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Friday, May 23

Senior Menu: Chicken pasta salad, three bean salad, cinnamon apple sauce, breadstick.
Track at Warner, 11 a.m.

Saturday, May 24

Sunday, May 25

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.



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

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

Monday, May 26

MEMORIAL DAY

State High School Baseball at Brookings

Tuesday, May 27

Senior Menu: Lemon chicken breast, wild rice green beans, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.
Girls Golf Region at Sioux Valley (Volga), 10 a.m.
State High School Baseball at Brookings

Wednesday, May 28

Senior Menu Turkey mashed potato with gravy, California blend, orange and pineapple, dinner roll.
Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

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1440

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

House Passes 'Big Beautiful Bill'

House Republicans passed a broad domestic policy bill early Thursday by a 215-214 vote following overnight negotiations and last-minute changes to the legislation. The so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill" now heads to the Senate, where expected tweaks may result in a back-and-forth between the two chambers.

The House version renews and expands trillions of dollars in tax cuts first enacted in 2017 and boosts spending for defense, border security, and immigration enforcement while reducing the budget for food assistance and Medicaid programs. Medicaid recipients would see stricter eligibility criteria, including the first federal work requirement of 80 hours a month for able-bodied adults (92% of recipients currently meet the standard). The bill would also create \$1,000 child savings accounts and increase the debt limit by \$4T ahead of the July deadline.

Passage relied on several eleventh-hour alterations, including the implementation of Medicaid work requirements three years sooner. Senators indicated the bill would likely see significant changes, particularly around reducing the deficit.

Jewish Museum Attack

A suspect was charged with two counts of first-degree murder and murder of foreign officials after killing two Israeli embassy staffers outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, DC, this week. The 31-year-old assailant, who is believed to have acted alone, shouted "Free, Free Palestine" after firing at the victims at close range. More charges are expected as officials investigate the act as a hate crime and act of terrorism.

World leaders condemned the attack, with Israel's government blaming the violence on a climate of antisemitism and anti-Israel incitement amid the country's ongoing war in Gaza. Officials were investigating whether a 900-word manifesto released the day before the attack was authentic. The Chicago-based suspect was affiliated with left-wing politics, at one point a member of a local chapter of the Party for Socialism and Liberation.

The two victims—Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky—were an interfaith couple who met while working together at the embassy. Family members say Lischinsky planned to propose next week.

A Penny Saved Is a Nickel Earned

The US Treasury announced yesterday it will stop issuing new pennies, ending more than 200 years of production for the one-cent coin. The Mint has already placed its final order for penny blanks—the metal discs used to create coins—and will continue minting until that supply runs out, likely in early 2026. Consumers can continue using existing pennies, but as circulation declines, banks and retailers will likely round cash transactions to the nearest nickel. Digital payments will remain unaffected and will continue to be processed to the exact cent.

The decision is largely driven by cost. Each penny costs about 3.7 cents to produce, resulting in an \$85M loss in 2024. Treasury officials estimate the move will save \$56M annually in materials and manufacturing. However, the nickel—which costs 13.8 cents to produce—may see increased demand, potentially cutting into the anticipated savings.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

"Lilo & Stitch" and "Mission: Impossible—The Final Reckoning" projected to open with a combined \$485M worldwide box office haul, potentially a record for Memorial Day weekend.

New York Liberty's owners sell stake in the WNBA team at \$450M valuation, the highest ever for a women's pro sports franchise.

NBA conference championships continue this weekend; see latest schedule ... NHL's conference championships also underway.

College Football Playoff committee approves change to seeding for the upcoming season, granting the top four seeds a first-round bye whether or not they won their conference.

Science & Technology

AI startup Anthropic releases next version of its flagship chatbot, Claude 4.

New AI model learns how to connect specific sounds with visual data without human assistance; may have use in helping robots understand their real-world environments.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. releases "Make America Healthy Again" report, blaming ultraprocessed foods, pesticides, lack of physical activity, overmedication, and more for a wide range of chronic childhood conditions.

Engineered contact lenses allow the wearer to see in infrared, a part of the electromagnetic spectrum invisible to the human eye.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.0%, Dow -0.0%, Nasdaq +0.3%) as 30-year Treasury yield hits highest level since October 2023.

Existing home sales in April fall to lowest level for the month since 2009; new listings reach highest level since March 2020 at 1.9 million.

Adtech platform MNTN shares soar 65% on first day of trading; the company—which boasts actor Ryan Reynolds as chief creative officer—was valued at \$1.2B before its debut.

Tinder CEO Faye Iosotaluno to step down in July.

Politics & World Affairs

Department of Homeland Security revokes Harvard University's Student and Exchange Visitor Program certification, blocking the school from enrolling international students; move comes amid battle between Trump administration and the university over records on international students, admissions policies.

Supreme Court deadlocks on what would have been the nation's first religious charter school; 4-4 ruling prevents state funding for the school.

Federal judge blocks executive order to close the Department of Education, requiring reinstatement of 1,300 terminated employees.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts above-average hurricane season, anticipating six to 10 hurricanes, three to five of them Category 3 or higher.

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Johnson advances to state in girls golf

Carlee Johnson qualified for the state golf meet after placing sixth at the Region 1A meet held Thursday in Sisseton. She shot a 43 in both rounds for a final score of 86. Claire Schuelke just missed the cutoff, placing 16th. She shot a 55 in the first nine and a 49 in the second nine for a total score of 104. Halee Harder placed 17th, shooting a 58 in the first nine and a 47 in the second nine for a total score of 105. Carly Gilbert tied in 19th place, shooting a 51 in the first nine and a 60 in the back nine for a total score of 111. Rylie Rose tied for 19th place, shooting a 55 and a 56 for a total of 111.

Aberdeen Roncalli won the team title with 345 points followed by Madison with 349, Sioux Valley 392, Groton Area with 406 and Milbank with 544.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Gross
Strokes																					
RED - Ladies Tee / SLOPE®: 123 / Course Rating™: 69.8 / Meadow Creek Golf Course																					
Yardage	280	120	290	382	450	295	334	105	278	2534	280	120	290	382	450	295	334	105	278	2534	5068
Par	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	36	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	36	72
Carlee Johnson	4	4	5	5	5	6	5	4	5	43	3	4	5	6	6	5	5	4	5	43	86
Claire Schuelke	5	4	4	6	7	10	6	6	7	55	5	6	5	4	8	6	6	4	5	49	104
Halee Harder	6	5	6	7	8	8	6	5	7	58	5	4	7	6	6	5	6	3	5	47	105
Carly Gilbert	3	6	5	5	9	4	7	6	6	51	8	5	6	10	7	6	6	5	7	60	111
Not included in scoring																					
Rylie Rose	6	4	6	10	8	5	5	3	8	55	8	4	5	6	8	5	7	5	8	56	111

Starting Hole Eagle or Better Birdie Par Bogey Double Bogey or Worse



Groton American Legion Auxiliary members and their families placed 323 flags for veterans at the Groton Cemetery on Thursday. Pictured in back row are David and Jan Seibel and Rich Zimney, front row Junior Auxiliary members Grace and Anna Oswald; Tami Zimney, Deb McKiver and Lori Giedt. Not pictured Cooper Olson. (Courtesy Photo)



MEMORIAL DAY

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



Groton Post #39 Memorial Day Schedule

Hufton at 7:30 a.m.

James at 8:15 a.m.

Verdon at 8:45 a.m.

Bates-Scotland at 9:15 a.m.

Ferney at 10 a.m.

Andover Union at 11 a.m.

Groton at Noon
Guest speaker at Groton
is Todd Oliver.

Lunch to follow at the Groton Post
#39 home served by the
Legion Auxiliary.

In the event of inclement weather,
the ceremony will be held at the
Post home.

Groton Post #39 is sponsoring
the FREE viewing of the broadcast
at

GDILIVE.COM

People in their vehicles can listen
on the radio at 89.3 FM.

OPENING MAY 2ND
CLOSING JUNE 2ND

WEBER LANDSCAPING GREENHOUSE

620 WEST THIRD AVENUE

GROTON

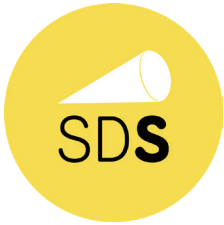
HOURS OF OPERATION

M-F 10-6

SAT 10-4

SUN 12-4





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

SD's Thune and Rounds support U.S. Senate vote to block tailpipe emissions standard

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - MAY 22, 2025 5:58 PM

The U.S. Senate voted early Thursday to prevent California from enforcing regulations on tailpipe emission from new cars and trucks, upending state regulations for the nearly 40% of Americans whose states follow California standards.

The House has already passed an identical measure, meaning the Senate vote sends the resolution to President Donald Trump's desk.

The 51-46 vote, with Michigan Democrat Elissa Slotkin joining all Republicans present to vote in favor, cleared a Congressional Review Act resolution repealing Environmental Protection Agency waivers that allow California to set regulations for emissions from cars and light-duty trucks.

The state policy includes a ramp-up to having no new gas-powered cars sold in the state by 2035.

Democrats blasted the near-party-line vote for contradicting the Senate parliamentarian, who'd ruled the waiver that the EPA had granted to California to set its own tailpipe standards was not a regulation that could be rolled back under the Congressional Review Act, or CRA.

The CRA allows for a simple majority in the Senate to vote to repeal recent executive branch rules, bypassing the chamber's usual 60-vote threshold for legislation.

'Chaos and uncertainty' around the U.S.

The EPA under President Joe Biden issued waivers under a Clean Air Act provision that allows California, which had more stringent standards than what Congress enacted in the 1970 law, to set its own standards for air pollution.

No other state is allowed to set independent standards, but any state may adopt California's.

For the light-duty vehicle emissions rule, 17 other states — Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Washington — and the District of Columbia adopted some portion of the standard.

The action by the Senate, particularly because of the mechanism for revoking the waiver, made the future of the standards in all those states uncertain, Justin Balik, vice president for states at the national environmental advocacy group Evergreen Action, said in a Thursday interview.

"What, fundamentally, they're doing is sowing a huge amount of chaos and uncertainty in states around the country, not just in California," he said of the senators.

Slotkin, who voted against procedural measures before her vote in favor of the resolution itself, said her vote was in defense of her state's automotive industry. Slotkin campaigned on a promise not to allow an electric vehicle mandate.

"Today, I voted to prevent California and the states that follow its standard from effectively banning gas-powered cars by 2035," she wrote in a statement. "I have a special responsibility to stand up for the more than one million Michiganders whose livelihoods depend on the U.S. auto industry."

Debate over choice

Critics said the state regulation was effectively an electric vehicle mandate that robbed consumers of

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the option to purchase the vehicle of their choice.

Because of California's market share — the state accounts for 11% of cars and trucks sold in the country, according to the California Air Resources Board — and adoption by other states, the Golden State standard had a virtually nationwide effect, they argued.

Republicans in the Senate focused on the 2035 deadline to end sales of new gas-powered vehicles, describing it as an electric vehicle mandate.

In a video posted to social media, the Senate's No. 2 Republican, John Barrasso of Wyoming, stood next to Shelley Moore Capito, the West Virginia Republican chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and touted the vote as a victory for consumer choice.

"Republicans have defeated Democrats' delusional dream of forcing every American to drive an electric vehicle," Barrasso said. "They wanted to force-feed the entire country things that don't necessarily work, not practical."

But proponents of the California standards said the Senate was removing choice from state policymakers, despite Republicans' longtime advocacy for state and local control.

Manish Bapna, the president of the advocacy group Natural Resources Defense Council, blasted the move in a statement that said senators undermined state power.

"This vote is an unprecedented and reckless attack on states' legal authority to address the pollution causing asthma, lung disease and heart conditions," Bapna said. "After a multi-million dollar lobbying campaign from Big Oil, Republicans readily jettisoned their long-held view that states can best enact measures that reflect the values and interests of their residents."

"If other states don't like California's approach, they don't need to follow it," the statement continued. "But federal lawmakers shouldn't be intervening to block states from providing cleaner air and a healthier environment."

Procedural fight

Republicans' use of the Congressional Review Act provoked a backlash from Democrats and environmental allies, who described it as "going nuclear" to tank the chamber's filibuster rule.

The Senate parliamentarian and the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office said the waiver could not be repealed with a CRA resolution, but Senate Republicans opted to use the procedure anyway.

"Senate Republicans exposed themselves as fair weather institutionalists. By overriding the parliamentarian — which the chair explicitly noted that the parliamentarian has been overridden — and in order to do the bidding of the fossil fuel industry, Republicans have eroded away at the Senate foundation and undermined this institution they claim to care about," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said after a procedural vote late Wednesday.

Republicans defended the move, saying they were responding to an unprecedented case in the chamber. The question of how Senate rules applied to the waiver should be decided by senators themselves, Majority Leader John Thune said.

"I believe that when the Senate is facing a novel situation like this one, with disagreement among its members, it is appropriate for the Senate to speak as a body to the question — something the Senate does when questions over application of the rules arise," he said in a floor speech.

Thune, of South Dakota, noted that the Senate resolved a rules question with a floor vote just last year after a Democrat raised a point of order against a Republican's attempt to fast-track a measure.

"Nobody at the time cried nuclear, nobody said the Democrat member was blowing up the Senate — in fact, most members probably don't even remember the situation, because it was just the Senate doing what the Senate is supposed to do, and that's voting on how to apply the rules when faced with a new situation."

Uncertainty abounds

Critics of the move attacked the process, the policy and the precedent, saying the Senate undid a half-

century of a California-federal government relationship regarding the Clean Air Act that had served all parties well.

John Boesel, the president and CEO of clean transportation industry group CALSTART, called the Senate action radical.

"This vote upends decades of policy that has successfully resulted in cleaner air and the growth of a robust clean transportation industry," he said in a statement. "It is a brazen, yet futile, attempt to bring the clean transportation industry to a sudden halt. CALSTART will continue to partner with the states working to fill this gaping void left by today's federal action."

And the unusual use of the Congressional Review Act will likely lead to lawsuits from California and at least some of the states that follow it to "protect their authority," Balik, of Evergreen Action, said.

"But that's going to take some time to play out," he said. "In the meantime, the whole marketplace has been plunged into unnecessary chaos. Part of what the industry always says is, 'We need certainty.' And if anything, right now, we have the exact opposite thanks to what Congress is doing."

Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

Most South Dakota tech college grads finding jobs right away, according to new data

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MAY 22, 2025 5:05 PM

The vast majority of South Dakota's technical college graduates from the 2023-24 school year secured jobs within six months of graduation, according to the latest state Board of Technical Education report.

Jenna Reis, policy and data analyst with the board, shared the report Thursday during a meeting at Lake Area Technical College in Watertown. She said that among graduates who are employable — not continuing with further education or joining the military — the data show 99% are employed, with 93% employed in a job related to their degree.

"These are strong numbers," she said. "In fact, you may notice in the chart that we have very few graduates that are either not in the labor market or who are still seeking employment."

The report evaluates the post-graduation outcomes of students from the state's four technical colleges who responded to requests for information:

Lake Area Technical College (Watertown): Out of 781 graduates, 768 responded, with 150 continuing their education or enlisting in the military, and 562 employed in their field of study with an average hourly pay of \$27.23.

Mitchell Technical College: Out of 488 graduates, 480 responded, with 52 continuing their education or enlisting in the military, and 397 employed in their field of study with an average hourly pay of \$24.36.

Southeast Technical College (Sioux Falls): Out of 900 graduates, 778 responded, with 84 continuing their education or enlisting in the military, and 632 employed in their field of study with an average hourly pay of \$24.68.

Western Dakota Technical College (Rapid City): Out of 286 graduates, 249 responded, with 39 continuing their education or enlisting in the military, and 200 employed in their field of study with an average hourly pay of \$27.48.

Of the 2,275 graduates who responded, 1,961 — 86% — reported living in South Dakota. The average salary of all graduates working in their field of study was about \$53,000 per year, according to Reis.

"I think these results show that our graduates are not only finding work and are staying in South Dakota, but they're contributing to the workforce in their program areas, which is important," she said.

The report drew data from graduate surveys, faculty outreach and phone surveys conducted six months post-graduation.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public af-

fairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Controversial pipeline provision removed as expected from budget reconciliation bill, group says

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - MAY 22, 2025 10:37 AM

A coalition of groups opposing a multi-state carbon dioxide pipeline celebrated the removal of controversial language from the budget reconciliation bill passed Thursday by the U.S. House.

Last week, the groups raised alarms about a provision they said would have allowed federal regulators to approve natural gas and carbon dioxide pipelines over prohibitions in state law.

South Dakota passed a law earlier this year that bans the use of eminent domain for carbon pipelines. Eminent domain is a legal process for gaining land access from unwilling owners, in exchange for compensation determined by a judge.

Chase Jensen, a senior organizer for Dakota Rural Action in South Dakota, was among the activists who called for the provision's removal.

"Within days of being introduced, Congress heard loud and clear that seizing federal siting authority for oil and CO2 pipelines was a nonstarter all across the nation," Jensen said in a news release.

The groups are also calling for the repeal of a federal tax credit for carbon sequestration, but have not succeeded in getting that repeal inserted in the legislation. And they remain opposed to a "fast-track" provision in the bill that they say would allow potential gas pipeline operators to pay a fee of \$10 million for expedited federal environmental reviews within a year's time.

The proposed \$9 billion, five-state Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline does not require that type of federal review, but it does need eminent domain for its proposed route. The project, which would transport ethanol-plant carbon emissions to an underground sequestration site in North Dakota, remains in limbo in South Dakota after the passage of the state's eminent domain ban and two permit rejections by the state's Public Utilities Commission.

RFK Jr.'s 'Make America Healthy Again' report stresses emphasis on children's well-being

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 22, 2025 5:21 PM

WASHINGTON — The Make America Healthy Again commission, created earlier this year by President Donald Trump, released its first report Thursday, calling on the administration and lawmakers to improve the well-being of the country's children.

The 73-page report was published just after Trump and several Cabinet secretaries held an event highlighting their concerns with four areas — nutrition, physical activity, environmental factors and "over-medicalization."

"Over the next 80 days, the commission will build on its work in this report to develop a road map to bold and transformative public health reforms for our consideration," Trump said.

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said the report and the administration's approach to childhood health issues is that "there is no difference between good economic policy, good environmental policy and good public health policy and good industrial policy. We can have all of them."

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said that everyone knows American farming interests need to be at the center of the Make America Healthy Again, or MAHA, agenda.

"We have the most robust, the safest, the best agriculture system in the world," Rollins said.

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Mainstream farm groups, however, were not happy. "Farmers are identified as 'critical partners,' yet were excluded from development of the report, despite many requests for a seat at the table," American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall wrote in a statement.

'Corporatization and consolidation' in food system

The numerous ways that American agriculture and the food people choose to eat have evolved received considerable attention in the report.

"Our agricultural system has historically focused on abundance and affordability. The progress we have made is largely thanks to the hard work of American farmers, ranchers, and food scientists," it states. "However, the rise of (ultra processed food) has corresponded with a pattern of corporatization and consolidation in our food system. Today's diet-related chronic disease crisis, demand a closer examination of this pattern and its broader impact."

The report mentions pesticides numerous times, but doesn't call for them to be banned outright.

"Some studies have raised concerns about possible links between some of these products and adverse health outcomes, especially in children, but human studies are limited," the report says. "For example, a selection of research studies on a herbicide (glyphosate) have noted a range of possible health effects, ranging from reproductive and developmental disorders as well as cancers, liver inflammation and metabolic disturbances."

Kennedy testified during a U.S. Senate committee hearing earlier this week that based on drafts of the report he had seen, "there is not a single word in them that should worry the American farmer."

His comments came during an exchange with Mississippi Republican Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith, who specifically asked him about glyphosate, a commonly used herbicide, that she referred to as "one of the most thoroughly studied products of its kind."

"We're talking about more than 1,500 studies and 50-plus years of review by the EPA and other leading global health authorities that have affirmed its safety when used as directed," Hyde-Smith said. "Have you been able to review thousands of studies and decades of scientific review in a matter of months?"

Kennedy responded during that Tuesday hearing that her "information about the report is just simply wrong."

Sleep, stress, social media

The report combines recommendations that have long been supported by research, like exercising regularly and eating a well-balanced diet, with proposals that aren't fully supported by science.

It notes that "physical activity, encompassing moderate-to-vigorous exercise, aerobic fitness, and reduced sedentary time, is critical for child health and well being.

"However, American youth have seen a steady decline in activity and cardiorespiratory fitness over decades, contributing to rising obesity, diabetes, mental health disorders, and cardiometabolic risks."

The report calls out children who are unable to get enough sleep and chronic stress as health challenges, in addition to the prevalence of social media.

"The near-ubiquitous presence of social media in the lives of American adolescents, with up to 95% of teens regularly using at least one or more of these platforms—is increasingly correlated with a concerning rise in mental health challenges, particularly among younger users," the report says. "With the vast majority of teenagers engaging with these platforms, understanding the nuanced consequences and mental health impacts of social media on their developing well-being is of critical public health importance."

No mention of gun violence

The report didn't include any mention of gun violence, a leading cause of death in American children and teenagers, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, analysis from the nonpartisan health research organization KFF and a report from the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions.

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"The United States has by far the highest rate of child and teen firearm mortality among peer nations. In no other similarly large, wealthy country are firearms in the top four causes of death for children and teens, let alone the number one cause," KFF's analysis states. "U.S. states with the most gun laws have lower rates of child and teen firearm deaths than states with few gun laws. But, even states with the lowest child and teen firearm deaths have rates much higher than what peer countries experience."

The Johns Hopkins report notes that the gun death rate in children between the ages of 1 and 17 has "increased by 106 percent since 2013 and (has) been the leading cause of death among this group since 2020."

In 2022, there were 2,526 gun deaths in that age range, for an average of seven a day, according to the report.

The KFF analysis shows other leading causes of childhood death include motor vehicles, cancer, suffocation, congenital anomalies, poisoning and drowning.

Farm Bureau, Corn Growers critical

Farm groups were dubious about the report's conclusions.

The American Farm Bureau's Duvall said it was "deeply troubling for the White House to endorse a report that sows seeds of doubt and fear about our food system and farming practices, then attempts to celebrate farmers and the critical role they play in producing the safest food supply in the world."

"The report also expresses a desire to ensure farmers continue to thrive, but undermining confidence in our food system directly contradicts that noble goal," said Duvall. "The report spotlights outlier studies and presents unproven theories that feed a false narrative and only then does it acknowledge a mountain of evidence about the safety of our food system."

Iowa Corn Growers Association Chair Jolene Riessen said the "misinformation surrounding crop protection tools is incredibly upsetting because if there's one thing all farmers have in common, it's that we care about raising safe, healthy, and affordable food that nourishes families around the world.

"Agriculture is a science, and we have spent years testing and researching pesticides, like glyphosate, to reaffirm that they are a safe and vital tool farmers rely on to feed and fuel the world."

Others said the report was lacking. Lori Ann Burd, the Center for Biological Diversity's environmental health director, wrote in a statement the "report's acknowledgement of pesticides' risks to our children's health is a small step forward," before rebuking Trump administration officials for not going further.

"The grassroots movement of millions of Americans who trusted Trump with their votes won't forget that RFK Jr. was cowed by the powerful industrial farming forces determined to make sure there are no U.S. restrictions on harmful pesticides like atrazine, which is banned in 60 nations," Burd wrote. "Instead of protecting our kids, we use over 70 million pounds of atrazine each year on the corn and sugarcane crops that are making Americans sick. The fight to ban atrazine will continue."

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

SD state worker promoted to lead Bureau of Information and Technology and its \$88 million budget

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 22, 2025 2:04 PM

An employee in the state Bureau of Information and Technology has been promoted to commissioner of the bureau, South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden announced Thursday.

Mark Wixon serves as the director of agency application support with the bureau. He previously worked at Black Hills Energy for 28 years before working with the state.

Rhoden said in a news release he believes Wixon will provide "meaningful, strategic insight" to the position.

The bureau manages information and technology-related needs in state government, such as operating

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the state's data center, providing cybersecurity training and awareness, and offering support services to other agencies. The bureau also includes South Dakota Public Broadcasting. The bureau's annual budget is \$88 million, and it has 390.5 full-time equivalent positions.

Wixon joined the bureau last year.

"My career in IT has been driven by the philosophy that innovative technology solutions can drive positive outcomes and enhance business performance," Wixon said in the news release. "I look forward to continuing this mission and achieving great results for the agencies which serve this great state."

South Dakota's former BIT commissioner Madhu Gottumukkala left recently to serve as the deputy director of U.S. Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, under former South Dakota governor and current Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

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.

Court order blocks Trump from eliminating U.S. Education Department

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - MAY 22, 2025 12:51 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Education must temporarily reinstate the hundreds of employees laid off earlier this year and cannot follow through on an executive order from President Donald Trump seeking to dismantle the agency, a federal judge in Massachusetts ruled Thursday.

The ruling stems from a pair of March lawsuits — one from a slew of Democratic attorneys general, another from a coalition of advocacy and labor groups — and blocks three Trump initiatives, marking a major blow to the president's education agenda as his administration seeks to dramatically reshape the federal role in education.

The lawsuits challenge some of the administration's most consequential education initiatives so far: a reduction in force effort at the agency that gutted more than 1,300 employees, Trump's executive order calling on Education Secretary Linda McMahon to facilitate the closure of her own department and Trump's proposal to rehouse the student loan portfolio in the Small Business Administration and special education services in the Department of Health and Human Services.

"A department without enough employees to perform statutorily mandated functions is not a department at all," U.S. District Judge Myong J. Joun wrote in his 88-page memorandum and order granting a preliminary injunction.

"This court cannot be asked to cover its eyes while the Department's employees are continuously fired and units are transferred out until the Department becomes a shell of itself," wrote Joun, whom former President Joe Biden appointed.

Joun's preliminary injunction took effect immediately and will remain until the merits of the consolidated case are decided.

A department spokesperson said the administration would immediately appeal the ruling. The agency has since filed an appeal.

Win for Democratic states

One of the cases comes from a coalition of Democratic attorneys general in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington state and Wisconsin.

The other lawsuit was brought by the American Federation of Teachers, its Massachusetts chapter, AF-SCME Council 93, the American Association of University Professors, the Service Employees International

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Union and two school districts in Massachusetts.

The department's reduction in force plan prompted concerns from education advocates and leaders over how the agency would be able to carry out its core responsibilities after roughly halving its workforce, including major cuts to key units including the Office of Federal Student Aid, Office for Civil Rights and the Institute of Education Sciences.

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, one of the largest teachers unions in the country, celebrated the ruling in a Thursday statement.

"Today, the court rightly rejected one of the administration's very first illegal, and consequential, acts: abolishing the federal role in education," Weingarten said.

"This decision is a first step to reverse this war on knowledge and the undermining of broad-based opportunity. For America to build a brighter future, we must all take more responsibility, not less, for the success of our children."

Joun's order also bars the agency from carrying out the president's directive to transfer the student loan portfolio and special education services out of the agency.

Trump announced the proposal, which had no accompanying executive order, at the opening of an Oval Office appearance with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. The department had told States Newsroom earlier this week that it had nothing new to share at this time regarding the proposed transfer.

Judge 'dramatically overstepped'

Madi Biedermann, a spokesperson for the department, said the agency "will immediately challenge this on an emergency basis."

"Once again, a far-left Judge has dramatically overstepped his authority, based on a complaint from biased plaintiffs, and issued an injunction against the obviously lawful efforts to make the Department of Education more efficient and functional for the American people," she said in a statement shared with States Newsroom.

"President Trump and the Senate-confirmed Secretary of Education clearly have the authority to make decisions about agency reorganization efforts, not an unelected Judge with a political axe to grind. This ruling is not in the best interest of American students or families."

Thursday's ruling came just a day after McMahon took a grilling from U.S. House Democrats over the drastic cuts and proposed changes at her department during a hearing in a panel of the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations.

McMahon appeared before the lawmakers to outline Trump's fiscal year 2026 budget request, which calls for \$12 billion in spending cuts at the department.

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.

SD Rep. Johnson votes yes as U.S. House Republicans push through budget reconciliation bill

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ASHLEY MURRAY - MAY 22, 2025 6:51 AM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House early Thursday approved the "big, beautiful bill" that Republican leaders spent months negotiating with centrists and far-right members of the party — two distinct factions that hold vastly different policy goals — over intense opposition from Democrats.

The 215-214 vote ships the package to the Senate, where GOP lawmakers are expected to rewrite much of it, before sending it back across the Capitol for final approval, a process likely to stretch through the summer.

President Donald Trump, who said he backed the House version, would then need to sign the legislation, which under the complicated process being used by Republicans can pass with just a majority vote in the GOP-controlled Senate.

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Trump called on the Senate to pass the legislation as quickly as possible, writing in a social media post that "(t)here is no time to waste" and that the bill is "arguably the most significant piece of Legislation that will ever be signed in the History of our Country!"

Speaker Mike Johnson said minutes before the vote that he expects lawmakers to give the measure final approval before the Fourth of July.

"Now, look, we're accomplishing a big thing here today, but we know this isn't the end of the road just yet," Johnson, R-La., said. "We've been working closely with Leader (John) Thune and our Senate colleagues, the Senate Republicans, to get this done and delivered to the president's desk by our Independence Day. That's July 4. Today proves that we can do that, and we will do that."

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., argued against the legislation, saying it "undermines reproductive freedom, undermines the progress that we have made in combating the climate crisis, undermines gun safety, undermines the rule of law and the independence of the federal judiciary. It even undermines the ability of hard-working and law-abiding immigrant families to provide remittances to their loved ones, who may just happen to live abroad."

Jeffries raised concerns with how the proposals in the bill would impact the economy and the federal government's financial stability.

"Costs aren't going down. They're going up. Inflation is out of control. Insurance rates remain stubbornly high," Jeffries said. "Our Moody's rating, our credit rating, has been downgraded, and you've got people losing confidence in this economy. Republicans are crashing this economy in real time and driving us toward a recession."

Ohio's Warren Davidson and Kentucky's Thomas Massie were the only Republicans to vote against passing the bill, which members debated throughout the night prior to the vote just after daylight in the nation's capital. All Democrats, who dubbed it "one big ugly bill," were opposed. Maryland GOP Rep. Andy Harris, chairman of the Freedom Caucus, voted "present."

Massie spoke against the bill overnight, calling it "a debt bomb ticking."

"I'd love to stand here and tell the American people: We can cut your taxes and we can increase spending, and everything's going to be just fine. But I can't do that because I'm here to deliver a dose of reality," Massie said. "This bill dramatically increases deficits in the near term, but promises our government will be fiscally responsible five years from now. Where have we heard that before? How do you bind a future Congress to these promises?"

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said during a briefing later in the day that Trump wants Davidson and Massie to face primary challenges next year during the midterm elections.

"I believe he does," Leavitt said. "And I don't think he likes to see grandstanders in Congress."

In the works for weeks

The 1,116-page package combines 11 bills that GOP lawmakers debated and reported out of committee during the last several weeks.

The legislation would:

Extend the 2017 tax law, including tax cuts for businesses and individuals;

Bolster spending on border security and defense by hundreds of billions of dollars;

Rework energy permitting;

Restructure higher education aid such as student loans and Pell Grants;

Shift some of the cost of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program food aid program for low-income Americans to state governments; and

Overhaul Medicaid, the nation's program for health care for low-income people and some people with disabilities.

The bill would make deep cuts to Medicaid spending, reducing the program by \$625 billion over 10 years under the latest estimate by the Congressional Budget Office.

The budget measure would also raise the debt limit by \$4 trillion.

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A new Congressional Budget Office analysis released late Tuesday showed the package tilted toward the wealthy, projecting it would decrease resources for low-income families over the next decade while increasing resources for top earners.

Republicans hold especially thin majorities in the House and Senate, meaning that nearly every GOP lawmaker — ranging from centrists who barely won their general elections to far-right members who are more at risk of losing a primary challenge — needed to support the bill.

Balancing the demands of hundreds of lawmakers led to nearly constant talks during the last few days as Johnson struggled to secure the votes to pass the bill before his Memorial Day deadline.

Any deal Johnson made with far-right members of the party risked alienating centrist GOP lawmakers and vice versa.

An agreement finally came together Wednesday evening when GOP leaders released a 42-page amendment that made changes to various sections of the package, including the state and local tax deduction, or SALT, and Medicaid work requirements and nixed the potential sale of some public lands.

Tax cuts

House debate on the package fell largely along party lines, with Democrats contending it would benefit the wealthy at the expense of lower-income Americans, including millions who would lose access to Medicaid.

Republicans argued the legislation is necessary to avoid a tax hike at the end of the year, when the 2017 GOP law expires, and to curb government spending in the years ahead.

Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith, R-Mo., said the tax section of the package would halt a tax increase for many that would have taken place after the vast majority of the provisions in that law expire at the end of this year.

"Working families, farmers and small businesses win with this bill," Smith said. "We expand and make permanent the small business deduction and increase the child tax credit, the standard deduction and the death tax exemption."

The legislation would increase the tax rate for colleges and universities with substantial endowments, which would match the corporate tax rate, he said.

Massachusetts Democratic Rep. Richard Neal, ranking member on that tax-writing committee, said the legislation would lead the United States to "borrow \$4 trillion and with interest payments over the next 10 years, \$5 trillion, to justify a tax cut for the billionaire class."

Neal said that the wealthy would see a greater benefit from the GOP tax provisions than working-class Americans.

"If you made a million dollars last year, you're going to get \$81,000 of tax relief. If you made less than \$50,000 Guess what? Not quite so lucky," Neal said. "But you know what? \$1 a day goes a long way, because that's where the numbers land."

Neal said Democrats would have worked with Republicans to extend the 2017 tax cuts if the GOP had capped them for those making less than \$400,000 a year, with people making more than that going back to the higher rate.

Child tax credit

The child tax credit will increase to \$2,500, up from the \$2,000 enacted under the 2017 tax law. The refundability portion of the credit, or the amount parents could receive in a refund check after paying their tax liability, will remain capped but will increase with inflation by \$100 annually. As of now, the amount a parent could receive back per child stands at \$1,700.

While Republicans hailed the increase as a win for families, critics say it continues to leave out the poorest families as the refund amount is dependent on how much a parent earns. The credit phases in at 15 cents per income dollar, one child at a time.

"The Republican bill will leave out 17 million American children who are in families that don't earn enough to receive the full child tax credit," Rep. Suzan DelBene of Washington said Wednesday in the House Com-

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mittee on Rules. Her amendment to make the tax credit fully refundable was rejected.

On the House floor Thursday morning, DelBene criticized the bill as a "big, broken promise."

SALT

Republicans from high-tax blue states declared victory on the increase in the SALT cap, or the amount of state and local taxes that can be deducted from federal taxable income. After long, drawn-out disagreement, Republicans representing districts in California, New Jersey and New York secured a bump to \$40,000, up from the \$10,000 cap enacted under Trump's 2017 tax law.

However, the cap comes with an income limit of \$500,000, after which it phases down. Both the \$40,000 cap and the \$500,000 income threshold will increase annually at 1% until hitting a ceiling of \$44,000 and \$552,000.

Rep. Mike Lawler of New York said during debate that he "would never support a tax bill that did not adequately lift the cap on SALT."

"This bill does that. It increases the cap on SALT by 300%," Lawler said. "And I would remind my Democratic colleagues, when they had full control in Washington, they lifted the cap on SALT by exactly \$0, zilch, zip, nada."

Medicaid work requirements

Energy and Commerce Chairman Brett Guthrie, R-Ky., said his panel's bill would ensure Medicaid coverage continued for low-income families, individuals who are disabled and seniors through new work requirements and other changes.

"This bill protects coverage for those individuals by ensuring ineligible recipients do not cut the line in front of our most vulnerable Americans," Guthrie said. "The decision by left-leaning state governments to spend taxpayer dollars on people who are ineligible for the program is indefensible. Medicaid should not cover illegal immigrants, deceased or duplicative beneficiaries, or able-bodied adults without dependents who choose not to work."

The policy change would require those who rely on the state-federal health program, and who are between the ages of 19 and 65, to work, participate in community service, or attend an educational program at least 80 hours a month.

The language has numerous exceptions, including for pregnant people, parents of dependent children, people who have complex medical conditions, tribal community members, those in the foster care system, people who were in foster care who are below the age of 26 and individuals released from incarceration in the last 90 days, among others.

New Jersey Democratic Rep. Frank Pallone, ranking member on the committee that oversees major health care programs, said the Republican bill would not only cut funding for Medicaid, but also for Medicare, the program relied on by seniors and some younger people with disabilities.

"Republicans are stripping health care away from people by putting all sorts of burdensome and time-consuming road blocks in the way of people just trying to get by," Pallone said. "The vast majority of people on Medicaid are already working. This is not about work. It's about burying people in so much paperwork that they fall behind and lose their health coverage, and if someone loses their health coverage through Medicaid, this GOP tax scam also bans them from getting coverage through the ACA marketplace."

While the GOP bill doesn't directly address Medicare, he said, a federal budget law, known as the Pay-As-You-Go Act, would force spending cuts called sequestration to that health program.

"The Medicare cuts will lead to reduced access to care for seniors, longer wait times for appointments, and increased costs," Pallone said.

States to share in food aid costs

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn "GT" Thompson, R-Pa., pressed for support for his piece of the legislation, saying changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, are needed.

"SNAP is the only state-administered welfare program that does not have a cost-share component, and while the federal government funds 100% of the benefit, states are tasked with operating it," Thompson said. "The only problem: They aren't operating it well."

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He also cheered several of the package's tax provisions, saying they would benefit farmers.

"The one big, beautiful bill makes permanent and expands the Trump tax cuts. It also prevents the death tax from hitting over 2 million family farms," Thompson said. "It locks in the small business deduction, helping 98% of American farms stay afloat."

Minnesota Democratic Rep. Angie Craig, ranking member on the panel, wrote in a statement that the proposed changes would "make America hungrier, poorer and sicker."

"At a time when grocery prices are going up and retirement accounts are going down, we must protect the basic needs programs that help people afford food and health care," Craig wrote. "As a mother and someone who needed food assistance at periods in my own childhood, I condemn this attempt to snatch food off our children's plates to fund tax breaks for large corporations."

Border security, air traffic control, EV fees

House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Sam Graves, R-Mo., said his piece of the package would combine "critical investments in border security, national defense and modernization of America's air traffic control system, while eliminating wasteful spending and other deficit reduction measures."

"Specifically, this bill addresses long overdue needs in the United States Coast Guard, which for over two decades has received less than half of the capital investment necessary to effectively carry out its critical missions," Graves said.

The transportation section of the package, he said, includes \$21 billion for the Coast Guard and \$12.5 billion to modernize the air traffic control systems while establishing a \$250 annual fee for electric vehicles and a \$100 annual fee for hybrid vehicles that would go toward the Highway Trust Fund. That account has traditionally been funded through a gas tax.

Washington Democratic Rep. Rick Larsen, ranking member on the transportation panel, said he wanted "to continue historic funding for transportation, infrastructure, and stronger and healthier communities."

"Unfortunately, this reconciliation package leaves very little room for those investments," Larsen said.

"This bill causes immediate harm by yanking money from locally selected projects that our constituents in Republican and Democratic districts alike are counting on," he added. "And for what? To help pay for the tax cuts for the richest Americans and largest and largest corporations."

Student loan overhaul, medical research

House Education and Workforce Committee ranking member Bobby Scott, D-Va., urged opposition to what he called the "big, bad billionaires bill," saying it would lead to a massive reshaping of higher education aid.

"The bill not only can increase the deficit, it has 4 million students who will lose their Pell Grants, 18 million children could potentially lose their free school lunch, 13.7 million people are set to lose their health care and everybody loses when the National Institutes of Health research is cut," Scott said.

Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman, R-Ark., said his portion of the legislation would "generate over \$20 billion in savings and new revenue for the federal government, primarily by direct royalty and lease fees from the sale of oil, gas, timber and mine resources, while curbing wasteful spending."

"Our title reinstates onshore and offshore oil and gas lease sales, holds annual geothermal lease sales and ensures a fair process for critical mineral development nationwide," Westerman said. "We've also directed the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to utilize long-term timber sale contracts."

The Trump administration released a Statement of Administration Policy on Wednesday urging GOP lawmakers to approve the legislation, when it still appeared several members of the party might delay or even block the bill in the House.

"The One Big Beautiful Bill Act reflects the shared priorities of both Congress and the Administration," the SAP states. "Therefore, the House of Representatives should immediately pass this bill to show the American people that they are serious about 'promises made, promises kept.'"

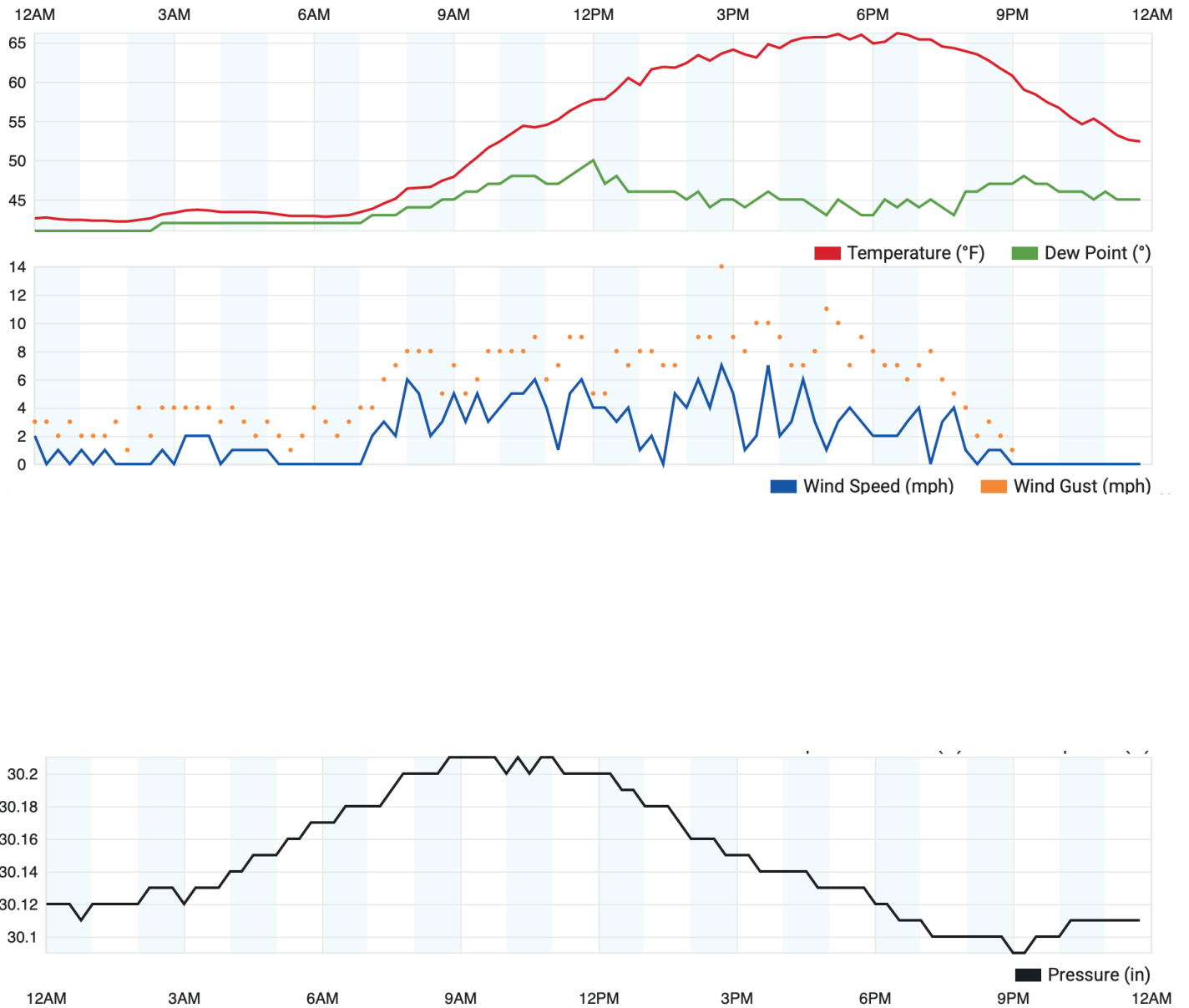
"President Trump is committed to keeping his promises, and failure to pass this bill would be the ultimate betrayal."

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

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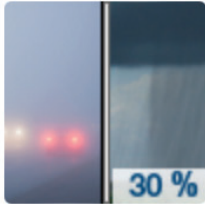
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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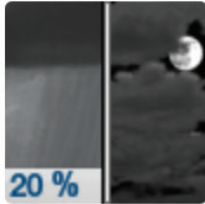
Today



High: 65 °F

Patchy Fog
then Chance
Showers

Tonight



Low: 43 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Mostly Cloudy

Saturday



High: 66 °F

Mostly Sunny

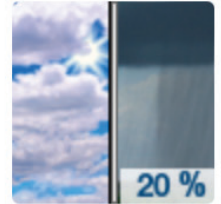
Saturday Night



Low: 45 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Sunday



High: 68 °F

Partly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
Showers

Friday

Highs: 52-67°
60-90% chance of rain
West of the James River



Lows: 40-46°
20-30% chance of rain
West of the James River



Saturday

Highs: 50-70°
30-60% chance of rain
West of the James River



Lows: 40-47°
35-65% chance of rain
West of the James River



Sunday

Highs: 55-70°
30-70% chance of rain
West of the James River



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

May 23, 2025

4:15 AM

There will be a chance for showers today and through the weekend, mainly west of the James River Valley. Temperatures will be slightly cooler than normal, with highs in the 50s-70s and lows in the low to mid 40s.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 67 °F at 5:39 PM

Low Temp: 42 °F at 1:42 AM

Wind: 14 mph at 2:39 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 15 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 94 in 1950

Record Low: 26 in 1897

Average High: 73

Average Low: 47

Average Precip in May.: 2.51

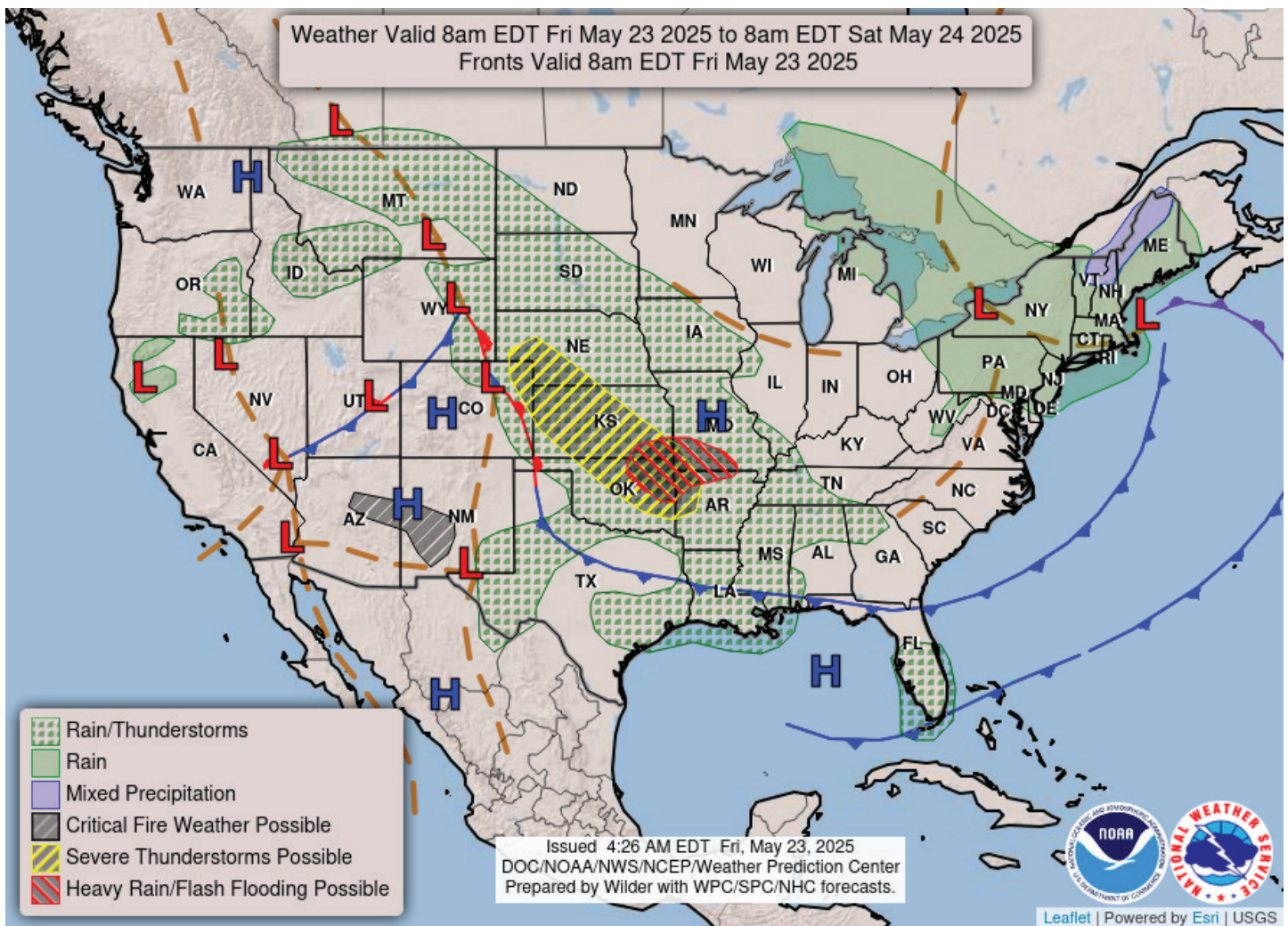
Precip to date in May.: 3.35

Average Precip to date: 6.48

Precip Year to Date: 5.98

Sunset Tonight: 9:06:56 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:50:37 am



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Today in Weather History

May 23rd, 1989: A complex of thunderstorms moved from southwest Minnesota through Iowa. One small tornado touched down briefly in Lyon County. But the main story with this complex was high winds and hail. Baseball-sized hail fell north of George in Lyon County. Also, two-inch hail occurred in Sac County in Schaller and Odebolt, and golf-ball-sized hail fell in Carroll, Iowa. The hail caused damage to vehicles, trees, and roofs. Thunderstorm winds of 60 miles an hour were also common across all of northwest Iowa with these storms.

1882 - An unusual late season snow blanketed eastern Iowa, with four to six inches reported around Washington. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1953 - The temperature at Hollis OK soared from a morning low of 70 degrees to an afternoon high of 110 degrees to establish a state record for the month of May. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was a busy day for thunderstorms in the central U.S. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Shreveport LA and golf ball size hail at Marfa, TX. Hobart, OK, received 3.55 inches of rain in the morning, and another 4.03 inches of rain that evening. Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced 8.5 inches of rain in two hours north of Potter, and 7.5 inches of rain in ninety minutes north of Minatare. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced five inches of hail at Greeley. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather across much of the eastern U.S. Golf ball size hail was reported in Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Ohio. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Severe thunderstorms developing along a cold front resulted in 98 reports of large hail and damaging winds in the Northern Plains and Upper Mississippi Valley. Golf ball size hail caused a million dollars damage around Buffalo City, WI, baseball size hail was reported at Northfield and Randolph, MN, and thunderstorm winds gusted to 95 mph at Dunkerton, IA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather continued in the south central U.S. Pueblo, CO, equalled their May record with a high of 98 degrees, and the high of 106 degrees at Midland, TX, marked a record six straight days of 100 degree heat. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - A cold front crossing the western U.S. produced snow over parts of Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho and Utah, with five inches reported at Austin NV, and four inches at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. Strong winds behind the cold front sharply reduced visibilities in blowing dust over central California, and two multi-vehicle accidents resulted in one death and eighteen injuries. In northern Idaho, a cloud-burst washed tons of topsoil, and rocks as large as footballs, into the valley town of Culdesac. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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DON'T STOP NOW!

Some time ago it was my privilege to be the commencement speaker at a high school graduation. At the end of the service, the students came forward and walked up to the headmaster to receive their diplomas. As he shook their hands, he looked into their eyes and said softly to each one of them, "Don't stop now, keep moving forward!"

Great advice - not only for the graduates but for everyone, every day. Whatever we do, wherever we go, we must keep on keeping on. We must keep forgiving! Keep growing! Keep helping! Keep loving! Keep witnessing! Keep serving! Keep worshipping! Keep working! Keep laughing! Keep moving forward! We must never stop doing good, but keep on keeping on!

If this is important for life in general, it is even more important in the life of a Christian. Paul said that "I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be." "Keep working" means "Keep on keeping on doing good!"

What great advice Paul offers us. Nothing must ever interfere with, nor cause us, to take our eyes off of knowing and serving Christ. We must focus on Him, and His will for our lives, as Paul did, to win the race and receive the prize He will award us by being faithful to Him.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to focus on "the prize" You have for each of us, as we run life's race. Help us to keep focused on You as we grow into Your likeness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philip-
pians 3:8-14

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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Password _____

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.20.25

18 30 33 55 64 11

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$154,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 58 Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.21.25

1 14 15 19 31 9

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$35,560,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 13 Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.22.25

12 16 28 31 37 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 28 Mins 40 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.21.25

1 14 16 17 25

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 28 Mins 40 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.21.25

4 9 21 37 56 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 57 Mins 40 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.21.25

9 29 31 34 43 2

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$163,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 57 Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Poll: Johnson, Rhoden set pace in South Dakota governor's race

South Dakota News Watch undefined

Sioux Falls, SD (South Dakota News Watch)

Early voter support in the 2026 Republican primary race for South Dakota governor is focused on U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson and incumbent Gov. Larry Rhoden, according to a poll of 500 registered GOP voters co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch.

But an expected crowded field could complicate the path to victory in the primary, with 35% of the vote needed to avoid a runoff election.

The statewide survey, also sponsored by the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota, showed Johnson at 28% and Rhoden at 27%, with Attorney General Marty Jackley at 18%.

Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden polled at 4%, followed by South Dakota Speaker of the House Jon Hansen at 2%.

The number of respondents who said they were undecided was 20%. That underscores the early nature of a race in which Hansen, a Dell Rapids lawyer and anti-abortion advocate, is the only one to have officially declared his candidacy.

Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy conducted the poll of registered Republican voters April 9-11, using random selections from a telephone-matched state voter registration list that included both landline and cellphone numbers. The margin of error was no more than 4.5 percentage points.

Here are key takeaways as candidates begin planning their campaigns:

Johnson, elected to a fourth term in Congress in 2024, has \$5.9 million in his "Friends of Dusty Johnson" campaign committee as of last filing and can shift that money toward a state race. His intention to run for governor has been well-known in state political circles for some time.

Combined with name recognition and decades of political experience, Johnson's campaign fund makes the 48-year-old Pierre native a major player in the governor's race, even with an incumbent in the field.

"I'm grateful to be the leading candidate for governor in the early going, but my focus is on working for our country," Johnson told News Watch in reaction to the poll. "We've got a narrow window to secure conservative wins in Washington, and I plan to keep delivering. I'll worry about the next race later."

Mindful that other Republicans will try to portray him as too moderate or not sufficiently loyal to President Donald Trump, Johnson has aligned himself with Trump on numerous issues in 2025, including tariffs, federal spending cuts and a potential takeover of the Panama Canal.

The poll showed that Trump carries a 68% favorability rating among South Dakota Republicans voters, compared to 52% for Johnson and 40% for Rhoden.

At times Johnson has taken a more centrist tone, introducing a Wounded Knee Massacre site bill in Congress that would preserve a section of the land where hundreds of Lakota Indians were massacred by the U.S. Army in 1890.

Rhoden, a 66-year-old Meade County rancher, is a former state legislator who served as lieutenant governor to former Gov. Kristi Noem. He took the top job in late January when Noem was confirmed as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security in the Trump administration.

The latest campaign filing from his "Rhoden for Governor" campaign committee shows a balance of about \$91,000. His ability to sell donors on his vision for another term and raise cash quickly will determine his viability in the race.

Julia Hellwege, an associate political science professor at USD and director of the Chiesman Center, said that Noem's departure and Rhoden's ascension to the top job "threw a wrench" into the race by allowing him to run as an incumbent.

"It sort of changed the landscape for the other candidates," said Hellwege.

The poll showed that 40% of respondents had a neutral view of Rhoden, compared to 23% for Johnson.

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Also, 13% didn't recognize the governor's name, more than half of those who hadn't heard of Johnson (6%).

Establishing a political identity separate from Noem, a challenge when taking office in the midst of a legislative session, will be a priority for Rhoden. The governor has heralded a pro-business approach as part of his "Open for Opportunity" tour, hoping to impress top-level donors with an eye toward 2026.

Like Johnson, he is widely expected to run but has not formally entered the race.

"I've been receiving a lot of encouragement from South Dakotans to keep doing the job of governor," Rhoden told News Watch in reaction to the poll. "Sandy (his wife) and I are encouraged by this information -- but campaigns are too long and a distraction from public service. South Dakota is a great state, and I'm focused on doing my job serving the people as governor."

The poll showed that male voters support Rhoden (31%) over Johnson (28%) and Jackley (17%), while Johnson has the early lead among female voters at 29%, followed by Rhoden at 22% and Jackley at 19%.

There's also a geographical divide. Johnson leads in the Sioux Falls Metro region (Minnehaha and Lincoln counties) with 34%, with Rhoden at 26% and Jackley at 18%. Among West River voters, Rhoden has the edge at 27%, followed by Johnson (24%) and Jackley (23%).

Hellwege noted that Rhoden stayed consistent among all four quadrants of the state, with each region between 26% and 29% in his favor, a balance that she said he could build on. Johnson showed a 10-point dip the Sioux Falls Metro (34%) and West River (24%).

Johnson has the highest share of young voters supporting him, with 35% of GOP respondents aged 18-34 saying they would vote for him if the election were held today, followed by Rhoden (32%) and Jackley (14%).

Jackley told News Watch that he was surprised by his third-place standing in the poll, 10 points behind the leader.

The 54-year-old Sturgis native has about \$520,000 in his campaign fund and is well-established in South Dakota's political and legal communities. He previously ran for governor in 2018, losing in the Republican primary to Noem.

Jackley, who has professional ties to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi, will work to build momentum with endorsements and support from groups such as the National Association of Attorneys General, of which he serves as vice president.

He has scheduled a major fundraiser for May 5 at the Arrowhead Country Club in Rapid City.

"I continue to receive encouragement to run for governor from South Dakotans who want a common sense conservative in the race," Jackley told News Watch. "But right now I'm focused on keeping our streets safe and leading the fight against government corruption."

Michael Card, an emeritus professor of political science at the University of South Dakota, also expressed surprise at Jackley's standing in the poll.

"There's a lot of time left, but I thought he would be a lot closer to Johnson and Rhoden," said Card. "Rhoden is 5 points ahead of him West River, where he should be strong, and he's not really in consideration in Sioux Falls Metro and East River/South, where he's below the number of undecideds. It shows that crime or personal safety may not be the issue that's on people's minds right now."

Hansen, who announced his candidacy along with running mate Karla Lems on April 24 in Sioux Falls, is well-known to political insiders as a force behind defeating the 2024 constitutional amendment to legalize abortion in South Dakota.

The 39-year-old property rights advocate rose to the office of House speaker as part of a populist surge in Pierre stemming from the 2024 GOP primary elections.

The News Watch poll showed he has a lot of work to do to translate those efforts into a viable statewide campaign. In a section of the survey used to gauge favorability, 54% of Republican voters surveyed didn't recognize Hansen's name.

The poll was taken before his campaign kickoff event at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance, where Hansen vowed to reduce government waste and corruption in support of "grassroots patriots from all across the state."

Name identity is also a problem for Doeden, whose Dakota First Action PAC helped boost anti-carbon

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pipeline efforts and send populist candidates to the state Legislature.

Doeden can self-fund campaign efforts with resources from his car dealerships and real estate holdings, but his social media outreach hasn't boosted his profile to casual voters. Nearly 60% of poll respondents did not recognize his name.

History has shown that hard-right candidates can make waves in South Dakota Republican primaries, such as Taffy Howard's 41% performance in the 2022 U.S. House race against Johnson. But there is typically a ceiling to such support.

"Both (Hansen and Doeden) have advantages with the MAGA (Make America Great Again) branch of the Republican Party," said Card. "But that also means that they have people who won't support them because of that perspective."

The poll also shed light on the popularity and name recognition of South Dakota politicians among Republican voters.

Noem, who served as governor from 2019-2025 before leaving for her Cabinet position, had a favorable rating of 61%, which puts her at the top of the list. The 53-year-old Castlewood native also had the highest unfavorable rating at 25%.

Mason-Dixon polling allows for a neutral response (neither favorable or unfavorable). Only 14% of respondents had a neutral opinion of the former governor.

Noem's job performance as Homeland secretary was part of a separate statewide poll that News Watch will release April 29.

The next highest favorability rating (56%) among GOP voters belonged to Senate Majority Leader John Thune, who has worked closely with the Trump administration since the president took office. Thune's unfavorable rating was the lowest among those polled, at 8.6%.

Thune was followed in favorability by U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds (53%), who is expected to run to keep his Senate seat in 2026. He was followed by Jackley (53%), Johnson (52%), Rhoden (40%), Hansen (12%) and Doeden (10%).

The poll showed Johnson with an unfavorable rating of 19% within the party, compared to 7% for Rhoden and 10% for Jackley.

"There's always the inside-the-GOP question about some voters' concerns about Dusty, which he has tried to address with symbolic support of Trump," said Hellwege. "I think there's also an inherent mistrust of Washington and members of Congress generally, which could be part of what we're seeing."

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Please coordinate with carson.walker@sdnewswatch.org should you want to publish photos for this piece. This content cannot be modified, apart from rewriting the headline. To view the original version, visit: <https://www.sdnewswatch.org/poll-dusty-johnson-larry-rhoden-south-dakota-john-thune-kristi-noem/>

Poll: About half of South Dakotans support Noem's DHS efforts

South Dakota News Watch undefined

Sioux Falls, SD (South Dakota News Watch)

Just over half of South Dakotans approve of the way Kristi Noem is running the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, according to a poll of 500 registered voters co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch.

Asked about the former South Dakota governor's job performance in President Donald Trump's Cabinet, 51% said they approve and 44% said they disapprove, with 5% not sure.

In the same poll, 58% said they approve of how Gov. Larry Rhoden is doing since he took over the job from Noem in February. U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, who assumed the chamber's top position in January, received a job approval rating of 55%.

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The statewide survey, also sponsored by the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota, polled registered voters regardless of party, unlike the GOP-only 2026 gubernatorial primary poll published April 28. The breakdown was 255 Republicans, 126 Independents and 119 Democrats.

Of Republicans polled, 71% said they approve of Noem's job performance after more than two months in her new role, compared to 44% of Independents and 15% of Democrats.

Jon Schaaff, a political science professor at Northern State University in Aberdeen, called Noem's job performance numbers "tepid" compared to her time as governor, though drawing conclusions between different jobs can be tricky.

Noem's high-water mark in South Dakota came during the COVID-19 pandemic in October 2020, when 57% of voters regardless of party approved of her performance as governor.

Noem, a 53-year-old Castlewood native who served as governor from 2019-2025, has become the face of immigration enforcement as the Trump administration carries out its policy of mass deportations.

She has traveled from street raids in New York City to a high-security prison in El Salvador and meetings with Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum.

Her methods have drawn as much attention as her mission, which involves running a federal network of 22 agencies and 260,000 employees.

She donned a bulletproof vest during an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid in late January, soon after being confirmed, posting a message about "getting the dirtbags off these streets."

Noem also posted photos of herself at the commands of a C-130 surveillance plane during a visit to U.S. Coast Guard service members in Alaska and standing in front of prisoners at a notorious mega-prison in El Salvador.

"People need to see that image," Noem told Fox News of the photos of her surrounded by rows of tattooed inmates inside their cells. "They need to see that the United States is going to use every tool that we have to make our communities safer, that that is a consequence of someone who is a terrorist."

The Trump administration has acknowledged mistakenly deporting a man named Kilmar Abrego Garcia to that El Salvador prison in March, resulting in a federal judge's order for the U.S. government to facilitate his return, which has not happened.

An Economist/YouGov poll from April 19-22 showed that Americans by a 2-to-1 margin believe that Abrego Garcia should be returned to the United States.

Noem fared significantly better with male voters in the News Watch poll than female voters, which was also the case when she served as governor.

The poll showed that 57% of male voters approve of Noem's performance as Homeland Security Secretary, compared to 46% of female respondents.

Geographically, her job approval was strongest among voters in the East River/North region, including Aberdeen, Brookings and Watertown, with 57%. That was followed by West River (53%), East River/South (49%) and Sioux Falls Metro (45%).

Noem's support in the poll was above 50% in every age group except 65-plus, where respondents registered 43% approval and 52% disapproval.

Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy conducted the poll from April 9-11, using random selections from a telephone-matched state voter registration list that included both landline and cellphone numbers. The margin of error was no more than 4.5 percentage points.

More than half of South Dakotans support the job performance of longtime Republican statesman Thune as he settles into his new role as majority leader of the U.S. Senate, working closely with the Trump administration.

The poll showed that 55% of respondents approve of the job he's doing, while 35% disapprove and 10% were not sure.

Of Republicans polled, 79% said they approve of Thune's job performance, compared to 40% of Independents and 19% of Democrats.

Thune, elected to the job by his GOP Senate peers last November, has navigated through a formerly

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fraught relationship with Trump, overseeing confirmations of all the president's Cabinet nominees, sometimes at a cost.

Several of those Cabinet officials have been involved in early controversies, from discussing military plans on an unclassified Signal app chat to encouraging the Republican president to follow through with steep tariffs on trading partners.

"Everybody's got to be rolling in the same direction," Thune said of the upcoming challenge of passing the GOP's budget reconciliation package. "It takes a lot of teamwork."

Thune's support in South Dakota is generally consistent across geographic regions, though slightly lower in East River/South (51%), which includes Mitchell, Yankton and Vermillion.

The poll found that 59% of male voters approve of his job performance, compared to 50% of female voters.

Rhoden became the first South Dakota governor to be sworn in during a legislative session when he took the oath of office at the state Capitol in Pierre on Feb. 8.

He was thrust into a leadership role tied in part to Noem's budget policies and priorities, including a planned prison project in rural Lincoln County that needed final funding in 2025 and was rejected by legislators.

So far, 58% of voters approve of Rhoden's job performance, compared to just 17% who disapprove. That approval number is higher than Noem's last job performance assessment in a News Watch poll, a rating of 52% in May 2024 following an ill-fated book tour. Her disapproval rating was 46%.

Still, the fact that 25% responded to the Rhoden question with "not sure" shows that many South Dakotans are reserving judgment until they see more of what the 66-year-old Union Center native stands for.

"(Noem) and I kept South Dakota strong, safe, and free -- and I'm continuing that mission in my administration by cutting property taxes, making targeted investments for public safety and limiting regulations," Rhoden told News Watch.

Though he hails from West River, Sioux Falls Metro was Rhoden's strongest region with 69% approval, followed by East River/North and West River (56%) and East River/South (47%).

Rhoden, without any direct ties to Washington or Trump, has more bipartisan support than Noem or Thune. The poll showed him with 80% approval from Republicans, 39% from Democrats and 38% from Independents.

The governor's strongest age group was 35-49 years old with 64% approval, followed by 50-64 (60%), 65-plus (57%) and 18-34 (47%).

Julia Hellwege, an associate political science professor at USD and director of the Chiesman Center, said that Rhoden's main challenge is to promote his political brand and policies to address the 25% of voters in the poll who were "not sure" about his performance as governor.

"People will start forming an opinion," she said, noting a separate GOP-only survey where 40% had a neutral view of Rhoden and 13% hadn't heard of him. "Hopefully the number of people who don't recognize the name of the governor will be reduced, not just for his sake but also for the sake of civic education."

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Please coordinate with carson.walker@sdnewswatch.org should you want to publish photos for this piece. This content cannot be modified, apart from rewriting the headline. To view the original version, visit: <https://www.sdnewswatch.org/south-dakota-poll-kristi-noem-john-thune-larry-rhoden/>

China criticizes US ban on Harvard's international students

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The Chinese government said Friday that the Trump administration's move to ban international students from Harvard would harm America's international standing, and one university in

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Hong Kong looked to capitalize on the uncertainty by promising to take them in.

Chinese students make up a large part of Harvard University's international student population. The university enrolled 6,703 international students across all of its schools in 2024, according to the school's data, with 1,203 of those coming from China.

The Trump administration's move, announced Thursday, was a hot topic on Chinese social media. State broadcaster CCTV questioned whether the U.S. would remain a top destination for foreign students, noting Harvard was already suing the U.S. government in court.

"But with the long litigation period, thousands of international students may have trouble waiting," the CCTV commentary said.

It went on to say that it becomes necessary for international students to consider other options "when policy uncertainty becomes the norm."

Educational cooperation with the U.S. is mutually beneficial and China opposes its politicization, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said at a daily briefing in Beijing.

"The relevant actions by the U.S. side will only damage its own image and international credibility," she said.

She added that China would firmly protect the rights and interests of Chinese students and scholars abroad but she didn't offer any details on how it would do so in this situation.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology extended an open invitation to international students already at Harvard and those who have been admitted. The institution posted a news release saying it would provide unconditional offers, streamlined admission procedures and academic support to facilitate a seamless transition.

Some people in China joked online about having the university open a branch in the northeastern Chinese city of Harbin, whose name shares the same character as Harvard's name in Chinese.

The issue of Chinese students studying overseas has long been a point of tension in the relationship with the United States. During Trump's first term, China's Ministry of Education warned students about rising rejections rates and shorter terms for visas in the U.S.

Last year, the Chinese foreign ministry protested that a number of Chinese students had been interrogated and sent home upon arrival at U.S. airports.

Chinese state media has long played up gun violence in the U.S. and portrayed America as a dangerous place. Some Chinese students are opting to study in the U.K. or other countries rather than the U.S.

World stocks are mixed and oil prices slip after Treasury yields ease

By JIANG JUNZHE Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — World shares were mixed on Friday as U.S. Treasury yields eased after a rocky week due to worries in the bond market over mounting U.S. government debt.

The yield of the 10-year Treasury shed 0.8% to 4.52% while the two-year yield, which more closely tracks expectations for action by the Federal Reserve, slipped 0.3% to 3.99%.

Oil prices dropped on expectations that the OPEC+ group of oil exporters may decide on another increase in output at their next meeting.

U.S. benchmark crude oil fell 21 cents to \$60.99 per barrel while Brent crude, the international standard, gave up 22 cents to \$64.23 per barrel.

In share trading, Germany's DAX gained 0.1% to 24,019.22, while the CAC 40 in Paris slipped 0.5% to 7,825.09. The FTSE 100 added 0.1% to 8,743.69.

The futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average edged slightly lower.

In other share trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 gained 0.5% to 37,160.47 after the government reported a core inflation rate of 3.5% in April, the highest since early 2023. Core inflation excludes volatile food and energy prices.

The surge in prices has increased the likelihood that the Bank of Japan might raise its benchmark inter-

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est rate at its next policy meeting, analysts said.

But uncertainty over U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff hikes will limit what the BOJ can do, given recent signs of weakness in the economy, Min Joo Kang of ING Economics said in a report.

He added that "with US tariffs likely to impact manufacturing and exports negatively throughout this year, the BOJ's policy changes are likely to be gradual."

Hong Kong's Hang Seng picked up 0.2% to 23,601.26, while the Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.9% to 3,348.37.

Seoul's Kospi retreated 0.1% to 2,592.09 and the S&P/ASX 200 in Australia gained 0.2% to 8,360.90.

On Thursday, stocks drifted to a mixed close on Wall Street.

The S&P 500 slipped less than 0.1% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.35 points. The Nasdaq composite rose 0.3%.

The majority of stocks within the S&P 500 lost ground, but gains for technology companies with outsized values offset those losses. Google's parent Alphabet jumped 1.4% and Nvidia rose 0.8%.

Treasury yields held a bit steadier after the House of Representatives approved a bill that would cut taxes and could add trillions of dollars to the U.S. debt.

The House's multitrillion-dollar spending bill, which aims to extend some \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks from Trump's first term while adding others, is expected to be amended when it gets to the Senate for a vote.

The legislation includes a speedier rollback of production tax credits for clean electricity projects, which sent shares of solar companies tumbling. Sunrun dropped 37.1%, Enphase Energy fell 19.6% and First Solar slid 4.3%.

In economic updates, the number of Americans filing unemployment claims last week fell slightly. The broader employment market has remained strong, though businesses remain worried about the economic uncertainty amid a trade war.

In other dealings early Friday, the U.S. dollar slipped to 143.21 Japanese yen from 144.01 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1348 from \$1.1279.

North Korean leader furious over failed destroyer launch, vows to arrest those responsible

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea is seeking to arrest those responsible for the failed launch of its second naval destroyer, as it denied the warship suffered major damage — a claim quickly met with outside skepticism.

A statement from North Korea on its handling of the botched launch came after leader Kim Jong Un expressed fury over the incident that he said was caused by criminal negligence. The main military committee said Friday that those responsible would be held accountable for their "unpardonable criminal act."

Satellite imagery on the site showed the vessel lying on its side and draped in blue covers, with parts of it submerged. North Korea says it will take about 10 days to repair the damage, but outside observers question that timeframe because damage to the ship appeared much worse than what North Korea claims.

Here is what you need to know about the failed ship launch:

How much damage was there to the ship?

North Korea's state media said Friday the severity of the damage to the 5,000-ton-class destroyer was "not serious" as it canceled an earlier assessment that the bottom of the hull had been left with holes.

It said the hull on the starboard side was scratched and some seawater had flowed into the stern section. It said it needs a total of 10 days to pump out the seawater, set the ship upright and fix the scratches.

It's almost impossible to verify the assessment because of the extremely secretive nature of North Korea. It has a history of manipulating or covering up military-related setbacks, policy fiascos and other mishaps, though it has periodically acknowledged some in recent years.

Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said the North Korean warship likely suffered much worse damage, including the flooding of its engine room located in the stern section,

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and holes in the starboard. He said North Korea could simply set the ship upright, paint it over and claim the ship has been launched, but that repairs could take more than a year as the replacement of an engine requires cutting the hull.

Why the ship's launch failed

According to the North Korean account, the destroyer was damaged when a transport cradle on the ship's stern detached early during a launch ceremony at the northeastern port of Chongjin on Wednesday.

Moon Keun-sik, a navy expert who teaches at Seoul's Hanyang University, said North Korean workers are probably not familiar with launching a 5,000-ton-class warship, which is a few times heavier than its existing main navy ships.

Observers say North Korea tried to launch the destroyer sideways, a method it has never used for warships, although it has previously employed it with big cargo and passenger ships.

Compared with those non-military vessels, Lee said it would be more difficult to maintain balance with the destroyer because it's equipped with heavy weapons systems. He suspected North Korean scientists and officials likely did not factor that in.

How Kim has reacted

The damaged ship is assessed as the same class as North Korea's first destroyer, launched with great fanfare last month with a floating dry dock at a western shipyard. It is North Korea's biggest and most advanced warship to date, and Kim called its construction "a breakthrough" in modernizing North Korea's naval forces to cope with what he calls U.S.-led security threats.

Subsequently, a failure to launch the second destroyer was an embarrassment for Kim. But by disclosing the failure both internally and externally, Kim could be trying to show his resolve in building greater naval forces and boosting discipline at home. He ordered officials to repair the warship before a ruling Workers' Party meeting in late June.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Friday that a team of prosecutors and experts began steps to arrest and investigate those responsible as part of their full-scale investigation into the case. KCNA said that Hong Kil Ho, manager of the Chongjin shipyard, has been summoned for questioning.

"No matter how good the state of the warship is, the fact that the accident is an unpardonable criminal act remains unchanged, and those responsible for it can never evade their responsibility for the crime," the North's Central Military Commission said in an instruction to the investigation team, according to KCNA.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said North Korea appears to be using the failed launch as a chance to strengthen the ruling party's control over science and technological sectors.

Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, said that North Korea's handling of the damaged warship could have long-term consequences for its defense science sector.

"If scientists are held severely accountable, I would say the future of North Korea's defense science doesn't look very bright, as it would be a sign that political responsibility is being prioritized over technical accountability," Lee wrote on Facebook.

Iran and the US holding a fifth round of nuclear negotiations in Rome with enrichment a key issue

By JON GAMBRELL and GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Iran and the United States prepared for a fifth round of negotiations over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program Friday in Rome, with enrichment emerging as the key issue.

U.S. officials up to President Donald Trump insist Iran cannot continue to enrich uranium at all in any deal that could see sanctions lifted on Tehran's struggling economy. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi early Friday insisted online that no enrichment would mean "we do NOT have a deal."

"Figuring out the path to a deal is not rocket science," Araghchi wrote on the social platform X. "Time to decide."

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The U.S. will be again represented in the talks by Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Michael Anton, the State Department's policy planning director. While authorities haven't offered a location for the talks, another round in Italy's capital took place at the Omani Embassy there. Oman's Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi is mediating the negotiations as the sultanate on the Arabian Peninsula has been a trusted interlocutor by both Tehran and Washington in the talks.

Enrichment remains key in negotiations

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

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

"Iran almost certainly is not producing nuclear weapons, but Iran has undertaken activities in recent years that better position it to produce them, if it chooses to do so," a new report from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said. "These actions reduce the time required to produce sufficient weapons-grade uranium for a first nuclear device to probably less than one week."

However, it likely still would take Iran months to make a working bomb, experts say.

Enrichment remains the key point of contention. Witkoff at one point suggested Iran could enrich uranium at 3.67%, then later began saying all Iranian enrichment must stop. That position on the American side has hardened over time.

Asked about the negotiations, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said "we believe that we are going to succeed" in the talks and on Washington's push for no enrichment.

"The Iranians are at that table, so they also understand what our position is, and they continue to go," Bruce said Thursday.

One idea floated so far that might allow Iran to stop enrichment in the Islamic Republic but maintain a supply of uranium could be a consortium in the Mideast backed by regional countries and the U.S. There also are multiple countries and the International Atomic Energy Agency offering low-enriched uranium that can be used for peaceful purposes by countries.

However, Iran's Foreign Ministry has maintained enrichment must continue within the country's borders and a similar fuel-swap proposal failed to gain traction in negotiations in 2010.

Meanwhile, Israel has threatened to strike Iran's nuclear facilities on their own if it feels threatened, further complicating tensions in the Mideast already spiked by the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Araghchi warned Thursday that Iran would take "special measures" to defend its nuclear facilities if Israel continues to threaten them, while also warning the U.S. it would view it as being complicit in any Israeli attack. Authorities allowed a group of Iranian students to form a human chain Thursday at its underground enrichment site at Fordo, an area with incredibly tight security built into a mountain to defend against possible airstrikes.

Talks come as US pressure on Iran increases

Yet despite the tough talk from Iran, the Islamic Republic needs a deal. Its internal politics are inflamed over the mandatory hijab, or headscarf, with women still ignoring the law on the streets of Tehran. Rumors also persist over the government potentially increasing the cost of subsidized gasoline in the country, which has sparked nationwide protests in the past.

Iran's rial currency plunged to over 1 million to a U.S. dollar in April. The currency has improved with the talks, however, something Tehran hopes will continue as a further collapse in the rial could spark further economic unrest.

Meanwhile, its self-described "Axis of Resistance" sits in tatters after Iran's regional allies in the region have faced repeated attacks by Israel during its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The collapse of Syrian President Bashar Assad's government during a rebel advance in December also stripped Iran of a key ally.

The Trump administration also has continued to levy new sanctions on Iran, including this week, which saw the U.S. specifically target any sale of sodium perchlorate to the Islamic Republic. Iran reportedly

received that chemical in shipments from China at its Shahid Rajaei port near Bandar Abbas. A major, unexplained explosion there killed dozens and wounded over 1,000 others in April during one round of the talks.

Music talent agent among dead after jet crashes into San Diego neighborhood

By JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A private jet carrying a music talent agent and five others hit a power line in foggy weather early Thursday and crashed into a San Diego neighborhood, slamming into a home and killing multiple people on the flight.

With the home engulfed in flames and jet fuel rolling down the streets, half a dozen vehicles ignited while residents in the neighborhood of U.S. Navy-owned housing were shaken awake just before 4 a.m. by the thunderous crash and subsequent explosions. Out their windows, they saw a wall of fire.

"I can't quite put words to describe what the scene looks like, but with the jet fuel going down the street, and everything on fire all at once, it was pretty horrific to see," San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl said.

No one in the neighborhood died, but eight were taken to the hospital for smoke inhalation and injuries that were not life-threatening, including a person who was hurt climbing out a window, police officer Anthony Carrasco said.

Dave Shapiro, co-founder of Sound Talent Group, and two employees were among those killed, the music agency said in a statement. Sound Talent Group has represented artists including American pop band Hanson, American singer-songwriter Vanessa Carlton and the Canadian rock group Sum 41. Hanson is perhaps best known for its earworm 1990s pop hit, "MMMBop." Shapiro also owned Velocity Records.

"We are devastated by the loss of our co-founder, colleagues and friends. Our hearts go out to their families and to everyone impacted by today's tragedy," the agency said.

Six people were on board the plane, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. Authorities were still combing the scene and recovering the bodies before releasing an official number and identifying the dead, though there were not believed to be any survivors aboard the flight.

Daniel Williams, former drummer for metal band The Devil Wears Prada, posted on his Instagram on Wednesday afternoon that he was boarding the plane with Shapiro. The band posted a tribute to Williams on their Instagram page.

"No words. We owe you everything. Love you forever," the band wrote.

A representative for the band referred to their social post when asked about Williams' death.

Parts of Shapiro's 1985 Cessna 550 Citation littered a large area, including fragments under the power lines and a section of wing on a road behind the homes, said Elliot Simpson of the National Transportation Safety Board.

Neighborhood hit hard

The home that was struck was destroyed, with its front heavily burned and its roof partially collapsed, and about 10 others were damaged in Murphy Canyon, the largest neighborhood of Navy-owned housing in the country, officials said.

Ben McCarty and his wife, who live in the home that was hit, said they felt heat all around them.

"My wife was screaming, and she's like, 'There's a fire,'" McCarty, who has served in the Navy for 13 years, told local ABC affiliate KGTV.

When he walked toward the front of the house, he saw that the roof had fallen off and flames blocked their exit. They grabbed their children and dogs and ran to the back, where their neighbors helped them climb over the fence to escape.

The plane also hit both of the couple's vehicles, which burned.

"It put my truck into our living room," McCarty said.

Other vehicles along the block were melted and scorched into burned shells. One stubborn car fire sent smoke billowing up for hours.

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Ariya Waterworth said she woke up to a "whooshing sound" and then saw a giant fireball outside. She screamed for help as firefighters arrived and helped her get out with her two children and their family dog.

One of the family's cars was "completely disintegrated," and the other had extensive damage. Her yard was littered with plane parts, broken glass and debris.

"I definitely do feel blessed, because we've been spared," she said.

At least 100 residents were evacuated. Hours after the crash, jet fuel rolled down Salmon Street. The smell of fumes lingered throughout the day, and officials said it was unclear when it would be safe for people to return.

"We have jet fuel all over the place," Assistant San Diego Fire Department Chief Dan Eddy said.

Eddy added that the fog was so thick in the morning that "you could barely see in front of you."

The plane originated from a small New Jersey airport

The flight took off from Teterboro, New Jersey, near Manhattan, at about 11:15 p.m. Wednesday and made a fuel stop in Wichita, Kansas, before continuing on to San Diego, according to Simpson.

Based on the flight path, it was bound for Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport when it struck power lines about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) southeast of the airfield, Simpson said.

Audio recorded by www.liveATC.net includes a brief transmission from the pilot saying he was on final approach to the airport and was about 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) out at 3:45 a.m.

NTSB investigators planned to spend Thursday and Friday at the scene gathering evidence, Simpson said. He welcomed video or other details from any witnesses.

The plane was attempting to land in foggy weather

At that hour and in foggy weather, the plane was likely operating on an instrument flight rules plan, which is typically used during reduced visibility, said Barry Newman, a board-certified aviation attorney.

However, for that airport, once an aircraft reaches 673 feet (205 meters), the pilot also has to rely on sight.

"If a pilot descends to that level and he can't see the runway, he has to call for a missed approach or divert to another airport," Newman said.

In October 2021 a twin-engine plane plowed into a San Diego suburb, killing the pilot and a UPS delivery driver on the ground and burning homes. It was preparing to land at the airport.

And in December 2008, a Marine Corps fighter jet slammed into a house in San Diego's University City neighborhood, causing an explosion that killed four people inside. The Marine Corps blamed the crash on mechanical failure and human error.

Record floodwaters in eastern Australia leave 4 dead and 1 missing

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Record floodwaters on Australia's east coast have left four people dead and one missing, officials said Friday as rain eased over the disaster area.

Some 50,000 people have been isolated by flooding along the coast of New South Wales state north of Sydney after days of heavy rain. The low-pressure weather system that brought the deluge had moved further south to Sydney and its surrounds Friday.

Four bodies have been retrieved from floodwaters in New South Wales since Wednesday. Three of the victims had driven into floodwaters, while a man's body had been found on the veranda of his flooded home.

The latest victim was a man in his 70s whose body was found in a car in floodwater Friday near Coffs Harbour, a police statement said. The car had run off the road.

A 49-year-old man remains missing after walking near a flooded road at Nymboida on Wednesday night.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and New South Wales Premier Christopher Minns on Friday were inspecting devastated communities, some of which had been inundated by the highest floodwaters on record.

Minns praised emergency services and volunteers for rescuing 678 people from floodwaters in recent days, including 177 in the past 24 hours.

"It's an amazing, heroic logistical effort where, in very difficult circumstances, many volunteers put themselves in harm's way to rescue a complete stranger. And over the coming days and weeks, we will

hear scores of stories of locals being plucked out of impossible, desperate situations," Minns told reporters in Maitland in the flood area.

"Without the volunteers, we would have had hundreds of deaths and we're in deep, deep gratitude to those people who volunteered their time," Minns added.

Despite the easing rain, State Emergency Service Commissioner Mike Wassing said crews were still looking out for floodwaters potentially rising due to water continuing to flow into catchments.

"We still do have active flood rescues still coming into the system and we're dealing with those on a case-by-case" basis, Wassing said. "We have seen that tempo drop off, and that's a good thing."

Bellingen Shire Council Mayor Steve Allan said landslides and damaged roads and bridges were complicating the process of reaching isolated communities in his rural local government region southwest of Coffs Harbour.

"We've woken up to blue skies which is a great thing," Allan said.

"Our rivers are slowly receding and I think we're probably transitioning from the response phase into the recovery phase this morning," he added.

Mahmoud Khalil permitted to hold newborn son for the first time despite government objections

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Detained Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil was allowed to hold his 1-month-old son for the first time Thursday after a federal judge blocked the Trump administration's efforts to keep the father and infant separated by a plexiglass barrier.

The visit came ahead of a scheduled immigration hearing for Khalil, a legal permanent resident and Columbia University graduate who has been detained in a Louisiana jail since March 8.

Khalil was the first person arrested under President Donald Trump's promised crackdown on pro-Palestinian protesters and is one of the few who has remained in custody as his case winds its way through both immigration and federal court.

Federal authorities have not accused Khalil of a crime, but they have sought to deport him on the basis that his prominent role in protests against Israel's war in Gaza may have undermined U.S. foreign policy interests.

His request to attend his son's April 21 birth was denied last month by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The question of whether Khalil would be permitted to hold his newborn child or forced to meet him through a barrier had sparked days of legal fighting, triggering claims by Khalil's attorneys that he is being subject to political retaliation by the government.

On Wednesday night, a federal judge in New Jersey, Michael Farbiarz, intervened, allowing the meeting to go forward Thursday morning, according to Khalil's attorneys.

The judge's order came after federal officials said this week they would oppose his attorney's effort to secure what's known as a "contact visit" between Khalil, his wife, Noor Abdalla, and their son Deen.

Instead, they said Khalil could be allowed a "non-contact" visit, meaning he would be separated from his wife and son by a plastic divider and not allowed to touch them.

"Granting Khalil this relief of family visitation would effectively grant him a privilege that no other detainee receives," Justice Department officials wrote in a court filing on Wednesday. "Allowing Dr. Abdalla and a newborn to attend a legal meeting would turn a legal visitation into a family one."

Brian Acuna, acting director of the ICE field office in New Orleans, said in an accompanying affidavit that it would be "unsafe to allow Mr. Khalil's wife and newborn child into a secured part of the facility."

In their own legal filings, Khalil's attorneys described the government's refusal to grant the visit as "further evidence of the retaliatory motive behind Mr. Khalil's arrest and faraway detention," adding that his wife and son were "the farthest thing from a security risk."

They noted that Abdalla had traveled nearly 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) to the remote detention

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center in hopes of introducing their son to his father.

"This is not just heartless," Abdalla said of the government's position. "It is deliberate violence, the calculated cruelty of a government that tears families apart without remorse. And I cannot ignore the echoes of this pain in the stories of Palestinian families, torn apart by Israeli military prisons and bombs, denied dignity, denied life."

Farbiarz is currently considering Khalil's petition for release as he appeals a Louisiana immigration judge's ruling that he can be deported from the country.

On Thursday, Khalil appeared before that immigration judge, Jamee Comans, as his attorneys presented testimony about the risks he would face if he were to be deported to Syria, where he grew up in a refugee camp, or Algeria, where he maintains citizenship through a distant relative.

His attorneys submitted testimony from Columbia University faculty and students attesting to Khalil's character.

In one declaration, Joseph Howley, a classics professor at Columbia, said he had first introduced Khalil to a university administrator to serve as a spokesperson on behalf of campus protesters, describing him as a "upstanding, principled, and well-respected member of our community."

"I have never known Mahmoud to espouse any anti-Jewish sentiments or prejudices, and have heard him forcefully reject antisemitism on multiple occasions," Howley wrote.

No ruling regarding the appeal was made on Thursday. Comans gave lawyers in the case until 5 p.m. June 2 to submit written closing arguments.

Columbia's interim president, Claire Shipman, acknowledged Mahmoud's absence from Wednesday's commencement ceremony and said many students were "mourning" that he couldn't be present. Her speech drew loud boos from some graduates, along with chants of "free Mahmoud."

Bonded by work and love, Israeli Embassy colleagues' lives cut short by gunman

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

They were colleagues, and they were a couple, days away from a marriage proposal.

But the interwoven lives of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim were brutally cut short Wednesday evening, when the two Israeli Embassy staffers were shot while leaving a reception for young diplomats at the Capital Jewish Museum.

The suspect told police he "did it for Palestine," according to court documents filed Thursday as he was charged with murder. He didn't enter a plea.

Milgrim, a 26-year-old American from Kansas, had devoted her burgeoning career to bringing people together to look for ways to promote peace and combat climate change, those who knew her say.

Lischinsky, a 30-year-old Israeli citizen who spent some of his childhood in Germany, had a deep attachment to Israel and an interest in bridging cultural and religious divides.

He had bought an engagement ring and was just days away from proposing to Milgrim on a planned trip to Jerusalem, according to Israeli Ambassador Yechiel Leiter.

"A young couple with a bright future, planning their life together," said Ron Prosor, a veteran Israeli diplomat who knew Lischinsky.

Yaron Lischinsky

Lischinsky grew up partly in the German city of Nuremberg and moved to Israel at 16. He served in the Jewish state's military "and chose to dedicate his life to the state of Israel," said Prosor, who taught Lischinsky at Israel's Reichman University. Lischinsky earned a master's degree in government, diplomacy and strategy there.

"He embodied the Judeo-Christian values and set an example for young people worldwide," Prosor said on X.

A friend, David Boskey, recalled Lischinsky as someone unafraid to broach hard questions in order to

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interrogate his own convictions.

He met Lischinsky in 2017 in Jerusalem at a Messianic Jewish congregation, where they would often end up talking together about life and faith, Boskey said. The Messianic movement — popularly known as Jews for Jesus — incorporates Jewish symbols and practices, but Israel considers Messianic Jews to be practicing another faith.

"He was looking to see where he was going to go in life, asking questions about calling and about identity and about what he was going to study, where he was going to work, what he wanted to pursue in life," Boskey said. He described Lischinsky as "a truth-seeking type of person, mixed with a very, very kind and gracious willingness to serve other people."

Lischinsky helped found the Israeli-German Society's youth forum, according to its counterpart in Germany, and he took a job at the Israeli Embassy in Washington in 2022.

There, he worked as a research assistant whose responsibilities included keeping track of important events and trends in the Middle East and North Africa, his LinkedIn profile said.

He said he advocated for interfaith dialogue and intercultural understanding and was an "ardent believer" in deepening Israel's ties with the Arab world through the U.S.-brokered agreements known as the Abraham Accords.

On Instagram, his bio included a yellow ribbon symbolizing the struggle to free the hostages taken by Hamas during its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel that ignited the war in the Gaza Strip.

Milgrim's Instagram bio also had a yellow ribbon, as well as a passage, in Hebrew, from the biblical Book of Deuteronomy: "Justice, justice you shall pursue."

Sarah Milgrim

Milgrim was an American citizen. She hailed from Overland Park, Kansas, where a former youth director at Congregation Beth Torah remembers a brilliant girl with a perpetual smile and a sense of purpose.

"She had a passion for Judaism and for Israel, and she wanted to do some good," said Marcia Rittmaster, the former youth director. She recommended Milgrim for a Jewish leadership internship upon the young woman's graduation from high school.

Milgrim went on to the University of Kansas, where she earned a bachelor's degree in environmental studies in 2021 and was a warm, uplifting presence at Shabbat dinners and holiday gatherings at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life.

"She believed in connections, in building community and bringing people together," Rabbi Zalman Tiechtel said. He said she loved asking questions, enjoyed insightful conversations and "was filled with so much love."

After graduating, Milgrim worked at a Tel Aviv-based organization centered on technology training and conflict dialogue for young Palestinians and Israelis, according to her LinkedIn profile. It said she had been trained in religious engagement and peacebuilding by the United States Institute of Peace, an organization that promotes conflict resolution and was created by the U.S. Congress.

After earning a master's degree in international affairs from American University in 2023, she went to work at the Israeli Embassy, where her job involved organizing events and missions to Israel.

Among them was an Earth Day gathering last month that highlighted Israeli companies and nonprofit groups doing climate work, recalled attendee Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, a philanthropist and a Maryland Commission on Climate Change member. She said she and Milgrim brainstormed by phone just this past week about ways to inform journalists about climate-related innovations in Israel.

"She was exceptionally talented, exceptionally passionate, really kind, extremely well-organized and very effective. And she's the kind of young leader that, really, this nation and the world needs," Mizrahi said.

A standing-room only crowd gathered for a vigil for Milgrim in her hometown Thursday night.

Her college roommate related how her friend was an animal lover who faithfully walked her dog, took care of her pet rabbit and was a member of the beekeeping club. She was a passionate advocate for the environment, Amanda Birger said.

"She was very tactful about how she used her voice, which sometimes came off as cautious," Birger

said. "But when it looked like wasn't speaking up, it's because she was trying to keep the peace."

She was "the ultimate peacemaker in her personal life and her professional life," Birger said.

Milgrim held her Jewish values dear and showed Birger how someone their age could live a joyful Jewish life.

"She stood so proudly in her Judaism. She wore it with a smile, happily educating anyone who asked about it. She made me want to be more Jewish," Birger said.

Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, said Milgrim was a point person for her organization with women's groups, LGBTQ communities and multi-faith groups.

"She accomplished so much in her short life, and she deserves to be remembered for all the things she brought to this world," she said.

Before her work at the embassy, Milgrim was studying whether friendships between Arabs and Israelis could promote peace, Katz said.

"We knew something like this could happen," she said. "I just don't think we thought it would happen to her."

Court papers say suspect in embassy killings declared, 'I did it for Palestine, I did it for Gaza'

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The man accused of fatally shooting two staff members of the Israeli Embassy in Washington outside a Jewish museum told police after his arrest, "I did it for Palestine, I did it for Gaza," federal authorities said Thursday in announcing charges in the killings they called a targeted act of terrorism.

Elias Rodriguez, 31, shouted "Free Palestine" as he was led away after his arrest, according to charging documents that provided chilling new details of the Wednesday night shootings in the nation's capital that killed an American woman and an Israeli man who had just left an event at the museum. They were set to become engaged.

The stunning attack prompted Israeli missions to beef up their security and lower their flags to half-staff. It came as Israel pursues another major offensive in the Gaza Strip in the war with Hamas that has heightened tensions across the Middle East and internationally, and that law enforcement officials have repeatedly warned could inspire violence in the U.S.

Rodriguez faces charges of murder of foreign officials and other crimes and did not enter a plea during a perfunctory court appearance. Additional charges are likely, prosecutors said, as authorities continue to investigate the killings as both a hate crime against the Jewish community and terrorism.

"Violence against anyone based on their religion is an act of cowardice. It is not an act of a hero," said Jeanine Pirro, the interim U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia. "Antisemitism will not be tolerated, especially in the nation's capital."

The couple planned to become engaged

The two people killed were identified as Yaron Lischinsky, an Israeli citizen, and Sarah Milgrim, an American. They were a young couple about to be engaged, according to Yechiel Leiter, the Israeli ambassador to the U.S. Those who knew them paid tribute to the pair Thursday as warm, vibrant and curious, dedicated to promoting peace and aspiring to bridge cultural and religious divides.

"Sarah and Yaron were stolen from us," said Ted Deutch, the chief executive of the American Jewish Committee, which organized the event. "Moments before they were murdered, they were smiling, laughing and enjoying an event with colleagues and friends. We are in shock and heartbroken as we attempt to process this immense tragedy."

An FBI affidavit made public Thursday presents the killing as calculated and planned, with authorities alleging that Rodriguez flew to the Washington region from Chicago on Tuesday with a handgun in his checked luggage. He purchased a ticket for the event about three hours before it started, the affidavit said.

The couple were leaving the Capital Jewish Museum when the suspect, who witnesses said had been behaving suspiciously by pacing outside, approached a group of four people and opened fire. Surveillance

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video showed Rodriguez advancing closer to the two victims as they fell to the ground, leaning over them and firing additional shots. He even appeared to reload before jogging off, the FBI said.

Affidavit says suspect declared that he 'did it'

After the shooting, the suspect went inside the museum and stated that he "did it." He was no longer armed by the time he was taken into custody, according to the affidavit.

"I did it for Palestine, I did it for Gaza, I am unarmed," he spontaneously said. He also told detectives that he admired an active-duty Air Force member who set himself on fire outside the Israeli Embassy in February 2024, describing the man as "courageous" and a "martyr," court documents said.

Investigators said they were still working to corroborate the authenticity of writings purported to be authored by Rodriguez, an apparent reference to a document circulating online that expressed outrage over Israel's conduct in the war. The FBI is also contacting associates, family members and co-workers.

Rodriguez appeared in federal court in Washington in a white jail suit and listened impassively as the charges and possible punishments, which include the death penalty, were read. At a home listed in public records for Rodriguez's mother in suburban Chicago, a sign taped on the door Thursday afternoon asked for privacy.

The shooting followed the Jewish advocacy group's annual Young Diplomats reception at the museum, which the couple had attended.

Yoni Kalin and Katie Kalisher were inside the museum when they heard gunshots, and a man came inside looking distressed. Kalin said people came to his aid and brought him water, thinking he needed help, without realizing he was the suspect. When police arrived, he pulled out a red kaffiyeh, the Palestinian headscarf, and repeatedly yelled, "Free Palestine," Kalin said.

"This event was about humanitarian aid," Kalin said. "How can we actually help both the people in Gaza and the people in Israel? How can we bring together Muslims and Jews and Christians to work together to actually help innocent people? And then here he is just murdering two people in cold blood."

Victims praised for their commitments and compassion

Milgrim, from Overland Park, Kansas, was "warm and compassionate, committed to peace building and passionate about sustainability and people-to-people relations," Deutch said.

A former youth director at Congregation Beth Torah recalled her as a brilliant girl with a perpetual smile and a sense of purpose.

"She had a passion for Judaism and for Israel, and she wanted to do some good," said Marcia Rittmaster, the former youth director. She recommended Milgrim for a Jewish leadership internship upon the young woman's graduation from high school.

Lischinsky grew up partly in the German city of Nuremberg and moved to Israel at 16.

"He was a Christian, a true lover of Israel, served in the (Israel Defense Forces), and chose to dedicate his life to the State of Israel and the Zionist cause," said Ron Prosor, who taught Lischinsky at Israel's Reichman University. Lischinsky earned a master's degree in government, diplomacy and strategy there. "He embodied the Judeo-Christian values and set an example for young people worldwide."

A friend, David Boskey, recalled Lischinsky as someone unafraid to broach hard questions in order to interrogate his own convictions. He met Lischinsky in 2017 in Jerusalem at a Messianic Jewish congregation, where they would often end up talking together about life and faith, Boskey said.

"He was looking to see where he was going to go in life, asking questions about calling and about identity and about what he was going to study, where he was going to work," Boskey said.

On Instagram, his bio included a yellow ribbon symbolizing the struggle to free the hostages taken by Hamas during its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel that ignited the war in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza's main hospital is overwhelmed with children in pain from malnutrition

By MOHAMMED JAHJOUH, WAFAA SHURAF, SARAH EL DEEB and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press
KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Grabbing her daughter's feeble arm, Asmaa al-Arja pulls a shirt over

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the 2-year-old's protruding ribs and swollen belly. The child lies on a hospital bed, heaving, then wails uncontrollably, throwing her arms around her own shoulders as if to console herself.

This isn't the first time Mayar has been in a Gaza hospital battling malnutrition, yet this 17-day stint is the longest. She has celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder that means she can't eat gluten and requires special food. But there's little left for her to eat in the embattled enclave after 19 months of war and Israel's punishing blockade, and she can't digest what's available.

"She needs diapers, soy milk and she needs special food. This is not available because of border closures. If it's available, it is expensive, I can't afford it," her mother said as she sat next to Mayar at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

Mayar is among the more than 9,000 children who have been treated for malnutrition this year, according to the U.N. children's agency, and food security experts say tens of thousands of cases are expected in the coming year.

Experts also warn the territory could plunge into famine if Israel doesn't stop its military campaign and fully lift its blockade — but the World Health Organization said last week that people are already starving.

"Everywhere you look, people are hungry. ... They point their fingers to their mouths showing that (they) need something to eat," said Nestor Owomuhangi, the representative of the United Nations Population Fund for the Palestinian territories. "The worst has already arrived in Gaza."

Israel eases blockade but little aid reaches Palestinians

For more than two months, Israel has banned all food, medicine and other goods from entering the territory that is home to some 2 million Palestinians, as it carries out waves of airstrikes and ground operations. Palestinians in Gaza rely almost entirely on outside aid to survive because Israel's offensive has destroyed almost all the territory's food production capabilities.

After weeks of insisting Gaza had enough food, Israel relented in the face of international pressure and began allowing dozens of humanitarian trucks into the territory this week — including some carrying baby food.

"Children are already dying from malnutrition and there are more babies in Gaza now who will be in mortal danger if they don't get fast access to the nutrition supplies needed to save their lives," said Tess Ingram of the U.N. children's agency.

But U.N. agencies say the amount is woefully insufficient, compared to around 600 trucks a day that entered during a recent ceasefire and that are necessary to meet basic needs. And they have struggled to retrieve the aid and distribute it, blaming complicated Israeli military procedures and the breakdown of law and order inside the territory.

On Wednesday, a U.N. official said more than a dozen trucks arrived at warehouses in central Gaza. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press. That appeared to be the first aid to actually reach a distribution point since the blockade was lifted.

Israel accuses Hamas of siphoning off aid, without providing evidence, and plans to roll out a new aid distribution system within days. U.N. agencies and aid groups say the new system would fall far short of mounting needs, force much of the population to flee again in order to be closer to distribution sites, and violate humanitarian principles by forcing people to move to receive the aid rather than delivering it based on need to where people live.

On top of not being able to find or afford the food that Mayar needs, her mother said chronic diarrhea linked to celiac disease has kept the child in and out of hospital all year. The toddler — whose two pigtailed are brittle, a sign of malnutrition — weighs 7 kilograms (15 pounds), according to doctors. That's about half what healthy girl her age should.

But it's getting harder to help her as supplies like baby formula are disappearing, say health staff.

Hospitals are hanging by a thread, dealing with mass casualties from Israeli strikes. Packed hospital feeding centers are overwhelmed with patients.

"We have nothing at Nasser Hospital," said Dr. Ahmed al-Farrah, who said his emergency center for malnourished children is at full capacity. Supplies are running out, people are living off scraps, and the

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situation is catastrophic for babies and pregnant women, he said.

Everything watered down to make it last

In the feeding center of the hospital, malnourished mothers console their hungry children — some so frail their spines jut out of their skin, their legs swollen from lack food.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a leading international authority on the severity of hunger crises, has warned that there could be some 71,000 cases of malnourished children between now and March. In addition, nearly 17,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women will need treatment for acute malnutrition in the coming months.

Mai Namleh and her 18-month-old son, who live in a tent, are both malnourished. She wanted to wean him off of breastmilk because she barely has any, but she has so little else to give him.

She gives him heavily watered-down formula to ration it, and sometimes offers him starch to quiet his hunger screams. "I try to pass it for milk to stop him screaming," she said of the formula.

An aid group gave her around 30 packets of nutritional supplements, but they ran out in two days as she shared them with family and friends, she said.

In another tent, Nouf al-Arja says she paid a fortune for a hard-to-find kilogram (about 2 pounds) of red lentils. The family cooks it with a lot of water so it lasts, unsure what they will eat next. The mother of four has lost 23 kilograms (50 pounds) and struggles to focus, saying she constantly feels dizzy.

Both she and her 3-year-old daughter are malnourished, doctors said. She's worried her baby boy, born four months earlier and massively underweight, will suffer the same fate as she struggles to breastfeed.

"I keep looking for (infant food) so I can feed him. There is nothing," she said.

Stop making cents: US Mint moves forward with plans to kill the penny

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration says making cents doesn't make sense anymore.

The U.S. Mint has made its final order of penny blanks and plans to stop producing the coin when those run out, a Treasury Department official confirmed Thursday. This move comes as the cost of making pennies has increased markedly, by upward of 20% in 2024, according to the Treasury.

By stopping the penny's production, the Treasury expects an immediate annual savings of \$56 million in reduced material costs, according to the official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity to preview the news.

In February, President Donald Trump announced that he had ordered his administration to cease production of the 1-cent coin.

"For far too long the United States has minted pennies which literally cost us more than 2 cents. This is so wasteful!" Trump wrote at that time in a post on his Truth Social site. "I have instructed my Secretary of the US Treasury to stop producing new pennies."

There are about 114 billion pennies currently in circulation in the United States — that's \$1.14 billion — but they are greatly underutilized, the Treasury says. The penny was one of the first coins made by the U.S. Mint after its establishment in 1792.

The nation's treasury secretary has the authority to mint and issue coins "in amounts the secretary decides are necessary to meet the needs of the United States."

Advocates for ditching the penny cite its high production cost — almost 4 cents per penny now, according to the U.S. Mint — and limited utility. Fans of the penny cite its usefulness in charity drives and relative bargain in production costs compared with the nickel, which costs almost 14 cents to mint.

The Wall Street Journal first reported the news.

Pennies are the most popular coin made by the U.S. Mint, which reported making 3.2 billion of them last year. That's more than half of all the new coins it made last year.

Congress, which dictates currency specifications such as the size and metal content of coins, could make Trump's order permanent through law. But past congressional efforts to ditch the penny have failed.

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Two bipartisan bills to kill the penny permanently were introduced this year.

Sens. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., introduced the Make Sense Not Cents Act this month. In April, Reps. Lisa McClain, R-Mich., and Robert Garcia, D-Calif., along with Sens. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., and Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., introduced the Common Cents Act.

Jay Zagorsky, professor of markets, public policy, and law at Boston University, said that while he supports the move to end penny production, Congress must include language in any proposed legislation to require rounding up in pricing, which will eliminate the demand for pennies.

Zagorsky, who recently published a book called "The Power of Cash: Why Using Paper Money is Good for You and Society," said otherwise simply ditching the penny will only increase demand for nickels, which are even more expensive, at 14 cents to produce.

"If we suddenly have to produce a lot of nickels — and we lose more money on producing every nickel — eliminating the penny doesn't make any sense."

Mark Weller, executive director of the Americans for Common Cents group — which conducts research and provides information to Congress and the Executive Branch on the value and benefits of the penny — says "there has been an evolution over the past six months that inevitably the production of the penny will be halted."

His group advocates for the U.S. to find ways to reduce the cost of producing the nickel, especially since it will be more in demand once the penny is totally eliminated from circulation.

"It's incumbent on Treasury to come up with a cheaper way to make the nickel," Weller said. "Let's make sure we're making our coins as least expensively as possible and maintaining the option to use cash in transactions."

Trump administration bars Harvard from enrolling foreign students

By COLLIN BINKLEY and MICHAEL CASEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration revoked Harvard University's ability to enroll international students in its escalating battle with the Ivy League school, saying thousands of current students must transfer to other schools or leave the country.

The Department of Homeland Security announced the action Thursday, saying Harvard has created an unsafe campus environment by allowing "anti-American, pro-terrorist agitators" to assault Jewish students on campus. It also accused Harvard of coordinating with the Chinese Communist Party, saying it hosted and trained members of a Chinese paramilitary group as recently as 2024.

"This means Harvard can no longer enroll foreign students and existing foreign students must transfer or lose their legal status," the agency said in a statement.

Harvard enrolls almost 6,800 foreign students at its campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts, accounting for more than a quarter of its student body. Most are graduate students, coming from more than 100 countries.

Harvard called the action unlawful and said it's working to provide guidance to students.

"This retaliatory action threatens serious harm to the Harvard community and our country, and undermines Harvard's academic and research mission," the university said in a statement.

The Trump administration's clash with Harvard, the nation's oldest and wealthiest university, has intensified since it became the first to openly defy White House demands for changes at elite schools it has criticized as hotbeds of liberalism and antisemitism. The federal government has cut \$2.6 billion in federal grants to Harvard, forcing it to self-fund much of its sprawling research operation. President Donald Trump has said he wants to strip the university of its tax-exempt status.

The administration has demanded records of campus protests

The threat to Harvard's international enrollment stems from an April 16 request from Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who demanded that it provide information about foreign students that might implicate them in violence or protests that could lead to their deportation.

In a letter to Harvard on Thursday, Noem said the school's sanction is "the unfortunate result of Harvard's failure to comply with simple reporting requirements." It bars Harvard from hosting international

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students for the upcoming 2025-26 school year.

Noem said Harvard can regain its ability to host foreign students if it produces a trove of records on foreign students within 72 hours. Her updated request demands all records, including audio or video footage, of foreign students participating in protests or dangerous activity on campus.

"This administration is holding Harvard accountable for fostering violence, antisemitism, and coordinating with the Chinese Communist Party on its campus," Noem said in a statement.

The action revoked Harvard's certification in the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, which gives the school the ability to sponsor international students to get their visas and attend school in the United States.

Harvard President Alan Garber earlier this month said the university has made changes to its governance over the past year and a half, including a broad strategy to combat antisemitism, but warned it would not budge on its "its core, legally-protected principles" over fears of retaliation. He said he wasn't aware of evidence to support the administration's allegation that its international students were "more prone to disruption, violence, or other misconduct than any other students."

Students in Harvard College Democrats said the Trump administration is playing with students' lives to push a radical agenda and to quiet dissent. "Trump's attack on international students is text book authoritarianism — Harvard must continue to hold the line," the group said in a statement.

The administration drew condemnation from free speech groups, including the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, which said Noem is demanding a "surveillance state."

"This sweeping fishing expedition reaches protected expression and must be flatly rejected," the group said in a statement.

The revocation opens a new front in a closely watched battle

Many of Harvard's punishments have come through a federal antisemitism task force that says the university failed to protect Jewish students from harassment and violence amid a nationwide wave of pro-Palestinian protests.

Homeland Security officials echoed those concerns in their Thursday announcement. It offered examples, including a recent internal report at Harvard, finding that many Jewish students reported facing discrimination or bias on campus.

It also tapped into concerns that congressional Republicans have raised about ties between U.S. universities and China. Homeland Security officials said Harvard provided training to the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps as recently as 2024. As evidence, it provided a link to a Fox News article, which in turn cited a letter from House Republicans.

Asked for comment on the alleged coordination with the Chinese Communist Party, a Harvard spokesperson said the university will be responding to the House Republicans' letter.

Ted Mitchell, president of the American Council on Education, called the latest action an "illegal, small-minded" overreach.

"I worry that this is sending a very chilling effect to international students looking to come to America for education," he said.

The Trump administration has leveraged the system for tracking international students' legal status as part of its broader attempts to crack down on higher education. What was once a largely administrative database has become a tool of enforcement, as immigration officials revoked students' legal status directly in the system.

Those efforts were challenged in court, leading to restorations of status and a nationwide injunction blocking the administration from pursuing further terminations.

Senate votes to block California's rule banning the sale of new gas-powered cars by 2035

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and SOPHIE AUSTIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate voted on Thursday to block California's first-in-the nation rule banning

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the sale of new gas-powered cars by 2035, moving to kill the country's most aggressive effort to transition toward electric vehicles as President Donald Trump's administration has doubled down on fossil fuels.

The measure overturning the rule now goes to the White House, where Trump is expected to sign it, along with two other resolutions that would block California rules curbing tailpipe emissions in certain vehicles and smog-forming nitrogen oxide pollution from trucks. All three measures were approved by the Senate on Thursday and by the House earlier this month.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, and state air regulators say that what Congress is doing is illegal and they will sue to keep the rules in place.

"This is not about electric vehicles," Newsom said at a news conference while the Senate was still voting on the measures. "This is about polluters being able to pollute more."

California Attorney General Rob Bonta said the state plans to sue over the way that Republicans passed the measures blocking the emissions rules. Senate Republicans established a narrow exception to the filibuster Wednesday to clear the way for the votes.

The GOP effort could have a profound impact on California's longtime efforts to curb air pollution. California makes up roughly 11% of the U.S. car market, giving it significant power to shape purchasing trends — especially because about a dozen states have already followed California's lead. Vehicles are one of the largest sources of planet-warming emissions.

Senate Democrats charged that Republicans are acting at the behest of the oil and gas industry and they say California should be able to set its own standards after obtaining waivers from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said the votes should "send a chill down the spine of legislators in every state."

"What we have at stake is a state's ability, it's right to make its own laws and to protect its own citizens, without having this body overturn that right," Schiff said.

Republicans say the phaseout of gas-powered cars, along with other waivers that California has obtained from the EPA, is costly for consumers and manufacturers, puts pressure on the nation's energy grid and has become a de facto nationwide electric vehicle mandate.

"America cannot meet these impossible standards — not next year, and not in 10 years," said Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the second-ranking Republican.

Newsom announced plans in 2020 to ban the sale of all new gas-powered vehicles within 15 years as part of an aggressive effort to lower emissions from the transportation sector. Plug-in hybrids and used gas cars could still be sold.

The Biden administration approved the state's waiver to implement the standards in December, a month before Trump returned to office. The California rules are stricter than a Biden-era rule that tightens emissions standards but does not require sales of electric vehicles.

Biden's EPA said in announcing the decision that opponents of the California waivers did not meet their legal burden to show how either the EV rule or a separate measure on heavy-duty vehicles was inconsistent with the Clean Air Act.

Republicans have long criticized California's waivers and have worked to find a way to overturn them. The Government Accountability Office said earlier this year that California's policies are not subject to the Congressional Review Act, a law that allows Congress to reject federal regulations under certain circumstances with a simple majority vote not subject to the filibuster. The Senate parliamentarian agreed with that ruling, but Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., cleared the way for the votes anyway with a workaround that established a new Senate precedent.

Democrats fought those changes, which were the latest attempt to chip away at the Senate filibuster after both parties have used their majorities in the past two decades to lower the threshold for nominations. Democrats tried in 2022 to roll back the filibuster for legislation, as well, but were thwarted by members of their own caucus who disagreed with the effort.

Republicans have insisted that they would not try a similar move after regaining the majority this year. But Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said the move to block California's laws were

a "point of no return" and called the Republicans "fair weather institutionalists."

Sen. Elissa Slotkin of Michigan was the only Democrat to support the measure to block the phaseout of gas-powered vehicles. She said in a statement after the vote that she has a "special responsibility to stand up for the more than one million Michiganders whose livelihoods depend on the U.S. auto industry."

John Bozzella, president and CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, an auto industry association and lobby group, said there is a gap between the vehicles that car buyers are purchasing and the rules that would force a transition to electric vehicles.

"The fact is these EV sales mandates were never achievable," Bozzella said.

What we know about a private plane's fatal crash into a San Diego neighborhood

By JOHN HANNA Associated Press

A private plane clipped power lines before crashing into a home early Thursday in San Diego, killing the co-founder of a music talent agency and two of its employees and igniting cars in a neighborhood of U.S. Navy-owned housing.

The Sound Talent Group said co-founder Dave Shapiro died in the crash. He is listed as the plane's owner and has a pilot's license, the Federal Aviation Administration said. The talent agency did not provide the names of the other employees.

At least 100 residents were moved to a nearby elementary school serving as an evacuation center, the San Diego Police Department said.

The plane was headed from New Jersey to San Diego after a fueling stop in Kansas. It crashed about 2 miles (3 kilometers) from San Diego's Montgomery-Gibbs Executive airport.

The total number of deaths is still unknown

San Diego officials had said earlier that two people died in the crash, but the National Transportation Safety Board now says the number of deaths is unknown. The FAA said six people were on board the plane.

The plane crashed into Murphy Canyon, the largest neighborhood of U.S. Navy-owned housing in the nation, during foggy weather, igniting at least one home and numerous vehicles parked on the street. The NTSB said the plane hit power lines before crashing.

Assistant San Diego Fire Chief Dan Eddy said the fog was thick: "You could barely see in front of you."

Several people were injured while trying to flee after the crash, and others were treated for smoke inhalation, authorities said.

On the ground, a horrific scene

At least one home was destroyed with its front heavily burned and its roof partially collapsed. About 10 others suffered damage. Half a dozen vehicles were melted and scorched into burned shells.

Jet fuel rolled down the street and the smell of it lingered in the air while authorities worked to extinguish one stubborn car fire that sent smoke billowing up.

Christopher Moore, who lives one street over from the crash site, said he and his wife were awakened by a loud bang, and he saw smoke out the window. The couple grabbed their three young boys and ran out of the house. They saw a car in flames on their way out of the neighborhood.

Police officers rescued multiple animals, including three husky puppies that were rolled away in a wagon. Agency's co-founder also had a record label

The Sound Talent Group, co-founded by Shapiro, has represented artists including American pop band Hanson, American singer-songwriter Vanessa Carlton, and Canadian rock group Sum 41. Hanson is perhaps best known for its earworm 1990s pop hit, "MMMBop."

Shapiro also owns Velocity Records, the label for American rock bands such as rosecoloredworld and Concrete Castles and the Japanese heavy metal band, Nemophila.

Shapiro also owned a flight school, Velocity Aviation.

The flight started outside Manhattan

According to the NTSB, the plane was a Cessna Citation II jet. The flight tracking site FlightAware said it

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was scheduled to arrive at the Montgomery-Gibbs airport in San Diego at 3:47 a.m. from the small Colonel James Jabara Airport in Wichita, Kansas.

Wichita's airport director said the plane had made a fueling stop there.

The flight originated Wednesday night in Teterboro, New Jersey, according to FlightAware. That airport is about 6 miles (10 kilometers) from Manhattan and is frequently used by private and corporate jets.

Planes have crashed in other San Diego neighborhoods

In October 2021, a twin-engine plane plowed into a San Diego suburb, killing the pilot and a UPS delivery driver on the ground and burning homes. It was preparing to land at the airport.

In December 2008, a U.S. Marine Corps fighter jet slammed into a house in San Diego's University City neighborhood, causing an explosion that killed four people inside. The Marine Corps blamed the crash on mechanical failure and human error.

RFK Jr.'s MAHA report raises concerns about vaccines, American foods and prescription drugs

By AMANDA SEITZ and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A government report released on Thursday covering wide swaths of American health and wellness reflects some of the most contentious views on vaccines, the nation's food supply, pesticides and prescription drugs held by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

The much-anticipated "Make America Healthy Again" report calls for increased scrutiny of the childhood vaccine schedule, a review of the pesticides sprayed on American crops and a description of the nation's children as overmedicated and undernourished.

"Never in American history has the federal government taken a position on public health like this," Kennedy told a group of MAHA supporters during an event unveiling the report on Thursday.

While it does not have the force of a law or official policy, the 69-page report will be used over the next three months for the MAHA commission to fashion a plan that can be implemented during the remainder of President Donald Trump's term.

Speaking to MAHA supporters at the White House on Thursday, Trump praised the report.

"There's something wrong and we will not stop until we defeat the chronic disease epidemic in America,"

Kennedy refused to provide details about who authored the report.

The HHS report scrutinizes vaccines, without evidence that it's warranted

Increased scrutiny of childhood vaccines — credited with saving millions of people from deadly diseases — figures prominently in the report. It poses questions over the necessity of school mandates that require children to get vaccinated for admittance and suggestions that vaccines should undergo more clinical trials, including with placebos.

Kennedy, a longtime vaccine critic, has raised doubts about the safety of shots even as a measles outbreak has sickened more than 1,000 Americans. This week, Kennedy's health department moved to limit U.S. access to COVID-19 shots.

The report does not provide any evidence that the childhood vaccine schedule, which includes shots for measles, polio and the chickenpox, is to blame for rising obesity, diabetes or autism rates, said Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease physician at Johns Hopkins University.

"It's not as if they're positing any kind of causal link," Adalja said, adding that Kennedy is "is trying to devalue vaccines in the minds of Americans."

Controversy over farming chemicals divides 'MAHA' movement

Parts of the report highlight growing factions within the Trump administration's MAHA movement, even as the report strained to appease opposing forces within the politically diverse coalition that Trump and Kennedy have fostered.

The report makes dozens of references to dietary guidelines and standards in Europe, but Environmental Protection Agency head Lee Zeldin promised it would not yield more rigorous regulations.

"This cannot happen through a European mandate system that stifles growth," Zeldin said in a call with

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reporters.

Despite numerous studies and statements throughout the MAHA report that raise concerns about American food products, Trump Cabinet officials insisted during a call with reporters on Thursday that the nation's food supply is safe.

The report mentions that glyphosate, a commonly used chemical sprayed on crops, may cause serious health problems, including cancer. The World Health Organization has said that the chemical is a probable carcinogen to humans, although the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has said it is unlikely.

Farmers, who — alongside Republican lawmakers — hounded the Trump administration leading up to the report's release, swiftly criticized the report's comments on the chemicals.

"The Make America Healthy Again Report is filled with fear-based rather than science-based information about pesticides," the National Corn Growers Association said in a statement.

But Kennedy's MAHA supporters were also disappointed, saying the report didn't go far enough when it came to chemicals used on crops.

"If the Trump White House and Republicans don't take pesticides and glyphosate's link to human health issues seriously, it will cost them the MAHA vote in the midterms," said Dave Murphy, a former Kennedy fundraiser who spearheaded a push for the issue to be addressed in the report.

Talking about the report on Thursday, Trump reiterated his "love" for farmers.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins acknowledged the tight rope Trump officials are walking to keep farmers, many of them in Republican-leaning states, happy while also working to satisfy Kennedy's eclectic and health-conscious following.

"Do all of us agree on everything? Of course not," Rollins said. "But the place that we have landed, which is, I think all of us agree, is that this is not a binary choice between an industry, agriculture and health."

Ultraprocessed foods also blamed for unhealthy Americans

The report comes out stronger, however, against ultraprocessed foods — industrially made products high in refined grains, sugar, saturated fats and additives like artificial dyes that now make up two-thirds of the diet for U.S. teens and children. Such products have been linked to a host of poor health outcomes, though documenting how they cause those problems has been notoriously difficult and time-consuming.

The MAHA commission report "is a pretty accurate depiction of the nutrition crisis facing our country," said Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, an expert in nutrition and policy at Tufts University.

The report focuses not only on ultraprocessed foods, but also on how too few fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and fish are present in U.S. diets, he noted. But the report leaves out excess salt, which causes harm, even in young children.

The MAHA report calls on the National Institutes of Health to execute sweeping, nationwide studies of ultraprocessed foods, even as the White House has called for \$18 billion to be axed from the agency's budget. An extra \$500 million has been requested from Congress for Kennedy's MAHA initiative.

The report raises concerns about other environmental and chemical research results, funded by corporations and industry, being skewed.

But the MAHA commission's call for more neutral research comes as sweeping budget and staff cuts propelled by Trump's Department of Government Efficiency have resulted in 20,000 jobs lost at the nation's health department and billions of dollars rescinded for research studies. The Trump administration also gutted the Environmental Public Health Tracking Program in its cuts of health-tracking programs.

The report also raises concerns about the lack of physical activity among children and their prescription drug use, including antibiotics and medications used to treat attention deficit disorders.

Some in the MAHA movement have raised concerns about offering medications, even over-the-counter drugs like pain relievers, to children.

But Trump spent 10 minutes during Thursday's event telling MAHA supporters how he's working to lower the cost of prescription drugs. The East Room crowd, packed full of MAHA supporters that offered applause for Trump's calls to investigate chronic disease in children, responded mildly — and eventually stopped clapping entirely — as he continued to talk about lowering drug costs.

"I think it's going to go down as one of the most important things we've ever done because drug prices are going to go down," he said, as Kennedy looked on.

Rapper Kid Cudi says his car was set on fire weeks after Sean 'Diddy' Combs broke into his home

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rapper Kid Cudi testified Thursday that Sean "Diddy" Combs broke into his Hollywood Hills home in 2011 after finding out he was dating Combs' ex-girlfriend, the R&B singer Cassie, and said he was sure Combs was behind the firebombing of his car weeks later.

Speaking at Combs' federal sex trafficking trial in Manhattan, Cudi said that while he and Cassie were briefly dating, he took her to a West Hollywood hotel in order to get her away from the seething Combs. While there, he said, he got a call from Combs' assistant Capricorn Clark. She told him Combs and an affiliate were in Cudi's house and she had been forced to go with them.

Cudi, whose legal name is Scott Mescudi, said he called Combs while driving home and asked why he was in his house. He said Combs calmly replied, "I want to talk to you."

But Combs wasn't there when he arrived, Cudi testified. Instead, he found that someone had opened Christmas presents he'd bought for his family and locked his dog in a bathroom. Cudi wasn't sure what was going on, so he called the police.

Cudi's car is set on fire

A few weeks later, Cudi testified, his Porsche 911 convertible was damaged by fire while parked in his driveway. Cudi said he was at a friend's house when his dog-sitter called and told him his car was on fire. Jurors were shown photos of the car's red leather interior scorched and burned, with a hole apparently cut in the fabric roof. A Molotov cocktail was found on the passenger seat, Cudi said.

Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, testified last week that Combs threatened to blow up Cudi's car and hurt him after he learned she was dating the Grammy Award-winning rapper.

Cudi said he didn't have conflicts at the time with anyone other than Combs.

"I knew he had something to do with it," Cudi said, leading Combs' lawyers to object. Jurors were told to disregard the remark.

Combs denies involvement in the blaze

Cudi told jurors he met with Combs the next day at a Los Angeles hotel to try to smooth things over.

"After the fire, I said this is getting out of hand. I need to talk to him," Cudi said.

At the end of the meeting, as they stood and shook hands, Cudi said he asked Combs: "What are we going to do about my car?" Cudi said Combs gave him a "very cold stare" and responded, "I don't know what you're talking about."

Cudi thought "he was lying" but let it go, and there were no more episodes at his house. A few years later, Combs apologized "for everything" when they ran into each other at a hotel, Cudi testified.

Combs seemed subdued as Cudi testified. Although he looked toward the witness stand, neither man seemed to react to the other. Cudi didn't look at Combs when he left the stand. Wearing jeans and a black leather jacket, Cudi arrived at the courthouse smoking a cigarette while someone held an umbrella over him in the rain. He didn't speak to reporters while leaving.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking and racketeering charges. He denies using threats or his music industry clout to abuse women and others, and denies forcing Cassie or anyone else to take part in drug-fueled sexual performances called freak-offs.

Combs' lawyer says Cassie was living 'double life'

During the defense cross-examination of Cudi, Combs' lawyer Brian Steel painted Cassie as the villain in her relationships with Combs and Cudi, suggesting she had played both of them and had been living a "double life."

Cudi testified that when he started dating Cassie in late 2011, she led him to believe she and Combs had broken up.

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In reality, Cassie testified earlier, she was still seeing Combs and using a "burner" phone to contact Cudi so as to keep their relationship secret.

"Ms. Ventura was living two different lives, is that true?" Steel asked.

"Yes," Cudi replied.

Cudi said he was in love with Cassie and was upset to find out she later decided to go back to Combs.

Jury hears more allegations that Combs abused Cassie

In four days of testimony last week, Cassie said Combs physically abused her during most of their relationship from 2007 through 2018.

George Kaplan, Combs' former personal assistant, testified Thursday that in 2015 he saw Combs be violent with Cassie on a private jet. He said no one helped her as she screamed: "Isn't anybody seeing this?" Kaplan said he didn't intervene because he was afraid of losing his job, but quit after that attack and a later episode in which he saw Cassie with a bruised eye.

Jurors also heard Thursday from makeup artist Mylah Morales, who's worked for Rihanna, Jennifer Lopez and other stars. She said Combs stormed into Cassie's bedroom at a hotel the weekend of the 2010 Grammy Awards.

Combs shut the door and she heard "yelling and screaming." Then she saw Cassie with a "swollen eye and a busted lip, and knots on her head."

Later, the general manager of the ritzy L'Ermitage Beverly Hills hotel testified that Combs frequently stayed there using aliases such as Frank White and Frank Black — names Cassie said he used when checking in for freak-offs, which often involved baby oil and hot wax.

Frédéric Zemmour said Combs' guest profile noted he "ALWAYS spills candle wax on everything and uses excessive amounts of oil." The profile instructed staff to "place the room out of order upon departure for deep cleaning."

The trial is set to resume Tuesday.

FDA panel is split on updates to COVID shots as questions loom for fall vaccinations

By MATTHEW PERRONE and LAURAN NEERGAARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Government advisers were split Thursday on whether drugmakers need to update their COVID-19 vaccines for next season, a decision overshadowed by confusion over a new Trump administration policy that may limit which Americans can get the shots.

The Food and Drug Administration's outside experts have met annually since the launch of the first COVID-19 vaccines to discuss tweaking their recipes to stay ahead of the virus. The challenge is trying to gauge how the virus might evolve before fall vaccinations begin.

"We all want to make the perfect choice and that's probably not possible," FDA's Jerry Weir told the panel of outside experts.

Some of the panelists voiced support for a switch to a newer coronavirus subtype named LP.8.1. It's currently the dominant version and part of the same family that circulated last year — known as the JN.1 branch of the virus family tree.

"We cannot predict the future, but it seems like LP.8 would be more likely to provide us better coverage," said Dr. Eric Rubin, a Harvard infectious disease expert and editor of the New England Journal of Medicine.

Other panelists noted that subtype is such a close relative that last year's shots seem to offer cross-protection, at least for now but with no guarantee there wouldn't be a different version circulating by the time a vaccination campaign ramps up in the late summer or early fall. Several advisers noted that people who want to get ahead of a summer surge like the U.S. typically experiences could seek out the current vaccines.

Hanging over the meeting was an FDA announcement earlier this week that upended the prior U.S. policy of recommending annual COVID-19 boosters for all Americans ages 6 months and older. Instead, the FDA said routine vaccine approvals will be limited to seniors and younger people with underlying medical risks,

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pending new research for healthy adults and children.

While that change has big implications for a fall vaccination campaign, FDA leaders repeatedly sidestepped questions from advisers about whether recommending an updated formula would trigger restrictions outlined in the new policy.

"I don't have an answer today," said Weir. "I think a lot of this is still under discussion."

FDA staffers also wouldn't confirm whether the advisers would be given a chance to meet about the new standards later.

FDA vaccine chief Dr. Vinay Prasad said in opening the meeting that the agency wants "to give people a little more time to digest" the new policy and is open to feedback from its experts — although apparently not in Thursday's public forum.

Last fall's recipe was tailored to the so-called JN.1 family of omicron descendants. The advisory panel voted unanimously that the family still is the right overall target, but left the FDA to decide which specific subtype to choose.

Novavax brewed shots targeting the parent JN.1 variant and said Thursday it was a good choice for this fall as well. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines last year targeted a subtype called KP.2 and company representatives told the FDA meeting that it showed cross-protection, but that they favored an update.

The debate reflected an international difference of opinion on the closely related virus strains. The World Health Organization recently issued guidance that last year's version remained OK but that vaccine-makers could also choose an update, while the European Medicines Agency preferred that newer LP.8.1 subtype.

While demand for vaccinations has dropped, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 30,000 to 50,000 adults have died from COVID-19 since October. The virus continues to cause "enormous burden" on the health care system, CDC's Dr. Fiona Havers told panelists. Older adults count for most hospitalizations and deaths but COVID-19 also is "a major cause of pediatric hospitalization," especially in children under 2 — many of whom had no underlying medical problems before their infections.

The strain decision normally isn't the final word on recommendations about who should be vaccinated.

The CDC's own advisory panel meets in June to make recommendations about the fall shots. Among its options are keeping universal access or recommending vaccination for high-risk groups but still giving lower-risk people the choice in getting a shot.

CDC staffers presented real-world data Thursday showing that getting a booster last fall offered added protection even in people who had been infected and previously vaccinated. Company studies reached the same conclusion — including one by Moderna that compared medical records of about 900,000 people.

Get ready for another busy Atlantic hurricane season, but maybe not as crazy as 2024

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — With warmer than normal ocean waters, forecasters are expecting yet another unusually busy hurricane season for the Atlantic. But they don't think it will be as chaotic as 2024, the third-costliest season on record as it spawned killer storms Beryl, Helene and Milton.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Thursday unveiled its outlook for the Atlantic hurricane season that begins June 1 and stretches through the end of November, with a 60% chance it will be above normal, 30% chance near normal and just 10% chance it will be quieter than average.

The forecast calls for 13 to 19 named storms with six to 10 becoming hurricanes and three to five reaching major status with winds of more than 110 mph (177 kph). A normal season has 14 named storms, seven of which strengthen to hurricanes and three power up further to major hurricanes.

Ocean warmth is not quite as high as last year's off-the-charts heat. But it's sufficient to be the top reason for the busy forecast, National Weather Service Director Ken Graham said.

"Everything is in place for an above average season," he said.

Despite massive job cuts at NOAA from the Department of Government Efficiency, "our ability to serve this country has never been better and it will be this year as well," Graham said at a news conference

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Thursday in Gretna, Louisiana, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

"The hurricane center is fully staffed up and we're ready to go," acting NOAA administrator Laura Grimm said. "We are making this a top priority for this administration."

Since 1995, 21 of the 30 Atlantic hurricane seasons have been officially classified as above normal, with nearly half of those considered "hyperactive," according to NOAA. It classifies seasons based on their Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) index, which takes into account the number and strength of storms and how long they last. In the last 10 years, only 2015 was below normal and 2022 was near normal.

Last year started with a record early Category 5 hurricane in Beryl but then had a lull during the early part of peak storm season from mid-August to mid-October. But then six storms, including Helene and Milton, formed in just two weeks. With 18 named storms, 11 of those becoming hurricanes and five major hurricanes, 2024 was considered a hyperactive season in the Atlantic. And it was the third such in the last 10 years.

"With a warming climate, forecasting above the long-term mean is always a safe bet," said Kristen Corbosiero, a University at Albany tropical meteorology professor who was not part of the NOAA research.

Human-caused climate change has generally made storms more intense, wetter and slower-moving so they drop more rain, Corbosiero and other experts said.

"The main fuel source for hurricanes is warm ocean waters," Corbosiero said. "Warmer ocean water, warmer atmosphere above it can hold more moisture, more fuel for storms."

Corbosiero said there are three main factors: Water temperature, the El Nino/La Nina cycle of natural ocean warming and cooling, and "seeds" of storms coming off Africa as thunderstorms. The warmer-than-normal water pushes toward a busy season, the El Nino cycle is neutral and it's too early to know what's coming off Africa, she and other hurricane experts said.

With climate change, hurricanes are powering up from almost nothing to intense storms more quickly, giving people less notice for whopper storms, meteorologists said. Every Category 5 hurricane that hit the United States was a tropical storm or weaker just three days earlier, Graham said.

Several other groups besides NOAA — private, public and academic — have already made forecasts for the upcoming season and they average out to a busy, but not hyperactive year with 16 named storms, eight of which become hurricanes and four major hurricanes.

Phil Klotzbach, who coordinates Colorado State's pioneering forecast program, is calling for a bit more than other forecasters — 17 named storms, nine hurricanes and four majors — heavily based on the warm waters and past trends. Still, it should not quite be like last year, he said.

"At least we're not looking at a crazy hot Atlantic like we did last year at this time," Klotzbach said. "We're still pretty toasty out there. So I don't have the warm fuzzies about 2025."

Even if it's a quiet year, Corbosiero said just one storm can change everything, recalling an ultra quiet 1992, when that one storm was the devastating Hurricane Andrew.

"We don't need a hyperactive season to have devastation in the U.S. or the Caribbean or anywhere," Corbosiero said.

Supreme Court tie vote dooms taxpayer funded Catholic charter school in Oklahoma

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday effectively ended a publicly funded Catholic charter school in Oklahoma, dividing 4-4.

The outcome keeps in place an Oklahoma court decision that invalidated a vote by a state charter school board to approve the St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School, which would have been the nation's first religious charter school. But it leaves the issue unresolved nationally.

The one-sentence notice from the court provides an unsatisfying end to one of the term's most closely watched cases.

The Catholic Church in Oklahoma had wanted taxpayers to fund the online charter school "faithful to

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the teachings of Jesus Christ.” Opponents warned that allowing it would blur the separation between church and state, sap money from public schools and possibly upend the rules governing charter schools in almost every state.

Only eight of the nine justices took part in the case. Justice Amy Coney Barrett didn’t explain her absence, but she is good friends and used to teach with Notre Dame law professor Nicole Garnett, who has been an adviser to the school.

The issue could return to the high court in the future, with the prospect that all nine justices could participate.

The court, following its custom, did not provide a breakdown of the votes. But during arguments last month, four conservative justices seemed likely to side with the school, while the three liberals seemed just as firmly on the other side.

That left Chief Justice John Roberts appearing to hold the key vote, and suggests he went with the liberals to make the outcome 4-4.

The case came to the court amid efforts, mainly in conservative-led states, to insert religion into public schools. Those include a challenged Louisiana requirement that the Ten Commandments be posted in classrooms and a mandate from Oklahoma’s state schools superintendent that the Bible be placed in public school classrooms.

St. Isidore, a K-12 online school, had planned to start classes for its first 200 enrollees last fall, with part of its mission to evangelize its students in the Catholic faith.

A key unresolved issue is whether the school is public or private. Charter schools are deemed public in Oklahoma and the other 45 states and the District of Columbia where they operate. North Dakota recently enacted legislation allowing for charter schools.

They are free and open to all, receive state funding, abide by antidiscrimination laws and submit to oversight of curriculum and testing. But they also are run by independent boards that are not part of local public school systems.

Proponents of publicly funded religious charter schools were quick to point out that the decision was limited to Oklahoma.

“Oklahoma parents and children are better off with more educational choices, not fewer. While the Supreme Court’s order is disappointing for educational freedom, the 4-4 decision does not set precedent, allowing the court to revisit this issue in the future,” said Jim Campbell, who argued the case at the high court on behalf of Oklahoma’s charter school board. Campbell is the chief legal counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal organization that appears often at the court in cases on high-profile social issues.

On the other side, the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State, which are among groups representing parents and other opponents of the school in a separate lawsuit, applauded the outcome for preserving public education.

“The very idea of a religious public school is a constitutional oxymoron. The Supreme Court’s ruling affirms that a religious school can’t be a public school and a public school can’t be religious,” said Daniel Mach, director of the ACLU’s Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

Oklahoma officials also offered differing views.

Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt and state School Superintendent Ryan Walters said the fight is far from over. “There will be another case just like this one and Justice Barrett will break the tie,” Stitt said.

Attorney General Gentner Drummond, also a Republican, sued to stop the school. He called the 4-4 vote “a resounding victory for religious liberty” that also will ensure that “Oklahoma taxpayers will not be forced to fund radical Islamic schools, while protecting the religious rights of families to choose any school they wish for their children.”

During arguments, Justice Samuel Alito said, “We have statement after statement by the attorney general that reeks of hostility toward Islam.”

Iran says it may take 'special measures' to defend nuclear sites from Israel

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's top diplomat warned Thursday that his country would take "special measures" to defend its nuclear facilities if Israel continues to threaten them, raising the stakes further ahead of a new round of talks with the United States.

The comments by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi offered no specifics on what Tehran would do, but international inspectors already have seen their access limited to Iran's program. That's even as Tehran enriches uranium to 60% purity, a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%.

"I have called on the international community to take effective preventive measures against the continuation of Israeli threats, which if unchecked, will compel Iran to take special measures in defense of our nuclear facilities and materials," Araghchi wrote on the social platform X after sending letters to United Nations officials.

"The nature, content and extent of our actions will correspond and be proportionate to preventive measures taken by these international bodies in accordance with their statutory duties and obligations."

Iran's mission to the United Nations later posted Araghchi's letter online, which included a warning to the U.S. as well.

"We are likewise of the firm conviction that — in the event of any attack against the nuclear facilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Zionist regime — the government of the United States shall bear legal responsibility, having been complicit therein," the letter reads.

It added any change involving Iranian nuclear sites would be communicated to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog.

Araghchi's remarks follow a CNN report Tuesday that described the U.S. as having "new intelligence suggesting that Israel is making preparations to strike Iranian nuclear facilities." Israel has not acknowledged any preparations, though officials up to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have repeatedly threatened to strike Iran's nuclear sites to prevent it from being able to obtain a nuclear weapon, should it choose to pursue one.

Israel and Iran have been archrivals in the Mideast for decades.

Araghchi's warning come as the U.S. and Iran are due to meet Friday in Rome for their fifth round of negotiations over a possible deal that would see Tehran limit or end its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

The U.S. will be again represented in the talks by Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Michael Anton, the State Department's policy planning director.

What we know about the DC shooting where 2 staff members of the Israeli Embassy were killed

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two staff members of the Israeli Embassy in Washington — a young couple on the verge of becoming engaged — were fatally shot Wednesday evening while leaving an event at a Jewish museum, and the suspect yelled, "Free, free Palestine" after he was arrested, police said.

The attack was seen by officials in Israel and the U.S. as the latest in a growing wave of antisemitism as Israel ramps up its offensive in the Gaza Strip, and as food security experts have warned that Gaza risks falling into famine unless Israel's blockade ends.

Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Yechiel Leiter said the man who was killed had purchased a ring this week with the intent to propose next week in Jerusalem.

Here's what we know:

What happened?

The two victims, a man and a woman, were leaving an event at the Capital Jewish Museum around 9:15 p.m. Wednesday when the suspect approached a group of four people and opened fire, Metropolitan Police

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Chief Pamela Smith said at a news conference.

The suspect was observed pacing outside the museum before the shooting, walked into the museum after the shooting and was detained by event security, Smith said.

When he was taken into custody, the suspect began chanting, "Free, free Palestine," Smith said. She said law enforcement did not believe there was an ongoing threat to the community.

The violence occurred following the American Jewish Committee's annual Young Diplomats reception at the museum.

Who is the suspect?

The suspect has been identified as Elias Rodriguez, 31, of Chicago.

It was not immediately clear whether Rodriguez had an attorney who could comment on his behalf. A telephone number listed in public records rang unanswered.

He was being interviewed early Thursday by D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department as well as the FBI. The U.S. attorney in Washington will prosecute the case.

Who are the victims?

They were identified as Yaron Lischinsky, an Israeli citizen, and Sarah Milgrim, an American woman — a young couple about to be engaged.

"Sarah and Yaron were stolen from us," said Ted Deutch, the chief executive of the AJC, the advocacy organization whose event the couple attended before they were killed. "Moments before they were murdered, they were smiling, laughing, and enjoying an event with colleagues and friends. We are in shock and heartbroken as we attempt to process this immense tragedy."

He described Milgrim, from Overland Park, Kansas, as "warm and compassionate, committed to peace building and passionate about sustainability and people-to-people relations." And he said Lischinsky was a staff member of the embassy's political department who focused on Middle East issues and who at the event told others that he was eager to return to Israel to be with his family for the Jewish holiday of Shavuot.

What is Israel's reaction?

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Thursday that he was "shocked" by the "horrific, antisemitic" shooting.

"We are witnessing the terrible price of antisemitism and wild incitement against Israel," he said in a statement.

Israeli diplomats in the past have been targeted by violence, both by state-backed assailants and Palestinian militants over the decades of the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict that grew out of the founding of Israel in 1948. The Palestinians seek Gaza and the West Bank for a future state, with east Jerusalem as its capital — lands Israel captured in the 1967 war. However, the peace process between the sides has been stalled for years.

Witnesses to the attack

Yoni Kalin and Katie Kalisher were inside the museum when they heard gunshots and a man came inside looking distressed, they said. Kalin said people came to the man's aid and brought him water, thinking he needed help, without realizing he was the suspect. When police arrived, he pulled out a red keffiyeh and repeatedly yelled, "Free Palestine," Kalin said.

"This event was about humanitarian aid," Kalin said. "How can we actually help both the people in Gaza and the people in Israel? How can we bring together Muslims and Jews and Christians to work together to actually help innocent people? And then here he is just murdering two people in cold blood."

The influential pan-Arab satellite channel Al Jazeera aired on a loop what appeared to be mobile phone footage of the alleged gunman, wearing a suit jacket and slacks, being pulled away after the shooting, his hands behind his back.

Israel's new campaign in Gaza

The shooting comes as Israel has launched a new campaign targeting Hamas in the Gaza Strip in a war that has set tensions aflame across the wider Middle East. The war began with the Palestinian militant group Hamas coming out of Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023, to kill 1,200 people and take some 250 hostages back

to the coastal enclave.

In the time since, Israel's devastating campaign in Gaza has killed more than 53,000 people, mostly women and children, according to local health authorities, whose count doesn't differentiate between combatants and civilians.

The fighting has displaced 90% of the territory's roughly 2 million population, sparked a hunger crisis and obliterated vast swaths of Gaza's urban landscape. Aid groups ran out of food to distribute weeks ago, and most of the population of around 2.3 million relies on communal kitchens whose supplies are nearly depleted.

House Republicans pass Trump's big bill of tax breaks and program cuts after all-night session

By LISA MASCARO, KEVIN FREKING and LEAH ASKARINAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans stayed up all night to pass their multitrillion-dollar tax breaks package, with Speaker Mike Johnson defying the skeptics and unifying his ranks to muscle President Donald Trump's priority bill to approval Thursday.

With last-minute concessions and stark warnings from Trump, the Republican holdouts largely dropped their opposition to salvage the "One Big Beautiful Bill" that's central to the GOP agenda. The House launched debate before midnight and by dawn the vote was called, 215-214, with Democrats staunchly opposed. It next goes to the Senate, with long negotiations ahead.

"To put it simply, this bill gets Americans back to winning again," said Johnson, R-La.

The outcome caps an intense time on Capitol Hill, with days of private negotiations and public committee hearings, many happening back-to-back, around-the-clock. Republicans insisted their sprawling 1,000-page-plus package was what voters sent them to Congress — and Trump to the White House — to accomplish. They believe it will be "rocket fuel," as one put it during debate, for the uneasy U.S. economy.

Trump himself demanded action, visiting House Republicans at Tuesday's conference meeting and hosting GOP leaders and the holdouts for a lengthy session Wednesday at the White House. Before the vote, the administration warned in a pointed statement that failure "would be the ultimate betrayal."

After the legislation's passage, Trump posted on social media: "Thank you to every Republican who voted YES on this Historic Bill! Now, it's time for our friends in the United States Senate to get to work."

The Senate hopes to wrap up its version by the Fourth of July holiday.

Central to the package is the GOP's commitment to extending some \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks they engineered during Trump's first term in 2017, while temporarily adding new ones he campaigned on during his 2024 campaign, including no taxes on tips, overtime pay, car loan interest and others.

To make up for some of the lost tax revenue, the Republicans focused on changes to Medicaid and the food stamps program, largely by imposing work requirements on many of those receiving benefits. There's also a massive rollback of green energy tax breaks from the Biden-era Inflation Reduction Act.

Additionally, the package tacks on \$350 billion in new spending, with about \$150 billion going to the Pentagon, including for the president's new "Golden Dome" defense shield, and the rest for Trump's mass deportation and border security agenda.

All told, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates 8.6 million fewer people would have health care coverage and 3 million less people a month would have SNAP food stamps benefits with the proposed changes.

The CBO said the tax provisions would increase federal deficits by \$3.8 trillion over the decade, while the changes to Medicaid, food stamps and other services would tally \$1 trillion in reduced spending. The lowest-income households in the U.S. would see their resources drop, while the highest ones would see a boost, it said.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York read letters from Americans describing the way the program cuts would hurt them. "This is one big ugly bill," he said.

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As the minority, without the votes to stop Trump's package, Democrats instead offered up impassioned speeches and procedural moves to stall its advance. As soon as the House floor reopened for debate, the Democrats forced a vote to adjourn. It failed.

In "the dark of night they want to pass this GOP tax scam," said Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif.

Other Democrats called it a "big, bad bill" or a "big, broken promise."

Pulling the package together before his Memorial Day deadline has been an enormous political lift for Johnson, with few votes to spare from his slim GOP majority whose rank-and-file Republicans have conflicting priorities of their own.

Conservatives, particularly from the House Freedom Caucus, held out for steeper spending cuts to defray costs piling onto the nation's \$36 trillion debt.

At the same time, more moderate and centrist GOP lawmakers were wary of the changes to Medicaid that could result in lost health care for their constituents. And some worried the phaseout of the renewable energy tax breaks will impede businesses using them to invest in green energy projects in many states.

One big problem had been the costly deal with GOP lawmakers from New York and other high-tax states to quadruple the \$10,000 deduction for state and local taxes, called SALT, to \$40,000 for incomes up to \$500,000, which was included in the final product.

For every faction Johnson tried to satisfy, another would roar in opposition.

Late in the night, GOP leaders unveiled a 42-page amendment with a number of revisions.

The changes included speedier implementation of the Medicaid work requirements, which will begin in December 2026, rather than January 2029, and a faster roll back of the production tax credits for clean electricity projects, both sought by the conservatives.

Also tucked into the final version were some unexpected additions — including a \$12 billion fund for the Department of Homeland Security to reimburse states that help federal officials with deportations and border security.

And in a nod to Trump's influence, the Republicans renamed a proposed new children's savings program after the president, changing it from MAGA accounts — money account for growth and advancement — to simply "Trump" accounts.

Rep. Erin Houchin, R-Ind., said Americans shouldn't believe the dire predictions from Democrats about the impact of the bill. "We can unlock the 'Golden Age' of America," she said, echoing the president's own words.

By early morning hours, the chief holdouts appeared to be falling in line. Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., said they "got some improvements."

But two Republicans voted against the package, including Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky, a deficit watcher who had been publicly criticized by Trump, remained unmoved. "This bill is a debt bomb ticking," he warned.

And Rep. Andy Harris, the chairman of the Freedom Caucus who wanted more time, voted present. Some others did not vote.

Final analysis of the overall package's costs and economic impacts are still being assessed.

Along with extending existing tax breaks, it would increase the standard income tax deduction, to \$32,000 for joint filers, and boost the child tax credit to \$2,500. There would be an enhanced deduction, of \$4,000, for older adults of certain income levels, to help defray taxes on Social Security income.

To cut spending, those seeking Medicaid health care, who are able-bodied adults without dependents, would need to fulfill 80 hours a month on a job or in other community activities.

Similarly, to receive food stamps through SNAP, those up to age 64, rather than 54, who are able-bodied and without dependents, would need to meet the 80 hours a month work or community engagement requirements. Additionally, some parents of children older than 7 years old would need to fulfill the work requirements.

Republicans said they want to root out waste, fraud and abuse in the federal programs.

North Korea's second naval destroyer is damaged in a failed launch attended by Kim

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea's second naval destroyer was damaged in a failed launch this week, state media reported Thursday, sparking fury from leader Kim Jong Un, who wants bigger warships to deal with what he calls escalating U.S.-led threats against his country.

It's not common for North Korea to acknowledge military-related setbacks, but observers say the disclosure of the failed ship launch suggests that Kim is serious about his naval advancement program and confident of ultimately achieving that objective.

During a launching event at the northeastern port of Chongjin on Wednesday, the newly built 5,000-ton-class destroyer became unbalanced and was punctured in its bottom sections after a transport cradle on the stern section slid off first and became stuck, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

KCNA didn't provide details on what caused the problem, the severity of the damage or whether anyone was injured.

According to KCNA, Kim, who was present at the ceremony, blamed military officials, scientists and shipyard operators for a "serious accident and criminal act caused by absolute carelessness, irresponsibility and unscientific empiricism." Kim called for a ruling Workers' Party meeting slated for late June to address their "irresponsible errors."

The destroyers are North Korea's most advanced warships

"It's a shameful thing. But the reason why North Korea disclosed the incident is it wants to show it's speeding up the modernization of its navy forces and expresses its confidence that it can eventually build" a greater navy, said Moon Keun-sik, a navy expert who teaches at Seoul's Hanyang University.

Moon suspected the incident likely happened because North Korean workers aren't yet familiar with such a large warship and were rushed to put it in the water.

The damaged vessel was likely the same class as the country's first destroyer unveiled last month, which experts assessed as North Korea's largest and most advanced warship to date. Kim called the first vessel, named Choe Hyon — a famed Korean guerilla fighter during the Japanese colonial period — a significant asset for advancing his goal of expanding the military's operational range and nuclear strike capabilities.

State media described that ship as designed to carry weapons systems including nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles. Kim said the ship was expected to enter active duty early next year and later supervised test-firings of missiles from the warship.

Satellite photos show the partially submerged destroyer

Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Thursday that the damaged vessel was likely equipped with similar systems and remains toppled over in the sea. Satellite images from Planet Labs PBC seen by The Associated Press appeared to show the vessel rolled onto its side, positioned diagonally from the dock, with most of its hull submerged and draped in blue covers.

Earlier commercial satellite images indicated that the country was building its second destroyer at a shipyard in Chongjin.

Beyond Parallel, a website run by the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank, said the satellite imagery of Chongjin's Hambuk shipyard on May 12 showed that a second vessel in the Choe Hyon-class of guided missile destroyers was under construction.

A report by the North Korea-focused 38 North website assessed last week that the destroyer in Chongjin was being prepared to be launched sideways from the quay, a method that has been rarely used in North Korea. The report said the previous destroyer launched at the western shipyard of Nampo, in contrast, used a floating dry dock.

South Korean officials and experts say the Choe Hyon destroyer was likely built with Russian assistance as the two countries' military partnerships are booming. While North Korea's naval forces are considered far inferior to those of its rivals, analysts say the destroyer with nuclear-capable missiles and an advanced radar system would still enhance the North's offensive and defensive capabilities.

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Kim has framed the arms buildup as a response to perceived threats from the United States and South Korea, which have been expanding joint military exercises in response to the North's advancing nuclear program. He says the acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine would be his next big step in strengthening the North Korean navy.

Hours after releasing the report on the damaged destroyer, North Korea test-fired multiple cruise missiles from an area about 300 kilometers (185 miles) south of Chongjin, according to South Korea's military. The launches were a continuation of a streak of weapons-testing activities by North Korea in recent years. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launches were being analyzed by South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities.

Today in History: May 23

Outlaws Bonnie and Clyde killed in police ambush

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, May 23, the 143rd day of 2025. There are 222 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 23, 1934, bank robbers Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were shot to death during a police ambush in Bienville Parish, Louisiana.

Also on this date:

In 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary, aligning with the Triple Entente of Russia, France and the United Kingdom.

In 1945, Nazi official Heinrich Himmler killed himself while in British custody in Lüneburg, Germany.

In 1984, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop issued a report saying there was "very solid" evidence linking cigarette smoke to lung disease in non-smokers.

In 2013, the Boy Scouts of America announced it would remove membership restrictions based on sexual orientation, while maintaining a ban on openly gay Scout leaders. (The ban on gay Scout leaders and organization employees was lifted two years later.)

In 2015, supporters of marriage equality in Ireland celebrated as referendum results showed a constitutional amendment in favor of recognizing same-sex marriage passing by a nearly 2-to-1 margin.

In 2018, NFL owners approved a new policy allowing players to protest during the national anthem by staying in the locker room but forbidding players from sitting or taking a knee if they're on the field.

In 2021, a cable car taking visitors to a mountaintop view of northern Italy's Lake Maggiore plummeted to the ground when a cable snapped, killing 14 people.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Joan Collins is 92. Tennis Hall of Famer John Newcombe is 81. Chess grand master Anatoly Karpov is 74. Comedian-TV host Drew Carey is 67. Comedian-actor Lea DeLaria is 67. Author Mitch Albom is 67. Actor Melissa McBride is 60. Singer-songwriter Maxwell is 52. "Jeopardy!" host Ken Jennings is 51. Singer-songwriter Jewel is 51. Filmmaker Ryan Coogler is 39. Singer-songwriter Sarah Jarosz (juh-ROHZ') is 34.