

# Groton Daily Independent

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## **Saturday, June 21**

U8 Youth Baseball Tournament  
Groton Triathlon  
Legion at Milbank Tourney  
U12 at Webster Tourney (9 a.m., 11 a.m.)  
U8 Groton Tourney

## **Sunday, June 22**

Emmanuel Lutheran worship 9 a.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Worship 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.  
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 at Milbank Tourney

**Groton Daily Independent**  
**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**  
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## **Monday, June 23**

Senior Menu: Parmesan chicken breast, rice pilaf, Italian blend, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.  
Jr. Legion hosts Aberdeen Smitty's 16U, 6 p.m.  
U12 B&W hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
**Cancelled:** U10 R&B hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U8 R&B at Columbia, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
Softball: U12 at Milbank, 6 p.m. (DH)  
Olive Grove: Women's 2-Person Scramble  
Community Blood Drive, Noon to 6 p.m., Groton Community Center  
Senior Citizens meet at Groton Community Center with potluck at noon.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

## **Tuesday, June 24**

Senior Menu: Pork roast, mashed potatoes with gravy, glazed carrots, cinnamon apple sauce, whole wheat bread.  
Jr. Legion hosts Miller, 5:30 p.m. (DH)  
U10 B&W hosts Claremont, 6:30 p.m.  
U8 B&W hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m.  
Softball: U14 hosts Warner, 6 p.m. (DH)  
T-Ball: Gold hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

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# 1440

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

## Heat Wave Rolls In

More than 53 million Americans across the country were under heat alerts yesterday, as the first major heat wave of the year descended on the first official day of summer.

Roughly half the country—about 170 million people—will be affected by 90- to 100-degree temperatures as the heat wave migrates from the Great Plains across the Midwest to the East Coast over the weekend and into next week. Temperatures hit 100 degrees in Denver yesterday and are expected to hover around that mark in cities like Chicago, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, in the coming days.

The culprit is a heat dome, a sprawling, slow-moving zone of high pressure that traps hot air, similar to a lid on a pot. The heat dome formed over the central US yesterday and has been fueled by moisture blown north from the southern US.

Across the Atlantic, the UK and France are also experiencing their first heat wave of the year.

## Summer officially begins with the start of the solstice.

The summer solstice marks the start of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, bringing the longest day and shortest night of the year as the Earth's tilt positions the northern half most directly toward the sun. The word "solstice" comes from Latin, combining "sol" (sun) and "stitium" (pause or stop), representing the moment when the sun appears to pause before reversing direction.

## Europe holds nuclear talks as Iran and Israel trade strikes.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said yesterday Iran will not consider diplomacy efforts over its nuclear program while under attack by Israel. The comments came after Araghchi and his European counterparts met in Geneva to reach a resolution that would prevent Iran from developing its nuclear weapons capabilities. Separately, Israel struck areas in western Iran, while Iran struck areas in southern Israel yesterday.

## Judge orders release of former Columbia student Mahmoud Khalil.

A federal judge ruled Friday the federal government failed to justify detaining Khalil, a former Columbia graduate and legal US resident who was arrested in early March over pro-Palestinian protests. The Trump administration has kept Khalil in a Louisiana ICE detention center as it seeks to deport him. While the judge has barred deportation based on his activism, he is allowing the administration to continue pursuing deportation based on allegations Khalil lied on his green card application.

## UK lawmakers back bill allowing assisted death for terminally ill adults.

The House of Commons voted 314–291 Friday to approve a bill allowing terminally ill adults in England and Wales, who are over 18 and expected to live less than six months, to request assisted death. The bill now heads to the House of Lords, where its unelected members can review and suggest changes but have limited power to delay or amend bills approved by the elected House of Commons. If passed, the UK would join a handful of countries and some US states that have passed such laws.

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## World's largest digital camera to release first images Monday.

The world's largest digital camera was installed in March at an observatory in Chile to capture 1,000 detailed images per night of the southern sky as part of a decade-long survey. The Legacy Survey of Space and Time camera is roughly the size of a small car and weighs over 6,000 pounds. It is also the world's highest resolution camera—roughly 400 ultra-high-definition televisions would be needed to display one of the camera's full-size photos.

## Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Katy P. in Louisa, Virginia.

"I run a small nonprofit that incorporates rescued horses in a powerful healing program for teens and women. ... Last weekend our big Belgian Draft horse named Koa was diagnosed with a tumor in his belly. Surgery was not an option so I had to make the heart breaking decision to humanely euthanize Koa. Burying such a large animal is a huge expensive undertaking, and we did not have the funds."

"My new neighbor Mike came over the next day with his excavator and placed our beautiful Koa in his final resting place. Mike treated our sweet horse and me with such dignity and respect. He asked me about Koa and what we are doing with the horses. I described our program and Mike thanked me for serving the community and would not allow me to pay him. I burst into tears and gave him a hug. Mike made an unbearable moment seem brighter and I will never forget."

### 2025 Groton U8 Pool Play Tournament Bracket

#### POOL A

GROTON

BRITTON

SMITTY'S GREY

#### POOL B

Mellette

SMITTY'S BLACK

MILBANK

#### FALK FIELD

10:00 GROTON VS SMITTY'S GREY

11:30 SMITTY'S GREY VS BRITTON

1:00 GROTON VS BRITTON

2:30 POOL A 3<sup>RD</sup> SEED VS POOL B 3 SEED

4:00 POOL A 1 SEED VS POOL B 1 SEED

#### NELSON FIELD

MELLETE VS SMITTY'S BLACK

SMITTY'S BLACK VS MILBANK

MELLETE VS MILBANK

POOL A 2 SEED VS POOL B 2 SEED

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## **Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Win In Fashion, Walk It Off Versus Redfield Flickertails**

**By GameChanger Media**

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U took Friday's game in dramatic fashion, with a 6-5 walk-off victory over Redfield Flickertails. The game was tied at five in the bottom of the fifth when Kolton Antonsen singled, scoring one run.

A ground out by Keegan Kucker put Groton Jr. Teeners 14U on the board in the bottom of the first.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U added to their early lead in the bottom of the second inning after Tucker Leicht grounded out, and Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored on a passed ball, each scoring one run.

A single by Zach Fliehs extended the Groton Jr. Teeners 14U lead to 4-1 in the bottom of the third inning.

Redfield Flickertails tied the game up in the top of the fourth thanks to two singles. Redfield Flickertails tied the game at four on a single by Nick Shottenkirk.

A double by Sam Crank gave Groton Jr. Teeners 14U the lead, 5-4, in the bottom of the fourth.

Jace Edgar grounded out, which helped Redfield Flickertails tie the game at five in the top of the fifth.

Trayce Schelle earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The righty allowed six hits and five runs over five innings, striking out five and walking three. Davey Bixler took the loss for Redfield Flickertails. The starter went four and two-thirds innings, surrendering six runs (four earned) on seven hits, striking out seven and walking three.

Leicht, Antonsen, Fliehs, Kucker, and Crank each drove in one run for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Antonsen went 3-for-3 at the plate to lead Groton Jr. Teeners 14U in hits. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Kucker had the most chances in the field with five.

Edgar and Christian Peterson each drove in two runs for Redfield Flickertails. Tayber Hansen went 2-for-3 at the plate to lead Redfield Flickertails in hits.

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## **Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Secure Win Against Redfield Flickertails**

**By GameChanger Media**

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U beat Redfield Flickertails 5-0 on Friday.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U opened the scoring in the bottom of the first thanks to two singles. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U first got on the board when Zach Fliehs singled, scoring one run.

A single by Asher Zimmerman extended the Groton Jr. Teeners 14U lead to 5-0 in the bottom of the second inning.

Wesley Borg earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The starter allowed three hits and zero runs over five innings, striking out five and walking two. Breckan Waldner took the loss for Redfield Flickertails. The right-handed pitcher went three innings, allowing five runs on eight hits, striking out four and walking two.

Zimmerman and Sam Crank each collected two hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Zimmerman went 2-for-2 at the plate and led the team with two runs batted in. Borg stole two bases. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U ran wild on the base paths, amassing eight stolen bases for the game. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U turned one double play in the game.

Davey Bixler, Jace Edgar, and Braxon Maher each collected one hit for Redfield Flickertails.

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## **Groton Legion Post 39 Firing On All Cylinders Against 2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion**

**By GameChanger Media**

Groton Legion Post 39 easily dispatched 2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion on Friday, 11-4, at the Milbank Heritage Tournament.

2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion got on the board in the first inning after Ted Smith singled, scoring one run.

A single by Nick Morris gave Groton Legion Post 39 the lead, 3-1, in the bottom of the first.

Groton Legion Post 39 added to their early lead in the bottom of the second inning after Brevin Fliehs walked, and Gavin Englund was struck by a pitch, each scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 added one run in the third after Groton Legion Post 39 scored on a passed ball.

Groton Legion Post 39 scored five runs on six hits in the bottom of the fifth inning. Korbin Kucker singled, scoring one run, Fliehs singled, scoring one run, Carter Simon singled, scoring one run, and Morris singled, scoring two runs.

Kucker started the game for Groton Legion Post 39. The starter gave up two hits and four runs (two earned) over four innings, striking out eight and walking seven. Turner Stevenson stepped on the hill first for 2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion. The starting pitcher surrendered one hit and five runs (two earned) over one inning, striking out one and walking four. Fliehs tossed two innings of shutout ball for Groton Legion Post 39 in relief. The right-handed pitcher gave up zero hits, striking out four and walking one.

Morris led Groton Legion Post 39 with four runs batted in. The second baseman went 2-for-3 on the day. Jarrett Erdmann led Groton Legion Post 39 with three walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, piling up eight walks for the game. Teylor Diegel and Kucker each stole multiple bases for Groton Legion Post 39. Groton Legion Post 39 stole eight bases in the game.

Smith drove the middle of the lineup, leading 2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion with two runs batted in. The switch hitter went 1-for-1 on the day. Smith and Caleb Drenth each collected one hit for 2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion. Stevenson paced 2025 Lake Norden/Badger Legion with four walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, amassing eight walks for the game.

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## Congress must act to pull USPS back from the brink

By Martha Diaz Aszkenazy

National Newspaper Association

The United States Postal Service is on the brink of a self-induced collapse. The failed policies of the Delivering for America Plan have driven away customers through a combination of sky-high rate increases and degraded service. David Steiner, who will take over as postmaster general on July 14, has a tough job to do and little time to do it with some estimates indicating the USPS could be insolvent as soon as 2028.

Congress has a key role to play in helping him right the ship but must get off the sidelines and act. A useful step occurred earlier this week with a hearing before the House Oversight Subcommittee on Government Operations. The National Newspaper Association (NNA) provided a statement for the hearing that lays out key actions Congress can take to help restore the USPS.

We emphasized that NNA members serve their communities, providing news on local events and civic matters that are not covered anywhere else, and that they depend on the USPS to get their papers to subscribers. The USPS — and by extension the small businesses in the communities they serve — faces an immediate and existential crisis. We urge Congress to act swiftly and compel meaningful reform at the USPS.

Here are three actions Congress can take right now to get the USPS back on track and keep commerce in America moving:

- Demand the USPS Board halt the Delivering for America Plan including the large rate increase planned for July 13, 2025. This increase, far above the rate of inflation will only deepen the hole and ties the hands of incoming Postmaster General David Steiner, who should have the opportunity to assess the situation. The same holds true for the network consolidations and service cuts. Every customer that is lost through these increases and service reductions is one less Steiner can rely on in the future.
- Modernize and empower the USPS regulator. Effective checks and balances are needed to keep the USPS on track. Congress needs to update and modernize the postal regulatory process to better safeguard against excessive rates and poor service by passing H.R. 3004, The USPS SERVES US Act.
- Measure newspaper costs accurately. Congress should compel accurate measurement of newspaper service and hold the USPS accountable for maintaining and improving service quality by enacting H.R. 2098/S.1002, the Deliver for Democracy Act.

These are all commonsense steps Congress can take to address what has been clearly a failed approach by USPS management. Steiner has a huge job ahead of him and will need all the help he can get.

Congress must act now to make sure the nation's next postmaster general is not the last one.

*Martha Diaz Aszkenazy is chair of the National Newspaper Association and publisher of The San Fernando Valley (Calif.) Sun/El Sol Newspapers.*



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **'This is an investment': opponents lambaste proposed state cut to needy family benefits**

**Lawmaker says cut is a product of 'significant miscommunication'**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 20, 2025 5:50 PM**

SIoux FALLS — Some needy South Dakota families could soon lose up to \$136 a month less to spend on gas, groceries, clothing, utilities, house repairs or rent.

The average South Dakota family in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program receives \$515.55 a month, according to the state Department of Social Services. An average of just under 2,500 families get TANF benefits each month.

Those families would lose anywhere from \$32 to \$136 a month in benefits under a proposed 10% reduction by the department, depending on the size of their family. The state would save about \$1.5 million for the year.

Dozens of South Dakotans stood up to speak out against the cut Friday, using words like "asinine," "appalling" and "ludicrous" to describe it during a public hearing in eastern Sioux Falls. No one spoke in support of the cut.

TANF is a federal-state program most commonly used to provide financial assistance to low-income families with children, on the condition that the caregiver searches or trains for a job. Non-parent relatives — grandparents or aunts or uncles — who take children into their home when a parent is not able to care for them are among the eligible.

Former Gov. Kristi Noem put \$5.3 million in TANF cuts into her proposed budget last year in light of a tight revenue year. Lawmakers approved the \$5.3 million cuts in March. In Noem's recommended budget, leftover federal funds reserved for the program were meant to cover the shortfall.

#### **Public hearing: 'This is not an expense, this is an investment'**

Colleen Werner, a former educator and school administrator in Sioux Falls, said at the public hearing she was shocked the state would start cuts "with the lowest and most in need" to save money. Families are paying more for rent, utilities, food and other living expenses than they did last year, she added.

"Imagine if you're at your financial end and you still step up," Werner said, a reference to relatives stepping in to care for children who are not their own. "And what does our state do? It just steps on you and cuts your funds when you've taken a bold and brave and loving measure to take care of those you love."

Lisa Sanderson, who said she formerly worked with Child Protective Services, said the proposal runs counter to the department's mission to support and uplift South Dakota families in need.

Participants, including Sanderson and others, called for more funding and increased benefits, citing inflation and a higher increased cost of living in recent years.

"This is not an expense," Sanderson said. "This is an investment."

Department representatives did not recommend any changes to the policy based on the public testimony, but will take written public comment through the end of the month. After that, they'll present their proposal to the legislative Rules Review Committee. If approved, the reduction would be implemented by Aug. 1.

#### **DSS explains its proposal**

The state distributed \$15.3 million in TANF benefits last fiscal year.

The 10% benefit cut is part of the department's plan to deal with having \$5.3 million less to spend on

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TANF this year. The department also intends to use \$3.8 million from a TANF carryover fund to cover some of the cost of benefits for families.

The carryover fund currently holds about \$23 million – more than enough to fully cover the \$5.3 million budget cut.

The fund has been reserved as a “rainy day fund,” said Department of Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff. He added that some of the unused funds are intended to upgrade the TANF computer system. He said he didn’t know how much the upgrades would cost.

The department could use another \$1.5 million from the carryover balance to avoid the benefit cuts. But Althoff called the reduction a “strategic approach” to managing the carryover fund.

He described the fund as a piggy bank that “is not going to last forever.” Without knowing what the financial landscape looks like in the coming years, reducing TANF benefits by 10% means the department can “keep the piggy bank there” for a longer period of time.

If state revenues continue to worsen and more cuts are necessary, the department could propose in the coming years to cut TANF benefits more.

The proposed rule change would also remove TANF eligibility for families who take in child relatives who are removed from their homes by the state’s child welfare system.

The change would incentivize caregivers to become licensed kinship caregivers with the state. The current foster and kinship subsidy rate for a child in SD is between \$22.85 and \$27.43 a day, depending on their age. That would be roughly \$685.50 to \$822.90 a month, per child.

Lawmakers approved rule changes in May to create the licensed kinship foster care pathway, as required by the federal government. Caregivers must meet training requirements to become a licensed kinship home, similar though less intensive than traditional foster care requirements.

According to the department, 184 cases per month managed by the department involving families eligible for TANF would be eligible for kinship subsidies.

Families who take in kin and apply for TANF use the “side door” to receive state and federal support, Althoff said. Eliminating eligibility encourages families to “come in through the front door.”

## **Proposal’s future depends on legislative committee interpretation**

Several participants said they were blindsided by the proposal. They said they understood from lawmakers during the state’s legislative session this winter that the \$5.8 million cut to TANF would be fully — not partially — offset by money from the carryover fund.

Althoff briefly mentioned that his department planned to review TANF benefits during a conversation with lawmakers on the state’s budget committee in January, but admitted Friday that “a conversation wasn’t held in earnest with lawmakers.”

Rep. Erik Muckey, D-Sioux Falls, said Friday that he didn’t expect TANF benefit cuts this fiscal year. Muckey is a member of the Joint Appropriations Committee. Because of a “significant miscommunication” between lawmakers on the committee and the department, Muckey said it wouldn’t be prudent to advance the TANF cuts.

“If the appropriations committee didn’t intend to do this, we need to have more conversations before we reduce benefits,” said Muckey, who’s also a member of the rules review committee.

“I can appreciate the gravity of our state’s financial situation. What is important is those conversations, as far as our budgetary decisions, are not under the purview of the rules review committee,” Muckey said. “I think the public understands this is a case where the Legislature did not give its permission.”

Sen. Taffy Howard, R-Rapid City, is also a member of the appropriations and rules review committees. She disagreed, saying there isn’t a way for the rules review committee to determine the Legislature’s intent, since the body did not take any votes specifically concerning the TANF changes. Lawmakers only passed a budget with a \$5.3 million reduction in TANF spending, she said.

Howard doesn’t remember discussions about TANF carryover funds during the session, but said she supports the 10% cut.



"Why aren't we cutting all of it? Why are we even using carryover funds?" Howard told South Dakota Searchlight. Howard has been critical about welfare program spending in the state.

The legislative rules review committee will take up the proposal at its July 15 meeting in Pierre.

*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.*

## Vance dispatched to LA after Trump administration court victory in National Guard case

**BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JUNE 20, 2025 5:34 PM**

Vice President J.D. Vance took a victory lap to Los Angeles Friday, following a federal appeals court's ruling that the administration could retain control of the California National Guard troops responding to protests earlier this month over immigration raids in the city.

"BIG WIN in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on the President's core power to call in the National Guard!" President Donald Trump wrote on social media following the decision.

Vance was scheduled to visit an FBI building being used by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, meet with law enforcement leadership and U.S. Marines and deliver remarks, according to a White House release Friday morning.

The trip was announced about 12 hours after the administration's win at the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, which held that Trump could keep control of the 4,000 National Guard troops he'd ordered to Los Angeles.

Three judges on the appeals court issued a unanimous opinion Thursday evening that courts had to afford the president wide discretion to decide when a state National Guard can be federalized, leaving command in Trump's hands while California Gov. Gavin Newsom's lawsuit challenging the deployment is ongoing. The case has been closely watched by leaders of states around the country.

The order overturns a lower court's ruling that Trump return control of the troops to Newsom, a Democrat who opposed sending the National Guard to Los Angeles. Newsom has said the Guard troops' presence has only inflamed tensions between anti-ICE protesters and law enforcement.

The president has the authority to deploy troops to a state with or without the governor's consent, the panel of appeals judges said Thursday.

The state's "concerns have more bearing on the question of whether the President should have federalized the California National Guard, not whether he had the authority to do so," the panel, made up of two judges appointed by Trump and one by former Democratic President Joe Biden, wrote.

They opted to revoke the district court's temporary restraining order, reasoning that the federal government stood a good chance of ultimately prevailing on the case.

### Quelling rebellion, enforcing laws

Attorneys for the state had argued in federal court that Trump's order was invalid because he did not show the conditions that the statute Trump cited, Section 12406 of U.S. Code Title X, required for federalization of a National Guard had been met and because the order was sent to the California National Guard adjutant general, not to Newsom himself.

The 9th Circuit panel rejected both arguments.

Based on the language of the statute alone, the judges might have required greater support for the federal government's position, which may have helped California's case, the order said.

But under U.S. Supreme Court precedent, the president only must meet a low standard to show that deployment is warranted to enforce laws or quell a rebellion, the judges wrote in language that resembled what Judge Jennifer Sung, the Biden appointee, said during oral arguments Tuesday.

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"We are not writing on a blank slate," they wrote. "The history of Congress's statutory delegations of its calling forth power, and a line of cases ... interpreting those delegations, strongly suggest that our review of the President's determinations in this context is especially deferential."

The federal government's evidence that protesters had thrown rocks and other objects at ICE officers, vandalized federal property and attacked vans used by ICE was enough to satisfy that standard, the judges wrote.

Trump quickly took to social media. "The Judges obviously realized that Gavin Newsom is incompetent and ill prepared, but this is much bigger than Gavin, because all over the United States, if our Cities, and our people, need protection, we are the ones to give it to them should State and Local Police be unable, for whatever reason, to get the job done," Trump wrote.

In amicus briefs in the case, Democratic state leaders have said they see Trump's use of the National Guard as a threat to their ability to use their Guards for state-level functions, including drug interdiction and natural disaster relief.

## Some reviewability

The opinion did, however, reject the U.S. Justice Department's argument that a president's federalization order could never be questioned in court.

In a statement, Newsom praised that aspect of the ruling and pledged to "press forward" with the case. "The court rightly rejected Trump's claim that he can do whatever he wants with the National Guard and not have to explain himself to a court," Newsom said. "The President is not a king and is not above the law."

U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer canceled oral arguments at a previously scheduled Friday morning hearing in the trial court, after the 9th Circuit order.

Breyer anticipated that the state may pursue a challenge based on a potential violation of the Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits the military from engaging in domestic law enforcement, and asked each side to file a brief by noon Pacific time on June 23 arguing whether the trial court or appeals court should first hear that issue.

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

## Both parties prep for mega-bill marathon in U.S. Senate vote-a-rama

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - JUNE 20, 2025 3:22 PM

WASHINGTON — The next hurdle for Republican leaders in the U.S. Senate and the "big, beautiful bill": Democrats — and possibly a few of their own members — in a marathon voting session will make last-ditch attempts to change the tax and spending cut measure.

The vote-a-rama, as it's known, is expected to begin sometime during the last full week of June as Congress heads toward the Fourth of July recess. It will likely begin in the afternoon and last overnight into the next morning. Senators will debate and vote on dozens of amendments attempting to revise the massive legislation that could have an effect on nearly every American.

Democrats, who have 47 votes in the Senate compared to 53 for Republicans, plan to zero in on Medicaid, taxes, corruption, policies that could raise energy costs and proposals that would increase the deficit, according to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., and the committee chairs tasked with drafting pieces of the package have spent weeks combing through the House-passed bill to figure out what needs to be altered to avoid divisive floor votes.

They've rewritten numerous policy proposals to comply with the strict rules that go along with the com-

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plex reconciliation process and are now trying to work out disagreements among GOP senators that could doom or complicate a final deal.

The goal is to avoid a protracted debate over core GOP provisions in full public view once the vote-a-rama begins, though some senators are already predicting votes on GOP amendments.

## 'A potentially messy process'

Missouri Republican Sen. Josh Hawley, who has raised concerns about the bill's impact on rural hospitals, said he hopes GOP leaders reach a consensus before vote-a-rama but didn't rule out offering his own amendments if they don't settle their disputes.

"Amending it on the floor, that's a potentially messy process," Hawley said. "I would hope that we could get to a good place before that. But we have to fix the rural hospital issue."

Alabama Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville said he will likely propose amendments during floor debate, though he declined to say what specific policies he'd seek to change or eliminate from the package.

"Yeah, we'll have some," Tuberville said. "And we've got them all, we just haven't turned them in yet."

Thune said he and other negotiators are making "headway" toward consensus on the more significant provisions in the package, which in many respects is far from its final form.

"The meetings right now are on the major provisions in tax and health. We have sort of pre-litigated a lot of that," Thune said. "But there are a lot of the other provisions in the bill, chapters in the bill that are still subject to going through the Byrd bath, and we're in the process of doing that. But hopefully that'll be done by early next week."

Republicans are using the reconciliation process to pass their sweeping tax and spending cuts package through the Senate with just a simple majority vote, requiring them to comply with the Byrd rules.

That includes the Byrd bath — going before the Senate parliamentarian to explain how each provision has an impact on federal revenue or spending that is not "merely incidental." Democrats then usually debate before the parliamentarian the various changes that don't meet that threshold. The process is named after the late Sen. Robert Byrd, a West Virginia Democrat.

Once the parliamentarian rules what elements comply and which need to be removed, the bill can go to the floor and senators can trudge through vote-a-rama. Eventually, all 100 lawmakers will vote to approve or disapprove of the legislation.

GOP senators passing their version of the package would send it back to the House, which passed its version on a slim 215-214 vote earlier this year — and could make yet more changes in the Senate bill.

## Democrats develop strategy

Democrats are hoping to highlight policy divisions among Republicans during the vote-a-rama. And even if they don't succeed in getting any of their amendments adopted, several votes could serve as fodder for campaign ads during next year's midterm elections.

Schumer said Wednesday during a press conference it would be "difficult" for Democrats to peel off at least four GOP senators from the rest of the party in order to get an amendment adopted, but said he's hopeful Republicans will "vote with us on some things they've all said they've agreed with."

Democratic senators, he said, have created a task force to reach out to Republicans on major issues in the package, including how it would impact rural hospitals.

"Many of these hospital administrators and employees are Republican," Schumer, a New York Democrat, said. "In many of the rural hospitals, they are the largest employer in the county, and in most they're the only supplier of health care. It infuriates the rural counties, and they tend to be Republican."

## 'It's just a show, it's a charade'

West Virginia Republican Sen. Shelley Moore Capito said she's not concerned about having to vote on dozens of amendments.

"We're here to vote," Capito said. "As a creature of the House, we voted all the time on everything, so

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this doesn't bother me. And, you know, just let the body work its will. If some changes are made, those will have to be dealt with. But I'm not worried about that."

Arkansas Republican Sen. John Boozman said he expects the vote-a-rama will be "a very late night" and that he's not planning to offer any of his own amendments.

As chairman of the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, Boozman expects to spend a considerable amount of time during vote-a-rama arguing against amendments seeking to change those provisions — including controversial cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides food aid for lower-income families.

Wisconsin Republican Sen. Ron Johnson said he plans to spend much of the vote-a-rama "going back and forth from my hideaway," the ceremonial office that every senator holds in the Capitol building.

But Johnson cast doubt on actually being able to amend the package during that process, saying changes to the various bills that Senate committees have released need to be agreed to before then.

"You've got to get this before it ever goes to the floor. I mean, you're not going to change things substantially or significantly with amendments. I know people have some idealized version that happens. It doesn't," Johnson said. "You've got to get these things in the base bill. Amendments; it's just a show, it's a charade."

## Vote-a-rama after vote-a-rama

The Senate has held two vote-a-ramas so far this year, and both demonstrated how difficult it is to change a piece of legislation.

The first all-nighter in February went along with Senate debate on its budget resolution and included votes on 25 amendments, with lawmakers adopting just two — one from Alaska Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan and one from Utah Republican Sen. Mike Lee.

The second vote-a-rama took place in April just before the Senate voted to approve the budget resolution that ultimately cleared the way for Congress to use the budget reconciliation process to advance the "big, beautiful bill." Senators debated 28 amendments, voting to adopt one change from Sullivan.

Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden, ranking member on the Finance Committee, said he and staff on the panel will continue to parse through details of the panel's bill, which Republicans just released Monday.

Wyden said he plans to hold several town hall meetings in GOP areas of his state over the weekend to gauge how residents there view the policy revisions Republican senators have put forward.

"We've had this bill for basically 36 hours. The first time I had it, I stayed up all night, so last night I got a little sleep," Wyden said on Wednesday. "But on the plane, I'll be working through it. And I expect to be working through it all through the next few days, except when I'm having these town hall meetings where I'll have a number of questions."

*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.*

## Trump administration move to restore gun rights to some convicts protested by Democrats

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - JUNE 20, 2025 3:10 PM

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration's decision to restore 10 convicts' ability to legally purchase firearms and explosives violated the law, according to a letter six high-ranking congressional Democrats released Friday.

The Justice Department publication of an interim final rule moving the authority to restore some convicts' gun rights from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to the attorney general also violated the separation of powers and a decades-old provision in the department's annual funding bill, according to the 12-page letter.

The Democrats wrote that while Congress did delegate the authority to "oversee restoration of federal



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firearm privileges applications" to the ATF several decades ago, lawmakers have included language in nearly every government funding bill since 1993 barring the ATF from spending any money to process those applications.

The prohibition followed then-President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, trying to move the authority from the ATF to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Given the pervasiveness of gun violence in our nation, this Administration should not be circumventing Congress' authority to prioritize restoring firearm privileges to individuals convicted of serious or violent crimes," the Democrats wrote.

The letter was signed by House Appropriations Committee ranking member Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn.; Senate Appropriations ranking member Patty Murray, D-Wash.; House Judiciary ranking member Jamie Raskin, D-Md.; Senate Judiciary ranking member Dick Durbin, D-Ill.; House Appropriations Commerce-Justice-Science subcommittee ranking member Grace Meng, D-N.Y.; and Senate Appropriations Commerce-Justice-Science subcommittee ranking member Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.

The Department of Justice did not immediately respond to a request for comment from States Newsroom.

## **Mel Gibson case**

The DOJ under President Donald Trump has so far restored 10 individuals' ability to legally purchase firearms, including the actor Mel Gibson, who "pleaded no contest to a charge of domestic violence" in 2011, according to Reuters.

Federal law bars several types of people from legally buying firearms, including anyone sentenced to more than one year in prison, which typically coincides with felonies, and those who commit domestic violence.

The six Democrats wrote that the "intersection between firearms and domestic violence remains a key concern, demonstrating the need to keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers.

"Research has shown that the presence of firearms significantly increases the risk of death or serious injury for victims of domestic or dating violence. The Supreme Court has recognized that the danger of a domestic abuser with a gun serves as a limitation on the Second Amendment."

The Democrats wrote that for decades Congress has prevented the ATF from restoring prohibited people's ability to legally purchase firearms. The annual DOJ appropriations bill also bars moving the ability to approve those applications away from ATF to any other federal agency.

"The concerns that originally led to these provisions — recidivist crime, limited investigative resources, and difficulty in assessing applicants — remain unchanged," they wrote. "Congress made an explicit policy choice to prioritize investigating crime, rather than to waste funds on evaluating whether to restore firearm rights to previously convicted felons."

## **Study cited**

The letter says a study from the Violence Policy Center that looked at restorations during the late 1980s is one of many reasons Congress prohibited the ATF from restoring some felons' ability to legally purchase firearms.

The study, which reviewed 100 ATF case files obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, showed the federal government had restored the ability of "terrorists, murderers, rapists, drug dealers, gun traffickers, and child molesters" to legally purchase firearms and explosives.

"The FOIA-obtained records also showed that of those granted relief between 1985 and 1989, 47 individuals were later re-arrested for serious offenses such as attempted murder, first-degree sexual assault, kidnapping, child molestation, illegal possession of a machine gun, trafficking in cocaine, LSD, and PCP, and illegal firearms possession or carrying," they wrote.

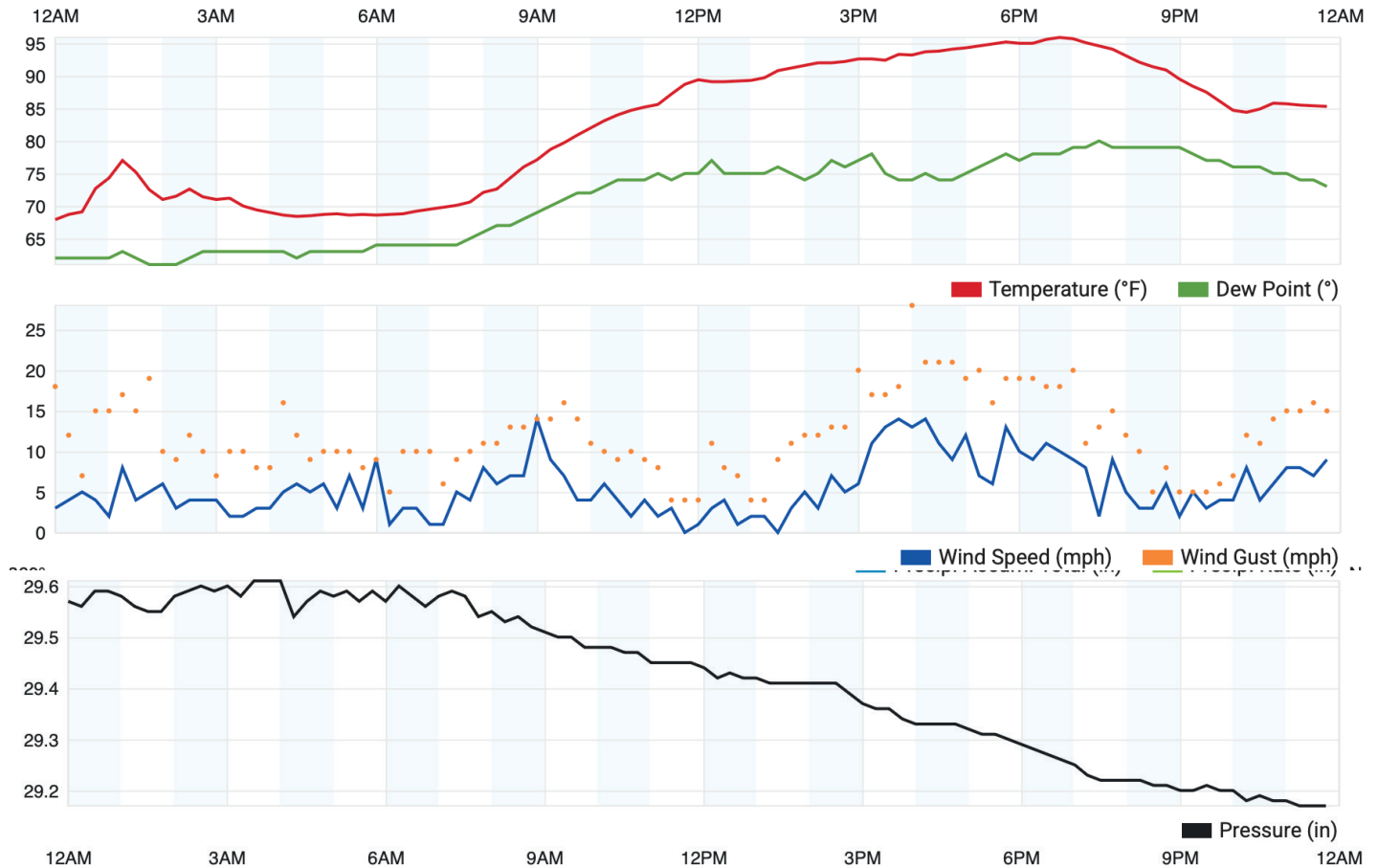
The letter ends with Democrats calling on the DOJ to withdraw the interim final rule and "vacate the wrongfully granted restoration of federal firearms privileges to the 10 individuals."

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

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

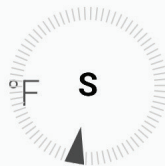


CURRENT CONDITIONS

7:07 p.m.

95.7

Feels Like  
114.3 °



WIND & GUST

9.0 /  
20.0 mph

DEWPOINT

79.0 ° F

PRECIP RATE

0.00 in/hr

PRESSURE

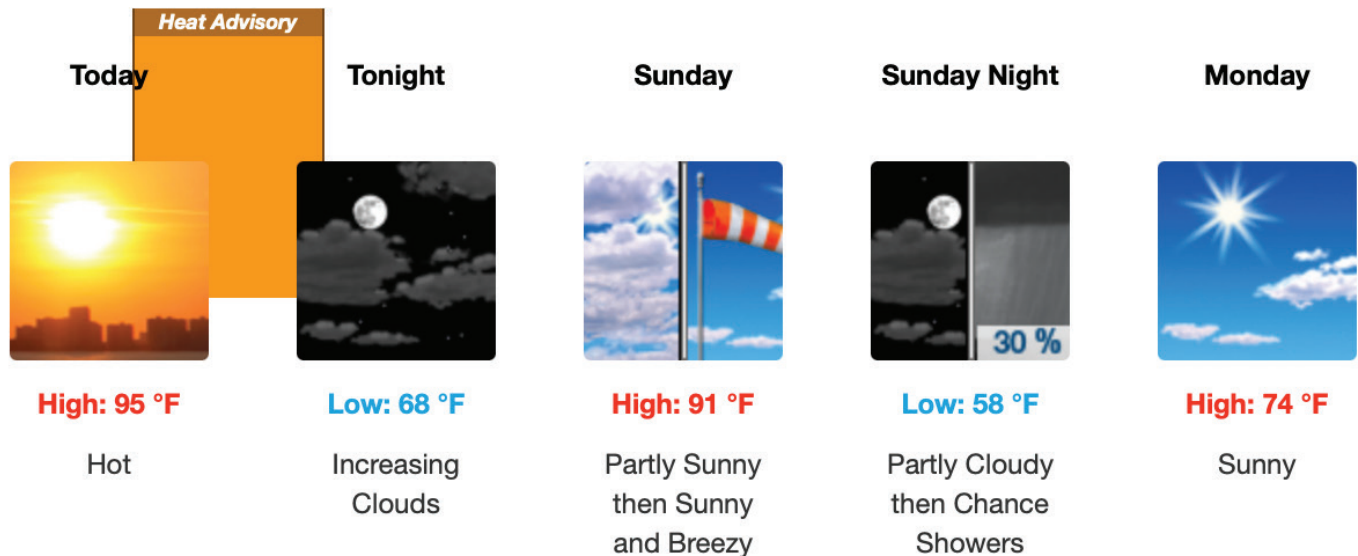
29.25 in

HUMIDITY

59 %

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## Heat Continues Through the Weekend

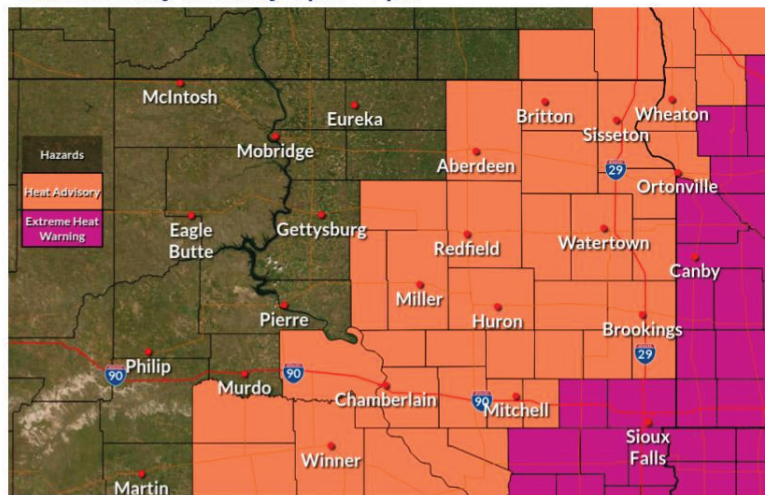
June 21, 2025  
3:54 AM

Severe weather remains conditional on storms even developing (low confidence) through Sunday

### Key Messages

- **Heat Advisory** remains in effect through this evening for portions of central and northeastern SD into west central MN
- **Severe Storm Risk Late Afternoon (low confidence)**
  - Strong CAP means storm initiation and persistence may be difficult to maintain
- Hot and muggy conditions persist into Sunday
  - Front will separates mild/dry & hot/humid air
  - Highs to the west of front: near 80
  - Highs to the east of front: low to mid 90s
- Risk for storms/severe weather along front Sunday

### Heat Advisory Saturday 1 pm - 9 pm



### NEW What Has Changed

- No major changes to headlines/thunderstorm risk areas



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Heat and humidity will continue through the weekend. Additionally, we could see an isolated storm or two this afternoon if they can get through this very warm air overhead (CAP). Storm chances continue into Sunday with a front that will pass through the region. Severe weather threats Saturday are primarily limited to large hail and damaging winds. Threats Sunday aside from large hail/damaging winds include an isolated tornado or two.



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## Today's Hazards

June 21, 2025

4:02 AM

Main hazard is the heat & humidity. Storms are also possible, but may struggle due to warm air aloft

### Moderate to Major Heat Risk

Temperatures: 90s to near 100°

Heat index values: up to 105°



Temperatures

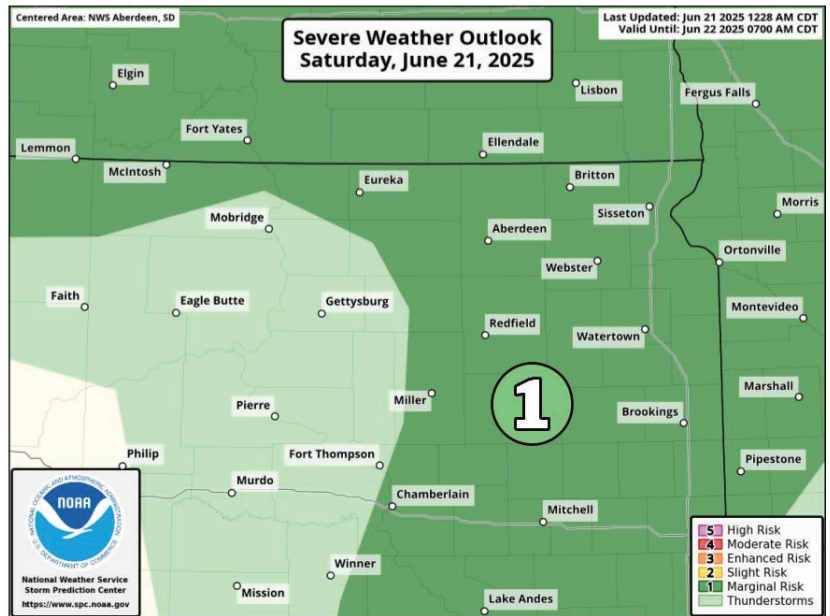
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	85	93	97	95	84	74
Miller	87	98	99	98	84	74
Mobridge	81	90	91	91	80	71
Murdo	86	97	99	97	84	74
Ortonville	83	88	94	95	87	78
Pierre	86	99	100	98	86	75
Sisseton	82	92	94	94	83	75
Watertown	83	92	97	97	84	76



Heat Index

	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	90	100	104	102	89	74
Miller	91	100	101	100	87	74
Mobridge	83	93	94	94	82	71
Murdo	85	95	96	96	84	74
Ortonville	89	96	100	101	93	78
Pierre	87	101	101	99	87	75
Sisseton	86	99	101	101	89	75
Watertown	87	98	102	101	88	76

**Marginal Risk** for storms Saturday late afternoon/evening  
Warm air (CAP) aloft means storms may struggle to develop



## Sunday's Hazards

June 21, 2025

4:14 AM

Main hazard is heat & humidity. Storms are also possible, but may struggle due to warm air aloft

### Moderate to Major Heat Risk East River

Temperatures east of front: 90s

Heat index values east of front: near 100°



Temperatures

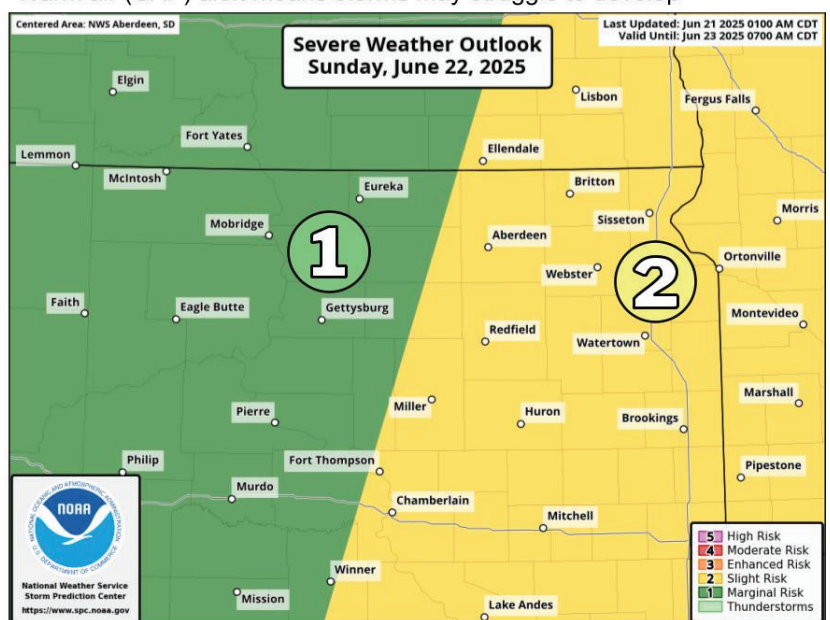
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	85	91	90	86	74	66
Miller	86	91	90	86	74	66
Mobridge	73	79	80	79	66	60
Murdo	70	78	85	85	72	63
Ortonville	86	91	93	92	81	72
Pierre	77	82	86	85	74	67
Sisseton	82	91	92	89	77	69
Watertown	84	91	93	90	78	70



Heat Index

	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	89	95	94	87	74	66
Miller	89	94	93	87	74	66
Mobridge	73	79	81	79	66	60
Murdo	70	78	85	84	72	63
Ortonville	92	97	99	96	83	72
Pierre	77	83	86	85	74	67
Sisseton	86	97	98	92	77	69
Watertown	88	95	97	93	78	70

**Slight Risk** for storms Sunday along/behind a front in the evening  
Warm air (CAP) aloft means storms may struggle to develop





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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 96 °F at 6:32 PM**

**Low Temp: 68 °F at 12:00 AM**

**Wind: 28 mph at 3:55 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 44 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 108 in 1988

Record Low: 31 in 1902

Average High: 82

Average Low: 57

Average Precip in June.: 2.56

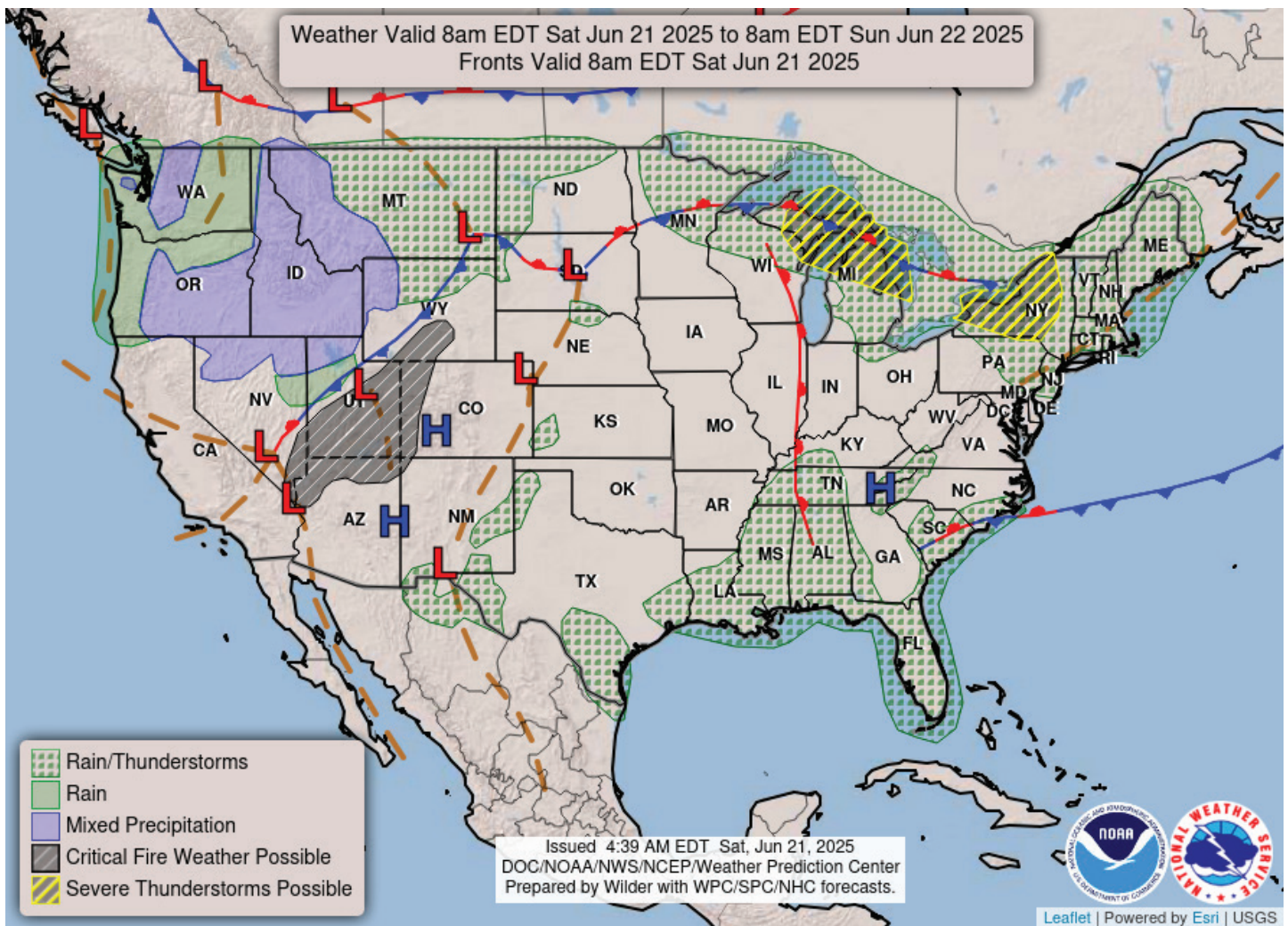
Precip to date in June: 2.54

Average Precip to date: 9.81

Precip Year to Date: 8.59

Sunset Tonight: 9:26:27 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:42:27 am



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## Today in Weather History

June 21st, 1902: Light to heavy frost occurred over most of the state, with low temperatures ranging from the mid-20s to the lower 30s. Some record low temperatures include 27 degrees in Ipswich and Leola, 29 degrees in Kennebec, 30 degrees in Mellette, 31 degrees in Aberdeen, Clark, and Watertown, 32 degrees in Faulkton and Gann Valley, 36 degrees in Sisseton, and 40 degrees in Milbank.

June 21st, 1983: An F3 tornado touched down in a resort area two miles west of Pollock. Eleven people fled from the southwestern most cabin and crawled under a nearby cabin. The southwest cabin was destroyed, and the cabin the group crawled under was moved five feet from its concrete block foundation. Four people were treated for injuries. A van, boat, and trailer were demolished, and a small car was heavily damaged. The tornado turned east and reformed four miles east of Pollock, where it touched down briefly and dissipated. Another F3 tornado touched down in open prairie three miles northeast of Glad Valley and moved northeast, creating a path of destruction as it progressed. On one farm, nine buildings were wiped out and scattered up to two miles away. Trees and poles were uprooted and scattered a half mile away. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for six miles with a path width of 300 yards. A third tornado, rated F2, touched down seven miles south of Pollock. This tornado damaged several cabin roofs and a restaurant and downed several trees. Boats were tossed into a lake, and picnic tables were hurled against cars.

June 21st, 2013: A long, severe thunderstorm developed over the southern Black Hills and moved eastward across the South Dakota plains in the morning. The storm produced large hail to softball size from eastern Custer to northern Jackson Counties. The softball-sized object fell 12 miles east-southeast of Fairburn in Custer County, damaging property. This storm intensified along a strong warm front with volatile air and strong, deep-layer winds into several supercell thunderstorms and a damaging line of thunderstorms/bow echo across parts of central and northeast South Dakota through the afternoon hours. Damaging winds up to 90 mph uprooted large trees and caused considerable structural and crop damage and loss of power to those along the path. The worst wind damage was at Lake Poinsett, Watertown, and Milbank. A woman was killed, and her husband was severely injured on Lake Poinsett when their lake house was destroyed. Numerous trees were downed, and many structures were damaged or destroyed. Many trees had fallen onto homes, cabins, and trailers. The bowling alley in Clear Lake lost its roof, and numerous pole barns were damaged along the storm's path. Thousands of people were also left without power. Four tornado touchdowns occurred, along with hail up to the size of softballs. Isolated flash flooding also occurred. Codington, Hamlin, Grant, and Deuel counties were all declared in a Federal Disaster Declaration. The total damage estimates were around 1,100,000 dollars.

1893 - On the first day of summer the temperature at Dodge City, KS, soared to 106 degrees during the midst of a blistering heat wave. The heat wave initiated a severe three year drought in the Central Plains Region. Ironically, at about the same time, heavy rains in the Mississippi Valley were causing the river to swell to its highest level of record at New Orleans, LA. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1919 - Seven heavy coach cars of a moving train were picked up and thrown from the tracks by tornado winds. A baggage car was set down thirty feet away from the rest of the train. (The Weather Channel)

1954 - A severe hailstorm struck Wichita KS and vicinity causing nine million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1972 - Phoenix, AZ, was drenched with 1.64 inches of rain late on the 21st and early on the 22nd to easily surpass their previous June rainfall record of 0.95 inches. The total for the month was 1.70 inches. (The Weather Channel)

1988 - The first full day of summer was a torrid one, with afternoon highs of 100 degrees or above reported from the Northern and Central Plains to the Ohio Valley. Sixty-nine cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 110 degrees at Sioux Falls, SD, was an all-time record for that location. Highs of 103 degrees at Des Moines, IA, 102 degrees at Fort Wayne, IN, 109 degrees at Huron, SD, 108 degrees at Sioux City, IA, and 101 degrees at South Bend IN were records for June. (The National Weather Summary)

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It was obvious to Solomon.

People who want wisdom are willing to pay the price to get it — because they “love” it. There is even a willingness, by some, to be disciplined, if necessary, to obtain wisdom.

People who “hate correction” or discipline, on the other hand, are considered “stupid.”

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid,” wrote Solomon.

There is a price to be paid for everything — even knowledge. In this verse, the author uses two interesting words to describe the attitude of one who wants “knowledge” or one who is content to be “stupid” — love and hate. Here, however, they are not connected to an emotional state. They focus on the priorities of an individual.

If a person wants knowledge, it must be a lifelong priority. If a person wants to be stupid, the only requirement is to refuse to learn or be corrected.

Knowledge and wisdom have very similar meanings in the Bible. In fact, they are almost synonymous — life-giving, life-sustaining, life-enhancing — and require one thing in common: the person who wants them must, at all costs, embrace “discipline.”

To “get” one, wisdom, we must endure the other, discipline. In other words, if I want to be wise, I must accept discipline.

Interestingly, the word “stupid” is found five times in the Old Testament. It is used to portray a dense, dumb animal as well as a man who is unkind and runs roughshod over people.

To refuse discipline, then, lowers the status of a person. To accept discipline opens the door to successful living.

Prayer: How blest we are, Father, for the opportunities You give us to achieve great things. Help us to persevere. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Today’s Scripture: “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.” Proverbs 12:1

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



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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.20.25

26 49 58 61 63 9

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$326,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.18.25

11 18 25 29 32 9

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,250,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 19 Mins 20 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.20.25

5 9 31 33 45 8

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 34 Mins 20 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.18.25

8 15 23 25 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$32,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 34 Mins 20 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.18.25

13 15 17 36 66 10

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 3 Mins 20 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.18.25

23 29 50 64 67 11

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$118,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 3 Mins 20 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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## **Upcoming Groton Events**

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

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

### **Israel hits Iranian nuclear research facility as war continues into second week**

By DAVID RISING and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel's military said Saturday it struck an Iranian nuclear research facility overnight and killed three senior Iranian commanders in targeted attacks as the war between the two nations continued into a second week.

Early Saturday, smoke could be seen rising from an area near a mountain in Isfahan, where a local official said Israel had attacked the nuclear research facility in two waves.

The target was two centrifuge production sites, and the attacks came on top of strikes on other centrifuge production sites elsewhere in recent days, according to an Israeli military official speaking on condition of anonymity under army guidelines to brief reporters. It was the second attack on Isfahan, which was hit in the first 24 hours of the war as part of Israel's goal to destroy the Iranian nuclear program.

Akbar Salehi, Isfahan province's deputy governor for security affairs, confirmed the Israeli strikes had caused damage to the facility but said there had been no human casualties.

Iran launched a new wave of drones and missiles at Israel but there were no immediate reports of significant damage, and the Israeli official called it a "small barrage" that was largely intercepted by Israel's defenses.

The official said part of the reason that Iran's overnight attack had been relatively small was that the military had been targeting its launchers, and estimates it has now taken out more than 50% of them.

"We've been able to take out a large amount of their launchers, creating a bottleneck — we're making it harder for them to fire toward Israel," he said. "Having said all that, I want to say the Iranian regime obviously still has capabilities."

Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said Saturday an Iranian drone hit a two-story building in northern Israel, but there were no casualties.

### **Talks in Switzerland fail to produce diplomatic breakthrough**

The ongoing fighting comes after talks in Geneva on Friday failed to produce a diplomatic breakthrough.

European officials expressed hope for future discussions, and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said he was open to further dialogue while emphasizing that Tehran had no interest in negotiating with the U.S. while Israel continued attacking.

"Iran is ready to consider diplomacy if aggression ceases and the aggressor is held accountable for its committed crimes," he told reporters.

No date was set for the next round of talks.

### **Iran warns against U.S. becoming militarily involved**

U.S. President Donald Trump is weighing active U.S. military involvement in the conflict, which Araghchi said Saturday "would be very unfortunate."

"I think that it would be very, very dangerous for everyone," he said in Istanbul, speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The war between Israel and Iran erupted June 13, with Israeli airstrikes targeting nuclear and military sites, top generals and nuclear scientists. At least 657 people, including 263 civilians, have been killed in Iran and more than 2,000 wounded, according to a Washington-based Iranian human rights group.

Iran has retaliated by firing more than 450 missiles and 1,000 drones at Israel, according to Israeli army estimates. Most have been shot down by Israel's multitiered air defenses, but at least 24 people in Israel have been killed and hundreds wounded.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel's military operation in Iran would continue "for as long as it takes" to eliminate what he called the existential threat of Iran's nuclear program and

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arsenal of ballistic missiles.

But Netanyahu's goal could be out of reach without U.S. help. Barring a commando raid or even a nuclear strike, Iran's underground Fordo uranium enrichment facility is considered to be out of reach to all but America's "bunker-buster" bombs. Trump said he would put off deciding whether to join Israel's air campaign against Iran for up to two weeks.

## **Israel continues targeted attacks on Iranian military commanders**

In Israel's opening attack, it killed three of Iran's top military leaders: one who oversaw the entire armed forces, Gen. Mohammad Bagheri; one who led the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Hossein Salami; and the head of the Guard's ballistic missile program, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh.

The targeted killings of senior commanders continued, with Israel's defense minister saying Saturday that the military had killed a commander in Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard who financed and armed Hamas in preparation for the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel that sparked the 20-month long war in Gaza.

Israel said Saeed Izadi was commander of the Palestine Corps for the Iranian Quds Force, an elite arm of the Guard that conducts military and intelligence operations outside Iran, and that he was killed in an apartment in the city of Qom.

Iranian officials did not immediately confirm the death, but the Qom governor's office did say there had been an attack on a four-story apartment building and local media reported two people had been killed.

Israel also said it had killed the commander of the Quds Force's weapons transfer unit, who it said was responsible for providing weapons to Hezbollah and Hamas. Behnam Shahriyari was killed in his car while traveling in western Iran, the military said.

A commander of Iran's drone force was also killed overnight, the Israeli official who briefed reporters said.

## **Iran threatens head of U.N. nuclear watchdog**

On Friday, the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog warned at an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council against attacks on Iran's nuclear reactors, particularly its only commercial nuclear power plant in the southern city of Bushehr.

"I want to make it absolutely and completely clear: In case of an attack on the Bushehr nuclear power plant, a direct hit would result in a very high release of radioactivity to the environment," said Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency. "This is the nuclear site in Iran where the consequences could be most serious."

Israel has not targeted Iran's nuclear reactors, instead focusing its strikes on the main uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, centrifuge workshops near Tehran, laboratories in Isfahan and the country's Arak heavy water reactor southwest of the capital.

Iran previously agreed to limit its uranium enrichment and allow international inspectors access to its nuclear sites under a 2015 deal with the U.S., France, China, Russia, Britain and Germany in exchange for sanctions relief. But after Trump pulled the U.S. unilaterally out of the deal during his first term, Iran began enriching uranium up to 60% — a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90% — and restricting access to its nuclear facilities.

Iran has long maintained its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, but it is the only non-nuclear-weapon state to enrich uranium up to 60%. Israel is widely believed to be the only Middle Eastern country with a nuclear weapons program but has never acknowledged it.

Leaders in Iran have blamed Grossi's statements about the status of Iran's nuclear program for prompting Israel's attack.

On Saturday, a senior adviser for Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamanei, Ali Larijani, said in a brief social media post without elaboration that Iran would make Grossi "pay" once the war with Israel is over.



## Columbia protester Mahmoud Khalil freed from immigration detention

By SOPHIE BATES and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

JENA, La. (AP) — Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil was released Friday from federal immigration detention, freed after 104 days by a judge's ruling after becoming a symbol of President Donald Trump's clampdown on campus protests.

The former Columbia University graduate student left a federal facility in Louisiana on Friday. He is expected to head to New York to reunite with his U.S. citizen wife and infant son, born while Khalil was detained.

"Justice prevailed, but it's very long overdue," he said outside the facility in a remote part of Louisiana. "This shouldn't have taken three months."

The Trump administration is seeking to deport Khalil over his role in pro-Palestinian protests. He was detained on March 8 at his apartment building in Manhattan.

Khalil was released after U.S. District Judge Michael Farbiarz said it would be "highly, highly unusual" for the government to continue detaining a legal U.S. resident who was unlikely to flee and hadn't been accused of any violence.

"Petitioner is not a flight risk, and the evidence presented is that he is not a danger to the community," he said. "Period, full stop."

During an hourlong hearing conducted by phone, the New Jersey-based judge said the government had "clearly not met" the standards for detention.

The government filed notice Friday evening that it's appealing Khalil's release.

The Department of Homeland Security said in a post on the social platform X that the same day Farbiarz ordered Khalil's release, an immigration judge in Louisiana denied him bond and "ordered him removed." The decision was made by Judge Jamee Comans, who is in a court located in the same detention facility from which Khalil was released.

"An immigration judge, not a district judge, has the authority to decide if Mr. Khalil should be released or detained," the post said.

Khalil was the first person arrested under Trump's crackdown on students who joined campus protests against Israel's devastating war in Gaza. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said Khalil must be expelled from the country because his continued presence could harm American foreign policy.

The Trump administration has argued that noncitizens who participate in such demonstrations should be deported as it considers their views antisemitic. Protesters and civil rights groups say the administration is conflating antisemitism with criticism of Israel in order to silence dissent.

Farbiarz has ruled that the government can't deport Khalil on the basis of its claims that his presence could undermine foreign policy. But the judge gave the administration leeway to continue pursuing a potential deportation based on allegations that he lied on his green card application, an accusation Khalil disputes.

The international affairs graduate student isn't accused of breaking any laws during the protests at Columbia. He served as a negotiator and spokesperson for student activists and wasn't among the demonstrators arrested, but his prominence in news coverage and willingness to speak publicly made him a target of critics.

The judge agreed Friday with Khalil's lawyers that the protester was being prevented from exercising his free speech and due process rights despite no obvious reason for his continued detention. The judge noted that Khalil is now clearly a public figure.

Khalil said Friday that no one should be detained for protesting Israel's war in Gaza. He said his time in the Jena, Louisiana, detention facility had shown him "a different reality about this country that supposedly champions human rights and liberty and justice."

"Whether you are a U.S. citizen, an immigrant or just a person on this land doesn't mean that you are less of a human," he said, adding that "justice will prevail, no matter what this administration may try to portray" about immigrants.

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Khalil had to surrender his passport and can't travel internationally, but he will get his green card back and be given official documents permitting limited travel within the country, including New York and Michigan to visit family, New Jersey and Louisiana for court appearances and Washington to lobby Congress.

In a statement after the judge's ruling, Khalil's wife, Dr. Noor Abdalla, said she can finally "breathe a sigh of relief" after her husband's three months in detention.

"We know this ruling does not begin to address the injustices the Trump administration has brought upon our family, and so many others," she said. "But today we are celebrating Mahmoud coming back to New York to be reunited with our little family."

The judge's decision comes after several other scholars targeted for their activism have been released from custody, including another former Palestinian student at Columbia, Mohsen Mahdawi; a Tufts University student, Rumeysa Ozturk; and a Georgetown University scholar, Badar Khan Suri.

## **A week into war, Israel and Iran trade fire as Europe's diplomatic effort yields no breakthrough**

By SAM MEDNICK, JON GAMBRELL and DAVID RISING Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel and Iran traded strikes a week into their war on Friday as President Donald Trump weighed U.S. military involvement and key European ministers met with Iran's top diplomat in Geneva in a scramble to de-escalate the conflict.

But the first face-to-face meeting between Western and Iranian officials in the weeklong war concluded after four hours with no sign of an immediate breakthrough.

To give diplomacy a chance, Trump said he would put off deciding for up to two weeks whether to join Israel's air campaign against Iran. U.S. participation would most likely involve strikes against Iran's underground Fordo uranium enrichment facility, considered to be out of reach to all but America's "bunker-buster" bombs.

Whether or not the U.S. joins, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel's military operation in Iran would continue "for as long as it takes" to eliminate what he called the existential threat of Iran's nuclear program and arsenal of ballistic missiles. Israel's top general echoed the warning, saying the Israeli military was ready "for a prolonged campaign."

As negotiations ended in Switzerland, European officials expressed hope for future negotiations. Iran's top diplomat said he was open to further dialogue.

But Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi emphasized that Tehran had no interest in negotiating with the U.S. while Israel continued attacking.

"Iran is ready to consider diplomacy if aggression ceases and the aggressor is held accountable for its committed crimes," he told reporters.

No date was set for the next round of talks.

Iran previously agreed to limit its uranium enrichment and allow international inspectors access to its nuclear sites under a 2015 deal with the U.S., France, China, Russia, Britain and Germany in exchange for sanctions relief. But after Trump pulled the U.S. unilaterally out of the deal during his first term, Iran began enriching uranium up to 60% — a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90% — and restricting access to its nuclear facilities.

After Israel said its warplanes hit dozens of military targets across Iran, including missile-manufacturing facilities, an Iranian missile crashed into Israel's northern city of Haifa, sending plumes of smoke billowing over the Mediterranean port and wounding at least 31 people.

The war between Israel and Iran erupted June 13, with Israeli airstrikes targeting nuclear and military sites, top generals and nuclear scientists. At least 657 people, including 263 civilians, have been killed in Iran and more than 2,000 wounded, according to a Washington-based Iranian human rights group.

Iran has retaliated by firing 450 missiles and 1,000 drones at Israel, according to Israeli army estimates. Most have been shot down by Israel's multitiered air defenses, but at least 24 people in Israel have been killed and hundreds wounded.

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## Worries rise over the perils of attacking Iran's nuclear reactors

Addressing an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency warned against attacks on Iran's nuclear reactors, particularly its only commercial nuclear power plant in the southern city of Bushehr.

"I want to make it absolutely and completely clear: In case of an attack on the Bushehr nuclear power plant, a direct hit would result in a very high release of radioactivity to the environment," said Rafael Grossi, chief of the U.N. nuclear watchdog. "This is the nuclear site in Iran where the consequences could be most serious."

Israel has not targeted Iran's nuclear reactors, instead focusing its strikes on the main uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, centrifuge workshops near Tehran, laboratories in Isfahan and the country's Arak heavy water reactor southwest of the capital. Grossi has warned repeatedly that such sites should not be military targets.

After initially reporting no visible damage from Israel's Thursday strikes on the Arak heavy water reactor, the IAEA on Friday said it had assessed "key buildings at the facility were damaged," including the distillation unit.

The reactor was not operational and contained no nuclear material, so the damage posed no risk of contamination, the watchdog said.

Although strikes on uranium enrichment facilities like Natanz can carry the risk of radiological contamination, experts say the chance of a serious incident is far lower than at reactors such as the Russian-built Bushehr power plant.

After a call with Netanyahu, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he has secured Israel's promise to keep Russian workers at the plant out of harm's way.

Iran has long maintained its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

But it is the only non-nuclear-weapon state to enrich uranium up to 60%. Israel is widely believed to be the only Middle Eastern country with a nuclear weapons program but has never acknowledged it.

## Israel says 'difficult days' ahead

Dozens of Israeli warplanes struck targets across the country early Friday, including industrial sites in the north, missile storage and launchers in the west and the headquarters of an advanced research institute in Tehran, known by its acronym SPND.

The U.S. alleges SPND has conducted research and testing that could be applicable to the development of nuclear explosive devices.

Iranian state media reported explosions from Israeli strikes in an industrial area of Rasht, along the coast of the Caspian Sea. Israel's military had warned the public to evacuate the area around Rasht's Industrial City, southwest of the city's downtown. But with Iran's internet shut off — now for more than 48 hours — it's unclear just how many people could see the message.

While praising the Israeli military's "significant achievements" in the conflict with Iran, army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir warned that "difficult days still lie ahead."

"We are preparing for a wide range of possible developments," he said in recorded remarks, describing the offensive against Iran as the most complex in Israeli history. "The campaign is not over."

From the ruins of the Weizmann Institute of Science hit in an Iranian missile barrage this week, Netanyahu also vowed that Israel would fight as long as necessary to destroy Iran's nuclear program, calling it an "existential danger."

Iran has insisted on its right to enrich uranium — albeit at lower levels — in recent talks over its nuclear program. But Trump, like Israel, has demanded Iran end its enrichment program altogether.

Asked about Iran developing civilian nuclear plants for energy, Trump was skeptical.

"You're sitting on one of the largest oil piles anywhere in the world," he said Friday. "It's a little bit hard to see why you'd need that."

## More Iranian missiles damage buildings in Israel

The Israeli military believes it has destroyed most of Iran's ballistic missile launchers, contributing to the

steady decline in Iranian attacks.

But several of the roughly three dozen missiles that Israel said Iran fired on Friday slipped through the country's vaunted aerial defense system, setting off air-raid sirens across the country and sending shrapnel flying into a residential area in the southern city of Beersheba, a frequent target of Iranian missiles where a hospital was hit Thursday.

A handful of cars were set ablaze in the attack but no one was seriously wounded, as residents had hunkered down in bomb shelters. The Israeli military said Iran had fired a missile rigged with fragmenting cluster munitions in its attack on Beersheba Friday for the second time.

In northern Israel, a projectile fell in downtown Haifa, wounding at least 31 people, according to the city's Rambam Medical Center. Black smoke rose over the city's main port. The windows and walls of several buildings, including a mosque, were blown out by the blast.

Israeli President Issac Herzog shared photos of the destruction and said the strike injured several Muslim clerics and worshippers.

## Judge asks if troops in Los Angeles are violating the Posse Comitatus Act

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — California's challenge of the Trump administration's military deployment in Los Angeles returned to a federal courtroom in San Francisco on Friday for a brief hearing after an appeals court handed President Donald Trump a key procedural win.

U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer put off issuing any additional rulings and instead asked for briefings from both sides by noon Monday on whether the Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits troops from conducting civilian law enforcement on U.S. soil, is being violated in Los Angeles.

The hearing happened the day after the 9th Circuit appellate panel allowed the president to keep control of National Guard troops he deployed in response to protests over immigration raids.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in his complaint that "violation of the Posse Comitatus Act is imminent, if not already underway" but Breyer last week postponed considering that allegation.

Vice President JD Vance, a Marine veteran, traveled to Los Angeles on Friday and met with troops, including U.S. Marines who have been deployed to protect federal buildings.

According to Vance, the court determined Trump's determination to send in federal troops "was legitimate" and he will do it again if necessary.

"The president has a very simple proposal to everybody in every city, every community, every town whether big or small, if you enforce your own laws and if you protect federal law enforcement, we're not going to send in the National Guard because it's unnecessary," Vance told journalists after touring a federal complex in Los Angeles.

Vance's tour of a multiagency Federal Joint Operations Center and a mobile command center came as demonstrations have calmed after sometimes-violent clashes between protesters and police and outbreaks of vandalism and break-ins that followed immigration raids across Southern California earlier this month. Tens of thousands have also marched peacefully in Los Angeles since June 8.

National Guard troops have been accompanying federal agents on some immigration raids, and Marines briefly detained a man on the first day they deployed to protect a federal building. The marked the first time federal troops detained a civilian since deploying to the nation's second-largest city.

### Trump allowed to keep control of National Guard

Breyer found Trump acted illegally when, over opposition from California's governor, the president activated the soldiers. However, the appellate decision halted the judge's temporary restraining order. Breyer asked the lawyers on Friday to address whether he or the appellate court retains primary jurisdiction to grant an injunction under the Posse Comitatus Act.

California has sought a preliminary injunction giving Newsom back control of the troops in Los Angeles, where protests have calmed down in recent days.



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Trump, a Republican, argued that the troops have been necessary to restore order. Newsom, a Democrat, said their presence on the streets of a U.S. city inflamed tensions, usurped local authority and wasted resources.

## **Los Angeles mayor lifts curfew after protests subside**

The demonstrations appear to be winding down, although dozens of protesters showed up Thursday at Dodger Stadium, where a group of federal agents gathered at a parking lot with their faces covered, traveling in SUVs and cargo vans. The Los Angeles Dodgers organization asked them to leave, and they did.

On Tuesday, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass lifted a downtown curfew that was first imposed in response to vandalism and clashes with police after crowds gathered in opposition to agents taking migrants into detention.

Trump federalized members of the California National Guard under an authority known as Title 10.

Title 10 allows the president to call the National Guard into federal service when the country "is invaded," when "there is a rebellion or danger of a rebellion against the authority of the Government," or when the president is otherwise unable "to execute the laws of the United States."

Breyer found that Trump had overstepped his legal authority, which he said allows presidents to control state National Guard troops only during times of "rebellion or danger of a rebellion."

"The protests in Los Angeles fall far short of 'rebellion,'" wrote Breyer, a Watergate prosecutor who was appointed by President Bill Clinton and is the brother of retired Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer.

## **National Guard stays in federal hands as lawsuit proceeds**

The Trump administration argued that courts can't second-guess the president's decisions. The appellate panel ruled otherwise, saying presidents don't have unfettered power to seize control of a state's guard, but the panel said that by citing violent acts by protesters in this case, the Trump administration had presented enough evidence to show it had a defensible rationale for federalizing the troops.

For now, the California National Guard will stay in federal hands as the lawsuit proceeds. It is the first deployment by a president of a state National Guard without the governor's permission since troops were sent to protect Civil Rights Movement marchers in 1965.

Trump celebrated the appellate ruling in a social media post, calling it a "BIG WIN" and hinting at more potential deployments.

Newsom, for his part, has also warned that California won't be the last state to see troops in the streets if Trump gets his way.

## **Federal judge blocks Trump effort to keep Harvard from hosting foreign students**

By COLLIN BINKLEY and ALBEE ZHANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge on Friday blocked the Trump administration's efforts to keep Harvard University from hosting international students, delivering the Ivy League school another victory as it challenges multiple government sanctions amid a battle with the White House.

The order from U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs in Boston preserves Harvard's ability to host foreign students while the case is decided, but it falls short of resolving all of Harvard's legal hurdles to hosting international students. Notably, Burroughs said the federal government still has authority to review Harvard's ability to host international students through normal processes outlined in law.

Harvard sued the Department of Homeland Security in May after the agency abruptly withdrew the school's certification to host foreign students and issue paperwork for their visas, skirting most of its usual procedures. The action would have forced Harvard's roughly 7,000 international students — about a quarter of its total enrollment — to transfer or risk being in the U.S. illegally. New foreign students would have been barred from coming to Harvard.

The university said it was experiencing illegal retaliation for rejecting the White House's demands to overhaul Harvard policies related to campus protests, admissions, hiring and more. Burroughs temporarily

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had halted the government's action hours after Harvard sued.

Less than two weeks later, in early June, President Donald Trump tried a new strategy. He issued a proclamation to block foreign students from entering the U.S. to attend Harvard, citing a different legal justification. Harvard challenged the move, saying the president was attempting an end-run around the temporary court order. Burroughs temporarily blocked Trump's proclamation as well. That emergency block remains in effect, and Burroughs did not address the proclamation in her order Friday.

"We expect the judge to issue a more enduring decision in the coming days," Harvard said Friday in an email to international students. "Our Schools will continue to make contingency plans toward ensuring that our international students and scholars can pursue their academic work to the fullest extent possible, should there be a change to student visa eligibility or their ability to enroll at Harvard."

## **Students in limbo**

The stops and starts of the legal battle have unsettled current students and left others around the world waiting to find out whether they will be able to attend America's oldest and wealthiest university.

The Trump administration's efforts to stop Harvard from enrolling international students have created an environment of "profound fear, concern, and confusion," the university said in a court filing. Countless international students have asked about transferring from the university, Harvard immigration services director Maureen Martin said.

Still, admissions consultants and students have indicated most current and prospective Harvard scholars are holding out hope they'll be able to attend the university.

For one prospective graduate student, an admission to Harvard's Graduate School of Education had rescued her educational dreams. Huang, who asked to be identified only by her surname for fear of being targeted, had seen her original doctoral offer at Vanderbilt University rescinded after federal cuts to research and programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Harvard stepped in a few weeks later with a scholarship she couldn't refuse. She rushed to schedule her visa interview in Beijing. More than a month after the appointment, despite court orders against the Trump administration's policies, she still hasn't heard back.

"Your personal effort and capability means nothing in this era," Huang said in a social media post. "Why does it have to be so hard to go to school?"

## **An ongoing battle**

Trump has been warring with Harvard for months after the university rejected a series of government demands meant to address conservative complaints that the school has become too liberal and has tolerated anti-Jewish harassment. Trump officials have cut more than \$2.6 billion in research grants, ended federal contracts and threatened to revoke Harvard's tax-exempt status.

On Friday, the president said in a post on Truth Social that the administration has been working with Harvard to address "their largescale improprieties" and that a deal with Harvard could be announced within the next week. "They have acted extremely appropriately during these negotiations, and appear to be committed to doing what is right," Trump's post said.

Trump's administration first targeted Harvard's international students in April. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem demanded that Harvard turn over a trove of records related to any dangerous or illegal activity by foreign students. Harvard says it complied, but Noem said the response fell short and on May 22 revoked Harvard's certification in the Student and Exchange Visitor Program.

The sanction immediately put Harvard at a disadvantage as it competed for the world's top students, the school said in its lawsuit, and it harmed Harvard's reputation as a global research hub. "Without its international students, Harvard is not Harvard," the lawsuit said.

The action would have upended some graduate schools that recruit heavily from abroad. Some schools overseas quickly offered invitations to Harvard's students, including two universities in Hong Kong.

Harvard President Alan Garber previously said the university has made changes to combat antisemitism. But Harvard, he said, will not stray from its "core, legally-protected principles," even after receiving federal ultimatums.

## 10 years after Europe's migration crisis, the fallout reverberates in Greece and beyond

By DEREK GATOPOULOS, LEFTERIS PITARAKIS and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

LESBOS, Greece (AP) — Fleeing Iran with her husband and toddler, Amena Namjoyan reached a rocky beach of this eastern Greek island along with hundreds of thousands of others. For months, their arrival overwhelmed Lesbos. Boats fell apart, fishermen dove to save people from drowning, and local grandmothers bottle-fed newly arrived babies.

Namjoyan spent months in an overcrowded camp. She learned Greek. She struggled with illness and depression as her marriage collapsed. She tried to make a fresh start in Germany but eventually returned to Lesbos, the island that first embraced her. Today, she works at a restaurant, preparing Iranian dishes that locals devour, even if they struggle to pronounce the names. Her second child tells her, "I'm Greek."

"Greece is close to my culture, and I feel good here," Namjoyan said. "I am proud of myself."

In 2015, more than 1 million migrants and refugees arrived in Europe — the majority by sea, landing in Lesbos, where the north shore is just 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Turkey. The influx of men, women and children fleeing war and poverty sparked a humanitarian crisis that shook the European Union to its core. A decade later, the fallout still reverberates on the island and beyond.

For many, Greece was a place of transit. They continued on to northern and western Europe. Many who applied for asylum were granted international protection; thousands became European citizens. Countless more were rejected, languishing for years in migrant camps or living in the streets. Some returned to their home countries. Others were kicked out of the European Union.

For Namjoyan, Lesbos is a welcoming place — many islanders share a refugee ancestry, and it helps that she speaks their language. But migration policy in Greece, like much of Europe, has shifted toward deterrence in the decade since the crisis. Far fewer people are arriving illegally. Officials and politicians have maintained that strong borders are needed. Critics say enforcement has gone too far and violates fundamental EU rights and values.

"Migration is now at the top of the political agenda, which it didn't use to be before 2015," said Camille Le Coz Director of the Migration Policy Institute Europe, noting changing EU alliances. "We are seeing a shift toward the right of the political spectrum."

### A humanitarian crisis turned into a political one

In 2015, boat after boat crowded with refugees crashed onto the doorstep of Elpiniki Laoumi, who runs a fish tavern across from a Lesbos beach. She fed them, gave them water, made meals for aid organizations.

"You would look at them and think of them as your own children," said Laoumi, whose tavern walls today are decorated with thank-you notes.

From 2015 to 2016, the peak of the migration crisis, more than 1 million people entered Europe through Greece alone. The immediate humanitarian crisis — to feed, shelter and care for so many people at once — grew into a long-term political one.

Greece was reeling from a crippling economic crisis. The influx added to anger against established political parties, fueling the rise of once-fringe populist forces.

EU nations fought over sharing responsibility for asylum seekers. The bloc's unity cracked as some member states flatly refused to take migrants. Anti-migration voices calling for closed borders became louder.

### Today, illegal migration is down across Europe

While illegal migration to Greece has fluctuated, numbers are nowhere near 2015-16 figures, according to the International Organization for Migration. Smugglers adapted to heightened surveillance, shifting to more dangerous routes.

Overall, irregular EU border crossings decreased by nearly 40% last year and continue to fall, according to EU border and coast guard agency Frontex.

That hasn't stopped politicians from focusing on — and sometimes fearmongering over — migration. This month, the Dutch government collapsed after a populist far-right lawmaker withdrew his party's ministers

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over migration policy.

In Greece, the new far-right migration minister has threatened rejected asylum seekers with jail time.

A few miles from where Namjoyan now lives, in a forest of pine and olive trees, is a new EU-funded migrant center. It's one of the largest in Greece and can house up to 5,000 people.

Greek officials denied an Associated Press request to visit. Its opening is blocked, for now, by court challenges.

Some locals say the remote location seems deliberate — to keep migrants out of sight and out of mind.

"We don't believe such massive facilities are needed here. And the location is the worst possible — deep inside a forest," said Panagiotis Christofas, mayor of Lesbos' capital, Mytilene. "We're against it, and I believe that's the prevailing sentiment in our community."

## **A focus on border security**

For most of Europe, migration efforts focus on border security and surveillance.

The European Commission this year greenlighted the creation of "return" hubs — a euphemism for deportation centers — for rejected asylum seekers. Italy has sent unwanted migrants to its centers in Albania, even as that faces legal challenges.

Governments have resumed building walls and boosting surveillance in ways unseen since the Cold War.

In 2015, Frontex was a small administrative office in Warsaw. Now, it's the EU's biggest agency, with 10,000 armed border guards, helicopters, drones and an annual budget of over 1 billion euros.

On other issues of migration — reception, asylum and integration, for example — EU nations are largely divided.

## **The legacy of Lesbos**

Last year, EU nations approved a migration and asylum pact laying out common rules for the bloc's 27 countries on screening, asylum, detention and deportation of people trying to enter without authorization, among other things.

"The Lesbos crisis of 2015 was, in a way, the birth certificate of the European migration and asylum policy," Margaritis Schinas, a former European Commission vice president and a chief pact architect, told AP.

He said that after years of fruitless negotiations, he's proud of the landmark compromise.

"We didn't have a system," Schinas said. "Europe's gates had been crashed."

The deal, endorsed by the United Nations refugee agency, takes effect next year. Critics say it made concessions to hardliners. Human rights organizations say it will increase detention and erode the right to seek asylum.

Some organizations also criticize the "externalization" of EU border management — agreements with countries across the Mediterranean to aggressively patrol their coasts and hold migrants back in exchange for financial assistance.

The deals have expanded, from Turkey to the Middle East and across Africa. Human rights groups say autocratic governments are pocketing billions and often subject the displaced to appalling conditions.

## **Lesbos still sees some migrants arrive**

Lesbos' 80,000 residents look back at the 2015 crisis with mixed feelings.

Fisherman Stratos Valamios saved some children. Others drowned just beyond his reach, their bodies still warm as he carried them to shore.

"What's changed from back then to now, 10 years on? Nothing," he said. "What I feel is anger — that such things can happen, that babies can drown."

Those who died crossing to Lesbos are buried in two cemeteries, their graves marked as "unknown."

Tiny shoes and empty juice boxes with faded Turkish labels can still be found on the northern coast. So can black doughnut-shaped inner tubes, given by smugglers as crude life preservers for children. At Moria, a refugee camp destroyed by fire in 2020, children's drawings remain on gutted building walls.

Migrants still arrive, and sometimes die, on these shores. Lesbos began to adapt to a quieter, more measured flow of newcomers.

Efi Latsoudi, who runs a network helping migrants learn Greek and find jobs, hopes Lesbos' tradition of helping outsiders in need will outlast national policies.



"The way things are developing, it's not friendly for newcomers to integrate into Greek society," Latsoudi said. "We need to do something. ... I believe there is hope."

## Mexico assesses damage from Hurricane Erick as rising rivers leave at least 1 dead

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ and LUIS ALBERTO CRUZ Associated Press

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP) — Authorities in southern Mexico were still assessing damage and watching rising rivers Friday as rain from the remnants of Hurricane Erick doused the region.

Torrential rains over steep coastal mountains and the landslides and flooding they could generate became the ongoing concern for officials after Erick dissipated following a landfall early Thursday on a sparsely populated stretch of coast.

The storm's death toll remained at one Friday, a 1-year-old boy who drowned in a swollen river, President Claudia Sheinbaum said. She also said she planned to visit the affected region Friday.

Power had been restored to about half the 277,000 customers who lost it and soldiers, marines and National Guard were helping to remove debris and reopen roads in Guerrero and Oaxaca state where Erick passed.

Erick came ashore down southern Mexico's Pacific coast in the morning as a Category 3 major hurricane, but it landed between the resort cities of Acapulco and Puerto Escondido. It dissipated Thursday night over the mountains in Michoacan state.

Authorities reported landslides, blocked highways, downed power lines and some flooding as coastal residents, above all in Acapulco, took the storm seriously with memories of the devastating Hurricane Otis in 2023 still fresh in their minds.

### Erick once had Category 4 strength

Erick had strengthened to a Category 4 storm as it approached the coast but weakened before making landfall to a Category 3.

Having doubled in strength in less than a day, Erick churned through an ideal environment for quick intensification. Last year, there were 34 incidents of rapid intensification — when a storm gains at least 55 kph (35 mph) in 24 hours — which is about twice the average and causes problems with forecasting, according to the hurricane center.

### One death reported

Authorities had warned the heavy rain would become the problem. On Friday, National Civil Defense Coordinator Laura Velázquez said a river in Juchitan, Oaxaca had spilled over its banks and some families had moved to shelter.

Forecasters had expected up to 40 centimeters (16 inches) of rain could fall across Oaxaca and Guerrero, with lesser totals in Chiapas, Michoacan, Colima and Jalisco states. The rainfall threatened flooding and mudslides, especially in areas with steep terrain.

Late Thursday, Guerrero state Civil Defense Director Roberto Arroyo said that a 1-year-old boy had died in San Marcos, an inland community southeast of Acapulco in the path of Erick. The child's mother had tried to cross a swollen river while carrying the child, but he slipped from her arms and drowned.

### Acapulco still scarred by Otis

Restaurants, shops and supermarkets gradually reopened in Acapulco, but schools were to remain closed across Guerrero on Friday as authorities continued to assess damage, clear debris and monitor rising rivers.

On Friday, the port was cloudy, but the rain had stopped.

Acapulco residents had braced for Erick's arrival with more preparation and trepidation because of the memory of the devastation two years earlier.

The city of nearly 1 million was hit in October 2023 by Hurricane Otis, a Category 5 hurricane that rapidly intensified and caught many unprepared. At least 52 people died in Otis and the storm severely damaged almost all of the resort's hotels.

"Many of us were frightened, but now it has passed," Juan Carlos Castañeda, a 49-year-old security guard at an Acapulco condominium complex, said the previous night. He said the "tragedy of Otis marked all of us."

Despite the rain, Castañeda decided to go out for a walk.

## UK lawmakers back a bill to allow terminally ill adults to end their lives

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.K. lawmakers on Friday approved a bill to allow terminally ill adults in England and Wales to choose to end their lives, taking it one step nearer to becoming law.

The vote backing what is generally termed "assisted dying" — sometimes referred to as "assisted suicide" — is potentially the biggest change to social policy in the U.K. since abortion was partially legalized in 1967.

Members of Parliament voted 314-291 to back the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill following an impassioned debate. The majority of 23 was less than the 55 when they last voted on the issue in November, meaning that some lawmakers changed their minds in the intervening months.

Since November, the bill has been scrutinized, leading to some changes in the proposed legislation, which has been shepherded through Parliament by Kim Leadbeater, the Labour lawmaker who proposed the bill.

"I appreciate it's a huge moment for the country," she told Sky News after the vote. "It was a huge sense of relief because this is the right thing to do."

The bill now goes to the unelected House of Lords, which can amend or delay policy, though it can't overrule the lower chamber.

### What lawmakers voted on

The bill would allow terminally ill adults over age 18 in England and Wales, who are deemed to have less than six months to live, to apply for an assisted death. The bill doesn't apply to Northern Ireland or Scotland, which is holding its own vote on the issue.

One of the most important changes to the bill from last November was the dropping of the requirement that a judge sign off on any decision. Many in the legal profession had objected.

Now any request would be subject to approval by two doctors and a panel featuring a social worker, senior legal figure and psychiatrist.

Changes were also made to ensure the establishment of independent advocates to support people with learning disabilities, autism or mental health conditions and the creation of a disability advisory board.

After receiving a go-ahead from doctors and the panel, the terminally ill person would have to be capable of taking the fatal drugs themselves.

Another big change made was that "no person," including doctors, social care workers and pharmacists, will be obliged to take part.

### Divisive issue

The bill has divided lawmakers for months. The vote was a free one, meaning lawmakers vote according to their conscience rather than on party lines. Alliances have formed across the political divide.

Proponents of the bill argued that those with a terminal diagnosis must be given a choice at the end of their lives to relieve their suffering. They also said that the current situation discriminates against the poor as wealthy individuals can already travel to Switzerland, which allows foreigners to legally end their lives, while others have to face possible prosecution for helping their loved ones die.

However, opponents warned that the most vulnerable in society, such as disabled and older people, could be at risk of being coerced, directly or indirectly, into ending their lives to save money or relieve the burden on family members.

Both sides agreed on the need to make improvements in palliative care and greater investments in hospices to ease suffering.

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Passions ran high outside of Parliament where hundreds of people gathered to make their voices heard. Supporters were dressed in clothing emblazoned with the phrase "Campaign for Dignity in Dying," while opponents held up banners urging lawmakers not to make the state-run National Health Service the "National Suicide Service."

Supporters wept, jumped and hugged each other as the bill was backed.

"This is for all the people who couldn't be here today," said Sarah Wootton, chief executive of Dignity in Dying. "This vote sends a clear message. Parliament stands with the public and change is coming."

## **Timeline for the bill**

The legislation now goes to the unelected House of Lords. Any amendments would then go back to the House of Commons.

There's also the possibility of legal challenge to the policy. Opposition campaigners such as "Right To Life U.K." and "Care Not Killing" said after the vote that they weren't giving up the fight.

Backers of the bill say implementation will take four years, rather than the initially suggested two. That means it could become law in 2029, around the time that the next general election must be held.

## **Government stance**

There is clearly no consensus in the Cabinet about the measure.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer backed the bill on Friday, while his health secretary, Wes Streeting, voted against.

The government has said it will respect the outcome.

However, it's not clear what the cost implications are, or how it would impact the NHS, hospice care and the legal system.

## **Nations where assisted dying is legal**

Other countries that have legalized assisted suicide include Australia, Belgium, Canada and parts of the United States, with regulations on who is eligible varying by jurisdiction.

Assisted suicide is different from euthanasia, allowed in the Netherlands and Canada, which involves health care practitioners administering a lethal injection at the patient's request in specific circumstances.

## **Juneteenth celebrations across the US commemorate the end of slavery**

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. (AP) — Juneteenth celebrations unfolded across the U.S. on Thursday, marking the day in 1865 when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved Black people in Texas and attracting participants who said current events strengthened their resolve to be heard.

The holiday has been celebrated by Black Americans for generations, but became more widely observed after being designated a federal holiday in 2021 by former President Joe Biden, who attended a Juneteenth event at a church in Galveston, Texas, the holiday's birthplace.

Biden said he was proud to sign the law making Juneteenth a federal holiday because "all Americans should know the weight and power of this day."

"Some say to me and you that this doesn't deserve to be a federal holiday. They don't want to remember what we all remember, the moral stain of slavery," he said.

The celebrations come as President Donald Trump's administration has worked to ban diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, or DEI, in the federal government and remove content about Black American history from federal websites. Trump's travel ban on visitors from select countries has also led to bitter national debate.

In Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Robert Reid waved a large Juneteenth flag at the city's African Burying Ground Memorial Park, where African drummers and dancers led the crowd in song and dance. Reid, 60, said he attended in part to stand against what he called Trump's "divide and conquer" approach.

"It's time for people to get pulled together instead of separated," he said.

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Jordyn Sorapuru, 18, visiting New Hampshire from California, called the large turnout a “beautiful thing.” “It’s nice to be celebrated every once in a while, especially in the political climate right now,” she said. “With the offensive things going on right now, with brown people in the country and a lot of people being put at risk for just existing, having celebrations like this is really important.”

## Juneteenth’s origins and this year’s celebrations

The holiday to mark the end of slavery in the U.S. goes back to an order issued on June 19, 1865, as Union troops arrived in Galveston at the end of the Civil War. General Order No. 3 declared that all enslaved people in the state were free and had “absolute equality.”

Juneteenth is recognized at least as an observance in every state, and nearly 30 states and Washington, D.C., have designated it as a permanent paid or legal holiday through legislation or executive action.

In Virginia, a ceremonial groundbreaking was held for rebuilding the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, one of the nation’s oldest Black churches.

In Fort Worth, Texas, about 2,500 people participated in Opal Lee’s annual Juneteenth walk. The 98-year-old Lee, known as the “grandmother of Juneteenth” for the years she spent advocating to make the day a federal holiday, was recently hospitalized and didn’t participate in public this year. But her granddaughter, Dione Sims, said Lee was “in good spirits.”

“The one thing that she would tell the community and the nation at large is to hold on to your freedoms,” Sims said. “Hold on to your freedom and don’t let it go, because it’s under attack right now.”

Events were planned throughout the day in Galveston, including a parade, a celebration at a park with music and the service at Reedy Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church that Biden attended.

During a Juneteenth speech in Maryland, Gov. Wes Moore announced pardons for 6,938 cases of simple marijuana possession, which can hinder employment and educational opportunities and have disproportionately affected the Black community.

Moore, a Democrat who is Maryland’s first Black governor and the only Black governor currently serving, last year ordered tens of thousands of pardons for marijuana possession. The newly announced pardons weren’t included in that initial announcement because they’d been incorrectly coded.

In New Hampshire, Thursday’s gathering capped nearly two weeks of events organized by the Black History Trail of New Hampshire aimed at both celebrating Juneteenth and highlighting contradictions in the familiar narratives about the nation’s founding fathers ahead of next year’s 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

“In a time when efforts to suppress Black history are on the rise, and by extension, to suppress American history, we stand firm in the truth,” said JerriAnne Boggis, the Heritage Trail’s executive director. “This is not just Black history, it is all of our history.”

## What Trump has said about Juneteenth

During his first administration, Trump issued statements each June 19, including one that ended with “On Juneteenth 2017, we honor the countless contributions made by African Americans to our Nation and pledge to support America’s promise as the land of the free.”

When White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt was asked during her Thursday media briefing whether the president would commemorate the holiday this year, she replied, “I’m not tracking his signature on a proclamation today.”

Later Thursday Trump complained on his social media site about “too many non-working holidays” and said it is “costing our Country \$BILLIONS OF DOLLARS to keep all of these businesses closed.” Most retailers are open on Juneteenth, while federal workers generally get a day off because the government is closed.

New Hampshire, one of the nation’s whitest states, is not among those with a permanent, paid or legal Juneteenth holiday, and Boggis said her hope that lawmakers would take action making it one is waning.

“I am not so sure anymore given the political environment we’re in,” she said. “I think we’ve taken a whole bunch of steps backwards in understanding our history, civil rights and inclusion.”

Still, she hopes New Hampshire’s events and those elsewhere will make a difference.

“It’s not a divisive tool to know the truth. Knowing the truth helps us understand some of the current



issues that we're going through," she said.

And if spreading that truth comes with a bit of fun, all the better, she said.

"When we come together, when we break bread together, we enjoy music together, we learn together, we dance together, we're creating these bonds of community," she said. "As much as we educate, we also want to celebrate together."

## Democrats in Virginia have a big fundraising advantage in the race for governor this year

By OLIVIA DIAZ Associated Press/Report for America

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Democrats in Virginia have built up a hefty fundraising advantage for their effort to reclaim the governor's mansion in a race seen as a bellwether for the party in power in Washington heading into the 2026 midterms.

Democrat Abigail Spanberger, a former CIA case officer turned congresswoman, has a more than 2-to-1 fundraising advantage over her GOP opponent in November, Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears, who has struggled to draw support from her fellow Republicans. Both were unopposed for their party's nominations and were able to focus on the fall general election without having to overcome a challenge in this week's primaries. The matchup means Virginia is all but certain to elect the state's first female governor.

Spanberger has amassed \$6.5 million toward her campaign for governor over the last two months after raising \$6.7 million between January and March, according to the nonpartisan Virginia Public Access Project. Combined with the money Spanberger raised in 2024, she has gathered \$22.8 million and still has \$14.3 million in her coffers.

Earle-Sears, meanwhile, spent more than she earned between April and June, bringing in \$3.5 million and spending \$4.6 million. Between January and March, she also raised a little over \$3.1 million. In total, she has raked in nearly \$9.2 million since launching her campaign last September. Now, she has a little under \$3 million in the bank, according to Virginia Public Access Project data.

In a statement, Earle-Sears' campaign said the candidate is putting forward a message for Virginians that money can't buy.

"Clearly the Spanberger campaign needs a lot of help attempting to erase Abigail's bad voting record on issues that actually matter to Virginians," press secretary Peyton Vogel said in an email. "This race isn't being bought — it's being built on a message that matters."

Virginia is one of two states, along with New Jersey, that host statewide elections this year. The contests will be closely watched as a measure of whether voters in the shadow of Washington will embrace President Donald Trump's aggressive effort to overhaul the federal government, or be repelled by it.

Democrats' fundraising lead ahead of the primaries may reflect local Democratic enthusiasm and the party's ability to push people to the polls in light of Trump being in office. Mark J. Rozell, dean of George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government, also referenced the noticeable frostiness among leading state Republicans. The party's statewide nominees have yet to campaign together, despite securing their nominations at the end of April.

"Enthusiasm drives fundraising and in Virginia right now the Democrats' voting base has much greater enthusiasm" than Republicans, Rozell said. "It is reminiscent of Trump's first term in office when Democratic fundraising and ultimately voting overwhelmed the Republicans in Virginia."

Money does not guarantee success, however. In the last Virginia governor's race, former Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe outspent Republican Glenn Youngkin, who had invested \$20 million of his own money in the race. Youngkin won the election by nearly two percentage points.

Youngkin, who is term-limited from seeking reelection, has offered more than \$21,000 in support to Earle-Sears through his political action committee.

When asked whether he would donate more, his PAC responded, "Governor Youngkin is working to elect the entire GOP ticket and is urging all Virginians to support the commonsense team this November to keep Virginia winning."

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The Democrats' fundraising advantage isn't confined to the governor's race.

State Sen. Ghazala Hashmi, who eked out a primary win in a close three-way contest for lieutenant governor, raised nearly \$1.8 million in her primary race and has \$462,000 remaining.

The Republican nominee, conservative talk-radio host John Reid, raised nearly \$312,000 since launching his campaign and has \$116,000 remaining.

The only statewide GOP candidate with a fundraising lead, incumbent Attorney General Jason Miyares, has \$2.3 million in the bank after raising a total of \$4.6 million. His Democratic opponent, Jay Jones, has raised \$2.7 million. He had about \$493,000 left at the beginning of June, reports show.

This year, all three Democratic statewide candidates are backed by Clean Virginia, a political group that pushes for clean energy and often takes on legislative challenges against Dominion Energy, Virginia's largest utility.

The two groups are some of the most influential entities lobbying on state politics and policy. With energy demand likely to be a key issue in November, their influence could be significant.

According to the nonpartisan public access group, Spanberger has taken in \$465,000 from the environmental organization. On Tuesday, Clean Virginia endorsed Hashmi's candidacy for lieutenant governor, following its previous donations to her state Senate campaign committee.

During his campaign, Jones also received \$1.5 million from Clean Virginia, while his primary opponent, Democrat Shannon Taylor, accepted \$800,000 from Dominion Energy between 2024 and 2025. Clean Virginia released attack ads targeting Taylor for accepting Dominion money.

The energy utility has become entangled in other statewide battles. On the Republican ticket, Earle-Sears accepted \$50,000 from Dominion in March. Miyares also gained \$450,000 from the utility so far this year.

Clean Virginia has donated to both Democrats and Republicans, including to candidates running for the House of Delegates, where all 100 members are up for reelection in November.

Democrats who control the legislature are hoping to keep or expand their thin majority and amend the state's Constitution to protect rights to voting, marriage equality and abortion.

Democratic candidates have raised about \$16.9 million in those races, with \$3.2 million stemming from House Speaker Don Scott.

Meanwhile, Republicans have raised \$8.8 million, with former Minority Leader Todd Gilbert earning over \$643,000, and newly tapped Minority Leader Terry Kilgore raising nearly \$470,000.

## **Food rations are halved in one of Africa's largest refugee camps after US aid cuts**

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

KAKUMA, Kenya (AP) — Martin Komol sighs as he inspects his cracked, mud-walled house that is one rain away from fully collapsing. Nothing seems to last for him and 300,000 other refugees in this remote Kakuma camp in Kenya — now, not even food rations.

Funding for the U.N. World Food Program has dropped after the Trump administration paused support in March, part of the widespread dismantling of foreign aid by the United States, once the world's biggest donor.

That means Komol, a widowed father of five from Uganda, has been living on handouts from neighbors since his latest monthly ration ran out two weeks ago. He said he survives on one meal a day, sometimes a meal every two days.

"When we can't find anyone to help us, we become sick, but when we go to the hospital, they say it's just hunger and tell us to go back home," the 59-year-old said. His wife is buried here. He is reluctant to return to Uganda, one of the more than 20 home countries of Kakuma's refugees.

Food rations have been halved. Previous ration cuts led to protests in March. Monthly cash transfers that refugees used to buy proteins and vegetables to supplement the rice, lentils and cooking oil distributed by WFP have ended this month.

Each refugee now receives 3 kilograms (6 pounds) of rice per month, far below the 9 kilograms recom-

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mended by the U.N. for optimal nutrition. WFP hopes to receive the next donation of rice by August. That's along with 1 kilogram of lentils and 500 milliliters of cooking oil per person.

"Come August, we are likely to see a more difficult scenario. If WFP doesn't receive any funding between now and then, it means only a fraction of the refugees will be able to get assistance. It means only the most extremely vulnerable will be targeted," said Colin Buleti, WFP's head in Kakuma. WFP is seeking help from other donors.

As dust swirls along paths between the camp's makeshift houses, the youngest children run and play, largely unaware of their parents' fears.

But they can't escape hunger. Komol's 10-year-old daughter immerses herself in schoolbooks when there's nothing to eat.

"When she was younger she used to cry, but now she tries to ask for food from the neighbors, and when she can't get any she just sleeps hungry," Komol said. In recent weeks, they have drunk water to try to feel full.

The shrinking rations have led to rising cases of malnutrition among children under 5 and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

At Kakuma's largest hospital, run by the International Rescue Committee, children with malnutrition are given fortified formula milk.

Nutrition officer Sammy Nyang'a said some children are brought in too late and die within the first few hours of admission. The 30-bed stabilization ward admitted 58 children in March, 146 in April and 106 in May. Fifteen children died in April, up from the monthly average of five. He worries they will see more this month.

"Now with the cash transfers gone, we expect more women and children to be unable to afford a balanced diet," Nyang'a said.

The hospital had been providing nutrient-dense porridge for children and mothers, but the flour has run out after stocks, mostly from the U.S., were depleted in March. A fortified peanut paste given to children who have been discharged is also running out, with current supplies available until August.

In the ward of whimpering children, Susan Martine from South Sudan cares for her 2-year-old daughter, who has sores after swelling caused by severe malnutrition.

The mother of three said her family often sleeps hungry, but her older children still receive hot lunches from a WFP school feeding program. For some children in the camp, it's their only meal. The program also faces pressure from the aid cuts.

"I don't know how we will survive with the little food we have received this month," Martine said.

The funding cuts are felt beyond Kakuma's refugee community. Businessman Chol Jook recorded monthly sales of 700,000 Kenyan shillings (\$5,400) from the WFP cash transfer program and now faces losses.

Those who are hungry could slip into debt as they buy on credit, he said.

## **Today in History: June 21, US Constitution becomes law**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, June 21, the 172nd day of 2025. There are 193 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 21, 1788, the United States Constitution went into effect as New Hampshire became the required ninth state to ratify it.

Also on this date:

In 1834, Cyrus Hall McCormick received a patent for his mechanical reaper.

In 1893, the first Ferris wheel opened to the public as part of the Chicago World's Fair.

In 1942, an Imperial Japanese submarine fired shells at Fort Stevens on the Oregon coast, but caused little damage.

In 1954, scientists of the American Cancer Society presented a study to a meeting of the American Medical Association in San Francisco which found that men who regularly smoked cigarettes died, particularly

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from lung cancer, at a considerably higher rate than non-smokers.

In 1964, civil rights activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner were murdered in Neshoba County, Mississippi; their bodies were found buried in an earthen dam six weeks later. (Forty-one years later, on this date in 2005, Edgar Ray Killen, an 80-year-old former Ku Klux Klansman, was found guilty of manslaughter in their deaths; he was sentenced to 60 years in prison, where he died in January 2018.)

In 1982, a jury in Washington, D.C. found John Hinckley Jr. not guilty by reason of insanity in the shootings of President Ronald Reagan, Press Secretary James Brady, Washington D.C. police officer Thomas Delahanty and Secret Service agent Tim McCarthy.

In 1989, a sharply divided Supreme Court ruled, in *Texas v. Johnson*, that burning the American flag as a form of political protest was protected by the First Amendment.

In 1997, the WNBA made its debut as the New York Liberty defeated the host Los Angeles Sparks 67-57.

In 2004, the aircraft SpaceShipOne made the first privately funded human spaceflight.

In 2010, Faisal Shahzad, a Pakistan-born U.S. citizen, pleaded guilty to charges of plotting a failed car bombing in New York's Times Square. (Shahzad was later sentenced to life in prison.)

Today's Birthdays: Composer Lalo Schiffrin is 93. Musician Ray Davies (The Kinks) is 81. Actor Meredith Baxter is 78. Nobel peace prize laureate Shirin Ebadi is 78. Actor Michael Gross is 78. Author Ian McEwan is 77. Musician Nils Lofgren is 74. Cartoonist Berkeley Breathed is 68. Country musician Kathy Mattea is 66. Filmmaker Lana Wachowski is 60. Rapper-DJ-producer Pete Rock is 55. Actor Juliette Lewis is 52. Actor Chris Pratt is 46. Rock singer Brandon Flowers (The Killers) is 44. Britain's Prince William is 43. Singer-songwriter Lana Del Rey is 40. Golfer Scottie Scheffler is 29.