

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Tuesday, Nov. 5

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin, tropical fruit, mixed vegetables, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Egg omelets.  
School Lunch: Chicken strips, waffle fries.  
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid, LWML, 1:30 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.  
Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center  
Region 1A Volleyball  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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



## Wednesday, Nov. 6

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, sweet potato, capri blend, peach crisp.  
School Breakfast: Cereal.  
School Lunch: Quesadilla, Santa Fe Corn.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Confirmation with students and parents, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Budget/financing meeting for 2025, 7 p.m.  
Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall  
Youth Rally, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

## Thursday, Nov. 7

Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes with gravy, three bean salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.  
School Lunch: Taco burgers, tater tos.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.  
Region 1A Volleyball in Groton. Groton Area plays the first match at 6 p.m.

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## FROSTY CLUE

I/My.....

5. Have three siblings



### October Senior Citizens News

October Groton Seniors met for a meeting Vice President Ruby opened with allegiance to the flag . Minutes and treasure reports were read and accepted. No old or new business. Meeting was adjourned. Cards were played by the winners of the games. pinochle-Kelly, whist- Darlene Fischer, canasta- Pat Larson and Julie Shilhanek. Door prizes went to Bruce Shilhanek , Dick Donovan, Bev Sombke. Lunch was served by Ruby Donovan. October 21 with eleven members met to play cards. Cards were played and the winners of the games. Pinochle- Bruce Shilhanek, Whist- Tony Goldade, Canasta-Julie Shilhanek. Door prizes Pat Larson, Darlene Fischer, Bev Sombke. Lunch was served by Tony Goldade.

October 28-24 Thirteen members met at Groton Seniors potluck dinner. Vice president opened with Allegiance to the flag and table prayer for the pot luck dinner Bingo was played after dinner. Pat Larson won black out. Cards were played after bingo. Cake and ice cream were served for lunch to celebrate Julie Shilhanek's birthday. Door prizes were Ella Johson, Dorothy and Pat Larson.

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# 1440

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

## Voting Day Arrives

Election Day has finally arrived in the US, following former President Donald Trump's and Vice President Kamala Harris' last-minute campaign blitzes in key battleground states. Trump held rallies in North Carolina and Pennsylvania yesterday before ending in Michigan, while Harris spent the day in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania (19 electoral votes) is seen as the tipping point among six other swing states whose collective 93 electoral votes are considered crucial to the election outcome. Trump and President Joe Biden won Pennsylvania in 2016 and 2020, respectively. However, the final results might not be known until later.

In 2020, Biden's victory in Pennsylvania wasn't clear until four days after Election Day. See when battleground state polls close here. A candidate must secure at least 270 of 538 votes to win the Electoral College.

Control of the US Senate and House are also up for grabs, with Republicans hoping to flip a number of seats. In Montana, incumbent Sen. Jon Tester (D) faces Tim Sheehy (R); in Ohio, Sen. Sherrod Brown (D) faces businessman Bernie Moreno (R); in Pennsylvania, incumbent Sen. Bob Casey (D) faces David McCormick (R); and in Michigan, Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D) faces former Rep. Mike Rogers (R) for a seat vacated by retiring Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D).

On the House side, races to watch include the battle for Virginia's 7th District, featuring newcomers and former Army veterans Derrick Anderson (R) and Eugene Vindman (D). Vindman and his twin brother raised concerns about a 2019 phone call between Trump and Ukraine that led to Trump's first impeachment.

In Nebraska's 2nd District, incumbent Rep. Don Bacon (R) faces Sen. Tony Vargas (D) in a 2022 rematch. And in Michigan, Slotkin's decision to run for the Senate opens up her seat in Lansing.

## Quincy Jones Dies

Legendary music producer Quincy Jones, an influential figure in music for over seven decades, died Sunday in Bel Air, California, at age 91. Born in 1933 on Chicago's South Side, he collaborated with iconic artists like Frank Sinatra, Lesley Gore, and Michael Jackson.

Jones was among the most awarded figures in music history, with 28 Grammy Awards, an Emmy, an honorary Oscar, and a Tony, placing him in the elite EGOT club. He produced "We Are the World," one of the bestselling singles of all time, and Michael Jackson's "Thriller," one of the bestselling albums. Throughout the 1960s, Jones became the first Black executive at a major record label and made his film score debut with 1964's "The Pawnbroker." He went on to score nearly 40 movies and numerous TV shows.

A longtime humanitarian, Jones received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award and founded the Quincy Jones Listen Up Foundation to empower youth through education and music. In 2010, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts, America's highest artistic honor.

## Boeing Takes Off

Boeing's 33,000 production workers voted to end their seven-week strike yesterday, approving a 38% pay raise over four years—the aerospace company's fourth contract offer since September.

The company's latest offer is two points shy of the 40% the union called for—and up from the 25% offer workers rejected in September, which prompted the walkout and brought the company's commercial airplane production to a standstill. This latest offer raises average machinist pay to \$119.3K per year for workers largely based in Seattle and Portland, Oregon. Union members can return to work as soon as tomorrow or as late as Nov. 12.

Boeing reported a \$6.1B quarterly loss last month; analysts say the stoppage has cost Boeing an estimated tens of millions of dollars in lost revenue per day. Shares have fallen over 40% this year amid the strike and concerns over Boeing's 737 Max aircraft.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

MLB Gold Glove winners announced for best fielders, including 14 first-time winners.  
MLB free agency begins; see ranking of potential landing spots for top 50 available players.  
Sean "Diddy" Combs seeks gag order from federal judge to prevent witnesses from speaking publicly about testimony prior to his sex-trafficking criminal case.  
>New Orleans Saints head coach Dennis Allen fired after 2-7 start to NFL season.  
2024 MLS Cup Playoffs underway.

## Science & Technology

Meta's plans to build a nuclear power plant to power AI blocked by discovery of rare bee species on location; broader effort follows other companies' push to use nuclear energy to support data centers.  
Researchers discover 16 different types of nerve cells involved in the sense of touch; findings shed light on the evolution of human sensory tools and how quickly the body can respond to external pain.  
Physicist develops equations to describe the motion of house cats; motivation reportedly to both model general behavior while making basic science accessible to nonexperts.

## Business & Markets

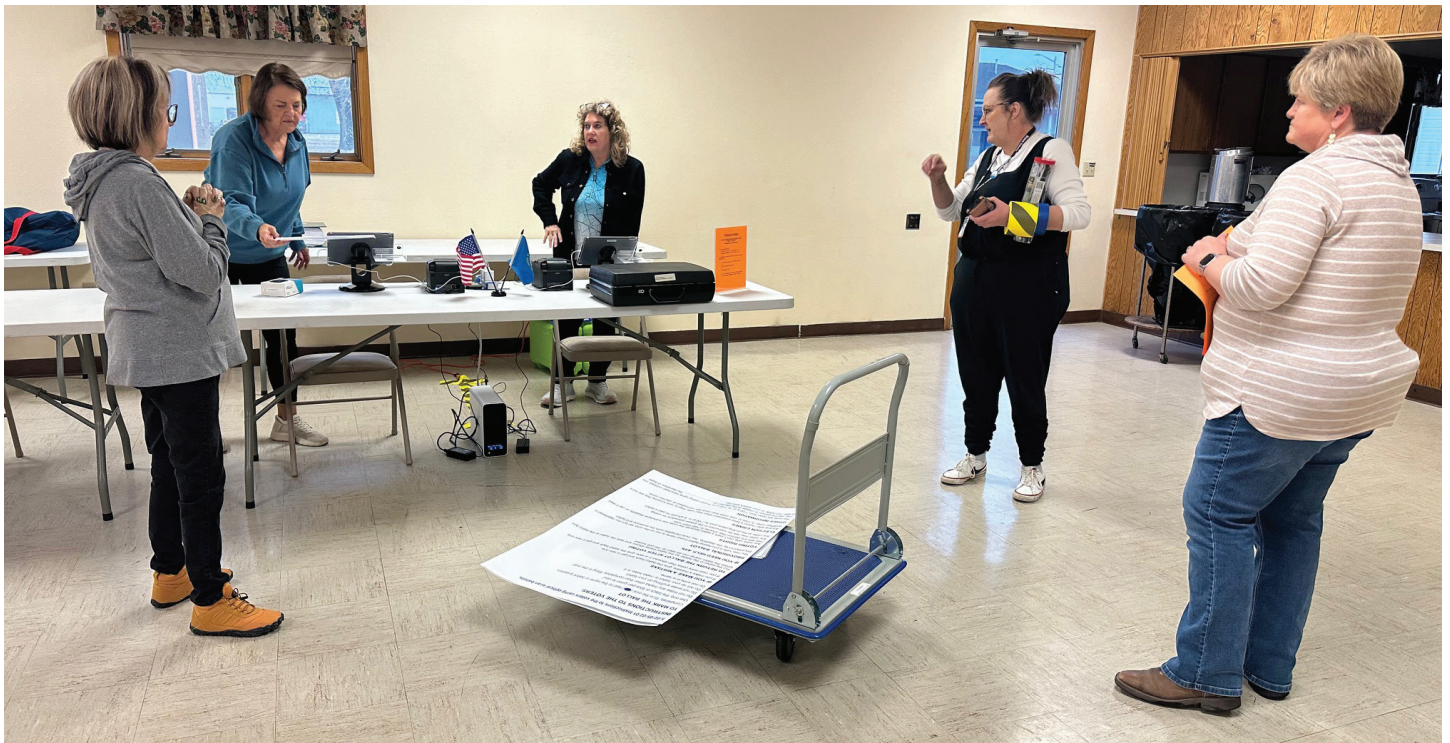
US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.3%, Dow -0.6%, Nasdaq -0.3%) as investors brace for outcome of 2024 presidential election and the Federal Reserve's policy decision this week.  
Palantir shares rise nearly 14% in after-hours trading after data analytics software giant posts better-than-expected revenue and earnings; company reports Q3 sales were up 30% year-over-year.  
China plans to sue the European Union in filing to World Trade Organization, alleging the EU improperly placed tariffs on new Chinese-made electric vehicles.

## Politics & World Affairs

US Supreme Court agrees to hear Louisiana redistricting dispute that could determine whether the state can keep its congressional map featuring two mostly Black districts.  
Pennsylvania judge allows Elon Musk's political action committee to continue \$1M giveaways to voters registered in swing states.  
At least 10 people killed after Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki erupts in eastern Indonesia; officials warn of greater risks of earthquakes in coming days.  
Tropical Storm Rafael forms in the Caribbean, expected to strengthen into a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico today and reach Cuba tomorrow.

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**Brown County Auditor Lynn Heupel (right) and Stephanie Jacobson (second from right) from the county auditor's office bring out all the election material for today's election. They were at the Groton Community Center as local election workers Charla Rye, Julie Hinds and Kelly Clark finalize getting things set up. The polls are open today from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Photo by Paul Kosel)**

## NOTICE OF SALE

November 9<sup>th</sup>, 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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. The amount of the Judgment is \$33,157.48, \$260.50 Cost, \$373.39 Pre-Judgement interest, plus continuing costs, and interest, as provided by law. This amount does not include Sheriff's Office fees and costs related to this matter. The property to be sold pursuant to the Execution is: 2012 Chevy Avalanche, VIN 3GNTKFE79CG124632. Odometer Reading: 206,206.

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

The sale will be held at the Brown County Court House, 101 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SE, Aberdeen, SD 57401 on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto: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



## Large lithium batteries next step in SD wind power expansion

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch



**A.J. Howey points on Oct. 24, 2024 to the site where a lithium-ion battery storage system has been proposed not far from his home near Waverly, S.D.** (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South

Dakota News Watch)

WAVERLY, S.D. – Retiree A.J. Howey has a hard time understanding why a Florida energy company would build a set of industrial-sized lithium-ion batteries near his rural homestead where he enjoys pattering around in the yard and raising exotic chickens.

Howey's property in Codington County lies amid miles of open farm and ranch land. He sees the lithium-ion batteries – which in rare cases can catch fire and release toxic chemicals – as a possible intrusion on his peaceful lifestyle. The proposed site is a third of a mile from his place.

"There's all these square miles with no homes, and it seems like they could find a better place to put it," Howey, 72, said during a recent interview in his home near the town of Waverly, northeast of Watertown. "With the lithium-ions being as close as they are ... they've had a lot of problems with lithium-ion (batteries), and it's risky stuff as far as I'm concerned."

The batteries used in power storage are much like the batteries in smartphones, computers and electric vehicles, only much larger. While the batteries can catch fire, recent data shows that the storage systems are increasingly safe due to new federal regulations and internal systems that prevent fires from occurring or spreading.

Construction of lithium-ion battery systems is proposed for at least two South Dakota locations so far, one by Howey's home and in a separate project in Brookings County.

In Codington County, the batteries would be the latest innovation attached to the state's rapidly growing wind energy industry, which has more than doubled the number of wind turbines and energy production capacity in the past five years, according to the state Public Utilities Commission.

The battery systems, labeled "the new frontier" by Florida-based NextEra Energy Resources, are a way to provide more stability to the regional power grid and reduce the cost of electricity for customers.

By storing lower-cost energy produced during times of low customer demand, such as during overnight periods when winds blow hard but power use is low, utilities can later release that energy during times of high demand. The systems help ensure consistent energy supply, lower the likelihood of blackouts, and reduce costs for both utility companies and customers.

Battery storage capacity is growing rapidly across the country as the technology has evolved, the cost of



large lithium-ion battery systems has fallen and as the nation moves further toward clean energy production.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the country had less than 500 megawatts of energy storage systems in place in 2016. But growth has exploded since then, with 16 gigawatts (16,000 MW) of storage in place in 2023 and a growth rate of 90% expected nationally in 2024, up to an estimated total of 30 gigawatts (30,000 MW).

Officials from NextEra, a sustainable energy division of Florida Power & Light, did not respond to a News Watch request for information. But in a September newsletter, the company said it has

built 74 battery storage systems across the U.S. and expects to build more in the coming years.

Unlike the NextEra project, the Cloverleaf Battery Project in Brookings County, proposed by Florida-based Spearmint Energy, is a standalone system not tied to a specific sustainable energy source.

Instead, those batteries would collect energy from any source during non-peak times and push it onto the grid during times of peak demand, according to chief development officer Peter Rood. Without battery systems, low-cost energy that could be produced is lost because there is no room on the grid for it to be captured, leading to higher overall prices for consumers, Rood said.

### Batteries likened to grain bins

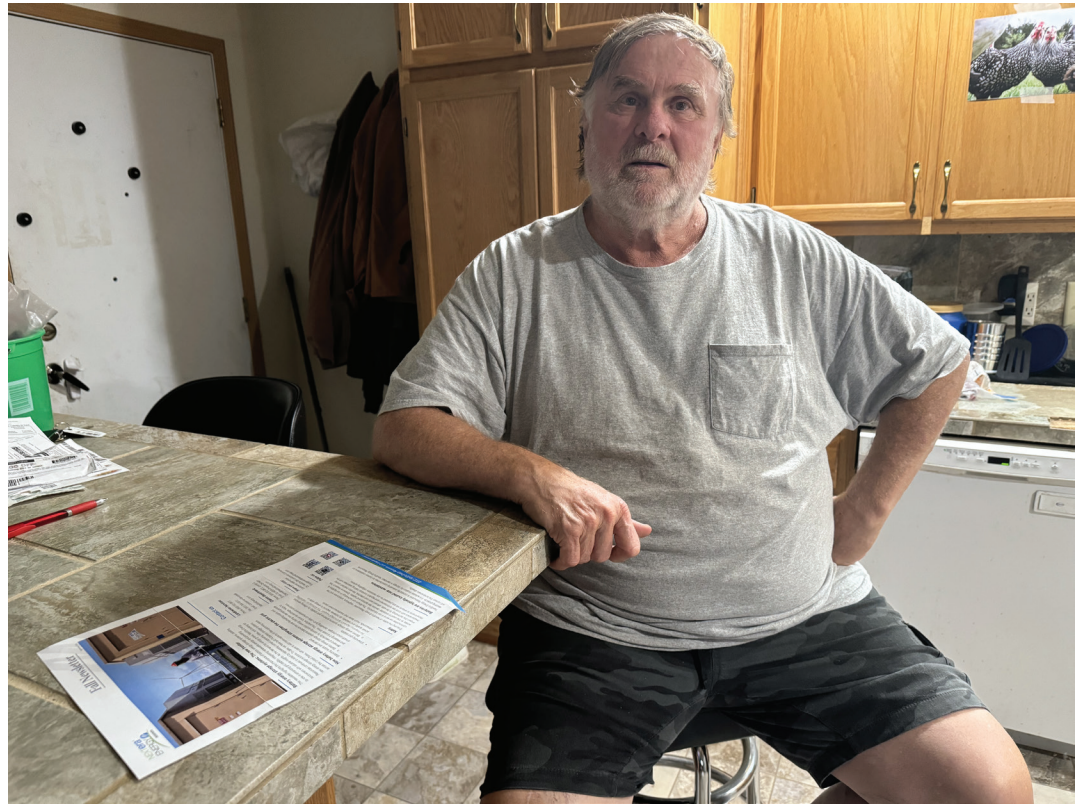
Battery systems provide three major benefits and are similar in concept to grain storage systems, Rood said. Just as farmers store corn or other products during times of low prices or low demand and then sell when prices are higher or when demand rises well after harvest, battery system operators store low-cost energy that otherwise would be lost and sell it to utilities when demand and prices for electricity are higher.

"Even with the costs of storage factored in, the final energy prices are still lower (for utilities and their customers)," Rood told News Watch.

The batteries also ensure greater consistency and stability within the regional electric grid and can provide electricity in times of great need, such as during weather-caused outages, Rood said.

The multi-million dollar Spearmint project could take up to a decade to be fully constructed and would include up to 150 battery enclosures that can hold up to 175 megawatts of energy. The battery complex would be built on a 15-acre site about 7 miles southeast of White in Brookings County, near where two major power transmission systems meet.

The project will create up to 100 jobs during a roughly 18-month construction period and will generate significant new property tax revenues for Brookings County once operational, Rood said.



**Codington County retiree A.J. Howey talks on Oct. 24, 2024 about a battery storage system proposed to be built not far from his home near Waverly, S.D.** (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

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**A proposed lithium-ion energy storage system would be built near this NextEra Energy Resources wind power substation, shown on Oct. 24, 2024 along 464th Avenue northeast of Waverly, S.D.** (Photo:

Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

The American Clean Power Association, which represents the battery storage industry, said that storing electricity saves customers money and avoids black-outs. The association said Texas saved \$750 million in one month by using stored energy during an emergency and that a community in Nevada is expected to see energy bills fall by up to 20% when a new storage facility becomes fully operational.

## **Federal incentives aimed at battery projects**

Just as it has provided tax incentives for development of wind and solar power,

the federal government is subsidizing construction of battery storage systems, with funding aimed both at developing batteries for electric vehicles and for grid storage systems.

In 2022, the DOE provided \$2.8 billion in grants to manufacturers of lithium-ion batteries, with most of that money targeted at boosting batteries for electric vehicles.

To further jump-start production of battery systems, the DOE in 2024 issued \$3 billion in matching grants to companies that make energy battery storage systems or components and to urge development of new battery technologies. Overall, the DOE intends to spend \$8 billion to incentivize the energy storage battery industry.

One new effort seeks to incentivize battery construction in large and small communities across the country.

The U.S. Department of Energy in July announced a new program to offer up to \$1 million to energy companies or communities that want to develop long-duration energy storage systems. The goal is to bolster the energy grid in urban and rural areas by making it easier for industry or local communities to invest in battery storage systems, according to the agency.

"These technical assistance vouchers empower technology innovators and communities with cutting-edge long-duration energy storage solutions," Gene Rodrigues, an assistant secretary for DOE, said in a news release. "Our vision is to create a resilient energy future by bringing clean energy options directly to neighborhoods across America, ensuring reliability and equity for all."

## **No state approval or monitoring required**

Under current South Dakota law, the state has authority to approve or regulate the construction, location and operation of any energy conversion facility, solar energy facility, and wind energy facility that are 100 MWs or greater, as well as AC/DC conversion facilities and transmission facilities, according to Leah Mohr, deputy director of the PUC.

"To require a siting permit from the PUC, a battery storage facility would need to be considered generation under the definition of an 'energy conversion facility,'" she wrote. "The question of whether a battery could fall under that definition has not come before the PUC, therefore, developers and interested persons should consult their attorney for guidance."

In Codington County, the NextEra battery facility was granted a conditional use permit earlier this sum-

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mer. Spearmint has secured land rights for its Brookings County facility and has been in contact with county officials but has not yet bought land or applied for a use permit, Rood said.

## **Safety risks exist, but industry pushes safety**

Lithium-ion batteries can catch fire, and if fire breaks out within an energy storage facility, containment can be difficult, and explosions, release of toxic gasses and local evacuations can result.

Eight firefighters were injured in a 2019 explosion at an energy battery facility in Surprise, Arizona. In May 2024, it took 40 firefighters five days to contain a fire at a battery facility in San Diego because the batteries emit oxygen that can cause fires to restart even after being doused with water.

On a smaller scale, the lithium-ion batteries used in cars, bicycles and other products have caused fires and deaths. In New York City in 2023, batteries in electric bikes caught fire 267 times, leading to 18 deaths and 150 injuries.

A database of energy battery failures aggregated by the ERPI research group documented 91 failures at stationary battery facilities globally since 2011, and 33 more incidents of failure of batteries in other situations. The data shows, however, that even as battery use has risen rapidly in recent years, incidence of failures has been on the decline.

The clean power group said that battery storage facilities place a high focus on testing and reliability and are constantly monitored for safety.

Battery companies communicate with local emergency response agencies in advance to ensure proper response if an accident does occur, Rood said. Stricter regulations and improved technologies prevent fires from occurring but also from spreading from one battery compartment to another, he said.

"It's very unusual now for one to start on fire at all, but if it did, with projects built under these new codes, it's a much less impactful event," he said.

## **Batteries too close for comfort**

Howey told News Watch that he supports production of sustainable energy and even paid more to tap sustainable sources while a power customer in Minnesota. He also doesn't have a beef with the many wind turbines that surround his home but which are not located on his rural acreage. His property sits within the boundaries of NextEra's Crown Ridge II project that includes about 130 wind towers.

However, he has had difficulty getting his concerns over the proximity of the battery storage facility to his home heard by the Codington County Commission or NextEra.

"Somehow they just seemed to forget that I'm here," he said.

Howey said NextEra told him the batteries had to be built about 1,900 feet from his home because moving the facility would lead to "line loss" in which power is lost as it is carried by transmission lines.

Howey continues to work with NextEra and hopes he can receive some financial compensation for being so close to the storage facility, similar to how power companies pay annual leases to landowners who allow turbines on their land.

But he is no longer hopeful the batteries will be built farther from his home.

"I believe in it, I really believe in the whole (sustainable energy and battery storage) concept, but I just didn't think it would be so close to people's homes," he said. "But you know, in the end it's all about money, as it always is."

*This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit news organization. Read more in-depth stories at [sdnewswatch.org](http://sdnewswatch.org) and sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. Contact Bart Pfankuch at [bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org](mailto:bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org).*

## Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

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



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# MANHART

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

### DISTRICT 1

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**General Election - Nov. 5**  
**Absentee Voting has begun**

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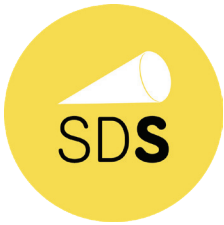
## **Groton City Council Meeting Agenda**

November 5, 2024 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. First Reading of Ordinance No. 781 – Budget Pay Plan
4. Department Reports
5. Airport Improvements – Darrell Hillestad
6. 2024 Baseball Report
7. Review Surplus Property Offers
8. First Reading of Ordinance No. 780 – 2025 Appropriations
9. Begin Accepting Applications for Skating Rink Employment
10. Minutes
11. Bills
12. Announcement: City Offices Closed on November 11, 2024, for Veteran's Day
13. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
14. First Reading of Ordinance No. 782 – 2025 Salaries
15. Adjournment



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Grassland and other conservation projects in SD receive \$83 million federal boost**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 4, 2024 5:04 PM**

Six projects in South Dakota will receive a combined \$83 million in grants from the federal government for grassland conservation and climate-smart agricultural practices, according to a recent announcement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The biggest award in South Dakota is \$24 million to Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever. Their project will fight the encroachment of eastern redcedar on grasslands by using prescribed fire to target the trees and by planting prairie grasses. The effort includes prescribed fire on 50,000 acres and other efforts to help landowners fight eastern redcedar encroachment on another 75,000 acres.

The area of focus includes lands along the Missouri, James and White River watersheds. Partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks; and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"Through the implementation of conservation practices such as prescribed fire, brush management, and prescribed grazing, we will restore grasslands for the benefit of wildlife habitat and livestock forage here in 'The Pheasant Capital,'" said Matt Gottlob, South Dakota state coordinator of Pheasants Forever, in a news release.

The grants for South Dakota are from a \$1.5 billion national initiative, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The funding comes from the 2018 farm bill and the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act.

The South Dakota projects focus on preserving grasslands, enhancing wildlife habitats, and supporting tribal-led initiatives to restore ecosystems and strengthen local economies.

Grassland conservation is seen as a "climate-smart" investment because grasslands pull heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in their deep root systems. Prairie grasslands reduce erosion and improve water retention, making the land more resilient to climate impacts like droughts and flooding.

The Nature Conservancy received about \$20 million to help fund conservation easements on 20,000 acres of grasslands in western South Dakota. The legal agreements restrict land development to protect the land's natural value. The easements allow the landowner to retain ownership and use the property within agreed-upon limitations.

The South Dakota Second Century Habitat Fund received \$11 million to support its Second Century Working Lands & Woody Habitat Program. The project will restore marginal croplands to grasslands that can be used for haying and grazing across the state.

Several projects involve Native American tribes. The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate will receive \$1.2 million to develop an index for assessing the environmental impacts of crop production on their land. The ultimate aim is to increase sustainable agricultural production on the reservation.

The Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance has been awarded \$5 million for grassland restoration. Working with 16 Native nation partners, including several in South Dakota, the alliance will identify marginal croplands suitable for restoration and support Indigenous producers in managing the lands sustainably.

The InterTribal Buffalo Council, based in Rapid City and serving tribes in South Dakota and elsewhere, received \$21 million to restore native grassland ecosystems through sustainable pasture-raised buffalo management.

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*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.*

## 'Election Day is not results day': Get ready for a wait to find out who's president

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - NOVEMBER 4, 2024 4:10 PM**

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump on Monday hopscotched across swing states and prepared for what could be an exceedingly tense election night watch as the 2024 presidential election sped to a close.

So far, more than 80.6 million Americans have voted, according to the University of Florida's Election Lab. In a presidential contest that pollsters say is virtually a toss-up, seven battleground states likely will determine the outcome of the election. The results could take days, election officials repeatedly have warned and stressed again Monday. The 2020 presidential race was called for President Joe Biden the Saturday following Election Day.

"Election Day is not results day," said Quentin Turner, the Common Cause Michigan executive director, during a Monday webinar.

Jen O'Malley Dillon, chair of the Harris-Walz campaign, made similar remarks during a Monday call with reporters, but still issued predictions as to when the campaign expects to know some results from key states.

She said the campaign understands that results could take a while based on each state's law. Some states begin counting votes after the polls close, some as they come in.

O'Malley Dillon said because of that, the campaign expects on election night to have "near complete results" for North Carolina, Michigan and Georgia, "and then partial results from Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Arizona."

She said the campaign expects by Wednesday morning to have most of the "results in from Wisconsin and additional results from Pennsylvania and potentially Michigan."

"And then on Wednesday and beyond, we expect additional results from Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada," she said. "So we think some of this stuff will trickle in, but keep in mind that some ballots will continue to be counted for many days."

Democracy groups like Common Cause said during the webinar that they are prepared for high voter turnout on Election Day.

Bob Phillips, the Common Cause North Carolina executive director, said he expects about 1 to 1.5 million voters in his state on Election Day.

"For the most part, we've seen a lot of voter enthusiasm," he said.

He added that there have been more calls on the voter help hotline than in the previous elections.

"There is definitely higher tension, more emotion, particularly among the electioneering that goes on outside the precincts, as well as some issues since this is our first major election where we've had the voter ID requirements," Phillips said.

### **It's all about Pennsylvania (almost)**

Harris is closing out her campaign in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, which offers the most electoral votes of the swing states at 19.

O'Malley Dillon said the campaign will have get-out-the-vote rallies late Monday night in the seven swing states with Harris and surrogates.

"We've believed all along this race is going to be incredibly close, and so it's really going to come down

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to mobilization, and that's why an event like tonight matters so much," she said.

Harris will head to Scranton and then to Allentown, a city with a large Puerto Rican population that Democrats have courted following racist remarks by a comedian at a Trump rally that referred to the island of Puerto Rico as "garbage." She'll then rally in Philadelphia with musical performances from The Roots and Lady Gaga among others.

Trump will make four stops in three states — starting in Raleigh, North Carolina, stopping twice in Pennsylvania at Reading and Pittsburgh and finishing in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

While at his first campaign stop in North Carolina on Monday, he told supporters that if he wins another term he will levy a 25% tariff on Mexico if migrants continue to head from that country to the U.S.-Mexico border.

"You're the first I've told this to," Trump told the crowd. "And if that doesn't work, we'll go up to 50. And if that doesn't work, we'll go to 75."

Trump will hold his election night watch party at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Palm Beach, Florida. Harris will have hers at her alma mater at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

## Polling puzzles

Polls published over the weekend still showed a tight race, but one in Iowa rattled the Trump campaign, showing that Harris had a lead in a state that the former president easily won in 2016 and 2020.

The highly regarded pollster — somewhat of a Midwestern oracle — showed that independent and women voters were breaking for Harris.

Both candidates are within the margin of error in all seven swing states meaning any of the states — Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin — could tip to either one.

Over the weekend, Harris appeared on NBC's live sketch comedy show, "Saturday Night Live." Trump also appeared on a free commercial during NBC's broadcast of a Sunday NASCAR race in compliance with the FCC's Equal Time rule.

On Sunday, while at Michigan State University, Harris pledged that she would do "everything in her power" to end the war in Gaza if she were to win the White House. Michigan has a high Arab American population that has been critical of Democrats' handling of the Israel-Hamas war, where more than 44,000 Palestinians have been killed.

During a Sunday rally in Pennsylvania, Trump told supporters that he shouldn't have left the White House after losing the 2020 presidential race and then he joked about not minding if journalists were shot while covering his campaign event.

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.*

## Recent safeguards should quash efforts to overturn election results, experts say

**It would take congressional majorities and most swing-state legislatures to upend the election**

**BY: MATT VASILOGAMBROS, STATELINE - NOVEMBER 4, 2024 11:47 AM**

Recent sweeping changes to how the nation handles election results should prevent a repeat of the near-constitutional crisis four years ago.

For months, former President Donald Trump has been laying the groundwork to challenge the results, claiming that noncitizens are voting in droves and swing-state election officials are cheating. Republicans could use those false allegations to refuse to certify election results or submit alternate slates of electors to the Electoral College.

But Trump's actions four years ago led to state and federal action: Swing-state officials have reinforced



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that the certification process is mandatory, and Congress has passed a law clarifying certification rules and procedures to prevent a repeat of Jan. 6, 2021.

Although the Trump team likely has plans to challenge the election results if he loses, those plans will fail, said David Becker, founder and executive director of the Center for Election Innovation & Research, a nonpartisan organization that advises local election officials nationwide.

"The guardrails are in place," Becker told reporters in a conference call last week. "The counties will certify, the states will certify, the governors will ascertain, the electors will meet, and Congress will count the electoral votes as they were cast."

Much of the anxiety from election officials and experts in the post-election period involves the certification of election results.

After voters cast their ballots and local election officials count them, the results are not yet official.

Local bipartisan panels — known as boards of canvassers — meet to ensure that the number of ballots cast and the number counted match. If they do, the board certifies the results. If there are discrepancies in the count, local election officials can be called in to clarify mismatched numbers.

The administrative process has long been accepted as mandatory and not subject to the whims of the local board members. If races are tight, automatic recounts are triggered in some states. Candidates can also go through the courts to contest results. But the certification process is not designed to be the venue to challenge results.

However, Trump and his allies have argued that the process is discretionary and that local board members have the right to refuse to certify an election in which they suspect widespread voter fraud or bureaucratic errors.

"They have the ability to ask questions about the results, to dig deeper, to ask for some feedback because they're putting their name on the results as having certified them," Michigan state Rep. Luke Meerman, a Republican, said in an interview.

Over the past four years, local canvassing board members in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and other states have refused to certify certain local elections, but they were swiftly met with successful legal challenges and, in some cases, criminal charges.

"We know we're going to see rogue local election officials who are poised to refuse to certify results, probably in multiple places at once," said Wendy Weiser, vice president for democracy at the nonpartisan Brennan Center for Justice.

"There is no legitimate way for a county or a state to refuse to certify results when they exist," Weiser said. "But that doesn't mean the people won't try."

## State protections

Trump is now preparing his voters and local officials who support him to reject the outcome if he loses.

In the past month, the former president has claimed that Pennsylvania is cheating "at large scale levels rarely seen before." Trump-aligned groups are also targeting local officials in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin with print ads in industry journals saying the officials don't have to certify results, ProPublica found.

"We really see the kind of dedicated attack against the system, and against voters themselves, as a clear preface for further political partisan games after everybody has voted," said Sylvia Albert, democracy and representation policy counsel for the voting rights group Common Cause, on a call with reporters last week.

Refusing to certify results would be one of the main pathways to overturn the presidential election. But courts and top state officials have confirmed that certification is mandatory.

In case after case in recent years in which a local board member balked or made allegations of fraud, either state officials or a court has stepped in.

In Michigan, the board of canvassers in Delta County initially refused to certify election results in a local race in May, after the two Republican canvassers objected. One said, without evidence, that she suspected there was wrongdoing in how the election was run.

The Michigan Department of State, led by Democrat Jocelyn Benson, then sent a letter to the county

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officials reminding them that their duty to certify is mandatory, after voters approved a constitutional amendment specifying that requirement in 2022. If they didn't certify, the letter warned, the county would be liable for "substantial" costs associated with state officials traveling to the county to complete the process. The local officials changed course and certified the election.

A Fulton County, Georgia, judge last month ruled that local election boards are legally bound to certify election results, thwarting a GOP board member's refusal to certify this year's primary. The board member, a Republican, has appealed the ruling.

Also last month, the Georgia Supreme Court for now left in place a lower court decision that blocked the State Election Board's last-minute efforts to change rules around the voting process. In an action that drew national attention, one of those rule changes would have given local election boards more discretion in the certification process, potentially leading to refusals to certify races and creating chaos.

And in Cochise County, Arizona, a Republican supervisor last month pleaded guilty to charges stemming from her refusal to certify the 2022 midterm election.

The swift reaction from state officials should give voters confidence, said Catie Kelley, the senior director of policy and strategic partnerships at the Campaign Legal Center, a bipartisan nonprofit.

"They are being very proactive and making sure that the local folks know what the law is," Kelley said in an interview with Stateline, "and making it clear what the expectations are for the folks who are certifying at the county level."

## Congressional protections

Not wanting to rely on the good faith of an official, such as former Vice President Mike Pence's unwillingness to go along with Trump's 2020 election plot, a bipartisan coalition in Congress pushed through the Electoral Count Reform Act in 2022. The law changed a statute that had been on the books for 135 years.

The law now clarifies that governors — not state legislatures — are the leaders who are tasked with certifying their state's electors for the Electoral College. Immediately, that change lowers risk of trouble this year, since the governors of the seven critical swing states are either Democrats or Republicans who have rejected fake elector schemes.

The law also sets a new timetable for certifying election results. In this election, states must finalize that work by Dec. 11. The Electoral College will meet on Dec. 17, and Congress will finalize the election on Jan. 6. Those tightened deadlines add pressure on localities to certify results.

Finally, the law raises the threshold for objecting to the certification from one U.S. House member and one senator to objections from 20% of the members in each chamber in order to trigger a debate. And the law clarifies that the vice president's role in the process is ceremonial.

The election could still be overturned, however, if majorities in both chambers of Congress and the state legislatures in swing states refuse to certify the election, triggering a "contingent election," in which each state delegation gets a single vote for president. Although the new Congress gets sworn in on Jan. 3, Republicans would likely have the edge in the state count.

In an online panel last week hosted by Democratic election lawyer Marc Elias, U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin, a Maryland Democrat and member of the select committee on the Jan. 6 attack, said he has confidence the new federal law will prevent efforts to overturn the election.

"We will be able to defend against any form of mischief that arises," Raskin said.

Raskin also said that Congress was better prepared for potential violence than it was four years ago. Security has been a key focus of state and local election officials since the last presidential election, and they've invested in new protections for their offices.

In swing states with Republican-led legislatures, such as North Carolina, officials are confident local elections will be certified.

"Even if they were to do some shenanigan at the legislature, the governor still has the right to send them to D.C.," Democratic Secretary of State Elaine Marshall told Stateline. "I'm sure there's some devious mind that might think of something, but I think we've got a reasonably tight process here in the state."

## Legal obstacles

But even with these protections, the Trump campaign and its lawyers have bombarded the courts with lawsuits challenging the validity of election procedures. Further lawsuits after the election could challenge the results or the constitutionality of the Electoral Count Reform Act.

Whether courts — including the U.S. Supreme Court — would agree with the Trump team is unclear.

Last week, the high court sided with Republican Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin in a dispute over his executive order that purged 1,600 alleged noncitizens from the voter rolls. Immigrant and voting rights groups, along with the U.S. Justice Department, opposed Youngkin, arguing eligible voters could lose their voting rights close to the election.

“What we’re seeing now is not so much litigation designed to legitimately clarify the rules,” said Becker, of the Center for Election Innovation & Research. “But we’re seeing litigation designed to set the stage for claims an election was stolen later. That would have the effect of increasing the amount of distrust in the system.”

Republican lawyers might lean on an argument in post-election lawsuits — one they put forward in 2020 — that could embolden state legislatures to assign slates of electors that differ from the popular vote of their state. However, the core of that legal theory was rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 2023 court case *Moore v. Harper*.

The “independent state legislature” theory the Supreme Court eviscerated holds that state legislatures can, without sway from courts or the governor, make election law. By that doctrine, they could select an alternative slate of electors for the Electoral College.

GOP lawyers are still using it in cases, including a recent one involving provisional ballots in Pennsylvania. Even though the Supreme Court rejected the theory, it could still play a role in challenging the Electoral College Reform Act.

In the coming weeks, as election certification makes its way through local boards of canvassers, Congress and the courts, it’s important that voters remain mindful of the information they take in during the likely long process, said Rachael Dean Wilson, managing director of Alliance for Securing Democracy, a nonpartisan initiative at the German Marshall Fund think tank that aims to bolster democratic institutions.

Disinformation will be widespread, meant to divide people in a stressful time, she said.

“The post-election period is going to be chaotic,” she said. “While you’re packing your patience to know the results of the election, you have to be patient with our system to work itself out.”

*Matt Vasilogambros covers voting rights, gun laws and Western climate policy for Stateline. He lives in San Diego, California.*

## Community health workers spread across the US, even in rural areas

**SD among states where programs help patients overcome barriers to accessing care and staying healthy**

**BY: ARIELLE ZIONTS, KFF HEALTH NEWS - NOVEMBER 4, 2024 7:00 AM**

HURON — Kelly Engebretson was excited to get fitted for a prosthetic after having part of his leg amputated. But he wasn’t sure how he’d get to the appointment.

Nah Thu Thu Win’s twin sons needed vaccinations before starting kindergarten. But she speaks little English, and the boys lacked health insurance.

William Arce and Wanda Serrano were recovering from recent surgeries. But the couple needed help sorting out their insurance and understanding their bills.

Engebretson, Win, Arce, and Serrano were fortunate to have someone to help.

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They're all paired with community health workers in Huron, a city of 14,000 people known for being home to the state fair and what's billed as the world's largest pheasant sculpture.

Three workers, employed by the Huron Regional Medical Center, help patients navigate the health system and address barriers, like poverty or unstable housing, that could keep them from getting care. Community health workers can also provide basic education on managing chronic health problems, such as diabetes or high cholesterol.

Community health worker programs are spreading across the U.S., including in rural areas and small cities as health providers and state and federal governments increasingly invest in them. These initiatives gained attention during the coronavirus pandemic and have been found to improve people's health and access to preventive care while reducing expensive hospital visits.

## 'An extension of the health care system'

Community health worker programs can address common barriers in rural areas, where people face higher rates of poverty and certain health problems, said Gabriela Boscán Fauquier, who oversees community health worker initiatives at the National Rural Health Association.

The workers are "an extension of the health care system" and serve as a link "between the formality of this health care system and the community," she said.

The programs are often based at hospital systems or community health centers. The workers have a median pay of \$23 an hour, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. Patients are typically referred to programs by clinicians who notice personal struggles or frequent visits to hospital emergency departments.

South Dakota is among the states that have recently funded community health worker programs, developed training requirements for the workers, and approved Medicaid reimbursement for their services. The state's certification program requires 200 hours of coursework and 40 hours of job shadowing.

Huron Regional Medical Center launched its initiative in fall 2022, after receiving a \$228,000 federal grant. The program is now funded by the nonprofit hospital and Medicaid reimbursements.

## Serving minority communities in Huron

Huron, a small city surrounded by rural areas, is mostly populated by white people. But thousands of Karen people — an ethnic minority from the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar — began arriving in 2006. Many are refugees. The city also has a significant Hispanic population from the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America.

Mickie Scheibe, one of Huron's community health workers, recently stopped by the house of client Kelly Engebretson. The 61-year-old hadn't been able to work since he had part of his leg amputated, due to diabetes complications.

Scheibe helps with "the hoops you've got to jump through," such as applying for Medicaid, Engebretson said.

He told Scheibe that he didn't know how he was going to get to his prosthetic fitting in Sioux Falls — a two-hour drive from home. Scheibe, 54, said she would help find him a safe ride.

She also invited Engebretson to a diabetes education program.

"Put me down as a definitely absolutely," he replied, adding that he'd invite his mother to tag along.

The same day, Scheibe's co-worker Sau-Mei Ramos visited the apartment where William Arce and Wanda Serrano live. Arce was recovering from heart surgery, while Serrano was healing from knee and shoulder operations.

The couple, both 61, moved three years ago from Puerto Rico to be near their children in Huron. Ramos, who's also from Puerto Rico, coordinated their appointments, answered their billing questions, and helped Arce find a walker and supplemental insurance.

Ramos, 29, handed Arce a pamphlet about heart health and asked him to read the section on angina, the pain that results when not enough blood flows to the heart.

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"Qué entiende?" she said, asking Arce what he understood about his condition. Arce, speaking in Spanish, responded that he knew what angina was and what symptoms to watch for.

Later that day, Paw Wah Sa, the third community health worker in town, met with client Nah Thu Thu Win, who moved to Huron in February from Myanmar with her husband and twin 6-year-olds. The Win family, like Sa, are part of the local Karen community, whose people have been persecuted under the military rulers of Myanmar, the country formerly known as Burma.

Win, 29, had assumed the kids would qualify for Medicaid. But unlike most other states, South Dakota does not immediately offer coverage to children who legally immigrated into the U.S. The boys' father hopes to eventually add them to his work-sponsored insurance.

Sa didn't want the kids to have to wait for health care. The 24-year-old previously took the twins to a free mobile dental clinic in Huron. It turned out they needed more advanced dental work, which they could get free only in Sioux Falls. Sa helped make the arrangements.

Many Karen residents and people from rural parts of Latin America had little access to health care before moving to the U.S., Sa and Ramos said. They said a major part of their job is explaining what kind of care is available, and when it's important to seek help.

The three community health workers sometimes take clients grocery shopping, to teach them how to understand labels and identify healthful food.

Boscán Fauquier, with the National Rural Health Association, said that because community health workers are familiar with the cultures they serve, they can suggest affordable food that clients are familiar with.

## Changing needs in rural America

Rural America's overall population is shrinking, but the 2020 census showed it has become more diverse as people representing ethnic minorities are drawn to jobs in industries such as farming, meatpacking, and mining. Others are attracted by rural areas' lower crime rates and cheaper housing.

Boscán Fauquier said many rural community health worker programs serve people from minority groups, who are more likely than white people to face barriers to health care.

She pointed to programs serving Native American reservations, the Black Belt region of the South, and Spanish-speaking communities, where the workers are called promotoras. But community health workers also serve rural white communities, such as those in Appalachia impacted by the opioid crisis.

Medicare, the federal health program for adults 65 or older, has been reimbursing community health worker services since January. Boscán Fauquier said advocates hope more state Medicaid programs and private insurers will allow reimbursement too.

Engebretson said he's happy to see community health workers across South Dakota, not just in big cities.

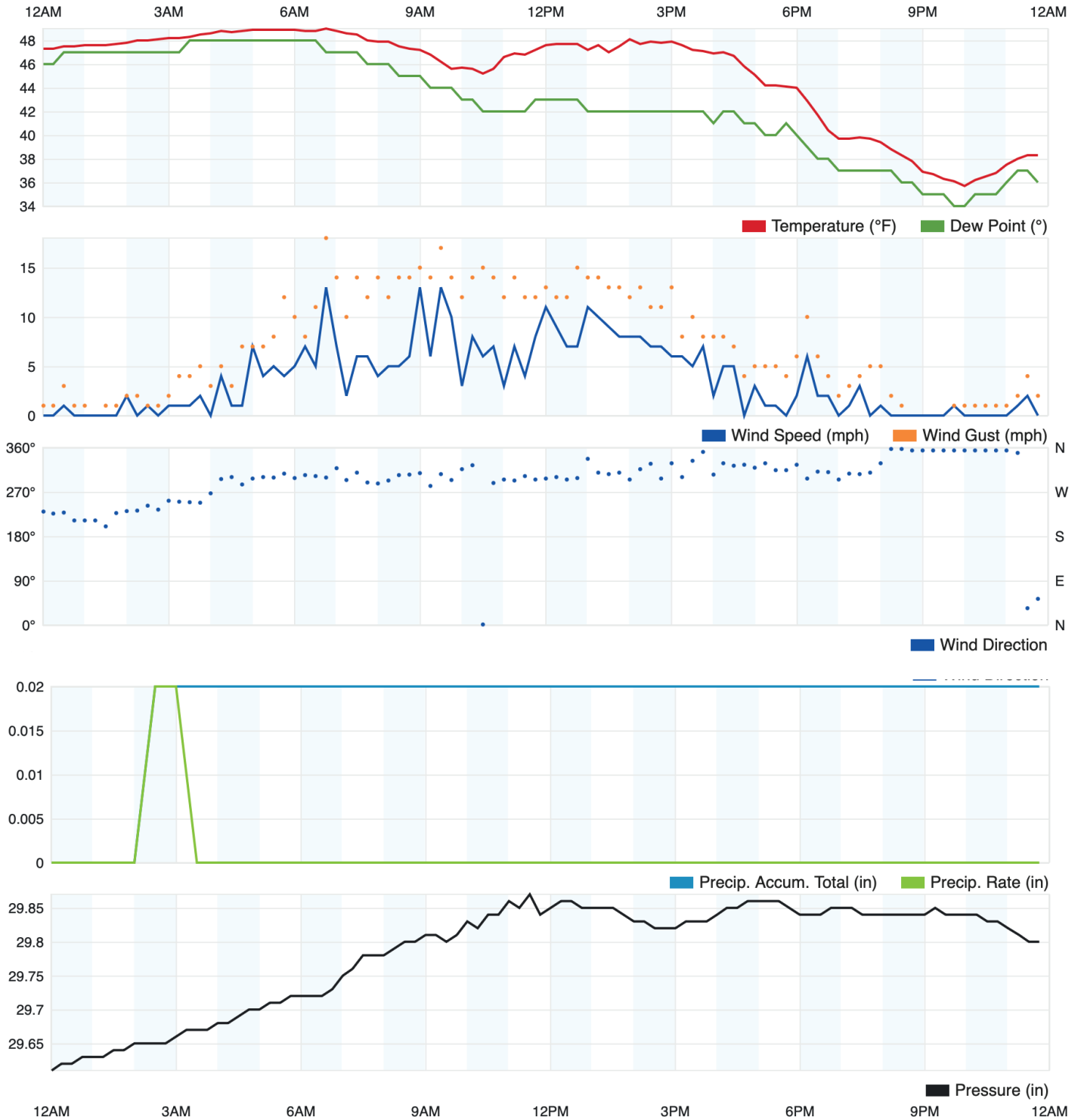
The more they "can branch out to the people, the better it would be," he said.

*Arielle Zions, rural health care correspondent for KFF Health News, is based in South Dakota. She primarily covers South Dakota and its neighboring states and tribal nations. Arielle previously worked at South Dakota Public Broadcasting, where she reported on business and economic development. Before that, she was the criminal justice reporter at the Rapid City Journal and a general assignment reporter at the Nogales International, on the border of Arizona and Mexico. She graduated from Pitzer College in Claremont, California. Arielle lives in Rapid City with her cat, Sully.*

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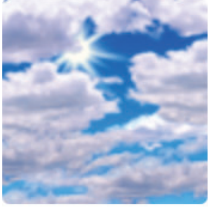


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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
				
<b>High: 45 °F</b>	<b>Low: 29 °F</b>	<b>High: 48 °F</b>	<b>Low: 26 °F</b>	<b>High: 48 °F</b>
Patchy Dense Fog then Partly Sunny	Slight Chance Rain then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny



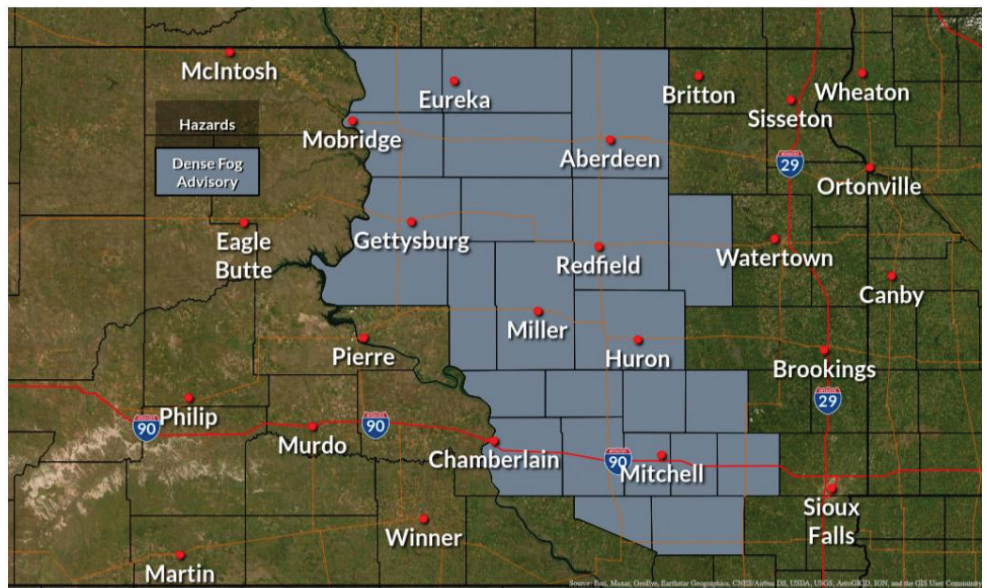
## Dense Fog Advisory

November 5, 2024  
4:11 AM

Visibility one quarter mile to one half mile because of dense fog until 9 AM CST (8 AM MST) November 5th

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 9AM CST (8AM MST) Tuesday, November 5th. The fog can cause visibilities to drop to a half 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.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 49 °F at 6:51 AM

Low Temp: 36 °F at 9:52 PM

Wind: 18 mph at 6:41 AM

Precip: : 0.02

Day length: 9 hours, 58 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 76 in 2016

Record Low: -6 in 2003

Average High: 48

Average Low: 24

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.17

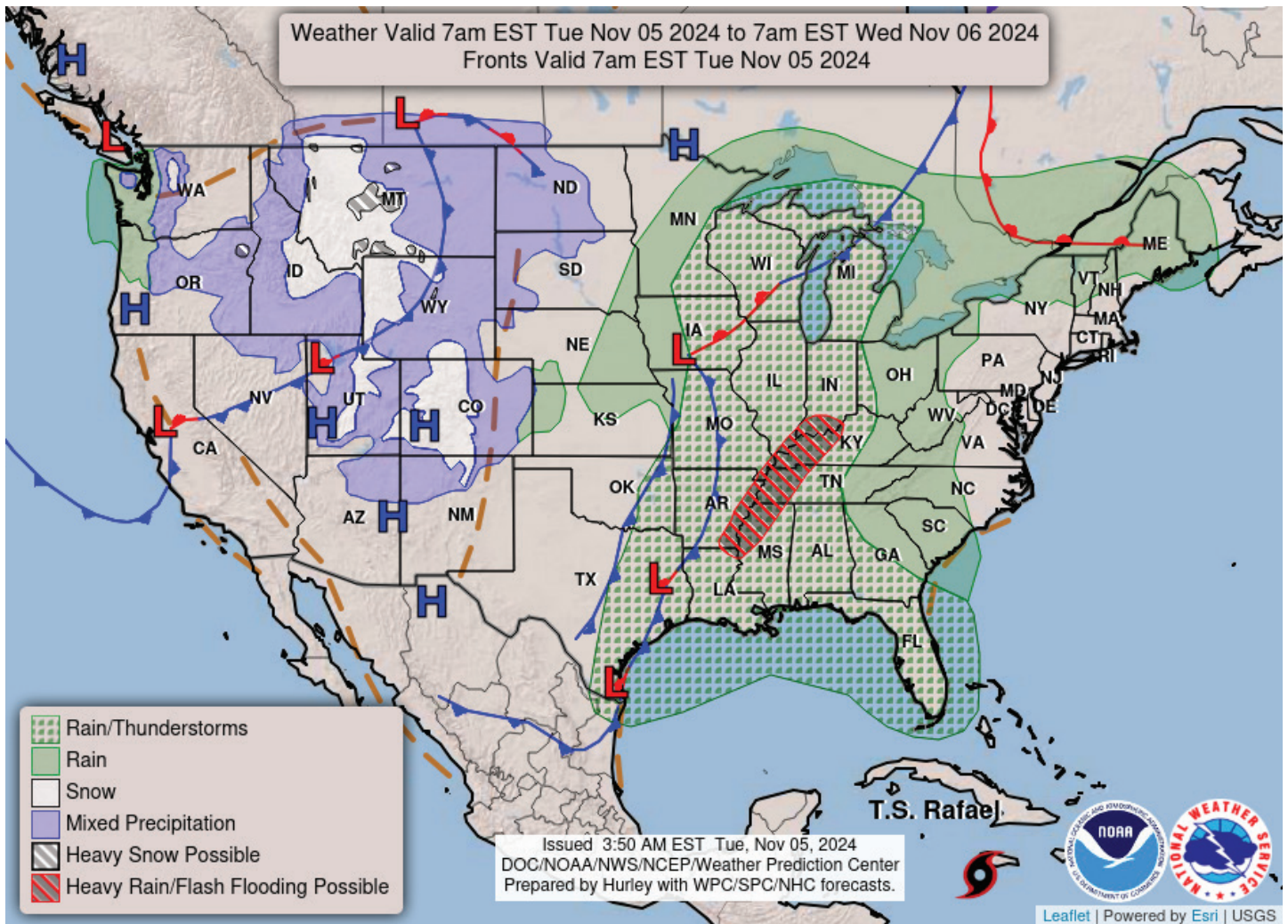
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.59

Average Precip to date: 20.64

Precip Year to Date: 20.47

Sunset Tonight: 5:15:06 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:18:17 am





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## Today in Weather History

November 5th, 1959:

A strong cold front brought near blizzard conditions and bitterly cold temperatures. As a result, high temperatures in many locations only reached the upper teens. Some daytime highs include; 19 degrees in Pierre and Waubay; 18 degrees in Aberdeen, Faulkton, Kennebec, Pollock, and Roscoe; 17 degrees in Eureka, Gettysburg, Mobridge, and Watertown; and 15 degrees in Timber Lake and near McIntosh. Some record or near-record lows also occurred near midnight on the 5th. Some lows include; 2 degrees in Aberdeen; 1 degree near McIntosh; 0 degrees in Timber Lake and Pollock; and 2 degrees below zero in Kennebec.

1894: A significant snowstorm impacted New England on November 5th through 6th. It formed off the New Jersey coast on the 5th and passed east of Connecticut with rapidly increasing heavy rain, snow, and high winds. The heavy snow and high winds caused significant damage to trees and brought down telegraph poles by the hundreds. As a result, all southern New England's telegraph and telephone services were crippled, and fallen poles and trees delayed railroad trains.

1961 - Strong Santa Ana winds fanned the flames of the Bel Air and Brentwood fires in southern California destroying many homes. At 10 PM the Los Angeles Civic Center reported a temperature of 74 degrees along with a dew point of 5 degrees. On the 6th, Burbank reported a relative humidity of three percent. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - A slow moving storm produced five to nine inch rains across northern Georgia causing the Toccoa Dam to burst. As the earthen dam collapsed the waters rushed through the Toccoa Falls Bible College killing three persons in the dorms. Thirty-eight persons perished at a trailer park along the stream. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Low pressure off the California coast produced stormy weather in the southwestern U.S. Flash flooding stranded 8000 persons in the Death Valley National Park of southern California. Thunderstorms over southern Nevada produced dime size hail and wind gusts to 68 mph around Las Vegas. Unseasonably mild weather in the northeastern U.S. was replaced with snow and gale force winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988: An F1 tornado touched down south of Altoona near Hollidaysburg. Several homes were damaged with roofs torn off and broken windows, numerous trees were toppled, and garages and other outbuildings were destroyed.

1988 - A powerful low pressure system produced high winds from the Great Plains to New England, and produced heavy snow in northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Winds gusted to 64 mph at Knoxville TN, and reached 80 mph at Pleasant Valley VT. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Temperatures warmed into the 80s across much of Texas. Highs of 86 degrees at Abilene, Fort Worth and San Angelo were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1991: Nearly 3,000 individuals were killed in the Philippines when Tropical Storm Thelma produced massive flooding on this day. The storm was the second major disaster of the year as Mount Pinatubo violently erupted on June 12th.

2002 - Severe thunderstorms moved across southeastern Alabama and the Florida panhandle, producing wind damage and several tornadoes. A tornado struck the Alabama town of Abbeville killing 2 people and injuring 25 (Associated Press).

2017: A classic Tornado Debris Signature (TBS) was observed in Washington County, Indiana.



## ANSWERING THE RIGHT QUESTION

A young student was sitting before Socrates anxiously wanting to learn from “the master.” With a penetrating gaze Socrates asked, “Where can I find the best things in life?”

The young student was struck with the breadth of the question. He thought of the various places that had the best fabrics and finest robes. Then he thought of the marketplaces that had the finest merchandise. Then he thought of the restaurants that had the best food and drinks.

As he was about to answer, Socrates held up his hand as if to interrupt the student’s thoughts and asked, “Must we not first, however, ask what the best things are?” That question changed Plato’s life forever.

David once said, “You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence, and the pleasures of living with you forever.”

Most individuals spend most of their time searching for the “best things in life” – things that will bring them joy, satisfaction and happiness. He realized that in spite of everything he possessed, God was the one who could make a difference in life and bring him peace and completeness. He realized that only God would be able to comfort him in his moments of distress and discouragement.

Everything in life is temporary except God. We must make worshiping Him the best thing in our lives.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to place You at the center of our lives. May we find contentment within us knowing that we have found the way, the truth and the life. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. Psalm 16

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

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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.01.24

11 22 42 46 51 4

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$303,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 19 Mins

DRAW: 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.24

3 9 12 16 52 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$13,830,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 34

DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.24

8 18 28 36 43 6

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 49 Mins

DRAW: 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.02.24

9 14 22 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$86,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 49

DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.24

8 14 16 34 51 14

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 18

DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.24

6 18 33 48 53 21

Power Play: 10x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$75,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 18

DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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## Upcoming Groton Events

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

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## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### Paul Bruns' 14 points lead South Dakota past Southern 93-79

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Paul Bruns' 14 points helped South Dakota defeat Southern 93-79 on Monday night in a season opener.

Bruns shot 4 of 8 from the field, including 3 for 6 from 3-point range, and went 3 for 3 from the line for the Coyotes. Chase Forte scored 13 points while shooting 5 of 7 from the field and 2 for 7 from the line and added six assists and four steals. Isaac Bruns shot 5 for 11, including 0 for 4 from beyond the arc to finish with 12 points.

The Jaguars were led by Tidjiane Dioumassi, who posted 30 points. Southern also got 11 points and nine rebounds from Damariee Jones. Brentay Noel finished with 11 points, six rebounds and two blocks.

The Associated Press created this story using technology provided by Data Skrive and data from Spor-tradar.

### Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Crazy Horse def. Oelrichs, 25-0, 25-0, 25-0

Rapid City Central def. Sturgis Brown High School, 2-1

SDHSAA Playoffs=

Class B=

Region 1=

Play-In=

Tiospa Zina def. Waubay/Summit, 19-25, 25-19, 28-26, 18-25, 15-11

Waverly-South Shore def. Leola-Frederick High School, 18-25, 25-23, 25-22, 25-18

Region 2=

Play-In=

Arlington def. James Valley Christian School, 25-9, 25-10, 25-14

Iroquois-Lake Preston def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-23, 31-29, 25-22

Region 3=

Play-In=

Canistota def. Howard, 25-13, 25-22, 25-20

Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Flandreau Indian, 25-3, 25-4, 25-7

Region 4=

Play-In=

Alcester-Hudson def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-20, 21-25, 25-14, 25-17

Freeman def. Scotland, 25-17, 25-18, 25-15

Irene-Wakonda def. Freeman Academy-Marion, 20-25, 25-23, 25-17, 25-23

Region 5=

Play-In=

Kimball-White Lake def. Colome, 25-9, 25-13, 25-12

Lower Brule def. Marty, 25-23, 25-19, 25-23

Region 6=

Quarterfinal=

Play-In=

Sully Buttes def. Wakpala, 25-8, 25-18, 25-12

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Tiospaye Topa def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-14, 25-23, 29-27

Region 7=

Quarterfinal=

Play-In=

Philip def. New Underwood, 25-15, 25-7, 25-23

Region 8=

Quarterfinal=

Play-In=

McIntosh High School def. Takini, 25-15, 25-19, 25-13

McLaughlin def. Bison, 25-13, 14-25, 25-21, 25-16

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

## Sayler's 18 lead South Dakota State over McNeese 80-73

By The Associated Press undefined

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Joe Sayler's 18 points helped South Dakota State defeat McNeese 80-73 on Monday night.

Sayler shot 7 for 13, including 4 for 7 from beyond the arc for the Jackrabbits. Oscar Cluff added 14 points while going 6 of 10 and 2 of 3 from the free-throw line while they also had 14 rebounds. Owen Larson had 14 points and shot 5 for 11, including 4 for 9 from beyond the arc.

Alyn Breed led the Cowboys in scoring, finishing with 18 points and three steals. Javohn Garcia added 15 points for McNeese. Christian Shumate also had 11 points and nine rebounds.

## Bal scores 24, Santa Clara downs Saint Louis 85-78 in Field of 68 Showcase

By The Associated Press undefined

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Adama Bal scored 24 points to help Santa Clara defeat Saint Louis 85-78 on Monday night in a season opener.

Bal shot 7 of 13 from the field, including 3 for 7 from 3-point range, and went 7 for 8 from the line for the Broncos. Camaron Tongue scored 18 points while shooting 6 of 11 from the field and 5 for 5 from the line and added seven rebounds. Christoph Tilly shot 6 for 7 (2 for 3 from 3-point range) and 3 of 4 from the free-throw line to finish with 17 points.

The Billikens were led in scoring by Isaiah Swope, who finished with 24 points and five assists. Kellen Thames and Robbie Avila each had 16 points.

Santa Clara took the lead for good with 41 seconds remaining in the first half. Bal led Santa Clara with 17 points in the first half to help put them ahead 48-41 at the break. Tilly scored a team-high 13 points after the break.

## Charleston secures 90-80 victory against Southern Illinois

By The Associated Press undefined

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Ante Brzovic's 27 points helped Charleston defeat Southern Illinois 90-80 on Monday in a season opener.

Brzovic also contributed nine rebounds for the Cougars. Deywilk Tavarez scored 17 points while shooting 5 for 7 (3 for 3 from 3-point range) and 4 of 4 from the free-throw line. CJ Fulton went 6 of 12 from the field (3 for 6 from 3-point range) to finish with 17 points, while adding seven assists.

Elijah Elliott led the way for the Salukis with 23 points and three steals. Southern Illinois also got 14 points and two steals from Ali Abdou Dibba. Kennard Davis had 12 points and three steals.

Charleston led Southern Illinois at the half, 45-42, with Brzovic (14 points) its high scorer before the

break. Charleston took the lead for good with 7:44 left in the second half on a layup from Brzovic to make it a 73-71 game.

## **An Israeli airstrike kills 20 people in northern Gaza, Palestinian officials say**

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli airstrike in northern Gaza has killed at least 20 people, mostly women and children, Palestinian officials said Tuesday, as Israel wages a nearly monthlong air and ground operation in what was already the most isolated and heavily destroyed part of the territory.

The strike late Monday hit a home where several displaced families were sheltering in the town of Beit Lahiya, near the border with Israel, according to Hossam Abu Safiya, the director of the recently raided and barely functioning Kamal Adwan Hospital, which received the casualties.

The Israeli military said it targeted a weapons storage facility from which a militant had operated, and that "numerous steps were taken to mitigate the risk of harming civilians."

The dead included eight women and six children, according to a list provided by the Gaza Health Ministry's emergency service. Separate strikes elsewhere in Gaza early Tuesday killed another 10 people, according to health officials.

Israel launched the offensive in the north after saying Hamas militants had regrouped there. The army has returned to several areas of Gaza multiple times after previous operations, as Hamas continues to carry out hit-and-run attacks on troops and fire occasional rockets into Israel.

The military has ordered the complete evacuation of Beit Lahiya, the nearby town of Beit Hanoun and the urban Jabaliya refugee camp, and has allowed almost no humanitarian aid into the area for over a month. That has drawn rebukes from the Biden administration, which has warned that U.S. laws might force it to curb military aid to Israel if more aid is not allowed in.

Tens of thousands of people have fled to nearby Gaza City in the latest wave of displacement within the besieged territory. Around 90% of the population of 2.3 million have fled during the war, often multiple times.

The three hospitals serving the area have been largely inaccessible because of the fighting, and ambulances have stopped operating. Israeli troops raided Kamal Adwan Hospital last month, saying Hamas militants were sheltering there, allegations denied by Palestinian health officials.

The offensive has raised fears among Palestinians that Israel is implementing a surrender-or-starve plan for northern Gaza proposed by former generals, in which civilians would be ordered out, aid would be cut off and anyone remaining would be considered a fighter.

The Israeli military has denied receiving such orders, but the government has not said whether it is adopting part or all of the plan.

Palestinian officials said a separate wave of Israeli strikes early Tuesday killed 10 people, including four children and two women.

One strike hit a house in the Tufah neighborhood in Gaza City, killing two children and their parents, according to the Health Ministry's emergency service. Two other children were wounded, it said.

In the central town of Zuweida, an Israeli airstrike hit a tent where a displaced family was sheltering, killing four people, including a mother and her two children, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the nearby city of Deir al-Balah. Another strike hit a house in Deir al-Balah, killing two people, the hospital said. An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the hospital morgue.

The Israeli military says it only targets militants and accuses them of hiding among civilians. It rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, taking another 250 people hostage. Around 100 captives are still inside Gaza, about a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry,



which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its toll but says over half of those killed were women and children.

## **Tropical Storm Rafael spins toward the Cayman Islands as Cuba prepares for hurricane hit**

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Tropical Storm Rafael chugged toward the Cayman Islands on Tuesday and was forecast to strengthen into a hurricane en route to Cuba.

The storm was located 105 miles (170 kilometers) southwest of Kingston, Jamaica, early Tuesday. It had maximum sustained winds of 60 mph (95 kph) and was moving northwest at 13 mph (20 kph), according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

"Rafael is forecast to become a hurricane in the northwestern Caribbean near the Cayman Islands with further strengthening before it makes landfall in Cuba," the center said.

The storm is expected to move near Jamaica on Tuesday morning, be near or over the Cayman Islands on Tuesday night and be near or over western Cuba on Wednesday.

A hurricane warning is in effect for the Cayman Islands and the Cuban provinces of Pinar del Rio, Artemisa, La Habana, Mayabeque, Matanzas and the Isle of Youth. A tropical storm warning is in effect for Jamaica and the Cuban provinces of Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus and Ciego de Avila. A tropical storm watch is in effect for the Cuban provinces of Camaguey and Las Tunas and the Lower and Middle Florida Keys from Key West to west of the Channel 5 Bridge, as well as Dry Tortugas.

"The storm is currently situated in an atmospheric and oceanic environment that is quite conducive for strengthening," the hurricane center said.

Rafael is expected to pass near or over the Cayman Islands late Tuesday, with officials closing schools and government offices as they urged residents to prepare. Jamaica also closed down as a precaution, with the storm's outer winds battering the island late Monday.

Rafael was forecast to approach Cuba on Wednesday. Cuban authorities said Monday night that some 37,000 people are under evacuation orders in far eastern Cuba, in the province of Guantanamo, due to bad weather.

The island is still struggling to recover from Hurricane Oscar, which battered the island about two weeks ago after making landfall in the eastern part of Cuba, killing at least six people. The storm also coincided with a large-scale blackout on the island.

Forecasters warned Rafael would unleash heavy rains across the western Caribbean that could lead to flooding and mudslides, with totals of 3 to 6 inches (7 to 15 centimeters) and up to 10 inches (25 cm) expected locally in Jamaica and parts of Cuba.

Heavy rainfall also was expected to spread north into Florida and nearby areas of the southeast U.S. during the middle to late part of the week. A few tornadoes also were expected Wednesday over the Keys and southwesternmost Florida mainland.

Rafael is the 17th named storm of the season.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted the 2024 hurricane season was likely to be well above average, with between 17 and 25 named storms. The forecast called for as many as 13 hurricanes and four major hurricanes.

An average Atlantic hurricane season produces 14 named storms, seven of them hurricanes and three major hurricanes.

## **Boeing factory strike ends as workers vote to accept contract**

By DAVID KOENIG, LINDSEY WASSON and HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Factory workers at Boeing voted to accept a contract offer and end their strike after more than seven weeks, clearing the way for the aerospace giant to resume production of its bestselling airliner and generate much-needed cash.

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Leaders of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers district in Seattle said 59% of members who cast ballots agreed to approve the company's fourth formal offer and the third put to a vote. The deal includes a 38% wage increase over four years, and ratification and productivity bonuses.

However, Boeing refused to meet strikers' demand to restore a company pension plan that was frozen nearly a decade ago.

The contract's ratification on the eve of Election Day cleared the way for a major U.S. manufacturer and government contractor to restart Pacific Northwest assembly lines that the walkout idled for 53 days.

Bank of America analysts estimated last month that Boeing was losing about \$50 million a day during the now-ended strike, which did not affect a nonunion plant in South Carolina where the company makes 787s.

Boeing CEO Kelly Ortberg said in a message to employees that he was pleased to have reached an agreement.

"While the past few months have been difficult for all of us, we are all part of the same team," Ortberg said. "We will only move forward by listening and working together. There is much work ahead to return to the excellence that made Boeing an iconic company."

According to the union, the 33,000 workers it represents can return to work as soon as Wednesday or as late as Nov. 12. Ortberg has said it might take "a couple of weeks" to resume production in part because some workers might need retraining.

The average annual pay of Boeing machinists is currently \$75,608 and eventually will rise to \$119,309 under the new contract, according to the company. The union said the compounded value of the promised pay raise would amount to an increase of more than 43% over the life of the agreement.

"It's time for us to come together. This is a victory," IAM District 751 President Jon Holden told members while announcing the tally late Monday. "You stood strong and you stood tall and you won."

Reactions were mixed even among union members who voted to accept the contract.

Although she voted "yes," Seattle-based calibration specialist Eep Bolaño said the outcome was "most certainly not a victory." Bolaño said she and her fellow workers made a wise but infuriating choice to accept the offer.

"We were threatened by a company that was crippled, dying, bleeding on the ground, and us as one of the biggest unions in the country couldn't even extract two-thirds of our demands from them. This is humiliating," she said.

For other workers like William Gardiner, a lab lead in calibration services, the revised offer was a cause for celebration.

"I'm extremely pumped over this vote," said Gardiner, who has worked for Boeing for 13 years. "We didn't fix everything — that's OK. Overall, it's a very positive contract."

Union leaders had endorsed the latest proposal, saying they thought they had gotten all they could through negotiations and the strike. Along with the wage increase, the new contract gives each worker a \$12,000 ratification bonus and retains a performance bonus the company wanted to eliminate.

"It is time for our members to lock in these gains and confidently declare victory," the local union district said before the vote. "We believe asking members to stay on strike longer wouldn't be right as we have achieved so much success."

President Joe Biden congratulated the machinists and Boeing for coming to an agreement that he said supports fairness in the workplace and improves workers' ability to retire with dignity. The contract, he said, is important for Boeing's future as "a critical part of America's aerospace sector."

Biden's acting labor secretary, Julie Su, intervened in the negotiations several times, including when Boeing made its latest offer last week.

A continuing strike would have plunged Boeing into further financial peril and uncertainty. Last month, Ortberg announced plans to lay off about 17,000 people and a stock sale to prevent the company's credit rating from being cut to junk status.

The strike began Sept. 13 with an overwhelming 94.6% rejection of the company's offer to raise pay by 25% over four years — far less than the union's original demand for 40% wage increases over three years.

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Machinists voted down another offer — 35% raises over four years, and still no revival of pensions — on Oct. 23, the same day that Boeing reported a third-quarter loss of more than \$6 billion.

The contract rejections reflected bitterness that built up after union concessions and small pay increases over the past decade.

The labor standoff — the first strike by Boeing machinists since an eight-week walkout in 2008 — was the latest setback in a volatile year for the aerospace giant. The 2008 strike lasted eight weeks and cost the company about \$100 million daily in deferred revenue. A 1995 strike lasted 10 weeks.

Boeing came under several federal investigations this year after a door plug blew off a 737 Max plane during an Alaska Airlines flight in January. Federal regulators put limits on Boeing airplane production that they said would last until they felt confident about manufacturing safety at the company.

The door-plug incident renewed concerns about the safety of the 737 Max. Two of the planes had crashed less than five months apart in 2018 and 2019, killing 346 people. The CEO at the time, whose efforts to fix the company failed, announced in March that he would step down. In July, Boeing agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud for deceiving regulators who approved the 737 Max.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Monday's vote puts Boeing's future back on more solid footing.

"Washington is home to the world's most skilled aerospace workers, and they understandably took a stand for the respect and compensation they deserve," Inslee said in a statement congratulating the workers.

## Harris and Trump set sights on Pennsylvania in final push before Election Day

By JILL COLVIN, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and BILL BARROW Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Kamala Harris and Donald Trump closed out this year's presidential race with a fierce battle for Pennsylvania on Monday, making their final pitch to voters across a state that could prove decisive in the campaign for the White House.

Harris ended her night in Philadelphia at the art museum steps made famous in the movie "Rocky," where she said "the momentum is on our side." She also rallied with supporters in Allentown, Scranton and Pittsburgh, and she swung through Reading to visit a Puerto Rican restaurant and do a little canvassing herself, knocking on doors alongside campaign volunteers.

"It's the day before the election and I just wanted to come by and say I hope to earn your vote," Harris told one woman, who said she had already cast a ballot for the Democratic nominee.

Trump started the day in North Carolina and finished it in Michigan, but he spoke in Reading and Pittsburgh in between. The former president delivered stemwinders at each stop, blending false claims about voter fraud with warnings about migrants committing crimes and promises to revitalize the United States.

"With your vote tomorrow, we can fix every single problem our country faces and lead America, and indeed the whole world, to new heights of glory," he said.

While Harris focused on optimism about the future and never mentioned Trump by name, the Republican nominee excoriated his opponent at every turn. His running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, followed Trump's lead during his own rally in Atlanta, telling the crowd that "we are going to take out the trash in Washington, D.C., and the trash's name is Kamala Harris."

In his final rally, Trump called former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat who led the House when it impeached him twice, a "crazy, horrible human being" and barely restrained himself from using a sexist slur.

"She's a crooked person, she's a bad person, evil," Trump said. "She's an evil, sick, crazy — oh no. It starts with a b, but I won't say it. I want to say it."

The last day of campaigning was an appropriately frenetic ending to a presidential race that has defied expectations at every turn.

Trump was convicted during a felony trial involving hush money payments and survived two assassination attempts. He remains under indictment for trying to overturn the last presidential election, which he lost to Joe Biden.

Harris became Democrats' replacement candidate this summer when Biden was pushed off the ticket

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and forced to abandon his reelection bid after stumbling badly in his debate with Trump.

One of the few constants in the campaign has been how close it's remained. The election is expected to be decided by razor-thin margins, and the results may not be known for days.

Pennsylvania has the most Electoral College votes of any battleground state, making it the top prize of the campaign. A victory there would clear a path to White House for either candidate.

"You are going to make the difference in this election," Harris said in Allentown.

About 30 miles away in Reading, Trump told supporters that "if we win Pennsylvania, we win the whole ball of wax."

In Pittsburgh, Trump delivered what his campaign aides described as his closing argument after his previous attempt — a mass rally at Madison Square Garden in New York -- was derailed by crude and racist jokes. He has also veered into invocations of violence and said he "shouldn't have left" the White House after he was voted out.

"Over the past four years, Americans have suffered one catastrophic failure, betrayal and humiliation after another," Trump said. He added that "we do not have to settle for weakness, incompetence, decline, and decay."

The crowd exploded in cheers when Trump said the country should tell Harris, "You're fired," his catchphrase from "The Apprentice," the reality television show that made him a nationally recognized star.

Harris arrived in Pittsburgh while Trump's rally was underway. By the time she finished her succinct remarks, he was still talking.

"We must finish strong," Harris said. "Make no mistake, we will win."

The day was further evidence of the ripple effects from Trump's Madison Square Garden event, where the comedian Tony Hinchcliffe referred to Puerto Rico as a "floating island of garbage." Southeastern Pennsylvania, which was visited by both candidates on Monday, is home to thousands of Latinos, including a sizable Puerto Rican population.

"It was absurd," said German Vega, a Dominican American who lives in Reading and became a U.S. citizen in 2015. "It bothered so many people — even many Republicans. It wasn't right, and I feel that Trump should have apologized to Latinos."

But Emilio Feliciano, 43, waited outside Reading's Santander Arena for a chance to take a photo of Trump's motorcade. He dismissed the comments about Puerto Rico despite his family being Puerto Rican, saying he cares about the economy and that's why he will vote for Trump.

"Is the border going to be safe? Are you going to keep crime down? That's what I care about," he said.

While in Reading, Harris visited Old San Juan Cafe with New York Rep. Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, who has Puerto Rican heritage.

Supporters chanted "Sí se puede" and "Kamala" as the vice president's motorcade pulled up. Once inside, Harris chatted with some diners, even mixing in "gracias" and a few Spanish words. The vice president later ordered cassava, yellow rice and pork, saying, "I'm very hungry" as she noted that she's been too busy campaigning to find time for many meals.

"I stand here proud of my long-standing commitment to Puerto Rico and her people," she told her crowd in Allentown. Harris promised to be "a president for all Americans."

Trump, meanwhile, stuck to talking about his proposed crackdown on immigration while speaking in Reading. He called to the stage Patty Morin, the mother of 37-year-old Rachel Morin, who was found dead a day after she went missing during a trip to go hiking. Officials say the suspect in her death, Victor Antonio Martinez Hernandez, entered the U.S. illegally after allegedly killing a woman in his home country of El Salvador.

About 77 million Americans have voted early. A victory by either side would be unprecedented.

Trump winning would make him the first incoming president to have been indicted and convicted of a felony. He would gain the power to end other federal investigations pending against him. Trump would also become only the second president in history to win nonconsecutive White House terms, after Grover Cleveland in the late 19th century.

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Harris is vying to become the first woman, first Black woman and first person of South Asian descent to reach the Oval Office — four years after she broke the same barriers in national office by becoming Biden's second in command.

Heading into Monday, Harris has mostly stopped mentioning Trump by name, calling him instead "the other guy." She is promising to solve problems and seek consensus.

Harris campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon said on a call with reporters that not saying Trump's name was deliberate because voters "want to see in their leader an optimistic, hopeful, patriotic vision for the future."

On her final day of campaigning, Harris took a rare trip down memory lane by talking about being a longshot candidate for San Francisco district attorney in 2003, her first elected office.

"I'd walk to the front of the grocery store, outside, and I would stand up my ironing board because, you see, an ironing board makes a really great standing desk," the vice president said, recalling how she would tape her posters to the outside of the board, fill the top with flyers and "require people to talk to me as they walked in and out."

Trump seemed nostalgic as well.

"It's sad because we've been doing this for nine years," he said in Pittsburgh after inviting members of his family to join him onstage.

He held his final rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he also concluded his campaigns in 2016 and 2020. He savored the moment, stopping every few steps as he made his way to the stage, soaking in an explosion of applause. A few in the crowd waited nearly 18 hours, at times in the rain, for a rally that finally began after midnight and ended after 2 a.m.

"It's unbelievable," Trump said when he started talking after standing wordless at his lectern for an extended ovation. "Think of it. This is it. This is the last one that we'll have to do."

## The final day of voting in the US is here, after tens of millions have already cast their ballots

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Election Day 2024 arrived Tuesday — with tens of millions of Americans having already cast their ballots. Those include record numbers in Georgia, North Carolina and other battleground states that could decide the winner.

The early turnout in Georgia, which has flipped between the Republican and Democratic nominees in the previous two presidential elections, has been so robust — over 4 million voters — that a top official in the secretary of state's office said the big day could look like a "ghost town" at the polls.

As of Monday, Associated Press tracking of advance voting nationwide showed roughly 82 million ballots already cast — slightly more than half the total number of votes in the presidential election four years earlier. That's driven partly by Republican voters, who were casting early ballots at a higher rate than in recent previous elections after a campaign by former President Donald Trump and the Republican National Committee to counter the Democrats' longstanding advantage in the early vote.

Despite long lines in some places and a few hiccups that are common to all elections, early in-person and mail voting proceeded without any major problems.

That included in the parts of western North Carolina hammered last month by Hurricane Helene. State and local election officials, benefiting from changes made by the Republican-controlled legislature, pulled off a herculean effort to ensure residents could cast their ballots as they dealt with power outages, lack of water and washed out roads.

By the time early voting in North Carolina had ended on Saturday, over 4.4 million voters — or nearly 57% of all registered voters in the state — had cast their ballots. As of Monday, turnout in the 25 western counties affected by the hurricane was even stronger at 59% of registered voters, state election board Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell said.

Brinson Bell called the voters and election workers in the hurricane-hit counties "an inspiration to us all."

Besides the hurricanes in North Carolina and Florida, the most worrisome disruptions to the election

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season so far were arson attacks that damaged ballots in two drop boxes near the Oregon-Washington border. Authorities there were searching for the person responsible.

The absence of any significant, widespread problems has not stopped Trump, the Republican nominee, or the RNC, which is now under his sway, from making numerous claims of fraud or election interference during the early voting period, a possible prelude to challenges after Election Day.

He has mischaracterized an investigation underway in Pennsylvania into roughly 2,500 potentially fraudulent voter registration applications by saying one of the counties was "caught with 2600 Fake Ballots and Forms, all written by the same person." The investigation is into registration applications; there is no indication that ballots are involved.

In Georgia, Republicans sought to prohibit voters from returning mailed ballots to their local election office by the close of polls on Election Day, votes that are allowed under state law. A judge rejected their lawsuit over the weekend.

Trump and Republicans also have warned about the possibility that Democrats are recruiting masses of noncitizens to vote, a claim they have made without evidence and that runs counter to the data, including from Republican secretaries of state. Research has consistently shown that noncitizens registering to vote is rare. Any noncitizen who does faces the potential of felony charges and deportation, a significant disincentive.

One case of noncitizen voting was caught during early voting last month and resulted in felony charges in Michigan after a student from China cast an illegal early ballot.

This is the first presidential vote since Trump lost to Joe Biden four years ago and began various attempts to circumvent the outcome and remain in power. That climaxed with the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol to halt certification of the results after Trump told his supporters to "fight like hell."

Even now, a solid majority of Republicans believe Trump's lie that Biden was not legitimately elected, despite reviews, audits and recounts in the battleground states that all affirmed Biden's win. A survey last month from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed Republicans remain much more skeptical than Democrats that their ballots will be counted accurately this year.

Seeking to rebuild voter confidence in a system targeted with false claims of widespread fraud, Republican lawmakers in more than a dozen states since 2020 have passed new voting restrictions. Those rules include shortening the window to apply or return a mail ballot, reducing the availability of ballot drop boxes and adding ID requirements.

On the last weekend before Election Day, Trump continued to falsely claim the election was being rigged against him and said a presidential winner should be declared on election night, before all the ballots are counted.

Vice President Kamala Harris urged voters not to fall for Trump's tactic of casting doubt on elections. The Democratic nominee told supporters at a weekend rally in Michigan that the tactic was intended to suggest to people "that if they vote, their vote won't matter." Instead, she urged people who had already cast ballots to encourage their friends to do the same.

Through four years of election lies and voting-related conspiracy theories, local election officials have faced harassment and even death threats. That has prompted high turnover and led to heightened security for election offices and polling sites that includes panic buttons and bullet-proof glass.

While there have been no major reports of any malicious cyberactivity affecting election offices, foreign actors have been active in using fake social media profiles and websites to drum up partisan vitriol and disinformation. In the final weeks, U.S. intelligence officials have attributed to Russia multiple fake videos alleging election fraud in presidential swing states.

On the eve of Election Day, they issued a joint statement with federal law enforcement agencies warning that Russia in particular was ramping up its influence operations, including in ways that could incite violence, and likely would continue those efforts well after the votes have been cast.

Jen Easterly, the nation's top election security official, urged Americans to rely on state and local election officials for information about elections.

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"This is especially important as we are in an election cycle with an unprecedented amount of disinformation, including disinformation being aggressively peddled and amplified by our foreign adversaries at a greater scale than ever before," she said. "We cannot allow our foreign adversaries to have a vote in our democracy."

## **Puerto Rico holds general election that promises to be historic**

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Puerto Rico is holding elections that will be historic regardless of which of the top two gubernatorial candidates wins.

If Jenniffer González of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party wins Tuesday's election, it will mark the first time in the island's history that the party secures three consecutive terms.

If Juan Dalmau, who is running for Puerto Rico's Independence Party and Citizen Victory Movement, wins, it will be the first win for a candidate not representing either of the two main parties that have dominated the island's politics for decades.

Trailing González and Dalmau in polls is Jesús Manuel Ortiz of the Popular Democratic Party, which supports the island's territorial status. Also running is Javier Jiménez of Project Dignity, a conservative party created in 2019.

For decades, the New Progressive Party and the Popular Democratic Party would receive at least 90% of all votes, but that began to change in 2016, with newer parties attracting more voters amid economic and political turmoil.

"That has been a very big change," said Jorge Schmidt Nieto, a political analyst and university professor.

Delayed results

Results are not expected late Tuesday, with analysts warning it might be a couple of days before that happens. During the 2020 elections, it took officials four days to release preliminary results.

Puerto Rico's State Elections Commission is still counting more than 220,000 early and absentee votes it received, with officials from various political parties noting the process is slow-going. The counting of those votes began more than two weeks later than usual.

Jessika Padilla, the commission's alternate president, said in a press conference that some 40% of those votes had been counted as of Monday.

"This validation process is one that we are not going to take lightly," she said.

More than 5,000 inmates out of some 7,400 total in Puerto Rico also have voted, although it's unclear how many of those votes have been counted.

The commission and other officials also are still receiving allegations about electoral crimes, including from people who said they received confirmations for early voting when they made no such request.

Meanwhile, energy generators have been dispatched to more than two dozen polling stations to guarantee electricity given the chronic power outages that have plagued Puerto Rico in recent years.

A status question and a symbolic vote

On Tuesday, voters also will be asked for a seventh time about Puerto Rico's political status. The nonbinding referendum offers three options: statehood, independence and independence with free association, under which issues like foreign affairs, U.S. citizenship and use of the U.S. dollar would be negotiated.

Regardless of the outcome, a change in status requires approval from the U.S. Congress.

In addition, Puerto Ricans on Tuesday can support Kamala Harris or Donald Trump in a symbolic vote if they wish. While Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, those on the island are not allowed to vote in U.S. presidential elections.

Nearly 2 million voters are eligible to participate in Tuesday's election, although it remains to be seen how many people will do so. Voter apathy has dominated recent elections.

## Abortion is on the ballot in nine states and motivating voters across the US

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voters in nine states are deciding whether their state constitutions should guarantee a right to abortion, weighing ballot measures that are expected to spur turnout for a range of crucial races.

Passing certain amendments in Arizona, Florida, Missouri, Nebraska and South Dakota likely would lead to undoing bans or restrictions that currently block varying levels of abortion access to more than 7 million women of childbearing age who live in those states.

The future legality and availability of abortion hinges not only on ballot measures, as policies could shift depending on who controls Congress and the presidency. Same with state governments — including legislatures that pursue new laws, state supreme courts that determine the laws' constitutionality, attorneys general who decide whether to defend them and district attorneys who enforce them.

If all the abortion rights measures pass, "it's a sign of how much of a juggernaut support for reproductive rights has become," said Mary Ziegler, a professor at the University of California Davis School of Law and an expert on the history of reproductive rights in the U.S.

"If some of them fail," she added, "then you're going to see some conservatives looking for guidance to see what the magic ingredient was that made it possible for conservatives to stem the tide."

Voters have been supporting abortion rights

Abortion rights advocates have prevailed on all seven measures that have appeared since 2022, when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and ended the nationwide right to abortion. That decision opened the door to bans or restrictions in most GOP-controlled states — and protections of access in most of those controlled by Democrats.

The abortion rights campaigns have a big fundraising advantage this year. Their opponents' efforts are focused on portraying the amendments as too extreme rather than abortion as immoral.

Currently, 13 states are enforcing bans at all stages of pregnancy, with some exceptions. Four more bar abortion in most cases after about six weeks of pregnancy — before women often realize they're pregnant. Despite the bans, the number of monthly abortions in the U.S. has risen slightly, because of the growing use of abortion pills and organized efforts to help women travel for abortion. Still, advocates say the bans have reduced access, especially for lower-income and minority residents of the states with bans.

The bans also are part of a key argument in the presidential race. Vice President Kamala Harris calls them "Trump abortion bans," noting former President Donald Trump's role in overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Harris, meanwhile, has portrayed herself as a direct, consistent advocate for reproductive health and rights, including Black maternal health.

Trump has struggled to thread a divide between his own base of anti-abortion supporters and the majority of Americans who support abortion rights, leaning on his catch-all response that abortion rights should be left up to individual states.

His shifting stances on reproductive rights include vowing in October to veto a national abortion ban, just weeks after the presidential debate when he repeatedly declined to say. Trump also has regularly taken credit for appointing three Supreme Court justices who helped overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Trump's attempt to find a more cautious stance on abortion echoes the efforts of many Republican congressional candidates as the issue has emerged as a major vulnerability for the GOP. In competitive congressional races from coast to coast, Republicans distanced themselves from more aggressive anti-abortion policies coming from their party and its allies, despite their records on the issue and previous statements opposing abortion rights.

The measures could roll back bans in five states

While the ballot questions have similar aims, each one occupies its own political circumstances.

There's an added obstacle to passing protections in reliably Republican Florida: Supporters of the amendment must get at least 60% of the vote.



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Passing it there and rolling back a 6-week ban that took effect in May would be a blow to Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican with a national profile, who has steered state GOP funds to the cause and whose administration has weighed in, too, with a campaign against the measure, investigators questioning people who signed petitions to add it to the ballot and threats to TV stations that aired one commercial supporting it.

Nebraska has competing ballot measures. One would allow abortion further into pregnancy. The other would enshrine in the constitution the state's current law, which bars most abortions after 12 weeks — but would allow for further restrictions.

In South Dakota, the measure would allow some regulations related to the health of the woman after 12 weeks. Because of that wrinkle, most national abortion-rights groups are not supporting it.

In some states, notably Missouri, passing amendments may not expand access immediately. Courts would be asked to invalidate the bans; and there could be legal battles over that. Clinics would need to staff up and get licenses. And some restrictions could remain in effect.

Arizona, a battleground in the presidential election, bans abortion after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy.

The ballot measure there gained momentum after a state Supreme Court ruling in April found that the state could enforce a strict abortion ban adopted in 1864. Some GOP lawmakers joined with Democrats to repeal the law before it could be enforced.

The measures would enshrine current access laws elsewhere

In the Democratic-controlled Colorado and Maryland, the ballot measures would largely put existing policies into the state constitutions, though Colorado's version could also remove financial barriers to abortion. It would take 55% of the vote to pass there.

Measures maintaining access also are on the ballot in Montana, where a U.S. Senate race could help determine control of the chamber, and Nevada, a battleground in the presidential election.

In Nevada, where control of the state government is divided, the ballot measure would have to be passed this year and again in 2026 to take effect.

New York also has a measure on the ballot that its supporters say would bolster abortion rights. It doesn't contain the word "abortion" but rather bans discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy."

## Control of Congress is at stake and with it a president's agenda

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Control of Congress is at stake Tuesday, with ever-tight races for the House and Senate that will determine which party holds the majority and the power to boost or block a president's agenda, or if the White House confronts a divided Capitol Hill.

The key contests are playing out alongside the first presidential election since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, but also in unexpected corners of the country after what has been one of the most chaotic congressional sessions in modern times.

In the end, just a handful of seats, or as little as one, could tip the balance in either chamber.

The economy, border security, reproductive rights and even the future of U.S. democracy itself have all punctuated the debate.

In the Senate, where Democrats now have a slim 51-49 majority, an early boost for Republicans is expected in West Virginia. Independent Sen. Joe Manchin's retirement creates an opening that Republican Jim Justice, now the state's governor, is favored to win. A pickup there would deadlock the chamber, 50-50, as Republicans try to wrest control.

Top House races are focused in New York and California, where in a politically unusual twist, Democrats are trying to claw back some of the 10 or so seats where Republicans have made surprising gains in recent years with star lawmakers who helped deliver the party to power.

Other House races are scattered around the country in a sign of how narrow the field has become, with just a couple of dozen seats being seriously challenged, some of the most contentious in Maine, the "blue

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dot" around Omaha, Nebraska, and in Alaska.

Vote counting in some races could extend well past Tuesday.

"We're in striking distance in terms of taking back the House," House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who is in line to make history as the first Black speaker if his party wins control, told The Associated Press during a recent campaign swing through Southern California.

But House Speaker Mike Johnson, drawing closer to Trump, predicts Republicans will keep "and grow" the majority. He took over after Kevin McCarthy was booted from the speaker's office.

Capitol Hill can make or break a new White House's priorities, giving Trump or Harris potential allies or adversaries in the House and Senate, or a divided Congress that could force a season of compromise or stalemate.

Congress can also play a role in upholding the American tradition of peacefully transferring presidential power. Four years ago, Trump sent his mob of supporters to "fight like hell" at the Capitol, and many Republicans in Congress voted to block Joe Biden's election. Congress will again be called upon to certify the results of the presidential election in 2025.

What started as a lackluster race for control of Congress was instantly transformed once Harris stepped in for Biden at the top of the ticket, energizing Democrats with massive fundraising and volunteers that lawmakers said reminded them of the Obama-era enthusiasm of the 2008 election.

Billions of dollars have been spent by the parties, and outside groups, on the narrow battleground for both the 435-member House and 100-member Senate.

Democrats need to win a handful of House seats to pluck party control from Republicans. In the Senate, the vice president becomes the tie-breaker in a split, which would leave control of that chamber up to the winner of the White House.

Senate Republicans launched a wide-open map of opportunities, recruiting wealthy newcomers to put Democratic incumbents on defense in almost 10 states across the country.

In Ohio, Trump-backed Republican Bernie Moreno, a Cleveland businessman, is seeking to unseat three-term Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown. Some \$400 million has been spent on the race.

One of the most-watched Senate races, in Montana, may be among the last to be decided. Democrat Jon Tester, a popular three-term senator and "dirt farmer" is in the fight of his political career against Trump-backed Tim Sheehy, a wealthy former NAVY Seal, who made derogatory comments about Native Americans, a key constituency in the Western state.

And across the "blue wall" battlegrounds of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, Republicans are depending on Trump as they try to unseat a trio of incumbent Democratic senators.

Outgoing Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has spent a career focused on seizing and keeping majority power, but other opportunities for Republicans are slipping into long shots.

In the Southwestern states, Arizona firebrand Republican Kari Lake has struggled against Democrat Ruben Gallego in the seat opened by Sen. Krysten Sinema's retirement. In Nevada, Democratic Sen. Jacky Rosen has been holding out against newcomer Sam Brown.

Democrats intensified their challenges to a pair of Republican senators — Ted Cruz of Texas and Rick Scott in Florida — in states where reproductive rights have been a focus in the aftermath of the Supreme Court decision rolling back abortion access. Cruz faces Democrat Colin Allred, the Dallas-area congressman, while Scott has poured \$10 millions of his own fortune into the race against Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, a former House lawmaker.

Congress has a chance to reach several history-making milestones as it is reshaped by the American electorate and becomes more representative of a diverse nation.

Not one, but possibly two Black women could be on their way to the Senate, which would be something never seen in the U.S.

Democrat Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware is favored in the Senate race against Republican Eric Hansen.

And in Maryland, Harris-ally Angela Alsobrooks is in a highly competitive race against the state's popular former governor, Republican Larry Hogan.

Americans have elected two Black women, including Harris, as senators since the nation's founding, but never at the same time.

House candidate Sarah McBride, a state lawmaker from Delaware who is close to the Biden family, is poised to become the first openly transgender person in Congress.

Fallout from redistricting, when states redraw their maps for congressional districts, is also shifting the balance of power within the House — with Republicans set to gain several seats from Democrats in North Carolina and Democrats picking up a second Black-majority seat in Republican-heavy Alabama.

Lawmakers in the House face voters every two years, while senators serve longer six-year terms.

If the two chambers do in fact flip party control, as is possible, it would be rare.

Records show that if Democrats take the House and Republicans take the Senate, it would be the first time that the chambers of Congress have both flipped to opposing political parties.

## Boeing machinists hold contract vote that could end their 7-week strike

By DAVID KOENIG and LINDSEY WASSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The voting has closed for unionized factory workers at Boeing who were deciding Monday whether to accept a contract offer or to extend their strike, which has lasted more than seven weeks and shut down production of most Boeing passenger planes.

A vote to ratify the contract on the eve of Election Day would clear the way for a major U.S. manufacturer and government contractor to resume airplane production. If members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers vote for a third time to reject Boeing's offer, it would plunge the aerospace giant into further financial peril and uncertainty.

In its latest proposed contract, Boeing is offering pay raises of 38% over four years plus ratification and productivity bonuses. IAM District 751, which represents Boeing workers in the Pacific Northwest, endorsed the proposal, which is slightly more generous than one the machinists voted down nearly two weeks ago.

Union officials said they achieved all they could through bargaining and the strike, and that if the current proposal is rejected, future offers from Boeing might be worse. They expect to announce the result of the vote late Monday.

Boeing says average annual pay for machinists is \$75,608 and would rise to \$119,309 in four years under the current offer.

Pensions were a key issue for workers who rejected the company's previous offers in September and October. In its new offer, Boeing did not meet their demand to restore a pension plan that was frozen nearly a decade ago.

If machinists ratify the contract now on the table, they would return to work by Nov. 12, according to the union.

The workers got their last paychecks in mid-September, a few days after the strike started, and are likely facing more pressure on their personal financial well-being.

Bernadeth Jimenez, who has worked in quality assurance at the Boeing plant in Everett, Washington, since 2022, said she voted "yes" on Monday after voting against previous company offers. She was satisfied with the proposed wage increases, and said she never expected a pension anyway — she's putting money in a 401(k) plan.

"This (offer) is good, and I really want to go back to work," she said. "This time we're ready."

Theresa Pound isn't ready. The 16-year company veteran said she voted "no" just as she did on the two earlier offers that went to a vote.

"Adding 3% (to the previous offer) doesn't change anything for my future. It still doesn't solidify that when I retire I'm going to have a comfortable living, and that's the bottom line," she said. "Instant gratification is not going to save me."

Both Jimenez and Pound have husbands who also work at Boeing, and both couples anticipated the

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strike and worked overtime before it started. Still, money is getting tight.

"We're making it by the best we can," Pound said. "We're going to run out soon, but it's not going to be a stopping point for me to say, 'Well, I'm out of money. I need to go back.' I'm going to find other ways to make it work."

There were fewer pro-strike protesters in Everett than during the Oct. 23 vote.

At a union hall in Renton, also near Seattle, signs warning against campaigning had been moved from inside to outside, and there was no table with workers handing out "Vote No" material, like the last time. A small knot of workers gathered around a burn barrel to talk and keep warm. The mood was subdued.

The strike began Sept. 13 with an overwhelming 94.6% rejection of Boeing's offer to raise pay by 25% over four years — far less than the union's original demand for 40% wage increases over three years.

Machinists voted down another offer — 35% raises over four years, and still no revival of pensions — on Oct. 23, the same day that Boeing reported a third-quarter loss of more than \$6 billion. However, the offer received 36% support, up from 5% for the mid-September proposal, making Boeing leaders believe they were close to a deal.

The contract rejections reflected bitterness that built up after union concessions and small pay increases over the past decade.

The new proposal that Boeing made last week offered slightly larger pay increases plus a \$12,000 contract-ratification bonus, up from \$7,000 in the previous offer, and larger company contributions to employees' 401(k) retirement accounts.

Boeing also promises to build its next airline plane in the Seattle area. Union officials fear the company might withdraw the pledge if workers reject the new offer.

Robert Helgeson has been repairing machines in the Renton plant for 34 years. He said he voted to approve the offer on Monday after voting no on the first proposal and skipping the second vote.

"I think this is fair," Helgeson said, citing the better pay. "It's as good as it's going to get. I know everyone wanted the pension back, but we're just not going to get that."

The strike drew the attention of the Biden administration. Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su intervened in the talks several times, including last week.

The labor standoff — the first strike by Boeing machinists since an eight-week walkout in 2008 — is the latest setback in a volatile year for the company.

Boeing came under several federal investigations after a door plug blew off a 737 Max plane during an Alaska Airlines flight in January. Federal regulators put limits on Boeing airplane production that they said would last until they felt confident about manufacturing safety at the company.

The door-plug incident renewed concerns about the safety of the 737 Max. Two of the plane's crashed less than five months apart in 2018 and 2019, killing 346 people. The CEO whose effort to fix the company failed announced in March that he would step down. In July, Boeing agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud for deceiving regulators who approved the 737 Max.

As the strike dragged on, new CEO Kelly Ortberg announced about 17,000 layoffs and a stock sale to prevent the company's credit rating from being cut to junk status. S&P and Fitch Ratings said last week that the \$24.3 billion in stock and other securities will cover upcoming debt payments and reduce the risk of a credit downgrade.

The strike has created a cash crunch by depriving Boeing of money it gets when delivering new planes to airlines. The walkout at Seattle-area factories stopped production of the 737 Max, Boeing's best-selling plane, and the 777, or "triple-seven," jet and the cargo-carrying version of its 767 plane.

Ortberg has conceded that trust in Boeing has declined, the company has too much debt, and "serious lapses in our performance" have disappointed many airline customers. But, he says, the company's strengths include a backlog of airplane orders valued at a half-trillion dollars.

## North Korea fires a barrage of ballistic missiles toward the sea ahead of US election

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, HYUNG-JIN KIM and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired a barrage of short-range ballistic missiles into the sea on Tuesday, its neighbors said, as it continued its weapons demonstrations hours before the U.S. presidential election.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said at least seven North Korean missiles flew as far as 400 kilometers (250 miles) with a maximum altitude of 100 kilometers (60 miles). He said they landed in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

“North Korea’s actions, including a series of repeated missile launches, threaten the peace and safety of Japan, the region and the international community,” Nakatani said.

South Korea’s military also detected several missile launches by North Korea and subsequently boosted its surveillance posture. The North Korean missiles could be used to target key facilities in South Korea, including U.S. military bases there.

The launches came days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised a flight test of the country’s newest intercontinental ballistic missile designed to reach the U.S. mainland. In response to that launch, the United States flew a long-range B-1B bomber in a trilateral drill with South Korea and Japan on Sunday in a show of force. That drew condemnation from Kim’s powerful sister Kim Yo Jong, who on Tuesday accused North Korea’s rivals of raising tensions with “aggressive and adventurist military threats.”

South Korean officials have said that North Korea was likely to dial up its military displays around the U.S. presidential election to command the attention of Washington. South Korea’s military intelligence agency said last week that North Korea has also likely completed preparations for its seventh nuclear test.

Outside officials and analysts say North Korea eventually hopes to use an expanded nuclear arsenal as leverage to win concessions such as sanctions relief after a new U.S. president is elected.

There are widespread views that Kim Jong Un would prefer a win by Republican candidate Donald Trump, with whom he engaged in high-stakes nuclear diplomacy in 2018-19, seeing him as a more likely counterpart to give him what he wants than Democratic candidate Kamala Harris. During campaigning, Harris said she won’t “cozy up to tyrants and dictators like Kim Jong Un who are rooting for Trump.”

North Korea claimed that the Hwasong-19 it tested on Oct. 31 was “the world’s strongest” ICBM, but experts say the solid-fuel missile is too big to be useful in war. Experts say North Korea has yet to acquire some critical technologies to build a functioning ICBM, such as ensuring that the warhead survives the harsh conditions of atmospheric re-entry.

Tensions between the Koreas are at their highest point in years as Kim has repeatedly flaunted his expanding nuclear weapon and missile programs, while reportedly providing Russia with munitions and troops to support President Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine.

On Monday, U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters that as many as 10,000 North Korean soldiers were in Russia’s Kursk region near Ukraine’s border and were preparing to join Moscow’s fight against Ukraine in the coming days. If they engage in combat, it would be North Korea’s first participation in a large-scale conflict since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

After a meeting in Seoul on Monday, senior South Korean and European Union officials expressed concerns about Russia’s possible transfer of technology to North Korea to enhance its nuclear program in exchange for its troops. Such transfers would “jeopardize the international non-proliferation efforts and threaten peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and across the globe,” they said.

In response to North Korea’s growing nuclear threat, South Korea, the United States and Japan have been expanding their combined military exercises. North Korea has portrayed such U.S.-led military drills as rehearsals for an invasion and used them to justify its relentless pursuit of nuclear weapons and missiles.

At a U.N. Security Council meeting Monday, North Korea’s ambassador, Kim Song, defended the North’s nuclear and ICBM programs as a necessary response to what it perceives as nuclear threats from the United States. U.S. Deputy Ambassador Robert Wood warned that the U.S. cannot stand back from North

Korea's expanding nuclear program and the growing threat to U.S. security "without a response."

Wood also repeated last week's call for Russia to say whether there are North Korean troops on the ground in Russia. "We're not in a court here," Russian Deputy Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva replied, "and the questions of the United States, in the spirit of an interrogation, is not something I intend to answer."

## **Federal agencies say Russia and Iran are ramping up influence campaigns targeting US voters**

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's federal law enforcement and election security agencies are debunking two new examples of Russian election disinformation on the eve of Election Day, highlighting attempts by foreign actors to sow doubt in the U.S. voting process and warning that the efforts run the risk of inciting violence against election officials.

In a joint statement late Monday, federal officials pointed to a recent article posted by Russian actors falsely claiming that U.S. officials across presidential swing states were orchestrating a plan to commit fraud, as well as a video that falsely depicted an interview with an individual claiming election fraud in Arizona.

U.S. intelligence reveals that Russia-linked influence actors "are manufacturing videos and creating fake articles to undermine the legitimacy of the election, instill fear in voters regarding the election process, and suggest Americans are using violence against each other due to political preferences," read the statement issued by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the FBI and the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. "These efforts risk inciting violence, including against election officials."

A spokesperson for the Russian Embassy did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

Federal officials warned that Russia will likely release additional "manufactured content" on Election Day and poses "the most active threat" when it comes to foreign election influence. The statement also noted that Iran remains a "significant foreign influence threat to U.S. elections."

The effort described by federal officials is part of a wide-ranging influence operation by Russia designed to undermine confidence in the electoral process and sow discord among American voters. Intelligence agencies have assessed that Russia, which also interfered on Donald Trump's behalf in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, again prefers the Republican nominee and is likely to persist in its influence operations well after Election Day.

Besides manufactured videos intended to promote disinformation, U.S. officials also have accused Russian state media of a covert, multimillion-dollar operation to spread pro-Russia content to American audiences and have seized dozens of internet domains they said fostered propaganda.

In their statement, officials also drew fresh attention to Iran's attempts to interfere in the election, which include a hack-and-leak operation designed to harm Trump's candidacy. The Justice Department in September charged three Iranian hackers in that effort.

Iranian actors also have created fake news sites and impersonated activists online in attempts to sway voters, according to analysts at Microsoft. The tech giant said last month that Iranian actors who allegedly sent emails aimed at intimidating U.S. voters in 2020 have been surveying election-related websites and major media outlets, raising concerns they could be preparing for another scheme this year.

As large tech firms and intelligence officials have called out foreign interference this election cycle, Russia, China and Iran have rejected claims that they are seeking to meddle with the U.S. election.

The Arizona video promoted on social media by Russian actors on Monday purported to show an anonymous whistleblower revealing an election fraud scheme. Federal officials said the Arizona Secretary of State's office had already refuted the content of the video.

Earlier this week, U.S. officials confirmed that a video claiming to show voter fraud in two left-leaning counties in Georgia was fake and the product of a Russian troll farm. And last month, they attributed to Russia another fake video of a person tearing up ballots in what appeared to be Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

## Some Republican-led states refuse to let Justice Department monitors into polling places

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and JIM SALTER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some Republican-led states say they will block the Justice Department's election monitors from going inside polling places on Election Day, pushing back on federal authorities' decades-long practice of watching for violations of federal voting laws.

Officials in Florida and Texas have said they won't allow federal election monitors into polling sites on Tuesday. And on Monday, Missouri filed a lawsuit seeking a court order to block federal officials from observing inside polling places. Texas followed with a similar lawsuit seeking to permanently bar federal monitoring of elections in the state.

The Justice Department announced last week that it's deploying election monitors in 86 jurisdictions across 27 states on Election Day. The Justice Department declined to comment on the moves by the Republican-led states, but filed court papers urging the judge to deny Missouri's request.

The race between Democratic nominee Kamala Harris and Republican nominee Donald Trump is a dead heat, and both sides are bracing for potential legal challenges to vote tallies. The Justice Department's election monitoring effort, a long practice under both Democratic and Republican administrations, is meant to ensure that federal voting rights are being followed.

Here's a look at election monitors and the states' actions:

Who are the election monitors?

Election monitors are lawyers who work for the Justice Department, including in the civil rights division and U.S. attorney's offices across the country. They are not law enforcement officers or federal agents.

For decades, the Justice Department's civil rights division has sent attorneys and staff members to monitor polling places across the country in both federal and non-federal elections. The monitors are tasked with ensuring compliance with federal voting rights laws.

The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division enforces a number of statutes protecting the right to vote. That includes the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits intimidation and threats against those who are casting ballots or counting votes. And it includes the Americans with Disabilities Act, which mandates that election officials ensure people with disabilities have the full and equal opportunity to vote.

"The Department of Justice has a nearly 60-year history of addressing Election Day issues to safeguard the voting rights of Black citizens and other communities of color," said Edward Casper, acting co-chief counsel at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. "While some recent efforts to interfere in this process may appear more bark than bite, they still pose a real threat to civil rights enforcement," he said.

Where are election monitors being sent?

The 86 jurisdictions that the Justice Department will send monitors to on Tuesday include Maricopa County, Arizona and Fulton County, Georgia, which in 2020 became the center of election conspiracy theories spread by Trump and other Republicans. Another place on the list is Portage County, Ohio, where a sheriff came under fire for a social media post in which he said people with Harris yard signs should have their addresses recorded so that immigrants can be sent to live with them if the Democrat wins the presidency.

Other areas where federal monitors will be sent include Detroit; Queens, New York; Providence, Rhode Island; Jackson County, South Dakota; Salem, Massachusetts; Milwaukee; Manassas, Virginia; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; and Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska. The Justice Department's monitors will be in St. Louis, four jurisdictions in Florida and eight jurisdictions in Texas.

What's happening in Missouri?

In filing the lawsuit Monday, Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft said state law "clearly and specifically limits who may be in polling places." He also accused the federal government of "attempting to illegally interfere in Missouri's elections."

The lawsuit states that Missouri law "permits only certain categories of persons to be present in voting locations, including voters, minor children accompanying voters, poll workers, election judges, etc." and

not federal officials.

The Justice Department also sought to monitor polling places in Missouri in 2022. The agency planned to have officials at Cole County, which includes Jefferson City, the state capital. County Clerk Steve Korsmeyer said he wouldn't let them in if they show up.

The federal agency backed down after Ashcroft showed Justice Department officials the state law, Ashcroft said. He says the Justice Department is now "trying to go through the back door" by contacting local election officials for access.

Messages were left Monday with the St. Louis Board of Election Commissioners.

In court papers filed late Monday, the Justice Department said it has authority to conduct monitoring there under a settlement agreement with the St. Louis Board aimed at ensuring people with mobility and vision impairments can access polling places. The settlement was reached in 2021 under Trump's Justice Department after federal officials found problems, such as ramps that were too steep and inaccessible parking, according to the court papers. The settlement, which expires next year, says the board must "cooperate fully" with Justice Department's efforts to monitor compliance, "including but not limited to providing the United States with timely access to polling places (including on Election Day)."

The Justice Department said an attorney and investigator from its Disability Rights Section are in St. Louis to inspect for accessibility issues Tuesday. The department has carried out such inspections under the settlement agreement on "multiple occasions," including in the April local elections, government lawyers said in court documents.

What are the other states saying?

In a letter to the Justice Department on Friday, Texas Secretary of State Jane Nelson said wrote, "Texas law is clear: Justice Department monitors are not permitted inside polling places where ballots are being cast or a central counting station where ballots are being counted."

"Texas has a robust processes and procedures in place to ensure that eligible voters may participate in a free and fair election," Nelson wrote.

In a similar letter Friday, Florida Secretary of State Cord Byrd told the Justice Department that Florida law lists who is allowed inside the state's polling places and Justice Department officials are not included. Byrd said Florida is sending its own monitors to the four jurisdictions the Justice Department plans to send staff to and they will "ensure there is no interference with the voting process."

## **Spain's king stood his ground under a mud barrage. What will the iconic moment mean for his reign?**

By JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Mud splattered the cheek of Spain's monarch as survivors of catastrophic floods unleashed their fury in a barrage of muck and mire. Felipe VI took it, literally, on the chin, and his determination to stay and speak to the enraged crowd could redefine his reign.

It instantly became an iconic moment. But what it will mean remains to be seen.

Spain's royals, prime minister and the Valencian regional president were greeted by a crowd hurling mud and other debris on Sunday when they tried to visit Paiporta, where over 60 people perished in last week's floods. The deluge has killed over 200 people in Spain and shattered communities.

It was the officials' first visit to the devastated area.

Sticky brown globs hit Felipe on the face and all over his black jacket, while Queen Letizia's hands were streaked with the mud that, nearly a week after the floods, still coats street after street of the southern outskirts of Valencia city. Many in the crowd wielded the shovels they are using to dig out their homes.

The anger appeared directed not at the king specifically but at the entire state for its management of the worst natural disaster in Spain's living memory. The government is also saying there were far-right agitators among the locals, implying they wanted to go after the Socialist prime minister.

In any case, for Montserrat Nebrera, professor of constitutional law at the International University of Catalonia, the shocking sight of a muddied monarch could set a precedent for more fervent protests, since



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"never had such anger been shown to the king."

Monarchists like Nebrera and even republicans agreed that Felipe, who holds a largely ceremonial position, cut the figure of a man of state. The king insisted that his bodyguards, who tried to cover him with umbrellas, let him get close to talk with residents, some of whom screamed "Get out!" and "Killers!" Letizia has likewise been praised for staying put and speaking with distraught people.

A monarch seen as aloof extends himself

"It could go down as the greatest day of Felipe's reign," Oriol Bartomeus, a political science professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, told The Associated Press.

"If he had sought protection from his bodyguards and run away, now that would have been the darkest day of his reign. Instead he showed why he is king, demonstrating composure and serenity, and by getting as close as he could to the people."

There is no doubt it was the most memorable moment of his reign.

The 56-year-old Felipe took over a Royal House whose reputation was in tatters after the financial and lifestyle scandals of his father, Juan Carlos, who abdicated in 2014. Earlier in his reign, Juan Carlos was loved or at least grudgingly respected after helping Spain's restoration of democracy after the death of dictator Francisco Franco. He was seen as down to earth and fun-loving compared to other European royals.

His son, by contrast, has been perceived as aloof, and has relied on Letizia, a former journalist, to help him run a relatively frugal palace in a nation where republican sentiment is strong.

Felipe heard some jeers when he took part in a tribute to the dead of the 2017 terror attack in Barcelona, but that was nothing compared to Sunday's reception.

The prime minister and others were struck

On Sunday, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was whisked away by his security detail after he also was pelted. Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said "there was a clear danger and (Sánchez) had received a blow."

The back window of the prime minister's car was broken. The minister did not specify what hit the prime minister. One of Letizia's bodyguards had a bloody forehead.

An investigative judge has opened a preliminary probe into possible assault.

Felipe stood his ground for over half an hour. It was impossible to hear what was said, but he spoke to several shouting people in an intimate and apparently serious tone.

Bartomeus, who said he is not a fervent defender of the monarchy, noted what the king didn't do: He didn't appear to patronize the people.

"He didn't console the people, like for example you see the British royals do," Bartomeus said. Instead, "he dialogued with them. He put the state on his back, got down off the pedestal and went down to the people who were telling him that the state had not arrived, and he told them that it will."

Did Felipe's involvement promise more than he can deliver?

Later Sunday, Felipe attended a gathering of the heads of the emergency response in Valencia, along with Sánchez and other politicians. He asked them to give "hope to those affected by the flood and attend to their needs, guaranteeing that the state is there for them." On Monday, he presided over the government's crisis committee at a military airbase outside Madrid.

But that, Nebrera said, could compound his problems.

In going to Paiporta with elected officials, Nebrera said, Felipe has created the impression that he has a real role to play in managing the gargantuan recovery effort, when his powers are mostly representing Spain on state visits and playing an institutional role in the post-election process.

In other words, it looks like he owns it.

"If there already existed a certain confusion among some people as to what powers the king has, now he runs the danger of people thinking he is responsible for something which he is not," she said.

"It is very likely that regardless of how many meetings he presides over, there will be nothing but more bad news coming from Valencia. They are only going to find more and more of the dead."

## A courtroom of relief: FBI recovers funds for victims of scammed banker

MARTHA MENDOZA undefined

WICHITA, KANSAS (AP) — Sobs of relief broke out in a federal courtroom in Kansas on Monday as dozens of people whose life savings had been embezzled by a bank CEO learned that federal law enforcement had recovered their money.

"I just can't describe the weight lifted off of us," said Bart Camilli, 70, who with his wife Cleo had just learned they'd recover close to \$450,000 — money Bart began saving at 18 when he bought his first individual retirement account. "It's life-changing."

In August, former Kansas bank CEO Shan Hanes was sentenced to 24 years after stealing \$47 million from customer accounts and wiring the money to cryptocurrency accounts run by scammers. Prosecutors said Hanes also stole \$40,000 from his church, \$10,000 from an investment club and \$60,000 from his daughter's college fund and lost \$1.1 million of his own in the scheme. Deposits were "jettisoned into the ether," said prosecutor Aaron Smith.

Hanes' Heartland Tri-State Bank, drained of cash, was shut down by federal regulators and sold to another financial institution. Customers' savings and checking accounts amounting to \$47.1 million were insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., which paid off their losses.

But there were still 30 shareholders of the community-owned rural bank Hanes helped found — including his close family friends and neighbors — who thought they lost \$8.3 million in investments: well-planned retirements were upended, funds for long-term eldercare gone, education funds and bequests for children and grandchildren zeroed out.

On Monday the shareholders stood to cheer federal Judge John W. Broomes in Wichita after he told them, one at a time, that they'd be paid back in full. The FBI recovered the funds from a cryptocurrency account held by Tether Ltd. in the Cayman Islands.

During an earlier sentencing hearing, these victims had called Hanes a "deceitful cheat and a liar," and "pure evil."

Margaret Grice came to court Monday figuring she'd get \$1,000 back. Instead, she learned she'd be recovering almost \$250,000, her entire 401(k).

"I'm just really thrilled," she said. "I can breathe."

Prosecutors said Hanes, who was the CEO of Heartland Tri-State Bank in Elkhart, Kansas, lost the money in a scam referred to as "pig butchering," or the way pigs are fattened before slaughter. In the scam, a third party gains a victims' trust and, over time, convinces them to invest all of their money into cryptocurrency, which immediately disappears. U.S. and U.N. officials say these schemes are proliferating, with scammers largely in Southeast Asia increasingly taking advantage of Americans.

Hanes started buying what he thought was \$5,000 in cryptocurrency in late 2022, communicating with someone who had reached out on WhatsApp, according to court records. A few months later he transferred over his church and investment club funds. Records show the scam accelerated in the summer of 2023, when Hanes wired \$47.1 million out of customer accounts in 11 wire transfers over just eight weeks. Each transfer, he thought, was necessary to end the investment and cash out, court records said. He watched, on a fake website, as the money appeared to grow to more than \$200 million.

"He was to take some of the money, and the rest of the money was supposed to go back to the bank," his attorney John Stang explained. "Now it's fiction, it didn't exist. We all know that now ... It failed big time."

Hanes, who was not in court Monday, apologized at an earlier sentencing hearing.

"From the deepest depth of my soul, I had no intention of ever causing the harm that I did," he said. "I'll forever struggle to understand how I was duped and how what I thought was just getting the money back was making it worse."

Prosecutors said Hanes wasn't just the victim of a scam, he crossed a line when he began taking customers' money and violating banking regulations. He pleaded guilty to embezzlement by a bank officer in May.

His prominent standing in his hometown of 2,000 made it easier for him to get away with it, a Federal

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Reserve System investigation found; he had been on the school board, volunteered as a swim meet official, and served on the Kansas Bankers Association.

He also was a banking leader beyond his rural community. In recent years, he testified to Congressional committees about the importance of local banks in farming communities, and he served as a director for the American Bankers Association, which represents almost all banking assets in the U.S.

On Monday, prosecutors said the FDIC wanted to be paid back for the insurance claims it reimbursed to bank customers. But Judge Broomes said the economic circumstances of shareholders "who became insolvent because of a fraud scheme" justified paying them back first, before the FDIC recovers anything.

Hanes, 53, may be in his late 70s when he is released and is unlikely to be able to pay the FDIC the \$47.1 million still owed.

In a court filing, Hanes and his attorney tried to explain what had happened.

"Mr. Hanes made some very bad choices after being caught up in an extremely well-run cryptocurrency scam," they said. "He was the pig that was butchered."

## US gives Israel a 'fail' grade on improving aid to Gaza so far

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is stepping up criticism of Israel for not doing enough to improve humanitarian conditions in Gaza as a 30-day deadline looms for Israeli officials to meet certain requirements or risk potential restrictions on military assistance.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller on Monday gave Israel a "fail" grade in terms of meeting the conditions for an improvement in aid deliveries to Gaza laid out in a letter last month to senior Israeli officials from Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

He said there were still roughly nine days until the deadline expires, but that limited progress so far has been insufficient.

"As of today, the situation has not significantly turned around," Miller told reporters. "We have seen an increase in some measurements. But if you look at the stipulated recommendations in the letter — those have not been met."

A day before the U.S. election, the Biden administration called out its close ally, with support for Israel a key issue for many voters and the humanitarian crisis for Palestinians also a factor for many in the race. Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris have been competing for Muslim and Arab American voters and Jewish voters in battleground states like Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Among other conditions, Austin and Blinken's letter from mid-October said that Israel must allow in a minimum of 350 trucks a day carrying desperately needed food and other supplies for Palestinians besieged by more than a year of war between Israel and Hamas. By the end of October, an average of just 71 trucks a day were entering Gaza, according to the latest U.N. figures.

"The results are not good enough today," Miller said. "They certainly do not have a pass. ... They have failed to implement all the things that that we recommended. Now, that said, we are not at the end of the 30-day period."

He would not say when asked what the U.S. would do when the deadline comes up next week, just that "we will follow the law."

Blinken spoke Monday with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, urging additional steps to "substantially increase and sustain humanitarian aid" to civilians in Gaza, according to a State Department readout of their call.

Similarly, Austin has been reinforcing "how important it is to ensure that humanitarian assistance can flow and flow faster into Gaza" in calls with Gallant, said Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, Pentagon press secretary.

The Israeli military body in charge of humanitarian aid to Gaza, known as COGAT, said it had evacuated 72 patients from hospitals in northern Gaza to other medical facilities Monday and had brought medical supplies as well as fuel, food, water and units of blood.

The head of UNICEF, the U.N. agency for children, said over the weekend that "the entire Palestinian

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population in North Gaza, especially children, is at imminent risk of dying from disease, famine, and the ongoing bombardments.”

Miller also said the U.S. is looking into a decision by the Israeli government to end an agreement facilitating the work of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, which is the main aid provider in Gaza.

It followed the passage of Israeli laws last week to sever ties with UNRWA, a move that Blinken and Austin opposed in their letter.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said in a statement Monday that it has notified the U.N. of the cancellation of an agreement dating back to 1967 that facilitates UNRWA's work. It said UNRWA “is part of the problem in the Gaza Strip and not part of the solution.”

Israel alleges that UNRWA has been infiltrated by Hamas, which the agency denies and says it takes measures to ensure its neutrality.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reiterated that UNRWA is essential and there is no alternative to its work in the Palestinian territories, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

At the same time, Miller said the U.S. is “deeply concerned” by a recent escalation in attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians in the West Bank, including several cars being torched overnight just a few kilometers (miles) away from the Palestinian Authority's headquarters and attacks on Palestinians harvesting olives, their livestock and other property.

“These violent actions cause intense human suffering for Palestinians and they threaten Israel's security,” Miller said. “It is critical that the government of Israel deter extremist settler violence and take measures to protect all communities from harm in accordance with its international obligations.”

He noted that the U.S. has since the beginning of the year imposed sanctions against Israeli groups and people implicated in violence against Palestinian civilians and warned of more to come.

## **About 24 states say they'll send National Guard troops to DC for vote certification and inauguration**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than two dozen states have indicated they would be willing to send National Guard troops to Washington if requested in the weeks following the presidential election and in the runup to the inauguration, Guard officials said Monday.

The District of Columbia has not yet made any formal requests for Guard troops, but officials across the government have been preparing for the possibility that the U.S. Capitol could once again be rocked by violence around the certification of the election by Congress on Jan. 6 and the inauguration two weeks later.

About 25,000 Guard troops from around the country flooded into Washington in the days after the deadly Jan. 6, 2021, riot, when thousands of supporters of then-President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol in an effort to prevent Congress from certifying Joe Biden's win.

The troops, along with local and federal law enforcement, locked down the city for the inauguration, securing the Capitol, monuments, Metro entrances and the perimeter of the central part of the city.

Speaking to reporters Monday, Col. Jean Paul Laurenceau, chief of future operations for the National Guard Bureau, said it is not yet clear how many Guard troops will be needed or requested this year. He said it will depend on what the District of Columbia wants, but he noted that the National Guard Bureau and the states are leaning forward in anticipation of a request for assistance.

“We're here to support D.C. with sustainment, lodging, transportation — anything they need to prepare for this mission,” he said.

Other officials have said it also will depend on intelligence reports assessing the potential threats to the city and the transition of power.

Fueling concerns about possible violence are Trump's claims — without proof — that cheating is already underway in the election. At rally after rally, he has told supporters that the only way he can lose is if Democrats cheat, and he has repeatedly refused to say whether he will accept the results regardless of

the outcome.

Guard members have historically provided support for presidential inaugurations, going back to the one for President George Washington.

But the 2021 event involved an enormous response due to the riot on Jan. 6, which forced lawmakers to flee the Capitol, delaying the certification of the presidential vote for hours. In the days afterward, Guard forces poured into the city by the busload.

In 2021, a few states declined to send troops, also worried about violence within their own borders and capitals.

Defense officials said Monday that 10 states have activated state Guard members to assist for the election — primarily doing cybersecurity missions. The total number of troops is about 125.

In addition, nine states and the District of Columbia have put a total of about 120 Guard troops on standby, ready to deploy if needed on Tuesday or in the following days — also mostly for cyber missions and some security.

Those states are Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia. Officials said those numbers could change on Election Day as states reassess their needs.

## **Belarus' authoritarian ruler will face only token challengers in presidential vote**

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Belarus' election commission on Monday allowed seven politicians loyal to President Alexander Lukashenko to start collecting signatures to run against him in January's election, in an apparent bid to create a semblance of competition to the longtime authoritarian ruler.

Lukashenko, who has ruled the country for more than 30 years, is seeking a seventh term following a relentless crackdown on the opposition and free media.

The election, scheduled for Jan. 26, would come 4 1/2 years after the 2020 presidential vote that was rejected by the opposition and the West as rigged with fraud and triggered massive nationwide protests. Belarusian authorities responded to the demonstrations with a sweeping crackdown on dissent, resulting in about 65,000 people arrested.

Major opposition figures were either imprisoned or fled the country in the crackdown. Human rights activists say Belarus now holds about 1,300 political prisoners and that many of them are denied adequate medical care and contact with their families.

Lukashenko has relied on subsidies and political support from his main ally, Russia, to survive the protests. He allowed Moscow to use Belarusian territory to send troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

Last week, Belarus' Central Election Commission registered an initiative group for Lukashenko to prepare for the race. On Monday, it also permitted seven politicians to begin collecting signatures to be able to run, including Sergei Syrankov of the Communist Party, Oleg Gaidukevich, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, and former Interior Ministry spokeswoman Olga Chemodanova.

"Those are alternative candidates, and I believe they just want to safeguard the incumbent," Lukashenko said of his aspiring token challengers.

Each of the candidates is required to collect at least 100,000 signatures until Dec. 6 to enter the race.

Last week, the commission refused to register initiative groups for two opposition politicians who aspired to enter the race.

"There are candidates, but no competition in this election," said Valery Karbalevich, an independent political analyst. "Lukashenko fears a replay of the 2020 protests, his trauma is still fresh and so he will carry out the vote in a format when the result is predetermined."

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who is in exile after challenging Lukashenko in the 2020 presidential election, denounced January's vote as a farce and urged Belarusians to vote against all candidates.

"We are offering people to voice their protest by voting against all those who are robbing us of our right to vote," said Tsikhanouskaya, whose husband Siarhei Tsikhanouski is serving a 19 1/2-year prison

sentence after trying to run against Lukashenko. "This is not an election but an imitation of an electoral process held amid terror when alternative candidates and observers aren't allowed."

During February's parliamentary and local elections, in which only candidates loyal to Lukashenko were allowed to compete, Belarus for the first time also refused to invite observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to monitor the vote.

## **Trump wants the presidential winner to be declared on election night. Why that's unlikely**

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump is stepping up his demands that the winner of the presidential race be declared shortly after polls close Tuesday, well before all the votes are counted.

Trump set the pattern in 2020, when he declared that he had won during the early morning hours after Election Day. That led his allies to demand that officials "stop the count!" He and many other conservatives have spent the past four years falsely claiming that fraud cost him that election and bemoaning how long it takes to count ballots in the U.S.

But one of many reasons we are unlikely to know the winner quickly on election night is that Republican lawmakers in two key swing states have refused to change laws that delay the count. Another is that most indications are this will be a very close election, and it takes longer to determine who won close elections than blowouts.

In the end, election experts note, the priority in vote-counting is to make sure it's an accurate and secure tally, not to end the suspense moments after polls close.

"There's nothing nefarious about it," said Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. "The time delay is to protect the integrity of the process."

Trump's demand also doesn't seem to account for the six time zones from the East Coast to Hawaii.

David Becker, an elections expert and co-author of "The Big Truth," debunking Trump's 2020 election lies, said it's not realistic for election officials in thousands of jurisdictions to "instantly snap their fingers and count 160 million multi-page ballots with dozens of races on them."

Trump wants the race decided Tuesday night

During a Sunday rally in Pennsylvania, Trump demanded that the race be decided soon after some polls begin closing.

"They have to be decided by 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock on Tuesday night," Trump said. "Bunch of crooked people. These are crooked people."

It was not clear who he was targeting with the "crooked people" remark.

Timing is one example of why Trump's demands don't match the reality of conducting elections in the U.S. By 11 p.m. Eastern time, polls will just be closing in the two Western swing states of Arizona and Nevada.

Trump has led conservatives to bemoan that the U.S. doesn't count elections as swiftly as France or Argentina, where results for recent races have been announced within hours of polls closing. But that's because those countries tabulate only a single election at a time. The decentralized U.S. system prevents the federal government from controlling elections.

Instead, votes are counted in nearly 10,000 separate jurisdictions, each of which has its own races for the state legislature, city council, school boards and ballot measures to tabulate at the same time. That's why it takes longer for the U.S. to count votes.

Declaring a winner can take time

The Associated Press calls races when there is no possibility that the trailing candidate can make up the gap. Sometimes, if one candidate is significantly behind, a winner can be called quickly. But if the margin is narrow, then every last vote could matter. It takes a while before every vote is counted even in the most efficient jurisdictions in the country.

In 2018, for example, Republican Rick Scott won the U.S. Senate race in Florida, a state conservatives regularly praise for its quick tally. But the AP didn't call Scott's victory until after the conclusion of a recount

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on Nov. 20 because Scott's margin was so slim.

It also takes time to count every one of the millions of votes because election officials have to process disputed, or "provisional," ballots, and to see if they were legitimately cast. Overseas ballots from military members or other U.S. citizens abroad can trickle in at the last minute. Mail ballots usually land early, but there's a lengthy process to make sure they're not cast fraudulently. If that process doesn't start before Election Day, it can back up the count.

Some states, such as Arizona, also give voters whose mail ballots were rejected because the signatures didn't match up to five days to prove they actually cast the ballot. That means final numbers simply cannot be available Tuesday night.

Election rules are to blame in some states

Some of the sluggishness is due to state-specific election rules. In Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, two of the most important swing states, election officials for years have pleaded with Republican lawmakers to change the law that prevents them from processing their mail ballots before Election Day. That means mail ballots get tallied late, and frequently the results don't start to get reported until after Election Day.

Democrats have traditionally dominated mail voting, which has made it seem like Republicans are in the lead until the early hours of the next morning, when Democratic mail votes finally get added to the tally. Experts even have names for this from past elections — the "red mirage" or the "blue shift." Trump exploited that dynamic in 2020 when he had his supporters demand an abrupt end to vote counts — the ballots that remained untallied were largely mail ones that were for Joe Biden. It's not clear how that will play out this year, since Republicans have shifted and voted in big numbers during early voting.

Michigan used to have similar restrictions, but after Democrats won control of the state Legislature in 2022 they removed the prohibition on early processing of mail ballots. That state's Democratic Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson, said she hopes to have most results available by Wednesday.

"At the end of the day, chief election officials are the folks who have the ability to provide those accurate results. Americans should focus on what they say and not what any specific candidate or folks who are part of the campaign say," said Jen Easterly, director of the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

Trump allies urge him to declare victory swiftly

Some of Trump's allies say he should be even more aggressive about declaring victory this time around.

Longtime Trump ally Steve Bannon, who in 2020 predicted the then-president would declare victory before the race was called, advocated for a similar strategy during a recent press conference after he was released from federal prison, where he was serving time for a contempt of Congress conviction related to the investigation into Trump's effort to overturn his loss in 2020.

"President Trump came up at 2:30 in the morning and talked," Bannon said. "He should have done it at 11 o'clock in 2020."

Other Trump supporters have taken a darker tone. His former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, suggested during a recent interview on the right-wing American Truth Project podcast that violence could erupt in states still counting ballots the day after Election Day because people "are just not going to put up with it."

Trying to project a sense of inevitability about a Trump win, the former president and his supporters have been touting early vote data and favorable polls to contend the election is all but over. Republicans have returned to voting early after largely staying away at Trump's direction in 2020 and 2022. In some swing states that track party registration, registered Republicans are outvoting Democrats in early voting.

But that doesn't mean Republicans are ahead in any meaningful sense. Early voting data does not tell you who will win an election because it only records who voted, not how they voted.

Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign has been explicitly targeting Republicans disillusioned by Trump. In each of those states where more Republicans have voted, there also are huge numbers of voters casting early ballots who are not registered with either of the two major political parties. If Harris won just a tiny fraction more of those votes than Trump, it would erase the small leads Republicans have.

There's only one way to find out who won the presidential election: Wait until enough votes are tallied,

whenever that is.

## Elon Musk's \$1 million-a-day voter sweepstakes can proceed, a Pennsylvania judge says

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The \$1 million-a-day voter sweepstakes that Elon Musk's political action committee is hosting in swing states can continue through Tuesday's presidential election, a Pennsylvania judge ruled Monday.

Common Pleas Court Judge Angelo Foglietta — ruling after Musk's lawyers said the winners are paid spokespeople and not chosen by chance — did not immediately explain his reasoning.

District Attorney Larry Krasner, a Democrat, had called the process a scam "designed to actually influence a national election" and asked that it be shut down.

Musk lawyer Chris Gober said the final two recipients before Tuesday's presidential election will be in Arizona on Monday and Michigan on Tuesday.

"The \$1 million recipients are not chosen by chance," Gober said Monday. "We know exactly who will be announced as the \$1 million recipient today and tomorrow."

Chris Young, the director and treasurer of America PAC, testified that the recipients are vetted ahead of time, to "feel out their personality, (and) make sure they were someone whose values aligned" with the group.

Musk's lawyers, defending the effort, called it "core political speech" given that participants sign a petition endorsing the U.S. Constitution. They also said Krasner's bid to shut it down under Pennsylvania law was moot because there would be no more Pennsylvania winners before the program ends Tuesday.

Krasner believes the giveaways violates state election law and contradict what Musk promised when he announced them during an appearance with Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's campaign in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on Oct. 19: "We're going to be awarding a million dollars randomly to people who have signed the petition every day from now until the election," Musk vowed.

Young also acknowledged that the PAC made the recipients sign nondisclosure agreements.

"They couldn't really reveal the truth about how they got the money, right?" Summers asked.

"Sounds right," Young said.

In an Oct. 20 social media post shown in court, Musk said anyone signing the petition had "a daily chance of winning \$1M!"

Summers grilled him on Musk's use of both the words "chance" and "randomly," prompting Young to concede the latter was not "the word I would have selected."

Young said the winners knew they would be called on stage but not specifically that they would win the money.

Musk did not attend the hearing. He has committed more than \$70 million to the super PAC to help Trump and other Republicans win in November.

"This was all a political marketing masquerading as a lottery," Krasner testified Monday. "That's what it is. A grift."

Lawyers for Musk and the PAC said they do not plan to extend the lottery beyond Tuesday. Krasner said the first three winners, starting on Oct. 19, came from Pennsylvania in the days leading up to the state's Oct. 21 voter registration deadline.

Other winners came from the battleground states of Wisconsin, Nevada, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina and Michigan. It's not clear if anyone has yet received the money. The PAC pledged they would get it by Nov. 30, according to an exhibit shown in court.

More than 1 million people from the seven states have registered for the sweepstakes by signing a petition saying they support the right to free speech and to bear arms, the first two amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Krasner questioned how the PAC might use their data, which it will have on hand well past the election.



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"They were scammed for their information," Krasner said. "It has almost unlimited use."

Krasner's team called Musk "the heartbeat of America PAC," and the person announcing the winners and presenting the checks.

"He was the one who presented the checks, albeit large cardboard checks. We don't really know if there are any real checks," Summers said.

Foglietta presided over the case at Philadelphia City Hall after Musk and the PAC lost an effort to move it to federal court.

Krasner has said he could still consider criminal charges, as he's tasked with protecting both lotteries and the integrity of elections.

Pennsylvania remains a key battleground state with 19 electoral votes and both Trump and Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris have repeatedly visited the state, including stops planned Monday in the final hours of the campaign.

Krasner — who noted that he has long driven a Tesla — said he could also seek civil damages for the Pennsylvania registrants. Musk is the CEO and largest shareholder of Tesla. He also owns the social media platform X, where America PAC has published posts on the sweepstakes, and the rocket ship maker SpaceX.

## **Saints fire coach Dennis Allen after seventh straight loss. Darren Rizzi named interim coach**

By BRETT MARTEL AP Sports Writer

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The New Orleans Saints fired coach Dennis Allen on Monday, a day after a loss at last-place Carolina extended the Saints' losing streak to seven games — their longest since 1999.

"DA is an excellent football coach," Saints general manager Mickey Loomis said. "This season, we've had an avalanche of injuries. It took its toll. DA has never offered excuses. He fought each day for this organization and this team and that is what makes today disappointing."

The Saints named special teams coordinator Darren Rizzi the club's interim coach for the final eight games of what is trending toward a fourth straight season without a playoff berth for New Orleans (2-7).

"This is not a day for celebration," Rizzi said. "This is a tough day. At the same time, there's only one way to fight through this."

The 54-year-old Rizzi said he embraced the challenge he's inherited because "I embrace everything."

"I only know how to do things one way. I grew up a little bit of a fighter. I've really never really been handed anything," Rizzi said, noting that he was a walk-on tight end in college at Rhode Island, an undrafted free agent with the Philadelphia Eagles in 1992 and got his first head coaching job with Division II New Haven in 1999.

"Literally, we're going to reevaluate everything," said Rizzi, who considers himself a disciple of two-time Super Bowl winning coach Bill Parcells, who was a Miami Dolphins executive when he gave Rizzi his first NFL job.

"You're going to reevaluate everybody, everything, staff, the coaches the players," Rizzi said. "Because, right now, when you lose seven games in a row, you're obviously not in a place where you can stay status quo."

Allen went 18-25 without a playoff appearance since taking over in 2022 after Sean Payton, the most successful coach in Saints history, began what turned out to be a one-season retirement from coaching.

Allen was promoted by Loomis after a six-season tenure as New Orleans' defensive coordinator, a period that saw his unit ranked in the top 10 in the NFL in 2020 and 2021.

"Dennis has been a part of our organization for many years," Saints owner Gayle Benson said, referring to Allen's initial stint as a defensive assistant with New Orleans from 2006 to 2010. "He has been extremely loyal and professional.

"All of this makes today very tough for me and our organization," Benson added. "However, this decision is something that I felt we needed to make at this time."

In a written statement released by the team, Allen thanked Benson and Loomis for his opportunity, call-

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ing the Saints an "organization that will always be near and dear to my heart."

Allen said he never questioned his players' dedication and resolve, adding, "I am sorry the results weren't better, because they were certainly deserved."

The Saints continued to field one of the better defenses in the NFL during Allen's first two seasons as head coach, but the offense has been erratic and often struggled in the late stages of close games.

This year, with new offensive coordinator Klint Kubiak in charge, the offense began the season by scoring a stunning 91 points during consecutive victories in Weeks 1 and 2. Since then, however, the unit has struggled to produce while injuries to key players have mounted.

Center Erik McCoy, the Saints' most accomplished offensive lineman, was the first to go down in Week 3 and hasn't played since. Meanwhile, New Orleans has endured stints without quarterback Derek Carr, top receivers Chris Olave and Rashid Shaheed and veteran guard Cesar Ruiz, among others.

New Orleans entered Sunday's loss to the Panthers without three of its top four cornerbacks on defense: Marshon Lattimore, Paulson Adebayo and Kool-Aid McKinstry.

But Carr was back from a three-game absence.

The Saints outgained the Panthers 427 yards to 246 yet still lost, 23-22 — to a team it had beaten 47-10 in Week 1.

Allen went 7-10 in his first season with the Saints and improved to 9-8 last year, narrowly missing the playoffs. Allen hoped that with a new offense, New Orleans would improve enough to make the playoffs for the first time since 2020 — which also was franchise all-time passer Drew Brees' final NFL season.

But since its strong opening two weeks, New Orleans' offense has largely languished and dropped to 16th in yards per game (331.4) through Sunday's games.

Allen's defense, meanwhile, has plummeted to 28th, allowing 376.4 yards per game.

"If you don't feel bad, something's probably wrong with you," safety Tyrann Mathieu said of how he expected Saints players to process Allen's firing.

"Defensively, we played probably the biggest role in him being fired," Mathieu added. "The way we didn't close out games. Tackling — that's kind of been an issue for us all season."

While the 52-year-old Allen remains an accomplished defensive coordinator, his prospects for getting another head coaching position appear dim at best. He is now 26-53 as an NFL coach, including his 8-28 record with the Oakland Raiders from 2012-14.

Allen thanked Saints fans for their "unwavering passion and support of the team," saying he realized "what a privilege it is to coach a special franchise in a great city."

Next steps

Rizzi makes his debut in a head coaching role when New Orleans hosts the NFC South-leading Atlanta Falcons. A victory would pull the Saints within three games of Atlanta (6-3) with seven more to play.

## Hugh Grant spent half his career in rom-coms. Now he plays monsters, and he's never been happier

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After some difficulties connecting to a Zoom, Hugh Grant eventually opts to just phone instead.

"Sorry about that," he apologizes. "Tech hell."

Grant is no lover of technology. Smart phones, for example, he calls the "devil's tinderbox."

"I think they're killing us. I hate them," he says. "I go on long holidays from them, three or four days at a time. Marvelous."

Hell, and our proximity to it, is a not unrelated topic to Grant's new film, "Heretic." In it, two young Mormon missionaries (Chloe East, Sophie Thatcher) come knocking on a door they'll soon regret visiting. They're welcomed in by Mr. Reed (Grant), an initially charming man who tests their faith in theological debate, and then, in much worse things.

After decades in romantic comedies, Grant has spent the last few years playing narcissists, weirdos and

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murders, often to the greatest acclaim of his career. But in "Heretic," a horror thriller from A24, Grant's turn to the dark side reaches a new extreme. The actor who once charmingly stammered in "Four Weddings and a Funeral" and who danced to the Pointer Sisters in "Love Actually" is now doing heinous things to young people in a basement.

"It was a challenge," Grant says. "I think human beings need challenges. It makes your beer taste better in the evening if you've climbed a mountain."

"Heretic," which opens in theaters Friday, is directed by Scott Beck and Bryan Woods, co-writers of "A Quiet Place." In Grant's hands, Mr. Reed is a divinely good baddie — a scholarly creep whose wry monologues pull from a wide range of references, including, fittingly, Radiohead's "Creep."

In an interview, Grant spoke about these and other facets of his character, and his journey from rom-com idol to horror-film villain.

AP: Do you have any theories on why horror has been so popular in recent years?

Grant: It's fascinating, isn't it? I don't know. Maybe these are the end of times, the end days, the apocalypse. We know it deep down but for some reason we won't confront it. I don't know, but it's wonderful that it sends people into the cinemas.

AP: Have you seen many horror films?

Grant: I can't. They're too frightening for me. I watched "The Exorcist" when I was too young and I've been in counseling ever since. I watched one by mistake recently, which was "Midsommar." I thought it looked like a jolly, Swedish comedy. I put it on one evening for my Swedish wife who needed cheering up and she's still very, very traumatized

AP: You've spoken before about your affinity for the big screen. Is the seeming decline of theatrical moviegoing a concern for you?

Grant: It is. Talk about the end of days. To me, one of the gloomiest signs or omens is the gradual closing of cinemas — and not just that, where I live in London, but the closing of bars. The bar where I met my wife, which was party night every night of the week, is now largely closed. I think the fact that we're all staying in, staring at our devil's tinderboxes is deeply tragic, or watching things on streaming by ourselves with maybe one or two other family members. These things should be collective experiences.

AP: One element that you've said factors into your choice of roles is whether you believe the film will be entertaining. Do you find your gauge for that is still accurate?

Grant: My ability to gauge what's entertaining, I used to be very proud of it. In the old days, my old career, I used to say, "I'm not so proud of my acting but I'm proud of the fact that the films I've done, on the whole, have been entertaining and I've been good at choosing them." And then, suddenly overnight, I became very bad at choosing them. I don't know, I lost the zeitgeist, I suppose. That can happen. Now, I feel like I've found something again.

If the character amuses me and I think I'm going to enjoy being that person, then I tend to do the job. Sometimes, when actors are enjoying it, it works.

AP: When would you mark this shift for you?

Grant: The big shift was after "Did You Hear About the Morgans?" That was sort of officially the end of romantic comedy for me. Nothing much happened after that in showbiz terms. I went off and did political campaigning and I was quite happy, in fact. But in drips and drabs, strange little projects, like the Wachowski's "Cloud Atlas," then Stephen Fears came along with "Florence Foster Jenkins" and "A Very English Scandal." "Paddington 2." These interesting, complex, often not very nice, narcissistic weirdos started to emerge from the woods.

AP: After this role, it might be hard for you to find something darker...

Grant: I agree.

AP: Does that make you want to push darker still or rebound back in the other direction?

Grant: It's a very good question that I do not have the answer to. As a matter of fact, there is one thing sitting on my desk in the other room here which is pretty weird and relatively fresh. I agree, I'm not quite sure where to go from here. Maybe it's song and dance.

## The death toll in Lebanon crosses 3,000 in the 13-month Israel-Hezbollah war, Health Ministry says

By BASSEM MROUE and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The 13-month war between Israel and Hezbollah has killed more than 3,000 people in Lebanon, the country's Health Ministry said on Monday, more than double the number of people killed since their last major war two decades ago.

The war shows no signs of ending, and Israel has said it is carrying out new operations targeting Hezbollah infrastructure across Lebanon and in parts of Syria while Hezbollah continues to launch dozens of rockets into northern Israel.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into northern Israel the day after Hamas' surprise attack into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023 ignited the war in Gaza. Hezbollah and Hamas are both allied with Iran.

For nearly a year, the conflict was mostly contained to the areas along the border between Israel and Lebanon. The conflict dramatically escalated on Sept. 23 with intense Israeli airstrikes on south and east Lebanon as well as Beirut's southern suburbs, leaving hundreds dead and leading to the displacement of nearly 1.2 million people.

Israel began a ground invasion of south Lebanon on Oct. 1, causing wide destruction in border villages but making little advances on the ground inside Lebanon. Israel says it is destroying Hezbollah weapons and command centers near the border, including an extensive tunnel system built by Hezbollah.

The Lebanese Health Ministry said 16 people were killed and 90 injured in attacks on Sunday, bringing the death toll to 3,002. At least 13,492 have been injured. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and Hezbollah fighters in its toll. Israel claimed hundreds of Hezbollah fighters have been killed.

In Israel, 72 people have been killed by Hezbollah attacks, including 30 soldiers, according to the prime minister's office. More than 60,000 people have been displaced from their homes.

Also on Monday, Israel announced it terminated the agreement facilitating the work of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, the main aid provider in Gaza.

It was the first step in implementing legislation passed last week that would sever ties with the agency, which Israel says has been infiltrated by Hamas, and prevent it from operating in Israel.

The agency, known as UNRWA, denies the allegations and says it takes measures to ensure its neutrality.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said in a statement Monday that it has notified the U.N. of the cancellation of an agreement dating back to 1967 that facilitates UNRWA's work. It said UNRWA "is part of the problem in the Gaza Strip and not part of the solution."

Israel controls all entry into Gaza, and aid groups groups have warned that the legislation could severely hamper UNRWA's work, creating further obstacles to addressing a severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Israel says that UNRWA is responsible for only 13% of aid entering Gaza and it says other U.N. agencies and aid groups can fill the gap. But aid organizations say UNRWA is essential, and the agency says the Israeli figures do not account for the key role it plays in coordinating aid deliveries.

"Without UNRWA coordination, without UNRWA logistics platforms ... no U.N. agency could operate at the scale required," said Jonathan Fowler, a spokesman for the agency.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said the US was clear about their opposition to the legislation, and gravely concerned about the insufficient number of aid trucks entering Gaza. "We have serious concerns about the implications of it being fully implemented, as well as our concerns about the underlying humanitarian situation in, Gaza, even before Israel passed the legislation," he told reporters in Washington on Monday.

The agency provides education, health and other basic services to Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation and their descendants, who now number nearly six million across the region. Refugee families make up the majority of Gaza's population.

The remainder of the legislation is set to go into effect in three months.

## Many retailers offer 'returnless refunds.' Just don't expect them to talk much about it

By HALELUYA HADERO AP Business Writer

It's one of the most under-publicized policies of some of the biggest U.S. retailers: sometimes they give customers full refunds and let them keep unwanted items too.

Returnless refunds are a tool that more retailers are using to keep online shoppers happy and to reduce shipping fees, processing time and other ballooning costs from returned products.

Companies such as Amazon, Walmart and Target have decided some items are not worth the cost or hassle of getting back. Think a \$20 T-shirt that might cost \$30 in shipping and handling to recover. There are also single-use items, such as a package of plastic straws, that might be difficult to resell or medicines that could be unsafe to market again.

Analysts say the companies offering returnless refunds do it somewhat sporadically, typically reserving the option for low-cost objects or ones with limited resale value. But some online shoppers said they've also been allowed to keep more pricey products.

Dalya Harel, 48, received a return-free refund recently after ordering a desk from Amazon that cost roughly \$300. When the desk arrived, she noticed it was missing some key pieces and would be impossible to put together, Harel said. She couldn't request a replacement and have it within a reasonable time for the office of her New York lice detection removal service because the item was out of stock.

Harel, who routinely buys towels and other products from Amazon for her business, said her team reached out to the company's customer service line. She was pleasantly surprised to hear she would get a refund without having to send back the desk.

"That's one less headache to deal with," Harel said. "It was really nice for us to not have to make an extra trip up to the post office."

She used the desk pieces to create makeshift shelves in her office in Brooklyn.

### A mysterious process

While the retail practice of letting customers keep merchandise and get their money back is not exactly a trade secret, the way it works is shrouded in mystery. Companies are not keen to publicize the circumstances in which they issue returnless refunds due to concerns over the potential for return fraud.

Even if brands don't provide details about such policies on their websites, returnless refunds are expanding in at least some retail corners.

Amazon, which industry experts say has engaged in the practice for years, announced in August that it would extend the option to the third-party sellers who drive most of the sales on the e-commerce giant's platform. Under the program, sellers who use the company's fulfillment services in the U.S. could choose to offer customers a traditional refund for purchases under \$75 along with no obligation to return what they ordered.

Amazon did not immediately respond to questions about how the program works. But publicly, it has pitched returnless refunds more directly to international sellers and those who offer cheaper goods. Items sold in an upcoming section of Amazon's website, which will allow U.S. shoppers to buy low-cost goods shipped directly from China, will also be eligible for returnless refunds, according to documents seen by The Associated Press.

In January, Walmart gave a similar option to merchants who sell products on its growing online marketplace, leaving it up to sellers to set price limits and determine if or how they want to participate.

China-founded e-commerce companies Shein and Temu say they also offer returnless refunds on a small number of orders, as does Target, the online shopping site Overstock and pet products e-tailer Chewy, which some customer said had encouraged them to donate unwanted items to local animal shelters.

Wayfair, another online retailer cited by some customers as offering returnless refunds, did not reply to a request for comment on its policies.

Deciding who is eligible - and when

Overall, retailers and brands tend to be careful about how often they let customers keep items for free. Many of them are deploying algorithms to determine who should be given the option and who should not.

To make the decision, the algorithms assess multiple factors, including the extent to which a shopper should be trusted based on prior purchasing – and returning – patterns, shipping costs and the demand for the product in the customer’s hands, according to Sender Shamiss, CEO of goTRG, a reverse logistics company that works with retailers like Walmart.

Optoro, a company that helps streamline returns for Best Buy, Staples and Gap Inc., has observed retailers assessing the lifetime value of a customer and extending returnless refunds as a type of unofficial, discreet loyalty benefit, according to CEO Amena Ali.

The king of online retail appeared to verify the process works that way.

In a statement, Amazon said it offers returnless refunds on a “very small number” of items as a “convenience to customers.”

The company also said it’s hearing positive feedback from sellers about its new program that authorized them to tell customers they could keep some products and still be reimbursed. Amazon said it was monitoring for signs of fraud and setting eligibility criteria for sellers and customers. It didn’t provide additional details on what that encompassed.

Online shopping and the cost of returns

Some retailers also are stiffening the liberal return policies they long employed to encourage online orders. Shoppers who enjoyed making purchases on their computers or cellphones became accustomed to loading up their digital shopping baskets with the intent of returning items they ended up not liking.

Shopping online also grew significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when homebound consumers reduced their trips to stores and relied on sites like Amazon for everyday items. Retail companies have talked in recent years about returns becoming more expensive to process due to the growing volume, rising inflation and labor costs.

Last year, U.S. consumers returned \$743 billion worth of merchandise, or 14.5% of the products they purchased - up from 10.6% in 2020, according to the National Retail Federation. In 2019, returned merchandise was valued at \$309 billion, according to loss prevention company Appriss Retail.

Last year, roughly 14% of returns were fraudulent, costing retailers \$101 billion in losses, according to a joint report from the National Retail Federation and Appriss Retail. The problem spans from low-level forms of fraud - such as shoppers returning already worn clothing - to more complicated schemes by fraudsters who return shoplifted merchandise or items purchased on stolen credit cards.

To deter excessive returns, some retailers, including H&M, Zara and J. Crew, started charging customers return fees in the past year. Others have shortened their return windows. Some shopping sites, such as the Canadian retailer Ssense, have threatened to kick frequent returners off their platforms if they suspect abuse of their policies.

However, retailers don’t all view frequent returners in the same way. Such customers could be seen as “good returners” if they purchase – and keep – many more items than they send back, Ali said.

“Oftentimes, your most profitable customers tend to be high returners,” she said.

## **Volcanic eruption burns houses in Indonesia, killing at least 10 people**

By JAKOBUS HERIN Associated Press

MAUMERE, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia’s National Disaster Management Agency said Monday that at least 10 people have died as a series of volcanic eruptions widens on the remote island of Flores.

The eruption at Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki around midnight spewed thick brownish ash as high as 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) into the air and hot ashes hit several villages, burning down houses including a convent of Catholic nuns, said Firman Yosef, an official at the Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki monitoring post.

He said volcanic material was thrown up to 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from its crater, blanketing nearby

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villages and towns with tons of volcanic debris and forcing residents to flee.

Rescuers were still searching for more bodies buried under collapsed houses, said Abdul Muhari, the National Disaster Management Agency's spokesperson. Muhari said all the bodies, including a child, were found within a 4-kilometer (2.4 mile) radius of the crater.

He said at least 10,000 people have been affected by the eruption in six villages of Wulanggintang District, and four villages in Ile Bura district. Some have fled to relatives' houses while the local government is readying schools to use as temporary shelters.

The country's volcano monitoring agency increased the volcano's alert status to the highest level and more than doubled the exclusion zone to a 7-kilometer (4.3-mile) radius after midnight on Monday as eruptions became more frequent.

A nun in Hokeng village died and another was missing, said Augusta Palma, the head of the Saint Gabriel Foundation that oversees convents on the majority-Catholic island.

"Our nuns ran out in panic under a rain of volcanic ash in the darkness," Palma said.

Photos and videos circulated on social media showed tons of volcanic debris covering houses up to their rooftops in villages like Hokeng, where hot volcanic material set fire to houses.

Lewotobi Laki-laki is one of a pair of stratovolcanoes in the East Flores district of East Nusa Tenggara province known locally as the husband — "Laki-laki" means man — and wife mountains. Its mate is Lewotobi Perempuan, or woman.

About 6,500 people were evacuated in January after Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki began erupting, spewing thick clouds and forcing the government to close the island's Frans Seda Airport. No casualties or major damage were reported, but the airport has remained closed since then due to seismic activity.

In a video conference on Monday, Muhammad Wafid, the head of Geology Agency at the Energy and Mineral Resources ministry said there was a different character between January's eruption and Monday's eruption due to a blockage of magma in the crater, which reduced detectible seismic activity while building up pressure.

"The eruptions that occurred since Friday were due to the accumulation of hidden energy," Wafid said.

It's Indonesia's second volcanic eruption in as many weeks. West Sumatra province's Mount Marapi, one of the country's most active volcanos, erupted on Oct. 27, spewing thick columns of ash at least three times and blanketing nearby villages with debris, but no casualties were reported.

Lewotobi Laki-laki is one of the 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, an archipelago of 280 million people. The country is prone to earthquakes, landslides and volcanic activity because it sits along the "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines around the Pacific Ocean. \_\_\_\_

Associated Press writers Niniek Karmini and Edna Tarigan in Jakarta contributed to this report.

## **Moldova's diaspora tipped the scales in a pivotal election. Critics question the vote's validity**

By STEPHEN McGRATH and NICOLAE DUMITRACHE Associated Press

CHISINAU, Moldova (AP) — Moldovans living abroad voted in record numbers in a presidential runoff that secured victory for pro-Western President Maia Sandu, in a pivotal race that pitted her against a Russia-friendly opponent amid ongoing claims of Russian interference, voter fraud, and intimidation.

Sandu's win, on a campaign promise to advance Moldova's candidacy for European Union membership, was a major boon for the pro-Western government, which strongly backed her candidacy.

However, her opponents claim her victory relied too much on Moldovans living outside the country — which has a population of about 2.5 million, excluding expatriates — to be considered legitimate.

With 100% of ballots counted in the second round of Sunday's presidential election, Sandu obtained 55.33% of the vote, according to the Central Electoral Commission, compared to 44.67% for Alexandr Stoianoglo, who was backed by the pro-Russia Party of Socialists.

A record number of 327,000 voters cast ballots abroad in the runoff, more than 82% of whom favored Sandu. But inside Moldova, Stoianoglo, a former prosecutor general, obtained 51.3% of the vote, com-

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pared to Sandu's 48.67%.

Although the former Soviet republic signed a deal with the EU in 2014 to forge closer political and economic ties, years of rampant corruption and lack of reform hindered development, and an exodus of hundreds of thousands of citizens sought better futures abroad.

Former president Igor Dodon, the leader of the pro-Moscow Party of Socialists, was quick to question Sandu's electoral victory by telling Russia's state news agency, TASS, that she has become "a president of the diaspora" and suggested it undermined the vote, noting Stoianoglo "won the presidential elections inside the country."

Dodon's party stated in a post on social media on Monday that it did not recognize the results, calling Sandu "an illegitimate president, recognized only by her sponsors and supporters abroad" and claimed Moldovans "feel betrayed and robbed."

Cristian Cantir, a Moldovan associate professor of international relations at Oakland University, told The Associated Press that the reaction from pro-Moscow politicians "was to be expected" since they have "criticized the diaspora vote in the past, especially votes by Moldovans" residing in Western countries.

"This message about illegitimacy and the diaspora will be used to amplify one specific Kremlin talking point," he said, "that pro-EU politicians aren't actually popular in Moldova, and that they're only staying in power with support from the diaspora in the West, as well as Western countries."

Moldova's diaspora also played a key role in a national referendum on Oct. 20, when a razor-thin majority of 50.35% voted to secure Moldova's path toward EU membership. Like Georgia and neighboring Ukraine, Moldova aspires to join the EU but is caught in a constant geopolitical tug between Moscow and the West.

In a victory statement early Monday, Sandu told voters they had "given a lesson in democracy, worthy of being written in history books" and also noted the significant role the diaspora played in her reelection.

"Our diaspora has given us yet another lesson today, one that we should all learn from," said Sandu, a former World Bank official. "Moldovans abroad have shown once again that Moldova beats as strongly in their hearts as it does in ours back home."

She also went on to say that the vote had been overshadowed by an "unprecedented attack" through alleged schemes including dirty money, vote-buying, and electoral interference "by hostile forces from outside the country" and criminal groups.

The results of both the October ballots and Sunday's runoff were indeed dogged by allegations of a major vote-buying scheme, Russian interference, and voter intimidation — which exposed Moldova's judiciary as unable to adequately protect the democratic process.

In the wake of the two October votes, Moldovan law enforcement said that a vote-buying scheme was orchestrated by Ilan Shor, an exiled oligarch who lives in Russia and was convicted in absentia last year of fraud and money laundering. Shor denies any wrongdoing.

Prosecutors say \$39 million was paid to more than 130,000 recipients through an internationally sanctioned Russian bank to voters between September and October. Anti-corruption 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 Monday, U.S. President Joe Biden congratulated Sandu on her "historic reelection" and said Moldovans favored her "vision for a secure, prosperous, and democratic" country. He also addressed allegations of Russian meddling.

"For months, Russia sought to undermine Moldova's democratic institutions and election processes. But Russia failed," he said. "The Moldovan people have exercised their democratic right to choose their own future, and they have chosen to pursue a path aligned with Europe and democracies everywhere."

The EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, also said Sandu won "despite unprecedented interference by Russia, including with vote-buying schemes and disinformation," which he said had "sought to undermine the country's democratic institutions and its EU path."

"I hope the government will understand the results, especially the one obtained on Moldovan soil that was a negative one for them, both in the referendum and the presidential election," 20-year-old student Artur, who did not give his surname, said in Chisinau on Monday, referring to the more than 50% support



for Stoianoglo from voters within Moldova. "Maybe they'll change things for the wellbeing of Moldova."

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.

The pro-Western government led by the Party of Action and Solidarity has been in power in Moldova since 2021, and a parliamentary election will be held in 2025. Moldova watchers warn that next year's vote could be Moscow's main target.

Mihai Mogaldea, the deputy director at the Chisinau-based Institute for European Policies and Reforms think tank, told the AP on Monday that the EU should focus on extending more funds to Moldova to "produce an immediate effect on people's lives."

"We must understand that we only won a battle," he said, "and the war will continue till after the parliamentary election — and actually that's where all Russia's bets are on."

## Remembering Quincy Jones: 10 career-spanning songs to celebrate his legacy

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

Few artists have legacies so mammoth their very name could be considered synonymous with the music industry, but then again, most musicians are not the prodigious producer Quincy Jones.

The larger-than-life figure died Sunday night at his Los Angeles home, surrounded by his family. He was 91 and scheduled to receive an honorary Academy Award later this month.

Across his career, the 28-time Grammy Award winning Jones worked with everyone from Ray Charles and Frank Sinatra to Michael Jackson with hundreds in-between. The best way to celebrate his legacy, of course, is to listen to the music he made.

Read on, and then listen to all of the tracks on our Spotify playlist, [here](#).

1963: Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie's orchestra, "Honeysuckle Rose"

Those looking to kickstart their Jones listening journey at the very beginning of his career could do so with "Liza," from his first album, "Jazz Abroad," a joint release with Roy Haynes. For everyone else, look to his arrangements on 1963's "Ella and Basie!," an album by Fitzgerald with Count Basie's orchestra. Moving from just vocals and bass before building into its own grandness — not to mention, a delightful scat solo from Fitzgerald — "Honeysuckle Rose" from the album is an exemplar of Jones' jazz brilliance.

1963: Lesley Gore, "It's My Party"

Teenage heartbreak met its match on Lesley Gore's "It's My Party," recorded when its pop singer was still in her own adolescence. Jones produced the record, with its addictive melodies, percussion and cheerful horn section — emotionally and diametrically opposed to its narrative tale of a girl getting dumped by her boyfriend for her best friend on her birthday. You'd cry, too, if it happened to you.

1964: Frank Sinatra, "Fly Me to the Moon"

Jones' legacy is defined by an idiosyncratic ability to master various American musical forms with an apparent ease. That is the case of this canonized cover by Frank Sinatra, "Fly Me to the Moon," from Sinatra's 1964 album, "It Might as Well Be Swing," arranged by Jones. The producer set the song to a punchy, swinging rhythm and wistful flute, and the rest is history. You can also thank Jones for "The Best Is Yet to Come."

1967: Ray Charles, "In the Heat of the Night"

Jones scored the 1967 film "In the Heat of the Night," which includes its R&B-gospel title track, "In the Heat of the Night," performed by his good friend Ray Charles. It is soul committed to wax, amplified by the inclusion of a lusty tenor sax solo.

1979: Michael Jackson, "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough"

Perhaps Jones' best-known production partnership is the one he had with Michael Jackson, working with the King of Pop on his culture-shifting albums, 1979's "Off the Wall," 1982's "Thriller" and 1987's "Bad." The pair met while working on the 1978 movie "The Wiz" — Jones worked on its soundtrack, and Jackson was

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its star. "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough," with its inventive disco-funk, ambitious production and Jackson's signature falsetto set the stage for the massive career to come.

1981: Quincy Jones, "Just Once"

Put it in the pantheon of great piano ballads: On Jones' 1981 album "The Dude," James Ingram takes over lead vocal duties for "Just Once," the big-hearted and bigger-feelings track.

1982: Michael Jackson, "Billie Jean"

What songs are more immediately recognizable? An elongated drum and bass lick introduce "Billie Jean," one of the great genre-averse pop songs of all time, from Jackson's record-breaking "Thriller" album. Here, Jones' production is post-disco, but still funky, still prescient. And time tells the greatest tale: "Thriller" sold more than 20 million copies in 1983 alone and has contended with the Eagles' "Greatest Hits 1971-1975" among others as the best-selling album of all time.

1982: Donna Summer, "Love Is in Control (Finger on the Trigger)"

And now for something completely different: In 1982, Jones worked with Donna Summer on her self-titled album, a dance-forward record that includes the synth-y pop single "Love Is in Control (Finger on the Trigger)," which earned a Grammy nomination for best R&B vocal performance, female.

1985: USA for Africa, "We Are the World"

Nearly four decades ago, some of the biggest stars on the planet — Jackson, Bob Dylan, Tina Turner, Dionne Warwick, Billy Joel, Stevie Wonder, Willie Nelson and Bruce Springsteen among them — came together for an all-night recording session. The result was "We Are the World," a pop superhit overseen by Jones, the 1985 charity record for famine relief in Africa.

Lionel Richie, who co-wrote "We Are the World" and was among the featured singers, would call Jones "the master orchestrator."

1989: Quincy Jones with Ray Charles and Chaka Khan, "I'll Be Good to You"

Back in 1976, Jones produced the Brothers Johnson's R&B hit, "I'll Be Good to You," and then re-recorded the track with Ray Charles and Chaka Khan — an ebullient number with contemporary production, completely transforming the classic.

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

By SALLY ABOU ALJOUND Associated Press

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jaber was living in Aramoun, just south of Beirut, before the war, and the rest of his family evacuated from Mhaibib after the border skirmishes ignited. Some of them left their possessions behind and sought

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refuge in Syria. Jaber's father and two sisters, Zeinab and Fatima, moved in with him.

In the living room of their temporary home, the siblings sip Arabic coffee while their father chain-smokes. "My father breaks my heart. He is 70 years old, frail and has been waiting for over a year to return to Mhaibib," Zeinab said. "He left his five cows there. He keeps asking, 'Do you think they're still alive?'"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The family painstakingly expanded their home over a decade.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Quincy Jones, music titan who worked with everyone from Frank Sinatra to Michael Jackson, dies at 91

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

Quincy Jones, the multitalented music titan whose vast legacy ranged from producing Michael Jackson's historic "Thriller" album to writing prize-winning film and television scores and collaborating with Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles and hundreds of other recording artists, has died at 91.

Jones' publicist, Arnold Robinson, says he died Sunday night at his home in the Bel Air section of Los Angeles, surrounded by his family. Jones was to have received an honorary Academy Award later this month.

"Tonight, with full but broken hearts, we must share the news of our father and brother Quincy Jones' passing," the family said in a statement. "And although this is an incredible loss for our family, we celebrate the great life that he lived and know there will never be another like him."

Jones rose from running with gangs on the South Side of Chicago to the very heights of show business, becoming one of the first Black executives to thrive in Hollywood and amassing an extraordinary musical catalog that includes some of the richest moments of American rhythm and song. For years, it was unlikely to find a music lover who did not own at least one record with his name on it, or a leader in the entertainment industry and beyond who did not have some connection to him.

Jones kept company with presidents and foreign leaders, movie stars and musicians, philanthropists and business leaders. He toured with Count Basie and Lionel Hampton, arranged records for Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald, composed the soundtracks for "Roots" and "In the Heat of the Night," organized President Bill Clinton's first inaugural celebration and oversaw the all-star recording of "We Are the World," the 1985 charity record for famine relief in Africa.

Lionel Richie, who co-wrote "We Are the World" and was among the featured singers, would call Jones "the master orchestrator."

In a career which began when records were still played on platters turning at 78 rpm, top honors likely go to his productions with Jackson: "Off the Wall," "Thriller" and "Bad" were albums near-universal in their style and appeal. Jones' versatility and imagination helped set off the explosive talents of Jackson as he transformed from child star to the "King of Pop." On such classic tracks as "Billie Jean" and "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough," Jones and Jackson fashioned a global soundscape out of disco, funk, rock, pop, R&B and jazz and African chants. For "Thriller," some of the most memorable touches originated with Jones, who recruited Eddie Van Halen for a guitar solo on the genre-fusing "Beat It" and brought in Vincent Price for a ghoulish voiceover on the title track.

"Thriller" sold more than 20 million copies in 1983 alone and has contended with the Eagles' "Greatest Hits 1971-1975" among others as the best-selling album of all time.

"If an album doesn't do well, everyone says 'it was the producers fault'; so if it does well, it should be your 'fault,' too," Jones said in an interview with the Library of Congress in 2016. "The tracks don't just all of a sudden appear. The producer has to have the skill, experience and ability to guide the vision to completion."

The list of his honors and awards fills 18 pages in his 2001 autobiography "Q," including 27 Grammys at the time (now 28), an honorary Academy Award (now two) and an Emmy for "Roots." He also received France's Legion d'Honneur, the Rudolph Valentino Award from the Republic of Italy and a Kennedy Center tribute for his contributions to American culture. He was the subject of a 1990 documentary, "Listen Up: The Lives of Quincy Jones," and a 2018 film by daughter Rashida Jones. His memoir made him a best-selling author.

Born in Chicago in 1933, Jones would cite the hymns his mother sang around the house as the first music he could remember. But he looked back sadly on his childhood, once telling Oprah Winfrey that "There are two kinds of people: those who have nurturing parents or caretakers, and those who don't. Nothing's

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in between." Jones' mother suffered from emotional problems and was eventually institutionalized, a loss that made the world seem "senseless" for Quincy. He spent much of his time in Chicago on the streets, with gangs, stealing and fighting.

"They nailed my hand to a fence with a switchblade, man," he told the AP in 2018, showing a scar from his childhood.

Music saved him. As a boy, he learned that a Chicago neighbor owned a piano and he soon played it constantly himself. His father moved to Washington state when Quincy was 10 and his world changed at a neighborhood recreation center. Jones and some friends had broken into the kitchen and helped themselves to lemon meringue pie when Jones noticed a small room nearby with a stage. On the stage was a piano.

"I went up there, paused, stared, and then tinkled on it for a moment," he wrote in his autobiography. "That's where I began to find peace. I was 11. I knew this was it for me. Forever."

Within a few years he was playing trumpet and befriending a young blind musician named Ray Charles, who became a lifelong friend. He was gifted enough to win a scholarship at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, but dropped out when Hampton invited him to tour with his band. Jones went on to work as a freelance composer, conductor, arranger and producer. As a teen, he backed Billie Holiday. By his mid-20s, he was touring with his own band.

"We had the best jazz band on the planet, and yet we were literally starving," Jones later told Musician magazine. "That's when I discovered that there was music, and there was the music business. If I were to survive, I would have to learn the difference between the two."

As a music executive, he overcame racial barriers by becoming a vice president at Mercury Records in the early '60s. In 1971, he became the first Black musical director for the Academy Awards ceremony. The first movie he produced, "The Color Purple," received 11 Oscar nominations in 1986. (But, to his great disappointment, no wins). In a partnership with Time Warner, he created Quincy Jones Entertainment, which included the pop-culture magazine Vibe and Qwest Broadcasting. The company was sold for \$270 million in 1999.

"My philosophy as a businessman has always come from the same roots as my personal credo: take talented people on their own terms and treat them fairly and with respect, no matter who they are or where they come from," Jones wrote in his autobiography.

He was at ease with virtually every form of American music, whether setting Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon" to a punchy, swinging rhythm and wistful flute or opening his production of Charles' soulful "In the Heat of the Night" with a lusty tenor sax solo. He worked with jazz giants (Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington), rappers (Snoop Dogg, LL Cool J), crooners (Sinatra, Tony Bennett), pop singers (Lesley Gore) and rhythm and blues stars (Chaka Khan, Queen Latifah).

On "We are the World" alone, performers included Michael Jackson, Bob Dylan, Billy Joel, Stevie Wonder and Bruce Springsteen. He co-wrote hits for Jackson – "P.Y.T (Pretty Young Thing)" – and Donna Summer – "Love Is in Control (Finger on the Trigger) – and had songs sampled by Tupac Shakur, Kanye West and other rappers. He even composed the theme song for the sitcom "Sanford and Son."

Jones was a facilitator and maker of the stars. He gave Will Smith a key break in the hit TV show "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," which Jones produced, and through "The Color Purple" he introduced Winfrey and Whoopi Goldberg to filmgoers. Starting in the 1960s, he composed more than 35 film scores, including for "The Pawnbroker," "In the Heat of the Night" and "In Cold Blood."

He called scoring "a multifaceted process, an abstract combination of science and soul."

Jones' work on the soundtrack for "The Wiz" led to his partnership with Jackson, who starred in the 1978 movie. In an essay published in Time magazine after Jackson's death, in 2009, Jones remembered that the singer kept slips of paper on him that contained thoughts by famous thinkers. When Jones asked about the origins of one passage, Jackson answered "Socrates," but pronounced it "SO-crayts." Jones corrected him, "Michael, it's SOCK-ra-tees."

"And the look he gave me then, it just prompted me to say, because I'd been impressed by all the things I saw in him during the rehearsal process, 'I would love to take a shot at producing your album,'" Jones recalled. "And he went back and told the people at Epic Records, and they said, 'No way — Quincy's

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too jazzy.' Michael was persistent, and he and his managers went back and said, 'Quincy's producing the album.' And we proceeded to make 'Off the Wall.' Ironically, that was one of the biggest Black-selling albums at the time, and that album saved all the jobs of the people saying I was the wrong guy. That's the way it works."

Tensions emerged after Jackson's death. In 2013, Jones sued Jackson's estate, claiming he was owed millions in royalties and production fees on some of the superstar's greatest hits. In a 2018 interview with New York magazine, he called Jackson "as Machiavellian as they come" and alleged that he lifted material from others.

Jones was hooked on work and play, and at times suffered for it. He nearly died from a brain aneurysm in 1974 and became deeply depressed in the 1980s after "The Color Purple" was snubbed by Academy Awards voters; he never received a competitive Oscar. A father of seven children by five mothers, Jones described himself as a "dog" who had countless lovers around the world. He was married three times, his wives including the actor Peggy Lipton.

"To me, loving a woman is one of the most natural, blissful, life-enhancing — and dare I say, religious — acts in the world," he wrote.

Along with Rashida, Jones is survived by daughters Jolie Jones Levine, Rachel Jones, Martina Jones, Kidada Jones and Kenya Kinski-Jones; son Quincy Jones III; brother Richard Jones and sisters Theresa Frank and Margie Jay.

He was not an activist in his early years, but changed after attending the 1968 funeral of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and later befriending the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Jones was dedicated to philanthropy, saying "the best and only useful aspect of fame and celebrity is having a platform to help others."

His causes included fighting HIV and AIDS, educating children and providing for the poor around the world. He founded the Quincy Jones Listen Up! Foundation to connect young people with music, culture and technology, and said he was driven throughout his life "by a spirit of adventure and a criminal level of optimism."

"Life is like a dream, the Spanish poet and philosopher Federico Garcia Lorca said," Jones wrote in his memoir. "Mine's been in Technicolor, with full Dolby sound through THX amplification before they knew what these systems were."

## **A presidential campaign unlike any other ends on Tuesday. Here's how we got here**

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's the election that no one could have foreseen.

Not so long ago, Donald Trump was marinating in anger at Mar-a-Lago after being impeached twice and voted out of the White House. Even some of his closest allies were looking forward to a future without the charismatic yet erratic billionaire leading the Republican Party, especially after his failed attempt to overturn an election ended in violence and shame. When Trump announced his comeback bid two years ago, the New York Post buried the article on page 26.

At the same time, Kamala Harris was languishing as a low-profile sidekick to President Joe Biden. Once seen as a rising star in the Democratic Party, she struggled with both her profile and her portfolio, disappointing her supporters and delighting her critics. No one was talking about Harris running for the top job — they were wondering if Biden should replace her as his running mate when he sought a second term.

But on Tuesday, improbable as it may have seemed before, Americans will choose either Trump or Harris to serve as the next president. It's the final chapter in one of the most bewildering, unpredictable and consequential sagas in political history. For once, the word "unprecedented" has not been overused.

"If someone had told you ahead of time what was going to happen in this election, and you tried to sell it as a book, no one would believe it," said Neil Newhouse, a Republican pollster with more than four decades of experience. "It's energized the country and it's polarized the country. And all we can hope is that we come out of it better in the end."

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History was and will be made. The United States has never elected a president who has been convicted of a crime. Trump survived not one but two assassination attempts. Biden dropped out in the middle of an election year and Harris could become the first female president. Fundamental tenets about democracy in the most powerful nation on earth will be tested like no time since the Civil War.

And that's not to mention the backdrop of simultaneous conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, hacking by foreign governments, an increasingly normalized blizzard of misinformation and the intimate involvement of the world's richest man, Elon Musk.

For now, the only thing the country can agree on is that no one knows how the story will end.

Trump rebounded from disgrace to the Republican nomination

Republicans could have been finished with Trump after Jan. 6, 2021.

That's the day he fired up his supporters with false claims of voter fraud, directed them to march on the U.S. Capitol while Congress was ceremonially certifying Biden's election victory, and then stood by as rioting threatened lawmakers and his own vice president.

But not enough Republicans joined with Democrats to convict Trump in an impeachment trial, clearing a path for him to run for office again.

Trump started planning a comeback even as some leaders in his party hoped he would be eclipsed by Ron DeSantis, the Florida governor, or Nikki Haley, the former South Carolina governor who served as Trump's ambassador to the United Nations.

In the year after Trump announced that he would run against Biden, he faced criminal charges four times. Two of the indictments were connected to his attempts to overturn his election defeat. Another involved his refusal to return classified documents to the federal government after leaving office. Trump has pleaded not guilty to all the charges, and none of those cases have been resolved.

However, a fourth indictment in New York led to Trump becoming the first president in U.S. history to be criminally convicted. A jury found him guilty on May 30 of falsifying business records over hush money payments to a porn star who claimed they had an affair.

None of it slowed Trump, who practically ignored his opponents during the primary as he barreled toward the Republican presidential nomination. A mugshot from one of his arrests was adopted by his followers as a symbol of resisting a corrupt system.

Trump's candidacy capitalized on anger over inflation and frustration about migrants crossing the southern border. He also hammered Biden as too old for the job even though he's only four years younger than the president.

But Democrats also thought Biden, 81, would be better off considering retirement than a second term. So when Biden struggled through a presidential debate on June 27 — losing his train of thought, appearing confused, stammering through answers — he faced escalating pressure within his party to drop out of the race.

As Biden faced a political crisis, Trump went to an outdoor rally in Butler, Pennsylvania on July 13. A young man evaded police, climbed to the top of a nearby building and fired several shots with a semiautomatic rifle.

Trump grabbed at his ear and dropped to the stage. While Secret Service agents crowded around him, he lurched to his feet with a streak of blood across his face, thrust his fist in the air and shouted "fight, fight, fight!" An American flag billowed overhead.

It was an instantly iconic moment. Trump's path to the White House seemed clearer than ever — perhaps even inevitable.

Harris gets an unexpected opportunity at redemption

The vice president was getting ready to do a puzzle with her nieces on the morning of July 21 when Biden called. He had decided to end his reelection bid and endorse Harris as his replacement.

She spent the rest of the day making dozens of phone calls to line up support, and she had enough to secure the nomination within two days.

It was a startling reversal of fortune. Harris had flamed out when running for president four years earlier, dropping out before the first Democratic primary contest. Biden resuscitated her political career by

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choosing her as his running mate, and she became the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president.

But Harris' struggles did not end there. She fumbled questions about immigration, oversaw widespread turnover in her office and faded into the background rather than use her historic status as a platform.

All of that started to change on June 24, 2022, when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the nationwide right to abortion enshrined by Roe v. Wade. Harris became the White House's top advocate on an issue that reshaped American politics.

She also proved to be more nimble than before. Shortly after returning from a weeklong trip to Africa, her team orchestrated a spur-of-the-moment venture to Nashville so Harris could show support for two Tennessee lawmakers who had been expelled for protesting for gun control.

Meanwhile, Harris was networking with local politicians, business leaders and cultural figures to gain ideas and build connections. When Biden dropped out, she was better positioned than many realized to seize the moment.

The day after she became the candidate, Harris jetted to Wilmington, Delaware to visit campaign headquarters. Staff members had spent the morning printing "Kamala" and "Harris for President" signs to tape up next to obsolete "Biden-Harris" posters.

There were 106 days until the end of the election.

The battle between Trump and Harris will reshape the country

While speaking to campaign staff in Wilmington, Harris used a line that has become a mantra, chanted by supporters at rallies across the country. "We are not going back," she declared.

It's a fitting counterpoint to Trump's slogan, "make America great again," which he has wielded since launching his first campaign more than eight years ago.

The two candidates have almost nothing in common, something that was on display on Sept. 10, when Harris and Trump met for the first time for their only televised debate.

Harris promised to restore abortion rights and use tax breaks to support small businesses and families. She said she would "be a president for all Americans."

Trump took credit for nominating the justices that helped overturn Roe, pledged to protect the U.S. economy with tariffs and made false claims about migrants eating people's pets. He called Harris "the worst vice president in the history of our country."

Harris was widely viewed as gaining the upper hand. Trump insisted he won but refused a second debate. The race remained remarkably close.

Pundits and pollsters have spent the final weeks straining to identify any shift in the candidates' chances. Microscopic changes in public opinion could swing the outcome of the election. It might take days to count enough votes to determine who wins.

The outcome, whenever it becomes clear, could be just another surprise in a campaign that's been full of them.

## Today in History: November 5, Susan B. Anthony defies law and casts vote for president

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 5, the 310th day of 2024. There are 56 days left in the year. Today is Election Day in the United States.

Today in history:

On Nov. 5, 1872, suffragist Susan B. Anthony defied the law by casting a vote in the presidential election; she was later arrested and charged with "knowingly voting without having a lawful right to vote." Found guilty at trial, she was fined \$100, which she refused to pay.

Also on this date:

In 1605, the "Gunpowder Plot" failed as Guy Fawkes was seized before he could blow up the English Parliament.



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In 1912, Democrat Woodrow Wilson was elected president, defeating Progressive Party candidate Theodore Roosevelt, incumbent Republican William Howard Taft and Socialist Eugene V. Debs.

In 1930, novelist Sinclair Lewis became the first American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt won an unprecedented third term in office as he defeated Republican challenger Wendell L. Willkie.

In 1968, Republican Richard M. Nixon won the presidency, defeating Democratic Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey and American Independent Party candidate George C. Wallace.

In 1994, George Foreman became the oldest heavyweight boxing champion at age 45, knocking out Michael Moorer in the 10th round of their title bout.

In 1996, President Bill Clinton won a second term in the White House, defeating Republican candidate Bob Dole.

In 2006, Saddam Hussein was convicted and sentenced by the Iraqi High Tribunal to hang for crimes against humanity.

In 2009, a shooting rampage at the Fort Hood Army post in Texas left 13 people dead; Maj. Nidal Hasan, an Army psychiatrist, was later convicted of murder and sentenced to death. He has not yet been executed.

In 2017, a gunman armed with an assault rifle opened fire in a small South Texas church, killing more than two dozen people; the shooter, Devin Patrick Kelley, was later found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

In 2021, a crush of fans during a performance by rapper Travis Scott at a Houston music festival left 10 dead, as people were squeezed so tightly they couldn't breathe.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Art Garfunkel is 83. Singer Peter Noone is 77. TV personality Kris Jenner is 69. Singer Bryan Adams is 65. Actor Tilda Swinton is 64. Actor Tatum O'Neal is 61. Actor Judy Reyes is 57. Actor Seth Gilliam is 56. Actor Sam Rockwell is 56. Musician Jonny Greenwood (Radiohead) is 53. Golfer Bubba Watson is 46. Olympic gold medal marathoner Eliud Kipchoge is 40. Retired NFL center Jason Kelce is 37. Musician Kevin Jonas (The Jonas Brothers) is 37. NFL wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. is 32.