

Groton Daily Independent

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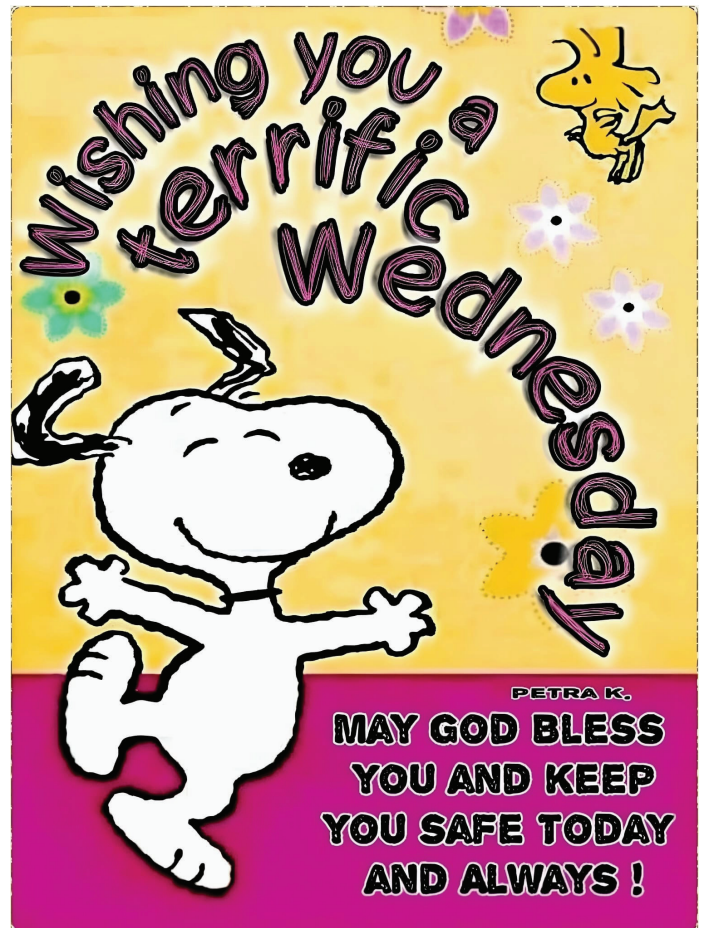
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Wednesday, Oct. 30

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas, pears, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Muffins.
School Lunch: Popcorn chicken, wedge fries.
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, 4 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 31

Senior Menu: Chili, cornbread, coleslaw, fruit.
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Slugs and cheese (Mac and cheese), frog eyes (peas).
Football Playoffs
Downtown Trick or Treat, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
United Methodist Trunk or Treat, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.



Friday, Nov. 1

Senior Menu: Pork cutlet, creamy noodles, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Egg wraps.
School Lunch: Sweet and sour chicken, rice.

Saturday, Nov. 2

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.

Hezbollah's New Chief

Hezbollah has appointed cleric Naim Kassem as its new leader following the death of Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike near the Lebanese capital, Beirut, last month.

The 71-year-old Kassem is considered one of Hezbollah's founding members and served as the group's deputy for 33 years, initially under Nasrallah's predecessor, Abbas al-Musawi, who was killed in 1992. Hezbollah and Israel have been trading fire since the start of the latest Israel-Hamas war in Gaza after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, cross-border attack. Both Hezbollah and Hamas are backed by Iran and are designated terrorist organizations by the US.

Across Gaza, at least 115 people were killed from Israeli airstrikes yesterday, with most of the deaths attributed to a hit on a five-story residential building in the north, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. The attack came a day after Israel's parliament banned the UN's Palestinian refugee agency, known as UNRWA, from operating within Israel.

Belgium's Largest Drug Trial

A Belgian court sentenced more than 120 people convicted of drug-related crimes yesterday in the largest drug trial in the country's history. Sentence lengths ranged from one to 17 years for dozens of defendants hailing from Albania, North Africa, Belgium, and Colombia in a globe-spanning drug trafficking operation.

The case, which began in December, relied on evidence collected after police successfully infiltrated and surveilled the Sky ECC and Encro encrypted phone networks in 2020 and 2021. Such networks consisted of tens of thousands of individuals using modified phones designed for total anonymity, including disabling cameras, microphones, and GPS and using a concealed operating system. The multinational and novel nature of the infiltration, which collected huge swaths of data from entire networks, has prompted complex legal questions and led to more than 6,500 arrests.

The ruling comes as Europe continues to grapple with sprawling criminal drug networks. Belgium's major port of Antwerp seizes more than 100 tons of cocaine annually.

Lost City Discovered

Archaeologists have discovered a Maya city beneath the jungle canopy in Campeche, Mexico, according to a study released yesterday. The ancient site, dubbed Valeriana by the team, contains more than 6,600 structures, including pyramids and ball courts. It is believed to be one of the largest Maya sites in Latin America.

The city, which may have housed up to 50,000 people during the Classic Maya period (years 250 to 900), features two major centers about 1.2 miles apart, linked by causeways. Researchers suggest Valeriana was likely an important political or economic center in the region due to its layout and construction.

Archaeologists discovered the city by analyzing preexisting lidar data—a technique in which variations in surface height are measured using airborne laser mapping. The site was found when a researcher stumbled upon the data, originally gathered for ecological and forestry studies, online.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

New York Yankees top Los Angeles Dodgers 11-4 in Game 4 to avoid World Series sweep; Game 5 is set for tonight (8 pm ET, Fox).

Teri Garr, Oscar- and BAFTA-nominated actress best known for starring roles in "Tootsie" and "Young Frankenstein," dies at age 79.

"Anora" leads 2024 Gotham Awards nominations for independent films with four nods.

Netflix and Universal renew animated movie licensing deal, will add live-action films to Netflix's offering beginning in 2027.

Science & Technology

LinkedIn launches Hiring Assistant, an AI-powered agent built to take on a number of tasks involved in employee recruitment.

Ocean scientists observe the largest predation event on record; millions of capelin—small anchovy-like fish—formed a mileslong group while being fed on by cod.

Astronomers discover one of the fastest spinning stars to date; located in the Sagittarius constellation near the center of the Milky Way, the neutron star rotates more than 700 times per second.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow -0.4%, Nasdaq +0.8%) with Nasdaq closing at record high.

Alphabet earnings beat expectations, fueled by cloud business; shares rise 6% in after-hours trading.

Snap shares rise 10% in after-hours trading after beating earnings expectations.

Starbucks warns remote corporate employees to return to office at least three days per week or face getting fired.

Zhang Yiming, founder of TikTok-owner ByteDance, ranked China's richest person, worth \$49.3B, in country's annual Hurun Rich List. |

Number of dollar billionaires falls by one-third in China as country's stock market and economy slow.

Politics & World Affairs

Jailed man who attacked husband of former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D, CA-11) sentenced to life in prison without parole on state charges of kidnapping, burglary, and false imprisonment.

UK teenager accused of killing three girls at Taylor Swift-themed dance class in July owned al-Qaida terror manual, produced deadly poison ricin, per police.

UN mission finds UAE-backed Rapid Support Forces in Sudan committed widespread acts of sexual violence amid civil war; the 80-page report includes interviews with victims and family members.

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Groton Community November Calendar

Friday, Nov. 1

Senior Menu: Pork cutlet, creamy noodles, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Sweet and sour chicken, rice.

Saturday, Nov. 2

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

Sunday, Nov. 3

Standard Time: Turn clocks back one hour

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Milestones 2nd and 3rd graders, Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

SEAS Fall Dinner, 5 p.m.

Monday, Nov. 4

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, California blend, pineapple, breadstick

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

JH GBB at Warner, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 5

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin, tropical fruit, mixed vegetables, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, waffle fries.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid, LWML, 1:30 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center Region 1A Volleyball

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 6

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, sweet potato, capri blend, peach crisp.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Quesadilla, Santa Fe Corn.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Confirmation with students and parents, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Budget/financing meeting for 2025, 7 p.m.

Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall

Youth Rally, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

Thursday, Nov. 7

Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes with gravy, three bean salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.

School Lunch: Taco burgers, tater tos.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Region 1A Volleyball

Friday, Nov. 8

Senior Menu: Beef and broccoli stir fry, rice, cauliflower, five cup salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, locally grown roasted squash.

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New Construction
Remodeling
Hoop Barns
Shops

BLOCKER
CONSTRUCTION


Perry Blocker

13379 Sperry Ln, Bath
605/216-2677
prblocker@hotmail.com



\$7 Meal Deal!
Includes Fries, Drink
and Sundae!

**Cheeseburger
or
3 Chicken Strips!**



DQ SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Saturday, Nov. 9

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

Sunday, Nov. 10

Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS), 3:16 p.m., GHS Conference Room

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School Christmas Practice, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

United Methodist Fall Dinner, 11 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 11

Senior Menu: Goulash, mixed vegetables, oranges, breadsticks

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes.

VETERAN'S DAY

Veteran's Day Program, 2 p.m., GHS Arena

FFA District 1 LDE, Doland

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

United Methodist: PEO Meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.

Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 12

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, fries.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center Volleyball SoDak16

School Board Meeting, 7 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 13

Senior Menu: Turkey with dressing, mashed potatoes with gravy, glazed baby carrots, pumpkin bar, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Beef stew with a biscuit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, time to be determined.

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

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

Groton C&MA: Missions Night with Mike Picconatto (for all ages), 7 p.m.

FCCLA Food Drive, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 14

Senior Menu: Chicken cacciatore, rice pilaf, Italian blend, apple sauce, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, wedge fries.

JH GBB hosts Webster (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

Groton Lions Club meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main

Friday, Nov. 15

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, sweet potato, Normandy blend, chocolate pudding with banana, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast cookie.

School Lunch: Cheese pizza, green beans.

Saturday, Nov. 16

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

JH GBB Jamboree at Roscoe

Groton Legion Turkey Party, 6:30 p.m.

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DID YOU KNOW . . .

You can use the GDI Fitness Center by paying by the month and you can cancel any time without penalty. Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460 for details!

Sunday, Nov. 17

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School Christmas Practice, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 18

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, biscuit, peas and carrots, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, garlic toast.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

First allowable day of wrestling practice

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 19

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle hot dish with peas, mixed vegetables, apple crisps, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

School Lunch: Turkey gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberries.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 12:30 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 20

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage hot dish, corn, pears, muffin.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Tacos.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, time to be determined; League, 6:30 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

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

Thursday, Nov. 21

Senior Menu: Ham rotini bake, capri blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.

School Lunch: Glazed ham, baby bakers.

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA: Praise and Thanksgiving, 1:30 p.m. (Program - Sarah, Hostess - Nigeria)

State Volleyball Tournament in Sioux Falls

Friday, Nov. 22

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, California blend, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Stromboli squares, mixed vegetables.

State Volleyball Tournament in Sioux Falls

JH GBB hosts Milbank (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

Saturday, Nov. 23

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

State Volleyball Tournament in Sioux Falls

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Sunday, Nov. 24

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Congregational meeting, League Pie Auction; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:30 a.m., and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School Christmas Practice, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 25

Senior Menu: Spanish rice, green beans, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: French bread pizza, peas.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

First allowable day for girls basketball

JH GBB at Britton (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

Fall Sports Awards Night, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, potluck at noon

Tuesday, Nov. 26

Senior Menu: Macaroni and cheese with kielbasa, Italian blend, vanilla pudding with oranges, whole wheat read.

Senior Menu: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Sloppy joes, fries.

United Methodist: No Bible Study

Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center

Wednesday, Nov. 27

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: No Confirmation

St. John's Lutheran: Thanksgiving Eve Service, 7 p.m.

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

No School - Thanksgiving Break

Thursday, Nov. 28

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

No School - Thanksgiving Break

Community Thanksgiving Dinner, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Groton Community Center

Friday, Nov. 29

No School - Thanksgiving Break

Saturday, Nov. 30

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main



3 bedroom apartment for rent.
Above laundromat in Downtown Groton.
Call/Text Tina 605-397-7285
Or Paul at 605-397-7460
\$650/Month Includes utilities



1 bedroom apartment for rent.
Above laundromat in Downtown Groton.
Call/Text Tina 605-397-7285
Or Paul at 605-397-7460
\$500/Month Includes utilities

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.

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

Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

- ✓ Pro Police
- ✓ Pro Constitution
- ✓ Pro Family



Visit the Campaign Site
ManhartForHouse.com



Paid for by Manhart for State House

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 1

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General Election - Nov. 5
Absentee Voting has begun



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Out-of-state nonprofit outspends in-state groups in open primaries campaign

'Dark money' organization has not disclosed its donors

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - OCTOBER 29, 2024 4:02 PM

An out-of-state nonprofit that hasn't disclosed its donors is outspending in-state opponents and supporters of an open primaries ballot question ahead of South Dakota's Nov. 5 election.

Article IV is an issue-advocacy nonprofit in Arlington, Virginia. It has spent \$889,145 on large postcards and online advertisements for Amendment H, according to reports filed with the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office.

Some of the postcards feature images of soldiers with tape over their mouths, along with a claim that Amendment H would "protect veteran voters" who "aren't able to participate fully in our political process."

That claim is related to South Dakota's current primary election system, in which Republicans only allow Republicans to vote, while Democrats allow Democrats and independents.

Amendment H, one of seven statewide questions on South Dakotans' Nov. 5 ballot, proposes opening up future primary elections and placing all candidates, regardless of party, on a single ballot open to all voters. The top two vote-getters would advance to the general election. In races with two winners, such as state House districts, the top four would advance to the general election.

Some veterans have spoken out against the Article IV postcards, saying they use veterans as props for a political agenda, and also saying veterans are currently able to register for a political party and participate in the party's primary election. Some of Article IV's other postcards are more generally supportive of Amendment H and do not mention veterans.

More about Article IV

Article IV is a 501(c)(4), a type of nonprofit sometimes described as a "dark money" group because it's allowed to engage in political campaigns and doesn't have to publicly disclose its donors.

Nobody from Article IV returned messages from South Dakota Searchlight, and the group's website reveals few details beyond a mission to "improve the health of American democracy by instituting reforms that align citizens' interests with politicians' incentives." The website also describes a form of open primaries as a solution: "Top-4 and Top-5 nonpartisan primaries where everyone, regardless of party, can participate are better than the alternative."

Some information about the group is available in public IRS documents that nonprofits are required to file. Article IV's 2022 filing — the most recent one located by Searchlight — said the group had \$11 million in revenue and made contributions to primary reform efforts across the country, such as a \$12,600 donation to Open Primaries Inc., \$342,000 to Oregon Ranked Choice Voting and \$400,000 to Utah Ranked Choice Voting.

In-state campaign finance data

Meanwhile, in-state supporters and opponents of open primaries have formed ballot question committees, which are required to disclose donors and additional details about fundraising and spending.

A pro-Open Primaries ballot question committee spent \$439,211 on advertising between May and Oct. 15, according to its latest campaign finance report, while opponents spent \$18,481.

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South Dakota Open Primaries Chair Joe Kirby said his ballot question committee does not have direct contact with Article IV, nor does the committee have control of what the organization advertises.

That's "the way the system works," Kirby added.

"That happens to politicians, too: Outsiders spending money for or against them," Kirby said, adding that there is a national interest in election reform. "There's not much you can do about that. Outside interests have a big say in all elections, including the governor and congressional delegation. It's not unique to our ballot issue."

In another example of outside "dark money" influencing a South Dakota ballot question this year, supporters of an amendment that would restore abortion rights in South Dakota received \$540,000 in donations from Think Big America, an issue-advocacy nonprofit in Illinois.

Article IV spent its own money directly on advertising rather than donating to the Open Primaries ballot question committee. The Open Primaries committee has raised over \$750,000 since May, mainly from a group of business leaders in Sioux Falls, while opponents hadn't broken \$100,000 in fundraising a week before the election.

Three-fourths of the Open Primaries ballot question committee's \$777,225 in fundraising came from eight households in southeastern South Dakota.

Those eight are:

\$250,000 in total contributions from chair of the committee Joe Kirby and his wife, Jennifer, of Sioux Falls.

\$110,000 from Dave Knudson, a Sioux Falls lawyer and former South Dakota lawmaker, and his wife Deanna, who serves as treasurer of the committee.

\$103,400 from gas station and convenience store chain Heinz Inc. owner Tom Heinz and wife, Jane Heinz, of Dakota Dunes.

\$50,000 from Matt Paulson, of Sioux Falls, owner and founder of MarketBeat.

\$25,000 from Dana Dykhouse, of Sioux Falls, CEO of First PREMIER Bank.

\$25,000 from Dan Kirby, of Kirby Financial in Sioux Falls and Joe Kirby's brother.

\$25,000 from Nathan Peterson, of Sioux Falls.

\$10,000 from Kevin Schieffer, of Sioux Falls, former president of the South Dakota Board of Regents.

Other major contributions include \$100,000 from Marc Merrill, co-founder and former CEO of Riot Games, in Santa Monica, California, and \$25,000 apiece from Avera Health and First PREMIER Bank, both based in Sioux Falls.

Opponents to Amendment H formed the Vote No on H ballot question committee and raised \$90,276. The ballot question committee's largest contribution was \$35,000 from James Koehler, an Aberdeen businessman and namesake of the Northern State University Koehler Hall of Fame Field.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

Lawmakers approve orders requiring state officials to talk privately about vehicle title scandal

Attorney general issues press release explaining his position after lawmaker discussion

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 29, 2024 1:48 PM

A South Dakota legislative board approved legal orders Tuesday requiring state officials to speak with lawmakers behind closed doors about allegedly criminal misconduct by former Department of Revenue employees.

The board, meeting in Pierre, voted 14-0 to approve the legal orders, called subpoenas. Rep. Dean Wink, R-Howes, was excused. Some members attended digitally.

The lawmakers aim to compel testimony to a separate legislative panel, the Government Operations and Audit Committee, from Revenue Secretary Michael Houdyshell and also Rosa Yaeger, head of the Motor

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Vehicle Division.

Houdyshell and Yeager are not accused of criminal wrongdoing. Two other former Revenue Department employees are criminally charged in a fake vehicle-titling scheme, following an investigation into similar allegations against a deceased former employee.

Earlier this month, Houdyshell refused to provide some details to the Government Operations and Audit Committee, even during a closed-door session, about reforms and internal controls the department has implemented to prevent further crimes. That committee voted 7-2 in favor of issuing subpoenas, which must be approved by the Executive Board.

During that earlier meeting, Houdyshell expressed an unwillingness to discuss specific changes, citing the active criminal cases and potential litigation that could arise from the situations. Houdyshell, an attorney, cited rules that direct practicing attorneys to avoid making public statements about a case.

Sen. David Wheeler, R-Huron, also an attorney, is a member of the Government Operations and Audit Committee.

"We need to be able to pursue our legislative oversight investigation at the same time as these other matters are pending," Wheeler said Tuesday in comments to the Executive Board.

Wheeler said his committee needs to know what corrective action the Legislature should take, "and it's difficult to do that when we can't get firsthand knowledge about what happened, why it happened, and what they have done to remedy it."

Disagreement about rule governing attorneys

Attorney General Marty Jackley issued a press release Tuesday after the Executive Board meeting. Jackley said the Government Operations and Audit Committee had asked for his guidance during the closed portion of its recent meeting. He said he told the committee that certain rules apply to all attorneys in the state, including the attorney general, attorney legislators, and department secretaries who are attorneys.

"These rules specifically restrict 'extrajudicial comment,' which include legislative proceedings, that affect a defendant's right to a fair trial or for the safety of law enforcement officers," he wrote in the release.

Wheeler shared basically that guidance, which he attributed to Jackley, with the Executive Board on Tuesday.

Executive Board Chairman and Senate President Pro Tempore Lee Schoenbeck, R-Watertown, another attorney, disagreed with broad interpretations of the attorney rules.

"Let me jump in here if I might. That's B.S.," he said. "It applies to the attorney general, who is a party. It does not apply to any legislator in their legislative function, at all. And it certainly wouldn't apply to the department if they were subpoenaed to appear before a legislative committee. It is a rule of ethics that applies to attorneys in a case."

Jackley added in the press release that as attorney general and a prosecutor, the rules specifically allow him to make "statements that are necessary to inform the public of the nature and the extent of the prosecutor's action and that serve a legitimate law enforcement purpose."

"It is further my opinion that the Legislature can seek general process information that will assist it in its oversight functions," Jackley said in the press release. "It is an important oversight, and I trust that the lawyers involved can formulate questions on the process that will not affect any of the defendant's right to a fair trial."

Before the vote to approve issuing the subpoenas, House Majority Leader Will Mortenson, R-Fort Pierre, another lawyer, commented on Jackley's public statements about the prosecutions of the former Revenue Department employees.

"It seems not to have prevented him from doing a number of press conferences on this topic," Mortenson said. "It strains me to understand how it would constrain the Department of Revenue from providing information in a confidential, executive session setting. And that advice has led us here to this pretty extreme measure of having to issue this subpoena. But I think it is warranted."

Jackley also wrote that he is assigning separate assistant attorneys general for the Legislature and the Revenue Department, because of the "level of disagreement on the subpoenas."

The Legislative Research Council is now tasked with drafting the subpoenas, which will be sent to the audit committee for a signature. They will then be issued to the officials.

South Dakota Searchlight is awaiting an answer from the Revenue Department about whether it will obey or challenge the subpoenas.

Criminal investigation details

The Revenue Department's Motor Vehicle Division has been the focus of legislators since last summer, in light of the behavior of now-deceased former employee Sandra O'Day.

She worked for the division for decades. After her death, her family found suspicious financial records that ultimately led the state Division of Criminal Investigation to discover that O'Day had created 13 fake vehicle titles. She'd used them to secure loans, and Jackley said earlier this month that the banks victimized by her failure to repay those loans could file lawsuits against the state seeking damages.

Jackley's latest statements came during a press conference Oct. 9, at which he announced criminal complaints against two other former Revenue Department employees. Lynne Hunsley is facing seven counts for allegedly falsifying a vehicle title, in part to avoid excise taxes, and Danielle Degenstein faces a misdemeanor charge for allegedly notarizing the phony title and for her failure to come clean to law enforcement when confronted.

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.

Overdose deaths are rising among Black and Indigenous Americans

Experts say responses such as mobile and mail-order safety supplies are needed

BY: TIM HENDERSON, STATELINE - OCTOBER 29, 2024 9:07 AM

The recent decline in overdose deaths hides a tremendous disparity by race: Deaths have fallen only among white people while continuing to rise among people of color, according to a new Stateline analysis of federal data.

Health experts in nonwhite communities say they're finding strategies that work in their areas, but that they still struggle for recognition and funding to address the problems, especially among Black and Native people.

In all, nearly 5,000 more people of color died from overdoses in 2023 than in 2021, while deaths among white people dropped by more than 6,000, according to the analysis of provisional data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As of early this year, based on partial counts, Black and Native people remain the hardest hit, having earlier in the pandemic surpassed white rates. Hispanic and Asian people are still experiencing more overdose deaths as well.

White people had the highest rate of overdose deaths in 2019, before the pandemic, at 25.4 deaths for every 100,000 people in the U.S. population. But rates for Black and Native people quickly surpassed white rates and continued to grow as white rates declined between 2021 and 2023. In 2023, the death rates were 49.5 and 39.8 per 100,000 for Black and Native people, respectively.

Tracie Gardner, co-director of the National Black Harm Reduction Network, said Black and Native people often have trouble navigating white-dominated institutions, including many harm reduction agencies. Such agencies need to have more people of color in leadership positions to gain the trust of Black, Native and other people who use drugs, she said.

"It is our contention that Black harm reduction isn't about drug use, it's about the harms of not being a

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white person in this country," Gardner said. "The only people doing worse or as poorly are Native Americans."

Different trends

Between 2021 and 2023, overdose deaths among white people dropped in all but a dozen states, most of them in the West. But few states saw any decline in deaths among Black or Native American populations. Deaths among Black people did decline, however, in Indiana (-75), the District of Columbia (-29) and Illinois (-22), while deaths among Native people declined in North Carolina (-34), Colorado (-11) and North Dakota (-9).

Connecticut was one of the few states to see a small rate drop among its Black residents. There was no change in the number of overdose deaths, but the Black population grew between 2021 and 2023.

The Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance is working to bring more harm reduction tools to the Black community and others, with 100 mobile kits available at a moment's notice.

Most recently, staff started going to meet people leaving detox programs, also known as withdrawal management, when they choose to leave early and are at especially high risk of overdose.

"The message is, 'Even though this didn't work out, we care about your welfare, we care about your safety, we want to see you come back,'" said Mark Jenkins, the alliance's executive director.

Too few services are specifically designed for the Black community, Jenkins said, even though data shows that the overdose crisis is hitting that population the hardest.

"We know that this disproportionately affects people of color, and we're right out there where people need to see us," he said of his organization's approach. "A lot of our people don't access services if they're not right there in their path."

A lack of funding

The overdose death numbers for American Indian and Native Alaskan people may be even higher than the Stateline analysis indicates, because Native people often are misidentified in death certificates, said Philomena Kebec, an attorney and member of the Wisconsin-based Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

"These numbers about the impact on tribal and Alaska Native individuals are really stark," Kebec told Stateline.

Many tribes struggle to provide overdose-halting naloxone and other medications because of chronic underfunding for health services, Kebec, who also is a fellow on addiction and overdose at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, said on a Brookings Institution podcast last month.

But increasingly, tribes are turning to mobile programs not unlike Connecticut's. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon is adapting buses to help people get methadone and buprenorphine that help curb opioid withdrawal symptoms.

Kebec said in an interview that her own tribe in Wisconsin began a mail-order naloxone program using private donations, but added it could do more with state funding that has yet to be approved.

"We have programming that's really keyed into how things have to happen in rural communities. We have a lot of people who have transportation issues, so we have to come to them," she said.

Tribes and helpers need more funding for research to find root causes and more timely information from hospitals to find overdose outbreaks quickly and intervene, she said. It's a need everywhere, but means even more in Native communities, which are often spread out in rural areas.

In the Black community, men older than 55 are especially hard hit, said Gardner, of the National Black Harm Reduction Network. She noticed their deaths start to increase in the mid-2010s, when she served as New York state's assistant secretary of health, and later realized those deaths were "the canary in the coal mine" that signaled deadly fentanyl's infiltration into supplies of other drugs.

During the pandemic, "older [Black] men lost their communities, their family supports. There are some men who became homeless and there was no safety network," Gardner said. "Plus, men still associate going out and getting health care with a woman's thing. A lot of care is geared to women."

Dr. Edwin Chapman, a District of Columbia physician whose practice serves many older Black men who use drugs, said that like others trying to help Black and Native people, he's had trouble getting funding. His innovations include early use of buprenorphine to curb opioid cravings.

"There has been more pushback from local officials than help," Chapman said.

Tim Henderson covers demographics for Stateline. He has been a reporter at the Miami Herald, the Cincinnati Enquirer and The Journal News in suburban New York. Henderson became fascinated with census data in the early 1990s, when AOL offered the first computerized reports. Since then he has broken stories about population trends in South Florida, including a housing affordability analysis included in the 2007 Pulitzer-winning series "House of Lies" for the Miami Herald, and a prize-winning analysis of public pension irregularities for The Journal News. He has been a member and trainer for the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting since its inception 20 years ago, specializing in online data access and visualization along with demographics.

How social media is influencing our interactions with public lands

Experts say our obsession with the perfect online photo is drawing more people into nature. Land managers are trying to mitigate risks and damage to wild places.

BY: PAIGE GROSS - OCTOBER 29, 2024 4:56 PM

Don't pet the fluffy cows.

That's the Instagram bio tagline for the National Park Service's popular account, which showcases stunning photos of the diverse terrains of the United States' 431 national parks.

The cheeky statement, followed by a buffalo emoji, is meant to make its 6 million followers laugh, NPS' social media specialist Matthew Turner says, but it's also a very real warning.

"We want you to be really prepared to stay this distance, and be aware of your surroundings at all times," Turner said. "And to know that if you don't, there are consequences where you can get hurt."

Technology and the rise of social media has driven new people to visit public parks and lands, as the platforms make it easier to showcase the great outdoors. But outdoor enthusiasts and environmental conservationists say social media has also contributed to "selfie tourism" or the influx of visitation to specific landmarks that go viral on social media.

It also can describe the behavior of those that crowd a landmark or ignore safety protocol to get the perfect shot.

Every year, there are incidents of people having such dangerous interactions with wildlife, or getting lost in the parks, or even losing their lives. It's hard to quantify how exactly social media influences the decision making or behavior of park visitors, but several nearly-fatal and fatal incidents have been connected to attempting to capture content.

In 2018, a 29- and 30-year-old couple fell to their deaths in Yosemite National Park in California while attempting to take a photo at Taft Point. Several people have been attacked by bison in Yellowstone National Park over the last three years — at least one was a tourist trying to touch a bison while recording with her phone.

"A selfie in and of itself can inspire others. Maybe you see a friend post from a great trip, and it inspires you to go," Philip Killbridge, CEO of NatureBridge said. "But you better do it thoughtfully. You better realize that when there's a fence, it's because there's loose rock on the other side, or there's a steep fall, or so many other unintended consequences."

'Loving our parks to death'

Killbridge runs NatureBridge, an organization that teaches young people how to explore the outdoors without technology. The organization was initially founded with the intention of exploring parks in their off-peak seasons, and teaching kids to learn more about themselves and the environment with low barriers to entry on cost and prior education.

The parks have seen a surge in visitors in the last few years, crossing more than 300 million visitors

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nearly each year since their centennial celebration in 2016.

NatureBridge has brought more than 1 million kids through the program over its tenure and operates in Golden Gate Park in California, Olympic National Park in Washington, Prince William Forest National Park in Virginia and Yosemite. It makes a conscious effort to explore areas and trails that are outside the most popular ones, but high visitorship is putting strain on the hotels and areas surrounding the parks, and as a result, it's more expensive to operate the program.

The social media effect on certain areas of the parks might be evident in some data from Yosemite National Park. Many drive in, take pictures at the iconic Half Dome and El Capitan rock formations, and then they head out, Killbridge said. The focus is on "documenting the visit and putting it on their checklist or bucket list, to prove that they've done it."

"You've probably heard the phrase, 'we're loving our parks to death,'" Killbridge said. "But the truth is, we're loving certain parts of certain parks to death."

Cynthia Hernandez, the National Parks System's public affairs specialist, said the agency uses social media to show examples of good environmental stewardship. Staff love and encourage new visitors to the parks, but they want them to be educated on preserving the trails, picking up trash, and learning the history and culture of where they're visiting.

"We ask visitors to be adaptable and to listen to the park rangers," Hernandez said. "You know, if the parking lot is full, don't drive wherever. We like to say, 'what is your plan B?'"

New Hampshire's public and private lands are feeling the impact from some not-so respectful visitors this year, as its peak fall foliage season — a few-week stretch in late September and October — is bringing an estimated 3.7 million visitors this fall, the Washington Post reported. New Hampshireers, and their neighbors in Vermont, are dealing with clogged roads, crowded hiking trails, trespassing on private property and trash left behind by their visitors, many of whom are doing so in the pursuit of the perfect fall photo.

Some towns have closed roads to non-local traffic, while others have had to pay for extra patrols during on routes leading to lookouts or popular spots. One group of neighbors in Pomfret, Vermont, has raised \$22,500 in a GoFundMe to "save" their road from the surge of influencers, with the funds planned to go toward temporary closures and increased signage, the Post reported.

Wesley Littlefield is a Salt Lake City-based marketing manager and outdoor content creator, and the effects Killbridge described and New Englanders are experiencing are some of the many reasons he's become mindful of not overexposing certain locations. Littlefield has been posting on social media and making YouTube videos about fishing, kayaking and other outdoor adventures for a few years, and focuses on educating people on 'leave no trace' principles.

He loves exploring the Southwest, but some of his favorite trails and natural wonders have become overpopulated after gaining attention on social media. Horseshoe Bend in Arizona is a prime example, he said, as is Antelope Canyon, which sits on Navajo land.

"What was once a peaceful overlook is now packed with people looking to snap that perfect shot, often at the expense of the environment around them," he said of Horseshoe Bend. "You'll notice things like litter, soil erosion and even permanent damage to local ecosystems. In extreme cases, wildlife habitats can be disrupted or destroyed, which takes away from the natural beauty and balance of these areas."

Responsible exploration

Littlefield said he loves that technology has allowed people to discover new places and share experiences. But carelessness in certain areas has made him more conservative with geotagging certain areas or "fragile" locations. It's his way of protecting them while still sharing his love for the outdoors, he said.

"We want these places to remain as beautiful and untouched as possible for future visitors," Littlefield said.

Alice Ford is another content creator who is sharing her outdoor adventures online as a way to educate others about conservation. She hosts a show on PBS called "Alice's Adventures on Earth," has a master's degree in environmental management and has been making Youtube videos showcasing outdoor traveling, hiking and sustainable living for about a decade.

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Her bread and butter is in longer-form content where she gets to place the focus on education.

"I think there's an issue with these three-to-10 second videos showcasing a place," Ford said. "Where you're just seeing the most beautiful part, and you're not learning anything about it, and you're then not doing any research. And you're just showing up because you want to get the exact same shot."

When Ford travels, she's looking for those less-busy places, not just to discover somewhere new to her, but also to not contribute to the demand of places that don't have infrastructure to support an onslaught of visitors. Pulling off the side of a road inundated with visitors may not just cause traffic chaos, but also could damage wildlife and road infrastructure, she said.

"I think also another thing that I've seen globally is just people wanting to see a place more than they have respect for the place," Ford said.

There are very real physical dangers to jumping head-first into a hike or a trip without proper preparation, Ford said. She's seen a rise in visitors to national parks and other places around the world attempting grueling hikes or exploring dangerous areas in extreme heat without the right footwear, food or water.

Two people died during this summer's brutal heat waves in Death Valley National Park in California, including a 57-year-old man who attempted a short hike on a day when temperatures reached nearly 120 degrees, which can quickly cause serious dehydration and heat stroke.

In Michigan, The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore — a state park featuring miles of sand and bluffs — has a dune climb that's been well-documented on social media. The hike includes 3.5 miles of sandy, steep terrain and can take three or four hours.

The Lakeshore gets an average of 1.5 to 1.7 million visitors a year, and reached its peak visitorship in 2020 and 2021, Emily Sunblade the park's lead education ranger said. The climb has long been a rite of passage, but the park rangers said visitors have been recognizing the location because of social media posts of the famous sign outlining the \$3,000 fee incurred for being rescued if you get stuck.

The park instituted a preventative search and rescue program where volunteers stand at the top of the dune and check in with visitors before they attempt the hike in order to quell the strain on local rescue resources, which are performed by township emergency services. The volunteers ask visitors if they have enough water, and if they're prepared for it to take two or more hours. It dramatically lowered the number of rescues needed, Sunblade said.

"The social media posts we are seeing are having a positive impact as people share their experience of what the hike was like, and what they wish they knew before starting," Sunblade said.

As much as social media has the ability to overexpose and overwhelm one area with visitors, it remains an essential tool for the Parks Service and for content creators who aim to educate others on responsible visitorship.

It's an important component of the "digital toolbox" for the Parks Service, Turner told States Newsroom. Their online profiles allow them to engage in real time with visitors and connect with people around the world. They use it as a forum to ask and answer questions, respond to outreach and share resources. And they do lean on memes and humor to get people's attention and have people "learn without maybe realizing they're learning," Turner said.

There are ways to add a photo-worthy spot to your travels, if you do so responsibly, Ford said. She suggests trying to research what's nearby those locations, and if the local community has been negatively impacted by visitors. If there's not enough restaurants, stores and accommodations, tourism may hurt the community or put a strain on its resources.

Her hope is that folks are making informed decisions about their travel plans and considering the impact that social media may have on driving them to visit.

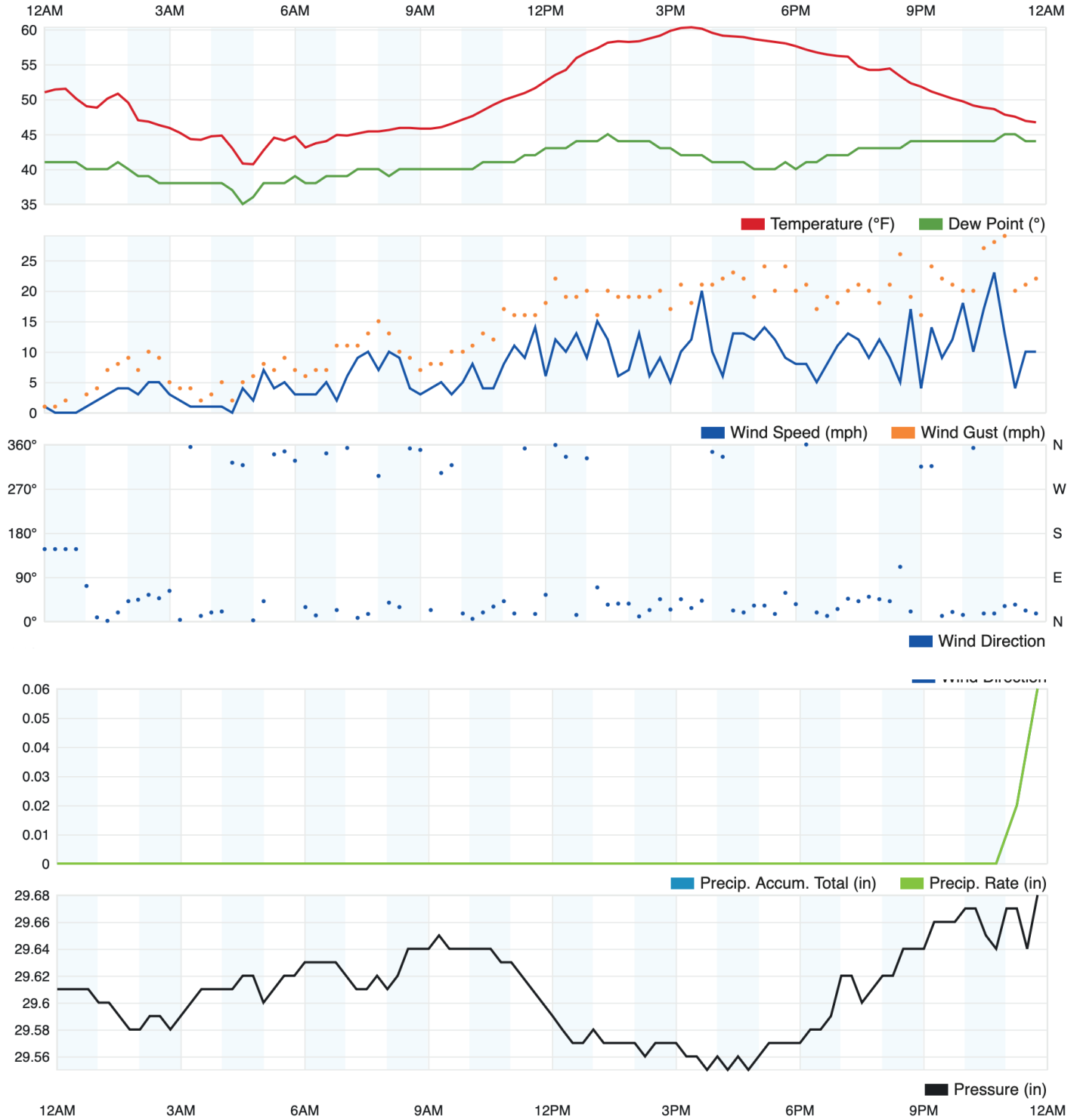
"I wish people would have more respect, not only for each other, but for the places that we visit," Ford said. "And to just think a little bit more before we act in general, like whether that's the time you're taking to take a selfie at a popular destination, or the place in which we're walking."

Paige Gross is a Philadelphia-based reporter covering the evolving technology industry for States Newsroom. Her coverage involves how congress and individual states are regulating new and growing technologies, how technology plays a role in our everyday lives and what people ought to know to interact with technology.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Wednesday



High: 49 °F

Rain Likely and Breezy then Partly Sunny

Wednesday Night



Low: 27 °F

Increasing Clouds

Thursday



High: 47 °F

Decreasing Clouds

Thursday Night



Low: 23 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 57 °F


Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers





Lingering Showers - Dry Tomorrow

October 30, 2024
3:39 AM

Hourly Temperatures For Thursday

Today
Highs: 45 - 50 

Thursday
Highs: 42 - 53 

Friday
Highs: 55 - 61 

	10/31 Thu													
	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm
Aberdeen	32	38	41	43	45	47	48	46	43	39	35	32	29	28
Britton	33	36	39	41	43	44	44	42	38	35	31	28	26	27
Brookings	32	34	39	41	43	44	44	42	40	37	35	33	32	30
Chamberlain	36	40	44	47	49	51	51	50	48	45	43	41	39	38
Clark	32	34	37	39	42	44	43	41	38	35	32	30	28	29
Eagle Butte	34	39	42	44	46	48	48	46	44	41	39	37	35	35
Ellendale	33	38	41	44	46	47	46	45	42	39	35	32	29	27
Eureka	30	35	38	41	44	46	46	44	41	38	34	31	29	29
Gettysburg	33	38	41	43	45	47	48	47	43	39	36	33	31	32
Huron	33	37	42	45	47	48	48	46	44	41	39	36	34	32
Kennebec	37	42	45	48	50	52	53	51	49	46	42	39	36	36
McIntosh	33	37	41	44	46	47	47	46	44	41	39	36	34	33
Milbank	36	40	42	43	44	46	45	43	40	36	33	30	27	28
Miller	35	41	45	47	49	50	49	48	45	42	39	36	33	33
Mobridge	35	40	44	46	49	51	52	50	47	43	39	35	33	35
Murdo	36	40	44	46	48	50	52	51	49	46	43	40	37	38
Pierre	38	41	45	48	51	52	53	51	49	46	43	40	38	38
Redfield	36	39	42	44	47	48	49	47	44	41	37	33	31	29
Sisseton	37	40	42	43	44	45	46	44	40	37	34	31	30	30
Watertown	33	36	39	41	43	44	44	41	38	34	30	28	26	28
Webster	32	35	36	38	40	42	42	40	38	34	31	28	26	28
Wheaton	36	38	40	42	43	44	44	42	40	36	33	31	29	29

NORR National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Light showers and sprinkles will linger through the morning but generally we should see dry conditions. Clouds clear for Thursday, though temperatures will remain seasonally chilly. Friday will be warmer and breezy.

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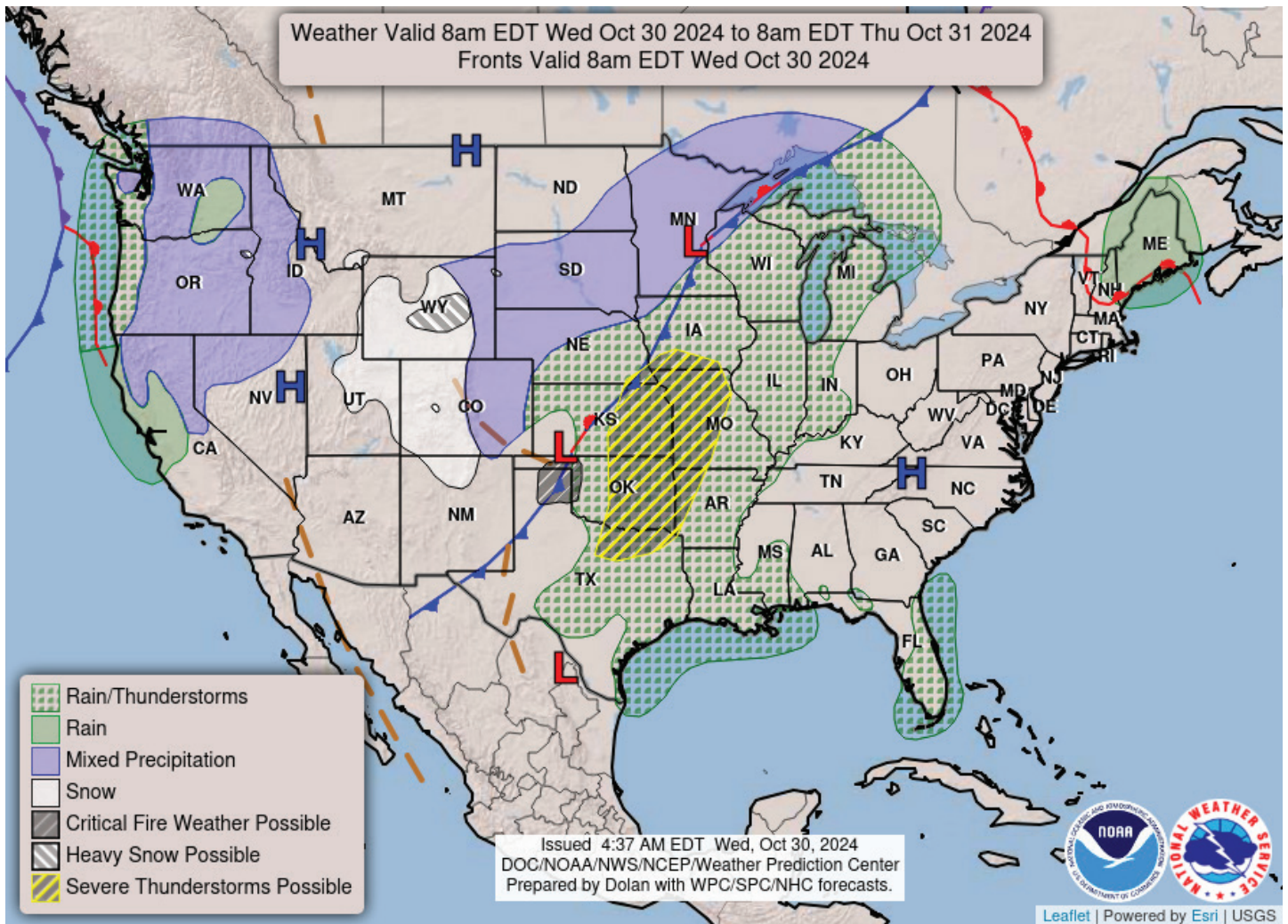
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 60 °F at 3:22 PM
Low Temp: 40 °F at 4:54 AM
Wind: 29 mph at 10:55 PM
Precip: : 0.06

Day length: 10 hours, 14 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 85 in 1950
Record Low: 8 in 1991
Average High: 51
Average Low: 27
Average Precip in Oct.: 2.09
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.13
Average Precip to date: 20.42
Precip Year to Date: 19.88
Sunset Tonight: 6:23:28 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09:56 am



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Today in Weather History

October 30, 1943: Snow fell across much of central and north central South Dakota on this date in 1943. Snowfall amounts of 2 to 7 inches occurred. Snowfall amounts included, 2 inches at Timber Lake, 4 inches at Murdo, 5 inches at Mobridge, and 7 inches at Kennebec and Pierre.

October 30, 1950: Much above normal temperatures occurred across the entire area of central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota. Record highs were mostly in the 80s across the area. The records were 78 degrees at Sisseton, 80 degrees at Wheaton, 85 degrees at Watertown and Aberdeen, 86 degrees at Mobridge, 88 degrees at Pierre, and a hot 91 degrees at Kennebec.

1925 - Nashville, TN, was blanketed with an inch of snow, their earliest measurable snow of record. (The Weather Channel)

1947 - The Donora, PA, smog disaster finally came to an end. For five days an inversion trapped impurities in the lower atmosphere over the Monongahela Valley killing 20 persons, and leaving more than 2000 others sick. (26th-30th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Severe thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 74 mph near the town of Gould. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the central U.S. Temperatures warmed into the 80s from Texas to the Lower Missouri Valley. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Ten cities in the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date. The morning low of 20 degrees at South Bend IND was a record for October, and lows of 18 degrees at Grand Rapids MI and 20 degrees at Fort Wayne IND equalled records for October. The low of 2 degrees at International Falls MN smashed their previous record for the date by 11 degrees. Syracuse NY received 2.9 inches of snow to establish a record for October with 5.7 inches for the month. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Temperatures soared into the 70s in the northeastern U.S. The record high of 73 degrees at Alpena MI marked their sixth straight day of record warmth. In the western U.S., Klamath Falls OR reported a record low of 19 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1991: The Perfect Storm, also known as the No-Name Storm reached maximum strength on this day with a low pressure of 972 mb and sustained winds of 69 mph.



THE REWARDS OF HONESTY

One of the traits that made Harry S. Truman a great president was his honesty. In fact, it was more important to him than the presidency.

During the presidential campaign against Thomas Dewey, his staff notified him that his campaign funds were running low. When one of his supporters was given this information, he approached Truman and said, "I'll give you what you need if, when you become president, you will use your office to get policies in effect that will benefit me."

"Give your money or keep it," said Truman, "but I'm not making any deals."

His response electrified his staff, and they began to work harder than ever. As a result, the money coming into his election committee increased dramatically, and Truman went on to win the election.

We read in Proverbs that, "The Lord hates cheating, but he delights in honesty." That is about as straight forward as it gets. And there is no way to get around it.

Honesty is very easy to measure: We are either honest or we are not. We either tell the truth or we lie. There are no "degrees" in honesty. We can't be 99% honest or 1% honest or somewhere in between. It's 100% or nothing.

Honesty is basic to a Christian's integrity.

Prayer: It is so easy, Lord, to compromise the truth when we want to fulfill some worldly desire. Cleanse us from deceit and fill our minds and mouths with truth. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The Lord detests the use of dishonest scales but he delights in accurate weights. Proverbs 11:1

We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.29.24

16 22 26 36 56 1

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$281,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 24

DRAW: Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.28.24

1 10 22 28 41 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$13,080,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 39 Mins

DRAW: 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.29.24

4 8 9 25 48 10

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 54 Mins

DRAW: 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.26.24

7 11 13 34 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$77,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 54 Mins

DRAW: 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.28.24

6 16 19 24 40 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 23 Mins

DRAW: 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.28.24

21 27 32 48 67 17

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$39,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 23 Mins

DRAW: 22 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
09/20/2025 NSU Gypsy Day
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Eagle feathers play a sacred role in powwows. Poachers are exploiting the high demand

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — America's golden eagles face a rising threat from a black market for their feathers used in Native American powwows and other ceremonies, according to wildlife officials, researchers and tribal members.

The government's response has been two-pronged: A crackdown on rings illegally trafficking dead eagles coupled with a longstanding program that lawfully distributes eagle feathers and parts to tribal members.

But that program has a yearslong backlog, and officials said illegal killings appear to be worsening, with young golden eagles in particular targeted because of high value placed on their white and black wing feathers. Golden eagles, which are federally protected but not considered endangered, already faced pressure — from poisonings, climate change and wind turbines that kill eagles in collisions.

An investigation centered around a Montana Indian reservation recently landed its first conviction — a Washington state man accused with others of killing thousands of birds including at least 118 bald and golden eagles and selling their parts in the U.S. and abroad.

He is scheduled to be sentenced to up to five years in prison Thursday in a case that offers a rare glimpse into the black market.

Another investigation involving undercover agents recovered 150 golden and bald eagles over the past decade, with 35 defendants charged and 31 sentenced for wildlife violations, according to court records and federal officials.

Perry Lilley, a member of the Nakota Tribe in northern Montana, attends numerous powwows a year and says he has been solicited to buy eagle feathers. He said illegal shootings were "absolutely wrong" but sympathized with tribal members who don't want to wait years for eagle parts.

Eagle feathers are woven into Native American culture. Beyond powwow regalia, they're presented to high school graduates, used in marriage ceremonies and buried with the dead.

Exploiting Native traditions

A government repository in Colorado that provides dead eagles and their parts for free to tribal members keeps up with orders for individual feathers, such as for graduates. Yet it's unable to meet demand for eagle wings, tails and whole birds, even as powwows become more elaborate and competitive.

That's left an opening for criminals to exploit Native Americans trying to keep traditions alive.

"The amount of money that you can win in powwows has increased a lot in the last 10 years, which has increased some of the demand," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chief of Law Enforcement Ed Grace. "If the price of feathers goes up, people ... become opportunistic, and see that you can make a lot of money in a relatively short period of time poaching eagles to provide for the feather trade."

Eagle feathers were on full display at a recent powwow in Billings, where dozens of Native Americans adorned with feathers paraded into a university fieldhouse to kick off dancing competitions. Their feet moved to the beat of a drum, its rhythmic sounds interrupted periodically by high-pitched singing.

Women carried eagle feather fans. Men wore eagle feather headdresses that bounced back and forth as they danced.

Leading the procession was a man wielding a staff topped with an eagle head. Behind him among tribal elders was Kenneth Deputee, Sr., from the nearby Crow Indian Reservation.

Around his waist was a decorative piece strung with eagle feathers, and he carried a short wooden stick carved into a bald eagle head, a single feather hanging from it.

For Deputee, the feathers signify strength and offer protection.

"The feathers are very important," he said. "I'm 72 years old, but once I put that on, I'm ready to rock and roll. ... All that strength comes back to me, you know, so I'm ready to go out there and boogie woogie."

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Comanche Nation member Bill Voelker describes powwows differently: more spectacle than spiritual, with some feathers bought online where eagle parts can cost hundreds of dollars.

Not all powwows have cash prizes.

A 'killing spree' in Montana

In the pending Montana poaching case, the defendant and accomplices allegedly killed about 3,600 birds — including golden and bald eagles — during what one defendant called a "killing spree." Prosecutors say the killings began in 2009 and continued until 2021 on the Flathead Reservation, home of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Such investigations are resource intensive and can take years, Grace said. That's difficult to sustain for an agency with about three law enforcement officers per state on average.

The case involving 150 eagle carcasses sprawled across several states and included two South Dakota pawn shops, with bird parts bought and sold including in Iowa, Montana, Nebraska and Wyoming.

"Almost all the information we receive on eagle trafficking comes from Native Americans, comes from tribes, comes from public citizens," Grace said. "And then we will look at that intel and specifically go after the larger trafficking groups."

Illegal shootings are a leading cause of eagle deaths, according to a recent government study. The pending Montana case emerged from an area with some of the highest concentrations of eagles and other raptors in the U.S. West.

Online posts from people selling eagle feathers illegally are relatively easy to find on internet marketplaces.

"The biggest atrocity in Indian country today is the powwow but no one will say that out loud because everybody takes part," said Voelker, who operates a tribally sanctioned feather repository and raptor shelter in southern Oklahoma.

Eagles on ice

Voelker's is one of two non-federal feather repositories in the U.S. Most dead eagles, parts and feathers received by tribal members come from the wildlife service's National Eagle Repository.

Inside the service's warehouse-sized building in a nature preserve outside Denver, a wildlife technician recently pulled a cold eagle carcass from a box.

He spread the wings, fanned the tail, examined the feathers, then methodically cut off the tail with a knife and severed the wings and feet with a garden lopper. The pieces went into separate plastic bags to be packaged and mailed to tribal members across the U.S.

The repository receives 3,500 dead bald and golden eagles annually from state wildlife agencies, avian rehabilitation facilities, zoos and other sources. It gets several thousand requests annually from tribal members for feathers, entire eagles and their parts.

Avian flu has slowed processing the birds at the repository; each eagle must now be tested to prevent its spread.

The longest backlog of requests is for young golden eagles.

A dry-erase board in the processing area showed how demand far outstrips supply: 1,242 requests pending for whole immature golden eagles with only 17 available. More than 600 requests for wings; 40 available. Almost 450 tails requested; 17 available.

The repository is currently fulfilling requests for immature golden eagles made in 2013. Wait times for bald eagles or parts are up to two years.

Lilley, the Nakota member, said many feathers in his regalia were gifted to him or came from a dead eagle he found along a fence after it apparently had been shot.

He also received a golden eagle from the government repository years after applying for it.

Lilley recalled his excitement when the package arrived with a whole bird on dry ice.

"I had to get someone to show me how to pluck it, take the feathers off, tail feathers, talons, head and things like that," he said.

One of the bird's feet is affixed to the short staff Lilley wields during powwow dances. A wing is fashioned into a fan.

"For a dancer, when you're outside it gets pretty hot so that's kind of like your AC, that one fan," he said.

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Herreid-Selby, 25-19, 23-25, 25-18, 25-17

Alcester-Hudson def. Freeman, 25-8, 17-25, 25-19, 25-16

Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. James Valley Christian, 25-21, 25-14, 25-18

Avon def. Bon Homme, 18-25, 25-19, 25-23, 25-21

Baltic def. Deubrook, 25-17, 25-20, 25-9

Britton-Hecla def. Wilmot, 25-10, 25-18, 25-14

Brookings def. T F Riggs High School, 25-23, 25-14, 25-18

Burke def. Parkston, 25-14, 25-19, 25-12

Castlewood def. Flandreau, 25-16, 25-18, 25-17

Chester def. Bridgewater-Emery, 25-10, 25-19, 25-15

Colman-Egan def. Dell Rapids St Mary, 18-25, 19-25, 25-13, 25-16, 15-6

Corsica/Stickney def. Colome, 25-7, 25-13, 25-17

Custer def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-16, 25-17, 25-13

DeSmet def. Arlington, 25-16, 23-25, 12-25, 26-24, 15-13

Dell Rapids def. Beresford, 25-11, 25-9, 25-17

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Vermillion, 25-15, 25-6, 25-9

Ethan def. Platte-Geddes, 22-25, 25-19, 25-15, 20-25, 15-10

Garretson def. Madison, 25-22, 20-25, 13-25, 25-22, 20-18

Hamlin def. Clark-Willow Lake, 25-19, 22-25, 24-26, 25-23, 15-12

Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-18, 25-23, 25-15

Hill City def. Belle Fourche, 25-12, 25-13, 25-15

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Wessington Springs, 25-8, 25-9, 25-15

Hot Springs def. Mahpiya Lúta Red Cloud, 25-13, 25-18, 25-21

Irene-Wakonda def. Howard, 25-8, 18-25, 23-25, 25-15, 15-13

Kadoka def. Lakota Tech, 25-12, 25-22, 25-16

Lemmon High School def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-16, 25-11, 25-22

Lower Brule def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-18, 18-25, 25-22, 16-25, 15-13

Marty def. Flandreau Indian

Menno def. Scotland, 25-16, 25-10, 25-13

Miller def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-18, 25-7, 25-15

Mitchell def. Huron, 8-25, 25-13, 25-23

Mobridge-Pollock def. Sully Buttes, 25-15, 25-8, 25-19

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Sanborn Central-Woonsocket, 25-13, 25-21, 25-11

Oldham-Ramona-Rutland def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-21, 25-16, 25-18

Philip def. New Underwood, 25-18, 25-14, 25-17

Potter County def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-12, 25-12, 25-17

Rapid City Stevens def. Sturgis Brown High School, 25-11, 25-20, 25-20

Redfield def. Tiospa Zina, 25-13, 25-16, 25-10

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Sioux Falls Washington, 25-18, 25-19, 21-25, 25-20

Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-21, 23-25, 25-22, 25-19

Sioux Valley def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 26-24, 25-19, 25-13

Spearfish def. Rapid City Central, 25-18, 25-14, 25-22

St Thomas More def. Rapid City Christian

St. Francis Indian def. Oelrichs, 25-16, 25-11, 25-15

Standing Rock, N.D. def. McLaughlin, 26-24, 18-25, 25-14, 26-24

Stanley County def. Jones County, 25-16, 25-23, 25-21
Timber Lake def. Wall, 30-28, 25-18, 17-25, 11-25, 15-12
Todd County def. Crow Creek Tribal School, 25-5, 25-7, 25-19
Tripp-Delmont-Armour def. Freeman Academy-Marion, 18-25, 25-22, 25-18, 25-12
Warner def. Langford, 25-7, 25-23, 25-13
Watertown def. Aberdeen Central High School, 25-16, 25-15, 25-16
Webster def. Waubay/Summit, 25-15, 25-22, 25-11
Wolsey-Wessington def. Faulkton, 22-25, 25-13, 21-25, 25-20, 15-3
Yankton def. Tea, 25-14, 25-19, 25-15
IW Tournament=
Great Plains Lutheran def. Sisseton, 23-25, 25-14, 25-18, 25-17
Tiospaye Topa Triangular=
Tiospaye Topa def. Takini, 25-13, 25-9, 25-23
Tiospaye Topa def. Wakpala, 25-10, 25-21, 21-25, 25-15

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

In Lebanon, a family's memories are detonated along with their village

By SALLY ABOU ALJOUD Associated Press

ARAMOUN, Lebanon (AP) — Ayman Jaber's memories are rooted in every corner of Mhaibib, the village in southern Lebanon he refers to as his "habibti," the Arabic word for "beloved." The root of the village's name means "the lover" or "the beloved."

Reminiscing about his childhood sweetheart, the 45-year-old avionics technician talks about how the young pair would meet in a courtyard near his uncle's house.

"I used to wait for her there to see her," Jaber recalls with a smile. "Half of the village knew about us."

The fond memory contrasts sharply with recent images of his hometown.

Mhaibib, perched on a hill close to the Israeli border, was leveled by a series of explosions on Oct. 16. The Israeli army released a video showing blasts ripping through the village in the Marjayoun province, razing dozens of homes to dust.

The scene has been repeated in villages across southern Lebanon since Israel launched its invasion a month ago with the stated goal of pushing Hezbollah militants back from the border. On Oct. 26, massive explosions in and around Odaisseh sparked an earthquake alert in northern Israel.

Israel says it wants to destroy a massive network of Hezbollah tunnels in the border area. But for the people who have been displaced, the attacks are also destroying a lifetime of memories.

Mhaibib had endured sporadic targeting since Hezbollah and Israeli forces began exchanging fire on Oct. 8 last year.

Jaber was living in Aramoun, just south of Beirut, before the war, and the rest of his family evacuated from Mhaibib after the border skirmishes ignited. Some of them left their possessions behind and sought refuge in Syria. Jaber's father and two sisters, Zeinab and Fatima, moved in with him.

In the living room of their temporary home, the siblings sip Arabic coffee while their father chain-smokes.

"My father breaks my heart. He is 70 years old, frail and has been waiting for over a year to return to Mhaibib," Zeinab said. "He left his five cows there. He keeps asking, 'Do you think they're still alive?'"

Mhaibib was a close-knit rural village, with about 70 historic stone homes lining its narrow streets. Families grew tobacco, wheat, mulukhiyah (jute mallow) and olives, planting them each spring and waking before dawn in the summer to harvest the crops.

The village was also known for an ancient shrine dedicated to Benjamin, the son of Jacob, an important figure in Judaism. In Islam, he is known as the prophet Benjamin Bin Yaacoub, believed to be the 12th son of prophet Yaacoub and the brother of prophet Yousef.

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The shrine was damaged in the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, then renovated. Pictures show the shrine enclosed in a golden cage adorned with intricate Arabic inscriptions beside an old stone mosque crowned by a minaret that overlooked the village. The mosque and the shrine are now gone.

Hisham Younes, who runs the environmental organization Green Southerners, says generations of southerners admired Mhaibib for its one-or two-story stone homes, some built by Jaber's grandfather and his friends.

"Detonating an entire village is a form of collective punishment and war crime. What do they gain from destroying shrines, churches and old homes?" Younes asks.

Abdelmoe'm Shucair, the mayor of neighboring Mays el Jabal, told the Associated Press that the last few dozen families living in Mhaibib fled before the Israeli destruction began, as had residents of surrounding villages.

Jaber's sisters attended school in Mays al-Jabal. That school was also destroyed in a series of massive explosions.

After finishing her studies in Beirut, Zeinab worked in a pharmacy in the neighboring village of Blida. That pharmacy, too, is gone after the Israeli military detonated part of that village. Israeli forces even bulldozed their village cemetery where generations of family members are buried.

"I don't belong to any political group," Zeinab says. "Why did my home, my life, have to be taken from me?"

She says she can't bring herself to watch the video of her village's destruction. "When my brother played it, I ran from the room."

To process what's happening, Fatima says she closes her eyes and takes herself back to Mhaibib. She sees the sun setting, vividly painting the sky stretching over their family gatherings on the upstairs patio, framed by their mother's flowers.

The family painstakingly expanded their home over a decade.

"It took us 10 years to add just one room," Fatima said. "First, my dad laid the flooring, then the walls, the roof and the glass windows. My mom sold a year's worth of homemade preserves to furnish it." She paused. "And it was gone in an instant."

In the midst of war, Zeinab married quietly. Now she's six months pregnant. She had hoped to be back in Mhaibib in time for the delivery.

Her brother was born when Mhaibib and other villages in southern Lebanon were under Israeli occupation. Jaber remembers traveling from Beirut to Mhaibib, passing through Israeli checkpoints and a final crossing before entering the village.

"There were security checks and interrogations. The process used to take a full or half a day," he says. And inside the village, they always felt like they were "under surveillance."

His family also fled the village during the war with Israel in 2006, and when they returned they found their homes vandalized but still standing. An uncle and a grandmother were among those killed in the 34-day conflict, but a loquat tree the matriarch had planted next to their home endured.

This time, there is no home to return to and even the loquat tree is gone.

Jaber worries Israel will again set up a permanent presence in southern Lebanon and that he won't be able to reconstruct the home he built over the last six years for himself, his wife and their two sons.

"When this war ends, we'll go back," Ayman says quietly. "We'll pitch tents if we have to and stay until we rebuild our houses."

Spanish authorities report at least 51 dead from devastating flash floods

By JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — At least 51 people have died in Spain's eastern region of Valencia after flash floods swept away cars, turned village streets into rivers and disrupted rail lines and highways in the worst

natural disaster to hit the European nation in recent memory.

Emergency services in the eastern region of Valencia confirmed the death toll on Wednesday.

Rainstorms on Tuesday caused flooding in a wide swath of southern and eastern Spain. Floods of mud-colored water tumbled vehicles down streets at frightening speeds. Pieces of wood swirled with household articles. Police and rescue services used helicopters to lift people from their homes and cars.

Authorities reported several missing people late Tuesday, but the following morning brought the shocking announcement of dozens found dead.

Over 1,000 soldiers from Spain's emergency response units were deployed to the devastated areas.

"Yesterday was the worst day of my life," Ricardo Gabaldón, the mayor of Utiel, a town in Valencia, told national broadcaster RTVE. He said several people were still missing in his town.

"We were trapped like rats. Cars and trash containers were flowing down the streets. The water was rising to three meters," he said.

Spain has experienced similar autumn storms in recent years, but nothing compared to the devastation over the last two days.

The death toll could easily rise with other regions yet to report victims and search efforts continuing in areas with difficult access. In the village of Letur in the neighboring Castilla La Mancha region, Mayor Sergio Marín Sánchez said six people were missing.

A high-speed train with nearly 300 people on board derailed near Malaga, although rail authorities said no one was hurt. High-speed train service between Valencia city and Madrid was interrupted, as were several commuter lines.

Valencian regional President Carlos Mazón urged people to stay at home so as not to complicate rescue efforts, with travel by road already difficult due to fallen trees and wrecked vehicles.

"The neighborhood is destroyed, all the cars are on top of each other, it's literally smashed up," Christian Viena, a bar owner in the Valencian village of Barrio de la Torre, said by phone. "Everything is a total wreck, everything is ready to be thrown away. The mud is almost 30 centimeters deep."

Spain's central government set up a crisis committee to help coordinate rescue efforts.

The rain had subsided in Valencia by late Wednesday morning. But more storms were forecast through Thursday, according to Spain's national weather service.

Spain is still recovering from a severe drought earlier this year. Scientists say increased episodes of extreme weather are likely linked to climate change.

AP-NORC poll finds Democrats and Republicans split on Israel's responsibility for war's escalation

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Many American voters are concerned that the ongoing Middle East conflict will escalate into an all-out regional war, a new poll finds. About half of voters are "extremely" or "very" worried about the possibility of a broader war in the region.

Though there is concern about the conflict growing, according to the survey from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, fewer voters — around 4 in 10 — are concerned that the United States will be drawn into a war in the Middle East. This poll was conducted prior to Israel's strike on military bases in Iran on Friday.

The conflict in the Middle East has become a major campaign issue as former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris attempt to win over Muslim and Jewish voters in battleground states like Michigan and Pennsylvania. And although Democrats and Republicans are similarly worried about the potential for the war to expand, they disagree about who is to blame for its recent escalation and how the U.S. should be involved going forward.

Partisan divide on Israeli government's level of responsibility

About 6 in 10 voters say the Palestinian militant group Hamas, the Iranian government and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah have "a lot" of responsibility for the escalation of the war in the Middle East.

Roughly 4 in 10 voters think the Israeli government has "a lot" of responsibility, and only about 2 in 10 say the U.S. government has "a lot" of responsibility.

But there's a big partisan split on whether the Israeli government bears "a lot" of responsibility for the war's escalation. About 6 in 10 Democrats say they do — similar to the share of Democrats who say Hamas bears "a lot" of responsibility — while only about one-quarter of Republicans say the Israeli government bears "a lot" of responsibility.

Voters support Iran sanctions, but not sending US troops

Voters broadly support economic sanctions on Iran, which could hinder support to its proxy groups Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. A majority, 55%, are in favor of imposing sanctions. They are about evenly divided on whether the U.S. should be providing weapons to Israel's military, and voters are more likely to oppose sending government funds to aid Israel's military than to support it.

Deploying U.S. troops to aid Israel's military garners little support among voters, regardless of their partisan affiliation. About half of voters oppose deploying U.S. troops to aid Israel's military. Only about 2 in 10 voters favor deploying U.S. troops to assist Israel, and a similar share have a neutral view.

Many think the US is doing what it can on cease-fire efforts

The U.S. is still pressing for any movement on short-term cease-fire proposals, despite letdowns in the past and little expectation of immediate breakthroughs ahead of the election.

About half of voters think the U.S. is doing "about as much as it can" to push for a cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah, while 3 in 10 say it could be doing more. Roughly 2 in 10 voters say the U.S. should be doing less.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to want less U.S. involvement in cease-fire efforts. About 3 in 10 Republicans say the U.S. should do less, compared to about 1 in 10 Democrats. About 6 in 10 Democrats say the U.S. is doing what it can, compared to about 4 in 10 Republicans.

Democrats, Republicans and independents are about equally likely to say the U.S. could be doing more.

The poll of 1,072 adults was conducted Oct. 11-14, 2024, using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for registered voters is plus or minus 4.2 percentage points.

North Korean troops sent to Russia may be pleased to be there, even as they face ferocious fighting

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The thousands of young soldiers North Korea has sent to Russia, reportedly to help fight against Ukraine, are mostly elite special forces, but that hasn't stopped speculation they'll be slaughtered because they have no combat experience, no familiarity with the terrain and will likely be dropped onto the most ferocious battlefields.

That may be true, and soon. Observers say the troops are already arriving at the front. From the North Korean perspective, however, these soldiers might not be as miserable as outsiders think. They may, in fact, view their Russian tour with pride and as a rare chance to make good money, see a foreign country for the first time and win preferred treatment for their families back home, according to former North Korean soldiers.

"They are too young and won't understand exactly what it means. They'll just consider it an honor to be selected as the ones to go to Russia among the many North Korean soldiers," said Lee Woong-gil, a former member of the same special forces unit, the Storm Corps. He came to South Korea in 2007. "But I think most of them won't likely come back home alive."

Worries about North Korea's likely participation in the Russian-Ukraine war were highlighted this week when the Pentagon said North Korea has sent about 10,000 troops to Russia, and that they will likely fight against Ukraine "over the next several weeks." NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Monday that some North Korean military units were already in Russia's Kursk border region, where Russia has been

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struggling against a Ukraine incursion.

North Korea's troop deployment could mark a serious escalation of the almost three-year war. It caught many outside observers by surprise because North Korea has its own security headache, a festering standoff with the United States and South Korea over its nuclear program.

Large North Korean troop casualties would be a major political blow for the country's 40-year-old ruler, Kim Jong Un. But experts say Kim may see this as a way to get much needed foreign currency and security support from Russia in return for joining Russia's war against Ukraine.

"Kim Jong Un is taking a big gamble. If there are no large casualty numbers, he will get what he wants to some extent. But things will change a lot if many of his soldiers die in battle," said Ahn Chan-il, a former North Korean army first lieutenant who is now head of the World Institute for North Korean Studies think tank in Seoul.

The Storm Corps, also known as the 11th Corps, is one of Kim's top units. Its main missions would be infiltrating agents into South Korea, blowing up important facilities in the South and assassinating key figures in the event of war on the Korean Peninsula.

Lee, who served in the Storm Corps in 1998-2003, recalled that his unit received better food and supplies than other units, but many members still suffered from malnutrition and tuberculosis.

Despite a gradual economic recovery in North Korea over the past 30 years, defectors say the average monthly wage for ordinary North Korean workers and soldiers is less than \$1. They say many people engage in capitalist market activities to make a living because the country's state rationing system remains largely broken.

Russia is expected to pay all the costs related to the deployment of North Korean troops, including their wages, which observers estimate will be at least \$2,000 per month for each person. About 90% to 95% of their stipends will likely go to Kim's coffers, and the rest to the soldiers. This means one year of service in Russia would earn a North Korean soldier \$1,200 to \$2,400. That's big enough to prompt many young soldiers to volunteer for risky Russian tours, former soldiers say.

Ahn said North Korea will likely offer other incentives meant to elevate the social standings of soldiers, such as membership in the ruling Workers' Party and the right to move to Pyongyang, the country's showcase capital. Kang Mi-Jin, a defector who runs a company analyzing North Korea's economy, said even family members of soldiers sent to Russia could be given benefits such as good houses or entrance to good universities.

Choi Jung-hoon, a former first lieutenant in North Korea's army, said serving on foreign soil will attract many soldiers who are eager to see other countries for the first time.

North Koreans are barred from accessing foreign news and need state approval to move from one province to another within the country. North Korean construction, logging and other workers sent abroad to bring in foreign currency have often been called "slaves" by international human rights groups. But defectors testify that such overseas jobs are often better than staying in North Korea, and many used bribery and family connections to get them.

"North Korean soldiers would see going to Russia as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Ahn said.

Ahn and other observers say such views could change if the soldiers see colleagues dying in large numbers. They say many North Korean soldiers could surrender to Ukraine forces and ask for resettlement in South Korea.

North Korean soldiers have been trained on the Korean Peninsula's mountainous terrain and are not familiar with the largely flat plain battlefields in the Russian-Ukraine war. They also don't understand modern warfare, including drone use, because North Korea hasn't fought a big battle since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, experts say.

"My heart ached," said Choi, now leader of an activist group in Seoul, when he saw a Ukraine video purportedly showing undersized North Korean soldiers believed to be in their late teens or early 20s.

"None would think they are going to Russia to die," Choi said. "But I think they're cannon fodder because they will be sent to the most dangerous sites and will surely be killed."

Leader Kim Jong Un may also be hoping that his troop offer will push Russia to share sophisticated

and highly sensitive technology that he needs to perfect his nuclear-capable missiles. That transfer could depend on how long the war continues and how many more troops Kim will send.

Nam Sung-wook, a former director of a think tank run by South Korea's spy agency, said North Korea will likely get hundreds of millions of dollars because of the soldiers' wages. The soldiers will get direct experience of modern warfare but will likely die in large numbers, and Russia will be reluctant to hand over its high-tech missile technology, he said.

"North Korea will continue to hide its troop dispatches from its own people because the public will be agitated if they know their soldiers are being sent abroad to be killed," said Nam, who is now a professor at Korea University in South Korea.

Jobs report on eve of election will be among the most distorted in years

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four days before Election Day, the government will issue its final snapshot of hiring and unemployment in the United States after a presidential race in which voter perceptions of the economy have played a central role.

Yet Friday's report will include some of the most distorted monthly employment figures in years, with job growth having been held down temporarily in October by hurricanes and worker strikes.

So just as voters, politicians and Federal Reserve officials are looking for a clear read on the economy, they instead will get a muddied one. The report arrives as Republican allies of Donald Trump, seeking to cast doubt on the economy's health, have sought to undercut confidence in the credibility of the monthly jobs reports.

Trump and his supporters have repeatedly attacked the Biden-Harris administration for the spike in inflation that peaked two years ago before steadily cooling. Despite healthy job growth, few layoffs and low unemployment, Trump has also charged that the United States is a "failing nation" and has vowed that his plan to implement sweeping tariffs on all imported goods would restore millions of manufacturing jobs.

Typically, the monthly jobs data helps clarify how the economy is faring. But economists estimate that Hurricanes Helene and Milton, combined with the effects of the ongoing strike by Boeing machinists, will have reduced hiring last month by a significant number — roughly 60,000 to 100,000 jobs, most of them only temporarily.

All told, economists have estimated that Friday's report will show that just 120,000 jobs were added in October, according to the data provider FactSet. That is a decent number, though less than half of September's unexpectedly robust 254,000 gain. The unemployment rate is expected to remain at a low 4.1%.

Once the impact of the hurricanes and strikes are considered, those figures would still point to a solid job market, one that has shown surprising durability, buoyed by healthy consumer spending, in the face of the Fed's high interest rates.

"This is a really incredibly resilient economy," said Jane Oates, a former Labor Department official during the Obama administration. "People are spending. That's what's keeping this economy going."

Yet there may be other effects that the government has a harder time measuring. The Labor Department, for example, has said it thinks the strike by Boeing machinists, along with a smaller walkout by some hotel workers, reduced job growth by 41,000 in October. But some of Boeing's suppliers may also have shed jobs as the strike cut into their sales. It's not clear how much of an impact those job losses might have had on the October employment figures.

At the same time, the hurricane might have cost fewer jobs than economists expect. A worker would have to lose pay for an entire pay period — often two weeks — for their job to be considered lost in the government's data. Though many workers in North Carolina were likely out of work that long, it's not clear that in Florida, which has had more experience with hurricanes, employees would have missed that much work, Oates said.

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Economists at UBS noted that the big amusement parks in Orlando — Walt Disney World, Sea World and Universal — were closed only for two days after Hurricane Milton hit. And in some states, people will be hired as part of the cleanup and rebuilding efforts.

Friday's jobs report will be the last major snapshot of the economy before the Fed's next meeting Nov. 7, two days after the election. Most economists expect the Fed to reduce its benchmark rate by a quarter-point, after an outsize half-point cut in September.

If the jobs report suggests that hiring stayed healthy in October excluding the effects of the hurricanes and strike, Republican political figures may question its credibility again. Last month, when the government reported that hiring had jumped unexpectedly in September, Sen. Marco Rubio, a Republican from Florida, made the baseless charge that the report was "fake."

Yet no mainstream economists share such skepticism. Other indicators — such as the number of people seeking unemployment benefits, data that is compiled mostly by the states — also point to a still-solid job market.

"I've been horrified by the degree to which politicians have made that argument," said Julia Pollak, chief economist at ZipRecruiter. The Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, which produces the jobs report, "is the most transparent government agency on the planet," she said.

Trump and other critics have seized on the revisions that are often made to the government's initial estimates as evidence for their false claim that the Biden-Harris administration has manipulated the data. In August, the BLS said it expected to downgrade its estimate of total jobs in the United States as of last March by 818,000, or about 0.5% of the total. During the presidential debate in September, Trump asserted that the revision reflected "fraud" in the employment data. Yet under his own administration, the BLS revised job counts downward in 2019, by 514,000.

Erica Groshen, a senior economic adviser at Cornell University and a former commissioner of the BLS, explained that such revisions are "not a bug; they are a feature" of the government's data-gathering.

"BLS wants to get as much timely information out there as possible, but it also wants to have the information be as accurate as possible," Groshen said.

The way it does that is to release early data, based on surveys of tens of thousands of businesses. Revisions are subsequently made based on late-arriving data from more companies and from actual job counts derived from unemployment benefit agencies.

Trump's running mate, Sen. JD Vance, has often sought to undercut positive hiring data by arguing that all the jobs created in the past year have gone to immigrants.

That claim rests on the fact that the number of "foreign-born" people with jobs, as BLS refers to them, increased 1.2 million in September from a year earlier, while the number of native-born workers with jobs fell by about 800,000.

Yet the "foreign-born" category includes people who have been in the United States for years, including from childhood, and who are now citizens, as well as recent immigrants, both authorized and unauthorized.

More significantly, native-born Americans have been retiring in droves, one reason why so many employers have often had difficulty filling jobs. As the huge baby boom generation ages, the proportion of Americans ages 65 and older has jumped to 17.3%, up from just 13.1% in 2010, according to Census Bureau data.

And the unemployment rate for native-born Americans, at 3.8%, is actually lower than the jobless rate for foreign-born workers, at 4.2%.

How Mexican cartels manage the flow of migrants on their way to the US border

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

CIUDAD HIDALGO, Mexico (AP) — The first place where many migrants sleep after entering Mexico from Guatemala is inside a large structure, a roof above and fenced-in sides on a rural ranch. They call it the "chicken coop" and they don't get to leave until they pay the cartel that runs it.

Migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border have reached a four-year low, but days before the U.S.

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election, in which immigration is a key issue, migrants continue pouring into Mexico.

While U.S. authorities give much of the credit to their Mexican counterparts for stemming the flow to their shared border, organized crime maintains stricter control of who moves here than the handful of federal agents and National Guardsmen standing by the river.

Kidnapped migrants who pay the \$100 ransom for their release are stamped to signal that they have paid. From January to August, just in this southernmost corner of Mexico, more than 150,000 migrants were intercepted by immigration agents, considered a fraction of the flow.

Six migrant families interviewed by The Associated Press, who had passed through an initial abduction and were held until paying, explained how it works. A Mexican federal official corroborated much of it. They all requested anonymity for fear of reprisals.

Mexican immigration agents encountered 925,000 undocumented migrants through August of this year, well above last year's annual total and triple the 2021 total. Yet, they've only deported 16,500, a fraction of previous years.

Rev. Heyman Vázquez, a priest in Ciudad Hidalgo along the Suchiate river that divides Mexico and Guatemala, sees it daily.

"It's them (the cartel) that says who passes and who doesn't," Vázquez said. "The numbers of migrants that they take every day are big and they do it in front of the authorities."

Pay to continue north

On Monday morning, Luis Alonso Valle, a 43-year-old Honduran traveling with his wife and two children, climbed off a raft lashed together with truck inner tubes and boards that had carried them across the Suchiate to Mexico.

They hadn't made it 50 yards toward Ciudad Hidalgo before three men approached on a motorcycle to tell them they couldn't keep walking. Then seeing journalists they left. The family looked scared.

In Ciudad Hidalgo's central plaza, Valle asked for a van that could take them the 23 miles (37 kilometers) to Tapachula, considered the main entry point for southern Mexico. Climbing aboard, the driver asked in a whisper that journalists stop recording. "They (organized crime) are going to stop me," he said.

This is often how migrants arrive at the ranch. Taxi or van drivers working for the cartel take them there and hand them over. They're forced to sleep on the ground.

"There were more than 500 people there, some had been there 10, 15 days," said a Venezuelan woman who was released Sunday with her husband and two children. "Whoever doesn't have money stays and whoever decides to pay leaves," she said.

A 28-year-old baker from Ecuador was escorted to a bank to withdraw money to free himself, his wife, daughter and four other relatives. His family was held as insurance until he returned.

Once the payment is made, migrants' photos are taken and their skin stamped.

Gunmen stop vans and taxis headed to Tapachula and check for the stamps. Those without them are sent back. Migrants said that once they got to Tapachula they were told to wash them off to avoid trouble with other gangs.

According to the nongovernmental organization Fray Matias de Cordova in Tapachula, at least one-third of the hundreds of migrants they have attended to this year arrived stamped. Director Enrique Vidal Olasoga said those who cannot pay are often sexually assaulted.

None of the families interviewed by AP said they had been harmed.

The official with knowledge of migrants' statements to investigators said that more than 100 migrants freed by security forces in Ciudad Hidalgo in September, as well as a group of several dozen migrants who were shot at by soldiers on Oct. 1, had passed through similar kidnapping and extortion scenarios.

Cartel-controlled border

Organized crime's strict control at Mexico's southern border tracks with the growing violence generated by the struggle between the Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation cartels. The state of Chiapas is only one of their battlegrounds, but it is key to controlling smuggling routes for people, drugs and weapons from Central America. Migrants have become the most lucrative commodity, according to experts.

The cartels' increasingly aggressive presence is becoming an obstacle to the organizations trying to help migrants. Earlier this month, gunmen killed an outspoken Catholic priest in Chiapas. And Vidal said that sometimes the groups prevent the migrants from receiving humanitarian aid.

President Claudia Sheinbaum has said the government is dealing with the violence, but refuses to confront the cartels. She appears to maintain tactics that began under the administration of former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, to cycle migrants from the north back down to the south exhausting their resources and keeping them far from the U.S. border — exposing them to more kidnappings and extortion.

Ciudad Hidalgo Mayor Elmer Vázquez claimed to not know anything about migrant safe houses operating in the area and said his town always looks after migrants.

But Rev. Vázquez (no relation to the mayor), who has spent two decades defending migrants, said the prosecutor's office, National Guard, special prosecutor for crimes against migrants do nothing even when crimes are reported.

"They are colluding with organized crime and, of course, they make it look like they're doing their jobs," he said.

Race against time

In August, the U.S. government expanded access to CBP One, an online portal used to schedule appointments to request asylum at the border, south to Chiapas. Mexico requested the move to relieve pressure migrants felt to travel north to get an appointment.

The Mexican government followed by opening "mobility corridors" to help migrants with CBP One appointments to travel safely from southern Mexico to the U.S. border. The appointments are just a first step, but most applicants are allowed to wait out the lengthy process from inside the U.S.

But from Sept. 9 to Oct. 11, Mexico's National Immigration Institute said it had transported only 846 migrants from Tapachula to the northern border. Others traveling on their own have told of being extorted by Mexican authorities and kidnapped — again — by cartels near the northern border, forcing them to miss their appointments.

Donald Trump has said he would do away with CBP One and close other legal routes to enter the U.S.

In Tapachula on Tuesday, hundreds of migrants with confirmed CBP One appointments waited outside Mexican immigration agency offices for permits that would allow them to travel north.

Jeyson Uqueli, a 28-year-old Honduran, had slept outside the office to make sure he was the first in line when it opened. He was traveling alone, but planned to reunite with his sister in New Orleans.

To have any chance at doing so, he would have to make it to the border between Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Mexico by Nov. 6 for his CBP One appointment. He planned to fly from Tapachula to the northern city of Monterrey and then take a bus to Matamoros.

He was nervous about making it in time, but relieved to have the appointment, "because Donald Trump is going to come in and get rid of (them)," he said.

China's new crew has arrived at space station in sign of growing influence in space field

By NG HAN GUAN Associated Press

JIUQUAN, China (AP) — A Chinese space ship carrying a three-person crew docked with its orbiting space station Tuesday as the country seeks to expand its exploration of outer space in competition with the United States, even as it looks for cooperation from other nations.

The team of two men and one woman will replace the astronauts who have lived on the Tiangong space station for the last six months, conducting a variety of experiments and maintaining the structure.

They are expected to stay until April or May of next year. The new mission commander, Cai Xuzhe, went to space in the Shenzhou-14 mission in 2022, while the other two, Song Lingdong and Wang Haoze, are first-time space travelers. Song and Wang were born in the 1990s and are graduates of the third wave of Chinese astronaut recruitment, having undergone a rigorous testing and training process taking years.

Early Wednesday morning, China declared the launch and entry into outerspace a "complete success."

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The Shenzhou-19 spaceship carrying the trio blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China at 4:27 a.m. local time atop a Long March-2F rocket, the backbone of China's crewed space missions.

"The crew condition is good and the launch has been successful," the state broadcaster China Central Television announced.

China built its own space station after being excluded from the International Space Station, mainly because of U.S. concerns over the People's Liberation Army, the Chinese Communist Party's military arm's overall control over the space program. China's moon program is part of a growing rivalry with the U.S. and others, including Japan and India.

The new team will replace the astronauts who have lived on the Tiangong space station for the last six months and will overlap with them for a couple of days or more. They are expected to stay until April or May of next year.

The new mission commander, Cai Xuzhe, went to space in the Shenzhou-14 mission in 2022, while the other two, Song Lingdong and Wang Haoze, are first-time space travelers, born in the 1990s.

Song was an air force pilot and Wang an engineer with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. Wang will be the crew's payload specialist and the third Chinese woman aboard a crewed mission.

Besides putting a space station into orbit, the Chinese space agency has landed an explorer on Mars. It aims to put a person on the moon before 2030, which would make China the second nation after the United States to do so. It also plans to build a research station on the moon and has already transferred rock and soil samples from the moon in a first for any nation in decades, and placed a rover on the little-explored far side of the moon in a global first.

The U.S. still leads in space exploration and plans to land astronauts on the moon for the first time in more than 50 years, though NASA pushed the target date back to 2026 earlier this year.

The new Chinese crew will perform spacewalks and install new equipment to protect the station from space debris, some of which was created by China.

According to NASA, large pieces of debris have been created by "satellite explosions and collisions." China's firing of a rocket to destroy a redundant weather satellite in 2007 and the "accidental collision of American and Russian communications satellites in 2009 greatly increased the amount of large debris in orbit," it said.

China's space authorities say they have measures in place in case their astronauts have to return to Earth earlier.

China launched its first crewed mission in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the former Soviet Union and the United States. The space program is a source of enormous national pride and a hallmark of China's technological advances over the past two decades.

Volpe slam sparks comeback after Freeman homer, Yanks beat Dodgers 11-4 to force World Series Game 5

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Fifteen years after little Anthony Volpe watched the Yankees parade with the World Series trophy, he saved their season and kept alive hopes for an improbable title.

New York had moved closer to getting swept in the World Series when Freddie Freeman hit another first-inning home run.

Volpe, a New York native whose family idolizes the pinstripes going back generations, turned on a knee-high slider and perhaps reshaped the Series, too. His third-inning grand slam sparked the Yankees to an 11-4 win over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday night that forced a Game 5.

"The place was shaking. I felt the ground literally shaking," Yankees catcher Austin Wells said.

Wells and Gleyber Torres added homers for the Yankees, who broke open the game with a five-run eighth.

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New York, which had scored just seven runs in the first three games, had some of its swagger back. Wells spoke after the game wearing a "Fully Operational Death Star" Yankees T-shirt, referring to general manager Brian Cashman's 2018 quip.

Fans in the sellout crowd of 49,354 chanted Volpe's name during the ninth inning.

"It's like you finally got to see the top blow off Yankee Stadium in a World Series game," Aaron Boone said after his first World Series win as New York's manager. "When Anthony hits that ball, it was like fun to see Yankee Stadium erupt."

Wells said the dire situation after Monday's loss had relieved the pressure.

"Why not go out tomorrow and have fun?" he described as the mood.

Freeman homered for his sixth straight Series game when he deposited a slider from rookie Luis Gil into the right-field short porch following Mookie Betts' one-out double. He became the first player to homer in the first four games of a World Series and his streak of long balls in six straight games is one more than Houston's George Springer 2017 and '19.

"I'll look back on it after hopefully we win and get this thing done tomorrow," Freeman said. "Pretty cool. Obviously, hopefully I can keep it going tomorrow."

Game 5 is Wednesday night, with the Yankees ace Gerrit Cole and the Dodgers' Jack Flaherty meeting in a rematch of Game 1.

Seeking to become the first team to overcome a 3-0 Series deficit, New York surged ahead 5-2 on Alex Verdugo's RBI grounder in the second and Volpe's drive against Daniel Hudson.

"All it takes is just one swing," Yankees captain Aaron Judge said.

Volpe sent Hudson's first pitch into the left-field seats.

"I pretty much blacked out as soon as I saw it go over the fence," Volpe said.

A Gold Glove shortstop in his second big league season, the 23-year-old Volpe also doubled and became the first player in Series history with a grand slam and a pair of stolen bases in one game. He was 8 when the Yankees last won the Series.

Volpe scored New York's first run when he walked after falling behind 0-2 in the second inning. He made a baserunning blunder when he headed back to second to tag up and failed to score on Wells' double off the center-field wall — pounding his own leg in anger. Verdugo followed with an RBI grounder.

"They're going to fight," Betts said. "If you made it this far, you have a resilient team that's going to fight the whole time."

Los Angeles closed within 6-4 in a two-run fifth that included Will Smith's homer off Gil and an RBI grounder by Freeman. Despite a sprained right ankle, Freeman beat a relay to avoid an inning-ending double play on what originally was ruled an out but was reversed in a video review.

Wells hit a second-deck homer in the sixth against Landon Knack, and Verdugo added another run-scoring grounder in the eighth — capping an 11-pitch at-bat — ahead of Torres' three-run homer off Brent Honeywell.

Tim Hill, winning pitcher Clay Holmes, Mark Leiter Jr., Luke Weaver and Tim Mayza strung together five innings of one-hit scoreless relief with seven strikeouts, and the Yankees avoided what would have been their first losing Series sweep since 1976.

"As far as outcomes, to have six guys in your 'pen that are feeling good, rested, I feel good about that," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

Twenty-one of the previous 24 teams to take 3-0 Series leads went on to sweeps, all but the 1910 Philadelphia Athletics against the Chicago Cubs, the 1937 Yankees against the New York Giants and the 1970 Baltimore Orioles against the Cincinnati Reds. All three of those Series ended in five games.

The 2004 Boston Red Sox, sparked by a stolen base by Roberts, are the only team to overcome a 3-0 deficit in any round, beating the Yankees in the AL Championship Series.

Judge drove in his first run of the Series with an RBI single in the eighth and is 2 for 15 in the four games. Dodgers sensation Shohei Ohtani also is 2 for 15 after going 1 for 4 with a single, his first hit since partially separating his left shoulder in Game 2.

New York stopped a seven-game Series losing streak against the Dodgers dating to 1981. The Yankees got their first seven RBIs from the bottom three hitters in their batting order, Volpe, Wells and Verdugo, who had entered 4 for 32 with three RBIs in the Series.

Volpe was interviewed after the game by former Yankees captain Derek Jeter, now a Fox broadcaster. "It's my dream, but it was all my friends' dreams, all my cousins' dreams, probably my sister's dream, too. But winning the World Series was first and foremost, by far. Nothing else compares. So still got a lot of work to do," Volpe said.

Former Boston star David Ortiz, also a Fox commentator, gave Volpe a shirt.

"I've got it in my locker," Volpe said. "I can't wear it. It's got him and Red Sox stuff on it."

UP NEXT

Cole allowed one run over six-plus innings in the opener -- Kiké Hernández tripled in the fifth as right fielder Juan Soto took a poor route, then scored on Smith's sacrifice fly. Flaherty gave up two runs in 5 1/3 innings, a two-run homer by Giancarlo Stanton.

How Putin views the choice between Harris and Trump, and what the election means for Russia

By The Associated Press undefined

The question posed to Vladimir Putin in September about the U.S. election drew a wry smile and an arched eyebrow from the Russian president.

Asked whether he preferred Donald Trump or Kamala Harris, Putin caught listeners up short with his teasing reply that also included a gentle jab at President Joe Biden.

"Our 'favorite,' if you can call it that, was the current president, Mr. Biden," he told the audience at an economic forum in the Far East port of Vladivostok.

"But he was removed from the race, and he recommended all his supporters to support Ms. Harris. Well, we will do so — we will support her," he said sardonically, citing her "expressive and infectious laugh" that shows "she's doing well."

The election Tuesday carries significant stakes for the Kremlin, and despite Putin's noncommittal and somewhat teasing answer, it appeared to encapsulate Russia's view as a choice between two unappealing possibilities.

Analysts say neither offers much promise of improving relations that have hit their lowest point since the Cold War.

Harris, the current vice president, has taken a hard line against Russia, while Trump, the former president, is known for his admiration of Putin. Still, at the September gathering, Putin complained that when Trump was in office, there were "so many restrictions and sanctions against Russia like no other president has ever introduced before him."

Timothy Colton of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies said that the Kremlin leadership is "by and large convinced nothing good is going to come in the election from Russia's point of view."

But he added that on the whole, Trump "is probably their preference; he's more of a known quantity."

Key issues for Russia as the U.S. election looms:

What will happen to aid for Ukraine?

Harris is seen as likely to continue the Biden administration's massive military and economic support for Ukraine as Russia's invasion stretches toward a third year.

Trump has bragged that his rapport with Putin and respect from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy are so strong that he could negotiate an end to the war "in 24 hours." He declines to detail his strategy, but recent remarks criticizing sanctions in general suggest he could lift those against Russia as an inducement to help settle the conflict.

During their debate, Trump twice refused to directly answer whether he wanted Ukraine to win the war, while Harris praised Western support for Kyiv and urged it to continue.

"Otherwise, Putin would be sitting in Kyiv with his eyes on the rest of Europe. Starting with Poland,"

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she said.

Trump's running-mate Sen. JD Vance has mentioned proposals that could suggest Trump's thinking: having Ukraine demilitarize territory occupied by Russia and agree to permanent neutrality. Those terms would be anathema to Kyiv, but Trump has shown little sympathy for Ukraine, saying Zelenskyy "should never have let that war start."

Harris has not specified how her position would differ from Biden's. The U.S. has provided Ukraine more than \$59.5 billion in weapons and assistance since Russia invaded in 2022. She has said previously it would be foolish to risk global alliances the U.S. has established and decried Putin's "brutality."

A Harris win "likely promises continued U.S. support as long as the administration can maintain congressional backing," the International Crisis Group said in a commentary, though it said she could seek an end to the fighting more actively than Biden did. Growing congressional animosity to vast outlays of aid for Ukraine could hobble or reshape her strategy.

How will the U.S. approach Russia on human rights?

Harris has confronted Russia directly on such matters, particularly in the case of the death in prison of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. She was among the first foreign leaders to comment on his death, calling it "a further sign of Putin's brutality."

Trump put off comment for days, then did not connect Putin to the matter. He likened Navalny's punishment to his own fraud prosecution, calling his case "a form of Navalny."

Trump has called for a bill declaring there to be only two genders and pledged to keep transgender women out of women's sports — positions that parallel how Russia under Putin has rolled back LGBTQ+ rights and lauded "traditional values."

His characterization of Democrats and his rivals as "the enemy within" is little different in spirit than Russia's accelerating suppression of opposition.

How will NATO be affected?

Trump has wrestled with other members of the NATO alliance, demanding that they meet the agreed spending levels for their militaries in their national budgets. He said that as president, he warned leaders that he would not only refuse to defend nations that don't meet those targets, but that Russia could "do whatever the hell they want" to such countries.

Trump also has questioned the NATO charter's mutual-defense clause, asking in an interview why the United States should be obliged to defend the "very aggressive people" of NATO member Montenegro.

Harris says the United States' commitment to NATO is "ironclad." She has not weighed in on whether she supports Ukraine becoming an alliance member.

What about arms control deals with Russia?

Putin has repeatedly brandished the nuclear sword as he seeks to deter the West from supporting Ukraine.

The last remaining nuclear arms control treaty between Moscow and Washington, New START, is to expire in 2026, a year after the new administration takes office, and its prospects are troubled.

Biden renewed the treaty quickly upon taking office, and Harris could be expected to follow that support for the pact that limits the number of intercontinental nuclear missile launchers.

Russia suspended participation in 2023 — although it did not withdraw — and the U.S. retaliated with measures including halting the sharing of information on missiles' location and status.

Trump, although he has warned of the threat of "nuclear warming," took steps while in office to dismantle the arms control regime, including pulling out of the INF Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear weapons — which banned ground-based nuclear and conventional missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometers (310-3,410 miles),

While in office, Trump called for a new nuclear pact that would include both Russia and China.

Inside 'the weave': How Donald Trump's rhetoric has grown darker and windier

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

DULUTH, Ga. (AP) — No scene has dominated U.S. politics since 2015 quite like Donald Trump on stage, waxing on for an hour-plus in front of a chorus of red "Make America Great Again" hats.

The stream-of-consciousness routine, the interrupting one of his thoughts with the next, is not a polemic Cicero or Lincoln would recognize. The former president and Republican nominee calls his style of speech "the weave," whipsawing from dystopian warnings to light-hearted storytelling to policy pronouncements.

"You make a speech, and my speeches last a long time because of the weave, you know, I mean, I weave stories into it," Trump explained last week to popular podcaster Joe Rogan. "If you don't — if you just read a teleprompter, nobody's going to be very excited. You've got to weave it out. So you — but you always have to — as you say, you always have to get right back to work. Otherwise, it's no good. But the weave is very, very important. Very few weavers around. But it's a big strain on your — you know, it's a big — it's a lot of work. It's a lot of work."

Over the closing weeks of his third presidential campaign, Trump's presentation has grown as disjointed as ever and notably darker. But the crowds keep coming, cheering his nationalistic populism, laughing at the insults and chanting along, fists raised, with his benedictory pledges to make America strong, proud, healthy, wealthy and, of course, great again.

Trump's speeches, while never the same, all employ consistent devices and themes. He wields humor, braggadocio, anecdotes, grievances and grand promises. There are non sequiturs, fantastical falsehoods and withering attacks on opponents. He sprinkles in vulgarities and superlatives. There are even the occasional stints read from the teleprompters he mocks when any other politician uses them — and then claims that he doesn't use teleprompters or doesn't need them.

Vice President Kamala Harris, Trump's Democratic opponent, encourages voters to see him in person, suggesting doing so only affirms that he is erratic and unfit for office. Other critics compare his extended showmanship to authoritarian leaders. Or they argue "the weave" is simply cover for the cognitive decline of a 78-year-old who would be the oldest newly sworn U.S. president in history.

Here is a study of "the weave," deployed on one night last week in suburban Atlanta.

Epic entrance and just enough details — even lies — make the case

Perhaps the most important moment is Trump's entrance. His walkout music, a device that evokes his brief turn as a professional wrestling promoter, is Lee Greenwood's "God Bless The U.S.A." The former president stands on stage, silent and serious, as the crowd sings along.

At a recent Turning Point USA rally in Duluth, Georgia, pyrotechnics and large video screens flanking him at center stage added to the effect, as his on-screen likeness towered over the crowd. Trump looked out over thousands of cellphones recording the spectacle.

With the last notes of Greenwood's opening hymn, Trump immediately relaxed and praised his audience as "thousands of proud, hardworking Americans and patriots, which is what you are."

Then, in a more formal tone he seemed to shift to the prompters: "I'd like to begin by asking a very simple question. Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"

It's the famous question Republican Ronald Reagan used to defeat Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter in 1980, and Trump uses it as a way to tie Harris to President Joe Biden. But as soon as the crowd in Duluth yelled "no," Trump moved to sweeping promises, hyperbole and superlatives that doubled as indictments of Biden and Harris.

"I will end inflation. I will stop the invasion of criminals into our country," he pledged, suggesting all migrants are criminals.

"We're going to fix our nation fast," he said. "America will be bigger, better, bolder, richer, safer and stronger than ever before. This election is a choice between whether we will have four more years of incompetence, failure and disaster, or whether we will begin the four greatest years in the history of our country."

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Biden and Harris aren't just bad, in Trump's language. He called them "the worst president" and "the worst vice president" ever. Harris, he warned, would "destroy your family's finances forever." He blames Harris alone for "an open border," taking liberties with immigration and crime statistics and suggesting, falsely, that the vice president singlehandedly controls U.S. immigration policy.

He slipped in that Harris "got no votes" — a reference to her becoming the Democratic nominee after Biden dropped out following party primaries. "Therefore," Trump insisted, "she is a threat to democracy" — a Trumpian staple projecting onto his opponents their most aggressive attacks against him.

By the time he was done in Duluth, he had lampooned Harris as a "low-IQ individual" and "not a smart person."

Thousands laughed at each broadside.

Transitions and accuracy are never necessary

Trump does not speak in a linear pattern as he builds to a crescendo. From his first Harris takedowns, he moved to expressions of compassion for Hurricane Helene victims and then jarringly to one of his favorite subjects: his public standing.

"Our hearts are with you and we are praying for you — the polls, despite everything. The polls," he said. "Do you see what's happening here? Here, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee? And Georgia. The polls. The polls are through the roof."

Minutes later, during an audible crowd lull, he dropped in his signature "MAGA" slogan to elicit cheers.

"What a nice crowd this is!" he answers with a chuckle. "What a nice crowd."

He bounced back to the prompter for numbers framing inflation's effects on U.S. households. He asked, "should I sue" CBS and "60 Minutes" for, in his words, manipulating Harris interview answers that were "from the loony bin."

"It's election interference and fraud," he said, projecting charges that are part of felony criminal cases against him.

Trump mocked Harris for saying she will raise taxes, but misrepresented her proposals as applying universally. (She targets corporations and the wealthiest individual filers.) Trump's 2017 tax cuts, meanwhile, were "the largest tax cuts in history," he said. (A charitable interpretation, at best, that ignores inflation.)

Specifics, though, are not the bottom line

Timothy and Amanda Browning reached different conclusions about Trump's style after driving from their Georgia mountain town of Lula to attend their first Trump rally.

"I liked it, because it shows how authentic he is," said Timothy Browning. "There are lulls — but you've got to stick with him because there's always a zinger coming."

Amanda Browning laughed as she recalled leaning over to her husband to whisper that Trump "sure could use a speechwriter."

Still, the co-owners of an event space and catering business in Lula reaffirmed their loyalties to the former president.

Timothy sported a T-shirt that had a sexist insult of Harris coined by some conservatives after Biden named her his running mate in 2020. Browning said, though, that he does not consider himself, Trump or the former president's supporters angry.

Instead, the Brownings keyed on Trump's first-term economy and his pledges for an encore term. Talking about their business, they recounted specific price increases they've seen since pandemic-era inflation. They were not interested in pandemic supply chain interruptions or Russia's invasion of Ukraine roiling world oil markets. Trump, they said, presided over a better situation for them than Biden and, by extension, Harris.

Timothy Browning summed up his takeaway in Trumpian terms.

"I hear him," Browning said, "putting America first."

We may not know the next president on Election Day.

This Arizona swing county could be why

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Inside a squat building ringed with a chainlink fence and concrete barriers in downtown Phoenix, election workers on Nov. 5 will begin a grindingly slow tally of every ballot cast in the vast expanse of stucco and saguaro that is Maricopa County, Arizona.

In what has become the nation's ultimate swing county, the count here could determine whether Democrat Kamala Harris or Republican Donald Trump will be the next U.S. president. It also is likely to determine the winner of a closely watched race that could decide which party controls the U.S. Senate.

It is one of the most consequential battlegrounds in the country. That means voters, campaigns and people around the world sometimes must wait more than a week to learn who won the county, and with it, statewide races in the swing state of Arizona. This year, election officials warn it could take as long as 13 days to tabulate all of the ballots in Maricopa.

The drawn-out count has made the county a center of election conspiracy theories spawned by Trump. It's also made Maricopa a key part of the former president's campaign to install those who supported overturning the last election in 2020 into positions overseeing future ones.

But the reason it takes so long is simple. With its 4.5 million residents, Maricopa has a higher population than nearly half of the states in the country and is home to 60% of Arizona's voters. Election workers must follow voting laws — which were approved by Republican-controlled legislatures — that slow the count. And it is one of the few counties in the U.S. that is so evenly divided politically that races are often close.

That's made the county "the center of everything," says Joe Garcia, a leader of the Latino activist group Chicanos Por La Causa, noting it is the population center of Arizona, its center of growth and home to the state capital.

"So the power structure, the money and the growth is all here in Maricopa County," he said. "If you can win Maricopa County, you're probably going to win the whole state of Arizona."

Maricopa's position isn't just at the center of Arizona politics. The county has been a regular stop for presidential candidates as they look to clinch Arizona's 11 electoral votes — including Trump and Harris and their campaigns this year — and it is a fulcrum on which nail-biter races that can determine control of the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate pivot.

The fast-growing county also has become home to a stew of key demographic groups in the battle for the White House: a growing Latino population, retirees, younger, newly arrived voters and a broad and deep conservative population wrestling with a pivotal splinter group — college-educated, more affluent Republicans who've soured on the party's more pugnacious, and at times anti-democratic, turn under Trump.

It wasn't always like that.

A 'small town' booms

Judy Schwiebert grew up in western Phoenix in the 1960s, when the now-booming city was what she describes as "a pretty small town" and the biggest event of the year was the three-day rodeo.

Everything stopped for the rodeo parade, as horse-drawn carriages, marching bands and dancers made their way through town. Schools closed for the full three days, recalls Schwiebert, who is now a Democratic state representative. In 1969, the county was still home to fewer than 1 million people, less than one-quarter the size it is today. With about 4.5 million residents, Maricopa County now has a population similar to the entire state of Kentucky.

"Over the years here I've seen it grow and grow," Schwiebert said.

The area became a magnet for conservatives like John Kavanagh, a retired New York Port Authority Police officer. After 20 years of policing, Kavanagh and his wife headed west, to Maricopa County. They went in 1993, because his wife couldn't stand the cold in New York and Florida had too much humidity and was "overstocked with New Yorkers."

Kavanagh was like a lot of other people who moved to Arizona in the 1990s — middle-class folks fleeing colder places and what they saw as economic and political dysfunction for a sunny, affordable, and what

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they perceived as a cleaner city.

"A lot of people came from those other cities, and they don't want a repeat of what they left," Kavanagh said.

In 1993, the county's population was 2.3 million. Republicans dominated the state legislature and Maricopa County politics. As a young state of transplants, it was easier than in other places for new arrivals to enter Arizona politics. Kavanagh was elected to the state's House of Representatives in 2006. Now he is serving his first term in the state Senate; the county's population has nearly doubled since his arrival, and its politics have changed.

Arizona now has a Democratic governor, elected in 2022. Both its U.S. senators — Mark Kelly and Kyrsten Sinema — were elected as Democrats, though Sinema has since become an independent.

Kavanagh attributes the county's leftward shift to a wide array of factors — from societal changes he sees as driven by the media and academia to people moving to Arizona for higher-paying jobs that require more education.

"Hopefully there's a point where people look and see what the result will be if that trend continues," Kavanagh said, predicting a strong November for his Republican Party. "Just look to L.A., look to New York, you know, look to Seattle. That's where the continuing shift left will still occur. So let's do a hard stop and maybe go a few steps back to the right."

Clearly, many who made the move to Maricopa over the past few decades were not like Kavanagh. The county's conservative, low-tax approach attracted businesses as well as individuals, and those companies then attracted workers who sometimes were different from the older transplants to Arizona.

Kevin Henderson moved to Maricopa in 2010 at age 23, after living in Chicago and Portland, Oregon. A Democrat who works in catering, he was pleasantly surprised by life in a then-red state and its residents' live-and-let-live attitude.

"The people were very friendly," said Henderson, now 37. "We are fortunate that, with such an eclectic group of people, we are very understanding and accepting of other people's views."

At the same time that people like Henderson came from other places inside the United States, increased migration to Arizona from Mexico also prompted political change.

In the 1990s, President Bill Clinton's administration strengthened California's border, pushing illegal migration to Arizona, which already had a robust Hispanic population. Immigration quickly became a political flashpoint, leading many in the growing Latino population living in Maricopa legally to feel that Republicans were demonizing them.

The biggest shift came in 2010, when Arizona's Republican-controlled legislature passed a law allowing local police to stop people they suspected of being in the country illegally. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the law, but it energized the state's Latinos to organize against Republicans.

The law, which opponents dubbed "Show Me Your Papers," was the harshest anti-immigrant law in the nation, and it changed Arizona politics, Latino activist Garcia said. It led to boycotts and protests. Nationally and internationally, people knew about Republican Sheriff Joe Arpaio — who pushed for the law — and his crime sweeps aimed at immigrants.

"That galvanized the Latino community like nothing ever had ever done before. It galvanized the Latino community more than all the voter groups put together," Garcia said. "It was a curse, but it was a silver lining. It was a blessing because Latinos figured out that, you know what? If we're not involved politically, then we lose."

Republicans swept the state in 2010 and their hammerlock on Maricopa County seemed likely to continue even amid growing Latino dissatisfaction.

But that would change, as a new GOP leader emerged.

Republicans reconsider

The first rumblings that Maricopa County could swing against the long-dominant Republican Party came in 2016.

Even as Trump was winning the county and Arizona, Republican Sheriff Arpaio lost his bid for a seventh

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term. Arpaio was something of a precursor to Trump, known for his hunger for media attention and jousting with journalists, a hardline stance on immigration and a willingness to go after his critics — he even arrested a Republican county supervisor who criticized him. Trump ultimately pardoned Arpaio after the sheriff was convicted of contempt of court for refusing to obey an injunction against racial profiling of Latinos.

Gordon Keig voted against Arpaio. A lifelong Republican, Keig was increasingly uneasy with his party's growing hostility to immigration and SB 1070, the controversial 2010 law. Though he's a developer and fan of low taxes, Keig was frustrated at how the GOP state legislature kept cutting Arizona's already-low taxes, jeopardizing education funding.

Keig couldn't bring himself to vote for Trump or his 2016 rival, Hillary Clinton. And once Trump came into office and began what Keig saw as his erratic, feud-driven approach to governing — including fighting with Arizona's popular senior Republican Sen. John McCain, whose grandchildren Keig's own daughters knew — Keig couldn't take it anymore. He switched his registration to the Democratic Party.

He did get some pushback. Keig said some friends questioned how he could become a Democrat, but others understood.

"I just felt like the Republican values weren't, weren't there for me anymore," he said. "But I think, you know, even some of my close friends that are still very, you know, active Republican Party members, understand and accept because they, I think they may agree with me that (what) buoyed a lot of the party has gone in a completely different direction."

In 2020, Keig voted for Democrat Joe Biden. The change by voters like him is visible by comparing Maricopa's votes in the 2012 presidential election with 2020. A crescent of more affluent neighborhoods ringing central Phoenix from the north to the southeastern edge, where a new Intel chip plant has attracted high-tech workers, switched from Republican to Democratic. Local political operatives dubbed the area "the flip zone."

The flip zone largely tracks where Maricopa's more educated residents have clustered. Once less educated than the national average, the county now boasts a slightly higher share of adults with four-year-college degrees than the national average — a key indicator of voting Democratic in the age of Trump.

As Maricopa County's political leaning changed, so did the state's. In every presidential election since 2000, the Republican had won both the county and the state, though Trump's 2016 margin over Hillary Clinton was smaller than previous GOP victories. But in 2020, Democrat Biden won the county, and Arizona.

Trump falsely claimed he won Arizona after his 2020 loss, and he and his allies assailed anyone who argued otherwise.

Watching the reaction of some local Republicans after Biden won the state made Keig even more comfortable with his change.

When the Republican speaker of the Arizona House refused to award the state's electors to Trump, the former president's backers primaried him and forced him out of office. When Maricopa County's Republican supervisors refused Trump's demands to question the vote tally, they, too, were targeted. Threats against Maricopa County Supervisor Bill Gates got so bad he fled his house.

"These are people I really, really admired," Keig said. "And they were just run through the mud."

Denials and conspiracies

Trump's lie that he won Arizona made Maricopa County one of the nation's hotbeds of election denial and conspiracy theories.

After the 2020 election, Trump supporters turned up outside the county elections office, some armed and many waving Trump and American flags, for a "Stop the Steal" rally. His then-attorney, Rudy Giuliani, held hearings at a Phoenix hotel.

The Republican-controlled state Senate launched an error-riddled review of Maricopa's handling of the 2020 election that included inspecting ballots for signs of fibers showing they were secretly made in China. The county became something of a tourist attraction for election deniers who came from other states to watch the show.

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County Recorder Stephen Richer, a Republican who defended the accuracy of the county's election results, was singled out for criticism by Trump himself, and Richer and his family faced threats.

In 2022, Republicans who sided with Trump against Richer and the county supervisors ran for top state-wide offices, and all lost. The losing candidate for governor, Kari Lake, made so many claims about the election being stolen and allegations against Richer that he sued his fellow Republican for libel.

Lake is running for Senate this year against Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego.

Richer says the reason some Republicans remain skeptical of the way elections work in the county isn't because there's anything especially complicated or unusual in how it counts votes. It's because Maricopa — located in a onetime reliably red state where Biden in 2020 defeated Trump by a margin of about 11,000 votes — may be the best place to undermine confidence in national elections.

"I don't think it's the complexity of the process. Our process looks pretty similar to most Western states," Richer said. "I think it is that this is where the action is."

Indeed, Trump, in a campaign appearance in the county in 2023 called the county's Board of Supervisors, which shares election duties with the Recorder, the most important in the country.

The four Republicans on the board also rebuffed Trump's pleas to overturn the election in 2020. Two are retiring after threats, and a Trump ally won the GOP primary to replace one of them. A third was ousted in a primary by another Trump supporter.

In July, Richer lost his Republican primary. The winner, state Rep. Justin Heap, has questioned the ballot-counting process.

Part of what fuels the conspiracy theories is sheer disbelief that Maricopa, a national magnet for conservatives for decades, could go Democratic.

Michelle Ugenti-Rita is an Arizona native who sought a seat on the county Board of Supervisors but lost in a GOP primary in July. Speaking to a group of Republicans gathered in Scottsdale to watch the debate between Trump and Biden earlier this year, she denied the shift is due to actual votes.

"I am tired of the media colluding with the Board of Supervisors and gaslighting us to make us feel like we're liberal, like we're California," Ugenti-Rita told the crowd.

Still, many in Maricopa are keenly aware they're living on a partisan razor's edge, closely balanced between the two sides. Take Sandra Heyn, an 80-year-old retired teacher from California who came to the county three years ago to be closer to one of her grown sons.

She's a Republican and devout Lutheran who's uneasy about Trump, even though she voted for him in 2020. But she's bemused at how, when she meets people just in line at the supermarket, the conversation quickly turns to politics.

"I've had people, some people tell me, 'Oh, you're from California. We don't want anybody liberal coming here.' And then I've had other people say ... 'If you're not liberal, keep moving.'"

Why a complete count takes time

The conspiracists have seized on how Maricopa reports its ballot counts in one large burst after Election Day and then in dribs and drabs for more than another week, when it finally becomes clear who won. There are three main reasons for this — Maricopa's size, the closeness of races in the county and Arizona's voting laws, which were written and approved by Republicans.

Maricopa is the second-largest election jurisdiction in the nation. Only reliably Democratic Los Angeles County is larger.

Maricopa reports its results far faster than Los Angeles, but it takes longer to find out who won Maricopa, which creates a false impression of disorder in the vote count there.

The reason Maricopa takes longer is because Maricopa — and Arizona overall — is so evenly divided nowadays that a few thousand votes make the difference. So news organizations have to wait until virtually the last ballot is counted before declaring a winner.

In 2022, a Democrat won the state attorney general's race by 280 votes. In less competitive places, from Florida to California, the victor is usually clear within minutes of polls closing because the tens of thousands of outstanding ballots wouldn't be enough to close the gap.

This election, voters are casting an extra-long two-page ballot that takes longer to tabulate, so it could take up to 13 days before they finish counting, Deputy Elections Director Jennifer Liewer said. The timeline is similar to the number of days it has taken in recent elections to complete the count. Associated Press research found it took 13 days for Maricopa County to finish counting in the 2018 general election, 11 days in 2020 and 13 days in the 2022 midterms.

Arizona's mail voting law also drags out the count. It allows voters to return mail ballots by the close of polls on Election Day. In 2022, some 293,000 voters — representing one-fifth the total vote in Maricopa — dropped off their mail ballots on Election Day.

Mail ballots take longer to count because, before they can be tallied, the envelopes must be scanned, the ballots sorted and the voters' signatures inspected to ensure they're legitimate. Some states like Florida require all mail ballots to be in before Election Day so this process is over when the polls close. Because of Arizona law, when Maricopa's polls close it's just beginning.

Extending the count even longer is a provision in Arizona law that allows voters to "cure" their ballots up to five days after Election Day. That means if the election office thinks the signature on the ballot or some other technical detail is wrong, the voter has five more days to come in and fix it so the ballot counts.

Usually the number of cured ballots is relatively small, but in elections where every vote is essential to determining the winner, the curing process drags the suspense out even more.

Richer noted that, while these processes may sound overly complex to some in the U.S., they're things that Western states like Arizona have been doing for a century or more. Mail voting dates back to the 19th century in the region.

"We vote differently than most of the Eastern United States does," Richer said.

US economy is believed to have grown at a solid pace again last quarter

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Powered by consumer spending, the U.S. economy likely kept expanding at a healthy pace from July through September despite the pressure of still-high interest rates.

The Commerce Department is expected to report Wednesday that the gross domestic product — the economy's total output of goods and services — grew at a 2.6% annual pace last quarter, according to a survey of forecasters by the data firm FactSet. That would be down from a 3% annual rate in the April-June period. But it would still amount to a solid pace as Americans ponder the state of the economy in the final stretch of the presidential race.

Wednesday's report is the first of three estimates the government will make of GDP growth for the third quarter of the year. The U.S. economy, the world's biggest, has shown surprising resilience in the face of the much higher borrowing rates the Federal Reserve imposed in 2022 and 2023 in its drive to curb inflation. Despite widespread predictions that the economy would succumb to a recession, it has kept growing, with employers still hiring and consumers still spending.

In a sign that the nation's households, whose purchases drive most of the economy, will continue spending, the Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index posted its biggest monthly gain since March 2021. The proportion of consumers who expect a recession in the next 12 months dropped to its lowest point since the board first posed that question in July 2022.

At the same time, the nation's once-sizzling job market has lost some momentum. On Tuesday, the government reported that the number of job openings in the United States fell in September to its lowest level since January 2021. And employers have added an average of 200,000 jobs a month so far this year — a healthy number but down from a record 604,000 in 2021 as the economy rebounded from the pandemic recession, 377,000 in 2022 and 251,000 in 2023.

On Friday, the Labor Department is expected to report that the economy added 120,000 jobs in October. That gain, though, will probably have been significantly held down by the effects of Hurricanes Helene and Milton and by a strike at Boeing, the aviation giant, all of which temporarily knocked thousands of

people off payrolls.

At its most recent meeting last month, the Fed was satisfied enough with its progress against inflation — and concerned enough by the slowing job market — to slash its benchmark rate by a hefty half percentage point, its first and largest rate cut in more than four years. When it meets next week, the Fed is expected to announce another rate cut, this one by a more typical quarter-point.

The policymakers have also signaled that they expect to cut their key rate again at their final two meetings this year, in November and December. And they envision four more rate cuts in 2025 and two in 2026. The cumulative result of the Fed's rate cuts, over time, will likely be lower borrowing rates for consumers and businesses.

Inflation, which reached a four-decade high of 9.1% in June 2022, has tumbled to 2.4%, barely above the Fed's 2% target. But average prices still far exceed their pre-pandemic levels, which has exasperated many Americans and posed a challenge to Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential prospects in her race against former President Donald Trump. Most mainstream economists have suggested, though, that Trump's policy proposals, unlike Harris', would worsen inflation.

Trump says his New York rally marked by crude and racist insults was 'an absolute lovefest'

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON, MICHELLE L. PRICE and MICHAEL RUBINKAM Associated Press

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Urged by some allies to apologize for racist comments made by speakers at his weekend rally, Donald Trump took the opposite approach on Tuesday, saying it was an "honor to be involved" in such an event and calling the scene a "lovefest" — the same term he has used to describe the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Trump gathered supporters and reporters to his Mar-a-Lago resort two days after a massive rally at Madison Square Garden featured a number of crude remarks by various speakers, including a set by comedian Tony Hinchcliffe in which he joked that Puerto Rico was a "floating island of garbage." Some of Trump's top Republican allies have condemned the remarks, and his campaign took the rare step of publicly distancing itself from Hinchcliffe's joke, though not the other comments.

But given the opportunity to apologize at multiple events and in interviews Tuesday, Trump instead leaned in. Speaking at his Florida resort, he said that "there's never been an event so beautiful" as his Sunday rally in his hometown of New York.

"The love in that room. It was breathtaking," he said. "It was like a lovefest, an absolute lovefest. And it was my honor to be involved."

On Tuesday night, he told Fox News' Sean Hannity that he knows nothing about Hinchcliffe but said, "I can't imagine it's a big deal." He later agreed, though, that "probably he shouldn't have been there."

With just a week before Election Day, some Trump allies have voiced alarm that the rally, which was supposed to highlight the Republican presidential nominee's closing message in grand New York fashion, has instead served as a distraction and even a liability, given the electoral importance of Puerto Ricans who live in Pennsylvania and other key swing states.

"This is not a time to have anyone criticize Puerto Rico or Latinos," former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, who challenged Trump for the GOP presidential nomination and later endorsed him, said in an interview with Fox News Channel.

Trump later held a rally in Allentown, Pennsylvania, a city with a large Hispanic population, where Puerto Rico's shadow U.S. senator, Zoraida Buxo, joined him and defended the former president's record.

"We need this man to be our commander in chief," said Buxo, who cannot vote in the Senate because Puerto Rico is not a state. "He will make us feel safe and he will protect us."

Still, there was anger in Allentown. Ivet Figueroa, 61, stood outside the rally venue holding a trash can with the words "Trash Trump" on it.

She said of the insult and Trump: "The person who said it was vetted by him. So that's what he allowed, so he has to take responsibility for what he said. Now it's too late for saying 'sorry.' I don't want an apol-

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ogy, I want justice, and justice is on Nov. 5.”

The fallout from the Madison Square Garden event risked highlighting voters’ concerns about Trump’s rhetoric and penchant for controversy in the closing stretch as both campaigns are scrambling for votes. Speakers at the rally also made racist comments targeting Latinos, Black people, Jews and Palestinians, along with sexist insults directed at Trump’s Democratic rival, Vice President Kamala Harris, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

In an interview with ABC News earlier Tuesday, Trump claimed to not know Hinchcliffe but did not denounce what he said.

“I don’t know him. Someone put him up there. I don’t know who he is,” Trump said, according to the network, insisting that he hadn’t heard Hinchcliffe’s comments. When asked what he made of them, Trump “did not take the opportunity to denounce them, repeating that he didn’t hear the comments,” ABC reported.

In the Hannity interview, Trump said people were trying to make the comedian’s appearance into a “big deal” when it “has nothing to do with the party, has nothing to do with us.”

Asked later in the interview whether he wished the comic wasn’t there, Trump said, “Yeah, I mean I don’t know if it’s a big deal or not, but I don’t want anybody making nasty jokes or stupid jokes.” He added, “Probably he shouldn’t have been there, yeah.”

Later Tuesday, President Joe Biden, on a call organized by the Hispanic advocacy group Voto Latino, denounced the comic’s joke and said, “The only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters.” He later tried to clarify his comment, saying he was talking about “the hateful rhetoric about Puerto Rico spewed by Trump’s supporter.”

The comments from the Madison Square Garden rally have drawn outrage from Puerto Rican leaders.

The archbishop of Puerto Rico called on Trump to disavow them, saying it wasn’t enough for the campaign to say the joke didn’t reflect Trump’s views. The president of Puerto Rico’s Republican Party called the “poor attempt at comedy” by Hinchcliffe “disgraceful, ignorant and totally reprehensible.”

In Pennsylvania, where Trump campaigned Tuesday night, the Latino eligible voter population has nearly tripled since 2000. More than half of those are Puerto Rican voters.

Angelo Ortega, a longtime Allentown resident and former Republican who’s planning to vote for Harris, said he couldn’t believe what he’d heard about Trump’s rally.

“I don’t know if my jaw dropped or I was just so irritated, angry. I didn’t know what to feel,” said Ortega, who was born in New York but whose father came from Puerto Rico. Ortega has been campaigning for Harris and said he knows of at least one Hispanic GOP voter planning to switch from Trump to Harris as a result of Hinchcliffe’s comments.

“They’ve had it. They’ve had it. They were listening to (Trump), but they said they think that that was like the straw that broke the camel’s back,” said Ortega, a member of the Make the Road PA advocacy group.

Still, some voters of Puerto Rican descent weren’t fazed. Maricelis Torres, 24, a waitress studying to be a radiologist, waited to get into the Allentown rally and said she and her family laughed at Hinchcliffe’s joke.

“If you don’t understand humor, then that’s what I’m saying, people are way too soft these days,” said Torres, whose father is from the island.

The Harris campaign has released an ad that will run online in battleground states targeting Puerto Rican voters and highlighting the comedian’s remarks.

At a roundtable outside Philadelphia on Tuesday afternoon, Trump got some praise from a retired occupational therapist from Puerto Rico, Maribel Valdez. “Puerto Rico stands behind you, and Puerto Rico loves you,” Valdez told him.

Trump thanked her and reminisced about his administration’s efforts to help the island after storms. “I think no president has ever done more for Puerto Rico than I have,” responded Trump, who delayed the release of billions of dollars in assistance to repair years-old hurricane damage in Puerto Rico until shortly before the 2020 election.

Biden suggests Trump supporters are 'garbage' after comic's insult of Puerto Rico

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden took a swipe against Donald Trump's supporters on Tuesday as he reacted to the Republican presidential nominee's weekend rally at Madison Square Garden, which was overshadowed by crude and racist rhetoric.

In a call organized by the Hispanic advocacy group Voto Latino, Biden responded to a comic at Trump's rally who called Puerto Rico a "floating island of garbage." Biden's initial comments were garbled.

"Just the other day, a speaker at his rally called Puerto Rico a floating island of garbage. Well, let me tell you something, I don't, I don't know the Puerto Rican that I know, the Puerto Rico where I'm fr -- in my home state of Delaware. They're good, decent honorable people," he said.

The president then added: "The only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters. His demonization of Latinos is unconscionable, and it's un-American. It's totally contrary to everything we've done, everything we've been."

White House spokesman Andrew Bates said Biden "referred to the hateful rhetoric at the Madison Square Garden rally as 'garbage.'"

Biden then took to social media to personally clarify what he said.

"Earlier today I referred to the hateful rhetoric about Puerto Rico spewed by Trump's supporter at his Madison Square Garden rally as garbage — which is the only word I can think of to describe it," he posted on X. "His demonization of Latinos is unconscionable. That's all I meant to say. The comments at that rally don't reflect who we are as a nation."

In referring to Trump's supporters as "garbage," however, Biden's tone was at odds with the message that Democratic nominee Kamala Harris is seeking to present as she aims to cast a broad appeal, including to disaffected Republicans. Shortly after Biden's comments, Harris spoke from the Ellipse in Washington, vowing to be a president who would unite the country.

"I pledge to be a president for all Americans," said Harris, who is Biden's vice president.

Republicans quickly highlighted Biden's remark. Trump called up Florida Sen. Marco Rubio during his rally in Allentown, Pennsylvania, to recount what happened.

"Moments ago Joe Biden stated that our supporters, our patriots, are garbage," Rubio said. "He's talking about everyday Americans who love their country."

Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said in a subsequent statement, "There's no way to spin it: Joe Biden and Kamala Harris don't just hate President Trump, they despise the tens of millions of Americans who support him."

A Trump campaign fundraising text declared, "KAMALA'S BOSS JOE BIDEN JUST CALLED ALL MY SUPPORTERS GARBAGE!" before ensuring recipients that Trump himself thinks, "YOU ARE AMAZING!"

Even some prominent Democrats began distancing themselves from Biden's comments. Speaking on CNN, Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro said he would "never insult the good people of Pennsylvania or any Americans even if they chose to support a candidate that I didn't support."

The comments recalled then-Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton dismissing Trump supporters during a 2016 fundraiser in New York by saying that half would fit into a "basket of deplorables."

Clinton later called that characterization "grossly generalistic." But it became a defiant rallying cry for many Trump backers who said the insult encapsulated the elitist attitudes of Clinton and the Democrats.

As reactions to Biden's reaction began to fly, meanwhile, Trump was asked in an interview Tuesday night with Fox News Channel's Sean Hannity about the racist and vulgar joke at his New York rally. He responded: "Somebody said there was a comedian that joked about Puerto Rico or something. And I have no idea who he is."

The former president added, "I can't imagine it's a big deal."

At a rally Tuesday in Allentown, Pennsylvania, a city with a large Hispanic population, Trump repeated his claim that Biden's immigration policies have allowed other countries to treat the U.S. like "a giant garbage

can.”

With Election Day now just a week off, Biden has worked to maintain relevance, furiously promoting his administration’s accomplishments while Harris in her race against Trump.

But his efforts to remain in the political spotlight might not always be so helpful for the top of the Democratic ticket he’s now promoting. That’s because, while Harris has been sharply critical of Trump for months, repeatedly calling him “unstable” and “unhinged” and even suggesting that he was “fascist,” she has been careful not to decry his supporters.

In fact, the vice president has campaigned extensively with former Republican Rep. Liz Cheney and other former GOP elected officials — hoping to woo conservative crossover voters. The Democratic convention — and Harris ads — have highlighted the stories of everyday Americans who talked about having voted for Trump in the past but now say they are supporting the vice president.

On Tuesday’s call, Biden also said that Trump “doesn’t give a damn about the Latino community” and urged rejection of the former president even as Trump’s campaign says its support is rising among Hispanics, particularly men.

“Vote to keep Donald Trump out of the White House,” Biden said. “He’s a true danger to, not just Latinos but to all people. Particularly those who are in a minority in this country.”

Israel must step in if it bans the UN agency that is a lifeline for Gaza, UN says

By EDITH M. LEDERER and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations stressed Tuesday that if Israel puts in place new laws cutting ties with the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, the Israeli government will have to meet their needs under international law.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a letter obtained by The Associated Press that there is no other alternative to the agency, known as UNRWA. It has been a lifeline during the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, and the Israeli legislation “will have devastating consequences for Palestinian refugees” in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, he said.

The U.N. agencies for children, health and migration also stressed that UNRWA is the “backbone” of the world body’s operations in Gaza, where people have relied on its emergency food aid and health centers during the more than yearlong war, which has killed tens of thousands and left much of the enclave in ruins.

The United Nations is heartened by statements of support for UNRWA from all quarters and countries, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said, and “we would very much appreciate efforts by any member state to help us get over this hurdle.”

Israel has alleged that some of UNRWA’s 13,000 staffers in Gaza participated in the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas that sparked the war. It’s also accused hundreds of UNRWA staff of having militant ties and said it has found Hamas military assets in or under the agency’s facilities.

Israel’s new laws

Two laws passed Monday could prevent UNRWA from continuing its work. Even the U.S., Israel’s closest ally, joined many governments and humanitarian organizations in opposing the legislation, which doesn’t take effect for three months.

Guterres sent the letter Tuesday to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu outlining his concerns.

As an occupying power, under international humanitarian law, Israel is required to ensure the needs of the Palestinians are met, including for food, health care and education, Guterres said. And if Israel isn’t in a position to meet those needs, it has an obligation to allow and facilitate the activities of the U.N., and “UNRWA is the principal means by which assistance is supplied to Palestinian refugees,” he said.

If UNRWA’s activities are restricted or halted, the secretary-general said, Israel would have to fill the vacuum “to ensure the needs of the population are met.”

“Otherwise, it would be in violation of international law,” said Dujarric, the U.N. spokesman.

Israel’s U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon responded to the letter by saying, “Rather than condemning

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UNRWA for turning a blind eye to terrorism and in some cases participating in terrorism, the U.N. instead condemns Israel."

He claimed in a statement that UNRWA isn't interested in providing humanitarian aid to Gaza, calling it "nothing but an arm of Hamas operating under the guise of the United Nations."

"Israel will continue to facilitate humanitarian aid in Gaza according to international law," Danon said, "but UNRWA has failed in its mandate and is no longer the right agency for this job."

Dismay from U.N. agencies

World Health Organization spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said UNRWA health workers have provided over 6 million medical consultations over the past year. They also offered immunizations, disease surveillance and screening for malnutrition, and UNRWA's work "couldn't be matched by any agency — including WHO," he said.

Jeremy Laurence, spokesman for the U.N. human rights office, said that "without UNRWA, the delivery of food, shelter, health care, education, amongst other things, to most of Gaza's population would grind to a halt."

UNRWA was established by the U.N. General Assembly in 1949 to provide relief for Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes before and during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war that followed Israel's establishment, as well as their descendants.

Israel faces criticism

Timed to the Israeli laws, Norway announced Tuesday that it will ask the 193-nation General Assembly to request a ruling from the top United Nations court about whether Israel is obligated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinians by international organizations, including the U.N.

The International Court of Justice in July condemned Israel's rule over the Palestinian territories, declaring its occupation unlawful. The nonbinding opinion called on Israel to end its occupation and immediately halt settlement construction.

Norway's foreign minister, Espen Barth Eide, told the AP that Israel's policy is making it increasingly difficult for Palestinians to access life-saving assistance. He said Norway will argue that even if Israel's occupation is illegal, it has obligations, "and we believe that these are not met."

Guterres told Netanyahu that while the Israeli laws prohibit any activity by UNRWA "within the sovereign territory of the State of Israel," the U.N. considers Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem part of the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel has no sovereignty because of its occupation.

Meanwhile, at the U.N.'s regular Security Council meeting on the Middle East — this month open to all U.N. members — speakers supported UNRWA and virtually all called for immediate cease-fires in Gaza and Lebanon.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield expressed deep concern at the Israeli legislation, saying, "right now there is no alternative to UNRWA when it comes to delivering food and other life-saving aid in Gaza."

She also called on Guterres "to create a mechanism to review and address allegations that UNRWA personnel have ties to Hamas and other terrorist groups."

Dujarric, the U.N. spokesman, said its internal watchdog is working on that. He said a letter from the Israeli government last week raising specific undisclosed issues is also being looked at "extremely seriously."

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller went further, warning that the Israeli legislation "poses risks for millions of Palestinians who rely on UNRWA for essential services."

Miller reiterated that the U.S. opposes the legislation and will be discussing it with Israel in the days ahead. He says there may be consequences under U.S. law and policy if it takes effect, referencing a letter that Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin sent to their Israeli counterparts saying humanitarian aid must increase or the country risks losing military assistance.

Harris urges voters to reject Trump's efforts to sow division and fear

By ZEKE MILLER and CHRIS MEGERIAN AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris stood before an overflowing crowd near the White House on Tuesday and promised Americans she would fight for them every day as she urged voters to reject Donald Trump's efforts to sow division and fear, declaring, "It doesn't have to be this way."

One week out from Election Day, the vice president tried to drive home the contrast with Trump by delivering her closing argument from the same spot on the grassy Ellipse where the Republican former president had fomented the Capitol insurrection in 2021, pledging that she would work to improve people's lives while arguing that her Republican opponent is only in it for himself.

"I'll be honest with you: I'm not perfect," she said. "I make mistakes. But here's what I promise you: I will always listen to you, even if you don't vote for me. I will always tell you the truth, even if it's hard to hear. I will work every day to build consensus and reach compromise to get things done. And if you give me the chance to fight on your behalf, there is nothing in the world that will stand in my way."

Harris began her capstone speech by reminding voters of Trump's role in the chaos of Jan. 6, 2021, when he spewed falsehoods about the 2020 presidential election that inspired a crowd to march to the Capitol and try unsuccessfully to halt the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory. She brought up his threats to use the military against his political rivals and his labeling of those who disagree with him as "the enemy from within."

"Look, we know who Donald Trump is. He is the person who stood at this very spot nearly four years ago and sent an armed mob to the United States Capitol to overturn the will of the people in a free and fair election," she said. Trump, she added, "has spent a decade trying to keep the American people divided and afraid of each other."

"This is not a candidate for president who is thinking about how to make your life better," she said, branding Trump a "petty tyrant" and "wannabe dictator."

Harris continued: "But America, I am here tonight to say: That's not who we are." She added, "It doesn't have to be this way."

Harris sought to use her largest remaining stage before polls close to make a broader case for why voters should reject Trump and consider what she offers, while still introducing herself to voters clamoring for more information.

The White House gleaming behind her, Harris encouraged the crowd to visualize their divergent futures depending on who wins on Election Day.

"In less than 90 days, either Donald Trump or I will be in the Oval Office," she said. "On Day One, if elected, Donald Trump would walk into that office with an enemies list. When elected, I will walk in with a to-do list."

Harris went on to list key policy goals, including expanding Medicare coverage of home health care, boosting the supply of housing in the country and working to restore nationwide access to abortion.

Her speech drew a massive crowd to Washington, with supporters spilling out toward the Washington Monument on the National Mall. More critically, her campaign hopes the setting will help catch the attention of battleground state voters who remain on the fence about whom to vote for — or whether to vote at all.

Ahead of Harris' remarks, her campaign showcased a line-up of ordinary Americans who spoke about their dream and priorities, rather than showcasing the star power that has been featured at some recent Harris events. They included Amanda Zurawski, a woman who nearly died from sepsis after being denied care under Texas' strict abortion ban, Craig Sicknick, the brother of Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, who died in the wake of the Jan. 6 attack, and a Pennsylvania husband and wife who previously vote for Trump but now back Harris.

Ruth Chiari, 78, of Charlottesville, Virginia, said she attended the rally with her husband to "support democracy."

"I think everybody understands what's on the ballot," she said as she waited in line to enter the event.

"We're either going to have an autocrat or freedom."

Kathleen Nicholas, 36, a government relations worker in Washington, remembered Jan. 6 and loved the contrast of Tuesday's crowd and atmosphere with that day. "I like she chose this place for her closing," she said. "Having something that is a direct contrast to that day is what we needed."

With time running out and the race tight, Harris and Trump have both sought big moments to try to shift momentum their way.

The address came days after Harris traveled to Texas, a reliably Republican state, to appear with mega-star Beyoncé and emphasize the consequences for women after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. That, too, was a speech meant to register with voters far away in the battleground states.

The vice president's latest address has been in the works for weeks. But aides hoped her message would land with more impact after Trump's rally Sunday at Madison Square Garden in New York, where speakers hurled cruel and racist insults.

"Unlike Donald Trump, I don't believe people who disagree with me are the enemy," Harris said. "He wants to put them in jail. I'll give them a seat at my table. And I pledge to be a president for all Americans. To always put country above party and above self."

Also central to her message: positioning herself as a "new generation" of leader after Trump and even her current boss, President Joe Biden.

"It is time to stop pointing fingers and start locking arms," she said. "It is time to turn the page on the drama and conflict, the fear and division. It is time for a new generation of leadership in America. And I am ready to offer that leadership as the next president of the United States."

She acknowledged that "many of you are still getting to know who I am" after her surprise elevation to the top of the Democratic ticket after Biden dropped out of the race in July, and used her remarks to try to answer voters' curiosity.

"I recognize this has not been a typical campaign," Harris said, adding that she is "not afraid of tough fights against bad actors and powerful interests."

Ahead of Harris' speech, Trump used remarks to reporters at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida on Tuesday morning to accuse Harris of closing with a message that doesn't address everyday Americans' day-to-day struggles and kitchen-table concerns.

He said Harris keeps "talking about Hitler, and Nazis, because her record's horrible," a reference to Harris amplifying the warnings from his former chief of staff that Trump spoke admiringly of the Nazi leader while in office.

Trump press secretary Karoline Leavitt said, "His closing argument to the American people is simple: Kamala broke it; he will fix it."

Biden told reporters Tuesday that he would not attend Harris' speech because the event is "for her," but he sparked a firestorm ahead of Harris' remarks. Reacting to a comic calling Puerto Rico garbage at a Trump rally last weekend, Biden said, "The only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters."

With Republicans amplifying his comments seemingly denigrating Trump supporters, Biden sought to clarify them in a post on X. "Earlier today I referred to the hateful rhetoric about Puerto Rico spewed by Trump's supporter at his Madison Square Garden rally as garbage — which is the only word I can think of to describe it. His demonization of Latinos is unconscionable. That's all I meant to say. The comments at that rally don't reflect who we are as a nation."

Canada alleges Indian Home Minister Amit Shah ordered campaign targeting Sikh separatists

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — A Canadian official alleged Tuesday that Indian Home Minister Amit Shah ordered a campaign of violence, intimidation and intelligence-gathering targeting Sikh separatists inside Canada.

Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister David Morrison told Parliament members of the national security committee that he had confirmed Shah's name to *The Washington Post*, which first reported the allegations.

"The journalist called me and asked if it was that person. I confirmed it was that person," Morrison told

the committee.

Morrison did not say how Canada knew of Shah's alleged involvement.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said a year ago that Canada had credible evidence agents of the Indian government were involved in the murder of Canadian Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia in June 2023.

Canadian authorities have repeatedly said they have shared evidence of that with Indian authorities.

Indian government officials have repeatedly denied Canada has provided evidence and have called the allegations absurd. India's embassy in Ottawa didn't immediately respond to messages for a request for comment on the allegation against Shah.

On Oct. 14, Canada expelled the Indian high commissioner and five other diplomats, alleging they were persons of interest in multiple cases of coercion, intimidation and violence aimed at quieting a campaign for an independent Sikh state known as Khalistan.

Canada is not the only country that has accused Indian officials of plotting an assassination on foreign soil. The United States Justice Department announced criminal charges in mid-October against an Indian government employee in connection with an alleged foiled plot to kill a Sikh separatist leader living in New York City.

In the case announced by the Justice Department, Vikash Yadav, who authorities say directed the New York plot from India, faces murder-for-hire charges in a planned killing that prosecutors have previously said was meant to precede a string of other politically motivated murders in the United States and Canada.

Nathalie Drouin, Trudeau's national security adviser, told the committee Tuesday that Canada has evidence the Indian government first gathered information on Indian nationals and Canadian citizens in Canada through diplomatic channels and proxies.

She said the information was then passed to the government in New Delhi, which allegedly works with a criminal network affiliated with Lawrence Bishnoi.

Bishnoi is currently in prison in India, but Drouin said his vast criminal network has been linked to homicides, assassination plots, coercion and other violent crimes in Canada.

Before the Royal Canadian Mounted Police went public with allegations that Indian diplomats were persons of interest in criminal investigations, Drouin said there was an effort to work with the Indian government to ensure accountability.

Drouin said a meeting was held with Modi's national security adviser, Ajit Doval, in Singapore two days earlier.

She said the decision was made to go public when it became evident the Indian government would not cooperate with Canada on proposed accountability measures.

That included asking India to waive diplomatic immunity for the persons of interest, including the high commissioner in Ottawa. Drouin said this was not seen as likely.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said it took the extraordinary step of talking publicly about ongoing investigations because of threats to public safety.

The Indian government denies the allegations and has expelled six Canadian diplomats in return.

Nijjar, 45, was fatally shot in his pickup truck after he left the Sikh temple he led in Surrey, British Columbia. An Indian-born citizen of Canada, he owned a plumbing business and was a leader in what remains of a once-strong movement to create an independent Sikh homeland.

Four Indian nationals living in Canada were charged with Nijjar's murder and are awaiting trial.

Drouin and Morrison were called as witnesses at the committee alongside Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner Mike Duheme, as well as the director of Canada's spy service.

Israeli strikes in northern Gaza kill at least 88, officials say

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Two Israeli airstrikes in the northern Gaza Strip on Tuesday killed at least 88 people, including dozens of women and children, health officials said, and the director of a

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hospital said life-threatening injuries were going untreated because a weekend raid by Israeli forces led to the detention of dozens of medics.

Israel has escalated airstrikes and waged a bigger ground operation in northern Gaza in recent weeks, saying it is focused on rooting out Hamas militants who have regrouped after more than a year of war. The intense fighting is raising alarm about the worsening humanitarian conditions for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians still in northern Gaza.

Concerns about not enough aid reaching Gaza were amplified Monday when Israeli lawmakers passed two laws to cut ties with the main U.N. agency distributing food, water and medicine, and to ban it from Israeli soil. Israel controls access to both Gaza and the occupied West Bank, and it was unclear how the agency known as UNRWA would continue its work in either place.

"The humanitarian operation in Gaza, if that is unraveled, that is a disaster within a series of disasters and just doesn't bear thinking about," said UNRWA spokesperson John Fowler. He said other U.N. agencies and international organizations distributing aid in Gaza rely on its logistics and thousands of workers.

In Lebanon, the militant group Hezbollah said Tuesday it has chosen Sheikh Naim Kassem to succeed longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike last month. Hezbollah, which has fired rockets into Israel since the start of the war in Gaza, vowed to continue with Nasrallah's policies "until victory is achieved."

A short while later, eight Austrian soldiers serving in the U.N. peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon were reported lightly injured in a midday missile strike.

The peacekeeping force, known as UNIFIL, said the rocket that struck its headquarters in Lebanon was "likely" fired by Hezbollah, and that it struck a vehicle workshop.

Strike in northern Gaza comes as Israel wages a major operation there

The Gaza Health Ministry's emergency service said at least 70 people were killed and 23 were missing in the first of Tuesday's strikes in the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya. More than half of the victims were women and children, the ministry said. A mother and her five children — some of them adults — and a second mother with six children, were among those killed in the attack on a five-story building, according to the emergency service.

A second strike on Beit Lahiya on Tuesday evening killed at least 18 people, according to the Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and militants in its count.

The nearby Kamal Adwan Hospital was overwhelmed by a wave of wounded women and children, including many who needed urgent surgeries, according to its director, Dr. Hossam Abu Safiya. The Israeli military raided the hospital over the weekend, detaining dozens of medics it said were Hamas militants.

"The situation is catastrophic in every sense of the word," Safiya said, adding that the only remaining doctor at the hospital was a pediatrician. "The health care system has collapsed and needs an urgent international intervention."

U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller referred to the "horrifying incident" in Beit Lahiya in comments to reporters. He said Israel's yearlong campaign against Hamas has ensured it cannot repeat the type of attack that started the war in Gaza, but that "getting to here came at a great cost to civilians."

The Israeli military said it was investigating the first Beit Lahiya strike; it did not immediately comment on the second.

Israel's recent operations in northern Gaza, focused in and around the Jabaliya refugee camp, have killed hundreds of people and driven tens of thousands from their homes.

The Israeli military has repeatedly struck shelters for displaced people in recent months. It says it carries out precise strikes targeting Palestinian militants and tries to avoid harming civilians, but the strikes often kill women and children.

On Tuesday, Israel said four more of its soldiers were killed in the fighting in northern Gaza, bringing the toll since the start of the operation to 16, including a colonel.

As the fighting raged, Hamas signaled it was ready to resume cease-fire negotiations, although its key demands — a permanent cease-fire and full withdrawal of the Israeli military — do not appear to have

changed, and have been dismissed in the past by Israel. Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri said on Tuesday the group has accepted mediators' request to discuss "new proposals."

Hezbollah's new leader has vowed to keep fighting Israel

Hezbollah said in a statement that its decision-making Shura Council elected Kassem, who had been Nasrallah's deputy leader for over three decades, as the new secretary-general.

Kassem, 71, a founding member of the militant group established following Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, had been serving as acting leader. He has given several televised speeches vowing that Hezbollah will fight on despite a string of setbacks.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel, drawing retaliation, after Hamas' surprise attack out of Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023. Iran, which backs both groups, has also directly traded fire with Israel, in April and then again this month.

The tensions with Hezbollah boiled over in September, as Israel unleashed a wave of heavy airstrikes and killed Nasrallah and most of his senior commanders. Israel launched a ground invasion into Lebanon at the start of October.

Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets into northern Israel on Tuesday, killing one person in the northern city of Maalot-Tarshiha, authorities said. Israeli strikes in the coastal city of Sidon killed at least five people, the Lebanese Health Ministry said.

Israeli laws targeting UN agency could further restrict aid

UNRWA and other international groups continued to express outrage Tuesday about the Israeli parliament's decision to cut ties to the agency.

Israel says UNRWA has been infiltrated by Hamas and that the militant group siphons off aid and uses U.N. facilities to shield its activities, allegations denied by the U.N. agency.

Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer vowed that aid will continue to reach Gaza, as Israel plans to coordinate with aid organizations or other bodies within the U.N. "Ultimately, we will ensure that a more efficient replacement for UNRWA takes its role, not one which is infiltrated by the terrorist organization," he said.

Multiple U.N. agencies rallied Tuesday around UNRWA, calling it the "backbone" of the world body's aid activities in Gaza and other Palestinian areas. UNRWA provides education, health care and emergency aid to millions of Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation and their descendants. Refugee families make up the majority of Gaza's population.

Israel has sharply restricted aid to northern Gaza this month, prompting a warning from the United States that failure to facilitate greater humanitarian assistance could lead to a reduction in military aid.

In its attack on Israel last year, Hamas killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took around 250 as hostages. Some 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities. Around 90% of the population of 2.3 million have been displaced from their homes, often multiple times.

A to-do list, size matters and a 'petty tyrant': Key moments from Kamala Harris' speech

By COLLEEN LONG and DAN MERICA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris on Tuesday sought to remind Americans what life was like under Donald Trump and then offered voters a different path forward if they send her to the White House, in a speech billed as her campaign's closing argument.

"I will always listen to you, even if you don't vote for me," she said, speaking before a massive crowd that spilled from the grassy Ellipse near the White House to the Washington Monument.

Some key moments from her half-hour speech:

The location of the speech reinforced her message

Harris chose to speak from the Ellipse on purpose. It's the same spot in Washington where Republican

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Donald Trump helped incite a mob that attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. But the vice president didn't devote much of her speech to the violence of that day, instead using the field between Constitution Avenue and the White House more as a backdrop — a quiet reminder of the different choices Americans face.

"Donald Trump has spent a decade trying to keep the American people divided and afraid of each other," she said, adding that he wants back into the White House "not to focus on your problems, but to focus on his."

Kamala Harris, the prosecutor, argued her case

Harris spent years working as a prosecutor. She was California's attorney general before she became a U.S. senator. And she often says on the campaign trail that she's only ever had one client — the people. In her speech, she talked about her past work taking on scammers, violent offenders who abused women and children, and cartels that trafficked in guns and human beings.

She said she'd bring with her to the White House an instinct to protect.

"There's something about people being treated unfairly, or overlooked, that just gets to me," she said.

It's me, Hi. I'm the presidential nominee. It's me.

One week before the election, Harris allowed that "I know many of you are still getting to know who I am."

The Democratic nominee has been running for only three months in a compressed campaign launched after President Joe Biden dropped out of the race. Harris still is confronting voters who say they want to learn more about her and how she will govern. So she spent some time Tuesday talking about her career, her goals and background.

"I'll be honest with you: I'm not perfect. I make mistakes. But here's what I promise you: I will always listen to you, even if you don't vote for me."

To-do list for Day One at the White House

Harris devoted a good chunk of her speech to talking about policies she'd enact if she were to win the White House, including helping first-time homeowners with down payments and aiding the so-called "sandwich generation" of adults who are caring for young children and older parents by allowing elder care to be funded by Medicare. She said she'd work to pass a bipartisan border security bill that tanked last year after Trump encouraged congressional Republicans to let it die.

And she said she would work to bring back abortion protections. "I will fight to restore what Donald Trump and his hand-selected Supreme Court justice took away from the women of America," Harris said. The Supreme Court, with three Trump-appointed justices, overturned federal protections of abortion in 2022. Abortion has since become one of the most motivating issues for the Democratic base in the 2024 election.

"On Day One, if elected, Donald Trump would walk into that office with an enemies list," she said. "When elected, I will walk in with a to-do list."

Size matters on the campaign trail — especially to Trump

The Ellipse is a grassy expanse between the White House and the Washington Monument that has long played host to political events and national traditions like the annual holiday tree lighting. On Tuesday, the space was packed. Crowds spilled onto the National Mall back toward the Washington Monument, where giant screens and speakers were set up for people to hear and see from afar.

The cheers of the boisterous crowd could be heard from the White House driveway. Harris' campaign said it was her biggest rally to date. She's already packed stadiums and other venues with supporters during her rallies. Harris loves to needle Trump about crowd size — a particular preoccupation for the Republican leader, who claimed the campaign had to bus people in Tuesday to fill the space.

Harris has called Trump 'unhinged' and 'unstable.' Now she's adding 'petty tyrant'

Harris boiled down criticism of Trump into two words: "petty tyrant."

She warned Trump is a man governed by grievances, one who would focus on himself and his "enemies list" when he got into the White House. She harked back to the nation's founding when Americans fought for freedom, then sped through decades of hard-fought civil rights battles.

"They did not struggle, sacrifice and lay down their lives only to see us cede our fundamental freedoms.

They didn't do that only to see us submit to the will of another petty tyrant," she said. "These United States of America, we are not a vessel for the schemes of wannabe dictators."

Meanwhile, a Biden complication emerges

Just moments before Harris was to speak, Biden was on a campaign call reacting to a comic who called Puerto Rico garbage during a Trump rally last weekend. The president said, "The only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters."

He'd joined a national call organized by the advocacy group Voto Latino. Biden urged those on the call to "vote to keep Donald Trump out of the White House," adding, "He's a true danger to not just Latinos but to all people."

Biden's remarks were quickly seized on by Republicans who said he was denigrating Trump supporters, a distraction for Harris when she is trying to reach out to GOP voters.

Biden quickly sent out a social media post seeking to clarify his remarks.

"His demonization of Latinos is unconscionable," Biden said of Trump. "That's all I meant to say."

There's still plenty to come after what Harris called her 'closing argument'

The event was framed as a campaign finale meant to lay out in stark terms the choice for voters next week. But it's far from Harris' last campaign event. She'll be hitting all the key battleground states as she makes her last pitch to voters.

She will headline events in Wisconsin, North Carolina and Pennsylvania on Wednesday, and on Thursday she will have rallies in Arizona and Nevada. More events are expected before Election Day.

The campaign is looking to pick up voters across many different demographics in the hope that a swing vote here and there may add up to a win in a razor's-edge race with Trump.

Elon Musk wins court victory in a dispute over a 2018 post during a labor dispute

By KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A federal agency was wrong to order that Tesla CEO Elon Musk delete a 2018 social media post that union leaders saw as a threat to employee stock options, a sharply divided federal appeals court has ruled.

The case involved a post made on what was then known as Twitter during United Auto Workers organizing efforts at a Tesla facility in Fremont, California. The post was made years before Musk bought the platform, now known as X, in 2022.

On May 20, 2018, Musk tweeted: "Nothing stopping Tesla team at our car plant from voting union. Could do so tmrw if they wanted. But why pay union dues and give up stock options for nothing? Our safety record is 2X better than when plant was UAW & everybody already gets healthcare."

The National Labor Relations Board said it was an illegal threat. After Tesla appealed, three judges on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans upheld that decision, as well as a related NLRB order that Tesla rehire a fired employee, with back pay.

But Tesla sought a rehearing, and the full 5th Circuit later threw out the earlier decision and voted to hear the matter again. In an opinion dated Friday, the judges split 9-8 in favor of Tesla and Musk.

"We hold that Musk's tweets are constitutionally protected speech and do not fall into the categories of unprotected communication like obscenity and perjury," the unsigned opinion said.

The majority also found the NLRB must reconsider its order that the fired employee be reinstated, saying there was no proof that the person who fired the worker acted out of ill will toward the union.

The 11-page opinion was followed by a 30-page dissent on behalf of eight judges, written by Judge James Dennis.

"Relevant here, the Supreme Court has consistently held that the First Amendment does not protect threatening, coercive employer speech to employees in the labor organization election context—the precise category of speech Musk disseminated via Twitter," Dennis wrote.

He also argued that the attitude of the supervisor who fired the worker was not relevant to whether he should be reinstated. The worker, Dennis wrote, "was fired for declining to divulge information about protected union activities during an interrogation."

The ruling sent the case back to the NLRB for further action. It was not immediately clear if there would be an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The union didn't respond to a question from The Associated Press asking about its next move. But on Tuesday night, President Shawn Fain cited the case in an online address to rally union members to vote and take part in the electoral process.

Musk, he said, has poured millions into Republican Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

"It's no coincidence that Elon Musk is one of the most anti-union auto CEOs in history, and he is buying elections to rig the law in his favor," Fain said. "That's what happens when the billionaire class makes the rules. And that's what happens when working class people stay on the sidelines."

Two closing arguments show the stark choice between Trump and Harris

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In the shadow of the White House, seven days before the final votes of the 2024 election are cast, Kamala Harris vowed to put country over party and warned that Donald Trump is obsessed with revenge and his own personal interests.

Less than 48 hours earlier inside Madison Square Garden, Trump called his Democratic opponent "a trainwreck who has destroyed everything in her path." His allies on stage labeled Puerto Rico a "floating island of garbage" and said Harris, who would be the first woman to be president, had begun her career as a prostitute.

Two nights and 200 miles apart, the dueling closing arguments outlined in stark terms the choice U.S. voters face on Nov. 5 when they will weigh two very different visions of leadership and America's future.

Trump's raucous rally, marked by crude and racist insults, highlighted the uglier elements of his coalition. But other parts of it underscored the former businessman's appeal as someone who vows to fix the economy and the border, and as a political outsider eager to defy any and all conventions despite the risks.

Harris, the vice president for the last four years, chose a more formal setting — the grassy Ellipse near the White House — to underscore the seriousness of this moment in American history and the threat Trump poses to democracy. She faced a massive audience in the same place where Trump addressed thousands of his loyalists on Jan. 6, 2021, before they stormed the U.S. Capitol in one of the darkest days of modern history.

But more than simply reminding voters of the danger that Trump poses to U.S. democracy, Harris' remarks were designed to highlight her opponent's record of prioritizing his personal interests instead of the nation's.

"Donald Trump has spent a decade trying to keep the American people divided and afraid of each other. That's who he is. But America, I am here tonight to say: That's not who we are," Harris said. "I pledge to be a president for all Americans — to always put country above party and above self."

Senior adviser Jen O'Malley Dillon noted that Harris' closing argument is designed to reach the narrow slice of undecided voters; many moderate Republicans are among them.

"We know that there are still a lot of voters out there that are still trying to decide who to support — or whether to vote at all," O'Malley Dillon said. "And this race is extremely close. We talk about it as a margin of error race. We know it is going to be closed out in this final week."

Trump's team is more focused on energizing his partisan base and reaching infrequent voters across the political spectrum who are frustrated by the direction of the country and looking for change.

Still, Trump framed his comments in recent days with a simple question that cuts across political lines, asking voters whether they are better off now than they were four years ago at the end of his first term. While the nation was still in the throes of the pandemic when Trump left office, polls indicate that most voters are unhappy with the direction of the country today.

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Trump has vowed to stage the largest deportation operation in U.S. history and impose broad tariffs to generate revenue and boost American manufacturing.

Ever defiant facing criticism from even some Republicans, Trump on Tuesday called his Madison Square Garden event "a lovefest" and did not address the comments of pro-Trump comedian Tony Hinchcliffe, who called Puerto Rico a "floating island of garbage." Hinchcliffe also made demeaning jokes about Black people, other Latinos, Palestinians and Jews in his routine before Trump took the stage.

"Nobody's ever had love like that," Trump said of the hours-long Sunday event that featured his family members and high-level surrogates and supporters including billionaire Elon Musk, TV psychologist "Dr. Phil" McGraw and former Fox News host Tucker Carlson. "It was really love for our country."

The Republican former president on Tuesday also offered a dark assessment of Harris' leadership. He said that she "obliterated" the nation's borders, "decimated the middle class," brought "bloodshed and squalor" to major cities and "unleashed war and chaos all over the world."

"No person who has caused so much destruction and death at home and abroad should ever be allowed to be the president of the United States," Trump told dozens of supporters who gathered at his Florida estate.

Trump senior adviser Jason Miller said Trump has made clear his plans to fix the economy, secure the southern border and "improve people's daily lives."

"Kamala Harris hasn't done any of that," he said. "It's a message of despair, personal attacks and nothing from Harris or her campaign about what they're actually going to do to help Americans. So it's a massive contrast."

Harris has largely moved on from the "joyful" campaigning style that defined her entrance into the presidential contest this summer. She pledged unity on Tuesday night, but she also cast Trump as someone driven more by revenge and grievance than a commitment to the people.

"This is someone who is unstable, obsessed with revenge, consumed with grievance and out for unchecked power," Harris said. "This is not a candidate for president who is thinking about how to make your life better."

She spoke directly to Republican voters at times and promised to listen to those who didn't vote for her if elected. Harris previously said she would include a Republican in her Cabinet.

"Unlike Donald Trump, I don't believe people who disagree with me are the enemy," she said. "He wants to put them in jail. I'll give them a seat at the table."

Heading into the speech, the Democrat's campaign was aware of criticism from her party's far-left base that she has been too focused on courting moderate Republican voters. They urged Harris to focus more on working-class priorities than the threat Trump poses to U.S. democracy.

Ultimately, the vice president's speech was designed to tie both issues together. She warned of Trump threatening democratic norms and vowed to take action against high grocery prices and help first-time home buyers with making a down payment.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, a top Harris ally, said voters can "walk and chew gum at the same time — meaning they can hear an argument about freedom and about something that affects their pocketbook. And I think she is certainly capable to prosecute both cases at the same time."

Sisters Michelle Detwiler and Renee Newell drove from Virginia to attend Harris' remarks at the Ellipse. "We both have daughters and we're both here for them," Newell said. Detwiler said the location of the event is a "great counterpoint to the imagery of Jan. 6. D.C. is a great city for peaceful public gatherings. "We're so glad to be here and to experience the joy," she said.

US forest managers finalize land exchange with Native American tribe in Arizona

CAMP VERDE, Ariz. (AP) — U.S. forest managers have finalized a land exchange with the Yavapai-Apache Nation that has been decades in the making and will significantly expand the size of the tribe's reservation in Arizona's Verde Valley, tribal leaders announced Tuesday.

As part of the arrangement, six parcels of private land acquired over the years by the tribe will be traded to the U.S. Forest Service in exchange for the tribe gaining ownership of 5 square miles (12.95 square kilometers) of national forest land that is part of the tribe's ancestral homelands. The tribe will host a signing ceremony next week to celebrate the exchange, which was first proposed in 1996.

"This is a critical step in our history and vital to the nation's cultural and economic recovery and future prosperity," Yavapai-Apache Chairwoman Tanya Lewis said in a post on the tribe's website.

Prescott National Forest Supervisor Sarah Clawson said in a statement that there had been many delays and changes to the proposal over the years, but the tribe and the Forest Service never lost sight of developing an agreement that would benefit both public and tribal lands.

The federal government has made strides over recent years to protect more lands held sacred by Native American tribes, to develop more arrangements for incorporating Indigenous knowledge into management of public lands and to streamline regulations for putting land into trust for tribes.

The Yavapai-Apache Nation is made up of two distinct groups of people — the Wipuhk'a'bah and the Dil'zhe'e. Their homelands spanned more than 16,000 square miles (41,440 square kilometers) of what is now central Arizona. After the discovery of gold in the 1860s near Prescott, the federal government carved out only a fraction to establish a reservation. The inhabitants eventually were forced from the land, and it wasn't until the early 1900s that they were able to resettle a tiny portion of the area.

In the Verde Valley, the Yavapai-Apache Nation's reservation lands are currently comprised of less than 3 square miles (7.77 square kilometers) near Camp Verde. The small land base hasn't been enough to develop economic opportunities or to meet housing needs, Lewis said, pointing to dozens of families who are on a waiting list for new homes.

Lewis said that in acknowledgment of the past removal of the Yavapai-Apache people from their homelands, the preamble to the tribal constitution recognizes that land acquisition is among the Yavapai-Apache Nation's responsibilities.

Aside from growing the reservation, the exchange will bolster efforts by federal land managers to protect the headwaters of the Verde River and ensure the historic Yavapai Ranch is not sold for development. The agreement also will improve recreational access to portions of four national forests in Arizona.

Family releases video showing final moments before Black man's death in Missouri prison

By SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri man who died after he was placed in a spit hood and restrained in a Missouri prison was motionless for nearly 10 minutes before a nurse checked on him, prison video released Tuesday shows.

Video of the final the moments before Othel Moore's December 2023 death shows the Black 38-year-old heaving with a mask covering his face, hands restrained behind his back and legs bound together as a guard watches from outside the cell.

Four former staffers at the Jefferson City Correctional Center have pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder. Charges against a fifth were dropped, Department of Corrections spokesperson Karen Pojmann said.

A criminal complaint alleges that guards pepper-sprayed Moore, placed a mask over his face and left him in a position that caused him to suffocate.

Moore's mother and sister separately filed a wrongful death lawsuit.

Surveillance video provided by Moore family lawyers shows a number of incarcerated men stripped down to their boxers with their hands restrained behind their backs as guards filter through cells and belongings on Dec. 8, 2023, the day Moore died.

While standing handcuffed just outside his cell door, a guard pepper-sprayed Moore, according to Cole County Prosecuting Attorney Locke Thompson's office.

Video released by Moore's family then shows him being led away from the other incarcerated men.

Guards held his arms as he went down to his knees and eventually lay face down on the floor.

Guards then bound his legs together and put a mask over his face before strapping him into a cart in a reclined position, the video shows.

As he was restrained, the video shows Moore swayed back and forth but did not appear to struggle with guards.

Guards told investigators that Moore was not following orders to be quiet and that he spit at them, although witnesses said Moore was spitting pepper spray out of his mouth.

Video shows guards then wheeled Moore to a locked cell, where he initially attempted to push himself to a more upright position before falling back into the reclined headrest.

His movements gradually slowed for about 20 minutes until he lay motionless, his head slumped to one side.

A nurse arrived about 10 minutes after Moore went motionless, calmly checked his pulse and moved his limp head. The nurse and another staffer briefly applied rapid compressions to his upper body before he was wheeled out of the cell.

The Moore family's attorney, Andrew M. Stroth, said in a Tuesday news conference that prison staff acted with "no sense of urgency."

In a separate statement, Stroth said the video highlights "the complete disregard for the sanctity of life, deliberate indifference and failure to provide emergency medical care to Othel by the medical staff."

Ten staffers and contractor employees were fired in response to Moore's death.

"We have taken and will continue to take steps necessary to mitigate safety risks to everyone in our facilities," said a June statement from the department after criminal charges were filed against several former staffers. "We take seriously our responsibility for creating the safest environment possible and will not tolerate behaviors or conditions that endanger the wellbeing of Missourians working or living in our facilities."

Pojmann in a Tuesday email said body cameras are now used at all of the state's maximum-security facilities.

Three of the former staffers charged with second-degree murder in Moore's death have scheduled court appearances in January. A fourth faces trial Dec. 11.

Steve Bannon spends his first day out of prison on the airwaves stumping for Trump

By DAVE COLLINS and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Longtime Donald Trump ally Steve Bannon was released from federal prison early Tuesday and immediately resumed his full-throated support for the former president, urging Republicans to turn out in large numbers next week to defeat Democratic nominee Vice President Kamala Harris.

Bannon served a four-month sentence for defying a subpoena in the congressional investigation into the U.S. Capitol attack on Jan. 6, 2021. He left the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut, in the pre-dawn hours and headed to Manhattan, where he resumed his WarRoom podcast and online show and later held an afternoon news conference.

"I'm finally out of being a political prisoner," Bannon declared at the media event, saying that prominent Democrats hoped to break him. "I think you can see today I'm far from broken. I've been empowered by my four months in Danbury federal prison."

The experience was empowering, he said, because of whom he met and what they had to say about Harris.

"I was able to listen, to observe and to learn and from working-class minorities — young African American men and Hispanic men and yes, Puerto Rican men — about what their lives are," Bannon said, claiming his fellow prisoners took a dim view of Harris and the Biden administration's record on incarceration.

He also reiterated his unfounded claim that the 2020 election was "stolen" from Trump and said he spoke with the former president on Tuesday, though he declined to provide specifics. Judges, election officials,

cybersecurity experts and Trump's own attorney general have all rejected his claims of mass voter fraud in 2020.

Bannon said similar things about the election and his time in prison on his podcast and web show earlier in the day. He bashed Democrats and their agenda, asserting that former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi sent him to prison to silence his voice — despite a jury having convicted him and a judge having sentenced him.

Bannon, 70, reported to the prison July 1 after the Supreme Court rejected his bid to delay the prison sentence while he appeals his conviction.

A jury found Bannon guilty in 2022 of two counts of contempt of Congress: one for refusing to sit for a deposition with the Jan. 6 House Committee and a second for refusing to provide documents related to his involvement with Trump's efforts to overturn his loss to Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential race.

A federal appeals court panel upheld Bannon's convictions in May. Bannon is now asking the full appeals court to hear his case. His legal team had argued that the congressional subpoena was invalid because Trump had asserted executive privilege. Prosecutors, though, say Bannon had left the White House years before and Trump had never invoked executive privilege in front of the committee.

Bannon faces additional criminal charges in New York state court, alleging he duped donors who gave money to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Bannon has pleaded not guilty to money laundering, conspiracy, fraud and other charges. A trial in that case is scheduled to begin in December.

In a first since 1938, Des Moines, Iowa, kids will trick-or-treat on Halloween

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — For the first time since 1938, children in Des Moines, Iowa, will go trick-or-treating on Halloween.

Going door-to-door for candy on All Hallows' Eve has long been commonplace throughout the country. But not in Des Moines, where Iowa's capital city took a different approach more than seven decades ago in hopes of tamping down on hooliganism.

Instead, Des Moines children don their costumes on Beggars' Night, typically the day before Halloween. And besides screaming, "Trick-or-Treat," children are expected to tell a joke before receiving a treat.

This year, Beggars' Night was set for Wednesday, but because of expected heavy rain and thunderstorms, officials delayed trick-or-treating until Thursday, which to the rest of the country is the normal Halloween.

"To my knowledge, it has never been moved or canceled since it was established after Halloween in 1938," Assistant City Manager Jen Schulte said. "However, the safety of our residents, families and children is always our top priority and led to the change in this year's scheduled Beggars' Night."

The city began its unusual custom at the suggestion of a former city parks director as a way to reduce vandalism and promote more wholesome fun for kids. Initially, children were encouraged to sing a song, recite poetry and offer some other kind of entertainment, but over time a joke became the most common offering.

Beggars' Night also has limited hours, typically running from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Many of Des Moines' suburbs also adopted the Beggars' Night tradition and chose to shift the celebration to Halloween this year.

"I didn't realize we were that much of an anomaly because for us, this is normal," said Debbie Westphal Swander, who owns a costume shop in West Des Moines. "We're going to be in sync at least for this year with the way the event is celebrated everywhere else.

"The big picture for me is, it's absolutely about the kids. That's the most important thing."

Man serving 30 years for attacking Nancy Pelosi's husband gets a life term on state charges

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The man who was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison for attacking the husband of former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi with a hammer in their California home was given a life term without the possibility of parole on Tuesday following a separate state trial.

A San Francisco jury in June found David DePape guilty of charges including aggravated kidnapping, first-degree burglary and false imprisonment of an elder.

Before sentencing DePape to life for the kidnapping conviction, Judge Harry Dorfman rejected defense attorneys' arguments that he be granted a new state trial for the 2022 attack against Paul Pelosi, who was 82 years old at the time.

"It's my intention that Mr. DePape will never get out of prison, he can never be paroled," Dorfman said while handing out the punishment. He later said, "I don't feel sympathy for you. I feel sympathy for the victim in this case, who's lucky to be alive."

Adam Lipson, a San Francisco deputy public defender, had asked Dorfman to consider DePape's mental health and isolation that made him susceptible to online propaganda.

"This is a man who has always been a peaceful, law-abiding person up until his activation," Lipson said before the punishment was handed down.

When given the chance to address the court prior to his sentencing, DePape, dressed in prison orange and with his brown hair in a ponytail, spoke at length about Sept. 11 being an inside job, his ex-wife being replaced by a body double, and his government-provided attorneys conspiring against him.

"I'm a psychic," DePape told the court, reading from sheets of paper. "The more I meditate, the more psychic I get."

The judge interrupted DePape multiple times to ask if he wanted to address the jury's verdict or his conduct on the night of the attack, but DePape ignored the offers.

In a letter read in court by the victim's daughter, Christine Pelosi, Paul Pelosi called for the maximum sentence, saying the "last peaceful sleep" he had ended abruptly "when the defendant violently broke into my home, burst into my bedroom and stood over my bed with a hammer and zip ties demanding to see my wife, yelling 'Where's Nancy?'"

He said the attack left him with bumps on his head, a metal plate in it, dizziness and nerve damage in his left hand. Sleeping alone at home evokes memories of the attack, he said.

In a statement after Tuesday's sentencing, the Pelosi family said that after a grueling two years, "legal justice has been served."

"Today's sentence of life without parole gives our Pop some measure of legal justice and, we hope, a message to others that political violence against elected officials or their family members will not be tolerated, minimized or condoned," the statement said. "We must each do our part to build a peaceful democracy."

Previously, a federal jury convicted DePape of assaulting a federal official's family member and attempting to kidnap a federal official. In May, he was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison.

Although DePape expressed remorse for his actions at the federal sentencing, he did not do that on Tuesday. Judges in both cases said they could not ignore the seriousness of targeting elected officials.

Judge Dorfman on Tuesday also sentenced DePape to additional years on the other counts, but all the sentences, including the federal one, will run concurrently. He said that if an appellate court overturns his sentence of life without parole, he will ask that the case be sent back to his court for resentencing.

Lipson told reporters after the hearing that he will appeal the ruling. "This was a really tragic end to a tragic story," he said.

The prosecutors, San Francisco assistant district attorneys Sean Connolly and Phoebe Maffei, said in a statement that the sentence reflects the seriousness of DePape's conduct and the harm he inflicted on an innocent man.

"There is no rejoicing in such cases. There are no winners," it said.

The defense argued that the state trial amounted to double jeopardy, saying that although the state and

federal counts weren't exactly the same, the two cases stem from the same act. The judge dismissed some of the state charges, but he kept others that weren't covered by the federal case.

The Oct. 28, 2022, attack on Paul Pelosi was captured on police body camera video just days before the midterm elections and shocked the political world. He suffered head wounds, including a skull fracture that was mended with plates and screws.

DePape, a Canadian citizen who has been living in the U.S. for years, admitted during his federal trial that he planned to hold Nancy Pelosi hostage, record his interrogation of her, and "break her kneecaps" if she did not admit to the lies he said she told about "Russiagate," a reference to the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Teri Garr, the offbeat comic actor of 'Young Frankenstein' and 'Tootsie,' has died

By BOB THOMAS Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Teri Garr, the quirky comedy actor who rose from background dancer in Elvis Presley movies to co-star of such favorites as "Young Frankenstein" and "Tootsie," has died. She was 79.

Garr died Tuesday of multiple sclerosis "surrounded by family and friends," said publicist Heidi Schaeffer. Garr battled other health problems in recent years and underwent an operation in January 2007 to repair an aneurysm.

Admirers took to social media in her honor, with writer-director Paul Feig calling her "truly one of my comedy heroes. I couldn't have loved her more" and screenwriter Cinco Paul saying: "Never the star, but always shining. She made everything she was in better."

The actor, who was sometimes credited as Terri, Terry or Terry Ann during her long career, seemed destined for show business from her childhood.

Her father was Eddie Garr, a well-known vaudeville comedian; her mother was Phyllis Lind, one of the original high-kicking Rockettes at New York's Radio City Music Hall. Their daughter began dance lessons at 6 and by 14 was dancing with the San Francisco and Los Angeles ballet companies.

She was 16 when she joined the road company of "West Side Story" in Los Angeles, and as early as 1963 she began appearing in bit parts in films.

She recalled in a 1988 interview how she won the "West Side Story" role. After being dropped from her first audition, she returned a day later in different clothes and was accepted.

From there, Garr found steady work dancing in movies, and she appeared in the chorus of nine Presley films, including "Viva Las Vegas," "Roustabout" and "Clambake."

She also appeared on numerous television shows, including "Star Trek," "Dr. Kildare" and "Batman," and was a featured dancer on the rock 'n' roll music show "Shindig," the rock concert performance T.A.M.I. and a cast member of "The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour."

Her big film break came as Gene Hackman's girlfriend in 1974's Francis Ford Coppola thriller "The Conversation." That led to an interview with Mel Brooks, who said he would hire her for the role of Gene Wilder's German lab assistant in 1974's "Young Frankenstein" — if she could speak with a German accent.

"Cher had this German woman, Renata, making wigs, so I got the accent from her," Garr once recalled.

The film established her as a talented comedy performer, with New Yorker film critic Pauline Kael proclaiming her "the funniest neurotic dizzy dame on the screen."

Her big smile and off-center appeal helped land her roles in "Oh, God!" opposite George Burns and John Denver, "Mr. Mom" (as Michael Keaton's wife) and "Tootsie" in which she played the girlfriend who loses Dustin Hoffman to Jessica Lange and learns that he has dressed up as a woman to revive his career. (She also lost the supporting actress Oscar at that year's Academy Awards to Lange.)

Although best known for comedy, Garr showed in such films as "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," "The Black Stallion" and "The Escape Artist" that she could handle drama equally well.

"I would like to play 'Norma Rae' and 'Sophie's Choice,' but I never got the chance," she once said, adding she had become typecast as a comic actor.

She had a flair for spontaneous humor, often playing David Letterman's foil during guest appearances on NBC's "Late Night With David Letterman" early in its run.

Her appearances became so frequent, and the pair's good-natured bickering so convincing, that for a time rumors cropped up that they were romantically involved. Years later, Letterman credited those early appearances with helping make the show a hit.

It was also during those years that Garr began to feel "a little beeping or ticking" in her right leg. It began in 1983 and eventually spread to her right arm as well, but she felt she could live with it. By 1999 the symptoms had become so severe that she consulted a doctor. The diagnosis: multiple sclerosis.

For three years Garr didn't reveal her illness.

"I was afraid that I wouldn't get work," she explained in a 2003 interview. "People hear MS and think, 'Oh, my God, the person has two days to live.'"

After going public, she became a spokesperson for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, making humorous speeches to gatherings in the U.S. and Canada.

"You have to find your center and roll with the punches because that's a hard thing to do: to have people pity you," she commented in 2005. "Just trying to explain to people that I'm OK is tiresome."

She also continued to act, appearing on "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," "Greetings From Tucson," "Life With Bonnie" and other TV shows. She also had a brief recurring role on "Friends" in the 1990s as Lisa Kudrow's mother. Garr married contractor John O'Neil in 1993. They adopted a daughter, Molly, before divorcing in 1996.

In her 2005 autobiography, "Speedbumps: Flooring It Through Hollywood," Garr explained her decision not to discuss her age.

"My mother taught me that showbiz people never tell their real ages. She never revealed hers or my father's," she wrote.

She said she was born in Los Angeles, although most reference books list Lakewood, Ohio. As her father's career waned, the family, including Teri's two older brothers, lived with relatives in the Midwest and East.

The Garrs eventually moved back to California, settling in the San Fernando Valley, where Teri graduated from North Hollywood High School and studied speech and drama for two years at California State University, Northridge.

Garr recalled in 1988 what her father had told his children about pursuing a career in Hollywood.

"Don't be in this business," he told them. "It's the lowest. It's humiliating to people."

Garr is survived by her daughter, Molly O'Neil, and a grandson, Tyryn.

At 7 feet, 9 inches, Olivier Rioux is the world's tallest teen and an intriguing basketball project

By MARK LONG AP Sports Writer

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Walking from his apartment to classes and then to the University of Florida's basketball facility, Olivier Rioux poses for dozens — sometimes hundreds — of pictures a day.

Vertical shots, of course. Rioux won't fit in the frame any other way.

At 7 feet, 9 inches (2.4 meters), Rioux is the ultimate BMOC. He's actually the Biggest Man On Campus — any campus.

The Florida freshman, a happy-go-lucky Canadian who owns a spot in the Guinness record book as the world's tallest teenager, also will make basketball history when he plays for the 21st-ranked Gators this season. The cheerful guy known as "Oli" will become the tallest to play college hoops, supplanting 7-foot-7 Kenny George of UNC Asheville (2006-08).

He's 2 inches (5 centimeters) taller than former NBA giants Gheorghe Muresan and Manute Bol, and 3 inches taller than popular big men Yao Ming, Tacko Fall and Shawn Bradley.

"You get asked questions every day," said Rioux, who likes to draw in his spare time. "You don't have a single three seconds to yourself when you're outside, which I was fine with because my brother and my dad are tall. And, as a family, we used to go out. That's just how it was, and you can't change that

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because people are curious.”

His college teammates have gotten used to it by now.

“It’s really weird looking up to someone,” said 7-foot-1 center Micah Handlogten. “But being around him just about every day, it’s just different when you’re out in public with him. People normally ask me, ‘You’re so tall. Do you play basketball?’ No one says a word to me (now). Everyone just looks to him. It’s kind of crazy. He doesn’t shy away from it.”

Rioux actually embraces it. He welcomes the stares, the questions and all the requests.

“It does help to be Canadian,” he quipped. “You just get used to it. Talking to people is nice because they are curious, and you can’t change that.”

Rioux has worked hard to prepare for Division I basketball, but no one expects him to be a star at this level, certainly not right away. The Gators do expect Rioux to be a fan favorite, beginning with their season opener against USF on Monday night. Coach Todd Golden predicts it will be like nothing he’s ever experienced, with chants for Rioux late in games.

“That one we can see coming from a mile away,” Golden said. “About 95% of my conversations with random people about our team are about him. It’s the first time we’ve been ranked since 2019 and it’s like, ‘Hey, Coach, we’re really excited to see Oli out there this year.’ And I get it, man. He’s a very unique individual.”

Rioux grew up in Terrebonne, Quebec, and realized at an early age he was different. He was taller than most of his teachers in elementary school, crossed the 6-foot mark by age 8 and topped 7 feet the summer before seventh grade.

His mom is 6-2, dad is 6-8 and his older brother is 6-9.

“At my meemaw’s house, we had the wall (where) me and my brother used to measure ourselves. And then one day, poof, my brother was gone,” Rioux said, recalling the day he “officially” outgrew his entire family.

Back home in Canada, Rioux has a number of custom-made items to make life more comfortable, most notably his bed. On campus, though, he barely fits diagonally across a queen-sized mattress.

He has to duck to get through near every doorway and often hits his head. He wears a size 20 shoe, gets most of his wardrobe from team gear and won’t dare ride a scooter because “I don’t trust myself.” And squeezing into a classroom desk is more comical than a point guard trying to box him out.

He started playing basketball at age 5 and ended up at IMG Academy in Sarasota, about three hours south of Gainesville, for high school. He had offers from UC Irvine and Morehead State but ended up at Florida as a preferred walk-on.

He’s one of six international players on Golden’s roster and a clear project despite having played in several FIBA events with the Canadian national team, including the 2024 U18 FIBA AmeriCup and the 2023 U19 World Cup.

“The great thing in our minds is we think he has potential to play at some point,” Golden said. “He’s more than just a 7-9 guy. He’s had some really good moments in practice, super coachable and I’m excited for him to get to this point next year and kind of see where we’re at.”

Rioux has made strides in just a few months. His mobility and coordination have improved — he can wrap his leg around his head — along with his conditioning. Golden still wants him to use his 305-pound frame to become “more of a butt-kicker” in the low post.

“He has flashes in practice where he’ll make some plays and you’re like, ‘Whoa,’” Golden said. “Like, obviously, we can’t do that with anybody else.”

Rioux can dunk without leaving his feet and has a nearly unstoppable hook shot. He wears No. 32 because of his affection for Pro Basketball Hall of Famers Magic Johnson and Shaquille O’Neal, a fellow 7-footer.

He’d like to pattern his game after former Purdue center Zach Edey (7-4) and French superstar Victor Wembanyama (7-3), who is currently considered the gold standard for 7-footers.

“Oh my God,” Rioux gushed.

Most people have the same reaction when seeing Rioux for the first time. He towers over teammates and classmates, and just about every picture taken of him goes viral.

"He doesn't seek the attention, but he also doesn't get annoyed at the people that ask," Handlogten said. "He embraces it because it's part of him, and he loves that. If someone comes up and asks for pictures, he's like, 'Yeah, of course.' And he always has that bright smile on his face. It's awesome."

Judge continues to block Florida officials from threatening TV stations over abortion ads

By KATE PAYNE Associated Press/Report for America

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge who recently chastised Florida officials for "trampling" on free speech rights continued to block the head of the state's health department from taking any more steps to threaten TV stations that air commercials for an abortion rights measure on next week's ballot.

U.S. District Judge Mark Walker extended a temporary restraining order, siding with Floridians Defending Freedom, the group that created the ads promoting the ballot question that would add abortion rights to the state constitution if it passes Nov. 5.

Walker handed down the decision from the bench after hearing arguments from attorneys for the campaign and state officials. The order extends a previous one that bars State Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo from taking any further action to coerce or intimidate broadcasters that run the commercials.

Walker said extending the temporary restraining order will give him more time to rule on the preliminary injunction that the abortion rights campaign is requesting. The order will run through Election Day and expire on Nov. 12, unless the judge rules before then.

The group filed the lawsuit after Ladapo and John Wilson, who was then the top lawyer at the state health department before resigning unexpectedly, sent a letter to TV stations on Oct. 3 telling them to stop running an abortion rights ad, asserting that it was false and dangerous. The letter also says broadcasters could face criminal prosecution.

The ad at issue features a woman named Caroline Williams who said Florida's current law — which bans most abortions after six weeks — would have barred her from getting the procedure that her doctors said was needed to extend her life, after she was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer in 2022. Her providers wouldn't go forward with her cancer treatment while she was still pregnant.

An attorney for the state argued that the claims made in the ad are dangerously misleading and could put Floridians at risk if they don't seek out medical care because they believe all abortions in the state are banned.

Spreading "false information about the availability of lifesaving medical services" is not protected by the Constitution, attorneys for the state wrote in legal filings.

At Tuesday's hearing, attorney Brian Barnes compared the FPF ad to a hypothetical commercial that falsely claims the state's 911 system has shut down, creating a public health emergency.

"We see this case as being controlled by the same legal principles that would apply for the 911 hypothetical," Barnes said.

An attorney for FPF maintains that "the ad is true," and that it features a Florida resident describing her own medical circumstances in her own words.

Lawyer Ben Stafford argued that robust free speech protections are vital for a functioning democracy, especially in matters where there are clear disagreements on difficult moral and religious issues like abortion.

"What the First Amendment does is leave matters like that to the public marketplace of ideas," Stafford said, "not the whims of a government censor."

The decision Walker handed down on Tuesday extends an Oct. 18 order barring state officials from "trampling" on the free speech rights of those they disagree with.

"The government cannot excuse its indirect censorship of political speech simply by declaring the disfavored speech is 'false,'" the judge said in the previous order.

He added, "To keep it simple for the State of Florida: it's the First Amendment, stupid."

Tuesday's hearing is the latest development in an ongoing fight between advocates for abortion rights

and officials in the administration of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has waged his own state-funded campaign to block the ballot measure.

If approved by 60% of Florida voters, the constitutional amendment would protect the right to an abortion until fetal viability, considered to be somewhere past 20 weeks. The measure would override current state law, which bans most abortions after six weeks, before many women know they're pregnant.

In the weeks leading up to the election, DeSantis has held taxpayer-funded, campaign-style rallies with doctors and religious leaders to advocate against the proposed amendment. Four state agencies have set aside millions of dollars in public funds to create their own commercials railing against the abortion measure and another proposed constitutional amendment that would legalize recreational marijuana use in the state — a move that critics say violates a state law that bars government officials from using their public office for electioneering.

At a media event in Naples on Tuesday, flanked by doctors advocating against the ballot measure, DeSantis claimed that providers who say state laws bars them from performing an abortion on patients in medical distress are "totally lying" and should lose their medical licenses.

The Associated Press and other news organizations have reported cases of Florida women being denied care for a miscarriage or nonviable pregnancy, despite the risk of serious complications, because providers feared legal repercussions if the patient's life wasn't deemed sufficiently in danger.

"Any suggestion, advertisement, anything to suggest that Florida law in any way prevents a physician from caring for anybody in Florida, for women, for pregnant mothers, is a lie," DeSantis said.

The AP previously reported a Florida case in which a doctor admitted state law had complicated emergency pregnancy care.

"Because of the new laws ... staff cannot intervene unless there is a danger to the patient's health," a doctor at Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood, Florida, told an investigator who was probing the hospital's failure to offer an abortion to a woman whose water broke at 15 weeks, well before the fetus could survive.

Putin launches drills of Russia's nuclear forces simulating retaliatory strikes

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday launched a massive exercise of the country's nuclear forces featuring missile launches in a simulation of a retaliatory strike, as he continued to flex the country's nuclear muscle amid spiraling tensions with the West over Ukraine.

Speaking in a video call with military leaders, Putin said that the drills will simulate top officials' action in using nuclear weapons and include launches of nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles.

Defense Minister Andrei Belousov reported that the exercise is intended to practice "strategic offensive forces launching a massive nuclear strike in response to a nuclear strike by the enemy."

Putin, who has repeatedly brandished the nuclear sword as he seeks to deter the West from ramping up support for Ukraine, emphasized on Tuesday that Russia's nuclear arsenal remains a "reliable guarantor of the country's sovereignty and security."

"Taking into account growing geopolitical tensions and emerging new threats and risks, it's important for us to have modern strategic forces that are always ready for combat," he said, reaffirming that Russia sees nuclear weapons use as "the ultimate, extreme measure of ensuring its security."

Putin noted that Moscow will continue to modernize its nuclear forces, deploying new missiles that have a higher precision, quicker launch times and increased capabilities to overcome missile defenses.

As part of Tuesday's drills, the military test-fired a Yars intercontinental ballistic missile from the Plesetsk launch pad at the Kura testing range on the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Defense Ministry said. The Novomoskovsk and Knyaz Oleg nuclear submarines test-fired ICBMs from the Barents Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, while nuclear-capable Tu-95 strategic bombers carried out practice launches of long-range cruise missiles.

The ministry said that all the missiles reached their designated targets.

Last month, the Russian leader warned the U.S. and NATO allies that allowing Ukraine to use Western-supplied longer-range weapons for strikes deep inside Russia would put NATO at war with his country.

He reinforced the message by announcing a new version of the nuclear doctrine that considers a conventional attack on Russia by a nonnuclear nation that is supported by a nuclear power to be a joint attack on his country — a clear warning to the U.S. and other allies of Kyiv.

Putin also declared that the revised document envisages possible nuclear weapons use in case of a massive air attack, holding the door open to a potential nuclear response to any aerial assault — an ambiguity intended to deter the West.

Tuesday's maneuvers follow a series of other drills of Russia's nuclear forces.

Earlier this year, the Russian military held a joint nuclear exercise with Moscow's ally Belarus, which has hosted some of Russia's tactical nuclear weapons.

The first presidential election since the Jan. 6 attack will test new guardrails from Congress

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — This presidential election, the first since the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol, will be a stress test of the new systems and guardrails that Congress put in place to ensure America's long tradition of the peaceful transfer of presidential power.

As Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris race toward the finish, pro-democracy advocates and elected officials are preparing for a volatile period in the aftermath of Election Day, as legal challenges are filed, bad actors spread misinformation and voters wait for Congress to affirm the results.

"One of the unusual characteristics of this election is that so much of the potential danger and so many of the attacks on the election system are focused on the post-election period," said Wendy Weiser, vice president for democracy at the nonpartisan Brennan Center for Justice.

After the Jan. 6 attack, Congress set out to shore up the process and prevent a repeat of that unprecedented period when Trump, joined by some GOP allies in Congress, refused to concede defeat to President Joe Biden. Trump spent months pushing dozens of failed legal cases before sending his supporters to the U.S. Capitol, where they disrupted the electoral count with a bloody riot. He faces a federal indictment for the scheme, which included slates of fake electors from states falsely claiming he won.

While the new Electoral Count Reform Act approved by Congress has clarified the post-election processes — to more speedily resolve legal challenges and reinforce that the vice president has no ability to change the election outcome on Jan. 6 — the new law is by no means ironclad.

Much depends on the people involved, from the presidential winners and losers to the elected leaders in Congress and the voters across America putting their trust in the democratic system that has stood for more than 200 years. Over the weekend, Trump said he and House Speaker Mike Johnson have a "little secret" for winning the election.

Voters are worried about post-election strife

A poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that American voters are approaching the election with deep unease about what could follow.

Dick Gephardt, the former House leader, now serves on the executive board of the nonpartisan Keep our Republic, which has been working to provide civic education about the process in the presidential battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

"We are concerned about one thing and one thing only: Can Americans still have valid trust in elections and can we have consistently a peaceful transfer of power in all offices, including the presidency?" Gephardt said in a briefing earlier this month.

"January 6th in 2021 was really a wake-up call, I think, for all of us," he said.

It's not just the onslaught of legal challenges that worries democracy groups, as dozens of cases already have been filed by both Republicans and Democrats even before Election Day. They say the sheer volume

of cases has the potential to sow doubt in the election tally and give rise to disinformation, both domestic and foreign, as happened in 2020 when Trump's legal team unfurled far-flung theories that proved to be wildly inaccurate.

As Trump runs to retake the White House, he is already setting the stage for challenges to the election he wants to be "too big to rig." The Republican National Committee has made legal strategy a cornerstone of its Election Integrity program.

Trump is backed by Republicans on Capitol Hill, including House Speaker Mike Johnson, who has adopted similar language, saying he would accept the results only if the election is free and fair.

"We're going to have the peaceful transition of power," said Johnson, who led one of Trump's 2020 legal challenges, on CBS. "I believe President Trump's going to win, and this will be taken care of."

One specific line of attack from House Republicans has been to suggest there will be illegal voting by noncitizens, even though it is a crime to do so, and state and federal reviews have found it to be extremely rare. Johnson has pointed to past House races, including one in Iowa in 2020 that was won by six votes, to bolster his concerns.

Rep. Joseph Morelle of New York, the top Democrat on the Committee on House Administration, said Johnson is "saying the quiet part out loud," signaling the way Republicans may challenge the outcome.

That "troubles me," he said.

What comes between election and inauguration?

At the Brennan Center, they've conducted war-game-like scenarios for what could happen after the election, at a time when state election officials are facing a resurgence in conspiracy theories and misinformation about voting.

A series of deadlines between Election Day on Nov. 5 and Inauguration Day on Jan. 20 are built into the process, once routine steps that are now important milestones that can be met — or missed.

States are required to certify their electors by Dec. 11 in advance of a meeting of the Electoral College, which is set this year on Dec. 17.

The new Congress convenes Jan. 3 to elect a House speaker and swear in lawmakers. Then, on Jan. 6, Congress holds a joint session to accept the electoral count from the states — a typically ceremonial session presided over by the vice president.

To fortify the process in the wake of the Jan. 6 attack, the Electoral Count Reform Act instituted several changes intended to shore up the process and make sure the disputes are resolved by the time the Congress meets. Legal challenges to the results are to be more quickly resolved, under an expedited timeline for judicial review, all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary. If a county refuses to certify its results, as some did during the 2022 midterm elections, the governor has more authority to certify the state's tally.

On Jan. 6, the law now requires 20% of the House and Senate to challenge a state's electors to force a vote on rejecting them, rather than a single member threshold from each chamber.

"You know people have a right, if they have a problem with the election, to go to court and be heard," said Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif. "The thing is, once that's over, it's over."

Ballot drop box fires highlight concerns that election conspiracy theories are making them a target

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Two ballot drop boxes in the Pacific Northwest were damaged in a suspected arson attack just over a week before Election Day, destroying hundreds of ballots at one location in Vancouver, Washington.

At the other, in neighboring Portland, Oregon, it appears a fire suppression system worked to contain the blaze and limited the number of ballots damaged to three. Authorities are reviewing surveillance footage as they try to identify who is responsible.

Here's what happened, how rules and security measures about drop boxes vary across the country, and

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how election conspiracy theories have undermined confidence in their use.

What do we know?

Police said incendiary devices started the fires in the drop boxes in Portland and Vancouver. Authorities said evidence showed the fires were connected and that they also are related to an Oct. 8 incident when an incendiary device was placed at a different drop box in Vancouver.

Multnomah County Elections Director Tim Scott said his office was planning to contact the three voters whose ballots were damaged in Portland to help them get replacements.

In Vancouver, hundreds of ballots were lost at a ballot box at the Fisher's Landing Transit Center when the drop box's fire suppression system did not work as intended. Clark County Auditor Greg Kimsey said the box was last emptied at 11 a.m. Saturday. Voters who dropped their ballots there afterward are being urged to contact the office to get a new one.

The office will be increasing how frequently it collects ballots and changing collection times to the evening to keep ballot boxes from remaining full overnight when vandalism is more likely to occur.

Kimsey described the suspected arson as "a direct attack on democracy."

When and where can drop boxes be used?

Drop boxes have been used for years in states such as Colorado, Oregon, Utah and Washington, where ballots are mailed to all registered voters.

They grew in popularity in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, as election officials sought options for voters who wanted to avoid crowded polling places or were worried about mail delays.

In all, 27 states and the District of Columbia allow ballot drop boxes, according to data collected by the National Conference of State Legislatures. Six others don't have a specific law but allow local communities to use them.

Placement can vary widely. In some communities, they're located inside public buildings, available only during office hours. Elsewhere, they are outside and accessible at any hour, typically with video surveillance or someone watching.

Sporadic problems have occurred over the years.

In 2020, a few drop boxes were hit by vehicles, and one in Massachusetts was damaged by arson. In that case, most of the ballots were legible enough for voters to be identified and sent replacements. A drop box also was set on fire in Los Angeles County in 2020.

How should they be secured?

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency advises state and local election officials to place drop boxes in convenient, high-traffic areas that are familiar to voters, such as libraries and community centers.

If drop boxes are not staffed, they should be secured and locked at all times, located in well-lit areas and monitored by video surveillance cameras, the guidance says. Many are bolted to the ground, surveilled with cameras or confined to public buildings during business hours, where they can be monitored.

How have conspiracy theories contributed to concerns around drop boxes?

Ballot drop boxes have been in the spotlight for the last four years, targeted by right-wing conspiracy theories that falsely claimed they were responsible for massive voter fraud in 2020.

A debunked film called "2,000 Mules" amplified the claims, exposing millions to a groundless theory that a ballot harvesting operation was depositing fraudulent ballots in drop boxes in the dark of night.

An Associated Press survey of state election officials across the U.S. found there were no widespread problems associated with drop boxes in 2020.

Paranoia about drop boxes continued into the 2022 midterms, when armed vigilantes began showing up to monitor them in Arizona and were restricted by a federal judge. This year, the conservative group True the Vote launched a website hosting citizen livestreams of drop boxes in various states.

In Montana, where an important U.S. Senate race is on the ballot, Republicans recently seized on an unsubstantiated ballot box tampering claim to raise money off doubts about the electoral process.

How have states responded since the 2020 election?

Republican lawmakers in several states sought to tighten rules around mail voting after the 2020 election, and much of their focus was on the use of ballot drop boxes.

Six states have since banned them: Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina and South Dakota, according to research by the Voting Rights Lab, which advocates for expanded voting access.

Other states have restricted their use. This includes Ohio and Iowa, which now permits only one drop box per county, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

In Georgia's Fulton County, which includes Atlanta and has over 1 million residents, 10 ballot drop boxes are available for this year's presidential election. That's down from 38 four years ago under an emergency rule prompted by the pandemic. It's the result of an election overhaul by Georgia Republicans in response to former President Donald Trump's false claims of a stolen election.

Overall, 12 states prohibit drop boxes or do not list drop boxes as an approved method of returning a ballot, according to data collected by the National Conference of State Legislatures. Five other states do not have a state law and do not use drop boxes.

Drop boxes had been used for years in Wisconsin, one of this year's presidential battlegrounds, but support for them has split along ideological lines since 2020. In Wausau, the conservative mayor carted away the city's lone drop box, an action that's under investigation by the state Department of Justice. The drop box has since been returned and is in use.

Care for a sweet treat during Mexico's Day of the Dead? Have a bite of 'pan de muerto'

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The first bite is an assault to the senses. A sugary, citric, fluffy delight.

"Pan de muerto" or "bread of the dead" is baked in Mexico every year, from early October to mid-November, amid Day of the Dead celebrations.

Shaped like a bun, decorated with bone-like bread pieces and sugar on top, pan de muerto can be seen at coffee shops, dinner tables or home-made altars, which Mexicans build to remember their deceased loved ones and welcome them back for a night on Nov. 2.

Its date of origin can't be specified, but pan de muerto can be thought of as a fusion of Mesoamerican and Spanish traditions, said Andrés Medina, a researcher at the Anthropological Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

Mexicans have remembered the dead with festivities and food for centuries

Since pre-Hispanic times, festivities for the dead have existed and skull-shaped products have been made. But in the 1500s, when the Spaniards arrived, new elements such as sugar and bread were incorporated into Indigenous offerings.

Those early celebrations, Medina said, coincided with the crop season, which provides pan de muerto a spiritual, symbolic meaning. If its decorations resemble bones, it's because Mesoamerican worldviews regarded them as the origin of life.

According to an ancient myth, Quetzalcóatl created humankind out of bones. Details vary from one source to another, but soon after the god apparently stole them from the underworld, he fell. And from his blood, the seed of life was born.

"Under this worldview, the human body's bones, just like the fruit's insides, are seeds," Medina said. "So, in a way, altars are offerings to fertility. And Day of the Dead is a celebration of the life contained in each seed."

Pan de muerto's shape, ingredients and preparations differ from one Mexican state to another, but is enjoyed all over the country.

100 and counting: One man's quest to try every variation of "pan de muerto"

In Mexico City, hundreds of bakeries make their own version. Rodrigo Delgado has spent years trying to taste them all.

For fun, he challenges himself to try as many as possible and review them on his Instagram account. On his first quest, a decade ago, he tried 15. In 2023, he had a bite of 100. This year, he expects to taste at least 110.

"I like pan de muerto because of what it means during Day of the Dead season," said Delgado, who also reviews local restaurants on his blog, Godínez Gourmet. "The mix of flavors of the bread, as much as its texture, are very comforting."

He can't remember the first time he tried pan de muerto, but he treasures the memories of his mother baking it at home. He and his brother used to knead the dough, he said, and shape the bone-like decorations of its top.

Baking pan de muerto is not an easy task. At Panadería Dos Veinte, in Mexico City's San Rafael neighborhood, owner Manu Tovar said that having these sweet buns ready for sale takes three days of work: one to extract the infusions that will provide the bread with its flavor, another to incorporate them into the dough and one more day to knead and shape the buns.

There's no secret in his recipe, Tovar said. The ingredients — although seasonal — are simple: orange blossom, tangerine zest, anise and butter.

His special touch, what makes his bread unique, is the sourdough. "It's an ancestral process," Tovar said. "A millenary way to make bread."

The sourdough that he and four assistants use is 20 years old. He incorporates water and flour daily, to keep it alive, and mixes part of it with new dough. This gives the bread a better taste, he said, and makes it easier to digest.

Pan de muertos' seasonal flavors help make it special

For years, said Tovar, he resisted the temptation of baking pan de muerto in early October. The quality of the ingredients improves as November gets closer, but customers kept asking when the buns would be ready, so he caved.

This season, aside from baking 90 pan de muertos per day, he came up with two new creations: a croissant roll filled with marigold cream and a bun — locally known as "concha" — shaped like a marigold flower and prepared with tangerine instead of vanilla or chocolate.

"If you bake it in a traditional way, you can only have pan de muerto now, because that's when the fruit is available," Tovar said. "That's what I think makes it so special."

The ambience of the Day of the Dead season, he added, also plays a role. Nightfall comes earlier during this time of year and there's certain mysticism, a particular feeling in the air.

"It probably has to do with the melancholy of what this festivity means," he said. "For one day a year, you can feel closer to those who are no longer with you."

Arab American voters make their choice — Harris, Trump or neither — in the election's final days

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Bowls of labneh and platters of za'atar bread covered the tables in a Lebanese restaurant near Detroit, yet no one seemed to have much of an appetite.

On one side were Kamala Harris' top emissaries to the Arab American community. On the other were local leaders who were explaining — once again — why many in the community couldn't vote for the vice president because of the war in Gaza.

"I love this country, but I'll tell you, we have never been so disappointed in this country as we are now," said Nabih H. Ayad, chairman of the Arab American Civil Rights League. "We wanted to give the Democratic Party the opportunity to do something, and they haven't."

"The one line we can't cross," Ayad said, "is genocide."

Nasrina Bargzie and Brenda Abdelal, who were hired by Harris' campaign to spearhead Arab and Muslim outreach, listened intently but said little in response.

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If Harris loses Michigan and the presidential election next week, it's conversations like this one that could explain why. The Detroit area has the country's largest concentration of Arab Americans, and Democrats fear that Harris will pay a steep political price for U.S. support for Israel, which rejects allegations that its military operations in Gaza constitute a genocide.

Community members who normally back Democrats said they face an impossible decision. Either they punish Harris for what they view as complicity in the deaths of at least 43,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, or they endure Donald Trump's return to the White House, which they fear would revive discrimination toward their community.

A reminder of the situation's complexity came in Ann Arbor on Monday night, when Harris held a campaign rally. Assad Turfe, one of the few Arab American officials in Michigan to endorse the vice president, said his community needs someone "who sees us, who understands us and who will give voice to our pain," adding that "without a doubt that Kamala Harris is that leader."

But as Harris began her remarks, pro-Palestinian protesters interrupted by chanting, "Israel bombs, Kamala pays, how many kids have you killed today?" Harris responded, "hey guys, I hear you" and "we all want this war to end as soon as possible."

It's unclear how many skeptics Harris will be able to win over, especially since she has not proposed any concrete changes on U.S. policy toward Israel or the war in Gaza. Four years ago, Joe Biden won by a 3-to-1 margin in Dearborn, where nearly half of the 110,000 residents are of Arab descent. Now Democrats are concerned some of these voters will go to Trump or third-party candidates like Jill Stein.

"They're split. There are those who will vote for Harris, recognizing that they could get a seat at the table," said U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., who convened the recent meeting at the Lebanese restaurant in his efforts to help the Harris campaign. "But there's a chunk that will vote for Stein or stay at home. Then there's a minority who will vote for Trump."

Trump has secured a number of endorsements from Muslims in the area, including from two Democratic mayors who represent Muslim-majority cities outside Detroit. He brought several Muslims on stage at a rally in metro Detroit on Saturday.

He argues he will put "a stop to the endless wars" and notes the Abraham Accords that Israel signed with several Arab nations during his presidency. He has also mocked Harris' embrace of former Rep. Liz Cheney, a conservative Republican whose father, former Vice President Dick Cheney, was a key force behind the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Harris is campaigning with Liz Cheney to try to pull away moderate Republicans turned off by Trump in Michigan and elsewhere.

But many top Arab American leaders — even those who have not endorsed Harris — are still deeply negative toward Trump and say his endorsements don't reflect a majority of the community. They also remember his call for a "total and complete shutdown" on Muslims entering the country and his travel restrictions on visitors from Muslim-majority countries. And some point out that Trump has suggested that he would give Israel even more leeway to attack its rivals in the region.

Harris wins over someone who backed the 'uncommitted' movement

Turfe, a Lebanese American and the deputy executive of Wayne County, is among the few Arab American leaders in Michigan to have endorsed Harris. He says it's to ensure the community doesn't return to a Trump presidency that "opened up old wounds for the generation that lived through those post 9/11 years."

Turfe said he was jolted awake by immigration agents in 2005 when they came to detain his wife, who had come to the country when she was 2 years old and was unaware that she didn't have legal citizenship.

"They came for her and they ripped my family apart," he said.

Then in 2006, Turfe's two grandmothers were killed in Lebanon as Israel fought with Hezbollah in a war backed by President George W. Bush.

Turfe said his community was primarily Republican until those years. But members moved toward the Democrats during Barack Obama's presidency and then helped Biden beat Trump in 2020.

Those political bonds are now ruptured.

Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing 1,200 Israelis and kidnapping more than 200 hostages. Israel launched its offensive shortly afterward with military and diplomatic support from Biden's administration.

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As civilian casualties mounted in Gaza, anti-war Democrats in Michigan and elsewhere launched a protest vote movement in the Democratic primary. They garnered over 100,000 "uncommitted" votes, with the majority coming from the state's Muslim-majority cities like Dearborn.

Turfe was part of the "uncommitted" movement while Biden was running for reelection, but he said he changed his mind when Harris became the nominee. He endorsed her in August and met her before a rally near Detroit in October.

He said he told Harris about his grandmothers' deaths nearly two decades ago, and "I felt her empathy." "She felt my pain," Turfe said.

Turfe's endorsement has sparked a backlash. On social media, photoshopped images accuse him of endorsing atrocities in Gaza. He's also received text messages labeling him a traitor. Longstanding relationships in his hometown of Dearborn have become strained.

Dearborn resident Suehaila Amen is accustomed to having her community in the national spotlight, having starred in the 2012 TLC reality series "All-American Muslim." A lifelong Democrat, Amen said she won't be voting for Harris.

"They want to send their people to come and scope and see how we're feeling because now they're scared that they're going to be losing a swing state," said Amen, who lived in Lebanon from 2017 to 2021. "But, you know, if she loses, it's by her own doing, by her own hand, and she'll deserve it."

Amen said she doesn't want Trump to win but "I have to, at the end of the day, sleep at night."

Harris makes her closing argument to Arab Americans

Harris made a rare reference to Israel's fight against Hamas and Hezbollah during a recent speech in Oakland County, outside of Detroit.

"This year has been very difficult, given the scale of death and destruction in Gaza and given the civilian casualties and displacement in Lebanon," she said. The death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, she said, "can and must be a turning point."

Harris also said she is "very proud to have the support" of Turfe and other Muslim leaders.

But Harris has not called for any reduction in the flow of U.S. weapons to Israel, and her campaign did not allow a pro-Palestinian speaker to take the stage at August's Democratic National Convention, a key demand of the "uncommitted" movement.

Khanna, a progressive Democrat from California, has stayed in close contact with Arab American leaders in metro Detroit for months and received the "Profile in Courage" award from the Arab American Civil Rights League this summer. Khanna is Hindu but said his family's background has given him shared experiences with Arab Americans.

During the Oct. 26 meeting with Arab American leaders, Khanna sat next to Harris' Arab and Muslim outreach directors while acknowledging that "not enough" has been done by Harris to help end the Israel-Hamas war.

"If Trump is elected, people like me won't be in any of the rooms," Khanna said. "Harris gives people like us a seat at the table to advocate for you."

It's the kind of message that resonates with Mike Musheinesh, a Palestinian American who runs his own auto parts store and attended the meeting. He said the community should vote for Harris "even if we have to hold our nose."

"If we want a seat at the table, we need to help her over the finish line," he said.

Today in History: October 30, Muhammad Ali defeats George Foreman in the "Rumble in the Jungle"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 30, the 304th day of 2024. There are 62 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 30, 1974, Muhammad Ali knocked out George Foreman in the eighth round of a scheduled 15-round bout known as the "Rumble in the Jungle," in Kinshasa, Congo (then Zaire), to regain his world

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heavyweight title.

Also on this date:

In 1912, Vice President James S. Sherman, running for a second term of office with President William Howard Taft, died six days before Election Day.

In 1938, the radio play "The War of the Worlds," starring Orson Welles, aired on the CBS Radio Network.

In 1961, the Soviet Union tested a hydrogen bomb, the "Tsar Bomba," with a force estimated at about 50 megatons (over 3,500 times that of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima).

In 1972, 45 people were killed when an Illinois Central Gulf commuter train was struck from behind by another train on Chicago's South Side.

In 1975, the New York Daily News ran the headline "Ford to City: Drop Dead" a day after President Gerald R. Ford said he would veto any proposed federal bailout of New York City.

In 1995, by a razor-thin vote of 50.6 percent to 49.4 percent, Federalists prevailed over separatists in a Quebec secession referendum.

In 2005, the late Rosa Parks became the first woman to lie in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda; President George W. Bush and congressional leaders paused to lay wreaths by the casket of the civil rights icon.

In 2013, the Boston Red Sox romped to their third World Series championship in 10 seasons, besting the St. Louis Cardinals 6-1 in Game 6 at Fenway Park.

In 2018, notorious gangster James "Whitey" Bulger was found beaten to death at a federal prison in West Virginia; the 89-year-old former Boston crime boss and longtime FBI informant had been transferred there just hours earlier.

Today's Birthdays: Author Robert Caro is 89. Football Hall of Fame coach Dick Vermeil is 88. Rock singer Grace Slick is 85. Songwriter Eddie Holland is 85. R&B singer Otis Williams (The Temptations) is 83. Actor Henry Winkler is 79. Broadcast journalist Andrea Mitchell is 78. Country/rock musician Timothy B. Schmit (The Eagles) is 77. Actor Harry Hamlin is 73. Country singer T. Graham Brown is 70. Actor Kevin Pollak is 67. Actor Michael Beach is 61. Musician Gavin Rossdale (Bush) is 59. Actor Nia Long is 54. Actor Matthew Morrison is 46. Business executive and former presidential adviser Ivanka Trump is 43. Olympic gold medal gymnast Nastia Liukin is 35. NBA guard Devin Booker is 28. NHL defenseman Cale Makar is 25.