

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 1 of 85

[1- Upcoming Events](#)

[2- 1440 News Headlines](#)

[3- Legion Halloween Costume Party](#)

[3- Frosty Clues](#)

[4- No. 21 Wolves Roll Past Host Beavers in Three](#)

[4- Apartments for Rent](#)

[5- Brown County Commission Agenda](#)

[6- SDSU Extension 4-H recognizes 2024 Premier](#)

[Exhibitor awards](#)

[7- South Dakota Voting System Update](#)

[8- Notice of Sale](#)

[9- Dog License Ad](#)

[10- Manhart Ad](#)

[11- SD SearchLight: Justice Department to monitor voting law compliance in tribal areas and Minnehaha County](#)

[12- SD SearchLight: Campaign finance reports reveal high-stakes spending in key legislative races](#)

[15- SD SearchLight: Cattle groups, South Dakota ranches file suit to block federal rule on electronic ear tags](#)

[17- SD SearchLight: Will control of Congress shift? The results hinge on a handful of states and races](#)

[21- SD SearchLight: Final report before presidential election shows just 12,000 jobs added after hurricanes, strikes](#)

[23- Weather Pages](#)

[28- Daily Devotional](#)

[29- Subscription Form](#)

[30- Lottery Numbers](#)

[31- Upcoming Groton Events](#)

[32- News from the Associated Press](#)

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.

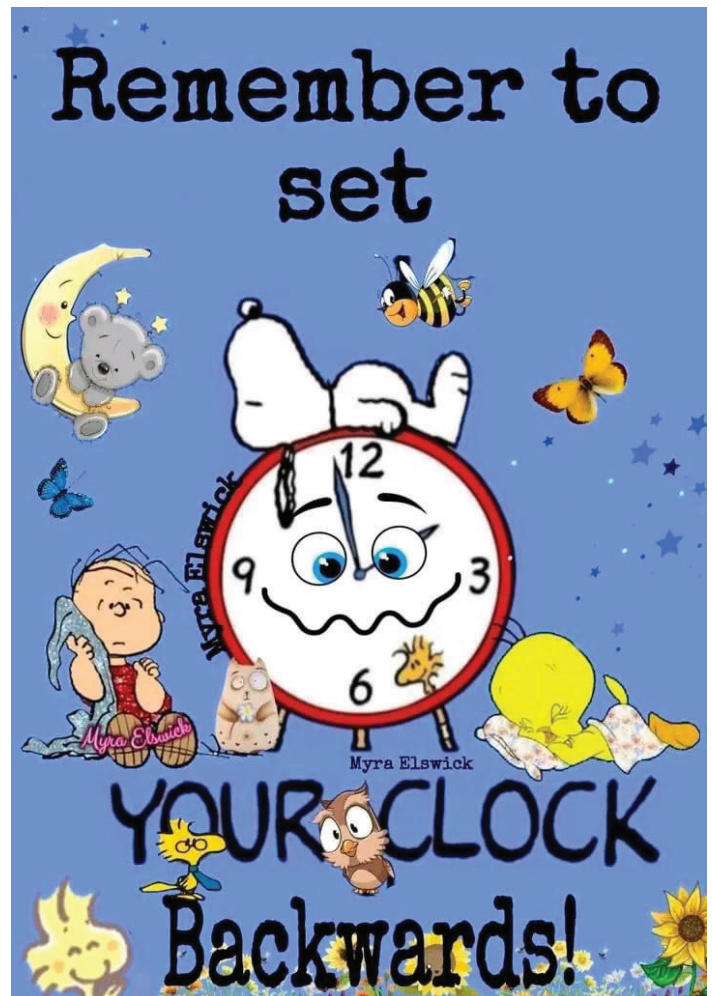
St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion at

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



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.

© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 2 of 85

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.

Death Toll Rises in Spain

The death toll from flash flooding in Spain earlier this week reached at least 205 as rescue teams continue to search for survivors in the country's Valencia region and surrounding areas. Officials called the storms the worst in living memory—more than 60 people died in the town of Paiporta, home to a population of just 25,000.

The storms began Tuesday, causing nearby rivers to overflow as many residents were returning home from work. The resulting waters and mudflow overtook roads and highways, trapping many in their cars and forcing others to rush for higher ground. The town of Chiva reportedly saw more rainfall in eight hours than it had over the past 20 months, while elsewhere waters reportedly rose more than 3 feet in the course of minutes. Residents have begun casting blame on local officials, saying warnings came too late and cities were unprepared.

More rainfall is expected in the region this weekend.

Early voting surpasses 68 million as election nears.

More than 36 million Americans have voted in person, and 31 million have logged mail-in ballots—roughly equal to 42% of the total vote in 2020. Vice President Kamala Harris to campaign in Georgia and North Carolina today; former President Donald Trump to hold rallies in North Carolina and Virginia (see polls—RCP, 538, Nate Silver).

US economy adds 12,000 jobs in October.

The figure is the lowest since December 2020 and well below estimates of 100,000, with analysts pointing to Hurricanes Helene and Milton as partial drivers of the slowdown. Unemployment held steady at 4.1%.

Boeing union sets Monday vote to end strike.

The roughly 30,000-strong International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union endorsed a 38% pay raise offer from the company and will vote Monday to potentially end a seven-week strike.

Thieves steal two Andy Warhol paintings, damage two others.

The group attempted to take the entire four-part series, known as "Reigning Queens," but left two badly damaged in the street as they fled from the museum in the Dutch town of Oisterwijk. Officials declined to place a value on the stolen works.

The WNBA's Indiana Fever name Stephanie White as coach.

White, who previously coached the Connecticut Sun, will oversee a team led by Rookie of the Year Caitlin Clark. The Fever went 20-20 last season and lost to the Sun in the playoffs.

North Korea unveils new missile.

Government of Kim Jong Un claims to have tested the world's largest intercontinental ballistic missile yesterday, with experts saying the Hwasong-19 weapon is too unwieldy to be useful in a practical war scenario.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Lindsay L. in Alberta, Canada.

"This occurred over a decade ago, but ... in 2006 I was gifted lifesaving stem cells from a retired marine in order to save my life from AML (a form of blood cancer) aka Leukemia! This man selflessly donated his stem cells so a young Canadian girl could live her life! I was 20 years old at the time, and celebrated my 40th birthday this year! Pretty auspicious day to say I have lived another 20 years post diagnosis, when they initially told me that there wasn't any cure for my disease. Modern medicine is just insane!"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 3 of 85



The Groton American Legion held its Halloween Costume Party Friday night. A couple of costumes were impressive. On the left are Mark and Kelly Abeln. Kelly said that it took a couple of hours just to make the horns. "I'm quite the engineer when it comes to Halloween," she said. On the right are Spencer and Kellie Locke being former President Donald Trump and S.D. Governor Kristi Noem. Spencer even has the patch over his ear from being shot. He said, "It's all in the details!" (Photos by Paul Kosel)

FROSTY CLUE

I/My.....

1. Am a resident of Groton
2. Went to Country School

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 4 of 85

No. 21 Wolves Roll Past Host Beavers in Three

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 21 Northern State University volleyball team opened their weekend with a sweep of Bemidji State on the road. The Wolves downed the Beavers with set scores of 25-16, 25-13, and 25-14.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 3, BSU 0

Records: NSU 16-5 (8-5 NSIC), BSU 7-14 (2-11 NSIC)

Attendance: 115

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves led the match with 43 kills, 37 assists, 53 digs, nine blocks, and three aces. Northern hit an NSIC match high .352 in the win with 43 kills on 105 swings, and held BSU to a .117 attack percentage.

Hanna Thompson led the offense with 13 kills, hitting .333 in the win, followed by Morissen Samuels with nine kills and a .400 attack percentage.

Natalia Szybinska and Victoria Persha followed with seven kills apiece, while Szybinska hit a team leading .467.

Keri Walker paced the offense to their best attack percentage in NSIC play with 32 assists; she added nine digs, three kills, and one block.

Abby Meister led the defensive effort with 22 digs, while Reese Johnson and Mia Hinsz added six each; Johnson recorded three assists.

Persha led the team at the net with five blocks, followed by Abby Brooks with four.

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Hanna Thompson: 13 kills, .333 attack%, 1 block, 1 dig

Keri Walker: 32 assists, 9 digs, 3 kills, 1 block

Abby Meister: 22 digs

Victoria Persha: 7 kills, 5 blocks, 1 dig

UP NEXT

Northern travels to Minnesota Crookston for a 2 p.m. match today against the Golden Eagles.



**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**

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 5 of 85

BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY
November 5, 2024 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Scott Meints, Emergency Management Director
 - a. Life Safety Award
4. Opportunity of Public Comment
5. Mike Scott, Landfill Manager, Ted Dickey, NECOG Program Coordinator & Leif Redinger, Helms Engineering
 - a. Approve/Authorize Advertising for Bids for Solid & Yard Waste Collection Service
6. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. Sand Lake Bridge Termination Agreement
 - b. Department Update
7. Approve Thomas Bentz to join the Brown County Dive Team
8. Rachel Kippley, Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks Manager
 - a. Quote for Bobcat
9. Resolution in Supporting Operation Green Light for Veterans
10. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of October 29, 2024
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Claim Assignments
11. Other Business
12. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
13. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone: <https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311)

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission but may not exceed 3 minutes. Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board).

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at

<https://www.brown.sd.us/departments/commission>

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 6 of 85

SDSU Extension 4-H recognizes 2024 Premier Exhibitor awards

BROOKINGS, S.D. – South Dakota State University Extension 4-H is pleased to announce the 2024 Premier Exhibitor Award winners.

Sixty 4-H members are being recognized for their hard work and accomplishments in the 4-H animal project areas with the Premier Exhibitor Award. The award is divided into four categories: large animal (beef, sheep, swine, meat goat); small animal/dairy (poultry, rabbit, dairy goat and dairy cattle); horse; and dog.

“The Premier Exhibitor Awards are the highest honor for animal projects in the South Dakota 4-H program,” said Tim Tanner, SDSU Extension State 4-H Program Director. “To win these honors, youth must demonstrate research-based knowledge gain, work ethic and animal care. With such dedication to their animal projects, these accomplished youth are prepared to be well-rounded in life.”

Placings are determined by the highest combined score of showmanship, skill-a-thon and animal show class results (performance or market/breeding). The top two members in each project area and age division receive a banner or belt buckles, and third through fifth place in the small and large animal projects receive a cash award.

“The knowledge and experience these youth are gaining through their animal projects is incredible. We are very excited for these youth members and congratulate them on this outstanding accomplishment,” said Sami Nordmann, State 4-H Livestock Program Manager. “We hope that these youth will continue to grow in their project areas and inspire others through their passion and hard work.”

2024 Premier Exhibitor Awards:

Large Animal (beef, sheep, swine, meat goat)

Beginner

- 1st – Thatcher Werning, Hanson County
- 2nd – McQuade Beare, Codington County
- 3rd – Paisley Johnson, Minnehaha County
- 4th – Henry Neilson, Hanson County
- 5th – Jace Smith, Spink County

Junior

- 1st – Creighten Werning, Hanson County
- 2nd – Chanel Mohrhauser, Minnehaha County
- 3rd – Hannah Skovly, Brookings County
- 4th – Skylar Stiefvater, McCook County
- 5th – Jake Cody, Minnehaha County

Senior

- 1st – Josie Nold, Brookings County
- 2nd – Delaney Zoss, Sanborn County
- 3rd – Landon Berg, Hanson County
- 4th – Carissa Scheel, Buffalo/Jerauld County
- 5th – Katelyn Dorsey, Hyde County

Small Animal/Dairy (poultry, rabbit, dairy goat, dairy cattle)

Beginner

- 1st – Kaylin Gjernes, Brookings County
- 2nd – Kaydee Neuharth, Hughes/Stanley County
- 3rd – Summer Senska, Sanborn County
- 4th – Eli McCloud, Kingsbury County
- 5th – Lydia Wonnemberg, Tripp County

Junior

- 1st – Justin Neuharth, Hughes/Stanley County
- 2nd – Larissa Fossum, Union County
- 3rd – Bailey Gjernes, Brookings County
- 4th – Hannah Masterson, Hutchinson County
- 5th – Mya McCloud, Kingsbury County

Senior

- 1st – Johnathon Neuharth, Hughes/Stanley County
- 2nd – Brityn Davies, Kingsbury County
- 3rd – Braylon Plucker, Turner County
- 4th – Brianna Gilchrist, Tripp County
- 5th – Karin Sweeter, Lincoln County

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 7 of 85

Horse

Beginner

- 1st – Zoey Rigo, Turner County
- 2nd – Magda Martinez, Hutchinson County
- 3rd – Emersyn Schwagel, Grant County
- 4th – Brace Tapio, Hutchinson County
- 5th – Kershaw Reiner, Buffalo/Jerauld County

Junior

- 1st – Emily Tapio, Hutchinson County
- 2nd – Maddie Lachman, Turner County
- 3rd – Lily Roesler, Buffalo/Jerauld County
- 4th – Madelyn Van Lith, Grant County
- 5th – Colston Dubbelde, Turner County

Senior

- 1st – Delaney Zoss, Sanborn County
- 2nd – Bailey Schwagel, Grant County
- 3rd – Josie Nold, Brookings County
- 4th – Anna Johnson, Brown County
- 5th – Brooke Schwagel, Grant County

Dog

Beginner

- 1st – Lilian Rusch, Pennington County
- 2nd – Alexis Fridley, Sanborn County
- 3rd – Piper Graham, Davison County
- 4th – Heath Wetzler, Butte/Lawrence County
- 5th – Navayah Vandenbosch, Lincoln County

Junior

- 1st – Bailie Lapcinski, Pennington County
- 2nd – Hailey Hussey, Pennington County
- 3rd – Sarah Bultje, Davison County
- 4th – Kathryn Framstad, Kingsbury County
- 5th – AJ Lindner, Codington County

Senior

- 1st – Gracie Kramer, Lincoln County
- 2nd – Makayla Meland, Day County
- 3rd – Jodyn Bawek, Spink County
- 4th – Sarah Carlson, Deuel County
- 5th – Madalyn Oftedahl, Deuel County

South Dakota Voting System Update

(Pierre, S.D.) – Yesterday we experienced a temporary technical issue with our voter check-in system due to a Microsoft service disruption. Our office worked closely with both our vendor and Microsoft to resolve the issue as swiftly as possible. Please rest assured that this temporary interruption in no way impacted the tally or processing of votes; ballots are securely stored and counted on Election Day.

During the disruption voters could still cast their ballots as planned at county auditor offices, where staff had been directed on alternative procedures to ensure voters could still participate without interruption.

“We monitored the situation as our top priority as we remain fully committed to maintaining the integrity and accessibility of the voting process,” said Secretary Monae L. Johnson. “As the system is up and running now, we want to thank everyone for their patience and understanding.”

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-Judgment 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

MANHART

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 1

facebook.com/ManhartLogan | ManhartForHouse.com

General Election - Nov. 5
Absentee Voting has begun



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Justice Department to monitor voting law compliance in tribal areas and Minnehaha County

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 1, 2024 5:47 PM

The U.S. Department of Justice will monitor polling places to ensure voting rights in South Dakota's most-populated county and three Native American-majority counties on Election Day.

Alison Ramsdell, U.S. attorney for the District of South Dakota, announced via press release Friday afternoon that the department's Civil Rights Division will monitor compliance with federal voting rights laws in Bennett, Jackson, Minnehaha and Oglala Lakota counties.

The federal election monitors will work with state and local election officials "as needed" on Election Day to enforce laws like the Voting Rights, National Voter Registration, Help America Vote, Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting, and Civil Rights acts. Monitors will also be on the lookout for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires polling places offer accommodations to people with disabilities, and for instances of voter intimidation.

The press release does not say why the four counties were chosen for monitoring. There is a history of voting rights litigation in tribal areas, some of which helped redefine state legislative districts that a federal judge ruled had diluted the representation of Native Americans.

The 2024 election will be the first presidential contest overseen by Minnehaha County Auditor Leah Anderson. The auditor, elected in 2022, has courted controversy for public statements questioning the integrity of the 2020 election, for suggesting the county's election system is untrustworthy, and for her willingness to bolster the claims of groups like South Dakota Canvassing, which has spread misinformation about election interference in the state.

In the June primary, 132 ballots from one Minnehaha County precinct were successfully challenged – at least initially – by an activist named Jessica Pollema, who claimed the ballots were fraudulent because the voters listed P.O. boxes for their address. The state Supreme Court later sided with the Minnehaha County state's attorney and the Secretary of State's Office, denying a request to invalidate the votes.

Anderson also recently amended county rules to allow voters to wear election apparel to the polls.



Minnehaha County Auditor Leah Anderson, center, gives advice to post-election audit workers on June 25, 2024. The county is one of four in South Dakota that will be monitored by the U.S. Justice Department for voting rights in Tuesday's election. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

A spokesperson from the Justice Department declined to comment on the reasons for choosing the four counties listed in the press release.

The press release from Ramsdell's office says Civil Rights Division personnel will be available to field complaints on Election Day. Complaints can also be lodged at www.civilrights.justice.gov, or at 800-253-3931.

Ramsdell's U.S. Attorney for the District of South Dakota office will take complaints on Election Day at 605-838-9446, and the local FBI office can be reached at 605-334-6881.

The department's ADA information hotline can be reached by calling 800-514-0301 or 833-610-1264 (TTY). More information about voting and elections, including guidance documents and other resources, is available at www.justice.gov/voting.

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

Campaign finance reports reveal high-stakes spending in key legislative races

All 105 seats are on the ballot, with Republican locks on many of them

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 1, 2024 3:48 PM



Sen. Al Novstrup, R-Aberdeen, on the Senate floor during the 2024 legislative session. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

South Dakota Republican legislative leaders are directing extra money toward a handful of competitive races in the state, while a few Democrats are outspending or nearly keeping pace with their Republican opponents ahead of the Nov. 5 general election.

All 105 seats in the South Dakota Legislature are on the ballot. Republicans had locks on roughly half of the seats before any votes were cast, because of Democrats' failure to field a full slate of candidates in many districts.

Following are summaries of some races where campaign finance reports filed ahead of an Oct. 21 deadline indicated a potentially competitive contest, based on money raised and spent since last spring.

Senate District 32 (Rapid City)

The Senate race in District 32, which covers portions of central Rapid City, has shaped up as a proxy war for factions within the Republican Party.

Incumbent Republican Sen. Helene Duhamel faces a challenge from Karen McNeal, who is running as an independent while campaigning as a conservative. There is no Democrat in the race.

Duhamel raised about \$72,000 and spent over \$43,000. Nearly \$24,000 came from individual donors, with another \$40,000 from political action committees representing industries such as health care, corn growers, utilities and chambers of commerce.

Of the political action committee money, \$25,000 came from the Senate Republican Campaign Committee, which is chaired by Republican Senate Majority Leader Casey Crabtree, R-Madison, and reported

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 13 of 85

spending a total of \$80,000 to support various candidates ahead of this election.

McNeal collected about \$17,000 in donations and spent the same. About \$15,000 came from individual supporters, while Republican Rep. Scott Odenbach's Liberty Tree PAC contributed \$2,000. Odenbach's committee targeted Republicans in the June primary that he deemed insufficiently conservative, helping to defeat 14 Republican incumbents.

House District 32 (Rapid City)

In the District 32 House race, Duhamel's husband, incumbent Republican Rep. Steve Duffy, is in a three-way race for two seats with Republican Brook Kaufman and Democrat Nicole Uhre-Balk. Republican Rep. Kristin Conzet is not running.

Kaufman spent about \$31,000, followed by Duffy's spending of \$23,000 and Uhre-Balk's spending of \$20,000.

Kaufman received \$18,000 from political action committees and \$12,000 from individuals, while Duffy received \$19,000 from PACs and \$2,000 from individuals. Uhre-Balk received \$4,000 from PACs and \$18,000 from individual contributions.

Senate District 34 (Rapid City)

Democrat Kehala Two Bulls is well-funded in her race against Republican former legislator Taffy Howard for the District 34 Senate seat vacated by the retiring Republican Mike Diedrich. The district covers western Rapid City and adjacent outlying areas.

Two Bulls has taken in \$7,000 in contributions of \$100 or less, and \$16,000 in contributions over \$100. In total, she's taken in \$29,000 and spent \$21,000.

Howard has raised \$3,500 in contributions of \$100 or less, and \$15,000 in contributions over \$100. She's taken in a total of \$23,000 and spent \$40,000, after starting with \$33,000 from past campaigns.

Toby Doeden's Dakota First Action political action committee gave Howard \$3,800. The group recently held a gala criticized by some Republicans for its inclusion of a speech from North Carolina Republican gubernatorial nominee Mark Robinson, who was outed by CNN for racist and sexually explicit remarks more than a decade ago on a pornographic website's message board.

Senate District 12 (Sioux Falls)

In District 12, which covers a portion of southwest Sioux Falls straddling Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties, Republican incumbent Sen. Arch Beal has been out-fundraised and outspent by Democratic challenger Clay Hoffman.

Beal took in \$48,000 and spent \$30,000. Of his campaign contributions, \$250 came from individuals giving \$100 or less, and \$14,250 came from people giving over that amount. Another \$1,000 came from Anheuser-Busch and \$1,000 from TRGU LLC, his company. Other political action committees gave another \$29,000, including \$15,000 from the Senate Republican Campaign Committee.

He also received \$3,900 worth of campaign material and travel expenses during door-knocking events from the Students for Life Action committee, which is a group of student anti-abortion advocates.

Hoffman took in \$66,000 and spent \$45,000. Of the contributions, \$12,000 came from individuals giving \$100 or less, and another \$32,000 came from people giving over \$100. Former Democratic candidate for governor Jamie Smith, who is running for Senate in District 15, contributed \$1,000 from his campaign to Hoffman's.

The Majority PAC, run by Sioux Falls Democratic state Sen. Reynold Nesiba, of Sioux Falls, who is not seeking reelection in District 15, made the largest donation to Hoffman, contributing \$5,000.

Senate, District 14 (Sioux Falls)

Another Republican state Senate incumbent being outspent by a Democratic challenger is Larry Zikmund in District 14, which covers a portion of southeast Sioux Falls.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 14 of 85

Democrat Sandra Henry has raised \$58,000 and spent \$39,000. Zikmund has raised \$42,000 and spent \$34,000.

Zikmund was helped by \$15,000 from the Senate Republican Campaign Committee. Another \$12,000 of Zikmund's campaign chest came from individuals.

For Henry, the vast majority of contributions came from individuals, including \$13,000 in contributions of \$100 or less. Another \$1,000 came from Nesiba's PAC.

Senate District 18 (Clay, Yankton counties)

District 18, which covers Yankton County and a portion of Clay County, has an open Senate seat after Republican challenger Lauren Nelson toppled Sen. Jean Hunhoff in the June primary, ending Hunhoff's 24-year legislative career.

Nelson, of Yankton, has raised \$23,000 and spent \$30,000, after starting with \$8,000 leftover from the primary. She took in \$2,000 in donations of \$100 or less. The campaign's biggest donation was \$8,000 from her and her husband. Odenbach's Liberty Tree PAC kicked in \$500.

The Democratic candidate, Sarah Carda, also of Yankton, took in over \$28,000 and spent \$24,000. She received \$3,500 in donations of \$100 or less, and \$10,000 from Nesiba's PAC.

House District 1 (Brown, Day, Marshall, Roberts counties)

In District 1, which covers the northeast corner of the state, six candidates are vying for the district's two House seats: two Republicans, two Democrats and two Libertarians.

Incumbent Republican Joe Donnell did not run for reelection, and Republican incumbent Tamara St. John lost to two other Republicans in the June primary.

One of those Republicans, Logan Manhart, of Aberdeen, has taken in \$14,500 and spent over \$16,000. Of that, \$30 came from individuals giving \$100 or less and nearly \$10,000 came from people giving over \$100, though several names listed are companies. Manhart received \$500 from Odenbach's Liberty Tree PAC.

Fellow Republican Christopher Reder, of Warner, took in about \$8,000 and spent \$8,000. Of that, \$170 came from individuals giving \$100 or less and \$3,200 came from those giving over \$100. He also received funds from Liberty Tree PAC, as well as the South Dakota Freedom Caucus PAC, another group advocating conservative positions.

Reder and Manhart both received about \$1,400 from Dakota First Action, and both attended the event that featured Mark Robinson. The House GOP PAC, chaired by House Majority Leader Will Mortenson, who criticized the Robinson event, gave Reder and Manhart \$1,500 each.

Democrat Steven McCleerey, of Sisseton, raised about \$21,000 and spent \$16,000. Of that, \$2,000 came from individuals giving \$100 or less. Another \$11,100 came from people giving over \$100.

Fellow Democrat Mark Sumption, of Frederick, raised and spent \$11,000. His biggest contribution was \$1,500 from Bluestem Initiative, a political action committee chaired by state Rep. Erin Healy, D-Sioux Falls. That group gave a total of \$15,500 to various candidates.

Libertarians Josh Dennert, of Aberdeen, and Tamara Lesnar, of Grenville, raised under \$2,000 combined.

House District 3 (Aberdeen)

In District 3, which covers most of Aberdeen and surrounding areas, a Democratic challenger has raised more for her campaign than either of the two Republicans in the three-way race for two seats.

The Democrat, Erin Rudner, brought in over \$46,000, including a \$5,000 loan from herself to her campaign. She raised \$4,000 from individuals giving \$100 or less, and another \$22,520 from people giving over \$100. One 605 Victory Fund gave her campaign its greatest contribution, of \$9,500. That funding predominately came from Steve Pfeiffer, of Aberdeen.

Term-limited Republican state Sen. Al Novstrup is attempting to switch from the Senate to the House. His campaign brought in \$13,000, including a \$3,700 loan from himself. Incumbent Republican Rep. Brandei Schaeffbauer raised \$21,000, including a \$10,000 loan from herself.

Senate District 27 (Bennett, Jackson, Pennington, Oglala Lakota counties)

Sen. Red Dawn Foster, D-Pine Ridge, took in \$13,000, and spent \$19,000. Her committee already had \$9,000 on hand. Her biggest donation was \$5,000 from Nesiba's Majority PAC.

Her Republican challenger, Anthony Kathol, took in about \$8,000 and spent \$12,000. His biggest reported contribution was \$3,700 to his own campaign for food and gas. The second biggest was \$1,250 from Foster's 2022 Republican challenger David Jones.

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.

Cattle groups, South Dakota ranches file suit to block federal rule on electronic ear tags

Challenge comes after 2024 Supreme Court decision that weakened federal rulemaking authority

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 1, 2024 11:58 AM

A group of ranchers and cattle industry associations is suing the U.S. Department of Agriculture in federal court in South Dakota to block a rule requiring electronic ear tags for cattle that cross state lines.

The lawsuit aims to undo a rule published in May that some in the ranching community see as expensive, unnecessarily burdensome and implemented in conflict with federal rulemaking norms.

The rule comes from the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and versions of it have seen significant pushback from ranchers since 2019. Previous proposals were scrapped after public comment periods. The latest version of the rule was published in May, and

would phase out traditional ear tags in favor of electronic identification for cattle and bison older than 18 months that are shipped across state lines, all dairy cattle and cattle or bison used for rodeo or recreation.

Electronic tags, the agency says, reduce the possibility of human error, because they wouldn't require a person to manually log information on ear tags. The electronic tags are also meant to make it easier for veterinarians to access information about a herd when attending to a sick animal.

The rule is meant to take effect on Tuesday. While many ranchers and ranch groups oppose the mandate, the opposition is not universal. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association supports the electronic ID



A cow in a pasture near Eureka in September 2024. (Joshua Haiar/
South Dakota Searchlight)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 16 of 85

rule, and has been releasing guidance for livestock growers on how to comply throughout the year. The National Milk Producers Federation has also pushed for ID rules.

New lawsuit for previous rule opponents

The plaintiffs in the South Dakota lawsuit are the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA), South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, Kenny and Roxie Fox, Rick and Theresa Fox, and Tracy and Donna Hunt of the MW Cattle Company of Wyoming and South Dakota.

Some of the same plaintiffs challenged a similar mandate in 2019. The USDA dropped its pursuit of the mandate in the face of resistance from numerous corners of the livestock industry shortly thereafter. The rule came back in a new form in 2023 in the run-up to the May 2024 final rule.

The groups argue in their new lawsuit that by bringing the rule back in a form substantially similar to previously ditched efforts, the USDA violated federal laws on administrative rulemaking.

The tags are expensive and impractical, the plaintiffs argue, and are not necessary to achieve the goals of the law for which the USDA wrote the rule. The USDA has argued that the tags can help trace animal diseases across state lines more effectively than the brands and ear tags commonly used by smaller producers.

In comments to the USDA last year, the plaintiffs wrote that the rule "was unnecessary because current animal disease traceability methods are adequate" and "does not actually address a fundamental problem" with the current system.

"All of Plaintiffs' comments and concerns were rejected or ignored," the lawsuit states.

The plaintiffs are asking a judge to invalidate the USDA rule and permanently prevent the agency from imposing it on them.

Case leans on recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling

The case is among the first filed in South Dakota that leans on this year's U.S. Supreme Court June 28 decision in *Loper Bright vs. Raimondo*, which undid a four-decade precedent called the "Chevron doctrine." The doctrine expected federal court deference to the judgment of federal agents who write rules to carry out the mandates in laws passed by Congress.

Under *Chevron*, plaintiffs who sought to challenge agency regulations had to clear a high bar to prove that an agency overstepped its authority. Without *Chevron*, judges are no longer expected to give preferential weight to the expertise of agencies when rules are challenged in court.

Loper Bright has sparked a flurry of court challenges to federal rules since June. Google Scholar lists more than 200 federal cases nationwide citing *Loper Bright* so far this year.

The case in South Dakota, which cites *Loper Bright*, spins out of longstanding resistance in some quarters to the electronic tagging requirements.

Last month, a group of ranchers held a rally in Rapid City, at which some speakers with the industry suggested the mandate would end the cattle industry.

The rally was held in tandem with the annual convention of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association.

According to coverage from *The Dakota Scout*, ranchers are concerned about the cost of the tags, but also fear that electronic tracking will be used to clamp down on ranchers in the name of climate change. U.S. Rep. Harriet Hageman, R-Wyoming, spoke at the event, and warned that ID tags in Denmark have helped that nation's government levy taxes on livestock producers over emissions from their animals.

Rounds aims to block rule with legislation

Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, has railed against the rule for years. In May, shortly after the most recent version of the rule was published in the federal register, Rounds introduced a bill that would bar the USDA from instituting electronic tagging mandates. Hageman has introduced a similar bill in the House of Representatives.

South Dakota state lawmakers have also weighed in on the issue. In 2022, Gov. Kristi Noem signed a bill into law that says livestock owners can choose any of the identification options available under federal rules from 2013, or options endorsed by the state Animal Industry Board.

Earlier this month, Rounds brought up Loper Bright during a question and answer session with the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce. For too long, he said, agencies had too much authority in rulemaking, citing the electronic tagging rules as a particularly egregious example.

Ranchers aren't opposed to ear tags necessarily, but Rounds said the USDA shouldn't impose rules for specific types of tags from afar.

"Why in the hell is the federal government telling our farmers or ranchers what kind of a damn ear tag they've got to put in the ear of their livestock?" the senator said during the Oct. 9 event in Sioux Falls.

The rule "may be a good idea," Rounds said, but he doesn't think regulators should be making laws without listening to the industry and taking its concerns seriously.

Overturning the Chevron doctrine, he said, has given ranchers a better chance to succeed in court.

"On that type of a deal, can they come back in under Chevron and challenge it?" he said. "Yeah, I think they probably can."

A representative from the USDA told South Dakota Searchlight by email that the agency cannot comment on pending litigation. The attorney representing the ranchers in the federal lawsuit did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday.

A news release from Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund says the rule "imposes punishing new financial and practical burdens, particularly on smaller and independent cattle producers."

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

Will control of Congress shift?

The results hinge on a handful of states and races

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - NOVEMBER 1, 2024 6:39 PM

WASHINGTON — Voters are determining whether the next president enters office with a friendly Congress or a hostile one set on blocking their policies and nominees — and as the election roars into its last moments it's still very unclear what the makeup of the House and Senate might be.

Most House races are not competitive. But House leaders are closely watching about two dozen toss-up contests to see whether Democrats or Republicans end up with the magic 218 lawmakers needed to control the speaker's gavel, the agenda and the floor schedule.

The GOP's razor-thin majority during the last two years created significant obstacles for leadership's legislative goals and ended Kevin McCarthy's speakership.

Neither political party is expected to gain a large House majority during the next Congress, set to begin in January. There's even a possibility the majority party has less wiggle room than the 220-212 split that currently exists, along with three vacancies. Experts warn it may not be known on election night or for some time who's won the House.

Senate leaders have been equally focused on hard-fought and close campaigns in Arizona, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Any one of them could deliver control of the upper chamber.

Republicans are favored to turn over the West Virginia seat occupied by Joe Manchin III, potentially pushing them past the 50-member benchmark if they hold onto seats occupied by incumbents Ted Cruz in Texas, Deb Fischer in Nebraska and Rick Scott in Florida.

If Democrats keep 50 seats, that would mean whichever party holds the vice presidency controls the Senate, making even just one pickup in either direction a priority for both political parties.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 18 of 85

The outcome in both the House and Senate will have sweeping implications for the country's future, including whether the GOP overhauls Obamacare, how lawmakers address core aspects of Republicans' 2017 tax law set to expire in the coming months and whether the country defaults on its debts for the first time in history.

Four tense toss-ups in the Senate

The nonpartisan Cook Political Report with Amy Walter rates four Senate races as toss-ups, meaning there's a relatively even chance for Democrats or Republicans to win.

While the campaigns have shifted around a bit during the last few months, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are all considered neck and neck heading into Election Day.

Arizona and Nevada are categorized as leaning toward Democrats and Montana is expected to lean toward a Republican pickup, potentially giving the GOP its 51st seat and a narrow majority.

It's also possible there could be upsets in Republican-held states traditionally considered safer, like Florida, Nebraska and Texas.

That could alter the math for both Democrats and Republicans, depending on how things shake out after all the votes are counted, recounts finalized and lawsuits settled in the days and weeks following Nov. 5.

Jessica Taylor, editor for U.S. Senate and Governors at the Cook Political Report, said in a statement released Friday the "battle for the Senate fundamentally ends where the cycle began — with an overwhelmingly favorable map that very likely portends a GOP majority."

Her projections show the GOP picking up two to five seats, giving the party a majority between 51 and 54 members.

A narrower majority, Taylor said, would allow "moderates like Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski and Maine Sen. Susan Collins to wield outsized influence in the next Congress."



The U.S. Capitol on Oct. 9, 2024. (Jane Norman/States Newsroom)

Will some voters split their tickets?

Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, said during an interview with Washington Post Live in late October that he expects voters in Montana and Ohio will split their tickets.

He acknowledged getting voters to support Democratic Sens. Jon Tester in Montana and Sherrod Brown in Ohio, while also voting for Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, will be much more challenging than in the past.

"Certainly, it's not easy if there's a lot of political gravity," Peters said. "I'm not going to sugarcoat that in any way."

But, he said, both Tester and Brown have been consistently polling within the margin of error against their GOP challengers.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 19 of 85

"It's about who's going to get their voters out and do the kind of ground campaign necessary to win," Peters said. "We're doing that in Montana. We're doing that in Ohio as well."

The Senate is more important to the next president than the House, since the upper chamber is responsible for vetting and confirming the next commander-in-chief's selections for their Cabinet as well as judicial nominees.

A GOP Senate would be a gift for Trump but likely tough for Vice President Kamala Harris.

The opposite could also be true — a Democratic majority in the Senate could put the brakes on many of Trump's plans for a second term, while it would aid Harris in setting up her administration and potentially confirming a Supreme Court justice or two.

The Senate is the more bipartisan of the two chambers, thanks to the legislative filibuster — the rule requiring at least 60 senators agree to advance legislation toward final passage.

Without bipartisan support, bills and some nominees will be stuck in limbo, regardless of which party runs the Senate or controls the White House.

Possible standoff

Philip Wallach, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative-leaning think tank, said a Harris administration and a Republican Senate would need to work out an agreement quickly "or risk going into some kind of protracted standoff over executive branch nominations."

Both Trump and President Joe Biden had the luxury of same-party Senate control during their full terms and former President Barack Obama had a Democratic Senate during his first six years in office. Harris possibly having to work with the opposing party to establish her Cabinet would be especially challenging, Wallach said in an interview.

"I would expect Republicans to try to come up with some pretty concrete asks as a conference: To say, 'If we're going to put any of your nominees up for a vote, here's what we want in return, and here's what kind of nominees we will accept.' And, you know, I expect that would play out as a fairly heated public confrontation," he said.

Trump and a Republican Senate would likely agree on some nominees and policy goals, though there would be significant differences over issues like tariffs.

"I think there are a lot of Republican senators who want to see some real limits to that, who still think of themselves as basically in favor of free trade and making sure that American businesses don't find themselves on the wrong end of a trade war," Wallach said. "Especially in the Senate, I just don't think they're that eager to just march to Trump's tune."

A Trump administration, he said, could also disagree with GOP lawmakers on the specific details of how to address tax policy.

"I think it's a very live possibility that there could be a much more confrontational kind of dynamic this time around, in part, because Trump and some of the people right around him have this idea that playing nicely in 2017 was a big mistake," Wallach said.

House 'as close as it's ever been'

Control of the 435-member House is more uncertain than the Senate, with 22 races rated as toss-ups by the Cook Political Report.

Twelve of those are held by Republicans, while 10 are occupied by Democratic lawmakers. At the moment, 205 House seats are at least leaning toward a Democratic win, with 208 districts at least leaning toward Republicans.

The Cook Political Report's final projections range from Republicans adding five seats to their majority to Democrats picking up 10 seats and taking over the majority again.

"The race for control of the U.S. House remains as close as it's ever been,"

Erin Covey, editor for the House at CPR, said in a written statement.

"The battleground is confined to a few dozen seats, with neither party having a clear advantage in a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 20 of 85

majority of seats," Covey added. "And with several competitive races in West Coast states that take longer to count their ballots, it's highly possible we won't know which party has control on election night."

The House is essential to turning bills into law, though it doesn't have any role in confirming presidential nominees. And unlike the Senate, there's no legislative filibuster, which means the majority party can approve any bills it wants without buy-in from the minority party, as long as the leaders in the majority have the votes from their own members.

Republican control of at least one chamber of Congress and a Harris victory would force significant bipartisan compromise on must-pass legislation, like the dozen annual government funding bills and the defense policy bill known as the National Defense Authorization Act.

It could also lead to the types of bipartisan legislation that Biden made a hallmark of his term in office, including the bipartisan infrastructure law.

That type of divided government is unlikely to produce the sweeping changes to home ownership, prescription drug prices, price gouging and reproductive rights that Harris has highlighted throughout her campaign.

But it could lead Republicans and Democrats to resurrect the bipartisan immigration and border security bill that Oklahoma Republican Sen. James Lankford, Connecticut Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy and Arizona independent Sen. Kyrsten Sinema agreed to earlier this year.

Trump in the White House and Democrats holding onto at least one chamber in Congress could also force bipartisan compromise, though likely with a far different tone and approach than under a Harris-Republican Congress scenario.

GOP trifecta?

Trump regaining the presidency along with GOP control of Congress would give the party at least two chances to use the complex budget reconciliation process to pass certain legislation.

The party would likely use one of those opportunities to address provisions in the 2017 Republican tax law that have expired or are about to.

The budget reconciliation process, which has considerable rules and restrictions, is how Republicans passed the tax bill during Trump's first term in office.

It doesn't require at least 60 senators to advance the bill. But it does include something known as a vote-a-rama, where the Senate holds dozens of votes on amendments to the bill. The process typically lasts throughout the night and gives the party not in power a chance to force their colleagues across the aisle to vote on tough issues.

Budget reconciliation is the process Republicans used to try to repeal and replace the 2010 health care law that's often referred to as the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, during Trump's first term in office.

Speaker Mike Jonson, R-La., said in late October on Fox Business that some of his prior comments about overhauling the ACA were taken out of context and that he wants to make changes to the program, but not entirely end it.

"I said the ACA, unfortunately, is deeply ingrained in our health care system now," he said. "Do we need further improvements? Absolutely. We need to expand quality of care, access to care and obviously lower the cost of health care."

Johnson said during the interview that he was "convinced" Republicans would gain unified control of government following the election and that he had compiled a "two-hour slide show presentation" detailing what the GOP would do with that power.

"We will secure the border on day one with a President Trump executive order and then legislation to follow, and we will turn immediately to the economy," Johnson said. "Energy policy will be the center of that as well."

Deeply conservative House bills might not garner the support needed to overcome the Senate's legislative filibuster.

Unified Republican control of Congress and the White House would challenge the GOP to address the

nation's debt limit mostly on its own during the first half of next year after the current law expires.

A default on the nation's debt is vastly different from a partial government shutdown, which takes place when Congress doesn't pass an appropriations package on time.

Failing to either raise or suspend the nation's debt limit, before what's known as extraordinary measures runs out, would likely cause a global financial crisis.

The GOP has been extremely vocal about cutting government spending, but that is separate from addressing the nation's debt limit, which gives the Treasury Department the borrowing authority to ensure all of the country's bills are paid in full and on time.

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

Final report before presidential election shows just 12,000 jobs added after hurricanes, strikes

BY: CASEY QUINLAN - NOVEMBER 1, 2024 5:06 PM

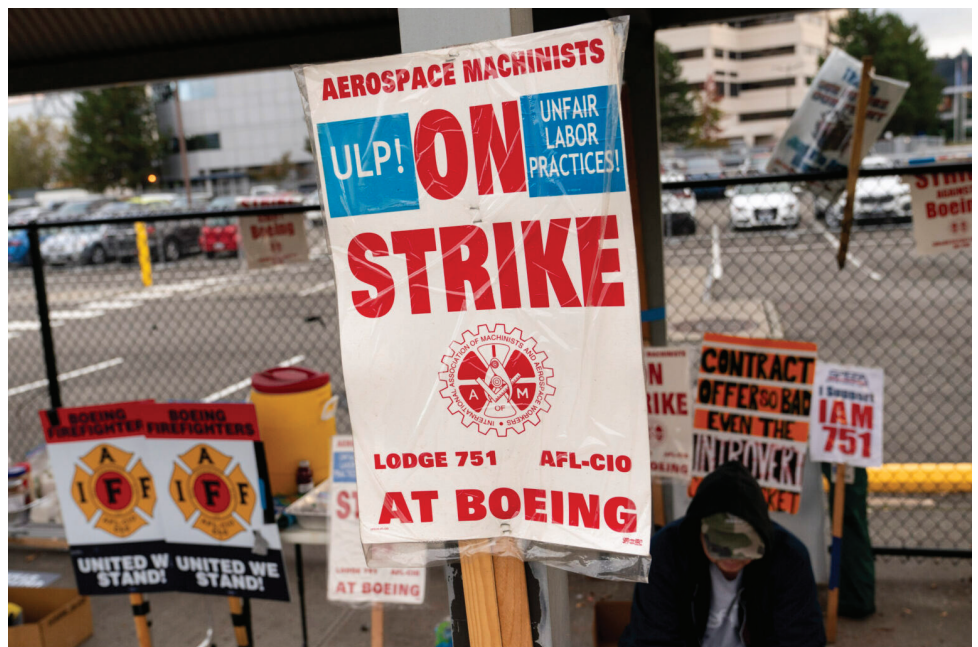
U.S. businesses added only 12,000 jobs in October, the Labor Department announced Friday, in a weak final jobs report heading into the final days of the presidential election. But experts say a pair of major hurricanes and labor strikes in manufacturing, hotels, and cargo transport obscure the view of the economy – a key issue for voters picking who should lead the country.

The unemployment rate held steady at 4.1% after falling a tenth of a percentage point the prior two months.

Strikes in October made it challenging to meaningfully understand the “abysmal” jobs number, said Lauren Saidel-Baker, an economist at ITR Economics, a nonpartisan economic research and consulting firm based in New Hampshire.

“That’s really where we see the difference between, say, the unemployment rate – that was steady at 4.1% – against this very disappointing jobs figure,” she said. “Those are two different surveys. One is from households and one is from businesses, and so with a strike, a striking worker can say, ‘I’m still employed. I haven’t lost my job. I’m just temporarily absent from it.’ Whereas the employer says they’re not here, they’re not working. This isn’t a job.”

The number of jobs added was far below Goldman Sachs analysts’ forecast of 95,000 jobs this month. Manufacturing jobs fell by 46,000 last month, with the vast majority of these numbers reflecting a massive strike. Job growth was projected to fall by at least 50,000 jobs or more in October in most estimates,



A strike sign is seen on display as Boeing workers gather on a picket line near the entrance to a Boeing facility during an ongoing strike on Oct. 24, 2024, in Seattle, Washington. (David

Ryder/Getty Images)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 22 of 85

according to the Economic Policy Institute, a left-leaning economic think tank. The number of hours worked was also expected to change, but average weekly hours remained the same.

Tens of thousands of machinists at Boeing have been on strike since September for increased pay and better retirement benefits in September. Hotel chain workers have also been striking over health benefits and hiring to lessen the workload after COVID-19 pandemic-related staffing cuts. The unemployment rate for leisure and hospitality was 6% compared to 5.5% a year ago. In early October, dockworkers stopped work for a few days for better wages and a ban on automation.

Hurricane Helene ripped a path from Florida to the Carolinas in late September and is blamed for more than 200 deaths. Hurricane Milton followed just weeks later in October, devastating more communities in Florida.

Economists expected to see this show up in the jobs data.

Carlos Martin, a senior fellow at Brookings Metro, said that although climate displacement of households is an issue, a lot of people stay where their job is. But if their job no longer exists because businesses have left or ended operations, that could mean a lot for the population.

"I'm curious on how [the hurricanes] affects the businesses there, including the small and medium-sized businesses. Are they going to leave?" he said. "If businesses aren't coming back, employment is not going to be maintained or go up in these places. That's where you're going to have major population loss."

Many of the same trends seen in past jobs reports continued in October's report, including the addition of jobs in healthcare, government, and construction, but professional and business services fell by 49,000 jobs.

Wages rose 0.4% in October and increased 4% over the past year. The labor force participation rate and employment-population ratio, which have been strong in past reports, did not change significantly over the past month or past year.

The category of permanent job losers, or people who did not voluntarily end their employment and who began looking for work, also increased, to 1.8 million in October. Sidel-Baker said that although this is something to watch for in future reports, she doesn't see it as something to worry about now.

Economists are also watching the jobs report closely to see what influence it may have on the Federal Reserve's decision to cut its key rate, which affects everything from credit cards to mortgage rates. The Personal Consumption Expenditures index fell to 2.1% year over year in September — low enough for economists to argue that the Fed should get ready to take deeper cuts.

"Today's report shows that the two hurricanes we just experienced had sizable impacts on people's ability to continue working. While that damage will likely be limited to this month's report, job growth has been slowing in recent months and the Federal Reserve should not use it as an excuse to delay their planned rate cuts," Lindsay Owens, executive director of Groundwork Collaborative, a progressive economic think tank, told States Newsroom on Friday.

But the Fed will likely not make any big changes in their decision-making due to one jobs report, particularly one this messy, Sidel-Baker said.

"I think the Fed has signaled pretty clearly that they will not be hanging on this one jobs number," she said. "They know everything that went into it, the hurricanes, the Boeing strike, etc."

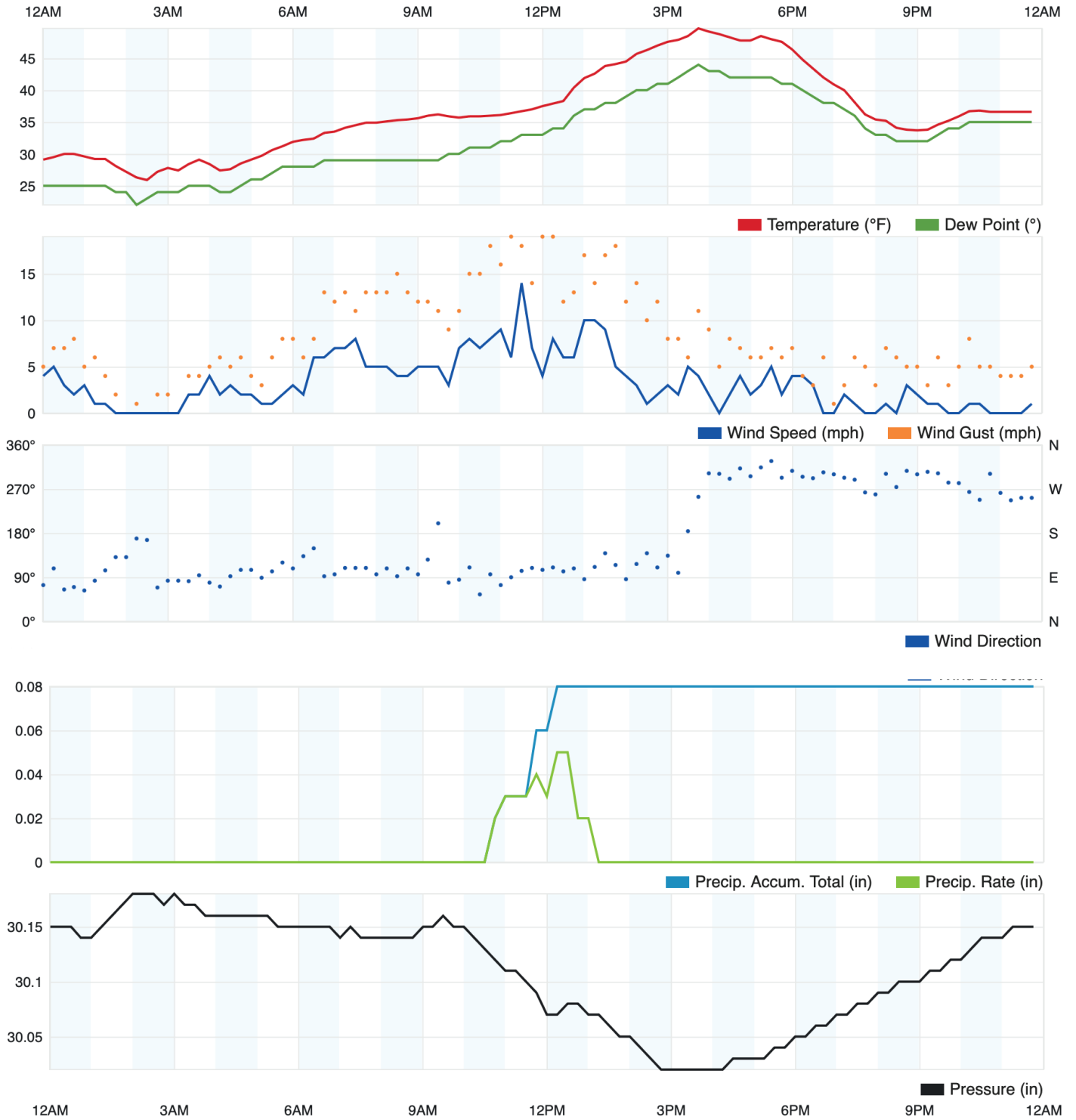
Millions of people have already cast their ballots through the mail or early voting, and the final day of voting in the U.S. is Tuesday.

Casey Quinlan is an economy reporter for States Newsroom, based in Washington, D.C. For the past decade, they have reported on national politics and state politics, LGBTQ rights, abortion access, labor issues, education, Supreme Court news and more for publications including The American Independent, ThinkProgress, New Republic, Rewire News, SCOTUSblog, In These Times and Vox.

Groton Daily Independent

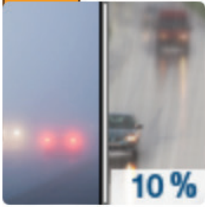
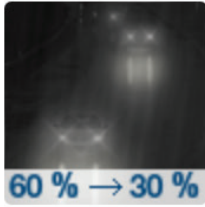

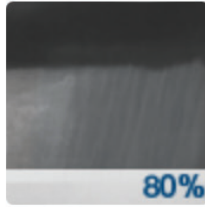

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 23 of 85

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 24 of 85

Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
 10%	 60% → 30%	 80%	 80%	 20%
High: 56 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 50 °F
Areas Freezing Fog and Patchy Fog then Slight Chance Rain	Rain Likely then Chance Rain	Rain	Showers	Slight Chance Showers



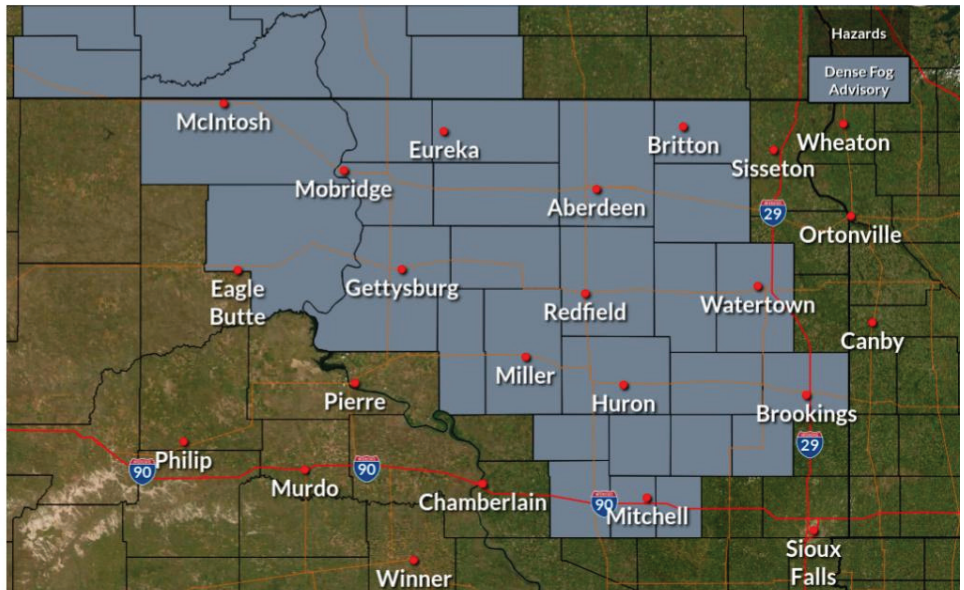
Dense Fog Advisory

November 2, 2024
4:33 AM

Visibility one quarter mile or less in dense fog until 11AM CDT (10AM MDT) November 2nd

This low visibility could make driving conditions hazardous. Additionally, sub freezing temperatures combined with fog may lead to slick spots on roadways

If driving, slow down, use your headlights, and leave plenty of distance ahead of you



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A Dense Fog Advisory has been issued for portions of central, north central, and northeast South Dakota until 11AM CDT (10AM MDT) Saturday, November 2nd. The fog can cause visibilities to drop to a quarter mile or less making driving conditions hazardous. If you are driving, make sure to slow down and leave plenty of distance ahead of you to stop.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 25 of 85



October 2024 Climate Summary

November 1, 2024
3:35 PM

Warm and Dry October across Central and Northeast South Dakota.

	Aberdeen	Sisseton	Mobridge	Pierre	Watertown
Average Temperature	52.7° (10th Warmest)	54.1° (7th Warmest)	55.0° (3rd Warmest)	54.3° (8th Warmest)	51.8° (13th Warmest)
Departure from Normal	+6.4°	+7.3°	+6.6°	+5.8°	+6.1°
Warmest Year	1947 (56.0°)	1963 (58.9°)	1963 (58.7°)	1938 (59.2°)	1963 (56.1°)
Warmest of the month	87° (3 days)	85° (10/10)	88° (10/10)	90° (10/17)	82° (2 days)
Coldest of the month	23° (10/31)	23° (10/15)	25° (10/25)	25° (10/15)	23° (10/31)
Rainfall	0.07" (6th Driest)	0.42" (19th Driest)	0.08" (8th Driest)	0.01" (3rd Driest)	0.08" (4th Driest)
Departure from Normal	-2.07"	-1.91"	-1.73"	-1.68"	-1.87"
Driest Year	1952, 1964 (Trace)	1933 (Trace)	1945, 1952 (Trace)	1952, 1964 (Trace)	1952 (Trace)
Wettest Year	1998 (7.29")	2009 (7.01")	2013 (5.69")	2007 (5.69")	1971 (8.10")



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Central and Northeast South Dakota observed a warm and dry October this year. This month ranked in the Top 10 Warmest Octobers for 4 out of our 5 climate sites. Similarly, 4 out of 5 sites ranked in the Top 10 Driest Octobers on record. Please see the chart for more statistics and information.



2024 Year to Date Climate Summary

November 1, 2024
3:56 PM

Based on 1991-2020 Normals

	Aberdeen (Since 1898)	Sisseton (Since 1935)	Mobridge (Since 1927)	Pierre (Since 1934)	Watertown (Since 1898)
Average Temperature	51.8°	51.7°	52.7°	52.9°	50.3°
Normal through Oct.	47.9°	47.7°	50.2°	50.8°	46.8°
Departure	+3.9°	+4.0°	+2.5°	+2.1°	+3.5°
All Time Rank	4th Warmest	3rd Warmest	5th Warmest	22nd Warmest	8th Warmest
Rainfall	18.28"	20.23"	12.66"	18.18"	22.49"
Normal through Oct.	20.47"	22.00"	17.05"	18.79"	21.35"
Departure	-2.19"	-1.77"	-4.39"	-0.61"	+1.14"
All Time Rank	50th Driest	40th Wettest	19th Driest	38th Wettest	39th Wettest



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

With a warm October, Central and Northeast South Dakota are on track for one of the warmest years on record for most places. All five climate sites have seen at least 2 degrees above normal so far, and four out of five are in the top 10 warmest years so far. Precipitation is trending below normal for all sites except Watertown this year, but no sites are on track to break records.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 26 of 85

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 50 °F at 3:41 PM

Low Temp: 26 °F at 2:26 AM

Wind: 21 mph at 10:48 AM

Precip: : 0.08

Day length: 10 hours, 6 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 78 in 1903

Record Low: -0 in 1911

Average High: 50

Average Low: 25

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.07

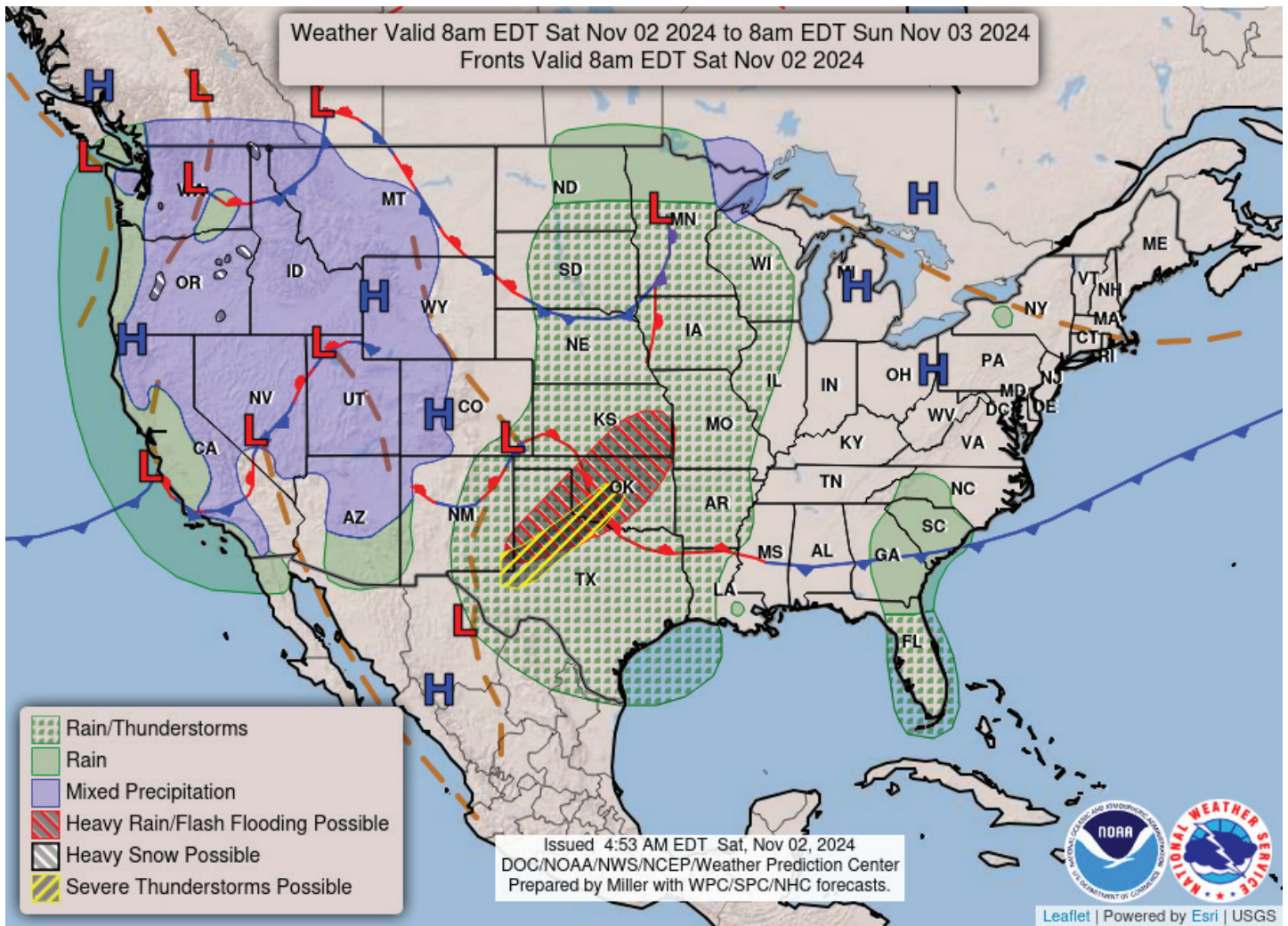
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.08

Average Precip to date: 20.54

Precip Year to Date: 19.96

Sunset Tonight: 6:19:10 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:14:07 am



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 27 of 85

Today in Weather History

November 2nd, 1961: A snowstorm began in western South Dakota and spread to the remainder of the state on November 2nd. Snowfall was relatively minimal, with 1 to 3 inches falling over most of the state's central and eastern parts, but 40 to 50 mph winds accompanied the storm in eastern South Dakota. Also, temperatures fell rapidly with the passage of a cold front with 24-hour changes of 40 to over 50 degrees. Huron dropped from 73 on the 1st to 21 only 24 hours later, a 52-degree drop.

November 2nd, 1972: Freezing rain caused up to 2 inches of ice to form on trees, bushes, wires, cars, and buildings. The ice brought down many trees and utility lines. Some of the most significant damage occurred from Tulare to Redfield and Doland and Troy to Sisseton in Spink, Brown, Day, Grant, and Roberts Counties. Also, heavy snow up to 20 inches fell in south-central South Dakota. Some snowfall amounts include; 5.2 inches in Huron, 10 inches in Wessington Springs; 12 inches in Platte; 12.5 in Bonesteel, and 19.5 inches in Gregory.

November 2nd, 1997: A low-pressure system over the Great Lakes produced 50 to 60 mph winds over much of northern and central South Dakota. In McLaughlin, high winds damaged a catwalk at the McLaughlin livestock auction. The winds tipped over half of the 400-foot walkway. Along with six-foot waves, the winds destroyed an 85-year old 40 x 75-foot dance hall located on Medicine Lake, 15 miles northwest of Watertown. In Aberdeen, brick from a top portion of an abandoned building collapsed. There were also widespread reports of tree limbs blown down.

1743: Benjamin Franklin's "eclipse hurricane" unlocked the key to storm movement. A rainstorm prevented Ben Franklin from viewing a lunar eclipse in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but his brother in Boston saw it, though the rain began an hour later.

1946 - A heavy wet snow began to cover the Southern Rockies. Up to three feet of snow blanketed the mountains of New Mexico, and a 31 inch snow at Denver CO caused roofs to collapse. (David Ludlum)

1946: A tornado hit Washington in Hempstead County in Arkansas, killing one.

1961 - The temperature at Atlanta, GA, reached 84 degrees to establish a record for November. (The Weather Channel)

1966 - A storm brought 18 inches of snow to Celia KY in 24 hours. It tied the state 24 hour snowfall record first established at Bowling Green. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A dozen cities, mostly in the Ohio Valley, reported record high temperatures for the date. Record highs included 83 degrees at Paducah KY and 84 degrees at Memphis TN. Temperatures reached 70 degrees as far north as southern Lower Michigan. Showers and thundershowers over southern Florida, associated with a tropical depression, produced 4.77 inches of rain at Tavernier, located in the Upper Florida Keys. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A very intense low pressure system brought heavy rain, snow, and high winds, to parts of the northeastern U.S. Portland ME established a record for November with 4.52 inches of rain in 24 hours, and winds along the coast of Maine gusted to 74 mph at Southwest Harbor. Heavy snow blanketed parts of northern Vermont and upstate New York, with 15 inches reported at Spruce Hill NY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Squalls in the Upper Great Lakes Region the first three days of the month buried Ironwood MI under 46 inches of snow, and produced 40 inches at Hurley WI. Arctic cold invaded the Southern Plains Region. Midland TX reported a record low of 22 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: Another infamous November Great Lakes Storm brought windy conditions to Minnesota's Lake Superior shoreline. 70 mph winds caused waves to crash over 130-foot walls along the shore.



YES, BUT DOES IT WORK?

A well-recognized inventor called his closest friends together to unveil the new electric motor he had just finished. He stood in front of the group with his new product displayed on an elegant black velvet tablecloth and highlighted by a spotlight.

"Gentlemen," he said in a voice that exposed his pride, "this is my most recent invention – a newly designed electric motor. What do you think of it?"

"Put it to work," said one of the engineers, "I can't tell a thing about it until I see it in action."

If we say that we are Christ's disciples then others will recognize us as His disciples when they see us "in action." In writing to the Ephesians, Paul said that we are to be "careful how you live...Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. Do not act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what God wants you to do."

When Paul referred to "these evil days," he was emphasizing the urgency of presenting the Gospel message. Then, as now, "evil" has penetrated society in such a powerful manner that it is difficult to see good or goodness in the way so many Christians behave. What was once avoided as "unbecoming for Christians" has now become accepted as appropriate by many who consider themselves as His disciples.

As the engineer said, "Put it" (our faith) "to work."

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to be aware of our witness in this world and to "understand" how we ought to live as Your disciples in this fallen, sin-filled world. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Ephesians 5:15-20

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 29 of 85

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months \$26.63
- 6 Months \$31.95
- 9 Months \$42.60
- 12 Months \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: [@paperpaul](https://venmo.com/paperpaul) Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 30 of 85



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.01.24

11 22 42 46 51 4

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$303,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.30.24

27 30 37 41 50 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$13,320,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 30 Mins
3 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.01.24

15 37 39 45 47 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 45 Mins
3 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.30.24

14 15 21 25 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$81,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 45 Mins
3 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.30.24

18 36 39 49 62 12

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 14 Mins 3
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.30.24

13 22 29 43 58 22

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$54,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 14 Mins 3
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 31 of 85

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
12/14/2024 Santa Day at Professional Management Services, downtown Groton
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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 32 of 85

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

All Nations State Playoffs=

Class A=

Semifinal=

Pine Ridge 46, Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud 22

Winnebago, Neb. 34, Little Wound 20

Class B=

Semifinal=

Lower Brule 66, Crazy Horse 0

White River 36, Omaha Nation, Neb. 0

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

10 states will vote on abortion rights this election

Prism undefined

Alameda, CA (Prism)

Abortion rights organizers hope the ballot measures will restore reproductive rights to what has become an "abortion and maternal care desert"

On the eve of a potentially historic presidential election, Natasha Sutherland is tired. The born-and-raised Floridian and senior advisor to the Yes on 4 campaign has been fighting to expand and protect abortion access in her home state for years, but that fight hit a fever pitch after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in 2022.

"We knew that lawmakers in the state of Florida were going to implement an abortion ban," Sutherland said. "And we knew there was something we had to do about it -- we knew [a ban] would be an immense and significant loss of care both to the state of Florida and the global South."

Florida is just one of 10 states with ballot measures that will give voters the opportunity to enshrine abortion rights in their constitutions. Since the fall of Roe, 21 states have banned or severely restricted abortion -- and the consequences have been far-reaching. A recent study published in JAMA Pediatrics found that infant mortality rates have risen in states with total or near-total abortion bans. In Texas, where abortion is banned with no exceptions for rape or incest, maternal mortality rose by 56%. In Georgia, at least two women so far -- Amber Nicole Thurman and Candi Miller -- have died as a result of the state's six-week abortion ban.

Meanwhile, the post-Roe crisis is forcing patients with means to travel out of state for abortion, prenatal, and miscarriage management care, resulting in backlogs in states where abortion rights are protected. In 2023 alone, 171,000 women traveled to another state to receive abortion care.

These ballot measures, organizers and advocates hope, could bring back abortion access to what has become an "abortion and maternal care desert."

With the writing on the proverbial wall after the draft of the Dobbs decision leaked, Sutherland and other organizers from Floridians Protecting Freedom immediately got to work -- creating partnerships with the ACLU of Florida, Planned Parenthood, Florida Women's Freedom Coalition, Florida Rising, and more. The collective began drafting amendment language and collecting signatures for ballot measure Amendment 4, which would prohibit the government from outlawing, penalizing, delaying, or restricting abortion care before fetal viability.

"We secured nearly 1 million verified signatures of everyday Floridians -- Republicans, Democrats, In-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 33 of 85

dependents -- to qualify for the ballot," Sutherland adds. "That was well above the requirement because we knew the government may try to interfere."

The organizers' premonitions proved correct. In April 2023, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the state's six-week abortion ban into law. DeSantis has since directed the state's health department to threaten television stations with criminal charges if they continue to air pro-abortion measure ads. Simultaneously, the state's Office of Election Crimes and Security claimed the group submitted a "large number of forged signatures or fraudulent petitions" to qualify for the ballot and issued a \$328,000 fine.

"Florida's government has been doing everything and anything that it can to really silence the campaign and to distract folks from the fact that we have a near-total abortion ban here in the state of Florida," Sutherland said. "Just as we were preparing for Hurricane Helene and subsequently Hurricane Milton, the state government ordered \$15.5 million in taxpayer-funded advertising -- much of that going towards campaigning against Amendment 4 and putting out misinformation about the abortion ban and the campaign overall."

For the amendment to pass, it must receive 60% or more of the vote, a higher threshold requirement than any other state in the country. Recent polling shows the amendment has a 66% approval rate.

As is the case in Florida, many anti-abortion groups and legislators across the country are attempting to curtail those efforts, spreading disinformation about the proposed amendments and attempting to circumvent the democratic process in court.

In South Dakota, Life Defense Fund has filed a lawsuit that would invalidate Amendment G, an abortion rights measure that would codify Roe v. Wade-era abortion protections in the state's constitution. A trial is set for Dec. 2.

"What they're trying to do is direct the court to tell the secretary of state, "You can't count the votes,"" said Rick Weiland, a long-time Democrat and former candidate for Congress. Weiland and his son, Adam, co-founded Dakotans for Health, the grassroots organization behind the ballot measure.

South Dakota is the only state with a total abortion ban to propose amending the state's constitution to protect abortion access. Immediately after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, the state enacted its trigger law, banning all abortions with no exceptions for rape or incest. Currently, abortion is only permissible if the life of the pregnant person is in danger, but like other states that have banned or severely restricted abortion care, post-Roe doctors are confused by the vague exception language and afraid to treat pregnant or miscarrying patients.

In a state with already high infant and maternal mortality rates, patients are forced to travel to nearby Minnesota or beyond for an abortion, prenatal care, and miscarriage management. The state is simultaneously experiencing a maternal care shortage due in part to OB-GYNs either leaving or choosing not to practice in a state that would criminalize them if they were even perceived to have defied the state's abortion ban.

"My cup runneth over in terms of the rage factor," Adam said. "But stuff like this, it makes you more determined to succeed."

Consistent polling has shown that the majority of South Dakotans, regardless of party affiliation, support the ballot initiative, which would allow unfettered abortion access in the first trimester, with government-regulated abortion access in the second and third trimesters in ways that are, according to the bill, "reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman" or "when abortion is necessary to preserve the life of the pregnant woman." A group of Republicans, led by former legislator Casey Murschel, have come out in support of the measure, along with 35 faith leaders from five different Christian denominations.

"Writing off red states where we have an opportunity to expand abortion access is extremely short-sighted. South Dakota is a perfect example," Adam said.

South Dakota was the first state to include direct democracy in its constitution, giving the electorate the power to circumvent the special interests, bypass the legislature, and put something on the ballot that lets the people decide "yes" or "no." Empowered by that history, both father and son are hopeful that despite anti-abortion groups' best efforts, voters will restore Roe v. Wade in the state.

"All you have to do is look at past initiatives," Rick said. "They will tell you a lot about the makeup of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 34 of 85

the voter.”

Arizona, which made national news after the Supreme Court allowed a near-total abortion ban from 1864 to take effect on Sept. 14, also gives voters the power to implement state policy via direct democracy. In this upcoming election, Arizona voters will weigh in on Proposition 139, which would enshrine abortion protections in the state’s constitution.

The state’s legislature eventually repealed the 160-year-old ban in May. Abortion is currently legal up to 15 weeks gestation, with no exceptions for rape or incest. If passed, Proposition 139 would expand abortion access to the “point of viability” and grant the right to care after viability “if it is done to protect the life, physical, or mental health of the pregnant individual.”

“This was the largest volunteer signature gathering effort in the history of the state,” said Laura Dent, the political director for Arizona For Abortion Access and the campaign manager for Yes on 139. “It sends a super clear message -- not just as we move into the election, but beyond -- that this is an issue Arizonans are united around.”

Like in Florida and South Dakota, in Arizona Dent and her volunteers have withstood attacks from anti-abortion groups attempting to undermine the amendment. After Arizona Abortion Access received 577,971 certified signatures in favor of the amendment -- well above the 383,923 signatures needed -- Arizona Right to Life filed a legal challenge to the ballot initiative, arguing the petition description was misleading and requesting the measure be withdrawn.

“This is a really important moment, [not] just for the issue of abortion rights but for our freedoms, protecting our liberties, and just for organizing in the state,” Dent said. “We have a beautiful, diverse coalition. I spent the day with Navajo leaders. We have environmental advocates, faith-based leaders, [and] Latino-led organizations. Our coalition is really broad, because this is such a resonant issue and a powerful exercise for Arizonans.”

In August, Arizona state’s Supreme Court rejected the anti-abortion group’s attempt to block the amendment, ruling that a description “is not required to explain the initiative’s impact on existing abortion laws or regulations.” The amendment is expected to pass. A recent New York Times/Siena College poll found that 58% of Arizona voters support the fundamental right to an abortion.

“We have kept 100% of our focus on educating and engaging voters and telling the stories of everyday Arizonans who have been impacted by the state’s ban, and really try to avoid getting pulled into conversations and distractions that try to frame this as a controversial issue,” Dent said. “The majority of Arizonans are with us. The majority of Americans are with us.”

While every state faces its own unique challenges, the organizers all agree that passing their respective amendments is only the start of the battle.

“We discovered over the last decade that if you get something on the ballot, and it’s able to pass, you also have to be able to hang around once you go into overtime to defend it and implement it,” said Adam Weiland of Dakotans for Health. “Things just don’t stop after you win. This law goes into effect in July of next year if it passes, and I’m sure -- knock me over with a feather if there’s not -- there will be attempts to undermine the law.”

“But we will be there to fight it every step of the way,” he added.

And when the organizers grow tired and the anti-abortion attacks feel overwhelming, they all say they remember the stories of people impacted by their states’ anti-abortion laws.

In moments of fatigue, Sutherland said she thinks of Deborah Dobert, who was forced to carry her nonviable pregnancy to term. As a result, she held her baby boy in her arms as he died. She also thinks about Anya Cook, who lost half the blood in her body before she was able to receive the life-saving abortion care she needed.

“These are Florida women,” Sutherland said. “These stories allow people to really understand that we’re not talking about the issue of reproductive health care as a hypothetical. We all understand that no politicians, regardless of party, should make decisions for us. So I am cautiously optimistic that we will see this through November, and I welcome whatever comes after that.”

This story is provided as a service of the Institute for Nonprofit News' On the Ground news wire. The Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) is a network of more than 475 independent, nonprofit newsrooms serving communities throughout the US, Canada, and globally. On the Ground is a service of INN, which aggregates the best of its members' elections and political content, and provides it free for republication. Read more about INN here: <https://inn.org/>.

Please coordinate with lara@prismreports.org should you want to publish photos for this piece. This content cannot be modified, apart from rewriting the headline. To view the original version, visit: <http://prismreports.org/2024/10/31/10-states-will-vote-on-abortion-rights-this-election/>

Macy's Thanksgiving Parade will feature Ariana Madix, T-Pain, 'Gabby's Dollhouse' and pasta

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A eclectic group of stars — including reality TV's Ariana Madix, Broadway belter Idina Menzel, hip-hop's T-Pain, members of the WNBA champions New York Liberty and country duo Dan + Shay — will feature in this year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Music performers The War and Treaty, Lea Salonga, Kylie Cantrall, The Temptations, Chlöe, Charli D'Amelio, Jimmy Fallon & The Roots, Coco Jones, Walker Hayes, Rachel Platten, Bishop Briggs, Joey McIntyre, Natti Natasha and ballet dancers Tiler Peck and Roman Mejia, are also slated to perform. The Associated Press got the list early.

The holiday tradition will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Nov. 28 in all time zones and will be kicked off by actor Alison Brie, the "Glow" star currently starring in Peacock's "Apples Never Fall."

This year's parade will feature 17 giant character balloons, 22 floats, 15 novelty and heritage inflatables, 11 marching bands, 700 clowns and 10 performance groups.

"The work that we do, the opportunity to impact millions of people and bring a bit of joy for a couple of hours on Thanksgiving morning, is what motivates us every day," Will Coss, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade executive producer, said in an interview.

The parade airs on NBC and streams on Peacock. Savannah Guthrie, Hoda Kotb and Al Roker from "Today" will host and a Spanish language simulcast on Telemundo will be hosted by Carlos Adyan and Andrea Meza.

There will be six new featured character balloons, including Minnie Mouse, "Extraordinary Noorah" with The Elf on the Shelf, "Gabby's Dollhouse," "Goku" and "Spider-Man."

The "Gabby's Dollhouse" float will include a 55-foot-tall (17-meter-tall) balloon featuring Gabby and Pandy Paws that will have 10 different shades of pink.

"As a little girl growing up in New Jersey, the Thanksgiving Day parade was what you always tuned into and the balloons were, of course, the best part," says Traci Paige Johnson, the co-creator of "Gabby's Dollhouse" with Jennifer Twomey.

"That little 7-year-old girl in me is just like, 'Oh my God!' — something from your brain that you created that all the world watches floating down New York City is just absolutely incredible."

She and Twomey, who also produced "Blue's Clues," are the rare creators who get to celebrate having a second balloon in the parade. Johnson advises watchers this time to look for all the hidden cats in Gabby's sneakers and costume.

The Macy's parade has been a traditional holiday season kickoff and spectators line-up a half-dozen deep along the route to cheer the floats, entertainers and marching bands. The parade has lately asked icons to be the last guest before Santa, with last year Cher fitting the bill. This year's headliner will be revealed later.

Broadway will be represented by performances from "Death Becomes Her," "Hell's Kitchen" and "The Outsiders," as well as the iconic Radio City Rockettes and "Riverdance" dancers.

New floats include ones from brands like Disney Cruise Line, Haribo, "Wednesday" from Netflix, Universal Orlando Resorts and "The Grannies Car" from BBC Studios' "Bluey." Nickelodeon and Paramount's "Dora the Explorer" will have both a float and a balloon.

One new float will spotlight the Rao's food brand, featuring a knight and a dragon in battle made with

actual pasta elements.

"It's one of those opportunities to really combine the whimsy and the artistry of our great artists and artisans at our studio and deliver on that iconic spectacle that's known and loved of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade," said Coss.

The marching bands will hail from Massachusetts, Indiana, Tennessee, Texas, Arkansas, South Dakota, Georgia, South Carolina, West Virginia and New York.

Members of the New York Liberty, who earlier this month won their first-ever WNBA Championship, will march alongside their popular mascot, Ellie the Elephant.

The Macy's parade team, if you can believe it, are already working on sketches and ideas for the next parade, since each cycle takes 18 months. Coss calls it "the largest variety show on television."

UK Conservative Party picks Kemi Badenoch as its new leader in wake of election defeat

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's Conservative Party on Saturday elected Kemi Badenoch as its new leader as it tries to rebound from a crushing election defeat that ended 14 years in power.

Badenoch (pronounced BADE-enock) defeated rival lawmaker Robert Jenrick in a vote of almost 100,000 members of the right-of-center party. She is the first Black woman to lead a major British political party.

Badenoch replaces former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who in July led the Conservatives to their worst election result since 1832. The Conservatives lost more than 200 seats, taking their tally down to 121.

The new leader's daunting task is to try to restore the party's reputation after years of division, scandal and economic tumult, hammer Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer's policies on key issues including the economy and immigration, and return the Conservatives to power at the next election, due by 2029.

"The task that stands before us is tough but simple," Badenoch said in a victory speech to a roomful of Conservative lawmakers, staff and journalists in London.

"Our first responsibility as His Majesty's loyal opposition is to hold this Labour government to account. Our second is no less important. It is to prepare over the course of the next few years for government, to ensure that by the time of the next election, we have not just a clear set of Conservative pledges that appeal to the British people, but a clear plan for how to implement them, a clear plan to change this country by changing the way that government works."

A business secretary in the previous Conservative government, Badenoch was born in London to Nigerian parents and spent much of her childhood in the West African country.

The 44-year-old former software engineer depicts herself as a disruptor, arguing for a low-tax, free-market economy and pledging to "rewire, reboot and reprogram" the British state.

A critic of multiculturalism and self-proclaimed enemy of wokeness, Badenoch has drawn criticism for saying recently said that "not all cultures are equally valid," and for suggesting that maternity pay was excessive.

In a race that has lasted more than three months, Conservative lawmakers reduced the field from six candidates in a series of votes before putting the final two to the wider party membership.

Both finalists came from the right of the party, and argued they can win voters back from Reform U.K., the hard-right, anti-immigrant party led by populist politician Nigel Farage that has eaten away at Conservative support.

But the party also lost many voters to the winning party, Labour, and to the centrist Liberal Democrats, and some Conservatives worry that tacking right will lead the party away from public opinion.

Debate over abortion rights leads to expensive campaigns for high-stakes state Supreme Court seats

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Abortion and reproductive rights have been central to the races for president and governor in North Carolina, a battleground state that has more moderate abortion restrictions than elsewhere across the South.

That's been even truer in the fight for a seat on the state Supreme Court that abortion rights supporters say will play an important role in determining whether Republicans can enact even more restrictions. Registered Republicans currently hold five of seven seats and could expand that majority even further in Tuesday's election.

Justice Allison Riggs, a Democrat who is running for reelection, is focusing heavily on the issue and touts her support for reproductive rights. Her first television ad featured images of Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, the Republican nominee for governor, who prefers to restrict abortions earlier than the current 12 weeks. She says her GOP rival for the court could be a deciding vote on the bench for such restrictions.

"This is an issue that is landing in front of state Supreme Courts, and it is one that is very salient to voters now," Riggs said in an interview.

Her Republican opponent, Court of Appeals Judge Jefferson Griffin, said Riggs is saying too much about an issue that could come before the court.

"I think it's an inappropriate manner, a clear violation of our judicial standards, our code of conduct," he said.

The North Carolina race emphasizes how much abortion is fueling expensive campaigns for Supreme Courts in several states this year. Groups on the right and left are spending heavily to reshape courts that could play deciding roles in legal fights over abortion, reproductive rights, voting rights, redistricting and other hot-button issues for years to come.

Experts say the campaigns show how the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision overturning constitutional abortion protections that had been in place for half a century has transformed races for state high courts.

"What Dobbs did was made clear to both political stakeholders and the public that these state courts that hadn't got a lot of attention are actually going to be really important and they're going to be deciding some of the biggest cases that people might have expected to go to the U.S. Supreme Court," said Douglas Keith, senior counsel in the judiciary program at the Brennan Center, which has tracked spending on state court races.

Thirty-three states are holding elections for 82 Supreme Court seats this year. The 2024 election cycle follows record-breaking spending for judicial races in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania last year.

Groups on the left have ramped up their spending on state courts considerably this year. The American Civil Liberties Union has spent \$5.4 million on court races in Montana, Michigan, North Carolina and Ohio. Planned Parenthood and the National Democratic Redistricting Committee earlier this year announced they were collectively spending \$5 million, focusing on court races in Arizona, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas.

"We have never invested this heavily in state Supreme Courts before," said Katie Rodihan, spokesperson for Planned Parenthood Votes. "This is really a groundbreaking move for us, and I expect this will be the norm for us moving forward."

The targets include Ohio, where Republicans hold a 4-3 majority on the court. Democrats are defending two seats on the court, while a third is open, and Democratic victories in all three races are considered a longshot in the Republican-leaning state.

Control of the court could be key if the state appeals a judge's ruling that struck down the most far-reaching of the state's abortion restrictions. The ruling said the law banning most abortions once cardiac activity is detected — as early as six weeks into pregnancy and before many women know they're pregnant — violated a constitutional amendment approved by voters last year that protected reproductive rights.

Two seats are up for election on Michigan's court, where Democratic-backed justices hold a 4-3 majority.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 38 of 85

Court races are technically nonpartisan, but candidates are nominated at party conventions. Republicans would need to win both seats to flip the court in their favor.

Justice Kyra Harris Bolden is defending the seat she was appointed to two years ago by Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Bolden was the first Black woman to sit on Michigan's bench. She faces Republican-backed circuit court Judge Patrick O'Grady for the remaining four years of the eight-year term.

Republican state Rep. Andrew Fink is competing against University of Michigan law professor Kimberly Anne Thomas, who was nominated by Democrats, for the other open seat that is being vacated by a Republican-backed justice.

Groups backing Bolden and Thomas are framing the races as crucial to defending abortion rights, with one group's ad warning that "the Michigan state Supreme Court can still take abortion rights away."

The most heated races are for two seats on the Montana Supreme Court, which has come under fire from GOP lawmakers over rulings against laws that would have restricted abortion access or made it more difficult to vote.

Former U.S. Magistrate Judge Jerry Lynch is running against county attorney Cory Swanson for chief justice, while state judge Katherine Bidegaray is running against state judge Dan Wilson for another open seat on the court.

Progressive groups have been backing Lynch and Bidegaray. Both said in an ACLU questionnaire that they agreed with the reasoning and holding of a 1999 state Supreme Court ruling that the constitutional right to privacy includes the right to obtain a pre-viability abortion.

Groups on the right have been painting them both as too liberal and echoing national Republicans' rhetoric, with text messages invoking the debate over transgender athletes on women's sports teams.

The Republican State Leadership Committee, a longtime player in state court races, said its Judicial Fairness Initiative planned to spend seven figures in Arizona, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas.

The group's ads are focusing on issues other than abortion. In one touting three Republicans running for Ohio's court, the group shows images of President Donald Trump along with images related to immigration.

A super PAC backed by conservative donor and shipping executive Richard Uihlein also has given to groups involved in state Supreme Court races in Montana and Ohio.

Progressive groups are even focusing attention on longshot states such as Texas, where Republicans hold all the seats on the Supreme Court. They're trying to unseat three GOP justices who were part of unanimous rulings rejecting challenges to the state's abortion ban.

One group, Find Out PAC, has been running digital ads in San Antonio, Dallas and Houston criticizing justices Jimmy Blacklock, John Devine and Jane Bland. In its ad, the group accuses the three of "playing doctor from the bench."

In North Carolina, Riggs' campaigning on abortion rights has prompted complaints from Republicans who say she's stepping outside the bounds of judicial ethics. But Riggs said she's not saying how she would rule in any case and is merely sharing her values with voters.

"I'm going to keep talking about my values because, at the core, our democracy works best when people cast informed votes," she said.

Attack on central Israel injures 11 as Iran's leader promises a punishing response

By ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — An attack on a central Israeli town early Saturday injured 11 people as Iran's Supreme Leader vowed a punishing response to Israel's attack last week.

The predawn strike on Tira, which followed air raid sirens across central Israel, was one of several barrages fired from Lebanon early in the day. Many of the projectiles were intercepted by Israeli air defenses, while others landed in unpopulated areas.

The Magen David Adom emergency service said 11 people were hurt by shrapnel and glass shards in a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 39 of 85

direct strike on a building in Tira, a predominantly Israeli Arab town. Three were in moderate condition, while the others suffered milder injuries.

Footage showed significant damage to the roof and top floor of the three-story building and cars below. Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group claimed responsibility for firing missiles toward the Israeli military's Unit 8200 base in Gilot on the edge of Tel Aviv and for attacking central Israel's Palmachim Air Base with explosive drones, saying they "scored precise hits on targets."

Israel's military has not confirmed either base was targeted or hit.

Hezbollah said the Saturday dawn missile attack directed at Gilot was in retaliation for the "massacres" that are being committed by Israel. It was likely that the claim was linked to the strike on Tira, which is about 20 kilometers (11 miles) away from Gilot.

Tamar Abdel Hai, a resident of Tira, said that the attack was frightening. "I call upon all the leaders in the Arab world and the leaders in Israel and to everyone who can help to end this war. It's enough," he said.

Hezbollah also said that its fighters have fired salvos of rockets into northern Israeli towns including Dalton, Yesud HaMa'ala and Bar Yohai.

Iran threatens more attacks

The early Saturday attacks may be only a precursor to a more severe strike against Israel.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, on Saturday threatened Israel and the U.S. with a punishing response over attacks on Iran and its allies following Israel's Oct. 26 airstrikes that targeted Iran's military bases and other locations.

"The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei said in video released by Iranian state media.

A further attack by Iran, which has already launched two direct attacks against Israel this year, could push the wider Middle East closer to a broader conflict. Israel is already battling the Iran-backed militant group Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The fight against Hezbollah has weakened the group but has also taken a heavy toll on southern Lebanon and other parts of the country.

On Friday, Israel launched dozens of intense airstrikes across Lebanon's northeastern farming villages, killing at least 52 people and wounding scores more, the Lebanese Health Ministry reported.

Since the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in 2023, more than 2,897 people have been killed and 13,150 wounded in Lebanon, according to a Health Ministry update early Friday. United Nations agencies estimate that Israel's ground invasion and bombardment of Lebanon has displaced 1.4 million people.

Residents of Israel's northern communities near Lebanon, roughly 60,000 people, have also been displaced for more than a year.

Israel has also stepped up its offensive against Hamas' remaining fighters in Gaza, raising concerns about humanitarian conditions for civilians still there. The World Health Organization has said it plans to finally resume its polio vaccination campaign on Saturday, but only in Gaza City as towns further north remain inaccessible as Israel tightens its siege.

Israel's war in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians since Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas militants killed roughly 1,200 people in Israel and took some 250 hostages back to Gaza. Health officials inside Hamas-run Gaza do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of the dead in the enclave are women and children.

Spain's government to send 10,000 soldiers and police to Valencia after deadly floods

MADRID (AP) — Spain is sending 5,000 more soldiers and 5,000 more police to the eastern region of Valencia after deadly floods this week that killed more than 200 people, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced Saturday.

So far, 205 bodies have been recovered — 202 in Valencia, two in neighboring Castilla La Mancha and

one in Andalusia, in the south — in Spain's deadliest natural disaster in living memory.

Rescuers were still searching for bodies in stranded cars and sodden buildings on Saturday, four days after the monstrous flash floods that swept away everything in their path in the east of Spain. An unknown number of people remain missing.

Thousands of volunteers are helping to clean up the thick mud that is covering everything in streets, houses and businesses in the hardest-hit towns.

At present there are some 2,000 soldiers involved in the emergency work, as well as almost 2,500 Civil Guard gendarmes — who have carried out 4,500 rescues during the floods — and 1,800 national police officers.

Iran's supreme leader threatens Israel and US with 'a crushing response' over Israeli attack

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's supreme leader on Saturday threatened Israel and the U.S. with "a crushing response" over attacks on Iran and its allies.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei spoke as Iranian officials are increasingly threatening to launch yet another strike against Israel after its Oct. 26 attack on the Islamic Republic that targeted military bases and other locations and killed at least five people.

Any further attacks from either side could engulf the wider Middle East, already teetering over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon, into a wider regional conflict just ahead of the U.S. presidential election this Tuesday.

"The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei said in video released by Iranian state media.

The supreme leader did not elaborate on the timing of the threatened attack, nor the scope. The U.S. military operates on bases throughout the Middle East, with some troops now manning a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, battery in Israel.

The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier likely is in the Arabian Sea, while Pentagon press secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said Friday that more destroyers, fighter squadrons, tankers and B-52 long-range bombers would be coming to the region to deter Iran and its militant allies.

The 85-year-old Khamenei had struck a more cautious approach in earlier remarks, saying officials would weigh Iran's response and that Israel's attack "should not be exaggerated nor downplayed." Iran has launched two major direct attacks on Israel, in April and October.

But efforts by Iran to downplay the Israeli attack faltered as satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press showed damage to military bases near Tehran linked to the country's ballistic missile program, as well as at a Revolutionary Guard base used in satellite launches.

Iran's allies, called the "Axis of Resistance" by Tehran, also have been severely hurt by ongoing Israeli attacks, particularly Lebanon's Hezbollah and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Iran long has used those groups as both an asymmetrical way to attack Israel and as a shield against a direct assault. Some analysts believe those groups want Iran to do more to back them militarily.

Iran, however, has been dealing with its own problems at home, as its economy struggles under the weight of international sanctions and it has faced years of widespread, multiple protests. After Khamenei's speech, the Iranian rial fell to 691,500 against the dollar, near an all-time low. It had been 32,000 rials to the dollar when Tehran reached its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Gen. Mohammad Ali Naini, a spokesman for Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard which controls the ballistic missiles needed to target Israel, gave an interview published by the semiofficial Fars news agency just before Khamenei's remarks were released. In it, he warned Iran's response "will be wise, powerful and beyond the enemy's comprehension."

"The leaders of the Zionist regime should look out from the windows of their bedrooms and protect their criminal pilots within their small territory," he warned. Israeli air force pilots appear to have used air-launched ballistic missiles in the Oct. 26 attack.

Khamenei on Saturday met with university students to mark Students Day, which commemorates a Nov. 4, 1978, incident in which Iranian soldiers opened fire on students protesting the rule of the shah at Tehran University. The shooting killed and wounded several students and further escalated the tensions consuming Iran at the time that eventually led to the shah fleeing the country and the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The crowd offered a raucous welcome to Khamenei, chanting: "The blood in our veins is a gift to our leader!" Some also made a hand gesture — similar to a "timeout" signal — given by the slain Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in 2020 in a speech in which he threatened that American troops who arrived in the Mideast standing up would "return in coffins" horizontally.

Iran will mark the 45th anniversary of the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis this Sunday, following the Persian calendar. The Nov. 4, 1979, storming of the embassy by Islamist students led to the 444-day crisis, which cemented the decades-long enmity between Tehran and Washington that persists today.

Israel's path of destruction in southern Lebanon raises fears of an attempt to create a buffer zone

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB, JULIA FRANKEL and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Perched on a hilltop a short walk from the Israeli border, the tiny southern Lebanese village of Ramyah has almost been wiped off the map. In a neighboring village, satellite photos show a similar scene: a hill once covered with houses, now reduced to a gray smear of rubble.

Israeli warplanes and ground forces have blasted a trail of destruction through southern Lebanon the past month. The aim, Israel says, is to debilitate the Hezbollah militant group, push it away from the border and end more than a year of Hezbollah fire into northern Israel.

Even United Nations peacekeepers and Lebanese troops in the south have come under fire from Israeli forces, raising questions over whether they can remain in place.

More than 1 million people have fled bombardment, emptying much of the south. Some experts say Israel may be aiming to create a depopulated buffer zone, a strategy it has already deployed along its border with Gaza.

Some conditions for such a zone appear already in place, according to an Associated Press analysis of satellite imagery and data collected by mapping experts that show the breadth of destruction across 11 villages next to the border.

The Israeli military has said the bombardment is necessary to destroy Hezbollah tunnels and other infrastructure it says the group embedded within towns. The blasts have also destroyed homes, neighborhoods and sometimes entire villages, where families have lived for generations.

Israel says it aims to push Hezbollah far enough back that its citizens can return safely to homes in the north, but Israeli officials acknowledge they don't have a concrete plan for ensuring Hezbollah stays away from the border long term. That is a key focus in attempts by the United States to broker a cease-fire.

Orna Mizrahi, a senior researcher at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, said Israel's immediate aim is not to create a buffer zone — but that might change.

"Maybe we'll have no other choice than staying there until we have an arrangement that promises us that Hezbollah will not come back to the zone," she said.

A path of destruction

Troops pushed into southern Lebanon on Oct. 1, backed by heavy bombardment that has intensified since.

Using satellite images provided by Planet Labs PBC, AP identified a line of 11 villages — all within 4 miles (6.5 kilometers) of Lebanon's border with Israel — that have been severely damaged in the past month, either by strikes or detonations of explosives laid by Israeli soldiers.

Analysis found the most intense damage in the south came in villages closest to the border, with between 100 and 500 buildings likely destroyed or damaged in each, according to Corey Scher of CUNY Graduate

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 42 of 85

Center and Jamon Van Der Hoek of Oregon State University, experts in damage assessments.

In Ramyah, barely a single structure still stands on the village's central hilltop, after a controlled detonation that Israeli soldiers showed themselves carrying out in videos posted on social media. In the next town over, Aita al-Shaab — a village with strong Hezbollah influence — bombardment turned the hilltop with the highest concentration of buildings into a gray wasteland of rubble.

In other villages, the damage is more selective. In some, bombardment tore scars through blocks of houses; in others, certain homes were crushed while their neighbors remained intact.

Another controlled detonation leveled much of the village of Odeissah, with an explosion so strong it set off earthquake alerts in Israel.

In videos of the blast, Lubnan Baalbaki, conductor of the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra, watched in disbelief as his parents' house — containing the art collection and a library his father had built up for years — was destroyed.

"This house was a project and a dream for both of my parents," he told the AP. His parents' graves in the garden are now lost.

When asked whether its intention was to create a buffer zone, Israel's military said it was "conducting localized, limited, targeted raids based on precise intelligence" against Hezbollah targets. It said Hezbollah had "deliberately embedded" weapons in homes and villages.

Israeli journalist Danny Kushmaro even helped blow up a home that the military said was being used to store Hezbollah ammunition. In a television segment, Kushmaro and soldiers counted down before they pressed a button, setting off a massive explosion.

Videos posted online by Israel's military and individual soldiers show Israeli troops planting flags on Lebanese soil. Still, Israel has not built any bases or managed to hold a permanent presence in southern Lebanon. Troops appear to move back and forth across the border, sometimes under heavy fire from Hezbollah.

October has been the deadliest month of 2024 for the Israeli military, with around 60 soldiers killed.

Attacks on UN peacekeeping troops and the Lebanese Army

The bombardment has been punctuated by Israeli attacks on U.N. troops and the Lebanese Army — forces which, under international law, are supposed to keep the peace in the area. Israel has long complained that their presence has not prevented Hezbollah from building up its infrastructure across the south.

Israel denies targeting either force.

The Lebanese military has said at least 11 of its soldiers were killed in eight Israeli strikes, either at their positions or while assisting evacuations.

The peacekeeping force, known as UNIFIL, said its forces and infrastructure have been harmed at least 30 times since late September, blaming Israeli military fire or actions for about 20 of them, "with seven being clearly deliberate."

A rocket likely fired by Hezbollah or an allied group hit UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura on Tuesday, causing some minor injuries, said UNIFIL spokesperson Andrea Tenenti.

UNIFIL has refused to leave southern Lebanon, despite calls by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for them to go.

Experts warn that could change if peacekeepers come under greater fire.

"If you went from the U.N. taking casualties to the U.N. actually taking fatalities," some nations contributing troops may "say 'enough is enough,' and you might see the mission start to crumble," said Richard Gowan of the International Crisis Group.

The future of the territory is uncertain

International cease-fire efforts appear to be centered on implementing U.N. Resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

It specified that Israeli forces would fully withdraw from Lebanon while the Lebanese army and UNIFIL — not Hezbollah — would be the exclusive armed presence in a zone about 25 kilometers (15 miles) from the border.

But the resolution was not fully implemented. Hezbollah never left the border zone, and Lebanon accuses Israel of continuing to occupy small areas of its land and carrying out frequent military overflights above its territory.

During a recent visit to Beirut, U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein said a new agreement was needed to enforce Resolution 1701.

Israel could be trying to pressure an agreement into existence through the destruction wreaked in southern Lebanon.

Yossi Yehoshua, military correspondent for the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, wrote that the military needs to "entrench further its operational achievements" to push Hezbollah, the Lebanese government and mediating countries "to accept an end (of the war) under conditions that are convenient for Israel."

Some Lebanese fear that means an occupation of parts of the south, 25 years after Israel ended its occupation there.

Lebanese parliamentarian Mark Daou, a critic of both Hezbollah and of Israel's military operations in Lebanon, said he believed Israel was trying to degrade Hezbollah's capabilities and turn the Lebanese public "against the will to resist Israeli incursions."

Gowan, of the International Crisis Group, said one aim of Resolution 1701 was to give the Lebanese army enough credibility that it, not Hezbollah, would be seen "as the legitimate defender" in the south.

"That evaporates if they become (Israel's) gendarmerie of southern Lebanon," he said.

Moldovans are voting in a pivotal presidential runoff. But voter fraud threatens its democracy

By STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

CHISINAU, Moldova (AP) — Moldovan historian and politician Octavian Ticu remembers when the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, a seismic event that enabled him to become one of the first amateur boxers to fight for his country at the pinnacle of his sport: the Olympic Games.

"It was a happy moment for me," the 52-year-old recalls, as he wraps his fists at a boxing gym in the capital, Chisinau. "In 1996, I participated in the Olympics in Atlanta. ... If I were in the Soviet Union, I would never have accomplished this."

But today, more than three decades after proclaiming independence, Moldova is being targeted by Russia in a hybrid war of propaganda and disinformation that "wreaks havoc," Ticu, who competed in the lightweight division, told The Associated Press.

Like Ukraine and Georgia, the former Soviet republic aspires to join the European Union but is caught in a constant geopolitical tug between Moscow and the West.

"Russian propaganda is a reality of 30 years of independence," added Ticu, who has written several books on his country's history.

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

In a national referendum on Oct. 20, Moldovans voted by a razor-thin majority of 50.35% in favor of securing a path toward EU membership. But the result was overshadowed by allegations of a Moscow-backed vote-buying scheme.

In a presidential election held the same day, incumbent pro-Western President Maia Sandu obtained 42% of the vote, but failed to win an outright majority. On Sunday, she will face Alexandr Stoianoglo, a Russia-friendly former prosecutor general, in a runoff viewed as a choice between geopolitical opposites — again.

As in the EU referendum, a poll released this week by research company iData indicates a tight race on Sunday that leans toward a narrow Sandu victory, an outcome that might rely on Moldova's large diaspora.

The presidential role carries significant powers in areas such as foreign policy and national security.

In the wake of the two October votes, Moldovan law enforcement said that a vote-buying scheme was

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 44 of 85

orchestrated by Ilan Shor, an exiled oligarch who currently lives in Russia and was convicted in absentia in 2023 of fraud and money laundering. Prosecutors say \$39 million was paid to more than 130,000 recipients through an internationally sanctioned Russian bank to voters between September and October. Shor denies any wrongdoing.

"These people who go to Moscow, the so-called government-in-exile of Ilan Shor, who come with very large sums of money, are left to roam free," said Ticu, who ran as a long-shot candidate in the presidential race.

It was "obvious," Ticu added, that the votes would "not be fair or democratic." Of the 11 first-round candidates, he was the only one to endorse Sandu in the runoff.

Voters from Moldova's Kremlin-friendly breakaway region of Transnistria, which declared independence after a short war in the early 1990s, can cast ballots in Moldova proper. Transnistria has been a source of tension during the war in neighboring Ukraine, especially since it is home to a military base with 1,500 Russian troops.

Ticu warned that if Russian troops in Ukraine reach the port city of Odesa, they could "join the Transnistrian region, and then the Republic of Moldova will be occupied."

In Gagauzia, an autonomous part of Moldova where only 5% voted in favor of the EU, a doctor was detained after allegedly coercing 25 residents of a home for older adults to vote for a candidate they did not choose. Police said they obtained "conclusive evidence," including financial transfers from the same sanctioned Russian bank.

Anticorruption authorities have conducted hundreds of searches and seized over \$2.7 million (2.5 million euros) in cash as they attempt to crack down.

On Thursday, prosecutors raided a political party headquarters and said 12 people were suspected of paying voters to select a candidate in the presidential race. A criminal case was also opened in which 40 state agency employees were suspected of taking electoral bribes.

Instead of winning the overwhelming support that Sandu had hoped, the results in both races exposed Moldova's judiciary as unable to adequately protect the democratic process. It also allowed some pro-Moscow opposition to question the validity of the votes.

Igor Dodon, the Party of Socialists leader and former president who has close ties to Russia, stated this week that "we don't recognize" the referendum result, and labeled Sandu "a dictator in a skirt" who will "do whatever it takes to stay in power."

Sandu admitted the ballots suffered from unprecedented fraud and foreign meddling, which undermined the results, calling the interference a "vile attack" on Moldova's sovereignty.

"If the judiciary does not wake up ... if it closes its eyes to selling the country, the future of Moldova will be in danger for decades," she warned.

Moldova is one of Europe's poorest countries and has been hit hard by inflation since the war started. Tatiana Cojocari, a Russia foreign policy expert at Chisinau-based think-tank WatchDog, says this means many citizens could "fall prey to electoral corruption" for relatively small amounts of money.

"For Russia, it's very important to have as many resources as possible to work with. It creates chaos, both informationally and politically," Cojocari said, adding that Russia "has turned a bit to the tactics of the Cold War and uses them skillfully, only now adapted to social media."

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moldova applied to join the EU. It was granted candidate status in June of that year, and in summer 2024, Brussels agreed to start membership negotiations. The sharp Westward shift irked Moscow and significantly soured relations with Chisinau.

Since then, Moldovan authorities have repeatedly accused Russia of waging a vast "hybrid war," from sprawling disinformation campaigns to protests by pro-Russia parties to vote-buying schemes that undermine countrywide elections. Russia has denied it is meddling.

Social media platforms have played a crucial role in disseminating Russian propaganda in Moldova, says Andrei Rusu, a media monitoring expert at WatchDog. "One of the biggest lies is that if Moldovans join the EU, they will go to war with Russia, they will lose their faith and traditional values, or they will be forced

to follow LGBT propaganda," he said.

Moldovans who lived through the Soviet Union, he added, can struggle to spot Russian propaganda about the EU and the West, and differentiate between real videos and ones generated by artificial intelligence, such as those that have frequently appeared online depicting Sandu.

In recent weeks, Meta and Telegram removed multiple fake accounts that railed against the EU and Sandu, and that expressed support for pro-Russian parties.

However, Moldova watchers warn that Moscow's main target could be the 2025 parliamentary elections. Waning support for the governing pro-Western Party of Action and Solidarity suggests it could lose its majority in the 101-seat legislature.

"We are already waiting for the parliamentary elections to see other tactics and strategies," added Cojocari, the Russia analyst. "This government will no longer be able ... to secure a parliamentary majority."

Back at the boxing gym, Ticu warned more must be done to counter foreign interference, or face a "danger of hybrid governance" with pro-Russian forces.

"Very good laws have been adopted, but are not implemented," he said. Russian President Vladimir "Putin does not want a war in Moldova, he wants to show the world and Europe a case in which European integration policies have failed."

Jury convicts former Kentucky officer of using excessive force on Breonna Taylor during deadly raid

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A federal jury on Friday convicted a former Kentucky police detective of using excessive force on Breonna Taylor during a botched 2020 drug raid that left her dead.

The 12-member jury returned the late-night verdict after clearing Brett Hankison earlier in the evening on a charge that he used excessive force on Taylor's neighbors.

It was the first conviction of a Louisville police officer who was involved in the deadly raid.

Some members of the jury were in tears as the verdict was read around 9:30 p.m. They had earlier indicated to the judge in two separate messages that they were deadlocked on the charge of using excessive force on Taylor, but chose to continue deliberating. The six man, six woman jury deliberated for more than 20 hours over three days.

Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer, celebrated the verdict with friends outside the federal courthouse, saying: "It took a lot of time. It took a lot of patience. It was hard. The jurors took their time to really understand that Breonna deserved justice."

Hankison fired 10 shots into Taylor's glass door and windows during the raid, but didn't hit anyone. Some shots flew into a next-door neighbor's adjoining apartment.

The death of the 26-year-old Black woman, along with the May 2020 police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis sparked racial injustice protests nationwide.

Bernice King, the daughter of Martin Luther King Jr., called the verdict "a long-awaited moment of accountability."

"While it cannot restore Breonna to her family, it represents a crucial step in the pursuit of justice and a reminder that no one should be above the law," King said in a social media post Friday night.

A separate jury deadlocked on federal charges against Hankison last year, and he was acquitted on state charges of wanton endangerment in 2022.

The conviction against Hankison carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. He will be sentenced on March 12 by U.S. District Judge Rebecca Grady Jennings.

Hankison, 48, argued throughout the trial that he was acting to protect his fellow officers after Taylor's boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, fired on them when they broke down Taylor's door with a battering ram.

This jury sent a note on Thursday to the judge asking whether they needed to know if Taylor was alive as Hankison fired his shots.

That was a point of contention during closing arguments, when Hankison's attorney Don Malarcik told the jury that prosecutors must "prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Ms. Taylor was alive" when Hankison fired.

After the jury sent the question, Jennings urged them to keep deliberating.

Walker shot and wounded one of the officers. Hankison testified that when Walker fired, he moved away, rounded the corner of the apartment unit and fired into Taylor's glass door and a window.

Meanwhile, officers at the door returned Walker's fire, hitting and killing Taylor, who was in a hallway.

Hankison's lawyers argued during closing statements Wednesday that Hankison was acting properly "in a very tense, very chaotic environment" that lasted about 12 seconds. They emphasized that Hankison's shots didn't hit anyone.

Hankison was one of four officers charged by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2022 with violating Taylor's civil rights. Hankison's verdict is the second conviction from those cases. The first was a plea deal from a former officer who was not at the raid and became a cooperating witness in another case.

Malarcik, Hankison's attorney, spoke at length during closing arguments about the role of Taylor's boyfriend, who fired the shot that hit former Sgt. John Mattingly at the door. He said Walker never tried to come to the door or turn the lights on as police were knocking and instead armed himself and hid in the dark.

"Brett Hankison was 12 inches away from being shot by Kenneth Walker," Malarcik said.

Prosecutors said Hankison acted recklessly, firing 10 shots into doors and a window where he couldn't see a target.

They said in closing arguments that Hankison "violated one of the most fundamental rules of deadly force: If they cannot see the person they're shooting at, they cannot pull the trigger."

Neither of the officers who shot Taylor — Mattingly and former Detective Myles Cosgrove — were charged in Taylor's death. Federal and state prosecutors have said those officers were justified in returning fire, since Taylor's boyfriend shot at them first.

Trump is using election lies to lay the groundwork for challenging 2024 results if he loses

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump has spent months laying the groundwork to challenge the results of the 2024 election if he loses — just as he did four years ago.

At rally after rally, he urges his supporters to deliver a victory "too big to rig," telling them the only way he can lose is if Democrats cheat. He has refused to say, repeatedly, whether he will accept the results regardless of the outcome. And he's claimed cheating is already underway, citing debunked claims or outrageous theories with no basis in reality.

"The only thing that can stop us is the cheating. It's the only thing that can stop us," he said at an event in Arizona late Thursday night.

In 2020, Trump prematurely declared victory from the White House. He launched a legal and political effort to overturn his loss to Democrat Joe Biden that culminated in the storming of the Capitol by his supporters on Jan. 6, 2021.

Democrats fear he may do the same thing this year before the race is called. He wouldn't answer a question Friday in Dearborn, Michigan, about those Democratic concerns, instead pivoting to attacking Vice President Kamala Harris.

Trump has made election lies central to his 2024 campaign, issuing fevered warnings about fraud while promising to take retribution against people he sees as standing in his way.

This year, he is backed by a sophisticated "election integrity" operation built by his campaign and the Republican National Committee that has filed more than 130 lawsuits already and signed up more than 230,000 volunteers being trained to deploy as poll watchers and poll workers across the country on Election Day.

Here's a look at Trump's strategy to sow doubt in this year's election and the facts behind each claim.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 47 of 85

Non-citizen voting

THE CLAIM: Trump has alleged, without evidence, that Democrats have allowed millions of migrants to enter the country illegally so that they can be registered to vote. In an interview with Newsmax in September, Trump alleged such efforts were already underway.

"They are working overtime trying to sign people, illegally, to vote in the election," he claimed. "They're working overtime to sign people and register people — many of the same people that you just see come across the border. Which is probably their original thought, because why else would they want to destroy our country?"

THE FACTS: It takes years for newcomers to become citizens and only citizens can legally cast ballots in federal elections. Isolated cases of noncitizens being caught trying to vote — like a University of Michigan student from China arrested for allegedly casting an illegal ballot — do not reflect a larger conspiracy.

Research has shown noncitizens illegally registering and casting ballots is extremely rare and usually done by mistake.

Overseas ballots

THE CLAIM: Trump has pointed to Democratic efforts to secure the votes of Americans living abroad as another opportunity for fraud. He's alleged that they are "getting ready to CHEAT!" and "want to dilute the TRUE vote of our beautiful military and their families."

THE FACTS: The former president has himself campaigned for the votes of Americans overseas, promising to end so-called "double taxation" for people who often pay taxes in the country where they reside as well as to the U.S. government.

Ominous warnings

THE CLAIM: Trump has begun to suggest that Harris might have access to some kind of secret inside information about the outcome of a race that has yet to be decided.

Since the vice president took a day off from the trail to sit for interviews with Telemundo and NBC, he has repeatedly suggested, "Maybe she knows something we don't know."

In Michigan last weekend, he suggested there is no way Harris would be campaigning with Beyoncé — one of the biggest stars in the world — if the race were really as close as polls suggest.

"Number one, they cheat like hell. So maybe they know something that we don't, right?" he said. "They might know something that we don't, I don't know. Why the hell would she be celebrating when you're down? Maybe — never thought of that — maybe she knows something we don't. But we're not going to let it happen."

THE FACTS: There is no evidence to support a Democratic conspiracy. Indeed, Trump fanned fears of his own inside planning at a rally at New York's Madison Square Garden when he looked at House Speaker Mike Johnson and talked about a "little secret" they had.

Johnson, before becoming speaker, took the lead in drafting a widely panned brief seeking to overturn Trump's 2020 loss and echoed some of the wilder conspiracy theories to explain away his loss.

Asked about Trump's reference to a "little secret," Johnson issued a statement that included the following: "By definition, a secret is not to be shared — and I don't intend to share this one." (He later told an audience that it related to "one of our tactics on get-out-the-vote," according to The Hill. Trump's campaign issued a statement noting he had "done countless tele-rallies" to help bolster Republican congressional candidates.)

Turning to Pennsylvania

THE CLAIM: Trump in recent days has turned his ire on Pennsylvania, a state that both campaigns view as critical, and where he's claimed cheating is already underway.

Earlier this week, he claimed York County, Pennsylvania, had "received THOUSANDS of potentially FRAUDULENT Voter Registration Forms and Mail-In Ballot Applications from a third party group." He has also pointed to Lancaster County, which he claimed had been "caught with 2600 Fake Ballots and Forms, all written by the same person. Really bad stuff."

During a campaign event in Allentown on Tuesday, the former president said: "They've already started cheating in Lancaster. They've cheated. We caught 'em with 2,600 votes. No, we caught them cold. 2,600

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 48 of 85

votes. Think of this, think of this. And every vote was written by the same person.”

THE FACTS: In Lancaster, County District Attorney Heather Adams, an elected Republican, has said election workers raised concerns about two sets of voter registration applications because of what she described as numerous similarities. Officials are now examining a total of about 2,500 forms.

To be clear, Lancaster is looking into voter registration applications, not “votes.” Lancaster officials said some forms contained false names, suspicious handwriting, questionable signatures, incorrect addresses or other problematic details, but did not say they were all written by the same person.

York County Chief Clerk Greg Monskie confirmed this week that his county was reviewing suspect forms. County Commissioner Julie Wheeler issued a statement saying voter registration forms and mail-in ballot applications were among a “large delivery containing thousands of election-related materials” that the county elections office received from a third-party organization.

Officials in the state say the discovery and investigation into the applications — not votes — is evidence the system is working as it should.

Threats of prosecution

THE CLAIM: Trump has threatened severe consequences for those engaged in what he deems “unscrupulous behavior.”

In one social media post that falsely cites “the rampant Cheating and Skullduggery that has taken place by the Democrats in the 2020 Presidential Election,” he has warned that, “WHEN I WIN, those people that CHEATED will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the Law, which will include long term prison sentences.”

The posts go on to threaten “Those involved in unscrupulous behavior,” including election officials, lawyers, and donors, whom he says “will be sought out, caught, and prosecuted at levels, unfortunately, never seen before in our Country.”

THE FACTS: Judges, election officials and even Trump’s own attorney general, William Barr, have all affirmed that there was no widespread cheating in the 2020 election.

If he’s elected again, Trump has vowed to go after rivals he has deemed “enemies from within,” including saying he would appoint a special prosecutor to target Biden. That’s more than a theoretical threat given that when he was president, Trump repeatedly pressed for investigations into perceived political adversaries.

While the Justice Department does have checks in place meant to ward off political influence, Trump could appoint leaders who would facilitate cases being opened at his behest.

What to watch over the final weekend of the 2024 presidential campaign

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The 2024 presidential contest speeds into its final weekend with Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump locked in a razor-thin contest.

At this late stage in the campaign, every day matters. And while few voters might change their minds this late in a typical election, there is a sense that what happens in these final days could shift votes.

Harris and Trump are crisscrossing the country to rally voters in the states that matter most. They’re trying — with varying degrees of success — to stay focused on a clear and concise closing message. At the same time, each side is investing massive resources to drive up turnout for the final early voting period. And in these critical days, the flow of misinformation is intensifying.

Here’s what we’re watching on the final weekend before Election Day, which is Tuesday:

Where will Harris and Trump be?

You only need to look at the candidates’ schedules this weekend to know where this election will likely be decided.

Note that schedules can and likely will change without warning. But on Saturday, Trump is expected to make separate appearances in North Carolina with one eyebrow-raising stop in Virginia in between.

No Democratic presidential candidate has carried North Carolina since Barack Obama in 2008, although it has been decided by less than 3 points in every election since. Trump’s decision to spend Saturday

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 49 of 85

there suggests Harris has a real opportunity in the state. But Trump is also trying to convey confidence by stopping in Virginia, a state that has been safely in the Democratic column since 2008.

There is perhaps no more important swing state than Pennsylvania, where Trump is expected to campaign Sunday. But he also has another appearance scheduled for North Carolina in addition to Georgia, another Southern state that has leaned Republican for almost three decades — that is, until Joe Biden carried it by less than a half percentage point four years ago.

Meanwhile, Harris is expected to campaign in North Carolina and Georgia on Saturday in a sign that her team is sensing genuine opportunity in the South. She's planning to make multiple stops in Michigan on Sunday, shifting to a Democratic-leaning state in the so-called Blue Wall where her allies believe she is vulnerable.

Do they stay on message?

Trump's campaign leadership wants voters to be focused on one key question as they prepare to cast ballots, and it's the same question he opens every rally with: Are you better off today than you were four years ago?

Harris' team wants voters to be thinking about another: Do they trust Trump or Harris to put the nation's interests over their own?

Whichever candidate can more effectively keep voters focused on their closing arguments in the coming days may ultimately win the presidency. Yet both candidates are off to a challenging start.

Trump opens the weekend still facing the fallout from his recent New York City rally in which a comedian described Puerto Rico as a "floating pile of garbage." Things got harder for Trump late Thursday after he raised the prospect of Republican rival Liz Cheney's death by gunfire.

It was exactly the kind of inflammatory comment his allies want him to avoid at this critical moment.

Harris' campaign, meanwhile, is still working to shift the conversation away from President Biden's comments earlier in the week that described Trump supporters as "garbage." The Associated Press reported late Thursday that White House press officials altered the official transcript of the call in question, drawing objections from the federal workers who document such remarks for posterity.

The spotlight of presidential politics always burns brightly. But it will burn brightest, perhaps, this final weekend, leaving the campaigns virtually no margin for error. In what both sides believe is a true tossup election, any final-hours missteps could prove decisive.

How will the gender gap play out?

Trump's graphic attack against Cheney was especially troublesome given his allies' heightened concerns about women voters.

Polling shows a significant gender gap in the contest with Harris generally having a much better rating among women than Trump has. Part of that may be the result of the GOP's fight to restrict abortion rights, which has been disastrous for Trump's party. But Trump's divisive leadership has also pushed women away.

Going into the weekend, Trump allies, including conservative firebrand Charlie Kirk, are warning that far more women than men appear to be casting early ballots. While it's impossible to know whom they're voting for, Kirk clearly believes that's bad news for Trump.

Trump isn't helping his cause. A day before his violent rhetoric about Cheney, the Republican former president made waves by insisting that he would protect women whether they "like it or not."

Harris, who would be the nation's first female president, said Trump doesn't understand women's rights "to make decisions about their own lives, including their own bodies."

It remains to be seen whether the Democrat's argument can break through on this packed weekend. But Harris' team believes there's still a significant chunk of persuadable voters out there. And they say the undecideds are disproportionately Republican-leaning suburban women.

What happens with early voting?

More than 66 million people have already cast ballots in the 2024 election, which is more than one-third the total number who voted in 2020.

They include significantly more Republicans compared with four years ago, largely because Trump has backed off his insistence that his supporters must cast ballots in person on Election Day.

And while early in-person voting has ended in many states, there will be a huge push for final-hours early voting in at least three key states as the campaigns work to bank as many votes as possible before Election Day.

That includes Michigan, where in-person early voting runs through Monday. Voters in Wisconsin can vote early in-person through Sunday, although it varies by location. And in North Carolina, voters have until 3 p.m. Saturday to cast early ballots in-person.

The early voting period officially ended Friday in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, questions remain about the Trump campaign's get-out-the-vote operation, which is relying heavily on well-funded outside groups with little experience — including one group funded largely by billionaire Elon Musk that's facing new questions about its practices.

Harris' campaign, by contrast, is running a more traditional get-out-the-vote operation that features more than 2,500 paid staffers and 357 offices in battleground states alone.

Will misinformation intensify?

Trump's allies appear to be intensifying baseless claims about voter fraud, and some are being amplified by Trump himself. He has spent months sowing doubts about the integrity of the 2024 election in the event he loses — just as he did four years ago.

His unfounded accusations are becoming more specific, in some cases, as wild claims begin to show up on social media.

Earlier this week, Trump claimed on social media that York County, Pennsylvania had "received THOUSANDS of potentially FRAUDULENT Voter Registration Forms and Mail-In Ballot Applications from a third party group." He has also pointed to Lancaster County, which he claimed had been "caught with 2600 Fake Ballots and Forms, all written by the same person. Really bad "stuff.""

Trump was referring to investigations into potential fraud related to voter registration applications. The discovery and investigation into the applications provide evidence the system is working as it should.

The Republican nominee has also raised baseless claims about overseas ballots and noncitizens voting, and suggested without evidence that Harris might have access to some kind of secret inside information about election results.

Expect such claims to surge, especially on social media, in the coming days. And remember that a broad coalition of top government and industry officials, many of them Republicans, found that the 2020 election was the "most secure" in American history."

Vigil set for Grizzly No. 399, the beloved Grand Teton bear who was killed by a vehicle

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

During her nearly three decades roaming the snowy wilderness of the Teton Range, Grizzly No. 399 became a beloved mama bear with millions of parkgoers following her yearly adventures and her ever-growing family tree.

Nature lovers are mourning the matriarch of the world-famous bear family after she was fatally struck by a vehicle Oct. 22 on a highway in western Wyoming. On Saturday night in the picturesque ski town of Jackson, dozens are expected to brave frigid weather to attend a candlelight vigil, and hundreds more will watch online.

Wildlife photographers, biologists and community members will come together to share fond memories of the 28-year-old grizzly known for frequenting tourist-heavy spots and roadsides in Grand Teton National Park.

A PBS documentary crowned her "Queen of the Tetons" and an Instagram account dedicated to her has amassed more than 60,000 followers.

"She was a living legend, and she became this ambassador for her species and a kind of rallying symbol for people working to conserve American public lands," said Jack Bayles, a wildlife tour guide who is organizing the ceremony in Jackson's town square.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 51 of 85

Named for the tag affixed by researchers to her ear, No. 399 was the oldest-known reproducing female grizzly in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. She has been credited for helping the region's grizzly population rebound from just over 100 in the 1970s to around 1,000 today.

She had 18 known cubs in eight litters over the years, and some have been spotted with cubs of their own.

Her ashes were spread this week in the Pilgrim Creek area of Grand Teton National Park, where she spent much of her life, park officials said.

"399 will always be part of this special place," Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Chip Jenkins said in a statement. "However, there is still work to do to ensure her descendants and all grizzly bears continue to thrive in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. It's up to all of us to make sure they do."

Grizzlies have teetered on and off the endangered species list. They remain federally protected, but some state officials in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho have sought to remove federal protections as their population has replenished. The states want to regain management of grizzlies and allow limited hunting.

Conservationists argue the species still requires protection as food scarcity caused by climate change has driven grizzlies further from their habitats in search of food.

On his tours of the Tetons, Bayles said he often draws attention to barren huckleberry bushes affected by rising temperatures, which he said might help explain why No. 399 was about 40 miles (64 kilometers) south of her habitat in the park when she was fatally struck. Grizzlies need to eat nearly nonstop in the fall to store enough fat to sustain their winter hibernation.

At the vigil Saturday, the tour guide said he plans to sing a few songs that he and his wife, Gina, used to play while they were out looking for her and her cubs.

A male yearling cub, known informally as "Rowdy" or "Spirit," was with No. 399 when she was killed and has not been located in the nearly two weeks since.

"There is no indication it was struck in the collision," Joe Szuszwalak of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service said. "Given the bear's age and the time of year, the yearling has a strong chance of surviving independently, and there are no current plans to capture it."

On average, about three grizzlies are killed in vehicle collisions in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem each year, according to data collected by researchers and released by the park. No. 399 was the second grizzly killed in the region by a vehicle this year.

Law enforcement officers have declared the bear's death an accident. The driver was not speeding and was not hurt.

Trump and Harris host dueling rallies in the Milwaukee area in a final push to win Wisconsin

By SCOTT BAUER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump hosted rallies within 7 miles of each other Friday night in the Milwaukee area as part of a fevered final push for votes in swing-state Wisconsin's largest county.

Milwaukee is home to the most Democratic votes in Wisconsin, but its conservative suburbs are where most Republicans live and are a critical area for Trump as he tries to reclaim the state he narrowly won in 2016 and lost in 2020. One reason for his defeat was a drop in support in those Milwaukee suburbs and an increase in Democratic votes in the city.

"Both candidates recognize that the road to the White House runs directly through Milwaukee County," said Hilario Deleon, chair of the county's Republican Party.

Air Force Two, the vice presidential aircraft, touched down at Milwaukee's airport about 40 minutes ahead of Trump's private plane, which he has dubbed Trump Force One. The planes parked near each other, but the candidates did not cross paths; Harris' motorcade was gone before Trump landed.

Both venues drew roughly the same number of people, based on crowd estimates provided by each

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 52 of 85

campaign. Trump took the stage seven minutes before Harris.

The two rallies — Trump was in downtown Milwaukee and Harris in a suburb — may be the candidates' last appearances in Wisconsin before Election Day. Both sides say the race is once again razor tight for the state's 10 electoral votes. Four of the past six presidential elections in Wisconsin have been decided by less than a point, or fewer than 23,000 votes.

It was absentee votes from Milwaukee, which typically are reported early in the morning after Election Day, that tipped Wisconsin for President Joe Biden in 2020.

Democrats know they must turn out voters in Milwaukee, also home to the state's largest Black population, to counter Trump's support in the suburbs and rural areas. Harris is hoping to replicate, and exceed, turnout from 2020 in the city, which voted 79% for Biden that year.

Trump is trying to cut into the Democrats' margin. DeLeon called it a "lose by less" mentality.

Before heading to Milwaukee, Harris campaigned in the southern Wisconsin city of Janesville, where she talked up her support for organized labor in a speech at an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers local.

"Nobody understands better than a union member that as Americans we all rise or fall together," Harris said. She promised to eliminate "unnecessary" degree requirements for federal jobs and push private sector employers to do the same.

She called Trump "an existential threat to America's labor movement" and said the nation lost manufacturing jobs during his presidency.

Trump, whose base includes working-class voters, has made sporadic efforts to reach out to rank-and-file union members, who have traditionally been core to the Democratic coalition.

Harris later went after Trump on health care, telling hundreds who packed into a high school in Little Chute that the former president wants to undo the Affordable Care Act law and take the United States back to the days when insurers could deny coverage to people with preexisting conditions.

Rapper Cardi B was among the celebrities at Harris' third and final Wisconsin rally, in the Milwaukee suburb of West Allis.

"Did you hear what Donny Trump said the other day?" Cardi B said onstage, referring to Trump saying he'll protect women "whether they like it or not."

"Donny, don't," she said. "Please."

At the same rally, Harris told the boisterous crowd that Trump is bad for the economy, their health care and women's reproductive rights.

"We know who Donald Trump is," she said. "This is not someone who is thinking about how to make your life better. This is someone who is increasingly unstable, obsessed with revenge, he is consumed with grievance and the man is out for unchecked power."

Across town, Trump railed against the economy under Biden. The U.S. jobs report released Friday, showing that employers added just 12,000 jobs in October, suggests that the Biden-Harris administration is failing on the economy, he said.

"This is like a depression," Trump said of the numbers as he heaped insults on Harris.

Economists estimate that Hurricanes Helene and Milton, combined with strikes at Boeing and elsewhere, pushed down net job growth by tens of thousands of jobs in October.

Trump held his microphone by hand for most of the rally after the audience struggled to hear him. He complained about the weight of the mic, joking, "It's like I'm weightlifting," and went on to vent his frustration on the production team.

"You wanna see me knock the hell out of people backstage?" he asked the crowd.

Trump supporters waiting in line for his Milwaukee rally said they were feeling optimistic about his chances of winning next week.

"I feel the Democrats can only win if they cheat," said Matt Kumorkiewicz, 55, a retired carpenter from nearby Oak Creek, echoing a common refrain from the former president.

He and several others in line were wearing yellow reflective safety vests in response to Biden's comment

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 53 of 85

seemingly calling Trump supporters "garbage."

Trump spent the afternoon in the Detroit area, where he stopped at a restaurant in Dearborn, the nation's largest Arab-majority city, to meet with supporters. Many in the community remain distrustful after his first act in office in 2017 was to sign an executive order effectively banning travelers from predominantly Muslim countries.

In Milwaukee, a lot of Democrats are "anxious and cautiously optimistic," said Angela Lang, founder and executive director of Black Leaders Organizing for Communities in Milwaukee.

"Especially given 2016 when there wasn't the same amount of energy, I think it's clear Dems learned lessons about the importance of Milwaukee and Wisconsin as a whole," she said.

In another late outreach effort targeting Black voters, former President Bill Clinton campaigned with local faith leaders on Thursday night at a center for celebrating African American music and arts in Milwaukee.

Hillary Clinton did not campaign in Wisconsin in 2016 after her primary loss, a mistake that Harris is not repeating. The Friday stop is her ninth in the state as a presidential candidate. It is Trump's 10th stop in Wisconsin, not counting the Republican National Convention, which was held in Milwaukee.

Wisconsin Republican Party Chair Brian Schimming said that Harris having to return to the Democratic stronghold of Milwaukee shows she is on defense while Trump is on offense.

The Milwaukee Election Commission estimated on Thursday that it expects to receive more than 100,000 ballots by Election Day. But that lags early vote returns from the conservative suburbs.

Lang, the Milwaukee organizer, said it is a tradition for many voters her group contacts to cast their ballots on Election Day. And if they don't?

"Then we're in a world of trouble," said Mandela Barnes, a former lieutenant governor and president of Power to the Polls, a group that's been working to boost turnout.

Trump's rally was staged in the same arena where the Republican convention took place three months ago. The Harris rally, held at the state fair park in West Allis, included performances by GloRilla, Flo Milli, MC Lyte and DJ Gemini Gilly.

South Carolina executes Richard Moore despite broadly supported plea to cut sentence to life

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina put Richard Moore to death by lethal injection Friday for the 1999 fatal shooting of a convenience store clerk, despite a broad appeal for mercy by parties that included three jurors and the judge from his trial, a former prison director, pastors and members of his family.

Moore, 59, was pronounced dead at 6:24 p.m.

Moore was convicted of killing James Mahoney, the Spartanburg clerk, in September 1999 and sentenced to death two years later. Moore went into the store unarmed, took a gun from the victim when it was pointed at him and fatally shot him in the chest as the victim shot him with a second gun in the arm.

Moore's lawyers asked Republican Gov. Henry McMaster to reduce his sentence to life in prison without parole because of his spotless prison record and willingness to be a mentor to other inmates. They also said it would be unjust to execute someone for what could be considered self-defense and unfair that Moore, who was Black, was the only inmate on the state's death row convicted by a jury without any African Americans.

But McMaster refused to grant clemency. In a letter, he did not give a reason why but said he reviewed all the items submitted by Moore's lawyers and spoke to the victim's family.

No South Carolina governor has reduced a death sentence, and 45 executions have now been carried out in the state since the U.S. Supreme Court allowed states to restart them nearly 50 years ago.

Unlike in previous executions, the curtain to the death chamber was open when media witnesses arrived. Moore's last words had already been read by Lindsey Vann, his lawyer of 10 years.

Moore had his eyes closed, and his head was pointed toward the ceiling. A prison employee announced the execution could begin at 6:01 p.m. Moore took several deep breaths that sounded like snores over

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 54 of 85

the next minute. Then he took some shallow breaths until about 6:04, when his breathing stopped. Moore showed no obvious signs of discomfort.

Vann cried as the employee announced the execution could start. She clutched a prayer bracelet with a cross. Sitting beside her was a spiritual advisor, his hands on his knees, palms up.

Two members of the victims' family were also present, along with Solicitor Barry Barnette, who was on the prosecution team that convicted Moore. They all watched stoically.

Afterward prison spokeswoman Chrysti Shain read his last words at a news conference.

"To the family of Mr. James Mahoney, I am deeply sorry for the pain and sorrow I caused you all," he said. "To my children and granddaughters, I love you and am so proud of you. Thank you for the joy you have brought to my life. To all of my family and friends, new and old, thank you for your love and support."

His final meal was steak cooked medium, fried catfish and shrimp, scalloped potatoes, green peas, broccoli with cheese, sweet potato pie, German chocolate cake and grape juice.

Three jurors who condemned Moore to death in 2001, including one who wrote Friday, sent letters asking McMaster to change his sentence to life without parole. They were joined by a former state prison director, Moore's trial judge, his son and daughter, a half-dozen childhood friends and several pastors.

They all said Moore, 59, was a changed man who loved God, doted on his new grandchildren the best he could, helped guards keep the peace and mentored other prisoners after his addiction to drugs clouded his judgment and led to the shootout in which Mahoney was killed, according to the clemency petition.

"He was not a danger to anyone, and the state eliminated a glowing example of reform and rehabilitation," the Justice 360 law firm, which represented Moore, said in a statement. "By killing Richard, the State also created more victims. Richard's children are now fatherless, and his grandchildren will have to grow up without their 'Pa Pa.'"

Moore previously had two execution dates postponed as the state sorted through issues that created a 13-year pause in the death penalty, including companies' refusal to sell the state lethal injection drugs, a hurdle that was solved by passing a secrecy law.

Moore is the second inmate executed in South Carolina since it resumed executions. Four more are out of appeals, and the state appears ready to put them to death in five-week intervals through the spring. There are now 30 people on death row.

The governor said before the execution that he would carefully review everything sent by Moore's lawyers and, as is customary, wait until minutes before the execution started to announce his decision after hearing that all appeals were finished.

"Clemency is a matter of grace, a matter of mercy. There is no standard. There is no real law on it," McMaster told reporters Thursday.

Prosecutors and Mahoney's relatives have not spoken publicly in the weeks leading up to the execution and did not speak after. In the past, family members have said they suffered deeply and wanted justice to be served.

Moore's lawyers said his original attorneys did not analyze the crime scene carefully and left unchallenged prosecutors' contention that Moore, who came into the store unarmed, fired at a customer and that his intention from the start was a robbery.

According to their account, the clerk pulled a gun on Moore after the two argued because he was 12 cents short for what he wanted to buy.

Moore said he wrestled the gun from Mahoney's hand and the clerk pulled a second weapon. Moore was shot in the arm and fired back, hitting Mahoney in the chest. Moore then went behind the counter and stole about \$1,400.

No one else on South Carolina's death row started their crime unarmed and with no intention to kill, Moore's current attorneys say.

Jon Ozmint, a former prosecutor who was director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections from 2003 to 2011 and who added his voice to those seeking clemency, said Moore's case was not the worst-of-the-worst kind of crime that would usually prompt a death penalty case.

There are plenty of people who were not sentenced to death but committed much more heinous crimes,

Ozmint said, citing the example of Todd Kohlhepp, who was given a life sentence after pleading guilty to killing seven people including a woman he raped and tortured for days.

Lawyers for Moore, who is Black, also said his trial was not fair. There were no African Americans on the jury even though 20% of Spartanburg County residents were Black.

"This execution underscores the flaws in South Carolina's death penalty system. Who is executed versus who is allowed to live out their lives in prison appears to be based on no more than chance, race, or status. It is intolerable that our state metes out the ultimate punishment in such a haphazard way," Justice 360 said.

Israel pummels Lebanon and Gaza, killing dozens in fresh waves of airstrikes

By SALLY ABOU ALJOUD and WAFAA SHURAFI Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel launched dozens of intense airstrikes across Lebanon's northeastern farming villages on Friday, killing at least 52 people and wounding scores more, the Lebanese Health Ministry reported.

In central Gaza, Palestinians recovered the bodies of 25 people killed in a barrage of Israeli aerial attacks that began Thursday, hospital officials said.

The latest violence comes against the backdrop of a renewed diplomatic push by United States President Joe Biden's administration, days before the presidential election, to reach temporary cease-fire deals.

Israel's emergency services said seven people were injured before dawn Saturday in attack in the central town of Tira. Three projectiles crossed into Israel from Lebanon, Israel's military said, and some were intercepted.

The Magen David Adom service said two of those injured were in moderate condition from the attack, and the others had milder injuries. A photo the service released showed damage to what appeared to be an apartment building.

Israel has stepped up its offensive against Hamas' remaining fighters in Gaza, pulverizing areas in the north and raising fears of worsening humanitarian conditions for civilians still there.

In Lebanon, Israel has broadened its strikes in recent weeks to bigger urban hubs, like the town of Baalbek, home to 80,000 people, after initially targeting smaller border villages in the south, where Hezbollah conducts operations.

Iran-backed Hezbollah doubles as a major political party and provider of social services in Lebanon.

Hezbollah began firing rockets, drones and missiles from Lebanon into Israel in solidarity with Hamas immediately after the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which triggered the war in Gaza. The yearlong cross-border fighting boiled over to full-blown war on Oct. 1, when Israeli forces launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon for the first time since 2006.

In Lebanon's Bekaa Valley — where small villages, olive groves and wineries nestled between the country's mountain ranges had largely been spared the worst of Israeli bombardment until recently — Israel conducted a series of heavy airstrikes Friday, killing at least 52 people, driving more families to flee with whatever they could carry and sending thick plumes of smoke over the horizon.

Intensified Israeli airstrikes on and around the northeastern city of Baalbek after Israel issued evacuation warnings have prompted 60,000 people to flee, emptying nearby villages, said Hussein Haj Hassan, a Lebanese lawmaker representing the region.

In Lebanon, rescuers searched for survivors after airstrikes killed nine people and brought down a building that had housed 20 people in the town of Younine. Further Israeli strikes killed 12 people in the town of Amhaz and 31 others across at least a dozen villages in Lebanon's northeast, bringing the total death toll to 52, the Health Ministry said. The bombardment left 72 people wounded, the ministry added.

There was no immediate comment from Israel on the deadly strikes.

In Lebanon's capital, Israeli planes pounded the southern suburb of Dahiyeh overnight and early Friday for the first time in four days, spreading panic after a rare lull. The Israeli military, which warned residents to evacuate at least nine locations in Dahiyeh, said it hit Hezbollah weapons manufacturing sites and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 56 of 85

command centers.

There were no reports of casualties from Dahiyeh, where fears of Israeli bombings drive a mass outflow of residents each night.

Bulldozers rumbled through clouds of dust and smoke Friday, clearing rubble from the pulverized roads where Israeli warplanes had reduced dozens of buildings to their skeletal remains.

Formerly home to families and businesses, mid-rise apartment blocks were left open to the breeze, walls blown off and furniture buried. Hezbollah supporters in several locations raised the group's bright yellow banner atop the rubble.

Since the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupted in 2023, more than 2,897 people have been killed and 13,150 wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reports, not including Friday's rising toll. Health authorities say that a quarter of those killed were women and children.

Overall, United Nations agencies estimate that Israel's ground invasion and bombardment of Lebanon has displaced 1.4 million people. Residents of Israel's northern communities near Lebanon, roughly 60,000 people, have also been displaced for more than a year.

Hezbollah has kept up firing rockets into northern Israel, with projectiles launched from Lebanon on Thursday crashing into agricultural areas and killing seven people, including four Thai farm workers.

Israel also pressed on with its bombardment of Gaza on Friday, where a barrage of airstrikes hit central Gaza's Nuseirat refugee camp and killed at least 21 Palestinians — including an 18-month-old and his 10-year-old sister — according to health officials at the nearby Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

Israeli strikes also hit a motorcycle in Zuwaida and a house in Deir al-Balah, killing four more people, hospital officials said, bringing Friday's overall death toll in Gaza to 25.

Israel said it targeted Hamas infrastructure and a militant operating near the Nuseirat refugee camp, but did not comment on the strikes outside the camp. It said it was aware of reports of civilian casualties and was investigating. In a separate announcement, the army said an airstrike on a vehicle in Gaza's southern town of Khan Younis killed a senior member of the Hamas political bureau, Izz al-Din Kassab, and his assistant, Ayman Ayesh.

Hamas confirmed the death of Kassab, who was not well known to the public. Israel alleged he was a coordinator between militant groups in Gaza.

As American diplomats left the region after a flurry of meetings with Israeli officials, there were no signs of a breakthrough on a cease-fire in either Lebanon or Gaza.

On Friday, Hamas doubled down on its longstanding demands for a permanent cease-fire and complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, saying Israel offered only a temporary pause in the war and an increase in aid shipments in the latest negotiations. There was no immediate comment from Israel.

"The proposals do not meet the comprehensive needs of the Palestinian people in terms of security, stability, relief, and reconstruction," said senior Hamas official Bassem Naem, speaking first to the Hamas-run Al Aqsa TV before confirming the group's position to The Associated Press.

Israel's blistering war in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians since Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas militants killed roughly 1,200 people in Israel and took some 250 hostages back to Gaza.

Health officials inside Hamas-run Gaza do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of the dead in the enclave are women and children.

Israeli forces have recently shifted their attention to Hamas militants who they say have regrouped in northern Gaza, renewing an offensive that has trapped tens of thousands of people under intense bombardment without enough food or water.

Israeli airstrikes have repeatedly hindered an emergency polio vaccination campaign, which the World Health Organization announced it planned to finally resume on Saturday — but only in Gaza City. Towns further north, like Jabaliya, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, remain inaccessible as Israel tightens its siege.

The U.N. and other humanitarian organizations warned Friday that "the situation unfolding in north Gaza is apocalyptic," citing Israel's denial of humanitarian aid to the area, military raids on hospitals, airstrikes on shelters and obstruction of Palestinian rescue teams who struggle to help survivors after Israeli attacks.

Mud-caked volunteers clean flood debris in a Spanish town as authorities struggle to respond

By JOSEPH WILSON and TERESA MEDRANO Associated Press

CHIVA, Spain. (AP) — Mud cakes her boots, splatters her leggings and the gloves holding her broom. Brown specks freckle her cheeks.

The mire covering Alicia Montero is the signature uniform of the impromptu army of volunteers who, for a third day Friday, shoveled and swept out the muck and debris that filled the small town of Chiva in Valencia after flash floods swept through the region. Spain's deadliest natural disaster in living memory has left at least 205 people dead with untold numbers still missing, and countless lives in tatters.

As police and emergency workers continue the grim search for bodies, authorities appear overwhelmed by the enormity of the disaster, and survivors are relying on the esprit de corps of volunteers who have rushed in to fill the void.

While hundreds of people in cars and on foot have been streaming in from Valencia city to the suburbs to help, Montero and her friends are locals of Chiva, where at least seven people died when Tuesday's storm unleashed its fury.

"I never thought this could happen. It moves me to see my town in this shape," Montero tells The Associated Press. "We have always had autumn storms, but nothing like this."

She says she barely avoided the floods when she was driving home Tuesday, and that if she had got on the road five minutes later she believes she would have been swept away like dozens of cars still stranded on the highway that crosses a flood plain between her town and the city of Valencia, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) to the east.

Tractors roar through Chiva's narrow streets, only briefly stopping or slowing to allow people to toss broken doors, shattered furniture and other debris into the beds before churning their way up, away from the epicenter of the destruction.

Residents and volunteers meanwhile shovel and sweep out the layers of mud that coat the floors of the ruined shops and homes, the air abuzz with frenetic energy. People carry buckets of water from a large ornamental pool in a town square to wash away the mire. Three young boys take a break to kick a soccer ball around on the slippery street.

Newcomers are easy to spot because they are clean, but a few steps down Chiva's slippery cobblestones and they are quickly marked with mud.

"How many hours have we been at it? Who knows?" Montero says, while taking a breather from cleaning near a gorge that was filled with a crushing wall of water just days earlier.

"We work, stop to eat a sandwich they give us, and keep on working."

Death by mud

"As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth," is Charles Dickens' description of 19th century London in his novel "Bleak House."

In Chiva and other parts of Valencia — Paiporta, Masanasa, Barrio de la Torre, Alfafar — mud has become synonymous with death and destruction. The mire flowed into houses and crawled into cars, smashing some vehicles apart and easily lifting and moving others.

The storm this week unleashed more rain on Chiva in eight hours than the town had experienced in the preceding 20 months. The deluge powered a flood that knocked down two of the four bridges in the town, and made a third unsafe to cross. The waters have now receded and the Civil Guard divers are gone, but police keep searching the gorge, smashed homes and underground garages, concerned that the mud could be hiding more bodies.

"Entire houses have disappeared. We don't know if there were people inside or not," Mayor Amparo Fort told RNE radio.

Citizens fill the void left by authorities

There are so many people coming to help the hardest-hit areas that the authorities have asked them not to drive or walk there, because they are blocking the roads needed by the emergency services.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 58 of 85

"It is very important that you return home," said regional President Carlos Mazón, who thanked the volunteers for their goodwill. The regional government has asked volunteers to gather at a large cultural center in the city Saturday morning to organize work crews and transport.

Electricity was at last restored for Chiva's 20,000 residents on Thursday night, and there is still no running water. Local governments have been distributing water, food and basic necessities in towns across Valencia affected by the flash floods, and the Red Cross is using its vast network of aid to help those affected.

In Chiva, the Civil Guard police officers have been searching collapsed houses and the gorge for bodies, and directing traffic. Firefighters are helping ensure buildings were safe. Some 500 soldiers have been deployed in the Valencia region to deliver water and essential goods to those in need, and more are on the way.

But so far no military units are in Chiva, where the wave of solidarity among average citizens underscores the dearth of official help. The vibe is one of townsfolk just getting on with it.

A man weeps inside the Astoria Cinema, which has been transformed into a supply depot. The theater is filled with piles of water bottles and fruit. People make sandwiches. One group of young men arrive and drop off bottled water before picking up shovels and brooms and joining the fray.

Just across a square at the town hall, a sign says everyone is allowed to take two bottles of water a day. Volunteers hand out baguette sandwiches.

Cleaning out the bakery that has been in her family for five generations, María Teresa Sánchez hopes it can survive, but she is not sure if her 100-year-old oven can be salvaged.

"Chiva will take a long time to recover from this," she said. "But it is true that we have not felt alone. We are helping each other. And at the end that is really what we embrace, that spirit of being a town that is isolated and nobody has come to help, yet see how we are all out in the street? That is the shining light to this story."

Top House Republicans seeking documents regarding Biden's 'garbage' comment

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top House Republicans called on the White House to produce all documents and internal communications regarding President Joe Biden's statement earlier this week in which he appeared to take a swipe at supporters of Donald Trump.

White House press officials altered the official transcript of Biden's statement, drawing objections from the federal workers who document such remarks for posterity, according to two U.S. government officials and an internal email obtained Thursday by The Associated Press.

The lawmakers said they question whether the decision to create "a false transcript and manipulate or alter the accurate transcript" produced for the National Archives and Records Administration was a violation of federal law.

Rep. James Comer, the Republican chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, and House Republican Conference Chairwoman Elise Stefanik demanded the White House produce the records. They're also calling for the White House to make available for a briefing the top supervisor of the White House Stenography's Office.

"The White House cannot simply rewrite President Biden's rhetoric," Comer and Stefanik wrote. "...We are concerned with the latest reporting of the White House's apparent political decision to protect the Biden-Harris Administration, instead of following longstanding and proper protocols."

Biden created an uproar earlier this week with his remarks to Latino activists responding to racist comments at a Trump rally made by the comedian Tony Hinchcliffe, who referred to the U.S. island territory of Puerto Rico as a "floating island of garbage."

Biden, according to a transcript prepared by the official White House stenographers, told the Latino group on a Tuesday evening video call, "The only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters — his — his demonization of Latinos is unconscionable, and it's un-American."

The transcript released by the White House press office, however, rendered the quote with an apostrophe,

reading "supporter's" rather than "supporters," which aides said pointed to Biden criticizing Hinchcliffe, not the millions of Americans who are supporting Trump for president.

Prosecutor says veteran's subway chokehold went 'too far.' **Defense says his 'courage' helped others**

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Prosecutors and defense lawyers agree on this about Marine veteran Daniel Penny's encounter last year with a distressed, angry man making ominous remarks on a New York subway: Penny didn't mean to kill him.

But a prosecutor told jurors Friday that Penny "went way too far" in trying to neutralize someone he saw as a threat and not as a person. A defense attorney countered that Penny showed "courage" and put others' welfare ahead of his own when he placed Jordan Neely in a chokehold that ended with Neely limp on the floor.

Both sides gave opening statements Friday in a manslaughter trial that has rattled fault lines surrounding race, homelessness, perceptions of public safety and bystanders' responsibility.

Penny's critics see him as a white vigilante killer of a Black man who was behaving erratically and making dire statements but wasn't armed and hadn't assaulted or even touched anyone in the subway car. Supporters credit the 25-year-old Penny with taking action to protect frightened riders — action that he has said was meant to defuse, not kill.

Prosecutor Dafna Yoran told the anonymous jury that the trial isn't "a referendum on our society's failure to deal with mental illness and homelessness on the subway" or on police response. Nor is the case about whether Penny had a right to intervene or about his decision to try a chokehold, she said.

Rather, she said, "He used far too much force for far too long. He went way too far."

She said he showed "indifference" toward Neely and "didn't recognize his humanity."

Not so, said defense lawyer Thomas Kenniff. He told jurors that Penny applied only as much force as needed to contain a "seething, psychotic" man who had lunged toward a woman with a small child and declared, "I will kill."

"In that moment, Danny could look away and pray, or he could summon the courage to put the safety of his neighbors above that of himself, to protect those who could not protect themselves," and he did the latter, Kenniff said.

"It doesn't make him a hero. But it doesn't make him a killer."

Jurors, who were quizzed earlier about their subway experiences, later saw police body camera video of officers performing some lifesaving techniques on Neely after Penny calmly explained he had "put him out," describing Neely as a "crackhead" who was "going crazy."

The case has been absorbed into the United States' fractious politics, with Republican officials speaking up for Penny and Democratic ones attending Neely's funeral. Both supporters and critics of Penny have held demonstrations; Penny arrived at the courthouse Friday to critical chants from a small group of protesters.

Once in court, Penny sat straight up in his seat at the defense table, mostly looking directly ahead. A member of Neely's family who was in the audience sometimes sniffled with tears.

"We know who the victim is in this case, and we know who the villain is," family lawyer Donte Mills said outside court.

Neely's life was tattered by mental illness and drug use after his mother was murdered and stuffed in a suitcase when he was a teen, his family has said. By 30, he sometimes entertained subway riders as a Michael Jackson impersonator, but he also had a criminal record that included assaulting a woman at a subway station.

Penny, an architecture student who served four years in the Marines, was going from class to a gym when he encountered Neely on a subway May 1, 2023.

Neely was begging for money, shouting about being willing to die or go to jail, and making sudden movements, according to witnesses. Yoran said Neely talked about hurting people.

Penny put his arm around the man's neck, took him to the floor and held Neely there, with Penny's legs around him.

With bystanders recording some of the encounter on video, Penny held Neely for about six minutes, Yoran said. The hold continued as the train stopped at a station, all but two fellow riders got off, those two helped restrain Neely, and another warned Penny to let Neely go or he'd die, according to Yoran's statement and court papers.

Kenniff said Penny pleaded with fellow passengers to call police and that he kept holding Neely because the man periodically flailed or tried to get up.

Penny ultimately released Neely nearly a minute after his body went limp, prosecutors said. He waited for police, but Yoran noted that despite being trained in first aid, Penny didn't check Neely's breathing or pulse or try to revive him.

Officers arrived about seven minutes after 911 calls started coming in, their description as varied as harassment and a gun-toting man.

Over about four minutes, officers talked to Penny, searched Neely — finding nothing but a muffin in his pockets — and determined he had a faint pulse but wasn't breathing. Then they did chest compressions and administered an overdose-reversal drug but didn't attempt mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Asked why, Sgt. Carl Johnson testified Friday that Neely was "very dirty," and the sergeant feared the man might have a disease or wake up and vomit.

"The motto is 'serve and protect,' right?" Kenniff said. He asked whether Johnson would have ordered rescue breaths if the officers had a protective mask.

"No," Johnson replied, adding: "There's a certain line where you have to protect your officers."

Neely's pulse soon faded away.

Penny told police that he had simply wanted to "de-escalate" the edgy situation and wasn't trying to injure Neely but rather "to keep him from hurting anyone else."

City medical examiners determined Neely died from compression of the neck. Penny's lawyers question that finding.

Georgia officials agree to spend \$100 million on Hurricane Helene aid for farms and forestry

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's state government is diverting \$100 million to spend on loans to farmers and cleanup after Hurricane Helene.

The Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission voted unanimously Friday to spend the money, which had been set aside for construction projects or paying off existing debt.

Officials last month estimated that the storm, which caused extensive damage in the eastern half of the state after a Sept. 26 landfall in Florida, caused \$6.46 billion in economic losses in the state's agriculture and forestry industries.

Cotton, pecan and chicken farmers took severe losses, as did owners of private timberlands. Lt. Gov. Burt Jones and others have called the damage a "generational loss."

The Georgia Development Authority, a state agency that lends money to farmers, will get \$75 million to provide disaster relief loans to farmers and associated businesses in the agricultural industry. The other \$25 million will be spent to clean up timber losses and other debris, said Garrison Douglas, a spokesperson for Gov. Brian Kemp.

Because Georgia has been flush with surplus cash, it has been paying for construction projects using cash, instead of the traditional method of selling bonds to borrow money. The \$100 million was being held for future spending, but it hadn't been allotted to any project that is already underway, Douglas said.

Because Georgia ended last year with a \$2 billion surplus, lawmakers may be able to replace the \$100 million when they amend the current budget during the 2025 legislative session that begins in January.

The state did not spend similar money after 2018's Hurricane Michael. Helene's damage to agriculture

has been estimated as more than twice as costly as Michael. The earlier storm was followed by a federal fight over aid that delayed help to farmers. Georgia itself spent more than \$470 million on loans and recovery after Michael.

"This is something we learned we could do," Douglas said of the \$100 million. Kemp and other state leaders say they will consider additional relief both when the General Assembly meets in January, as well as through administrative measures before then.

"We'll continue to work with stakeholders on all levels to direct resources and support to the hardworking Georgians devastated by this storm," Kemp said in a statement Friday.

Kemp, Georgia state House Speaker Jon Burns and others have been urging Congress to act quickly on a relief package for Hurricanes Helene and Milton. They are asking Congress to give block grants to states that the states can then give to farmers for recovery purposes. Burns is urging similar block grants that states could spend to repair damaged infrastructure and help private businesses and citizens.

"This measure will provide necessary financial relief to farmers and foresters as we continue to work alongside our federal partners to secure every available asset and resource for the Georgians impacted by this disaster," Burns said in a statement.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said Thursday that it has already spent \$1.3 billion on direct aid to people following Helene and Hurricane Milton. FEMA has spend more than \$1.1 billion on debris removal and emergency protective measures.

Georgia's government itself can't give direct aid to people and private businesses because its state constitution bans what it calls gratuities — what most people would call gifts. Georgia Agribusiness Council President Will Bentley told a state Senate committee on Monday that a constitutional amendment is needed to allow direct disaster aid.

Besides Kemp, Burns and Jones, other commission members who voted for the spending included state Auditor Greg Griffin, Attorney General Chris Carr, Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper and state Treasurer Steve McCoy.

The Georgia Development Authority is scheduled to meet Monday in Macon to begin spending the \$100 million.

Musk tests the role of money in U.S. politics with multimillion-dollar effort to back Trump

By BRIAN SLODYSKO, THOMAS BEAUMONT and TOM KRISHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Next week's presidential election isn't just a referendum on Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. It's also a measure of the influence the world's richest man wields over American democracy.

Elon Musk, the South African-born tech and business titan, has spent at least \$119 million mobilizing Trump's supporters to back the Republican nominee. His social media platform, X, has become a firehose of pro-Trump propaganda. And he's playing a starring role in Trump-style rallies in critical battleground states.

All the while, he's coming under growing scrutiny. He skipped a hearing on Thursday in a lawsuit over his effort to dole out millions of dollars to registered voters, a giveaway legal experts liken to vote buying. He's being investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission. And The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Musk regularly communicates with Russian President Vladimir Putin, a potential national security risk because SpaceX, his aerospace company, holds billions of dollars worth of contracts with NASA and the Department of Defense.

Musk is hardly the only person whose megawealth places him at the nexus of politics, business and foreign policy. But few are working so publicly for a single candidate as Musk, whose expansive business ties and growing bravado pose a vexing test of one unelected person's political power. His stature is perhaps one of the most tangible consequence of the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision, which eliminated many limits on political giving.

"This is definitely an election brought to you by Citizens United," said Daniel I. Weiner, the director of elections and government at the Brennan Center for Justice, who added that the phenomenon was big-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 62 of 85

ger that just Musk. "What this is really about is a transformation of our campaign finance system to one in which the wealthiest donors are playing a central role."

Musk did not respond to a request for comment made through his attorney. Tesla, his electric car company, and X did not respond to inquiries. SpaceX disputed parts of The Journal's reporting in a statement and said it continues to work in "close partnership with the U.S. Government."

Musk's recent conversion to 'Dark MAGA'

Musk's conversion to a self-described "Dark MAGA" Trump warrior is a recent one. In the past, he donated modest sums to both Republicans and Democrats, including \$5,000 to Hillary Clinton in 2016, records show. He didn't contribute to Trump's political efforts until this year, according to federal campaign finance disclosures.

He was all in once he did.

Musk is now leading America PAC, a super political action committee that is spearheading Trump's get-out-the-vote effort. As a newcomer to politics, there have been growing pains.

Over the summer, America PAC struggled to reach its voter contact goals. Musk brought in a new team of political consultants, Generra Peck and Phil Cox, who worked on Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' losing Republican presidential primary bid.

On paper, the numbers have improved. But Republican officials, operatives and activists say in some critical places it's been difficult to tell how active the PAC's ground effort has been.

The PAC's presence is not perceptible in rural Georgia, according to three Republican strategists who are closely monitoring the ground game in the battleground state. For example, America PAC has shown little evidence of leaving literature behind on doorsteps, as is common when a voter is not home, especially in remote places, the three people said.

There are also indicators Musk, a tech innovator, has been taken advantage of at his own game. In Nevada, three other people familiar with America PAC's efforts said hired canvassers paid tech-savvy operatives to digitally manipulate an app used to track their progress — appearing to falsify their data so they could get paid for work that they did not do. Canvassers are typically paid by the number of doors that they knock on.

There are signs the practice wasn't limited to Nevada. One person warned America PAC leadership weeks ago that canvassing data from multiple states showed signs that it had been falsified, but their concerns were not acted on, according to two people with knowledge of the matter.

The individuals, like others who provided details about Musk's political operation, insisted on anonymity to discuss the matter out of fear of retribution.

Musk has become frustrated with his PAC

Musk has become frustrated with the inner workings of his political organization and has brought in private sector associates, including Steve Davis, president of the Boring company, Musk's tunnel building company, according to three people with knowledge of the move. Davis' role with America PAC was first reported by The New York Times.

A person close to the PAC disputed that the group had been taken advantage of, suggesting it was a conspiracy theory based on a poor understanding of how political canvassing works. The person insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the innerworkings of the PAC.

Musk has more riding on the election than just bragging rights.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the main agency that regulates Tesla, has repeatedly proved to be a thorn for the electric car maker run by Musk, which is the primary source of his wealth. The agency is overseeing more than a dozen recalls, some that Tesla resisted. It has also opened investigations that have raised doubts about Musk's claims that Tesla is close to deploying self-driving vehicles, a key expectation of shareholders and a major driver of Tesla's lofty share price.

Earlier this year Tesla disclosed that the Department of Justice and the SEC have requested and subpoenaed information about "Full Self-Driving" capability, vehicle functionality, data privacy and other matters.

The social media platform X is another Musk company that has drawn interest of the Biden administration. The Federal Trade Commission has probed Musk's handling of sensitive consumer data after he

took control of the company in 2022, but has not brought enforcement action. The SEC has an ongoing investigation of Musk's purchase of the social media company.

Many of these troubles, which Musk blames President Joe Biden and Democrats for, could go away if Trump is elected. The former president has mused that Musk could have a formal role in a future Trump administration that focuses on government efficiency — an enormous conflict of interest given Musk's companies vast dealings with the government.

Harris team warns CEOs that Trump is a threat to economy, while Trump says tariffs can drive growth

By JOSH BOAK and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris' campaign is actively warning business leaders that Donald Trump has a pattern of disregard for democracy and the rule of law that would threaten U.S. economic growth — a closing argument designed to show the possible consequences for companies and workers if he returns to the White House.

It's a position that Trump's team rejects as they tell voters that prices will be lower and growth stronger than ever before if he wins Tuesday's election. As a billionaire who made his name in real estate, the former president has argued for higher tariffs to bring more factories into the United States and tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations on the premise that will lead to more investment.

The rival positions get at a fundamental distinction between the two candidates on how to guide the world's largest economy: Harris' team is arguing that the rule of law creates the certainty that can make markets and workers thrive, while Trump is arguing that tariff increases and tax cuts are the keys for growth.

Gene Sperling, who has guided three Democratic presidents on economic policy and is now advising the Harris campaign, has made what he describes as a "common sense" case to financiers and others about the dangers of a second Trump administration.

"A president who targets people, targets CEOs, targets companies, targets journalists and targets opposition could have a devastating impact on the investment confidence that has been robust for the past four years but also part of America's strength since its founding," said Sperling.

But the billionaire hedge fund investor John Paulson, a Trump supporter who sees himself as a possible treasury secretary, pushes back against the Harris campaign's criticisms by saying the world was more stable under Trump and inflation was lower.

"It's completely false," he said of Sperling's argument about the rule of law being at risk. "When people make these claims, they're totally spurious. They're not grounded in reality. Trump is a brilliant businessman. He wants to bring down wasteful spending and encourage growth."

Trump has derided his opponent's handling of the economy as "stupid" and claimed the stock market will crash if he loses the election, although the S&P 500 index of stocks has increased roughly 50% during President Joe Biden's term.

"We will give our companies the lowest taxes, the lowest energy cost, the lowest regulatory burdens, and free access to the best and biggest market on the planet," Trump said at a rally Tuesday in Allentown, Pennsylvania. "The problem is, if we had more of these idiots running our country, you won't have a big and best market anymore because we're a nation in decline."

The Harris team's push involves connecting the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol with Trump's history of using the bully pulpit to attack the Federal Reserve as well as companies such as Amazon, Merck, Comcast, John Deere and Toyota. Their argument is that companies are less likely to make long-term investments if democratic values are under attack and election results denied.

In addition to Sperling, corporate executives have been hearing from Robert Rubin, the former treasury secretary; Kenneth Chenault, the former CEO of American Express; and Brian Deese, the former National Economic Council director for Biden.

One person familiar with the conversations said that the representatives of the Harris campaign are

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 64 of 85

not having to push hard on this issue. Seemingly apolitical CEOs are privately raising this issue as their central concern about a Trump presidency, with the person insisting on anonymity to describe the private conversations with business leaders who want to stay out of the electoral spotlight.

But Vanessa Williamson, a senior fellow in governance at the Brookings Institution, said that the Harris campaign has somewhat underplayed the risks given the possible hazards.

"By and large, Americans have been able to take the basic rule of law for granted," Williamson said. "The kind of rampant cronyism and fraud that is endemic in some other countries has really been unimaginable here — and that's a great thing, of course. But it also makes it difficult for people to conceive of just how important government is for the functioning of markets."

Both campaigns are vying for support from the business community. Trump has the backing of billionaire Elon Musk, the owner of Tesla, SpaceX and X, the social media platform previously known as Twitter. Billionaires such as Microsoft founder Bill Gates and billionaire entrepreneur Mark Cuban are backing Harris.

Many of the disputes have centered on policy differences. Trump has said that the higher corporate tax rates favored by Harris would deter investment, while the Harris team has attacked his plans to remove Biden-era incentives for building computer chip, electric vehicle and other advanced factories as costing the country factory jobs.

But the argument about the importance of democratic values picked up credibility in October after the Nobel memorial prize in economics was awarded to three economists, Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson, who showed that social institutions and the rule of law are critical for economic growth.

Acemoglu was among the 23 Nobel prize-winning economists who signed a letter saying Trump's economic plans would "lead to higher prices, larger deficits, and greater inequality."

The letter said: "Among the most important determinants of economic success are the rule of law and economic and political certainty, and Trump threatens all of these."

The topic has long fascinated Harris, a former California attorney general. Two people working in the White House recalled that in 2022, Harris asked for economic research to back her own understanding that the erosion of democratic standards would harm growth. Those people insisted on anonymity to discuss the request.

Similarly, Biden was the nominee, White House chief of staff Jeff Zients made the case to the CEOs in the Business Roundtable that a Trump return to the presidency would generate uncertainty that would hinder growth. It was a pitch that contrasted with Trump floating additional tax cuts to the group.

Neither the Business Roundtable nor the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have made endorsements in November's presidential election. The Business Roundtable has made keeping corporate tax rates at their current 21% rate its top legislative priority. Trump has pledged further cuts to the corporate rate for U.S. manufacturers, whereas Harris would like to raise it to 28%, an increase though still lower than the 35% rate in place until 2017.

The Chamber, meanwhile, has emphasized its willingness to advocate for its corporate members with whichever administration would be in power.

Business Roundtable CEO Josh Bolten said in a statement this month that the organization supported the peaceful transfer of power. So far, Trump has declined to commit to the peaceful transfer of power, after having falsely claimed that his 2020 loss was the result of a rigged election, a claim that helped encourage the 2021 insurrection.

"It can take time to finalize election results, and we urge all Americans to respect the processes set out in federal and state laws for electoral determinations and an orderly transition," Bolten said.

Rapper Young Thug is a free man. Here are things to know about his plea.

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Rapper Young Thug is a free man after pleading guilty to gang, drug and gun charges. About 2 ½ years after he was arrested on the charges in a sprawling gang and racketeering indictment, Young Thug was released from custody Thursday evening. It was a remarkable development in a trial that's dragged on and been plagued by problems.

Jury selection at the Fulton County courthouse in Atlanta began in January 2023 and took nearly 10 months. Prosecutors had called dozens of witnesses since opening statements last November in the trial of six defendants.

Here are some things to know about the plea:

Who is Young Thug?

An Atlanta-based artist whose given name is Jeffery Lamar Williams, Young Thug is known for his eccentric style, mumble rap and squeaky, high-pitched vocals. He shot to popularity with breakout hits including "Stoner" and "Best Friend" and co-wrote the hit "This is America" with Childish Gambino, which became the first hip-hop track to win the song of the year Grammy in 2019.

Young Thug has collaborated with other top artists including Drake, Chris Brown, T.I. and Travis Scott. Elton John called working with Young Thug an "amazing moment" after recording the song "Always Love You" featuring Nicki Minaj and Gunna.

He broke with the hyper-masculine norms of the hip-hop scene, wearing a dress on the cover of his 2016 mixtape "Jeffery" and saying there's no such thing as gender as part of a Calvin Klein campaign.

Young Thug, 33, grew up in a suburban Atlanta housing project that was marred by crime and violence. What was he accused of?

He was originally indicted and arrested May, 9, 2022, and more charges were added in a subsequent indictment that August. The second indictment accused Young Thug and 27 others of conspiring to violate Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as RICO. The rapper was also accused of participation in criminal street gang activity, as well as drug and gun charges.

Prosecutors alleged that Young Thug and two other people co-founded a violent criminal street gang in 2012 called Young Slime Life, or YSL, which they say is associated with the national Bloods gang. The indictment says Young Thug "made YSL a well-known name by referring to it in his songs and on social media."

Prosecutors painted him as a gang leader known as King Slime, someone who calls the shots and directs others to engage in criminal activity.

How did the plea come about?

Prosecutors had been negotiating with Young Thug's lawyers to try to reach a deal that would end his participation in the long-running trial. But those efforts stalled when the two sides disagreed on conditions.

Speaking to reporters after the sentencing, Young Thug attorney Brian Steel declined to discuss the negotiations. But he said prosecutors were pushing for "outrageous" conditions: "They would let him out of custody, but they would have a tether around him so tight that it's unconscionable."

Instead, the rapper went forward with a potentially risky non-negotiated or "blind" plea, meaning he was entering pleas without having a deal in place with prosecutors.

He pleaded guilty to one gang charge, three drug charges and two gun charges. He also entered a no contest plea to another gang charge and a racketeering conspiracy charge, meaning that he decided not to contest those charges but could be punished as if he had pleaded guilty.

Will he spend time in prison?

No — as long as he abides by the conditions of his sentence.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Paige Reese Whitaker gave him a total sentence of 40 years. The first five years were to be served in prison, but that was commuted to time served. Then he has 15 years on probation. Finally, a "backloaded" 20 years in prison will be commuted to time served if he complies

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 66 of 85

with all of the conditions of his probation. If he doesn't complete his probation successfully, he will have to serve those 20 years in prison.

Prosecutors wanted Young Thug sentenced to 45 years, with 25 years in prison and the remaining 20 on probation. The charges against him carried a potential maximum sentence of 120 years in prison, prosecutor Adriane Love said.

Steel had asked the judge for a 45-year sentence with five in prison commuted to time served and 40 years on probation.

What did he say to the judge before sentencing?

He apologized to his family, his managers, the courtroom deputies and "really everybody that got something to do with this situation" for the time his case ate up.

"I hope that you allow me to go home today and just trust in me to just do the right thing," he told the judge, promising her that he'd never be in this type of situation again.

"I've learned from my mistakes, you know. I come from nothing and I've made something and I didn't take full advantage of it. I'm sorry," he said.

He told her he understands his impact on people and said he also has tried to give back, putting millions of dollars back into his community.

What are the conditions of his sentence?

He must stay away from the metro Atlanta area — as defined by the census — for the first 10 years of his probation, except for weddings, funerals, graduations or a serious illness of an immediate family member. He can arrive 24 hours before the event and must leave within 48 hours after.

But he must also return to the Atlanta area four times during each year of his probation to make an anti-gang, anti-gun violence presentation at a grade school, middle school or high school, or at an organization like the Boys & Girls Club. Those visits can count toward the 100 hours of community service he must complete during each year of his probation.

He also cannot knowingly have contact with any member of a criminal street gang. The judge said that includes other people named in the indictment, with the exception of his brother and the rapper Gunna, with whom he has contractual obligations.

He cannot participate in criminal street gang activity or promote any gang, including through hand signs.

He also can't contact the victims in the case or their families, may not own a gun, must not use drugs other than those prescribed to him, must submit to random drug tests, and must allow searches of himself and his property and electronics.

What do prosecutors say about the sentence?

"The convictions in this case represent accountability for admitted members of YSL, a violent street gang," the office of Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis said in a statement Friday. The statement says prosecutors are committed to continuing to pursue charges against the remaining defendants.

What happened during the trial?

The trial has been long and was marred by problems.

Before the trial began, prosecutors and defense attorneys sparred over whether the defendants' rap lyrics should be allowed as evidence. Fulton County Superior Court Judge Ural Glanville, the original judge, allowed prosecutors to introduce certain lyrics as long as they could show that the lyrics were related to crimes that Young Thug and others were accused of committing. Defense attorneys had asked the judge to exclude them, arguing the lyrics are constitutionally protected speech and would be unfairly prejudicial.

Just weeks after prosecutors began presenting evidence, the trial had to be paused because one of Young Thug's codefendants was stabbed in jail.

In June, Steel told Glanville in open court that he had learned of a meeting in the judge's chambers between the judge, prosecutors and a prosecution witness. When Steel refused to tell him how he'd learned of the meeting, Glanville found him in contempt and ordered him to spend 10 weekends in jail. That sentence was paused while Steel appealed, and the Georgia Supreme Court recently overturned the contempt ruling.

Glanville was removed from the case the following month after defense attorneys sought his recusal, citing the meeting the judge held with prosecutors and a state witness. That caused another delay until Whitaker was appointed to take over.

Whitaker in September grew frustrated with Love, the lead prosecutor, saying the case was being presented in a "haphazard" way and that she couldn't tell "whether all of this is purposeful or this is just really poor lawyering."

What about the other defendants?

Three co-defendants had already pleaded guilty this week after reaching deals with prosecutors. That leaves just two other co-defendants on trial.

Nine people charged in the indictment, including Gunna, accepted plea deals before the trial began. Twelve others are to be tried separately. Prosecutors dropped charges against one defendant after he was convicted of murder in an unrelated case.

Deaths of 10 newborns shake millions' trust in Turkey's health care system

By SUZAN FRASER and ROBERT BADENDIECK Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — The mother thought her baby looked healthy when he was born 1.5 months early, but staff swiftly whisked him to the neonatal intensive care unit.

It was the last time Burcu Gokdeniz would see her baby alive. The doctor in charge told her that Umut Ali's heart stopped after his health deteriorated unexpectedly.

Seeing her son wrapped in a shroud 10 days after he was born was the "worst moment" of her life, the 32-year-old e-commerce specialist told The Associated Press.

Gokdeniz is among hundreds of parents who have come forward seeking an investigation into the deaths of their children or other loved ones since Turkish prosecutors accused 47 doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers and other medical workers of neglect or malpractice in the deaths of 10 newborns since last year.

Turkey guarantees all citizens health care through a system that includes both private and state institutions: The government reimburses private hospitals that treat eligible patients when the public system is overwhelmed.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party, in power since 2002, has promoted the expansion of private health care facilities to improve access in the country of 85 million people. The case of the newborn deaths has put for-profit health care for the country's most vulnerable — newborns — into the most horrifying light imaginable.

The medical workers say they made the best possible decisions while caring for the most delicate patients imaginable, and now face criminal penalties for unavoidable unwanted outcomes.

Shattered parents say they have lost trust in the system and the cases have prompted so much outrage that demonstrators staged protests in October outside hospitals where some of the deaths occurred, hurling stones at the buildings.

After the scandal emerged, at least 350 families petitioned prosecutors, the Health Ministry or the president's office seeking an investigation into the deaths of their loved ones, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

The prosecution's case

Prosecutors are demanding up to 583 years in prison for the main defendant, Dr. Firat Sari, who operated the neonatal intensive care units of several hospitals in Istanbul. Sari is charged with "establishing an organization with the aim of committing a crime," "defrauding public institutions," "forgery of official documents" and "homicide by negligence."

Prosecutors say that the evidence clearly shows medical fraud for profit, although they haven't said how much the defendants allegedly earned. An indictment issued this month accused the defendants of falsifying records, and placing patients in the neonatal care units of some private hospitals for prolonged and sometimes unnecessary treatments in facilities unprepared to treat them.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 68 of 85

The indictment and the testimonies of nurses who have come forward suggest that the newborns were sometimes transferred to hospitals that were understaffed and had outdated equipment or insufficient medicine.

The indictment and testimonies also claim that the defendants withheld treatment and gave false reports to parents in order to keep hospital stays long as possible and to embezzle the social security system out of more money. The indictment alleges that the long-term stays coupled with patient mistreatment resulted in babies' deaths.

The prosecutor's office included hundreds of pages of transcripts of audio recordings in the indictment but the recordings themselves were not made available to the public.

In one of the transcripts, a nurse and a doctor talk about how they mishandled the treatment of a baby and agree to fake the hospital record. The transcript describes the nurse as saying: "Let me write in the file the situation worsened, and the baby was intubated."

Suspect Hakan Dogukan Tasci — a male nurse — is described as accusing Sari of compromising patient care by leaving just him in charge at the hospital instead of having a doctor present in the intensive care unit.

Tasci is also described as accusing an ambulance driver, who is among the 47 who have been charged in the scandal, of transferring babies to some hospitals for "profit."

"He does not check whether the hospital is suitable for these newborn babies or not, he risks the lives of the babies and sends them to hospitals just to make money," the indictment quotes the male nurse as saying.

In an interview with the Turkish newspaper BirGun, Dr. Esin Koc, president of the Turkey Neonatology Association, said that the private hospitals in the indictment most likely had "insufficient staff."

"They made it seem like there were doctors who didn't exist," she told BirGun.

She said that her association conducted inspections of the neonatal intensive care units of private, state and university hospitals in about 40 hospitals in 2017 and while university and state hospitals were good, "there were problems in private hospitals at that time."

Years without a family, then a death

After years of fertility treatment, Ozan Eskici and his wife welcomed twins — a boy and a girl — to one of Sari's hospitals in 2019. Although the babies initially appeared to be healthy, both were admitted to intensive care. The girl was discharged after 11 days, but the boy died 24 days later.

During questioning by prosecutors, Sari denied accusations that the babies were not given the proper care, that the neonatal units were understaffed or that his employees were not appropriately qualified, according to a 1,400-page indictment.

He told prosecutors: "Everything is in accordance with procedures."

This week, a court in Istanbul approved the indictment and scheduled the trial date for Nov. 18 in a case that whose defendants are increasingly isolated.

Lawyer Ali Karaoglan said he and two other attorneys who represented Sari during the investigation have recently withdrawn from the case. And authorities have since revoked the licenses and closed nine of the 19 hospitals implicated in the scandal, including one owned by a former health minister.

The scandal has led main opposition party leader Ozgur Ozel to call for all hospitals involved to be seized by the state and nationalized. Erdogan said those responsible for the deaths would be severely punished but warned against placing all blame on the country's health care system.

"We will not allow our health care community to be battered because of a few rotten apples," Erdogan said, calling the alleged culprits "a gang of people devoid of humanity."

"This gang ... committed such despicable atrocities by exploiting the facilities provided by our state to ensure citizens with higher quality and more accessible, affordable healthcare," Erdogan said.

No more trust in the system

Gokdeniz, who gave birth in 2020, said she trusted Sari and accepted her son's death as natural until she watched the scandal unfold in TV news and on social media.

"It all started to fall into place like dominoes," she said.

Eskici, too, had placed complete trust in Sari, whose assurances he now views as cruel deceptions.

"The sentences he told me are in front of my eyes like it was yesterday," he said.

Sibel Kosal, who lost her baby daughter Zeynep at a private hospital in 2017, is also seeking answers. She says the scandal has shattered her trust in the health care system and left her in constant fear for her surviving children.

"They have ruined a dad and a mom," she said.

Kosal pleaded to the authorities to take immediate action.

"Don't let babies die, don't let mothers cry," she said. "We want a livable world, one where our children are safe."

Meet Decoy Ohtani, perhaps the most valuable pet of the World Series

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As Los Angeles Dodgers fans thronged to the World Series victory parade in Los Angeles on Friday, many had their eyes on most valuable player Freddie Freeman. But in the mix was another MVP — the Dodgers' most valuable pet: Decoy Ohtani, dog of Shohei.

The much-memed Decoy, a Nederlandse kooikerhondje, or Dutch kooikerhondje, was nestled in Ohtani's arms on the top section of a double-decker parade bus.

Decoy has become a fixture of Dodgers — and dog — fandom. The pup was on Ohtani's lap when he learned he was the first Major League Baseball player ever to be unanimously selected twice as Most Valuable Player, which he achieved while with the Los Angeles Angels.

Decoy also featured in Ohtani's post-victory Instagram post, with photos of the dog being taken for a walk amid autumnal foliage and looking groggy in bed just after images of the Dodgers' champagne celebration.

After Ohtani went on to sign a record \$700 million, 10-year deal with the Dodgers, some of the first questions that reporters had for him were about the dog. At a news conference, the Japanese-born Ohtani revealed his pet's name — in Japanese, Dekopin, but he suggested that Decoy would be easier for Americans to pronounce.

It's also a fitting name for a member of this Dutch duck-hunting breed. Indeed, the English word "decoy" is thought to come from the Dutch term "de kooi," which means "the cage."

The Nederlandse kooikerhondje (pronounced NAY'-dehr-lahn-seh KOY'-kehr-hahnd-jeh) was initially trained to get ducks' attention and then lure them into net-covered canals for hunters to catch. Take a look at many a Dutch Old Master painting, and if you spot a smallish, brown and white, spaniel-like dog with long ears, you've probably seen an ancestor of today's kooikerhondje.

Owners say the breed is lively and clever.

Clever enough to, for instance, carry out the ceremonial first pitch in front of nearly 54,000 people, as Decoy did at a Dodgers-Orioles game in August.

Decoy's portrait might not be hanging on a museum wall, but he's been immortalized in an Ohtani bobblehead. The pooch also got a special, supersized "visa" during a visit to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo last winter.

FBI links video falsely depicting voter fraud in Georgia to 'Russian influence actors'

By ERIC TUCKER and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A video purporting to depict voter fraud in Georgia is fake and the work of "Russian influence actors," U.S. intelligence officials said Friday as they warned that foreign efforts to undermine faith in the integrity of next week's elections may persist long after votes have been cast.

The announcement that the video was fake represented an effort by the FBI and other federal agencies, four days before Tuesday's elections, to combat foreign disinformation by calling it out rather than letting it

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 70 of 85

spread for days unchecked. It follows a similar statement last week that also attributed to Russian actors a widely circulated video falsely depicting mail-in ballots for Donald Trump being destroyed in Pennsylvania.

The 20-second video, which began circulating on the social media platform X on Thursday afternoon, shows someone who describes himself as a Haitian immigrant talking about how he's intending to vote multiple times in two Georgia counties for Vice President Kamala Harris.

He flashes several purported Georgia IDs with different names and addresses. An Associated Press analysis of the information on two of the IDs confirms it does not match any registered voters in Gwinnett or Fulton counties, the two counties he mentioned.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said Thursday night that the video is "obviously fake" and likely the product of Russian trolls "attempting to sow discord and chaos on the eve of the election."

Intelligence officials echoed that finding Friday, saying the video was manufactured by "Russian influence actors" and was part of "Moscow's broader effort to raise unfounded questions about the integrity of the U.S. election and stoke divisions among Americans."

The intelligence community expects Russia, in the days before the election and weeks and months after, "to create and release additional media content that seeks to undermine trust in the integrity of the election and divide Americans," said the joint statement from the FBI, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The post that originally popularized the video was no longer available on Friday morning, but copycat versions of the video were still being shared widely with false claims it showed election fraud.

The video in its style and method of dissemination is similar to other videos created by Storm-1516, also known as CopyCop, a known Russian disinformation network that has created several fake videos this election, according to Darren Linvill, co-director of the Media Forensics Hub at Clemson University, who has researched the group.

Also Friday, the agencies attributed to Russia a separate manufactured video falsely accusing "an individual associated with the Democratic presidential ticket of taking a bribe from a U.S. entertainer." They did not elaborate.

US employers added just 12,000 jobs last month as hurricanes and strikes sharply reduce payrolls

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — America's employers added just 12,000 jobs in October, a total that economists say was held down by the effects of strikes and hurricanes that left many workers temporarily off payrolls. The report provided a somewhat blurry view of the job market at the end of a presidential race that has pivoted heavily on voters' feelings about the economy.

Last month's hiring gain was down significantly from the 223,000 jobs that were added in September. But economists have estimated that Hurricanes Helene and Milton, combined with strikes at Boeing and elsewhere, had the effect of pushing down net job growth by tens of thousands of jobs in October.

Friday's report from the Labor Department also showed that the unemployment rate remained at 4.1% last month. The low jobless rate suggests that the labor market is still fundamentally healthy, if not as robust as it was early this year. Combined with an inflation rate that has tumbled from its 2022 peak to near pre-pandemic levels, the overall economy appears to be on solid footing on the eve of Election Day.

The government did not estimate how many jobs were likely removed temporarily from payrolls last month. But economists have said they think the storms and strikes caused up to 100,000 jobs to be dropped. Reflecting the impact of the strikes, factories shed 46,000 positions in October.

In a cautionary sign for future hiring, though, temporary job placement firms lost 49,000 jobs last month. Companies often take on temporary workers before committing to full-time employees. On the other hand, healthcare companies added 52,000 jobs in October, and state and local governments tacked on 39,000.

The employment report for October also revised down the government's estimate of the job gains in August and September by a combined 112,000, indicating that the labor market wasn't quite as robust

then as initially thought.

"The big one-off shocks that struck the economy in October make it impossible to know whether the job market was changing direction in the month," Bill Adams, chief economist at Comerica Bank, wrote in a commentary. "But the downward revisions to job growth through September show it was cooling before these shocks struck."

Still, economists have noted that the United States has the strongest of the world's most advanced economies, one that has proved surprisingly durable despite the pressure of high interest rates. This week, for example, the government estimated that the economy expanded at a healthy 2.8% annual rate last quarter, with consumer spending helping drive growth.

Yet as voters choose between former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris, large numbers of Americans have said they are unhappy with the state of the economy. Despite the plummeting of inflation, many people are exasperated by high prices, which surged during the recovery from the pandemic recession and remain about 20% higher on average than they were before inflation began accelerating in early 2021.

With inflation having significantly cooled, the Fed is set to cut its benchmark interest rate next week for a second time and likely again in December. The Fed's 11 rate hikes in 2022 and 2023 managed to help slow inflation without tipping the economy into a recession. A series of Fed rate cuts should lead, over time, to lower borrowing rates for consumers and businesses.

In the meantime, there have been signs of a slowdown in the job market. This week, the Labor Department reported that employers posted 7.4 million job openings in September. Though that is still more than employers posted on the eve of the 2020 pandemic, it amounted to the fewest openings since January 2021.

And 3.1 million Americans quit their jobs in September, the fewest in more than four years. A drop in quits tends to indicate that more workers are losing confidence in their ability to land a better job elsewhere.

Even so, with the unemployment rate and the number of people seeking unemployment aid each week still uncommonly low, Americans as a whole continue to enjoy unusual job security

"The cooling of the jobs market is still ongoing," said Sarah House, senior economist at Wells Fargo. "Overall, the jobs market — it's not falling apart, but it's too early to say that conditions have stabilized."

For employers, a softer job market is easing the labor shortages that left many of them struggling to find and keep workers over the past few years.

Jon Abt, co-president of Abt Electronics in Chicago, said it has become somewhat easier to hire, and his company has felt less pressure to raise wages this year. Still, finding qualified installers and service technicians remains a challenge.

The electronics retailer, which employs 1,750, including 200 part-timers, runs its own training program, works with trade schools to find workers and also receives applicants by referral. If the job market deteriorates further, Abt said, "it will be easier to find quality people we are looking for."

Army looking into shoving allegations involving the general who heads US Central Command

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army's Criminal Investigation Division is looking into allegations that the four-star general who heads U.S. Central Command shoved a member of his air crew during a trip overseas, according to U.S. officials.

Officials said Army Gen. Erik Kurilla became upset during a flight and pushed the service member. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the assault allegations, which recently came to light. Kurilla is still in his job and is currently in the Middle East.

The Army Criminal Investigation Division said in a statement Friday that it is "aware of an alleged incident and is currently looking into it. No additional information is available at this time."

The division routinely conducts preliminary inquiries when allegations of misconduct are made to determine if a full investigation is warranted.

Kurilla has been traveling extensively in the Middle East, including numerous trips to Israel and other allies in the region as Israel's war with Hamas and subsequent battles against Hezbollah in Lebanon have raged on.

The inquiry was first reported by NBC.

An Idaho health department isn't allowed to give COVID-19 vaccines anymore. Experts say it's a first

By DEVI SHASTRI AP Health Writer

A regional public health department in Idaho is no longer providing COVID-19 vaccines to residents in six counties after a narrow decision by its board.

Southwest District Health appears to be the first in the nation to be restricted from giving COVID-19 vaccines. Vaccinations are an essential function of a public health department.

While policymakers in Texas banned health departments from promoting COVID vaccines and Florida's surgeon general bucked medical consensus to recommend against the vaccine, governmental bodies across the country haven't blocked the vaccines outright.

"I'm not aware of anything else like this," said Adriane Casalotti, chief of government and public affairs for the National Association of County and City Health Officials. She said health departments have stopped offering the vaccine because of cost or low demand, but not based on "a judgment of the medical product itself."

The six-county district along the Idaho-Oregon border includes three counties in the Boise metropolitan area. Demand for COVID vaccines in the health district has declined — with 1,601 given in 2021 to 64 so far in 2024. The same is true for other vaccines: Idaho has the highest childhood vaccination exemption rate in the nation, and last year, the Southwest District Health Department rushed to contain a rare measles outbreak that sickened 10.

On Oct. 22, the health department's board voted 4-3 in favor of the ban — despite Southwest's medical director testifying to the vaccine's necessity.

"Our request of the board is that we would be able to carry and offer those (vaccines), recognizing that we always have these discussions of risks and benefits," Dr. Perry Jansen said at the meeting. "This is not a blind, everybody-gets-a-shot approach. This is a thoughtful approach."

Opposite Jansen's plea were more than 290 public comments, many of which called for an end to vaccine mandates or taxpayer funding of the vaccines, neither of which are happening in the district. At the meeting, many people who spoke are nationally known for making the rounds to testify against COVID vaccines, including Dr. Peter McCullough, a Texas cardiologist who sells "contagion emergency kits" that include ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine — drugs that have not been approved to treat COVID-19 and can have dangerous side effects.

Board Chairman Kelly Aberasturi was familiar with many of the voices who wanted the ban, especially from earlier local protests of pandemic measures.

Aberasturi, who told The Associated Press that he's skeptical of COVID-19 vaccines and national public health leaders, said in the meeting and in an interview with the AP that he was supportive of but "disappointed" in the board's decision.

He said the board had overstepped the relationship between patients and their doctors — and possibly opened a door to blocking other vaccines or treatments.

Board members in favor of the decision argued people can get vaccinated elsewhere, and that providing the shots was equivalent to signing off on their safety. (Some people may be reluctant to get vaccinated or boosted because of misinformation about the shots despite evidence that they're safe and have saved millions of lives.)

The people getting vaccinated at the health department — including people without housing, people who are homebound and those in long-term care facilities or in the immigration process — had no other options, Jansen and Aberasturi said.

"I've been homeless in my lifetime, so I understand how difficult it can be when you're ... trying to get by and get ahead," Aberasturi said. "This is where we should be stepping in and helping.

"But we have some board members who have never been there, so they don't understand what it's like."

State health officials have said that they "recommend that people consider the COVID-19 vaccine." Idaho health department spokesperson AJ McWhorter declined to comment on "public health district business," but noted that COVID-19 vaccines are still available at community health centers for people who are uninsured.

Aberasturi said he plans to ask at the next board meeting if the health department can at least be allowed to vaccinate older patients and residents of long-term care facilities, adding that the board is supposed to be caring for the "health and well-being" of the district's residents. "But I believe the way we went about this thing is we didn't do that due diligence."

Early voting reaches such heights that some Georgia polls may be Election Day 'ghost town'

By JEFF AMY and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

STONE MOUNTAIN, Ga. (AP) — Flags telling people to "Vote Here" fluttered in not only English, but Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese at the Mountain Park Activity Building as a steady stream passed through its doors to cast their ballots in the 2024 election.

One by one, the voters who turned out Thursday were adding to what's become a colossal heap of early ballots in the key swing state of Georgia. Early voting, scheduled to end Friday, has been so robust that nearly 4 million ballots could be cast before Election Day dawns on Tuesday.

"I normally try to vote early because I'm a mailman and it's hard to me to get over here on an election day," said Mike King of Lilburn, who voted for Trump Thursday before scattering leaves as he departed in his red pickup truck.

Voters like King are part of the reason early vote records have been shattered not only in Georgia and other presidential battlegrounds such as North Carolina but even in states without major contests on the ballot like New Jersey and Louisiana. During the pandemic in 2020, then-President Donald Trump railed against early voting and mail voting, claiming they were part of a plot to steal the election from him. In 2022, after falsely blaming his 2020 loss on early voting, he kept at it.

In both elections, Republicans largely stayed away from voting early, preferring to do it on Election Day. This year Trump has emphasized early voting and his supporters are responding. So far Republicans have flooded the polls in places where in-person early voting is available. Though they've increased their mail voting too, it's been at a much lower rate.

"The Trump effect is real," said Jason Snead, executive director of Honest Elections, a conservative group that focuses on election policy.

So far about 64 million people have cast ballots in the 2024 election, which is more than one-third the total number who voted in 2020. Not all states register voters by party, but in those that do the early electorate is slightly more Republican than Democratic, according to AP Elections Data.

Early vote data, of course, does not tell you who will win an election. It doesn't tell you who the voters support, only basic demographic information and sometimes party affiliation. One demographic may seem unusually energized because it dominates the early vote, only to have no more voters left to turn out on Election Day.

Campaigns encourage early voting because it lets them "bank" their most reliable supporters, freeing resources to turn out lower-propensity backers on Election Day.

"I've largely viewed the idea of going back to Election Day as trying to put toothpaste back in a tube," Snead said.

Election officials say the early vote is already racking up impressive totals. In North Carolina, all but two of 25 western counties most harmed by Hurricane Helene in late September are posting higher early in-person turnout percentages compared with 2020.

Statewide, over 3.7 million people had cast early in-person ballots as of early Friday, exceeding the early

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 74 of 85

in-person total for all of 2020, the North Carolina State Board of Elections said. Early in-person voting ends Saturday afternoon in the state.

"Hurricane Helene did not stop us from voting," said Karen Brinson Bell, the state board's executive director and top voting official in that swing state. She added that voters have been appreciative and "we are seeing a lot of civility."

In Georgia, so many people have voted early that a state election official says it could be a "ghost town" at the polls on Election Day.

There's no doubt that part of that is due to Trump. Large signs at his rallies spell out "VOTE EARLY!" and others have also been pushing Republicans to cast ballots before Tuesday, even by mail.

"This election is too important to wait!" proclaimed one flyer mailed to a voter in Georgia by the Elon Musk-funded America PAC. "President Trump is counting on patriots like you to apply for an absentee ballot and bank your vote today."

Tona Barnes is one person who has heeded that message. Instead of voting on Election Day, she voted early for the first time on Thursday in the northern Atlanta suburb of Marietta.

"He keeps putting it out there to vote early," she said of Trump.

Others in Georgia, both Democrats and Republicans, say they vote early for convenience.

Ashenafi Arega, who voted Thursday for Vice President Kamala Harris at the Mountain Park Activity Building in suburban Gwinnett County, said he cast a ballot early "to save time."

"I think on Election Day the line will be long," said Arega, who owns an importing business. "It will be discouraging."

Gabe Sterling, chief operating officer for Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, said Wednesday that the state already had hit two-thirds of the entire turnout for the 2020 election, when Georgia set a record number of nearly 5 million votes cast.

"There's a possibility it could be a ghost town on Election Day," Sterling said. "We had less than a million show up during COVID in 2020 with all the uses of pre-Election Day voting."

Nearly as many people had voted early by this time in 2020 in Georgia, but the turnout pattern was different. For a brief time during the pandemic, Georgia allowed voters to request mail ballots online without sending in a form with a hand-inked signature, and allowed counties to set up many drive-through drop boxes. But fueled by Trump's insistence that he had been cheated, Republican lawmakers allowed only sharply limited drop boxes going forward, imposed new deadlines on mail ballot requests and went back to requiring a hand-signed absentee request form.

That law and others in Georgia led to cries that Republicans were trying to suppress votes. Republicans said 2024's robust early turnout proves that isn't so.

"I think that gives the lie to this idea that having some pretty basic security measures in place somehow discourages people from voting," said Josh McKoon, chairman of the Georgia Republican Party.

But Tolulope Kevin Olasanoye, executive director of the Democratic Party of Georgia, discounts those statements, saying recent fights about State Election Board rules, which ended with a judge throwing out the rules, prove Republicans are preparing to decry the legitimacy of any vote they don't win in Georgia.

"I think there is no doubt that these folks were trying to muck up the waters a little bit to have something to point to potentially down the road," Olasanoye said.

Republicans are thrilled with the turnout in heavily GOP counties, which in some cases is approaching two-thirds of active voters. Through Thursday, about 39% of voters in the majority Black Democratic stronghold of Augusta-Richmond County had cast ballots, while nearly 54% of voters in the neighboring Republican suburb of Columbia County had voted.

"Just from a winning and losing standpoint, the more votes I have put in the bank by Friday, the fewer votes I have to push to the polls on Tuesday to win," McKoon said.

Olasanoye, though, expressed confidence that Harris was broadening her coalition and would still win.

"Democrats and the vice president, we're just doing all right," he said.

Trump and Vance make anti-transgender attacks central to their campaign's closing argument

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Donald Trump has made his opposition to transgender rights central to his closing argument before Election Day, using demeaning language and misrepresentations to paint an exceedingly narrow slice of the U.S. population as a threat to national identity.

The former president and Republican nominee's campaign and aligned political action committees have spent tens of millions of dollars on advertising that attacks Democratic nominee and Vice President Kamala Harris for her previous statements supporting transgender rights.

His rally speeches now feature a spoof video mocking trans people and their place in the U.S. military. The montage, interspersed with clips of the Vietnam War movie "Full Metal Jacket," typically draws loud boos at his rallies, as do Trump's false claims about female athletes and his mocking impression of what he says is a trans woman lifting weights.

"We will get ... transgender insanity the hell out of our schools, and we will keep men out of women's sports," Trump said at his recent Madison Square Garden rally, drawing an approving roar from the crowd of 20,000-plus. He regularly claims, falsely, that "your kid goes to school and comes home a few days later with an operation" changing their sex.

Trump's running mate, JD Vance, alleged Thursday that white teenagers in the "middle class or upper-middle class" can identify as transgender to more easily get into elite universities.

"Is there a dynamic that's going on where if you become trans, that's the way to reject your white privilege?" Vance told podcaster Joe Rogan, citing conservative anger about affirmative action and other programs geared toward historically disenfranchised groups. "That's the only social signifier," Vance continued, "the only one that is available in the hyper-woke mindset, is if you become gender nonbinary."

While often overshadowed by his emphasis on migrants, Trump's broadsides against LGBTQ people have seemed to grow more frequent and ominous in the campaign's final days, intended both to stir his core supporters and coax votes from more moderate voters who may not mesh with Trump on other matters. It's part of an overall campaign in which Trump has pushed his own brand of hyper-masculinity, most recently referring several times to CNN anchor Anderson Cooper, who is gay, by a woman's name, "Allison Cooper."

Harris has largely ignored Trump's attacks but has pushed back on his characterization of her stances, noting that federal policy giving U.S. military personnel access to gender-affirming medical care and transgender surgery was in place during Trump's presidency.

"I will follow the law," Harris said in a Fox News interview on Oct. 17. "And it's a law that Donald Trump actually followed. You're probably familiar with now. It's a public report that under Donald Trump's administration, these surgeries were available on a medical necessity basis, to people in the federal prison system."

On "The Breakfast Club" podcast earlier this week, she added that Trump was "living in a glass house" with his attacks. She compared the number of people involved: She said two U.S. service members have sought transgender surgery, while millions of people could be stripped of their health insurance if Trump and Republicans succeed in their efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Harris' campaign aides, meanwhile, see Trump's approach as appealing only to hardline supporters already behind him, thus ceding issues, especially the economy, that resonate with many more voters who are not interested in another culture war battle.

Polling suggests a divided electorate on transgender rights. About half of Americans, 51%, say changing one's gender is morally wrong, according to a Gallup poll from May. About 7 in 10 Americans say transgender athletes should only be allowed to compete on sports teams that match their birth gender, according to a 2023 Gallup poll. Yet about 6 in 10 Americans oppose laws that ban treatments and medical procedures that help transgender individuals align with their gender identity, according to a Gallup poll from May. About one-third favor such bans.

Civil rights advocates, meanwhile, express concerns over what a second Trump administration would

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 76 of 85

mean for LGBTQ rights, and say his campaign messaging already threatens the security of transgender people, regardless of who prevails.

Trump has vowed to target transgender people if elected. He has said he would ask Congress to pass a bill stating there are "only two genders" and to ban hormonal or surgical intervention for transgender minors in all 50 states.

Sarah Kate Ellis, president of the LGBTQ advocacy group GLAAD, said Trump's approach attacks "vulnerable people" who make up about 1% of the population "and already are marginalized" by much of society.

"Why are we debating trans people's medical care? Because there's a lack of understanding, and there's a lack of humanizing about who trans people are," Ellis said. "It's not easy to be transgender, to wake up every day in a body that might not fit who you are, and instead of having empathy, they're met with hostility. That's the culture Trump is creating."

Writer and activist Charlotte Clymer added on the social media platform X: "It really ... sucks to watch any sports event as a trans person right now because of the Trump commercials, and I just need everyone to know that: yes, we do see the ads, and it's demoralizing to know this entire subset of people sees us as subhuman."

Indeed, Trump's campaign has since Sept. 1 spent about \$35 million airing three ads based on statements Harris made in 2019 as a candidate for Democrats' 2020 presidential nomination. Clips show Harris affirming her support for federal policies that allow federal prisoners access to medical care including gender-affirming hormone treatments and, potentially, transgender surgery.

"It sounds insane because it is insane," the announcer states in an ad that, as of Thursday, had aired almost 28,000 times across presidential battlegrounds and national television. "Kamala's agenda is 'they-them,' not you," the ad concludes, referring to non-gender-specific pronouns.

Harris, in her 2019 presidential campaign, wrote in an ACLU questionnaire, "I support policies ensuring that federal prisoners and detainees are able to obtain medically necessary care for gender transition, including surgical care, while incarcerated or detained."

She also worked as California attorney general to grant access to such care for state prisoners. But Harris is correct in noting that similar federal policies were in place under Trump's presidency, both for immigrant detainees and federal prisoners.

At Trump's rallies, he often addresses LGBTQ issues with generalizations and emotional appeals. He routinely blasts U.S. military leaders for being "woke," blaming Harris and President Joe Biden.

The spoof video that is played on screens at Trump's rallies alternates between scenes of intense military training, sometimes with drill sergeants yelling at troops, and scenes depicting what are supposed to be LGBTQ members of the military, each displaying exaggerated feminine affects. The latter scenes, the video states, reflect the U.S. military under Biden and Harris.

By the time Trump takes the stage, multiple speakers have primed the audience on the issue.

"We're in the middle of a national identity crisis. Faith in God, patriotism, hard work, family -- these things have disappeared only to be replaced by 'wokeism' and transgenderism" and other philosophies, said former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy at Madison Square Garden. "These are symptoms of a deeper void of purpose and meaning in our country, and right now we need to step up and fill that void with our own vision."

Peeking behind the curtain: News outlets are conscious of the need to explain election reporting

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Associated Press will have thousands of people on hand next week to count votes and declare winners and losers in the U.S. election, continuing a tradition that began in 1848.

There's an even greater priority this year on explaining that process to outsiders.

The AP has already run a series of stories outlining how everything works, and has a team of reporters

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 77 of 85

who will be assigned on election night to write in plain language why it is "calling" key individual states for presidential candidates Kamala Harris or Donald Trump.

Similar plans are afoot at other news organizations. At the AP, editors are mindful of political misinformation and opinion polls that reveal a growing distrust of the media, said Julie Pace, senior vice president and executive editor.

"I can't make people trust us," Pace said. "But we have devoted an incredible amount of time and effort and resources in getting after exactly that. We take it very seriously."

Several news organizations are trying to explain things

NBC News has published explanatory stories on its website — one, for example, tells readers how exit polls work and how the network will use them. The New York Times has promised more information will accompany one of its most popular online features election night, the Needle, which fluctuates as it measures the probability of which presidential candidate will win.

On the air, ABC News has run a "Protecting Your Vote" series, which has profiled election workers, explained why there will be fewer polling places and introduced people who have been caught up in elections lawsuits.

CNN is also posting a series of articles that explain the projection process and exit polls, and gives advice on how people should follow election night coverage. It is also making a version of its "Magic Wall" available online, so viewers can have the same access to statistics and historical comparisons that correspondent John King has on the air.

The AP's election night role in counting the vote is unique, built upon the premise that while individual jurisdictions report tallies, there is no federal authority to pull it all together.

The process involves nearly 5,000 people and the data is widely used across the news industry. Stringers collect results directly from local authorities nationwide and transmit them to a vote entry center, where the numbers are compiled and checked against online sources. Separately, the news organization — like the largest television networks — calls individual races making use of actual results, exit polls and historical trends.

The rule for declaring a winner is simple: "We call the race when there is no way that the trailing candidate can catch up," Pace said. In 2020, news outlets declared Joe Biden the winner over Trump on Saturday after election day.

The AP expects to make calls this year in 6,832 individual races, from the president down to local elections and ballot measures.

Why calls are made — and not made

A dozen journalists have been assigned to write stories and live blog entries that explain the specific factors that go into making calls in the key presidential swing states and other closely-watched races. It's a test for writers: It requires both technical knowledge and an ability to convey that information clearly and quickly.

It's also important to keep people updated when a race is too close or there are other factors holding back a call.

"It's absolutely important for an organization to be as transparent as they can be, especially because there's been an effort to challenge the credibility of calls," said Mark Lukasiwicz, dean of Hofstra University's communications school and a longtime NBC News producer. At the same time, it's hard to do in a way that makes sense to people who are not statisticians or systems operation experts, he said.

The AP was correct in every one of its calls for president, Congress and governors in the 2020 race, a 99.9% accuracy rate overall.

Yet then-President Trump and his supporters were furious when Fox News Channel and the AP reported Joe Biden as the winner in the key state of Arizona well before other news organizations. The call proved correct but it fueled suspicions about the voting process. Fox, in particular, faced an enormous blowback from its viewers.

There's a direct line from that episode to AP's effort to be more systematic and thorough in its explana-

tory efforts this year, Pace said.

"We need to be better and faster in explaining what is happening in those moments as opposed to saying, effectively, 'We're the AP, we have a 99% accuracy rate, of course we're right,'" she said.

Only about one-quarter of Republicans say they have either "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of trust that the vote will be counted accurately nationwide, according to a poll released Friday by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. About three-quarters of Democrats reported that same level of trust.

Don't overlook routine things that may become stories

Journalists also need to be aware that even small things that happen routinely during elections — numbers mistakenly transposed on a vote tally, or broken voting machines that result in extended hours at some polling places — are stories that need to be reported upon so they don't blow up into conspiracy theories.

Ultimately, elections in the United States have been incredibly well run, Pace said.

"My hope is that if people are confused about what's going to happen here, what's happening behind the scenes, we've been very transparent," she said. "It's all there. It's all available for people.

"I'm not naive enough to think that putting it out there quells all of the skepticism around elections or tamps down all of the misinformation, but it's an incredibly robust effort to make sure that fact-based explanatory information about elections is out there."

The AP experimented with more of this material early in the election season and it proved popular with readers. "It reinforced for us that this is something that we should be doing," she said.

Creative 'I Voted' stickers branch out beyond the familiar flag design

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Whether scenic or slightly sinister — angry werewolf, anyone? — the designs on the front of "I Voted" stickers are attracting a lot of attention this year. But have you ever considered the back of your Election Day souvenir?

"Garment-safe adhesive, it's incredibly important," said Janet Boudreau, one sticker designer. "You can ruin leather, silk, fine wool if you don't use garment-safe adhesive on any sticker that goes on fabric."

Boudreau should know. She designed the iconic sticker that has been a polling place staple for decades: a simple ellipse featuring a rippling red, white and blue American flag. And while the company she once owned now has competition, she is delighted by the new versions cropping up around the country, many of them designed by children.

"I am all for it," she said. "And I'm all for younger people getting involved and understanding the power of voting and having faith in it."

Two years ago, a New York county's stickers featuring a wild-eyed crab-like creature created by a 14-year-old boy became an online sensation. This year the smash hit — one of nine designs distributed in Michigan — depicts a werewolf shredding its shirt in front of an American flag.

The 12-year-old Michigan designer declined an interview request, but other young artists described rewarding experiences.

In Milton, New Hampshire, 10-year-old Grace was treated like a celebrity when she visited the polls for the presidential primary in January and town elections in March.

"I definitely did see a difference in everyone's attitude, like everyone seemed happier and more excited to vote because they'd get a cool sticker that I designed," she said. "And I really think it was cool that I made an impact on the way people vote and how they feel about voting."

New Hampshire's contest was open to fourth graders and more than 1,000 submitted entries. Grace, whose design features the state's fallen but not forgotten Old Man of the Mountain rock formation, not only got to attend a pizza party at the Statehouse but has since become pen pals with one of the other two winners.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 79 of 85

While Grace settled on her design quickly, 11-year-old Rilynn drafted three versions and had her family vote on their favorite. The winner? A moose standing on a ledge overlooking colorful fall foliage and the state's highest mountain.

Like Grace, she was excited to see her stickers in action earlier this year.

"They had a huge pile of stickers and people were literally picking out my sticker," she said. "By the time my dad got there, he didn't get one."

Not all of the new stickers are designed by children.

In Denver, incarcerated individuals designed two stickers, one featuring the Colorado flag with a brick building, sun and purple mountains comprising the "D" in "voted." The design competition was aimed at promoting civic engagement and fostering a sense of purpose and community.

In King County, Washington, a graphic designer developed a sticker showcasing the Seattle cityscape on the top and the countryside on the bottom. In New York City, those who voted on Halloween got stickers showing a pigeon wearing a witch's hat. And a contest open to adults and college students in San Francisco was won by illustrator Hollis Callas, who included flowers, birds, a seal, the Golden Gate Bridge and "I voted" in multiple languages.

"I love it," said Allison Tichenor, who picked up a sticker when she voted earlier this week. "It's beautiful, just like the city."

Tichenor and others said they enjoy wearing the stickers to remind others to cast their ballots.

"I think they are important because you never know who it might inspire to vote," said Deanna Long of Raleigh, North Carolina, who went to a Kamala Harris rally Wednesday with a voting sticker on her bag depicting a child riding a purple-maned unicorn.

"The designs have been fun and are from young kids, who have to rely on others to vote for their needs," Long said. "The value of voting is hopefully becoming clearer to the younger generations, and I hope the artwork is inspiring to them as well."

In 2019, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission launched a national contest for the best sticker as part of its efforts to honor innovative best practices in election administration. The latest batch of winners includes the Santa Fe County Clerk's Office in New Mexico, where the contest focused specifically on "Future Voter" and "First Time Voter" stickers.

"Running elections is hard, and those 'I voted' sticker contests are both a nice way to potentially engage the community, but also some creativity and some fun," said Benjamin Hovland, chairman of the nonpartisan federal commission.

Jason Wickersty certainly showed creativity with the sticker he fashioned out of pork roll, a type of processed meat favored in New Jersey also known as Taylor ham. He shared a photo on the social platform X in 2020 of the meat stuck to his shirt and explained himself in an email this week.

"We Jersey people are fiercely proud and loyal to our state, and since they haven't yet made official 'I Voted' slices of pork roll, I took an x-acto knife to a slice and carved my own quintessentially Jersey 'I Voted' badge," he said.

Though a writer once called her a "veritable Betsy Ross" of "I Voted" stickers, Boudreau wasn't the first to produce them. But she did come to dominate the market. By 2000, some 13 years after she sketched out the design at her kitchen table, her election supply company was selling more than 100 million stickers every two years before she sold the company in 2015. Officials there did not respond to an email seeking current sales figures.

The stickers started as a way to diversify the company's offerings and attract new business, said Boudreau, who remembers her 6-year-old son affixing the colorful stickers to the black-and-white ads she mailed to potential clients.

"But this just made people happy," she said. "It opened doors for us, and it made the voters happy."

North Korea's top diplomat holds talks in Moscow as Pyongyang sent troops to help the war on Ukraine

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia's top diplomat on Friday met his North Korean counterpart for talks amid reports that Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops to Russia to support its military in the war in Ukraine.

Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui's visit to Moscow and her meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov came on the heels of the Pentagon's statement that North Korea has deployed about 10,000 troops to Russia to fight against Ukraine.

The Biden administration said Thursday that some 8,000 North Korean soldiers are now in Russia's Kursk region near Ukraine's border and are preparing to help the Kremlin fight against Ukrainian troops in the coming days.

Western leaders have described the North Korean troop deployment as a significant escalation that could also jolt relations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Neither Moscow nor Pyongyang have specified the agenda for Choe's talks in Moscow, but in a closed-door hearing at South Korea's parliament, the South's spy agency said Choe may be involved in high-level discussions on sending additional troops to Russia and negotiating what the North would get in return.

South Korean and Western officials have voiced concern that Russia may offer technology that could advance the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile program.

Meeting Choe in Moscow on Friday, Lavrov hailed ties between Moscow and Pyongyang, saying that they "have reached an unprecedented high level over the past few years," and proposed discussing the implementation of the strategic partnership agreement the two nations signed earlier this year.

"We will have discussions on a series of issues regarding politics and foreign policy as well as matters that require a joint response between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation," Choe said, invoking the North's formal name.

She reiterated Pyongyang's support "for the just fight of Russia's military and people to defend their country's sovereign rights and security interests" in Ukraine.

Moscow and Pyongyang have responded vaguely to South Korean and Western claims of the North Korean troop deployment to Russia, emphasizing that their military cooperation conforms with international law, without directly admitting the presence of the North's forces in Russia.

The United States and its allies also have accused North Korea of providing millions of artillery shells and other equipment to Russia to fuel its military action in Ukraine.

Russia, along with China, has blocked U.S.-led efforts at the U.N. Security Council to tighten sanctions on North Korea over its recent missile testing, which intensified after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Russia also vetoed a U.N. resolution to extend the mandate of monitors in March, in a move that effectively abolished oversight by U.N. experts of Security Council sanctions against North Korea.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol last month raised the possibility of supplying Ukraine with weapons while saying Seoul is preparing countermeasures that could be rolled out in stages depending on the degree of military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow.

South Korea, a growing arms exporter, has provided humanitarian aid and other nonlethal support to Ukraine and joined U.S.-led economic sanctions against Moscow. It has so far resisted calls by Kyiv and NATO to directly supply Ukraine with weapons, citing a longstanding policy of not providing arms to countries engaged in active conflict.

In other developments:

— Russia launched three aviation missiles and 48 drones of various types, including Shaheds, at Ukraine overnight, the Ukrainian air force said. One missile and 31 drones were intercepted, 14 drones were jammed and three drones flew to the territory of Belarus, the air force said in a report on Friday morning. Several civilian facilities, as well as apartment buildings and private houses in Poltava, Cherkasy, Kyiv and Odesa regions were damaged by drone debris.

— The Russian military on Friday said it intercepted and destroyed a total of 83 Ukrainian drones over four

Russian regions near the border with Ukraine and the annexed Crimean Peninsula. In the Bryansk region, a drone hit a residential block, local authorities said. No casualties were reported. In the Stavropol region, a drone hit an oil depot, according to local officials. Unconfirmed media reports said the depot caught fire.

— Lavrov plans to attend an international meeting in December in Malta, which would be his first trip to a European Union country since the start of the war, the newspaper Vedomosti cited ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying. Lavrov plans to make the trip for a gathering of foreign ministers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, according to the report.

The OSCE includes countries strongly opposed to the Ukraine war, including the U.S. and many European nations, as well as Moscow's supporter Belarus and former Soviet Central Asian states that have taken neutral stances.

AP-NORC poll finds skepticism of nationwide election tallies, especially among Republicans

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's deep partisan divisions extend to trust in the vote tallies for this year's election, as a new poll finds that Republicans are much more skeptical than Democrats that ballots will be counted accurately.

Voters generally show more distrust toward nationwide voting results compared to the tallies done by their own local election offices, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

About half of Republican registered voters have "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of trust that the vote will be accurately counted by their local election officials and around 4 in 10 say the same about the vote count in their state, but only around one-quarter have at least "quite a bit" of trust in the nationwide count.

Republicans voters' overall level of trust in all three, however, is lower than it is among Democratic voters. Roughly three-quarters of Democrats say they have at least "quite a bit" of confidence that votes will be counted accurately nationwide, in their state or by their local election officials.

This year's election marks the first presidential race since former President Donald Trump began a campaign of lies about a stolen 2020 election — a narrative that has undermined public confidence in election results among a wide swath of conservative voters, despite no evidence of widespread fraud.

Election experts have warned that Trump may be laying the groundwork to once again challenge the election if he loses.

David Farrington, a 78-year-old conservative in Fort Worth, Texas, said he distrusts mail-in ballots and ballot drop boxes, both common targets for claims of voter fraud and election conspiracies attempting to sow distrust in election results.

"It's not the vote count that I'm worried about," Farrington said. "I have every faith in all the precincts and their ability to count the ballots that are there. But the ballots — we don't know if they're legitimate or not."

Conversely, Ruth Edwards, a 28-year-old kindergarten teacher in Tampa, Florida, said she has "never seen evidence that elections are rigged."

"It's just people who are upset about their candidate losing who are now claiming it's rigged with no evidence," said Edwards, a Democrat. "It's ridiculous."

Voters overall are more likely to believe that votes in the 2024 presidential election will be counted accurately by their local election officials or in their state than nationwide, according to the poll. About 6 in 10 voters have "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of confidence that votes in the 2024 presidential election will be counted accurately by their local election officials or in their state, while about half say this about votes counted nationwide.

About one-quarter in each case have "a moderate amount" of confidence. About 3 in 10 say they have "only a little" or no confidence in the nationwide count, while fewer say that about the tally in their state

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 82 of 85

or by local officials.

Drew Inman, a 31-year-old Republican working in law enforcement in New Jersey, said he is skeptical that votes will be counted accurately at all levels, but especially in counties outside his own.

"I definitely trust my vote to be counted at a local level more than I trust the national vote count," he said. "... When you go national, there's a lot more people involved and that can create corruption."

While ballots can include races for federal offices such as president or Congress, the U.S. does not run national elections as other countries do. All elections are run by the states and administered by local election offices in thousands of townships, cities and counties.

Election officials have recognized that many skeptical voters tend to point to other jurisdictions with false claims of fraud. Some groups have tried to counter this perception by emphasizing that elections in every state are run at the local level.

"What is difficult is when we have national elections, oftentimes people will maybe throw election professionals under the bus from another state, and that is not helpful," said Tammy Patrick, a former election official now with the National Association of Election Officials.

Older voters have more faith in the vote count at all levels than younger voters, including the count conducted by local election officials. About half of 18- to 29-year-old voters have at least "quite a bit" of confidence that votes will be counted accurately in their state or by their local election officials, compared to around 7 in 10 voters ages 60 and older.

The gap is smaller for the nationwide vote count, though: About 4 in 10 18- to 29-year-old voters have at least "quite a bit" of confidence, compared to about half of voters ages 60 and older.

Bill Sanchez, a 29-year-old criminal defense attorney in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, said older voters have been watching and participating in the election process for longer, giving them more time to build trust.

"Younger voters have less experience voting and have spent a lot of their lives surrounded by this kind of misinformation that we're seeing more and more of," Sanchez said. "... It just sets the base for younger voters to be more distrustful."

About 6 in 10 Republicans say people voting who are not eligible is a major problem in U.S. elections, compared to 2 in 10 Democrats. Democrats and Republicans differ most sharply over whether mail ballots that are returned via the U.S. Postal Service or a drop box will be counted accurately. About 6 in 10 Democrats are "extremely" or "very confident" that mail ballots that are returned by these methods will be counted accurately, compared to around 1 in 10 Republicans.

Democrats, meanwhile, are much more concerned about voter suppression than Republicans. About half of Democrats say voter suppression is a major problem, compared to about one-third of Republicans

And about 4 in 10 voters are concerned about other countries tampering with U.S. voting systems or election results, which is down slightly from when the question was last asked in February 2020. This is something that independent voters are at least slightly more likely to be worried about than Democrats or Republicans.

Sanchez, the attorney from Pennsylvania, said he is more concerned about voter suppression than widespread fraud or ballots being miscounted and called for the expansion of early voting and mail ballots to "make voting as accessible as possible." He also worries about the potential that false claims of voter fraud could incite violence and unrest, and said he hopes election officials' attempts to inform voters ahead of the election will help.

"There's a lot of misinformation and disinformation about election security from bad faith actors who are trying to build distrust and take advantage of the fact that people don't always understand everything about the process," Sanchez said. "And when we don't understand things, we end up fearing it."

Taiwanese driver recounts his narrow escape during Typhoon Kong-rey

By JOHNSON LAI and KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — A ride-hailing driver recounted Friday how he had narrow escape when a huge tree smashed onto his vehicle as Typhoon Kong-rey swept over Taiwan, also sweeping away metal roofs and sending landslides onto roads and railway tracks and into houses.

Song Zi-jie had just dropped off riders in Taipei, the capital city, and was stopped at a red light on Thursday night when a tree was uprooted and fell squarely onto the passenger compartment of his car. He felt the roof hit his head and reclined his seat but couldn't open the rear door. He lay there until police found him.

"I was so frightened that I didn't know what to do," said Song, who wasn't injured despite the extensive damage to his vehicle. "It took me a while to return to normal."

Two people died, four people are missing and 580 others were injured by Kong-rey in Taiwan. It weakened to a tropical storm after leaving the island but was still bringing heavy rain and windy conditions to Shanghai and nearby parts of China's east coast on Friday.

Kong-rey, which is a Cambodian name, was heading northeast along the coast with winds of 83 kilometers (52 miles) per hour and could make landfall in Zhejiang province before veering back out to sea, the National Meteorological Center said.

Zhejiang authorities evacuated about 280,000 people and opened more than 10,000 emergency shelters ahead of the storm, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Both Zhejiang and neighboring Fujian province also suspended multiple ferry routes.

In Taiwan, a Czech couple who had gone missing while hiking in the mountains were found and airlifted out of Taroko National Park by helicopter on Friday. They told Taiwanese TV network EBC that they hadn't been aware of the approaching typhoon but were able to call for help with their mobile phones and mostly stayed in their tent until rescuers arrived.

The two fatalities in Taiwan were a man hit by a utility pole that fell over when a tree dragged down nearby power lines in Taipei and a Thai woman who was in a small truck that was hit by a tree.

Workers cut and cleared up fallen trees in Taipei on Friday, while schools and offices largely reopened and public services were gradually restored across Taiwan.

The typhoon passed north of the Philippines earlier in the week, prompting fresh evacuations just days after devastating Tropical Storm Trami killed at least 145 people.

Intense rainfall and flooding caused in part by Trami also killed seven people in China and eight people in Vietnam this week, Xinhua reported. The deaths in China were in Hainan province, a southern island known for its beach resorts.

Voters view one another across partisan divide with increasing animosity

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and MARC LEVY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden tried to explain this week that he doesn't really think Donald Trump's supporters are "garbage," but that doesn't mean that other people don't believe the label occasionally fits.

"I would say that some of them are garbage," said Samantha Leister, 32, who went to see Kamala Harris at a rally in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

As for the rest of them? Leister, whose parents and father-in-law are backing Trump, says they are "misguided."

That same day, at Trump's rally in Green Bay, Wisconsin, the idea of voting for Harris was impossible to fathom.

"I just think they are uneducated, and they believe all the lies," said Shawn Vanderheyden, 44, who went to see Trump with his wife and two young daughters. "It's unfortunate."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 84 of 85

Vanderheyden still has faith in some people who are supporting the Democratic vice president, saying "hopefully they open their eyes."

The enduring truth of American politics — one that will undoubtedly outlast the controversy over Biden's comments and this year's presidential campaign — is that many Trump and Harris voters view one another with disdain and suspicion. At best, they feel confused by people supporting the other party and anxious about the country's future after the election.

The wariness between Americans is not new, but interviews with voters in battleground states reveal that it's only growing deeper and more insurmountable. It's divided families and friends, and it's driven people further into their own political tribes.

Some said they believe the country is headed for an even more dramatic splintering.

Braxton Wadford, 20, predicted there would be a "mass exodus" of Americans after the election, regardless of who wins. He said people on both sides can't imagine living under the opposing party's leadership.

"The American dream is turning into leaving America," said Wadford, who voted early for Trump in North Carolina.

Jennifer Phelan, 60, has been volunteering for Harris' campaign in the same state, pushing undecided voters to cast ballots for the vice president. She's nervous about the election and can't see why it's so close.

"It just seems very much like a cartoon of good and evil," she said at Harris' rally in Raleigh.

The political animosity has been building for a while, helped along by historic upheaval. There was the outbreak of a global pandemic, a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and nationwide protests over racial injustice — and that was just in the span of a single year.

The Pew Research Center found that Democrats and Republicans are becoming more likely to view members of the other party as unintelligent, lazy, immoral or dishonest. And nearly everyone has a very or somewhat unfavorable view of the opposing party, according to an AP-NORC Poll from September.

Travis Waters, 54, said Trump supporters are "detached from reality." He has no one close to him who is a Trump supporter — and he's not looking to add any.

"I would think that the people who I choose to associate with are not people who support invading the Capitol, say Haitians are eating pets and tell lies," Waters said while waiting in line for Harris' event in Harrisburg.

Trump has been a dominant figure in American politics for nearly a decade, contributing to polarization by demonizing his political opponents and fostering a sense of persecution among his followers.

"Look how they've treated you," he said at one of his rallies this week. "They've treated you like garbage."

It was a reference to Biden's comments after Trump's recent event at Madison Square Garden, where a comedian called Puerto Rico a "floating island of garbage."

During a campaign call organized by the Hispanic advocacy group Voto Latino, Biden said that "the only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters. His demonization of Latinos is unconscionable, and it's un-American."

Biden later stressed he was talking about the rhetoric, not Trump's supporters. And Harris said she disagrees "with any criticism of people based on who they vote for."

Norma Jeffcoat, 72, said she was wounded by criticism over her support for Trump.

"I have loved ones that think I am voting for a racist," she said at a rally in North Carolina. "It breaks my heart. I love my country so much."

Jeffcoat is devoutly loyal to the former president, who she said has unfairly suffered through criminal prosecutions, political attacks and assassination attempts.

A Trump flag hanging outside her home has been shredded to pieces by the wind, but she rejected her husband's effort to replace it.

"I said 'no,'" Jeffcoat said. "It's staying there until after the election because it symbolizes everything he's been through."

Nick Sandquist, 47, said Trump was a hypocrite to criticize Biden over his "garbage" comment.

"It's ironic for Donald Trump to use name calling for his advantage," he said at a Harris rally in Wisconsin. "We're not the type you have to worry about storming the Capitol."

He said he occasionally talks about the election with his brother and father, who support Trump, but "it doesn't go very well."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 130 ~ 85 of 85

It was a common refrain from others as well, who describe discussing politics as more trouble than it's worth.

"Everything we say, they have a ridiculous answer for," said Debi Franz, 66. "It's terrible to say because we don't have a lot of conversations anymore. It's fruitless."

Her husband, Phil, 68, agreed.

"I just avoid it," he said as they waited for Harris to take the stage in Madison.

But at least one person decided to give it a shot this week.

Annette Uhlenberg, 52, attended Harris' rally in Raleigh and said she was inspired by her talk about rising above political disagreements.

So she took a picture with her campaign sign, wrote a message about putting "country over party," and sent it to three of her friends who she believes will be voting for Trump.

None of them wrote back immediately.

But maybe, Uhlenberg hopes, it "at least opens the door for conversation."

Today in History: November 2, Truman defeats Dewey

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Nov. 2, the 307th day of 2024. There are 59 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 2, 1948, in one of the most unexpected results in U.S. election history, Democratic incumbent Harry S. Truman won the presidential election against the heavily favored Republican governor of New York, Thomas E. Dewey.

Also on this date:

In 1783, Gen. George Washington issued his Farewell Address to the Army.

In 1861, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln relieved Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont of his command of the Army's Western Department, following Fremont's unauthorized efforts to emancipate slaves in Missouri.

In 1947, Howard Hughes piloted his Hughes H-4 Hercules, nicknamed the 'Spruce Goose,' on its one and only flight; a massive wooden seaplane with a wingspan longer than a football field, it remained airborne for 26 seconds.

In 1959, Charles Van Doren testified to a Congressional committee that he had conspired with television producers to cheat on the television quiz show 'Twenty-One.'

In 1976, former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter became the first candidate from the Deep South to be elected president since the Civil War as he defeated incumbent Gerald R. Ford.

In 2000, American astronaut Bill Shepherd and two Russian cosmonauts, Yuri Gidzenko and Sergei Krikalev, became the first crew to reside onboard the International Space Station; they spent a total of 136 days in the International Space Station before returning to Earth on Space Shuttle Discovery.

In 2003, in Iraq, insurgents shot down a Chinook helicopter carrying dozens of U.S. soldiers, killing 16.

In 2004, President George W. Bush was elected to a second term, defeating Sen. John Kerry, and Republicans strengthened their control of Congress.

In 2007, British college student Meredith Kercher, 21, was found slain in her bedroom in Perugia, Italy; her roommate, American Amanda Knox and Knox's Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, were convicted of killing Kercher, but both were later exonerated.

In 2016, ending a championship drought that had lasted since 1908, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, defeating the Cleveland Indians 8-7 in extra innings.

In 2021, the Atlanta Braves won their first World Series championship since 1995, defeating the Houston Astros in Game 6.

Today's Birthdays: Tennis Hall of Famer Ken Rosewall is 90. Political commentator Pat Buchanan is 86. Olympic gold medal wrestler Bruce Baumgartner is 65. Singer-songwriter k.d. lang is 63. Playwright Lynn Nottage is 60. Actor David Schwimmer is 58. Jazz singer Kurt Elling is 57. Rapper Nelly is 50. Film director Jon Chu is 45. TV personality Karamo Brown ("Queer Eye") is 44. NFL quarterback Jordan Love is 26.