

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 1 of 80

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- DI Day at DQ](#)
- [5- Flags at Half-Staff in Honor of Peace Officers Memorial Day](#)
- [6- Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Ad](#)
- [7- Girls win all five relay events at Milbank Invite](#)
- [13- City Council Story](#)
- [14- Brookings County Fatal Crash](#)
- [15- Groton Senior Citizens](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: Ban on spreading human remains reinstated at Bear Butte State Park](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: New licensed kinship care pathway aims to increase homes for SD foster children](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: South Dakota ballot group loses attorney fees because of new U.S. Supreme Court precedent](#)
- [18- SD SearchLight: 'We have to move': USDA soon to disclose which staff jobs will leave D.C.](#)
- [20- SD SearchLight: Thune, Rounds vote yes as U.S. Senate confirms Bisignano to lead Social Security](#)
- [21- SD SearchLight: Nonpartisan poll finds 'remarkably low' trust in federal health agencies](#)
- [23- Weather Pages](#)
- [27- Daily Devotional](#)
- [28- Subscription Form](#)
- [29- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [30- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [31- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Wednesday, May 7

Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin, creamed peas, cheesecake with fruit glaze, dinner roll.  
School Breakfast: Muffins.  
School Lunch: Cheese nachos, refried beans.  
Groton Chamber Board Meeting, Noon, City. Hall  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.; Sara Circle, 5 p.m.  
Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

*No matter what happens in life, keep a **good heart.***

*A heart of patience & trust.*

*Don't let the darkness of this world harden your*

*heart.*

-Unknown



## Thursday, May 8

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, oranges, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.

Girls Golf at Lee Park Golf Course, 10 a.m.

Junior High Track at Roncalli

Elementary Track and Field Day, 12:30 p.m.

Groton Lions Club Meeting, 104 N Main, 6 p.m.

## Friday, May 9

Senior Menu: Cold turkey sub, lettuce/cheese/tomato, macaroni salad, pineapple.

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Cheese pizza, green beans.

Track at Aberdeen 2 p.m.

## Saturday, May 10

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

© 2025 Groton Daily Independent

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 2 of 80

# 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.**

## India Launches Missiles

Indian forces reportedly fired missiles across the border into Pakistan and the Pakistani-administered territory of Kashmir early Wednesday morning local time, killing at least eight people. Pakistan vowed to retaliate.

The attack marks a rise in tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors, who have a longstanding dispute over the mountainous region of Kashmir. India and Pakistan have fought three wars over Kashmir since the two nations were divided from former British India in 1947.

India said it struck nine sites in Punjab and Kashmir, targeting infrastructure used by militants linked to last month's deadly attack in the resort town of Pahalgam (part of Indian-administered Kashmir) that killed 26 people. Pakistan reported civilian casualties in at least five locations. India has accused Pakistan of supporting separatist violence, while Pakistan denied association with the incident.

Since the Pahalgam attack, the two sides have scaled back diplomatic ties, closed airspace to each other, and exchanged fire across the Line of Control, raising fears of broader conflict.

## Conclave Begins at the Vatican

The process to determine the successor to Pope Francis gets underway today, as Catholic Church leaders gather in the Sistine Chapel to begin the secretive and centuries-old tradition known as a conclave.

Ballots will be cast by a group of cardinals, the second-highest rank in the church hierarchy. While there are 252 cardinals, only those under 80 years old are eligible to vote, with a two-thirds majority required for a candidate to be selected.

Observers say the election will be a referendum on whether to continue the reforms set in motion by Pope Francis—regarded as a relatively liberal church leader—or return to more conservative roots. Of the 133 voting cardinals, 108 were appointed by Pope Francis during his tenure. While no clear frontrunner has emerged, some top candidates include Cardinals Pietro Parolin (Italy) and Luis Antonio Tagle (Philippines).

Voting continues until a successor is chosen, with white smoke from the chapel's chimney indicating a decision has been made.

## New US Travel Requirement

Starting today, most travelers flying domestically within the US must present a federally compliant driver's license or identification card—known as a REAL ID and marked by a star in the upper right corner—to airport security or to access other federal facilities.

Travelers without a REAL ID-compliant license or identification will still be allowed to board domestic flights, but should expect extra screening, according to Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. Currently, 81% of US travelers have REAL ID-compliant identification.

Congress enacted the REAL ID program in 2005 in response to the 9/11 Commission's recommendations that the federal government set standards for issuing state identification documents like driver's licenses. Its goal is to enhance the security and reliability of state-issued identification, making it harder to forge and requiring states to verify applicants' information more thoroughly.

The program, originally set to launch in 2008, faced repeated delays due to states' concerns over implementation costs and privacy, limited federal funding, technical challenges, and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 3 of 80

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) proposes \$7.5B federal tax incentive for the film industry in response to President Donald Trump's announcement of possible tariffs on foreign-made films.

Kentucky Derby winner Sovereignty will skip the Preakness Stakes (May 17) but will run at the Belmont Stakes (June 7), the third leg of horse racing's Triple Crown.

Inter Milan tops FC Barcelona to advance to UEFA Champions League final, will face off against the winner of Arsenal and Paris Saint-Germain in the other semifinal matchup.

## Science & Technology

Engineers develop electronic "Band-Aid" capable of delivering drugs directly to internal organs; battery-free device may provide a platform for advanced health monitoring and therapies.

Brain study reveals humans process faces from other races differently than their own, with less detail and differentiation; results confirm phenomenon known as the "other race effect".

Researchers demonstrate quantum communication network over a distance of 11 miles using single photons and conventional fiber optics, marking a step forward in realizing "unbreakable" quantum encryption.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.8%, Dow -1.0%, Nasdaq -0.9%) as investors resume caution over global trade and await conclusion of the Federal Reserve's two-day policy meeting today.

DoorDash to buy UK rival Deliveroo for \$3.9B and US hospitality tech company SevenRooms for \$1.2B; DoorDash is America's largest food delivery service ahead of Uber Eats.

Uber to buy 85% stake in Turkish food delivery platform Trendyol GO for \$700M.

EV-maker Rivian posts better-than-expected Q1 results, but slashes deliveries forecast for 2025 amid tariffs.

AMD tops earnings estimates, but says revenue will take \$1.5B hit from US chip restrictions to China.

## Politics & World Affairs

Germany's parliament elects conservative leader Friedrich Merz in second round of voting; Merz becomes first chancellor in Germany's postwar history to have lost a first-round ballot.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney meets with President Donald Trump, rejects suggestion of US acquisition of Canada.

Supreme Court allows Trump administration to proceed with ban on transgender people serving in the military while litigation continues.

The order impacts at least 4,240 service members, roughly 0.2% of the military.

President Donald Trump says the US will stop bombing Houthi rebels in Yemen after Oman confirms a ceasefire was reached with the militant group.

Israel says its airstrikes disabled Yemen's main airport in Sanaa following Houthi rebel attack on Tel Aviv's main airport.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 4 of 80

**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!**





## Flags at Half-Staff in Honor of Peace Officers Memorial Day

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Larry Rhoden ordered that flags be flown at half-staff from sunrise until sunset statewide on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, in honor of Peace Officers Memorial Day.

Peace Officers Memorial Day will be widely recognized on May 15, 2025, across the nation. However, due to a wreath laying ceremony being hosted by South Dakota law enforcement on May 7, 2025, the Governor will be honoring our state's peace officers accordingly.

OPENING MAY 2ND  
CLOSING JUNE 2ND

## WEBER LANDSCAPING GREENHOUSE

620 WEST THIRD AVENUE

GROTON

HOURS OF OPERATION

M-F 10-6

---

SAT 10-4

SUN 12-4



## Girls win all five relay events at Milbank Invite

All five girls relay teams took first place at the Milbank Invitational Track Meet held Tuesday, boosting the team to a tie for second place. The boys took third place with Jayden Schwan winning the 1600m run and the boys 3200m relay team also taking first.

### Boy's Division

**Team Scores:** 1. Milbank 218, 2. Great Plains Lutheran 98, 3. Groton Area 77.5, 4. Aberdeen Roncalli 60.5, 5. Britton-Hecla 58, 6. Hamlin 56, 7. Sisseton 50, 8. Clark/Willow Lake 46, 9. Wilmot 43, 10. Tri-State 28, 11. Florence/Henry 22, 12. Webster Area 20.

**100 Meters:** 2. Keegen Tracy, 11.32; 6. Lincoln Krause, 11.77; 28. Ryder Schelle, 12.62

**200 Meters:** 2. Keegen Tracy, 22.90; 18. Brevin Fliehs, 24.94; 31. Ryder Schelle, 27.12

**400 Meters:** 2. Keegen Tracy, 52.16; 13. Jordan Schwan, 58.18

**800 Meters:** 2. Blake Pauli, 2:08.51; 9. Tristin McGannon, 2:23.34

**1600 Meters:** 1. Jayden Schwan, 4:50.32; 12. Jace Johnson, 5:33.50

**4x100 Relay:** 6. (Brevin Fliehs, Ryder Schelle, Jordan Schwan, Lincoln Krause), 48.16.

**4x200 Relay:** 8. (Brevin Fliehs, Ethan Kroll, Lincoln Krause, Jordan Schwan), 1:40.90

**4x400 Relay:** 3. (Jayden Schwan, Jordan Schwan, Ethan Kroll, Blake Pauli), 3:45.48.

**4x800 Relay:** 1. (Jayden Schwan, Jace Johnson, Tristin McGannon, Blake Pauli), 8:44.94.

**Shot Put - 12lb:** 6. Karter Moody, 41' 4"

**Javelin - 800g:** 17. TC Schuster, 102' 1"; 25. Karter Moody, 81' 8"

**Long Jump:** 5. Ethan Kroll, 18' 10.5"; 27. TC Schuster, 15' 6.5"

**Triple Jump:** 3. Ethan Kroll, 38' 4"; 13. Tristin McGannon, 34' 6.5"

### Girl's Division

**Team Scores:** 1. Clark/Willow Lake 166.5, 2. Milbank 121.5, 2. Groton Area 121.5, 4. Webster Area 81, 5. Aberdeen Roncalli 46.5, 6. Tri-State 43, 7. Britton-Hecla 38, 8. Langford Area 37, 9. Sisseton 34, 9. Great Plains Lutheran 34, 11. Florence/Henry 32, 12. Hamlin 18.

**100 Meters:** 2. MaKenna Krause, 12.89; 16. Rylee Dunker, 14.09; 26. Elizabeth Fliehs, 15.10

**200 Meters:** 12. Rylee Dunker, 29.22; 26. Hannah Sandness, 31.97

**400 Meters:** 18. Elizabeth Fliehs, 1:16.22

**800 Meters:** 4. Faith Traphagen, 2:37.83

**1600 Meters:** 2. Ruelle Gilbert, 5:39.77; 6. Ashlynn Warrington, 5:59.95

**100m Hurdles - 33":** 2. McKenna Tietz, 17.03; 6. Talli Wright, 19.08; 16. Ella Kettner, 21.97

**300m Hurdles - 30":** 1. McKenna Tietz, 49.11; 6. Talli Wright, 54.01; 13. Ella Kettner, 56.63

**4x100 Relay:** 2. (Laila Roberts, Rylee Dunker, MaKenna Krause, Ella Kettner), 52.56.

**4x200 Relay:** 1. (Laila Roberts, Kella Tracy, McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen), 1:48.82.

**4x400 Relay:** 1. (Laila Roberts, Taryn Traphagen, McKenna Tietz, Kella Tracy), 4:07.80.

**4x800 Relay:** 1. (Faith Traphagen, Ruelle Gilbert, Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy), 9:51.40.

**SMR 1600m - [200-200-400-800]:** 1. (Laila Roberts, MaKenna Krause, Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy), 4:35.76.

**Shot Put - 4kg:** 3. Emma Kutter, 33' 4"; 17. Libby Cole, 26' 11.5"; 25. Avery Crank, 24' 11.5"

**Discus - 1kg:** 8. Avery Crank, 84' 4"; 10. Emma Kutter, 79' 6"; 19. Libby Cole, 63' 10"

**Javelin - 600g:** 2. Avery Crank, 89' 11"; 6. Emma Kutter, 78' 2"; 14. Elizabeth Fliehs, 70' 7"

**Long Jump:** 2. MaKenna Krause, 15' 6.75"; 22. Teagan Hanten, 13' 1.5"; 29. Rylie Rose, 11' 8.25"

**Triple Jump:** 15. Teagan Hanten, 28' 5.25"



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 8 of 80



**Groton Area Taryn Traphagen and Milbank Emmett Hanson won the Valley Queen Cheese track VIP award. Taryn claimed 1st place in four events. The 4x200m relay, 4x400m relay, 4x800m relay, and SMR 1600m relay.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**The Groton Area 4x800m relay team won and beat the Milbank Valley Queen meet record and set a new Groton Area High School record. L-R Kella Tracy, Reyelle Gilbert, Faith Traphagen, and Taryn Traphagen.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Groton Area standout sprinter Keegen Tracy in the boys 100m dash placing second.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 9 of 80



**Groton Area Senior middle distance threat Blake Pauli places second in the 800m race.**

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Ethan Kroll launches in the triple jump to place third and setting a new personal record.**

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 10 of 80



**Groton Area long distance ace Jayden Schwan wins the 1600m (mile) run and setting a new personal record.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Groton Area freshman long distance stand-out Ryelle Gilbert places second in the 1600m (mile) run.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 11 of 80



**Brevin Fliehs hands off to Ryder Schelle in the 4x100m relay.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Laila Roberts hands off to Kella Tracy in 4x200m relay.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**The Groton Area won the 4x200m relay. They also set a new Milbank Valley Queen meet record. Pictured are Kella Tracy, McKenna Tietz, Laila Roberts and Taryn Traphagen.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Rylee Dunker takes the hand off from Kella Tracy in the 4x100m relay placing second and setting a personal record.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 12 of 80



**Tristin McGannon running in the winning 4x800m relay race.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



**Jace Johnson running in the winning 4x800m relay race.** (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



## Groton City Council swears in new councilman, appoints new city attorney, approves wastewater improvement project

By Elizabeth Varin

Two new people joined the Groton City Council table at Tuesday's meeting.

Mike Shilhanek was sworn in as council member for Ward 1, replacing Shirley Wells. Soon after, Mayor Scott Hanlon appointed new City Attorney Chad Locken, taking over the position previously held by Drew Johnson for 42 years.

Hanlon thanked Wells and Johnson for their time with the city, including reading a statement to celebrate Johnson's years of service.

"Drew's life is defined by service, justice and love for his family," Hanlon said. "Thank you Drew for putting up with us for all these years and for all that you've done."

After the council reorganization, the topic moved to a possible road project and wastewater improvement funding.

The council approved a \$6.587 million wastewater improvement project, which has been a discussion item since mid-2024. The council officially approved the project and a plan to work with the state's Department of Natural Resources for a \$4.587 million 30-year loan and a consolidated grant that can't exceed \$2 million.

The council also approved signing a design/engineering agreement with IMEG Corporation to solidify plans for the project.

Council members expressed concerns about whether the improvements in the project would keep the city's system going through at least the life of the loan. IMEG Corporation Senior Civil Designer Ken Hier said the wastewater improvement study from 2024 included a long life for the wastewater improvement project, and there should even be room for the city to grow a bit.

The council approved both the project and engineering agreement with two 5-0 votes. Shilhanek abstained from the vote, saying he wasn't comfortable voting on the project without reviewing it further.

The council also reviewed a grant opportunity that would allow the city to improve Railroad Avenue, from Broadway Street to the golf course.

The city could apply for a community access grant from the Department of Transportation, said Ted Dickey, program coordinator with the Northeast Council of Governments.

Ken Hier with IMEG Corporation discussed a couple of roadway improvement options, but said he wasn't convinced with a lower-cost option. He told the city he would want to core the roadway and do some more engineering before making any recommendations on the project.

Dickey recommended the city work on a grant application to see if funding would even be available. However, Councilman Brian Bahr said that while he would like to get the road fixed, he couldn't justify spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in matching funding the city would have to provide.

"That's a large chunk of money on a road that's decent in my opinion," he said. "We have some roads on the west side of town" that should be prioritized.

"I think we have streets elsewhere we should do instead of spending \$200,000 or more on this," he added.

- The council approved hiring three more summer recreational employees.
  - o Jace Johnson was hired as a lifeguard with no previous experience listed.
  - o Katelyn Giedt was hired as U8 softball coach with no previous experience listed.
  - o Amanda Bisbee was hired as U14 softball coach with no previous experience listed.
- Some council members indicated support for spending money to ship swimming pool chemicals faster in order to open the pool earlier in May. The pool could open as soon as May 20, though no official date has been announced.

## Brookings County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: 478th Avenue and 209th Street, one mile north of Bushnell, SD

When: 4:51 p.m., Monday, May 5, 2025

Driver 1: 34-year-old male from Hendricks, MN, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2004 Chevrolet Tahoe

Seat belt Used: No

Driver 2: 67-year-old male from White, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 2: 1985 Freightliner Conventional FLC

Seat belt Used: Yes

Brookings County, S.D.- One person died and another was seriously injured in a head-on crash one mile north of Bushnell, SD, Monday afternoon.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2004 Chevrolet Tahoe was traveling southbound on 478th Avenue in the northbound lane, when it collided with an oncoming northbound 1985 Freightliner dump truck.

The driver of the Tahoe was pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver of the Freightliner sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

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

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

###

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.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 15 of 80

## Groton Senior Citizens

### March 10

Groton Seniors met with ten members to play cards. Cards were played. The winners of each game, pinochle- Ruby Donovan, Whist- Elda Stange, Canasta- Julie Shilhank, door prizes Ruby Donovan, Julie Shilhank, Tony gold age, Eunice McColister served lunch.

### March 17

Groton Seniors met with nine members president opened with allegiance to the flag. Secretary and treasurer reports were read. A card was all signed for Julie Shilhank who was having surgery. Meeting adjourned and cards played the winners were pinochle- Ruby Donovan, whist- Darlene Fischer, Canasta- Eunice McColister, Door prizes Ruby Donovan, Dick Donovan, Elda Stange. Lunch was served by Darlene Fischer

### March 24

Groton Seniors met with eleven members for their pot dinner. President led the flag pledge and table prayer. After dinner bingo was played. Pat Larson won Black out. Cards were played after bingo. Door prizes Bev Sombke, Dick Donovan, Ruby Donovan. Lunch was served from left over from dinner before going home.

### April 14

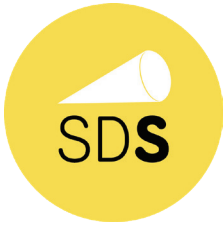
Groton Seniors met with eleven members president Ruby Donovan opened the meeting with allegiance to the flag. Minutes and treasurer's reports were read. A motion was made by Darlene Fischer to have the May meetings the 3, 12, 19, of May because of Memorial Day. It was accepted. Julie Shilhank is home now meeting was adjourned. Cards were played. The winners of each game Pinochle- John Aldrich, Whist- Darlene Fischer, Canasta- Bev Sombke. Door prizes, Pat Larson, Bev Sombke, Darlene Fischer. Lunch was served by Elda Stange.

### April 21

Eleven Groton Seniors met to play cards. President led the flag pledge. Cards were played the winners of each game. Pinochle- David Klienssor, Whist- Elda Stange, Canasta - Pat Larson. Door prizes Dick Donovan, Darlene Fischer, Don Hoops. Lunch was served by Pat Larson.

### April 28

Groton Seniors had their pot luck dinner. President had the flag pledge and table prayer. After dinner bingo was played. Pat Larson won black out. Cards were played after bingo. Door prizes Darlene Fischer, David Klienssor, Bev Sombke.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Ban on spreading human remains reinstated at Bear Butte State Park**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 6, 2025 2:52 PM**

Lawmakers reinstated a rule Tuesday to prohibit the spreading of human remains at Bear Butte State Park in western South Dakota.

The rule was originally set in 2002 after tribal leaders worked with the Department of Game, Fish and Parks to ban the practice. Bear Butte, called "Mato Paha" in Lakota, is a spiritual site for Native American tribes.

The 4,426-foot solitary mountain on the plains near Sturgis is a national historic landmark, and the area surrounding it became a state park in 1961. A ceremonial area and special campground are reserved for religious purposes, and visitors are asked to respect the area.

The department and lawmakers inadvertently repealed the ban in 2019 when they changed several other rules simultaneously, said Jeff VanMeeteren, director of the Division of Parks and Recreation with the department. Tribal leaders requested the mistake be fixed, he said.

"Bear Butte is a sacred worship area by the tribes, and the leaving of human remains is just not an acceptable thing in their culture," VanMeeteren said.

South Dakotans can spread burial ashes at other state parks, VanMeeteren told lawmakers, as long as they get a burial permit and seek permission from the department.

The legislative Rules Review Committee unanimously approved the change.

*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.*

### **New licensed kinship care pathway aims to increase homes for SD foster children**

**Rule change also sets parity between kinship, foster family stipends**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 6, 2025 2:02 PM**

Lawmakers approved rule changes Tuesday to create a new license pathway for kinship foster care in the state, paid at the same rate as foster families.

The intent is to increase licensed kinship care, which is when children removed from their home due to suspected abuse and neglect are placed with relatives or close family friends instead of strangers. Just under 30% of South Dakota foster children were placed in kinship care last fiscal year, according to the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

Currently, kinship caregivers don't receive the same amount of resources and financial support as foster parents, unless they become licensed foster parents themselves. That training is intensive, time consuming and potentially unrelated to the kin's situation since they're already familiar with the child.

When children have to be removed from their homes, prioritizing kinship care can improve academic, behavioral and mental health outcomes, and allow the children to stay within their culture and community, according to Child Trends, a research organization focused on child welfare.

Department of Social Services legal counsel Jeremy Lippert told lawmakers there is a shortage of foster



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 17 of 80

homes in the state.

"The objective of these changes is to help support families and remove barriers for families who provide care for kinship children by increasing available kinship placement resources," Lippert said.

As of last June, there were 824 licensed foster homes in the state and 1,710 children in the foster care system, according to the department's fiscal year 2024 numbers. Most guardianships — which is when a court appoints an adult as a child's caregiver — in the state are not within licensed foster care, Lippert added, so the changes could create a smoother transition from guardianship to adoption if a child can't be reunited with their parents and their guardian is already licensed for kinship care.

The new pathway lightens training requirements for licensed kinship homes compared to traditional foster licensing, eliminates a physical health exam for applicants, and reduces the age of an eligible caregiver from 21 years old as a foster parent to 19 years old for a kinship caregiver. The reduction allows an adult sibling or relative to care for the children instead of placing them with older caregivers or strangers, said Becky Nelson, with the department.

The federal government set a requirement in 2023 that kinship and foster families be paid the same rate when caring for children, as a condition of states receiving federal funding for foster care and adoption assistance programs. Lippert told lawmakers the change in the rules meets those requirements.

Foster families in South Dakota receive about \$600 per month for the average foster child, depending on their age.

The department projects 438 children will be placed in newly licensed kinship homes this year under the new rule, costing \$3.8 million to pay daily foster care rates. The placements will cost \$981,607 in general funds and \$2.8 million in federal funds.

Susan Schrader, child protection and Indian Child Welfare Act director for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, wrote a letter in support of the rule change. Her office works with more than 500 children living with unlicensed kinship families, she said.

Schrader said there are another 400 Oglala Sioux kinship families "struggling" to care for children without support from her office because "they found the licensing process too difficult and cumbersome to navigate."

As of June 30, 2024, 72.5% of South Dakota foster children were Native American, according to the Department of Social Services. Native American children make up about 11% of the state's child population, according to the federal Health and Human Services Department.

The legislative Rules Review Committee approved the changes in a 5-1 vote.

Sen. Taffy Howard, R-Rapid City, was the lone vote against the change. She questioned if the rate parity requirement, without setting income limits for families, was a responsible use of taxpayer dollars. There are no income requirements for foster care payments currently.

She added that families can use other welfare programs through the state to receive the funding they need. Not all kinship caregivers who seek other financial assistance are applicable for the funding, department representatives said.

*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.*

## South Dakota ballot group loses attorney fees because of new U.S. Supreme Court precedent

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MAY 6, 2025 11:16 AM

A South Dakota ballot question committee and its lawyer are among the first victims of a new U.S. Supreme Court precedent that lessens the likelihood of recovering attorney fees when suing the government for civil rights violations.

The high court's decision in a separate case recently caused Dakotans for Health and its attorney, Jim

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 18 of 80

Leach, to drop their effort to recover attorney fees in a lawsuit against Lawrence County.

Leach and Dakotans for Health won a temporary restraining order last year against the county. The order blocked the county from restricting petition circulators to a designated area away from public sidewalks surrounding the courthouse complex in Deadwood. The circulators were gathering signatures for two measures — one that would have restored abortion rights, and one that sought to eliminate the state sales taxes on groceries. Both measures made it onto statewide ballots but were rejected by voters in November.

The county claimed its policy restricting circulators preserved public safety and protected the right of local citizens to conduct county business without disruption, but a federal judge ruled the policy “burdened substantially more speech than necessary.”

The judge also ordered the county to pay \$19,238.90 in attorney fees and costs, but the county filed an appeal to resist paying the money. Meanwhile, in February, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in *Lackey v. Stinnie*.

The Supreme Court ruled that when civil rights plaintiffs win a preliminary injunction and the government relents without the need for a permanent injunction, the plaintiffs are not “prevailing parties” and are not eligible for court-awarded attorney fees.

In the Lawrence County case, the county relented and changed its policy, resulting in a voluntary dismissal of the case. Therefore, wrote Leach in a March motion to the appeals court, “under *Lackey v. Stinnie*, Dakotans for Health loses this appeal. So there is no need for anyone to spend any more time on this case.” A judge finalized the matter by dismissing the attorney fees and costs last week.

Rick Weiland, chairman of Dakotans for Health, said this week that the *Lackey v. Stinnie* ruling guts the incentive for lawyers to represent clients suing to protect their civil rights.

“The Supreme Court is attacking the people who go after the government for when it, basically, goes after its own citizens — things like First Amendment violations, which is what we showed the government did,” Weiland said.

Dakotans for Health also settled with Minnehaha County in a similar lawsuit last year, and that county has paid \$54,815.15 in attorney fees and costs.

*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.*

## **‘We have to move’: USDA soon to disclose which staff jobs will leave D.C.**

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 6, 2025 3:27 PM**

WASHINGTON — Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins announced during a congressional hearing Tuesday the department will soon detail which staff positions it plans to move away from the nation’s capital and where in the country those jobs will be relocated.

“We have to move,” Rollins said. “This is a customer service oriented agency. And why do we have so many people in Washington, D.C.? And then you bring the forest part into that and then the nutrition into that and it just doesn’t make as much sense.”

Rollins’ comments about restructuring the 100,000-employee department came in the middle of a Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s budget request for the upcoming fiscal year.

Republicans and Democrats on the panel used the opportunity to question Rollins about USDA freezing billions in funding approved by Congress, some of which has yet to be released.

Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins, chairwoman of the full Appropriations Committee, said she’s heard from several “constituents who have received grant award letters from USDA in the previous administra-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 19 of 80

tion, only to receive letters from USDA informing them that their grant funding is frozen.”

Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee ranking member Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., urged Rollins to “ensure that funding goes to the small farms” and that it be released quickly.

Rollins testified USDA originally froze about \$20 billion in federal funds and is still reviewing \$5 billion to decide if the department should spend the money as planned.

“Some of the funding that we have pulled back and then reopened, we’ve asked for re-applications to realign around this president’s priorities, which, of course, not surprisingly, is not diversity, equity and inclusion, or some climate programs. But instead to reapply where the farmer or rancher would receive 65% of the funding or more,” she said.

“That’s another piece of this as well,” Rollins added. “So we again, are going line by line. We’re working around the clock. And believe me, we are on it.”

## Local food programs funding

Several Democratic senators on the panel — including Wisconsin’s Tammy Baldwin, New Mexico’s Martin Heinrich and Georgia’s Jon Ossoff — pressed Rollins to restore funding for the local food purchasing assistance and local food for schools programs.

“They may be COVID programs, but they’re two of the best examples of using American-grown produce to produce healthier outcomes in our students. To me, that is Making America Healthy Again,” Heinrich said, referencing an often-used Trump administration slogan. “You canceled both of those contracts, even though those contracts were signed and farmers had bought supplies for planting based on those contracts. So what would you say to both the producers and the schools who made financial decisions based on those commitments?”

Rollins said the two programs were “never meant to last forever” and that nearly every state has asked USDA for contract extensions, since they haven’t been able to spend all of the money the federal government sent them.

“Do you know USDA spends \$400 million a day on nutrition and food programs? Just USDA. That’s aside from this food bank,” Rollins said. “There is plenty of money in the system. We just have to be better about how we’re spending it. So I hear you, but I think that it’s important to look at where this money is sitting, how it is being spent, and making sure that we’re using the taxpayer dollars effectively.”

The Trump administration’s budget request, released Friday, asks Congress to cut Agriculture Department discretionary funding by \$5 billion, or 18.3%.

The proposal suggests lawmakers bolster funding for the Food Safety Inspection Service by \$15 billion and for rental assistance grants by \$74 billion, though it requests funding cuts on about a dozen programs.

The Agricultural Research Service, rural development programs, Farm Service Agency and National Forest System Management would all see funding cuts if Congress goes along with the budget request.

Rollins said during the hearing the proposed Agricultural Research Service funding cuts, if approved by lawmakers, would decrease that account from \$2.1 billion to \$1.9 billion.

“So while it is a cut, it’s not a massive cut, it’s a 7% cut. And it’s very much focused on outdated facilities,” Rollins said. “So as we continue the high priority and the focus on the important research, I believe that none of that will be compromised.”

## Coming home to Kansas

Kansas Republican Sen. Jerry Moran asked Rollins about proposed funding cuts to the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, saying the programs are important to his home state.

“It was particularly troublesome when those on probation were eliminated,” Moran said, referring to mass firings of new and newly promoted federal workers. “We love the circumstance when a young man or woman out of college returns home, goes to work for USDA in a county office. We do not have sufficient personnel in those county offices today. But we particularly love when they are somebody who’s in their

20s, they come home and they raise a family in a small county of Kansas."

Rollins responded that FSA is of "paramount importance."

Congress will debate the dozen annual appropriations bills, including the Agriculture spending measure, in the months ahead.

Lawmakers are supposed to negotiate agreement on all of the government funding bills before the start of the new fiscal year on Oct. 1. But they will likely use a stopgap spending bill to give themselves until mid-December to work out bipartisan, bicameral agreements.

*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.*

## Thune, Rounds vote yes as U.S. Senate confirms Bisignano to lead Social Security

**All Democrats vote in opposition to nominee tasked with cutting agency's workforce**

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 6, 2025 2:42 PM**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate on Tuesday confirmed Frank Bisignano as Social Security commissioner, putting him in charge of a \$1.5 trillion entitlement program that's relied on by tens of millions of Americans.

The 53-47 party-line vote drops a considerable amount of responsibility onto Bisignano, who will not only be tasked with fixing the Social Security Administration's customer services issues, but ensuring plans to cut its staff by at least 7,000 workers doesn't hinder the safety net program that helps to keep seniors out of poverty.

Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden said during a floor speech just before the vote that Bisignano should have been disqualified from consideration after he "lied multiple times" during the confirmation process.

Wyden also argued that Bisignano would institute substantial changes at the Social Security Administration, which could negatively affect people who rely on the program.

"Every single member of this body that votes to confirm this nominee is going to own the consequences," Wyden said. "Mr. Bisignano is unfit to be the steward of Americans' hard-earned Social Security benefits."

Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, said during a floor speech last week that he was "confident" Bisignano held the "experience needed to lead this important agency."

"The Social Security Administration needs steady, Senate-confirmed leadership," Crapo said. "Mr. Bisignano would bring his decades-long focus on customer service and operational excellence to the Social Security Administration."

### Wait times, error rate

Bisignano said during his nearly three-hour confirmation hearing in March that he would make sure beneficiaries could visit an office, use the website, or speak to a real person after calling the 1-800 number.

"On the phone, I'm committed to reducing wait times and providing beneficiaries with a better experience; waiting 20 minutes-plus to get an answer will be of yesteryear," Bisignano said at the time. "I also believe we can significantly improve the length of the disability claim process."

Bisignano told lawmakers during the hearing he would reduce the 1% error rate in payments, which he said was "five decimal places too high."

### Whistleblower allegations

The Senate Finance Committee voted along party lines in April to send Bisignano's nomination to the floor, though Chairman Crapo said at the time the panel would look into a whistleblower's allegations.

"Even though the timing of the anonymous letter suggests a political effort to delay the committee vote on this nominee, my staff have told Sen. Wyden's staff — and we have discussed this just now — we are open to meeting with the author of the letter and keeping the individual anonymous," Crapo said.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 21 of 80

"However, any information provided by the individual must be thoroughly vetted, including allowing the nominee the opportunity to respond."

Wyden, ranking member on the panel, urged Republicans to delay that committee vote until after the investigation concluded.

"This nominee lied multiple times to every member of this committee, including the bipartisan Finance staff and the nominee's actions and communications with DOGE remain very much at the heart of my objection here," Wyden said. "My office received an account from a whistleblower about the ways the nominee was deeply involved in and aware of DOGE's activities at the agency."

Crapo said during his floor speech last week that the whistleblower "allegations focused on the frequency and details of communications between the nominee and Social Security Administration officials."

"Mr. Bisignano addressed these allegations during the hearing and responded in writing as part of the questions for the record," Crapo added. "He has stated clearly that he does not currently have a role at the Social Security Administration and was not part of the decision-making process led by the Acting Commissioner, Lee Dudek, about Social Security operations, personnel, or management."

Bisignano, of New Jersey, most recently worked as chairman of the board and chief executive officer at Fiserv, Inc., which "enables money movement for thousands of financial institutions and millions of people and businesses," according to its website. The company is based in Wisconsin.

He previously worked as co-chief operating officer and chief executive officer of Mortgage Banking at JPMorgan Chase & Co.

*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.*

## Nonpartisan poll finds 'remarkably low' trust in federal health agencies

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 6, 2025 8:45 AM**

WASHINGTON — Less than half of Americans have confidence in federal public health agencies' ability to regulate prescriptions, approve vaccines and respond to outbreaks, according to a poll released Tuesday by the nonpartisan health research organization KFF.

The survey shows that just 46% of the people questioned have at least some confidence in federal agencies ensuring the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.

Even fewer, 45%, have confidence in the safety and effectiveness of vaccines and only 42% said they have confidence federal health agencies to respond to infectious disease outbreaks, like bird flu and measles.

An especially low percentage of those polled, 32%, had either some confidence or a lot of confidence in federal health agencies acting independently without interference from outside interests.

"There are remarkably low levels of trust in the nation's scientific agencies, shaped by partisan perspectives, and that presents a real danger for the country if and when another pandemic hits," KFF President and CEO Drew Altman wrote in a statement accompanying the poll.

### Confidence in agencies sags or rises by party affiliation

The percentage of people overall who hold confidence in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide reliable information about vaccines has dropped since a similar survey in September 2023, though party affiliation shows differing trends.

Democrats with a fair amount or great deal of trust in the FDA's vaccine information has decreased from 86% to 67%, while trust among Republicans has increased from 42% to 52%.

When combined with independents, overall trust in the FDA's information about vaccines has decreased, from 61% to 57%.

Confidence in the CDC providing reliable information about vaccines has also shifted based on party affiliation.

During the Biden administration, 88% of Democrats had a fair amount or great deal of trust in the CDC,

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 22 of 80

though that has since dropped to 70%. Republicans have started to come back around to the CDC's vaccine information, with their level of trust increasing from 40% to 51%.

Altogether, trust in CDC has dropped from 63% to 59%, according to the survey.

"The overall level of trust in each case is similar to where it stood in September 2023, though the poll reveals significant partisan shifts as the second Trump administration and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. have started to change vaccine policies and messaging," the poll states.

## Local sources trusted

Health care providers and local public health departments are overwhelmingly looked to as trusted sources for reliable information on vaccines, according to the survey.

Eighty-two percent of respondents said they either have a great deal or a fair amount of trust in doctors and health care providers to give them reliable information about vaccines.

Eighty-one percent said they trust their child's pediatrician, 66% responded they have confidence in their local public health department, 59% believe in the CDC, 57% trust the FDA and 51% have confidence in pharmaceutical companies to provide factual information about vaccines.

Those polled held less trust in politicians, with 41% believing Kennedy's comments about vaccines and 37% trusting President Donald Trump "to provide reliable information about vaccines," according to the poll.

A majority of those surveyed, however, are somewhat or very confident in the safety of several vaccines, including 83% for measles, mumps and rubella, or the MMR vaccine; 82% for pneumonia; 79% for shingles; 74% for the flu; and 56% for COVID-19.

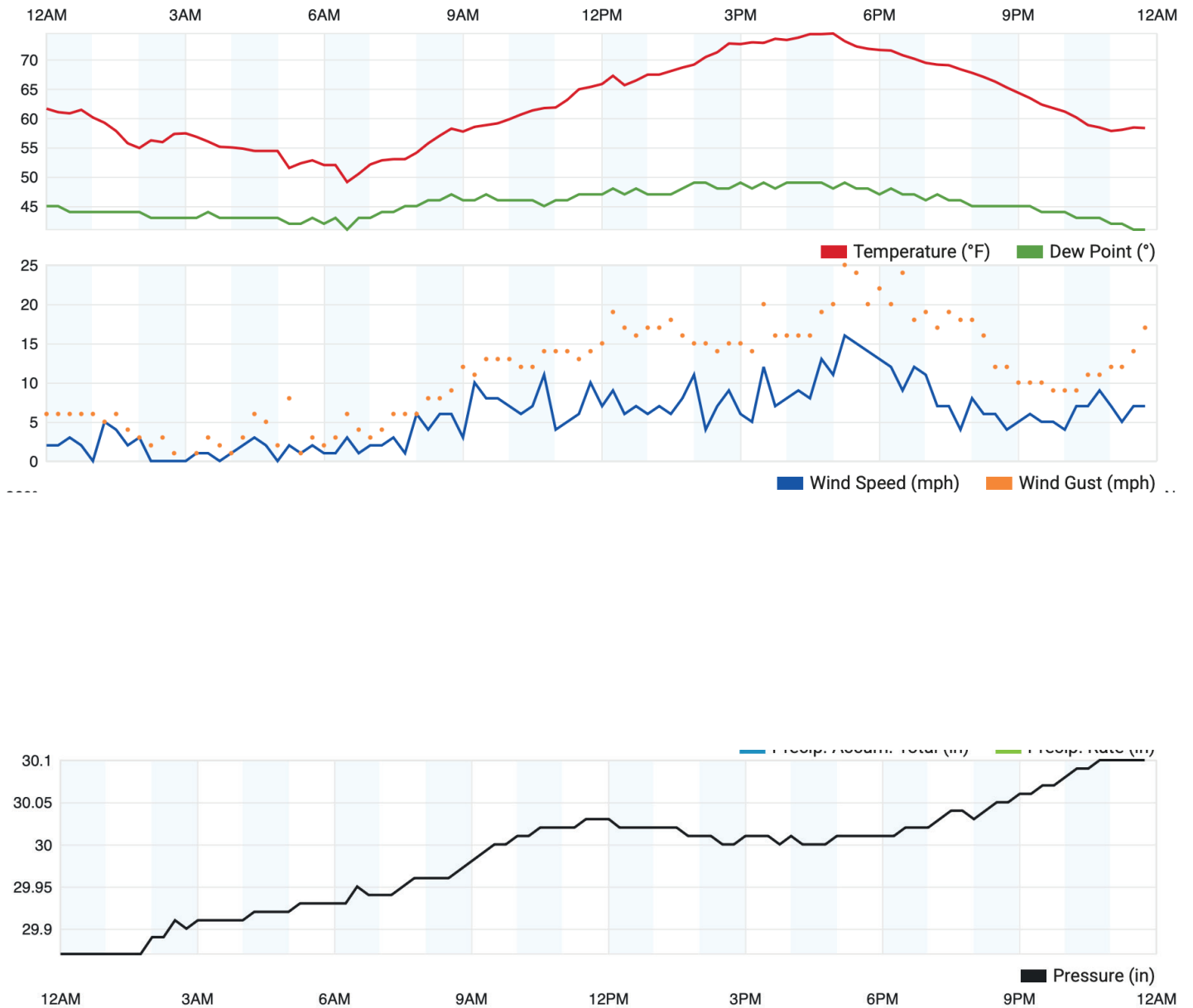
The poll included 1,380 U.S. adults contacted online or via telephone from April 8-15, for a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

*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.*

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 23 of 80

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 24 of 80

Today



High: 74 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 44 °F

Mostly Clear

Thursday



High: 79 °F

Sunny

Thursday  
Night



Low: 51 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 85 °F




Sunny

 **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



## Temperatures Increasing into the Weekend

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)  
May 7, 2025 3:21 AM

Today	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
				
68-77°	73-82°	77-86°	77-86°	82-91°

Mostly sunny today once showers move out, with highs in the upper 60s to upper 70s. Temperatures will increase through the rest of the week with 90s possible Sunday.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 25 of 80

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 75 °F at 4:47 PM**

**Low Temp: 49 °F at 6:29 AM**

**Wind: 27 mph at 5:17 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 14 hours, 38 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 94 in 1928

Record Low: 24 in 2019

Average High: 67

Average Low: 40

Average Precip in May.: .76

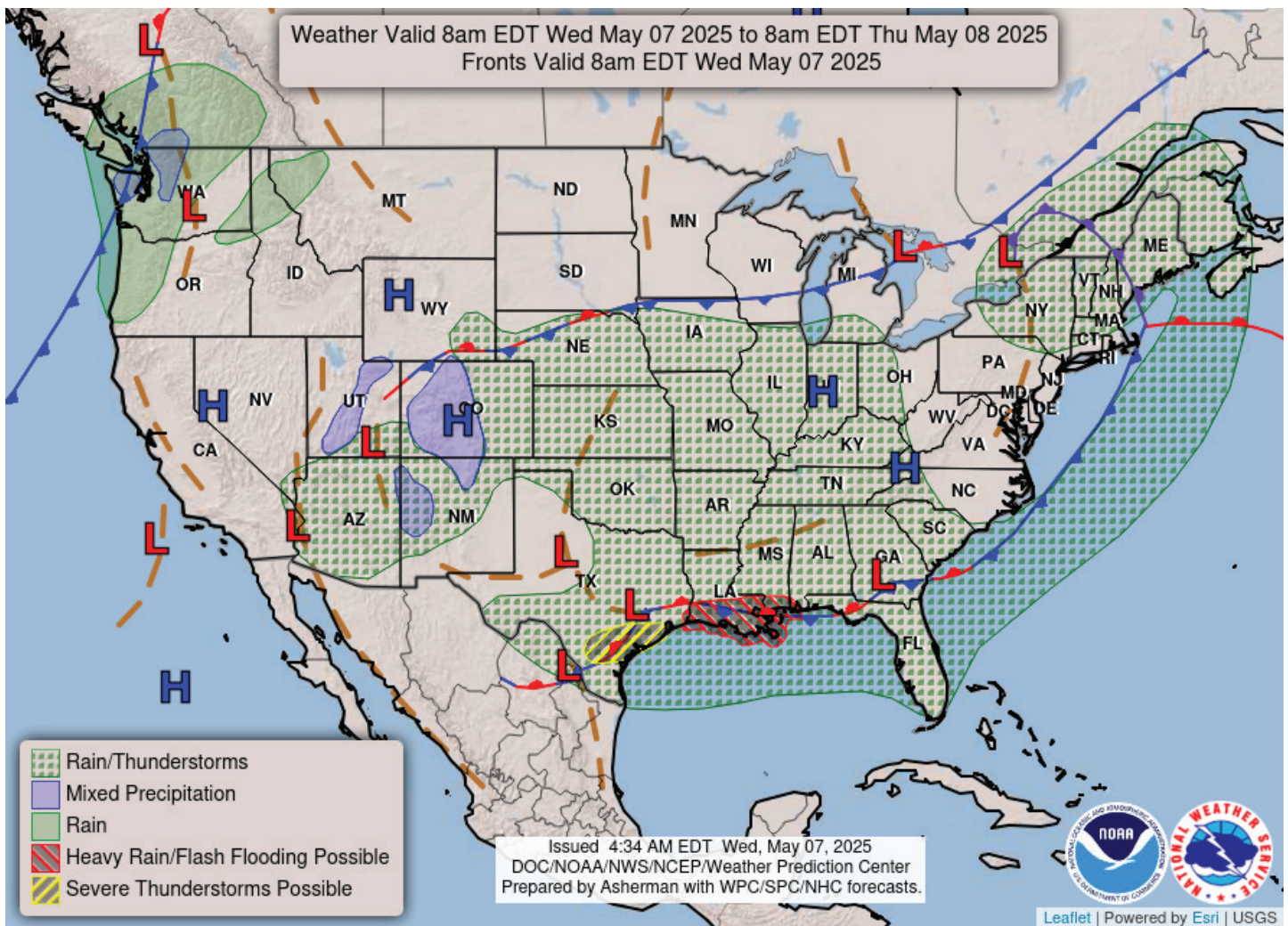
Precip to date in May.: 0.30

Average Precip to date: 4.73

Precip Year to Date: 2.93

Sunset Tonight: 8:48:23 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:08:06 am





# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 26 of 80

## Today in Weather History

May 7th, 1896: A strong, estimated F3 tornado moved northeast from 12 miles SSW of Clark to 3 miles west of Watertown, beyond Lake Kampeska. It was estimated to be on the ground for 30 miles. Near the start of the path, a woman was killed, and ten people were injured in one home. Parts of a house were found up to two miles away. The tornado also leveled barns near Watertown.

1840 - A powerful tornado wrecked many boats at the Natchez Landing in Mississippi, then plowed through the city on the bluff. The tornado killed 317 persons, and caused a million dollars damage. The force of the storm caused houses to burst open. The tornado was the most deadly and destructive in early American history. (David Ludlum)

1964 - The temperature at White Mountain 2, located in California, dipped to 15 degrees below zero to set a record for May for the continental U.S. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thirty-one cities in the western U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 93 degrees at Portland OR and San Jose CA were the warmest of record for so early in the season. The high of 92 degrees at Quillayute WA was a record for the month of May. The temperature at Sacramento CA hit 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A powerful storm in the north central U.S. produced up to three feet of snow in the Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming and the mountains of south central Montana. Up to five inches of rain drenched central Montana in less than 24 hours, and flash flooding in Wyoming caused a million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thirty-two cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, and 24 hour snowfall totals of 7.2 inches at Buffalo NY and 10.7 inches at Rochester NY were records for the month of May. While northerly winds ushered unseasonably cold air into the eastern U.S., temperatures warmed rapidly in the Great Plains Region, reaching the 90s in Kansas. The temperature at Manhattan KS soared from a low of 30 degrees to a high of 88 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Gale force winds lashed the northern and central Pacific coast. A wind gust of 52 mph at Eureka CA established a record for the month of May. Strong winds over northeastern Colorado, associated with a fast moving Pacific cold front, gusted to 63 mph at Peetz. Snow developed over the northwest mountains of Wyoming late in the day, and Yellowstone National Park was whitened with 6 to 14 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 27 of 80



## CONFIDENCE GUARANTEED!

"Each time I walk through a book store I make it a point to visit the "self-help" section. It never ceases to amaze me at the large amount of space this particular category of books occupies. Over 1,500,000 different titles are available in the United States, and the amount of money spent on them exceeded \$13,900,000.00."

"In 1859 Samuel Smiles published a book entitled, Self-help, and an industry designed to provide self-help, self-improvement, problem-solving, and confidence-building was born. But, this was not the beginning of this movement. The Egyptians receive some credit for this area of knowledge as well as The Book of Proverbs."

"However, there's one very important difference between Proverbs and the other sources available for hope and help: The Book of Proverbs comes with a guarantee from God. The others do not, even cannot, guarantee anything. Only a guarantee that comes from God can be trusted."

"For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared."

"Confidence does not come from formulas or mental exercises, nor a plan or a program. It comes from the only One who can empower us to become and do things that are beyond our imagination. Whatever God wants us to do, He will, through His power, enable us to do it."

"Confidence does not come from within - it comes from God. When we apply His 'discernment and sound judgment,' His presence and power are available for us."

Prayer:

Lord, may we seek the wisdom of Your Word and reject the foolishness of those who live in darkness.  
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Verse: "For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared." - Proverbs 3:26

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 28 of 80

## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

- ☐ Black & White .....\$48.99/year
- ☐ Colored .....\$79.88/year
- ☐ Colored .....\$42.60/6 months
- ☐ E-Weekly\* .....\$31.95/year

\* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to [paperpaul@grotonsd.net](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent [www.397news.com](http://www.397news.com) Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- ☐ 1 Month .....\$15.98
- ☐ 3 Months.....\$26.63
- ☐ 6 Months.....\$31.95
- ☐ 9 Months.....\$42.60
- ☐ 12 Months.....\$53.25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

[paypal.me/paperpaul](https://paypal.me/paperpaul)

Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul    Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 29 of 80



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.06.25

16 17 43 46 58 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$100,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 14 Mins  
16 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.05.25

5 13 20 22 28 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$32,800,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 29 Mins 16  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.06.25

15 31 33 35 46 17

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 44 Mins 16  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.03.25

4 9 13 20 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$143,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 44 Mins 17  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.05.25

21 26 28 62 63 1

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 13 Mins 17  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.05.25

16 34 40 45 66 19

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$65,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 13 Mins 17  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 30 of 80

## Upcoming Groton Events

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

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

### Lawmakers seek to rein in citizen ballot initiatives with new requirements for petitions

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Citizen activists supporting a public vote on important issues could have to brush up on their reading, writing and arithmetic if they want to get their initiatives on next year's ballot in some states.

A new Arkansas law will bar initiative ballot titles written above an eighth-grade reading level. And canvassers will have to verify that petition signers have either read the ballot title or had it read aloud to them.

In South Dakota, sponsors will need to make sure their petition titles appears in 14-point type on the front page and 16-point font on the back, where people typically sign.

And in Florida, volunteers will have to register with the state if they gather more than 25 petition signatures from outside their family or risk facing felony charges punishable by up to five years in prison.

Across about dozen states, roughly 40 bills restricting or revamping the citizen initiative process have passed at least one legislative chamber this year, according to a review by The Associated Press. Many already have been signed into law.

Some advocates for the initiative process are alarmed by the trend.

"Globally, as there's movements to expand direct democracy. In the United States it's contracting," said Dane Waters, chair of the Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California, who has advised ballot campaigns in over 20 nations.

Most of the new restrictions come from Republican lawmakers in states where petitions have been used to place abortion rights, marijuana legalization and other progressive initiatives on the ballot. GOP lawmakers contend their measures are shielding state constitutions from outside interests.

"This is not a bill to restrict. It is a bill to protect — to make sure that our constitutional system is one of integrity, and that it's free of fraud," said state Sen. Jennifer Bradley of Florida, where the new initiative requirements already have been challenged in court.

A right in some states, but not others

About half the U.S. states allow people to bypass their legislatures by gathering signatures to place proposed laws or constitutional amendments on the ballot.

Since Oregon voters first used the process in 1904, a total of 2,744 citizen initiatives have appeared on statewide ballots, with 42% winning approval, according to the Initiative and Referendum Institute.

But the process has long caused tension between voters and their elected representatives.

Lawmakers often perceive the initiative process as "an assault on their power and authority, and they want to limit it," Waters said. "They view it, in my opinion, as a nuisance — a gnat that keeps bothering them."

Restrictions on petition canvassers

Because initiative petitions require thousands of signatures to qualify for the ballot, groups sponsoring them often pay people to solicit signatures outside shopping centers and public places. Some states now prohibit payments based on the number of signatures gathered.

States also are trying to restrict who can circulate petitions. A new Arkansas law requires paid petition canvassers to live in the state. And a new Montana law will make petition circulators wear badges displaying their name and home state.

The new Florida law expanding registration requirements for petition circulators also requires them to undergo state training and bars canvassers who are noncitizens, nonresidents or felons without their voting rights restored.

More requirements for petition signers

In addition to providing their name, address and birth date, people signing initiative petitions in Florida also will have to provide either their Florida driver's license, state identification card or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 32 of 80

That information is not required in other states, said Kelly Hall, executive director of the Fairness Project, a progressive group that has backed dozens of ballot initiatives in states. Hall said people concerned about privacy might hesitate to sign petitions.

"I work in ballot measures, and I deeply support many of the things that folks have tried to put on the ballot in Florida," Hall said, "and I don't know if I could bring myself to do that – that's a very prohibitive requirement."

Making the fine print larger

Many states already prescribe a particular format for initiative petitions. South Dakota's new mandate for specific font sizes was prompted by allegations that some people got duped into signing a petition for abortion rights last year, said sponsoring state Sen. Amber Hulse, a Republican.

Printing the ballot title in large type "might make it harder for some issues to get on the ballot if people know what they're signing. But that's actually a good thing," Hulse said.

More power for elected officials

Before they can collect signatures, petition sponsors must get approval from state officials. New measures in several states give those officials greater authority.

New Arkansas laws allow the attorney general to reject initiatives written above an eighth-grade reading level or which conflict with the U.S. Constitution or federal law. Utah's lieutenant governor, who already can reject unconstitutional petitions, now also will be able to turn away petitions that are unlikely to provide adequate funding for their proposed laws.

A new Missouri law gives greater power to the secretary of state, instead of judges, to rewrite ballot summaries struck down as being insufficient or unfair.

A higher threshold for voter approval

Most states require only a majority vote to amend their constitutions, though Colorado requires 55% approval and Florida 60%.

Republican-led legislatures in North Dakota and South Dakota approved measures this year proposing a 60% public vote to approve future constitutional amendments, and Utah lawmakers backed a 60% threshold for tax measures. All three propositions still must go before voters, where they will need only a majority to pass.

Voters rejected similar proposals in Ohio, Arkansas and South Dakota in recent years, but they approved a 60% threshold for tax measures in Arizona.

Lawmakers contend the move has merit.

"Raising the threshold can help protect the constitution from being manipulated by special interest groups or out-of-state activists," North Dakota House Majority Leader Mike Lefor said earlier this year.

## Poll: South Dakota Republicans support Trump but policies mixed

South Dakota News Watch undefined

Sioux Falls, SD (South Dakota News Watch)

Nearly three-quarters of Republican voters in South Dakota approve of President Donald Trump's leadership in the first 100 days of his second White House stint, but there are pockets of discontent with some of his policies, according to a poll co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch.

The survey of 500 registered GOP voters showed that 73% approve of Trump's presidential leadership so far in 2025, while 25% disapprove. The statewide survey was also co-sponsored by the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota.

When asked if they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Trump, a question about general political popularity, 68% of Republican voters said favorable, a rating higher than any South Dakota politician.

"He said what he wanted to get done and he's setting out to do it," said Lee McInroy, 84, of Dell Rapids, a Trump supporter who attended Republican Jon Hansen's campaign kickoff event for governor on April 24 in Sioux Falls.

"People voted for Trump to get in the White House and do these things (immigration crackdown and

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 33 of 80**

tariffs), and now he's doing them and the other party is going after him for it."

Trump's popularity is strongest in South Dakota's rural areas, matching a national trend.

Of the state's two highest population centers, Republican voters in the Sioux Falls metro area responded with 64% approval, while West River (Rapid City) was at 62%, both below the national average for Trump's favorability among Republicans.

Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy conducted the poll April 9-11, using random selections from a telephone-matched state voter registration list that included both landline and cellphone numbers.

The poll also included a survey of South Dakota registered voters regardless of party, with a breakdown of 255 Republicans, 126 Independents and 119 Democrats.

Those voters showed mixed support for Trump administration policies, including fewer than half (49%) who approve of the efforts by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to cut federal spending under the direction of billionaire Elon Musk.

The poll showed that 48% of overall South Dakota voters disapprove of the efforts, which have led to cuts in programs involving the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, tribal initiatives, nonprofit organizations and other agencies.

There's a stark party breakdown, with 70% of Republican voters supporting the DOGE spending cuts, as opposed to 45% of registered Independents and 7% of Democrats.

The poll showed that men (54%) are more supportive than women (44%), which Michael Card, emeritus professor of political science at the University of South Dakota, said could be attributable to DOGE's potential impact on schools and public health.

Musk said recently that he'll be spending less time in Washington slashing government costs and more time running Tesla after his electric vehicle company reported a big drop in profits.

Trump carried South Dakota with 63% of the vote in the 2024 election, consistent with his 62% showings in 2016 and 2020.

But one of the president's signature policies, tariffs, is less popular in a state whose reliance on agricultural trade makes it more susceptible to the risks of trade wars with China, Canada and Mexico.

The News Watch poll showed that 50% of South Dakota voters support Trump's tariff policies, compared to 47% who disapprove.

The party breakdown of support was 73% Republican, 45% Independent and 6% Democrat.

Trump has imposed hundreds of billions of dollars a year in new import taxes -- some of them partially suspended -- while launching a trade war against China and pledging to wrap up deals with other countries that are temporarily facing tariffs of 10%. Financial markets are swinging with every twist and turn from Trump's tariff pronouncements.

"There's a balance between wanting to negotiate strong trade agreements and asking those countries to come to the table to negotiate in good faith while they're being slapped with tariffs," DaNita Murray, executive director of South Dakota Corn, told News Watch.

Card said much of the unease in South Dakota likely stems from Trump's first term, when China retaliated with a 25% tariff that greatly reduced farm exports to that country.

"If you're in corn, soybeans and hogs, it's very clear because you have a memory from less than a decade ago of what happened to your market," said Card. "And even though it's a subsidized industry, those protections are going to be gone unless they get bailed out again, and it's not clear that's going to happen this time around."

When it comes to confidence in elections, Trump's victory over Democratic nominee Kamala Harris in 2024 appears to have changed some perspectives.

The News Watch poll showed that 82% of South Dakota voters were confident in the accuracy of the 2024 election vote count, including 55% who said they were very confident.

Of Republicans polled, 59% said they were very confident, compared to 56% of Independents and 46% of Democrats.

It's a sharp contrast from a November 2023 poll co-sponsored by News Watch and the Chiesman Center,



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 34 of 80

which showed 56% of South Dakotans confident in the accuracy of American elections, including 20% who said they were very confident.

Just 7% of Republicans in that poll said they were very confident, and nearly half (49%) said they did not accept the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, when Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

"There's plenty of recent experience to show that the losing party is sort of inoculated to believe that the elections aren't fair, and vice versa," said Card.

As for general outlook of the country, 68% of overall poll respondents said they were optimistic in the future of the United States, including 22% who were very optimistic.

Nearly 9 in 10 Republicans (89%) said they were optimistic, compared to 60% of Independents and 33% of Democrats.

The positivity extended to "very optimistic" for 34% of Republicans, 17% of Independents and just 2% of Democrats.

This story is provided as a service of the Institute for Nonprofit News' On the Ground news wire. The Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) is a network of more than 475 independent, nonprofit newsrooms serving communities throughout the US, Canada, and globally. On the Ground is a service of INN, which aggregates the best of its members' elections and political content, and provides it free for republication. Read more about INN here: <https://inn.org/>.

Please coordinate with [carson.walker@sdnewswatch.org](mailto:carson.walker@sdnewswatch.org) should you want to publish photos for this piece. This content cannot be modified, apart from rewriting the headline. To view the original version, visit: <https://www.sdnewswatch.org/poll-south-dakota-republican-donald-trump-gop-doge/>

## India fires missiles on Pakistan in what Islamabad calls 'act of war'

By MUNIR AHMED, SHEIKH SAALIQ, RIAZAT BUTT, RAJESH ROY and AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press ISLAMABAD (AP) — India fired missiles at Pakistan early Wednesday, in what it said was retaliation for last month's massacre of Indian tourists. Pakistan called the strikes an act of war and said more than two dozen people, including children, were killed.

The strikes targeted at least nine sites "where terrorist attacks against India have been planned," India's Defense Ministry said. Pakistan's military said the missiles hit six locations in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and in the country's eastern Punjab province.

Pakistan claimed it shot down several Indian fighter jets. Three planes fell onto villages in India-controlled territory, and there was a heavy exchange of fire between the sides. At least seven civilians were also killed in the region by Pakistani shelling, Indian police and medics said.

Tensions have soared between the nuclear-armed neighbors since an April attack in which gunmen killed 26 people, mostly Indian Hindu tourists, in India-controlled Kashmir, in some cases killing men before their wives' eyes.

India accuses Pakistan of being behind the attack, which was claimed by a militant group calling itself Kashmir Resistance. India has said the group is linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a disbanded Pakistani militant group.

Islamabad denies involvement.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

In the wake of the massacre, the rivals have expelled each other's diplomats and nationals, closed their borders and shuttered airspace. India has also suspended a critical water-sharing treaty with Pakistan.

Wednesday's strikes were a significant escalation.

The escalation raises the risk of war

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the airstrikes and said his country would retaliate.

"Pakistan has every right to give a robust response to this act of war imposed by India, and a strong response is indeed being given," Sharif said.

It was not clear if Pakistan's claim that it shot down fighter jets constituted its retaliation or if more

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 35 of 80

might be coming.

South Asia analyst Michael Kugelman said the strikes were some of the highest-intensity ones from India on its rival in years and that Pakistan's response would "surely pack a punch as well."

"These are two strong militaries that, even with nuclear weapons as a deterrent, are not afraid to deploy sizeable levels of conventional military force against each other," Kugelman said. "The escalation risks are real. And they could well increase, and quickly."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for maximum restraint because the world could not "afford a military confrontation" between India and Pakistan, according to a statement from spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

China also called for calm. Beijing is the largest investor in Pakistan by far and has multiple border disputes with India, including one in the northeastern part of the Kashmir region.

Pakistan's National Security Committee met Wednesday morning. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security and postponed his upcoming official trip to Norway, Croatia and the Netherlands, scheduled to start next week.

Several Indian states planned civil defense drills later Wednesday, according to India's Home Ministry, to train civilians and security personnel to respond in case of any "hostile attacks." Such drills are rare in non-crisis times.

Scenes of panic and destruction

The missile strikes hit six locations and killed at least 26 people, including women and children, said Pakistan's military spokesperson, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif.

Officials said another 38 people were injured in the strikes, and five more people were killed in Pakistan during exchanges of fire across the border later in the day.

In Muzaffarabad, the main city of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, resident Abdul Sammad said he heard several explosions as blasts ripped through houses. He saw people running in panic and authorities immediately cut power to the area.

People ran into the streets or open areas. "We were afraid the next missile might hit our house," said Mohammad Ashraf, another resident.

Indian jets damaged infrastructure at a dam in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, according to Sharif, the military spokesman, calling it a violation of international norms.

The strikes also hit close to at least two sites previously tied to militant groups that have since been banned, according to Pakistan.

One hit Subhan Mosque in Punjab's Bahawalpur city, killing 13 people, according to Zohaib Ahmed, a doctor at a nearby hospital.

The mosque is near a seminary that was once the central office of Jaish-e-Mohammed, a militant group outlawed in 2002. Officials say the group has had no operational presence at the site since the ban.

Another missile hit a mosque in Muridke in Punjab, damaging it. A sprawling building located nearby served as the headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba until 2013, when Pakistan banned the militant group and arrested its founder.

India's Defense Ministry called the strikes "focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature."

"No Pakistan military facilities have been targeted," the statement said, adding that "India has demonstrated considerable restraint."

Indian politicians from different political parties lauded the operation, which was named "Sindoor," a Hindi word for the vermillion powder worn by married Hindu women on their foreheads and hair. It was a reference to the women whose husbands were killed in front of them in the Kashmir attack.

"Victory to Mother India," India's defense minister, Rajnath Singh, wrote on X.

Exchanges of fire and planes fall on villages in India-controlled Kashmir

Along the Line of Control, which divides the disputed region of Kashmir between India and Pakistan, there were heavy exchanges of fire.

Indian police and medics said seven civilians were killed and 30 wounded by Pakistani shelling in Poonch



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 36 of 80

district near the highly militarized de facto border. Officials said several homes also were damaged in the shelling.

Shortly after India's strikes, aircraft fell in three villages: two in India-controlled Kashmir, a third in India's northern Punjab state.

Sharif, the Pakistani military spokesperson, said the country's air force shot down five Indian jets in retaliation for the strikes. There was no immediate comment from India about Pakistan's claim.

Debris from one plane was scattered across Wuyan village on the outskirts of the region's main city of Srinagar, including in a school and a mosque compound, according to police and residents. Firefighters struggled for hours to douse the resulting blazes.

"There was a huge fire in the sky. Then we heard several blasts also," said Mohammed Yousuf Dar, a Wuyan resident.

Another aircraft fell in an open field in Bhardha Kalan village. Resident Sachin Kumar told The Associated Press he heard massive blasts and saw a huge ball of fire.

Kumar said he and several others rushed to the scene.

"We found the two pilots at some distance in injured condition. They were Indian pilots and and soldiers took them away," he said.

A third aircraft crashed in a farm field in Punjab, a police officer told the AP, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media. The officer did not provide further details.

## The Latest: India fires missiles across the border with Pakistan

By The Associated Press undefined

India fired missiles into Pakistani-controlled territory in several locations early Wednesday, as the overall death toll increased to 31 people in what Pakistan's leader called an act of war. India also claims there are casualties from Pakistani fire in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir.

India said it struck infrastructure used by militants linked to last month's massacre of tourists in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir. At least seven people died in Indian-controlled Kashmir from artillery exchanges.

Pakistan said at 26 people died in the missiles strikes and five from artillery exchange along the Line of Control that separates the two countries in Kashmir. It said another 5 were killed in artillery fire near the Line of Control.

Pakistan claimed it shot down several Indian aircraft in retaliation, including three top-line fighter jets. Two planes fell onto villages in India-controlled Kashmir. One fell in northern Punjab state.

Tensions have soared between the nuclear-armed neighbors over last month's militant attack on tourists in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir.

India has moved to punish Pakistan after accusing it of backing the attack in Pahalgam, which Islamabad denies. The region has been split between India and Pakistan since 1949 and is claimed by both in its entirety.

Here's the latest:

Indian PM postpones trip to Norway, Croatia and the Netherlands

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has postponed his upcoming official trip to Norway, Croatia and the Netherlands amid rising tensions with Pakistan. His trip was originally scheduled to start next week.

Pakistan's top political and military leaders condemn Indian airstrikes, reserve the right to respond

Pakistan's top political and military leaders on Wednesday condemned Indian airstrikes that they said killed 26 people.

The National Security Committee, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, said in a statement that the Indian strikes were carried out "on the false pretext of the presence of imaginary terrorist camps" and deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure, including mosques.

"These unprovoked and unjustified attacks martyred innocent men, women and children," the statement

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 37 of 80

said.

Pakistan's military responded to the strikes, the statement added, by downing five Indian fighter jets and surveillance aircraft.

The government said Pakistan reserves the right to respond "in self-defense, at a time, place, and manner of its choosing" and that the armed forces have been authorized to take "corresponding actions" to avenge what it called a violation of the country's sovereignty.

Indian military says attack lasted 25 minutes, says it showed restraint

Col. Sofiya Qureshi, an Indian army officer, said the Indian missile strikes started at 1.05 am and lasted for about 25 minutes. She said no military installations were targeted.

These military strikes were designed "to deliver justice to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack and their families," she said.

Another officer, Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, said the strikes were undertaken through "precision capability" so that there was "no collateral damage."

"India has demonstrated considerable restraint in its response," she said. "However, it must be said that the Indian armed forces are fully prepared respond to Pakistani misadventures if any that will escalate the situation."

AP Photographer documents aircraft debris on school building in outskirts of Srinagar

Shortly after India said it fired missiles across the border into Pakistani-controlled territory, AP photo-journalist Dar Yasin received reports of a burning aircraft in the outskirts of Srinagar, the main city in Indian-controlled Kashmir. It was still night and Yasin rushed to southern Wuyan village in Pampore area, where the incident occurred. At first, Indian forces did not allow him to reach the accident site. By the time he managed to find his way to the debris the sun was out. Dar saw few broken tree branches and mangled tin sheets of a school's roof that was damaged by the aircraft's impact and quickly began taking pictures. Dar said Indian forces did not allow him and other journalists to go near the debris. Later, local residents told him parts of the aircraft were also lying scattered some 500 meters away inside a mosque compound. Dar swiftly rushed to the second site and managed to get pictures of parts of the wreckage before Indian forces cordoned off the area. It is unclear whether the aircraft broke mid air or after falling on the ground. "Locals told me they saw a huge ball of fire emerging from the accident site and the wreckage was burning for more than an hours," Dar said from the crash site. He said firefighters struggled to douse the resulting fires and worried onlookers captured the plane's burning wreckage on their smartphones. Police and military officials later sealed off the area to clear the debris, Dar said.

Several Indian states hold security drills

Several Indian states will be conducting security drills on Wednesday, as fears of a wider conflict mount after India's strikes in Pakistan.

The mock security drills were announced by India's home ministry on Monday. The drills will include air raid warning sirens, evacuation plans, preparation for blackouts, and training people to respond in case of any "hostile attacks," the ministry said in a statement.

Pakistan summons India's chargé d'affaires called in for protest

Pakistan on Wednesday summoned India's chargé d'affaires to lodge a strong protest over what it called "unprovoked Indian strikes at multiple locations" across Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

In a statement, it said the strikes resulted in the deaths and injuries of several civilians, including women and children.

The Indian diplomat was told that "India's blatant act of aggression constitutes a clear violation of Pakistan's sovereignty," the statement said.

It said the Indian side was warned that such "reckless behaviour" poses a serious threat to regional peace and stability.

Third aircraft crashes in India's northern Punjab state

A third aircraft fell in a farm field in India's northern Punjab state, a police office told AP on the condition

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 38 of 80**

of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media. The officer did not provide further details.

By Associated Press Writer Sheikh Saaliq

Indian Foreign Secretary says strikes were preemptive after indications that new attacks planned

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri in a news briefing in New Delhi accused Pakistan of failing to take "demonstrable steps" against "terrorist infrastructure on its territory or on territory under its control" following the April 22 attack.

He said the attack was driven "by the objective of undermining the normalcy returning" to Indian-controlled Kashmir. "Instead, all it has indulged in is denial and allegations," Misri said and added that Pakistan also had "well-deserved reputation as a haven for terrorists around the world."

"Pakistan based terrorist modules indicated that further attacks against India were impending. There was thus a compulsion both to deter and to preempt," he said.

Pakistan says it shot down five Indian fighter jets

Pakistan's military said Wednesday its air force shot down five Indian fighter jets, including three Rafale aircraft. He said at least 31 people had been killed around the country from the strikes and artillery exchanges.

Military spokesperson Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif said the jets were downed from within Pakistani airspace in response to the strikes, which killed 26 civilians, women and children in multiple locations across the country, including women and children, in multiple locations across the country.

He said another five civilians were also killed along the Line of Control because of the shelling by the Indian force in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

He said Pakistan returned fire and destroyed some Indian posts. Indian police and medics said at least seven civilians were killed and 30 others wounded in the Pakistani firing.

Sharif also accused Indian forces of damaging infrastructure at a dam in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, calling it a violation of international norms.

"Pakistan is responding to the Indian aggression," he said.

Indian police and medics say Pakistani artillery fire kills at least 7, wounds 30

Indian police and medics said at least seven civilians were killed and 30 others wounded in the Pakistani firing and shelling at multiple places across the Line of Control, the de facto border that divides disputed Kashmir between the two countries.

There have been heavy exchanges of artillery fire along the Line of Control, authorities have said.

All the fatalities occurred in Poonch district which lies close to the highly militarized frontier. Officials said several homes also were damaged in the shelling.

The Indian army in a statement said Pakistani troops "resorted to arbitrary firing," including gunfire and artillery shelling, along the Line of Control and their international border. It said it was "responding in a proportionate manner."

Fighting disrupts flights between Taiwan and Europe

Ten passenger airline flights between Taiwan and Europe have been affected by the closure of Pakistan air space, airport authorities said Wednesday.

An EVA Air flight from Vienna to Taipei returned to Vienna, and five China Airlines flights that had departed for Europe stopped in Bangkok, a statement from Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport said.

China Airlines also canceled a flight that had been scheduled to depart Wednesday morning for London.

Three other EVA Air flights between Europe and Taiwan were rerouted but were continuing to their destinations, the statement said.

China calls on Indian and Pakistan to show restraint

Beijing called on restraint from both sides Wednesday morning following India's strike into Pakistan.

"China expresses regret over India's military actions this morning and is concerned about the current developments. China opposes all forms of terrorism," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson said in a statement. "We call on both India and Pakistan to prioritize peace and stability, remain calm and restrained, and avoid taking actions that further complicate the situation."



# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 39 of 80**

Beijing is the largest investor in Pakistan by far, with a \$65 billion China–Pakistan Economic Corridor project that spans across the country. China meanwhile also has multiple border claims disputed with India, with one of those claims in the northeastern part of the Kashmir region

Pakistani official says Indian missile strike on Bahawalpur mosque killed 13, including women and children Zohaib Ahmed, a doctor at a hospital, said the death toll from the Indian missile strike on the Subhan Mosque in Bahawalpur has jumped to 13, bringing the overall death toll from the Indian strikes across the country to 19.

Six people were killed in the Indian strikes and shelling in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, according to security officials. India said it struck infrastructure used by militants linked to last month's massacre of tourists in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir. At least three civilians were also killed in Indian-controlled Kashmir by Pakistani shelling, the Indian army said in a statement.

Missiles fired from India struck multiple locations across Pakistan

Missiles fired from India struck multiple locations across Pakistan, damaging at least four mosques and a medical clinic, authorities said. One of the missiles hit a mosque in Muridke, a town near the eastern city of Lahore, damaging its structure.

A sprawling building located near the mosque in Muridke had previously served as the headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba until 2013, when Pakistan banned the group and took control of the seminaries, schools, and dispensaries run by a charity linked to LeT founder Hafiz Saeed.

Saeed is currently serving multiple prison sentences on terror financing charges.

In Bahawalpur, another missile struck a mosque adjacent to a religious seminary that once served as the central office of Jaish-e-Mohammed, a militant group outlawed by former President Pervez Musharraf in 2002.

Officials say the group has had no operational presence at the site since the ban.

Muhammad Sabir, a resident who lives near the damaged Subhan Mosque in Bahawalpur, described the chaos that followed the strike.

"I heard three or four loud explosions in a row," he said. He said he grabbed his family, and "we ran to the nearby fields and lay down." Police and ambulances arrived shortly afterward, he added.

Schools closed in Indian-controlled Kashmir

Authorities in Indian-controlled Kashmir have closed all schools, colleges and educational institutions in at least seven border areas of the region, officials said. Schools will also remain closed around Srinagar airport, they said.

Second aircraft reported to have crashed in Indian-controlled Kashmir

Another aircraft has reportedly crashed in an open field in a village close to the Line of Control in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Residents said the aircraft fell shortly after India launched missile strikes on Pakistan on early Wednesday.

Sachin Kumar, a local villager, told the Associated Press that he heard massive blasts followed by a huge ball of fire that lit his village, Bhardha Kalan near southern Akhnoor town.

Kumar said he and some villagers rushed to the scene and found two pilots in injured condition. Both were later taken away by the Indian army.

Aircraft crashes on a school building in the outskirts of main city in Indian-controlled Kashmir

An unknown aircraft has crashed on a school building in the outskirts of the main city in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Police and residents said the aircraft fell in the early hours Wednesday, shortly after India launched missile strikes on Pakistan.

"There was a huge fire in the sky. Then we heard several blasts also," said Mohammed Yousuf Dar, a local resident in southern Wuyan village in Pampore area, where the incident occurred.

Firefighters struggled for hours to extinguish the fires. Police and military officials sealed off the area immediately after the incident.

India says Pakistani army shelling kills 3

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 40 of 80**

India's army says three civilians were killed in Pakistani shelling into Indian-controlled Kashmir. It says the Pakistani army "resorted to arbitrary firing" across the de facto border that divides disputed Kashmir between the two countries.

Pakistan tells UN it reserves right to respond

Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Islamabad has informed the U.N. Security Council about the Indian attacks and the threat it poses to international peace and security.

The ministry says in a statement that the Security Council was told that "Pakistan reserves the right to respond appropriately to this aggression at a time and place of its choosing."

Officials say India used precision strike weapons systems

Indian security officials say that army, navy and air force personnel used precision strike weapon systems, including drones, to carry out the strikes.

The officials said that intelligence agencies provided coordinates for the strikes and that all operations were executed from Indian territory.

The officials said the strikes targeted the headquarters of militant groups Jaish-e-Mohammed in Bawalpur and Lashkar-e-Taiba in Muridke.

Rubio says he hopes the latest conflict ends quickly

The U.S. secretary of state says in a post on X that "I am monitoring the situation between India and Pakistan closely."

Rubio continued: "I echo @POTUS's comments earlier today that this hopefully ends quickly and will continue to engage both Indian and Pakistani leadership towards a peaceful resolution."

Trump said earlier Tuesday that he hopes the fighting "ends very quickly" and called it "a shame."

Indian official says Prime Minister Modi monitored the operation

An Indian official says Prime Minister Narendra Modi monitored the operation against Pakistan through the night.

The government official says there were nine targets that were hit "successfully."

The official spoke on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to disclose details.

Pakistani official says eight killed and dozens injured

Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif, Pakistan's military spokesperson, says India attacked six locations, killing eight people and injuring 38 others.

He said in televised remarks that five civilians were killed in Ahmedpur East in Punjab province and that three people were killed at other locations.

Sharif says that "retaliatory action is being taken in response to the enemy's attacks."

Emergency declared in hospitals in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir

Waqar Noor, the region's interior minister, says authorities have declared an emergency in local hospitals.

In Muzaffarabad, the main city of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, resident Abdul Sammad says he heard several explosions and that some people were wounded in the attack.

He says people were running in panic and that authorities immediately cut the power, leading to a blackout.

Indian police say a woman is killed and a girl is injured during border fight

Police say a woman was killed and a girl was wounded in Indian-controlled Kashmir when Indian and Pakistani soldiers exchanged mortar and gunfire at several places along the highly militarized frontier.

A local doctor says the woman was killed in the Mankote area of the Poonch district.

The doctor spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

India says official spoke with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio

India's embassy in Washington says that Ajit Doval, the country's national security adviser, has spoken U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio shortly after the Indian strikes.

The Embassy says in a statement that India's actions "were measured, responsible and designed to be non-escalatory in nature. No Pakistani civilian, economic or military targets have been hit. Only known terror camps were targeted."

Pakistan says a child was killed and 2 people injured in attack

A Pakistani official says one missile struck a mosque in the city of Bahawalpur in Punjab, where a child

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 41 of 80

was killed and a woman and man were injured.

The official and others say Pakistan launched retaliatory strikes but didn't provide any details.

They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Pakistan condemns what it calls Indian Air Force strikes on civilian areas

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned what it calls a "blatant and unprovoked act of aggression" on civilian areas by the Indian Air Force.

It said Indian aircraft launched strikes from Indian airspace, targeting civilian areas in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and in Punjab province.

The ministry said in a statement that the attack reportedly resulted in civilian casualties, including women and children, and posed a significant threat to commercial air traffic. UN secretary-general calls for restraint

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement that Secretary General Antonio Guterres is calling for restraint from both countries.

"The world cannot afford a military confrontation between India and Pakistan," the statement read.

Pakistan's defense minister condemns what he calls a 'cowardly act'

Defense Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif has strongly condemned what he calls a "cowardly act by India."

He told Pakistan's Geo news channel that India had deliberately targeted civilian populations and a mosque.

"This was a cowardly move by India," Asif said. "We will also respond."

Indian army says Pakistan fired artillery along the border

The Indian army says in a statement that Pakistan fired artillery along what's known as the de facto border, or the Line of Control, in Bhimber Gali in India-controlled Kashmir.

It said India's armed forces were "responding appropriately in a calibrated manner."

Pakistan's Sharif convenes national security committee

Pakistan's prime minister has convened a meeting of the National Security Committee on Wednesday morning, according to a government announcement.

Pakistan's prime minister calls Indian action an 'act of war'

In a statement, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that "Pakistan has every right to give a robust response to this act of war imposed by India, and a strong response is indeed being given."

Sharif said the entire nation stands with the Pakistan Armed Forces, and the morale and spirit of the Pakistani people are high.

"The Pakistani nation and the Pakistan Armed Forces know very well how to deal with the enemy," he said. "We will never let the enemy succeed in its nefarious objectives."

## Trump plans to announce that the US will call the Persian Gulf the Arabian Gulf, officials say

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump plans to announce while on his trip to Saudi Arabia next week that the United States will now refer to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf or the Gulf of Arabia, according to two U.S. officials.

Arab nations have pushed for a change to the geographic name of the body of water off the southern coast of Iran, while Iran has maintained its historic ties to the gulf.

The two U.S. officials spoke with The Associated Press on Tuesday on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter. The White House and National Security Council did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

The Persian Gulf has been widely known by that name since the 16th century, although usage of "Gulf of Arabia" and "Arabian Gulf" is dominant in many countries in the Middle East. The government of Iran — formerly Persia — threatened to sue Google in 2012 over the company's decision not to label the body of water at all on its maps.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 42 of 80

On Google Maps in the U.S., the body of water appears as Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf). Apple Maps only says the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. military for years has unilaterally referred to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf in statements and images it releases.

The name of the body of water has become an emotive issue for Iranians who embrace their country's long history as the Persian Empire. A spat developed in 2017 during Trump's first term when he used the name Arabian Gulf for the waterway. Iran's president at the time, Hassan Rouhani, suggested Trump needed to "study geography."

"Everyone knew Trump's friendship was for sale to the highest bidder. We now know that his geography is, too," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote online at the time.

On Wednesday, Iran's current foreign minister also weighed in, saying that names of Mideast waterways do "not imply ownership by any particular nation, but rather reflects a shared respect for the collective heritage of humanity."

"Politically motivated attempts to alter the historically established name of the Persian Gulf are indicative of hostile intent toward Iran and its people, and are firmly condemned," Abbas Araghchi wrote on the social platform X.

"Any short-sighted step in this connection will have no validity or legal or geographical effect, it will only bring the wrath of all Iranians from all walks of life and political persuasion in Iran, the U.S. and across the world."

Trump can change the name for official U.S. purposes, but he can't dictate what the rest of the world calls it.

The International Hydrographic Organization — of which the United States is a member — works to ensure all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted uniformly, and also names some of them. There are instances where countries refer to the same body of water or landmark by different names in their own documentation.

In addition to Saudi Arabia, Trump is also set to visit Doha, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, which also lie on the body of water. Originally planned as Trump's first trip overseas since he took office on Jan. 20, it comes as Trump has tried to draw closer to the Gulf countries as he seeks their financial investment in the U.S. and support in regional conflicts, including resolving the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and limiting Iran's advancing nuclear program.

The U.S. president also has significant financial ties to the countries through his personal businesses, over which he has retained ownership from the Oval Office.

The move comes several months after Trump said the U.S. would refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

The Associated Press sued the Trump administration earlier this year after the White House barred its journalists from covering most events because of the organization's decision not to follow the president's executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America" within the United States.

U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden, an appointee of President Donald Trump, ruled last month that the First Amendment protects the AP from government retaliation over its word choice and ordered the outlet's access to be reinstated.

## Israeli strikes across Gaza kill at least 59 as Israel prepares to ramp up its offensive

By WAFAA SHURAFU and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes across Gaza killed at least 59 people, including women and children, hospital officials said Wednesday, as Israel prepares to ramp up its campaign against Hamas in a devastating war now entering its 20th month.

The strikes included one attack on Tuesday night on a school sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinians, which killed 27 people, officials from the Al-Aqsa Hospital said, including nine women and three

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 43 of 80

children. It was the fifth time since the war began that the school in central Gaza has been struck.

An early morning strike on another school turned shelter in Gaza City killed 16 people, according to officials at Al-Ahli Hospital, while strikes on targets in other areas killed at least 16 others.

A large column of smoke rose and fires pierced the dark skies above the school shelter in Bureij, a built-up urban refugee camp. Paramedics and rescuers rushed to pull people out from the blaze.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strikes. Israel blames Hamas for the death toll because it operates from civilian infrastructure, including schools.

The new bloodshed comes days after Israel approved a plan to intensify its operations in the Palestinian enclave, which would include seizing Gaza, holding on to captured territories, forcibly displacing Palestinians to southern Gaza and taking control of aid distribution along with private security companies.

Israel is also calling up tens of thousands of reserve soldiers to carry out the plan. Israel says the plan will be gradual and will not be implemented until after U.S. President Donald Trump wraps up his visit to the region later this month.

Any escalation of fighting would likely drive up the death toll. And with Israel already controlling some 50% of Gaza, increasing its hold on the territory, for an indefinite amount of time, could open up the potential for a military occupation, which would raise questions about how Israel plans to have the territory governed, especially at a time when it is considering how to implement Trump's vision to take over Gaza.

Trump jars Israelis with remark on hostage figures

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages. Israel's offensive has killed more than 52,000 people in Gaza, many of them women and children, according to Palestinian health officials. The officials do not distinguish between combatants and civilians in their count.

Trump on Tuesday stunned many in Israel when he declared that only 21 of the 59 hostages remaining in Gaza are still alive. Israel insists that figure stands at 24, although an Israeli official said there was "serious concern" for the lives of three captives. The official said there has been no sign of life from those three, whom the official did not identify. He said that until there is evidence proving otherwise, the three are considered to be alive. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive details related to the war, said the families of the captives were updated on those developments.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum, a group representing the families of the captives, demanded from Israel's government that if there is "new information being kept from us, give it to us immediately." It also called for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to halt the war in Gaza until all hostages are returned. "This is the most urgent and important national mission," it said on a post on X.

Since Israel ended a ceasefire with the Hamas militant group in mid-March, it has unleashed fierce strikes on Gaza that have killed hundreds and has captured swaths of territory. Before the truce ended, Israel halted all humanitarian aid into the territory, including food, fuel and water, setting off what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis in 19 months of war.

Key interlocutors Qatar and Egypt said Wednesday that mediation efforts were "ongoing and consistent." But Israel and Hamas remain far apart on how they see the war ending. Israel says it won't end the war until Hamas' governing and military capabilities are dismantled, something it has failed to do in 19 months of war. Hamas says it is prepared to release all of the hostages for an end to the war and a long term truce with Israel.

The US-Houthi deal does not appear to cover Israel

Against the backdrop of the plans to intensify the campaign in Gaza, fighting has also escalated between Israel and Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The Houthis fired a ballistic missile earlier this week that landed on the grounds of Israel's main international airport. Israel responded with a series of airstrikes over two days, whose targets included the airport in Yemen's capital, Sanaa.

The Houthis have been striking Israel and targets in a main Red Sea shipping route since the war began in solidarity with the Palestinians. On Tuesday, Trump said the U.S. would halt a nearly two-monthlong

campaign against the Houthis in Yemen, after the rebel group agreed not to target U.S. ships.

Israel does not appear to be covered by the U.S.-Houthi agreement.

The Israeli official said the deal came as a surprise to Israel and that it was concerned by it because of what it meant for the continuation of hostilities between it and the Houthis.

## **The Latest: Catholic cardinals to sequester themselves in the Vatican for the start of the conclave**

By The Associated Press undefined

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Catholic cardinals will sequester themselves Wednesday behind the Vatican's medieval walls for the start of a conclave to elect the 267th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, a successor to Pope Francis who died in April at the age of 88.

The 133 cardinals from 70 countries will be locked inside the Sistine Chapel, where they will vote in secret and silence, a process designed to be both contemplative and free from outside interference. They will surrender their cellphones and airwaves around the Vatican will be jammed to prevent them from all communications until they find a new leader for the 1.4 billion-member church.

Here is the latest:

Rome on high alert ahead of the conclave

The Vatican's Swiss Guards and Italian carabinieri and police have been mobilized as Rome and the wider world hold their breath to see who will emerge from the conclave as the next pontiff.

As of Wednesday morning, when cardinals attended a special pre-conclave Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, police were carrying out enhanced checks of people entering St. Peter's Square.

Over 4,000 officers have been deployed, with an anti-drone system and signal jammers to block communication between the cardinals and the outside world once they enter into their secret assembly.

"The safety of the cardinals is a priority, but so is that of the faithful outside," said Fabio Ciciliano, head Italy's Civil Protection agency.

A plea to choose a pope who prizes unity in diversity

A senior cardinal has urged the cardinals who will vote in the conclave to elect a pope who prizes unity in diversity, and puts personal interests aside.

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the dean of the College of Cardinals, outlined the marching orders for the 133 men who will enter the Sistine Chapel later on Wednesday to begin voting to elect a new pope.

In his sermon at the final pre-conclave Mass at St. Peter's Basilica, Re reminded the cardinals that a conclave represented the highest human and church responsibility, and that they must set aside "every personal consideration."

He said the new pope should foster communion and unity within the church.

A final pre-conclave Mass

Cardinals have entered St. Peter's Basilica on Wednesday to celebrate the final Mass before the conclave to elect a new pope.

The dean of the College of Cardinals, Giovanni Battista Re, is celebrating the Mass and leading the prayers for cardinals to find the wisdom, counsel and understanding to choose a worthy new shepherd.

Re, 91, had presided at Francis' funeral two weeks ago, delivering a heartfelt sermon recalling history's first Latin American pope and the reforming 12-year papacy he oversaw.

Later in the day, the cardinals will sequester themselves in the Sistine Chapel to begin casting their ballots.

How the voting works

The electors cast paper ballots, and voting continues until one candidate receives a two-thirds majority, or 89 votes. After two rounds of voting, ballots are burned in a special stove — black smoke signals no decision, while white smoke means a new pope has been chosen.

The last few popes have been elected within a few days, but there is no formal deadline. Electors must be under 80, and are more geographically diverse than ever.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 45 of 80

They represent Catholicism's growing presence in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as its traditional power base in Europe.

Prayers in the Philippines for another pope good for poor people

Nearly 100 people in a slum in Manila, the Philippine capital, were praying Wednesday for the conclave to elect another pope who will reach out to the poor.

Rev. Robert Reyes told the crowd in a small chapel surrounded by shanties in suburban Quezon city that the next pope should be humble and inclusive, like Francis.

"Francis was such a unique person open to all, specially to those who are neglected, forgotten, marginalized, rejected and oppressed," said Reyes.

The Philippines, the largest Roman Catholic nation in Asia, has long been plagued by poverty and inequality.

## Conclave voters urged to elect a pope who seeks unity and avoids personal interest

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — With all the pomp, drama and solemnity that the Catholic Church can muster, 133 cardinals on Wednesday began the centuries-old ritual to elect a successor to Pope Francis, celebrating a morning Mass before opening the most geographically diverse conclave in the faith's 2,000-year history.

During the morning Mass, the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, urged the voters to find a pope who prizes unity and sets aside all personal interests. The world today needs a leader who can awaken consciences, he said.

From the altar of St. Peter's Basilica, Re prayed that they can agree "on the pope that our time needs" in their final set of marching orders before they enter the Sistine Chapel to begin voting.

Hailing from 70 countries, the cardinals are being sequestered from the outside world, their cellphones surrendered and airwaves around the Vatican jammed to prevent all communications until they find a new leader for the 1.4 billion-member church.

Francis named 108 of the 133 "princes of the church," choosing many pastors in his image from far-flung countries like Mongolia, Sweden and Tonga that had never had a cardinal before.

His decision to surpass the usual limit of 120 cardinal electors and include younger ones from the "global south" — often marginalized countries with lower economic clout — has injected an unusual degree of uncertainty in a process that is always full of mystery and suspense.

Many hadn't met one another until last week and lamented they needed more time to get to know one another, raising questions about how long it might take for one man to secure the two-thirds majority, or 89 ballots, necessary to become the 267th pope.

"Wait and see, a little patience, wait and see," said Cardinal Mario Zenari, the Vatican's ambassador to Syria as he arrived for the final day of pre-vote discussions.

A final Mass, then 'All out'

The cardinals began the day by participating in the Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, attended by Vatican officials and the public. The 91-year-old dean of the college, Re, prayed for cardinals to find the wisdom, counsel and understanding to elect a worthy new shepherd.

He prayed for a new pope for the church and all of humanity, who can "awaken the consciences of all and the moral and spiritual energies in today's society."

Wearing bright red vestments, the cardinals processed down the central aisle of the basilica as the Sistine Chapel's boys' choir sang. They took up their seats around the main altar, which lies above the traditional burial place of St. Peter, considered to be the first pope.

Re had presided at Francis' funeral, delivering a heartfelt sermon recalling history's first Latin American pope and the reforming 12-year papacy he oversaw.

At 4:30 p.m. (1430 GMT; 10:30 a.m. EDT) the cardinals walk solemnly into the frescoed Sistine Chapel, chanting the meditative "Litany of the Saints" and the Latin hymn "Veni Creator," imploring the saints and

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 46 of 80

the Holy Spirit to help them pick a pope.

Once there, they pledge to maintain secrecy about what is about to transpire and to not allow “any interference, opposition or any other form of intervention” from outsiders to influence their voting.

Standing before Michelangelo’s vision of heaven and hell in “The Last Judgment,” each cardinal places his hand on the Gospel and swears to carry out that duty “so help me God and these Holy Gospels, which I touch with my hand.”

The awesomeness of the chapel’s frescoes, and Michelangelo’s in particular, is meant to remind the cardinals of the weighty responsibility they bear. In his regulations for the conclave, St. John Paul II wrote that in the Sistine Chapel, “everything is conducive to an awareness of the presence of God, in whose sight each person will one day be judged.”

After the cardinals take their oaths, a senior cardinal delivers a meditation. The master of papal liturgical ceremonies, Archbishop Diego Ravelli, calls out “Extra omnes,” Latin for “all out.” Anyone not eligible to vote then leaves and the chapel doors close, allowing the work to begin.

The cardinals don’t have to take a first vote on Wednesday, but they usually do. Assuming no winner is found, the Vatican said black smoke could be expected out of the Sistine Chapel chimney at around 7 p.m.

The cardinals retire for the night and return Thursday morning. They can hold up to two ballots in the morning and two in the afternoon until a winner is found.

While cardinals this week said they expected a short conclave, it will likely take at least a few rounds of voting. For the past century, it has taken between three and eight ballots to find a pope. John Paul I — the pope who reigned for 33 days in 1978 — was elected on the third ballot. His successor, John Paul II, needed eight. Francis was elected on the fifth in 2013.

## Lobbying before the conclave

While the cardinals are supposed to resist any “secular” influences in their choice, such lobbying abounded in Rome in the days before the conclave as various groups reminded cardinals of what ordinary Catholics want in a leader.

Young Catholics penned an open letter reminding cardinals that there is no church without young people, women and the laity. Conservative Catholic media slipped cardinals copies of a glossy book containing their assessments of contenders. Survivors of clergy sexual abuse warned cardinals that they would be held accountable if they failed to find a leader who will crack down on decades of abuse and cover-up.

Advocates for women’s ordination were sending pink smoke signals over the Vatican to demand that women be allowed to be priests.

## Challenges facing a new pope

There are any number of challenges facing a new pope and weighing on the cardinals, above all whether to continue and consolidate Francis’ progressive legacy on promoting women, LGBTQ+ acceptance, the environment and migrants, or roll it back to try to unify a church that became more polarized during his pontificate. The clergy sex abuse scandal hung over the pre-conclave talks.

Since Francis chose 80% of the voters, continuity is likely, but the form it might take is uncertain.

As a result, identifying front-runners has been a challenge. But some names keep appearing on lists of “papabile,” or cardinals having the qualities to be pope.

— Cardinal Pietro Parolin, 70, is a leading Italian, by nature of his office. He was Francis’ secretary of state, the Vatican No. 2, so known to every cardinal.

— Filipino Cardinal Luis Tagle, 67, is a top candidate to be history’s first Asian pope. He had a similarly high-profile job, heading the Vatican’s evangelization office responsible for the Catholic Church in much of the developing world.

— Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo, 72, the archbishop of Budapest, is a leading candidate representing the more conservative wing of the church.

## Those devoted to bullfighting in Mexico feel recent bans harm a sacred tradition

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

AGUASCALIENTES, Mexico (AP) — Mexican matador Diego Silveti performs a ritual ahead of each bullfight. In each hotel room where he dresses in the garment that may bring him glory or death, he sets up an altar where he leaves his wedding band and prays before heading to the arena.

"By leaving my ring behind, I'm telling God: Here's everything I am as a father, a husband, a son and a brother," Silveti said. "I commit to what I was born to be — a bullfighter."

He last encountered a bull in late April in Aguascalientes, a state in central Mexico where bullfighting is considered a cultural heritage. Weeks before, though, Mexico City lawmakers banned violent bullfighting in the nation's capital.

While matadors there are still allowed to fight bulls, piercing their muscles with laces or running a sword through their body is prohibited under that ban.

Animal rights advocates celebrated the ruling and Environment Secretary Julia Álvarez said the lawmakers made history. But matadors like Silveti, as well as fans and cattle breeders, contend this long-time Spanish tradition bears a profound significance that would be undermined if bulls can't be killed in the arena.

"What they propose goes against the essence and the rituals of bullfighting," Silveti said. "It's a veiled prohibition that opposes the ways in which it has been done since its origins."

Bullfighting in Mexico traces its roots to Spain

The European conquerors of Mesoamerican territories in the 16th century brought along Catholicism and cultural practices that are now intertwined with Indigenous customs.

Researcher and bullfighting fan Antonio Rivera lives in Yucatán, a southeastern state where bullfights reflect ancient Mayan traditions.

"In local celebrations, the roots of bullfighting are sacrificial rites," Rivera said. "Ancient cultures believed the gods requested sacrifices and blood fertilizes the earth."

Every year, the Yucatán peninsula celebrates about 2,000 events featuring bulls, he said.

In 2021, Yucatán's Congress declared bullfighting part of its cultural heritage. It was a way to keep the ancestral memory alive, the official declaration said, and a way to honor its people's identity.

"When I see a bull, I feel an immense devotion," Rivera said. "It's a mirror of myself. It's like looking at a living museum containing all the rituals from our collective memory."

Like father, like son

Instead of soccer balls, Silveti grew up playing with "muletas" and "capotes" — the brightly colored capes matadors use to channel the bull's charge.

His father was one of Mexico's most beloved and renowned bullfighters. Until his death in 2003, fans called him "King David" and many remember him fondly when his son is in the ring.

"No one asked us where we wanted to be born," Silveti said. "The love towards the bull and the feast of bullfighting has been my life and my ancestors' life."

His grandfather and his father before him were also matadors. Silveti emphasizes that his sons — now ages 6 and 2 — will decide their profession, but he would proudly support them if they followed in his footsteps.

Neither the boys nor his wife watch him at the bullring, but Silveti conveys his passion in other ways. His family often visit ranches where bulls are breed. Occasionally, with his sons in his arms, Silveti bullfights baby cows.

"My youngest loves it," the matador said. "When he watches a bullfight, he plays with a napkin or a cloth and says 'Olé!' How is that possible?"

Each bullfight has its rituals

"The King" was no longer alive when Silveti became a professional bullfighter in Spain in 2011, but he senses his father's presence constantly.

"I feel his spirit in my soul," Silveti said. "On certain days, when I'm alone and focused, I try to speak to



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 48 of 80

him and follow his example.”

As a child, Silveti never watched his father at the ring. He stayed home with his mother and brothers. With no social media at hand to monitor live updates, they asked God to protect him.

Many matadors, like Silveti, pray ahead of each bullfight. At the Aguascalientes plaza, the Rev. Ricardo Cuéllar blesses them.

“My job is to attend the religious needs of the bullfighting family,” Cuéllar said. “Not only matadors, but also aficionados, those selling food at the arena and the bullfighters’ assistants.”

According to Tauromaquia Mexicana, Mexico’s biggest bullfighting organization, more than 20,000 jobs depend on this tradition.

A take on bulls

One of the organizations opposed to violent bullfighting, Cultura sin Tortura, was pleased by the Mexico City measure and said it would continue its efforts elsewhere. Another half a dozen Mexican states have also imposed bans.

“We will keep advocating for the prohibition, given that no animal must be seen as entertainment,” the group said on social media.

Cattle breeders, meanwhile, say they view bulls not as sources of income but as fascinating creatures they spend years caring for. Manuel Sescosse, who owns a ranch, said that breeding this specific type of bull is as thrilling as bullfighting.

“They must look good at the arena,” Sescosse said. “Offensive but noble. They must charge and simultaneously spark a sensitivity driving the crowds to deep emotion.”

The perfect bull for a fight is 4 or 5 years old and weighs between 900-1,200 pounds.

According to Sescosse, each rainy season a bull is mated with 30 cows and their offspring are carefully monitored. Most receive a name. All are fed exclusively with grass and large areas are secured for them to exercise and grow strong. At the proper age, only a handful will be selected for bullfighting.

“You watch them since they are born and become calves and grow,” Sescosse said. “That affection grows when they turn out good for a bullfight, leave a mark and are revered.”

Long live Centinela

Not everyone attending bullfights is drawn to the sacred aspect, but some do find deeper purpose.

Daniel Salinas says matadors follow strict norms to demonstrate their appreciation toward the bull’s life, even as they end it. “We celebrate death deriving from a rite in which a human being confronts a wild animal,” he said.

At Aguascalientes, when his second bull died, Silveti caressed him and respectfully closed his eyes before stepping out of the arena.

“I’m aware the bull is offering me everything he has and I’m also willing to present him with my life,” Silveti said. “I’ve been gored 13 times and I’ve taken those hits willingly because I do this for a bigger purpose.”

It rarely happens, but when a bull has a unique, artistic connection with its matador, his life is spared. Instead of a sword, he gets a “banderilla” (a dart-like stick). Then he returns to his ranch and breeds a progeny that fans will revere.

Following Silveti’s performance in Aguascalientes, Spanish matador Alejandro Talavante faced one of those bulls.

Centinela — pitch-black hide, four years old, 1,140 pounds — won the fans’ hearts as Talavante’s passes made him spin and dance. The matador aimed to kill more than once, but the crowd pleaded for him not to. And in the end, the judge indulged.

Centinela gave a final, vigorous run and vanished through the tunnel while thousands cheered. It was a day of glory for him as well.

## Lawmakers seek to rein in citizen ballot initiatives with new requirements for petitions

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Citizen activists supporting a public vote on important issues could have to brush up on their reading, writing and arithmetic if they want to get their initiatives on next year's ballot in some states.

A new Arkansas law will bar initiative ballot titles written above an eighth-grade reading level. And canvassers will have to verify that petition signers have either read the ballot title or had it read aloud to them.

In South Dakota, sponsors will need to make sure their petition titles appears in 14-point type on the front page and 16-point font on the back, where people typically sign.

And in Florida, volunteers will have to register with the state if they gather more than 25 petition signatures from outside their family or risk facing felony charges punishable by up to five years in prison.

Across about dozen states, roughly 40 bills restricting or revamping the citizen initiative process have passed at least one legislative chamber this year, according to a review by The Associated Press. Many already have been signed into law.

Some advocates for the initiative process are alarmed by the trend.

"Globally, as there's movements to expand direct democracy. In the United States it's contracting," said Dane Waters, chair of the Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California, who has advised ballot campaigns in over 20 nations.

Most of the new restrictions come from Republican lawmakers in states where petitions have been used to place abortion rights, marijuana legalization and other progressive initiatives on the ballot. GOP lawmakers contend their measures are shielding state constitutions from outside interests.

"This is not a bill to restrict. It is a bill to protect — to make sure that our constitutional system is one of integrity, and that it's free of fraud," said state Sen. Jennifer Bradley of Florida, where the new initiative requirements already have been challenged in court.

A right in some states, but not others

About half the U.S. states allow people to bypass their legislatures by gathering signatures to place proposed laws or constitutional amendments on the ballot.

Since Oregon voters first used the process in 1904, a total of 2,744 citizen initiatives have appeared on statewide ballots, with 42% winning approval, according to the Initiative and Referendum Institute.

But the process has long caused tension between voters and their elected representatives.

Lawmakers often perceive the initiative process as "an assault on their power and authority, and they want to limit it," Waters said. "They view it, in my opinion, as a nuisance — a gnat that keeps bothering them."

Restrictions on petition canvassers

Because initiative petitions require thousands of signatures to qualify for the ballot, groups sponsoring them often pay people to solicit signatures outside shopping centers and public places. Some states now prohibit payments based on the number of signatures gathered.

States also are trying to restrict who can circulate petitions. A new Arkansas law requires paid petition canvassers to live in the state. And a new Montana law will make petition circulators wear badges displaying their name and home state.

The new Florida law expanding registration requirements for petition circulators also requires them to undergo state training and bars canvassers who are noncitizens, nonresidents or felons without their voting rights restored.

More requirements for petition signers

In addition to providing their name, address and birth date, people signing initiative petitions in Florida also will have to provide either their Florida driver's license, state identification card or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

That information is not required in other states, said Kelly Hall, executive director of the Fairness Project, a progressive group that has backed dozens of ballot initiatives in states. Hall said people concerned about privacy might hesitate to sign petitions.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 50 of 80

"I work in ballot measures, and I deeply support many of the things that folks have tried to put on the ballot in Florida," Hall said, "and I don't know if I could bring myself to do that – that's a very prohibitive requirement."

Making the fine print larger

Many states already prescribe a particular format for initiative petitions. South Dakota's new mandate for specific font sizes was prompted by allegations that some people got duped into signing a petition for abortion rights last year, said sponsoring state Sen. Amber Hulse, a Republican.

Printing the ballot title in large type "might make it harder for some issues to get on the ballot if people know what they're signing. But that's actually a good thing," Hulse said.

More power for elected officials

Before they can collect signatures, petition sponsors must get approval from state officials. New measures in several states give those officials greater authority.

New Arkansas laws allow the attorney general to reject initiatives written above an eighth-grade reading level or which conflict with the U.S. Constitution or federal law. Utah's lieutenant governor, who already can reject unconstitutional petitions, now also will be able to turn away petitions that are unlikely to provide adequate funding for their proposed laws.

A new Missouri law gives greater power to the secretary of state, instead of judges, to rewrite ballot summaries struck down as being insufficient or unfair.

A higher threshold for voter approval

Most states require only a majority vote to amend their constitutions, though Colorado requires 55% approval and Florida 60%.

Republican-led legislatures in North Dakota and South Dakota approved measures this year proposing a 60% public vote to approve future constitutional amendments, and Utah lawmakers backed a 60% threshold for tax measures. All three propositions still must go before voters, where they will need only a majority to pass.

Voters rejected similar proposals in Ohio, Arkansas and South Dakota in recent years, but they approved a 60% threshold for tax measures in Arizona.

Lawmakers contend the move has merit.

"Raising the threshold can help protect the constitution from being manipulated by special interest groups or out-of-state activists," North Dakota House Majority Leader Mike Lefor said earlier this year.

## Most travelers must have a REAL ID now to fly within the US

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — REAL ID requirements for those flying within the United States begin Wednesday after nearly 20 years of delays.

The day ahead of the deadline, people lined up at government offices across the country to secure their compliant IDs. In Chicago, officials established a Real ID Supercenter for walk-in appointments, while officials in California and elsewhere planned to continue offering extended hours for the crush of appointments.

"I'm here today so I won't be right on the deadline, which is tomorrow," said Marion Henderson, who applied for her REAL ID on Tuesday in Jackson, Mississippi.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem on Tuesday assured people who don't yet have a REAL ID but need to take a domestic flight Wednesday that they will be able to fly after clearing additional identity checks.

Some complained about the need to secure the ID after waiting in line for hours.

Michael Aceto waited in line at a DMV in King of Prussia, Philadelphia, for about two and a half hours Tuesday before getting his REAL ID.

"It's a pain in the butt. It's really a lot of time. Everybody's got to take off from work to be here," he said. "It's a big waste of time as far as I'm concerned."

The Transportation Security Administration warned people who don't have identification that complies



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 51 of 80

with REAL ID requirements to arrive early at the airport and be prepared for advanced screening to avoid causing delays.

The new requirements have been the subject of many Reddit threads and Facebook group discussions in recent weeks, with numerous people expressing confusion about whether they can travel without a REAL ID, sharing details about wait times and seeking advice on how to meet the requirements.

Noem told a congressional panel that 81% of travelers already have REAL IDs. She said security checkpoints will also be accepting passports and tribal identification, like they have already been doing.

Those who still lack an identification that complies with the REAL ID law "may be diverted to a different line, have an extra step," Noem said.

"But people will be allowed to fly," she said. "We will make sure it's as seamless as possible."

REAL ID is a federally compliant state-issued license or identification card that Homeland Security says is a more secure form of identification. It was a recommendation by the 9/11 Commission and signed into law in 2005. It was supposed to be rolled out in 2008 but the implementation had been repeatedly delayed.

"The whole idea here is to better validate those individuals that were encountering a checkpoint to ensure they are who exactly they say they are," said Thomas Carter, TSA's Federal Security Director in New Jersey.

Carter said those without a REAL ID should give themselves extra time to clear security.

"If they do that, I do not have a belief that this will cause people to miss their flights if they take that additional time in," he said.

Besides serving as a valid form of identification to fly domestically, people will also need a REAL ID to access certain federal buildings and facilities.

State government offices that issue driver's licenses and state IDs have seen a significant increase in demand for REAL ID and some have extended their office hours to meet the demand. Some officials have recommended people wait for a while to get REAL ID compliant licenses and cards if they don't have flight planned in the next few months.

"We are encouraging people who have passports or other REAL ID-compliant documents and people who don't have travel plans in the next few months to wait until after the current rush to apply for a REAL ID," said Erin Johnson, a spokesperson with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Johnson said that the department has seen a significant increase in demand for REAL ID in recent weeks. In February, there were more than 48,000 applications for a REAL ID; that has nearly doubled to over 99,000 in April, she said.

## Top US officials will meet with Chinese delegation in Switzerland in first major talks of trade war

By ZEKE MILLER, FATIMA HUSSEIN and DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top U.S. officials are set to meet with a high-level Chinese delegation this weekend in Switzerland in the first major talks between the two nations since President Donald Trump sparked a trade war with stiff tariffs on imports.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer will meet with their counterparts in Geneva in the most-senior known conversations between the two countries in months, the Trump administration announced Tuesday. It comes amid growing U.S. market worry over the impact of the tariffs on the prices and supply of consumer goods.

No country has been hit harder by Trump's trade war than China, the world's biggest exporter and second largest economy. When Trump announced his "Liberation Day" tariffs on April 2, China retaliated with tariffs of its own, a move that Trump viewed as demonstrating a lack of respect. The tariffs on each other's goods have been mounting since then, with the U.S. tariffs against China now at 145% and China tariffs on the U.S. at 125%.

American firms have already begun canceling orders from China, postponing expansion plans and hunkering down as a result of the tariff war.

After plans for the talks had been announced, Bessent said on Fox News' "The Ingraham Angle" that as

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 52 of 80

the U.S. has engaged in negotiations with various trading partners, "China has been the missing piece."

The current situation, he said, "isn't sustainable ... especially on the Chinese side." He added that current high tariff levels were "the equivalent of an embargo. We don't want to decouple. What we want is fair trade."

Trump had claimed previously that the U.S. and China were holding negotiations on lowering tariffs, which Beijing has denied, saying Trump must first lower his stiff tariffs.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry on Tuesday confirmed the meeting between its vice premier and Bessent in Switzerland.

"The Chinese side carefully evaluated the information from the U.S. side and decided to agree to have contact with the U.S. side after fully considering global expectations, Chinese interests and calls from U.S. businesses and consumers," said a ministry spokesperson.

The spokesperson said China would not "sacrifice its principles or global equity or justice in seeking any agreement."

Most economists have said the cost of the tariffs would get passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices for autos, groceries, housing and other goods. And the higher prices are already becoming a burden on U.S. consumers, who are in the biggest economic funk since the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, economists say the risk of a recession is growing.

Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade official and now vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute, said the upcoming meeting is a welcome development.

"As the first face to face meeting between senior U.S. and Chinese officials since Trump's inauguration, it's an important opportunity to have initial talks on unwinding some tariffs, mapping out a path forward, as well as raising concerns," Cutler said. "We should not expect any quick victories — this will be a process that will take time."

In Switzerland, Bessent and Greer also plan to meet with Swiss President Karin Keller-Sutter, according to readouts from their respective offices.

Both Greer and Bessent had talked with their counterparts before the beginning of the trade war.

Greer told Fox News Channel last month that he spoke with his Chinese counterpart for over an hour before the trade war started. "I thought it was constructive," he said, adding: "This is not a plan just to encircle China. It's a plan to fix the American economy, to have a greater share of manufacturing as GDP, to have real wages go up, to be producing things instead of having an economy that's financed by the government."

And Bessent in February spoke with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng "to exchange views on the bilateral economic relationship," according to a Treasury news release.

## Trump says only 21 hostages held by Hamas in Gaza now believed to be alive

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday that three hostages held by Hamas in Gaza have died, leaving only 21 believed to be still living.

"As of today, it's 21, three have died," Trump said of the hostages being held by Hamas, noting until recently it had been 24 people believed to be living. He did not elaborate on the identities of those now believed to be dead, nor how he had come to learn of their deaths. "There's 21, plus a lot of dead bodies," Trump said.

One American, Edan Alexander, had been among the 24 hostages believed to be alive, with the bodies of several other Americans also held by Hamas after its Oct. 7, 2023, assault on Israel.

The president's comments came as Israel approved plans Monday to seize the Gaza Strip and to stay in the Palestinian territory for an unspecified amount of time, in a bid to recover the hostages and try to fulfill its war aims of destroying Hamas. If implemented, the move would vastly expand Israel's operations there and likely draw fierce international opposition.

Separately, the State Department said Tuesday that the U.S. embassy helped 17 U.S. citizens and legal

permanent residents leave Gaza on Monday.

"We thank our partners in the Israeli and Jordanian governments who made this departure possible," the department said.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Jordan's King Abdullah II on Monday in Washington.

## Israel says it has disabled Yemen's main airport with airstrikes against rebels

By ELENA BECATOROS and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military bombed the airport in Yemen's rebel-held capital Tuesday, claiming to have disabled the airfield in an attack that left commercial aircraft burning on the tarmac as its fighter jets struck power plants and other targets.

The rare daytime attack on Sanaa, held by Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels since 2014, came as part of a second day of Israeli airstrikes in response to a Houthi ballistic missile striking the grounds of Ben-Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv. The Houthis described the Israeli attacks as killing at least seven people and wounding 74 others over two days.

But the future of American attacks on the Houthis, who have pledged to continue to target Israel, was thrown into question after U.S. President Donald Trump said America would stop striking the Houthis. Trump described the rebels as having "capitulated" and agreed to stop targeting shipping in the Red Sea, though the rebels did not specifically acknowledge such a pledge.

"We indirectly informed the Americans that the continued escalation will affect the criminal Trump's visit to the region, and we have not informed them of anything else," said Mahdi al-Mashat, head of the Houthi's supreme political council, in a statement carried by the rebel-controlled SABA news agency early Wednesday. Trump is due to visit Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates next week.

Badr al-Busaidi, the foreign minister of Oman who mediated between the U.S. and the Houthis, also is mediating between America and Iran over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program.

"Today's news about the situation in the Red Sea means that diplomatic efforts have lead to the end to the conflict between the US and Ansar Allah in Yemen," al-Busaidi wrote on the social platform X, using another name for the Houthis. "They will no longer target each other, ensuring freedom of navigation for international commercial shipping in the Red Sea."

Israeli attack leaves Sanaa airport in ruins

The strikes in Sanaa came shortly after Israel's military warned on social media that people should leave the area immediately, saying that "failure to evacuate the area endangers your lives." The explosions from the strikes echoed across Sanaa, sending the public fleeing to find cover as thick black smoke rose over the skyline.

The Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel later aired footage from the airport, showing its terminal's windows blown out, with concrete blocks exposed and a fire burning inside. On its runway, aircraft associated with the state carrier Yemenia burned.

The airline later said three of its planes had been "taken out of service" in the attack, though those abroad in Jordan were untouched. The Israeli strike came after its flight to Amman on Tuesday took off.

Other strikes hit a cement plant and power plants, the Houthis and Israelis both said. On Monday, Israel targeted Houthi rebels in Yemen's Red Sea province of Hodeida, hitting a key port there and another cement factory.

Israel's defense minister, Israel Katz, said the strike should be seen as a warning to the "head of the Iranian octopus," which he said bears direct responsibility for attacks by the Houthis against Israel.

The Israeli airstrikes involved some 50 bombs and "dozens" of aircraft, the Israeli military said. It also required mid-air refueling to reach Sanaa, showing their reach also to Iran as Israel has threatened to strike Tehran's nuclear enrichment sites.

Houthi attacks on Israel linked to war in Gaza

Sunday's missile attack struck an access road near Israel's main airport near Tel Aviv, briefly halting flights



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 54 of 80

and commuter traffic. Four people were slightly injured. It was the first time a missile struck the grounds of Ben-Gurion airport since the October 2023 start of the war in Gaza. While most missiles launched by the Houthis have been intercepted, some missiles and drones have penetrated Israel's air defenses.

The Houthis have targeted Israel throughout the war in Gaza in solidarity with Palestinians there, while also targeting commercial and naval vessels on the Red Sea. That raised their profile both at home amid Yemen's decadelong war and abroad as the last member of Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" capable of launching regular attacks on Israel.

The U.N. special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, said the latest strikes carried out on Israel and Yemen's airport marked a "grave escalation in an already fragile and volatile regional context." He urged the parties to show restraint.

In March, Trump had vowed to use "overwhelming lethal force" after the Houthis said they would resume attacks on ships sailing off Yemen in response to Israel's mounting another blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Trump told reporters Tuesday that the U.S. "will stop the bombings. They have capitulated, but more importantly, we will take their word that they say they will not be blowing up ships anymore." Trump added, "I think that's very positive. They were knocking out a lot of ships."

Data from Lloyd's List suggests larger shipping firms are slowly beginning to return to the Red Sea, though traffic through the waterway that once saw \$1 trillion in goods a year pass through it remains low.

Israel has repeatedly targeted the Houthis. It struck Hodeida and its oil infrastructure in July after a Houthi drone attack killed one person and wounded 10 in Tel Aviv.

In September, Israel struck Hodeida again, killing at least four people after a missile targeted Ben-Gurion airport as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was returning to the country. In December, Israeli strikes killed at least nine people in Hodeida.

Also Tuesday, Israel continued its strikes in Gaza. At least 18 people were killed, including children, when a school sheltering displaced people was hit in Bureij, according to Khalil Al- Dokran, spokesperson for al-Aqsa Hospital, where some of the bodies were taken.

## **Smokey Robinson accused by former housekeepers of sexual assault and rape**

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Four former housekeepers of Smokey Robinson allege in a lawsuit filed Tuesday that the Motown music luminary repeatedly sexually assaulted and raped them while they worked for him.

The suit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court seeks at least \$50 million in damages over the alleged assaults, which the women say took place between 2007 and 2024, and labor violations including a hostile work environment, illegally long hours and lack of pay.

A message seeking comment from a representative for the 85-year-old Robinson was not immediately answered.

The four women each say that Robinson would wait until he was alone with them in his Los Angeles house then sexually assault and rape them over their objections.

"We believe that Mr. Robinson is a serial and sick rapist, and must be stopped," the women's attorney John Harris said at a news conference.

All said they eventually quit over the assaults, though in some cases it took several years. And all said they feared coming forward over fears of retaliation, public shame and possible effects on their immigration status.

"Having to tell their husband and children of these despicable actions left them filled with shame and embarrassment," Harris said. "So throughout their dreadful experiences with Mr. Robinson, all four women remained silent."

He said as low-wage earners, they also all feared "missing a payday, and not being able to afford rent or buy food for their families."

All four women withheld their legal names citing privacy concerns and are identified as Jane Does in

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 55 of 80

court documents. They appeared at the news conference with their attorneys, but did not speak, and covered their faces with masks.

The lawsuit also names Robinson's wife Frances Robinson as a defendant, alleging that she enabled his behavior despite knowing about past sexual misconduct. It also blames her for the hostile work environment, saying she berated them with language that included ethnic slurs.

One woman said she worked for the Robinsons from 2012 until 2024, and was assaulted at least 20 times in that span. Another said she worked for them from 2014 until 2020, and was assaulted at least 23 times. Another said she worked for them for a year before quitting in 2024 and was assaulted at least seven times. The fourth woman, who said she also acted as Frances Robinson's personal assistant, hairdresser and cook, worked for them for 18 years before resigning in 2024. She cited similar experiences to the other women, but did not say how often she was assaulted.

The women, some of whom worked for the Robinsons at the same time as each other, also kept stories of the assaults from one another, but are now bonding over their experience, the attorneys said. They declined to give details at the news conference about how they came forward and learned there were others.

The suit seeks damages based on sexual battery, assault, false imprisonment, gender violence and other allegations.

"Obviously, no amount of money can compensate these women for what Mr. Robinson put them through," Harris said. But he said the \$50 million was warranted "based on the gravity of Mr. Robinson's despicable and reprehensible misconduct."

Plaintiffs' attorney Herbert Hayden said that while they felt the assaults are worthy of criminal investigation, the women have not filed police reports, based on the same fears that kept them from coming forward.

Robinson, a member of both the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame, was among the biggest hitmakers of the 1960s — both with his group the Miracles and as a solo artist, with songs including "Tears of a Clown" and "The Tracks of My Tears."

He was a central part of the Motown Records music machine in his hometown of Detroit as an artist, producer and songwriter for other artists.

## 5 people charged after migrant boat capsized, killing 3, including 14-year-old boy from India

By JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Federal officials filed charges Tuesday against five people in connection to a boat carrying migrants that capsized a day earlier off San Diego's Pacific coast, killing three people, including a 14-year-old boy from India.

The boy's 10-year-old sister is still missing at sea and is presumed dead, the U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego said in a statement. Their parents were among four people who were injured and taken to the hospital, including the father, who is in a coma.

The other two killed were from Mexico, including an 18-year-old boy and another man, according to the Mexican consulate. The 18-year-old's girlfriend, who is 16, remains hospitalized after water filled her lungs, the consulate said. The consulate is working with the families in Mexico to repatriate the bodies of those who died.

Nine people were initially reported missing. All but the 10-year-old girl were found late Monday by Border Patrol agents conducting operations in the San Diego area, officials said.

The search efforts by the U.S. Coast Guard stopped late Monday. Crews combed the area via helicopter and a cutter for hours after the boat flipped shortly after sunrise about 35 miles (56 kilometers) north of the Mexico border. Officials described the skiff as a panga, a small wooden open-air boat used to fish but also commonly used by smugglers to bring people into the U.S. from Mexico.

Two Mexican citizens were arrested at the beach near where the boat overturned. They were charged with human smuggling resulting in death, a crime that carries a maximum penalty of death or life in prison.

Border Patrol agents found eight migrants after they managed to make it to shore. The agents also

identified vehicles with drivers who were waiting to pick up the migrants as part of the smuggling scheme, according to court documents.

U.S. authorities arrested the three drivers, all Mexican citizens, and charged them with unlawfully transporting migrants, according to court documents. One had been deported in 2023 from the U.S.

It was unclear if any of the defendants had defense attorneys, and they could not be reached for comment. The Mexican consulate said they have not been contacted by any of the accused yet to ask for legal help.

Seven of the eight migrants are also from Mexico and were interviewed by the consular staff.

"The drowning deaths of these children are a heartbreaking reminder of how little human traffickers care about the costs of their deadly business," U.S. Attorney Adam Gordon said. "We are committed to seeking justice for these vulnerable victims, and to holding accountable any traffickers responsible for their deaths."

Migrants are increasingly turning to the risky alternative offered by smugglers to travel by sea to avoid heavily guarded land borders, including off California's coast. Pangas leave the Mexican coast in the dead of night.

In 2023, eight people were killed when two migrant smuggling boats approached a San Diego beach in heavy fog. One capsized in the surf. It was one of the deadliest maritime smuggling cases in waters off the U.S. coast.

A federal judge sentenced a San Diego man to 18 years in prison in 2022 for piloting a small vessel overloaded with 32 migrants that smashed apart in powerful surf off San Diego's coast, killing three people and injuring more than two dozen others.

## **Kentucky Derby winner Sovereignty won't run in the Preakness, dashing Triple Crown possibility**

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

Kentucky Derby winner Sovereignty will not run in the Preakness Stakes, officials announced Tuesday, meaning there won't be a Triple Crown champion for a seventh consecutive year.

"We received a call today from trainer Bill Mott that Sovereignty will not be competing in the Preakness," said Mike Rogers, executive VP of 1/ST Racing, which operates the Preakness. "We extend our congratulations to the connections of Sovereignty and respect their decision."

Mott told Preakness officials the plan will be to enter Sovereignty in the Belmont Stakes, the third jewel of the Triple Crown, on June 7 at Saratoga Race Course in upstate New York. Mott on Sunday morning had foreshadowed skipping the Preakness in the name of long-term interests.

"We want to do what's best for the horse," he told reporters at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky. "Of course, you always think about a Triple Crown, and that's not something we're not going to think about."

Sovereignty won a muddy Derby with jockey Junior Alvarado at odds of 7-1 by passing favorite Journalism down the stretch.

Owner Godolphin's U.S. director of bloodstock, Michael Banahan, deferred an explanation to Mott in a text message sent to The Associated Press, calling it a team decision that "both feel it's the right direction for the horse going forward." A message left for Mott was not immediately returned.

This is the fifth time since Justify won all three races in 2018 that the Preakness will go on without a true shot at a Triple Crown. Elevated winner Country House and Maximum Security, who was disqualified for interference, each did not participate in 2019, the races were run out of order in 2020, Bob Baffert-trained Medina Spirit was DQ'd for a positive drug test in 2021 and long shot Rich Strike was held out in 2022 to rest him for the previously planned five weeks.

Mage finished third in the Preakness in 2023, and Mystik Dan was second last year after his owner and trainer also were initially reluctant to run him. The two-week turnaround from the Kentucky Derby to the Preakness and changes in modern racing have sparked debate around the sport about spacing out the races.

Prominent owner Mike Repole earlier Tuesday posted on social media a proposal to move the Belmont to second in the Triple Crown order, four weeks after the Kentucky Derby and sliding the Preakness back



further with the aim of keeping more of the top horses involved.

"The Preakness being run two weeks after the Kentucky Derby, in this new day and age in racing, shows the lack of vision and leadership needed to evolve this sport," Repole wrote. "I expect the top three finishers of this year's Derby to skip the Preakness and go right to the Belmont."

No decision has been made on second-place finisher Journalism, who was the Derby favorite, or third-place Baeza for the 150th running of the Preakness, the last at Pimlico Race Course before it is knocked down and rebuilt. The plan is for the 2026 Preakness to take place at Laurel Park between Baltimore and Washington while Pimlico is under construction.

## Trump, Carney faceoff in Oval Office leaves gaping differences on tariffs, 51st state

By ROB GILLIES and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney faced off in the Oval Office on Tuesday and showed no signs of retreating from their gaping differences in an ongoing trade war that has shattered decades of trust between the two countries.

The two kept it civil, but as for Trump's calls to make Canada the 51st state, Carney insisted his nation was "not for sale" and Trump shot back, "time will tell."

Asked by a reporter if there was anything Carney could tell him to lift his tariffs of as much as 25% on Canada, Trump bluntly said: "No."

The U.S. president added for emphasis, "Just the way it is."

Carney acknowledged that no bit of rhetoric on tariffs would be enough to sway Trump, saying that "this is a bigger discussion."

"There are much bigger forces involved," the Canadian leader continued. "And this will take some time and some discussions. And that's why we're here, to have those discussions."

The meeting between the two leaders showcased the full spectrum of Trump's unique mix of aggression, hospitality and stubbornness.

Shortly before Carney's arrival, Trump insulted Canada by posting on social media that the United States didn't need "ANYTHING" from its northern neighbor, only to then turn on the charm and praise Carney's election win in person before showing his obstinance on matters of policy substance.

Carney won the job of prime minister by promising to confront the increased aggression shown by Trump, even as he has preserved the calm demeanor of an economist who has led the central banks of both Canada and the United Kingdom.

At times, Carney struggled to interject his views and raised his hand to talk as Trump held forth at length and veered between topics, touching on California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, Carney's predecessor, Justin Trudeau, and teasing a "great" upcoming announcement that's "not necessarily on trade."

Trump offended Canada's sense of pride and friendship by saying he wants to make Canada the 51st U.S. state and levying steep tariffs against an essential partner in the manufacturing of autos and the supply of oil, electricity and other goods. The outrage provoked by Trump enabled Carney's Liberal Party to score a stunning comeback victory last month as the trade war and attacks on Canadian sovereignty have outraged voters.

Trump said the two would not discuss making Canada part of the U.S., even as he insisted the idea would lead to lower taxes for Canadians.

"It's not for sale," Carney said. "It won't be for sale. Ever. But the opportunity is in the partnership and what we can build together."

Trump persisted by saying that the United States did not want to buy autos from Canada, even if the vehicles were also assembled in America. The U.S. leader insisted that the \$63 billion trade deficit in goods — which he inflated to \$200 billion — was a subsidy that needed to come an end.

The meeting never devolved into the outburst that the public saw in Trump's meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was berated by the U.S. president and his team for not being suffi-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 58 of 80

ciently deferential. Nor did it have the ease of Trump's sit down with the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who invited Trump for a visit provided by King Charles III.

Carney later described his conversation with Trump as "wide ranging" and "constructive," telling reporters that the prospect is there for positive negotiations but there would be "zigs and zags." Carney said he stressed the value that Canadian companies and factories created for U.S. automakers while stressing that it was unfair to assume one meeting could resolve any differences.

"I wouldn't have expected white smoke coming out of this meeting," Carney said after the Tuesday meeting, referencing the signal that a new pope has been selected.

Carney said that he privately asked Trump to stop calling Canada the 51st state during their meeting. But when pressed on how Trump responded, the Canadian prime minister said: "He's the president. He's his own person."

Trump was later asked if he would give Carney the same "governor" nickname that he had put on Trudeau. The nickname was a slight meant to imply that Canada's leader would eventually be just one of many U.S. governors.

"As far as calling him Gov. Carney, no, I haven't done that yet, and maybe I won't," Trump said. "I did have a lot of fun with Trudeau. But I think this is, this is a big step. It's a good step up for Canada."

Trump added that the meeting with Carney had been "great" and that he thought the ongoing relationship would be "strong."

A senior Canadian government official said the president asked Carney his perspective on a variety of foreign policy issues including Iran, Russia, Ukraine and China. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter, said Trump was looking forward to the G-7 meeting in Alberta, Canada.

The stakes of the meeting were high and the messages beforehand mixed. Trump told reporters on Monday that he wasn't quite sure why Carney was visiting.

"I'm not sure what he wants to see me about," Trump said. "But I guess he wants to make a deal."

U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick further stoked doubts about their interest in repairing the relationship with Canada in a Monday interview on Fox Business Network's "Kudlow" show.

Asked if the U.S. could make a deal with Canada, Lutnick called the country a "socialist regime" that has been "basically feeding off America." Lutnick said Tuesday's meeting would be "fascinating."

Carney, at a Friday news conference ahead of his trip, said the talks would focus on immediate trade pressures and the broader economic and national security relationships. He said his "government would fight to get the best deal for Canada" and "take all the time necessary" to do so, even as Canada pursues a parallel set of talks to deepen relations with other allies and lessen its commitments with the U.S.

Trump has maintained that the U.S. doesn't need anything from Canada. He is actively going after a Canadian auto sector built largely by U.S. companies, saying, "They're stopping work in Mexico, and they're stopping work in Canada, and they're all moving here." He also said the U.S. doesn't need Canada's energy — though nearly one-fourth of the oil that the U.S. consumes daily comes from the province of Alberta.

The president has also disparaged Canada's military commitments despite a partnership that ranges from the beaches of Normandy in World War II to remote stretches of Afghanistan. He said on Tuesday with Carney that the U.S. would continue to provide national security support to Canada.

Trump has imposed 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum and tariffs on other products outside the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, in some cases ostensibly to address relatively low volumes of fentanyl intercepted at the northern border. That has jeopardized a closely entwined trade relationship as Canada sees an increasing need to build relations with the European Union and other nations.

Canada is the top export destination for 36 U.S. states. Nearly \$3.6 billion Canadian (US\$2.7 billion) worth of goods and services cross the border each day. About 60% of U.S. crude oil imports are from Canada, and 85% of U.S. electricity imports are from Canada.

Canada is also the largest foreign supplier of steel, aluminum and uranium to the U.S. and has 34 critical minerals and metals that the Pentagon is eager for and investing in for national security. Canada is one of the most trade-dependent countries in the world, and 77% of Canada's exports go to the U.S.

## **Jury selection in the Sean 'Diddy' Combs sex trafficking trial expected to be completed Wednesday**

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A jury in the sex trafficking trial of Sean “Diddy” Combs is expected to be in place sometime Wednesday, lawyers told a federal judge after dozens of prospective jurors were questioned over two days to see if they can judge the music mogul fairly.

The lawyers measured the progress made over two days after Judge Arun Subramanian completed questioning dozens of prospective jurors to weed out any biases.

Opening statements are scheduled for Monday, when prosecutors will cast Combs as the head of a criminal organization who exploited his fame and fortune to sexually abuse women and destroy young lives. Defense attorneys plan to counter by saying Combs was not committing crimes when he engaged in sexual activity with consenting adults.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to a five-count indictment charging him with leading a racketeering conspiracy from 2004 to 2024 that resulted in various crimes, including kidnapping, arson, bribery and sex trafficking.

The Bad Boy Records founder has been held without bail since his arrest at a Manhattan hotel last September.

On Monday and Tuesday, the judge assembled a pool of 35 potential jurors, 10 individuals short of the group of 45 would-be jurors that are one step from sitting on the jury for a trial projected to last up to two months.

The last step in the process will occur when lawyers on both sides strike a limited number of individuals off the jury for reasons they usually are not required to disclose.

Numerous possible jurors were disqualified on Tuesday after answering questions in ways that left lawyers and the judge to believe they could not be fair and unbiased. One man was dismissed after expressing doubt that he could follow an order by the judge not to smoke marijuana for the duration of the trial.

“He was honest,” Subramanian quipped, eliciting laughter throughout the courtroom where he interviewed prospective jurors one at a time.

Throughout the day, Combs seemed engaged with the process. Sometimes he was the first to rise from his chair at the defense table each time a potential juror entered or left the courtroom. Near the end of the day, he stretched several times in his cushioned chair.

Several who were eliminated from the jury pool had seen or heard media reports related to the case, including some who said they saw a video in which Combs was hitting and kicking one of his accusers in a Los Angeles hotel hallway in 2016.

But one man who had written on a questionnaire that the video left him with the “impression of an angry hostile person who is entitled” was not dismissed from the jury pool.

After the video aired on CNN last year, Combs apologized, saying, “I take full responsibility for my actions in that video. I was disgusted then when I did it. I’m disgusted now.”

In a court filing Tuesday, prosecutors complained that a prominent attorney — the father of one of the lawyers on Combs’ legal team — had a long-standing relationship with Combs and seemed to be acting as an adviser to Combs and the defense team even as he spoke out about the case repeatedly on his podcast.

Prosecutors urged the judge to require the attorney to obey rules that require lawyers working on the case to limit their public comments.



## Family sues over Florida deputy's killing of US Airman Roger Fortson

By KATE PAYNE Associated Press/Report for America

The family of a U.S. airman who was shot by a Florida sheriff's deputy inside his own home sued the deputy, the sheriff and the owner of the airman's apartment complex on Tuesday, saying they want to ensure people are held accountable for his 2024 death.

The complaint alleges that Deputy Eddie Duran used excessive and unconstitutional deadly force when he shot Roger Fortson just seconds after the Black senior airman opened his apartment door in Fort Walton Beach on May 3, 2024. Duran was responding to a domestic disturbance report at Fortson's apartment that turned out to be false.

"I want accountability because he was 23. I want accountability because he had a life ahead of him. I want accountability because he was in his own home," said Fortson's mother, Meka Fortson, who wore a shirt emblazoned with an image of her son in his Air Force uniform while appearing with the family's attorney, Ben Crump, at a press conference to announce the wrongful death lawsuit.

The complaint filed in federal court in Pensacola details alleged failures by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office in training and supervision and claims that staff at the apartment complex where Fortson lived provided misleading information that led to the fatal law enforcement response.

Messages were left seeking comment from attorneys for Duran, a spokesperson for the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and an agent for the apartment complex's management company.

Duran has pleaded not guilty to a charge of manslaughter with a firearm in the shooting, which renewed debate on police killings and race, and occurred against a wider backdrop of increased attention by the military to racial issues in its ranks. Duran identifies as Hispanic, according to his voter registration.

The airman's mother said she has "no faith" in Okaloosa County, expressing doubt that Duran will get a "real trial" in the Florida Panhandle community where he worked as a law enforcement officer.

It is highly unusual for Florida law enforcement officers to be charged for an on-duty killing. Convictions in such cases are even rarer.

"This is not policing. This is an unlawful execution," said Crump, a civil rights attorney who has been involved in a number of cases involving law enforcement killings of Black people, including those of Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, Tyre Nichols and George Floyd.

"We believe Roger's death was a result of a pattern and practice here in Okaloosa County," added Crump, who announced the lawsuit at a press conference at Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church in Fort Walton Beach.

Duran came to Fortson's door in response to a report of a physical fight inside an apartment. A worker at the complex had identified Fortson's apartment as the location of a loud argument, according to sheriff's investigators. Fortson, who was assigned to the 4th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, was alone at the time, talking with his girlfriend on a FaceTime video call.

Duran's body camera video showed what happened next.

The deputy pounded at the door repeatedly and yelled, "Sheriff's office — open the door!" Fortson opened the door with his legally purchased gun in his right hand, pointed to the ground.

The deputy said, "Step back," then immediately began firing. Fortson fell backward onto the floor. Only then did the deputy yell, "Drop the gun!"

Deputies had never been called to Fortson's apartment before, 911 records show, but they had been called to a nearby unit 10 times in the previous eight months, including once for a domestic disturbance.

Crump defended Fortson's right to answer his door with his firearm in hand.

"He had a right to the Second Amendment too — to protect his home, to protect his castle," Crump said. "He didn't do anything wrong."

## Rescue crews recover the body of a 10-year-old girl lost in Texas floods

BRENHAM, Texas (AP) — The body of a 10-year-old girl who was swept away in rapidly rising floodwaters has been recovered, Brenham Fire Chief Mark Donovan said Tuesday.

Her body was found as forecasters warned that the day could bring more heavy rains and flooding to the Houston area and the state's coast.

The girl was identified by authorities as Devah Woods, a third-grade student at Brenham Elementary School.

Woods and her sister were walking home from school around 4 p.m. Monday when they got caught in floodwaters from a creek, said Melinda Gordon, a spokesperson for the city.

Authorities are not sure if Woods slipped and fell in the creek, but her sister ran to get help, Gordon said. A man who saw her get swept away and a Brenham police officer tried to rescue her but were unsuccessful.

The man "got her backpack, but she got away from him," Gordon said. The man and the officer were treated by paramedics and released.

Teams of people scoured the city Monday night, using dogs and drones with thermal imaging to try to find the girl. The water rescue operation was scaled back overnight when heavy thunderstorms moved through, but four swift water rescue teams resumed operations early Tuesday, the Fire Department said via social media.

The department worked with more than a dozen supporting agencies in the search.

Around 10:45 a.m., a dive team with the Texas Department of Public Safety told authorities that it had found her body, Brenham Police Lt. Steven Eilert said during a news conference.

"We have taken care of her as much as we could. Our hearts go out to (her) family. It is a difficult thing," Eilert said.

Woods' mother attended the news conference but did not speak.

The girl's body was found 1.2 miles (1.9 kilometers) from where she went missing, Gordon said.

Brenham, which has about 19,000 residents, is located about 70 miles (110 kilometers) northwest of Houston.

"We're a very, very special community, very tight-knit Christian community. The response from everyone was overwhelming," Mayor Atwood Kenjura said. "We don't like the outcome that happened."

At Woods' school, support services were being provided for students and staff, according to the Brenham Independent School District.

"Our hearts are broken for Devah's family, and we ask that you continue to keep them in your thoughts and prayers during this unimaginably difficult time," the district said in a social media post.

The next round of severe storms threatened to bring as much as 6 inches (15 centimeters) of rain Tuesday to parts of southeastern Texas, according to the National Weather Service in Houston. Strong rip currents and flooding along Gulf-facing beaches, especially during high tide, were also forecast.

A large swath of Texas and parts of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi were under flood watches early in the day.

Just last week, storms drenched much of southern Oklahoma and northern Texas, washing out roads and causing hundreds of flight cancellations and delays.

## Homeland Security chief says travelers with no REAL ID can fly for now, but with likely extra steps

By REBECCA SANTANA and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Travelers who haven't obtained a REAL ID by this week's deadline received assurances from the head of Homeland Security that they will be able to fly after additional identity checks. Her comments came Tuesday as people were waiting in long lines outside of government buildings from California to Chicago trying to update their IDs before the long-delayed deadline.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 62 of 80**

Kristi Noem told a congressional panel that 81% of travelers already have IDs that comply with the REAL ID requirements. She said security checkpoints will also be accepting passports and tribal identification when the deadline hits Wednesday.

Those who still lack an identification that complies with the REAL ID law "may be diverted to a different line, have an extra step," Noem said.

"But people will be allowed to fly," she said. "We will make sure it's as seamless as possible."

The Transportation Security Administration warned people who don't have the REAL ID to show up early and be prepared for advanced screening to avoid causing delays.

"I do not have a belief that this will cause people to miss their flights if they take that additional time in," said Thomas Carter, the TSA's Federal Security Director in New Jersey. "I think there's that self-responsibility of the law that they need to know, give themselves that extra time, and if they do that, they shouldn't have an issue."

Across the country, government offices extended their hours to help meet the demand. But despite that, some people waited for hours Tuesday to get a REAL ID ahead of the long-delayed deadline.

Renel Leggett, a college student from West Chester, Pennsylvania, spent hours getting her REAL ID and was not happy about it.

"I've been out here for three hours to get one ID when I've already had one that should have lasted me until about 2029," Leggett said.

"You have to do it. But it feels like a waste of time," she said.

REAL ID is a federally compliant state-issued license or identification card that Homeland Security says is a more secure form of identification. It was a recommendation by the 9/11 Commission and signed into law in 2005.

The commission recommended the government set security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and IDs. It was supposed to be rolled out in 2008. But the implementation has been repeatedly delayed.

Besides needing a REAL ID to fly domestically, people will also need one to access certain federal buildings and facilities.

In recent weeks, Noem has been warning the American public about the upcoming deadline. In a television ad put out by Homeland Security, she warned that these IDs were needed for air travel and for entering public buildings, adding: "These IDs keep our country safe."

A REAL ID-compliant driver's license has a symbol ( in most states, a star ) in the top corner of the card.

In California, about 58% of all driver's license and ID cardholders have a REAL ID. The state has extended the hours of some Department of Motor Vehicles offices through June 27 to help more people get the federally required identification. Officials are also reminding residents that if they already have a valid U.S. passport, they can use that and wait to upgrade to a REAL ID when their ID or driver's license is due for renewal.

Lucas Krump was traveling Tuesday to San Francisco on business from Newark, New Jersey, and said he was using a passport to get through security.

"I don't have a license that is Real ID," he said. "I question the bureaucracy around it. It feels like attacks on everyday people, having to upgrade their licenses and all of their identification for something that really, you know, seems like we've been fine without it."

At the Driver Services Bureau in Jackson, Mississippi, there were no long lines Tuesday, and people were getting their REAL IDs fairly quickly.

Marion Henderson said before going in that she planned to travel to California, Michigan, Chicago and New York this year and wanted to be prepared.

"Even though I have my license, now that it's required, I wanted to go ahead and get it done" ahead of the deadline, Henderson said.



## Supreme Court allows Trump ban on transgender members of the military to take effect, for now

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed President Donald Trump's administration to enforce a ban on transgender people in the military, while legal challenges proceed.

The court acted in the dispute over a policy that presumptively disqualifies transgender people from military service and could lead to the expulsion of experienced, decorated officers.

The court's three liberal justices said they would have kept the policy on hold. Neither the justices in the majority or dissent explained their votes, which is not uncommon in emergency appeals.

Just after beginning his second term in January, Trump moved aggressively to roll back the rights of transgender people. Among the Republican president's actions was an executive order that claims the sexual identity of transgender service members "conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in one's personal life" and is harmful to military readiness.

In response, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued a policy in February that gave the military services 30 days to figure out how they would seek out and identify transgender service members to remove them from the force. Those actions had been stalled by the lawsuits.

"No More Trans @ DoD," Hegseth wrote in a post on X following Tuesday's Supreme Court order. Earlier in the day, before the court acted, Hegseth said that his department is leaving wokeness and weakness behind. "No more pronouns," he told a special operations forces conference in Tampa. "No more dudes in dresses. We're done with that s---."

The Defense Department said Tuesday that officials are currently determining the next steps, but officials were not aware of any actions being taken right away.

Three federal judges had ruled against the ban.

In the case the justices acted on Tuesday, U.S. District Court Judge Benjamin Settle in Tacoma, Washington, had ruled for seven long-serving transgender military members who say that the ban is insulting and discriminatory and that their firing would cause lasting damage to their careers and reputations. A prospective service member also sued.

The individual service members who challenged the ban together have amassed more than 70 medals in 115 years of service, their lawyers wrote. The lead plaintiff is Emily Shilling, a Navy commander with nearly 20 years of service, including as a combat pilot who flew 60 missions in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The Trump administration offered no explanation as to why transgender troops, who have been able to serve openly over the past four years with no evidence of problems, should suddenly be banned, Settle wrote. The judge is an appointee of Republican President George W. Bush and is a former captain in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Corps.

Settle imposed a nationwide hold on the policy and a federal appeals court rejected the administration's emergency plea. The Justice Department then turned to the Supreme Court.

The policy also has been blocked by a federal judge in the nation's capital, but that ruling has been temporarily halted by a federal appeals court, which heard arguments last month. The three-judge panel, which includes two judges appointed by Trump during his first term, appeared to be in favor of the administration's position.

In a more limited ruling, a judge in New Jersey also has barred the Air Force from removing two transgender men, saying they showed their separation would cause lasting damage to their careers and reputations that no monetary settlement could repair.

The LGBTQ rights groups Lambda Legal and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation called the high court order a devastating blow to dedicated and highly qualified service members.

"By allowing this discriminatory ban to take effect while our challenge continues, the court has temporarily sanctioned a policy that has nothing to do with military readiness and everything to do with prejudice. Transgender individuals meet the same standards and demonstrate the same values as all who serve. We remain steadfast in our belief that this ban violates constitutional guarantees of equal protection and will

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 64 of 80

ultimately be struck down," the groups said in a statement.

The federal appeals court in San Francisco will hear the administration's appeal in a process that will play out over several months at least. All the while, though, the transgender ban will remain in place under the Supreme Court order.

In 2016, during Barack Obama's presidency, a Defense Department policy permitted transgender people to serve openly in the military. During Trump's first term in the White House, the Republican issued a directive to ban transgender service members, with an exception for some of those who had already started transitioning under more lenient rules that were in effect during Obama's Democratic administration.

The Supreme Court allowed that ban to take effect. President Joe Biden, a Democrat, scrapped it when he took office.

The rules the Defense Department wants to enforce contain no exceptions.

The policy during Trump's first term and the new one are "materially indistinguishable," Solicitor General D. John Sauer told the justices, though lawyers for the service members who sued disagreed.

Thousands of transgender people serve in the military, but they represent less than 1% of the 2.1 million troops serving.

A senior defense official said in February that they believe there are about 4,200 troops diagnosed with gender dysphoria currently serving in the active duty, National Guard and Reserves.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss personnel issues, said that between 2015 and 2024, the total cost for psychotherapy, gender-affirming hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgery and other treatment for service members is about \$52 million.

## How Utah dentists are preparing patients for the first statewide fluoride ban

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — With Utah's first-in-the-nation ban on fluoride in public drinking water set to take effect Wednesday, dentists who treat children and low-income patients say they're bracing for an increase in tooth decay among the state's most vulnerable people.

Republican Gov. Spencer Cox signed the law against the recommendation of many dentists and national health experts who warn removing fluoride will harm tooth development, especially in young patients without regular access to dental care.

Florida is poised to become the second state to ban fluoride under a bill that Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis announced Tuesday he would sign soon. The Ohio and South Carolina legislatures are considering similar measures.

Supporters of states' efforts to ban fluoride said they did not dispute that it could have some benefits but thought people should not be given it by the government without their informed consent.

"It really shouldn't be forced on people," DeSantis said.

U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has applauded Utah for being the first state to enact a ban and said he plans to direct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to stop recommending fluoridation nationwide.

Many patients not in the know

A majority of Utah water systems already did not add fluoride. The state ranked 44th in the nation for the percentage of residents receiving fluoridated water, with about 2 in 5 receiving it in 2022, according to CDC data. The law will impact about 1.6 million people in Salt Lake City and elsewhere in northern Utah who are losing fluoridation, state officials say.

Dentists in Salt Lake City over the past week said many patients were unaware of the upcoming ban, and most did not realize the city had been adding fluoride to their drinking water for nearly two decades.

"I did not know about a ban," said Noe Figueroa, a patient at Salt Lake Donated Dental Services, a clinic that provides free or heavily discounted dental treatment to low-income residents. "Well, that's not good. I don't think that's good at all."

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 65 of 80

At Donated Dental, providers expect their monthslong waitlist for children's procedures to grow significantly and their need for volunteer dentists to skyrocket. The effects of the ban in children's teeth will likely be visible within the next year, said Sasha Harvey, the clinic's executive director.

"Fluoridated water is the great equalizer," Harvey said. "It really benefits everybody, regardless of your age, gender, your ethnicity, your education level, your income level — it helps everyone."

A public health achievement under scrutiny

The fluoridation process involves supplementing the low levels of fluoride that occur naturally in most water to reach the 0.7 milligrams per liter recommended by the CDC for cavity prevention. Water treatment plants dump fluoride into the water in liquid or powder form and often use dosing pumps to adjust the levels.

Nearly two-thirds of the U.S. population receives fluoridated drinking water, according to health officials. It was long considered among the greatest public health achievements of the last century.

Fluoride fortifies teeth and reduces cavities by replacing minerals lost during normal wear and tear, according to the CDC. It's especially important to children whose teeth are still developing. For some low-income families, public drinking water containing fluoride may be their only source of preventative dental care.

Some supporters of the Utah law pointed to studies linking high levels of fluoride exposure to illness and low IQ in kids. The National Institutes of Health says it's "virtually impossible" to get a toxic dose from fluoride added to water or toothpaste at standard levels.

Elaine Oaks, a Bountiful resident and trustee of her local water district, said it's not the role of government to decide that the entire population should receive fluoride in their drinking water. Individuals and parents should be able to make that decision for themselves, she said.

Before signing the bill, Cox said there is no difference in health outcomes between communities with and without fluoride — a statement Utah dentists say is false.

"Any dentist can look in someone's mouth in Utah and tell exactly where they grew up. Did you grow up in a fluoridated area or a non-fluoridated area? We can tell by the level of decay," said Dr. James Bekker, a pediatric dentist at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Barriers to fluoride supplements

The law shifts responsibility to individuals, meaning all Utah residents will need to be proactive about their oral health, Harvey said. Most patients at her clinic only come in when a toothache becomes unbearable, and many cannot spare the few dollars a month needed to buy fluoride supplements to add to their drinking water at home.

Figueroa, the free dental clinic patient, said other expenses take priority.

Fluoride toothpaste alone is insufficient for children because it doesn't penetrate the tooth's outer layer, Bekker said. When a person regularly ingests fluoridated water, their saliva bathes the teeth in fluoride throughout the day and makes them stronger.

Bekker said he recommends Utah parents add fluoride supplements to their children's drinking water. But for families who don't visit doctors regularly, that may prove difficult.

Fluoride tablets require a prescription from a doctor or dentist. Utah providers are working to make the supplement accessible over the counter, but Bekker said that change may be months or years away.

## As Trump battles elite colleges, House GOP looks to hike endowment tax by at least tenfold

By COLLIN BINKLEY and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's feud with America's elite universities is lending momentum to Republicans on Capitol Hill who want to increase a tax on wealthy college endowments by tenfold or more.

House Republicans already were considering a hike in the tax on college endowments' earnings from 1.4% to 14% as part of Trump's tax bill. As the president raises the stakes in his fight with Harvard, Co-



# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 66 of 80**

lumbia and other Ivy League schools, lawmakers are floating raising the rate as high as 21% in line with the corporate tax rate. It appears no decisions have been made.

In a letter blocking Harvard from new funding on Monday, the Trump administration drew attention to the school's "largely tax-free" \$53 billion endowment, noting it's bigger than some nations' economies. Trump previously said he wants to see Harvard stripped of its tax-exempt status as he presses for reforms at colleges he accuses of "indoctrinating" students with "radical left" ideas.

Similar rhetoric has been echoed by Republican lawmakers who question why wealthy colleges get tax breaks that businesses don't.

In a letter to Brown University last month, Rep. Troy Nehls of Texas, who has proposed legislation with the higher rate, said lawmakers are concerned about the priorities of universities that operate in a "largely tax-free" world. He questioned whether their endowments contribute to the public good.

Republicans appear to be chipping away at the long-held notion that colleges provide the kind of public benefit that deserves to be protected from heavy taxation. And it's happening just as the House looks to cut or offset \$1.5 trillion in spending as part of the president's sweeping tax bill.

Endowment taxes were introduced in Trump's first administration

Colleges weren't taxed on their investment gains until Trump's 2017 tax package, which applied a 1.4% levy to schools that enroll at least 500 students and have \$500,000 per full-time student in the bank.

A proposal floated by the House Ways and Means Committee in January called for a 14% endowment tax. Now lawmakers are looking at a 21% tax, among various options. As a senator, Vice President J.D. Vance proposed going further, to 35%.

In 2023, the current tax generated \$380 million from 56 colleges.

Raising the tax to 14% would generate \$10 billion for the federal government over 10 years, according to budget documents. On its own, it would have little impact on the House's goals for slashing government spending.

The momentum for an increase reflects a broader attack on higher education, said Steven Bloom, an assistant vice president of the American Council on Education, which represents the presidents of hundreds of colleges.

"It's not a lot of money, so that can't be the motivating factor," Bloom said.

Multi-billion dollar endowments draw new scrutiny

Colleges see their endowments as stability for the future. The wealthiest ones run massive investment portfolios, and they usually draw about 5% of their returns to cover scholarships and other operating costs.

Critics say colleges have been allowed to amass huge, tax-free returns while charging students as much as \$95,000 a year for tuition and fees. They point to Harvard, Yale and others with tens of billions stored away. In total, roughly 50 colleges have endowments worth more than \$1 billion, while the vast majority are much smaller.

The tax proposals heighten financial uncertainty for colleges, including some that already are drawing deeper into endowment reserves to make up for federal funding cuts or grappling with budget gaps amid enrollment decreases.

At Davidson College, the most modest proposal would add \$11 million a year to the school's tax bill, which was about \$1 million last year, President Douglas Hicks said in an interview.

"That amount of money would be astronomical for our budget," he said.

Davidson is among a small group of colleges that don't consider students' income in admissions and agree to cover their full financial need. Hicks said the proposed tax hikes would take away the equivalent of full scholarships for up to 200 students.

"If leaders are trying to reform higher education, there are much better incentives," Hicks said.

Middlebury College in Vermont, a campus of about 3,000 students, cited the potential tax increase as a factor contributing to recent financial uncertainty. The school faces a budget deficit amid a dip in graduate school enrollment, but it's opting not to pull more from its endowment over concerns of a tax hike.

"Endowment tax increases that are currently under consideration could raise our tax bill from \$1 million to \$12 million," university leaders wrote in an April update.

## Associated Press finds 'no definitive evidence' to change credit for famous Vietnam War photo

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

Months after the release of a film that questions who took an iconic Vietnam War image of a naked girl running from a napalm attack, The Associated Press said Tuesday it had found "no definitive evidence" to warrant changing a nearly 53-year-old photo credit.

The AP released a 96-page report — its second examination in less than four months — about who actually took the Pulitzer Prize-winning photo credited to Nick Ut that became one of the defining images of the 20th century. A documentary shown at Sundance in January, "The Stringer," asserts that it was actually shot by another man, Nguyen Thanh Nghe, but that credit was given to Ut, an AP staff photographer.

The AP concluded that it was "possible" Ut took the photo, but it was unable to be proven conclusively due to the passage of time, absence of key evidence, limitations of technology and the deaths of several key people involved.

At the same time, AP found no proof that Nguyen took the photo, the report said.

"We left nothing uncovered that we're aware of and we've done it with a great deal of respect to everybody involved," said Derl McCrudden, an AP vice president who heads global news production. "It makes no difference to us if we changed the credit, but it has to be based on facts and evidence. And there is no definitive evidence proving that Nick Ut did not take this picture."

The AP's latest study involved further interviews, examination of cameras, building a 3D model of the scene and studying photo negatives that survive from June 8, 1972, the date of the photo.

The report revealed inconsistencies on both sides. The prize-winning photo was apparently taken on a Pentax camera, not a Leica as Ut had long claimed. Nguyen told AP he was not working for NBC that day, as was earlier asserted. Of 10 people on the scene that day that the AP reached, Nguyen is the only one who believes that Ut didn't take the picture, the report said.

The report said that believing Nguyen's story would require several leaps of faith, including believing that the only time he ever sold a photo to a Western news agency it turned out to be one of the most famous images of the century.

Ut, who has strongly maintained that the photo is his, said Tuesday he was gratified by the findings of AP's investigation.

"This whole thing has been very difficult for me and has caused great pain," he said in a statement. "I'm glad the record has been set straight."

## Conservative leader Merz overcomes historic defeat to become Germany's chancellor

By STEFANIE DAZIO and KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Conservative leader Friedrich Merz succeeded Tuesday in becoming Germany's next chancellor, drawing applause and a palpable sense of relief in the parliament chamber after a historic loss in the first round of voting threatened the new government's promises of stability.

No other postwar candidate for German chancellor has failed to win on the first ballot. The stunning but short-lived defeat sent shock waves throughout Europe and dragged down the stock market. The DAX, the index of major German companies, fell by 1.8% at one point.

The first round of voting, which was conducted by secret ballot, could affect Merz's prospects for success and bring trouble to his coalition's agenda, which includes reviving a stagnant economy and dealing with the rise of the far-right, anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany party.

As the most populous member state of the 27-nation European Union and the continent's biggest economy, Germany is Europe's diplomatic and economic heavyweight. Many had hoped Merz's ascension would help the continent navigate the war in Ukraine and the confrontational trade policy of U.S. President

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 68 of 80

Donald Trump.

"The whole of Europe, perhaps even the whole world, is watching this second round of elections," Jens Spahn, the head of the center-right Union bloc in the German parliament, said before the final vote.

The aftermath

Merz had been expected to easily win the vote to become Germany's 10th chancellor since World War II, but the first ballot in the lower house of parliament unexpectedly left him with 310 votes — well short of the 328 seats held by his coalition.

Hours later in the second round, he earned 325 votes, surpassing the 316 needed to pass in the 630-seat Bundestag.

Because the votes were cast secretly, it was not immediately clear — and might never be — who defected from Merz's camp.

Merz's coalition is led by his center-right Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union. They are joined by the center-left Social Democrats led by outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who lost the national election in February.

Volker Resing, Merz's biographer, said Merz and his new ministers must now focus on the day-to-day business of running the country.

"Tomorrow, this government must work, and it must make people forget how it started," he told The Associated Press. "It must now show that it can get the economy going again. ... It must show that it can get illegal migration under control, and it must show that there is leadership again in Europe, especially in light of the threat from the east."

Merz did not directly address his first-round loss Tuesday evening in his first speech after being sworn in, saying only that he was grateful to be elected "in the second round of voting."

"So here we go. I am looking forward to the new task, and I am looking forward to working with you all in this house in a spirit of trust," he said.

80th anniversary of World War II

Tuesday's voting came on the eve of the 80th anniversary of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender in World War II. The ballots were cast in the restored Reichstag building, where graffiti left by victorious Soviet troops has been preserved at several locations.

The shadow of the war in Ukraine also loomed over the vote. Germany is the second-biggest supplier of military aid to Ukraine, after the United States.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday that he seeks more European and transatlantic leadership from Germany following Merz's win.

"Ukraine is deeply grateful for the support of Germany and its people," Zelenskyy wrote on social platform X. "Your helping hand has saved thousands and thousands of Ukrainian lives."

Overall, Germany is the fourth-largest defense spender in the world, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which studies trends in global military expenditures. Only the U.S., China and Russia are ahead.

Germany rose to that rank thanks to an investment of 100 billion euros (\$107 billion) for its armed forces, a measure passed by lawmakers in 2022.

Defense spending rose again earlier this year, when parliament loosened the nation's strict debt rules. The move has been closely watched by the rest of Europe as the Trump administration has threatened to pull back from its security commitment to the continent.

Germany and the Trump administration

The U.S. administration has bashed Germany repeatedly since Trump's inauguration in January. Trump, who has German roots, often expressed his dislike of former Chancellor Angela Merkel during his first term.

This time around, Trump's lieutenants are at the forefront — tech billionaire and Trump ally Elon Musk has supported AfD for months. He hosted a chat with co-leader Alice Weidel that he livestreamed on X earlier this year to amplify her party's message.

AfD is the biggest opposition party in Germany's new parliament after it placed second in February's elections. Despite its historic gains, it was shut out of coalition talks due to the so-called "firewall" that

mainstream German political parties have upheld against cooperating with far-right parties since the end of the war.

Vice President JD Vance, during the Munich Security Conference in February, assailed the creation of the firewall and later met with Weidel, a move that German officials heavily criticized.

Last week, the German domestic intelligence service said it has classified AfD as a "right-wing extremist" organization, making it subject to greater and broader surveillance.

The decision by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution prompted blowback from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vance over the weekend. Germany's Foreign Ministry hit back at Rubio after he called on the country to drop the classification.

The domestic intelligence service's measure does not amount to a ban of the party, which can only be imposed through a request by either of parliament's two chambers or by the federal government through the Federal Constitutional Court.

Merz has not commented publicly on the intelligence service's decision.

## Ukraine drone attacks briefly shut down Moscow's international airports

By The Associated Press undefined

All four international airports around Moscow temporarily suspended flights Tuesday as Russian forces intercepted more than 100 Ukrainian drones fired at almost a dozen Russian regions, the Defense Ministry in Moscow said.

Nine other regional Russian airports also temporarily stopped operating as drones struck areas along the border with Ukraine and deeper inside Russia, according to Russia's civil aviation agency, Rosaviatsia, and the Defense Ministry. The Moscow region was later attacked for a second time, with the capital's major airports of Vnukovo and Domodedovo forced to ground flights again, while the city's air defenses intercepted three drones, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said.

The drone assaults threatened a planned unilateral 72-hour ceasefire in the more than three-year war announced by President Vladimir Putin to coincide with celebrations in Moscow marking Victory Day in World War II.

The day celebrating Moscow's defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 is Russia's biggest secular holiday. Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and others will gather in the Russian capital on Thursday for the 80th anniversary and watch a parade featuring thousands of troops accompanied by tanks and missiles.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry urged foreign countries not to send military representatives to take part in the parade, as some have in the past. None is officially confirmed for this year's event.

Ukraine will regard the participation of foreign military personnel as "an affront to the memory of the victory over Nazism, to the memory of millions of Ukrainian front-line soldiers who liberated our country and all of Europe from Nazism eight decades ago," a statement on the ministry's website said.

Security is expected to be tight. Russian officials have warned that internet access could be restricted in Moscow during the celebrations and have told residents not to set off fireworks.

Putin last week declared the brief unilateral truce "on humanitarian grounds" from May 8. Ukraine has demanded a longer ceasefire.

Russia has effectively rejected a U.S. proposal for an immediate and full 30-day halt in the fighting by insisting on far-reaching conditions. Ukraine has accepted that proposal, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that the brief truce "doesn't sound like much, but it's ... a lot if you knew where we started from."

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that ceasefire orders had been issued to Russian troops, but soldiers would retaliate if fired upon.

Meanwhile, Ukraine and Russia swapped hundreds of captured soldiers in one of the largest exchanges



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 70 of 80

since Moscow's full-scale invasion started in February 2022. The last exchange was on April 19.

Zelenskyy and Russia's Defense Ministry said they each received 205 soldiers in the swap. Both sides said the United Arab Emirates had mediated the exchange, as on previous occasions.

The long-range strikes by both sides continued, however. Ukraine has used increasingly sophisticated, domestically produced drones to compensate for having a smaller army than Russia along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, and to take the war onto Russian soil with long-range strikes.

Russia has used Shahed drones as well as 3,000-pound (1,300-kilogram) glide bombs, artillery and cruise and ballistic missiles against Ukraine.

Two people were injured in Russia's Kursk region, according to local Gov. Alexander Khinshtein, and some damage was reported in the Voronezh region.

The Russian reports couldn't be independently verified.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 136 strike and decoy drones overnight.

Russian forces fired at least 20 Shahed drones at Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near the border with Russia, injuring four people, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov wrote on Telegram.

The drones started a fire at the biggest market in Kharkiv, Barabashovo, destroying and damaging around 100 market stalls, he said.

Seven civilians were hurt elsewhere in the Kharkiv region by Russian glide bombs and drones, Syniehubov said.

Three people were also killed when a Russian ballistic missile hit the Ukrainian city of Sumy Tuesday evening, acting Mayor Artem Kobzar said. One woman died at the scene, while two more people died due to injuries at a hospital, he said.

In Kramatorsk, in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, Russian Shahed drones killed one person and injured two others, Mayor Oleksandr Honcharenko wrote on Facebook. The drones targeted residential and industrial areas of the city, he said.

In the Odesa region, Russian drones struck residential buildings and civilian infrastructure, killing one person, regional head Oleh Kiper wrote on Telegram.

## Cardinals wrap up pre-conclave meetings still uncertain about who should follow Pope Francis

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Cardinals wrapped up their pre-conclave meetings Tuesday, trying to identify a possible new pope who could follow Pope Francis and make the 2,000-year-old Catholic Church credible and relevant today, especially to young people.

Although they come from 70 different countries, the 133 cardinal electors seem fundamentally united in insisting that the question before them isn't so much whether the church gets its first Asian or African pontiff, or a conservative or progressive. Rather, they say the primary task facing them when the conclave opens Wednesday is to find a pope who can be both a pastor and a teacher, a bridge who can unite the church and preach peace.

"We need a superman!" said Cardinal William Seng Chye Goh, the 67-year-old archbishop of Singapore.

It is indeed a tall task, given the sexual abuse and financial scandals that have harmed the church's reputation and the secularizing trends in many parts of the world that are turning people away from organized religion. Add to that the Holy See's dire financial state and often dysfunctional bureaucracy, and the job of being pope in the 21st century seems almost impossible.

Francis named 108 of the 133 electors and selected cardinals in his image. But there is an element of uncertainty about the election since many of them didn't know one another before last week, meaning they haven't had much time to suss out who among them is best suited to lead the 1.4-billion-strong church.

The cardinals held their last day of pre-conclave meetings Tuesday morning, during which Francis' fisherman's ring and his official seal were destroyed in one of the final formal rites of the transition of his pontificate to the next.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 71 of 80**

The cardinals will begin trying to find the new pope Wednesday afternoon, when those "princes of the church" walk solemnly into the Sistine Chapel to the meditative chant of the "Litany of the Saints." They'll take their oaths of secrecy under the daunting vision of heaven and hell in Michelangelo's "Last Judgment," hear a meditation from a senior cardinal, and then most likely cast their first ballot.

Assuming no candidate secures the necessary two-thirds majority, or 89 votes, the cardinals will retire for the day and return on Thursday. They will have two ballots in the morning and then two in the afternoon, until a winner is found.

Asked what the priorities of the cardinal electors were, Goh told reporters this week that the No. 1 issue was that the new pope must be able to spread the Catholic faith and "make the church relevant in today's time. How to reach out to young people, how to show a face of love, joy and hope."

A pope for the future

But beyond that, there are some real-world geopolitical concerns to take into consideration. The Catholic Church is growing in Africa and Asia, both in numbers of baptized faithful and vocations to the priesthood and women's religious orders. It is shrinking in traditionally Catholic bastions of Europe, with empty churches and the faithful formally leaving the church in places like Germany, many citing the abuse scandals.

"Asia is ripe for evangelization and the harvest of vocations," said the Rev. Robert Reyes, who studied in the seminary with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, the Filipino prelate considered a contender to be the first Asian pope.

But should the pope necessarily reflect the new face of the Catholic Church, and inspire the faithful especially in the parts of the world where the momentum of growth is already underway? Does it even matter?

Pope Francis was the first Latin American pope, and the region still counts the majority of the world's Catholics.

Indian Cardinal Oswald Gracias, the retired archbishop of Mumbai, said the church needs to become more Asian, culturally and spiritually.

The "center of gravity of the world is shifting toward Asia," he said. "The Asian church has much to give to the world."

At 80, Gracias won't be participating in the conclave, but India has four cardinal-electors, and overall Asia counts 23, making it the second-biggest voting bloc after Europe, which has 53 (or likely 52, given that one is not expected to participate for health reasons).

One of the big geopolitical issues facing the cardinals is China and the plight of the estimated 12 million Chinese Catholics there.

Under Francis, the Vatican in 2018 inked a controversial agreement with Beijing governing the appointment of bishops, which many conservatives decried as a sellout of the underground Chinese Catholics who had remained loyal to Rome during decades of communist persecution. The Vatican has defended the accord as the best deal it could get, but it remains to be seen if Francis' successor will keep the policy.

The church in Africa

According to Vatican statistics, Catholics represent 3.3% of the population in Asia, but their numbers are growing, especially in terms of seminarians, as they are in Africa, where Catholics represent about 20% of the population.

Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, the archbishop of Kinshasa, Congo, said he is in Rome to elect a pope for all the world's Catholics.

"I am not here for the Congo, I am not here for Africa, I am here for the universal church. That is our concern, the universal church," he told reporters. "When we are done, I will return to Kinshasa and I will put back on my archbishop of Kinshasa hat and the struggle continues."

Cardinal Jean-Paul Vesco, the chatty French-born archbishop of Algiers, Algeria, lamented last week that there hadn't been enough time for the cardinals to get to know one another, since many of them had never met before and hail from 70 countries in the most geographically diverse conclave in history.

"Every day, I say to myself, 'Ah! Oh my God! There we have it!'" he said.

The role of the Holy Spirit

For the cardinals, there is also the belief that they are guided by the Holy Spirit.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 72 of 80

There is a famous quote attributed to then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in 1997, in comments to a Bavarian television station. The future Pope Benedict XVI said the Holy Spirit acted like a good educator in a conclave, allowing cardinals to freely choose a pope without dictating the precise candidate.

"Probably the only assurance he offers is that the thing cannot be totally ruined," Ratzinger reportedly said. "There are too many contrary instances of popes the Holy Spirit would obviously not have picked."

## Sliding mitts are baseball's 'must-have,' even if at youth levels, they're all fashion, no function

By WILL GRAVES AP National Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Andrew McCutchen hasn't had the conversation with 7-year-old son Steel yet, but the Pittsburgh Pirates star knows it's probably coming at some point.

Steel, already playing in a youth baseball league, will probably come home at one point and ask his five-time All-Star father if he can have whatever hot item his teammates might be wearing during a given spring.

McCutchen plans to accommodate Steel up to a point. The oldest of McCutchen's four children is already rocking an arm sleeve, just the way dad does.

Yet if Steel is hoping his father will spring for a sliding mitt — a padded glove a player can slip over one of their hands to protect it should the hand get stepped on while diving headfirst for a base — he probably shouldn't get his hopes up.

McCutchen, who has stolen 220 bases at the major league level, has never worn one. And he's quick to point out the next time the cleat of a fielder mashes his hand will also be the first.

Still, the 38-year-old understands. Once upon a time, he was a 20-something who epitomized baseball cool, from his dreadlocks (long since shorn) to his goatee to his rope chain to the occasional skull cap he wore underneath his batting helmet, all of it designed to accentuate McCutchen's innate blend of talent and charisma.

"It's all about the drip," McCutchen said with a smile.

Even if the "drip" (Gen Z slang for stylish clothes and their accessories) emphasizes fashion over function, particularly when it comes to the gloves — which look a bit like oven mitts — that are becoming just as ubiquitous in the Little Leagues as they are in the major leagues.

Safety and self-expression

Former major leaguer Scott Podsednik (career stolen base total: 309) is credited with "inventing" the sliding mitt during the late stages of his 11-year career.

Tired of having his hand stepped on, Podsednik worked with a hand therapist for a solution. The initial mitts were relatively simple. A 2009 picture of Podsednik sliding into second base shows his left hand covered in what looks like a padded modified batting glove, all wrapped in black to match the trim on his Chicago White Sox uniform.

Things have gotten considerably more intricate over the years. Google "sliding mitt designs" and you'll find themes ranging from the American flag to an ice cream cone to aliens to a poop emoji ( yes, really ).

Scott McMillen, a lawyer in the Chicago area, had no plans to get into the baseball accessory business. He first took notice of sliding mitts when his son Braydon, then 10, pointed out one of his teammates had one and said basically, "Oh hey dad, wouldn't it be nice if I had one, too."

They headed to a local sporting goods store, where McMillen was surprised at the variety available.

That was around 2021. By early 2024, McMillen had launched "Goat'd," a specialty baseball accessory company with everything from sliding mitts to batting gloves to arm sleeves to headbands and more, many of them religiously inspired.

Sales during their first full year? Over 1 million units.

"We were surprised at how large the marketplace is," McMillen said.

Maybe he shouldn't have been.

Youth sports have bounced back from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Aspen Institute's 2024 State of Play report noted that the participation levels in sports among children ages 6-17 were the highest they've

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 73 of 80**

been since 2015. Baseball's numbers have steadied following a decline. Little League International told The Associated Press last fall that more than 2 million kids played baseball or softball under its umbrella across the world, an uptick over 2019.

Many of those kids are also fans of the game, some of whom may have noticed their favorite major leaguer sporting a mitt when they're on the bases. Yes, that was San Diego Padres star Fernando Tatis Jr. sliding across home plate ( feetfirst, by the way ) with a bright yellow mitt on his left hand in the ninth inning of a 2-1 win over Pittsburgh last weekend.

It's one of the many ways in which the game has evolved over the years. When McMillen grew up, there wasn't much swag to go around.

"We had our baseball uniform and our glove (and) everyone looked the same, everyone was the same," he said. "Now, everyone wants to express themselves individually. The best way to do that without acting like a clown is to wear something that shows people who you are."

Self-expression, however, doesn't exactly come cheap, particularly in an era when top-of-the-line bats are \$400 or more. What amounts to an entry-level sliding mitt can go for \$40, but Goat'd and others have versions that can fetch double that.

That hasn't stopped sales from being brisk, and McMillen points out it's not merely a luxury item.

"We don't play football with 1940s safety equipment," he said. "You feel better in the (batter's) box when you have something that protects you, right? With a sliding mitt, it's also like, 'Hey this is fun. It's cool. I want to be like my fave high school player, like my favorite college player.'"

It's becoming increasingly common for McMillen and other members of the company's staff to spot Goat'd gear at the field. In recent months, they've popped up in youth tournaments from Georgia to Las Vegas, sometimes in the back pockets of players as young as 6 or 7. McMillen can't help but shake his head to see his product become part of the time-honored tradition of kids imitating their heroes.

Which is good for business and, oh by the way, probably unnecessary.

The pressure to keep up

Here's the thing: In most — if not all — youth baseball leagues, headfirst slides that would require a player to stretch out their hand to secure the bag are illegal.

In Little League, for example, stealing bases for players 12 and under is rare because the player can take off only after the ball has reached the batter. And even if they do bolt for the next base, they have to slide feetfirst. The only times in Little League that a baserunner can dive headfirst toward a base is when they are returning to it while in a rundown or during a pickoff attempt, both of which are also rare.

That doesn't stop the players from wanting a sliding mitt. It also doesn't stop their parents from buying them, all part of the pressure to "keep up with the Jones" that has practically been a part of youth sports culture since the first time somebody came to practice with a batting glove or wristbands.

It's a phenomenon Chelsea Cahill and her family has known for years. The longtime educator who lives just east of Columbus, Ohio, has spent most of the last decade shuttling her three boys from practice to games to tournaments.

What she and her husband have learned over the years is that some trends come and go, but the pressure to have the right stuff remains.

"There's always that feeling of 'This is the next new thing' or 'This is what you've got to get,'" Cahill said.

They appeased their sons up to a point, but only up to a point.

Last summer their youngest son Braxton, then 11, and the rest of the kids on his travel team kept pestering their parents to buy sliding mitts. Entering the final tournament, the team moms decided to give in. Sort of.

Rather than plop down that kind of money for something they didn't actually need, the moms headed to a local dollar store and bought them actual oven mitts — the kind used to pull tonight's dinner from out of the oven. Average retail price? Less than a cup of coffee at the gas station.

Oh, and the kids loved them, and wore them during the game. Cahill posted video of them playing with the mitts stuck in their back pocket to her TikTok account. The video is now at 12 million views and counting.

"They thought it was hilarious, but we didn't really think they would wear them for the rest of the tour-



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 74 of 80

nement,” Cahill said. “We were wrong. They really embraced it!”

Among viewers of that TikTok, by the way, were the people at Goat’d, who sent Braxton a couple of mitts as a result.

The good news is, Cahill now won’t have to buy one for Braxton this spring. Yet there’s also something else she has learned through the years: This time in her boys’ lives is fleeting.

For proof, just look at her calendar. Her two older sons — the ones who played travel baseball just like Braxton, and asked for all the cool stuff their teammates had, just like Braxton has — gave up baseball by the time they got to high school.

Her advice to parents who might be feeling the financial pinch of what it takes to play these days: Relax. “We’ve learned as parents is to stop taking it so seriously,” she said. “They’re kids. Let them have fun.”

The reality

A day after hundreds of members of the Monroeville Baseball and Softball Association marched through the Pittsburgh suburb’s well-appointed community park, the regular season is in full swing.

All four fields are alive with the chatter of coaches, parents and boys and girls aged anywhere from 5-12.

Over on Field 1, the Rays are in the middle of their season opener. Playing first base, Josiah Jones has his glove at the ready, with a black sliding mitt noticeably sticking out of his left back pocket.

Per the league rules, the Rays and the other players at the “Bronco” level (ages 11-12), play actual full-on baseball. They can take leads and steal bases whenever they like, though headfirst slides are only allowed when returning to a base, just like in Little League.

Longtime MBSA executive commissioner Josh Plassmeyer is milling about, trying to keep tabs on everything. Plassmeyer outlawed sliding mitts on his son Grant’s 10-and-under tournament team, calling them a “distraction” because players would spend so much time fiddling with them once they got to first base, they would miss signs from the third-base coach.

About 50 feet away, Jones settles into the box and rips a ball to left-center field. His long legs carry him past first base, and he cruises into second with an easy double.

As his teammates erupted in the dugout, Jones beamed for a brief moment. Then, as the opposing pitcher stepped onto the rubber, he took an aggressive lead off second and eyed third.

His back pocket, the one where his sliding mitt had been 30 minutes before, was empty.

## One Tech Tip: Skype shut down for good, but users still have these alternatives

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Skype is dead. What now?

Microsoft’s shutdown of Skype on May 5 sent millions of users scrambling to find an alternative to the pioneering internet phone service.

Skype, which Microsoft bought in 2011, was beloved by a dwindling group of users who appreciated how it let them make cheap long-distance calls as well as communicate with other users through chat messages, voice or video calls.

Some liked its simplicity and ease of use — an advantage, for example, when setting up a communications app for an elderly parent living far away.

Or they just used it out of habit.

Skype was founded in 2003 and was among the first in a wave of communication services that used voice over internet protocol technology (VoIP), which converts audio into a digital signal.

Skype’s disappearance also inconveniences Americans and other expatriates living overseas who signed up because they needed an U.S.-based number to receive text authentication codes from, say, a bank back home. It was also handy for calling 800 numbers for free even if you weren’t living in North America.

Here is a guide for life after Skype:

What’s happening

Microsoft announced in late February that it was shutting down Skype on May 5 and shifting some of

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 75 of 80**

its services to Microsoft Teams, its flagship office videoconferencing and group collaboration platform.

Skype users can use their existing accounts to log into Teams and have the option to automatically migrate their contacts and chats.

If you had a Skype number or a calling subscription, it stopped automatically renewing on April 3.

If your account still has credit, you can access Skype's dial pad from the web portal or Teams to make calls.

Skype numbers won't immediately expire on May 5 so you'll still be able to receive calls until your subscription expires. But you'll have to use Teams or keep the Skype dial pad open on the web portal to receive them.

Porting your number(s)

If your Skype number hasn't expired and you don't want to lose it, you should transfer it to another provider.

Skype numbers can be ported to a phone carrier or any number of other VoIP services. But you'll have to start the process through the new provider, not Skype.

Google Voice

Google users can access the online search giant's internet phone service to make calls from a smartphone or a desktop web browser. You can get your own Google Voice phone number and use features like call forwarding and voicemail. Or you can port your number from another service like Skype, but it will cost \$20.

Calls to U.S., Canadian or Puerto Rican numbers are free. Rates for other countries vary.

The free version of Google Voice is only available to U.S. residents physically located in the 48 contiguous states, so that means expatriate Americans can only use it if they registered before they moved overseas.

"You cannot sign up for a Google Voice number while outside the USA," according to a help page. "Do not try to circumvent this by using a VPN."

Viber

Owned by Japan's Rakuten, Viber was long considered one of the closest competitors to Skype. One key difference is that Skype users don't need a phone number and are identified by their usernames, while Viber users need a number to register for service.

Similar to Skype, Viber users can buy credit or packages to call phone numbers around the world but it's no longer possible to get a Viber number to receive calls.

Zoom

The videoconferencing service that's become a byword for online company meetings offers a calling service, Zoom Phone, and features like number porting and the ability to send and receive SMS text messages.

Take note that Zoom Phone isn't free. There are various calling plans that involve a monthly subscription cost and extra fees for international calls.

Teams

Microsoft users have the option of making calls on Teams, dubbed Teams Phone. Like Zoom Phone, you'll need to buy a subscription and pay extra for international calls.

But it's not an option for regular people because Microsoft says Teams Phone isn't for consumer use and is only available to small and medium-sized businesses.

Wireless Carriers

If you absolutely need a U.S. number but live overseas, sign up for service with a low-cost virtual wireless carrier that offers cheap cellphone plans or pay-as-you-go rates.

One provider, Tello, offers monthly plans for as little as \$5 and says users can activate its service even if they're living outside the U.S.

Because mobile virtual network operators like Tello are essentially wireless phone companies that piggyback off a bigger carrier's physical network, you can't use it to make calls on a computer or an app.

VoIP it

There are a slew of Skype pretenders offering phone calls over the internet, such as Zoiper, VoIP.ms, CallCentric, Mytello, and Virtual Landline. Many are aimed at business users.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 76 of 80

Some are capitalizing on Skype's disappearance. Hushed, which started as an anonymous calling app, bills itself as a Skype alternative. Users can buy a phone number from the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom or Puerto Rico or port their own number.

It warns that some of its numbers aren't guaranteed to work with third-party verification text messages. "We do not intentionally block anyone from receiving these codes, but it's common that some services will prevent verification texts from being sent to certain phone numbers due to their own security policies," Hushed says on its website.

Park your number

Maybe you can't decide which calling service you want to switch to. If you want to save your current number, there are services to just park your number like NumberBarn.com and Parkmyphone.com.

They let you store a phone number for a monthly fee while relaying any text messages sent to that number. You can port the number to another service whenever you want.

Beware, you can only port in U.S. or Canadian phone numbers.

eSIMs

What about an international eSIM? They're the virtual version of the mobile phone SIM card that you can buy and add to your phone when you're on a trip to save on roaming fees.

They offer cheap data access rates so you can use the internet without worrying about racking up a huge bill when you get home.

Unfortunately, you can't port a Skype number to an international eSIM because of "the fundamental differences" between VoIP services and traditional mobile networks, said Pedro Maiquez, co-founder of eSIM provider Holafly. "Skype numbers are not tied to a mobile carrier's physical infrastructure, making them incompatible with mobile eSIM solutions."

## On the attack: Trump's media response in Abrego Garcia story is notably vigorous

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Responding to coverage of Kilmar Abrego Garcia's deportation, the Trump administration has called journalists "despicable," questioned CNN's patriotism, scolded Fox News and even admitted to a mistake — in admitting to a mistake in the first place.

The vigorous reaction was noteworthy even in service to a president known for never backing down and a hostility toward the press. "The song is the same," said former CNN Washington bureau chief Frank Sesno, "but the volume is a lot louder."

President Donald Trump has fought the press on several fronts since returning to office in January. His team is battling The Associated Press in court over White House access, has sought to close Voice of America and launched FCC investigations into ABC News, CBS News, PBS and NPR, among others.

In the Abrego Garcia case, the White House took a situation that may have knocked predecessors on their heels and used it as an opportunity.

The 29-year-old Salvadoran national has lived in the United States for 14 years, married and is raising three children, and a judge shielded him from deportation in the first Trump term. In what Justice Department officials called an "administrative error," he was sent last month to a Salvadoran prison. His case has come to symbolize concerns over whether people are being expelled legally.

'I have to correct you on every single thing that you said'

Trump deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller wasn't interested in those questions during an interview with Fox News' Bill Hemmer. "I hate to do it, Bill, but I have to correct you on every single thing that you said, because it was all wrong," Miller said, interpreting a U.S. Supreme Court order that the administration facilitate Abrego Garcia's return as a victory.

Similarly, Trump said that people at CNN "hate our country" and objected when the network's Kaitlan Collins asked about Abrego Garcia in an Oval Office news conference.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 77 of 80

"Why don't you just say, 'Isn't it wonderful that we're keeping criminals out of our country?'" Trump responded. "Why can't you say that? Why do you go over and over — and that's why nobody watches you anymore, you know. You have no credibility."

From the briefing room, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said "outrage" about the case by Democrats and the media "has been nothing short of despicable."

"Based on the sensationalism of many of the people in this room, you would have thought we had deported a candidate for Father of the Year," she said. She called Abrego Garcia "an illegal alien MS-13 gang member and foreign terrorist who was deported back to his home country." Abrego Garcia has denied being part of the El Salvadoran gang.

To Trump's team, calling it an 'administrative error' was an error

She later told Fox News that the official who labeled Abrego Garcia's deportation an "administrative error" was himself mistaken. The immigrant, she promised, wouldn't be returning to his old life in the United States.

Trump and his team are banking on his immigration stance being among his most popular, and that many of his followers dislike journalists, said Sean Spicer, White House press secretary during the president's first term.

"If the roles were reversed and the Trump administration had been referring to Abrego Garcia as a 'Maryland family man,' the media would have gone nuts claiming he was spreading misinformation," Spicer said in an interview.

Matt Margolis, a columnist for PJMedia, told The Associated Press that "when the media won't report the facts, it's on the Trump administration to bring the facts directly to the public, and I think they've done so effectively. That's why he has solid approval ratings on immigration. The public knows the media is lying — and they know Trump isn't."

Nonetheless, Abrego Garcia put a human face to an issue and an effort frequently happening in the shadows. Recognizing the potency of government by anecdote, the administration produced its own face — inviting Patty Morin to meet Trump in the White House and address reporters. The Maryland woman's daughter, Rachel, was raped and killed in 2023 and a jury on April 14 convicted an immigrant from El Salvador in the U.S. illegally, Victor Martinez-Hernandez, of the crime.

Trump aide Steven Cheung called it a "media outrage" that CNN and MSNBC did not carry "angel mom" Patty Morin's recounting of the tragedy live on the air. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr criticized the same two networks for "news distortion" in their coverage of Abrego Garcia.

A conservative media watchdog, the Media Research Center, produced a report that Martinez-Hernandez's trial received 12 seconds of coverage on the ABC, CBS and NBC morning and evening newscasts. The Abrego Garcia case got 143 minutes in total on the broadcasts between April 1 and 23, enabling them to "berate" the Trump administration, they said.

"Disgusting," Donald Trump Jr. said in a social media posting.

The Morin murder trial did receive extensive local news coverage. Nationally, ABC News covered the case in 2024 when Martinez-Henderson was arrested and when Morin's brother spoke before the Republican national convention.

What is the case about, and what does Trump want it to be about?

The tactic — don't look here, look there! — is familiar in politics and propaganda, said Mark Lukasiewicz, a former NBC News executive who is now dean of the Hofstra University school of communication.

"It seems to me that what the White House would like the Abrego Garcia case to be about is whether this individual should be in the United States," Lukasiewicz said. "Their clear view is that he should not, and that should be the story. From a news perspective, that's not what the story is about. The story is about the absence of due process."

Attacking the news media is also not unique or new; ask your grandparents who former Vice President Spiro Agnew was referring to when he coined the phrase "nattering nabobs of negativism." Trump's defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, has bitterly denounced the press for a series of tough stories on his leadership.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 78 of 80

Yet the Abrego Garcia case is worth examining; the media strategy followed by the White House is likely to be repeated, especially since the president has a strong cadre of loyalists to follow his lead, said Sesno, professor at George Washington University's school of media and public affairs.

"Does any of this ever get old?" he asked. "That is the question."

## **The federal Bureau of Prisons has lots of problems. Reopening Alcatraz is now one of them**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

Eleven inmate deaths in less than two months. More than 4,000 staff vacancies. A \$3 billion repair backlog. And now, a stunning directive from President Donald Trump for the crisis-plagued federal Bureau of Prisons to "REBUILD, AND OPEN ALCATRAZ!" — the notorious penitentiary on an island in San Francisco Bay that last held inmates more than 60 years ago.

Even as the Bureau of Prisons struggles with short staffing, chronic violence and crumbling infrastructure at its current facilities, Trump is counting on the agency to fulfill his vision of rebooting the infamously inescapable prison known in movies and pop culture as "The Rock."

Trump declared in a social media post Sunday that a "substantially enlarged and rebuilt" Alcatraz will house the nation's "most ruthless and violent Offenders." It will "serve as a symbol of Law, Order, and JUSTICE," he wrote on Truth Social.

Newly appointed Bureau of Prisons Director William K. Marshall III said Monday that the agency "will vigorously pursue all avenues to support and implement the President's agenda" and that he has ordered "an immediate assessment to determine our needs and the next steps."

"USP Alcatraz has a rich history. We look forward to restoring this powerful symbol of law, order, and justice," Marshall said in a statement, echoing Trump's post. "We will be actively working with our law enforcement and other federal partners to reinstate this very important mission."

Alcatraz was once an exemplar

Alcatraz, a 22-acre (8.9 hectare) islet with views of the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco skyline, was once the crown jewel of the federal prison system and home to some of the nation's most notorious criminals, including gangsters Al Capone and George "Machine Gun" Kelly.

But skyrocketing repair and supply costs compelled the Justice Department to close the prison in 1963, just 29 years after it opened, and the Bureau of Prisons has long since replaced Alcatraz with modern penitentiaries, including a maximum-security prison in Florence, Colorado.

The former and perhaps future penitentiary is now a popular tourist attraction and a national historic landmark. It's controlled by the National Park Service as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, meaning the Bureau of Prisons could be in for an interagency tug of war if it tries to wrest away control of the island.

Trump's Alcatraz directive is yet another challenge for the Bureau of Prisons as it struggles to fix lingering problems while responding to the president's priorities on incarceration and immigrant detention. The agency's mission, as redefined under Trump, includes taking in thousands of immigration detainees under an agreement with the Department of Homeland Security.

The problems at the Bureau of Prisons transcend administrations and facilities.

An ongoing Associated Press investigation has uncovered deep, previously unreported flaws within the Bureau of Prisons over the last few years, including widespread criminal activity by employees, dozens of escapes, the free flow of guns, drugs and other contraband, and severe understaffing that has hampered responses to emergencies.

Last year, then-President Joe Biden signed a law strengthening oversight of the agency. It remains the Justice Department's largest agency, with more than 30,000 employees, 155,000 inmates and an annual budget of about \$8 billion, but the Trump administration's cost-cutting measures have eliminated some pay bonuses that were credited with retaining and attracting new staff.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 79 of 80

That has resulted in long overtime shifts for some workers and the continued use of a policy known as augmentation, where prison nurses, cooks, teachers and other workers are pressed into duty to guard inmates.

Infrastructure is buckling, too. A Bureau of Prisons official told Congress at a hearing in February that more than 4,000 beds within the system — the equivalent of at least two full prisons — are unusable because of dangerous conditions like leaking or failing roofs, mold, asbestos or lead.

Deaths have plagued the federal prison system

Since mid-March, 11 federal prison inmates have died. They include David Knezevich, a 37-year-old Florida businessman who was found dead April 28 in a suspected suicide at a federal jail in Miami. He was awaiting trial on charges he kidnapped and killed his estranged wife in Spain.

And on April 24, inmate Ramadhan Jaabir Justice was killed in a fight at the federal penitentiary in Pollock, Louisiana, where he was serving a nearly 11-year sentence for a conviction related to an armed robbery.

As Trump was ordering Alcatraz's reopening Sunday, correctional officers at the same Miami jail were fighting to curb the spread of tuberculosis and COVID-19, isolating inmates after they tested positive for the diseases. Last month, immigration detainees at the facility ripped out a fire sprinkler and flooded a holding cell during a lengthy intake process.

Meanwhile, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) east of Alcatraz, the Federal Correctional Institution in Dublin, California, has sat idle for more than a year after the Bureau of Prisons cleared it of inmates in the wake of rampant sexual abuse by employees, including the warden.

In December, the agency made the closure permanent and idled six prison camps across the country to address "significant challenges, including a critical staffing shortage, crumbling infrastructure and limited budgetary resources."

While Trump hails Alcatraz as a paragon of the federal prison system's cherished past, other facilities stand as reminders of its recent troubles.

They include the federal jail in Manhattan, which remains idle after Jeffrey Epstein's suicide there in 2019 exposed deep flaws in its operations, and a troubled federal lockup in Brooklyn, where 23 inmates have been charged in recent months with crimes ranging from smuggling weapons in a Doritos bag to the stabbing last month of a man convicted in the killing of hip-hop legend Jam Master Jay.

## Today in History: May 7, RMS Lusitania torpedoed, sunk by German submarine

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, May 7, the 127th day of 2025. There are 238 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 7, 1915, a German U-boat torpedoed and sank the British liner RMS Lusitania off the southern coast of Ireland, killing 1,198 people, including 128 Americans, out of the nearly 2,000 on board.

Also on this date:

In 1945, Nazi Germany signed an unconditional surrender at Allied headquarters in Rheims, France, ending its role in World War II.

In 1954, the 55-day Battle of Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam ended with Vietnamese insurgents overrunning French forces; it would be the last major battle of the First Indochina War.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford formally declared an end to the "Vietnam era." In Ho Chi Minh City — formerly Saigon — the Viet Cong celebrated its takeover.

In 1977, Seattle Slew won the Kentucky Derby, the first of his Triple Crown victories.

In 1984, Monsanto and six other chemical companies agreed to pay a \$180 million settlement to Vietnam veterans who were exposed to the chemical herbicide Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

In 2020, Georgia authorities arrested a white father and son and charged them with murder in the February shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man they had pursued in a truck after spotting him

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 316 ~ 80 of 80**

running in their neighborhood near the port city of Brunswick. (The two men and a third white man would be convicted of murder in state court and hate crimes in federal court.)

Today's Birthdays: Singer Thelma Houston is 82. Rock musician Bill Kreutzmann (Grateful Dead) is 79. Actor/former boxer Randall "Tex" Cobb is 75. Actor Breckin Meyer is 51. Reggaeton musician J Balvin is 40. Actor-comedian Aidy Bryant is 38. Actor-writer Maya Erskine is 38. Actor Alexander Ludwig is 33. YouTube personality MrBeast (Jimmy Donaldson) is 27.