

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 1 of 53

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Groton Community Calendar through June 15](#)
- [6- Thompson sets World Record at National Championship](#)
- [6- JVT Annual Meeting Ad](#)
- [7- Groton Legion beats Lake Norden](#)
- [9- Patio seatings complete](#)
- [10- Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Ad](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: South Dakota governor's economic advisers bemoan Trump's tariff policy](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Board plans hearing on removal of student growth goals from SD teacher evaluation requirements](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Two local court advocacy programs for children are revived with legislative funding](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: RFK Jr. ends COVID vaccine recommendation for healthy children, pregnant people](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: NPR sues over Trump order cutting off its funding, citing First Amendment](#)
- [19- Weather Pages](#)
- [23- Daily Devotional](#)
- [24- Subscription Form](#)
- [25- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [26- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [27- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Wednesday, May 28:

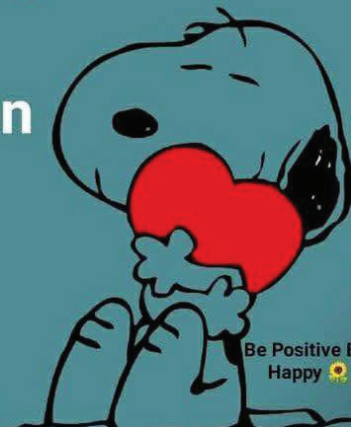
Senior Menu Turkey mashed potato with gravy, California blend, orange and pineapple, dinner roll.  
Jr. Teener hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U12 R&B at Aberdeen (north complex), 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 R&B hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U8 R&B hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

## Thursday, May 29:

Senior Menu: Taco salad with chips, Mexican rice with beans, fruit, breadstick, cookie.  
James Valley Annual Meeting, 5:30 p.m., GHS Arena  
State Track Meet in Sioux Falls  
Jr. Legion hosts Watertown 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U12 B&W hosts Webster 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 B@W hosts Aberdeen 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Just a reminder  
in case your mind is  
playing tricks on you  
today:

You matter.  
You're important.  
You're loved.  
And your  
presence on  
this earth  
makes a  
Beautiful  
difference.



## Friday, May 30:

Senior Menu: Hot pork sandwich, cucumber salad, oven roasted potato, honey fruit salad.  
State Track Meet in Sioux Falls  
Legion at Refield, 5:30 p.m.  
Jr. Legion at Redfield 7:30 p.m.  
Jr. Teeners hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

## Saturday, May 31

State Track Meet in Sioux Falls

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

© 2025 Groton Daily Independent

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 2 of 53

# 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.**

## Starship Takes a Spin

SpaceX carried out the ninth test flight of its massive Starship space vehicle last night, achieving mixed results as the spacecraft successfully reached orbital velocity but disintegrated upon reentry. After launching from Starbase, Texas, the uncrewed ship experienced several issues, including a fuel tank leak, cutting short planned exercises. Mission controllers lost contact shortly before an uncontrolled, spinning descent into the Indian Ocean.

It marks the third straight test where Starship failed to complete the entire flight. Following the launch, CEO Elon Musk—having returned “24/7” to his companies from the Trump administration—pointed out the vehicle exceeded a number of checkpoints from Flights 7 and 8 and vowed to accelerate the launch schedule to once every three to four weeks.

Starship is currently slated to carry astronauts to the moon by 2027 as part of NASA’s Artemis program.

## Harvard Strips Tenure

Harvard has revoked the tenure of Business School professor Francesca Gino after an internal investigation found she manipulated data in multiple studies to support her conclusions. It’s the first known case of a tenured professor being dismissed since Harvard formalized its process in the 1940s. Gino, once seen as an expert in ethics and decision-making, came under scrutiny after the academic blog Data Colada flagged a 2012 study on honesty that was later retracted.

Gino was once among Harvard’s highest-paid faculty, earning \$1M annually in 2018 and 2019. She has denied the allegations and is suing Harvard and the blog’s authors for \$25M, claiming defamation, breach of contract, and gender discrimination. A federal judge has dismissed the defamation claim but allowed her contract-related claims to proceed. Gino has published two books and more than 140 academic papers, including one on workplace dishonesty.

Separately, the Trump administration is moving to cancel all remaining federal contracts with the university, worth roughly \$100M.

## New ‘Harry Potter’ Cast

HBO unveiled the lead cast of its “Harry Potter” TV series yesterday, ending a monthslong search for the main roles of Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ron Weasley. The young leads—Dominic McLaughlin, Arabella Stanton, and Alastair Stout, respectively—will begin filming for the series this summer, with a debut scheduled for next year.

More than 30,000 actors from Ireland and the UK auditioned in HBO’s open casting call, announced last fall. The adaptation will be a decade-plus project, with each season covering a single book in JK Rowling’s seven-book series. Warner Bros. has described the adaptation as faithful to the novels, with longer character arcs than the 2001-11 film adaptations. Rowling will serve as executive producer.

“Harry Potter” is the bestselling book series in history, with more than 600 million copies sold worldwide since the first book was released in 1997. The film franchise has grossed over \$7.7B at the worldwide box office.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 3 of 53

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Sean "Diddy" Combs sex trafficking trial continues as ex-aide testifies Combs kidnapped her at gunpoint, threatened to kill rapper Kid Cudi.

President Donald Trump threatens to withhold federal funding from California if it allows a transgender female athlete to compete in state's high school track and field championship.

Cornell wins first NCAA men's lacrosse title since 1977; UNC finishes season undefeated to win women's lacrosse championship.

Billie Eilish dominates the 2025 American Music Awards, bringing home seven awards.

Rick Derringer, legendary rock musician and songwriter whose career spanned six decades, dies at age 77.

## Science & Technology

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. says Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will remove COVID-19 shots from its list of recommended immunizations for healthy children and healthy pregnant women.

Researchers discover first tools made from whale bones dating back 20,000 years in what is now Western Europe, roughly 15,000 years earlier than previously known.

New memory model suggests brain cells known as astrocytes are involved in storing memories; may explain brain's larger-than-expected storage capacity.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +2.1%, Dow +1.8%, Nasdaq +2.5%) on optimism the US will secure a trade deal to prevent 50% tariffs on goods from the European Union.

Salesforce acquires cloud data management firm Informatica in \$8B equity deal.

Motorola Solutions to buy wireless radio-maker Silvus Technologies for \$4.4B.

Neuralink, Elon Musk's brain implant company, raises \$600M at \$9B valuation, up from \$3.5B valuation in 2023.

Southwest ends policy of two free checked bags per passenger, the last major airline to offer the perk; most Southwest passengers will now pay \$35 for a first checked bag, \$45 for a second.

## Politics & World Affairs

State Department pauses all new student visa interviews as Trump administration considers updating procedures to vet applicants' social media profiles.

Chaos erupts at new Gaza distribution center as thousands of people attempt to secure aid from US- and Israeli-backed distribution group.

Cholera outbreak in Sudan sparks concerns of public health disaster, with drone strikes on water purification stations reducing access to clean water; more than 150,000 people have been killed in the two-year civil war.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 4 of 53

## Groton Community Calendar through June 15

### Wednesday, May 28:

Senior Menu Turkey mashed potato with gravy, California blend, orange and pineapple, dinner roll.  
Jr. Teener hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U12 R&B at Aberdeen (north complex), 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 R&B hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U8 R&B hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

### Thursday, May 29:

Senior Menu: Taco salad with chips, Mexican rice with beans, fruit, breadstick, cookie.  
James Valley Annual Meeting, 5:30 p.m., GHS Arena  
State Track Meet in Sioux Falls  
Jr. Legion hosts Watertown 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U12 B&W hosts Webster 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 B@W hosts Aberdeen 5:30 p.m. (DH)

### Friday, May 30:

Senior Menu: Hot pork sandwich, cucumber salad, oven roasted potato, honey fruit salad.  
State Track Meet in Sioux Falls  
Legion at Refield, 5:30 p.m.  
Jr. Legion at Redfield 7:30 p.m.  
Jr. Teeners hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

### Saturday, May 31

State Track Meet in Sioux Falls

### Sunday, June 1:

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 a.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran worship 9 a.m.  
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.  
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.  
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.  
United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.  
Legion at Volga (vs. Canton at 2 p.m., Volga at 4 p.m.)

### Monday, June 2:

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, mixed vegetables, fruit, biscuit.  
State Girls Golf Meet in Madison  
Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
Legion at Aberdeen Smitty's, 6 p.m.  
U12 W&R hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 W&R hosts Clark 5:30 p.m. (DH); U8 B&W at Aberdeen (north complex), 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
T-Ball practice at 6 p.m. at soccer field.

### Tuesday, June 3:

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes and ham, Monterey blend, strawberry ambrosia, whole wheat bread.  
State Girls Golf Meet in Madison  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
Jr. Legion at Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U12 R&B hosts Roslyn, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 R&B at Aberdeen (north complex), 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

### Wednesday, June 4:

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, oranges, whole wheat bread.  
Emmanuel Lutheran Sara Circle, 5 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.  
Groton Chamber Board Meeting, Noon, City. Hall  
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.  
Softball Groton hosts Ipswich (U8B at 5:30, U10B at 5:30, U12 at 6:30)

### Thursday, June 5:

Senior Menu: Cheeseburger casserole, carrots, apple sauce, whole wheat bread.  
Emmanuel Lutheran Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.  
Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m. (DH)  
Jr. Legion at Miller 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
Jr. Teeners at Lake Norden, 5 p.m. (DH)  
U10 B&W at Sisseton, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U8 W&R hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m.  
T-Ball practice at 6 p.m.

### Friday, June 6

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

### Saturday, June 7

Day of Play at Groton Baseball Complex  
Amateurs host Northville, 7 p.m.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 5 of 53

Legion hosts W.I.N., 5 p.m.  
Jr. Teeners hosts W.I.N., 1 p.m.  
U12 ALL hosts Britton, 1 p.m. (DH); U10 ALL hosts Webster, 11 a.m. (DH); U8 ALL hosts Britton, 9 a.m. (DH)  
Softball in Groton: U8B vs. Britton, 9 a.m.; U8G vs. Britton, 10 a.m.; U10B vs. U10G DH, 11 a.m.; U12/ U14 Intersquad Scrimmage DH, 1 p.m.

## Sunday, June 8

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 a.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran worship with communion, 9 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.  
Amateurs host Faulkton, 4 p.m.  
Legion at Chamberlain, 1 p.m. (DH)  
U12 ALL at Sisseton Tournament  
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.

## Monday, June 9

Senior Menu: Hamburger gravy over mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, apricots, whole wheat bread.  
Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.  
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.  
Jr. Legion at Sisseton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
Jr. Teeners at Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U12 B&W at Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 W&R hosts Columbia, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U8 R&B hosts Columbia, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
T-Ball G at Warner, 6 p.m., B at Warner, 7 p.m.

## Tuesday, June 10

Senior Menu: New England ham dinner, green beans, baked apples, whole wheat bread.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Council 6 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
U12 R&B at Roslyn, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

## Wednesday, June 11

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, baked beans coleslaw, fruit.  
U10 R&B hosts Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U8 B&W hosts Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
Softball: U8G at Redfield, 5:30 p.m.; U10G at Redfield, 5:30 p.m.; U10B at Frankfort, 6 p.m. (DH)  
T-Ball: Black at Andover, 6 p.m.

## Thursday June 12

Senior Menu: Beef noodle stroganoff, Normandy blend, mixed fruit, whole wheat bread.  
Groton Lions Club Meeting, 104 N Main, 6 p.m.  
U12 R&B hosts Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U10 B&W at Webster, 6 p.m. (DH); U8 W&R at Webster, 6 p.m. (DH)  
Softball: U8 at Mellette, 6 p.m. (DH)  
T-Ball: Gold practice, 6 p.m.

## Friday, June 13

Senior Menu: Chicken salad sandwich, tomato juice, cauliflower/pea/carrot salad, Mandarin orange salad.  
SDSU Golf Tourney at Olive Grove  
Legion hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
Jr. Teeners at Clark, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
T-Ball Black practice, 6 p.m.

## Saturday, June 14

FLAG DAY  
Jr. Legion at Platte (vs. Platte, 10 a.m.; vs. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, noon)

## Sunday, June 15

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 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.  
Emmanuel Lutheran worship 9 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.  
Legion hosts Redfield, 5:30 p.m.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 6 of 53



Photo and info from Taryn Thompson's Facebook Page.

## Thompson sets World Record at National Championship

Taryn Thompson of Groton set a world record at the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association National Championship held in Lincoln, Neb. Taryn with her horse, Smarty, ended up becoming the AAA Eliminator National Champion, earning a world record, and placing 3rd in main match for L5's. The previous world record was set in 2012. The new record is 11.863 on Course 5, the "fast five." Taryn also competed in the championship with her other horse, Gunnar.

## JAMES VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS 68<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, May 29th  
Groton Area High School Arena  
5:30pm Registration & Meal  
6:30pm Meeting

- Membership Gift
- Serving Ken's Famous Fried Chicken, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Corn, & Dessert
- Many Door Prizes, including a \$500 JVT Credit

*Our Groton office will close at 4pm.*



**JVT** 

## Groton Legion Post 39 Defeat Lake Norden/Badger Legion On Multiple Hit Performance By Brevin Fliehs

By GameChanger Media

Brevin Fliehs collected four hits in five at bats, as Groton Legion Post 39 defeated Lake Norden/Badger Legion 13-1 on Tuesday at Groton. Fliehs doubled in the sixth inning, singled in the second inning, singled in the sixth inning, and singled in the first inning.

Groton Legion Post 39 scored eight runs in the sixth inning on the way to victory. Fliehs doubled, scoring one run, Carter Simon singled, scoring one run, Korbin Kucker grounded out, scoring one run, Nick Morris grounded out, scoring one run, Teylor Diegel singled, scoring one run, Fliehs singled, scoring one run, and Simon drew a walk, scoring one run.

Lake Norden/Badger Legion were the first to get on the board in the first when Caleb Drenth singled, scoring one run.

In the bottom of the second inning, Groton Legion Post 39 went back into the lead after Diegel singled to the left side of the infield, Braxton Imrie singled, Fliehs singled up the middle, and Simon grounded into a fielder's choice, each scoring one run.

Gavin Englund earned the win for Groton Legion Post 39. The pitcher gave up three hits and one run over five and one-third innings, striking out five and walking six. Drenth took the loss for Lake Norden/Badger Legion. The righty went four innings, surrendering six runs (four earned) on eight hits, striking out three and walking one. Jarrett Erdmann pitched one and two-thirds innings of shutout ball for Groton Legion Post 39 in relief. The pitcher surrendered zero hits, striking out five and walking one.

Groton Legion Post 39 amassed 13 hits in the game. Diegel and Englund each collected multiple hits for Groton Legion Post 39. Fliehs stole two bases. Groton Legion Post 39 stole five bases in the game. Groton Legion Post 39 turned one double play in the game.

Drenth went 2-for-3 at the plate and led the team with one run batted in. Turner Stevenson stole three bases. Lake Norden/Badger Legion had a strong eye at the plate, tallying seven walks for the game.

Next up for Groton Legion Post 39 is a game at Redfield on Friday.

*Copyright © 2025 GameChanger Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Any reuse or republication of this story must include the preceding attribution and is subject to the Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. Terms of Use, License Agreement, and Privacy Policy.*



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 8 of 53

## 2025 Lake Norden/ Badger Legion

2 - 13 Groton Legion Post 39

📍 Home 📅 Tuesday May 27, 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
2025	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3
GRTN	0	4	-1	2	0	8	0	13	13	1

### BATTING

2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion	H	R	B	I	B	S	O
E Schultz #17 (C)	3	0	0	0	1	1	
T Stevens... #6 (CF)	3	1	1	0	1	1	
T Smith #3 (1B)	3	0	0	0	1	2	
C Drenth #34 (P)	3	0	2	1	1	0	
B Stevens... #4 (SS)	4	0	0	0	0	2	
T Steve... #22 (3B)	2	0	0	0	1	1	
J Mahe #25 (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	0	
K Stevens... #2 (2B)	2	0	0	0	1	2	
E Aho #9 (RF)	1	0	0	0	1	1	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	

**2B:** T Stevenson, **TB:** T Stevenson 2, C Drenth 2, **HBP:** J Mahe, E Aho, **SB:** T Stevenson 3, **LOB:** 10

### PITCHING

2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion	IP	R	ER	B	B	S	O	H	R
C Drenth #34	4.0	8	6	4	1	3	0		
T Steve... #22	1.2	3	6	6	3	1	0		
<b>B Stevenson #40.1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>		

**L:** C Drenth, **P-S:** C Drenth 77-46, B Stevenson 22-11, T Stevenson 52-25, **WP:** B Stevenson 2, **HBP:** T Stevenson, **BF:** C Drenth 23, B Stevenson 5, T Stevenson 13

Groton Legion Post 39	B	R	H	B	B	S	O
T Diegel #7 (CF)	5	3	2	2	0	0	
B Imrie #1 (RF)	4	2	1	1	1	2	
B Fliehs #6 (SS)	5	1	4	3	0	0	
C Simon #4 (1B)	4	1	1	2	1	0	
K Kucker #9 (2B)	5	0	0	1	0	3	
G Englund #18 (P)	4	1	2	0	0	1	
N Morris #17 (3B)	3	1	1	1	1	0	
K Fliehs #10 (C)	3	0	1	0	0	0	
J Erdmann #0 (LF)	2	3	1	0	2	0	
CR: L Krause #2	0	2	0	0	0	0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	

**2B:** B Fliehs, G Englund, **TB:** C Simon, T Diegel 2, N Morris, K Fliehs, B Fliehs 5, J Erdmann, G Englund 3, B Imrie, **HBP:** K Fliehs, **SB:** C Simon, B Fliehs 2, L Krause, B Imrie, **LOB:** 9

Groton Legion Post 39	IP	R	ER	B	B	S	O	H	R
G Englu... #18	5.1	3	1	1	6	5	0		
J Erdmann #0	1.2	0	0	0	1	5	0		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>		

**W:** G Englund, **P-S:** J Erdmann 30-17, G Englund 104-56, **HBP:** G Englund 2, **BF:** J Erdmann 6, G Englund 26



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 9 of 53



**Patio seatings complete**  
The patio seating areas under the sun shelters have been completed for Falk and Nelson Fields, just in time for the busy baseball season. The Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation spearheaded the projects. (Photos from Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation Facebook page)



OPENING MAY 2ND  
CLOSING JUNE 2ND

## WEBER LANDSCAPING GREENHOUSE

620 WEST THIRD AVENUE

GROTON

HOURS OF OPERATION

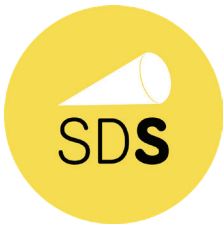
M-F 10-6

---

SAT 10-4

SUN 12-4





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### South Dakota governor's economic advisers bemoan Trump's tariff policy

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MAY 27, 2025 6:21 PM



**A January 2025 view of the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

Members of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors raised alarms during a virtual roundtable Tuesday about volatile Trump administration tariff policies, saying they're driving up costs, stalling housing developments, and threatening key sectors of South Dakota's economy.

"It's a really regressive tax," council member John Hemmingstad, of Avalon Capital Group, said of tariffs.

Hemmingstad said his team has paused multi-family housing investments due to the price uncertainty of building materials. He added that South Dakota, which relies heavily on sales taxes, could be especially vulnerable if higher tariffs cause inflation that dampens consumer spending.

Retailers are also feeling the strain. Kevin Nyberg, owner of Ace Hardware stores in Sioux Falls and Watertown, said suppliers are warning of price increases on up to 50% of inventory. He compared it to the economic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This is the psyche of a retailer right now," Nyberg said. "You scramble before the price increases go into effect."

U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, made a separate visit later Tuesday to Maguire, a water tower manufacturer and maintainer in Sioux Falls.

"When we hear from businesses locally, and we have, we're obviously doing what we can to intervene with the administration," Thune said. "On a broader level, the tariffs are, I think, designed to sort of rebalance trade, create more reciprocity with other countries who, in many cases, have been taking advantage of us."

Last year, before Trump took office, Thune said an across-the-board tariff strategy would be "a recipe for increased inflation."

At the Council of Economic Advisors meeting, South Dakota State University economics professor Evert Van der Sluis called the Trump administration's approach a "deliberate policy to dismantle some of the



pillars of American prosperity," citing cuts to education, immigration and research as compounding the harm. He said economic modeling does not support the idea that tariffs will offset federal revenue losses or reinvigorate U.S. manufacturing.

Van der Sluis and others also expressed concern for South Dakota's export-dependent agricultural sector, which remains vulnerable to international tariff retaliation.

"Agriculture is very much dependent on exports," he said.

During Trump's prior four years in office, the U.S. Department of Agriculture paid out billions of dollars to support farmers suffering from retaliatory tariffs. Thune said discussions are underway among Congress, the USDA and the White House about how to shield farmers from tariff fallout.

"I think you want to try and ensure that nobody gets harmed," Thune said. "And agriculture oftentimes is the place where a lot of countries retaliate first."

Hemmingstad said bailing out ag producers alone would be a tough sell politically.

"This time it's not just ag. Every industry is going to be impacted," he said. "Is ag really going to get one and no one else does?"

While farmers received significant aid during the last tariff standoff, Van der Sluis noted, "those bailouts, they come from federal revenue," and so "it adds to the fiscal irresponsibility."

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

## Board plans hearing on removal of student growth goals from SD teacher evaluation requirements

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 27, 2025 3:20 PM



**South Dakota Department of Education Secretary Joseph Graves speaks to the state House Education Committee on Jan. 17, 2024.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

The South Dakota Education Department hopes to once again ask lawmakers to remove a specific student learning requirement from the state's teacher evaluation rules.

The legislative committee responsible for reviewing administrative rule changes rejected a similar attempt last year. The revision would remove a requirement that teacher performance evaluations include "student learning objectives," which are student educational growth goals. The objectives are set by the teacher and school administration.

Department Secretary Joe Graves told the state Board of Education Standards at its Tuesday meeting that lawmakers rejected last year's proposal because "they didn't believe it was right to remove a portion of the overall evaluation that specifically addressed student growth."

The evaluation as a whole still focuses on student growth, Graves added, and student growth is monitored outside of teacher evaluations, such



as in standardized testing. The specific student growth piece of the evaluation has become “increasingly trite and meaningless,” Graves said.

“If I’m going to put a student learning objective in my evaluation, then I better find one that I’m pretty sure I can meet,” Graves said, adding that the standards weren’t “having the desired impact.”

The board voted to move ahead with a public hearing at its next meeting on July 7. Board President Steve Perkins, of Sioux Falls, was the sole vote against it, saying he’d like “to see another option presented” to the board and more time to study the issue.

If passed onto the legislative Interim Rules Review Committee and approved, school districts would still be able to implement student learning objectives in teacher evaluations if they want. It just won’t be a state requirement.

Tea Area School District Superintendent Jennifer Lowrey, who will serve the Harrisburg School District starting in July, told the board that setting and tracking student learning objectives was “time consuming” and “very rigorous” for teachers in her district.

When first implemented over a decade ago, teachers feared they’d lose their jobs if students didn’t meet their growth needs, Lowery said. Many factors influencing a child’s ability to learn are outside a teacher’s control, she added.

Board member Phyllis Heineman said however the board moves forward, evaluations should retain “a strong student growth component.”

“I think we just need to be convinced,” Heineman said, “and help legislators be convinced that it’s still within that teacher evaluation – that there is some way that we’re connecting it to student growth.”

*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.*

## Two local court advocacy programs for children are revived with legislative funding

**Many more volunteers are needed to help hundreds of kids statewide, nonprofit leaders say**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 27, 2025 8:00 AM**

Three years after lawmakers put \$1 million toward advocacy efforts for children in the court system statewide, two revived nonprofits are starting to support children again.

Volunteers with local Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) programs advocate for children who’ve been removed from their families and placed in state care due to suspected abuse and neglect. The volunteers meet with the children and other contacts, such as teachers, therapists and caseworkers. They also write reports to judges about the children’s needs, strengths and interests.

“This process is crucial as it gives the child a voice in the legal proceedings concerning their welfare,” said CASA state director Sara Kelly in an emailed statement.

Over 330 CASA volunteers worked with 658 children in 37 counties last year, according to the state Unified Judicial System. Most of the state’s 1,049 active cases involving CASA last year — with or without a volunteer — were in the Sioux Falls and Rapid City areas.

This is the first time in 16 years that the state has operated CASA organizations in all of its circuit courts. The Sixth Circuit, in central South Dakota, and the Fifth Circuit, representing northeastern South Dakota, closed in 2009.

Gloria Hutson, in Aberdeen, was hired to lead the reestablished Fifth Circuit CASA in November last year. She told the state CASA Commission at its Wednesday meeting that three counties within her 10-county

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 14 of 53

jurisdiction have a high case volume: Brown, Walworth and Spink counties.

"The focus these last six months has been on building a solid, sustainable structure while building deep community roots," Hutson said.

Walworth County has a "disproportionate" number of cases for its population, and many involve the Indian Child Welfare Act, Hutson said. The federal Indian Child Welfare Act sets minimum standards for efforts to reunite tribal children in the state's custody with their families. Walworth county is adjacent to the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations.

As of the end of April, Walworth County had 25 pending cases involving 52 children. Brown County had 32 cases involving 58 children and Spink County had three cases involving three children.

Fifty-seven cases were active in the Fifth Circuit last year, and none of the children had CASA representation, according to UJS. Through April this year, the circuit had 61 pending cases involving 117 children, Hutson said.

Most of those children still do not have CASA volunteers advocating for them. Fifth Circuit CASA has eight volunteers so far, two of whom are advocating for three children. All the children are younger than 2 years old.

Laurie Gill, a former state Department of Social Services secretary who now works with Maxwell Strategy Group, leads CASA for the Sixth Circuit. Gill's firm was hired to lead the nonprofit, and Gill said the contract was renewed recently by the nonprofit's board of directors.

Sixth Circuit CASA, which represents 14 counties in central South Dakota, including Hughes County and the state capital city of Pierre, intends to train 10 volunteers this year. The first will be sworn in and assigned cases by June, Gill said.

Thirty-nine cases were active in the Sixth Circuit last year. There were 45 pending cases involving 94 children at the end of April, Gill said. Most are in the Pierre/Fort Pierre area.

The 2022 funding from the Legislature was a result of lawmakers learning about the holes in South Dakota's CASA coverage, after loosening a requirement to appoint advocates for abused and neglected children in the court system. Lawmakers on the state budget committee approved funding to help restart the two shuttered programs and help existing CASA programs expand.

The Fifth and Sixth Circuit organizations have each received \$120,000 so far.

Another \$143,715 was awarded to most other CASA programs.

The need for volunteers remains one of the biggest challenges for CASA nonprofits across the state, leaders told the commission. Since last year's report, the number of volunteers has dropped from 330 statewide to 318.

National CASA guidelines require one staff member to supervise a maximum of 30 volunteers. Each volunteer is assigned one case at a time, typically staying with a case until it's resolved.

The Sioux Falls CASA reports 333 children currently on the waiting list to be represented by a volunteer.



**An equal justice statue stands outside the doors of the Minnehaha County Courthouse in Sioux Falls.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

The Seventh Circuit CASA in Rapid City reports 455 children on its waiting list.

The 2022 Legislature appropriated \$1 million to the Unified Judicial System to award South Dakota CASA nonprofits with grants to rebuild or expand. About \$384,000 – less than 40% of the funds – have been spent so far:

\$120,000 to the Fifth Circuit CASA in Aberdeen

\$120,000 to the Sixth Circuit CASA in Pierre

\$58,400 to the Southeast CASA in Yankton

\$40,835 to the First Circuit CASA in Mitchell

\$25,000 to the East Central CASA in Brookings

\$15,000 to the Sioux Falls Area CASA

\$2,000 to the Seventh Circuit CASA in Rapid City

\$2,480.47 in miscellaneous expenses

*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.*

## RFK Jr. ends COVID vaccine recommendation for healthy children, pregnant people

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 27, 2025 5:10 PM



**Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. testifies during his Senate Finance Committee confirmation hearing at the Dirksen Senate Office Building on Jan. 29, 2025 in Washington, D.C..** (Photo by Win McNamee/

Getty Images)

WASHINGTON — U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. changed the federal government's recommendation for the coronavirus vaccine on Tuesday, saying healthy children and healthy pregnant people no longer need to get it.

Kennedy, a longtime vaccine skeptic who had to broker several deals with Republican senators to secure confirmation, didn't explain why he was making the change in a brief video.

"I couldn't be more pleased to announce that as of today the COVID vaccine for healthy children and healthy pregnant women has been removed from the CDC recommended immunization schedule," Kennedy said. "Last year the Biden administration urged healthy children to get yet another COVID shot despite the lack of any clinical data to support the repeat booster strategy in children."

National Institutes of Health Director Jay Bhattacharya and Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Martin A. Makary both spoke briefly during the social media video to say they supported the decision. But neither pointed to new studies regarding COVID-19 boosters or any evidence of safety issues.

"It's common sense and it's good science," Bhattacharya said.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 16 of 53

Kennedy made several promises to Louisiana Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy — chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee — in order to secure Cassidy's vote so that Kennedy could be confirmed as HHS secretary.

Among those was that Kennedy would "maintain the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory committee on immunization practices recommendations without changes."

Cassidy's office did not respond to a request for comment.

'Extremely disappointed'

Public health organizations raised concerns about the change in policy.

Dr. Steven J. Fleischman, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said the organization was "concerned about and extremely disappointed by the announcement that HHS will no longer recommend COVID vaccination during pregnancy."

"As ob-gyns who treat patients every day, we have seen firsthand how dangerous COVID infection can be during pregnancy and for newborns who depend on maternal antibodies from the vaccine for protection," Fleischman wrote. "We also understand that despite the change in recommendations from HHS, the science has not changed."

"It is very clear that COVID infection during pregnancy can be catastrophic and lead to major disability, and it can cause devastating consequences for families. The COVID vaccine is safe during pregnancy, and vaccination can protect our patients and their infants."

Dr. Sean O'Leary, chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases, wrote in a statement HHS' "decision bypasses a long-established, evidence-based process used to ensure vaccine safety and ignores the expertise of independent medical experts, including members of CDC committees who are examining the evidence regarding the vaccine to make recommendations for the fall."

"By removing the recommendation, the decision could strip families of choice," O'Leary wrote. "Those who want to vaccinate may no longer be able to, as the implications for insurance coverage remain unclear. It's also unclear whether health care workers would be eligible to be vaccinated."

"What is clear is that pregnant women, infants and young children are at higher risk of hospitalization from COVID, and the safety of the COVID vaccine has been widely demonstrated."

## Former surgeon general under Trump critical

Dr. Jerome Adams, the surgeon general during Trump's first administration, wrote in a detailed social media post that Kennedy's announcement "raises significant concerns, as it overlooks both available evidence, and the complexities of public health."

"Shifting from vaccine mandates to outright prohibitions does not reflect medical freedom; it represents a different form of government intervention, one that restricts individual choice and access to evidence-based care," Adams wrote. "A balanced approach would prioritize informed decision-making, ensuring that vaccines remain available to those who need them while respecting personal autonomy."

"Hoping as this policy change is implemented, anyone who is truly high risk can still easily get a vaccine, and that we don't let politics trump science, health, and previous proclamations about 'personal choice.'"

American Public Health Association Executive Director Dr. Georges C Benjamin wrote in a statement that "(v)accines offer the best protection from severe symptoms and death associated with the COVID-19 virus for all populations."

"This decision by Secretary Kennedy puts kids, pregnant moms and their babies at risk of unnecessary suffering that is preventable. Lots of questions remain as to how HHS leadership plans to implement this poorly thought out announcement that is not supported by the scientific evidence and our national experience."

An HHS press secretary wrote in an email to States Newsroom that "as part of the Trump administration's commitment to common sense, the COVID-19 vaccine will be removed from the CDC's recommended immunization schedule."



"With the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, it is time to move forward," the spokesperson wrote. "HHS and the CDC remain committed to gold standard science and to ensuring the health and well-being of all Americans—especially our nation's children—using common sense."

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.

## NPR sues over Trump order cutting off its funding, citing First Amendment

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 27, 2025 10:55 AM

WASHINGTON — A collection of National Public Radio stations sued the Trump administration on Tuesday, seeking to block an executive order that would cut off their federal funding.

The 43-page filing says the order that President Donald Trump signed earlier this month "violates the expressed will of Congress and the First Amendment's bedrock guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association, and also threatens the existence of a public radio system that millions of Americans across the country rely on for vital news and information."

The executive order called on the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which receives its funding from Congress, to cease sending money to the Public Broadcasting Service and NPR.

The order stated that government funding for public media "is not only outdated and unnecessary but corrosive to the appearance of journalistic independence."

The Trump administration also appeared to take issue with the types of news stories that PBS and NPR report, arguing "that neither entity presents a fair, accurate, or unbiased portrayal of current events to taxpaying citizens."



**The National Public Radio headquarters in Washington, D.C., is pictured on Tuesday, May 27, 2025.** (Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

### 'Viewpoint-based discrimination'

The lawsuit says the executive order has an "overt retaliatory purpose" and "is unlawful in multiple ways."

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 18 of 53

"The Order is textbook retaliation and viewpoint-based discrimination in violation of the First Amendment, and it interferes with NPR's and the Local Member Stations' freedom of expressive association and editorial discretion," the lawsuit states. "Lastly, by seeking to deny NPR critical funding with no notice or meaningful process, the Order violates the Constitution's Due Process Clause."

The lawsuit was filed by NPR along with three Colorado stations — Aspen Public Radio, Colorado Public Radio and KSUT Public Radio — in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The case has been assigned to Judge Randolph D. Moss, who was nominated by then-President Barack Obama.

White House principal deputy press secretary Harrison Fields wrote in a statement that the "Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is creating media to support a particular political party on the taxpayers' dime."

"Therefore, the President is exercising his lawful authority to limit funding to NPR and PBS. The President was elected with a mandate to ensure efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and he will continue to use his lawful authority to achieve that objective."

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is funded by Congress and in turn provides grants to more than 1,500 public radio and television stations throughout the United States, was established as a private "nonprofit corporation" and is not "an agency or establishment of the United States Government," according to the lawsuit.

## Power of the purse

Congress has consistently approved funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting on a bipartisan basis, including its current \$535 million appropriation.

The lawsuit contends that the "loss of all direct funding from CPB and the loss (or significant decline) of revenue from local stations would be catastrophic for NPR."

It also states the president "has no authority under the Constitution to" interfere in funding decisions made by lawmakers."

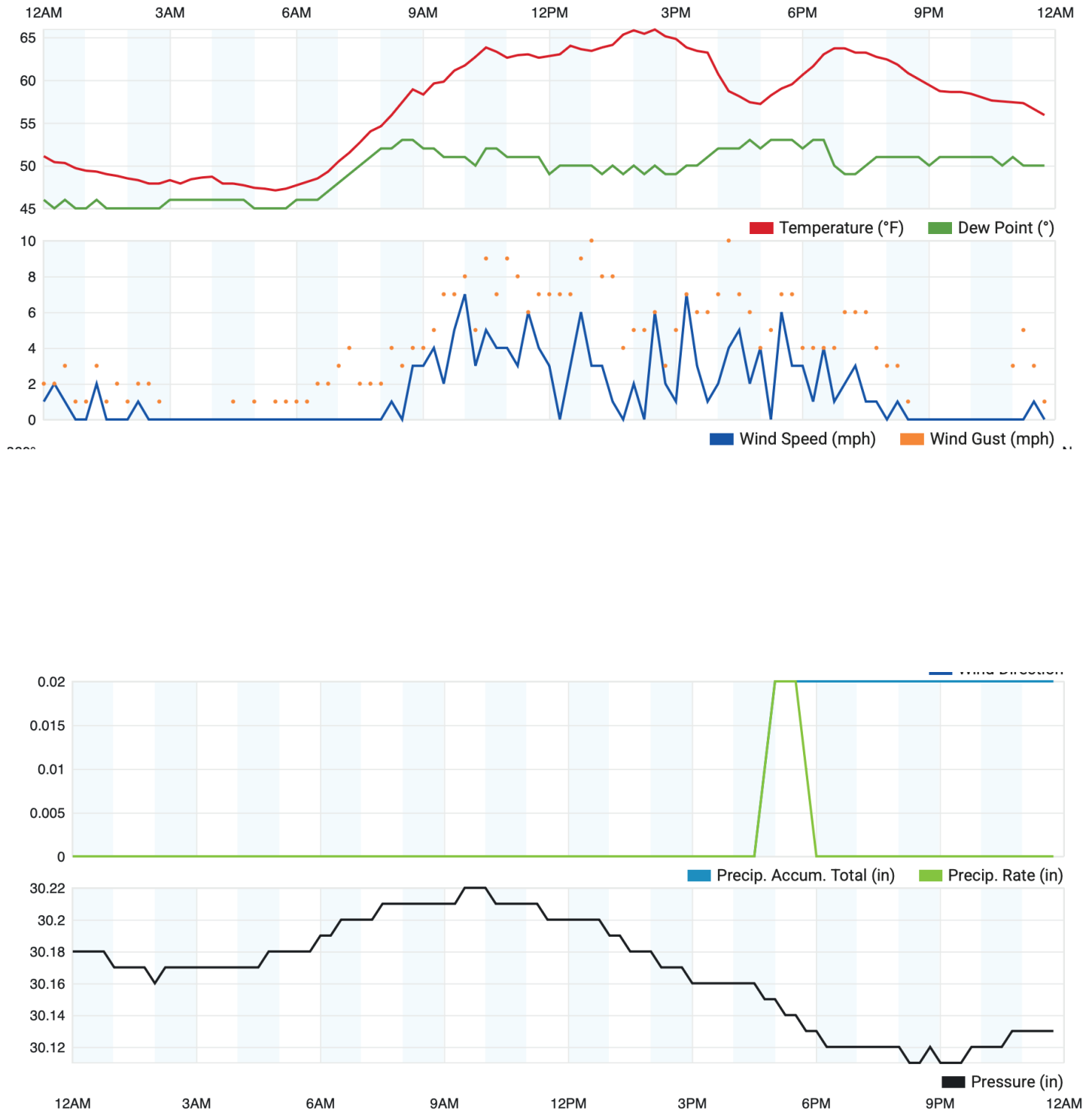
"On the contrary, the power of the purse is reserved to Congress, and the President has no inherent authority to override Congress's will on domestic spending decisions," the lawsuits says. "By unilaterally imposing restrictions and conditions on funds in contravention of Congress, the Order violates the Separation of Powers and the Spending Clause of the Constitution."

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 19 of 53

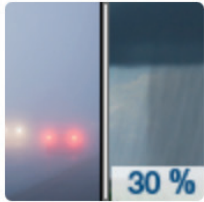
## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 20 of 53

Today



**High: 68 °F**

Patchy Fog  
then Chance  
Showers

Tonight



**Low: 44 °F**

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



**High: 75 °F**

Sunny

Thursday  
Night



**Low: 48 °F**

Mostly Clear

Friday



**High: 82 °F**

Sunny

Today



20-50%  
**Highs: 63-69°**  
**Lows: 47-47°**

Wednesday



20-40%  
**Highs: 64-71°**  
**Lows: 44-50°**

Thursday



**Highs: 71-77°**  
**Lows: 46-53°**



**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Scattered showers with a few afternoon thunderstorms will be possible today as an upper level disturbance rotates around the region. High temperatures will fall just shy of normal this afternoon with readings in the 60s to near 70 degrees. More scattered showers and storms will be possible again during daytime heating on Wednesday. Temperatures will remain in the 60s to around 70. More sunshine and drier conditions will be possible Thursday with warmer temperatures.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 21 of 53

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 66 °F at 2:18 PM**

**Low Temp: 47 °F at 5:26 AM**

**Wind: 13 mph at 4:03 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 24 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 102 in 1934

Record Low: 30 in 1965

Average High: 75

Average Low: 49

Average Precip in May.: 2.98

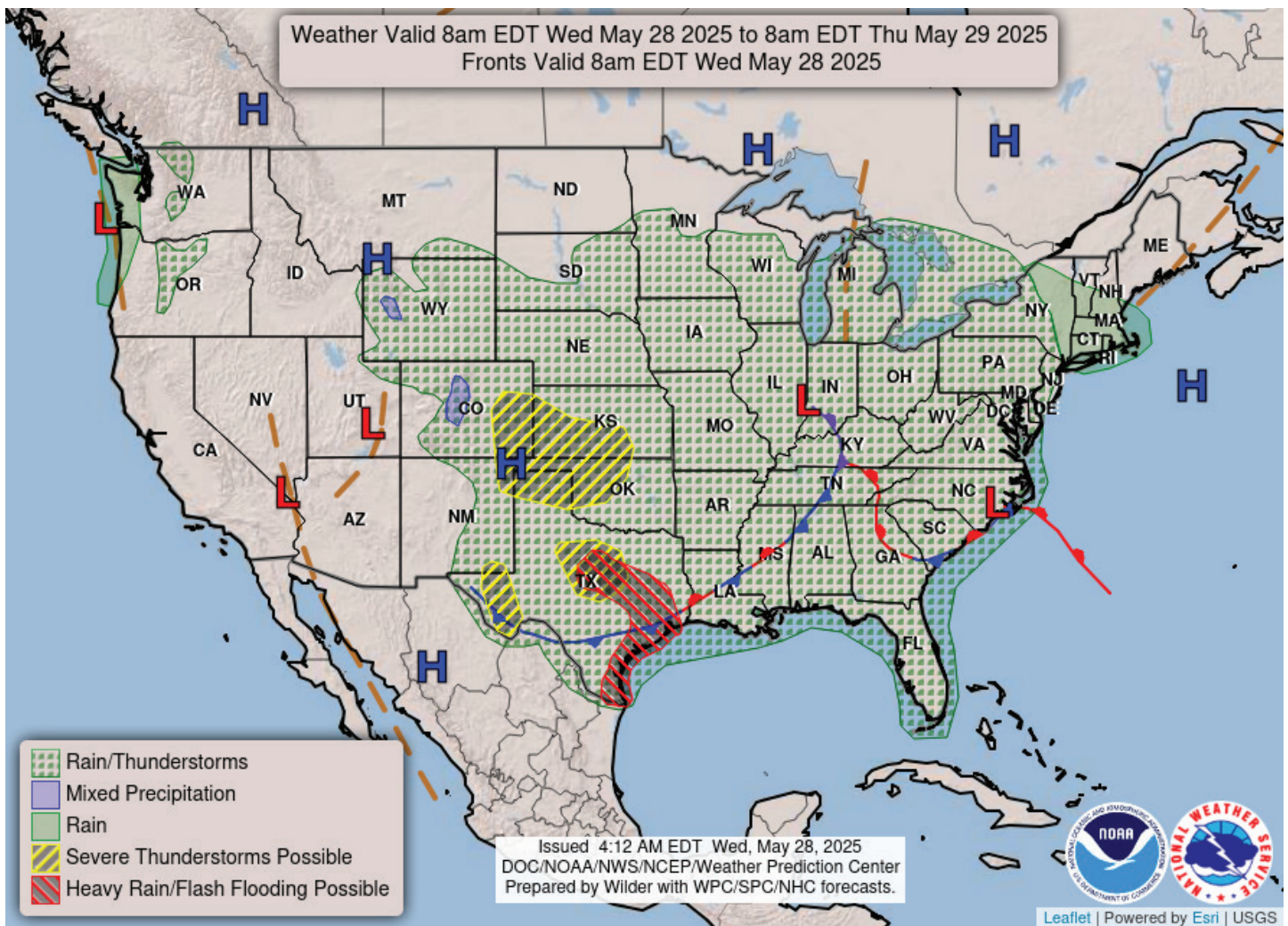
Precip to date in May.: 3.35

Average Precip to date: 6.95

Precip Year to Date: 5.98

Sunset Tonight: 9:11:57 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46:54 am



# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 22 of 53**

## **Today in Weather History**

May 28th, 1934: Watertown recorded a high temperature of 102 degrees, the earliest yearly date when it reached 100 degrees.

May 28th, 1965: Low temperatures were mainly in the mid-to upper-20s across a broad area. The low temperatures set back some crops and caused light damage to others. Some low temperatures around the area include 26 degrees in Andover, 27 in Ipswich, 28 in Britton, Leola, and McLaughlin, and 29 in Clear Lake, Eureka, Gettysburg, and Pierre.

1877 - A "terrific" two day long sandstorm (sand) blasted Yuma, AZ. (28th-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1942 - The latest snowstorm of record for the state of Iowa left ten inches at LeMars, eight inches at Cherokee, and 7.5 inches at Waukon. Afternoon highs were in the lower 30s in parts of northwestern Iowa. (The Weather Channel)

1947 - A storm produced heavy snow across Wisconsin, with ten inches reported at Gay Mills. The snow damaged fruit and other trees, and downed power lines. The storm was followed by the coldest weather of the month for much of the High Plains Region and Missouri Valley. Williston ND reported a low of 21 degrees the morning of the 28th, and the next morning Cheyenne WY reported a morning low of 16 above zero. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced torrential rains in Oklahoma and northern Texas. Lake Altus, OK, was deluged with nine inches of rain. Up to eight inches drenched northern Texas, and baseball size hail was reported north of Seminole and at Knickerbocker. Ten to 13 inch rains soaked central Oklahoma the last five days of May resulting in an estimated 65 million dollars damage, and forcing several thousand persons to evacuate their homes, many by boat or helicopter. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A sharp cold front began to usher cold, wet and windy weather into the western U.S. Thunderstorms in the Great Plains Region produced wind gusts to 80 mph near Brookings, SD. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather continued in Florida. Five cities reported record high temperatures for the date. The record high of 98 degrees at Lakeland, FL, was their fifth in a row. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Florida late in the day, with golf ball size hail reported at Kissimmee. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Two to five inches of rain over southeastern Ohio on the 28th and 29th capped an exceptionally wet month of May, and triggered widespread flooding. Flooding which resulted claimed three lives, and caused millions of dollars damage. Numerous roads in southeast Ohio were flooded and impassable, and many other roads were blocked by landslides. (Storm Data)

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 23 of 53



It's not an everyday thought. Nor do we look at the beauty that surrounds us, the miracles that invade our lives, the unexpected meeting of our needs out of nowhere, or waking up to see the dawn of a new day. Somehow, we rarely see, or acknowledge, or are even aware of the wisdom of God at work in our lives and our world.

"I was appointed from eternity...from the very beginning before the world began, when there were no oceans, no springs with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills, before He made the earth or its fields, or any of the dust of the world...before the heavens were set in place or He marked the horizons of the moon or established the clouds, or fixed the borders of the oceans and the foundation of the earth, I was the craftsman at His side!"

What a description of the wisdom of God in creation! Before anything was, there was wisdom - God's wisdom - present and at work, forming and fashioning, settling and securing everything. Land before water, skies before birds, heavens before the clouds - and on and on. First, His presence, then His plan and now His purpose. Things did not just "happen." God's wisdom was at work, is at work, and will be at work throughout eternity.

After looking at "wisdom at work," Solomon says in simple, easy to understand words, "Now then, my sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep My ways." In other words, now that You see My wisdom, understand My wisdom, accept My wisdom and apply My wisdom to your lives.

In the end: "Whoever finds Me finds life and finds favor from the Lord." What a Creator!

Prayer: It's almost impossible, Father, to comprehend the fact that Your wisdom is available to us if we seek it. Unsettle our hearts until You control them! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "Now then, my sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep My ways." - Proverbs 8:32

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



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 24 of 53

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

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

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

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

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

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

City \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

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

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

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

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

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

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

City \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Password \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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





## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.27.25

6 28 34 48 62 9

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$189,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 27 Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.26.25

2 13 25 37 42 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$36,880,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.27.25

10 12 18 43 46 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 57 Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.24.25

1 2 6 28 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 57 Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.26.25

7 13 27 29 67 8

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 26 Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.26.25

13 47 52 64 67 25

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$189,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 26 Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 26 of 53

## Upcoming Groton Events

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

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

### **One killed, 48 wounded when forces fired on crowd overrunning aid site, Gaza officials say**

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — At least one Palestinian was killed and 48 others wounded when forces opened fire on a crowd overrunning a new aid distribution site in the Gaza Strip set up by an Israeli and U.S.-backed foundation, Gaza's Health Ministry said Wednesday.

Crowds of Palestinians broke through the fences around the distribution site on Tuesday, and an Associated Press journalist heard Israeli tank and gun fire, and saw a military helicopter firing flares.

It was not yet known whether the death and injuries were caused by Israeli forces, private contractors or others. The foundation said its military contractors had not fired on the crowd but "fell back" before resuming aid operations. Israel said its troops nearby had fired warning shots.

Ajith Sunghay, head of the U.N. Human Rights Office for the Palestinian territories, had earlier told reporters in Geneva that 47 people were wounded, mostly by gunfire.

In a separate development, Israel carried out airstrikes Wednesday on the international airport in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, destroying the last plane belonging to the country's flagship carrier. The strikes came after Iran-backed Houthi rebels fired several missiles at Israel in recent days, without causing casualties.

The Israeli military said it destroyed aircraft used by the rebels. It was not immediately clear if anyone was killed or wounded in the strikes.

#### **Chaos at new aid hub**

The distribution hub outside Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah was opened the day before by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which has been slated by Israel to take over aid operations.

The U.N. and other humanitarian organizations have rejected the new system, saying it won't be able to meet the needs of Gaza's 2.3 million people and allows Israel to use food as a weapon to control the population. They have also warned of the risk of friction between Israeli troops and people seeking supplies.

Palestinians have become desperate for food after nearly three months of Israeli border closures pushed Gaza to the brink of famine.

Israel says it helped establish the new aid mechanism to prevent Hamas from siphoning off supplies, but it has provided no evidence of systematic diversion and U.N. agencies say they have mechanisms in place to prevent it.

GHF says it has established four hubs, two of which have begun operating. They are guarded by private security contractors and have chain-link fences channeling Palestinians into a what resemble military bases surrounded by large sand berms.

Israeli forces are stationed nearby in what Israel refers to as the Morag corridor, a military zone separating the southern city of Rafah — which is now mostly uninhabited — from the rest of the territory.

The U.N. and other humanitarian groups have refused to participate in GHF's system, saying it violates humanitarian principles. They say it can be used by Israel to forcibly displace the population by requiring them to move near the few distribution hubs or else face starvation, a violation of international law.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that "there was some loss of control momentarily" at the distribution point, adding that "happily, we brought it under control."

He repeated that Israel plans to move Gaza's entire population to a "sterile zone" at the southern end of the territory while troops fight Hamas elsewhere.

Throughout the war, the U.N. and other aid groups have conducted a massive operation distributing food, medicine and other supplies to wherever Palestinians are located. Israel says GHF will replace that network, but the past week has allowed a trickle of aid to enter Gaza for the U.N. to distribute.

Israel says it destroyed the Houthis' last plane

The Israeli strikes on the main airport in Yemen destroyed the last plane belonging to the country's flag-



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 28 of 53

ship carrier Yemenia, according to the airport.

Yemenia had a total of four aircraft registered, according to the plane tracking website FlightRadar24. Israel destroyed three of the planes in a May 6 airstrike on the airport, which also riddled the runway with craters.

Footage released by the airport on Wednesday showed a smoking Yemenia plane shorn in half with debris cluttering the runway.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said the strikes on Wednesday destroyed the last plane used by the Houthis.

The Houthis have targeted Israel throughout the war in Gaza in solidarity with Palestinians, raising their profile at home and internationally as the last member of Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" capable of launching regular attacks on Israel.

The Houthi missiles have mostly been intercepted, although some have penetrated Israel's missile defense systems, causing casualties and damage. Israel has frequently struck back against the rebels in Yemen, especially around the vital Hodeida port.

Netanyahu said that Israel would continue to strike as long as the Houthis continued launching missiles towards Israel. "Whoever doesn't understand it by force — will understand it by more force," he said.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Hamas still holds 58 hostages, around a third of them believed to be alive. Most of the rest were released in ceasefire deals or other agreements. Israeli forces have rescued eight and recovered dozens of bodies.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed over 54,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It says women and children make up most of the dead but does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its tally.

## Zelenskyy visits Berlin as he seeks more support for Ukraine in the war against Russia

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will meet with new German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Berlin on Wednesday as Ukraine seeks further military support amid a recent escalation in Russia's bombing campaign, despite U.S.-led efforts to end the war.

Germany has been the second-biggest supplier of military aid to Ukraine after the United States. Merz has plunged into diplomatic efforts to try to secure a ceasefire and keep Western support for Ukraine intact since becoming Germany's leader three weeks ago. European leaders have accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of dragging his feet in U.S.-led peace talks.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul was set to meet in Washington with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday.

Zelenskyy said Tuesday that Ukraine is ready to hold peace talks at the highest level, including a trilateral meeting with himself, Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump.

"We are ready to meet at the level of leaders. Both the American side knows this, and the Russian side knows this," he said. Zelenskyy said he would accept any configuration of talks, whether that includes one trilateral meeting or separate meetings with Trump.

Merz said on Monday that Germany and other major allies are no longer imposing any range restrictions on weapons supplied to Ukraine as it fights to repel Russia's full-scale invasion, which began in February 2022.

Merz's government hasn't said whether it will supply its Taurus long-range cruise missiles to Ukraine, something his predecessor, Olaf Scholz, refused to do and which Merz advocated for as opposition leader. The government has said it would no longer provide full details of the weapons it's supplying to Ukraine, unlike Scholz's administration, citing the need for "strategic ambiguity."

Taurus missiles have a range of up to 500 kilometers (310 miles). The German- and Swedish-made mis-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 29 of 53

siles, which are equipped with stealth technology, would be able to reach targets deep in Russia from Ukrainian soil, including the Black Sea. Ukraine wants the missiles to complement the long-range Storm Shadow missiles sent by Britain and France's nearly identical Scalp cruise missiles.

Zelenskyy said that he plans to discuss the supply and use of long-range weapons in his talks with Merz. The Ukrainian leader said Tuesday that he hasn't received any indications from Germany that their policy of limiting the use of Western weapons against Russian targets has changed.

Ukraine needs \$30 billion in additional financing to help it compete with Russia in the production of drones and missiles, Zelenskyy said. Russia is aiming to produce 300-350 drones per day, he said.

Meanwhile, fighting has continued along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, and both sides have conducted deep strikes. Russia launched its biggest drone attack of the war against Ukraine on Sunday.

Russian air defenses downed 296 Ukrainian drones over 13 Russian regions late Tuesday and early Wednesday, Russia's Defense Ministry said, in what appeared to be one of the biggest Ukrainian drone assaults of the war.

Ukraine is increasing its domestic production of drones and missiles, according to Zelenskyy. He said late Tuesday that Ukraine wants European countries to help it invest in the manufacturing of attack drones, air defense interceptors, cruise missiles and ballistic systems.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said that air defenses shot down Ukrainian 33 drones heading toward the capital.

Andrei Vorobyov, the governor of the Moscow region, said that 42 drones were downed. He said that drone fragments damaged three residential buildings in the village of Troitskoye, but no one was hurt.

Moscow airports delayed or diverted hundreds of flights.

Overnight, Russian forces launched an attack on Ukraine using five Iskander ballistic missiles, one guided air-launched missile and 88 drones, Ukraine's Air Force said Wednesday. Air defense units shot down 34 drones, and 37 drones were jammed.

Ukraine's railway infrastructure and equipment in the Kharkiv, Donetsk and Sumy regions also came under fire overnight and Wednesday morning, Ukraine's state railway company Ukrzaliznytsia said. No casualties were reported.

In Kharkiv region, railway traffic was temporarily suspended so that police and emergency workers could clear debris from a downed drone that landed on the tracks. In Sloviansk in the Donetsk region, the attack shattered windows at the station building, and drone debris slightly damaged a train car.

## World shares are mixed after a Japanese government bond auction falls flat

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

World shares are mixed after a closely watched auction of 40-year Japanese government bonds fell flat as worries mount over growing levels of debt.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX gained 0.2% to 24,283.71, while the CAC 40 in Paris was up 0.3% at 7,847.20. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 0.2% to 8,794.80.

The future for the S&P 500 slipped 0.1% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.2%.

In Asian trading, Japan's Nikkei 225 index was nearly unchanged at 37,722.40.

Government debt and bonds have become an increasingly important issue for markets in wealthy countries in recent weeks as yields have climbed around the world.

Wednesday's auction of about 500 billion yen (about \$3.5 billion) drew a bid-to-cover ratio of just 2.21, the lowest level since July 2024. The ratio of the amount of bonds offered versus the amount of bids received is seen as a measure of demand. When demand is slack, bond prices fall and yields rise.

After years of pumping money into the economy through hefty bond purchases, Japan's central bank has been gradually cutting back, undermining demand at a time when other institutional investors also have been buying fewer JGBs.

A recent auction of 20-year JGBs also found relatively few buyers. But analysts said worries eased a bit

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 30 of 53**

after Japan's Finance Ministry recently sent a questionnaire to bond investors that they took as a signal of efforts to calm the market by suggesting it might issue less debt.

When yields softened earlier in the week in Japan, the bond market rallied, Thomas Matthews of Capital Economics said in a report. The "somewhat soft 40-year JGB auction seems to have contributed to a slight souring of the global mood," he said.

The dollar fell to 144.16 Japanese yen from 144.36 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1322 from \$1.1329.

Elsewhere in the region, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index lost 0.5% to 23,258.31, while the Shanghai Composite index ended flat at 3,393.93.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.1% higher to 8,396.90. The S&P/NZX 50 in New Zealand fell 1.8% after the central bank cut its benchmark interest rate by 0.25 percentage points, as expected, to 3.25%.

In South Korea, the Kospi jumped 1.3% to 2,670.15, helped by a global rally in technology shares. Samsung Electronics' shares climbed 3.7% while SK Hynix was up 2.7%.

In Taiwan, the TaieX added 0.1%. India's Sensex slipped 0.1%.

Oil prices rose after the U.S. authorization to Chevron to export crude from Venezuela expired Tuesday. The Trump Administration has been trying to wind down U.S. reliance on Venezuelan energy.

U.S. benchmark crude oil gained 45 cents to \$61.35 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, was up 42 cents at \$63.99 per barrel.

On Tuesday, Wall Street resumed its roller coaster ride created by U.S. President Donald Trump's trade policies after he delayed his threatened 50% tariff on imports from the European Union. U.S. markets were closed for Memorial Day on Monday, and the S&P 500 leaped 2.1% in its first trading since Trump's announcement.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 1.8% and the Nasdaq composite gained 2.5%.

Nvidia rallied 3.2% and was the strongest single force driving the S&P 500 higher ahead of its profit report coming on Wednesday. It's the last to report this quarter among the "Magnificent Seven" Big Tech companies.

Talks with the EU have raised hopes the United States can reach a deal with one of its largest trading partners, helping to keep global commerce moving and avoiding a possible recession. Trump declared a similar pause on his stiff tariffs for products coming from China earlier this month, which launched an even bigger rally on Wall Street at the time.

Surveys have shown U.S. consumers are concerned over the economy's prospects and where inflation may be heading because of tariffs.

However, a report Tuesday by the Conference Board said confidence among U.S. consumers has improved more in May than economists expected.

Treasury yields eased to take some of the pressure off the stock market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.47% early Wednesday from 4.51% late Friday. It had risen last week, in part because of worries about the U.S. government's rapidly increasing debt.

## **Israeli troops fire warning shots as Palestinians overwhelm new Gaza food center**

By MOHAMMED JAHJOUH and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

MUWASI, Gaza Strip (AP) — Chaos erupted on the second day of aid operations by a new U.S.-backed group in Gaza as desperate Palestinians overwhelmed a center distributing food on Tuesday, breaking through fences. Nearby Israeli troops fired warning shots, sending people fleeing in panic.

An AP journalist heard Israeli tank and gunfire and saw a military helicopter firing flares. The Israeli military said its troops fired the warning shots in the area outside the center and that "control over the situation was established."

At least three injured Palestinians were seen by The Associated Press being brought from the scene, one of them bleeding from his leg.

The distribution hub outside Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah had been opened the day before by the



# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 31 of 53**

Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which has been slated by Israel to take over aid operations. The U.N. and other humanitarian organizations have rejected the new system, saying it won't be able to meet the needs of Gaza's 2.3 million people and allows Israel to use food as a weapon to control the population. They have also warned of the risk of friction between Israeli troops and people seeking supplies.

Palestinians have become desperate for food after nearly three months of Israeli blockade pushed Gaza to the brink of famine.

Palestinians walk miles for food, finding chaos

Palestinians at the scene told AP that small numbers of people made their way to the GHF center Tuesday morning and received food boxes. As word spread, large numbers of men, women and children walked for several miles from the sprawling tent camps along Gaza's Mediterranean coast. To reach the hub, they had to pass through nearby Israeli military positions.

By the afternoon, hundreds of thousands were massed at the hub. Videos show the crowds funneled in long lines through chain-link fence passages. Two people said each person was searched and had their faces scanned for identification before being allowed to receive the boxes. Crowds swelled and turmoil erupted, with people tearing down fences and grabbing boxes. The staff at the site were forced to flee, they said.

The AP journalist positioned some distance away heard gunfire and rounds of tank fire. Smoke could be seen rising from where one round impacted. He saw a military helicopter overhead firing flares.

"There was no order, the people rushed to take, there was shooting, and we fled," said Hosni Abu Amra, who had been waiting to receive aid. "We fled without taking anything that would help us get through this hunger."

"It was chaos," said Ahmed Abu Taha, who said he heard gunfire and saw Israeli military aircraft overhead. "People were panicked."

Crowds were seen running from the site. A few managed to secure aid boxes — containing basic items like sugar, flour, pasta and tahini — but the vast majority left empty-handed.

US-backed group says they 'fell back' to ensure safety

In a statement, GHF said that because of the large number of Palestinians seeking aid, staff at the hub followed the group's safety protocols and "fell back" to allow them to dissipate, then later resumed operations.

A spokesperson for the group told the AP that no shots were fired from GHF. Speaking on condition of anonymity in line with the group's rules, the spokesperson said the protocols aim at "avoiding loss of life, which is exactly what happened."

GHF uses armed private contractors to guard the hubs and the transportation of supplies. The hub is also close to Israeli military positions in the Morag Corridor, a band of territory across the breadth of Gaza that divides Rafah from the rest of the territory.

GHF has set up four hubs around Gaza to distribute food, two of which began operating on Monday — both of them in the Rafah area.

The U.N. and other humanitarian groups have refused to participate in GHF's system, saying it violates humanitarian principles. They say it can be used by Israel to forcibly displace the population by requiring them to move near the few distribution hubs or else face starvation — a violation of international law. They have also opposed the use of facial recognition to vet recipients.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday commented on the turmoil at the Rafah center, saying, "There was some loss of control momentarily ... happily we brought it under control."

He repeated that Israel plans to move Gaza's entire population to a "sterile zone" at the southern end of the territory while troops fight Hamas elsewhere.

UN says it has been struggling to transport aid

Israel has said the new system is necessary because it claims Hamas has been siphoning off supplies that reach Gaza. The U.N. has denied that any significant diversion takes place.

Throughout the war, the U.N. and other aid groups have conducted a massive operation distributing

food, medicine and other supplies to wherever Palestinians are located. Israel says GHF will replace that network, but the past week has allowed a trickle of aid to enter Gaza for the U.N. to distribute.

COGAT, the Israeli military agency in charge of coordinating aid, said on Tuesday that 400 trucks of supplies, mainly food, was waiting on the Gaza side of the main crossing from Israel, but that the U.N. had not collected them. It said Israel has extended the times for collection and expanded the routes that the U.N. can use inside Gaza.

Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the U.N. humanitarian office OCHA, told reporters in Geneva that agencies have struggled to pick up the supplies "because of the insecure routes that are being assigned to us by the Israeli authorities to use." He said the amount of aid allowed the past week was "vastly insufficient."

## Trump administration moves to cut \$100 million in federal contracts for Harvard

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, COLLIN BINKLEY and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration asked federal agencies Tuesday to cancel contracts with Harvard University worth about \$100 million, intensifying the president's clash with the nation's oldest and wealthiest university.

The government already has canceled more than \$2.6 billion in federal research grants for the Ivy League school, which has pushed back on the administration's demands for changes to several of its policies.

A letter sent Tuesday from the General Services Administration, which oversees contracting and real estate for the federal government, directed agencies to review contracts with the university and seek alternate arrangements.

The New York Times first reported on the letter.

President Donald Trump has railed against Harvard, calling it a hotbed of liberalism and antisemitism. The school filed a lawsuit April 21 over the administration's calls for changes to the university's leadership, governance and admissions policies. Since then, the administration has slashed the school's federal funding, moved to cut off enrollment of international students and threatened its tax-exempt status.

Contracts include scientific research, executive training

The administration has identified about 30 contracts across nine agencies to be reviewed for cancellation, according to an administration official who was not authorized to speak publicly and provided details on the condition of anonymity.

The contracts total roughly \$100 million, according to a senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal deliberations. The contracts include executive training for Department of Homeland Security officials, research on health outcomes related to energy drinks and a contract for graduate student research services.

Agencies with contracts that are deemed critical are being directed not to halt them immediately, but to devise a plan to transition to a vendor other than Harvard.

The letter applies only to federal contracts with Harvard and not its remaining research grants.

Trump threatens to give Harvard's funding to trade schools

Trump laid into Harvard on social media over the weekend, threatening to cut an additional \$3 billion in federal grants and give it to trade schools across the United States. He did not explain which grants he was referring to or how they could be reallocated.

The president also accused Harvard of refusing to release the names of its foreign students. In a new line of attack, he argued that students' home countries pay nothing toward their education and that some of the countries are "not at all friendly to the United States."

International students are not eligible for federal financial aid, but Harvard offers its own aid to foreign and domestic students alike.

"We are still waiting for the Foreign Student Lists from Harvard so that we can determine, after a ridiculous expenditure of BILLIONS OF DOLLARS, how many radicalized lunatics, troublemakers all, should not be let back into our Country," Trump said on social media.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 33 of 53

It was not clear exactly what the president was referring to. The federal government already has access to visa information and other records on foreign students at Harvard and other universities.

The Department of Homeland Security has demanded that Harvard turn over a trove of files related to its foreign students, including disciplinary records and records related to "dangerous or violent activity."

Harvard says it complied, but the agency said its response fell short and moved to revoke the university's ability to enroll foreign students. A federal judge in Boston temporarily blocked the move after Harvard sued.

Harvard rallies against Trump administration

Trump administration officials have said some of Harvard's international students are promoting anti-semitism on campus. But the ban on international students has "nothing to do with combating antisemitism," said Jacob Miller, a former president of Harvard Hillel, who is graduating this week with math and economics concentrations.

"Antisemitism is a real problem. It's a problem at Harvard. It's a problem in our country," Miller said Tuesday at a rally outside Harvard Yard. "These policies will do nothing to combat this age-old hatred. Instead, they are designed to divide us. ... The Jewish community rejects this administration's narrative. We will not allow our identities to be invoked to destroy Harvard."

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. He said Harvard would not budge on its "its core, legally-protected principles" over fears of retaliation.

Harvard's international students await further court rulings to find out whether they can enroll in summer or fall classes. Some say they're discussing backup plans.

The government's ban would not apply to students graduating this week, such as Jemma Liu, a Chinese student who studied landscape architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

"I hope the situation will resolve," she said Tuesday. "We'll have to see what happens next. But I do feel a privilege that I can actually graduate tomorrow."

"What the international students are caught in right now is just a limbo," said Leo Gerdén, a graduating senior from Sweden.

Other nations respond

Japan's government said Tuesday that it's looking for ways to help Harvard's foreign students. Education Minister Toshiko Abe told reporters she planned to ask Japanese universities to compile measures to support international students.

The University of Tokyo, Japan's top school, is considering temporarily accepting some Harvard students hit by the Trump sanctions.

Universities in other countries have made similar moves, including two in Hong Kong that recently extended invitations to Harvard students.

On Harvard's campus, law student Carson Durdell said he was proud of the university for standing up to Trump. He said intellectual independence has historically made the United States strong.

"It's the reason we are like a beacon for the rest of the world," he said. "I think that undermining those things, cutting those things is not only a bad short-term view but a horrendous long-term view."

## US stops scheduling visa interviews for foreign students while it expands social media vetting

By MATTHEW LEE and ANNIE MA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department has halted the scheduling of new visa interviews for foreign students hoping to study in the U.S. while it prepares to expand the screening of their activity on social media, officials said.

A U.S. official said Tuesday the suspension is intended to be temporary and does not apply to applicants who already had scheduled their visa interviews. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss an internal administration document.

A cable signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio and obtained by The Associated Press says the State



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 34 of 53

Department plans to issue guidance on expanded social media vetting.

"Effective immediately, in preparation for an expansion of required social media screening and vetting, consulate sections should not add any additional student or exchange visitor visa appointment capacity" until the guidance is issued, the cable says.

Asked about the suspension at a briefing Tuesday, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said the U.S. uses every available resource to vet people applying for visas.

"We will continue to use every tool we can to assess who it is that's coming here, whether they are students or otherwise," Bruce said.

The move, first reported by Politico, is the latest in the Trump administration's crackdown on international students.

Last week, the Trump administration revoked Harvard University's ability to enroll international students, removing the college from the program that allows schools to sponsor foreign students for visas. That effort was quickly challenged in court and for now is blocked by a federal judge.

This spring the administration also revoked the legal status of thousands of international students already in the country, leading some to leave the U.S. out of fear of deportation. After many students filed successful legal challenges, the administration said it was restoring the students' legal status. But the government also expanded the grounds for terminating international students' legal status going forward.

President Donald Trump's previous administration stepped up scrutiny of all visa applicants, introducing reviews of their social media accounts. The policy remained during President Joe Biden's administration.

An extended pause in scheduling student visas could lead to delays that may disrupt college, boarding-school or exchange students' plans to enroll in summer and fall terms.

A downturn in enrollment of international students could hurt university budgets. To make up for cuts in federal research funding, some colleges shifted to enrolling more international students, who often pay full tuition.

## Trump set to pardon reality TV stars Todd and Julie Chrisley of fraud and tax evasion convictions

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that he's planning to pardon TV stars Todd and Julie Chrisley, famous for "Chrisley Knows Best," a reality show that followed their tight-knit family and extravagant lifestyle that prosecutors said was boosted by bank fraud and hiding earnings from tax authorities.

The Chrisleys were convicted in 2022 of conspiring to defraud banks in the Atlanta area out of more than \$30 million in loans by submitting false documents. They were also found guilty of tax evasion, obscuring their earnings while showcasing a luxurious way of living that authorities said included high-priced cars, designer clothes, real estate and travel.

Prosecutors said the couple walked away from their responsibility for repayment when Todd Chrisley declared bankruptcy and left \$20-plus million in unpaid loans. Julie Chrisley was sentenced to seven years in federal prison, and Todd Chrisley got 12 years behind bars. The couple was also ordered to pay \$17.8 million in restitution.

"Your parents are going to be free and clean and I hope that we can do it by tomorrow," Trump said in a call with their daughter, Savannah Chrisley, according to a video posted online by a White House aide. In a social media post, the aide declared, "Trump Knows Best!"

"They've been given a pretty harsh treatment based on what I'm hearing," the president added a few moments later of the couple.

A White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss decisions that hadn't yet been made public, said the pardons would be forthcoming.

The move continues a pattern of Trump pardoning high-profile friends, supporters, donors and former staffers. On Monday, Trump pardoned Scott Jenkins, a former Virginia sheriff who was sentenced to 10

years in prison after being convicted on fraud and bribery charges. The president posted online that Jenkins and his family "have been dragged through HELL by a Corrupt and Weaponized Biden DOJ."

The president has also moved to pardon Paul Walczak, a Florida health care executive imprisoned on tax charges, whose mother helped expose the contents of a diary kept by Ashley Biden, daughter of former President Joe Biden. And, in April, he pardoned Nevada Republican Michele Fiore, who was awaiting sentencing on federal charges that she used money meant for a statue honoring a slain police officer for personal costs, including plastic surgery.

The Chrisleys' attorney, Alex Little, said the pardon "corrects a deep injustice and restores two devoted parents to their family and community."

"President Trump recognized what we've argued from the beginning: Todd and Julie were targeted because of their conservative values and high profile. Their prosecution was tainted by multiple constitutional violations and political bias," Little said in a statement.

Little's statement added, "Todd and Julie's case is exactly why the pardon power exists. Thanks to President Trump, the Chrisley family can now begin healing and rebuilding their lives."

Before the Chrisleys became reality television stars, they, and a former business partner, submitted false documents to banks in the Atlanta area to obtain fraudulent loans, prosecutors said during their trial. They accused the couple of spending lavishly, then using new fraudulent loans to pay off old ones.

A three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last summer upheld the Chrisleys' convictions but found a legal error in how the trial judge had calculated Julie Chrisley's sentence by holding her accountable for the entire bank fraud scheme. The appellate panel sent her case back to the lower court for resentencing.

Savannah Chrisley spoke at the 2024 Republican National Convention, where she talked about her parents' imprisonment. She said then that they were "persecuted by rogue prosecutors" — echoing Trump's rhetoric about the criminal justice system as he faced investigations and criminal cases of his own.

She said Trump had been targeted for his politics, and said her parents likewise were targeted because of their conservative beliefs and high profile.

"I'll never forget what the prosecutors said in the most heavily Democratic county in the state, before an Obama-appointed judge. He called us the 'Trumps of the South,'" Savannah Chrisley said in her remarks at the convention, adding, "He meant it as an insult but, let me tell you, boy, do I wear it as a badge of honor."

## Trump administration asks Supreme Court to halt judge's order on deportations to South Sudan

By REBECCA SANTANA and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration asked the Supreme Court on Tuesday to halt an order allowing migrants to challenge their deportations to South Sudan, an appeal that came hours after the judge suggested the Trump administration was "manufacturing" chaos and said he hoped that "reason can get the better of rhetoric."

Judge Brian Murphy found the White House violated a court order with a deportation flight bound for the chaotic African nation carrying people from other countries who had been convicted of crimes in the U.S. He said those immigrants must get a real chance to raise any fears that being sent there could put them in danger.

The federal government argued that Murphy has stalled its efforts to carry out deportations of migrants who can't be returned to their home countries. Finding countries willing to take them is a "a delicate diplomatic endeavor" and the court requirements are a major setback, Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote in an emergency appeal asking the court to immediately halt his order.

Murphy, for his part, said he had given the Trump administration "remarkable flexibility with minimal oversight" in the case and emphasized the numerous times he attempted to work with the government,

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 36 of 53**

according to an order published Monday night.

This is the latest case where federal judges weighing in on the legality of the Trump administration's sweeping agenda have used forceful, sometimes even scathing, language to register their displeasure. The Trump administration has accused judges of thwarting the will of voters by stopping or slowing the White House agenda.

The judge said the men couldn't advocate for themselves

In a hearing last week called to address reports that eight immigrants had been sent to South Sudan, Murphy said the men hadn't been able to argue that the deportation could put them in danger.

But instead of ordering the government to return the men to the U.S. for hearings — as the plaintiffs wanted — he gave the government the option of holding the hearings in Djibouti, where the plane had flown on its way to South Sudan, as long as the men remained in U.S. government custody. Days later, the Trump administration filed another motion saying that Murphy was requiring them to hold "dangerous criminals in a sensitive location."

Murphy, though, said it was the government's "own suggestion" that they be allowed to process the men's claims while they were still abroad.

"It turns out that having immigration proceedings on another continent is harder and more logistically cumbersome than Defendants anticipated," the Boston-based Murphy, who was appointed by Democratic President Joe Biden, wrote.

The government has argued that the men had a history with the immigration system, giving them prior opportunities to express a fear of being deported to a country outside their homeland. And they've said that the men's home countries — Cuba, Laos, Mexico, Myanmar, Vietnam and South Sudan — would not take them back.

"The district court's invented process offers little but delay. While certain aliens may benefit from stalling their removal, the nation does not," wrote Sauer. Keeping the migrants in Djibouti has also strained the U.S. relationship with that country, officials have said.

The administration has also repeatedly emphasized the men's criminal histories in the U.S. and portrayed them as national security threats.

The administration is relying on third countries

The Trump administration has increasingly relied on third countries to take immigrants who cannot be sent to their home countries for various reasons. Some countries simply refuse to take back their citizens being deported while others take back some but not all of their citizens. And some cannot be sent to their home countries because of concerns they'll be tortured or harmed.

Historically that has meant that immigration enforcement officials have had to release people into the U.S. that it wants to deport but can't.

But the Trump administration has leaned on other countries to take them. In the Western Hemisphere, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Panama have all agreed to take some people being removed from the U.S., with El Salvador being the most controversial example because it is holding people deported from the U.S. in a notorious prison.

The Trump administration has said it's exploring other third countries for deportations.

Murphy said in his order that the eight men were initially told May 19 they'd be going to South Africa and then later that same day were told they were going to South Sudan. He noted that the U.S. government "has issued stark warnings regarding South Sudan."

He said the men had fewer than 16 hours between being told they were going to be removed and going to the airport, "most of which were non-waking hours," and "limited, if any" ability to talk to family or a lawyer. "From the course of conduct, it is hard to come to any conclusion other than that Defendants invite a lack of clarity as a means of evasion," the judge wrote.

## Driver arrested on suspicion of attempted murder after Liverpool soccer parade tragedy

By KWIYEON HA and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LIVERPOOL, England (AP) — A 53-year-old British man who injured 65 people when his car rammed into a crowd of Liverpool soccer fans celebrating their team's Premier League championship was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, police said Tuesday.

The driver was also being held on suspicion of dangerous driving and driving on drugs, Detective Chief Superintendent Karen Jaundrill said.

The incident late Monday afternoon turned a jubilant parade into a tragedy that sent 50 people to hospitals for treatment of their injuries. Eleven remained hospitalized Tuesday in stable condition.

The wounded included four children, one of whom had been trapped beneath the vehicle with three adults.

Driver dodged road block

Police had closed off much of the area to traffic, but the driver is believed to have maneuvered around a road block by following an ambulance that was rushing to treat a person suspected of having a heart attack, Assistant Chief Constable Jenny Sims said.

Merseyside Police said they were not treating the incident as terrorism and were not looking for other suspects. The force has not identified the arrested driver. Police in Britain usually do not name suspects until they are charged.

Detectives were still working to piece together why the minivan plowed into crowds packing a narrow street just after the players of Liverpool Football Club had celebrated its championship with an open-topped bus parade.

The incident cast a shadow over a city that has suffered twin tragedies linked to the soccer team and led to widespread expressions of shock, sadness and support.

"It is truly devastating to see that what should have been a joyous celebration for many could end in such distressing circumstances," King Charles III said in a statement while on a visit to Canada. "I know that the strength of community spirit for which your city is renowned will be a comfort and support to those in need."

Crime scene scoured for evidence

Water Street, near the River Mersey in the heart of the city, was cordoned off by police tape, and a blue tent had been erected on the road strewn with the detritus of celebration, including bottles, cans and Liverpool flags.

Teams of officers wearing white forensic suits scoured the damp streets for evidence and snapped photos of clothing and other items left behind as people fled the chaotic scene.

Hundreds of thousands of Liverpoolians had crammed the streets of the port city in northwest England on Monday to celebrate the team winning England's Premier League this season for a record-tying 20th top-flight title.

As the parade was wrapping up, a minivan turned down a cordoned-off street just off the parade route and plowed into the sea of fans wrapped in their red Liverpool scarves, jerseys and other memorabilia. A video on social media showed the van strike a man, tossing him in the air, before veering into a larger crowd, where it plowed a path through the group and pushed bodies along the street before coming to a stop.

"It was extremely fast," said Harry Rashid, who was with his wife and two young daughters as the minivan passed by them. "Initially, we just heard the pop, pop, pop of people just being knocked off the bonnet of a car."

Rashid said the crowd charged the halted vehicle and began smashing windows.

"But then he put his foot down again and just plowed through the rest of them, he just kept going," Rashid said. "It was horrible. And you could hear the bumps as he was going over the people."

Suspect partly identified to stop rumor mill



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 38 of 53

Police quickly identified the suspect as a white local man to prevent misinformation from flooding social media, Liverpool City Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram said.

Rotheram said police acted appropriately to tamp down online speculation about the person responsible as false rumors spread rapidly online of there being another incident.

"Social media is a cesspit," he said, referring to the conjecture and misinformation. "It was designed to inflame. It was designed to divide. The message of hate doesn't go down well here."

Last summer, a teen in the nearby town of Southport killed three girls in a stabbing rampage at a dance class and wounded 10 others, including two adults. An incorrect name of the suspect was spread on social media and people said he was an asylum-seeker. In fact, he had been born in the U.K. Rioting spread across England and Northern Ireland, targeting Muslims and refugees in hotels for asylum-seekers, lasting about a week.

Liverpool soccer legacy tainted by tragedy

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was appalled by the tragedy as he hailed the bravery of rescuers and said the country's thoughts were with the city and its people.

"Scenes of joy turned to utter horror and devastation," Starmer said Tuesday. "Liverpool stands together and the whole country stands with Liverpool."

The storied franchise has been associated with two of the biggest tragedies in professional soccer.

Its fans were largely blamed for the 1985 disaster at Heysel stadium in Belgium when 39 people — mostly supporters of Italian team Juventus — died when Liverpool backers surged into the rival's stand.

Four years later, a crush at Hillsborough stadium in Sheffield led to the deaths of 97 Liverpool fans.

## A former aide says Sean 'Diddy' Combs kidnapped her in a plot to kill Kid Cudi

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A former top aide to Sean "Diddy" Combs testified Tuesday that the hip-hop mogul threatened to kill her during her first day on the job and waved a gun as he kidnapped her years later in an angry rush to find and kill rapper Kid Cudi.

Capricorn Clark's account of Combs' volatility and violence launched the third week of testimony at his Manhattan federal sex trafficking trial.

Prosecutors called Clark, the former global brand director for Combs' Bad Boy Entertainment, to support a charge that he led a two-decade racketeering conspiracy that relied on beefy bodyguards, death threats and the silence of frightened staff to ensure he got what he wanted.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to an indictment alleging he abused his longtime girlfriend, R&B singer Cassie, and others. If convicted, he could face 15 years to life in prison.

Clark's tearful testimony came days after Cudi, whose legal name is Scott Mescudi, testified that Clark called him from a car outside his home in December 2011 and told him Combs had forced her to accompany him to Cudi's house.

Combs was angry Cudi was dating Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, Clark said.

Clark, referring to Combs as "Puff," said he came to her home holding a gun and demanded she get dressed because "we're going to kill Cudi."

Her voice shaky, Clark recounted how they rode in a black Cadillac Escalade to Cudi's Los Angeles home, where Combs and his bodyguard entered the residence while Clark sat in the SUV and called Cassie.

Clark testified she told Cassie that Combs "got me with a gun and brought me to Cudi's house to kill him."

Clark said she heard Cudi in the background asking, "He's in my house?" She said she told Cassie, "Stop him, he's going to get himself killed." Cassie told her she couldn't stop Cudi, she recalled.

Combs returned to the Escalade and asked Clark who she was talking to, she said, then grabbed the phone and called Cassie back.

They next heard Cudi driving up the road, Clark said. Combs and his bodyguard got back in the SUV and chased after Cudi, finally giving up when they passed police cars that were heading to Cudi's house.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 39 of 53

After the break-in, Clark said, Combs told her she had to convince Cudi "it wasn't me."

"If you don't convince him of that I'll kill all you," he said, punctuating his threat with an expletive, Clark said.

Clark said she and Cassie then went to Cudi's home, telling jurors: "We needed to talk to him. We needed to make sure he wasn't going to make a police report about Puff."

After that, she said, she watched in shock as Combs viciously assaulted Cassie over her relationship with Cudi.

Combs kicked Cassie with "100% full force" to the legs and back as she curled on the ground outside his home in a fetal position and wept silently, Clark said.

Clark said her "heart was breaking from seeing her get hit like that" and that neither she nor Combs' bodyguard intervened.

The answer prompted an objection from Combs' lawyers, and Judge Arun Subramanian told jurors to disregard it.

Combs' lawyer Marc Agnifilo questioned Clark's recollection, leading her to reconsider certain details. She admitted some haziness about events that happened "such a long time ago."

On Thursday, Cudi testified that he dated Cassie briefly in December 2011, believing she'd broken up with Combs, but they agreed over the holidays to break up.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Mitzi Steiner questioned Clark about her off-and-on employment with Combs from 2004 to 2018, beginning with her first day when she said Combs and a bodyguard took her to Central Park after 9 p.m. and said he hadn't been aware of her past work for other rappers.

Clark testified that Combs told her that if that work became an issue, he'd have to kill her.

Clark said she was only weeks into the job when Combs tasked her with carrying diamond jewelry and it went missing. As a result, she said, she was repeatedly given lie detector tests over five-day stretch by a man who seemed five times larger than her own size.

"He said: 'If you fail this test they're going to throw you in the East River,'" she recalled, adding that they eventually let her return to work.

Even the alleged kidnapping didn't scare Clark away, Agnifilo noted.

Last year, after federal agents raided Combs' homes, she suggested returning to his employment as his chief of staff. Combs rejected the offer, Agnifilo said.

## To win the Scripps National Spelling Bee, contenders must also master geography

By BEN NUCKOLS Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. (AP) — Rudveep Randhawa's three kids competed in eight consecutive Scripps National Spelling Bees from 2016 to 2024, with four appearances by daughter Aisha and two each by daughter Lara and son Avi. Yet when Avi's spelling journey concluded in last year's semifinals, Randhawa, a pediatric endocrinologist who goes by "Dr. Happy," was decidedly grumpy.

His gripe? At unexpected and critical moments, the spelling bee transforms into a geography bee.

Scripps has begun relying on obscure geographical terms to winnow down the field of spellers in the later rounds. While the words are included in the Merriam-Webster Unabridged dictionary, they often don't follow familiar roots or language patterns, denying accomplished spellers of the tools they use to figure out which letters form the sounds of words they've never seen before.

Along with SAT-style, multiple-choice vocabulary questions, geographical terms have altered the way spellers prepare for the bee, which began Tuesday and concludes Thursday at a convention center outside Washington. Mastering them can require an out-of-fashion skill: rote memorization.

"Geographical words can be super hard sometimes because there's no roots to break it down or sometimes you don't get a language of origin. It will say 'unknown origin' or the dictionary doesn't say," said Avinav Prem Anand, a 14-year-old from Columbus, Ohio, who's competing this year for the fourth and final

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 40 of 53

time. "Basically, you have to memorize them because that's the only thing you can do."

Avinav put his preparation to use in Tuesday's preliminary rounds when he breezed through Sapporo, the capital of the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. Others were not so fortunate: 12-year-old Eli Schlosser of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, heard the dreaded bell because he was unfamiliar with Terre Haute, the western Indiana city. He went with "terrahote."

Last year, the Randhawa family of Corona, California, saw its decade-long spelling journey end when Avi misspelled Abitibi, the name of a shallow lake in northeastern Ontario and western Quebec.

"It's beyond the pale of what anybody would consider a reasonable geographical word, a small lake in Canada that not even my Canadian friends had heard of. Not even a top-50 size lake in Canada," Rudveep Randhawa said. "It's just bizarre. In all the years with geographical words, we had seen words of some significance, they may be capitals of smaller countries, or they may be some port city that had significance, things of that nature."

Yet for those who might find geographical terms unfair, Scripps has a message: Study harder.

"Per our contest rules, all words listed in Merriam-Webster Unabridged Online, except those that are labeled 'archaic' or 'obsolete,' are fair," said Molly Becker, the editorial director at Cincinnati-based Scripps and a member of the panel that selects words for the competition.

Scripps considers encouraging intellectual curiosity as part of the bee's mission, and if kids with designs on the trophy have to learn more geography in order to prepare, that's arguably a good thing.

"You never know what word will stand out to a speller and spark a lifelong interest or introduce them to a new concept," Becker said.

Longtime spelling coach Grace Walters, a graduate student in linguistics at the University of Kentucky, cringed at the memory of Abitibi.

"Geo is definitely something that is feared by spellers," Walters said, calling it "a daunting task to study."

"But if geo is unfair because it doesn't have patterns, that would mean other categories like trademarks and personal eponyms and words of unknown origin would also be unfair," she said.

Some spellers embrace the challenge. Faizan Zaki, last year's runner-up who's competing again this year, was thrilled to hear Abitibi and Hoofddorp — a town in the Netherlands — in 2024 because he had seen those words before.

"There's actually a section in Merriam-Webster that is dedicated to just geographical words, so sometimes when I'm tired from studying normal words, I take a break and I browse through that list of geographical words that they have," said Faizan, a 13-year-old from Allen, Texas.

You heard that right: When Faizan gets tired of studying, he "takes a break" by studying more.

"Pretty much, that's my life," he said. "But yeah, it's definitely enjoyable. I don't hate it or anything."

## COVID vaccines are no longer recommended for healthy children and pregnant women, Kennedy says

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on Tuesday announced that COVID-19 vaccines are no longer recommended for healthy children and pregnant women — a move immediately questioned by several public health experts.

In a 58-second video posted on the social media site X, Kennedy said he removed COVID-19 shots from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations for those groups. No one from the CDC was in the video, and CDC officials referred questions about the announcement to Kennedy and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

No other details were released, and HHS officials did not immediately respond to questions about how the decision was made.

Some doctors and public health leaders called the move concerning and confusing.

"There's no new data or information, just them flying by the seat of their pants," said Michael Osterholm,

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 41 of 53**

director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.

U.S. health officials, following recommendations by infectious disease experts, have been urging annual COVID-19 boosters for all Americans ages 6 months and older.

The idea of changing the recommendations is not completely out of the blue. As the COVID-19 pandemic has waned, experts have increasingly discussed the possibility of focusing vaccination efforts on people 65 and older — who are among those most at risk for death and hospitalization.

A CDC advisory panel is set to meet in June to make recommendations about the fall shots. Among its options are suggesting shots for high-risk groups but still giving lower-risk people the choice to get vaccinated.

But Kennedy, a leading anti-vaccine advocate before becoming health secretary, decided not to wait for the scientific panel's review. He said that annual COVID-19 booster shots have been recommended for kids "despite the lack of any clinical data" to support that decision.

Some physicians and public health leaders expressed concern that HHS officials disregarded a scientific review process that has been in place for decades, in which experts — in public meetings — review current medical evidence and hash out the pros and cons of policy changes.

"It's a dangerous precedent. If you can start doing that with this vaccine, you can start doing that with any vaccine you want — including mumps-measles-rubella," said Osterholm, referring to another vaccine that Kennedy has voiced doubts about.

He and others said the announcement raises an array of questions, including whether health insurance companies will keep covering COVID-19 vaccinations and how hard it will be now for people who want the shots to get them.

"The reason we give vaccines to healthy people is to keep them safe," said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

More than 1.2 million people have died in the U.S. from COVID-19, most of them elderly. But children haven't been spared: The coronavirus has been the underlying cause in more than 1,300 childhood deaths since the pandemic began, according to CDC data.

Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. Marty Makary and Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, head of the National Institutes of Health, appeared in the video with Kennedy.

Earlier this year, during the nomination process, Kennedy gave assurances to wavering Republicans that he would not alter the federal vaccine schedule.

But since then, Kennedy and other Trump administration appointees have made big changes to the system for approval and use of vaccines.

They added restrictions to a recent vaccine approval. Last week, the FDA announced routine COVID-19 vaccine approvals will be limited to seniors and younger people with underlying medical risks, pending new research for healthy adults and children.

Among the confusion created by Tuesday's announcement, experts said, was the implication that the coronavirus isn't dangerous to pregnant women.

During the height of the pandemic, deaths of women during pregnancy or shortly after childbirth soared to their highest level in 50 years. Indeed, pregnancy was on the list of health conditions that would qualify someone for a COVID-19 vaccination under FDA's new guidance "framework" announced last week.

Vaccination has been recommended for pregnant women, in part, because it's a way to pass immunity to newborns who are too young for vaccines and are vulnerable to infections.

"To say that they are not at any risk is simply incorrect," said Dr. Sean O'Leary of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Dr. Steven Fleischman, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, said: "The science has not changed. It is very clear that COVID infection during pregnancy can be catastrophic and lead to major disability, and it can cause devastating consequences for families."



## **The US and EU are in a showdown over trade. What does Trump want and what can Europe offer?**

By DAVID McHUGH and PAUL WISEMAN AP Business Writers

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Top officials at the European Union's executive commission says they're pushing hard for a trade deal with the Trump administration to avoid a 50% tariff on imported goods. Trump had threatened to impose the tariffs on June 1, but has pushed back the deadline to July 9, repeating an oft-used tactic in his trade war.

European negotiators are contending with Trump's ever-changing and unpredictable tariff threats, but "still, they have to come up with something to hopefully pacify him," said Bruce Stokes, visiting senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Stokes also sees more at play than just a disagreement over trade deficits. Trump's threats "are rooted in frustration with the EU that has little to do with trade," Stokes said. "He doesn't like the EU. He doesn't like Germany."

What exactly does Trump want? What can Europe offer? Here are the key areas where the two side are squaring off.

Buy our stuff

Over and over, Trump has bemoaned the fact that Europe sells more things to Americans than it buys from Americans. The difference, or the trade deficit in goods, last year was 157 billion euros (\$178 billion). But Europe says that when it comes to services — particularly digital services like online advertising and cloud computing — the U.S. sells more than it buys and that lowers the overall trade deficit to 48 billion euros, which is only about 3% of total trade. The European Commission says that means trade is "balanced."

One way to shift the trade in goods would be for Europe to buy more liquefied natural gas by ship from the U.S. To do so, the EU could cut off the remaining imports of Russian pipeline gas and LNG. The commission is preparing legislation to force an end to those purchases -- last year, some 19% of imports — by the end of 2027.

That would push European private companies to look for other sources of gas such as the U.S. However the shift away from Russia is already in motion and that "has obviously not been enough to satisfy," said Laurent Ruseckas, a natural gas markets expert at S&P Global Commodities Insights Research.

The commission doesn't buy gas itself but can use "moral suasion" to convince companies to turn to U.S. suppliers in coming years but "this is no silver bullet and nothing that can yield immediate results," said Simone Tagliapietra, an energy analyst at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels.

Europe could buy more from U.S. defense contractors as part of its effort to deter further aggression from Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, says Carsten Brzeski, global chief of macro at ING bank. If European countries did increase their overall defense spending — another of Trump's demands — their voters are likely to insist that the purchases go to defense contractors in Europe, not America, said Stokes of the German Marshall Fund. One way around that political obstacle would be for U.S. defense companies to build factories in Europe, but "that would take time," he said.

The EU could also reduce its 10% tax on foreign cars — one of Trump's long-standing grievances against Europe. "The United States is not going to export that many cars to Europe anyway ... The Germans would be most resistant, but I don't think they're terribly worried about competition from America," said Edward Alden, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "That would be a symbolic victory for the president."

A beef over beef

The U.S. has long complained about European regulations on food and agricultural products that keep out hormone-raised beef and chickens washed with chlorine. But experts aren't expecting EU trade negotiators to offer any concessions at the bargaining table.

"The EU is unwilling to capitulate," said Mary Lovely, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "The EU has repeatedly said it will not change its sanitary rules, its rules on (genetically modified) crops, its rules on chlorinated chickens, things that have been longtime irritants for the U.S."

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 43 of 53

Backing down on those issues, she said, would mean that "the U.S. gets to set food safety (standards) for Europe."

## Value-added tax

One of Trump's pet peeves has been the value-added taxes used by European governments, a tax he says is a burden on US companies.

Economists say this kind of tax, used by some 170 countries, is trade-neutral because it applies equally to imports and exports. A value-added tax, or VAT, is paid by the end purchaser at the cash register but differs from sales taxes in that it is calculated at each stage of the production process. In both cases, VAT and sales tax, imports and exports get the same treatment. The U.S. is an outlier in that it doesn't use VAT.

There's little chance countries will change their tax systems for Trump and the EU has ruled it out.

## Negotiating strategy

Trump's approach to negotiations has involved threats of astronomical tariffs - up to 145% in the case of China - before striking a deal for far lower levels. In any case, however, the White House has taken the stance that it won't go below a 10% baseline. The threat of 50% for the EU is so high it means "an effective trade embargo," said Brzeski, since it would impose costs that would make it unprofitable to import goods or mean charging consumers prices so high the goods would be uncompetitive.

Because the knottiest issues dividing the EU and U.S. — food safety standards, the VAT, regulation of tech companies — are so difficult "it is impossible to imagine them being resolved by the deadline," Alden said. "Possibly what you could have — and Trump has shown he is willing to do this — is a very small deal" like the one he announced May 8 with the United Kingdom.

Economists Oliver Rakau and Nicola Nobile of Oxford Economics wrote in a commentary Monday that if imposed, the 50% tariffs would reduce the collective economy of the 20 countries that use the euro currency by up to 1% next year and slash business investment by more than 6%.

The EU has offered the US a "zero for zero" outcome in which tariffs would be removed on both sides industrial goods including autos. Trump has dismissed that but EU officials have said it's still on the table.

Lovely of the Peterson Institute sees the threats and bluster as Trump's way of negotiating. "In the short run, I don't think 50% is going to be our reality."

But she says Trump's strategy adds to the uncertainty around U.S. policy that is paralyzing business. "It suggests that the U.S. is an unreliable trading partner, that it operates on whim and not on rule of law," Lovely said. "Friend or foe, you're not going to be treated well by this administration."

## NPR sues Trump administration over executive order to cut federal funding to public media

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — National Public Radio and three of its local stations sued President Donald Trump on Tuesday, arguing that his executive order cutting funding to the 246-station network violates their free speech and relies on an authority that he does not have.

Earlier this month, Trump instructed the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and federal agencies to cease funding for NPR and PBS, either directly or indirectly. The president and his supporters argue their news reporting promotes liberal bias and shouldn't be supported by taxpayers.

Retaliation is Trump's plain purpose, the lawsuit argues. It was filed in federal court in Washington by NPR and three Colorado entities — Colorado Public Radio, Aspen Public Radio and KUTE, Inc., chosen to show the system's diversity in urban and rural areas.

"By basing its directives on the substance of NPR's programming, the executive order seeks to force NPR to adapt its journalistic standards and editorial choices to the preferences of the government if it is to continue to receive federal funding," Katherine Maher, NPR's CEO, said Tuesday.

## Lawsuit says Trump is targeting a private nonprofit corporation

The lawsuit alleges that Trump is acting to contravene the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private nonprofit corporation set up to distribute federal funding to NPR and PBS, which is intended to insulate

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 44 of 53

the system from political interference. Congress has appropriated \$535 million yearly to CPB for 2025, 2026 and 2027.

In response to the lawsuit, White House deputy press secretary Harrison Fields said that CPB "is creating media to support a particular political party on the taxpayers' dime," so Trump was exercising his authority under the law. "The president was elected with a mandate to ensure efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and he will continue to use his lawful authority to achieve that objective," Fields said.

Trump hasn't hidden his feelings about NPR, calling it a "liberal disinformation machine" in an April social media post.

The court fight seemed preordained, given that the heads of NPR and PBS both reacted to Trump's move earlier this month with statements that they believed it was illegal. The absence of PBS from Tuesday's filing indicates the two systems will challenge this separately; PBS has not yet gone to court, but is likely to soon.

"PBS is considering every option, including taking legal action, to allow our organization to continue to provide essential programming and services to member stations and all Americans," PBS spokesman Jeremy Gaines said Tuesday.

Trump is in other legal disputes with news organizations

The president's attempts to dismantle government-run news sources like Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty have also sparked court fights.

The administration has battled with the press on several fronts. The Federal Communications Commission is investigating ABC, CBS and NBC News. The Associated Press also went to court after the administration restricted access to certain events in response to the organization's decision not to rename the Gulf of Mexico as Trump decreed.

The lawsuit says 11% of Aspen Public Radio's budget is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. It is 6% for the Colorado Public Radio, a network of 19 stations, and 19% of KUTE's budget. That station was founded in 1976 by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

NPR notes that the order attempts to prohibit individual stations in NPR's system from using any federal money to buy NPR programming, like "All Things Considered," the most listened-to afternoon radio news program in the country, its early counterpart "Morning Edition" and cultural programming like the Tiny Desk concerts.

The order "directly interferes with editorial independence by requiring them to seek programming elsewhere," the lawsuit said.

NPR says it also provides infrastructure services to hundreds of public radio stations and without it, their coverage area would shrink. It also provides the backbone for emergency alert systems across the country.

"Public broadcasting is an irreplaceable foundation of American civic life," Maher said. "At its best, it reflects our nation back to itself in all our complexity, contradictions and commonalities and connects our communities across differences and divides."

## At least 5 are dead and 19 injured after a chemical plant explodes in China, authorities say

BEIJING (AP) — A huge explosion rocked a chemical plant in China's eastern Shandong province around noon Tuesday, killing at least five people and injuring 19, according to local emergency management authorities. Another six people were missing.

It was not immediately clear what caused the explosion.

The blast was powerful enough to knock out windows at a warehouse more than two miles (three kilometers) away, according to a video shared by a resident, who declined to give his name out of concern about retaliation.

The resident said his home shook. As he went to the window, he saw a column of smoke from the site more than seven kilometers (4.3 miles) away.

Gaomi Youdao Chemical Co. is located in an industrial park in the city of Weifang. It manufactures pes-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 45 of 53**

ticides as well as chemicals for medical use, and has more than 500 employees, according to corporate registration records.

Local fire officials sent more than 230 personnel to the scene, according to state broadcaster China Central Television.

A student at a school about 1,000 yards away from the plant told state-run news site The Paper that he heard one explosion and saw dirt-yellow smoke, tainted with redness, rising from the plant. He said there was a funny smell, and all students were given a mask and told not to remove it.

A staffer at the local environment bureau told The Paper that a team was dispatched to the scene to monitor potential pollution but had yet to report back.

The blast came less than two weeks after the National Ministry of Emergency Management held a workshop on preventing and controlling risks in the chemical industry, as Beijing urged officials at chemical industrial parks to boost their capabilities in "managing hazardous chemicals."

Last year, the chemical plant was cited for "safety risks" at least twice, but in September it was praised by the Weifang Emergency Management Bureau for relying on party members to effectively manage workplace risks. Specifically, party members at Gaomi Youdao identified more than 800 safety hazards in the first eight months of 2024 and rectified all of them, the bureau said.

Workplace safety has improved over the years in China but remains a stubborn problem. The National Ministry of Emergency Management recorded 21,800 incidents and 19,600 deaths in 2024.

A warehouse complex storing large amounts of hazardous chemicals caught fire and exploded in Tianjin in 2015, leaving 173 dead or missing.

In 2019, 78 people were killed in a blast at a chemical plant in Yancheng in China's eastern coastal province of Jiangsu.

## **US consumer confidence rebounds after five straight months of declines amid tariff anxiety**

By MATT OTT AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans' views of the economy improved in May after five straight months of declines sent consumer confidence to its lowest level since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, largely driven by anxiety over the impact of President Donald Trump's tariffs.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose 12.3 points in May to 98, up from April's 85.7, its lowest reading since May 2020.

A measure of Americans' short-term expectations for their income, business conditions and the job market jumped 17.4 points to 72.8, but remained below 80, which can signal a recession ahead.

The proportion of consumers surveyed saying they think a U.S. recession is coming in the next 12 months also declined from April.

Trump's aggressive and unpredictable policies — including massive import taxes — have clouded the outlook for the economy and the job market, raising fears that the American economy is headed toward a recession.

However, Trump's tariff pullbacks, pauses and negotiations with some trading partners may have calmed nerves for the time being.

"The rebound was already visible before the May 12 US-China trade deal but gained momentum afterwards," said Stephanie Guichard, senior economist at The Conference Board.

Trump had initially imposed a stunning 145% tariff on most goods from China, but agreed to a 90-day pause for negotiations. The U.S. also came to an agreement with the U.K. earlier in May.

Over the Memorial Day holiday weekend, Trump and European Union leaders announced that the president's 50% tariff on imports from the E.U., which he announced Friday, are on hold until July 9. That announcement would not have impacted the Board's survey, which closed on May 19.

The Conference Board said the rebound in confidence this month was broad-based across all ages and income groups.



Consumers' assessments of the present economic situation also improved, with the exception of their view on job availability, which weakened for the fifth straight month despite another strong U.S. jobs report.

However, less than 25% of respondents said they were worried about losing their jobs, compared with the 50% of respondents who said they were concerned about not being able to buy the things they need or want.

The Labor Department earlier this month reported that U.S. employers added a surprising 177,000 jobs in April and the unemployment rate remained at a low 4.2%.

Write-in responses to the survey showed that tariffs are still consumers' biggest concern. Inflation is also still weighing on their minds, though some noted that inflation seemed to be easing, along with gas prices.

Earlier in May, the Commerce Department reported that consumer prices rose just 2.3% in March from a year earlier, down from 2.7% in February. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 2.6% compared with a year ago, below February's 3%. Economists track core prices because they typically provide a better read on where inflation is headed.

Gas prices have hovered around \$3.17 per gallon this month, down from \$3.59 a year ago, but up a few pennies from April.

The slowdown in inflation could be a temporary respite until the widespread duties imposed by Trump begin to push up prices in many categories. Most economists expect inflation to start ticking up in the coming months.

Robert Frick, an economist with Navy Federal Credit Union, said that while the tariff rollbacks may have boosted Americans' confidence this month, that optimism may be fleeting.

"When prices start rising from existing tariffs in a month or two, it will be a sobering reminder that a new inflation fight has just begun," Frick said.

The Board's survey Tuesday also showed that Americans' plans to spend on homes, cars and vacations also increased from April, with significant gains coming after the May 12 China tariff pause.

## **As Ukrainian POWs die in Russian prisons, autopsies point to a system of brutality**

By HANNA ARHIROVA, VASILISA STEPANENKO and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — "Everything will be all right."

Ukrainian soldier Serhii Hryhoriev said this so often during brief phone calls from the front that his wife and two daughters took it to heart. His younger daughter, Oksana, tattooed the phrase on her wrist as a talisman.

Even after Hryhoriev was captured by the Russian army in 2022, his anxious family clung to the belief that he would ultimately be OK. After all, Russia is bound by international law to protect prisoners of war.

When Hryhoriev finally came home, though, it was in a body bag.

A Russian death certificate said the 59-year-old died of a stroke. But a Ukrainian autopsy and a former POW who was detained with him tell a different story about how he died — one of violence and medical neglect at the hands of his captors.

Hryhoriev is one of more than 200 Ukrainian POWs who have died while imprisoned since Russia's full-scale invasion three years ago. Abuse inside Russian prisons was likely a contributing factor in many of these deaths, according to officials from human rights groups, the U.N., the Ukrainian government and a Ukrainian medical examiner who has performed dozens of POW autopsies.

The officials say the prison death toll adds to evidence that Russia is systematically brutalizing captured soldiers. They say forensic discrepancies like Hryhoriev's, and the repatriation of bodies that are mutilated and decomposed, point to an effort to cover up alleged torture, starvation and poor health care at dozens of prisons and detention centers across Russia and occupied Ukraine.

Russian authorities did not respond to requests for comment. They have previously accused Ukraine of mistreating Russian POWs — allegations the U.N. has partially backed up, though it says Ukraine's viola-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 47 of 53

tions are far less common and severe than what Russia is accused of.

'Alive and well'

Hryhoriev joined the Ukrainian army in 2019 after he lost his job as an office worker at a high school. When the war began three years later, he was stationed with other soldiers in Mariupol, an industrial port city that was the site of a fierce battle — and far from his home in the central Poltava region.

On April 10, 2022, Hryhoriev called his family to reassure them that "everything will be all right." That was the last time they ever spoke to him.

Two days later, a relative of a soldier in Hryhoriev's unit called to say the men had been captured. After Mariupol fell to Russia, more than 2,000 soldiers defending the city became Russian prisoners.

Soon his family got a call from the International Committee of the Red Cross, which confirmed he was alive and officially registered as a POW, guaranteeing his protection under the Geneva Conventions. "We were told: 'that means everything is fine ... Russia has to return him,'" Hryhoriev's wife, Halyna, recalled.

In August 2022, she received a letter from him, that addressed her by a nickname. "My dear Halochka," he wrote. "I am alive and well. Everything will be all right."

Desperate for more information, his daughter Oksana, 31, scoured Russian social media accounts, where videos of Ukrainian POWs regularly appeared. Eventually, she saw him in one — looking gaunt and missing teeth. His gray hair was cropped very short, framing gentle features now partially covered by a beard.

In the video, likely shot under duress, Hryhoriev said to the camera: "I'm alive and well."

"But if you looked at him, you could see that wasn't true," Oksana said.

The truth was dismal, said Oleksii Honcharov, a 48-year-old Ukrainian POW who was detained with him.

Honcharov lived in the same prison barracks as Hryhoriev starting in the fall of 2022. Over a period of months, he witnessed Hryhoriev absorb the same severe punishment as every other POW at the Kamensk-Shakhtinsky Correctional Colony in southwest Russia.

"Everyone got hit -- no exceptions," said Honcharov, who was repatriated to Ukraine in February as part of a prisoner swap. "Some more, some less, but we all took it."

Honcharov endured months of chest pain while in captivity. Even then, the beatings never stopped, he said, and sometimes they began after his pleas for medical care, which were ignored.

"Toward the end, I could barely walk," said Honcharov, who was diagnosed with tuberculosis once back in Ukraine — an increasingly common ailment among returning POWs.

A 2024 U.N. report found that 95% of released Ukrainian POWs had endured "systematic" torture. Prisoners described beatings, electric shocks, suffocation, sexual violence, prolonged stress positions, mock executions, and sleep deprivation.

"This conduct could not be more unlawful," said Danielle Bell, the U.N.'s top human rights monitor in Ukraine.

The report also said some Russian POWs were mistreated by Ukrainian forces during their initial capture -- including beatings, threats and electric shocks. But the abuse stopped once Russian POWs were moved to official Ukrainian detention centers, the report said.

Hryhoriev was physically strong and often outlasted younger prisoners during forced exercises, Honcharov recalled. But over time, he began showing signs of physical decline: dizziness, fatigue and, eventually, an inability to walk without help.

Yet despite his worsening condition, prison officials provided only minimal health care, Honcharov said.

Piecing together how POWs died

In a bright, sterile room with the sour-sweet smell of human decomposition, Inna Padei performs autopsies on Ukrainian soldiers repatriated by Russia, as well as civilians exhumed from mass graves. Hundreds of bodies zipped up in black plastic bags have been delivered in refrigerated trucks to the morgue where she works in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine.

Those who died in battle are still wearing military fatigues and often have obvious external wounds. The bodies of former POWs are dressed in prison uniforms and are often mutilated and decomposed.

It is the job of Padei and other forensic experts to piece together how soldiers like Hryhoriev died.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 48 of 53**

These reports are often the only reliable information the soldiers' families get — and they will be used by Ukraine, along with testimony from former POWs, to bring war crimes charges against Russia at the International Criminal Court.

The body of a former POW recently examined by Padei had an almond-sized fracture on the right side of its skull. That suggested the soldier was struck by a blunt object — a blow potentially strong enough to have killed him instantly, or shortly after, she said.

"These injuries may not always be the direct cause of death," Padei said, "but they clearly indicate the use of force and torture against the servicemen."

Earlier this year, Amnesty International documented widespread torture of Ukrainian POWs in Russia. Its report was especially critical of Russia's secrecy regarding the whereabouts and condition of POWs, saying it refused to grant rights groups or health workers access to its prisons, leaving families in the dark for months or years about their loved ones.

Of the more than 5,000 POWs Russia has repatriated to Ukraine, at least 206 died in captivity, including more than 50 when an explosion ripped through a Russian-controlled prison barracks, according to the Ukrainian government. An additional 245 Ukrainian POWs were killed by Russian soldiers on the battlefield, according to Ukrainian prosecutors.

The toll of dead POWs is expected to rise as more bodies are returned and identified, but forensic experts face significant challenges in determining causes of death.

In some cases, internal organs are missing. Other times, it appears as if bruises or injuries have been hidden or removed.

Ukrainian officials believe the mutilation of bodies is an effort by Russia to conceal the true causes of death. Extreme decomposition is another obstacle, officials say.

"They hold the bodies until they reach a state where nothing can be determined," said Petro Yatsenko, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian government agency in charge of POW affairs.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said the prompt exchange of POWs must be part of any ceasefire agreement, along with the return of thousands of Ukrainian civilians, including children forcibly deported to Russia. A major prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine took place over the weekend.

The Associated Press interviewed relatives of 21 Ukrainian POWs who died in captivity. Autopsies performed in Ukraine found that five of these POWs died of heart failure, including soldiers who were 22, 39 and 43. Four others died from tuberculosis or pneumonia, and three others perished, respectively, from an infection, asphyxia and a blunt force head wound.

Padei said cases like these — and others she has seen — are red flags, suggesting that physical abuse and untreated injuries and illness likely contributed to many soldiers' deaths.

"Under normal or humane conditions, these would not have been fatal," Padei said.

In one autopsy report, coroners said an individual had been electrocuted and beaten just days before dying of heart failure and extreme emaciation. Other autopsies noted that bodies showed signs of gangrene or untreated infections.

"Everything the returned prisoners describe ... we see the same on the bodies," Padei said.

'Angel in the sky'

Months into Hryhoriev's detention at the Kamensk-Shakhtinsky prison — and after his daughter saw him in the Russian army's social media video — his health deteriorated significantly, according to Honcharov.

But instead of being sent to a hospital, Hryhoriev was moved to a tiny cell that was isolated from other prisoners. Another Ukrainian captive, a paramedic, was assigned to stay with him.

"It was damp, cold, with no lighting at all," recalled Honcharov.

He died in that cell about a month later, Honcharov said. It was May 20, 2023, according to his Russian death certificate.

The Hryhoriev family didn't learn he had died until more than six months later, when a former POW reached out. Then, in March 2024, police in central Ukraine called: A body had arrived with a Russian death certificate bearing Hryhoriev's name. A DNA test confirmed it was him.

An autopsy performed in Ukraine disputed Russia's claim that Hryhoriev died of a stroke. It said he bled to death after blunt trauma to his abdomen that also damaged his spleen.

Hryhoriev's body was handed over to the family last June, and soon after he was buried in his hometown of Pyriatyn.

To honor him, Hryhoriev's wife and older daughter, Yana, followed Oksana's lead and tattooed their wrists with the optimistic expression he had drilled into them.

"Now we have an angel in the sky watching over us," Halyna said. "We believe everything will be all right."

## **A new cholera outbreak in Sudan has killed over 170 people in a week, officials say**

By FATMA KHALED and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A new cholera outbreak in Sudan has killed 172 people and sickened more than 2,500 over the past week, authorities said Tuesday as a leading medical group warned that the country's existing health facilities were unable to cope with the surge of patients.

The bulk of the cases were reported in the capital, Khartoum, and its twin city of Omdurman, but cholera was also detected in the provinces of North Kordofan, Sennar, Gazira, White Nile and Nile River, health officials said.

According to Joyce Bakker, the Sudan coordinator for Doctors Without Borders — also known as Médecins Sans Frontières or MSF — the alarming spike began in mid-May, with MSF teams treating almost 2,000 suspected cholera cases in the past week alone.

On Saturday, Sudan's Health Minister Haitham Ibrahim said the increase in cholera cases just in the Khartoum region has been estimated to average 600 to 700 per week over the past four weeks.

Bekker said MSF's treatment centers in Omdurman are overwhelmed and that the "scenes are disturbing."

"Many patients are arriving too late to be saved," she said. "We don't know the true scale of the outbreak, and our teams can only see a fraction of the full picture."

She called for a united response, including water, sanitation and hygiene programs and more treatment facilities.

In March, MSF said that 92 people had died of cholera in Sudan's White Nile State, where 2,700 people had contracted the disease since late February.

The World Health Organization said that the water-borne disease is a fast-developing and highly contagious infection that causes diarrhea and leads to severe dehydration and possible death within hours when not treated. The disease is transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food or water.

The outbreak is the latest crisis for Sudan, which was plunged into a war more than two years ago, when tensions between the Sudanese army and its rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces group, or RSF, exploded with street battles in Khartoum that quickly spread across the country.

Since then, at least 20,000 people have been reported killed, though the number is likely far higher, and more than 14 million have been displaced and forced from their homes.

Sudan has also been engulfed by what the United Nations says is the world's largest humanitarian crisis, and disease outbreaks, famine and atrocities have mounted as the African country entered its third year of war.

Last week, the Sudanese military said it had regained control of the Greater Khartoum area from the paramilitary forces.

Ibrahim, the health minister, attributed the cholera surge to the return of many Sudanese to the Khartoum region — people who had fled their homes to escape the fighting and are now coming back. Their returns have strained the city's dwindling water resources, he said.



## Far-right candidate Calin Georgescu, who upended Romanian presidential race, withdraws from politics

BY STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Calin Georgescu, the controversial populist whose bid for Romania's presidency last year resulted in the annulment of an election in the European Union and NATO member country, announced he is stepping away from political life.

Georgescu upended Romania's political landscape last November when he ran as an independent and unexpectedly surged to frontrunner in the first round of the presidential election, going from an obscure candidate to beating the incumbent prime minister.

"I choose to be a passive observer of public and social life," the 63-year-old said in a video posted online late Monday. "I choose to remain outside any political party structure ... I am not affiliated with any political group in any way."

Despite denying any wrongdoing, Georgescu was barred from the tense election rerun held in May, won by pro-EU candidate Nicusor Dan, who was officially sworn in on Monday. Dan, a mathematician and former Bucharest mayor, beat the hard-right nationalist George Simion, who became Georgescu's nominal successor.

Georgescu said he made his decision to take a step back following the conclusion of the presidential race, which for him indicated "the sovereignist movement has come to a close."

"Even though this political chapter has ended, I am convinced that the values and ideals we fought for together remain steadfast," he said. "My dear ones, I have always said that we would make history, not politics."

The outcome of Georgescu's success in last year's chaotic election cycle sent shockwaves through Romania's political establishment. It also left many observers wondering how most local surveys had put him behind at least five other candidates.

Despite what appeared to be a sprawling social media campaign promoting him, Georgescu had declared zero campaign spending. A top Romanian court then made the unprecedented move to annul the election after allegations emerged of electoral violations and Russian interference.

He sparked controversy in the past for describing Romanian fascist and nationalist leaders from the 1930s and 1940s as national heroes. He has also previously praised Russian President Vladimir Putin and has questioned Ukraine's statehood, but says he is not pro-Russian.

In February, prosecutors opened criminal proceedings against Georgescu, accusing him of incitement to undermine the constitutional order, election campaign funding abuses, and founding or supporting fascist, racist, xenophobic, or antisemitic organizations, among other charges.

On Tuesday, Georgescu attended a hearing at a prosecutor's office in Bucharest, which said it's extending the criminal investigation against him due to remarks he made on primetime television earlier in May, which could allegedly be interpreted by the public as supporting ideas linked to fascist legionnaire figures from the 1930s and 1940s.

Once a member of Simion's hard-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, Georgescu left the party in 2022 after a period of infighting. He was accused by colleagues of being pro-Russian and critical of NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance to which Romania belongs.

After Romania's decision to cancel the election last year, Georgescu became a cause célèbre among nationalists, with support coming from figures such as U.S. Vice President JD Vance and tech billionaire Elon Musk — who both criticized Romania for annulling the vote.

Georgescu has argued the election was "canceled illegally and unconstitutionally," and after he was barred from the May rerun, he accused the authorities of "inventing evidence to justify the theft" of the elections.

Earlier this year, thousands of protesters took to the streets of Bucharest in a show of support for Georgescu, who cemented his status as a persecuted anti-system candidate, railing against a corrupt political class.

"I deeply understand what many of you have gone through: you suffered, you were harassed, humili-

ated, wronged, and marginalized,” Georgescu said Monday, adding he might return to politics “if a serious opportunity arises that could bring real benefits to Romania and the Romanian people.”

## Takeaways from AP report on Ukrainian POWs dying in Russian prisons

By HANNA ARHIROVA, VASILISA STEPANENKO and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press  
KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — More than 200 Ukrainian POWs have died in prison since Russia’s full-scale invasion three years ago.

Abuse inside Russian prisons likely contributed to many of these deaths, adding to evidence that Russia is systematically brutalizing captured soldiers, according to officials from human rights groups, the U.N. and the Ukrainian government, and a Ukrainian medical examiner who has performed dozens of POW autopsies.

Ukrainian officials say the frequent repatriation of bodies that are mutilated and decomposed point to an effort by Russia to cover up alleged torture, starvation and poor health care at dozens of prisons and detention centers across Russia and occupied Ukraine.

Ukraine is planning to bring war crimes charges against Russia at the International Criminal Court over its mistreatment of captured soldiers, relying on the testimony of former POWs and evidence collected during autopsies of repatriated bodies.

Russian authorities did not respond to requests for comment. They have previously accused Ukraine of mistreating Russian POWs — allegations the U.N. has partially backed up, though it says Ukraine’s violations are far less common and severe than what Russia is accused of.

Mistreatment of POWs is ‘systematic’

A 2024 U.N. report found that 95% of released Ukrainian POWs had endured “systematic” torture and ill-treatment. Prisoners described beatings, electric shocks, suffocation, sexual violence, prolonged stress positions, mock executions and sleep deprivation.

“This conduct could not be more unlawful,” said Danielle Bell, the U.N.’s top human rights monitor in Ukraine.

Earlier this year, Amnesty International documented widespread torture of Ukrainian POWs in Russia. Its report was especially critical of Russia’s secrecy regarding the whereabouts and condition of POWs, saying it refused to grant rights groups or health workers access to its prisons, leaving families in the dark for months or years about their loved ones.

A major prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine took place over the weekend.

Of the more than 5,000 POWs Russia has repatriated to Ukraine, at least 206 died in captivity, including more than 50 when an explosion ripped through a Russian-controlled prison barracks, according to the Ukrainian government. An additional 245 Ukrainian POWs were killed by Russian soldiers on the battlefield, according to Ukrainian prosecutors.

The toll of dead POWs is expected to rise as more bodies are returned and identified, but forensic experts face significant challenges in determining causes of death.

In some cases, internal organs are missing. Other times, it appears as if bruises or injuries have been hidden or removed.

Piecing together how POWs died

Inna Padei performs autopsies in a bright, sterile room inside a morgue in Kyiv, where the air is thick with the sour-sweet smell of human decomposition.

Since the start of the war, she has examined dozens of repatriated bodies of POWs, which are delivered in refrigerated trucks and arrive zipped up in black plastic bags.

The body of one former POW recently examined by Padei had an almond-sized fracture on the right side of its skull that suggested the soldier was struck by a blunt object — a blow potentially strong enough to have killed him instantly, or shortly after, she said.

“These injuries may not always be the direct cause of death,” Padei said, “but they clearly indicate the

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 52 of 53

use of force and torture against the servicemen.”

The Associated Press interviewed relatives of 21 Ukrainian POWs who died in captivity. Autopsies performed in Ukraine found that five of these POWs died of heart failure, including soldiers who were 22, 39 and 43. Four others died from tuberculosis or pneumonia, and three others perished, respectively, from an infection, asphyxia and a blunt force head wound.

Padei said cases like these — and others she has seen — are red flags, suggesting that physical abuse and untreated injuries and illness likely contributed to many soldiers’ deaths.

“Under normal or humane conditions, these would not have been fatal,” Padei said.

One soldier’s story

Ukrainian soldier Serhii Hryhoriev told his family “everything will be all right” so often during brief phone calls from the front that his wife and two daughters took it to heart. His younger daughter, Oksana, tattooed the phrase on her wrist as a talisman.

Even after Hryhoriev was captured by the Russian army in 2022, his anxious family clung to the belief that he would ultimately be OK. After all, Russia is bound by international law to protect prisoners of war.

When Hryhoriev finally came home, though, it was in a body bag.

A Russian death certificate said the 59-year-old died of a stroke. But a Ukrainian autopsy and a former POW who was detained with him tell a different story about how he died — one of violence and medical neglect at the hands of his captors.

Oleksii Honcharov lived in the same prison barracks as Hryhoriev starting in the fall of 2022. Over a period of months, he witnessed Hryhoriev regularly beaten at the Kamensk-Shakhtinsky Correctional Colony in southwest Russia.

Over time, Hryhoriev began showing signs of physical decline: dizziness, fatigue and, eventually, an inability to walk without help.

But instead of being sent to a hospital, Hryhoriev was moved to a tiny cell that was isolated from other prisoners. “It was damp, cold, with no lighting at all,” recalled Honcharov, who was repatriated to Ukraine in February as part of a prisoner swap.

About a month later, on May 20, 2023, Hryhoriev died in that cell, Honcharov said.

An autopsy performed in Ukraine said he bled to death after blunt trauma to his abdomen that also damaged his spleen.

To honor him, Hryhoriev’s wife and older daughter, Yana, followed Oksana’s lead and tattooed their wrists with the optimistic expression he had drilled into them.

“Now we have an angel in the sky watching over us,” Halyna said. “We believe everything will be all right.”

## Today in History: May 28, Jackson signs Indian Removal Act

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, May 28, the 148th day of 2025. There are 217 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 28, 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, which forced nearly 50,000 Native Americans to relocate to designated territories west of the Mississippi River.

Also on this date:

In 1863, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, made up of free Black men, left Boston to fight for the Union in the Civil War.

In 1892, the Sierra Club was founded in San Francisco by naturalist John Muir.

In 1918, American troops fought their first major battle during World War I as they launched an offensive against the German-held French village of Cantigny; the Americans succeeded in capturing the village.

In 1959, the U.S. Army launched Able, a rhesus monkey, and Baker, a squirrel monkey, aboard a Jupiter missile for a suborbital flight which both primates survived.

In 1972, burglars working on behalf of the Nixon White House broke into the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C., installing surveillance devices on telephones

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, May 28, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 337 ~ 53 of 53**

and taking photos of DNC documents.

In 1977, 165 people were killed when fire raced through the Beverly Hills Supper Club in Southgate, Kentucky.

In 1987, to the embarrassment of Soviet officials, Mathias Rust, a teenage West German amateur pilot, landed a private plane near Moscow's Red Square without authorization. (Rust was held by the Soviets until he was pardoned and freed the following year.)

In 2013, calling it perhaps the biggest money-laundering scheme in U.S. history, federal prosecutors charged seven people with running what amounted to an online, underworld bank, saying that Liberty Reserve handled \$6 billion for drug dealers, child pornographers, identity thieves and other criminals around the globe.

In 2021, officials announced that the remains of more than 200 children, some as young as 3 years old, had been found buried on the site of what was once Canada's largest indigenous residential school, in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Today's Birthdays: Former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is 81. Singer Gladys Knight is 81. Musician Billy Vera is 81. Musician John Fogerty (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 80. Country singer-songwriter Phil Vassar is 63. Singer-actor Kylie Minogue is 57. Actor Justin Kirk is 56. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is 54. TV personality Elisabeth Hasselbeck is 48. Actor Jake Johnson is 47. Singer-songwriter Colbie Caillat is 40. Actor Carey Mulligan is 40.