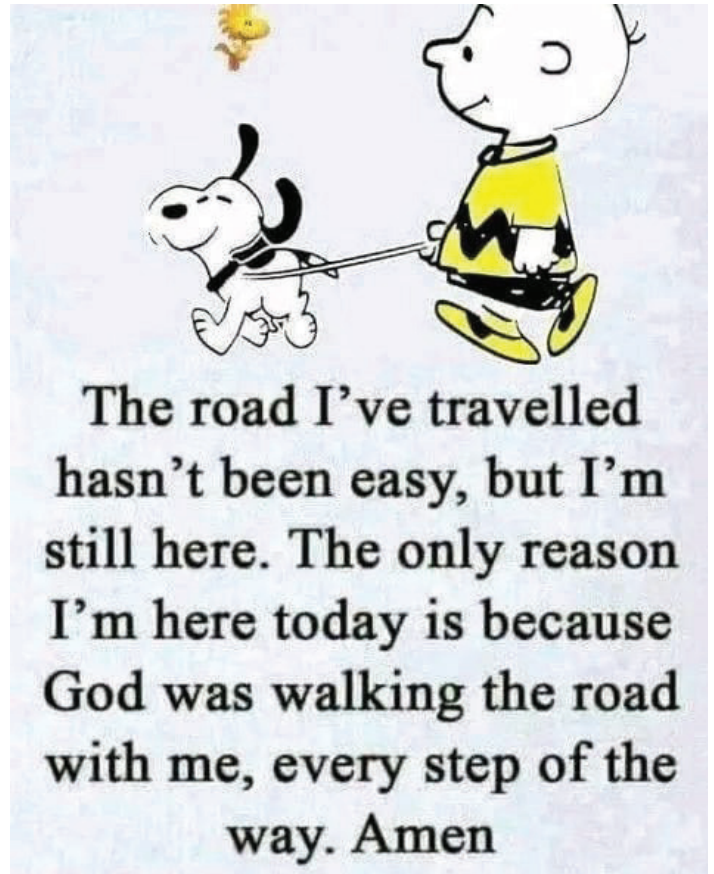


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Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



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 Webster the first match at 6 p.m. The match that follows features Aberdeen Roncalli and Milbank.

Friday, Nov. 8

Senior Menu: Beef and broccoli stir fry, rice, cauliflower, five cup salad, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Egg bake.
School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, locally grown roasted squash.

FROSTY CLUE

I/My.....

7. Am a member of a Groton Church



Bon Homme County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: South Dakota Highway 50, mile marker 361, six miles east of Tyndall, SD

When: 1:16 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024

Driver 1: 25-year-old male from Knoxville, TN, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2006 Pontiac G6

Seatbelt Used: Yes

Driver 2: 80-year-old male from Chamberlain, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2011 Jeep Patriot

Seatbelt Used: Yes

Bon Homme County, S.D.- Two people died Tuesday afternoon in a two-vehicle crash near Tyndall, SD.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2006 Pontiac G6 was traveling eastbound near mile marker 361 on SD Highway 50. A 2011 Jeep Patriot was traveling westbound at the same location and crossed into the eastbound lane colliding head-on with the oncoming Pontiac. Both drivers received fatal injuries.

Name Released in Codington County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: 445th Ave and 175th St, 10 miles southwest of Watertown, SD

When: 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024

Driver 1: Dell James Felstet, 33-year-old male from Watertown, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2012 Ford Escape

Seatbelt Used: No

Codington County, S.D.- A Watertown man died Saturday morning in a single vehicle crash 10 miles southwest of Watertown, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Dell James Felstet, the driver of a 2012 Ford Escape, was traveling west on 175th Street near 445th Avenue. The vehicle left the roadway, rolled, and entered a slough, coming to rest on its roof in the slough west of the intersection.

Felstet was pronounced deceased at the scene.

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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.

Blue Wall Falls

President-elect Donald Trump is on track to return to the White House with a decisive victory in the Electoral College and the popular vote—the first Republican to secure the popular vote since President George W. Bush in 2004.

Trump has earned 295 electoral votes as of this writing, flipping all three “blue wall” states—Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan—an achievement he also made in 2016, the only Republican president to do so since 1988. He secured at least 72.6 million votes nationally to Vice President Kamala Harris’ 67.9 million.

Trump’s victory kicks off a 75-day period in which his transition team will work to fill roughly 4,000 government positions with political appointees. Vice President Kamala Harris has meanwhile conceded the race, speaking publicly on the outcome yesterday. President Joe Biden is set to address the nation tonight.

Vote counting remains ongoing to determine control of the House, with dozens of races still uncalled as of this writing. Republicans have won control of the Senate.

Cancer DNA Therapy

A form of cancer-driving DNA was found to be much more prevalent in the cells of certain cancers, according to research released yesterday. The studies could pave a path toward targeted drug therapy for aggressive cancers of the brain, breast, and more.

The research analyzed extrachromosomal DNA, atypical groups of genes located off the main 23 chromosome pairs of DNA inside each cell nucleus. In a study of 15,000 cancer patients hosting 39 types of tumors, researchers found 17% of tumors contained the genetic loops, more than previously thought. They also found ecDNA presence in tumors was associated with malignancy and greater fatality rates due to the unique—and theory-shifting—way ecDNA is passed on unequally during cell division.

In small-scale trials, researchers found ecDNA-laced tumor cells in mice were reduced after inhibiting the functions of a key protein known as CHK1. Early-phase clinical trials using CHK1 inhibitors on humans are underway.

Rafael Strikes Cuba

Hurricane Rafael made landfall in western Cuba yesterday as a Category 3 storm, with maximum sustained winds near 115 mph. Rafael is the fifth major hurricane of the Atlantic season, which runs from June through November.

The storm appeared to herald a nationwide blackout weeks after the country was hit by Hurricane Oscar and beset by days of power outages. In the hours leading up to Rafael’s landfall, the storm rapidly intensified, gaining 55 mph over 24 hours. Warnings of storm surges, flash flooding, and mudslides were in effect.

Rafael is the strongest storm to impact the northwestern Caribbean this late in the Atlantic hurricane season since 2009. It is set to continue its path in the Gulf of Mexico today and could make landfall in central Louisiana later this week or avoid a US landfall altogether.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Viewership of primetime coverage for presidential election across major networks and cable news channels falls to 42.3 million viewers, down 26% from 2020; lowest percentage of households follow TV coverage since 1960.

Ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz" up for auction nearly 20 years after being stolen from Minnesota museum; the Judy Garland-worn slippers are expected to fetch more than \$1M at auction.

Netflix confirms 2025 release for fifth and final season of "Stranger Things".

Argentine police are investigating three people as part of probe into One Direction's Liam Payne's Oct. 16 death.

Science & Technology

Ride-hailing platform Lyft to partner with trio of self-driving car startups to bring autonomous rides to Atlanta by next year.

Astronomers link fast radio bursts—high-energy spikes in radio waves lasting a few seconds or less—to massive star-forming galaxies; likely sources include magnetars, dead stars believed to emit universe's strongest magnetic fields.

Vampire bat metabolism, unique among mammals, mirrors that of blood-sucking insects, new study finds; the animal has evolved to subsist on diets composed almost entirely of blood.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +2.5%, Dow +3.6%, Nasdaq +3.0%) following election; Dow notches record close in best day since 2022.

Bitcoin hits all-time high, surpassing \$75K.

Federal Reserve expected to cut interest rates today for the second time this year.

Tesla shares close up 15% at record high on expectations CEO Elon Musk and EV company will benefit from Trump presidency.

Toyota reports first drop in quarterly profit in two years following certification scandal and recalls.

Super Micro shares continue to fall, closing down 18% after issuing weaker-than-expected unaudited financial results amid accusations of accounting irregularities.

Politics & World Affairs

Justice Department works to wind down two federal criminal cases against President-elect Donald Trump—related to Jan. 6 and classified documents storage—in alignment with longstanding policy not to prosecute a sitting president.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz calls vote of confidence in his government for January 2025, potentially ushering in early elections; announcement comes after Scholz dismissed his finance minister over disagreements on economic reforms, endangering ruling centrist coalition.

Moldovan President Maia Sandu wins reelection against pro-Russian candidate in second round of voting, with eligible voter turnout at 54%.

Karen Wolter is quilter extraordinaire

by Dorene Nelson



Karen Wolter guides the quilt top through the machine. A computer is connected to the quilting machine to tell the machine which pattern she has chosen. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)

Karen Wolter, quilter extraordinaire, has made more quilts than she can remember! "I probably inherited the interest and ability from my grandmother who did a lot of quilting," Wolter explained.

Karen's quilting shop, located in a building attached to her house, was supposed to be a car garage. However, that never happened! Now the main centerpiece of this building is her huge expensive quilting machine which was purchased in 2008.

"Actually, this shop has also been a ceramic and later a porcelain doll shop," Wolter listed. "The first quilt I made was a rag quilt in 2005," she said. "A rag quilt is made from several layers of fabric that are sewn together with exposed seams. These edges eventually will fray when washed, giving rag quilts their distinctive look and soft, cozy feel."

"Three or four years after purchasing the quilting machine, I purchased the computer system. After I have it set to the size of the stitches and the pattern of the design, I turn it on and watch to make sure it is all going smoothly," she explained. "Every so often I have to turn long rollers on the end to bring

up more, unquilted sections for the computer to quilt."

"As you can see by glancing around my shop, there are a lot of items here that I need so they get stacked around the edges of the quilting machine," she smiled. "I know where most everything is, but sometimes I have to do a little searching first!"

"The first step in quilting is to choose the colors you want to use," Wolter explained. "This decision is based upon the material being used and which pattern is best for that design."

"At first my husband Dale would help me with pinning on the quilt, putting it on the machine, and taking it off," she stated. "Now my daughter Coralee helps me whenever she's got a minute or two in-between her job at the Animal Care Clinic and her pet sitting jobs!"

"When I brought up the idea to switch from ceramics and porcelain dolls to making quilts, Dale told me that quilting was a dying art and that I shouldn't spend money on something that won't be needed," Wolter smiled. "So I had to prove to him that quilting was NOT going to disappear anytime soon." She was very correct in this because there is still a demand for creating and making quilts.

"As a matter of fact, I attend a three-week quilting retreat every year at a Bible camp located in Okoboji, Iowa," Wolter explained. "About fifty ladies attend every year providing a good time for me to visit with and learn from other expert quilters as well as spend many hours every day for three weeks just doing my favorite thing: quilting!"

"I use the computer for getting design suggestions and to order whatever supplies I need," she listed. "I spend from six to eight hours a day in my shop when the quilting machine is working. Even though the computer guides the quilting machine where to go and what to do, I need to make sure that the machine doesn't catch on a hole or that the tension is correct for the quilt she is working on."

"It takes about eight hours to quilt a lap-sized quilt using the long arm," Wolter explained. "For many years I quilted the high school senior FACS classes' quilts, but I have now quit doing that."

"My best friend Marge Overacker and I started the Quilts for Veterans Program," Wolter explained. "We were both members of the American Legion Auxiliary and thought this was an excellent way to let the veterans know we remember their sacrifices and also to help keep them warm!"

"Every year six veterans are selected for the honor of getting a quilt from the Auxiliary," she said. "There

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has been a change this year concerning who will receive the quilts. There are some veterans in the nursing home who are not members of Groton's American Legion who will be receiving quilts this coming Veterans' Day."

"This Quilts for Veterans Program will probably end soon since there is no military draft and therefore, fewer retired soldiers," Wolter admitted. "Marge and I originally started this due to the large number of Vietnam Veterans. I enjoy doing the quilting because it is a way to say "Thank You" to the veterans as well as giving back to the community for the sacrifices made for all of us," she smiled. "Besides that, I need something to do that I enjoy doing!"

"In 1975 before I started the ceramics, porcelain dolls, and quilting, I went back to school and earned my nurses' degree. After I retired from nursing, I started my quilt shop, a business/hobby that has grown much bigger than I'd ever expected!" Wolter admitted.



This photo shows how Karen has to guide the finished quilt top so that it doesn't get stuck or off center on the quilt top.

(Photo by Dorene Nelson)



A Touch Up

The Groton Chamber welcomed A Touch Up at their regular monthly meeting! A Touch Up opened in August and is owned by Samantha Bahr. She specializes in interior painting and murals. Check out her Facebook page or contact her at 605-290-3163 for project and pricing details.

Pictured here are Chamber Secretary April Abeln, A Touch Up owner Samantha Bahr, Chamber President Ashley Bentz, and Chamber Vice Present Douglas Heinrich

In the photo you can see that trees have started arriving for the Christmas Tour of Trees! Reach out to City Hall if your business or group would like to be a part of this fun event! (Courtesy Photo)

Activities association seeks consistency in officiating

By Dana Hess For the S.D. NewsMedia Association

PIERRE — The South Dakota High School Activities Association tries to ensure that the rules of sporting events are interpreted with consistency across the state. That is sometimes easier said than done.

At its meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 6, the SDHSAA board of directors got a firsthand look at how basketball rules lend themselves to interpretation. That happened during a presentation by Sioux Falls Christian eighth grade basketball coach Dylan Kvaale.

Kvaale said that too often officials at South Dakota basketball games rule that a player's standard spin move is a travel. He told the board that basketball games he has seen at other levels and in other states allow the player with the ball to use the spin move without it being called a travel.

"Why would we take this beautiful move out of the game?" Kvaale asked. "Every good player uses this move."

According to Kvaale, South Dakota's interpretation of the rule makes the job of officials harder.

"You have refs say to other refs, 'We're not calling it tonight,'" Kvaale said.

SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos admitted that his sports background was in wrestling, but he asserted that South Dakota is not doing anything different than other states when it comes to basketball officiating. The rule concerns the use of the player's pivot foot during the spin move, said Swartos, who added that the rule is a judgment call. "It lends itself to a lot of inconsistency."

Kvaale was unconvinced. "You don't see that interpreted as a travel anywhere else," he said.

SDHSAA Board Chairman Marty Weismantel of Groton has worked for years as a basketball official. "That exact move you just showed us is a travel," Weismantel said. "It's a tough call to catch."

Weismantel said the association is always striving for consistency in officiating.

Swartos said the association would be in contact with basketball officials prior to the start of the season to offer some reminders about the rules governing spin moves and traveling.

SDHSAA collects data on economic impact of state events

By Dana Hess For the S.D. NewsMedia Association

PIERRE — The South Dakota High School Activities Association has begun to collect data from state tournaments to gauge the economic impact of those events.

According to SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos, the study will help the association engage with local chambers of commerce in an effort show the economic worth of the state events and perhaps find a way get local businesses to lower costs for hotel rooms and food.

The association often finds itself competing with other events for the use of venues. The study may help the association prove, Swartos said, "that we might not be as flashy, but we have value, too."

According to data collected from 20 state events, those events generated \$14.3 million in direct spending from families in attendance. As the money flows through the community, Swartos said, its second- and third-hand effects result in an output of just more than \$26 million.

The direct spending by families attending state events led to \$2.9 million in tax revenue for the host communities. The events in the data collected so far took place in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Harrisburg, Brandon, Pierre, Watertown, Brookings and Aberdeen.

The data collected on the economic impact of state events does not include the spending by the teams themselves or the association. That spending includes hotel rooms and food for players, coaches, staff and officials as well as facility rent.

In November of 2023 SDHSAA entered a contract with IMPLAN of Huntersville, North Carolina, to help with the economic impact study. To save on costs, much of the data collection was done by SDHSAA staff.

Swartos said the association sent emails to schools that participated in the tournaments. The schools then forwarded those emails to parents who responded to a survey about how much they spent on hotels, food and shopping during the event. Swartos noted that the data was reliant on how well parents responded to the survey with the number of responses varying by event.

Groton City Council discusses budget priorities, baseball concessions pay

The Groton City Council began shaping its budget priorities for the coming year during Tuesday's meeting, approving the first reading of an appropriations ordinance that focuses on essential upgrades and future projects.

Immediate priorities include community center improvements, repainting city hall and acquiring new public works equipment. The council also reviewed larger expenses, such as a projected \$200,000 replacement of the city's aging electric metering system, and discussed upcoming initiatives, including a sewer system update and the construction of a park safe room and restroom facility.

Most of the city's building received hail damage from a June storm, said City Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich. The council should also consider some improvements needed at the Community Center.

"It needs some love," Heinrich said.

The appropriations ordinance includes \$5,000 for Community Center improvements, including a \$500 deductible from the insurance company to get the roof fixed as well as \$4,500 in other repairs needed there.

With items included in the initial ordinance – restriping the City Hall parking lot, \$2,500 in swimming pool equipment, increased summer salaries to reflect a rise in the state's minimum wage, cost-of-living adjustments for full-time staff, purchasing U12 baseball uniforms, adding money to the new baseball/softball facility concession stand project, \$125,000 in street resurfacing/chip seal projects and an increase in the electric rate to customers – the budget included \$92,000 surplus. Additionally, Heinrich told the council, the city has a good amount in the bank.

"Currently we're sitting on \$4 million, but on average about \$3.8 million in the bank, so I think we could probably start expending some of that if need be," he said. "Actually, we probably should. As a municipality we're not in it to make money. We're in it to provide service. Sitting on a surplus that large, it's good to have a cushion, but that's a heck of a cushion."

The council wanted to add painting the outside of City Hall, new mowers and a side-by-side to the appropriations ordinance.

However, future projects also loomed in the distance.

"What year are they talking about doing the sewer project?" Councilman Kevin Nehls asked.

"Pretty much '26-'27," Councilman Brian Bahr answered.

"I don't think you can push much more off to '26-'27," Nehls said. "With what's in the budget right now, I wouldn't get too crazy. That's going to be an expensive situation we've got coming at us pretty hard."

"For that and then we'll have to have money for the (park) bathroom whenever, if we ever find out if we get a grant or not," added Councilwoman Shirley Wells.

The council also indicated wanting to include a full \$200,000 to go toward electric meter replacement, though that may change as the new year begins.

The council will review the revised 2025 appropriation ordinance during a second reading of the ordinance on Nov. 19.

Baseball program, concession manager pay discussed during annual report

The city's baseball program ended the 2024 season with \$60,598.95 in uncoupled expenses—a significant increase from last year's \$37,784 deficit—according to a report reviewed by the city council on Tuesday.

Despite a boost in concession stand revenue, which climbed to \$42,371, concerns about operations lingered. One concession volunteer brought up an ongoing issue to the council, noting that concession staff face weeks-long waits for payment after the season concludes, prompting council members to consider adjustments.

The baseball program had \$162,777.55 in total expenses for the 2024 season, according to the report. Total revenues for the season totaled \$90,467.16.

Those totals don't reflect the additional expense of \$40,810 donated to the Groton Baseball/Softball

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Foundation to go toward a new concession stand.

Chuck Padfield, who has volunteered with the concession stand, told the board that while the concession staff don't know he was at Tuesday's meeting, he had to bring up concerns about how they are paid. Currently, the manager is paid \$50 per day for set up and gets half of the concession stand profits at the end of the season. They don't get that latter payment, though, for up to 13 weeks after the season ends.

He warned the council that if things don't change, they might be looking for a new concession manager for next year.

Currently, Padfield said he has heard many compliments from other teams throughout the region about how fast and efficient the concession stand is run. He doesn't want to see that go downhill.

Mayor Scott Hanlon thanked Padfield for bringing the issue to the council's attention.

"We appreciate you letting us know because sometimes we don't see what you see, and we don't want to lose our good help," he said.

Councilman Jason Wambach added, "you guys do a great job."

City Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich told the council they could separate out the concessions report and the baseball report in the future, which would allow the concession manager to get a check within a few weeks of the season ending.

The issue will likely be discussed again when the council reviews its summer salary ordinance in the spring.

Budget billing program to restart in Groton

The city is bringing back a program that allows citizen's to equalize their utility bills.

At Tuesday evening's meeting, the council approved the first reading of Ordinance No. 781 to adopt a budget billing program for utility services. Residents wanting to equalize their bill can apply to participate in the program. The city would review the past 12 months of utility usage and average the total so the resident is charged an equal amount each month.

The city had a similar program before but ended it in 2021, said Assistant Finance Officer Kellie Locke. While it wasn't used much before, Locke said she thinks it could be utilized more, and having an ordinance in place would formalize the program requirements.

The ordinance is set for a second reading at the council's next meeting on Nov. 19.

- After a prolonged executive session, the council approved the first reading of Ordinance No. 782, setting salaries for full-time non-seasonal employees. The council voted to add a 2.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment, as well as a 2 percent salary increase. The council also approved increasing the city's contribution for dependent care health coverage from \$260 up to \$300.

- The City Council received an update on the Groton airport's summer season during Monday's meeting, as the airport manager outlined plans to build hangar structures starting as early as next spring.

- The city will begin accepting applications for skating rink workers ahead of the winter season. Applications are available at City Hall and will also be posted on the city's website.

- City offices will be closed Monday, Nov. 11, for Veterans Day.

- The council accepted a bid for a 1985 dump truck that was declared surplus in September. The bid from Cody Monson totaled \$3,850. "I guess it ain't doing any good sitting there," said Mayor Scott Hanlon. "Might as well get rid of it."

NOTICE OF SALE

November 9th, 2024, at 10:00 AM

State Nebraska Bank & Trust vs Brian Dolan & Kristen Dolan

(06CIV22-000424-01)

2012 Chevy Avalanche



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

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

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

DAVE LUNZMAN, SHERIFF OF BROWN COUNTY.

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

2025 DOG LICENSES DUE BY 12/31/2024



LICENSE YOUR DOG.



Licenses due by December 31, 2024

Fines start January 1, 2025

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

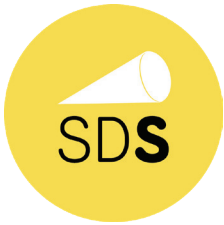
Proof of rabies shot information is REQUIRED!!

Email proof to city.kellie@nvc.net

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

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

Questions call (605) 397-8422



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Democrats lose ground in Legislature, but pick up seat in longtime Republican district

Rapid City voters in District 32 send Democrat to Pierre for first time in 18 years

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 8:10 PM

Voters in Rapid City's District 32 will send a Democrat to represent them in Pierre for the first time in 18 years.

The Tuesday victory of Nicole Uhre-Balk stands as a bright spot for Democrats in an election that once again saw the party lose strength in the Legislature.

Voters in District 28 opted for the GOP's Tamara Grove over longtime incumbent Democrat Shawn Bordeaux, and Republican Jana Hunt bested Democrat Carl Petersen in District 28A to fill a seat vacated this year by Rep. Oren Lesmeister, D-Parade.

Rep. Kameron Nelson, D-Sioux Falls, fell to Republican Bobbi Andera in District 10, which he and Democratic Rep. Erin Healy represented during the 2024 session. Healy won reelection alongside Andera in the three-way race for two seats.

Democrats will have nine seats in the 2025 Legislature – six in the House, three in the Senate. That's down from 11 in 2024 and is the fewest Democrats in the Legislature since there were two in 1953. There will be 96 Republicans – 64 in the House, 32 in the Senate.

Uhre-Balk picked up a seat vacated by Republican Rep. Kristin Conzet, who didn't run for reelection. She garnered 22 more votes than incumbent GOP Rep. Steve Duffy, who took second in the three-way race for two seats. Uhre-Balk and Duffy bested Republican Brook Kaufman by 586 and 564 votes, respectively.

In Sioux Falls' District 15, Rep.-elect Erik Muckey beat Republican Joni Tschetter by nine votes, according to the Secretary of State's unofficial results, and the contest is listed as a possible recount. If the vote totals hold, Muckey will take the seat held by Democratic Rep. Linda Duba, who retired from the Legislature this year.

Uhre-Balk's win is the first for the party in District 32 since 2006, when voters sent Tom Katus to the Senate for a single term. Before that, the last Democrat to win office there was Mike Wilson, elected to the House in 1998. Wilson also served a single two-year term.

Katus was aided by his opposition to a controversial abortion ban on the 2006 ballot, ultimately defeated. His opponent made the 2006 ban a centerpiece of her campaign after she ousted then-incumbent GOP Sen. Stan Adelstein in the primary.

This year, an attempt to restore abortion access in South Dakota tanked at the ballot box, as did nearly every other ballot measure.

"She just worked really hard and straight up won," South Dakota Democratic Party Director Dan Ahlers said of Uhre-Balk. "She was a great candidate, and she'll be a great legislator. We're glad to have her on the team."

Republicans have a 1,200-vote advantage in voter registration in the district, but it also has 4,900 voters registered as independent or having no party affiliation. The most recent redistricting also improved the odds for Democrats by adding parts of North Rapid City, a heavily Native American area.

Path to victory

Uhre-Balk said she spent a lot of time in North Rapid, listening to the concerns of Native American vot-

ers. But she also spent time knocking on doors elsewhere.

"It was just a lot of boots on the ground, literally, a lot of door knocking, going to a lot of events and getting my name out there to listen to the concerns of District 32," she said.

Uhre-Balk, an educator who now helps train teachers through Compass Partners in Learning out of Rapid City, also credited her personal history. She was raised by Republicans – her aunt Carole Hillard was the state's first female lieutenant governor – and said she worked hard to connect with voters from across the aisle.

"It is a very diverse district and there are a lot of different issues to address," Uhre-Balk said. "I think people were ready for a more balanced legislature."

Uhre-Balk raised \$10,450 through individual donations after the primary, according to campaign finance reports, and she raised nearly as much from two county Democratic parties and a handful of interest groups, including SD Educators Political Involvement Committee and the Bluestem Initiative, a Sioux Falls-based political action committee that donates to Democrats.

The money helped with advertising, phone banking and mailers, but Uhre-Balk also had a bit of help getting out the vote from a group called Uniting Resilience, an LGBTQ+ organization that registered 107 new voters in the run-up to the election and had four volunteers offering free rides to the polls on Election Day.

When asked if she believes her efforts helped push Uhre-Balk over the line, the group's founder, Monique "Muffie" Mousseau, said "I hope so."

Mousseau was one of four volunteers offering rides on Tuesday, and said she gave around 50 people rides. After 5 p.m., she said, "it was just one to the next, to the next, to the next."

"I'm so proud of the community that did contact us for rides," Mousseau said. "To make a difference, you've got to get up and do something different."

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

Rape, incest and 'health of the mother': Abortion reform discussion continues post-election

Abortion-rights advocate challenges state politicians to change law or 'we will do it for you'

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 5:05 PM

If anything could be predicted in Tuesday's election, it was that Amendment G's fate would not be the end of abortion discussions in South Dakota.

The measure, written to mirror Roe v. Wade's trimester approach to abortion regulation, failed with a 59% vote against it, based on unofficial results from the Secretary of State's Office.

When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the national right to an abortion in 2022, a trigger ban adopted by the South Dakota Legislature in 2005 immediately took effect. The ban has one exception for abortions necessary to "preserve the life of the pregnant female."

Abortion rights were on the ballot in 10 states Tuesday. South Dakota was one of three states, including Florida and Nebraska, where the measures failed.

But proponents of Amendment G rallied Wednesday with a challenge for anti-abortion advocates and politicians: Keep your promise.

In some advertisements leading up to the election, anti-abortion groups said South Dakota's laws may need to be changed — a possible reference to the lack of exceptions for the mother's health and for instances of rape and incest — but emphasized Amendment G was "too extreme."

Dakotans for Health Chair Rick Weiland issued a statement to fellow abortion-rights activists Wednesday calling attention to that advertising.

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"You have forced these politicians to make a promise they can't back out of," Weiland wrote. "... This is no small task, but it's one they've committed to. Now, it's their responsibility to keep it."

Kenya Majia of Sioux Falls was one of the South Dakotans who voted against the measure but also found fault in the state's current law.

"There should be something, but I don't think this is the right amendment," Mejjia told South Dakota Searchlight outside her polling place Tuesday.

Jon Hansen, co-chair of the anti-abortion Life Defense Fund and a Republican state representative from Dell Rapids, said Tuesday night that such discussions will continue in the months and years to come.

"There's already lots of people talking about what the law should look like," Hansen said.

Caroline Woods, spokesperson for the Life Defense Fund, also said she expects discussions to continue.

"The creation of Life Defense Fund was to defeat Amendment G, and that mission was accomplished," Woods said. "Undoubtedly, conversations will continue to take place to determine what laws are best for children, mothers, and fathers in our state."

Nancy Turbak Berry, who led a coalition supporting Amendment G, doubts there will be any legislative action — largely because in the two years since the abortion ban was triggered, no state lawmakers have introduced a bill to create exceptions for rape and incest. A bill to create an exception for the "health of the mother" failed in 2023.

"They acknowledged late in the campaign they may need to fix some things with the current law," Turbak Berry said, "but I don't put much stock in that because I think they'd say anything to defeat the ballot measure."

Many new Republican lawmakers are headed to Pierre, having defeated incumbents in the June primary by running as conservatives. The makeup of the incoming legislative body, said Democratic Rep. Erin Healy, of Sioux Falls, will make it challenging to "advocate for women's health and the care they receive, especially in circumstances when a woman's health is at risk."

Healy, who supported the amendment, said its failure raises more concerns about broader health care access, including family planning and maternal health care resources.

Sen. Sydney Davis, R-Burbank, said she doesn't "anticipate a lot of movement" on abortion changes with the incoming legislative body. Davis supported the 2023 bill to amend the state's ban to include the "health" of the mother and a 2024 bill mandating the state create an informational video interpreting the state's abortion law and medical interventions.

"I think South Dakotans agreed resoundingly last night that G is too extreme," Davis said. "What the state will find as far as consensus on the topic moving forward? I don't know that I have a good indication."

Davis hopes to hear more from South Dakotans about their opinions on the proper exceptions and regulations for abortion in the state, she said. She expected such conversations whether Amendment G won or lost.

"If G passed, I think the Legislature would have taken up the opportunity to regulate it in the second and third trimester," Davis said. "If it failed, there are some opponents of G who recognize, even in the messaging used, that the current law isn't perfect or where it needs to be either."

"It's going to take time to strike that balance of what the public is looking for," Davis continued. "Our government is designed to move slowly and methodically, ensuring voices are heard."

If the Legislature does not reach some consensus, Davis anticipates the discussion will return to the ballot in two years, given the state's "strong history of direct democracy." South Dakotans rejected abortions bans on the ballot in 2006 and 2008.

Weiland vowed another ballot measure will happen if lawmakers don't repeal the current law.

"Either you end the ban and fix the healthcare crisis your promises created — promises you made with that three-million-dollar campaign on every billboard, phone call and TV ad across the state — or we will be back, and we will do it for you," he wrote.

Turbak Berry added that she believes Dakotans for Health being outspent on advertising contributed to the amendment's demise. If abortion comes back to the ballot, it'll likely be bolder and will have more financial backing from out-of-state, progressive organizations, she said.

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota, which did not publicly or financially back Amendment G, issued a statement Wednesday from Executive Director Libby Skarin. The organization is grateful and inspired by the measures' supporters, it read, and is disappointed the vote didn't reflect "the support we know South Dakotans have for abortion rights."

Planned Parenthood did not support the amendment either, but issued a statement Wednesday saying politicians are not "more qualified" to make medical decisions than a patient and their health care provider.

Both organizations had expressed concerns about the amendment's wording and what they described as its insufficiently inclusive drafting process.

Skarin added the ACLU will seek "the best path to meaningfully restore" abortion access in the state.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Frustration mounts over wait for Minnehaha County's election results

Officials question embattled auditor's explanations for delay

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 3:53 PM

SIOUX FALLS — Statewide scrutiny fell on the shoulders of a controversial Minnehaha County official Tuesday night and Wednesday as her office failed to timely report the county's election results.

The office of Auditor Leah Anderson still had not completely reported the county's results as of mid-afternoon Wednesday, although results were trickling out at that time. That held up definitive results in some races, including legislative races, many of which are clustered around Sioux Falls, the county seat and the state's most-populated city.

Anderson, a Republican, has been a lightning rod for criticism since taking office in 2022 after questioning the integrity of the 2020 election. Wednesday, she blamed the delay on the number of voters, limited staffing and the timing of absentee voting.

"It's the sheer volume of ballots, and a lot of absentee ballots," Anderson said. "We had a good amount of staff, but additional staff would be great."

Election officials statewide knew Tuesday's turnout would be high. Secretary of State Monae Johnson predicted turnout around 75%, which would be the state's highest general election turnout in 20 years. The actual turnout figure remained unknown early Wednesday afternoon due to Minnehaha County's incomplete results.

Republican Minnehaha County Commissioner Joe Kippley said he looks forward to Friday's canvassing review to verify vote totals. He expressed concerns about the delay and Anderson's role in it.

"She didn't request staff. She didn't request any of the stuff she evidently needed," Kippley said. "She said she had a plan. It's hard to believe this is 'according to plan.'"

State Rep. Tony Venhuizen, a Republican who represents a Sioux Falls district, said frustration with Anderson is growing.

"I don't know what exactly is going on down there, but I'm hearing from legislators of every stripe who are very concerned that it's taking longer to count the votes in Minnehaha than it did in the entire state of Florida," Venhuizen said. "I think there would be great interest in a legislative fix if that's necessary. Trust in our election system relies on quick, reliable results."

Anderson offered numerous explanations when asked to explain the delay in vote-counting.

According to Anderson, nearly 30,000 early or absentee ballots were submitted in Minnehaha County, with voters continuing to cast those ballots through Monday. Processing absentee ballots involves several time-intensive steps, she said, including verifying voter information, opening envelopes and preparing

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ballots for scanning.

However, Bob Litz, Minnehaha County's retired former auditor, said 30,000 absentee ballots do not necessarily take that long to process.

"I had 42,000 absentee ballots in 2020," he said. "Yeah, sure, it takes time. But we were done the morning after the election by about 9 or 10 in the morning. I wasn't as far behind as she is, that's for sure."

Litz said he also had three ballot tabulator machines compared to Anderson's four, which "would make a huge difference." Litz said he also shut down for a period overnight while the ballots were guarded.

"When people are up all night, that's where mistakes happen," Litz said.

Anderson said some members of her team worked all night.

"My core team has not come home. They have barely gotten off their feet," Anderson said Wednesday morning. "We're working as hard as we can."

Anderson said after early and absentee voting ended Monday night, the team had to reorganize the space for vote counting, a process that wasn't complete until about 10 p.m. Monday.

"We need to not have absentee voting on the Monday before the election," Anderson said. "It needs to end on the Friday before or something."

Her core team came to the office at 6 a.m. Tuesday, she said, responding to calls from voters, precinct workers and county staff. At 8 a.m., absentee superintendents — election officials overseeing absentee ballot processing — began organizing ballots, which started around 9 a.m., when about 50 additional workers arrived to help prepare the ballots for scanning.

Anderson said the county only reports results to the secretary of state — which reports them to the public — when "about five" precincts have been fully counted. That process pushed initial reporting well into late Tuesday night.

Litz said Anderson's reporting protocol is a preference, not a rule or standard.

"She could be reporting partial precincts to the Secretary of State's Office if she wanted," he said. "That's what we did."

Court order received for counting problem

Court documents reveal that Anderson's count was also affected by other problems.

At 10:25 a.m. on Wednesday, Anderson filed an affidavit in pursuit of a court order. In it, she said that while counting ballots for Precinct 4-6, a tabulation machine jammed. After clearing the jam and restarting the machine, the ballots were returned to a sealed ballot box as required by law, according to Anderson.

Upon reviewing the count, Anderson and her staff found a discrepancy: The machine's tally showed 21 fewer votes than there should have been. They determined that some ballots affected by the jam were not counted.

Because the number of counted ballots did not match the total number of ballots cast, her team did not complete the tabulation or transmit the results to the South Dakota secretary of state. She pointed to a law stating ballots that cannot be accurately counted by the tabulation equipment should be referred to the Minnehaha County Resolution Board for review. And since the ballot box for Precinct 4-6 had been sealed, she was unable to unseal it without a court order, she said in the court documents. That order was issued Wednesday morning.

The 2024 election is Anderson's first time overseeing a presidential contest since her election as county auditor in 2022. She has drawn controversy for questioning the integrity of the 2020 election, calling Minnehaha County's election system untrustworthy, and publicly engaging with groups such as South Dakota Canvassing, which have promoted some unsubstantiated claims of election fraud and interference.

In the June primary election, activist Jessica Pollema challenged 132 ballots from one Minnehaha precinct, claiming they were fraudulent due to the use of P.O. box addresses. The South Dakota Supreme Court ultimately ruled against her, siding with the county and state officials. Pollema was assisting with the Minnehaha County vote count on Wednesday morning.

Additionally, Anderson recently amended county rules to allow voters to wear election-related apparel

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at polling places, a change that some viewed as undermining election decorum.

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.

Trump won the presidency. What does that mean for education?

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 8:15 PM

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's return to the presidency could set the stage for sweeping changes in U.S. education policy.

Throughout his campaign, Trump has vowed to "save American education," with a focus on parental rights and universal school choice — offering a sharp contrast to the Biden administration's education record.

With Trump's White House victory cemented, here's a look at where he stands on education:

Getting rid of U.S. Education Department

Perhaps Trump's most far-reaching plan for education includes his vow to close down the U.S. Department of Education.

The department — just 45 years old — is not in charge of setting school curriculum, as education is decentralized in the United States. The agency's mission is to "promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access."

Trump has repeatedly called for moving education "back to the states," though the responsibility of education already mainly falls on states and local governments, which allocate much of the funding for K-12 schools.

Funding boosts

Trump has proposed funding boosts for states and school districts that comply with his vision for education, including adopting a "Parental Bill of Rights that includes complete curriculum transparency, and a form of universal school choice," according to his plan.

He also wants to give funding preferences to schools who get rid of "teacher tenure" for grades K-12 and adopt "merit pay."

He could also ramp up funding for schools that have parents hold the direct elections of principals as well as for schools that significantly reduce the number of their administrators.

Trump's plan also includes the creation of a credentialing body to certify teachers "who embrace patriotic values, and understand that their job is not to indoctrinate children, but to educate them."

He is also threatening to cut federal funding for schools that teach "critical race theory" or "gender ideology" and vowed to roll back updated Title IX regulations under the Biden administration on his first day back in office.

The updated regulations, which the Biden administration released earlier this year, extend federal protections for LGBTQ+ students.

The final rule rolls back changes to Title IX made under Trump's previous administration and then Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

A slew of GOP-led states have challenged the measure, leading to several legal battles and a policy patchwork throughout the country.

Student debt and higher education

Trump has criticized the Biden administration's student loan forgiveness efforts, describing them as "not even legal," and could let go of any mass student loan forgiveness efforts.

Trump could repeal the administration's Saving on a Valuable Education, or SAVE, plan, which is currently

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on hold while tied up in a legal challenge. The sweeping initiative seeks to provide lower monthly loan payments for borrowers and lessen the time it takes to pay off their debt.

Meanwhile, the 2024 GOP platform called for making colleges and universities "sane and affordable," noting that Republicans will "fire Radical Left accreditors, drive down Tuition costs, restore Due Process protections, and pursue Civil Rights cases against Schools that discriminate."

The platform also calls for reducing the cost of higher education through the creation of "additional, drastically more affordable alternatives to a traditional four-year College degree."

Trump has also proposed the "American Academy," a free, online university that he says would be endowed through the "billions and billions of dollars that we will collect by taxing, fining, and suing excessively large private university endowments."

Project 2025

Apart from the GOP platform and Trump's proposals, the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 proposes a sweeping conservative agenda that, if implemented, could have major implications for the future of education.

Though Trump has disavowed the conservative think tank's blueprint, some former members of his previous administration helped craft the agenda.

Some of the education policy proposals outlined in the extensive document include eliminating the U.S. Education Department and Head Start, ending time-based and occupation-based student loan forgiveness and restoring the Title IX regulations made under DeVos.

The proposal also states that "the federal government should confine its involvement in education policy to that of a statistics-gathering agency that disseminates information to the states."

Major teachers unions react to Trump win

"The voters have spoken. While we hoped and fought for a different outcome, we respect both their will and the peaceful transfer of power," Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, one of the largest teachers unions in the country, said in a Wednesday statement.

"At this moment, the country is more divided than ever, and our democracy is in jeopardy. Last night, we saw fear and anger win," Weingarten said.

Becky Pringle, president of the National Education Association, the country's largest labor union, said in a statement Wednesday that "this is not the outcome we campaigned for, nor the future we wanted for our students and families, but it is the road through history we now must travel."

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

Trump in second administration promises mass deportations, tariffs and spending cuts

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY AND JACOB FISCHLER - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 6:35 PM

WASHINGTON — Voters delivered a decisive win for former President Donald Trump over Vice President Kamala Harris in Tuesday's election, laying the groundwork for a second administration — a "golden age," he calls it — in which he has vowed to conduct mass deportations of migrants, impose stiff taxes on foreign goods and install wealthy supporters in key positions.

And according to numerous media reports, the former president is expected to enter office free of his federal criminal charges as the U.S. Justice Department plans to wind down its classified documents and 2020 election interference cases ahead of inauguration day.

Trump's populist campaign was at least as focused on cultural resentments as concrete policy proposals, but he did consistently promise to take action on immigration and the economy.

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A hardliner on immigration since he began his first White House run in 2015, Trump promised on the campaign trail this year to conduct a mass deportation of more than 13 million immigrants in the country illegally.

The logistical challenges and cost of such an enterprise, which may include temporary detention camps and a massive boost to immigration enforcement funding, may prove difficult.

Experts across the fiscal policy spectrum have also warned that Trump's plan to impose across-the-board tariffs on foreign goods will increase consumer costs and risk triggering a trade war.

The former president incessantly threatened to spike tariffs as high as 60% on all Chinese goods, and anywhere between 25% to 200% on goods coming over the U.S. border from Mexico.

Trump teased a Cabinet and staff featuring billionaire Elon Musk, a major campaign donor and surrogate, who told thousands of Trump supporters he could cut \$2 trillion in federal spending.

Trump also promised a top health spot for Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., whose reputation includes spreading misinformation about vaccines and leaving a dead bear cub in New York's Central Park.

The son of the late attorney general and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy promised Saturday on social media that a new Trump administration would "advise all U.S. water systems to remove fluoride from public water" on its first day in office.

The former president thanked Musk and Kennedy, Jr., in his victory speech in the wee hours Wednesday, promising the latter "is going to make America healthy again" as the crowd chanted "Bobby, Bobby, Bobby."

"He wants to do some things, and we're gonna let him go to it," Trump said.

Harris called the former president Wednesday to congratulate him on his win, according to a senior campaign aide. The conversation, during which the aide said she stressed a peaceful transfer of power, represented a departure from Trump's behavior in 2020, when he refused to concede to the race's victor, President Joe Biden.

Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung said the former president "acknowledged Vice President Harris on her strength, professionalism, and tenacity throughout the campaign, and both leaders agreed on the importance of unifying the country."

Trump, who is poised to be the first-ever convicted felon elected to the Oval Office, now faces a presidential transition period that will entail filling thousands of political appointees' positions, a process that is expected to be made smooth by a Republican-led Senate.

Federal criminal charges trailed Trump through his entire second presidential run, and the former president made clear on the campaign trail his ire for political foes, at times labeling them the "enemy from within."

A U.S. Supreme Court decision this year that granted presidents wide latitude to take criminally questionable action if they purport to do so in service of the office could provide Trump an opening to wield the department against political opponents.

Upon taking office this time, Trump, 78, will also make history as the oldest person ever elected to the U.S. presidency, while his running mate, 40-year-old Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance, will be among the youngest to assume second in command.

Geopolitical impact

Even before the AP had called the race, world leaders began congratulating Trump for his win.

"Congratulations on history's greatest comeback!" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrote on X in a post addressed to the president-elect and former first lady Melania Trump. "Your historic return to the White House offers a new beginning for America and a powerful recommitment to the great alliance between Israel and America."

Qatar's leader Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani offered his best wishes on X around the same time as Netanyahu, declaring that Qatar is looking forward "to working together again to strengthen our strategic relationship and partnership, and to advancing our shared efforts in promoting security and stability both in the region and globally."

Qatar is a major broker in negotiations for a ceasefire and hostage deal to end the Israel-Gaza war.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also swiftly congratulated Trump on "an impressive election victory."

"I recall our great meeting with President Trump back in September, when we discussed in detail the Ukraine-U.S. strategic partnership, the Victory Plan, and ways to put an end to Russian aggression against Ukraine," Zelenskyy posted to X early Wednesday.

"I appreciate President Trump's commitment to the 'peace through strength' approach in global affairs. This is exactly the principle that can practically bring just peace in Ukraine closer. I am hopeful that we will put it into action together," Zelenskyy continued.

U.S. aid is critical to both Israel and Ukraine in their respective conflicts with Hamas and Russia.

Trump has frequently criticized U.S. support for Ukraine but is not expected to significantly alter U.S. policy toward Israel.

Trump legal problems

The former president has faced numerous criminal charges and civil lawsuits since his term ended in January 2021.

Trump's long presidential campaign was punctuated by a busy legal schedule that included two federal cases, still ongoing, and cases in Georgia and New York.

Just over a month before Election Day, a federal judge unsealed new evidence from U.S. special counsel Jack Smith outlining Trump's alleged role in the plot to overturn the 2020 presidential election results that culminated in the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The high-profile case was stuck in a holding pattern for most of 2024 while Trump fought the charges, arguing that former U.S. presidents cannot be criminally tried for actions they took while still in office.

In July, the U.S. Supreme Court returned the case to the lower court after ruling that former presidents enjoy criminal immunity for any actions related to core constitutional powers, and presumed immunity for duties on the office's outer perimeter, but none for personal actions.

Smith has argued in hundreds of pages of new court filings that Trump undermined the 2020 presidential election results as a candidate, in his personal capacity working with private attorneys.

Trump has indicated numerous times that, if elected to another presidency, he would oust Smith from the U.S. Justice Department.

The only criminal case against Trump to reach trial played out in a Manhattan courtroom in April and May, and concluded when a jury found Trump guilty on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. The former president had covered up hush money paid to a porn star ahead of the 2016 election.

Trump's sentencing in his home city, originally scheduled for July, is now set for Nov. 26 — though it's unclear how New York Judge Juan Merchan will proceed following Trump's second trajectory to the White House. The case had already been delayed as the parties began to argue how the Supreme Court's immunity ruling affected evidence presented against Trump.

Trump made history in June 2023 as the first former president to be indicted on federal criminal charges alleging that he hoarded classified documents at his Florida Mar-a-Lago estate and refused to return them to the National Archives. A federal judge tossed the case in July, but Smith has appealed it.

How the states were called for Trump

The Associated Press projected Trump's victory Wednesday morning when Wisconsin notched the former president's Electoral College vote count to 277 — over the 270 needed to secure the presidency. Harris had 224.

Trump by midday on Wednesday gained Michigan, bringing his electoral vote total to 292 and snagging five of the vital seven swing states in which he and the Democratic nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, spent most of their time campaigning through 2024.

North Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin all voted for Trump. Still without a victor declared were Nevada and Arizona.

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GOP Senate

Republicans also took control of the U.S. Senate, guaranteeing Trump a relatively smooth path in confirming his appointments to the courts and the Cabinet in the coming months.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican who is leaving his leadership post at the end of the year, called it "a hell of a good day."

As of Wednesday afternoon, Republicans had nabbed 52 seats in the Senate and Democrats had 43, the AP said.

Montana Sen. Jon Tester, a longtime centrist Democrat viewed as his party's most vulnerable senator in 2024, was ousted by Republican Tim Sheehy in a high-profile race called by the AP on Wednesday morning.

Control of the U.S. House had not yet been called but Republicans were leading there on Wednesday afternoon, 201-186.

If they were to maintain control of the chamber, that would set up an extraordinary Republican trifecta in Washington that likely could expedite legislation including on taxes, the debt, reproductive rights and immigration.

All results are unofficial until local election officials across the country verify and certify the outcome in the coming days and weeks.

Democracy as an issue flops

Harris' campaign emphasized Trump's threat to democratic norms, citing his refusal to accept his 2020 election loss and conviction on 34 felony counts.

But that message appeared not to resonate with voters, who told exit pollsters they were more concerned about economic factors like high inflation.

Leaders with Common Cause, an advocacy group that sought to engage voters on democracy issues, accepted the results Wednesday but continued to warn about the "grave threat" Trump posed to the country's democratic norms.

"We respect the democratic process, but we now must face the fact that Trump's stated intentions and actions pose a grave threat to the core principles of our democracy," Virginia Kase Solomón, Common Cause president and CEO, said on a call with reporters. "As a twice-impeached former president with multiple felony charges, his return to office brings unprecedented risk to our nation's foundational values."

A roller coaster race

Trump had spent most of his reelection campaigning against Biden, who bowed out of the race in the summer after a disastrous debate performance.

That required the Trump team to pivot to a new campaign with a candidate Trump had never gone up against — Harris.

Harris, who touted herself as the underdog, tried to position herself as a new generation of leadership and through her policy plans on housing, health care and the economy, offering a new chapter for Americans.

She heavily ran on her support of reproductive rights and the threat to democracy that a second Trump presidency would bring, citing the immunity ruling from the Supreme Court.

In the end, Trump's core campaign issues of immigration and criticisms of the economy appeared to have swayed voters, and she fell short of claiming any of the swing state votes that offered her a path toward victory.

As it became clear late Tuesday that she was falling behind in key states that carried Biden to the White House in 2020, thousands of her supporters who gathered at Howard University for a watch party left in waves as her chances for victory continued to narrow.

Ariana Figueroa, Jane Norman and Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

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Pronoun changes for South Dakota constitution fail to win voter support

BY: SETH TUPPER AND MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 4:07 PM

A proposal to replace male-specific references in the South Dakota Constitution with neutral words and phrases was losing in unofficial election results Wednesday.

The tally was 57% against Amendment E and 43% in favor at 4 p.m. Central time Wednesday, with about 95% of statewide precincts fully reported.

The amendment would replace male pronouns in the constitution, such as "he," "him" and "his," with neutral words and phrases such as "the governor," "the lieutenant governor," "the officer," "the elector," "the accused," and so on. The male-specific references have been in the constitution since statehood 135 years ago.

Amendments to the constitution require voter approval. Legislators voted last year to put the amendment on this year's ballot. Supporters said it was time to update language in the constitution to acknowledge the presence and contributions of women in state government. Opponents said the existing language is historical and does not preclude women from holding office.

Similar legislation last year changed male pronouns to neutral words and phrases in the state's codified laws, which are not part of the constitution and don't require voter approval to amend. Lawmakers approved that legislation by wide margins, and Republican Kristi Noem — the state's first female governor — signed it into law.

At the polls Tuesday in Sioux Falls, Jessica Aguilar said she supported the amendment.

"To me, it's a no brainer. We have females serving in our government. Changing the language should be fairly noncontroversial," she said.

Jay Schmidt said he voted against Amendment E because he doesn't see the need for it, since women already serve in elected offices.

Other voters viewed the amendment as an extension of the culture wars, including Lois Steensma, who said she voted against it.

"All of these gender things are starting to bother me," she said. "I'm getting burned out on the gender issue."

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

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Marijuana legalization fails in unofficial South Dakota results

BY: SETH TUPPER AND JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 4:01 PM

A ballot measure to legalize adult recreational marijuana use in South Dakota was losing in unofficial results.

The tally was 56% against Initiated Measure 29 and 44% in favor at 4 p.m. Central time Wednesday, with 95% of statewide precincts fully reported.

The measure would not have legalized marijuana sales. That would have required later legislative action. Initiated Measure 29 would have provided the groundwork by legalizing for adults 21 and older the pos-

session, use and free distribution of up to 2 ounces of marijuana.

South Dakota voters previously rejected recreational marijuana in 2022.

In 2020, voters passed a constitutional amendment legalizing both recreational and medical marijuana, but it was overturned in court for violating the state constitution's single-subject rule for ballot measures. A separate medical marijuana initiative that passed in 2020 laid the groundwork for the state's current program.

Thirty-eight states allowed medical marijuana prior to Tuesday, and 24 and the District of Columbia allowed recreational pot. The federal government is considering a change that would reclassify cannabis as a less harmful drug under federal law.

A representative of the campaign against Initiated Measure 29 celebrated the measure's defeat Wednesday morning.

"We are thrilled and grateful for eyes being opened to the overwhelming harms of marijuana that try to sneak in as benign," said Rhonda Milstead of the Protecting South Dakota Kids committee. "With South Dakota, North Dakota and Florida all defeating their measures as well as Oklahoma two years ago, perhaps other states will have the courage to push back and bring health and safety back to their communities."

At a polling place Tuesday, Kenya Mejia, of Sioux Falls, said she voted against marijuana legalization. She was born and raised in California, she said, and believes legalization in her home state has led to more crime and drug abuse.

"I go back every year, and things just keep getting worse," she said.

Patty Kuehn, also of Sioux Falls, said she voted in favor of legalization because it makes more sense to regulate the drug than leave it to the black market.

"I believe there should be legal choices that are safe," Kuehn said.

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

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

VP Harris concedes presidential race in phone call to Donald Trump

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 1:47 PM

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris Wednesday afternoon called Donald Trump to concede the 2024 presidential race, according to a senior Harris aide.

During the call, the Democratic presidential nominee "discussed the importance of a peaceful transfer of power and being a president for all Americans," the senior aide said.

Steven Cheung, the Trump campaign communications director said in a statement that during the call Trump "acknowledged Vice President Harris on her strength, professionalism, and tenacity throughout the campaign, and both leaders agreed on the importance of unifying the country."

Harris delivered a concession speech at 4 p.m. Eastern to her supporters at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, was in the crowd as well.

"The outcome of this election is not what we wanted," she said. "But hear me when I say this: The light of America's promise will always burn bright."

Harris told her supporters to not be discouraged by the results, but to continue the fighting and organizing.

"Sometimes the fight takes a while," she said. "This is not a time to throw up our hands, this is a time to roll up our sleeves."

The college was also the site of her election watch party on Tuesday night, which quickly turned somber after her path to the White House narrowed when the southern battleground states of North Carolina and Georgia swung to Trump.

Harris, who was originally expected to attend her own election night party, never arrived on campus,

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disappointing supporters and Howard alums.

Trump was declared the presidential winner early Wednesday, according to projections by The Associated Press.

Harris said it was important to accept the results of the race – something that Trump did not do four years ago, leading to a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

“That principle, as much as any other, distinguishes democracy from monarchy or tyranny and anyone who seeks the public trust must honor it,” she said. “At the same time, in our nation, we owe loyalty not to a president or a party, but to the Constitution of the United States.”

Harris said that while she concedes the election, “I do not concede the fight that fueled this campaign.”

The presidential race isn’t the only loss for Democrats. They lost control of the U.S. Senate and Republicans are favored to take the House, potentially giving the GOP a trifecta in Washington.

The election saw a deep gender divide, with exit poll surveys showing women tended to favor Harris over Trump.

It’s the second time a woman has led as the presidential candidate for a major party and it’s the second time a woman has lost to Trump. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton lost to him in 2016.

The election came two years after the constitutional right to an abortion was stripped away by the U.S. Supreme Court. The incoming 47th president cemented its conservative majority by hand-picking three justices.

Harris, whose bid only began in July after President Joe Biden suspended his reelection campaign, had a little over 100 days to pick a running mate, release policy plans to appeal to voters and hit the seven battleground states.

Despite the sprint of a campaign, Harris said she was grateful for the campaign she and Walz ran and the coalition they built along the way.

Some of that coalition was fractured, though. There was deep dissatisfaction within her party for the current administration’s handling of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

Michigan, which has a high Arab American population and is a state that Biden won in 2020, voted for Trump, according to projections by The Associated Press.

It was Harris’ second time running for the White House, after her first run quickly fizzled in 2019 before Biden picked her as his running mate.

With Biden out of the race following a disastrous June debate that rattled his party’s belief he could win a rematch against Trump, the coronation of Harris as the party heir breathed new hope into Democrats along with a flood of cash. They raised more than \$1 billion, according to the campaign.

Despite the funding and new enthusiasm among Democrats, the swing states of Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin ultimately went to Trump, giving him a clear path to the White House with 292 Electoral College votes out of 270 needed to win the White House, to her 224 votes, according to The Associated Press.

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

‘It was a hell of a good day’: U.S. Senate GOP takes an election victory lap

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ARIANA FIGUEROA - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 1:07 PM

WASHINGTON — Republicans were moving toward unified control of Congress on Wednesday as more House races were called in their favor and GOP candidates continued flipping Democratic seats in the Senate.

Democratic leaders were still holding out hope that they would secure a narrow majority in the House once there’s a clear outcome in more than 50 uncalled races, though that seemed somewhat unlikely.

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GOP leaders in Congress used the opportunity to take a victory lap.

"House Republicans have been successful in securing critical flips in swing states including Pennsylvania and Michigan, while our battle-tested incumbents have secured re-election from coast to coast," House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., wrote in a statement released by his campaign.

"The latest data and trends indicate that when all the votes are tabulated, Republicans will have held our majority, even though we faced a map with 18 Biden-won seats," Johnson added, referring to President Joe Biden.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who will step aside as his party's leader in the upper chamber next Congress, said during a press conference Wednesday he planned to work to ensure the GOP would be as successful as possible during the next couple of years.

"It was a hell of a good day," McConnell said, of the election results.

What a GOP trifecta could mean

When combined with Donald Trump winning the presidential race, Republicans appeared close to unlocking a complicated legislative process that could allow the GOP to make sweeping changes to policy as long as it has a significant impact on federal revenue, spending, or the debt.

While there will be many, many hurdles for Republican lawmakers to jump through, assuming they do control the House, that budget reconciliation process would allow the GOP to overhaul the country's tax code and Obamacare, also called the Affordable Care Act.

It might also provide a way for them to change some aspects of immigration law, though that's a longer shot than the other two given the process' strict rules.

Republicans used budget reconciliation in 2017 to implement sweeping changes to tax law after trying unsuccessfully to use it to repeal and replace Obamacare.

Democrats used the process during the first two years of the Biden administration to pass a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill and their sweeping climate change, health care and tax bill, sometimes referred to as the Inflation Reduction Act, or IRA.

Big immigration push ahead

Republicans focused much of their campaign for Congress on immigration and border security, likely making it one of the major issues they'll address in the years ahead.

Trump, who ran on the campaign promise of mass deportations, is unlikely to support any pathways to citizenship, and instead push for lawmakers to approve the spending necessary to carry out his pledge of removing more than 13 million people in the country without authorization.

That type of plan would require Congress to approve funding for additional detention beds, thousands of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and charter flights. It would also strain an already backlogged U.S. immigration court.

The American Immigration Council, a pro-immigration group, estimated the cost of deporting 13 million people would be \$968 billion over a decade.

The closest Congress came to immigration reform in decades was earlier in the year, when Connecticut Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy, Oklahoma Republican Sen. James Lankford and Arizona independent Sen. Kyrsten Sinema negotiated a bipartisan border security and immigration bill.

The trio of senators spent months working through the particulars of the deal only to have it scuttled after Trump told GOP members he didn't want the legislation to pass.

Instead, Trump threw his support behind a House GOP bill that reinstated the former president's immigration policies, including "Remain in Mexico," which required asylum seekers to stay in Mexico while their cases were processed.

The legislation would have also required employers to verify their employees' immigration status and fast-tracked deportations for unaccompanied minors, among other things.

Last year, the GOP-controlled House passed the bill, but it was never taken up in the Democratic-controlled

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Senate. California Rep. John S. Duarte and Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie were the only Republicans to vote against the bill. No Democrats voted in favor of passage.

McConnell pledged during his Wednesday press conference at the U.S. Capitol that his party would not change the 60-vote legislative filibuster that requires bipartisan support for the vast majority of bills to move through that chamber.

That likely means any immigration bills the GOP tries to pass through the regular legislative process would need at least some Democratic support to move through the Senate.

"One of the most gratifying results of the Senate becoming Republican — the filibuster will stand, there won't be any new states admitted that give a partisan advantage to the other side and we'll quit beating up the Supreme Court every time we don't like a decision they make," McConnell said.

He, however, didn't rule out Republicans using the budget reconciliation process to their advantage should they secure the House majority.

McConnell declined to answer questions about the future of U.S. military and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine, which several GOP lawmakers, including Trump, have indicated they would end if voters gave them the ability to.

"Yeah, look, I'm here this morning to talk about the election and I think I'm going to largely confine it to that," he said.

McConnell also declined to address a few questions about whether he believes Trump, who he has repeatedly criticized, is up to the task of president, though he did say he will do everything he "can to help the new administration to be successful."

The GOP Senate

The Associated Press, the news organization that States Newsroom looks to for race calls based on decades of experience, had announced 28 Senate races as of 1 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday.

GOP candidates flipped Montana, Ohio and West Virginia seats occupied by Jon Tester, Sherrod Brown and Joe Manchin III, respectively.

The AP hadn't projected a win in six Senate campaigns, though Pennsylvania and Nevada were trending toward Republican pickups.

That would give the GOP at least 54 seats in the Senate and would likely erode the negotiating power of moderates like Alaska's Lisa Murkowski and Maine's Susan Collins.

Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee communications director David Bergstein released a written statement Wednesday that the party expected to win some of the uncalled races.

"The remaining ballots being counted will continue to strengthen Democrats' standing in our Senate races," Bergstein wrote. "When this process of counting the votes concludes Democrats will have won races in multiple states carried by Trump and successfully limited the GOP's potential gains on their historically favorable map.

"These results, which defy historical trends, are a stark demonstration of the strength of our candidates, and the unique support they have earned from voters of every political party in a challenging political atmosphere."

Arizona was trending toward electing Democrat Ruben Gallego over Republican Kari Lake on Wednesday afternoon, though only 60% of the votes in that state had been counted.

In Michigan, Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin had amassed more votes than former Rep. Mike Rogers with 99% of the votes counted, giving Slotkin 48.6% and Rogers 48.3%.

Wisconsin voters appeared on track to reelect incumbent Democratic Sen. Tammy Baldwin over Republican Eric Hovde in a neck-and-neck race. With 99% of votes counted, Baldwin held a 49.4% lead over Hovde's 48.5%.

The race remained extremely close, and the two were separated by fewer than 30,000 votes out of more than 3 million cast.

Maine independent Sen. Angus King, who typically votes with Democrats, had not yet had his race called by the AP on Wednesday afternoon, though he held a 52.2% lead over his Republican challenger's 33.9%.

Another 13.9% of the state's votes went to other candidates, according to the AP.

While the Senate holds 100 lawmakers, they're elected to six-year terms, meaning about one-third of the chamber is up for reelection or retirement during a given election year. This year, a total of 34 Senate seats were up.

No majority call in the House yet

The AP had announced 383 House races as of 1 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday, but neither party has the 218 votes needed for majority control. Democrats held 182 seats and Republicans had 201 seats with 52 races yet to be called.

Republicans have maintained control of the House since January 2023, but hold a slim majority that Speaker Johnson has had to cautiously navigate.

He repeatedly had to strike a deal with Democrats in order to approve must-pass legislation to avoid a government shutdown while keeping members of his party's right flank happy with the general direction of the chamber.

Democrats were still hoping to regain the House to block Republicans from having a trifecta. But McConnell said he's confident in Johnson's optimism that House Republicans will maintain control of the chamber.

"I hope that's the case," McConnell said.

Pennsylvania Democratic Rep. Susan Wild conceded her race to Republican challenger Ryan Mackenzie on Wednesday morning in a statement, calling it a "bitterly disappointing outcome."

"This election may not have gone the way we hoped, but the fight continues on," Wild said. "Let us dust ourselves off and get right back up."

Republicans also regained Michigan's 7th Congressional District after Republican Tom Barrett defeated Democrat Curtis Hertel in the seat left open when Slotkin ran for the state's Senate seat.

New York Democratic Rep. Ritchie Torres wrote on his personal social media account that his party should have been more realistic about this year's election.

"The signs of a decisive defeat were staring us in the face all along. We were simply in denial about them or willfully blind to them, substituting magical thinking for actual analysis," Torres wrote. "In recent history, there's no precedent for an incumbent party winning a presidential election when the percentage of Americans who think the country is on the wrong track or headed in the wrong direction is in the 20s. The structural challenge was simply insurmountable."

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

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

South Dakotans approve consideration of Medicaid expansion work requirements

BY: SETH TUPPER, MAKENZIE HUBER AND JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 9:54 AM

A ballot measure authorizing South Dakota state officials to consider work requirements for Medicaid expansion recipients was winning in unofficial results.

The tally was 56% in favor of Amendment F and 44% opposed as of 9:45 a.m. Central time Wednesday, with about 90% of statewide votes counted.

Medicaid is a federal-state health insurance program for people with low incomes. In the past, Medicaid was not available to able-bodied adults younger than 65, unless they were below the poverty line and had young children.

In 2022, South Dakota voters expanded Medicaid eligibility to adults with incomes up to 138% of the

poverty level. The expansion is part of the state constitution and can only be altered by voters. It includes a ban on "greater or additional burdens or restrictions," such as a work requirement.

Earlier this year, legislators decided to put Amendment F on the ballot. The amendment will allow lawmakers to consider a work requirement if the federal government permits it. The Democratic Biden administration does not allow it, but a future Republican administration might.

Rep. Tony Venhuizen, R-Sioux Falls, supported the amendment. He issued a statement Wednesday morning thanking South Dakotans.

"We believe in the value of work, and that our social programs should be a hand up in tough times, not a way of life," Venhuizen said. "Our SD values can prevail over big out-of-state money."

Also Wednesday morning, the Vote No on Amendment F coalition, including several health-related organizations, predicted the measure may "place harmful government red tape around access to health care for thousands of South Dakotans."

"Ensuring our neighbors get health care is the right thing to do and this result may inhibit that process," said retired Yankton physician Mary Milroy, Vote No on Amendment F chair, in a statement. "Health care access for hardworking South Dakotans is good for them and their families, good for the employers who need them more than ever, and good for the economic progress of this state."

She added that the measure could allow lawmakers and bureaucrats to write new rules governing Medicaid eligibility, and the measure "provides no specifics on what those rules will be nor how they will be enforced."

At the polls Tuesday, Parker Stewart, a 38-year-old Sioux Falls resident, said he voted yes on the amendment. He counts himself as a supporter of Medicaid and Medicaid expansion, but sees a work requirement as a protective measure against abuse of the system.

"We have family members who are dependent on that program for medical reasons," Stewart said. "But at the same time, there are those who take advantage of it."

Jessica Aguilar, a 43-year-old from Sioux Falls, said she voted against the measure.

"Medicaid expansion was passed by South Dakotans last election," she said. "Let it stand as it was passed."

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

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

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

Carbon-pipeline law tossed out by South Dakota voters in unofficial results

Summit Carbon Solutions says it will reapply this month for a permit

BY: SETH TUPPER, JOHN HULT AND MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 8:11 AM

A proposed law regulating carbon dioxide pipelines was losing in unofficial South Dakota election results. The tally was 60% against Referred Law 21 and 40% in favor as of 8 a.m. Central time Wednesday, with 90% of statewide precincts fully reported.

State lawmakers and Republican Gov. Kristi Noem adopted the law last winter. Opponents gathered more than 31,000 petition signatures to refer it to voters. A yes vote supported the law, while a no vote opposed it.

The law came in response to a controversial proposal from Iowa-based Summit Carbon Solutions. The company has partnered with ethanol producers to capture some of the carbon dioxide emitted by 57

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ethanol plants in several midwestern states — including eastern South Dakota — and send it via pipeline to North Dakota for underground storage. The project would capitalize on federal tax credits that incentivize the prevention of climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

Wednesday morning, Summit issued a statement saying it will reapply on Nov. 19 to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission for a permit after being denied a permit last year. That denial was partially due to the pipeline route's conflicts with local county siting laws.

"Our focus continues to be on working with landowners and ensuring the long-term viability of ethanol and agriculture in the state," Summit's statement said. "Projects like ours have successfully navigated South Dakota's existing regulatory landscape in the past. We will continue to operate within the current framework, knowing that the future of ethanol and agriculture is vital to our shared success."

Referred Law 21 would have implemented a list of protections for landowners and counties impacted by the construction of the pipeline but would have stopped short of preventing pipeline companies from using a legal process known as "eminent domain" to gain land access from unwilling landowners.

The lack of protection against eminent domain was a sticking point for the law's opponents. They also opposed a provision in the law requiring local governments to demonstrate their restrictions on pipeline locations are reasonable, rather than requiring pipeline companies to prove those regulations are unreasonable. Opponents labeled that provision a seizure of local authority.

One of those opponents, affected landowner Ed Fischbach, issued a statement Wednesday morning.

"South Dakota voters have spoken: South Dakota is not for sale," he said. "Summit and its big-moneyed partners thought they could buy the voters as easily as they bought the Legislature. They outspent us by over a tenfold, but voters saw through their lies.

"As South Dakotans, we value local control and our communities. By defeating Referred Law 21, the voters have proven that we value people over profits. Hopefully this time the Legislature will listen."

The referred law's complicated backstory contributed to voter confusion. Poll results published last month found 24% of respondents undecided on the ballot question.

Kenya Mejia, of Sioux Falls, said Tuesday outside her polling place that she wasn't sure how to vote on the pipeline measure, and ultimately voted no.

"I kept reading it and reading it and was so confused," she said.

Linda Price, also of Sioux Falls, said she endured a similar struggle before voting no.

"I shouldn't have voted on that one at all," she said. "I just don't know."

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

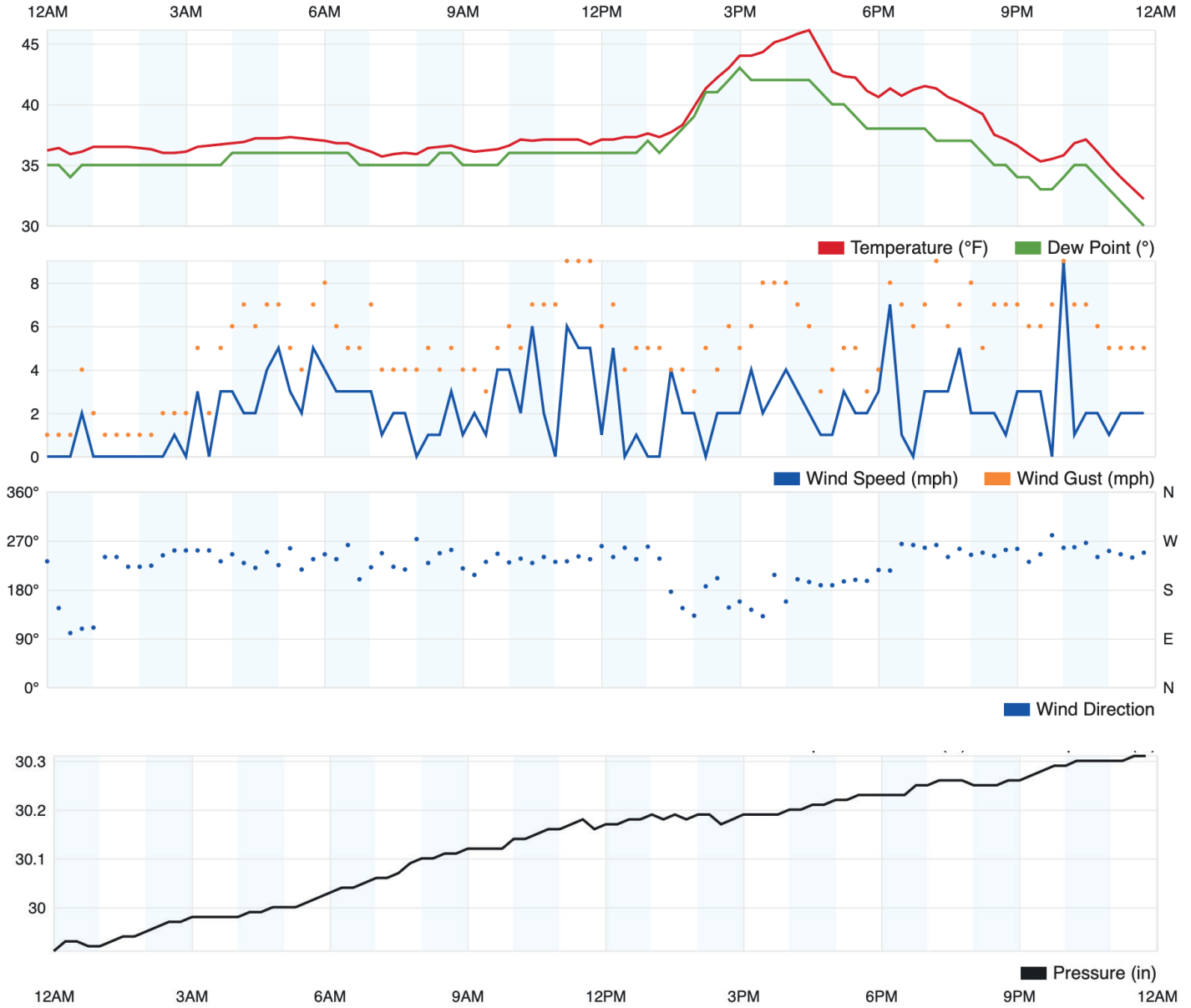
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 51 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 27 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 53 °F

Sunny

Friday Night



Low: 34 °F



Increasing
Clouds



Saturday





High: 50 °F

Rain Likely

Thursday Highs: 48-55° 
Lows: 26-33° 

Friday Highs: 53-57° 
Lows: 36-39°
15-40% for Rain 

Saturday Highs: 46-52°
45-80% for Rain 

 National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD
November 7, 2024 3:48 AM

Sunny skies Thursday will start to cloud up through Friday, with a chance for rain overnight Friday into Saturday. High temperatures will warm Thursday into Friday with highs in the mid to upper 50s before dipping back down Saturday.

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Early Look at Weekend Rain

Saturday Morning, Nov 9 - Sunday Evening, Nov 10

	Sat 11/9				Sun 11/10			
	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm
Aberdeen	0	0	0	0.03	0.01	0	0	0
Miller	0	0	0.02	0.04	0.01	0	0	0
Mobridge	0	0	0.01	0.04	0.01	0	0	0
Murdo	0	0.02	0.02	0.1	0	0	0	0
Ortonville	0	0	0	0.02	0.01	0.02	0	0
Pierre	0	0	0.02	0.12	0.02	0	0	0
Sisseton	0	0	0	0.02	0.02	0.01	0	0
Watertown	0	0	0	0.02	0.01	0.01	0	0

6 hr Precipitation (in)

Information:

The table displays the weather element values based on model predictions from the National Blend of Models.

Additional Details



The next chances for rain will be Saturday afternoon through early Sunday morning.

- There is a 50-70% chance of rain for central and northeast South Dakota.
- One to two tenths of an inch of rain is expected.
- The largest rainfall totals are expected in the southeastern part of the state, and decrease as you move northwest.

Valid: Sat 12 am CST - Sun 06 pm CST

Issued: Wed, Nov 6, 2024, 12 pm CST



The next chances for rain will be on Saturday afternoon through early Sunday morning. Around a tenth of an inch of rain is expected with this system, with the best chances to see heavier rain totals increasing as you move further southeast.

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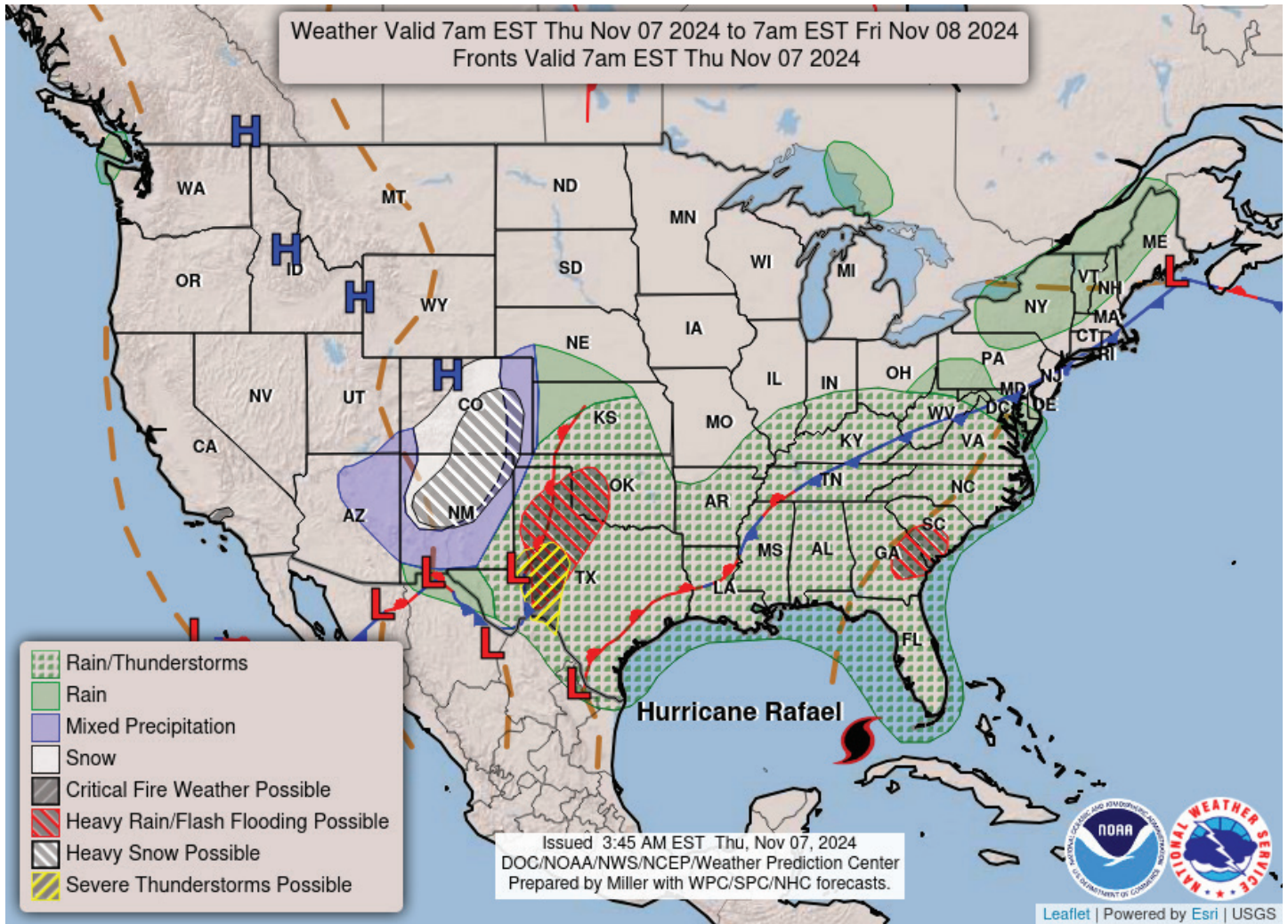
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 46 °F at 4:21 PM
Low Temp: 33 °F at 11:30 PM
Wind: 10 mph at 11:17 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 52 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 75 in 1909
Record Low: -9 in 1991
Average High: 47
Average Low: 23
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.23
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.59
Average Precip to date: 20.70
Precip Year to Date: 20.47
Sunset Tonight: 5:12:32 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:21:04 am



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Today in Weather History

November 7th, 1986: A major winter storm dumped 10 to 25 inches of snow over most of North Dakota. The snow combined with winds of 30 to 50 mph and gusts to 70 mph, creating blizzard conditions. Snow began over southern and eastern North Dakota on the morning of the 7th, and by late afternoon, had spread over the entire state. The snowfall was heavy at times and continued through the night of the 7th. In the southeast quarter, the snow alternated with rain, freezing rain, and sleet. By daybreak on the 8th, snow and blowing snow was occurring statewide. By late morning, the storm had intensified into a blizzard over almost all of North Dakota. The blizzard ended over extreme western North Dakota by late afternoon of the 8th and over the rest of the state that night. The most substantial snowfall occurred over south-central and east-central North Dakota. The highest wind gusts of the storm happened in the north-central and northeast sections of the state. Several wind gusts to 58 mph were recorded at Grand Forks, and a gust to 55 mph occurred at the Minot Air Force Base. Wind chills dipped to 40 below over some parts of the state. The storm happened on the opening day of deer hunting season and forced many hunters to cancel their trips.

November 7th, 2000: A storm system brought 4 to 10 inches of snow and northwest winds of 30 to 50 mph, with higher gusts to create blizzard conditions to South Dakota. Numerous schools and other events were canceled due to the blizzard conditions. In addition, several accidents occurred due to the slick roads and low visibilities. Some storm total snowfall amounts include; 9.5 inches in Selby; 8 inches in Glenham and 12SSW of Harrold; 7.3 inches near Onaka; 7 inches at Faulkton; and 6 inches in Miller.

1940: The Tacoma Narrows Bridge opened on July 1st, 1940, spanned the Puget Sound from Gig Harbor to Tacoma. At the time of the opening, the bridge was the third-longest suspension bridge in the world, covering nearly 6,000 feet. Before the bridge opened, high winds would cause the bridge to move vertically, giving the nickname Galloping Gertie. On this day in 1940, winds of 40 mph caused the bridge to collapse because of the physical phenomenon known as aeroelastic flutter.

1951: At 7 AM, a blinding flash, a massive ball of fire, and a terrific roar occurred over parts of Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, caused by a disintegrating meteor. Windows were broken in and near Hinton, Oklahoma, by the concussion.

1957: A historic tornado outbreak impacted southeast Texas and southwestern Louisiana. Ten people were killed.

1986 - An early season blizzard struck the Northern Plains Region. North Dakota took the brunt of the storm with wind gusts to 70 mph, and snowfall totals ranged up to 25 inches at Devils Lake. (Storm Data)

1987 - Heavy snow fell across parts of eastern New York State overnight, with twelve inches reported at the town of Piseco, located in the Mohawk Valley. A storm in the southwestern U.S. left nine inches of snow at the Winter Park ski resort in Colorado. Smoke from forest fires reduced visibilities to less than a mile at some locations from North Carolina to Ohio and Pennsylvania. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2001: Typhoon Lingling struck the southern Philippines, killing 171 people with 118 missing in Camiguin. The typhoon then struck Vietnam 5 days later, killing an additional 18 people.

2011: A powerful storm system moving through the southern Great Plains produced tornadoes, large hail, damaging winds, and flooding across parts of Oklahoma and western north Texas on November 7-8, 2011. The system initially produced numerous thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, and flash flooding over portions of south-central Oklahoma during the late evening of November 6th and early morning of November 7th. Rainfall totals of 5-9 inches were reported across Jefferson, Carter, and Murray counties.

2012: A Nor'Easter brought several inches of snow to the Northeast. Snowfall amounts of 2 to 6 inches were typical with locally higher amounts.

2013: Super Typhoon Haiyan made history as one of the largest and strongest typhoons ever recorded.



COUNT ON ME!

General Robert E. Lee had a brilliant officer serving on his staff. He was fiercely faithful and loyal to the general. He was also a man of conviction, courage and confidence. Every letter or note he wrote to General Lee was signed, "You can count on me."

Our Lord has many people He can count but not many He can count on. But there is one who stands as an example to all of us: Joshua!

Joshua was careful to obey all of the teachings and instructions given by God. As we read the book that bears his name, we find the theme of obedience time and time again. This theme of obedience is so very prominent because it is an important aspect of the believer's life. Additionally, it is certainly a significant part of our lives and one part of our lives that, with God's help, we can control.

We cannot control the events that God brings into our lives, but we can control the way we respond to them. We cannot control the behavior of others around us, but we certainly can control how we behave when we are in their presence. We cannot control the decisions of our leaders, but we certainly can "pray without ceasing" for them. We cannot control the content of the media, but we can certainly choose different materials to read or programs to watch on television.

However, one choice that every Christian has is to obey God. God's Word sets the standard for all to follow.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, empower us with Your Holy Spirit to understand and accept Your Word, and to be obedient to it so You will be able to "count on us." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today As the LORD had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua. And Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all the commands that the LORD had given to Moses. Joshua 11:15

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.05.24

2 24 25 52 58 9

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$334,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 30
DRAW: Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.24

3 19 42 47 48 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$14,080,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 45
DRAW: Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.24

4 7 12 14 43 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 17 Hrs 48
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.24

2 5 9 13 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$91,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs
DRAW: 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.24

12 16 17 39 45 10

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 29
DRAW: Mins 48 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.06.24

12 17 37 58 62 4

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$92,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 29
DRAW: Mins 48 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

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Forte scores 23 as South Dakota downs Texas A&M-Commerce 91-83

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Chase Forte's 23 points helped South Dakota defeat Texas A&M-Commerce 91-83 on Wednesday night.

Forte shot 5 of 10 from the field and 13 for 16 from the line for the Coyotes (2-0). Cameron Fens added 14 points while going 6 of 10 and 2 of 5 from the free-throw line while he also had five rebounds. Isaac Bruns had 13 points and shot 6 for 12, including 1 for 5 from beyond the arc.

Khaliq Abdul-Mateen led the Lions (0-2) in scoring, finishing with 18 points and two steals. Scooter Williams Jr. added 15 points and Tay Mosher had 12 points.

Trio of ballot failures leads marijuana backers to refocus their efforts for recreational weed

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

The movement to legalize recreational marijuana has run into a wall of resistance, failing in all three states where it was on the ballot this year and leading proponents to weigh a tactical shift focused more on state legislatures and the federal government.

Over the past dozen years, the number of states legalizing marijuana use by adults rose rapidly from zero to 24, even as it remains illegal under federal law. But no new states joined that list Tuesday, as initiatives went down in Florida, North Dakota and South Dakota.

It's "going to be a potentially tougher hill to climb going forward to enact legalization in the other 26 states," Paul Armentano, deputy director of the marijuana advocacy organization NORML, said Wednesday.

That's because many of the remaining states don't allow citizen ballot initiatives, meaning the path to legalization must pass through state legislatures that have been resistant.

Voters on Tuesday did approve medical marijuana in Nebraska, which would become the 39th state to allow it. But the measure still faces a legal challenge.

Ballot box struggles for recreational marijuana come despite a potential softening of marijuana policies at the federal level. The U.S. Justice Department has proposed to reclassify it from a Schedule I drug to a less dangerous Schedule III drug, and President-elect Donald Trump has signaled support for the change.

About 6 in 10 voters across the country said they favor legalizing recreational use nationwide, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 U.S. voters. Support for national legalization was slightly lower in some of the states where ballot measures lost Tuesday.

In Florida the proposed legalization of recreational marijuana received support from a majority of voters, which would have been sufficient to pass in most places. But it fell short of the 60% supermajority required for constitutional amendments in the state.

The campaign was among the costliest of the more than 140 measures on state ballots this November. Supporters raised \$153 million through the end of October, coming almost entirely from Florida's largest medical marijuana operator, Trulieve.

Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis helped lead opposition, using state resources to run ads raising concerns about marijuana. Jessica Spencer, the advocacy director for the opposition campaign, praised DeSantis' "conviction, courage and fearlessness" against "Big Weed."

The pricey Florida campaign was a sharp contrast to the lightly funded ones in North and South Dakota. It also highlighted a recent trend in which marijuana legalization efforts have been heavily financed by existing medical marijuana providers who stand to benefit from expansion.

"We've reached the point where there's basically very little philanthropic funding for cannabis reform initiatives," said Matthew Schweich, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project and leader of the

unsuccessful South Dakota campaign.

This year marked the third attempt for recreational marijuana initiatives in the Dakotas. Voters approved a South Dakota measure in 2020 that was later struck down in court, and voters rejected another one in 2022. North Dakotans voted against recreational marijuana in 2018 and 2022, both times by larger margins than this year.

"The real question is where should we even attempt this anymore, because we're not a well-funded political movement," Schweich said.

Citing the close loss, a group backing the North Dakota initiative urged state lawmakers to consider passing their own version of cannabis legalization.

"This conversation is far from over," New Economic Frontier said in a statement while pledging to "continue working toward practical solutions."

One state where marijuana advocates are hoping for success is New Hampshire. The Republican-led House and Senate there each passed bills this year that would have legalized recreational marijuana, but they failed to agree on a final version.

In some Democratic-led states, marijuana advocates have pushed for legalization while emphasizing social justice and equity arguments, noting that disproportionate enforcement of drug laws has resulted in minorities facing incarceration at a higher rate than white people despite similar rates of cannabis use.

But when focusing on Republican-led states, Armentano said, advocates may need to stress the potential for marijuana legalization to yield cost savings and free up police and prosecutors to focus on other crimes.

"I think that there is going to be some pivoting in tactics going forward," Armentano said. "Potentially there could be some shifting in the way this issue has been framed."

South Dakota has rejected an abortion rights measure and voted down recreational marijuana

By JOHN HANNA Associated Press

Voters in South Dakota have rejected a proposal to add protections for abortion rights to the state constitution, preserving a near-total ban there.

The abortion measure was in a crowded field of ballot initiatives for Tuesday's general election that also included a proposal to legalize marijuana for recreational use. After most votes were counted Wednesday, the marijuana measure was defeated. Voters also rejected a measure to remove the state sales tax from food and a plan for a single, all-candidate primary election with the top two finishers for each office advancing.

Here is a look at the biggest ballot initiatives.

Voters stay the course on abortion

The abortion vote in South Dakota followed the rejection in Florida of a proposed change in its state constitution to protect abortion rights — the first time abortion opponents have won a statewide vote since the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision overturning Roe vs. Wade in June 2022.

The South Dakota measure would have barred restrictions on terminating a pregnancy during its first 12 weeks.

From the 13th through the 26th week of pregnancy, state regulations would have had to be "reasonably related" to the patient's physical health. Even after the 26th week, the state would have had to permit abortions to preserve a patient's life or health.

The ban in place since the Dobbs decision makes it a felony to perform an abortion except to save the life of the patient.

Supporters of recreational marijuana try again

South Dakota voters rejected a measure that would have legalized the use of recreational marijuana, continuing a back-and-forth fight over efforts to allow the use of the drug.

Voters turned down the measure that would have legalized recreational marijuana for people 21 and older and set limits on how much they could possess. The proposal also would have allowed the cultiva-

tion of marijuana.

Voters have weighed in repeatedly on marijuana in the past eight years. They ultimately allowed the use of marijuana for medical purposes in 2020 but again rejected the recreational use of the drug after turning down such a proposal in 2022.

A proposal to give grocery buyers a break fails

Flush with cash, South Dakota last year dropped its sales tax from 4.5% to 4.2%, but voters rejected a proposal to eliminate the tax from food altogether.

The Legislature's research staff estimated the state would lose about \$124 million in annual revenues or 5% of its general tax revenues of \$2.4 billion.

But critics of the measure suggested it was written so poorly that it could go further than intended, applying even to tobacco products. They argued that the loss of revenue would push the state to make up for it by enacting an income tax, and it drew opposition from a coalition of business and other interest groups.

Supporters said they were trying to give people a break on food costs. The measure would have prohibited a state tax on "anything sold for human consumption," except alcoholic beverages and prepared food, such as restaurant meals.

Parties' opposition helps sink 'jungle' primary plan

Voters rejected a proposal to adopt what is sometimes known as a jungle primary after the leaders of both major parties criticized it. Those critics argued that the smaller Libertarian and No Labels parties would be unlikely to ever appear on the general election ballot.

In South Dakota, Democrats allowed voters with no political affiliation to participate in their June primary, but Republicans did not. The election initiative would have amended the state constitution to end partisan primaries by having all candidates for an office run at once, with the top two advancing.

Supporters of the change argue it would make elections better reflect voters' wishes and ensure that 155,000 voters with no party affiliation can vote for their favored candidates in a primary.

In a state where the GOP holds nearly 90% of the Legislature's seats, it's likely that in many places all of the general election candidates would have been Republicans. Meanwhile, a broader electorate could have helped more moderate GOP candidates at the expense of more conservative ones favored by party leaders.

South Dakota voters on Tuesday did approve one ballot measure that will allow officials to impose work requirements for people receiving Medicaid.

Abortion rights advocates win in 7 states and clear way to overturn Missouri ban but lose in 3

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voters in Missouri cleared the way to undo one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans in one of seven victories for abortion rights advocates, while Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota defeated similar constitutional amendments, leaving bans in place.

Abortion rights amendments also passed in Arizona, Colorado, Maryland and Montana. Nevada voters also approved an amendment, but they'll need to pass it again in 2026 for it to take effect. Another that bans discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy outcomes" prevailed in New York.

The results include firsts for the abortion landscape, which underwent a seismic shift in 2022 when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, a ruling that ended a nationwide right to abortion and cleared the way for bans to take effect in most Republican-controlled states.

They also came in the same election that Republican Donald Trump won the presidency. Among his inconsistent positions on abortion has been an insistence that it's an issue best left to the states. Still, the president can have a major impact on abortion policy through executive action.

In the meantime, Missouri is positioned to be the first state where a vote will undo a ban on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with an amendment that would allow lawmakers to restrict abortions only past the point of a fetus' viability — usually considered after 21 weeks, although there's no exact defined time frame.

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But the ban, and other restrictive laws, are not automatically repealed. Advocates now have to ask courts to overturn laws to square with the new amendment.

"Today, Missourians made history and sent a clear message: decisions around pregnancy, including abortion, birth control, and miscarriage care are personal and private and should be left up to patients and their families, not politicians," Rachel Sweet, campaign manager of Missourians for Constitutional Freedom, said in a statement.

Roughly half of Missouri's voters said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 2,200 of the state's voters. But only about 1 in 10 said abortion should be illegal in all cases; nearly 4 in 10 said abortion should be illegal in most cases.

Bans remain in place in three states after votes

Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota became the first states since Roe was overturned where abortion opponents prevailed on a ballot measure. Most voters supported the Florida measure, but it fell short of the required 60% to pass constitutional amendments in the state. Most states require a simple majority.

The result was a political win for Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican with a national profile, who had steered state GOP funds to the cause. His 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.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the national anti-abortion group SBA Pro-Life America, said in a statement that the result is "a momentous victory for life in Florida and for our entire country," praising DeSantis for leading the charge against the measure.

The defeat makes permanent a shift in the Southern abortion landscape that began when the state's six-week ban took effect in May. That removed Florida as a destination for abortion for many women from nearby states with deeper bans and also led to far more women from the state traveling to obtain abortion. The nearest states with looser restrictions are North Carolina and Virginia — hundreds of miles away.

"The reality is because of Florida's constitution a minority of Florida voters have decided Amendment 4 will not be adopted," said Lauren Brenzel, campaign director for the Yes on 4 Campaign said while wiping away tears. "The reality is a majority of Floridians just voted to end Florida's abortion ban."

In South Dakota, another state with a ban on abortion throughout pregnancy with some exceptions, the defeat of an abortion measure was more decisive. It would have allowed some regulations related to the health of the woman after 12 weeks. Because of that wrinkle, most national abortion-rights groups did not support it.

Voters in Nebraska adopted a measure that allows more abortion restrictions and enshrines the state's current 12-week ban and rejected a competing measure that would have ensured abortion rights.

Other states guaranteed abortion rights

Arizona's amendment will mean replacing the current law that bans abortion after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. The new measure ensures abortion access until viability. A 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.

In Maryland, the abortion rights amendment is a legal change that won't make an immediate difference to abortion access in a state that already allows it.

It's a similar situation in Montana, where abortion is already legal until viability.

The Colorado measure exceeded the 55% of support required to pass. Besides enshrining access, it also undoes an earlier amendment that barred using state and local government funding for abortion, opening the possibility of state Medicaid and government employee insurance plans covering care.

A New York equal rights law that abortion rights group say will bolster abortion rights also passed. It doesn't contain the word "abortion" but rather bans discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy." Sasha Ahuja, campaign director of New Yorkers for Equal Rights, called the result "a monumental victory for all New Yorkers" and a vote against opponents who

she says used misleading parental rights and anti-trans messages to try to thwart the measure.

The results end a win streak for abortion-rights advocates

Until Tuesday, abortion rights advocates had prevailed on all seven measures that have appeared on statewide ballots since the fall of Roe.

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 issue is resonating with voters. About one-fourth said abortion policy was the single most important factor for their vote, according to AP VoteCast, a sweeping survey of more than 110,000 voters nationwide. Close to half said it was an important factor, but not the most important. Just over 1 in 10 said it was a minor factor.

The outcomes of ballot initiatives that sought to overturn strict abortion bans in Florida and Missouri were very important to a majority of voters in the states. More than half of Florida voters identified the result of the amendment as very important, while roughly 6 in 10 of Missouri's voters said the same, the survey found.

Without formal addresses, Indigenous communities experience voter suppression

Prism undefined

Alameda, CA (Prism)

Many Native Americans on rural reservations do not have a traditional street address, creating insurmountable barriers to voting

Chances are you've probably never heard of an "addressing coordinator," though the work these local government employees perform literally shapes communities.

This is because they're responsible for verifying and enforcing addresses, creating new locations on maps, and tracking changes to roads and road names, among other essential tasks. As the Navajo Nation's rural addressing/geographic information systems (GIS) coordinator, MC Baldwin has his work cut out for him.

For more than 24 years, a major component of Baldwin's job has been to help people obtain coordinates to map the locations of their homes -- a difficult task, given that many homes in the Navajo Nation lack a "backbone," according to the coordinator.

"We have a lot of roads of Navajo Nation that do not have official names, and we have a lot of roads and streets that are paved, but we have probably four times the amount of paved roads that are not paved," Baldwin said. "And when a road out in the rural area [is] not paved, then about 80% of the time it will not have a road name."

A home needs to be located on a street with an official name to have a physical address. This, too, is more difficult than it should be. Part of the problem, Baldwin said, is a need for more care and concern for the people in the area, which translates to a lack of financial resources and too few employees to get people the addresses they need in a timely manner.

The effect of this neglect has significant consequences for residents in rural areas -- including during presidential elections.

"The outside world, including mainly the Republicans, they are aware of our challenges, but they don't consider us," Baldwin said. "[T]hey kind of use this tool as vote suppression."

Baldwin's office provides locals with proof of residency for voter registration, but it can be a cumbersome process that creates another barrier to voting. If someone lives in a rural area without a street name,

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Baldwin must get the coordinates for their house and then find two of the nearest official roads on the map. If he can find at least two such roads, he measures the distance from the intersection of the two center lines to the location of the person's house.

"That way, we can say the house is located 2.75 miles northeast of road 2715 and county road 327 junction on Navajo Nation," Baldwin explained.

Google Plus Codes are also increasingly used in the Navajo Nation. These codes are made up of numbers and letters based on latitude and longitude, and they can act as addresses for places that don't have one. With a Plus Code, rural residents can receive deliveries and ensure that emergency responders and social services can find them.

Plus Codes made their way to the Navajo Nation in large part thanks to the Rural Utah Project (RUP) led by addressing specialist Daylene Redhorse.

In 2018, Redhorse conducted a voter registration drive that, in part, included checking whether voters were registered to vote in the correct precincts. While carrying out this work, she realized that her own precinct was incorrect and that she'd been voting in the wrong precinct. Many others in the region experienced similar issues, she said.

This realization led Redhorse to begin working with Google developers in 2019. To ensure residents were informed of their home's Plus Code address, Redhorse went door-to-door and in many cases, traveled to the most remote parts of Utah's Navajo Nation. The process of actually finding the Plus Code for each house was also tedious.

"So let's say you're looking at a map, you're looking at a house, you're going to zoom to it further, and then you're going to zoom in really close, drop a pin in the center of the roof, whatever that center or that pin, that grid that it's sitting in, that number is what would they use, that's going to be your Plus Code," Redhorse explained.

Within the first year of Redhorse's efforts, 1,600 people registered as new voters. Redhorse also made sure to re-register people with their Plus Codes if they were unsure of their registration status or voting precinct. The team finished the project late last year, identifying 5,500 addressable structures -- just in time for this year's presidential election.

Baldwin and Redhorse's efforts speak to a much larger problem: Many Native Americans -- especially those living on rural reservations -- do not have a traditional street address. In fact, sometimes they have multiple addresses: A 911 address, a utility address, and the address they give themselves, all of which are different. The lack of standard street addresses poses a major challenge when registering to vote or voting by mail.

Making matters worse, many Native American reservations also do not have full U.S. Postal Service (USPS) coverage, meaning that they are not able to receive mail directly to their homes. Voter registration, election-day voting, and vote-by-mail are nearly impossible for those lacking a residential address or access to home mail delivery, and nonexistent or unreliable mail service disrupts the delivery of timely registration forms and ballots. When combined, these systemic barriers disenfranchise Native American voters and suppress their political participation -- especially in states that rely heavily on vote-by-mail.

Voter registration forms overwhelmingly rely on standard residential addresses, which creates a challenge for many Native Americans living on reservations. According to Ronnie Jo Horse, a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota and a descendant of the Northern Cheyenne Nation in Montana, these communities often use P.O. boxes or descriptive direction. Horse is currently the executive director of Western Native Voice, a Native American leadership and advocacy organization that serves 12 Tribal Nations in Montana.

"Descriptive direction" is exactly how it sounds, according to Horse. Instead of an address, it's a series of directions like, "You go a mile down river road, and I live in the last white house on the right." Allison Neswood, a Navajo attorney working with the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), told Prism that voter registration forms with descriptive addresses are disproportionately rejected.

The Census Bureau uses several methods to count the U.S. population, including Type of Enumeration Area, a classification identifying how the agency obtained addresses for each census collection block.

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There are five different types of enumeration areas, including the category "Update Leave," which requires a personal visit to the households to drop off a

Census questionnaire for the respondent to complete and mail back. This category is more common in rural areas, though it accounts for only 4.52% of housing units in the country that "either do not have mail delivered to the physical location of the housing unit, or the mail delivery information for the housing unit cannot be verified."

A recent NARF study found a strong correlation between Native American addresses, especially on reservations, and Update Leave addresses. In Arizona, for example, a recent study found that residents off-reservation are 105 times more likely to have a standard address than residents on reservation.

The study also found this correlation to be true even for off-reservation areas that were heavily Native American.

If people do not receive mail at their house, especially on reservations, they often must travel significant distances to participate in the electoral process. Some Navajo Nation members travel 140 miles round trip to access postal services. Some precincts do not allow P.O. boxes or shared boxes for voter registration, and it's also worth noting that P.O. boxes can be costly.

"In the community that I lived in, it was very limited in the hours that the post office was actually open," Horse noted.

Native Americans have a 26.6% poverty rate, nearly double the national rate. On reservations and in Alaska Native villages, the poverty rate is 38.3%. Mailing a ballot on a reservation requires gas money, time, and access to a vehicle. Over 90% of reservations also lack broadband access, making it difficult for Native American voters to register online.

"So it really is this sort of layered situation, where all of these barriers add up," Neswood said.

Some states have tried to implement laws to further disenfranchise Native voters.

In Montana, HB 176 ended Election Day voter registration, which reservation voters have disproportionately relied on to cast votes in Montana. HB 530 also blocked paid third-party ballot collection, another practice relied on heavily by Native Americans living on reservations. Horse referred to these laws as "voter suppression tactics" aimed at Native American communities.

This is why Western Native Voice and Montana Native Vote challenged these laws. The Montana Supreme Court ruled that these laws made it "much more difficult on average for people living on reservations to either get to a polling place on or before election day, or to mail an absentee ballot prior to election day." However, earlier this year the state decided to review the Montana Supreme Court's decision with the U.S. Supreme Court and the case is currently ongoing.

In 2022, Arizona House Bill 2492 required voters to provide a government-issued photo ID that contains or is paired with another document that shows their current physical address. Otherwise, a prospective voter must provide two documents that contain their current physical address. More than 40,000 homes on Native American reservations across the state do not have physical addresses, and the lack of access to postal delivery also means that most residents did not have many documents featuring their name and an address corresponding with the physical location of their home.

The law was challenged by the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Gila River Indian Community, and last year the U.S. District Court ruled in their favor, finding that the proof of address requirement in Arizona's HB 2492 is preempted by the National Voter Registration Act. The court ruled that the bill's address requirements must be liberally interpreted so that voters aren't required to have a standard street address while also allowing numerous documents to satisfy the requirement, including an Arizona-issued ID listing a P.O. box or any Tribal identification document, regardless of whether it has an address. In September, however, the Supreme Court stopped the lower court's ruling that blocked election officials from automatically rejecting state voter registration forms without documentary proof of citizenship.

While the court did reject part of the request that sought to block registered Arizona voters without proof of citizenship from voting in federal elections or by mail, this also meant that voters who registered to vote using state-created voter registration forms would still need documentation proving citizenship for

the registration to be valid. If no proof is provided, the state could reject the registration without informing the resident. If the court were to have granted the request to block registered voters without proof of citizenship from voting in federal elections, it could have impacted thousands of Arizona voters in this year's presidential election -- despite all Indigenous peoples being declared citizens of the U.S. in 1924.

Arizona is a swing state and it's expected to play a critical role in the 2024 election. Native voters have the potential to be a major deciding factor.

"There are way more Native American voters in states like Arizona and Wisconsin than there are votes that made up the margins in critical statewide elections," Neswood said. "Even up to the presidential election in 2020, the number of voters exceeded the margin between the winner and the loser in those states, and those states are certainly in the mix as swing states again."

From 1996 to 2020, Arizona was a Republican stronghold until President Joe Biden's presidency. Native Americans played a pivotal role in flipping the state.

Voters in precincts on the Navajo and Hopi reservations in northeastern Arizona cast nearly 60,000 ballots in the 2020 election, 17,500 more than in 2016, according to an Associated Press analysis of election data. Biden won Arizona by 10,457 votes. Compared with a 4% uptick among all Arizona voters, participation in two of the larger precincts on the reservations heightened by 12% and 13%, respectively, with Biden securing a significant lead in these areas.

According to Neswood, a great deal of work must be done to ensure Native American voters get the information and support they need and to make sure they are not denied the time and access at the polls. Neswood said that volunteers monitoring early voting in Montana recently found that one polling location opened an hour later than its scheduled time, requiring her team to negotiate an extra hour of voting time.

Much of the focus for groups like the Native American Rights Fund is empowering voters to perform tasks many take for granted, like filling out voter registration forms and informing these voters that they can describe the location of their home on the address line or draw a map that shows where their home is located. Of course, this also means that part of their work is holding county and other election workers accountable when they incorrectly reject this information.

To Neswood, the efforts to disenfranchise Native American voters are transparent: These voters "can really have an impact all the way up to the top of the ticket," she said.

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North Dakota voters defeat measures to legalize recreational marijuana, axe property tax

By JACK DURA Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota voters rejected a ballot measure to outlaw most local property taxes, which critics said would have led to dramatic cuts in state services.

Voters also defeated a measure calling for the legalization of recreational marijuana and another that sought to make it more difficult to amend the state constitution.

The measure to end local property taxes based on assessed value would have forced the state to provide an estimated \$3.15 billion in replacement revenue to local governments during each two-year budget, according to a legislative panel. The state now forecasts about \$5 billion in general tax revenues in the current two-year budget.

Supporters of the proposed cut said rising property taxes were increasingly frustrating to voters and

that the taxation system was hard to understand. Opponents said the measure would force legislators to make huge cuts to state services.

North Dakota voters also turned down the measure to legalize recreational possession and use of the drug. The outcome of the proposal wasn't clear until Wednesday morning. North Dakota is one of a handful of states, including Florida and South Dakota, where recreational marijuana measures went before voters. Two dozen states have legalized recreational marijuana, the most recent being Ohio in 2023.

North Dakota voters rejected past measures in 2018 and 2022. The state's Senate defeated two House-passed bills for legalization and taxation in 2021.

The measure sought to legalize recreational marijuana for people 21 and older to use at their homes and, if permitted, on others' private property. The measure also outlined production and processing regulations, prohibited uses — such as in public or in vehicles — and would have allowed home cultivation of plants.

Supporters said the measure would have allowed law enforcement to focus limited resources on more important issues, such as fentanyl. Opponents said marijuana has harmful physiological and societal effects.

Voters also rejected adding requirements for citizen-initiated constitutional measures. Such initiatives have been a smoldering issue in the Legislature for years over the perception that the state constitution is too easy to amend.

The measure referred by the Legislature would have limited constitutional initiatives to a single subject, mandated that only eligible voters may circulate and sign initiative petitions, raised the number of required signatures for submitting petitions, and required that such measures pass both the primary and general elections.

Republican state Sen. Janne Myrdal, who introduced the measure, said the state constitution is "standing naked on Main Street in North Dakota, and anyone ... from California or New York can throw a dart and play the game for \$1 million to change the law in North Dakota."

Myrdal, an anti-abortion leader in the Legislature, had denied that the measure was an effort to head off an abortion-rights initiative. States around the country — including North Dakota's neighbors Montana and South Dakota — have seen the introduction of such measures after the fall of *Roe v. Wade*.

North Dakota lawmakers have groused in recent years about the origins and funding of ballot initiatives that added crime victim rights, ethics mandates and term limits to the state constitution. Opponents said the new proposed restrictions step on citizen democracy.

Two other measures also were on the ballot. Voters approved a constitutional amendment from the Legislature to change outdated terms related to disabilities in the state constitution. A measure proposing administrative changes for the state's \$11 billion in oil tax savings was too early to call.

A new law allows Israel to deport the relatives of attackers.

Experts expect it to be struck down

By JULIA FRANKEL and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's parliament passed a law early Thursday that would allow it to deport family members of Palestinian attackers, including the country's own citizens, to the war-ravaged Gaza Strip or other locations.

The law, which was championed by members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and his far-right allies, passed with a 61-41 vote. But legal experts said that any attempt to implement it would likely lead to it being struck down by Israeli courts.

It would apply to Palestinian citizens of Israel and residents of annexed east Jerusalem who knew about their family members' attacks beforehand or who "express support or identification with the act of terrorism."

They would be deported, either to the Gaza Strip or another location, for a period of seven to 20 years. The Israel-Hamas war is still raging in Gaza, where tens of thousands have been killed and most of the population has been internally displaced, often multiple times.

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It was unclear if it would apply in the occupied West Bank, where Israel already has a long-standing policy of demolishing the family homes of attackers. Palestinians have carried out scores of stabbing, shooting and car-ramming attacks against Israelis in recent years.

Oded Feller, a legal adviser to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, dismissed the law as "populist nonsense." He said it was unlikely to be applied, because there is no legal way for the Interior Ministry to send an Israeli citizen to another country or to Gaza.

His organization doesn't plan to challenge the law unless authorities try to enforce it, in which case he expects any court challenge to succeed.

Eran Shamir-Borer, a senior researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute and a former international law expert for the Israeli military, agreed that the law was likely to be struck down by the Supreme Court.

"The bottom line is this is completely nonconstitutional and a clear conflict to Israel's core values," Shamir-Borer said.

Israel captured Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Middle East war — territories the Palestinians want for their future state. It withdrew settlers and soldiers from Gaza in 2005, but has reoccupied parts of the territory since Hamas' attack on Oct. 7, 2023 triggered the war.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem in a move not recognized by most of the international community. Palestinians there have permanent residency and are allowed to apply for citizenship, but most choose not to, and those who do face a series of obstacles.

Palestinians living in Israel make up around 20% of the country's population. They have citizenship and the right to vote but face widespread discrimination. Many also have close family ties to those in the territories and most sympathize with the Palestinian cause.

Middle East latest: Large airstrikes hit Beirut suburbs as Israel expands northern Gaza operations

By The Associated Press undefined

Several large airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs early Thursday, including one on a site adjacent to Lebanon's only international airport. The Israeli military had issued an evacuation notice for the site, saying there were Hezbollah facilities there, without giving more details.

Also Thursday, the Israeli military announced it expanded its month-old ground operation in northern Gaza to include part of Beit Lahiya, a town that has been heavily bombed since the earliest days of the war, where Israel says Hamas militants have regrouped.

Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem said in a speech aired Wednesday that the Lebanese militant group is open for cease-fire negotiations only once "the enemy stops its aggression." His speech marked the 40-day mourning period since former Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah was assassinated in Beirut.

Hezbollah began firing into Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, in solidarity with the Hamas militant group in the Gaza Strip. Since the conflict erupted, more than 3,000 people have been killed and some 13,600 wounded in Lebanon, the Health Ministry reported.

The Israel-Hamas war began after Palestinian militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 250 others. Israel's military response in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 people, Palestinian health officials say. They do not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but say more than half of those killed were women and children.

Here's the latest:

Israel announces \$5.2 billion fighter jet deal with Boeing

JERUSALEM — Israel says it has reached an agreement to purchase 25 advanced F-15 fighter jets from U.S. aerospace giant Boeing for \$5.2 billion.

The Defense Ministry said the agreement, concluded Wednesday, was part of a broader aid package approved by the U.S. government earlier this year. Deliveries will begin in 2031, and there's an option for the purchase of an additional 25 aircraft.

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The United States has provided crucial military support to Israel as it has battled Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and traded fire with Iran.

The Biden administration recently warned Israel that if it did not facilitate the delivery of more aid to Gaza, U.S. laws may force the administration to curb some of its military support.

The State Department said this week that Israel had yet to sufficiently improve aid deliveries ahead of a mid-November deadline.

President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to end the wars in the Middle East without saying how he plans to do it. He was a staunch supporter of Israel during his previous term but also cultivated close ties with Arab Gulf leaders.

Israeli military extends shutdown of Al Jazeera's West Bank bureau

RAMALLAH, West Bank — The Al Jazeera news network says the Israeli military has extended the order shutting down its bureau in the occupied West Bank.

Walid al-Omari, the network's bureau chief, said Israeli troops raided the office in Ramallah again early Thursday and posted a notice extending the closure for an additional 45 days.

Israel had previously raided the office and shut it down on Sept. 22. Earlier this year, authorities took the rare step of barring the Qatar-based network from operating in Israel.

Israel accuses Al Jazeera of serving as a mouthpiece for Hamas, an allegation denied by the network. Last month, Israel accused six Al Jazeera journalists in Gaza of being Palestinian militants, which the network also denied.

Al-Jazeera has provided near 24-hour coverage from inside Gaza since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, with a heavy focus on the war's toll among Palestinian civilians. Several of its correspondents have been killed or wounded by Israeli forces.

It also routinely airs unedited Hamas videos showing attacks on Israeli forces and hostages speaking under duress.

Israel passes law that would allow it to deport the families of Palestinian attackers, including citizens

Israel's parliament passed a law early Thursday that would allow it to deport family members of Palestinian attackers, including the country's own citizens, to the war-ravaged Gaza Strip or other locations.

The law, which was championed by members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party and his far-right allies, passed with a 61-41 vote but is likely to be challenged in court.

It would apply to Palestinian citizens of Israel and residents of annexed east Jerusalem who knew about their family members' attacks beforehand or who "express support or identification with the act of terrorism."

Read the full story here.

Israel expands its ground operation in northern Gaza

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military has expanded its month-old ground operation in northern Gaza to a town that has been heavily bombed since the earliest days of the war.

The military said in a statement Thursday that "troops started to operate" in the area of Beit Lahiya after intelligence indicated the presence of militants there. Hamas has repeatedly regrouped in areas where the military already conducted major operations.

The town in the northwestern corner of Gaza was among the first targets of the ground invasion launched over a year ago, after Hamas' attack into southern Israel. The northern third of the territory has been encircled by Israeli forces since then.

Israel launched another major offensive in nearby Jabaliya, a decades-old urban refugee camp, in early October. It has sharply restricted the amount of aid entering northern Gaza and ordered a full evacuation. Tens of thousands have fled to nearby Gaza City in the latest mass displacement of the war.

Airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs, including one on site adjacent to airport

BEIRUT — Several large airstrikes hit Beirut's southern suburbs early Thursday, including one on a site adjacent to Lebanon's only international airport.

The Israeli military had earlier issued an evacuation notice for the site, saying that there were Hezbollah facilities there, without giving more details.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. Beirut's airport has not been directly targeted in the war between Israel and Hezbollah, and national air carrier Middle East Airlines has continued to operate commercial flights.

China is bracing for fresh tensions with Trump over trade, tech and Taiwan

By SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — The first time China faced Donald Trump in the White House, there was a trade war, a breach of protocol involving Taiwan's former leader, and a president-to-president bromance that turned sour.

As President-elect Trump prepares to start his second term in office, China is bracing for unpredictability in its ties with the United States and renewed tensions over trade, technology and Taiwan.

A new tariff war looms

Perhaps the biggest consequence for China — if Trump stays true to his campaign promises — is his threat to slap blanket 60% tariffs on all Chinese exports to the U.S.

Tariffs like that would be a blow to China's already unstable economy, which is suffering from high youth unemployment, a lengthy property slump and government debt. A 60% duty on Chinese imports could shave off 2.5 percentage points, or about half, of China's projected economic growth, according to an analysis published earlier this year by UBS.

During Trump's previous term in office, the U.S. imposed tariffs on more than \$360 billion of Chinese products. That brought Beijing to the negotiating table, and in 2020 the two sides signed a trade deal in which China committed to improve intellectual property rights and buy an extra \$200 billion of American goods. A research group a couple of years later showed China had bought essentially none of the goods it had promised.

President Joe Biden retained most of those tariffs and added fresh duties this year on imports including steel, solar cells and electric vehicles.

Like last time, tariffs could serve as a tool to force Beijing back to the negotiating table, said Henry Gao, a law professor at Singapore Management University who focuses on international trade.

"Given the weak economic position of China this time, I think there will be more willingness to talk," he said. "Thus, while the tariff might have some short-term effects on the Chinese economy, the situation might improve once they reach a deal."

Factoring into the trade talks could be Trump's appeals to Chinese President Xi Jinping to help negotiate a resolution to the Ukraine war, which Trump has boasted he'll be able to do quickly, without saying how.

Trump previously sought Xi's help in dealing with North Korea's rogue leader Kim Jong Un. That dynamic could repeat itself, with Trump weighing trade grievances against seeking China's support in global crises, according to Wang Huiyao, founder of the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization.

"China is the largest trading partner of both Russia and Ukraine," Wang wrote in a recent commentary. "These close economic ties give China a unique opportunity to play a greater role in peace-making efforts."

Willing to go 'crazy' over Taiwan

There is one scenario in which Trump has threatened to impose even higher tariffs — 150% to 200% — on Chinese goods: if China invades Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy that Beijing claims as its own.

The U.S. does not recognize Taiwan as a country, but is its strongest backer and biggest arms provider.

Trump angered Beijing in December 2016 by taking a congratulatory call from Taiwan's then-president Tsai Ing-wen in a breach of diplomatic protocol. No U.S. president had spoken directly to a Taiwanese leader since Washington and Beijing established ties in 1979.

Trump's move created anxiety in China-watching circles, but ultimately, he stuck to supporting the status quo in relations between Taipei and Beijing.

China expects him to continue to do so, said Zhu Feng, dean of the School of International Relations at Nanjing University.

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"Will (he) want to turn to support Taiwan independence? It is unlikely," he said.

As for China's repeated threats to annex Taiwan, Trump told The Wall Street Journal last month that he would not have to use military force to prevent a blockade of Taiwan because Xi "respects me and he knows I'm (expletive) crazy."

On the campaign trail, Trump sometimes talked up his personal connection with Xi, which started exuberantly during his first term but soured over disputes about trade and the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But Trump has also said that Taiwan should pay the U.S. for defending it against China, likening the relationship to insurance. Taiwan spends about 2.5% of its GDP on defense, and purchased hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of U.S. weapons this year.

In a congratulatory message to Trump after his victory, Xi called for the U.S. and China to manage their differences and get along in a new era, according to Chinese state media. History has shown that both sides gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation, Xi said.

Trump has purposely maintained a sense of uncertainty in his relationship with China, said Da Wei, director of the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

"We are clear about the challenges," he said. "As for opportunities, we are yet to see them clearly."

Disputes over chips

During his first term, Trump began targeting Chinese technology firms over security concerns, focusing on large companies like the telecoms giant Huawei. Biden continued in that direction by placing curbs on China's access to advanced semiconductors, which are needed to develop strategic industries such as artificial intelligence.

But Trump has criticized Biden's CHIPS and Science Act, a bipartisan bill that earmarked \$53 billion to build up domestic manufacturing of semiconductors. Currently, Taiwan produces nearly 90% of the world's supply of the most advanced chips.

The island's largest semiconductor manufacturer, TSMC, expanded production in Arizona, partly to respond to the CHIPS Act, and to be prepared to withstand any other protectionist policies in the U.S., said Shihoko Goto, director of the Indo-Pacific Program at the Wilson Center.

Trump has promised to do away with the CHIPS Act, though critics say that would undermine his campaign to reindustrialize the U.S. The president-elect has also accused Taiwan of "stealing" the chip industry from the U.S. decades ago.

"Rather than providing a silicon shield, Taiwan's dominance in the chip industry could actually be the source of tension between Taipei and Trump, as Taiwan's successes in the chip sector may be seen as having only been possible as a result of the United States being taken advantage of," Goto said.

Trump's second term could realign US diplomacy toward authoritarian leaders

By JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — Hungary's fiery, right-wing leader says Donald Trump's victory will help his own battle against immigration and multiculturalism and restore traditional family values.

In Argentina, a president who once bear-hugged Trump at a political conference in Maryland is attacking his critics as rats and parasites, ranting against what he calls a corrupt elite and calling climate change "a socialist lie."

Trump's second term could realign U.S. diplomacy away from traditional international alliances and more toward populist, authoritarian politicians, according to both those leaders and outside observers.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary

Two days before Tuesday's election, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán made a daring prediction.

"Donald Trump will be president again, and that means by the end of the year, pro-peace political forces will be in the majority in the West," Orbán told state radio.

Orbán has been accused by the European Union of burying Hungary's democracy by dominating media

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and building a network of loyal oligarchs. He has worried foreign leaders by drawing closer to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

What Orbán calls "illiberal democracy" has stigmatized civil-society organizations and cracked down on LGBTQ+ rights. It favors retaining power even if that means contravening traditional Hungarian allies' interests.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Trump has avoided publicly criticizing Putin and has consistently spoken warmly about him.

"There is clearly that sort of authoritarian-minded chemistry," between them, said Nigel Gould-Davies of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London.

That chemistry aligns with Trump's admiration for other authoritarian leaders, some of whom were elected by systems that were once democratic, Gould-Davies said, noting Hungary under Orbán as an example.

Trump has claimed that he will bring an end to Russia's war in Ukraine "within 24 hours," an assertion welcomed by the Kremlin, which currently holds an advantage on the battlefield as well as roughly 20% of Ukrainian territory.

Moscow may hope that Trump will sow dysfunction in NATO given his demands that other members of the alliance meet agreed military spending levels, and his warnings that Russia could "do whatever the hell they want" to those who fail.

Gould-Davies observed before the election that the Kremlin would welcome Trump's victory because of his apparent desire for the war in Ukraine to end on terms favorable to Russia. Putin and other authoritarian leaders will be encouraged by Trump's reelection, which will mean "much less emphasis in American foreign policy on the importance and value of human rights," Gould-Davies said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is one of his country's both beloved and polarizing political leaders. Under Modi, Hindu nationalism — once a fringe ideology in India — has become mainstream, and nobody has done more to advance this cause than the 74-year-old leader.

Some critics believe Modi's politics have divided India, especially along religious lines. He was accused of using hate speech against the country's minority Muslim community, especially in the last phase of election campaigning this year when he ramped up rhetoric against them.

To his supporters, Modi is a political outsider who broke the country's history of dynastic politics. His rise has been boosted in part by promises to overhaul India's economy, but also by Hindu-first politics that have resonated widely in a country where 80% of the population is Hindu.

To his critics, Modi has strained democracy and threatened India's secular fabric, while his attacks on media and free speech have grown in more than a decade of his rule.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey

Like Trump, Erdogan projects an image of strength that prioritizes national interests and relies on populist messages that present him as a champion of common people against elites.

The Biden administration has kept Erdogan's government at arms' length, but Trump and Erdogan have cultivated a cordial relationship. That's despite a series of differences between their countries, like when the Trump administration removed Turkey from the F-35 fighter jet program in 2019 over Ankara's purchase of a Russian-made missile defense system.

President Javier Milei of Argentina

The president of Argentina has a brash style like Trump, rebukes multilateral institutions like the United Nations and has taken a disdainful approach to diplomacy, snubbing meetings with the leaders of traditional allies like Brazil and Spain.

For many observers, the most worrying parallel involves Milei's claims that last year's presidential election in Argentina was rigged against him. That, along with his efforts to downplay the atrocities of Argentina's 1976-1983 bloody military dictatorship has raised concerns about his impact on democracy.

Milei congratulated Trump on his election victory Wednesday by posting an image on Instagram of the two men hugging in front of their nations' flags.

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"You know you can count on Argentina to carry out your task," the caption reads. "Now, Make America Great Again."

Analysts say his cash-strapped government — badly in need of support from the U.S., the largest stakeholder in the International Monetary Fund — has been betting on a Trump win. Milei's administration is pinning its hopes on the idea that Trump could exert pressure on the IMF to lend more money to Argentina, its biggest debtor.

The fund is weighing whether to lend Argentina more cash, which Milei's libertarian government needs to fully reenter the world market and exit currency controls. During Trump's first term, the IMF granted Argentina — at the time led by conservative President Mauricio Macri — a controversial \$57 billion bailout.

Mariano Machado, principal analyst for the Americas at Verisk Maplecroft, a global risk intelligence firm, said that while U.S. institutions and separation of powers are designed to prevent autocratic rule, "Argentina is now going back to a phase where the very parameters of its institutions are being pressured."

Prime Minister Robert Fico of Slovakia

While a leftist, Fico has used rhetoric similar to Trump's.

Fico even compared the July assassination attempt against Trump to his own wounding in a shooting in May.

"It is a carbon-copy scenario," Fico said. "Political opponents of Donald Trump are trying to imprison him, and when they don't succeed, they enrage the public so much that some loser picks up a gun."

Like Trump, Fico displays contempt for the mainstream media, and has declared war on illegal immigration. Fico has faced criminal charges for organized crime, which he denounced as politically motivated. The case was eventually dismissed.

The Slovak leader has condemned the West's approach to the war in Ukraine and canceled weapons shipments to Kyiv.

Fico, like Orbán, is known for his pro-Russian views, opposes EU sanctions on Moscow and has said he would block Ukraine from joining NATO.

Joe Biden gets blamed by Harris allies for the vice president's resounding loss

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden's name wasn't on the ballot, but history will likely remember Kamala Harris' resounding defeat as his loss too.

As Democrats pick up the pieces following President-elect Donald Trump's decisive victory, some of the vice president's backers are expressing frustration that Biden's decision to seek reelection until this summer — despite longstanding voter concerns about his age and unease about post-pandemic inflation as well as the U.S.-Mexico border — all but sealed his party's loss of the White House.

"The biggest onus of this loss is on President Biden," said Andrew Yang, who ran against Biden in 2020 for the Democratic nomination and endorsed Harris' unsuccessful run. "If he had stepped down in January instead of July, we may be in a very different place."

Biden will leave office after leading the U.S. out of the worst pandemic in a century, galvanizing international support for Ukraine in the aftermath of Russia's invasion and passing a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill that will impact communities for years to come.

But having run four years ago against Trump to "restore the soul of the country," Biden will make way after just one term for his immediate predecessor, who overcame two impeachments, a felony conviction and an insurrection launched by his supporters. Trump has vowed to radically reshape the federal government and roll back many of Biden's priorities.

"Maybe in 20 or 30 years, history will remember Biden for some of these achievements," said Thom Reilly, co-director of the Center for an Independent and Sustainable Democracy at Arizona State University. "But in the shorter term, I don't know he escapes the legacy of being the president who beat Donald Trump only to usher in another Donald Trump administration four years later."

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The president on Wednesday stayed out of sight for the second straight day, making congratulatory calls to Democratic lawmakers who won downballot races as well as one to Trump, who he invited for a White House meeting that the president-elect accepted.

Biden is set to deliver a Rose Garden address Thursday about the election. He issued a statement shortly after Harris delivered her concession speech on Wednesday, praising Harris for running an "historic campaign" under "extraordinary circumstances."

Some high-ranking Democrats, including three advisers to the Harris campaign, expressed deep frustration with Biden for failing to recognize earlier in the election cycle that he was not up to the challenge. The advisers spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly.

Biden, 81, ended his reelection campaign in July, weeks after an abysmal debate performance sent his party into a spiral and raised questions about whether he still had the mental acuity and stamina to serve as a credible nominee.

But polling long beforehand showed that many Americans worried about his age. Some 77% of Americans said in August 2023 that Biden was too old to be effective for four more years, according to a poll by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs.

The president bowed out on July 21 after getting not-so-subtle nudges from Democratic Party powers, including former President Barack Obama and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. He endorsed Harris and handed over his campaign operation to her.

Harris managed to spur far greater enthusiasm than Biden was generating from the party's base. But she struggled to distinguish how her administration would differ from Biden's.

Appearing on ABC's "The View" in September, Harris was not able to identify a decision where she would have separated herself from Biden. "There is not a thing that comes to mind," Harris said, giving the Trump campaign a sound bite it replayed through Election Day.

The strategists advising the Harris campaign said the compressed campaign timetable made it even more difficult for Harris to differentiate herself from the president.

Had Biden stepped aside early in the year, they said, it would have given Democrats enough time to hold a primary. Going through the paces of an intraparty contest would have forced Harris or another eventual nominee to more aggressively stake out differences with Biden.

The strategists acknowledged that overcoming broad dissatisfaction among the American electorate about rising costs in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic and broad concerns about the U.S. immigration system weighed heavy on the minds of voters in key states.

Still, they said that Biden had left Democrats in an untenable place.

Harris senior adviser David Plouffe in a posting on X called it a "devastating loss." Plouffe didn't assign blame. He noted the Harris campaign "dug out of a deep hole but not enough."

At the vice president's concession speech on Wednesday, some Harris supporters said they wished the vice president had had more time to make her pitch to American voters.

"I think that would have made a huge difference," said Jerushatalla Pallay, a Howard University student who attended the speech at the center of her campus.

Republicans are poised to control the White House and Senate. Control of the House has yet to be determined.

Matt Bennett, executive vice president at the Democratic-aligned group Third Way, said this moment was the most devastating the party has faced in his lifetime.

"Harris was dealt a really bad hand. Some of it was Biden's making and some maybe not," said Bennett, who served as an aide to Vice President Al Gore during the Clinton administration. "Would Democrats fare better if Biden had stepped back earlier? I don't know if we can say for certain, but it's a question we'll be asking ourselves for some time."

Federal Reserve is set to cut interest rates again as post-election uncertainty grows

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve officials are poised Thursday to reduce their key interest rate for a second straight time, responding to a steady slowdown of the inflation pressures that exasperated many Americans and contributed to Donald Trump's presidential election victory.

Yet the Fed's future moves are now more uncertain in the aftermath of the election, given that Trump's economic proposals have been widely flagged as potentially inflationary. His election has also raised the specter of meddling by the White House in the Fed's policy decisions, with Trump having proclaimed that as president he should have a voice in the central bank's interest rate decisions.

The Fed has long guarded its status as an independent institution able to make difficult decisions about borrowing rates, free from political interference. Yet during his previous term in the White House, Trump publicly attacked Chair Jerome Powell after the Fed raised rates to fight inflation, and he may do so again.

The economy is also clouding the picture by flashing conflicting signals, with growth solid but hiring weakening. Even so, consumer spending has been healthy, fueling concerns that there is no need for the Fed to reduce borrowing costs and that doing so might overstimulate the economy and even re-accelerate inflation.

Financial markets are throwing yet another curve at the Fed: Investors have sharply pushed up Treasury yields since the central bank cut rates in September. The result has been higher borrowing costs throughout the economy, thereby diminishing the benefit to consumers of the Fed's half-point cut in its benchmark rate, which it announced after its September meeting.

The average U.S. 30-year mortgage rate, for example, fell over the summer as the Fed signaled that it would cut rates, only to rise again once the central bank actually cut its benchmark rate.

Broader interest rates have risen because investors are anticipating higher inflation, larger federal budget deficits, and faster economic growth under a President-elect Trump. In what Wall Street has called the "Trump trade," stock prices also soared Wednesday and the value of bitcoin and the dollar surged. Trump had talked up cryptocurrencies during his campaign, and the dollar would likely benefit from higher rates and from the across-the-board increase in tariffs that Trump has proposed.

Trump's plan to impose at least a 10% tariff on all imports, as well as significantly higher taxes on Chinese goods, and to carry out a mass deportation of undocumented immigrants would almost certainly boost inflation. This would make it less likely that the Fed would continue cutting its key rate. Annual inflation as measured by the central bank's preferred gauge fell to 2.1% in September.

Economists at Goldman Sachs estimate that Trump's proposed 10% tariff, as well as his proposed taxes on Chinese imports and autos from Mexico, could send inflation back up to about 2.75% to 3% by mid-2026.

Such an increase would likely upend the future rate cuts the Fed had signaled in September. At that meeting, when the policymakers cut their key rate by an outsize half-point to about 4.9%, the officials said they envisioned two quarter-point rate reductions later in the year — one on Thursday and one in December — and then four additional rate cuts in 2025.

But investors now foresee rate cuts next year as increasingly unlikely. The perceived probability of a rate cut at the Fed's meeting in January of next year fell Wednesday to just 28%, down from 41% on Tuesday and from nearly 70% a month ago, according to futures prices monitored by CME FedWatch.

The jump in borrowing costs for things like mortgages and car loans, even as the Fed is reducing its benchmark rate, has set up a potential challenge for the central bank: Its effort to support the economy by lowering borrowing costs may not bear fruit if investors are acting to boost longer-term borrowing rates.

The economy grew at a solid annual rate of just below 3% over the past six months, while consumer spending — fueled by higher-income shoppers — rose strongly in the July-September quarter.

At the same time, companies have reined in hiring, with many people who are out of work struggling to find jobs. Powell has suggested that the Fed is reducing its key rate in part to bolster the job market. But if economic growth continues at a healthy clip and inflation climbs again, the central bank will come under growing pressure to slow or stop its interest rate cuts.

Thousands ordered to evacuate as powerful wind-fed wildfire burns homes in Southern California

By MARCIO J. SANCHEZ, CHRISTOPHER WEBER and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

CAMARILLO, Calif. (AP) — California was lashed by powerful winds Wednesday that fed a fast-moving wildfire, which destroyed dozens of homes and forced thousands of residents to flee as forecasters warned of the potential for “extreme and life-threatening” blazes.

Northwest of Los Angeles, the Mountain Fire exploded in size and prompted evacuation orders for more than 10,000 people as it threatened 3,500 structures in suburban communities, ranches and agricultural areas around Camarillo, according to a statement from Gov. Gavin Newsom. The area east of the Pacific coast city of Ventura will receive federal assistance after a request from Newsom was granted, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said Wednesday.

The blaze was burning in a region that has seen some of California’s most destructive fires over the years. A thick plume of smoke rose hundreds of feet into the sky Wednesday, blanketing whole neighborhoods and limiting visibility for firefighters and evacuees. The fire grew from less than half of a square mile to 16 square miles (62 square kilometers) in little more than five hours.

Ventura County Fire Captain Trevor Johnson described crews racing with their engines to homes threatened by the flames to save lives.

“This is as intense as it gets. The hair on the back of the firefighters’ neck I’m sure was standing up,” he said during a news conference Wednesday afternoon.

At one spot, flames licked the burning remains of a home. Its roof was reduced to only a few charred shingles.

Two people suffered apparent smoke inhalation and were taken to hospitals, fire officials said. No firefighters reported significant injuries.

The erratic winds and limited visibility grounded fixed-wing aircraft, and gusts topped 61 mph (98 kph), said weather service meteorologist Bryan Lewis. Water-dropping helicopters were still flying.

First responders pleaded with residents to evacuate. Deputies made contact with 14,000 people to urge them to leave as embers spread up to 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) away and sparked new flames.

“This fire is moving dangerously fast,” Ventura County Fire Chief Dustin Gardner said.

Aerial footage from local television networks showed dozens of homes in flames across several neighborhoods as embers were whipped from home to home. Other footage captured horses trotting alongside evacuating vehicles.

Jade Katz, who said she is disabled and does not drive, waited for a friend to pick her up near her Camarillo Heights home with a suitcase full of medication and Bella, her Great Dane service dog. But the friend couldn’t reach her, so first responders sent a squad car to escort her out Wednesday afternoon as a helicopter dropped water on the house across from her home.

“On the way out of the neighborhood, there were five or eight houses that had already burnt to the ground,” said Katz, 35, who was sitting in a car with housemate Shannon Kelly, 28. They plan to spend the night with a friend in Los Angeles.

Officials said they were using all resources, including water-dropping helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft dropping fire retardant, but it was still burning out of control Wednesday afternoon. Andrew Dowd, a Ventura County fire spokesperson, said he did not have details of how many structures had been damaged.

Gus Garcia, who owns a ranch south of the fire, said he’s waiting to see whether conditions will change to decide if he should evacuate his horses and cattle. Around 12:30 p.m., his animals were still safe and he was trying to stay out of the way as others got their livestock out.

His ranch is surrounded by others with horses and alpaca, and Garcia said his neighbors in the canyon did not seem panicked.

“The horse community, they prepare for this because it’s always a possibility up here,” he said.

Meanwhile to the south, Los Angeles County Fire Department crews scrambled to contain a wildfire near Malibu’s Broad Beach as authorities briefly shut down the Pacific Coast Highway as flames burned

near multimillion-dollar properties. Residents were urged to shelter in place while aircraft dropped water on the 50-acre (20-hectare) Broad Fire. It was 15% contained around 12:30 p.m. with forward progress stopped. Fire officials said two structures burned.

The National Weather Service office for the Los Angeles area amended its red flag warning for increased fire danger with a rare "particularly dangerous situation" label, and officials in several counties urged residents to be on watch for fast-spreading blazes, power outages and downed trees amid the latest round of notorious Santa Ana winds.

With predicted gusts between 50 mph (80 kph) and 100 mph (160 kph) and humidity levels as low as 8%, parts of Southern California could experience conditions ripe for "extreme and life-threatening" fire behavior into Thursday, the weather service said.

Forecasters also issued red flag warnings until Thursday from California's central coast through the San Francisco Bay Area and into counties to the north, where strong winds were also expected.

Utilities in California began powering down equipment during high winds and extreme fire danger after a series of massive and deadly wildfires in recent years were sparked by electrical lines and other infrastructure. On Wednesday, more than 65,000 customers in Southern California were without power preventatively, and upwards of 20,000 in Northern California.

Wednesday's fires were burning in the same areas of other recent destructive fires, including the 2018 Woolsey Fire, which killed three people and destroyed 1,600 homes near Los Angeles, and the the 2017 Thomas Fire, which destroyed more than a thousand homes and other structures in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Southern California Edison has paid tens of millions of dollars to settle claims after its equipment was blamed for both blazes.

Cuba left reeling after Category 3 hurricane ravages island and knocks out power grid

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba was left reeling Thursday after a fierce Category 3 hurricane ripped across the island and knocked out the country's power grid.

The magnitude of the impact remained unclear through the early hours of the day, but forecasters warned that Hurricane Rafael could bring "life-threatening" storm surges, winds and flash floods to Cuba after ravaging parts of the Cayman Islands and Jamaica.

On Wednesday evening, massive waves lashed at Havana's shores as sharp winds and rain whipped at the historic cityscape, leaving trees littered on flooded roads. Much of the city was dark and deserted.

As it plowed across Cuba, the storm slowed to a Category 2 hurricane chugging into the Gulf of Mexico near northern Mexico and southern Texas, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

But many Cubans were left picking up the pieces from the night before, with a strange sense of déjà vu after a rocky few weeks in the Caribbean nation.

In October, the island was hit by a one-two punch. First, Cuba was roiled by stretching island-wide blackouts stretching on for days, a product of the island's energy crisis. Shortly after, it was slapped by another powerful hurricane that killed at least six people in the eastern part of the island.

It stoked discontent already simmering in Cuba amid an ongoing economic crisis, which has pushed many to migrate from Cuba.

While the State Department issued a travel warning for Cuba because of the story, the Cuban government also raised an alarm, asking citizens to hunker down.

Classes and public transport were suspended on parts of the island and authorities canceled flights in and out of Havana and Varadero. Thousands of people in the west of the island were evacuated as a preventative measure, and many more like Silvia Pérez, a 72-year-old retiree living in a coastal area of Havana, scrambled to prepare.

"This is a night I don't want to sleep through, between the battering air and the trees," Pérez said. "I'm scared for my friends and family."

The concern came after the storm knocked out power in the Cayman Islands and Jamaica, where it also unleashed flooding and landslides.

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.

Plea deals revived for alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and others

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A military judge has ruled that plea agreements struck by alleged Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and two co-defendants are valid, voiding an order by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to throw out the deals, a government official said Wednesday.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the order by the judge, Air Force Col. Matthew McCall, has not yet been posted publicly or officially announced.

Unless government prosecutors or others attempt to challenge the plea deals again, McCall's ruling means that the three 9/11 defendants before long could enter guilty pleas in the U.S. military courtroom at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, taking a dramatic step toward wrapping up the long-running and legally troubled government prosecution in one of the deadliest attacks on the United States.

The plea agreements would spare Mohammed and two co-defendants, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi, the risk of the death penalty in exchange for the guilty pleas.

Government prosecutors had negotiated the deals with defense attorneys under government auspices, and the top official for the military commission at the Guantanamo Bay naval base had approved the agreements.

The plea deals in the Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaida attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people spurred immediate political blowback by Republican lawmakers and others after they were made public this summer.

Within days, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin issued a brief order saying he was nullifying them. Plea bargains in possible death penalty cases tied to one of the gravest crimes ever carried out on U.S. soil were a momentous step that should only be decided by the defense secretary, Austin said at the time.

The agreements, and Austin's attempt to reverse them, have made for one of the most fraught episodes in a U.S. prosecution marked by delays and legal difficulties. That includes years of ongoing pretrial hearings to determine the admissibility of statements by the defendants given their years of torture in CIA custody.

The Pentagon is reviewing the judge's decision and had no immediate further comment, said Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, Pentagon press secretary.

The New York Times first reported the ruling.

Military officials have yet to post the judge's decision on the Guantanamo military commission's online site. However, a legal blog that long has covered the prosecutions from the Guantanamo courtroom said McCall's 29-page ruling concludes that Austin lacked the legal authority to toss out the plea deals.

The ruling also calls the timing of Austin's move "fatal," coming after Guantanamo's top official already had approved the deals, according to the blog, called Lawdragon.

Abiding by Austin's order would give defense secretaries "absolute veto power" over any act they disagree with, which would be contrary to the independence of the presiding official over the Guantanamo trials, the law blog quotes McCall as saying in the ruling.

While families of some of the victims and others are adamant that the 9/11 prosecutions continue until trial and possible death sentences, legal experts say it's not clear that could ever happen. If the 9/11 cases ever clear the hurdles of trial, verdicts and sentencings, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of

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Columbia Circuit would likely hear many of the issues in the course of any death penalty appeals.

The issues include the CIA destruction of videos of interrogations, whether Austin's plea deal reversal constituted unlawful interference and whether the torture of the men tainted subsequent interrogations by "clean teams" of FBI agents that did not involve violence.

European climate agency says this will likely be the hottest year on record -- again

By MELINA WALLING Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — For the second year in a row, Earth will almost certainly be the hottest it's ever been. And for the first time, the globe this year reached more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming compared to the pre-industrial average, the European climate agency Copernicus said Thursday.

"It's this relentless nature of the warming that I think is worrying," said Carlo Buontempo, director of Copernicus.

Buontempo said the data clearly shows the planet would not see such a long sequence of record-breaking temperatures without the constant increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere driving global warming.

He cited other factors that contribute to exceptionally warm years like last year and this one. They include El Nino — the temporary warming of parts of the Pacific that changes weather worldwide — as well as volcanic eruptions that spew water vapor into the air and variations in energy from the sun. But he and other scientists say the long-term increase in temperatures beyond fluctuations like El Nino is a bad sign.

"A very strong El Nino event is a sneak peek into what the new normal will be about a decade from now," said Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist with the nonprofit Berkeley Earth.

News of a likely second year of record heat comes a day after Republican Donald Trump, who has called climate change a "hoax" and promised to boost oil drilling and production, was reelected to the presidency. It also comes days before the next U.N. climate conference, called COP29, is set to begin in Azerbaijan. Talks are expected to focus on how to generate trillions of dollars to help the world transition to clean energies like wind and solar, and thus avoid continued warming.

Buontempo pointed out that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) threshold of warming for a single year is different than the goal adopted in the 2015 Paris Agreement. That goal was meant to try to cap warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times on average, over 20 or 30 years.

A United Nations report this year said that since the mid-1800s on average, the world has already heated up 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) — up from previous estimates of 1.1 degrees (2 degrees Fahrenheit) or 1.2 degrees (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit). That's of concern because the U.N. says the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals of the world's nations still aren't nearly ambitious enough to keep the 1.5 degree Celsius target on track.

The target was chosen to try to stave off the worst effects of climate change on humanity, including extreme weather. "The heat waves, storm damage, and droughts that we are experiencing now are just the tip of the iceberg," said Natalie Mahowald, chair of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Cornell University.

Going over that number in 2024 doesn't mean the overall trend line of global warming has, but "in the absence of concerted action, it soon will," said University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann.

Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson put it in starker terms. "I think we have missed the 1.5 degree window," said Jackson, who chairs the Global Carbon Project, a group of scientists who track countries' carbon dioxide emissions. "There's too much warming."

Indiana state climatologist Beth Hall said she isn't surprised by the latest report from Copernicus, but emphasized that people should remember climate is a global issue beyond their local experiences with changing weather. "We tend to be siloed in our own individual world," she said. Reports like this one "are taking into account lots and lots of locations that aren't in our backyard."

Buontempo stressed the importance of global observations, bolstered by international cooperation, that allow scientists to have confidence in the new report's finding: Copernicus gets its results from billions of

measurements from satellites, ships, aircraft and weather stations around the world.

He said that going over the 1.5 degree Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) benchmark this year is "psychologically important" as nations make decisions internally and approach negotiations at the annual U.N. climate change summit Nov. 11-22 in Azerbaijan.

"The decision, clearly, is ours. It's of each and every one of us. And it's the decision of our society and our policymakers as a consequence of that," he said. "But I believe these decisions are better made if they are based on evidence and facts."

Canada orders TikTok's Canadian business to be dissolved but won't block app

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada announced Wednesday it won't block access to the popular video-sharing app TikTok but is ordering the dissolution of its Canadian business after a national security review of the Chinese company behind it.

Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne said it is meant to address risks related to ByteDance Ltd.'s establishment of TikTok Technology Canada Inc.

"The government is not blocking Canadians' access to the TikTok application or their ability to create content. The decision to use a social media application or platform is a personal choice," Champagne said.

Champagne said it is important for Canadians to adopt good cybersecurity practices, including protecting their personal information.

He said the dissolution order was made in accordance with the Investment Canada Act, which allows for the review of foreign investments that may harm Canada's national security. He said the decision was based on information and evidence collected over the course of the review and on the advice of Canada's security and intelligence community and other government partners.

A TikTok spokesperson said in a statement that the shutdown of its Canadian offices will mean the loss of hundreds of local jobs.

"We will challenge this order in court," the spokesperson said. "The TikTok platform will remain available for creators to find an audience, explore new interests and for businesses to thrive."

TikTok is wildly popular with young people, but its Chinese ownership has raised fears that Beijing could use it to collect data on Western users or push pro-China narratives and misinformation. TikTok is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company that moved its headquarters to Singapore in 2020.

TikTok faces intensifying scrutiny from Europe and America over security and data privacy. It comes as China and the West are locked in a wider tug of war over technology ranging from spy balloons to computer chips.

Canada previously banned TikTok from all government-issued mobile devices. TikTok has two offices in Canada, one in Toronto and one in Vancouver.

Michael Geist, Canada research chair in Internet and E-commerce Law at the University of Ottawa, said in a blog post that "banning the company rather than the app may actually make matters worse since the risks associated with the app will remain but the ability to hold the company accountable will be weakened."

Canada's move comes a day after the election in the United States of Donald Trump. In June, Trump joined TikTok, a platform he once tried to ban while in the White House. It has about 170 million users in the U.S.

Trump tried to ban TikTok through an executive order that said "the spread in the United States of mobile applications developed and owned" by Chinese companies was a national security threat. The courts blocked the action after TikTok sued.

Both the U.S. FBI and the Federal Communications Commission have warned that ByteDance could share user data such as browsing history, location and biometric identifiers with China's government. TikTok said it has never done that and would not, if asked.

Trump said earlier this year that he still believes TikTok posed a national security risk, but was opposed

to banning it.

U.S. President Joe Biden signed legislation in April that would force ByteDance to sell the app to a U.S. company within a year or face a national ban. It's not clear whether that law will survive a legal challenge filed by TikTok or that ByteDance would agree to sell.

Abortion rights amendment's passage triggers new legal battle in Missouri

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO and GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Abortion rights advocates prevailed on seven ballot measures across the U.S. in Tuesday's election and lost on three.

The losses are the first on statewide reproductive rights ballot measures anywhere in the U.S. since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, a ruling that struck down the nearly 50-year nationwide right to abortion, proving that abortion opponents can win on ballot measures.

There were firsts on the other sides, too: Three amendments call for rolling back abortion bans, including one in Missouri that bars it at all stages of pregnancy with exceptions only under limited circumstances to save the life of the woman.

Here's a look at takeaways from the results.

Abortion is headed to court in the push to overturn Missouri's ban

Missouri is the most populous state where a ballot measure could roll back a current ban on abortions at all stages of pregnancy.

But the work isn't done there.

Planned Parenthood affiliates that operate in Missouri filed in a state court Wednesday seeking to invalidate the state's abortion ban and several laws that regulate the care.

The Missouri amendment, which is to take effect Dec. 5, does not specifically override any state laws. Instead, the measure left it to advocates to ask courts to knock down bans that they believe would now be unconstitutional.

Planned Parenthood leaders said Wednesday on a Zoom call with reporters that they want to start offering abortions at clinics in Columbia, Kansas City and St. Louis if they get the judicial ruling they're requesting — starting with blocking enforcement of laws on the book.

"This is only the first step to realizing and fully implementing the protections of Amendment 3. It's certainly not the last step," said Richard Muniz, interim president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Great Rivers.

Clinics had stopped providing abortions in Missouri even before the state's ban took effect in 2022. They said a list of regulations made it impossible for them to operate. In its legal filing, the Planned Parenthood affiliate that covers much of the state says the onerous requirements include clinicians who provide abortion have surgical licenses and that they conduct pelvic exams on all patients — even if they offer only medication abortions.

"Some of these patients choose medication abortion precisely because they do not want instruments inserted into their vagina," Dr. Selina Sandoval, an associate medical director for Planned Parenthood Great Plains, said in a legal filing. "I cannot and will not subject my patients to unnecessary exams."

Planned Parenthood also objects to laws requiring clinicians to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals, mandating a 72-hour waiting period for abortions and banning telemedicine for abortion. Besides the ban on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, the group is calling for having other bans that kick in after eight, 14, 18 and 20 weeks of pregnancy to be struck down.

Abortion rights are popular with voters

Abortion rights advocates heralded victories at the ballot box as a signal of widespread support for abortion rights, even in conservative states.

The three states where abortion measures were defeated had special circumstances that weren't present in the others.

In Florida, the threshold for passing a constitutional amendment is 60% while most states require a

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simple majority. Most voters supported adding abortion rights — but it fell short of the requirement.

There, Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican with a national profile, also presented a challenge to proponents by steering state GOP funds to counter the measure and defending a state agency for publishing a webpage attacking it, among other government efforts.

In South Dakota, the measure is different from the others because it would have allowed the state to regulate abortion in the second trimester — but only in ways that protect the health of the woman. Because of that provision, most national abortion rights groups did not put money into promoting it, which could have been a factor in its failure in a conservative state.

In Nebraska, both sides had questions on the ballot. Voters passed the one that bars abortion after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy — which is in line with current state law — and also allows the possibility of more stringent bans. They also rejected the measure that aimed to enshrine into the state constitution the right to abortion until viability, which is considered to be sometime after 21 weeks of pregnancy, though there's not a fixed time.

Abortion rights advocates condemned the novel strategy by anti-abortion groups of putting a competing measure on the ballot as an attempt to confuse voters. The approach was considered by anti-abortion groups elsewhere.

Trump's return to the White House could also shape abortion policy

Republican Donald Trump reclaimed the presidency, despite his consistently shifting stances on reproductive rights.

If Republicans win the House, in addition to their victories in the Senate and White House, it could open the door to the passage of a national ban.

Trump has said he would veto a national ban, despite previously declining to answer questions about it.

But Republicans have been accused of attempting to recast federal abortion restrictions as "minimum national standards" in order to distort their own stances on the issue, given the political unpopularity of the GOP's position on abortion.

Judicial appointments have already shaped the national abortion landscape. Trump has repeatedly taken credit for appointing three justices to the U.S. Supreme Court who helped form the majority that overturned *Roe v. Wade*. It's not just the Supreme Court. Trump-nominated U.S. District Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk has issued rulings with nationwide consequences, including one impacting access to the abortion pill mifepristone.

Through executive power, a president could also restrict abortion pills sent through the mail and declare that a law that requires doctors to stabilize emergency room patients does not require them to provide abortion. A new administration could also pull back on a federal lawsuit that challenges aspects of Idaho's ban.

Results show voters willing to split the ticket on abortion issues

One interpretation of the presence of some of the ballot measures was that they were put up in part to drive turnout of Democratic voters in candidate elections.

If that was the plan — and some abortion rights advocates say it wasn't — it didn't seem to sway other statewide races.

The mostly Republican states of Montana and Missouri passed abortion rights protections and also elected GOP candidates for president, U.S. Senate and governor.

In Montana, Republican Tim Sheehy defeated three-term incumbent Sen. Jon Tester, who attempted to pair his campaign with the abortion rights push.

Three other Republican states — Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota — rejected abortion ballot measures and supported Trump for president and GOP senators where they were on the ballot.

The Democratic states of Colorado and Maryland expanded abortion rights and voted for Democrats in statewide elections. The same is true in New York, where the ballot measure bars discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy outcomes" and does not mention abortion specifically — but was championed by abortion rights advocates, who say it will preserve access.

The measures also passed in Arizona and Nevada, where the presidential and U.S. Senate races had not been called by midday Wednesday.

Abortion rights fail to deliver Democrats wins in Senate

Democrats in the most competitive Senate races centered their closing argument and ads around abortion, an issue they hoped to capitalize on after it has previously motivated voters up and down the ballot. But abortion rights failed to put them over the top — including in Montana.

Texas Rep. Colin Allred, a Democrat, failed in his bid to defeat Sen. Ted Cruz after investing \$5 million in an ad campaign focused on abortion and invoking the issue in campaign trail speeches and during an October debate. Allred leaned on the personal stories of Texas women impacted by the state's abortion ban that have sparked national outrage.

In Ohio, Republican Bernie Moreno defeated incumbent Sen. Sherrod Brown after Brown and his allies pounced on cellphone video that emerged late in the campaign showing Moreno criticizing suburban women who base their votes on abortion rights.

A hotly contested race between Democratic Sen. Tammy Baldwin and Republican Eric Hovde has also focused heavily on abortion and appeared to be close enough early Wednesday for a recount to be requested.

Voters in a conservative Texas city shot down a local anti-abortion proposal

In the Texas city of Amarillo, located in the state's conservative Panhandle region, voters overwhelmingly rejected an anti-abortion proposal that would have essentially banned travel for those seeking abortions out of state by allowing civil lawsuits against anyone who helps a local resident obtain an abortion.

The "Sanctuary Cities for the Unborn" ordinance was rejected by nearly 60% of voters.

"We hope to set the tone for not only the state, but the nation, that we will not penalize anyone for seeking health care when they're facing an extreme travel ban in their own state," said Lindsay London, a nurse who helped found a group to oppose the effort.

Trump receives congratulations and an invitation to the White House as Biden nudges on transition

By ZEKE MILLER, WILL WEISSERT and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Donald Trump spent his first day as president-elect receiving congratulatory phone calls from his defeated opponent, world leaders and President Joe Biden as he began the process of turning his election victory into a government.

Trump was keeping a low profile, staying out of the public eye after addressing supporters in Florida during the wee hours of Wednesday morning.

Vice President Kamala Harris called Trump to concede the race and to congratulate him, while Biden invited the man he ousted from the White House four years ago to an Oval Office meeting to prepare to return the keys.

"President Trump looks forward to the meeting, which will take place shortly, and very much appreciated the call," said Trump campaign communications director Steven Cheung.

Biden's chief of staff later Wednesday nudged the Trump team to sign the required federal agreements necessary to begin an orderly presidential transition, a White House official said.

A source with knowledge of the Trump campaign said transition talks to take over power on Jan. 20, 2025, had not begun in earnest. Instead, the president-elect was busy taking calls from leaders, domestic and international, donors and key supporters. Transition discussions are expected to ramp up later in the week, as attention turns to naming an inaugural committee and a formal transition team.

Biden chief of staff Jeff Zients reached out to Trump transition co-chairs Howard Lutnick and Linda McMahon to reiterate the important role the agreements with the White House and the General Services Administration play in beginning a presidential transition. The White House official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive transition planning.

The delay is holding up the federal government's ability to begin processing security clearances for

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potential Trump administration national security appointees, which could limit the number of his staff who could work on sensitive information by Inauguration Day. It also means they can't yet access federal facilities, documents and personnel to prepare for taking office.

The agreements are required by the Presidential Transition Act, and require the president-elect's team to agree to an ethics plan and to limit and disclose private donations. Congress, in the act, set a deadline of Sept. 1 for the GSA agreement and Oct. 1 for the White House agreement, in an effort to ensure that incoming administrations are prepared to govern when they enter office on Jan. 20.

Lutnick and McMahan released a statement late Wednesday saying Trump will be selecting personnel for his administration in the "days and weeks ahead," but did not address the agreements with the Biden administration.

"As he chooses the best people to join his team and best policies to pursue, his transition team will ensure the implementation of President Trump's common sense agenda starting on Day 1," they said.

The White House announced that Biden had spoken to the president-elect and expressed his commitment to ensuring a smooth transition, while emphasizing the importance of working to bring the country together.

Biden also called Harris to salute her for her campaign. And Trump and Harris spoke on a call where the president-elect "acknowledged Vice President Harris on her strength, professionalism, and tenacity throughout the campaign, and both leaders agreed on the importance of unifying the country," according to Trump spokesman Steven Cheung.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he called Trump and the pair had a "warm and cordial" conversation while also discussing the "Iranian threat."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he had an "excellent call" with Trump, who has threatened to cut off the steady flow of U.S. aid and arms to his nation in its fight against Russia's nearly three-year-old invasion. "I praised his family and team for their great work," Zelenskyy said. "We agreed to maintain close dialogue and advance our cooperation. Strong and unwavering U.S. leadership is vital for the world and for a just peace."

French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer called Trump, too, as did Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who spoke to the president-elect to express "the kingdom's aspiration to strengthen the historical and strategic relations between the two countries, wishing the friendly American people progress and prosperity under his excellency's leadership," according to a statement from Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry.

Trump made his first foreign trip as president during his first term to Saudi Arabia. He stood by the kingdom then, even as ties became strained over the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi operatives in Istanbul.

The president-elect has since vowed to bring peace to the Middle East at a time when Israel is at war with Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon and has recently traded fire with Iran. Trump, who was a staunch supporter of Israel during his previous term, has not said how he'd accomplish that.

Meanwhile, U.S. markets, banks and bitcoin all stormed higher Wednesday, as did Tesla, owned by outspoken Trump supporter Elon Musk, as investors looked favorably on a smooth election and Trump returning to the White House.

Trump got more potential good news with word that special counsel Jack Smith is evaluating how to wind down the two federal cases against the president-elect before he takes office in light of longstanding Justice Department policy that says sitting presidents cannot be prosecuted, according to a person familiar with Smith's plans who was not authorized to discuss the matter by name and spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press.

Smith charged Trump last year with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election and illegally hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate. The latter case had already been dismissed. But Trump's election victory means that the Justice Department believes he can no longer face prosecution in accordance with decades-old department legal opinions meant to shield presidents from criminal charges while in office.

Hurricane Rafael plows across Cuba as a Category 3 storm after knocking out power on the island

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Hurricane Rafael pushed into the Gulf of Mexico on Wednesday night after plowing across western Cuba as a Category 3 hurricane with winds so powerful it knocked out the entire country's power grid.

Massive waves lashed at the shores of Havana as sharp winds and rain whipped at the city's historic center, leaving trees littered on flooded streets on Wednesday evening.

Forecasters warned Rafael could bring "life-threatening" storm surges, winds and flash floods to western swaths of the island after it knocked out power and dumped rain on the Cayman Islands and Jamaica the day before. The extent of the damage was still unclear as of Wednesday night.

The storm was located 55 miles (90 kilometers) west-northwest of Havana on Wednesday. After plowing across the island, it slowed to a Category 2 hurricane. It had maximum sustained winds of 105 mph (170 kph) and was moving northwest at 13 mph (20 kph), according to the National Hurricane Center.

The storm is bad news for Cuba, which is struggling with devastating blackouts while recovering from another hurricane two weeks ago that killed at least six people in the eastern part of the island.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Cuban government issued an alert for the incoming storm while crews in Havana worked to fortify buildings and clear scraps from seaside areas in anticipation of flooding.

Classes and public transport were suspended on parts of the island and authorities canceled flights in and out Havana and Varadero. Meanwhile, thousands of people in the west of the island were evacuated as a prevention measure.

Silvia Pérez, a 72-year-old retiree living in a coastal area of Havana was among those scrambling to prepare. As other neighbors moved appliances and other furniture from ground floor homes, Pérez stocked up on water and food.

"This is a night I don't want to sleep through, between the battering air and the trees," Pérez said. "I'm scared for my friends and family."

Forecasters expected the storm to weaken over Cuba before emerging in the southeastern Gulf of Mexico as a hurricane.

The U.S. State Department issued an advisory for Cuba on Tuesday afternoon, offering departure flights to non-essential staff and American citizens, and advising others to "reconsider travel to Cuba due to the potential impact of Tropical Storm Rafael."

On Tuesday morning, the Cuban Civil Defense called on Cubans to prepare as soon as possible, because when the storm makes landfall "it's important to stay where you are."

A hurricane warning was in effect Wednesday for the Cuban provinces of Pinar del Rio, Artemisa, La Habana, Mayabeque, Matanzas and the Isle of Youth.

A tropical storm warning was in effect for the Cuban provinces of Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus and Ciego de Avila, as well as the lower and middle Florida Keys from Key West to west of the Channel 5 Bridge, and Dry Tortugas.

The storm on Tuesday knocked out power in parts of Jamaica and unleashed flooding and landslides. The Jamaica Public Service, the island's electricity provider, said in a statement late Tuesday that impassable roads were preventing crews from restoring power in some areas.

Power outages were reported across the Cayman Islands after a direct hit late Tuesday, and schools remained closed on Wednesday.

"While conditions have improved on Grand Cayman, residents are advised to exercise extreme caution on the roads and near coastlines as rough seas and residual flooding risks may persist," the government said in a statement.

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. The Hurricane Center predicted storm surges in Florida could reach up to 3 feet in Dry Tortugas and between 1 and 2 feet in the Lower Florida Keys. A few tornadoes

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also were expected Wednesday over the Keys and southwestern Florida.

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.

Trump has vowed to shake some of democracy's pillars

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — American presidential elections are a moment when the nation holds up a mirror to look at itself. They are a reflection of values and dreams, of grievances and scores to be settled.

The results say much about a country's character, future and core beliefs. On Tuesday, America looked into that mirror and more voters saw former president Donald Trump, delivering him a far-reaching victory in the most contested states.

He won for many reasons. One of them was that a formidable number of Americans, from different angles, said the state of democracy was a prime concern.

The candidate they chose had campaigned through a lens of darkness, calling the country "garbage" and his opponent "stupid," a "communist" and "the b-word."

The mirror reflected not only a restive nation's discontent but childless cat ladies, false stories of pets devoured by Haitian immigrant neighbors, a sustained emphasis on calling things "weird," and a sudden bout of Democratic "joy" now crushed. The campaign will be remembered both for profound developments, like the two assassination attempts on Trump, and his curious chatter about golfer Arnold Palmer's genitalia.

Even as Trump prevailed, most voters said they were very or somewhat concerned that electing Trump would bring the U.S. closer to being an authoritarian country, where a single leader has unchecked power, according to the AP VoteCast survey. Still, 1 in 10 of those voters backed him anyway. Nearly 4 in 10 Trump voters said they wanted complete upheaval in how the country is run.

In Trump's telling, the economy was in shambles, even when almost every measure said otherwise, and the border was an open sore leeching murderous migrants, when the actual number of crossings had dropped precipitously. All this came wrapped in his signature language of catastrophism.

His win, only the second time in U.S. history that a candidate won the presidency in non-consecutive terms, demonstrated Trump's keen ear for what stirs emotions, especially the sense of millions of voters of being left out — whether because someone else cheated or got special treatment or otherwise fell to the ravages of the enemy within.

That's whom Americans decisively chose.

The centuries-old democracy delivered power to the presidential candidate who gave voters fair warning he might take core elements of that democracy apart.

After already having tried to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power when he lost to President Joe Biden in 2020, Trump mused that he would be justified if he decided to pursue "the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution."

This, in contrast to the oath of office he took, and will again, to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution" as best he can.

One rough and decidedly imperfect measure of whether Trump might mean what he says is how many times he says it. His direct threat to try to end or suspend the Constitution was largely a one-off.

But the 2024 campaign was thick with his vows, rally after rally, interview after interview, that if realized would upend democracy's basic practices, protections and institutions as Americans have known them.

And now, he says after his win, "I will govern by a simple motto: promises made, promises kept."

Through the campaign, to lusty cheers, Trump promised to use presidential power over the justice system to go after his personal political adversaries. He then raised the stakes further by threatening to

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enlist military force against such domestic foes — “the enemy from within.”

Doing so would shatter any semblance of Justice Department independence and turn soldiers against citizens in ways not seen in modern times.

He’s promised to track down and deport immigrants in massive numbers, raising the prospect of using military or military-style assets for that as well.

Spurred by his fury and denialism over his 2020 defeat, Trump’s supporters in some state governments have already engineered changes in how votes are cast, counted and affirmed, an effort centered on the false notion that the last election was rigged against him.

On Tuesday, Trump won an election in the time of a Democratic administration. The effort to revise election procedures will now be fought out by states in his time.

Yet another pillar of the system is also in his sights — the non-political civil service and its political masters, whom Trump together calls the deep state.

He means the generals who didn’t always heed him last time, but this time shall.

He means the Justice Department people who refused to indulge his desperate effort to cook up votes he didn’t get in 2020. He means the bureaucrats who dragged their heels on parts of his first-term agenda and whom Trump now wants purged.

Trump wants to make it easier to fire federal workers by classifying thousands of them as being outside civil service protections. That could weaken the government’s power to enforce statutes and rules by draining parts of the workforce and permit his administration to staff offices with more malleable employees than last time.

But if some or all of these tenets of modern democracy are to fall, it will be through the most democratic of means. Voters chose him — and by extension, this — not Democrat Kamala Harris, the vice president.

And by early measures, it was a clean election, just like 2020.

Eric Dezenhall is a scandal-management expert who has followed Trump’s business and political career and correctly predicted his wins in 2016 and now. He also foresaw that the criminal cases against Trump would help, not hurt, him.

Sussing out what Trump truly intends to do and what might be bluster is not always easy, he said. “There are certain things that he says because they cross his brain at a certain moment,” Dezenhall said. “I don’t put stock in that. I put stock in themes, and there is a theme of vengeance.”

So it remains to be seen whether America will get two special days Trump has promised.

Upon taking office again, he said, he’ll be a “dictator,” but only for a day. And he’s promised to let police stage “one really violent day” to crack down on crime with impunity, a remark his campaign said he didn’t really mean, just as his people said he wasn’t serious about subverting the U.S. Constitution.

The voters also gave Trump’s Republicans clear control of the Senate, and therefore majority say in whether to confirm the loyalists Trump will nominate for top jobs in government. Trump controls his party in ways he didn’t in his first term, when major figures in his administration repeatedly frustrated his most outlier ambitions.

“The fact that a once proud people chose, twice, to demean itself with a leader like Donald Trump will be one of history’s great cautionary tales,” said Cal Jillson, a constitutional and presidential scholar at Southern Methodist University whose new book, “Race, Ethnicity, and American Decline,” anticipated some of the existential issues of the election.

“Donald Trump’s actions will be as divisive, ill-considered, and mean-spirited in his second term as in his first,” he said. “He will undercut Ukraine, NATO, and the U.N. abroad and the rule of law, individual rights, and our senses of national cohesion and purpose at home.”

From the political left, any threats to democracy were not on the mind of independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont when he offered a blistering critique of the Democratic campaign.

“It should come as no surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working people would find that the working class has abandoned them,” he said in a statement. “Will they understand the pain and political alienation that tens of millions of Americans are experiencing?”

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He concluded: "Probably not."

For his part, Trump says he is intent on restoring democracy, not tearing it down.

There was nothing democratic, he and his allies assert, in seeing military leaders defy the elected commander in chief, whether the issue was troop deployments or his wish for a splashy military parade. Or in seeing Democratic presidents establish immigration policy and vast student loan relief through executive action, bypassing Congress.

But that case is built from the ground up on the lie of a stolen 2020 election, his machinations to stall the certification of that vote and his mob's bloody attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. He comes to office intending to pardon some of the people convicted for that riot and perhaps clear himself of criminal cases against him.

Guardrails remain. One is the Supreme Court, whose conservative majority loosened the leash on presidential behavior in its ruling expanding their immunity from prosecution. The court has not been fully tested on how far it will go to accommodate Trump's actions and agenda. And which party will control the House is not yet known.

The Republican's victory came from a public so put off by America's trajectory that it welcomed his brash and disruptive approach.

Among voters under 30, just under half went for Trump, an improvement from his 2020 performance, according to the AP VoteCast survey of more than 120,000 voters. About three-quarters of young voters said the country was headed in the wrong direction, and roughly one-third said they wanted total upheaval in how the country is run.

By Trump's words, at least, that's what they'll get.

Control of the US House hangs in the balance with enormous implications for Trump's agenda

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. House majority hung in the balance Wednesday, teetering between Republican control that would usher in a new era of unified GOP governance in Washington or a flip to Democrats as a last line of resistance to a Trump second-term White House agenda.

A few individual seats, or even a single one, will determine the outcome. Final tallies will take a while, likely pushing the decision into next week — or beyond.

After Republicans swept into the majority in the U.S. Senate by picking up seats in West Virginia, Ohio and Montana, House Speaker Mike Johnson predicted his chamber would fall in line next.

"Republicans are poised to have unified government in the White House, Senate and House," Johnson said Wednesday.

President-elect Donald Trump, who won the Electoral College and the popular vote against Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris, has consolidated growing power around his MAGA movement, backing newcomers to Washington and setting the stage for his own return to the White House.

Johnson said Republicans in Congress are preparing an "ambitious" 100-day agenda with Trump, who he has said is "thinking big" about his legacy.

Tax cuts, securing the southern border and taking a "blowtorch" to federal regulations are at the top of the agenda if the GOP sweeps the White House and Congress. Trump himself has promised mass deportations and retribution against his perceived enemies. And Republicans want to push federal agencies out of Washington and to restaff the government workforce with the help of outside think tanks, Johnson has said, to bring the federal government "to heel."

But Johnson, after just a year on the job, has had difficulty governing the House, and the new Congress would be no different. Hard-liners led by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, Rep. Matt Gaetz and others have often confronted and upended their own GOP leadership in what has been one of the most chaotic sessions in modern times.

If Johnson's slim four-seat majority were to shrink any further, governing could come to a standstill.

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Democratic Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said the House "remains very much in play."

With Democrats having defeated two House Republicans in Jeffries' home state of New York, he said the path to the majority now runs through pickup opportunities in Arizona, Oregon, Iowa and California that are still too early to call.

"We must count every vote," Jeffries said.

The House contests remained a tit-for-tat fight to the finish, with no dominant pathway to the majority for either party. Rarely, if ever have the two chambers of Congress flipped in opposite directions.

Each side is gaining and losing a few seats, including through the redistricting process, which is the routine redrawing of House seat boundary lines. The process reset seats in North Carolina, Louisiana and Alabama.

Much of the outcome hinges on the West, particularly in California, where a handful of House seats are being fiercely contested, and mail-in ballots arriving a week after the election will still be counted. Hard-fought races around the "blue dot" in Omaha, Nebraska and in far-flung Alaska are among those being watched.

Trump, speaking early Wednesday at his election night party in Florida, said the results delivered an "unprecedented and powerful mandate" for Republicans.

He called the Senate rout "incredible," and he praised Johnson, saying he's "doing a terrific job."

From the U.S. Capitol, Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell, privately a harsh Trump critic, called it a "hell of a good day."

Senate Republicans marched across the map alongside Trump, flipping the three Democratic-held seats and holding their own against Democratic challengers who failed to unseat Sen. Ted Cruz in Texas and Sen. Rick Scott in Florida.

In West Virginia, Jim Justice, the state's wealthy governor, flipped the seat held by retiring Sen. Joe Manchin. Republicans toppled Democrat Sen. Sherrod Brown in Ohio with GOP luxury car dealer and blockchain entrepreneur Bernie Moreno. And Republican Tim Sheehy defeated Democratic Sen. Jon Tester in Montana.

Democrats avoided a total wipeout by salvaging seats in the "blue wall" states. Rep. Elissa Slotkin won an open Senate seat in Michigan, and Sen. Tammy Baldwin was reelected in Wisconsin. Pennsylvania's race between Democratic Sen. Bob Casey and Republican challenger Dave McCormick was still undecided.

In other developments, Democrats made history by sending two Black women, Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware and Angela Alsobrooks of Maryland, to the Senate. Just three Black women, including Harris, have served in the Senate, but never two at the same time.

All told, Senate Republicans have the potential to achieve their most robust majority in years — a testament to McConnell, who made a career charting a path to power, this time aligned with Trump whom he has privately called "despicable" in the run-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

During a news conference Wednesday, McConnell declined to answer questions about his past stark criticism of Trump and said he viewed the election results as a referendum on the Biden administration.

He told reporters at the Capitol that a Senate under Republican control would "control the guardrails" and prevent changes in Senate rules that would end the filibuster.

"People were just not happy with this administration and the Democratic nominee was a part of it," McConnell said.

What's still unclear is who will lead the new Republican Senate, as McConnell prepares to step down from the post.

South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the No. 2 Republican, and Texas Sen. John Cornyn, who previously held that post, are the front-runners to replace McConnell in a secret-ballot election scheduled for when senators arrive in Washington next week.

Harris says nation must accept election results while urging supporters to keep fighting

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Faced with a sweeping rejection by American voters, Kamala Harris conceded the presidential election to Donald Trump on Wednesday and encouraged supporters to continue fighting for their vision of the country.

The Democratic vice president said the battle would continue “in the voting booth, in the courts and in the public square.”

“Sometimes the fight takes a while,” she said at Howard University, her alma mater, where she had hoped to make a victory speech after the election. “That doesn’t mean we won’t win.”

Harris’ decisive defeat shattered hopes that she could rescue Democrats’ chances after President Joe Biden’s reelection effort stalled and she replaced him at the top of the ticket.

She trailed in every battleground state to Trump, a Republican whom she described as an existential danger to the country’s foundational institutions. And Trump appeared on track to win the popular vote for the first time in his three campaigns for the White House — even after two impeachments, felony convictions and his attempt to overturn his previous election loss.

Despite her stark warnings about Trump, Harris reached for optimism on Wednesday.

“It is OK to feel sad and disappointed, but please know it’s going to be OK,” she told supporters as some of them wiped tears from their eyes.

Biden released a statement praising Harris after her speech, saying: “She will continue the fight with purpose, determination, and joy. She will continue to be a champion for all Americans. Above all, she will continue to be a leader our children will look up to for generations to come as she puts her stamp on America’s future.”

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Harris’ running mate, was in the audience with his family. So were Reps. Nancy Pelosi, the former House speaker, and Barbara Lee, both from Harris’ home state of California.

Before her speech, Harris called Trump to congratulate him on his victory. She told the crowd that “we will engage in a peaceful transfer of power,” an implicit reference to Trump’s unwillingness to do the same four years ago.

Some in the audience expressed disappointment that Harris was not able to make history as the country’s first Black female president. Harris would also have been first U.S. president of South Asian descent.

Gregory Pate, 38, said he appreciated that Harris said she was “committed to the fight and not looking at this as a permanent defeat, but just another obstacle that we have to go through as Black people.”

“I think it was perfect. I think that it was timely, and it was a message that I came to hear,” said Pate, of Fairfax, Virginia.

Jay Evans, of Greenbelt, Maryland, said after Harris’ spoke that he’s wistful for what could have been.

“We’re partly sad, because hearing her speak, she would have been an amazing person to bring the country together and to keep us in a better path,” Evans said.

After Trump lost to Biden, he directed his supporters to march on the U.S. Capitol, leading to a violent insurrection that interrupted the ceremonial certification of the election results.

Now Harris is expected to oversee the same certification process to finalize Trump’s victory as voters brush off concerns about the future of American democracy and return the former Republican president to the White House.

Biden plans to address the election results on Thursday. The White House said he spoke with Harris and Trump on Wednesday, and he invited the president-elect to meet with him soon.

David Plouffe, a top Harris adviser, said campaign staffers “left it all on the field for their country.”

“We dug out of a deep hole but not enough,” he said. “A devastating loss.”

Harris became the Democratic candidate after Biden, who was already struggling to convince voters that he could serve as president until he was 86 years old, stumbled badly in his June 27 debate with Trump.

He dropped out of the race on July 21 and endorsed his vice president, who swiftly unified the Democratic Party around her candidacy.

It was a remarkable twist of fate for Harris. Four years earlier, her own presidential campaign had flamed out and revealed the political limitations of someone once dubbed "the female Barack Obama." Even though Biden chose Harris as his running mate, she languished in the role after taking office as the first woman, Black person or person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president.

Some Democrats started writing her off when they pondered the party's future after Biden. But Harris found fresh purpose after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, and she became the White House's leading advocate for abortion rights.

Harris also made a more concerted effort to network with local politicians, business leaders and cultural figures, forging connections that could serve her down the road. The moment arrived sooner than she anticipated, and she was catapulted into the presidential race with Biden's departure only a month before the Democratic National Convention.

Harris instantly reset the terms of the contest with Trump. She was 18 years younger and a former courtroom prosecutor going up against the first major presidential candidate convicted of crimes. Her candidacy energized Democrats who feared they were destined for defeat with Biden at the top of the ticket.

But she also faced steep odds from the beginning. She inherited Biden's political operation with just 107 days until the end of the election, and she faced a restless electorate that was eager for change.

Although Harris pitched "a new way forward," she struggled to meaningfully differentiate herself from the unpopular sitting president. In addition, she had limited time to introduce herself to skeptical voters, who never cast a ballot for her in a presidential primary.

Democrats now face the prospect of picking up the pieces during a second Trump presidency, and it's unclear what role Harris will play in her party's future.

"The work of protecting America from the impacts of a Trump Presidency starts now," wrote Jen O'Malley Dillon, Harris' campaign chair, in a letter to staff. "I know the Vice President isn't finished in this fight, and I know the very people on this email are also going to be leaders in this collective mission."

Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon drops by nearly 31% compared to previous year

By FABIANO MAISONNAVE Associated Press

AGUA CLARA, Brazil (AP) — Forest loss in Brazil's Amazon dropped by 30.6% compared to the previous year, officials said Wednesday, the lowest level of destruction in nine years.

In a 12-month span, the Amazon rainforest lost 6,288 square kilometers (2,428 square miles), roughly the size of the U.S. state of Delaware.

The results, announced in Brazil's presidential palace, sharply contrast with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's predecessor, far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro, who prioritized agribusiness expansion over forest protection and weakened environmental agencies. Deforestation hit a 15-year high during his term.

Deforestation in Brazil's vast savannah, known as the Cerrado, decreased by 25.7%, the first decline in five years. The area destroyed reached 8,174 square kilometers (3,156 square miles). Located in central Brazil, it is the world's most biodiverse savannah but has fewer legal protections than the Amazon.

Despite the success in curbing Amazon deforestation, Lula's government has been criticized by environmentalists for backing projects that could harm the region, such as the pavement of a highway that cuts from an old-growth area, oil drilling in the mouth of the Amazon River and building a railway to transport soy to Amazonian ports.

Brazil's deforestation monitoring system tracks Aug. 1 to July 30, so Wednesday's report doesn't capture the destruction from the past few months, as a historic drought opened the way to a surge in forest fires that burned an area larger than Switzerland.

Much of the damage from fires is classified as degradation, not clearcutting deforestation, as the fire

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in the Amazon rainforest spreads mostly through leaves on the ground, and not through treetops. But the full impact will be assessed in the following months through further satellite monitoring. Government officials already fear that the deforestation rate may increase next year as the Amazonian city of Belem prepares to host the annual U.N. climate talks, known as COP30.

The Amazon, an area twice the size of India, holds the world's largest rainforest, about two-thirds of it within Brazil. It stores vast amounts of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that causes climate change. The Amazon thus prevents the climate from warming even faster than it would otherwise. The basin also holds about 20% of the world's fresh water and biodiversity includes 16,000 known tree species.

Special counsel evaluating how to wind down two federal cases against Trump after presidential win

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Special counsel Jack Smith is evaluating how to wind down the two federal cases against Donald Trump before the president-elect takes office in light of longstanding Justice Department policy that says sitting presidents cannot be prosecuted, a person familiar with the matter said Wednesday.

Smith charged Trump last year with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election and illegally hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate. But Trump's election defeat of Kamala Harris means that the Justice Department believes he can no longer face prosecution in accordance with department legal opinions meant to shield presidents from criminal charges while in office.

The person familiar with Smith's plans was not authorized to discuss the matter by name and spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press.

By moving to wind down the cases before the inauguration in January, Smith and the Justice Department would be averting a potential showdown with Trump, who said as recently as last month that he would fire Smith "within two seconds" of taking office. It would also mean Trump would enter the White House without the legal cloud of federal criminal prosecutions that once carried the potential for felony convictions and prison sentences.

NBC News first reported Smith's plans.

Smith's two cases charge Trump in a conspiracy to undo the election results in the run-up to the Capitol riot, and with retaining top secret records at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida and obstructing FBI efforts to recover them. He was appointed to the position in November 2022 by Attorney General Merrick Garland.

The classified documents case has been stalled since July when a Trump-appointed judge, Aileen Cannon, dismissed it on grounds that Smith was illegally appointed. Smith has appealed to the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, where the request to revive the case is pending. Even as Smith looks to withdraw the documents case against Trump, he would seem likely to continue to challenge Cannon's ruling on the legality of his appointment given the precedent such a ruling would create.

In the 2020 election interference case, Trump was scheduled to stand trial in March in Washington, where more than 1,000 of his supporters have been convicted of charges for their roles in the Capitol riot. But the case was halted as Trump pursued his sweeping claims of immunity from prosecution that ultimately landed before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Trump could be emboldened by the Supreme Court's ruling in July, which granted former presidents expansive immunity from prosecution for acts taken in the White House and explicitly put off-limits any alleged conduct involving Trump's discussions with the Justice Department. That included his efforts to use the Justice Department to conduct sham election fraud investigations as part of his bid to stay in power.

The conservative-majority Supreme Court sent the case back to U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan to determine which of the other allegations in the indictment, if any, could move forward to trial.

In response, Smith's team last month filed a 165-page brief laying out new evidence to persuade the judge that the actions alleged in the indictment were taken in Trump's private capacity as a candidate — not as commander-in-chief — and therefore can remain part of the case. Trump's lawyers are scheduled to file their response later this month.

In New York, meanwhile, Trump could seek to leverage his newfound status as president-elect in an effort to set aside or expunge his felony conviction and stave off a potential prison sentence.

Trump has been fighting for months to overturn the May 30 verdict, which involves a \$130,000 hush

money payment to porn actor Stormy Daniels just before the 2016 election. It is the only one of his criminal cases to go to trial.

Tried as a private citizen, his impending return to the White House could compel a court to step in and avoid the unprecedented spectacle of potentially locking up a former and future president.

Trump's lawyers haven't signaled their plans. Before the election, the attorneys were rejected in a bid to move the case from state court to federal court, where he could more easily dispose of it. They are now appealing.

Judge Juan M. Merchan has said he will rule next Tuesday on whether to uphold or toss the verdict in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's July ruling that presidents have broad protections from prosecution.

The judge has penciled in Nov. 26 for sentencing, "if necessary." Punishments range from a fine or probation to up to four years in prison.

Though Trump technically has no authority as president to shut down a state-level prosecution like the one in New York, his victory nonetheless calls into question that case as well as a separate pending case in Fulton County, Georgia charging him with plotting to subvert that state's election in 2020.

UN agency for Palestinian refugees urges world to save it from Israeli ban

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The head of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees urged the world Wednesday to save it from an Israeli ban that would have "disastrous consequences" for millions of people caught up in the war in Gaza.

Philippe Lazzarini, who heads the agency known as UNRWA, told the 193 nations of the U.N. General Assembly that they must take action to prevent Israel from implementing legislation that prohibits the agency's operations in the Palestinian territories. The laws, adopted by Israel's parliament last month, take effect in 90 days.

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

UNRWA has been the main agency distributing humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip, where almost the entire population of around 2.3 million Palestinians relies on aid for survival amid Israel's more than yearlong war with Hamas. Experts say hunger is rampant.

Assembly President Philemon Yang told members at Wednesday's informal meeting that Israel's legislation "constitutes an intolerable affront to the authority of this assembly, an affront to international law and, most importantly, an affront to the human dignity of innocent Palestinian civilians."

Yang said the assembly extended UNRWA's mandate — most recently in December 2022 — by an overwhelming majority until June 30, 2026. He urgently called on Israel to comply with its international legal obligations, the U.N. Charter and U.N. resolutions.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has repeatedly said there is no alternative to UNRWA, and Yang stressed that a halt to its activities "would exacerbate an already catastrophic humanitarian situation."

Israel alleges that around a dozen of UNRWA's 13,000 staff in Gaza participated in the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks in southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza. It recently provided the U.N. with over 100 names of UNRWA staff it claims have militant ties.

The agency denies it knowingly aids armed groups and says it acts quickly to purge any suspected militants among its staff. Lazzarini said the U.N. has asked Israel for details so it can investigate but has received no response.

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon reiterated Israeli accusations that UNRWA is riddled with supporters of Hamas and educates Palestinian children to "hate." He stressed that Gaza's future cannot include Hamas or UNRWA.

Sitting next to released Israeli hostage Mia Schem, he strongly criticized the General Assembly and all other U.N. bodies for failing to condemn Hamas or to hold a single session dedicated to the hostages.

Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian U.N. ambassador, echoed calls for countries to act collectively to save UNRWA, accusing Israel of an "open assault" against the agency partly aimed at stripping Palestinians of their refugee status and rights.

"As we gather here, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are facing imminent death," he said of northern Gaza.

Acting U.N. humanitarian chief Joyce Msuya said Tuesday that northern Gaza has been under "a near-total brutal siege" for the past month and Palestinian civilians are starving while the world watches.

"These atrocities must stop," Msuya said in a posting on X. "Israeli military ground operations have left Palestinians without the essentials to survive, forced them to flee for safety multiple times, and cut off their escape and supply routes."

Lebanon's U.N. Ambassador Hadi Hachem, speaking on behalf of the U.N.'s 22-member Arab Group, called on the General Assembly to confront Israel's "dangerous precedent" and take urgent measures to defend UNRWA and uphold international law.

Trump's return to White House sets stage for far-reaching immigration crackdown

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — "Build the Wall" was Donald Trump's rally cry in 2016, and he acted on his promise by tapping military budgets for hundreds of miles of border wall with Mexico. "Mass Deportation" was the buzzword that energized supporters for his White House bid in 2024.

Trump's victory sets the stage for a swift crackdown after an AP VoteCast survey showed the president-elect's supporters were largely focused on immigration and inflation — issues the Republican has been hammering throughout his campaign.

How and when Trump's actions on immigration will take shape is uncertain.

While Trump and his advisers have offered outlines, many questions remain about how they would deport anywhere close to the 11 million people estimated to be in the country illegally. How would immigrants be identified? Where would they be detained? What if their countries refuse to take them back? Where would Trump find money and trained officers to carry out their deportation?

Trump has said he would invoke the Alien Enemies Act, a rarely used 1798 law that allows the president to deport any noncitizen from a country the U.S. is at war with. He has spoken about deploying the National Guard, which can be activated on orders from a governor. Stephen Miller, a top Trump adviser, has said troops under sympathetic Republican governors would send troops to nearby states that refuse to participate.

Trump, who repeatedly referred to immigrants "poisoning the blood" of the United States, has stricken fear in immigrant communities with words alone.

Julie Moreno, a U.S. citizen who has been married for seven years to a Mexican man who is in the country illegally, is adjusting to the idea that she may have to live separately from her husband, who came to the United States in 2004. She can move to Mexico from New Jersey but it would be nearly impossible to keep running her business importing boxing gloves.

"I don't have words yet, too many feelings," Moreno said, her voice breaking as she spoke Wednesday of Trump's victory. "I am very scared for my husband's safety. ... If they detain him, what is going to happen?"

Moreno's husband, Neftali Juarez, ran a construction business and feels he has contributed to the country, paying taxes and providing employment through his company. "Unfortunately, the sentiment of the people who voted is different," he said. "I feel horrible losing my wife."

Some policy experts expect Trump's first immigration moves to be at the border. He may pressure Mexico to keep blocking migrants from reaching the U.S. border as it has since December. He may lean on Mexico to reinstate a Trump-era policy that made asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for hearings in U.S.

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immigration court.

Andrew Arthur, a fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies, which supports immigration restrictions, highlighted campaign remarks by Vice President-elect JD Vance that deporting millions would be done one step at a time, not all at once.

"You're not talking about a dragnet," Arthur, a former immigration judge, told The Associated Press. "There's no way you could do it. The first thing you have to do is seal the border and then you can address the interior. All of this is going to be guided by the resources you have available."

Elena, a 46-year-old Nicaraguan who has been living in the United States illegally for 25 years, couldn't sleep after Trump's victory, crying about what to do if she and her husband, 50, are deported. They have two adult daughters, both U.S. citizens, who have had stomach pain and respiratory problems from anxiety about the election.

"It is so difficult for me to uproot myself from the country that I have seen as my home," said Elena, who lives in South Florida and gave only her first name for fear of being deported. "I have made my roots here and it is difficult to have to abandon everything to start over."

Advocates are looking at where deportation arrests might take place and are watching especially closely to see if authorities adhere to a longstanding policy of avoiding schools, hospitals, places of worship and disaster relief centers, said Heidi Altman, federal advocacy director for the National Immigration Law Center's Immigrant Justice Fund.

"We're taking it very seriously," said Altman. "We all have to have our eyes wide open to the fact that this isn't 2016. Trump and Stephen Miller learned a lot from their first administration. The courts look very different than they did four years ago."

Trump is expected to resume other far-reaching policies from his first term and jettison key Biden moves. These include:

—Trump has harshly criticized Biden policies to create and expand legal pathways to entry, including an online app called CBP One under which nearly 1 million people have entered at land crossings with Mexico since January 2023. Another policy has allowed more than 500,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to fly into the country with financial sponsors.

— Trump slashed the number of refugees screened abroad by the United Nations and State Department for settlement in the U.S. to its lowest level since Congress established the program in 1980. Biden rebuilt it, establishing an annual cap of 125,000, up from 18,000 under Trump.

—Trump sought to end the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which shielded people who came to the U.S. as young children from deportation. A lawsuit by Republican governors that has seemed headed for the Supreme Court challenges DACA. For now, hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients may renew their status but new applications aren't accepted.

—Trump dramatically curtailed the use of Temporary Protected Status, created under a 1990 law to allow people already in the United States to stay if their homelands are deemed unsafe. Biden sharply expanded use of TPS, including to hundreds of thousands of Haitians and Venezuelans.

Maribel Hernandez, a Venezuelan on TPS that allows her to stay in the United States until April 2025, burst into tears as her 2-year-old son slept in a stroller outside New York's Roosevelt Hotel as migrants discussed election fallout Wednesday.

"Imagine if they end it," she said.

Stocks and bitcoin jump after Trump's victory. So do worries about inflation as Dow surges 1,500

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market, Elon Musk's Tesla, banks and bitcoin all stormed higher Wednesday as investors made bets on what Donald Trump's return to the White House will mean for the economy and the world. Among the losers the market sees: the renewable-energy industry and potentially anyone worried about higher inflation.

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The S&P 500 rallied 2.5% for its best day in nearly two years. The Dow Jones Industrial Average surged 1,508 points, or 3.6%, while the Nasdaq composite jumped 3%. All three indexes topped records they had set in recent weeks.

The U.S. stock market has historically tended to rise regardless of which party wins the White House, with Democrats scoring bigger average gains since 1945. But Republican control could mean big shifts in the winning and losing industries underneath the surface, and investors are adding to bets built earlier on what the higher tariffs, lower tax rates and lighter regulation that Trump favors will mean.

"The markets are scrambling to figure out what happens next, but for the time being, the market is pricing in a higher growth and higher inflation outlook," Peter Esho of Esho Capital said.

Of course, how much change Trump effects in his second term will likely depend on whether his fellow Republicans win control of Congress, and that's still to be determined. That could leave room for snaps back in some of Wednesday's big knee-jerk movements.

Nevertheless, the market is cleaving between rather clear winners and losers following Trump's dramatic win. Among them:

Bank stocks, UP

Bank stocks led the market higher, in part on hopes that a stronger economy would mean more customers getting loans and paying them back with interest. They also rallied on hopes for lighter regulation from a Republican White House. JPMorgan Chase soared 11.5%, and financial stocks had the biggest gain by far among the 11 sectors that make up the S&P 500. Capital One Financial climbed 15%, and Discover Financial jumped 20.2% for some of the market's biggest gains on speculation their pending merger will more easily get federal clearance under Trump.

Crypto, UP

Trump has pledged to make the country "the crypto capital of the planet" and create a "strategic reserve" of bitcoin. The price of bitcoin hit an all-time high above \$76,480, according to CoinDesk, and was recently just under \$76,100. Companies in the crypto industry also jumped, including trading platform Coinbase's 31.1% leap.

Tesla, UP

Musk has become a close ally of Trump, exhorting the former president's run. While Trump may end up hurting the electric-vehicle industry broadly by limiting government subsidies, analysts say Tesla could gain somewhat of an advantage by already being such a big player in the industry. Tesla revved 14.8% higher, while rival Rivian Automotive fell 8.3%.

Trump Media & Technology Group, UP

The company behind Trump's Truth Social platform rose 5.9% after jumping nearly 35% earlier in the day. It regularly trades more on Trump's popularity than on prospects for its profits. Its rise came even after it filed unaudited financial documents with regulators on Tuesday saying it lost \$19.2 million during the latest quarter and that its sales weakened from a year earlier.

Private-prison operators, UP

A Trump-led Washington could push for tougher enforcement of the nation's borders, which could mean more business for companies that work with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE. GEO Group, which runs ICE processing centers, surged 42.1%.

Stocks of smaller companies, UP

Trump's America-First policies could help companies that focus on customers within the United States, rather than big multinationals that could be hurt by increased tariffs and protectionism. The Russell 2000 index of smaller stocks, which are seen as more domestically focused than the big stocks in the S&P 500, jumped 5.8%. That was more than double the S&P 500's gain.

Treasury bond prices, DOWN

Investors see Trump's policies potentially leading to stronger economic growth, which helps push prices down for Treasuries and their yields up. Tax cuts under Trump could also further swell the U.S. government's deficit, which would increase its borrowing needs and force yields even higher. The yield on the 10-year Treasury jumped to 4.43% from 4.29% late Tuesday, which is a major move for the bond market.

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It's up substantially from August, when it was below 4%.

Inflation worries, UP

Investors also see Trump's policies likely adding to future inflation, particularly tariffs, which can add costs to U.S. households' bills.

"Trump keeps openly telling people that he will increase tariffs not just on China but with every trade partner," said Andrzej Skiba, head of BlueBay U.S. Fixed Income at RBC Global Asset Management. "We're talking 10% tariffs across all global partners. This is a big deal because this could add 1% to inflation. If you add 1% to next year's inflation numbers, we should say bye to rate cuts."

A drop-off in immigration could also mean a crunch of available workers for employers, which could force companies to raise wages for workers faster and put more upward pressure on inflation.

Expectations for interest rate cuts, MUDDLED

Much of Wall Street's run to records this year was built on expectations for coming cuts to interest rates by the Federal Reserve, now that inflation seems to be heading back down to its 2% target. Easier interest rates help boost the economy, but they can also give inflation more fuel.

The Fed will announce its latest decision on interest rates Thursday, where the expectation is still for a cut, according to data from CME Group. But traders are already paring back forecasts for how many cuts the Fed will provide through the middle of next year.

Foreign currencies, DOWN against the dollar

Trump has vowed to sharply hike tariffs on imports from China, Mexico and other countries, raising worries about trade wars and disruptions to the global economy. A measure of the U.S. dollar's value against several major currencies climbed 1.6%, which means that those other currencies fell.

The euro sank 1.5%, and the South Korean won fell 1.2%. The Mexican peso, which has been falling against the dollar since the summer, in part on worries about a possible Trump re-election, fell early in the day but then pared its loss.

Renewable energy stocks, DOWN

Trump is a fan of fossil fuels, encouraging production of oil and natural gas. His win sent solar stocks sharply lower, including a 10.1% fall for First Solar and 16.8% slide for Enphase Energy.

The only stock with a bigger loss in the S&P 500 was Super Micro Computer, which said its sales for the latest quarter could come in below its prior forecast. Its stock sank 18.1%.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 146.28 points to 5,929.04. The Dow surged 1,508.05 to 43,729.93, and the Nasdaq composite jumped 544.29 to 18,983.47.

With Trump's win, some women wonder: Will the US ever see a female president?

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and JOCELYN NOVECK Associated Press

Voters had the chance this election to break the highest glass ceiling in American politics by electing Kamala Harris the nation's first female president. Instead, they returned Donald Trump to the White House, a comeback that relied on significant -- even somewhat improved -- support among women.

Some female voters on Wednesday mourned the missed opportunity to send a woman to the Oval Office and wondered when, if ever, it might happen.

"I am just aghast," said Precious Brady-Davis, a Black transgender woman who'd just won a two-year term on a Chicago-area water management board -- but her joy in that was tempered. "I am disappointed in my fellow Americans that, once again, we did not elect a qualified woman to the presidency."

Those who supported Trump -- like Katherine Mickelson, a 20-year-old college student from Sioux Falls, South Dakota -- said the race came down to values and to issues like the economy, not gender. Even Harris herself sought her place in history without dwelling on her gender.

"While I think a lot of women would like to see a female president, myself included," Mickelson said, "we aren't just going to blindly vote for a woman."

Despite the history-making potential of Harris' campaign, she wasn't able to expand on President Joe

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Biden's 2020 support among women to cement a win, according to AP VoteCast, a sweeping survey of more than 120,000 voters nationwide. Fifty-three percent of women supported Harris, compared with 46% for Trump — slightly narrower than Biden's advantage among them in 2020.

The prospect of electing the first female president didn't rank high as a motivator for voters. Only about 1 in 10 voters said the fact that Harris would be the first woman was the single most important factor for their vote, while about one-quarter said it was an important driver, but not the most important.

Denise Martin in Georgia had a grim view: "I really feel like the majority of Americans still aren't ready for a woman. They are so short-sighted." That included, she said, some fellow female voters.

Women were more likely than men to say electing the first female president was at least a factor in their vote, VoteCast showed, though few said it was the main driver and about 4 in 10 women said it wasn't a factor.

Black women were especially motivated by the potential for the first female president — about a third said it was the most important factor.

Maya Davis theorized that Harris' identity as a Black and South Asian woman "absolutely" played a role in her defeat. As a Black woman herself, the 27-year-old North Carolina attorney said she's constantly forced to prove herself.

"I don't think there's anything she could have done differently unfortunately," she said of Harris. "Maybe not be a woman."

Female supporters of Trump, 78 — who adopted a hypermasculine campaign style, used sexist tropes and vowed to protect women "whether they like it or not" — said they found his rhetoric perhaps unfortunate or hyperbolic, but less troubling than concerns about the economy, immigration and abortion.

Krissy Bunner of Greenville, South Carolina, called Trump a "promoter of women" and said the future is "so much brighter" for them because Trump was elected.

"He does so much, you know, for us," the 56-year-old said. She described women who favored Harris as misled by the media, and said Trump's stringent border policies and stance on barring transgender athletes from women's sports would benefit all women.

Virginia King, 19, of Dallas, spoke about Trump's unscripted nature. "He's just kind of outspoken about what he thinks and what he does, whereas other people hide it," she said. "It's probably not ideal, but it doesn't make me not support him."

Other women found the former president's bombast ominous and feared a second Trump term would further threaten their rights two years after his Supreme Court appointees helped overturn the right to abortion.

"All of women's protections are going to go away if you don't protect the basic fundamental issue of democracy to begin with," said retired teacher Mary Ellen Brown, 66, of Newtown, Pennsylvania. Brown said she dressed in black Wednesday and feared her family was losing faith in their country.

After Harris stepped into the race in July, Trump doubled down on banter that many found paternalistic — and worse — as he tried to close the gender gap. He also offended many by calling Harris "stupid" or "lazy." His running mate, JD Vance, called the vice president "trash."

The discourse didn't bother Nina Christina, a North Carolina nurse more worried about feeding her children. Christina, 35, voted for Trump and said she just hopes to avoid being "underwater."

"It shouldn't be this difficult to survive in everyday life," said Christina, adding that Harris already had a chance to fix the economy.

Harris, 60, bypassed the suffragist white worn by Hillary Clinton in 2016 and rarely spoke about the glass ceiling during a frenzy of energetic campaign stops since becoming the Democratic nominee in July.

Her supporters welcomed the upbeat mood after what they saw as a series of setbacks for women's progress in recent years: a workload surge during the pandemic, when children were sent home from school in 2020; the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022; and the steady drumbeat of #MeToo cases, some lodged against Trump.

In Minneapolis, 90-year-old Audrey Wesley -- who's voted in more presidential elections than she can count off the top of her head -- said she'd been hoping a Harris victory would usher in a bipartisan resurgence.

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"I can't believe a man that has done this much against the law can even be running for president," Wesley said, referring to the litany of legal battles, including sexual assault allegations, Trump brings to the office. "Our system is broken."

Relatively few voters said Trump's legal cases were a major factor in their decision-making this election, according to AP VoteCast. Only about a quarter of Trump voters said the legal cases involving Trump were at least an important factor, but about 8 in 10 Harris voters did.

Some women voters experienced the gender gap within their own homes or families — women like Dee Bertino, 55, of Moorestown, New Jersey, who spent her first date with her husband arguing about trickle-down economics. Twenty-five years and two sons later, she mailed in a ballot for Harris while her husband voted for Trump.

Bertino said her top concern was women's rights, but she also bemoaned the lack of civility she felt Trump had unleashed. Her husband, Bob, 58, with whom she runs a sexual health company, also supported abortion rights, she said, but felt the economy, immigration and other issues were more important.

Having a woman president is "not that big" for me, Bertino said. "But I truly believe that our democracy is facing its largest threat in history, and Trump must be stopped."

Bertino and her husband hotly debate politics and the election. That's not true for Martin, in Peachtree City, Georgia,

Martin, 61, is a flight attendant. Her partner is a pilot. He voted for Trump, for the third time. She voted for Harris. Speaking about politics is fraught and painful, and they know to avoid it.

When Clinton lost in 2016, Martin said, she was beside herself and couldn't talk to her partner for days. This year, Martin had hoped to privately celebrate the ascension of the first female president, a woman she supported not because she was a woman, but because she was the right candidate: "so thoughtful, so smart, so well-spoken."

But the news did not seem good, so she went to bed. She awoke to see the race called for Trump, and grew tearful. Among her chief concerns: the future of democracy; health care, especially reproductive care for young women; respect for science; climate policy; and the United States' standing in the world.

As Clinton herself has said, Harris didn't need to emphasize the gender issue, because the public has grown more accustomed to seeing female candidates. Seven women, representing three political parties, ran for president in 2020.

"We now don't just have one image of a person who happens to be a woman who ran for president — namely me," she told the AP in September. "Now we have a much better opportunity for women candidates, starting with Kamala, to be viewed in a way that just takes for granted the fact that, yes, guess what? She's a woman."

Trump voter Elizabeth Herbert, a retired homeschool teacher from Wake Forest, North Carolina, saw Trump as a strong leader and family man. She would still like to see a woman president. She just didn't embrace Harris.

"I think a woman could do a great job as president," she said. "I don't think she is the right woman."

Some women who'd voted for Harris told AP they were too stunned to speak about the news. "I'm devastated," texted one; "I'll need a little time," another wrote. Others said they were forcing themselves to move forward.

"We'll get through today and then get some rest," Martin said, looking forward to playing trivia with her friends later.

"The world is going to change, but we have to find our way in it. We can't let this ruin us."

Republicans take Senate majority and eye unified power with Trump

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans have taken control of the U.S. Senate and are fighting to keep their majority in the U.S. House, which would produce a full sweep of GOP power in Congress alongside

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President-elect Donald Trump in the White House.

A unified Republican grip on Washington would set the course for Trump's agenda. Or if Democrats wrest control of the House, it would provide an almost certain backstop, with veto power over the White House.

Trump, speaking early Wednesday at his election night party in Florida, said the results delivered an "unprecedented and powerful mandate" for Republicans.

He called the Senate rout "incredible." And he praised House Speaker Mike Johnson, who dashed from his own party in Louisiana to join Trump. "He's doing a terrific job," Trump said.

From the U.S. Capitol, Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell, privately a harsh Trump critic, called it a "hell of a good day."

Vote counting in some races could go on for days, and control of the House is too early to call.

The rally for Republicans started early on election night in West Virginia, when Jim Justice, the state's wealthy governor, flipped the seat held by retiring Sen. Joe Manchin. From there, the Republicans marched alongside Trump across the Senate map.

Republicans toppled Democrat Sen. Sherrod Brown in Ohio, the first incumbent senator to fall, with GOP luxury car dealer and blockchain entrepreneur Bernie Moreno. They chased Democrats in the "blue wall" states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, where Vice President Kamala Harris strained to carry the party forward, though Democrats avoided a total wipeout as Elissa Slotkin won an open Senate seat in Michigan and Sen. Tammy Baldwin was reelected in Wisconsin.

Democratic efforts to oust firebrand Republicans Ted Cruz of Texas and Rick Scott of Florida collapsed. The unexpected battleground of Nebraska pushed Republicans over the top. Incumbent GOP Sen. Deb Fischer brushed back a surprisingly strong challenge from independent newcomer Dan Osborn.

In one of the most-watched Senate races, in Montana, Democrat Jon Tester, a popular three-term senator and "dirt farmer" in the fight of his political career, lost to Trump-backed Tim Sheehy, a wealthy former Navy SEAL, who made derogatory comments about Native Americans, a key Western state constituency.

All told, Senate Republicans have a chance to scoop up a few more seats, potentially delivering their most robust majority in years — a coda to outgoing GOP Leader McConnell, who made a career charting a path to power, this time by recruiting high-wealth Republicans aligned with Trump.

He told reporters at a Capitol news conference that a Senate under Republican control would "control the guardrails" and prevent changes in Senate rules that would end the filibuster.

McConnell declined to answer questions about his past stark criticism of Trump or about the prospects of potential nominees in a new administration. He also said he viewed the election results as a referendum on the Biden administration.

"People were just not happy with this administration and the Democratic nominee was a part of it," McConnell said.

The fight for control of the House became a state-by-state slog, much of which unfolded far from the presidential race.

House races are focused in New York and California, where Democrats are trying to claw back some of the 10 or so seats where Republicans have made surprising gains in recent years.

Other House races are scattered around the country, with some of the most contentious in Maine, the "blue dot" around Omaha, Nebraska, and in Alaska.

Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said the House "remains very much in play."

To gain control of the House, Democrats need to flip four seats from Republicans, while holding all of their own, a tall task especially in congressional districts where Trump has won.

It could come down to just a handful of seats, or as little as one, to determine House control.

Johnson voiced confidence, posting on X: "Republicans are poised to have unified government in the White House, Senate, and House."

Harris ignited enthusiasm for her party when Biden dropped out of the race, and she stepped in atop the ticket, a head-spinning development barely 100 days from the election. But Democrats watched their own hopes for a sweep of Washington fizzle.

Voters said the economy and immigration were the top issues facing the country, but the future of

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democracy was also a leading motivator for many Americans casting ballots in the presidential election. AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of more than 120,000 voters nationwide, found a country mired in negativity and desperate for change as Americans faced a stark choice between Trump and Harris.

This is the first presidential election since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, when Trump sent a mob of his supporters to “fight like hell” against the 2020 election. Many Republicans in Congress voted against President Joe Biden’s victory. Congress will again be called on next year to certify the 2024 election.

Even still, the election followed one of the most chaotic congressional sessions in modern times as the Republican-led House kicked out its speaker, Kevin McCarthy, threatened government shutdowns and had difficulty conducting the basic operations of governance.

Johnson has said Republicans in the House and Senate have been working on an “ambitious” 100 day-agenda — cutting taxes, securing the U.S. border and taking a “blowtorch” to federal regulations — if they sweep the White House and Congress.

Trump himself has promised mass deportations and retribution on his perceived enemies. Republicans want to push federal agencies out of Washington and restaff the government workforce, Johnson said, to bring the federal government “to heel.”

Trump is “thinking big” about his legacy, Johnson said.

Several states will send history-makers to the new Congress.

Voters elected two Black women to the Senate, Democrat Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware and Democrat Angela Alsobrooks, who defeated Republican Larry Hogan, the former governor, in Maryland. Just three Black women have served in the Senate, and never before have two served at the same time.

And in New Jersey, Andy Kim became the first Korean American elected to the Senate. The seat opened when Bob Menendez resigned this year after his federal conviction on bribery charges.

In the House, candidate Sarah McBride, a Democratic state lawmaker from Delaware who is close to the Biden family, became the first openly transgender person elected to Congress.

What’s still unclear is who will lead the new Republican Senate, as longtime leader McConnell prepares to step down from the post.

South Dakota Sen. John Thune, the No. 2 Republican, and Texas Sen. John Cornyn, who previously held that post, are the front-runners to replace McConnell in a secret-ballot election scheduled for when senators arrive in Washington next week.

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.

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.

Trump wins the White House in a political comeback rooted in appeals to frustrated voters

By ZEKE MILLER, MICHELLE L. PRICE, WILL WEISSERT and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump was elected the 47th president of the United States on Wednesday, an extraordinary comeback for a former president who refused to accept defeat four years ago, sparked a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, was convicted of felony charges and survived two assassination attempts.

With a win in Wisconsin, Trump cleared the 270 electoral votes needed to clinch the presidency. He won Michigan on Wednesday afternoon, sweeping the “blue wall” along with Pennsylvania — the one-time Democrat-leaning, swing states that all went for Trump in 2016 before flipping to President Joe Biden in 2020.

His Democratic rival, Vice President Kamala Harris, called Trump on Wednesday afternoon to concede the race and congratulate him. A short time later, Biden also called Trump to congratulate him and to invite the president-elect to the White House, formally kicking off the transition ahead of Inauguration Day, the

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White House said. Biden also called Harris.

Foreign leaders called Trump too, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and French President Emmanuel Macron.

The victory validates Trump's bare-knuckles approach to politics. He had attacked Harris in deeply personal – often misogynistic and racist – terms as he pushed an apocalyptic picture of a country overrun by violent migrants. The coarse rhetoric, paired with an image of hypermasculinity, resonated with angry voters – particularly men – in a deeply polarized nation.

"I want to thank the American people for the extraordinary honor of being elected your 47th president and your 45th president," Trump told throngs of cheering supporters in Florida even before his victory was confirmed.

In state after state, Trump outperformed what he did in the 2020 election while Harris failed to do as well as Joe Biden did in winning the presidency four years ago. Upon taking office again, Trump will work with a Senate that will now be in Republican hands, while control of the House hadn't been determined.

"We've been through so much together, and today you showed up in record numbers to deliver a victory," Trump said. "This was something special and we're going to pay you back," he said.

The U.S. stock market, Elon Musk's Tesla, banks and bitcoin all stormed higher Wednesday, as investors looked favorably on a smooth election and Trump returning to the White House. In his second term, Trump has vowed to pursue an agenda centered on dramatically reshaping the federal government and pursuing retribution against his perceived enemies.

The results cap a historically tumultuous and competitive election season that included two assassination attempts targeting Trump and a shift to a new Democratic nominee just a month before the party's convention. Trump will inherit a range of challenges when he assumes office on Jan. 20, including heightened political polarization and global crises that are testing America's influence abroad.

His win against Harris, the first woman of color to lead a major party ticket, marks the second time he has defeated a female rival in a general election. Harris, the current vice president, rose to the top of the ticket after Biden exited the race amid alarm about his advanced age. Despite an initial surge of energy around her campaign, she struggled during a compressed timeline to convince disillusioned voters that she represented a break from an unpopular administration.

The vice president, who has not appeared publicly since the race was called, was set to speak Wednesday afternoon at Howard University, where her supporters gathered Tuesday night for a watch party while the results were still in doubt.

Trump is the first former president to return to power since Grover Cleveland regained the White House in the 1892 election. He is the first person convicted of a felony to be elected president and, at 78, is the oldest person elected to the office. His vice president, 40-year-old Ohio Sen. JD Vance, will become the highest-ranking member of the millennial generation in the U.S. government.

There will be far fewer checks on Trump when he returns to the White House. He has plans to swiftly enact a sweeping agenda that would transform nearly every aspect of American government. His GOP critics in Congress have largely been defeated or retired. Federal courts are now filled with judges he appointed. The U.S. Supreme Court, which includes three Trump-appointed justices, issued a ruling this year affording presidents broad immunity from prosecution.

Trump's language and behavior during the campaign sparked growing warnings from Democrats and some Republicans about shocks to democracy that his return to power would bring. He repeatedly praised strongman leaders, warned that he would deploy the military to target political opponents he labeled the "enemy from within," threatened to take action against news organizations for unfavorable coverage and suggested suspending the Constitution.

Some who served in his White House, including Vice President Mike Pence and John Kelly, Trump's longest-serving chief of staff, either declined to endorse him or issued dire public warnings about his return.

While Harris focused much of her initial message around themes of joy, Trump channeled a powerful sense of anger and resentment among voters.

He seized on frustrations over high prices and fears about crime and migrants who illegally entered the

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country on Biden's watch. He also highlighted wars in the Middle East and Russia's invasion of Ukraine to cast Democrats as presiding over – and encouraging – a world in chaos.

It was a formula Trump perfected in 2016, when he cast himself as the only person who could fix the country's problems, often borrowing language from dictators.

"In 2016, I declared I am your voice. Today I add: I am your warrior. I am your justice. And for those who have been wronged and betrayed, I am your retribution," he said in March 2023.

This campaign often veered into the absurd, with Trump amplifying bizarre and disproven rumors that migrants were stealing and eating pet cats and dogs in an Ohio town. At one point, he kicked off a rally with a detailed story about the legendary golfer Arnold Palmer in which he praised his genitalia.

One defining moment came in July when a gunman opened fire at a Trump rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. A bullet grazed Trump's ear and killed a supporter. His face streaked with blood, Trump stood and raised his fist in the air, shouting "Fight! Fight! Fight!" Weeks later, a second assassination attempt was thwarted after a Secret Service agent spotted the barrel of a gun poking through the greenery while Trump was playing golf.

Trump's return to the White House seemed unlikely when he left Washington in early 2021 as a diminished figure whose lies about his defeat sparked a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. He was so isolated then that few outside of his family bothered to attend the send-off he organized for himself at Andrews Air Force Base, complete with a 21-gun salute.

Democrats who controlled the U.S. House quickly impeached him for his role in the insurrection, making him the only president to be impeached twice. He was acquitted by the Senate, where many Republicans argued that he no longer posed a threat because he had left office.

But from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, Trump – aided by some elected Republicans – worked to maintain his political relevance. Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the California Republican who then led his party in the U.S. House, visited Trump soon after he left office, essentially validating his continued role in the party.

As the 2022 midterm election approached, Trump used the power of his endorsement to assert himself as the unquestioned leader of the party. His preferred candidates almost always won their primaries, but some went on to defeat in elections that Republicans viewed as within their grasp. Those disappointing results were driven in part by a backlash to the Supreme Court ruling that revoked a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, a decision aided by Trump-appointed justices. The midterm election prompted questions within the GOP about whether Trump should remain the party's leader.

But if Trump's future was in doubt, that changed in 2023 when he faced a wave of state and federal indictments for his role in the insurrection, his handling of classified information and election interference. He used the charges to portray himself as the victim of an overreaching government, an argument that resonated with a GOP base that was increasingly skeptical – if not outright hostile – to institutions and established power structures.

Special counsel Jack Smith was evaluating Wednesday how to wind down the two federal criminal cases against Trump.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who challenged Trump for the Republican nomination, lamented that the indictments "sucked out all the oxygen" from the GOP primary. Trump easily captured his party's nomination without participating in a debate against DeSantis or other GOP candidates.

With Trump dominating the Republican contest, a New York jury found him guilty in May of 34 felony charges in a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election through a hush money payment to a porn actor who said the two had sex. He faces sentencing this month, though his victory poses serious questions about whether he will ever face punishment.

He also has been found liable in two other New York civil cases: one for inflating his assets and another for sexually abusing advice columnist E. Jean Carroll in 1996.

Trump is subject to additional criminal charges in an election-interference case in Georgia that has become bogged down. On the federal level, he's been indicted for his role in trying to overturn the results of the 2020 election and improperly handling classified material. When he becomes president, Trump could

appoint an attorney general who would erase the federal charges.

As he prepares to return to the White House, Trump has vowed to swiftly enact a radical agenda that would transform nearly every aspect of American government. That includes plans to launch the largest deportation effort in the nation's history, to use the Justice Department to punish his enemies, to dramatically expand the use of tariffs and to again pursue a zero-sum approach to foreign policy that threatens to upend longstanding foreign alliances, including the NATO pact.

When he arrived in Washington 2017, Trump knew little about the levers of federal power. His agenda was stymied by Congress and the courts, as well as senior staff members who took it upon themselves to serve as guardrails.

This time, Trump has said he would surround himself with loyalists who will enact his agenda, no questions asked, and who will arrive with hundreds of draft executive orders, legislative proposals and in-depth policy papers in hand.

UK identifies 4 cases of new mpox variant, the first cluster outside Africa

By The Associated Press undefined

LONDON (AP) — British health officials say they have identified four cases of the new, more infectious version of mpox that first emerged in Congo, marking the first time the variant has caused a cluster of illness outside of Africa. Scientists said the risk to the public remains low.

Authorities announced the first case of the new form of mpox in the U.K. last week, saying the case was being treated at a London hospital after recently traveling to countries in Africa with ongoing outbreaks.

This week, the U.K. Health Security Agency said it had now identified three further cases who lived in the same household as the first patient. They too are now being treated at a hospital in London.

"Mpox is very infectious in households with close contact and so it is not unexpected to see further cases within the same household," said Susan Hopkins, chief medical advisor of the U.K. Health Security Agency.

The new variant of mpox was first detected earlier this year in eastern Congo. Scientists believe it causes milder symptoms that are harder to notice, which makes it easier to spread because people may not know they are infected. Its spread in Congo and elsewhere in Africa prompted the World Health Organization to declare a global emergency in August.

Britain recorded more than 3,000 cases of another type of mpox during a 2022 outbreak that hit more than 100 countries.

The new variant of mpox has also caused outbreaks in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Single cases in travelers have also been reported in Sweden, India, Germany and Thailand.

To date, there have been about 43,000 suspect cases of mpox in Africa, including more than 1,000 deaths, mostly in Congo.

On Wednesday, WHO said it had allocated 899,900 vaccine doses to nine African countries struggling with mpox epidemics.

Donald Trump has sweeping plans for a second administration. Here's what he's proposed

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump has promised sweeping action in a second administration.

The former president and now president-elect often skipped over details but through more than a year of policy pronouncements and written statements outlined a wide-ranging agenda that blends traditional conservative approaches to taxes, regulation and cultural issues with a more populist bent on trade and a shift in America's international role.

Trump's agenda also would scale back federal government efforts on civil rights and expand presidential powers.

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A look at what Trump has proposed:

Immigration

"Build the wall!" from his 2016 campaign has become creating "the largest mass deportation program in history." Trump has called for using the National Guard and empowering domestic police forces in the effort. Still, Trump has been scant on details of what the program would look like and how he would ensure that it targeted only people in the U.S. illegally. He's pitched "ideological screening" for would-be entrants, ending birth-right citizenship (which almost certainly would require a constitutional change), and said he'd reinstitute first-term policies such as "Remain in Mexico," limiting migrants on public health grounds and severely limiting or banning entrants from certain majority-Muslim nations. Altogether, the approach would not just crack down on illegal migration, but curtail immigration overall.

Abortion

Trump played down abortion as a second-term priority, even as he took credit for the Supreme Court ending a woman's federal right to terminate a pregnancy and returning abortion regulation to state governments. At Trump's insistence, the GOP platform, for the first time in decades, did not call for a national ban on abortion. Trump maintains that overturning *Roe v. Wade* is enough on the federal level. Trump said last month on his social media platform Truth Social that he would veto a federal abortion ban if legislation reached his desk — a statement he made only after avoiding a firm position in his September debate against Democratic nominee Kamala Harris.

But it's unclear if his administration would aggressively defend against legal challenges seeking to restrict access to abortion pills, including mifepristone, as the Biden administration has. Anti-abortion advocates continue to wage legal battles over the Food and Drug Administration's approval of the drug as well as the agency's relaxed prescribing restrictions. Trump is also unlikely to enforce Biden's guidance that hospitals must provide abortions for women who are in medical emergencies, even in states with bans.

Taxes

Trump's tax policies broadly tilt toward corporations and wealthier Americans. That's mostly due to his promise to extend his 2017 tax overhaul, with a few notable changes that include lowering the corporate income tax rate to 15% from the current 21%. That also involves rolling back Democratic President Joe Biden's income tax hikes on the wealthiest Americans and scrapping Inflation Reduction Act levies that finance energy measures intended to combat climate change.

Those policies notwithstanding, Trump has put more emphasis on new proposals aimed at working- and middle class Americans: exempting earned tips, Social Security wages and overtime wages from income taxes. It's noteworthy, however, that his proposal on tips, depending on how Congress might write it, could give a back-door tax break to top wage earners by allowing them to reclassify some of their pay as tip income — a prospect that at its most extreme could see hedge-fund managers or top-flight attorneys taking advantage of a policy that Trump frames as being designed for restaurant servers, bartenders and other service workers.

Tariffs and trade

Trump's posture on international trade is to distrust world markets as harmful to American interests. He proposes tariffs of 10% to 20% on foreign goods — and in some speeches has mentioned even higher percentages. He promises to reinstitute an August 2020 executive order requiring that the federal government buy "essential" medications only from U.S. companies. He pledges to block purchases of "any vital infrastructure" in the U.S. by Chinese buyers.

DEI, LGBTQ and civil rights

Trump has called for rolling back societal emphasis on diversity and for legal protections for LGBTQ citizens. Trump has called for ending diversity, equity and inclusion programs in government institutions, using federal funding as leverage.

On transgender rights, Trump promises generally to end "boys in girls' sports," a practice he insists, without evidence, is widespread. But his policies go well beyond standard applause lines from his rally speeches. Among other ideas, Trump would roll back the Biden administration's policy of extending Title

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IX civil rights protections to transgender students, and he would ask Congress to require that only two genders can be recognized at birth.

Regulation, federal bureaucracy and presidential power

The president-elect seeks to reduce the role of federal bureaucrats and regulations across economic sectors. Trump frames all regulatory cuts as an economic magic wand. He pledges precipitous drops in U.S. households' utility bills by removing obstacles to fossil fuel production, including opening all federal lands for exploration — even though U.S. energy production is already at record highs. Trump promises to unleash housing construction by cutting regulations — though most construction rules come from state and local government. He also says he would end “frivolous litigation from the environmental extremists.”

The approach would in many ways strengthen executive branch influence. That power would come more directly from the White House.

He would make it easier to fire federal workers by classifying thousands of them as being outside civil service protections. That could weaken the government's power to enforce statutes and rules by reducing the number of employees engaging in the work and, potentially, impose a chilling effect on those who remain.

Trump also claims that presidents have exclusive power to control federal spending even after Congress has appropriated money. Trump argues that lawmakers' budget actions “set a ceiling” on spending but not a floor — meaning the president's constitutional duty to “faithfully execute the laws” includes discretion on whether to spend the money. This interpretation could set up a court battle with Congress.

As a candidate, he also suggested that the Federal Reserve, an independent entity that sets interest rates, should be subject to more presidential power. Though he has not offered details, any such move would represent a momentous change to how the U.S. economic and monetary systems work.

Education

The federal Department of Education would be targeted for elimination in a second Trump administration. That does not mean that Trump wants Washington out of classrooms. He still proposes, among other maneuvers, using federal funding as leverage to pressure K-12 school systems to abolish tenure and adopt merit pay for teachers and to scrap diversity programs at all levels of education. He calls for pulling federal funding “for any school or program pushing Critical Race Theory, gender ideology, or other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content on our children.”

In higher education, Trump proposes taking over accreditation processes for colleges, a move he describes as his “secret weapon” against the “Marxist Maniacs and lunatics” he says control higher education. Trump takes aim at higher education endowments, saying he will collect “billions and billions of dollars” from schools via “taxing, fining and suing excessively large private university endowments” at schools that do not comply with his edicts. That almost certainly would end up in protracted legal fights.

As in other policy areas, Trump isn't actually proposing limiting federal power in higher education but strengthening it. He calls for redirecting the confiscated endowment money into an online “American Academy” offering college credentials to all Americans without a tuition charges. “It will be strictly non-political, and there will be no wokeness or jihadism allowed—none of that's going to be allowed,” Trump said on Nov. 1, 2023.

Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid

Trump insists he would protect Social Security and Medicare, popular programs geared toward older Americans and among the biggest pieces of the federal spending pie each year. There are questions about how his proposal not to tax tip and overtime wages might affect Social Security and Medicare. If such plans eventually involved only income taxes, the entitlement programs would not be affected. But exempting those wages from payroll taxes would reduce the funding stream for Social Security and Medicare outlays. Trump has talked little about Medicaid during this campaign, but his first administration reshaped the program by allowing states to introduce work requirements for recipients.

Affordable Care Act and Health Care

As he has since 2015, Trump calls for repealing the Affordable Care Act and its subsidized health in-

insurance marketplaces. But he still has not proposed a replacement: In a September debate, he insisted he had the “concepts of a plan.” In the latter stages of the campaign, Trump played up his alliance with former presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime critic of vaccines and of pesticides used in U.S. agriculture. Trump repeatedly told rally crowds that he would put Kennedy in charge of “making America healthy again.”

Climate and energy

Trump, who claims falsely that climate change is a “hoax,” blasts Biden-era spending on cleaner energy designed to reduce U.S. reliance on fossil fuels. He proposes an energy policy – and transportation infrastructure spending – anchored to fossil fuels: roads, bridges and combustion-engine vehicles. “Drill, baby, drill!” was a regular chant at Trump rallies. Trump says he does not oppose electric vehicles but promises to end all Biden incentives to encourage EV market development. Trump also pledges to roll back Biden-era fuel efficiency standards.

Workers’ rights

Trump and Vice President-elect JD Vance framed their ticket as favoring America’s workers. But Trump could make it harder for workers to unionize. In discussing auto workers, Trump focused almost exclusively on Biden’s push toward electric vehicles. When he mentioned unions, it was often to lump “the union bosses and CEOs” together as complicit in “this disastrous electric car scheme.” In an Oct. 23, 2023, statement, Trump said of United Auto Workers, “I’m telling you, you shouldn’t pay those dues.”

National defense and America’s role in the world

Trump’s rhetoric and policy approach in world affairs is more isolationist diplomatically, non-interventionist militarily and protectionist economically than the U.S. has been since World War II. But the details are more complicated. He pledges expansion of the military, promises to protect Pentagon spending from austerity efforts and proposes a new missile defense shield — an old idea from the Reagan era during the Cold War. Trump insists he can end Russia’s war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war, without explaining how. Trump summarizes his approach through another Reagan phrase: “peace through strength.” But he remains critical of NATO and top U.S. military brass. “I don’t consider them leaders,” Trump said of Pentagon officials that Americans “see on television.” He repeatedly praised authoritarians like Hungary’s Viktor Orbán and Russia’s Vladimir Putin.

Abortion rights advocates win in 7 states and clear way to overturn Missouri ban but lose in 3

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voters in Missouri cleared the way to undo one of the nation’s most restrictive abortion bans in one of seven victories for abortion rights advocates, while Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota defeated similar constitutional amendments, leaving bans in place.

Abortion rights amendments also passed in Arizona, Colorado, Maryland and Montana. Nevada voters also approved an amendment, but they’ll need to pass it again in 2026 for it to take effect. Another that bans discrimination on the basis of “pregnancy outcomes” prevailed in New York.

The results include firsts for the abortion landscape, which underwent a seismic shift in 2022 when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, a ruling that ended a nationwide right to abortion and cleared the way for bans to take effect in most Republican-controlled states.

They also came in the same election that Republican Donald Trump won the presidency. Among his inconsistent positions on abortion has been an insistence that it’s an issue best left to the states. Still, the president can have a major impact on abortion policy through executive action.

In the meantime, Missouri is positioned to be the first state where a vote will undo a ban on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with an amendment that would allow lawmakers to restrict abortions only past the point of a fetus’ viability — usually considered after 21 weeks, although there’s no exact defined time frame.

But the ban, and other restrictive laws, are not automatically repealed. Advocates now have to ask courts

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to overturn laws to square with the new amendment.

"Today, Missourians made history and sent a clear message: decisions around pregnancy, including abortion, birth control, and miscarriage care are personal and private and should be left up to patients and their families, not politicians," Rachel Sweet, campaign manager of Missourians for Constitutional Freedom, said in a statement.

Roughly half of Missouri's voters said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 2,200 of the state's voters. But only about 1 in 10 said abortion should be illegal in all cases; nearly 4 in 10 said abortion should be illegal in most cases.

Bans remain in place in three states after votes

Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota became the first states since Roe was overturned where abortion opponents prevailed on a ballot measure. Most voters supported the Florida measure, but it fell short of the required 60% to pass constitutional amendments in the state. Most states require a simple majority.

The result was a political win for Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican with a national profile, who had steered state GOP funds to the cause. His 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.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the national anti-abortion group SBA Pro-Life America, said in a statement that the result is "a momentous victory for life in Florida and for our entire country," praising DeSantis for leading the charge against the measure.

The defeat makes permanent a shift in the Southern abortion landscape that began when the state's six-week ban took effect in May. That removed Florida as a destination for abortion for many women from nearby states with deeper bans and also led to far more women from the state traveling to obtain abortion. The nearest states with looser restrictions are North Carolina and Virginia — hundreds of miles away.

"The reality is because of Florida's constitution a minority of Florida voters have decided Amendment 4 will not be adopted," said Lauren Brenzel, campaign director for the Yes on 4 Campaign said while wiping away tears. "The reality is a majority of Floridians just voted to end Florida's abortion ban."

In South Dakota, another state with a ban on abortion throughout pregnancy with some exceptions, the defeat of an abortion measure was more decisive. It would have allowed some regulations related to the health of the woman after 12 weeks. Because of that wrinkle, most national abortion-rights groups did not support it.

Voters in Nebraska adopted a measure that allows more abortion restrictions and enshrines the state's current 12-week ban and rejected a competing measure that would have ensured abortion rights.

Other states guaranteed abortion rights

Arizona's amendment will mean replacing the current law that bans abortion after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. The new measure ensures abortion access until viability. A 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.

In Maryland, the abortion rights amendment is a legal change that won't make an immediate difference to abortion access in a state that already allows it.

It's a similar situation in Montana, where abortion is already legal until viability.

The Colorado measure exceeded the 55% of support required to pass. Besides enshrining access, it also undoes an earlier amendment that barred using state and local government funding for abortion, opening the possibility of state Medicaid and government employee insurance plans covering care.

A New York equal rights law that abortion rights group say will bolster abortion rights also passed. It doesn't contain the word "abortion" but rather bans discrimination on the basis of "pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy." Sasha Ahuja, campaign director of New Yorkers for Equal Rights, called the result "a monumental victory for all New Yorkers" and a vote against opponents who she says used misleading parental rights and anti-trans messages to try to thwart the measure.

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The results end a win streak for abortion-rights advocates. Until Tuesday, abortion rights advocates had prevailed on all seven measures that have appeared on statewide ballots since the fall of Roe.

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 issue is resonating with voters. About one-fourth said abortion policy was the single most important factor for their vote, according to AP VoteCast, a sweeping survey of more than 110,000 voters nationwide. Close to half said it was an important factor, but not the most important. Just over 1 in 10 said it was a minor factor.

The outcomes of ballot initiatives that sought to overturn strict abortion bans in Florida and Missouri were very important to a majority of voters in the states. More than half of Florida voters identified the result of the amendment as very important, while roughly 6 in 10 of Missouri's voters said the same, the survey found.

Trump win ignites crypto frenzy that sends bitcoin to a record high

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — The price of bitcoin hit a new high Wednesday and crypto-related shares rallied as investors bet that former President Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election will be a boon for cryptocurrencies.

Bitcoin jumped nearly 8% in early trading, climbing above \$75,000 and smashing its previous record set in March. Other cryptocurrencies also soared, including ether, the world's second most popular cryptocurrency after bitcoin, which rallied 8%.

Another token, dogecoin, rocketed as much as 18%. It's the favorite cryptocurrency of billionaire Elon Musk, one of Trump's most prominent supporters.

Crypto-related shares outran the rest of the stock market. Coinbase, one of the biggest cryptocurrency exchanges, leaped 17%. Online brokerage Robinhood Markets, which offers crypto trading, soared 12% and MicroStrategy, which says it is the "largest corporate holder of bitcoin," jumped 10%.

Trump was previously a crypto skeptic but changed his mind and embraced cryptocurrencies ahead of the election.

He has pledged to make America "the crypto capital of the planet" and create a "strategic reserve" of bitcoin. His campaign accepted donations in cryptocurrency and he courted crypto fans at a bitcoin conference in July. He also launched World Liberty Financial, a new venture with family members to trade cryptocurrencies.

Bitcoin is up 77% this year.

"Bitcoin is the one asset that was always going to soar if Trump returned to the White House," said Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell, a British online investment platform. After touching its new high, the market is now speculating about "when, not if, it will smash through \$100,000," he said.

"Trump has already declared his love of the digital currency and crypto traders now have a new narrative by which to get even more excited about where the price could go," Mould said.

But other experts warned of the risks.

"Investors should only dabble in crypto with money that they can be prepared to lose," said Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown. "Because we've seen these wild swings in the past."

Crypto industry players welcomed Trump's victory, in hopes that he would be able to push through leg-

islative and regulatory changes that they've long lobbied for.

Trump had already promised that, if elected, he would remove the chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Gary Gensler, who has been leading the U.S. government's crackdown on the crypto industry.

"Tonight the crypto voter has spoken decisively — across party lines and in key races across the country," said Coinbase CEO Brian Armstrong. "Americans disproportionately care about crypto and want clear rules of the road for digital assets. We look forward to working with the new Congress to deliver it," Armstrong posted on X.

Streeter said Trump's administration would most likely pursue "light touch regulation" for the crypto industry.

"Certainly that's what crypto fans would want," she said. "They want the sheen of legitimacy to be brought to crypto, but they don't want regulations to be too onerous to stop opportunities and innovation."

Baby girl and her mother among those lost in Spain's catastrophic flooding

By PAOLO SANTALUCIA and JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

PAIPORTA, Spain (AP) — The mangled car in which Jorge Tarazona's 3-year-old niece and sister-in-law perished in last week's catastrophic flooding in Spain now hangs halfway off the ragged edge of road.

His brother managed to survive, clinging to a fence. He and his family had been caught in traffic driving home to Paiporta on Valencia's southern outskirts, Tarazona said. They had no chance to escape when the tsunami-like wave quickly overflowed the nearby drainage canal and swept away everything in its path.

"They did not have time to do anything," Tarazona told The Associated Press, a week after the Oct. 29 flash floods. "My brother was dragged away and ended up clinging to a fence." His sister-in-law "could not get out and died with her little girl."

Tarazona had ridden a bike back to the site and taped a note on the car asking for whoever eventually removed the wreck off the side of the highway, to call him.

"It all happened so fast," he said, tears coming to his eyes. "In half an hour the current had carried away the car. There was no time, no time. She managed to send me the location of their car hoping for a rescue.

"The next day she was found dead inside," he said.

It's unclear if the two are included in the official toll of the 217 confirmed dead as fatalities tick up, eight days after the deadliest floods in Spain this century.

Paiporta has been labeled by Spanish media as the ground zero of the natural disaster that has also left 89 people still missing, while officials say the real figure could be higher.

Over 60 people perished in Paiporta when a wave of water rushed down the Poyo canal that cuts through its center. Frustration over the survivors' sense of abandonment exploded in Paiporta on Sunday when a crowd greeted Spain's royals and officials with a barrage of mud and other objects.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was rushed away and the royal couple had to eventually cancel the visit after speaking to several distraught neighbors amid a chaotic scene.

The mayor of Paiporta, a middle-class community of 30,000, on Tuesday pleaded for a "higher authority" to step in and take control of her municipality because the floods had made it impossible to go on. Mayor Maribel Albalat said all the municipal buildings, from town hall to the local police, had been severely damaged and that many of the local civil servants "are in a state of shock."

"Paiporta is a strong village, but this overwhelms out capacities as a local administration," she said.

The air-throbbing "thup, thup, thup" of the huge, two-propeller Chinook helicopters that have flown overhead with the arrival of the army has added to the post-apocalyptic atmosphere.

The destruction, however, went far beyond Paiporta and covers a huge swath of municipalities, above all on the southern flank of Valencia city on the Mediterranean coast. Seventy-eight localities had at least one person die from the floods. Police have expanded their search to the nearby marshes and coastline, where the waters carried some away.

The residents, businesses and town councils of the affected localities can apply for financial help from

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a 10.6-billion-euro relief package from Spain's government. The regional Valencia government, which is being slammed for not alerting the populace of the danger in time, has asked the central government in Madrid for 31 billion euros to ensure the recovery.

Over a week later, the cleanup goes on to get rid of tons of mud and debris that clog street after street, filling thousands of ground floors, destroying living rooms and kitchens. Neighborhoods were left without shops and supermarkets after all their products were ruined. Many houses still don't have drinking water.

An impromptu army of volunteers were the first helpers on the ground, shoveling and sweeping away the sticky brown mire covering everything, and helping to start removing pile after pile of debris that made access to cars impossible in many areas.

Authorities eventually mobilized 15,000 soldiers and police reinforcements to help firefighters search for bodies and start extracting thousands of wrecked cars strewn over streets and sunk in canal beds.

At every corner, cars are piled on top of one another or smashed into buildings, light poles, trees and bridge overpasses.

"There is still so much to do," said volunteer Juanma Baztan López, who is helping churn through the muck in Catarroja, which borders on Paiporta, in his four-wheel drive. He has helped transport doctors to people in need, deliver essential products, and tow away wrecked cars.

"It will take a year to get this back to normal," he said.

Trump promises to bring lasting peace to a tumultuous Middle East. But fixing it won't be easy

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Donald Trump will return to the U.S. presidency at a time of unprecedented conflict and uncertainty in the Middle East. He has vowed to fix it.

But Trump's history of strong support for Israel coupled with his insistence during the campaign that the war in Gaza should end quickly, the isolationist forces in the Republican party and his penchant for unpredictability raise a mountain of questions over how his second presidency will affect the region at this pivotal moment.

Barring the achievement of elusive cease-fires before the inauguration, Trump will ascend to the highest office in the country as a brutal war in Gaza still rages and Israel presses its offensive against the Lebanese Hezbollah militant group. A conflagration between Iran and Israel shows no signs of abating — nor do Israel's conflicts with Iranian proxies in Iraq and Yemen — and Iran's nuclear program remains a top concern for Israel.

Trump says he wants peace, but how?

Throughout his campaign, Trump has vowed to bring peace to the region.

"Get it over with and let's get back to peace and stop killing people," Trump said of the conflict in Gaza in an interview with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt in April.

Israel launched the war in response to Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, when militants killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250, with dozens still in Gaza. Israel's offensive has killed more than 43,000 people, according to Gaza health officials, whose count does not distinguish between civilians and fighters, though they say more than half of the dead are women and children.

The war has ignited a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, driven Israel into increasing international isolation, with two world courts examining charges of war crimes, and has sparked a wave of protests on American campuses that have fueled debate over the U.S. role as Israel's key military and diplomatic supporter.

International mediators from the U.S., Egypt and Qatar have tried unsuccessfully to bring about a lasting cease-fire.

Yet Trump has repeatedly urged to Israel "finish the job" and destroy Hamas — but hasn't said how.

"Does finish the job mean you have a free hand to act in dealing with the remnants of Hamas? Or does finish the job mean the war has to come to an end now?" asked David Makovsky, director of the program on Arab-Israel Relations at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "That's part of the enigmas here."

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Netanyahu is pinning his hopes on a pro-Israel Trump administration

Uncertainty also shrouds how Trump will engage with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. During his first term, Trump offered broad support for the Israeli leader's hard-line policies, including unilaterally withdrawing from a deal meant to rein in Iran's nuclear program that Netanyahu long opposed.

Trump also recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, bolstering its claim over the disputed city, and Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war. He presented a peace plan with the Palestinians widely seen as favoring Israel. Settlement-building in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, seen as an obstacle to Palestinian statehood, surged under his presidency.

Trump also helped secure agreements between Israel and four Arab countries to normalize ties that were not contingent on progress toward Palestinian statehood — a major victory for Netanyahu. The Israeli leader hopes to replicate those successes with a deal with Saudi Arabia.

The leaders had a falling out after Netanyahu congratulated President Joe Biden following the 2020 elections — a move Trump viewed as a slight from his loyal ally, though Netanyahu visited Trump in Florida this year.

Under Biden, the U.S. has been critical at times and slowed some weapons deliveries in response to Israel's conduct in Gaza. Netanyahu is likely hoping that Trump's return will loosen any restraints on Israel to pursue its war goals. The American leader could also work to challenge a potential international war crimes arrest warrant for Netanyahu. And a smoother relationship with Washington could help improve the Israeli leader's own popular support.

"He has the most pro-Israel record of any president," said Michael Oren, a former Israeli ambassador to Washington. "The hope is here that there'll be more of the same."

Neither Netanyahu nor Trump has a clear vision for postwar Gaza

Netanyahu leads a far-right government whose key members have vowed to topple his rule if the war in Gaza ends with anything short of Hamas' destruction. They support resettling Gaza and are enthusiastic about a Trump presidency — and their influence will only grow now that Netanyahu has fired his defense minister over his more pragmatic approach to the conflict.

Their grip on the government and over Netanyahu's political future helps explain why Netanyahu has not spelled out a clear vision for a postwar Gaza.

The Biden administration has favored having the war-ravaged territory governed by the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the West Bank. Netanyahu has rejected that idea and insists on the right for the Israeli military to operate there.

Trump has not outlined a clear vision, although he has said developers could make Gaza "better than Monaco" because it has "the best location in the Middle East, the best water, the best everything."

Diana Buttu, a former adviser to Palestinian leaders, said a lack of a firm U.S. vision for Gaza, coupled with a politically powerful Israeli far right, made the future for people in Gaza and for Palestinians in general grim.

"I don't see this as a president who is going to care about Palestinians," she said.

Will Trump help defend Israel against Iran or choose America first?

In Lebanon, Israel is battling the Iranian-backed Hezbollah with both a ground invasion and strikes on Hezbollah targets. The militant group has fired thousands of rockets and drones at Israeli communities, killing dozens and displacing 60,000. Israel's offensive, meanwhile, has displaced over 1 million people in Lebanon and killed more than 3,000.

U.S. mediation efforts there too have been fruitless. Trump, who has a Lebanese-American son-in-law, recently posted on the social platform X that as president he would "stop the suffering and destruction in Lebanon."

But a key question is how much Trump will be swayed by his America First instincts.

The U.S. has played a central role in diplomatic efforts throughout the war, and an even more robust role in helping Israel defend itself against Iran and its allies.

The U.S. has sent military assets to the region, helped Israel thwart two missile attacks by Iran and

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even has U.S. soldiers in Israel to operate a sophisticated air defense system. But any effective Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, a target it avoided in its strike last month, will likely need greater U.S. military involvement.

Accusations that Iran has hacked campaign associates and concerns about the potential for Tehran to carry out violence against Trump or members of his administration could deepen his antipathy toward the country.

While Trump has indicated he will focus on domestic affairs, the Mideast could be an outlier.

He enjoys a wide base of support from evangelical Christians, who are staunchly pro-Israel, and his son-in-law and former adviser Jared Kushner was a prominent voice in support of the country in his first administration.

"As Trump is likely to navigate between those forces mostly based on his intuition," said Udi Sommer, an expert on U.S.-Israel relations at Tel Aviv University, "uncertainty will likely define his approach."

Election takeaways: Trump's decisive victory in a deeply divided nation

By STEVE PEOPLES and BILL BARROW Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump scored a decisive victory in a deeply divided nation. And in so doing, the Republican president-elect exposed a fundamental weakness within the Democratic base and beat back concerns about his moral failings, becoming the first U.S. president with a felony conviction.

Trump won over frustrated voters with bold promises that his fiery brand of America-first economic populism and conservative culture would make their lives better. He will be tested immediately, however, and there are reasons to believe his plans for mass deportations and huge tariffs may hurt the very people who enabled his victory.

Still, he is set to enter the White House on Jan. 20, 2025, from an undisputed position of strength. With votes still being counted, he could become the first Republican in two decades to win the popular vote.

The results left Democrats facing an urgent and immediate reckoning, with no obvious leader to unite the anti-Trump coalition and no clear plan to rebuild as an emboldened Trump prepares to re-take Washington.

Here are some key takeaways:

With modest shifts, Trump undermines the Democrats' coalition

Black voters — men and women — have been the bedrock of the Democratic Party, and in recent years, Latinos and young voters have joined them.

All three groups still preferred Democrat Kamala Harris. But preliminary data from AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 voters nationwide, suggested that Trump made significant gains.

Voters under age 30 represent a fraction of the total electorate, but about half of them supported Harris. That's compared to the roughly 6 in 10 who backed Biden in 2020. Slightly more than 4 in 10 young voters went for Trump, up from about one-third in 2020.

At the same time, Black and Latino voters appeared slightly less likely to support Harris than they were to back Biden four years ago, according to AP VoteCast.

About 8 in 10 Black voters backed Harris, down from the roughly 9 in 10 who backed Biden. More than half of Hispanic voters supported Harris, but that was down slightly from the roughly 6 in 10 who backed Biden in 2020. Trump's support among those groups appeared to rise slightly compared to 2020. Collectively, those small gains yielded an outsize outcome.

Trump focus on immigration, economy and culture worked

For all of the showmanship, profanity and name-calling, Trump ultimately won over voters with grand promises to improve the economy, block the flow of immigrants on the Southern border and his siren call to "make America great again."

He also appealed to religious voters in both parties by seizing on the Democrats' support for the transgender community.

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Overall, about half of Trump voters said inflation was the biggest issue factoring into their election decisions. About as many said that of the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border, according to AP VoteCast.

He papered over the fact that the economy by many conventional metrics is robust — inflation is largely in check and wages are up — while border crossings have dropped dramatically. He talked right past the facts and through relentless repetition convinced voters.

He also sold them on the promise of the largest mass deportation effort in U.S. history, although he has not explained how such an operation would work. And he is threatening to impose massive tariffs on key products from China and other American adversaries, which economists warn could dramatically boost prices for average Americans.

Ultimately, Trump's victory may have had as much to do with the fundamental challenges Harris faced all along. Facing deep voter frustration over the direction of the country — with Biden's approval rating dismal — she never did distance herself from her party's sitting president. Though Trump has now been the central figure in American politics for nine years, he convinced voters he represented change.

Trump will take charge of a nation with deep fissures

Trump is poised to inherit a nation with deepening political and cultural fissures and a worried electorate.

When asked what most influenced their vote, about half of voters cited the future of democracy. That was higher than the share who answered the same way about inflation, immigration or abortion policy. And it crosses over the two major parties: About two-thirds of Harris voters and about a third of Trump voters said the future of democracy was the most important factor in their votes.

That's not surprising given the realities of the Trump era and the rhetoric of the campaign.

Trump refused to acknowledge his 2020 defeat and watched his supporters ransack the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as Congress convened to certify Democrat Joe Biden's victory. Trump even mused two days before Election Day that he "shouldn't have left" the White House after repeatedly promising retribution to his political enemies.

Harris, by the end of the campaign, joined other critics — including Trump's former White House chief of staff — in describing the former president and now president-elect as a "fascist." Trump, meanwhile, labeled Harris a "fascist" and a "communist."

Trump's criminal baggage not an issue for many voters

Incomplete returns show that Donald Trump's criminal convictions, additional pending indictments and any concerns over his most incendiary rhetoric simply were not a sufficient concern to keep tens of millions of Americans from voting for him.

According to AP VoteCast, slightly more than half of voters said Harris has the moral character to be president, compared to about 4 in 10 who said that about Trump. It's quite possible, as Trump has said many times on the campaign trail, that his legal peril actually helped him.

As it stands, Trump may never actually face sentencing in a New York business fraud case in which he was convicted of 34 felonies. For now, his sentencing is scheduled for later this month.

He's already had one federal indictment in Florida dismissed, sparing him from a trial on whether he flouted U.S. law on protecting national security secrets. And he's made clear he would use his power as president to spike the federal case against him for his role in the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. That would leave a Georgia racketeering case pending against Trump and others accused of trying to subvert the 2020 election result.

'Bro' politics beats out abortion concerns

It was the first presidential election after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and ended a woman's national right to terminate a pregnancy. It was also the first time that a Republican presidential candidate overly courted males with a hypermasculine approach.

But the "gender gap" that resulted was not enough to sink Trump.

About half of women backed Harris, while about half of men went for Trump, according to AP VoteCast. That appears largely consistent with the shares for Biden and Trump in 2020.

Democrats face leadership crisis with urgent need to regroup

Just a few months ago, Harris generated incredible excitement across the party. She raised more than a billion dollars seemingly overnight. She dominated her debate with Trump. She filled arenas. And just days ago drew a massive crowd to the Ellipse and National Mall.

But in the end, it wasn't enough.

Meanwhile, Republicans have claimed control of the Senate, ousting veteran Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and putting several other Democratic incumbents on the edge of defeat. The results will give Trump a significant advantage in pushing his agenda through Congress. Their only hope is to win a House majority built mostly through key suburban districts in California and New York, but that was far from certain early Wednesday.

And either way, the results shrink Democrats' geographic footprint and, with Brown's loss, diminish the kind of working class voice that can counter Trump's appeal.

Trump already succeeded in painting Democrats as out-of-touch culturally with middle America. Now Democrats are left to wonder how to reconnect with parts of the country and slices of the electorate that rejected them.

Iran's currency falls to an all-time low as Trump clinches the US presidency

By AMIR VAHDAT and NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's currency fell on Wednesday to an all-time low as Donald Trump clinched the U.S. presidency again, signaling new challenges ahead for Tehran as it remains locked in the wars raging in the Middle East.

The rial traded at 703,000 rials to the dollar, traders in Tehran said, breaking through the record before recovering slightly later in the day to 696,150 to \$1.

It wasn't immediately clear what caused the rally but Iran's Central Bank has in the past flooded the market with more hard currencies as an attempt to improve the rate.

The slide comes as the rial already faces considerable woes over its sharp slide in value — and as the mood on the streets of Tehran among some darkened.

"One-hundred percent he will intensify the sanctions," said Amir Aghaeian, a 22-year-old student. "Things that are not in our favor will be worse. Our economy and social situation will surely get worse."

He added: "I feel the country is going to blow up."

In 2015, at the time of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, the rial was at 32,000 to \$1. On July 30, the day that Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian was sworn in and started his term, the rate was 584,000 to \$1.

Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord in 2018, sparking years of tensions between the countries that persist today.

Iran's economy has struggled for years under crippling international sanctions over its rapidly advancing nuclear program, which now enriches uranium at near weapons-grade levels.

Pezeshkian, elected after a helicopter crash killed hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi in May, came to power on a promise to reach a deal to ease Western sanctions.

However, Iran's government has for weeks been trying to downplay the effect on Tehran of whoever won Tuesday's election in the United States. That stance continued on Wednesday with a brief comment from Fatemeh Mohajerani, a spokeswoman for Pezeshkian's administration.

"The election of the U.S. president doesn't have anything specifically to do with us," she said. "The major policies of America and the Islamic Republic are fixed, and they won't heavily change by people replacing others. We have already made necessary preparations in advance."

By midday Wednesday in the Middle East, Donald Trump was elected the 47th president of the United States in a remarkable political comeback.

Tensions still remain high between the nations, 45 years after the 1979 U.S. Embassy takeover and 444-

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day hostage crisis that followed. Before the revolution, the rial traded at 70 for \$1.

Iran remains locked in the Mideast wars roiling the region, with its allies battered — militant groups and fighters of its self-described “Axis of Resistance,” including the militant Palestinian Hamas, Lebanon’s Hezbollah and Yemen’s Houthi rebels.

Israel is pressing its war in the Gaza Strip targeting Hamas and its invasion of Lebanon amid devastating attacks against Hezbollah. At the same time, Iran still appears to be assessing damage from Israel’s strikes on the Islamic Republic on Oct. 26 in response to two Iranian ballistic missile attacks.

Iran has threatened to retaliate against Israel — where U.S. troops now man a missile defense battery. Mahmoud Parvari, a 71-year-old taxi driver in Tehran, did not mince his words when discussing Trump. “I feel like I’m seeing the devil,” he said. “He looks like Satan, his eyes are like Satan and his behavior is like a mad man.”

But another taxi driver, who only gave his last name as Hosseini, offered a more pragmatic view. “If it helps my country I would definitely” make a deal with Trump, he said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s Trump or anyone else. After all he is a human being.”

Today in History: November 7, first woman elected to Congress

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Nov. 7, the 312th day of 2024. There are 54 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 7, 1916, Jeannette Rankin of Montana won election to the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the first woman elected to either chamber of Congress.

Also on this date:

In 1917, Russia’s Bolshevik Revolution took place as forces led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin overthrew the provisional government of Alexander Kerensky.

In 1940, Washington state’s original Tacoma Narrows Bridge, nicknamed “Gallop Gertie,” collapsed into Puget Sound during a windstorm just four months after opening to traffic.

In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt won an unprecedented fourth term in office, defeating Republican Thomas E. Dewey.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon was reelected in a landslide over Democrat George McGovern.

In 1989, L. Douglas Wilder won the governor’s race in Virginia, becoming the first elected Black governor in U.S. history; David N. Dinkins was elected New York City’s first Black mayor.

In 1991, basketball star Magic Johnson announced that he had tested positive for HIV and was retiring.

In 2011, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Michael Jackson’s doctor, Conrad Murray, of involuntary manslaughter for supplying a powerful anesthetic implicated in the entertainer’s 2009 death. (Murray was sentenced to four years in prison. He served two years and was released in October 2013.)

In 2020, Democrat Joe Biden clinched victory over President Donald Trump as a win in Pennsylvania pushed Biden over the threshold of 270 Electoral College votes. Trump refused to concede.

Today’s Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Jim Kaat is 86. Former Singer Johnny Rivers is 82. Singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell is 81. Retired Army general and former CIA Director David Petraeus is 72. Actor Christopher Knight (TV: “The Brady Bunch”) is 67. DJ-producer David Guetta is 57. Actor Yunjin Kim is 51. Rock singer Lorde is 28.