.

Both Republican former President Donald Trump and Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris are competing hard for the 10 electoral votes at stake in Wisconsin, making frequent stops in the Badger State — including several in the vote-rich Milwaukee, Madison and Green Bay areas.

Wisconsin was one of three "blue wall" states (Michigan and Pennsylvania are the others) that went narrowly for Trump in 2016 after almost 30 years of voting for Democratic presidential candidates. Four years later, Democrat Joe Biden won all three states back for Democrats with a margin in Wisconsin of about 20,000 votes out of nearly 3.3 million votes cast.

In the state's U.S. Senate race, Democratic incumbent Tammy Baldwin seeks a third term against Republican Eric Hovde. Baldwin is one of five vulnerable Senate Democrats defending a seat against a well-funded, Trump-backed challenger in a campaign cycle when a defeat for even one would likely cost the party control of the chamber. Both the Baldwin and Hovde campaigns and their allies have blanketed the state with more than \$160 million in advertising, according to data from the campaign ad tracking firm AdImpact.

In the state Legislature, Democrats hope that new district maps will help them chip away at the lopsided majorities Republicans have enjoyed in both chambers for more than a decade. Almost half of Wisconsin's 33 state Senate seats and all 99 state Assembly seats are up for election this year. In the state Assembly, Democrats have their most competitive campaign cycle in years, thanks in large part to the newly redrawn districts and the retirements they helped bring about.

Wisconsin voters will also consider a statewide ballot measure that would amend the state constitution to specifically ban noncitizens from voting in state elections. Noncitizens are already barred from participating in federal elections nationwide, and no state permits them to vote in state elections. However, some municipalities in a handful of states allow noncitizens to vote in local elections. The issue has prompted efforts by Republicans in Congress and several states to ban the practice entirely.

Here's a look at what to expect in the 2024 election in Wisconsin:

Election Day

Nov. 5.

Poll closing time

9 p.m. ET.

Presidential electoral votes

10 awarded to statewide winner.

Key races and candidates

President: Harris (D) vs. Trump (R) vs. Randall Terry (Constitution) vs. Chase Oliver (Libertarian) vs. Jill Stein (Green) vs. Claudia De la Cruz (Party for Socialism and Liberation) vs. Cornel West (Justice for All) vs. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (We the People).

U.S. Senate: Baldwin (D) vs. Hovde (R) and two others.

Ballot measures: Question 1 (require citizenship to vote).

Other races of interest

U.S. House, state Senate and state Assembly.

Decision Notes

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In Wisconsin, the first vote results reported on election night tend to be a mix of ballots cast on Election Day and in advance. In the April presidential primaries, more than a third of counties reported most or all of their vote results in their first vote report of the night — including in-person Election Day votes as well as mail-in and early votes.

But larger counties, including the Democratic strongholds of Milwaukee and Dane, took much longer. Their first vote update of the night included only a small share of the total votes cast. In a close race, that likely means waiting for final results in both places to know who has won the state.

In 2016, Democrat Hillary Clinton lost to Trump despite winning Milwaukee County with 66% of the vote; Dane County, the home of Madison, with 70%; and LaCrosse County with 51%. Four years later, Biden won Milwaukee with 69% of the vote, Dane with 76% and LaCrosse with 56%, eking out a narrow statewide victory.

Trump carried Brown County, the home of Green Bay, in 2016 and 2020 with about 52% of the vote, but Biden improved upon Clinton's showing there by about 4 percentage points on his way to a win.

Along with support in the more rural parts of the state, Trump will likely need to post big numbers in the "WOW" counties of Waukesha, Ozaukee and Washington in suburban Milwaukee to counter the heavy Democratic support Harris will likely claim in Milwaukee and Dane.

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Recounts are not automatic in Wisconsin, but candidates may request and pay for one if the vote margin is less than a percentage point. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is eligible for a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Past presidential results

2020: Biden (D) 50%, Trump (R) 49%, AP race call: Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2020, 2:16 p.m. ET.

Voter registration and turnout

Registered voters: 3,503,706 (as of Sep. 1, 2024).

Voter turnout in Nov. 2020: 84% of registered voters.

Pre-Election Day voting

Votes cast before Election Day 2020: about 61% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2022: about 29% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2024: See AP Advance Vote tracker.

How long does vote-counting take?

First votes reported, Nov. 3, 2020: 9:07 p.m. ET.

By midnight ET: about 70% of total votes cast were reported.

AP Decision Notes: What to expect in Pennsylvania on Election Day

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pennsylvania voters are almost sure to play a pivotal role in the Nov. 5 general election, with control of the White House and both chambers of Congress and the state Legislature in the balance.

With its 19 electoral votes, the commonwealth is the largest prize among the battleground states and an important piece of both campaigns' path to victory. Both Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican former President Donald Trump have made frequent visits to the state since becoming their parties' nominees, including for their sole debate in Philadelphia in September.

Pennsylvania was one of three "blue wall" swing states that went narrowly for Trump in 2016 after almost 30 years of voting for Democratic presidential candidates; the others were Michigan and Wisconsin. Four years later, Democrat Joe Biden won all three states back for Democrats with a margin in Pennsylvania of about 80,000 votes out of more than 6.9 million votes cast. The states remain key electoral prizes this year.

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In the U.S. Senate race, Democratic incumbent Bob Casey seeks a fourth term against Republican Dave McCormick. Casey, the son and namesake of a former two-term governor, has one of the most recognizable names in state politics but this year he faces what has shaped up to be the toughest race of his Senate career. The seat is critical to Democratic hopes of keeping control of the narrowly divided chamber. McCormick, a former hedge fund CEO and Army combat veteran, ran for Pennsylvania's other U.S. Senate seat in 2022 but lost the GOP nomination to Mehmet Oz, who went on to lose to Democrat John Fetterman.

Further down the ballot, a handful of competitive races could play a role in determining control of the U.S. House. In the 7th Congressional District, Democratic U.S. Rep. Susan Wild seeks a fourth full term against Republican Ryan Mackenzie. In the neighboring 8th Congressional District, Democratic U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright seeks a seventh term against Republican Robert Bresnahan. The 7th District in eastern Pennsylvania narrowly went for Biden in 2020, while voters in the 8th District, which includes Biden's hometown of Scranton, preferred Trump.

In the race to control the state Legislature, Democrats are defending the razor-thin state House majority they won in 2022 for the first time in 12 years and have since successfully defended in several special elections. All 203 state House seats and half the 50 state Senate seats are up for election this year. Republicans have a majority in the state Senate.

Here's a look at what to expect in the 2024 election in Pennsylvania:

Election Day

Nov. 5.

Poll closing time

8 p.m. ET.

Presidential electoral votes

19 awarded to statewide winner.

Key races and candidates

President: Harris (D) vs. Trump (R) vs. Chase Oliver (Libertarian) vs. Jill Stein (Green).

U.S. Senate: Casey (D) vs. McCormick (R) and three others.

7th Congressional District: Wild (D) vs. Mackenzie (D).

8th Congressional District: Cartwright (D) vs. Bresnahan (R).

Other races of interest

U.S. House, Attorney General, Auditor General, Treasurer, state Senate and state House.

Decision Notes

Several factors contribute to a relatively slow vote counting process in Pennsylvania. Under Pennsylvania law, elections officials must wait until 7 a.m. ET on Election Day before they can begin to process ballots cast by mail and prepare them to be counted. The actual tabulation of mail ballots cannot begin until after polls have closed. Because of the overall volume of mail ballots — they comprised almost a quarter of the total vote in the 2022 midterm elections — and the varying amounts of time it takes the state's 67 counties to tally these votes, determining a winner in a highly competitive race could take several days, as it did in the 2020 presidential election.

The first vote results reported after polls close are expected to come from mail ballots. Results from later in the night are expected to be a mix of mail votes and votes cast in person on Election Day. Once the vote counting stretches into the day after Election Day and beyond, the vote results are once again expected to come mostly from mail ballots.

Overall, votes cast by mail have tended to favor Democrats, ever since the issue of early and mail voting became highly politicized during the 2020 election. This means the Democratic candidate in a competitive contest could take an early lead in the vote count in the initial vote reports after polls close, even though the race may tighten considerably as more votes are tabulated.

In 2020, Biden took an early, temporary lead after mail voting results began to be released shortly after polls closed at 8 p.m. ET. By about 10 p.m. ET, Trump took the lead as more results from Election Day voting were released. By early Wednesday morning, Trump led Biden by nearly 700,000 votes, but

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that lead would gradually shrink as more mail ballots were tabulated. Biden eventually retook the lead by Friday morning.

The suburban "collar counties" around Philadelphia are key battlegrounds and have been trending toward Democrats in recent years. In statewide elections, Republican candidates tend to win overwhelmingly in rural areas statewide, while Democrats rely on lopsided support in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Erie and Northampton counties on opposite sides of the state may also hold clues on election night. They are two of only 10 counties across all the presidential battlegrounds that voted for Trump in 2016 and flipped to Biden in 2020.

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In Pennsylvania, races with a vote margin of 0.5 percentage points or less are subject to an automatic recount. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is eligible for a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Past presidential results

2020: Biden (D) 50%, Trump (R) 49%, AP race call: Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020, 11:25 a.m. ET.

Voter registration and turnout

Registered voters: 9,036,833 (as of Oct. 14, 2024). About 44% Democrats, about 40% Republicans, about 12% unaffiliated.

Voter turnout in 2020 presidential election: 76% of registered voters.

Pre-Election Day voting

Votes cast before Election Day 2020: about 38% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2022: about 23% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2024: See AP Advance Vote tracker.

How long does vote-counting take?

First votes reported, Nov. 3, 2020: 8:09 p.m. ET.

By midnight ET: about 54% of total votes cast were reported.

AP Decision Notes: What to expect in Nevada on Election Day

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nevada is once again home to competitive races that could determine control of the White House and the U.S. Senate. It is also one of 10 states where voters will decide a high-profile ballot measure on abortion in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

Nevada has six electoral votes, making it the smallest prize of the seven presidential battleground states that Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican former President Donald Trump and their campaigns view as critical to winning the presidency. Both candidates have made multiple campaign stops in Nevada since becoming their parties' nominees over the summer.

In a race for a seat in the closely divided U.S. Senate, Democratic incumbent Jacky Rosenseeks a second term against Republican Sam Brown, a retired Army captain who ran unsuccessfully for the GOP nomination for the state's other U.S. Senate seat in 2022.

Voters will also decide ballot measures that would enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution, require voters to show photo identification in order to vote and adopt a nonpartisan, ranked-choice voting system in future elections.

Nevada has one of the nation's best track records as a presidential bellwether. The candidate who won the state has gone on to win the White House in 27 of the last 30 presidential elections. It voted for the losing candidate only in 1908, 1976 and 2016, when Democrat Hillary Clinton carried the state. Democrats have won Nevada in the last four presidential elections.

Election Day

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Nov. 5.

Poll closing time

10 p.m. ET.

Presidential electoral votes

6 awarded to statewide winner.

Key races and candidates

President: Harris (D) vs. Trump (R) vs. Chase Oliver (Libertarian) vs. Joel Skousen (Independent American Party) vs. "None of these candidates."

U.S. Senate: Rosen (D) vs. Brown (R) and two others plus "None of these candidates."

Ballot measures: Question 6 (Right to abortion), Question 3 (Top-five primary, ranked choice general election), Question 7 (Require photo ID to vote).

Other races on interest

U.S. House, state Senate, state Assembly, state Supreme Court and Washoe county commissioner.

Decision Notes

Nevada conducts its elections predominantly by mail. In 2021, the state adopted a law requiring mail-in ballots to be automatically sent to active voters, making permanent an emergency measure implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midterm elections the following year, about 80% of voters cast their ballots in-person before Election Day or by mail.

Mail ballots that are postmarked by Election Day will be counted if they are received by Nov. 9, four days after Election Day. With a large number of mail ballots potentially arriving after Election Day, the outcome of some highly competitive races might not be determined until these additional mail ballots are received and tabulated. State Republicans challenged this law, but a federal court dismissed the lawsuit in July. In recent elections, votes counted after Election Day have been heavily Democratic.

Although most ballots are cast by mail, voters have the option of voting in-person at a polling place on Election Day. The state does not release any vote results until the final voter in line has cast a ballot, which could be well after the time polls formally close.

In statewide elections, Democrats tend to carry only two of Nevada's 17 counties: Clark (home to Las Vegas) and Washoe (home to Reno). Whether they win depends on how big their margins are in those two counties. Clark County has by far the largest population in the state and is vital to Democratic electoral success. It comprised 69% of the total statewide vote in 2020.

In the 2022 midterm elections, the Republican candidates for U.S. Senate and governor both took an early lead when the first votes were reported after polls closed, but the two races tightened considerably and ultimately saw different outcomes as more mail ballots were tallied. Democratic U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto eventually overtook Republican Adam Laxalt for the lead four days after Election Day and ultimately prevailed when the results were certified. In the gubernatorial race, Republican Joe Lombardo kept his slim lead and defeated Democratic incumbent Steve Sisolak.

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Nevada does not have an automatic recount law, but candidates may request and pay for a recount within three days of the county or statewide canvass, regardless of the vote margin. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is subject to a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Past presidential results

2020: Biden (D) 50%, Trump (R) 48%, AP race call: Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020, 12:13 p.m. ET.

Voter registration and turnout

Registered voters: 2,379,571 (as of Sept. 1, 2024). About 30% Democrats, 28% Republicans.

Voter turnout in 2020 presidential election: 68% of registered voters.

Pre-Election Day voting

Votes cast before Election Day 2020: about 89% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2022: about 80% of the total vote.

Votes cast before Election Day 2024: See AP Advance Vote tracker.

How long does vote-counting take?

First votes reported, Nov. 2020: 11:41 p.m. ET.

By 6 a.m. ET on Nov. 4: about 79% of total votes cast were reported.

In battleground Georgia, some poor people see no reason to vote. That decision could sway election

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

MACON, Ga. (AP) — Sabrina Friday scanned the room at Mother's Nest, an organization in Macon that provides baby supplies, training, food and housing to mothers in need, and she asked how many planned to vote. Of the 30, mostly women, six raised their hands.

Friday, the group's executive director, said she tries to stress civic duty, an often difficult proposition given the circumstances of her clients.

"When a mom is in a hotel room and there's six or seven people in two beds and her kids are hungry and she just lost the car, she doesn't want to hear too much about elections," Friday said. "She wants to hear how you can help."

Macon is the largest city in Bibb County, where the majority of residents are Black and one in four of its population lives in poverty. When Joe Biden became president four years ago, he promised to tackle the pernicious gap in racial equity — and in few places is the stubbornness of that challenge as politically significant in this state that could swing the presidential election.

Located about 80 miles (130 kilometers) south of Atlanta, Bibb County is the kind of place where Vice President Kamala Harris would need to run up her margin in order to defeat Donald Trump in this year's election, a strategy that helped Biden win the state four years ago as he promised to lift up Black Americans. It won't be easy: Bibb County never recovered all the jobs lost during the pandemic, and Labor Department data show it had more jobs in 2019 under Trump than it does now.

Trump, the former president, sees himself as having an opportunity with Black voters, particularly men. But he and Harris have one thing in common: Each will have a difficult time persuading people to turn out who typically sit out elections. More than 47,000 people in Bibb County were eligible to vote in 2020 and didn't, a figure roughly four times Biden's margin of victory across the entire state. Eligible voters are defined as legal residents who are 18 or older, according to Census figures.

The Biden-Harris administration can claim to have addressed three of the four crises it pledged to fix. The pandemic largely receded three years ago, the economy has improved and there is a genuine commitment of several hundreds of billions of federal dollars to tackle climate change. But racial inequality — as measured by the Federal Reserve — has worsened.

At Mother's Nest, Linda Solomon, 58, said she and her daughter aren't voting "because nothing changes" no matter who sits in the White House. "Why you gonna vote and ain't nobody doing nothing?"

While Harris has excited Black voters in and around Atlanta, with its wealthier and better-educated electorate, interviews in Bibb County suggest voters living in far worse circumstances are not moved by the historic nature of her candidacy. Democrats won the county by a 2-1 margin in 2020, and Republicans are increasingly confident they can erode Democrats' historic advantage of winning roughly 90% of all Black votes.

Janiyah Thomas, Black media director for the Trump campaign, said in an email exchange that "Black voters in rural America hold the key to America's future, and President Trump is the only candidate who has proven he can deliver real results."

Thomas said Black unemployment hit historic lows during Trump's first term, although it ultimately hit

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a record low of 4.8% in April 2023 under Biden. But the Black unemployment rate is now at 5.6%, more than two percentage points higher than the unemployment rate for white workers and higher than the rate for Asian and Hispanic workers.

Thomas said get-out-the-vote efforts are focused on low-propensity voters, adding that they are using traditional canvassing methods as well as TikTok and outside groups. She estimated the efforts will reach 15 million doors across the battlegrounds.

The Harris campaign is relying on having staff on the ground. It has six people in its Macon office and has been canvassing across the region, including lower-income and rural areas. The campaign believes lower-income voters receive most of their news and information on mobile devices and can be reached by its \$200 million digital ad push.

While campaigning, Harris has focused on the middle class, and she has offered plans for small businesses and home buyers.

In places like Macon, that could prove a difficult sale. The clients at Mother's Nest are not business owners or homebuyers anytime soon, and even Harris' plan to take on grocery chains for price gouging doesn't resonate with a population living in food deserts.

The outlook of those patrons falls in line with other Black registered voters. They have an overwhelmingly positive view of Harris, but only about half of them believe the outcome of this presidential election will have "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of impact on them personally, according to a recent poll from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

But the more nonurban parts of Georgia are only part of the electoral puzzle. It's a dramatically different story in Atlanta and its vote-rich suburbs where enthusiasm runs high for both Harris and Trump, although often divided by race.

A viewing party of the presidential debate drew scores of well-to-do residents to Buckhead Art & Company in an affluent uptown neighborhood. Many of the dozens of attendees, including the owner and hostess, Karimah McFarlane, were part of the Howard University graduate network. The party had a panel discussion that urged attendees to focus their efforts on getting young Black men to vote. The first thing every guest encountered was the voter registration table, complete with information on Georgia's system and various deadlines.

McFarlane explained that Atlanta has attracted small business owners and others because of the business-friendly atmosphere. What can be less friendly is the voting system, with some newcomers particularly puzzled by how to vote absentee.

Across town, a voter registration drive at Spelman College targeted first-time voters. Hosted by the members of Harris' sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and their Alpha Phi Alpha brothers from Morehouse College, the event began drawing would-be registrants an hour before sign-ups started. At its peak, dozens of students crowded the tables set up outside the student union and bookstore. The organizations could not campaign for, or endorse Harris, but students spoke freely.

Caleb Cage, 21, a religion major at Morehouse, said he'd seen the excitement rise for the vice president "especially among people in my particular demographic, young people." Cage is voting absentee in his home state of Maryland.

He said he had heard about young Black men taking their support to Trump and his response was to remember what the vote means. "To reiterate the sentiments of our Morehouse brother, Sen. Raphael Warnock, a vote is a prayer for the future world you want to see. That's extremely important for young people."

But, even on a storied historically Black college campus, there was an awareness that the messages that are invigorating college students might not hit others. Elise Sampson, 20, a junior political science major at Spelman and member of the sorority co-sponsoring the registration drive, said economic disparities needed to be part of the discussions.

"It comes down to an accessibility issue," she said. "When people don't feel heard and represented, it is hard to want to participate in a political system that doesn't hear and represent you."

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Malcolm Patterson, a 21-year-old junior finance major at Morehouse from Marietta, Georgia, was at the event to support the activity, adding he was already registered.

"This is my first presidential election," Patterson said. "It's important for us to vote on the future we hope to see," he said.

Poor voters are hidden figures in the election

Even with 2020's record number of ballots cast, more than 75 million people eligible to vote did not cast ballots, according to a study by the Center for Inclusive Democracy at the University of Southern California.

AP VoteCast, a survey of both voters and nonvoters, showed that nonvoters in 2020 tended to be poorer, younger, less educated, unmarried and minorities. The data, collected by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, also found that among voters in 2020, 15% reported having a household income under \$25,000 in the previous year, compared with roughly 3 in 10 nonvoters. Put those characteristics against a population of 27 million adults who live below poverty, according to the census, and the figures suggest that people on the lower rungs of the economic ladder probably make up a significant subset of all nonvoters.

Georgia was an unlikely cauldron of election turmoil

In 2020, the turnout of people eligible to vote in Georgia was 66.3%, nearly matching the national figure of 66.8%, according to the Center for Inclusive Democracy, with the lowest turnouts among Black and Latino voters.

The Republican-controlled legislature has sought changes aimed at redressing complaints fueled by Trump's false claims of voting fraud in 2020. (Trump is facing criminal charges in the state for his actions trying to overturn the result.) That includes requiring a hand count of all ballots cast, though a Georgia judge has blocked that at least for now. Another change requires homeless voters to use the address of the county voter registration office rather than where they live, which could add to the impoverished nonvoter numbers.

A microcosm of demographics and census

A majority of Bibb County's 150,000-plus residents are minorities and over 60% are unmarried. Four in 10 are younger than 30 and nearly half have a high school education or less. The poverty rate is above 25%, more than double the state and national averages.

In interviews with dozens of single moms, grandmothers and some men, it was clear that the campaigns are not addressing their problems.

Solomon came to Mother's Nest with her grown son and daughter and grandchildren. None of them vote, she said. Her son can't because of a criminal record but she and her daughter won't because, "If you ain't got nothing, nobody has time for you whether you are Black or white. If you're poor, you're poor and they ain't got time."

Friday, who started the center in 2022, slips in comments on voting and why it's important, not just nationally but locally, where issues are decided that impact the families directly.

"You'd be surprised that a lot of them just don't want to because they've given up," she said.

Dr. Tiffany Hall hosted a dental clinic and heard the challenges of the attendees first hand, including how most can't get preventive dental care until issues become emergencies.

Tynesha Haslem, 36, listened intently. In an interview, she said she remembered voting — she believes during one of Barack Obama's elections — but voting has not been a priority in a "horrible" life.

She lost the car she had earlier this year and she and her sons spend nights in a hotel. She is not registered to vote now but even if she wanted to, it is unclear that she could because of a felony conviction on her record from 2016 for attacking an ex-boyfriend. Her top priority is getting a job "hopefully in customer service," she said.

Nonvoters have basic, urgent needs the campaigns don't address

Cars began lining up, for more than a mile, near the Unionville Missionary Baptist Church for a food and clothing giveaway. The first flurry came in a steady flow for an hour, grabbing canned goods and other produce packaged the night before by church members.

Levita Carter, 55, was one of the church members and also a teacher in the school system. "Our children

are coming to school hungry," she said. "They don't have sufficient food. They don't have sufficient clothing."

Carter's message to people using the food pantries and Mother's Nest: "Our vote counts right here. We need to start small in our town and our place and get some people in place right here that can affect change here before we can even get to voting for president."

Peru's ex-president Toledo gets more than 20 years in prison in case linked to corruption scandal

By FRANKLIN BRICEÑO and REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peru's former President Alejandro Toledo on Monday was sentenced to 20 years and six months in prison in a case involving Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, which became synonymous with corruption across Latin America, where it paid millions of dollars in bribes to government officials and others.

Authorities accused Toledo of accepting \$35 million in bribes from Odebrecht in exchange for allowing the construction of a highway in the South American country. The National Superior Court of Specialized Criminal Justice in the capital, Lima, imposed the sentence after years of legal wrangling, including a dispute over whether Toledo, who governed Peru from 2001 to 2006, could be extradited from the United States.

Judge Inés Rojas said Toledo's victims were Peruvians who "trusted" him as their president. Rojas explained that in that role, Toledo was "in charge of managing public finances" and responsible for "protecting and ensuring the correct" use of resources. Instead, she said, he "defrauded the state."

She added that Toledo "had the duty to act with absolute neutrality, protect and preserve the assets of the state, avoiding their abuse or exploitation," but he did not do so.

Odebrecht, which built some of Latin America's most crucial infrastructure projects, admitted to U.S. authorities in 2016 to having bought government contracts throughout the region with generous bribes. The investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice spun probes in several countries, including Mexico, Guatemala and Ecuador.

In Peru, authorities accused Toledo and three other former presidents of receiving payments from the construction giant. They alleged Toledo received \$35 million from Odebrecht in exchange for the contract to build 650 kilometers (403 miles) of a highway linking Brazil with southern Peru. That portion of the highway was initially estimated to cost \$507 million, but Peru ended up paying \$1.25 billion.

Rojas at one point read parts of the testimony from Jorge Barata, a former Odebrecht executive in Peru, who told prosecutors that the former president called him up to three times after leaving office to demand that he be paid. Toledo lowered his gaze and looked at his hands as Rojas read the expletive-laden remarks that Barata recounted to prosecutors.

Toledo has denied the accusations against him. His attorney, Roberto Siu, told reporters after the hearing that they will appeal the sentence.

The former president on Monday frequently smirked, and at times laughed, particularly when the judge mentioned multimillion-dollar sums central to the case as well as when she struggled to read transcripts and other evidence in the case. Throughout the hearing, he also leaned to his right to speak with his attorney.

In contrast, last week, he asked the court with a broken voice and his hands together, as if he were praying, to let him return home citing his age, cancer and heart problems.

Toledo, 78, was first arrested in 2019 at his home in California, where he had been living since 2016, when he returned to Stanford University, his alma mater, as a visiting scholar to study education in Latin America. He was initially held in solitary confinement at a county jail east of San Francisco but was released to house arrest in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and his deteriorating mental health.

He was extradited to Peru in 2022 after a court of appeals denied a challenge to his extradition and he surrendered to authorities. He has since remained under preventive detention.

Rojas said Toledo will get credit for time served starting in April 2023. He will serve the remainder of his sentence at a prison on the outskirts of Lima that was built specifically to house former Peruvian presidents.

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Prosecutor José Domingo Pérez after the hearing described the sentence as “historic” and said it shows Peruvians that “crimes and corruption are punished.”

Odebrecht rebranded as Novonor in 2020.

Today in History: October 23, Beirut barracks bombings

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 23, the 297th day of 2024. There are 69 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 23, 1983, 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines, were killed in a suicide truck-bombing at the U.S. Marine Corps barracks at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon, while a near-simultaneous attack on French barracks in Beirut killed 58 paratroopers.

Also on this date:

In 1915, an estimated 25,000 women marched on Fifth Avenue in New York City in support of women’s suffrage.

In 1942, during World War II, Britain launched a major offensive against Axis forces at El Alamein (el ah-lah-MAYN’) in Egypt, resulting in an Allied victory.

In 1944, the Battle of Leyte (LAY’-tee) Gulf began; the largest naval battle of World War II resulted in a major Allied victory against Japanese forces.

In 1956, a student-sparked revolt against Hungary’s Communist rule began; as the revolution spread, Soviet forces started entering the country, putting down the uprising within weeks.

In 1987, the U.S. Senate rejected the Supreme Court nomination of Robert H. Bork 58-42.

In 1989, 23 people were killed in an explosion at a Phillips Petroleum chemical complex in Pasadena, Texas.

In 1993, the Toronto Blue Jays won their second consecutive World Series as Joe Carter hit a walk-off, three-run home run in Game 6 to win the series over the Philadelphia Phillies.

In 1995, a jury in Houston convicted Yolanda Saldivar of murdering Tejano singing star Selena.

In 2001, Apple released the iPod. An estimated 450 million iPod devices were sold before the line was discontinued in 2022.

Today’s Birthdays: Film director Philip Kaufman is 88. Advocate and humanitarian Graça Machel is 79. Film director Ang Lee is 70. Jazz singer Dianne Reeves is 68. Country singer Dwight Yoakam is 68. Activist and philanthropist Martin Luther King III is 67. Author and commentator Michael Eric Dyson is 66. Film director Sam Raimi is 65. Comedic musician “Weird Al” Yankovic is 65. Rock musician Robert Trujillo (Metallica) is 60. Racing driver and paracyclist Alex Zanardi is 58. CNN medical reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta is 55. TV personality Cat Deeley is 48. Actor Ryan Reynolds is 48. TV personality Meghan McCain is 40. R&B singer Miguel is 39. Actor Emilia Clarke is 38. Actor Margaret Qualley is 30. Actor Amandla Stenberg is 26.