

Groton Daily Independent

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Wednesday, June 25

Senior Menu: BBQ Pork Riblet on bun, potato salad, green beans, oranges with vanilla pudding.
Amateurs at Aberdeen, 6 p.m.
Legion hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Jr. Teeners vs. W.I.N. at Northville, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U12 W&R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U10 W&R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U8 W&R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Softball: U8 B vs. U8G, 5:30 p.m.; U10B vs. U8G, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U12 hosts Redfield 2, 6:30 p.m. (DH)

Groton Daily Independent
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Good Morning

Wednesday Blessings

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You. Trust in the LORD forever, for YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength. Isaiah 26:3-4

**Have a
Wonderful
Day
in the Lord!**



United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Thursday, June 26

Senior Menu: Kielbasa with Mac n cheese, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Jr. Legion hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Jr. Teeners at Aberdeen 13U, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Softball: U8G at Claremont, 5:30 p.m.; U14 hosts Redfield 1, 5 p.m. (DH)
T-Ball: Black at Columbia, 5 p.m.

Friday, June 27

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, sweet potato, corn, cherry fluff, dinner roll.
Legion at Lake Norden, 6 p.m.

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1440

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

NATO Spending Hike

NATO leaders are expected to agree to ramp up defense spending when the two-day summit concludes today. Countries may commit to spending 5% of their gross domestic product on defense by 2035—up from the current 2% target, which 22 of the 32 member countries have met.

The commitment responds to a call from President Donald Trump, who has conveyed skepticism about the military alliance's value to the United States. The US is one of NATO's biggest contributors, responsible for roughly 16% of the alliance's collective \$3.5B budget last year. It is also the only country to have triggered Article 5, which assures collective defense for all member countries. Spain struck a deal with NATO to be exempted in the final communique, instead committing 2.1% of its GDP to defense.

Separately, the ceasefire between Israel and Iran appeared to hold yesterday despite violations. An early US intelligence assessment meanwhile reportedly found US strikes set Iran's nuclear program back by months but left its uranium stockpile and centrifuges largely intact. The White House has denied the report. See updates [here](#).

Historic Heat Wave

A record-breaking heat wave is scorching much of the eastern US, with some cities seeing their hottest June temperatures in over a decade. Driven by a powerful heat dome, temperatures have soared 15 to 20 degrees above normal—New York City exceeded its 1888 record Tuesday of 96 degrees—and heat indexes have climbed over 100 degrees in several cities.

Millions remain under heat alerts as the multiday heat wave strains power grids, sparks outages, and disrupts travel, including damaged infrastructure such as buckled roads. Hot days often feel hotter due to high humidity, trapped heat, and elevated dew points, making conditions feel like a sauna. Urban areas are especially vulnerable due to the heat island effect, as asphalt and concrete trap heat overnight. Meteorologists say some relief is expected heading into the weekend.

Separately, Tropical Storm Andrea formed Tuesday in the Atlantic, becoming the first named storm of the 2025 hurricane season. It is not expected to impact any land.

Cult-Connected Killings

A woman tied to the cultlike Zizian group and charged in the death of a US Border Patrol agent appeared in federal court for pretrial proceedings yesterday. Authorities have also connected the radical group composed largely of young computer scientists to homicides in Pennsylvania and California.

Teresa Youngblut, 21, allegedly shot agent David Maland during a January traffic stop in Vermont. She and her companion, Felix Bauckholt, who was killed in the shootout, had been under surveillance for suspected Zizian ties. They were traveling armed and, days earlier, another suspected Zizian had allegedly killed a California landlord.

Authorities linked the gun Youngblut used to a person of interest in a 2022 Pennsylvania double homicide who was arrested in February alongside the group's assumed leader, Jack "Ziz" LaSota. LaSota, a 34-year-old who amassed a following through blogging, was indicted last week on weapons charges.

Though their motives remain unclear, the Zizians' online writings explore anarchy, radical veganism, gender identity, and AI.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2025 NBA Draft kicks off tonight (8 pm ET, ABC/ESPN) with Round 1 from Brooklyn, New York. NBA Finals Game 7 hauled in 16 million viewers, the most for a finals game since 2019. Bobby Sherman, singer, TV actor, and 1960s and 1970s teen idol, dies of cancer at age 81. Mick Ralphs, founding member of influential rock bands Bad Company and Mott the Hoople, dies at age 81. R&B stars Brandy and Monica announce coheadlining "The Boy Is Mine" tour, a 24-city arena tour named after their 1998 chart-topping hit.

Science & Technology

Federal judge rules AI startup Anthropic may train its large language models on published books without authors' permission; marks first legal ruling supporting AI companies' use of copyrighted material. Problems with cholesterol metabolism implicated in the development of macular degeneration; discovery may lead to a treatment for the age-related vision disease that affects around 20 million Americans. Scientists capture the structure of explosive molecules in the moments after detonation; technique simulates explosions by using X-rays to excite molecules under cryogenic conditions.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +1.1%, Dow +1.2%, Nasdaq +1.4%); oil prices fall over 5% amid shaky Israel-Iran truce. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell says interest rate cuts can wait in congressional testimony. CareerBuilder + Monster, a merger of two pioneers in online job recruiting, files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy to facilitate the sale of its operations. Amazon to expand same- or next-day delivery to over 4,000 smaller US communities. Tesla shares fall over 2% as robotaxis appear to violate traffic laws. Chipmaker Nano Labs shares close up 36% amid plans to purchase \$1B of Binance Coin. Stablecoin company Circle shares drop more than 15% as Wall Street flags risk of increasing competition.

Politics & World Affairs

New York City mayoral primary heads to ranked-choice count after no Democratic candidate earns more than 50% of the vote; Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani leads with nearly 44% of the votes, former Gov. Andrew Cuomo concedes after receiving 36% of the votes. Florida's Operation Dragon Eye rescues 60 missing children ages 9 to 17, leads to eight arrests; operation is the largest rescue of missing children in US history. Sudan's army accused of attack on hospital in West Kordofan state killing more than 40 people; army has not commented on the allegation as of this writing. The US authorizes \$30M to Israeli-backed group distributing food in Gaza.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Defeat Miller

By GameChanger Media

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion defeated Miller 7-2 on Tuesday at 411 W Third Ave.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion jumped out to the lead in the bottom of the first inning after T.C Schuster singled, scoring one run, and an error scored two runs.

A single by Schuster, an error, and an error helped Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion extend their early lead in the third.

Schuster earned the win for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The starter allowed one hit and zero runs over three innings, striking out six and walking none. Dillan Otto took the loss for Miller. The starter went four innings, surrendering seven runs (one earned) on five hits, striking out two and walking one. Xavior Elenecker collected the save.

Schuster provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with two runs batted in. The pitcher went 2-for-2 on the day. Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Kason Oswald had the most chances in the field with seven.

Sam Crago led Miller with one run batted in. The cleanup hitter went 1-for-2 on the day. Chase Hurd went 2-for-2 at the plate to lead Miller in hits. Miller turned one double play in the game.

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Miller 2 - 7 Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion

📍 Home 📅 Tuesday June 24, 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	R	H	E
MLLR	0	0	0	2	0	2	4	6
GRTN	3	0	4	0	X	7	5	0

BATTING

Miller	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
D Range #18 (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	1
W Hosman #11 (SS)	2	1	1	0	0	0
C Hurd #15 (CF)	2	1	2	0	0	0
S Crago #19 (C)	2	0	1	1	0	1
G Range #28 (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	2
E Fritzsc... #33 (1B)	2	0	0	0	0	1
S Rosela... #36 (3B)	2	0	0	0	0	1
D Otto #12 (P)	2	0	0	0	0	1
R Munger #13 (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	18	2	4	1	0	8

TB: S Crago, C Hurd 2, W Hosman, **CS:** S Crago, **SB:** C Hurd, W Hosman, **LOB:** 1

PITCHING

Miller	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
D Otto #12	4.0	5	7	1	1	2	0
Totals	4.0	5	7	1	1	2	0

L: D Otto, **P-S:** D Otto 73-47, **HBP:** D Otto, **BF:** D Otto 24

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
L Krause #2 (CF)	2	1	0	0	1	0
A Abeln #5 (SS)	3	1	1	0	0	0
N Groeblich... #13	2	0	0	0	0	0
T Schuster #3 (P)	2	2	2	2	0	0
X Ellene... #21 (P)	1	0	0	0	0	1
E Kroll #14 (RF)	2	1	1	0	0	0
R Schelle #8 (RF)	0	0	0	0	0	0
B Fliehs #19 (1B)	2	1	1	0	0	0
T McGan... #22 (LF)	2	1	0	0	0	0
J Schwan #11 (LF)	0	0	0	0	0	0
I Scean... #20 (3B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
J Bisbee #15 (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	1
K Oswald #12 (C)	2	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	22	7	5	2	1	2

TB: A Abeln, E Kroll, B Fliehs, T Schuster 2, **HBP:** N Groeblichhoff, **SB:** A Abeln, **LOB:** 5

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion	IP	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
T Schust... #3	3.0	1	0	0	6	0
X Ellen... #21	2.0	3	2	2	2	0
Totals	5.0	4	2	2	8	0

W: T Schuster, **P-S:** X Ellenecker 32-18, T Schuster 38-24, **WP:** T Schuster, **BF:** X Ellenecker 8, T Schuster 10

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Defeat Miller On Multiple Hit Performance By T.C Schuster

By GameChanger Media

T.C Schuster collected three hits in four at bats, as Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion defeated Miller 12-2 on Tuesday. Schuster tripled in the sixth inning, singled in the first inning, and singled in the fourth inning.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion won thanks in part to eight runs in the third inning. Nick Groebelinghoff singled, scoring one run, an error scored one run, Ryder Schelle tripled, scoring two runs, Xavier Ellenecker drew a walk, scoring one run, an error scored one run, and Alex Abeln singled, scoring two runs.

Miller opened the scoring in the top of the first thanks to two errors. Miller first got on the board when an error scored one run.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion took the lead, 3-2, in the bottom of the first thanks to singles by Schuster, and Jordan Schwan.

Schelle earned the win for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The starter surrendered one hit and two runs (zero earned) over five innings, striking out six and walking one. Sam Crago took the loss for Miller. The starter went two and two-thirds innings, giving up 11 runs (three earned) on seven hits, striking out one and walking five. Isaiah Scepaniak tossed one inning of shutout ball for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion in relief. The pitcher surrendered zero hits, striking out none and walking two.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion collected 11 hits in the game. Schwan led Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with three runs batted in. The center fielder went 1-for-3 on the day. Lincoln Krause and Braeden Fliehs each collected multiple hits for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. Ellenecker paced Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with two walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, collecting six walks for the game. Krause stole four bases. Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion ran wild on the base paths, tallying seven stolen bases for the game. Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion turned one double play in the game.

Chase Hurd led Miller with one hit in three at bats. Miller turned one double play in the game.

Next up for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion is a game against Britton U17 Teeners on Thursday.

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Miller 2 - 12 Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	R	H	E
MLLR	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	4
GRTN	3	0	8	0	0	1	12	11	3

BATTING

Miller	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
W Hosman #11 (LF)	2	0	0	0	1	0
C Fanning #21 (CF)	3	0	0	0	0	1
C Hurd #15 (C)	3	1	1	0	0	0
S Crago #19 (P)	3	1	0	0	0	0
J Lacombe #16 (SS)	1	0	0	0	1	0
G Runge #28 (RF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
H Maul #17 (SS)	2	0	0	0	0	2
S Rosela... #36 (1B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
C Caven... #42 (3B)	2	0	0	0	0	1
E Frinsy #33 (2B)	1	0	0	0	1	1
#18 (2B)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	21	2	1	0	3	6

TB: C Hurd, **SB:** #18, **LOB:** 4

PITCHING

Miller	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
S Crago #19	2.2	7	11	3	5	1	0
H Maul #17	3.0	4	1	1	1	0	0
Totals	5.2	11	12	4	6	1	0

L: S Crago, **P-S:** H Maul 38-23, S Crago 80-42, **WP:** S Crago 3, **BF:** H Maul 14, S Crago 22

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
L Krause #2 (C)	4	2	2	0	0	0
A Abeln #5 (SS)	3	0	1	2	1	0
N Groebl... #13 (1B)	3	2	1	1	1	0
T Schuster #3 (3B)	4	3	3	1	0	0
E Kroll #14 (2B)	2	1	0	1	1	0
J Schwan #11 (CF)	3	0	1	3	0	0
R Schelle #8 (P)	3	1	1	2	0	0
I Scepanski #20 (P)	1	0	0	0	0	0
X Ellene... #21 (RF)	0	1	0	0	2	0
K Oswald #12 (RF)	1	0	0	0	0	0
J Bisbee #15	0	0	0	0	0	0
T McGan... #22 (LF)	2	1	0	0	1	0
B Fliehs #19	3	1	2	0	0	1
Totals	29	12	11	10	6	1

3B: R Schelle, T Schuster, **TB:** R Schelle 3, T Schuster 5, J Schwan, N Groebelinghoff, A Abeln, L Krause 2, B Fliehs 2, **SF:** J Schwan, **SB:** J Schwan, N Groebelinghoff, L Krause 4, B Fliehs, **LOB:** 7

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Schelle #8	5.0	1	2	0	1	6	0
I Scepanski #20	1.0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Totals	6.0	1	2	0	3	6	0

W: R Schelle, **P-S:** R Schelle 71-46, I Scepanski 21-6, **BF:** R Schelle 19, I Scepanski 5

First West Nile Detection of Season in Minnehaha County

PIERRE, SD – The South Dakota Department of Health has confirmed the first West Nile virus (WNV) mosquito pools of the season have been detected in Minnehaha County. Officials urge individuals across the state to take simple steps to protect themselves and their families against WNV, which can cause symptoms such as fever, headaches, rash, swollen lymph nodes, and muscle and joint aches.

“Given the rural nature of our state and increased outdoor activities during the summer, protecting yourself against mosquito bites remains an important factor against West Nile infection,” said Dr. Joshua Clayton, State Epidemiologist for the Department of Health. “Using bug spray or limiting activities between dusk-to-dawn hours can reduce your infection risk significantly.”

Prevent mosquito bites and reduce the risk of WNV by taking the following precautions:

Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus 2-undecanone, para-menthane-diol, or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening.

Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when mosquitoes are most active. *Culex tarsalis* is the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota.

Remove standing water that provides mosquitoes with a breeding ground. Regularly change the water in birdbaths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from other flowerpots and garden containers. Also, avoid areas near standing water.

Support local mosquito control efforts.

Personal precautions are especially important for those at high risk for severe illness from WNV – people over 60 years of age, pregnant women, transplant patients, individuals with cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and kidney disease. Individuals experiencing fever with headache, muscle aches, or rash should consult their physician. South Dakota has reported more than 2,864 human cases and 54 deaths since WNV was first reported in 2002. Every county has reported cases.

For more information on WNV, visit the DOH website.

At the heart of the Department of Health’s mission is a simple goal: to protect and improve the health of all South Dakotans. The department is entrusted with the vital task of promoting wellness, preventing disease, and ensuring access to quality healthcare for all South Dakotans.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Prison task force is offered sites east of Box Elder, near unbuilt hog operation in Sioux Falls

Late-arriving options appear as state faces resistance in Mitchell and Worthing

BY: JOHN HULT - JUNE 24, 2025 6:16 PM

Land that Sioux Falls economic development boosters had once hoped to see anchored by a \$500 million slaughterhouse is now on offer as a men's prison site.

Also a prison site option, as of Tuesday: a hundred-plus acres of ranch land just east of Box Elder, the growing city near Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Letters offering up the Pennington County ranchland and the land near what would have been Wholstone Foods in Sioux Falls

were posted on Tuesday on the Project Prison Reset task force's website. Gov. Larry Rhoden formed the group in February to study options to address the state's swelling correctional population after lawmakers said no to the 1,500-bed, \$850 million prison the governor wanted to build in southern Lincoln County.

The task force has since rejected that Lincoln County site as an option, in spite of the state having spent about \$50 million on it so far, capped the price of a new prison at \$600 million, and asked Rhoden to push back the date of the planned special session of the Legislature next month at which lawmakers would be asked to sign off on a final prison plan. Rhoden agreed to the delay.

Until Tuesday, the task force's two remaining property options for a new prison that don't involve land already owned by the Department of Corrections were outside of Worthing and Mitchell, respectively. Citizens and some community leaders in both cities have rallied against prison construction, however.

The task force winnowed down the options to Worthing, Mitchell and existing DOC properties in Sioux Falls and Springfield from a list of more than a dozen submissions, each sent in response to a request for information a few months ago.



The Project Prison Reset group meets on April 3, 2025, at the Military Heritage Alliance in Sioux Falls. (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

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The state wants at least 100 acres of land for a prison, ideally within 20 miles of its existing penitentiary workforce in Sioux Falls.

Unbuilt slaughterhouse, ranch added to options list

Tuesday's two late-arriving options came from opposite ends of the state.

Sweetman Partners of Sioux Falls sent a letter to the task force on Tuesday to inform the group that if the state wants it, the company would be happy to negotiate a sale of 137 acres of its eastern Sioux Falls property off Interstate 229.

The land is just south of what would have been a 1,000-employee hog operation. Wholestone, part of the Iowa-based, producer-owned Pipestone Cooperative, had recently aimed to open what would have been one of the largest swine butchering operations in South Dakota in that industrial park, and the company still owns the land.

Sioux Falls voted down an effort to ban new slaughterhouses in the city on the 2022 ballot, but the project nonetheless fizzled. By mid-2023, Wholestone had partnered with an Iowa company to meet its production needs.

Today, Sweetman Partners is in the process of selling off smaller hunks of the property just to the south of the Wholestone land. Sweetman's managing partner said in his Tuesday letter to the Project Prison Reset task force that he'd be "willing to sell it all to the State of South Dakota."

"If you are interested and would like to enter into negotiations, please let me know," Thomas Sweetman wrote.

Sweetman told South Dakota Searchlight he got a call near the end of May from someone – he couldn't recall who – asking him if he'd sell the land to the state for a prison. He said yes, and was told to write a letter to the lieutenant governor saying as much.

Lt. Gov. Tony Venuhizen, who leads the prison task force, emailed a copy of the resulting Sweetman letter to his fellow task force members on Tuesday. He also forwarded along the pitch from the economic development coordinator for the city of Box Elder. Both letters were posted to the Project Prison Reset task force website.

The Box Elder letter touts just under 105 acres of land owned by Gikling Ranch LLC as a workable prison option. The city of Box Elder would service the site for water and utilities, the document says, and the state could take advantage of the area's large and growing workforce.

Box Elder has grown rapidly in recent years to meet the Air Force's anticipated needs as it expands the base to host B-21 bombers.

"The city offers a pro-growth climate, excellent access to training and education resources, and a collaborative approach to public-private partnerships," the letter from Box Elder's Sean Overeynder wrote.

Any sale of the land, he said, "is subject to appropriate due diligence and additional discussion with the City of Box Elder," and final approval would need to come from the city council.

The next Project Prison Reset task force meeting is scheduled for July 8 in Sioux Falls.

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

Legislative group studies SD's high incarceration rate, overrepresentation of Indigenous prisoners

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 24, 2025 5:01 PM

SIOUX FALLS — The overrepresentation of Native Americans in state prisons, a lack of rehabilitation programming, and a need for more intervention to keep people out of prison are the biggest issues flagged by members of South Dakota's legislative recidivism and rehabilitation committee.

The group held its first meeting Monday at the University of South Dakota's Sioux Falls campus. The committee is tasked with analyzing the makeup of the prison population, comparing incarceration rates and sentencing laws in similar states, and identifying barriers to inmates' reintegration into society.

South Dakota has the nation's 15th-highest incarceration rate, according to The Sentencing Project. Forty-three percent of adult offenders in South Dakota return to prison within three years of release, according to 2023 statistics from the state Department of Corrections.

Some lawmakers who voted in February against funding to build an \$825 million men's prison said the state should be investing more into rehabilitation programs to reduce its prison population.

Lawmakers on the recidivism and rehabilitation committee may propose bills and funding recommendations during the next legislative session. Some members of the committee also sit on the governor's Project Prison Reset committee, which is searching for a location to build a new prison at a cost up to \$600 million.

Mitchell Republican Rep. Jeff Bathke is the former director of substance abuse programs for the state Department of Corrections and a member of the recidivism and rehabilitation committee. He hopes the group will dig further into rehabilitation and behavioral health programming to understand existing programs and their efficacy.

"Right now, we're just a warehouse. We warehouse people," Bathke told South Dakota Searchlight after the meeting. "Then they come back because we did nothing as a community to help them."

The first meeting supported his belief that the state should hire a consultant to better evaluate the prison system and make recommendations to policy and programming. The state has hired a consultant to study prison construction needs, and that consultant said strict sentencing laws are among the factors



Linsey Sapp, who wears an "Inmate Rights" shirt and whose husband is incarcerated, speaks to lawmakers at an Initial Incarceration, Re-entry Analysis, and Comparison of Relevant States Interim Committee meeting in Sioux Falls on June 24, 2025. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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driving prison population growth.

"This is a severely damaged system," Bathke said. "But it can be great. It can be the best program in the nation, with some changes."

Indigenous overrepresentation

Native Americans account for nearly 40% of the state's prison inmates. They account for about 9% of the state's overall population, according to a presentation from the Legislative Research Council.

That statistic is "alarming," said Rep. Kadya Wittman, D-Sioux Falls, during the meeting. Sioux Falls Republican Rep. Greg Jamison, who co-chairs the committee, told lawmakers he believes the overrepresentation is one of the "biggest issues" facing the committee.

The disparity of Native Americans in the prison system has persisted for decades. Bathke added that offenders sentenced in federal court after crimes on tribal land aren't accounted for in the state data.

"It is way worse than what these numbers actually show," Bathke said.

South Dakota's disparity is higher than similar states analyzed by the committee: Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming. Legislative staff compared the states' prison populations because they share economic and demographic similarities.

Jamison said he hopes to connect with tribal leaders this summer to hear their suggestions for addressing the problem.

South Dakota also has the third highest female incarceration rate in the nation, according to The Sentencing Project. Nearly two-thirds of incarcerated women in the state are Native American, and about half of their worst offenses are drug-related.

North Dakota has the lowest prison population in the four-state comparison presented to the committee, at under 2,000 inmates, along with the lowest incarceration rate and lowest female incarceration rate.

"We're going to have to dig into North Dakota a bit," Jamison said.

'Rehabilitation is important, and we are failing'

Several lawmakers and members of the public raised concerns about rehabilitation programming — both the quality of programs and the number of programs available to inmates. A Department of Corrections employee was not on hand to answer lawmaker questions.

Leaders of a company that trained and employed maximum security inmates at the state penitentiary for two decades said they were pushed out of the prison system by administrators last year, although administrators said the company left voluntarily to avoid adhering to newer, stricter security protocols. Gov. Larry Rhoden announced this week his administration will use economic development dollars from the state's Future Fund to start a diesel mechanic training program in the metal shop's former space.

Linsey Sapp, whose husband is incarcerated, told lawmakers during public comment that the lack of classes and programming is a serious concern, especially if inmates are spending "23 hours a day" in their cells.

"Rehabilitation is important, and we are failing," she said.

Tracii Barse, a Native American business owner who introduced himself as a seven-time felon to lawmakers, said mentorship during and after a prison sentence is necessary to successfully reintegrate inmates into society.

He suggested policy changes to allow ex-inmates to come into the prison to teach classes or mentor current inmates. While there are several volunteers who mentor, former prisoners better understand inmates' history and challenges, he said.

Barse finds it ironic that he's allowed to enter a school to mentor children, despite his background, but he can't use that same experience and connection to help inmates.

Intervention and understanding reoffending

Sen. Tamara Grove, R-Lower Brule, encouraged lawmakers on the committee to explore the path that leads a person to prison and reasons why people reoffend. In better understanding those areas, the state

can intervene, deter and help people while they're in their home, she added.

Doing so would be cheaper, healthier, and keep a community intact — especially given the number of Native Americans removed from their communities due to incarceration, Grove said.

Grove, along with Sen. Kevin Jensen, R-Canton, discussed the possibility of removing a person's felony conviction from their record for certain crimes after an amount of time or after rehabilitation, to help with reintegration and recidivism. Felons are not allowed to live in certain neighborhoods, can't have some jobs and can't own a gun.

"I think, at some point, it has to be where the person has paid for their crime and they move back to wholeness in whatever way that looks," Grove said. "I think that's a really big part of re-entry."

The committee's next meeting will be held in July in the Rapid City area.

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.

Thune, other GOP leaders in US Senate struggle to lessen pain of Medicaid cuts for rural hospitals

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT, ARIANA FIGUEROA, ASHLEY MURRAY AND JACOB FISCHLER -
JUNE 24, 2025 4:17 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senate Republicans were scrambling Tuesday to restructure several proposals in the "big, beautiful bill" that don't meet their chamber's strict rules for passing a reconciliation package, while GOP lawmakers on the other side of the Capitol warned those changes may doom its passage in the House.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said he and several others are working on a way to bolster rural hospitals, which could experience financial strain as a result of the various changes to Medicaid and other health care programs in the package.

"We are working on a solution for rural hospitals and that's something that's been in the works now for several days in response to a number of concerns that our colleagues have mentioned in ensuring that the impact on rural hospitals be lessened, be mitigated," Thune said. "And I think we're making good headway on that solution."

Thune said GOP lawmakers shouldn't let the "perfect be the enemy of the good," though he predicted



U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, speaks to Rotary members on April 17, 2025, at the Elks Lodge in Watertown. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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there "could be" two or three Republicans who vote against the package.

"We've got a lot of very independent-thinking senators who have reasons and things that they'd like to have in this bill that, in their view, would make it stronger," Thune said. "But at the end of the day this is a process whereby not everybody is going to get what they want. And we have to get to 51 in the United States Senate."

More objections to Medicaid cuts

Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, who has been vocal about Medicaid changes and rural hospitals, said he had "no details whatsoever" about the rural hospital fund or how it would work if it's added to the bill.

But he said he's not going to support a bill that takes away working people's health care.

"We've got 1.3 million people on Medicaid in Missouri, hundreds of thousands of kids. That's 21% of my population. Most of these people are working people. They're on Medicaid, not because they're sitting around at home; they're on Medicaid because they don't have a job that gives them health care and they cannot afford to buy it on the exchange," Hawley said. "They don't want to be, but it's their only option. And I just think it's wrong to take away health care coverage from those folks. Now if they're not working, then sure, they should be."

Senate Republican Policy Committee Chair Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., said she had a "lengthy discussion" with her home state's hospital association earlier in the day.

"This has a lot of impacts and we want to make sure we have a lot of rural hospitals. That's why this rural hospital fund idea is developing," Capito said. "I don't think anything is set yet but that is an issue. I think Medicaid, we need to preserve it for the people it's intended for and get rid of the people who don't deserve it and don't qualify and are bilking the system."

Capito said she hadn't yet formed an opinion on the rural hospital fund since there isn't yet a formal proposal written down.

Public lands

In one major development, the Senate parliamentarian ruled Monday that a controversial provision championed by Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Mike Lee to mandate the sale of at least 2 million acres of public lands in 11 Western states did not comply with the chamber's rules for reconciliation.

Lee, a Utah Republican, has said the provision would free up land to build new housing. But Democrats and some Republicans from the affected states strongly opposed it.

Lee said on social media Monday evening that he was working to rewrite the proposal to comply with reconciliation rules. A spokesperson for his office did not return a message seeking comment Tuesday morning.

SNAP cost-sharing under debate

In another turn of events, Senate Agriculture Chairman John Boozman, R-Ark., earlier Tuesday had announced the panel successfully reworked a provision that would transfer some of the cost of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to state governments.

But a spokesperson for the panel said later that the parliamentarian actually has not yet made a ruling. The spokesperson said "we've gotten some clarification from leadership and it's steering in the direction it would be compliant but not official."

Boozman earlier had said his proposal would improve SNAP. "Our commonsense approach encourages states to adopt better practices, reduce error rates, be better stewards of taxpayer dollars, and prioritize the resources for those who truly need it," Boozman wrote in a statement.

The new language, if accepted, would give states the option of selecting fiscal year 2025 or 2026 as the year that the federal government uses to determine its payment error rate for SNAP, which will then impact how much of the cost the state has to cover starting in fiscal year 2028. Afterward, a state's payment error rate will be calculated using the last three fiscal years.

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Any state with an error rate higher than 6% will have to cover a certain percentage of the cost of the nutrition program for lower income households.

Rushing toward deadline

The internal debates among lawmakers about how to rewrite major pieces of the tax and spending cuts package have led to a rushed feeling among Republican leaders, who have repeatedly promised to approve the final bill before the Fourth of July — an exceedingly tight timeline.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said during a press conference shortly after a closed-door House GOP conference meeting Tuesday that he's hopeful the final bill that comes out of the Senate won't make too many changes to what the House approved earlier this year.

"I remain very optimistic that there's not going to be a wide chasm between the two products — what the Senate produces and what we produce," Johnson said. "We all know what the touchpoints are and the areas of greatest concern."

Republicans, he said, know they need to focus on preserving a fragile compromise on the state and local tax deduction, or SALT, that helps offset the cost of living in some higher-tax states like California, New Jersey and New York.

A deal Johnson brokered with GOP lawmakers in the SALT Caucus has been significantly rewritten in the Senate, but is expected to move back toward the House version, though not entirely.

Johnson also mentioned GOP efforts to roll back certain clean-energy provisions that Democrats approved and President Joe Biden signed into law in their signature climate change, health care and tax package, called the Inflation Reduction Act, or IRA, in 2022.

"We've got to get the SALT negotiation number right. We've got to make sure the IRA subsidies are handled in an appropriate manner," Johnson said. "Look, you've got a number of provisions."

Johnson said he expects the Senate to vote on its final bill by Friday or Saturday and that he's told House lawmakers to "keep your schedules flexible" on being in Washington, D.C., for a final House vote.

Trump goads Republicans

President Donald Trump sought to spur quick approval of a final bill, posting on social media that GOP lawmakers should get the package to him as soon as possible.

"To my friends in the Senate, lock yourself in a room if you must, don't go home, and GET THE DEAL DONE THIS WEEK. Work with the House so they can pick it up, and pass it, IMMEDIATELY," Trump wrote Tuesday. "NO ONE GOES ON VACATION UNTIL IT'S DONE. Everyone, most importantly the American People, will be much better off thanks to our work together. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Oklahoma Sen. Markwayne Mullin said there are concerns among his fellow Republicans about all of the provisions that must be removed or significantly reworked to meet the complex rules for moving a reconciliation bill through that chamber.

"Every time something comes out that we're using as a pay for, it takes the deficit reduction down. And they've taken out nearly \$300 billion so far. We've got to make that up," Mullin said after leaving the closed-door House GOP meeting. "The Senate can't come in below the House version as far as deficit reduction. So that makes it difficult."

Mullin, who has been acting as his chamber's top negotiator with SALT Republicans in the House, told reporters he expects the deduction for state and local taxes to remain at the \$40,000 level negotiated in the House. But said the Senate will likely rewrite the \$500,000 income ceiling to qualify for the tax deduction.

"I think 40 is a number we're going to land on," Mullin said. "It's the income threshold that's in negotiations."

Sen. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota said "most of us would like to make it zero."

"I hate the idea of \$40,000 but if that's what it takes to pass the bill, I probably could do it. I would like to maybe find some other tweaks to it, somehow, like changing the income levels," he said.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told reporters he expects a resolution on SALT in the next 24 to 48

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hours.

"I had a very successful lunch meeting with the senators. I think that we are on track," Bessent said.

The 'red line' in the House

New York Republican Rep. Mike Lawler told reporters following the closed-door meeting that Senate leaders shouldn't assume whatever they pass will be accepted by the House.

"I've been very clear about where my red line is. So, you know, we'll let this process play out," Lawler said. "I think the Senate should recognize the only number that matters is 218, and 50 plus 1. That's it. And how do you get there?"

Republicans hold 53 seats in the Senate, so leadership cannot lose more than four votes and still approve the package, given that Democrats are universally opposed.

In the House, GOP leaders have 220 seats and need nearly every one of their members to support whatever the Senate sends back across the Capitol for it to make it to the president's desk before their self-imposed deadline.

In addition to the SALT tax compromise, Lawler said he has concerns about how the Senate has changed other provisions, including those addressing Medicaid, the state-federal health program for lower income people.

"Yeah, there are a number of concerns about decisions that they're making," Lawler said. "And obviously, the bill on their side is not final, so we'll see where it goes."

Missouri Republican Rep. Jason Smith, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee that crafted the tax provisions in the reconciliation bill, stood by the House's version of the Opportunity Zone Tax Incentives. The House version extends the incentive from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act for a year, while the Senate's version makes it permanent.

The Opportunity Zone Tax Incentive was pushed by South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott during the first Trump administration, which aimed to create tax cuts for businesses and real estate to invest in low-income communities, but it had mixed results.

"The tax bill that we're going to deliver is gonna deliver for working families, small businesses and farmers," Smith said.

Thumbs down from one House Republican

House Freedom Caucus Chairman Andy Harris, R-Md., posted on social media that he doesn't support how the Senate has changed the bill and that he would seek to block it from becoming law.

"The currently proposed Senate version of the One Big Beautiful Bill weakens key House priorities—it doesn't do enough to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicaid, it backtracks on Green New Scam elimination included in the House bill, and it greatly increases the deficit – taking us even further from a balanced budget.

"If the Senate tries to jam the House with this version, I won't vote 'present.' I'll vote NO."

Rattlesnakes and the Senate

West Virginia Republican Sen. Jim Justice told reporters that it's important for the Senate to take its time in its changes to the reconciliation package and that GOP lawmakers need to be patient.

"If you're walking through the woods and you look right over there at that wall and there's a rattlesnake all curled up there and everything, what do you do?" Justice asked. "Most people just jump and take off runnin', well ... rattlesnakes run in pairs and if you just jump left or right or behind, that one can hurt you right there."

Rattlesnakes are typically solitary creatures, but new research has shown that rattlesnakes are more social than previously thought.

Justice said the best course of action when dealing with a rattlesnake, or two, is to stand still for a moment.

"Look to the left, look to the right, look behind you, and then decide which way you're going," he said. "That's what I think we need to do (in the Senate)."

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.

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

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

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Former governors say bipartisan unity key to rebuffing questionable federal policy

BY: DARRELL EHRLICK, DAILY MONTANAN - JUNE 24, 2025 5:51 PM

In a country flooded by a never-ending wave of talking heads, pundits and fiery social media posts, two bipartisan former governors said the solution to America's political gridlock may be more talking.

But former Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican, and former Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, a Democrat, said that it's not about talking on airwaves or to like-minded political party members. Instead, it's about sitting and talking about common ground — together — face-to-face.

That was the message the two former state leaders and former chairmen of the National Governors Association said during an hour-long panel, "Federalism Tested: How States are Navigating in an Era of Uncertainty," hosted by the Pew Charitable Trusts and States Newsroom on Tuesday morning.

Both Bullock and Hogan said that despite an apparent growing list of issues that divide the country, most Americans agree on one thing: They're exhausted by the partisan rhetoric and political gridlock and want politicians to find common ground.

They said that organizations like the National Governors Association provide models for how to find common ground and advocate for solutions. And both governors know something about bipartisan work as Hogan, a member of the GOP, served two terms in Maryland, a state dominated by Democrats. Mean-



Former Gov. Steve Bullock, D-Montana, (left) and former Gov. Larry Hogan, R-Maryland, (right) said that current governors may be missing an opportunity to have a bigger role in national issues that seem relegated to Congress and the White House if they were able to come together. (Photo by Danielle

Brown/Maryland Matters)

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while, Bullock, a Democrat, served two terms, accomplishing Medicaid expansion and campaign spending reform, with a legislature of nearly two-thirds Republicans.

"There's more that unites us than divides us," Hogan said, adding it was a message that resonated with deeply liberal Maryland, because it stressed common solutions and bipartisanship.

"The politics that divide the nation need not divide the state," Hogan said. "These days, people seem to want to win an argument rather than provide solutions to solve problems."

Current governors may be missing an opportunity to have a bigger role in the national issues that seem relegated to Congress and the White House, they said. They agreed that if governors were able to come together, they may be better at checking the power of Congress or the president.

"You actually have to govern when you're a governor," Bullock said. "And that means you have to stay focused on what's happening in your own state and to your people."

That gives governors power to communicate concerns and stand together to influence federal leaders. One example they used was the way the governors' association worked together during the COVID pandemic. Instead of meeting quarterly, they had weekly meetings via Zoom.

"We didn't all agree, but we didn't fight. We simply said: These are the things we need. It was productive," Hogan said.

Hogan also touted the large infrastructure bill that was shaped by bipartisan input from governors of both parties.

"We don't see enough of that," Hogan said.

Both said governors are crucial in the feedback circle because they can pierce the federal bubble in Washington, D.C.

For example, Hogan said that Maryland, during his tenure, was able to eliminate 7,000 jobs through "a scalpel and attrition," resulting in savings, efficiency and maintaining a high approval rating as governor, nearing 75% statewide.

"What happened with (the Department of Government Efficiency) is we took a meat ax instead of an instrument of precision," Hogan said. "And every time you lay someone off, it will affect real people."

It's those people whom governors are the closest to, and those stories can be shared by the state leaders.

In Montana, Bullock said, the impacts may be noticeable when visitors travel for "a trip of a lifetime" to places like Yellowstone and Glacier national parks, which may have fewer amenities, or have extraordinary lines.

"At the end of the day, state government isn't going to be paying for those employees, so when someone has their lifelong dream vacation in Glacier National Park, and can't get to where they want, states will have to work with federal services," Bullock said. "Unfortunately, folks have to feel pain for it to be real."

He also called for more accountability for elected leaders down to the local level who avoid answering constituent questions or press inquiries. He said the media must continue to hold officials accountable by telling the public when leaders won't speak, and what questions were asked.

Moreover, he said that true bipartisanship begins with individuals who are willing to support leaders whom they don't always agree with, but demonstrate a commitment to bipartisan solutions.

"Why is it that the most dangerous place in America today is around the Thanksgiving table?" Bullock asked.

Hogan said that extreme gerrymandering and political primaries that select the more extreme sides of each party contribute to a sense of gridlock and polarization.

"We have an exhausted majority," Hogan said. "The public is sick of it, and that's why people are fleeing from both parties, becoming political independents."

Darrell Ehrlick is the editor-in-chief of the Daily Montanan, after leading his native state's largest paper, The Billings Gazette. He is an award-winning journalist, author, historian and teacher, whose career has taken him to North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Utah, and Wyoming. With Darrell at the helm, the Gazette staff took Montana's top newspaper award six times in seven years. Darrell's books include writing the historical chapters of "Billings Memories" Volumes I-III, and "It Happened in Minnesota." He has taught journalism at Winona State University and Montana State University-Billings, and has served on the student publications board of the University of Wyoming.

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Overdose deaths, gang violence draw charges in some — not all — recent prison incidents

Nine gangs allegedly involved in coordinated fighting on May 27, resulting in indictments for 24 inmates

BY: JOHN HULT - JUNE 24, 2025 5:35 PM

SIOUX FALLS — Attorney General Marty Jackley announced a flurry of criminal charges Tuesday in a series of incidents that have played out since February on the grounds of the South Dakota State Penitentiary.

Two people stand accused of providing the drugs that killed two of the four inmates who've overdosed this year in South Dakota prisons.

The charges in the overdose deaths of 20-year-old Anthony Richards and 39-year-old Jason Garreau were unsealed Tuesday.

An inmate allegedly supplied the synthetic marijuana that killed Richards in February at the penitentiary's Jameson Annex. The methamphetamine and cocaine that killed Garreau in the penitentiary in May was allegedly delivered hand-to-hand by an on-site visitor who lives in Sioux Falls.

There are two other suspected prison overdose deaths under investigation, Attorney General Marty Jackley said Tuesday at the Law Enforcement Center in Sioux Falls.

Charges may come soon in those cases, which involved the May 18 death of 24-year-old Joshua Arrow and the June 10 death of 42-year-old Nicholas Skorka.

Jackley said the state's still awaiting toxicology results in those cases.



South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley speaks at a press conference on prison violence on June 24, 2025, in Sioux Falls. (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

Fighting: Nine gangs involved

Also unsealed Tuesday were felony assault and rioting indictments for 24 inmates reportedly involved in a 40-man gang skirmish at the Jameson Annex on May 27 that injured 14 and sent four to the hospital.

There were nine gangs involved in that fight, Jackley said. The violence was "coordinated" by the gangs, he said, but he declined to say if any of the eight inmate victims who are named in the indictments were targeted specifically.

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Two of the people whose names are listed as assault victims were themselves charged for felony rioting, defined under South Dakota law as an incident in which three or more people break things or hurt others on purpose.

"I'm going to suggest to you that of the 24 indicted, they might all be taking the position that they're victims," Jackley said, noting that the Division of Criminal Investigation concluded that only eight of those involved could legally be classified as such.

The number of gangs involved – nine – is "probably more than I'm normally involved with in a particular investigation," Jackley said. But he also said he recognizes that "there is gang prevalence at the penitentiary."

Fallout: visits suspended, investigations ongoing

The charges relate to some, but not all, of the recent high-profile prison grounds incidents.

An inmate broke the nose of a female correctional officer in late March at the penitentiary.

Another, unrelated bout of violence at the Jameson Annex between inmates came hours later. On May 7, a male correctional officer was injured by an inmate at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield.

None of those incidents has drawn charges.

Several investigations have commenced this year into situations like those, Jackley said, as well as into a prison drug ring the Department of Corrections announced it had broken up.

A late May press release on that investigation said criminal charges would follow "if warranted."

The attorney general declined to say Tuesday if more charges were imminent in any of those situations.

"Like all investigations, you may reach a point where you're prepared because there's probable cause and a reasonable likelihood that a jury would convict, where you move forward, but those investigations are not at that charging decision stage," Jackley said.

He did suggest that autopsy results in the overdose deaths of Arrow and Skorka would be necessary to make the call in those specific cases. After Tuesday's press conference, Jackley spokesman Tony Mangan told South Dakota Searchlight that the state is waiting for final reports in the officer assault cases.

The Department of Corrections, meanwhile, suspended in-person visits in Sioux Falls in response to the drug ring investigation.

That decision has led to some consternation among inmate families, some of whom planned to hold the latest in a series of protests against the DOC Tuesday evening.

The charges and investigations this year have taken place as state officials consider sites for a new men's prison to replace the oldest parts of the penitentiary.

The first meeting of the Project Prison Reset task force came days after the late March assaults. Penitentiary and Jameson Annex inmates were on a security lockdown when the task force members toured the grounds for that April 2 meeting.

The officer in Durfee was attacked a week and a day after the group met in Springfield.

The next task force meeting is scheduled for July 8 in Sioux Falls.

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

Utah's Mike Lee to make new attempt to sell off public lands in US Senate mega-bill

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JUNE 24, 2025 2:38 PM

U.S. Sen. Mike Lee says he will revamp his controversial proposal to require the sales of vast acres of federal lands in the West so it can be included in Senate Republicans' sweeping tax and spending cut package.

Lee will be seeking approval for his revised plan from the Senate parliamentarian, who will decide if the provision complies with the chamber's strict rules for the fast-track procedure Republicans are using to pass their bill. An earlier version of Lee's plan was dropped from the measure.

Lee, a Utah Republican who chairs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, wrote on X on Monday night that he would alter the proposal to include only Bureau of Land Management land within 5 miles of a population center and exempt U.S. Forest Service lands altogether.

The amended version would also create "freedom zones" and protect "our farmers, ranchers, and recreational users," Lee said.

It was not immediately clear what either point would mean and legislative text of the proposal was not publicly available Tuesday. A spokesperson for the committee Lee leads did not return a message seeking comment Tuesday morning.

The original version of the proposal would have mandated the sale of at least 2 million acres of BLM and Forest Service land in 11 Western states. The Senate parliamentarian ruled that language did not comply with the Senate's rules for budget reconciliation, according to Senate Budget Committee ranking Democrat Jeff Merkley of Oregon.

Budget reconciliation is the procedure Republicans are using to pass the package that contains most of President Donald Trump's domestic policy priorities, including extension of the 2017 tax cuts.

The process allows passage with only a simple majority in the Senate instead of the usual 60 votes but comes with strict rules that every provision has a substantial impact on the federal deficit and relates to spending and taxes.



U.S. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, participates in a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing at the Dirksen Senate Office Building on May 13, 2025 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)

Polarizing provision

Lee's social media post emphasized his goal was to expand housing supply by making public lands available for new construction.

"Housing prices are crushing families and keeping young Americans from living where they grew up,"

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Lee wrote. "We need to change that."

Democrats and some Republicans from the affected states — Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming — strongly opposed the measure, seeing it as a one-time sell-off of public lands used by hunters, hikers, ranchers and other users of public lands.

The provision "would have gutted America's public lands and auctioned them off to the highest bidder, in yet another bid to benefit the wealthy," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Tuesday.

"Republicans tried to rip away hundreds of millions of acres of public land—not to help families, not to solve real problems—but to hand yet another gift to the wealthy and well-connected," he added. "It was outrageous, it was shameless, and it would have forever changed the character of the country. Senate Democrats fought tooth and nail to keep public lands in public hands because these lands belong to everyone—not just the privileged few."

A similar provision was removed from the House's version of the reconciliation bill in the face of heated opposition from Western Republicans led by Montana U.S. Rep. Ryan Zinke.

The former Interior secretary said last week he remained firmly opposed to the Senate version of the bill that included Lee's proposal.

"I have said from day one I would not support a bill that sells public lands," he wrote on X. "I am still a no on the senate reconciliation bill that sells public lands. We did our job in the House. Let's get it finished."

Other energy provisions stripped

Merkley reported the Senate parliamentarian also ruled several other provisions of the Energy Committee's section of the package to be out of compliance with the "Byrd Rule," which governs what can be included in a reconciliation bill.

Among the provisions the parliamentarian removed were items that would have waived environmental review requirements for offshore oil and gas development, mandated approval of a controversial mining road in Alaska, required annual lease sales for geothermal energy lease sales while changing how geothermal royalties are calculated and allowed natural gas exporters to pay a fee to have projects exempted from environmental requirements.

Other provisions in the committee's reconciliation instructions were still under review Tuesday, Merkley said.

In a statement, Merkley said he would continue to lead Democrats' campaign to strip provisions from the GOP bill.

"Democrats will not stand idly by while Republicans attempt to circumvent the rules of reconciliation in order to sell off public lands to fund tax breaks for billionaires," he said. "We will make sure the Byrd Rule is followed and review any changes Republicans attempt to make to the bill."

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.

Governor candidate grilled on witness stand in lawsuit against shorter petition window

New law affecting ballot questions is scheduled to take effect as litigation proceeds

BY: SETH TUPPER - JUNE 24, 2025 1:26 PM



South Dakota Speaker of the House Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, speaks at a meeting of the Project Prison Reset work group on June 3, 2025, in Pierre. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

RAPID CITY — A candidate for governor of South Dakota endured two hours of questioning on a witness stand Monday about his efforts to restrict citizen-initiated ballot measures.

The candidate is Jon Hansen, who serves as speaker of the state House of Representatives and is running for the Republican gubernatorial nomination in next June's primary election. He convinced his fellow legislators to pass a bill during the winter that makes the window for gathering ballot-question petition signatures three months shorter, by moving the election-year deadline for submitting signed petitions from May to February.

Petitioners need 17,508 signatures from registered voters to place a proposed law on the ballot, or to refer a bill passed

by legislators to the ballot as a question. The number of signatures required to petition a state constitutional amendment onto the ballot is 35,017.

Dakotans for Health is a ballot question committee that has sponsored multiple petition drives. It's suing South Dakota's top elections official — the secretary of state — and asking a judge to stop enforcement of the new law. Monday's proceeding at the federal courthouse in Rapid City was the first part of a hearing that will continue in early August. Meanwhile, the law is scheduled to take effect next Tuesday.

The lawsuit is the latest development in a longstanding struggle between ballot petitioners and Republican legislators over citizen lawmaking. Jim Leach, the lawyer representing Dakotans for Health, said in his opening statement that the earlier petition deadline is an unlawful attack on a form of free speech.

"Three months of core political speech are eliminated, out the window, cannot happen," Leach said.

The secretary of state's lawyer, Assistant Attorney General Grant Flynn, said in his opening statement that Hansen proposed the new law to allow adequate time for resolving disputes about the validity of petition signatures.

"What he has attempted to do is place proper guardrails so this process can be used effectively," Flynn said.

Several times during witness testimony, Leach pointed to bills Hansen has sponsored during his legislative career to restrict citizen lawmaking.

During this year's legislative session, for example, Hansen prime-sponsored the bill to shorten the signature-gathering period and also prime-sponsored a bill adding justifications for the secretary of state to reject petition signatures, both of which passed. He co-sponsored a bill vetoed by the governor that

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would have required constitutional amendment petitions to have signatures from registered voters in each of the 35 state Senate districts. Existing law allows signatures to come from registered voters anywhere in the state.

The state's lawyer, in response, asked Hansen if he's opposed to the initiative process or wants to repeal it. Hansen answered no to both questions.

Monday wasn't the first time that Hansen — who has his own private law practice — has tussled with Leach and Dakotans for Health in court. Last year, Hansen helped lead a lawsuit attempting to disqualify Dakotans for Health's abortion-rights ballot question. The lawsuit claimed numerous petition signatures should have been invalidated because of alleged legal infractions by petition circulators, including failing to show signers the attorney general's explanation of the measure and leaving petitions unattended, among other accusations.

Hansen alleged Monday on the stand, under questioning from the state's lawyer, that one of the reasons the earlier lawsuit didn't make it to trial before last fall's election was because Leach deliberately stalled the proceedings. That was among the reasons Hansen wanted to shorten the window for signature collecting, he said — to allow more time for litigation to play out and avoid the possibility of a "completely unlawful" measure being placed on the ballot.

Hansen's group, the Life Defense Fund, ultimately dropped the earlier lawsuit after voters rejected the abortion-rights ballot measure in November.

Leach, during his questioning of Hansen, methodically attacked the stalling allegation. Relying on records from the earlier lawsuit, Leach showed, for example, that he sometimes took less time to file his motions and responses than Hansen's side did — forcing Hansen to admit that those examples reflected Leach's promptness. Leach also showed that Hansen's lead co-counsel in the earlier case, Sara Frankenstein, told the judge at one point that she had no availability during a three-week period, forcing Hansen to answer "yes" when Leach asked if that slowed down the case.

Frankenstein was unavailable to participate in Monday's hearing. The judge granted the state's request to continue the hearing and set a date of Aug. 8 so Frankenstein can testify.

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

Minnesota assassination prompts many lawmakers to wonder: Is service worth the danger?

Nearly 9 in 10 state lawmakers reported facing insults and 4 in 10 facing harassment and threats

BY: ALEX BROWN AND ROBBIE SEQUEIRA - JUNE 24, 2025 12:48 PM

A year into her first term in office, New Jersey Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer decided not to run for reelection.

The political world saw her as a rising star in 2023; Jaffer, a Democrat, previously served as the nation's first female Muslim mayor. But rampant harassment from online commenters and other politicians about her religion, as well as high-profile acts of violence against other public officials, made her reconsider her political future.

"I was concerned about my family," Jaffer said in an interview. "They didn't sign up for this. I didn't want to put them in harm's way."

In the wake of the assassination of Minnesota state Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband, as well as the wounding of state Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, more public officials across the country are taking stock of their safety. Some say death threats have become part of the job. They fear that violence — real attacks and constant threats — will scare potential candidates away from seeking public office.

Michigan Democratic state Rep. Laurie Pohutsky said she has faced multiple death threats since 2020.

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In one instance, a neighbor reported that a stranger was waiting at her house, demanding to know when she would return home.

"I have certainly considered somewhat frequently that I might be killed doing this job," Pohutsky told Stateline. "But what really alarmed me [about the Minnesota attacks] and stopped me in my tracks was I had not considered that someone might enter my home and kill my family."

Nationwide, lawmakers in both parties say political

rhetoric that dehumanizes anyone who disagrees on an issue has created a charged atmosphere. As politicians increasingly describe their rivals not just as wrong on policy but as the enemy, the message can embolden extremists to carry out violence.

"People treat death threats against government officials as a matter of course until someone is assassinated," Pohutsky said. "It's an impossible position, because the people who are carrying out these attacks want people to leave public office."

In some states, lawmakers are discussing whether officials' home addresses should be included in campaign finance forms and other publicly available documents. Elsewhere, political leaders are reviewing their security protocols.

But elected leaders say there are no easy answers. And they fear things will get worse before they get better.

"These threats of violence, we've seen it before here and there, but nothing like we've seen it now," said South Carolina Republican Gov. Henry McMaster, speaking with reporters this week. "And yes, I think that would make a lot of people stop and think and decide they do not want to enter that arena."

"It's a tough arena anyway," McMaster said, "but when you have the threat of violence — unanticipated, unmitigated, unexpected violence — that's just one more reason not to get involved in politics."

Growing threats

In recent years, elected officials have faced a growing number of threats and attacks.

In 2020, a group of men were accused of plotting to kidnap Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whit-



Flowers, notes and American flags adorn a makeshift memorial for Minnesota state Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, at the Minnesota State Capitol. In the wake of the assassination, more public officials across the country are taking stock of their safety. (Steven Garcia/Getty Images)

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mer; five were later convicted. That same year, the 20-year-old son of a federal judge in New Jersey was killed by a gunman and lawyer who had previously had a case before her.

Paul Pelosi, the husband of former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, was assaulted by a hammer-wielding attacker at his home in 2022. President Donald Trump was targeted in a pair of assassination attempts during the 2024 campaign, including a shooting in which a bullet grazed his ear. And earlier this year, Pennsylvania Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro was targeted in an arson attack on the governor's mansion.

Nearly 9 in 10 state lawmakers reported facing demeaning or derogatory comments or actions in their current term or the campaign leading up to it, and more than 4 in 10 reported harassment and threats, according to a report published last year by the progressive-leaning Brennan Center for Justice.

Women were three to four times more likely than men to experience abuse related to their gender, according to the report. And people of color were more than three times as likely as white officeholders to endure race-based abuse.

Since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, political threats against candidates — particularly women, people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals — have escalated dramatically, according to Amanda Litman, co-founder and president of Run for Something, a political action committee that helps recruit young, liberal candidates for office.

"It sucks that we have to have these conversations with folks," she said. "But the goal of this violence is to stop good people from running."

Litman said that her organization offers support for candidates, including safety protocols, digital privacy training and mental health support. But increasing political violence and the easy online access to officeholders and candidates has begun to change how they interact with constituents and what they share about their lives.

"We have candidates who may have not thought twice to share a photo of their family or post updates about their lives outside of political office," Litman said. "But now there is a shift in being more deliberate about what is being shared, especially online, where people can send threats and other stuff into your DMs, and use that information to stoke even more fear."

Language matters

Leaders say that rhetoric characterizing opponents as evil has made violent incidents more likely.

"People have gotten very, very good at toeing the line just shy of actually threatening to kill people," Pohutsky, the Michigan lawmaker, said.

"That's sort of become normalized," she said. "If you make this a righteous fight, if you convince people that someone is harming children, it's much easier to incite violence against them. That language is intentional."

The changes have accelerated in recent years. Returning home in 2015 after serving in combat zones as a U.S. Marine and working in post-conflict regions, Jake Harriman said he didn't recognize the country he had fought for.

Harriman said the tactics he witnessed extremist groups use in conflict areas abroad to exploit fractured nations and warring factions — such as division, fear, isolation — he now sees playing out across the United States.

"What shocked me most," said Harriman, founder of More Perfect Union, a veteran-led civic service group, "was the hatred — Americans dehumanizing each other in ways I had only seen in war."

More people are finding a sense of self and belonging via partisan political groups, such as identifying as MAGA or as an opponent of MAGA, said Amy Pason, an associate professor who specializes in political rhetoric at the University of Nevada, Reno.

"This is because people are more isolated or finding social groups on social media — or the other media they consume — and they identify with that group," she said. "This gets to be more problematic when belonging to that group is to also accept beliefs and shift your attitudes — that those not in your group are dangerous or out to harm your group."

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Despite condemnations of the Minnesota shootings from state lawmakers of both parties, some Republicans in Congress rushed to social media to falsely blame Democrats and liberals.

U.S. Sen. Tina Smith, a Democrat and friend of Hortman's, confronted U.S. Sen. Mike Lee, a Republican, in person on Capitol Hill after he made inflammatory comments about the assassination on the platform X. The posts were removed soon after.

Oregon state Sen. Jeff Golden, a Democrat, said the Minnesota attacks were a wakeup call. He pledged to direct his public comments in the future "towards the substance of the proposal and not the character of the person proposing."

"I do think it can be a thin line," Golden said. "I probably have crossed it one time or another, and I'm gonna do everything I possibly can not to do it again."

But politicians have incentive to keep their base motivated and engaged through inflammatory attacks on people they characterize as the enemy, which dehumanizes them and fuels political violence, said Donald Nieman, a history professor at Binghamton University in New York.

Nieman noted in an email to Stateline that fear for personal and family safety is increasingly common among elected officials — affecting even how they vote. While he believes the path out is clear — "tone down the rhetoric, emphasize common ground" — he's not optimistic.

"In a polarized political system, politicians depend on (and fear) a loyal base," Neiman wrote. "I fear that the discussion of political violence will take the same course as school shootings: We will lament them, propose solutions that go nowhere, and there will be more shootings."

Security measures

Just hours before the Minnesota shootings, Oregon lawmakers passed a bill that would make it harder for the public to obtain the home addresses of elected officials. Rather than having that information on the secretary of state's website, as is currently law, the bill would require residents to submit a public records request to obtain those details.

In 2023, New Jersey lawmakers passed a bill exempting local officials from sharing their addresses publicly, but Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy declined to sign the measure, citing a technicality with its effective date.

"We're in such uncharted territory when all of this data can be accessed by anyone and made into lists," said Jaffer, the former New Jersey lawmaker, citing the "hit list" of 45 officials that law enforcement officials say had been compiled by alleged Minnesota attacker Vance Boelter.

"There needs to be more done to protect those who step up to serve, but we also need to protect freedom of speech and freedom of information," she said.

Jaffer said a friend from another country was surprised to learn that she had no security detail while in office.

"We're just normal people," she said of state legislators. "It's a great thing that we're accessible, but it certainly makes us vulnerable."

Following the Minnesota shootings, North Dakota officials announced they will take down lawmakers' addresses from legislative websites. New Hampshire legislative leaders also pulled down pages with information about elected leaders, while ramping up security at the State House. Meanwhile, lawmakers in New Mexico are reviewing their security practices.

Litman, of Run for Something, said legislatures should consider funding security for local candidates and officials who may not be able to afford it.

"I think there's a real fear that if Donald Trump, who has the best security detail in the world, can be attacked at a public event, then what about local officials who don't have the budget to afford to keep themselves or their families safe?" Litman said.

Julia Shumway of the Oregon Capital Chronicle and Seanna Adcox of the South Carolina Daily Gazette contributed to this report.

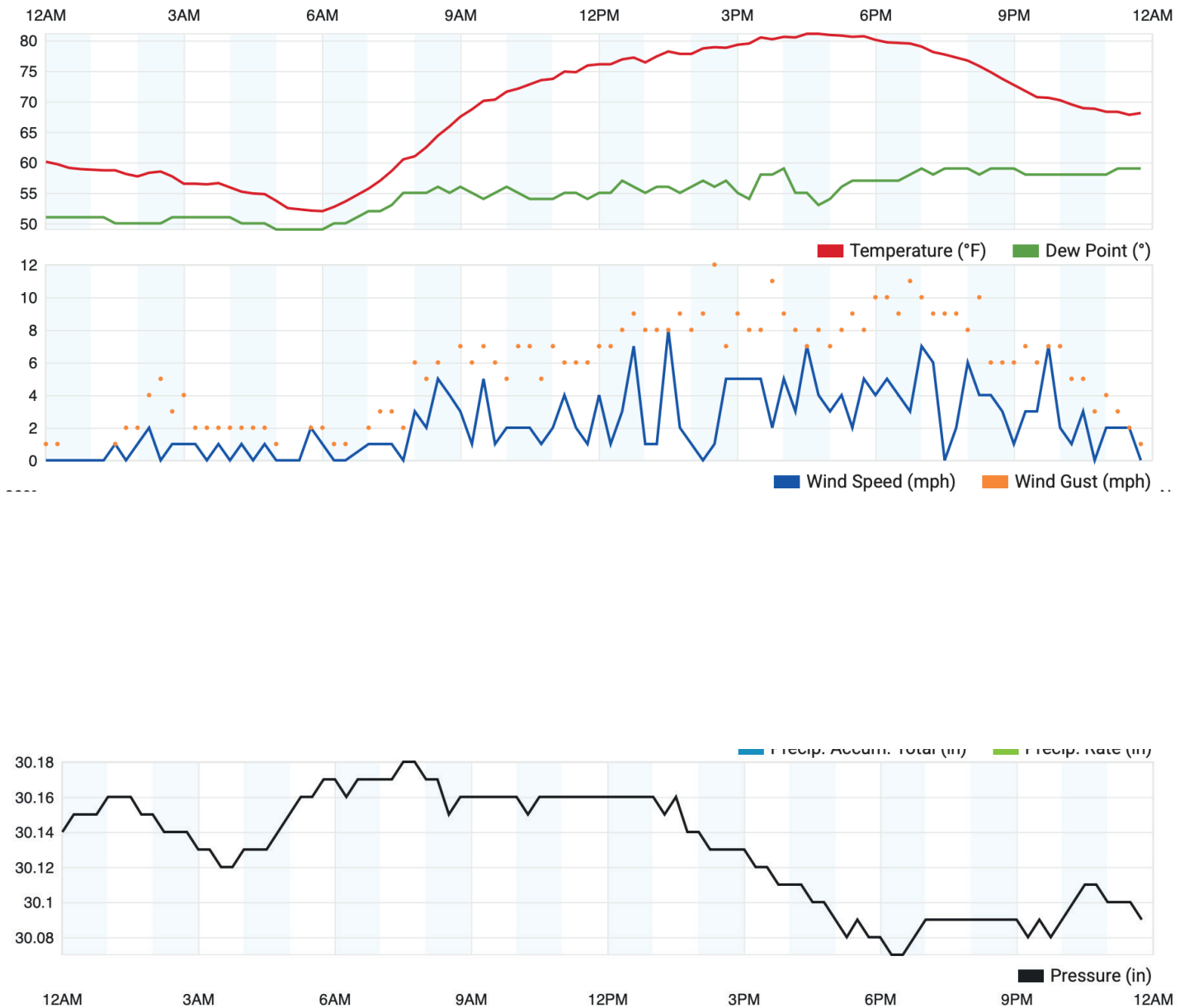
Based in Seattle, Alex Brown covers environmental issues for Stateline. Prior to joining Stateline, Brown wrote for The Chronicle in Lewis County, Washington state.

Robbie Sequeira is a staff writer covering housing and social services for Stateline.

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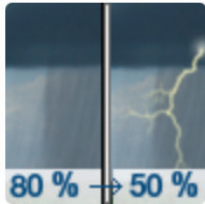
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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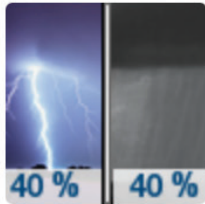
Wednesday



High: 72 °F

Showers then
Chance
T-storms

Wednesday
Night



Low: 58 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Chance
Showers

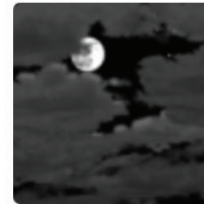
Thursday



High: 72 °F

Slight Chance
Showers

Thursday
Night



Low: 57 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Friday



High: 87 °F

Sunny

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated severe storms
possible

TIMING

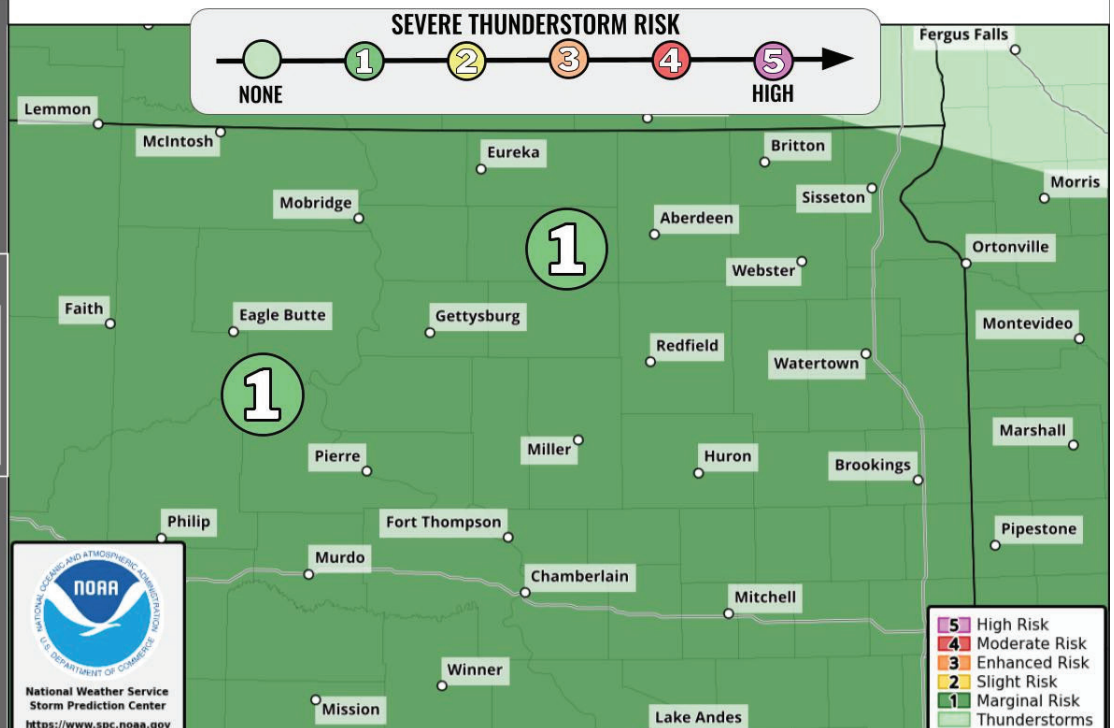
- Daytime: eastern SD/western MN
- Wed Night: central SD

PRIMARY THREATS



Get your up to date
forecast at weather.gov/abr

SEVERE STORMS Possible Wednesday & Wednesday Night



Showers and thunderstorms will spread over northeastern SD into west central MN early Wednesday morning with precipitation continuing Wednesday night into Thursday morning. There is a marginal risk (level 1 out of 5) for severe thunderstorms over eastern SD and western MN with that threat more over central SD Wednesday night. The strongest storms that develop overnight will be capable of producing winds around 60mph or large hail around the size of quarters.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 81 °F at 5:19 PM

Low Temp: 52 °F at 5:46 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 2:19 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 43 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1936

Record Low: 41 in 2017

Average High: 83

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in June.: 3.10

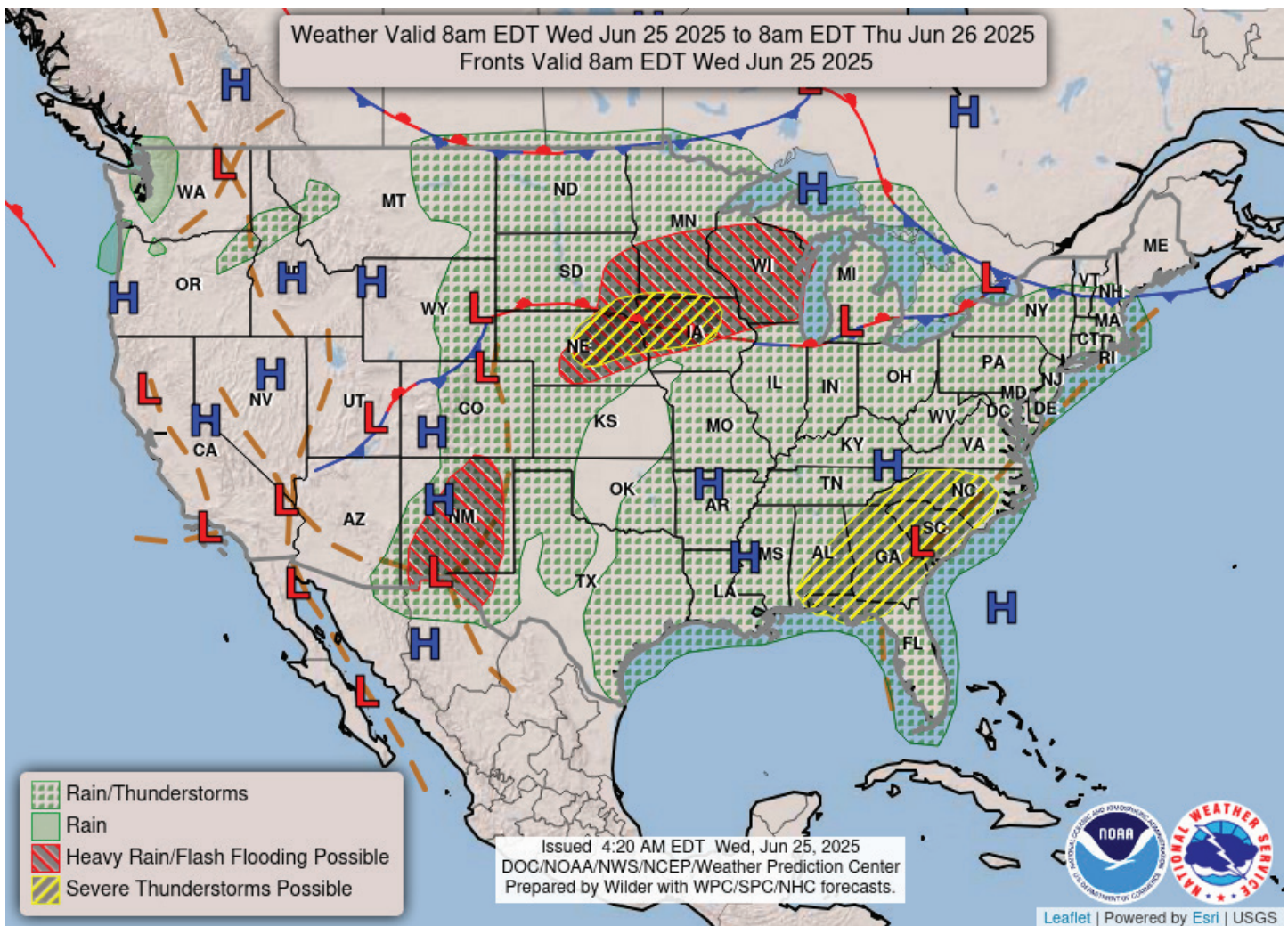
Precip to date in June: 2.72

Average Precip to date: 10.35

Precip Year to Date: 8.77

Sunset Tonight: 9:26:55 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:43:52 am



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Today in Weather History

June 25th, 1914: An estimated F2 tornado moved east from 6 miles southeast of Isabel in Dewey County. The storms damaged three small homes and two barns. Twelve tons of hay was said to have vanished.

June 25th, 1969: On the northeast side of Groton, an F2 to near F3 tornado destroyed a large grain elevator and uprooted trees. Four people were hospitalized. Also, heavy rains caused flash flooding in Sully and Hughes Counties. A bridge near Harrold was washed out. Some rainfall amounts include 5.34 inches at 23N of Highmore, 4.24 at 2N of Onaka, 4.14 at 12SSW of Harrold, 3.90 at 1NW of Faulkton, and 3.73 inches at Ipswich. Unofficial reports of 6 inches fell in and around Harrold.

1749 - A general fast was called on account of drought in Massachusetts. It was the year of the famous dry spring in which fields and villages burned. (David Ludlum)

1925 - The mercury hit 101 degrees at Portland, OR, their earliest 100 degree reading of record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1953 - The temperature at Anchorage soared to 86 degrees, their hottest reading of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Afternoon highs of 97 degrees at Miami, FL, 107 degrees at Medford, OR, and 111 degrees at Redding CA were new records for the date. It was the third of six straight days of record heat for Miami. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Austin, and gusts to 75 mph at Tulsa OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Fifty-two cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 100 degrees at Erie, PA, and 104 degrees at Cleveland OH established all-time records for those two locations. Highs of 101 degrees at Flint, MI, 105 degrees at Chicago, IL, and 106 degrees at Fort Wayne, IN, equalled all-time records. Thunderstorms in Idaho produced wind gusts to 100 mph west of Bliss and north of Crouch, injuring 29 persons. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Tropical depression Allison, the remnants of what was earlier Cosme (a hurricane over the Pacific Ocean which dissipated as it crossed northern Mexico), began to spread heavy rain into southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana. (The National Weather Summary)

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"Larry, you need to change Bella's name to 'Lucky,'" said my friend Bruce. "I can't imagine anyone who would take better care of that dog than you. It's plain to me she's not Bella. She's 'Lucky' — really lucky she found you."

Here's the backstory...

One dark, stormy, cold, foggy night I opened the door to our carport. Sensing something at my foot, I looked down. There, looking up at me, was a small, unkempt dog wagging her tail nervously, and wiggling all over as if to say, "I'm home!"

For weeks Mary and I searched for her owners but were unsuccessful. Then, we tried to find her another home. That didn't work either. Every time we thought we found a new home for her, we failed. So, we decided to keep her and named her "Bella," which means "beautiful."

When reading through Proverbs several months ago, I noticed a verse that had never registered in my mind: "The righteous care for the needs of their animals."

Please understand that I am not claiming to be righteous, though I try desperately to live right, nor am I elevating animals to the level of humans.

But notice this: A distinct contrast is made by the author between a person who is righteous and one who is not: the one who is righteous has a gentleness that the wicked do not have. And, if one is truly righteous, it becomes obvious: if we as believers willingly give our hearts completely to God, He will remove every trace of "cruelty" from us — even to the way we treat animals.

He will control us and bless us and enable us to demonstrate how much we value every gift He gives us — even animals. We expose who we truly are by the way we care for each gift God gives us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, implant within us a gentle, gracious and loving heart. May we respect all of Your gifts. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel."

Proverbs 12:10

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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paypal.me/paperpaul

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



Winning Numbers

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.24.25

10 11 18 24 60 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$348,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 18 Mins
DRAW: 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.23.25

16 18 26 40 46 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,350,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 33 Mins 26
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.24.25

1 4 27 40 45 11

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 48 Mins 26
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.21.25

9 13 15 29 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$36,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 48 Mins 26
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.23.25

4 7 12 20 55 12

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 17 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.23.25

5 25 42 44 65 20

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$140,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 17 Mins 25
DRAW: 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

A fragile ceasefire between Iran and Israel gives rise to hopes for longer peace

By JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The fragile ceasefire between Israel and Iran appeared to be holding Wednesday after a rocky start, giving rise to cautious hope it could lead to a longer term peace agreement, even as Tehran insisted it would not give up its nuclear program.

The ceasefire took hold Tuesday on the 12th day of the war between Israel and Iran, with each side initially accusing the other of violating it until the missiles, drones and bombs finally stopped.

On Wednesday, U.S. President Donald Trump, who helped negotiate the ceasefire, told reporters at a NATO summit in the Netherlands that it was going “very well.”

“They’re not going to have a bomb and they’re not going to enrich,” Trump added.

Iran has insisted, however, that it will not give up its nuclear program and in a vote underscoring the tough path ahead, Iranian parliament agreed to fast-track a proposal that would effectively stop the country’s cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Vienna-based United Nations organization that has been monitoring the Iranian nuclear program for years.

Ahead of the vote, parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf criticized the IAEA for having “refused to even pretend to condemn the attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities” that were carried out by the U.S. on Sunday.

“For this reason, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran will suspend cooperation with the IAEA until security of nuclear facilities is ensured, and Iran’s peaceful nuclear program will move forward at a faster pace,” Qalibaf told lawmakers.

Questions over effectiveness of American strikes

The American strikes hit three Iranian nuclear sites, which Trump said had “completely and fully obliterated” the country’s nuclear program.

Trump’s special envoy to the Mideast Steve Witkoff said on Fox News late Tuesday that Israel and the U.S. had now achieved their objective of “the total destruction of the enrichment capacity” in Iran, and Iran’s prerequisite for talks — that Israel end its campaign — had also been fulfilled.

“The proof is in the pudding,” he said. “No one’s shooting at each other. It’s over.”

At the NATO summit, when asked about a U.S. intelligence report that found Iran’s nuclear program has been set back only a few months, Trump scoffed and said it would at least take “years” to rebuild.

Israeli military spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin said Wednesday his country’s assessment was also that Iran’s nuclear facilities had been “significantly damaged” and its nuclear program “set it back by years.”

An Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said the ceasefire agreement with Iran amounted to “quiet for quiet,” with no further understandings about Iran’s nuclear program going ahead.

Hopes for a longer term agreement

In the Fox News interview, Witkoff said Trump is now looking to land “a comprehensive peace agreement that goes beyond even the ceasefire.”

“We’re already talking to each other, not just directly, but also through interlocutors,” Witkoff said, adding that the conversations were promising and “we’re hopeful that we can have a long-term peace agreement.”

China, a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and close Iranian partner, also weighed in on Wednesday, saying it hoped a “lasting and effective ceasefire can be achieved so as to promote the realization of peace and stability in the Middle East.”

China is a major buyer of Iranian oil and has long supported its government politically, blaming Israel for starting the latest conflict and destabilizing the region.

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Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told reporters in Beijing that in the wake of the conflict, China is willing to "inject positive factors to safeguard peace and stability in the Middle East."

Iran executes 3 more prisoners on spying allegations

During the war with Israel, Iran executed several prisoners accused of spying for Israel, sparking fears from activists that it could conduct a wave of executions after the conflict ended.

It hanged three more prisoners on spying charges on Wednesday, bringing the total number of executions for espionage up to six since June 16.

The hangings happened in Urmia Prison in Iran's West Azerbaijan province, which is the country's most northwestern province. State-run IRNA cited Iran's judiciary for the news, saying the men had been accused of bringing "assassination equipment" into the country.

Iran identified the three men as Azad Shojaei, Edris Aali and Iraqi national Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul. Amnesty International had previously raised concerns that the men could be executed.

During the 12 day war, at least 28 people were killed in Israel and more than 1,000 wounded, according to officials.

In Iran, the government on Tuesday put the death toll at 606 people killed, with 5,332 others wounded. The Washington-based Human Rights Activists group released figures Wednesday suggesting Israeli strikes on Iran had killed at least 1,054 people and wounded 4,476 others.

The group, which has provided detailed casualty figures from multiple rounds of unrest in Iran, said of those killed, it identified 417 civilians and 318 security force personnel.

Tehran experienced intense Israeli airstrikes throughout the war, including those that targeted Iran's top military leadership and other sites associated with its ruling theocracy.

With the ceasefire in place, Iranians began trying to return to their normal lives.

State media described heavy traffic around the Caspian Sea area and other rural areas outside of the capital, Tehran, as people began returning to the city.

Trump arrives at a NATO summit facing an alliance shaped to his liking

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — President Donald Trump on Wednesday is meeting with members of a NATO alliance that he has worked to bend to his will over the years and whose members are rattled by his latest comments casting doubt on the U.S. commitment to its mutual defense guarantees.

Trump's comments en route to the Netherlands that his fidelity to Article 5 "depends on your definition" are drawing attention at the NATO summit, as will the new and fragile Iran-Israel ceasefire that Trump helped broker after the U.S. unloaded airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.

At the same time, the alliance is poised to enact one of Trump's chief priorities for NATO: a pledge by its member countries to increase, sometimes significantly, how much they spend on their defense.

"I've been asking them to go up to 5% for a number of years," Trump said Wednesday morning as he met with Mark Rutte, the alliance's secretary-general. "I think that's going to be very big news."

The boost in spending follows years of Trump complaints that other countries weren't paying their fair share for membership in an alliance created as a bulwark against threats from the former Soviet Union. Most NATO countries, with the key exception of Spain, are preparing to endorse the 5% pledge, motivated to bolster their own defenses not just by Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine but also, perhaps, to placate Trump.

As a candidate in 2016, Trump suggested that he as president would not necessarily heed the alliance's mutual defense guarantees outlined in Article 5 of the NATO treaty. In March of this year, he expressed uncertainty that NATO would come to the United States' defense if needed, though the alliance did just that after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

On Tuesday, he told reporters aboard Air Force One on his way to The Hague for the summit that whether he is committed to Article 5 "depends on your definition."

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"There's numerous definitions of Article 5. You know that, right?" Trump said. "But I'm committed to being their friends." He signaled that he would give a more precise definition of what Article 5 means to him once he is at the summit.

New Hampshire Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee who traveled to The Hague and met with several foreign leaders at the summit, said other countries raised "understandable questions" about the U.S.'s commitment to the alliance, "certainly given President Trump's past statements."

"We were very strong and reassuring everyone that we are committed to NATO, we are committed to Article 5, we are committed to maintaining troops on the eastern flank," said Shaheen, who represented the U.S. Senate with Democratic Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware.

Trump also vented to reporters before leaving Washington about the actions by Israel and Iran after his announced ceasefire — although on Monday, he said the ceasefire was "very good."

After Trump arrived in the Netherlands, news outlets, including The Associated Press, published stories revealing that a U.S. intelligence report suggested in an early assessment that Iran's nuclear program had been set back only a few months by weekend strikes and was not "completely and fully obliterated," as Trump had said.

But on Wednesday morning, Trump and other senior Cabinet officials vigorously pushed back on the assessment and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the administration was launching an investigation into who disclosed those findings to reporters.

"That hit ended the war," Trump said. Drawing comparisons to the atomic bombings from the U.S. during World War II, he added: "I don't want to use an example of Hiroshima. I don't want to use an example of Nagasaki. But that was essentially the same thing. That ended that war."

The White House has not said what other world leaders Trump would meet with one-on-one while in The Hague, but Trump said in his morning meeting with Rutte that he will meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later Wednesday.

A whirlwind 48 hours: How Trump's Israel-Iran ceasefire agreement came together

By AAMER MADHANI and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a 48-hour whirlwind, President Donald Trump veered from elated to indignant to triumphant as his fragile Israel-Iran ceasefire agreement came together, teetered toward collapse and ultimately coalesced.

Trump, as he worked to seal the deal, publicly harangued the Israelis and Iranians with a level of pique that's notable even for a commander in chief who isn't shy about letting the world know what he thinks.

The effort was helped along as his aides and Qatari allies sensed an opening after what they saw as a half-hearted, face-saving measure by Tehran on Monday to retaliate against the U.S. for strikes against three key nuclear sites. And it didn't hurt that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after 12 days of bombing, could tell the Israeli public that Iran's nuclear program had been diminished.

"This is a War that could have gone on for years, and destroyed the entire Middle East, but it didn't, and never will!" Trump declared in a social media post announcing the ceasefire.

Netanyahu is less than enthusiastic about Trump's message

The agreement began taking shape early Sunday morning, soon after the U.S. military carried out blistering strikes on Iranian nuclear sites that U.S. defense officials said have set back Tehran's nuclear program.

Trump directed his team to get Netanyahu on the phone.

The president told Netanyahu not to expect further U.S. offensive military action, according to a senior White House official who was not authorized to comment publicly about the sensitive diplomatic talks.

The U.S. president made the case that it was time to stop the war and return to diplomatic negotiations with Iran. Trump also noted that the U.S. had removed any imminent threat posed by Iran, according to

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the official.

For his part, Netanyahu listened to Trump's argument as Israel was nearing its own objectives with Iran, the official said. Netanyahu did not enthusiastically agree, but understood Trump's stance that the U.S. had no desire for additional military involvement.

Around the same time, Trump special envoy Steve Witkoff spoke directly with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, telling him to come back to the bargaining table because Iran had seen what the U.S. military could do and that it was capable of doing much more, the official said.

Witkoff stressed that the U.S. wanted peace — and Iran should, too.

Trump ebullient about Israel-Iran deal prospects

Less than 48 hours later, Trump took to his social media platform to announce that a "Complete and Total CEASEFIRE" had been achieved.

The ceasefire was based solely on the end of military hostilities, rather than on additional conditions about Iran's nuclear program or its economic interests. Trump was acting on the belief that Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons had been crippled.

But as Trump spoke with confidence about the coming ceasefire, the Israelis and Iranians were notably quiet — neither side publicly commented on what Trump described as a deal that would be phased in over the coming hours.

Araghchi spoke out first, acknowledging the wheels were in motion for a deal, but stopping short of saying Iran had signed off.

"As of now, there is NO 'agreement' on any ceasefire or cessation of military operations," Araghchi posted on X. "However, provided that the Israeli regime stops its illegal aggression against the Iranian people no later than 4 am Tehran time, we have no intention to continue our response afterwards."

Commitment from Iran and Israel to Trump's ceasefire remained murky

Not long before Trump's announcement, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei took to social media to declare that Iran wouldn't surrender. It was unclear what role Khamenei, the ultimate authority in the Islamic Republic's theocracy, had in the deal.

And Netanyahu was silent. He would wait more than eight hours after Trump's announcement to confirm that Israel had accepted the ceasefire and that it had achieved its war goals against Iran.

Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said ceasefire efforts gained steam after Iran's retaliatory attack on a major U.S. base in the emirate on Monday evening.

The Iranians fired 14 missiles at the base — with U.S. and Qatari defense systems knocking down 13. One of the missiles, according to Trump, was "'set free' because it was headed in a nonthreatening direction." Trump also claimed the Iranians gave the U.S. and Qatar a heads up, allowing the troops to take shelter and the Qataris to clear their typically busy airspace.

Qatar plays a key role in the ceasefire talks

Iran's restrained direct response to the U.S. bombardment suggested to Trump administration officials that Iran — battered by Israel's 12-day assault — and its degraded proxy groups, including Lebanon-based Hezbollah and Yemen-based Houthis, didn't have the wherewithal to expand the fight.

Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, had a "long call" with Trump soon after the Iranian attack on the Al-Ubeid military installation, according to the Qatari prime minister.

"There was an opportunity during this communication to announce a full ceasefire on all fronts, and U.S. authorities asked Qatar to contact Iranian authorities to know how prepared they are for a ceasefire," the prime minister said.

Trump saw the moment as a clear opening

The president soon got back in touch with Netanyahu to secure his commitment to end the hostilities, officials said. The prime minister agreed to the ceasefire, as long as there were no further attacks by Iran, the officials said.

An Israeli official confirmed that the two leaders spoke about a ceasefire Monday. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said Netanyahu agreed and delivered the deci-

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sion to his Security Cabinet. Some ministers objected, with some even saying Israel should push ahead to topple the Iranian government. But Netanyahu did not change his mind.

The official said the ceasefire amounted to "quiet for quiet," with no further understandings beyond an end to the fighting for the time being.

From there, things moved quickly.

Vice President JD Vance was making an appearance on Fox News' "Special Report" on Monday evening when Trump took to social media to announce the ceasefire deal had been reached and would go into effect over the coming day. The vice president appeared surprised when host Bret Baier told him that Trump had announced a deal had been reached.

"We were actually working on that just as I left the White House to come over here," Vance said. "So that's good news that the president was able to get that across the finish line."

But after Trump's announcement, the attacks kept coming. Iran launched a series of strikes on Israel after 4 a.m. local time Tuesday in Tehran, the time that Iran's foreign minister had said Iran would cease its attacks if Israel ended their airstrikes.

And the Israeli prime minister's office confirmed that Israel launched a major assault hours ahead of the ceasefire's start, hitting central Tehran. "We attacked forcefully in the heart of Tehran, hitting regime targets and killing hundreds of Basij and Iranian security forces," the statement read.

Iranian media confirmed nine casualties in the northern Gilan province. "Four residential buildings were completely destroyed and several neighboring houses were damaged in the blasts," Fars News Agency reported.

A frustrated Trump lashes out

Trump, who was scheduled to depart the White House early Tuesday to fly to the Netherlands for the NATO summit, was livid. His frustration was palpable as he spoke to reporters on the White House South Lawn.

"I'm not happy with them. I'm not happy with Iran, either, but I'm really unhappy with Israel going out this morning," Trump said. "We basically have two countries that have been fighting so long and so hard that they don't know what the f--- they're doing."

Minutes later, he took to his Truth Social platform to send a warning to Israel.

"ISRAEL. DO NOT DROP THOSE BOMBS. IF YOU DO IT IS A MAJOR VIOLATION," Trump posted. "BRING YOUR PILOTS HOME, NOW!"

Trump climbed aboard Air Force One and was soon on the phone with Netanyahu. He did not mince words with the Israeli leader, according to one of the White House officials. Trump was "exceptionally firm and direct" with Netanyahu "about what needed to happen to sustain the ceasefire." Netanyahu got the message.

His office confirmed that the Israeli leader held off tougher action after the appeal from Trump and "refrained from additional attacks."

After the call, Trump once again took to social media to declare the ceasefire was "in effect."

"ISRAEL is not going to attack Iran," Trump declared. "All planes will turn around and head home, while doing a friendly 'Plane Wave' to Iran, Nobody will be hurt, the Ceasefire is in effect!"

The president went on to spend a considerable chunk of his flight celebrating what his administration is calling a signal achievement.

"It was my great honor to Destroy All Nuclear facilities & capability, and then, STOP THE WAR!"

On Tuesday evening, Trump's envoy Witkoff said the president is now looking to land "a comprehensive peace agreement that goes beyond even the ceasefire."

"We're already talking to each other, not just directly, but also through interlocutors," Witkoff said in an appearance on Fox News' "The Ingraham Angle." "I think that the conversations are promising."

Back to the future: NATO leaders hark back to the Cold War as they meet to hike defense spending

By MIKE CORDER, SYLVIE CORBET, MOLLY QUELL and LORNE COOK Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte was upbeat that the military organization will agree on massive spending hikes at a “transformational summit” on Wednesday, as member state leaders including U.S. President Donald Trump assembled in the Netherlands.

Leaders of the 32-nation alliance are expected to agree a new defense spending target of 5% of gross domestic product, as the United States — NATO’s biggest-spending member — shifts its attention away from Europe to focus on security priorities elsewhere.

“So a transformational summit. Looking forward to it,” Rutte told reporters in The Hague, before chairing the meeting’s only working session, which was expected to last less than three hours.

But ahead of the meeting, Spain announced that it would not be able to reach the target by the new 2035 deadline, calling it “unreasonable.” Belgium signaled that it would not get there either, and Slovakia said it reserves the right to decide its own defense spending.

Many European countries face major economic challenges, and Trump’s global tariff war could make it even harder for America’s allies to reach their targets. Some countries are already squeezing welfare and foreign aid spending to channel extra funds into their military budgets.

On Tuesday, Trump complained that “there’s a problem with Spain. Spain is not agreeing, which is very unfair to the rest of them, frankly.” He has also criticized Canada “a low payer.” In 2018, a NATO summit during Trump’s first term unraveled due to a dispute over defense spending.

But Rutte conceded that “these are difficult decisions. Let’s be honest. I mean, politicians have to make choices in scarcity. And this is not easy.” But he said: “given the threat from the Russians, given the international security situation, there is no alternative.”

Russia’s neighbors lead the pack in boosting spending

Other countries closer to the borders of Russia and Ukraine — Poland, the three Baltic states and Nordic countries — have committed to the goal, as have NATO’s European heavyweights Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

“This is a big win, I think, for both President Trump and I think it’s also a big win for Europe,” Finnish President Alexander Stubb told reporters. “We’re witnessing the birth of a new NATO, which means a more balanced NATO.”

He said it would take nations “back to the defense expenditure levels of the Cold War.” NATO countries started to cut their military budgets in safer times after the Berlin Wall collapsed in 1989.

In a fresh take on Trump’s MAGA movement, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said: “We should choose a motto, ‘make NATO great again.’”

After Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the NATO allies agreed to make 2% of GDP the minimum spending level. Last year, 22 countries were expected to hit that target, up from just three a decade ago.

In The Hague, the allies plan a major revamp of their spending targets. They are expected to up the ante for what NATO calls “core defense spending” to 3.5%, while changing how it’s counted to include providing military support to Ukraine.

To hit Trump’s 5% demand, the deal will set a second target of 1.5% of GDP for a broader range of defense-related spending, such as improving roads, bridges, ports and airfields so that armies can deploy more quickly, countering cyber and hybrid attack measures, or preparing societies to deal with future conflicts.

Progress will be reviewed in 2029, after the next U.S. presidential elections.

“This declaration is historic. We are 32 allies supporting that ambition, which is huge,” said Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre. “We have been struggling to get above 2% and now we said 3.5%, which is necessary in order to reach our capabilities.”

Earlier this month, NATO agreed individual purchasing targets for nations to stock up on weapons and

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military equipment to better defend Europe, the Arctic and the North Atlantic, as part of the U.S. push to ramp up security spending.

US decision on forces in Europe expected in coming months

Extra funds will also be needed should the Trump administration announce a draw-down of forces in Europe, where around 84,000 U.S. troops are based, leaving European allies to plug any security gaps. The Pentagon is expected to announce its intentions in coming months.

Beyond Trump's demands, European allies and Canada have steeply ramped up defense spending out of concern about the threat posed by Russia. Several countries are concerned that Russia could carry out an attack on NATO territory by the end of the decade. Hungary is not one of them, though.

"I think Russia is not strong enough to represent a real threat to us. We are far stronger," said Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, fielding questions from reporters, leaning back with his hands thrust into his pockets. Orbán is considered Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest ally in Europe.

Switzerland's ebbing glaciers show a new, strange phenomenon: holes reminiscent of Swiss cheese

By FANNY BRODERSEN, MATTHIAS SCHRADER and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

RHONE GLACIER, Switzerland (AP) — Climate change appears to be making some of Switzerland's vaunted glaciers look like Swiss cheese: full of holes.

Matthias Huss of the glacier monitoring group GLAMOS offered a glimpse of the Rhone Glacier, which feeds the eponymous river that flows through Switzerland and France to the Mediterranean, shared the observation with The Associated Press this month as he trekked up to the icy expanse for a first "maintenance mission" of the summer to monitor its health.

The state of Switzerland's glaciers came into stark and dramatic view of the international community last month when a mudslide from an Alpine mountain submerged the southwestern village of Blatten. The Birch Glacier on the mountain, which had been holding back a mass of rock near the peak, gave way — sending an avalanche into the valley village below.

Experts say geological shifts and, to a lesser extent global warming, played a role.

Fortunately, the village had been largely evacuated beforehand, but Swiss authorities said a 64-year-old man had gone missing after the incident. Late Tuesday, regional Valais police said they had found and were examining human remains of a person who died in the mudslide.

The Alps and Switzerland — home to the most glaciers in any European country by far — have seen them retreat for about 170 years, but with ups and downs over time until the 1980s, he said. Since then, the decline has been steady, with 2022 and 2023 the worst of all. Last year was a "bit better," he said.

"Now, this year also doesn't look good, so we see we have a clear acceleration trend in the melting of glaciers," said Huss, who also is a lecturer at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, ETHZ, said in beaming sunshine and with slushy ice dripping underfoot.

Less snow and more heat create punishing conditions

The European Union's Copernicus climate center said last month was the second-warmest May on record worldwide, although temperatures in Europe were below the running average for that month compared to the average from 1991 to 2020.

Europe is not alone. In a report on Asia's climate released Monday, the U.N.'s World Meteorological Organization said reduced winter snowfall and extreme summer heat last year "were punishing for glaciers" — with 23 out of 24 glaciers in the central Himalayas and the Tian Shan range suffering "mass loss" in 2024.

A healthy glacier is considered "dynamic," by generating new ice as snow falls on it at higher elevations while melting at lower altitudes: The losses in mass at lower levels are compensated by gains above.

As a warming climate pushes up the melting to higher altitudes, such flows will slow down or even stop altogether and the glacier will essentially become "an ice patch that is just lying there," Huss said.

"This is a situation we are seeing more and more often on our glaciers: That the ice is just not dynamic

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anymore," he said. "It's just resting there and melting down in place."

This lack of dynamic regeneration is the most likely process behind the emergence and persistence of holes, seemingly caused by water turbulence at the bottom of the glacier or air flows through the gaps that appear inside the blocks of ice, Huss said.

"First the holes appear in the middle, and then they grow and grow, and suddenly the roof of these holes is starting to collapse," he said. "Then these holes get visible from the surface. These holes weren't known so well a few years ago, but now we are seeing them more often."

Such an affected glacier, he said, "is a Swiss cheese that is getting more holes everywhere, and these holes are collapsing — and it's not good for the glacier."

Effects felt from fisheries to borders

Richard Alley, a geosciences professor and glaciologist at Penn State University, noted that glacier shrinkage has wide impacts on agriculture, fisheries, drinking water levels, and border tensions when it comes to cross-boundary rivers.

"Biggest worries with mountain glaciers may be water issues — now, the shrinking glaciers are supporting summertime (often the dry season) flows that are anomalously higher than normal, but this will be replaced as glaciers disappear with anomalously low flows," he said in an email.

For Switzerland, another possible casualty is electricity: The Alpine country gets the vast majority of its power through hydroelectric plants driven from its lakes and rivers, and wide-scale glacier melt could jeopardize that.

With a whirr of a spiral drill, Huss sends ice chips flying as he bores a hole into the glacier. Then with an assistant, he unfurls a jointed metal pole — similar to the basic glacier-monitoring technology that has existed for decades — and clicks it together to drive it deep down. This serves as a measuring stick for glacier depth.

"We have a network of stakes that are drilled into the ice where we determine the melting of the mass loss of the glacier from year to year," he said. "When the glacier will be melting, which is at the moment a speed of about 5 to 10 centimeters (2-4 inches) a day, this pole will re-emerge."

Reaching up over his head — about 2.5 meters (8 feet) — he points out the height of a stake that had been drilled in in September, suggesting that an ice mass had shrunk by that much. In the super-hot year of 2022, nearly 10 meters of vertical ice were lost in a single year, he said.

Some glaciers have gone for good

The planet is already running up against the target cap increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius in global temperatures set in the Paris Climate Accord of 2015. The concerns about global warming that led to that deal have lately been overshadowed by trade wars, conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East and other geopolitical issues.

"If we manage to reduce or limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, we couldn't save this glacier," Huss said, acknowledging many Swiss glaciers are set to disappear in the future. As a person, Huss feels emotion. As a glaciologist, he is awestruck by the speed of change.

"It's always hard for me to see these glaciers melting, to even see them disappearing completely. Some of my monitoring sites I've been going to for 20 years have completely vanished in the last years," he said. "It was very sad — if you just exchange this beautiful, shiny white with these brittle rocks that are lying around."

"But on the other hand," he added, "it's also a very interesting time as a scientist to be witness to these very fast changes."

Explosive kills 7 Israeli soldiers in Gaza inside an armored vehicle, military says

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Seven Israeli soldiers were killed in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis when an explosive device affixed to their armored vehicle detonated, an Israeli military official said Wednesday.

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Tuesday's explosion was a particularly deadly incident for Israel's military inside Gaza. Over 860 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the war began with the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack — including more than 400 during the fighting inside Gaza.

Also in the area of Khan Younis area, one soldier was seriously wounded Tuesday by weapons fire, the military said.

Al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, said on its Telegram channel it had ambushed Israeli soldiers taking cover inside a residential building Tuesday in the southern Gaza Strip.

Some of the soldiers were killed and other injured after they were targeted by a Yassin 105 missile and another missile south Khan Younis, Hamas said. Al-Qassam fighters then targeted the building with machine guns.

It was not immediately clear whether the two incidents were the same.

The deadly attack came as the Palestinian death toll inside Gaza passed 56,000.

Gaza's Health Ministry said Tuesday that Israel's 21-month military operation in Gaza has killed 56,077 people.

Hamas in its 2023 attack on southern Israel killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 others hostage. Many hostages have been released by ceasefire or other agreements.

The death toll is by far the highest in any round of Israeli-Palestinian fighting. The ministry doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants but says more than half of the dead were women and children.

The ministry said the dead include 5,759 who have been killed since Israel resumed fighting on March 18, shattering a two-month ceasefire.

Israel says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, which operates in heavily populated areas. Israel says over 20,000 Hamas militants have been killed, though it has provided no evidence to support that claim. Hamas has not commented on its casualties.

On Wednesday, a local Palestinian official said Israeli forces shot and killed a 66-year-old Palestinian woman in east Jerusalem. Israeli police said they were investigating the death of a woman from east Jerusalem who was pronounced dead at a checkpoint after arriving with "serious penetrating injuries" on Tuesday night.

Marouf Al-Refai, the Palestinian official, said Israeli forces stormed Shuafat refugee camp overnight, killing Zahia Obeidi with a shot to the head around 10 p.m. and seizing her body thereafter.

Israeli forces arrested her husband and sons later that night, said Refai. It was not clear by morning whether they had been released.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, including the Old City and its holy sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, in the 1967 Mideast war in a move not internationally recognized. Palestinians want an independent state with east Jerusalem as its capital.

Zohran Mamdani declares victory in NYC's Democratic mayoral primary as Cuomo concedes

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Zohran Mamdani declared victory in New York City's Democratic mayoral primary Tuesday night after Andrew Cuomo conceded the race in a stunning upset, as the young, progressive upstart who was virtually unknown when the contest began built a substantial lead over the more experienced but scandal-scarred former governor.

Though the race's ultimate outcome will still be decided by a ranked choice count, Mamdani took a commanding position just hours after the polls closed.

With victory all but assured, Mamdani, a 33-year-old democratic socialist who ran an energetic campaign centered on the cost of living, told supporters, "I will be your Democratic nominee for the mayor of New York City."

"I will be the mayor for every New Yorker, whether you voted for me, for Governor Cuomo, or felt too

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disillusioned by a long-broken political system to vote at all," he said. "I will work to be a mayor you will be proud to call your own."

Cuomo, who had been the front-runner throughout a race that was his comeback bid from a sexual harassment scandal, conceded the election, telling a crowd that he had called Mamdani to congratulate him. "Tonight is his night. He deserved it. He won," Cuomo told supporters.

Cuomo trailed Mamdani by a significant margin in the first choice ballots and faced an exceedingly difficult pathway to catching up when ballots are redistributed in New York City's ranked choice voting process.

Mamdani, a member of the state Assembly since 2021, would be the city's first Muslim and Indian American mayor if elected. Incumbent Mayor Eric Adams skipped the primary. He's running as an independent in the general election. Cuomo also has the option of running in the general election.

"We are going to take a look and make some decisions," Cuomo said.

Cuomo and Mamdani were a study in political contrasts and could have played stand-ins for the larger Democratic Party's ideological divide, with one candidate a fresh-faced progressive and the other an older moderate.

Cuomo characterized the city as a threatening, out-of-control place desperate for an experienced leader who could restore order. He brought the power of a political dynasty to the race, securing an impressive array of endorsements from important local leaders and labor groups, all while political action committees created to support his campaign pulled in staggering sums of cash.

Mamdani, meanwhile, offered an optimistic message that life in the city could improve under his agenda, which was laser-focused on the idea that a mayor has the power to do things that lower the cost of living. The party's progressive wing coalesced behind him and he secured endorsements from two of the country's foremost progressives, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Unofficial results from the New York City's Board of Elections showed that Mamdani was ranked on more ballots than Cuomo. Mamdani was listed as the second choice by tens of thousands of more voters than Cuomo. And the number of votes that will factor into ranked choice voting is sure to shrink. More than 200,000 voters only listed a first choice, the Board of Elections results show, meaning that Mamdani's performance in the first round may ultimately be enough to clear the 50% threshold.

The race's ultimate outcome could say something about what kind of leader Democrats are looking for during President Donald Trump's second term.

The primary winner will go on to face incumbent Adams, a Democrat who decided to run as an independent amid a public uproar over his indictment on corruption charges and the subsequent abandonment of the case by Trump's Justice Department. Republican Curtis Sliwa, the founder of the Guardian Angels, will be on the ballot in the fall's general election.

The rest of the pack has struggled to gain recognition in a race where nearly every candidate has cast themselves as the person best positioned to challenge Trump's agenda.

Comptroller Brad Lander, a liberal city government stalwart, made a splash last week when he was arrested after linking arms with a man federal agents were trying to detain at an immigration court in Manhattan. In the final weeks of the race, Lander and Mamdani cross endorsed one another in an attempt to boost their collective support and damage Cuomo's bid under the ranked choice voting system.

Among the other candidates are City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, state Sen. Zellnor Myrie, hedge fund executive Whitney Tilson and former city Comptroller Scott Stringer.

Mamdani's grassroots run has been hard not to notice.

His army of young canvassers relentlessly knocked on doors throughout the city seeking support. Posters of his grinning mug were up on shop windows. You couldn't get on social media without seeing one of his well-produced videos pitching his vision — free buses, free child care, new apartments, a higher minimum wage and more, paid for by new taxes on rich people.

That youthful energy was apparent Tuesday evening, as both cautiously optimistic canvassers and ecstatic supporters lined the streets of Central Brooklyn on a sizzling hot summer day, creating a party-like atmosphere that spread from poll sites into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Outside his family's Caribbean apothecary, Amani Kojo, a 23-year-old first-time voter, passed out iced

tea to Mamdani canvassers, encouraging them to stay hydrated.

"It's 100 degrees outside and it's a vibe. New York City feels alive again," Kojo said, raising a pile of Mamdani pamphlets. "It feels very electric seeing all the people around, the flyers, all the posts on my Instagram all day."

Cuomo and some other Democrats have cast Mamdani as unqualified. They say he doesn't have the management chops to wrangle the city's sprawling bureaucracy or handle crises. Critics have also taken aim at Mamdani's support for Palestinian human rights.

In response, Mamdani has slammed Cuomo over his sexual harassment scandal and his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cuomo resigned in 2021 after a report commissioned by the state attorney general concluded that he had sexually harassed at least 11 women. He has always maintained that he didn't intentionally harass the women, saying he had simply fallen behind what was considered appropriate workplace conduct.

Kilmar Abrego Garcia is expected to be released from jail only to be taken into immigration custody

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Kilmar Abrego Garcia is expected to be released from jail in Tennessee on Wednesday, only to be taken into immigration custody.

The Salvadoran national whose mistaken deportation became a flashpoint in the fight over President Donald Trump's immigration policies has been in jail since he was returned to the U.S. on June 7, facing two counts of human smuggling.

On Sunday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Barbara Holmes ruled that Abrego Garcia does not have to remain in jail ahead of that trial. On Wednesday afternoon, she will set his conditions of release and allow him to go, according to her order. However, both his defense attorneys and prosecutors have said they expect him to be taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement as soon as he is released on the criminal charges.

In addition, federal prosecutors are appealing Holmes' release order. Among other things, they expressed concern in a motion filed on Sunday that Abrego Garcia could be deported before he faces trial. Holmes has said previously that she won't step between the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security. It is up to them to decide whether they want to deport Abrego Garcia or prosecute him.

Abrego Garcia pleaded not guilty on June 13 to smuggling charges that his attorneys have characterized as an attempt to justify his mistaken deportation in March to a notorious prison in El Salvador.

Those charges stem from a 2022 traffic stop for speeding in Tennessee during which Abrego Garcia was driving a vehicle with nine passengers. At his detention hearing, Homeland Security Special Agent Peter Joseph testified that he did not begin investigating Abrego Garcia until April of this year.

Holmes said in her Sunday ruling that federal prosecutors failed to show that Abrego Garcia was a flight risk or a danger to the community. He has lived for more than a decade in Maryland, where he and his American wife are raising three children.

However, Holmes referred to her own ruling as "little more than an academic exercise," noting that ICE plans to detain him. It is less clear what will happen after that. Although he can't be deported to El Salvador — where an immigration judge found he faces a credible threat from gangs — he is still deportable to a third country as long as that country agrees to not send him to El Salvador.

NATO leaders meet for what could be a historic summit or a divided one

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump and his NATO counterparts will meet formally Wednesday for a summit that could unite the world's biggest security organization around a new defense spending pledge or widen divisions among the allies.

Just a week ago, things had seemed rosy. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte was optimistic the European members and Canada would commit to invest at least as much of their economic growth on defense as the United States does for the first time.

Then Spain rejected the new NATO target for each country to spend 5% of its gross domestic product on defense, calling it "unreasonable." Trump insists on that figure, but doesn't say it should apply to America. The alliance operates on a consensus that requires the backing of all 32 members.

Trump has since lashed out at Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's government, saying: "NATO is going to have to deal with Spain. Spain's been a very low payer." He also criticized Canada as "a low payer."

European allies and Canada also want Ukraine to be at the top of the summit agenda, but they are wary that Trump might not want President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to steal the limelight.

The two-day summit has been overshadowed by Trump's decision to order the bombing of nuclear installations in Iran. In 2003, the U.S.-led war on Iraq deeply divided NATO, as France and Germany led opposition to the attack, while Britain and Spain joined the coalition.

A short summit, decades of mutual security

The summit in The Hague involved an informal dinner Tuesday and one working session Wednesday morning. A very short summit statement has been drafted to ensure the meeting is not derailed by fights over details and wording.

Indeed, much about this NATO summit is brief, even though ripples could be felt for years.

Founded in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed by 12 nations to counter the threat to security in Europe posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, notably via a strong U.S. presence on the continent.

Dealing with Moscow is in its DNA. Keeping the peace outside the Euro-Atlantic area is not.

NATO's ranks have grown to 32 countries since the Washington Treaty was signed 75 years ago. Sweden joined last year, worried by an increasingly aggressive Russia.

NATO's collective security guarantee — Article 5 of the treaty — underpins its credibility.

It's a political commitment by all countries to come to the aid of any member whose sovereignty or territory might be under attack. Trump has suggested he is committed to that pledge, but he has also sowed doubt about his intentions. He has said the U.S. intends to remain a member of the alliance.

Asked again on Tuesday whether he would abide by NATO's security guarantee, Trump said: "There's numerous definitions of Article 5, you know that, right? But I'm committed to being their friends." He added only that he is "committed to life and safety."

A civilian runs NATO, but the U.S. and its military hold power

The United States is NATO's most powerful member. It spends much more on defense than any other ally and far outweighs its partners in terms of military muscle. Washington has traditionally driven the agenda but has stepped back under Trump.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal provides strategic deterrence against would-be adversaries.

NATO's day-to-day work is led by Rutte, a former Dutch prime minister.

As its top civilian official, he chairs almost weekly meetings of ambassadors in the North Atlantic Council at its Brussels headquarters. He chairs other "NACs" at ministerial and leader levels. Rutte runs NATO headquarters, trying to foster consensus and to speak on behalf of all members.

NATO's military headquarters is based nearby in Mons, Belgium. It is always run by a top U.S. officer.

Ukraine's role at the summit is unclear

With Trump demanding greater defense spending, Ukraine's role has been downgraded, compared to

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previous summits. Zelenskyy attended a royal dinner that Trump also attended Tuesday. He will not have a seat at NATO's table for its one working session. But nor will any other non-NATO leader.

More broadly, NATO itself is not arming Ukraine. As an organization, it possesses no weapons of any kind. Collectively, it provides only nonlethal support — fuel, combat rations, medical supplies, body armor, and equipment to counter drones or mines.

But individually, members do send arms. European allies provided 60% of the military support that Ukraine received in 2024. NATO coordinates those weapons deliveries via a hub on the Polish border and helps organize training for Ukrainian troops.

NATO's troop plans

A key part of the commitment for allies to defend one another is to deter Russia, or any other adversary, from attacking in the first place. Finland and Sweden joined NATO recently because of this concern.

Under NATO's new military plans, 300,000 military personnel would be deployed within 30 days to counter any attack, whether it be on land, at sea, by air or in cyberspace. But experts doubt whether the allies could muster the troop numbers.

It's not just about troop and equipment numbers. An adversary would be less likely to challenge NATO if it thought the allies would use the forces it controls. Trump's threats against U.S. allies — including imposing tariffs on them — has weakened that deterrence.

The U.S. is carrying the biggest military burden

Due to high U.S. defense spending over many years, the American armed forces have more personnel and superior weapons but also significant transportation and logistics assets.

Other allies are starting to spend more, though. After years of cuts, NATO members committed to ramp up their national defense budgets in 2014 when Russia illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the NATO allies agreed to make 2% of GDP the minimum spending level. Last year, 22 countries were expected to hit that target, up from only three a decade ago.

In The Hague, the allies were expected to up the ante to 3.5%, plus a further 1.5% for things like improving roads, bridges, ports and airfields or preparing societies to deal with future conflicts.

Ceasefire between Israel and Iran appears to hold as Trump vents frustration with both sides

By JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A fragile ceasefire between Iran and Israel appeared to hold Tuesday after initially faltering, and U.S. President Donald Trump expressed frustration with both sides, saying they had fought "for so long and so hard" that they do not know what they are doing.

But even as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed Israel had brought Iran's nuclear program "to ruin," a new U.S. intelligence report found that the program has been set back only a few months after U.S. strikes over the weekend, according to two people familiar with the assessment.

The early report issued Monday by the Defense Intelligence Agency was described to The Associated Press by two people familiar with it. They were not authorized to address the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The report also contradicts statements from Trump, who has said the Iranian nuclear program was "completely and fully obliterated." The White House called the assessment "flat-out wrong."

After the truce was supposed to take effect, Israel accused Iran of launching missiles into its airspace, and the Israeli finance minister vowed that "Tehran will tremble."

The Iranian military denied firing on Israel, state media reported, but explosions boomed and sirens sounded across northern Israel in the morning, and an Israeli military official said two Iranian missiles were intercepted.

Trump told reporters at the White House before departing for a NATO summit that, in his view, both

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sides had violated the nascent agreement. He had particularly strong words for Israel, a close ally, while suggesting Iran may have fired on the country by mistake.

But later he said the deal was saved.

"ISRAEL is not going to attack Iran. All planes will turn around and head home, while doing a friendly 'Plane Wave' to Iran. Nobody will be hurt, the Ceasefire is in effect!" Trump said in his Truth Social post.

Indeed, Netanyahu's office said he held off on tougher strikes against Iran after speaking to Trump.

Iran's U.N. Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani told the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday the Islamic Republic emerged "proud and steadfast" from the aggression by Israel and the United States.

"This proves one simple truth more clearly than ever: diplomacy and dialogue are the only path to resolving the unnecessary crisis over Iran's peaceful program," he said.

A dozen tense days

The conflict, now in its 12th day, began with Israel targeting Iranian nuclear and military sites, saying it could not allow Tehran to develop atomic weapons and that it feared the Islamic Republic was close. Iran has long maintained that its program is peaceful.

If the truce holds, it will provide a global sense of relief after the U.S. intervened by dropping bunker-buster bombs on nuclear sites — a move that risked further destabilizing the volatile region.

Trump phoned Netanyahu after the American bombing on Sunday and told him not to expect additional U.S. military attacks and that he should seek a diplomatic solution with Iran, a senior White House official said.

Trump's position was that the U.S. had removed any imminent threat posed by Iran, according to the official, who was not authorized to comment publicly about sensitive diplomatic talks and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Israel followed up the U.S. air attacks by expanding the kinds of targets it was hitting.

After Tehran launched a limited retaliatory strike Monday on a U.S. military base in Qatar, Trump announced the ceasefire.

A protracted conflict could have a broad economic impact if Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, a major shipping channel.

China, which is Iran's largest trading partner and only remaining oil customer, condemned the U.S. attacks and said it was concerned about a "spiral of escalations" without a ceasefire. Trump suggested the ceasefire would allow Iranian oil to continue to flow, saying on social media that China could keep purchasing crude from Iran.

Israel accuses Iran of violating the truce. Iran denies allegation

The deal got off to a rocky start.

An Israeli military official who spoke on the condition of anonymity in line with military regulations said Iran launched two missiles at Israel hours into the tenuous ceasefire. Both were intercepted, the official said.

Iranian state television reported that the military denied firing missiles after the start of the ceasefire — while condemning Israel for predawn strikes of its own.

One of those attacks killed a high-profile nuclear scientist, Mohammad Reza Sedighi Saber, at his father-in-law's residence in northern Iran, Iranian state TV reported.

Trump's frustration with the early morning strikes was palpable as he spoke to reporters before departing for the Hague. He said both sides had violated the agreement and used an expletive to hammer home his point.

"We basically have two countries that have been fighting so long and so hard that they don't know what the f--- they're doing," he said.

Breakthrough announced after hostilities spread

Netanyahu said Israel agreed to the ceasefire with Iran, in coordination with Trump, after the country achieved all of its war goals, including removing the threat of Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

In a televised statement, Netanyahu said late Tuesday that Israel took out top generals and nuclear

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scientists and destroyed nuclear facilities in Natanz, Isfahan and the Arak heavy water reactor. He thanked Trump for his help.

It's unclear what role Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's leader, played in the talks. He said earlier on social media that he would not surrender.

Trump said Tuesday that he wasn't seeking regime change in Iran, two days after floating the idea himself in a social media post.

"I don't want it," Trump told reporters on Air Force One. "Regime change takes chaos and, ideally, we don't want to see much chaos."

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff told Fox News that the U.S. and Iran are already in early discussions about resuming negotiations over Iran's nuclear program. He called the direct talks and discussions through intermediaries "promising."

Before the ceasefire was announced, Israel's military said Iran launched 20 missiles toward Israel. Police said they damaged at least three densely packed residential buildings in the city of Beersheba. First responders said they retrieved four bodies from one building and were searching for more. At least 20 people were injured.

Outside, the shells of burned out cars littered the streets. Broken glass and rubble covered the area. Police said some people were injured while inside their apartments' reinforced safe rooms, which are meant to withstand rockets but not direct hits from ballistic missiles.

The attack followed a limited Iranian missile assault Monday on a U.S. military base in Qatar in retaliation for earlier American bombing of its nuclear sites. The U.S. was warned by Iran in advance, and there were no casualties.

Elsewhere, U.S. forces shot down drones attacking the Ain al-Assad base in the desert in western Iraq and a base next to the Baghdad airport, while another one crashed, according to a senior U.S. military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly.

No casualties were reported, and no group claimed responsibility for the attacks in Iraq. Some Iran-backed Iraqi militias had previously threatened to target U.S. bases if the U.S. attacked Iran.

Conflict has killed hundreds

In Israel, at least 28 people have been killed and more than 1,000 wounded in the war. Israeli strikes on Iran have killed at least 974 people and wounded 3,458 others, according to the Washington-based group Human Rights Activists.

The group, which has provided detailed casualty figures from Iranian unrest, said of those killed, it identified 387 civilians and 268 security force personnel.

The U.S. has evacuated some 250 American citizens and their immediate family members from Israel by government, military and charter flights that began over the weekend, a State Department official said.

There are roughly 700,000 American citizens, most of them dual U.S.-Israeli citizens, believed to be in Israel.

Man charged with supplying chemicals to Palm Springs fertility clinic bomber dies in custody

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A Washington state man who was charged with aiding the bomber of a fertility clinic in Southern California died Tuesday in federal custody, just weeks after his arrest, prison officials said.

Daniel Park, 32, was accused of supplying chemicals to Guy Edward Bartkus of California, the bomber, who died in the May 17 explosion.

Park, of suburban Seattle, was found unresponsive at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles Tuesday morning and was pronounced dead at a hospital, the Bureau of Prisons said in a statement. No cause of death was provided.

The two men connected in fringe online forums over their shared beliefs against human procreation, investigators said. The blast gutted the clinic in Palm Springs, east of Los Angeles, and shattered the

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windows of nearby buildings, with officials calling the attack terrorism. The facility was closed, and no embryos were damaged.

Park shipped 180 pounds (about 82 kilograms) of ammonium nitrate to Bartkus in January and bought another 90 pounds (about 41 kilograms) and had it shipped to him days before the explosion, investigators said. Park purchased ammonium nitrate online in several transactions between October 2022 and May 2025, according to a federal complaint.

Authorities said Park traveled to Twentynine Palms, California, near Palm Springs, to experiment with explosives in Bartkus' garage months before the attack.

Three days before Park visited him in January, Bartkus asked an AI chat application about explosives, detonation velocity, diesel and gasoline mixtures, the complaint said. The discussion centered on how to create the most powerful blast.

Park was taken into custody at New York's John F. Kennedy Airport on June 3, after he was extradited from Poland, where he fled four days after the attack. Park had been charged with providing and attempting to provide material support to terrorists. He had been at Metropolitan Detention Center since June 13, federal prison officials said.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, which is prosecuting the case, referred questions about Park's death to the Bureau of Prisons.

Park and Bartkus bonded over a "shared belief that people shouldn't exist," Akil Davis, the FBI's assistant director in charge, said earlier this month.

They believed in anti-natalism, a fringe theory that opposes childbirth and population growth and contends that people should not continue to procreate. Officials said Bartkus intentionally targeted the American Reproductive Centers, a clinic that provides services to help people get pregnant, including in vitro fertilization and fertility evaluations.

Park appeared to be a frequent poster in an anti-natalist Reddit forum going back nearly a decade, according to court papers. In 2016, he spoke of recruiting others to the movement, which he described as hopeful.

According to court papers, he wrote: "When people are lost and distraught, death is always an option."

Relatives told federal investigators that Park had made "pro-mortalist" statements since high school, according to the complaint.

More recently, in March, he posted in the forum to say he was seeking to find fellow anti-natalists in and around Washington state to "start some protests or just any in-person events," according to court papers. The post did not receive any public comments.

The Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles is also used to detain people arrested for immigration violations. It's been the site of many recent protests over President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, and Trump has deployed the National Guard to stand guard outside the facility.

Bobby Sherman, teen idol in the 1960s and '70s, and later a CPR teacher, dies at 81

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

Bobby Sherman, whose winsome smile and fashionable shaggy mop top helped make him into a teen idol in the 1960s and '70s with bubblegum pop hits like "Little Woman" and "Julie, Do Ya Love Me," has died. He was 81.

His wife, Brigitte Poublon, announced the death Tuesday and family friend John Stamos posted her message on Instagram: "Bobby left this world holding my hand — just as he held up our life with love, courage, and unwavering grace." Sherman revealed he had Stage 4 cancer earlier this year.

Sherman was a squeaky-clean regular on the covers of Tiger Beat and Sixteen magazines, often with hair over his eyes and a choker on his neck. His face was printed on lunchboxes, cereal boxes and posters that hung on the bedroom walls of his adoring fans. He landed at No. 8 in TV Guide's list of "TV's 25 Greatest Teen Idols."

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He was part of a lineage of teen heartthrobs who emerged as mass-market, youth-oriented magazines and TV took off, connecting fresh-scrubbed Ricky Nelson in the 1950s to David Cassidy in the '70s, all the way to Justin Bieber in the 2000s.

Sherman had four Top 10 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 chart — "Little Woman," "Julie, Do Ya Love Me," "Easy Come, Easy Go," and "La La La (If I Had You)." He had six albums on the Billboard 200 chart, including "Here Comes Bobby," which spent 48 weeks on the album chart, peaking at No. 10. His career got its jump start when he was cast in the ABC rock 'n' roll show "Shindig!" in the mid-'60s. Later, he starred in two television series — "Here Come the Brides" (1968-70) and "Getting Together" (1971).

Admirers from Hollywood took to social media to honor Sherman, with actor Patricia Heaton posting on X: "Hey all my 70s peeps, let's take a minute to remember our heartthrob Bobby Sherman" and Lorenzo Lamas recalling listening to Sherman's "Easy Come, Easy Go" on the school bus as a kid.

After the limelight moved on, Sherman became a certified medical emergency technician and instructor for the Los Angeles Police Department, teaching police recruits first aid and CPR. He donated his salary.

"A lot of times, people say, 'Well, if you could go back and change things, what would you do?'" he told The Tulsa World in 1997. "And I don't think I'd change a thing — except to maybe be a little bit more aware of it, because I probably could've relished the fun of it a little more. It was a lot of work. It was a lot of blood, sweat and tears. But it was the best of times."

A life-changing Hollywood party

Sherman, with sky blue eyes and dimples, grew up in the San Fernando Valley, singing Ricky Nelson songs and performing with a high-school rock band.

"I was brought up in a fairly strict family," he told the Sunday News newspaper in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1998. "Law and order were important. Respect your fellow neighbor, remember other people's feelings. I was the kind of boy who didn't do things just to be mischievous."

He was studying child psychology at a community college in 1964 when his girlfriend took him to a Hollywood party, which would change his life. He stepped onstage and sang with the band. Afterward, guests Jane Fonda, Natalie Wood and Sal Mineo asked him who his agent was. They took his number and, a few days later, an agent called him and set him up with "Shindig!"

Sherman hit true teen idol status in 1968, when he appeared in "Here Come the Brides," a comedy-adventure set in boom town Seattle in the 1870s. He sang the show's theme song, "Seattle," and starred as young logger Jeremy Bolt, often at loggerheads with brother, played by David Soul. It lasted two seasons.

Following the series, Sherman starred in "Getting Together," a spinoff of "The Partridge Family," about a songwriter struggling to make it in the music business. He became the first performer to star in three TV series before the age of 30. That television exposure soon translated into a fruitful recording career: His first single, "Little Woman," earned a gold record in 1969.

"While the rest of the world seemed jumbled up and threatening, Sherman's smiling visage beamed from the bedroom walls of hundreds of thousands of teen-age girls, a reassuring totem against the riots, drugs, war protests and free love that raged outside," The Tulsa World said in 1997.

His movies included "Wild In Streets," "He is My Brother" and "Get Crazy."

From music to medicine

Sherman pulled back from his celebrity career after several years of a frantic schedule, telling The Washington Post: "I'd film five days a week, get on a plane on a Friday night and go someplace for matinee and evening shows Saturday and Sunday, then get on a plane and go back to the studio to start filming again. It was so hectic for three years that I didn't know what home was."

Sherman's pivot to becoming an emergency medical technician in 1988 was born out of a longtime fascination with medicine. Sherman said that affinity blossomed when he raised his sons with his first wife, Patti Carnel. They would get scrapes and bloody noses and he became the family's first-aid provider. So he started learning basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation from the Red Cross.

"If I see an accident, I feel compelled to stop and give aid even if I'm in my own car," he told the St. Petersburg Times. "I carry equipment with me. And there's not a better feeling than the one you get from

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helping somebody out. I would recommend it to everybody."

In addition to his work with the Los Angeles Police Department, he was a reserve deputy with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, working security at the courthouse. Sherman estimated that, as a paramedic, he helped five women deliver babies in the backseats of cars or other impromptu locations.

In one case, he helped deliver a baby on the sidewalk and, after the birth, the new mother asked Sherman's partner what his name was. "When he told her Bobby, she named the baby Roberta. I was glad he didn't tell her my name was Sherman," he told the St. Petersburg Times in 1997.

The teen idols grow up

He was named LAPD's Reserve Officer of the Year for 1999 and received the FBI's Exceptional Service Award and the "Twice a Citizen" Award by the Los Angeles County Reserve Foundation.

In a speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in 2004, then-Rep. Howard McKeon wrote: "Bobby is a stellar example of the statement 'to protect and serve.' We can only say a simple and heartfelt thank you to Bobby Sherman and to all the men and women who courageously protect and serve the citizens of America."

Later, Sherman would join the 1990s-era "Teen Idols Tour" with former 1960s heartthrobs Micky Dolenz and Davy Jones of the Monkees and Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits.

The Chicago Sun-Times in 1998 described one of Sherman's performances: "Dressed to kill in black leather pants and white shirt, he was showered with roses and teddy bears as he started things off with 'Easy Come, Easy Go.' As he signed scores of autographs at the foot of the stage, it was quickly draped by female fans of every conceivable age group."

Sherman also co-founded the Brigitte and Bobby Sherman Children's Foundation in Ghana, which provides education, health, and welfare programs to children in need.

He is survived by two sons, Christopher and Tyler, and his wife.

"Even in his final days, he stayed strong for me. That's who Bobby was — brave, gentle, and full of light," Poublon wrote.

Early US intelligence report suggests US strikes only set back Iran's nuclear program by months

By MICHELLE L. PRICE, MARY CLARE JALONICK, STÉPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN and SAM McNEIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. intelligence report suggests that Iran's nuclear program has been set back only a few months after U.S. strikes and was not "completely and fully obliterated" as President Donald Trump has said, according to two people familiar with the early assessment.

The report issued by the Defense Intelligence Agency on Monday contradicts statements from Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the status of Iran's nuclear facilities. According to the people, the report found that while the Sunday strikes at the Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan nuclear sites did significant damage, the facilities were not totally destroyed. The people were not authorized to address the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. has held out hope of restarting negotiations with Iran to convince it to give up its nuclear program entirely, but some experts fear that the U.S. strikes — and the potential of Iran retaining some of its capabilities — could push Tehran toward developing a functioning weapon.

The assessment also suggests that at least some of Iran's highly enriched uranium, necessary for creating a nuclear weapon, was moved out of multiple sites before the U.S. strikes and survived, and it found that Iran's centrifuges, which are required to further enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels, are largely intact, according to the people.

At the deeply buried Fordo uranium enrichment plant, where U.S. B-2 stealth bombers dropped several 30,000-pound bunker-buster bombs, the entrance collapsed and infrastructure was damaged, but the underground infrastructure was not destroyed, the assessment found. The people said that intelligence officials had warned of such an outcome in previous assessments ahead of the strike on Fordo.

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The White House pushes back

The White House strongly pushed back on the DIA assessment, calling it “flat-out wrong.”

“The leaking of this alleged assessment is a clear attempt to demean President Trump, and discredit the brave fighter pilots who conducted a perfectly executed mission to obliterate Iran’s nuclear program,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement. “Everyone knows what happens when you drop fourteen 30,000 pound bombs perfectly on their targets: total obliteration.”

The CIA and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence declined to comment on the DIA assessment. ODNI coordinates the work of the nation’s 18 intelligence agencies, including the DIA, which is the intelligence arm of the Defense Department, responsible for producing intelligence on foreign militaries and the capabilities of adversaries. The Israeli government also has not released any official assessments of the U.S. strikes.

Trump special envoy Steve Witkoff, who said he has read damage assessment reports from U.S. intelligence and other nations, reiterated Tuesday night that the strikes had deprived Iran of the ability to develop a weapon and called it outrageous that the U.S. assessment was shared with reporters.

“It’s treasonous so it ought to be investigated,” Witkoff said on Fox News Channel.

Trump has said in comments and posts on social media in recent days, including Tuesday, that the strike left the sites in Iran “totally destroyed” and that Iran will never rebuild its nuclear facilities.

Netanyahu said in a televised statement on Tuesday that, “For dozens of years I promised you that Iran would not have nuclear weapons and indeed ... we brought to ruin Iran’s nuclear program.” He said the U.S. joining Israel was “historic” and thanked Trump.

The intelligence assessment was first reported by CNN on Tuesday.

Outside experts had suspected Iran had likely already hidden the core components of its nuclear program as it stared down the possibility that American bunker-buster bombs could be used on its nuclear sites.

Bulldozers and trucks visible in satellite imagery taken just days before the strikes have fueled speculation among experts that Iran may have transferred its half-ton stockpile of enriched uranium to an unknown location. And the incomplete destruction of the nuclear sites could still leave the country with the capacity to spin up weapons-grade uranium and develop a bomb.

Iran has maintained that its nuclear program is peaceful, but it has enriched significant quantities of uranium beyond the levels required for any civilian use. The U.S. and others assessed prior to the U.S. strikes that Iran’s theocratic leadership had not yet ordered the country to pursue an operational nuclear weapon, but the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly warned that Iran has enough enriched uranium to make several nuclear bombs should it choose to do so.

Vice President JD Vance said in a Monday interview on Fox News Channel that even if Iran is still in control of its stockpile of 408.6 kilograms (900.8 pounds) of enriched uranium, which is just short of weapons-grade, the U.S. has cut off Iran’s ability to convert it to a nuclear weapon.

“If they have 60% enriched uranium, but they don’t have the ability to enrich it to 90%, and, further, they don’t have the ability to convert that to a nuclear weapon, that is mission success. That is the obliteration of their nuclear program, which is why the president, I think, rightly is using that term,” Vance said.

Approximately 42 kilograms of 60% enriched uranium is theoretically enough to produce one atomic bomb if enriched further to 90%, according to the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

What experts say

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi informed U.N. nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi on June 13 — the day Israel launched its military campaign against Iran — that Tehran would “adopt special measures to protect our nuclear equipment and materials.”

American satellite imagery and analysis firm Maxar Technologies said its satellites photographed trucks and bulldozers at the Fordo site beginning on June 19, three days before the Americans struck.

Subsequent imagery “revealed that the tunnel entrances into the underground complex had been sealed off with dirt prior to the U.S. airstrikes,” said Stephen Wood, senior director at Maxar. “We believe that some of the trucks seen on 19 June were carrying dirt to be used as part of that operation.”

Some experts say those trucks could also have been used to move out Iran’s enriched uranium stockpile.

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"It is plausible that Iran moved the material enriched to 60% out of Fordo and loaded it on a truck," said Eric Brewer, a former U.S. intelligence analyst and now deputy vice president at the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Iran could also have moved other equipment, including centrifuges, he said, noting that while enriched uranium, which is stored in fortified canisters, is relatively easy to transport, delicate centrifuges are more challenging to move without inflicting damage.

Apart from its enriched uranium stockpile, over the past four years Iran has produced the centrifuges key to enrichment without oversight from the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

Iran also announced on June 12 that it has built and will activate a third nuclear enrichment facility. IAEA chief Grossi said the facility was located in Isfahan, a place where Iran has several other nuclear sites. After being bombarded by both the Israelis and the Americans, it is unclear if, or how quickly, Isfahan's facilities, including tunnels, could become operational.

But given all of the equipment and material likely still under Iran's control, this offers Tehran "a pretty solid foundation for a reconstituted covert program and for getting a bomb," Brewer said.

Kelsey Davenport, director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association, a nonpartisan policy center, said that "if Iran had already diverted its centrifuges," it can "build a covert enrichment facility with a small footprint and inject the 60% gas into those centrifuges and quickly enrich to weapons grade levels."

But Brewer also underlined that if Iran launched a covert nuclear program, it would do so at a disadvantage, having lost to Israeli and American strikes vital equipment and personnel that are crucial for turning the enriched uranium into a functional nuclear weapon.

Temperature in New York City reaches 100 degrees as eastern US swelters under extreme heat wave

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Extensive triple digit heat, broken temperature records and oppressive humidity piled up into a steaming mess as the heat dome crushing the Eastern half of the nation sizzled to what should be its worst Tuesday.

New York City's John F. Kennedy Airport hit 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius) a little after noon, the first time since 2013. Then Baltimore, Philadelphia and Boston joined the 100 club. More than 150 million people woke up to heat warnings and forecasters at the National Weather Service expected dozens of places to tie or set new daily high temperature records Tuesday. The dangerous heat sent people to the hospital, delayed Amtrak trains and caused utilities to urge customers to conserve power.

"Every East Coast state today from Maine to Florida has a chance of 100 degree actual temperature," said private meteorologist Ryan Maue, a former National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration chief scientist.

Fryeburg, Maine, also hit 100, for the first time since 2011.

"Getting Maine to 100 degrees is infrequent," Maue said.

Tuesday's heat came on top of 39 new or tied heat records Monday. But just as dangerous as triple digit heat is the lack of cooling at night, driven by the humidity.

"You get the combination of the extreme heat and humidity but no relief," said Jacob Asherman, a meteorologist at NOAA's Weather Prediction Center. "It's kind of been just everything stacked on top of itself.... It just speaks to how strong this heat wave is. This is a pretty, pretty extreme event."

Asherman and Maue said Tuesday is the peak of the high pressure system that sits on top of the Mid-Atlantic and keeps the heat and humidity turned up several notches.

"Nobody is immune to the heat," said Kimberly McMahon, the weather service public services program manager who specializes in heat and health.

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Heat turns dangerous

Dozens attending outdoor high school graduation ceremonies in a northern New Jersey city on Monday were treated for heat exhaustion and related problems, including 16 taken to hospitals. The Paterson school district held ceremonies in the morning and the afternoon as temperatures soared to nearly 100 degrees. Officials halted the second ceremony about an hour after it had started due to the heat.

And in New Hampshire, two 16-year-old hikers were rescued from a mountain in Jaffrey late Monday afternoon, overcome by the heat, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department said. They were described as being in and out of consciousness and taken to a hospital.

The heat hit New York City as residents headed to the polls for the city's primary election. In Queens, Rekha Malhotra was handing out flyers in support of Democratic mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani while wearing a pink electric fan around their neck.

"It's 90 bazillion degrees and here I am," said Malhotra. "I could have been phone banking."

"I have all the things — hat, ice and this," Malhotra added, clutching a commercial-grade spray bottle.

Utilities across the Midwest and East braced for the surge of extra demand in the heat, at times asking people to cut back on air conditioning when it felt like it was needed the most. In Memphis, Tennessee, residents were asked to turn off unnecessary lights and electronics, wait until nighttime to use dishwashers, washing machines dryers, and raise thermostats a few degrees, if health allows.

No relief at night

The heat and humidity during the day was compounded by humid nights where the temperatures don't drop much and the human body and the electric bill don't get a break to recover, said Bernadette Woods Placky, chief meteorologist at Climate Central.

"The longer the heat lasts, the more it wears on the body, the more it wears on the health," Woods Placky said.

A good rule of thumb is the temperature has to get at least as low as 75 degrees, if not lower, for people to recover, McMahon said. That's a lesson from the Pacific Northwest heat wave of 2021, when many of the deaths were older people who lived at home and died at night because it wasn't getting cool enough, she said.

"Unlike other weather hazards, heat does have that compounding effect on the human body. Your body tolerates less and less heat as the days go on," McMahon said.

Because warmer air from human-caused climate change holds more moisture, making it more humid, summer nights are actually heating up faster than summer days, Woods Placky said. That's why the Dust Bowl of the 1930s hit high temperatures similar to now, but it wasn't as warm overall because the nights cooled, she said.

The United States daytime summer high temperature has increased 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit since 1975, but the nighttime lowest temperature is now on average 2.6 degrees higher, according to NOAA data. In Baltimore, summer nights have warmed 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit since 1975, while summer days only 1.5 degrees, the data showed.

Marc Savenor, who owns Acme Ice and Dry Ice Company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, struggled to keep up with phones ringing as the heat wave overwhelmed ice machines and refrigerators, forcing customers to seek emergency supplies.

"During the heat waves, my phone will ring at 3 in the morning till 11 at night," Savenor said as workers shoveled dry ice into pellets. "There's no help for the weary here, because you've got to get it when it's coming in and everybody wants some."

Air conditioners and fans have been flying off the shelves at Khan Electronics in Queens, owner Mudassar Khan said.

"It started getting hot at night. People buy air conditioners when they feel uncomfortable at night," Khan said.

"Relief is coming," Maue said, predicting that on Friday, New York City probably won't even get into the 70s. "It'll feel incredible."

NBA owners unanimously approve \$1.5B sale of Wolves, WNBA's Lynx from Taylor to Lore-Rodriguez group

By DAVE CAMPBELL AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The \$1.5 billion sale of the Minnesota Timberwolves from Glen Taylor to an investment group led by e-commerce entrepreneur Marc Lore and former baseball star Alex Rodriguez gained NBA approval on Tuesday, finalizing a complex and contentious process more than four years after the deal was reached.

The ownership transfer that Taylor tried to stop last year received an unanimous vote from the league's board of governors that comprises the 30 team owners. The deal, which is expected to close this week nearly 51 months and more than 1,500 days after the initial agreement, includes the four-time WNBA champion Minnesota Lynx.

The Timberwolves are planning an introductory news conference for Lore and Rodriguez next month in Las Vegas during the NBA Summer League. Lore and Rodriguez will serve as co-chairmen on the board, with Lore as Timberwolves governor and Rodriguez as alternate governor, the league announced. For the Lynx, Rodriguez will serve as governor and Lore as alternate governor.

"We fully recognize the great responsibility that comes with serving as stewards of these exceptional franchises," Lore said in a statement distributed by the organization. "We are committed to building an organization that sets the standard for excellence, is universally admired, and rooted in pride that spans generations."

The business partners and close friends who met during the pandemic over a Zoom call have said they're committed to keeping the teams in Minnesota.

"I've dedicated my entire life to the world of sports, not just as a game, but as a powerful force that unites people, uplifts communities, and changes lives," Rodriguez said. "I'm incredibly honored and energized to roll up my sleeves and get to work. I know what it takes to be a champion, and I'm ready to bring that same commitment and drive to create a winning culture in Minnesota."

The 83-year-old Taylor, who grew up on a Minnesota dairy farm and built a fortune with a business that specialized in printing wedding invitations, bought the Timberwolves for about \$88 million in 1994 to prevent them from moving after a deal between the original owners and a group in New Orleans was nixed by the NBA.

After Lore and Rodriguez were outbid for the New York Mets by hedge fund manager Steve Cohen, they turned their attention to basketball after learning Taylor was exploring a sale. The deal was arranged in phases to allow Taylor to stay as a mentor of sorts.

The value of the franchise has more than doubled since that April 10, 2021, agreement due largely to soaring NBA revenues. Forbes has estimated the Timberwolves are worth \$3.1 billion. Sportico's most recent calculations pegged the club at \$3.29 billion. Both publications put them as the third-lowest in the league, playing in a mid-sized market in a 35-year-old arena.

The Lynx have been valued between \$230 million (Forbes) and \$240 million (Sportico), in the bottom half of the league that's in the midst of an expansion to 16 teams by 2028.

Taylor announced on March 28, 2024, he was exercising his right to back out of the sale because Lore and Rodriguez missed the deadline to purchase a third portion of the club that would have given their group about an 80% stake.

Lore and Rodriguez were blindsided by the decision and defended their integrity, accusing Taylor of having seller's remorse. They blamed the payment delay on the slow pace of the league's approval process and said they submitted paperwork six days ahead of the deadline.

The dispute first went to mediation and then to arbitration, where a three-panel judge ruled in favor of Lore and Rodriguez. Their group, which includes former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Google executive Eric Schmidt, has been poised to buy Taylor and his partners completely out rather than leave him with a 20% stake from the initial agreement.

Taylor decided in April not to appeal the arbitration decision, near the end of his 31st season controlling

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the team. The Timberwolves saved him the best for last, reaching the Western Conference finals for a second straight year before losing to NBA champion Oklahoma City.

Even after making the playoffs in each of Taylor's final four seasons, the Timberwolves have the worst all-time regular season record — 1,196-1,680, a .416 winning percentage — of the league's current 30 franchises. They're 39-55 in playoff games, with a first-round elimination in 10 of the 13 times they qualified.

Taylor and his wife, Becky, published a farewell message in Monday's print edition of the Minnesota Star Tribune, which Taylor bought in 2014. The Timberwolves also posted it on the front of their website.

"This marks the end of an extraordinary chapter in our lives — one filled with purpose, pride, and a deep connection. When we kept the Timberwolves from moving to New Orleans in 1994, we did so with the hope of building something that could unite people across Minnesota and beyond. And when we added the Lynx in 1998, it was driven by our belief in supporting women and fully embracing the diversity and promise of the WNBA," the Taylors said, thanking their limited partners, the players, the staff, the community and the fans for their support.

"Though we are stepping away as owners, our love for this organization and this community remains as strong as ever. We will always be fans, cheering from our seats, celebrating your triumphs, and believing in what comes next. It has been the honor of our lives."

Lore, whose net worth is estimated by Forbes at \$2.9 billion, is the CEO of the New York-based meal delivery service Wonder. He has founded e-commerce companies that were previously acquired by retail giants Walmart and Amazon.

Rodriguez, a 14-time All-Star who hit 696 career home runs but has fallen short of Hall of Fame induction due to his admitted use of performance enhancing drugs, built a business career around real estate investment and development. He made more than \$450 million in salaries over 22 years in the major leagues.

Trump administration postpones classified briefings for lawmakers on Iran

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Tuesday postponed classified briefings for Senate and House members as lawmakers look for more answers about President Donald Trump's directed strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities over the weekend and his announcement on Monday that the two countries had reached a ceasefire agreement.

The Senate briefing has been rescheduled for Thursday so that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Secretary of State Marco Rubio can attend, according to multiple people with knowledge of the scheduling change who would only discuss it on the condition of anonymity. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said on social media that the House briefing will now be held on Friday, "details to follow."

Trump proclaimed on social media that Israel and Iran had agreed that there will be an "Official END" of their conflict. That tentative truce briefly faltered Tuesday when Israel accused Iran of launching missiles into its airspace, but Trump later declared it was "in effect!"

The separate briefings for the House and Senate were to be led by CIA Director John Ratcliffe and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, along with Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and deputy secretaries of state Christopher Landau and Steve Feinberg.

Democrats in Congress, along with some Republicans, have many questions about Trump's unilateral decision to launch military action, arguing he should have gone to Congress for approval — or at least provided more justification for the attacks. Congress has not received any new intelligence since Gabbard told lawmakers in March that the U.S. believed Iran was not building a new nuclear weapon, according to two people familiar with the intelligence. The people insisted on anonymity to share what Congress has been told.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said it is "outrageous" that the administration postponed the briefings.

"There is a legal obligation for the administration to inform Congress about precisely what is happening,"

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Schumer said. "What are they afraid of? Why won't they engage Congress in the critical details?"

California Rep. Pete Aguilar, chair of the House Democratic caucus, said that lawmakers "need evidence, we need details and we need to know them now."

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., defended the administration's handling of the information, saying the briefings were postponed because "the situation is still developing" amid the recent ceasefire announcement.

Many lawmakers feel they have been left in the dark on what led to the strikes and amid escalating tensions between the White House and Congress over the role of the United States internationally — disagreements that don't always fall along party lines.

Democrats have been generally suspicious of the Republican president's strategy, and his motives abroad, but some believe the U.S. could have a role in supporting Israel against Iran. Others strongly believe the U.S. should stay out of it.

Some of Trump's strongest Republican supporters agree with the Democrats who oppose intervention, echoing the president's years of arguments against "forever wars." But most Republicans enthusiastically backed the strikes, saying Trump should have the power to act on his own.

Speaker Johnson said Tuesday that the strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities were "clearly" within Trump's powers and went as far as to question the constitutionality of the War Powers Act, which is intended to give Congress a say in military action.

"The bottom line is the commander in chief is the president, the military reports to the president, and the person empowered to act on the nation's behalf is the president," Johnson told reporters.

After Trump first announced a ceasefire between the two countries on Monday, Republicans immediately praised him. Sen. Bernie Moreno, R-Ohio, suggested in a post on X that Trump should be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala., posted: "Historic! The President of Peace!"

But Democrats said they wanted more information. After Iran's retaliation on the U.S. base in Qatar earlier in the day on Monday, Schumer said he wanted an additional classified briefing "laying out the full threat picture, the intelligence behind Iran's retaliation, and the details, scope, and timeline of any U.S. response."

Senate Democrats are also forcing a vote as soon as this week on a resolution by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., requiring congressional approval for specific military action in Iran.

"You have a debate like this so that the entire American public, whose sons and daughters are in the military and whose lives will be at risk in war, get to see the debate and reach their own conclusion together with the elected officials about whether the mission is worth it or not," Kaine said.

While he did not seek approval, Trump sent congressional leaders a short letter Monday serving as his official notice of the strikes, two days after the bombs fell.

The letter said that the strike was taken "to advance vital United States national interests, and in collective self defense of our ally, Israel, by eliminating Iran's nuclear program."

While previous presidents have deployed armed forces without permission from Congress, Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries said that those administrations explained "the imminent threat that justified their action."

"We've asked that question," Jeffries said. "We have no answers from the Trump administration."

Powell says Fed rate cut is on hold even as Trump demands cuts

By CHRIS RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve will continue to wait and see how the economy evolves before deciding whether to reduce its key interest rate, Chair Jerome Powell said Tuesday, a stance directly at odds with President Donald Trump's calls for immediate cuts.

"For the time being, we are well positioned to wait to learn more about the likely course of the economy before considering any adjustments to our policy stance," Powell said in testimony Tuesday before the House Financial Services Committee.

Several Republicans on the committee pushed Powell to consider reducing borrowing costs more quickly,

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as soon as its next meeting at the end of July. But on the whole, the hearing was uniformly polite and Powell did not face sharp criticism over the Fed's decision to leave its rate unchanged.

Members of both parties thanked Powell for maintaining his focus on the Fed's dual mission of controlling inflation and supporting maximum employment. Powell has often cited his support in Congress as a bulwark against Trump's attacks.

Trump lashed out again early Tuesday, posting on his social media site: "I hope Congress really works this very dumb, hardheaded person, over. We will be paying for his incompetence for many years to come."

Several Republicans asked Powell why the central bank has yet to lower borrowing costs. Powell responded that most economists, inside and outside the Fed, still expect tariffs to push inflation higher, and Fed policymakers want to see what happens over the next couple of months before making any changes.

"We do expect tariff inflation to show up more," Powell said. "We really don't know how much of that's going to be passed through the consumer. We have to wait and see."

Under questioning, Powell acknowledged that tariffs might not push up inflation as much as economists forecast. That, he said, could lead the Fed to reduce rates more quickly. A sharp rise in the unemployment rate could also spur the Fed to cut borrowing costs more quickly, he said.

"We could see inflation come in not as strong as we expect," he said. "And if that were the case, that would tend to suggest cutting sooner." But when asked specifically about July, Powell declined to comment.

Powell also said he expected to see tariffs' impact on prices emerge in the next few months, starting in June. The June inflation report will be released July 15.

Rep. Josh Gottheimer, a Democrat from New Jersey, asked Powell whether Trump's "bullying" would impact the Fed's decision-making.

Powell said the Fed wants to "deliver a good economy for the benefit of the American people, and that's it."

"Anything else is kind of a distraction," Powell added. "We always do what we think is the right thing to do, and we live with the consequences. I don't know how else to do the job."

The Fed's 19-member interest rate setting committee, led by the chair, decides whether to cut or raise borrowing costs. They typically increase rates to cool the economy to fight or prevent inflation, and lower rates when the economy is weak to boost borrowing and spending.

The Fed's committee voted unanimously last week to keep its key rate unchanged, though the Fed also released forecasts of future rate cuts that revealed emerging divisions among the policymakers. Seven projected no rate cuts at all this year, two just one, while 10 forecast at least two reductions.

The Fed chair said the bump to inflation from tariffs could be temporary, or it could lead to a more persistent bout of inflation.

The Fed's "obligation," Powell said, "is ... to prevent a one-time increase in the price level from becoming an ongoing inflation problem."

At a news conference last week, Powell suggested the Fed would monitor how the economy evolves over the summer in response to Trump's tariffs, hinting that a rate cut wouldn't occur until September.

Yet two high-profile members of the Fed's governing board, Michelle Bowman and Christopher Waller, have since suggested the central bank could cut its rate as early as July. Both officials were appointed by Trump during his first term and Waller is often mentioned as a potential replacement for Powell when his term ends next May. Powell was also appointed by Trump in late 2017.

Other officials, however, are still cautious about rate reductions. Beth Hammack, president of the Federal Reserve's Cleveland branch, said Tuesday that given the uncertainty enveloping the economy, rates may be on hold for "quite some time" before the Fed decides to make "very modest cuts."

Trump is urging the Fed to cut rates to save the U.S. government money on interest payments affixed to the vast national debt. Yet the Fed has long resisted consideration of the government's financing costs when making interest rate decisions, preferring instead to focus on the health of the economy and inflation..

Waller, in an interview Friday, said that lowering the government's borrowing costs is "not our job" and added that it was up to Congress and the White House to reduce the budget deficit.

Trump meanwhile, on social media Tuesday repeated his false claim that the European Central Bank

has cut its key rate ten times while the Fed has not cut at all. In fact, in the last 12 months the ECB has reduced its rate eight times and the Fed has done so three times, all late last year.

The Fed's cuts last year lowered its rate to about 4.3%. Since then it has put reductions on pause out of concern that Trump's tariffs lead to inflation. The president has slapped a 10% duty on all imports, along with an additional 30% levy on goods from China, 50% on steel and aluminum, and 25% on autos.

Yet inflation has steadily cooled this year despite widespread concerns among economists about the impact of tariffs. The consumer price index ticked up just 0.1% from April to May, the government said last week, a sign that price pressures are muted.

What to know about 'Alligator Alcatraz,' Florida's immigration detention site in the Everglades

By KATE PAYNE Associated Press/Report for America

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — An immigration detention facility located at an isolated Everglades airfield surrounded by mosquito-, python- and alligator-filled swamplands is just days away from being operational, federal officials said Tuesday.

Florida officials are racing ahead with the construction of what they've dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" to help carry out President Donald Trump's mass deportation agenda, working to build a compound of heavy-duty tents, trailers and temporary buildings similar to sites used during natural disasters.

The construction of the facility in the remote and ecologically sensitive wetland about 45 miles (72 kilometers) west of downtown Miami is alarming environmentalists, as well as human rights advocates who have slammed the plan as cruel and inhumane.

State officials say the installation is critical to support the federal government's immigration crackdown, which has resulted in a record-high number of detentions, totaling more than 56,000 immigrants in June, the most since 2019.

Here's what to know.

5,000 detention beds by early July

Construction of the site in the dog days of summer is part of the state's plan to operationalize 5,000 immigration detention beds by early July, according to Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier, a former chief of staff for Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and a key architect of the state's aggressive immigration enforcement campaign. Uthmeier helped coordinate the state-funded flights of about 50 Venezuelans to Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in 2022.

In the eyes of Florida officials, the harsh conditions surrounding the far-flung Everglades airstrip and its nearly 10,500-foot (3,200-meter) runway make it an ideal location to house and transport migrants.

"We don't need to build a lot of brick and mortar," Uthmeier said in an interview with conservative media commentator Benny Johnson. "And thankfully, Mother Nature does a lot on the perimeter."

"There's really nowhere to go. If you're housed there, if you're detained there, there's no way in, no way out," Uthmeier added.

The Trump administration wants to more than double its existing 41,000 beds for detaining migrants to at least 100,000 beds.

A tax-cutting and budget reconciliation bill approved last month by the U.S. House of Representatives includes \$45 billion over four years for immigrant detention, a threefold spending increase. The Senate is now considering that legislation.

Democrats and activists decry the plan

More than 50 years ago, environmental advocates, including the famed Marjory Stoneman Douglas, rallied to stop the same stretch of land from being turned into what was to be the largest airport in the world.

Now, activists are rallying to halt what some critics have described as a state-backed "heist."

"Surrounded by Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve, this land is part of one of the most fragile ecosystems in the country," reads a statement from the advocacy group Friends of the Everglades. "Let's not repeat the mistakes of the past. This land deserves lasting protection."

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Florida Democratic U.S. Rep. Maxwell Frost condemned the detention center, calling its apparent use of alligators as a security measure a "cruel spectacle."

"Donald Trump, his Administration, and his enablers have made one thing brutally clear: they intend to use the power of government to kidnap, brutalize, starve, and harm every single immigrant they can — because they have a deep disdain for immigrants and are using them to scapegoat the serious issues facing working people," Frost said in a statement.

Maria Asuncion Bilbao, Florida campaign coordinator at American Friends Service Committee, an immigration advocacy group, warned that the health and safety of detainees is being put at risk.

"What's happening is very concerning, the level of dehumanization," Bilbao said. "It's like a theatricalization of cruelty."

Bilbao, who leads a group of immigration advocates who help immigrants at one of the ICE offices in South Florida, said she's concerned about the health risks of the heat and mosquitoes, and the challenges the remoteness of the site presents to community members hoping to protest or monitor activities there.

DHS is backing the initiative

Officials with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security have applauded the effort and the agency's "partnership with Florida."

DHS Secretary Kristi Noem said the new facility will be funded in large part by the Shelter and Services Program within the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, which is best known for responding to hurricanes and other natural disasters.

"We are working at turbo speed on cost-effective and innovative ways to deliver on the American people's mandate for mass deportations of criminal aliens," said Noem in a written statement provided to the AP. "We will expand facilities and bed space in just days."

Managing the facility "via a team of vendors" will cost \$245 a bed per day or approximately \$450 million a year, a U.S. official said. The expenses will be incurred by Florida and reimbursed by FEMA, which has a \$625 million shelter and service program fund.

Immigrants arrested by Florida law enforcement officers under the federal 287 (g) program will be held at the facility, as well as immigrants in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE.

Under the revived 287 (g) program, local and state law enforcement officers can interrogate immigrants in their custody and detain them for potential deportation.

Agencies across all 67 Florida counties have signed more than 280 such agreements, more than a third of the 720 agreements ICE have reached nationwide.

Florida is using emergency powers to build the site

State officials are commandeering the land using state emergency powers, under an executive order issued by DeSantis during the administration of then-President Joe Biden to respond to what the governor deemed a crisis caused by illegal immigration.

Florida is moving forward with the construction on county-owned land over the concerns of Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, local activists and Native American tribal leaders who consider the area sacred.

By relying on executive orders, the state is able to sidestep purchasing laws and fast-track the project, which Fried said amounts to an abuse of power.

The orders grant sweeping authority to the state's head of emergency management, Kevin Guthrie, including the power to suspend "any statute, rule, or order" seen as slowing the response to the emergency, and the ability to place select law enforcement personnel from across the state under his "direct command and coordination."

"Governor DeSantis has insisted that the state of Florida, under his leadership, will facilitate the federal government in enforcing immigration law," a DeSantis spokesperson said in a statement.

"Florida will continue to lead on immigration enforcement."

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US stocks approach their all-time high as oil prices tumble

By STAN CHOE, DAVID McHUGH and ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks rose toward their all-time high on Tuesday after oil prices eased further on hopes that Israel's war with Iran will not damage the global flow of crude.

The S&P 500 climbed 1.1%, following up on big gains for stocks across Europe and Asia, after President Donald Trump said late Monday that Israel and Iran had agreed to a "complete and total ceasefire." The main measure of Wall Street's health is back within 0.8% of its record set in February after falling roughly 20% below during the spring.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 507 points, or 1.2%, and the Nasdaq composite rallied 1.4%.

The strongest action was again in the oil market, where a barrel of benchmark U.S. crude fell 6% to settle at \$64.37. Brent crude, the international standard, had a similar drop.

The fear throughout the Israel-Iran conflict has been that it could squeeze the world's supply of oil, which would pump up prices for gasoline and hurt the global economy. Iran is a major producer of crude, and it could also try to block the Strait of Hormuz off its coast, through which 20% of the world's daily oil needs passes on ships.

Oil prices began falling sharply on Monday after Iran launched what appeared to be a limited retaliatory strike to the United States' entry into the war, one that did not target the production or movement of oil. They kept falling even after attacks continued past a deadline to stop hostilities early Tuesday. Trump later said that the ceasefire was "in effect."

Oil prices have dropped so much in the last two days that they're below where they were before the fighting began nearly two weeks ago.

With the global oil market well supplied and the OPEC+ alliance of producing countries steadily increasing production, oil prices could be headed even lower as long as the ceasefire holds and a lasting peace solution can be found, said Carsten Fritsch, commodities analyst at Commerzbank.

Falling oil prices should take some pressure off inflation, and that in turn could give the Federal Reserve leeway to resume cutting interest rates.

Wall Street loves lower rates because they boost the economy by making it cheaper for U.S. households and businesses to borrow money to buy a car or build a factory. But they could also give inflation more fuel. That threat is why the Fed has been hesitant to cut rates this year after lowering them through the end of last year.

The Fed has said repeatedly that it wants to wait and see how much Trump's tariffs will hurt the economy and raise inflation before committing to its next move. So far, the economy seems to be holding up OK, though a report on confidence among U.S. consumers came in weaker than economists expected on Tuesday, and inflation has remained only a bit above the Fed's 2% target.

Trump has been pushing loudly for more cuts to rates. And two of his appointees to the Fed have said recently they may consider cutting rates as soon as the Fed's next meeting next month.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell remains more cautious, though he did indicate Tuesday that the Fed's next move is likely to be a cut.

Asked during testimony before a Congressional committee whether a reduction could arrive as soon as July, Powell said, "We will get to a place where we cut rates, sooner rather than later — but I wouldn't want to point to a particular meeting. I don't think we need to be in any rush because the economy is still strong."

That helped Treasury yields ease in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.29% from 4.34% late Monday.

The two-year Treasury yield, which more closely tracks expectations for Fed action, fell to 3.81% from 3.84%.

On Wall Street, cruise operator Carnival steamed 6.9% higher after the cruise operator delivered a much bigger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

CEO Josh Weinstein said it's seeing strong demand from people booking cruises close to the departure

date, and customers are spending strongly once on board. Carnival also raised its forecast for an underlying measure of profit for the full year.

Uber Technologies rose 7.5% after it said customers in Atlanta can use its app to ride in Waymo autonomous vehicles.

Coinbase Global rallied 12.1% as the cryptocurrency exchange rose with the price of bitcoin, which jumped back above \$105,000.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 67.01 points to 6,092.18. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 507.24 to 43,089.02, and the Nasdaq composite rallied 281.56 to 19,912.53.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rallied at least 1% everywhere from France to Germany to Japan following the announcement of the Israel-Iran ceasefire. Hong Kong's jump of 2.1% and South Korea's leap of 3% were two of the strongest moves.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs confirms he won't testify and praises the trial judge for an 'excellent job'

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sean "Diddy" Combs told the judge at his sex trafficking trial that he's doing an "excellent job" as he confirmed Tuesday that he won't testify.

Combs made the comment to U.S. District Judge Arun Subramanian after being asked about testifying.

The question was posed by the Manhattan jurist after the prosecution rested following a more than six-week-long presentation of evidence against the hip-hop maven. Later in the afternoon, the defense rested without calling any witnesses.

In a routine occurrence after prosecutors rest at criminal trials, Combs' lawyers made arguments to toss out the charges, arguing the charges weren't proven. The judge said he'll rule at a later date.

Prosecutors have called 34 witnesses to try to prove sex trafficking and racketeering conspiracy charges that resulted in Combs' September arrest, including two ex-girlfriends of Combs who testified they felt coerced into marathon sex events with male sex workers that were called "freak-offs" or "hotel nights."

Defense lawyers, though, say they were consensual sexual encounters consistent with the swingers lifestyle.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty and has remained incarcerated without bail in a federal lockup in Brooklyn after multiple judges concluded last fall that he was a danger to the community.

It is standard practice at federal criminal trials for the judge to directly question the defendant about the decision to testify or not, in part to ensure that the defendant knows it is his decision, regardless of what his lawyers have told him.

When it came time for Subramanian to question Combs after prosecutors rested, the judge asked him how he's doing.

"I'm doing great, your honor," the Bad Boy Entertainment founder answered, before volunteering a compliment to the judge before another question could be posed.

"I want to tell you thank you, you're doing an excellent job," Combs said.

Combs said he "thoroughly" discussed the matter with his lawyers before deciding not to testify.

"That is my decision, your honor," Combs said, adding: "That is solely my decision."

Prodded by the judge, he clarified further: "I mean, it's my decision with my lawyers. ... My decision to make. I'm making it."

Since the trial began in early May, government witnesses have included former employees of Combs' companies, but the bulk of its proof has come from the testimony of two former girlfriends: Casandra "Cassie" Ventura and a model and internet personality known to jurors only by the pseudonym "Jane."

Ventura, 38, testified for four days during the trial's first week, saying she felt pressured to engage in hundreds of "freak offs" because the encounters would enable her to be intimate with Combs after performing sexually with male sex workers while he watched them slather one another with baby oil and sometimes filmed the encounters.

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Jane testified for six days about the sexual performances she labeled "hotel nights," saying that she was putting them into perspective after beginning therapy three months ago. She said she felt coerced into engaging in them as recently as last August, but did so because she loved and still loves Combs.

Ventura was in a relationship with Combs from 2007 to 2018, while Jane was frequently with him from 2021 until his arrest, which canceled her plan to meet him at the New York hotel where he was taken into custody.

The Associated Press doesn't generally identify people who say they are victims of sexual abuse unless they come forward publicly, as Cassie has done.

Throughout the trial, defense lawyers have made their case for exoneration through their questioning of witnesses, including several who testified reluctantly or only after they were granted immunity from any crimes they may have committed.

Combs has been active in his defense, writing notes to his lawyers and sometimes helping them decide when to stop questioning a witness.

He was admonished once by the judge for nodding enthusiastically toward jurors during a successful stretch of cross-examination by one of his lawyers. Prosecutors complained that his gestures were a form of testifying without being subject to cross-examination. The judge warned that he could be excluded from his trial if it happened again.

In the past week, prosecutors and defense lawyers have shown jurors over 40 minutes of recordings Combs made of the "freak offs" or "hotel nights."

Several jurors occasionally seemed squeamish as they viewed and listened to audio of the encounters, but most did not seem to react.

In her opening statement, Geragos had called the videos "powerful evidence that the sexual conduct in this case was consensual and not based on coercion."

Closing arguments were scheduled for Thursday.

Gaza health authorities say Israel kills 44 waiting for aid as war's death toll passes 56,000

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli forces and drones opened fire toward hundreds of Palestinians waiting for aid in separate incidents in southern and central Gaza early Tuesday, killing at least 44, witnesses and hospitals said, as health authorities announced the number of Palestinians killed in the war has risen above 56,000.

Palestinian witnesses and health officials say Israeli forces have repeatedly opened fire on crowds heading toward desperately needed food, killing hundreds in recent weeks. The military says it has fired warning shots at people it said approached its forces in a suspicious manner.

In central Gaza, three witnesses told The Associated Press that Israeli forces opened fire as people advanced east toward aid trucks south of Wadi Gaza.

"It was a massacre," said Ahmed Halawa. He said tanks and drones fired at people, "even as we were fleeing. Many people were either martyred or wounded."

Hossam Abu Shahada said drones were flying over the area, watching the crowds, then there was gunfire from tanks and drones as people were moving eastward. He described a "chaotic and bloody" scene as people tried to escape.

He said he saw at least three people lying motionless and many others wounded.

Israel's military said it was reviewing the incident, which took place near the Netzarim corridor, a road that separates northern and southern Gaza.

The Awda hospital in the urban Nuseirat refugee camp, which received the victims, confirmed 25 deaths and said 146 others were wounded. It said 62 were in critical condition and transferred to other hospitals.

In the central town of Deir al-Balah, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital said it received the bodies of six people from the same incident.

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In the southernmost city of Rafah, witnesses said Israeli troops opened fire as crowds tried to reach a food distribution site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. At least 19 were killed and 50 others wounded, according to Nasser hospital and Gaza's Health Ministry.

The new distribution sites run by an American contractor, with U.S. and Israeli government support, have been plagued by scenes of violence and chaos since opening last month. The GHF sites are in Israeli military zones where independent media have no access.

The Trump administration has authorized providing \$30 million to the GHF, a U.S. official said Tuesday, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive diplomatic issue involving a controversial aid program.

Two witnesses said Israeli troops started firing as thousands of Palestinians massed at the Shakoush area, several hundred meters (yards) from the distribution site.

The Israeli military did not immediately return a request for comment.

Salem Ismail was in the crowd and was shot in a leg. He said he saw forces firing towards the crowd who were moving north toward the site.

Ayman Abu Joda said he saw heavy gunfire from Israeli tanks and that many people were shot. He said he helped evacuate three wounded people, one hit in the chest and two in the legs.

"It was the same tragedy every day: We seek food and the occupation opens fire and kills many," he said.

The casualty toll was confirmed to The Associated Press by Zaher al-Waheidi, head of the Health Ministry's records department.

The GHF said on social media its hub there opened Tuesday at 10 a.m. and closed after finishing food distribution. It called on people not to head to the hub.

Israel wants the GHF to replace a system coordinated by the United Nations and international aid groups. Along with the United States, it accuses Hamas of stealing aid, without offering evidence. The U.N. denies there is systematic diversion of aid.

Death toll in Gaza over 56,000

Meanwhile, Gaza's Health Ministry said Israel's 21-month military operation in Gaza has killed 56,077 people. The war was sparked by Hamas' surprise attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, that killed around 1,200 people dead, mostly civilians, and took 251 others hostage. Many have been released by ceasefire or other agreements.

The death toll is by far the highest in any round of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

The ministry said the dead include 5,759 who have been killed since Israel resumed fighting on March 18, shattering a two-month ceasefire.

The ministry doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants but says more than half of the dead were women and children.

Israel says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, which operates in heavily populated areas. Israel says over 20,000 Hamas militants have been killed, though it has provided no evidence to support that claim. Hamas has not commented on its casualties.

NATO chief praises Trump for making Europe 'pay in a BIG way' on defense ahead of summit

By MOLLY QUELL, LORNE COOK and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte praised President Donald Trump for making Europe "pay in a BIG way," as leaders gathered in the Netherlands on Tuesday for a historic summit that could unite them around a new defense spending pledge or widen divisions among the 32 member countries of the security alliance.

The U.S. president, while en route, published a screenshot of a private message from Rutte saying: "Donald, you have driven us to a really, really important moment for America and Europe and the world. You will achieve something NO American president in decades could get done."

"Europe is going to pay in a BIG way, as they should, and it will be your win," Rutte wrote. NATO con-

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firmed that he sent the message.

Rutte appeared unconcerned that Trump aired it, telling reporters: "I have absolutely no trouble or problem with that because there's nothing in it which had to stay secret."

Trump arrived early in the evening after injecting uncertainty over whether the U.S. would abide by the mutual defense guarantees outlined in the NATO treaty. "Depends on your definition," he said. Rutte said he has no doubt about the Article 5 guarantee, which says an armed attack on one member is an attack on all.

On Wednesday, the allies are likely to endorse a goal of spending 5% of their gross domestic product on their security, to be able to fulfil the alliance's plans for defending against outside attack. Trump has said the U.S. should not have to.

Spain has said it cannot, and that the target is "unreasonable." Slovakia said it reserves the right to decide how to reach the target by NATO's new 2035 deadline.

"There's a problem with Spain. Spain is not agreeing, which is very unfair to the rest of them, frankly," Trump told reporters.

In 2018, a NATO summit during Trump's first term unraveled due to a dispute over defense spending.

Ahead of the meeting, Britain, France and Germany committed to the 5% goal. The Netherlands is also on board. Nations closer to the borders of Ukraine, Russia and its ally Belarus had previously pledged to do so.

Trump's first appearance at NATO since returning to the White House was supposed to center on how the U.S. secured the historic military spending pledge from others in the alliance — effectively bending it to its will.

But the spotlight has shifted to Trump's decision to strike three nuclear enrichment facilities in Iran that the administration says eroded Tehran's nuclear ambitions, as well as the president's sudden announcement that Israel and Iran had reached a "complete and total ceasefire."

Ukraine has also suffered as a result of that new conflict. It has created a need for weapons and ammunition that Kyiv desperately wants, and shifted the world's attention. Past NATO summits have focused almost entirely on the war in Ukraine, now in its fourth year.

Still, Rutte insisted NATO could manage more than one conflict at a time.

"If we would not be able to deal with ... the Middle East, which is very big and commanding all the headlines, and Ukraine at the same time, we should not be in the business of politics and military at all," he said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived in The Hague for meetings, despite his absence from a leaders' meeting aiming to seal the military spending agreement.

It's a big change since the summit in Washington last year, when the alliance's weighty communique included a vow to supply long-term security assistance to Ukraine, and a commitment to back the country "on its irreversible path" to NATO membership.

Zelenskyy's first official engagement this time was with Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof at his official residence across the road from the summit venue.

But in a telling sign of Ukraine's status at the summit, neither leader mentioned NATO. Ukraine's bid to join the alliance has been put in deep freeze by Trump.

"Let me be very clear, Ukraine is part of the family that we call the Euro-Atlantic family," Schoof told Zelenskyy, who in turn said he sees his country's future in peace "and of course, a part of a big family of EU family."

Schoof used the meeting to announce a new package of Dutch support to Kyiv including 100 radar systems to detect drones and a move to produce drones for Ukraine in the Netherlands, using Kyiv's specifications.

The U.S. has made no new public pledges of support to Ukraine since Trump took office six months ago.

Meeting later with Rutte and top EU officials, Zelenskyy appealed for European investment in Ukraine's defense industry, which can produce weapons and ammunition more quickly and cheaply than elsewhere in Europe.

"No doubt, we must stop (Russian President Vladimir) Putin now and in Ukraine. But we have to under-

stand that his objectives reach beyond Ukraine," he said. He said NATO's new target of 5% of GDP "is the right level."

Waymo's robotaxis to start carrying passengers in Atlanta, expanding Uber partnership

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

Waymo's robotaxis will begin carrying passengers through parts of Atlanta on Tuesday in an expansion of a partnership with Uber that began earlier this year in Austin.

Waymo's driverless march into Atlanta comes just days after Tesla finally launched a limited robotaxi service in Austin, more than five years after CEO Elon Musk brashly promised the electric automaker would quickly overtake Waymo as the leader in autonomous driving technology. Unlike Waymo's robotaxis, Tesla is initially placing a human in the passenger seat of its rival service to take over the vehicle if something goes wrong.

While Tesla is starting with about a dozen supervised robotaxis, Waymo and Uber have dispatched about 100 completely driverless vehicles in Austin less than four months after their partnership began. The expansion into Atlanta keeps the two companies aligned with a road map they laid out last September.

As has been the case in Austin, Waymo's robotaxis in Atlanta will be dispatched through Uber's app. Uber will give customers a choice to request a car operated by a human if they don't want to take a driverless ride. The robotaxis will initially cover a 65-square-mile (168,00-square-kilometers) area within the Atlanta market before expanding to a larger stretch.

Waymo's own ride-hailing app is available in Phoenix, Los Angeles and a steadily expanding swath of the San Francisco Bay Area. Factoring in its partnership with Uber, Waymo is currently providing more than 250,000 paid rides per week — making it the early frontrunner in the still-nascent robotaxi market.

But competition looms down the road as Musk continues to insist Tesla's robotaxi service will be able to grow quickly and Amazon gears up to bring its Zoox driverless cabs to Las Vegas later this year — with plans to expand into San Francisco next year. Zoox is also aiming to bring its robotaxi service to Atlanta, although it hasn't set a target date for that yet.

Uber once had ambitions to build robotaxis, but reversed course after a bruising legal battle with Waymo, which alleged the ride-hailing company stole its autonomous technology after poaching one of its engineers. After reaching a \$245 million settlement with Waymo, Uber eventually sold its self-driving vehicle division following a 2018 crash that killed a pedestrian in Tempe, Arizona.

Uber then pivoted to robotaxi partnerships to remain competitive as driverless cabs reshape the ride-hailing market. "By integrating Waymo's cutting-edge technology into the Uber platform, we're continuing to make transportation more convenient, sustainable, and reliable," said Sarfraz Maredia, who oversees Uber's efforts in autonomous driving.

With 18 different robotaxi partnerships in place around the world, Uber says it is on pace to make about 1.5 million annual driverless trips that either transport passengers or deliver food.

Texas will put warning labels on some foods, but its additives list has inaccuracies

By JONEL ALECCIA and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A new Texas law promoting the Trump administration's "Make America Healthy Again" agenda requires first-ever warning labels on foods like chips and candies that contain dyes and additives not allowed in other countries.

It could have far-reaching effects on the nation's food supply, but a review of the legislation shows it also misrepresents the status of some ingredients that would trigger the action.

The law signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott on Sunday requires foods made with any of more than

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40 dyes or additives to have labels starting in 2027 saying they contain ingredients “not recommended for human consumption” in Australia, Canada, the European Union or the U.K. But a review shows that nearly a dozen of the targeted additives are either authorized in the cited regions — or already restricted in the U.S.

The law, which will send the food industry scrambling to respond, is laudable in its intent, but could lead to incorrect citations and potential legal challenges, a consumer advocacy group said.

“I don’t know how the list of chemicals was constructed,” said Thomas Galligan, a scientist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest. “Warnings have to be accurate in order to be legal.”

The law, approved with wide bipartisan support, is part of a flurry of similar legislation this year by GOP-led statehouses as lawmakers align themselves with U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s “Make America Healthy Again” agenda. Texas would be the first in the U.S. to use warning labels to target additives, rather than nutrients like sugar or saturated fat, to change American diets.

It will force food companies to decide whether to reformulate products to avoid the labels, add the newly required language, pull certain products from Texas shelves or oppose the measure in court.

It’s unclear how the list of additives was created. Inquiries to the office of the bill’s author, Republican state Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, were not immediately returned.

Some of the targeted ingredients are allowed in all the named regions

Regulators in Australia, Canada, the EU and the U.K. take a cautious approach to food additives: If a product’s safety is uncertain, it can be banned or restricted until it is determined to be safe. By contrast, the U.S. generally allows products on the market unless there is clear risk of harm.

Three additives targeted by Texas — partially hydrogenated oils, Red Dye No. 4 and Red Dye No. 3 — are not approved or have been banned in food by U.S. regulators.

Several of the other listed ingredients are allowed in all four of those regions, noted Galligan and representatives from the Consumer Brands Association, a food industry trade group.

Examples of those include: Blue Dye No. 1; Blue Dye No. 2; butylated hydroxyanisole, or BHA; butylated hydroxytoluene, or BHT; diacetyl; interesterified soybean oil; lactylated fatty acid esters of glycerol and propylene glycol; and potassium aluminum sulfate.

In addition, the legislation contains regulatory loopholes that could prevent certain ingredients from being labeled at all, said Melanie Benesh, an analyst with the Environmental Working Group, an activist organization that focuses on toxic chemicals.

For example, the food additive azodicarbonamide, known as ADA and used as a bleaching agent in cereal flours, is included on the Texas list. But under the Federal Code of Regulations, it may safely be used in food under certain conditions. That federal regulation likely exempts ADA from the state labeling law, Benesh said.

“The law, as passed, may not end up having the impact that legislators intended,” Benesh said.

Nutrition experts welcome a look at food additives

Nutrition experts have long worried about the potential health effects of food additives, even as it remains unclear how much of a role processed foods have in driving chronic health disease.

Research has shown that requiring food label warnings can help steer consumers toward healthier choices and prompt industry to remove concerning ingredients. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has proposed front-of-package labels that would flag levels of saturated fat, sugar and sodium.

“This represents a big win for Texas consumers and consumers overall,” said Brian Ronholm, director of food policy for Consumer Reports. “It’s a reflection of states not wanting to wait for the federal government to act.”

The law also creates a state nutrition advisory committee, boosts physical education and nutrition curriculum requirements in public and charter schools, and requires nutrition courses for college students and medical professionals doing continuing education.

States take on additives

Several states have been taking action to restrict dyes and additives in foods.

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In 2023, California became the first state to ban some chemicals and dyes used in candies, drinks and other foods because of health concerns. The state expanded on that last year by barring several additional dyes from food served in public schools.

Other laws passed this year include one in Arkansas banning two particular additives from food sold or manufactured in the state and a West Virginia law includes a statewide ban on seven dyes.

Lawmakers in several states have passed measures this year banning certain additives from food served or sold at public schools, according to an Associated Press analysis using the bill-tracking software Plural. That includes Texas, where the governor last month signed a bill banning foods with certain ingredients from being served in school lunches.

"It's a pretty dizzying time to be watching what's happening, because usually policies that are not very industry friendly are opposed, particularly in red states," said Christina Roberto, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Food and Nutrition Policy, "With RFK and the MAHA movement, it's really turned things upside-down in some ways."

At the federal level, Kennedy and FDA Commissioner Marty Makary have pledged to remove artificial dyes from foods and have pressured industry to take voluntary action. Some large food manufacturers have complied.

Health advocates have long called for the removal of artificial dyes from foods, citing mixed studies indicating they can cause neurobehavioral problems, including hyperactivity and attention issues, in some children.

The FDA previously has said that the approved dyes are safe and that "the totality of scientific evidence shows that most children have no adverse effects when consuming foods containing color additives."

Truckers fear job loss as new English language rules take effect

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ Associated Press

LINDEN, New Jersey (AP) — At a trucking school in New Jersey, students are maneuvering 18-wheelers around traffic cones. Other future drivers look under hoods to perform safety checks, narrating as they examine steering hoses for cracks and leaks.

An instructor glides between speaking Spanish and English as he teaches Manuel Castillo, a native Spanish speaker, how to inspect a school bus. They're using a printed script of English phrases to practice what Castillo would say during a roadside inspection.

Brushing up on English has taken on new urgency for future and current truck drivers after President Donald Trump issued an executive order saying truckers who don't read and speak the language proficiently would be considered unfit for service.

"A driver who can't understand English will not drive a commercial vehicle in this country. Period," Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said last month while announcing enforcement guidelines that take effect on Wednesday.

Updated U.S. Department of Transportation procedures call for enhanced inspections to determine if commercial motor vehicle operators can reply to questions and directions in English, as well as understand highway traffic signs and electronic message boards.

Truckers who learned English as a second language are concerned they may lose their jobs if they make a mistake or speak with a heavy accent while under questioning. Some have worked to improve their English fluency by taking classes, reciting scripts and watching instructional videos.

"If it's not the language that you prefer to use daily, you may get a little nervous and you may feel, 'What if I say the wrong thing?'" said Jerry Maldonado, chairman of the board of the Laredo Motor Carriers Association, a trade association in Laredo, Texas, that represents approximately 200 trucking companies. "It's going to be, at the end of the day, the interpretation of the officer, so that makes people nervous."

The guidance applies to truck and bus drivers engaged in interstate commerce. It aims to improve road safety following incidents in which truck drivers' inability to read signs or speak English may have contributed to traffic deaths, the Transportation Department said.

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English requirement isn't new

Requiring truck drivers to speak and read English isn't new, but the penalty for not meeting the proficiency standard is becoming more severe.

To get a commercial driver's license, applicants must pass a written test and be able to name the parts of a bus or truck in English as they check tire inflation, tread depth, lug nuts and coolants.

The revised policy reverses guidance issued nine years ago, near the end of then-President Barack Obama's final term, according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. In 2016, the agency said drivers whose English skills were found lacking could receive a citation but not be prohibited from working. Before that, the penalty was getting placed on "out-of-service status."

"We have bridges that get hit because drivers don't understand the signs on the bridges for things like height clearance," Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association President Todd Spencer said.

Practicing English phrases

In Laredo, a border city where many residents speak a mix of English and Spanish, Maldonado's association is offering free English classes on weekends to help truckers feel more confident in their ability to communicate.

"Everybody knows what a stop sign looks like," Maldonado said. "But if there's construction or if there is an accident five miles down the road, and they have to put up a sign — 'Caution, must exit now, road closed ahead,' and you are not able to read that or understand that, that could potentially be a safety issue."

At Driving Academy in Linden, New Jersey, multilingual instructors teach students how to inspect vehicle parts in their first language and then provide explanations in English, according to founder Jonathan Marques. The school created scripts so students could practice what to say if they're stopped, he said.

Students are advised to watch training videos as homework, while licensed truckers can listen to English language apps instead of music when they're on the road, Marques suggested.

Instructor Paul Cuartas helps students prepare but worries that inspectors will now expect truckers and bus drivers to have perfect English. "I'm concerned because now for all the Spanish people it's more difficult," he said.

Castillo, who moved to the U.S. from Ecuador in 1993, said he has no problem understanding English but has been watching videos to study industry terms. "Some words I don't understand, but I try to learn more English," he said.

Asked whether he supports the president's executive order, Castillo said he voted for Trump but doesn't agree with the president's push to deport some immigrants who haven't committed crimes.

"He makes a lot of problems, especially for Hispanic people," Castillo said.

GTR Trucking School in Detroit also has offered students ESL classes. Co-owner Al Myftiu drove a truck after moving to the U.S. from Albania in 1993. He said he wants to create a small book of phrases that truckers need to learn.

For students with a thick accent, "I tell them, 'Slow down, speak slowly and people can understand you, and if you don't understand something, you can ask,'" Myftiu said.

How it will work

Roadside inspections can be initiated over issues such as a faulty brake light or on a routine basis, and often take place at weigh stations.

The guidance directs inspectors who suspect a driver doesn't understand what they're saying to administer an English proficiency test, which includes both an interview and a highway traffic sign recognition component.

In the past, some drivers used translation apps to communicate with federal inspectors. The updated policy bars the use of interpreters, smartphones, cue cards or other aids during interviews.

Several truck drivers taking a break at Flying J Travel Center in New Jersey said they support Trump's order, adding that drivers who heavily rely on translation programs probably wouldn't be able to read important signs.

"We try to ask them questions about the business just to strike a conversation, ... and they're not able

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to communicate with us at all," Kassem Elkhatib, one of the drivers at Flying J, said.

Fear of discrimination

It's unclear how safety inspectors will decide whether a driver knows enough English because that portion of the instructions was redacted from the guidance distributed by Transportation Department.

The department advised motor carriers that drivers should be able to answer questions about shipping documents, the origin and destination of trips, and how long they've been on duty.

A trucker placed out of service and the company they work for are responsible for ensuring a language violation is corrected before the driver hits the highway again, the Transportation Department said.

Truck drivers who practice the Sikh religion already face discrimination in hiring and at loading docks, according to Mannirmal Kaur, federal policy manager for Sikh Coalition, an advocacy group. Now they are worried about inspectors making subjective, non-standardized determinations about which of them are proficient in English, she said.

"A truck driver who does speak English sufficiently to comply with federal standards but maybe they speak with an accent, or maybe they use a different vocabulary that the inspector isn't used to hearing: Is that person then going to be subject to an English language violation?" Kaur asked. "And under the new policy, are they then going to be designated out-of-service, which could result in unemployment?"

What to know about Kilmar Abrego Garcia's release and risk of deportation

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

Kilmar Abrego Garcia, whose mistaken deportation to El Salvador became a flashpoint in President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, has been back in the United States for more than two weeks after being charged with human smuggling in Tennessee.

But the 29-year-old Maryland construction worker's future is far from certain.

A federal judge has raised questions about the strength of the government's smuggling allegations, including its claim Abrego Garcia is in the violent MS-13 street gang. The judge on Sunday denied federal prosecutors' request to keep Abrego Garcia in jail while he awaits trial. The conditions of his release will be discussed at a court hearing on Wednesday.

Federal prosecutors have said they will appeal the judge's decision. Even if Abrego Garcia is released, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is expected to detain him and try to deport him.

Here's what to know about Abrego Garcia's case:

The smuggling charges

Abrego Garcia is charged with smuggling throughout the U.S. hundreds of people living in the country illegally, including children and members of MS-13, from 2016 to 2025.

The charges stem from a 2022 traffic stop for speeding in Tennessee during which he was driving a vehicle with nine passengers who didn't have any luggage.

Body camera footage shows a calm exchange between officers and Abrego Garcia. The officers discussed among themselves their suspicions of smuggling. One of the officers says, "He's hauling these people for money." Another says Abrego Garcia had \$1,400 in an envelope.

Abrego Garcia was allowed to continue driving with only a warning.

A Department of Homeland Security special agent, Peter Joseph, testified at a June 13 court hearing in Nashville that witnesses testified to a grand jury that they saw Abrego Garcia smuggling people, guns or drugs and that he earned upward of \$100,000 a year.

A not guilty plea

Abrego Garcia pleaded not guilty at the June 13 hearing. His attorneys have characterized the case as an attempt by Trump's Republican administration to justify his mistaken deportation in March.

Abrego Garcia's lawyers told the judge that some government witnesses cooperated to get favors regarding their immigration status or criminal charges they were facing. Joseph, the special agent, acknowledged in testimony that one witness was living in the U.S. illegally with a criminal record and is now getting

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preferred status.

Casting doubt, an assistant federal public defender, Richard Tennent, noted that a witness claimed that Abrego Garcia would drive from Maryland to Houston — a 1,400-mile (2,250-kilometer) trip taking about 24 hours — two or three times per week.

Judge raises questions

In her ruling Sunday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Barbara Holmes rejected the government's request to keep Abrego Garcia in jail.

The judge echoed defense attorneys' doubts that Abrego Garcia could make multiple roundtrips per week from Maryland to Houston, which she wrote would "approach physical impossibility."

The judge also noted inconsistencies about Abrego Garcia's alleged ties to MS-13, writing that two witnesses offered "general statements" and "hearsay."

Meanwhile, a third witness who'd known Abrego Garcia for 10 years said "there were no signs or markings, including tattoos, indicating that Abrego is an MS-13 member," the judge wrote.

Holmes also noted the contrast between the government's allegations and the fact that Abrego Garcia "has no reported criminal history of any kind."

Original MS-13 allegation

Abrego Garcia grew up in El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, and helped his family run a business selling pupusas, tortilla pouches filled with cheese, beans or pork.

In 2011, the year he turned 16, he fled a local gang that extorted and terrorized his family, court records state. He traveled illegally to Maryland, where his brother already lived as a U.S. citizen.

Abrego Garcia found work in construction and began a relationship with an American woman, Jennifer Vasquez Sura. In 2018, he moved in with her and her two children after she became pregnant with his child. They lived in Prince George's County, just outside Washington.

In March 2019, Abrego Garcia went to a Home Depot seeking work as a laborer when he and three other men were detained by local police, court records say. They were suspected of being in MS-13 based on tattoos and clothing.

A criminal informant told police that Abrego Garcia was in MS-13, court records state, but police did not charge him and turned him over to ICE.

Abrego Garcia then went before a U.S. immigration judge and sought asylum, which was denied. The judge, however, granted him protection from being deported back to El Salvador.

The judge said Abrego Garcia had demonstrated a "well-founded fear" of gang persecution there, court records state. He was released.

Abrego Garcia checked in with ICE yearly while Homeland Security issued him a work permit, his attorneys said. He joined a union and was employed full-time as a sheet metal apprentice.

In February, the Trump administration designated MS-13 as a foreign terrorist organization, and in March it deported Abrego Garcia to a notorious prison in El Salvador.

The administration described its violation of the immigration judge's 2019 order as an administrative error. Trump and other officials doubled down on claims Abrego Garcia was in MS-13.

US could try to deport him again

Holmes acknowledged in Sunday's ruling that considering release was "little more than an academic exercise." Prosecutors had told Holmes that ICE would take Abrego Garcia into custody if he were released.

Another public defender, Will Allensworth, told the judge he expects a full hearing before an immigration judge, who would have to consider Abrego Garcia's 2019 protection order from deportation to El Salvador.

If the U.S. wanted to try to deport Abrego Garcia somewhere else, the government would have to prove the other country wouldn't just send him to El Salvador, Allensworth said.

César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, an Ohio State University law professor, said the Trump administration would be "fully within its legal power to attempt to remove him to some other country."

"The Trump administration would have to pull its diplomatic levers," the professor added. "It's unusual. But it's not unheard of."

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Abrego Garcia could contest the criminal allegations in immigration court while demonstrating his ties to the U.S., García Hernández said.

"The fact that he has become the poster boy for the Trump administration's hard-line approach to immigration bolsters his persecution claim," the professor said. "Because he's a known quantity at this point, and not just in El Salvador or Central America, but really across much of the world."

Life on the other side: Refugees from 'old media' flock to the promise of working for themselves

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Six months ago, Jennifer Rubin had no idea whether she'd make it in a new media world. She just knew it was time to leave The Washington Post, where she'd been a political columnist for 15 years.

The Contrarian, the democracy-focused website that Rubin founded with partner Norm Eisen in January, now has 10 employees and contributors like humorist Andy Borowitz and White House reporter April Ryan. Its 558,000 subscribers also get recipes and culture dispatches.

In the blink of an eye, Rubin became a independent news entrepreneur. "I think we hit a moment, just after inauguration, when people were looking for something different and it has captured people's imaginations," she says. "We've been having a ball with it."

YouTube, Substack, TikTok and others are spearheading a full-scale democratization of media and a generation of new voices and influencers. But don't forget the traditionalists. Rubin's experience shows how this world offers a lifeline to many at struggling legacy outlets who wanted — or were forced — to strike out on their own.

Tough business realities, changing consumer tastes

The realities of business and changing consumer tastes are both driving forces.

YouTube claims more than 1 billion monthly podcast views, and a recent list of its top 100 shows featured seven refugees from legacy media and six shows made by current broadcasters. Substack, which launched in 2017 and added live video in January, has more than doubled its number of paid subscribers to participating content creators to 5 million in less than two years.

Almost immediately after he was cut loose by ABC News on June 10 for an anti-Trump tweet, Terry Moran headed for Substack. Two former hosts of NBC's "Today" show — Katie Couric and Hoda Kotb — announced new media ventures on the same day last month.

"I think you've seen, really in the last six months for some reason, this whole space explode with people who are understanding that this is a really important way to convey information," says Couric, who's been running her own media company with newsletters, interviews and a podcast since 2017 and recently joined Substack.

Among the most successful to make transitions are Bari Weiss, the former New York Times writer whose Free Press website celebrates independent thought, the anti-Trump Republicans at Bulwark and ex-MSNBC host Mehdi Hasan, who champions "adversarial journalism" on Zeteo.

Television news essentially left Megyn Kelly for dead after her switch from Fox News to NBC went bust. She launched a podcast in 2020, at first audio only, and SiriusXM picked it up as a daily radio show. She added video for YouTube in 2021, and gets more than 100 million viewers a month for commentary and newsmaker interviews.

This year, Kelly launched her own company, MK Media, with shows hosted by Mark Halperin, Maureen Callahan and Link Lauren.

While they thrive, the prospect of layoffs, audiences that are aging and becoming smaller and constant worry about disappearing revenue sources are a way of life for legacy media. Moving to independent media is still not an easy decision.

Taking a deep breath, and making the leap

"If I'm going to jump off a cliff, is there water or not?" former "Meet the Press" moderator Chuck Todd

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says. "I didn't know until I left NBC. Everybody told me there would be water. But you don't know for sure until you jump."

It takes some adjustment — "At first I was like, 'do you know who I used to be?'" Couric jokes — but some who have made the jump appreciate the nimbleness and flexibility of new formats and say news subjects often respond to the atmosphere with franker, more expansive interviews.

Jim Acosta, who traded a CNN anchor desk for a video podcast he does from his home after deciding not to make a move he considered a demotion, says he's been surprised at the quality of guests he's been able to corral — people like Hakeem Jefferies, Pete Buttigieg and Sean Penn.

Many podcasters succeed because they communicate authenticity, former Washington Post editor Marty Baron said in an interview at the George W. Bush Presidential Center. Traditional journalists trade on authority at a time people don't trust institutions anymore, he said.

Couric has seen it in some of the feedback she gets from subscribers.

"There's some disenchantment with legacy media," she says. "There are certainly some people who are frustrated by the capitulation of some networks to the administration, and I think there's a sense that when you're involved in mainstream media that you may be holding back or there may be executives who are putting pressure on you."

Is there an audience — and money — on the other side?

Substack says that more than 50 people are earning more than \$1 million annually on its platform. More than 50,000 of its publishers make money, but since the company won't give a total of how many people produce content for the platform, it's impossible to get a sense of the odds of success.

Alisyn Camerota isn't making money yet. The former CNN anchor left the broadcaster after she sensed her time there was running out. Blessed with a financial cushion, she's relishing the chance to create something new.

She records a video podcast, "Sanity," from her basement in Connecticut. A former Fox colleague who lives nearby, Dave Briggs, joins to talk about the news. "It's harder than you think in terms of having to DIY a lot of this," Camerota says, "but it's very freeing."

Different people on the platform have different price points; some publishers put everything they do behind a pay wall, others only some. Acosta offers content for free, but people need to pay to comment or discuss. Zeteo charges \$12 a month or \$72 a year, with a \$500 "founding member" yearly fee that offers access to Mehdi.

The danger for independent journalists is a market reaching a saturation point. People already stress over how many streaming services they can afford for entertainment. There's surely a limit to how many journalists they will pay for, too.

"I hope to make a living at this," Acosta says. "We'll see how it goes. This is a bit of an experiment. I think it's a valuable one because the stakes are so high right now."

A strong point of view is one route to success

To succeed in independent media, people need a strong work ethic, self-motivation and an ability to pivot quickly to deal with changing markets, says Chris Balfe, founder of Red Seat Ventures. He has created a thriving business ushering conservative media figures into the new world, including Kelly, Bill O'Reilly, Tucker Carlson and Piers Morgan.

Balfe's clients all have strong opinions. That's a plus for consumers who want to hear their viewpoints reflected back at them.

"I think you need a point of view and a purpose," Rubin says. "Once you have that, it helps you to organize your thinking and your selections. You're not going to be all things to all people."

That's one of the things that concerns Acosta and Todd. They're looser, and they certainly say what they think more than they felt free to do on television; a remark Acosta made on June 17, while appearing on Rubin's podcast, about Trump marrying immigrants was criticized as "distasteful" by the White House. But at heart, they consider themselves reporters and not commentators. Is there enough room for people like them?

Todd has a podcast, a weekly interview show on the new platform Noosphere and is looking to build on

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an interest in improving the fortunes of local news. He believes that opinion can help someone build an audience quickly but may ultimately limit growth.

As Rubin did, they will find out soon enough.

"As it turned out," she says, "what was on the other side was much more exciting and successful and absorbing than I could ever have imagined."

Trump says Israel-Iran ceasefire 'is in effect' and Israeli planes won't attack anymore

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Israel was going to "turn around" its jets and stop attacking Iran and their ceasefire was "in effect" on Tuesday after briefly faltering.

"ISRAEL is not going to attack Iran. All planes will turn around and head home, while doing a friendly 'Plane Wave' to Iran," Trump, as he pressed both sides to abide by the ceasefire, posted on social media. "Nobody will be hurt, the Ceasefire is in effect!"

Earlier, in comments to reporters at the White House before departing for the NATO summit at The Hague, Trump had expressed disappointment over attacks that had continued beyond an early Tuesday deadline to stop hostilities.

"They violated it, but Israel violated it, too," Trump said. He added, "I'm not happy with Israel."

"I didn't like the fact that Israel unloaded right after we made the deal," Trump said. "And now I hear Israel just went out because they felt violated by one rocket that didn't land anywhere."

The Republican president expressed deep disappointment with both sides after holding out the agreement he helped broker as validation for his strategic gamble of ordering U.S. airstrikes on Iranian nuclear sites.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi confirmed that Iran would stop its attacks if Israel would. And Israel also confirmed that it had reached its aims of its operations and would cease hostilities.

But the tentative truce faltered Tuesday when Israel accused Iran of launching missiles into its airspace after the ceasefire was supposed to take effect and vowed to retaliate.

Iran's military denied firing on Israel, state media reported, but explosions boomed and sirens sounded across northern Israel midmorning, and an Israeli military official said two Iranian missiles were intercepted.

Trump's frustration was palpable as he spoke to reporters, using an expletive to hammer home his point.

"I'm not happy with them. I'm not happy with Iran, either, but I'm really unhappy with Israel going out this morning," Trump said. "We basically have two countries that have been fighting so long and so hard that they don't know what the f--- they're doing."

The president then took to his Truth Social platform to warn Israel to end its attacks.

"ISRAEL. DO NOT DROP THOSE BOMBS. IF YOU DO IT IS A MAJOR VIOLATION," Trump posted. "BRING YOUR PILOTS HOME, NOW!"

Charitable giving in 2024 was up, according to new Giving USA report

By RASHEEDA CHILDRESS of The Chronicle of Philanthropy Chronicle of Philanthropy

Charities received \$592.5 billion in donations in 2024, a 3.3% increase over 2023, after adjusting for inflation, according to the most recent "Giving USA" report, which takes a comprehensive look at U.S. philanthropy. Only one major cause — religion — saw an inflation-adjusted decline in giving.

The increase, reported Tuesday, may be small comfort to nonprofits that in 2025 experienced a significant drop in federal funding, more than 20,000 layoffs, increased demand for services, and market uncertainty that has led some donors to pull back.

"There's a lot of uncertainty, a lot of volatility, especially in financial markets," said Una Osili, an associate dean at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. "When you're not sure exactly what's happening and the news is changing, that sometimes leads to donors just being uncertain and not acting. Uncertainty can dampen giving."

Yet last year marked a return to typical giving patterns, said Jon Bergdoll, managing director for Giving

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USA. The pandemic and high inflation of recent years were atypical, he said, which meant giving patterns didn't always align with traditional models. In 2024, things lined up as expected.

"The fundamentals of giving are still working like they historically have in the U.S.," Bergdoll said. "We've been through a lot of changes, and there's potentially more on the horizon, but it is important to take comfort in that we are still seeing the same things move and shift giving that 20 years ago moved and shifted giving."

Strong performance by companies, particularly in the tech sector, pushed corporate giving up 6%, after adjusting for inflation. Individual giving was up 5%. Foundation giving was down by half a percent. Bequests (money given through wills) were down 4.4% — but Bergdoll noted bequests are historically volatile because the data can be shifted "by a single billionaire passing away."

The share of giving by each source remained stable over the past two years. In 2024, individuals accounted for the largest share of giving, 66%, followed by foundations at 19%, bequests at 8%, and corporations at 7%.

While inflation-adjusted giving by foundations was down, most organizations would not have felt the drop because in current dollars, foundations gave 2.4% more.

Giving by sector

Giving to various causes increased almost across the board. The biggest jumps were in giving to public society benefit, 16.1%; international affairs, 14.3%; and education, 9.9%. The public society benefit category includes organizations like the United Way, as well as commercial donor-advised funds, which have increased in popularity as contribution vehicles.

Compassion International had its best fundraising year ever in 2024, says Mark Hanlon, chief development officer. He noted that the group received some outlier gifts, but even taking those out, the organization had strong growth, which he attributed to the organization's ongoing engagement with donors.

At Brown University, giving was up, due in part to the end of a capital campaign that started in 2014. That helped the university keep annual donors engaged in giving, Sergio Gonzalez, senior vice president for advancement, said. "It was not only the larger gifts that really were transformative but the cumulative giving from all," he said. "Those dollars are critically important."

The causes that showed the least growth included religion, which was down 1% after adjusting for inflation, gifts to foundations, which rose half a percent, and gifts to health and human services, which rose 2% for both categories.

Effects of government cuts

Nonprofits are worried — both about how much money will be coming in and the level of demand for their services.

Changes in federal funding are a big deal for human services organizations. The Mid-Ohio Food Collective, a food bank that serves more than 20 counties from rural Appalachia to urban centers like Columbus, is worried about potential funding cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and what they will mean for the people the food bank serves.

"There's been millions and millions of dollars in cuts to the food that was going to be coming to food banks," said Matt Habash, the group's CEO. "For every meal we give out in the food-bank world, SNAP is nine meals. So you cut SNAP and there's no food there from the private sector to make that up."

The uncertainty surrounding government support makes it hard to know what to ask for from foundations and major donors, said Roger Schulman, CEO of the Fund for Educational Excellence, a nonprofit that aims to close equity gaps for students in Baltimore City schools.

"The gaps that are being left by the clawback of federal dollars as well as the unpredictability of what federal dollars will or will not come in the coming year has made it really hard to understand where philanthropy can make a difference right now in a meaningful way," Schulman said. "The gap is so big that even our largest foundations can only do so much to help sustain what is."

The general feeling is it's going to be a rough year, says Jim Klocke, CEO of the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network. Each year, the network surveys its roughly 700 members.

One perennial question on the survey: What do you think your financial condition will be like a year from

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now?

"Usually, you get more organizations that say my financial picture will be better in a year. Some say worse, but more say better," Klocke said. "This time, almost everybody said they expect their financial condition to be worse a year from now. It's a pretty much across-the-board concern."

Some organizations are worried about their donors' shifting priorities. Bergdoll, with Giving USA, said in times of crises, human-services organizations, which feed and house people, often see a bump in donations.

The Mid-Ohio Food Collective, for example, is trying to shift its messaging to persuade local donors to step up.

"The cavalry is not coming from the federal government," Habash said. "Even our state government has cut back on the amount of money they're giving us. The messaging for us is really about local. We've got to convince people locally to do something."

Today in History: June 25, Korean War begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, June 25, the 176th day of 2025. There are 189 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 25, 1950, war broke out in Korea as forces from the communist North invaded the South. The conflict would last for over three years and would be responsible for an estimated 4 million deaths, an estimated 3 million of whom were civilians.

Also on this date:

In 1876, the Battle of the Little Bighorn, also known as Custer's Last Stand, began in southeastern Montana Territory. As many as 100 Native Americans were killed in the battle, as were 268 people attached to the 7th Cavalry Regiment, including George Armstrong Custer and Mark Kellogg, the first Associated Press reporter to die in the line of duty.

In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which set a minimum wage, guaranteed overtime pay and banned "oppressive child labor," was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1947, "The Diary of a Young Girl," the personal journal of Anne Frank, a German-born Jewish girl hiding with her family from the Nazis in Amsterdam during World War II, was first published.

In 1973, former White House Counsel John Dean began testifying before the Senate Watergate Committee, implicating top administration officials, including President Richard Nixon as well as himself, in the Watergate scandal and cover-up.

In 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health*, its first "right-to-die" decision, ruled 5-4 that family members could be barred from ending the lives of persistently comatose relatives who had not made their wishes known conclusively.

In 1993, Kim Campbell was sworn in as Canada's 19th prime minister, the first woman to hold the post.

In 1996, a truck bomb killed 19 Americans and injured hundreds at a U.S. military housing complex in Saudi Arabia.

In 2015, in the case of *King v. Burwell*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld nationwide tax subsidies under President Barack Obama's health care overhaul in a 6-3 ruling that preserved health insurance for millions of Americans.

In 2021, former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin was sentenced to 22 1/2 years in prison for the murder of George Floyd, whose death led to the biggest outcry against racial injustice in the U.S. in generations.

Today's Birthdays: Actor June Lockhart is 100. Civil rights activist James Meredith is 92. Singer Carly Simon is 82. Actor-comedian Jimmie Walker is 78. Musician Tim Finn is 73. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor is 71. Actor-writer-comedian Ricky Gervais is 64. Hockey Hall of Famer Doug Gilmour is 62. Author Yann Martel ("Life of Pi") is 62. Actor Angela Kinsey ("The Office") is 54. Actor Linda Cardellini is 50. Actor Busy Philipps is 46.