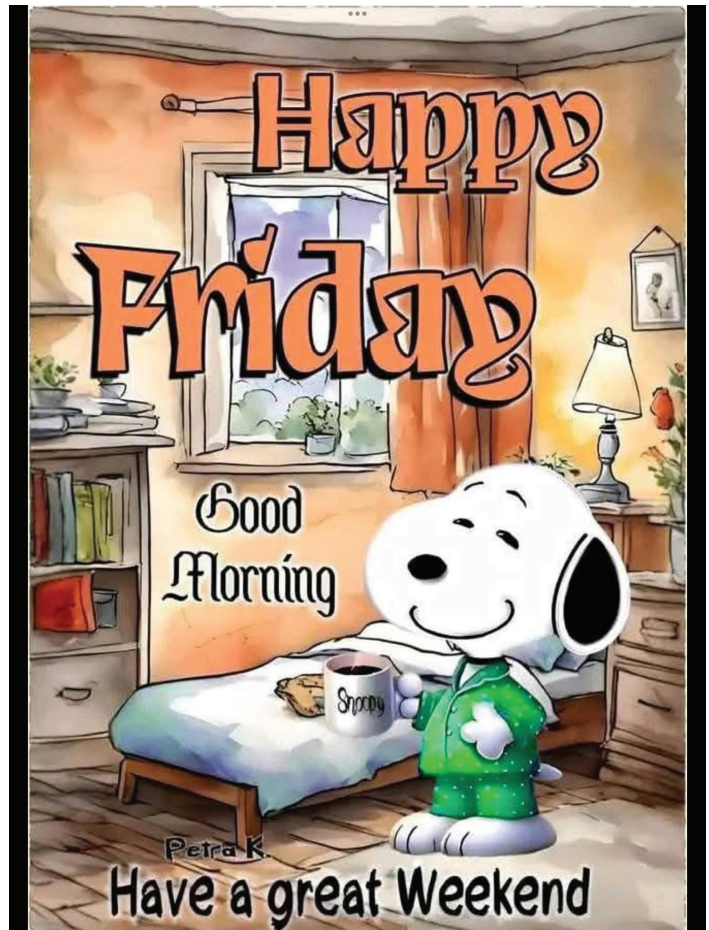


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Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Friday, May 16

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, creamy coleslaw, corn, peach crisp.
Faculty In-Service

Saturday, May 17

GHS Graduation, 2 p.m.

Sunday, May 18

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion 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.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 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.

Gene-Editing Breakthrough

A personalized gene-editing treatment successfully treated an infant with a rare genetic disease known as CPS1 deficiency, doctors announced yesterday. It marks the first time a patient of any age has been successfully treated via customized CRISPR gene editing.

While CRISPR—which typically acts as molecular scissors, deleting faulty genetic code—has been approved to treat diseases like sickle cell and beta-thalassemia, these are relatively common diseases. CPS1 deficiency, which blocks the liver's ability to process ammonia, affects around one in 1.3 million children and is linked to specific mutations in each patient. Doctors used an advanced form of CRISPR known as base editing, which acts more like a "spell check" for genes and is capable of replacing individual bases with the correct code.

Researchers hope the demonstration can be extended to treat millions of patients with rare or otherwise unique diseases.

Birthright Citizenship

The Supreme Court appeared undecided yesterday on whether lower courts can implement nationwide—rather than more limited—injunctions on presidential orders. The case stems from President Donald Trump's January executive order seeking to end birthright citizenship, which has been blocked nationwide by three federal lower court judges.

Birthright citizenship offers full legal rights to anyone born in the US regardless of immigration status. It has been the legal precedent in the US since the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868. The administration argues this practice does not include children born to parents in the country without legal status and claims it incentivizes unauthorized migration. Critics of the administration say overturning the practice would create a second-class group of noncitizens in the US.

The justices debated whether universal injunctions—whose use by lower courts has increased significantly in the last decade—could be replaced by class-action lawsuits, which require more stringent review. A decision is expected this summer.

Magna Carta Surprise

A rare original Magna Carta from 1300 has been identified in Harvard Law School's archives. Purchased in 1946 for just \$27.50 (about \$477 today), it was misfiled for decades and long mistaken for a replica. The sheepskin parchment is now confirmed as one of only seven known surviving originals issued by King Edward I that year.

British historians discovered its significance after encountering a high-resolution digital image online. They then used ultraviolet light and spectral imaging to compare the physical texts to verify its authenticity. They believe the document was first sent to the parliamentary borough of Appleby-in-Westmorland, England, and later purchased by London book dealers from a Royal Air Force war hero before being sold to Harvard.

First signed in 1215 by King John, the Magna Carta established the principle that no one—not even a monarch—is above the law. The 1300 version, known as a Confirmation of the Charters, reaffirmed those rights and helped lay the foundation for constitutional law, including the US Constitution.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2025 WNBA season kicks off today; see previews and predictions for all 13 teams.

NFL owners to vote next week on proposal to allow players to play flag football at the 2028 Summer Olympics.

Grammy-winning R&B artist Chris Brown arrested in Manchester, UK, over alleged 2023 assault at a London nightclub.

The 150th Preakness Stakes, the second leg of horse racing's Triple Crown, is set for tomorrow (7 pm ET, NBC); Kentucky Derby winner Sovereignty will not run but is expected to race in the Belmont Stakes.

Science & Technology

Scientists use stem cells to grow a human amniotic sac, the protective bubble that shields the fetus; model allows study of how the structure supports embryonic growth between two and four weeks.

Feline genetic mutation responsible for turning cats orange pinpointed by scientists; sex chromosome-linked variation predominantly affects male cats.

Microparticle drug delivery system could provide multiple vaccinations without the need for follow-up shots; approach allows drug payloads to be released weeks or months after being administered.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.4%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq -0.2%), with S&P 500 notching gains for fourth straight day on optimism over signs US-China tariffs will be reduced.

Walmart officials warn prices will be raised on most consumer goods in response to Trump administration tariffs as soon as the end of the month.

Thirteen people charged by federal prosecutors in scheme to steal more than \$265M in cryptocurrency.

UnitedHealth reportedly under federal investigation for potential Medicare fraud.

Politics & World Affairs

US negotiators present outline of nuclear deal to Iran; President Donald Trump says Iran is close to agreeing to terms, which would include the lifting of US sanctions.

Florida becomes second state to ban the addition of fluoride to municipal drinking water, following Utah.

Census Bureau releases list of fastest-growing cities in 2024; Dallas suburb of Princeton tops list with 31% growth.

Germany to raise defense spending to 5% of GDP following US push for NATO members to increase financial contributions.

Social Security Delivers the Most Popular Baby Names in South Dakota for 2024

The Social Security Administration today announced the most popular baby names in South Dakota for 2024. Liam and Amelia topped the list.

The top five boys' and girls' names for 2024 in South Dakota were:

	Boys	Girls
1	Liam	Amelia
2	Oliver	Charlotte
3	Henry	Lainey
4	Theodore	Harper
5	Asher	Olivia

The agency announced last week that Olivia and Liam were the most popular baby names in the U.S. How does South Dakota compare to the rest of the country? Check out Social Security's website, www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/, to see the top national baby names for 2024 and see where your name ranks now and over the past 100 years.

Social Security began compiling the baby names list in 1997, with names dating back to 1880. Each year, the list reveals the effect of pop-culture on naming trends. In addition to each state's top baby names (and names for U.S. territories), Social Security's website has a list of the 1,000 most popular boys' and girls' names for 2024 and the fastest rising girls' and boys' names.

Most parents apply for their child's Social Security number (SSN) at birth, during their hospital stay. Social Security Commissioner Frank 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 Social Security number and card is provided in Social Security Numbers for Children.

Gov. Rhoden Signs Hours of Service Waiver to Bring Relief for Fuel Supply

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Larry Rhoden signed Executive Order 2025-05 granting an hours of service waiver for certain liquid products being transported through South Dakota.

The 14-day order exempts delivery of gasoline, or gasoline blends, diesel, fuel oil, ethanol, propane, jet fuel, and biodiesel from federal motor carrier regulations regarding drivers' hours of service. The waiver will address supply shortages being reported in the state by businesses and residents.

Although hours of service have been temporarily suspended for commercial deliveries, companies may not require or allow fatigued drivers to make deliveries. All other road safety and vehicle compliance regulations still apply.

The executive order is consistent with other states in the region, including Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas, who currently have similar waivers in effect. The executive order expires at midnight on May 29, 2025.

Douglas County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 44 and 398th Avenue, 10 miles northeast of Armour, SD

When: 2:20 p.m., Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Driver 1: 65-year-old female from Winner, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2004 Chrysler Town and Country, towing a small utility trailer

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 1: 29-year-old female from Sioux Falls, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 2: 38-year-old male from Tyndall, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 2: 2008 Peterbilt 389 with dump trailer

Seat belt Used: Yes

Douglas County, S.D.- One woman died and another was seriously injured in a two vehicle crash 10 miles northeast of Armour, SD Wednesday afternoon.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2004 Chrysler Town and Country was traveling east on SD Highway 44. A Peterbilt semi with dump trailer was traveling the same direction ahead of the Chrysler and had slowed down for a right turn. The approaching Chrysler swerved to the right, colliding with the right rear side of the dump trailer.

The driver of the semi was not injured. The driver of the Chrysler was pronounced deceased at the scene, and a passenger in the Chrysler sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

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

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

###

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

Name Released in Minnehaha County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: I-29 at mile marker 79, Sioux Falls City Limits, SD

When: 6:11 p.m., Sunday, May 11, 2025

Driver 1: Derek Jwan Berry, 44-year-old-male from Zumbrota, MN, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2004 Suzuki GSX1300 Motorcycle

Minnehaha County, S.D.- A Zumbrota, Minnesota man died following a single vehicle crash Sunday evening in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates Derek Jwan Berry, the driver of a Suzuki motorcycle, entered the northbound I-29, West 12th Street ramp at a high speed. He failed to navigate the curve and struck concrete barriers on the east and west sides of the road, causing him to separate from his motorcycle. Berry died from his injuries at a Sioux Falls hospital.

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

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

###

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

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GROTON LEGION 2025

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
May 27	Lake Norden	Groton	6:00pm
May 30	Redfield	Redfield	5:30pm
June 1	Canton	Volga	2:00pm
	Volga		4:00pm
June 2	Aberdeen Smitty's	Groton	6:00pm
June 5	Watertown	Watertown	5:00pm (DH)
June 7	W.I.N.	Groton	5:00pm
June 8	Chamberlain	Chamberlain	1:00pm
	Parkston		3:00pm
June 13	Milbank	Groton	5:30pm (DH)
June 15	Redfield	Groton	5:30pm
June 18	Spearfish	Clark	5:30pm
June 19-22	Milbank Founder's Day Tournament	Milbank	TBD
June 24	Webster	Groton	5:30pm (DH)
June 27	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	6:00pm
June 30	W.I.N.	Northville	5:30pm
July 2	Big Stone City	Groton	4:30pm
July 7	Webster	Webster	5:30pm (DH)
July 9	Lisbon	Groton	6:00pm
July 10-12	Clark Rotary Tournament	Clark	TBD
July 15	Milbank	Milbank	5:30pm (DH)
July 16	Clark	Groton	5:30pm
July 22-25	Region 6B Tournament	Groton	TBD
Aug 1-5	State B Tournament	Milbank	TBD

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2025 U10 Schedule

Date	Team(s)	Opponent	Location	Time	Field
May 28	R & B	Webster	Groton	5:30 (2)	
May 29	B & W	Aberdeen	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 2	W & R	Clark	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 3	R & B	Aberdeen	Aberdeen North Complex	5:30 (2)	
June 5	B & W	Sisseton	Sisseton	5:30 (2)	
June 7	ALL	Webster	Groton	11:00 (2)	
June 9	W & R	Columbia	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 11	R & B	Aberdeen	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 12	B & W	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)	
June 16	W & R	Britton	Britton	5:30 (2)	
June 17	R & B	Aberdeen	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 18	B & W	Milbank	Milbank	5:30 (2)	
June 19	W & R	Sisseton	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 23	R & B	Milbank	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 24	B & W	Claremont	Groton	6:30 (1)	
June 25	W & R	Aberdeen	Aberdeen	5:30 (2)	
June 28	All	Groton Tournament	Groton	TBA	
July 2	R & B	Britton	Groton	5:30 (2)	
July 7	B & W	Clark	Clark	5:30 (2)	
July 8	W & R	Claremont	Claremont	6:30 (1)	
July 18-20	All	State Tournament	Webster	TBA	

Groups:

Red (R) Pat K

Blue (B) Eric M

White (W) Tigh F

Micah K

Keenan M

Rae F

Nolan R

Bennett I

Bo F

Quinton R

Boston K

Sam F

Greyson W

Sutton S

McCormick H

Dayton G

Mac M

Gauge J

Ian N

Lincoln H

Stetson F

Freddy C

Mavrik S

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2025 U8 Schedule

Date	Team(s)	Opponent	Location	Time	Field
May 28	R & B	Webster	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 3	B & W	Aberdeen	Aberdeen North Complex	5:30 (2)	
June 5	W & R	Britton	Groton	5:30	
June 7	ALL	Britton	Groton	9:00 (2)	
June 9	R & B	Columbia	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 11	B & W	Aberdeen	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 12	W & R	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)	
June 16	R & B	Britton	Britton	5:30 (2)	
June 17	B & W	Aberdeen	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 19	W & R	Britton	Britton	5:30 (2)	
June 21	All	Groton Tournament	Groton	TBA	
June 23	R & B	Columbia	Columbia	5:30 (2)	
June 24	B & W	Claremont	Groton	5:30 (1)	
June 25	W & R	Aberdeen	Aberdeen	5:30 (2)	
June 30	R & B	Frankfort	Groton	6:00 (1)	
July 1	B & W	Aberdeen	Groton	5:30 (2)	
July 8	W & R	Claremont	Claremont	6:00 (1)	

Groups:

Red (R) Mitch L	Blue (B) Collin H	White (W) Scott V
Landon L	Ryker H	Brooks V
Vic F	Kroy K	Jax R
Max E	Briggs B	Kase R
Laycen W	Brecken S	Briggs S
Colton Z	Levi D	Liam G
Holden H	Lukas S	

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2025 U12 Schedule

Date	Team(s)	Opponent	Location	Time	Field
May 28	R & B	Aberdeen	Aberdeen North Complex	5:30 (2)	
May 29	B & W	Webster	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 2	W & R	Sisseton	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 3	R & B	Roslyn	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 7	ALL	Britton	Groton	1:00 (2)	
June 8	ALL	Sisseton Tournament	Sisseton	TBA	
June 9	B & W	Milbank	Milbank	5:30 (2)	
June 10	W & R	Roslyn	Roslyn	5:30 (2)	
June 12	R & B	Aberdeen	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 16	B & W	Sisseton	Sisseton	5:30 (2)	
June 17	W & R	Britton	Britton	5:30 (2)	
June 18	R & B	Aberdeen	Aberdeen North Complex	5:30 (2)	
June 21	ALL	Webster Tournament	Webster	TBA	
June 23	B & W	Britton	Groton	5:30 (2)	
June 25	W & R	Aberdeen	Aberdeen	5:30 (2)	
June 29	All	Groton Tournament	Groton	TBA	
July 1	R & B	Milbank	Groton	5:30 (2)	
July 11-13	All	State Tournament	Groton	TBA	

GROUPS

RED (R) Matt L

Blue (B) (Chris E)

White (W) (Jarrett Z)

Mason L

Bentley E

Brody Z

Eason L

Knox M

Adam F

Rylan B

Haden H

Grady R

Hank H

Carter B

Graham R

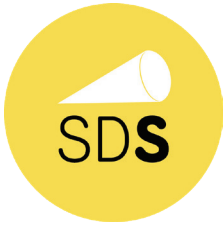
Hank F

Jack S

Hayden H

Owen T

Blake M



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Is Congress trampling on state laws protecting property rights against pipelines?

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - MAY 15, 2025 6:35 PM

Lawmakers and advocates on the right and left are raising questions about a provision in legislation a powerful U.S. House committee approved Wednesday, with critics arguing it would allow federal regulators to approve natural gas and carbon dioxide pipelines over prohibitions in state law.

Two sections in the House Energy and Commerce Committee's reconciliation instructions, which the Republican-led panel passed along party lines, would allow pipeline operators to pay \$10 million to participate in an expedited federal permitting process that critics say would override state laws.

The potentially intensely controversial provision would give the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission exclusive authority to issue licenses for pipelines carrying natural gas, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, oil, or other energy products and byproducts.

"Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the Commission issues a license under subsection (c)(1) of this section and the licensee is in compliance with such license, no requirement of State or local law that requires approval of the location of the covered pipeline with respect to which the license is issued may be enforced against the licensee," the text of the bill reads.

A summary document provided by the committee says the bill would apply to states only in cases when state agencies are responsible for conducting federal reviews.

"For States, this includes their authorities to impose conditions for any certifying authorities delegated to States by federal law," the document says.

But a variety of groups and lawmakers — environmental groups opposed to loosening reviews, landholder advocates concerned about property rights and small-government conservatives who favor local control — say the measure would open the door for the federal government to nullify state and local protections.

That includes a recent South Dakota law to prevent pipeline operators from using eminent domain to force landowners to sell or allow use of their property.

"This is federal overreach," South Dakota state Rep. Karla Lems said in a Thursday interview. "It would override any state or local law regarding ... the routing of a pipeline."

Trump's 'big, beautiful bill'

The Energy and Commerce Committee was one of 11 House panels that have approved reconciliation instructions and sent them to the House Budget Committee to consolidate into one package. House Republicans plan to consider the 1,100-page package on the floor next week.

The complex process, known as budget reconciliation, allows the majority party to pass legislation with simple majorities in both chambers, avoiding the U.S. Senate's usual 60-vote requirement.

President Donald Trump has described the package as "one big, beautiful bill" and it contains a host of his domestic policy priorities including extending tax cuts and increasing funding for immigration enforcement.

A provision in Democrats' 2022 reconciliation bill encouraged an existing trend of pipeline installation in the Midwest. The measure provided tax breaks for carbon sequestration, which can involve piping the carbon dioxide byproducts that result from processes like ethanol production into underground storage chambers.

Actually building those pipelines across hundreds of miles between ethanol producers, particularly in farm states like Iowa and South Dakota, and underground storage facilities in North Dakota, where the

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geology supports it, requires the use of private land, which has been strongly opposed for several reasons and led to state restrictions.

Environmental and safety groups worry some pipeline at some point will rupture and therefore pose a danger to nearby residents and water sources.

Private property owners and conservative political allies say they should have stronger rights to resist pipeline operators from using their property.

Plea to Congress

That unusual coalition was apparent again this week as environmentalists and conservatives united to oppose the measure in the Energy and Commerce bill.

A collection of 70 environmental and conservation groups signed a letter to the committee Wednesday urging the language be removed.

"These measures would radically expand federal jurisdiction over all types of interstate pipelines, drastically limit public input, shorten environmental review timelines, and shield projects from legal challenges, all while clearing the way for expanded use of federal eminent domain against landowners," the letter said.

The letter was signed by groups ranging from the local agriculture and conservation organization Dakota Rural Action to national environmental group Food & Water Watch.

South Dakota House Speaker Jon Hansen, a self-described MAGA Republican, tweeted screenshots of the provision with the message "property rights are under attack again."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican former U.S. House member and rival to Trump in the 2024 presidential nomination race, reposted the tweet.

"This represents overriding both the rights of states and private property owners to serve Biden's Green New Deal," DeSantis wrote above Hansen's message. "What the heck is going on up there?"

Uncertainty over impact

Chase Jensen, a senior organizer with Dakota Rural Action, said in a press release accompanying the coalition letter that the group was calling on members of Congress "to stand with the State of South Dakota and oppose this clear attempt to buy permits and bypass the people."

"When South Dakota was first faced with carbon dioxide pipelines, our congressmen said it was up to the state to deal with it," Jensen said. "Now that we have barred eminent domain for these private projects – their billionaire owners are trying to cut the state out of the process altogether."

South Dakota's U.S. House member, Republican Dusty Johnson, said in a statement to South Dakota Searchlight he'd been unaware of the bill's language but predicted it would be removed before final passage.

He indicated he was unsure what the effect of the bill would be, but started "from a place of deep skepticism."

"I wasn't aware of this language until committee text was released," Johnson, who does not sit on Energy and Commerce, wrote. "As a former public utilities commissioner, I have strong concerns with bypassing state permitting and I begin from a place of deep skepticism for this language. I doubt it will be included in President Trump's 'one, big, beautiful bill.'"

But U.S. Rep. Julie Fedorchak, a North Dakota Republican who is a former state utility regulator, told reporters on a press call Thursday morning that she thought the bill would not block the state from being involved in environmental reviews, even if a company seeks a pipeline permit from federal regulators.

Fedorchak said she doesn't think the proposal would limit local input on projects, adding that FERC has a "pretty robust permitting process" for interstate natural gas pipelines.

A spokesman for the Energy and Commerce Committee did not return a message seeking clarification Thursday.

North Dakota Monitor Editor Amy Dalrymple and South Dakota Searchlight Editor Seth Tupper contributed to this report.

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

Men arrested in Madison among dozens of immigrants detained in South Dakota

BY: JOHN HULT - MAY 15, 2025 6:56 PM

It's unknown how many immigrants have been held for removal in South Dakota since President Donald Trump took office in January promising mass deportations, but public jail rosters in the state show more than two dozen being held now.

A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesperson told South Dakota Searchlight that arrest statistics will be updated soon. The most recent figures on its website are from December.

A high-profile ICE operation Tuesday in Madison resulted in the arrests of eight people accused of being in the country without legal permission. Before that, ICE was already using jails in South Dakota as waystations for immigration actions more often since Trump took office, according to Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead.

"They're not only doing what's been reported on in Madison," he said. "They're doing investigations around the clock, with other federal agencies."

22 at Sioux Falls jail

As of Thursday morning, there were 22 people detained at the Sioux Falls jail with pending immigration issues, according to Milstead, who said the figure can change by the hour as inmates come and go.

About half of the current detainees with ICE holds came to the attention of immigration agents after being arrested on state-level criminal charges. The others arrived at the jail for removal actions alone, and Milstead said that activity has increased.

The jail holds federal inmates for both ICE and the U.S. Marshals Service, which oversees people accused of federal crimes, including those related to immigration. The feds pay the county \$112 a day per federal inmate.

People targeted by ICE for removal who don't have criminal charges can only be held at the jail in Sioux Falls for 72 hours before being transferred to an ICE detention facility, Milstead said.

Those facilities are themselves local jails, but Sioux Falls is not designated as a long-term detention facility for ICE.

Unlike inmates targeted for removal alone, inmates with ICE holds and criminal charges can stay in Sioux Falls until their case concludes. An inmate who comes in on an ICE hold and is later charged with a crime is transferred to the U.S. Marshals Service.

"If they're Marshals prisoners, we've held them for years sometimes," Milstead said.

Jails cooperate with ICE across South Dakota

Milstead's jail has cooperated with ICE for more than a decade as part of the agency's Secure Communities Program, under which participating local jails send booking fingerprints to both the FBI and ICE. The FBI uses the fingerprints to check for federal warrants and federal criminal charges. ICE checks for prior interactions with immigration agents.

The Minnehaha County Jail also sends the names of every foreign-born detainee to be cross-checked for legal status by ICE's Criminal Alien Program.

The jail has agreed to step up its cooperation. Milstead recently signed a 287(g) agreement with ICE, which will require some of his deputies to take about eight hours of training, after which they'll be able to serve ICE warrants for removal actions. There are several types of 287(g) agreements, all of which enable some measure of cross-deputization to allow local law enforcement to work on behalf of ICE.

Milstead and Hughes County Sheriff Patrick Callahan, in Pierre, both signed up for the warrant service program through 287(g) this spring. It won't be a large change operationally in Sioux Falls, said Milstead, who expects to train around a dozen people.

Inmates brought to the jail by ICE on removal proceedings have already been served removal warrants

by ICE agents.

Those who come to jail on criminal charges and are later alleged to be in the country illegally are served removal warrants by ICE agents after those agents obtain warrants from a judge. The Minnehaha County Jail's 287(g) agreement will allow trained deputies to serve those warrants, eliminating the need for an ICE agent to return to the jail for that purpose after asking for them.

Callahan told South Dakota Searchlight he'll be the local officer trained to serve removal warrants. His jail has no inmates with immigration holds.

Pennington County, South Dakota's second-largest county by population, had four inmates with ICE holds as of Thursday afternoon, spokesperson Helene Duhamel said.

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

Eight targeted in Madison immigration operation appear in federal court

Investigation had been underway for months, documents say

BY: JOHN HULT - MAY 15, 2025 6:48 PM

SIOUX FALLS — The eight men targeted in an immigration enforcement operation at two Madison businesses this week are accused of using fraudulent documents to get their jobs and had been under investigation for months.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement inquiries that ultimately led to their detention and criminal charges began in February, according to documents filed in the U.S. District Court of South Dakota.

One of the men is accused of fraudulently misusing visas, permits and other documents. The other seven are each accused of one count of fraudulent use of identification documents. Each of the charges carry up to \$250,000 in fines and up to five years in prison.

All but one of the men were arrested at one of the two businesses in Madison that employed them, Global Polymer Industries and Manitou Equipment America.

Manitou received a \$1 million tax break from the Governor's Office of Economic Development for an expansion in December of 2022. At that point, U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was governor of South Dakota. Manitou's owner told South Dakota Searchlight during a 2023 tour that the business employed 250 people.

Noem was given an honorary doctorate and delivered a commencement speech to graduates at Dakota State University in Madison just days before the arrests. Approximately 200 people protested outside that event.

The details of each case vary slightly, but affidavits — sworn written statements — from two ICE agents allege the men used fraudulent identification documents and were working under names that weren't their own. The agents reviewed I-9 documents, which are used by employers to verify a person's eligibility to work in the U.S., and allegedly learned in February and March that the names on the documents were fraudulent.

Five of the men had signed the allegedly fraudulent I-9s in 2022, suggesting they'd worked under their adopted names for years. Two others signed I-9s in 2023, and one signed his in 2024.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Veronica Duffy signed the search warrants Friday that authorized the operation resulting in the arrests.

One of the men was at home, according to court documents. The rest were at work. In six of the affidavits, ICE agents allege the men admitted they'd been working under false names.

Five are from Nicaragua, two are from Guatemala, and one is from El Salvador, according to ICE.

On Thursday in Sioux Falls, Judge Duffy ordered that the men be held by the U.S. Marshals Service at least until a preliminary hearing can be held. That hearing, which will take place within the next 14 days, would offer the men an opportunity to challenge their charges, and to make arguments for pre-trial release.

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Greenpeace seeks to reduce jury's award of \$667M in Dakota Access Pipeline trial

BY: MARY STEURER - MAY 15, 2025 11:03 PM

Greenpeace wants a North Dakota judge to reduce the nearly \$667 million in damages it was ordered to pay the developer of the Dakota Access Pipeline in March, arguing that the award is excessive and unreasonable.

A Morton County jury handed down the sum following a more than three-week trial earlier this year. Jurors found the environmental group at fault for damages related to protests against the pipeline in North Dakota in 2016 and 2017, and for publishing defamatory statements that harmed Energy Transfer's business.

Greenpeace was one of many activist groups that backed the movement, which drew thousands to rural south-central North Dakota to protest in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

Greenpeace denies Energy Transfer's allegations and says the company only brought the lawsuit to chill environmental activism. The defendants have yet to appeal.

In the meantime, attorneys for Greenpeace have asked Southwest Judicial District Judge James Gion to slash the nearly \$667 million award, claiming it exceeds statutory caps on damages and that the verdict is riddled with inconsistencies.

"This is the poster child of where the court needs to step in," Steven Caplow, an attorney representing Greenpeace, said in a Thursday morning remote hearing.

Energy Transfer says Gion should let the jury's award stand. Trey Cox, an attorney representing the pipeline developer, called the damages "consistent with the evidence produced at trial and the law of the state of North Dakota."

In North Dakota, a punitive damage award cannot exceed two times the compensatory damage award, or the amount granted to make up for financial losses a party suffered.

Greenpeace and Energy Transfer disagree as to whether the verdict meets this requirement. Caplow argued that the punitive damages must be reduced by roughly \$43 million to be consistent with state law, while Cox said the damages don't exceed the cap and ought to be left in place.

Greenpeace also claims the award includes costs that should actually be attributed to Energy Transfer or other third parties. Greenpeace maintains it only had six employees visit the protest camps, and that its presence was small compared to the many other activist groups that supported the movement.

Caplow argued that Energy Transfer without sufficient evidence is holding Greenpeace responsible for all damages the company incurred in connection to the protests. He said the award unfairly compensates Energy Transfer for expenses it sustained before any Greenpeace employees set foot in North Dakota, for example.

Greenpeace also alleges the jury form — which the jurors had to fill out to issue their verdict — was flawed in a way that inflated the damages attributed to the environmental group.

Before the jurors deliberated, Gion directed them to consider whether each damage Energy Transfer claimed was directly caused by Greenpeace, or whether and to what extent they resulted from the actions of another group. Despite this being part of the instructions, there wasn't space on the form for the jury to conduct this analysis, Caplow said.

That meant jurors were deprived of an opportunity to voice whether they believe Energy Transfer or

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other groups shared responsibility for any of the \$667 million award, Caplow argued.

Cox said Greenpeace could have proposed changes to the form to address this issue, but didn't.

Greenpeace also asked Gion to remove hundreds of millions of dollars of defamation-related damages, claiming the award is not supported by the evidence presented at trial. The jury awarded Energy Transfer damages for statements Greenpeace published about the pipeline between November 2016 and June 2018.

The environmental group maintains that none of the statements are defamatory, but also says that even if they were, they cannot be held solely responsible for defamation. Greenpeace says the statements originated with other sources — including the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe — and were circulated by hundreds of other outlets well before it published anything about the pipeline.

Additionally, Greenpeace says a significant portion of the \$667 million includes compensation for damages Energy Transfer did not formally request relief for, including some Greenpeace says the company referenced during trial but didn't claim in its written complaint.

Energy Transfer disputes the notion that Gion has discretion to reduce the jury's award.

Energy Transfer's lawsuit is against three Greenpeace entities — Greenpeace USA, Greenpeace International and Greenpeace Fund. Greenpeace USA was found at fault for most of the claims brought by Energy Transfer. The jury did not find Greenpeace International and Greenpeace Fund responsible for on-the-ground harms committed by protesters, though it did find those entities responsible for defamation and interfering with Energy Transfer's business. Additionally, the jury found Greenpeace USA and Greenpeace International liable for conspiracy.

Matt Kelly, an attorney representing Greenpeace Fund, said during Thursday's hearing that the award against the organization should be tossed out. The jury ordered Greenpeace Fund to pay roughly \$130 million despite the fact that it did not find the organization at fault for most of the major claims in the case, Kelly said.

"We were forced to litigate for seven years on claims where there was no basis for any liability against Greenpeace Fund," Kelly said during the hearing. "The idea that we should be forced to bear those costs, at this point, is ridiculous."

Greenpeace International in court filings argued similarly that the nearly \$132 million in damages it was ordered to pay should be dropped.

Energy Transfer says that the awards are valid because the jury found both of the organizations at fault for interfering with the company's business.

Gion took the motion under advisement. Greenpeace in separate motions has asked Gion to fully reverse the jury's verdict. The parties are scheduled to reconvene for another hearing on May 27.

Greenpeace USA has announced its intent to appeal the verdict to the North Dakota Supreme Court.

Mary Steurer is a reporter based in Bismarck for the North Dakota Monitor. A native of St. Louis, Steurer previously worked as the local government reporter for the Casper Star-Tribune newspaper in Wyoming.

What to know about the U.S. House GOP's student loan overhaul

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - MAY 15, 2025 10:55 PM

WASHINGTON — Students and families could see significant changes to how student loans are repaid as well as cuts to federal student aid as congressional Republicans look to slash billions of dollars in federal spending to offset the cost of President Donald Trump's sweeping agenda.

Republicans are using the complex reconciliation process to move a package through Congress with simple majority votes in each chamber, avoiding the Senate's 60-vote threshold that generally requires bipartisanship.

The House Committee on Education and Workforce approved its portion of the package in a party-line vote in April, pushing GOP lawmakers a step closer to potentially securing key changes to student loan repayment options and Pell Grant eligibility.

Chairman Tim Walberg, a Michigan Republican, said the 103-page bill would save taxpayers more than

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\$350 billion over 10 years and “bring much-needed reform” on “simplified loan repayment, streamlined student loan options, and accountability for students and taxpayers.”

But the bill has drawn criticism and worry from student advocates and congressional Democrats over how the proposed changes would impact higher education affordability and access.

Aissa Canchola Bañez, policy director at the Student Borrower Protection Center, told States Newsroom that the advocacy group was “really troubled to see House Republicans take such a drastic approach to their efforts to address the college affordability crisis.”

“Unfortunately, this bill will make college more expensive for families and students and will make it significantly more risky for students and families just trying to pay for college, and it’s also going to make student loan debt significantly more expensive for millions of borrowers across the country,” she said.

Rep. Bobby Scott, ranking member of the committee, echoed the concerns of student advocacy groups.

The Virginia Democrat said the bill would “increase costs for colleges and students,” “limit students’ access to quality programs” and take “all the so-called ‘savings’ to pay for more tax cuts for the wealthy and the well-connected.”

Here’s a breakdown of some of the major changes outlined in the House education panel’s portion of the package:

The bill would repeal subsidized loans — where the federal government pays the interest on the loan while a borrower is in school — for borrowers beginning July 1, 2026, according to the committee’s summary.

For unsubsidized loans disbursed on or after July 1, 2026, the maximum annual loan limit would be amended to the “median cost of students’ program of study.”

The total amount of federal student aid a person could receive annually would also be capped at the “median cost of college.” According to the committee, this is defined as “the median cost of attendance for students enrolled in the same program of study nationally and calculated by the (Education) Secretary using data from the previous award year.”

Aggregate limits, or the maximum amount a student can borrow, would cap at \$50,000 for undergraduate programs; \$100,000 for graduate programs; and \$150,000 for professional programs, such as law or medical school.

The bill also repeals the Grad PLUS program and places new restrictions on Parent PLUS loans.

Undergraduate students would be required to “exhaust their unsubsidized loans before parents can utilize Parent PLUS to cover their remaining cost of attendance,” according to the panel’s summary.

Canchola Bañez noted that the repeal of the Grad PLUS program would increase the likelihood that students would have to take out loans in the private market to fill gaps they would have normally filled by using Grad PLUS loans.

“We know that private loans have much less protections and consumer protections for borrowers,” she said, adding that “the more we push folks out of the federal market and into the private market, the less students and borrowers have access to those protections should things go wrong after school.”

‘Skin-in-the-game accountability’

The package also proposes “skin-in-the-game accountability” for colleges and universities, and institutions would have to pay the federal government “a percentage of the non-repayment balance associated with loans disbursed on or after July 1, 2027,” according to the panel’s summary.

Preston Cooper, senior fellow in higher education policy at a right-leaning think tank, the American Enterprise Institute, said “essentially, for colleges whose borrowers require some of this repayment assistance, if their payments are too low to cover interest on their loans, or they require that principal credit, the colleges will have to cover a share of the costs.”

“They won’t have to cover all the costs — the government will pay some of it — but they will have to cover some of the cost of providing borrowers with that repayment assistance, and I think the idea here is to create better incentives for colleges to make sure that they’re not loading students up with unnecessary debt,” he said.

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Pell Grant eligibility

The bill redefines full-time enrollment for Pell Grants — a federal government subsidy that helps low-income students pay for college.

The legislation raises the minimum number of credit hours to qualify for the maximum Pell Grant award from 12 credit hours per semester to 15 credit hours. Students would also be ineligible for a Pell Grant if their Student Aid Index — a formula-based number to determine financial aid eligibility — equals or surpasses twice the amount of the maximum Pell Grant.

Pell Grant eligibility would also be expanded for those in short-term programs between eight and 15 weeks long.

Repealing the SAVE plan

The bill creates just two repayment plans — a Standard Repayment Plan and a Repayment Assistance Plan, while eliminating the Biden administration's Saving on a Valuable Education, or SAVE, plan, which is currently tied up in federal court.

The Standard Repayment Plan includes fixed monthly payments and repayment terms between 10 to 25 years depending on how much one borrows, per the committee, while the Repayment Assistance Plan calculates payments based on a borrower's total adjusted gross income.

The Repayment Assistance Plan also includes a minimum \$10 monthly payment and "offers balance assistance to borrowers making their required on-time payments by waiving unpaid interest and providing a matching payment-to-principal of up to \$50," according to the panel.

Cooper said the Repayment Assistance Plan "fixes one of the long-standing problems in the income-driven repayment system for student loans, which is that a lot of borrowers' payments don't cover their accrued interest, which means that they see their balances rise over time."

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

Raising constitutional amendment vote threshold would backfire, says newly formed opposition group

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 15, 2025 4:05 PM

SIOUX FALLS — A constitutional amendment that South Dakota voters will consider in next year's general election will strengthen rather than weaken the influence of out-of-state organizations in state politics, opponents of the amendment said Thursday.

Lawmakers approved a resolution this winter asking voters to increase the threshold for approving a constitutional amendment ballot measure from a simple majority to 60%. The question will be posed as Constitutional Amendment L.

Opponents launched a "No on L" campaign Thursday. Matthew Schweich, president of the Voter Defense Association, said the amendment would ensure the "tyranny of the minority" in the state.

Sioux Falls Republican Rep. John Hughes introduced the resolution. He told South Dakota Searchlight that the amendment would protect the state's constitution from being amended by outside interests and prevent policy from being inserted into a document that's intended only to stipulate the structure and powers of the government.

"Political issues shouldn't be injected into the constitution," Hughes said, adding "we've discovered it's problematic and should be made more difficult."

Hughes said an influx of constitutional amendments in recent years, including four last year (among seven total ballot questions), resulted in voter fatigue and groups bringing in "out-of-state money by the truckloads to convince people to do things ultimately against their best interests." He specifically mentioned

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a 2022 amendment to expand Medicaid in the state, which passed with 56% of the vote, and a 2024 amendment to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution, which failed with 61% of votes against it.

Amendment L wouldn't change campaign finance laws to directly address out-of-state influence, Schweich said Thursday. Instead, he said, the amendment would make it more difficult for grassroots movements to succeed.

Schweich has worked on several ballot measure campaigns in recent years, most recently on a failed measure to legalize recreational marijuana in the state.

"If Amendment L takes effect and constitutional amendments require 60%, the only people who will be able to attempt them are big money, out-of-state groups, because they will have the resources to run all of the ads necessary to hit 60%," Schweich said.

Similar measures in 2018 and 2022 proposing to increase the voter threshold for constitutional amendments failed at the ballot box.

Passing constitutional amendments is already difficult, Schweich said. South Dakotans have passed nearly half of the 100 constitutional amendments placed on the ballot since 1972, when South Dakotans gained the right to initiate them, according to a report from the No on L campaign.

If Amendment L were to have taken effect in 1972, only 20% of amendments would have crossed the 60% threshold since then, according to the report.

That includes several amendments related to gambling in the state and 2012's Amendment O, which requires a balanced state budget each legislative session. The law passed with a 57% vote.

The 60% threshold would also have prevented Medicaid expansion, Hughes said, which currently has South Dakota on the hook for an "unfunded mandate" to cover millions of dollars of costs if the federal government reduces its share of Medicaid expansion funding.

"It's a constitutional train wreck," Hughes said. "The people who are pushing this agenda are unhappy with the views of a majority of South Dakotans, so they're trying to manipulate people to change our culture and our core values."

Supporters of the resolution during the legislative session included representatives with the National Rifle Association, South Dakota Right to Life, Protecting South Dakota Kids, South Dakota Retailers Association and South Dakota Family Voice Action.

Lawmakers endorsed three more constitutional amendments this winter that will be on next year's ballot, including a clarification that non-U.S. citizens can't vote in South Dakota elections, the creation of an unclaimed property trust fund, and a question to allow the Legislature to remove South Dakota from expanded Medicaid if the federal funding share declines.

Another six potential ballot questions from the public are already listed on the Secretary of State's website. Two of those questions have been approved for petition circulation.

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.

Judge shields Rapid City international student from removal while lawsuit proceeds

BY: JOHN HULT - MAY 15, 2025 2:54 PM

A woman from India who recently earned master's and doctoral degrees from South Dakota Mines in Rapid City can't be removed from the U.S. as her lawsuit against the federal government proceeds, a judge has ruled.

Priya Saxena sued U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem last month after Saxena learned that her visa had been revoked, and that Homeland Security had, in turn, terminated her record in the federal

database that clears international students to study in the country.

U.S. District Judge Karen Schreier ruled on Thursday that the terms of a temporary restraining order against Homeland Security that she'd applied in the case last month should extend out for the duration of the lawsuit's proceedings.

Saxena was among more than 1,000 students who'd had their student records scrubbed by Homeland Security in recent months. She's also one of many who'd earned court orders to reverse the record removal. Homeland Security opted to reinstate the student records last month, and had argued in South Dakota court documents that doing so made Saxena's lawsuit moot.

Through her lawyer, Jim Leach of Rapid City, Saxena argued that it wasn't moot, as without court intervention the government could resume its attempts to deport her at any point.

Saxena collected her degrees from Mines on Saturday.

Days later in court, Saxena told Schreier that she'd hoped to stay in the U.S. and apply to work under the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service's Optional Practical Training (OPT) program, which allows international students to stay in the U.S. and work in their field following graduation.

In Thursday's ruling, Judge Schreier wrote that the cloud of potential deportation proceedings should not hang over Saxena as she moves to participate in the post-degree work program.

"Saxena's uncertain legal status as it relates to her ability to apply for OPT programs and the more-than-speculative risk that she may be arrested and deported," Schreier wrote, justifies an injunction to stop the federal government from interfering with Saxena's plans.

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Raising constitutional amendment vote threshold would backfire, says newly formed opposition group

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 15, 2025 4:05 PM

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U.S. Supreme Court divided over Trump birthright citizenship ban, lower courts' powers

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - MAY 15, 2025 2:22 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. Supreme Court justices appeared split Thursday hearing a major case in which the Trump administration defended not only the president's order to end the constitutional right to birthright citizenship but also its efforts to limit nationwide injunctions.

Though the dispute before the justices relates to the executive order on birthright citizenship that President Donald Trump signed on his Inauguration Day, the Trump administration is asking the high court to focus on the issue of preliminary injunctions granted by lower courts, rather than the constitutionality of the order.

It means that the Supreme Court could potentially limit the power of federal judges in district courts who curtail the president's authority.

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The Trump administration argues that a federal judge granting a nationwide injunction that blocks the federal government from carrying out its policy anywhere in the country is unconstitutional.

The justices had before them three cases with injunctions levied by judges on Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship, from courts in Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington state. Under the 14th Amendment, all children born in the United States are considered citizens, regardless of their parents' legal status.

Trump's order, originally planned to go into effect Feb. 19, said that children born in the United States would not be automatically guaranteed citizenship if their parents were in the country without legal authorization or if they were on a temporary legal basis such as a work or student visa.

The justices questioned the practicality of a system in which judges can no longer issue nationwide injunctions and the logistics of instead having individuals file their own cases.

Liberal justice Elena Kagan said that would create a chaotic system, and conservative justice Neil Gorsuch said it would produce a "patchwork" of suits and noted how long it takes for a class — a group of affected people — to be put together for a court case.

Nationwide injunctions have stymied Trump's agenda, but were also frequent during the Joe Biden administration. However, Trump has lashed out at judges who have blocked his actions, which in March prompted a rare response from conservative Chief Justice John Roberts on the importance of an independent judiciary.

'Stateless' children

If the Supreme Court, dominated 6-3 by conservatives, decides that nationwide injunctions are not allowed in the birthright citizenship cases, it would temporarily create a patchwork of citizenship rules varying from state to state while the cases are litigated. Liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayor said it would create a class of stateless people.

"Thousands of children who are going to be born without citizenship papers that could render them stateless in some places because some of their parents' homes don't recognize children of their nationals unless those children are born in their countries," she said.

If birthright citizenship were to be eliminated, 255,000 children born each year would not be granted U.S. citizenship, according to a study by the think tank Migration Policy Institute.

40 injunctions since Jan. 20

Arguing on behalf of the Trump administration, U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer, in his opening remarks, noted that since Trump took office in January, there have been 40 nationwide injunctions.

"Universal injunctions exceed the judicial power granted in Article III, which exists only to address the injury to the complaining party," he said, referring to the Constitution. "They transgress the traditional balance of equitable authority, and it creates a host of practical problems."

Sauer touched on the merits of birthright citizenship, arguing that the 14th Amendment was only meant to grant citizenship to newly freed Black people, and not for immigrants in the country without legal authorization.

"The suggestion that our position on the merits is weak is profoundly mistaken," Sauer said. "That kind of snap judgment on the merits that was presented in the lower courts is exactly the problem with the issue of racing to issue these nationwide injunctions."

He said that the Trump administration would follow the high court's ruling on birthright citizenship.

Sotomayor said that the Supreme Court has ruled four times to uphold birthright citizenship, starting in 1898, in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, in which the court ruled children born in the U.S. are citizens.

The justice that seemed most inclined to agree with Sauer's argument was conservative Clarence Thomas, who noted the use of nationwide injunctions began in the 1960s and the U.S. has survived without them.

However, conservative Justice Samuel Alito criticized that district court judges "are vulnerable to an occupational disease, which is the disease of thinking that 'I am right and I can do whatever I want.'"

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Citizenship 'turned on and off'

New Jersey Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum, who represented the states that sought an injunction against the birthright citizenship order, laid out how the patchwork of citizenship means that citizenship would be "turned on" and off depending on state lines.

"Since the 14th Amendment, our country has never allowed American citizenship to vary based on the state in which someone resides, because the post-Civil War nation wrote into our Constitution that citizens of the United States and of the states would be one and the same without variation across state lines," he said.

Immigrant rights' groups and several pregnant women in Maryland who are not U.S. citizens filed the case in Maryland; four states — Washington, Arizona, Illinois, and Oregon — filed the case in Washington state; and 18 Democratic state attorneys general filed the challenge in Massachusetts.

Those 18 states are California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wisconsin. The District of Columbia and the county and city of San Francisco also joined.

Feigenbaum argued that the birthright citizenship case before the justices is the rare instance in which nationwide injunctions are needed because under a patchwork system, a burden would be created for states and local facilities such as hospitals where births occur.

"We genuinely don't know how this could possibly work on the ground," he said.

Kelsi Corkran, who argued on behalf of immigrant rights groups, said that the Trump order is "blatantly unlawful," and that a nationwide injunction against the executive order was warranted.

"It is well settled that preliminary injunctions may benefit non-parties when necessary to provide complete relief to the plaintiffs or when warranted by extraordinary circumstances, both of which are true here," she said.

Corkran is the Supreme Court director at Georgetown's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection.

Lots of injunctions

The justices seemed frustrated with the frequent use of preliminary injunctions from the lower courts not only in the Trump administration, but others that occurred during the Biden administration.

Kagan noted that during the first Trump administration, suits were filed in the more liberal courts of California, and that during the Biden administration suits were filed in the more conservative courts in Texas.

"There is a big problem that is created by that mechanism," Kagan said.

She added that it's led to frequent emergency requests to the high court.

Conservative Justice Brett Kavanaugh agreed, and called it a "bipartisan" issue that has occurred during Republican and Democratic presidencies.

While the justices seemed concerned about the frequent use of nationwide injunctions, they also seemed eager to address the merits of the constitutionality of the birthright citizenship executive order that could potentially impact newborns.

Kavanaugh returned to the question of the logistics of birthright citizenship and how it would even be enforced.

He pressed Sauer on how hospitals and local governments would implement the policy and if they would be burdened.

"What would states do with a newborn?" Kavanaugh asked, adding that the executive order requires a quick implementation within 30 days.

Sauer said that hospitals wouldn't have to do anything differently because the executive order directs the federal government to "not accept documents that have the wrong designation of citizenship from people who are subject to the (executive) order."

Kavanaugh asked how the federal government would know who is subject to the order.

"The federal officials will have to figure that out," Sauer said.

Any decision on the case will come before the Supreme Court's July Fourth recess.

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

SD tests for 'forever chemicals' in rivers to identify, address potential contamination

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 15, 2025 9:36 AM

South Dakota's state government is testing for "forever chemicals" in rivers across the state.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s, including in modern products such as nonstick cookware and water-resistant clothing, and don't break down easily in the environment or in the human body. Research indicates PFAS exposure may be linked to negative developmental and reproductive effects, and an increased risk of some cancers.

Concerns about their prevalence in the environment and their impacts on human health have grown steadily in recent years, as they've been discovered in drinking water, fish and food packaging.

The Biden administration set first-ever limits on the chemicals in last year. EPA-mandated testing has found them in nearly half of Americans' drinking water. Publicly available test results found a type of PFAS called perfluorooctane sulfonic acid at Mount Rushmore National Memorial as well as smaller amounts of other PFAS contaminants in Aberdeen, Harrisburg, Rapid Valley Sanitary District, Lincoln County Rural Water System and the Mni Wiconi water system. The Trump administration is planning to weaken drinking water limits on PFAS, according to Politico.

The state Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources began testing rivers this spring to "establish a baseline" for the presence of PFAS in surface waters across the state, according to Ben Koisti, spokesman for the department.

The department will use results to determine risks and help "identify and address potential contaminant sources," Koisti said in an emailed statement.

"The results can also be beneficial for water systems that use surface water as their water source," Koisti said. "If PFAS contamination is identified in an area and at concentrations that pose a potential risk to a drinking water system, DANR will take action to further identify the source and mitigate the contamination to protect the impacted water supply."

Testing is underway with additional sampling planned at the 30 testing sites this fall. Results will be posted on the department's website. The East Dakota Water Development District tested 11 sites along the Big Sioux River in eastern South Dakota last year, finding the contaminants were most concentrated downstream of cities like Watertown and Sioux Falls in its preliminary data.

The department's sampling sites were selected based on geographic distribution, population density, and whether the surface water contributes to a drinking water supply. There are 26 water systems in the state that rely on surface water for drinking water.

The project costs about \$15,000 using federal EPA funds through the Public Water System Supervision grant.

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.

OPENING MAY 2ND
CLOSING JUNE 2ND

WEBER LANDSCAPING GREENHOUSE

620 WEST THIRD AVENUE

GROTON

HOURS OF OPERATION

M-F 10-6

SAT 10-4

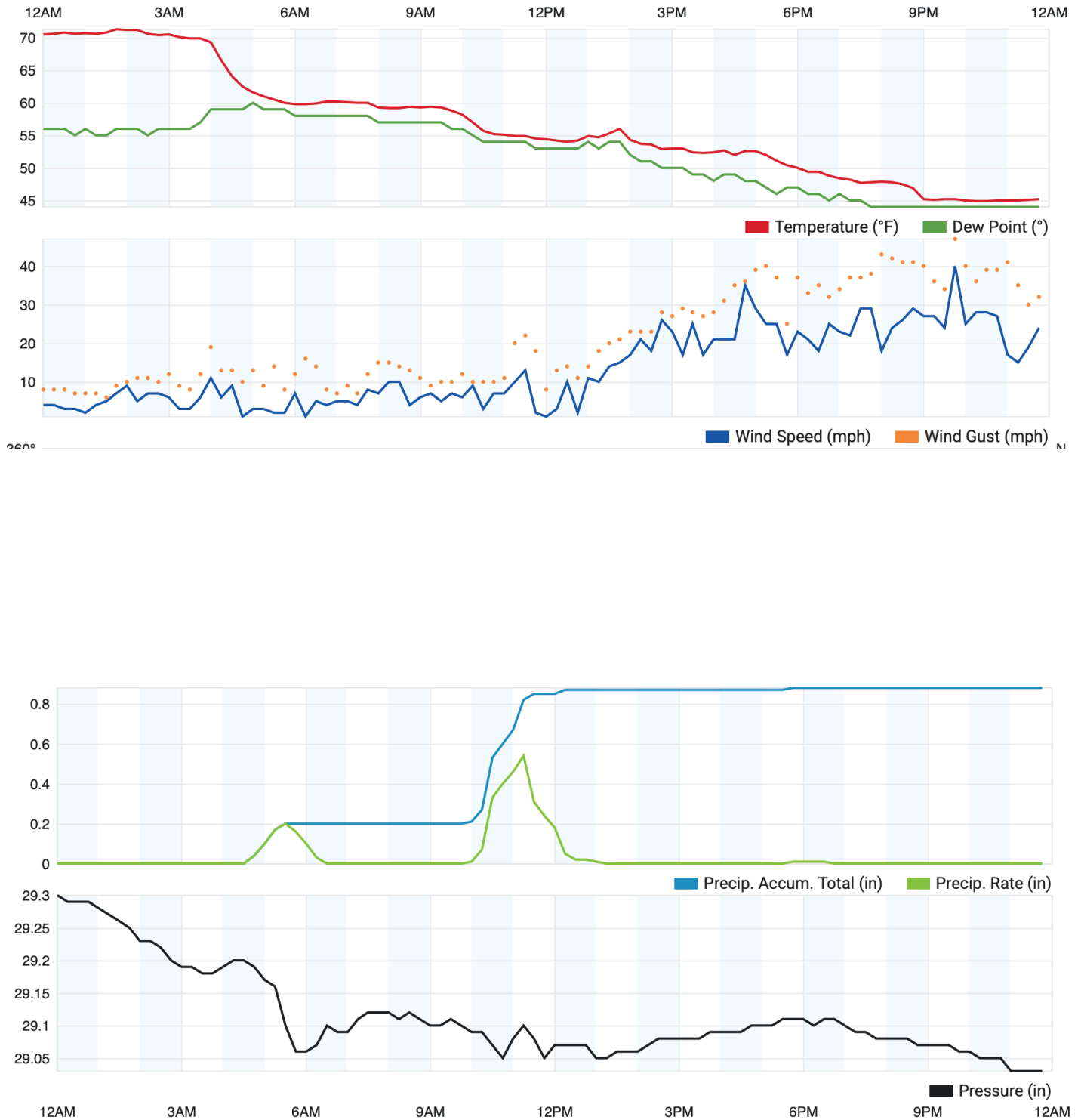
SUN 12-4



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

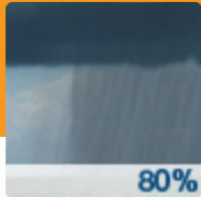


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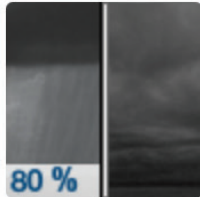
Friday



High: 49 °F

Showers and
Windy

Friday Night



Low: 38 °F

Showers and
Breezy then
Cloudy

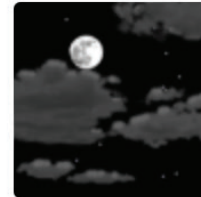
Saturday



High: 57 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Saturday Night



Low: 32 °F

Partly Cloudy
then Frost

Sunday



High: 59 °F

Frost then
Slight Chance
Showers



Frost/Freeze Potential For Sunday Morning

May 16, 2025
3:44 AM

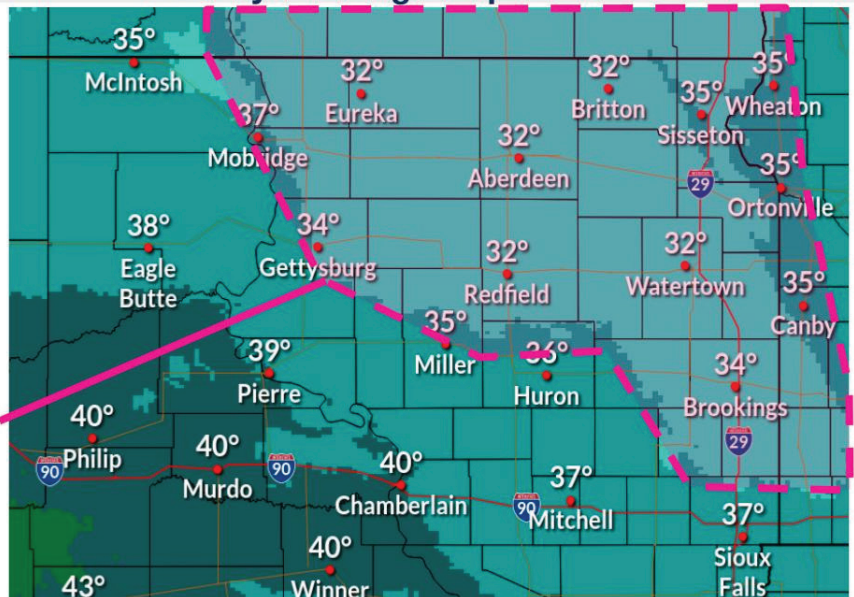
Key Messages:

- + High temperatures only in the mid 50s Saturday
- + Clouds dissipating Saturday afternoon
- + Weakening northeast winds

= Temperatures Near Freezing!

**Main Area Of Concern For
Widespread Near/Sub Freezing
Temperatures Sunday Morning**

Sunday Morning Temperatures



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Potential exists for a widespread frost/freeze coming Sunday morning with light winds, clear skies and cold temperatures.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 71 °F at 1:36 AM

Low Temp: 45 °F at 10:15 PM

Wind: 47 mph at 9:42 PM

Precip: : 0.88 (+.21 since midnight)

Day length: 15 hours, 00 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1934

Record Low: 23 in 2014

Average High: 71

Average Low: 44

Average Precip in May.: 1.77

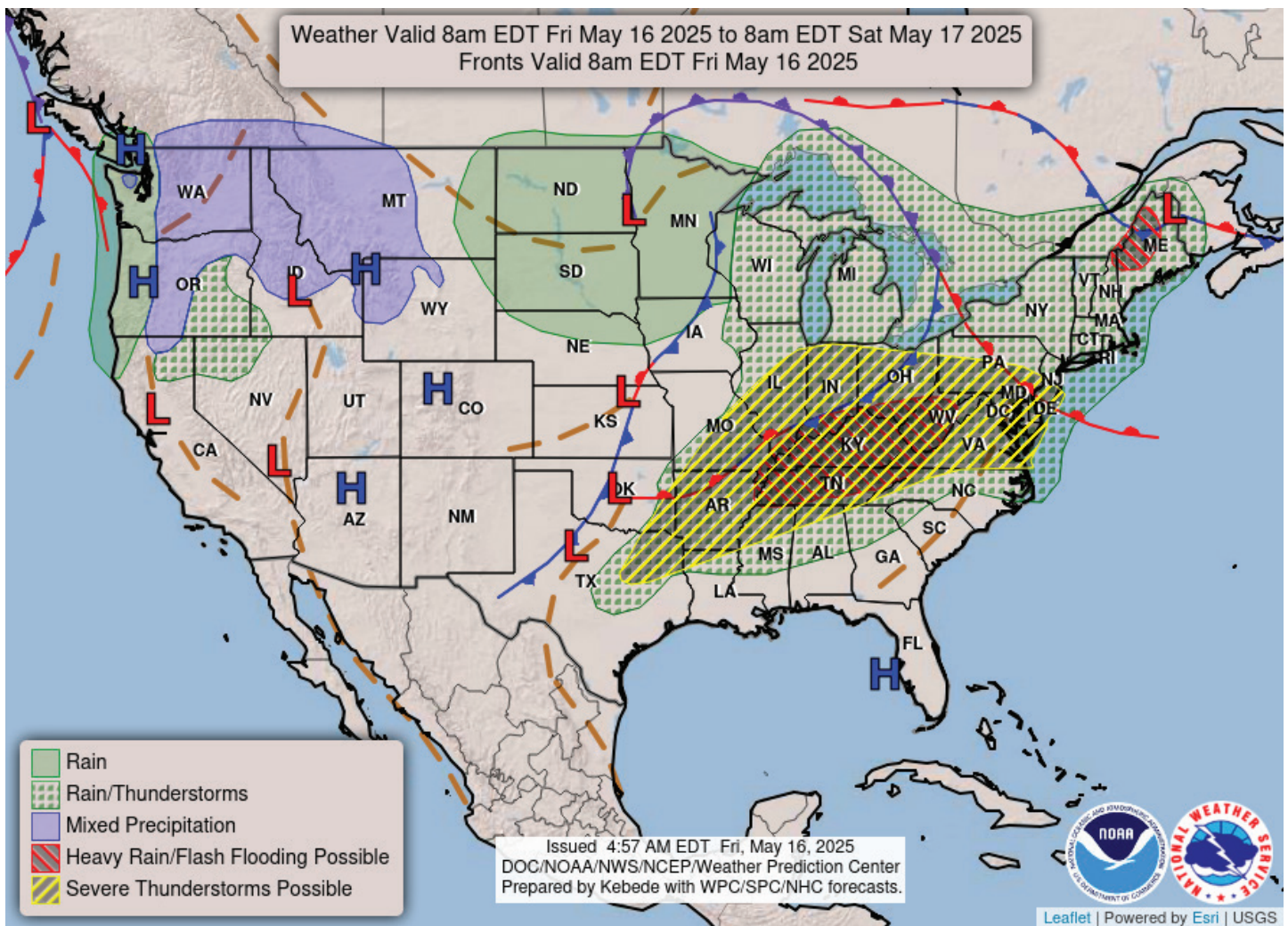
Precip to date in May.: 1.18

Average Precip to date: 5.74

Precip Year to Date: 3.81

Sunset Tonight: 8:59:12 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:57:17 am



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Today in Weather History

May 16th, 1883: Benchmark flooding in the Black Hills occurred in 1883, with highly high flows reported throughout the hills that resulted from heavy rainfall on top of snowmelt.

May 16th, 1929: On this day, Aberdeen recorded 3.0 inches of snow, the latest measurable snowfall for the city on record.

May 16th, 1992: It was a wild day across the tri-state region of Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa, with tornadoes and destructive straight-line winds. A tornado damaged three grain bins and two farm wagons in Cedar County of northeast Nebraska before crossing into Dixon County. As it traveled east, it destroyed two barns and a garage and was responsible for killing between 5,000 and 10,000 chickens at a chicken farm. In northwest Iowa, Sioux City reported winds of around 60 miles an hour, causing minor damage. Elsewhere, winds gusted as high as 75 miles an hour in Spencer and 74 miles an hour in Le Mars.

1874 - The Mill Creek disaster occurred west of Northhampton MA. Dam slippage resulted in a flash flood which claimed 143 lives, and caused a million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1924 - The temperature at Blitzen OR soared to 108 degrees to set a state record for the month of May. The record was later tied at Pelton Dam on the 31st of May in 1986. (The Weather Channel)

1952 - High winds in the Wasatch Canyon of Utah struck Ogden and Brigham City. Winds at Hill Air Force Base gusted to 92 mph. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was a summer-like day as thunderstorms abounded across the nation. Thunderstorms in Texas drenched Guadalupe County with more than three inches of rain resulting in flash flooding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from Florida to New York State. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Havre, MT, reported a record high of 95 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather in the south central U.S. Thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes, and there were 180 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A tornado at Cleburne, TX, caused 30 million dollars damage. A violent (F-4) tornado touched down near Brackettville, TX, and a strong (F-3) tornado killed one person and injured 28 others at Jarrell, TX. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Shamrock, TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Oklahoma and northeastern Texas to the Upper Ohio Valley. Thunderstorms spawned seventeen tornadoes, including a twister which killed one person and injured another north of Corning, AR. There were 128 reports of large hail or damaging winds. Strong thunderstorm winds killed one person and injured six others at Folsomville, IN, and injured another five persons in southeastern Hardin County KY. In Arkansas, baseball size hail was reported near Fouke and near El Dorado. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



WHAT WOULD HE THINK?

A mother lectured her daughter about the importance of keeping family secrets private. One day she got in trouble in school, and the principal called her mother to tell her about the trouble her daughter was in.

After scolding the girl, she said, "Now you must go to your room and ask God to forgive you."

Later, when the family sat down for dinner, she asked, "Sara, did you ask God to forgive you?"

"No, Mom, I didn't," said Sara. "I knew that you wouldn't want Him to know about our family scandals!"

Sara had no doubt that everything she did and everything she said "whether good or bad" was seen or heard by God.

It was true for Job. It is true for us. Nothing that we have done or will ever do will escape His notice because nothing can be hidden from Him. As Job was speaking of the life he lived in the presence of God, he was able to say, "I have not committed any sin in my heart against God or my neighbor." How many of us can repeat those words?

Prayer: Help us to realize, Lord, that we cannot hide anything from You. May we realize the importance of the way we live and strive to be like Your Son. In His Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Isn't it calamity for the wicked and misfortune for those who do evil? Doesn't he see everything I do and every step I take? Job 31:3-4

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: 05.13.25

6 29 33 47 68 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$122,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 27 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.14.25

8 17 38 42 50 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$34,360,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 42 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.15.25

7 16 17 20 23 4

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 57 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.14.25

9 11 18 19 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 57 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.14.25

2 44 55 56 67 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 26 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.14.25

4 10 24 29 53 4

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$123,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 26 Mins 37 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

Homeland Security looks to buy a new \$50M jet for secretary and Coast Guard officials

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

The Department of Homeland Security wants to spend about \$50 million to buy a new long-range Gulfstream jet to replace an aging one used by Secretary Kristi Noem and top Coast Guard and DHS officials.

The request for funding, to come from the Coast Guard's 2025 fiscal year budget, came up during a House appropriations subcommittee meeting on Wednesday. Democratic Rep. Lauren Underwood of Illinois said she was "horrified" to receive a "last-minute addition" to the service's budget proposal for the jet, noting Noem has another Gulfstream to use.

"We should be investing in our national security and improving the lives of our Coasties — not wasting taxpayer dollars on luxury travel and political stunts," Underwood, the ranking member of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Appropriations, said in a social media post. The Coast Guard is overseen by DHS.

The request for a new jet comes as President Donald Trump considers accepting a luxury Boeing 747-8 jumbo jet as a gift from the ruling family of Qatar.

Adm. Kevin Lunday, the acting commandant, said the Coast Guard, like the other military services, operates two military "long-range command and control aircraft" and the one being replaced is more than 20 years old.

"Like a lot of the rest of our operational aviation fleet and our cutters and our boats and our shore facilities, it's old and it's approaching obsolescence and the end of its service life," he said during the hearing. "The avionics are increasingly obsolete. The communications are increasingly unreliable, and it is in need of recapitalization like much of the fleet."

Lunday, who became acting commandant on Jan. 21 after Trump, a Republican, fired Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan, said the jet is needed to provide the DHS secretary, deputy secretary, himself, the acting vice commandant and two area commanders with "secure, reliable, on-demand communications and movement to go forward."

The current plane is also "outside the Gulfstream's service life, and well beyond operational usage hours for a corporate aircraft," Assistant DHS Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said in a written statement, calling its replacement "a matter of safety."

The agency did not immediately respond to questions about Noem's use of the plane or other details about the agency's request.

The Coast Guard received its other long-range command and control C-37B aircraft in 2022, saying at the time its mission was to "operate as a command and control platform anywhere in the world for the secretary of Homeland Security, the commandant of the Coast Guard, and other top DHS leadership." That jet, which has a range of 5,000 nautical miles and can carry 12 people, is based at Coast Guard Air Station Washington, D.C.

Opulence, business deals and a \$400M plane from Qatar: Takeaways from Trump's Mideast tour

By ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — President Donald Trump used the first major foreign trip of his second term to outline a vision for restoring global stability that is grounded in pragmatism and self-interest rather than values, holding out U.S. ties to wealthy Gulf countries as a model for America's longtime foes.

His four-day swing through Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which ends Friday, put a spotlight on Trump's transactional approach to foreign affairs as he was feted by autocratic rulers with a trio of lavish state visits where there was heavy emphasis on economic and security partnerships.

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His trip played out against the backdrop of stubborn global conflicts, including Gaza and Ukraine, that showed the limits of his influence. But Trump insisted he was turning the page on American "intervention-ism" in the region as he moved to recognize the new government in Syria for the first time and prodded Iran to engage on nuclear talks before it's too late.

Some takeaways from Trump's travels:

Trump marveled at Gulf state opulence but held his tongue on human rights

Presidential trips to the Middle East usually feature at least some public calls for authoritarian governments to improve their human rights efforts. Not this one, as Trump celebrated his business deals with Gulf royals and admired their wealth.

Trump toured the marble and gilded palaces of Gulf rulers and deemed them "perfecto" and "very hard to buy." He praised the "gleaming marvels" of the skyline in Saudi Arabia. And he groused about the "much less impressive" Air Force One.

In Trump's remarks at a VIP business conference in Riyadh, he went out of his way to distance himself from the actions of past administrations, the days when he said American officials would fly in "in beautiful planes, giving you lectures on how to live and how to govern your own affairs."

Rights advocates took that as a pledge of nonintervention, swearing off some of the pressure past U.S. presidents have brought to bear on partners to varying degrees to ease up on detentions, suppression of critics and other issues.

"It's absolute support for absolute monarchy," said Saudi exile Abdullah Alaoudh. His father, a Saudi cleric with a wide following there, is imprisoned in the kingdom.

Some rights advocates said Trump officials gave them private assurances the administration was working on behalf of detained Americans and rights advocates. Tommy Pigott, a deputy spokesman at the State Department, declined to say whether Trump raised those or other rights issues in discussions with Gulf royals.

Thwarted by Putin

While Trump was in the Mideast, Vladimir Putin opted to skip direct peace talks with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy despite the U.S. president's strong calls for them to meet face to face.

Trump has been pushing Putin and Zelenskyy to move with greater haste to end Russia's grinding war in Ukraine.

But after it became clear Putin wouldn't be attending talks in Turkey this week and would instead be sending underlings to Istanbul, an annoyed Trump insisted he knew all along that it was highly likely Putin would be a no-show.

"I don't believe anything's going to happen whether you like it or not, until he and I get together," Trump said. "But we're going to have to get it solved because too many people are dying."

As he wrapped up his visit on Friday, Trump said the face-to-face would happen "as soon as we can set it up."

Trump was scheduled to fly back to Washington on Friday, but tried to keep people guessing until the end. He teased late Thursday that he would be heading to a "destination unknown" — "probably" Washington, he added. His opaque language stoked speculation that he might make a drop-by to Turkey.

But on Friday morning, he told reporters he needed to get back to Washington. His daughter Tiffany had her first child while the president has been away.

"I would actually leave here and go," Trump said. "I do want to see my beautiful grandson."

On Syria sanctions, Trump takes a leap of faith

Just two months ago, the Trump administration wasn't sold on Syria's interim government led by Ahmad al-Sharaa, the onetime al-Qaida-affiliated insurgent. They worried the Syrian president didn't have the legitimacy to govern the country's ethnically diverse population.

Clashes broke out in early March, killing hundreds and targeting many more members of the Alawite religious minority to which the ousted Syrian leader Bashar Assad belongs.

The moment gave the Trump White House pause about easing sanctions on Syria. But Trump signaled Monday that he was having a change of heart and was moving toward lifting the Syria sanctions. A day

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later, he announced the move during an address to Gulf leaders.

Trump then took it another step by agreeing to meet al-Sharaa.

Trump said he was impressed with al-Sharaa, who not that long ago had a \$10 million U.S. bounty on his head. The president called him a "young, attractive guy" with a "very strong past."

Trump said it was recommendations from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that nudged him to take a chance on al-Sharra.

"President Erdogan called me and said: 'Is there any way you could do that? Because if you don't do that, they don't have a chance,'" Trump said. "So, I did it."

Trump's fuzzy math on display

Throughout the trip, Trump felt more than comfortable dishing out exaggeration and hyperbole.

"This has been an amazing trip." Trump told reporters Thursday as Air Force One was about to land in Qatar. "We've raised trillions of dollars of investment for our country." A little later he put the figure at \$4 trillion.

That figure is about two times the combined gross domestic products of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, meaning that any announced investments would likely accrue over several years — if at all — in ways that might not show up in overall U.S. economic growth numbers.

Boeing confirmed that Qatar's \$96 billion purchase of its 787 and 777X jets was the largest order for 787s and wide body jets in the company's history. Trump enthused it was "the biggest order in the history of, I think, aviation, certainly of that size" of jets.

Trump also went overboard in running down the economic record of his predecessor, Democrat Joe Biden, at one point declaring, "The days of economic misery under the last administration are rapidly giving way to the greatest economy in the history of the world."

The U.S. economy grew at 2.8% last year. It declined at an annualized rate of 0.3% during the first three months of this year.

Intractable conflicts remain just that

While Trump's trip initially was conceived as a visit to reward countries that invest in the United States, Trump at one point hoped it also would herald significant steps to end the wars in Gaza and Ukraine. Positive news on both fronts proved elusive.

Trump barely mentioned either conflict on his trip — and when he did, it was generally in the context of his assertion that they wouldn't have occurred had he won reelection in 2020.

As Israel stepped up an offensive in Gaza — a prelude to a promised full takeover of the territory if Hamas doesn't release the remaining hostages in its captivity — Trump was again musing about the creation of a "freedom zone" in its territory. It's a notion rejected by Palestinians and the broader Arab world because Trump's plan would relocate civilians from Gaza to allow for rebuilding.

Israel conducted significant airstrikes all week in Gaza as Trump was in the region and the fighting on the ground appeared to escalate Friday morning even before Trump left the UAE.

Meanwhile, Trump said "a lot of people are starving" in Gaza, a rare acknowledgement of the humanitarian crisis in the territory. Speaking to reporters at a business forum in Abu Dhabi on the final day of his trip to the Middle East, Trump said, "We're looking at Gaza."

"And we've got to get that taken care of. A lot of people are starving. A lot of people are — there's a lot of bad things going on."

Ethics issues follow along as Trump travels the Mideast

Trump was already facing questions about conflicts of interest for traveling to the Middle East to shape U.S. policy at a time when his family's business interests in the region have boomed. He attempted to quiet worries about national security and constitutional questions by insisting he's smart to accept a \$400 million luxury plane from Qatar and use it as Air Force One.

"Why should our military, and therefore our taxpayers, be forced to pay hundreds of millions of Dollars when they can get it for FREE," Trump posted on his social media site during his Middle East swing.

The president also dodged questions about a state-backed investment company in Abu Dhabi using a

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Trump family-aligned stablecoin for a \$2 billion investment in the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange. "I don't know anything about it," he said.

Beyond that, the Trump family has piled up deals to license its brand for real estate projects, and to build Trump towers and golf courses, around the Middle East. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt says it's "frankly ridiculous" to wonder if those profits might influence Trump's governing decisions.

Construction magnate surrenders on negligence charges over Bangkok building collapse in earthquake

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A construction magnate, builders, designers and engineers surrendered to police Friday on criminal negligence charges for the deadly collapse of a Bangkok high-rise in the March 28 earthquake that hit Myanmar.

Premchai Karnasuta, the president of Italian-Thai Development Co, the main Thai contractor for the building project, as well as designers and engineers were among 17 charged with the felony of professional negligence causing death, Bangkok deputy police chief Noppasin Poonsawat said.

Noppasin said those who met police on Friday formally denied the charges. Several have previously issued public denials in response to allegations in the media.

Ninety-two people were confirmed dead in the rubble of the building that had been under construction and a small number of other people remain unaccounted for. The building, which was to become a new State Audit Office, was the only one in Thailand to collapse in the earthquake that was centered in neighboring Myanmar. The search for victims at the site has been halted, though efforts to identify remains through DNA will continue.

Noppasin said at a news conference that evidence and testimony from experts suggested the building plan did not meet standards and codes. The Bangkok Post newspaper said police had also determined the project showed "structural flaws in the core lift shaft and substandard concrete and steel."

Thai media have reported allegations of wrongdoing in the project almost every day since the building's collapse, many of them involving irregular documentation for the project. Their reports have highlighted the role of Italian-Thai's Chinese joint venture partner, the China Railway No. 10 company, which is involved in projects around the world.

One of the 17 charged Friday was Chinese executive Zhang Chuanling, a director at China Railway No. 10's joint venture with Italian-Thai Development. He was previously arrested last month on a charge of violating Thai business law by wrongly using Thai nominees to serve as the Chinese firm's proxies to allegedly control the joint venture. Three Thai executives were also arrested on the charge.

A Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for the 17 on the negligence charge on Thursday. Noppasin said 15 turned themselves in at a police station in the morning and the remaining two were expected to do so later Friday.

The epicenter of the quake was in central Myanmar, where it killed more than 3,700 people and caused major damage in Mandalay, the country's second biggest city, and the capital Naypyitaw.

Premchai's case is his second major tangle with the law. In 2019, he was convicted of wildlife poaching and served about three years in prison.

He was found guilty of killing protected animals and illegal possession of weapons after park rangers found a hunting party at a wildlife sanctuary in 2018 with carcasses of a rare black panther, a kalij pheasant and a barking deer. The panther had been butchered and its meat cooked for soup.

Russia and Ukraine to hold their first direct peace talks in 3 years amid low expectations

By HANNA ARHIROVA and ANDREW WILKS Associated Press

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) — Russia and Ukraine are due to hold their first direct peace talks in three years

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Friday, gathering in Istanbul for Turkish-brokered negotiations, but officials and observers expect them to yield little immediate progress on stopping the more than 3-year war.

A Ukrainian delegation led by Defense Minister Rustem Umerov was due to meet with a low-level Russian team headed by presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky.

The latest push to end the fighting got off to a rocky start on Thursday, when Russian President Vladimir Putin spurned an offer by Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy to meet face-to-face. Delegations from the two countries also flew to different Turkish cities and put together teams of significantly different diplomatic heft for possible talks.

Although expectations for a possible Putin-Zelenskyy meeting were low, the apparent lack of traction in peace efforts frustrated hopes of bold steps being taken in Turkey toward reaching a settlement.

The two sides are far apart in their conditions for ending the war, and U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday during a trip to the Middle East that a meeting between himself and Putin was crucial to breaking the deadlock.

On Friday, Trump said a meeting with Putin would happen "as soon as we can set it up."

"I think it's time for us to just do it," Trump told reporters in Abu Dhabi.

Ukraine has accepted a U.S. and European proposal for a full, 30-day ceasefire, but Putin has effectively rejected it by imposing far-reaching conditions.

Meantime, Russian forces are preparing a fresh military offensive, Ukrainian government and Western military analysts say.

Russia's invasion has killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, the U.N. says, and razed towns and villages. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers have died, and likely a larger number of Russian troops, officials and analysts say.

A Friday morning drone attack on the northeastern Ukrainian city of Kupiansk killed a 55-year-old woman and wounded four men, Oleh Syniehubov, head of the Kharkiv Regional Military Administration, said. All the victims worked for a municipal utility.

After Putin didn't take up Zelenskyy's challenge to sit down with him in the Turkish capital on Thursday, the Ukrainian president accused Moscow of not making a serious effort to end the war by sending a low-level negotiating team that he described as "a theater prop."

Even so, Zelenskyy said that he was sending a team headed by his defense minister to Friday's meeting in Istanbul. That would show Trump that Ukraine is determined to press ahead with peace efforts despite Russian foot-dragging, Zelenskyy said, amid intense diplomatic maneuvering by Kyiv and Moscow.

The Russian delegation also includes three other senior officials, the Kremlin said. Putin also appointed four lower-level officials as "experts" for the talks.

A senior Ukrainian official said Kyiv's delegation had a "real mandate" to engage in substantive talks, while casting doubt on Russia's readiness to negotiate in good faith.

"Everything depends on whether Russians are ready and have the necessary mandate or is this just Putin sending low-level representatives in order to stall the process," the official said on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks. "We will discover this very soon when delegations meet."

A flurry of diplomatic activity took place in Istanbul before the talks.

Ukrainian officials held an early-morning meeting with national security advisers from the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom to coordinate positions, a senior Ukrainian official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

The U.S. team was led by retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, while Umerov and presidential office chief Andriy Yermak represented Ukraine, the official said.

A three-way meeting between Turkey, the U.S. and Ukraine also took place, Turkish Foreign Ministry officials said. The U.S. side included Secretary of State Marco Rubio as well as Kellogg.

Rubio on Thursday said he didn't foresee major developments in Istanbul.

"We don't have high expectations of what will happen tomorrow. And frankly, at this point, I think it's abundantly clear that the only way we're going to have a breakthrough here is between President Trump

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and President Putin," Rubio told reporters Thursday in Antalya, Turkey.

Zelenskyy, meantime, flew to Albania to attend a meeting Friday of the leaders of 47 European countries to discuss security, defense and democratic standards against the backdrop of the war.

After Putin is a no-show at talks in Turkey, Trump says he'll meet the Russian leader soon

By ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — President Donald Trump said Friday he's moving to set up direct talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin as soon as he can.

Trump's push for a face-to-face meeting comes after Putin opted to skip talks between Russia and Ukraine set for Friday in Turkey.

"I think it's time for us to just do it," Trump told reporters as he wrapped a four-day visit to the Middle East.

Trump reiterated that he wasn't surprised that Putin skipped out on the talks. Putin didn't want to go because he's not there, Trump said.

Trump added that he would hold a meeting with Putin "as soon as we can set it up."

"I would actually leave here and go," said Trump, who noted his daughter Tiffany just gave birth to her first child. "I do want to see my beautiful grandson."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy agreed to take part in the talks as Trump pressed for the leaders to find a solution. But Putin spurned the call to meet face-to-face with Zelenskyy.

Trump has pressed both sides to quickly come to a war-ending agreement. Zelenskyy has agreed to an American plan for an initial 30-day halt to hostilities, but Russia has not signed on and has continued to strike at targets inside Ukraine.

Still, Russia and Ukraine are to hold their first direct peace talks in three years Friday, gathering in Istanbul for negotiations. Officials and observers expect them to yield little immediate progress on stopping the more than 3-year war.

"He didn't go, and I understand that," Trump said. "We're going to get it done. We got to get it done. Five thousand young people are being killed every single week on average, and we're going to get it done."

Trump on Thursday told reporters that a meeting between himself and Putin was crucial to breaking the deadlock.

"I don't believe anything's going to happen whether you like it or not, until he and I get together," Trump said. "But we're going to have to get it solved because too many people are dying."

Trump's Mideast trip splashes out on deals and diplomacy but is quiet on human rights

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Saudi royalty and American billionaires were in the front row for a speech in Riyadh where President Donald Trump condemned what he called past U.S. interference in the wealthy Gulf states.

Gone were the days when American officials would fly to the Middle East to give "you lectures on how to live, and how to govern your own affairs," Trump said at a Saudi investment forum this week.

No one in the audience sat closer, or listened more intently, than Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

Ordinary Arabs listened, too, including Saudi journalists, rights advocates, businesspeople, writers and others who had fled the kingdom. Their fear: Trump's words underlined a message that the United States was pulling back from its longtime role as an imperfect, sporadic but powerful advocate for human rights around the world.

"It was painful to see," said Abdullah Alaoudh, whose 68-year-old father, a Saudi cleric with a wide following, was among hundreds of royals, civil society figures, rights advocates and others jailed by Prince

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Mohammed in the first years of his rise to de facto ruler.

Saudi Arabia has since freed many of those people in what groups say is the crown prince's improved human rights record following past international criticism and isolation. But Abdullah's father, Salman Alaoudh, is among the many still behind bars.

Trump was speaking directly to the prince — "the person who tortured my father, who has banned my family" from leaving the kingdom, said Abdullah, who advocates for detained and imprisoned people in Saudi Arabia from the United States.

The Saudi embassy did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

A White House spokeswoman, Anna Kelly, said Trump's speech "celebrated the ever-growing partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia" and a Middle East working toward peace. Kelly did not respond to a question about whether the president had raised human rights issues with Gulf leaders.

A State Department spokesman, Tommy Pigott, called Trump's discussions with Gulf leaders private.

Less attention than usual on human rights

Trump's first major trip of his second term — also including Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — drew far less attention to human rights than is typical for U.S. visits to autocratic countries with spotty records on free speech, fair trials and other rights.

Human rights groups posted concerns about the Gulf countries, but some refrained from more vocal objections. Saudi exiles in the U.S. also skipped the usual pointed comments on social media. And the administration faced few of the typical questions on whether a visiting president had used the trip to press for the release of detained Americans or imprisoned activists.

That's partly due to human rights improvements in Saudi Arabia, groups say. But the silence also reflects what some organizations call a worsening human rights picture in the United States.

Ibrahim Almadi, a Florida man seeking U.S. help getting his father home from Saudi Arabia, said he tried in vain to score a commitment from a Republican lawmaker or other official to urge Trump to raise his father's cause. His now 75-year-old Saudi American father, Saad Almadi, had been jailed over critical tweets about the Saudi government and now is under an exit ban from the country.

"It is a love relationship between Trump and MBS," the son said. One mention of the case to Trump, then one comment by Trump to the Saudi crown prince, and "I will have my father back."

Some voices have gone silent

Some Saudis who fled to the U.S. say they are pulling back from social media and any public criticism of Saudi officials, fearing the same detentions and deportations faced by some immigrants and pro-Palestinian protesters under the Trump administration.

Democracy in the Arab World Now — the nonprofit founded by Jamal Khashoggi, the U.S.-based journalist killed at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul — is advising Arabs with unsettled immigration status in the U.S. to "be cautious when they travel, to be thoughtful about what they say," executive director Sarah Leah Whitson said.

The U.S. intelligence community said the crown prince oversaw the 2018 plot, while he has denied any involvement. The killing of Khashoggi, who used his Washington Post column to urge Prince Mohammed to institute reforms, led then-President Joe Biden to pledge to make Saudi royals into pariahs.

But soaring U.S. gasoline prices in 2022 spurred Biden to visit the oil-exporting giant, where he had an awkward fist bump with the prince.

In his second term, Trump has tightened his embrace of Prince Mohammed and other wealthy Gulf leaders, seeking big investments in the U.S., while Trump's elder sons are developing major real estate projects in the region.

The human rights record in Saudi Arabia

Burned by the condemnation and initial isolation over Khashoggi, Prince Mohammed has quietly released some of those imprisoned for seeking women's right to drive, for critical tweets, for publicly proposing Saudi policy changes and more. The prince also has liberalized legal and social conditions for women, part of a campaign to attract business and diversify Saudi Arabia's economy.

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But many others remain in prison. Thousands, including Almadi, face exit bans, rights groups say. Those organizations cite another reason that activists are staying quieter than usual during the trip: the United States' own human rights reputation.

Besides deportations, Whitson pointed to U.S. military support to Israel during its 19-month offensive against Hamas in Gaza, which has killed thousands of civilians. The Trump administration says it's trying to secure a ceasefire.

Americans faulting another country's abuses now "just doesn't pass the laugh test," Whitson said. "The United States does not have the moral standing, the legal standing, the credibility to be chastising another country at this moment in time."

New Jersey Transit train engineers go on strike, leaving some 350,000 commuters in the lurch

By BRUCE SHIPKOWSKI Associated Press

New Jersey Transit train engineers went on strike Friday, leaving an estimated 350,000 commuters in New Jersey and New York City to seek other means to reach their destinations or consider staying home.

The walkout comes after the latest round of negotiations on Thursday didn't produce an agreement. It is the state's first transit strike in more than 40 years and comes a month after union members overwhelmingly rejected a labor agreement with management.

"We presented them the last proposal; they rejected it and walked away with two hours left on the clock," said Tom Haas, general chairman of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

NJ Transit CEO Kris Kolluri described the situation as a "pause in the conversations."

"I certainly expect to pick back up these conversations as soon as possible," he said late Thursday during a joint news conference with New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy. "If they're willing to meet tonight, I'll meet them again tonight. If they want to meet tomorrow morning, I'll do it again. Because I think this is an imminently workable problem. The question is, do they have the willingness to come to a solution."

Murphy said it was important to "reach a final deal that is both fair to employees and at the same time affordable to New Jersey's commuters and taxpayers."

"Again, we cannot ignore the agency's fiscal realities," Murphy said.

The announcement came after 15 hours of non-stop contract talks, according to the union. Picket lines are expected to start at 4 a.m. Friday.

NJ Transit — the nation's third-largest transit system — operates buses and rail in the state, providing nearly 1 million weekday trips, including into New York City. The walkout halts all NJ Transit commuter trains, which provide heavily used public transit routes between New York City's Penn Station on one side of the Hudson River and communities in northern New Jersey on the other, as well as the Newark airport, which has grappled with unrelated delays of its own recently.

The agency had announced contingency plans in recent days, saying it planned to increase bus service, but warned riders that the buses would only add "very limited" capacity to existing New York commuter bus routes in close proximity to rail stations and would not start running until Monday. The agency also will contract with private carriers to operate bus service from key regional park-and-ride locations during weekday peak periods.

However, the agency noted that the buses would not be able to handle close to the same number of passengers — only about 20% of current rail customers — so it urged people who could work from home to do so if there was a strike.

Even the threat of it had already caused travel disruptions. Amid the uncertainty, the transit agency canceled train and bus service for Shakira concerts Thursday and Friday at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

The parties met Monday with a federal mediation board in Washington to discuss the matter, and a mediator was present during Thursday's talks. Kolluri said Thursday night that the mediation board has suggested a Sunday morning meeting to resume talks.

Wages have been the main sticking point of the negotiations between the agency and the Brotherhood

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of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen that wants to see its members earn wages comparable to other passenger railroads in the area. The union says its members earn an average salary of \$113,000 a year and says an agreement could be reached if agency CEO Kris Kolluri agrees to an average yearly salary of \$170,000.

NJ Transit leadership, though, disputes the union's data, saying the engineers have average total earnings of \$135,000 annually, with the highest earners exceeding \$200,000.

Kolluri and Murphy said Thursday night that the problem isn't so much whether both sides can agree to a wage increase, but whether they can do so under terms that wouldn't then trigger other unions to demand similar increases and create a financially unfeasible situation for NJ Transit.

Congress has the power to intervene and block the strike and force the union to accept a deal, but lawmakers have not shown a willingness to do that this time like they did in 2022 to prevent a national freight railroad strike.

The union has seen steady attrition in its ranks at NJ Transit as more of its members leave to take better-paying jobs at other railroads. The number of NJ Transit engineers has shrunk from 500 several months ago to about 450 today.

Romania braces for crossroads presidential runoff viewed as a choice between East or West

By STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — As Romania braces for a high-stakes presidential runoff this weekend between two starkly different candidates, 25-year-old medical resident Alexandra Bejinariu is anxious about which direction her European Union nation will choose in the closely watched vote.

Like many voters, the young medic views Sunday's ballot between hard-right nationalist frontrunner George Simion and pro-Western reformist and incumbent Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan as a choice for the country's geopolitical future.

It's a choice between "East or West," she told The Associated Press in Bucharest. "It has divided my family, my relatives, my friends," she said.

Romania is gripped by a deep political crisis after a top court voided the previous election in which the far-right outsider Calin Georgescu topped the first round, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied.

A nation divided by election crisis

Deep societal divisions have been exposed during Romania's chaotic election cycle, and Bejinariu said she fears that a Simion presidency would undermine Romania's long-standing Western alliances. "I think it's a big risk," she said.

"It has to change, but I don't know in what direction it will change," she added. "I hope that our future will be good ... it really gives me anxiety this election."

After coming fourth in last year's canceled race, Simion, the 38-year-old leader of the Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, backed Georgescu who was banned in March from standing in the redo. Simion then surged to frontrunner in the May 4 rerun after becoming the standard-bearer for the hard right.

Years of endemic corruption and growing anger toward Romania's political establishment has fueled a surge in support for nationalist figures, reflecting a broader pattern seen across Europe.

The AUR party says it stand for "family, nation, faith, and freedom" and rose to prominence in a 2020 parliamentary election. It has since grown to become the second-largest party in the Romanian legislature.

To his critics, Simion is a pro-Russian extremist who threatens Romania's longstanding alliances in the European Union and NATO. But in an AP interview last week, he rejected the accusations, saying Russia is his country's biggest threat, and that he wants Romania to be treated as "equal partners" in Brussels.

"Some fake news were saying that we want to exit the European project," he said. "Tough luck."

Local surveys indicate a tight race

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Most recent local surveys indicate the runoff has narrowed to a near tie, after earlier ones showed Simion holding a lead over Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician who rose to prominence as a civic activist fighting against illegal real estate projects.

Dan founded the reformist Save Romania Union party in 2016 but later left, and is running independently on a pro-EU ticket, reaffirming Western ties, support for Ukraine, and fiscal reform. At a rally in Bucharest on Sunday, he also addressed the growing tensions.

"How did it come to this, that in a country with hardworking, decent people, there is so much hatred and division, that families and circles of friends are torn apart over political opinions," he said. "We need to project hope."

Simion, also a former activist who campaigned for reunification with neighboring Moldova, says he would focus on reforms: slashing red tape, reducing bureaucracy and taxes. But he insists that his main goal is to restore democracy. "My platform is to return to democracy, to the will of the people," he said.

The presidential role carries a five-year term and significant decision-making powers in national security and foreign policy.

A choice for geopolitical future

Siegfried Muresan, a Romanian member of the European Parliament, told the AP that Sunday's vote is the first election since communism ended in which Romania's geopolitical orientation is at stake.

"The election is about choosing between the European model, the European way of life, which is based on democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of press, rule of law, development, unity, solidarity," he said. "And the Russian model, which is the exact opposite — it's more than just the presidential election."

In a local televised debate last week, Simion railed against EU officials whom he called the "globalists in Brussels," and voiced admiration for Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, a longtime critic of the 27-nation bloc.

"That is precisely why many of his positions, not all ... will be state policy in Romania," said Simion, who opposes further military aid to neighboring Ukraine or sending troops from NATO countries to protect any peace agreements, fearing escalation.

Simion's activities in Moldova led to allegations he was trying to destabilize the country and a ban on his entry there. He is also banned from entering Ukraine for "systemic anti-Ukrainian" activities.

Moldova's pro-Western President Maia Sandu posted a public message this week in support of Dan, saying Moldovans understand the value of being "part of the European family," and urged Moldovans with dual Romanian citizenship to vote to "protect what Romania has already achieved, but which is now under threat."

Turnout could decide vote outcome

In the first round on May 4, Simion won a massive 61% of Romania's large diaspora vote, with his calls to patriotism resonating with Romanians who moved abroad in search of better opportunities.

Claudiu Tufis, an associate professor of political science at the University of Bucharest, says Sunday's result will likely boil down to turnout, which is often higher in the second round vote. "Turnout will be the key," he said. He added that Simion lacks adequate experience for high office and fears he would quickly target civil society organizations.

"That is a significant problem," he said. "What is driving him is his focus on identity politics. He has absolutely no experience when it comes to foreign policy ... economy, and no experience when it comes to public administration."

For energy sector worker Rares Ghiorghies, 36, Simion represents a new form of patriotic conservatism that he feels is needed to overhaul an outdated political class.

"I think about freedom, dignity, equal rights for everyone, prosperity, and healthy principles, not what we have now: manipulation, censorship, and incompetence in everything related to the state system," he said.

"We need a role model, a patriot who knows that you can achieve more with your heart than with your brain," Ghiorghies said.

Tensions in society are being further amplified online, where networks of coordinated disinformation have emerged as a pervasive force through the entire election cycle.

Disinformation deluge ramps up for runoff

Cyabra, an AI-powered platform that studies online influence campaigns, analyzed hundreds of comments on both candidates' official X accounts after the first round, and concluded that a large percentage came from fake accounts.

Those posts reached a peak on the day of the election and the day after in what appeared to be a synchronized campaign, the group said, with most of them criticizing Dan using rhetoric such as "foreign puppet," or praising Simion with slogans such as "Well done, Romania!"

Andrei Grajdeanu, a 34-year-old dental technician, says he feels Romanians were long divided but that social media has exposed the division.

"I think everybody needs to go to the vote to express their opinion, and that's it," he said. "Don't fight with family, friends, or each other."

Asylum-seekers still arrive at the US border, but what will happen to them?

By TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

They arrive at the U.S. border from around the world: Eritrea, Guatemala, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Ghana, Uzbekistan and so many other countries.

They come for asylum, insisting they face persecution for their religion, or sexuality or for supporting the wrong politicians.

For generations, they had been given the chance to make their case to U.S. authorities.

Not anymore.

"They didn't give us an ICE officer to talk to. They didn't give us an interview. No one asked me what happened," said a Russian election worker who sought asylum in the U.S. after he said he was caught with video recordings he made of vote rigging. On Feb. 26, he was deported to Costa Rica with his wife and young son.

On Jan. 20, just after being sworn in for a second term, President Donald Trump suspended the asylum system as part of his wide-ranging crackdown on illegal immigration, issuing a series of executive orders designed to stop what he called the "invasion" of the United States.

What asylum-seekers now find, according to lawyers, activists and immigrants, is a murky, ever-changing situation with few obvious rules, where people can be deported to countries they know nothing about after fleeting conversations with immigration officials while others languish in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody.

Attorneys who work frequently with asylum-seekers at the border say their phones have gone quiet since Trump took office. They suspect many who cross are immediately expelled without a chance at asylum or are detained to wait for screening under the U.N.'s convention against torture, which is harder to qualify for than asylum.

"I don't think it's completely clear to anyone what happens when people show up and ask for asylum," said Bella Mosselmans, director of the Global Strategic Litigation Council.

Restrictions face challenges in court

A thicket of lawsuits, appeals and countersuits have filled the courts as the Trump administration faces off against activists who argue the sweeping restrictions illegally put people fleeing persecution in harm's way.

In a key legal battle, a federal judge is expected to rule on whether courts can review the administration's use of invasion claims to justify suspending asylum. There is no date set for that ruling.

The government says its declaration of an invasion is not subject to judicial oversight, at one point calling it "an unreviewable political question."

But rights groups fighting the asylum proclamation, led by the American Civil Liberties Union, called it "as unlawful as it is unprecedented" in the complaint filed in a Washington, D.C., federal court.

Illegal border crossings, which soared in the first years of President Joe Biden's administration, reaching

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nearly 10,000 arrests per day in late 2024, dropped significantly during his last year in office and plunged further after Trump returned to the White House.

Yet more than 200 people are still arrested daily for illegally crossing the southern U.S. border.

Some of those people are seeking asylum, though it's unclear if anyone knows how many.

Paulina Reyes-Perrariz, managing attorney for the San Diego office of the Immigrant Defenders Law Center, said her office sometimes received 10 to 15 calls a day about asylum after Biden implemented asylum restrictions in 2024.

That number has dropped to almost nothing, with only a handful of total calls since Jan. 20.

Plus, she added, lawyers are unsure how to handle asylum cases.

"It's really difficult to consult and advise with individuals when we don't know what the process is," she said.

Doing 'everything right'

None of this was expected by the Russian man, who asked not to be identified for fear of persecution if he returns to Russia.

"We felt betrayed," the 36-year-old said. "We did everything right."

The family had scrupulously followed the rules. They traveled to Mexico in May 2024, found a cheap place to rent near the border with California and waited nearly nine months for the chance to schedule an asylum interview.

On Jan. 14, they got word that their interview would be on Feb 2. On Jan. 20, the interview was canceled.

Moments after Trump took office, U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced it had scrubbed the system used to schedule asylum interviews and canceled tens of thousands of existing appointments.

There was no way to appeal.

The Russian family went to a San Diego border crossing to ask for asylum, where they were taken into custody, he said.

A few weeks later, they were among the immigrants who were handcuffed, shackled and flown to Costa Rica. Only the children were left unchained.

Turning to other countries to hold deportees

The Trump administration has tried to accelerate deportations by turning countries like Costa Rica and Panama into "bridges," temporarily detaining deportees while they await return to their countries of origin or third countries.

Earlier this year, some 200 migrants were deported from the U.S. to Costa Rica and roughly 300 were sent to Panama.

To supporters of tighter immigration controls, the asylum system has always been rife with exaggerated claims by people not facing real dangers. In recent years, roughly one-third to half of asylum applications were approved by judges.

Even some politicians who see themselves as pro-immigration say the system faces too much abuse.

"People around the world have learned they can claim asylum and remain in the U.S. indefinitely to pursue their claims," retired U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, a longtime Democratic stalwart in Congress, wrote last year in the Wall Street Journal, defending Biden's tightening of asylum policies amid a flood of illegal immigration.

An uncertain future

Many of the immigrants they arrived with have left the Costa Rican facility where they were first detained, but the Russian family has stayed. The man cannot imagine going back to Russia and has nowhere else to go.

He and his wife spend their days teaching Russian and a little English to their son. He organizes volleyball games to keep people busy.

He is not angry at the U.S. He understands the administration wanting to crack down on illegal immigration. But, he adds, he is in real danger. He followed the rules and can't understand why he didn't get a chance to plead his case.

He fights despair almost constantly, knowing that what he did in Russia brought his family to this place.

"I failed them," he said. "I think that every day: I failed them."

Children die as USAID aid cuts snap a lifeline for the world's most malnourished

By TAIWO ADEBAYO Associated Press

DIKWA, Nigeria (AP) — Under the dappled light of a thatched shelter, Yagana Bulama cradles her surviving infant. The other twin is gone, a casualty of malnutrition and the international funding cuts that are snapping the lifeline for displaced communities in Nigeria's insurgency-ravaged Borno state.

"Feeding is severely difficult," said Bulama, 40, who was a farmer before Boko Haram militants swept through her village, forcing her to flee. She and about 400,000 other people at the humanitarian hub of Dikwa — virtually the entire population — rely on assistance. The military restricts their movements to a designated "safe zone," which severely limits farming.

For years, the United States Agency for International Development had been the backbone of the humanitarian response in northeastern Nigeria, helping non-government organizations provide food, shelter and healthcare to millions of people. But this year, the Trump administration cut more than 90% of USAID's foreign aid contracts and \$60 billion in overall assistance around the world.

Programs serving children were hit hard.

Bulama previously lost young triplets to hunger before reaching therapeutic feeding centers in Dikwa. When she gave birth to twins last August, both were severely underweight. Workers from Mercy Corps enrolled them in a program to receive a calorie-dense paste used to treat severe acute malnutrition.

But in February, Mercy Corps abruptly ended the program that was entirely financed by USAID. Two weeks later, one of the twins died, Bulama said.

She has no more tears, only dread for what may come next.

"I don't want to bury another child," she said.

'Very traumatic'

Globally, 50% of the therapeutic foods for treating malnutrition in children were funded by USAID, and 40% of the supplies were produced in the U.S., according to Shawn Baker, chief program officer at Helen Keller Intl and former chief nutritionist at USAID.

He said the consequence could be 1 million children not receiving treatment for severe malnutrition, resulting in 163,500 additional deaths per year. For Helen Keller Intl, its programs in Bangladesh, Nepal and Nigeria have been terminated.

"It is very traumatic," said Trond Jensen, the head of the United Nations humanitarian office in Maiduguri, Borno's capital, of the funding cuts, noting that other donors, including the European Union, have taken similar steps this year. "One of the things is the threat to the lives of children."

UNICEF still runs a therapeutic feeding center nearby, which now supports Bulama's surviving baby, but its capacity is stretched. It is turning away many people previously served by other aid groups that have pulled out due to funding cuts.

Intersos, an Italian humanitarian organization, has the only remaining facility providing in-patient services for malnutrition in Dikwa, treating the most perilous cases. Its workers say they are overwhelmed, with at least 10 new admissions of seriously malnourished children daily.

"Before the USAID cut, we made a lot of progress," said Ayuba Kauji, a health and nutrition supervisor. "Now my biggest worry is high mortality. We don't have enough resources to keep up."

Intersos was forced to reduce its staff from 30 to 11 in Dikwa after the USAID freeze. Its nutrition and health facilities now operate solely on support from the Nigerian Humanitarian Fund, a smaller pot of money contributed by a few European countries. That funding will be finished in June.

The crisis is equally acute in Maiduguri, where the economy is reeling from massive terminations of aid workers. At another Intersos-run facility, 10 of the 12 doctors have left and four nurses remain, with 50 new admissions of malnourished children per week.

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"It used to be far less," said Emmanuel Ali, one of the remaining doctors.

Beyond nutrition

The effects of the funding cuts extend far beyond nutrition. At the International Organization for Migration's reception center in Dikwa, thousands of displaced families and those escaping Boko Haram captivity are stranded. There are no new shelters being built and no support for relocation.

"Before, organizations like Mercy Corps built mud-brick homes and rehabilitated damaged shelters to absorb people from the IOM reception center," said one official at the center, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly on the situation. "Now, that has stopped."

Jensen, the U.N. humanitarian head in Maiduguri, said, "sadly, we are not seeing additional funding to make up for the U.S. cuts." He warned that vulnerable people could turn to risky ways of coping, including joining violent groups.

A global problem

The crisis in Nigeria is part of a larger reckoning. According to Kate Phillips-Barrasso, Mercy Corps' vice president for policy and advocacy, 40 of its 62 U.S.-funded programs with the potential to reach 3.5 million people in Nigeria, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Somalia, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Kenya, Lebanon and Gaza have been terminated.

In Mozambique, where jihadist violence in the north has displaced over a million people since 2017, humanitarian organizations face steep shortfalls with "devastating" effects on the needy, said Frederico João, chairman of the forum of NGOs in the region.

More widely, the USAID funding cut compromises Mozambique's health sector, especially in HIV/AIDS care, said Inocência Impissa, cabinet spokesman. The government now seeks alternative funding to prevent total collapse of health systems.

Charles Mangwiro in Maputo, Mozambique, contributed to this story.

For more on Africa and development: <https://apnews.com/hub/africa-pulse>

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US wants to withhold details in Kilmar Abrego Garcia case. Judge will hear arguments

By BEN FINLEY and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

A federal judge in Maryland will hear arguments Friday over whether the Trump administration can invoke the state secrets privilege to withhold information about bringing Kilmar Abrego Garcia back to the United States.

U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis ordered Abrego Garcia's return from El Salvador in April and has since directed the administration to provide documents and testimony showing what it has done, if anything, to comply.

Trump administration lawyers claim many of those details are protected, including sensitive diplomatic negotiations. Revealing the specifics would harm national security because foreign governments "would be less likely to work cooperatively with the United States," they argued in a brief to the court.

Abrego Garcia's lawyers contend the administration hasn't shown "the slightest effort" toward retrieving him after his mistaken deportation. And they point to President Donald Trump's interview last month with ABC News, in which he said he could bring Abrego Garcia back but won't.

"Even as the Government speaks freely about Abrego Garcia in public, in this litigation it insists on secrecy," Abrego Garcia's lawyers wrote to the court.

The focus of Friday's hearing will be a legal doctrine that is more often used in cases involving the military and spy agencies. Xinis's ruling could impact the central question looming over the case: Has the Trump

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administration followed her order to bring back Abrego Garcia?

The Trump administration deported the Maryland construction worker to El Salvador in March. The expulsion violated a U.S. immigration judge's order in 2019 that shielded Abrego Garcia from deportation to his native country because he faced likely persecution by a local gang that had terrorized his family.

Abrego Garcia's American wife sued, and Xinis ordered his return on April 4. The Supreme Court ruled on April 10 that the administration must work to bring him back.

Xinis later lambasted the administration for failing to explain what it has done to retrieve him and instructed the government to prove it was following her order. The Trump administration appealed, but the appeals court backed Xinis in a blistering order.

The debate over state secrets privilege is the latest development in the case.

In a legal brief filed Monday, Trump administration attorneys said they provided extensive information, including 1,027 pages of documents, to show they're following the judge's order.

They argued that Abrego Garcia's legal team is now "attempting to pry into the privileged inner workings of the U.S. government apparatus and its communications with a foreign government."

"Nearly all the additional materials Plaintiffs demand are protected by the state secrets and deliberative process privileges and so cannot be produced," U.S. attorneys wrote.

In their brief, Abrego Garcia's attorneys urged the judge to be skeptical, writing that the state secrets privilege "is not for hiding governmental blunders or malfeasance."

Abrego Garcia's lawyers noted that U.S. attorneys claim in court to be following Xinis's order, while "senior officials from the President on down were saying precisely the opposite to the American public."

For example, they cited an April 16 statement from Attorney General Pam Bondi, who said, "He is not coming back to our country."

"Over and over again, official statements by the Government — in congressional testimony, television interviews, and social media — confirm that producing this information would not imperil national security," Abrego Garcia's attorneys wrote.

The hearing is scheduled to start at 1 p.m. in federal court in Greenbelt.

Trump administration officials have said Abrego Garcia was deported based on a 2019 accusation from Maryland police that he was an MS-13 gang member. Abrego Garcia denied the allegation and was never charged with a crime, his attorneys said.

The administration later acknowledged that Abrego Garcia's deportation to El Salvador was "an administrative error" because of the immigration judge's 2019 order. But Trump and others have continued to insist that Abrego Garcia was in MS-13.

As Trump targets DEI, Republican-led states intensify efforts to stamp it out

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Republican-led states are accelerating efforts to stamp out diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, expanding from higher education to other government functions since President Donald Trump fully embraced the movement.

Governors and lawmakers this year have about doubled last year's actions targeting DEI initiatives, which had roughly doubled those of 2023, according to an Associated Press analysis aided by the bill-tracking software Plural.

The surge comes as Trump's executive orders seeking to halt DEI initiatives ripple through the federal government, universities and schools, despite legal challenges.

"The federal attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion from the Trump administration have further cleared the path for conservative state legislators," said Shaun Harper, a professor of education, business and public policy at the University of Southern California who founded the National DEI Defense Coalition.

"We are seeing the multiplication of the anti-DEI effort literally everywhere," Harper added.

Details vary by state, but many efforts contain at least some aspects of a four-pronged plan outlined

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two years ago by a pair of conservative think tanks. The legislative model promoted by the Manhattan Institute and the Goldwater Institute focused on higher education, seeking to abolish DEI offices and staff, end mandatory diversity training, ban compulsory diversity statements and outlaw racial or sexual preferences in hiring and admissions.

Now Republican-led states are using the same model to prohibit DEI initiatives in state and local governments.

"Despite the Trump administration taking action, the states cannot rely on the federal government to root out DEI for them," said Timothy Minella, senior fellow at the Goldwater Institute.

What are DEI initiatives trying to address?

Efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion have existed for years in higher education institutions, businesses and government bureaucracies. Supporters say such initiatives benefit everyone by helping people navigate diverse societies and understand people's differing viewpoints and experiences. Their goal is to promote student bodies and workplaces where everyone feels valued.

That is why some DEI offices have tailored services to people of particular races, genders, sexual orientations and cultures and disabilities. Some institutions also have factored in equity goals when admitting students, providing scholarships or making employment decisions, to try to reflect society at large.

Findings in a poll conducted earlier this month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research show that while "DEI" has become a politically toxic term for many Americans, some components of DEI programs have much less opposition.

The poll found about 4 in 10 Americans "strongly" or "somewhat" favor DEI programs in colleges and universities, while about 3 in 10 oppose those initiatives and about 3 in 10 are neutral.

Support is higher for courses on racism and scholarships for students of color, among other services designed to help students from underrepresented groups.

President Joe Biden's administration required diversity and equity goals in various government programs.

Trump has reversed those efforts, denouncing DEI policies as a form of discrimination that threatens merit-based decision-making. The Republican roll-back gained momentum after the Supreme Court in 2023 struck down racial affirmative action in college admissions. With Trump's return to the presidency, a growing number of businesses have voluntarily withdrawn their DEI programs.

How are the new state laws defining DEI?

There is no universal definition about what's covered by those initiatives. But most state laws and gubernatorial orders focus on initiatives related to race, ethnicity, gender or sex.

Some measures, such as bills passed in Oklahoma and Wyoming, further narrow their definition of DEI activities to those that grant preferential or differential treatment of individuals based on such factors.

The state measures don't typically mention people with disabilities, military veterans or those from lower-income households, even though they might also be included in an institution's equity efforts, said Paulette Granberry Russell, president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion efforts extends well beyond race, gender and sexuality, but it has been framed in ways that targets those populations and demonize those populations," she said.

Some workers targeted by Trump's anti-DEI measures claim they are being used to justify firing people who happen to be minorities and women. One class-action complaint by federal workers alleges that Trump's anti-DEI executive orders discriminate against employees who aren't white men.

Where are DEI efforts being targeted?

Limits on DEI initiatives in higher education recently approved by legislatures in Missouri and Oklahoma raise the total number of similar state laws and gubernatorial orders to two dozen since 2023. That includes bills passed earlier this year in Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, West Virginia and Wyoming. More are under consideration in additional states.

The Missouri measures show the growth of the movement. A provision limiting DEI in higher education got left out of the state budget last year. But it got included this year after new Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe issued an order barring executive agencies from using state funds on DEI positions and activities.

New laws in Tennessee, West Virginia and Wyoming target DEI initiatives in state and local governments

as well as higher education.

What have governors been doing?

More governors are issuing directives now.

On his first day in office in West Virginia in January, Republican Gov. Patrick Morrisey ordered an end to DEI staff positions and activities that grant preferential treatment based on race, ethnicity or sex in executive departments and state-funded institutions. On his second day, Republican Indiana Gov. Mike Braun issued a similar order. Kehoe's anti-DEI order came in his second month as Missouri governor.

Texas was among the first states in 2023 to legislate against spending on DEI programs in higher education. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott expanded upon that this year, ordering all state agencies to "comply with the color-blind guarantee" of the U.S. and state constitutions. His executive order described DEI concepts as "blatant efforts to divide people" with "new forms of racism."

What's next in the anti-DEI crosshairs?

A new Idaho law signed by Republican Gov. Brad Little not only bans DEI offices and programs in higher education but also addresses what's taught in the classroom. It prohibits colleges and universities from requiring students to take DEI-related courses to meet graduation requirements, unless they're pursuing degrees in race or gender studies.

It's the first such law nationally, according to the Goldwater Institute, which teamed up with Speech First to develop a model they describe as the "Freedom from Indoctrination Act." DEI opponents are hoping more states will soon follow.

"Our goal is to get rid of the DEI mandates for general education and programs in order to get a degree," Minella said.

Democratic Rep. Gluesenkamp Perez won in a Trump district. Now she faces an uprising from the left

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

CENTRALIA, Wash. (AP) — Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez gave Democrats a rare win last fall when she defeated a MAGA diehard in a Republican district in southwestern Washington state.

Hailed by some as a model for winning back blue-collar voters who abandoned the Democratic Party in last year's elections, the auto repair shop owner shunned partisanship, refused to engage in culture wars, and concentrated on helping people in her district — preserving VA clinics, for example, or backing funding for vocational shop classes.

Whether the second-term congresswoman's strategy succeeds will be decided by voters in next year's midterm elections. But for some progressives in her district, it is proving inadequate to counter the authoritarian tilt of President Donald Trump's second term in the White House.

At two town halls she hosted recently, crowds shouted questions or chanted, "Vote her out!" Many vowed to support a more liberal primary challenger.

"It's a really bad time to be a centrist," said Liz Oxford, a 39-year-old stay-at-home mom from Centralia. "She just keeps on coming down as one of the few Democrats to side with Republicans, and that is a really hard thing to accept right now. It's like, look, you ran as a Democrat, and right now Democrats have to draw a hard line."

Is she in danger?

Hundreds of people showed up at her town halls last month. Many were furious over her recent votes to censure Texas Democratic Rep. Al Green for disrupting Trump's speech to Congress and for a measure that would require proof of citizenship to register to vote.

How well Gluesenkamp Perez, 36, navigates the criticism could help determine whether Democrats can retake the House next year. But in a largely rural, red district, some say a bashing from leftist voters might actually help her.

"In a district like Washington 3, you win or lose by being able to get independents and moderate Republicans to cross over the vast chasm that has opened up between the parties and vote for you," said

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Sandeep Kaushik, a Seattle-based political consultant who worked on Gluesenkamp Perez's first campaign in 2022. "And Marie has been almost uniquely successful in doing that in her first two campaigns."

Gluesenkamp Perez is the only Democrat running for federal or statewide office to carry the district in at least a decade, Kaushik noted. Even Democratic Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, former Gov. Jay Inslee and newly elected Gov. Bob Ferguson failed there despite winning big statewide.

Gluesenkamp Perez's predecessor, six-term Republican Jaime Herrera Beutler, did not make it out of the 2022 primary. Right-wing constituents angry about her vote to impeach Trump cast their lot with Joe Kent, a former U.S. Army special operations soldier who promoted Trump's lie that the 2020 election was stolen and touted conspiracy theories about the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol by his supporters.

In the general election that year, Gluesenkamp Perez beat Kent by less than a percentage point, flipping the seat for Democrats.

Heading into a rematch with Kent last fall, she was considered one of the most vulnerable members of Congress — but won by nearly 4 points and outperformed both Trump and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris.

So far, one Democrat, Brent Hennrich, has announced a primary challenge. On his website, the former movie theater operations manager who filed to run this week dismissed Gluesenkamp Perez's moderation as the wrong approach for the moment.

"With our nation in crisis, Democrats in Congress must do everything in their power to block the radical Trump agenda, but our incumbent has been far too willing to compromise on bills that threaten our rights, our prosperity, and our health," Hennrich wrote.

What does she stand for?

Analysts across the country have pointed to the congresswoman's nuts-and-bolts approach to governing — what she describes as a "positive policy agenda" — as a remedy for Democratic woes. For her, that's meant securing money for shop programs at vocational colleges, pressing the VA to reopen a clinic in Chehalis so veterans don't have to drive to Olympia, and pushing to allow loggers to thin forests to create jobs and reduce wildfire risks.

"Political polarization has been really destructive to our democracy," Gluesenkamp Perez told The Associated Press in an interview. "If you're trying to build a policy agenda that is popular, if you're trying to build a bigger sense of democracy, it's not, in my view, prudent to start excluding people. It's about building a bigger team, just being more useful to more people."

Constituents across the political spectrum have praised her work on local issues. But at her recent town halls, anger over some of her votes was obvious.

Those include a vote for the SAVE Act, which would require proof of citizenship for anyone registering to vote. Critics call it a voter-suppression tool meant to hype the notion that illegal immigrants vote in U.S. elections — an exceptionally rare occurrence. The bill could make it harder for women who have taken their husband's last name or transgender people whose names don't match their birth certificates to vote.

Gluesenkamp Perez called the bill flawed but said making sure only citizens vote is a popular idea in her district. She also said she knew it wouldn't pass in the Senate.

That enraged Carol Brock, the former chairwoman of the Lewis County Democrats.

"I'm all for working across the aisle. I live in Lewis County — there's more Republicans here than there is grass," Brock said after the town hall in Centralia. "It doesn't mean I give up my values. If you don't believe in it, why did you vote for it?"

Tina Podlodowski, the former three-term chair of the state Democratic Party, posted on Facebook after the SAVE Act vote, "Democrats can and must do better in WA3 than Marie Gluesenkamp Perez."

This week, Pacific County Democrats began considering whether to call on the state party to refrain from endorsing Gluesenkamp Perez as long as another Democrat is challenging her.

Supporters urge her to pick her battles

Gluesenkamp Perez said she has spoken up against Republicans when their actions have real effects on people in her district: cutting funding for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration buoys relied on by fishermen, cutting support to wildland firefighters, gutting hunger relief programs, or proposing

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Medicaid cuts that she said “are going to kill people.”

“There’s a lot of consternation and anger and rage about things that don’t have the force of law,” she said. “It’s really important that we’re not torching social capital on things that will not be experienced by most people — or any people.”

Perhaps no one has enjoyed the mounting criticism of Gluesenkamp Perez more than Republicans, who say she is being “abandoned” by Democrats.

“Vulnerable Democrat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez is getting primaried and no one’s shocked,” the National Republican Congressional Committee said in a statement. “She’s too weak for the far left, too radical for Washington’s families, she doesn’t belong anywhere.”

Some of her supporters say Gluesenkamp Perez must pick her battles — and Democrats in her district should, too.

“We are cutting our nose off to spite our face, to make statements about throwing her out of office,” said Bob Guenther, a Lewis County labor activist. “We’ve got to be thoughtful. We’ve got to flip the Congress or we’re in trouble.”

Democrats want to focus on Trump. Instead, they’re being asked about Biden’s mental acuity

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Joe Biden’s time in public office is now behind him, but his age and mental acuity have become a litmus test for the next leaders in his party.

A new book that alleges White House aides covered up Biden’s physical and mental decline has put the questions about Biden’s health back in the spotlight, months after former Vice President Kamala Harris lost to President Donald Trump. Several potential Democratic contenders for the 2028 nomination in recent days have been asked whether they believe Biden was declining in office or whether he should have sought reelection before a disastrous debate performance led to his withdrawal.

Many Democrats would prefer to focus on Trump’s second term. Trump has done his best to prevent that — mentioning Biden’s name an average of six times per day during his first 100 days in office, according to an NBC News analysis — and Republicans have followed his lead, betting that voters frustrated by Trump’s policy moves will still prefer him over memories of an unpopular presidency.

In the race for Virginia governor, one of this year’s highest-profile contests, Republican Winsome Earle-Sears is running a pair of television ads tying Democrat Abigail Spanberger to Biden, with images of the two hugging and the former president calling her a friend.

“The stench of Joe Biden still lingers on the Democratic Party,” Democratic strategist Sawyer Hackett said. “We have to do the hard work of fixing that, and I think that includes telling the truth, frankly, about when we were wrong.”

Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut told Politico this week that “there’s no doubt” that Biden, now 82, experienced cognitive decline as president.

Pete Buttigieg, the former transportation secretary, wasn’t nearly as blunt but still stopped short of defending Biden’s decision to run. He responded “maybe” when asked Tuesday whether the Democratic Party would have been better off if Biden hadn’t tried to run for a second term.

“Right now, with the advantage of hindsight, I think most people would agree that that’s the case,” Buttigieg told reporters during a stop in Iowa.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker said he didn’t see signs of mental or physical decline in his meetings with Biden.

“I saw him a few times,” he told CNN this week. “I certainly went to the White House whenever there was an opportunity for me to make the case for something for people in my state. And I never had the experience of anything other than a guy who brought to the table a lot of good ideas about how to solve problems.”

The book “Original Sin,” by journalists Jake Tapper of CNN and Alex Thompson of Axios, revives a core controversy of Biden’s presidency: his decision to run for a second term despite voters, including Demo-

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crats, telling pollsters that he should not run again. Biden would have been 86 at the end of a second term had he won in November.

A spokesperson for Biden did not respond to a request for comment.

"We continue to await anything that shows where Joe Biden had to make a presidential decision or where national security was threatened or where he was unable to do his job," the spokesperson has told many media outlets in response to the book.

Even as Democratic leaders dismissed both a series of verbal flubs and Republican allegations about his declining acuity, Biden faced widespread doubts within his own party.

In January 2022, just a year into Biden's first term, an AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll found that only 48% of Democrats wanted him to seek reelection. That fell to 37% of Democrats in an AP-NORC poll conducted in February 2023. Three-quarters of Americans — and 69% of Democrats — said in August 2023 that they believed Biden was too old to serve as president for another four-year term.

And shortly after his debate flop, nearly two-thirds of Democrats said Biden should withdraw from the race.

Biden and former first lady Jill Biden appeared on ABC's "The View" in a preemptive defense of his health and decision-making before the first excerpts of "Original Sin" were published.

He said he's responsible for Trump's victory but attributed Harris' loss, at least in part, to sexism and racism. He maintained that he would have won had he remained the Democratic nominee. Both Bidens rejected concerns about his cognitive decline.

Patricia McEnerney, a 74-year-old Democrat in Goodyear, Arizona, said Biden should not have tried to run again.

"I think it's sad the way it ended," she said.

She compared him to Douglas MacArthur, the World War II and Korean War general famously dismissed by President Harry Truman.

"I think he needs to stop giving interviews. I think that would help," McEnerney said. "Like MacArthur said, generals just fade away."

Janet Stumps, a 66-year-old Democrat also from Goodyear, a Phoenix suburb, had a different view.

"I don't think it's going to hurt the Democrats," Stumps said. "I feel badly that he feels he has to defend himself. I don't think he has to. Everybody ages. And the fact that he did what he did at his age, I think he should be commended for it."

Hackett, the Democratic strategist, predicted Biden won't be a major factor in the 2026 midterms or the 2028 presidential primaries. But he said Democrats who want voters to trust them would be well-served "by telling the truth about the mistakes that our party made in the run-up to 2024."

"Those mistakes were largely driven by Joe Biden, and I think any Democrat not willing to say that is not really prepared to face the voters, who want the truth and they want authenticity," Hackett said.

Rick Wilson, a former GOP strategist who co-founded the anti-Trump group the Lincoln Project, said Republicans want to talk about Biden to avoid defending Trump. But he said the strategy is folly.

Besides "political nerds," he said, "no one else cares."

Criminal investigation opened in rape and sexual assault allegations against Smokey Robinson

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said Thursday that it has opened a criminal investigation into rape and sexual assault allegations against Motown music luminary Smokey Robinson.

The department said in a statement that its Special Victims Bureau is "actively investigating criminal allegations" against Robinson.

Last week, four former housekeepers of Robinson filed a lawsuit alleging that he repeatedly raped and

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sexually assaulted them, in some cases for years, while they worked for him.

The suit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court seeks at least \$50 million in damages over the alleged assaults, which the women say took place between 2007 and 2024.

Robinson's lawyer said there was no merit to the allegations against the 85-year-old musical icon who was among the biggest hitmakers of the 1960s.

The attorney, Christopher Frost, said Tuesday the only reason for the suit is "unadulterated avarice."

"We feel confident that a determination will be made that Mr. Robinson did nothing wrong, and that this is a desperate attempt to prejudice public opinion and make even more of a media circus than the Plaintiffs were previously able to create," Frost said.

John Harris and Herbert Hayden, the lawyers for the women, say they are pleased to learn that law enforcement is pursuing the allegations.

"Our clients intend to fully cooperate with LASD's ongoing investigation in the pursuit of seeking justice for themselves and others that may have been similarly assaulted by him," the lawyers said.

The sheriff's statement said the investigation is in its early stages, and no other details would be provided.

Robinson's attorney said last week that the allegations "defy credulity" and are full of inconsistencies.

The four women, whose names have not been made public, each allege that Smokey Robinson would wait until he was alone with them in his Los Angeles house and then sexually assault and rape them. One woman said she worked for Robinson from 2012 until 2024 and was assaulted at least 20 times. Another said she worked for him from 2014 until 2020 and was assaulted at least 23 times.

Harris called Robinson a "serial and sick rapist" who must be stopped.

When asked at a May 6 news conference whether the women had talked to police, Hayden said no, but felt the allegations merited law enforcement getting involved.

All of the accusers said they eventually quit over the assaults. And all said they feared coming forward over fears of retaliation, public shame and possible effects on their immigration status.

Robinson churned out a host of hits as a central part of the Motown Records machine — both with his group the Miracles and as a solo artist, with songs including "Tears of a Clown" and "The Tracks of My Tears." He also wrote and co-wrote songs for other Motown artists, including the Temptations' "My Girl."

He is a member of both the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

54 people killed in overnight airstrikes on southern Gaza city, hospital says

By MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Multiple airstrikes hit Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis overnight into Thursday, killing more than 50 people in a second consecutive night of heavy bombing, while another airstrike in the north of the Palestinian territory left more than a dozen people dead, authorities said.

The strikes come as U.S. President Donald Trump visits the Middle East, visiting Gulf states but not Israel. There had been widespread hope that Trump's regional visit could usher in a ceasefire deal or renewal of humanitarian aid to Gaza. An Israeli blockade of the territory is now in its third month.

An Associated Press cameraman in Khan Younis counted 10 airstrikes on the city overnight into Thursday, and saw numerous bodies taken to the morgue in the city's Nasser Hospital. It took time to identify some of the bodies due to the extent of their injuries. The hospital's morgue confirmed 54 people had been killed.

The dead included a journalist working for Qatari television network Al Araby TV, the network announced on social media, saying Hasan Samour had been killed along with 11 members of his family in one of the strikes in Khan Younis.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strikes.

It was the second night of heavy bombing, after airstrikes Wednesday on northern and southern Gaza killed at least 70 people, including almost two dozen children.

Another strike in Jabaliya in northern Gaza hit a complex including a mosque and a small medical clinic, killing 13 people, said the Civil Defense, a first responder agency operating under Gaza's Hamas-run gov-

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ernment.

Mourning for the dead in Khan Younis

In Nasser Hospital, Safaa Al-Najjar, her face stained with blood, wept as the shroud-wrapped bodies of two of her children were brought to her: 1 1/2-year-old Motaz Al-Bayyok and 1 1/2 month-old Moaz Al-Bayyok.

The family was caught in the overnight airstrikes. All five of Al-Najjar's other children, ranging in ages from 3 to 12, were injured, while her husband was in intensive care.

One of her sons, 11-year-old Yusuf, his head heavily bandaged, screamed in grief as the shroud of his younger sibling was parted to show his face.

"I gave them dinner and put them to sleep as usual, it was a normal day. Suddenly I don't know what happened, the world went upside down," she said as others tried to comfort her. "I don't know, I don't know ... what is their fault? What is their fault?"

Outside the hospital, mourners gathered to pray as the dead, laid out in rows in white body bags, were loaded onto a truck to be taken for burial.

Israel has vowed to escalate the war

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed earlier in the week to push ahead with a promised escalation of force in Israel's war in the Gaza Strip to pursue his aim of destroying the Hamas militant group, which governs Gaza.

In comments released by Netanyahu's office Tuesday, the prime minister said Israeli forces were days away from entering Gaza "with great strength to complete the mission ... It means destroying Hamas."

International rights group Human Rights Watch said Thursday that Israel's stated plan of seizing Gaza and displacing hundreds of thousands of people "inches closer to extermination," and called on the international community to speak out against it.

The war began when Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people in an Oct. 7, 2023 intrusion into southern Israel. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants. Almost 3,000 have been killed since Israel broke a ceasefire on March 18, the ministry said.

The Health Ministry said Thursday morning that the bodies of 82 people killed in Israeli strikes, including the 54 in Khan Younis, had been brought to hospitals in the past 24 hours. The overall Palestinian death toll rose to 53,010, with another 119,998 people wounded.

Hamas still holds 58 of the roughly 250 hostages it took during its Oct. 7 attack on Israel, with 23 believed to still be alive, although Israeli authorities have expressed concern for the status of three of those.

Gaza's only hospital providing cancer treatments out of service due to Israeli strikes

Gaza's Health Ministry said Thursday that Israeli strikes have rendered the European Hospital Khan Younis — the only remaining facility providing cancer treatments in Gaza — out of service due to severe damage to its infrastructure and access roads.

The shutdown halts all specialized treatments, including cardiac surgeries and cancer care, the ministry added.

The Israeli military conducted two airstrikes against the European Hospital on Tuesday, saying it was targeting a Hamas command center beneath the facility. Six people were killed in the strike.

European Hospital director Imad al-Hout told AP there had been 200 patients in the hospital at the time of Tuesday's strikes. They were all gradually evacuated, with the last 90 transferred to other hospitals, including Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, on Wednesday morning. Efforts were now underway to coordinate repairs to the facility, he added.

Israeli blockade of aid into Gaza in its third month

Palestinians in northern Gaza lined up Thursday near areas under Israeli bombardment in a desperate attempt to obtain food, as Israel's aid blockade entered its third month.

At the charity kitchen set up atop piles of rubble in Beit Lahia, dozens of Palestinians stood in a crowded line, pressing against one another, holding empty pots and plastic containers high in the air in hopes of

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receiving vegetable soup.

Um Abed, who is displaced with 20 family members, waited in line from 9 a.m. and went home empty-handed for the second day in a row as the number of people far exceeded the available food.

"I have a 3-year-old child who's crying all day because he wants to eat ... we want them to stop the war and to allow food in," Um Abed cried and yelled as she held up her empty pot to the camera.

Israel's offensive has obliterated vast swaths of Gaza's urban landscape and displaced 90% of the population, often multiple times. It halted the entry of all aid, including food and medication, into the territory on March 2, and international food security experts have warned that Gaza will likely fall into famine if Israel doesn't lift its blockade and stop its military campaign.

Nearly half a million Palestinians are facing possible starvation while 1 million others can barely get enough food, according to findings by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a leading international authority on the severity of hunger crises.

Israeli government spokesman David Mencer on Thursday denied there was a food shortage in Gaza and claimed Hamas was "holding onto it ... they need to open up the food to the people."

Human Rights Watch said Israel's plan to seize Gaza and remain there, coupled with the "systematic destruction" of civilian infrastructure and the block on all imports into the territory, were cause for signatories to the Genocide Convention to act to prevent Israel's moves. The group also called on Hamas to free the hostages it still holds.

Israel vehemently denies accusations that it is committing genocide in Gaza.

The Menendez brothers case reflects a shifting culture across decades

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The trials of Lyle and Erik Menendez came at a time of cultural obsession with courts, crime and murder, when live televised trials captivated a national audience.

Their resentencing — and the now very real possibility of their freedom — came at another, when true crime documentaries and docudramas have proliferated and brought renewed attention to the family.

A judge made the Menendez brothers eligible for parole Tuesday when he reduced their sentences from life without parole to 50 years to life for the 1989 murder of their father Jose Menendez and mother Kitty Menendez in their Beverly Hills home. The state parole board will now determine whether they can be released.

Their two trials bookended the O.J. Simpson trial, creating a mid-1990s phenomenon where courts subsumed soap operas as riveting daytime television.

"People were not used to having cameras in the courtroom. For the first time we were seeing the drama of justice in real time," said Vinnie Politan, a Court TV anchor who hosts the nightly "Closing Arguments" on the network. "Everyone was watching cable and everyone had that common experience. Today there's a true crime bonanza happening, but it's splintered off into so many different places."

The brothers became an immediate sensation with their 1990 arrest. They represented a pre-tech-boom image of young wealthy men as portrayed in many a 1980s movie: the tennis-playing, Princeton-bound prep.

For many viewers, this image was confirmed by the spending spree they went on after the killings. Their case continued a fascination with the dark, private lives of the young and wealthy that goes back at least to the Leopold and Loeb murder case of the 1930s, but had been in the air in cases like the Billionaire Boys Club, a 1980s Ponzi scheme that spurred a murder.

The first Menendez trial becomes compelling live TV

Their first trials in 1993 and 1994 became a landmark for then-new Court TV, which aired it nearly in its entirety. Defense lawyers conceded that they had shot their parents. The jury, and the public, then had to consider whether the brothers' testimony about sexual and other abuse from their father was plausible, and should mean conviction on a lesser charge.

The lasting image from the trial was Lyle Menendez crying on the stand as he described the abuse.

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At the time there had been some public reckoning with the effects of sex abuse, but not nearly to the extent of today.

The two juries — one for each brother — deadlocked, largely along gender lines. It reflected the broader cultural reaction — with women supporting a manslaughter conviction and men a guilty verdict for first-degree murder.

A tough-on-crime era, and a Menendez trial sequel

The trials came at a time when crime in the U.S. was at an all-time high, a tough-on-crime stance was a prerequisite for holding major political office, and a wave of legislation mandating harsher sentences was passed.

That attitude appeared to prevail when, at their second trial, the brothers were both convicted of first-degree murder.

As Associated Press trial reporter Linda Deutsch, who covered both trials along with Simpson's and countless others, wrote in 1996:

"This time, the jury rejected the defense claim that the brothers murdered their parents after years of sexual abuse. Instead, it embraced the prosecution theory that the killings were planned and that the brothers were greedy, spoiled brats who murdered to get their parents' \$14 million fortune."

The second trial was not televised and got less attention.

"There were no cameras, it was in the shadow of O.J. so it didn't have the same spark and pop as the first one," Politan said.

The Menendez brothers become a distant memory

They had become too well-known to be forgotten, but for decades, the Menendez brothers faded into the background. Occasional stories emerged about the brothers losing their appeals, as did mugshots of them aging in prison.

"The public's memory of them was, 'Yeah, I remember that trial, the guys with the sweaters in court,'" Politan said.

That would change in the era of true-crime TV, podcasts and streamers.

True crime goes big

The 2017 NBC drama series "Law & Order True Crime: The Menendez Murders," wasn't widely watched, but still brought the case new attention. The next decade would prove more important.

The 2023 Peacock docuseries "Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed" included a former member saying he was raped by Jose Menendez when he was 14. At about the same time, the brothers submitted a letter that Erik wrote to his cousin about his father's abuse before the killings.

The new true-crime wave would continue to promote them, even if the portrayal wasn't always flattering.

"Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story," a drama created by Ryan Murphy on Netflix, made them beautiful and vain buffoons, and the actors were shown shirtless on provocative billboards. Javier Bardem as Jose Menendez brought Oscar-winning star power to the project that dropped in September of last year.

That was followed a month later by a documentary on Netflix, "The Menendez Brothers."

Together, the shows had the public paying more attention to the case than it had since the trials. Almost simultaneously came a real-life turning point, when then- Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascón said he was reviewing new evidence in the case.

The office of Gascón's successor, Nathan Hochman, opposed the resentencing.

Deputy District Attorney Habib Balian constantly sought at hearings to make sure the "carnage" caused by the brothers wasn't forgotten, and repeatedly emphasized that they "shotgunned, brutally, their parents to death."

But the shifts in public perception and legal actions were already in motion. The judge's decision to reduce their charges came not with the drama of the televised trial, but in a short hearing in a courtroom that wouldn't allow cameras. The broader public never saw.

Despite his opposition, Hochman was reflective in a statement after the resentencing.

"The case of the Menendez brothers has long been a window for the public to better understand the

judicial system," Hochman said. "This case, like all cases — especially those that captivate the public — must be viewed with a critical eye. Our opposition and analysis ensured that the Court received a complete and accurate record of the facts. Justice should never be swayed by spectacle."

Cassie forced to read aloud explicit messages with Sean 'Diddy' Combs at his sex trafficking trial

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — R&B singer Cassie was pressed to read aloud her own explicit messages to ex-boyfriend Sean "Diddy" Combs in federal court Thursday, including texts that showed her expressing desire for the drug-fueled group sex she previously testified left her traumatized.

Lawyers for Combs sought to portray Cassie to the jury as a willing and eager participant in the music mogul's sexual lifestyle. Combs has pleaded not guilty to federal sex trafficking and racketeering charges. His defense says that, while he could be violent, nothing he did amounted to a criminal enterprise.

Prosecutors say he exploited his status as a powerful music executive to violently force Cassie and other women into these marathon encounters with sex workers, called "freak-offs," which sometimes lasted days. Combs insists all the sex was consensual. He's also accused of using his entourage and employees to facilitate illegal activities, including prostitution-related transportation and coercion, which is a key element of the federal charges.

Messages between Combs and Cassie — both romantic and lurid — were the focus of the fourth day of testimony in a Manhattan courtroom. Defense attorney Anna Estevao read what Combs wrote, while Cassie recited her own messages about what she wanted to do during the freak-offs. Cassie's testimony will resume Friday.

Combs, 55, has been jailed since September. He faces at least 15 years in prison if convicted.

Defense highlights Cassie's messages to Combs

While Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, has said she felt compelled to participate in freak-offs to keep Combs happy, Estevao pointed to message exchanges where Cassie appeared excited about the sexual encounters and raised the idea of having one on her own.

In August 2009, Combs asked when she wanted the next encounter to be, and she replied "I'm always ready to freak off." Two days later, Cassie sent an explicit message and he replied in eager anticipation. She responded: "Me Too, I just want it to be uncontrollable."

Later that year, however, she also sent Combs messages that she was frustrated with the state of their relationship and needed something more from him than sex.

Estevao also noted a July 2013 text message exchange where Cassie wrote to Combs, "Wish we could've FO'd before you left," using the initials of freak-off.

In a 2017 text message, Cassie told Combs: "I love our FOs when we both want it." On the stand Thursday, Cassie explained: "I would say loving FOs were just words at that point."

Cassie complained at one point that jurors weren't hearing the full context of the messages the defense was highlighting, saying, "There's a lot we skipped over."

Combs' attorney presented Cassie with sexual texts she sent before a 2016 encounter at a Los Angeles hotel, where Combs was caught on surveillance video kicking and dragging her in a hallway. Cassie said she wanted to get the encounter over with, in order to keep Combs happy and avoid a scene ahead of movie premier she was attending days later.

Estevao raised instances of Cassie's anger with Combs and her admitted jealousy over attention he gave other women. Cassie said Combs didn't want her seeing anyone else, but the same rules didn't apply to him.

Cassie testified that after a few years with Combs she longed to be a bigger part of his life but he wouldn't let her in. Their relationship lasted from 2007 to 2018.

A packed courtroom watches Cassie's testimony

The cross-examination didn't have the combative tone of a stereotypical defense grilling. Estevao spoke gently, and she and Cassie seemed like two friends chatting at times.

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The 38-year-old Cassie — who is in the third trimester of pregnancy with her third child — has held up well on the witness stand. She cried several times during the previous two days of questions by the prosecution, but for the most part has remained composed and matter-of-fact as she spoke about the most sensitive subjects.

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly, as Cassie has.

As the explicit messages were read, Combs appeared relaxed at the defense table, sitting back with his hands folded and legs crossed. The courtroom was packed with family and friends of Combs, journalists, and a row of spectator seats occupied by Cassie's supporters including her husband.

During a break, Combs stood at the table, huddling with his lawyers, holding a pack of Post-It notes in one hand and a pen in the other. At one point, he turned to the gallery and acknowledged a few reporters who were studying his demeanor. "How you doing?" he asked. Combs' daughters were not in the courtroom Thursday.

Jurors leaned forward in their seats to follow along as the messages were displayed on monitors in front of them in the jury box. One woman shook her head as a particularly explicit message was shown. A man stared intently at the screen, pressing his thumb to his chin. Other jurors appeared curious and quizzical, some looking at Cassie or jotting notes.

Defense draws a comparison to the 'swingers lifestyle,' but Cassie pushes back

While prosecutors have focused on Combs' desire to see Cassie having sex with other men, she testified that she sometimes watched Combs have sex with other women. She said Combs described it as part of a "swingers lifestyle."

Estevao asked Cassie directly whether she thought freak-offs were related to that lifestyle.

"In a sexual way," Cassie responded, before adding: "They're very different."

Cassie said Tuesday that Combs was obsessed with a form of voyeurism where "he was controlling the whole situation." The freak-offs took place in private, often in dark hotel rooms, unlike Combs' very public parties that attracted A-list celebrities.

She testified she sometimes took IV fluids to recover from the encounters, and eventually developed an opioid addiction because it made her "feel numb" afterward.

Cassie's testimony on cross-examination was in contrast to previous days, when she described the violence and shame that accompanied her "hundreds" of freak-offs during her relationship with Combs.

Cassie's lawsuit sparked the criminal case against Combs

Cassie testified Wednesday that Combs raped her when she broke up with him in 2018, and had locked in a life of abuse by threatening to release videos of her during the freak-offs.

She sued Combs in 2023, accusing him of years of physical and sexual abuse. Within hours, the suit was settled for \$20 million — a figure Cassie disclosed for the first time Wednesday — but dozens of similar legal claims followed from other women. It also touched off a law enforcement investigation into Combs that has culminated in this month's trial.

Trump administration officials say Secret Service is investigating Comey's '86 47' social media post

WASHINGTON (AP) — Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Thursday that federal law enforcement is investigating a social media post made by former FBI Director James Comey that she and other Republicans suggest is a call for violence against President Donald Trump.

In an Instagram post, Comey wrote "cool shell formation on my beach walk" under a picture of seashells that appeared to form the shapes for "86 47."

Numerous Trump administration officials, including Noem, said Comey was advocating for the assassination of Trump, the 47th president. "DHS and Secret Service is investigating this threat and will respond appropriately," Noem wrote.

Merriam-Webster, the dictionary used by The Associated Press, says 86 is slang meaning "to throw out,"

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"to get rid of" or "to refuse service to." It notes: "Among the most recent senses adopted is a logical extension of the previous ones, with the meaning of 'to kill.' We do not enter this sense, due to its relative recency and sparseness of use."

The post has since been deleted. Comey subsequently wrote, "I posted earlier a picture of some shells I saw today on a beach walk, which I assumed were a political message. I didn't realize some folks associate those numbers with violence."

"It never occurred to me," Comey added, "but I oppose violence of any kind so I took the post down."

Comey's original post sparked outrage among conservatives on social media, with Donald Trump Jr. accusing Comey of calling for his father's killing.

Current FBI Director Kash Patel said he was aware of the post and was conferring with the Secret Service and its director.

James Blair, White House deputy chief of staff for legislative, political and public affairs, noted that the post came at a delicate time given that Trump is traveling in the Middle East.

"This is a Clarion Call from Jim Comey to terrorists & hostile regimes to kill the President of the United States as he travels in the Middle East," Blair wrote on X.

Comey, who was FBI director from 2013 to 2017, was fired by Trump during the president's first term amid the bureau's probe into allegations of ties between Russian officials and Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. Comey wrote about his career in the best-selling memoir "A Higher Loyalty."

He is now a crime fiction writer and is promoting his latest book, "FDR Drive," which is being released on Tuesday.

The FBI is disbanding one of its public corruption squads in its Washington office, AP sources say

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI is disbanding a squad in its Washington field office that investigates allegations of fraud and public corruption against members of Congress and other federal officials, people familiar with the matter said Thursday.

The move is part of a broader reorganization of the field office, said one FBI official familiar with the plans, adding that the bureau would continue to pursue investigations into alleged corruption by public officials.

It was not immediately clear where the agents on the squad might be reassigned, though the office does have other squads focused on public corruption in the District of Columbia and Virginia.

The people who confirmed the FBI's decision insisted on anonymity to discuss personnel changes that had not been previously announced.

The action comes as the Trump administration has overhauled its approach to enforcement of public corruption, including by moving to dramatically slash the size of a prestigious section of Justice Department prosecutors responsible for pursuing cases of fraud and corruption against elected officials.

The administration also has announced a pause in criminal enforcement of a law that prohibits U.S. companies from paying bribes to foreign officials for business. In addition, Justice Department leaders in February urged a judge to dismiss a public corruption case against New York Mayor Eric Adams so he could support the administration's efforts to crack down on illegal immigration.

The dissolving of the squad is consistent with an ongoing shuffling of FBI priorities as the bureau under Director Kash Patel pivots to focus more on illegal immigration, drug trafficking and violent crime, core priorities of the Trump administration.

The Washington field office is one of the largest in the country, responsible for investigating national security threats, public corruption and other crimes in the nation's capital. The federal public corruption squad has handled significant investigations over the years, including into efforts by Trump and allies to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

The development was first reported by NBC News.

Military commanders will be told to send transgender troops to medical checks to oust them

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Military commanders will be told to identify troops in their units who are transgender or have gender dysphoria, then send them to get medical checks in order to force them out of the service, officials said Thursday.

A senior defense official laid out what could be a complicated and lengthy new process aimed at fulfilling President Donald Trump's directive to remove transgender service members from the U.S. military.

The new order to commanders relies on routine annual health checks that service members are required to undergo. Another defense official said the Defense Department has scrapped — for now — plans to go through troops' health records to identify those with gender dysphoria.

Instead, transgender troops who do not voluntarily come forward could be outed by commanders or others aware of their medical status. Gender dysphoria occurs when a person's biological sex does not match up with their gender identity.

The defense officials spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details of the new policy. The process raises comparisons to the early "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which at times had commanders or other troops outing gay members of the military who — at the time — were not allowed to serve openly.

Active-duty troops will have until June 6 to voluntarily identify themselves to the Defense Department, and troops in the National Guard and Reserve have until July 7.

The department is offering a financial incentive to those who volunteer to leave. They will receive roughly double the amount of separation pay than those who don't come forward.

Initially, officials said the Defense Department would begin going through medical records to identify anyone who did not come forward voluntarily. That detail was not included in the new guidance released Thursday.

While the department believes it has the authority to review medical records, it would rather go through a more routine health assessment process, the defense official said. Traditionally, all service members go through a health assessment once a year to determine if they are still medically able to serve.

A new question about gender dysphoria is being added to that assessment. Active-duty troops who do not voluntarily come forward would have to acknowledge their gender dysphoria during that medical check, which could be scheduled months from now.

A unit commander could expedite the health assessment.

Under the new policy, "commanders who are aware of service members in their units with gender dysphoria, a history of gender dysphoria, or symptoms consistent with gender dysphoria will direct individualized medical record reviews of such service members to confirm compliance with medical standards."

The defense official said it is the duty of the service member and the commander to comply with the new process. The department is confident and comfortable with commanders implementing the policy, and it does not believe they would use the process to take retribution against a service member, the senior defense official said.

It comes after the Supreme Court recently ruled that the Trump administration could enforce the ban on transgender people in the military while other legal challenges proceed. The court's three liberal justices said they would have kept the policy on hold.

Officials have said that as of Dec. 9, 2024, there were 4,240 troops diagnosed with gender dysphoria in the active duty, National Guard and Reserve. But they acknowledge the number may be higher.

There are about 2.1 million total troops serving.

In a statement, Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said earlier this month that about 1,000 troops already have identified themselves and "will begin the voluntary separation process" from the military. That can often take weeks.

Trump tried to ban transgender troops during his first term, while allowing those currently serving to stay on. Then-President Joe Biden overturned the ban.

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The new policy does not grandfather in those currently serving and only allows for limited waivers or exceptions.

Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth allege that troops with gender dysphoria don't meet military standards. Hegseth has tied his opposition to a campaign to rid the department of "wokeness."

"No More Trans @ DoD," Hegseth wrote in a post on X. In a recent speech to a special operations conference, he said: "No more dudes in dresses. We're done with that s---."

Wisconsin judge pleads not guilty to helping a man evade federal immigration agents

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — A Wisconsin judge pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges accusing her of helping a man who is illegally in the country evade U.S. immigration authorities seeking to arrest him in her courthouse.

Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah Dugan entered the plea during a brief arraignment in federal court. Magistrate Judge Stephen Dries scheduled a trial to begin July 21. Dugan's lead attorney, Steven Biskupic, told the judge that he expects the trial to last a week.

Dugan, her lawyers and prosecutors left the hearing without speaking to reporters.

The accusations against Dugan

She is charged with concealing an individual to prevent arrest and obstruction. Prosecutors say she escorted Eduardo Flores-Ruiz and his lawyer out of her courtroom through a back door on April 18 after learning that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were in the courthouse seeking to arrest him for being in the country illegally. She could face up to six years in prison if convicted on both counts.

Her attorneys say she's innocent. They filed a motion Wednesday to dismiss the case, saying she was acting in her official capacity as a judge and therefore is immune to prosecution. They also maintain that the federal government violated Wisconsin's sovereignty by disrupting a state courtroom and prosecuting a state judge.

A public backlash

Dugan's arrest has inflamed tensions between Trump administration and Democrats over the president's sweeping immigration crackdown.

Dozens of demonstrators gathered outside the courthouse ahead of Thursday's hearing, with some holding signs that read, "Only Fascists Arrest Judges -- Drop the Charges," "Department of Justice Over-Reach" and "Keep Your Hands Off Our Judges!!" The crowd chanted "Due process rights," "Hands off our freedom," and "Si se puede" — Spanish for "Yes, we can" — which is a rallying cry for immigrant rights advocates.

One man stood alone across the street holding a Trump flag.

Nancy Camden, from suburban Mequon north of Milwaukee, was among the protesters calling for the case to be dismissed. She said she believes ICE shouldn't have tried to arrest Flores-Ruiz inside the courthouse and the Department of Justice "overreached" in charging Dugan.

"How they handled this and made a big show of arresting her and putting her in handcuffs, all of that was intimidation," Camden said. "And I'm not going to be intimidated. I'm fighting back."

Esther Cabrera, an organizer with the Milwaukee Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, said the charges against Dugan amount to "state-funded repression."

"If we are going to go after judges, if we're going to go after mayors, we have to understand that they can come after anybody," she said. "And that's kind of why we wanted to make a presence out here today is to say that you can't come after everyone and it stops here."

The case background

According to court documents, Flores-Ruiz illegally reentered the U.S. after being deported in 2013. Online court records show he was charged with three counts of misdemeanor domestic abuse in Milwaukee County in March, and he was in Dugan's courtroom on April 18 for a hearing in that case.

According to an FBI affidavit, Dugan was alerted to the agents' presence by her clerk, who was informed

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by an attorney that the agents appeared to be in the hallway. Dugan was visibly angry and called the situation "absurd" before leaving the bench and retreating to her chambers, the affidavit contends. She and another judge later approached members of the arrest team in the courthouse with what witnesses described as a "confrontational, angry demeanor."

After a back-and-forth with the agents over the warrant for Flores-Ruiz, Dugan demanded they speak with the chief judge and led them from the courtroom, according to the affidavit.

After she returned to the courtroom, witnesses heard her say something to the effect of "wait, come with me" before ushering Flores-Ruiz and his attorney out through a door typically used only by deputies, jurors, court staff and in-custody defendants, the affidavit alleges. Flores-Ruiz was free on a signature bond in the abuse case, according to online state court records. Federal agents ultimately detained him outside the courthouse after a foot chase.

The state Supreme Court suspended Dugan last week, saying the move was necessary to preserve public confidence in the judiciary. She was freed after her arrest.

How the case might play out

John Vaudreuil, a former federal prosecutor in Wisconsin who isn't involved in Dugan's or Flores-Ruiz's cases, said the Trump administration seems to want to make an example out of Dugan. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi or Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, rather than the U.S. attorney in Milwaukee, are likely making the decisions on how to proceed, making it less likely prosecutors will reduce the charges against Dugan in a deal, he said.

Her attorneys will likely try to push for a jury trial, Vaudreuil predicted, because they know that "people feel very strongly about the way the president and administration is conducting immigration policy."

Dugan is represented by some of Wisconsin's most accomplished lawyers. Biskupic was a federal prosecutor for 20 years and served seven years as U.S. attorney in Milwaukee. Paul Clement, meanwhile, is a former U.S. solicitor general who has argued more than 100 cases in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. Both were appointed to jobs by former Republican President George W. Bush.

Supreme Court could block Trump's birthright citizenship order but limit nationwide injunctions

By MARK SHERMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court seemed intent Thursday on maintaining a block on President Donald Trump's restrictions on birthright citizenship while looking for a way to scale back nationwide court orders.

It was unclear what such a decision might look like, but a majority of the court expressed concerns about what would happen if the Trump administration were allowed, even temporarily, to deny citizenship to children born to people who are in the United States illegally.

The justices heard arguments in the Trump administration's emergency appeals over lower court orders that have kept the citizenship restrictions on hold across the country.

Nationwide injunctions have emerged as an important check on Trump's efforts to remake the government and a source of mounting frustration to the Republican president and his allies.

Judges have issued 40 nationwide injunctions since Trump began his second term in January, Solicitor General D. John Sauer told the court at the start of more than two hours of arguments.

Birthright citizenship is among several issues, many related to immigration, that the administration has asked the court to address on an emergency basis.

The justices also are considering the Trump administration's pleas to end humanitarian parole for more than 500,000 people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela and to strip other temporary legal protections from another 350,000 Venezuelans. The administration remains locked in legal battles over its efforts to swiftly deport people accused of being gang members to a prison in El Salvador under an 18th century wartime law called the Alien Enemies Act.

Trump signed an executive order on the first day of his second term that would deny citizenship to chil-

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dren who are born to people who are in the country illegally or temporarily.

The order conflicts with a Supreme Court decision from 1898 that held that the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment made citizens of all children born on U.S. soil, with narrow exceptions that are not at issue in this case.

States, immigrants and rights group sued almost immediately, and lower courts quickly barred enforcement of the order while the lawsuits proceed.

The current fight is over the rules that apply while the lawsuits go forward.

The court's liberal justices seemed firmly in support of the lower court rulings that found the changes to citizenship that Trump wants to make would upset the settled understanding of birthright citizenship that has existed for more than 125 years.

Birthright citizenship is an odd case to use to scale back nationwide injunctions, Justice Elena Kagan said. "Every court has ruled against you," she told Sauer.

If the government wins on today's arguments, it could still enforce the order against people who haven't sued, Kagan said. "All of those individuals are going to win. And the ones who can't afford to go to court, they're the ones who are going to lose," she said.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson described the administration's approach as "catch me if you can," forcing everyone to file suit to get "the government to stop violating people's rights."

Several conservative justices who might be open to limiting nationwide injunctions also wanted to know the practical effects of such a decision as well as how quickly the court could reach a final decision on the Trump executive order.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh pressed Sauer with a series of questions about how the federal government might enforce Trump's order.

"What do hospitals do with a newborn? What do states do with a newborn?" he said.

Sauer said they wouldn't necessarily do anything different, but the government might figure out ways to reject documentation with "the wrong designation of citizenship."

Kavanaugh continued to push for clearer answers, pointing out that the executive order gave the government only about 30 days to develop a policy. "You think they can get it together in time?" he said.

The Trump administration, like the Biden administration before it, has complained that judges are overreaching by issuing orders that apply to everyone instead of just the parties before the court.

Picking up on that theme, Justice Samuel Alito said he meant no disrespect to the nation's district judges when he opined that they sometimes suffer from an "occupational disease which is the disease of thinking that 'I am right and I can do whatever I want.'"

But Justice Sonia Sotomayor was among several justices who raised the confusing patchwork of rules that would result if the court orders were narrowed and new restrictions on citizenship could temporarily take effect in more than half the country.

Some children might be "stateless," Sotomayor said, because they'd be denied citizenship in the U.S. as well as the countries their parents fled to avoid persecution.

New Jersey Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum, representing 22 states that sued, said citizenship could "turn on and off" for children crossing the Delaware River between Camden, New Jersey, where affected children would be citizens, and Philadelphia, where they wouldn't be. Pennsylvania is not part of the lawsuit.

One possible solution for the court might be to find a way to replace nationwide injunctions with certification of a class action, a lawsuit in which individuals serve as representatives of a much larger group of similarly situated people.

Such a case could be filed and acted upon quickly and might even apply nationwide.

But under questioning from Justice Amy Coney Barrett and others, Sauer said the Trump administration could well oppose such a lawsuit or potentially try to slow down class actions.

Supreme Court arguments over emergency appeals are rare. The justices almost always deal with the underlying substance of a dispute.

But the administration didn't ask the court to take on the larger issue now and, if the court sides with the administration over nationwide injunctions, it's unclear how long inconsistent rules on citizenship would

apply to children born in the United States.
A decision is expected by the end of June.

Putin spurns Zelenskyy meeting but lower-level Ukraine-Russia talks are still on

By MEHMET GUZEL, HANNA ARHIROVA and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Russia and Ukraine are set to hold their first direct peace talks in three years, both countries said Thursday, but hopes for a breakthrough remained dim after Russian President Vladimir Putin spurned an offer by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to meet face-to-face in Turkey.

Zelenskyy said he is sending a team headed by his defense minister from the Turkish capital Ankara to Istanbul to meet a Russian delegation, even though Moscow's side doesn't include "anyone who actually makes decisions."

The Ukrainian side would be headed by Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, and its aim is "to attempt at least the first steps toward de-escalation, the first steps toward ending the war — namely, a ceasefire," he said.

Few had expected Putin to show up in Turkey, and his absence punctured any hope of significant progress toward ending the 3-year-old war amid peace efforts in recent months by the Trump administration and Western European leaders. It also raised the prospect of intensified international sanctions on Russia that have been threatened by the West.

Zelenskyy, who flew Thursday to Ankara after challenging Putin to sit down with him, accused Moscow of not making a serious effort to end the war by sending a low-level negotiating team that he described as "a theater prop."

His proposal to Putin came amid a flurry of maneuvering last weekend as each side sought a diplomatic advantage.

Zelenskyy said he decided to send the delegation to Istanbul to demonstrate to U.S. President Donald Trump that Ukraine wants to end the fighting.

The war has killed tens of thousands of soldiers on both sides and more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, according to the U.N. Russian forces are preparing a fresh military offensive, Ukrainian government and Western military analysts say.

At least five civilians were killed and 29 wounded in the past day, according to authorities in five eastern regions of Ukraine where Russia is trying to advance.

The head of the Russian delegation, presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky, said in Istanbul that the representatives were ready to meet Ukrainian officials.

"The task of these direct negotiations with Ukraine is to establish long-term peace sooner or later by eliminating the root causes of this conflict," he said in a brief statement.

It was not clear when they would meet. Medinsky said late Thursday that the Russian delegation would be waiting for Ukrainian officials at 10 a.m. Friday.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he would confer Friday in Istanbul with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and the Ukrainian delegation, adding that the Russian delegation would be meeting with other members of the U.S. team and that he hoped all sides could get together.

"We don't have high expectations of what will happen tomorrow. And frankly, at this point, I think it's abundantly clear that the only way we're going to have a breakthrough here is between President Trump and President Putin," Rubio told reporters in Antalya, Turkey, where he was attending a NATO foreign ministers meeting.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan earlier welcomed Zelenskyy to the presidential palace in Ankara for their own talks. Zelenskyy heads Friday to Albania for a gathering of European officials.

Weekend maneuvers

The diplomatic maneuvering began Saturday when European leaders met Zelenskyy in Kyiv and urged

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the Kremlin to agree to a full, unconditional 30-day ceasefire as a first step toward peace. Putin responded early Sunday by proposing direct talks with Ukraine in Istanbul. Then came Zelenskyy's challenge to Putin for face-to-face talks.

After days of silence, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov finally said Thursday that Putin had no plans to travel to Istanbul in the next few days.

Trump said he was not surprised that Putin was a no-show. He had pressed for Putin and Zelenskyy to meet but brushed off the Kremlin leader's decision not to attend.

"I didn't think it was possible for Putin to go if I'm not there," Trump told reporters in Doha, Qatar, on the third day of his visit to the Middle East.

Trump said a meeting between him and Putin was crucial to breaking the deadlock.

"I don't believe anything's going to happen whether you like it or not, until (Putin) and I get together," he said on Air Force One while traveling from Doha to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. "But we're going to have to get it solved because too many people are dying."

Peskov said Putin has no plans to meet with Trump in the coming days.

Medinsky, Putin's aide, is leading the Russian team that also includes three other senior officials, the Kremlin said. Putin also appointed four lower-level officials as "experts" for the talks in Istanbul.

Also absent from the talks were Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Putin's foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov, both of whom represented Russia at talks with the U.S. in Saudi Arabia in March.

The top-level Ukrainian delegation included Umerov, Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and the head of the Ukrainian presidential office, Andriy Yermak, a Ukrainian official said. Zelenskyy will sit at the negotiating table only with Putin, said presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak.

Putin met Wednesday with senior government officials and members of the delegation in preparation for the talks, Peskov said. Defense Minister Andrei Belousov, General Staff chief Valery Gerasimov and National Security Council secretary Sergei Shoigu attended.

Russia calls the talks a 'restart'

The Kremlin billed the Istanbul talks as a "restart" of peace negotiations held there in 2022 that quickly collapsed. Moscow accused Ukraine and the West of wanting to continue fighting, while Kyiv said Russia's demands amounted to an ultimatum, not something both sides could agree on. That delegation also was also headed by Medinsky.

Putin's proposal came after more than three months of diplomacy kick-started by Trump, who promised during his campaign to end the war swiftly, although it's been hard to pull off. The Trump administration in recent weeks indicated it might walk away from the effort if there was no tangible progress soon.

Sybiha, the Ukrainian foreign minister, met with Rubio and Sen. Lindsey Graham on Wednesday night in Antalya.

Sybiha reaffirmed Ukraine's support for Trump's mediation efforts and thanked the U.S. for its continued involvement, urging Moscow to "reciprocate Ukraine's constructive steps" toward peace. "So far, it has not," Sybiha said.

On Thursday morning, Sybiha also met with other European foreign ministers, including his French counterpart, Jean-Noël Barrot, who in a post on X reiterated the call for a ceasefire and the threat of "massive sanctions" if Russia doesn't comply.

"We're in a very difficult spot right now, and we hope that we can find the steps forward that provide for the end of this war in a negotiated way and the prevention of any war in the future," Rubio said Thursday.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer accused Putin of "standing in the way of peace."

"There was only one country that started this conflict — that was Russia. That was Putin. There's only one country now standing in the way of peace — that is Russia. That is Putin," he said in a visit to Tirana, Albania.

Barrot echoed that sentiment: "In front of Ukrainians, there is an empty chair, one that should have been occupied by Vladimir Putin," he said. Putin "is dragging his feet and in all evidence does not want to enter into these peace discussions."

Autopsies misclassified deaths in police custody that were homicides, Maryland officials say

By BRIAN WITTE and LEA SKENE Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — An audit of Maryland autopsies has uncovered at least 36 deaths in police custody that should have been considered homicides, state officials announced Thursday following a comprehensive review of such cases spurred by widespread concerns about the former state medical examiner's testimony in the death of George Floyd.

Medical examiners under Dr. David Fowler displayed racial and pro-police bias, according to the review. They were "especially unlikely to classify a death as a homicide if the decedent was Black, or if they died after being restrained by police," Attorney General Anthony Brown said during a news conference.

"These findings have profound implications across our justice system," Brown said. "They speak to systemic issues rather than individual conduct."

The auditors reviewed 87 in-custody death cases after medical experts called Fowler's work into question because he testified that police weren't responsible for Floyd's death. The Maryland team focused on cases in which people died suddenly after being restrained, often by police, officials said.

Three-person panels evaluated each autopsy and, in 36 cases, they unanimously concluded that the deaths should have been classified as homicides but were not. In five more cases, two of the three reviewers came to that conclusion.

Fowler didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

State officials could reopen death investigations

Democratic Gov. Wes Moore said he has signed an executive order directing Brown to review the 41 cases and determine if any should be reopened for investigation.

Moore acknowledged the families whose loved ones have died in police custody, some of whom have been "screaming for this type of analysis — and have been met with silence." He also acknowledged the many members of law enforcement who do their jobs honorably and protect the public.

Moore said he has also created a statewide task force to study the deaths of people restrained in law enforcement custody. He said the state won't shy away from rooting out misconduct and working to create a more equitable justice system.

Among a list of recommendations, the review suggested better training for law enforcement officers on the dangers of improper restraint techniques. It also directed the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to create standardized procedures for investigating restraint-related deaths.

The governor described the review as the first of its kind in the nation, saying he hopes it will provide a model for similar investigations elsewhere.

In a national investigation published last year, The Associated Press and its reporting partners found that medical examiners and coroners, whose rulings have huge consequences in the courts, can face pressure from law enforcement to exonerate officers. Some medical officials based their decisions not on physical evidence, but instead on whether they believed police intended to kill.

When deaths are ruled accidental, prosecutions of officers are exceedingly rare — of 443 cases that were ruled accidental, just two resulted in criminal charges. A family's chances of winning a wrongful death lawsuit also become much tougher.

While the audit findings are troubling, Maryland officials said they don't suggest intentional or malicious conduct. They emphasized that a homicide classification simply means someone died because of another person's action, not necessarily that the officers involved should be prosecuted.

Fowler was criticized for embracing a widely rejected theory

Fowler, who testified for the defense at the 2021 murder trial of former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin, attributed Floyd's death to a sudden heart rhythm disturbance as a result of his heart disease — a widely rejected theory that did little to persuade the jury. Chauvin was ultimately convicted of murder and manslaughter for kneeling on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes.

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After his conviction, 400 medical experts signed a letter to the Maryland attorney general asserting that Fowler's testimony deviated way outside the bounds of accepted forensic practice. In addition to citing heart problems, he classified the manner of death as "undetermined" rather than "homicide."

The letter called for an investigation to determine whether the office's in-custody death determinations under Fowler's leadership exhibited certain bias, among other potential issues.

Officials said Thursday that their audit found a troubling systemic pattern.

Nearly half of the reviewed cases cited "excited delirium" as a cause of death, a diagnosis that has been debunked by medical experts in recent years. Critics say it was often used to justify excessive force by police. The report recommended that medical examiners stop using the term altogether.

Fowler was Maryland's chief medical examiner from 2002 to 2019.

Two high-profile deaths are among the 41 cases highlighted

In 2023, state officials approved a settlement agreement that reformed the process for conducting autopsies on people killed in police custody.

That change came in response to the 2018 death of Anton Black, who died in police custody on Maryland's Eastern Shore. His death was captured on video, which showed police in rural Greensboro holding the unarmed teenager down for more than six minutes. Fowler ruled that Black died because of a sudden cardiac event while struggling with police — not because they pinned him in a prone position. His death was declared an accident.

Fowler similarly ruled that Tyrone West died of natural causes after struggling with Baltimore police following a traffic stop in 2013. Witnesses and the officers themselves said there was a violent struggle between the officers and West. His manner of death was undetermined, according to the autopsy.

Both Black and West are now included on the list of cases that should have been ruled homicides.

Tawanda Jones, West's sister who has held weekly rallies for 616 weeks to highlight his case, said she feels something positive will come from the investigation. "They're finally listening to me now," Jones said. "It feels good that finally they're listening."

Fowler's tenure also included the death of Freddie Gray 10 years ago. The autopsy concluded Gray died from spinal injuries sustained during transport in a Baltimore police van. It also classified his death as a homicide because officers repeatedly failed to seek medical attention while he was in distress. Prosecutors filed charges against six officers, but none were convicted.

A rare warning from Walmart during a US trade war: Higher prices are inevitable

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Walmart, which became the nation's largest retailer by making low prices a priority, has found itself in a place it's rarely been: Warning customers that prices will rise for goods ranging from bananas to car seats.

Executives at the \$750 billion company told industry analysts Thursday that they're doing everything in their power to absorb the higher costs from tariffs ordered by President Donald Trump.

Given the magnitude of the duties, however, the highest since the 1930s, higher prices are unavoidable, and they will hurt Walmart customers already buffeted by inflation over the past three years.

Trump's threatened 145% import taxes on Chinese goods were reduced to 30% in a deal announced Monday, with some of the higher tariffs on pause for 90 days.

Those higher prices began to appear on Walmart shelves in late April and accelerated this month, Walmart executives said Thursday. However, a larger sting will start to be felt in June and July when the back-to-school shopping season goes into high gear.

"We're wired to keep prices low, but there's a limit to what we can bear, or any retailer for that matter," Chief Financial Officer John David Rainey told The Associated Press on Thursday after the company reported strong first-quarter sales.

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Rainey emphasized that prices are rising not just for discretionary items such as patio furniture and trendy fashions, but for basic necessities as well. The price of bananas, imported from Costa Rica, rose from 50 cents per pound, to 54 cents. He thinks car seats made in China that currently sell for \$350 at Walmart will likely cost customers another \$100. Baby strollers are also sourced from China, Rainey said.

Higher prices arrive as many Americans pull back on spending as they grow increasingly uneasy about the economy. A slew of companies including toy manufacturer Mattel, toolmaker Stanley Black & Decker and consumer products giant Procter & Gamble have announced higher prices or plans to raise prices.

But Walmart's moves are even more significant given its outsized power in the retailing landscape. Walmart says that 90% of American households rely on the retailer for a range of products, and more than 150 million customers shop on its website or in its stores every week. Analysts will dissect the earnings reports from other retailers including Target and Home Depot, set to be released next week.

Government data Thursday revealed slowing sales growth for retailers. Walmart says that its consumers have become cautious and selective.

Tariffs on China and other countries are threatening the low-price model at the core of Walmart's success. The full impact of tariff costs had been delayed as companies tried to beat the clock by bringing in foreign goods before Trump's tariffs took effect. Retailers and importers had also largely halted shipments of shoes, clothes, toys, and other items due to new tariffs, but many are resuming imports from China in the narrow window that opened during the temporary "truce" this week, hoping to avoid sparse shelves this fall.

Yet retailers, already operating on thin margins, say they have no choice but to raise prices to offset higher costs from tariffs. And they are also bracing for higher shipping costs fueled by a surge of companies scrambling to get their goods on ships to the U.S.

Rainey told The Associated Press that the retailer did not pause shipments from China as a result of the tariffs like others because it didn't want to hurt its suppliers and wanted to keep merchandise flowing. It has built in hedges against some tariff threats. Two-thirds of Walmart's merchandise is sourced in the U.S., with groceries now accounting for roughly 60% of Walmart's U.S. business.

Still, Walmart isn't immune.

CEO Doug McMillon told analysts Thursday that Walmart imports general merchandise from dozens of countries. But China, in particular, represents a big chunk of volume in certain categories like electronics and toys.

Tariffs on countries like Costa Rica, Peru and Colombia are raising costs on groceries like avocados, coffee and roses, in addition to bananas, company executives said. In some cases, Walmart is absorbing costs on general merchandise within departments or a category and not simply passing on a tariff cost attributable to each item individually, executives said.

Walmart is also asking suppliers to swap input materials for components if possible, for example, using fiberglass instead of aluminum, which Trump hit with tariffs in early March.

"We're very dependent upon imports for these types of products," Rainey told The Associated Press.

He said there are some goods for which Walmart simply can't shift production or produce easily in the United States.

McMillon, who was among a select group of CEOs of major retailers who met with Trump at the White House late last month to discuss tariffs, told analysts Thursday that he's hoping tariffs would be further reduced.

Walmart earned \$4.45 billion, or 56 cents per share, in the quarter ended April 30, down from \$5.10 billion, or 63 cents per share, in the same period last year.

Adjusted earnings per share were 61 cents, exceeding the 58 cent projections from industry analysts, according to FactSet.

Revenue rose 2.5% to \$165.61 billion, just short of analyst estimates.

Walmart's U.S. comparable sales — those from established physical stores and online channels — rose 4.5% in the second quarter, though that's slowed from a 4.6% bump in the previous quarter, and a 5.3% increase in the third quarter of 2024. .

Business was fueled by health and wellness items as well as groceries. Sales were weaker in home and

sporting good, which was offset by robust sales of toys, automotive goods and kid's clothing, the company said.

Global e-commerce sales rose 22%.

Walmart said it expects sales growth of 3.5% to 4.5% in the second quarter.

Like many other U.S. companies, however, it did not issue a profit outlook for the quarter because of the chaotic environment, with stated U.S. tariff policies changing constantly. The company maintained its full-year guidance issued in February.

The Latest: Supreme Court hears arguments in case over Trump's birthright citizenship order

By The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has heard its first set of Trump-related arguments in the second Trump presidency. The case stems from the executive order President Donald Trump issued on his first day in office that would deny citizenship to children born on U.S. soil to parents who are in the country illegally or temporarily. The executive order marks a major change to the provision of the 14th Amendment that grants citizenship to people born in the United States, with just a couple of exceptions.

On Thursday, the high court heard from three attorneys: Solicitor General D. John Sauer, who represents the Trump administration; New Jersey Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum is arguing against Trump's order on behalf of several states; and Kelsi Corkran, who is representing pregnant women and immigrant rights groups.

Federal judges have uniformly cast doubt on Trump's reading of the Citizenship Clause. Three judges have blocked the order from taking effect anywhere in the U.S., including U.S. District Judge John Coughenour. "I've been on the bench for over four decades. I can't remember another case where the question presented was as clear as this one is. This is a blatantly unconstitutional order," Coughenour said at a hearing in his Seattle courtroom.

The Supreme Court took up emergency appeals filed by the Trump administration asking to be able to enforce the executive order in most of the country, at least while lawsuits over the order proceed. The constitutionality of the order is not before the court just yet. Instead, the justices are looking at potentially limiting the authority of individual judges to issue rulings that apply throughout the United States. These are known as nationwide, or universal, injunctions.

Here's the latest:

Which way is the court leaning?

The Supreme Court seemed intent on keeping a block on President Donald Trump's restrictions on birthright citizenship Thursday while still looking for a way to scale back nationwide court orders. It was not immediately clear what such a decision might look like, but a majority of the court expressed concerns about what would happen if the administration were allowed, even temporarily, to deny citizenship to children born to parents who are in the country illegally.

Democratic attorneys general said Thursday that the case before the court goes beyond birthright citizenship.

"It's about whether the rule of law and ... whether the president can act like a king," said New Jersey attorney general Matthew Platkin.

He spoke outside the Supreme Court accompanied by other Democratic attorneys general who have filed dozens of lawsuits challenging Trump's policies in court. The Supreme Court will determine whether the Trump administration can partially enforce the president's order on birthright citizenship.

The court could also narrow the power of other federal judges to make decisions that affect the entire country and potentially restrain the states' ability to score victories against the administration court.

Would the Trump administration follow court rulings?

An underlying issue that did seem to be on the minds of several of the justices was judicial authority and whether the Trump administration would follow it. At least six of them questioned Sauer on the authority

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of the courts, including their own.

Justice Kavanaugh asked directly if the administration would follow an adverse ruling in the case while reading from government court filings on following Supreme Court precedents.

Sauer ran into another moment when he would not commit to respecting the decisions of a circuit court, saying administrations had generally followed rulings. Justice Coney Barrett responded tersely with, "Really?" Court is adjourned

After a short rebuttal from Sauer, arguments are now complete after more than two hours. The Supreme Court typically rules in all its argued cases by the end of June and this one shouldn't be any different. After oral arguments today, it's not out of the question that the court could make a decision on this quickly, but we can't know for sure.

Although the Supreme Court case talked of birthright citizenship, a subject that could have huge implications for millions of people, the courtroom was sparse when it came to seeing anyone who might be impacted by the ruling. Most attendees appeared to be lawyers, with a few general visitors.

Despite the seriousness of the subject, the hearing had moments of laughter throughout the courtroom as justices quipped with attorneys or laughed with one another.

At one point, Justice Neil Gorsuch brought laughter when he responded to New Jersey Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum's offer of an amicus brief with "I need all the amici I can get." More laughter came when Justice Kagan told U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer, "let's just assume you're dead wrong" as she set up a scenario for him to address. Justices Alito and Kagan also shared a private laugh when Alito began to ask a question but changed his mind and leaned back in his chair.

Kagan rolled over and whispered in his ear, and both laughed.

The attorney representing private individuals and immigrants makes their case

After the states finished their case, Kelsi Corkran, the attorney for pregnant women and immigrant-rights groups fighting Trump's executive order, used her 15 minutes to make her case. Corkran said every judge who has considered the issue has found Trump's order is "blatantly unlawful" and asked the justices to block the effort to begin enforcing it.

Kavanaugh suggested that people who want to challenge the birthright citizenship order might not need nationwide injunctions.

Instead, they could bind together and file class-action lawsuits. "That seems to solve the issue for preliminary relief," he said. Corkran pushes back. "That is not actually addressing the court's emergency docket. It's just now we're slapping a label of class certification on it," she said.

A series of questions from Alito at one point seemed to hint at the many other cases the Trump administration is now appealing to the Supreme Court on an emergency basis. Lower-court judges can be "vulnerable to an occupational disease," of believing they can do whatever they want, he said.

Even if their decisions are wrong, he said, appeals courts can be reluctant to act quickly to block them. He seemed to suggest that includes his own colleagues on the Supreme Court.

"How do we deal with that practical problem?" he said.

Corkran argues it wouldn't. The government hasn't said how they would enforce the order against everyone except the handful of people who sued, much less how they would filter out parents who are part of the groups that have sued, she argued.

Even if there were a way, it would likely mean the government would be able to identify the women as non-citizens. That would put many at risk for potential deportation, she said.

Trump's Solicitor General wraps up his opening and his challenger steps up

Justice Kavanaugh pressed Sauer with a series of questions about exactly how the federal government might enforce Trump's order.

"What do hospitals do with a newborn? What do states do with a newborn?" he said. Sauer said they wouldn't necessarily do anything different, but the government might figure out ways to reject documentation with "the wrong designation of citizenship."

Kavanaugh continued to press for clearer answers, pointing out that the executive order only gave the government about 30 days to develop a policy. "You think they can get it together in time?" he said.

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Justice Brown Jackson appeared deeply skeptical of Sauer's argument.

"Your argument seems to turn our justice system, in my view at least, into a catch me if you can kind of regime ... where everybody has to have a lawyer and file a lawsuit in order for the government to stop violating people's rights," she said to Sauer.

New Jersey Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum stepped up to make his case after justices peppered Sauer with questions. He is arguing on behalf of the states that say they'll lose millions of dollars in benefits available to U.S. children and also have to overhaul identification systems. Feigenbaum asserted in his opening that the "post-Civil War nation wrote into our Constitution that citizens of the United States and of the States would be one and the same without variation across state lines."

Feigenbaum told the justices that judges should be able to issue orders that affect the whole country, but only in narrow circumstances. Roberts jumps on that last point, asking him to elaborate on why they should only be used sparingly — a question that could be a clue as to how the chief justice is thinking about the issue.

Justices try to pin down Solicitor Sauer's argument

Justice Kagan cut to the heart of the case by asking Sauer that, if the court concludes Trump's order is illegal, how the nation's highest court could strike down the measure under the administration's theory of courts' limited power.

"Does every single person who is affected by this EO have to bring their own suit?" Kagan asked. "How long does it take?"

Sauer tried to answer, but several of Kagan's colleagues, along with the justice, jumped in to say they didn't hear a clear way the court could swiftly ensure the government could not take unconstitutional action. Roberts tried to help by jumping in to note the high court has moved fast in the past, concluding the TikTok case in one month.

"General Sauer, are you really going to answer Kagan by saying there is no way to do this expeditiously?" Coney Barrett asks Sauer.

She pressed Sauer to say whether a class-action lawsuit could be another way for judges to issue a court order that could affect more people. He said the administration would likely push back on efforts of people to bind together for a class-action lawsuit, but that it would be another way for cases to move forward.

Justice Alito pointed out that multiple states have also sued over the birthright citizenship order and won broader victories. The Trump administration is also arguing that states shouldn't have been able to do that, but Sauer sticks to his point about the nationwide injunctions, saying they yield "all these sort of pathologies."

Sotomayor returned how Trump's order could affect people, saying it for some babies it could "render them stateless."

Justices pepper Trump's Solicitor General with questions in oral arguments

Arguing first is D. John Sauer, the solicitor general and the government's top attorney before the Supreme Court. Sauer also served as a personal lawyer for Trump as he fought election interference charges filed in 2023. Before that, Sauer served as Missouri's solicitor general and a clerk to the late Justice Antonin Scalia.

Sauer began by taking aim at decisions from lower courts that apply nationwide. He argued that they go beyond the courts' authority and allow people who want to file lawsuits to go "judge shopping" for those they expect to agree. The decisions are often rushed, he said.

"This is a bipartisan problem that has now spanned the last five presidential administration," he said.

Nationwide injunctions have become especially frustrating for the Trump administration, as opponents of the president's policies file hundreds of lawsuits challenging his flurry of executive orders.

After a series of questions from Justices Brown Jackson and Coney Barrett about the possible implications of nationwide court orders more generally, Justice Gorsuch raised another question about birthright citizenship in particular: "What do you say to the suggestion in this case those patchwork problems for the government as well as for the plaintiffs justify broader relief?"

Sauer responded that it is a problem for the executive branch to deal with.

The court issued an opinion unrelated to birthright citizenship

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The Supreme Court has revived a civil rights lawsuit against a Texas police officer who fatally shot a man during a traffic stop over unpaid tolls. The justices Thursday ordered the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to take a new look at the case of Ashtian Barnes, who died in his rental car in 2016 on the shoulder of the Sam Houston Tollway. Barnes was shot by Officer Roberto Felix Jr., who jumped on the sill of the driver's door of Barnes' car as it began to pull away from the stop. Felix's lawyers say he fired twice in two seconds because he "reasonably feared for his life."

Trump presses for restrictions ahead of arguments

President Donald Trump is weighing in ahead of arguments in the birthright citizenship case today.

Trump says in an online post that granting citizenship to people born here, long seen as a constitutional promise, makes the country look "STUPID" and like "SUCKERS." He incorrectly asserted the U.S. is the only country in the world with birthright citizenship. While not every country grants it, about 30 other countries do, including Canada.

His executive order at the heart of today's case aims to end birthright citizenship for children born to people in the U.S. illegally, something many legal scholars say would require amending the Constitution.

Three lawyers will present arguments to the court

Solicitor General D. John Sauer is representing the Trump administration in urging the court to allow Trump's restrictions on birthright citizenship to take effect in at least 27 states. New Jersey Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum is arguing on behalf of the states that say they'll lose millions of dollars in health and other benefits available to U.S. children and also have to overhaul identification systems since birth certificates will no longer serve as proof of citizenship. Kelsi Corkran is representing pregnant women and immigrant rights groups that say chaos will result if Trump's order takes effect anywhere.

The justices will take the bench at 10 o'clock Eastern time, but the livestream won't begin immediately. The court will issue at least one opinion before hearing arguments, so it could be 10 minutes before the Chief Justice John Roberts invites Sauer to begin.

The livestream will be available on the court's website, www.supremecourt.gov, or C-SPAN. C-SPAN asked Roberts to allow cameras to carry the case live, but he did not respond to the request, C-SPAN said. The Supreme Court has never allowed cameras in the courtroom.

A decision should come relatively soon. The Supreme Court typically rules in all its argued cases by the end of June and this one shouldn't be any different. If anything, an order from the court might come quickly because the legal issue before the justices is not whether Trump's birthright citizenship restrictions are constitutional, but whether to grant the administration's emergency appeals to narrow lower court orders against it while lawsuits proceed.

Trump says the US and Iran have 'sort of' agreed on the terms for a nuclear deal

By ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday that the United States and Iran have "sort of" agreed to terms on a nuclear deal, offering a measure of confidence that an accord is coming into sharper focus.

Trump, in an exchange with reporters at a business roundtable in Doha, Qatar, described talks between American envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi as "very serious negotiations" for long-term peace and said they were continuing to progress.

Still, throughout his four-day visit to the Gulf this week, the president has underscored that military action against Iran's nuclear facilities remains a possibility if the talks derail.

"Iran has sort of agreed to the terms: They're not going to make, I call it, in a friendly way, nuclear dust," Trump said at the business event. "We're not going to be making any nuclear dust in Iran."

Without offering detail, he signaled growing alignment with the terms that he has been seeking.

A top political, military and nuclear adviser to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told NBC News on Wednesday that Tehran stands ready get rid of its stockpiles of highly enriched uranium that

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can be weaponized, agree to enrich uranium only to the lower levels needed for civilian use and allow international inspectors to supervise the process.

Ali Shamkhani added that in return, Iran wants an immediate lifting of all economic sanctions.

On Thursday, hours after Trump said the two sides were getting closer to a deal, Araghchi said Tehran's ability to enrich uranium remained a core right of the Iranian people and a red line in nuclear talks.

"We have said repeatedly that defending Iran's nuclear rights — including enrichment — is a fundamental principle," the official said. "This is not something we concede, either in public discourse or in negotiations. It is a right that belongs to the Iranian people, and no one can take it away."

Trump said his demands have been straightforward.

"They can't have a nuclear weapon. That's the only thing. It's very simple," Trump said. "It's not like I have to give you 30 pages worth of details. It is only one sentence. They can't have a nuclear weapon."

But Trump on Wednesday suggested he was looking for Tehran to make other concessions as part of a potential agreement.

Iran "must stop sponsoring terror, halt its bloody proxy wars and permanently and verifiably cease pursuit of nuclear weapons," Trump said in remarks at a meeting in Saudi Arabia, the first stop on the Mideast trip. "They cannot have a nuclear weapon."

Before moving on to the United Arab Emirates from Qatar on Thursday, Trump stopped at a U.S. military installation at the center of American involvement in the Middle East and spoke to U.S. troops. The Republican president has used his visit to Gulf states to reject the "interventionalism" of America's past in the region.

Al-Udeid Air Base was a major staging ground during the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The base houses some 8,000 U.S. troops, down from about 10,000 at the height of those wars.

Trump told the troops that his "priority is to end conflicts, not start them."

"But I will never hesitate to wield American power if it's necessary to defend the United States of America or our partners," he said.

Trump has held up Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar as models for economic development in a region plagued by conflict. He urged Qatari officials to use their influence to entice Iran to come to terms with his administration on a nuclear deal.

Trump later flew to Abu Dhabi in the UAE for the final leg of his trip. He visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the country's largest mosque. The UAE's founder, Sheikh Zayed, is buried in the mosque's main courtyard.

Trump took his shoes off, which is customary, as he stepped into the house of worship and spent time marveling at the architecture.

"It's beautiful," Trump said.

He was later attended a state visit hosted by UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at the Qasr Al Watan presidential palace. Trump and his delegation were greeted by young children wearing traditional robes and waving small U.S. and UAE flags, and they were guided through a space exhibit inside the palace.

Al Nahyan also presented Trump with the Order of Zayed, the UAE's highest civil decoration and credited Trump with building the two nations' economic partnership to new heights.

"This partnership has taken a significant leap forward since you assumed office," he told Trump.

As he made his way to Abu Dhabi on Thursday, Trump reminded reporters about President Joe Biden's 2022 fist bump with the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a moment roundly criticized by human rights activists already upset by the Democrat's decision to hold the meeting. Trump noted in contrast that while in Saudi Arabia and Qatar this week, he had shaken many hands.

"They were starving for love because our country didn't give them love," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One. "They gave him a fist bump. Remember the fist bump in Saudi Arabia? He travels all the way to Saudi Arabia ... and he gives him a fist bump. That's not what they want. They don't want a fist bump. They want to shake his hand."

Under a cloud of tariffs, Walmart is the latest retailer to announce price hikes

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Volley after volley of tariffs — and at times on-again, off-again trade actions — have put companies around the world on edge. And a handful of major retailers have already raised prices across the U.S., or warned of future hikes.

President Donald Trump has slapped new import taxes on nearly all of America's trading partners and a range of sector-specific goods in recent months — all while some targeted countries, notably China, have responded with their own retaliatory duties. While many of the steepest tariffs have since been paused or reduced, scores of other remaining levies have piled up on businesses.

That's because companies that buy products made abroad pay the tariffs imposed on them — and, as a result, face higher costs that are typically passed on to consumers. Trump has argued that his new duties will bring manufacturing and money back to the U.S. But since so much of what we buy today relies on a global supply chain, economists have long-warned that such sweeping tariffs will mean more expensive prices from the grocery aisle to the auto repair shop.

Many businesses (and their customers) are already facing that reality. Here's some big-name retailers that have recently announced or anticipate price hikes amid the ongoing trade wars:

Walmart

Walmart became the latest to join the list on Thursday — when the nation's largest retailer said it must raise prices due to higher costs from tariffs.

While Walmart has built in hedges against some tariff threats, with two-thirds of its merchandise sourced in the U.S., it still isn't immune. Higher prices began to appear on Walmart shelves in late April and accelerated this month, company executives said Thursday. However, a larger sting will be felt in June and July, just when the back-to-school shopping season goes into high gear.

John David Rainey, the company's chief financial officer, emphasized that prices are going up on many necessities. The price of bananas, imported from Costa Rica, went up to 54 cents per pound from 50 cents per pound, for example. And he thinks that China-made car seats, which currently sell for \$350 at Walmart, will likely go up another \$100.

"We're wired to keep prices low, but there's a limit to what we can bear, or any retailer for that matter," Rainey told The Associated Press.

Mattel

Mattel Inc., the maker of Barbie dolls and Hot Wheels cars, said earlier this month that it would also have to raise prices "where necessary" to offset tariff costs.

The toymaker makes 40% of its products in China. It warned of price hikes on May 5 — prior to the U.S. and China agreeing to a 90-day reprieve to temporarily slash the bulk of their sky-high levies — but tariffs on the country still remain higher than before Trump started ramping them up last month.

In its latest earnings call, Mattel said it plans to move roughly 500 products this year from manufacturers in China to sources in other countries, compared to 280 products last year. And for some highly sought-after toys, the company said it would enlist factories in more than one country.

Microsoft's Xbox

At the start of May, Microsoft raised recommended retailer pricing for its Xbox consoles and controllers around the world. Its Xbox Series S, for example, now starts at \$379.99 in the U.S. — up \$80 from the \$299.99 price tag that debuted in 2020. And its more powerful Xbox Series X will be \$599.99 going forward, a \$100 jump from its previous \$499.99 listing.

"We understand that these changes are challenging," Microsoft wrote in a May 1 Xbox support update. The tech giant didn't point to tariffs specifically, but cited wider "market conditions and the rising cost of development."

Beyond the U.S., Microsoft also laid out Xbox price adjustments for Europe, the U.K. and Australia. The company said all other countries would also receive updates locally. And further down the road, Microsoft

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said it also expects to make some of its new, first-party games more expensive this holiday season — with a price tag of \$79.99.

Shein and Temu

Last month, e-commerce giants Temu and Shein both announced price hikes in separate but nearly identical notices citing “recent changes in global trade rules and tariffs.”

Customers began seeing higher prices for many items in late April — particularly leading up to the May 2 expiration of the so-called de minimis rule, a duty-free exemption on low-value imports from China that shopping sites have taken advantage of for years. This week’s deal between the U.S. and China later eased the burden some — but these products still face duties, with low-value parcels from China that come through the U.S. Postal Service now tariffed at 54% (down from 120%).

Even prior to this reprieve, Temu appeared to halt shipments from China and tap into existing U.S. inventory. The retailer, owned by the Chinese e-commerce company PDD Holdings, continues to advertise scores of items from “local” warehouses that carry “no import charges” for U.S. shoppers. Meanwhile, Singapore-based Shein currently has a checkout banner that reads, “Tariffs are included in the price you pay. You’ll never have to pay extra at delivery.”

Stanley Black & Decker

Toolmaker Stanley Black & Decker said it raised prices in April and plans to do so again in the July-September quarter because of higher tariffs.

“We are accelerating adjustments to our supply chain and exploring all options as we seek to minimize the impact of tariffs on end users while balancing the need to protect our business,” CEO Donald Allan, Jr., said in a statement last month.

Procter & Gamble

Executives at Procter & Gamble — the consumer product giant that makes household brands such as Crest toothpaste, Tide detergent and Charmin toilet paper — has also said it will likely have to pass on higher prices to consumers.

Last month, P&G said it was doing whatever it can to reduce higher costs from tariffs, including from shifting sourcing to avoid duties. But the company said shoppers may still see price hikes as early as July.

Theo Von riffs on drugs, disabilities and homosexuality before Trump speaks at US base in Qatar

By ZEKE MILLER and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

AL-UDEID AIR BASE, Qatar (AP) — When President Donald Trump addressed U.S. and Qatari troops at a military base in Qatar on Thursday, he assured the rank and file that “we don’t care if you’re politically correct.”

Anyone needing proof of that could have watched comedian Theo Von’s routine just a little earlier. Wearing a black T-shirt and backward baseball cap, the podcast host regaled the uniformed troops with jokes about drugs, developmental disabilities, homosexuality and their Qatari hosts.

He talked about snorting cocaine off a baby’s back but said it was “a mixed baby” so the white powder was visible on the baby’s skin.

Von acted out various disabilities, including Down syndrome, and he insulted the U.S. Navy as “gay.” He also had a punchline about terrorism attacks, asking, “Where do you think the next 9/11 should happen?”

He joked about the lack of crime in Qatar, where he said it would be impossible to identify a perpetrator because everyone is named Mohammed and dresses in the same white robes. They were like a “Ku Klux Sandsman,” Von said.

He later pointed to the Qatari troops in the audience and said “they don’t like me.”

The jokes drew laughter and some groans from the service members at the base, home to the forward headquarters of the U.S. military’s Central Command.

There was no acknowledgment from Qatar about the comedy routine and its topics. U.S. and Qatari service members and a small number of journalists following Trump heard the set, which was also avail-

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able to American television networks.

The wealthy Gulf nations that Trump has visited have increasingly welcomed a burgeoning standup scene at home and acts from abroad as they promote themselves as global entertainment destinations, and there are fewer red lines than one might expect in the socially conservative region. When Russell Peters performed in Saudi Arabia and Dave Chappelle in Abu Dhabi last year, both told a number of sexually explicit jokes and playfully mocked aspects of local culture, like the heavy reliance on foreign workers.

The only no-go zones appear to be criticism of Islam or the countries' autocratic rulers.

"You can't talk about the royals, and you can't talk about religion," comedian Tom Segura said on his podcast last year, describing restrictions imposed on a comedy tour he made to the United Arab Emirates.

Von connected with Trump during last year's presidential campaign, hosting the Republican candidate for an extended conversation that helped him reach young male voters who were important to his victory.

Trump wasn't present for Von's routine at the al-Udeid Air Base, which houses about 8,000 troops. When Trump took the stage in a hangar on the Qatari side of the installation, he praised Von and talked about how his son Barron encouraged him to sit down with the comedian.

"Dad, you've got to do an interview with a guy named Theo Von," Trump said. "I said, 'Who the hell is Theo Von?'"

"We had a good time," he added.

This isn't the first time a warm-up act has stirred controversy for Trump. Comedian Tony Hinchcliffe called Puerto Rico a "floating island of garbage" during a Madison Square Garden rally near the end of the campaign.

Trump delivered his own free-wheeling remarks during Thursday's event, telling the troops that "I have nothing else to do, so let's have a little fun."

He talked about plans for an upcoming military parade in Washington, falsely said that he won three presidential elections, joked about people who want him to run for another term and said France would be "speaking German" if it wasn't for American help during World War II.

Trump talked about his administration's efforts to thin the military's top ranks, saying "we let a lot of four-stars go."

There's long been friction between Trump and some top generals, and he's been more emboldened to remake the command structure.

He described people who doubted his military instincts as "freaking losers," talking up the campaign against the Islamic State group in his first term.

Trump ended his speech in his customary way, dancing to his campaign anthem of "YMCA."

Von's "This Past Weekend" is the fifth-most-popular podcast in the U.S. among weekly podcast listeners age 13 or older, according to recent rankings from Edison Podcast Metrics. The mullet-sporting 45-year-old is one of the burgeoning voices of the so-called manosphere, a rising online community of hyper-masculine influencers and comedians who rebuff cancel culture and offer crudeness in its place. Von has interviewed people across the political spectrum and in industries from artificial intelligence to entertainment and sports.

Older people in crosshairs as government restarts Social Security garnishment on student loans

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Christine Farro has cut back on the presents she sends her grandchildren on their birthdays, and she's put off taking two cats and a dog for their shots. All her clothes come from thrift stores and most of her vegetables come from her garden. At 73, she has cut her costs as much as she can to live on a tight budget.

But it's about to get far tighter.

As the Trump administration resumes collections on defaulted student loans, a surprising population has been caught in the crosshairs: Hundreds of thousands of older Americans whose decades-old debts now put them at risk of having their Social Security checks garnished.

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"I worked ridiculous hours. I worked weekends and nights. But I could never pay it off," says Farro, a retired child welfare worker in Santa Ynez, California.

Like millions of debtors with federal student loans, Farro had her payments and interest paused by the government five years ago when the pandemic thrust many into financial hardship. That grace period ended in 2023 and, earlier this month, the Department of Education said it would restart "involuntary collections" by garnishing paychecks, tax refunds and Social Security retirement and disability benefits. Farro previously had her Social Security garnished and expects it to restart.

Farro's loans date back 40 years. She was a single mother when she got a bachelor's degree in developmental psychology and when she discovered she couldn't earn enough to pay off her loans, she went back to school and got a master's degree. Her salary never caught up. Things only got worse.

Around 2008, when she consolidated her loans, she was paying \$1,000 a month, but years of missed payments and piled-on interest meant she was barely putting a dent in a bill that had ballooned to \$250,000. When she sought help to resolve her debt, she says the loan company had just one suggestion.

"They said, 'Move to a cheaper state,'" says Farro, who rents a 400-square-foot casita from a friend. "I realized I was living in a different reality than they were."

Student loan debt among older people has grown at a staggering rate, in part due to rising tuitions that have forced more people to borrow greater sums. People 60 and older hold an estimated \$125 billion in student loans, according to the National Consumer Law Center, a six-fold increase from 20 years ago.

That has led Social Security beneficiaries who have had their payments garnished to balloon by 3,000% — from approximately 6,200 beneficiaries to 192,300 — between 2001 and 2019, according to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

This year, an estimated 452,000 people aged 62 and older had student loans in default and are likely to experience the Department of Education's renewed forced collections, according to the January report from CFPB.

Debbie McIntyre, a 62-year-old adult education teacher in Georgetown, Kentucky, is among them. She dreams of retiring and writing more historical fiction, and of boarding a plane for the first time since high school. But her husband has been out of work on disability for two decades and they've used credit cards to get by on his meager benefits and her paycheck. Their rent will be hiked \$300 when their lease renews. McIntyre doesn't know what to do if her paycheck is garnished.

She floats the idea of bankruptcy, but that won't automatically clear her loans, which are held to a different standard than other debt. She figures if she picks up extra jobs babysitting or tutoring, she could put \$50 toward her loans here and there. But she sees no real solution.

"I don't know what more I can do," says McIntyre, who is too afraid to check what her loan balance is. "I'll never get out of this hole."

Braxton Brewington of the Debt Collective debtors union says it's striking how many older people dial into the organization's calls and attend its protests. Many of them, he says, should have had their debts cancelled but fell victim to a system "riddled with flaws and illegalities and flukes." Many whose educations have left them in late-life debt have, in fact, paid back the principal on their loans, sometimes several times over, but still owe more due to interest and fees.

For those who are subject to garnishment, Brewington says, the results can be devastating.

"We hear from people who skip meals. We know people who dilute their medication or cut their pills in half. People take drastic measures like pulling all their savings out or dissolving their 401ks," he says. "We know folks that have been driven into homelessness."

Collections on defaulted loans may have restarted no matter who was president, though the Biden administration had sought to limit the amount of income that could be garnished. Federal law protects just \$750 of Social Security benefits from garnishment, an amount that would put a debtor far below the poverty line.

"We're basically providing people with federal benefits with one hand and taking them away with another," says Sarah Sattelmeyer of the New America think tank.

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Linda Hilton, a 76-year-old retired office worker from Apache Junction, Arizona, went through garnishment before COVID and says she will survive it again. But flights to see her children, occasional meals at a restaurant and other pleasures of retired life may disappear.

"It's going to mean restrictions," says Hilton. "There won't be any travel. There won't be any frills."

Some debtors have already received notice about collections. Many more are living in fear. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order calling for the Department of Education's dismantling and, for those seeking answers about their loans, mass layoffs have complicated getting calls answered.

While Education Secretary Linda McMahon says restarting collections is a necessary step for debtors "both for the sake of their own financial health and our nation's economic outlook," even some of Trump's most fervent supporters are questioning a move that will make their lives harder.

Randall Countryman, 55, of Bonita, California, says a Biden administration proposal to forgive some student debt didn't strike him as fair, but he's not sure Trump's approach is either. He supported Trump but wishes the government made case-by-case decisions on debtors. Countryman thinks Americans don't realize how many older people are affected by policies on student loans, often thought to be the turf of the young, and how difficult it can be for them to repay.

"What's a young person's problem today," he says, "is an old person's problem tomorrow."

Countryman started working on a degree while in prison, then continued it at the University of Phoenix when he was released. He started growing nervous as he racked up loan debt and never finished his degree. He's worked a host of different jobs, but finding work has often been complicated by his criminal record.

He lives off his wife's Social Security check and the kindness of his mother-in-law. He doesn't know how they'd get by if the government demands repayment.

"I kind of wish I never went to school in the first place," he says.

Americans are divided over DEI programs on college campuses, an AP-NORC poll finds

By JOCELYN GECKER and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As President Donald Trump seeks to end diversity, equity and inclusion practices on college campuses, a new poll suggests that while the concept of DEI is divisive, some of the initiatives being affected by his administration's guidance are less controversial.

The poll, conducted earlier this month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, found about 4 in 10 Americans "strongly" or "somewhat" favor DEI programs in colleges and universities, while about 3 in 10 oppose those initiatives and about 3 in 10 are neutral.

Support is higher for courses on racism and scholarships for students of color, among other services designed to help students from underrepresented groups.

The findings underscore that while "DEI" has become a politically toxic and unpopular term for many Americans, some components of DEI programs have much less opposition.

This is especially true among Republicans. While about 6 in 10 Republicans oppose DEI programs broadly, their opposition softens for many of their most common elements. Just under half of Republicans oppose courses that teach about racism. About one-third oppose scholarships for students from underrepresented groups. And roughly 3 in 10 oppose clubs and mentorship services for those students.

About 7 in 10 Democrats, by contrast, favor DEI programs on college campuses, with similar shares supporting courses that teach about racism and scholarships or extracurricular support services for students from underrepresented groups.

Divides reflect different views of DEI's meaning

Some of this tension may stem from differing perspectives on what DEI means.

"I'm dead set against DEI," says poll respondent Robert Ayala, an 81-year-old registered independent who leans Republican. His understanding of DEI is "giving someone a free ride" or hiring people based on their skin color, as opposed to their skill set.

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But Ayala says he fully supports scholarships and mentoring to help disadvantaged students. Ayala, who has Mexican ancestry, grew up poor in rural South Dakota, faced prejudice as a child and lacked career direction. "If I was offered a scholarship or training or had somebody to guide me, I might have found my way faster," says Ayala, who spent 22 years in the Navy, then went into contracting and is now retired near Palm Springs, California.

Trump, a Republican, has signed multiple executive orders to eliminate diversity practices in the federal government, private companies and in education, calling them "illegal" and "immoral." He has threatened to cut federal funding to campuses that defy him. Some of his orders are being challenged in court.

On campuses, students of color say colleges responding to the new guidance have cut back scholarships, diversity offices and mentors that made them feel welcome on predominantly white campuses.

"Everybody should have the same opportunities as everybody else," says Stanley Roberts, 61, a registered Republican near Knoxville, Tennessee. He is "somewhat" opposed to the idea of DEI and is "on the fence" about courses that teach about racism because he thinks dwelling on the past creates division. "What happened 200 years ago or 1,000 years ago shouldn't have happened," he says, "but if everybody would quit talking about it, it would be a whole lot less of a problem."

White adults are more likely to oppose DEI programs

The poll shows that white adults are more likely than Black and Hispanic adults to oppose DEI programs.

Black adults are more likely than U.S. adults overall to favor courses that teach about racism.

"I know this sounds cliché to say, but the reason I favor teaching about racism is so history doesn't repeat itself," says Nicole Martin, 34, a Black social worker in Idaho Falls, Idaho. "I hear a lot of, 'Oh, just get over it.' But I think, 'OK you don't want to talk about slavery. But we're still talking about the Holocaust and that's OK.'"

The poll found that women are more likely than men to say they support DEI programs on college campuses, as well as support services for students from underrepresented groups.

"Without DEI, I am not sure there are many chances for understanding other people's experiences," says Regina Cuddeback, 27, a Democrat in Cortland, New York, who says her support for DEI depends on the context.

Cuddeback does not think race should factor into college admissions but DEI programs on campuses are "completely fine," and she does not think the federal government should have a say in the courses colleges offer.

"Students have a right to take the classes they want to take," says Cuddeback, who is white and a registered Democrat. "For a college to remove a class and say you don't get to learn a certain subject anymore would be pretty abysmal."

Poland votes for a new president Sunday as worries grow about the future

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — A war next door in Ukraine. Migration pressure at borders. Russian sabotage across the region. Doubts about the U.S. commitment to Europe's security.

In Poland's presidential election Sunday, security looms large. So do questions about the country's strength as a democracy and its place in the European Union. One of the new president's most important tasks will be maintaining strong ties with the United States, widely seen as essential to the survival of a country in an increasingly volatile neighborhood.

A crowded field, a likely runoff

Voters in this Central European nation of 38 million people will cast ballots to replace conservative incumbent Andrzej Duda, whose second and final five-year term ends in August.

With 13 candidates, a decisive first-round victory is unlikely. Some have appeared unserious or extreme, with a couple expressing openly pro-Putin or antisemitic views. A televised debate this week dragged on

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for nearly four hours. There are calls to raise the threshold to qualify for the race.

A runoff on June 1 is widely expected, with polls pointing to a likely showdown between Rafał Trzaskowski, the liberal mayor of Warsaw, and Karol Nawrocki, a conservative historian backed by the Law and Justice party, which governed Poland from 2015 to 2023.

A nation at the front line

Poland's geography gives the election added importance. Bordering Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, Belarus and war-torn Ukraine — as well as several Western allies — Poland occupies a critical position along NATO's eastern flank and serves as a key logistics hub for military aid to Ukraine.

There are growing fears that if Russia prevails in its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it could target other countries that freed themselves from Moscow's control some 35 years ago. Against that backdrop, the election will shape Warsaw's foreign policy at a moment of mounting strain on trans-Atlantic unity and European defense.

Both leading candidates support continued U.S. military engagement in Europe. Trzaskowski puts greater emphasis on deepening ties with the European Union, while Nawrocki is more skeptical of Brussels and promotes a nationalist agenda.

When Law and Justice held power, it repeatedly clashed with EU institutions over judicial independence, media freedom and migration.

Why the presidency matters

While Poland is a parliamentary democracy, the presidency wields significant influence. The president serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, holds veto power, shapes foreign policy and plays a symbolic role in national discourse.

Under Duda, the office largely advanced the conservative agenda of Law and Justice. Since Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centrist coalition came to power in late 2023, Duda has blocked key reforms aimed at restoring judicial independence and repairing relations with the EU.

"The stakes are enormous for the ruling coalition and for those concerned with the future of Polish democracy," said Jacek Kucharczyk, president of the Institute of Public Affairs, a Warsaw think tank. "This is about democratic reform and restoring the rule of law — and that can only happen with cooperation from the next president."

The election is also pivotal for Law and Justice, Kucharczyk noted: "Its future as a dominant political force may hinge on the outcome."

Two visions for Poland

Both Trzaskowski and Nawrocki have pledged to support Ukraine and maintain strong defense ties, but their visions for Poland diverge sharply on the role of the EU and domestic social policy.

Trzaskowski, 52, is a former presidential contender and a senior figure in Civic Platform, the centrist party led by Tusk. He is running on a pro-European platform and has pledged to defend judicial independence and rebuild democratic institutions.

Supporters describe him as a modernizer who represents a cosmopolitan, outward-facing Poland. He speaks foreign languages, has marched in LGBTQ+ parades and appeals to younger, urban voters. Trzaskowski's progressive views highlight an evolution of the once more conservative Civic Platform.

Nawrocki, 42, represents how the party backing him, Law and Justice, is turning further to the right as support for the hard right grows.

Nawrocki, who is not a Law and Justice party member, heads the state-backed Institute of National Remembrance, which investigates Nazi and communist-era crimes. He has drawn praise from conservatives for dismantling Soviet monuments and promoting patriotic education, but he faces criticism for inexperience and playing on anti-German and other resentments. He has also been embroiled in some scandals.

Earlier this month, Nawrocki met with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House — a symbolic moment welcomed by Law and Justice-friendly media as proof that he would be the best man for keeping the relationship with the United States strong. Critics viewed it as interference by Trump's administration.

This week Nawrocki was joined on the campaign trail by Romanian nationalist George Simion, who faces

a runoff vote for the presidency on Sunday. Simion is viewed by critics as pro-Russian, leading Tusk to tweet: "Russia is pleased. Nawrocki and his pro-Russian Romanian counterpart George Simion on the same stage five days before the presidential elections in Poland and Romania. Everything is clear."

Those who've worked with Pope Leo XIV are optimistic he'll elevate women's roles — with limits

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Before becoming Pope Leo XIV, Cardinal Robert Prevost presided over one of the most revolutionary reforms of Pope Francis' pontificate by having women serve on the Vatican board that vets nominations for bishops.

But he also has said decisively that women cannot be ordained as priests, and despite having worked for years in Peru where women often lead church communities, seems noncommittal on whether women could ever serve in any ministerial capacity.

Nevertheless, the women who have worked closely with Prevost in recent years have praised his leadership style, ability to listen and respect for their opinions. In interviews with The Associated Press, they say they expect that as pope, Leo will continue to promote women in church governance positions, albeit with limits.

Maria Lia Zervino was among the three women Francis appointed to the Dicastery for Bishops in 2022 to review possible appointments. It was a job previously held by cardinals and bishops, an old boy's club that has jealously guarded the secret process behind the appointment of bishops.

Zervino rejoiced when Prevost was elected pope, saying the respect he showed for her and other women on the board and their opinions gave them faith in him as a leader.

"I'm convinced that he doesn't need to learn how to work (with women), how to let them speak, to listen to them, to have them participate in decisions, because that's what he does anyway," said Zervino, the Argentine former head of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.

Zervino said she expected Leo would continue Francis' reform processes, albeit in his own style.

"He's a simple man, serene, always with that smile that we saw that seems to come from an interior peace," she said in an interview. "So when you see someone who is balanced, peaceful and respectful and who welcomes what you say and is always ready to hear the other, you have faith in him."

A 2023 comment on women as priests

At a 2023 gathering of bishops on the future of the Catholic Church, Prevost was asked at a news conference about women in church leadership positions. He said it was "a work in progress" and that there would be a "continuing recognition of the fact that women can add a great deal to the life of the church on many different levels."

But he drew some very clear lines.

"I think we're all familiar with the very significant and long tradition of the church, and that the apostolic tradition is something that has been spelled out very clearly, especially if you want to talk about the question of women's ordination to the priesthood," he said in the Oct. 25, 2023, briefing.

Catholic women do much of the church's work in schools and hospitals and are usually responsible for passing the faith to the next generation. But they have long complained of second-class status in an institution that reserves the priesthood for men.

Prevost acknowledged Francis had created two commissions to study whether women could be made deacons, who perform many of the same functions as priests. While he said the issue was still open, he warned that turning women into clerics "doesn't necessarily solve a problem, it might make a new problem."

Just because a woman in society can be president doesn't mean there's an "immediate parallel" in the church, he argued.

"It isn't as simple as saying that at this stage we're going to change, if you will, the tradition of the church after 2,000 years on any one of those points," he said.

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Deacons are ordained ministers who preside at weddings, baptisms and funerals. They can preach but cannot celebrate Mass. Married men can be ordained as deacons while women cannot, although historians say women served as deacons in the early Christian church.

A prudent and private listener

Karlijn Demasure, emeritus professor of practical theology at St. Paul University in Ottawa, served on a Vatican commission with Prevost proposing reforms to the authority of bishops and how they are selected. She said Prevost was absolutely convinced of the need to involve lay people and nuns in the selection of bishops, at least at an initial level.

"He listens well," Demasure said. "He hears what has been said, and if he doesn't agree, he says it but in a nice way: 'I wouldn't say it like this, or I wouldn't do it like that.'"

She said Prevost was quiet, "prudent and private." She wonders, though, what will happen with the work of the commission, one of 10 groups that are studying particularly thorny questions, such as the role of women, and were due to report back to the pope by July.

Sister Nathalie Becquart, one of the highest-ranking women at the Vatican, worked with Prevost during Francis' meeting, known as a synod, on the future of the church. She also happens to be his neighbor, living in the same Palazzo Sant'Uffizio inside the Vatican gates, and was among the well-wishers who greeted Leo when he came home the night of his May 8 election.

Becquart posted a joyous selfie with the pope in the courtyard in one of the first private moments after his election. "I had time to greet him, not just as a neighbor," she said.

The women's diaconate

Becquart recalled that she had been at a conference of the 900 nuns who run the world's female religious orders when the white smoke came out of the Sistine Chapel chimney. It didn't bother her that the nuns had no vote in the conclave, since the cardinals "could see that the church is the people of God."

"Synodality is about feeling we are from the same body, we are interdependent, we have a deep inner connection, and for me that was a deep spiritual experience I could never imagine before," she said.

Also during the conclave, advocates for women's ordination set off pink smoke flares over the Vatican to protest their exclusion from the priesthood and the election process.

"The discrimination and exclusion of women is a sin, and we're here to say the next pope will inherit this question and needs to work quickly to correct it," said Kate McElwee, executive director of the Women's Ordination Conference.

Hofstra University researcher Phyllis Zagano, who was on Francis' first Vatican commission on women deacons, remains optimistic. She pointed to Prevost's acknowledgement that the deacon issue was still open and that he ministered in Peru, a region that has pushed for years for the church to recognize women as ministerial deacons to help offset the priest shortage.

In a column for Religion News Service, Zagano noted that a recent proposal for a new Amazonian liturgical rite, published last month by the Amazonian bishops conference, contained explicit recommendations for women to be ordained as deacons. When Francis in 2020 considered official requests from Amazonian bishops for female deacons, he dodged the issue.

"Women deserve the ordained diaconal ministry of women," she said in an interview.

In their words: What judges have said about birthright citizenship and nationwide injunctions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal courts have uniformly blocked President Donald Trump's order seeking to end birthright citizenship for children born in the United States to someone in the country illegally.

The Supreme Court is hearing arguments Thursday in appeals of three of those orders that prevented the Trump administration's citizenship restrictions from taking effect anywhere in the United States.

At issue are both the meaning of the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment and the authority of individual judges to universally block policies rather than apply them just to the people and organizations

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that sued.

In dozens of pages of opinions, four federal judges have explained why they believe Trump's birthright citizenship executive order, signed on his first day in office, is unconstitutional. Nine appellate judges also have weighed in over whether to narrow or pause those rulings while the administration appeals.

Here are excerpts from their opinions, as well as the 1898 Supreme Court case, *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, that the judges have cited as the clearest precedent for their rulings:

Supreme Court ruled 127 years ago in favor of a child born in San Francisco to Chinese parents

Justice Horace Gray wrote the majority opinion in the 6-2 decision that Wong was a citizen by virtue of his birth on American soil.

"The real object of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution, in qualifying the words 'all persons born in the United States' by the addition 'and subject to the jurisdiction thereof,' would appear to have been to exclude, by the fewest and fittest words (besides children of members of the Indian tribes, standing in a peculiar relation to the national government, unknown to the common law), the two classes of cases, — children born of alien enemies in hostile occupation, and children of diplomatic representatives of a foreign state."

"... The fourteenth amendment affirms the ancient and fundamental rule of citizenship by birth within the territory, in the allegiance and under the protection of the country, including all children here born of resident aliens, with the exceptions or qualifications (as old as the rule itself) of children of foreign sovereigns or their ministers, or born on foreign public ships, or of enemies within and during a hostile occupation of part of our territory, and with the single additional exception of children of members of the Indian tribes owing direct allegiance to their several tribes.

"The amendment, in clear words and in manifest intent, includes the children born within the territory of the United States of all other persons, of whatever race or color, domiciled within the United States.

In dissent, Chief Justice Melville Fuller wrote that Wong could not be a citizen because his parents still owed their allegiance to the Chinese emperor and could not be fully "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States. Justice John Marshall Harlan joined the dissent.

4 federal judges have said the changes likely violate the Constitution and 3 have blocked them nationally

"I've been on the bench for over four decades. I can't remember another case where the question presented was as clear as this one is. This is a blatantly unconstitutional order," U.S. District Judge John Coughenour said at a hearing in his Seattle courtroom.

In his written order, Coughenour said, "The plaintiffs are likely to succeed on their claim that the order violates the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment ... Indeed, the court need only look to its text. The Citizenship Clause is clear: 'All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.' In other words, any individual who is born in the territorial United States or properly naturalized according to federal procedures is a citizen of this country.

"The government for its part relies on the provision of the Citizenship Clause that conditions citizenship upon being 'subject to the jurisdiction' of the United States. That is, the government argues that 'children born in the United States of illegal aliens or temporary visitors' are not 'subject to the jurisdiction thereof' and therefore cannot be considered birthright citizens ... But the government accords more meaning to the phrase 'subject to the jurisdiction' than those words or precedent support."

U.S. District Judge Leo Sorokin in Boston said the *Wong Kim Ark* decision resolved the current case. "The rule and reasoning from that decision were reiterated and applied in later decisions, adopted by Congress as a matter of federal statutory law in 1940, and followed consistently by the Executive Branch for the past 100 years, at least. A single district judge would be bound to apply that settled interpretation, even if a party were to present persuasive arguments that the long-established understanding is erroneous. The defendants, however, have offered no such arguments here. "The loss of birthright citizenship — even if temporary, and later restored at the conclusion of litigation — has cascading effects that would cut across a young child's life (and the life of that child's family), very likely leaving permanent scars. The

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record before the court establishes that children born without a recognized or lawful status face barriers to accessing critical healthcare, among other services, along with the threat of removal to countries they have never lived in and possible family separation. That is irreparable harm."

In Greenbelt, Maryland, a Washington suburb, U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman wrote that "the Supreme Court has resoundingly rejected and no court in the country has ever endorsed" Trump's interpretation of birthright citizenship.

The children targeted by Trump's order don't fit into any of the exceptions the high court recognized in 1898, Indian tribes, foreign diplomats or occupying forces. "They are children whose citizenship by birth has been recognized in this country since the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. When the children described in the Executive Order are born, they will be United States citizens under the Fourteenth Amendment and long-standing Supreme Court precedent. The President does not have the authority to strip them of their constitutional right to citizenship by birth," she wrote.

Boardman also explained why she issued a nationwide injunction. One of the groups that sued, ASAP, has more than 680,000 members. "Because ASAP's members reside in every state and hundreds of them expect to give birth soon, a nationwide injunction is the only way 'to provide complete relief' to them," she wrote. "It also is necessary because the policy concerns citizenship—a national concern that demands a uniform policy."

In New Hampshire, U.S. District Judge Joseph Laplante blocked the citizenship order only in the state. "The court need not presume the Executive Order's constitutionality. 'A legislative enactment carries with it a presumption of constitutionality.' The defense has not argued, or cited binding or persuasive authority, that executive orders enjoy a similar presumption, and the court does not know of any," Laplante wrote.

3 federal appeals courts have refused to let the citizenship changes take effect while Trump appeals

In the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Danielle Forrest, a Trump appointee, wrote to explain why she voted against an emergency stay of Coughenour's ruling. "To constitute an emergency under our Rules, the Government must show that its inability to implement the specific policy at issue creates a serious risk of irreparable harm within 21 days," Forrest wrote. "The Government has not made that showing here. Nor do the circumstances themselves demonstrate an obvious emergency where it appears that the exception to birthright citizenship urged by the Government has never been recognized by the judiciary and where executive-branch interpretations before the challenged executive order was issued were contrary."

In the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge David Barron wrote for a unanimous panel. "The Government expressly declines to make any developed argument that it is likely to succeed on appeal in showing that the Executive Order is either constitutional or compliant with" federal law, Barron wrote.

The three-judge panel in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals split 2-1 to deny the administration's emergency appeal, focused on nationwide, or universal, injunctions. "We are of course aware of separate writings by Supreme Court Justices, emphasized by the government, that express concerns about the propriety of universal injunctions and an interest in taking up that question. But notwithstanding these reservations, the Supreme Court has allowed most universal injunctions to remain in effect during the course of litigation, even in cases in which the Court has ultimately reversed on the merits," Judges Pam Harris and Roger Gregory wrote. "No decision of the Supreme Court has superseded our precedent in this area, and we have no reason to think the Court will soon announce a change in course."

They also forecast "confusion and upheaval" if the restrictions were allowed to take effect. "Even for children born to two citizen parents, a standard birth certificate will no longer suffice to prove citizenship — not under the Executive Order, and not for any other purpose. Existing administrative systems will fail, states and localities will bear the costs of developing new systems for issuing birth certificates and verifying citizenship, and anxious parents-to-be will be caught in the middle."

In dissent, Judge Paul Niemeyer wrote that administration "only seeks to stay the effort by the district court to impose its injunction nationwide to afford relief to persons beyond the District of Maryland."

The legality of the Trump order was not before the court, Niemeyer wrote. "Rather, it is whether the court was entitled, in the circumstances of this case, to extend its injunction to apply 'throughout these United States' — to persons not before the court nor identified by the court. I would grant the govern-

ment's modest motion, which seeks only to cabin the order's inappropriate reach," he wrote.

Harvard thought it had a cheap copy of the Magna Carta. It turned out to be extremely rare

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Harvard University for decades assumed it had a cheap copy of the Magna Carta in its collection, a stained and faded document it had purchased for less than \$30.

But two researchers have concluded it has something much more valuable — a rare version from 1300 issued by Britain's King Edward I.

The original Magna Carta established in 1215 the principle that the king is subject to law, and it has formed the basis of constitutions globally. There are four copies of the original and, until now, there were believed to be only six copies of the 1300 version.

"My reaction was one of amazement and, in a way, awe that I should have managed to find a previously unknown Magna Carta," said David Carpenter, a professor of medieval history at King's College London. He was searching the Harvard Law School Library website in December 2023 when he found the digitized document.

"First, I'd found one of the most rare documents and most significant documents in world constitutional history," Carpenter said. "But secondly, of course, it was astonishment that Harvard had been sitting on it for all these years without realizing what it was."

Confirming the document's authenticity

Carpenter teamed up with Nicholas Vincent, a professor of medieval history at Britain's University of East Anglia, to confirm the authenticity of Harvard's document.

Comparing it to the other six copies from 1300, Carpenter found the dimensions matched up. He and Vincent then turned to images Harvard librarians created using ultraviolet light and spectral imaging. The technology helps scholars see details on faded documents that are not visible to the human eye.

That allowed them to compare the texts word-for-word, as well as the handwriting, which include a large capital 'E' at the start in 'Edwardus' and elongated letters in the first line.

After the 1215 original printed by King John, five other editions were written in the following decades — until 1300, the last time the full document was set out and authorized by the king's seal.

The 1300 version of Magna Carta is "different from the previous versions in a whole series of small ways and the changes are found in every single one," Carpenter said.

Harvard had to meet a high bar to prove authenticity, Carpenter said, and it did so "with flying colors."

Its tattered and faded copy of the Magna Carta is worth millions of dollars, Carpenter estimated — though Harvard has no plans to sell it. A 1297 version of the Magna Carta sold at auction in 2007 for \$21.3 million.

A document with a colorful history

The other mystery behind the document was the journey it took to Harvard.

That task was left to Vincent, who was able to trace it all the way back to the former parliamentary borough of Appleby in Westmorland, England.

The Harvard Law School library purchased its copy in 1946 from a London book dealer for \$27.50. At the time, it was wrongly dated as being made in 1327.

Vincent determined the document was sent to a British auction house in 1945 by a World War I flying ace who also played a role defending Malta in World War II. The war hero, Forster Maynard, inherited the archives from Thomas and John Clarkson, who were leading campaigners against the slave trade. One of them, Thomas Clarkson, became friends with William Lowther, hereditary lord of the manor of Appleby, and he possibly gave it to Clarkson.

"There's a chain of connection there, as it were, a smoking gun, but there isn't any clear proof as yet that this is the Appleby Magna Carta. But it seems to me very likely that it is," Vincent said. He said he would like to find a letter or other documentation showing the Magna Carta was given to Thomas Clarkson.

Making Magna Carta relevant for a new generation

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Vincent and Carpenter plan to visit Harvard in June to see its Magna Carta firsthand — and they say the document is as relevant as ever at a time when Harvard is clashing with the Trump administration over how much authority the federal government should have over its leadership, admissions and activism on campus.

"It turns up at Harvard at precisely the moment where Harvard is under attack as a private institution by a state authority that seems to want to tell Harvard what to do," Vincent said.

It also is a chance for a new generation to learn about the Magna Carta, which played a part in the founding of the United States — from the Declaration of Independence to the adoption of the Bill of Rights. Seventeen states have incorporated aspects of it into their laws.

"We think of law libraries as places where people can come and understand the underpinnings of democracy," said Amanda Watson, the assistant dean for library and information services at Harvard Law School. "To think that Magna Carta could inspire new generations of people to think about individual liberty and what that means and what self-governance means is very exciting."

Today in History: May 16, China's Cultural Revolution begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, May 16, the 136th day of 2025. There are 229 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 16, 1966, the Chinese Communist Party issued the May 16 Notification, a document that criticized "counterrevolutionary revisionists" within the party and marked the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

Also on this date:

In 1770, Marie Antoinette, age 14, married the future King Louis XVI of France, who was 15.

In 1868, having already been impeached by the House of Representatives, President Andrew Johnson narrowly avoided impeachment by the Senate, which voted 35-19 in favor of impeachment—one vote shy of the required two-thirds majority.

In 1929, the first Academy Awards were presented. "Wings" won the award for Outstanding Picture, while Emil Jannings and Janet Gaynor were named Best Actor and Best Actress.

In 1943, the nearly monthlong Warsaw Ghetto Uprising came to an end as German forces crushed the Jewish resistance and blew up the city's Great Synagogue.

In 1960, the first working laser was demonstrated at Hughes Research Laboratories in Malibu, California, by physicist Theodore Maiman.

In 1975, Japanese climber Junko Tabei became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton publicly apologized for the notorious 40-year Tuskegee Experiment, in which government scientists deliberately allowed Black men to weaken and die of treatable syphilis.

In 2018, officials at Michigan State University said they had agreed to pay \$500 million to settle claims from more than 300 women and girls who said they were assaulted by sports doctor Larry Nassar.

In 2022, the U.S. death toll from COVID-19 reached 1 million.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Danny Trejo is 81. Actor Pierce Brosnan is 72. Olympic gymnastics gold medalist Olga Korbut is 70. Baseball Hall of Famer Jack Morris is 70. Actor Debra Winger is 70. Olympic marathon gold medalist Joan Benoit Samuelson is 68. Actor Mare Winningham is 66. Rock musician Krist Novoselic (Nirvana) is 60. Singer Janet Jackson is 59. Football Hall of Famer Thurman Thomas is 59. Singer Ralph Tresvant (New Edition) is 57. Actor David Boreanaz is 56. Political commentator Tucker Carlson is 56. Tennis Hall of Famer Gabriela Sabatini is 55. Actor Tori Spelling is 52. Actor Melanie Lynskey is 48. Actor Megan Fox is 39. Actor Thomas Brodie-Sangster is 35.