

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, May 3

Track at Howard Wood, 10 a.m.
Spring Citywide Rummage Sale

Sunday, May 4

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m. (Senior Milestones and Faith Forever Scholarship)

High School Baseball in Groton - hosting Elton at 2 p.m. and Clark/Willow Lake/Hamlin/Castlewood at 6 p.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.

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

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Monday, May 5

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, 4w5aa, garlic bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Popcorn chicken, tiny whole potatoes.

Junior High Track at Sisseton, 2 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

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

Tuesday, May 6

Senior Menu: Sloopy joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, California blend, tropical fruit.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, puzzle tots.

Track at Milbank, 1:30 p.m.

City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1:30 p.m.

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1440

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

Tariff Loophole Expires

The US ended a "de minimis" tariff exemption for packages from China and Hong Kong yesterday, which allowed duty-free entry for shipments of goods valued under \$800. The so-called loophole was widely used by overseas online retailers, like Shein and Temu, to offer cheap products directly to American consumers.

The de minimis exemption has existed since 1938, with its threshold adjusted periodically over time. The most recent change came in 2016, when the limit was raised from \$200 to \$800, allowing more packages to qualify for the perk. With the exemption now gone, low-value packages from China and Hong Kong are subject to new tariffs, some as high as 145%. Prices on many imported goods are expected to rise, with retailers adding tariff surcharges or shifting their business models. Temu announced it has stopped shipping products from China and will only display products shipped from its US warehouses.

US Customs also faces the potential challenge of inspecting millions more packages, which could cause shipping delays. Roughly 1.36 billion shipments using the de minimis provision entered the US in fiscal year 2024, per federal data.

White House proposes cutting \$163B in federal budget.

The proposal would cut federal spending from nondefense discretionary programs, including those related to the environment, renewable energy, education, and foreign aid, by 23% to the lowest level since 2017. In contrast, the proposal would increase military spending by 13% to over \$1T and funding for Homeland Security by nearly 65% to \$175B. The plan outlines the administration's fiscal priorities and will undergo debate in Congress before any measures are enacted.

CDC reports 216 child deaths this flu season, the most in 15 years.

The 2024-25 flu season has seen the highest number of pediatric deaths since the 2009-10 H1N1 global flu pandemic and surpasses last year's total of 207 deaths. The rise coincides with a drop in childhood flu vaccination rates, which have fallen from roughly 64% five years ago to 49% this season, with vaccination coverage varying widely by state.

Ireland fines TikTok \$600M for sending EU user data to China.

The fine comes after a four-year investigation found the video-sharing platform's transfers of user data to China violated EU data privacy laws and lacked sufficient transparency. Ireland's data watchdog—the EU's lead regulator for TikTok—ordered the company to fix the issues within six months. TikTok plans to appeal, arguing recent security improvements were overlooked.

Gregg Popovich, NBA's winningest coach, steps down as Spurs coach.

The 76-year-old Popovich stepped down as head coach of the San Antonio Spurs after 29 seasons, concluding his coaching career with an NBA-record 1,422 wins and five championships. He will continue with the Spurs as team president of basketball operations following health issues, including a stroke in November, which led to his absence for most of the 2024-25 season.

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Prince Harry loses bid to reinstate security on visits to UK.

Harry had tried to challenge the UK government's decision to reduce his security after he left royal duties and moved to the US. The Court of Appeal ruled the decision-making process was lawful and found no legal grounds to overturn the government's choice to provide him security on a case-by-case basis rather than automatically granting the same level of protection as senior royals.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Holly A. in Haines City, Florida.

"I have been struggling lately with my own connection to others in these divisive times, with my ability to offer grace and kindness amidst so much intolerance and hate, to find my own humanity in an inhumane world. Five years ago, at the start of the pandemic, my husband and I placed plastic Easter eggs on the lawns of every home in our subdivision with a message of hope inside. I thought there was maybe someone who needed that message in that egg.

So this Easter, I decided, despite my trepidation, to revive my hope eggs this time for my coworkers, leaving 120 plastic eggs all over the building with chocolate and my simple message, 'On this day and all days may you find light, hope, strength, voice, connection, compassion, peace, renewal...and chocolate.'

As everyone found their eggs people began thanking me with hugs and tears in their eyes, even people I didn't know came to introduce themselves I had no idea how many people had been feeling the same way I was and how much those simple words would begin to create new connections and open hearts that were as guarded as mine. In dark times, we are tasked with finding even the smallest bit of light and sharing it with those around us. It is that tiny spark that stands to ignite not only the humanity in others but just as importantly to remind us of our own."

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Wed., May 7 from 4-9 pm

**DI DAY
AT DQ**

**Here's your chance to support
the two Groton Area teams attending
Global Finals in Kansas City, MO. A
portion of the evening sales go to DI.**

Imagination will get you everywhere!

Thanks for your support!

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Four athletes are triple winners at Sisseton

The Groton Area boys team took first place in five events while the girls took first in seven events at the Sisseton Legion Relays held Friday.

Keegen Tracy, MaKenna Krause, Taryn Traphagen and McKenna Tietz were all triple winners. Tracy won the 100m, 400m, and ran the first leg of the 4x400 relay. Krause won the 100m, the long jump and anchored the SMR 1600m relay. Tietz won the 100m hurdles and ran on the 4x200 and 4x400m relay events and Traphagen was on three winning relay teams.

Others taking first were Blake Pauli in the 800m run, Jayden Schwan in the 1600m run and the girls won three other relay events: 4x100 relay, 4x400m relay and the 4x800m relay.

Both teams placed third at the meet.

Boy's Division

Team Standings: 1. Milbank 170, 2. Sisseton 88, 3. Groton Area 86, 4. Frederick Area 82, 5. Border West 74, 6. Britton-Hecla 56, 7. Tri-State 49, 8. Lisbon 35, 9. Waubay/Summit 31, 10. Hankinson 30, 11. Northwestern 29, 12. Langford Area 15, 13. Richland 12, 14. Webster Area 7, 15. Wilmot 3.

100 Meters: 1. Keegen Tracy, 11.59; 5. Lincoln Krause, 12.13

200 Meters: 10. Jordan Schwan, 25.83

400 Meters: 1. Keegen Tracy, 51.55

800 Meters: 1. Blake Pauli, 2:04.06; 7. Tristin McGannon, 2:19.02; 15. Kason Oswald, 2:33.06

1600 Meters: 1. Jayden Schwan, 4:50.33; 5. Jace Johnson, 5:23.34

4x100 Relay: 4. (Brevin Fliehs, Lincoln Krause, Jordan Schwan, Ryder Schelle), 47.43.

4x400 Relay: 1. (Keegen Tracy, Blake Pauli, Jayden Schwan, Ethan Kroll), 3:35.57.

SMR 1600m - [200-200-400-800]: 2. (Brevin Fliehs, Lincoln Krause, Jordan Schwan, Jace Johnson), 4:04.76.

Shot Put - 12lb: 6. Karter Moody, 39' 4.75"

Discus - 1.6kg: 17. Karter Moody, 86' 1"

Javelin - 800g: 14. TC Schuster, 96' 5"; 19. Karter Moody, 86' 3"

Long Jump: 5. Ethan Kroll, 18' 9.5"; 26. Kason Oswald, 14' 9.5"; 29. TC Schuster, 13' 8.5"

Triple Jump: 3. Ethan Kroll, 38' 0.5"; 12. Tristin McGannon, 33' 6.5"

Girl's Division

Team Standings: 1. Border West 146, 2. Lisbon 118, 3. Groton Area 110, 4. Britton-Hecla 80, 5. Milbank 64, 6. Richland 54, 7. Tri-State 47, 8. Sisseton 38, 9. Langford Area 36, 10. Frederick Area 26, 11. Webster Area 11, 12. Hankinson 5, 12. Waubay/Summit 5, 14. Northwestern 4, 15. Wilmot 3.

100 Meters: 1. MaKenna Krause, 13.37; 23. Elizabeth Fliehs, 15.26

200 Meters: 6. Rylee Dunker, 30.35; 15. Elizabeth Fliehs, 31.94

800 Meters: 2. Faith Traphagen, 2:41.27

1600 Meters: 3. Ryelle Gilbert, 5:50.54

100m Hurdles - 33": 1. McKenna Tietz, 17.44; 5. Talli Wright, 19.30; 9. Teagan Hanten, 20.51; 10. Hannah Sandness, 20.76

300m Hurdles - 30": 3. McKenna Tietz, 51.31; 9. Talli Wright, 56.49; 13. Teagan Hanten, 59.26; 14. Hannah Sandness, 1:02.46

4x100 Relay: 3. (Rylee Dunker, Faith Traphagen, Ashlynn Warrington, Elizabeth Fliehs), 56.19.

4x200 Relay: 1. (Laila Roberts, Kella Tracy, McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen), 1:53.06.

4x400 Relay: 1. (Laila Roberts, Taryn Traphagen, McKenna Tietz, Kella Tracy), 4:18.54.

4x800 Relay: 1. (Faith Traphagen, Kella Tracy, Taryn Traphagen, Ryelle Gilbert), 10:19.56.

SMR 1600m - [200-200-400-800]: 1. (Rylee Dunker, Ashlynn Warrington, Ryelle Gilbert, MaKenna Krause), 4:41.19.

Shot Put - 4kg: 3. Emma Kutter, 30' 11.75"; 18. Libby Cole, 25' 4"; 26. Avery Crank, 23' 0.5"; 28. Audrey Davis, 22' 6.75"; 29. Ashley Johnson, 22' 4.5"

Discus - 1kg: 8. Avery Crank, 80' 11"; 17. Libby Cole, 74' 11"; 21. Emma Kutter, 69' 9"; 33. Audrey Davis, 61' 4"; 34. Kyleigh Kroll, 60' 7"

Javelin - 600g: 9. Avery Crank, 75' 9"; 11. Emma Kutter, 69' 2"; 16. Elizabeth Fliehs, 64' 6"; 18. Addison Hoffman, 62' 1"; 24. Ashley Johnson, 51' 11"

Long Jump: 1. MaKenna Krause, 15' 5"; 24. Rylie Rose, 11' 8"; 26. Teagan Hanten, 11' 2.5"; 29. Addison Hoffman, 9' 11.25"

Triple Jump: 14. Teagan Hanten, 26' 11.25"

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Groton area swept the boys and girls MVP honors in the Sisseton Legion Relays with Keegen Tracy and MaKenna Krause. Keegen had triple first places in 100m, 400m, and 4x400 relay. Makenna also had triple first places in 100m, SMR 1600m relay, and long jump. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Groton Area Tigers girls 4x400m relay winners rear L-R Kella Tracy and Taryn Traphagen. Front L-R Laila Roberts and McKenna Tietz. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Groton Area Tigers boys 4x400m relay winners and personal record rear L-R Blake Pauli, Jayden Schwan. Front L-R Ethan Kroll and Keegan Tracy. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Emma Kutter lets the shot put fly in her 3rd place finish. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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Ethan Kroll anchors the winning boys 4x400m relay. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Blake Pauli hands off to Jayden Schwan in the winning 4x400m relay. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Keegan Tracy hands off to Blake Pauli in the winning 4x400m relay. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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Laila Roberts hand off to Taryn Traphagen in the winning 4x400m relay. The Groton Area Tigers girls won 4 out of the 5 relays.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Two Groton Tiger standouts McKenna Tietz hands off to Kella Tracy in the winning 4x400m relay.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Veteran Tiger junior hurdler Talli Wright clears the intermediate hurdle to best her season record.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Faith Traphagen hands off to Rylee Dunker in 4x100m relay.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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Tiger hurdlers cross the 100m highs L-R Hannah Sandness, Talli Wright, and Teagan Hanten.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Addison Hoffman throwing javelin. (Photo by

Bruce Babcock)



Tiger Ace hurler McKenna Tietz during the girls 300m intermediate hurdle race placing 3rd. Earlier in meet in the 100m hurdles McKenna placed first in a cross border competitive field. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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Tiger girls long distance ace Ryelle Gilbert in the 1600m run placing third.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Tiger ace long distance runner Jayden Schwan wins the 1600m (mile) run and sets yet another personal record.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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Tiger freshman long jumper and runner Ethan Kroll in his long jump 5th place finish. He also placed 3rd in the triple jump. (Photo by

Bruce Babcock)



Tiger sophomores standouts Kella Tracy hands off to McKenna Tietz in the winning 4x200m relay. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

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

May 6, 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. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Rental Agreement with All Seasons Motorsports
5. Approval of the transfer of two vehicles from the Sheriff Office to Equalization
 - 2015 Chevrolet Traverse & 2012 Chevrolet Suburban
6. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes for April 29, 2025
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Approval of Election Workers
 - e. Lease Agreements
 - f. Township Bonds
 - g. Travel Request
 - h. Landfill Tonnage Report for April
7. Other Business
8. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
9. 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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Brown County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: 39135 138th Street, six miles southeast of Aberdeen, SD

When: 2:42 p.m., Thursday, May 1, 2025

Driver 1: 74-year-old male from Aberdeen, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: Farmall Tractor

Seat belt Used: No

Brown County, S.D.- An Aberdeen man died in a single vehicle tractor crash Thursday afternoon six miles southeast of Aberdeen, SD.

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

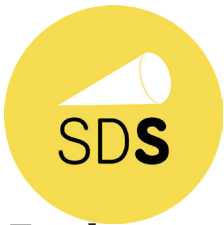
Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a Farmall Tractor with a belly mower was mowing a steep ditch on 138th Street when the tractor rolled. The driver was pronounced deceased at the scene.

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.

###

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>

Exploratory drilling projects threaten important Black Hills cultural sites, activists say

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MAY 2, 2025 3:47 PM

An environmental organization and a Native American advocacy group say two important Black Hills cultural and historical sites face threats from exploratory drilling projects.

One of the projects is proposed by Rapid City-based Pete Lien and Sons. It wants to conduct exploratory drilling for graphite on national forest land near Pe' Sla, also known as Reynolds Prairie, which is a high-elevation meadow in the central Black Hills. Graphite is used in electric vehicle batteries, lubricants, pencils and other products.

Pe' Sla is a ceremonial site for Lakota people, and it figures prominently in traditional Lakota creation stories.

"Drilling at Pe' Sla would be like drilling under the Vatican or at a sacred site in Jerusalem," said Taylor Gunhammer, an Oglala Lakota, in a news release. "Under any circumstances, it is not a place to be considering mining."

In response to questions from South Dakota Searchlight, a representative of Pete Lien and Sons said the U.S. Forest Service is reviewing the plan's potential impact on sites of cultural and historical significance in the proposed project area, and questions and concerns should be directed to that agency.

Gunhammer is a local organizer with NDN Collective, a Native American advocacy group in Rapid City. NDN and the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance are encouraging people to submit comments on the Pete Lien and Sons project and another project that could affect Craven Canyon in the southern Black Hills.

That's where a Canadian company, Clean Nuclear Energy Corp., plans to conduct exploratory drilling for uranium on state-owned land located seven miles north of Edgemont. Uranium is the primary ingredient in nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants.

The Black Hills Clean Water Alliance and NDN said Craven Canyon contains 7,000-year-old cultural and historical sites of importance to Indigenous tribes, historians and archeologists.



Pe' Sla, or Reynolds Prairie, is a high-elevation Black Hills meadow of sacred importance to Lakota people. (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

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A representative of Clean Nuclear Energy Corp., Mike Blady, said in email correspondence with South Dakota Searchlight that the proposed exploration area has been explored and mined previously. A letter to the company from state regulators last year said the area is within a quarter-mile of the edge of Craven Canyon, but Blady said the area is over a mile away.

"We are aware of the cultural significance and are doing everything in our power to ensure that there is no collateral damage," Blady wrote. "We have consulted with the state and federal government as well as hosting an open house for Indigenous groups and are confident that there will not be adverse effects.

Meanwhile, another company, enCore Energy, hopes to mine uranium in the Edgemont area. Its various state and federal mining permit applications have been bogged down in administrative and court appeals for years.

The Clean Nuclear Energy Corp. drilling proposal will be considered by the state Board of Minerals and Environment. The Pete Lien and Sons proposal is under consideration by the supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest. Both proposals are open for public comment.

How to comment

Written comments regarding the Clean Nuclear Energy Corp. proposal must be received by May 14. Comments may be submitted online at <https://danr.sd.gov/public/default.aspx> by clicking the date under the "Comment deadline" heading for the project, or in writing to the Minerals, Mining, and Superfund Program, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD, 57501-3182.

Comments regarding the Pete Lien and Sons proposal must be received by May 9. Those may be submitted online at <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=67838>; by mail to the Mystic Ranger District Office, Attn: Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project, 8221 S. Mount Rushmore Rd., Rapid City, SD, 57702; or by fax at (605) 343-7134.

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

Governor seeks nominations after northeast South Dakota lawmaker resigns

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 2, 2025 2:52 PM

South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden announced Friday he's seeking nominations for a new lawmaker to represent District 1 in northeastern South Dakota after Rep. Chris Reder, R-Warner, resigned Thursday.

District 1 includes areas in Brown, Day, Marshall and Roberts counties. Reder was elected to his first term last November and served during the 2025 legislative session. He is a Navy veteran and sat on the House Military and Veterans Affairs, Taxation and Transportation committees.

The two bills he introduced, one of which was signed into law by Rhoden, related to military members and veteran benefits. The new law allows non-South Dakota residents who are veterans to purchase three-day temporary non-resident waterfowl licenses in the state.

Reder announced his resignation through social media on Thursday due to "personal and professional reasons."

He had faced questions in the news media and on political



State Rep. Chris Reder, R-Warner, speaks on the South Dakota House floor on March 6, 2025. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota

Searchlight)

blogs about his residency status, but did not address that in his resignation announcement.

Another legislative seat opened recently in District 22, which includes areas in Beadle, Spink and Clark counties, when Rhoden selected Sen. David Wheeler, R-Huron, to become a judge. Rhoden will make appointments for the open seats.

To submit a nomination for the open state representative seat in District 1, email ryan.brunner@state.sd.us by May 23. Nominations should include the candidate's name, current physical address, resume, cover letter and letters of recommendation.

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.

Musk DOGE cuts motivate former U.S. Senate candidate to run again

Now-independent Brian Bengs ran as Democrat in 2022 against U.S. Sen. John Thune

BY: JOHN HULT - MAY 2, 2025 8:02 AM



U.S. Senate candidate Brian Bengs speaks to supporters on Nov. 7, 2022, at the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls. (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

Government cost-cutting led by billionaire Elon Musk spurred a 2022 Democratic U.S. Senate candidate to jump back into the electoral arena.

Brian Bengs announced this week that he plans to run in the 2026 election, this time as an independent, for the seat held by Republican U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds. Sioux Falls businessman Julian Beaudion is seeking the Democratic nomination.

Bengs said his previous run as a Democrat was out of character.

"The bulk of my life I've been an independent," Bengs told South Dakota Searchlight, noting that he only registered as a Democrat in 2022 to earn the organizational and fundraising advantage of party alignment.

Bengs came in second in the three-way race for U.S. Senate that year. Republican Sen. John Thune, who's since become majority leader, got 70% of the vote, Bengs collected 26%, and Libertarian Tamara Lesnar pulled 4%.

There had been "people telling me to run" against Rounds in 2026 for quite a while, Bengs said, but "a switched flipped" when Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) came for his job.

The former Northern State University professor and retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel had moved to Hot Springs and taken a "retirement job" as a ranger

at Wind Cave National Park.

In February, DOGE fired "probationary" federal employees – those who hadn't been on the job at least a year. Court orders later reinstated those employees, though most wound up on administrative leave, not back at work.

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Bengs didn't actually lose his job in the shake-up. No one at Wind Cave did.

"We learned that they had decided they weren't going to fire veterans," Bengs said. "I and everybody else were veterans, so we were only spared by virtue of having been in the military."

That was enough to put Bengs back into political mode. He resigned his position at Wind Cave as of this month.

Bengs told Searchlight he didn't want to run as a Democrat in 2022, but that "I didn't have the money to run as an independent." The party infrastructure opened doors to financing (Bengs ultimately raised about half a million dollars for his 2022 campaign), but it also gave him name recognition and helped him collect a list of potential donors that "wasn't huge, but it was something."

"Partisanship is an addictive drug, and it's a drug we've mainlined into our homes," Bengs said, referencing political media streams. "We get it on a daily basis."

The small list of donors he collected through his momentary wade through Democratic waters has since grown to a "multi-million" name list, Bengs said Thursday. That's the list upon which he intends to finance his run this time around.

"If everybody on that list donates even a few dollars, then we're in the race," Bengs said.

If elected, Bengs said he wouldn't caucus with Democrats or Republicans. He'd act as kingmaker, he said, by courting whatever side had a proposal aligning with his values.

"When it's a closely divided Senate and they want my vote, I'm going to say 'what's in it for South Dakota?'" Bengs said.

That would be part of his pitch to the Republicans and independents who might be wary of casting a ballot for a former Democrat. He'd also point out positions like his belief that it's time to end birthright citizenship. For those on the political left, he'd lean into support for a tax system that "favors work over wealth," and his disgust with what he sees as the South Dakota delegation's capitulation to President Donald Trump.

Bengs' decision to run as an independent strikes Beaudion as opportunistic and as a telling sign. He supported Bengs in 2022 and said the two agree on some issues, but "I always have understood who I am and what I stand for," Beaudion said.

"My campaign is for the people, and we believe the Democratic Party gives us the best chance to lead people in that way," Beaudion said. "There has been much more of a steady hand in the Democratic Party."

Bengs and Beaudion did speak about their respective electoral plans, with Bengs telling Beaudion he didn't plan to run. That was before DOGE began targeting federal employees, though.

Both men will appear over the weekend at the Custer County Democratic Party's \$50-per-ticket McGovern Day Rally at Crazy Horse Memorial, as will District 32 state Rep. Nicole Uhre-Balk, D-Rapid City.

Sen. Rounds, in a statement from his campaign staff, responded to Bengs' announcement by calling him another choice for left-leaning South Dakotans.

"It's great that the left wing of the Democrat Party will have multiple candidates to choose from," the statement said.

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

Trump budget puts clean-energy spending in crosshairs

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - MAY 2, 2025 6:53 PM

President Donald Trump's budget request for the next fiscal year proposes deep cuts to renewable energy programs and other climate spending as the administration seeks to shift U.S. energy production to encourage more fossil fuels and push the focus away from reducing climate change.

The budget proposes slashing \$21 billion in unspent funds from the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law for renewable energy, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other efforts to cut climate-warming

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carbon dioxide emissions. The request also targets climate research spending and initiatives meant to promote diversity.

"President Trump is committed to eliminating funding for the globalist climate agenda while unleashing American energy production," a White House fact sheet on climate and environment spending said. The budget "eliminates funding for the Green New Scam."

The president's budget request is a wish list for Congress, which controls federal spending, to consider. Even with both chambers of Congress controlled by Republicans who have shown an unusual willingness to follow Trump's lead on a host of policies, it is best understood as a starting point for negotiations between the branches of government and a representation of the administration's priorities.

A White House official speaking on background Friday, though, said the Trump administration is exploring ways to exert more control over the federal spending process, including by potentially refusing to spend funds appropriated by lawmakers.

The first budget request of Trump's second term calls on Congress to cut non-defense accounts by \$163 billion to \$557 billion, while keeping defense funding flat at \$893 billion.



President Donald Trump's budget request, released on May 2, 2025, proposes slashing \$21 billion in unspent funds from the 2021 bipartisan infrastructure law for renewable energy, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other efforts to cut climate-warming carbon dioxide emissions. Shown are solar panels and wind turbines. (Photo by Marga Buschbell-Steege/Getty Images)

'Political talking points'

The proposal drew criticism for a focus on culture-war buzzwords, even from groups that are not always inclined to support environment and climate spending.

The request "is long on rhetoric and short on details," Steve Ellis, president of the nonpartisan budget watchdog Taxpayers for Common Sense, said in a statement.

"This year's version leans heavily on political talking points—taking aim at so-called 'woke' programs and the 'Green New Scam,' while proposing a massive Pentagon spending hike to pay for wasteful fantasies like the Golden Dome and diverting military resources to immigration enforcement missions."

Renewable energy

The administration proposal would roll back funding Trump's predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden, championed for renewable energy.

It would cancel more than \$15 billion from the 2021 infrastructure law "purposed for unreliable renewable energy, removing carbon dioxide from the air, and other costly technologies that burden ratepayers

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and consumers,” according to the White House fact sheet.

It would also eliminate \$6 billion for building electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

“EV chargers should be built just like gas stations: with private sector resources disciplined by market forces,” the fact sheet said.

And it would decrease spending on the Energy Department’s Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy program, which helps private-sector projects secure financing and conducts research on low-carbon energy sources, by \$2.5 billion.

In a statement, Rep. Marcy Kaptur, the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations subcommittee that writes the bill funding energy programs, slammed the cuts to renewable energy programs, saying they would cost consumers and hurt a growing domestic industry.

“The Trump Administration’s proposal to slash \$20 Billion from the Department of Energy’s programs — particularly a devastating 74% cut to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy — is shortsighted and dangerous,” the longtime Ohio lawmaker said. “By gutting clean energy investments, this budget threatens to raise energy prices for consumers, increase our reliance on foreign energy, and stifle American competitiveness. ... We must defend the programs that power America’s future — cleaner, cheaper, and made right here at home.”

Diversity

Throughout the request, the administration targets programs out of line with Trump’s ideology on social issues, including those meant to promote diversity.

For energy and environment programs, that includes spending on environmental justice initiatives, which target pollution and climate effects in majority-minority and low-income communities, and organizations “that advance the radical climate agenda,” according to the fact sheet.

Research and grant funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration would be particularly hard hit by the proposal, which would terminate “a variety of climate-dominated research programs that are not aligned with Administration policy of ending ‘Green New Deal’ initiatives, saving taxpayers \$1.3 billion.”

The budget also proposes eliminating \$100 million from a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency fund dedicated to environmental justice. That funding “enabled a witch hunt against private industry” and “gave taxpayer dollars to political cronies who exploited the program’s racial preferencing policies to advance an anti-oil and gas crusade,” according to the White House.

National Park Service targeted

The budget also proposes cutting \$900 million from National Park Service operations, which the administration said would come from defunding smaller sites while “supporting many national treasures.”

The document indicates the administration would prefer to leave responsibility for smaller sites currently under NPS management to states and refocus the federal government on the major parks that attract nationwide and international tourists.

“There is an urgent need to streamline staffing and transfer certain properties to State-level management to ensure the long-term health and sustainment of the National Park system,” according to a budget spreadsheet highlighting major line items in the request.

Despite laws in recent years to boost spending for maintenance at parks, the National Park Service faces a \$23.3 billion deferred maintenance backlog, according to a July 2024 report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

The proposed NPS cut represents the largest single funding change – either positive or negative – of any line item under the Department of Interior, which would receive a funding decrease of more than \$5 billion, about 30%, under the proposal.

Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.

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

Trump asks Congress to cut \$163B in non-defense spending, ax dozens of programs

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ARIANA FIGUEROA - MAY 2, 2025 1:24 PM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump released a budget request Friday that would dramatically slash some federal spending, the initial step in a monthslong process that will include heated debate on Capitol Hill as both political parties work toward a final government funding agreement.

The proposal, for the first time, details how exactly this administration wants lawmakers to restructure spending across the federal government — steep cuts to domestic appropriations, including the elimination of dozens of programs that carry a long history of bipartisan support, and a significant increase in defense funding.

Trump wants more than 60 programs to be scrapped, some with long histories of assistance to states, including Community

Services Block Grants, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the National Endowment for Democracy, the National Institute on Minority and Health Disparities within the National Institutes of Health, and the Sexual Risk Avoidance and Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs.

Congress will ultimately decide how much funding to provide to federal programs, and while Republicans hold majorities in both chambers, regular funding bills will need Democratic support to move through the Senate's 60-vote legislative filibuster.

White House budget director Russ Vought wrote in a letter that the request proposes shifting some funding from the federal government to states and local communities.

"Just as the Federal Government has intruded on matters best left to American families, it has intruded on matters best left to the levels of government closest to the people, who understand and respect the needs and desires of their communities far better than the Federal Government ever could," Vought wrote.

The budget request calls on Congress to cut non-defense accounts by \$163 billion to \$557 billion, while keeping defense funding flat at \$893 billion in the dozen annual appropriations bills.

The proposal assumes the GOP Congress passes the separate reconciliation package that is currently being written in the House, bringing defense funding up to \$1.01 trillion, a 13.4% increase, and reducing domestic spending to \$601 billion, a 16.6% decrease.



From left to right, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, President Donald Trump and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth attend a Cabinet meeting at the White House on April 30, 2025, in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Andrew Harnik/Getty Images)

Many domestic cuts

Under Trump's request many federal departments and agencies would be slated for significant spending reductions, though defense, border security and veterans would be exempt.

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The cuts include:

Agriculture: – \$5 billion, or 18.3%

Commerce: – \$1.7 billion, or 16.5%

Education: – \$12 billion, or 15.3%

Energy: – \$4.7 billion, or 9.4%

Health and Human Services: – \$33 billion, or 26.2%

Housing and Urban Development: – \$33.6 billion, or 43.6%

Interior: – \$5.1 billion, or 30.5%

Justice: – \$2.7 billion, or 7.6%

Labor: – \$4.6 billion, or 34.9%

State: – \$49.1 billion, or 83.7%

Treasury: – \$2.7 billion, or 19%

Increases include:

Defense: + \$113 billion, or 13.4% with reconciliation package

Homeland Security: + \$42.3 billion, or 64.9% with reconciliation package

Transportation: + \$1.5 billion, or 5.8%

Veterans Affairs: + \$5.4 billion, or 4.1%

The budget request also asks Congress to eliminate AmeriCorps, which operates as the Corporation for National and Community Service; the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which provides some funding to National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service; the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences; and the 400 Years of African American History Commission.

What if Congress won't act on the cuts?

Debate over the budget proposal will take place throughout the summer months, but will come to a head in September, when Congress must pass some sort of funding bill to avoid a partial government shutdown.

A senior White House official, speaking on background on a call with reporters to discuss details of the budget request, suggested that Trump would take unilateral action to cut funding if Congress doesn't go along with the request.

"Obviously, we have never taken impoundment off the table, because the president and myself believe that 200 years of the president and executive branch had that ability," the official said. "But we're working with Congress to see what they will pass. And I believe that they have an interest in passing cuts."

The 1974 Impoundment Control Act bars the president from canceling funding approved by Congress without consulting lawmakers via a rescissions request, which the officials said the administration plans to release "soon."

The annual appropriations process is separate from the reconciliation process that Republicans are using to pass their massive tax cuts, border security, defense funding and spending cuts package.

Huge boost for Homeland Security

The budget proposal aligns with the Trump's administration's plans for mass deportations of people without permanent legal status, and would provide the Department of Homeland Security with \$42.3 billion, or a 64.9% increase.

The budget proposal suggests eliminating \$650 million from a program that reimburses non-governmental organizations and local governments that help with resettling and aiding newly arrived migrants released from DHS custody, known as the Shelters and Services Program.

The Trump administration also seeks to eliminate the agency that handles the care and resettlement of unaccompanied minors within Health and Human Services. The budget proposal recommends getting rid of the Refugee and Unaccompanied Alien Children Programs' \$1.97 billion budget. The budget proposal argues that because of an executive order to suspend refugee resettlement services, there is no need for the programs.

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A federal judge from Washington state issued a nationwide injunction, and ruled the Trump administration must continue refugee resettlement services.

The budget proposal also calls for axing programs that help newly arrived migrant children or students for whom English is not a first language.

For the Education Department, the budget proposal suggests eliminating \$890 million in funding for the English Language Acquisition and \$428 million for the Migrant Education and Special Programs for Migrant Students.

Key GOP senator rejects defense request

Members of Congress had mixed reactions to the budget request, with some GOP lawmakers praising its spending cuts, while others took issue with the defense budget.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Roger Wicker, R-Miss., outright rejected the defense funding level, writing in a statement that relying on the reconciliation package to get military spending above \$1 trillion was unacceptable.

"OMB is not requesting a trillion-dollar budget. It is requesting a budget of \$892.6 billion, which is a cut in real terms. This budget would decrease President Trump's military options and his negotiating leverage," Wicker wrote. "We face an Axis of Aggressors led by the Chinese Communist Party, who have already started a trade war rather than negotiate in good faith. We need a real Peace Through Strength agenda to ensure Xi Jinping does not launch a military war against us in Asia, beyond his existing military support to the Russians, the Iranians, Hamas, and the Houthis."

The senior White House official who spoke on a call with reporters to discuss details of the budget request said that splitting the defense increase between the regular Pentagon spending bill and the reconciliation package was a more "durable" proposal.

Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, wrote the panel will have "an aggressive hearing schedule to learn more about the President's proposal and assess funding needs for the coming year."

"This request has come to Congress late, and key details still remain outstanding," Collins wrote. "Based on my initial review, however, I have serious objections to the proposed freeze in our defense funding given the security challenges we face and to the proposed funding cuts to – and in some cases elimination of – programs like LIHEAP, TRIO, and those that support biomedical research."

"Ultimately, it is Congress that holds the power of the purse."

Senate Appropriations Committee ranking member Patty Murray, D-Wash., wrote in a statement she will work with others in Congress to block the domestic funding cuts from taking effect.

"Trump wants to rip away funding to safeguard Americans' health, protect our environment, and to help rural communities and our farmers thrive. This president wants to turn our country's back on Tribes—and let trash pile up at our national parks," Murray wrote. "Trump is even proposing to cut investments to prevent violent crime, go after drug traffickers, and tackle the opioids and mental health crises."

A press release from Murray's office noted the budget request lacked details on certain programs, including Head Start.

House Speaker Mike Johnson R-La, praised the budget proposal in a statement and pledged that House GOP lawmakers are "ready to work alongside President Trump to implement a responsible budget that puts America first."

"President Trump's plan ensures every federal taxpayer dollar spent is used to serve the American people, not a bloated bureaucracy or partisan pet projects," Johnson wrote.

Spending decisions coming

The House and Senate Appropriations committees are set to begin hearings with Cabinet secretaries and agency heads next week, where Trump administration officials will explain their individual funding requests and answer lawmakers' questions.

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The members on those committees will ultimately write the dozen annual appropriations bills in the months ahead, determining funding levels and policy for numerous programs, including those at the departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Interior, Justice, State and Transportation.

The House panel's bills will skew more toward Republican funding levels and priorities, though the Senate committee has a long history of writing broadly bipartisan bills.

The leaders of the two committees — House Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., House ranking member Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., Senate Chairwoman Collins and Senate ranking member Murray — will ultimately work out a final deal later in the year alongside congressional leaders.

Differences over the full-year bills are supposed to be solved before the start of the new fiscal year on Oct. 1, but members of Congress regularly rely on a stopgap spending bill through mid-December to give themselves more time to complete negotiations.

Failure to pass some sort of government funding measure, either a stopgap bill or all 12 full-year spending bills, before the funding deadline, would lead to a partial government shutdown.

This round of appropriations bills will be the first debated during Trump's second-term presidency and will likely bring about considerable disagreement over the unilateral actions the administration has already taken to freeze or cancel federal spending, many of which are the subject of lawsuits arguing the president doesn't have that impoundment authority.

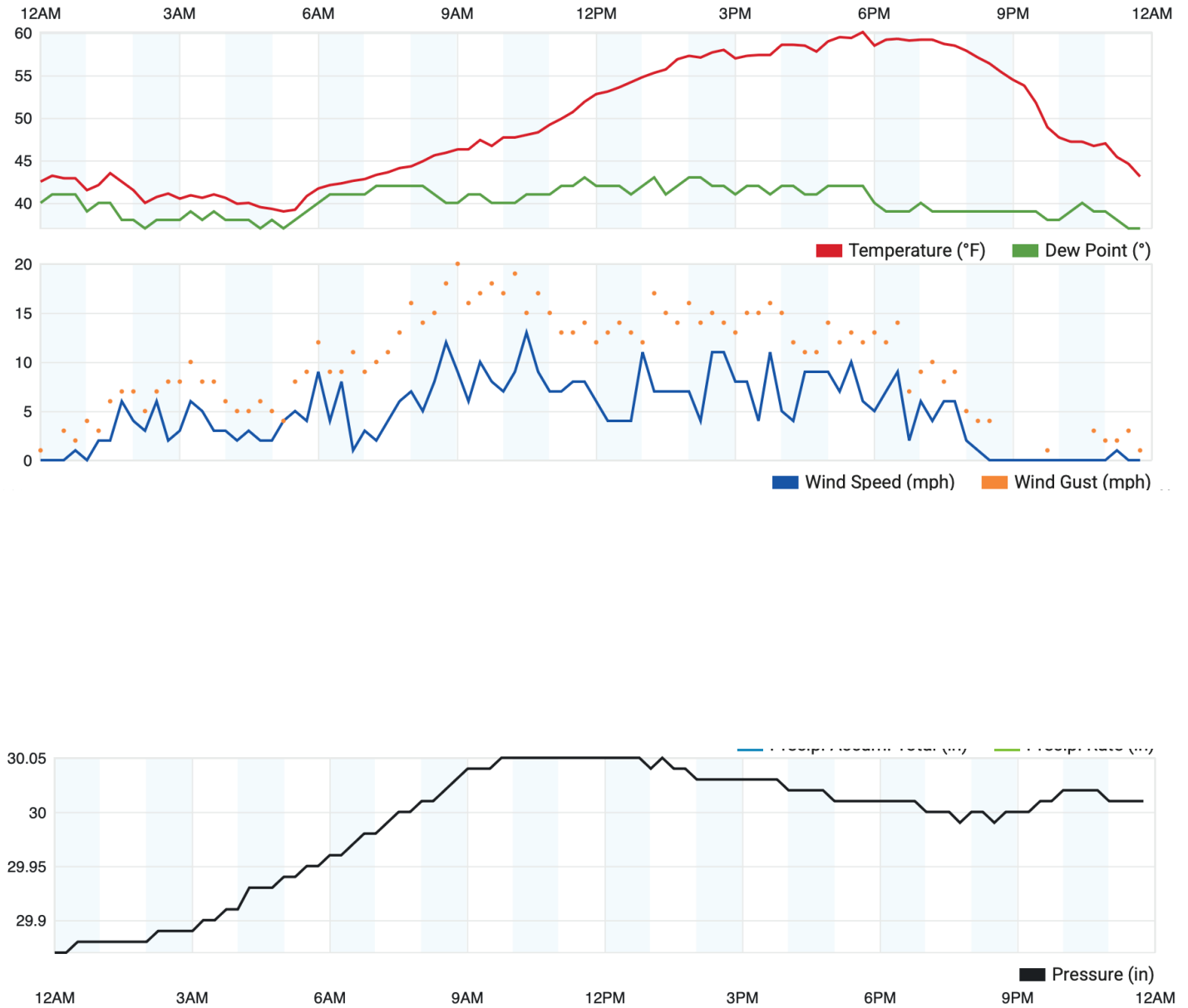
Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 71 °F

Areas Frost
then Sunny

Tonight



Low: 41 °F

Clear

Sunday



High: 77 °F

Sunny then
Sunny and
Breezy

Sunday Night



Low: 47 °F

Clear

Monday



High: 78 °F

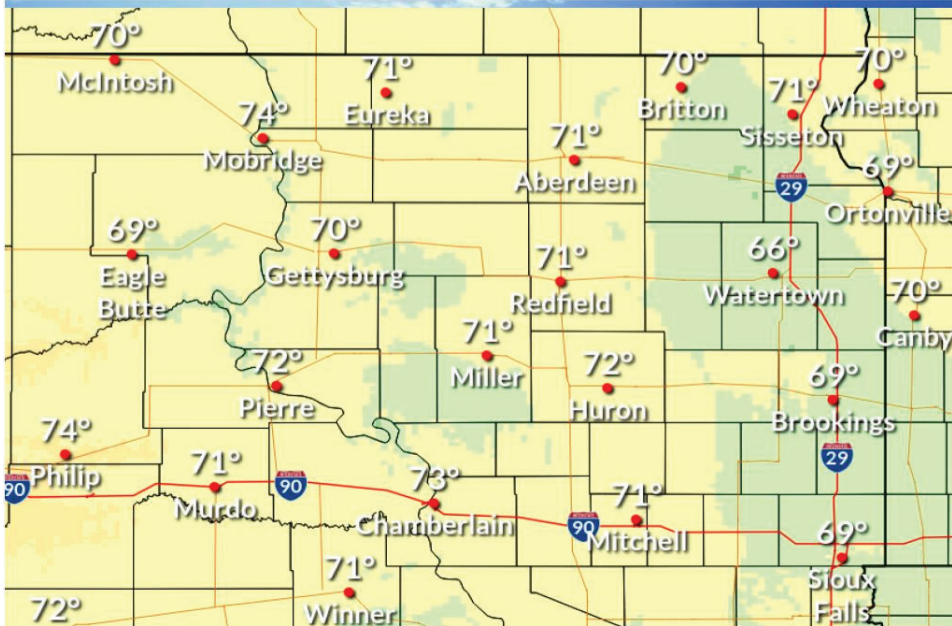
Sunny



Mild & Dry

Highs Today

May 3, 2025
3:06 AM



***Near to Slightly Above
Normal Temperatures
Through Next Weekend**

- Highs in the 70s to near 80
- Lows in the 40s

***Relatively Low Chances For
Moisture**

- Late Monday Through
Tuesday
- Mainly West-River
- Not Expected To Exceed
0.1" to 0.25"



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Look for temperatures to run about near to about 10 degrees above normal for the next several days. We could see some moisture, mainly west river early next week, but even then amounts appear limited.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 60 °F at 5:43 PM

Low Temp: 38 °F at 5:22 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 8:57 AM

Precip: 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 28 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 90 in 1952

Record Low: 13 in 2005

Average High: 65

Average Low: 39

Average Precip in May.: .33

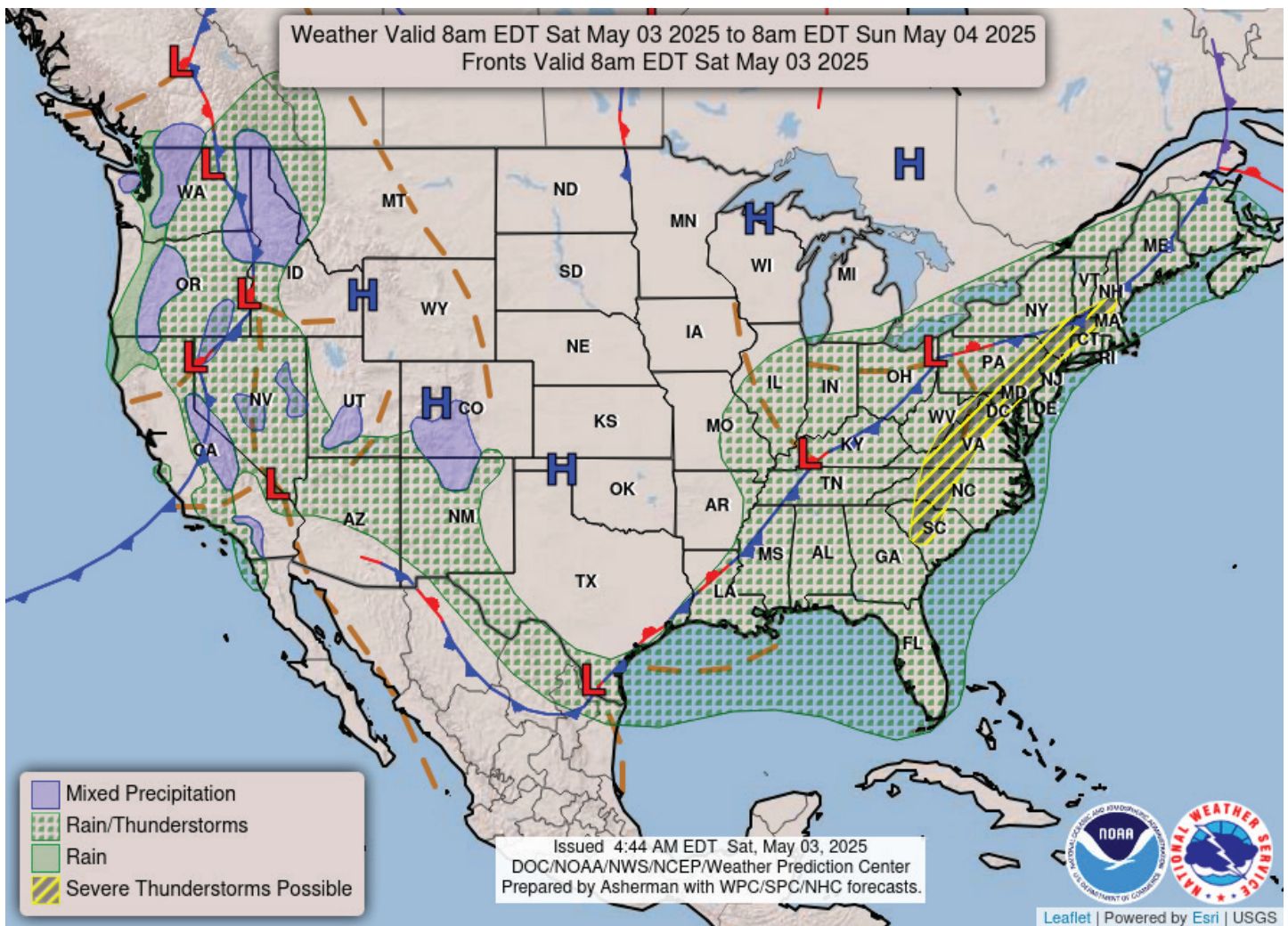
Precip to date in May.: 0.30

Average Precip to date: 4.30

Precip Year to Date: 2.93

Sunset Tonight: 8:43:23 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:13:37 am



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Today in Weather History

May 3rd, 1895: A tornado moved northeast from 3 miles northwest of Redfield through Ashton. It was estimated to be on the ground for about 5 miles. Several homes were unroofed, and barns were destroyed. Tornadoes were also spotted in Minnehaha and Bon Homme Counties in South Dakota.

May 3rd, 1907: The low temperature at Watertown fell to 16 degrees, making this the coldest May temperature ever recorded in Watertown.

May 3rd, 1960: Late-season snowfall of 3 to 7 inches covered Perkins, Corson, and Campbell Counties. Lemmon reported 7 inches, and 6 miles SE of McIntosh had 6.5 inches. Main roads were very slippery, and some rural roads were impassable for about one day.

May 3rd, 1999: Two to four inches of rain fell across southeastern Dewey County, causing flash flooding south of La Plant, mainly on Willow Creek. As a result of the flash flooding, several roads were underwater. Highway 212, south of La Plant, was flooded for a few hours along with Highway 8, 15 miles south of La Plant. The flash flooding resulted in some road and bridge damage.

May 3rd, 2002: With low humidity, dry vegetation, and increasing South winds, embers from a day-old controlled burn initiated a large grassland fire in the early afternoon west of Claremont. South winds of 30 to 40 mph gusting to 50 mph caused the fire to spread quickly. The fire extended to 4 miles wide and spread 4 miles north before it was contained late in the evening. Many trees and a mobile home, an abandoned house, and an old barn burned. Seven miles of road had to be closed due to poor visibility from smoke. Eleven fire departments with nearly 150 firefighters extinguished the fire. The fire was completely put out during the afternoon hours of the 4th. This fire was one of the largest grassland fires in Brown County history.

1978 - Persistent thunderstorms caused widespread flooding in southeastern Louisiana and extreme southeastern Mississippi. Rainfall totals of ten to thirteen and a half inches were reported around New Orleans causing the worst flooding in thirty years. The water depth reached three to four feet in several hundred homes, and total property damage was estimated at one hundred million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. Softball size hail was reported at Center Point TX, and a tornado caused three million dollars damage near Satanta KS. Heavy snow blanketed the foothills of eastern Colorado, with 18 inches reported at Divide. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms brought much needed rains to the drought- stricken central U.S. Evening thunderstorms produced large hail in North Carolina. Baseball size hail was reported west of Mooresville NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern and Central Plains Region. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 72 mph at Graford TX, and baseball size hail was reported at Graham TX and Lake Kemp TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A stubborn late season storm slowly crawled across southern Colorado the first three days of the month producing heavy snow from the San Juan Mountains to the southeast plains. The storm produced up to three feet of snow in the higher elevations of southern Colorado, and 18 to 22 inches of snow along the eastern slopes of the Central Mountains of New Mexico. Pueblo CO reported a record 10.6 inches of snow for the month as a result of the storm, and a record total for the winter season of 69.6 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999 - On May 3, 1999, an unusual confluence of atmospheric conditions in Oklahoma spawned dozens of tornadoes that swept across the state in an hours-long parade of destruction. Thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed, and 19 counties became disaster areas. The worst toll was in human lives: 44 dead, including three children. Hundreds more were injured.(<http://newsok.com/may3>)



Troubled? Try Praise!

Through praise, we escape the oppressive emotions that often accompany hardship.

Psalms 34:1-22

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.

- 1 I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
- 2 I will glory in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
- 3 Glorify the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together.
- 4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
- 5 Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
- 6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
- 7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.
- 8 Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
- 9 Fear the Lord, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
- 10 The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
- 11 Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
- 12 Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,
13 keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from telling lies.
- 14 Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.
- 15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;
- 16 but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil,
to blot out their name from the earth.
- 17 The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.
- 18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
- 19 The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the Lord delivers him from them all;

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- 20 he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.
21 Evil will slay the wicked;
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.
22 The Lord will rescue his servants;
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

Hardship is often accompanied by negative emotions such as fear, frustration, despair, and doubt. People ruled by these feelings are more likely to make poor choices. So it's important to decide now to respond to adversity as the psalmist did—with a heart of praise.

Even in the darkest hours, worship fills the heart with joy and the mind with peace. It also enlarges our vision so we begin to discern how the Lord is at work in the world, perhaps in ways we haven't noticed before. We see what He's doing in our life and detect areas where obedience is required.

Our tendency is to plot a course through a situation toward the easiest solution. But believers who handle things on their own do not mature in their faith. They miss out on the blessings of following the Lord's plan. Stopping to praise Him protects us and directs us to the right path—namely, the way of God's will. Moving forward in faith can be frightening. However, we can confidently take a risk, knowing our omniscient, omnipotent God has His children's best interest in mind (Jeremiah 29:11).

It's hard to despair while honoring God. We can dispel doubt by recalling His past faithfulness to us and ease frustration by committing our future to Him. Praise is not the obvious reaction to hardship, but it is the wisest response.

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.02.25

14 37 40 41 68 2

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$90,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.30.25

5 22 23 24 36 7

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$32,100,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 34 Mins 17 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.02.25

2 17 18 33 38 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 49 Mins 17 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.30.25

1 20 21 29 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$136,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 49 Mins 17 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.30.25

1 34 38 60 65 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 17 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.30.25

1 2 3 57 59 9

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$44,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 17 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

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Early vote count favors Australia's government being reelected for a second term

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Early vote counting in Australia's general election Saturday suggested the government was likely to be returned for a second term.

The Australian Electoral Commission's early projections gave the ruling center-left Labor Party 70 seats and the conservative opposition coalition 24 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form governments. Unaligned minor parties and independent candidates appeared likely to win 13 seats.

Senior government minister Jim Chalmers said the early results pointed to volatility and different contests across the nation. Opposition Sen. James McGrath expected the result would be too close to call on Saturday.

"I don't think we'll know who the next prime minister of this country is definitely tonight and there'll be a number of seats we'll not know the results this coming week or even next week," McGrath said.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and opposition leader Peter Dutton will address party gatherings in Sydney and Brisbane later Saturday as the Australian Electoral Commission tallies votes. Leaders usually concede defeat and claim victory on the day of the election.

Energy policy and inflation have been major issues in the campaign, with both sides agreeing the country faces a cost of living crisis.

Opposition leader branded 'DOGE-y Dutton'

Dutton's conservative Liberal Party blames government waste for fueling inflation and increasing interest rates, and has pledged to ax more than one in five public service jobs to reduce government spending.

While both say the country should reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, Dutton argues that relying on more nuclear power instead of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind turbines would deliver less expensive electricity.

The ruling center-left Labor Party has branded the opposition leader "DOGE-y Dutton" and accused his party of mimicking U.S. President Donald Trump and his Department of Government Efficiency.

Labor argues Dutton's administration would slash services to pay for its nuclear ambitions.

"We've seen the attempt to run American-style politics here of division and pitting Australians against each other and I think that's not the Australian way," Albanese said.

Albanese also noted that his government had improved relations with China, which removed a series of official and unofficial trade barriers that had cost Australian exporters 20 billion Australian dollars (\$13 billion) a year since Labor came to power in 2022.

Dutton wants to become the first opposition leader to oust a first-term government since 1931, when Australians were reeling from the Great Depression.

If Albanese wins, he'll become the first Australian prime minister to win successive elections in 21 years.

A cost of living crisis as the country faces generational change

The election is taking place against a backdrop of what both sides of politics describe as a cost of living crisis.

Foodbank Australia, the nation's largest food relief charity, reported 3.4 million households in the country of 27 million people experienced food insecurity last year.

That meant Australians were skipping meals, eating less or worrying about running out of food before they could afford to buy more.

The central bank reduced its benchmark cash interest rate by a quarter percentage point in February to 4.1% in an indication that the worst of the financial hardship had passed. The rate is widely expected to be cut again at the bank's next board meeting on May 20, this time to encourage investment amid the international economic uncertainty generated by Trump's tariff policies.

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Both campaigns have focused on Australia's changing demographics. The election is the first in Australia in which Baby Boomers, born between the end of World War II and 1964, are outnumbered by younger voters.

Both campaigns promised policies to help first-home buyers buy into a property market that is too expensive for many.

The election could produce a minority government

Going into the election, Labor held a narrow majority of 78 seats in a 151-seat House of Representatives. There will be 150 seats in the next parliament due to redistributions.

A loss of more than two seats could force Labor to attempt to form a minority government with the support of unaligned lawmakers.

There was a minority government after the 2010 election, and the last one before that was during World War II.

The last time neither party won a majority, it took 17 days after the polls closed before key independent lawmakers announced they would support a Labor administration.

Russian drone attack wounds 47 in Ukraine's second city of Kharkiv

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian drone strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, wounded 47 people, officials said, and prompted another appeal from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for more decisive support from the country's allies.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said drones hit 12 locations across the city late Friday. Residential buildings, civilian infrastructure and vehicles were damaged in the assault, according to Kharkiv regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov.

The Kharkiv Prosecutor's Office said Saturday that Russian forces used drones with thermobaric warheads. In a statement on Telegram, it said thermobaric weapons create a powerful blast wave and a hot cloud of smoke, causing large-scale destruction. The prosecutor said its use may indicate a deliberate violation of international humanitarian law.

"While the world hesitates with decisions, nearly every night in Ukraine turns into a nightmare, costing lives. Ukraine needs strengthened air defense. Strong and real decisions are needed from our partners — the United States, Europe, all our partners who seek peace," Zelenskyy wrote on X in the early hours of Saturday.

Russia fired a total of 183 exploding drones and decoys overnight, Ukraine's air force said. Of those, 77 were intercepted and a further 73 lost, likely having been electronically jammed. Russia also launched two ballistic missiles.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down 170 Ukrainian drones overnight. The ministry said eight cruise missiles and three guided missiles were also intercepted.

In southern Russia, five people, including two children, were injured in a drone strike on the Black Sea port city of Novorossiysk overnight, according to Mayor Andrey Kravchenko.

Zelenskyy favors a 30-day ceasefire proposed by US

The latest wave of attacks comes after the U.S. and Ukraine on Wednesday signed an agreement granting American access to Ukraine's vast mineral resources. It finalizes a deal months in the making that could enable continued military aid to Kyiv amid concerns that President Donald Trump might scale back support in ongoing peace negotiations with Russia.

Speaking to journalists in Kyiv on Friday, Zelenskyy said Ukraine is prepared to pursue a 30-day ceasefire proposed by the United States.

He said the proposed ceasefire could start on any date and last for a full month, offering time for meaningful steps toward ending the war. "Let's be honest — you can't agree on anything serious in three, five, or seven days," he said.

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Zelenskyy said that Moscow's announcement of a unilateral 72-hour ceasefire next week in Ukraine to mark Victory Day in World War II is merely an attempt to create a "soft atmosphere" ahead of Russia's annual celebrations. "It looks unserious," he said, "so that Putin's guests on Red Square feel comfortable and safe."

The Ukrainian leader reiterated that Kyiv's military actions will remain "mirror-like," responding to Russia's moves. He acknowledged that implementing a complete frontline ceasefire without robust international monitoring remains nearly impossible, but emphasized that the 30-day window offers a credible start.

He confirmed ongoing efforts to convene a meeting of international advisors, meaning the next round of the negotiations with the U.S. He also expressed hope that it could happen in Ukraine, saying it was a "positive sign" that such a gathering is under discussion despite recent personnel changes in Washington.

Vatican workers install Sistine Chapel stove where ballots are burned during conclave to elect pope

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Vatican workers installed the simple stove in the Sistine Chapel where ballots will be burned during the upcoming conclave to elect a new pope, as jockeying continued outside over who among the cardinals is in the running.

The Holy See released a video Saturday of the preparations for the May 7 conclave, which included installing the stove and a false floor in the frescoed Sistine Chapel to make it even. The footage also showed workers lining up simple wooden tables where the cardinals will sit and cast their votes starting Wednesday, and a ramp leading to the main seating area for any cardinal in a wheelchair.

On Friday, fire crews were seen on the chapel roof attaching the chimney from which smoke signals will indicate whether a pope has been elected.

The preparations are all leading up to the solemn pageantry of the start of the conclave to elect a successor to Pope Francis, history's first Latin American pope, who died April 21 at age 88.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni issued a net denial Friday of reports that one of the leading candidates, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, had suffered health problems earlier in the week that required medical attention. The reports, which spoke of a blood pressure issue, were carried by Italian media and picked up by Catholicvote.org, the U.S. site headed by Brian Burch, the Trump administration's choice to be ambassador to the Holy See.

Speculation about a papal candidate's health is a mainstay of conclave politics and maneuvering, as various factions try to torpedo or boost certain candidates. Francis experienced the dynamic firsthand: When the votes were going his way in the 2013 conclave, one breathless cardinal asked him if it was true that he had only one lung, as rumors had it. (Francis later recounted that he told the cardinal he had had the upper lobe of one lung removed as a young man.) He was elected a short time later.

Bruni also confirmed the names of two cardinal electors who will not be participating, bringing the number down to 133 with four more still due to arrive in Rome: Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, the retired archbishop of Valencia, Spain, and the retired archbishop of Nairobi, Kenya, Cardinale John Njue. Both said they couldn't participate due to health reasons.

What happens in the conclave?

Wednesday morning begins with a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica celebrated by the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, after which the cardinal electors are sequestered from the rest of the world. In the afternoon, they will process into the Sistine Chapel, hear a meditation and take their oaths before casting their first ballots.

If no candidate reaches the necessary two-thirds majority, or 89 votes, on the first ballot, the papers will be burned and black smoke will indicate to the world that no pope was elected.

The cardinals will go back to their Vatican residence for the night and return to the Sistine Chapel on Thursday morning to conduct two votes in the morning, two in the afternoon, until a winner is found.

After every two rounds of voting, the ballots are burned in the stove. If no pope is chosen, the ballots

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are mixed with cartridges containing potassium perchlorate, anthracene — a component of coal tar — and sulfur to produce black smoke out the chimney. If there is a winner, the ballots are mixed with potassium chlorate, lactose and chloroform resin to produce the white smoke.

The white smoke came out of the chimney on the fifth ballot on March 13, 2013, and Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was introduced to the world as Pope Francis a short time later from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica.

The preparations are underway as the cardinals meet privately in more informal sessions to discuss the needs of the Catholic Church going forward and the type of pope who can lead it.

South Korea's main conservative party nominates Kim Moon Soo as its presidential candidate

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Former Labor Minister and staunch conservative Kim Moon Soo won the presidential nomination of South Korea's main conservative party, facing an uphill battle against liberal front-runner Lee Jae-myung for the June 3 election.

Observers say Kim will likely try to align with other conservative forces, such as former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, to prevent a split in conservative votes and boost prospects for a conservative win against Lee.

In a party primary that ended Saturday, Kim won 56.5% of the votes cast, beating his sole competitor, Han Dong-hun, the party said in a televised announcement. Other contenders have been eliminated in earlier rounds.

"I'll form a strong alliance with anyone to prevent a rule by Lee Jae-myung and his Democratic Party forces. I'll push for that in a procedure and method that our people and party members accept, and I'll ultimately win," Kim said in his victory speech.

The June 3 election is meant to find a successor to conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol, a People Power Party member who was impeached by the opposition-controlled National Assembly in mid-December and dismissed by the Constitutional Court in early April over his ill-fated imposition of martial law.

Yoon's impeachment is a major source of feuding at the PPP and a hot topic at the party's primary.

Kim, who served as labor minister under Yoon, has opposed parliament's impeachment of Yoon, though he said he disagreed with Yoon's decision to declare martial law on Dec. 3. Kim gained popularity among hardline PPP supporters after he solely defied a demand on Dec. 11. by an opposition lawmaker that all Cabinet members stand up and bow in a gesture of apology for Yoon's martial law enactment at the National Assembly.

Han Dong-hun, Kim's main contender in the PPP's primary, served as Yoon's first justice minister. Han leads a reformist yet minority faction at the PPP who joined the liberal opposition in voting to overturn Yoon's martial law decree and later impeach him. Without the support of Han's faction members, an opposition-led impeachment motion on Yoon couldn't have passed through the National Assembly because opposition parties were eight votes short of a two-thirds majority to approve it.

Shin Yul, a politics professor at Seoul's Myonggi University, said that public awareness of the conservatives' campaign could have risen more sharply if Han had won, as he could have appealed to moderate, swing voters more.

Kim, 73, was originally a prominent labor activist in the 1970-80s but joined a conservative party in the 1990s. Kim recently said he gave up his dream to become "a revolutionist" after observing the collapse of communist states. He has since served as a governor of South Korea's most populous Gyeonggi province for eight years and a member of the National Assembly for three terms.

Kim has said that if elected, he would push to fight corruption, overhaul financial regulations, reform pension systems and increase government spending on Artificial Intelligence infrastructure. He said he would maintain a solid military alliance with the U.S. and introduce nuclear-powered submarines as a way to increase deterrence against North Korean nuclear threats.

Lee, who won the Democratic Party nomination last Sunday, is the clear favorite to win the election. But

Lee's campaign suffered a setback due to a recent Supreme Court decision to order a new trial on his election law charges. It's unclear if he will face a court sentence that requires the suspension of his campaign before the June 3 vote, but he'll likely grapple with an intense political offensive by his election rivals.

Groups fear Israeli proposal for controlling aid in Gaza will forcibly displace people

By SAM MEDNICK and LEE KEATH Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel has blocked aid from entering Gaza for two months and says it won't allow food, fuel, water or medicine into the besieged territory until it puts in place a system giving it control over the distribution.

But officials from the U.N. and aid groups say proposals Israel has floated to use its military to distribute vital supplies are untenable. These officials say they would allow military and political objectives to impede humanitarian goals, put restrictions on who is eligible to give and receive aid, and could force large numbers of Palestinians to move — which would violate international law.

Israel has not detailed any of its proposals publicly or put them down in writing. But aid groups have been documenting their conversations with Israeli officials, and The Associated Press obtained more than 40 pages of notes summarizing Israel's proposals and aid groups' concerns about them.

Aid groups say Israel shouldn't have any direct role in distributing aid once it arrives in Gaza, and most are saying they will refuse to be part of any such system.

"Israel has the responsibility to facilitate our work, not weaponize it," said Jens Laerke, a spokesperson for the U.N. agency that oversees the coordination of aid Gaza.

"The humanitarian community is ready to deliver, and either our work is enabled ... or Israel will have the responsibility to find another way to meet the needs of 2.1 million people and bear the moral and legal consequences if they fail to do so," he said.

None of the ideas Israel has proposed are set in stone, aid workers say, but the conversations have come to a standstill as groups push back.

The Israeli military agency in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, known as COGAT, did not respond to a request for comment and referred AP to the prime minister's office. The prime minister's office did not respond either.

Since the beginning of March, Israel has cut off Gaza from all imports, leading to what is believed to be the most severe shortage of food, medicine and other supplies in nearly 19 months of war with Hamas. Israel says the goal of its blockade is to pressure Hamas to free the remaining 59 hostages taken during its October 2023 attack on Israel that launched the war.

Israel says it must take control of aid distribution, arguing without providing evidence that Hamas and other militants siphon off supplies. Aid workers deny there is a significant diversion of aid to militants, saying the U.N. strictly monitors distribution.

Alarm among aid groups

One of Israel's core proposals is a more centralized system — made up of five food distribution hubs — that would give it greater oversight, aid groups say.

Israel has proposed having all aid sent through a single crossing in southern Gaza and using the military or private security contractors to deliver it to these hubs, according to the documents shared with AP and aid workers familiar with the discussions. The distribution hubs would all be south of the Netzarim Corridor that isolates northern Gaza from the rest of the territory, the documents say.

One of the aid groups' greatest fears is that requiring Palestinians to retrieve aid from a small number of sites — instead of making it available closer to where they live — would force families to move to get assistance. International humanitarian law forbids the forcible transfer of people.

Aid officials also worry that Palestinians could end up permanently displaced, living in "de facto internment conditions," according to a document signed by 20 aid groups operating in Gaza.

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The hubs also raise safety fears. With so few of them, huge crowds of desperate Palestinians will need to gather in locations that are presumably close to Israeli troops.

"I am very scared about that," said Claire Nicolet, emergency coordinator for Doctors Without Borders.

There have been several occasions during the war when Israeli forces opened fire after feeling threatened as hungry Palestinians crowded around aid trucks. Israel has said that during those incidents, in which dozens died, many were trampled to death.

Given Gaza's population of more than 2 million people, global standards for humanitarian aid would typically suggest setting up about 100 distribution sites — or 20 times as many as Israel is currently proposing — aid groups said.

Aside from the impractical nature of Israel's proposals for distributing food, aid groups say Israel has yet to address how its new system would account for other needs, including health care and the repair of basic infrastructure, including water delivery.

"Humanitarian aid is more complex than food rations in a box that you pick up once a month," said Gavin Kelleher, who worked in Gaza for the Norwegian Refugee Council. Aid boxes can weigh more than 100 pounds, and transportation within Gaza is limited, in part because of shortages of fuel.

Private military contractors

As aid groups push back against the idea of Israel playing a direct distribution role within Gaza, Israel has responded by exploring the possibility of outsourcing certain roles to private security contractors.

The aid groups say they are opposed to any armed or uniformed personnel that could potentially intimidate Palestinians or put them at risk.

In the notes seen by AP, aid groups said a U.S.-based security firm, Safe Reach Solutions, had reached out seeking partners to test an aid distribution system around the Netzarim military corridor, just south of Gaza City, the territory's largest.

Aid groups urged each other not to participate in the pilot program, saying it could set a damaging precedent that could be repeated in other countries facing crises.

Safe Reach Solutions did not respond to requests for a comment.

Whether Israel distributes the aid or employs private contractors to it, aid groups say that would infringe on humanitarian principles, including impartiality and independence.

A spokesperson for the EU Commission said private companies aren't considered eligible humanitarian aid partners for its grants. The EU opposes any changes that would lead to Israel seizing full control of aid in Gaza, the spokesperson said.

The U.S. State Department declined to comment on ongoing negotiations.

Proposals to restrict who can deliver and receive aid

Another concern is an Israeli proposal that would allow authorities to determine if Palestinians were eligible for assistance based on "opaque procedures," according to aid groups' notes.

Aid groups, meanwhile, have been told by Israel that they will need to re-register with the government and provide personal information about their staffers. They say Israel has told them that, going forward, it could bar organizations for various reasons, including criticism of Israel, or any activities it says promote the "delegitimization" of Israel.

Arwa Damon, founder of the International Network for Aid, Relief and Assistance, says Israel has increasingly barred aid workers from Gaza who had previously been allowed in. In February, Damon was denied access to Gaza, despite having entered four times previously since the war began. Israel gave no reason for barring her, she said.

Aid groups are trying to stay united on a range of issues, including not allowing Israel to vet staff or people receiving aid. But they say they're being backed into a corner.

"For us to work directly with the military in the delivery of aid is terrifying," said Bushra Khalidi, Oxfam's policy lead for Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. "That should worry every single Palestinian in Gaza, but also every humanitarian worker."

Here's why May the 4th is celebrated as Star Wars Day across the galaxy

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

It didn't begin a long time ago or in a galaxy far far away, but every May 4 it feels like images, memes and promotional deals involving "Star Wars" have an inescapable gravity.

May 4 — or May the 4th, as fans say — has evolved over the years into Star Wars Day, an informal holiday celebrating the space epic and its surrounding franchise.

What is Star Wars Day?

Star Wars Day was created by fans as a sly nod to one of the films' most popular catchphrases, "May the force be with you." Get it? Good, now May the 4th be with you too.

It's not an official holiday but has become so well-known that even former President Joe Biden marked it last year when "Star Wars" actor Mark Hamill dropped by the White House a day beforehand.

"I think it's a very clever way for fans to celebrate their passion and love for 'Star Wars' once a year," said Steve Sansweet, founder and executive chairman of Rancho Obi-Wan, a nonprofit museum in California that has the world's largest collection of "Star Wars" memorabilia.

How did it begin?

The phrase "May the 4th be with you" was used by fans in the years after the first film was released in 1977, and even appeared in a British political ad in 1979 celebrating Margaret Thatcher's victory as prime minister on May 4 that year.

For some fans, the official Star Wars Day comes on May 25, the date of the first film's release. The Los Angeles City Council even declared the date to be Star Wars Day in 2007, although the California Legislature voted in 2019 to designate May 4 as Star Wars Day.

How has it spread?

May the 4th caught on informally among fans through inside jokes shared on social media and viewings of the films to mark the occasion. Businesses eventually joined in on the fun, with brands ranging from Nissan to Jameson Whiskey running ads or posting on social media about it.

Disney, which acquired Lucasfilm in 2012, embraced the day as a way to further promote the franchise with merchandise, special screenings and other events surrounding the brand.

Not all "Star Wars" fans are enthused about how ubiquitous the once-underground joke has become. Chris Taylor, a senior editor at Mashable and author of "How Star Wars Conquered the Universe," labels himself a "May the 4th grinch" in part because of its commercialization.

"I love a good dad joke as much as anyone, but my God you can take it too far," Taylor said.

How is it being celebrated this year?

The day is being celebrated on a large and small scale this year. Disney+ is launching the new series "Star Wars: Tales of the Underworld" on the date, and it comes as the second season gets underway for another franchise series, "Andor."

It also follows the announcement that a new stand-alone "Star Wars" film installment starring Ryan Gosling will be released in 2027.

Disney marks the day with the launch of new "Star Wars" merchandise, ranging from lightsaber sets to jewelry.

Most Major League Baseball teams have marked the day in recent years with special events incorporating "Star Wars" characters. For example, the San Francisco Giants sold special tickets for Saturday's game that included a bobblehead portraying pitcher Logan Webb as "Obi-Webb Kenobi."

It's hard to find a place where May the 4th celebrations aren't occurring, from bakeries serving cookies with a "Star Wars" theme to concerts featuring the memorable scores of the films.

It's a town-wide celebration in New Hope, Pennsylvania, which shares its name with the subtitle of the first "Star Wars" film. The town of about 2,600 people, located 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of Philadelphia, plans to have costumed characters throughout town with restaurants serving themed items like a "YodaRita."

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"I would always joke around and wish people 'May the 4th' — but taking it to this level, I've definitely upped my 'Star Wars' nerdiness," said Michael Sklar, president of the Greater New Hope Chamber of Commerce.

Europe will mark V-E Day's 80th anniversary as once-unbreakable bonds with the US are under pressure

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

THIMISTER-CLERMONT, Belgium (AP) — The memory of blood dripping from trucks loaded with the mangled bodies of U.S. soldiers arriving at a nearby war cemetery straight from the battlefield in 1945 still gives 91-year-old Marcel Schmetz nightmares.

It also instilled a lifelong sense of gratitude for the young soldiers from the United States and around the world who gave their lives battling the armies of Adolf Hitler to end World War II in Europe.

Schmetz even built a museum at his home in the Belgian Ardennes to honor their sacrifice.

"If the Americans hadn't come, we wouldn't be here," the Belgian retiree said.

That same spirit also pervades Normandy in northern France, where the allied forces landed on June 6, 1944, a day that became the tipping point of the war.

Eternal gratitude

In Normandy, Marie-Pascale Legrand is still taking care of the ailing Charles Shay, a 100-year-old American who stormed the bloodied beaches on that fateful D-Day as a teenager and fought to help liberate Europe for many more months.

"Gratitude for me means that I am eternally indebted, because I can live free today," Legrand said.

After D-Day, it would take almost another year of fierce fighting before Germany would finally surrender on May 8, 1945. Commemorations and festivities are planned for the 80th anniversary across much of the continent for what has become known as Victory in Europe Day, or V-E Day, one of the most momentous days on the continent in recent centuries.

Fraying bonds

Ever since, for generation upon generation in the nations west of the Iron Curtain that sliced Europe in two, it became a day to confirm and reconfirm what were long seen as the unbreakable bonds with the United States as both stood united against Soviet Eastern Europe.

No more.

Over the past several months, the rhetoric from Washington has become increasingly feisty.

The Trump administration has questioned the vestiges of the decades-old alliance and slapped trade sanctions on the 27-nation European Union and the United Kingdom. Trump has insisted that the EU trade bloc was there to "screw" the United States from the start.

The wartime allies are now involved in a trade war.

"After all that has happened, it is bound to leave scars," said Hendrik Vos, European studies professor at Ghent University.

Honoring the fallen

Yet deep in the green hills and Ardennes woods where the Battle of the Bulge was fought and Schmetz lives, just as along the windswept bluffs of Legrand's Normandy, the ties endure — isolated from the tremors of geopolitics.

"For all those that criticize the Americans, we can only say that for us, they were all good," Schmetz said. "We should never forget that."

After watching the horrors of the dead soldiers at the nearby Henri-Chapelle cemetery as an 11-year-old, Schmetz vowed he would do something in their honor and gathered war memorabilia.

A car mechanic with a big warehouse, he immediately started to turn it into the Remember Museum 39-45 once he retired more than three decades ago.

"I had to do something for those who died," he said.

And for the treasure trove of military artifacts, what truly stands out is a long bench in the kitchen where U.S. veterans, their children, and even their grandchildren come and sit and talk about what happened,

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and the bonds uniting continent, memories all meticulously kept by his wife Mathilde, to pass on to new visitors and new generations of schoolkids.

'The Big Red One'

In the coming weeks, she will be going out to put 696 roses on the graves of soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division — nicknamed "The Big Red One," or "BRO" — who lie buried among 7,987 headstones at Henri Chapelle.

Charles Shay, who is now bedridden in Normandy, was also part of the 1st Infantry Division and came through the Ardennes region too before heading to Germany. He survived the Korean War too and started making visits to the D-Day beaches around two decades ago. Over the years, he became increasingly sick and Legrand, who has helped veterans in one way or another for more than 40 years, took him in to her home in 2018.

He has been living there ever since.

Reagan's impact

The moment everything changed for Legrand was listening to then U.S. President Ronald Reagan in 1984 speaking on a Normandy bluff of the sacrifice and heroism of American soldiers.

Barely in her 20s, she realized that "their blood is in our soil and we have to show gratitude. We have to do something. I didn't know what at the time, but I knew I would do something to show it."

She had long volunteered to help Allied veterans before she met Shay. He was lonely, sick and frail when she took him in and began caring for him at her Normandy home.

"It is a strong symbol, which takes on a new dimension in this day and age," she said, referring to the tumultuous trans-Atlantic relations that have put the bonds between allies that Trump called "unbreakable" only six years ago, under extreme pressure.

Once an ally, always an ally?

Central in Trump's criticism of European NATO allies is that they have happily hunkered far too long under U.S. military supremacy since World War II and should start paying much more of their own way in the alliance. He has done so in such terms that many Europeans sincerely fear the breakup of the trans-Atlantic bonds that were a core of global politics for almost a century.

"The naive belief that the Americans will, by definition, always be an ally — once and for all, that is gone," said Vos. It also raises a moral question for Europeans now.

"Are we doomed to be eternally grateful?" Vos asked.

Dinner parties, listening and lobbying. What goes on behind closed doors to elect a pope

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Rome is bustling with jasmine blooming and tourists swarming. But behind closed doors, these are the days of dinner parties, coffee klatches and private meetings as cardinals in town to elect a successor to Pope Francis suss out who among them has the stuff to be next.

It was in this period of pre-conclave huddling in March of 2013 that Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the retired archbishop of Westminster, and other reform-minded Europeans began pushing the candidacy of an Argentine Jesuit named Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Their dinner table lobbying worked and Pope Francis won on the fifth ballot.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols may have inherited Murphy-O'Connor's position as archbishop of Westminster. But he's not taking on the job as the front-man papal lobbyist in these days of canvassing of cardinals to try to identify who among them should be the next pope.

"We're of quite different styles," Nichols said Friday, chuckling during an interview in the Venerable English College, the storied British seminary in downtown Rome where Nichols studied in the 1960s. "Cardinal Cormac would love to be at the center of the party. I'm a little more reserved than that and a little bit more introverted."

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Nevertheless, Nichols, 79, provided an insider's view of what's going on among his fellow cardinal-electors, between meals of Rome's famous carbonara — as they get to know one another. They all descended on Rome to bid farewell to the pope and are now meeting informally before the start of the May 7 conclave.

Nichols says he is spending these days before he and his fellow cardinals are sequestered listening. The routine calls for cardinals to meet each morning in a Vatican auditorium to discuss the needs of the Catholic Church and the type of person who can lead it. These meetings are open to all cardinals, including those over 80, while the conclave itself in the Sistine Chapel is limited to cardinals who haven't yet reached 80.

With the exception of an afternoon Mass — part of the nine days of official mourning for Francis — the rest of the day is free. Cardinals have been seen around town taking walks or eating out, trying to remain incognito.

'Not a boys' brigade that marches in step'

Nichols said a picture of the future pope is beginning to emerge, at least in his mind, as cardinals look back at Francis' 12-year pontificate and see where to go from here.

"I suppose we're looking for somebody who even in their manner not only expresses the depth of the faith, but also its openness as well," said Nichols.

Pope Benedict XVI named Nichols archbishop of Westminster in 2009, but he didn't become a cardinal until 2014, when Francis tapped him in his first batch of cardinals. Francis went on to name Nichols as a member of several important Vatican offices, including the powerful dicastery for bishops, which vets bishop nominations around the world.

"My experience so far, to be quite honest with you, is there's a lot of attentive listening," Nichols said. "That's listening to the people who might have an idea today of who they think is the best candidate, and I wouldn't be surprised if by Monday they might have changed their mind."

Nichols said the picture that is emerging is of seeing Francis' pontificate in continuity with the more doctrinaire papacies of St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and of appreciating the multicultural reality of the Catholic Church today. Francis greatly expanded the College of Cardinals to include cardinals from far-flung places like Tonga and Mongolia, rather than the traditional centers of European Catholicism.

Yes, divisions and disagreements have been aired. "But I can never remember a time when Catholics all agreed about everything," Nichols said.

"We're not a boys' brigade that marches in step." But he said he sensed that cardinals believe Francis' reforming papacy and radical call to prioritize the poor and marginalized, to care for the planet and all its people, needed further consolidating with another papacy.

"There's a sense that the initiatives that this man of such originality took, they probably do need rooting a bit more to give them that stability and evident continuity," Nichols said. "So that these aren't just the ideas of one person, one charismatic person, but they are actually consistently part of how the church reflects on humanity, our own humanity and our world."

'Team Bergoglio'

In his book "The Great Reformer," Francis' biographer Austen Ivereigh described the 2013 conclave and how Nichols' predecessor, Murphy-O'Connor and other reform-minded Europeans seized the opportunity to push Bergoglio after it was clear the Italians were fighting among themselves over the Italian candidate.

"Team Bergoglio," as these reform-minded cardinals came to be known, had tried to talk up Bergoglio in the 2005 conclave, but failed to get their man through after Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's momentum grew and Bergoglio bowed out.

In 2013, with many too old to vote in the conclave itself, "Team Bergoglio" talked up the Argentine at dinner parties around Rome in the days before the conclave. The aim was to ensure Bergoglio could secure at least 25 votes on the first ballot to establish himself as a serious candidate, the book said.

"The Great Reformer" recounts a dinner party at the North American College, the U.S. seminary in Rome, on March 5, 2013 to which Murphy-O'Connor and Australian Cardinal George Pell were invited and where the British cardinal talked up the qualities of a possible first Latin American pope.

"He held a number of these dinners, and I think there were a few of them involved, a few who had grown convinced that Bergoglio was what the church needed," Ivereigh said Friday.

Nichols doesn't have any such calculations or preferred candidate, at least that he is willing to share. "For me, it's no good going into a conclave thinking it's like a political election and I want my side to win. I'm not going to do that," he said. "I'm going to go in certainly with my own thoughts but ready to change them, to listen and maybe try and persuade others to change theirs too."

'The janjaweed are coming': Sudanese recount atrocities in RSF attack on a Darfur camp

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Umm al-Kheir Bakheit was 13 when she first came to Zamzam Camp in the early 2000s, fleeing the janjaweed, the infamous Arab militias terrorizing Sudan's Darfur region. She grew up, married and had three children in the camp.

Now 31, Bakheit fled Zamzam as the janjaweed's descendants — a paramilitary force called the Rapid Support Forces — stormed into the camp and went on a three-day rampage, killing at least 400 people, after months of starving its population with a siege.

Bakheit and a dozen other residents and aid workers told The Associated Press that RSF fighters gunned down men and women in the streets, beat and tortured others and raped and sexually assaulted women and girls.

The April 11 attack was the worst ever suffered by Zamzam, Sudan's largest displacement camp, in its 20 years of existence. Once home to some 500,000 residents, the camp has been virtually emptied. The paramilitaries burned down large swaths of houses, markets and other buildings.

"It's a nightmare come true," Bakheit said. "They attacked mercilessly."

The attack came after months of famine

The attack on Zamzam underscored that atrocities have not ended in Sudan's 2-year-old war, even as the RSF has suffered heavy setbacks, losing ground recently to the military in other parts of the country.

Throughout the war, the RSF has been accused by residents and rights groups of mass killings and rapes in attacks on towns and cities, particularly in Darfur. Many of RSF's fighters originated from the janjaweed, who became notorious for atrocities in the early 2000s against people identifying as East or Central African in Darfur.

"Targeting civilians and using rape as a war weapon and destroying full villages and mass killing, all that has been the reality of the Sudan war for two years," said Marion Ramstein, MSF emergency field coordinator in North Darfur.

Zamzam Camp was established in 2004 to house people driven from their homes by janjaweed attacks. Located just south of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur province, it swelled over the years to cover an area 8 kilometers (5 miles) long by about 3 kilometers (2 miles) wide.

In the spring of 2024, the RSF clamped a siege around Zamzam as it moved against el-Fasher, one of the last strongholds of the Sudanese military in Darfur.

Many have died of starvation under the siege, Bakheit and others said. "For too long, there was no option but to eat grass and tree leaves," she said.

Famine was declared in the camp in August after RSF attacks forced the U.N. and aid groups to pull out of Zamzam. A comprehensive death toll from the famine is not known.

Ahlam al-Nour, a 44-year-old mother of five, said her youngest child, a 3-year-old, died of severe malnutrition in December.

The RSF has repeatedly claimed Zamzam and nearby Abu Shouk Camp were used as bases by the military and its allied militias. It said in a statement that it took control of the camp on April 11 to "secure civilians and humanitarian workers." It denied its fighters targeted civilians. The RSF did not reply to AP's questions on the attack.

'The janjaweed are coming'

Bakheit, who lived on the southern edge of Zamzam, said she heard loud explosions and heavy gunfire

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around 2 a.m. April 11. The RSF started with heavy shelling, and people panicked as the night sky lit up and houses burst into flames, Bakheit said.

By sunrise, the RSF-led fighters broke into her area, storming houses, kicking residents out and seizing valuables, Bakheit and others said. They spoke of sexual harassment and rape of young women and girls by RSF fighters.

"The children were screaming, 'The janjaweed are coming'," Bakheit said.

About two dozen women who fled to the nearby town of Tawila reported that they were raped during the attack, said Ramstein, who was in Tawila at the time. She said the number is likely much higher because many women are too ashamed to report rapes.

"We're talking about looting. We're talking about beating. We're talking about killing, but also about a lot of rape," she said.

The paramilitaries rounded up hundreds of people, including women and children. Bakheit said fighters whipped, beat, insulted and sexually harassed her in front of her children as they drove her family from their home.

She said she saw houses burning and at least five bodies in the street, including two women and a boy, the ground around them soaked in blood.

The fighters gathered Bakheit and about 200 other people in an open area and interrogated them, asking about anyone fighting for the military and its allied militias.

"They tortured us," said al-Nour, who was among them.

Al-Nour and Bakheit said they saw RSF fighters shoot two young men in the head during the interrogation. They shot a third man in the leg and he lay bleeding and screaming, they said.

One video shared online by RSF paramilitaries showed fighters wearing RSF uniforms by nine bodies lying motionless on the ground. A fighter says he is inside Zamzam and that they would kill people "like this," pointing to the bodies on the ground.

Much of the camp was burned

The RSF rampage, which also targeted Abu Shouk Camp north of el-Fasher, went on for days.

The paramilitaries destroyed Zamzam's only functioning medical center, killing nine workers from Relief International. They killed at least 23 people at a religious school, mostly young students studying the Quran, according to the General Coordination for Displaced Persons and Refugees in Darfur.

Much of the south and east of the camp was burned to the ground, the General Coordination said.

Satellite imagery from April 16 showed thick black smoke rising from several active fires in the camp. At least 1.7 square kilometers (0.65 square miles) appeared to have been burned down between April 10-16, said a report by the Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab, which analyzed and published the imagery. That is about 10% of the camp's area.

The imagery showed vehicles around the camp and at its main access points, which HRL said were probably RSF checkpoints controlling entry and exit.

By April 14, only about 2,100 people remained in the camp, according to the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration.

An arduous journey

After being detained for three hours, Bakheit, al-Nour and dozens of other women and children were released by the paramilitaries.

They walked for hours under the burning summer sun. Bakheit and al-Nour said that as they passed through the camp, they went by burning houses, the destroyed main market and bodies of men, women, children in the streets, some of them charred.

They joined an exodus of others fleeing Zamzam and heading to the town of Tawila, 64 kilometers (40 miles) west of El Fasher. Al-Nour said she saw at least three people who died on the road, apparently from exhaustion and the effects of starvation and dehydration.

"The janjaweed, once again, kill and torture us," Bakheit said. "Like my mother did about 20 years ago, I had no option but to take my children and leave."

Play your cardinals right: Betting on next pope gains popularity ahead of the conclave

By MARIA GRAZIA MURRU and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Next week's conclave to elect the successor to Pope Francis as leader of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics is a solemn affair steeped in centuries-old traditions.

But far from the Sistine Chapel where cloistered cardinals will cast votes, people are placing bets on who will be chosen as the next pope. From cash bets on websites to online games modeled after fantasy football leagues and casual wagers among friends and families, the popularity of guessing and gambling on the future of the papacy is increasing worldwide, experts and participants say.

It's even topped the Europa League soccer tournament and Formula One drivers' championship, said Sam Eaton, U.K. manager for Oddschecker, a leading online platform analyzing odds across sports, events and other betting markets.

"There's a huge level of interest globally," he said. "I don't think we've had a market like this where we've had so many countries interested in seeing odds."

Around the world, thousands of bets on the next pope

Hundreds of thousands of people from some 140 countries have visited Oddschecker to review each cardinal's chances of becoming the next pope, Eaton said. He noted special eagerness in the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States.

In the U.K., about 30,000 pounds (almost \$40,000) have been wagered with one leading online betting platform as of this week, Eaton said — a far cry from 1.2 million pounds on the singing contest Eurovision but still noteworthy as a trend, with the conclave days away.

"Betting on the next pope is definitely a niche market in the grand scheme of things, but it generates global interest," said Lee Phelps, a spokesman for William Hill, one of the U.K.'s biggest bookmakers.

"Since April 21, we've taken thousands of bets, and it's the busiest of all our non-sports betting markets," said Phelps, who expects a surge in interest once the conclave begins Wednesday.

Betting on elections, papal conclaves and all manner of global events is almost a tradition of its own in the U.K., but such betting is not legal in the United States. BetMGM, one of the world's top sports-betting companies, said it would not have any bets up.

But Eaton noted that in the unregulated, illegal space, one of the biggest sites has \$10 million wagered so far in pope bets.

Fantasy "teams" of cardinals

In Italy, betting on the papal election — and all religious events — is forbidden.

Some people in Rome are making friendly, informal wagers — the equivalent of \$20 on a favorite cardinal, with the loser pledging to host a dinner or buy a pizza night out.

Others are turning to an online game called Fantapapa, or Fantasy Pope, which mimics popular fantasy football and soccer leagues. More than 60,000 people are playing, each choosing 11 cardinals — as if for a soccer team — whom they believe have the best shot at becoming the next pope.

They also draft the top contender, or captain. As with online wagers, the No. 1 choice for fantasy players has been Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, closely followed by Filipino Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle.

"It's a really fun game to play with friends and have a laugh," Italian student Federico La Rocca, 23, said. "Initially my dad sent it to me ironically, but now that it's going to be the conclave, I decided to have a go and try it."

La Rocca said he chose Tagle because "he looks like a nice guy and fun person."

Players' selections determine the number of points they rake in. But what's the jackpot?

"Eternal glory," joked Mauro Vanetti, who created the game when Francis was hospitalized earlier this year.

Vanetti said he and his co-founder are against gambling, but they wanted to create something fun around the event.

"It seems like in Italy there's a certain inquisitiveness about the mechanisms of the Catholic hierarchy, but it's a critical curiosity, a sarcastic and playful curiosity, so we were interested in this jesting spirit for

such a solemn event," Vanetti said. "In some ways it deflates the sacredness, in a nonaggressive way."

Some concerns about betting on a solemn event

Beyond simply picking who the next pope will be, players and gamblers also can guess how many tries it will take the cardinals to choose the leader, which day of the week he'll be elected, what new name he will decide on, or where his priorities will land on the progressive-conservative scale.

While the game and some of the bets have a novel or fun nature, anti-gambling advocates have raised overall concerns about legal gaming and the growing popularity of wagering on all manner of events.

A study published last fall found that 10% of young men in the U.S. show behavior that indicates a gambling problem, which is a rising concern in other parts of the world, too.

And for gambling around the papacy in general, some have raised religious concerns. Catholic teaching doesn't go so far as to call games of chance or wagers sinful, but its Catechism warns that "the passion for gambling risks becoming an enslavement."

It says gambling becomes "morally unacceptable" if it gravely affects a person's livelihood.

Chilean woman with muscular dystrophy becomes face of euthanasia debate as bill stalls in Senate

By NAYARA BATSCHE Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — As a child, Susana Moreira didn't have the same energy as her siblings. Over time, her legs stopped walking and she lost the ability to bathe and take care of herself. Over the last two decades, the 41-year-old Chilean has spent her days bedridden, suffering from degenerative muscular dystrophy. When she finally loses her ability to speak or her lungs fail, she wants to be able to opt for euthanasia — which is currently prohibited in Chile.

Moreira has become the public face of Chile's decade-long debate over euthanasia and assisted dying, a bill that the left-wing government of President Gabriel Boric has pledged to address in his last year in power, a critical period for its approval ahead of November's presidential election.

"This disease will progress, and I will reach a point where I won't be able to communicate," Moreira told The Associated Press from the house where she lives with her husband in southern Santiago. "When the time comes, I need the euthanasia bill to be a law."

A debate spanning more than 10 years

In April 2021, Chile's Chamber of Deputies approved a bill to allow euthanasia and assisted suicide for those over 18 who suffer from a terminal or "serious and incurable" illness. But it has since been stalled in the Senate.

The initiative seeks to regulate euthanasia, in which a doctor administers a drug that causes death, and assisted suicide, in which a doctor provides a lethal substance that the patients take themselves.

If the bill passes, Chile will join a select group of countries that allow both euthanasia and assisted suicide, including the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, Spain and Australia.

It would also make Chile the third Latin American country to rule on the matter, following Colombia's established regulations and Ecuador's recent decriminalization, which remains unimplemented due to a lack of regulation.

'As long as my body allows me'

When she was 8 years old, Moreira was diagnosed with shoulder-girdle muscular dystrophy, a progressive genetic disease that affects all her muscles and causes difficulty breathing, swallowing and extreme weakness.

Confined to bed, she spends her days playing video games, reading and watching Harry Potter movies. Outings are rare and require preparation, as the intense pain only allows her three or four hours in the wheelchair. As the disease progressed, she said she felt the "urgency" to speak out in order to advance the discussion in Congress.

"I don't want to live plugged into machines, I don't want a tracheostomy, I don't want a feeding tube,

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I don't want a ventilator to breathe. I want to live as long as my body allows me," she said.

In a letter to President Boric last year, Moreira revealed her condition, detailed her daily struggles and asked him to authorize her euthanasia.

Boric made Moreira's letter public to Congress in June and announced that passing the euthanasia bill would be a priority in his final year in office. "Passing this law is an act of empathy, responsibility and respect," he said.

But hope soon gave way to uncertainty.

Almost a year after that announcement, multiple political upheavals have relegated Boric's promised social agenda to the background.

A change in mood

Chile, a country of roughly 19 million inhabitants at the southern tip of the southern hemisphere, began to debate euthanasia more than ten years ago. Despite a predominantly Catholic population and the strong influence of the Church at the time, Representative Vlado Mirosevic, from Chile's Liberal Party, first presented a bill for euthanasia and assisted dying in 2014.

The proposal was met with skepticism and strong resistance. Over the years, the bill underwent numerous modifications with little significant progress until 2021. "Chile was then one of the most conservative countries in Latin America," Mirosevic told the AP.

More recently, however, Chilean public opinion has shifted, showing greater openness to debating thorny issues. "There was a change in the mood, and today there is a scenario where we have an absolute major support (of the population) for the euthanasia bill," Mirosevic added.

Indeed, recent surveys show strong public support for euthanasia and assisted dying in Chile.

According to a 2024 survey by Chilean public opinion pollster Cadem, 75% of those interviewed said they supported euthanasia, while a study by the Center for Public Studies from October found that 89% of Chileans believe euthanasia should "always be allowed" or "allowed in special cases," compared to 11% who believed the procedure "should never be allowed."

Suffering, 'the only certainty'

Boric's commitment to the euthanasia bill has been welcomed by patients and families of those lost to terminal illnesses, including Fredy Maureira, a decade-long advocate for the right of choosing when to die.

His 14-year-old daughter Valentina went viral in 2015, after posting a video appealing to then-President Michelle Bachelet for euthanasia. Her request was denied, and she died less than two months later from complications of cystic fibrosis.

The commotion generated both inside and outside Chile by her story allowed the debate on assisted death to penetrate also into the social sphere.

"I addressed Congress several times, asking lawmakers to put themselves in the shoes of someone whose child or sibling is pleading to die, and there's no law to allow it," said Maureira.

Despite growing public support, euthanasia and assisted death remains a contentious issue in Chile, including among health professionals.

"Only when all palliative care coverage is available and accessible, will it be time to sit down and discuss the euthanasia law," Irene Muñoz Pino, a nurse, academic and advisor to the Chilean Scientific Society of Palliative Nursing, said. She was referring to a recent law, enacted in 2022, that ensures palliative care and protects the rights of terminally ill individuals.

Others argue that the absence of a legal medical option for assisted dying could lead patients to seek other riskier, unsupervised alternatives.

"Unfortunately, I keep hearing about suicides that could have been instances of medically assisted death or euthanasia," said Colombian psychologist Monica Giraldo.

With only a few months remaining, Chile's leftist government faces a narrow window to pass the euthanasia bill before the November presidential elections dominate the political agenda.

"A sick person isn't certain of anything; the only certainty they have is that they will suffer," Moreira said. "Knowing that I have the opportunity to choose, gives me peace of mind."

Harassed by Assassin's Creed gamers, a professor fought back with kindness

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

HANOVER, N.H. (AP) — Sachi Schmidt-Hori has never played Assassin's Creed Shadows, but facing an onslaught of online harassment from its fans, she quickly developed her own gameplay style: confronting hate with kindness.

Schmidt-Hori, an associate professor of Japanese literature and culture at Dartmouth College, worked as a narrative consultant on the latest installment in the popular Ubisoft video game franchise. The game launched March 20, but the vitriol directed at Schmidt-Hori began in May 2024 with the release of a promotional trailer.

"Once I realized that I was by myself — nobody was defending me — I just decided to do what I knew would work," she said. "It's very difficult to hate someone up close."

Ancient history sparks modern-day harassment

Set in 16th century Japan, the game features Naoe, a Japanese female assassin, and Yasuke, a Black African samurai. Furor erupted over the latter, with gamers criticizing his inclusion as "wokeness" run amok.

They quickly zeroed in on Schmidt-Hori, attacking her in online forums, posting bogus reviews of her scholarly work and flooding her inbox with profanity. Many drew attention to her academic research into gender and sexuality. Some tracked down her husband's name and ridiculed him, too.

"Imagine that! Professional #WOKE SJW confirms fake history for Ubisoft," one Reddit user said, using an acronym for "social justice warrior." Another user called her a "sexual degenerate who hate humanity because no man want her."

Learning Yasuke was based on a real person did little to assuage critics. Asian men in particular argued Schmidt-Hori was trying to erase them, even though her role involved researching historical customs and reviewing scripts, not creating characters.

"I became the face of this backlash," she said. "People wanted to look for who to yell at, and I was kind of there."

Ubisoft told her to ignore the harassment, as did her friends. Instead, she drew inspiration from the late civil rights leader and congressman John Lewis.

"I decided to cause 'good trouble,'" she said. "I refused to ignore."

Turning the tables on the trolls

Schmidt-Hori began replying to some of the angry emails, asking the senders why they were mad at her and inviting them to speak face-to-face via Zoom. She wrote to an influencer who opposes diversity, equity and inclusion principles and had written about her, asking him if he intended to inspire the death threats she was getting.

"If somebody said to your wife what people are saying to me, you wouldn't like it, would you?" she asked.

The writer didn't reply, but he did take down the negative article about Schmidt-Hori. Others apologized.

"It truly destroyed me knowing that you had to suffer and cancel your class and received hate from horrible people," one man wrote. "I feel somehow that you are part of my family, and I regret it. I'm sorry from the bottom of my heart."

Anik Talukder, a 28-year-old south Asian man living in the United Kingdom, said he apologized at least 10 times to Schmidt-Hori after accepting her Zoom invitation to discuss his Reddit post about her.

On May 16, feeling surprised and disappointed about Yasuke as a protagonist, he posted a screenshot that included photos of Schmidt-Hori, her professional biography from the Dartmouth website and a description of a book she wrote.

"I felt like maybe they were doing too much of like racial inclusion and changing things," he said in an interview. "An Asian male could have been the role model for so many people."

Though he didn't criticize Schmidt-Hori directly, others responded negatively and the image was picked up and shared in other forums.

He was shocked the professor reached out to him and hesitant to speak to her at first. But they ended

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up having a thoughtful conversation about the lack of Asian representation in Western media and have stayed in touch ever since.

"I learned a massive lesson," he said. "I shouldn't have made this person a target for no reason whatsoever."

Ubisoft defends choices and commends its consultant

Ubisoft officials declined to be interviewed about the criticism of the game or the harassment Schmidt-Hori faced. In a statement, the company said it carefully researches historical settings and collaborates with internal and expert witnesses, but the games remain works of fiction and artistic liberties are taken.

"We do not condone harassment or bullying in any form," the company said. "We are committed to creating a supportive and collaborative environment and we're constantly learning how we can improve this process. We commend and appreciate Sachi Schmidt-Hori for addressing these topics directly and are grateful for her approach and expertise."

Unlike the professor at Dartmouth, in Hanover, New Hampshire, most people who become the target of online hate end up retreating to protect themselves, said Kate Mays, an assistant professor of public communication at the University of Vermont.

Online forums allow people to post anonymously without seeing how their words are received and algorithms boost more aggressive content, she said, creating a "perfect storm" for people to become hateful.

"The intervention that she did was pretty brilliant in terms of sort of stopping that toxic train in its tracks and putting another spin on how people are engaging with her," Mays said. "She's sort of breaking the spell of that online disinhibition community involvement and forcing people to address her as a human and an individual."

NPR stations targeted for cuts by Trump have provided lifelines to listeners during disasters

By JOHN RABY and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — After Hurricane Helene devastated Asheville, North Carolina, the sound coming from open car windows as residents gathered on a street at the top of a ridge trying to get cell service last fall was Blue Ridge Public Radio. And as they stood in line for water or food, the latest news they'd heard on the station was a frequent topic of conversation.

"The public radio station was alerting people what was going on," said Lisa Savage, who volunteered at an area church after the hurricane.

Now public radio stations are being targeted for cuts by President Donald Trump. This week, he signed an executive order aimed at slashing public subsidies to NPR and PBS, alleging "bias" in the broadcasters' reporting.

Public radio stations have been a lifeline for residents during natural disasters that take out power, the internet and cell towers. And in many remote and rural areas across the U.S., they can be a lone source of local news.

About a week after she'd volunteered in the Asheville area, Savage recalled driving through another hard-hit community and hearing updates on Blue Ridge Public Radio on where residents could pick up water.

"So that was crucial," Savage said.

In the West Texas desert, Marfa Public Radio provides listeners with a mix of local and national news and music. It's based in Marfa, a city of about 2,000 that draws tourists to its art scene.

"Marfa Public Radio is the only radio service in a lot of the geographic area that we cover," said Tom Livingston, the station's interim executive director. "So it's really essential in terms of if there's news events, if there's safety things that happen in the community."

Funding has widespread impact

Trump's order instructs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and other federal agencies "to cease Federal funding for NPR and PBS" and further requires that they work to root out indirect sources of public financing for the news organizations. The broadcasters get roughly half a billion dollars in public

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money through the private CPB, which has said that it is not a federal executive agency subject to Trump's orders.

The heads of PBS, NPR and CPB all suggested Friday that the order was illegal, and a court fight seems inevitable.

The White House has also said it will be asking Congress to rescind funding for the CPB as part of a \$9.1 billion package of cuts. Local stations operate on a combination of government funding, donations and philanthropic grants, and stations in smaller markets are particularly dependent on the public money.

WMMT, based in the eastern Kentucky community of Whitesburg, can be heard in parts of five Appalachian states. The station's general manager, Teddy Wimer, said listeners "want to hear people that sound like folks that they know from Appalachia," and the station, which currently operates from a renovated Winnebago called the Possum Den, relies on CPB funding.

"We're in an economically disadvantaged area of the country," Wimer said. "Most of our listeners who really rely upon our programming don't have the funds to ramp up their support."

Livingston said about 30% of their funding comes from the CPB. Right now, he says, it's too early to know if the cuts will actually happen or what they would impact if they do come through.

Local flavor is a factor in listenership and credibility

Along the West Virginia-Virginia border, more than three hours from Washington, D.C., residents can pick up signals from radio stations far away. But those "aren't going to have the local flavor and impact that we do," said Scott Smith, general manager of Allegheny Mountain Radio. "This is the only game in town for that sort of thing."

In his home base of Monterey, Virginia, Smith said there's about a 4 -square-mile (10.3-square-kilometer) area of cell coverage with one cell tower. The station has proven to be a vital source of information during natural disasters. In 2012, residents relied on it after a derecho knocked out power to 680,000 customers across West Virginia and it took nearly two weeks for some areas to get their service restored.

"Yeah, we play music. Yeah, we get on the air and joke around," he said. "But we're here providing basic level services of information, emergency information, that sort of thing, to our communities. And as part of that, we're a pretty critical link in this area for the emergency alert system."

Smith, who has a staff of 10 people, said 68% of Allegheny Mountain Radio's annual budget comes from CPB.

"What CPB does fund the most is small rural radio," Smith said. "When you take 60% of our income away, that's not readily or easily replaceable."

Smith calls it a "wait-and-see game" on whether Congress will act on the CPB funding.

"The answer to how we move forward is vague," Smith said. "We will still continue to be here as long as we can be."

Iranian students at the University of Alabama say immigration crackdown echoes repression at home

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press/Report For America

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP) — Sama Ebrahimi Bajgani and her fiancé, Alireza Doroudi, had just spent an evening celebrating the Persian new year at the University of Alabama when seven armed immigration officers came to their apartment before dawn and arrested Doroudi.

In a moment, the young couple's life was upended.

"I was living a normal life until that night. After that nothing is just normal," Bajgani said.

Details about Doroudi's detention spread through the small Iranian community in Tuscaloosa, where Bajgani and Doroudi are doctoral students. Other Iranian students say they have been informally advised by faculty to "lay low" and "be invisible" — instilling fear among a once vibrant cohort.

Doroudi is among students across the U.S. who have been detained in recent weeks as part of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown. Bajgani said the couple does not know why Doroudi faces deportation and that Trump's recent visit to the school made her feel like the university was "ignorant of

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our crisis.”

One Iranian civil engineering student and close friend to Doroudi said he has lost over 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) due to stress and depression in the six weeks since Doroudi was detained.

“It’s like all of us are waiting for our turn. It could be every knock, every email could be deportation,” said the student, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of concerns about losing his legal status.

He now avoids unnecessary trips outside. When he was in a car crash last month, he begged the other driver not to call the police, even though he wasn’t at fault, because he didn’t want to draw attention to himself.

‘I stayed with their permission’

Bajgani said Doroudi, 32, is an ambitious mechanical engineering student from Shiraz, Iran.

He entered the United States legally in January 2023 on a student visa. Bajgani said he often worked 60-hour weeks while still making time to run errands for loved ones.

“If someone like him doesn’t get to the place he deserves, there is nothing called the American dream,” she said.

Doroudi’s visa was revoked in June 2023, but the embassy didn’t provide a reason and ignored his inquiries, Bajgani said. The university told him he could stay as long as he remained a student but that would not be allowed to reenter the U.S. if he left, she said.

He was operating under that guidance when immigration officers came to the couple’s door in March.

The University of Alabama didn’t comment on Doroudi’s case, but said it offers resources to help immigrants on campus comply with federal law. It also offers guidance to students whose visas are revoked.

“Our international students are valued members of our campus community,” university spokesperson Monica Watt said in a statement.

Doroudi told Bajgani he spent three days in a county jail, sleeping on a tile floor and feeling panicked.

He is now in a Louisiana immigration detention facility over 300 miles (480 kilometers) from Tuscaloosa while he awaits a deportation hearing scheduled for next week. At least one other high-profile international student is there.

“I didn’t deserve this. If they had just sent me a letter asking me to appear in court, I would’ve come, because I didn’t do anything illegal. I stayed with their permission,” Doroudi said in a letter he dictated to Bajgani over the phone to provide his perspective to others. “What was the reason for throwing me in jail?”

Trump’s immigration crackdown

More than 1,000 international students across the U.S. have had their visas or legal status revoked since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements and correspondence with school officials. They included some who protested Israel’s war in Gaza. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has since reversed those revocations, including those of four University of Alabama students.

“University staff closely monitors changes that could affect them and has communicated updates related to new protocols and procedures,” Watt said.

A Louisiana judge who denied Doroudi bond in mid-April said he didn’t sufficiently prove that he wasn’t a national security threat, Doroudi’s lawyer, David Rozas said. Rozas said he was “flabbergasted” because the government hasn’t presented evidence that Doroudi is a threat, though that is what the Department of Homeland Security has alleged.

A familiar sense of fear

International students make up over 13% of the statewide University of Alabama graduate program, according to the school’s website. Over 100 Iranian students attend the university, according to an estimate from the Iranian Student Association.

Every year, many gather for a picnic to celebrate Sizdah Bedar, the thirteenth day of the Persian new year, which begins with spring.

This year, the typically festive holiday “felt like a funeral service,” one Iranian doctoral student said. At one point, silence fell over the group as a police car passed.

“It’s becoming too hard to be living here, to be yourself and thrive,” said the student, who spoke on condition of anonymity because she fears retaliation.

She has criticized the Iranian regime since arriving in the United States over five years ago, so she suspects she is no longer safe in her home country. Now, she has those same doubts in Alabama.

"All of a sudden it feels like we're returning back to Iran again," she said.

AmeriCorps cuts leave people who serve and community organizations scrambling for alternatives

By HANNAH FINGERHUT and LEKAN OYEKANMI Associated Press

WEST COLUMBIA, Texas (AP) — Years had passed since Hurricane Harvey's howling winds and heavy rains tore apart Dan Lee's century-old roof in West Columbia, south of Houston. Then came the knock on his door.

It was Mosaic in Action, a nonprofit that has helped more than 450 homeowners and relies on an AmeriCorps community service program that sends young adults to work on projects across the U.S. The organization repaired Lee's roof and got rid of the mold left behind in Harvey's wake.

"Before they came, man, I had holes in the ceiling where it got wet and the sheetrock had failed," Lee said at his home. "I was ashamed of it. They've just been a blessing."

Last month, President Donald Trump's cost-cutting Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, gutted AmeriCorps, a 30-year-old federal agency that dispatches 200,000 volunteers and hundreds of millions of dollars. For Mosaic in Action, that meant a 10-person team it was counting on would not arrive a few days later as planned, entailing a loss of nearly 2,000 hours of service that had been committed to help 11 homeowners.

"You can imagine what it's like to be in your home, never knowing how much rain's gonna come in that day," said Debbie Allensworth, executive director and co-founder of Mosaic in Action. "Without those valuable workers, we just can't do the work."

The far-reaching government cuts have left communities across the country — small and large, urban and rural, in red and blue states alike — scrambling for alternatives amid the uncertainty, trying to sustain a slew of initiatives, from after-school programs to veterans' services to natural disaster response.

Long a target of critics

AmeriCorps employs more than 500 full-time federal workers, most of whom are now on administrative leave, and has an operating budget of roughly \$1 billion. Despite bipartisan support, it has long been a target of critics who decry bloat, inefficiencies and misuse of funds.

"President Trump has the legal right to restore accountability to the entire Executive Branch," Anna Kelly, White House deputy press secretary, said this week via email after Democratic officials in about two dozen states filed a federal lawsuit.

In the weeks since corps members were let go and grants were abruptly canceled, organizations and volunteers have been searching for alternative solutions.

In West Virginia, High Rocks Education Corporation was told last week to immediately halt its programing funded by the AmeriCorps State and National grant program, including growing food, teaching digital literacy and mentoring kids in afterschool programs.

High Rocks executive director Sarah Riley said the organization has been trying to find emergency money to support corps members who will no longer have a paycheck and the nearly two dozen partner organizations that relied on AmeriCorps.

"We're all desperately trying to figure that out," Riley said. "Organizations will 100% fold over this."

Meanwhile there is a broader ripple effect that leaves holes in communities, Riley added.

"All of the kids that they mentor, that was a really important adult in their life who cared about them, who's now gone with no ability to say goodbye," she said. "I don't know how you measure that."

Not ready for service to end

Anna Gibbons, a 23-year-old team leader with AmeriCorps' National Civilian Community Corps, started reaching out to sponsor organizations days after being discharged three months early. She and her peers

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also started an online fundraiser, which brought in over \$11,000 in donations within a little over a week. Now they are headed to work at an environmental and education center in rural Oregon — without the support of the federal agency.

"We weren't ready for our service to end," Gibbons said. "We had the manpower to do it, we just needed the funds."

In central Wyoming, the Casper Housing Authority was counting on an AmeriCorps team to kick-start food production on an urban farm providing fresh, locally grown produce to residents.

Within 48 hours of learning that AmeriCorps was dismissing the 10 workers, the authority received a \$20,000 donation from the Zimmerman Family Foundation allowing it to bring in the corps members and pay them minimum wage.

Such workarounds are bandages that will be difficult to maintain, said Judd Jeansonne, executive director of the Volunteer Louisiana service commission. Public funding through AmeriCorps has always been coupled with private dollars, he said, but it is a symbiotic relationship with one requiring the presence of the other to subsist.

"It's not sustainable in the long term," Jeansonne said, "because those investments historically have been part of the puzzle, not the whole puzzle."

And while AmeriCorps is a large national investment, Jeansonne said, it's unique in that most funding decisions are made locally by state service commissions like the one he runs in Louisiana.

"It's meeting critical community needs," he said. "These are people in Louisiana or Mississippi or Arkansas, or wherever they are, identifying the needs and making sure that the dollars go there."

VP Vance's global travels are a mix of diplomacy, dealmaking, soft power and family time

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When JD Vance was running for vice president, he walked across an airport tarmac in Wisconsin one August day when his campaign travels happened to intersect those of Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and approached Air Force Two. Besides wanting to take a poke at Republican Donald Trump's rival for avoiding the press, Vance said, "I just wanted to check out my future plane."

It's an aircraft he now knows well.

In the opening months of Trump's term, Vice President Vance has traveled all over the globe — family in tow — to conduct top-level diplomacy for the administration, in addition to taking a number of domestic trips. His international forays have featured a mix of meetings with world leaders, sharply crafted speeches advancing U.S. policy, "soft power" appearances to build goodwill and family time at tourist sites along the way.

Diplomacy before family and cultural sights

Vance's trips have included a five-day trip to Europe in February, a hastily reorganized trek to Greenland in March and a tour of Italy and India in April that was notable for the vice president's brief meeting with Pope Francis the day before the pontiff died.

In his first big moment on the world stage in February, Vance pressed Trump's "America first" message at an artificial intelligence summit in Paris and spoke of maintaining U.S. dominance in the surging industry. From there, he attended a security conference in Munich, where the vice president left his audience stunned with his lecturing remarks about democracy and scant focus on Russia's war against Ukraine.

In March, Vance delivered pointed remarks while in Greenland, scolding Denmark for not investing more in the security of its territory and demanding a new approach. Trump has upset many Greenlanders with his aggressive claims that the U.S. needs to take control of the island away from Denmark.

There's been dealmaking, too.

In India last month, Vance announced after meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi that they had agreed on a negotiating framework for a U.S.-India trade deal. In Italy, he held talks with Prime Minister

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Giorgia Meloni, in addition to his separate audiences with the pope and a top Vatican official.

Family time follows Vance's diplomatic work

Vance has been accompanied on his overseas trips by his wife, Usha, and their 7- and 5-year-old sons and 3-year-old daughter. The kids are usually in pajamas as they board Air Force Two for the overnight flights.

The Vances have gazed aloft at the newly restored Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City and been photographed, with the children in traditional Indian dress, in front of the Taj Mahal in Agra. Without their children, the Vances also visited Dachau in Germany.

Brad Blakeman, a former senior official in George W. Bush's administration who has provided planning advice to Vance's office for some of his foreign travel, said that, while some personal time is woven in, these are not vacations.

"You try and balance the policy with the culture aspect of the trip so that you're honoring the customs and culture of the places that you are visiting," he said. Visiting iconic cultural sites while abroad shows respect and builds rapport with host nations that can enhance diplomacy.

It's also important to be mindful that the president and vice president travel at the public's expense, he said.

"That's the balancing act that always has to be done because of the stewardship of the taxpayers' money," he said.

Joel Goldstein, a law professor at Saint Louis University who specializes in the U.S. vice presidency, said the journeys also could be intended to build Vance's foreign policy chops.

"Part of foreign travel for a vice president is establishing a national security and diplomatic credential," he said, noting that it's particularly important for Vance.

At age 40, Vance served just two years in the Senate before ascending to the office.

Vance displays the habits of a millennial

Vance is also the second-youngest person and the first of the millennial generation to hold the job.

"Generations" author Jean Twenge, a San Diego State University psychology professor who studies generational differences, said the ease with which Vance moves between work and leisure is emblematic of his generation.

"The research suggests that, just with internet use and social media use, the lines between work time and family time blur, that you switch tasks much more quickly than, say, Gen Xers or boomers," she said.

Vance frequently switches gears on the road. Last week, he wedged in a quick beer with service members in Germany — and autographed the "kegerator" built by one airman — after days of wall-to-wall official and cultural activities throughout Italy and India.

Some of the Vances' activities have been unwelcome

Usha Vance was originally slated for a solo trip to Greenland with one of their sons to attend a dogsled race. But that plan was scrapped amid growing discontent from the governments of Greenland and Denmark over the visit and Trump's tough talk of the U.S. taking the territory away from a NATO ally. Instead, the vice president joined the trip, and their visit was limited to a U.S. military base there.

On his Italy trip, Vance took heat on X for being photographed inside the Sistine Chapel. Photography there is usually forbidden, but the session turned out to have been sanctioned by the Vatican, as has happened on past visits by U.S. dignitaries.

A decision during the same trip to close the Roman Colosseum to the public so Usha Vance and the children could take a tour drew some grumbling from tourists stranded outside. A consumer group has since filed a legal complaint.

In India, the Taj Mahal, normally swarming with tourists, was also closed to visitors to accommodate the Vances, according to local media reports.

American officials are often formally invited to make such cultural diversions, and it's not unusual for the U.S. Secret Service, which provides protection for top U.S. officials, to ask for the sites to be closed to the public for security reasons during presidential and vice presidential tours.

The Vances appear to have tried on occasion to avoid such disruptions. In France, the family visited the

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Louvre on a Tuesday, a day when the museum is closed to the public.

Such trips have a long history

Other recent vice presidents also have taken family members along on trips. Presidents do, as well.

As vice president, Democrat Joe Biden often took one of his older granddaughters on trips, a practice he continued as president. Presidents' children, including Malia and Sasha Obama and Chelsea Clinton, went along on some trips with their parents, too.

Practices differ, but the idea is the same: Time in office is short, so make the most of it and expose your children to the world.

Usha Vance said as much during the family visit to India, where her parents were born. She hadn't visited in decades, and her husband and children had never been there.

In an interview with India's NDTV, she said she'd been anxious to make the "trip of a lifetime" with them.

"It's been something that I've wanted to share with my new nuclear family," the U.S. second lady said, adding that they knew Vance would have a chance to visit India as vice president. "We always knew that, when that opportunity arose, we would all come with him."

"We think of it as sort of a gateway, the first of many trips to come, I hope," she said.

Soft diplomacy is another goal

One aim of vice presidential travel abroad is often soft diplomacy, or the building of favorable attitudes toward the U.S. through imagery and symbolism.

When Vance, with his wife of Indian descent and their children, is photographed at the Taj Mahal, it sends a message of solidarity with that nation. When he visits the Vatican and worships there, it emphasizes common ground with Catholics around the world.

Likewise, when Vance appears in public with his children, it could help drive home his quest to encourage large families and build goodwill among American voters, said University of Dayton political scientist Christopher Devine, co-author of "Do Running Mates Matter?"

"I wonder, with JD Vance, if it's an effort to soften his image," Devine said. "He's someone who has not been particularly popular ever since he entered the national scene, and appearing with family tends to make people a little more likable, harder to hate."

Judge orders mental health assessment for man accused of killing 11 at Vancouver festival

By JIM MORRIS Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — A Canadian judge on Friday ordered a man accused of ramming his sport utility vehicle through a Filipino heritage festival crowd, killing 11 people and injuring dozens, to receive a mental health assessment to determine if he's fit to stand trial.

A publicity ban prevents the publication of why Judge Reginal Harris made the decision.

Kai-Ji Adam Lo, 30, appeared in provincial court via video link. He wore an orange short-sleeved jumpsuit and sat on a blue couch. He is expected to return to court on May 30.

Lo faces eight counts of second-degree murder after allegedly driving an SUV through a crowd of people at the Filipino community's Lapu Lapu Day Street festival on Saturday in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Attending Friday's hearing was Marco Harder, vice consul for the Consulate General of the Philippines.

Lo had previously been scheduled to appear in court on May 26, after making his first appearance by video on Sunday, the day after the attack.

Damienne Darby with the British Columbia Prosecution Service said that Lo's lawyer had requested the next appearance be moved ahead.

Lo's court appearance came just hours before a memorial mass to pray for victims of the tragedy.

The B.C. provincial government had declared Friday a day of mourning for the victims. Flag across the city flew at half mast.

During a Mass at the Holy Rosary Cathedral Archbishop J. Michael Miller offered words of comfort to everyone affected "by this grim day in Vancouver's history."

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Miller told members of the Filipino community they are not alone in their grief.

"We are with you in your sorrow, a sorrow that has shaken all of us to the very core of our being," he said. When the service ended B.C. Premier David Eby addressed the gathering, saying the entire province is in mourning.

"We're mourning an injury to the Filipino community," said Eby. "We mourn a loss of innocence. That this could happen here, our province and Vancouver. It happened to people we know.

"We mourn a loss of potential, those who were taken from us."

Vancouver Mayor Ken Sim said the tragedy "shattered something in all of us."

"I'm still trying to process the heartbreak, the shock, the anger and the deep, deep sadness of the families that lost loved ones," he said.

Vancouver police Interim Chief Const. Steve Rai said the city stands united with the Filipino community.

"With all who are mourning and struggling with the terrible tragedy as we now try to begin the long process of healing," he said.

Weinstein accuser insists in tearful outburst: 'He did that to me'

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One of Harvey Weinstein's accusers broke down in tears and cursed on the witness stand Friday as a defense lawyer questioned her account of the former Hollywood mogul forcing oral sex on her nearly two decades ago.

"He was the one who raped me, not the other way around," Miriam Haley told jurors.

"That is for the jury to decide," Weinstein lawyer Jennifer Bonjean responded.

"No, it's not for the jury to decide. It's my experience. And he did that to me," Haley said, using expletives as tears began streaming down her face.

Judge Curtis Farber halted questioning and sent jurors on a break. Haley, her eyes red and face glistening, did not look at Weinstein as she left the witness stand.

Haley, 48, was testifying for a fourth day at Weinstein's rape trial. Questioning resumed after the break, with Haley composed but frustration sometimes flickering in her voice.

By midafternoon, the judge grew impatient with contentious cross-talk and extraneous comments from Haley and the attorney. Farber pounded his fist on the bench at one point and banged his gavel at another, telling them: "Let's behave, both of you."

Farber later said it was the first time in 13 years that he'd used the gavel.

Weinstein is charged with sexually assaulting Haley and another woman, Kaja Sokola, and raping a third, Jessica Mann. Mann and Sokola also are expected to testify.

Weinstein denies the allegations. His lawyers argue that his accusers had consensual encounters with a then-powerful movie producer who could advance their careers.

Haley, who has also gone by the name Mimi Haley, is the first accuser to testify at the retrial, which is happening after an appeals court overturned Weinstein's conviction at an earlier trial. Haley's testimony at that 2020 trial took just one day.

Haley alleges that Weinstein assaulted her after inviting her to stop by his apartment. She had worked briefly as a production assistant on the Weinstein-produced TV show "Project Runway," and his company had booked her a flight to Los Angeles the next day to attend a movie premiere.

She testified earlier in the week that Weinstein backed her into a bedroom and pushed her onto a bed, holding her down as she tried to get up and pleaded: "No, no — it's not going to happen."

Haley and two of her friends testified that she told them soon after that Weinstein had sexually assaulted her. She maintains she was never interested in any sexual or romantic relationship with Weinstein but still wanted his help professionally.

Weinstein, 73, listened with his hands clasped against his chin as Haley reiterated she never had romantic feelings for him and never wanted any sexual contact with him.

Bonjean questioned why Haley would agree to go to Weinstein's apartment after being put off by some

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of his prior behavior, including what she described as him barging into her home as he sought to persuade her to go to Paris with him.

Haley said she thought it would be “weird” to refuse the invitation to his Manhattan loft, since his company had paid for the L.A. flight she was taking the next day.

Haley and grew emotional when asked just how her clothes came off before Weinstein allegedly yanked out a tampon and performed oral sex on her. Haley said Weinstein took off her clothing, but she didn’t recall the details: “I was, you know, busy struggling,” she explained.

“You removed your clothes, right?” Bonjean soon asked, leading to Haley’s tearful and cutting response.

Later, Bonjean continued to press her about the alleged July 2006 assault and its aftermath, including a time a couple of weeks later when Haley has said she had sex with Weinstein that she didn’t want but didn’t fight.

“You didn’t say, ‘Like, hey, what you did to me the other night wasn’t cool?’” Bonjean asked.

“No,” said Haley, reiterating that she “went numb” during the hotel encounter.

Haley stayed in continued, sporadic contact with Weinstein for about three years afterward, according to testimony and documents. At times, she asked him for work, premiere tickets and financial backing for an online TV show she was trying to launch.

“The other stuff is neither here nor there. It doesn’t mean that I wasn’t sexually assaulted,” Haley said.

Bonjean also queried her about her continued interactions with Weinstein and his assistants, about her frequent travels and famous acquaintances at the time, and about her 2020 lawsuit against Weinstein. It ended in a \$475,000 settlement.

The Associated Press generally does not name people who allege they have been sexually assaulted unless they give permission to be identified. Haley, Mann and Sokola have done so.

Tennessee police release video of Kilmar Abrego Garcia traffic stop in 2022

By BEN FINLEY and TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE (AP) — Authorities in Tennessee have released video of a 2022 traffic stop involving Kilmar Abrego Garcia, the Maryland construction worker who became the face of U.S. immigration policy after his erroneous deportation to El Salvador.

The body-camera footage shows a calm and friendly exchange between officers with the Tennessee Highway Patrol and Abrego Garcia. He was pulled over for speeding in a vehicle with eight passengers and said they’d been working in Missouri.

Officers then discussed among themselves their suspicions of human trafficking because nine people were traveling without luggage. One of the officers said: “He’s hauling these people for money.” Another said he had \$1,400 in an envelope.

Abrego Garcia was never charged with a crime, while the officers allowed him to drive on with only a warning about an expired driver’s license, according to a report about the stop released last month by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The report said he was traveling from Texas to Maryland, via Missouri, to bring in people to perform construction work.

The Trump administration has been publicizing Abrego Garcia’s interactions with police over the years, despite a lack of corresponding criminal charges, while it faces a federal court order and calls from some in Congress to return him to the U.S.

An attorney for Abrego Garcia, Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, said in a statement Friday that he saw no evidence of a crime in the released footage.

“But the point is not the traffic stop — it’s that Mr. Abrego Garcia deserves his day in court. Bring him back to the United States,” Sandoval-Moshenberg said.

When details of the Tennessee traffic stop were first publicized, Abrego Garcia’s wife said he sometimes transported groups of fellow construction workers between job sites.

“Unfortunately, Kilmar is currently imprisoned without contact with the outside world, which means he

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cannot respond to the claims,” Jennifer Vasquez Sura said in mid-April.

Abrego Garcia fled his native El Salvador to the U.S. when he was 16 and lived in Maryland for roughly 14 years, court documents state. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported him in March to a Salvadoran prison over a 2019 accusation that he was in the MS-13 gang.

Police in Maryland had identified Abrego Garcia as an MS-13 gang member based on his tattoos, Chicago Bulls hoodie and the word of a criminal informant. But he was never charged. His lawyers say the informant claimed Abrego Garcia was in an MS-13 chapter in New York, where he’s never lived.

Abrego Garcia’s expulsion to El Salvador also violated a U.S. immigration judge’s order in 2019 that shielded him from deportation to his native country. The judge had determined that Abrego Garcia would likely face persecution there by local gangs that had terrorized him and his family.

After Abrego Garcia’s family filed a lawsuit, U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis ordered the Trump administration to return Abrego Garcia on April 4. The Supreme Court ruled April 10 that the administration must work to bring him back.

Xinis then lambasted a government lawyer who couldn’t explain what, if anything, the Trump administration has done. She ordered officials to provide sworn testimony and other information to document their efforts.

The Trump administration appealed. But a federal appeals court backed Xinis’ order for information in a blistering ruling. The case is ongoing.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump acknowledged to ABC News on Tuesday that he could call El Salvador’s president and have Abrego Garcia sent back. But Trump doubled down on his claims that Abrego Garcia is a member of the MS-13 gang.

Attorney Sandoval-Moshenberg said Friday that Abrego Garcia should be able to answer the allegations himself before the U.S. immigration judge who heard his case in 2019.

“I have represented Kilmar Abrego Garcia for more than a month, and this bodycam video is the first time I’ve heard his voice,” Sandoval-Moshenberg said. “He has been denied the most basic protections of due process — no phone call to his lawyer, no call to his wife or child, and no opportunity to be heard.”

The White House seeks sharp spending cuts in Trump’s 2026 budget plan

By LISA MASCARO and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House released President Donald Trump’s 2026 budget proposal Friday, hoping to slash, if not zero out, spending on many government programs. It seeks a sweeping restructuring of the nation’s domestic priorities, reflective of the president’s first 100 days in office and sudden firing of federal workers.

Trump’s plan aims for steep cuts to child care, disease research, renewable energy and peacekeeping abroad, many already underway through Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency, all while pumping up billions for the administration’s mass deportation agenda.

The budget drafters echo Trump’s promises to end “woke programs,” including preschool grants to states with diversity programs. And they reflect his vow to stop the “weaponization of government” by slashing the Internal Revenue Service, even as critics accuse him of using the levers of power to punish people and institutions he disfavors.

Overall, it’s a sizable reduction in domestic accounts — some \$163 billion, or 22.6% below current year spending, the White House said.

At the same time, the White House said it is relying on Congress to unleash \$375 billion in new money for the Homeland Security and Defense departments as part of Trump’s “big, beautiful bill” of tax cuts and spending reductions. His goal is to repel when he calls a “foreign invasion,” though migrant arrivals to the U.S. are at all-time lows.

House Speaker Mike Johnson welcomed the proposal as “a bold blueprint that reflects the values of hardworking Americans and the commitment to American strength and prosperity.”

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Budgets do not become law, but serve as a touchstone for the coming fiscal year debates. Often considered a statement of values, this first budget since Trump's return to the White House carries the added weight of defining the Republican president's second-term pursuits, alongside his party in Congress.

It comes as Trump has unilaterally imposed what could be hundreds of billions of dollars in tax increases in the form of tariffs, setting off a trade war that has consumers, CEOs and foreign leaders worried about a possible economic downturn.

Trump, in an interview with NBC News' "Meet the Press" taped Friday, pushed back against recession talk. Asked by Meet the Press host Kristen Welker about Wall Street analysts who have expressed concerns that the chances of a recession are increasing, Trump insisted the economy will do "fantastically."

"Well, you know, you say, some people on Wall Street say," Trump said. "Well, I tell you something else. Some people on Wall Street say that we're going to have the greatest economy in history."

Democrats assailed the budget as a devastating foreshadowing of Trump's vision for the country.

"President Trump has made his priorities clear as day: he wants to outright defund programs that help working Americans," said Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, the top Democrat on the Appropriations Committee. This, she said, "while he shovels massive tax breaks at billionaires like himself and raises taxes on middle-class Americans with his reckless tariffs."

The White House Office of Management and Budget, headed by Russell Vought, a chief architect of Project 2025 from the conservative Heritage Foundation, provided contours of a so-called skinny version of topline numbers only.

It covers only the federal government's discretionary spending, now about \$1.83 trillion a year on defense and nondefense accounts. Trump's team drops that spending by \$163 billion, to \$1.69 trillion, a portion of the nation's nearly \$7 trillion budget that includes far more programs and services.

Federal budgets have been climbing steadily, as have annual deficits that are fast approaching \$2 trillion, with annual interest payments on the debt almost \$1 trillion. That's thanks mostly to the spike in emergency COVID-19 pandemic spending, changes in the tax code that reduced revenues and the climbing costs of Medicare, Medicaid and other programs, largely to cover health needs as people age. The nation's debt load, at \$36 trillion, is ballooning.

"We need a budget that tells the full story, and it should control spending, reduce borrowing, bring deficits down," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog group.

Among some of the White House's proposed highlights:

The State Department and international programs would lose 84% of their money and receive \$9.6 billion, reflecting deep cuts already underway, including to the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The Health and Human Services Department would be cut by \$33.3 billion and the Education Department's spending would be reduced by \$12 billion. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health would all face steep reductions.

The Defense Department would get an additional \$113.3 billion and Homeland Security would receive \$42.3 billion more. Much of that is contingent on Congress approving Trump's big bill. That approach drew criticism from leading defense hawks, among them the former GOP Leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

McConnell called the proposed boost in defense money in the president's budget a "gimmick."

"America cannot expect our allies to heed calls for greater annual defense spending if we are unwilling to lead by example," McConnell said in a blistering statement. "Fortunately, Presidential budget requests are just that: requests. Congress will soon have an opportunity to ensure that American power – and the credibility of our commitments – are appropriately resourced."

It's Congress, under its constitutional powers, that decides the spending plans, approves the bills that authorize federal programs and funds them through the appropriations process. Often, that system breaks down, forcing lawmakers to pass stopgap spending bills to keep the government funded and avoid federal shutdowns.

Congress is already deep into the slog of drafting Trump's big bill of tax breaks, spending cuts and bolstered funds for the administration's mass deportation effort — a package that, unlike the budget plan, would carry the force of law.

Vought is also expected on Capitol Hill in the weeks ahead as the Trump administration presses its case. Among the more skilled conservative budget hands in Washington, Vought has charted a career toward this moment. He served during the first Trump administration in the same role and, for Project 2025, wrote an extensive chapter about the remaking of the federal government.

Vought has separately been preparing a \$9 billion package that would gut current 2025 funding for the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which involves the Public Broadcasting Service and National Public Radio. Trump signed an executive order late Thursday that instructs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and federal agencies to cease funding for PBS and NPR.

Vought has said that a package of so-called budget rescissions would be a first of potentially more, as the Trump administration tests the appetite in Congress for lawmakers to go on record and vote to roll back the money.

Trump administration asks Supreme Court to let DOGE access Social Security systems

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration asked the Supreme Court on Friday to clear the way for Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency to access Social Security systems containing personal data on millions of Americans.

The emergency appeal is the first in a string of applications to the high court involving DOGE's swift-moving work across the federal government.

It comes after a judge in Maryland restricted the team's access to Social Security under federal privacy laws. The agency holds personal records on nearly everyone in the country, including school records, bank details, salary information and medical and mental health records for disability recipients, according to court documents.

The government says the team needs access to target waste in the federal government. Musk, now preparing to step back from his work with DOGE, has been focused on Social Security as an alleged hotbed of fraud. The billionaire entrepreneur has described it as a "Ponzi scheme" and insisted that reducing waste in the program is an important way to cut government spending.

Solicitor General John Sauer argued Friday that the judge's restrictions disrupt DOGE's important work and inappropriately interfere with executive-branch decisions. "Left undisturbed, this preliminary injunction will only invite further judicial incursions into internal agency decision-making," he wrote.

He asked the justices to block the order from U.S. District Judge Ellen Hollander in Maryland as the lawsuit plays out.

An appeals court previously refused to immediately lift the block on DOGE access, though it split along ideological lines. Conservative judges in the minority said there's no evidence that the team has done any "targeted snooping" or exposed personal information.

The lawsuit was originally filed by a group of labor unions and retirees represented by the group Democracy Forward. The Supreme Court asked them for a response to the administration's appeal by May 12.

More than two dozen lawsuits have been filed over DOGE's work, which has included deep cuts at federal agencies and large-scale layoffs.

Hollander found that DOGE's efforts at Social Security amounted to a "fishing expedition" based on "little more than suspicion" of fraud.

Her order does allow staffers to access data that has been made anonymous, but the Trump administration has said DOGE can't work effectively with those restrictions.

Elizabeth Laird with the nonprofit group Center for Democracy and Technology said wide-ranging access to sensitive personal data poses a serious threat. "If DOGE gets a hold of this information, it opens the

floodgates on a host of potential harms. It also normalizes a very dangerous practice for other federal agencies," she said.

The nation's court system has been ground zero for pushback to President Donald Trump's sweeping conservative agenda, with about 200 lawsuits filed challenging policies on everything from immigration to education to mass layoffs of federal workers.

Among those that have reached the Supreme Court so far, the justices have handed down some largely procedural rulings siding with the administration but have rejected the government's broad arguments in other cases.

7.4 magnitude quake off Chile's far south briefly triggers tsunami alert but causes no damage

By NAYARA BATSCHEKE undefined

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — A major earthquake with a magnitude of 7.4 struck in the South Atlantic Ocean off Chile and Argentina on Friday, prompting thousands in Chile to evacuate parts of the sparsely populated coast for higher ground due to tsunami fears.

There were no reported damage or casualties from the earthquake that hit at 8:58 a.m. local time and triggered at least a dozen aftershocks.

Due to fears that the tremor could generate a potential tsunami, the Chilean government issued an evacuation order for the coastline of the Strait of Magellan, at the southern tip of South America, and for the country's bases and research stations on the Antarctic peninsula.

Chilean authorities withdrew the warning later Friday after determining that no tsunami was occurring, allowing people to trickle back to their homes even as officials continued to caution the public to steer clear of boardwalks and beaches.

"Although the state of the emergency has been downgraded ... it's very important to remain alert to official communications," Chilean President Gabriel Boric wrote on social media platform X. "In these cases, it's always better to be safe than sorry."

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake was shallow, at just 10 kilometers (6 miles) under the seabed, and it struck about 219 kilometers (173 miles) south of Argentina's southernmost city of Ushuaia, the remote outpost from which most Antarctic cruises set sail.

The U.S. monitoring agency said it expected waves to reach up to 3 meters high. The Chilean government estimated the waves would first hit bases in Antarctica before reaching Chile's southernmost naval station of Puerto Williams and, on Saturday morning, lashing the coast off the larger town of Punta Arenas along the Strait of Magellan, the key waterway connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Local news stations aired footage of residents in Punta Arenas calmly making their way toward shelters and evacuation points on higher ground as sirens blared in the background. Schools in the region closed for the day.

Chile's police force also shared footage of an officer pushing a man in a wheelchair up a hill in desolate Puerto Williams.

Chile's national disaster response service, Senapred, reported the evacuation of some 2,000 residents before it downgraded the warnings, with 32 people following procedures from Chile's Antarctic research bases.

Boric, who is from the city of Punta Arenas, suspended his normal agenda on Friday and called an emergency committee meeting to address the earthquake. "All state resources are available," he said.

As one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world, Chile has built up its preparedness for earthquakes and tsunamis spawned over the years by the tectonic plates clashing under the surface of the Pacific Ocean.

As Trump sets his sights on public broadcasting, a decades-old institution frets about the future

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

The nation's public broadcasting system — decades-long home to Big Bird, Ken Burns documentaries and "All Things Considered" — faces the biggest crisis in its nearly 60-year history with President Donald Trump's order to slash federal subsidies.

A court fight seems inevitable, with the heads of PBS, NPR and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting all suggesting Friday that Trump's order is illegal.

"We will vigorously defend our right to provide essential news, information and life-saving services to the American public," said Katherine Maher, NPR's president and CEO. "We will challenge this executive order using all means available." Her counterpart at PBS, Paula Kerger, said Trump's order was blatantly unlawful.

The public broadcasting system dates back to the late 1960s, devised as an educational and public service-oriented alternative to commercial broadcasters available at the time. In his order, Trump said the system has become politically biased and time has passed it by.

"Today the media landscape is filled with abundant, diverse and innovative news options," the president said in his order, issued just before midnight Thursday. "Government funding of news media in this environment is not only outdated and unnecessary, but corrosive to the appearance of journalistic independence."

The focus is on news, but there could be other casualties

Trump's order concentrates on news, and between PBS' "NewsHour" and a robust reporting corps at NPR, that's an important part of their operations. But public broadcasting also has entertainment programming, educational children's shows and Burns' historical documentaries.

PBS and NPR get about a half-billion dollars a year in public funding funneled through the private Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Roughly 70% of that goes directly to the 330 local PBS outlets and 246 NPR stations.

On average, PBS says 15% of its stations' budgets come from public funding. But there are wide variations; stations in larger markets usually get more money through philanthropy and fund drives, while smaller stations depend much more on the government.

Besides Trump's order, Congress has been considering future funding levels for the public broadcasters, and the Federal Communications Commission is questioning public broadcasting efforts at corporate underwriting, said Josh Shepperd, author of the 2023 book "Shadow of the New Deal: The Victory of Public Broadcasting."

"It's a three-pronged effort that is frankly very smart in its institutional understanding," Shepperd said. "They're not just going after programs that they don't like. They're going after the operations and the infrastructure that makes it possible to even air the programming."

A ripple effect is possible, and could be local

Trump's order instructs the CPB and other government agencies to "cease Federal funding" for PBS and National Public Radio and further requires that they work to root out indirect sources of public financing. Separate from the CPB grant, for example, PBS gets a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for programming that helps build the reading, math and science skills for children age 2 to 8, particularly in poor areas.

The administration's plan might not threaten your favorite program — Burns gets plenty of corporate and philanthropic support — but it may impact local programming and potential growth, Shepperd said.

Congressional Republicans aired some of their grievances about public broadcasting to Kerger and Maher at a public hearing in March. Such complaints have been common over the years, but the broadcasters have avoided funding cuts, in large part because members of Congress don't want to be seen as responsible if a station in their district shuts down. Who wants to be the public official who killed "Sesame Street"?

Also, public pressure from constituents is minimized because most Republicans don't watch PBS or listen to NPR, said Tim Graham, director of media analysis at the conservative Media Research Center. "I have this morning habit of listening to NPR on my commute," Graham said. "I yell at the radio."

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For years, Graham's group has issued reports with examples of what it says is bias against conservatives. For example, during an 18-month period that ended last November, his researchers counted 162 examples of PBS journalists or contributors making reference labeling some politicians "far right" or some variation, with only six called "far left."

He said he's not trying to shut down these stations, but resists them receiving public money.

"Let the people who listen to it do the funding," Graham said.

Bias concerns are taken seriously, officials say

At a board meeting Friday, CPB president and CEO Pat Harrison said her agency has taken bias concerns seriously. It has increased investments in fact-based local journalism, and provided a grant to NPR to make changes in its newsroom to address issues of bias.

The court fight over public broadcasting has already begun. The president earlier this week said he was firing three of the five remaining CPB board members — threatening its ability to do any work — and was immediately sued by the CPB to stop it.

The executive order is also the latest move by Trump and his administration to utilize federal powers to control or hamstring institutions whose actions or viewpoints he disagrees with — particularly those related to media.

Since taking office in January for a second term, Trump has ousted leaders, placed staff on administrative leave and cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to artists, libraries, museums, theaters and others, through takeovers of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Trump has also pushed to withhold federal research and education funds from universities and punish law firms unless they agree to eliminate diversity programs and other measures he has found objectionable.

The move against PBS and NPR comes as Trump's administration works to dismantle the U.S. Agency for Global Media, including Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which were designed to model independent news gathering globally in societies that restrict the press.

Those efforts have faced pushback from federal courts, which have ruled in some cases that the Trump administration may have overstepped its authority in holding back funds appropriated to the outlets by Congress.

CDC reports 216 child deaths this flu season, the most in 15 years

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — More U.S. children have died this flu season than at any time since the swine flu pandemic 15 years ago, according to a federal report released Friday.

The 216 pediatric deaths reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eclipse the 207 reported last year. It's the most since the 2009-2010 H1N1 global flu pandemic.

It's a startlingly high number, given that the flu season is still going on. The final pediatric death tally for the 2023-2024 flu season wasn't counted until autumn.

"This number that we have now is almost certainly an undercount, and one that — when the season is declared over, and they compile all the data — it's almost certain to go up," said Dr. Sean O'Leary, of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

There are likely several contributors to this season's severity, but a big one is that fewer children are getting flu shots, added O'Leary, a University of Colorado pediatric infectious diseases specialist.

The flu vaccination rate for U.S. children has plummeted from about 64% five years ago to 49% this season.

Flu vaccinations may not prevent people from coming down with symptoms, but research shows they are highly effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths, O'Leary said.

The season has not only been hard on children. CDC officials have described it as "highly severe," and estimate that so far there have been at least 47 million illnesses, 610,000 hospitalizations and 26,000 deaths this season.

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CDC officials have information about underlying conditions on nearly 5,200 adults who were hospitalized with flu this season, and 95% had at least one existing health problem. But among 2,000 hospitalized children with more detailed health information, only about 53% had an underlying condition — including asthma and obesity.

The CDC report did not say how many of the children who died were vaccinated. The agency did not make an expert available to talk about the flu season.

The good news is that flu indicators have been waning since February, and last week all 50 states were reporting low or minimal flu activity.

The season has seen more of a mix of flu strain circulating than in many other years, with two different Type A strains — H1N1 and H3N2 — causing a lot of infections. But CDC data released earlier this year suggested flu shots were doing a pretty good job at preventing deaths and hospitalizations.

The CDC continues to recommend that everyone ages 6 months and older get an annual flu vaccine.

Childhood vaccinations in general have been declining, driven by online misinformation and the political schism that emerged around COVID-19 vaccines. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has also echoed some of the rhetoric of antivaccine activists since taking over as the nation's health secretary.

But there may be other reasons fewer children got flu shots this year, O'Leary said.

Many pediatricians offices are understaffed and are not holding as many after-hours vaccination clinics as in the past. Also, more Americans are getting their vaccinations at pharmacies, but some drugstores don't vaccinate children, he said.

"My hope is that this season will be a bit of wake up call for folks that we actually do need to vaccinate our kids against influenza," O'Leary said.

Wall Street extends its gains to a 9th straight day, reclaiming losses since tariff escalation

By DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

Wall Street extended its gains to a ninth straight day Friday, marking the stock market's longest winning streak since 2004 and reclaiming the ground it lost since President Donald Trump escalated his trade war in early April.

The rally was spurred by a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market and resurgent hope for a ratcheting down in the U.S. trade showdown with China.

The S&P 500 climbed 1.5%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 1.4%, and the Nasdaq composite rose 1.5%.

The gains were broad. Roughly 90% of stocks and every sector in the S&P 500 advanced. Technology stocks were among the companies doing the heaviest lifting. Microsoft rose 2.3% and Nvidia rose 2.5%. Apple, however, fell 3.7% after the iPhone maker estimated that tariffs will cost it \$900 million.

Banks and other financial companies also made solid gains. JPMorgan Chase rose 2.3% and Visa closed 1.5% higher.

Employers added 177,000 jobs in April. That marks a slowdown in hiring from March, but it was solidly better than economists anticipated. However, the latest job figures don't yet reflect the effects on the economy of President Donald Trump's across-the-board tariffs against America's trading partners. Many of the more severe tariffs that were supposed to go into effect in April were delayed by three months, with the notable exception of tariffs against China.

"We've already seen how financial markets will react if the administration moves forward with their initial tariff plan, so unless they take a different tack in July when the 90-day pause expires, we will see market action similar to the first week of April," said Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer for Northlight Asset Management.

The S&P 500 slumped 9.1% during the first week of April as Trump announced a major escalation of his trade war with more tariffs. The market has now clawed back its losses since then, helped by a string of

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resilient earnings reports from U.S. companies, hopes for de-escalation of trade tensions with China and expectations that the Federal Reserve will still be able to cut rates a few times this year.

The benchmark index is still down 3.3% so far this year, and 7.4% below the record it reached in February. All told, the S&P 500 rose 82.53 points to 5,686.67. The Dow gained 564.47 points to 41,317.43, and the Nasdaq added 266.99 points to 17,977.73.

The job market is being closely watched for signs of stress amid trade war tensions. Strong employment has helped fuel solid consumer spending and economic growth over the last few years. Economists are now worried about the impact that taxes on imports will have on consumers and businesses, especially about how higher costs will hurt hiring and spending.

The economy is already showing signs of strain. The U.S. economy shrank at a 0.3% annual pace during the first quarter of the year. It was slowed by a surge in imports as businesses tried to get ahead of Trump's tariffs.

The current round of tariffs and the on-again-off-again nature of Trump's policy has overshadowed planning for businesses and households. Companies have been cutting and withdrawing financial forecasts because of the uncertainty over how much tariffs will cost them and how much they will squeeze consumers and sap spending.

Hopes remain that Trump will roll back some of his tariffs after negotiating trade deals with other countries. China has been a key target, with tariffs of 145%. Its Commerce Ministry said Beijing is evaluating overtures from the U.S. regarding the tariffs.

Investors had a relatively quiet day of earnings reports following a busy week. Exxon Mobil rose 0.4%, recovering from an early slide, after reporting its lowest first-quarter profit in years. Rival Chevron rose 1.6% after it also reported its smallest first-quarter profit in years.

Falling crude oil prices have weighed on the sector. Crude oil prices in the U.S. are down about 17% for the year. They fell below \$60 per barrel this week, which is a level at which many producers can no longer turn a profit.

Block slumped 20.4% after reporting a sharp drop in first-quarter profit that fell short of analysts' forecasts. The financial technology company behind Cash App cited a pullback in consumer spending on travel and other discretionary items as a key reason for the results.

Treasury yields rose in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.31% from 4.22% late Thursday.

Snakes have bitten this man hundreds of times. His blood could help make a better treatment

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tim Friede has been bitten by snakes hundreds of times — often on purpose. Now scientists are studying his blood in hopes of creating a better treatment for snake bites.

Friede has long had a fascination with reptiles and other venomous creatures. He used to milk scorpions' and spiders' venom as a hobby and kept dozens of snakes at his Wisconsin home.

Hoping to protect himself from snake bites — and out of what he calls "simple curiosity" — he began injecting himself with small doses of snake venom and then slowly increased the amount to try to build up tolerance. He would then let snakes bite him.

"At first, it was very scary," Friede said. "But the more you do it, the better you get at it, the more calm you become with it."

While no doctor or emergency medical technician — or anyone, really — would ever suggest this is a remotely good idea, experts say his method tracks how the body works. When the immune system is exposed to the toxins in snake venom, it develops antibodies that can neutralize the poison. If it's a small amount of venom the body can react before it's overwhelmed. And if it's venom the body has seen before, it can react more quickly and handle larger exposures.

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Friede has withstood snakebites and injections for nearly two decades and still has a refrigerator full of venom. In videos posted to his YouTube channel, he shows off swollen fang marks on his arms from black mamba, taipan and water cobra bites.

"I wanted to push the limits as close to death as possible to where I'm just basically teetering right there and then back off of it," he said.

But Friede also wanted to help. He emailed every scientist he could find, asking them to study the tolerance he'd built up.

And there is a need: Around 110,000 people die from snakebite every year, according to the World Health Organization. And making antivenom is expensive and difficult. It is often created by injecting large mammals like horses with venom and collecting the antibodies they produce. These antivenoms are usually only effective against specific snake species, and can sometimes produce bad reactions due to their nonhuman origins.

When Columbia University's Peter Kwong heard of Friede, he said, "Oh, wow, this is very unusual. We had a very special individual with amazing antibodies that he created over 18 years."

In a study published Friday in the journal *Cell*, Kwong and collaborators shared what they were able to do with Friede's unique blood: They identified two antibodies that neutralize venom from many different snake species with the aim of someday producing a treatment that could offer broad protection.

It's very early research — the antivenom was only tested in mice, and researchers are still years away from human trials. And while their experimental treatment shows promise against the group of snakes that include mambas and cobras, it's not effective against vipers, which include snakes like rattlers.

"Despite the promise, there is much work to do," said Nicholas Casewell, a snakebite researcher at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in an email. Casewell was not involved with the new study.

Friede's journey has not been without its missteps. Among them: He said after one bad snake bite he had to cut off part of his finger. And some particularly nasty cobra bites sent him to the hospital.

Friede is now employed by Centivax, a company trying to develop the treatment and that helped pay for the study. He's excited that his 18-year odyssey could one day save lives from snakebite, but his message to those inspired to follow in his footsteps is simple: "Don't do it," he said.

Drones strike ship carrying aid to Gaza, organizers say, in latest confrontation over assistance

By SAM MEDNICK and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Drones attacked a vessel carrying aid to Gaza on Friday in international waters off Malta, the group organizing the shipment said, in the latest confrontation over efforts to send assistance to the Palestinian territory devastated by nearly 19 months of war.

A nearby tugboat responded to a distress call from the *Conscience*, which authorities said experienced a fire that was brought under control. The vessel was carrying 12 crew members and four civilians, the Maltese government said, adding that those aboard refused to leave the ship. The group was safe and no serious injuries were reported, it said.

The Freedom Flotilla Coalition accused Israel of attacking its ship. The group did not provide evidence for that claim or to show that the fire was caused by drones, but in a video it shared an explosion could be heard. Another video showed a fire blazing.

The Israeli army did not respond to a request for comment. Israel has cut off Gaza from all imports, including food and medicine, since the beginning of March, leading to what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis in the war with Hamas, the Palestinian militant group.

Explosions in the night

Mecid Bagcivan, an activist from Turkey who was aboard the *Conscience*, was getting ready for bed when two explosions rocked the ship about two minutes apart, he said. At first it seemed there had been a collision. Then the crew saw fire and realized it was an attack, Bagcivan told The Associated Press.

As the crew radioed Malta for help, Bagcivan said someone impersonated them on the same channel

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saying help was no longer needed. Those on board scrambled to fight the fire on their own, leaving some with minor injuries, he said. Help later arrived, and after hours the fire was extinguished.

The ship was trying to reenter Maltese waters amid fears of a second attack, according to a statement from the crew.

"We feel like right now we're safe, but we don't know what Israel is going to do," Bagcivan said. "We can't trust no one in this situation after we get bombed in the middle of the night."

Stranded in international waters

Video taken after the explosions showed two large holes in the ship's deck, with thick smoke surrounding the vessel. The person recording the footage said the ship had been hit twice and was on fire about 14 miles from Malta. The video was provided by Codepink, a grassroots peace and social justice movement.

The ship's generator was badly damaged and will need to be repaired before continuing, said Charlie Andreasson, who has been involved with the Freedom Flotilla for more than a decade.

It's unclear where the ship will be able to stop for repairs, said Tighe Barry, a Codepink member who was among a group of activists who took speedboats to the Conscience after the attack. The boats were turned away by Maltese authorities, he said, but one person made it aboard and spoke to the captain.

Barry said the nation of Palau revoked its flag from the Conscience prior to the attack, and authorities in Malta, Greece and Turkey have threatened to confiscate the ship if it comes to port. Barry said the ship is loaded with medicine and food supplies.

"To get a new flag will take months, so they're just stuck out there," Barry said of the crew.

Conflict over Israel's blockade

Israel says the blockade is an attempt to pressure Hamas to release hostages it took during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the conflict. Hamas-led militants assaulted southern Israel that day, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Hamas is still holding 59 hostages, 24 of whom are believed to be alive.

In response, Israel launched an offensive that has killed over 52,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between fighters and civilians. Israel's bombardment and ground operations have destroyed vast areas of the territory and left most of its population homeless.

When an aid flotilla attempted to break a blockade of Gaza in 2010, Israeli forces stormed a Turkish ship, the Mavi Marmara, killing nine people on board.

On Friday, the Conscience was hit about 16 miles (26 kilometers) from Malta, according to the Freedom Flotilla.

Photos provided by Cypriot authorities showed the ship with damage to its side.

Ship sailed from Tunisia on route to Gaza

According to the ship-monitoring website Marine Traffic, the Conscience left the Tunisian port of Bizerte on Tuesday and arrived Thursday morning in the area where it reported being attacked.

Volunteers who had traveled to Malta were meant to board the ship to go to Gaza, the group said. Andreasson said climate activist Greta Thunberg was supposed to have participated. The organization said Thunberg did not board and was safe.

The ship's 12 crew members are from Turkey and Azerbaijan, said Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Codepink.

Turkey condemned the attack and pledged to hold the perpetrators accountable.

The assault "threatens freedom of navigation and maritime security in international waters," Turkish Foreign Ministry Spokesman Oncu Keceli said in a statement posted on the X social media platform.

The attack happened as aid groups have warned that the humanitarian response in Gaza is on the verge of collapse.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said Friday that it will not have access to food, medicine and life-saving supplies needed for many of its Gaza programs if aid deliveries don't resume immediately.

Programs at risk include "common kitchens" that often give residents the only meal they receive each

day and could be forced to halt operations in a few weeks, the ICRC said.

"Aid must be allowed to enter Gaza. Hostages must be released. Civilians must be protected," the committee said. "Without immediate action, Gaza will descend further into chaos that humanitarian efforts will not be able to mitigate."

Ruth Buzzi, comedy sketch player on groundbreaking series 'Laugh-In,' dies at 88

By BETH HARRIS Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ruth Buzzi, who rose to fame as the frumpy and bitter Gladys Ormphby on the groundbreaking sketch comedy series "Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In" and made over 200 television appearances during a 45-year career, died Thursday. She was 88.

Buzzi died at her home in Texas, her agent Mike Eisenstadt said. She had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and was in hospice care. Shortly before her death, her husband Kent Perkins, had posted a statement on Buzzi's Facebook page, thanking her many fans and telling them: "She wants you to know she probably had more fun doing those shows than you had watching them."

Buzzi won a Golden Globe and was a two-time Emmy nominee for the NBC show that ran from 1968 to 1973. She was the only regular to appear in all six seasons, including the pilot.

"Ruth Buzzi was a comedic genius," Nancy Sinatra posted on X. "Working alongside her on Laugh-In was the most fun I ever had working. I treasured her friendship and I am heartbroken to wake up to the news that she is gone. I love you, Ruthie."

Singer Deana Martin posted, "Her laughter and warmth touched us all, leaving an everlasting void." Ormphby character leads to 'Laugh-In'

Buzzi was first spotted by "Laugh-In" creator and producer George Schlatter playing various characters on "The Steve Allen Comedy Hour."

Schlatter was holding auditions for "Laugh-In" when he received a picture in the mail of Buzzi in her Ormphby costume, sitting in a wire mesh trash barrel. The character was clad in drab brown with her bun covered by a hairnet knotted in the middle of her forehead.

"I think I hired her because of my passion for Gladys Ormphby," he wrote in his 2023 memoir "Still Laughing A Life in Comedy." "I must admit that the hairnet and the rolled-down stockings did light my fire. My favorite Gladys line was when she announced that the day of the office Christmas party, they sent her home early."

The Gladys character used her purse as a weapon against anyone who bothered her, striking people over the head. On "Laugh-In," her most frequent target was Arte Johnson's dirty old man character Tyrone F. Horneigh.

"Gladys embodies the overlooked, the downtrodden, the taken for granted, the struggler," Buzzi told The Connecticut Post in 2018. "So when she fights back, she speaks for everyone who's been marginalized, reduced to a sex object or otherwise abused. And that's almost everyone at some time or other."

Buzzi took her act to the Dean Martin Celebrity Roasts in Las Vegas, where she bashed her purse on the heads of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Lucille Ball, among others.

"Ruth Buzzi brought a singular energy and charm to sketch comedy that made her a standout on 'Laugh-In' and the Dean Martin Celebrity Roasts. Her characters, especially the unforgettable Gladys Ormphby, captured the delightful absurdity of the era," said Journey Gunderson, executive director of the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, New York.

Her other recurring characters on "Laugh-In" included Flicker Farkle; Busy-Buzzi, a Hollywood gossip columnist; Doris Swizzler, a cocktail-lounge regular who got drunk with husband Leonard, played by Dick Martin; and an inconsiderate flight attendant.

"I never took my work for granted, nor assumed I deserved more of the credit or spotlight or more pay than anyone else," Buzzi told The Connecticut Post. "I was just thrilled to drive down the hill to NBC every day as an employed actor with a job to do."

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Buzzi remained friends through the years with "Laugh-In" co-stars Lily Tomlin and Jo Anne Worley. From cheerleading to the stage

Born Ruth Ann Buzzi on July 24, 1936, in Westerly, Rhode Island, she was the daughter of Angelo Buzzi, a nationally known stone sculptor. Her father and later her brother operated Buzzi Memorials, a gravestone and monument maker in Stonington, Connecticut, where she was head cheerleader in high school.

Buzzi enrolled at the Pasadena Playhouse at age 17. Two years later, she traveled with singer Rudy Vallee in a musical and comedy act during her summer break. That earned her an Actors' Equity union card before she graduated from the playhouse's College of Theatre Arts.

Buzzi moved to New York and was immediately hired for a lead role in an off-Broadway musical revue, the first of 19 such shows she performed in on the East Coast.

She got her national television break on "The Garry Moore Show" in 1964, just after Carol Burnett was replaced by Dorothy Loudon on the series. She played Shakundala the Silent, a bumbling magician's assistant to Dom DeLuise's character Dominic the Great.

Buzzi was a regular on the CBS variety show "The Entertainers" whose hosts included Burnett and Bob Newhart.

She was in the original Broadway cast of "Sweet Charity" with Gwen Verdon in 1966.

Buzzi toured the country with her nightclub act, including appearances in Las Vegas.

She was a semi-regular on "That Girl" as Marlo Thomas' friend. She co-starred with Jim Nabors as time-traveling androids on "The Lost Saucer" in the mid-1970s.

Her other guest appearances included variety shows hosted by Burnett, Flip Wilson, Glen Campbell, Tony Orlando, Donny and Marie Osmond and Leslie Uggams.

She appeared in Ball's last comedy series "Life With Lucy."

Buzzi appeared in music videos with "Weird Al" Yankovic, the B-52's and the Presidents of the United States of America.

She did hundreds of guest voices in cartoon series including "Pound Puppies," "Berenstain Bears," "The Smurfs" and "The Angry Beavers."

She was Emmy nominated for her six-year run as shopkeeper Ruthie on "Sesame Street."

Her movie credits included "Freaky Friday," "Chu Chu and the Philly Flash," "The North Avenue Irregulars" and "The Apple Dumpling Gang Rides Again."

Buzzi was active on social media and had thousands of followers whom she rewarded with such one-liners as "I have never faked a sarcasm" and "Scientists say the universe is made up entirely of neurons, protons and electrons. They seem to have missed morons."

She married actor Perkins in 1978.

The couple moved from California to Texas in 2003 and bought a 640-acre ranch near Stephenville.

Buzzi retired from acting in 2021 and suffered a series of strokes the following year. Her husband told The Dallas Morning News in 2023 that she had dementia.

Prince Harry seeks family reconciliation after losing a court case that caused a split with his dad

By BRIAN MELLEY and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Harry said that he wants to reconcile with his family after losing a court battle Friday over his publicly funded security that he said led his father, King Charles III, to stop talking to him.

"I would love reconciliation with my family. There's no point in continuing to fight anymore," Harry told the BBC. "I don't know how much longer my father has."

But Harry took aim at Buckingham Palace officials after the court of appeal rejected a bid to restore his police protection detail that was stripped by a government committee when he stepped away from his royal duties and moved to the U.S.

The Duke of Sussex said that he was devastated to lose the case that was a source of friction with his 76-year-old father, who is being treated for an undisclosed cancer. Harry has met with him once briefly

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since his diagnosis early last year.

"He won't speak to me because of this security stuff," Harry said in the interview that aired three hours after the ruling.

Harry, who is estranged from his family since departing the U.K. and writing a tell-all memoir with embarrassing details about the House of Windsor, said Friday's court verdict meant it would be impossible to safely bring his family back to the U.K.

Harry blames Buckingham Palace officials

Despite those comments, there was little indication of reconciliation in the near future as the palace signaled its support for the court's ruling.

Harry said repeatedly that the decision to withdraw his security had been made at the direction of palace officials in an effort to control him and his wife, even though it put their safety at risk.

"What I'm struggling to forgive, and what I will probably always struggle to forgive, is the decision that was made in 2020 that affects my every single day, and that is knowingly putting me and my family in harm's way," Harry said.

A government committee decided in 2020 that Harry's security arrangements should be decided on a case-by-case basis whenever he visits the U.K.

Harry said that committee includes two representatives of Buckingham Palace who have blocked his security in the U.K. The king could resolve the security issue by stepping out of the way and letting experts make the decision, Harry added.

The prince called on U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to order a review of the process.

"Whether you're the government, whether you're the royal household, whether you're my dad, my family, despite all of our differences, do you not want to just ensure our safety?"

In response to the court ruling, Buckingham Palace issued a statement saying that issue had been meticulously examined by the courts "with the same conclusion reached on each occasion."

Loss of security an 'unintended consequence' of move

Harry said that he loves his country and would love to show his young children his homeland, but now he only returns for funerals and court cases.

He made a rare appearance for the two-day Court of Appeal hearing last month, where his lawyer argued that his life was in danger and the Royal and VIP Executive Committee had singled him out for inferior treatment.

Three judges on the appellate court ruled unanimously Friday that the committee's decision to strip him of his publicly funded security wasn't unreasonable.

Justice Geoffrey Vos acknowledged in a 21-page judgment that the Duke of Sussex felt badly treated and his lawyer had made powerful and moving arguments on his behalf. But he said that Harry's grievance wasn't legal grounds to challenge the decision to deny him regular security.

"From the Duke of Sussex's point of view, something may indeed have gone wrong, in that an unintended consequence of his decision to step back from royal duties and spend the majority of his time abroad has been that he has been provided with a more bespoke, and generally lesser, level of protection than when he was in the U.K.," Vos said. "But that does not, of itself, give rise to a legal complaint."

The ruling is likely to leave the Duke of Sussex with a large bill to pay the U.K. government's legal fees — in addition to his own lawyers' costs.

The judgment upheld a High Court judge's decision last year that found that a "bespoke" plan for the Duke of Sussex's security wasn't unlawful, irrational or unjustified.

A lawyer for the government said that Harry's argument repeated his misconceived approach that failed in the lower court.

"It involves a continued failure to see the wood for the trees, advancing propositions available only by reading small parts of the evidence, and now the judgment, out of context and ignoring the totality of the picture," attorney James Eadie said.

Harry says family is endangered

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Harry and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, had stepped back from their official roles in the family in 2020, because they didn't feel they were "being protected by the institution," his lawyer said.

After doing so, a Home Office committee ruled that there was "no basis for publicly funded security support for the duke and duchess within Great Britain."

Harry claimed that he and his family are endangered when visiting his homeland because of hostility aimed at him and Meghan on social media and through relentless hounding by news media.

Since he lost his government-sponsored protection, Harry faced at least two serious security threats, his lawyer said in court papers. Al-Qaida had published a document that said Harry's assassination would please Muslims. And nearly two years ago, he and his wife were involved in a dangerous pursuit by paparazzi in New York.

Harry, 40, the younger son of Charles and the late Princess Diana, has bucked royal family convention by taking the government and tabloid press to court, where he has a mixed record.

He lost a related court case in which he sought permission to privately pay for a police detail when in the U.K. A judge denied that offer after a government lawyer argued officers shouldn't be used as "private bodyguards for the wealthy."

But he won a significant victory at trial in 2023 against the publisher of the Daily Mirror when a judge found that phone hacking at the tabloid was "widespread and habitual." He claimed a "monumental" victory in January when Rupert Murdoch's U.K. tabloids made an unprecedented apology for intruding in his life for years, and agreed to pay substantial damages to settle his privacy invasion lawsuit.

He has a similar case pending against the publisher of the Daily Mail.

What is behind the latest round of clashes in Syria between Druze and pro-government gunmen

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Four days of clashes between pro-government gunmen and members of a minority sect in Syria have left nearly 100 people dead and raised fears of deadly sectarian violence. The country is deeply divided as it tries to emerge from decades of dictatorship.

The clashes are the worst between forces loyal to the government and Druze fighters since the fall of President Bashar Assad in early December whose family ruled Syria with an iron grip for more than five decades.

The situation between the two sides has been tense for weeks and a smaller clash broke out in March in a suburb of Damascus.

Here are the main reasons the clashes expanded in recent days and background on the two sides:

Who are the Druze?

The Druze religious sect is a minority group that began as a 10th-century offshoot of Ismailism, a branch of Shiite Islam. More than half the roughly 1 million Druze worldwide live in Syria. Most of the other Druze live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast War and annexed in 1981. In Syria, they largely live in the southern Sweida province and some suburbs of Damascus, mainly in Jaramana and Ashrafiyat Sahnaya to the south.

The transitional government has promised to include the Druze, but has so far kept authority in the hands of the Islamist former insurgents who toppled Assad in December — Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS.

The new 23-member government in Syria announced in late March only has one Druze member, Minister of Agriculture Amjad Badr.

Under the Assad family's tight rule, religious freedom was guaranteed as the country then boasted about its secular and Arab nationalist system.

The Druze have been slightly divided over how to deal with their issues with the new status quo in the country. Most Druze support a dialogue with the government while others support a more confrontational approach, so the reactions have differed while they are all concerned about the safety of their people.

What is behind the tension between the two sides

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Syria's religious and ethnic communities are worried about their place in Syria's new system that is mostly run by Islamists including some who have links to extremist groups.

The country's new President Ahmad al-Sharaa himself is a former militant who once was a member of al-Qaida and was held for years in jails in neighboring Iraq for his role in the anti-American insurgency. Although al-Sharaa had said that the right of ethnic and religious minorities will be protected, there have been several rounds of sectarian killings since Assad's fall.

The Assad family rule that was dominated by members of the Alawite sect had oppressed much of the country's Sunni majority while giving minorities some powers. Being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, the largest Islamic group in the country decades ago, was punishable by death as of the 1980s.

The Druze have major concerns about Muslim groups since they came under attack by members of the Islamic State group in 2018 in the southern Sweida province. It left dozens killed or wounded and more than two dozen people were taken hostage for nearly four months. Muslim extremists consider the Druze heretics.

During Syria's 14-year conflict, the Druze had their own militias.

What triggered the clashes?

The clashes broke out around midnight Monday in the southern Damascus suburb of Jaramana after an audio clip circulated on social media of a man criticizing Islam's Prophet Muhammad. The audio was attributed to a Druze cleric. But cleric Marwan Kiwan said in a video posted on social media that he was not responsible for the audio, which angered many Sunni Muslims.

The fighting later spread to the outskirts of the southern town of Sakhnaya triggering the first Israeli airstrike against pro-government gunmen. Israeli officials, whose country has its own Druze community, have vowed to protect the Druze of Syria and warned Islamic groups from entering predominantly Druze areas.

The clashes have pulled Israel further into the conflict with the airstrike two days ago and Friday marked a major increase in tensions with an attack close to the presidential palace in Damascus in what Syria's presidency called a major escalation.

Israel does not want what it calls Islamic extremists near the country's northern border. Since Assad's fall, Israel has carved a buffer zone in southern Syria and has destroyed much of the Syrian army's assets so they don't fall into the hands of groups that removed him from power.

Israel had been warning for decades that Iran and its proxies pose a danger along its northern border, and now it is doing the same with the new authorities in Syria who are backed by Turkey.

Other sporadic attacks in different areas as well as an ambush on the Damascus-Sweida highway made the situation worse until a deal was reached early Friday after which Interior Ministry forces and local Druze gunmen deployed in different areas.

The Britain-based war monitor The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that 99 people were killed over the past four days, of which 51 were killed in Sakhnaya and the Druze-majority Damascus suburb of Jaramana. Among them were local gunmen and security forces.

What are the main concerns?

The clashes near Damascus and in southern Syria came nearly two months after an ambush by fighters loyal to Assad triggered days of sectarian and revenge attacks. The fighting in the country's coastal region left more than 1,000 people dead. Many of the dead were civilians who were gunned down because they belonged to the minority Alawite sect that Assad belongs to.

Security forces deployed in the coastal province of Latakia and Tartus but activists say that sectarian killings against Alawites are still taking place albeit at a much slower pace when compared to the early March attacks.

Members of religious minorities in Syria such as Alawites, Christians and Druze fear persecution by the main Sunni Muslim groups. Videos have circulated on social media showing Islamist fighters insulting Druze detainees and humiliating them such as shaving their mustaches.

Trump re-ups his threat to strip Harvard University's tax-exempt status

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday re-upped his threat to strip Harvard University of its tax-exempt status, escalating a showdown with the first major college that has defied the administration's efforts to crack down on campus activism.

He's underscoring that pledge even as federal law prohibits senior members of the executive branch from asking the Internal Revenue Service to conduct or terminate an audit or an investigation. The White House has said any IRS actions will be conducted independently of the president.

"We are going to be taking away Harvard's Tax Exempt Status," Trump wrote on his social media site Friday morning from Palm Beach, Florida, where he is spending the weekend. "It's what they deserve!"

The president has questioned the fate of Harvard's tax-exempt status — which a majority of U.S. colleges and universities have — ever since the school refused to comply with the administration's demands for broad government and leadership changes, revisions to its admissions policy, and audits of how diversity is viewed on the campus. That prompted the administration to block more than \$2 billion in federal grants to the Cambridge, Massachusetts, institution.

Harvard stressed Friday that there is "no legal basis" to revoke its tax-exempt status.

"Such an unprecedented action would endanger our ability to carry out our educational mission," the school said in a statement. "It would result in diminished financial aid for students, abandonment of critical medical research programs, and lost opportunities for innovation. The unlawful use of this instrument more broadly would have grave consequences for the future of higher education in America."

The Treasury Department directed a senior official at the Internal Revenue Service to begin the process of revoking Harvard's tax-exempt status shortly after a social media post from Trump in mid-April questioning it, although the White House has suggested that the tax agency's scrutiny of Harvard began before Trump's public comments targeting the school.

Democrats say Trump's actions against Harvard are purely political. The Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, along with Massachusetts' two Democratic senators, Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, and the Senate Finance Committee chairman, Ron Wyden of Oregon, called for an inspector general investigation into Trump's attempts to strip Harvard of its tax-exempt status.

Trump's move "raises troubling constitutional questions, including whether the president is trying to squelch Harvard's free speech rights and whether the revocation of its tax-exempt status will deprive the university of its due process rights," the senators wrote in a letter Friday to Heather Hill, the acting Treasury inspector general for tax administration.

Mike Kaercher, deputy director of NYU's Tax Law Center, said: "Overwhelming bipartisan majorities in Congress have enacted laws making it a crime for the President and his staff to request an audit or investigation of a particular taxpayer."

An IRS representative did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

Trump's battle against Harvard is part of a broader campaign the administration is framing as an effort to root out antisemitism on college campuses. But the White House also sees a political upside in the fight, framing it as a bigger war against elite institutions decried by Trump's loyal supporters.

The "next chapter of the American story will not be written by The Harvard Crimson," Trump said Thursday night in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he delivered the commencement address at the University of Alabama. "It will be written by you, the Crimson Tide."

The Harvard Crimson is that school's student newspaper. The Crimson Tide refers to the Alabama school's football program.

In addition to threatening Harvard's tax-exempt status and halting federal grants, the Trump administration wants to block Harvard from being able to enroll international students.

A US-led effort to end the war in Ukraine looks favorable to Russia, but mixed signals emerge

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — The discussions have taken place in an ornate Kremlin hall, on the polished marble of St. Peter's Basilica and in a famously contentious session in the Oval Office of the White House.

What's emerged so far from the Washington-led effort to end the war in Ukraine suggests a deal that seems likely to be favorable to Russia: President Donald Trump has sharply rebuked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, echoed Kremlin talking points, and indicated Kyiv would have to surrender territory and forego NATO membership. What's more, he has engaged in a rapprochement with Moscow that was unthinkable months ago.

More recently, Trump has offered mixed signals — social media posts that perhaps Russian President Vladimir Putin is stringing him along — and a deal has yet to materialize.

While the optics so far have been in the Kremlin's favor, no proposals that were put forth have been cemented.

And on Wednesday, Washington and Kyiv signed an agreement granting American access to Ukraine's vast mineral resources that could enable continued military aid to the country under ongoing attacks from Russia.

Zelenskyy said Thursday the deal was the first result of his "truly historic" meeting with Trump at the Vatican before the funeral of Pope Francis.

Dialogue and aligned vision

One gain for the Kremlin is that Washington is talking again to Moscow after years of extremely strained ties following its 2022 invasion of Ukraine — and not just about the war, said Nikolay Petrov, senior research fellow with the New Eurasian Strategies Centre think tank.

Russian officials and state media from the very start of discussions with Trump's officials sought to underscore that Ukraine was only one item on the vast agenda of the "two superpowers." Trump and Putin talked in March about Ukraine but also the Middle East, stopping the proliferation of strategic weapons and even organizing hockey games between the countries.

Russia's main state TV channel reported that the meeting between Putin and Trump envoy Steve-Witkoff showed that Moscow and Washington were building "a new structure of the world" together.

In this sense, "Putin already got a part of what he sought" — the optics of Russia as a country that is on par with the U.S., Petrov said.

Trump has said Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula Moscow illegally annexed in 2014, "will stay with Russia," and outlines of a peace proposal his team reportedly presented to Kyiv last month apparently included allowing Russia to keep control of other occupied Ukrainian territories. Trump, who had a contentious meeting with Zelenskyy in the Oval Office on Feb. 28, lashed out at him for publicly rejecting the idea of ceding land, and also said that Kyiv was unlikely to ever join NATO.

All of these reflect Moscow's long-held positions, and Trump's echoing of them suggested his administration's vision was aligned with the Kremlin's.

Trump also seemingly puts more pressure on Kyiv than Moscow in trying to reach a peace deal and appears eager to return to a more normal relationship with Russia and its "big business opportunities," said Sam Greene of King's College London.

"Is there any part of this that doesn't look like a win for Russia? No," Greene adds.

So far, it's only talk

But so far, all of this has remained nothing but rhetoric, with terms of a possible settlement still very much "in the air," says Sergey Radchenko, a historian and a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Moreover, there are still demands by both Russia and Ukraine that would be hard to reconcile in any kind of peace settlement.

Ukraine refuses to cede any land and wants robust security guarantees against future aggression, possibly

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involving a contingent of peacekeepers -- something a handful of European nations have been discussing and Russia publicly rejects as a nonstarter.

Russia, in turn, demands that it holds onto the territory it has seized as well as no NATO membership for Ukraine. It also wants Kyiv to "demilitarize," or significantly reduce its armed force.

Radchenko sees the latter as a major sticking point in peace talks, because a strong, viable army is important for Ukraine to defend itself.

"If there are restrictions on the kinds of weapons Ukraine can receive (from the West) or the size of the army, then it will be very difficult to get them to accept this sort of agreement," he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov seemingly raised the stakes further this week by saying that international recognition of regions annexed from Ukraine by Russia was "imperative" for a peace deal.

Achieving that remains unclear, given that dozens of countries have decried the annexations as violating international law.

What if the US walks away?

Some analysts believe it is in Putin's interest to prolong the war and keep making gains on the battlefield.

Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio have threatened to wash their hands of the peace effort if there is no progress soon.

Putin, in an apparent gesture of willingness to keep talking, announced this week a 72-hour ceasefire starting May 8 for Russia's Victory Day holiday that marks the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

Zelenskyy dismissed the gesture as a further attempt by Putin at "manipulation" to string along the U.S., saying a ceasefire should begin immediately and last longer.

Greene noted that the Russian ruble and markets have been doing better recently over expectations of a peace deal and U.S. businesses and investors coming back, "and there may be a price to be paid" for pulling out the rug from under that.

The larger question is what happens on the battlefield if the Trump administration withdraws from the peace effort.

"When the Trump administration says they'll walk away, we don't know what that means. Does that mean they walk away from negotiations and keep supporting Ukraine?" Greene said.

Greene says that Ukraine probably doesn't feel confident that the U.S. stepping back from the process means that Washington will keep supporting Kyiv, adding that Russia may not be sure of the Trump administration ending aid, either.

"I think it's very difficult for the Kremlin to calculate the risks of dragging this out," he said.

And U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the mineral deal "signals clearly to Russia that the Trump administration is committed to a peace process centered on a free, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine over the long term."

A lot depends on whether Europe can step up and fill any gaps in U.S. aid.

If Trump walks away from the peace effort and still pursues normalizing relations with Russia, lifting sanctions, "this will amount to a major breakthrough" for Putin, but it's not a given, Radchenko says.

That would be an uphill battle for Trump as "there's a lot of congressional sanctions that are predicated on the war in Ukraine," Greene notes.

Rubio takes on dual national security roles after embracing Trump's 'America First' vision

By MATTHEW LEE and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Marco Rubio has been thrown into two top national security jobs at once as President Donald Trump presses forward with his top-to-bottom revamp of U.S. foreign policy, upending not only longstanding policies that the former Florida senator once supported but also the configuration of the executive branch.

Trump's appointment of Rubio to temporarily replace Mike Waltz as national security adviser is the first major leadership shake-up of the nascent administration, but Waltz's removal had been rumored for weeks

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— ever since he created a Signal group chat and accidentally added a journalist to the conversation where top national security officials shared sensitive military plans.

So, just over 100 days into his tenure as America's top diplomat, Rubio now becomes just the second person to hold both positions. He follows only the late Henry Kissinger, who served as both secretary of state and national security adviser for two years under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford in the 1970s.

Rubio — a one-time Trump rival and hawkish conservative who was derided by the president as "Little Marco" during the 2016 presidential campaign — has proven adept at aligning himself with Trump's "America First" foreign policy positions. Rubio has largely eschewed his staunch advocacy of providing foreign aid and promoting democracy overseas since taking over the State Department, repeating a refrain that every policy or program should make America safer, stronger or more prosperous.

Rubio leads during Trump's massive changes

Since being confirmed in a 99-0 Senate floor vote, Rubio has presided over a radical reorganization of the State Department. That includes the dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development and plans to cut U.S. jobs by 15% while closing or consolidating more than 100 bureaus worldwide. He has also begun a major cull of the visa system, revoking hundreds, if not thousands, of visas issued to foreign students.

He has overseen the negotiation of agreements to send immigrants accused of crimes to third countries, most notably to El Salvador, in cases that are now being challenged in federal courts.

"Marco Rubio, unbelievable," Trump said Thursday before announcing on social media that Waltz would be nominated as ambassador to the United Nations and Rubio would take over as national security adviser in the interim. "When I have a problem, I call up Marco, he gets it solved."

That's a far cry from 2016, when Rubio and Trump were competing for the GOP presidential nomination and Rubio warned that Trump was a threat. After Trump won, the relationship remained contentious, but eight years later, Rubio was an enthusiastic Trump supporter who worked his Florida bona fides to get into the president's inner circle.

Yet, even after Rubio was nominated to the top diplomatic job, doubts remained. Many pundits suggested he would last only a short time in office before Trump dismissed him in the same way he did his first-term secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, who was fired by tweet in 2018 just 18 months into the job.

Yet Rubio has been resilient. And as of Thursday, he oversees both the State Department and the National Security Council, which is responsible for coordinating all executive branch foreign policy functions, ranging from diplomatic to military and intelligence operations.

Thomas Wright, an NSC official during the Biden administration who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said the national security adviser post alone is "more than a full-time job."

"It is just very hard to comprehend the idea that you can do this job sort of part time," Wright said.

He said he watched national security adviser Jake Sullivan and his deputy work 14-15 hour days, six to seven days a week: "I think they felt that they had to do that to do the job properly."

Rubio says little so far on his additional role

Appearing Thursday night on Fox News Channel's "Hannity," Rubio was not asked to weigh in on the president's decision to tap him as national security adviser but did joke that he was barred from adding pope to his list of many jobs because he is married.

But as he marked the first 100 days of Trump's latest term, Rubio applauded the president for his vision.

"I am honored by the trust President Trump placed in me and I am proud of the work the Department of State has done over the past hundred days to implement his agenda and put the American people first," he wrote Wednesday in a State Department Substack post.

One of Rubio's former Florida statehouse colleagues, Dan Gelber, a Democrat, said of Rubio's increasing responsibilities that "Marco is probably, to a certain extent, one of the more reliable Cabinet officers, if not the most reliable."

"And I can only believe those qualities are even more vital to his current confluence of positions and growing portfolio," Gelber said. "He's not a chaos guy, and I've always sort of wondered how he's going

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to do in an administration where there seems to be so much chaos. And maybe that's why he's getting all these positions."

Rubio's dual-hatted role comes on top of him serving as acting administrator of the largely shut down USAID and as acting head of the National Archives. It puts him in a similar position to that of Trump's longtime personal friend and golfing buddy Steve Witkoff.

As a special envoy, Witkoff is the lead U.S. negotiator in the Iran nuclear talks and in administration peace efforts for the Israel-Hamas war and the Ukraine-Russia war.

In many ways, Rubio and Witkoff are following in the footsteps of Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, who had multiple roles in the first administration, ranging from the Middle East to Latin America and immigration.

How Rubio's expanded duties are seen at the State Department

State Department officials appeared taken aback by Trump's appointment of Rubio as acting national security adviser. Spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said at a briefing Thursday that she learned the news from a journalist who asked her a question about Trump's post minutes after it appeared on social media.

Officials, however, have noted that Rubio in recent weeks has spent an increasingly large amount of time at the White House away from his posh seventh-floor State Department office in what is known as "Mahogany Row," a corridor known for its wood paneling.

At the same time, these officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the personnel shift, said they did not expect Rubio's duties as secretary of state to change significantly. He still plans to travel on diplomatic missions abroad and likely will delegate at least some of the NSC management to others, they said.

Employers added a surprising 177,000 jobs as job market shows resilience. Unemployment stays at 4.2%

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — American employers added a surprising 177,000 jobs in April as the job market showed resilience in the face of President Donald Trump's trade wars.

Hiring fell slightly from a revised 185,000 in March, but that is above economist projections of 135,000 jobs. The unemployment rate remained at a low 4.2%, the Labor Department reported Friday.

Trump's aggressive and unpredictable policies — including massive import taxes — have clouded the outlook for the economy and the job market and raised fears that the American economy is headed toward recession.

Friday's report showed employment, one of the strongest aspects of the U.S. economy, remains solid, yet many economists anticipate that a negative impact from trade wars will materialize this year for American workers and potentially, President Trump.

"Politicians can count their lucky stars that companies are holding on to their workers despite the storm clouds forming that could slow the economy further in the second half of the year," said Christopher Rupkey, chief economist at fwdbonds, a financial markets research firm.

Transportation and warehousing companies added 29,000 jobs last month, suggesting companies have built up inventory before imported goods are hit with new tariffs. Healthcare companies added nearly 51,000 jobs and bars, restaurants almost 17,000 and construction firms 11,000. Factories lost 1,000 jobs. Labor Department revisions shaved 58,000 jobs from February and March payrolls.

Average hourly earnings ticked up 0.2% from March and 3.8% from a year ago, nearing the 3.5% that economists view as consistent with the 2% inflation the Federal Reserve wants to see.

Trump's massive taxes on imports to the U.S. are likely to raise costs for Americans and American businesses that depend on supplies from overseas. They also threaten to slow economic growth. His immigration crackdown threatens to make it more difficult for hotels, restaurants and construction firms to fill job openings. By purging federal workers and cancelling federal contracts, Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency risks wiping out jobs inside the government and out.

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The drastic changes have shaken markets and consumers. The Conference Board, a business group, reported Tuesday that Americans' confidence in the economy fell for the fifth straight month to the lowest level since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Still, Bill Adams, chief economist at Comerica Bank, called the jobs report "reassuringly normal. The fears of a softer labor market due to tariff uncertainty went unrealized last month ... There are signs that businesses are reining in plans for hiring and capital spending and that consumers are turning more cautious toward discretionary spending."

American workers have at least one thing going for them. Despite the uncertainty about fallout from Trump's policies, many employers don't want to risk letting employees go – not after struggling to bring people back from the massive but short-lived layoffs from the pandemic.

"For now, the unemployment rate and the number of people filing claims for jobless benefits every week remain low by historical standards," Boston College economist Brian Bethune said this week.

The federal government's workforce fell by 9,000 on top of 17,000 job losses in February and March. The full effect of Musk's DOGE cuts may yet to be seen. Bethune noted job cuts by the billionaire's DOGE are still being challenged in court. Also, some of those leaving federal agencies were forced into early retirement and don't count as unemployed.

After the jobs numbers were released, Trump repeated his call for the Federal Reserve to lower its benchmark short-term interest rate, which it raised to combat inflation. Trump said on social media platform Truth Social that there is "NO INFLATION" and "employment strong."

Yet as long as the job market remains healthy, the Fed will likely stay on the sidelines as it takes time to evaluate the impact of tariffs. Fed chair Jerome Powell has underscored that the duties are likely to push up prices in the coming months, making the central bank wary of the potential for higher inflation.

The Fed typically fights inflation with higher interest rates, so it is unlikely to cut its key short-term rate anytime soon. It may change course if layoffs spike and unemployment rises.

Some U.S. companies stand to benefit from Trump's protectionist policies.

Allen Jacoby, executive vice president of textile division at Milliken & Co., said that cheap Chinese imports have hurt business at the Spartanburg, South Carolina, manufacturer. His division makes Polartec fabric for brands such as North Face and Patagonia and has closed six plants and reduced its payrolls 12% since 2019.

Trump's tariffs, he said, could improve Milliken's sales and hiring. "It's too early to tell, but there's more optimism than pessimism," he said.

Most Americans still enjoy job security, yet many who have lost jobs say that it's now harder to find work.

Jason Schunkewitz, 33, was laid off by a startup that uses virtual reality to train caregivers. Single and debt free, the Denver resident took some time off before beginning the job search in earnest.

He has a background in jobs training and economic development – a field heavily reliant on government grants. Trump spending cuts have eliminated some grants and generated uncertainty about others. Schunkewitz now says many nonprofits have postponed hiring.

"It's just been silent in some cases," he said. "It's very tricky to navigate." He's now focusing his job search on private companies, which might be more secure.

Schunkewitz is also developing a business making charcuterie-to-go packs – cured salami, aged cheese, dried fruit – for skiers, hikers and other adventurers. The business is in the early stages, but he said: "I hope it becomes a full-time job."

Vatican firefighters install a chimney on the roof of the Sistine Chapel for the papal election

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Preparations for the conclave to find a new pope accelerated Friday with the installation of the chimney out of the Sistine Chapel that will signal the election of a successor to Pope Francis.

Vatican firefighters were seen on the roof of the Sistine Chapel installing the chimney, a key moment in

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the preparation for the May 7 conclave.

After every two rounds of voting in the Sistine Chapel, the ballots of the cardinals are burned in a special furnace to indicate the outcome to the outside world.

If no pope is chosen, the ballots are mixed with cartridges containing potassium perchlorate, anthracene (a component of coal tar) and sulfur to produce black smoke. But if there is a winner, the burning ballots are mixed with potassium chlorate, lactose and chloroform resin to produce the white smoke.

The white smoke came out of the chimney on the fifth ballot on March 13, 2013, and Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was introduced to the world as Pope Francis a short time later from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica. Francis, history's first Latin American pope, died April 21 at age 88.

The chimney installation took place as cardinals arrived in the Vatican for another day of pre-conclave discussions about the needs of the Catholic Church going forward and the type of pope needed to run it.

These consultations include all cardinals, including those over age 80 who are ineligible to vote in the conclave itself.

In recent days, they have heard reports about the Vatican's dire financial situation, and have had the chance to speak individually about priorities going forward and problems they identified in Francis' pontificate.

Francis was a somewhat divisive pope, beloved by some for his focus on the poor and marginalized, but criticized by others who accused him of sowing confusion among the faithful on issues of morality and church law. These conservatives and traditionalists, who are not believed to have a majority among the 135 cardinal electors, are hoping a new pope will reassert core church teachings and act as a stabilizing figure in the Vatican bureaucracy.

Cardinal Beniamino Stella, who headed the Vatican office for clergy under Francis until his retirement in 2021, has been among the older, non-voting cardinals who has spoken during the pre-conclave sessions. According to America, the magazine of the U.S. Jesuits, Stella this week strongly criticized Francis' reform of the Vatican bureaucracy that allowed women and lay people to head Holy See offices rather than clergy.

That reform, contained in a 2022 constitution, overhauled the Vatican bureaucracy and fulfilled a key mandate Francis received from cardinals going into the 2013 conclave that elected him pope. But some have criticized the reform, which was nine years in the works and sought to make the Holy See more service-oriented and efficient.

Francis named two laymen to head the Vatican communications operation and the economy ministry. More significantly, he named two nuns to head two of the most important Vatican offices: Sister Simona Brambilla as head of the Vatican office responsible for all the world's Catholic religious orders, and Sister Raffaella Petrini as head of the Vatican City State administration. In that position, Petrini runs the city state and is responsible for everything from the Vatican Museums that provide the Holy See with most of its revenue, to the firefighters who installed the chimney on the Sistine Chapel Friday.

Their appointments were tangible evidence of Francis' belief that women should have a greater decision-making role in church governance. But Stella, according to unnamed cardinals cited by America, objected to Francis' decision to separate the power of governance in the church from the priesthood.

It is unclear what influence older cardinals such as Stella, who at age 83 will not actually cast a vote, will have on the younger cardinal electors. In general, cardinals of the more conservative old guard have stressed the need for unity over pursuing Francis' more radical legacy.

"The pope has to ensure the unity of all of the church," said Cardinal Fernando Filoni, the retired head of the Vatican's evangelization office. "This is first and foremost. Everything else comes after," the 79-year-old cardinal said as he arrived Friday for the pre-conclave discussions.

Cardinal Fernando Natalio Chomali Garib, the 68-year-old archbishop of Santiago, Chile, said the variety of points of view was useful in the pre-conclave meetings. Francis made Chomali a cardinal in December after appointing him to head the Chilean church through the continued fallout of the clergy sexual abuse scandal.

"For me, that I come from Chile, a far away country, hearing such different experiences is an enrichment, not only for me but for all of the church," he said as he entered Friday.

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Today in History: May 3, Oklahoma City struck by historic tornado

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, May 3, the 123rd day of 2025. There are 242 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 3, 1999, the Bridge Creek–Moore tornado struck the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, causing 41 deaths and nearly 600 injuries; the tornado's top wind speed of 321 miles per hour (517 km/hour) was the highest ever recorded on earth.

Also on this date:

In 1802, Washington, D.C., was incorporated as a city.

In 1937, Margaret Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for her novel, "Gone with the Wind."

In 1948, the Supreme Court, in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, ruled that covenants prohibiting the sale of real estate to Blacks or members of other racial groups were legally unenforceable.

In 1979, the Conservative Party ousted the incumbent Labour government in British parliamentary elections; Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher would become the first female U.K. Prime Minister the following day.

In 1986, aboard the longshot horse Ferdinand, Bill Shoemaker became the oldest jockey to win the Kentucky Derby at age 54.

In 2003, the "Old Man of the Mountain," a 40-foot-tall granite outcropping in Franconia, N.H. that bore the resemblance of a human face in profile, collapsed despite decades of preservation efforts.

In 2015, two gunmen were killed by a SWAT team in Garland, Texas, after they opened fire outside a purposely provocative contest for cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad.

In 2016, in a stunning triumph for a political outsider, Donald Trump all but clinched the Republican presidential nomination with a resounding victory in the Indiana primary election that knocked rival Ted Cruz out of the race.

In 2018, a federal grand jury in Detroit indicted former Volkswagen CEO Martin Winterkorn on charges stemming from the company's diesel emissions cheating scandal. (Under Germany's constitution, he could not be extradited to the U.S. to face charges.)

Today's Birthdays: Singer Frankie Valli is 91. Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, is 82. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., is 76. Singer Christopher Cross is 74. Actor Amy Ryan is 57. Actor Bobby Cannavale (ka-nuh-VAL'-ee) is 55. Music executive-entrepreneur Damon Dash is 54. Actor Christina Hendricks is 50. Actor Dule (doo-LAY') Hill is 50. Country musician Eric Church is 48. Golfer Brooks Koepka is 35. Actor Rachel Zegler is 24.