

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Tuesday, Jan. 21

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, mixed vegetables, fruit, biscuits.  
School Breakfast: Waffles.  
School Lunch: Hot dots, tater tots.  
Boys JH Basketball hosts Northwestern, 7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.  
Girls Basketball hosts Northwestern (JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)  
Boys Wrestling Tri-angular at Clark with Clark/Willow Lake and Hamlin, 6 p.m.  
Boys JH Invitational Wrestling at Simmons Middle School, 4 p.m.

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



Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.  
Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

## Wednesday, Jan. 22

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Muffins.  
School Lunch: Chicken Lo Mein, mixed vegetables.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.  
Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

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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.**

## Trump Swears In

Donald Trump, 78, was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States at the Capitol Rotunda yesterday, officially beginning his second nonconsecutive term. JD Vance, 40, became the third-youngest vice president in US history.

Trump's inauguration is the first to feature foreign leaders in attendance, including Argentine President Javier Milei, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni. Notable tech leaders, including Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg, also attended. Carrie Underwood sang "America the Beautiful," while opera tenor Christopher Macchio sang the national anthem.

Trump also signed a round of executive orders, including suspending the US TikTok ban for 75 days, withdrawing from the Paris climate treaty again, and revoking 78 Biden-era executive actions. He also pardoned about 1,500 defendants charged in the Jan. 6, 2021, storming of the US Capitol and commuted six defendants' sentences.

Separately, Joe Biden preemptively pardoned his family members, Dr. Anthony Fauci, and others, as his last act as president to guard them from potential politically motivated investigations.

## O-H-I-O

The Ohio State Buckeyes won the College Football Playoff National Championship last night, beating the Notre Dame Fighting Irish by a score of 34-23. The win is the program's ninth title and its first since 2014.

Ohio State largely controlled the first half of the game, building a 31-7 lead through the middle of the third quarter. Notre Dame, led by two touchdowns from receiver Jaden Greathouse, cut the deficit to eight with four minutes to go before Ohio State iced the game with a field goal.

The victory capped a cathartic turn of fortune for the Buckeyes, who lost twice, including dropping the regular-season finale for the fourth straight year, to rival Michigan. Entering the inaugural 12-team playoff as a No. 8 seed, Ohio State beat No. 9 Tennessee, No. 1 Oregon, and No. 5 Texas, each by double digits to reach the championship. As many as 16 players from the senior-laden team are projected to be selected in this year's NFL draft.

## Frigid Air Grips US

A massive Arctic blast is delivering the coldest temperatures of the winter season to much of the US, while Gulf Coast and Southeast states face a rare winter storm. The National Weather Service warns this could be the coldest air in several years, with nearly all Lower 48 states—except for South Florida—seeing freezing temperatures.

Nearly 300 million Americans are set to experience below-average temperatures, with some areas seeing temperatures drop up to 45 degrees below normal and wind chills as low as minus 55 degrees. Around 30 million people from Texas to northern Florida and the Carolinas may face an unusual mix of snow, sleet, and freezing rain. Up to 10 inches of snow is possible in typically milder areas. See detailed forecasts for across the US.

The culprit is a shift in the polar vortex—a mass of low-pressure, cold air that rotates above the Earth's polar regions. A weakened polar jet stream changes wind patterns and temporarily brings Arctic air southward.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

"FireAid" benefit concert (Jan. 30) expands as Olivia Rodrigo joins Billie Eilish, Lady Gaga, Stevie Wonder, and more at fundraiser for Los Angeles wildfire relief.

Lynne Taylor-Corbett, two-time Tony-nominated choreographer known for "Swing!" and "Footloose," dies at age 78.

Cecile Richards, former Planned Parenthood president, dies of cancer at age 67.

Man arrested in Jan. 16 stabbing of Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan; Khan is currently recovering in a hospital.

## Science & Technology

X, Bluesky roll out vertical video feeds as the status of TikTok—the short-form video-sharing platform that relies largely on the format—remains in limbo.

Study suggests sleeping pills restrict the brain's ability to clear cellular waste from the brain during non-REM sleep cycles.

Researchers detail the evolution of bacteria behind Pierce's disease, which decimates grapevines and causes \$100M in annual losses in California alone; specimen was isolated from a 120-year-old grapevine sample.

## Business & Markets

Annual World Economic Forum begins in ski resort town of Davos, Switzerland, hosting government leaders, multinational CEOs, and global financiers.

Billionaire wealth grew by \$2T in 2024, report finds; at least five trillionaires expected to emerge over next decade.

Bitcoin hits new record above \$109K after President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump launched a pair of meme coins; bitcoin has jumped roughly 40% since Trump was elected in November.

Apple under investigation by Belgium for allegedly using "blood minerals" from the Democratic Republic of Congo—mineral sources that finance armed conflict and are associated with human rights abuses.

## Politics & World Affairs

Vivek Ramaswamy (R) to run for Ohio governor and leave colead role on President Donald Trump's federal spending watchdog group, known as the Department of Government Efficiency.

Senate confirms Marco Rubio (R) as secretary of state.

UK teen pleads guilty to murder in July 2024 stabbings of three girls at Taylor Swift-themed dance class.

China executes two men for separate deadly attacks in November; one man killed 35 people in car rampage, another man killed eight people in school knife attack.

At least 100 people killed and 11,000 displaced from guerrilla violence in Colombia following the government's failed peace talks with the rival National Liberation Army.



## Child care policy proposals return to Pierre

BROOKINGS, S.D. – Nearly 40% of South Dakota’s child care programs have fewer kids enrolled than they can handle because of a shortage of workers, the latest South Dakota Child Care Task Force report found.

“The No. 1 issue why they were not able to have the desired enrollment was they just didn’t have the workforce,” said Republican state Sen. Tim Reed of Brookings. “So we need to be able to increase what we’re paying at the child care assistance level. And I think it’s gonna have to increase at other levels too. But we need to start there just to make sure we can keep these employees.”

The task force released its initial report on Jan. 10, days before lawmakers gaveled in for the 100th legislative session. The 60-plus-page document includes community success stories, data about the cost of child care, and policy suggestions.

The South Dakota Child Care Task Force includes child care providers, law makers, business leaders and others. It partnered with The Hunt Institute, which specializes in education policy.

The study uses market survey results from the South Dakota Department of Social Services and other data to demonstrate that child care providers are among the lowest wage-earners in the state, yet families are paying between 10-20% of their annual income on child care.

Child care revenue contributes not only to provider wages but often to other costs like rent, utilities for the space, food and other materials. If providers attempt to raise wages by increasing their prices, they risk pricing out the families they’re trying to serve. But with such low wages, many providers can’t hire or retain enough employees.

“The current model we have to child care is not sustainable,” Reed said. “Providers are struggling, and many are closing,”

Reed said his legislative priority is addressing the state’s contribution to the Child Care Assistance program.

The federal government provides Child Care and Development Block Grant funds to help low-income families who meet certain qualifications afford care. Those grants are then handled by a lead agency.

In South Dakota’s case, that’s the Department of Social Services. According to a recent brief from the Congressional Research Service, states have flexibility in the program outside certain federal requirements.

### **‘We have made it work’**

Some child care employees leave because they can’t afford child care for their own children.

RiAnna Kolovksy left her job with Lutheran Social Services in Sioux Falls because the level of care she wanted for her kids wasn’t financially feasible.

“This year, I would have paid over \$27,000 a year to have both of these kids in child care,” she said in 2023. “Granted, it’s a good center, and it had accreditation outside of regular state accreditation. But what job can you work that makes that feasible?”

Shortly after becoming a single-income family, the Kolovsky’s moved to a small town just south of Mitchell, where RiAnna’s husband’s family had a house and job waiting for him.

In an interview with “South Dakota Focus” just before the move, she worried about managing through the long winter with limited resources and two small kids at home.

“We have made it work,” she said in a follow up interview with SDPB in late 2024. “I have also enrolled my eldest in a part-time preschool, which has alleviated a lot of tension in that she gets a little bit of an outlet, some peer interaction, some other interaction with other adults. And it gives me an opportunity to go to the store with only one child instead of two.”

In addition to caring for her children full-time, Kolovsky has build connections with other frustrated parents around the country. Through another parent’s post lamenting child care costs on Reddit, she connected with the advocacy group Mother Forward. Kolovsky and 4-year-old joined the group for a trip to Washington in December.

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"There's nothing like walking through security at 4:45 on a Friday saying, 'Hello, I'm here to meet my senator!'" Kolovsky laughed. She was able to meeting with some of Sen. John Thune's staffers, but that wasn't the only goal of the trip.

"I also hoped to strengthen bonds with the women that I've been meeting with online for the last almost two years," Kolovsky said. "And that was just so life-giving in the way that having an in-person community is."

## **Not a sustainable model**

Back at home, Kolovsky advocates for accessible child care however she can, from Children's Day at the Capitol in Pierre to engaging in conversations over coffee with skeptical neighbors.

"You know, there was a woman who said that in her experience as a child care provider, parents might not always adjust their budgets accordingly and that might be why they feel that child care is too expensive. I met with her for coffee, and we now have a great working relationship in which we can agree on where changes need to be made."

Kolovsky understands the catch-22 in which child care providers find themselves based on her experience working with Lutheran Social Services. She remembers speaking to a local National Exchange Club and being asked how her center justified their prices.

"And I said at the time, 'I'm not sure it matters because that child care center is now closed,'" Kolovsky remembered. "Child care is not a sustainable business model, and it never has been since its inception. And I hope that more people are recognizing that this isn't just an issue of everyone should just have a parent stay home. That's not possible for all families."

## **Policy proposals yet to come**

In addition to adjustments to the Child Care Assistance program, the Child Care Task Force suggests scholarships for those entering the child care workforce. It also suggests making parents who join the child care workforce eligible for child care assistance themselves.

Reed said the task force focused its policy proposals on improving the child care workforce.

"All this really comes down to money," he said. "And if we don't have the money available, this is going to be very tough to do."

With many lawmakers concerned about a limited budget – particularly with high pricetag projects like the new men's prison already in the works – any state investment in child care is likely to be a hard sell.

Not to mention the 100th legislature features a larger-than-typical number of lawmakers who are newly elected to office. But Reed believes the strain on families and additional information provided by the task force will come a long way in communicating the need for action.

"We went through it when it came to skilled care facilities, right?" he said. "We were starving them and they were closing. And that's going to continue to happen here. So we have to figure this out, like we figured out (how) to increase the funding that was needed for skilled care facilities to make sure that they could stay viable, especially in a rural community. The same thing is going to happen. We're gonna lose child care in the rural communities first, and then it's really hard for those smaller towns to be able to grow."

How to watch 'South Dakota Focus'

The next episode of "South Dakota Focus" airs on Thursday, Jan. 23, at 8 p.m. Central time / 7 p.m. Mountain time. It can be viewed on SDPB-TV1, Facebook, YouTube and SD.net.

The episode includes:

- A mom who left the workforce to care for her kids and found an online community advocating for child care access

- New online options working to help parents find child care that meets their needs

- The South Dakota Child Care Task Force report and policy suggestions

This story was written by Jackie Hendry, host and producer of South Dakota Public Broadcasting's "South Dakota Focus," to preview the next show. It was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at [sdnewswatch.org](http://sdnewswatch.org) and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Contact us at [info@sdnewswatch.org](mailto:info@sdnewswatch.org).

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**GDILIVE.COM**

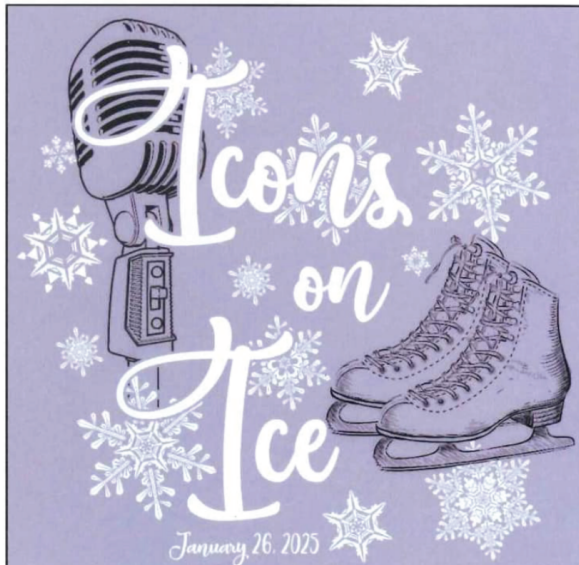


Groton Area  
Tigers

**Text Paul at  
605-397-7460**

Any interest in any of  
these basketball games on  
**GDILIVE.COM?**  
They are \$25 each.

Roncalli JV Boys  
Florence-Henry Girls C  
Roncalli Boys JV  
Roncalli Boys C  
Deuel Girls C (livestream with no commentary  
but with scoreboard - but that could change!)  
Deuel Boys C (livestream with no commentary  
but with scoreboard - but that could change!)  
Deuel Boys JV  
Vermillion Boys C  
Vermillion Boys JV  
Great Plains Lutheran Girls C  
Leola-Frederick Boys JV



Free Viewing  
sponsored by the  
Carnival of Silver  
Skates.

Free livestream  
internet provided by  
Midco

**Sunday, Jan. 26**  
2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

**GDILIVE.COM**

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## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

January 21, 2025 – 7:00pm  
City Hall – 120 N Main Street

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

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Airport Discussion – Darrell Hillestad
4. Authorization to Purchase New Mowers
5. December Finance Report
6. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 784 – Water Rates
7. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 785 – Sewer Rates
8. Minutes
9. Bills
10. Reminder: Applications are Open for Summer Recreational Positions:
  - Baseball Coordinator
  - Softball Coordinator
  - Legion Coach
  - Jr. Legion Coach
  - Jr. Teener Coach
  - Girls' Softball Coaches (U8/U10/U12/U14)
  - Day Baseball/Softball Coach
  - Concessions Manager
  - Swimming Pool Manager
11. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
12. Adjournment

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BROWN COUNTY  
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA  
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

January 21, 2025, 8:45 A.M.

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

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. First Reading of the following Ordinances:
  - a. Ord. #286 – Rezone for Lorin & Julie Flieth
  - b. Ord. #287 – Rezone for Jarod & Sarah Bierman
  - c. Ord. #288 – Rezone for James Smith/Owner: Thomas Johnson
5. Previously Postponed: Vacate a Plat: Ole Crow Addition platted by Stacy Gossman (Originally scheduled for December 31, 2024)
6. Aaron Walberg, Veteran's Service Officer
  - a. Legislative/Department Update
7. Brian Koens, Brown County Coroner
  - a. Approve Purchase of Coroner Van
8. Gene Loeschke, Director of Equalization
  - a. 2025 Assessment Plan
9. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
  - a. Set Dates & Authorize Publishing for the following Bids:
    - i. Gravel Bids
    - ii. Hot Mix Bids
    - iii. Road Oil Bids
    - iv. Equipment Rental Bids
10. Consent Calendar
  - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2025
  - b. Claims
  - c. HR Report
  - d. Claim Assignments
  - e. 2024 Sheriff Reports
  - f. Travel Requests
11. Other Business
12. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
13. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

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

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

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

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission.

Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board) - Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>



## AGENDA

### BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025 – 7:00 PM  
BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT  
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS TO BASEMENT)

- I. **Call to Order:** for Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission
- II. **Roll Call:** David North - Vice Chair, Dale Kurth, Patrick Keatts, James Meyers, Carrie Weisenburger, County Commissioner Mike Gage, Alternate Paul Johnson, and Stan Beckler-Chairman.
- III. **Approval of January 21, 2025, Agenda:** Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
- IV. **Approval of December 17, 2024, Minutes:** Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

### ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

- V. **Old Business:**
  - 1. **Sign-up sheet:** On the table by the door entrance, there is a Sign-up Sheet. Please legibly sign in and mark YES or NO if you want to speak to the Board on any Agenda Item.
  - 2. **Permits:** Anyone that has submitted a Variance Petition (VP) or a Conditional Use Petition (CUP) to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) is still required to get their required PERMITS from the Zoning Office before starting their project if their Petition gets approved. Penalties may be assessed per Ordinance when starting projects without proper permits in place.
- VI. **New Business:** Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA).
  - 1. **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in a Rural Urban District (RU) described as Lot 4, “Jark Replat of Block 10 to Stratford” in the SW1/4 of Section 4-T121N-R62W of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (421 Nelson Avenue; Stratford, East Rondell Twp.).
  - 2. **Variance for Shelterbelt Setbacks** in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as the S1/2 of the SW1/4 of Section 11-T122N-R61W of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (Approx. 40446 138<sup>th</sup> Street; West Hanson Twp.).
  - 3. **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in a Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) described as Lot 7, “Larkota Acres First Addition” in the N1/2 of the SW1/4 of Section 3-T121N-R64W of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (38507 Larkota Drive; Warner Twp.).
  - 4. **Variance to Building Setbacks** in a Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) described as Lot 7, “Larkota Acres First Addition” in the N1/2 of the SW1/4 of Section 3-T121N-R64W of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (38507 Larkota Drive; Warner Twp.).

5. **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in a Heavy Industrial District (H-I) described as Lot 2, "Wheat Growers West Subdivision" in the N1/2 of Section 21-T123N-R64W of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (38435 133<sup>rd</sup> Street; Aberdeen Twp.).

VII. **Other Business:**

*Completed as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) & going to Planning Commission*

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# AGENDA

## BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025 – 7:00 PM  
BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT  
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS TO BASEMENT)

## PLANNING COMMISSION

I. **Old Business:**

II. **New Business:** *Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as [Planning Commission](#).*

10. **Rezone Petition** for properties described as Lot 1 & 2, "Johnston Subdivision" in the SE1/4 of Section 24-T123N-R62W of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (39996 134<sup>th</sup> Street & 13385 400<sup>th</sup> Avenue; Henry Twp.) to be rezoned from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG).

11. **Other Business:** Executive Session if requested.

12. **Motion to Adjourn:** 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

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## GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT 06-6

### MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

P.O. Box 410  
502 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Groton, SD 57445  
Fax: (605) 397-8453

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

P.O. Box 410  
810 North 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Groton, SD 57445  
Fax: (605) 397-2344

#### Groton Area School

##### Board

Grant Rix, President  
Nick Strom, VP  
Debra Gengerke  
Martin Weismantel  
Tigh Flihs  
Travis Harder  
Dr. Heather Lerseth-Flihs,  
DVM

##### Superintendent

Joseph J. Schwan  
(605) 397-2351 ext. 1003  
Joe.Schwan@k12.sd.us

##### High School Principal

Shelby Edwards  
(605) 397-8381 ext. 1004  
Shelby.Edwards@k12.sd.us

##### Elementary Principal

Brett Schwan  
(605) 397-2317  
Brett.Schwan@k12.sd.us

##### Business Manager

Becky Hubsch  
(605) 397-2351 ext. 1008  
Becky.Hubsch@k12.sd.us

##### Athletic Director

Alexa Schuring  
(605) 397-8381 ext. 1068  
Alexa.Schuring@k12.sd.us

##### Opportunity Coordinator

Jodi Schwan  
(605) 397-8381 ext. 1015  
Jodi.Schwan@k12.sd.us

##### K-12 School Counselor

Emily Neely  
(605) 397-2317  
Emily.VanGerpen@k12.sd.us

##### Technology Coordinator

Aaron Helvig  
(605) 397-8381 ext. 1025  
Aaron.Helvig@k12.sd.us

### JH Boys BB / HS Girls Basketball Game

Northwestern @ Groton Area  
Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

#### Game Times/Locations: Main Court in Arena

- 4:00 PM CT → 7<sup>th</sup> Grade JH BB
- 5:00 PM CT → 8<sup>th</sup> Grade JH BB
- 6:00 PM CT → Girls JV
- 7:30 PM CT → Girls Varsity
  - o *Halftime Entertainment: Sugar Babes and Sweet Sensation Dancers*

**\*Pep Band will be playing during pre-game warm-ups.**

**Prior to the Girls Varsity game, the National Anthem will be first, with Varsity Introductions/Lineups to follow.**

**ADMISSION & SPECTATORS: Adults: \$5.00 Students: \$4.00.**

**CONCESSIONS:** Will be available

**LOCKER ROOM:** JH Boys will use the locker room in the Old Gym.  
HS Girls will use the far back locker room down the JH Locker Room Hallway.

**Team Benches – Groton:** South Bench  
**Northwestern:** North Bench

**ATHLETIC TRAINER:** There will be an athletic trainer on site. AED is located near the ticket booth.

**Livestream:** [www.GDlive.com](http://www.GDlive.com) or [Groton High School | High School Sports | Home | Hudl](#)

**JH Officials:** Kasey Kurtz, Kristi Zoellner, Marty Weismantel

**JV/Varsity Officials:** David Planteen, Justin Deutsch, Tanner Jondahl

**Announcer:** Mike Imrie

**JH/JV/V Scoreboard:** Kristen Dolan

**JV/V Official Book:** Alexa Schuring

**JV/V Shot Clock Operator:** Kristi Zoellner

**National Anthem:** Groton HS Pep Band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh

**\*\*Full Circle Ag is sponsoring Free Popcorn Night!**

Thank you,  
Alexa Schuring, Athletic Director

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## "Its Here"

Lately I've been reminded of a blockbuster movie from my youth. It contains a scene that even those who never saw the film are likely to recognize. A sleeping family is jolted awake, and from the foot of the bed the young daughter sings "they're here!"

One might wonder why I'm thinking so much about Poltergeist. That quote started ringing in my brain during our last monthly clinic meeting, when our lab director reported on the previous day's influenza statistics. Nearly 90% of the tests were positive. Respiratory viruses may not seem like a natural comparison to malevolent ghosts, but they're here, and things are likely to get worse before they get better.

Last season, there were over 20,000 confirmed cases of influenza in South Dakota. Over 800 people were hospitalized. Nearly 50 died.

When I diagnose someone with influenza, I warn them to expect misery. They will likely have fevers, body aches, exhaustion, and of course cough. Some people are out of commission for only a few days, others for two weeks. Some people can barely get out of bed, and some people just feel a bit run down.

The flu shot helps, but it is far from perfect. People who get the shot can still get influenza. Generally it is between 40 and 60% effective at preventing infection. Still, those who had the shot and get sick anyway are significantly less likely to be hospitalized. So long as influenza is circulating you should still get your shot. It isn't too late even if you already had influenza, as the shot contains 3 different strains.

Of course, things like washing your hands, not touching your face, and avoiding sick people are also useful. It can be hard to distinguish one respiratory virus from another.

Influenza tends to strike more suddenly than many others, but symptoms have significant overlap. Testing is the best way to distinguish whether or not your illness is influenza. Influenza is also one of the few viruses for which we have specific treatments, so getting that answer can be useful. Treatment is generally used for those at higher risk, such as young children, people over 65, those who have chronic health conditions or are pregnant. Importantly, medicine should be started within the first 48 hours of illness.

So what can you do if you get sick? First, stay home! Get lots of rest. Drink lots of fluids. Fever reducers and over the counter pain medications can help you be more comfortable. Pseudoephedrine can help the congestion. Guaifenesin can help thin the mucous. Dextromethorphan or honey can help soothe the cough.

Finally, watch out for signs that you are getting sicker instead of better. Influenza can lead to ear infections, sinus infections, pneumonia, and things that are even more serious, like bloodstream infections, inflammation of the heart or brain, and kidney failure. If something doesn't seem right, get it checked out.

*Debra Johnston, MD. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a Family Medicine Doctor at Avera Medical Group in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org), Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Threads. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB), providing health information based on science, built on trust.*



**Debra Johnston, MD**

## Bon Homme County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: South Dakota Highway 50, mile marker 364, three miles west of Tabor, SD

When: 1:52 a.m., Sunday, January 19, 2025

Driver 1: 29-year-old male from Tyndall, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2012 Ford Escape

Seat belt Used: No

Bon Homme County, S.D.- One person died in a single vehicle crash that occurred early Sunday morning three miles west of Tabor, SD.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2012 Ford Escape was traveling westbound on SD Highway 50 near mile marker 364 when for an unknown reason, the vehicle left the roadway and entered the south ditch. The vehicle rolled, ejecting the driver.

The driver was airlifted to a Sioux Falls hospital where he later passed away from his injuries.

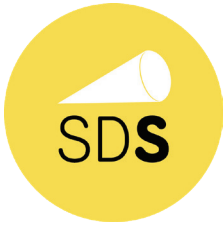
The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

## Service Notice: Sandra Oliver

Sandra Jeanne Oliver, 83 of Sioux Falls, SD (formerly of Groton, SD) passed away on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at the Dougherty Hospice House in Sioux Falls, SD.

A Mass of Christian Burial and celebration will be held at 1:00 p.m., on Saturday, February 22nd at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Groton, SD. Father Gregory Tschakert will officiate. A time of sharing and fellowship will be held in the church hall after the service. Inurnment will follow in the spring under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel of Groton, SD.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Biden commutes sentence of Peltier, convicted of killing FBI agents on Pine Ridge

BY: JEFF BEACH - JANUARY 20, 2025 11:39 AM

President Joe Biden on Monday commuted the sentence of Leonard Peltier, a Native American activist who was serving life in prison after being convicted of killing two FBI agents 50 years ago on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

Peltier, 80, is a citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in North Dakota.

Biden's order as he leaves office is to take effect Feb. 18. A statement from Biden said Peltier should serve the remainder of his life sentence at home.

NDN Collective, an Indigenous rights organization in Rapid City, issued a news release Monday celebrating Peltier's commutation. The release included a quote attributed to Peltier: "It's finally over – I'm going home. I want to show the world I'm a good person with a good heart. I want to help the people, just like my grandmother taught me."

Peltier's sister, Betty Ann Peltier, welcomed the news.

"I am going to cook him the biggest meal I can," she said. "Fry bread and foods he hasn't eaten for years."

She said her brother is suffering from the effects of diabetes, has heart trouble and uses a walker. There has been a home waiting for him on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, she said, but she hopes he will stay with her in Fargo, North Dakota.

She had yet to communicate with her brother as of Monday morning.

According to the FBI, in 1975, agents Ron Williams and Jack Coler were attempting to arrest a robbery suspect on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The agents pursued a vehicle, with Peltier among the people inside. A fatal shootout ensued, with the two agents and Joseph Stuntz, a member of the American Indian Movement, killed. Peltier has maintained that he is innocent.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said in a statement his office strongly opposes any change to Peltier's sentence, calling the deaths of the agents "cold-blooded murders."

"That conviction has been reviewed and upheld by no fewer than 22 federal judges since then," Jackley said Monday.

Tracey Wilkie of Fargo grew up on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and said she was raised hearing the story of Leonard Peltier.

She called herself a "lifetime supporter and organizer for his freedom." She helped lead a rally for Peltier



**A prayer for Leonard Peltier is sung to a drumbeat on June 20, 2024, outside the federal courthouse in Fargo, North Dakota. Demonstrators were calling for the release of Peltier, who was convicted at a trial in Fargo for the deaths of FBI agents in South Dakota in 1975.** (Jeff Beach/North Dakota Monitor)

last year when he was up for parole, which was denied.

The rally was on the steps of the federal courthouse in Fargo where Peltier was convicted.

"So many people have been working behind the scenes," Wilkie said. "It's going to give a lot of people hope."

Peltier has been serving two consecutive life terms in prison, most recently in Florida.

According to Biden's statement, tribal nations, Nobel Peace laureates, former law enforcement officials — including the former U.S. attorney whose office oversaw Peltier's prosecution and appeal — and human rights organizations support granting Peltier clemency. They cite Peltier's advanced age, illnesses, his close ties to and leadership in the Native American community, and the substantial length of time he has already spent in prison.

A statement from the White House indicates that Biden's action does not pardon Peltier from his crimes, but will allow him to spend his remaining days at home.

North Dakota state Rep. Jayme Davis, D-Rolette, a Turtle Mountain citizen, is among Peltier's supporters. She said her father attended school in Belcourt with Peltier.

"It's fabulous," Davis said from the North Dakota legislative session in Bismarck after hearing the news. "I was in committee when I heard the news and almost screamed out loud."

Nick Tilsen, founder and CEO of NDN Collective, credited "50 years of intergenerational resistance, organizing and advocacy" for winning the commutation.

"Leonard Peltier's liberation is our liberation — we will honor him by bringing him back to his homelands to live out the rest of his days surrounded by loved ones, healing, and reconnecting with his land and culture," Tilsen said.

*North Dakota Monitor Deputy Editor Jeff Beach is based in the Fargo area. His interests include agriculture, renewable energy and rural issues.*

## Trump officials outline planned immigration crackdown, with Noem in key role

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JANUARY 20, 2025 10:39 AM

WASHINGTON — Shortly after being inaugurated as the 47th president, Donald Trump is expected to sign 10 executive orders that will begin his immigration crackdown at the southern border, incoming Trump officials said during a call with reporters early Monday.

The first order is likely to be a declaration of a national emergency at the southern border, officials said. The specifics of the orders were not yet available on Monday morning.

"What this action does is it deploys armed forces, erect physical barriers by directing (Department of Defense) and (Department of Homeland Security) secretaries to finish the wall along the border, and allows for counter (Unmanned Aircraft System) capabilities near the southern borders," an incoming Trump official said, speaking on background. "In addition, specifically, it directs the secretary of defense to deploy additional personnel to the border crisis, including members of the armed forces and the National Guard."

Trump's pick to carry out his immigration plans, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, completed her confirmation hearing last week and is likely to get a vote in the Senate in the coming days.

Trump's pick for defense secretary, Fox News personality Pete Hegseth, was grilled by Senate Democrats during his confirmation hearing, but is considered likely to be approved by Republicans when his nomination is brought to the floor.

Additionally, the executive orders will clarify the U.S. military's role in protecting U.S. territory, the Trump official said.

"What this action does is it assigns the mission to seal our borders and institutes campaign planning requirements for the military," the official said. "The executive order directs the military to prioritize our borders and territorial integrity and strategic planning for its operations to maintain sovereignty, territory

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integrity and security of the U.S against all forms of invasion, including unlawful mass migration, narcotic trafficking, human smuggling, attacking and other criminal activities.”

Some of the incoming administration’s actions are likely to face immediate legal challenges. Officials said they plan to move to end asylum — something that is in U.S. law — as well as birthright citizenship, which is guaranteed in the 14th Amendment and affirmed in an 1898 U.S. Supreme Court case.

“The federal government will not recognize automatic birthright citizenship for children of illegal aliens born in the United States,” a Trump official said.

Some of the executive orders outlined Monday would reinstate policies from the first Trump administration such as the so-called Remain in Mexico policy.

Under that order, asylum seekers were required to remain in Mexico — often in dangerous circumstances — while their asylum cases were pending in the courts, something that can take months or even years.

Another order would reinstate a ban on so-called “catch and release,” which allows migrants who are detained to live in U.S. communities while they await having their asylum cases heard by an immigration judge.

One of the executive orders will also designate cartel groups as global terrorists.

Another will suspend refugee resettlement operations for at least four months.

Another will direct the attorney general to pursue capital punishment — the death penalty — for the murder of law enforcement officials and capital crimes committed by people in the country without legal authorization.

“This is about public safety, and this is about the victims of some of the most violent, abusive criminals we’ve seen enter our country in our lifetime,” the Trump official said. “And it ends today.”

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



**Migrants from Mexico and Guatemala are apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officers after crossing a section of border wall into the U.S. on Jan. 4, 2025 in Ruby, Arizona.** (Photo by

Brandon Bell/Getty Images)

## Major GOP-led immigration measure passed by U.S. Senate, heads to House

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JANUARY 20, 2025 6:03 PM**

WASHINGTON — On the first day of Donald Trump’s presidency, the U.S. Senate Monday passed a bill that would require the expansion of mass detention for immigrants charged or arrested for property crimes.

In a 64-35 vote, 12 Democrats joined Republicans to send the bill, S. 5, known as the Laken Riley Act, back to the House for final passage due to two amendments that were agreed to by senators.

One amendment from Texas GOP Sen. John Cornyn would add the assault of a law enforcement officer as an offense requiring mandatory detention.

Another amendment, from Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa, would also require mandatory detention requirements for “any crime that results in death or serious bodily injury to another person.”



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When the measure is passed by the House, it'll likely be one of the first bills signed into law by Trump, an early victory after he ran a presidential campaign promising mass deportations of immigrants in the country without proper legal authorization.

Trump is set to sign 10 executive orders to put in motion his immigration crackdown at the southern border.

The bill is named after 22-year-old Laken Riley, a nursing student who was murdered by a man who immigration authorities say entered the country illegally and was previously charged with shoplifting.

The measure would not only greatly expand the detention of immigrants arrested or charged with crimes outlined in the measure, but would give state attorneys general broad discretion to challenge federal immigration policy if enacted into law.

Immigration attorneys and experts have warned the measure could have far-reaching ramifications, such as subjecting some migrants — including children and teens — to rapid detention and deportation.

They also argue that the bill would not only affect undocumented people, but would ensnare some immigrants with legal status and have the potential to interfere with the issuing of visas on the international stage.

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



**A barrier is erected around the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 3, 2025, as law enforcement prepares for the beginning of the 119th Congress and certification of the Electoral College votes.** (Photo by Ariana Figueroa/States Newsroom)

## Donald Trump is sworn in as president of the United States

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - JANUARY 20, 2025 11:52 AM**

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump took the presidential oath of office for the second time Monday during an inauguration ceremony inside the U.S. Capitol rotunda.

The swearing-in marked the culmination of a four-year journey for Trump, whom many Republicans distanced themselves from following the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, but nonetheless supported during his third campaign for the White House. Trump's running mate, J.D. Vance of Ohio, was sworn in as vice president.

"Many people thought it was impossible for me to stage such a historic political comeback," Trump said during his inaugural address following the swearing-in. "But as you see today, here I am — the American people have spoken."

Trump spent much of his speech detailing the executive orders he plans to sign later Monday addressing immigration, energy and more.

"With these actions we will begin the complete restoration of America and the revolution of common sense," he said.

He pledged to declare a national emergency at the southern border, which drew a standing ovation from the audience in the rotunda. He said all illegal entry into the United States would be "immediately halted" and vowed to begin the process of deporting "millions and millions" of undocumented immigrants.

"As commander in chief, I have no higher responsibility than to defend our country from threats and invasions, and that is exactly what I am going to do," Trump said.

Trump defeated the Democratic presidential nominee, former Vice President Kamala Harris, in November's general election, after receiving 312 Electoral College votes to her 226.

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**Donald Trump at his inauguration ceremony in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 20, 2025 in Washington, D.C. Trump took office for his second term as the 47th president of the United States.** (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

He also won the popular vote with 77.3 million votes, 49.9%, compared to Harris' 75 million, 48.4%. Harris attended the inaugural ceremony with her husband, Doug Emhoff.

The inauguration was supposed to take place outside the Capitol building on the terrace overlooking the National Mall, but Trump announced Friday he wanted it moved indoors amid polar temperatures.

It was the first time since former President Ronald Reagan's inauguration the ceremony was held in the rotunda. Looking on along with top government officials was a trio of billionaires — Mark Zuckerberg of Meta, Amazon's Jeff Bezos and tech entrepreneur Elon Musk.

Some of the guests and supporters who couldn't fit inside the rotunda watched on large screens inside the Capitol Visitor Center or at the Capital One Arena in downtown Washington, D.C.

Trump later in the afternoon was expected to return to the arena, where he rallied with supporters

on Sunday, for the traditional inaugural parade that was moved inside.

## 'The envy of every nation'

Trump's first speech of the day, in the Capitol rotunda, focused extensively on his vision for the country, in which he sharply criticized the current condition of the United States while former President Joe Biden listened.

"The Golden Age of America begins right now," Trump said, vowing to "put America first" during his next four years in the White House.

"From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world," he said, noting that the United States "will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer."

The president, who said he wants to be a "peacemaker" and a "unifier," pointed to the hostage and ceasefire deal made between Israel and Hamas last week.

Trump said he would declare a "national energy emergency" later Monday and reiterated his "drill, baby, drill" approach when it comes to oil and gas production.

He also called for an "External Revenue Service" that would collect "all tariffs, duties and revenues."

Trump said he would sign an executive order to "immediately stop all government censorship and bring back free speech to America."

He said he wants to create a "color-blind" and "merit-based" society and said "it will henceforth be the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders: male and female."

He also echoed his pledge to take control of the Panama Canal, to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America" as well as to revert Alaska's Mount Denali back to "Mount McKinley."

## Back to campaign rhetoric

Trump bid farewell to Biden and former first lady Jill Biden after the rotunda ceremony, before they departed on a helicopter. The Bidens were scheduled to travel to California as they began their life after the White House.

Trump then gave a freewheeling, 35-minute speech in the Capitol Visitor Center's Emancipation Hall, which event organizers used as an overflow room to accommodate governors, lawmakers' spouses, the

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diplomatic corps and others who couldn't fit inside the rotunda.

"I just want to say you're a younger, far more beautiful audience than I just spoke to and I want to keep it off the record," he said, later adding he gave them the "A+ treatment."

Trump's second speech was more reminiscent of his campaign rallies than the official speech he gave during the rotunda ceremony. He reiterated false claims he's made about his 2020 election loss to Biden and the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol that was spurred on by those false statements.

"I was going to talk about that. They said, 'Please, don't bring that up right now. You can bring it up tomorrow.' I said how about now," Trump said. "We're giving you a little more information than we gave upstairs."

Trump said he didn't want to make his first speech "complicated," he wanted to make it "beautiful and unifying."

"Then, when they said we have a group of people who are serious Trump fans, I said 'This is the time to tell those stories,'" he said.

Trump also spoke at length about border security and immigration during his second speech, saying it has become a problem during Biden's term as president.

"I think it probably was the number one issue for me back in 2015, 2016," Trump said. "This border is much worse. We fixed the border. It was totally fixed. There was nothing to talk about."

## Flags at full staff

Trump signed several documents in the President's Room by the U.S. Senate chamber Monday afternoon, including a proclamation that the U.S. flag be flown at full staff for this inauguration and all future inauguration days.

Then-President Biden ordered U.S. flags to be flown at half staff until Jan. 28, the customary 30-day period, to commemorate former President Jimmy Carter, who died in December.

Last week, U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana ordered the flags at the U.S. Capitol to be flown at full staff on Inauguration Day. Some Republican-led states followed suit.

## Senate moves on Trump nominees

The Senate began confirming Trump's Cabinet nominees later Monday, taking a 99-0 vote to make former Florida Sen. Marco Rubio the secretary of state.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said he plans to confirm other nominees as soon as possible, with a vote expected later this week on John Ratcliffe to be the next director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

"Our priority here in the Senate for the next few weeks is getting President Trump's nominees confirmed, so that he has the team that he needs in place to deliver," Thune said.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, supported Rubio during the floor vote after detailing how he and others in the party will approach their advice and consent responsibility for Trump's second term.

"We will neither rubber-stamp nominees we feel are grossly unqualified nor will we reflexively oppose nominees that deserve serious consideration," Schumer said.

The Senate began holding hearings last week on several of Trump's picks, including hedge fund manager Scott Bessent for Treasury secretary, former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi to run the Justice Department, former North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum for Interior secretary, former Fox News commentator Pete Hegseth to run the Pentagon, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem for Homeland Security secretary, former Texas state legislator Eric Scott Turner for Department of Housing and Urban Development secretary, and former White House budget director Russ Vought to run the Office of Management and Budget once again.

Hearings are scheduled this week for several other nominees.

*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.*

*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.*

## Biden pardons his family members, Fauci, Milley and Jan. 6 committee members and staff

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - JANUARY 20, 2025 10:01 AM

WASHINGTON — Hours before his four-year term ended, President Joe Biden issued preemptive pardons early Monday to several officials and lawmakers who have been the target of incoming President-elect Donald Trump's threats of retaliation as well as several members of his family.

Biden pardoned retired Gen. Mark Milley, Dr. Anthony Fauci, members and staff of the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol, and Capitol and D.C. Metropolitan Police officers who testified before the committee.

"I believe in the rule of law, and I am optimistic that the strength of our legal institutions will ultimately prevail over politics. But these are exceptional circumstances, and I cannot in good conscience do nothing. Baseless and politically motivated investigations wreak havoc on the lives, safety, and financial security of targeted individuals and their families," Biden said in a statement Monday morning.

"Even when individuals have done nothing wrong — and in fact have done the right thing — and will ultimately be exonerated, the mere fact of being investigated or prosecuted can irreparably damage reputations and finances," Biden said.

Just last month during an interview with NBC News' "Meet the Press with Kristen Welker," Trump said that Rep. Bennie Thompson and former Rep. Liz Cheney "lied" and "should go to jail." The Mississippi Democrat and Wyoming Republican led the panel that investigated the Capitol attack on Jan. 6, 2021.

On that day a violent mob of Trump supporters marched to the Capitol — at Trump's urging — and assaulted over 140 police officers and caused upwards of \$2.8 million in damage to the Capitol, according to the Department of Justice.

Trump has promised to pardon those who were convicted on or pleaded guilty to charges related to the attack, describing them as "hostages," "patriots" and "warriors." Approximately 1,580 have been charged, according to the latest Department of Justice figures.

Former U.S. Capitol Police Sgt. Aquilino Gonell, who was among law enforcement officers to testify before the Jan. 6 committee, wrote on X Sunday that "The law and order dude is about to pardon those who assaulted the police. Collectively more than 40 rioters attacked me that day."

Milley was chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Trump's first administration and continued into Biden's time in the Oval Office. The retired general is on record describing Trump as a "fascist" and a "wannabe dictator."

Milley has been the target of Trump's ire after he refused orders from Trump — among them a directive to send the military to quash protesters in D.C. during a wave of nationwide demonstrations after the murder by police of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Trump has called for political retribution against Milley. The retired general has been receiving "a nonstop barrage of death threats" since his retirement, according to journalist Bob Woodward.

Fauci, who led the U.S. as the chief medical expert during the COVID-19 pandemic, has for years also been the target of threats and investigations from congressional Republicans.

Trump launched partisan attacks on Fauci and began name-calling the former director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases as early as 2020, describing him as "a total disaster."



**Donald Trump supporters on Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington, D.C.** (Photo by Brent Stirton/Getty Images)

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## **Pardons for the Biden family**

Minutes before Trump swore his oath of office, the White House announced Biden's preemptive pardons of his siblings and their spouses.

They include James B. Biden, Sara Jones Biden, Valerie Biden Owens, John T. Owens, and Francis W. Biden.

"My family has been subjected to unrelenting attacks and threats, motivated solely by a desire to hurt me—the worst kind of partisan politics. Unfortunately, I have no reason to believe these attacks will end," Biden said in a statement.

Biden said the pardons "should not be mistaken as an acknowledgment that they engaged in any wrongdoing, nor should acceptance be misconstrued as an admission of guilt for any offense."

Rep. James Comer, the Kentucky Republican who chairs the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, said in a statement that the "preemptive pardons for the Biden Crime Family serve as a confession of their corruption as they sold out the American people to enrich themselves."

Comer's committee limped along for years on an investigation of Biden that the GOP-led panel said would lead to Biden's impeachment, which did not occur.

Comer said his committee's investigation "will be remembered as one of the most successful ever conducted by Congress."

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

## Coming up on GDILIVE.COM

Groton Area  
Tigers



Tuesday, Jan. 21

**Girls Basketball  
Northwestern  
at Groton Area**

**6:00 JV Game**

Sponsored by Weber Landscaping

**Followed by Girls Varsity**

Sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Farmers Union Co-op of Ferney and Conde, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Groton Subway, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Locke Electric, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms, The Meat-house in Andover

**\$5 ticket or**

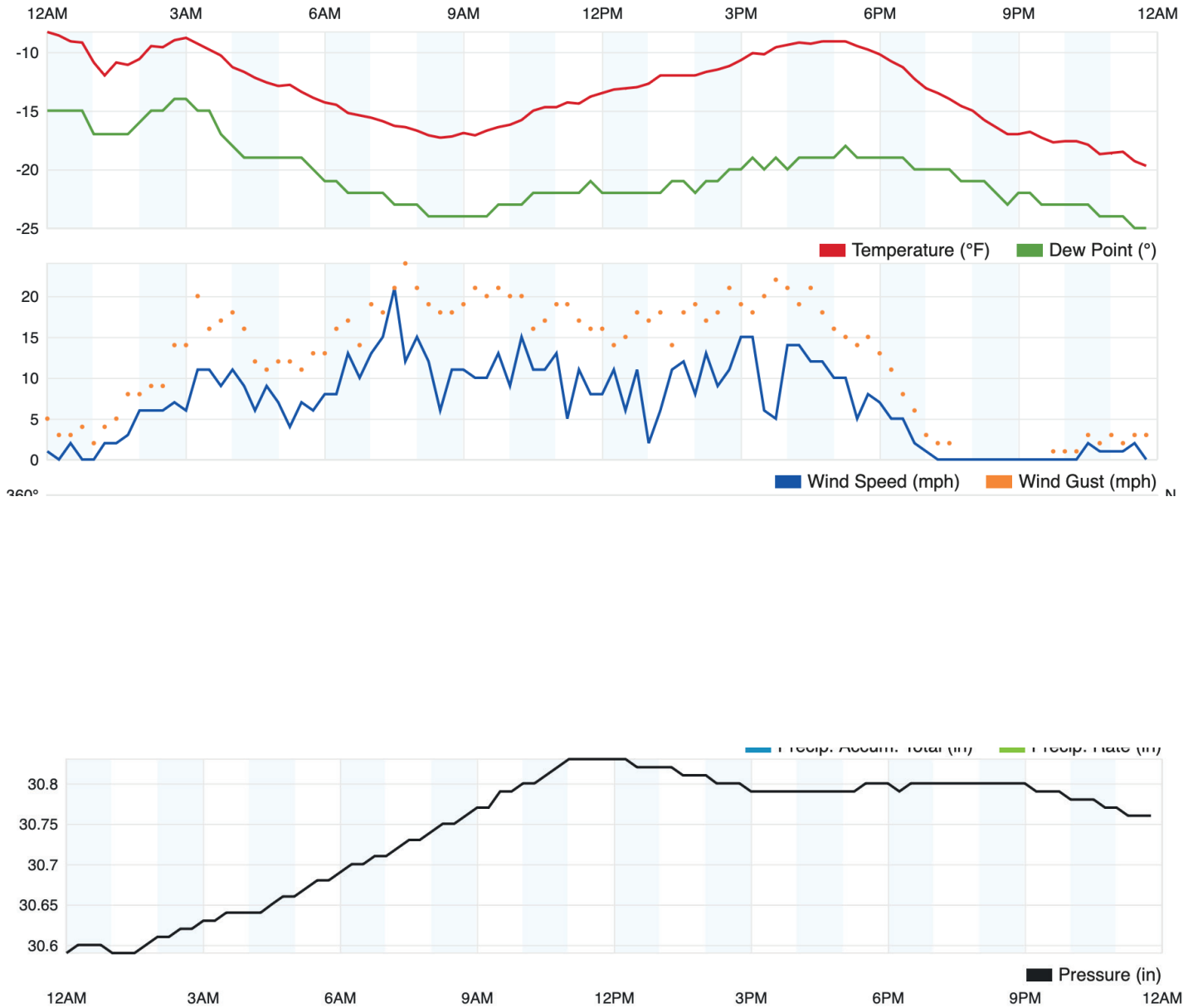
**GDI Subscription**

**required to watch the games.**

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Cold ...  
Today



High: 17 °F

Partly Sunny  
then Slight  
Chance Snow  
and Breezy

Tonight



Low: 14 °F↑

Slight Chance  
Snow then  
Mostly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 31 °F

Mostly Cloudy  
then Chance  
Snow and  
Blustery

Wednesday  
Night



Low: 8 °F

Mostly Cloudy  
then Slight  
Chance Snow

Thursday



High: 20 °F

Partly Sunny



## Arctic Air Creating Cold Weather Hazards

January 21, 2025  
3:51 AM

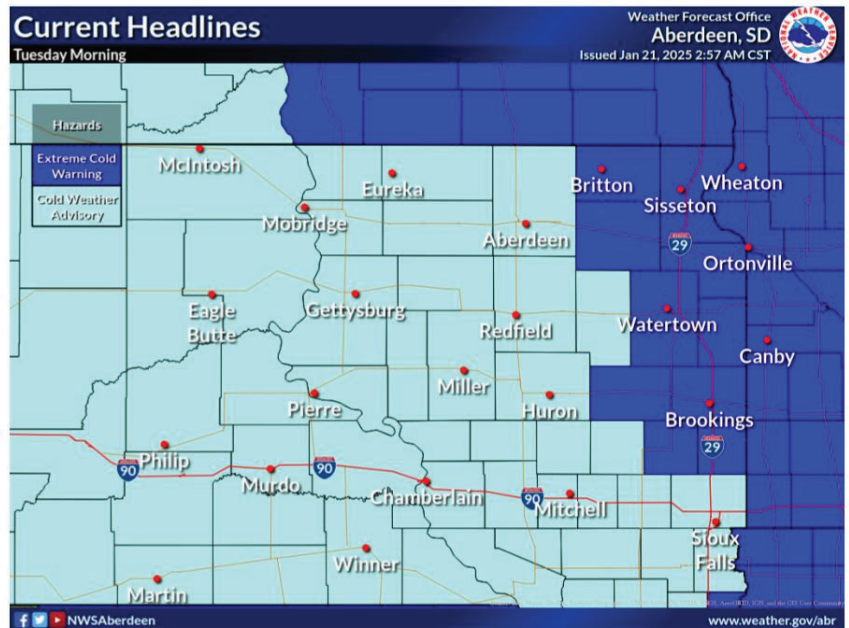
### Key Messages

- Cold Weather headlines remain in effect through this morning
- Wind chills near -25 to -40° through this morning



### Next Update

- This will be the last update as the dangerously cold temperatures and wind chills will be moving out central and eastern SD



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Cold weather headlines remain in effect through this morning with the coldest wind chills from -25 to -40° over the forecast area. The Extreme Cold Warning over northeastern South Dakota is in effect through the morning

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## Dangerously Low Wind Chills Continue

January 21, 2025  
3:54 AM

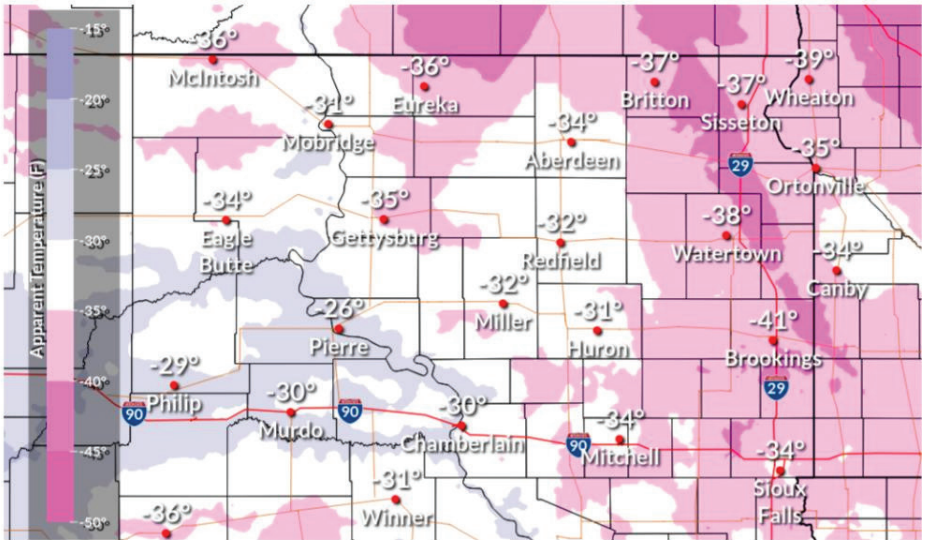
- **Extreme Cold Warnings** for far northeast SD and west central MN and **Cold Weather Advisories** for portions of central to northeast SD through this morning

- Low Temperatures -15 to -22°
- Winds 5 to 15 mph
- **Lowest Wind Chills** -25 to around -40°



- Frostbite may occur in less than 10-30 minutes to exposed skin

Minimum Wind Chills through this Morning



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD



## Cold Air in place through Tuesday

January 21, 2025  
3:55 AM

- Temperatures remain in the single digits below to teens below zero this morning
- Temperatures in the teens to 30s late this afternoon through Wednesday



Minimum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	1/21 Tue			1/22 Wed			1/23 Thu			
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm
<b>Aberdeen</b>	-13	4	14	19	21	26	15	10	9	17
<b>Miller</b>	-10	7	21	23	25	28	19	14	13	19
<b>Mobridge</b>	-9	12	24	24	25	29	20	14	13	21
<b>Murdo</b>	-10	16	26	23	22	27	21	16	16	20
<b>Ortonville</b>	-14	4	12	16	20	24	12	7	7	13
<b>Pierre</b>	-10	13	26	25	25	30	22	17	16	22
<b>Sisseton</b>	-12	5	13	19	23	21	11	7	7	12
<b>Watertown</b>	-16	2	11	15	18	24	12	7	6	13

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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD



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## URGENT - WEATHER MESSAGE

National Weather Service Aberdeen SD

415 AM CST Tue Jan 21 2025

Corson-Campbell-McPherson-Brown-Walworth-Edmunds-Dewey-Potter-Faulk-Spink-Clark-Stanley-Sully-Hughes-Hyde-Hand-Jones-Lyman-Buffalo-

Including the cities of Faulkton, McIntosh, Herreid, Kennebec, Gettysburg, Redfield, Onida, Ipswich, Highmore, Eureka, Murdo, Aberdeen, Pierre, Isabel, Clark, Miller, Mobridge, Fort Thompson, and Fort Pierre

### **...COLD WEATHER ADVISORY REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL NOON TODAY...**

\* WHAT...Very cold wind chills as low as 35 below.

\* WHERE...Portions of central, north central, and northeast South Dakota.

\* WHEN...Until noon CST /11 AM MST/ today.

\* IMPACTS...The dangerously cold wind chills as low as 35 below zero could cause frostbite on exposed skin in as little as 10 minutes. Frostbite and hypothermia will occur if unprotected skin is exposed to these temperatures.

#### PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

Use caution while traveling outside. Wear appropriate clothing, a hat, and gloves.

Keep pets indoors as much as possible.

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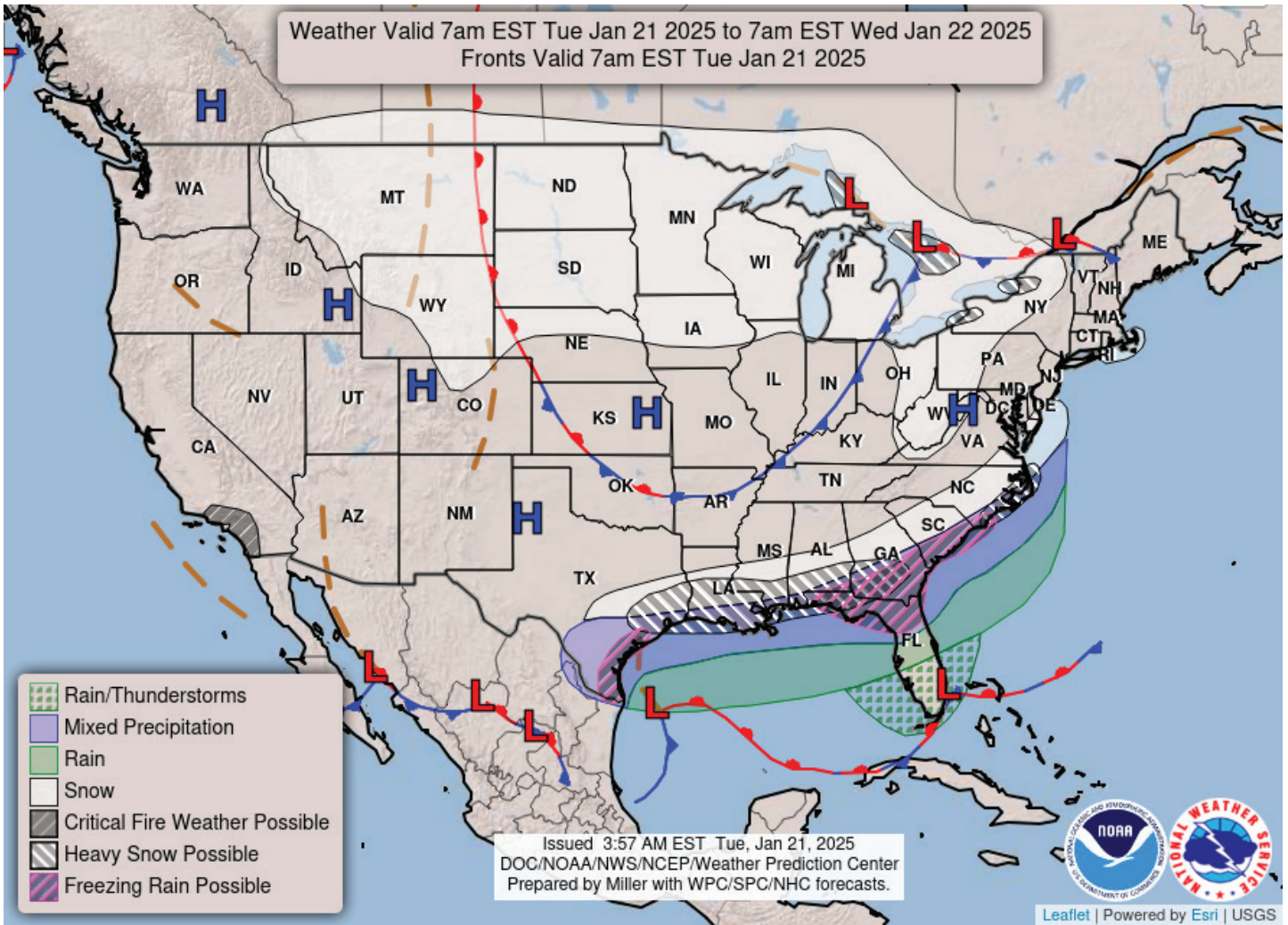
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: -8 °F at 12:00 AM**  
**Low Temp: -19 °F at 11:29 PM**  
**Wind: 24 mph at 7:40 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 9 hours, 23 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 57 in 1942  
Record Low: -31 in 1949  
Average High: 24  
Average Low: 1  
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.39  
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 0.39  
Precip Year to Date: 21.71  
Sunset Tonight: 5:25:35 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:01:14 am



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## Today in Weather History

January 21, 1999: Widespread dense fog and freezing drizzle created treacherous driving conditions across northeast South Dakota from the evening of the 21st to around noon on the 22nd. The freezing drizzle ended in the early morning hours of the 22nd. As a result, slippery conditions developed, especially across Hamlin, Deuel, and Codington counties. Many vehicles slid into the ditch. A few accidents resulted in minor injuries. Numerous activities were canceled on the evening of the 21st, and many schools had delayed starts on the 22nd.

1863 - A severe coastal storm dropped heavy rain on the Fredericksburg area of Virginia. It disrupted a Union Army offensive in an ill famed "mud march." (David Ludlum)

1963: Up to 3" of snow falls on San Francisco, their heaviest since 1887.

1982 - The second of two major snowstorms to hit southern Minnesota came to an end. Minneapolis received 20 inches of snow in 24 hours to break the previous record of 17 inches in 24 hours established just a few days earlier. A record 38 inches of snow covered the ground following the two storms, with drifts ten feet high. (David Ludlum)

1985 - Three days of snow squalls at Buffalo NY finally came to an end. The squalls, induced by relatively warm water in Lake Erie, produced 34 inches of snow at the International Airport, with up to 47 inches reported in the suburbs of Buffalo. The New York "blizzard of '85" left many counties disaster areas. (19th-21st) (Weather Channel) (Storm Data) President Reagan was sworn in for a second term in the coldest Inauguration Ceremony of record. Cold and wind resulted in wind chill readings as much as 30 degrees below zero. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - Low pressure over Minnesota produced high winds in the Northern Plains Region. Winds gusted to 66 mph at Rapid City SD, and reached 70 mph at Belle Fourche SD. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - High pressure over northern Nevada and low pressure off the coast of southern California combined to produce high winds in the southwestern U.S. Wind gusts in the San Francisco area reached 70 mph at Fremont. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Cold and snow prevailed in the northeastern U.S. Up to 13 inches of snow was reported between Woodford and Searsburg in Vermont. Montpelier VT reported a wind chill reading of 42 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the state of Florida. Eight cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including West Palm Beach with a reading of 86 degrees. Rain in southern New England changed to freezing rain, then to sleet, and then to heavy snow during the late morning. Most of Massachusetts was blanketed with 6 to 10 inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999: A major tornado outbreak occurred from the southwest into central and northeast Arkansas during the afternoon and evening. In the Little Rock Area, 30 tornadoes tracked across 15 counties. Homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed in Little Rock, Beebe, McRae, and areas farther north and east. Eight deaths resulted from the tornadoes, with 140 to 150 injuries also reported. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the National Weather Service office in Little Rock, Arkansas.



## NEEDS AND WANTS

Two merchants in a small community were fierce competitors. Their stores faced each other on opposite sides of the street. Drake's Store was much larger than Albert's Merchandise Mart. Each fought for the same customers.

One day Drake put up a sign in his store that read, "If you want it, we've got it!" Not to be out done, Albert hung a larger sign across the entrance to his store that read, "If we don't have it, you don't need it!"

There is a vast difference between "a need" and "a want." A "need" refers to the essentials in life, the things that we cannot do without. A "want" is something quite different. It is something that is not really essential. Think of the importance of water and the pleasure of soda. We can do without sodas, but water is essential.

Jesus said, "Your Father knows what you need and He will give you what you need if you live for Him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern." When we make the Kingdom of God our primary concern, it means that God is first and foremost in our lives and that He is at the center of all that we do.

If we make His thoughts our thoughts, His desires our desires, His priorities our priorities and His ways our ways, He will meet our every need every day!

Prayer: Our Father, may we give You the place of honor that You deserve in our lives. May we always place You first in our lives and honor You in all that we do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will have its own worries. The troubles we have in a day are enough for one day. Matthew 6:31-34

*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: 01.17.25

8 10 37 54 69 22

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 16 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.25

2 4 22 23 32 5

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$22,120,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 31 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.25

4 8 12 22 35 15

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 46 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.18.25

8 11 19 20 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 46 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.25

10 23 33 38 54 17

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 15 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.25

15 16 32 47 54 6

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$31,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 15 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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## Upcoming Groton Events

- 01/05/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/26/2025 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed at the Community Center 10am-1pm
- 01/26/2025 87th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 02/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 02/05/2025 FB Live Electronic Hwy 12 Sign Drawing City Hall 12pm
- 03/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
- 04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 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
- 06/07/2025 Day of Play
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm

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

### Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

#### **BOYS PREP BASKETBALL**

Dell Rapids 61, Parker 32

Highmore-Harrold 50, Hitchcock-Tulare 43

James Valley Christian School 73, Sunshine Bible Academy 44

Wessington Springs 76, Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 61

West Central 65, Baltic 38

Wolsey-Wessington 71, Iroquois-Lake Preston 36

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Bison vs. Takini, ppd.

#### **GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**

Highmore-Harrold 68, Hitchcock-Tulare 50

Iroquois-Lake Preston 48, Sunshine Bible Academy 20

Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 68, Wessington Springs 38

Wolsey-Wessington 55, James Valley Christian School 22

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Bison vs. Takini, ppd.

Herreid-Selby vs. South Border, N.D., ppd.

Northwestern vs. Potter County, ppd. to Jan 30th.

Waverly-South Shore vs. Florence-Henry, ppd.

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

### **Palestinians confront a landscape of destruction in Gaza's 'ghost towns'**

By ABDEL KAREEM HANA and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Palestinians in Gaza are confronting an apocalyptic landscape of devastation after a ceasefire paused more than 15 months of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

Across the tiny coastal enclave, where built-up refugee camps are interspersed between cities, drone footage captured by The Associated Press shows mounds of rubble stretching as far as the eye can see — remnants of the longest and deadliest war between Israel and Hamas in their blood-ridden history.

"As you can see, it became a ghost town," said Hussein Barakat, 38, whose home in the southern city of Rafah was flattened. "There is nothing," he said, as he sat drinking coffee on a brown armchair perched on the rubble of his three-story home, in a surreal scene.

Critics say Israel has waged a campaign of scorched earth to destroy the fabric of life in Gaza, accusations that are being considered in two global courts, including the crime of genocide. Israel denies those charges and says its military has been fighting a complex battle in dense urban areas and that it tries to avoid causing undue harm to civilians and their infrastructure.

Military experts say the reality is complicated.

"For a campaign of this duration, which is a year's worth of fighting in a heavily urban environment where you have an adversary that is hiding in amongst that environment, then you would expect an extremely high level of damage," said Matthew Savill, director of military sciences at the Royal United Services Institute, a British think-tank.

Savill said that it was difficult to draw a broad conclusion about the nature of Israel's campaign. To do so, he said, would require each strike and operation to be assessed to determine whether they adhered



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to the laws of armed conflict and whether all were proportional, but he did not think the scorched earth description was accurate.

International rights groups, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, view the vast destruction as part of a broader pattern of extermination and genocide directed at Palestinians in Gaza, a charge Israel denies. The groups dispute Israel's stance that the destruction was a result of military activity.

Human Rights Watch, in a November report accusing Israel of crimes against humanity, said "the destruction is so substantial that it indicates the intention to permanently displace many people."

From a fierce air campaign during the first weeks of the war, to a ground invasion that sent thousands of troops in on tanks, the Israeli response to a Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7, 2023, has ground down much of the civilian infrastructure of the Gaza Strip, displacing 90% of its population. The brilliant color of pre-war life has faded into a monotone cement gray that dominates the territory. It could take decades, if not more, to rebuild.

Airstrikes throughout the war toppled buildings and other structures said to be housing militants. But the destruction intensified with the ground forces, who fought Hamas fighters in close combat in dense areas.

If militants were seen firing from an apartment building near a troop maneuver, forces might take the entire building down to thwart the threat. Tank tracks chewed up paved roads, leaving dusty stretches of earth in their wake.

The military's engineering corps was tasked with using bulldozers to clear routes, downing buildings seen as threats, and blowing up Hamas' underground tunnel network.

Experts say the operations to neutralize tunnels were extremely destructive to surface infrastructure. For example, if a 1.5-kilometer (1-mile) long tunnel was blown up by Israeli forces, it would not spare homes or buildings above, said Michael Milshtein, a former Israeli army intelligence officer.

"If (the tunnel) passes under an urban area, it all gets destroyed," he said. "There's no other way to destroy a tunnel."

Cemeteries, schools, hospitals and more were targeted and destroyed, he said, because Hamas was using these for military purposes. Secondary blasts from Hamas explosives inside these buildings could worsen the damage.

The way Israel has repeatedly returned to areas it said were under its control, only to have militants overrun it again, has exacerbated the destruction, Savill said.

That's evident especially in northern Gaza, where Israel launched a new campaign in early October that almost obliterated Jabaliya, a built up, urban refugee camp. Jabaliya is home to the descendants of Palestinians who fled, or were forced to flee, during the war that led to Israel's creation in 1948. Milshtein said Israel's dismantling of the tunnel network is also to blame for the destruction there.

But the destruction was not only caused from strikes on targets. Israel also carved out a buffer zone about a kilometer inside Gaza from its border with Israel, as well as within the Netzarim corridor that bisects north Gaza from the south, and along the Philadelphi Corridor, a stretch of land along Gaza's border with Egypt. Vast swaths in these areas were leveled.

Amir Avivi, a retired Israeli general, said the buffer zones were an operational necessity meant to carve out secure plots of land for Israeli forces. He denied Israel had cleared civilian areas indiscriminately.

The destruction, like the civilian death toll in Gaza, has raised accusations that Israel committed war crimes, which it denies. The decisions the military made in choosing what to topple, and why, are an important factor in that debate.

"The second militants move into a building and start using it to fire on you, you start making a calculation about whether or not you can strike," Savill said. Downing the building, he said, "still needs to be necessary."

## At least 10 dead, 32 injured in a hotel fire at a ski resort in northwestern Turkey

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — A fire at a hotel at a ski resort in northwestern Turkey on Tuesday killed at least 10 people and hospitalized 32 others, officials said.

The fire broke out at around 3:30 a.m. in the restaurant of the 12-story Grand Kartal hotel in the resort of Kartalkaya in Bolu province, officials and reports said. The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Two of the victims died after jumping from the building in a panic, Gov. Abdulaziz Aydin told the state-run Anadolu Agency. Private NTV television said some people tried to climb down from their rooms using sheets and blankets.

There were 234 guests staying at the hotel, Aydin said.

Necmi Kepcetutan, a ski instructor at the hotel, said he was asleep when the fire erupted and he rushed out of the building. He told NTV television that he then helped some 20 guests out of the hotel.

He said the hotel was engulfed in smoke, making it difficult for guests to locate the fire escape.

"I cannot reach some of my students. I hope they are OK," the ski instructor told the station.

Television images showed the roof and top floors of the hotel on fire.

The government appointed six prosecutors to lead an investigation into the fire. NTV television suggested that the wooden cladding on the exterior of the hotel, in a chalet-style design, may have accelerated the spread of the fire.

The 161-room hotel is on the side of a cliff, hampering efforts to combat the flames, the station also reported.

NTV showed a smoke-blackened lobby, its glass entrance and windows smashed, its wooden reception desk charred and a chandelier crashed to the ground.

Kartalkaya is a popular ski resort in the Koroglu mountains, some 300 kilometers (185 miles) east of Istanbul. The fire occurred during the school semester break when hotels in the region are packed.

Aydin's office said 30 fire trucks and 28 ambulances were sent to the site.

Other hotels at the resort were evacuated as a precaution and guests were placed in hotels around Bolu.

Meanwhile, a natural gas explosion at a hotel at another ski resort in central Turkey, injured four people.

The explosion took place at the Yildiz Mountain Winter Sports Center in Sivas province. Two alpine skiers and their instructor were slightly injured while another instructor received second-degree burns on the hands and face, the Sivas governor's office said.

## Taliban say 2 Americans held in Afghanistan were freed in a prisoner exchange

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A prisoner swap between the United States and Afghanistan's Taliban freed two Americans in exchange for a Taliban figure imprisoned for life in California on drug trafficking and terrorism charges, officials said Tuesday.

The deal came as Joe Biden, who oversaw the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, handed power over to returning President Donald Trump. The Taliban praised the swap as a step toward the "normalization" of ties between the U.S. and Afghanistan, but that likely remains a tall order as most countries in the world still don't recognize their rule.

The Taliban's Foreign Ministry in Kabul confirmed the swap, saying two unidentified U.S. citizens had been exchanged for Khan Mohammed, who was sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment in 2008.

The family of Ryan Corbett, one American held by the Taliban, confirmed he had been released in a statement. Corbett, who had lived in Afghanistan with his family at the time of the 2021 collapse of the U.S.-backed government, was detained by the Taliban in August 2022 while on a business trip.

"Our hearts are filled with overwhelming gratitude and praise to God for sustaining Ryan's life and bringing him back home after what has been the most challenging and uncertain 894 days of our lives," the family's statement said. They thanked both Trump and Biden, as well as many government officials, for

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their efforts in freeing him.

Corbett's family also praised the Middle Eastern nation of Qatar "for their vital role in facilitating Ryan's release, and for their visits to Ryan as the United States' Protecting Power in Afghanistan." Energy-rich Qatar, which hosted negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban over the years, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Both CNN and The New York Times, relying on anonymous U.S. officials, identified the second American released as William McKenty, though no other details have emerged about his identity or what he was doing in Afghanistan.

Mohammed, 55, was a prisoner in California after his 2008 conviction. The Bureau of Prisons early Tuesday listed Mohammed as not being in their custody.

Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, deputy spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, said Mohammed had arrived in Afghanistan and was with his family. There were no immediate plans to celebrate or mark his freedom, Takal added.

Mohammed was detained on the battlefield in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province and later taken to the U.S. A federal jury convicted him on charges of securing heroin and opium that he knew were bound for the United States and, in doing so, assisting terrorism activity.

The Justice Department at the time referred to Mohammed as "a violent jihadist and narcotics trafficker" who "sought to kill U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan using rockets." He was the first person to be convicted on U.S. narco-terrorism laws.

Before Biden left office, his administration had been trying to work out a deal to free Corbett as well as George Glezmann and Mahmood Habibi in exchange for Muhammad Rahim, one of the remaining detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

Glezmann, an airline mechanic from Atlanta, was taken by the Taliban's intelligence services in December 2022 while traveling through the country. Habibi, an Afghan-American businessman who worked as a contractor for a Kabul-based telecommunications company, also went missing in 2022. The Taliban have denied they have Habibi.

Officials in Washington did not respond to requests for comment early Tuesday after Trump's inauguration the day before.

The Taliban called the exchange the result of "long and fruitful negotiations" with the U.S. and said it was a good example of solving problems through dialogue.

"The Islamic Emirate looks positively at the actions of the United States of America that help the normalization and development of relations between the two countries," it said.

The Taliban have been trying to make inroads in being recognized, in part to escape the economic tailspin caused by its takeover. Billions in international funds were frozen, and tens of thousands of highly skilled Afghans fled the country and took their money with them.

## After 15 months of war, Hamas still rules over what remains of Gaza

By SAMY MAGDY and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

As a ceasefire brought calm to Gaza's ruined cities, Hamas was quick to emerge from hiding.

The militant group has not only survived 15 months of war with Israel — among the deadliest and most destructive in recent memory — but it remains firmly in control of the coastal territory that now resembles an apocalyptic wasteland. With a surge of humanitarian aid promised as part of the ceasefire deal, the Hamas-run government said Monday that it will coordinate distribution to the desperate people of Gaza.

For all the military might Israel deployed in Gaza, it failed to remove Hamas from power, one of its central war aims. That could make a return to fighting more likely, but the results might be the same.

There was an element of theater in Sunday's handover of three Israeli hostages to the Red Cross, when dozens of masked Hamas fighters wearing green headbands and military fatigues paraded in front of cameras and held back a crowd of hundreds who surrounded the vehicles.

The scenes elsewhere in Gaza were even more remarkable: Thousands of Hamas-run police in uniform

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re-emerged, making their presence known even in the most heavily destroyed areas.

"The police have been here the whole time, but they were not wearing their uniforms" to avoid being targeted by Israel, said Mohammed Abed, a father of three who returned to his home in Gaza City more than seven months after fleeing the area.

"They were among the displaced people in the tents. That's why there were no thefts," he said.

Other residents said the police had maintained offices in hospitals and other locations throughout the war, where people could report crimes.

Israel has repeatedly blamed Hamas for the heavy civilian death toll and damage to infrastructure because the group's fighters and security forces embed themselves in residential neighborhoods, schools and hospitals.

A deeply rooted movement

Opinion polls consistently show that only a minority of Palestinians support Hamas. But the Islamic militant group — which does not accept Israel's existence — is deeply rooted in Palestinian society, with an armed wing, a political party, media and charities that date back to its founding in the late 1980s.

For decades, Hamas functioned as a well-organized insurgency, able to launch hit-and-run attacks on Israeli forces and suicide bombings in Israel itself. Many of its top leaders have been killed — and quickly replaced. It won a landslide victory in 2006 parliamentary elections, and the following year it seized Gaza from the Western-backed Palestinian Authority in a week of street battles.

Hamas then established a fully-fledged government, with ministries, police and a civilian bureaucracy. Its security forces quickly brought Gaza's powerful families into line and crushed rival armed groups. They also silenced dissent and violently dispersed occasional protests.

Hamas remained in power through four previous wars with Israel. With help from Iran it steadily enhanced its capabilities, extended the range of its rockets and built deeper and longer tunnels to hide from Israeli airstrikes. By Oct. 7, 2023, it had an army of tens of thousands in organized battalions.

In the surprise incursion that triggered the war, its fighters attacked southern Israel by air, land and sea, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians. Hamas-led militants abducted 250 others.

A war like no other

In response, Israel launched an air and ground war that has killed over 47,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, and has reduced entire neighborhoods to fields of rubble. Some 90% of Gaza's population has been displaced, often multiple times.

Nearly every day of the war, the Israeli military announced that it had killed dozens of fighters, or taken out a midlevel commander, or dismantled a tunnel complex or obliterated a weapons factory. Israeli forces killed Hamas' top leader, Yahya Sinwar, and most of his lieutenants. But the exiled leadership is mostly intact and Mohammed Sinwar, his brother, has reportedly assumed a bigger role in Gaza.

The military says it has killed over 17,000 fighters — roughly half of Hamas' estimated prewar ranks — though it has not provided evidence.

What Israel said were carefully targeted strikes frequently killed women and children and in some cases wiped out entire extended families.

The military blamed civilian casualties on Hamas. But survivors of the bombardment, crammed into tents after their homes were flattened, were a pool of potential recruits.

Earlier this month, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a prepared speech that Hamas had recruited nearly as many fighters as it lost during the war.

Michael Milshtein, an Israeli expert on Palestinian affairs and former military intelligence officer, said Hamas no longer has the ability to launch an Oct. 7-style attack but has returned to its insurgent roots, using creative tactics like harvesting unexploded Israeli ordnance for homemade bombs.

"Hamas is a chameleon. It changed its colors according to the circumstances," he said.

"The war is ending with a strong perception of success for Hamas," he added. "The enlistment capabilities will be crazy. They won't be able to handle it."

Israel ensures there is no alternative

Palestinian critics of Hamas have long said there is no military solution to the Mideast conflict, which predates the birth of the militant group by several decades.

They argue that Palestinians would be more likely to break with Hamas if they had an alternative path to ending Israel's decades-long occupation, which has further entrenched itself during the war.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose government is opposed to Palestinian statehood, has ensured they do not.

He has rebuffed proposals from the United States and friendly Arab countries for a reformed Palestinian Authority to govern both Gaza and parts of the occupied West Bank ahead of eventual statehood. Instead, he has vowed to maintain open-ended security control over both territories.

Avi Issacharoff, a veteran Israeli journalist — and co-creator of the Netflix hit "Fauda" — said Netanyahu's refusal to plan for the day after was the "biggest debacle of this war."

"Israel is waking up from a nightmare into the very same nightmare," he wrote in Israel's Yediot Ahronot newspaper. "Hamas is going to remain in power and will continue to build more tunnels and recruit more men, without the emergence of any local alternative."

Netanyahu has threatened to resume the war after the first six-week phase of the ceasefire if Israel's goals are not met, while Hamas has said it will not release dozens of remaining captives without a lasting truce and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

There's no reason to think another military campaign would bring about a different result.

In early October, Israeli forces sealed off the northern towns of Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun and Jabaliya, barring nearly all humanitarian aid, forcing thousands to flee and destroying nearly every structure in their path, including schools and shelters, according to witnesses who fled.

The army had carried out major operations in all three places previously, only to see militants regroup. At least 15 Israeli soldiers have died in northern Gaza this month alone.

When residents returned to Jabaliya on Sunday, they found a sprawling scene of devastation with only a few tilted shells of buildings in a sea of gray rubble.

Dozens of Hamas police kept watch over their return.

## Trump grants sweeping pardon of Jan. 6 defendants, including rioters who violently attacked police

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday pardoned, commuted the prison sentences or vowed to dismiss the cases of all of the 1,500-plus people charged with crimes in the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot, including people convicted of assaulting police officers, using his clemency powers on his first day back in office to undo the massive prosecution of the unprecedented assault on the seat of American democracy.

Trump's action, just hours after his return to the White House, paves the way for the release from prison of people found guilty of violent attacks on police, as well as leaders of far-right extremist groups convicted of failed plots to keep the Republican in power after he lost the 2020 election to former President Joe Biden.

The pardons are a culmination of Trump's yearslong campaign to rewrite the history of the Jan. 6 attack that left more than 100 police officers injured as the angry mob of Trump supporters — some armed with poles, bats and bear spray — overwhelmed law enforcement, shattered windows and sent lawmakers and aides running into hiding. While pardons were expected, the speed and the scope of the clemency amounted to a stunning dismantling of the Justice Department's effort to hold participants accountable over what has been described as one of the darkest days in the country's history.

Trump also ordered the attorney general to seek the dismissal of roughly 450 cases that are still pending before judges stemming from the largest investigation in Justice Department history.

Casting the rioters as "patriots" and "hostages," Trump has claimed they were unfairly treated by the Justice Department that also charged him with federal crimes in two cases he contends were politically motivated. Trump said the pardons will end "a grave national injustice that has been perpetrated upon the

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American people over the last four years" and begin "a process of national reconciliation."

The pardons were met with elation from Trump supporters and lawyers for the Jan. 6 defendants. Trump supporters gathered late Monday in the cold outside the Washington jail, where more than a dozen defendants were being held before the pardons.

"We are deeply thankful for President Trump for his actions today," said James Lee Bright, an attorney who represented Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes, who was serving an 18-year prison sentence after being convicted of seditious conspiracy and other crimes.

It's unclear how quickly the defendants may be released from prison. An attorney for Enrique Tarrío, the former Proud Boys national chairman who was sentenced to 22 years in prison for seditious conspiracy, said he expected his client to be released from prison Monday night.

"This marks a pivotal moment in our client's life, and it symbolizes a turning point for our nation," attorney Nayib Hassan said in a statement. "We are optimistic for the future, as we now turn the page on this chapter, embracing new possibilities and opportunities."

Democrats slammed the move to extend the pardons to violent rioters, many of whose crimes were captured on camera and broadcast on live TV. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called it "an outrageous insult to our justice system and the heroes who suffered physical scars and emotional trauma as they protected the Capitol, the Congress and the Constitution."

"Donald Trump is ushering in a Golden Age for people that break the law and attempt to overthrow the government," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said in an emailed statement.

Former Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone, who lost consciousness and suffered a heart attack after a rioter shocked him with a stun gun, appeared taken aback to learn from an Associated Press reporter that those who assaulted police officers are among the pardon recipients.

"This is what the American people voted for," he said. "How do you react to something like that?"

Fanone said he has spent the past four years worried about his safety and the well-being of his family. Pardoning his assailants only compounds his fears, he said.

"I think they're cowards," he said. "Their strength was in their numbers and the mob mentality. And as individuals, they are who they are."

Trump had suggested in the weeks leading up to his return to the White House that instead of blanket pardons, he would look at the Jan. 6 defendants on a case-by-case basis. And Vice President JD Vance had said just days ago that people responsible for the violence during the Capitol riot "obviously" should not be pardoned.

Fourteen defendants, including several convicted of seditious conspiracy, had their sentences commuted, while the rest of those found guilty of Jan. 6 crimes were granted "full, complete and unconditional" pardons.

The pardons come weeks after the Justice Department abandoned its two federal criminal cases against Trump, citing its policy against prosecuting sitting presidents. Had Trump lost the 2024 election, he may have ultimately stood trial on charges in the same federal courthouse in Washington in the case that had accused him of conspiring to overturn his 2020 election loss in a desperate bid to cling to power.

More than 1,200 people across the U.S. had been convicted of Jan. 6 crimes over the last four years, including roughly 200 people who pleaded guilty to assaulting law enforcement.

Hundreds of Jan. 6 defendants who didn't engage in any of the violence and destruction were charged with misdemeanor trespassing offenses, and many of those served little to no time behind bars.

But the violence that day has been documented extensively through videos, testimony and other evidence seen by judges and jurors in the courthouse that is within view of the Capitol.

Police were dragged into the crowd and beaten. Rioters used makeshift weapons to attack police, including flagpoles, a crutch and a hockey stick. Investigators documented a number of firearms in the crowd, along with knives, a pitchfork, a tomahawk ax, brass knuckle gloves and other weapons. Officers have described in testimony fearing for their lives as members of the mob hurled insults and obscenities at them.

Of the more than 1,500 people charged, about 250 people were convicted of crimes by a judge or a jury after a trial, while more than 1,000 others had pleaded guilty to offenses. Only two people were acquitted

of all charges by judges after bench trials. No jury has fully acquitted a Capitol riot defendant.

More than 1,000 rioters had been sentenced, with over 700 receiving at least some time behind bars. The rest were given some combination of probation, community service, home detention or fines.

## **Panama, familiar with US intervention, bristles at Trump's comments on canal**

By JUAN ZAMORANO Associated Press

PANAMA CITY (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump's insistence Monday that he wants to have the Panama Canal back under U.S. control fed nationalist sentiment and worry in Panama, home to the critical trade route and a country familiar with U.S. military intervention.

"American ships are being severely overcharged and not treated fairly in any way, shape or form, and that includes the United States Navy. And above all, China is operating the Panama Canal," Trump said Monday.

In the streets of the capital, some Panamanians saw Trump's remarks as a way of applying pressure on Panama for something else he wants: better control of migration through the Darien Gap. Others recalled the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama with concern.

Panama President José Raúl Mulino responded forcefully Monday, as he did after Trump's initial statement last month that the U.S. should consider repossessing the canal, saying the canal belongs to his country of 4 million and will remain Panama's territory.

Luis Barrera, a 52-year-old cab driver, said Panama had fought hard to get the canal back and has expanded it since taking control.

"I really feel uncomfortable because it's like when you're big and you take a candy from a little kid," Barrera said.

At a rally in Phoenix in December, Trump said he might try to get the canal back after it was "foolishly" ceded to Panama. He complained that shippers were overcharged and that China had taken control of the key shortcut between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

Earlier this month, Trump wouldn't rule out using military force to take it back.

The United States built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Washington relinquished control of the waterway to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999, under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter.

The canal is a point of pride for Panamanians. On Dec. 31, they celebrated the 25th anniversary of the handover, and days later they commemorated the deaths of 21 Panamanians who died at the hands of the U.S. military decades earlier.

On Jan. 9, 1964, students protested in the then-U.S. controlled canal zone over not being allowed to fly Panama's flag at a secondary school there. The protests expanded to general opposition to the U.S. presence in Panama and U.S. troops got involved. A group of protesters this year burned an effigy of Trump.

The canal's administrator, Ricaurte Vásquez, said this month that China is not in control of the canal and that all nations are treated equally under a neutrality treaty.

He said Chinese companies operating in the ports on either end of the canal were part of a Hong Kong consortium that won a bidding process in 1997. He added that U.S. and Taiwanese companies operate other ports along the canal as well.

Omayra Avendaño, who works in real estate, said Trump's threat should be taken seriously.

"We should be worried," she said. "We don't have an army and he's said he would use force."

On Dec. 20, 1989, the U.S. military invaded Panama to remove dictator Manuel Noriega. Some 27,000 troops were tasked by then-President George H.W. Bush with capturing Noriega, protecting the lives of Americans living in Panama and restoring democracy to the country that a decade later would take over control of the Panama Canal.

Avendaño said she was 11 years old the last time the U.S. invaded her country and hoped Panama's current government would seek international support to head off Trump's designs on the canal.

"I remember the disaster that it was," she said.

## **Beneath a veneer of calm, Trump's inauguration holds warning signs for US democracy**

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

All the living former presidents were there and the outgoing president amicably greeted his successor, who gave a speech about the country's bright future and who left to the blare of a brass band.

At first glance, President Donald Trump's second inauguration seemed like a continuation of the country's nearly 250-year-long tradition of peaceful transfers of power, essential to its democracy. And there was much to celebrate: Trump won a free and fair election last fall, and his supporters hope he will be able to fix problems at the border, end the war in Ukraine and get inflation under control.

Still, on Monday, the warning signs were clear.

Due to frigid temperatures, Trump's swearing-in was held in the Capitol Rotunda, where rioters seeking to keep him in power the last time roamed during the Jan. 6, 2021, attack. Trump walked into the space from the hall leading to the building's west front tunnel, where some of the worst hand-to-hand combat between Trump supporters and police occurred that day.

After giving a speech pledging that "never again" would the government "persecute political opponents," Trump then gave a second, impromptu address to a crowd of supporters. The president lamented that his inaugural address had been sanitized, said he would shortly pardon the Jan. 6 rioters and fumed at last-minute preemptive pardons issued by outgoing President Joe Biden to the members of the congressional committee that investigated the attack.

"I did have a couple of things to say that were extremely controversial," Trump told the crowd in the Capitol's Emancipation Hall. It was the same space that had filled with rows of National Guard troops sleeping on the hard floors for weeks in the aftermath of the Jan. 6 attack.

Hours later, Trump followed through on a campaign promise to pardon those involved in the attack — some 1,500 of his supporters, including ones who had assaulted police officers. That came after an extraordinary pardon issued by Biden — announced by the White House as he greeted Trump at the inaugural ceremony — for several members of Biden's extended family. The 11th hour Biden pardons were a response to Trump's continual threats to carry out a campaign of retribution against his political opponents.

The head-spinning developments of Trump's first day back in power suggested there will be no lack of controversy during his second term.

Even after regaining the highest office in the land, Trump continued to lie about his 2020 election loss. He didn't mention it in his formal address, but in his impromptu, second speech, Trump falsely contended it was only due to voter fraud and that if votes were counted accurately he would win California, a state he lost by more than 3.2 million votes.

The celebration of the peaceful transfer of power kicked off just before noon Monday with both Trump and Biden present. That was a stark difference from last time, when Trump didn't attend the event to hand over power to Biden.

Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar kicked off the speeches because she chairs the joint congressional inaugural committee. She pronounced that the theme was "our enduring democracy." It was a fairly anodyne line and in other circumstances would be a fairly routine speech, but had a stark implication given the setting.

Klobuchar spoke about how "in other countries" the festivities might be in a presidential palace, but the United States holds them at "the people's house," the Capitol complex. She concluded by recognizing the firefighters battling blazes in Southern California.

"Our democracy's strength and grit must match theirs," Klobuchar said.

The day began with a reminder of the unprecedented dynamic that Trump's return has created. Biden preemptively pardoned Dr. Anthony Fauci, former Gen. Mark Milley — a vocal Trump critic whom the new president has suggested should be executed — and the congressional Jan. 6 committee members, staff and officers who provided them testimony.



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Among them was former Rep. Liz Cheney, one of the few Republicans to challenge Trump and who had been targeted for prosecution by her former Republican colleagues in the U.S. House. During his second speech, Trump again dug at Cheney, calling her "a crying lunatic."

"These are exceptional circumstances, and I cannot in good conscience do nothing," Biden said about his blanket pardons. "Even when individuals have done nothing wrong — and in fact have done the right thing — and will ultimately be exonerated, the mere fact of being investigated or prosecuted can irreparably damage reputations and finances."

Former Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone, who lost consciousness and suffered a heart attack after a rioter shocked him with a stun gun, was one of the officers who received a last-minute Biden pardon because he testified before the Jan. 6 committee.

Fanone said he learned about the pardon from a Washington Post reporter who called him Monday morning.

"I haven't digested it," he later told The Associated Press. "I just can't believe that this is my country."

## Another day of ferocious winds forecast for Southern California

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A second day of ferocious winds were forecast for Tuesday in Southern California where firefighters remained on alert and extreme fire weather raised the risk of new wildfires two weeks after two major blazes still burning in the Los Angeles area sparked.

Gusts could peak at 70 mph (113 kph) along the coast and 100 mph (160 kph) in the mountains and foothills during extreme fire weather that is expected to last through Tuesday morning.

The National Weather Service issued a warning of a "particularly dangerous situation" for parts of Los Angeles, Ventura and San Diego counties from Monday afternoon through Tuesday morning due to low humidity and damaging Santa Ana winds.

"The conditions are ripe for explosive fire growth should a fire start," said Andrew Rorke, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard.

On Monday, Los Angeles fire crews quickly put out a small brush fire that broke out south of the iconic triple-domed Griffith Observatory. A man suspected of starting the fire was taken into custody, said David Cuellar, a Los Angeles Police Department spokesman. Firefighters also quickly extinguished a brush fire along Interstate 405 in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Granada Hills that temporarily closed the northbound lanes.

Farther south, fire crews aggressively fought a blaze that also sparked Monday afternoon in the city of Poway, in San Diego County, and stopped its forward progress.

Former Vice President Kamala Harris, and her husband Doug Emhoff, flew to Los Angeles after attending President Donald Trump's inauguration and met with firefighters, volunteers and victims of the Eaton Fire in Altadena.

"We just came out to thank (firefighters), to thank the community and just remind folks that we're all in this together," Harris said. She said their home in Pacific Palisades was still standing.

Trump, who criticized the response to the wildfires during his inaugural address, has said he will travel to Los Angeles on Friday.

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday said the devastation left by the blazes underscores the need for partnership between the state and federal governments.

"I look forward to President Trump's visit to Los Angeles and his mobilization of the full weight of the federal government to help our fellow Americans recover and rebuild," Newsom said in a statement.

A small amount of rain is forecast for the weekend in the Los Angeles area, though more gusty winds are expected to return Thursday, Rorke said.

Authorities urged people not to mow their lawns to prevent sparking a fire, nor start any fires that could get out of control. They also urged residents to review their evacuation plans and ready emergency kits and be on the lookout for any new blazes and report them quickly.

David Acuna, a spokesman with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, said the big-

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gest concerns are the Palisades and Eaton Fires breaking their containment lines and a new blaze starting.

"Don't do things to start another fire so we can focus on the mitigation of the current fires," Acuna said.

The low humidity, bone-dry vegetation and strong Santa Ana winds come as firefighters continue to battle two major blazes in the Los Angeles area, the Palisades and Eaton fires, which have destroyed more than 14,000 structures since they broke out during fierce winds on Jan. 7. The Palisades fire was 59% contained on Monday and the Eaton fire 87% contained, according to fire officials.

More evacuation orders were lifted Monday for Pacific Palisades and authorities said only residents would be allowed to get back in after showing proof of residency at a checkpoint. Over the weekend, two men impersonating firefighters attempted to enter an evacuation zone for the Palisades Fire, according to the Los Angeles County sheriff's department.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said Monday the city was prepared for any possible new fires and warned the strong winds could disperse ash from existing fire zones across Southern California. She urged Angelenos to visit [lacity.gov](http://lacity.gov) to learn about ways to protect themselves from toxic air during Santa Ana winds.

Cal Fire and local fire departments have positioned fire engines, water-dropping aircraft and hand crews across the region to enable a quick response should a new fire break out, Acuna said.

Acuna said Cal Fire had extra fire crews in Kern and Riverside counties.

Los Angeles fire officials said the department has all available engines ready and that 30 of them had been positioned in fire risk areas. The agency also ordered the outgoing shift of about 1,000 firefighters to remain on duty to staff the extra engines.

"The pre-deployment is very, very thoughtful and strategic," Crowley said.

## China's population falls for a third straight year, posing challenges for its government and economy

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — China's population fell last year for the third straight year, its government said Friday, pointing to further demographic challenges for the world's second most populous nation, which is now facing both an aging population and an emerging shortage of working age people.

China's population stood at 1.408 billion at the end of 2024, a decline of 1.39 million from the previous year.

The figures announced by the government in Beijing follow trends worldwide, but especially in East Asia, where Japan, South Korea and other nations have seen their birth rates plummet. China three years ago joined Japan and most of Eastern Europe among other nations whose population is falling.

The reasons are in many cases similar: Rising costs of living are causing young people to put off or rule out marriage and childbirth while pursuing higher education and careers. While people are living longer, that's not enough to keep up with rate of new births.

Countries such as China that allow very little immigration are especially at risk.

China has long been among the world's most populous nations, enduring invasions, floods and other natural disasters to sustain a population that thrived on rice in the south and wheat in the north. Following the end of World War II and the Communist Party's rise to power in 1949, large families reemerged and the population doubled in just three decades, even after tens of millions died in the Great Leap Forward that sought to revolutionize agriculture and industry and the Cultural Revolution that followed a few years later.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution and leader Mao Zedong's death, Communist bureaucrats began to worry the country's population was outstripping its ability to feed itself and began implementing a draconian "one child policy." Though it was never law, women had to apply for permission to have a child and violators could face forced late-term abortions and birth control procedures, massive fines and the prospect of their child being deprived an identification number, effectively making them non-citizens.

Rural China, where the preference for male offspring was especially strong and two children were still ostensibly allowed, became the focus of government efforts, with women forced to present evidence

they were menstruating and buildings emblazoned with slogans such as "have fewer children, have better children."

The government sought to stamp out selective abortion of female children, but with abortions legal and readily available, those operating illicit sonogram machines enjoyed a thriving business.

That has been the biggest factor in China's lopsided sex ratio, with as many as millions more boys born, raising the possibility of social instability among China's army of bachelors. Friday's report gave the sex imbalance as 104.34 men to every 100 women, though independent groups give the imbalance as considerably higher.

More disturbing for the government was the drastically falling birthrate, with China's total population dropping for the first time in decades in 2022 and China being narrowly overtaken by India as the world's most populous nation the following year. A rapidly aging population, declining workforce, lack of consumer markets and migration abroad are putting the system under severe pressure.

While spending on the military and flashy infrastructure projects continues to rise, China's already frail social security system is teetering, with increasing numbers of Chinese refusing to pay into the underfunded pension system.

Already, more than one-fifth of the population is aged 60 or over, with the official figure given as 310.3 million or 22% of the total population. By 2035, this number is forecast to exceed 30%, sparking discussion of changes to the official retirement age, which one of the lowest in the world. With fewer students, some vacant schools and kindergartens are meanwhile being transformed into care facilities for older people.

Such developments are giving some credence to the aphorism that China, now the world's second largest economy but facing major headwinds, will "grow old before it grows rich."

Government inducements including cash payouts for having up to three children and financial help with housing costs have had only temporary effects.

Meanwhile, China continued its transition to an urban society, with 10 million more people moving to cities for an urbanization rate of 67%, up almost a percentage point from the previous year.

## Trump rolls out his blueprint on border security, but his orders will face challenges

By REBECCA SANTANA, GISELA SALOMON and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump rolled out a blueprint to beef up security at the southern border in a series of executive orders that began taking effect soon after his inauguration Monday, making good on his defining political promise to crack down on immigration and marking another wild swing in White House policy on the divisive issue.

Some of the orders revive priorities from his first administration that his predecessor had rolled back, including forcing asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico and finishing the border wall. Others launched sweeping new strategies, like an effort to end automatic citizenship for anyone born in America and ending use of a Biden-era app used by nearly a million migrants to enter America.

Actual execution of such a far-reaching immigration agenda is certain to face legal and logistical challenges.

But in a concrete sign of how the changes quickly played out, migrants who had appointments to enter the U.S. using the CBP One app saw them canceled minutes after Trump was sworn in, and Mexico agreed to allow people seeking U.S. asylum to remain south of the American border while awaiting their court cases.

"I will declare a national emergency at our southern border. All illegal entry will immediately be halted, and we will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places in which they came," Trump said in his inauguration speech to thunderous applause.

The CBP One app disappears

The online lottery system gave appointments to 1,450 people a day at eight border crossings to enter on "parole," which Joe Biden used more than any president.

It was a critical piece of the Biden administration's border strategy to create new immigration pathways while cracking down on people who enter illegally.

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Supporters say it brought order to a chaotic border. Critics say it was magnet for more people to come. By midday Monday, it was gone.

Migrants who had scored coveted appointments weeks ago found them canceled.

That includes Melanie Mendoza, 21, and her boyfriend. She said they left Venezuela over a year ago, spending more than \$4,000 and traveling for a month, including walking for three days.

"We don't know what we are going to do," she said in Tijuana, Mexico, just on the other side of the border from San Diego.

### Mexico agrees to take back migrants

The Trump administration is reinstating its "Remain in Mexico" policy, which forced 70,000 asylum-seekers in his first term to wait there for hearings in U.S. immigration court.

Mexico, a country integral to any American effort to limit illegal immigration, indicated Monday that it is prepared to receive asylum-seekers while emphasizing that there should be an online application allowing them to schedule appointments at the U.S. border.

Immigration advocates say the policy put migrants at extreme risk.

"This is déjà vu of the darkest kind," said Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Global Refuge. She said policies like "Remain in Mexico" have exacerbated conditions at the border while doing little to address reasons migrants leave home in the first place.

### Aiming to end the constitutional right to birthright citizenship

Anyone born in the United States automatically becomes a citizen, including children born to someone in the country illegally or in the U.S. on a tourist or student visa. It's a right enshrined in the 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868 after the Civil War to assure citizenship for all, including Black people.

Trump's executive order suggests that the amendment has been wrongly interpreted, and it would go into effect in 30 days — meaning it would not be retroactive.

The American Civil Liberties Union and other groups immediately sued, calling it "a reckless and ruthless repudiation of American values." Trump said he thought he had "very good grounds" for the order.

### Migrants fear promised mass deportations

Trump is moving to realize his pledge of mass deportations of at least 11 million people in the country illegally.

One order restores efforts to pursue everyone in the country illegally, moving away from the Biden administration's more narrow deportation criteria. He also wants negotiations with state and local governments to deputize police to enforce immigration laws.

As in his first term, Trump also wants to end federal grants to "sanctuary" jurisdictions — states and cities that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

Rocio, a 43-year-old single mother from Mexico who lives in South Florida, said she's worried about her 13-year-old son. His father was deported when the boy was an infant, and he's afraid the same thing could now happen to her.

Rocio, who asked to be identified only by her first name over fears about being detained, said she worries about driving without a license but needs to work to survive.

"We have to be very careful," she said.

Erlinda, a single mother from El Salvador who arrived in 2013, has signed over legal rights to her U.S.-born children, ages 10 and 8, to Nora Sandigo, who has volunteered to be the guardian for more than 2,000 children in 15 years, including at least 30 since December.

"I am afraid for my children, that they will live the terror of not seeing their mother for a day, for a month, for a year," said Erlinda, 45, who asked to be identified by first name only due to fears of being detained.

### A bigger military role in border security

Trump ordered the government, with Defense Department assistance, to "finish" construction of the border wall and send troops to the border. He did not say how many would go — leaving it up to the defense secretary — or what their exact role would be.

His executive orders suggested the military would help the Department of Homeland Security with "de-

attention space, transportation (including aircraft), and other logistics services." Trump directed the defense secretary to come up with a plan to "seal the borders" and repel "unlawful mass migration."

Both Trump and Biden have sent troops to the border before.

Historically, they have been used to back up Border Patrol agents, who are responsible for securing the nearly 2,000-mile border, and not in ways that put them in direct contact with migrants.

Critics say using troops this way signals that migrants are a threat.

Cartels as foreign terrorist organizations

A Trump order paves the way for criminal organizations such as Tren de Aragua or MS-13 to be named "foreign terrorist organizations." MS-13 is a transnational gang that originated in Los Angeles and gained a grip on much of Central America. Tren de Aragua is a Venezuelan street gang that has become a menace on American soil.

"The Cartels functionally control, through a campaign of assassination, terror, rape, and brute force nearly all illegal traffic across the southern border of the United States," the order reads.

Trump is also raising the possibility of invoking a wartime power act for the first time since World War II to deport gang members who are deemed members of a foreign terrorist organization.

Pausing permission for refugees

Trump also is indefinitely suspending refugee resettlement. For decades, the program has allowed hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and persecution worldwide to come to the United States.

Trump also suspended the refugee program in his first term, and after reinstating it, slashed the numbers of refugees admitted. Under Biden, the program was rebuilt to a three-decade high.

The refugee program is the type of legal immigration that the Trump administration says it's for, said Mark Hetfield, president of HIAS, one of 10 resettlement agencies helping refugees start new lives in the U.S.

The first Trump administration said it needed more vetting. This time, it says immigration is straining American communities, Hetfield said.

"This is a complaint that I have heard nobody raise," he said. "It's going to be devastating for people who followed the rules and are waiting to get out of danger."

What else is Trump planning?

The incoming administration also ordered an end to releasing migrants in the U.S. while they await immigration court hearings, a practice known as "catch-and-release," but officials didn't say how they would pay for the enormous costs associated with detention.

Trump plans to "end asylum," presumably going beyond what Biden has done to severely restrict it. It is unclear what the incoming administration will do with people from countries that don't take back their citizens, such as Nicaragua and Venezuela.

## Thailand gears up for a celebration as a long-awaited marriage equality law takes effect

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — They have been in a committed relationship for more than 13 years, and even had a wedding in 2019. Since then, Danaya Phonphayung and Sunma Piamboon, both women, have considered themselves a married couple, even if same-sex marriages were not legally recognized.

The walls of their home in suburban Bangkok are decorated with faded photos from their happy union, filled with joy and love from their families and friends. Come this Thursday, their wedded status will be recognized by the nation as well, when a law that allows members of the LGBTQ+ community in Thailand to get married and have the same legal rights as heterosexual couples takes effect.

The couple said they can't wait to formalize their union. They plan to register their marriage at a district office near their home on the very first day that the law allows.

"I think I'll cry," Danaya, an office worker, said with a big smile, thinking about the moment that they will sign the paper. "I'm so happy. It's something that was more than I could've dreamed of, that suddenly

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this day is happening.”

“We live together. We bought a house. We bought a car. But we cannot share these things together like a married couple. When this is happening, we feel that it’s our rights that we need to secure as quickly as possible,” she said.

The marriage equality bill, which sailed through both the House of Representatives and the Senate, amended the Civil and Commercial Code to change the words “men and women” and “husband and wife” to “individuals” and “marriage partners.” It would open up access to full legal, financial and medical rights for LGBTQ+ couples.

Sunma, who owns a travel agency, said that she had realized how crucial being legally married was when Danaya was hospitalized with dengue fever, as they don’t live close to her parents.

“The doctors asked me who I was, and I said I was the girlfriend, and they were like, ‘so what?’ I couldn’t make any decision until her condition became quite serious,” she said. “I was so upset, like, if I had lost her ... there would be nothing that could’ve made up for it. So, I think this is very important for both of us.”

How marriage equality became law

Thailand has a reputation for acceptance and inclusivity, but struggled for decades to pass a marriage equality law. Thai society largely holds conservative values. Members of the LGBTQ+ community say they face discrimination in everyday life, although they note that things have improved greatly in recent years.

The government led by the Pheu Thai party made marriage equality one of its main goals. It made a major effort to identify itself with the annual Bangkok Pride parade in June, in which thousands of people celebrated in one of Bangkok’s busiest commercial districts.

Last week, Government House invited dozens of LGBTQ+ couples and activists for a photo op and a meeting with Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and several high ranking officials to celebrate the law coming into effect, making Thailand the first in Southeast Asia and the third place in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal, to legalize same-sex marriage.

“It is almost like a dream, but it’s not. So, congratulations to all,” Paetongtarn said. “I think it’s very important that the world notice us, and know that in this small country we have this kind of thought. We have this kind of support for our people. So, we all should be proud.”

The organizers of Bangkok Pride have collaborated with relevant government agencies to hold a grand celebration in central Bangkok and facilitate couples who wish to register their marriage on the very first day. They said that more than 300 couples have registered to officially tie the knot on Thursday at the event.

“(The law) is about returning our dignity, and confirming that we also have dignity as a human being,” said Ann “Waaddao” Chumaporn, a gender equality activist and the lead organizer of Bangkok Pride. “That day is going to be meaningful to all the couples that have gone through this journey together. I’d like to thank everyone, every love, that has faithfully struggled so that today would finally happen.”

How the law will be implemented

The government and state agencies in Thailand are historically traditional in outlook. To prepare them for change, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration said that it has organized workshops for staff of all Bangkok district offices who are in charge of handling marriage registration. They included lectures raising awareness about gender diversity and guidance on how to properly communicate with those who come for the service.

“It’s like a missing piece of the jigsaw,” Bangkok Deputy Gov. Sanon Wangsrangboon said at one of the workshops earlier this month. “Society is ready. The law is getting ready. But the last piece of the jigsaw is the understanding from officials.”

He acknowledged there that would be problems in the beginning, but said that he hoped they would gradually improve over time.

After they register their marriage, Sunma said that she’s looking forward to having a “real marriage celebration” with her and Danaya’s families.

“It’s not just the two of us that are happy, but both of our families feel it is a big deal, and it is what everyone has been waiting for. Everyone said they are waiting for Jan. 23,” she said.

## Trump sets out to erase Biden's legacy with pardons and orders immediately after taking office

By ZEKE MILLER, CHRIS MEGERIAN and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump began erasing Joe Biden's legacy immediately after taking office as the nation's 47th president on Monday, pardoning nearly all of his supporters who rioted at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and issuing a blizzard of executive orders that signal his desire to remake American institutions.

It was an aggressive start for a returning president who feels emboldened and vindicated by his unprecedented political comeback. Four years after being voted out of the White House, Trump has a second chance to launch what he called "a golden age" for the country.

He signed orders for increasing border security, designating drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations, limiting birthright citizenship, freezing new regulations and establishing a task force for reducing the size of the federal government. He also rescinded dozens of directives issued by Biden, including those relating to climate change and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Trump said that walking back into the already-remodeled Oval Office after his inauguration was "one of the better feelings I've ever had." Unlike during his first term, when new staff members scrambled to figure out what exactly their president was trying to achieve, Trump moved rapidly and methodically to advance his agenda Monday.

His first action after arriving at the White House was pardoning about 1,500 people charged in connection with the Jan. 6 attack, even if they had been convicted of assaulting police officers. Trump commuted the sentences of another 14 people, including leaders of the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys.

The decision amounted to a sweeping cloak of impunity for Trump supporters who upended the country's tradition of peaceful transfers of power by trying to overturn his election defeat four years ago. Trump described them as "hostages" and said he expected them to be freed shortly. A crowd gathered outside a Washington, D.C., jail to welcome their release.

Trump's inauguration combined formal ceremony and freewheeling rhetoric, a reminder of how Trump can abide solemnity for only so long before going off script with a blend of humor and vitriol. Before leaving the White House for an evening of inaugural balls, Trump spent nearly an hour parrying questions by reporters.

He promised that tariffs on Canada and Mexico were coming, suggested that he might visit China and praised the decorators for the new look of his Oval Office. Among other changes, a portrait of Franklin Delano Roosevelt that had been hung by Biden was replaced with one of George Washington.

Frigid weather rewrote the particulars of the day. Trump's swearing-in was moved indoors to the Capitol Rotunda — the first time that has happened in 40 years — and the inaugural parade was replaced by an event with marching bands at Capital One Arena.

In his inaugural address, Trump declared the beginning of "the complete restoration of America and the revolution of common sense."

Trump said the government faces "a crisis of trust." He claimed to have "a mandate to completely and totally reverse a horrible betrayal," promising to "give the people back their faith, their wealth, their democracy and indeed their freedom."

"From this moment on," he added as Biden watched from the front row, "America's decline is over."

Also present at the ceremony was Vice President Kamala Harris, who replaced Biden on the ballot after he abandoned his reelection bid last summer, only to be defeated by Trump in the general election.

Trump said he would lead a government that "expands our territory," a reference to his goals of acquiring Greenland from Denmark and restoring U.S. control of the Panama Canal.

He also pledged to "pursue our manifest destiny into the stars" by launching American astronauts to Mars. Elon Musk, the world's richest man and the owner of a space rocket company with billions of dollars in federal contracts, cheered and flashed two thumbs up as Trump spoke.

Trump supporters who descended on the city to watch the incoming president take the oath of office

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from the National Mall were left to find other places to view the ceremony when it was moved inside. But a cadre of tech titans — including Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Tim Cook and Sundar Pichai — were given prominent positions in the Rotunda. They mingled with Trump's incoming team in a striking display of wealth for a Republican president who is also a billionaire but branded himself as a working-class crusader.

After the ceremony, Trump walked with Biden to the building's east side, where the Democrat left via helicopter to begin his post-presidential life.

Trump's inaugural address was just the beginning of the thoughts he shared on his second first day as president.

Trump followed Biden's departure with extended and unscripted remarks to supporters in the Capitol that revisited a litany of conspiracy theories about voter fraud and criticisms of perceived enemies such as former Republican Rep. Liz Cheney, whom he called "a crying lunatic."

He spoke for even longer than in his inaugural address, saying, "I think this is a better speech than the one I gave upstairs."

Then he went to the Capital One Arena to begin signing executive orders as thousands of supporters cheered, melding the theatrics of his campaign rallies with the powers of the presidency.

"We won, we won, but now the work begins," Trump said before a crowd of people in "Make America Great Again" hats.

He abandoned the more earnest tone of his inaugural address and taunted his predecessor while scrawling his name in thick black ink on his executive orders.

"Could you imagine Biden doing this?" he said. "I don't think so!"

When finished, he tossed the pens into the crowd.

Trump's inauguration realized a political comeback without precedent in American history. Four years ago, he was voted out of the White House during an economic collapse caused by the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. Trump denied his defeat and tried to cling to power. He directed his supporters to march on the Capitol while lawmakers were certifying the election results, sparking a riot that interrupted the country's tradition of the peaceful transfer of power.

But Trump never lost his grip on the Republican Party and was undeterred by criminal cases and two assassination attempts as he steamrolled rivals and harnessed voters' exasperation with inflation and illegal immigration.

Now Trump is the first person convicted of a felony — for falsifying business records related to hush money payments — to serve as president. He pledged to "preserve, protect and defend" the Constitution from the same spot that was overrun by his supporters on Jan. 6.

"We all believe God's hand has been on this man to be elected," said Pam Pollard, 65, a longtime Republican official from Oklahoma, who came to Washington to see him sworn in.

Trump has promised retribution against his political opponents and critics, and he's placed personal loyalty as a prime qualification for appointments to his administration.

With minutes to go before leaving office, Biden issued preemptive pardons to his siblings and their spouses to shield them from the possibility of prosecution. He also pardoned current and former government officials who have been the target of Trump's anger. Biden said "these are exceptional circumstances, and I cannot in good conscience do nothing."

Trump, talking to reporters in the Oval Office late in the day, criticized Biden's pardons, saying "that makes him look very guilty."

A reporter asked Trump if Biden had left him a note in the desk, a tradition during presidential transitions. Trump looked in a drawer and found an envelope.

"Maybe we should all read it together?" Trump joked when holding it up for the cameras. But he didn't open the envelope.



## Fire crews in Southern California quickly extinguish brush fires amid extreme fire weather

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Firefighters quickly extinguished several brush fires that erupted Monday in Southern California amid windy and dry conditions. The extreme fire weather is raising the risk of new wildfires like the two major blazes that started two weeks ago and are still burning in the Los Angeles area.

Gusts could peak at 70 mph (113 kph) along the coast and 100 mph (160 kph) in the mountains and foothills during extreme fire weather that is expected to last through Tuesday.

The National Weather Service issued a warning of a “particularly dangerous situation” for parts of Los Angeles, Ventura and San Diego counties from Monday afternoon through Tuesday morning due to low humidity and damaging Santa Ana winds.

“The conditions are ripe for explosive fire growth should a fire start,” said Andrew Rorke, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard.

On Monday afternoon, Los Angeles fire crews quickly put out a small brush fire that broke out south of the iconic triple-domed Griffith Observatory. A man suspected of starting the fire was taken into custody, said David Cuellar, a Los Angeles Police Department spokesman. Firefighters also quickly extinguished a brush fire along Interstate 405 in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Granada Hills that temporarily closed the northbound lanes.

Farther south, fire crews aggressively fought a blaze that also sparked Monday afternoon in the city of Poway, in San Diego County, and stopped its forward progress.

Former Vice President Kamala Harris, and her husband Doug Emhoff, flew to Los Angeles after attending President Donald Trump’s inauguration and met with firefighters, volunteers and victims of the Eaton Fire in Altadena.

“We just came out to thank (firefighters), to thank the community and just remind folks that we’re all in this together,” Harris said. She said their home in Pacific Palisades was still standing.

Trump, who criticized the response to the wildfires during his inaugural address, has said he will travel to Los Angeles on Friday.

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday said the devastation left by the blazes underscores the need for partnership between the state and federal governments.

“I look forward to President Trump’s visit to Los Angeles and his mobilization of the full weight of the federal government to help our fellow Americans recover and rebuild,” Newsom said in a statement.

A small amount of rain is forecast for the weekend in the Los Angeles area, though more gusty winds are expected to return Thursday, Rorke said.

Authorities urged people not to mow their lawns to prevent sparking a fire, nor start any fires that could get out of control. They also urged residents to review their evacuation plans and ready emergency kits and be on the lookout for any new blazes and report them quickly.

David Acuna, a spokesman with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, said the biggest concerns are the Palisades and Eaton Fires breaking their containment lines and a new blaze starting.

“Don’t do things to start another fire so we can focus on the mitigation of the current fires,” Acuna said.

The low humidity, bone-dry vegetation and strong Santa Ana winds come as firefighters continue to battle two major blazes in the Los Angeles area, the Palisades and Eaton fires, which have destroyed more than 14,000 structures since they broke out during fierce winds on Jan. 7. The Palisades fire was 59% contained on Monday and the Eaton fire 87% contained, according to fire officials.

More evacuation orders were lifted Monday for Pacific Palisades and authorities said only residents would be allowed to get back in after showing proof of residency at a checkpoint. Over the weekend, two men impersonating firefighters attempted to enter an evacuation zone for the Palisades Fire, according to the Los Angeles County sheriff’s department.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said Monday the city was prepared for any possible new fires and warned the strong winds could disperse ash from existing fire zones across Southern California. She urged Angelenos to visit [lacity.gov](http://lacity.gov) to learn about ways to protect themselves from toxic air during Santa Ana winds.

Cal Fire and local fire departments have positioned fire engines, water-dropping aircraft and hand crews across the region to enable a quick response should a new fire break out, Acuna said.

Acuna said Cal Fire had extra fire crews in Kern and Riverside counties.

Los Angeles fire officials said the department has all available engines ready and that 30 of them had been positioned in fire risk areas. The agency also ordered the outgoing shift of about 1,000 firefighters to remain on duty to staff the extra engines.

"The pre-deployment is very, very thoughtful and strategic," Crowley said.

## **Bitter cold spreads across much of the US as Texas and the South brace for rare winter storm**

By SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

Frigid temperatures engulfed the South on Monday ahead of a winter storm that's expected to spread heavy snow and disruptive ice around a region from Texas to north Florida that rarely sees such weather, sending residents rushing to insulate pipes, check heating systems and stock up on emergency supplies.

In Texas, both Houston airports announced flight operations would be suspended starting Tuesday in expectation of hazardous conditions from an unusual blast of severe winter weather taking aim at a huge swath of the South including much of the northern Gulf Coast.

Elsewhere, the East Coast contended with a thick blanket of snow while people from the Northern Plains to the tip of Maine shivered in bitterly cold temperatures from an Arctic air mass that sent temperatures plunging well below normal Monday with dangerously cold wind chills.

Around 40 million people, primarily across the southern U.S., were under some type of weather hazard, including more than 21 million under a winter storm warning, said Marc Chenard, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in College Park, Maryland. He added about 170 million people from the Rockies to points eastward were under either an extreme warning or a cold weather advisory.

Lakesha Reed, manager of Beaucoup Eats catering in New Orleans, had plans to leave Tuesday to cook for a Mardi Gras-style event in the nation's capital, but flights were canceled amid extreme cold. The 47-year-old New Orleans native said it was in the 30s early Monday afternoon in her port city, where near-freezing temperatures are rare.

"We can barely drive in the rain," she said. "Last year, we wore shorts for Mardi Gras."

The online tracker FlightAware reported more than 570 flight cancellations by Monday afternoon within the U.S. or entering or leaving the country, along with more than 5,800 delays.

Winter storm warnings extended from Texas to Florida on Monday, with heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain expected around the region into Wednesday. Meanwhile, a state of emergency was declared Monday night across at least a dozen counties in New York as heavy lake-effect snow was expected around Lake Ontario and Lake Erie through Wednesday, along with extreme cold temperatures.

**Snow on the Gulf Coast**

Anticipating the storm, governors in Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, declared states of emergency and many school systems canceled classes Tuesday.

Winter storm warnings were in effect in Texas, Mississippi, Alabama and the Florida panhandle. The storm was expected to impact Texas starting Monday evening, spread eastward through Wednesday morning with heavy snow expected along and to the north of the Interstate 10 corridor with sleet and freezing rain in south Texas and southeast Georgia and northern Florida.

Forecasters warned the sub-freezing morning lows could threaten sensitive vegetation and exposed plumbing in areas unaccustomed to bitter cold.

Across Louisiana, officials urged residents to "stay home" and not "go sightseeing" once the storm hits, warning any road ice could make travel dangerous. Warming centers were being readied as towns worked to get homeless people off the streets. The weather service warned power outages were possible in areas of significant snow and ice accumulation.

Meanwhile, shoppers packed supermarkets, stocking up.

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"Things were really nuts with everyone shopping and trying to get supplies in the past couple days, and most people were looking for the same stuff because they want to make something that will warm your blood, maybe a gumbo," William Jordan said Monday.

## Return of the Arctic blast

Much of the Eastern Seaboard is enduring some of the coldest temperatures this winter.

The intense cold temperatures prompted Donald Trump to take the oath as president Monday from inside the Capitol Rotunda, upending months of meticulous planning for a massive outdoor event with crowds sprawling down the National Mall. The last time an inaugural ceremony was held indoors was Ronald Reagan's in 1985.

Elsewhere, an area from the Rockies into the Northern Plains will see colder than normal weather over several days, with temperatures forecast to drop to between minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 34 degrees Celsius) to minus 55 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 48 degrees Celsius) on Monday. Sub-zero wind chills are expected as far south as Oklahoma and the Tennessee Valley.

The weather service issued cold weather advisories across the Great Lakes region as high temperatures in many places were expected only to rise into the single digits or teens Monday and Tuesday. Night-time wind chills could drop temperatures to minus 20 F (minus 29 C) or lower. Chicago's high Monday only was expected to hit 10 F (minus 12 C), while Monday night's low was targeted at minus 5 degrees F.

Like earlier this month, this latest cold snap comes from a disruption in the polar vortex, the ring of cold air usually trapped about the North Pole.

In Texas, Jonathan LeBron, 39, plumbing manager at Nick's Plumbing & Air Conditioning in the Houston area, said the company started getting homeowner calls Monday about worries of frozen pipes.

"There is a little bit of panic," LeBron said. "I think they're pretty aware of what's going on. The last freeze was three or four years ago. They want us to go out there and make sure things are insulated accordingly."

Houston's low temperature on Tuesday will be about 18 F (minus 8 C), according to the National Weather Service, or low enough for water to freeze in pipes, expand and then cause the pipes to burst.

## Santa Ana winds expected to return to Southern California

In Southern California, where blazes have killed at least 27 people and burned thousands of homes, strong Santa Ana winds were expected to return Monday with gusts between 70 and 90 mph (about 113 to 145 kph), according to Andrew Rorke, senior forecaster with the weather service in Oxnard, California. But he said a small amount of rain in the weekend forecast was a hopeful sign.

## Senate passes immigrant detention bill that could be the first measure Trump signs into law

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fresh off President Donald Trump's inauguration, the Senate on Monday passed a bill that would require federal authorities to detain migrants accused of theft and violent crimes, the first measure he likely will sign into law and giving more weight to his plans to deport millions of migrants.

Trump has made a broad crackdown on illegal immigration his top priority, and Congress, with Republicans in control and some Democrats willing to go along, is showing it is ready to follow suit. The bill passed 64-35, with 12 Democrats joining with Republicans voting in favor.

Passage of the Laken Riley Act — named after a Georgia nursing student whose murder by a Venezuelan man last year became a rallying cry for Trump's White House campaign — was a sign of how Congress has shifted sharply right on border security and immigration. Passage came just minutes before Trump signed the first of his executive orders.

"We don't want criminals coming into our country," Trump told supporters at the Capitol earlier Monday, adding he looked forward to holding a bill signing "within a week or so."

The bill now heads back to the Republican-controlled House, which passed its version earlier this month and will need to approve changes made in the Senate. The Senate expanded the legislation to target im-

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migrants who assault a police officer or are accused of crimes that kill or seriously injure someone.

Trump is already ending many of former President Joe Biden's border and immigration programs, turning the United States away from the Democrat's attempts at more humane immigration policies at a time when record numbers of people were sometimes arriving at the border with Mexico. Swift action on immigration policy in the new Congress was proof of how Democrats were no longer resisting some strict enforcement proposals.

"Anyone who commits a crime should be held accountable. That's why I voted to pass the Laken Riley Act," Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., said on social media after its passage. Sen. John Fetterman, D-Pa., said that a "secure border" and support for immigration were "fully compatible."

The bill cleared a key procedural vote in the Senate last week also with support from Democrats, and similar legislation gained support from 48 House Democrats earlier this month.

"If you come into this country illegally and you commit a crime, you should not be free to roam the streets of this nation," said Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala., who helped push the bill through the Senate.

The legislation would require federal authorities to detain migrants accused of crimes, including shoplifting, and would grant states new legal standing to challenge federal immigration decisions, including by immigration judges.

Critics of the bill say that provision will open the door for Republican state attorneys general to wage a legal battle against federal immigration decisions, injecting even more uncertainty and partisanship into immigration policy.

Deporting millions of migrants or enforcing the Laken Riley Act will largely depend on Congress' ability to allocate roughly \$100 billion that Republicans have proposed for border security and immigration enforcement. Republicans are debating how to approve that money through a process known as budget reconciliation that will allow them to squeeze it through Congress purely on party-line votes.

That won't be easy in the House, where Republicans hold the majority by just a few seats. They will also face intense pressure to balance their pledges to tame budget deficits and concerns about the economic, as well as humanitarian, impacts of mass deportations.

Currently, the Laken Riley Act has no funding attached to it, but Democrats on the Appropriations Committee estimate the bill would cost \$83 billion over the next three years, according to a memo obtained by The Associated Press. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has estimated it would need to nearly triple the number of detention beds and conduct more than 80 removal flights per week to implement the requirements, according to the memo.

"That's a lot of money to spend on a bill that is going to cause chaos, punish legal immigrants and undermine due process in America — all while drawing resources away from true threats," said Washington Sen. Patty Murray, the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, in a floor speech last week.

Democrats also raised concerns about its impact on immigrants who have received deportation protection from an Obama-era program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Trump sought to end the program during his first term, but he also occasionally expressed openness to allowing those covered by it to stay in the U.S.

## Senate confirms Marco Rubio as secretary of state, giving Trump the first member of his Cabinet

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate quickly confirmed Marco Rubio as secretary of state Monday, voting unanimously to give President Donald Trump the first member of his new Cabinet on Inauguration Day.

Rubio, the Republican senator from Florida, is among the least controversial of Trump's nominees and vote was decisive, 99-0. Another pick, John Ratcliffe for CIA director, is also expected to have a swift vote, as soon as Tuesday. Action on others, including former combat veteran and Fox News host Pete Hegseth for defense secretary, is possible later in the week.

"Marco Rubio is a very intelligent man with a remarkable understanding of American foreign policy," Sen.

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Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the senior-most Republican, said as the chamber opened.

It's often tradition for the Senate to convene immediately after the ceremonial pomp of the inauguration to begin putting the new president's team in place, particularly the national security officials. During Trump's first term, the Senate swiftly confirmed his defense and homeland security secretaries on day one, and President Joe Biden's choice for director of national intelligence was confirmed on his own Inauguration Day.

With Trump's return to the White House, and his Republican Party controlling majorities in Congress, his outsider Cabinet choices are more clearly falling into place, despite initial skepticism and opposition from both sides of the aisle.

Rubio, who was surrounded by colleagues in the Senate chamber, said afterward he feels "good, but there's a lot of work ahead."

"It's an important job in an important time, and I'm honored by it," Rubio said.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune moved quickly Monday, announcing he expected voting to begin "imminently" on Trump's nominees.

Democrats have calculated it's better for them to be seen as more willing to work with Trump, rather than simply mounting a blockade to his nominees. They're holding their opposition for some of his other picks who have less support, including Tulsi Gabbard for director of national intelligence and vaccine skeptic Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for health secretary.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said his party will "neither rubber-stamp nominees we feel are grossly unqualified, nor oppose nominees that deserve serious consideration."

Rubio, he said, is an example of "a qualified nominee we think should be confirmed quickly."

Senate committees have been holding lengthy confirmation hearings on more than a dozen of the Cabinet nominees, with more to come this week. And several panels are expected to meet late Monday to begin voting to advance the nominees to the full Senate for confirmation.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously advanced Rubio's nomination late Monday. The Senate Armed Services Committee and Senate Intelligence Committee, respectively, voted to move the nominations of Hegseth and Ratcliffe. And the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee advanced nominees Kristi Noem as homeland security secretary and Russell Vought as director of the Office of Management and Budget, but with opposition.

Rubio, a well-liked senator and former Trump rival during the 2016 presidential race, has drawn closer to the president in recent years. He appeared last week to answer questions before the Foreign Relations Committee, where he has spent more than a decade as a member.

As secretary of state, Rubio would be the nation's top diplomat, and the first Latino to hold the position. Born in Miami to Cuban immigrants, he has long been involved in foreign affairs, particularly in South America, and has emerged as a hawk on China's rise.

During his confirmation hearing last week, Rubio warned of the consequences of America's "unbalanced relationship" with China. While he echoes Trump's anti-globalist rhetoric, Rubio is also seen as an internationalist who understands the power of U.S. involvement on the global stage.

Rubio cultivated bipartisan support from across the aisle, both Republicans and Democrats. He takes over for outgoing Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has said he hopes the Trump administration continues Biden's policies in the Middle East to end the war in Gaza and to help Ukraine counter Russian nomination.

The Senate is split 53-47, but the resignation of Vice President JD Vance and, soon, Rubio drops the GOP majority further until their successors arrive. Republicans need almost all every party member in line to overcome Democratic opposition to nominees.

Objection from any one senator, as is expected with Hegseth and several other choices, would force the Senate into procedural steps that would drag voting later into the week.

## **Biden leaves office and Washington after 50 years but says 'we're not leaving the fight'**

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden on Monday wrapped up a more than 50-year political career, but promised that “we’re not leaving the fight,” as he bid farewell to the presidency and flew to California to unwind with his family and ease back into private life.

Biden spoke not long after watching his successor, Republican President Donald Trump, pledge during his inaugural address to “completely and totally reverse” everything that his Democratic predecessor did.

In the final hours before the noontime transfer of executive power, Biden extended courtesies to the man he had turned out of the Oval Office four years ago. Trump denied losing the 2020 election and refused to offer similar niceties to Biden upon his inauguration in 2021.

The bitter cold day opened with Biden and his wife, Jill, receiving Trump, and his wife, Melania, for a traditional Inauguration Day meet-and-greet over tea at the White House.

“Welcome home,” Biden told Trump.

Afterward, the rivals who share a history of political animosity rode in a limousine to the Capitol where Trump was sworn in as the 47th president.

“Our recent election is a mandate to completely and totally reverse a horrible betrayal,” Trump said about the work of the Biden administration. Biden sat expressionless in the front row.

As Trump gave his address, the residence staff at the White House got to work clearing out the remainder of Biden’s belongings so they could move Trump and his family back in. The work of turning over the White House includes redecorating the Oval Office.

Walls in the press offices that were bare in the morning after most of the staff had ended their government service were decorated by midafternoon with fresh photographs of Trump.

After Trump’s address, the new president and his wife walked the Bidens outside to a Marine helicopter that had been waiting on the Capitol grounds to fly them to Joint Base Andrews for a farewell event with his staff.

“We couldn’t have done anything we did without you,” Biden told them. “No president gets to choose the moment they enter history, but they get to choose the team they enter history with and we chose the best damn team in the world.”

Even though they may feel “knocked down” by the turn of events, he said what was important was how quickly they get back up.

“We’re leaving office. We’re not leaving the fight,” Biden said, urging them to stay engaged.

And he appeared to joke about Trump’s speech, chuckling as he said, “we heard the inaugural address today. We got a lot more to do.” Biden then made the sign of the cross and everyone laughed.

He and the first lady then walked across the tarmac to the familiar blue-and-white Air Force plane he flew on as president for the flight to Santa Ynez, California.

## **Inside the intimate inauguration: Close-up encounters between political rivals, some awkward**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI, STEPHEN GROVES, JULIA NIKHINSON, and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A president’s inaugural address is typically a choreographed spectacle. A makeshift grandstand is erected next to the Capitol, hundreds of thousands of people line the National Mall and the images and words of the day endure for generations.

This time was different. Forced inside to the Capitol Rotunda by frigid temperatures, Donald Trump was sworn in for a second term as president in an intimate setting for a man who has always favored the largest one possible.

The day’s pomp and unusual circumstances made for a lot of close-up encounters between political

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combatants, some awkward, some not.

It also made for a pecking-order configuration for attendees — top-level guests in the Rotunda and several hundred other VIPs watching from another room at the Capitol, as well as thousands of Trump supporters at a local arena outside the grounds of Congress.

Associated Press reporters, photographers and videographers were in all those rooms, as part of a pool arrangement typically used to cover proceedings in confined spaces. Such arrangements give a selection of news organizations access to events on condition they provide material to others.

## IN THE ROTUNDA

On Monday, the center of the action was in the gleaming, circular space of statues and history.

The tableau bore little resemblance to what would have been on the outside. Seated closely behind Trump in prime seats was a tight clutch of some of the richest people in the world, tech titans all, including Trump's adviser Elon Musk, with a combined net worth near \$1 trillion. They had better seats than the men and women Trump has tabbed for his Cabinet.

The living former presidents, Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama all upheld the tradition of witnessing the peaceful transfer of power. Obama's wife, Michelle, did not. Nor did former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Among the less exclusive club of former vice presidents, Dan Quayle and Mike Pence were present. Dick Cheney did not attend, and neither did Pence's wife, Karen. Members who prosecuted two impeachment cases against Trump were in the room, as were others who served as Trump's defenders. So was a glowering Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Supreme Court justices, Trump's Cabinet choices and a sampling of world leaders also got to be there in person. Musk's mother, Maye Musk, got a better seat than most lawmakers.

And TikTok CEO Shou Chew was seated on the platform next to intelligence chief nominee Tulsi Gabbard, despite the national security concerns that prompted Congress to pass a law banning the Chinese-owned app or forcing its sale.

Before the program began, the soft hum of conversation filled the Rotunda, the white noise of political niceties.

Though Republicans were quick to get to their feet and Democrats did not, it was a strikingly cordial string of events in a place and at a time of such ferocious division. When Lee Greenwood sang "God Bless the U.S.A.," former Speaker John Boehner wept.

Democrats who had a better vantage point offered to take photos of the president for their Republican colleagues.

Family dynamics were at work, too. Perhaps most remarkable was how much Trump's son Barron had grown since his father's first inaugural in 2017 — he is now easily the tallest member of the family.

His mother, Melania, set off a fashion discussion with her broad-brimmed hat that nearly concealed her eyes. Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter, wore a small beret on the side. John Fetterman, the do-it-my-way Democratic senator from Pennsylvania, arrived in a Carhartt sweatshirt and cargo shorts.

For all of the genuine and forced comity of the day, there were reminders of the ragged anger that swept the Capitol when rioters overran it four years ago, inspired by Trump's lies about a stolen election, and tried to stop Joe Biden from taking office.

Trump entered the Rotunda near the tunnel where rioters had engaged in some of the most brutal fighting with police as they broke into the Capitol.

On Monday, the domed landmark was in its usual gleaming state. Most in attendance respected the etiquette instructions placed on each chair in advance.

"Stand or sit quietly with your hands crossed or at your sides," it said, "to respect ceremonial protocols that may or may not represent your associations or beliefs."

## IN EMANCIPATION HALL

With such tight confines, the spacious Capitol Visitor Center's Emancipation Hall was the next best place

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to be.

There, cowboy hats and fur-lined caps dotted the hall as foreign dignitaries, governors and political boosters watched on large screens. They broke into laughter at scenes of former President George W. Bush's playful facial contortions.

Trump visited after the swearing in, bringing people to their feet.

"You're a younger, far more beautiful audience than I just spoke to," Trump told those who had been relegated to this overflow seating.

Several sports celebrities attended the event, among them race car driver Danica Patrick, mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor and Jake Paul and the boxer Evander Holyfield.

Trump launched into a winding speech reminiscent of his campaign appearances. As the speech wore on, enthusiasm waned. People shifted on their feet and turned to talk to companions.

As he concluded after nearly a half hour, he told the crowd he was really only supposed to tell them, "Thank you for being here. Bye bye."

The new president added, "I gave you the A-plus treatment."

## THE INAUGURAL LUNCH

At the inaugural luncheon head table, Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, as chair of the congressional inaugural committee, engaged Trump in an animated conversation for most of the meal. Eventually Vice President JD Vance joined in, and Melania Trump occasionally as well.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg sat next to Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who left early. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos sat between Senate Majority Leader John Thune and his wife, Kimberly, at a table where Barron Trump held forth at length.

Among those at another table: Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, Apple CEO Tim Cook, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, Attorney General nominee Pam Bondi and Donald Trump Jr.

They feasted on Chesapeake crab cakes, ribeye steak and Minnesota Apple Ice Box Terrine with sour cream ice cream and salted caramel.

## **FACT FOCUS: A look at false and misleading claims Trump made at inaugural events**

The Associated Press undefined

In his first address after being sworn in on Monday, President Donald Trump repeated several false and misleading statements that he made during his campaign. They included claims about immigration, the economy, electric vehicles and the Panama Canal. In remarks later at the Capitol's Emancipation Hall, he issued a number of other false claims, including one that distorts pardons made by President Joe Biden as he left office. Here's a look at the facts.

Biden did not pardon 33 murderers

**CLAIM:** Trump, at Emancipation Hall, said Biden pardoned "what is it, 33 murderers, absolute murderers, the worst murderers. You know, when you get the death sentence in the United States, you have to be bad."

**THE FACTS:** Biden announced on Dec. 23 that he was commuting the sentences of 37 of the 40 people on federal death row, converting their punishments to life imprisonment. A commutation does not exonerate the person.

In making the announcement, Biden said: "These commutations are consistent with the moratorium my Administration has imposed on federal executions, in cases other than terrorism and hate-motivated mass murder."

The move spared the lives of people convicted in killings, including the slayings of police and military officers, people on federal land and those involved in deadly bank robberies or drug deals, as well as the killings of guards or prisoners in federal facilities.

The three federal inmates that now face execution are Dylann Roof, who carried out the 2015 racist slay-



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ings of nine Black members of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina; 2013 Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev; and Robert Bowers, who fatally shot 11 congregants at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue in 2018, the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history.

Trump resurfaces false claim about the 2020 election

CLAIM: "2020, by the way, that election was totally rigged." — remarks at Emancipation Hall.

THE FACTS: The election was not rigged. Authorities who have reviewed the election — including Trump's own attorney general — have concluded the election was fair.

Biden won the Electoral College with 306 votes to Trump's 232, and the popular vote by more than 7 million ballots. Recounts in key states affirmed Biden's victory, and lawsuits challenging the results were unsuccessful.

Nancy Pelosi did not reject National Guard troops on Jan. 6

CLAIM: Calling the Select Committee to Investigate the Jan. 6th Attack on the United States Capitol the "Unselect Committee of political thugs," Trump alleged that then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi "turned down the offer of 10,000 soldiers" on Jan. 6, 2021 and that she was "in charge of security at the Capitol." — remarks at Emancipation Hall.

THE FACTS: Trump has frequently claimed Pelosi rejected his offer to send National Guard troops to the Capitol on Jan. 6. While he was involved in discussions in the days prior to Jan. 6 about whether the National Guard would be called ahead of the joint session, he issued no such order or formal request before or during the rioting, and the guard's arrival was delayed for hours as Pentagon officials deliberated over how to proceed.

In a 2022 interview with the Democratic-led House committee that investigated the attack, Christopher Miller, the acting defense secretary at that time, confirmed that there was no order from the president.

Pelosi did not direct the National Guard. However, as the Capitol came under attack, she and then-Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell called for military assistance, including from the National Guard.

The Capitol Police Board makes the decision on whether to call National Guard troops to the Capitol. It is made up of the House Sergeant at Arms, the Senate Sergeant at Arms and the Architect of the Capitol. The board decided not to call the guard ahead of the insurrection but did eventually request assistance after the rioting had already begun, and the troops arrived several hours later.

The House Sergeant at Arms reported to Pelosi and the Senate Sergeant at Arms reported to McConnell. There is no evidence that either Pelosi or McConnell directed the security officials not to call the guard beforehand. Drew Hammill, a then-spokesperson for Pelosi, said after the insurrection that Pelosi was never informed of such a request.

Trump repeats unfounded claim about immigrants

CLAIM: Trump, a Republican, said in his inaugural address that the U.S. government "fails to protect our magnificent, law-abiding American citizens but provides sanctuary and protection for dangerous criminals, many from prisons and mental institutions that have illegally entered our country from all over the world."

THE FACTS: There is no evidence other countries are sending their criminals or the mentally ill across the border.

Trump frequently brought up this claim during his most recent campaign.

Inflation did not reach record highs under Biden

CLAIM: "I will direct all members of my Cabinet to marshal the vast powers at their disposal to defeat what was record inflation and rapidly bring down costs and prices." — inaugural address.

THE FACTS: Inflation peaked at 9.1% in June 2022 after rising steadily in the first 17 months of Democrat Joe Biden's presidency from a low of 0.1% in May 2020. The most recent data shows that as of December it had fallen to 2.9%.

Other historical periods have seen higher inflation, such as a more than 14% rate in 1980, according to the Federal Reserve.

The average price of basic consumer goods has seen major spikes in recent years. For example, a dozen large eggs went from a low of \$1.33 in August 2020 to \$4.82 in January 2023. They decreased in price to \$2.07 in September 2023 but are currently on the rise again, at \$4.15 as of December, partly attributable

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to a lingering outbreak of bird flu coinciding with high demand during the holiday baking season.

A gallon of whole milk rose to a high of \$4.22 in November 2022, up from \$2.25 at the start of Biden's term. As of December, it was at \$4.10.

Gasoline fell as low as \$1.77 a gallon under Trump. But that price dip happened during coronavirus pandemic lockdowns when few people were driving. The low prices were due to a global health crisis, not Trump's policies.

Under Biden, gasoline rose to a high of \$5.06 in June 2022. It has since been on a downward trend, at \$3.15 as of December.

Promise of an External Revenue Service to collect tariffs

CLAIM: Promising to establish an External Revenue Service to collect "all tariffs, duties, and revenues," Trump said in his inaugural address, "It will be massive amounts of money pouring into our Treasury, coming from foreign sources."

THE FACTS: Nearly all economists point out that American consumers will pay at least part, if not most, of the cost of the tariffs. Some exporters overseas may accept lower profits to offset some of the cost of the duties, and the dollar will likely rise in value compared with the currencies of the countries facing tariffs, which could also offset some of the impact.

But the tariffs won't have the desired impact of spurring more production in the U.S. unless they make foreign-made products more expensive for U.S. consumers.

In addition, many of Trump's supporters, and even some of his appointees, argue that he intends to use tariffs primarily as a bargaining tool to extract concessions from other countries. Yet if an External Revenue Service is established, it certainly suggests Trump is expecting to impose and collect many duties.

Calls for revocation of EV mandate that doesn't exist

CLAIM: "We will revoke the electric vehicle mandate, saving the auto industry and keeping my sacred pledge to our great American autoworkers." — inaugural address.

THE FACTS: It's misleading to claim that such a mandate exists. In April 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency announced strict limits on greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles. The agency says these limits could be met if 67% of new-vehicle sales are electric by 2032.

And yet, the new rule would not require automakers to boost electric vehicle sales directly. It sets emissions limits and allows automakers to choose how to meet them.

In 2019, Kamala Harris co-sponsored a bill as a U.S. senator called the Zero-Emission Vehicles Act that would have required 100% of new passenger vehicles sold to be zero-emission by 2040. The bill, which stalled in committee, did not ban ownership of vehicles that produce emissions.

China does not operate the Panama Canal

CLAIM: Discussing his desire for the U.S. to take back the Panama Canal: "American ships are being severely overcharged and not treated fairly in any way, shape or form, and that includes the United States Navy. And, above all, China is operating the Panama Canal." — inaugural address.

THE FACTS: Officials in Panama have denied Trump's claims that China is operating the canal and that the U.S. is being overcharged. Ricaurte Vásquez, administrator of the canal, said in an interview with The Associated Press that "there's no discrimination in the fees."

"The price rules are uniform for absolutely all those who transit the canal and clearly defined," he said.

He also said China was not operating the canal. He noted Chinese companies operating in the ports on either end of the canal were part of a Hong Kong consortium that won a bidding process in 1997. He added that U.S. and Taiwanese companies are operating other ports along the canal as well.

Vásquez stressed that the canal can't give special treatment to U.S.-flagged ships because of a neutrality treaty. He said requests for exceptions are routinely rejected, because the process is clear and there mustn't be arbitrary variations. The only exception in the neutrality treaty is for American warships, which receive expedited passage.

Trump, complaining about rising charges for ships transiting the canal, has refused to rule out the use of military force to seize control of the canal.

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The United States built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Washington relinquished control of the waterway to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999, under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat.

## Lions offensive coordinator Ben Johnson agrees to become Bears head coach, AP source says

By ANDREW SELIGMAN and ROB MAADDI AP Sports Writers

Ben Johnson helped Jared Goff establish himself as one of the NFL's top quarterbacks.

Now, he'll try to do something similar for Caleb Williams.

The Detroit Lions' offensive coordinator has agreed to become the Chicago Bears head coach, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Monday.

The person spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the contract was being finalized.

This will be the first head coaching job for the 38-year-old Johnson, who was widely considered the top candidate on the market after spending the past three seasons as the Lions offensive coordinator under Dan Campbell. He joined Detroit's staff in 2019 following a seven-year run as an assistant with the Miami Dolphins.

With Johnson overseeing the offense, Goff has thrown for more than 4,400 yards each of the past three seasons. He made two of his four career Pro Bowls in that stretch.

The Lions earned the top seed in the NFC at 15-2 before getting stunned by Jayden Daniels and the Washington Commanders in a divisional playoff game on Saturday. Detroit led the league in points per game and finished second in yards passing and total yards per game during the regular season.

The Bears fired Matt Eberflus on Nov. 29 and replaced him on an interim basis with Thomas Brown. Chicago finished last in the NFC North at 5-12 and lost 10 in a row before closing the season with a win at Green Bay.

The development of Williams will be the top priority for Johnson in the wake of the Bears' fourth straight losing season. The No. 1 pick in last year's draft threw for 3,541 yards, 20 touchdowns and six interceptions. But he was sacked a franchise-record and league-leading 68 times.

Johnson has a fan in Williams.

"I think it's been really cool to watch," Williams said two weeks ago, when the Bears cleaned out their lockers. "During our game, I would sit back and watch and try and learn something. It was fascinating to watch. He had wrinkles for counters and things like that throughout the game."

Johnson had strong praise for Williams before the Bears faced the Lions in Week 16.

"There's no question that this guy is talented. I remember standing on the sideline last game and you can hear the ball whistle by you," Johnson said.

"He's got quite a fastball and has some creativity to him, can extend plays and is accurate down the field as well. Like I said, I haven't really dove in and can tell you much more beyond that, but he's been impressive from afar."

The Bears confirmed interviewing 17 candidates. That list included former Seattle Seahawks coach Pete Carroll, former Green Bay Packers and Dallas Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy and former Tennessee Titans coach Mike Vrabel, who got the job in New England.

Chicago has just three playoff appearances since the 2006 team won the NFC. The Bears' lone Super Bowl title came during the 1985 season.

Chicago has not won a postseason game since the 2010 team advanced to the conference title game under Lovie Smith. Johnson becomes their sixth head coach since then, not including Brown.

In three years under general manager Ryan Poles, the Bears are 15-36 with two double-digit losing streaks. They dropped their final 10 games in 2022 while in a teardown mode as part of a franchise-worst 14-game slide.

Chicago came into this season looking for a playoff spot after making some high-profile moves in the offseason, highlighted by Williams' arrival and a blockbuster trade with the Los Angeles Chargers for six-

time Pro Bowl receiver Keenan Allen. But after a 4-2 start, the season went off the rails.

The founding NFL franchise fired a head coach during a season for the first time when it let Eberflus go following a series of poor late-game decisions. The Bears also fired an offensive coordinator for the second time in less than a year, with Shane Waldron lasting just nine games after replacing Luke Getsy in the offseason. Brown, who began the season as passing game coordinator, took over for Waldron and then became interim coach a few weeks later.

Things got so bad that fans chanted "Sell the team!" during the final home game against Seattle — a 6-3 loss before a national audience on a Thursday night.

## **Biden pardons Fauci, Milley and the Jan. 6 panel. It's a guard against potential 'revenge' by Trump**

By COLLEEN LONG and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden, in one of his final acts as president, pardoned Dr. Anthony Fauci, retired Gen. Mark Milley and members of the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, in an extraordinary use of executive power to guard against potential "revenge" by the new Trump administration.

The decision Monday by Biden came after now-President Donald Trump had warned of an enemies list filled with those who have crossed him politically or sought to hold him accountable for his attempt to overturn his 2020 election loss and his role in the Capitol siege four years ago. Trump has selected Cabinet nominees who backed his election lies and who have pledged to punish those involved in efforts to investigate him.

"The issuance of these pardons should not be mistaken as an acknowledgment that any individual engaged in any wrongdoing, nor should acceptance be misconstrued as an admission of guilt for any offense," Biden said in a statement. "Our nation owes these public servants a debt of gratitude for their tireless commitment to our country."

The prospect of such pardons had been the subject of heated debate for months at the highest levels of the White House. It's customary for a president to grant clemency at the end of his term, but those acts of mercy are usually offered to Americans who have been convicted of crimes.

Trump said after his inauguration that Biden had pardoned people who were "very very guilty of very bad crimes" — "political thugs," Trump called them.

Biden, a Democrat, has used the power in the broadest and most untested way possible: to pardon those who have not even been investigated. His decision lays the groundwork for an even more expansive use of pardons by Trump, a Republican, and future presidents.

While the Supreme Court last year ruled that presidents enjoy broad immunity from prosecution for what could be considered official acts, the president's aides and allies enjoy no such shield. There is concern that future presidents could use the promise of a blanket pardon to encourage allies to take actions they might otherwise resist for fear of running afoul of the law.

"I continue to believe that the grant of pardons to a committee that undertook such important work to uphold the law was unnecessary, and because of the precedent it establishes, unwise," said Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who worked on the committee. "But I certainly understand why President Biden believed he needed to take this step."

It's unclear whether those pardoned by Biden would need to apply for the clemency. Acceptance could be seen as a tacit admission of guilt or wrongdoing, validating years of attacks by Trump and his supporters, even though those who were pardoned have not been formally accused of any crimes. The "full and unconditional" pardons for Fauci and Milley cover the period extending back to Jan. 1, 2014.

"These are exceptional circumstances, and I cannot in good conscience do nothing," Biden said, adding that "Even when individuals have done nothing wrong — and in fact have done the right thing — and will ultimately be exonerated, the mere fact of being investigated or prosecuted can irreparably damage reputations and finances."

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Fauci was director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health for nearly 40 years, including during Trump's term in office, and later served as Biden's chief medical adviser until his retirement in 2022. He helped coordinate the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and raised Trump's ire when he resisted Trump's untested public health notions. Fauci has since become a target of intense hatred and vitriol from people on the right, who blame him for mask mandates and other policies they believe infringed on their rights, even as hundreds of thousands of people were dying.

"Despite the accomplishments that my colleagues and I achieved over my long career of public service, I have been the subject of politically-motivated threats of investigation and prosecution," Fauci said in a statement. "There is absolutely no basis for these threats. Let me be perfectly clear: I have committed no crime."

Milley, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has called Trump a fascist and has detailed Trump's conduct around the Jan. 6 insurrection. He said he was grateful to Biden for a pardon.

"I do not wish to spend whatever remaining time the Lord grants me fighting those who unjustly might seek retribution for perceived slights," he said in a statement. "I do not want to put my family, my friends, and those with whom I served through the resulting distraction, expense, and anxiety."

Biden also extended pardons to members and staff of the Jan. 6 committee that investigated the attack, as well as the U.S. Capitol and D.C. Metropolitan police officers who testified before the House committee about their experiences that day, overrun by an angry, violent mob of Trump supporters. It's a "full and unconditional pardon," for any offenses "which they may have committed or taken part in arising from or in any manner related to the activities or subject matter."

The committee spent 18 months investigating Trump and the insurrection. It was led by Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and then-Rep. Liz Cheney, a Wyoming Republican who later pledged to vote for Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and campaigned with her against Trump. The committee's final report found that Trump criminally engaged in a "multi-part conspiracy" to overturn the lawful results of the 2020 presidential election and failed to act to stop his supporters from attacking the Capitol.

"Rather than accept accountability," Biden said, "those who perpetrated the January 6th attack have taken every opportunity to undermine and intimidate those who participated in the Select Committee in an attempt to rewrite history, erase the stain of January 6th for partisan gain, and seek revenge, including by threatening criminal prosecutions."

Biden's statement did not list the dozens of members and staff by name. Some did not know they were to receive pardons until it happened, according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

Cheney and Thompson said in a statement on behalf of the committee that they were grateful for the decision, saying they were being pardoned "not for breaking the law but for upholding it."

"These are indeed 'extraordinary circumstances' when public servants are pardoned to prevent false prosecution by the government for having worked faithfully as members of Congress to expose the facts of a months long criminal effort to override the will of the voters after the 2020 election, including by inciting a violent insurrection," the said in the statement.

The extent of the legal protection offered by the pardons may not fully shield the lawmakers or their staff from other types of inquiries, particularly from Congress. Republicans on Capitol Hill would still likely have wide leverage to probe the committee's actions, as the House GOP did in the last session of Congress, seeking testimony and other materials from those involved.

Biden, an institutionalist, has promised a smooth transition to the next administration, inviting Trump to the White House and saying that the nation will be OK, even as he warned during his farewell address of a growing oligarchy. He has spent years warning that Trump's ascension to the presidency again would be a threat to democracy. His decision to break with political norms was brought on by those concerns.

Biden has set the presidential record for most individual pardons and commutations issued. He also pardoned his son Hunter for tax and gun crimes. Moments before leaving office, he pardoned his siblings and their spouses in a move designed to guard against potential retribution.

He is not the first to consider such preemptive pardons. Trump aides considered them for Trump and

his supporters involved in his failed efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election that culminated in the violent riot at the Capitol. But Trump's pardons never materialized before he left office four years ago.

President Gerald Ford granted a "full, free, and absolute pardon" in 1974 to his predecessor, Richard Nixon, over the Watergate scandal.

Trump has promised to grant swift clemency to many of those involved in the Capitol riot.

Former Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone, who lost consciousness and suffered a heart attack after a rioter shocked him with a stun gun, was one of the officers who testified before the congressional panel that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack. Fanone said he learned of Biden's last-minute pardons from a reporter. He said it was about protecting him and his family from a "vengeful party."

"I haven't digested it," he said. "I just can't believe that this is my country."

## Border app that became 'a salvation' for migrants to legally enter the US may end

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — A nurse who fled Cuba as part of the Caribbean nation's largest exodus in more than six decades needed a place to stay in Mexico as she waited to legally enter the U.S. using a government app. A woman who had lived her whole life in the same Tijuana neighborhood was desperate for medical help after a dog attack left her with wounds to her legs.

A mutual acquaintance brought the two women together. Nurse Karla Figueredo stayed with Martha Rosales for three days in October 2023, waiting for a border appointment booked through the CBP One app and treating Rosales' dog bites. When Figueredo left for the U.S., she got Rosales' permission to give her name to other migrants.

Word quickly spread and Rosales made her home part of a roster of at least three dozen migrant shelters in her hometown on the U.S.-Mexico border, temporarily housing people who use the CBP One app.

"I told God that if they didn't amputate my feet, I would help every Cuban," said Rosales, 45, who was using a wheelchair after being attacked by five dogs until Figueredo helped heal her wounds.

CBP One has brought nearly 1 million people to the U.S. on two-year permits with eligibility to work but could go away once President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

Figueredo, 25, now works as a medical assistant in the Houston area and keeps in touch with Rosales, who quit her job as a bank cleaner to focus on her migrant shelter. The people Rosales houses, mostly Cubans, refer to her as "Tía Martha" (Aunt Martha) as she cooks pancake breakfasts, throws birthday parties and shuttles them to their CBP One appointments.

Supporters say CBP One has helped bring order to the border and reduced illegal crossings. But Trump has said he would end it as part of a broader immigration crackdown. Critics say it prioritizes a lottery system over people who have long lived in the U.S. illegally while paying taxes and people who have waited years for visas.

Dayron Garcia, a doctor in Cuba who heard about Rosales from a nephew, applied with his wife and children and plans to settle with a friend in Houston. He said Rosales' house "feels like family" and that "CBP One has been a salvation."

"It's a guarantee," Garcia, 40, said. "You enter with papers, with parole."

CBP One began under Trump and changed under Biden

U.S. Customs and Border Protection debuted CBP One near the end of Trump's first term as a way for customs brokers to schedule inspections and for visitors with short-term visas to extend stays.

The Biden administration extended its use to migrants to replace an opaque patchwork of exemptions to a pandemic-related asylum ban that was then in place.

CBP One is popular with Cubans, Venezuelans, Haitians and Mexicans, likely because advocates in their communities promote it.

Illegal border crossings by Cubans plunged under CBP One from a peak of nearly 35,000 in April 2022 to just 97 in September.

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Demand for appointments has far outstripped supply, with an average of about 280,000 people competing for 1,450 daily slots toward the end of last year, according to CBP. Winners must report to a border crossing in three weeks.

## A night owl

Migrant shelters along Mexico's border with the U.S. are now occupied primarily by people seeking the online appointments.

Rosales' house is in a neighborhood with ramshackle homes where old tires are stacked to stop flash floods. Migrants watch television, play billiards, do chores and look after their children at Rosales' house or a rental home nearby. Those who don't yet have appointments work their phones for slots made available daily at eight U.S. border crossings with Mexico, a task likened to trying to buy Taylor Swift concert tickets.

Rosales works throughout the night. A helper drives to the airport in an SUV Rosales bought with retirement pay from her bank job.

Shortly after midnight, she shuttles guests from her house to Tijuana's main border crossing with San Diego for the day's first appointments at 5 a.m. She chats with them, smiles for photos and hugs people goodbye.

By 3 a.m., she is at a television station for a four-hour shift cleaning the newsroom and fetching coffee for journalists, who give her the latest information on immigration and the city.

She checks her phone for migrants needing shelter who heard about her on social media or from friends and family. Her contact list identifies them by size of party and appointment date: "3 on the 16th," "6 on the 17th."

Rosales, one of 13 children, dropped out of school in third grade. Reading the Bible taught her enough to barely understand texts, which she generally responds to with voice messages or calls.

Enrique Lucero was Tijuana's director of migrant affairs when she came to City Hall for advice. He helped Rosales establish a legal entity to raise money and made himself available for emergencies, such as when a woman missed her CBP One appointment to give birth. Lucero talked to CBP to make sure the woman and her baby got in.

"She worries about them. She cries for them," Lucero said.

## The exodus from Cuba

Border arrests of Cubans increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and after anti-government protests in 2021. Nicaragua had recently eased rules for Cubans to fly from Havana, allowing them to avoid walking through the Darien Gap, a dangerous jungle in Colombia and Panama. By the spring of 2022, Cubans eclipsed all nationalities but Mexicans in illegal crossings.

"CBP One came like a gift from God," said Yoandis Delgado, who flew to Nicaragua in 2023, paid a smuggler \$1,000 to reach southern Mexico and was repeatedly robbed by Mexican authorities while trying to reach the U.S. border. "CBP One gave us a sense of possibility, of hope."

Delgado, a cook in Cuba, said Rosales' home and neighborhood don't stand out for people seeking to prey on migrants, giving a sense of security he wouldn't get at hotels or other shelters.

"She lives in the same condition that we do, not any better," Delgado said after a pancake breakfast. "She cries for everything that happens to us, for what we have suffered to get here from Cuba."

## A grim future for CBP One

Biden administration officials portray CBP One as a key success in its strategy to create legal pathways at the border while deterring illegal crossings. They note people in life-threatening circumstances can come to a border crossing without an appointment to plead their case.

Anxiety is spreading among migrants in Mexico who fear Trump will end CBP One. Even those in the U.S. are uneasy because parole expires after two years.

The Trump transition team didn't respond to a question about CBP One's future, but his allies say it's overly generous and encourages immigration. A bill that stalled in the Senate in 2023 would have prohibited using the app to admit migrants.

Figueredo, the nurse who helped Rosales, plans to get a green card under a 1966 law that applies to

Cubans. She says she and her partner, a barber, came to "continue to grow professionally and support our future children."

She writes Rosales often, telling her that her job is "crazy" busy and asking about her health. "I hope you're very happy," she wrote.

## **MLK Day at King's Atlanta congregation features daughter's warning about anti-woke rhetoric**

By JEFF MARTIN and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A massive 70-member choir belted out "Hallelujah" at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day service Monday at his former congregation in Atlanta, followed by a stern message from his youngest daughter warning against anti-woke rhetoric.

The service at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta was among the most prominent commemorations of King that played out across the country Monday. At the front of the church's stage, seven people held large signs proclaiming "JUSTICE", "FREEDOM" and "DEMOCRACY."

"We are living in a time when anti-woke rhetoric has become a weapon to divide us and distract us from the real issues of injustice," King's daughter, the Rev. Bernice King, said. "To be woke is to be aware of oppression and commitment to justice."

The MLK holiday was half of the nation's double-duty Monday: the inauguration of Donald Trump, who heads back to the White House, created mixed feelings on King's day for civil rights leaders who have opposed Trump's rhetoric and stances on race and civil rights.

The keynote speaker at Ebenezer then made a reference to Trump, saying he had heard "that somebody had won a mandate."

"I don't care who you are, if you win 60% of the vote, you never win a mandate to violate justice," said Bishop William Barber II, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign. "You never win a mandate to hurt people."

But in Washington, in a speech after taking the oath of office, Trump noted the significance of the King holiday.

"In his honor, we will strive together to make his dream a reality," Trump said.

Ebenezer is where King was baptized as a child and ordained at 19 years old. He became the congregation's co-pastor in 1960 alongside his father, Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. He remained in that role until his death, and his funeral was held at the church. The church is now part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park & Preservation District.

Monday marks the third time in the nearly 40 years since the federal King holiday became law that it coincides with a presidential inauguration. Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama also were sworn in for their second terms on the holiday. MLK Day lands on the third Monday of January — close to King's Jan. 15 birthday.

King himself worried the legal protections he dedicated his life to realizing would not be followed by greater anti-discrimination efforts or social programs. The celebrated Black civil rights leader proposed it would take white Americans embracing a deeper kinship with Black Americans and engaging in economic and social solidarity to see change.

There was a heavy security presence outside the Atlanta church, where more than two dozen police officers from across metro Atlanta stood guard with all-terrain vehicles, police motorcycles and suburban utility vehicles. Streets in the immediate vicinity of the historic church were blocked to vehicle traffic.

Lonnie J. Edwards of Stone Mountain, Georgia, has been attending the annual service for 15 to 20 years. He always finds it refreshing that the movement King led is still alive, and he said he enjoys "sharing the kind of philosophy and the image that Dr. King had not just for Atlanta but for America."

Liccy Arias, 21, a recent Georgia State University alumna, was among a large group of Georgia State students and faculty members at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. Her visit was part of the day of service the Atlanta-based school has on the holiday.



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"Helping out makes my heart very, very full," she said.

In frigid Columbia, South Carolina, an MLK Day rally at the Statehouse entered its 25th year, featuring a smaller crowd, and some trepidation mixed in about the change of power occurring in Washington. The South Carolina event started in 2000 when tens of thousands poured in to demand the Confederate flag be taken down from the Capitol dome.

In 2013, the rally paused so thousands on hand could watch Obama, the nation's first Black president, take the oath of office for a second time on big screens. On Monday, there was no mention of the 2025 inauguration.

College student Michael Parker thought about how King endured through all kinds of racism and hate, confident he would make the world a better place. That was the attitude he was taking Monday.

"There's still work to be done," Parker said. "Progress hasn't gone steady through the generations. We need to keep working on Dr. King's dream."

King was shot in Memphis, Tennessee, while standing on the balcony of the old Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. The civil rights leader had been in the city to support a sanitation workers' strike. The motel has been turned into the National Civil Rights Museum, which was providing free admission and offering extended hours to visitors Monday.

The museum also scheduled musical performances, food and blood donation drives, and a livestreamed presentation that will explore King's leadership and his relevance to present day social justice movements.

## Inauguration Day Latest: Trump becomes the 47th president of the United States

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump, who overcame impeachments, criminal indictments and a pair of assassination attempts to win another term in the White House, will be sworn in Monday as the 47th U.S. president taking charge as Republicans claim unified control of Washington and set out to reshape the country's institutions.

Trump's swearing-in ceremony, moved indoors due to intense cold, will begin at noon ET. But festivities will start earlier when the incoming president arrives for service at St. John's Episcopal Church.

Here's the latest:

Cheers erupt in Rotunda as Trump is sworn in

Trump's family surrounds him after his swearing-in.

He kisses his wife, Melania, on the cheek — this time making it past the brim of her hat.

JD Vance has been sworn in by Justice Brett Kavanaugh  
Chief Justice John Roberts has sworn in Trump for a second term as president  
Inauguration Day on MLK Day

This is the third time a president has been sworn in on the federal holiday honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama also were sworn in for their second terms on the holiday.

The holiday honoring the civil rights leader was established nearly 40 years ago. It is observed on the third Monday of January every year.

The Constitution places Inauguration Day on Jan. 20.

Klobuchar said the coincidence is "a further reminder we must strive to uphold the values in our Constitution."

Speeches highlighting the "endurance" of American democracy

The bipartisan leaders of the 60th Inaugural Committee kicked off the ceremony by highlighting the importance of American democracy as the country is close to celebrating 250 years.

"Our great American experiment, grounded in the rule of law, has endured. So as we inaugurate a new president and vice president, let us remember that the power of those in this room comes from the people," Sen. Amy Klobuchar, the committee chair, said in her speech.

Her Republican counterpart, Sen. Deb Fischer, echoed that sentiment.

"Our democracy promises the American people the power to change, to chart their own destiny," Fischer

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said. "That's the beauty that is the importance of democracy. It allows endurance, the permanence of a nation and never change."

Lincoln Bible redux

President-elect Donald Trump plans to use his own Bible, which was given to him by his mother, and the Lincoln Bible for his swearing-in ceremony.

The Lincoln Bible was provided during Lincoln's 1861 inauguration by William Thomas Carroll, clerk of the Supreme Court. That's because Lincoln's family Bible was still packed and on its way to Washington from Springfield, Illinois, along with the Lincoln family's other belongings.

In 2017, Trump stacked a family Bible atop Lincoln's while taking the oath. He's set to do the same with his own Bible and Lincoln's this time.

That recalls Barack Obama, who also used the Lincoln Bible during his first swearing-in in 2009. During his second in 2014, he paired it with a Bible that had belonged to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

White House staff turning over the mansion for Trump during inauguration

The staff of the White House residence starts the work of moving out one president and preparing the mansion for a new president as soon as the outgoing and incoming presidents leave for the inauguration at the Capitol.

They have about five hours to do it.

The White House chief usher is the staff person who oversees the process and will have worked with Melania Trump to coordinate the move. One former White House usher describes the process as "organized chaos."

No Bible required

While reciting the presidential oath of office is mandated by the Constitution, using a Bible isn't.

Theodore Roosevelt didn't use one when he was sworn in following the assassination of William McKinley in 1901. John Quincy Adams used a law text for his 1825 inauguration.

And, sworn in aboard Air Force One after John Kennedy's assassination in 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson used a Catholic missal.

Also, who holds the Bible during the inaugural ceremony isn't spelled out. Lady Bird Johnson set a tradition that has continued until today when she became the first incoming-first lady to hold the Bible for her husband Lyndon's second inauguration in January 1965.

Prior to that, the Bibles were often held by an unknown official — people not easily identified in historical photographs.

Biden's other family pardon proved unpopular

Only about 2 in 10 Americans approved of Biden's previous decision to pardon his son, Hunter Biden, according to an AP-NORC poll from December — suggesting that his last-minute move to issue pardons to his family members may not be received well.

That poll found that about 4 in 10 Democrats approved of the pardon, while about 3 in 10 disapproved and about one-quarter did not have an opinion or did not know enough to say. The vast majority of Republicans and about half of independents had a negative opinion.

Read more about how Americans reacted to Biden's pardons

Trump's purple tie appears to include a checkered pattern of red and blue

It could be a potential nod to unity and a departure from the fire engine red tie he wore when he was first sworn in back in 2017.

Trump attempts to kiss his wife's cheek

The president-elect leaned in to kiss her but appeared to be blocked by the brim of her hat.

He greeted President Joe Biden after entering the Capitol Rotunda to roaring applause and cheers.

Why does Amy Klobuchar speak first?

Klobuchar spoke at the start of the swearing-in, calling the audience to order before the ceremony began.

The Minnesota Democrat has a prominent role because she chairs the joint committee overseeing preparations for the inauguration.

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The decision to move the inauguration inside creates a split screen  
Senior government officials, tech moguls and donors are gathered inside the Capitol building, attending the swearing-in ceremony in person.

Meanwhile, thousands of Trump's supporters, many wearing MAGA gear, are gathered at Capital One Arena to watch on screen.

Proud Boys seen marching on Washington streets

A group of Proud Boys carrying pro-Trump signs and anti-antifa marched on the streets in Washington as Trump prepared for the swearing-in ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda.

The extremist group was known for street fights with anti-fascist activists when Trump infamously told them to "stand back and stand by" during his first debate in 2020 with Biden.

Dozens of Proud Boys leaders, members and associates have been convicted and sentenced to prison in the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. It's unclear whether any might receive pardons promised by Trump.

Vice President-elect JD Vance enters the Rotunda to roaring applause  
Trump will order the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico and more

A spokeswoman for the transition team says Donald Trump will order the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska's Mount Denali in his first executive orders.

Spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said on the social platform X that the Gulf of Mexico will be renamed the Gulf of America and Denali — the highest mountain in North America — will revert to Mount McKinley, its former name until the Obama administration changed it in 2015.

Earlier this month, Trump floated the idea of renaming the body of water that forms the coastline along five southeastern states, saying he felt "Gulf of America" has a "beautiful ring to it."

As president, Trump can take the action to rename the body of water, although other countries don't have to adopt the new name.

Jill Biden and Doug Emhoff exchange a hug and a smile

The two awaited the arrival of their spouses on the inauguration platform.

Audience welcomes former presidents

The former presidents in attendance — Obama, Bush and Clinton — drew applause from the audience.

Two former first ladies were there, too, but Michelle Obama skipped the inauguration.

She wasn't with the former U.S. leaders and their spouses at former President Jimmy Carter's state funeral earlier this month either.

No explanation has been given for her absences.

The former first and second ladies that aren't attending

While former Vice President Mike Pence is in attendance at Trump's inauguration, his wife, former second lady Karen, is not.

Karen Pence snubbed the Trumps earlier this month at former President Jimmy Carter's funeral, where she ignored Melania Trump's efforts to shake her hand.

Michelle Obama also chose not to attend.

Former vice presidents have arrived

Dan Quayle and Mike Pence arrived on the platform with a standing ovation from members of both the House and Senate.

CEOs have better seats than Trump's Cabinet members

The CEOs of Meta, X, and Amazon sat in front of the president-elect's entire Cabinet — a nod to the importance Trump has given the heads of some of the most powerful companies and social media platforms over his agency heads.

Some of the nation's most powerful tech titans are at the Capitol

Vocal Trump ally Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla and owner the social platform X, was seen along with Google's Sundar Pichai and Amazon owner Jeff Bezos.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Apple CEO Tim Cook were also in the audience.

The capacity shrunk significantly when the ceremony was moved indoors due to cold temperatures.

Musk has also been tapped by Trump to help lead an outside government group called the Department

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of Government Efficiency to slash bureaucracy.

All 9 Supreme Court justices are at the Capitol

The entire court entered, led by Roberts. Retired Justice Stephen Breyer also is there.

Italian, Argentine leaders are in the Rotunda

Argentine President Javier Milei and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni are in the Rotunda. Trump broke with precedent by inviting foreign leaders to attend his inauguration.

Pence and the Clintons get booed in arena

The crowd in the arena is not discriminate with their cheers — anything from a man holding a “Joe Biden You’re Fired” sign to a shot of Rudy Giuliani has inspired enthusiastic applause — but a rare boo erupted from the crowd at the sigh of Mike Pence walking into the rotunda.

Soon after a much larger boo came for the Clintons.

Trump has entered the Capitol with BidenPodcast host Joe Rogan is taking his seat near the platform ‘Promises Made, Promises Kept’

That is the subject line of an email from Trump’s transition team touting the executive orders he is expected to sign shortly after being sworn in for a second term.

“He told voters on Day One, we would Drill, Baby, Drill. President Trump will be doing that,” it reads.

“He told voters on Day One, he would end the invasion at the border. President Trump will be doing that,” it goes on.

“He told voters on Day One, he would restore common sense. President Trump will be doing that,” it adds.

Congressional leaders arrive at the Capitol

Asked how he felt today, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said: “Feel great about the Bills.”

The New Yorker had a royal blue cap in hand. The House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, said it’s “bright, sunny outside and bright in our heart.” Johnson said he expects “a lot” of executive orders from Trump. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries smiled and waved but declined comment.

“Feel great,” said House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La.

President-elect Donald Trump and Vice President-elect JD Vance arrive at the Capitol ahead of their inauguration Getting their selfies in while they can

Republicans and Democrats sat amongst each other as lawmakers did not have designated seats and took selfies before the official inaugural ceremony began.

Biden and Trump share a limo

Both men shared the same vehicle, along with Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, chair of the bipartisan Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

Biden and Trump have been the bitterest of rivals for years. But the outgoing and incoming president taking the same vehicle to the inauguration ceremony keeps with political traditions.

President Joe Biden and President-elect Donald Trump are exiting

They left the White House after spending about 35 minutes in a private meeting.

They got into a limo for the Capitol for the swearing-in ceremony. It’s now less than two hours away.

First lady and incoming first lady leave the White House

First lady Jill Biden and incoming first lady Melania Trump have left the White House.

They were followed by Vice President Kamala Harris and Vice President-elect JD Vance, who left in a limo for the swearing-in at the Capitol.

“Very well, thank you,” Harris replied to a shouted question as she left the White House and headed to a waiting limo.

Flags are up at the Capitol

Flags that had been lowered for the passing of former President Jimmy Carter are back up at the U.S. Capitol.

House Speaker Mike Johnson ordered the flags raised for Trump’s inauguration.

Second gentleman heads to the Capitol

Second gentleman Doug Emhoff has exited the White House with Usha Vance, wife of vice president-elect JD Vance, to go to the Capitol.

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Sports celebrities and business figures alike crowd into the Capitol's visitor center  
The attendees, which include the CEO of TikTok, made their way into the Capitol's visitor center to watch the inauguration ceremonies on a large screen.

Evander Holyfield, Danica Patrick, Conor McGregor, Jake Paul and his brother Logan Paul have all made their way into a large area called the Emancipation Hall.

The CEO of TikTok, Shou Zi Chew, is also there. He struck up a conversation with Logan Paul, who is a social media influencer and professional boxer.

As Trump enters the White House a second time, some celebrities and business leaders have sought closer relationships than during Trump's first term.

Trump is already proving he is a valuable ally to have — the incoming president intervened this weekend in an attempt to halt a ban on TikTok.

Seeing red

House Republican women arrived at the Rotunda wearing various shades of red, a nod to the GOP's signature hue. Similarly, Republican men wore ties ranging from dark red to orange as they took their seats.

Harris and Biden make final posts on X

"It has been the honor of our lifetimes to serve you, the American people," the vice president and president wrote in identical posts Monday morning on the social platform X.

The posts both featured a portrait of Biden, first lady Jill Biden, Harris and second gentleman Doug Emhoff.

What are the most — and least — popular parts of Trump's agenda?

Donald Trump will start implementing a far-reaching agenda when he takes office for the second time on Monday, but a new AP-NORC poll finds that some of his priorities are a lot more popular than others.

Just over half of Americans favor eliminating taxes on earnings from tips, for example, while about one-quarter are neutral and only about 2 in 10 are opposed.

On the other hand, about 6 in 10 US adults oppose pardoning many of the people who participated in the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Chief Justice John Roberts will administer the presidential oath of office to Trump

It's the fifth inauguration for Roberts, who swore in Barack Obama twice, Joe Biden once and now will stand opposite Trump for a second time.

In the first inaugural ceremony for both men, in 2009, Roberts and Obama combined to flub the constitutionally prescribed oath, then met at the White House for a rare do-over — just to be safe.

Guests begin to arrive at the Capitol

Among the first people high-ranking officials to arrive at the Capitol Rotunda on Monday was Gen. CQ Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is sitting on the platform where Trump will take his oath.

Current and former House and Senate leaders also arrived, including former Republican Leader Mitch McConnell and his wife former Trump Cabinet member Elaine Chao.

Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh will administer oath of office to Vance

Kavanaugh has known Vance and his wife, Usha, since their days at Yale Law School.

Vance was among Kavanaugh's students in a law school seminar in 2011. He later employed Usha Vance as a law clerk when Kavanaugh was a judge on the federal appeals court in Washington.

She went on to serve as a clerk to Chief Justice John Roberts.

3 former Republican Speakers of the House are present

Newt Gingrich, John Boehner and Kevin McCarthy are in the Capitol Rotunda for the inauguration.

The last Democratic Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, has said she is not attending the ceremony.

French billionaire Bernard Arnault joined others at the church service

Arnault, who heads the LVMH fashion empire and is France's richest man, was sitting a few rows back and to the left of Trump and his wife, Melania, wearing a dark suit and tie.

LVMH's many brands include Louis Vuitton and Dior, and its influence and Arnault's wealth make the lowkey billionaire a powerful figure.

LVMH had a stellar year in France last year, especially as a high-profile sponsor of the Paris Olympics. Arnault also was a key donor toward the reconstruction of Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral after its fire in

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2019 and attended the monument's reopening — along with Trump — last December.

Biden says he wrote a letter to Trump

It's become tradition for the outgoing president to write a letter to his successor and leave it in the drawer of the Oval Office desk for the new president to find.

Biden declined to say what he said in the note. Trump wrote Biden a note four years ago.

Pence is attending today's inauguration ceremony

"This is a day when every American does well to celebrate our democracy and the peaceful transfer of power under the Constitution of the United States," the former vice president wrote in a post on the social platform X.

"We encourage all our fellow Americans to join us praying for President Trump and Vice President Vance as they assume the awesome responsibility of leading this great Nation," he added.

Trump and Pence once had a close relationship, but had a falling out when Pence refused to go along with Trump's unconstitutional scheme to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

Pence ran against Trump in the GOP primary but dropped his bid before any votes were cast.

He has been critical of several of Trump's proposals for a second term, with a group he runs urging Republican senators not to confirm Robert F. Kennedy to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.

Putin congratulates Trump

Speaking during a video call with members of Russia's Security Council just before Trump's inauguration, Putin said that "we hear the statements from Trump and members of his team about their desire to restore direct contacts with Russia, which were halted through no fault of ours by the outgoing administration."

"We also hear his statements about the need to do everything to prevent World War III," Putin said in televised comments. "We certainly welcome such an approach and congratulate the U.S. president-elect on taking office."

Putin said Moscow is open to discussing a prospective peace settlement in Ukraine, adding it should lead not to a short truce but a lasting peace and take into account Russia's interests.

New York's governor orders flags to be raised to full height

The move came after a Hochul spokesperson said last week that flags would remain at half-staff following the death of former President Jimmy Carter.

Flags will be returned to half staff on Tuesday, Hochul said in a statement.

"Regardless of your political views, the American tradition of the peaceful transition of power is something to celebrate," said Hochul, a Democrat.

The Trumps have arrived at the White House

They met the Bidens on a gold-trimmed red carpet, exchanging greetings and posing for photos ahead of a private meeting over tea and coffee.

"Welcome home," Biden said to Trump after the president-elect stepped out of the car.

Biden wrapped his hand around Trump's upper arm to escort him inside the mansion.

Biden welcomes Trump at the White House for a preinaugural tea, restoring traditions around peaceful transfer of power

Serving up the inaugural lunch menu

Chesapeake Crab Cake, Greater Omaha Angus Ribeye Steak and wine from Monticello are on the menu for the inaugural luncheon.

That's according to the joint congressional committee on inauguration ceremonies headed by Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.

It says the luncheon after the swearing-in ceremony is the 11th to be held at the Capitol's National Statuary Hall, and will include more than 200 guests including the president, vice president, family, U.S. Supreme Court justices, Cabinet Member-designees and members of Congressional leadership.

For dessert, there's Minnesota Apple Ice Box Terrine with sour cream ice cream and salted caramel.

Nerves and uncertainty run high for those along the border.

Before dawn Monday, ahead of Donald Trump's inauguration, several dozen people waited in freezing temperatures at a bridge connecting Ciudad Juarez, a Mexican border city, with El Paso, Texas.

They held appointments for CBP One, a program that allows asylum seekers to schedule initial appoint-

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ments before reaching the border. CBP One has brought nearly 1 million people to the U.S. on two-year permits with eligibility to work and is one of the programs that Trump has said he will end.

Nerves and uncertainty were running high in the line.

Julio González, 35, who came from the violent Mexican state of Michoacan, cried as he considered his circumstances.

"We hope that with Donald Trump's arrival the application (CBP One) continues," he said.

Inauguration ceremony begins in the Capitol Rotunda

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Combined Choirs kicked off the inaugural ceremonies Monday with a musical prelude. The students wore all black with a red scarf embossed with their university logo.

Their voices echoed into the Capitol dome where in just a few hours Trump will be sworn in as the 47th President.

## Spurs, Pacers make their way to Paris, for a week where all eyes will be on Victor Wembanyama

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

NANTERRE, France (AP) — Officially, Indiana will be the home team on the scoreboard when it plays San Antonio in Paris on Thursday.

The Pacers know better. They will not be feeling right at home.

"It's going to be a big crowd against us, honestly," Indiana guard Andrew Nembhard said.

He's not wrong, for one 7-foot-4 reason. The upcoming NBA Paris Games — Indiana vs. San Antonio on Thursday and Saturday, the Pacers being the designated home team for the first matchup and the Spurs getting that distinction for the second game — are essentially going to be a weeklong celebration of France's own Victor Wembanyama, San Antonio's reigning NBA rookie of the year who likely will be an All-Star this season for the first time.

In other words, welcome to Wemby Week in Paris.

The teams arrived in Paris on Monday, with practices and other events scheduled throughout the week and then the games toward the end. The Spurs were coming straight from the airport to a light workout in Nanterre — on the court that Wembanyama called home when started his pro career in the French league as a 15-year-old.

"It was even a bit surreal to see all my teammates in this arena where I spent so much time," Wembanyama said after the workout, which was viewed by a few dozen kids from a local basketball club — all wearing Spurs T-shirts with his name and jersey number. "It's a bit like two worlds colliding. For now, it's going well. In any case, it's really extremely pleasant. There is emotion."

There have been single games in Paris in each of the last two seasons — Chicago-Detroit in 2023, Brooklyn-Cleveland last year — but this season, it's a two-game trip and Wembanyama is surely one of the reasons for that.

Ticket demand was off the charts. The games sold out in a day. Some tickets remain as part of packages; for example, a game ticket for Thursday, including a chance to grab a picture with the Larry O'Brien Trophy, will set you back \$730. Flight not included, of course.

Then again, not everyone in attendance will have bought their tickets. Wembanyama arranged a treasure hunt for 10 tickets; there were QR codes hidden in five cities — Paris, Lyon, Lille, Marseille and Bordeaux — and he encouraged fans to start hunting.

"I couldn't come back to the capital without giving you the opportunity to come see me play," he wrote on social media.

The Spurs are a global brand with deep ties to France that pre-date Wembanyama's arrival in San Antonio. Tony Parker and Boris Diaw helped the Spurs establish that relationship with France during their years in Spurs colors, and now the interest can be marked in plenty of ways off the court as well. Last week, the Spurs announced a series of events for this week in collaboration with Paris-Saint Germain, one of the world's most-followed soccer teams.

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"We have a long history with France for obvious reasons in many ways. So, it's just another milestone or opportunity, I think, to probably strengthen that bond or connection," Spurs interim coach Mitch Johnson said. "Very cool for Vic. Obviously, he just got done in the Olympics as well."

France played host to the Paris Games last summer and Wembanyama helped his home nation get to the gold-medal game against the U.S. He was spectacular in the final, scoring 26 points. It wasn't enough, not with Stephen Curry leading the way with 24 for the Americans — capped by a barrage of four 3-pointers in the final couple of minutes to clinch the gold.

Wembanyama settled for silver that night. The games this week are in the same arena as the Olympic final was. He was asked earlier this season how often he thinks about this trip and getting to play in Paris again.

"All the time," he said.

And now, it's finally here. It's happening. Wembanyama has a busy week ahead — but game days will solely be game days, per his customs. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday can be about seeing old friends and giving back to his homeland, but in his mind, Thursday and Saturday will solely be about the Spurs trying to beat the Pacers.

"The way I approach this trip is my way of giving back a little to the French public, trying to please many people who will never have the chance to go to the United States," he said Monday. "It's really important to me. We arrived a few hours ago, but it's already incredible."

Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton was on that U.S. Olympic team that won gold last summer. He knows what that arena felt like and can envision what it'll be like for Wembanyama's return this week.

"The game has never seen anybody like him," Haliburton said.

The Spurs played in Miami on Sunday and lost, then stuck around for a few hours to have some dinner and get their body clocks right for the 8-hour flight from South Florida to France. The Pacers were heading to do some sightseeing after landing Monday, including the Eiffel Tower.

"All that good stuff," Pacers center Myles Turner said in a video released by the team.

Paris has been waiting. And Wemby will be welcomed back like a conquering hero.

"I think any time anybody gets to play (or) perform back home, especially when that's not something you do consistently or regularly, it's a pretty cool opportunity," Johnson said. "I'm sure there'll be people at the game that haven't seen him play in a long time or typically maybe never have. You know, hometown kids get to see you ... maybe they've never been to an NBA game. So, I know there's a lot of things, not to speak for him, that I'm sure he's looking forward to and that are unique in a very, very cool way for him to connect."

## **Pope Francis calls Trump's plans of mass deportation of immigrants 'a disgrace'**

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis said Donald Trump's plans to impose mass deportations of immigrants would be a "disgrace," as he weighed in on the incoming U.S. president's pledges nearly a decade after calling him "not Christian" for wanting to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border.

Francis made the comments during an appearance at an evening talk show, and then followed up Monday with an official telegram of congratulations to Trump on the day of his inauguration. Francis said he prayed that America would live up to its ideals of being a "land of opportunity and welcome for all."

"It is my hope that under your leadership the American people will prosper and always strive to build a more just society, where there is no room for hatred, discrimination or exclusion," he wrote in the telegram.

History's first Latin American pope was asked Sunday night about the Trump administration pledges of deportations during an appearance on a popular Italian talk show, Che Tempo Che Fa.

"If true, this will be a disgrace, because it makes the poor wretches who have nothing pay the bill" for the problem, Francis said. "This won't do! This is not the way to solve things. That's not how things are resolved."



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Trump, who is being sworn in on Monday, made mass deportations a signature issue of his campaign and has promised a raft of first-day orders to remake immigration policy.

During his first campaign for the presidency, in 2016, Francis was asked about Trump's plans to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Speaking after he celebrated Mass along the border, Francis famously said anyone who builds a wall to keep out migrants is "not Christian."

Many U.S. bishops have firmly opposed Trump's deportation plan, with the incoming archbishop of Washington D.C., Cardinal Robert McElroy, saying such policies were "incompatible with Catholic doctrine." It was a reference to the Biblical call to "welcome the stranger."

Another cardinal close to Francis, Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich, said the reports of mass deportations targeting the Chicago area "are not only profoundly disturbing but also wound us deeply."

In a statement delivered from the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City on Sunday, Cupich said governments have the responsibility to protect borders and communities.

"But we also are committed to defending the rights of all people, and protecting their human dignity," according to the text of his statement.

Francis, who grew up in Argentina in a family of Italian immigrants, has long prioritized the plight of migrants and called for governments to welcome, protect and integrate them, within their means. He has said the dignity and rights of migrants trump any national security concerns.

## Today in History: January 21, first US case of COVID-19 confirmed

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2025. There are 344 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 21, 2020, the U.S. reported its first known case of the 2019 novel coronavirus circulating in China, saying a Washington state resident who had returned the previous week from the outbreak's epicenter was hospitalized near Seattle.

Also on this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed by guillotine.

In 1915, the first Kiwanis Club, dedicated to community service, was founded in Detroit.

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died at age 53.

In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who proclaimed his innocence, served less than four years in prison.)

In 1976, British Airways and Air France inaugurated scheduled passenger service on the supersonic Concorde jet.

In 1977, on his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.

In 2010, a deeply divided U.S. Supreme Court, in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, vastly increased the influence of big business and labor unions by allowing unlimited contributions to political campaigns.

In 2017, a day after Donald Trump's first presidential inauguration, an estimated 3 million to 5 million people rallied at Women's March demonstrations across the U.S. to support civil rights and to protest Trump's rhetoric and policies.

Today's birthdays: Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus is 85. Opera singer Plácido Domingo is 84. Singer-songwriter Billy Ocean is 75. Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is 74. Artist Jeff Koons is 70. Actor-director Robby Benson is 69. Actor Geena Davis is 69. Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., is 64. Basketball Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon is 62. Singer Emma Bunton (Spice Girls) is 49. Actor Luke Grimes is 41.