

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
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Friday, April 11

Senior Menu: Chicken tetazzine, peas, pineapple, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg Omelets.

School Lunch: Tuna. Noodle hot dish, green beans.

Smarter Balance Testing for Grades 6-8 and 11 (ELA and Math)

Track at Ipswich, 2 p.m.

Saturday, April 12

Prom, Grand March at 7 p.m.

Lions Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m., city park

Firemen's Spring Social, 7 p.m., Groton Fire Hall

Sunday, April 13

PALM SUNDAY

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m. (Procession of the Palms by youth)

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Sunday School sing in church, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

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

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

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; Easter Cantata with Aberdeen Alliance joining Groton in Groton, 6:30 p.m. Title is "Calvary's Love Story."

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

Sisseton-Britton-Webster JV baseball in Groton, doubleheader, 2 p.m.

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Newsweek

The
Bulletin

YOUR DAILY BRIEFING OF
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

WORLD IN BRIEF

- Iran shows off nuclear advances: Iran showcased new nuclear achievements just days ahead of talks with the United States on its nuclear program.
- Musk to send 'Optimus' robots to Mars: Tesla's Optimus robots will be used to explore the surface of Mars, Elon Musk confirmed today. The humanoid robots, which were initially pitched as household assistants in October last year, will "hopefully" be sent to Mars on a SpaceX flight by the end of 2026.
- Bernie Sanders warns about Elon Musk: Sen. Bernie Sanders did not hold back on Elon Musk, DOGE and the Trump administration during his appearance on CNN's town hall on Wednesday.
- Butter recalled in 7 states: Cabot Creamery is recalling 1,700 pounds of butter after testing found elevated levels of coliform bacteria in the product, a marker of potential fecal contamination.
- Russia recruited Chinese troops via TikTok: Chinese citizens have been recruited to fight for Russia against Ukraine via social media networks such as TikTok, Volodymyr Zelensky has said.
- Social Security to begin new identity checks: The Social Security Administration has provided an update on its identity proofing requirements that will change next week.

Trump Sends Warning to China: 'Most Powerful Weapons in the World'

The rundown: U.S. President Donald Trump has dismissed concerns of his trade war with China escalating beyond the exchange of eye-watering tariffs, alluding to a cache of "the most powerful weapons in the world."

Why it matters: Speaking in the Oval Office on Wednesday, he said was "not concerned" about the economic conflict with China escalating further, calling Chinese President Xi Jinping "one of the very smart people of the world." "I don't think he would allow that to happen," Trump said. The U.S. is "far more powerful than people understand," he added. Trump told the media he believed Beijing and Washington would "end up making a very good deal" beneficial to both countries. In his remarks posted to social media, the president said more than 75 countries had reached out to U.S. authorities to "negotiate a solution" to tariffs and "have not, at my strong suggestion, retaliated in any way, shape, or form against the United States."

Yuan Sinks to 17-year Low as Trump Excludes China From Tariffs Pause

TL/DR: The Trump administration's raft of tariffs has been wide-ranging, but have singled out China above all others.

What happens now? It isn't clear how far the world's two largest economies will go in their trade war, with the WTO predicting that goods trade between the two countries could plunge by up to 80 percent.

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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.

Columbia vs. Feds

The Trump administration's antisemitism task force aims to pursue a consent decree with Columbia University as a condition of restoring \$400M in annual funding. A consent decree would give a federal judge the responsibility to oversee changes at Columbia and may last for years. The report follows a turbulent month at the school, where its interim president—who took over in August—resigned a week after conceding to administration demands.

The Joint Task Force on Combating Antisemitism—first created in early February by executive order—has launched over 60 investigations into major universities for alleged antisemitism and civil rights violations. This week, the administration froze \$1B in grants to Cornell and \$790M to Northwestern amid the probes. The State Department has also rescinded visas from nearly 400 students for their alleged involvement in campus protests.

The administration has also reduced federal Department of Education funding and laid off roughly half of its workers.

Luxury Marriage

Prada Group announced yesterday it will acquire Versace from Capri Holdings for just under \$1.4B, uniting two of the biggest names in Italian fashion. The deal—backed by approximately \$1.6B in new debt—is expected to close in late 2025 pending regulatory approval, and comes amid market volatility driven by tariffs and a broader slowdown in global luxury sales. The acquisition returns Versace to Italian ownership after seven years with US-based Capri, which originally bought the brand for \$2.1B in 2018.

Prada said it plans to revitalize Versace by blending its minimalist style with Versace's bold designs, which have struggled to adapt to the "quiet luxury" trend. Donatella Versace, who led the brand for nearly three decades, recently stepped down as creative director and will serve as a brand ambassador. Capri Holdings said it will focus on its remaining brands, Michael Kors and Jimmy Choo.

The deal is Prada's largest in 112 years and aligns with its strategy to build an Italian luxury powerhouse rivaling French giants like LVMH and Kering.

Planet-Based Diet

NASA has provided new analysis of the first observation of a planet being swallowed by a star.

Located 12,000 light-years from Earth, the star was observed brightening in 2020, possibly suggesting it was growing into a red giant and subsuming a Jupiter-sized planet in its orbit. This is the same process by which Earth is expected to be subsumed by our sun in 5 billion years.

Now, new observations from the powerful James Webb telescope indicate the planet did not brighten enough to indicate expansion into a red giant; instead, the planet's orbit got smaller over millions of years, until it fell into the star's atmosphere and was swallowed.

In related news, a Senate committee is expected to vote shortly on the confirmation of Jared Isaacman, President Donald Trump's pick to lead NASA. In his testimony, Isaacman indicated his desire to prioritize sending Americans to Mars while also making a return to the moon.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2025 Cannes Film Festival (May 13-24) lineup announced, headlined by films from Wes Anderson and Richard Linklater; see full festival lineup.

Film director James Toback ordered to pay \$1.68B in damages to 40 women for alleged sexual assault that spanned 40 years.

All-British cast version of "Saturday Night Live" to launch in 2026 on UK broadcaster Sky; "SNL" creator Lorne Michaels will executive produce the show.

Science & Technology

OpenAI adds feature allowing ChatGPT to use past conversations to inform answers, framing the capability as referencing "memories."

DoorDash launches robot delivery in Chicago and Los Angeles.

La Niña, the weather phenomenon driven by cold water in the Pacific Ocean, disappears after a short-lived three months.

Scientists develop brain cell graft that can be applied without triggering rejection by the immune system; approach may enable new treatments for neurological diseases like Parkinson's.

Business & Markets

US stock markets tumble (S&P 500 -3.5%, Dow -2.5%, Nasdaq -4.3%) after White House confirms cumulative tariffs on Chinese imports will total 145%.

US consumer price index falls to 2.4% year over year in March from 2.8% in February; excluding food and energy, core inflation rose 2.8% year over year—the lowest rate for core inflation since March 2021.

Egg prices rise to record-high of \$6.23 per dozen in March, up roughly 60% from a year ago.

Former OpenAI CTO Mira Murati, reportedly aiming for \$2B fundraising target for her generative AI startup, Thinking Machines Labs, in what could be the largest seed round in history.

Politics & World Affairs

Supreme Court rules Trump administration must begin process of returning Maryland man wrongfully sent to El Salvador prison.

Six people dead after a helicopter crashes into the Hudson River, with rescue crews recovering the bodies of all three adults and three children; authorities are investigating the crash.

House lawmakers, led by House Speaker Mike Johnson (R, LA-4), adopt Senate's budget resolution in a 216-214 vote to begin carrying out President Donald Trump's agenda on taxes, energy, and immigration.

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GHS School Internship

by Dorene Nelson

Groton Area High School offers a variety of business classes. One of these classes, School Internship, offers seniors the opportunity to work in various local businesses of their choice.

The purpose of this internship is to teach students responsibility by working for someone other than their family. It helps them learn how to work with the public and with customers who might not be all that agreeable at times.

Internships could also help students decide on a part-time job while they are in college or maybe even help them choose a future occupation.

Brittany Hubbard, a Science and Health Science teacher, organized this experience for the 15 students enrolled in her School Internship class.

Local business owners, farmers, and day care providers welcome the students' help. The Internship class is open only to seniors who have to find their own sponsor for their workplace.

All students must be at their chosen place of work during the last period of the school day. The student interns must contact the place they would like to work and have their own personal transportation. The following brief articles are from five of the intern students in her class.

Drew Thurston

Drew Thurston, son of Todd Thurston and Deb Thurston, Groton, is interning at the Marc Sippel farm located north of Groton. "I decided to use my senior year to check out the options that are available for me in the future," Drew explained. "This high school internship class has given me that opportunity."

"I've enjoyed working with Marc and his son on their farm," he said. "I intend to work on the farm with my dad, but I needed to see how other farmers operate and just exactly what they do."

"We specialize in both sheep and cattle, an area that I'd like to continue when I'm done with my education," Drew stated. "It is important to learn about correct feeding, crop rotation, and sustainable farming techniques."

"The most difficult job I've encountered here is in working with the baler system," he admitted. "Each bale is wrapped in a netting which needs to be removed before the animals feed on it. Cutting this netting off is very challenging!"

"The Sippel Farms raise grass, alfalfa, and some barley," Drew listed. "These crops are all used for feeding the livestock on the farm. This method of farming is the best way to take care of your livestock as well as maintaining a profitable farm."

"The best part of this job is learning new things that will be useful for me in the future," he explained. "I intend to go into the livestock industry when I graduate from Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown. My major concentration will be on livestock management."



Drew Thurston

Groton Area Tigers Varsity Fall After Big Comeback By W.I.N. Varsity

By GameChanger Media

Despite leading by as many as four runs, Groton Area Tigers Varsity fell to W.I.N. Varsity 8-5 on Thursday.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity lost despite out-hitting W.I.N. Varsity six to three. Karsten Fliehs and Nicholas Morris each collected two hits for Groton Area Tigers Varsity.

W.I.N. Varsity opened the scoring in the first after Mac Heinz doubled, scoring one run.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity took the lead, 3-1, in the bottom of the first thanks to doubles by Fliehs, and Morris.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity added to their early lead in the bottom of the second inning after Brevin Fliehs grounded out, and Fliehs singled down the left field line, each scoring one run.

W.I.N. Varsity flipped the game on its head in the top of the fourth, scoring six runs on two hits to take the lead, 8-5. The biggest blow in the inning was a double by Chays Mansfield on a full count that drove in two.

Devon Fischbach earned the win for W.I.N. Varsity. The starter allowed six hits and five runs (four earned) over five innings, striking out five and walking five. Morris pitched four innings in relief for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The righty allowed zero hits and zero runs while, striking out three and walking two. Gavin Englund started the game for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The pitcher gave up one hit and three runs over three innings, striking out two and walking five. Lincoln Kroll earned the save.

Fliehs and Morris each drove in two runs for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. Lincoln Krause paced Groton Area Tigers Varsity with two walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, piling up seven walks for the game.

Heinz drove the middle of the lineup, leading W.I.N. Varsity with three runs batted in. The right-handed hitter went 1-for-4 on the day. Mansfield, Alec Mikkelson, and Heinz each collected one hit for W.I.N. Varsity. W.I.N. Varsity had a strong eye at the plate, amassing nine walks for the game. Fischbach and Drew Bakeburg led the team with two walks each. W.I.N. Varsity turned one double play in the game.

Next up for Groton Area Tigers Varsity is a game at Madison/Chester Varsity 2024 on Friday.

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W.I.N. Varsity 8 - 5 Groton Area Tigers Varsity

📍 Home 📅 Thursday April 10, 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
W..N	1	0	1	6	0	0	0	8	3	2
GRTN	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	2

BATTING

W.I.N. Varsity	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
D Fischbach #1 (P)	2	2	0	0	2	1
C Mansfield #9 (C)	3	1	1	2	1	1
A Mikkell... #14 (3B)	3	1	1	1	1	0
M Heinz #25 (LF)	4	0	1	3	0	0
L Fischb... #11 (CF)	3	0	0	0	1	0
D Bakeburg #2 (SS)	2	1	0	0	2	0
J Schmidt #12 (2B)	3	1	0	0	1	3
L Kroll #17 (1B)	4	1	0	1	0	0
B Halvor... #13 (RF)	2	1	0	1	1	0
Totals	26	8	3	8	9	5

2B: C Mansfield, M Heinz, **TB:** C Mansfield 2, A Mikkelson, M Heinz 2, **SB:** L Fischbach, **LOB:** 6

PITCHING

W.I.N. Varsity	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
D Fischb... #1	5.0	6	5	4	5	5	0
L Kroll #17	2.0	0	0	0	2	3	0
Totals	7.0	6	5	4	7	8	0

W: D Fischbach, **P-S:** L Kroll 32-16, D Fischbach 95-58, **BF:** L Kroll 8, D Fischbach 26

Groton Area Tigers Varsity	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Fliehs #6 (SS)	3	1	1	1	1	0
K Fliehs #10 (C)	4	0	2	2	0	2
G Englund #18 (P)	4	0	0	0	0	2
C Simon #4 (1B)	3	1	1	0	1	0
J Erdma... #00 (CF)	4	0	0	0	0	0
N Morris #17 (3B)	3	0	2	2	1	1
A Abeln #5 (RF)	3	0	0	0	1	2
K Antonsen #7 (2B)	2	1	0	0	1	1
L Krause #2 (LF)	1	1	0	0	2	0
CR: J Schwan #11	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	27	5	6	5	7	8

2B: N Morris, K Fliehs, **TB:** C Simon, N Morris 3, K Fliehs 3, B Fliehs, **SB:** J Schwan, B Fliehs, **LOB:** 8

Groton Area Tigers Varsity	IP	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
G Englu... #18	3.0	1	3	3	5	2
J Erdm... #00	0.0	2	5	2	2	0
N Morris #17	4.0	0	0	0	2	3
Totals	7.0	3	8	5	9	0

L: J Erdmann, **P-S:** N Morris 54-33, G Englund 56-24, J Erdmann 32-14, **WP:** J Erdmann, **BF:** N Morris 14, G Englund 15, J Erdmann 6

Groton Area Tigers JV Firing On All Cylinders Against W.I.N. Baseball JV

By GameChanger Media

Groton Area Tigers JV easily dispatched W.I.N. Baseball JV on Thursday, 6-0.

Groton Area Tigers JV got on the board in the first inning after Isaiah Scepaniak singled, scoring three runs.

Groton Area Tigers JV added to their early lead in the bottom of the third inning when Jordan Schwan doubled, scoring two runs, and a wild pitch scored one run.

Alex Abeln earned the win for Groton Area Tigers JV. The right-handed pitcher allowed four hits and zero runs over three and two-thirds innings, striking out nine and walking three. #25 took the loss for W.I.N. Baseball JV. The starter went two innings, surrendering six runs (five earned) on three hits, striking out four and walking four. Lincoln Shilhanek pitched one and one-third innings of scoreless ball for Groton Area Tigers JV in relief. The righty allowed one hit, striking out none and walking one.

Schwan and Scepaniak each drove in two runs for Groton Area Tigers JV. Groton Area Tigers JV had patience at the plate, tallying six walks for the game. Groton Area Tigers JV were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. John Bisbee had the most chances in the field with nine.

#11 went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead W.I.N. Baseball JV in hits.

Groton Area Tigers JV play at home on Sunday against SBW JV Baseball in their next game.

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W.I.N. Baseball JV 0 - 6 Groton Area Tigers JV

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	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
W..N	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
GRTN	3	0	3	0	X	6	3	0

BATTING

W.I.N. Baseball JV	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
#32 (LF)	3	0	0	0	0	2
#11 (SS)	3	0	2	0	0	0
#20 (CF)	3	0	0	0	0	1
#17 (RF)	2	0	1	0	1	1
#13 (C)	2	0	1	0	1	1
#8 (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	1
#4 (2B)	1	0	0	0	1	1
#6 (3B)	2	0	0	0	0	2
#25 (P)	1	0	1	0	1	0
Totals	20	0	5	0	4	9

TB: #11 2, #25, #13, #17, **SB:** #11, **LOB:** 9

PITCHING

W.I.N. Baseball JV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
#25	2.0	3	6	5	4	4	0
#20	1.0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Totals	3.0	3	6	5	6	5	0

L: #25, **P-S:** #20 21-8, #25 65-28, **WP:** #20, #25 2, **HBP:** #20 2, #25 3, **BF:** #20 6, #25 16

Groton Area Tigers JV	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
A Abeln #5 (P)	0	2	0	0	1	0
W Borg #12 (SS)	1	1	0	0	0	1
J Schwan #11 (CF)	2	1	2	2	0	0
B Fliehs #19 (1B)	1	1	0	0	1	1
I Scean... #25 (3B)	1	0	1	2	1	0
L Shilha... #22 (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
J Bisbee #15 (C)	0	0	0	0	1	0
K Antonsen #3 (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	0
G Kroll #14 (LF)	0	0	0	0	1	0
Z Fliehs #23 (3B)	2	0	0	0	0	1
S Crank #20 (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
N Scepiani... #1 (RF)	0	1	0	0	1	0
Totals	11	6	3	4	6	5

2B: J Schwan, **TB:** I Scepianiak, J Schwan 3, **HBP:** K Antonsen, A Abeln, J Bisbee, W Borg, G Kroll, **SB:** A Abeln, **LOB:** 5

Groton Area Tigers JV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
A Abeln #5	3.2	4	0	0	3	9	0
L Shilh... #22	1.1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Totals	5.0	5	0	0	4	9	0

W: A Abeln, **P-S:** A Abeln 76-44, L Shilhanek 25-16, **BF:** A Abeln 18, L Shilhanek 7

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Tina's Baskets - for Easter 605-397-7285

Cow basket - \$20



Includes - green drink cup, light up football, play dough, dinosaur bubble, bubbles, and 4 filled eggs

Rainbow basket - \$25



Includes- two color books 7 filled eggs, pink drink cup crayons, Reese's candy , egg chalk, playdough, bubbles fan bubbles and a rabbit bubble

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Pink basket - \$20



Includes a pink bear with hugs in it , bubble machine, bubbles, side chalk bunny book, 6 eggs filled Reese's pieces candy



CALVARY'S LOVE STORY

*Easter Cantata presented by
Aberdeen Alliance Church and
Groton C&MA Church*

**APRIL
13
2025**

**GROTON C&MA
CHURCH**

**6:30 PM
706 N MAIN ST.
GROTON, SD**

**APRIL
16
2025**

**ABERDEEN
ALLIANCE CHURCH**

**7:00 PM
1106 S. ROOSEVELT ST.
ABERDEEN, SD**

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

April 14, 2025 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of March 10, 2025, March 24, 2025, April 2, 2025 and April 3, 2025 school board meetings as drafted.
2. Approval of March 2025 District bills for payment.
3. Approval of March 2025 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
4. Approval of March 2025 School Transportation Report.
5. Approval of March 2025 School Lunch Report.
6. Authorize the Business Manager to pay district bills up to \$75,000 in advance, using the custodial advance payment account to be approved by the board for reimbursement at the following regular board meeting.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion regarding show choir for 2025-2026 school year.
2. Adopt resolution authorizing membership in the SDHSAA for the 2025-2026 school year.
3. Approve Associated School Boards Protective Trust Agreements
 - a. Protective Trust Joint Powers Agreement and Bylaws
 - b. Health Fund Participation Agreement and Plan Options
 - c. Worker's Compensation Renewal Agreement
4. Approve District Membership Agreement for North Central Special Education Cooperative.
5. Approve resignation from Duane Fliehs, Maintenance Team Member, effective immediately.
6. First reading of recommended policy changes: GDBE Support Staff Vacations and Holidays and GCBE Professional Staff Vacations and Holidays.
7. Approve 2025-2026 Negotiated Agreements; Groton Teachers Association (GTA) and Groton Auxiliary Staff Association (GASA)
8. Approve amended contract lengths for FY2026 contracts:
 - a. Jodi Schwan reduced by five days
 - b. Emily Neely increased by five days.
9. Issue 2025-2026 Teacher Contracts with return date of Friday, April 25, 2025.
10. Issue 2025-2026 Auxiliary Staff Work Agreements with return date of Friday, April 25, 2025.
11. Approve hiring Jessica Maurer, 1st Grade Teacher, for the 2025-2026 school year.
12. Approve 2024-2025 school calendar amendments and make-up days.
13. Executive Session pursuant to SDCL1-25-2(4) Negotiations and SDCL1-25-2(1) Personnel.

ADJOURN

"Serving Those Who Served: Schneider Looks Forward to Connecting with all Veterans"

I am honored to have begun my tenure as Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs on March 5th. One of my foremost objectives is to visit each county veterans service office and all veteran's service organizations across our state, with the goal of strengthening our partnerships with veterans, local communities, and veteran organizations. During my first month in this role, I continue to be deeply inspired by the pride, strength, and resilience of our veterans and their families. South Dakota's military heritage is firmly rooted in the enduring foundation built by our veterans and their loved ones, and I am both proud and humbled to serve as your Secretary.

In April, we are preparing for the launch of our "What's Brewing" events across South Dakota. While the specific dates are still being finalized, they will be publicized as soon as they are confirmed. These events provide an invaluable opportunity to strengthen our network, engage in meaningful dialogue, seek answers, and enhance the services we provide. Additionally, these gatherings offer a chance to share stories, enjoy camaraderie, and engage in friendly banter, as is characteristic of the bonds shared by our brothers and sisters in arms. These events hold significant importance for the SDDVA staff, as they allow us to engage directly with veterans and gain insight into their needs. I encourage all veterans to attend these events whenever possible.

April also marks the "Month of the Military Child." Many of us who served in the military left behind families, including children, who experienced their own form of separation as we went off to training or into combat. This month, I urge you to take a moment to connect with your children and grandchildren. It is easy to become absorbed in the busyness of life, but it is essential to recognize the impact our deployments had on our families. Our children, too, faced their own kind of deployment, and their sacrifices should not be overlooked. Take time to engage with them, share your experiences, and continue to nurture those priceless family bonds.

I would also like to extend my warmest wishes to all Navy Chiefs on the occasion of the 132nd anniversary of the Navy Chief's birthday. Yes, we are a seasoned group, affectionately known as "Goats," and we may be salty, but much like all South Dakota veterans, we are deeply proud of our service. My charge for the day is this: "Passion is a powerful tool; yield that power carefully, for it carries the weight of influence."

On April 5th, we observed Gold Star Spouses Day, a day to honor the spouses who have lost their loved ones in service to our country. This observance, which dates back to the early 20th century, began with a lapel button and later became officially recognized through a Senate resolution. Each year, we pause on this day to express our deepest gratitude and respect for the sacrifices made by Gold Star families.

Finally, I would like to extend heartfelt birthday wishes to both the Army Reserve and the Air Force Reserve. Your continued dedication to service is integral to the strength of our state and our nation. Your commitment ensures that South Dakota remains a proud and resilient community of veterans, and we are profoundly grateful for your service.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Secretary. It is an honor I do not take lightly, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside you to ensure that South Dakota remains a place where veterans and their families are respected, supported, and honored.

Jeremiah J. Schneider, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



Jeremiah J. Schneider,
Secretary
South Dakota
Department of
Veterans Affairs

Arts Leadership Institute shares ideas and strategies

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

Amazing arts and culture projects are happening all across South Dakota but arts organizations and their leaders are spread out and often isolated from colleagues. The Arts Leadership Institute, sponsored by Arts South Dakota, has been created to support those who are doing the critical work of fostering local creative communities. Join us April 29-30 in Sioux Falls and come together with arts leaders, trainers and panelists from across South Dakota. Learn more about developing audiences by providing accessible experiences created in collaboration with each unique community.

Additional institutes will take place on future dates, providing deep dives into a changing set of topics of interest to many different types of cultural organizations and their staff, volunteers, boards and more. Equally important, Arts Leadership Institute sessions will provide time to gather with arts colleagues to help strengthen the arts ecosystem across the state.

Arts organizations work hard to make an impact by creating programming with local communities—not just for the community—to broaden the reach of creative programs and develop new audiences. One key factor to providing these types of experiences is accessibility. The 35th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act this year is a great time to revisit conversations surrounding accessibility with lessons that apply to helping your whole community feel welcome and engaged, including physical accessibility, representation and cross-cultural conversations.

Tailored to both rural and non-rural organizations, the Arts Leadership Institute sessions will feature practical tools to expand audiences and create even more vibrant organizations across the state. Respected trainers will provide valuable information and opportunities to network with arts colleagues, along with helpful resources and follow-up cohorts to help implement what participants have learned.

Contact Arts South Dakota Community Development Director Andrew Reinartz at Andrew@ArtsSouthDakota.org with any questions. Visit www.ArtsSouthDakota.org to learn more and register for the 2025 Arts Leadership Institute!



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**Groton
American Legion**

GRAND REOPENING

**Groton
Legion Lounge
"Legion
Remodel
Celebration!"**

**When: Friday,
April 11**

**Time: 5-10pm
(reduced drink
prices & door
prizes)**

**Where: Groton
American Legion
Lounge, Main St,
Groton**

**Appetizers:
6 pm until gone**

**Door prices:
hourly cash
prizes (must be
present to win)**

**Music:
Karaoke 9-1
B&M Tunes**

Our Legion Post
Lounge & Hall
remodel
celebration has
been
finalized.
Please come and
celebrate with
our customers,
friends, and
Legion family.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Regulators say carbon pipeline company must show a path forward to keep permit application active

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - APRIL 10, 2025 5:27 PM

South Dakota regulators refused Thursday to pause proceedings on a carbon capture pipeline permit, instead directing Summit Carbon Solutions to present a plan during the next meeting illustrating how the company can move forward — or not — under a new state law barring its use of eminent domain.

The Public Utilities Commission, meeting in Pierre, voted 3-0 to deny Summit's request to put its application on hold.

"What's the plan here? And that's the question that's rolling around in my mind," said Commissioner Chris Nelson.

The proposed \$9 billion pipeline would carry carbon dioxide emissions captured from ethanol plants in five states to an underground storage site in North Dakota, where some carbon could also be used to extract oil from old wells. The project is part of a broader federal push to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and could qualify for federal tax credits tied to carbon sequestration.

Summit has been seeking a permit to build a portion of the pipeline through South Dakota since 2022. But its path forward was complicated by the Legislature's passage of the eminent domain ban in March. Eminent domain is a legal process that allows qualifying entities to acquire access to private land for projects in the public interest, with compensation for landowners determined by a court.

Summit had relied on that authority to survey land and secure access from property owners unwilling to sign voluntary easements.

"If they can't even build it, what are we doing here?" said attorney Brian Jorde, representing landowners opposed to the project.

Nelson moved for the permit to be denied, arguing that the proposed route cannot be legally constructed under the new law and citing declarations from dozens of landowners refusing access. His motion failed 2-1, with the other commissioners saying Summit should be given more time.

Summit attorney Brett Koenecke said the company needs more time to evaluate its options, but declined when pressed by Nelson to say whether Summit plans to challenge the eminent domain ban in court.

The commission plans to consider the matter again at its April 22 meeting.

Summit has permits in North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa, but some of the permits are being challenged in court. Nebraska does not have a permitting process for the project.



From left, South Dakota Public Utilities Commissioners Kristie Fiegen, Gary Hanson and Chris Nelson wait for a hearing to begin on Jan. 15, 2025, in Sioux Falls.

(Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Sioux Falls business owner and former state trooper announces Democratic bid for U.S. Senate

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - APRIL 10, 2025 12:16 PM

Julian Beaudion, a small-business owner and former state trooper from Sioux Falls, announced Thursday that he is seeking South Dakota's Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate seat held by Republican Mike Rounds.

"This campaign isn't about me — it's about securing a future where South Dakota's working families don't get left behind," Beaudion said in a statement.

He and his wife co-own Swamp Daddy's Cajun Kitchen, and he also operates The Hub, a professional development program. He previously served 13 years as a South Dakota Highway Patrol trooper and is a graduate of the Obama Foundation's Leaders program. If elected, Beaudion would be the first Black person from South Dakota to serve in Congress.

He said his campaign will focus on "practical solutions, bipartisan cooperation, and creating economic opportunities for all South Dakotans." His priorities include investing in rural infrastructure, expanding telehealth services and supporting workforce development.

"I'll fight to enforce the checks and balances our Constitution demands and reject the influence of big money and tech monopolies threatening our freedoms," he said.

Beaudion criticized what he described as Rounds' defense of and support for President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk's policy agenda, including firing federal workers without congressional approval and Rounds' legislation to eliminate the federal Department of Education.

A Rounds spokesman sent a statement in response to a South Dakota Searchlight message: "Mike is focused on the actual job — securing the border, national defense, growing our economy, eliminating the federal Department of Education, and working with President Trump to get our country back on track. South Dakotans have soundly rejected Bidenomics and Obama's job-killing policies. Good luck running on that platform."

The South Dakota Democratic Party announced on Monday that it will conduct public town halls this month in at least four South Dakota cities. Beaudion will be one of the Democrats participating in those events.

South Dakota's primary election is June 2, 2026, and the general election is Nov. 3, 2026.



Julian Beaudion, a Sioux Falls businessman and former state trooper, speaks at the downtown Sioux Falls library on Apr. 7, 2025. (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

State cancels teacher trainings for new social studies standards due to federal funding cuts

\$2.8 million was intended to support summit and road trip for educators

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - APRIL 10, 2025 9:34 AM

South Dakota officials said history road trips and summits would help educators prepare to teach an extensive and controversial overhaul of state social studies standards.

But months before the new standards will be implemented in schools, the events are canceled due to federal funding cuts. Other summer programs for students and educators are suspended, including career exploration camps for middle schoolers that were expected to serve 600 students.

State Education Department officials did not say whether the suspended programs will be reinstated at a later date. Department spokeswoman Nancy Van Der Weide said the department will work to balance fiscal responsibility with "our equally important priority of providing South Dakota's K-12 students with the best educational opportunities available."

States and school districts can resubmit requests for the federal funding, which was provided as pandemic relief and then extended by the Biden administration. But the projects will be more strictly reevaluated by the Trump administration based on how they address the effects of COVID-19 on students, according to the federal Department of Education. The state has not told South Dakota Searchlight if the department plans to reapply.

East Dakota Educational Cooperative contracted with the state to organize the Civics and History Summit and History Road Trip. The state used federal funds to pay for the events each of the past two years, but the federal Department of Education canceled \$2.8 million in funding to pay for this year's events.

Sisseton School District Superintendent Tammy Meyer said students and teachers in her district have participated in the programs in the past.

"I've seen the excitement of staff to attend the summit and road trips to bring back those experiences and to teach their students what they've learned. I've seen the impact of these career summer camps on students," Meyer said. "It's unfortunate the staff and students who anticipated attending those may not have those opportunities this summer."

Feds cut funding because extensions were 'not justified'

As of April 7, Trump administration funding cuts affecting South Dakota's state government totaled nearly \$10 million. More than half of those cuts — over \$5 million — have impacted the state Department of Education.



Department of Education Secretary Joe Graves speaks to educators at the Civics and History Summit in Sioux Falls on June 12, 2023. (Courtesy of the South Dakota Department of Education)

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U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon notified state education departments in a March 28 letter that COVID-19 federal relief funds would expire that day, instead of in March 2026. The change impacts the final payouts of the American Rescue Plan Act's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund.

Congress approved \$189.5 billion in ESSER funding during the pandemic to help schools recover from pandemic setbacks and expenses.

South Dakota was awarded \$593.4 million, according to the federal pandemic oversight website. The funds were intended for the state department and individual school districts. The awards' obligation deadline was set for the end of September 2024, but some entities, including the state department, requested extensions to spend remaining funds. Extensions were granted by the Biden administration, until they were recently revoked by the Trump administration.

McMahon said in the letter that an extension to spend remaining funds "was not justified."

"Extending deadlines for COVID-related grants, which are in fact taxpayer funds, years after the COVID pandemic ended is not consistent with the Department's priorities and thus not a worthwhile exercise of its discretion," McMahon wrote.

Schools could spend the funds on programs and improvements to address student needs, including summer classes, extended programs, educational software, mental health services, indoor air quality improvements and building renovations. All projects were subject to approval by the state Education Department.

Three South Dakota school districts were impacted by the loss of extended funds. Sisseton lost \$448,071, Iroquois lost \$69,662, and Armour lost \$9,061, according to the Bureau of Finance and Management.

Sisseton was awarded a total of \$11.7 million in ESSER funds over its three phases, using the money to renovate its high school building and classrooms, replace its roof, and purchase school buses and student laptops, among other programs and improvements, Meyer said. Some of its lost funding was due to unused funds, but about \$319,000 was renovation spending that had yet to be reimbursed.

Meyer said she's working with the state department to resubmit its extension request. Otherwise, the \$319,000 will have to come out of the district's own budget, which might cause a postponement other projects.

"It's late in the budget year," Meyer said, "so a lot of our projects have already been assigned and established for this budget."

Beyond the history summit and road trip, another \$2.37 million in extended funding would have supported middle school career summer camps, mentoring academies for teachers and a state websitelisting open teaching positions in the state. The Associated School Boards of South Dakota also hosts a website for educator openings.

According to the South Dakota Board of Regents, the Dakota Dreams summer career exploration camps served 1,800 middle school students between 2023 and 2024. Another 600 students were expected to attend camps this summer in nursing, health sciences, education, law enforcement, cyber operations, computer science, engineering and more.

The state's teacher apprenticeship pathway, which allows paraprofessionals to earn a teaching degree for a reduced rate while working full time, lost \$58,178 in federal funding. The state Jobs for America's Graduates program, which helps struggling middle and high school students complete their education, lost \$88,414. The state Department of Education hasn't responded to questions about the fate of the two programs.

Social studies standards implications

The South Dakota Board of Education Standards approved social studies standards changes in 2023 after almost two years of controversy over their age appropriateness, feasibility and the scope of Native American history included.

Shortly after, then-Gov. Kristi Noem and South Dakota Department of Education Secretary Joe Graves said students "will be taught the best social studies education in the country" and be equipped "with the

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solid grounding in history and civics they need to exercise their role as citizens.”

“The department stands ready to support that implementation with professional development and standards-aligned resources,” Graves said at the time.

Rob Monson, executive director of School Administrators of South Dakota, said educators “were counting” on the professional development opportunities this summer.

“A lot of districts were looking forward to having conversations at the history summit and road trip locations to get clarity on the new standards,” Monson said. “It’s unfortunate for those who would attend and those who would benefit.”

The civics and history event cancellations won’t affect the social studies standards implementation this fall, Van Der Weide said.

“We’ve successfully hosted these programs within the past two years and continue to offer implementation support for our educators,” she said, adding that the department provides standards-aligned books and resources along with a weekly social studies curriculum to South Dakota classrooms.

Dismantled federal Education Department won’t negatively impact SD, secretary says

The funding cuts compound existing worries public school advocates have surrounding the uncertainty of education funding. President Donald Trump signed an executive order in March directing McMahon to dismantle her department and “return education authority to the states.” The move followed a 50% reduction in department staff.

In an interview with South Dakota Searchlight, Graves said he doesn’t see the move to dismantle the federal Department of Education “negatively impacting South Dakota.”

“I think some people have had some real concerns about what’s going on at the federal level,” Graves said. “The truth is, I don’t see it having much of an impact or causing that much change for us other than returning decision-making to the state level where constitutionally, pragmatically and ideally it would remain.”

Federal cuts to South Dakota education funding

Canceled extensions of federal pandemic assistance funding to the South Dakota Department of Education impacted numerous grants and contracts. Lost funding includes:

\$2.09 million contracted to East Dakota Educational Co-op to develop and organize the Civics and History Summit.

\$729,655 contracted to East Dakota Educational Co-op to organize and staff South Dakota educator history road trips.

A \$64,242 contract with East Dakota Educational Co-op to reimburse travel for participants who take part in the Teacher Leadership Academy.

\$27,748 contracted to Northern State University to teach companion courses for the South Dakota educator history road trips and the Civics and History Summit.

\$793,748 contracted to the South Dakota Board of Regents to organize and host summer middle school career camps.

\$147,000 contracted to the South Dakota Board of Regents to create the Dakota Dreams Teacher Leadership Academy.

\$58,178 contracted to the South Dakota Board of Regents to help operate the South Dakota Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway.

\$626,236 of state Department of Education administrative funds.

\$307,525 contracted to Lake Area Technical College to establish a Career and Technical Student Center and employ a director and state adviser for South Dakota’s Career and Technical Student organizations.

\$172,080 contracted to Salt Lake City-based Instructure to create a professional development platform for the state Department of Education.

\$131,989 contracted to Black Hills Special Services Cooperative to provide training and support to build

a professional development platform.

\$92,528 contracted to TAESE through Utah State University to create, market and manage a statewide web-based employment system to improve teacher recruitment in South Dakota.

\$88,414 contracted to Aspire Learning to manage the Jobs for America's Graduates program.

\$58,178 contracted to the South Dakota Board of Regents to help run the South Dakota Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program.

A \$23,275 contract with Katie Anderson to write syllabi and provide transcription of credits through Dakota State University for AIM Institute for Learning & Research courses.

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

State board awards \$6 million in sales and use tax offsets for construction projects

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - APRIL 10, 2025 4:40 PM

A South Dakota board decided Wednesday to offset a combined \$6.2 million worth of sales and use taxes for three companies that are pursuing job-creating construction projects.

The Board of Economic Development's decision will be carried out by the Governor's Office of Economic Development through its Reinvestment Payment Program. The program makes payments up to the amount of sales and use taxes paid on project costs.

The office estimates that the companies will spend a combined total of \$419 million on the projects and create a combined total of 180 full-time jobs.

"The growth we're witnessing in South Dakota is a direct result of the dedication and hard work of businesses investing in our future," said GOED Commissioner Joe Fiala in a news release. "We're excited to see these projects move forward and contribute to our state's success."

Big Stone Energy Storage Project LLC was awarded up to \$3.39 million to incentivize the construction of a thermal energy storage facility.

The office provide no further information about the project. According to the Renewable Thermal Collaborative, thermal energy storage is a term describing "various technologies that temporarily store energy by heating or cooling various storage mediums for later reuse. Sometimes called 'heat batteries,' TES technologies work to decouple the availability of heat generated from renewable electricity, solar thermal energy, or even recovered waste heat from when it is actively needed, helping decarbonize industrial processes and the heating or cooling of buildings."

Another company, Bel Brands USA, was awarded up to \$2.57 million to support a 100,000-square-foot expansion of its Brookings cheese production plant.

Lastly, Dakota Line Energy was awarded up to \$250,682 to develop a new 23 million gallon covered lagoon digester and install five manure separators to improve manure management and energy production.

The office provided no further information about Dakota Line Energy. A separate U.S. Department of Agriculture grant announcement says the company is in Humboldt.



Joe Fiala, of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, speaks Sept. 21, 2023, at an Early Learner Summit in Brookings. (Makenzie

Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

U.S. House passes bill targeting voting by noncitizens, which is already against the law

South Dakota Republican Rep. Dusty Johnson votes yes

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - APRIL 10, 2025 3:48 PM

The U.S. House passed a bill Thursday to require voters to provide proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote, approving a Republican priority over the objections of Democrats who said the bill would only create hurdles for eligible voters without actually improving fraud protection.

The 220-208 vote sent the measure to the U.S. Senate, where it faces an uphill road to overcome the chamber's 60-vote requirement for most legislation. If enacted, the bill would require states, which are responsible for administering elections, to obtain from people registering to vote in federal elections documents that prove U.S. citizenship.

Acceptable documents under the act include any valid photo ID issued by the federal government, a state or tribe that shows the applicant's place of birth was the United States, or a combination of a valid government-issued photo ID and another document proving citizenship such as a birth certificate or certificate of naturalization.

Four House Democrats – Jared Golden of Maine, Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington, Ed Case of Hawaii and Henry Cuellar of Texas – joined all Republicans present to vote in favor of the bill.

Supporters of the bill say it is needed to keep immigrants in the country without legal status from voting. It is already illegal for noncitizens to vote in federal elections, though some local governments allow noncitizen residents to vote in local elections.



Voters cast their ballots at Fairmont Junior High in Boise during the Idaho primary on May 17, 2022. (Otto Kitsinger for Idaho

Capital Sun)

GOP priority

By tackling fraudulent voting and targeting immigrants in the country illegally, the bill addresses two planks of the Republican platform under President Donald Trump. Trump has consistently positioned himself as a hardliner on immigration and continues to voice the debunked claim that fraud caused his 2020 election loss.

During floor debate this week, the bill's sponsor, Texas Republican Chip Roy, said the measure, titled the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility, or SAVE, Act, responded to the message voters sent by electing Trump and Republican majorities in both chambers of Congress last year after inaction from Democratic President Joe Biden.

"Republicans are responding to an American people who are tired of the previous administration that was allowing illegals to come into our country, kill our citizens, vote in our elections, undermine our country," Roy said. "And we are addressing their concerns and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't want to address it."

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Hurdle for citizens

Democrats, though, said the measure was unnecessary to prevent the exceedingly rare cases of noncitizens voting in federal elections and would only make voting harder for citizens who are eligible, including married women who may have changed their name but have not updated their documents.

"I think the gentleman from Texas will be happy to learn that it already is the law that only American citizens can vote in federal elections," Rep. Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat, said following Roy's remarks. "Our problem with the SAVE Act is that it is an attempt to make it more difficult for women in this country, women who are U.S. citizens, to be able to vote."

At a virtual press conference Thursday, Democratic secretaries of state – the office in most states responsible for elections administration – highlighted the difficulties it could create for eligible voters.

"Losing your driver's license or birth certificate, letting your passport expire or even getting married and taking your partner's last name could all prevent a voter from making their voice heard in free and fair elections if the SAVE Act passes," Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold said. "Replacing just one of those documents – let alone multiple documents that would be needed to register – takes time and money that not every American has."

"Women who are citizens – who are eligible to vote – should not be stopped at the ballot box by (House Speaker) Mike Johnson and Donald Trump."

Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

Trump-supported budget squeaks by in U.S. House after GOP assurances of vast spending cuts

Thune: Senate is 'aligned with the House' on reductions over the next decade

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - APRIL 10, 2025 11:04 AM

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Republicans adopted a budget resolution Thursday, clearing the way for both chambers of Congress to write a bill extending 2017 tax cuts and bolstering funding for border security and defense, though the blueprint set vastly different targets for spending cuts.

The cliff-hanger 216-214 vote followed a tumultuous week on Capitol Hill. Far-right members of the GOP Conference said repeatedly they wouldn't accept the outline, since it requires the House to write a bill that cuts spending by at least \$1.5 trillion, while senators set themselves a floor of \$4 billion in cuts.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., was forced to postpone a floor vote on the budget resolution on Wednesday evening. But Johnson was able to secure the votes needed after he and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., announced Thursday morning that they were in agreement about meeting the higher threshold for spending cuts.

Johnson said both chambers of Congress "are committed to finding at least \$1.5 trillion in savings for the American people, while also preserving our essential programs."

"Many of us are going to aim much higher and find those savings because we believe they are there," Johnson said. "We want to make the government more efficient, effective and leaner for the American people. And I think that will serve every American of every party. And we're happy to do that."

Despite the difference in reconciliation instructions, Thune said the Senate is "aligned with the House" when it comes to cutting spending over the next decade.

"The speaker has talked about \$1.5 trillion," Thune said. "We have a lot of United States senators who believe that is a minimum."

Thune added he believes it's time for Congress "to get the country on a more sustainable fiscal path and that entails us taking a hard scrub of our government and figuring out where we can find those savings."

Democrats, and some centrist Republicans, have expressed deep concerns the House's instructions require the Energy and Commerce Committee, which oversees Medicaid, to cut at least \$880 billion.

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The panel, which also oversees Medicare and other programs, could not recoup that level of spending without pulling hundreds of billions from Medicaid, the state-federal program for lower-income Americans and some people with disabilities.

The budget resolution has been endorsed by President Donald Trump, who's repeatedly urged the House to adopt the measure. "Great News! "The Big, Beautiful Bill" is coming along really well. Republicans are working together nicely. Biggest Tax Cuts in USA History!!! Getting close. DJT," Trump posted on social media Thursday morning prior to the vote.

Only a beginning

The House adopting the 68-page budget resolution only marks the start of the months-long journey of writing and voting on the reconciliation package.

Republicans hope to use that bill to permanently extend the 2017 tax law, increase spending on border security and defense by hundreds of billions of dollars and rework energy policy.

The budget resolution includes different budget targets for many of those goals, and for raising the debt limit. It calls on the House to increase the country's borrowing authority by \$4 trillion, while the Senate's instructions say that chamber would lift the debt ceiling by up to \$5 trillion.

Writing the various elements of the reconciliation package will fall to 11 committee chairs in the House and 10 committee leaders in the Senate, as well as Johnson, Thune and a lot of staffers.

In the House, the Agriculture Committee needs to slice at least \$230 billion; Education and Workforce must reduce spending by a minimum of \$330 billion; Energy and Commerce needs to cut no less than \$880 billion; Financial Services must find at least \$1 billion in savings; Natural Resources has a minimum of \$1 billion; Oversight and Government Reform has a floor of \$50 billion; and the Transportation Committee needs to reduce deficits by \$10 billion or more.

Four Senate committees — Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Energy and Natural Resources; and Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, or HELP — must each find at least \$1 billion in spending cuts over the 10-year budget window.

House committees that can increase the federal deficit include the Armed Services Committee with a cap of \$100 billion in new spending, Homeland Security with a \$90 billion ceiling for new funding for programs it oversees, Judiciary with a maximum of \$110 billion and Ways and Means, which can increase deficits up to \$4.5 trillion for tax cuts.

Senate committees also got instructions for increasing the deficit, which will allow them to spend up to the dollar amount outlined in the budget resolution. Those committees include Armed Services at \$150 billion; Commerce, Science and Transportation with \$20 billion; Environment and Public Works at \$1 billion; Finance with \$1.5 trillion in new deficits, likely for tax cuts; Homeland Security at \$175 billion and Judiciary with \$175 billion.



U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., right, and Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., hold a press conference on the Republican budget resolution at the U.S. Capitol on April 10, 2025 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Kayla Bartkowski/Getty Images)

The back story

If the process to reach agreement on a final reconciliation package is anything like the path to adopting

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the budget resolution, it will be long, winding and filled with drama.

The Senate voted for a completely different budget resolution in February that would have set up Congress to enact Republicans' agenda in two reconciliation bills instead of one.

Budget Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., referred to the reconciliation instructions in that budget proposal as "Plan B."

That tax-and-spending blueprint would have had lawmakers first write a bill increasing funding for border security and defense, and rewriting energy policy, before debating another bill later in the year to extend the 2017 tax law and cut federal spending.

The House voted about a week later to approve its original budget resolution, but not without a bit of theatrics.

Johnson didn't originally have the votes and opted to recess the chamber before calling lawmakers back about 15 minutes later to approve that version of the budget resolution.

The Senate made changes to its reconciliation instructions in the House-approved budget resolution, before voting to send it back across the Capitol for their colleagues to vote on final approval, which they did Thursday.

Politically difficult votes ahead

Each time the Senate voted on a budget resolution it undertook a marathon amendment voting session, known as a vote-a-rama, where lawmakers stay on the floor overnight to debate various aspects of the outline.

Senators will need to undertake one more of those when they debate the actual reconciliation package later this year, though the stakes will be much higher.

The budget resolution is a blueprint for how Congress wants to shape tax and spending policy during the 10-year budget window. It's not a bill so it never becomes law. And it contains no actual money, it's simply a plan for how lawmakers want to structure policy.

The reconciliation package, once written, will have the chance of becoming law, so any amendments offered during the Senate's vote-a-rama will carry greater weight than the proposals voted on when the chamber took up the two budget resolutions.

Democrats will have an opportunity to challenge centrist GOP senators on whether they support or want to remove every single policy that Republicans put in their reconciliation package.

That could create real issues for GOP leadership if they include tax policy or spending cuts that cannot garner the backing of senators like Alaska's Lisa Murkowski, Kentucky's Mitch McConnell, Maine's Susan Collins and others.

The final reconciliation package will need support from nearly every Republican in Congress. GOP leaders will not be able to lose more than three House lawmakers or three Republican senators, under their very slender majorities.

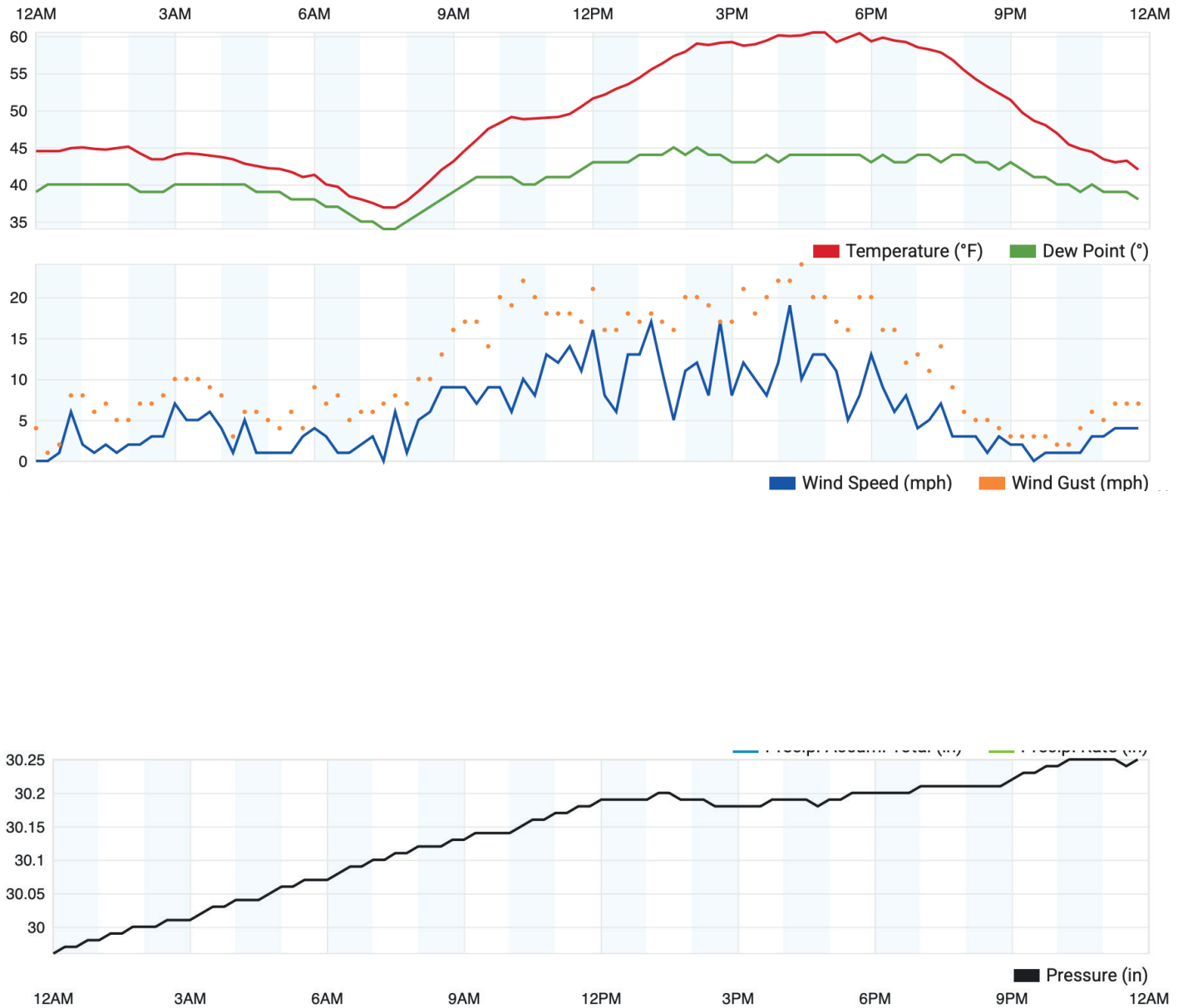
Four or more Republicans opposing the reconciliation package in one chamber, either because it cuts too much spending or doesn't cut enough, would likely prevent it from becoming law.

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Friday



High: 68 °F

Freezing Fog
and Fog then
Sunny

Friday Night



Low: 46 °F

Increasing
Clouds

Saturday



High: 72 °F

Partly Sunny

Saturday Night



Low: 44 °F

Chance
Showers

Sunday



High: 63 °F

Partly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
Showers and



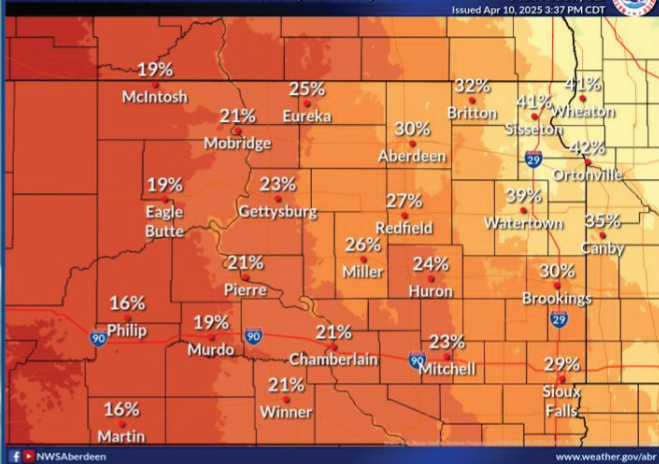
Dry and Windy Conditions Friday

April 10, 2025
3:46 PM

High to Very High Grassland Fire Danger Indices for central & northeast SD

South to Southeast winds up to 15-20 mph, gusting to 25-30 mph, will be in place over most of central and portions of northeast SD. Highest gusts will be over the Missouri Valley. Dry and windy conditions will create elevated fire weather.

Minimum Relative Humidity Friday



Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	4/11 Fri						Maximum
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
Aberdeen	8↑	14↑	17↑	21↑	22↑	26↑	26
Chamberlain	7↑	12↑	17↑	22↑	23↑	24↑	24
Eagle Butte	16↑	25↑	28↑	28↑	28↑	26↑	28
Ellendale	9↑	15↑	18↑	22↑	22↑	25↑	25
Eureka	10↑	17↑	23↑	25↑	25↑	26↑	26
Gettysburg	14↑	20↑	23↑	25↑	25↑	29↑	29
Huron	7↑	10↑	14↑	17↑	21↑	25↑	25
Kennebec	9↑	16↑	21↑	23↑	24↑	26↑	26
McIntosh	17↑	28↑	30↑	30↑	30↑	28↑	30
Miller	10↑	14↑	16↑	21↑	22↑	28↑	28
Mobridge	13↑	21↑	24↑	25↑	25↑	25↑	25
Murdo	12↑	21↑	24↑	24↑	24↑	26↑	26
Pierre	9↑	17↑	22↑	24↑	25↑	26↑	26
Redfield	9↑	14↑	16↑	21↑	22↑	28↑	28



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

High pressure will shift east of the area on Friday allowing for southerly winds to return to the area. A tightening pressure gradient between that high and low pressure to the west will lead to increasing south to southeast winds by midday and afternoon on Friday. Temperatures warming into the 60s to low 70s will drive afternoon relative humidity values down to critical levels. The combination of the gusty winds and low RH values will promote elevated fire danger, especially from the James Valley and points west.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 61 °F at 4:46 PM

Low Temp: 37 °F at 7:37 AM

Wind: 26 mph at 2:44 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 23 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 86 in 1910

Record Low: 8 in 1939

Average High: 56

Average Low: 30

Average Precip in April.: 0.51

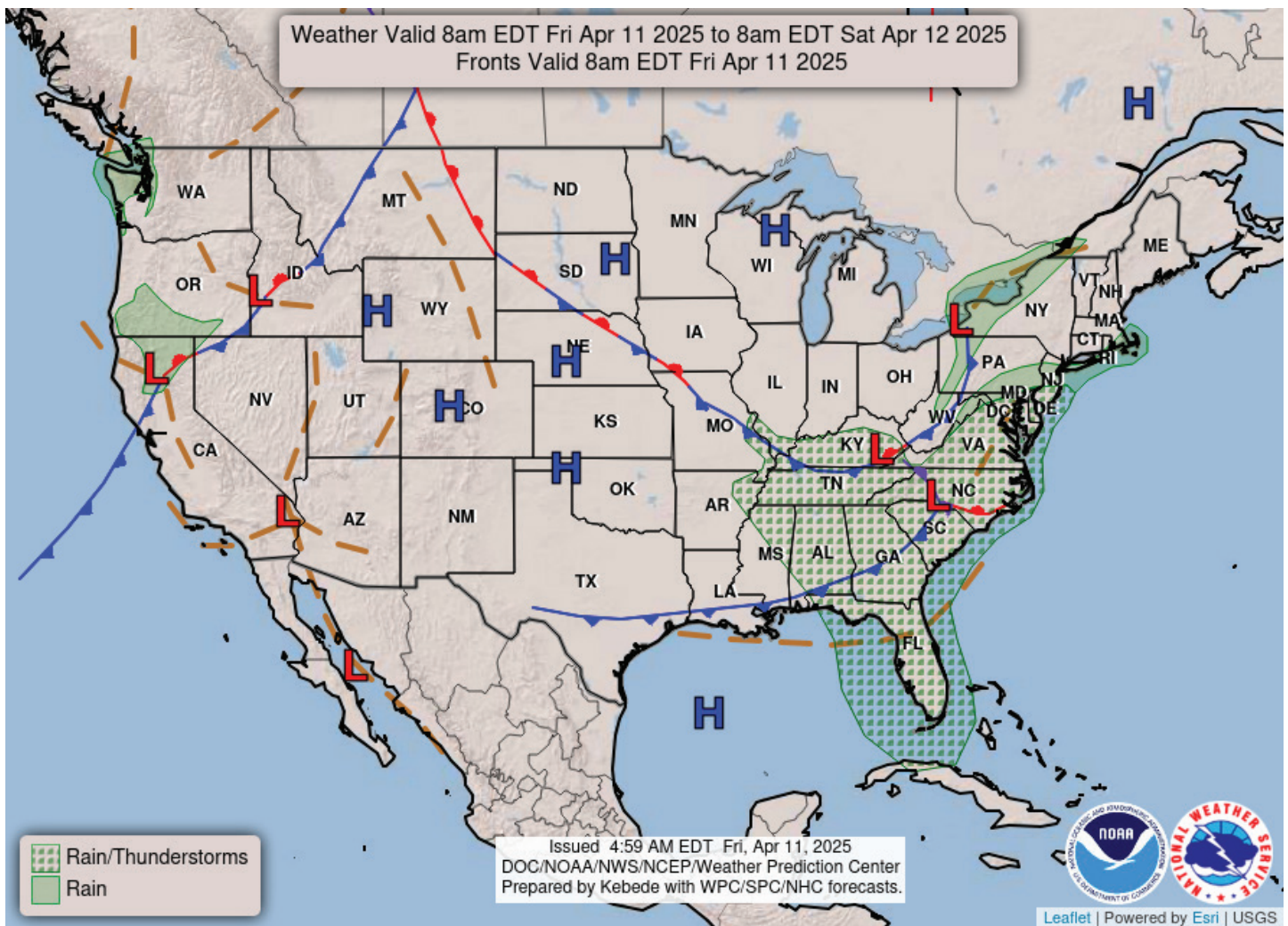
Precip to date in April.: 1.07

Average Precip to date: 2.57

Precip Year to Date: 1.70

Sunset Tonight: 8:15:08 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:49:39 am



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Today in Weather History

April 11, 1993: Heavy wet snow fell over northeast South Dakota, mainly east of Aberdeen and north of Watertown. The snowfall began on the 10th and carried into the 11th. 2 to 6 inches were reported across the area. However, 8 inches were reported near Summit and 7 inches near Sisseton.

April 11, 2007: A large upper-level low-pressure area wrapped snow into far northeast South Dakota. The heavy, wet snow made travel tough, resulting in snow-covered and slushy roads. Some schools and events were postponed or canceled. Snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Sisseton and Milbank, 7 inches at Castlewood, 8 inches at Bryant, 9 inches at Toronto and Clear Lake, and 12 inches at Summit.

April 11, 2008: An intense area of low pressure moving northeast across the Central Plains brought widespread heavy snow and strong winds to parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall from 3 to 16 inches combined with north winds of 30 to 45 mph brought widespread blowing and drifting snow with blizzard conditions and heavy drifting affecting much of the area. A few thunderstorms also occurred, bringing rapid snowfall rates to some areas. Many vehicles went into the ditch, and many other accidents occurred. Most roads became nearly impassable, and no travel was advised for parts of central and much of northeast South Dakota. There were many people stranded to wait out the storm. Also, many schools and businesses were closed on Friday the 11th. Snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Faulkton, Ree Heights, Kidder, and Hayti, 7 inches at Garden City, Castlewood, Miller, Britton, and near Stephan, 9 inches at Waubay, Bryant, and Roy Lake, 10 inches at Big Stone City and Milbank, 11 inches at Wilmot, Watertown, and Victor, 15 inches at Summit, and 16 inches at Clear Lake.

1965 - Severe thunderstorms in the Upper Midwest spawned fifty-one tornadoes killing 256 persons and causing more than 200 million dollars damage. Indiana, Ohio and Michigan were hardest hit in the "Palm Sunday Tornado Outbreak". (David Ludlum)

1987 - Ten days of flooding in the northeastern U.S. finally came to an end. Damage from flooding due to rain and snow melt ran into the billions of dollars. The collapse of the New York State Thruway Bridge over Schoharie Creek claimed ten lives. (Storm Data)

1988 - Sixteen cities in the western U.S., nine in California, reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 95 degrees at Sacramento CA and 96 degrees at Bakersfield CA were the warmest of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Forty-four cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported new record low temperatures for the date. Lows of 25 degrees at Conway AR, 29 degrees at Dallas/Fort Worth TX, and 22 degrees at Ozark AR, were April records. Lows of 26 degrees at Hot Springs AR and 31 degrees at Shreveport LA equalled April records. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - While showers produced heavy rain over much of the northeastern U.S., heavy snow blanketed northern Maine, with 13 inches reported at Telos Lake. Strong southwesterly winds accompanying the rain and snow gusted to 68 mph at the Blue Hill Observatory in Massachusetts. Rainfall totals of 1.04 inch at Pittsburgh PA and 1.52 inch at Buffalo NY on the 10th were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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A KING'S RESUME

Recently I was asked to write a resume. Since I had not written one in nearly 30 years, it presented a real challenge. As I thought about the many things I had done, some well and some not so well, I was grateful for the fact that the choice of what I would include was up to me.

Solomon did not write his resume. God did. Nor was he the last one to make a statement about who he was and what he had accomplished. God did that as well. (And, by the way, God will do the same for you and me.)

Even a casual review of Solomon's resume is impressive.

-Early Childhood Education:

Exposed to sages, philosophers, wise men

Observed troops preparing for battle

Studied large building construction

Accompanied his father in foreign affairs

Sang Psalms written by his father

Involved in worship, prayer, and praise

-Major Life Achievements:

The third king of Israel

Built God's Temple in Jerusalem

Diplomat, trader, patron of the arts

Recognized as "wisest man who ever lived"

Author, sage, and philosopher

-Final Notations:

Leadership accomplishments destroyed

Married pagan women, compromised his God

Enslaved God's children

What could have been, never was. Sadly, sin defeated Solomon, and he lost everything.

Prayer: One day, Father, we will all stand before You to be judged for the lives we lived.. May You bless us and say, Well done, Faithful Servant! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. Nehemiah 13:26

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: 04.08.25

10 16 50 60 61 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$72,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 25 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.09.25

12 19 30 42 46 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$28,870,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 40 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.10.25

9 18 38 39 45 13

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 55 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.09.25

1 14 23 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$101,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 55 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.09.25

2 15 44 60 68 23

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 24 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.09.25

4 29 37 55 67 10

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$82,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 24 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
03/29/2025 Men's Singles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle 10am, 1pm & 4pm
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
04/12/2025 Groton Firemens Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
05/12/2025 High School Girls Golf Meet at Olive Grove
05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
06/07/2025 Day of Play
06/13/2025 SDSU 4 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
06/21/2025 Groton Triathlon
06/23/2025 Ladies 2 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
07/11-13/25 2025 VFW 12U Class B State Baseball Tournament
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
07/16/2025 Men's Pro Am Golf at Olive Grove
07/25/2025 Ferney Open Scramble Golf at Olive Grove
08/01/2025 Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove
08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
08/14/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm (2nd Thursday)
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Trump nominee for public lands post withdraws after her criticism of Jan. 6 attack surfaces

By MATTHEW BROWN and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — President Donald Trump's nominee to oversee an agency that manages a quarter-billion acres of public land has withdrawn her nomination following revelations that she criticized the Republican president in 2021 for inciting the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

The withdrawal of Kathleen Sgamma to lead the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management was announced Thursday morning at the start of her confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

David Bernhardt, who served as interior secretary in Trump's first term, suggested on X that Sgamma's withdrawal was "self-inflicted" and he included a link to a website that posted her 2021 comments. Bernhardt indicated that people whose views don't align with Trump's should not seek political appointments in his administration.

"I am disgusted by the violence witnessed yesterday and President Trump's role in spreading misinformation that incited it," Sgamma said in the comments earlier reported by Documented, which describes itself as a watchdog journalism project.

Sgamma confirmed her withdrawal on LinkedIn and said it was an honor to have been nominated.

"I remain committed to President Trump and his unleashing American energy agenda and ensuring multiple-use access for all," said Sgamma. Since 2006 she's been with the Denver-based Western Energy Alliance, an oil industry trade group, and has been a vocal critic of the energy policies of Democratic administrations.

White House spokesperson Liz Huston said the administration looked forward to naming another nominee but did not offer a timeline.

The longtime oil and gas industry representative appeared well-poised to carry out Trump's plans to roll back restrictions on energy development, including in Western states where the land bureau has vast holdings. The agency also oversees mining, grazing and recreation.

Sgamma's withdrawal underscored the Trump administration's creation of a "loyalty test" to weed out subordinates who are out of step with him, said Aaron Weiss, deputy director of the left-leaning Center for Western Priorities.

"That's the world we're in — if that's what happened — where being sane and acknowledging reality with the White House is enough to sink a nomination," he said.

Trump has been testing how far Republicans are willing to go in supporting his supercharged "Make America Great Again" agenda. Few Republicans have criticized Trump after his sweeping pardons of supporters, including violent rioters, charged in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Most congressional Republicans have played down the potential negative impact of Trump's actions, including widespread tariffs on U.S. allies, and have stressed the importance of uniting behind him.

The Bureau of Land Management plays a central role in a long-running debate over the best use of government-owned lands, and its policies have swung sharply as control of the White House has shifted between Republicans and Democrats. Under President Joe Biden, a Democrat, it curbed oil drilling and coal mining on federal lands while expanding renewable power. The agency under Biden also moved to put conservation on more equal footing with oil drilling and other extractive industries in a bid to address climate change.

Trump is reversing the land bureau's course yet again.

On Thursday, officials announced that they will not comprehensively analyze environmental impacts from oil and gas leases on a combined 5,500 square miles (14,100 square kilometers) of bureau land in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. The leases were sold

to companies between 2015 and 2020 but have been tied up by legal challenges.

Also this week, Trump signed an executive order aimed at boosting coal production. That will end the Biden administration's ban on new federal coal sales on bureau lands in Wyoming and Montana, the nation's largest coal fields.

The land bureau had about 10,000 employees at the start of Trump's second term, but at least 800 employees have been laid off or resigned amid efforts by the Trump administration to downsize the federal workforce.

It went four years without a confirmed director during Trump's first term. Trump moved the agency's headquarters to Colorado before it was returned to Washington, D.C., under Biden.

Senate energy committee Chairman Mike Lee said he would work with the administration to find a new nominee for the bureau.

"Its work directly impacts millions of Americans — especially in the West — and its leadership matters," the Utah Republican said.

Utah officials last year launched a legal effort to wrest control of Bureau of Land Management property from the federal government and put it under state control. They were turned down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Education Department withdraws from plan to address discipline disparities for Native students

By ANNIE MA and SARAH RAZA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Education Department has withdrawn from an agreement to address disparities in discipline for Native American students at a South Dakota school system, saying it was wrongly rooted in efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

The decision reflects a shift in interpretation of anti-discrimination laws under President Donald Trump's administration, which is planning to review other agreements the department's Office for Civil Rights has struck with school systems around the U.S.

At issue in the Rapid City Area School District were questions of harsh discipline and access to advanced coursework for Native students, who have been less likely than their white peers to be in high-level classes. A federal investigation found Native students were roughly four times as likely to be suspended and five times as likely to be arrested compared with their white peers.

Last month, the Education Department told the district it would close its compliance review, saying in a letter the agreement violated civil rights laws because DEI was at its foundation.

Some parents who participated in listening sessions with the Office for Civil Rights said they felt their effort had been wasted.

"If there's a fight, instead of restorative practices, in our schools the first thing they do is call the police who are right there in the schools as resource officers," said Valeria Big Eagle, a parent of three children in the school district and a leader at NDN Collective, an Indigenous advocacy group. "We know the school-to-prison pipeline is real for our kids, and the only way we can address that is by promoting restorative practices."

The Education Department backed away from the Rapid City case because the resolution focused on racial balancing and tasked its lawyers with "micromanaging" how the schools disciplined students, a department official said.

Agreements at other schools lay out plans to address harassment and discrimination

Under Trump, the Education Department has threatened to cut funding from schools that refuse to disavow DEI, which his administration has described as discriminatory and illegal. The Office for Civil Rights, which was hit hard by reductions in staff, meantime has prioritized investigations into allegations of antisemitism.

The rollback of the South Dakota case reflects the department's efforts to control school-level decisions on diversity initiatives, regardless of their legal basis, said Michael Pillera, director of educational equity issues at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

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"It does feel unprecedented, and it does feel extreme," Pillera said.

The Trump administration has rescinded one other civil rights resolution agreement with a school district, a case involving books removed from a Forsyth County School District library in Georgia. But the department official said they will be reviewing others.

The Office for Civil Rights enters into hundreds of resolution agreements a year with districts in cases involving racial harassment, disproportionate discipline, disability discrimination and gender discrimination. It can require corrective action ranging from resolving access issues for individual students with disabilities to sweeping audits of district-wide practices.

The issues uncovered in Rapid City schools around disproportionate discipline and policing have long been an area of concern when it comes to preventing discrimination against students of color, said Liz King, senior director for the education equity program at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

"The question is, do we care what the effect of discrimination is or not?" King said. "If we're seeing they're causing disproportionate harm to some groups of students, we need to be asking hard questions about whether or not we can justify those policies."

Rapid City schools say the reforms will continue, but some parents have doubts.

The Rapid City investigation began in 2010 and was closed in 2024 under the Biden administration.

In interviews with federal investigators, a former superintendent said high truancy rates owed to some Native American tribes not valuing education, and that they operate on "Indian time," arriving late. The board fired her last summer over the derogatory remarks.

In a statement, the district's acting superintendent, Cory Strasser, said neither the board or district leadership were involved in the decision to terminate the resolution agreement. He said that the district had already done much of the work required by the resolution agreement, which ranged from training in implicit bias to better tracking of discipline data. He said the work will continue without federal oversight.

"These efforts have positively impacted all students," Strasser said.

Some in the community worry the district on its own will not follow through on the recommendations. Nick Tilsen, founder of the Rapid City-based NDN Collective, said it has been flooded with calls from concerned parents and students.

"The agreement exists because the Rapid City Area school board needed to be held accountable to implementing those provisions," Tilsen said. "They can't just simply say that they're doing it, because the data already shows that they're not implementing these things."

Darren Thompson, media relations director at the Native nonprofit Sacred Defense Fund, said it is the latest in a series of federal decisions that affects tribal citizens but did not solicit input from any tribal communities. He added the Native American population in South Dakota is unique because many have distinctly Indian surnames, like "Black Elk," which can make them targets of discrimination in schools or when seeking employment.

Associated Press writer Collin Binkley in Washington contributed to this report. Raza reported from Sioux Falls, S.D.

Britain announces more support for Ukraine's fight against Russia as Kyiv's Western backers meet

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Britain on Friday announced a "surge" of military support to Ukraine, as the war-ravaged country's Western backers gathered to drum up more weapons and ammunition to fight off Russia's invasion and a U.S. envoy flew to Moscow amid ongoing ceasefire efforts.

Britain said that in a joint effort with Norway just over \$580 million would be spent to provide hundreds of thousands of military drones, radar systems and anti-tank mines, as well as repair and maintenance contracts to keep Ukrainian armored vehicles on the battlefield.

On the eve of the meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said a key issue was strengthening his country's air defenses. "Ukraine needs a sufficient number of mod-

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ern systems like Patriot" missile systems, he said in a post on social media.

"A political decision is needed to supply these systems to protect our cities, towns, and the lives of our people — especially from the threat of Russian ballistic weapons. Our partners have such available systems," Umerov said.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed his appeals for more Patriot systems since 20 people were killed a week ago, including nine children, when a Russian missile tore through apartment buildings and blasted a playground in his home town.

"Ukraine needs at the very least 10 systems that are sufficiently effective specifically against Russian ballistic missiles, and this is where Patriots are second to none," he said on his Telegram channel ahead of the meeting. "We are counting on decisions."

Zelenskyy joined Friday's meeting by video link.

Russia holds off agreeing to ceasefire

Russian forces hold the advantage in Ukraine, with the war now in its fourth year. Ukraine has endorsed a U.S. ceasefire proposal, but Russia has effectively blocked it by imposing far-reaching conditions.

The Russian delay in accepting Washington's proposal has frustrated U.S. President Donald Trump and fueled doubts about whether Russian President Vladimir Putin really wants to stop the fighting while his bigger army has momentum on the battlefield.

"Russia continues to use bilateral talks with the United States to delay negotiations about the war in Ukraine, suggesting that the Kremlin remains uninterested in serious peace negotiations to end the war," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said in an assessment late Thursday.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff was back in Moscow on Friday but he didn't confirm whether he will meet with Putin. Witkoff has been pressing the Kremlin to accept a truce.

Washington remains committed to securing a peace deal, even though four weeks have passed since it made its ceasefire proposals, State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said.

"It is a dynamic that will not be solved militarily. It is a meat grinder," Bruce said Thursday about the war, adding that "nothing else can be discussed ... until the shooting and the killing stops."

Observers expect a new Russian offensive

Ukrainian officials and military analysts believe Russia is preparing to launch a fresh military offensive in coming weeks to ramp up pressure and strengthen the Kremlin's hand in the negotiations.

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said that his country would provide Ukraine with four IRIS-T short- to medium-range systems with missiles, as well as 30 missiles for use on Patriot batteries. The Netherlands plans to supply a Hawkeye air defense system, an airborne early warning aircraft.

Estonian Defense Minister Hanno Pevkur said that his country is monitoring the world armaments market and sees opportunities for Ukraine's backers to buy more weapons and ammunition.

Pevkur said he believes Putin might try to reach some kind of settlement with Ukraine by May 9 — the day that Russia marks victory during World War II — making it even more vital to strengthen Kyiv's position now.

"This is why we need to speed up the deliveries as quickly as we can," he said.

Friday's meeting is the 27th gathering of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group. It's being chaired by Britain and Germany. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth will be absent from a forum that the United States created and led for several years, although he was due to take part via video.

Hegseth spent the first part of this week in Panama and returned to Washington on Wednesday night.

At the last contact group meeting in February, Hegseth warned Ukraine's European backers that the U.S. now has priorities elsewhere — in Asia and on America's own borders — and that they would have to take care of their own security, and that of Ukraine, in future.

Asked about the U.S. stepping back from its leadership role on Ukraine, Pistorius declined to comment, saying only that "it's a decision of the new administration in Washington."

"We are here to take over the lead," he told reporters, "and we are willing and determined to do that with full responsibility and together with our allies."

NYC sightseeing helicopter plunges into river, killing 6 including Spanish family and pilot

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, JENNIFER PELTZ and TED SHAFFREY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York City sightseeing helicopter broke apart in midair Thursday and crashed upside-down into the Hudson River, killing the pilot and a family of five Spanish tourists in the latest U.S. aviation disaster, officials said.

The victims included Siemens executive Agustin Escobar, his wife, Mercè Camprubí Montal, a global manager at an energy technology company, and three children, in addition to the pilot, a person briefed on the investigation told The Associated Press. The person could not discuss details of the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Photos posted on the helicopter company's website showed the couple and their children smiling as they boarded just before the flight took off.

The flight departed a downtown heliport around 3 p.m. and lasted less than 18 minutes. Radar data showed it flew north along the Manhattan skyline and then back south toward the Statue of Liberty.

Video of the crash showed parts of the aircraft tumbling through the air into the water near the shoreline of Jersey City, New Jersey.

Witnesses describe the helicopter's plunge into the Hudson

A witness there, Bruce Wall, said he saw it "falling apart" in midair, with the tail and main rotor coming off. The main rotor was still spinning without the helicopter as it fell.

Dani Horbiak was at her Jersey City home when she heard what sounded like "several gunshots in a row, almost, in the air." She looked out her window and saw the chopper "splash in several pieces into the river."

The helicopter was spinning uncontrollably with "a bunch of smoke coming out" before it slammed into the water, said Lesly Camacho, a hostess at a restaurant along the river in Hoboken, New Jersey.

On air traffic control radio, an NYPD helicopter pilot can be heard saying, "Be advised, you do have an aircraft down. Holland Tunnel. Please keep your eyes open for anybody in the water."

About five minutes after that, someone asks, "Hey Finest," a reference to the NYPD's call sign, "what's going on over there by the Holland Tunnel?"

"The ship went down," someone else responds.

Rescue boats circled the submerged aircraft within minutes of impact near the end of a long maintenance pier for a ventilation tower serving the Holland Tunnel. Recovery crews hoisted the mangled helicopter out of the water just after 8 p.m. using a floating crane.

The bodies were also recovered from the river, Mayor Eric Adams said.

The flight was operated by New York Helicopters, officials said. No one answered the phones at the company's offices in New York and New Jersey.

A person who answered the phone at the home of the company's owner, Michael Roth, said he declined to comment. Roth told the New York Post he was devastated and had "no clue" why the crash happened.

"The only thing I know by watching a video of the helicopter falling down, that the main rotor blades weren't on the helicopter," the Post quoted him as saying. He added that he had not seen such a thing happen during his 30 years in the helicopter business, but noted: "These are machines, and they break."

Emails seeking comment were sent to attorneys who have represented Roth in the past.

The Federal Aviation Administration identified the helicopter as a Bell 206, a model widely used in commercial and government aviation, including by sightseeing companies, TV news stations and police. It was initially developed for the U.S. Army before being adapted for other uses. Thousands have been manufactured over the years.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it would investigate.

Tragedy strikes a family from Spain

Escobar worked for the tech company Siemens for more than 27 years, most recently as global CEO for rail infrastructure at Siemens Mobility, according to his LinkedIn account. In late 2022 he briefly became president and CEO of Siemens Spain. In a post about the position, he thanked his family: "my endless

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source of energy and happiness, for their unconditional support, love ... and patience."

Escobar regularly posted about the importance of sustainability in the rail industry and often traveled internationally for work, including journeying to India and the UK in the past month. He also was vice president of the German Chamber of Commerce for Spain since 2023.

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic helicopter crash in which Agustin Escobar and his family lost their lives. Our heartfelt condolences go out to all their loved ones," Siemens said in a statement early Friday.

Camprubí Montal worked in Barcelona, Spain, for energy technology company Siemens Energy for about seven years, including as its global commercialization manager and as a digitalization manager, according to her LinkedIn account.

Spanish regional government officials said the family resided in Barcelona.

"(I am) dismayed by the tragic helicopter accident in the Hudson River in New York which cost the lives of six people, five of which were members of a Barcelona family," Catalan regional president Salvador Illa wrote on X.

Another regional official said Agustin Escobar was originally from Puertollano, a town in central Spain.

"I want to express my sorrow for the traffic helicopter accident in New York that claimed the lives of Agustín Escobar and his family," Castilla La Mancha regional president Emiliano García-Page wrote on X. "Agustín is native of Puertollano and in 2023 we named him a Favorite Son of Castilla La Mancha."

What may have caused the crash

Video of the crash suggested that a "catastrophic mechanical failure" left the pilot with no chance to save the helicopter, said Justin Green, an aviation lawyer who was a helicopter pilot in the Marine Corps.

It is possible the helicopter's main rotors struck the tail boom, breaking it apart and causing the cabin to free fall, Green said.

"They were dead as soon as whatever happened happened," Green said. "There's no indication they had any control over the craft. No pilot could have prevented that accident once they lost the lifts. It's like a rock falling to the ground. It's heartbreaking."

The skies over Manhattan are routinely filled with planes and helicopters, both private recreational aircraft and commercial and tourist flights. Manhattan has several helipads from which business executives and others are whisked to destinations throughout the metropolitan area.

At least 38 people have died in helicopter accidents in New York City since 1977. A collision between a plane and a tourist helicopter over the Hudson in 2009 killed nine people, and five died in 2018 when a charter helicopter offering "open door" flights went down into the East River.

New York Helicopters also owned a Bell 206 that lost power and made an emergency landing on the Hudson during a sightseeing tour in June 2013. The pilot managed to land safely and he and the passengers — a family of four Swedes — were uninjured. The National Transportation Safety Board found that a maintenance flub and an engine lubrication anomaly led to the power cutoff.

Thursday's crash was the first for a helicopter in the city since one hit the roof of a skyscraper in 2019, killing the pilot.

The accidents and the noise caused by helicopters have repeatedly led some community activists and officials to propose banning or restricting traffic at Manhattan heliports.

Other recent crashes and close calls have already left some people worried about the safety of flying in the U.S.

Seven people were killed when a medical transport plane plummeted into a Philadelphia neighborhood in January. That happened two days after an American Airlines jet and an Army helicopter collided in midair in Washington in the deadliest U.S. air disaster in a generation.

China announces countermeasures by raising tariffs on US goods from 84% to 125% from Saturday

BEIJING (AP) — China announced countermeasures by raising tariffs on U.S. goods from 84% to 125% starting Saturday.

The U.S. and China have escalated a new trade war by raising tariffs even as U.S. President Donald Trump hit a pause on tariffs for other countries. China notably had said it would fight the American tariffs with its own countermeasures, calling Trump's actions "economic bullying," which led Trump to retaliate by continuously hiking up tariffs this week.

Trump's universal tariffs on China total 145%. When Trump announced Wednesday that China faced 125% tariffs, he did not include a 20% tariff on China tied to its role in fentanyl production.

Trump's actions led business executives to warn of a potential recession, and some of the top U.S. trading partners to retaliate with their own import taxes, before the pause. But Trump and China continued raising the tariffs in a tit for tat.

"The U.S. alternately raising abnormally high tariffs on China has become a numbers game, which has no practical economic significance, and will become a joke in the history of the world economy," a Finance Ministry spokesman said in a statement announcing the new tariffs. "However, if the US insists on continuing to substantially infringe on China's interests, China will resolutely counter and fight to the end."

China's Commerce Ministry said it was filing another lawsuit with the World Trade Organization against the U.S. tariffs.

Beijing last week suspended sorghum, poultry and bonemeal imports from some American companies, and put more export controls on rare earth minerals, critical for various technologies, and put a few dozen American companies on lists that would prevent Chinese companies from selling them dual-use goods.

Given the size of the two economies, experts fear global economic turmoil.

The head of the WTO, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, said earlier this week that the trade war between the U.S. and China could "could severely damage the global economic outlook."

Senate confirms Trump nominee for chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff in overnight vote

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate confirmed retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan "Razin" Caine to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Friday, filling the position almost two months after President Donald Trump fired his predecessor.

Trump nominated Caine to become the top U.S. military officer in February after abruptly firing Gen. CQ Brown Jr., the second Black general to serve as chairman, as part of his administration's campaign to rid the military of leaders who support diversity and equity in the ranks. The Senate confirmed Caine 60-25 in an overnight vote before heading home for a two-week recess.

Caine is a decorated F-16 combat pilot who served in leadership in multiple special operations commands, in some of the Pentagon's most classified programs and in the CIA. He does not meet prerequisites for the job set out in a 1986 law, such as being a combatant commander or service chief. But those requirements can be waived by the president if there is a determination that "such action is necessary in the national interest."

Caine's confirmation in the middle of the night, just before the Senate left town, comes as Republicans have been quickly advancing Trump's nominees and as Democrats have been trying to delay the process and show that they are fighting Trump's policies. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., set up the early morning vote after Democrats objected to speeding up procedural votes on the nomination.

Still, Caine was confirmed with some bipartisan support. At his confirmation hearing earlier this month, Caine said he would be candid in his advice to Trump and vowed to be apolitical. He disputed Trump's story that Caine wore a "Make America Great Again" hat when the two first met.

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"I have never worn any political merchandise," he said.

Caine was asked how he would react if ordered to direct the military to do something potentially illegal, such as being used against civilians in domestic law enforcement.

"Will you stand up and push back?" Michigan Democratic Sen. Elissa Slotkin asked.

"Senator, I think that's the duty and the job that I have, yes," Caine said.

Trump's relationship with Caine dates to his first administration. They met during a trip to Iraq, as Trump recounted in a 2019 speech. He has said Caine is "a real general, not a television general."

During his first term, Trump's relationship with then-Chairman Gen. Mark Milley soured as Milley pushed back and took steps to try to prevent what he saw as an attempt to politicize the office. He would remind military service members that they took an oath to the Constitution, not to a president.

Within hours of Trump's inauguration in January, Milley's portrait as chairman of the Joint Chiefs was removed from the Pentagon. Milley's security clearance and security detail also were revoked.

Two fans die in Chile before a Copa Libertadores match between Colo Colo and Fortaleza

By NAYARA BATSCHE and JOSÉ MANUEL VALLADARES Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Two fans died on Thursday before the start of a Copa Libertadores match between the host Colo Colo and Fortaleza of Brazil near Santiago's estadio Monumental, a local prosecutor said.

According to authorities, a group of fans attempted to force their way into the stadium and tore down one of the venue's protective fences. The victims were reportedly trapped beneath them.

The match was later suspended in the 70th minute due to unruly fans, although it was not immediately clear if it was related to the earlier deaths.

The Eastern Flagrancy Prosecutor, Francisco Morales said that a group of fans tried to access the estadio Monumental through the Casa Alba, a building adjacent to the venue and the police tried to prevent them from entering.

"A stampede ensued, resulting in the collapse of a fence," added Morales. "We are currently investigating whether a police vehicle was involved in the death."

Authorities said one of the persons died at the scene and the other at a nearby medical clinic.

Match later suspended

Later, the match between Colo Colo and Fortaleza was suspended at the 70-minute mark, with the score level at 0-0, when a group of local fans started a protest by throwing objects onto the pitch. It was unclear whether the protests were related to the fan deaths before the match.

The Fortaleza players ran for cover in the locker room, while the Colo Colo players, led by captain Esteban Pavez and Arturo Vidal, tried to calm the fans.

The refereeing team, led by Uruguayan Gustavo Tejera, informed the players that the match had been stopped, and all the players went to the locker room. Later, it was announced that the match was officially suspended.

"CONMEBOL deeply regrets the death of two fans near the estadio Monumental before the start of the match between Colo Colo and Fortaleza," said the governing body of soccer in South America. "We express our sincere condolences to their families and loved ones."

Burials begin as the search ends for victims in the Dominican nightclub collapse that killed 221

By MARTÍN ADAMES ALCÁNTARA and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — A merengue icon, a baseball star and others killed when a cement roof collapsed at a popular nightclub in the Dominican Republic were buried Thursday, as authorities called off the search for bodies with the death toll at 221.

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Mourners clad in black and white streamed into Santo Domingo's National Theater, where the body of singer Rubby Pérez lay inside a closed coffin. Pérez had been performing on stage at the packed Jet Set club early Tuesday when dust began falling from the ceiling and, seconds later, the roof caved.

President Luis Abinader and first lady Raquel Arbaje arrived at the theater and stood beside Pérez's coffin for several minutes. Some mourners doubled over in tears as a recording of Pérez singing the national anthem played. Renowned Dominican musician Juan Luis Guerra was among those gathered to pay their respects.

Pérez, 69, had turned to music after a car accident left him unable to pursue his dream of becoming a professional baseball player. He was known for hits including "Volveré," which he sang with Wilfrido Vargas's orchestra, and "Buscando tus besos" as a solo artist.

After a five-hour memorial, mourners released dozens of white balloons outside the theater and spontaneously sang "Volveré" in unison. One woman put her hand over her heart and patted it as she cried.

At the cemetery, Zulinka Pérez, one of his daughters, said: "I knew he was loved but I never imagined this."

The search for answers

Just blocks from the memorial for Pérez, heavy equipment began withdrawing from the site where Jet Set once stood and rescue crews packed up their equipment.

Meanwhile, a group of prosecutors arrived.

It is still unclear what caused the roof to collapse or when the building was last inspected. The government has said it will launch a thorough investigation, and the club's owners have said they are cooperating with authorities.

Juan Manuel Méndez, director of the Center of Emergency Operations, broke down as he addressed reporters.

"Thank you, God, because today we accomplished the most difficult task I've had in 20 years," he said, moving the microphone away from his face as he cried. Other officials patted him on the back as he continued, "Please forgive me," before passing the microphone to an army official.

Officials said 189 people were rescued alive from the rubble. More than 200 were injured, with 23 of them still hospitalized, including eight in critical condition.

"If the trauma is too great, there's not a lot of time" left to save patients in that condition, said Health Minister Víctor Atallah. He and other doctors said some of the injured suffered fractures to the skull, femur and pelvis.

Exasperated families wait

Many people have been anxiously waiting for news of their loved ones, growing frustrated with the drip-drip of information provided by hospitals and the country's forensic institute.

At least 146 bodies have been identified, authorities said Thursday.

María Luisa Taveras told TV station Noticias SIN that she was looking for her sister.

"We have gone everywhere they have told us," she said, her voice breaking.

Taveras said the family has spread out, with a relative stationed at each hospital and at the National Institute of Forensic Pathology. Dozens of people waited at the institute Thursday, wearing face masks and complaining about the smell as they demanded the release of their loved ones' bodies.

"The odor is unbearable," said Wendy Sosa, who has been waiting since Wednesday morning for the body of her cousin, 61-year-old Nilka Curiel González. Sosa told The Associated Press by phone that the situation there was "chaotic," and that officials had set up a refrigerated container to handle the volume of bodies being delivered.

She wept as she described her cousin as gracious, authentic, and "very empathetic."

'Life is but a breath'

Victims identified so far include former MLB players Octavio Dotel and Tony Enrique Blanco Cabrera; and Nelsy Cruz, the governor of the northwestern province of Montecristi whose brother is seven-time Major League Baseball All-Star Nelson Cruz.

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Dotel was buried Thursday in Santo Domingo. Hundreds of people attended his wake on Wednesday, including Hall of Famer David Ortiz, formerly of the Boston Red Sox. Ortiz said the number of people who attended Dotel's wake spoke volumes.

"He was a person whom everyone loved," Ortiz told reporters. "It's very hard, very hard, truly."

MLB Hall of Famer Pedro Martínez attended another wake Thursday.

"There are no words to describe the pain we are all feeling," said Martínez, adding that he knew more than 50 of those who died. "Life is but a breath."

Also killed was a retired United Nations official; saxophonist Luis Solís, who was playing onstage when the roof fell; New York-based fashion designer Martín Polanco; the son and daughter-in-law of the minister of public works; the brother of the vice minister of the Ministry of Youth; and three employees of Grupo Popular, a financial services company, including the president of AFP Popular Bank and his wife.

More than 20 victims came from Haina, Rubby Pérez's hometown, just southwest of Santo Domingo.

The governor held a communal wake, setting up 10 stands for coffins beneath a banner that read: "Haina bids farewell to her beloved children with immense sorrow."

Among the mourners was Juancho Guillén, who lost his wife three months ago and whose brother, sister and brother-in-law died at Jet Set.

"This family is in shock, is devastated," he told Noticias SIN. "We're practically dead too."

Is Ethiopia at war again? A look at the rebellion in one of its most powerful regions

By AMIR AMAN KIYARO Associated Press

Before he was a rebel, Asres Mare Damte was a lawyer. Today he fights for the Fano, a loose collection of groups taking on Ethiopia's military in one of its most populous and powerful regions.

The conflict in Amhara has simmered largely out of sight, with access limited by authorities and insecurity. But a rare interview with Asres, deputy of an influential Fano faction, and others on the ground give a sense of its impact.

Ethiopia's federal government has long been challenged to hold together a potent mix of ethnic groups and interests. Sometimes, as recently in the Tigray region, it explodes into war.

The Amhara, Ethiopia's second-largest ethnic group, once dominated national politics. Many among the rebels want to see them in power again. But they also claim the Amhara are under attack, citing ethnic-based violence in parts of Ethiopia where they are a minority.

The extent of the Amhara fighting has been difficult to measure since the Fano emerged during anti-government protests in 2016.

Alliances in Ethiopia can be shifting. During the Tigray conflict, the Fano fought alongside Ethiopian forces. Afterward, angered by certain terms of the peace deal, the rebels turned against the federal government once again.

Before taking up arms, Asres said he coordinated peaceful demonstrations to protest the killing of Amharas. He was arrested twice and fled in 2022 after a third warrant was issued.

These days, he and fellow fighters live in fear of drone strikes by Ethiopian forces. He makes bullish, unverified claims.

"We have fought thousands of battles," he told The Associated Press from Amhara's Gojjam area, which has seen some of the heaviest battles. He claimed that the Fano control over 80% of Amhara, a mountainous region of over 22 million people, and has captured "many enemy troops."

In a statement last month, Amhara's deputy head of security said the government had "freed" 2,225 of Amhara's 4,174 subdistricts. It was not clear how many more were under Fano control.

Fighting has escalated since mid-March, with the Fano launching an offensive across Amhara. The military has claimed it "crushed" the offensive and killed 300 Fano fighters, but reports of clashes persist.

Amhara's large population has long created pressure to expand, and the ethnic group has claimed the western part of Tigray. The Fano and Amhara regional forces seized it during the Tigray conflict, but they

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were left out of peace negotiations. They were angered to learn that western Tigray's fate might be left up to a referendum, which has not been held.

It is "not a genuine peace," Asres said.

After several months of small-scale skirmishes, Amhara saw open rebellion in July 2023, when Fano groups launched a coordinated offensive and briefly seized control of several towns.

They retreated to the countryside and have waged a hit-and-run guerrilla campaign since then, setting up checkpoints on key roads and often entering major urban areas.

"One week you're ruled by one, one week you're ruled by the other," said a mother of three in the southern town of Debre Markos, referring to the rebels and Ethiopia's military. She spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

The monitoring group ACLED recorded 270 battles between Fano and government forces between Oct. 27 of last year and Jan. 31, as well as over a dozen attacks targeting health facilities and doctors in Amhara since last April.

Residents and observers say some local officials have fled their posts for fear of assassination, while police struggle to maintain control.

The regional education office says over 3,600 schools across Amhara are closed, with many looted or damaged, depriving 4.5 million children of schooling. The government said 2.3 million people needed food aid in 2024, many in hard-to-reach areas.

"You can't travel from one city to another safely. Work has stopped," said Tadesse Gete, a barber based in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, but from North Gondar, one of the fighting's hot spots. He said his family fled for safety.

Rights groups have accused Ethiopia's military of abuses including extrajudicial killings, drone strikes against civilians and enforced disappearances of alleged Fano sympathizers. Human Rights Watch last year said it had documented attacks by Ethiopian soldiers and allied militias in at least 13 Amhara towns since August 2023.

The bloodiest known episode was in February 2024 in Merawi, 30 kilometers (18 miles) south of Amhara's regional capital, when Ethiopian troops went door-to-door rounding up and executing civilians following a Fano attack, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The state-appointed human rights commission said at least 45 civilians were killed.

"The Ethiopian authorities have taken no meaningful steps to hold perpetrators accountable," said Haimanot Bejiga, a researcher for Amnesty International.

A government spokesperson denied the allegations at the time, saying "not only would civilians never be targeted, even surrendering combatants would not be killed."

On March 31, soldiers rounded up and killed civilians in the town of Brakat after clashing with local forces, two witnesses told the AP, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

One described seeing soldiers killing four women. "They ordered them to kneel down and they shot them from behind," he said. "After the soldiers left that area, I counted 28 dead bodies."

The government has restricted access to Brakat and has not commented.

The government did not respond to AP questions. It has accused the Fano of "terrorizing the people". But it has also formed regional peace councils, and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed last year said his government had been in talks for "a while" with Fano groups.

They have not made significant progress. Abiy has said the rebel's diffuse structure and lack of a coherent leadership has made negotiating difficult.

The Fano continues to draw recruits from disillusioned Amhara youth and from soldiers deserting the military. They include 25-year-old Andrag Challe, who believes that joining the rebellion is the only way to protect the Amhara and bring political change to Ethiopia.

The military "serves the interests of the ruling party," not the people, he said.

Now that they've passed a budget plan, the hard part begins for Republicans

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans narrowly got their budget plan over the finish line. Now comes the hard part.

The resolution adopted this week was only a first step that allows Republicans to draft legislation that they can push through Congress without Democratic support. Next, they begin crafting a final bill with enough spending cuts to satisfy those on the right while not jeopardizing the reelection prospects of more vulnerable lawmakers whose constituents rely on key safety net programs.

With thin majorities in the House and Senate, Republicans can afford to lose hardly any votes from their side of the aisle as they draft legislation, giving every individual lawmaker leverage over the process.

"It's going to take all of us to get it done," said House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La.

The road ahead is daunting.

Republicans are determined to extend the individual tax cuts that were approved during President Donald Trump's first term before they expire at year's end. But they intend for the legislation to do far more than that, potentially enacting a host of tax reductions that Trump promised during the campaign, such as no income tax on tips and overtime.

And the tax cuts are only half the equation. Conservatives in the House gave the budget plan the final votes needed for passage Thursday after they said they received assurances from leadership in both chambers that they would work to have a final product with at least \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts — forcing changes to federal programs including Medicaid that could prove hard for some in the party to support.

"The struggles Republicans have faced so far are only a glimmer of what's to come," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer.

Rep. Max Miller, R-Ohio, senses a difficult fight for Republicans. He said Trump has made clear he doesn't want any benefit cuts for those who get health insurance coverage through Medicaid, which could conflict with the desire some conservatives have for steep spending cuts.

"If it's this rocky now, it's only going to get worse from here on out if the speaker is not able to get the entire conference in line," Miller said.

Democrats have framed the debate as Republicans looking to slash key government programs so they can pass tax cuts that predominately help wealthier households. It's a message Democrats will hammer home leading up to the 2026 midterm elections.

"At this point, they're all worried about primaries and they are worried about Elon's money, but they ought to be worried about a general election as well," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., referring to Trump's billionaire ally, Elon Musk. "I think it's going to be very difficult for a moderate Republican, if there's still any left, to be able to vote for this and go home and defend it."

Some Republicans also made clear to GOP leadership before Thursday's budget vote that they will be closely monitoring the changes to Medicaid in the final bill.

"This was just making sure that there is a clear understanding here that there are a group of members that will not cut benefits from seniors and our most vulnerable New Yorkers who rely on Medicaid," said Rep. Nicole Malliotakis, R-N.Y.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, who is up for reelection next year, said she's also made her position known to leadership.

"I could not make my position on Medicaid cuts clearer," she said. "I am not going to support cuts that affect low-income families, disabled individuals, low-income seniors, rural hospitals."

Republicans say their focus is on instilling work requirements for able-bodied beneficiaries and more rigorous eligibility assessments. But Democrats say Republicans can't generate the savings being discussed without also cutting benefits.

Meanwhile, Republicans see extending the individual and estate tax cuts passed in Trump's first term as key to their electoral success next year. The House Ways and Means Committee says a family of four

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making \$80,610, the median income in the United States, would see a \$1,695 tax increase if the tax cuts are not extended.

Republicans spent the last few years blaming the Biden administration for increasing the debt, and a key test will be how many keep that focus as they seek to extend and expand tax cuts.

A recent estimate from the Joint Committee on Taxation projects that extending the 2017 tax breaks will add \$5.5 trillion over the next decade when including interest, and \$4.6 trillion not including interest. On top of that, adding Trump's campaign promises would swell the price tag to \$7 trillion.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said he'll advocate for splitting the measure into two reconciliation bills if Republicans take too long to get to a final product.

"I'm going to say break it apart, because they need money for the border yesterday and they also need money for DoD," Graham said, referring to the Department of Defense.

House Speaker Mike Johnson said he looked forward to the challenge and there was a lot of work ahead.

"The American people are counting on us," Johnson said.

Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., said he's confident a final bill will pass with the House winning the most important tussles on the scope of taxes and spending cuts.

"I will bet you they will fold rather than inflict the largest tax increase in American history on their voters," Cole said of the Senate. "And two-thirds of them, with all due respect, aren't on the ballot next time. ... Whereas everyone here is on the line. And our majority is much more on the line that their majority is."

In fight over insurance, neighbors crowdsource LA fire contamination data

By CLAUDIA LAUER and SALLY HO Associated Press

All sense of survivors' guilt was fleeting for those residents whose homes remained standing after wild-fires ripped through the Los Angeles area three months ago.

Many worried that smoke from the Eaton wildfire that destroyed more than 9,000 structures and killed 18 people may have carried toxins, including lead, asbestos and heavy metals, into their homes. But they struggled to convince their insurers to test their properties to ensure it was safe to return.

Nicole Maccalla, a data scientist, said embers burned more than half of her roof, several windows and eaves were damaged, and her house in Altadena was left filled with ash, debris, soot and damaged appliances. She said her insurance adjuster said USAA would pay for contamination testing, but after choosing a company and coming back with the results, her claim was rejected. The adjuster said the company only covered testing in homes with major damage.

"Every single item is a battle," said Maccalla. "It's denials and appeals and denials and appeals, and you wait weeks and weeks and weeks for responses."

Crowdsourcing contamination data

Maccalla and others banded together as Eaton Fire Residents Unite, sharing environmental testing data and compiling the results in an online map. Of 81 homes tested so far for lead, all show elevated levels, according to the group.

"I've already had multiple people reach out and say: 'Thank you for publishing this map ... because my insurance company has changed their mind and approved testing,'" said Maccalla, who helped design the data collection to verify results and maintain privacy.

Many homeowners paid privately for the testing after their insurance companies refused, revealing gaps in coverage. The group hopes the data will help residents who can't afford it to convince their insurers to cover testing and remediation.

"If I can prove my community is not fit for human habitation then maybe I can show my home won't be," said Jane Lawton Potelle, founder of Eaton Fire Residents Unite.

It's not easy to understand how and when it is safe to return home, Lawton Potelle said. The fine print of insurance policies can be frustrating and confusing, and the government has not stepped in to help.

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency said it has no plans to conduct widespread environmental testing. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is tracking environmental testing largely by academic researchers and a handful from government agencies, but most studies assess outdoor contamination.

Toxic air and limited coverage

Reports from other urban wildfires, in which building materials, appliances, cars and more burn at incredibly high temperatures, show increased levels of heavy metals including lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) such as benzene that are tied to negative health risks. But insurance companies haven't standardized testing for those contaminants.

Home insurance broadly covers fire damage, but there is a growing dispute over what damage must be covered when flames don't torch the property.

California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara released a bulletin in March that put the onus on companies to properly investigate reported smoke damage, saying they cannot deny such claims without investigating thoroughly, including paying for professional testing as warranted. But many residents have been left to fight for coverage anyway.

Janet Ruiz, spokesperson for the Insurance Information Institute that represents many major insurance companies, said it's hard to compare neighbors because every claim is unique due to each home's physical structure, actual damage and defined insurance coverage limits.

"It can vary and insurance companies are sensitive to what the claim is," Ruiz said. "You have to work with your insurance companies and be reasonable about what may have happened."

Dave Jones, director of the Climate Risk Initiative at University of California, Berkeley, and former state insurance commissioner, said testing should be covered even though some insurance companies disagree.

"It's perfectly reasonable for people to have some kind of environmental test done so that their home is safe and their property is safe," Jones said. "We're talking about very catastrophically high temperature fires where all sorts of materials are melted and some of them become toxic."

State plan struggles

The state's insurer of last resort, known as the California Fair Access to Insurance Requirements Plan, has been scrutinized for years over how it handles smoke damage claims. A 2017 change to the FAIR Plan limited coverage to "permanent physical changes," meaning smoke damage must be visible or detectable without lab testing for claims to be approved. State officials said that threshold was too high and illegal, and ordered a change.

Dylan Schaffer, an attorney leading a class action lawsuit challenging FAIR Plan's threshold, said he was surprised private carriers are disputing similar fire damage claims.

"The damage is not due to smoke, the damage is contamination from fire," Schaffer said. "They make it complicated because it saves them money."

Meanwhile, Altadena residents on the FAIR Plan say their claims are still being denied. Jones believes the debate will only end when lawmakers take action.

FAIR Plan spokeswoman Hilary McLean declined to comment on the ongoing litigation and individual cases, but said the FAIR Plan pays all covered claims based on the adjusters' recommendations.

"Our policy, like many others, requires direct physical loss for there to be coverage," McLean said.

Worries over kids' safety

Lawton Potelle said the first inkling that her house might be toxic came after meeting with her AAA insurance adjuster in the days after the fire. Even though she had worn a mask, her chest still ached and her voice rasped, and she wondered whether her home was safe for her 11-year-old.

Stephanie Wilcox said her toddler's pediatrician recommended testing their home. Her Farmers Insurance policy includes coverage for lead and asbestos in addition to her wildfire coverage, but after multiple denials, she paid out of pocket.

"After the initial inspection, (Farmers) had told us remediation would cost about \$12,000 and that it would be habitable, like we could move back in tomorrow," she said. "But now there's no way."

She plans to ask for a new estimate including lead abatement and other costs, citing the results. Similarly, Zach Bailey asked in late January for contamination testing. The house he shares with his wife and toddler sits in an island of largely spared homes among blocks wiped out by the fire. After months of denials, State Farm agreed to pay for lead and asbestos testing because the remediation company cited federal worker safety regulations.

It shouldn't have been that hard, he said. "It feels like the insurance companies should have a playbook at this point," he said. "They should have a process to keep people safe because this isn't the first disaster like this."

Trump will undergo his annual physical Friday after years of reluctance to share medical information

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump is undergoing his annual physical on Friday, potentially giving the public its first details in years about the health of a man who in January became the oldest in U.S. history to be sworn in as president.

"I have never felt better, but nevertheless, these things must be done!" Trump, 78, posted on his social media site.

Despite long questioning predecessor Joe Biden's physical and mental capacity, Trump himself has routinely kept basic facts about his own health shrouded in secrecy — shying away from traditional presidential transparency on medical issues.

If history is any indication, his latest physical is likely to produce a flattering report that's scarce on details. It will be conducted at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and will be the first public information on Trump's health since an assassination attempt against him in Butler, Pennsylvania, last July.

Rather than release medical records at that time, Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson — a staunch supporter who served as his White House physician and once joked in the White House briefing room that Trump could live to be 200 if he had a healthier diet — wrote a memo describing a gunshot wound to Trump's right ear.

In a subsequent interview with CBS last August, Trump said he'd "very gladly" release his medical records but never did.

Trump is three years younger than Biden. But on Inauguration Day of his second term in January, Trump was five months older than Biden was during his 2021 inauguration — making Trump the nation's oldest president to be sworn into office.

Before Jackson's memo, Americans hadn't seen key details about Trump's health since November 2023, when Dr. Bruce A. Aronwald released a letter to coincide with Biden's 81st birthday, saying Trump was in "excellent" physical and mental health.

The letter, posted on Trump's social media platform, contained no details — including Trump's weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, or the results of any test. Instead, Aronwald wrote that he'd examined Trump that fall and found his "physical exams were well within the normal range and his cognitive exams were exceptional," while also noting that Trump had "reduced his weight."

Trump was treated at Walter Reed for his serious bout with the coronavirus in 2020. During that, Trump's physician offered a rosy prognosis on his condition, though his White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said some of Trump's vital signs were "very concerning."

After he recovered, more details emerged that Trump had been sicker than he'd let on.

But Trump largely refused to say more about his health at the time, instead submitting to a pretaped, remote medical "evaluation" and interview on Fox News Channel. That was conducted by Dr. Marc Siegel, a Fox News contributor who had questioned Hillary Clinton's physical ability to serve as president in 2016 and later urged the Biden White House to test the then-president's cognitive acuity.

In November 2019, meanwhile, Trump's trip to Walter Reed for a physical was omitted from his public schedule, breaking the White House protocol of giving advance public notice of them.

The visit was revealed three days later, with Trump disclosing that he'd had a "very routine physical."

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The White House released a subsequent statement from the president's then-personal physician, U.S. Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, saying it had been a "planned interim checkup" kept "off the record" due to scheduling uncertainties.

Arguably, Trump's most famous past comments about his own health came during a television interview in July 2020, when he listed off "Person. Woman. Man. Camera. TV" while attempting to demonstrate his cognitive abilities.

Trump said that a collection of those five nouns, or ones like them, stated in order, demonstrated mental fitness — and were part of a cognitive test he had aced.

Asian shares sink, with Japan's Nikkei down 5.6% as China-US trade war escalates

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares sank Friday after U.S. stocks gave up much of their historic gains from the day before.

The deepening worries over President Donald Trump's trade war initially helped pull Japan's Nikkei 225 share index down 5.6%.

By mid-morning in Tokyo, it was down 4.2% at 33,148.45.

The yen surged against the U.S. dollar, which also lost value against the euro.

One dollar bought 143.64 Japanese yen, down from about 146 yen a day earlier. The euro rose to \$1.1306 from \$1.1195.

South Korea's Kospi fell 1.3% to 2,413.16, while in Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 shed 1.2% to 7,619.70.

In China markets, Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged down 0.4% to 20,606.04 and Shanghai's lost 0.2% to 3,218.94.

Taiwan's Taiex gained 1.5% as investors expect more orders would transfer to Taiwan under the worsening China-US trade war.

China announced more countermeasures against the United States and losses for U.S. stocks accelerated after the White House clarified that the United States will tax Chinese imports at 145%, not the 125% rate that Trump had written about in his posting on Truth Social Wednesday, once other previously announced tariffs were included. The drop for the S&P 500 exceeded 6% at one point.

China, meanwhile, has been seeking to join forces with other countries in apparent hopes of forming a united front against Trump. The world's second-largest economy is also ramping up its own countermeasures to Trump's tariffs.

Investors are viewing Trump's decision to delay higher tariffs for most countries for 90 days as a ploy, not a pivot, Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

"That's the market hitting the brakes, hard. The sugar high from Trump's tariff pause is fading fast, and Asia's about to feel the comedown. The champagne's flat, the party's over and the tape is twitching," he wrote.

On Thursday, the S&P 500 tumbled 3.5% to 5,268.05, slicing into Wednesday's surge of 9.5% following Trump's decision to pause many of his tariffs worldwide. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 2.5% to 39,593.66, and the Nasdaq composite tumbled 4.3% to 16,387.31.

"Trump blinks," UBS strategist Bhanu Baweja wrote in a report about the president's decision on tariffs, "but the damage isn't all undone."

The stock price of Warner Bros. Discovery, the company behind "A Minecraft Movie," dropped 12.5% for one of Wall Street's sharpest losses after China said Thursday it will "appropriately reduce the number of imported U.S. films." The Walt Disney Co.'s stock sank 6.8%.

A spokesperson for the China Film Administration said it is "inevitable" that Chinese audiences would find American films less palatable given the "wrong move by the U.S. to wantonly implement tariffs on China."

That was after Trump and his Treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, sent a clear message to other countries Wednesday after announcing their pause on tariffs for most countries: "Do not retaliate, and you will be

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rewarded."

The European Union said Thursday it will put its trade retaliation measures on hold for 90 days and leave room for a negotiated solution.

Thursday's swings also hit the bond market, which has historically played the role of enforcer against politicians and economic policies it deemed imprudent. It helped topple the United Kingdom's Liz Truss in 2022, for example, whose 49 days made her Britain's shortest-serving prime minister.

Earlier this week, big jumps for U.S. Treasury yields had rattled the market, so much that Trump said Wednesday he had been watching how investors were "getting a little queasy."

Several reasons could have been behind the sharp, sudden rise in yields. Hedge funds may have sold Treasuries in order to raise cash, and investors outside the United States may be dumping their U.S. government bonds because of the trade war. Regardless of the reasons behind it, higher Treasury yields crank up pressure on the stock market and push rates higher for mortgages and other loans for U.S. households and businesses.

The 10-year Treasury yield had calmed following Trump's U-turn on tariffs, dropping all the way back to 4.30% shortly after the release of a better-than-expected report on inflation Thursday morning. That's after it had shot up to nearly 4.50% Wednesday morning from just 4.01% at the end of last week.

As Thursday progressed, though, the 10-year Treasury yield climbed once again and reached 4.40%. It was trading at 4.39% early Friday.

In other dealings early Friday, U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 37 cents to \$59.70 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

Brent crude, the international standard, fell 30 cents to \$63.03 per barrel.

Ksenia Karelina, a dual US-Russian national released by Moscow in prisoner swap, arrives in US

By JON GAMBRELL and DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Russian-American woman freed by Moscow arrived back in the United States late Thursday as part of a prisoner swap completed as the two countries aim to repair ties.

A plane carrying Ksenia Karelina landed around 11 p.m. EDT at Joint Base Andrews, where she was greeted by her fiancé. Morgan Ortagus, President Donald Trump's deputy special envoy to the Middle East, presented her with a bouquet. She was released earlier in the day in exchange for a Russian-German man who'd been jailed in the U.S. on smuggling charges.

Karelina was arrested in the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg in February 2024 and convicted of treason on charges stemming from a donation of about \$52 to a charity aiding Ukraine. U.S. authorities have called the case "absolutely ludicrous."

"They released the young ballerina and she is now out, and that was good. So we appreciate that," President Donald Trump said at a Cabinet meeting Thursday. He said the release followed conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Arthur Petrov was released as part of the swap in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, according to the Federal Security Service, or FSB, Russia's main security and counterintelligence agency. Petrov was arrested in Cyprus in August 2023 at the request of the U.S. on charges of smuggling sensitive microelectronics to Russia and extradited to the U.S. a year later.

Karelina was among a growing number of Americans arrested in Russia in recent years as tensions between Moscow and Washington spiked over the war in Ukraine. Her release is the latest in a series of high-profile prisoner exchanges Russia and the U.S. carried out in the last three years — and the second since Trump took office and reversed Washington's policy of isolating Russia in an effort to end the war in Ukraine.

CIA Director John Ratcliffe hailed "the CIA officers who worked tirelessly to support this effort." The CIA also emphasized that "the exchange shows the importance of keeping lines of communication open with Russia, despite the deep challenges in our bilateral relationship."

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Meanwhile, Russian and U.S. diplomats met in Istanbul for a second round of talks on normalizing embassies' work, following the first such meeting in February. The State Department said the delegations "exchanged notes to finalize an understanding to ensure the stability of diplomatic banking for Russian and U.S. bilateral missions."

It said the U.S. reiterated its concerns about the Russian ban on hiring of local staff, "the key impediment to maintaining for stable and sustainable staffing levels at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow."

Alexander Darchiyev, Russia's ambassador to Washington, who led Moscow's delegation in the talks, praised their "positive atmosphere" and noted the parties agreed to continue discussions to facilitate diplomats' travel. He added that the Russian side also pushed for a quick return of its diplomatic property seized by U.S. authorities.

In February, Russia released American teacher Marc Fogel, imprisoned on drug charges, in a swap that the White House described as part of a diplomatic thaw that could advance peace negotiations. That same month, Russia released another American just days after arresting him on drug smuggling charges.

Karelina, a former ballet dancer also identified in some media as Ksenia Khavana, lived in Maryland before moving to Los Angeles. She was arrested when she returned to Russia to visit her family last year.

The FSB accused her of "proactively" collecting money for a Ukrainian organization that was supplying gear to Kyiv's forces. The First Department, a Russian rights group, said the charges stemmed from a \$51.80 donation to a U.S. charity aiding Ukraine.

"I am overjoyed to hear that the love of my life, Ksenia Karelina is on her way home from wrongful detention in Russia," Karelina's fiancé, professional boxer Chris van Heerden, said in a statement. "She has endured a nightmare for 15 months and I cannot wait to hold her. Our dog, Boots, is also eagerly awaiting her return."

He thanked Trump and his envoys, as well as prominent public figures who had championed her case, including Dana White, a Trump friend and CEO of the Ultimate Fighting Championship. Trump also credited White, too, saying the UFC boss had called him about the case.

White House national security adviser Mike Waltz said on X, "President Trump and his administration continue to work around the clock to ensure Americans detained abroad are returned home to their families."

The exchange was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

The United Arab Emirates' state-run WAM news agency released photos of Karelina boarding a plane and one of her standing next to Yousef al-Otaiba, the UAE's ambassador to the U.S.

The FSB, which said Putin had pardoned Karelina before the swap, released a video showing her being escorted to a plane somewhere in Russia. The footage then featured what appeared to be the scene of exchange at the Abu Dhabi airport, with Petrov walking off a plane and shaking hands with Russian officials on the tarmac.

The video showed Petrov undergoing medical checkups on a flight to Russia. "I have no particular complaints, just a bit tired," he said.

Another video released by the FSB later in the day showed him walking off a plane after arriving in Russia.

Petrov was accused by the U.S. Justice Department of involvement in a scheme to procure microelectronics subject to U.S. export controls on behalf of a Russia-based supplier of critical components for the country's weapons industries. He was facing a 20-year prison term in the U.S.

Abu Dhabi was the scene of another high-profile prisoner swap between Russia and the United States. In December 2022, American basketball star Brittney Griner was traded for the notorious Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.

The UAE has been a mediator in prisoner swaps between Russia and Ukraine, while the skyscraper-studded city of Dubai has become home to many Russians and Ukrainians who fled there after the start of Moscow's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Judge will halt Trump administration from ending humanitarian parole for people from four countries

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge said Thursday that she will prevent the Trump administration from ordering hundreds of thousands of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans with temporary legal status to leave the country later this month.

The ruling is a significant, although perhaps temporary, setback for the administration as it dismantles Biden-era policies that created new and expanded pathways for people to live in the United States, generally for two years with work authorization.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani said she would issue a stay on an order for more than 500,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to leave the country, sparing them until the case advances to the next phase. Their permits were to be canceled April 24.

During a hearing, Talwani repeatedly questioned the government's assertion that it could end humanitarian parole for the four nationalities. She argued that immigrants in the program who are here legally now face an option of "fleeing the country" or staying and "risk losing everything."

"The nub of the problem here is that the secretary, in cutting short the parole period afforded to these individuals, has to have a reasoned decision," Talwani said, adding that the explanation for ending the program was "based on an incorrect reading of the law."

"There was a deal and now that deal has been undercut," she said later in the hearing.

Last month, the administration revoked legal protections for hundreds of thousands of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans, setting them up for potential deportation in 30 days.

They arrived with financial sponsors, applying online and paying their own airfare for two-year permits to live and work in the U.S. During that time, the beneficiaries needed to find other legal pathways if they wanted to stay longer in the U.S. Parole is a temporary status.

President Donald Trump has been ending legal pathways for immigrants to come to the U.S., implementing campaign promises to deport millions of people who are in the U.S. illegally.

Outside court, immigration advocates, including Guerline Jozef, founder and executive director of the Haitian Bridge Alliance, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, said attacks on this program contradict the Trump administration's strategy on immigration.

"We hear the narrative of people coming here illegally and the administration wanting to erase illegal immigration," Jozef said. "But, we clearly see today that is not the case. Even those people who have legal status, are paying their taxes and working are under attack."

Cesar Baez, an activist of the political opposition in Venezuela, said he feared for his life and left his country to come to the U.S. under the sponsorship of a doctor. He arrived under the humanitarian parole program in December 2022 and, for the last year, has been working as a producer at a media outlet in Washington.

He has applied for a working visa as another way to get legal status and has also requested asylum, but those processes have also been paused under the Trump administration.

For him, the judge's announcement means hope.

"It is very important for me to have protections and not be removed to Venezuela," said Baez, 24. "I have no doubt that if I set foot in the country, I would immediately be imprisoned."

Zamora, a 34-year-old Cuban woman who asked to be identified only by her last name due to fears of being detained and deported, received the judge's news as relief.

"I was terrified of being left without a work permit," said Zamora, whose parole and work permit expire in September. "We are people who, in order to come here, have gone through several background checks, and the government take away our status as if we had been criminals and entered illegally."

Advocates, who called the administration's action "unprecedented," said it would result in people losing their legal status and ability to work and argued that it violated federal rule-making.

The government's lawyer, Brian Ward, argued in court that ending the program doesn't mean that in-

dividuals couldn't be considered for other immigration programs. He also said the government wouldn't prioritize them for deportation — something Talwani found suspect, given they could be arrested if they happened to go to the hospital or were involved in a car accident.

The end of temporary protections for these immigrants has generated little political blowback among Republicans other than three Cuban-American representatives from Florida who called for preventing the deportation of the Venezuelans affected. One of them, Rep. Maria Salazar of Miami, also joined about 200 congressional Democrats this week in cosponsoring a bill that would enable them to become lawful permanent residents.

Social Security lists thousands of living immigrants as dead to prompt them to leave, AP sources say

By WILL WEISSERT and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has moved to classify more than 6,000 living immigrants as dead, canceling their Social Security numbers and effectively wiping out their ability to work or receive benefits in an effort to get them to leave the country, according to two people familiar with the situation.

The move will make it much harder for those affected to use banks or other basic services where Social Security numbers are required. It's part of a broader effort by President Donald Trump to crack down on immigrants who were allowed to enter and remain temporarily in the United States under programs instituted by his predecessor, Joe Biden.

The Trump administration is moving the immigrants' names and legally obtained Social Security numbers to a database that federal officials normally use to track the deceased, according to the two people familiar with the moves and their ramifications. They spoke on condition of anonymity Thursday night because the plans had not yet been publicly detailed.

The officials said stripping the immigrants of their Social Security numbers will cut them off from many financial services and encourage them to "self-deport" and abandon the U.S. for their birth countries.

It wasn't immediately clear how the 6,000-plus immigrants were chosen. But the Trump White House has targeted people in the country temporarily under Biden-era programs, including more than 900,000 immigrants who entered the U.S. using that administration's CBP One app.

On Monday, the Department of Homeland Security revoked the legal status of the immigrants who used that app. They had generally been allowed to remain in the U.S. for two years with work authorization under presidential parole authority during the Biden era, but are now expected to self-deport.

Meanwhile, a federal judge said Thursday that she was stopping the Trump administration from ordering hundreds of thousands of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans with temporary legal status to leave the country later this month.

A representative from the Social Security Administration did not respond to a request for comment on the news that living immigrants were being classified as dead. The agency maintains the most complete federal database of individuals who have died, and the file contains more than 142 million records, which go back to 1899.

The Privacy Act allows the Social Security Administration to disclose information to law enforcement in limited circumstances, which includes when a violent crime has been committed or other criminal activity.

DHS and the Treasury Department signed a deal this week that would allow the IRS to share immigrants' tax data with Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the purpose of identifying and deporting people illegally in the U.S. The agreement will allow ICE to submit names and addresses of immigrants inside the U.S. illegally to the IRS for cross-verification against tax records.

The acting IRS commissioner, Melanie Krause, who had served in that capacity since February, stepped down over that deal.

In March, meanwhile, a federal judge temporarily blocked a team charged with cutting federal jobs and shrinking the government led by billionaire Elon Musk from Social Security systems that hold personal

data on millions of Americans, calling their work there a “fishing expedition.”

Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward, an advocacy group that has challenged various Trump administration efforts in court, said her organization would likely sue over the Social Security numbers as well, once more details become available.

“This President continues to engage in lawless behavior, violating the law and abusing our systems of checks and balances,” Perryman said.

Supreme Court says Trump administration must work to bring back mistakenly deported Maryland man

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday said the Trump administration must work to bring back a Maryland man who was mistakenly deported to prison in El Salvador, rejecting the administration’s emergency appeal.

The court acted in the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran citizen who had an immigration court order preventing his deportation to his native country over fears he would face persecution from local gangs.

U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis had ordered Abrego Garcia, now being held in a notorious Salvadoran prison, returned to the United States by midnight Monday.

“The order properly requires the Government to ‘facilitate’ Abrego Garcia’s release from custody in El Salvador and to ensure that his case is handled as it would have been had he not been improperly sent to El Salvador,” the court said in an unsigned order with no noted dissents.

It comes after a string of rulings on the court’s emergency docket where the conservative majority has at least partially sided with Trump amid a wave of lower court orders slowing the president’s sweeping agenda.

In Thursday’s case, Chief Justice John Roberts had already pushed back Xinis’ deadline. The justices also said that her order must now be clarified to make sure it doesn’t intrude into executive branch power over foreign affairs, since Abrego Garcia is being held abroad. The court said the Trump administration should also be prepared to share what steps it has taken to try to get him back — and what more it could potentially do.

The administration claims Abrego Garcia is a member of the MS-13 gang, though he has never been charged with or convicted of a crime. His attorneys said there is no evidence he was in MS-13.

The administration has conceded that it made a mistake in sending him to El Salvador, but argued that it no longer could do anything about it.

The court’s liberal justices said the administration should have hastened to correct “its egregious error” and was “plainly wrong” to suggest it could not bring him home.

“The Government’s argument, moreover, implies that it could deport and incarcerate any person, including U. S. citizens, without legal consequence, so long as it does so before a court can intervene,” Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote, joined by her two colleagues.

Abrego Garcia’s wife, Jennifer Vasquez Sura, said the ordeal has been an “emotional rollercoaster” for their family and the entire community.

“I am anxiously waiting for Kilmar to be here in my arms, and in our home putting our children to bed, knowing this nightmare is almost at its end. I will continue fighting until my husband is home,” she said.

One of his lawyers, Simon Sandoval-Moshenburt, said “tonight, the rule of law prevailed,” and he encouraged the government to “stop wasting time and get moving.”

In the district court, Xinis wrote that the decision to arrest Abrego Garcia and send him to El Salvador appears to be “wholly lawless.” There is little to no evidence to support a “vague, uncorroborated” allegation that Abrego Garcia was once in the MS-13 street gang, Xinis wrote.

The 29-year-old was detained by immigration agents and deported last month.

He had a permit from the Homeland Security Department to legally work in the U.S. and was a sheet metal apprentice pursuing a journeyman license, his attorney said. His wife is a U.S. citizen.

Tricia McLaughlin, assistant DHS secretary for public affairs, said Thursday that the justices' order for clarification from the lower court was a win for the administration. "We look forward to continuing to advance our position in this case," she said.

A Justice Department spokesman said the court had "directly noted the deference owed to the Executive Branch" in foreign affairs.

An immigration judge had previously barred the U.S. from deporting Abrego Garcia to El Salvador in 2019, finding that he faced likely persecution by local gangs.

A Justice Department lawyer conceded in a court hearing that Abrego Garcia should not have been deported. Attorney General Pam Bondi later removed the lawyer, Erez Reuveni, from the case and placed him on leave.

Israel releases 10 Palestinians detained from Gaza. They say they suffered abuse

By WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Ten Palestinians detained from Gaza by Israeli troops were freed and returned to the territory on Thursday, saying they had suffered constant abuse while imprisoned.

Israel has detained thousands of Palestinians since it launched its military campaign in Gaza in retaliation for Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel. It has done periodic releases of detainees throughout the war, though this was the first since it restarted the war in mid-March, breaking a ceasefire with the militant Hamas group.

The 10 men, all dressed in grey sweatpants and shirts, were brought by bus to a hospital in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah, where they were welcomed by family members.

They had all been detained from the northern Gaza Strip during Israel's last offensive there before the January ceasefire. They said they had been held at least part of the time in Sde Teiman, a military prison camp that has become notorious for abuses of Gaza detainees.

One of the freed men, Fayez Ayoub, looked gaunt and walked with difficulty, supported by another man. "I swear, Dad, every moment we waited for you to be released," his daughter Marah Ayoub told him, crying. "Every time a prisoner was released, we went to him" to ask about her father.

"Torment, torment," he told her.

Detained by Israeli troops on Nov. 6, he said "156 days have passed with us in agony. We are tortured and in pain." He said detainees were abused every day and had little sleep. His daughter said he was seized by Israeli troops just after being released from Kamal Adwan hospital in northern Gaza after suffering fractures in his pelvis and spine from an airstrike.

"Was this how my father was? And Is this what he has become?" she said, referring to his appearance. "He wasn't like this."

Another man, Hani Abu Sharif, said they were frequently beaten, stripped to their underwear, and forced to stand barefoot on stones, causing their feet to bleed. They were only allowed to shower every month or two, he said.

There was no immediate comment by the military. The army and prison authorities have said they abide by the letter of the law in the treatment of prisoners and investigate violations.

But there have been widespread reports of abuse of Palestinian detainees in military prison camps and civilian prisons, including frequent beatings and lack of medical care and food. Five soldiers have been indicted for allegedly raping a detainee with a knife at Sde Teiman.

In March, a 17-year-old Palestinian died at Megiddo Prison, a civilian-run facility, and doctors said starvation was likely the main cause of death. The Palestinian Authority says at least 61 Palestinians have died in Israeli prisons since the war began.

Thousands of Palestinians continue to be held in Israeli detention, without charge or trial. Israel says it detains those it suspects of links to Hamas and does releases as it determines they are not connected to the militants. During the two-month ceasefire, Israel released hundreds of imprisoned Palestinians in return for the release of hostages held by militants in Gaza.

Pressed for evidence against Mahmoud Khalil, government cites its power to deport people for beliefs

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Facing a deadline from an immigration judge to turn over evidence for its attempted deportation of Columbia University activist Mahmoud Khalil, the federal government has instead submitted a brief memo, signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, citing the Trump administration's authority to expel noncitizens whose presence in the country damages U.S. foreign policy interests.

The two-page memo, which was obtained by The Associated Press, does not allege any criminal conduct by Khalil, a legal permanent U.S. resident and graduate student who served as spokesperson for campus activists last year during large demonstrations against Israel's treatment of Palestinians and the war in Gaza.

Rather, Rubio wrote Khalil could be expelled for his beliefs.

He said that while Khalil's activities were "otherwise lawful," letting him remain in the country would undermine "U.S. policy to combat anti-Semitism around the world and in the United States, in addition to efforts to protect Jewish students from harassment and violence in the United States."

"Condoning anti-Semitic conduct and disruptive protests in the United States would severely undermine that significant foreign policy objective," Rubio wrote in the undated memo.

The submission was filed Wednesday after Judge Jamee Comans ordered the government to produce its evidence against Khalil ahead of a hearing Friday on whether it can continue detaining him during immigration proceedings.

Attorneys for Khalil said the memo proved the Trump administration was "targeting Mahmoud's free speech rights about Palestine."

"After a month of hiding the ball since Mahmoud's late-night unjust arrest in New York and taking him away to a remote detention center in Louisiana, immigration authorities have finally admitted that they have no case whatsoever against him," the attorneys, Marc Van Der Hout and Johnny Sinodis, said in a joint statement.

"There is not a single shred of proof that Mahmoud's presence in America poses any threat," they added.

A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson, Tricia McLaughlin, did not respond to questions about whether it had additional evidence against Khalil, writing in an emailed statement, "DHS did file evidence, but immigration court dockets are not available to the public."

Khalil, a 30-year-old Palestinian by ethnicity who was born in Syria, was arrested March 8 in New York and taken to a detention center in Louisiana. He recently finished his coursework for a master's degree at Columbia's school of international affairs. His wife, an American citizen, is due to give birth this month.

Khalil has adamantly rejected allegations of antisemitism, accusing the Trump administration in a letter sent from jail last month of "targeting me as part of a broader strategy to suppress dissent."

"Knowing fully that this moment transcends my individual circumstances," he added, "I hope nonetheless to be free to witness the birth of my first-born child."

Though Rubio's memo references additional documents, including a "subject profile of Mahmoud Khalil" and letter from the Department Homeland Security, the government did not submit those documents to the immigration court, according to Khalil's lawyers.

The memo also calls for the deportation of a second lawful permanent resident, whose name is redacted in the filing.

The Trump administration has pulled billions of dollars in government funding from universities and their affiliated hospital systems in recent weeks as part of what it says is a campaign against antisemitism on college campuses, but which critics say is a crackdown on free speech. To get the money back, the administration has been telling universities to punish protesters and make other changes.

The U.S. government has also been revoking the visas of international students who criticized Israel or accused it of mistreating Palestinians.

At the time of Khalil's arrest, a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson accused Khalil of leading activities "aligned to Hamas," referring to the militant group that attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

But the government has not produced any evidence linking Khalil to Hamas, and made no reference to the group in their most recent filing.

Meanwhile, lawyers for Yunseo Chung, 21, another Columbia student and lawful U.S. resident whom the Department of Homeland Security seeks to deport, included the Rubio letter as an exhibit in court papers filed late Thursday in Manhattan federal court.

The lawyers asked a judge to let them obtain documents from the government related to the targeting of their client, including any that reference her by name related to the State Department's decision to move to deport her.

Chung, who was arrested on a misdemeanor charge at a recent sit-in at Barnard College protesting the expulsion of students who participated in pro-Palestinian activism, has been ordered freed while her legal challenge is pending.

Justin Rose steals the Masters show and builds 3-shot lead over Scottie Scheffler

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Justin Rose did more than just match his best score at the Masters.

With a round that was nearly nine shots better than the field Thursday, the 44-year-old Rose managed to steal the spotlight from the Masters dominance of Scottie Scheffler and the endless quest of Rory McIlroy to complete the career Grand Slam.

Rose felt his 7-under 65 had the potential to be something special. And even with a bogey on the final hole, it was every bit of that.

He opened with three straight birdies. He ran off three in a row around the turn. And he wound up with a three-shot lead over Scheffler, Ludvig Aberg and Corey Connors.

"When I have been playing well, I feel like I have been competing at a high level," Rose said. "My consistency maybe has not been as high this year. But my good is good again. So I'm excited about that."

Scheffler did his part in his bid to win a third Masters green jacket in four years, playing a bogey-free round of 68.

McIlroy, so desperate to win this major and complete the career Grand Slam, was right there with him until the end. He took a pair of double bogeys late in the afternoon with careless mistakes and had to settle for a 72. It was the seventh straight time he failed to break 70 in the opening round of the Masters.

He declined to speak to the media after his round.

Rose set one Masters record: The fifth time he has had at least a share of the 18-hole lead, breaking the mark held by Jack Nicklaus. The glaring difference, of course, is Nicklaus has six of those green jackets.

It also was the eighth time Rose has had at least a share of the lead after any round at Augusta National, something only five others have done. All are Masters champions.

"I feel like I've played well enough to win this tournament," said Rose, whose best chance was a playoff loss to Sergio Garcia in 2017. "I just feel like I don't have the jacket to prove it. ... But you've got to be playing the golf to keep creating those opportunities, and the only way to do that is to get your name on the leaderboard. I definitely don't shy away from it."

Rose opened with a 25-foot birdie putt and made his eighth birdie with a 20-foot putt on the par-3 16th. In between was a series of good shots — smart shots — that gave him plenty of chances and he converted most of them.

Augusta National, soaked by rain that washed out most of the Monday practice round, already was getting scary fast.

The average score was 73.6. Only six players broke 70, and 20 others broke par.

"Ridiculous. That's nuts," Viktor Hovland said about Rose's score. "Those greens are so firm. I remember a few years ago — I can't remember what year it was — but he kind of did something similar. I think this one is probably a little bit more impressive because out of all the Masters I've played, this is probably the firmest it's been on a Thursday. It's definitely no joke out there."

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Scheffler was 3 under at the turn, including one birdie on the par-5 eighth in which his ball was deep in a divot hole short of the green. He managed to get that out some 20 feet left of the pin and used the slope to bring it back to 15 feet and made the putt.

He was rarely under stress.

"I struggled for what felt like two pars today," Scheffler said "But other than that, the golf course was in front of me most of the day, kept the ball in play, did a lot of really good things out there."

U.S. Open champion Bryson DeChambeau and Tyrrell Hatton carried the LIV Golf flag, both at 69. DeChambeau had seven birdies in his up-and-down day, a show of his scoring power.

"Making some bogeys for me probably frees me up a little bit and says, you know what? Just go out and play some golf," DeChambeau said.

The roars came early, along with a few shockers.

Fred Couples, who wondered a month ago if at 65 with a creaky back he would still be welcomed to play, became only the second player that age to break par. Couples holed out from the fairway on the 14th with a 6-iron hybrid on his way to a 71. Tom Watson was also 65 — by 28 days he is still the oldest — when he shot 71 in 2015.

The horror show belonged to Nick Dunlap, a 21-year-old who last year won on the PGA Tour as an amateur. This must have felt like amateur hour when he made double bogey on the final hole for a 90. It was the highest score since Ben Crenshaw shot 91 in 2015 at age 63.

Hideki Matsuyama might have caught the worst break when his approach into the par-5 13th hit the pin and caromed into the tributary of Rae's Creek. The wildest day belonged to Nicolai Hojgaard — one eagle, five birdies, four pars, five bogeys and three double bogeys. Do the math and that comes out to 76.

"It's mentally draining playing a round like this," Hojgaard said.

And then there was McIlroy, chipping into the water from behind the 15th green for double bogey, and then going long on the 17th and compounding that mistake with a three-putt for another double bogey.

Far more blissful on a warm spring day was Rose, who at one point had it going so well that he felt like a pitcher throwing a no-hitter.

He pitched to 6 feet for birdie on the par-5 eighth. He hit wedge to the ninth and used the slope to set up a 5-foot birdie, giving him a career-low 31 on the front nine. That was followed by a 12-foot birdie putt.

"That's when the day felt a bit different. That's when I felt I was doing something potentially more on the special side," Rose said.

And then he really began to pull away from the field with a smart pitch away from the water to set up a 10-foot birdie on the 15th, followed by the 20-foot birdie on the 16th. The pins on the final two holes allowed for birdies and Rose was thinking super special. He got par-bogey instead that didn't ruin his mood.

"I'm 44. Golf is not going to get easier for me in the next five, 10 years, whatever it's going to be," Rose said. "So your opportunity is less going forward. So you have to make the most of it."

Judge allows requirement that everyone in the US illegally must register to move forward

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Thursday allowed the Trump administration to move forward with a requirement that everyone in the U.S. illegally must register with the federal government and carry documentation, in a move that could have far-reaching repercussions for immigrants across the country.

Judge Trevor Neil McFadden — a Trump appointee — sided with the administration, which had argued that officials were simply enforcing a requirement that already existed for everyone who is in the country but isn't an American citizen. McFadden's ruling didn't go into the substance of those arguments but rested largely on the technical issue of whether the groups pushing to stop the requirement had standing to pursue their claims. He ruled they didn't.

The requirement goes into effect Friday.

Immediately after the ruling, Department of Homeland Security officials emphasized in a news release

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that the deadline to register for those who've already been in the country for 30 days or more is Friday and that going forward, the registration requirement would be enforced to the fullest.

"President Trump and I have a clear message for those in our country illegally: leave now. If you leave now, you may have the opportunity to return and enjoy our freedom and live the American dream," Secretary Kristi Noem said in the statement. "The Trump administration will enforce all our immigration laws — we will not pick and choose which laws we will enforce. We must know who is in our country for the safety and security of our homeland and all Americans."

While questions remain about how the registration requirement will function, its impact is potentially far-reaching. The Trump administration — which has worked to make good on campaign promises of mass deportations — has said between 2.2 million and 3.2 million people could be affected.

One of the groups that sued, the National Immigration Law Center, called the Thursday ruling "disappointing" in a statement.

"This disappointing ruling unfortunately means that, for now, Trump's scheme to force people into an impossible choice moves forward. As we weigh next steps in our case, we urge affected community members to consult with an immigration attorney to better understand the consequences of registering or not," said Nicholas Espíritu, deputy legal director at National Immigration Law Center.

Homeland Security officials announced Feb. 25 that it was mandating that all people in the United States illegally register with the federal government, and said those who didn't self-report could face fines or prosecution. Failure to register is considered a crime, and people will be required to carry registration documents with them or risk prison time and fines.

Registration will be mandatory for everyone 14 and older without legal status. People registering have to provide their fingerprints and address, and parents and guardians of anyone under age 14 must ensure they registered.

The registration process also applies to Canadians who are in the U.S. for more than 30 days, including so-called snowbirds who spend winter months in places like Florida.

Federal immigration law has long required that people who aren't American citizens and live in the U.S., including those here illegally, register with the government. Those laws can be traced back to the Alien Registration Act of 1940, which came amid growing fears of immigrants and political subversives in the early days of World War II. The current requirements stem from the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.

But the requirement that people illegally in the U.S. register has been enforced only in rare circumstances. In fact, advocates opposing the government say it hasn't been universally used since it was first introduced in the mid-1940s.

It was used in a limited way after Sept. 11, 2001, when the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System required that noncitizen males 16 and older from 25 countries — all but one of them majority Arab or Muslim — register with the U.S. government. The program led to no terrorism convictions but pulled more than 13,000 people into deportation proceedings. It was suspended in 2011 and dissolved in 2016.

The Trump administration has argued that the registration requirement has always existed and that officials are simply enforcing it for everyone.

The groups that sued say the government should have gone through the more lengthy public notification process before bringing about the change, and that it's enforcing this simply to facilitate President Donald Trump's aim of carrying out mass deportations.

They argue that the registry puts people who work, contribute to the economy and have deep family ties in America into a deep bind: Do they come forward, register and essentially give up their location to a government intent on carrying out mass deportations, or do they stay in the shadows and risk being charged with the crime of not registering?

The government has already asked people subject to the registration requirement to create an account on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website.

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US egg prices increase to record high, dashing hopes of cheap eggs by Easter

By JOSH FUNK and DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writers

U.S. egg prices increased again last month to reach a new record-high of \$6.23 per dozen despite President Donald Trump's predictions, a drop in wholesale prices and no egg farms having bird flu outbreaks.

The increase reported Thursday in the Consumer Price Index means consumers and businesses that rely on eggs might not get much immediate relief. Demand for eggs is typically elevated until after Easter, which falls on April 20.

Industry experts were expecting the index to reflect a drop in retail egg prices because wholesale egg prices fell significantly in March. University of Arkansas agricultural economist Jada Thompson said the wholesale prices did not start dropping until mid-March, so there may not have been enough time for the average price for the month to decline. And grocery stores may not have immediately passed on the lower prices.

The bird flu effect

Bird flu outbreaks were cited as the major cause of price spikes in January and February after more than 30 million egg-laying chickens were killed to prevent the spread of the disease. Only 2.1 million birds were slaughtered in March and none of them were on egg farms.

Egg prices hit \$5.90 in February one month after setting a record at \$4.95 per dozen, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The farms that had fall outbreaks have been working to resume egg production after sanitizing their barns and raising new flocks, but chickens must be about six months old before they start laying eggs. Thompson said those farms did not come back online as quickly as anticipated.

In the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture numbers, there were only about 285 million hens laying eggs nationwide as of March 1. Before the outbreak, the flock typically numbered more than 315 million.

Since the current bird flu outbreak began, more than 168 million birds have been slaughtered, most of them egg-laying chickens. Any time a bird gets sick, the entire flock is killed to help keep bird flu from spreading. That can have an effect on the egg supply because massive egg farms may have millions of birds.

Egg price politics

Trump tried to take credit for the lower wholesale egg prices the USDA reported in recent weeks.

"The egg prices they were going through the sky. And you did a fantastic job," Trump said to Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins before he announced the details of his tariffs at the White House last week. "Now we have lots of eggs and they are much cheaper now."

But experts say the president's plan to fight bird flu by focusing on strengthening egg farmers' defenses against the virus is likely to be more of a long-term help.

The Agriculture Department tried to find egg imports to add to the supply and nearly 4 million dozens of eggs were brought into the country in February. But egg traders saw an opportunity with the high prices and 7.6 million dozens were exported. Numbers for March were not yet available.

"I think there are lots of people who are looking to see the egg prices coming down because they wanted to call it a win. And I think it's a loss for everybody. I think we all want to see egg prices come down," Thompson said.

Rollins on Thursday suggested the rise in egg prices is temporary. She pointed to the overall consumer price index showing a slight dip in prices for goods and services across the U.S. economy in March and suggested egg prices will soon follow.

"We're also moving into the Super Bowl of eggs, which is Easter," Rollins said. "So from the beginning, I've said this is sort of the high price for retail for eggs, but we feel very confident that will continue to come back down."

Earlier this week, Trump said the annual White House egg roll would use real eggs again this year despite the high prices. Egg farmers typically donate more than 30,000 eggs for the event.

Egg prices around the country

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U.S. egg prices did begin falling in mid-March, according to Datasembly, a market research company that tracks prices at thousands of stores. Datasembly said eggs averaged \$5.98 per dozen the week beginning March 16 and dropped to \$5.51 the week beginning March 30.

But prices vary widely around the country, depending on the location of recent bird flu outbreaks and some state laws requiring eggs to be cage-free. At a Walmart in Richmond, California, a dozen eggs were \$6.34 on Thursday. In Omaha, Nebraska, Walmart was selling eggs for \$4.97 per dozen. California requires eggs sold to be cage-free; Nebraska doesn't.

The latest numbers could increase scrutiny of Cal-Maine Foods, which provides 20% of the nation's eggs, and other large egg producers.

Earlier this week, Cal-Maine acknowledged it is being investigated by the antitrust division of the U.S. Department of Justice, which is looking into egg price increases. Cal-Maine said it is cooperating with the investigation.

In its most recent quarter, which ended March 1, Cal-Maine said its net income more than tripled to \$508.5 million compared to the same period a year ago.

Faking it

The price of real eggs has some consumers turning to fake ones for Easter crafts this year.

Craft retailer Michaels said sales of its plastic egg craft kits — which were listed for \$2.49 on the company's website Thursday — are up 20% over last year. Michaels said sales usually peak closer to Easter, but it started seeing a noticeable uptick in early March this year.

"With a little over a week still to go until Easter, our craft egg kits are nearly sold out," the company said.

US stocks dive as euphoria on Wall Street reverts to fear about US-China trade war

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks dove Thursday and surrendered a chunk of their historic gains from the day before as President Donald Trump's trade war continues to threaten the economy.

The S&P 500 tumbled 3.5%, slicing into Wednesday's surge of 9.5% following Trump's decision to pause many of his tariffs worldwide. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 1,014 points, or 2.5%, and the Nasdaq composite tumbled 4.3%.

"Trump blinks," UBS strategist Bhanu Baweja wrote in a report about the president's decision on tariffs, "but the damage isn't all undone."

Trump has focused more on China, raising tariffs on its products to well above 100%. Even if that were to get negotiated down to something like 50%, and even if only 10% tariffs remained on other countries, Baweja said the hit to the U.S. economy could still be large enough to hurt expected growth for upcoming U.S. corporate profits.

The losses for U.S. stocks accelerated Thursday after the White House clarified that the United States will tax Chinese imports at 145%, not the 125% rate that Trump had written about in his posting on Truth Social Wednesday, once other previously announced tariffs were included. The drop for the S&P 500 exceeded 6% at one point.

"Everything is still very volatile, because with Donald Trump, you don't know what to expect," said Francis Lun, chief executive of Geo Securities. "This is really big uncertainty in the market. The threat of recession has not faded."

China, meanwhile, has reached out to other countries around the world in apparent hopes of forming a united front against Trump. The world's second-largest economy is also ramping up its own counter-measures to Trump's tariffs.

The stock price of Warner Bros. Discovery, the company behind "A Minecraft Movie," dropped 12.5% for one of Wall Street's sharpest losses after China said Thursday it will "appropriately reduce the number of imported U.S. films." The Walt Disney Co.'s stock sank 6.8%

A spokesperson for the China Film Administration said it is "inevitable" that Chinese audiences would find

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American films less palatable given the “wrong move by the U.S. to wantonly implement tariffs on China.”

That was after Trump and his Treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, sent a clear message to other countries Wednesday after announcing their pause on tariffs for most countries: “Do not retaliate, and you will be rewarded.”

The European Union said Thursday it will put its trade retaliation measures on hold for 90 days and leave room for a negotiated solution.

Thursday’s swings also hit the bond market, which had been showing encouraging signals earlier in the day that stress may be easing.

The bond market has historically played the role of enforcer against politicians and economic policies it deemed imprudent. It helped topple the United Kingdom’s Liz Truss in 2022, for example, whose 49 days made her Britain’s shortest-serving prime minister. James Carville, adviser to former U.S. President Bill Clinton, also famously said he’d like to be reincarnated as the bond market because of how much power it wields.

Earlier this week, big jumps for U.S. Treasury yields had rattled the market, so much that Trump said Wednesday he had been watching how investors were “getting a little queasy.”

Several reasons could have been behind the sharp, sudden rise in yields. Hedge funds may have sold Treasuries in order to raise cash, and investors outside the United States may be dumping their U.S. government bonds because of the trade war. Regardless of the reasons behind it, higher Treasury yields crank up pressure on the stock market and push rates higher for mortgages and other loans for U.S. households and businesses.

The 10-year Treasury yield had calmed following Trump’s U-turn on tariffs, dropping all the way back to 4.30% shortly after the release of a better-than-expected report on inflation Thursday morning. That’s after it had shot up to nearly 4.50% Wednesday morning from just 4.01% at the end of last week.

As Thursday progressed, though, the 10-year Treasury yield climbed once again and reached 4.40%.

It all demonstrates why many on Wall Street are preparing for more swings in markets, after the S&P 500 at one point nearly dropped into a “bear market” by almost closing 20% below its record.

Often, the market’s whipsaw moves have come not just day to day but also hour to hour. The S&P 500 still remains below where it was when Trump announced his sweeping set of tariffs last week on “Liberation Day.”

All told, the S&P 500 fell 188.85 points Thursday to 5,268.05. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 1,014.79 to 39,593.66, and the Nasdaq composite sank 737.66 to 16,387.31.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rallied across Europe and Asia in their first chances to trade following Trump’s pause on many of his tariffs. Japan’s Nikkei 225 surged 9.1%, South Korea’s Kospi leaped 6.6% and Germany’s DAX returned 4.5%.

Prince Harry meets war victims in unannounced visit to Ukraine

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Harry met with war victims on Thursday during an unannounced visit to Ukraine as part of his ongoing work with wounded veterans, a spokesperson said.

Harry visited the Superhumans Center, an orthopedic clinic in Lviv that treats and rehabilitates wounded military personnel and civilians, to see top-notch services provided in a country in the midst of war. The center provides prosthetics, reconstructive surgery and psychological help free of charge.

The trip into western Ukraine, a region frequently targeted by Russian missiles, was only announced after he had left the country.

Harry, who served 10 years in the British Army, has made helping injured soldiers one of his most prominent causes. He founded the Invictus Games in 2014 to offer wounded veterans the challenge of competing in sports events similar to the Paralympics.

Invictus is more than just about competition, the spokesperson said. It’s a year-round movement about life after an injury, which is why Harry visits rehabilitation centers like the one in Lviv.

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Ukraine integrates sports recovery into its support for wounded troops and has been active in the Invictus Games since 2017. During the visit, Harry met with Natalia Kalmykova, Ukraine's veteran affairs minister.

The Duke of Sussex was accompanied by a contingent from the Invictus Games Foundation, including four veterans who have been through similar rehabilitation experiences.

He traveled to Ukraine after spending two days in a London court where he is appealing the British government's decision to strip him of his government-funded protection after he quit working as a member of the royal family in 2020 and moved his family to California.

The prince is no stranger to war zones, having served two tours in Afghanistan, where he flew missions as an Apache helicopter copilot gunner.

Harry, 40, the younger son of King Charles III, is the second member of the royal family to visit Ukraine. His aunt, Sophie, the Duchess of Edinburgh, became the first British royal to travel to the country since Russia's 2022 invasion when she made an unannounced visit to Kyiv last year.

The royal family has been outspoken in their support for Ukraine. King Charles warmly greeted President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a show of support at his estate on the North Sea coast just two days after his extraordinary dressing down by U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House.

Harry's older brother, Prince William, met with Ukrainian refugees during a two day visit to Estonia last month.

House approves budget framework for Trump's 'big' bill after intense wrangling sways GOP holdouts

By LISA MASCARO and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans narrowly approved their budget framework Thursday, a political turnaround after Speaker Mike Johnson worked into the night to satisfy GOP holdouts who had refused to advance trillions of dollars in tax breaks without deeper spending cuts.

Johnson stood with Senate Majority Leader John Thune early in the morning at the Capitol to shore up President Donald Trump's "big, beautiful bill," and they committed to seeking at least \$1.5 trillion in cuts to federal programs and services. The speaker had abruptly halted voting Wednesday night.

"I told you not to doubt us," Johnson, R-La., said afterward.

He acknowledged the week's economic turmoil with the financial markets "a little unstable." But he said the House vote was a "big day."

The 216-214 vote pushed the budget plan forward, one more milestone for Johnson, and next step in a lengthy process to unlock the centerpiece to the president's domestic agenda of tax cuts, mass deportations and a smaller federal government. A failed vote, particularly as the economy was convulsing over Trump's trade wars, would have been a major setback for the party in power in Washington. Two conservative Republicans voted against it, as did all Democrats.

Trump, at a black-tie fundraising dinner this week, had admonished Republicans to "stop grandstanding" on the budget.

By Thursday morning, Trump had shifted his tone.

"Biggest Tax Cuts in USA History!!! Getting close," Trump said.

The action still leaves weeks, if not months, ahead. House and Senate Republicans will have to turn their budget framework into bill text for a final product. Johnson can lose only a few detractors from his slim Republican majority at any vote along the way. Democrats, in the minority, lack the numbers to stop the package, but they promised to fight every step.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said the GOP budget plan was a "toxic scheme" that proposed the largest cuts to the Medicaid health care program and food assistance in the nation's history, "all in service of enacting massive tax breaks to their millionaire donors, like Elon Musk" — referring to the billionaire businessman who is leading Trump's cost-cutting efforts through the Department of Government Efficiency.

Jeffries said Democrats will push back until they "bury this budget resolution in the ground."

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Late Wednesday, the outcome was in flux. At least a dozen conservative Republicans, if not more, were firmly against the plan. Several of them, including members of the ultraconservative Freedom Caucus, made the unusual move of walking across the Capitol to meet privately with Senate GOP leaders to insist on deeper cuts.

As night fell, Johnson pulled a group of Republicans into a private meeting room as House proceedings came to a standstill. They stayed into the night hashing out alternatives, and were back at it in the morning.

Johnson said he spoke with Trump for about five minutes while the GOP meeting was taking place.

"The president is very anxious for us to get this done," Johnson said.

But House GOP conservatives, including several of those who met with Trump this week, were concerned that the Senate GOP's blueprint, approved last weekend, did not cut spending to the level they believe necessary to help prevent soaring deficits.

"The Math Does Not Add Up," Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, had posted earlier on social media.

Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md., the Freedom Caucus chair, led others to meet with the senators.

In the end, Harris, Roy and almost all the holdouts came on board. They said they were assured by Johnson, Thune and Trump that there would be steep cuts ahead. Republican Reps. Thomas Massie of Kentucky and Victoria Spartz of Indiana voted "no."

"We got as much as we could," said Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tenn. "We realized it was bigger than us."

Before the vote, Thune, R-S.D., tried to assure House conservatives that many GOP senators were aligned with their pursuit of spending reductions.

"We certainly are going to do everything we can," Thune said.

But the details ahead will matter. Key Republican senators already signaled their disapproval of some \$800 billion in House-proposed cuts that could hit Medicaid and other vital programs.

Johnson insisted that the health care and other services that millions of Americans rely on, particularly Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, would be spared. Republicans instead are seeking to impose new restrictions on benefits and cut what they portray as waste, fraud and abuse, following DOGE's efforts.

A final product is expected later this spring or summer, with more voting to come.

Central to the budget framework is the Republican effort to preserve the tax breaks approved in 2017, during Trump's first term, while potentially adding the new ones he promised during his 2024 campaign. That includes no taxes on tipped wages, Social Security income and others, ballooning the price tag to some \$7 trillion over the decade.

The package also allows for more than \$500 billion in budget increases, including some \$175 billion to pay for Trump's deportation operation and as much for the Defense Department to bolster military spending.

The plan would also raise the nation's debt limit to allow more borrowing to pay the bills. Trump had wanted lawmakers to take the politically difficult issue off the table. With debt now at \$36 trillion, the Treasury Department has said it will run out of funds by August.

But the House and Senate need to resolve their differences on the debt limit, as well. The House GOP increases the debt limit to \$4 trillion, but the Senate lifted it to \$5 trillion so Congress would not have to revisit the issue again until after the midterm elections in November 2026.

To clip costs, the Senate is using an unusual accounting method that does not count the costs of preserving the 2017 tax cuts, some \$4.5 trillion, as new spending, another factor that is enraging the House conservatives.

Republican bill requiring proof of citizenship for voting passes US House

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY, CHRISTINE FERNANDO and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House passed one of Republicans' signature issues for the year on Thursday, approving legislation to require proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote for federal elections, one of President Donald Trump's top election-related priorities.

Nearly all Democrats lined up against the bill and warned that it risks disenfranchising millions of Ameri-

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cans who do not have ready access to the proper documents.

Trump has long signaled a desire to change how elections are run in the U.S. and last month issued a sweeping executive order that included a citizenship requirement among other election-related changes.

Republicans argued the legislation, known as the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, is necessary to ensure only citizens vote in U.S. elections and would cement Trump's order into law.

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, a Wisconsin Republican who chairs the House committee that handles election legislation, said during Thursday's debate that the bill is meant to "restore Americans' confidence in our elections" and prevent noncitizens from voting.

This marks Republicans' second attempt at passing the SAVE Act. It passed the House last year but failed in the Senate amid Democratic opposition.

It's unlikely to fare any better this year. While Republicans won control of the Senate last fall, they have a narrow majority that falls short of the 60 votes they would need to overcome a filibuster.

Republicans hammered on the issue during last year's presidential election, even though voting by non-citizens is rare, already is illegal and can lead to felony charges and deportation.

The SAVE Act would require all applicants using the federal voter registration form to provide documentary proof of citizenship in person at their local election office. Among the acceptable documents are a valid U.S. passport and a government-issued photo ID card presented alongside a certified birth certificate.

Democrats and voting rights groups warn the legislation could lead to widespread voter disenfranchisement if it were to become law. The Brennan Center for Justice and other groups estimated in a 2023 report that 9% of U.S. citizens of voting age, or 21.3 million people, do not have proof of their citizenship readily available. Almost half of Americans don't have a U.S. passport.

In Kansas, a proof-of-citizenship requirement that passed in 2011 ended up blocking the voter registrations of more than 31,000 U.S. citizens in the state who were otherwise eligible to vote. The law was later declared unconstitutional by a federal court and hasn't been enforced since 2018.

"Just to exercise their inalienable right as citizens of this country, Republicans would force Americans into a paperwork nightmare," said Rep. Joe Morelle, a Democrat from New York. "This bill is really about disenfranchising Americans — not noncitizens, Americans."

A further concern came up several times Thursday: Married women would need multiple documents to prove their citizenship if they have changed their name.

It was a complication that arose in town hall elections held last month in New Hampshire, which was enforcing a new state law requiring proof of citizenship to register. One woman, since divorced, told a local elections clerk that her first marriage was decades ago in Florida and that she no longer had the marriage certificate showing her name change. She was unable to register and vote for her town election.

"This legislation would immediately disenfranchise the 69 million women who have changed their names after marriage or divorce," said Rep. Deborah Ross, a Democrat from North Carolina.

Rep. Laurel Lee, a Republican from Florida, said the bill "contemplates this exact situation" of married women whose names have changed, saying it "explicitly directs states to establish a process for them to register to vote."

Morelle countered by saying, "Why not write it in the bill? Why are we making the potential for 50 different standards to be set? ... How much paperwork do Republicans expect Americans to drown in?"

On a call with reporters Thursday, Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas, a Democrat, said she started trying to gather her own personal documents that would be required under the bill about 10 days ago. She doesn't yet have them together despite having more time and know-how than many other people.

"It pushes women out of the democratic process," she said of the documentation requirement. "And it's not a coincidence. It's part of a strategy to make voting harder, to sow distrust in our elections."

Democrats also said the bill would disproportionately affect older people in assisted care facilities, military service members who wouldn't be able to solely use their military IDs, people of color and working-class Americans who may not have the time or money to jump through bureaucratic hoops.

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"The SAVE Act is everything our civil rights leaders fought against," said Rep. Nikema Williams, a Democrat from Georgia.

Republicans have defended the legislation as necessary to restore public confidence in elections and say it allows states to adopt procedures to help voters comply. They have disputed Democratic characterizations of the bill.

Four Democrats voted in favor of the legislation: Reps. Ed Case of Hawaii, Henry Cuellar of Texas, Jared Golden of Maine and Marie Perez of Washington.

"The truth is, those who were registered to vote would still be able to vote under their current registration," said Rep. Chip Roy, a Texas Republican who sponsored the bill. "We have mechanisms giving the state fairly significant deference to make determinations as to how to structure the situation where an individual does have a name change, which of course is often women."

On Thursday, Roy said Cleta Mitchell, a key figure in Trump's campaign to overturn the 2020 election results, "had a significant hand in what we're doing here." Mitchell, a longtime GOP lawyer, has played a central role in coordinating the movement to tighten voting laws across the country.

Trump lost the 2020 election to Democrat Joe Biden but has repeatedly made the bogus claim that it was stolen from him. There is no evidence to support Trump's claim: Elections officials and his own attorney general rejected the notion, and his arguments have been roundly dismissed by the courts, including judges he appointed.

Adrian Fontes, a Democrat who serves as Arizona's top state election official, described the voting proposal as a solution in search of a problem, given how rare noncitizen voting is.

"What it is doing is capitalizing on fear -- fear built on a lie," Fontes said. "And the lie is that a whole bunch of people who aren't eligible are voting. That's just not true."

Ancient jawbone from Taiwan belongs to a mysterious group of human ancestors, scientists say

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

An ancient jawbone discovered in Taiwan belonged to an enigmatic group of early human ancestors called Denisovans, scientists reported Thursday.

Relatively little is known about Denisovans, an extinct group of human cousins that interacted with Neanderthals and our own species, Homo sapiens.

"Denisovan fossils are very scarce," with only a few confirmed finds in East Asia, said study co-author Takumi Tsutaya at the Graduate University for Advanced Studies in Japan.

So far, the only known Denisovan fossils include partial jawbones, a few teeth and part of a finger bone found in caves in Siberia and Tibet. Some scientists believe fossils found in a cave in Laos may also belong to Denisovans.

The probable identification of the jawbone from Taiwan as Denisovan expands the region where scientists know these ancient people once lived, said Tsutaya.

The partial jawbone was first recovered when a fishing operation dredged the seafloor in the Penghu Channel near the Taiwan Strait. After it was sold to an antique shop, a collector spotted it and purchased it in 2008, then later donated it to Taiwan's National Museum of Natural Science.

Based on the composition of marine invertebrates found attached to it, the fossil was dated to the Pleistocene era. But exactly which species of early human ancestor it belonged to remained a mystery.

The condition of the fossil made it impossible to study ancient DNA. But recently, scientists in Taiwan, Japan and Denmark were able to extract some protein sequences from the incomplete jawbone.

An analysis showed some protein sequences resembled those contained in the genome of a Denisovan fossil recovered in Siberia. The findings were published in the journal Science.

While the new research is promising, Rick Potts, director of the Smithsonian Institution's Human Origins Project, said he would like to see further data before confirming the Taiwan fossil as Denisovan.

Potts, who was not involved in the new research, praised the study for “a fantastic job of recovering some proteins.” But he added, such a small sliver of material may not give a full picture.

At one time, at least three human ancestor groups — Denisovans, Neanderthals and Homo sapiens — coexisted in Eurasia and sometimes interbred, researchers say.

“We can identify Neanderthal elements and Denisovan elements” in the DNA of some people alive today, said Tsutaya.

A video shows men identified as Russian troops holding Ukrainian POWs. Then the killing begins

By ERIKA KINETZ, JOHN LEICESTER and BEATRICE DUPUY Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The Ukrainian soldiers clambered from the ruined house at gunpoint — one with arms raised in surrender to the Russian troops — and lay face-down in the early spring grass.

Two drones — one Ukrainian and one Russian — recorded the scene from high above the southern Ukrainian village of Piatykhatty. The Associated Press managed to get both videos. They offer very different versions of what happened next.

The Ukrainian drone video, which AP obtained from European military officials, shows soldiers with Russian uniform markings raising their weapons and shooting each of the four Ukrainians in the back with such ferocity that one man was left without a head.

“Out of all the executions that we’ve seen since late 2023, it’s one of the clearest cases,” said Rollo Collins of the Center for Information Resilience, a London group that specializes in visual investigations and reviewed the video at AP’s request. “This is not a typical combat killing. This is an illegal action.”

The Russian drone video, which AP located on pro-Kremlin social media, cuts off abruptly with the men lying on the ground — alive. “As a result of the work done by our guys, the enemy decided not to be killed and came out with their hands up,” wrote a Russian military blogger who posted the video.

Two videos. Two stories. In one, the prisoners appear to live. In the other, they die.

As evidence of potential war crimes continues to mount, many in Ukraine worry that the Trump administration’s about-face on the war will make it more difficult to establish a firm historical narrative about what has happened since Russia’s 2022 invasion and whether those most responsible for atrocities will ever be held accountable.

On March 13, the day European officials say the incident in Piatykhatty took place, U.S. representatives landed in Russia for ceasefire talks with President Vladimir Putin.

President Donald Trump, who has signaled that a prospective deal could see Ukraine surrender some territory and echoed Moscow’s talking points, called for a quick peace deal. His administration has pulled back support for Ukraine, including war crimes investigations, and is rebuilding relations with Putin — the very man many victims and prosecutors want to see in court.

“Whatever a peace agreement would be, Ukraine is not ready to forgive everything which happened in our territory,” Yuriy Bielousov, head of the war crimes department for Ukraine’s prosecutor general, told AP. “In which form there will be accountability, that we don’t know at the moment.”

Kremlin denies a policy of killing POWs

The killing of surrendering POWs in the Ukrainian video — a crime under international law — was not unique, according to Ukrainian prosecutors, international human rights officials and open-source analysts.

At least 245 Ukrainian POWs have been killed by Russian forces since the full-scale invasion, according to Ukrainian prosecutors. They allege it’s part of a deliberate strategy encouraged by Russian officials.

“It’s definitely part of the policy, which is fully supported by the top leaders of the Russian Federation,” Bielousov told AP. “This isn’t the action of specific commanders. It is supported on the top level.”

Asked about Russia’s treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia treats surrendering Ukrainian troops in accordance with international law and does not encourage the killing of POWs.

“This is not a policy of the Russian side,” he told AP, and repeated Moscow’s claims that atrocities com-

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mitted by its troops in the Ukrainian town of Bucha were faked.

In the occupation of that town outside Kyiv early in the war, hundreds of Ukrainians were killed. Overwhelming evidence, including witness testimony, photos, CCTV videos, phone intercepts and corpses of civilians, substantiated those deaths.

The battle for Piatykhatty

The drone video in Piatykhatty was taken by Ukraine's 128th Mountain Brigade, according to military officials with a European country that Ukrainian authorities shared the video with. The AP obtained it on condition of anonymity because the officials were not authorized to release it.

Intense fighting has devastated this crossroads in the Zaporizhzhia region. Fresh scorch marks stain the grass and what houses remain are missing roofs and windows. The battle has been part of a scramble to seize territory ahead of peace talks, with Russia seeking a strategic foothold to force Ukraine to restructure its logistics lines, according to military analysts.

Russian soldiers planted their flag amid the ruins of Piatykhatty last month, according to a drone video posted March 11 by pro-Kremlin bloggers.

Two days later, the Russian and Ukrainian drones recorded the surrender of the four Ukrainian soldiers about 100 meters (yards) away.

The Russian video shows an explosive drone flying in the window of the house where Ukrainians took cover, detonating with a flash.

Both countries' drones recorded one of the Ukrainians, arms raised and seemingly unarmed, leaving the shattered house. With a Russian soldier pointing his gun at him, the man plants himself spread-eagled next to his comrades on the ground.

European military officials who analyzed the video said the Russians are identifiable by red or white markings on their uniforms.

The Ukrainian video shows the Russians briefly searching their prisoners. Two more Russians arrive and consult with comrades. One pauses to use his radio.

What happens next was cut from the Russian video. One Russian walks to the prisoners, raises his gun with one hand and starts firing. Another soldier shoots, too. While he reloads, a third Russian joins in, firing at least two shots at close range that take off the helmet — and head — of one man. Then the soldier who'd been reloading finishes off the four Ukrainians, methodically shooting each, one by one.

Neither video shows how the first Ukrainian soldier got out of the house.

Ukraine's 128th Mountain Brigade declined comment because the deaths are being investigated as a suspected war crime. Ukraine's internal security agency confirmed to AP it has opened an investigation.

Russian military bloggers who posted the edited video said it shows the work of an assault unit from Russia's 247th Airborne Regiment.

Russia's Ministry of Defense did not respond to requests for comment on the incident.

Analysts at the Center for Information Resilience confirmed the videos were recorded by different drones, as well the location and identifying marks of the soldiers.

"For us, this is very much a quite clinical, methodical process of execution," said Collins, the CIR analyst. "It follows on from a very consistent sort of trend that we've seen since at least December 2023."

A surge in killings of POWs

Russia also claims to have documented "systematic killings" of Russian POWs by Ukrainian troops but didn't give overall numbers. In March, the Russian Foreign Ministry released testimony from Russian POWs exchanged by Ukraine who described beatings and torture in custody. Some reported "a practice of finishing off wounded Russian fighters, as well as executing combatants who have laid down their arms."

The Investigative Committee, Russia's top state criminal investigation agency, said in December it had opened over 5,700 criminal cases into alleged Ukrainian crimes since the start of the conflict.

The U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has documented 91 extrajudicial killings of Ukrainian POWs since August 2024. During the same period, it found a single case of Ukrainian soldiers killing a Russian POW.

Bielousov, the Ukrainian war crimes prosecutor, said all such allegations against Ukrainian troops are being investigated.

Danielle Bell, head of the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, said the increase in POW killings by Russian forces hasn't happened in a vacuum. Russia enacted laws shielding soldiers from prosecution, she said, and officials have called for the killing or torture of Ukrainian POWs and endorsed reported extrajudicial killings. Multiple videos of POW killings have appeared online, some posted by Russian soldiers themselves, she noted, suggesting an environment of broad impunity.

"Calls on social media by public officials, amnesty laws, dehumanizing language within the context of impunity for these acts — it's contributing to an environment that allows such acts or these crimes to take place," she said.

Tracking war crimes

Extrajudicial killings are among over 157,000 potential war crimes Ukrainian prosecutors are investigating. Ukraine has relied on international support to help process that flood of information and structure complex cases for both international and domestic courts.

That work is suffering since the Trump administration's cuts to foreign aid.

Among those hit was the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, which lost \$5 million from cuts to the U.S. Agency for International Development. It had been using the money to collect evidence of offenses ranging from property damage to sexual assaults. The nongovernmental organization has cut staff, reduced operations and moved out of its Kyiv offices, executive director Oleksandr Pavlichenko told AP.

U.S. funding to groups investigating atrocities in Cambodia and Syria helped build war crimes cases years later. It took over two decades to bring top leaders of the Khmer Rouge before a U.N.-backed court on war crimes charges stemming from their brutal rule in the 1970s that led to 1.7 million deaths. Prosecutors relied on archives of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, established with U.S. government funding.

If not for that center, "there would have been no Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Period," said Christopher "Kip" Hale, a criminal law expert who worked at the tribunal and has worked in Ukraine.

"To have durable peace, we have to have accountability. We have to invest now," he said. "Without it, we see that ceasefires and armistices are just waiting periods for the next conflict to start."

A video of Ukrainian POWs killed by men identified as Russians raises questions on accountability

By ERIKA KINETZ, JOHN LEICESTER and BEATRICE DUPUY Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Two videos, two different stories about Russia's war in Ukraine. In one of them, the prisoners appear to live. In the other, they die.

The Associated Press has obtained a video from a Ukrainian drone showing soldiers with Russian uniform markings killing Kyiv's forces who had surrendered to them. It also has discovered a second video, recorded by a Russian drone, of the same incident that sheds light on how Moscow is framing it.

These videos, analyzed together, tell a larger story at a crucial time in the 3-year-old war. Evidence of alleged atrocities is mounting. Chances for accountability are at risk. U.S. President Donald Trump has pushed for a peace deal and echoed narratives of Russian President Vladimir Putin — the very man who war crimes prosecutors want to see in court.

Here's what to know about the images and their implications:

What does the Ukrainian video show?

It was taken by Ukraine's 128th Mountain Brigade in what was left of the village of Piatykhvatky in southern Ukraine on March 13, according to military officials with a European country that Ukrainian authorities shared the video with. The AP obtained the video from the officials on condition they not be identified because they were not authorized to release it.

The video shows the four Ukrainians who had surrendered, lying face-down on the ground. After they're searched, one Russian walks to the prisoners, raises his gun and starts firing. Another soldier shoots, too, then has to reload. A third Russian joins in, firing at least two shots at close range that take off the helmet

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— and the head — of one of the men. The soldier who reloaded then finishes off the four, methodically shooting each.

What does the Russian video show?

The video recorded by a Russian drone in Piatykhatky on the same day was found by AP on pro-Kremlin social media. It is set to eerie, ominous music and follows three Russian soldiers as they coax the surrendering Ukrainians out of the ruined house at gunpoint. But it cuts off with the Ukrainian soldiers lying on the ground — alive.

Intense fighting has devastated the area in the Zaporizhzhia region of southern Ukraine as both sides scramble to seize territory ahead of peace talks.

How have Ukrainian and Russian officials responded?

Ukraine's 128th Mountain Brigade said it could not comment because the deaths are being investigated as a suspected war crime. Ukraine's internal security agency confirmed it opened an investigation.

Russia's Ministry of Defense did not respond to requests for comment.

Asked about Russia's treatment of Ukrainian POWs, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia treats Ukrainian troops who surrender in accordance with international law and does not encourage the killing of POWs.

A Russian Foreign Ministry report in March claimed Ukrainian soldiers systematically kill Russian POWs. It offered no overall numbers.

What do outside experts say?

"Out of all the executions that we've seen since late 2023, it's one of the clearest cases," said Rollo Collins of the Center for Information Resilience, a London group that specializes in visual investigations and reviewed the Ukrainian video at AP's request. "Our assessment is that this is not a typical combat killing. This is an illegal action."

What's the view of prosecutors and UN officials?

Ukrainian prosecutors and United Nations officials say such extrajudicial killings of Ukrainian POWs — a crime under international law — have surged and are being encouraged by high-ranking Russian officials.

"We've documented a startling spike in the number of executions of captured Ukrainian service persons," said Danielle Bell, the head of the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. "Calls on social media by public officials, amnesty laws, dehumanizing language within the context of impunity for these acts — it's contributing to an environment that allows such acts or these crimes to take place."

At least 245 Ukrainian POWs have been killed by Russian forces since the war began, according to Ukrainian prosecutors.

"It's definitely part of the policy, which is fully supported by the top leaders of the Russian Federation," Yuriy Bielousov, head of the war crimes department for Ukraine's prosecutor general, told AP. "This isn't the action of specific commanders. It is supported on the top level."

The U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine documented 91 extrajudicial killings of Ukrainian POWs since August 2024. In the same period, they found one case of Ukrainian soldiers killing a Russian POW.

Bielousov said all such allegations against Ukrainian troops are being investigated.

What about war crimes in general?

Ukraine has registered more than 157,000 incidents of potential war crimes since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has long held that accountability for war crimes should be part of any peace agreement.

Russia's Investigative Committee, the country's top investigation agency, said in December it had opened over 5,700 criminal cases into alleged Ukrainian crimes since the war began.

How will shifting US policy affect accountability?

The Trump administration has withdrawn support for a multinational effort to create a special tribunal to investigate Russian leaders for aggression in Ukraine and imposed sanctions on key staff of the International Criminal Court, which issued an arrest warrant for Putin.

Cuts to U.S. foreign aid have debilitated groups that collect evidence and work with Ukrainian authorities

to build robust legal cases. Questions are also growing about whether amnesty for Russian officials might be part of a U.S.-brokered peace deal.

Stephen Rapp, a former U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, said the absence of U.S. support will diminish hopes of prosecutions.

Bielousov said Ukraine "is not ready to forgive everything which happened in our territory."

Remember public phones? The Masters still offers old-school devices as alternative to cellphones

By STEVE REED AP Sports Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Attending the Masters for the first time was a new experience for Thomas Abraham, and it wasn't just about the golf.

The 16-year-old from Houston had the rare opportunity to use a public telephone for the first time.

"It was kind of cool," said Abraham, who phoned a friend while attending the Masters Par 3 competition on Wednesday with his father, Sid. "I've never used one before. I figured it out. If I had to use one of those (rotary) phones I probably would've had to ask my dad."

Augusta National requires its patrons to leave their cellphones and other electronic devices behind. In place of those security blankets, there are several public telephone banks of those throwback devices from days gone by. They are a foreign sight for many in the younger generation who've never seen a phone with an attached cord.

Abraham is not unlike most teenagers — or adults, for that matter — who are very much attached to the world through their cellphones.

At some point, chances are, patrons check for their phone — patting their pockets, reaching for the clip on their belts, wherever it usually is.

And when they can't find it, well...

"It's kind of panic mode," Abraham said. "We were at 18th (hole) and I went to reach in my pocket and it wasn't there. Then I remembered it's in the car."

He wasn't alone.

"I've checked my pockets for my phone no less than 10 times today," said Ryan O'Connor from Little Rock, Arkansas. "I was sitting in the bleachers on the 16th green and someone dropped a water bottle and it made a loud noise and I instinctively reached for my phone. Not there."

The line at the public phone bank can stretch up to 10 people deep at the height of the Masters. And while they provide an outlet for those looking to touch base with the world outside of Augusta National's gates, there are some issues that come with them.

Like, remembering phone numbers.

Bill Kehoe, 50, from Raleigh, North Carolina came prepared.

As he approached the public phones, Kehoe whipped out a sheet of paper with a handful of names and numbers written on them with a black Sharpie. He picked up the receiver on the phone, punched in the number "1" to start the call and then looked down at the paper and entered the remaining numbers to complete the free call.

"I can't even remember my own phone number, let alone anyone else's number," Kehoe joked. "They're all saved in my phone."

One of the calls he made was to his 14-year-old son Connor, who was on a school fieldtrip to Washington, D.C.

Connor had asked his dad to call at a prearranged time while he was on a bus, and his 8th grade classmates were shocked when his caller ID popped up as "Augusta National Golf Club."

"You could hear all of the kids like, 'Oh, that's so cool!'," Kehoe said with a laugh. "But then they all started asking for merchandise so I had to hang up."

The reasons patrons disrupt their round of watching professional golf to make a call.

One person was calling to hear about the day's dramatic movement in the stock market. Another said

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he was checking in with work. And several others were simply touching base with family or loved ones. Tyler Johnson and his wife Lauren called home to Roswell, Georgia to check on their 5-year-old son, who is staying with his grandparents, "just to make sure there's no blood," Tyler said with a laugh. As mom and dad alternated talking to their son, they took pictures of each other talking on the odd-looking black public phone.

"I think the last time I used one of these was 1999, before Y2K, I think," Tyler joked.

While not having a cellphone is an inconvenience for some, others have come to relish the liberating feeling of being disconnected from the world for a little while.

Fletcher Lord from Little Rock texted his wife after he arrived at the course around 6 a.m. and reminded her not to expect to hear from him all day. He then set out to enjoy a few refreshments on a sunny, 70-degree day amid the serene backdrop of blooming azaleas and tall pines.

"Once you get over the anxiety of not having your phone, it's a very freeing feeling because it forces you to just be here in the moment," Lord said.

O'Connor agreed.

He phoned one of his old friends from high school just to see if he'd pick up. He did.

"He didn't recognize the number obviously, but when he saw Augusta National pop up he said I better pick this one up," O'Connor said.

Then it was off to enjoy the day.

"Is not having a phone a pain?" O'Connor said. "No, I think it's actually good for me. Those emails will be there when I get back home."

Inflation fell last month as gas prices dropped sharply, a sign prices cooled before tariffs

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. inflation declined last month as the cost of gas, airline fares, and hotel rooms fell, a sign that price growth was cooling even as President Donald Trump ramped up his tariff threats.

Consumer prices rose just 2.4% in March from a year earlier, the Labor Department said Thursday, down from 2.8% in February. That is the lowest inflation figure since September.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 2.8% compared with a year ago, down from 3.1% in February. That is the smallest increase in core prices in nearly four years. Economists closely watch core prices because they are considered a better guide to where inflation is headed.

Yet economists warned that the data is mostly backward-looking and likely to be overtaken by the impact of the tariffs that Trump has left in place, including huge duties on China, even after the 90-day pause of some tariffs announced Wednesday. Inflation should start to pick up in two to three months' time and possibly remain elevated through at least the end of this year.

"We got a huge tariff increase," said Paul Donovan, chief economist for UBS Wealth Management. "There was an extreme tariff increase for less than 24 hours, and we're back to a huge tariff increase, relative to where we were a month ago. This is increasing taxes on U.S. consumers. And they're going to have to find the money to pay these taxes."

On a monthly basis, prices actually fell 0.1% in March, the first monthly drop in nearly five years. Core prices rose just 0.1% in March from February.

"That was nice, but don't get used to it," said Greg McBride, chief financial analyst at Bankrate. "All this is looking in the rearview mirror. With both inflation and the overall economy, uncertainty abounds about what might be lurking around the bend."

Used car prices dropped 0.7% from February to March, the government said. The cost of auto insurance fell 0.8%, welcome relief for car owners, though insurance costs are still up 7.5% compared with a year ago.

One reason prices fell was sharp drops in travel-related costs, including air fares, which slipped 5.3% just from February to March. Hotel room prices dropped 3.5%. Economists said those drops in part reflected much slower international demand as the number of tourists visiting the United States has fallen sharply

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amid Trump's aggressive trade policy.

Visits to the United States from overseas fell nearly 12% last month, according to government data.

The cost of groceries, however, jumped 0.5% last month, the report showed, as egg prices leapt 5.9% to a new record average price of \$6.23 a dozen. Clothing prices rose 0.4%, though they have increased little in the past year.

Trump had imposed sweeping tariffs on nearly 60 nations last week, which sent financial markets into a tailspin and caused sharp drops in business and consumer sentiment. Yet on Wednesday he paused those duties for 90 days. The White House initially said a 125% tariff would remain on all imports from China, later clarifying that the tariff is 145% when a 20% hike for fentanyl tariffs are included. And 25% duties on steel, aluminum, imported cars, and many goods from China and Mexico also remain in place.

The remaining tariffs are still likely to lift inflation this year, economists say, even with the 90-day pause.

Even with the pause, many companies are still uncertain where trade policy will go next. Trump has also said that duties on pharmaceutical imports will be imposed.

Consumers will likely see some prices rise because of the existing duties, including the massive tariffs on China. The United States imports more than \$60 billion of iPhones and other mobile phones every year from China, as well as massive amounts of clothes, shoes and toys.

Many U.S. companies will likely shift production out of China, a process that had already started during Trump's first term when he slapped duties on some of its exports. Still, China remains the United States' third-largest trading partner.

Shifting supply chains out of China will also likely take time and come with its own costs, which could raise prices for U.S. consumers in the coming months.

Last week, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said that the central bank was likely to keep its key interest rate unchanged at about 4.3% as it waited to see how Trump's policies impacted the economy. Trump called for the Fed to cut rates on Friday.

"There's a lot of waiting and seeing going on, including by us," Powell said. "And that just seems like the right thing to do in this period of uncertainty."

Cabot Creamery butter recalled over fecal bacteria contamination

By The Associated Press undefined

A Vermont firm has recalled more than 1,700 pounds of butter because it may be contaminated with coliform, a type of bacteria found in fecal matter.

Agri-Mark Inc., of Waitsfield, Vermont, recalled 189 cases of Cabot Creamery 8-ounce premium butter made with sea salt, according to a notice from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The butter was distributed in Arkansas, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

The recall was issued on March 26 and is ongoing, according to the FDA. It is classified as the lowest level of recall, Class III, which means it's not likely to cause health problems in people.

Consumers should not eat or use the recalled butter, which has a best-by date of Sept. 9. It is identified as lot 090925-055, item 2038.

Agri-Mark officials said in statement that the company recovered 99.5% of the potentially contaminated lot before it was sold to consumers. The firm said that 17 packages of the butter were sold to consumers in Vermont.

Coliform bacteria are found in the environment and in the feces of all warm-blooded animals and humans. The bacteria likely will not cause illness but could indicate the presence of disease-causing germs. Agri-Mark officials said that they have "taken the appropriate internal actions to address" the cause.

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Cannes Film Festival sets lineup with Ari Aster, Wes Anderson and, yes, Spike Lee

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN and JAKE COYLE Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — New films from Wes Anderson, Ari Aster, and Richard Linklater will compete for the Palme d'Or at the 78th Cannes Film Festival, organizers announced Thursday.

Coming off a 2024 edition that produced the Academy Award best-picture winner "Anora," as well as a number of Oscar contenders in "Emilia Pérez," "The Substance" and "The Apprentice," the French film festival responded with a 2025 lineup full of big-name auteurs.

Thierry Frémaux, Cannes' artistic director, announced the selections in a news conference in Paris with festival president Iris Knobloch.

Asked if he was under pressure after producing so many Oscars contenders last year, Frémaux said the festival organizers feel like an athlete putting his title back on the line.

"What happened last year was great," he said. "And what happened the year before was great. The last seven, eight years, Cannes and the films of Cannes were great."

Entries include Aster's "Eddington," a pandemic-set Western starring Joaquin Phoenix, Pedro Pascal and Emma Stone; Anderson's "The Phoenician Scheme," starring Benicio Del Toro as a European profiteer and Linklater's appropriately French-language "Nouvelle Vague," about Jean-Luc Godard and the French New Wave.

Julia Ducournau, whose "Titane" won the Palme d'Or in 2021, making Ducournau only the second female filmmaker to ever receive Cannes' top honor, will return to the festival with the 1980s New York-set "Alpha," about an 11-year-old with a parent who has AIDS.

Several high-profile films that some had hoped would show up in Cannes weren't announced Tuesday in Paris, including Terrence Malick's long-awaited Jesus drama "The Way of the Wind," Spike Lee's Akira Kurosawa remake "Highest 2 Lowest," and Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another." New films by Jim Jarmusch and Kristen Stewart had also been expected in the Cannes lineup.

Asked about their absence, Frémaux declined to comment, saying he wanted to instead focus on the pictures which made the cut. He, however, said more films could be later added to the selection.

An hour after the press conference in Paris, however, Lee said on Instagram that "Highest 2 Lowest" is, indeed, going to Cannes, and screening out of competition. Representatives for the festival later confirmed that Lee's post was accurate, noting that the film wasn't announced in the press conference because Cannes was awaiting confirmation that the movie's star, Denzel Washington, would be in attendance. With that confirmed, "Highest 2 Lowest" will premiere on May 19.

Frémaux altogether announced 19 films vying for the Palme d'Or, six of which are directed by women.

Two films starring Josh O'Connor made it into the competition lineup: Oliver Hermanus' "The History of Sound," co-starring Paul Mescal, and Kelly Reichardt's "The Mastermind," an art heist film set during the Vietnam War.

Other previously Cannes regulars coming back include two-time Palme winners Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne. The Belgian filmmaking brothers' latest is titled "Young Mothers." Joachim Trier, whose "The Worst Person in the World" was a highlight of the 2021 Cannes, is back in competition with "Sentimental Value," which likewise stars Renate Reinsve.

Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi, who was imprisoned during the release of his last, secretly made film, 2022's "No Bears," and not released until he went on a hunger strike, will unveil his latest film, "It Was Just an Accident."

Playing in the festival's Un Certain Regard sidebar is Scarlett Johansson's directorial debut, "Eleanor the Great," starring June Squibb. Harris Dickinson, the "Babygirl" star, will also premiere his directorial debut, "Urchin," in the same section.

Bono will also be coming to the Croisette for the premiere of "Bono: Stories of Surrender," Andrew Dominik's film of the singer's one-man stage show. That will play in Cannes' special screening section.

Cannes earlier announced that "Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning" will launch at the festival, which three years ago bestowed an honorary Palme d'Or on Tom Cruise. This year, Robert De Niro is set

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to receive one during the festival's opening ceremony.

Following in the footsteps of Greta Gerwig, Juliette Binoche will head the jury that decides this year's Palme d'Or. Knobloch said it's the first time in 60 years that two women succeed each other in this role.

The festival runs May 13-24. The opening night film, playing out of competition, will be "Leave One Day," the first movie by French director Amélie Bonnin.

Billionaires, trusted allies, media personalities.

These are the people Trump picked for top roles

By PARKER KAUFMANN, HUMERA LODHI and CHRISTOPHER KELLER Associated Press

President Donald Trump prioritized loyalty as he built out a team for his second term, surrounding himself with people who served faithfully in his first administration or who worked on one or more of his three campaigns.

Those are not the only ties that connect the people in the highest ranks of his administration. Several are billionaires or campaign donors, or both. There also are media personalities, former lawmakers and people who worked on Project 2025, the conservative blueprint for slashing government that Trump insisted he had no affiliation with as he campaigned for the White House.

Some people in key roles have personal relationships with Trump that go back years, from a onetime caddy at one of Trump's golf courses to his son's former fiancée. Others came around after opposing Trump in the past; examples include his vice president and a handful of Republicans and Democrats who once ran against him.

These are some of the people Trump picked for top roles in his second administration — and a look at what they have in common, according to a review by The Associated Press.

Who's who:

Tom Barrack, ambassador to Turkey

Scott Bessent, treasury secretary

Pam Bondi, attorney general

Doug Burgum, interior secretary

Lori Chavez-DeRemer, labor secretary

Doug Collins, veterans affairs secretary

Sean Duffy, transportation secretary

Tulsi Gabbard, director of national intelligence

Jamieson Greer, trade representative

Kimberly Guilfoyle, ambassador to Greece

Kevin Hassett, National Economic Council director

Pete Hegseth, defense secretary

Pete Hoekstra, ambassador to Canada

Tom Homan, border czar

Mike Huckabee, ambassador to Israel

Jared Isaacman, NASA administrator

Ronald Johnson, ambassador to Mexico

Keith Kellogg, special envoy for Ukraine and Russia

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., health and human services secretary

Karoline Leavitt, White House press secretary

Kelly Loeffler, administrator of the Small Business Administration

Howard Lutnick, commerce secretary

Dr. Marty Makary, Food and Drug Administration commissioner

Linda McMahon, education secretary

Stephen Miller, White House deputy chief of staff

Elon Musk, Department of Government Efficiency

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Peter Navarro, White House senior counselor on trade and manufacturing

Janette Nesheiwat, surgeon general

Kristi Noem, homeland security secretary

Dr. Mehmet Oz, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Kash Patel, FBI director

David Perdue, ambassador to China

John Ratcliffe, CIA director

Brooke Rollins, agriculture secretary

Marco Rubio, secretary of state

Dan Scavino, White House deputy chief of staff

Rodney Scott, Customs and Border Protection commissioner

Scott Turner, housing secretary

JD Vance, vice president

Russell Vought, director of the Office of Management and Budget

Mike Waltz, national security adviser

Matthew Whitaker, ambassador to NATO

Susie Wiles, White House chief of staff

Steven Witkoff, special envoy

Chris Wright, energy secretary

Lee Zeldin, Environmental Protection Agency administrator

What they have in common:

Worked in the Trump administration during his first term: Rollins, Scavino, Greer, Ratcliffe, Leavitt, Patel, Kellogg, Hassett, McMahon, Whitaker, Hoekstra, Navarro, Scott, Johnson, Vought, Turner, Miller, Homan.

Is from Florida, Trump's home when he's not in the White House and site of his estate, Mar-a-Lago: Guilfoyle, Rubio, Waltz, Bondi, Johnson, Witkoff, Wiles, Barrack.

Gave money to Trump's campaign or a pro-Trump PAC, according to campaign finance data: Wright, Musk, Lutnick, Loeffler, Zeldin, McMahon, Hoekstra, Bessent, Witkoff, Wiles, Barrack.

Employed by Trump's 2016, 2020 or 2024 campaign (or for more than one): Scavino, Leavitt, Guilfoyle, Miller, Wiles.

Previously served in state or federal public office: Perdue, Burgum, Collins, Vance, Ratcliffe, Loeffler, Noem, Zeldin, Chavez-DeRemer, Rubio, Huckabee, Waltz, Bondi, Hoekstra, Turner, Duffy, Gabbard.

Formerly opposed Trump, by being openly critical of him or running against him for president: Burgum, Musk, Vance, Rubio, Kennedy, Gabbard.

Hosted a TV show, was employed by a TV network as a paid contributor or owns a social media company: Nesheiwat, Oz, Musk, Guilfoyle, Huckabee, Hegseth, Duffy.

Has a personal wealth of \$1 billion or more, according to AP reporting: Musk, Lutnick, Isaacman, Loeffler, McMahon, Bessent, Witkoff, Barrack.

Was an author or contributor to the conservative policy playbook known as Project 2025: Ratcliffe, Hoekstra, Navarro, Vought, Homan.

Has a personal relationship with Trump, such as a longtime friend, business colleague or person with other close ties to Trump family members: Scavino, Guilfoyle, McMahon, Witkoff, Barrack.

Today in History: April 11, the liberation of Buchenwald

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, April 11, the 101st day of 2025. There are 264 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 11, 1945, during World War II, U.S. Army troops liberated the Buchenwald Nazi concentration camp near Weimar, Germany.

Also on this date:

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In 1814, Napoleon Bonaparte abdicated as emperor of the French and was banished to the island of Elba. (Napoleon later escaped from Elba and returned to power in March 1815, until his downfall in the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815.)

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln spoke to a crowd outside the White House, saying, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart." (It was the last public address Lincoln would deliver; he would die four days later after being shot by John Wilkes Booth.)

In 1951, President Harry S. Truman relieved General Douglas MacArthur of his command following multiple public statements by MacArthur that contradicted official U.S. policies.

In 1961, former SS officer Adolf Eichmann went on trial in Israel, charged with crimes against humanity for his role in the Nazi Holocaust. (Eichmann was later convicted and executed.)

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which included the Indian Civil Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act, one week after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1970, Apollo 13, with astronauts James A. Lovell, Fred W. Haise and Jack Swigert, blasted off on its ill-fated mission to the moon. (The mission was aborted following an oxygen tank explosion two days after liftoff, and the crew splashed down safely in the Pacific Ocean on April 17.)

In 1980, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission published guidelines saying sexual harassment in the workplace amounted to unlawful sex discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In 2012, George Zimmerman, the Florida neighborhood watch volunteer who fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, was arrested and charged with second-degree murder. (He was acquitted at trial.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Joel Grey is 93. Actor Louise Lasser is 86. Actor Peter Riegert is 78. Actor Bill Irwin is 75. Singer Lisa Stansfield is 58. Former MLB catcher Jason Varitek is 53. Actor Jennifer Esposito is 52. Rapper David Banner is 51. Model Alessandra Ambrosio is 44. Singer Joss Stone is 38.