

Groton Daily Independent

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The Groton Transit Bus will be going to Madison on Sunday, April 27 for baseball games.
For more information contact the Transit at 605-397-8661.

Saturday, April 26

Track at Ipswich, 10 a.m.

Sunday, April 27

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.;

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



at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Sunday School, 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.

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

Baseball at Canova, 2 p.m.

JV Baseball hosts Sioux Valley, 2 p.m. (DH)

Monday, April 28

Senior Menu: Goulash, green beans, fruit, cookie, breadstick.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Junior High Track at Britton-Hecla, 3:30 p.m.

Groton Senior Citizens Meet, Noon Potluck., Groton Community Center

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

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1440

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

George Santos Sentenced

Former US Rep. George Santos was sentenced to over seven years in prison for federal fraud and identity theft yesterday after admitting to deceiving donors and misusing the identities of nearly a dozen people, including family members, to fund his campaign.

The New York Republican—expelled from Congress in 2023 after less than a year in office—pleaded guilty to charges last summer and agreed to pay roughly \$580K in fines and serve prison time. The 36-year-old Santos was sentenced to 87 months in prison. His lawyers had sought a sentence of two years, citing Santos' cooperation and acceptance of responsibility; prosecutors had sought at least seven years, arguing Santos had not shown genuine remorse based on his social media activity.

In December 2023, Santos became the sixth House member to be expelled in US history and the first to be removed without being convicted of a crime or supporting the Confederacy.

Russian general killed by car bomb outside Moscow.

A senior Russian military leader, Lt. Gen. Yaroslav Moskalik, was killed by a car bomb containing a home-made explosive device while in a Moscow suburb Friday. The explosion occurred as Moskalik approached a parked vehicle and as a US envoy arrived in Moscow for peace talks amid ongoing negotiations over the Russia-Ukraine war.

Pope Francis' funeral to be held today in Vatican City.

The funeral begins at 10 am local time (4 am ET) in St. Peter's Square in Vatican City, after three days of lying in state at St. Peter's Basilica, where tens of thousands of mourners paid their respects. Unlike his predecessors, who were buried in three nested coffins made of cypress, lead, and elm (symbolizing humility, protection, and dignity), Pope Francis chose to be buried in a wooden coffin. Francis died Monday at the age of 88 of a stroke and irreversible heart failure.

FBI arrests Wisconsin judge over obstructing immigration enforcement.

Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah Dugan was arrested by the FBI on obstruction charges for allegedly helping an undocumented immigrant evade arrest during an immigration operation at her courthouse. The arrest marks the latest enforcement action under the Trump administration's efforts to crack down on undocumented immigrants.

New study sheds light on why our waistlines expand in middle age.

Researchers, in a preclinical study, found that as humans grow older, a specific type of adult stem cell in belly fat becomes highly active, rapidly producing new fat cells and driving the expansion of waistlines in middle age. The process is triggered naturally and occurs in mice and humans, suggesting that targeting these cells could help prevent age-related obesity.

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Court ruling opens door to FDA action against Ozempic copycats.

A federal judge in Texas sided with Novo Nordisk in upholding FDA restrictions that now bar pharmacies from making or distributing compounded versions of weight-loss drugs Wegovy and Ozempic after the FDA determined the active ingredient, semaglutide, is no longer in shortage in the US. Compounded versions are custom-made drugs prepared by pharmacists when approved medications are unavailable or unsuitable but lack FDA approval.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Nancy M. in Gilroy, California.

"The other day, my mailman stopped me and told me he liked the sunflower sign in my yard. His daughter passed away last year, and she loved sunflowers. Her favorite flower. When he sees my sign, he thinks of her. I offered him my sign. He said no ... He likes to see it when he delivers my mail. So, naturally, I had to get a sunflower mailbox cover. I am also getting neighbors to do something similar, so when he drives our street, he will see more sunflowers."

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**BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY**

April 29, 2025, 8:45 A.M.

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

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Second Reading/Possible Adoption on following Ordinances:
 - a. Ord. #292 – Rezone for Donald & Jolene Bonn
 - b. Ord. #293 – Rezone for Donald & Becky Wegleitner
5. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. R-O-W for Web Water
6. Allison Tunheim, HR Director
 - a. Discuss Benefits
7. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 22, 2025:
 - i. General Meeting
 - ii. Consolidated Board of Equalization
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Malt Beverage & SD Farm Wine License Renewals
 - e. Township Bonds
 - f. Abatement
8. Other Business
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

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

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

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

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

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

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

Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

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

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

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Members of the Groton Garden Club planted a Crab Pink Spires tree behind the Groton City Sign on Arbor Day which was Friday. Pictured are Becky Aldrich, Denise Sombke, Mayor Scott Hanlon, Pat Sanderson and Bev Sombke. You can view the video of the program on YouTube @gdilive. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Names Released in Lincoln County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: 272nd Street and 464th Avenue, three miles northwest of Lennox, SD

When: 6:42 p.m. Monday, April 21, 2025

Driver 1: Douglas James Barr, 62-year-old male from Sioux Falls, SD, serious non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 1966 Chevrolet Nova

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 1a: Robert Scott Barr, 60-year-old male from Sioux Falls, SD, fatal injuries

Seat belt Used: No

Lincoln County, S.D.- One man died and another was seriously injured in a single vehicle crash Monday night, three miles northwest of Lennox, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Douglas James Barr, the driver of a 1966 Chevrolet Nova, was traveling westbound on 272nd Street near 464th Avenue when the vehicle left the lane of travel, entered the south ditch and rolled over a concrete culvert. During the rollover, the front seat passenger was ejected.

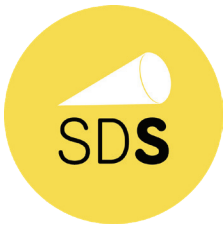
Douglas J. Barr sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries. The passenger, Robert Scott Barr, was pronounced deceased at the scene.

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

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

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Note: Records of state-reportable crashes are now available at <http://www.safesd.gov/> . Records should be available about 10 days after the investigation is complete.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

SD uses portion of opioid settlement funds to distribute overdose prevention kits

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - APRIL 25, 2025 3:27 PM

About 20,000 opioid overdose prevention kits will be distributed across South Dakota thanks to a partnership between the state and Sioux Falls-based nonprofit Emily's Hope. The kits are filled with naloxone, an antidote for opioid overdoses, along with other resources and information.

Emily's Hope founder and CEO Angela Kennecke, whose daughter died from a fentanyl overdose in 2018, announced the partnership in Sioux Falls on Friday alongside South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley, state Health Department Secretary Melissa Magstadt and state Social Services Department Secretary Matt Althoff.

The distribution is funded with \$350,000 of South Dakota's \$78.6 million "and counting" in national opioid settlement funds, Jackley said. The national opioid settlements were reached to resolve opioid litigation against pharmaceutical distributors and manufacturers accused of flooding communities with opioid painkillers even though they allegedly knew how addictive and deadly the drugs were.

South Dakota will receive about \$50 million over the next 15 years from the first settlement and will receive another \$28.6 million over the next 17 years from a settlement with Walgreens, CVS, Walmart, Teva and Allergan.

"That's what is so important about this partnership is it's putting those dollars back to work to save and protect people," Jackley said.

Teva pharmaceuticals donated 2,313 kits for the effort and sold the other kits at a discounted rate to the state.



Naloxone harm reduction kits will be available in some public spaces across South Dakota due to a partnership between the state and Emily's Hope, officials announced on April 25, 2025. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Ninety-five South Dakotans died from overdoses in 2023, according to the state Department of Health. Forty-seven of the deaths were opioid-related, and 39 of those were fentanyl-related, Magstadt said. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid.

"Since 2019, we've had a 70% increase in the amount of fentanyl deaths in South Dakota," Magstadt said. "It's hitting home."

The program will target areas of the state impacted the most by opioid use, overdoses and death, officials said. The top 10 counties impacted, according to Emily's Hope, are Minnehaha, Lincoln, Pennington, Corson, Roberts, Turner, Todd, Oglala Lakota, Beadle and Meade.

Although most overdose deaths are among white residents, Native Americans are disproportionately affected. Native Americans die from overdoses at a rate of 26.6 per 100,000 — more than four times the rate among white South Dakotans, according to the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System.

The kits will be placed in publicly accessible areas, Kennecke said. Emily's Hope has been distributing naloxone kits, primarily in the Sioux Falls area, for nearly a year. The organization has distributed about 6,000 kits in that time.

Although most overdoses occur in private residences, they also happen in public restrooms, in traffic or on the street, Kennecke said. Offering them in public allows more bystanders to access the drug and intervene.

"Our goal is to have one of these kits in every house, in every business, by every AED possible," Kennecke said. AEDs are automated external defibrillators that help people in cardiac arrest, many of which are stationed in public areas and offices throughout the state.

Magstadt called naloxone a "one more chance" medicine, since it halts overdose symptoms and opens a window for people to seek treatment for opioid use disorder. Administering naloxone will not harm someone who isn't experiencing overdose, she said, and victims often appear sleepy while overdosing from opioid use.

The state has distributed about 15,000 naloxone kits in the last eight years to law enforcement, emergency medical services and schools across the state using a federal grant. About 3,600 kits have been distributed to public spaces through the new program so far.

South Dakota's current plan in the Department of Social Services is to put a majority of settlement dollars into a trust fund to gain interest over time. Althoff said he wants to ensure the money is spent wisely rather than "spend this precious resource for the sake of spending."

Jackley told South Dakota Searchlight he doesn't agree with the trust fund approach and he'd rather see the funds be put toward prevention and treatment immediately. That includes funneling some of the settlement money toward rehabilitation for South Dakota prisoners, he said.

"Today, there was a minimal amount of money used from that settlement to save lives," Jackley said. "We need to do more of that."

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.

Governor appoints Huron lawmaker to judgeship and seeks nominations for his replacement

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - APRIL 25, 2025 2:23 PM

South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden announced Friday he's seeking nominations for a new lawmaker to represent District 22 in eastern South Dakota after he appointed Sen. David Wheeler, R-Huron, to serve as a judge in the state's Third Circuit.

District 22 includes Beadle, Spink and part of Clark counties. Wheeler was serving his third term as a state



Sen. David Wheeler, R-Huron, speaks on the South Dakota Senate floor on March 4, 2025. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

senator after he was first elected in 2020. He served as chair of the Senate Commerce and Energy Committee this session and vice chair of the Government Operations and Audit Committee and the State Affairs Committee. He was also a member of the Judiciary and Legislative Procedure committees.

Wheeler will replace retiring Judge Greg Stoltenburg. The Third Circuit consists of the counties of Beadle, Brookings, Clark, Codington, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Hand, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Lake, Miner, Moody and Sanborn.

"As a judge, it will be my job to apply the law fairly and equally," Wheeler said in a news release, "without regard for politics or personal beliefs."

Rhoden said he believes Wheeler will "represent the judicial branch with the same integrity, work ethic, and passion that he did in the Senate."

Wheeler earned his bachelor's, master's and law degrees from the University of South Dakota before returning to his hometown of Huron. He is married with three children and a partner at the Blue, Wheeler and Banks law firm.

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.

Trump touts manufacturing while undercutting state efforts to help factories

Tariffs, spending cuts and the winding down of state-based manufacturing aid could hurt small factories

BY: TIM HENDERSON, STATELINE - APRIL 25, 2025 10:00 AM

Steve Whalen loves his home state of Delaware and he's proud to manufacture computers there that police officers use to "catch bad guys." He said tariffs on imports from China and other countries, along with sharp cuts to government spending and the winding down of a program for small manufacturers, will make it harder for him to do that.

"We got into business to keep costs low for the 'good guys,' but tariffs or anything else that raises prices keeps us from doing that," said Whalen, co-founder of Sumuri LLC in Magnolia, Delaware, which makes computer workstations for police and government investigations. Whalen has to buy materials overseas, often from China, and he said the tariffs could force him to triple his price on some workstations to \$12,000.

Tariffs are the main tool President Donald Trump is wielding to try to boost manufacturing in the United States, calling the achievement of that goal "an economic and national security priority." But the higher levies have led to retaliation and suspended shipments, and Whalen said they are just one of several Trump administration actions squeezing his small manufacturing business.

The wave of federal spending cuts, which has affected grants to state and local governments, could make his customers put off purchases. And the administration has moved to cut off funding for a \$175 million state-based program that provides expert advice to smaller factories like his.

The Delaware version of that program, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, helped Sumuri fit expanded product lines into the limited space in its small-town factory.

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"We were really having a tough time trying to figure out how to utilize our space efficiently," Whalen said. "They came here and helped us organize and optimize, and it made a huge difference."

On April 1, the Trump administration cut off funding for 10 such manufacturing programs that were up for renewal in Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota and Wyoming. Other state MEP programs will expire over the next year.

The administration gave a reprieve to those 10 states until the end of the fiscal year after objections from Democrats in the U.S. House and Senate. The National Institute of Standards and Technology, which manages the program, extended funding for the 10 states "after further review and consideration" and will "continue to evaluate plans for the program," said agency spokesperson Chad Boutin.

The program has come under fire from Republicans since the George W. Bush administration first tried to end it in 2009, and again during the first Trump administration, but Congress has continued to fund it. The conservative Heritage Foundation said in a 2023 book that MEP's functions "would be more properly carried out by the private sector."



Employee Jericho Talatala assembles a forensic computer workstation used in police investigations at the Sumuri LLC plant in Magnolia, Del., which could be hurt by tariffs and reduced government spending. Tariffs meant to encourage U.S. manufacturing could have the opposite effect because many materials are imported from China. (Courtesy of Sumuri LLC)

'Dots don't quite connect'

Buckley Brinkman, executive director of the Wisconsin Center for Manufacturing and Productivity, which works with his state's MEP program, said it didn't make much sense for the administration to shutter the program as it seeks to boost the number of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

"It's one of those things where the dots don't quite connect," Brinkman said. "I mean, jeez, here's a part of government that doesn't cost a whole lot, in the grand scheme of things — less than \$200 million a year — that's returning 10-to-1 to the national treasury, working on a priority for the president."

A 2024 Upjohn report found an even higher return: 17-to-1 on \$175 million in the 2023 fiscal year, creating \$3 billion in new federal tax revenue.

In Wisconsin, which has lost more than 138,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000, some parts makers report that business is booming as manufacturers seek to avoid tariffs by finding U.S. alternatives to Chinese manufacturers, Brinkman said. But more broadly, he doubts that the tariffs will spark a manufacturing boom in the state.

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"Do we want all this manufacturing back? Do we have the will to get it back? The answer to both those questions is 'no,'" Brinkman said. "Even without the tariffs we don't really want Americans doing a lot of those jobs that are in Chinese factories right now."

In Delaware, the MEP helped Sumuri manage its expansion, but unpredictable tariffs and budgets are now a bigger danger, said Jason Roslewicz, Sumuri's vice president of business development. He's had to devote two employees to monitoring supply lines, tariff news and competitor pricing to stay afloat.

"We went from putting things together in a basement to a 19,000-square-foot facility, doing exactly what we're supposed to do here in the U.S., and it's all in danger of coming apart because of this problem," Roslewicz said.

Other small manufacturers express similar concerns. TJ Semanchin, who owns Wonderstate Coffee in Madison, Wisconsin, said his business roasting and distributing coffee is in crisis because of the tariffs.

Wonderstate's costs have almost doubled between tariffs on imported coffee and packaging materials from China, plus a cyclical rise in coffee prices. "I'm borrowing money to pay for this and at some point we'll have to raise prices. We'll have no choice," Semanchin said.

But many Republican state officials, and even some Democrats, have backed Trump's tariff push, including Virginia Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin, who credited the Trump administration with "reshoring manufacturing and restoring this middle class which has been eviscerated over the last 20 years."

"There's dislocation in the short term, there's long-term opportunity," Youngkin said in an April 15 interview on CNBC. He said his state is hearing more interest from manufacturers looking to build or expand local factories since Trump took office. For instance, Delta Star recently announced a plan to add 300 jobs building power transformers in Lynchburg.

"The president has been clear that there will be some level of tariffs, and folks are coming, and that's good for Virginia," Youngkin said in the CNBC interview.

Virginia's MEP program, called Genedge, claims successes in streamlining production and quality control for local factory products including TreeDiaper, an automated tree watering device made in Ashland, and for advising EDM, a Lynchburg plastic product assembler that needed more efficient production to keep overseas competition at bay. But Virginia's MEP is one of the state programs slated to expire in the next year.

Long-term trend

The slide in U.S. manufacturing jobs has continued on and off since 1979, and many experts say tariffs will not bring them back. Despite a modest bounce back under the Biden administration, the number of manufacturing jobs has declined from nearly 20 million in 1979 to less than 13 million today, even as the total U.S. workforce has grown from 89 million to 159 million during that period.

Manufacturing faces labor shortages, with many factories operating below capacity because they can't find enough workers, according to Jason Miller, a professor of supply chain management at Michigan State University.

That doesn't bode well for a mass reshoring of factories from China and other countries, but Miller doesn't expect that to happen anyway.

"Firms are not planning on reshoring much of the work that was offshored 20 to 25 years ago," Miller said. "I'm not concerned about having enough workers for manufacturing jobs that would be reshored because this isn't going to happen."

In a 2024 survey by the libertarian Cato Institute, 80% of Americans said America would be better off if more people worked in manufacturing, but only 25% said they personally would be better off working in a factory. The Chinese government has poked fun at the idea with memes of American workers struggling to make Nike sneakers with sewing machines.

Joseph McCartin, a labor historian at Georgetown University, said the idea of a manufacturing rebirth is a "mirage being conjured to attract the support of workers who have been underpaid in an increasingly unequal economy for the last 40 years, and are desperate for some hope of renewed upward mobility."

Manufacturing “isn’t the magic wand to make that happen,” McCartin said.

“What we need is to raise workers’ wages and make the economy less prone to producing inequality,” McCartin said. “That mission is not at all what Trump is about. He is dealing in stale nostalgia.”

Stateline reporter Tim Henderson can be reached at thenderson@stateline.org.

Tim Henderson covers demographics for Stateline. He has been a reporter at the Miami Herald, the Cincinnati Enquirer and The Journal News in suburban New York. Henderson became fascinated with census data in the early 1990s, when AOL offered the first computerized reports. Since then he has broken stories about population trends in South Florida, including a housing affordability analysis included in the 2007 Pulitzer-winning series “House of Lies” for the Miami Herald, and a prize-winning analysis of public pension irregularities for The Journal News. He has been a member and trainer for the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting since its inception 20 years ago, specializing in online data access and visualization along with demographics.

Arrest of Wisconsin judge ‘escalation’ in Trump-judiciary conflict, Democrats warn

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY AND JACOB FISCHLER - APRIL 25, 2025 4:47 PM

WASHINGTON — A handful of Democratic U.S. senators sounded the alarm Friday after federal agents arrested a Wisconsin judge on charges she obstructed immigration officials from detaining a man in her courtroom, saying the arrest marked a new low in President Donald Trump’s treatment of the law.

Some congressional Democrats framed the FBI’s Friday morning arrest of Milwaukee County Judge Hannah Dugan as a grave threat to the U.S. system of government, saying it was part of Trump’s effort to expand his own power and undermine the judiciary, with which the administration has become increasingly noncompliant.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer decried the judge’s arrest on social media late Friday afternoon as a “dangerous escalation.”

“There are no kings in America. Trump and (Attorney General Pam) Bondi can’t just decide to arrest sitting judges at will and threaten judges into submission,” wrote Schumer, a New York Democrat.

Trump administration officials, including Bondi, defended the arrest as legitimate. The FBI had been investigating Dugan after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers sought to detain an immigrant without legal authority to be in the country who was in her courtroom on a misdemeanor charge.

Bondi wrote on social media just after noon Eastern, “I can confirm that our @FBI agents just arrested Hannah Dugan — a county judge in Milwaukee — for allegedly helping an illegal alien avoid an arrest by



U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi testifies before the Senate Judiciary Committee during her confirmation hearing on Jan. 15, 2025. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

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@ICEgov. No one is above the law."

Democrats object

Democrats in Washington who sounded their objections to the arrest Friday argued it subverted separation of powers.

Sen. Dick Durbin, the top Democrat on the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, said Trump "continues to test the limits of our Constitution — this time by arresting a sitting judge for allegedly obstructing an immigration operation at the courthouse."

In a statement, Durbin added that local courtrooms should be off limits to immigration enforcement agents.

"When immigration enforcement officials interfere with our criminal justice system, it undermines public safety, prevents victims and witnesses from coming forward, and often prevents those who committed crimes from facing justice in the United States," Durbin wrote.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin, who represents Wisconsin, issued a statement shortly after news of the arrest, calling it "a gravely serious and drastic move."

"In the United States we have a system of checks and balances and separation of powers for damn good reasons," Baldwin said.

"The Trump Administration just arrested a sitting judge," Arizona's Ruben Gallego said in a social media post. "This is what happens in authoritarian countries. Stand up now — or lose the power to do so later. The administration must drop all charges and respect separation of powers."

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, who also sits on the Judiciary Committee, was more careful in his criticism but said Trump is "constantly challenging" separation of powers laid out in the Constitution.

"I don't know what happened in Wisconsin, but amplifying this arrest as the Attorney General and FBI Director have done looks like part of a larger intimidation campaign against judges," the Rhode Island Democrat said in a statement.

In a since-deleted post on Bluesky, Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey accused Trump of "using immigrants to justify an all-out assault on our democracy and rule of law."

"After openly defying a Supreme Court order, calling for judges to be impeached, and bullying and belittling judges, today his FBI director took the extreme step of ordering a sitting judge arrested," Booker wrote, referring to the high court's order that the Trump administration "facilitate" the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who is being held in El Salvador.

Spokespeople for Booker did not respond to a late Friday inquiry about why the post was taken down.

Trump officials back up arrest

Administration officials boasted online following the arrest.

FBI Director Kash Patel deleted a post on X in which he wrote Dugan "intentionally misdirected federal agents away" from Eduardo Flores-Ruiz, a 30-year-old Mexican immigrant accused of misdemeanor battery.

Trump posted a screenshot on his social media site from the conservative activist account "Libs of TikTok" that featured a photo of Dugan and celebrated her arrest.

White House Border Czar Tom Homan said that Dugan crossed a line in her opposition to the administration's agenda.

"People can choose to support illegal immigration and not assist ICE in removing criminal illegal aliens from our communities, BUT DON'T CROSS THAT LINE," he wrote on X. "If you actively impede our enforcement efforts or if you knowingly harbor or conceal illegal aliens from ICE you will be prosecuted. These actions are felonies. More to come..."

Trump vs. courts

Trump and administration officials have publicly attacked judges online, including calling for the impeach-

ment of District Judge James Boasberg for the District of Columbia after he ordered immigration officials to halt deportation flights to El Salvador.

The administration allowed the flights to reach Central America, and is now at risk of being held in criminal contempt of court as a legal fight plays out.

The president's verbal attacks on Boasberg prompted a rare rebuke from U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts in mid-March.

And the administration has seemingly refused to do anything to facilitate the return of Maryland resident Abrego Garcia from a notorious El Salvador mega-prison, despite a Supreme Court order.

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

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.

First candidate for governor focuses on property rights, spending and halting 'corporate welfare'

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - APRIL 24, 2025 10:26 PM

Dissatisfaction with the "status quo" is driving Jon Hansen and Karla Lems to run for South Dakota governor and lieutenant governor, they said.

The pair officially announced their 2026 campaign to hundreds of supporters Thursday at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance in Sioux Falls. The crowd included property rights advocates against eminent domain for carbon dioxide pipelines, "election integrity" activists and over a dozen Republican lawmakers.

Hansen, who currently serves as state House speaker, will seek the Republican Party's nomination for governor, with Lems, his second in command in the House, running to serve as his lieutenant governor.

The two, along with speakers who introduced them, said elected officials too often put the "people's interests" second to special interests. To resounding applause, they said that's caused a wave of opposition to establishment politicians, a referred state pipeline law that voters rejected in November, and ousted incumbent state lawmakers in last June's primary election.

"Grassroots patriots from all across the great state of South Dakota are standing up and we are saying in record numbers, 'No more corruption, no more waste and abuse, no more tax on our land and our liber-



Reps. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, left, and Karla Lems, R-Canton, kick off their campaign for governor and lieutenant governor on April 24, 2025, at the Military Heritage Alliance in Sioux Falls. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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ties and our way of life,” Hansen said to the crowd. “Today renews the coming of the end for all of that.”

If elected, Hansen pledged to “clean up” the system by cutting state government and spending. He also promised to create “education choice grants” for alternative and private school education, and sign an executive order to “define man and woman, end the woke and restore common sense.” Hansen said he plans to stop offering “corporate welfare” as well.

Republican governors and lawmakers for decades have invested millions of tax dollars in bonds, loans and grants to entice businesses to build and expand in the state. That includes funding for farmers and value-added operations, as well as support for larger investments such as Tru Shrimp.

Hansen cited the Tru Shrimp deal as an example of “corporate welfare.”

State and local officials committed \$6.5 million in taxpayer money for a low-interest loan six years ago for Tru Shrimp to build a facility in Madison. The company has not built the facility, even though it was expected to break ground in 2024. The company, which has since changed its name to Iterro, announced it’s “more than halfway” to its fundraising goal to begin the Madison project earlier this year.

“I think it’s just unnecessary government mingling, and it’s risky business, and they’re wasting our taxpayer dollars to do it,” Hansen said of the deal. “It’s that sort of stuff that we want to say ‘no more’ to. Let’s just get back to the free market, low tax and low regulation.”

A Dell Rapids lawyer, Hansen has spent a decade in the South Dakota House of Representatives. The 39-year-old was elected House speaker for the most recent legislative session after serving as speaker pro tempore from 2021 to 2022.

Lems, from Canton, owns a coffee shop and property management business. The 56-year-old entered the state political fray in 2022 and was elected as House speaker pro tempore during the most recent legislative session, the first woman to hold the position in state history.

The two are riding the momentum of private property rights and anti-abortion successes in the last year.

Both have been leading forces on property rights in the Legislature, culminating in an eminent domain ban for carbon capture pipelines signed into law this year. The legislation contributed to the Public Utilities Commission’s recent denial of Summit Carbon Solutions’ second permit application to build a portion of its \$9 billion pipeline through the state.

Hansen would sometimes be introduced as “our governor” during rallies in opposition to Summit’s pipeline. He told attendees at the event Thursday that under his leadership, the “only thing that’s going to get sequestered are leftist climate policies” — a reference to Summit’s planned underground “sequestration” of carbon dioxide in North Dakota. Meanwhile, Republican President Donald Trump championed carbon capture and storage this week, highlighting it as part of his agenda to improve American energy production.

When asked about Trump’s support of carbon sequestration, Hansen said “when it comes to taking people’s land and using it without their consent in order to build a risky pipeline across their property, that’s a big no.”

Hansen has also focused on anti-abortion legislation and tightening South Dakota’s election laws in the Legislature. Now vice president of South Dakota Right to Life and co-chair of the Life Defense Fund, he organized a campaign last year that fended off a ballot initiative to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution.

Hansen and Lems are the first to announce their candidacy for the governor’s race, though other prominent South Dakota politicians have said they’re considering their own bids, including Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden and Republican U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson. Other Republicans frequently mentioned as possible candidates include Attorney General Marty Jackley, who ran unsuccessfully for governor in 2018, and Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden, who briefly considered a run against Johnson for U.S. House last year.

Rhoden, who formerly served as lieutenant governor, changed the name of his campaign fundraising committee to “Rhoden for Governor” in February. His lieutenant governor, Tony Venhuizen, created a new campaign fundraising committee the same month.

The Legislature changed the process for choosing lieutenant governor nominees this year. The new law allows candidates for governor to choose their running mate, rather than relying on political party

conventions to nominate them.

If more than one person from each party seeks the nomination, party voters will choose their nominee for governor in the primary election on June 2, 2026. The winners will advance to the general election on Nov. 3, 2026.

Rhoden is currently serving the remainder of the second term won by former Gov. Kristi Noem, who would've been term-limited at the end of 2026. She resigned earlier this year to accept the top job at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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.

COMMENTARY

Why South Dakota doesn't need to close the 'banana gap,' and other lessons about trade and tariffs

by Todd Epp, Northern Plains News LLC

Thanks to President Trump and his on-again/off-again tariffs, I've been thinking about wheat, oranges and bananas.

Almost 50 years ago, I took my only economics class at Wichita State University over a summer session. One of the ongoing examples of economics was Kansas' production of wheat and Florida's production of oranges.

While it seems obvious why Kansas grows wheat and Florida grows oranges, there is a lot of economics behind it — specifically, what economists call "comparative advantage."

Kansas is a good place to grow wheat because of seasonal weather and miles of flat, fertile land. In fact, according to data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Kansas produces about 300 million bushels annually, making it America's largest wheat producer.



A stack of ripe bananas arranged in the market for sale. (Kryssia Campos, via Getty Images)

Florida is a good place to grow oranges because of the warm weather and the right soil types. According

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to the Florida Department of Citrus, oranges produce over 70% of America's citrus and generate over \$9 billion in economic impact, supporting approximately 45,000 jobs.

Kansas could grow oranges, and Florida could grow wheat, but why should they?

Each state had a competitive advantage in growing their respective crops. Sure, Kansas could grow oranges — indoors, at great expense. The cost of the oranges would be prohibitive and not be enough to export.

Sure, Florida could grow wheat, but why produce such a low-value commodity when they have the warmth and growing season to grow oranges easily? This high-value commodity can be exported at a reasonable price for consumers.

So, Kansas grows wheat for the nation and the world; Florida grows oranges for the nation and the world. It's a good system.

But what about bananas?

You go to the grocery store and buy bananas. There are usually bunches and bunches of them and cost relatively little. And where do they come from? Guatemala, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Colombia and Honduras.

American-grown bananas make up only 0.01% of total world production. According to the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, most come from Hawaii and Florida. The United States imports about 4 million metric tons of bananas a year, or about 27 pounds per person, according to Statista. According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, bananas cost American consumers an average of 62 cents per pound.

So, America has a "banana gap" with much of Central America.

From what I understand about Trump's trade policy, this is a problem. We run a deficit with these countries for bananas. Could America produce more bananas? Probably. The few we do grow are grown in Hawaii and Florida.

Closer to my home, could South Dakota grow bananas? I'm no agronomist, but probably. At great expense. Indoors. With a lot of resources, including fertilizer, propane or natural gas for heating, construction of large greenhouses, then setting up a distribution network.

My guess is that hardy South Dakotans could maybe — maybe — produce enough bananas for Sioux Falls. Maybe. At great cost. That might also mean we don't produce as much of the stuff we're good at producing, such as beef, hogs, corn and soybeans; processing credit cards; and providing excellent medical care. But we would have locally grown, expensive American bananas.

So, just as Kansas has a competitive advantage for wheat, and Florida for oranges, Central America has a competitive advantage for bananas.

That doesn't wholly explain world trade, but it goes a long way in doing so.

But I have my doubts, sown by what I learned at Wichita State — home of the Shockers, a reference to "shocking" or harvesting wheat.

To be fair to President Trump's position, tariffs can serve strategic purposes. Proponents argue that tariffs can help address national security concerns by reducing dependency on foreign suppliers for critical goods and protecting domestic manufacturing capabilities.

Additionally, these measures might provide leverage in negotiating more favorable trade terms with countries that have historically imposed higher tariffs on American goods. Some defenders maintain that tariffs can help revitalize manufacturing regions that have suffered from globalization's effects and protect American workers from what they view as unfair international competition.

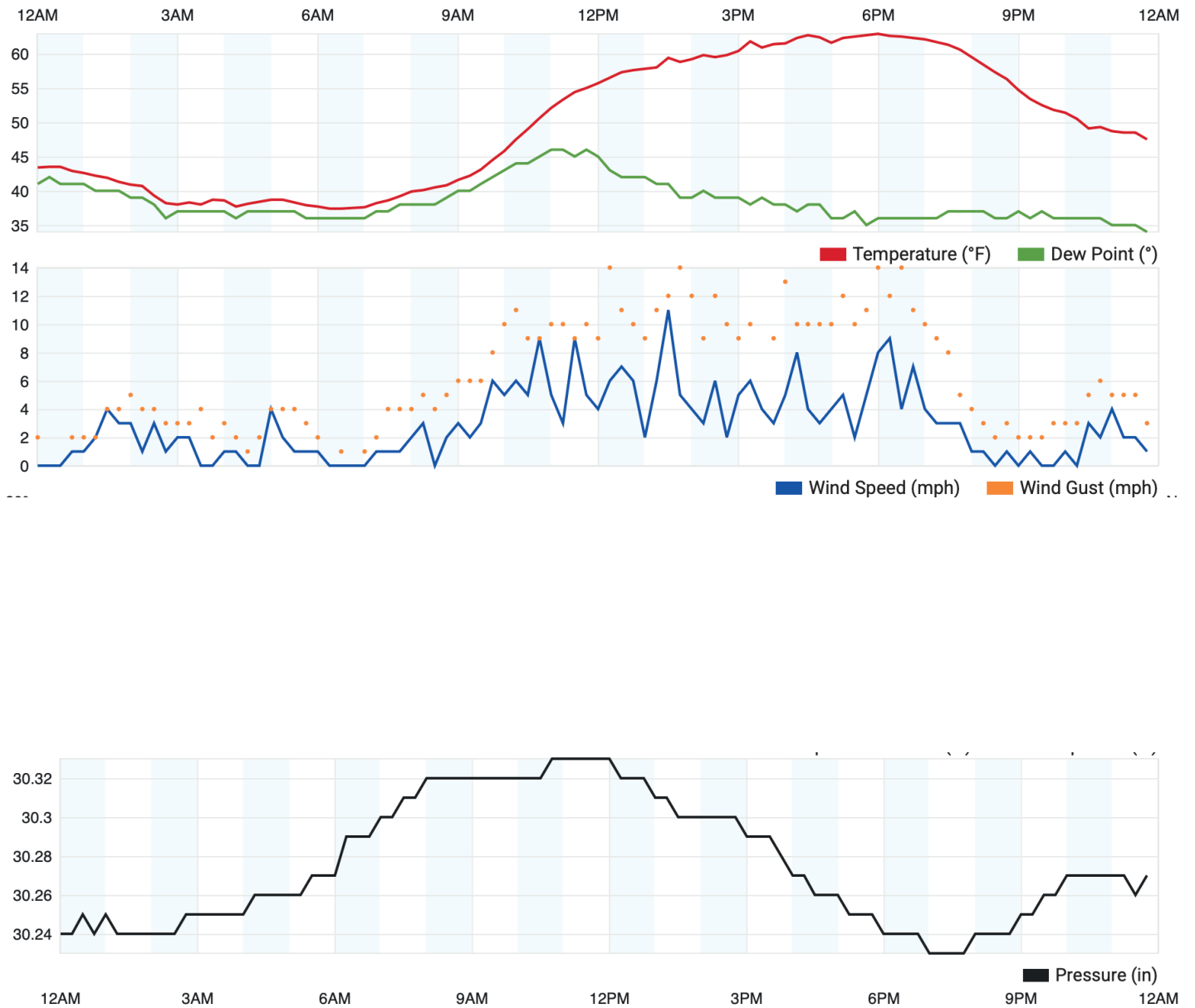
I hope President Trump, a graduate of the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, also learned this lesson: Yes, we have no (need to grow) bananas.

Todd Epp is a mostly retired journalist and lawyer from Harrisburg, South Dakota. He is the publisher and editor of Northern Plains News LLC, an independent news organization. He has worked in both commercial and public broadcasting in South Dakota and Kansas.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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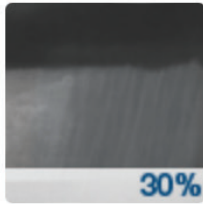
Today



High: 62 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
Showers and
Breezy

Tonight



Low: 48 °F

Chance
Showers

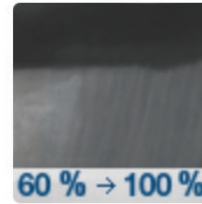
Sunday



High: 70 °F

Mostly Cloudy
and Breezy

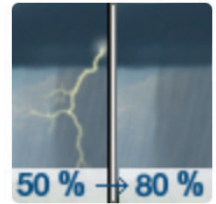
Sunday Night



Low: 54 °F

Showers
Likely then
Showers

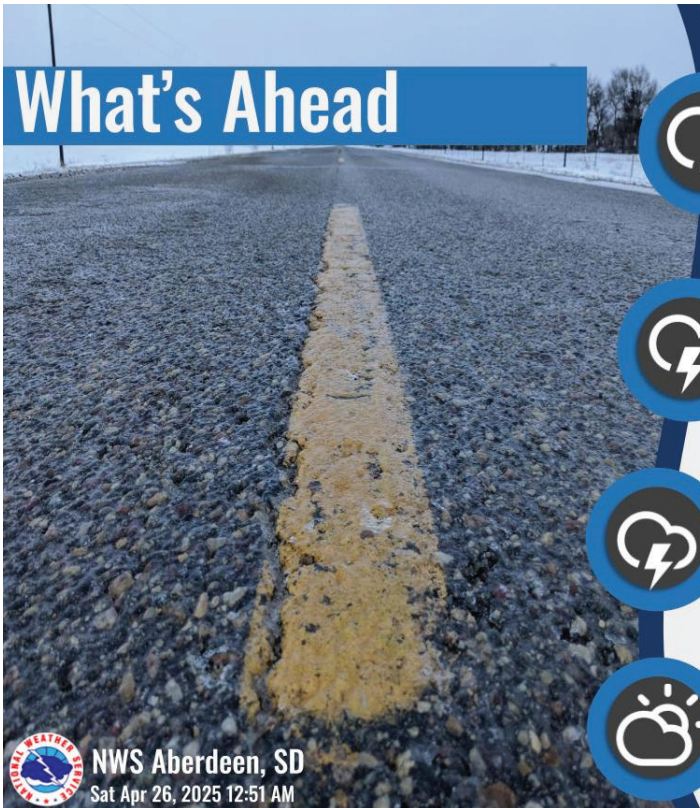
Monday



High: 69 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Showers and
Breezy

What's Ahead



Saturday

Light Showers

Highs: 58-65°



Sunday

AM Light Showers/
PM Showers & Storms

Highs: 65-77°



Monday

PM Northwest Winds 30-40mph

Highs: 58-72°



Tuesday

Clearing
AM Northwest Winds 30-40mph

Highs: 55-62°



NWS Aberdeen, SD
Sat Apr 26, 2025 12:51 AM

Light shower activity will hang around with us today before departing east. Then the next system comes in late Sunday. Most of the storms look to be occurring overnight which will limit the severe weather potential, with the system then moving east Monday.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 63 °F at 5:38 PM

Low Temp: 37 °F at 6:11 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 5:16 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 08 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 86 in 1952

Record Low: 20 in 1931

Average High: 63

Average Low: 35

Average Precip in April.: 1.54

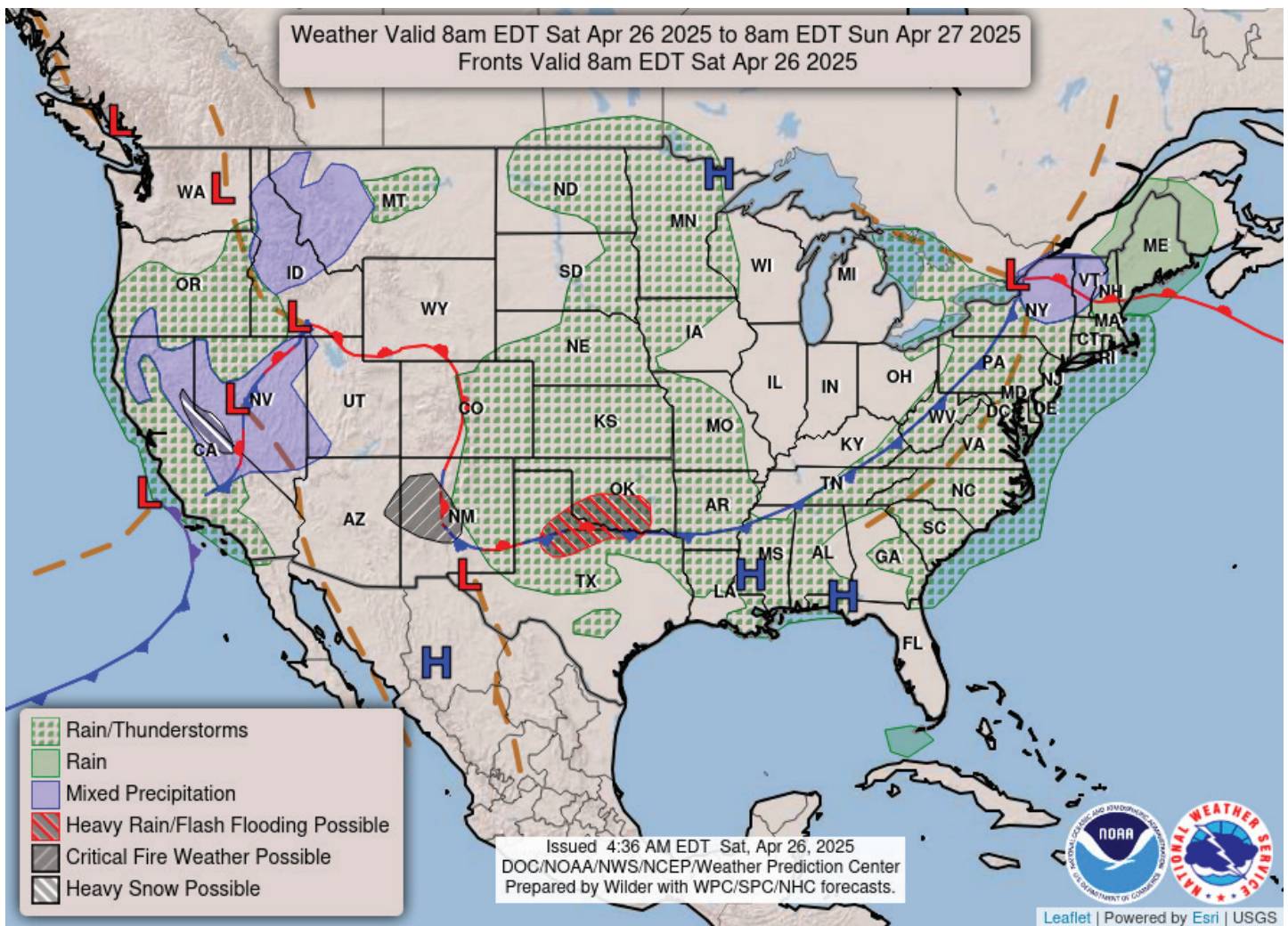
Precip to date in April.: 1.58

Average Precip to date: 3.60

Precip Year to Date: 2.21

Sunset Tonight: 8:34:29 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:24:09 am



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Today in Weather History

April 26th, 1986: Intense thunderstorms swept across southeast South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, and northwest Iowa. Baseball size hail fell in a 15-mile wide swath from near Pickstown to Scotland, South Dakota. The large hail caused extensive damage to windows, roofs, siding, and vehicles in the storm's path. Wind gusts of 70 to 80 mph and rain amounts of 2 or more inches in a short period (including 5 inches at Centerville) were reported in southeast South Dakota. Several tornadoes moved across northwest Iowa, including one that ran across part of Lyon County, destroying several farmsteads. Another tornado moved through Lyon County, Iowa, into Nobles County, Minnesota, damaging at least 16 farms. Another tornado touched down briefly on the south side of Okebena in Jackson County, destroying or damaging several houses.

April 26th, 1991: During a severe thunderstorm, large hail fell over parts of Brown, Spink, Hand, and Buffalo Counties. Both Brown and Hand Counties received hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter.

April 25-26th, 2008: An area of low-pressure brought widespread heavy snow of 6 to 20 inches to most of northeast South Dakota for much of the 25th and into the early morning hours of the 26th. The precipitation began as light freezing rain in the early morning across parts of the area before changing to all snow by mid-morning. Snowfall rates and north winds also increased as the low-pressure area intensified. The heavy snow combined with the high winds created widespread visibility problems and large snowdrifts. Snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Andover, Britton, Gann Valley, and 15 miles south of Miller, 8 inches at Roy Lake, 9 inches at Clark, Big Stone City, Hillside Colony, and Sisseton, 10 inches 7 miles south of Bristol, and 11 inches at Hayti. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included 12 inches at Wilmot, Webster, and Waubay, 13 inches at Milbank, 15 inches at Castlewood, 16 inches near Victor and Summit, 17 inches at Clear Lake, 19 inches at Watertown, and 20 inches at Bryant.

Some automobiles went into the ditch, and many other vehicles were damaged in accidents. Many stranded motorists had to abandon their cars in the hardest hit areas. Travel was not advised across the entire region. A school bus slid into a ditch east of Castlewood with no injuries. Interstate-29 was closed from 3 pm the 25th until 3 pm on the 26th from Brookings north to the North Dakota border. Also, South Dakota State Highway 12 was closed from Webster to the Minnesota line from the afternoon of the 25th until the late morning of the 26th. Most counties affected by the storm opened emergency shelters when Interstate 29 was closed to house stranded motorists. Also, many schools were closed across the area.

The very heavy snow set several records across the area. The 19 inches at Watertown broke its all-time 24-hour snowfall record of 16 inches. Both Victor and Clear Lake had their second-highest snowfall ever recorded in a 24-hour period. Watertown and several other locations in northeast South Dakota received near-record or record snowfall for April. Watertown's 29.5 inches of snow for April was almost their average seasonal snowfall.

1834 - Killer frosts were reported in the Deep South. The frost was quite severe around Huntsville AL, and highlighted a backward spring in the South that year. (David Ludlum)

1978 - An unusually strong occluded front swept out of the Gulf of Alaska and produced the first April thunderstorm of record at Fairbanks. Pea size hail fell northeast of Fairbanks from thunderstorms whose tops were less than 8000 feet. (The Weather Channel)

1984 - Severe thunderstorms associated with an intense cyclone spawned a total of forty-seven tornadoes in two days from Louisiana to Upper Michigan. The tornadoes killed 16 persons and injured 259 others. (Storm Data)

1987 - Twenty-two cities in the central and western U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 83 degrees at Astoria OR smashed their previous record by 13 degrees. Sacramento CA hit 94 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - While Rochester, MN, was blanketed with 13.7 inches of snow, establishing a single storm record for the month of April, Minneapolis MN, just 90 miles away, got only rain. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



The Power of Christ

The Holy Spirit will release power when we choose to obey our Father's call.

Ephesians 3:13-19 English Standard Version

¹³ So I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Strength

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Paul frequently wrote about the need to rely on Christ's strength. He shared a promise the Lord had given him: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul was a great Christian leader, but in God's eyes, he was no more deserving of grace than any other person. We can have the same confidence in the Lord's power that the apostle had.

When Paul received Jesus as his Lord and Savior, he was adopted as God's son. His sins were forgiven, and he received the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:9), so he could begin his work for the Lord's service (Gal. 1:15).

Consider Paul's jail time. To help him endure imprisonment, the Holy Spirit provided physical and mental stamina. And at the same time, He burdened the hearts of other believers to provide for Paul's needs (Phil. 4:18). Most importantly, God's Spirit gave him the courage to speak of Jesus Christ with his Roman guards (Phil. 1:13).

Paul relied upon God for strength and consequently never gave up on his faith. We serve the same all-powerful God, which means we have no excuse for running away from His plan, either. His Spirit dwells in us and is ready to release power when we obey our Father's call.

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.25.25

38 40 60 62 70 9

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$70,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.23.25

18 24 34 40 42 8

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$31,550,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 55 Mins 47 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.25.25

9 15 40 41 48 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 10 Mins 47 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.23.25

1 23 26 27 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$124,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 10 Mins 47 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.23.25

37 42 49 54 66 26

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 39 Mins 47 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.23.25

15 44 63 66 69 20

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$168,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 39 Mins 47 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

The Latest: Francis is remembered as a 'pope among the people' in his funeral Mass

By The Associated Press undefined

VATICAN CITY (AP) — World dignitaries and Catholic faithful attended Pope Francis' funeral in St. Peter's Square on Saturday.

Despite the presence of presidents and princes, prisoners and migrants ushered him into the basilica where he will be buried, reflecting his priorities as pope, as hundreds of thousands have flocked to the funeral Mass.

U.S. President Donald Trump, French President Emmanuel Macron, the U.N. chief and European Union leaders, as well as Prince William and the Spanish royal family, were in attendance.

Francis is breaking with recent tradition and will be buried in the St. Mary Major Basilica, where a simple underground tomb awaits him with just his name: Franciscus.

Here is the latest:

Francis is remembered as a 'pope among the people' in his funeral Mass

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re eulogized Pope Francis on Saturday as a pope of the people, a pastor who knew how to communicate to the "least among us" with an informal, spontaneous style.

Re called Francis "a pope among the people, with an open heart towards everyone."

He recalled the last image many people have of Francis was of him delivering what would become his final blessing on Easter Sunday, and saluting from the popemobile in the same piazza where his funeral was being celebrated.

Vatican says about 200,000 people have flocked to Pope Francis' funeral Mass

The brief statement did not specify if that was in St. Peter's Square alone.

Mourners were lined up along Via della Conciliazione, which leads up to the Vatican, and followed the Mass on big screens in public squares in Rome, including outside the Santa Maria Major Basilica.

Trump and Zelenskyy meet before the service

That's according to Zelenskyy's press office.

White House Communications Director Steven Cheung confirmed the meeting and said they "met privately today and had a very productive discussion."

"More details about the meeting will follow," he said.

Shortly after arriving in Rome last Friday, Trump said on social media that Ukraine and Russia should meet for "very high-level talks" on ending the three-year war sparked by Russia's invasion. His envoy, Steve Witkoff, met with Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier Friday, and Trump said both sides were "very close to a deal."

Pope Francis' funeral Mass begins in a packed St. Peter's Square

Tens of thousands flocked to the funeral, which Francis choreographed himself when he revised and simplified the Vatican's rites and rituals last year.

Pallbearers carry Pope Francis' simple wooden coffin

They carried the coffin, adorned with just a crucifix and Francis' coat of arms, down the central aisle of St. Peter's Basilica and out into the square at the start of his funeral.

Red-robed cardinals lined the path and followed behind as the crowd in the square erupted in applause in a sign of respect.

Cardinals flank pope's coffin

Cardinals in rich red robes formed a double line in St. Peter's Basilica, flanking the coffin as it was carried into the square for the funeral Mass. Pallbearers lifted the coffin to applause from the square.

Trump takes his seat for the funeral

Trump, in a blue suit, and his wife, Melania, were escorted out of St. Peter's Basilica to their seats for

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the service.

He was followed afterward by Zelenskyy, who was greeted with a burst of applause from the audience.

Giant photographs of Carlo Acutis seen in St. Peter's Square

Acutis was supposed to have been canonized on Sunday as the Catholic Church's first millennial saint.

The Vatican suspended the ceremony after Pope Francis died, but many people who had made plans to be in Rome for the canonization came anyway to attend the funeral. Announcers asked all flags and banners be lowered as the funeral was getting underway.

Bells toll to signal the start of the procession

Francis' coffin will be brought from St. Peter's Basilica to the front of the altar in the square.

Mourners were instructed to refrain from waving flags or banners during the procession.

Mourners are led in rosary prayer as dignitaries take their seats at Pope Francis' funeral

World leaders and royalty sat to the right of the main altar.

EU Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni and Argentine President Javier Milei have all made their way to their seating.

The Argentine and Italian leaders have a place of pride in the seating order.

Trump arrives at funeral to pay respects to Pope Francis

The U.S. president clashed with the pope on immigration, climate and other issues.

Donald Trump arrived with his wife, Melania. He is among more than 50 heads of state and other dignitaries attending the funeral of Pope Francis.

Mourners remember Pope Francis

They spoke of the pontiff in emotional terms while lining up along Via della Conciliazione for Pope Francis' funeral in St. Peter's Square.

Miguel Vaca, a pilgrim from Peru, lined up at 7 a.m.

"He was a very charismatic pope, very human, very kind, above all very human," Vaca said. "It's a very great emotion to say goodbye to him."

Italian pilgrim Pasquale Vezza made his way to the square with his family. He said the pope "was a bit like everyone's grandfather."

"He will be greatly missed as a person, as a pope. ... Now we hope that there will be a continuation, especially of his message of peace," Vezza said.

Ukrainian president arrives in Rome for papal funeral

Volodymyr Zelenskyy's press office confirmed his arrival, joining the first lady Olena Zelenska, who preceded him.

Zelenskyy's presence was put in doubt after a recent missile attack.

Pope's coffin will be placed on the back of a popemobile used on a Philippines trip

The pope will get one more ride past the faithful on one of his beloved popemobiles.

The Vatican says for Saturday's burial procession, his coffin will be placed on the back of a popemobile used during his 2015 trip to the Philippines.

The vehicle has been modified so the coffin will be visible to mourners along the nearly 4-kilometer (2.5-mile) route from St. Peter's Basilica to his place of burial.

The pope reveled in being driven through crowds of faithful whether in St. Peter's Square or on one of his many foreign trips. His last was on Easter Sunday, when he looped around St. Peter's Square to the delight of the faithful who had followed his 5-week hospitalization for pneumonia and his recovery at the Vatican.

A Calabria parish group camped out all night to get a good spot

The 13 spent the night in a nearby square. They were already coming to Rome for the planned canonization of the first millennial saint on Sunday, which was suspended by Francis' death. Instead, they drove up a day early for his funeral.

"The Lord wanted it this way, so we came all the same," said Sandra De Felice of Anzio in the Calabria region. "For me, this is a sign that we need to be truly humble and charitable. Otherwise, we are nothing."

Mourners race to find a spot in St Peter's Square

Ordinary mourners streamed Saturday to get a spot in standing room near the rear of the square sur-

rounding the ancient obelisk, behind VIP seating. The area to the left of the main altar, up the basilica steps, is reserved for celebrants and Catholic hierarchy, while world leaders and royalty will be seated on the right.

Many ran toward the square as barricades opened. Some carried banners for the Jubilee Holy Year that Francis opened in December and will continue despite his death Monday following a stroke.

Trump pays his respects to a pope who publicly and pointedly disagreed with him, meets Zelenskyy

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

ROME (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday was among more than 50 heads of state and other dignitaries attending the funeral of Pope Francis, where he paid his respects to the Roman Catholic leader who pointedly disagreed with him on a variety of issues.

Trump also met briefly with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy before the service, both the White House and Zelenskyy's office confirmed. White House communications director Steven Cheung said they "met privately today and had a very productive discussion" and that more details would follow.

Trump arrived at the Vatican with his wife, first lady Melania Trump, and was seated in the front row, not far from French President Emmanuel Macron, for the outdoor service.

Trump told reporters on Friday as he flew to Rome that he was going to the funeral "out of respect" for the pontiff, who died Monday after suffering a stroke at the age of 88.

Francis sharply disagreed with Trump's approach on issues including immigration, the treatment of migrants and climate change. The Argentine pontiff and the American president sparred early in their relationship over immigration. In 2016, Francis, alluding to then-candidate Trump and his campaign slogan of "Build the wall," called anyone who builds a wall to keep out migrants "not Christian." Trump said the comment was "disgraceful."

But after Francis' death, the Republican president praised him as a "good man" who "worked hard" and "loved the world." Trump also directed that U.S. flags be flown at half-staff in Francis' honor.

Trump had said on a couple of occasions before leaving Washington that he would have "a lot" of meetings with counterparts on the sidelines of the funeral. But he seemed to back away from that as he flew to Rome.

"Frankly, it's a little disrespectful to have meetings when you're at the funeral of a pope," the president told reporters accompanying him aboard Air Force One. Nonetheless, Trump said: "I'll be talking to people. I'll be seeing a lot of people."

The leaders of France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Hungary and Argentina are among those who attended.

One person Trump didn't expect to interact with is former President Joe Biden, a practicing Roman Catholic who attended with his wife, Jill. Biden, wearing his signature aviator sunglasses was seated several rows behind Trump, who had said he didn't know his Democratic predecessor would be at the funeral. Asked if they'd meet, Trump said: "It's not high on my list. It's really not."

The pope's funeral is not one of those occasions that bring together the current and former U.S. presidents. Former Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush were not attending, their offices said. A spokesperson for former President Bill Clinton did not respond to an inquiry about his plans.

Trump didn't elaborate when asked if he'd just be meeting with leaders in passing or holding more in-depth talks.

"It's a little tough because we don't have much time," Trump said, noting his late arrival in Rome on Friday. He was scheduled to head back to the United States immediately after the funeral.

"I think that we're going to try and see a couple of people that are important in what we're doing," said Trump, who is trying to broker a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine and negotiate trade agreements with multiple countries.

After Trump was shown to his seat for the funeral, he was immediately followed out of St. Peter's Basilica by Zelenskyy, who was greeted with a burst of applause from the audience.

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Trump posted on Truth Social shortly after arriving in Rome that Ukraine and Russia should meet for “very high level talks” on ending the bloody three-year war sparked by Russia’s invasion. His envoy, Steve Witkoff, had met earlier Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Trump said both sides were “very close to a deal.” Putin did not attend the funeral.

Mighty and meek attend Pope Francis’ funeral, a ceremony he helped reimagine

By NICOLE WINFIELD and COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — World leaders and Catholic faithful bade farewell to Pope Francis in a funeral Saturday reflecting his priorities as pope and wishes as pastor. Though presidents and princes attended the Mass in St. Peter’s Square, prisoners and migrants will welcome him into the basilica across town where he will be laid to rest.

Some 200,000 people flocked to the funeral, held on a brilliant spring day that was supposed to have been a special Holy Year celebration for adolescents. Perhaps because so many young people were on hand, the somber ceremony still had a festive mood, with mourners taking selfies amid the hymns as Francis’ simple coffin was brought out of St. Peter’s Basilica at the start of the Mass.

Francis had choreographed the funeral himself when he revised and simplified the Vatican’s rites and rituals last year. His aim was to emphasize the pope’s role as a mere pastor and not “a powerful man of this world.”

It was a reflection of Francis’ 12-year project to radically reform the papacy, to stress priests as servants and to construct “a poor church for the poor.” He articulated the mission just days after his 2013 election and it explained the name he chose as pope, honoring St. Francis of Assisi “who had the heart of the poor of the world,” according to the official decree of the pope’s life that was placed in his simple wooden coffin before it was sealed Friday night.

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re remembered him as a “pope among the people, with an open heart towards everyone.”

He recalled the last image many people have of Francis was of him delivering what would become his final blessing on Easter Sunday, and saluting from the popemobile in the same piazza where his funeral was being celebrated.

Despite Francis’ focus on the powerless, the powerful were at his funeral. U.S. President Donald Trump and former President Joe Biden, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, and European Union leaders joined Prince William and European royals leading more than 160 official delegations. Argentine President Javier Milei had the pride of place given Francis’ nationality, even if the two didn’t particularly get along and the pope alienated many Argentines by never returning home.

The white facade of St. Peter’s glowed pink as the sun rose Saturday and hordes of mourners rushed into the square. Giant television screens were set up along the surrounding streets for those who couldn’t get close. The Mass and funeral procession — with Francis’ coffin carried on the open-topped popemobile he used during his 2015 trip to the Philippines — were also being broadcast live around the world.

Police helicopters whirled overhead, part of the massive security operation Italian authorities mounted, including more than 2,500 police and 1,500 soldiers and a torpedo ship off the coast, Italian media reported.

Many mourners had planned to be in Rome anyway this weekend for the now-postponed Holy Year canonization of the first millennial saint, Carlo Acutis, and groups of scouts and youth church groups nearly outnumbered the gaggles of nuns and seminarians.

“He was a very charismatic pope, very human, very kind, above all very human,” said Miguel Vaca, a pilgrim from Peru who said he had camped out near the piazza. “It is a very great emotion to say goodbye to him.”

The poor and marginalized welcome him

Francis, the first Latin American and first Jesuit pope, died Easter Monday at age 88 after suffering a stroke while recovering at home from pneumonia.

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Following his funeral, preparations can begin in earnest to launch the centuries-old process of electing a new pope, a conclave that will likely begin in the first week of May. In the interim, the Vatican is being run by a handful of cardinals, key among them Re, the 91-year-old dean of the College of Cardinals who presided at the funeral and is organizing the secret voting in the Sistine Chapel.

Francis is breaking with recent tradition and will be laid to rest in St. Mary Major Basilica, near Rome's main train station, where a simple tomb awaits him with just his name: Franciscus. As many as 300,000 people are expected to line the 4-kilometer (2.5-mile) motorcade route that will bring Francis' coffin from the Vatican through the center of Rome to the basilica after the funeral.

Forty special guests, organized by the Vatican's Caritas charity and the Sant'Egidio community, will greet his coffin at the basilica, honoring the marginalized groups Francis prioritized as pope: homeless people and migrants, prisoners and transgender people.

"The poor have a privileged place in the heart of God," the Vatican quoted Francis as saying in explaining the choice.

A special relationship with the basilica

Even before he became pope, Francis had a particular affection for St. Mary Major, home to a Byzantine-style icon of the Madonna, the Salus Populi Romani, to which Francis was particularly devoted. He would pray before it before and after each of his foreign trips as pope.

The choice of the basilica is also symbolically significant given its ties to Francis' Jesuit religious order. St. Ignatius Loyola, who founded the Jesuits, celebrated his first Mass in the basilica on Christmas Day in 1538.

Crowds waited hours to bid farewell to Francis

Over three days this week, more than 250,000 people stood for hours in line to pay their final respects while Francis' body lay in state in St. Peter's Basilica. The Vatican kept the basilica open through the night to accommodate them, but it wasn't enough. When the doors closed to the general public at 7 p.m. on Friday, mourners were turned away in droves.

By dawn Saturday, they were back and ready to say a final farewell, some recalling the words he uttered the very first night of his election and throughout his papacy.

"We are here to honor him because he always said 'don't forget to pray for me,'" said Sister Christiana Neenwata from Biafrana, Nigeria. "So we are also here to give to him this love that he gave to us."

Indian military says Pakistani troops fired at positions along the border in disputed Kashmir

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN, RAJESH ROY and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Pakistani soldiers fired at Indian posts along the highly militarized frontier in disputed Kashmir for a second consecutive night, the Indian military said Saturday, as tensions flared between the nuclear-armed rivals following a deadly attack on tourists last week.

India described the massacre, in which gunmen killed 26 people, most of them Indian tourists, as a "terror attack" and accused Pakistan of backing it.

Pakistan denies the charge. The assault, near the resort town of Pahalgam in India-controlled Kashmir, was claimed by a previously unknown militant group calling itself the Kashmir Resistance.

It was the restive region's worst assault targeting civilians in years. In the days since, tensions have risen dangerously between India and Pakistan, which have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir. The region is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

The Indian army said Saturday that soldiers from multiple Pakistani army posts overnight opened fire at Indian troops "all across the Line of Control" in Kashmir. "Indian troops responded appropriately with small arms," the statement said. There were no casualties reported, the statement added.

There was no comment from Pakistan, and the incidents could not be independently verified. In the past, each side has accused the other of starting border skirmishes in the Himalayan region.

Markets and bazaars were open in Pakistan-administered Kashmir on Saturday, and there was no sign

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of evacuations from villages located near the Line of Control.

Tit-for-tat measures and a spike in tensions

After the tourist attack, India suspended a crucial water-sharing treaty and closed the only functional land border crossing. It revoked visas issued to Pakistanis with effect from Sunday.

Pakistan retaliated by canceling visas issued to Indians, closing its airspace to Indian-owned or Indian-operated airlines, and suspending trade with India. Nationals from both sides began heading to their home countries through the Wagah border near Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore on Friday.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday vowed the government would respond "with full force and might" to Indian attempts to stop or divert the flow of water.

He also said Pakistan was open to participating in any "neutral, transparent and credible investigation" into the tourist attack.

New Delhi describes all militancy in Kashmir as Pakistan-backed terrorism, a charge Pakistan rejects. Many Muslim Kashmiris consider the militants to be part of a home-grown freedom struggle. Rebels have been fighting Indian rule since 1989 for uniting the territory, either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country.

Iran offers to mediate, while Trump declines to engage

With tensions high between the two countries, Iran offered mediation, while U.S. President Donald Trump said he expected them to work out their differences.

"Tehran stands ready to use its good offices in Islamabad and New Delhi to forge greater understanding at this difficult time," Iranian Foreign Minister Syed Abbas Araghchi said on Friday.

"India and Pakistan are brotherly neighbors of Iran, enjoying relations rooted in centuries-old cultural and civilizational ties. Like other neighbors, we consider them our foremost priority," Araghchi wrote in a social media post.

Trump on Friday said "there's great tension between Pakistan and India, but there always has been."

Trump, who spoke on board Air Force One, did not answer when asked by reporters whether he would contact leaders of the two countries, but said "they'll get it figured out one way or the other."

The U.S. has long called for calm between India and Pakistan, and mediated between the two rivals during a major border skirmish in 1999.

U.S. intelligence chief Tulsi Gabbard expressed solidarity with India.

"We are with you and support you as you hunt down those responsible for this heinous attack," Gabbard said on the X platform.

India intensifies its crackdown in Kashmir

Shortly after Tuesday's attack, Indian forces intensified a crackdown in the Kashmir Valley, the heartland of anti-India rebellion. They detained and questioned at least 1,500 people, three police officials said.

Troops detonated explosives in the family homes of at least three suspected militants in southern Kashmir Friday night, residents said. In one such incident, dozens of other houses also suffered damage, with their windowpanes shattering and walls cracking due to the impact of the blast.

The police officials insisted on anonymity, in keeping with their departmental policy, while the villagers feared reprisals from authorities.

Early Friday, troops also destroyed the family homes of two suspected militants they accused of being involved in Tuesday's attack.

Indian troops demolish homes as a common anti-militancy tactic in Kashmir.

Iran and the US begin expert talks in Oman over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

MUSCAT, Oman (AP) — Iran and the United States began in-depth negotiations in Oman over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program on Saturday, talks that likely will hinge on the Islamic Republic's enrichment of uranium.

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Iranian state television reported the talks had begun in Muscat, the mountain-wrapped capital of this sultanate on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. However, neither Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi nor U.S. Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff offered any immediate specifics or details on the talks that they'll lead.

Araghchi arrived Friday in Oman and met with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, who has mediated the two previous round of talks in Muscat and Rome. Araghchi then visited the Muscat International Book Fair, surrounded by television cameras and photojournalists. Video late Saturday morning showed Araghchi heading to the talks.

Witkoff was in Moscow on Friday meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin. He arrived Saturday to Oman, where the talks were expected to start in the coming hours, a source familiar with Witkoff's travels told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door negotiations.

Nuclear talks come after decades of tensions

The talks seek to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of some of the crushing economic sanctions the U.S. has imposed on the Islamic Republic closing in on half a century of enmity.

U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's program if a deal isn't reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn that they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels.

Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers did limit Tehran's program. However, Trump unilaterally withdrew from it in 2018, setting in motion years of attacks and tensions. The wider Middle East also remains on edge over the devastating Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Trump, traveling to Rome for the funeral of Pope Francis, again said he hoped negotiations would lead to a new nuclear deal. However, he still held out the possibility of a military strike if they didn't.

"The Iran situation is coming out very well," Trump said on Air Force One. "We've had a lot of talks with them and I think we're going to have a deal. I'd much rather have a deal than the other alternative. That would be good for humanity."

He added: "There are some people that want to make a different kind of a deal — a much nastier deal — and I don't want that to happen to Iran if we can avoid it."

Talks turn to experts

While Araghchi and Witkoff are again expected to speak through the Omanis, experts on both sides also will begin negotiating details of a possible deal.

From the Iranian side, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-e Ravanchi will lead Tehran's expert team, said Mohammad Golzari, an Iranian government official. Takht-e Ravanchi took part in the 2015 nuclear talks.

The U.S. technical team, which is expected to arrive in Oman on Friday, will be led by Michael Anton, the director of U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's policy planning staff. Anton does not have the nuclear policy experience of those who led America's efforts in the 2015 talks.

Iran has insisted that keeping its enrichment is key. But Witkoff has muddled the issue by first suggesting in a television interview that Iran could enrich uranium at 3.67%, then later saying that all enrichment must stop. That demand all enrichment stop also has been repeated by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

However, Iranians remain hopeful the talks could be successful, as the Iranian rial has rebounded from historic lows during which it took over 1 million rial to buy \$1.

"It's OK to negotiate, to make the nuclear program smaller or bigger, and reach a deal," Tehran resident Farzin Keivan said. "Of course we shouldn't give them everything. After all, we've suffered a lot for this program."

What to know about the funeral and burial of Pope Francis

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Pope Francis died on Easter Monday at the age of 88. His death set off mourning across the Catholic world and days of ritual at the Vatican. Here are the key things to know about the

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funeral of the first Latin American pontiff in the church's history:

When and where is his funeral being held?

His funeral is being held on Saturday in St. Peter's Square. Francis will then be buried, according to his will: in a simple underground tomb at St. Mary Major Basilica. The church is home to his favorite icon of the Virgin Mary, to whom he was particularly devoted.

The sealing of the coffin

The night before the funeral, the camerlengo presided over the closing and sealing of the coffin, in the presence of other senior cardinals. A white cloth was placed over Francis' face.

A bag containing coins minted during his papacy was placed in the coffin along with a one-page written account of his papacy — known in Italian as a "rogito," a word indicating an official deed. It was read aloud by the master of liturgical ceremonies and then rolled up and slipped inside a cylindrical tube that was placed inside the coffin. Another copy is kept in the Vatican archives. The covers of both the zinc coffin and the wooden one bear a cross and Francis' papal coat of arms.

Why not at the Vatican?

Francis had said he wanted to be buried not in St. Peter's Basilica or its grottoes, where most popes are buried, but in the St. Mary Major Basilica across town. His choice reflects his veneration of an icon of the Virgin Mary that is located there, the Salus Populi Romani (Salvation of the people of Rome).

Before and after every foreign trip, Francis would go to the basilica to pray before the Byzantine-style painting that features an image of Mary, draped in a blue robe, holding the infant Jesus who in turn holds a jeweled golden book.

Which dignitaries are expected to attend?

Heads of state, including U.S. President Donald Trump, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and French President Emmanuel Macron, are among those expected for the funeral. Others dignitaries include: Prince William, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and European Council President António Costa.

How long did the pope serve?

Pope Francis had a 12-year papacy during which he charmed the world with his humility and concern for the poor. But the Argentina-born pope also alienated conservatives with critiques of capitalism and climate change.

So, how do they choose a new pope?

The death of a pope starts a centuries-old ritual to elect a new one, involving sacred oaths by the cardinals, the piercing of ballots with a needle and thread after they're counted, and then burning them to produce either the white or black smoke to signal if there's a new leader for the world's 1.4 billion Catholics.

With the burial, the Catholic Church begins nine days of official mourning, known as the "novemdiales". The date of the conclave to elect a new pope has not yet been announced.

In the conclave, the cardinals will vote in secret sessions, and the ballots will be burned in a special stove after each session. Black smoke indicates no pope has been elected; white smoke says the cardinals have chosen the next head of the Catholic Church.

Any baptized Catholic male is eligible, though only cardinals have been selected since 1378. The winner must receive at least two-thirds of the vote from those cardinals under age 80 who are eligible to participate.

Francis appointed the vast majority of electors, often tapping men who share his pastoral priorities, which suggests continuity rather than rupture.

While it's impossible to predict who the next pope will be, some cardinals are considered to have better chances than others.

Is it like the movie?

Yes and no. "Conclave" the 2024 film, introduced many laypeople to the ancient selection process with its arcane rules and grand ceremony, albeit with a silver screen twist packed full of palace intrigue and surprise.

Vatican experts say the movie excels at re-creating the look and feel of a conclave. But there are discrepancies, errors and some outlandish storylines in the Hollywood version. And while the voting process was depicted accurately, the ballots are burned not after each vote, but after each session.

The legacy of Francis

Francis was known for his personal simplicity, from the choice of his name Francis in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, who renounced wealth to help the poor, to the outward symbols and priorities of his papacy.

He chose to live in the Vatican's Domus Santa Marta hotel instead of the Apostolic Palace and wore his old orthotic shoes and not the red loafers of the papacy.

In his teachings, he focused on concern for refugees and other marginalized people. His first trip outside Rome as pope in 2013 was to the Sicilian island of Lampedusa to meet with newly arrived migrants. His plea for welcome put him at odds with U.S. and European policies.

He also signaled a more welcoming stance toward LGBTQ+ people, while also making the fight against climate change a priority. Francis became the first pope to use scientific data in a major teaching document and made care for God's creation a hallmark of his papacy.

He eschewed the grandiose even in his departure, lying in state in a simple coffin made of wood.

Virginia Giuffre, who accused Britain's Prince Andrew in Epstein sex trafficking scandal, has died

By JENNIFER PELTZ and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

Virginia Giuffre, who accused Britain's Prince Andrew and other influential men of sexually exploiting her as a teenager trafficked by financier Jeffrey Epstein, has died. She was 41.

Giuffre died by suicide Friday at her farm in Western Australia, her publicist confirmed.

"Virginia was a fierce warrior in the fight against sexual abuse and sex trafficking. She was the light that lifted so many survivors," her family said in a statement. "Despite all the adversity she faced in her life, she shone so bright. She will be missed beyond measure."

Her publicist Dini von Mueffling described Giuffre as "deeply loving, wise and funny."

"She adored her children and many animals. She was always more concerned with me than with herself," von Mueffling wrote in a statement. "I will miss her beyond words. It was the privilege of a lifetime to represent her."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in Australia is available by calling 13 11 14. In the U.S., it is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org

The American-born Giuffre, who lived in Australia for years, became an advocate for sex trafficking survivors after emerging as a central figure in Epstein's prolonged downfall.

The wealthy, well-connected New York money manager killed himself in August 2019 while awaiting trial on U.S. federal sex trafficking charges involving dozens of teenage girls and young women, some as young as 14. The charges came 14 years after police in Palm Beach, Florida, first began investigating allegations that he sexually abused underage girls who were hired to give him massages.

Giuffre came forward publicly after the initial investigation ended in an 18-month Florida jail term for Epstein, who made a secret deal to avoid federal prosecution by pleading guilty instead to relatively minor state-level charges of soliciting prostitution. He was released in 2009.

In subsequent lawsuits, Giuffre said she was a teenage spa attendant at Mar-a-Lago — President Donald Trump's Palm Beach club — when she was approached in 2000 by Epstein's girlfriend and later employee, Ghislaine Maxwell.

Giuffre said Maxwell hired her as a masseuse for Epstein, but the couple effectively made her a sexual servant, pressuring her into gratifying not only Epstein but his friends and associates. Giuffre said she was flown around the world for assignations with men including Prince Andrew while she was 17 and 18.

The men denied it and assailed Giuffre's credibility. She acknowledged changing some key details of her account, including the age at which she first met Epstein.

But many parts of her story were supported by documents, witness testimony and photos — including one of her and Andrew, with his arm around her bare midriff, in Maxwell's London townhouse.

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Giuffre said in one of her lawsuits that she had sex with the royal three times: in London during her 2001 trip, at Epstein's New York mansion when she was 17 and in the Virgin Islands when she was 18.

"Ghislaine said, 'I want you to do for him what you do for Epstein,'" Giuffre told NBC News' "Dateline" in September 2019.

Andrew categorically rejected Giuffre's allegations and said he didn't recall having met her.

His denials blew up in his face during a November 2019 BBC interview. Viewers saw a prince who proffered curious rebuttals — such as disputing Giuffre's recollection of sweaty dancing by saying he was medically incapable of perspiring — and showed no empathy for the women who said Epstein abused them.

Within days of the interview, Andrew stepped down from his royal duties. He settled with Giuffre in 2022 for an undisclosed sum, agreeing to make a "substantial donation" to her survivors' organization. A statement filed in court said that the prince acknowledged Epstein was a sex trafficker and Giuffre "an established victim of abuse."

She also filed, and in at least some cases settled, lawsuits against Epstein and others connected to him. In one case, she dropped her claims against a prominent U.S. attorney, saying she might have erred in identifying him as one of the men to whom Epstein supplied her.

Epstein's suicide put an end to his accusers' hopes of holding him criminally accountable.

Maxwell was convicted in 2021 on federal sex trafficking and conspiracy charges and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. She said she wasn't to blame for Epstein's abuse.

Prosecutors elected not to include Giuffre's allegations in the Maxwell case, but Giuffre later told the court that the British socialite had "opened the door to hell."

Giuffre, born Virginia Roberts, told interviewers that her childhood was shattered when she was sexually abused as a grade-schooler by a man her family knew. She later ran away from home and endured more abuse, she said.

She said she met her now-husband in 2002 while taking massage training in Thailand at Epstein's behest. She married, moved to Australia and had a family.

Giuffre founded an advocacy charity, SOAR, in 2015.

Giuffre separated from her husband and children this year. She had been charged with breaching a family violence restraining order over an incident in February, and was set to appear in court in June in the city of Perth, where her estranged husband and children live.

She had yet to enter a plea to the charge. A conviction would have carried a potential maximum sentence of two years in prison.

Giuffre was hospitalized after a serious accident, her publicist said last month. She didn't answer questions at the time about the date, location, nature or other specifics of the accident and about the accuracy of an Instagram post that appeared to come from Giuffre. The post said she had been in a car that was hit by a school bus and her prognosis was dire.

She is survived by her three children, whom the statement described as the "light of her life."

Sigrid McCawley, an attorney for Giuffre, said in a statement, "Her courage pushed me to fight harder, and her strength was awe-inspiring. The world has lost an amazing human being today. Rest in peace, my sweet angel."

The AP does not identify people who say they were victims of sexual assault unless they have come forward publicly.

Trump's attack on diversity takes center stage as Boston remembers 1965 Freedom Rally led by MLK

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — As a Black teenager growing up in Boston, Wayne Lucas vividly remembers joining some 20,000 people to hear the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. speak out against the city's segregated school system and the entrenched poverty in poor communities.

Sixty years on, Lucas will be back on the Boston Common on Saturday to celebrate the anniversary of

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what became known as the 1965 Freedom Rally. This time, though, Lucas expects much of the focus will be on President Donald Trump and concerns that the commander-in-chief is exploiting divisions and fears about race and immigration.

"There's different forms of, how do we say it, racism and also I have to include fascism, what's going on in this country," said Lucas, a social activist and retired postal worker who was standing on the Boston Common near the site of 20-foot-high (6-meter) memorial to racial equity, "The Embrace," where the rally will be held.

The rally will be preceded by a march mostly along the route taken to the Boston Common in 1965 and feature up to 125 different organizations.

"People gotta be aware and say something," he continued. "We can grumble (and) stuff like that, but we need to take part and do something."

1965 protest brings civil rights movement to the Northeast

The original protest rally in 1965 brought the civil rights movement to the Northeast, a place King knew well from his time earning a doctorate in theology from Boston University and serving as assistant minister at the city's Twelfth Baptist Church. It was also the place he met his wife, Coretta Scott King, who earned a degree in music education from the New England Conservatory.

In his speech, King told the crowd that he returned to Boston not to condemn the city but to encourage its leaders to do better at a time when Black leaders were fighting to desegregate the schools and housing and working to improve economic opportunities for Black residents. King also implored Boston to become a leader that other cities like New York and Chicago could follow in conducting "the creative experiments in the abolition of ghettos."

"It would be demagogic and dishonest for me to say that Boston is a Birmingham, or to equate Massachusetts with Mississippi," he told the crowd. "But it would be morally irresponsible were I to remain blind to the threat to liberty, the denial of opportunity, and the crippling poverty that we face in some sections of this community."

Rally followed Civil Rights Act signing in 1964

The Boston rally happened after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and months ahead of the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 signed in August.

King and other civil rights movement leaders had just come off the Selma to Montgomery march in Alabama, also referred to as Blood Sunday, weeks before the Boston rally. The civil rights icon also was successful in the 1963 Birmingham campaign prompting the end of legalized racial segregation in the Alabama city, and eventually throughout the nation.

This time in Boston, King's eldest son, Martin Luther King III, will be the keynote speaker. He and other speakers are expected to touch on some of the same issues that have plagued communities of color for decades including the need for good jobs, decent health care and affordable housing.

DEI comes under threat by Trump administration

His visit also comes at a time when the Trump administration is waging war on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in government, schools and businesses around the country, including in Massachusetts.

Since his Jan. 20 inauguration, Trump has banned diversity initiatives across the federal government. The administration has launched investigations of colleges — public and private — that it accuses of discriminating against white and Asian students with race-conscious admissions programs intended to address historic inequities in access for Black students.

The Defense Department at one point temporarily removed training videos recognizing the Tuskegee Airmen and an online biography of Jackie Robinson. In February, Trump fired Air Force Gen. CQ Brown Jr., a champion of racial diversity in the military, as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Brown, in the wake of Floyd's killing, had spoken publicly about his experiences as a Black man, and was only the second Black general to serve as chairman.

The administration has fired diversity officers across government, curtailed some agencies' celebrations of Black History Month and terminated grants and contracts for projects ranging from planting trees in

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disadvantaged communities to studying achievement gaps in American schools. Trump also wants to force changes at the Smithsonian Institution with an executive order targeting funding for programs that advance "divisive narratives" and "improper ideology."

Massachusetts also impacted

The efforts also impact Massachusetts. The state has pushed back against threats from the Trump administration to cut funding if the state doesn't comply with an Education Department order to certify local school systems' compliance with a race-neutral interpretation of civil rights laws.

The Museum of African American History in Boston also announced earlier this month that a \$500,000 federal grant received last year has been terminated.

"Make no mistake, these efforts are designed to marginalize and destabilize the Museum of African American History, and African American public history institutions like us," the museum wrote in a statement. "We are all in danger of being erased."

Martin Luther King III told The Associated Press that the attacks on diversity make little sense, noting, "We cannot move forward without understanding what happened in the past."

"It doesn't mean that it's about blaming people. It's not about collective guilt. It's about collective responsibility," he continued. "How do we become better? Well, we appreciate everything that helped us to get to where we are. Diversity hasn't hurt the country."

King said opponents of diversity have floated an uninformed narrative that unqualified people of color are taking jobs from white people, when the reality is they have long been denied opportunities they deserve.

"I don't know if white people understand this, but Black people are tolerant," he said. "From knee-high to a grasshopper, you have to be five times better than your white colleague. And that's how we prepare ourselves. So it's never a matter of unqualified, it's a matter of being excluded."

Imari Paris Jeffries, the president and CEO of Embrace Boston, which along with the city is putting on the rally, said the event is a chance to remind people that elements of the "promissory note" King referred to in his "I Have A Dream" speech remain "out of reach" for many people.

"We're having a conversation about democracy. This is the promissory note — public education, public housing, public health, access to public art," Paris Jeffries said. "All of these things are a part of democracy. Those are the things that are actually being threatened right now."

Ex-US Rep. George Santos sentenced to over 7 years in prison for fraud and identity theft

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

CENTRAL ISLIP, N.Y. (AP) — Disgraced former U.S. Rep. George Santos was sentenced Friday to over seven years in prison, sobbing as he learned his punishment for the crimes that led to his expulsion from Congress.

Santos, who pleaded guilty last summer to federal wire fraud and aggravated identity theft, appealed for mercy. In a federal court a short drive from his old congressional district, he said through tears that he was "humbled" and "chastened" and understood he had betrayed his constituents' trust.

"I offer my deepest apologies," he said, adding: "I cannot rewrite the past, but I can control the road ahead."

U.S. District Court Judge Joanna Seybert evidently wasn't convinced.

"Where is your remorse? Where do I see it?" she asked as she sentenced him to 87 months behind bars. "It's always someone else's fault."

The New York Republican, who must report to prison July 25, didn't respond to reporters' questions outside the courthouse.

Hours later, though, he took to social media angling for a White House reprieve, despite saying in recent days he wouldn't seek clemency.

"I believe that 7 years is an over the top politically influenced sentence and I implore that President Trump gives me a chance to prove I'm more than the mistakes I've made," he wrote on the social platform

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X late Friday.

Santos, 36, served in Congress less than a year before becoming just the sixth member of the House to be ousted by colleagues.

He admitted to deceiving donors and stealing the identities of nearly a dozen people, including his family members, to fund his winning campaign. His plea deal included agreeing to pay roughly \$580,000 in penalties.

"From the moment he declared his candidacy for Congress, Santos leveraged his campaign for his own enrichment and financial benefit," U.S. Attorney John Durham, whose office prosecuted the case, said outside court.

Santos' victims included a woman with brain damage and two octogenarian men, prosecutor Ryan Harris told the judge.

Defense lawyer Andrew Mancilla had asked the judge for a sentence of two years, portraying Santos as a troubled figure who grew up in a "broken house" and was subjected to bullying throughout his life.

As a result, "he built the man he wanted to be, not who he was," Mancilla said. "He did that because he believed that the world would not accept him for who he was."

"Deep down, he is warm, kind, caring and thoughtful," Mancilla said.

But, the lawyer said, now "everyone hates George Santos."

Santos was elected in 2022, flipping a wealthy district representing parts of Queens and Long Island for the GOP.

Soon after, it was revealed that the political unknown had fabricated much of his life story, painting himself as a successful business owner who worked at prestigious Wall Street firms and held a valuable real estate portfolio.

In reality, Santos was struggling financially and even faced eviction.

He falsely claimed to have been a volleyball star at a college he never even attended. He had referred to himself during the campaign as "a proud American Jew," but later acknowledged that he was Catholic and insisted he'd only said he was "Jew-ish" after learning that his maternal family had a Jewish background.

Reporters uncovered that Santos had been accused in Brazil of using stolen checks to buy clothing, and that he had once been charged in Pennsylvania with using bad checks to buy puppies from dog breeders.

The revelations led to congressional and criminal inquiries into how he had funded his campaign.

"He told lie after lie until it caught up with him — until we caught up with him and exposed him for what he truly was: an opportunist and a fraud," Nassau County District Attorney Anne Donnelly, a Republican, said outside court Friday. Her office also investigated Santos.

Before winning office, Santos collected unemployment benefits from New York state while actually working for a Florida company. Once in Congress, he cosponsored legislation intended to root out unemployment fraud.

As his sentencing approached, Santos was reflective and apologetic in social media posts, but at other times seemed to relish his notoriety.

He launched a podcast called "Pants on Fire with George Santos," and earned hundreds of thousands of dollars selling cheerful, personalized video messages on Cameo. He leaned into his longtime support of Trump, praising the new administration.

The week of his sentencing, Santos told The Associated Press by text he was "ready to face the music." On X, he made one final plug for his Cameo account.

"Think ahead and of any celebration or event coming up later this year. Book them today," Santos wrote, ending the post with a series of heart emojis.

What to know about the tensions between Iran and the US before their third round of talks

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

MUSCAT, Oman (AP) — Iran and the United States will hold talks Saturday in Oman, their third round of negotiations over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program.

The talks follow a first round held in Muscat, Oman, where the two sides spoke face to face. They then met again in Rome last weekend before this scheduled meeting again in Muscat.

Trump has imposed new sanctions on Iran as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign targeting the country. He has repeatedly suggested military action against Iran remained a possibility, while emphasizing he still believed a new deal could be reached by writing a letter to Iran's 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to jump start these talks.

Khamenei has warned Iran would respond to any attack with an attack of its own.

Here's what to know about the letter, Iran's nuclear program and the tensions that have stalked relations between Tehran and Washington since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Why did Trump write the letter?

Trump dispatched the letter to Khamenei on March 5, then gave a television interview the next day in which he acknowledged sending it. He said: "I've written them a letter saying, 'I hope you're going to negotiate because if we have to go in militarily, it's going to be a terrible thing.'"

Since returning to the White House, the president has been pushing for talks while ratcheting up sanctions and suggesting a military strike by Israel or the U.S. could target Iranian nuclear sites.

A previous letter from Trump during his first term drew an angry retort from the supreme leader.

But Trump's letters to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in his first term led to face-to-face meetings, though no deals to limit Pyongyang's atomic bombs and a missile program capable of reaching the continental U.S.

How did the first round go?

Oman, a sultanate on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, hosted the first round of talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and U.S. Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff. The two men met face to face after indirect talks and immediately agreed to this second round in Rome.

Witkoff later made a television appearance in which he suggested 3.67% enrichment for Iran could be something the countries could agree on. But that's exactly the terms set by the 2015 nuclear deal struck under U.S. President Barack Obama, from which Trump unilaterally withdrew America.

Witkoff hours later issued a statement underlining something: "A deal with Iran will only be completed if it is a Trump deal." Araghchi and Iranian officials have latched onto Witkoff's comments in recent days as a sign that America was sending it mixed signals about the negotiations.

Yet the Rome talks ended up with the two sides agreeing to starting expert-level talks this Saturday. Analysts described that as a positive sign, though much likely remains to be agreed before reaching a tentative deal.

Why does Iran's nuclear program worry the West?

Iran has insisted for decades that its nuclear program is peaceful. However, its officials increasingly threaten to pursue a nuclear weapon. Iran now enriches uranium to near weapons-grade levels of 60%, the only country in the world without a nuclear weapons program to do so.

Under the original 2015 nuclear deal, Iran was allowed to enrich uranium up to 3.67% purity and to maintain a uranium stockpile of 300 kilograms (661 pounds). The last report by the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iran's program put its stockpile at 8,294.4 kilograms (18,286 pounds) as it enriches a fraction of it to 60% purity.

U.S. intelligence agencies assess that Iran has yet to begin a weapons program, but has "undertaken activities that better position it to produce a nuclear device, if it chooses to do so."

Ali Larijani, an adviser to Iran's supreme leader, has warned in a televised interview that his country has

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the capability to build nuclear weapons, but it is not pursuing it and has no problem with the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspections. However, he said if the U.S. or Israel were to attack Iran over the issue, the country would have no choice but to move toward nuclear weapon development.

"If you make a mistake regarding Iran's nuclear issue, you will force Iran to take that path, because it must defend itself," he said.

Why are relations so bad between Iran and the U.S.?

Iran was once one of the U.S.'s top allies in the Mideast under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who purchased American military weapons and allowed CIA technicians to run secret listening posts monitoring the neighboring Soviet Union. The CIA had fomented a 1953 coup that cemented the shah's rule.

But in January 1979, the shah, fatally ill with cancer, fled Iran as mass demonstrations swelled against his rule. The Islamic Revolution followed, led by Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and created Iran's theocratic government.

Later that year, university students overran the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, seeking the shah's extradition and sparking the 444-day hostage crisis that saw diplomatic relations between Iran and the U.S. severed. The Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s saw the U.S. back Saddam Hussein. The "Tanker War" during that conflict saw the U.S. launch a one-day assault that crippled Iran at sea, while the U.S. later shot down an Iranian commercial airliner that the American military said it mistook for a warplane.

Iran and the U.S. have see-sawed between enmity and grudging diplomacy in the years since, with relations peaking when Tehran made the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. But Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the accord in 2018, sparking tensions in the Mideast that persist today.

Thousands gather in New Mexico for the largest powwow in North America

By SUSAN MONTTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Thousands of people are gathering in New Mexico for a celebration showcasing Native American and Indigenous dancers, musicians and artisans from around the world.

Billed by organizers as the largest powwow in North America, the annual Gathering of Nations festival kicked off Friday with a colorful procession of dancers spiraling into the center of an arena at the New Mexico state fairgrounds.

Participants wear elaborate regalia — some with jingling bells and others with feathers. They dance to the tempo of rhythmic drumming, each coming to the gathering for their own reasons.

"It's not just for show," said Deshava Apachee, who is Mescalero Apache and Navajo. "It's for healing, it's for strength, it's for reconnecting."

The event also features the crowning of Miss Indian World, as well as horse parades in which riders are judged on the craftsmanship of their intricately beaded adornments or feathered headdresses and how well they work with their horses.

Powwow roots

Powwows are a relatively modern phenomenon that emerged in the 1800s as the U.S. government seized land from tribes throughout the Northern and Southern Plains. Forced migrations and upheaval during this period resulted in intertribal solidarity among Plains people and those from the southern prairies of Canada.

Alliances were formed, giving way to the exchange of songs and dances during gatherings between different tribes. In the decades that followed, powwows were advertised to pioneers heading westward as "authentic" Native American dance shows. For some, it was an exploitation of their cultures.

The word powwow was derived from pau wau, an Algonquian Narrtuck word for "medicine man," according to the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Scholars say English settlers misused the word to refer to the meetings of medicine men and later to any kind of Native American gathering.

Today, some of the large powwows like the Gathering of Nations have become more commercialized events that use dancing and drumming competitions, with prize money at stake, to provide a glimpse into Indigenous cultures.

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Reconnecting with culture

At ceremonial dances, participants wear traditional regalia specific to their tribe, whereas powwow attire often is more contemporary and flashy with sequins and sparkles. It is about dressing to impress the judges, said Warren Queton, a Kiowa Tribe legislator and adjunct instructor at the University of Oklahoma who has participated in community dancing and cultural events since he was a boy.

Queton, who served as the head gourd dancer at the university's recent spring powwow, said ceremonial dances are deeply rooted in community, identity and cultural values.

It is a struggle to keep traditional cultural practices and commercial powwows from being lumped into the same category, he said. Powwow ways and ceremonial traditions have different meanings in Native American and Indigenous cultures.

There has been a focus on promoting smaller powwows held in tribal communities. Queton said these gatherings serve as a way for people who live elsewhere to return home and reconnect with their families and the land, and to share traditions with younger generations.

"Knowing where you come from, your land, your oral traditions, your language, but also values and traits — that can only be learned from a community," he said. "That's why those smaller dances are so important because people learn those community values. They're all a part of our identity."

Capturing good energy

There still are elements of tradition woven in to modern powwows. Competitors wear feathered bustles, buckskin dresses, fringed shawls and beaded head and hair pieces. Some of the elaborate outfits are hand-stitched designs that can take months to complete.

The sounds, movements and emotions that radiate from the dancing are challenging to capture on canvas. But Cochiti Pueblo painter Mateo Romero did just that when he partnered with the U.S. Postal Service to create a series of powwow stamps unveiled Friday during Gathering of Nations.

Powerfully hypnotic, atavistic and somatic is how the artist describes the dancing. One of his pieces depicts what is known as a fancy shawl dance with its dips, pivots, hops and twirls. Each tassel on the shawl flows and flips, accentuating the dancer's movements.

Romero said he used color, thick and thin paint and soft and hard edges along with photographic elements to create something that feels alive, embedded with feeling and bright pops of color.

Romero called it a huge honor to transform powwow culture into a postage stamp filled with "good energy."

"I look at it as a sort of vehicle to express this sentiment, the energy, the celebration, the vibration, the beauty of it," he said. "It's the power of it."

Pope's burial place reflects his 'humble, essential' life, Rome's poor will pay him a final tribute

By GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis chose his place of burial in St. Mary Major Basilica, near an icon of the Madonna that he revered, because it reflects his "humble, simple and essential" life, the archbishop who administers the basilica said Friday.

Francis, who died Monday at age 88, will be buried in a niche tomb in the basilica on Saturday after his funeral in St. Peter's Square about 4 kilometers (2½ miles) away.

Francis initially demurred when Archbishop Rolandas Makrickas suggested in May 2022 that he choose St. Mary Major as his last resting place. Makrickas had identified it because of the pontiff's long association with the basilica, its ties to Francis' Jesuit order, its artistic and spiritual heritage and links to the papacy. Seven other popes are buried there, but none since 1669.

At first, "he said no because popes are buried in St. Peter's," Makrickas told reporters on the steps of the basilica. "After a week, he called me to (his home at the Vatican) Santa Marta and he said 'Prepare my tomb.'"

The pope later insisted that his tomb remain simple, stressing that people should still come to the basilica

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dedicated to the Virgin Mary "to venerate the Madonna, not to see the tomb of a pope," Makrickas said.
Marble from Liguria

Francis will be buried beneath a simple headstone made of marble from Liguria, the Italian region of his mother's family, engraved with his name in Latin: Franciscus. Above it will hang a slightly enlarged replica of his pectoral cross, featuring raised images of a shepherd carrying a sheep over his shoulders and a dove, but no other adornments.

The tomb is placed in a niche next to the chapel where the Salus Populi Romani icon that the pope revered is located, and in a part of the basilica that was once a door to an adjacent palace where four popes lived. During his 12-year papacy, Francis would pray before the icon before and after each foreign trip.

The basilica also has significance for the Jesuit pope: It's where the founder of the religious order, St. Ignatius Loyola, celebrated his first Mass on Christmas Day in 1538.

St. Mary Major is a pontifical basilica, one of four in Rome, and has never been destroyed, damaged or burned over the ages, with history dating back to the fifth century. Makrickas called it "a treasure chest of art and spirituality."

Mary's protection

Tens of thousands of faithful flocked here since Francis' death on Monday, and hundreds stood patiently in line on Friday morning to explore the place where he will be buried, now cordoned off and obscured by plywood.

Carlos Taborda, 39, traveled to Europe from Brazil with his husband and a group of friends.

"It was a coincidence to be in Italy now, for the pope's death," he said. "We paid homage to him yesterday in St. Peter's and now we're going to see the place where he'll rest forever."

Felicia Vewawati, a 35-year-old nun from Indonesia, prayed in silence in front of the wooden box protecting Francis' tomb.

"To me this pope was very special," she said. "He would always come to pray in this church, I think because he could feel Mary's protection here."

St. Mary Major is perched on top of one of the seven hills on which ancient Rome was built and its bell tower is the tallest in the capital.

While Francis' tomb will be simple and essential, the basilica strikes visitors with its gilded wood ceilings and intricate mosaics adorning the floor of the central nave.

Special bond with youth

"I felt very close to Francis, I liked his kindness," said 8-year-old Flavia Chiodaroli, who came to Rome with her parents from Pavia, in northern Italy. "I want to tell Francis I love him very much and I hope the next pope will be like him."

Chiodaroli was among the many children and teens who visited St. Mary Major on Friday as part of the Jubilee of Teenagers, which was taking place in Rome despite Francis' death. The event is expected to draw over 80,000 teenagers from all over the world to the Vatican to celebrate the special bond between Francis and youth.

The pope will start his final journey on Saturday morning from St. Peter's Square – where his funeral will be attended by over 160 international delegations, including royals and world leaders.

His casket will be driven to St. Mary Major through Rome. The motorcade is expected to move slowly so that the public along the route can pay homage for the last time.

Upon arrival, Francis' casket will be greeted by a group of Rome's poor and needy people, those whom the pontiff felt closer to. Around 40 people — homeless, prisoners, migrants and transgender people — will salute the pope holding a white rose, just before his burial.

"The poor have a special place in the heart of the Holy Father, who chose the name Francis to never forget them," the Vatican said.

FBI arrests a Milwaukee judge accused of helping a man evade immigration authorities

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER, DEVI SHASTRI and SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The FBI on Friday arrested a Milwaukee judge accused of helping a man evade immigration authorities, escalating a clash between the Trump administration and local authorities over the Republican president's sweeping immigration crackdown.

Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Hannah Dugan is accused of escorting the man and his lawyer out of her courtroom through the jury door last week after learning that immigration authorities were seeking his arrest. The man was taken into custody outside the courthouse after agents chased him on foot.

President Donald Trump's administration has accused state and local officials of interfering with his immigration enforcement priorities. The arrest also comes amid a growing battle between the administration and the federal judiciary over the president's executive actions over deportations and other matters.

Dugan was taken into custody by the FBI on Friday morning on the courthouse grounds, according to U.S. Marshals Service spokesperson Brady McCarron. She appeared briefly in federal court in Milwaukee later Friday before being released from custody. She faces charges of "concealing an individual to prevent his discovery and arrest" and obstructing or impeding a proceeding.

"Judge Dugan wholeheartedly regrets and protests her arrest. It was not made in the interest of public safety," her attorney, Craig Mastantuono, said during the hearing. He declined to comment to an Associated Press reporter following her court appearance.

Democratic Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, in a statement on the arrest, accused the Trump administration of repeatedly using "dangerous rhetoric to attack and attempt to undermine our judiciary at every level."

"I will continue to put my faith in our justice system as this situation plays out in the court of law," he said.

Court papers suggest Dugan was alerted to the presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in the courthouse by her clerk, who was informed by an attorney that they appeared to be in the hallway.

The FBI affidavit describes Dugan as "visibly angry" over the arrival of immigration agents in the courthouse and says that she pronounced the situation "absurd" before leaving the bench and retreating to her chambers. It says she and another judge later approached members of the arrest team inside the courthouse, displaying what witnesses described as a "confrontational, angry demeanor."

After a back-and-forth with officers over the warrant for the man, Eduardo Flores-Ruiz, she demanded that the arrest team speak with the chief judge and led them away from the courtroom, the affidavit says.

After directing the arrest team to the chief judge's office, investigators say, Dugan returned to the courtroom and was heard saying words to the effect of "wait, come with me" before ushering Flores-Ruiz and his lawyer through a jury door into a non-public area of the courthouse. The action was unusual, the affidavit says, because "only deputies, juries, court staff, and in-custody defendants being escorted by deputies used the back jury door. Defense attorneys and defendants who were not in custody never used the jury door."

A sign that remained posted on Dugan's courtroom door Friday advised that if any attorney or other court official "knows or believes that a person feels unsafe coming to the courthouse to courtroom 615," they should notify the clerk and request an appearance via Zoom.

Flores-Ruiz, 30, was in Dugan's court for a hearing after being charged with three counts of misdemeanor domestic battery. Confronted by a roommate for playing loud music on March 12, Flores-Ruiz allegedly fought with him in the kitchen and struck a woman who tried to break them up, according to the police affidavit in the case.

Another woman who tried to break up the fight and called police allegedly got elbowed in the arm by Flores-Ruiz.

Flores-Ruiz faces up to nine months in prison and a \$10,000 fine on each count if convicted. His public defender, Alexander Kostal, did not immediately return a phone message Friday seeking comment.

A federal judge, the same one Dugan would appear before a day later, had ordered Thursday that Flores-

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Ruiz remain jailed pending trial. Flores-Ruiz had been in the U.S. since reentering the country after he was deported in 2013, according to court documents.

Attorney General Pam Bondi said victims were sitting in the courtroom with state prosecutors when the judge helped him escape immigration arrest.

"The rule of law is very simple," she said in a video posted on X. "It doesn't matter what line of work you're in. If you break the law, we will follow the facts and we will prosecute you."

White House officials echoed the sentiment of no one being above the law.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat who represents Wisconsin, called the arrest of a sitting judge a "gravely serious and drastic move" that "threatens to breach" the separation of power between the executive and judicial branches.

Emilio De Torre, executive director of Milwaukee Turners, said during a protest Friday afternoon outside the federal courthouse that Dugan was a former board member for the local civic group who "was certainly trying to make sure that due process is not disrupted and that the sanctity of the courts is upheld."

"Sending armed FBI and ICE agents into buildings like this will intimidate individuals showing up to court to pay fines, to deal with whatever court proceedings they may have," De Torre added.

The case is similar to one brought during the first Trump administration against a Massachusetts judge, who was accused of helping a man sneak out a back door of a courthouse to evade a waiting immigration enforcement agent.

That prosecution sparked outrage from many in the legal community, who slammed the case as politically motivated. Prosecutors dropped the case against Newton District Judge Shelley Joseph in 2022 under the Democratic Biden administration after she agreed to refer herself to a state agency that investigates allegations of misconduct by members of the bench.

The Justice Department had previously signaled that it was going to crack down on local officials who thwart federal immigration efforts.

The department in January ordered prosecutors to investigate for potential criminal charges any state and local officials who obstruct or impede federal functions. As potential avenues for prosecution, a memo cited a conspiracy offense as well as a law prohibiting the harboring of people in the country illegally.

Dugan was elected in 2016 to the county court Branch 31. She also has served in the court's probate and civil divisions, according to her judicial candidate biography.

Before being elected to public office, Dugan practiced at Legal Action of Wisconsin and the Legal Aid Society. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1981 with a bachelor of arts degree and earned her Juris Doctorate in 1987 from the school.

Kennedy Center's events scheduled for LGBTQ+ pride celebration canceled, organizers say

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Organizers and the Kennedy Center have canceled a week's worth of events celebrating LGBTQ+ rights for this summer's World Pride festival in Washington, D.C., amid a shift in priorities and the ousting of leadership at one of the nation's premier cultural institutions.

Multiple artists and producers involved in the center's Tapestry of Pride schedule, which had been planned for June 5 to 8, told The Associated Press that their events had been quietly canceled or moved to other venues. And in the wake of the cancellations, Washington's Capital Pride Alliance has disassociated itself from the Kennedy Center.

"We are a resilient community, and we have found other avenues to celebrate," said June Crenshaw, deputy director of the alliance. "We are finding another path to the celebration ... but the fact that we have to maneuver in this way is disappointing."

The Kennedy Center's website still lists Tapestry of Pride on its website with a general description and a link to the World Pride site. There are no other details.

The Kennedy Center did not respond to a request from the AP for comment.

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The move comes on the heels of massive changes at the Kennedy Center, with President Donald Trump firing both the president and chairman in early February. Trump replaced most of the board with loyalists, who then elected him the new Kennedy Center chairman.

The World Pride event, held every two years, starts in just under a month — running from May 17 through June 8 with performances and celebrations planned across the capital city. But Trump administration policies on transgender rights and comments about Kennedy Center drag performances have sparked concern about what kind of reception attendees will receive.

"I know that D.C. as a community will be very excited to be hosting World Pride, but I know the community is a little bit different than the government," said Michael Roest, founder and director of the International Pride Orchestra, which had its June 5 performance at the Kennedy Center abruptly canceled within days of Trump's takeover.

Roest told the AP he was in the final stages of planning the Kennedy Center performance after months of emails and Zoom calls. He was waiting on a final contract when Trump posted on social media Feb. 7 of the leadership changes and his intention to transform the Kennedy Center's programming.

Immediately the Kennedy Center became nonresponsive, Roest said. On Feb. 12, he said, he received a one-sentence email from a Kennedy Center staffer stating, "We are no longer able to advance your contract at this time."

"They went from very eager to host to nothing," he said. "We have not since heard a word from anybody at the Kennedy Center, but that's not going to stop us."

In the wake of the cancellation, Roest said he managed to move the International Pride Orchestra performance to the Strathmore theater in nearby Bethesda, Maryland.

Crenshaw said some other events, including a drag story time and a display of parts of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, would be moved to the World Pride welcome center in Chinatown.

Monica Alford, a veteran arts and culture journalist and event planner, was scheduled to organize an event June 8 as part of Tapestry of Pride, but said she also saw communication abruptly end within days of Trump's takeover.

Alford has a long history with the Kennedy Center and organized the first-ever drag brunch on the Kennedy Center rooftop in 2024, and said she regarded the institution — and its recent expansion known as The Reach — as "my home base" and "a safe space for the queer community"

She said she was still finalizing the details of her event, which she described as "meant to be family-friendly, just like the drag brunch was family-friendly and classy and sophisticated."

She said she mourns the loss of the partnership she nurtured with the Kennedy Center.

"We're doing our community a disservice — not just the queer community but the entire community," she said.

Roest said he never received an explanation as to why the performance was canceled so late in the planning stages. He said his orchestra would no longer consider performing at the Kennedy Center, and he believes most queer artists would make the same choice.

"There would need to be a very, very public statement of inclusivity from the administration, from that board, for us to consider that," he said. "Otherwise it is a hostile performance space."

Judge blocks Trump administration from nixing collective bargaining for most federal employees

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Friday temporarily blocked the Trump administration from implementing an executive order that a labor union says would cancel collective bargaining rights for hundreds of thousands of federal employees.

U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman ruled that a key part of President Donald Trump's March 27 order can't be enforced at roughly three dozen agencies and departments where employees are represented by the

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National Treasury Employees Union.

The union, which represents nearly 160,000 federal government employees workers, sued to challenge Trump's order. The union said it would lose more than half of its revenue and over two-thirds of its membership if the judge denied its request for a preliminary injunction.

Friedman said he would issue an opinion in several days to explain his two-page order. The ruling isn't the final word in the lawsuit. He gave the attorneys until May 2 to submit a proposal for how the case should proceed.

Union president Doreen Greenwald said the judge's order is "a victory for federal employees, their union rights and the American people they serve."

"The preliminary injunction granted at NTEU's request means the collective bargaining rights of federal employees will remain intact and the administration's unlawful agenda to silence the voices of federal employees and dismantle unions is blocked," Greenwald said in a statement.

Some agencies, including the FBI, are exempt from a law requiring federal agencies to bargain with labor organizations over employment matters. Presidents can apply the exemption to agencies that have a "primary function" of performing intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative or national security work.

But no president before Trump tried to use the national security exemption to exclude an entire cabinet-level agency from the law's requirements, according to the employees' union. It said Trump's order is designed to facilitate mass firings and exact "political vengeance" against federal unions opposed to his agenda.

"The President's use of the Statute's narrow national security exemption to undo the bulk of the Statute's coverage is plainly at odds with Congress's expressed intent," union attorneys wrote.

Government lawyers argued that the court order requested by the union would interfere with the president's duty to ensure federal workers are prepared to help protect national security.

"It is vital that agencies with a primary purpose of national security are responsive and accountable to the American people." Justice Department attorneys wrote.

The IRS is the largest bargaining unit represented by the National Treasury Employees Union. A day after Trump signed his order, the administration sued a union chapter in Kentucky to seek a ruling that it can terminate the collective bargaining agreement for the IRS.

The union says the administration has "effectively conceded" that its members don't do national security work. The union members affected by the executive order also include employees of the Health and Human Services Department, the Energy Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Communications Commission.

The union said it will lose approximately \$25 million in dues revenue over the next year. Some agencies, it says, already have stopped deducting union dues from employees' pay.

"In the absence of preliminary injunctive relief, NTEU may no longer be able to exist in a manner that is meaningful to the federal workers for whom it fights," union lawyers wrote.

Government attorneys argued that the courts typically defer to the president's judgment on national security matters.

"Executive actions that are facially valid — that is, within the lawful authority of the executive — are entitled to a presumption of regularity," they wrote.

ICE is reversing the termination of legal status for international students around the US

By JANIE HAR and KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The U.S. government is reversing the termination of legal status for international students around the country after many filed court challenges against the Trump administration crackdown, federal officials said Friday.

The records in a federal student database maintained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement had been terminated in recent weeks. Judges across the U.S. had already issued orders temporarily restoring

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students' records in dozens of lawsuits challenging the terminations.

More than 1,200 students nationwide suddenly lost their legal status or had visas revoked, leaving them at risk for deportation. Many said they had only minor infractions on their record or did not know why they were targeted. Some left the country while others have gone into hiding or stopped going to class.

Government says it will restore student status

Word of the policy pivot came Friday from lawyers representing the government in several of the lawsuits.

A lawyer for the plaintiff in one of the lawsuits, Brian Green, provided The Associated Press with a copy of a statement a government lawyer emailed to him on the restoration of legal status for people whose records were recently terminated.

It says: "ICE is developing a policy that will provide a framework for SEVIS record terminations. Until such a policy is issued, the SEVIS records for plaintiff(s) in this case (and other similarly situated plaintiffs) will remain Active or shall be re-activated if not currently active and ICE will not modify the record solely based on the NCIC finding that resulted in the recent SEVIS record termination."

SEVIS is the Student and Exchange Visitor Information Systems database that tracks international students' compliance with their visa status. NCIC is the National Crime Information Center, a database of criminal justice information maintained by the FBI.

Tricia McLaughlin, an assistant Homeland Security secretary, said ICE had not reversed course on any visa revocations but did "restore SEVIS access for people who had not had their visa revoked."

Several colleges said Friday they noticed legal status already had been restored for some of their students, but uncertainty remained.

"It is still unclear whether ICE will restore status to everyone it has targeted and whether the State Department will help students whose visas were wrongly revoked," said Greg Chen of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Legal fights may not be over

Green, who is involved in lawsuits on behalf of several dozen students, said his cases only sought restoration of the student status and that he would be withdrawing them as a result of the statement Friday from ICE.

But lawyers in the Oakland case are seeking a nationwide order from the court prohibiting the government from arresting or incarcerating students, transferring them to places outside their district or preventing them from continuing work or studies.

Pam Johann, a government lawyer, said it was premature to consider anything like that given that ICE was in the process of reactivating records and developing a policy. "We should take a pause while ICE is implementing this change that plaintiffs are seeking right now, on its own," she said.

But U.S. District Judge Jeffrey S. White asked her to humor the court.

"It seems like with this administration there's a new world order every single day," he said. "It's like whack-a-mole."

He ordered the government to clarify the new policy.

Visa revocations and student status terminations caused confusion

Last month, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said his department was revoking visas held by people acting counter to national interests, including some who protested Israel's war in Gaza and those who face criminal charges. But many students whose status was terminated said they did not fall under those categories.

A survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs research found that even the visa revocations for students who participated in pro-Palestinian protests are more unpopular than popular. About half of U.S. adults oppose this policy, and only 3 in 10 are in support. Among college educated adults, 6 in 10 strongly oppose, compared with 4 in 10 who aren't college graduates.

In lawsuits, students argued they were denied due process. Many were told that their status was terminated as a result of a criminal records check or that their visa had been revoked.

International students and their schools were caught off guard by the terminations of the students' records. Many of the terminations were discovered when school officials were doing routine checks of the

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international student database.

Charles Kuck, who filed a case in Atlanta on behalf of 133 students across the country said ICE's reversal can't undo the distress and hardship they have faced in recent weeks.

"I've got kids who lost their jobs, who might not get them back," he said. "I've got kids who lost school opportunities who might not get them back. We've got kids who missed finals, missed graduation. How do you get any of that stuff back?"

Jodie Ferise, a higher education attorney in Indiana, said some students at schools her law firm works with already left the country after receiving instructions to self-deport.

"This unprecedented treatment of student status had caused tremendous fear among international students," Ferise said. "Some of them were too frightened to wait and hope for the administration to change course."

Earlier this week, before the government's reversal, Ferise said the situation could hurt international student enrollment.

"The world is watching, and we will lose students, not just by the technical revocation of their status, but by the message we're sending that we don't want them anyway and that it isn't safe to even try to go to school here," she said.

At least 1,220 students at 187 colleges, universities and university systems have had their visas revoked, their legal status terminated or both, since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements, correspondence with school officials and court records. The AP has been working to confirm reports of hundreds more students who are caught up in the crackdown.

Trump calls for Ukraine and Russia to meet for 'very high level' talks, says they are close to deal

By ILLIA NOVIKOV, CHRIS MEGERIAN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

ROME (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday called for Ukraine and Russia to meet for "very high level talks," saying they are "very close to a deal" on ending the bloody three-year war.

Trump posted on his Truth Social site shortly after arriving in Rome for Pope Francis' funeral that it was a "good day in talks and meetings with Russia and Ukraine." His envoy, Steve Witkoff, had made a visit to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday,

"They are very close to a deal, and the two sides should now meet, at very high levels, to 'finish it off,'" Trump wrote. "Most of the major points are agreed to. Stop the bloodshed, NOW. We will be wherever is necessary to help facilitate the END to this cruel and senseless war!"

Trump's announcement followed him saying in an interview published Friday that "Crimea will stay with Russia," the latest example of how he has been pressuring Ukraine to make concessions to end the war while the country remains under siege.

He also earlier demanded on social media that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy "IMMEDIATELY" sign a long-delayed agreement giving the United States access to his nation's mineral resources.

Progress on ending the war has seemed elusive in the months since Trump returned to the White House, and his previous claims of imminent breakthroughs have failed to come to fruition. Russia continued its bombardment of Ukraine on Friday, killing three people with a drone strike on an apartment building in a southeastern city.

Despite a rare admonishment of Putin this week, Trump's focus has largely been on urging Zelenskyy to cut a deal that would involve ceding territory to Ukraine's invader. In an interview with Time magazine, Trump described Crimea as a place where Russia has "had their submarines" and "the people speak largely Russian."

"Crimea will stay with Russia," Trump said. "And Zelensky understands that, and everybody understands that it's been with them for a long time. It's been with them long before Trump came along."

When asked by reporters, Zelenskyy said he didn't want to comment on Trump's statement but repeated, as he has many times during the war, that recognizing occupied Ukrainian territory as Russian is a red

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line for his country.

Crimea is a strategic peninsula along the Black Sea in southern Ukraine. It was seized by Russia in 2014, while President Barack Obama was in office, years before Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbor in 2022.

Disagreements over next steps

Trump has been accusing Zelenskyy of prolonging the war by resisting negotiations with Putin. Western European leaders, however, have accused Putin of dragging his feet in the negotiations and seeking to grab more Ukrainian land while his army has battlefield momentum.

The war could be approaching a pivotal moment as the Trump administration weighs its options. Senior U.S. officials had warned that the administration could soon give up attempts to stop the war if the two sides did not come to a settlement. That could potentially mean a halt of crucial U.S. military aid for Ukraine.

Speaking to reporters Friday as he left the White House to attend the pope's funeral, Trump said there was no deadline for the conclusion of peace talks.

"I just want to do it as fast as possible," Trump said. Negotiators are "pretty close" to a deal, he said.

He promised to meet with foreign leaders while in Rome, and said it was "possible" he could meet with Zelenskyy. Zelenskyy said late Friday, however, that he was not sure he would make it to Rome in time for the funeral.

Witkoff's meeting with Putin on Friday was their second this month and the fourth since February. Witkoff's trip coincided with the death of a senior Russian military officer in a car bomb near Moscow.

The Kremlin released a short video of Putin and Witkoff greeting each other. "How are you, Mr. President?" Witkoff could be heard saying. "Fine, just fine, thank you," Putin responded in rare remarks in English, as the two shook hands.

Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov, who attended the talks, said the meeting lasted three hours and was "constructive" and "useful." Further talks are expected, he said.

Putin and Witkoff discussed, "in particular, the possibility of resuming direct negotiations between representatives of the Russian Federation and Ukraine," according to Ushakov. Delegations from the two countries last met in the weeks following Russia's February 2022 invasion of its neighbor.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview with CBS' "Face the Nation" that he agreed with Trump's opinion that negotiations "are moving in the right direction."

Russia, he said before Trump's post late Friday, is "ready to reach a deal, but there are still some specific points — elements of this deal which need to be fine-tuned." He declined to provide further details, according to excerpts of the interview that will air Sunday.

Russia's attacks claim more lives

Meanwhile, Russia has continued its bombardment of Ukraine. A drone struck an apartment building in a southeastern Ukraine city, killing three people and injuring 10 others, officials said Friday, a day after Trump rebuked Putin for a major missile and drone attack on Kyiv that killed 12 people and injured 87.

A child and a 76-year-old woman were among the civilians killed in the nighttime drone strike in Pavlohrad, in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region, the head of the regional administration, Serhii Lysak, wrote on Telegram.

Russian forces fired 103 Shahed and decoy drones at five Ukrainian regions overnight, Ukraine's air force reported. Authorities in the northeastern Sumy and Kharkiv regions reported damage to civilian infrastructure but no casualties.

Russian forces used Thursday's attack on Kyiv as cover to launch almost 150 assaults on Ukrainian positions along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, Zelenskyy said late Thursday.

"When the maximum of our forces was focused on defense against missiles and drones, the Russians went on to significantly intensify their ground attacks," he wrote on Telegram.

Zelenskyy noted Thursday that Ukraine agreed to a U.S. ceasefire proposal 44 days ago, as a first step to a negotiated peace, but that Russian attacks continued.

During recent talks, Russia hit the city of Sumy, killing more than 30 civilians gathered to celebrate Palm Sunday, battered Odesa with drones and blasted Zaporizhzhia with powerful glide bombs.

Justice Department says it will resume practice of obtaining reporters' records in leak inquiries

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is cracking down on leaks of information to the news media, with Attorney General Pam Bondi saying prosecutors will once again have authority to use subpoenas, court orders and search warrants to hunt for government officials who make “unauthorized disclosures” to journalists.

New regulations announced by Bondi in a memo to the staff obtained by The Associated Press on Friday rescind a Biden administration policy that protected journalists from having their phone records secretly seized during leak investigations — a practice long decried by news organizations and press freedom groups.

The new regulations assert that news organizations must respond to subpoenas “when authorized at the appropriate level of the Department of Justice” and also allow for prosecutors to use court orders and search warrants to “compel production of information and testimony by and relating to the news media.”

The memo says members of the press are “presumptively entitled to advance notice of such investigative activities,” and subpoenas are to be “narrowly drawn.” Warrants must also include “protocols designed to limit the scope of intrusion into potentially protected materials or newsgathering activities,” the memo states.

“The Justice Department will not tolerate unauthorized disclosures that undermine President Trump’s policies, victimize government agencies, and cause harm to the American people,” Bondi wrote.

Under the new policy, before deciding whether to use intrusive tactics against the news media, the attorney general is to evaluate whether there’s a reasonable basis to believe that a crime has been committed and that the information the government is seeking is needed for prosecution. Also, deciding whether prosecutors have first made reasonable attempts to “obtain the information from alternative sources” and whether the government has first “pursued negotiations with the affected member of the news media.”

The regulations come as the Trump administration has complained about a series of news stories that have pulled back the curtain on internal decision-making, intelligence assessments and the activities of prominent officials such as Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. Tulsi Gabbard, the director of national intelligence, said this week that she was making a trio of “criminal” referrals to the Justice Department over intelligence community leaks to the media.

The policy shift also comes amid continued scrutiny of the highest levels of the Trump administration over their own lapses in safeguarding sensitive information. National security adviser Michael Waltz was revealed last month to have inadvertently added a journalist to a group text using the Signal encrypted messaging service, where top officials were discussing plans to attack the Houthis. Hegseth has faced his own drumbeat of revelations over his use of Signal, including a chat that included his wife and brother, among others.

In a statement, Bruce Brown, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, said in a statement that “strong protections for journalists serve the American public by safeguarding the free flow of information.”

“Some of the most consequential reporting in U.S. history — from Watergate to warrantless wiretapping after 9/11 — was and continues to be made possible because reporters have been able to protect the identities of confidential sources and uncover and report stories that matter to people across the political spectrum,” he said.

The policy that Bondi is rescinding was created in by then-Attorney General Merrick Garland in the wake of revelations that the Justice Department officials alerted reporters at three news organizations — The Washington Post, CNN and The New York Times — that their phone records had been obtained in the final year of the Trump administration.

The new regulations from Garland marked a startling reversal of a practice of phone records’ seizures that had persisted across multiple presidential administrations. The Obama Justice Department, under then-Attorney General Eric Holder, alerted The Associated Press in 2013 that it had secretly obtained two months of phone records of reporters and editors in what the news cooperative’s top executive called a

"massive and unprecedented intrusion" into newsgathering activities.

After blowback, Holder announced a revised set of guidelines for leak investigations, including requiring the authorization of the highest levels of the department before subpoenas for news media records could be issued.

But the department preserved its prerogative to seize journalists' records, and the recent disclosures to the news media organizations show that the practice continued in the Trump Justice Department as part of multiple investigations.

Luigi Mangione pleads not guilty to federal death penalty charge in UnitedHealthcare CEO's killing

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Luigi Mangione pleaded not guilty Friday to a federal murder charge in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson. Prosecutors formally declared their intent to seek the death penalty, and the judge warned Justice Department officials to refrain from making public comments that could spoil his right to a fair trial.

Mangione, 26, stood between his lawyers and leaned toward a tabletop microphone as he entered the plea in Manhattan federal court. He responded "yes" when U.S. District Judge Margaret Garnett asked if he understood the indictment that charges him with gunning down Thompson outside a midtown hotel last December.

Asked how he wished to plead, Mangione said simply "not guilty" and sat down.

A cause célèbre for people upset with the health insurance industry, Mangione's federal arraignment drew dozens of people to court, including former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning, who served prison time for stealing classified diplomatic cables.

Some lined up for hours in front of the courthouse steps, trying to snag a seat inside. Others rallied across the street as a pair of advertising trucks drove around playing videos denouncing the health insurance industry and the death penalty.

Mangione, an Ivy League graduate from a prominent Maryland real estate family, faces separate murders in federal and state court, where he faces a maximum punishment of life in prison.

Prosecutors had expected the state case go to trial first, but Mangione's lawyers said Friday that they want the federal case to take precedent because it involves the death penalty. Because of the many legal issues involved in capital cases, Mangione's federal case will move at a slower pace than non-death penalty prosecutions.

Mangione is next due in federal court on Dec. 5, a day after the one-year anniversary of Thompson's death. His next appearance in the state case is set for June 26. No trial date has been set in either case.

Mangione, held in a federal jail in Brooklyn since his arrest, arrived to court Friday in a mustard-colored jail suit and chatted with one of his lawyers, death penalty counsel Avi Moskowitz, as they waited for the arraignment to begin.

Late Thursday night, federal prosecutors filed a required notice of their intent to seek the death penalty. That came weeks after U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi announced that she would be directing federal prosecutors to seek the death penalty for what she called "an act of political violence" and a "premeditated, cold-blooded assassination that shocked America."

It was the first time the Justice Department said it was pursuing capital punishment since President Donald Trump returned to the White House on Jan. 20 with a vow to resume federal executions after they were halted under the previous administration.

Mangione's lawyers argue that Bondi's announcement — which she followed with posts on Instagram account and a TV appearance — was a "political stunt" that violated long-established Justice Department protocols, corrupted the grand jury process and deprived him of his constitutional right to due process.

After Mangione lawyer Karen Friedman Agnifilo raised the issue again on Friday, Garnett instructed federal prosecutors to convey to Bondi and other Justice Department officials that court rules prohibit any pretrial

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publicity that could interfere with a defendant's right to a fair trial.

Mangione's federal indictment includes a charge of murder through use of a firearm, which carries the possibility of the death penalty. The indictment also charges him with stalking and a gun offense.

Surveillance video showed a masked gunman shooting Thompson from behind as the executive arrived for UnitedHealthcare's annual investor conference. Police say the words "delay," "deny" and "depose" were scrawled on the ammunition, mimicking a phrase commonly used to describe how insurers avoid paying claims.

The killing and ensuing five-day search leading to Mangione's arrest rattled the business community while galvanizing health insurance critics who rallied around Mangione as a stand-in for frustrations over coverage denials and hefty bills.

Mangione was arrested Dec. 9 in Altoona, Pennsylvania, about 230 miles (about 370 kilometers) west of New York City and whisked to Manhattan by plane and helicopter.

Police said Mangione had a 9mm handgun that matched the one used in the shooting and other items including a notebook in which they say he expressed hostility toward the health insurance industry and wealthy executives.

Among the entries, prosecutors said, was one from last August that said "the target is insurance" because "it checks every box" and one from October that describes an intent to "wack" an insurance CEO. UnitedHealthcare, the largest U.S. health insurer, has said Mangione was never a client.

About 250,000 mourners pay last respects to Pope Francis over 3 days of public viewing

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — More than 250,000 people paid their last respects to Pope Francis over three days of public viewing by ordinary mourners, church and political leaders that ended Friday, when his coffin was sealed ahead of his state funeral in St. Peter's Square and burial in a basilica outside the Vatican's walls.

World leaders, including U.S. President Donald Trump and Argentine President Javier Milei, along with royalty, converged on Rome for the funeral. But the group of marginalized people who will meet his casket in a small crosstown basilica are more in keeping with Francis' humble persona and disdain for pomp.

The Vatican said that 164 delegations are confirmed, including 54 heads of state and 12 reigning sovereigns. French President Emmanuel Macron, who will also attend the funeral, was among those who made it in time to pay last respects to the pope.

Paying respects

Tens of thousands of mourners waited hours in line over three days to bid farewell to Francis, who died Monday after suffering a stroke at the age of 88. A higher-than-expected turnout prompted the Vatican to extend the basilica's opening hours overnight.

Angele Bilegue, a nun, was among the last mourners. It was her third time to pay her respects, including once inside the Vatican at his residence in the Santa Marta Domus, where she said she spent six hours praying at his coffin.

"He was my friend, so I went one last time to say goodbye," she said. "I cried."

A changing of the guards at Francis' open coffin signaled the end of the viewing period of the pontiff, who was laid out in red robes, a bishop's pointed miter and a rosary entwined in his hands. He was being buried with his well-worn black shoes, including scuff marks on the toe — emblematic of the simple life he espoused.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell presided over the closing and sealing of the coffin in his role of camerlengo, or interim Vatican administrator. According to photos released by the Vatican, a white cloth was placed over the pope's face, and a bag containing coins minted during his papacy was put in the coffin along with a one-page written account of his papacy.

The account, called a rogito, summarized his whole life's story, from his childhood in Argentina as the son of parents with Italian heritage through his priesthood and promotions eventually to archbishop and

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cardinal in Buenos Aires — and then pope. It highlighted his “defense of innocents,” his encyclicals and also his illnesses.

“He was a simple and much loved pastor in his archdiocese, who traveled far and wide, also by subway and bus,” read the text of the document, recounting his life as archbishop. “He lived in an apartment and he prepared dinner alone, so he could feel like an ordinary person.”

‘We will see each other again’

Roman neighbors and retired flight attendants Aurelia Ballarini and Francesca Codato came to pay respects to Francis on Friday with very different motivations. Ballarini, 72, was coming to terms with her grief, and Codato, 78, was seeking forgiveness.

For Ballarini, the pope’s death leaves a hole in her life. While only 16 years younger than Francis, she considered him a grandfather figure. Every morning, she would log on to Facebook for his daily greeting, and respond “with a couple of words.”

“He gave everything, gave all of himself, up to the end,” said Ballarini. “I spent the last two days crying. I was not well after his passing — I can’t even say the word. For me he flew away. One day, we will see each other again.”

Codato said that she feels tremendous guilt toward Francis, having forsaken him out of devotion to one of his predecessors, St. John Paul II. When Francis became pope “he was an outsider to me.”

“I feel guilty, because through videos I have seen in these days, I have understood he was a man of enormous humanity, close to the simple people,” she said. “So I came to ask forgiveness, because I feel guilty towards him, like a worm.”

Cardinals ‘are in discussions’

The work of the conclave to choose a new pope won’t start until at least May 5, after nine days of public mourning.

Cardinals have been arriving in Rome, with 149 meeting on Friday morning to discuss church business. They won’t meet again until next week, meaning a conclave date is unlikely to be set until after the funeral.

Cardinal François-Xavier Bustillo, who hosted Francis during his last papal trip to Corsica last year, remembered Francis as “a free man” who “humanized the church without desacralizing it.”

He described the atmosphere inside the meetings as “good,” but said that they weren’t yet “at the point of decisions; we are in discussions.”

Papal burial

In keeping with Francis’ embrace of the marginalized, the Vatican said a group of poor and needy people will meet the pope’s coffin to pay homage to him when it arrives at St. Mary Major Basilica for burial on Saturday. It has already become a point of pilgrimage.

The tomb is being prepared behind a wooden barrier within the basilica that he chose to be near an icon of the Madonna that he revered and often prayed before. The burial will take place in private, the Vatican said.

Photos released by the Vatican on Friday show the marble tombstone flat against the pavement, with the simple engraving in Latin that he requested in his last testament: “Franciscus.”

Cardinals will visit the St. Mary Major Basilica on Sunday. Entering through the Holy Door, they will visit the Salus Populi Romani icon, which was dear to Francis, and celebrate evening prayers, the Vatican said.

Security measures

Italy is deploying more than 2,500 police officers and 1,500 soldiers to provide security during the funeral, which is expected to gather about 200,000 mourners in St. Peter’s Square and up to 300,000 people along the 4-kilometer (2½-mile) route from the Vatican to the pope’s burial place across Rome.

The major security operation includes stationing an armed naval vessel off the coast, and putting squads of fighter jets on standby, Italian media reported.

Royals and leaders

Trump, who is traveling with first lady Melania Trump, is scheduled to arrive Friday, after Francis’ coffin has been sealed.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s press office previously confirmed his presence, but he told

reporters Friday evening on the site of a recent missile attack that he will attend if time permits, given obligations at home related to the ongoing war.

Among the other foreign dignitaries confirmed for the papal funeral are:

- U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer
- Prince William
- King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of Spain
- Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán
- Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

Donald Trump's trip to Pope Francis' funeral puts a sharper focus on their clashes over the years

By PETER SMITH and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The day before he died, in his final public address, Pope Francis expressed an Easter Sunday message of unity and an appeal for the marginalized and migrants. "All of us," he proclaimed, "are children of God!"

In a dramatically different message Sunday, President Donald Trump issued an insult-laced post wishing a happy Easter to his opponents, including "Radical Left Lunatics," "WEAK and INEFFECTIVE Judges and Law Enforcement Officials," and former President Joe Biden, "our WORST and most Incompetent President."

Some of the fundamental differences between the U.S. president and the late pope — not only their divergent styles but their positions on migration, the environment and poverty — will come into sharper focus with Trump in Rome to attend Francis' funeral, to be held Saturday morning in St. Peter's Square.

Trump, as he prepared to leave Washington on Friday, said Francis "loved the world, actually, and he was just a good man."

"I thought he was a fantastic kind of a guy," Trump said.

David Gibson, director of the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University in New York, put it this way: "Obviously, it's been a fraught relationship."

The relationship eroded

Things weren't great between Trump and the pope during Trump's first term, from 2017 to 2021. But, says Gibson, "Trump II was even worse with the Vatican because of how much more aggressive it has been on every level, against migrants, against international aid."

The Argentine pontiff and the American president sparred early on over immigration. In 2016, Francis, alluding to then-candidate Trump, called anyone who builds a wall to keep out migrants "not Christian." Trump called the comment "disgraceful."

Despite the billionaire former reality star's divergences over the years with Francis, who was known for a humble style, Trump's support has gradually risen among American Catholics. He courted them in his last presidential campaign, and many influential bishops are among his supporters.

Trump, who has identified himself as a "non-denominational Christian," has long counted Christians, especially evangelical Christians, among his key blocs of support. His policies on abortion, including his role in appointing three of the five U.S. Supreme Court justices who overturned national abortion rights, deepened his support among Christians, including many conservative Catholics.

His politics are also closely aligned with many conservative U.S. Catholic bishops, who were often at odds with Francis' more progressive approach to leading the church.

The Republican president implored Catholics last year to vote for him. In October, when he addressed the Al Smith charity dinner in New York, which raises millions of dollars for Catholic charities, Trump said: "You gotta get out and vote. And Catholics, you gotta vote for me."

Many Catholics did. In the 2024 election, Trump won the Catholic vote, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 voters. In 2020, the Catholic vote was evenly split between Joe Biden, but in 2024, 54% of Catholic voters supported Trump and 44% supported Kamala Harris.

For Trump, Catholics' support didn't earn Francis'

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But while Trump may have won the Catholic vote, he never won over Francis.

Vice President JD Vance, a Catholic who met briefly with Francis the day before he died, dismissed the pontiff's disagreements with the administration, telling reporters this week that the pope was "a much broader figure" than American politics — a man who led a church with 1.4 billion members worldwide.

"I'm aware that he had some disagreements with some of the policies of our administration," Vance said. "He also had a lot of agreements with some of the policies of our administration. I'm not going to soil the man's legacy by talking about politics."

Trump, too, met with Francis, in a largely cordial meeting at the Vatican in 2017. But their differences persisted.

In February of this year, Francis sent a letter to U.S. bishops that was similar in tone to his comments on immigration almost a decade earlier. He denounced the Trump administration's embarking on plans for mass deportations and noted that in the Bible, the infant Jesus and his family were themselves refugees in Egypt, fleeing a threat to their lives.

Some leading bishops did applaud some of the new Trump administration initiatives on "school choice" and policies defining gender as determined at birth. Francis, while upholding church teachings on sexuality, took a more tolerant stance toward LGBTQ+ people.

Other prominent bishops, appointed by Francis, are more sympathetic with his priorities. They include the new archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Robert McElroy.

Catholics are a diverse group and act accordingly

But the Catholic vote is not monolithic. John Fea, a professor of history at Messiah University in Pennsylvania, said many conservative Catholics, even if they respect the office of the pope, "don't like his progressive views" on immigrants and his authorizing of blessings for same-sex couples.

"The views of many conservative American Catholics line-up with Trump's brand of populism: strong borders, pro-life on abortion, concern about critical race theory in schools, etc.," Fea, author of "Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump," said via email.

In contrast, he speculated that many progressive Catholics who do share Pope Francis' social justice concerns probably did not vote for Trump.

In addition to migration, Francis also differed with Trump on the environment, writing an encyclical calling for climate action, in contrast to the president's push to bring back fossil fuels. Francis also staunchly opposed the death penalty, something Trump supports.

Stylistically, Trump's big personality also contrasted with Francis' more self-deprecating and welcoming tone, immortalized by his "Who am I to judge?" response to a question about gay priests.

Trump and Francis did share some policy goals on issues such as abortion and religious freedom, and U.S.-Vatican relations involve more than two people, said Steven Millies, director of the Bernadin Center at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

"But the alignments were at the diplomatic level more than at the personal or political level, of course," said Millies, a professor of public theology.

"They were profoundly different people — one who'd been formed by Jesuit spirituality and lived his life in deepening faith that he shared with the world, the other who mangles Scripture quotations, sells Bibles for personal profit, and uses Christian faith like a brand identity in a market competition."

Trump keeps contradicting himself on tariffs, making a fragile world economy nervous

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump can't stop contradicting himself on his own tariff plans. He says he's on a path to cut several new trade deals in a few weeks — but has also suggested it's "physically impossible" to hold all the needed meetings.

Trump has said he will simply set new tariff rates negotiated internally within the U.S. government over the next few weeks — although he already did that on his April 2 "Liberation Day," which caused the world

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economy to shudder.

The Republican president says he's actively negotiating with the Chinese government on tariffs — while the Chinese and U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent have said talks have yet to start.

What should one believe? The sure bet is that uncertainty will persist in ways that employers and consumers alike expect to damage the economy and that leave foreign leaders scratching their heads in bewilderment.

And the consequences of all this tariffs turmoil are enormous.

Trump placed tariffs totaling 145% on China, leading China to retaliate with tariffs of 125% on the U.S. — essentially triggering a trade war between the world's two largest economies with the potential to bring on a recession.

Trump's negotiating trade deals with himself

The president told Time magazine in an interview released Friday that 20%, 30% or 50% tariffs a year from now would be a "total victory," even though a financial market panic led him to temporarily reduce his baseline import taxes to 10% for 90 days while talks take place.

"The deal is a deal that I choose," Trump said in the interview. "What I'm doing is I will, at a certain point in the not too distant future, I will set a fair price of tariffs for different countries."

If that is confusing for the nation's trading partners, it's also sowing anxiety at home.

The Federal Reserve's beige book, a compilation of anecdotes from U.S. businesses prepared eight times a year, on Wednesday reported a huge spike in uncertainty among American companies that has caused them to pull back on hiring and investment in new projects. The word "uncertainty" cropped up 80 times, compared with 45 in early March and just 14 in January.

Beyond the idea that Trump plans to keep some level of tariffs in place, the world finance ministers and corporate executives who gathered this past week in Washington for the International Monetary Fund conference said in private discussions that the Trump administration was providing no real clarity on its goals for substantive talks.

"There's not a coherent strategy at the moment on what the tariffs are supposed to achieve," said Josh Lipsky, senior director of the GeoEconomics Center at The Atlantic Council. "My conversations with the ministers and governors this week at the IMF meetings have been they don't understand completely what the White House wants, nor who they should be negotiating with."

Other countries trying to get talks going

Swiss President Karin Keller-Sutter, in an interview with broadcaster SRF released Friday, said after a meeting with Bessent that Switzerland would be one of 15 countries with which the United States plans to conduct "privileged" negotiations. But she said a memorandum of understanding would have to be reached for talks to formally begin.

She was happy to at least know whom to talk to, saying that "we have also been assigned a specific contact person. This is not easy in the U.S. administration."

Nations are deploying various negotiating tactics.

The South Korean officials who met with their U.S. counterparts this week say they specifically asked for the tariffs to be lifted with the goal of working toward an agreement by July. The European Union has pushed for cutting tariffs to zero for both parties, though Trump objects to European countries charging a value-added tax, which is akin to a sales tax that he says hurts U.S. goods.

Trump continues to radiate optimism that negotiated deals with other countries will occur despite his claims that he will set his own deals and a lack of clarity about how the process goes forward.

"I'm getting along very well with Japan," Trump told reporters on Friday. "We're very close to a deal."

As part of a deal with Japan, the Trump administration has publicly called on the Japanese government to change its auto safety standards that put a greater focus on pedestrian safety. But the steering wheels on autos sold in Japan are on the right-hand side, while U.S. automakers put their steering wheels on the left.

"I don't think left-hand drive cars sell in Japan," Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba told a parliamentary session this week.

"We want to make sure we aren't seen as being unfair," Ishiba said, suggesting a possibility of reviewing

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Japanese car safety standards.

Higher prices and shortages are likely

As Trump continues to make conflicting statements about tariffs, companies are actively looking at higher prices, lower sales and possibly bare shelves in stores due to fewer shipments from China.

Ryan Petersen, CEO of Flexport, a supply chain company, said on the social media site X: "In the 3 weeks since the tariffs took effect, ocean container bookings from China to the United States are down over 60% industry wide."

Consumers are getting notices via email and social media from retailers that lamps, furniture and other housewares will now include tariff-related charges.

The showerhead company Afina on Wednesday reported on a test to see if people would buy an American-made product that cost more than an import. Their Chinese-made filtered showerhead retails for \$129, but to manufacture the same product domestically would take the price up to \$239.

When customers on the company's website were given a choice between a showerhead made in the USA or a cheaper one made in Asia, there were 584 purchases of the \$129 model made abroad and not one sale of the domestically produced showerhead.

Ramon van Meer, Afina's founder, said in an interview that the "scale and the speed" of the tariffs were part of the challenge for smaller businesses looking to adapt, adding that part of the challenge is that Trump imposed the import taxes "without proper planning or announcements."

He concluded in his written analysis: "If policymakers and pundits want to rebuild American industry, they need to grapple with this truth: idealism doesn't always survive contact with a price tag."

Forecasters warn of fire risk amid low humidity, wind gusts as Pine Barrens fire burns

By MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

Forecasters on Friday warned low humidity and gusty wind increased the risk that fire could develop across parts of New Jersey, Philadelphia and its suburbs and Delaware as firefighters continued to battle a vast wildfire in the Pine Barrens.

The National Weather Service discouraged any outdoor burning with low humidity, temperatures reaching near 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees Celsius) and southerly winds that could gust up to 20 mph (32 kph) across a swath of the Mid-Atlantic. There's a chance of rain over the weekend in the region, where officials said fires also burned uncontained in Pennsylvania on Friday.

In its most recent update, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service said about 60% of the fire spread over nearly 24 square miles (62 square kilometers) in the southern part of the state was contained. No injuries or deaths have been reported, but buildings have burned along with cars.

Suspect is arrested in connection with wildfire

Officials have charged a 19-year-old man from the area with starting the blaze that led to the wildfire.

Prosecutors on Thursday said Joseph Kling, 19, from Waretown, New Jersey, was arrested and charged with arson and aggravated arson, saying he lit wooden pallets on fire and left the area before they were fully put out.

A public defender representing him during the hearing said she had "nothing further" when asked by a judge.

"The New Jersey Office of the Public Defender cannot comment on pending cases at this early stage of the legal process, other than to remind everyone that individuals are presumed innocent until proven otherwise in a court of law," said Cristina LiBassi a spokesperson with the Office of the Public Defender in an email Friday.

Attempts to reach Kling by phone were not successful.

Blaze first spotted when smoke appears amid the pines

Authorities first spotted the blaze Tuesday morning from a fire tower when a smoke column appeared

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amid the pines. Law enforcement said they used a GPS to plot the origin of the fire and determined the cause was a bonfire that hadn't been put out.

Speaking Thursday afternoon at a news conference, Ocean County Prosecutor Bradley D. Billhimer said "we can confidently say that we think the fire was set intentionally." He declined further comment on why authorities believe the man they arrested was responsible and other matters related to the investigation since it remains ongoing.

It's forest fire season in the pinelands, a wilderness that encompasses more than 1 million acres (405,000 hectares) — an area roughly as large as the Grand Canyon. Firefighters are contending with low humidity and the aftermath of a monthslong drought in the region.

New Jersey is most densely populated state

New Jersey is the nation's most densely populated state and officials have warned the fire could threaten developments nearby, although parts of the Pine Barrens are uninhabited. The fire had grown to more than 23.8 square miles (about 62 square kilometers) on Thursday.

Officials said the fire is believed to be the second-worst in recent years in New Jersey, smaller only than a 2007 blaze that burned 26 square miles (67 square kilometers).

Jim and Lenore Thoms, who own a business in an industrial park near the blaze, called the fire "a very scary experience" and praised the efforts of firefighters.

"The firefighters were phenomenal, they saved this whole park," Jim Thoms said. "If they weren't around, the way things were going on, you might not have seen any buildings at all."

The fire is roughly 54 miles (87 kilometers) south of New York City. It's about 60 miles (97 kilometers) east of Philadelphia.

Firefighters also battle blazes in Pennsylvania

Some 115 miles (186 kilometers) to the west of Philadelphia in south-central Pennsylvania, firefighters battled two fires around Michaux State Forest covering a combined 2.1 square miles (5.4 square kilometers), authorities said.

A spokesman for Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources said warm, dry conditions and winds made the fires difficult to contain, although no structures had yet been consumed by midday Friday.

On Thursday, New York officials warned of higher-than-normal pollution levels were possible in New York City, Rockland and Westchester counties, and in Long Island's Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Officials said New Jersey's fire is believed to be the second-worst in recent years, smaller only than a 2007 blaze that burned 26 square miles (67 square kilometers).

Video released by the state agency overseeing the fire service showed billowing white and black clouds of smoke, intense flames engulfing pines and firefighters dousing a charred structure.

The Pine Barrens sit between Philadelphia to the west and the Atlantic coast to the east. In the region with quick-draining sandy soil and trees with still-developing leaves, humidity remains low and winds can kick up, drying out the forest floor.

College journalists wrestle with transparency as students fear deportation for speaking out

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Over the past few weeks, Greta Reich, editor-in-chief of Stanford University's student newspaper, has had almost two dozen requests to take down quotes, bylines, photos and opinion articles from current and former sources and writers.

She and her staff at the Stanford Daily have been reviewing them on a case-by-case basis.

"It's a number that has been startling to see," Reich said.

Other student journalists on college campuses across the country are fielding similar requests. They are being asked to remove previously published content amid the Trump administration's crackdown on

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student protesters, fears of deportation for international students and what critics have described as unprecedented attacks on campus speech.

Many young editors are beginning to reconsider long-standing journalistic practices around transparency to protect the people who appear in their reports. It's happening amid a climate of fear on campuses that is causing certain students to be reluctant to speak out publicly.

Fears of deportation lead to a reassessment of transparency

These dramatic shifts in student media escalated after Rümeyza Öztürk, a Tufts University student from Turkey, was threatened with deportation and detained in March over what her lawyers say is apparent retaliation for an op-ed piece she co-wrote in the student newspaper. Öztürk was among four students who wrote the op-ed in the campus newspaper, The Tufts Daily, criticizing the university's response to student activists demanding that Tufts "acknowledge the Palestinian genocide," disclose its investments and divest from companies with ties to Israel.

And Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University graduate student and Palestinian activist, was arrested in March and has been held in a Louisiana detention center for more than six weeks.

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 students at 160 colleges, universities and university systems have had their visas revoked or their legal status terminated since late March, according to an Associated Press review. The federal government has since announced it will reverse the termination of legal status for international students after many filed court challenges, a government lawyer said Friday.

The need to consider high-stakes safety risks has increased pressure on students in newsrooms that are meant to be learning labs for future journalists.

Emma Wozniak, editor-in-chief of The Lantern at Ohio State University, where 12 students had their visas revoked, said it's "taken a mental toll" on staff members.

"We feel an enormous pressure to do the right thing because the stakes are higher and we don't want to put anyone in danger," she said. "It's terrifying to think that something we put out into the world could have such a devastating impact on someone. And so we take that very seriously."

A chilling effect on campus journalism

Earlier this month, the Student Press Law Center and other media rights groups issued guidance urging student journalists to be more flexible about requests to take down content.

"This is something we've never, ever done before," said Mike Hiestand, senior legal counsel for the center. "It's unprecedented. But we felt it was important to respond to what we were hearing from students."

Hiestand said he's seen a surge in calls from student journalists facing requests to take down content, remove bylines or offer anonymous sourcing. Some of the calls have been from international students concerned about how to protect themselves while working in campus newsrooms. Many, fearing legal repercussions, have decided to retract their names in the bylines of published articles or opinion pieces.

"People are really concerned, really fearful," he said.

The Stanford Daily has seen multiple staff members step away from editing positions or from covering certain stories related to the Israel-Hamas war or President Donald Trump's campaign to end diversity, equity and inclusion programs, Reich said.

Certain students 'scared to have their stories told'

Since returning to the White House, Trump, a Republican, has threatened funding for universities over what he calls "wokeness" and diversity efforts in education, and he has launched an unprecedented campaign of immigration enforcement that has pushed the limits of executive power and clashed with federal judges trying to restrain him.

The Stanford Daily published a letter from the editor in April addressing a "chilling effect we've noticed on campus and the fear of speaking to the Daily" and announcing more leniency in granting anonymity for students who feel threatened. Three days before, the Daily reported that six student visas had been revoked by federal authorities.

Reich said she worries about the diversity in voices the Daily may be losing because international students especially are afraid to speak with reporters or join the newsroom.

"When we have an entire section of the student body scared to have their stories told, that's a significant

portion of the life of Stanford that just isn't being told," she said. "It's wildly concerning."

Adam Kinder, editor-in-chief of the Columbia Political Review, said he's had about half a dozen requests from student writers wanting to put the publishing process on hold and a similar number of requests to take down previously published articles.

Many of the requests have been from international students "because of the very real fear right now, including the fear of deportation," Kinder said. The publication reversed a previous rule restricting non-bylined articles.

"I don't think it's a coincidence that we're getting more of these requests than we ever had before," he said.

Worries that the 'first draft of history' could be erased

Dylan Hembrough, editor-in-chief of the Alestle at Southern Illinois University, said he's also being more flexible with taking down previously published content, removing bylines from staff writers and offering anonymity. That includes for an upcoming story about eight international students at the school who have had their visas revoked.

The Alestle's staff is working on a new policy for removing previously published content.

"Offering anonymity now is important because for some of these people, their lives could be completely upended at a moment's notice," Hembrough said. "People's lives are more important than a good story."

Jane Kirtley, a University of Minnesota media ethics professor, acknowledged that the current moment "raises a whole new set of ethical issues that may feel much more existential." But she encouraged student journalists to slow down when deciding how to weigh minimizing harm with other ethical standards, including to seek the truth and report it and to tell the full story of what is happening.

Kirtley said anonymous sourcing and non-bylined work can appear less credible. Removing previously published content can have lasting effects, given that journalism is often called the first draft of history.

"You have to ask yourself, what am I doing to the historical record, especially amid attempts in the current administration to rewrite history," she said.

Lori Vallow Daybell convicted in Arizona of conspiring to kill her estranged husband in 2019

By JACQUES BILLEAUD and RIO YAMAT Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — A woman whose doomsday religious beliefs led her to kill her two youngest children and engage in a plot to kill a romantic rival in Idaho was convicted Tuesday in Arizona for conspiring to murder her estranged husband.

Jurors found Lori Vallow Daybell guilty after deliberating for about three hours, and she faces another possible life sentence on top of the three she is already serving in Idaho. She will not be sentenced in Arizona until after she goes on trial in another alleged murder conspiracy.

Prosecutors said Vallow Daybell had help from her brother, Alex Cox, in the July 2019 shooting death of Charles Vallow at her home in the Phoenix suburb of Chandler. They say she was motivated by an opportunity to cash in on Vallow's life insurance policy and a marriage to then-boyfriend Chad Daybell who wrote several religious novels about prophecies and the end of the world.

Chad Daybell was sentenced to death for the deaths of Vallow Daybell's children, 7-year-old Joshua "JJ" Vallow and 16-year-old Tylee Ryan, and his wife, Tammy. Authorities in Idaho said the case included bizarre claims by Chad Daybell and Vallow Daybell that the children were zombies and that Vallow Daybell was a goddess tasked with ushering in an apocalypse.

Vallow Daybell, who isn't an attorney but chose to defend herself at trial in Arizona, sat mostly still as the verdict was read but glanced occasionally at jurors as they were asked to confirm they found her guilty on the single charge.

One of the jurors, Victoria Lewis, said outside the courthouse that Vallow Daybell didn't do herself any favors by choosing to represent herself.

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"Many days she was just smiling and laughing and didn't seem to take anything very seriously," Lewis told reporters.

Vallow Daybell told the jury that Vallow chased her with a bat inside her home, and her brother shot Vallow in self-defense as she left the house. She told jurors the death was a tragedy, not a crime.

Cox died five months later from what medical examiners said was a blood clot in his lungs.

Vallow's siblings, Kay Woodcock and Gerry Vallow, told reporters outside court that they are grateful for the jury's decision.

"We gotcha, and you're not the smartest person in the room," Woodcock said when asked if she has a message for Vallow Daybell. "Everybody's going to forget about you."

The Associated Press left email messages seeking comment Tuesday from the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, which prosecuted the case, and the lawyers who served as legal advisers to Vallow Daybell during the trial.

Last week Adam Cox, another brother of Vallow Daybell, testified on behalf of the prosecution, telling jurors that he had no doubt that his siblings were behind Vallow's death.

Adam Cox said the killing happened just before he and Vallow were planning an intervention to bring his sister back into the mainstream of their shared faith in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He testified that before Vallow's death, his sister had told people her husband was no longer living and that a zombie was living inside his body.

Four months before he died, Vallow filed for divorce from Vallow Daybell, saying she had become infatuated with near-death experiences and had claimed to have lived numerous lives on other planets. He alleged she threatened to ruin him financially and kill him. He sought a voluntary mental health evaluation of his wife.

Vallow Daybell is scheduled to go on trial again in early June, accused in a plot to kill Brandon Boudreaux, the ex-husband of Vallow Daybell's niece. Boudreaux survived.

Canadians put off by Trump's bluster and border arrests are booking far fewer US visits

By ROB GILLIES and JIM MORRIS Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Diana and Rick Bellamy initially planned to take a Caribbean cruise out of Houston before heading to Laurel, Mississippi, to visit the home of one of their favorite HGTV shows, "Home Town."

The Calgary couple scrapped those plans and vacationed last month along Mexico's Pacific coast instead, put off by U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war with Canada, the insults he's hurled at their homeland, and stories about American border agents searching people's phones and detaining foreigners for minor reasons.

She found it ironic that she felt more comfortable traveling to Mexico than the U.S.

"I never thought I would hear myself say that," Diane Bellamy said.

Trump's attacks on Canada's economy and threats to make it the 51st state have infuriated Canadians, who are canceling trips to the U.S. in big numbers. They also seem to have also flipped the narrative heading into Canada's parliamentary elections on Monday, with Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberal Party surging after trailing far behind in the polls just a few months ago.

A steep decline

The U.S. gets more visitors from Canada each year than from any other country, according to the U.S. Travel Association, an industry trade group, which said the 20.4 million visits from Canada last year generated \$20.5 billion in spending.

But there has been a big drop in foreigners traveling to the U.S. since Trump took office, and Canadians are no exception. There were more than 910,000 fewer land border crossings from Canada into the U.S. last month than in March of 2024 — a more than 22% drop — according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data. An Air Canada spokesman, meanwhile, said Canada-U.S. flight bookings for April through

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September are down about 10%.

Trump brushed aside the decline in tourism to the United States on Wednesday, saying, "There's a little nationalism there I guess, perhaps. It's not a big deal."

Traveler worries

Since Trump started his second term, there have been well-publicized reports of tourists being stopped at U.S. border crossings and held for weeks at immigration detention facilities before being allowed to fly home at their own expense.

On March 3, Canadian Jasmine Mooney, an actor and entrepreneur on a U.S. work visa, was detained by U.S. border agents in San Diego. She was released after 12 days detention.

Before Mooney's release, British Columbia Premier David Eby expressed concern, saying: "It certainly reinforces anxiety that ... many Canadians have about our relationship with the U.S. right now, and the unpredictability of this administration and its actions."

The Canadian Association of University Teachers, which represents faculty and staff at Canadian universities, warned its members against nonessential travel to the U.S. due to the "political landscape" under Trump and reports of Canadians encountering difficulties crossing the border.

Academics who have expressed negative views about the Trump administration should be particularly cautious about traveling to the U.S., said the group.

"People are scared to cross the border. I don't know what Americans are thinking, quite frankly. Are they that oblivious?" said former Quebec Premier Jean Charest, who has family in Florida.

Mike Sauer, who runs a community policing center in Vancouver, said he and his partner have no interest in traveling to the U.S. now because of Trump's politics and border fears. One of Sauer's concerns is that if a border guard were to check his cellphone, the guard might see his past purchases of marijuana, which is legal to buy in Canada and about half the 50 states but is still illegal under U.S. federal law.

"The States have a different view on drugs. They could certainly look at my phone and see I'm 420-friendly," he said, meaning he's marijuana-friendly. "I think it kind of depends on which border guard would have a problem with that and which ones wouldn't."

Dietra Wilson, 32, said when she was younger, she often visited Detroit, which is just across the border from Windsor, Ontario, where she and her husband, Ben, own a secondhand shop. She hasn't visited much in recent years, though, and she said she's heard of people's worries about crossing the border since Trump moved back into the White House.

"It's worrisome," she said.

Ben Wilson, 37, also has qualms about trying to cross.

"Why would I want to?" he said. "Regardless of the tariffs, if I'm going to be stopped at the border for my phone or something somebody texted me, why go?"

Industry worries

The drop in Canadian tourism to the U.S. led California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a frequent target of Trump, to announce an ad campaign this month meant to lure Canadians back to his state, citing a 12% year-on-year drop in February.

McKenzie McMillan, a consultant with a Vancouver-based travel agency, The Travel Group, said the company's bookings to the U.S. have dried up. "We have seen a near-total collapse of U.S. business," he said. "Probably about a 90% drop since February."

Lesley Keyter, the CEO and founder of the Travel Lady agency in Calgary, said she's seen people actually forfeit money to cancel their U.S. trips.

"Even if they're going on a Caribbean cruise, they don't want to go down to Fort Lauderdale to get on the cruise ship," she said.

UN food agency says its food stocks in Gaza have run out under Israel's blockade

By WAFAA SHURAF and LEE KEATH Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The World Food Program says its food stocks in the Gaza Strip have run out under Israel's nearly 8-week-old blockade, ending a main source of sustenance for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the territory.

The WFP said in a statement that it delivered the last of its stocks to charity kitchens that it supports around Gaza. It said those kitchens are expected to run out of food in the coming days.

Some 80% of Gaza's population of more than 2 million relies primarily on charity kitchens for food, because other sources have shut down under Israel's blockade, according to the U.N. The WFP has been supporting 47 kitchens that distribute 644,000 hot meals a day, WFP spokesperson Abeer Etefa told The Associated Press.

It was not immediately clear how many kitchens would still be operating in Gaza if those shut down. But Etefa said the WFP-backed kitchens are the major ones in Gaza.

Israel cut off entry of all food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to Gaza on March 2 and then resumed its bombardment and ground offensives two weeks later, shattering a two-month ceasefire with Hamas. It says the moves aim to pressure Hamas to release hostages it still holds. Rights groups have called the blockade a "starvation tactic" and a potential war crime.

COGAT, the Israeli military agency in charge of coordinating aid in Gaza, declined to comment on the amount of supplies remaining in the territory. It has previously said Gaza had enough aid after a surge in distribution during the ceasefire. Israel accuses Hamas of diverting aid for its purposes. Humanitarian workers deny there is significant diversion, saying the U.N. strictly monitors distribution. They say the aid flow during the ceasefire was barely enough to cover the immense needs from throughout the war when only a trickle of supplies got in.

With no new goods entering Gaza, many foods have disappeared from markets, including meat, eggs, fruits, dairy products and many vegetables. Prices for what remains have risen dramatically, becoming unaffordable for much of the population. Most families rely heavily on canned goods.

Malnutrition is already surging. The U.N. said it identified 3,700 children suffering from acute malnutrition in March, up 80% from the month before. At the same time, because of diminishing supplies, aid groups were only able to provide nutritional supplements to some 22,000 children in March, down 70% from February. The supplements are a crucial tool for averting malnutrition.

Almost all bakeries shut down weeks ago and the WFP stopped distribution of food basics to families for lack of supplies. With stocks of most ingredients depleted, charity kitchens generally can only serve meals of pasta or rice with little added.

World Central Kitchen — a U.S. charity that is one of the biggest in Gaza that doesn't rely on the WFP — said Thursday that its kitchens had run out of proteins. Instead, they make stews from canned vegetables. Because fuel is scarce, it dismantles wooden shipping pallets to burn in its stoves, it said. It also runs the only bakery still functioning in Gaza, producing 87,000 loaves of pita a day.

The WFP said 116,000 tons of food is ready to be brought into Gaza if Israel opens the borders, enough to feed 1 million people for four months.

Israel has leveled much of Gaza with its air and ground campaign, vowing to destroy Hamas after its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel. It has killed over 51,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, whose count does not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

In the Oct. 7 attack, militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251. They still hold 59 hostages after most were released in ceasefire deals.

So you saw 'Conclave' the movie. Here's what it got right – and wrong – about real-life conclaves

By HOLLY MEYER Associated Press

Speculation surrounding a conclave to elect a pope is a time-honored tradition. But for the impending conclave following the death of Pope Francis, the ranks of armchair Vatican experts have swelled thanks to Hollywood.

"Conclave" the film, a moody 2024 political thriller, introduced many laypeople to the ancient selection process with its arcane rules and grand ceremony, albeit with a silver screen twist packed full of palace intrigue and surprise.

Though it has its critics, the film treats the gravity of a papal election with respect and accurately portrays many rituals and contemporary problems facing today's Catholic Church. But Vatican experts warn the movie doesn't get everything right.

Here's a look at what "Conclave" does get right — and wrong — about conclaves. (Spoilers ahead.)

Scenery and aesthetics

The movie excels at re-creating the look and feel of a conclave.

"The film gets a lot right. They tried to reproduce the mise-en-scene of the Vatican accurately," William Cavanaugh, a Catholic studies professor at DePaul University in Chicago, said in an email. "They show that a lot of the drama is around the preconclave conversations among cardinals."

It's not a perfect re-creation, according to the Rev. Thomas Reese, a senior analyst with the Religion News Service and a Vatican expert.

He called the movie's production values "marvelous," but noted slight discrepancies in the cardinals' dress.

"The red in the cardinals' garments was a deep red, while the reality is more orange. Frankly, I like the Hollywood version better," Reese, a Jesuit priest who wrote "Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church," said in an email.

Papal protocols

The movie aligns with real-life expectations for a quick conclave, said Massimo Faggioli, a historical theology professor at Villanova University in Pennsylvania.

"A long conclave would send the message of a Church divided and possibly on the verge of a schism. The history of the conclaves in the last century is really a story of short conclaves," he said via email.

Reese pointed out other discrepancies. While the voting process was depicted accurately, he said, the ballots are burned not after each vote, but after each session, which is typically two votes.

Holy plot holes

There are a few particularly egregious errors that, if corrected, would lead to a very different movie.

A key character in the film, the archbishop of Kabul, Afghanistan, arrives just before the conclave with paperwork declaring the late pope had made him a cardinal "in pectore" — "in secret" — allowing him to vote for the next pope.

"The biggest mistake in the movie was the admission of a cardinal in pectore into the conclave," said Reese. "If the name is not announced publicly by the pope in the presence of the College of Cardinals, he has no right to attend a conclave."

Cavanaugh agreed and noted that while the movie's twist about the Kabul archbishop was far-fetched, it does point to a certain truth about conclaves.

"The cardinals do not always know who they're getting when they elect a pope," he said. "If the cardinals knew how (Jorge Mario) Bergoglio would be as Pope Francis, many of them wouldn't have voted for him. Pius IX was elected as a liberal and turned into an archconservative. John XXIII was supposed to be a jolly caretaker pope, and he unleashed Vatican II," a series of modernizing reforms.

Another of the movie's more outlandish storylines involves the dean of the College of Cardinals breaking the seal of the confessional by revealing to another cardinal what a nun confessed to him, said Reese.

"He committed a mortal sin and would be automatically excommunicated. Such an action would be egregiously wrong," Reese said.

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In addition to that, a cardinal paying for votes, as shown in the film, is unheard of in modern times, said Cavanaugh, and the politicking is exaggerated.

And so are the politics.

The movie errs in making cardinals into either liberal or conservative champions, said Kurt Martens, professor of canon law at the Catholic University of America in Washington.

"Those labels don't help us," he said because cardinals are very cautious in expressing their opinions and "even someone we think is a liberal cardinal is pretty conservative by secular standards."

And he added that even in an unusually large conclave like this year's, the rule requiring the next pope wins at least a two-thirds majority of the vote ensures that "whatever we call extreme" likely won't get enough votes.

Why Trump's call for the Fed to cut interest rates may not help consumers

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

President Donald Trump is badgering the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates, but even if the Fed gave in to the pressure, it wouldn't necessarily lead to lower borrowing costs for consumers.

In fact, economists say, Trump's ongoing attacks on Fed Chair Jerome Powell and his tariff policies could keep the longer-term interest rates that matter for consumers and businesses higher than they otherwise would be. A less-independent Fed can lead, over time, to higher borrowing costs, as investors worry that inflation may spike in the future. As a result they demand higher yields to own Treasury securities.

Trump has repeatedly urged Powell to cut the short-term interest rate that the central bank controls. The Fed typically reduces its rate during an economic downturn to encourage more borrowing and spending, and raises it to cool the economy and fight inflation when prices rise.

But long-term rates on things like mortgages, auto loans, and credit cards are largely set by market forces. And in recent weeks, fears that Trump's sweeping tariffs could raise inflation, along with the administration's threats to the Fed's independence, have led markets to push those longer term rates higher. It's not clear that the Fed can fully reverse those trends by itself.

"It's not automatically true that even if the Fed were to cut rates, that you would see a measured decline in long-term interest rates," Francesco Bianchi, an economist at Johns Hopkins University, said. "This kind of pressure on the Fed might backfire...if markets don't believe the Fed has inflation under control."

Trump renewed calls on Wednesday and Thursday for Powell to reduce the Fed's short-term rate, telling reporters that the chair is "making a mistake" by not doing so.

And last week, Trump suggested he could fire Powell, while a top aide said that the White House was "studying" whether it could do so.

Stock markets plunged in response, the yield on the 10-year Treasury bond rose, and the dollar fell, an unusual combination that suggested investors were selling most American assets. Markets recovered those losses after Trump said on Tuesday that he had "no intention" of firing the Fed chair.

Still, the threats to the Fed's independence unnerved Wall Street investors, because they see a Fed free from political pressure as critical to keeping inflation in check. An independent Fed can take unpopular steps, such as raising rates, to fight inflation.

"Threatening the Fed doesn't soothe markets — it spooks them," said Lauren Goodwin, chief market strategist at New York Life Investments. "And the result is often the opposite of what any administration wants to see: higher rates, weaker confidence, and more market turmoil."

Since Trump began imposing tariffs in early March, when he slapped duties on Canada and Mexico, the 10-year Treasury yield has risen from 4.15% to about 4.3%. The yield is a benchmark for mortgage rates and other borrowing. Mortgage rates, in turn, have increased during that time, from 6.6% to 6.8%.

While Trump says he is negotiating over tariffs with many countries, most economists expect some level of duties to remain in place for at least this year, including his 10% duties on nearly all imports.

The 10-year yield did fall Thursday when two Federal Reserve officials said that rate cuts are possible

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as soon as this summer, should the economy falter and unemployment rise.

Yet last fall, longer-term interest rates also fell in anticipation of rate cuts, but then rose once the Fed cut in September and then continued to rise as the central bank reduced its rate again in November — two days after the election — and in December. Mortgage rates are now higher than they were when the Fed cut.

A range of factors can affect longer-term Treasury rates, including expectations for future growth and inflation, as well as the supply and demand for government bonds. Bianchi worries that stubbornly high government budget deficits — which are financed by trillions of dollars of Treasuries — could also lift long-term rates.

Should the Fed cut rates now, longer-term borrowing costs “would move in the opposite direction, absolutely,” Goodwin said, “because the threat of inflation is so palpable -- that move would call their credibility into question.”

Trump said in a social media post this week that there is “virtually No Inflation” and as a result, the Fed should lower its key rate, from its current level of about 4.3%. Many economists expect the central bank will do so this year. But Powell has underscored that the central bank wants to evaluate the impact of Trump’s policies before making any moves.

Inflation has fallen in recent months, dropping to 2.4% in March, the lowest level since last September. Yet excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core inflation was 2.8%. Core prices often provide a better signal of where inflation is headed.

A key issue for the Fed is that the economy is very different now than it was during Trump’s first term. Back then inflation was actually below the Fed’s target. At that time, it was a “no-brainer” to cut rates, Bianchi said, if there was a threat of a recession, because inflation wasn’t an issue.

But now, tariffs will almost certainly lift prices in the coming months, at least temporarily. That raises the bar much higher for a Fed rate cut, Bianchi said.

Still, once there are clear signs the economy is deteriorating, such as a rising unemployment rate, the Fed will cut rates, regardless of what Trump does, economists said.

Trump on Monday accused Powell of often being “too late” with his rate decisions, but ironically the Fed may move more slowly this time because of the threat of higher prices from tariffs. Without clear evidence of a downturn, Fed officials would worry about being seen as giving in to political pressure from Trump if they cut.

“Powell knows the irreparable damage that would occur if it was perceived that he cut because he was forced to by Trump,” said Tom Porcelli, chief U.S. economist at PGIM Fixed Income.

The Fed now “will be even more delayed because I think you’re going get more of an inflation lift initially, before you get the more pronounced slowing in growth,” Porcelli said.

Either way it may take more than a Fed cut or two to bring down longer-term borrowing costs, Bianchi said.

“To really lower long-term rates you need to provide a stable macroeconomic environment, and right now we are not there yet,” he added.

How the public’s shift on immigration paved the way for Trump’s crackdown

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

PASSAIC, N.J. (AP) — Alleged gang members without criminal records wrongly sent to a notorious prison in El Salvador.

International students detained by masked federal agents for writing opinion columns or attending campus demonstrations.

American citizens, visa holders and visitors stopped at airports, detained for days or facing deportation for minor infractions.

Since returning to the White House, President Donald Trump has launched an unprecedented campaign of immigration enforcement that has pushed the limits of executive power and clashed with federal judges

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trying to restrain him. But unlike in his first term, Trump's efforts have not sparked the kind of widespread condemnation or protests that led him to retreat from some unpopular positions.

Instead, immigration has emerged as one of Trump's strongest issues in public polling, reflecting both his grip on the Republican base and a broader shift in public sentiment that is driven in part, interviews suggest, by anger at the policies of his predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden.

The White House has seized on this shift, mocking critics and egging on Democrats to engage on an issue that Trump's team sees as a win.

"I think this is another men/women's sports thing for the Democrats," Trump said in an interview with Time magazine published Friday, referring to the cultural wars debate over transgender rights that Trump campaign aides saw as a key driver of support in November.

"America's changed," said pollster Frank Luntz, a longtime ally of Republicans who has been holding focus groups with voters to discuss immigration. "This is the one area where Donald Trump still has significant and widespread public support."

Luntz said voters dismayed by the historically large influx of migrants under Biden are now "prepared to accept a more extreme approach."

"Make no mistake," he added. "The public may not embrace it, but they definitely support it. And this is actually his strongest area as he approaches his 100th day (in office)."

Changing views

A poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that immigration is a relative high point for Trump compared with other issues, including his approach to the economy, foreign policy and trade negotiations. Slightly fewer than half of U.S. adults, 46%, say they approve of Trump's handling of the issue, compared with his overall job approval rating of 39%, according to the survey.

The poll was conducted April 17-21, a period that included a trip by Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., to El Salvador to demand that Kilmar Abrego Garcia be released from prison after the U.S. government admitted he was wrongly deported.

In the 2020 election, few voters considered immigration the most important issue facing the country, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of registered voters in all 50 states.

Four years later, after Republicans and conservative media had hammered Biden for his policies and often cast migrant U.S.-Mexico border crossings as an invasion, immigration had risen above health care, abortion and crime. It was second only to the economy.

Under Biden, migrant apprehensions spiked to more than 2 million two years in a row. Republican governors in border states bused migrants by the tens of thousands to cities across the country, including to New York, where migrants were placed in shelters and hotels, straining budgets.

Voters in the 2024 election were also more open to tougher immigration policies than the 2020 electorate. Last November, 44% of voters said most immigrants living in the United States illegally should be deported to their home countries, according to AP VoteCast, compared with 29% in 2020.

Immigration remains a relative strength for Trump today: 84% of Republicans approve of Trump's immigration approach, according to the April AP-NORC poll, compared with 68% who approve of how he is handling trade negotiations.

The poll found about 4 in 10 U.S. adults "strongly" or "somewhat" favor Trump's policy of sending Venezuelan immigrants who authorities say are gang members to El Salvador, with an additional 22% saying they neither favor nor oppose it. About 4 in 10 were opposed.

Americans are more opposed, broadly, to revoking foreign students' visas over their participation in pro-Palestinian activism, with about half opposed and about 3 in 10 in support.

The changing views are evident in places like northern New Jersey's suburban Passaic County, one of the former Democratic strongholds where Trump overperformed in November.

Trump became the first Republican to win the county in more than 30 years. He carried the heavily Latino city of Passaic and significantly increased his support in Paterson, the state's third-largest city, which is majority Latino and also has a large Muslim community. He drew 13,819 votes after winning 3,999 in 2016. Having lost New Jersey by nearly 16 percentage points to Biden in 2020, Trump narrowed that margin to

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6 percentage points last year.

Paterson resident Sunny Cumur, 54, a truck driver who immigrated from Turkey in the late 1990s, describes himself as a Democrat who doesn't usually vote. But he wanted Trump to win, he said, because he was concerned about the border under Biden.

While studies show immigrants are generally less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans, local news in New York and other cities frequently featured what Trump took to calling "migrant crime."

"What Biden did, they opened all the borders, and a lot of people come here for political asylum. Come on! They don't even check if they are terrorists or not," Cumur said. He complained that newcomers willing to work for lower wages have been undercutting workers like him.

"Throw 'em out. I don't want to live with criminals," he said.

Still, other supporters worry Trump is taking things too far.

Republican Manuel Terrero, 39, a real estate agent from Clifton, said he was drawn to Trump because of what felt like "chaos" under Biden, with too many people crossing the border and too much crime in neighboring New York.

"It shouldn't be allowed," said Terrero, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic.

Trump "is doing a lot of good things. And that is one of them, stopping the people that are coming here to create chaos. And the people that have criminal records, send them back. But I am against (deporting) the people that are working," he said. "I don't think it's the right way to do it."

Rep. Nellie Pou, D-N.J., who was elected last year to represent the area in Congress, said her constituents believe strongly in border security but stand by her advocacy for immigrants. She recently joined Democrats on a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border.

"I do not want anyone that may be a danger to come to our country to harm any of our citizens. No one wants that. And I firmly believe that's what people in our district and across America want," she said. At the same time, she said, "Our country was made of immigrants. ... So I believe there's a place for someone who comes in the legal ways."

A new paradigm

Trump burst onto the political scene in 2015 by labeling Mexican immigrants as criminals and rapists and pledging to build "a great wall." He spent much of his first term focused on the border.

One of his first actions in office was to impose a travel ban barring the entry of citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries. That caused chaos at airports and protests across the nation. The policy was quickly blocked by the courts, forcing his administration to offer three broader iterations, the last of which was eventually upheld by the Supreme Court.

The next flashpoint came in 2018, when border officials began separating families detained after illegally crossing the border. In some cases, children were forcibly removed from their parents under a "zero tolerance" policy, and the parents were sometimes deported without their kids.

Images of children held in cages at border facilities and audio recordings of young children crying for their parents drew intense backlash, with thousands participating in hundreds of marches across the country. The protesters included soon-to-be Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., who was photographed in 2018 breaking down outside a facility in Texas being used to detain migrant children.

Republicans joined in that condemnation.

Gov. Greg Abbott, R-Texas, called the separations "tragic and heartrending" in a letter that urged Congress to act. "This disgraceful condition must end," he wrote.

"All Americans are rightly horrified by the images we are seeing on the news, children in tears pulled away from their mothers and fathers. This must stop," said Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas. He introduced legislation mandating that apprehended families be kept together.

Bowing to pressure and concerned about the impact on the upcoming midterm elections, Trump halted the policy.

This time around, with border crossings down, Trump has shifted focus to expelling people already in the United States. He is expanding the limits of executive power and jousting with judges as he uses old laws and rarely used provisions to label hundreds of men gang members so they can be deported without

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being able to challenge their cases in court.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio — who as a senator once tried to negotiate a bipartisan immigration package — has moved to expel people in the U.S. legally over political beliefs he deems counter to U.S. foreign policy interests.

Their targets have included hundreds of students and others with legal status, including those on student visas or holding green cards conferring permanent residency, as well as those who have sought asylum using legal channels.

Jorge Loweree, of the American Immigration Council, a nonprofit advocacy group, said Trump was doing something “that’s wholly new in historical terms.”

“It’s critical that people understand what the administration is doing,” said Loweree, the council’s managing director of programs and strategy. “We have an administration that believes they can disappear who they want, where they want, to anywhere they want.”

Loweree argued that even if voters in November rejected what they saw as chaos at the border, that “doesn’t necessarily mean that they support these very draconian measures that are being implemented today.”

Few elected Republicans are speaking out, though some of Trump’s outside allies have criticized what they see as overreach.

Joe Rogan, the popular podcast host who endorsed Trump late in the campaign, voiced alarm at the case of Andry Hernandez Romero, a gay makeup artist from Venezuela with no criminal record who was among those sent to El Salvador’s maximum-security CECOT prison.

“You gotta get scared that people who are not criminals are getting like lassoed up and deported and sent to like El Salvador prisons,” Rogan told his listeners. “That’s horrific. And again, that’s bad for the cause. Like the cause is let’s get the gang members out. Everybody agrees. But let’s not (have) innocent gay hairdressers get lumped up with the gangs.”

Signs of change?

The April AP-NORC poll found that about half of Americans say Trump has “gone too far” when it comes to deporting immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, compared with about 6 in 10 who say he’s “gone too far” on imposing new tariffs on other countries.

It found Americans split on mass deportations, with about 4 in 10 in favor of deporting all immigrants living in the U.S. illegally and a similar share opposed. The percentage who support mass deportations is down slightly from an AP-NORC poll conducted in January, just before Trump took office.

Still, about one-third of U.S. adults say Trump’s actions have been “about right” on immigration, and about 2 in 10 think he hasn’t gone far enough.

One case that has gained traction nationally is that of Abrego Garcia, the Maryland resident from El Salvador who was sent to CECOT despite an immigration court order preventing his deportation. Trump officials have said that Abrego Garcia has ties to the MS-13 gang, a claim Abrego Garcia’s attorneys deny, and noted that his wife once sought a protective order against him.

El Salvador’s president, Nayib Bukele, has said he will not let Abrego Garcia leave the country.

More Democrats have traveled to El Salvador to highlight the case. And people angry about the situation have confronted Republican lawmakers, including at a contentious town hall Wednesday hosted by Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, during which several members of the audience shouted at him to push for Abrego Garcia’s return.

The White House has embraced the fight. “A request for Democrats — please continue to make defending criminal illegal immigrants your top messaging point,” wrote Trump’s director of communications, Steven Cheung.

Some in the party have urged it to steer clear. Gov. Gavin Newsom, D-Calif., called the case a “distraction” from issues such as tariffs that have emerged as a bigger weakness for Trump.

“This is the debate (Republicans) want. This is their 80-20 issue, as they’ve described it,” he said of Republicans on his podcast. “It’s a tough case, because,” he said, it risks people wondering, “are they defending MS-13?”

But Dan Pfeiffer, a former senior adviser to President Barack Obama, is urging Democrats to seize on the case. He says border issues are “much more nuanced than ‘immigration good for Trump, bad for Democrats’” and believes that voters are on their side.

“If we can’t stand up against the illegal rendition of the father of a U.S. child to a prison known for torture, then I don’t really know what we’re doing,” he said.

Indian officials say troops exchanged fire with Pakistani soldiers in disputed Kashmir

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN and RAJESH ROY Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Indian and Pakistani soldiers briefly exchanged fire along their highly militarized frontier in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, Indian officials said Friday, as tensions soared between the nuclear-armed rivals following a deadly attack on tourists.

India has described the massacre in which gunmen killed 26 people, most of them Indian, as a “terror attack” and accused Pakistan of backing it. Pakistan denied any connection to the attack near the resort town of Pahalgam in India-controlled Kashmir. It was claimed by a previously unknown militant group calling itself the Kashmir Resistance.

With the region on edge, three Indian army officials said that Pakistani soldiers fired at an Indian position in Kashmir late Thursday. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity in keeping with departmental policy, said Indian soldiers retaliated and no casualties were reported.

Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs declined to comment on the report.

Tensions rise

Tuesday’s attack in Kashmir was the worst assault in years targeting civilians in the restive region. Since then, tensions have risen dangerously between India and Pakistan, which have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

On Wednesday, India suspended a crucial water-sharing treaty that has withstood two wars between the countries and closed their only functional land border crossing. A day later, India revoked all visas issued to Pakistani nationals with effect from Sunday.

Pakistan responded angrily that it has nothing to do with the attack, and canceled visas issued to Indian nationals, closed its airspace for all Indian-owned or Indian-operated airlines and suspended all trade with India. Nationals from both sides began heading back to their home countries through the Wagah border near Pakistan’s eastern city of Lahore on Friday.

Islamabad also warned that any Indian attempt to stop or divert the flow of water would be considered an “act of war.” The suspension of the water treaty could lead to water shortages at a time when parts of Pakistan are already struggling with drought and declining rainfall.

Pakistan has also warned it could suspend the Simla Agreement — in what would be a major and worrying step. The peace treaty signed after the 1971 India-Pakistan war established the Line of Control, a highly militarized de facto border that divides Kashmir between the countries.

The United Nations has urged India and Pakistan “to exercise maximum restraint and to ensure that the situation and the developments we’ve seen do not deteriorate any further.”

“Any issues between Pakistan and India, we believe can be and should be resolved peacefully, through meaningful, mutual engagement,” the statement said Friday.

India and Pakistan each administer a part of Kashmir. New Delhi describes all militancy there as Pakistan-backed terrorism. Pakistan denies this, and many Muslim Kashmiris consider the militants to be part of a home-grown freedom struggle.

Residents and police in southern Kashmir said Indian soldiers detonated explosives in the family homes of two suspected militants they accused of being involved in Tuesday’s attack. In the past, Indian troops have demolished homes as a way to punish militancy in Kashmir.

Authorities say they are investigating two local men and two Pakistani nationals for their alleged involve-

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ment in the attack. Officials have not elaborated or shared any evidence.

"He left home three years ago. We haven't seen him since and nothing was ever recovered from this house despite multiple raids," said Afroza, the aunt of one of the local men accused, Asif Sheikh. The blast partially damaged the house in Monghama village that she shares with Sheikh's parents and two sisters, including blowing out its windows. It also shattered windowpanes of several other homes.

"Even if he had done the attack, why blow up the house of a poor family," Afroza, who like many women in Kashmir uses only one name, said as she wailed.

A police official and two residents in Guree village said a house there was also targeted by soldiers. The official insisted on anonymity because he was not authorized to speak with media while the two villagers feared reprisals from authorities.

Protesters take to the streets

Also Friday, hundreds of people rallied in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, to denounce the suspension of the water-sharing treaty.

The demonstrators chanted slogans against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and burned his effigy before dispersing peacefully. Similar small rallies were also held elsewhere.

Pakistan's Senate condemned the attack, while passing a resolution denouncing New Delhi's attempt to link Islamabad to it and the suspension of the water treaty.

Hundreds of demonstrators also took to streets in India's capital of New Delhi, where most markets were shut in protest against the killings. They demanded action against Pakistan.

"Now our patience has run out," protester Surekha Sharma said. "Now we want revenge for this."

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Immigration is Trump’s strongest issue, but many say he’s gone too far, a new AP-NORC poll finds

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump’s handling of immigration remains a point of strength as he takes wide-ranging actions to ramp up deportations and target people in the U.S. illegally, according to a new poll.

The survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that 46% of U.S. adults approve of Trump’s handling of immigration, which is nearly 10 percentage points higher than his approval rating on the economy and trade with other countries.

While Trump’s actions remain divisive, there’s less of a consensus that the Republican president has overstepped on immigration than on other issues. Still, there’s little appetite for an even tougher approach. About half of Americans say he’s “gone too far” when it comes to deporting immigrants in the U.S. illegally.

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They're divided on the deportation of Venezuelan immigrants who are accused of being gang members to El Salvador, and more oppose than support revoking foreign students' visas over their participation in pro-Palestinian activism.

Here's what the poll shows about how Americans are viewing the Trump administration's actions on immigration.

Immigration is a point of strength for Trump, particularly with Republicans

Immigration was a major factor for voters in last November's election, particularly for Trump's supporters, and they were more open to tough stances on the issue than they'd been four years earlier. And even though many of Trump's immigration enforcement efforts are currently mired in battles with federal judges, it's remained an issue of relative strength in the court of public opinion.

Similar to an AP-NORC poll conducted in March, nearly half of Americans approve of Trump's immigration approach, while about 4 in 10 approve of how he's handling the presidency.

This higher approval on immigration comes primarily from Republicans. About 8 in 10 Republicans approve of Trump's handling of immigration, higher than the roughly 7 in 10 Republicans who approve of how he's handling the economy or trade negotiations with other countries.

Other groups are less enthusiastic about Trump's approach. About 4 in 10 independents and only about 2 in 10 Democrats approve of Trump on immigration.

Relatively few Americans are concerned they'll know someone who is directly affected by increased immigration enforcement, according to the poll. About 2 in 10 Americans say they are "extremely" or "very" concerned that they or someone they know will be directly affected.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to worry they'll be affected, and Hispanic adults are more likely than white or Black adults to be concerned.

About half say Trump has 'gone too far' on deportations

About half of Americans say Trump has "gone too far" when it comes to deporting immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. About one-third say his approach has been "about right," and about 2 in 10 say he's not gone far enough.

They're unhappier, generally, with how he's approaching trade negotiations. About 6 in 10 say he's "gone too far" in imposing new tariffs on other countries.

There is not a strong desire for more aggressive action on immigration, though, even among the people who approve of what's Trump doing. Among the Americans who approve of how Trump is handling immigration, about 6 in 10 say his approach has been "about right," and roughly 3 in 10 say he hasn't gone far enough.

Americans are split on sending Venezuelans to El Salvador but oppose revoking student visas

There is a deep divide on whether and how the Trump administration should undertake large-scale deportations, according to the survey, which was conducted in mid-April, while Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., was on a trip to El Salvador to demand the release of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who was mistakenly deported there in what officials later described as an "administrative error."

The poll found that 38% of Americans favor deporting all immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, down slightly from an AP-NORC poll conducted just before Trump took office in January. About the same share of Americans are opposed, and about 2 in 10 are neutral.

The findings are very similar for Trump's policy of sending Venezuelan immigrants in the U.S. who authorities say are gang members to a prison in El Salvador.

But the public is more opposed, broadly, to revoking foreign students' visas over their participation in pro-Palestinian activism, which has emerged as another flashpoint.

About half of U.S. adults oppose this, and about 3 in 10 are in support. This action is particularly unpopular among Americans with a college degree. About 6 in 10 strongly or somewhat oppose it, compared with about 4 in 10 Americans who aren't college graduates.

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Cam Ward goes No. 1, Travis Hunter 2nd and Shedeur Sanders not picked in 1st round of NFL draft

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Cam Ward went from zero-star recruit to No. 1 pick in the NFL draft. Travis Hunter cost Jacksonville a premium. Jaxson Dart was selected before Shedeur Sanders.

While Ward, Hunter and Abdul Carter went 1-2-3 as expected, Sanders wasn't picked at all in the first round.

"We all didn't expect this, of course, but I feel like with God, anything's possible, everything's possible," Sanders told family and friends at his draft party. "I don't think this happened for no reason. All this is, of course, fuel to the fire. Under no circumstance, we all know this shouldn't have happened, but we understand we're on to bigger and better things. Tomorrow's the day. We're going to be happy regardless."

Sanders was passed over by every team that had a need for a potential franchise quarterback, even though some draft analysts had him rated higher than Ward. The New York Giants had two opportunities to take Sanders — who starred at Colorado under his father, coach Deion Sanders — and went with Penn State edge rusher Carter with the No. 3 pick, bolstering an already strong pass rush.

The Giants then moved back into the first round and selected Dart at No. 25, hoping he could end up providing what another Mississippi quarterback — Eli Manning — did for the franchise.

After the Tennessee Titans selected Ward first overall, the Jaguars moved up from No. 5 to select the Heisman Trophy winner with the second pick. Hunter, a playmaking wide receiver and cornerback at Colorado, wants to become the first full-time, two-way player in the NFL since Chuck Bednarik did it with the Philadelphia Eagles more than 60 years ago.

The Jaguars gave the Cleveland Browns a ton to give Hunter that opportunity.

"I'm super excited to go home," said Hunter, whose hometown is Boynton Beach, Florida. "It means a lot that they gave up so much. It means they believe in me."

The New England Patriots took LSU left tackle Will Campbell with the fourth pick, giving quarterback Drake Maye more protection.

Campbell broke down in tears on stage, saying: "I'm gonna fight and die to protect him."

Michigan defensive tackle Mason Graham went fifth to Cleveland. Boise State running back Ashton Jeanty was picked at No. 6 by the Las Vegas Raiders.

The New York Jets selected Missouri offensive tackle Armand Membou with the seventh pick. Arizona wide receiver Tetairoa McMillan went to the Carolina Panthers with the No. 8 pick.

The New Orleans Saints chose Texas offensive tackle Kelvin Banks Jr. at No. 9. Michigan's Colston Loveland became the first tight end off the board when the Chicago Bears selected him at No. 10.

The Titans explored their options with the first pick before it became clear a few weeks ago that Ward would be their man.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell announced Ward's name to kick off the draft, which for the first time was held next to historic Lambeau Field. The NFL's smallest market is hosting the league's biggest offseason event as thousands of fans from across the country traveled to Titledown for the festivities.

Goodell rode a bicycle onto the draft stage and was followed by former Packers stars Clay Matthews, Jordy Nelson, Mason Crosby, Ahman Green and James Jones, as well as rap megastar and Green Bay superfan Lil Wayne.

As usual, fans booed Goodell when he opened the extravaganza.

Titans fans cheered inside the draft theater after hearing Ward's name called. An overlooked high school player out of Texas, Ward began his college career at Incarnate Word, an FCS school in San Antonio. He played two seasons at Washington State after transferring there in 2022 and then set school records in his only season at Miami, finishing fourth in Heisman Trophy voting.

"Everything that I went through, not a lot of people went through the process from high school to this point can make it to this level and continue to have the same work ethic since day one, but I had God by my side and if you have that, the rest takes care of itself," Ward said.

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The Titans are coming off a three-win season and have missed the playoffs three straight years. Ward is the fourth quarterback Tennessee has drafted in the first round over the past two decades, joining Marcus Mariota (No. 2, 2015), Jake Locker (No. 8, 2011) and Vince Young (No. 3, 2006).

Mariota is the only QB drafted by Tennessee in that span who led the team to a playoff win. That was back in 2017.

Will Levis, the 33rd overall pick in 2023, is 5-16 as a starter in his two seasons with the Titans.

Ward led the country with 39 touchdown passes and finished second with 4,313 yards passing while leading the Hurricanes to a 10-3 record. Ward also had only seven interceptions and completed 67.2% of his passes.

The Browns got Jacksonville's first-round pick (No. 5), picks Nos. 36 and 126, and a first-rounder in 2026 to trade down and clear the way for the Jaguars to pick Hunter. The Jags also received fourth- and sixth-round picks in this draft.

Hunter wore a neon pink blazer and flashed a big smile after Jacksonville selected him, even though he hadn't spoken to the team since the scouting combine. He caught 96 passes for 1,258 yards and 15 touchdowns while making 35 tackles, breaking up 11 passes and picking off four.

The San Francisco 49ers took Georgia edge rusher Mykel Williams with the 11th pick. Alabama guard Tyler Booker went to the Dallas Cowboys at No. 12.

Michigan defensive tackle Kenneth Grant was selected by the Miami Dolphins with the 13th pick. The Indianapolis Colts snagged Penn State tight end at No. 14 and Georgia edge rusher Jalon Walker went 15th to the Atlanta Falcons.

Mississippi defensive tackle Walter Nolen was picked by the Arizona Cardinals at No. 16 and Texas A&M edge rusher Shemar Stewart went to the Cincinnati Bengals at No. 17.

The Seattle Seahawks took North Dakota State guard Grey Zabel with the 18th pick and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers got Ohio State wide receiver Emeka Egbuka at No. 19.

Texas cornerback Jahdae Barron was selected by the Denver Broncos with the 20th pick. After the Pittsburgh Steelers chose Oregon defensive tackle Derrick Harmon 21st, North Carolina running back Omarion Hampton went to the Los Angeles Chargers at No. 22.

The Packers made their rowdy fans happy, taking Texas wide receiver Matthew Golden with the 23rd pick. Golden became the first wideout selected by Green Bay in the first round since Javon Walker in 2002.

Ohio State guard Donovan Jackson was selected by the Minnesota Vikings with the 24th pick. After Dart went to New York, the Falcons moved back into the first round and grabbed Tennessee edge rusher James Pearce Jr. at No. 26.

Georgia safety Malaki Starks went to the Baltimore Ravens with the 27th pick and the Detroit Lions took Ohio State defensive tackle Tyleik Williams 28th.

The Washington Commanders picked Oregon offensive tackle Josh Conerly Jr. at No. 29 and Kentucky cornerback Maxwell Hairston went 30th to the Buffalo Bills.

Alabama linebacker Jihaad Campbell was picked by the defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles, who moved up one spot to No. 31.

The Kansas City Chiefs finished off the first round by taking Ohio State offensive tackle Josh Simmons, who could provide Patrick Mahomes some much-needed protection.

The first round featured four trades and ended with Michigan cornerback Will Johnson and Alabama quarterback Jalen Milroe still in the green room.

Here's why a flare-up between India and Pakistan over Kashmir matters

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India and Pakistan have intensified their hostilities over the hotly contested Kashmir region following a massacre of 26 mostly Indian tourists, which New Delhi linked to Pakistan.

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Pakistan denies it was behind Tuesday's attack by gunmen on a group of tourists in Kashmir. Both sides have since escalated the tensions by exchanging diplomatic and trade sanctions against each other and raising fears of a military conflict.

Here are five reasons why a flare-up between India and Pakistan matters:

The Kashmir attack can lead to an armed conflict between two neighbors

Under intense domestic pressure, India has hinted at the possibility of a limited military strike on Pakistan in response to what it called the "terror attack" with "cross-border links." Pakistan made it clear that it will respond militarily to an attack.

This raises fears that an escalation by any one side can lead to a wider war. The last time the two nations came to blows was in 2019, when a suicide car bombing killed 40 Indian soldiers in Kashmir.

In 2021, the sides renewed a ceasefire agreement along their border, which has largely held. That relative calm was broken on Thursday after a brief exchange of fire between their armies.

Kashmir is a nuclear flashpoint between the archrivals

Both India and Pakistan are armed with nuclear weapons. There are fears that any conventional war or skirmish between them could potentially turn into a nuclear exchange.

India and Pakistan have fought two major wars, in 1965 and 1971, but in 1974, India conducted its first nuclear tests, raising the stakes in any military conflict. It triggered a nuclear race and Pakistan reached that same milestone in 1998.

Since then, India and Pakistan have had one major border skirmish in 1999 that killed at least 1,000 combatants. The fighting only stopped after U.S. intervened.

A conflict could drag in China

India and China are geopolitical rivals whose armies clashed along the disputed Himalayan border in 2020. Ties between the Asian giants have improved since but they still maintain large numbers of troops on their borders. Their borders are also contiguous to Pakistan's, making it the world's only three-way nuclear junction.

Beijing also controls a part of the Kashmir region that New Delhi says belongs to India.

On the other hand, China is also a main ally of Pakistan and has helped advance its missile programs, creating additional military concerns for New Delhi. Meanwhile, India maintains strong defense ties with the U.S., which has long sought to limit Beijing's rise in the Indo-Pacific region.

Experts say any conflict between India and Pakistan is unlikely to stay strictly between them, as their strategic partners are likely to get involved.

Kashmir tensions can lead to a war over water

In response to the massacre, India suspended a crucial treaty that governs the flow of river waters into Pakistan. Pakistan said it would consider any attempt to stop the flow of water from India an "act of war."

Under the Indus Water treaty, India is obliged to let six rivers flow freely to Pakistan. If India follows through and restricts the flow, it can have a devastating impact on Pakistan's agriculture as it battles acute water shortages.

It's also also a major environmental issue. Water insecurity is a big concern in both India and Pakistan due to rapidly growing populations and climate change.

Attacks by militants and rights abuses in Kashmir test world's response

Rights groups — including the U.N. — have blamed New Delhi for rights violations including civilian killings and arbitrary arrests in Indian-controlled Kashmir as a result of an intense crackdown by Indian forces. It has hurt India's human rights record and raised concerns that global powers are not doing enough to pressure New Delhi and hold it accountable.

Militants fighting against Indian rule have also killed scores of civilians, including Hindu pilgrims.

India has used military response against militants as part of its efforts to eradicate "terrorism," saying it threatens regional stability.

How the public's shift on immigration paved the way for Trump's crackdown

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

PASSAIC, N.J. (AP) — Alleged gang members without criminal records wrongly sent to a notorious prison in El Salvador.

International students detained by masked federal agents for writing opinion columns or attending campus demonstrations.

American citizens, visa holders and visitors stopped at airports, detained for days or facing deportation for minor infractions.

Since returning to the White House, President Donald Trump has launched an unprecedented campaign of immigration enforcement that's pushed the limits of executive power and clashed with federal judges trying to restrain him. But unlike in his first term, Trump's efforts haven't sparked the kind of widespread condemnation or protests that led him to retreat from some unpopular positions.

Instead, immigration has emerged as one of Trump's strongest issues in public polling, reflecting his grip on the Republican base and a broader shift in public sentiment driven in part, interviews suggest, by anger at the policies of his predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden.

The White House has seized on this shift, mocking critics and egging on Democrats to engage on an issue Trump's team sees as a win.

"America's changed," said pollster Frank Luntz, a longtime ally of Republicans who's been holding focus groups with voters to discuss immigration. "This is the one area where Donald Trump still has significant and widespread public support."

A poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds immigration is a relative high point for Trump compared with other issues: Slightly fewer than half of U.S. adults, 46%, say they approve of Trump's handling of the issue, compared with his overall job approval rating of 39%.

The poll was conducted April 17-21, a period including a trip by Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., to El Salvador to demand Kilmar Abrego Garcia be released from prison after the U.S. government admitted he was wrongly deported.

In the 2020 election, few voters considered immigration the most important issue facing the country, according to AP VoteCast.

Voters in the 2024 election were also more open to tougher immigration policies than the 2020 electorate. Last November, 44% of voters said most immigrants living in the United States illegally should be deported to their home countries, according to AP VoteCast, compared with 29% in 2020.

The changing views are evident in places like northern New Jersey's suburban Passaic County, one of the former Democratic strongholds where Trump overperformed in November.

Trump became the first Republican to win the county in more than 30 years. He carried the heavily Latino city of Passaic and significantly increased his support in Paterson, the state's third-largest city, which is majority Latino and also has a large Muslim community. He drew 13,819 votes after winning 3,999 in 2016. Having lost New Jersey by nearly 16 percentage points to Biden in 2020, Trump narrowed that margin to 6 percentage points last year.

Paterson resident Sunny Cumur, 54, a truck driver who immigrated from Turkey in the late 1990s, describes himself as a Democrat who doesn't usually vote. But he wanted Trump to win, he said, because he was concerned about the border under Biden.

While studies show immigrants are generally less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans, local news in New York and other cities frequently featured what Trump took to calling "migrant crime."

"What Biden did, they opened all the borders and a lot of people come here for political asylum. Come on! They don't even check if they are terrorists or not," Cumur said.

"Throw 'em out. I don't want to live with criminals," he said.

Still, other supporters worry Trump is taking things too far.

Republican Manuel Terrero, 39, a real estate agent from Clifton, said he was drawn to Trump because

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of what felt like “chaos” under Biden, with too many people crossing the border and too much crime in neighboring New York.

“It shouldn’t be allowed,” said Terrero, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic.

Trump “is doing a lot of good things. And that is one of them, stopping the people that are coming here to create chaos. And the people that have criminal records, send them back. But I am against (deporting) the people that are working,” he said.

In 2018, border officials began separating families detained after illegally crossing the border. In some cases, children were forcibly removed from their parents under a “zero tolerance” policy, the parents sometimes deported without their kids.

Gov. Greg Abbott, R-Texas, called the separations “tragic and heartrending” in a letter that urged Congress to act.

Bowing to pressure and concerned about the impact on the upcoming midterm elections, Trump halted the policy.

This time around, with border crossings down, Trump has shifted focus to expelling people already in the United States. He’s expanding the limits of executive power and jousting with judges as he uses old laws and rarely used provisions to label hundreds of men gang members so they can be deported without being able to challenge their cases in court.

Jorge Loweree, of the American Immigration Council, a nonprofit advocacy group, said Trump was doing something “wholly new in historical terms.”

“We have an administration that believes they can disappear who they want, where they want, to anywhere they want,” he said.

One case that has gained traction nationally is that of Abrego Garcia, the Maryland resident from El Salvador who was sent to the CECOT mega-prison despite an immigration court order preventing his deportation. Trump officials have said Abrego Garcia has ties to the MS-13 gang, a claim his attorneys deny, and noted his wife once sought a protective order against him.

The White House has embraced the fight. “A request for Democrats — please continue to make defending criminal illegal immigrants your top messaging point,” wrote Trump’s director of communications, Steven Cheung.

But Dan Pfeiffer, a former senior adviser to President Barack Obama, urges Democrats to seize on the case. He says border issues are “much more nuanced than ‘immigration good for Trump, bad for Democrats’” and believes voters are on their side.

“If we can’t stand up against the illegal rendition of the father of a U.S. child to a prison known for torture, then I don’t really know what we’re doing,” he said.

Today in History: April 26, the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, April 26, the 116th day of 2025. There are 249 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 26, 1986, in the worst nuclear disaster in history, an explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine caused radioactive fallout to begin spewing into the atmosphere. Dozens of people were killed in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, while the long-term death toll from radiation poisoning is believed to number in the thousands.

Also on this date:

In 1607, English colonists went ashore at present-day Cape Henry, Virginia, on an expedition to establish the first permanent English settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1865, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, was surrounded by federal troops near Port Royal, Virginia, and killed.

In 1913, Mary Phagan, a 13-year-old worker at a Georgia pencil factory, was strangled; Leo Frank, the factory superintendent, was convicted of her murder and sentenced to death. (Frank’s death sentence

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was commuted, but he was lynched by an antisemitic mob in 1915.)

In 1964, the African nations of Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form what is now known as Tanzania.

In 1977, the legendary nightclub Studio 54 had its opening night in New York.

In 1994, voting began in South Africa's first all-race elections, which resulted in victory for the African National Congress and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president.

In 2000, Vermont Gov. Howard Dean signed the nation's first bill allowing same-sex couples to form civil unions.

In 2012, former Liberian President Charles Taylor became the first head of state since World War II to be convicted by an international war crimes court as he was found guilty of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, and the use of child soldiers. (Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in prison.)

In 2018, comedian Bill Cosby was convicted of drugging and molesting Temple University employee Andrea Constand at Cosby's suburban Philadelphia mansion in 2004. (Cosby was later sentenced to three to 10 years in prison, but Pennsylvania's highest court threw out the conviction and released him from prison in June 2021, ruling that the prosecutor in the case was bound by his predecessor's agreement not to charge Cosby.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Carol Burnett is 92. Composer-producer Giorgio Moroder is 85. Olympic swimming gold medalist Donna de Varona is 78. Actor Giancarlo Esposito is 67. Actor Joan Chen is 64. Actor Jet Li is 62. Actor-comedian Kevin James is 60. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey is 59. Actor Marianne Jean-Baptiste is 58. First lady Melania Trump is 55. Singer Tionne "T-Boz" Watkins (TLC) is 55. Country musician Jay DeMarcus (Rascal Flatts) is 54. Actor Tom Welling is 48. Actor Pablo Schreiber is 47. Actor Jordana Brewster is 45. Actor Channing Tatum is 45. New York Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge is 33.