

# Groton Daily Independent

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**Saturday, May 10**

**Sunday, May 11**

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

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

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

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

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

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



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

High School Baseball in Groton: Hosting Sisseton-Britton-Webster: Varsity at 2 p.m. JV at 4 p.m.

**Monday, May 12**

Senior Menu: Meatball, mashed potato with gravy mixed vegetables, mixed fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: French bread pizza, cooked broccoli.

Girls Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course, 10a .m.

Junior High Track at Webster, 3 p.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

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

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# 1440

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

## **FDA OKs Natural Dyes**

The Food and Drug Administration yesterday approved three new natural food color additives: galdieria extract blue (a blue color derived from algae), calcium phosphate (a white color from minerals), and butterfly pea flower extract (a blue color from dried petals).

The new dyes will be available for use in products like yogurt, beverages, pretzels, candies, and even ready-to-eat chicken, offering manufacturers more plant- and mineral-based choices. The change, effective next month, reflects the FDA's broader shift away from petroleum-based synthetic dyes, which have drawn scrutiny over potential behavioral effects in children. While the FDA maintains most artificial dyes are safe, consumer advocacy groups and public health experts have long pushed for more natural alternatives in the nation's food supply.

The announcement follows the FDA's plans to phase out eight artificial dyes, including Red No. 40 and Yellow No. 5, from food and medications by the end of 2026. The FDA also plans to phase out Red No. 3 from food by January 2027.

## **Trump signals openness to cutting China tariffs to 80%.**

President Donald Trump proposed reducing tariffs on Chinese imports to 80% in a bid to ease trade tensions ahead of high-level talks today between US and Chinese officials in Switzerland. The talks mark the first major meeting between the two countries since the trade war began. Tariffs have surged to 145% on US goods from China and 125% on Chinese goods from the US, impacting markets and consumer prices.

## **Former Supreme Court Justice David Souter dies at age 85.**

The retired Supreme Court justice, appointed by President George HW Bush in 1990, passed away Thursday at his home in New Hampshire. Though initially expected to be a conservative voice, Souter became known for his liberal stances on issues like abortion and civil rights. He also dissented in the 2000 Bush v. Gore decision, which ended the Florida recount and secured George W. Bush's presidential victory.

## **Newark Airport goes dark for second time Friday morning.**

Early Friday morning, radar screens at Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey went dark for about 90 seconds due to a telecommunications outage at a Philadelphia facility overseeing its airspace. The brief outage is the second such incident in two weeks and came a day after the Department of Transportation announced a multibillion-dollar modernization plan.

## **Two men convicted of cutting down iconic Sycamore Gap tree.**

Daniel Graham and Adam Carruthers were found guilty Friday of criminal damage for felling the Sycamore Gap tree in northern England in 2023. The roughly 150-year-old tree previously stood symmetrically in a dip between two hills alongside a portion of Hadrian's Wall, a 73-mile stone barrier built by Roman Emperor Hadrian about 1,900 years ago to protect the empire's northwest frontier. Sentencing is July 15.

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## **Lyft sees shares rise 28% after increasing its share buyback plan.**

Lyft's shares popped a day after the rideshare company beat first-quarter estimates, reporting \$1.45B in revenue. It also expanded its share buyback plan to \$750M. Additionally, Lyft reported strong rider growth in smaller US cities and international expansion through its FreeNow acquisition have contributed to a record number of bookings.

## **FDA approves first at-home alternative to the Pap smear.**

The Food and Drug Administration on Friday approved an at-home cervical cancer screening tool called the Teal Wand, which allows women ages 25 to 65 to self-collect samples to test for HPV—the virus responsible for most cervical cancers. The alternative to traditional Pap smears aims to make screening easier, especially for those who find in-office exams uncomfortable or inaccessible.

## **Humankind(ness)**

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Elise K. in Bloomingdale, Indiana.

"Monday afternoon, my husband rushed me to the ER for severe pain: appendicitis, requiring surgery. In the morning, a student nurse took my vitals. 'In December, I had appendicitis,' she said. 'It hurts.' I hadn't eaten in more than 36 hours, and all I could think about was water. When the nurse next entered, she brought what looked like a toothbrush with a sponge, wet the sponge, and said, 'They gave this to me when my mouth was dry. You rub it around your mouth.' Cool relief followed.

Surgery was scheduled for the afternoon; thankfully, it was moved to the morning. But my husband, who had gone home to take care of animals, couldn't make it back before the procedure. 'Can I go down with her?' the student nurse asked her supervisor. With a yes, she walked alongside the gurney, giving me a packet to ease nausea. She stood next to me as I was prepped, not saying much, just being there, a calm presence when needed most.

The surgery went well, and the student was one of the nurses who stood along the hallway and waved and smiled as I was wheeled back to my room."

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## Local newspaper is Community Spark

Groton Daily Independent's 'Paper Paul' honored for innovation and impact

by Danielle Kearin

### Heartland Energy Communications Specialist

Sparked by a love of journalism at a young age, Paul Kosel knew early on he wanted to own a newspaper.

It all began in high school with a bulletin board in the English room called "Kosel's Korner."

He typed up stories at home on his typewriter and posted them the next day. Eventually, he approached the school superintendent and told him they needed a school newspaper.

It was added to the school's budget the following year.

Fueled by that early drive and a growing passion for storytelling, Kosel earned a degree at South Dakota State University. After gaining experience at various local newspapers and radio stations, he was ready to take the next step.

He contacted the state newspaper association to find out which papers were for sale – a bold move that soon led him to Groton, SD. In 1986, he packed up, relocated, and became the proud owner of the city's local paper.

Nearly 40 years later, Kosel is affectionately known throughout town as "Paper Paul."

He publishes both a daily and weekly newspaper, live streams local events, owns a fitness center and laundromat, and is an integral part of the community.

In recognition of his impact, the Groton Daily Independent has been named the 2025 recipient of the Community Spark Award by Heartland Energy. Presented in conjunction with National Small Business Week, the award celebrates outstanding small businesses in Heartland customer communities.

### Storm sparks new era

When Kosel first took over the Groton Independent, it was a traditional weekly newspaper. That changed one day when severe weather rolled through town.

"We had just published the weekly and a storm system came through," Kosel recalled. "I thought, do I really have to wait a whole week to report this?"

Instead, he pulled together a special edition and published it online. That day, the Groton Daily Independent was born.

Known locally as GDI, the daily edition launched in 1999 with just seven subscribers. Today, it reaches around 200 readers, who receive a link in their inbox each morning.

GDI became the first weekly newspaper in South Dakota to establish a daily online presence – an early move that helped future-proof the paper.

Once a week, stories are compiled into a print edition which is sent to another 200 subscribers. Kosel prints the paper in house, giving him flexibility to operate on his own timeline.



**Paul Kosel of the Groton Daily Independent with his Spark Awards.** (Heartland Energy Photo)



**Kosel streams an event for broadcast on GDILive.com.** (Photo courtesy city of Groton.)

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**Heartland Energy presents the Community Spark Award to Groton Daily Independent owner and publisher Paul Kosel. From left to right: Heartland Customer Relations Manager Kelly Dybdahl, Groton, SD Assistant Finance Officer Kellie Locke, Heartland Director of Economic Development Casey Crabtree, Kosel, Heartland Chief Communications Officer Ann Hyland, Groton Superintendent Joe Schwan, Groton Deputy Finance Officer April Abeln, and Groton Finance Officer Doug Heinrich.** (Heartland Energy Photo)

## Diversification expands reach

With Kosel's schedule, flexibility is key.

During the day, you'll find him working for the city of Groton as the technology specialist, helping with everything from summer pool prep to electric department projects.

Before dawn, he's at the newspaper office assembling the daily edition. After his city job, he returns to work on stories or prepare the weekly edition. And if there's a local event or game, he's on the road to livestream it.

That livestreaming effort, known as GDILive, began as a way to connect the community with local sports and activities—and has grown into a vital extension of the Groton Daily Independent.

Groton Superintendent Joe Schwan appreciates the work Kosel puts into making sure activities are always available online.

"Having Paper Paul be a local supporter and producer of all of our school activities is a huge advantage to those people who live away from here and parents who are chasing kids to multiple activities," Schwan said.

Kosel covers everything from athletic and fine arts events to graduation ceremonies. During games, he calls the plays and keeps detailed stats while running the camera. The next day, readers can find a full recap in the GDI.

GDILive is bundled with newspaper subscriptions, while non-subscribers can pay a small fee to access events.

It's all part of a broader strategy Kosel has embraced to keep local journalism thriving.

"You have to diversify yourself if you want to stay in the business," he said. "GDI Live really helped sustain the whole operation. If you just try to stay in one thing, social media will run you out of business."

## A legacy rooted in community

The Groton Daily Independent was nominated for the Community Spark by Kosel's colleagues at the city of Groton – people who see his impact firsthand every day.

"GDI is essential to the well-being of our community. It plays an essential role in promoting our businesses and community events through advertising and editorials. GDI keeps Groton and surrounding communities informed and connected," the nomination stated.

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Kosel is more than the local newsman. As a longtime city employee, he brings deep institutional knowledge and a dependable presence the staff says they couldn't imagine doing without.

"He's up to date on all the events in town, everything that's happening in the city," said Groton Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich. "With the GDI, he helps to maintain the transparency that we as a city strive for."

Kosel takes pride in keeping his community informed - a place he's proud to call home.

"Everybody is still caring and works together," Kosel said. "When there's a crisis, people chip in. Everybody gets together and helps out."

## Community Spark

Heartland Energy created the Community Spark to recognize small businesses that serve as the lifeblood of rural communities. Nominations for the award were accepted throughout their customer base. Heartland provides wholesale power and energy to the city of Groton as well as other municipalities throughout the Midwest.

"Paul is an innovator and what he has done with the GDI exemplifies what it means to serve a community with dedication and heart," said Heartland Energy Director of Economic Development Casey Crabtree. "His commitment to local journalism and community engagement truly sets him apart."

While Kosel wears many hats, he is the first to admit that he can't do it all alone. He has a small team of reporters and counts on the community to help him stay in the loop.

"It's a group effort - a community effort," he said.

Under his leadership, GDI has become more than a newspaper. It's a hub for everything happening in and around Groton and is a cornerstone of the community.

As for the future? Kosel says he'll keep going as long as he's able.

"It's something I enjoy doing and if you enjoy something, keep doing it."

When asked how he hopes he is remembered, his answer is simple.

"I just hope my legacy is that I served the community well."

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## Girl Scouts donate to The Pantry

On Monday, Groton Girl Scout Troop #40249 generously donated several boxes of Girl Scout cookies to The Pantry - Groton, SD, spreading a little sweetness. The team at Enrich Groton SoDak Inc. is incredibly grateful for this thoughtful gesture.

Pictured L to R: Senior Citizen member Dave Kleinsasser, Enrich volunteers Steve and Sandy Dresbach, Enrich board members Nancy Larsen, Diane Warrington, April Abeln, and Topper Tastad, Girl Scout members Rosalyn Block, Isabella Daly and Hallie Perkin. (Courtesy Photo April Abeln)

**The Groton Daily Independent is delivered to subscribers via email as a supplement to the weekly Groton Independent.**



**Kosel operates the Groton Daily Independent from Main Street, Groton. He's also a longtime city employee.** (Heartland Energy Photo)

OPENING MAY 2ND  
CLOSING JUNE 2ND

## WEBER LANDSCAPING GREENHOUSE

620 WEST THIRD AVENUE

GROTON

HOURS OF OPERATION

M-F 10-6

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SAT 10-4

SUN 12-4



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## Gilbert is double winner at Aberdeen Track Meet

Ryelle Gilbert was a double winner at the Al Sahli Invitational Track Meet held Friday in Aberdeen. She won the 800m run and the 1600m run events. The girls 4x200m relay team was also a winner.

### Mens Results

**100 Meters:** 7. Keegen Tracy, 11.36; 11. Lincoln Krause, 11.55; 33. Ryder Schelle, 12.26

**200 Meters:** 4. Keegen Tracy, 22.55; 38. Jordan Schwan, 24.98; 48. Ryder Schelle, 25.30

**800 Meters:** 14. Jace Johnson, 2:17.72; 30. Kason Oswald, 2:35.91

**1600 Meters:** 2. Jayden Schwan, 4:44.30; 13. Jace Johnson, 5:25.75

**3200 Meters:** 3. Jayden Schwan, 10:21.17

**4x200 Relay:** 6. (Brevin Fliehs, Lincoln Krause, Ethan Kroll, Jordan Schwan), 1:38.40.

**SMR 1600m - [200-200-400-800]:** 2. (Brevin Fliehs, Lincoln Krause, Keegen Tracy, Blake Pauli), 3:40.72.

**Long Jump:** 9. Ethan Kroll, 18' 5.25"; 33. Kason Oswald, 14' 10.75"; 37. TC Schuster, 14' 6.25".

**Triple Jump:** 2. Ethan Kroll, 40' 1.75"; 16. Tristin McGannon, 34' 10.5".

### Womens Results

**100 Meters:** 7. MaKenna Krause, 12.91; 27. Rylee Dunker, 13.91; 38. Faith Traphagen, 14.41; 68. Suri Jetto, 17.73

**200 Meters:** 26. Rylee Dunker, 28.76; 84. Suri Jetto, 38.96

**400 Meters:** 14. Rylee Dunker, 1:08.24

**800 Meters:** 1. Ryelle Gilbert, 2:25.53; 4. Faith Traphagen, 2:31.79; 9. Ashlynn Warrington, 2:38.87

**1600 Meters:** 1. Ryelle Gilbert, 5:32.50; 11. Ashlynn Warrington, 6:03.23

**100m Hurdles - 33":** 4. McKenna Tietz, 16.99; 13. Ella Kettner, 19.30; 14. Hannah Sandness, 19.49; 16. Teagan Hanten, 19.69; 23. Talli Wright, 23.31

**300m Hurdles - 30":** 2. McKenna Tietz, 48.17; 11. Talli Wright, 54.29; 15. Teagan Hanten, 56.56; 17. Ella Kettner, 57.17; 20. Hannah Sandness, 59.55

**4x100 Relay:** 4. (Laila Roberts, Kella Tracy, McKenna Tietz, MaKenna Krause), 51.43.

**4x200 Relay:** 1. (Laila Roberts, Kella Tracy, McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen), 1:48.15.

**SMR 1600m - [200-200-400-800]:** 2. (MaKenna Krause, Taryn Traphagen, Laila Roberts, Kella Tracy), 4:24.98.

**Javelin - 600g:** 13. Avery Crank, 80' 10"; 23. Emma Kutter, 74' 9"; 33. Libby Cole, 63' 3"; 37. Audrey Davis, 60' 8"; 41. Addison Hoffman, 53' 7"; 44. Kyleigh Kroll, 50' 1"

**Long Jump:** 16. MaKenna Krause, 14' 6"; 33. Teagan Hanten, 12' 7"; 44. Rylie Rose, 11' 8".

**Triple Jump:** 24. Teagan Hanten, 26' 3.75"

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**The Groton Lions Club conducted their Spring Groton US Highway 12 cleanup Thursday. Pictured left to right are Dave Pigors, Suzie Easthouse, Hazel Neu, Emery Blackwood, Brenda McCarthy, Karyn Babcock, Rylan Blackwood and Topper Tastad. Not pictured is Bruce Babcock. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)**

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## **GFP Commission Holds May Meeting**

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) held their May Commission meeting at the Custer State Park Events Barn.

The Commission had several proposals and finalizations for upcoming seasons and regulations.

### **WILDLIFE PROPOSALS**

#### **Closed Area on Lake Francis Case**

The Commission continued discussions on a proposal to eliminate the closed area, referenced as the "Dredge Hole" below the I-90 bridge on Lake Francis Case by Chamberlain. This area is closed December 1-April 30 and includes the area between the I-90 Bridge and Railroad Bridge. This would open this area to fishing for the entire season.

#### **Beaver Trapping and Hunting Season**

The Commission proposed to close the beaver trapping and hunting season for 2025 and 2026 in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. The closure would then be reassessed for future seasons in 2027.

The beaver trapping and hunting season in South Dakota, excluding the Black Hills Fire Protection District, would remain open, year round for residents and between March 16 and November 30 for nonresidents.

#### **River Otter Trapping and Hunting Season**

The Commission proposed to increase the harvest limit from 20 to 30 otters. Positive growth within the population and harvest limits being reached quickly in prior seasons provided strong evidence the harvest limit can be increased for the 2025 season.

### **PARKS PROPOSALS**

#### **Purple Heart Recipient**

The Commission accepted a petition to include Purple Heart recipients as eligible for the resident disabled veteran lifetime park entrance license and half off camping discount. This petition will now become a proposal, which will go through the public comment process.

### **WILDLIFE FINALIZATIONS**

#### **Mentored/Youth/Apprentice Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 mentored/youth/apprentice deer hunting seasons. The season dates will be:

Sept. 13, 2025 - Jan. 1, 2026

Sept. 12, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2027

#### **Archery Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 archery deer hunting seasons. The season dates will be:

Sept. 1, 2025 - Jan. 1, 2026

Sept. 1, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2027

Nonresidents may not hunt private lands leased by GFP for public hunting access or public lands until Oct. 1.

The archery deer season will also include the expansion of the municipal deer hunting areas around Sioux Falls and establishment of a municipal deer hunting area in Hot Springs.

#### **Muzzleloader Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 muzzleloader deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

Dec. 1, 2025 - Jan. 1, 2026

Dec. 1, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2027

There will be 1,000 resident "Any Deer" licenses available for this season.

#### **Black Hills Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 Black Hills deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

Nov. 1 - 30, 2025

Nov. 1 - 30, 2026

All firearm deer season licenses will be restricted to buck only in the Black Hills, resulting in no antlerless

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deer legal for harvest during the Black Hills firearm deer season. There will be 200 "Any Buck Deer" and 2,750 "Any Whitetail Buck" resident licenses available, and 16 "Any Buck Deer" and 220 "Any Whitetail Buck" nonresident licenses available.

## **Custer State Park Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 Custer State Park deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

Nov. 1 - 30, 2025

Nov. 1 - 30, 2026

The "antlerless deer" season will remain closed in Custer State Park.

There will be 25 "Any Whitetail Deer" resident licenses available.

## **West River Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 West River deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

2025  
November 15 – 30, 2025\*

\*Gregory County – 30A: November 8 – 11 and 24 – 30, 2025

30B: November 15 – 30, 2025

Antlerless deer tags only: December 13-21, 2025

2026

November 14 – 29, 2026\*

\*Gregory County – 30A: November 7 – 10 and 23 – 29, 2026

30B: November 14 – 29, 2026

Antlerless deer tags only: December 12-20, 2026

Many "Any Deer" license types were changed to "Any Buck Deer" license types to reduce antlerless deer harvest. As a result, there will be 730 "Any Buck Deer" licenses available during the West River Deer season. In addition, there will be 4,120 fewer antlerless deer licenses available in 2025 and 2026, representing a 40% reduction in antlerless licenses. There will be 15,648 resident deer licenses and 1,256 nonresident deer licenses available.

## **Refuge Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 National Refuge deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

2025 Season Dates:

Sand Lake NWR November 8-12, November 13-17, November 24 – 30, and December 1-7

Lacreek NWR October 15-21 and November 26 – December 2

Waubay NWR November 15-23, and November 29 – December 7 (includes Waubay State Game Bird Refuge)

2026 Season Dates:

Sand Lake NWR November 14-18, November 19-23, November 30 – December 6, and December 7-13

Lacreek NWR October 21-27 and November 25-December 1

Waubay NWR November 14-22, and November 28 – December 6 (includes Waubay State Game Bird Refuge).

There will be 120 resident "Any Deer" licenses and 12 nonresident "Any Deer" licenses available in total.

## **East River Deer**

The Commission finalized the 2025 and 2026 East River deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

2025  
November 22 – December 7, 2025

Antlerless deer tags only: December 13-21, 2025

2026

November 21 – December 6, 2026

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Antlerless deer tags only: December 12-20, 2026

Many "Any Deer" license types were changed to "Any Buck Deer" license types to reduce antlerless deer harvest. As a result, there will be 950 "any buck deer" licenses available during the East River Deer season. In addition, there will be 3,550 fewer antlerless deer licenses available in 2025 and 2026, representing a 50% reduction in antlerless licenses. There will be 18,840 resident deer licenses available for this season.

## **Black Hills Elk**

The Commission finalized the Black Hills and Custer State Park elk hunting seasons with the following dates:

Black Hills and CSP Archery: September 1 – 30

CSP Firearm: October 1 – 31

Black Hills Firearm

Any Elk Units: H1A, H2A, H3A, H4A, H5A, H7A, and H9A - Oct. 1 - 31

Antlerless Elk Units: H1B, H4B, H7B, and H9B - Oct. 15-31 and Dec. 1-16

Antlerless Elk Units: H2B, H2E, H2H, H3B, and H3E - Oct. 15 - 31

Antlerless Elk Units: H2C, H2F, H2I, H3C and H3F - Dec. 1 - 16

Antlerless Elk Units: H2D, H2G, H2J, H3D, and H3G - Dec. 17-31.

897 any elk licenses and 1,335 antlerless elk licenses are available for the 2025 Black Hills and Custer State Park elk hunting seasons. This would result in 115 additional any elk licenses and 515 additional antlerless elk licenses compared to 2024.

The following recommendations represent a 15% increase in any elk licenses and a 63% increase in antlerless elk licenses from 2024 to 2025.

## **Mentored Hunting**

The Commission finalized their proposal for mentored hunting. The following changes will be implemented:

The mentored hunter will be issued their respective license and be the holder of their license. The license will be under the mentee's name. Previously, mentored hunters hunted under the mentor's license. Mentored hunters will need a profile in the South Dakota Go Outdoors system in order to obtain a license.

There will be no group size restriction for mentored hunting.

Consent for mentored hunting will now be verbal or written. Previously, written consent was required.

This allows the GFP Commission to establish criteria and conditions for mentored hunting seasons.

## **Electronic Tagging**

The Commission finalized the description of electronic license registration and tagging requirements to accommodate the comprehensive testing the department is conducting regarding electronic tagging. This will not replace the current locking seal tagging rule, but would allow the option to switch to an electronic tagging option in the future.

## **Public Comment Opportunity and Upcoming Meeting**

To hear the discussion on any of the topics on the agenda, audio from the meeting is available through South Dakota Public Broadcasting and will soon be available on the GFP website as part of the meeting archive.

To see these documents in their entirety, visit [gfp.sd.gov/commission/information](http://gfp.sd.gov/commission/information).

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, public comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CDT June 2.

The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held June 5-6 at the Dakota Events Center in Aberdeen

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**BROWN COUNTY  
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA  
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY  
May 13, 2025, 8:45 A.M.**

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

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. First Reading of the following Ordinances:
  - a. Ord. #294 – Rezone for Timothy & Kelly Serr
  - b. Ord. #295 – Rezone for Adam Monson
  - c. Ord. #296 – Rezone for Jeffery & Tamara Sahli
  - d. Ord. #297 – Rezone for Shane Reich
  - e. Ord. #298 – Rezone for James Johnson/William Mundhenke
5. Rachel Kippley, Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks Manager
  - a. Gaga Ball Pit Contract
  - b. Fairgrounds Updates
6. Brad Borge, Public Defender
  - a. Discuss Software Purchase
7. Judy Dosch, Building Superintendent
  - a. Courthouse Security Grant
8. Consent Calendar
  - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes for May 6, 2025
  - b. Claims/Payroll
  - c. HR Report
  - d. Claim Assignments
9. Other Business
10. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
11. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

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

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

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

**Access Code:** 601-168-909 #

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

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

Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

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

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

## Olivia and Liam Remain Most Popular Baby Names for 2024

Olivia and Liam are once again America's most popular baby names of the year. 2024 marks the sixth consecutive year that families chose to stick with both familiar names. Also, for the sixth consecutive year, Emma took the second slot for girls, and Noah for boys. The girls' name Luna has dropped from its spot among the Top 10, replaced by Sofia which enters at number 10 for the first time.

Here are the top 10 boys' and girls' names for 2024:

BOYS	GIRLS
1) Liam	1) Olivia
2) Noah	2) Emma
3) Oliver	3) Amelia
4) Theodore	4) Charlotte
5) James	5) Mia
6) Henry	6) Sophia
7) Mateo	7) Isabella
8) Elijah	8) Evelyn
9) Lucas	9) Ava
10) William	10) Sofia

Every year, Social Security celebrates Mother's Day by announcing the 1,000 most popular baby names. For the full list, visit [www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames](http://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames).

"As Mother's Day nears, we remember the incredible impact that mothers have on our lives," said Social Security Commissioner Frank Bisignano. "Growing up with a working mom, I witnessed firsthand the dedication, resilience, and balance it takes to juggle both career and family. Happy Mother's Day to all the incredible mothers in our lives who inspire us and set an example for future generations."

Most parents apply for their child's Social Security number (SSN) at birth, during their hospital stay. Commissioner Bisignano encourages families to take this vital step in ensuring valuable protection for any benefits their children may be eligible for in the future.

An SSN is needed to claim a child as a dependent for income tax purposes or to open a bank account in the child's name and buy savings bonds. More information on getting a child's SSN and card is provided in Social Security Numbers for Children.

### Additional Baby Names Information:

Social Security began compiling the baby name list in 1997, with names dating back to 1880. At the time of a child's birth, parents supply the name to the agency when applying for a child's Social Security card, thus making Social Security America's source for the most popular baby names.

Each year, the list also reveals the names that increased the most in popularity. Among those rising in popularity for girls, Ailany, which means 'chief', topped the list. The boys' name Truce, which means 'peace', rose an incredible 11,118 spots from last year's position, cracking the top 1,000 at number 991 overall.

Here are the top five boys' and girls' names that increased the most in popularity in 2024:

BOYS	GIRLS
1) Truce	1) Ailany
2) Colsen	2) Aylani
3) Bryer	3) Marjorie
4) Halo	4) Scottie
5) Azaiah	5) Analeia

## **Names Released in 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: Taylor Neil Johnson, 34-year-old male from Hendricks, MN, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2004 Chevrolet Tahoe

Seat belt Used: No

Driver 2: Randall Dean Willmott, 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.

Preliminary crash information indicates Taylor Neil Johnson, 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 driven by Randall Dean Willmott.

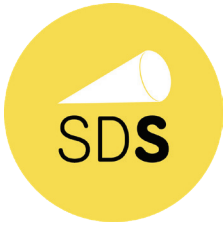
Johnson was pronounced deceased at the scene. Willmott sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

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.

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



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Two SD lawmakers join push to ban soda and candy purchases from food assistance program

**Governor's spokesperson says state will 'review' SNAP eligible items**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 9, 2025 5:16 PM**

Two state lawmakers who work in health care want Republican South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden's help to ban sugary drinks, candy and "other non-nutritious items" from a nutrition program for low-income people.

Sen. Sydney Davis, R-Burbank, and Rep. Taylor Rehfeldt, R-Sioux Falls, sent Rhoden a letter this week asking him to seek a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to prohibit families on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) from purchasing the items.

"This policy reform is about promoting healthier outcomes, encouraging smarter choices, and protecting the integrity of a program by ensuring responsible use of taxpayer dollars," the letter read. "South Dakota should align its policies with common sense and nutritional science."

At least four other states had asked the USDA to let them ban some foods from the assistance program as of late April: Iowa, Nebraska, Arkansas and Indiana, according to Reuters. President Donald Trump's administration has called on states to request such waivers, and said it'll work to approve them in a push to "Make America Healthy Again."

Forty-one million people nationwide use the program in a typical month. Over 37,600 South Dakota households participated in the program in March, according to the state Department of Social Services, which includes 33,675 children. The average household received \$395.38 through the program, costing about \$14.9 million in federal funds. States pay for about half of administrative costs.

Critics of the waivers and bans on "unhealthy" food say the restrictions stigmatize low-income people and could create inefficiencies in implementing and tracking the program because states spend more administrative time establishing, monitoring and updating the list of restricted food items. Research from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that increases in monthly SNAP benefits increase nutritious food consumption, such as vegetables and healthy proteins, among participants while reducing food insecurity and fast-food consumption.

Some rural South Dakotans live in areas with limited access to supermarkets, where gas stations fill the void with more expensive but less nutritious food options, according to a 2008 South Dakota State University report on food deserts in the state. At that time, nearly half of South Dakota counties were considered food deserts.

In an emailed statement to South Dakota Searchlight, Rhoden's spokesperson Josie Harms said the governor is "grateful" for the federal administration's initiative, but did not say whether he will seek a waiver.

"Our state will continue to review our SNAP eligible items to ensure that nutritious options are available to our families," Harms said.

Davis said Rhoden's administration responded to the letter with a request to further discuss how a waiver might be implemented in the state. She hopes to work with the state government and other retailers and stakeholders to walk through the implementation process, identify what items to ban and to hear what the department projects as "additional implementation costs."

"We shouldn't let the fears of a difficult implementation stop us from trying to implement good policy," Davis told South Dakota Searchlight. "At the heart of this request is looking out for the health and betterment of South Dakotans, kids and families that are financially vulnerable."

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As a certified registered nurse anesthetist at the Sanford Vermillion Medical Center, Davis said she's seen the impact a sugary diet can have on children's health, which leads to costly health care bills for families — or the government if the children are on Medicaid. For example, she's anesthetized children for dental work, she said, because of "Mountain Dew put in their baby bottles."

"Whether or not that Mountain Dew or whatever was purchased with SNAP benefits, it's hard to say," Davis said, adding that if the SNAP ban on such items is implemented, "then I guess we'll know."

Davis said it's "not uncommon for government programs to have guardrails in place." She said she doesn't know what the timeline would be to request a waiver and implement a ban.

*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.*

## Small-town newspapers say mail delays are crippling their business

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MAY 9, 2025 9:04 AM

Delayed Postal Service deliveries of small-town newspapers are frustrating readers, undermining subscriptions and hurting advertising revenue, according to publishers across South Dakota.

"It's taking nine days to get a paper from Armour to Sioux Falls," said Julie Hinckley of Rocket Printing, which prints several small-town publications. "That's unacceptable for timely news."

Armour and Sioux Falls are about 95 miles apart. Many smaller publishers, like those that work with Rocket Printing, depend on the post office for deliveries to subscribers who've moved away to Sioux Falls or other locations but still want to receive their hometown paper. Some larger newspapers that formerly hired people to deliver the paper now count on the post office even for local deliveries, due to tighter budgets, a migration to online readership and a lack of people interested in having a paper route.

The Postal Service had announced last year it would pause — at least until this year — a controversial plan to downgrade several mail processing centers, including one in Huron. The pause followed pushback from the state's congressional delegation.

In a Feb. 21 press release, the Postal Service announced a \$3 billion cost-cutting initiative, but also mentioned \$3 million in planned upgrades to the Huron facility. The release did not mention the removal of any sorting operations.

Then, in early April, a postal employee emailed David Bordewyk, executive director of the South Dakota NewsMedia Association, to say that some sorting operations were halted in Huron, and some newspapers and other bulk mail were going to a postal facility in Fargo, North Dakota, before being routed back to South Dakota for final delivery.

The change adds days to delivery, according to newspaper publishers.

"We're getting calls left and right," said Barb Pechous with the Wagner Post. "Advertisers are starting to pull back."

Dan Bechtold with the Winner Advocate said readers are assuming their subscription has lapsed when papers don't arrive on time.

"If something is coming up people want to know about, they're going to miss it," he said.

After reaching out to member newspapers, Bordewyk heard from at least a dozen papers reporting problems. He also reached out to the state's congressional delegation, whose staffers said the Postal Service claimed the problem stemmed from newspapers not properly sorting their own mail.

Bordewyk said that explanation "doesn't make any sense," because papers have been sorting the same way for years.

"Are they changing the rules in the middle of the game?" he said. "If things need to be fixed, tell us. Work with us."

Bordewyk said the Postal Service has not provided newspapers with any updated guidance on how to prepare mail. He hopes to arrange a meeting between the papers and the Postal Service.

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The Postal Service responded to a request for comment by asking for more specific questions from South Dakota Searchlight, but did not immediately respond upon receiving those questions.

## Newspaper delays in South Dakota

The South Dakota NewsMedia Association has collected reports of postal delivery delays from member newspapers, including:

The Timber Lake Topic reported more readers switching to email delivery due to delays, but noted that many subscribers are elderly or lack reliable internet.

The Highmore Herald reported a subscriber in South Dakota who hasn't received the last four issues.

The Aberdeen Insider said papers delivered just 50 miles away are taking seven days to arrive, resulting in a loss of subscribers.

The Sanborn Weekly Journal, based in Woonsocket, said it had received at least six non-delivery calls in one week alone, far above normal.

The True Dakotan in Wessington Springs reported delays of at least two days and said a major delivery to Mitchell never arrived.

The Pioneer Review in Philip reported that its shopper publication didn't reach Wall one week. A local postmaster confirmed that papers are now trucked from Huron to Fargo.

The Wagner Post reported papers taking up to nine days to reach customers.

The Grant County Review in Milbank received non-delivery complaints from as far as Vermont and Oregon.

The Sioux Valley News in Canton said cross-border deliveries to Iowa and Minnesota now take five days.

The Marshall County Journal in Britton noted delays forcing staff to re-mail individual copies in envelopes.

The Brookings Register said subscribers reported no delivery for a week, with delayed bundles arriving out of order.

*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.*

## AmeriCorps cuts are 'devastating' for nonprofit Native American school in South Dakota, lawsuit says

BY: SETH TUPPER - MAY 8, 2025 8:49 PM

The Trump administration's decision to abruptly cut AmeriCorps funding has had a "devastating impact" on a nonprofit school for Native American children in South Dakota, according to a lawsuit.

Red Cloud Indian School Inc., which operates schools under the Lakota name Mahpiya Luta, is one of more than a dozen plaintiffs that jointly filed a lawsuit this week challenging the funding cut.

"Red Cloud schools, their programs, and the prospects of their students and of Lakota youth who participate in AmeriCorps are at serious risk," the lawsuit says.

AmeriCorps is a federal agency dedicated to community service and volunteerism, which works in close partnership with states. It's the latest victim of President Donald Trump's campaign to dismantle programs and slash the federal workforce.

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and slash the federal workforce.

The agency abruptly cut \$400 million, or 41% of its budget, and placed 85% of its staff on administrative leave last month, according to court records. AmeriCorps had provided \$960 million to fund 3,100 projects across the United States each year, according to general undated figures available on the agency's website.

Red Cloud Indian School Inc. operates two elementary schools, one middle school, a high school and a Lakota language immersion program on the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwest South Dakota. For 26 years, according to the lawsuit, the nonprofit has received AmeriCorps awards. The awards have enabled the training of over 400 Lakota AmeriCorps participants as teaching assistants and paraprofessional educators, offering career and job training opportunities in one of the nation's poorest regions.

AmeriCorps told Red Cloud via email on April 25 that its grant was terminated, that all grant activities should cease, and that the action was not administratively appealable, the lawsuit says.

In the past three years, the nonprofit received approximately \$400,000 a year in AmeriCorps funding. The money enabled Red Cloud to recruit local Lakota AmeriCorps participants to serve as teaching assistants for a duration of one to three years. The participants joined in groups of four to five to assist a staff teacher with classes of approximately 20 students.

The participants provided students with individualized support in math, literacy and social-emotional development, while also gaining teaching skills. Students benefited from one-on-one attention with participants they viewed as role models.

Many AmeriCorps participants pursued college degrees concurrently. Ten of Red Cloud's current teachers began as AmeriCorps participants.

"The program's success is evident in its improved student outcomes and strengthened community empowerment through a career pipeline into education," the lawsuit says.

As of last month, Red Cloud had 11 AmeriCorps participants serving in its teaching assistant program. The organization felt a moral obligation to retain the participants through the end of the school year on May 16, the lawsuit says, which has "placed an unexpected financial strain" on the nonprofit. The school is not in a position to retain the participants through July 31, when the AmeriCorps grant was set to expire, the lawsuit says.

Fourteen organizations, the union representing AmeriCorps staffers and three individual plaintiffs who were AmeriCorps members filed the lawsuit Monday in U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland.

Besides Red Cloud in South Dakota, the other nonprofits bringing the lawsuit are based in California, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

On April 29, attorneys general from nearly two dozen states and the District of Columbia also sued alleging the cuts were illegal. South Dakota's attorney general is not included in that group.

In a statement provided Thursday to States Newsroom, the White House defended the cuts.

"AmeriCorps has failed eight consecutive audits and identified over \$45 million in unaccounted for payments in 2024 alone. President Trump is restoring accountability to the entire Executive Branch," said spokesperson Anna Kelly.

*States Newsroom's D.C. Bureau contributed to this report.*

*Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.*

## Trump again tries to defund NPR and PBS, sparking a new congressional battle

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 9, 2025 6:38 PM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump urged Congress to eliminate funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting during his first term, but was largely unsuccessful.

Now, in his second go-around, Trump is once again asking lawmakers to scrap federal spending on the private, nonprofit corporation that Congress established in the 1960s.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting allocates funding to National Public Radio, or NPR, and the Public Broadcasting Service, or PBS, as well as more than 1,500 local radio and television stations throughout the country.

Trump's renewed focus on public media — in his budget proposal, an executive order and an expected rescissions request — has led the organizations that benefit from the CPB to start talking more than they have in recent years about their funding and their journalism.

Katherine Maher, president and CEO of NPR, rejected the idea that ending funding for the CPB would have a significant impact on the federal ledger, since the "appropriation for public broadcasting, including NPR and PBS, represents less than 0.0001% of the federal budget."

Maher also opposed what she viewed as the Trump administration seeking to influence journalists and news organizations.

"The President's order is an affront to the First Amendment rights of NPR and locally owned and operated stations throughout America to produce and air programming that meets the needs of their communities," Maher wrote in a statement. "It is also an affront to the First Amendment rights of station listeners and donors who support independent news and information."

Paula Kerger, CEO and president at PBS, also defended the CPB as well as the news programs that receive its funding.

"There's nothing more American than PBS, and our work is only possible because of the bipartisan support we have always received from Congress," Kerger said. "This public-private partnership allows us to help prepare millions of children for success in school and in life and also supports enriching and inspiring programs of the highest quality."

NPR receives about 1% of its direct funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, while PBS receives about 15%. Those numbers fluctuate for the local stations, which tend to get more, but not all, of their operating budgets from CPB funding.

### Senate likely to balk

House Republicans, who have sought to zero out funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in recent appropriations bills, are likely to get on board. But senators, who write broadly bipartisan bills, haven't taken that step and appear unlikely to do so this year — possibly helping public media resist Trump's cutback attempts, as it did during his first term.

The differences between the House and Senate will lead to heated debate for months to come about future spending on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as well as the dozens of other programs Trump told lawmakers to stop funding in his budget request.

Wisconsin Democratic Sen. Tammy Baldwin, ranking member on the panel that funds CPB, told States Newsroom during a brief interview she hopes lawmakers "can effectively fight back against that proposed budget."

"I find that some of my Republican colleagues, especially those from rural states, hear from their constituents that they are reliant on public broadcasting, especially radio for local information, news, etcetera," Baldwin said. "And there's not a lot of other radio resources out there. But I think the same can be said about the public television offerings."

Opinions among Republicans vary, though.

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Louisiana Republican Sen. John Kennedy, who sits on the spending panel, said funding for CPB "may have made sense at one time, but the American taxpayer has no business spending half a billion dollars a year subsidizing media."

Kennedy said he doesn't expect rural residents will lose access to local television and radio programming should Congress eliminate the funding.

"Rural communities have the same access as everybody else to cable, to streaming, to getting their news off of this thing," Kennedy said, pointing to his cell phone. "It's just an argument by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to hold on to a government subsidy."

Alaska Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, pushed back against defunding.

She wrote in an op-ed published in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner that while she shares "the desire to reduce government spending, defunding the CPB, and particularly the essential reporting it allows locally owned radio and television stations to provide in Alaska, is not the place to start."

Alaska's local stations received \$12 million last year from CPB, which made up between 30% and 70% of their total budget, in addition to individual donation and state funding, according to the op-ed.

"Not only would a large portion of Alaska communities lose their local programming, but warning systems for natural disasters, power outages, boil water advisories, and other alerts would be severely hampered," Murkowski wrote. "What may seem like a frivolous expense to some has proven to be an invaluable resource that saves lives in Alaska."

CPB has a state-by-state breakdown on its website detailing how much it provided during each of the past six years. The individual profiles show what portion of each state's funding went to different programs, like the Next Generation Warning System, radio programming, Ready to Learn and Television Community Service Grants.

## **Public media among multiple Trump targets**

Trump's skinny budget request, released last week, calls on Congress to cease funding the CPB as well as dozens of other organizations, including the National Endowment for Democracy and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP.

The section on CPB says the request is "consistent with the President's efforts to decrease the size of the Federal Government to enhance accountability, reduce waste, and reduce unnecessary governmental entities."

Trump has also signed an executive order directing the CPB Board of Directors as well as executive departments and agencies to halt funding NPR and PBS.

The order stated that the "viewpoints NPR and PBS promote does not matter. What does matter is that neither entity presents a fair, accurate, or unbiased portrayal of current events to taxpaying citizens."

Patricia Harrison, president and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, wrote in a statement responding to the executive order that Trump didn't have the authority he was trying to wield.

"CPB is not a federal executive agency subject to the President's authority," Harrison wrote. "Congress directly authorized and funded CPB to be a private nonprofit corporation wholly independent of the federal government."

"In creating CPB, Congress expressly forbade 'any department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over educational television or radio broadcasting, or over [CPB] or any of its grantees or contractors...' 47 U.S.C. § 398(c)."

There are also several news reports that the Trump administration will send a rescissions request to Capitol Hill, asking lawmakers to pull back funding already approved for CPB. But the Office of Management and Budget hasn't yet taken that step.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting received steady funding from Congress starting at its founding, before the last Trump administration asked lawmakers to phase out its appropriation.

The last Trump administration's first budget request called on lawmakers to "conduct an orderly closeout"

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by providing \$30 million for CPB that would have gone toward salaries, rent and other costs.

The proposal argued that “private fundraising has proven durable, negating the need for continued Federal subsidies.”

“Services such as PBS and NPR, which receive funding from the CPB, could make up the shortfall by increasing revenues from corporate sponsors, foundations, and members. In addition, alternatives to PBS and NPR programming have grown substantially since CPB was first established in 1967, greatly reducing the need for publicly funded programming options.”

## **Funding increased despite Trump**

Congress didn’t go along with the fiscal 2018 budget request for the CPB, and it wouldn’t for the rest of Trump’s first term.

In March 2018, lawmakers approved \$445 million, followed by the same amount in the next year’s bill. Congress then lifted spending to \$465 million in December 2019 and then again just before Trump left office for a total funding level of \$475 million.

Those allocations continued rising during the Biden administration, reaching a \$535 million appropriation in March 2024, the last full-year spending law enacted before Trump returned to the Oval Office.

House Republicans did, however, try to phase out funding for CPB during the second half of President Joe Biden’s term. The House GOP provided a two-year advanced appropriation until 2023, when Republicans announced they wanted “the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to compete with other programs in the bill for annual funding.”

Those efforts didn’t work and the final spending bill, which became law in March 2024, included funding for CPB.

Senate Democrats wrote after negotiating the bipartisan agreement that it “protects funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to support more than 1,500 locally owned TV and radio stations nationwide—rejecting House Republicans’ proposal to zero out funding and weaken Americans’ access to local reporting.

“The bill maintains a critical investment of \$60 million for digital interconnection and \$535 million as a two-year advance appropriation, of which roughly 70% is provided directly to local public TV and radio stations.”

## **Final resolution far off**

Congress is expected to begin work on its dozen annual appropriations bills sometime this summer, which collectively total about \$1.8 trillion and make up about one-third of all federal spending.

The House Appropriations Committee will likely propose phasing out CPB funding, or at least its advanced appropriation, in its bill.

The Senate Appropriations Committee tends to write more bipartisan bills, so as long as several of the panel’s members advocate for CPB in its funding measure, the program will likely receive its advanced funding in that bill.

Final agreement between the House and Senate is supposed to come before the start of the next fiscal year on Oct. 1. But that rarely happens and lawmakers often use a stopgap spending bill to push off final negotiations until mid-December.

That’s likely the earliest this year the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and those who rely on it will learn if Congress will reduce or eliminate its funding. That is, unless lawmakers fail to reach agreement on that particular funding bill.

Congress would then have to use a stopgap spending bill, which mostly keeps funding levels on autopilot, until it can enact a full-year bill.

*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.*

## Treasury advises Congress must deal with debt limit before August or face default

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 9, 2025 6:14 PM

WASHINGTON — The Treasury Department announced Friday that Congress must address the debt limit before August, setting a firm deadline for Republicans to wrap up work on the “big, beautiful bill” that will raise the nation’s borrowing limit by up to \$5 trillion.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent wrote in a letter to congressional leaders that “there is a reasonable probability that the federal government’s cash and extraordinary measures will be exhausted in August while Congress is scheduled to be in recess.

“Therefore, I respectfully urge Congress to increase or suspend the debt limit by mid-July, before its scheduled break, to protect the full faith and credit of the United States.”

The projection marks the first time the Trump administration has weighed in publicly on when the government will likely reach default since the last suspension expired in January.

In the months since then, the Treasury Department has used accounting maneuvers known as extraordinary measures to pay all of the country’s bills in full and on time.

Treasury’s projection is similar to a report the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released in March predicting the country would reach default in August or September unless Congress acted before then.

### Reconciliation package

Republicans are hoping to lift the debt limit without having to negotiate a bipartisan agreement with Democrats, which is typically how lawmakers have addressed the debt limit during the past couple decades.

GOP leaders plan to raise the debt limit by between \$4 trillion and \$5 trillion in the 11-bill reconciliation package they’re using to address tax law, overhaul higher education aid and cut federal spending.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., expects his chamber will vote on that legislation before the end of May, though Senate leaders haven’t put a timeline on when they’d bring the bill to the floor in that chamber.

GOP senators are likely to propose several amendments to the package, and any changes by the Senate would require the bill to get a final sign-off in the House before it could head to President Donald Trump’s desk.

The Treasury Department’s projection that a debt limit default will likely take place if no action is taken before August puts a firm deadline on when Republicans will need to reach final agreement.

### Caution against waiting

Bessent also cautioned lawmakers against waiting until the last minute to get their work done.

“Prior episodes have shown that waiting until the last minute to suspend or increase the debt limit can have serious adverse consequences for financial markets, businesses, and the federal government, harm businesses and consumer confidence, and raise short-term borrowing costs for taxpayers,” he wrote. “A failure to suspend or increase the debt limit would wreak havoc on our financial system and diminish America’s security and global leadership position.”

A default on the country’s debt would limit the federal government to spending only the money it has on hand, likely leading to delayed, incomplete, or nonexistent payments on thousands of programs, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, troop pay, veterans benefits and nutrition programs, among many others.

It would also lead to a downturn in the global economy with a recession being among the better scenarios.

A default is vastly different from a partial government shutdown and would lead to more significant consequences for federal spending and the economy.

*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.*

## As Trump slashes AmeriCorps, states lose a federal partner in community service

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - MAY 8, 2025 8:35 PM

WASHINGTON — Hillary Kane learned on a Saturday morning in April that within days, she would lose AmeriCorps funding for two programs that match mentors with West Philadelphia high schoolers and first-generation college students — both vulnerable groups at risk of not completing diplomas and degrees.

Kane, director of the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development, dreaded calling her AmeriCorps members to say the federal government had just terminated their positions in the nationwide service program. It embeds nearly 200,000 Americans each year in community nonprofits, schools and other organizations.

"My first thought was just a string of expletives, just that sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach," she said, recalling the April 26 morning.

The federal agency dedicated to community service and volunteerism, which works in close partnership with states, is the latest target since President Donald Trump began his second term with an aggressive campaign to dismantle programs and slash the federal workforce.

The agency abruptly cut \$400 million, or 41% of its budget, and placed 85% of its staff on administrative leave last month, according to court records.

AmeriCorps had provided \$960 million to fund 3,100 projects across the United States each year, according to general undated figures available on the agency's website.

Two of Kane's grants were abruptly canceled as part of the cuts, and as of May 20, she'll lose nearly 30 AmeriCorps members.

"They're literally just left stranded," she said. "You know, I have members who are single moms with kids and suddenly don't have insurance, or at least by the end of the month they won't."

Five of Kane's members were placed in three high schools in West Philadelphia helping students with career exploration, resumes and college applications. They also provided recreation activities after school.

"We're in under-resourced schools," Kane said. "We've got schools that have one counselor for 300 students, and they're not even primarily a college counselor, right? They're guidance counselors who are dealing with all kinds of other issues."

### Even more short-staffing

The cuts have produced upheaval for many nonprofits.

AmeriCorps members serve various roles in organizations that support environmental conservation projects, rebuild after natural disasters, prepare adults for the GED exam, tutor children and more.

Rick Cohen, of the National Council of Nonprofits, said the announcement was a blow to community organizations that are already stretched thin.

"Groups that were already short-staffed and facing all these other headwinds are now even further short-staffed and trying to figure out how to keep things going and how to keep helping people," said Cohen, the chief communications officer and chief operating officer for the advocacy organization.

"It's a very difficult time for a lot of people in the nonprofit sector because you never want to have to tell somebody that's coming to you for help that you can't help them, and that there's not somewhere else for them to turn," Cohen said.

Aaron Gray, who helped run an AmeriCorps program serving at-risk youth in Pennsylvania's Allegheny County from 1997 to 2017, said "it's a shame."

Over the years as an assistant director, Gray placed thousands of service members with community organizations, faith-based programs and schools.

"I think this is gonna be detrimental. AmeriCorps has been around since the 90s, and it took a long time to build up to this, and it's just being eviscerated overnight. If it survives, or if it's brought back at some later point, it's going to take a generation to rebuild."

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## Clinton administration

Congress created AmeriCorps in 1993 when President Bill Clinton was in office. Then titled the Corporation for National and Community Service, the agency absorbed other government service programs including Volunteers in Service of America, or VISTA, created in 1964 to combat poverty, and the National Civilian Community Corps, referred to as NCCC, created in 1992 to assist natural disaster recovery.

The agency grew to include FEMA Corps in 2012 and Public Health AmeriCorps in 2022, among other specialized programs.

Service members, who are not federal employees, are provided a meager stipend of a few hundred dollars a week and receive an education award to pay for college or student loans upon completion of service, which typically lasts just under a year. As of 2024, the award was roughly \$7,300.

Members, who range in age from young adults to senior citizens, can also receive health insurance while serving. While participants are not allowed to apply for unemployment, some can seek food assistance.

The administration terminated all NCCC programs in mid-April. Then, late on Friday, April 25, more than 1,000 grantees were told to pull their members from service immediately, according to court filings.

AmeriCorps did not respond to questions about the cuts.

## Lawsuits filed

Two lawsuits challenging the cuts are working their way through the federal courts. Fourteen organizations, the union representing AmeriCorps staffers and three individual plaintiffs who were AmeriCorps members filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland on May 5.

The nonprofits bringing the lawsuit are based in California, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Virginia.

Plaintiffs say the immediate termination of grants has caused irreparable harm to nonprofits and AmeriCorps members who have now lost income, health insurance and large portions of their education awards, according to the complaint.

Plaintiff J. Doe 3 relocated to Fayetteville, North Carolina, for a second year of service, embedded with the Kingdom Community Corporation, a nonprofit that helps first-time homebuyers learn how to avoid foreclosure and that provides counseling certified by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

According to the 55-page complaint, Doe 3 began service in February and was engaging with community members on a daily basis, answering anywhere from 25 to 75 calls. Doe 3 planned to use the education award to continue higher education.

"The sudden cancellation of Doe 3's AmeriCorps position has left them in a new city, without a job, lacking the experience, skill building, and community they signed up for," according to the complaint.

## States left reeling

States are also affected by the cuts.

AmeriCorps' structure puts the agency in close connection with states. Each state government establishes its own commission to determine which priorities and organizations receive the annual federal dollars.

For example, in Kane's state of Pennsylvania, more than 8,500 members were placed in various roles at 1,000 nonprofits in 2024. The state's commission received \$38.8 million in federal dollars, while local dollars supplemented the rest, reaching \$54.8 million in total funding for the year, according to the latest AmeriCorps annual state-by-state reports.

On April 29, state attorneys general from nearly two dozen states and the District of Columbia sued the administration, alleging the cuts were illegal.

The 123-page complaint details how U.S. DOGE Service officials arrived at AmeriCorps offices in D.C. on April 8 and began working with the interim agency head, Jennifer Bastress Tahmasebi, to plot program cuts.

"This case presents only the latest chapter in an ongoing saga, as the Administration attempts to dis-mantle federal agencies without Congressional approval," according to the court filing.

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States that brought the legal challenge include Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

## **White House response**

In a statement provided to States Newsroom Thursday, the White House defended the cuts.

"AmeriCorps has failed eight consecutive audits and identified over \$45 million in unaccounted for payments in 2024 alone. President Trump is restoring accountability to the entire Executive Branch," said spokesperson Anna Kelly.

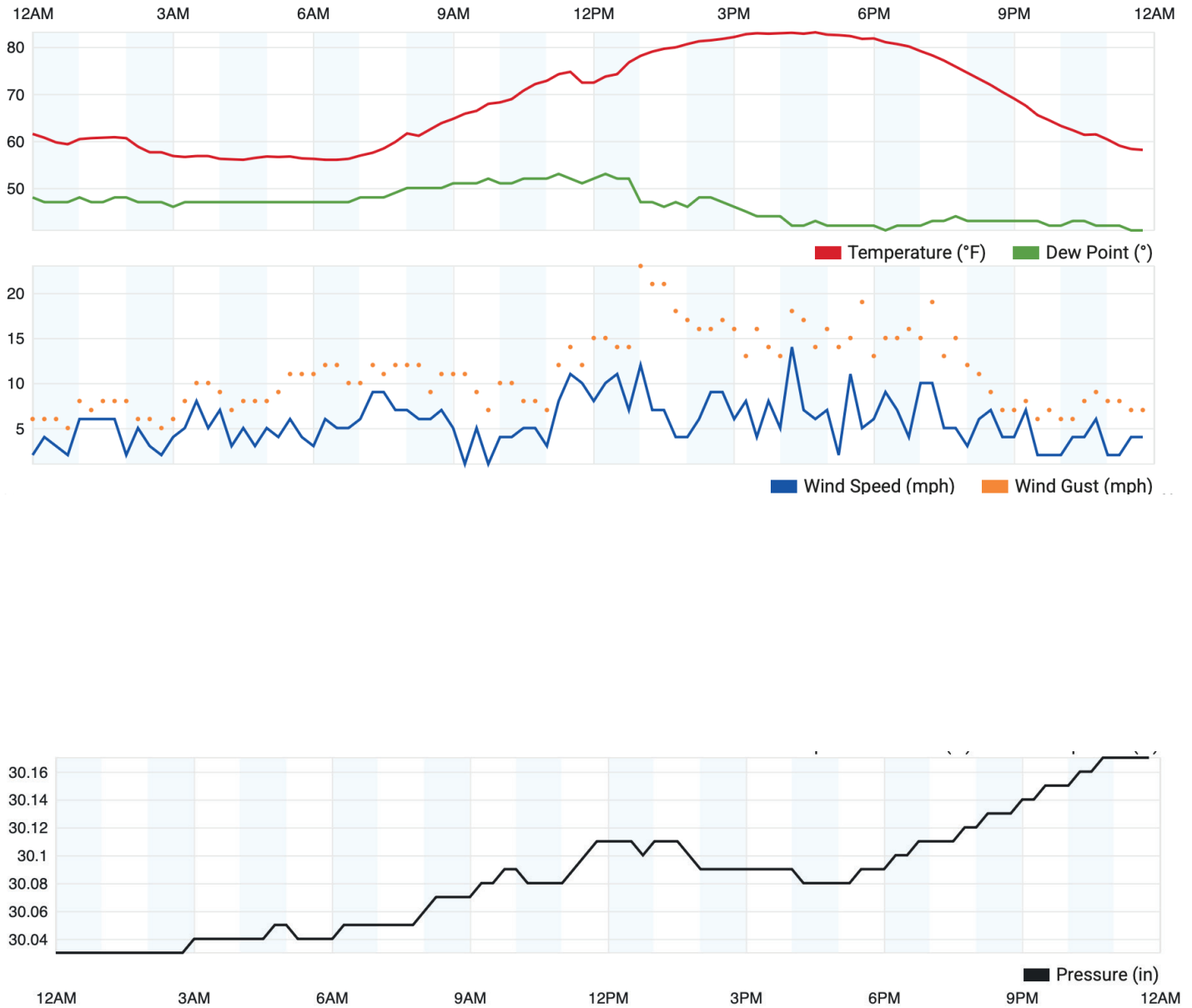
*Editor's note: D.C. Bureau Senior Reporter Ashley Murray served in AmeriCorps in 2011.*

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

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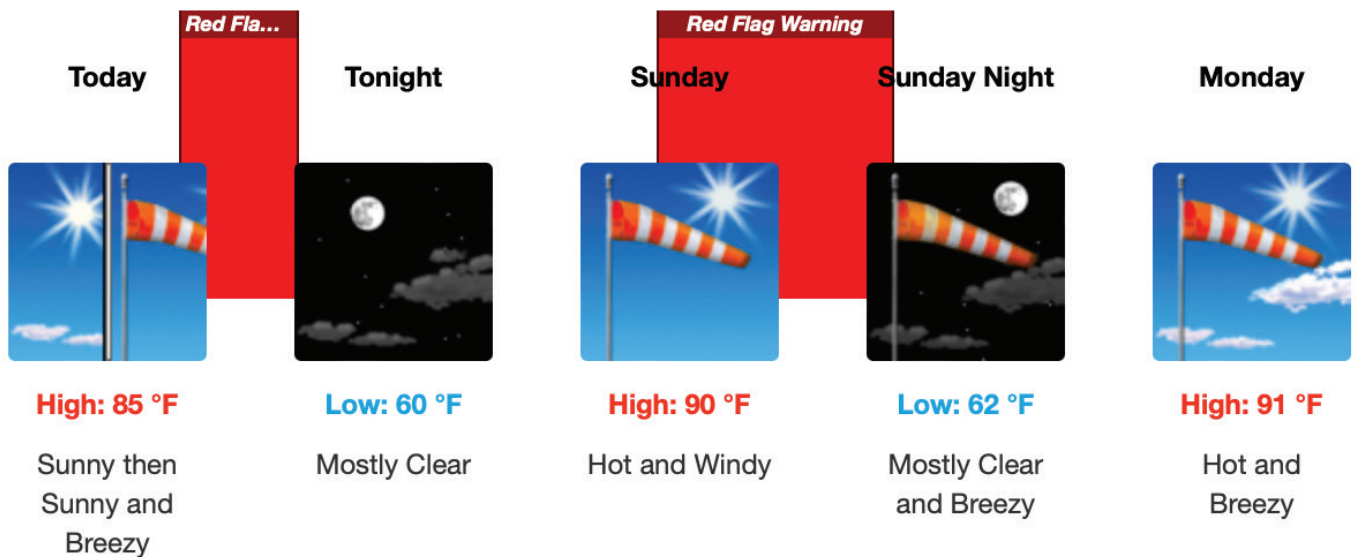
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

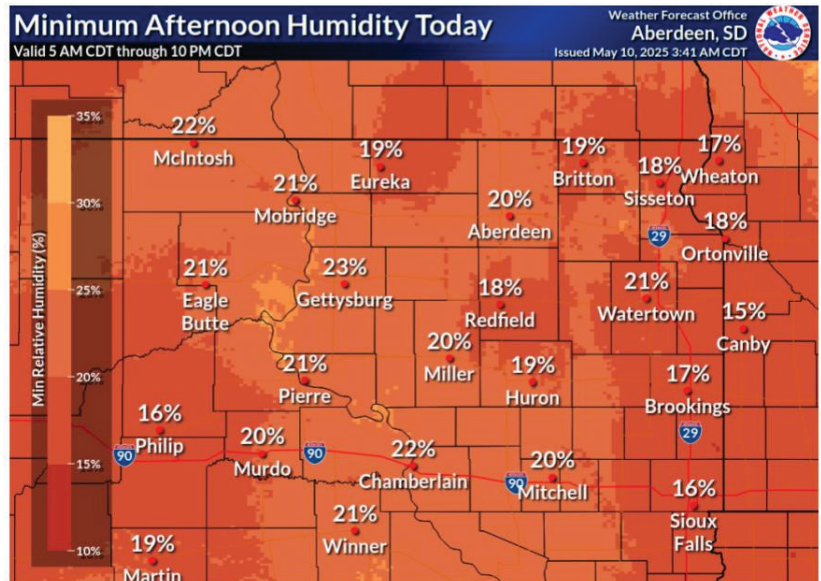
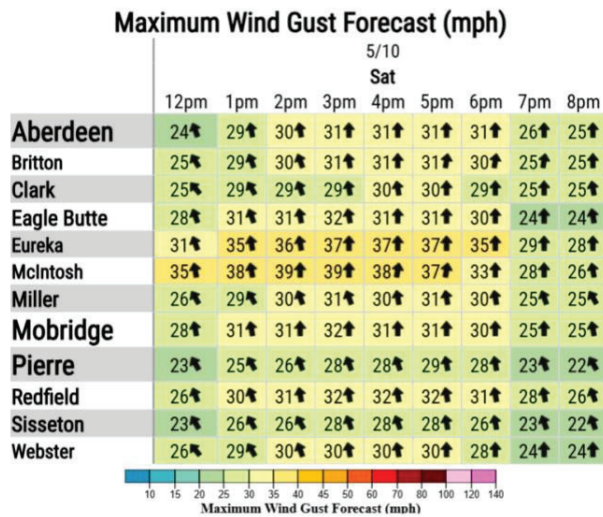
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## Lowest Relative Humidity and Wind Gusts

May 10, 2025  
4:45 AM

Winds will be strongest for areas *west of the James Valley into north central SD today.*



→ Southerly winds *parts of central and northeast SD* will be 15-30 mph with gusts up to 40 mph. Peak winds are expected between 1-5 PM CDT.

→ Humidity will drop to as low as 15-25% over central and northeast South Dakota. *These low humidity values will occur at the same time as peak winds.*

Areas west of the James Valley into north central South Dakota will see the greatest wind impacts, even though relative humidity will be low across northeastern South Dakota as well. Southerly winds will gust up to 40 miles per hour, and minimum afternoon humidity will get as low as 14%.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 84 °F at 4:35 PM**

**Low Temp: 56 °F at 6:06 AM**

**Wind: 23 mph at 12:57 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 14 hours, 46 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1911

Record Low: 20 in 1981

Average High: 68

Average Low: 42

Average Precip in May.: 1.10

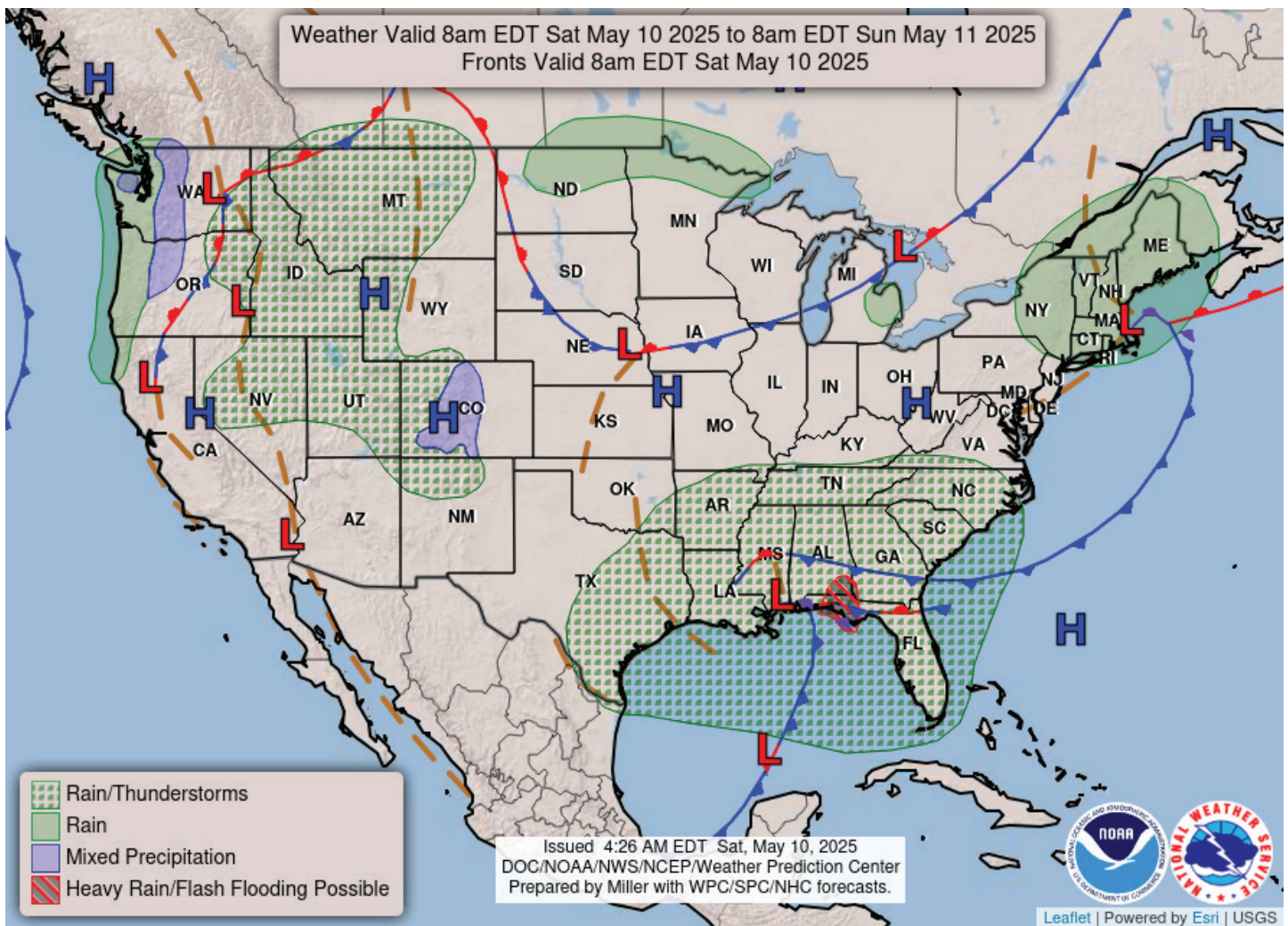
Precip to date in May.: 0.30

Average Precip to date: 5.07

Precip Year to Date: 2.93

Sunset Tonight: 8:52:04 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:04:15 am



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## **Today in Weather History**

May 10th, 1982: An F3 tornado was first sighted six miles west of Tintah, Minnesota. The storm moved into the town of Tintah and then northeastward, dissipating north of Wendell. Two farmsteads were damaged west of Tintah. Nearly one dozen farm buildings were destroyed, and 50 cows were killed. Hail as large as softballs preceded the tornado into Tintah, with extensive damage. A school and church received heavy damage, two railroad cars were overturned, homes and grain buildings were damaged, and utility poles and trees were uprooted.

1905 - A deadly tornado hit the town of Snyder, OK, killing 87 persons. The tornado leveled 100 homes in Snyder, and destroyed many others. The large and violent tornado killed a total of 97 persons along its 40 miles path across southwestern Oklahoma. Its roar could reportedly be heard up to twelve miles away. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1966 - Morning lows of 21 degrees at Bloomington-Normal and Aurora, IL, established a state record for the month of May. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Summer-like "Father's Day" type weather prevailed in the north central and western U.S. for "Mother's Day", as seventeen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Jamestown ND soared to a record high of 96 degrees. Thunderstorms along the Central Gulf Coast deluged Lillian AL with 14.5 inches of rain, and nearby Perdido Key FL with 12.8 inches of rain. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced hail and high winds over the Atlantic Coast Region and the Gulf Coast States marking the end of a five day episode of severe weather associated with a cyclone tracking out of the Great Basin into southeastern Canada. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front crossing the Plateau Region produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Butte MT, and gusts to 77 mph at Choteau MT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A spring storm produced heavy snow in Upper Michigan and eastern Wisconsin. Totals ranged up to 12 inches at Marquette MI, with eight inches reported at Muskego WI and Hartford WI. The heavy wet snow, and winds gusting to 35 mph, damaged or destroyed thousands of trees, and downed numerous power lines. Total damage from the storm was more than four million dollars. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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Years ago, I underwent spinal surgery. Soon after, it was necessary for more surgery on another section on my spine. God was very gracious to me, and both were successful. He blessed the skills of the surgeons as they corrected various problems that had developed over the years.

During a post-surgical consultation, one of them asked, "Larry, walk over to the door, turn around and then walk back toward me." I followed his instructions and, after carefully watching every step, he asked me to repeat the process.

After a moment he asked, "Do you feel like you are off balance? And did you notice your feet seemed to oppose the directions you wanted them to travel?"

"Well, yes," I replied, "but I thought those two conditions would correct themselves after some time."

"Oh, no," he said. "You'll need some extensive physical therapy to correct those problems."

Physical therapy is important to correct physical problems. But only spiritual therapy can solve spiritual problems.

Solomon said that if we apply God's wisdom to our lives, our steps will be secure at all times. Our steps will not be "hampered" — or restricted — by the obstacles of life. We will be able to take long, safe, secure strides if we follow His will.

He also said that "when we run we will not stumble" and our feet will never become "ensnared by the traps" of this world.

## Prayer:

Lord, unite our heads, hearts, hands and feet so that we are completely surrendered in service to You in all that we do.

Assure us that if we follow Your will, our paths will be safe, our journeys enjoyable, and our lives satisfying! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

**Today's Scripture:** "When you walk, you won't be held back; when you run, you won't stumble." — Proverbs 4:12

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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.09.25

9 10 12 48 60 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$110,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

3 6 9 13 17 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$33,140,000**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 10 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.09.25

4 9 22 41 46 13

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 25 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

5 12 17 26 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$149,000**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 25 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

9 31 32 50 57 14

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 54 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

14 15 30 40 59 20

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$82,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 54 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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## **Upcoming Groton Events**

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

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

### **Pope Leo XIV lays out his vision of the papacy and identifies AI as a main challenge for humanity**

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV laid out the vision of his papacy Saturday, identifying artificial intelligence as one of the most critical matters facing humanity.

In his first formal audience, Leo made clear he will follow in the modernizing reforms of his predecessor, Pope Francis, to make the Catholic Church inclusive, attentive to the faithful and a church that looks out for the “least and rejected.”

Citing Francis repeatedly, he told the cardinals who elected him that he was fully committed to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the 1960s meetings that modernized the church. He identified AI as one of the main issues facing humanity, saying it poses challenges to defending human dignity, justice and labor.

Leo referred to AI in explaining the choice of his name: His namesake, Pope Leo XIII, was pope from 1878 to 1903 and laid the foundation for modern Catholic social thought. He did so most famously with his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which addressed workers’ rights and capitalism at the dawn of the industrial age. The late pope criticized both laissez-faire capitalism and state-centric socialism, giving shape to a distinctly Catholic vein of economic teaching.

In his remarks Saturday, Leo said he identified with his predecessor, who addressed the great social question of the day posed by the industrial revolution in the encyclical.

“In our own day, the church offers everyone the treasury of its social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour,” he said.

Toward the end of his pontificate, Francis became increasingly vocal about the threats to humanity posed by AI and called for an international treaty to regulate it.

He warned that such powerful technology risks turning human relations into mere algorithms. Francis brought his message to the Group of Seven industrialized nations when he addressed their summit last year, insisting AI must remain human-centric so that decisions about when to use weapons or even less-lethal tools always remain made by humans and not machines.

The late Argentine pope also used his 2024 annual peace message to call for an international treaty to ensure AI is developed and used ethically, arguing that a technology lacking human values of compassion, mercy, morality and forgiveness is too perilous to develop unchecked.

### **Quakers march against Trump’s crackdown on immigrants carrying on their long faith tradition**

LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

PRINCETON, N.J. (AP) — A group of Quakers are marching more than 300 miles from New York City to Washington, D.C., to demonstrate against the Trump administration’s crackdown on immigrants.

The march extends a long tradition of Quaker activism. Historically, Quakers have been involved in peaceful protests to end wars and slavery, and support women’s voting rights in line with their commitment to justice and peace. Far more recently, Quakers sued the federal government earlier this year over immigration’s ability to make arrests at houses of worship.

Organizers of the march say their protest seeks to show solidarity with migrants and other groups that are being targeted by President Donald Trump’s administration.

“It feels really daunting to be up against such critical and large and in some ways existential threats,” said Jess Hobbs Pifer, a 25-year-old Quaker and march organizer, who said she felt “a connection” to the faith’s long history of activism.

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"I just have to put one foot in front of the other to move towards something better, something more true to what Quakers before us saw for this country and what people saw for the American Experiment, the American dream," she said.

Their goal is to walk south from the Flushing Quaker Meeting House — across New York, New Jersey, Maryland and Pennsylvania — to the U.S. Capitol to deliver a copy of the "Flushing Remonstrance" — a 17th century document that called for religious freedom and opposed a ban on Quaker worship.

Quakers say it remains relevant in 2025 as a reminder to "uphold the guiding principle that all are welcome."

"We really saw a common thread between the ways that the administration is sort of flying against the norms and ideals of constitutional law and equality before the law," said Max Goodman, 28, a Quaker, who joined the march.

"Even when they aren't breaking rules explicitly, they're really engaging in bad faith with the spirit of pluralism, tolerance and respect for human dignity that undergirds our founding documents as Americans and also shows up in this document that's really important in New York Quaker history."

A Quaker history of resistance

The Religious Society of Friends — best known as the Quakers — originated in 17th century England.

The Christian group was founded by George Fox, an Englishman who objected to Anglican emphasis on ceremony. In the 1640s, he said he heard a voice that led him to develop a personal relationship with Christ, described as the Inner Light.

Fox taught that the Inner Light emancipates a person from adherence to any creed, ecclesiastical authority or ritual forms.

Brought to court for opposing the established church, Fox tangled with a judge who derided him as a "quaker" in reference to his agitation over religious matters.

Following the faith's core beliefs in nonviolence and justice, Quakers have demonstrated for the abolition of slavery, in favor of the suffrage movement, against both World Wars, and the U.S. role in the wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan, said Ross Brubeck, 38, one of the Quaker march organizers.

They also joined protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle and the Black Lives Matter protests after the 2020 killing of George Floyd.

"Within the DNA of Quakerism is actions speaking out against authority," said Brubeck, who was marching along a trail in New Jersey with companions waving an upside-down American flag — intended to serve as a signal of distress.

"Quakers have had a central role in opposition to repression within the United States since its founding," Brubeck said.

The basic unit of Quaker organization is the weekly meeting, which corresponds to the congregation in other churches. Quakers gather for silent worship in meeting houses, where they wait for a message from God to move through them until they speak.

When Brubeck and his group reached downtown Princeton, they were met by members of the local Quaker group, who praised them for their effort and guided them to their meeting house. After taking their shoes off their blistered feet, some rested on wooden pews and later prayed in silence, holding hands in a circle in preparation for another long walk.

"I felt humbled by their presence knowing what a long way they've been walking," said Casey Oware, a member of the Princeton Friends Meeting. "And also a sense of connection knowing that we're fighting for the same thing."

Her friend, Marae McGhee, a retired teacher and member of the local Quaker group, agreed: "It's such a disturbing time and I think a lot of people feel that there's little they can do. But these folks are doing it — they're giving their feet and their energy."

Quaker beliefs and a lawsuit challenge to Trump

Quaker practices and beliefs vary from a more Bible-centered Christianity, with pastors as worship leaders, to a more liberal approach with less structured worship and a wide range of teachings.

One of the most well-known Quakers was William Penn, who founded Pennsylvania following the faith's emphasis on religious tolerance; the group became influential in cities like Philadelphia.

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But members of the group have also faced scorn for refusing to join wars due to their belief in pacifism and nonviolence. Some were persecuted and even killed for trying to spread their religious beliefs.

Earlier this year, five Quaker congregations filed a lawsuit challenging a Trump administration move giving immigration agents more leeway to make arrests at houses of worship.

The Quaker groups were later joined by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and a Sikh temple. Following that, more than two-dozen Christian and Jewish groups representing millions of Americans — ranging from the Episcopal Church and the Union for Reform Judaism to the Mennonites — filed a similar lawsuit, but a federal judge ruled against them last month.

During the presidential campaign, Donald Trump insisted that immigrants were an existential threat to America. Immigration into the U.S., both legal and illegal, surged during President Joe Biden's administration, and Trump assailed that influx in ways that proved powerful with voters.

Since returning to the White House, Trump has launched a campaign of immigration enforcement that has pushed the limits of executive power and clashed with federal judges trying to restrain him.

"Immigrants are the ones experiencing the most acute persecution in the United States," Brubeck said. "The message to Trump is that the power is not his to make."

## Transgender issues are a strength for Trump, AP-NORC poll finds

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — About half of U.S. adults approve of how President Donald Trump is handling transgender issues, according to a new poll — a relative high point for a president who has the approval overall of about 4 in 10 Americans.

But support for his individual policies on transgender people is not uniformly strong, with a clearer consensus against policies that affect youth.

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey conducted this month found there's more support than opposition on allowing transgender troops in the military, while most don't want to allow transgender students to use the public school bathrooms that align with their gender identity and oppose using government programs to pay for gender-affirming health care for transgender youth.

Schuyler Fricchione, a 40-year-old stay-at-home mother from northern Virginia, is one of those who opposes the government paying for gender-affirming care, especially for young people.

She said she doesn't want people to make major changes that they might later regret. But she said that because of her Catholic faith, she doesn't want to exclude transgender people from public life. "It's very important to me that everyone understands their dignity and importance as a person."

"It is something I am kind of working through myself," she said. "I am still learning."

Most adults agree with Trump that sex is determined at birth.

About two-thirds of U.S. adults agree with President Donald Trump that whether a person is a man or woman is determined by their biological characteristics at birth.

The poll found that Republicans overwhelmingly believe gender identity is defined by sex at birth, but Democrats are divided, with about half saying gender identity can differ from biological characteristics at birth. The view that gender identity can't be separated from sex at birth view contradicts what the American Medical Association and other mainstream medical groups say: that extensive scientific research suggests sex and gender are better understood as a spectrum than as an either-or definition.

A push against the recognition and rights of transgender people, who make up about 1% of the nation's population, has been a major part of Trump's return to the White House — and was a big part of his campaign.

He has signed executive orders calling for the government to classify people by unchangeable sex rather than gender, oust transgender service members and kick transgender women and girls out of sports competitions for females. Those actions and others are being challenged in court, and judges have put many of his efforts on hold.

The public is divided on some issues — and many are neutral

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Despite being a hot-button issue overall, a big portion of the population is neutral or undecided on several key policies.

About 4 in 10 people supported requiring public schoolteachers to report to parents if their children are identifying at school as transgender or nonbinary. About 3 in 10 opposed it and a similar number was neutral.

About the same portion of people — just under 4 in 10 — favored allowing transgender troops in the military as were neutral about it. About one-quarter opposed it.

Tim Phares, 59, a registered Democrat in Kansas who says he most often votes for Republicans, is among those in the middle on that issue.

One on hand, he said, "Either you can do the job or you can't do the job." But on the other, he added, "I'm not a military person, so I'm not qualified to judge how it affects military readiness."

This month, a divided U.S. Supreme Court allowed Trump's administration to enforce a ban on transgender people in the military while legal challenges proceed, a reversal of what lower courts have said.

Most object to government coverage of gender-affirming care for youth

About half oppose allowing government insurance programs such as Medicare and Medicaid to cover gender-affirming medical care, such as hormone therapy and surgery, for transgender people 19 or older. About two-thirds oppose it for those under 19.

And on each of those questions, a roughly equal portion of the populations support the coverage or is neutral about it.

One of Trump's executive orders keeps federal insurance plans from paying for gender-affirming care for those under 19. A court has ruled that funding can't be dropped from institutions that provide the care, at least for now.

Meanwhile, Trump's administration this month released a report calling for therapy alone and not broader gender-affirming health care for transgender youth. Twenty-seven states have bans on the care for minors, and the Supreme Court is expected to rule in coming months over whether the bans can hold.

Forming a stance is easy for some

While Democrats are divided on many policies related to transgender issues, they're more supportive than the population overall. There is no anguish over the issue or other transgender policy questions for Isabel Skinner, a 32-year-old politics professor in Illinois.

She has liberal views on transgender people, shaped partly by her being a member of the LGBTQ+ community as a bisexual and pansexual person, and also by knowing transgender people.

She was in the minority who supported allowing transgender students to use the public-school bathrooms that match their gender identity — something that at least 14 states have passed laws to ban in the last five years.

"I don't understand where the fear comes from," Skinner said, "because there really doesn't seem to be any basis of reality for the fear of transgender people."

## **Tariff talks begin between US and Chinese officials in Geneva as the world looks for signs of hope**

By PAUL WISEMAN, DIDI TANG and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The U.S. Treasury Secretary and America's top trade negotiator began talks with high-ranking Chinese officials in Switzerland Saturday aiming to de-escalate a dispute that threatens to cut off trade between the world's two biggest economies and damage the global economy.

China's Xinhua News Agency says Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer have begun meetings in Geneva with a Chinese delegation led by Vice Premier He Lifeng.

Diplomats from both sides also confirmed that the talks have begun but spoke anonymously and the exact location of the talks wasn't made public. However, a motorcade of black cars and vans was seen leaving the home of the Swiss Ambassador to the United Nations in the wealthy Swiss city, and a diplomatic source, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the meeting, said the sides met

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for about two hours before departing for a previously arranged luncheon.

Prospects for a major breakthrough appear dim. But there is hope that the two countries will scale back the massive taxes — tariffs — they've slapped on each other's goods, a move that would relieve world financial markets and companies on both sides of the Pacific Ocean that depend on U.S.-China trade.

U.S. President Donald Trump last month raised U.S. tariffs on China to a combined 145%, and China retaliated by hitting American imports with a 125% levy. Tariffs that high essentially amount to the countries' boycotting each other's products, disrupting trade that last year topped \$660 billion.

Even before the talks began, Trump suggested Friday that the U.S. could lower its tariffs on China, saying in a Truth Social post that "80% Tariff seems right! Up to Scott."

Sun Yun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, noted it will be the first time He and Bessent have talked. She doubts the Geneva meeting will produce any substantive results.

"The best scenario is for the two sides to agree to de-escalate on the ... tariffs at the same time," she said, adding even a small reduction would send a positive signal. "It cannot just be words."

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has aggressively used tariffs as his favorite economic weapon. He has, for example, imposed a 10% tax on imports from almost every country in the world.

But the fight with China has been the most intense. His tariffs on China include a 20% charge meant to pressure Beijing into doing more to stop the flow of the synthetic opioid fentanyl into the United States. The remaining 125% involve a dispute that dates back to Trump's first term and comes atop tariffs he levied on China back then, which means the total tariffs on some Chinese goods can exceed 145%.

During Trump's first term, the U.S. alleged that China uses unfair tactics to give itself an edge in advanced technologies such as quantum computing and driverless cars. These include forcing U.S. and other foreign companies to hand over trade secrets in exchange for access to the Chinese market; using government money to subsidize domestic tech firms; and outright theft of sensitive technologies.

Those issues were never fully resolved. After nearly two years of negotiation, the United States and China reached a so-called Phase One agreement in January 2020. The U.S. agreed then not to go ahead with even higher tariffs on China, and Beijing agreed to buy more American products. The tough issues — such as China's subsidies — were left for future negotiations.

But China didn't come through with the promised purchases, partly because COVID-19 disrupted global commerce just after the Phase One truce was announced.

The fight over China's tech policy now resumes.

Trump is also agitated by America's massive trade deficit with China, which came to \$263 billion last year.

In Switzerland, Bessent and Greer also plan to meet with Swiss President Karin Keller-Sutter.

Trump last month suspended plans to slap hefty 31% tariffs on Swiss goods -- more than the 20% levies he plastered on exports from European Union. For now, he's reduced those taxes to 10% but could raise them again.

The government in Bern is taking a cautious approach. But it has warned of the impact on crucial Swiss industries like watches, coffee capsules, cheese and chocolate.

"An increase in trade tensions is not in Switzerland's interests. Countermeasures against U.S. tariff increases would entail costs for the Swiss economy, in particular by making imports from the USA more expensive," the government said last week, adding that the executive branch "is therefore not planning to impose any countermeasures at the present time."

The government said Swiss exports to the United States on Saturday were subject to an additional 10% tariff, and another 21% beginning Wednesday.

The United States is Switzerland's second-biggest trading partner after the EU — a 27-member-country bloc that nearly surrounds the wealthy Alpine country of more than 9 million. U.S.-Swiss trade in goods and services has quadrupled over the last two decades, the government said.

The Swiss government said Switzerland abolished all industrial tariffs on Jan. 1 last year, meaning that 99% of all goods from the United States can be imported into Switzerland duty-free.

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## Ukraine and its allies push for 30-day ceasefire starting Monday

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine and its allies are ready for a “full, unconditional ceasefire” with Russia for at least 30 days starting on Monday, Ukrainian FM Andrii Sybiha said Saturday.

His remarks came as the leaders of four major European countries visited Kyiv, amid a push for Moscow to agree to a truce and launch peace talks on ending the nearly three-year war. They followed what Sybiha said was a “constructive” phone call between them, U.S. President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Saturday also marked the last day of a unilateral three-day ceasefire declared by Russia that Ukraine says the Kremlin’s forces have repeatedly violated.

In March, the United States proposed an immediate, limited 30-day truce which Ukraine accepted, but the Kremlin has held out for terms more to its liking.

The leaders of France, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom arrived together at the train station in Kyiv, and met Zelenskyy shortly after to join a ceremony at Kyiv’s Independence Square marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. They lit candles at a makeshift flag memorial for fallen Ukrainian soldiers and civilians slain since Russia’s invasion.

The visit marked the first time the leaders of the four countries have traveled together to Ukraine, while Friedrich Merz is making his first visit to Ukraine as Germany’s new chancellor.

Sybiha on Thursday called the Russian truce a “farce,” accusing Russian forces of violating it over 700 times less than a day after it formally came into effect. Both sides also said attacks on their troops had continued on Thursday.

“We reiterate our backing for President Trump’s calls for a peace deal and call on Russia to stop obstructing efforts to secure an enduring peace,” the leaders said in a joint statement. “Alongside the U.S., we call on Russia to agree a full and unconditional 30-day ceasefire to create the space for talks on a just and lasting peace.”

Trump has pressed both sides to quickly come to a war-ending agreement, but while Zelenskyy agreed to an American plan for an initial 30-day halt to hostilities, Russia has not signed on. Instead, it has kept up attacks along the roughly 1,000-mile (1,600-kilometer) front line, including deadly strikes on residential areas with no obvious military targets.

On Saturday morning, local officials in Ukraine’s northern Sumy region said Russian shelling over the past day killed three residents and wounded four more. Another civilian man died on the spot on Saturday as a Russian drone struck the southern city of Kherson, according to regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin.

Speaking to reporters in Kyiv, French President Emmanuel Macron, said: “What’s happening with Poland, Germany and Great Britain is a historic moment for European defense and toward a greater independence for our security. Obviously for Ukraine, but for all of us. It’s a new era. It’s a Europe that sees itself as a power.”

Trump said last week that he doubts Russia’s Vladimir Putin wants to end his war in Ukraine, expressing new skepticism that a peace deal can be reached soon, and hinted at further sanctions against Russia.

Progress on ending the war has seemed elusive in the months since Trump returned to the White House, and his previous claims of imminent breakthroughs have failed to come to fruition. Trump has previously pushed Ukraine to cede territory to Russia to end the war, threatening to walk away if a deal becomes too difficult.

Ukraine’s European allies view the war as fundamental to the continent’s security, and pressure is now mounting to find ways to support Kyiv militarily — regardless of whether Trump pulls out.

Ukrainian presidential aide Andrii Yermak, who met the European leaders at Kyiv’s main train station, wrote on Telegram earlier on Saturday: “There is a lot of work, a lot of topics to discuss. We need to end this war with a just peace. We need to force Moscow to agree to a ceasefire.”

Later in the day, the leaders began hosting a virtual meeting alongside Zelenskyy to update other leaders on the progress being made for a future so-called “coalition of the willing” that would help Ukraine’s armed

forces after a peace deal and potentially deploy troops to Ukraine to police any future peace agreement with Russia.

## Pakistan and India hint at de-escalation after trading missile strikes

By MUNIR AHMED, AIJAZ HUSSAIN and RAJESH ROY Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — India and Pakistan on Saturday signaled they were ready to de-escalate their conflict if the other reciprocates following missile and drone attacks across their border, in the most serious confrontation between the nuclear-armed rivals in decades.

The two have been locked in hostilities after a gun massacre last month that India blames on Pakistan.

Pakistan's foreign minister said his country would consider de-escalation if India stopped further attacks. However, Ishaq Dar warned that if India launched any strikes, "our response will follow."

Dar told Pakistan's Geo News that he also conveyed this message to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who contacted him after Rubio spoke to New Delhi earlier.

"We responded because our patience had reached its limit. If they stop here, we will also consider stopping," Dar added.

India said it targeted Pakistani air bases after Islamabad fired several high-speed missiles at military and civilian infrastructure in the country's Punjab state early Saturday.

Pakistan earlier said it intercepted most missiles and responded with retaliatory strikes on India.

Rubio spoke to his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and emphasized that "both sides need to identify methods to de-escalate and reestablish direct communication to avoid miscalculation," State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said Saturday, and offered U.S. support to facilitate "productive discussion."

India says it's committed to 'non-escalation'

India's military held a press briefing in New Delhi, saying Pakistan targeted health facilities and schools at its three air bases in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

"Befitting reply has been given to Pakistani actions," said Indian Col. Sofiya Qureshi.

Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said India was committed to "non-escalation" provided that Pakistan reciprocated. However, Pakistani ground forces were observed mobilizing toward forward areas, she said, "indicating an offensive intent to further escalate the situation."

"Indian armed forces remain in a high state of operational readiness," she added.

Singh said India carried out "precision strikes only at identified military targets" including technical infrastructure and radar sites.

Pakistan's military said it used medium-range Fateh missiles to hit an Indian missile storage facility and air bases in the cities of Pathankot and Udhampur.

The Associated Press could not independently verify all the actions attributed to Pakistan or India.

Army spokesman Lt. Gen. Ahmad Sharif said Pakistan's air force assets were safe following the Indian assault.

Indian strikes target Pakistani air bases

Tensions have soared since an attack at a popular tourist site in India-controlled Kashmir left 26 civilians dead, mostly Indian Hindu tourists, on April 22. New Delhi has blamed Pakistan for backing the assault, an accusation Islamabad rejects.

Indian missiles Saturday targeted Nur Khan air base in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad, Murid air base in Chakwal city and Rafiqui air base in the Jhang district of eastern Punjab province, according to Pakistan's military spokesman.

There were no immediate reports of the strike or its aftermath from residents in the densely populated Rawalpindi.

Pakistanis celebrated the missile launches on India.

"Thank God we have finally responded to Indian aggression," said Muhammad Ashraf, who had gone

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out in Lahore for breakfast. There were jubilant scenes in Peshawar and Karachi.

Explosions in India-controlled Kashmir

Following the announcement of Pakistani retaliation, residents in Indian-controlled Kashmir said they heard loud explosions at multiple places, including the two big cities of Srinagar and Jammu and the garrison town of Udhampur.

"Explosions that we are hearing today are different from the ones we heard the last two nights during drone attacks," said Shesh Paul Vaid, the region's former top police official and Jammu resident. "It looks like a war here."

Vaid said explosions were heard from areas with military bases, adding it appeared that army sites were targeted. Residents living near Srinagar city's airport, which is also an air base, said they were rattled by the explosions and booming sound of jets.

"I was already awake, but the explosions jolted my kids out of their sleep. They started crying," said Srinagar resident Mohammed Yasin, adding he heard at least two explosions.

Praveen Donthi, a senior analyst with the International Crisis Group for India, said the two countries were at war even if they had not yet labelled it as one.

"It's become a remorseless race for military one-upmanship with no apparent strategic end goals from either side," said Donthi. "Finding an exit or off-ramp is going to be challenging."

India and Pakistan have traded strikes and heavy cross-border fire for days, resulting in civilian casualties on both sides.

Buildings were destroyed or damaged in Indian-controlled Kashmir, where powerful blasts ripped off roofs, windows and walls and left homes riddled with holes.

Villagers and rescuers in a district of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir sifted through the rubble of homes hit by overnight Indian shelling on Friday as people carried the dead. Others surveyed the ruins.

## **Soviet-era spacecraft plunges to Earth after 53 years stuck in orbit**

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

A Soviet-era spacecraft plunged to Earth on Saturday, more than a half-century after its failed launch to Venus.

The European Union Space Surveillance and Tracking confirmed its uncontrolled reentry, based on analysis and no-shows of the spacecraft on subsequent orbits. The European Space Agency's space debris office also indicated that the spacecraft had reentered after it failed to appear over a German radar station.

It was not immediately known where the spacecraft came in or how much, if any, of the half-ton spacecraft survived the fiery descent from orbit. Experts said ahead of time that some if not all of it might come crashing down, given it was built to withstand a landing on Venus, the solar system's hottest planet.

The chances of anyone getting clobbered by spacecraft debris were exceedingly low, scientists said.

Launched in 1972 by the Soviet Union, the spacecraft known as Kosmos 482 was part of a series of missions bound for Venus. But this one never made it out of orbit around Earth, stranded there by a rocket malfunction.

Much of the spacecraft came tumbling back to Earth within a decade of the failed launch. No longer able to resist gravity's tug as its orbit dwindled, the spherical lander — an estimated 3 feet (1 meter) across — was the last part of the spacecraft to come down. The lander was encased in titanium, according to experts, and weighed more than 1,000 pounds (495 kilograms).

After following the spacecraft's downward spiral, scientists, military experts and others could not pinpoint in advance precisely when or where the spacecraft might come down. Solar activity added to the uncertainty as well as the spacecraft's deteriorating condition after so long in space.

As of Saturday morning, the U.S. Space Command had yet to confirm the spacecraft's demise as it collected and analyzed data from orbit.

The U.S. Space Command routinely monitors dozens of reentries each month. What set Kosmos 482 apart — and earned it extra attention from government and private space trackers — was that it was more

likely to survive reentry, according to officials.

It was also coming in uncontrolled, without any intervention by flight controllers who normally target the Pacific and other vast expanses of water for old satellites and other space debris.

## India's clash with Pakistan sees use of Chinese missiles, French jets, Israeli drones and more

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — India's missile and bomb strikes on targets in Pakistan and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir have spiked tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors, with Pakistan's leader calling the attacks an act of war.

Claims about the initial attack and the aftermath have differed widely, with neither India nor Pakistan releasing many specific details. Making the ongoing conflict even more confusing, the internet has been "flooded with disinformation, false claims, and manipulated photos and videos," the Soufan Center think tank said.

"This information warfare is compounded by both sides' commitment to save face," it said.

With ongoing fighting, it has been impossible to independently verify many of the claims, but some information can be gleaned from official statements and paired with what is known to gain greater insight into the clash:

Chinese aircraft, Russian defenses and rampant disinformation

Pakistan on Saturday said it launched hypersonic missiles from a JF-17 Thunder jet, an aircraft built by China in collaboration with Pakistan, and destroyed a Russian-built S-400 air defense system in India's border Punjab state.

India denied the site was hit, saying it would provide evidence later.

Praveen Donthi, a senior analyst with the International Crisis Group, said the two sides are "effectively at war" even though they have not yet called it that, and an "explosion of disinformation stemming from a lack of official confirmation" is causing panic among civilians, particularly among those living in border areas.

"It's become a remorseless race for military one-upmanship," he said.

Pakistan also said Saturday it used its Fatah-II missiles to target an Indian missile storage facility and two airbases, an attack acknowledged by Indian officials who said they targeted Pakistani military bases in retaliation.

It was not clear what damage was caused in either attack, though Pakistan claimed to have intercepted most of the Indian missiles and was, in turn, retaliating for India's retaliatory strike.

Pakistan says it shot down 5 Indian planes involved in initial attack

Hours after India's attack early Wednesday, in retaliation for last month's massacre of tourists in Indian-controlled Kashmir, Pakistan's military spokesperson Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif claimed the Pakistan air force had shot down five Indian attack aircraft: three French-made Rafales, a Russian-made SU30MKI and a Russian-made MiG-29.

Pakistan's air force suffered no casualties, and that all of its aircraft returned safely to base, he said.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif repeated the claim, saying the Pakistan air force had the opportunity to shoot down 10 Indian planes, but exercised restraint and downed only the five that had fired on Pakistani targets.

He told Parliament that overall 80 Indian planes had been involved in the attack.

India, meantime, has not acknowledged any losses, though debris from three aircraft came down in at least three areas.

Events remain unclear without witness reports or video

India has all three types of jets among its more-than 700 combat capable fighter aircraft, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies' Military Balance report.

All three aircraft are fighters with the capability of carrying bombs or missiles for ground attacks.

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Pakistan and India have both said their planes did not leave their home airspace, suggesting that if Pakistan's account is accurate, rather than a dogfight in the skies over Kashmir, Pakistani pilots fired multiple air-to-air missiles over a long distance to take down Indian planes.

Presuming India fired back, even though Pakistan said none of its planes were hit, the aerial skirmish would have been quite the show. But there have been no eyewitness reports or video to emerge on social media.

What is known for sure is that Indian planes were in the air and attacked at least nine targets and debris from three has been found.

It's also plausible Pakistan used surface to air missiles to hit Indian planes, which the war in Ukraine has shown to be very effective and would not have meant risking any of its own planes.

Pakistan has a wide range of such missiles, primarily Chinese-made.

Events put Chinese tech to the test

Pakistan's air force includes U.S.-made F-16s, the French Mirage and the new Chinese-built J-10C, as well as the JF-17.

In addition to American air-to-air missiles, Pakistan also has several Chinese products in its arsenal, including the PL-12 and PL-15, both of which can be used to fire at targets beyond visual range.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar told lawmakers it was the J-10C that shot down the Indian aircraft, raising the likelihood that Chinese-built missiles were also employed.

"It's interesting that Pakistan is saying it is using Chinese jets that it has imported from China to shoot down Indian aircraft," said Lisa Curtis, director of the Indo-Pacific security program at the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank.

In 2019, during the rivals' previous military confrontation, "it was a Pakistani F-16 provided by the United States that was used to shoot down an Indian aircraft," Curtis said in a conference call. "It's interesting to see that Pakistan is relying more on its Chinese equipment than it did six years ago."

The news convinced traders with shares in AVIC Chengdu Aircraft, which builds both the J-10C and J-17, to post large gains Wednesday and Thursday on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange.

The stock of Dassault Aviation, the maker of the Rafale jet, which is among those Pakistan claims to have shot down, dropped sharply on Wednesday on the Paris Stock Exchange, though it had recovered by close on Thursday.

Pieces of information issued by each country

India hasn't talked about what assets were involved in the attacks. The Indian Defense Ministry said the strikes targeted at least nine sites "where terrorist attacks against India have been planned."

India showed video of eight of the strikes at a briefing on Wednesday, four in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and four in Pakistan.

Pakistan has said 31 civilians were killed, including women and children, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and the country's Punjab province, and that buildings hit included two mosques.

Both sides have talked about missile strikes, but it was clear from the video that bombs also were dropped on some targets, possibly from drones. In addition to claiming the five Indian aircraft shot down, Pakistan also said it downed an unspecified number of drones on Wednesday.

Indian officials said the strikes were precision attacks, and from the videos shown it appeared specific areas of installations were targeted with individual missiles or bombs, rather than widespread areas.

## **South Korean conservative party moves to switch presidential candidates as election turmoil deepens**

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's embattled conservative party has taken the unprecedented step of nullifying its primary and replacing presidential candidate Kim Moon Soo with former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, just one week after Kim's selection, deepening internal turmoil ahead of the June 3 presidential election.

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Saturday's move by the People Power Party's leadership, which Kim denounced as an "overnight political coup," underscores the desperation and disarray within the party following the ouster of former President Yoon Suk Yeol over his ill-fated attempt to impose martial law in December.

Kim, a staunch conservative and former labor minister under Yoon, was named the PPP's presidential candidate on May 3 after winning 56.3% of the primary vote, defeating a reformist rival who had criticized Yoon's martial law. But the PPP's leadership, dominated by Yoon loyalists, has spent the past week pressuring Kim to step aside and back Han, whom they believe stands a stronger chance against liberal Democratic Party frontrunner Lee Jae-myung.

Han served as acting president after Yoon was impeached by the legislature in December and officially removed by the Constitutional Court in April. He resigned from office May 2 to pursue a presidential bid, arguing his long public service career qualifies him to lead the country amid growing geopolitical uncertainty and trade challenges intensified by the policies of U.S. President Donald Trump.

After failed talks between Han and Kim to unify their candidacies, the PPP's emergency committee canceled Kim's nomination in the early hours of Saturday and officially registered Han as a party member and its new presidential candidate.

The replacement still requires confirmation through an all-party vote Saturday and approval by the party's national committee Sunday, which is the deadline for candidates to register with the election authorities.

Han in a televised statement called for unity, saying that "our party's top priority is winning the presidential election."

"Unifying the candidacies is the will of the people," he said. "We should all gather our strength, not to lift up just one of us, but to place our economy and our people on the grandest palanquin in the world and move together toward a prosperous future."

Kim lamented "democracy in our party died" and vowed to take unspecified legal and political steps, but it remained unclear whether any realistic path existed to restore his candidacy without the party's cooperation. Kim later filed a request for an injunction to stop the party from canceling his candidacy.

Kim had opposed the legislature's impeachment of Yoon on Dec. 14, though he said he disagreed with Yoon's decision to declare martial law on Dec. 3. Kim had gained popularity among hardline PPP supporters after he solely defied a Dec. 11 demand by an opposition lawmaker that all Cabinet members stand and bow in a gesture of apology for Yoon's martial law enactment at the Assembly.

Han and Kim have lagged well behind Lee in recent opinion polls. Lee, who spearheaded the Democrats' efforts to oust Yoon, ridiculed the PPP efforts to switch candidacies, telling reporters Thursday, "I have heard of forced marriages but never heard of forced unity."

Lee has long cultivated an image as an anti-establishment figure capable of tackling South Korea's entrenched inequality and corruption. However, critics view him as a populist who fuels division and vilifies opponents, warning that his leadership could further polarize the country.

He currently faces five trials for corruption and other criminal charges. If he becomes president, those trials likely will stop because of special presidential immunity from most criminal charges.

## Long-range Russian attacks continue to kill Ukrainians amid ceasefire deadlock

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Two months ago, following high-level talks between Ukrainian and American delegations in the Saudi city of Jeddah, the United States proposed an unconditional 30-day ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy publicly announced on that same day that Ukraine was ready to accept the proposal, provided Russia did the same.

The Russian leader balked, saying a temporary break in hostilities would only benefit Ukraine and its Western allies by letting them replenish their arsenals. Since then, Russia has continued its military campaign, maintaining attacks along the roughly 1,000-mile (1,600-kilometer) front line and targeting civilian

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infrastructure. In some cases, it has stepped up its attacks on residential areas with no obvious military targets.

An Associated Press tally based on reports from Ukrainian authorities found at least 117 civilians have been killed and more than 1,000 wounded in Russian aerial attacks since Ukraine announced on March 11 its willingness for a ceasefire — all of them attacks involving long-range drones and a variety of missiles.

The tally does not include casualties caused by short-range weapons, including mortars, multiple launch rocket systems, S-300 and S-400 ballistic missiles, drone-dropped explosives and aerial glide bombs, which Russia continues to use along the front line and nearby areas.

Ukrainian officials do not provide overall casualty figures nor do they release official figures on how many Ukrainian troops have been killed on the battlefield.

Among the deadliest attacks recently was a Russian ballistic missile that struck in the packed center of Sumy in northeast Ukraine on a busy Palm Sunday morning in mid-April. At least 35 people, including two children, were killed and around 120 wounded. Another blasted a playground in Zelenskyy's hometown, killing 20 people including nine children.

A deadly barrage targeting the capital Kyiv prompted rare criticism from President Donald Trump for the Russian leader.

"Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP!" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform.

In the past two months, Putin has twice unilaterally declared a brief ceasefire, one for Easter and the other to mark Victory Day in World War II. Both were repeatedly violated.

Ukraine, meanwhile, has continued to launch droves of drones at Russian regions. This week, Russia's Victory Day festivities were overshadowed by reports of Ukrainian drone attacks targeting Moscow and triggering severe disruptions at the capital's airports, as well as cellphone internet outages amid jamming aimed at foiling more potential attacks.

Here's a look at some of the deadliest attacks by Russian troops targeting Ukraine since March, 11:

March 24: A Russian missile hit a densely populated area of Sumy, damaging 30 residential buildings and a school. Local authorities said 101 people were wounded, including 23 children.

April 3: Russian forces launch Shahed drones at a residential neighborhood in Ukraine's second largest city of Kharkiv. Regional officials reported five people killed and 34 others wounded. Among the victims was an entire family, including their 12-year-old daughter.

April 4: Russian forces carry out a combined missile and drone attack on a residential area in Kryvyi Rih that blasted a playground. According to local authorities, 20 people were killed, including nine children, and 74 others were wounded. The assault damaged more than 60 apartment buildings and private homes.

April 13: On a busy Palm Sunday morning, a Russian ballistic missile strikes Sumy city center filled with civilians, killing 35 people, including two children, and wounding 119. It was one of the deadliest attacks on Ukrainian civilians this year. The next day, Russia said it targeted a gathering of senior Ukrainian military officers. Putin later admitted it was a "civilian facility" but claimed it hosted an award ceremony for Ukrainian troops.

April 18: Three Russian cluster munitions struck Kharkiv, killing one man and wounding 113 people, including nine children. The strikes that happened during early morning hours could have potentially led to much higher casualty rates if conducted an hour later, city authorities said.

April 24: Russia struck Ukraine's capital Kyiv with an hourslong barrage of missiles and drones. At least 12 people were killed and 90 were hurt in the deadliest assault on the city since last July. In total, Russia launched 145 Shahed drones and 70 missiles in a single night over Ukraine.

April 29: At least 16 Russian Shahed drones struck Kharkiv, wounding 47 people, including two children and a pregnant woman. The city's mayor reported direct hits on residential buildings and a medical facility.

May 2: Drones targeted at least four districts of Kharkiv city, injuring 47 people. One child was among the wounded.

## Judge pauses much of Trump administration's massive downsizing of federal agencies

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The Trump administration must halt much of its dramatic downsizing of the federal workforce, a California judge ordered Friday.

Judge Susan Illston in San Francisco issued the emergency order in a lawsuit filed last week by labor unions and cities, one of multiple legal challenges to Republican President Donald Trump's efforts to shrink the size of a federal government he calls bloated and expensive.

"The Court holds the President likely must request Congressional cooperation to order the changes he seeks, and thus issues a temporary restraining order to pause large-scale reductions in force in the meantime," Illston wrote in her order.

The temporary restraining order directs numerous federal agencies to halt acting on the president's workforce executive order signed in February and a subsequent memo issued by the Department of Government Efficiency and the Office of Personnel Management.

The order, which expires in 14 days, does not require departments to rehire people. Plaintiffs asked that the effective date of any agency action be postponed and that departments stop implementing or enforcing the executive order, including taking any further action.

They limited their request to departments where dismantlement is already underway or poised to be underway, including at the the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which announced in March it will lay off 10,000 workers and centralize divisions.

Illston, who was nominated to the bench by former President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, said at a hearing Friday the president has authority to seek changes in the executive branch departments and agencies created by Congress.

"But he must do so in lawful ways," she said. "He must do so with the cooperation of Congress, the Constitution is structured that way."

Trump has repeatedly said voters gave him a mandate to remake the federal government, and he tapped billionaire Elon Musk to lead the charge through DOGE.

Tens of thousands of federal workers have been fired, left their jobs via deferred resignation programs or have been placed on leave as a result of Trump's government-shrinking efforts. There is no official figure for the job cuts, but at least 75,000 federal employees took deferred resignation, and thousands of probationary workers have already been let go.

In her order, Illston gave several examples to show the impact of the downsizing. One union that represents federal workers who research health hazards faced by mineworkers said it was poised to lose 221 of 222 workers in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, office; a Vermont farmer didn't receive a timely inspection on his property to receive disaster aid after flooding and missed an important planting window; a reduction in Social Security Administration workers has led to longer wait times for recipients.

All the agencies impacted were created by Congress, she noted.

Lawyers for the government argued Friday that the executive order and memo calling for large-scale personnel reductions and reorganization plans provided only general principles that agencies should follow in exercising their own decision-making process.

"It expressly invites comments and proposals for legislative engagement as part of policies that those agencies wish to implement," Eric Hamilton, a deputy assistant attorney general, said of the memo. "It is setting out guidance."

But Danielle Leonard, an attorney for plaintiffs, said it was clear that the president, DOGE and OPM were making decisions outside of their authority and not inviting dialogue from agencies.

"They are not waiting for these planning documents" to go through long processes, she said. "They're not asking for approval, and they're not waiting for it."

The temporary restraining order applies to departments including the departments of Agriculture, Energy, Labor, Interior, State, Treasury and Veterans Affairs.

It also applies to the National Science Foundation, Small Business Association, Social Security Administration and Environmental Protection Agency.

Some of the labor unions and nonprofit groups are also plaintiffs in another lawsuit before a San Francisco judge challenging the mass firings of probationary workers. In that case, Judge William Alsup ordered the government in March to reinstate those workers, but the U.S. Supreme Court later blocked his order.

Plaintiffs include the cities of San Francisco, Chicago and Baltimore; labor group American Federation of Government Employees; and nonprofit groups Alliance for Retired Americans, Center for Taxpayer Rights and Coalition to Protect America's National Parks.

## **Mayor of Newark, New Jersey, released after arrest at immigration detention center**

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka was released after spending several hours in custody following his arrest at a new federal immigration detention center he has been protesting against.

Baraka was accused of trespassing and ignoring warnings to leave the Delaney Hall facility and was finally released around 8 p.m. Friday. Stepping out of an SUV with flashing emergency lights, he told waiting supporters: "The reality is this: I didn't do anything wrong."

The mayor said he could not speak about his case, citing a promise he made to lawyers and the judge. But he voiced full-throated support for everyone living in his community, immigrants included.

"All of us here, every last one of us, I don't care what background you come from, what nationality, what language you speak," Baraka said, "at some point we have to stop these people from causing division between us."

Baraka, a Democrat who is running to succeed term-limited Gov. Phil Murphy, has embraced the fight with the Trump administration over illegal immigration.

He has aggressively pushed back against the construction and opening of the 1,000-bed detention center, arguing that it should not be allowed to open because of building permit issues.

Linda Baraka, the mayor's wife, accused the federal government of targeting her husband.

"They didn't arrest anyone else. They didn't ask anyone else to leave. They wanted to make an example out of the mayor," she said, adding that she had not been allowed to see him.

Alina Habba, interim U.S. attorney for New Jersey, said on the social platform X that Baraka trespassed at the detention facility, which is run by private prison operator Geo Group.

Habba said Baraka had "chosen to disregard the law."

Video of the incident showed that Baraka was arrested after returning to the public side of the gate to the facility.

Witnesses describe a heated argument

Witnesses said the arrest came after Baraka attempted to join three members of New Jersey's congressional delegation, Reps. Robert Menendez, LaMonica McIver, and Bonnie Watson Coleman, in attempting to enter the facility.

When federal officials blocked his entry, a heated argument broke out, according to Viri Martinez, an activist with the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice. It continued even after Baraka returned to the public side of the gates.

"There was yelling and pushing," Martinez said. "Then the officers swarmed Baraka. They threw one of the organizers to the ground. They put Baraka in handcuffs and put him in an unmarked car."

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement that the lawmakers had not asked for a tour of Delaney Hall, which the agency said it would have facilitated. The department said that as a bus carrying detainees was entering in the afternoon "a group of protestors, including two members of the U.S. House of Representatives, stormed the gate and broke into the detention facility."

Watson Coleman spokesperson Ned Cooper said the three lawmakers went there unannounced because

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they planned to inspect it, not take a scheduled tour.

"They arrived, explained to the guards and the officials at the facility that they were there to exercise their oversight authority," he said, adding that they were allowed to enter and inspect the center sometime between 3 and 4 p.m.

Watson Coleman later said the DHS statement inaccurately characterized the visit.

"Contrary to a press statement put out by DHS we did not 'storm' the detention center," she wrote. "The author of that press release was so unfamiliar with the facts on the ground that they didn't even correctly count the number of Representatives present. We were exercising our legal oversight function as we have done at the Elizabeth Detention Center without incident."

Video shows the mayor standing on the public side of the gate

In video of the altercation shared with The Associated Press, a federal official in a jacket with the logo of the Homeland Security Investigations can be heard telling Baraka he could not enter the facility because "you are not a congress member."

Baraka then left the secure area, rejoining protesters on the public side of the gate. Video showed him speaking through the gate to a man in a suit, who said: "They're talking about coming back to arrest you."

"I'm not on their property. They can't come out on the street and arrest me," Baraka replied.

Minutes later several ICE agents, some wearing face coverings, surrounded him and others on the public side. As protesters cried out, "Shame," Baraka was dragged back through the gate in handcuffs.

Several civil rights and immigration reform advocates, as well as government officials, condemned Baraka's arrest. New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin, whose office is defending a state law barring private immigration detention facilities, criticized the arrest during a seemingly peaceful protest and said no state or local law enforcement agencies were involved.

Rep. Menendez said in a statement that as members of Congress, they have the legal right to carry out oversight at DHS facilities without prior notice and have done so twice already this year. But on Friday, "Throughout every step of this visit, ICE attempted to intimidate everyone involved and impede our ability to conduct oversight."

The detention center

The two-story building next to a county prison formerly operated as a halfway house.

In February, ICE awarded a 15-year contract to The Geo Group Inc. to run the detention center. Geo valued the contract at \$1 billion, in an unusually long and large agreement for ICE.

The announcement was part of President Donald Trump's plans to sharply increase detention beds nationwide from a budget of about 41,000 beds this year.

Baraka sued Geo soon after the deal was announced.

Geo touted the Delaney Hall contract during an earnings call with shareholders Wednesday, with CEO David Donahue saying it was expected to generate more than \$60 million a year in revenue. He said the facility began the intake process May 1.

Hall said the activation of the center and another in Michigan would increase capacity under contract with ICE from around 20,000 beds to around 23,000.

DHS said in its statement that the facility has the proper permits and inspections have been cleared.

## In coffee-producing Uganda, an emerging sisterhood wants more women involved

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

SIRONKO, Uganda (AP) — Meridah Nandudu envisioned a coffee sisterhood in Uganda, and the strategy for expanding it was simple: Pay a higher price per kilogram when a female grower took the beans to a collection point.

It worked. More and more men who typically made the deliveries allowed their wives to go instead.

Nandudu's business group now includes more than 600 women, up from dozens in 2022. That's about 75% of her Bayaaya Specialty Coffee's pool of registered farmers in this mountainous area of eastern

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Uganda that produces prized arabica beans and sells to exporters.

"Women have been so discouraged by coffee in a way that, when you look at (the) coffee value chain, women do the donkey work," Nandudu said. But when the coffee is ready for selling, men step in to claim the proceeds.

Her goal is to reverse that trend in a community where coffee production is not possible without women's labor.

Uganda is one of Africa's top two coffee producers, and the crop is its leading export. The east African country exported more than 6 million bags of coffee between September 2023 and August 2024, accounting for \$1.3 billion in earnings, according to the Uganda Coffee Development Authority.

The earnings have been rising as production dwindles in Brazil, the world's top coffee producer, which faces unfavorable drought conditions.

In Sironko district, where Nandudu grew up in a remote village near the Kenya border, coffee is the community's lifblood. As a girl, when she was not at school, she helped her mother and other women look after acres of coffee plants. They usually planted, weeded and toiled with the post-harvest routine that includes pulping, fermenting, washing and drying the coffee.

The harvest season was known to coincide with a surge in cases of domestic violence, she said. Couples fought over how much of the earnings that men brought home from sales — and how much they didn't.

"When (men) go and sell, they are not accountable. Our mothers cannot ask, 'We don't have food at home. You sold coffee. Can you pay school fees for this child?'" she said.

Years later, Nandudu earned her degree in the social sciences from Uganda's top public university in 2015, with her father funding her education from coffee earnings. She had the idea to launch a company that would prioritize the needs of coffee-producing women in the country's conservative society.

She thought of her project as a kind of sisterhood and chose "bayaaya" — a translation in the Lumasaba language — for her company's name.

It launched in 2018, operating like others that buy coffee directly from farmers and process it for export.

But Bayaaya is unique in Mbale, the largest city in eastern Uganda, for focusing on women and for initiatives such as a cooperative saving society that members can contribute to and borrow from.

For small-holder Ugandan farmers in remote areas, a small movement in the price of a kilogram of coffee is a major event. The decision to sell to one or another middleman often hinges on small price differences.

A decade ago, the price of coffee bought by a middleman from a Ugandan farmer was roughly 8,000 Uganda shillings, or just over \$2 at today's exchange rate. Now the price is roughly \$5.

Nandudu adds an extra 200 shillings to the price of every kilogram she buys from a woman. It's enough of an incentive that more women are joining. Another benefit is a small bonus payment during the off-season from February to August.

That motivates many local men "to trust their women to sell coffee," Nandudu said. "When a woman sells coffee, she has a hand in it."

Nandudu's group has many collection points across eastern Uganda, and women trek to them at least twice a week. Men are not turned away.

Selling as a Bayaaya member has fostered teamwork as her family collectively decides how to spend coffee earnings, said Linet Gimono, who joined the group in 2022.

And with assured earnings, she's able to afford the "small things" she often needs as a woman. "I can buy soap (and) I can buy sugar without pulling ropes with my husband over it," she said.

Another member, Juliet Kwaga, said her mother never would have thought of collecting coffee earnings because her father was very much in charge.

Now, Kwaga's husband, with a bit of encouragement, is comfortable sending her. "At the end of the day I go home with something to feed my family, to support my children," she said.

In Sironko district, home to more than 200,000 people, coffee trees dot the hilly terrain. Much of the farming is on plots of one or two acres, although some families have larger tracts.

Many farmers don't usually drink coffee, and some have never tasted it. Some women smiled in embarrassment when asked what it tasted like.

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But things are slowly changing. Routine coffee drinkers are emerging among younger women in the coffee business in urban areas, including at a roasting place in Mbale where most employees are women.

Phoebe Nabutale, who helps oversee quality assurance for Darling Coffee, was raised in a family of coffee growers. She bent over the roaster, smelling the beans until she got the aroma she wanted.

Many of her girlfriends, she said, regularly ask how they can break into the coffee business, as roasters or otherwise.

For Nandudu, who aims to start exporting beans, that's progress.

Now there are more women in "coffee as a business," she said.

## **How US-China tariffs reached sky-high levels in 3 months**

By SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Talks planned this weekend between U.S. and Chinese officials in Switzerland are a culmination of more than three months of dizzying rounds of retaliatory tariffs between the two countries that have crippled each other's exporters and dragged on their economies.

Washington and Beijing are entering talks with tariffs on each other's goods at an all-time high. U.S. duties on Chinese imports stand at 145%, while China's retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods have reached 125%.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he believed the talks could bring tangible progress, and that he was open to lowering the tariffs substantially if Beijing made concessions. China, however, has reiterated calls for Washington to cancel the tariffs ahead of the talks.

Here is a play-by-play of how U.S. and Chinese tariffs have reached such sky-high levels since the beginning of Trump's second term in office:

Feb. 1, 2025

Trump signs an executive order imposing 10% tariffs on China, as well as 25% duties on Mexico and Canada. He later announces a 30-day reprieve on the Mexican and Canadian tariffs.

Feb. 4

The 10% tariffs on all Chinese imports to the U.S. come into effect. China retaliates the same day by announcing a flurry of countermeasures, including duties on American coal, liquefied natural gas and agricultural machinery.

March 4

Trump imposes additional 10% tariffs on all Chinese goods, bringing the total level of duties to 20%. China responds with tariffs of up to 15% on imports of key U.S. farm products including chicken, pork, soy and beef, and expanded controls on doing business with key U.S. companies.

March 10

Chinese tariffs and measures announced on March 4 go into effect.

April 2

On Trump's so-called tariff "Liberation Day," he announces additional 34% duties on all Chinese imports, alongside tariffs on goods from countries around the world. The sweeping tariffs are to come into effect April 9.

April 4

China fights back by imposing 34% tariffs on all U.S. goods, effective April 10, as well as other retaliatory measures including more export controls on rare earth minerals.

China also suspends imports of sorghum, poultry and bonemeal from several U.S. companies, adds 27 firms to lists of companies facing trade restrictions, and starts an anti-monopoly probe into DuPont China Group, a subsidiary of the U.S. company DuPont.

April 7

Trump threatens China with additional 50% tariffs if it doesn't roll back its 34% reciprocal tariffs.

April 9

Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs come into effect. The U.S. raises tariffs on China even higher than previously announced, to 104%.

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Beijing retaliates with duties of 84% on U.S. goods, effective April 10.

Trump further raises tariffs on all Chinese goods to 145%, effective immediately.

April 11

China raises its tariffs on all U.S. goods to 125%, effective April 12. Beijing says it would not raise the duties any further.

May 6

The Trump administration announces that Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer will meet with their Chinese counterparts in Geneva. China will be represented at the talks by Vice Premier He Lifeng.

## Is the Southern accent fixin' to disappear in parts of the US South?

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

Growing up in Atlanta in the 1940s and 1950s, Susan Levine's visits to New York City relatives included being the star of an impromptu novelty show: Her cousin invited over friends and charged 25 cents a pop for them to listen to Levine's Southern accent.

Even though they too grew up in Atlanta, Levine's two sons, born more than a quarter century after her, never spoke with the accent that is perhaps the most famous regional dialect in the United States, with its elongated vowels and soft "r" sounds.

"My accent is nonexistent," said Ira Levine, her oldest son. "People I work with, and even in school, people didn't believe I was from Atlanta."

The Southern accent, which has many variations, is fading in some areas of the South as people migrate to the region from other parts of the U.S. and around the world. A series of research papers published in December documented the diminishment of the regional accent among Black residents of the Atlanta area, white working-class people in the New Orleans area and people who grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina.

More than 5.8 million people have moved into the U.S. South so far in the 2020s, more than four times the combined total of the nation's three other regions. Linguists don't believe mass media has played a significant role in the language change, which tends to start in urban areas and radiate out to more rural places.

Late 20th century migration surge affects accents

The classical white Southern accent in the Atlanta area and other parts of the urban South peaked with baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964 and then dropped off with Gen Xers born between 1965 and 1980 and subsequent generations, in large part because of the tremendous in-migration of people in the second half of the 20th century.

It has been replaced among the youngest speakers in the 21st century with a dialect that was first noticed in California in the late 1980s, according to recent research from linguists at the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech and Brigham Young University. That dialect, which also was detected in Canada, has become a pan-regional accent as it has spread to other parts of the U.S., including Boston, New York and Michigan, contributing to the diminishment of their regional accents.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, the trigger point in the decline of the Southern accent was the opening in 1959 of the Research Triangle Park, a sprawling complex of research and technology firms that attracted tens of thousands of highly educated workers from outside the South. White residents born after 1979, a generation after the Research Triangle's establishment, typically don't talk with a Southern accent, linguist Sean Lundergan wrote in a paper published in December.

Often, outsiders wrongly associate a Southern accent with a lack of education, and some younger people may be trying to distance themselves from that stereotype.

"Young people today, especially the educated young people, they don't want to sound too much like they are from a specific hometown," said Georgia Tech linguist Lelia Glass, who co-wrote the Atlanta study. "They want to sound more kind of, nonlocal and geographically mobile."

Accents change for younger people

The Southern dialect among Black people in Atlanta has dropped off in recent decades mainly because

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of an influx of African Americans from northern U.S. cities in what has been described as the "Reverse Great Migration."

During the Great Migration, from roughly 1910 to 1970, African Americans from the South moved to cities in the North like New York, Detroit and Chicago. Their grandchildren and great-grandchildren have moved back South in large numbers to places like Atlanta during the late 20th and early 21st centuries and are more likely to be college-educated.

Researchers found Southern accents among African Americans dropped off with Gen Z, or those born between 1997 and 2012, according to a study published in December. The same researchers previously studied Southern accents among white people in Atlanta.

Michelle and Richard Beck, Gen Xers living in the Atlanta area, have Southern accents, but it's missing in their two sons born in 1998 and 2001.

"I think they speak clearer than I do," Richard Beck, a law enforcement officer, said of his sons. "They don't sound as country as I do when it comes to the Southern drawl."

New Orleans 'yat' accent diminished

Unlike other accents that have changed because of an influx of new residents, the distinctive, white working-class "yat" accent of New Orleans has declined as many locals left following the devastating Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The accent is distinct from other regional accents in the South and often described as sounding as much like Brooklynese as Southern.

The hurricane was a "catastrophic" language change event for New Orleans since it displaced around a quarter million residents in the first year after the storm and brought in tens of thousands of outsiders in the following decade.

The diminishment of the "yat" accent is most noticeable in millennials, who were adolescents when Katrina hit, since they were exposed to other ways of speaking during a key time for linguistic development, Virginia Tech sociolinguist Katie Carmichael said in a paper published in December.

Cheryl Wilson Lanier, a 64-year-old who grew up in Chalmette, Louisiana, one of the New Orleans suburbs where the accent was most prevalent, worries that part of the region's uniqueness will be lost if the accent disappears.

"It's kind of like we're losing our distinct personality," she said.

Southern identity changing

While it is diminishing in many urban areas, the Southern accent is unlikely to disappear completely because "accents are an incredibly straightforward way of showing other people something about ourselves," said University of Georgia linguist Margaret Renwick, one of the authors of the Atlanta studies.

It may instead reflect a change in how younger speakers view Southern identity, with a regional accent not as closely associated with what is considered Southern as in previous generations, and linguistic boundaries less important than other factors, she said.

"So young people in the Atlanta area or Raleigh area have a different vision of what life is in the South," Renwick said. "And it's not the same as the one that their parents or grandparents grew up with."

## 'Leo will follow Francis.' Amazon Catholics hope the new pope will protect the rain forest

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and STEVEN GRATTAN Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — The bishop sat quietly near the front row, hands folded, listening as Indigenous leaders and church workers spoke about the threats to Peru's northern forests, a part of the Amazon rain forest. It was 2016, a year after Laudato Si, Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment.

When he was up to speak, the bishop didn't preach though he was in his city of Chiclayo as host of a regional gathering. Instead, he reflected on things he had seen.

"It's a very important encyclical," he said. "It also represents something new in terms of this explicit expression of the church's concern for all of creation."

That bishop, Robert Prevost, is now Pope Leo XIV.

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"He was always very welcoming, very close to the people," Laura Vargas, secretary of the Interreligious Council of Peru, who helped organize the event, recalled in a phone interview with The Associated Press.

"He had no problem saying yes when we proposed it — he was genuinely interested in social pastoral work."

Since then, Prevost deepened his ties with interfaith environmental networks like the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative and Indigenous organizations such as AIDSEP, which place forest protection and rights at the center of Church concern.

Such credentials have brought hope to clergymen and faithful in the Amazon region, a vast area with 48 million residents and 6.7 million square kilometers (2.6 million square miles) in South America. They see Chicago-born Prevost, who spent about two decades in Peru's countryside, as a pontiff who protect the region and fight against climate change.

## NAVIGATING THE AMAZON

Many Catholics have said they believe Prevost's experience as bishop of Chiclayo, a city of 630,000 residents in Northern Peru and not too far from the Amazon, was one of the key reasons he was chosen. They also said the pontiff's hands-on experience in an impoverished area far from major cities could also serve him well in dealing with the Amazon and navigating its challenges.

The Amazon is a key regulator of the climate, as its dense forests absorb carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that when released into the atmosphere heats the planet. But many parts of the Amazon are under threat from a wide range of illegal activities: farmers clearing trees to raise cows, gold miners dredging rivers and destroying local ecosystems and land-grabbers seizing territories. Wildfires and droughts, exacerbated by climate change, have also hit Amazon communities hard in recent years.

Prevost is well acquainted with these issues, having presided over the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, which helped him bond with colleagues of the nine countries touched by the Amazon. Many of them are among the 105 bishops of an organization he openly supports, the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network, a Catholic Church network focused on the Amazon region.

"I spoke to him a number times about the Amazon and the environment. He doesn't need to be convinced of its importance," said Cardinal Pedro Barreto, the president of the network, who has known Prevost since he became the bishop of Chiclayo in 2015.

Brazilian Friar Paulo Xavier agrees.

"Leo will follow Francis; we are going forward with environment protection," Xavier said. "The Holy Spirit has acted on our behalf."

Xavier is based in Manaus, a city of 2 million residents in the Amazon which received its first-ever cardinal appointed by Francis in 2022: the now 74-year-old archbishop Leonardo Steiner, an enthusiast of Laudato Si.

Steiner, Xavier and the Manaus archdiocese have invested to get the encyclical into the hands of locals, even when that means jumping on small, motorized canoes through the brown waters of the Negro River to reach isolated villages in journeys that can last days on a boat.

## POPE FOR ACTION

In November 2024, the Vatican News reported that Prevost called for more action to tackle climate change and protect the environment during a seminar in Rome. He cited efforts the Vatican has taken such as installing solar panels and electric vehicles.

On the social media platform X, Prevost has reposted messages about protecting the environment. One message he reposted on April 1, 2017, expressed concern about emissions of carbon dioxide, a planet-warming gas, during President Donald Trump's his first term.

Laura Vicuña, an Indigenous woman of the Kariri people and the vice president of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon Region, said in a letter published on social media that she hopes the pope will be an ally in the fight against climate change. The conference was created by Francis in 2020 to promote discussion between clergymen and laypeople.

"From our dear Amazon, we plead with you to be our ally in the defense of what is the most sacred for us; life, land and rights," Vicuña wrote.

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Indigenous peoples like Vicuña's Kariri are often regarded as key protectors of the Amazon, but for many years they have been forced out of their lands by criminals, deforestation and famine, as seen in the Yanomami lands in Northern Brazil in 2023.

Spaniard Luis Ventura, the executive-secretary of Brazil's Indigenous Missionary Council, said he prays for the new pope to keep his eyes close to the Amazon, with a special attention to the Indigenous. Founded in 1972, the council had rare occasions to meet with pontiffs until Francis rose in 2013. Its members hope Leo doesn't change that.

"Leo XIV will have a big impact on the Amazon," said Ventura. "His life was always with the people in Peru, and that allows us to think the church will be deep into the territory."

## CLIMATE URGENCY

Francis showed great interest in the Amazon during his pontificate. Four years after *Laudato Si*, he hosted the Amazon Synod, which sought "new Paths for the Church and for an integral ecology."

Rose Bertoldo, one of the secretaries of the Manaus archdiocese, said she is hopeful for the region's future under Leo, given it would build on Francis' interest. She added the new pontiff will have a chance to visit Brazil, the nation with the most Catholics in the world, during this year's U.N. climate summit, known as COP30, in the Amazonian city of Belem in November.

"We know that the urgencies and the challenges in the Amazon will be bigger because of the global political context of division. We need him at COP," Bertoldo said.

Irish priest Peter Hughes, who spent most of his life in Peru, met Prevost shortly after he arrived in the Andean nation in 1985. They quickly became friends, and would see each other when the bishop of Chiclayo was in the capital Lima.

"Back then, (Prevost) was worried about extractivism in the Amazon and the effect it had on the poor," said Hughes, referring to the new pontiff. "Now it is a much more complex world, the urgency is evident."

## Pope Leo XIV's Creole heritage highlights complex history of racism and the church in America

By JACK BROOK and DEEPA BHARATH Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The new pope's French-sounding last name, Prevost, intrigued Jari Honora, a New Orleans genealogist, who began digging in the archives and discovered the pope had deep roots in the Big Easy.

All four of Pope Leo XIV's maternal great-grandparents were "free people of color" in Louisiana based on 19th-century census records, Honora found. As part of the melting pot of French, Spanish, African and Native American cultures in Louisiana, the pope's maternal ancestors would be considered Creole.

"It was special for me because I share that heritage and so do many of my friends who are Catholic here in New Orleans," said Honora, a historian at the Historic New Orleans Collection, a museum in the French Quarter.

Honora and others in the Black and Creole Catholic communities say the election of Leo — a Chicago native who spent over two decades in Peru including eight years as a bishop — is just what the Catholic Church needs to unify the global church and elevate the profile of Black Catholics whose history and contributions have long been overlooked.

## A rich cultural identity

Leo, who has not spoken openly about his roots, may also have an ancestral connection to Haiti. His grandfather, Joseph Norval Martinez, may have been born there, though historical records are conflicting, Honora said. However, Martinez's parents — the pope's great-grandparents — were living in Louisiana since at least the 1850s, he said.

Andrew Jolivet, a professor of sociology and Afro-Indigenous Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, did his own digging and found the pope's ancestry reflected the unique cultural tapestry of southern Louisiana. The pope's Creole roots draw attention to the complex, nuanced identities Creoles hold, he said.

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"There is Cuban ancestry on his maternal side. So, there are a number of firsts here and it's a matter of pride for Creoles," said Jolivette, whose family is Creole from Louisiana. "So, I also view him as a Latino pope because the influence of Latino heritage cannot be ignored in the conversation about Creoles."

Most Creoles are Catholic and historically it was their faith that kept families together as they migrated to larger cities like Chicago, Jolivette said.

The former Cardinal Robert Prevost's maternal grandparents — identified as "mulatto" and "Black" in historical records — were married in New Orleans in 1887 and lived in the city's historically Creole Seventh Ward. In the coming years, the Jim Crow regime of racial segregation rolled back post-Civil War reforms and "just about every aspect of their lives was circumscribed by race, extending even to the church," Honora said.

**An American story of migration**

The pope's grandparents migrated to Chicago around 1910, like many other African American families leaving the racial oppression of the Deep South, and "passed for white," Honora said. The pope's mother, Mildred Agnes Martinez, who was born in Chicago, is identified as "white" on her 1912 birth certificate, Honora said.

"You can understand, people may have intentionally sought to obfuscate their heritage," he said. "Always life has been precarious for people of color in the South, New Orleans included."

The pope's grandparents' old home in New Orleans was later destroyed, along with hundreds of others, to build a highway overpass that "eviscerated" a stretch of the largely Black neighborhood in the 1960s, Honora said.

A former New Orleans mayor, Marc Morial, called the pope's family's history, "an American story of how people escape American racism and American bigotry."

As a Catholic with Creole heritage who grew up near the neighborhood where the pope's grandparents lived, Morial said he has contradictory feelings. While he's proud of the pope's connection to his city, Morial said the new pontiff's maternal family's shifting racial identity highlights "the idea that in America people had to escape their authenticity to be able to survive."

**African American influence on Catholicism**

The Rev. Ajani Gibson, who heads the predominantly Black congregation at St. Peter Claver Church in New Orleans, said he sees the pope's roots as a reaffirmation of African American influence on Catholicism in his city.

"I think a lot of people take for granted that the things that people love most about New Orleans are both Black and Catholic," said Gibson, referring to rich cultural contributions to Mardi Gras, New Orleans' jazz tradition and brass band parades known as second-lines.

He hoped the pope's Creole heritage — emerging from the city's "cultural gumbo pot" — signals an inclusive outlook for the Catholic Church.

"I want the continued elevation of the universal nature of the church — that the church looks, feels, sounds like everybody," Gibson said. "We all have a place and we come and bring who we are, completely and totally, as gifts to the church."

Shannen Dee Williams, a history professor at the University of Dayton, said she hopes that Leo's "genealogical roots and historic papacy will underscore that all roads in American Catholicism, in North, South and Central America, lead back to the church's foundational roots in its mostly unacknowledged and unreconciled histories of Catholic colonialism, slavery and segregation."

"There have always been two trans-Atlantic stories of American Catholicism; one that begins with Europeans and another one that begins with Africans and African-descended people, free and enslaved, living in Europe and Africa in the 16th century," she said. "Just as Black history is American history, (Leo's) story also reminds us that Black history is, and always has been, Catholic history, including in the United States."

**Hope for the future**

Kim R. Harris, associate professor of African American Religious Thought and Practice at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, said the pope's genealogy got her thinking about the seven African American

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Catholics on the path to sainthood who have been recognized by the National Black Catholic Congress, but haven't yet been canonized.

Harris highlighted Pierre Toussaint, a philanthropist born in Haiti as a slave who became a New York City entrepreneur and was declared "Venerable" by Pope John Paul II in 1997.

"The excitement I have in this moment probably has to do with the hope that this pope's election will help move this canonization process along," Harris said.

While it's not known how Leo identifies himself racially, his roots bring a sense of hope to African American Catholics, she said.

"When I think about a person who brings so much of the history of this country in his bones, I really hope it brings to light who we are as Americans, and who we are as people of the diaspora," she said. "It brings a whole new perspective and widens the vision of who we all are."

Reynold Verret, president of Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, the only historically Black Catholic university, said he was "a little surprised" about the pope's heritage.

"It's a joyful connection," he said. "It is an affirmation that the Catholic Church is truly universal and that (Black) Catholics remained faithful regardless of a church that was human and imperfect. It also shows us that the church transcends national borders."

## **Mayor Baraka of Newark, New Jersey, arrested at immigration detention center he has been protesting**

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka was arrested Friday at a new federal immigration detention center he has been protesting against and was held in custody for several hours.

Baraka was released around 8 p.m. after being accused of trespassing and ignoring warnings to leave the Delaney Hall facility. Stepping out of an SUV with flashing emergency lights, he told waiting supporters: "The reality is this: I didn't do anything wrong."

The mayor said he could not speak about his case, citing a promise he made to lawyers and the judge. But he voiced full-throated support for everyone living in his community, immigrants included.

"All of us here, every last one of us, I don't care what background you come from, what nationality, what language you speak," Baraka said, "at some point we have to stop these people from causing division between us."

Baraka, a Democrat who is running to succeed term-limited Gov. Phil Murphy, has embraced the fight with the Trump administration over illegal immigration.

He has aggressively pushed back against the construction and opening of the 1,000-bed detention center, arguing that it should not be allowed to open because of building permit issues.

Linda Baraka, the mayor's wife, accused the federal government of targeting her husband.

"They didn't arrest anyone else. They didn't ask anyone else to leave. They wanted to make an example out of the mayor," she said, adding that she had not been allowed to see him.

Alina Habba, interim U.S. attorney for New Jersey, said on the social platform X that Baraka trespassed at the detention facility, which is run by private prison operator Geo Group.

Habba said Baraka had "chosen to disregard the law."

Video of the incident showed that Baraka was arrested after returning to the public side of the gate to the facility.

Witnesses describe a heated argument

Witnesses said the arrest came after Baraka attempted to join three members of New Jersey's congressional delegation, Reps. Robert Menendez, LaMonica McIver, and Bonnie Watson Coleman, in attempting to enter the facility.

When federal officials blocked his entry, a heated argument broke out, according to Viri Martinez, an activist with the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice. It continued even after Baraka returned to the public side of the gates.

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"There was yelling and pushing," Martinez said. "Then the officers swarmed Baraka. They threw one of the organizers to the ground. They put Baraka in handcuffs and put him in an unmarked car."

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement that the lawmakers had not asked for a tour of Delaney Hall, which the agency said it would have facilitated. The department said that as a bus carrying detainees was entering in the afternoon "a group of protestors, including two members of the U.S. House of Representatives, stormed the gate and broke into the detention facility."

Watson Coleman spokesperson Ned Cooper said the three lawmakers went there unannounced because they planned to inspect it, not take a scheduled tour.

"They arrived, explained to the guards and the officials at the facility that they were there to exercise their oversight authority," he said, adding that they were allowed to enter and inspect the center sometime between 3 and 4 p.m.

Watson Coleman later said the DHS statement inaccurately characterized the visit.

"Contrary to a press statement put out by DHS we did not 'storm' the detention center," she wrote. "The author of that press release was so unfamiliar with the facts on the ground that they didn't even correctly count the number of Representatives present. We were exercising our legal oversight function as we have done at the Elizabeth Detention Center without incident."

Video shows the mayor standing on the public side of the gate

In video of the altercation shared with The Associated Press, a federal official in a jacket with the logo of the Homeland Security Investigations can be heard telling Baraka he could not enter the facility because "you are not a congress member."

Baraka then left the secure area, rejoining protestors on the public side of the gate. Video showed him speaking through the gate to a man in a suit, who said: "They're talking about coming back to arrest you."

"I'm not on their property. They can't come out on the street and arrest me," Baraka replied.

Minutes later several ICE agents, some wearing face coverings, surrounded him and others on the public side. As protestors cried out, "Shame," Baraka was dragged back through the gate in handcuffs.

Several civil rights and immigration reform advocates, as well as government officials, condemned Baraka's arrest. New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin, whose office is defending a state law barring private immigration detention facilities, criticized the arrest during a seemingly peaceful protest and said no state or local law enforcement agencies were involved.

Rep. Menendez said in a statement that as members of Congress, they have the legal right to carry out oversight at DHS facilities without prior notice and have done so twice already this year. But on Friday, "Throughout every step of this visit, ICE attempted to intimidate everyone involved and impede our ability to conduct oversight."

The detention center

The two-story building next to a county prison formerly operated as a halfway house.

In February, ICE awarded a 15-year contract to The Geo Group Inc. to run the detention center. Geo valued the contract at \$1 billion, in an unusually long and large agreement for ICE.

The announcement was part of President Donald Trump's plans to sharply increase detention beds nationwide from a budget of about 41,000 beds this year.

Baraka sued Geo soon after the deal was announced.

Geo touted the Delaney Hall contract during an earnings call with shareholders Wednesday, with CEO David Donahue saying it was expected to generate more than \$60 million a year in revenue. He said the facility began the intake process May 1.

Hall said the activation of the center and another in Michigan would increase capacity under contract with ICE from around 20,000 beds to around 23,000.

DHS said in its statement that the facility has the proper permits and inspections have been cleared.

## As US and China begin trade talks in Geneva, Trump's tariff hammer looks less mighty than he claims

By PAUL WISEMAN and DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The way President Donald Trump sees it, beating China in a trade war should be easy.

After all, his logic goes, the Chinese sell Americans three times as much stuff as Americans sell them. Therefore, they have more to lose. Inflict enough pain, like the combined 145% taxes he slapped on Chinese imports last month, and they'll beg for mercy.

Trump's treasury secretary, Scott Bessent has confidently compared Beijing to a card player stuck with a losing hand. "They're playing with a pair of twos," he said.

Somebody forgot to tell China. So far, the Chinese have refused to fold under the pressure of Trump's massive tariffs. Instead, they have retaliated with triple-digit tariffs of their own.

"All bullies are just paper tigers," the Chinese Foreign Ministry declared in a video last week. "Kneeling only invites more bullying."

The stakes are high between the world's two biggest economies whose trade topped \$660 billion last year. Bessent and Trump's top trade negotiator, Jamieson Greer, are heading to Geneva this weekend for initial trade talks with top Chinese officials. Trump suggested Friday that the U.S. could lower its tariffs on China, saying in a Truth Social post that "80% Tariff seems right! Up to Scott."

While businesses and investors welcome any easing of tensions, the prospects for a quick and significant breakthrough appear dim.

"These are talks about talks, and China may be coming to assess what's on the table — or even just to buy time," said Craig Singleton, senior China fellow at the Washington-based think tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "There's no shared roadmap or clear pathway to de-escalation."

But if the two countries eventually agree to scale back the massive taxes — tariffs — they have slapped on each other's goods, it would relieve world financial markets and companies on both sides of the Pacific Ocean that depend on U.S.-China trade.

"The companies involved in this trade on both sides just cannot afford waiting anymore," said economist John Gong of the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. In a worst-case scenario, China could walk away from the negotiations if it feels the U.S. side isn't treating China as an equal or isn't willing to take the first step to deescalate, Gong said.

"I think if (Bessent) doesn't go into this negotiation with this kind of mindset, this could be very difficult," he said.

For now, the two countries can't even agree on who requested the talks. "The meeting is being held at the request of the U.S. side," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said Wednesday. Trump disagreed. "They ought to go back and study their files," he said.

Trump's faith in tariffs meet economic reality

What seems clear is that Trump's favorite economic weapon — import taxes, or tariffs — has not proved as mighty as he'd hoped.

"For Trump, what's happened here is that the rhetoric of his campaign has finally had to face economic reality," said Jeff Moon, a trade official in the Obama administration who now runs the China Moon Strategies consultancy. "The idea that he was going to bring China to its knees in terms of tariffs was never going to work."

Trump views tariffs an all-purpose economic tool that can raise money for the U.S. Treasury, protect American industries, lure factories to the United States and pressure other countries to bend to his will, even on issues such as immigration and drug trafficking.

He used tariffs in his first term and has been even more aggressive and unpredictable about imposing them in his second. He's slapped a 10% tariff on almost every country in the world, blowing up the rules that had governed global trade for decades.

But it's his trade war with China that has really put markets and businesses on edge. It started in Febru-

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ary when he announced a 10% levy on Chinese imports. By April, Trump ratcheted up the taxes on China to a staggering 145%. Beijing upped its tariff on American products to 125%.

Trump's escalation sent financial markets tumbling and left U.S. retailers warning that they might run out of goods as U.S.-China trade implodes. U.S. consumers, worried about the prospect of empty shelves and higher prices, are losing confidence in the economy.

"This was not very well planned," said Zongyuan Zoe Liu, senior fellow in China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "I don't think he intended to have the tariffs escalate into this chaos."

China was ready for a rematch

When Trump hit Chinese imports with tariffs during his first term, he charged that Beijing used unfair tactics, including cybertheft, to give its technology firms an edge.

The two countries reached a truce — the so-called Phase One agreement — in January 2020; China agreed to buy more U.S. products, and Trump held off on even higher tariffs. But they didn't resolve the big issues dividing them, including China's subsidies of homegrown tech firms.

China was ready for a rematch when Trump returned to the White House. It had worked to reduce its dependence on America's massive market, cutting the U.S. share of its exports to 15% last year from more than 19% in 2018, according to Dexter Roberts of the Atlantic Council.

Beijing is confident that the Chinese people are more willing than Americans to endure the fallout from a trade war, including falling exports and shuttered factories. "For China, it's painful, but it's also imperative to withstand it, and it's prepared to cope with it," said Sun Yun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center.

Dependency works both ways

In addition to miscalculating Chinese resolve, the Trump administration may have underestimated how much America relies on China.

For decades, Americans have come to depend on Chinese factories. They produce 97% of America's imported baby carriages, 96% of its artificial flowers and umbrellas, 95% of its fireworks, 93% of its children's coloring books and 90% of its combs.

"Without us, what do they have to sell?" Chinese toymaker Cheng Zhengren told Beijing News. "Their shelves would be empty."

The showerhead company Afina last month reported on an experiment suggesting that American consumers have little willingness to pay more for American-made products. Afina makes a filtered showerhead in China and Vietnam that retails for \$129. Making the same product in America would lift the price to \$239. When customers on the company's website were given a choice between them, 584 chose the cheap Asian one; not one opted for the costlier U.S.-made version.

And it's not just consumers who depend on China. America's own factories do, too. The National Association of Manufacturers calculates 47% of U.S. imports from China in 2023 were "manufacturing inputs" — industrial supplies, auto parts and capital equipment that American manufacturers used to make other their own products domestically. So Trump's tariffs risk raising costs and reducing supplies that U.S. factories rely on, making them less competitive.

Louise Loo, China economist at Oxford Economics, a consulting firm, said that China's ability to reduce its dependence on the U.S. market in recent years means "they're probably likely to be able to find substitutes for buyers, much easier than the U.S. side will be able to find suppliers."

Still, China won't emerge from a trade war unscathed either. Citing the impact of the trade war, the International Monetary Fund last month downgraded the outlook for the Chinese economy this year and next.

"China needs the United States of America," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said at Friday's news briefing. "They need our markets. They need our consumer base. And Secretary Bessent knows that he's going to Switzerland this weekend with the full support and confidence and trust of the president here at home."

Indeed Moon, who also served as a diplomat in China, noted the tariffs cut both ways: "Both of them are highly dependent on bilateral trade. They have put themselves in a corner."

Jens Eskelund, president of the EU Chamber of Commerce in China, expressed relief that U.S. and Chi-

nese officials were meeting.

"So good," he said, pointing to the Vatican conclave that just picked a new pope as inspiration. "Lock them in a room and then hopefully white smoke will come out."

## **Air traffic controllers for Newark airport briefly lose radar access again**

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

The air traffic controllers directing planes into the Newark, New Jersey, airport briefly lost their radar Friday morning for the second time in two weeks, renewing concerns about the nation's aging air traffic control system that President Donald Trump wants to overhaul.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the radar at the facility in Philadelphia that directs planes in and out of Newark airport went black for 90 seconds at 3:55 a.m. Friday. That's similar to what happened on April 28.

That first radar outage led to hundreds of flights being canceled or delayed at the Newark airport in the past two weeks after the FAA slowed down traffic at the airport to ensure safety. Five controllers also went on trauma leave after that outage, worsening the existing shortage. It's not clear if any additional controllers will go on leave now.

The number of cancellations and delays spiked after the FAA limited traffic at Newark and has remained high since then. The FAA said Newark is one of the most delay-prone airports in the nation right now. In addition to all the technical and staffing challenges, an ongoing runway construction project is adding to the disruptions.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a briefing Friday that the "glitch this morning at Newark" was caused by the same issues as last week.

The latest Newark problems reinforce the need for the multibillion-dollar plan Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced Thursday to replace the nation's aging air traffic control system, Leavitt said. The plan is designed to prevent such problems from happening and give controllers modern technology. More than 4,600 new high-speed connections would be installed and 618 radars would be replaced across the country.

Officials developed the plan to upgrade the system after a deadly midair collision in January between a passenger jet and an Army helicopter killed 67 people in the skies over Washington, D.C. Several other crashes this year also put pressure on officials to act.

But the shortcomings of the air traffic control system have been known for decades. The National Transportation Safety Board has not determined that a problem with the air traffic control system caused the crash near Reagan National Airport.

There has been an average of 34 arrival cancellations per day since mid April at Newark, and the FAA said the number of delays increases throughout the day from an average of five in the mornings to 16 by the evening. They tend to last 85 to 137 minutes on average.

The FAA said the airport clearly cannot handle its current traffic, so it will propose cutting arrivals and departures to 28 each per hour until the runway construction is complete, and 34 per hour after the main runway project is completed, although some work will continue on the weekends.

The FAA scheduled a formal meeting with all the airlines that fly out of Newark on Wednesday and Thursday of next week to talk about cutting their schedules while the staffing and technology issues persist.

These radar outages in such a crowded airspace are alarming because seconds matter, but Allied Pilots Association spokesman Capt. Dennis Tajer said "it's not an impending disaster that some are suggesting."

"The system is wired to run really well when everything's functioning. But the most important part is that it's prepared to function when things go wrong," Tajer said. "Even when it sounds frightening, know that the air traffic controllers and the pilots have training and we go to that."

When pilots lose contact with controllers their first action is to continue on their last-directed path, but if the outage continues, pilots will start broadcasting their position to every other plane in the area — much

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like pilots do at small airports that don't have a control tower.

U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer blamed the problems that have plagued Newark on the lack of proper air traffic controller staffing and modern technology.

"Our region is a key economic artery for our country. Yet this region ... one of the busiest air spaces in the world, as I mentioned, is running off a tower that's full of copper wire dating back to the 1980s with outdated and inefficient technology," Gottheimer said. He said the tower was built back in "the Brady Bunch era" in 1973.

The FAA said it currently has 24 air traffic controllers assigned to handle the Newark traffic, but it wants to have 38. And now several of those are on leave. Plus, 16 of the controllers currently working in Philadelphia are only assigned there temporarily through July 2026 as part of the facility's move from New York that it made last summer. So the FAA is working to quickly certify as many of the 26 trainees currently working in Philadelphia as possible.

The FAA said earlier this week that it is installing new fiber optic data lines to carry the radar signal between its facilities in Philadelphia and New York. Officials said some of the lines connecting those two facilities are outdated copper wire that will be replaced. But it's not clear how quickly those repairs can be completed.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York said it's important that the FAA get the problems affecting the Newark airport fixed quickly.

"Enough is enough. The connection between New York air space and the Philadelphia air traffic control center must be fixed now. The backup system that is not working must be fixed. Now," Schumer said. "This is an air travel safety emergency that requires immediate and decisive action, not a promise of a big, beautiful unfunded overhaul that will take years to begin to implement."

## Harvey Weinstein's lawyers grill ex-model who says he sexually assaulted her in her teens

By JENNIFER PELTZ and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein's lawyers sought Friday to raise doubts about an ex-model's allegation that he sexually assaulted her in her teens, portraying her as a wannabe actor who tried to leverage the former studio boss.

"You believed that if you had consensual sex with Mr. Weinstein, you'd get your foot in the door and become a movie star," defense lawyer Mike Cibella said.

"No, that's not what happened," Kaja Sokola responded. "I never had a consensual relation with Mr. Weinstein."

Throughout a day of questioning, Cibella sought to suggest that Sokola hadn't told the full story of her interactions with Weinstein. At one point, Cibella repeatedly asked whether she invited Weinstein up to a New York apartment — and into the bedroom — where she was staying in 2005. She denied it.

"I didn't want any shortcuts from Mr. Weinstein. I wanted him to be honest with me," Sokola testified at a later point, her voice growing heated.

She said the Oscar-winning producer promised to help her fulfill her acting ambitions but instead "broke my dreams, and he broke my self-esteem."

The Polish psychotherapist has accused Weinstein of repeatedly sexually abusing her when she was a teenage fashion model. Some of those allegations are beyond the legal time limit for criminal charges, but Weinstein faces a criminal sex act charge over Sokola's claim that he forced oral sex on her in 2006.

Prosecutors added the charge to the landmark #MeToo case last year, after an appeals court overturned Weinstein's 2020 conviction. The guilty verdict pertained to allegations from two other women, who also have testified or are expected at the retrial.

Weinstein, 73, has pleaded not guilty and denies ever sexually assaulting anyone.

The Polish-born Sokola, 39, had a jet-setting modeling career as a teen. She testified earlier this week that Weinstein exploited her youthful interest in an acting career to subject her to unwanted sexual ad-

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vances, starting days after they met in 2002, while she was a 16-year-old on a modeling trip to New York.

She told jurors that four years later, when she was 19, Weinstein lured her to a hotel room by saying he had a script for her to see, then pinned her down on a bed and performed oral sex on her as she implored him not to.

Sokola never got a full-fledged role in a Weinstein movie, though he did arrange for her to be an extra in 2007's "The Nanny Diaries." Her scene ultimately got cut, she said.

His company also wrote her a recommendation letter to an acting school. She said she hadn't been able to afford it.

Sokola sued Weinstein several years ago over the alleged 2002 incident, and she ultimately received about \$3.5 million in compensation. Her suits never mentioned the alleged 2006 assault. She testified Thursday that she'd had a tougher time coming to terms with it than she did with the alleged 2002 sex abuse.

Cibella underscored the omission, and he suggested that she sued to gain financial independence and be able to leave her now-estranged husband. On the contrary, she said, she was working two jobs and out-earning him.

Cibella also pointed to differences in some details of Sokola's testimony this week and what she told a grand jury last year, including the month of the alleged 2002 sexual abuse. The attorney further noted that Sokola is pursuing various legal pathways to stay in the U.S. long-term, and her involvement in the criminal case could help with one of them.

Sokola is expected to continue testifying next week.

The Associated Press generally does not name people who allege they have been sexually assaulted, but Sokola has given her permission to be identified.

## Google will pay Texas \$1.4B to settle claims the company collected users' data without permission

By HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

Google will pay \$1.4 billion to Texas to settle claims the company collected users' data without permission, the state's attorney general announced Friday.

Attorney General Ken Paxton described the settlement as sending a message to tech companies that he will not allow them to make money off of "selling away our rights and freedoms."

"In Texas, Big Tech is not above the law," Paxton said in a statement. "For years, Google secretly tracked people's movements, private searches, and even their voiceprints and facial geometry through their products and services. I fought back and won."

The agreement settles several claims Texas made against the search giant in 2022 related to geolocation, incognito searches and biometric data. The state argued Google was "unlawfully tracking and collecting users' private data."

Paxton claimed, for example, that Google collected millions of biometric identifiers, including voiceprints and records of face geometry, through such products and services as Google Photos and Google Assistant.

Google spokesperson José Castañeda said the agreement settles an array of "old claims," some of which relate to product policies the company has already changed.

"We are pleased to put them behind us, and we will continue to build robust privacy controls into our services," he said in a statement.

The company also clarified that the settlement does not require any new product changes.

Paxton said the \$1.4 billion is the largest amount won by any state in a settlement with Google over this type of data-privacy violations.

Texas previously reached two other key settlements with Google within the last two years, including one in December 2023 in which the company agreed to pay \$700 million and make several other concessions to settle allegations that it had been stifling competition against its Android app store.

Meta has also agreed to a \$1.4 billion settlement with Texas in a privacy lawsuit over allegations that the tech giant used users' biometric data without their permission.

## Turkish Tufts University student released from Louisiana immigration detention center

By KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

A Tufts University student from Turkey was released from a Louisiana immigration detention center Friday, more than six weeks after she was arrested walking on the street of a Boston suburb.

U.S. District Judge William Sessions in Burlington ordered the release of Rumeysa Ozturk pending a final decision on her claim that she's been illegally detained following an op-ed she co-wrote last year that criticized the school's response to Israel's war in Gaza. A photo provided by her legal team showed her outside, smiling with her attorneys in Louisiana, where the immigration proceedings will continue.

"Despite an 11th hour attempt to delay her freedom by trying to force her to wear an ankle monitor, Rumeysa is now free and is excited to return home, free of monitoring or restriction," attorney Mahsa Khanbabai said.

Even before her release, Ozturk's supporters cheered the decision, punctuating an earlier news conference held by her attorneys with chants of "She is free!"

"What we heard from the court today is what we have been saying for weeks, and what courts have continued to repeat up and down through the litigation of this case thus far," Jessie Rossman, legal director at the ACLU of Massachusetts, told reporters. "There's absolutely no evidence that justifies detaining Ozturk for a single day, let alone the six and a half weeks that she has been detained, because she wrote a single op-ed in her student newspaper exercising her First Amendment right to express an opinion."

Appearing by video for her bail hearing, Ozturk, 30, detailed her growing asthma attacks in detention and her desire to finish her doctorate degree focusing on children and social media while appearing remotely at her bail hearing from the Louisiana center. She and her lawyer hugged after hearing the judge's decision.

"Completing my Ph.D. is very important to me," she testified. She had been on track to finish her work in December when she was arrested.

Ozturk was to be released on her own recognizance with no travel restrictions, Sessions said. He said she is not a danger to the community or a flight risk, but that he might amend his release order to consider any specific conditions by ICE in consultation with her lawyers.

Sessions said the government had offered no evidence about why Ozturk was arrested other than the op-ed.

"This is a woman who is just totally committed to her academic career," Sessions said. "This is someone who probably doesn't have a whole lot of other things going on other than reaching out to other members of the community in a caring and compassionate way."

A message seeking comment was emailed Friday afternoon to the U.S. Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review.

Sessions told Acting U.S. Attorney Michael Drescher he wants to know immediately when she is released.

Sessions said Ozturk raised serious concerns about her First Amendment and due process rights, as well as her health. She testified Friday that she has had 12 asthma attacks since her detention, starting with a severe one at the Atlanta airport.

"I was afraid, and I was crying," she said.

Immigration officials surrounded Ozturk in Massachusetts on March 25 and drove her to New Hampshire and Vermont before putting her on a plane to a detention center in Basile, Louisiana. Her student visa had been revoked several days earlier, but she was not informed of that, her lawyers said.

Ozturk's lawyers first filed a petition on her behalf in Massachusetts, but they did not know where she was and were unable to speak to her until more than 24 hours after she was detained. A Massachusetts judge later transferred the case to Vermont.

Ozturk was one of four students who wrote an op-ed in the campus newspaper, The Tufts Daily, last year criticizing the university's response to student activists demanding that Tufts "acknowledge the Palestinian genocide," disclose its investments and divest from companies with ties to Israel.

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Ozturk said Friday that if she is released, Tufts would offer her housing and her lawyers and friends would drive her to future court hearings. She is expected to return to New England on Saturday at the earliest.

"I will follow all the rules," she said.

A State Department memo said Ozturk's visa was revoked following an assessment that her actions "may undermine U.S. foreign policy by creating a hostile environment for Jewish students and indicating support for a designated terrorist organization" including co-authoring an op-ed that found common cause with an organization that was later temporarily banned from campus."

A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said in March, without providing evidence, that investigations found that Ozturk engaged in activities in support of Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist group.

"When did speaking up against oppression become a crime? When did speaking up against genocide become something to be imprisoned for?" Khanbabai asked. "I am thankful that the courts have been ruling in favor of detained political prisoners, like Rumeysa."

## **Judge rejects claim that Sean 'Diddy' Combs was treated differently because of his race**

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sean "Diddy" Combs was not treated differently because of his race by prosecutors who brought racketeering and sex trafficking charges against him, a judge ruled Friday as he rejected a request to dismiss some charges three days before opening statements in the hip-hop mogul's trial.

Judge Arun Subramanian said Combs had shown no evidence of discriminatory effect or intent based on his race, when his lawyers made their arguments in Manhattan federal court in February. In a separate written opinion, the judge also refused to suppress evidence in the case.

The lawyers had written that the prosecution was unprecedented because, "most disturbingly, no white person has ever been the target of a remotely similar prosecution."

The judge agreed with arguments by prosecutors that the extent of criminal conduct by Combs from 2004 to 2024 — when he was alleged to have overseen a racketeering enterprise that enabled him to sexually abuse women — was enough to separate the case against him from other prosecutions.

"It's the severity of what Combs allegedly did — not his race — that mattered," the judge wrote.

Subramanian noted that lawyers for Combs had alleged that the government sought to humiliate him through its news releases, the way search warrants were executed at his home, the refusal to let him surrender and alleged leaks to the media.

"However, Combs doesn't point to any evidence that racial bias played a role in the Government's actions, that the prosecution team was responsible for any leaks to the press, or that the way Combs's homes were searched bespeaks a discriminatory purpose," the judge wrote.

He added that the government's press releases and refusal to allow Combs to self-surrender were in keeping with how it has handled cases with defendants of other races.

The ruling came as opening statements were scheduled to occur Monday immediately after the final stage of jury selection, which defense lawyers say will take only a matter of minutes.

Prosecutors allege that Combs, 55, used his fame and power at the top of the hip-hop world to sexually abuse women from 2004 to 2024. He pleaded not guilty after his September arrest and has been held without bail at a Brooklyn federal lockup.

At a hearing Friday, Subramanian cancelled plans to finish picking the jury for the trial, saying he was worried that some jurors might get "cold feet" and back out of the case by Monday if they had the weekend to think about it.

One juror who sent an email to the court's jury department on Thursday night expressing concern about her "well-being" was dismissed from the panel of 45 jurors, from which 12 jurors and six alternates will be chosen on Monday.

Combs was in the Manhattan courtroom on Friday, but jurors weren't required to be there. The trial is projected to last two months.

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Would-be jurors were asked questions earlier in the week to help the judge and lawyers determine if they could be fair and impartial. And they were also questioned to ensure they could decide the case on the facts — even after seeing explicit videos of sexual activity that some might find disturbing.

If Combs is convicted on all charges — which include racketeering, kidnapping, arson, bribery and sex trafficking — he would face a mandatory 15 years in prison and could remain behind bars for life.

An indictment includes descriptions of “Freak Offs,” drugged-up orgies in which women were forced to have sex with male sex workers while Combs filmed them.

The charges against him also portray Combs as abusive to his victims, sometimes choking, hitting, kicking and dragging them, often by the hair. Once, the indictment alleges, he even dangled someone from a balcony.

His lawyers say prosecutors are trying to criminalize sexual activity between consenting adults. They concede that Combs had abused various substances but say he has since undergone treatment.

A centerpiece of the evidence against him are recordings of Combs beating a longtime girlfriend in a Los Angeles hotel hallway in 2016.

After a video of the encounter 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.”

Numerous prospective jurors told the judge they’d seen the video and some were deemed too affected by it to be impartial.

## **Pentagon directs military to pull library books that address diversity, anti-racism, gender issues**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon has ordered all military leaders and commands to pull and review all of their library books that address diversity, anti-racism or gender issues by May 21, according to a memo issued to the force on Friday.

It is the broadest and most detailed directive so far on Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s campaign to rid the military of diversity and equity programs, policies and instructional materials. And it follows similar efforts to remove hundreds of books from the libraries at the military academies.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the memo, which was signed Friday by Timothy Dill, who is performing the duties of the defense undersecretary for personnel.

In addition, Hegseth put out a memo Friday ordering the military academies to make sure they are admitting students based solely on merit — with “no consideration of race, ethnicity, or sex.” He underlined the word “no,” but added that the schools can consider “unique athletic talent,” prior military service or those from a military prep school.

He said the secretaries of the services must certify within 30 days that the admissions offices are adhering to those standards. And he said the academies must rank student candidates by their “merit-based scores” within each nomination category.

Those categories include students whose parents are service members or were troops killed or injured in duty, as well as those nominated by the vice president, senators or members of Congress.

The memo on the latest library purge says that educational materials at the libraries “promoting divisive concepts and gender ideology are incompatible with the Department’s core mission.” It says department leaders must “promptly identify” books that are not compatible with that mission and sequester them by May 21.

By then, the memo says, additional guidance will be provided on how to cull that initial list and determine what should be removed and “determine an appropriate ultimate disposition” for those materials. It does not say what will happen to the books or whether they will be stored away or destroyed.

According to the memo, a temporary Academic Libraries Committee set up by the department will provide information on the review and decisions about the books. That panel provided a list of search terms

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to use in the initial identification of the books to be pulled and reviewed.

The search terms include: affirmative action, anti-racism, critical race theory, discrimination, diversity, gender dysphoria, gender identity and transition, transgender, transsexual and white privilege.

Early last month the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, removed nearly 400 books from its library after being told by Hegseth's office to get rid of those that promote DEI.

About two weeks later, the Army and Air Force libraries were told to go through their stacks to find books related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Naval Academy's purge led to the removal of books on the Holocaust, histories of feminism, civil rights and racism, and Maya Angelou's famous autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," based on the list of 381 books that have been taken out of its library.

In addition to Angelou's award-winning book, the list includes "Memorializing the Holocaust," which deals with Holocaust memorials; "Half American," about African Americans in World War II; "A Respectable Woman," about the public roles of African American women in 19th century New York; and "Pursuing Trayvon Martin," about the 2012 shooting of the Black 17-year-old boy in Florida that raised questions about racial profiling.

## Judge sets dates for Menendez brothers' resentencing hearings

By JAIMIE DING Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Resentencing hearings for Erik and Lyle Menendez will move forward next week after a series of delays.

The brothers were sentenced in 1996 to life in prison without the possibility of parole for fatally shooting their entertainment executive father, Jose Menendez, and mother, Kitty Menendez, in their Beverly Hills home. The brothers were 18 and 21 at the time of the killings. Defense attorneys argued the brothers acted out of self-defense after years of sexual abuse by their father, while prosecutors said the brothers killed their parents for a multimillion-dollar inheritance.

LA County Superior Court Judge Michael Jesic on Friday set the hearings for next Tuesday and Wednesday.

The hearing was supposed to be about the defense attorneys' request to remove the Los Angeles district attorney's office from the case, but defense attorneys withdrew their motion. Prosecutors, meanwhile, tried again to withdraw the resentencing petition set under the prior district attorney. Jesic rejected their efforts.

Here's what to know:

Resentencing hearings on May 13 and 14

Next week, the judge will hear arguments on the crucial question: Have Erik and Lyle Menendez been rehabilitated during 30 years in prison?

The brothers' attorneys say yes.

Since their conviction, the brothers have gotten an education, participated in self-help classes and started various support groups for their fellow inmates.

The extended Menendez family, with the exception of an uncle who died last month, has said they fully forgive the brothers for what they did and want them to be freed. Their cousins have said the brothers worked hard over the decades to better themselves and give back to the prison community.

Defense attorney Mark Geragos said he plans to call seven family members to testify at the hearings.

If the brothers are resentenced, they could become immediately eligible for parole. The state parole board would ultimately rule on whether to release them from prison.

LA prosecutors oppose the brothers' resentencing

Former LA County District Attorney George Gascón had opened the door to possible freedom for the brothers in October by requesting their sentences be reduced to 50 years with the possibility of parole. His office said the case would've been handled differently today due to modern understandings of sexual abuse and trauma, and the brothers' rehabilitation during their 30 years in prison.

But current district attorney Nathan Hochman reversed course and opposed the brothers' resentencing.

He's argued the brothers have not taken full responsibility for their crimes because they have not admit-

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ted to lies told during their trials.

"They're not ready" to be resentenced, Hochman told the judge Friday.

The state parole board made available last month the preliminary results of risk assessments for Erik and Lyle Menendez conducted by a forensic psychologist. While the reports have not been made public, Hochman cited them as the reason why he could not support resentencing.

According to Hochman, the reports said the brothers had recently broken prison rules by smuggling cellphones inside, which he argued demonstrated an inability to regulate their own behavior. It came to the conclusion that they were "moderately more likely" to engage in violence in the community, Hochman said.

But Jesic disagreed.

"I don't see anything new," he said. "He's (Erik Menendez) had cellphones throughout the time he's been in custody."

Geragos had filed a motion to remove the case from Hochman's office, arguing that Hochman has a bias against the brothers. But he withdrew that motion Friday. Hochman has said he has done nothing wrong and simply disagrees with the defense attorneys and their arguments as to why the brothers should be resentenced.

Clemency from governor still on the table

The Menendez brothers are still waiting for the full results of a state parole board risk assessment ordered by Gov. Gavin Newsom's office. The final hearing, scheduled for June 13, will influence whether Newsom grants the brothers clemency.

While parts of the risk assessment were disclosed in court Friday that could be unfavorable to the brothers' case, Geragos emphasized they were only one component of the parole board's evaluation, not meant to be made public and could still change.

## **Former Supreme Court Justice David Souter, a Republican who became a liberal favorite, dies at 85**

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Retired Supreme Court Justice David H. Souter, the ascetic bachelor and New Hampshire Republican who became a favorite of liberals during his nearly 20 years on the bench, has died. He was 85.

Souter died Thursday at his home in New Hampshire, the court said in a statement Friday.

He retired from the court in June 2009, giving President Barack Obama his first Supreme Court vacancy to fill. Obama, a Democrat, chose Sonia Sotomayor, the court's first Latina justice.

Souter was appointed by Republican President George H.W. Bush in 1990. He was a reliably liberal vote on abortion, church-state relations, freedom of expression and the accessibility of federal courts. Souter also dissented from the decision in *Bush v. Gore* in 2000, which effectively handed the presidency to George W. Bush, the son of the man who put him on the high court.

While liberals were delighted with a justice they initially feared, conservatives turned Souter's appointment into a rallying cry, "No more Souters," that fueled their successful drive to move the court more firmly to the right.

In retirement, Souter warned that ignorance of how government works could undermine American democracy.

"What I worry about is that when problems are not addressed, people will not know who is responsible. And when the problems get bad enough ... some one person will come forward and say, 'Give me total power and I will solve this problem.' That is how the Roman republic fell," Souter said in a 2012 interview.

His lifestyle was spare — yogurt and an apple, consumed at his desk, was a typical lunch — and he shunned Washington's social scene. He couldn't wait to leave town in early summer. As soon as the court finished its work in late June, he climbed into his Volkswagen Jetta for the drive back to the worn farmhouse where his family moved when he was 11.

Yet for all his reserve, Souter was beloved by colleagues, court employees and friends. He was a noted

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storyteller and generous with his time.

"Justice David Souter served our Court with great distinction for nearly twenty years. He brought uncommon wisdom and kindness to a lifetime of public service," Chief Justice John Roberts said. Souter continued hearing cases on the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for more than a decade after he left the high court, Roberts said.

Sotomayor recalled the kindness of the man she succeeded on the Supreme Court. "When I arrived at the court, no one was more welcoming to me than David," she said in a statement. "After his retirement, he periodically sent me notes, which I will forever treasure for their insightfulness and beautiful turns of phrase."

When Bush plucked Souter from obscurity in 1990, liberal interest groups feared he would be the vote that would undo the court's Roe v. Wade ruling in favor of abortion rights. He was called a stealth nominee by some.

Bush White House aide John Sununu, the former conservative governor of New Hampshire, hailed his choice as a "home run." And early in his time in Washington, Souter was called a moderate conservative.

But he soon joined in a ruling reaffirming women's right to an abortion, a decision from 1992 that is his most noted work on the court. Thirty years later, a more conservative court overturned that decision and the constitutional right to abortion.

Souter asked precise questions during argument sessions, sometimes with a fierceness that belied his low-key manner. "He had an unerring knack of finding the weakest link in your argument," veteran Supreme Court advocate Carter Phillips said.

Souter was history's 105th Supreme Court justice and only its sixth bachelor.

Although hailed by The Washington Post as the capital city's most prominently eligible single man when he moved from New Hampshire, Souter resolutely resisted the social whirl.

"I wasn't that kind of person before I moved to Washington, and, at this age, I don't see any reason to change," the intensely private Souter told an acquaintance.

He worked seven days a week through most of the court's term from October to early summer, staying at his Supreme Court office for more than 12 hours a day. He said he underwent an annual "intellectual lobotomy" at the start of each term because he had so little time to read for pleasure.

Souter rented an apartment a few miles from the court and jogged alone at Fort McNair, an Army installation near his apartment building. He was once mugged while on a run, an apparently random act.

Souter returned to his well-worn house in Weare, New Hampshire, for a few months each summer and was given the use of an office in a Concord courthouse.

An avid hiker, Souter spent much of his time away from work trekking through the New Hampshire mountains.

When Souter in 2005 joined an unpopular 5-4 decision on eminent domain allowing a Connecticut city to take several waterfront homes for a private development, a group angered by the decision tried to use it to evict him from his Weare farmhouse to make way for the "Lost Liberty Hotel." But Weare residents rejected the proposal.

Shortly after his retirement, Souter bought a 3,500-square-foot Cape Cod-style home in Hopkinton, New Hampshire. It was reported, though perhaps it was just part of Souter's lore, that he worried that the foundation of the house in Weare would give way under the weight of all the books he owned.

Souter had been a federal appellate judge for just over four months when picked for the high court. He had heard but one case as a federal judge, and as a state judge previously had little chance to rule on constitutional issues.

Though liberals were initially wary of his appointment, it was political conservatives who felt betrayed when, in two 1992 rulings, Souter helped forge a moderate-liberal coalition that reaffirmed the constitutional right of abortion and the court's longtime ban on officially sponsored prayers in public schools.

Yet as Souter biographer Tinsley Yarbrough noted, the justice did not take "extreme positions."

Indeed, in June 2008, Souter sided with Exxon Mobil Corp. and broke with his liberal colleagues in slash-

ing the punitive damages the company owed Alaskan victims of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Before serving as a New Hampshire judge, Souter was his state's attorney general for two years. He worked on the attorney general's staff for the previous eight years, after a brief stint in private practice.

Souter earned his undergraduate and law degrees from Harvard University, and a master's degree from Oxford as a Rhodes scholar.

## **Pope Leo XIV celebrates first Mass as details emerge of how votes coalesced in secret conclave**

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV said Friday that his election was both a cross to bear and a blessing as he celebrated his first Mass and details began to emerge of how votes swiftly coalesced to make him history's first American pope.

Freed from their conclave, cardinals began describing the hours leading up to the final ballot Thursday afternoon that brought Leo past the two-thirds majority needed. Many marveled that the Chicago-born Augustinian missionary Robert Prevost reached the threshold so quickly, given the vast diversity of voters and the traditional taboo against a U.S. pope because of the secular power the country wields.

"It is a miracle of the Holy Spirit," said Cardinal Fernando Natalio Chomalí Garib, archbishop of Santiago, Chile. He noted that 133 men who barely knew one another from 70 countries came to an agreement in just over 24 hours. A miracle, he said, "and also an example for all our countries where nobody comes to an agreement."

Leo presided over his first Mass before those same cardinal electors Friday morning, speaking off-the-cuff in English in the Sistine Chapel. He acknowledged the great responsibility they had placed on him before delivering a brief but dense homily in Italian on the need to joyfully spread Christianity in a world that often mocks it.

"You have called me to carry that cross and to be blessed with that mission, and I know I can rely on each and every one of you to walk with me as we continue as a church, as a community, as friends of Jesus, as believers, to announce the good news, to announce the Gospel," he said.

Leo on Saturday meets with cardinals formally. On Sunday, he is set to deliver his first noon blessing from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica while his formal installation Mass was set for May 18.

The Americans share some details

There seemed to be mixed messages coming from a briefing with American cardinals who saw one of their own become the 267th pope. Before they arrived, the auditorium at the U.S. seminary up the hill from the Vatican blasted "Born in the U.S.A." and "American Pie."

But more conservative cardinals seemed to distance Leo from both his citizenship and the political polemics of the Trump administration back home. They pointed to the decades Prevost spent as a missionary in Peru and said, regardless, he has a new identity now.

"Where he comes from is sort of now a thing of the past," said New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who had been President Donald Trump's pick for pope. "Robert Francis Prevost is no longer around. It's now Pope Leo."

But Cardinal Joseph Tobin, an old friend of Prevost's who repeatedly called him "Bob," said he expected the pope would be true to himself. He said that was the advice conveyed to all the electors by the retired preacher of the papal household, Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, who delivered a meditation in the Sistine Chapel before they took their first vote.

Tobin revealed that he had warned Prevost of his real chances of winning in the days before the voting began. But Tobin recounted the moment when saw it had sunk in for Prevost himself: Tobin had just cast his ballot before Michelangelo's "The Last Judgment" and was returning to his seat when he saw Prevost.

"And he had his head in his hands," Tobin said. "And I was praying for him because I couldn't imagine what happens to a human being when you're facing something like that."

"And then when he accepted it, it was like he was made for it," Tobin said.

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A papal Mass

The cardinals urged the public and faithful to give Leo time to get used to his new role before trying to understand what kind of pope he will be.

But some clues were already apparent. Two women delivered the readings of Scripture at the start of Leo's Mass, perhaps an indication of an intention to continue Francis' focus on expanding women's role in the church. As a cardinal, Leo put into practice one of Francis' most revolutionary reforms by having three women serve on the Vatican board that vets bishop nominations.

Speaking in near-perfect Italian, Leo lamented that the Christian faith in many parts of the world is "considered absurd," mocked or opposed in the face of temptations such as money, success and power. He complained that in many places Jesus is misunderstood, "reduced to a kind of charismatic leader or superman."

"This is true not only among nonbelievers but also among many baptized Christians, who thus end up living, at this level, in a state of practical atheism," he said. "A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family and so many other wounds that afflict our society."

The cardinals applauded as the Mass concluded. Leo was seen wearing simple black shoes — eschewing, as Francis did, the red loafers of the papacy preferred by some traditionalist popes.

In another signal he might break with tradition, Leo spent his first night as pontiff in his residence in the Sant'Uffizio Palace, and not the Apostolic Palace where popes traditionally reside, Vatican News reported. Francis chose to live in an apartment in the Santa Maria guesthouse.

How did it happen? English helped

Cardinals revealed that they got to know Prevost during the preconclave discussions, not because he made some showstopping speech like Pope Francis did in 2013. Then, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio spoke about the need for the church to go to the "existential peripheries" to find wounded souls and was elected a short time later.

"It wasn't that he got up and made some overwhelmingly convincing speech that just wowed the body," said Cardinal Wilton Gregory, the retired archbishop of Washington, D.C.

This time, Prevost made an impression with his manner, in small groups. Although Italian had always been the primary language of past conclaves, this time English seemed to prevail, participants said.

German Cardinal Reinhard Marx, a close adviser of Francis, said he took note of the man who would become pope — an American with deep experience in Latin America, strong linguistic and cultural fluency, and a history of leadership as superior of the Augustinians.

"That convinced me to say this could be a possibility," Marx told reporters Friday. "I can tell you, I'm very happy."

Marx also recalled meeting the future pope last year and being struck by his temperament.

"We had a very good conversation," he said. "I realized he's a man who listens, takes arguments seriously, weighs them. You can't just place him into one camp — he really tries to build bridges. I liked that very much."

## **'Don't get in my way,' the new acting head of federal disaster agency warns in call with staff**

By GABRIELA AOUN ANGUEIRA and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The new head of the federal agency tasked with responding to disasters across the country warned staff in a meeting Friday not to try to impede upcoming changes, saying that "I will run right over you" while also suggesting policy changes that would push more responsibilities to the states.

David Richardson, a former Marine Corps officer who served in Afghanistan, Iraq and Africa, was named acting administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Thursday just after Cameron Hamilton, who'd been leading the agency, also in an acting role, was fired.

Richardson has been the Department of Homeland Security's assistant secretary for countering weapons

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of mass destruction. He does not appear to have any experience in managing natural disasters, but in an early morning call with the entire agency staff he said that the agency would stick to its mission and said he'd be the one interpreting any guidance from President Donald Trump.

Prefacing his comments with the words "Now this is the tough part," Richardson said during the call with staffers across the thousands-strong agency that he understands people can be nervous during times of change. But he had a warning for those who might not like the changes — a group he estimated to be about 20% of any organization.

"Don't get in my way if you're those 20% of the people," he said. "I know all the tricks."

"Obfuscation. Delay. Undermining. If you're one of those 20% of the people and you think those tactics and techniques are going to help you, they will not because I will run right over you," he said. "I will achieve the president's intent. I am as bent on achieving the president's intent as I was on making sure that I did my duty when I took my Marines to Iraq."

He previewed what might be ahead

Richardson also reminded staff that FEMA is part of the Department of Homeland Security: "Don't forget that."

In a preview of what might be coming in terms of changes in policy, Richardson also said there would be more "cost-sharing with the states."

"We're going to find out how to do things better, and we're going find out how to push things down to the states that should be done at the state level. Also going to find out how we can do more cost sharing with the states," he said.

This issue — how much states, as opposed to the federal government, should pay for disaster recovery — has been a growing concern, especially at a time of an increasing number of natural disasters that often require Congress to repeatedly replenish the federal fund that pays for recovery.

But states often argue that they are already paying for most disaster recoveries on their own and are only going to the federal government for those events truly outside of their ability to respond.

Richardson did not take questions from the staff members, saying he wanted them to first read memos he was going to be sending out later Friday. He planned a town hall next week, when he will take questions from the staff.

A 'mission analysis' is planned for FEMA

In the memos obtained by The Associated Press, Richardson told the agency it would be conducting a "Mission Analysis" of the organization to identify "redundancies and inefficiencies" while also clarifying the organization's "core" mission and "detering mission creep."

He also listed tasks to be accomplished in the coming weeks — including providing internal assessments of the agency's preparedness for 2025; a list of all known gaps "in preparedness or core capabilities"; a list of lessons learned from past disasters; and an overview of "disaster aid before FEMA's existence and the role of states and the federal government coordinating disaster management."

He said he was honored to be in the role, leading an organization he described as an "unwieldy beast."

Richardson arrives at FEMA at a time of immense turmoil and as it prepares for hurricane season, an extremely busy time for the agency.

Trump, a Republican, has suggested abolishing FEMA and providing money directly to states to manage. He has established a review council tasked with "reforming and streamlining the nation's emergency management and disaster response system." The 13-member council is chaired by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

Homeland Security has not said specifically why Hamilton was removed from his position. But his dismissal came one day after he appeared before a House subcommittee where he was asked about plans to eliminate FEMA and said he did not believe the agency should be eliminated.

"Having said that," Hamilton continued, "I'm not in a position to make decisions and impact outcomes on whether or not a determination such as consequential as that should be made. That is a conversation that should be had between the president of the United States and this governing body."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt was asked Friday about Hamilton's firing and suggested

it was related to his congressional testimony, but didn't specify exactly what it was that he said that led to his dismissal.

"This individual testified saying something that was contrary to what the president believes and the goals of this administration in regards to FEMA policy. So of course we want to make sure that people in every position are advancing the administration's goals," she said.

## **Chimpanzees drum with regular rhythm when they beat on tree trunks, a form of ancient communication**

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

Chimpanzees drum with regular rhythm when they beat on tree trunks, a new study shows.

Chimpanzees and humans last shared a common ancestor around 6 million years ago. Scientists suspect this ancient ancestor must have been a drummer — using beats to communicate.

"Our ability to produce rhythm — and to use it in our social worlds — that seems to be something that predates humans being human," said study co-author Cat Hobaiter, a University of St Andrews primatologist.

Previous research has shown that chimps have their own signature drumming style. A new analysis of 371 bouts of chimpanzee drumming demonstrates that the chimps "clearly play their instruments -- the tree trunks -- with regular rhythms," said University of Amsterdam music cognition researcher Henkjan Honing, who was not involved in the study.

When bounding through the jungle, chimps will often grab hold of the tall buttress roots of rainforest trees. Sometimes they pound them several times to create low-frequency sounds that can be heard for a kilometer or more through the forest.

Scientists believe that the drumming is a form of long-distance communication, perhaps to alert other chimps where one chimp is waiting or the direction it is traveling.

"It's a way of socially checking in," said Hobaiter, adding that each chimp has its own "individual signature — a pattern of beats that allows you to recognize who's producing that drumming."

The new work showed that chimps from different regions of Africa drum with distinctly different rhythms, with western chimps preferring a more even beat while eastern chimps used varied short and long intervals between beats. The research was published Friday in the journal *Current Biology*.

It's well-known that chimps use tools such as rocks to crack open nuts and sticks to "fish" termites from their mounds. Tree roots can also be tools, the researchers say.

Chimps are selective about which roots they pound, said co-author Catherine Crockford, a primatologist at the CNRS Institute for Cognitive Sciences in France. Certain shapes and wood varieties create sounds that travel well through dense jungle.

The drummings are likely "a very important way to make contact," she said.

At closer distances, chimps use a repertoire of vocal calls more complex than scientists once thought, according to a separate study in *Science Advances*.

Researchers analyzed how chimps combined sounds — such as a call associated with resting and one used to invite play — to create new meanings. In this example, the combined call was an invitation to nest together nearby at night.

"We have probably underestimated the flexibility and complexity of animal communication," said Crockford, who was part of both research teams.

## **You called me. No — you called ME. Before US-China meeting, nations each say the other wanted talks**

By DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Who called first?

It's the question that has put Beijing and Washington in a verbal sparring match even as the two countries are heading into a weekend meeting in Switzerland to discuss lowering sky-high tariffs that they

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slapped on each other in heated moments that have shaken financial markets and stirred worries about the global economy.

"The meeting is being held at the request of the U.S. side," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said Wednesday.

President Donald Trump disagreed. "They said we initiated it? Well, I think they ought to go back and study their files," Trump said Wednesday when swearing in David Perdue as the new U.S. ambassador to China. That followed weeks of each side suggesting the other side had reached out first, including Trump implying Chinese President Xi Jinping had called him, only to be refuted by Beijing.

When it comes to the world's two largest economies readying themselves for what is expected to be tough trade talks, the public back-and-forth is no trivial matter.

"The obsession with who reached out first is a proxy fight over leverage," said Craig Singleton, senior director of the China program at the Washington-based think tank Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "For Washington, signaling that Beijing initiated the meeting reinforces the narrative that the tariffs are working. For Beijing, denying outreach preserves the illusion of parity and avoids domestic perception of weakness."

Jockeying for dominance

Daniel Russel, a former U.S. diplomat who oversaw East Asian and Pacific affairs, called the exchange "part diplomatic stalemate and part dominance display worthy of a nature documentary."

In his decades-long career as a diplomat, Russel said he is unaware of a single instance where a Chinese leader initiated a call with a U.S. president. "It may be pride, it may be protocol, but for Beijing, being the demandeur is to show weakness — and that's something the Chinese system is hardwired to avoid," said Russel, now vice president for international security and diplomacy at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

The Trump's administration is less accommodating. "Their position is: 'If Xi wants the tariffs lifted, he knows how to reach us,'" Russel said.

Not long after Trump raised tariffs on Chinese goods to 145% and Beijing retaliated with 125% tariffs on U.S. goods, Trump suggested that China, like many other countries, was in talks with his administration. On April 22, he apparently directed White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt to say "we're doing very well" regarding a potential trade deal with China.

"I think it's a process that's going to go pretty quickly with China," Trump said on the same day. "I think we're going to live together very happily and ideally work together."

Back and forth ... and back again

Yet China quickly denied any talk towards a deal. When asked about such negotiations, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun responded: "All is fake news." The next day, Guo asked the U.S. to "stop creating confusion" on tariff talks.

Then came a TIME magazine interview when Trump claimed Xi had called him. Details? None provided. When? Trump didn't say. "He's called. And I don't think that's a sign of weakness on his behalf," Trump said in the interview published on April 25. Beijing dismissed it, saying there was no recent leadership phone call.

Yet soon the word started to spread on China's social media that the Trump administration was contacting Beijing, and it was confirmed a few days later by the Chinese Commerce Ministry.

The U.S. had "repeatedly" and "proactively" conveyed messages to China recently to express the hope to engage in negotiations with China, the ministry said on May 2. "In this regard, the Chinese side is assessing it," the ministry said, in an apparent off-ramp move climbdown that prepared the public opinion for the announcement a few days later that Vice Premier He Lifeng would meet U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Switzerland this weekend.

Sun Yun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, said the reality is more complicated when the two governments have been in regular contact and each side may have its own understanding what constitutes "reaching out" for tariff talks. "Technically," Sun said, "both sides are correct."

By Thursday, Trump appeared ready to move on. "We can all play games — who made the first call, who didn't make them. Doesn't matter," Trump said.

Referring to the upcoming tariff talk this weekend in Switzerland, Trump said: "It only matters what happens in that room."

## Most Americans disapprove of Trump's treatment of colleges, a new AP-NORC poll finds

By JOCELYN GECKER and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A majority of U.S. adults disapprove of President Donald Trump's handling of issues related to colleges and universities, according to a new poll, as his administration ramps up threats to cut federal funding unless schools comply with his political agenda.

More than half of Americans, 56%, disapprove of the Republican president's approach on higher education, the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds, while about 4 in 10 approve, in line with his overall job approval.

Since taking office in January, Trump has tried to force change at universities he says have become hotbeds of liberalism and antisemitism. The spotlight most recently has been on Harvard University, where Trump's administration has frozen more than \$2.2 billion in federal grants, threatened to strip the school's tax-exempt status, and demanded broad policy changes.

The Trump administration also has cut off money to other elite colleges, including Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell University, over issues including the handling of pro-Palestinian activism and transgender athletes' participation in women's sports. Harvard has framed the government's demands as a threat to the autonomy that the Supreme Court has long granted American universities.

The poll shows a disconnect between the Trump administration's targeting of universities and an American public that sees them as key to scientific research, new ideas and innovative technology. About 6 in 10 U.S. adults say colleges and universities make more of a positive contribution to medical and scientific research than a negative one, and a similar share favors maintaining federal funding for scientific research.

"Let's talk about Harvard for a minute," said Freddy Ortega, 66, a Democrat and a retired military veteran in Columbus, Georgia. "The way he took away all that money in funding, impacting things that Harvard has been working on for the betterment of the world."

"One man should not have that much power," Ortega continued. "This is something for Congress to deal with."

Ortega, who's Hispanic, also said he's concerned about Trump's attempts to dismantle diversity, equity and inclusion programs across U.S. society. "I came up in the military. I know the good that those programs do," he said. "It changes the direction that people's lives are going to take."

Republicans are divided on cuts to colleges' federal funding

Trump's stance on higher education resonates more strongly with Republicans, most of whom see college campuses as places where conservatives are silenced and liberal ideas run unchecked. About 8 in 10 Republicans approve of how Trump is handling issues related to colleges and universities — which, notably, is higher than the share of Republicans, 70%, who approve of his handling of the economy — and about 6 in 10 say they're "extremely" or "very" concerned about liberal bias on campus.

Republicans are more divided, however, on withholding federal funding from schools unless they bow to Trump's demands. About half are in favor, while about one-quarter are opposed and a similar share are neutral.

"I'm all for it," said Republican voter Hengameh Abraham, 38, a mother of two in Roseville, California. She supports cutting federal funds and opposes DEI programs, saying she emigrated to America from Iran as a teenager and worked hard to get ahead in school without the help of affirmative action programs.

"Your racial identity, nationality and background should not be a factor in getting accepted to college or getting a job," said Abraham. She supports Trump's focus on campus antisemitism. When pro-Palestinian protests swept U.S. colleges last year, some of the demonstrators' messaging was anti-U.S., she said.

"I do not think if you have any kind of anti-American agenda or slogan that you should be allowed on a university campus in the United States," she said.

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In Harvard's case, Trump has threatened to remove its tax-exempt status, and his administration has implemented funding cuts. Those measures are divisive among the general public: Nearly half oppose withholding federal funding as a punitive action, while about one-quarter favor it. About one-quarter are neutral.

Charles Jolivet, 43, a college career counselor who lives in New Orleans, sees Trump's education policies as an attack on free speech and people of color.

"Not only is the president going after anyone he feels is an opponent and anyone who is not compliant, but he's attacking some of the most important elements of our society," said Jolivet, a Democrat. "It's rampant bullying from the president of the United States, who is supposed to be crossing the aisle."

The cost of tuition far outweighs other concerns

A top concern of most Americans is the cost of a college degree. About 6 in 10 U.S. adults are "extremely" or "very" concerned about the cost of tuition. That concern is shared by majorities of Democrats and Republicans and far outweighs concerns about antisemitism and liberal bias on campuses among the general public.

"College costs a lot more than it needs to. To get an education, you should not have to break your pocketbook," said Eunice Cortez, 68, a Republican near Houston.

Cortez, who's originally from Mexico, did not go to college, but she made sure her U.S.-born children did and is proud that her grandchildren are getting college degrees. She supports Trump but is concerned that some of his policies, including funding cuts, will make it harder for people who need tuition aid to get an education. She sees it as the government "getting in the way" of an educated society.

The poll shows a divide between college-educated Americans and those without college degrees, highlighting a possible cultural rift that Trump has seized on in the past.

Most Americans with a college degree, 62%, are opposed to withholding funding from universities that don't comply with the president's requirements, while those without a college degree are split, with about 3 in 10 in favor, a similar share opposed, and about 4 in 10 saying they don't have an opinion.

Kara Hansen, 40, a registered independent in Seminole, Oklahoma, is a few credits shy of a college degree. She supports the idea of dismantling the Education Department to shake things up. But she said she's concerned by what she calls Trump's "authoritarian tendencies" and a growing fear on college campuses to speak up and voice opinions.

"It feels like everybody has a muzzle on," Hansen said. "They can't fully express themselves because they're afraid of getting in trouble, and afraid of Trump."

About 3 in 10 U.S. adults say students or professors can freely speak their minds "a lot" on college and university campuses. About 4 in 10 say they can do this to "some" extent. Republicans feel their views are stifled: About 8 in 10 say liberals can speak their minds "a lot" or "some" on campus, but fewer than half say the same about conservatives.

## **Two dolls instead of 30? Toys become the latest symbol of Trump's trade war**

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and DIDI TANG Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's tariffs crusade has taken aim at a number of foreign goods, from European wines and car parts from Mexico to films made abroad. Lately, the president's wandering ire has found another rhetorical poster child: toy dolls.

Trump asserted that children will be fine having two dolls — perhaps three or five — instead of 30 if U.S. import taxes increase consumer prices. The response on social media included memes of him portrayed as the Grinch and photos of a young Barron Trump's child-sized Mercedes convertible.

"COMPLETELY out of touch," The Loyal Subjects CEO Jonathan Cathey, whose collectible toy company in Los Angeles produces Strawberry Shortcake and Rainbow Brite dolls, wrote on LinkedIn. "If that ain't a 'Let them eat cake' moment shot through the echoes of history? Love how toys and dolls have become THE martyr metaphor for this nonsensical trade war incoherence."

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The president's comments also touched a nerve with parents, both ones who took offense at the casual way he hypothesized that perhaps "two dolls will cost a couple bucks more" and those who acknowledged their own kids have more toys than they need.

Either way, the U.S. toy industry has a lot riding on a possible deescalation of the tariff standoff between the Trump administration and the government in Beijing. Nearly 80% of the toys sold in the U.S. come from China.

The Toy Association, a trade group, has lobbied for an immediate reprieve from the 145% tariff rate the president put on Chinese-made products. Some toy companies warn the likelihood of holiday shortages increases each week the tariff remains in effect.

Here's a snapshot of the doll debate and how tariffs are impacting toys:

How much is the US doll market worth?

From Barbie, Bratz and Cabbage Patch Kids to Adora baby dolls, American Girl and Our Generation, dolls are a big business in the U.S. as well as beloved playthings.

The doll category, which includes accessories like clothes, generated U.S. sales of \$2.7 billion last year compared to \$2.9 billion in 2023 and \$3.4 billion in 2019, according to market research firm Circana.

Consumers splurged on toys during the height of the COVID pandemic to keep children and themselves occupied, but sales flattened as inflation seized the economy.

Younger girls becoming more interested in buying makeup and skincare also has cooled the demand for dolls, Marshal Cohen, Circana's chief retail advisor, said.

What are toy companies doing to navigate tariffs?

The nation's largest toy maker, Mattel, said this week it would have to raise prices for some products sold in the U.S. to offset higher costs related to tariffs.

The company, whose brands include Barbie and American Girl, said the increases were necessary even though it's speeding up the expansion of its manufacturing base outside of China.

Smaller toy companies are expected to have a harder time than Mattel and Hasbro, which makes the eating, drinking and diaper-wetting Baby Alive. Cathey said he paused The Loyal Subjects' shipments from China in April because he couldn't pay the stratospheric tariff they would have incurred.

"Nobody insulates themselves with that much cash," he said.

With about four months' worth of inventory on hand, Cathey said his ability to secure holiday stock depends on a break in the U.S.-China trade standoff happening in the next two weeks since it would take time for cargo operations to resume.

Cepia, a Missouri company that was behind the 2009 holiday season hit Zhu Zhu Pets, launched a line of 11-inch fashion dolls called Decora Girlz last year. CEO James Russell Hornsby said he was working to relocate some production but the move won't happen in time to replace the orders he planned to get from China.

Hornsby described himself as a Trump supporter and said he understands the administration's desire to reduce trade imbalances.

"Let's just get the deals done and stop all this because (Trump's) disrupting Christmas," he said.

What goes into making a doll?

Although American Girl launched in 1986 with a line based on fictional historical characters, the dolls never were domestic products. They were made in Germany before production eventually moved to China.

Toy experts say that in addition to lower costs, Chinese factories have developed techniques and expertise that are not easily replicated.

"We don't have any capacity in the U.S. to make rooted doll hair. And then you've got things like the faces. Some of them are hand-painted, others are done with a Tampo (printing) machine," James Zahn, editor-in-chief of industry publication The Toy Book, said of doll-making.

Hornsby said rooting the synthetic hair onto the heads of Decora Girlz dolls is carried out by skilled workers at factories in Guangzhou and Dongguan, China.

"It's not just sticking into a machine and it automatically does it," he said. "You have to know what you're doing in order to make that doll look like it's got a full set of hair when literally maybe only 60% of the

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head is filled with hair.”

Are toys from China safe?

White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller said last week that he assumes consumers would prefer to pay more for American-made products. Dolls made in China might have lead paint in them, he said.

Teresa Murray, consumer watchdog director at the U.S. Public Interest Research Group, said the picture is more complicated.

Products for children ages 12 and under require third-party testing and certification from labs approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the agency tasked with enforcing lead levels in toys, Murray said.

The rules apply to all products sold in the U.S. Toys by major brands such as Fisher-Price, Mattel, Hasbro and Lego, which have long outsourced manufacturing to China, are usually in compliance, she said.

But the rise of online shopping, including e-commerce platforms that ship directly to U.S. consumers from overseas, has posed a challenge, according to Murray. When valued at less than \$800, such parcels entered the U.S. duty-free and were not subject to the same scrutiny as bulk imports, she said.

The White House eliminated the customs exemption starting May 2 for low-value parcels that originated in mainland China and Hong Kong. U.S. Customs and Border Protection expects additional oversight will make it easier to flag problems.

Toy companies and industry experts argue the high tariffs on Chinese imports will tempt price-sensitive shoppers to search for cheap counterfeit toys that carry higher safety risks.

Can children have too many dolls?

Plenty of people agree American consumer culture has gotten out of hand, in large part due to prices kept low through the labor of foreign factory workers who earn much less than they would in the U.S.

Katie Walley-Wiegert, 38, a senior marketer in Richmond, Virginia, and the parent of a 2-year-old son, agrees there's too much materialism but thinks parents should have choices when deciding what is best for their children. She found the wealthy Trump's comments off-putting.

“I think it is a small view of what purchase habits and realities are for people who buy toys for kids,” Walley-Wiegert said.

San Francisco resident Elenor Mak, who founded the Jilly Bing doll company after she couldn't find an Asian American doll for her daughter, Jillian, now 5, said the president's remarks upset her because some families struggle to buy even one doll.

The trade war with China “just makes it even more impossible for those families,” Mak said.

## Indian and Pakistan troops swap intense artillery fire

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN, MUNIR AHMED, SHEIKH SAALIQ and RAJESH ROY Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Indian and Pakistani soldiers exchanged heavy volleys of shells and gunfire across their frontier in Kashmir overnight, killing at least five civilians in a growing military standoff that erupted following an attack on tourists in the India-controlled portion of the disputed region.

In Pakistan, an unusually intense night of artillery exchanges left at least four civilians dead and wounded 12 others in areas near the Line of Control that divides Kashmir, local police official Adeel Ahmad said. People in border towns said the firing continued well into Friday morning.

“We're used to hearing the exchange of fire between Pakistan and India at the Line of Control, but last night was different,” said Mohammad Shakil, who lives near the frontier in Chakothi sector.

In India, military officials said Pakistani troops barraged their posts overnight with artillery, mortars and gunfire at multiple locations in Indian-controlled Kashmir. They said Indian soldiers responded, triggering fierce exchanges until early dawn.

Two people were killed and four others injured in Uri and Poonch sectors, police said, taking the civilian death toll in Indian-controlled Kashmir to 18 since Wednesday. Pakistan said Indian mortar and artillery fire has killed 17 civilians in Pakistan-administered Kashmir in the same period.

Indian authorities have evacuated tens of thousands of civilians from villages near the volatile frontier.

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Thousands of people slept in shelters for a second consecutive night.

Rivals exchange strikes and allegations

Tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals have soared since an attack on a popular tourist site in India-controlled Kashmir left 26 civilians dead, mostly Hindu Indian tourists, on April 22. New Delhi has blamed Pakistan for backing the attack, an accusation Islamabad rejects.

On Wednesday, India conducted airstrikes on several sites in Pakistani territory it described as militant-related, killing 31 civilians according to Pakistani officials. Pakistan said it shot down five Indian fighter jets.

On Thursday, India said it thwarted Pakistani drone and missile attacks at military targets in more than a dozen cities and towns, including Jammu city in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Pakistan denied that it carried out drone attacks. India said meanwhile it hit Pakistan's air defense systems and radars close to the city of Lahore. The incidents could not be independently confirmed.

The Indian army said Friday that Pakistan fired about 300-400 drones overnight in violation of Indian airspace to target military installations in nearly three dozen sites along the western borders. India brought down a number of the drones using "kinetic and non-kinetic means," Wing Commander Vyomika Singh of the Indian air force told a news conference.

Pakistan's army spokesperson Lt. Gen. Ahmad Sharif refuted India's claims of firing 300-400 drones. "At least show us the debris of one drone to prove the charge," he said at a news briefing on Friday.

Sharif said that since Wednesday night India had fired 77 Israeli-made attack drones into Pakistan, all of which were neutralized and their debris collected by Pakistani forces. "Whatever they will send, we will convert it into debris," he said.

India orders X to block thousands of accounts

Meanwhile, social platform X in a statement on Thursday said the Indian government had ordered it to block users in the country from accessing more than 8,000 accounts, including a number of "international news organizations and other prominent users."

The social platform did not release the list of accounts it was blocking in India, but said the order "amounts to censorship of existing and future content, and is contrary to the fundamental right of free speech." Later, X briefly blocked access to the Global Affairs Account from which it had posted the statement, also citing a legal demand from India.

Crisis disrupts schools, sports and travel

India's biggest domestic cricket tournament, the Indian Premier League, which attracts top players from around the world, was suspended for one week. Pakistan also moved its own domestic tournament to the United Arab Emirates because of the tensions.

Panic also spread during an evening cricket match in northern Dharamsala city, where a crowd of more than 10,000 people had to be evacuated from the stadium and the game called off, according to an Associated Press photographer covering the event.

Meanwhile, several northern and western Indian states, including Punjab, Rajasthan, Indian-controlled Kashmir, shut schools and other educational institutions for two days.

Airlines in India have also suspended flight operations from two dozen airports across northern and western regions until May 15, India's Civil Aviation Ministry said.

The impact of border flare up was also seen in the Indian stock markets. In early trade on Friday, the benchmark Sensex tanked 662 points to 79,649 while Nifty 50 declined 215 points to trade at 24,058.

Vance says a war would be 'none of our business'

As fears of military confrontation soar and worried world leaders call for de-escalation, the U.S. Vice President JD Vance has said that a potential war between India and Pakistan would be "none of our business."

"What we can do is try to encourage these folks to de-escalate a little bit, but we're not going to get involved in the middle of war that's fundamentally none of our business and has nothing to do with America's ability to control it," Vance said in an interview with Fox News.

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## Leo XIV's brother recalls feeling of 'disbelief' over his sibling becoming pope

By OBED LAMY and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

NEW LENOX, Ill. (AP) — When white smoke poured out of the Sistine Chapel revealing that a new pope had been chosen, John Prevost turned on his television in Illinois, called his niece and they watched in awe as his brother's name was announced.

"She started screaming because it was her uncle and I was in the moment of disbelief that this cannot be possible because it's too far from what we thought would happen," Prevost said Thursday in an interview with The Associated Press from his home in New Lenox, Illinois.

Next, he said he felt an intense sense of pride that his brother, Cardinal Robert Prevost, had become the 267th pontiff to lead the Catholic Church, making the Chicago-born missionary the first U.S. pope.

"It's quite an honor; it's quite a once in a lifetime," he said. "But I think it's quite a responsibility and I think it's going to lead to bigger and better things, but I think people are going to watch him very closely to see what he's doing."

Robert Prevost, a 69-year-old member of the Augustinian religious order who spent his career ministering in Peru, took the name Leo XIV.

John Prevost described his brother as being very concerned for the poor and those who don't have a voice. He said he expects him to be a "second Pope Francis."

"He's not going to be real far left and he's not going to be real far right," he added. "Kind of right down the middle."

At one point during the interview, John Prevost realized he had missed several calls from his brother, so he gave the new pope a call back.

Leo told him he wasn't interested in being part of the interview and after a brief message of congratulations and discussion in which they talked like any two brothers about travel arrangements, they hung up.

The new pope grew up the youngest of three boys. John Prevost, who was only a year older than him, said he remembers Robert Prevost being very good in school as a kid and enjoying playing tag, Monopoly and Risk.

From a young age, he said he knew his brother was going to be a priest. Although he didn't expect him to become pope, he recalled a neighbor predicting that very thing when Robert Prevost was only a first grader.

"She sensed that at 6 years old," he said. "How she did that, who knows. It took this long, but here he is, first American pope."

When Robert Prevost graduated eighth grade, he left for seminary school, his brother said.

"There's a whole period there where we didn't really grow up together," he said. "It was just on vacations that we had contact together."

These days, the brothers talk on the phone every day, John Prevost said. Robert Prevost will call him and they'll discuss everything from politics to religion and even play the day's Wordle.

John Prevost said he's not sure how much time his brother will have to talk as the new pope and how they'll handle staying in touch in the future.

"It's already strange not having someone to talk to," he said.

## Today in History: May 10, golden spike completes transcontinental railway

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, May 10, the 130th day of 2025. There are 235 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 10, 1869, a golden spike was driven in a ceremony in Promontory, Utah, marking the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the United States.

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Also on this date:

In 1775, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys, along with Col. Benedict Arnold, captured the British-held fortress at Ticonderoga, New York.

In 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was captured by Union forces near Irwinville, Georgia.

In 1924, J. Edgar Hoover was named acting director of the Bureau of Investigation (later known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or FBI) by President Calvin Coolidge; Hoover would serve as FBI director until 1972.

In 1933, book burnings were held in 34 cities across Germany, targeting authors whose ideologies were in conflict with Nazism.

In 1940, during World War II, German forces began invading the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium and France. On the same day, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned, and Winston Churchill formed a new government.

In 1994, Nelson Mandela was inaugurated, becoming the first Black president of South Africa.

In 1994, the state of Illinois executed serial killer John Wayne Gacy, 52, for the murders of 33 young men and boys.

In 2014, Michael Sam was selected by the St. Louis Rams in the seventh round of the NFL draft, becoming the first openly gay player drafted by a National Football League team.

In 2023, Rep. George Santos, the New York Republican infamous for fabricating his life story, was indicted on charges that he duped donors, stole from his campaign and lied to Congress. (Santos pled guilty in August 2024, and was sentenced to 87 months in prison in April 2025.)

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Fame coach Jim Calhoun is 83. Musician-songwriter Donovan is 79. Sen. Fashion designer Miuccia Prada is 76. Olympic skiing medalists Phil and Steve Mahre are 68. Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith, R-Miss., is 66. Singer-activist Bono (U2) is 65. Sen. John Curtis, R-Utah, is 65. Playwright Suzan-Lori Parks is 62. Model Linda Evangelista is 60. Rapper Young MC is 58. Racing driver Helio Castroneves is 50. Actor Kenan Thompson is 47. Olympic swimming gold medalist Missy Franklin is 30.