

Groton Daily Independent

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Friday, July 4

Firecracker Couples Golf Tourney, 10 a.m.

Sunday, July 6

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

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

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

Amateurs at Faulkton, 4 p.m.

Monday, July 7

Senior Menu: Goulash, corn, baked apples, bread-stick.

Legion at Webster 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Jr. Teeners hosts Lake Norden, 5 p.m. (DH)

U10 B&W at Clark, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Softball: U12 hosts Milbank, 6 p.m. (DH); U8B at Mellette, 6 p.m. (DH)

T-Ball: Gold practice, 6 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 8

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, normandy blend, oranges, whole wheat bread.

Jr. Legion hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

U10 W&R at Claremont, 6:30 p.m.

U8 W&R at Claremont, 6 p.m.

Softball: U14 hosts Redfield, 5 p.m. (DH)

T-Ball: Gold at Claremont, 5 p.m.; Black hosts Andover, 6 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Social Security Applauds Passage of Legislation Providing Historic Tax Relief for Seniors

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is celebrating the passage of the One Big, Beautiful Bill, a landmark piece of legislation that delivers long-awaited tax relief to millions of older Americans.

The bill ensures that nearly 90% of Social Security beneficiaries will no longer pay federal income taxes on their benefits, providing meaningful and immediate relief to seniors who have spent a lifetime contributing to our nation's economy.

"This is a historic step forward for America's seniors," said Social Security Commissioner Frank Bisignano. "For nearly 90 years, Social Security has been a cornerstone of economic security for older Americans. By significantly reducing the tax burden on benefits, this legislation reaffirms President Trump's promise to protect Social Security and helps ensure that seniors can better enjoy the retirement they've earned."

The new law includes a provision that eliminates federal income taxes on Social Security benefits for most beneficiaries, providing relief to individuals and couples. Additionally, it provides an enhanced deduction for taxpayers aged 65 and older, ensuring that retirees can keep more of what they have earned.

Social Security remains committed to providing timely, accurate information to the public and will continue working closely with federal partners to ensure beneficiaries understand how this legislation may affect them.

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Groton Chamber of Commerce

July 2nd, 2025 12pm City Hall.

- Members present: Brian Dolan, Douglas Heinrich, Ashley Bentz, April Abeln, Katelyn Nehlich, and Carol Kutter.
- Minutes from the previous meeting were approved by Heinrich and seconded by Nehlich. All members present voted aye..
- The treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$19,748.36 in addition to the \$5,000 CD. The bucks account balance is \$2979.80. The report was approved by Abeln and seconded by Kutter. All members present voted aye..
- Nehlich shared the NFL Football Book from Olive Grove Golf Course that we received as part of our advertising sponsorship..
- A motion was made via email by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to purchase a full-page ad for \$300 in the U12 Class B State Baseball Tournament program. All members present voted aye..
- A motion was made via email by Abeln and seconded by Heinrich to sponsor popcorn at the June 29th U12 Baseball Tournament. All members present voted aye. Total expense was \$100..
- A motion was made via email by Abeln and seconded by Locke to donated \$400 to the Groton Lions Club to help offset food expenses for the Groton Transit Fundraiser. All members present voted aye..
- A motion was made via email by Abeln and seconded by Kutter to pay \$300 to sponsor B&M Tunes Karaoke for the Celebration in the Park/Rib Fest event. All members present voted aye..
- John Kotzer was the winner of the \$25 Chamber Bucks and tumbler for the Groton Clay Target League giveaway..
- Becky Kotzer's pheasant shirt design was selected as the winner of the shirt contest. Both her design and Jamie Mitchek's water tower design will be available this year. Shirts will be ordered through BK Custom T's & More, with proceeds going toward the purchase of a new seesaw for the park. A flier will be posted with ordering details that includes a picture of the current seesaw. Orders will be accepted online July 11th through August 19th . It was mentioned that shirt order details be available at the GES Open House prior to school starting..
- The Groton Chamber did not receive the POET Community Impact Grant, but other monies were discussed..
- Laurie Buntrock was the winner of the 605-Selfie Contest..
- A discussion was held regarding the upcoming Hwy 12 electronic sign contracts. Plans must be finalized by September to be included in the dues notices scheduled to be mailed in October. Kutter suggested using the contract funds to purchase a customized Groton rock to be placed in the center of the city. It was also noted that the existing wooden sign near POET is leaning and needs to be reset..
- Board member shirts have been purchased through Geffdog and are ready to be picked up..
- Additional welcome bags for new residents will be purchased. Local businesses are encouraged to drop off items they would like to include in the bags at City Hall..
- All Hwy 12 and Main Street welcome banners have been hung thanks to the Public Works Dept..
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Heinrich to give \$20 Chamber Bucks to Wage Memorial Library for their upcoming scavenger hunt. All members present voted aye..
- The ad for September/October issues of the Aberdeen and SD Magazines will be similar style as the U12 State Baseball ad..
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Heinrich to sponsor Groton BB/SB Foundation LiveTicket broadcast for \$100. All members present voted aye..
- Motion by Kutter and seconded by Nehlich to sponsor an ad in the Groton Independent school activities calendar for \$420. All members present voted aye..
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to have a table at Family Fun Fest with a giveaway basket containing \$25 Chamber Bucks, a shirt, and tumbler. All members present voted aye..
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Heinrich to donate \$100 to the Groton Lions Club to offset food

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expenses for the Groton Airport Fly In/Drive In. All members present voted aye..

- Motion by Heinrich and seconded by Kutter to donate a giveaway basket containing \$25 Chamber Bucks, a shirt, and tumbler to Wine on Nine. All members present voted aye..

- There are currently no new businesses to welcome. Recent welcomes were held with BEddy Cookies and Hydrate Haven..

- Next Meeting: August 6th , 12pm at City Hall

Upcoming events:

- o July 4th – Firecrackers couples golf tournament – Olive Grove Golf Course

- o July 4th – Bring your inflatables, Surprise every hour – 1:00 – 5:00pm – Groton Pool

- o July 9th – Legion Auxiliary #39 salad Buffet & Dessert Bar, 11:00am – 1:00pm – Groton Legion

- o July 11th – 13th – VFW Class B U12 State Baseball Tourney

- o July 13th – Lions Club Summer Fest/Car show, 9:00am – 3:00pm – City Park

- o July 16th – Pro Am Golf Tourney – Olive Grove Golf Course

- o July 21st – School Supply Drive/ Pick up, 4:00 – 7:00pm – Groton Community Center

- o July 21st-25th VBS "Road Trip: On the Go with God", 10 -12pm – Emmanuel Lutheran

- o July 23rd – Groton Golf Association Fundraiser Lunch – 11:30am – 1pm – Olive Grove Golf Course

- o July 23rd – Choosing Joy – 6pm – Emmanuel Lutheran Church

- o July 25th – Ferney Open Golf Tourney – 9am – Olive Grove Golf Course

- o July 28th – Streaming TV Made Easy by NVC/JVT – 3pm – Groton Community Center

- o Aug. 1st – Wine on Nine – Olive Grove Golf Course

- o Aug. 2nd – Celebration in the Park/Rib Fest – 1:00pm – 9:00pm – City Park

- o Aug. 7th – Family Fun Fest – 5:30pm – 7:30pm – Downtown Main Street

Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: Interstate 90, mile marker 109, one mile west of Wall, SD
When: 8:39 a.m., Wednesday, July 2, 2025

Driver 1: 41-year-old male from Box Elder, SD, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2014 GMC Yukon
Seat belt Used: Yes
Passenger 1a: 38-year-old male from Rapid City, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries
Seat belt Used: Yes

Pennington County, S.D.- One man died and another was seriously injured Wednesday morning in a single vehicle crash one mile west of Wall, SD.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2014 GMC Yukon was traveling eastbound on Interstate 90 when the vehicle left its lane and entered the median. The vehicle struck a median crossing and become airborne, then overturned.

The driver sustained fatal injuries. A passenger in the vehicle received serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

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

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



FACT BRIEF

Fact brief: Is the number of annual tornadoes in South Dakota decreasing?

July 03, 2025

FACT BRIEF

Yes.

South Dakota's average annual number of reported tornadoes has decreased in the past 35 years.

The state ranks 20th in the country for tornadoes annually, according to data from 2002-2022.

It's hit by an average of 28 per year, much lower than all the states in the top 10. Texas is first with 124, followed by Kansas (87). Iowa receives 53 per year and Minnesota 46.

Tornadoes have decreased in South Dakota compared to 1991-2010, when the state saw an average of 36 annually.

South Dakota has historically been included in "Tornado Alley," a geographic area that extends from Texas into South Dakota and includes states most at risk for tornadoes.

Scientific American reported that the parts of Tornado Alley have shifted east, especially in the central part of the country, where Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama are much more likely to receive outbreaks than they were 30 years ago.



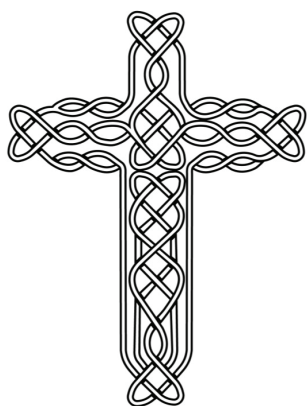
- Wheeling Back to Doland 5K Run/Walk
- Pancake breakfast
- Classic Car and Tractor Show
- Bouncy houses, splash pad, basketball, bean bag tournament
- Storybook Land Theatre
- School tours and class reunions
- Parade
- Dueling Duo Piano Entertainment

For details, find Back to Doland on Facebook or visit <https://sites.google.com/view/backtodoland2025>.

Golden Threads

“Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than jewels.

Proverbs 8:10-11



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Ladies Luncheon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

By Bethesda Women of the ELCA

Silent Auction opens at 10:30

Guest Speaker: Melinda Eikamp,
“Weaving Threads of our Heritage”

Luncheon at Noon

Tickets: \$15.00

Deadline to purchase tickets is Friday, July 11

Kay Espeland 605-492-3507

Jane Goehring 605-290-1420

Or contact any WELCA member





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

US House passes massive tax break and spending cut bill, sending it to Trump

SD's Rep. Dusty Johnson votes yes after Thune and Rounds supported bill in Senate

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ARIANA FIGUEROA - JULY 3, 2025 2:08 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Republicans cleared the “big, beautiful bill” for President Donald Trump’s signature Thursday, marking an end to the painstaking months-long negotiations that began just after voters gave the GOP unified control of Washington during last year’s elections.

The final 218-214 vote on the expansive tax and spending cuts package marked a significant victory for Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., who were able to unify centrist and far-right members of the party against long odds and narrow majorities.

But the legislation’s real-world impacts include millions of Americans expected to lose access to Medicaid through new requirements and slashed spending, and state governments taking on a share of costs for a key nutrition program for low-income families. If voters oppose Republicans at the ballot box in return, it could mean the GOP loses the House during next year’s midterm elections.

In the end just two Republicans in the House and three in the Senate opposed the measure, which the Senate approved earlier in the week with Vice President JD Vance casting the tie-breaking vote.

Trump posted on social media numerous times in the days leading up to the vote, thanking supportive Republicans who were praising the bill during interviews and threatening to back primary challenges against GOP lawmakers who stood in the way of passage.

“Largest Tax Cuts in History and a Booming Economy vs. Biggest Tax Increase in History, and a Failed Economy,” Trump posted just after midnight when it wasn’t yet clear the bill would pass. “What are the Republicans waiting for??? What are you trying to prove??? MAGA IS NOT HAPPY, AND IT’S COSTING YOU VOTES!!!”

Trump told reporters while on his way to Iowa for an event that he would sign the bill at 5 p.m. Eastern on Friday, with military aircraft flying over the White House and Republican lawmakers in attendance.

Johnson said during a floor speech the legislation is a direct result of the November elections, when voters gave the GOP control of the House, Senate and the White House.

“That election was decisive. It was a bellwether. It was a time for choosing,” Johnson said. “And I tell you what — the American people chose, overwhelmingly, they chose the Republican Party.”

The package, he said, would make the country “stronger, safer and more prosperous than ever before.”

“We’ve had spirited debates, we’ve had months of deliberation and now we are finally ready to fulfill our promise to the American people,” Johnson said.

Republicans were spurred to write the tax provisions in the legislation to avoid a cliff at the end of the year, created by the party’s 2017 tax law. But the legislation holds dozens of other provisions as well, spanning border security, defense, energy production, health care and higher education aid.

The bill raises the country’s debt limit by \$5 trillion, a staggering figure that many fiscal hawks would have once balked at, but is enough to get Republicans past the midterm elections before they’ll have to negotiate another deal to raise the country’s borrowing limit.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office’s latest analysis of the measure projects it would add \$3.4 trillion to deficits during the next decade compared to current law.

Jeffries: “It guts Medicaid”

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House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., called the health care provisions “reckless” during a speech that lasted nearly nine hours, forcing the vote to take place in the afternoon rather than early morning, and said the “bill represents the largest cut to health care in American history.”

“Almost \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid,” Jeffries said. “This runs directly contrary to what President Trump indicated in January, which was that he was going to love and cherish Medicaid. Nothing about this bill loves and cherishes Medicaid. It guts Medicaid.”

The speech broke the eight-hour-and-32-minute record that then-Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., set in 2021 when he sought to delay Democrats from passing a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package. House leaders are allowed to exceed normal speaking limits through a privilege called the “magic minute.”

The nonpartisan health research organization KFF’s analysis of the package shows it would reduce federal spending on Medicaid by nearly \$1 trillion during the next decade and lead to 11.8 million people becoming uninsured.

Republicans made numerous changes to the state-federal health program for lower income people and some people with disabilities, including a requirement that some enrollees work, participate in community service, or attend an educational program for at least 80 hours a month.

Medicaid patients will no longer be able to have their care covered at Planned Parenthood for routine appointments, like annual physicals and cancer screenings, for one year. Congress has barred federal taxpayer dollars from going to abortions with limited exceptions for decades, but the new provision will block all Medicaid funding from going to Planned Parenthood, likely leading some of its clinics to close.

Overnight drama

House passage followed several frenzied days on Capitol Hill as congressional leaders and Trump sought to sway holdouts to their side ahead of a self-imposed Fourth of July deadline.

The Senate, and then later the House, held overnight sessions followed by dramatic votes where several Republicans, who said publicly they didn’t actually like the bill, voted to approve it anyway.

GOP leaders didn’t have much room for error amid a narrow 53-seat Senate majority and a 220-212 advantage in the House. That delicate balance hovered in the background during the last several months, as talks over dozens of policy changes and spending cuts in the bill appeared deadlocked.

Any modifications meant to bring on board far-right members of the party had to be weighed against the policy goals of centrist lawmakers, who are most at risk of losing their seats during next year’s elections.

The House passed its first version of the bill following a 215-214 vote in May, sending the legislation to the Senate, where Republicans in that chamber spent several weeks deciding which policies they could support and which they wanted to remove or rework.

The measure changed substantially to comply with the complex rules for moving a budget reconciliation bill through the upper chamber. GOP leaders chose to use that process, instead of moving the package through the regular legislative pathway, to avoid having to negotiate with Democrats to get past the Senate’s 60-vote legislative filibuster.

In the end nearly every one of the 273 Republicans in Congress approved the behemoth 870-page bill.

Maine’s Susan Collins, Kentucky’s Rand Paul and North Carolina’s Thom Tillis voted against it in the Senate and Pennsylvania Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick and Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie opposed passage in the House.

Fitzpatrick wrote in a statement that while he voted to approve the House’s original version of the bill, he couldn’t support changes made in the Senate.

“I voted to strengthen Medicaid protections, to permanently extend middle class tax cuts, for enhanced small business tax relief, and for historic investments in our border security and our military,” Fitzpatrick wrote. “However, it was the Senate’s amendments to Medicaid, in addition to several other Senate provisions, that altered the analysis for our PA-1 community.”

Massie posted on social media that he couldn’t vote for the measure because it would exacerbate the country’s annual deficit.

“Although there were some conservative wins in the budget reconciliation bill (OBBBA), I voted No on

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final passage because it will significantly increase U.S. budget deficits in the near term, negatively impacting all Americans through sustained inflation and high interest rates," Massie wrote.

GOP holdouts delay passage

Floor debate on the bill in the House, which began around 3:30 a.m. Eastern Thursday and lasted 11 hours, was along party lines, with Democrats voicing strong opposition to changes in the package and GOP lawmakers arguing it puts the country on a better path.

GOP leaders didn't originally plan to begin debate in the middle of the night while most of the country slept, but were forced to after holdouts refused to give their votes to a procedural step.

When the House did finally adopt the rule, Pennsylvania's Brian Fitzpatrick was the sole member of his party to vote against moving onto floor debate and a final passage vote.

Fitzpatrick had posted on social media earlier in the day that he wanted Trump "to address my serious concern regarding reports the United States is withholding critical defense material pledged to Ukraine."

"Ukrainian forces are not only safeguarding their homeland—they are holding the front line of freedom itself," he wrote. "There can be no half-measures in the defense of liberty. We must, as we always have, stand for peace through strength."

Tax breaks and so much more

House Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith, R-Mo., made significant promises to middle-class Americans during floor debate about the tax provisions in the bill that many voters will be watching for in the months ahead.

"Households making under \$100,000 will see a 12% tax cut compared to what they pay today. The average family of four will see nearly 11,000 more in their pockets each year," Smith said. "Real wages for workers will rise by as much as \$7,200 a year. A waitress working for tips will keep an extra \$1,300, a lineman working overtime after a storm will keep an extra \$1,400."

Massachusetts Democratic Rep. Richard Neal, ranking member on the tax writing panel, said the legislation's benefits skew largely toward the very wealthy.

"If you made a million dollars last year, you're going to make a plus of \$96,000 in the next tax filing season," Neal said. "If you made under \$50,000 last year, you're going to get 68 cents a day in terms of your tax relief."

The extension of the 2017 tax law would predominantly benefit high-income earners. The top 1% would receive a tax cut three times the size of those with incomes in the bottom 60% of after-tax income, according to analysis from the left-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Some other tax incentives that critics say skew toward wealthier families include a \$1,000 deposit from the federal government for babies born between 2024 and 2028, known as a "Trump account." The program would track a stock index and gain interest accordingly and families with disposable income could contribute additional funding.

And while Republicans included an extension of the child tax credit to \$2,200 per child, it requires the parents to have a Social Security number to claim the tax credit.

The bill will give the president more than \$170 billion to carry out his campaign promise of mass deportations of people in the country without permanent legal status. The package would give the Department of Homeland Security \$45 billion for the detention of immigrants and give its immigration enforcement arm another \$30 billion to hire up to 10,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

Food aid, higher education

The legislation will overhaul federal loans for higher education and how states pay for food assistance that roughly 42 million low-income people rely on, known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

The bill would cap federal graduate loans to \$100,000 per borrower and \$200,000 per borrower who is

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attending law school or medical school. It would also cap the ParentPLUS loans to \$65,000.

Under the SNAP changes, the package would require states to shoulder more of the burden in food assistance. Currently, the federal government covers 100% of the cost. The legislation tightens eligibility for SNAP, requiring parents with children aged 6 and older to meet the work requirements when they were previously exempt.

Current estimates from CBO show that changes in federal nutrition programs including SNAP would reduce federal spending by roughly \$186 billion over 10 years.

The GOP megabill cuts clean energy tax credits and claws back some of the funding in former president Joe Biden's signature climate bill, known as the Inflation Reduction Act.

Some of those cuts to clean energy tax credits include terminating at the end of September a nearly \$8,000 rebate for the purchase of an electric vehicle, ending a tax credit by December for energy efficient home upgrades such as solar roof panels and heat pumps.

The package rescinds funds to help local governments and states adopt zero emission standards, and eliminates environmental justice block grants that communities used to address health impacts due to environmental pollution, among other things.

South Dakota's vote

FROM SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, the state's lone member of the House, voted in favor of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act."

"Our state is counting on the provisions in this bill for extension of current tax rates to see our businesses and communities grow and thrive," he said in a press release. "This bill is pro-family, pro-small business, pro-energy, and pro-America."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Sen. Mike Rounds, Republicans from South Dakota, voted for the bill earlier.

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.

SD Health Department warns of potential measles exposure in Hot Springs

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 3, 2025 3:20 PM

An out-of-state traveler visited Hot Springs while contagious with measles last month and stopped at two public spaces several times during their stay, according to a news release Thursday from the South Dakota Department of Health.

Those places were:

12-7 p.m. on June 19 at Two Crows Creamery.

8:30-11:30 a.m. on June 19, 20 and 21 at Wandering Bison Coffee.

The department said anyone who was at the locations during the indicated days and times may have been exposed. They should self-monitor for symptoms for three weeks after the exposure date.

People who are not immune to measles should contact their health care provider to discuss protective options, the Health Department said, including vaccination or immune globulin, depending on eligibility and timing. People considered immune to measles include those who:

Were born before 1957.

Received one dose of measles vaccine (MMR) as an adult or from 12 months to pre-school age.

Received two doses of measles vaccine (MMR) as a school-aged child or as an adult at higher risk of

infection.

Have a presence of measles antibodies shown by a lab test.

Had a previous measles infection shown by a lab test.

The public alert comes as the in-state number of reported measles cases has remained at four for two weeks. The super-contagious disease is nearing a six-year record as outbreaks spread across the United States. According to a federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention update Tuesday, there are 1,267 confirmed cases affecting 34 states.

In response to cases appearing in South Dakota, the state Health Department is holding vaccination clinics across the state through July 10.

Measles symptoms appear in two stages, first with a runny nose, cough and slight fever. Second, occurring on the third to seventh day of the illness, a red blotchy rash appears and lasts for up to a week. The rash usually begins on the face. The person's temperature also rises to 103-105 degrees Fahrenheit.

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.

Sioux Falls receives \$37 million in 'forever chemical' lawsuit settlement with 3M, DuPont

Ellsworth, Box Elder continue work to address contamination

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 3, 2025 2:47 PM

Nearly six years after Sioux Falls officials filed a federal lawsuit against chemical manufacturers for pollution discovered in the city's groundwater, the city received its first installment of settlement money this June: \$37.2 million.

Dave Pfeifle, city attorney, said in an emailed statement that the funds will be reserved to "replenish, protect, and secure source water" for the city. Vanessa Gomez, the mayor's chief of staff, added that the city is in the process of determining the "best course of action" to place the settlement funds into a "restricted and committed" fund to achieve that goal.

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

"PFAS have become a widespread, environmental issue that affects not only Sioux Falls, but the nation, and impacts people's lives through the everyday products they use," Pfeifle said. "The City's proactive response and pursuit of litigation is a testament to our commitment and responsibility to supply safe and reliable drinking water to our community."

Sioux Falls was one of thousands of plaintiffs in a class action lawsuit against manufacturers of fire-fighting foam that contained PFAS. The settlement agreement was approved by a U.S. District Court in South Carolina last year. The full amount that the city will receive is unknown, Pfeifle said. The city did not respond to a follow up question seeking an explanation.

Sioux Falls alleged that chemical-makers tested for and were aware of health risks of compounds used in a firefighting foam that for decades was tested and stored at the Sioux Falls Regional Airport. Investigators for the Air National Guard — which is co-located at the airport — tested the soil and groundwater near the airport beginning in 2013, finding high amounts of PFAS.

Health advisories from the EPA set a safety limit of 70 parts-per-trillion for drinking water at the time. Groundwater and soil near the airport was contaminated at a rate of 255,100 parts-per-trillion, according to analysis of military records by Northeastern University and advocates with the nonprofit Environmental

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Working Group.

PFAS mitigation, testing and planning efforts

Sioux Falls officials shuttered 21 of the city's 64 wells "out of an abundance of caution" once the contamination was identified, Pfeifle said, "which significantly impacted the city's ability to harvest water and severely limited its water supply."

The Environmental Protection Agency proposed regulating PFAS levels in drinking water at a stricter 4 parts per trillion in 2023, which experts projected would cost South Dakota water systems hundreds of millions of dollars to test and treat. Water providers throughout South Dakota have since been testing drinking water to ensure compliance once the limits are in place, including federal testing of private wells. Initial tests of Mount Rushmore's drinking water exceeded the new limit in 2024.

The EPA under the Trump administration is planning to delay enforcement of some PFAS drinking water limits until 2031 and reconsidering rules for other types of PFAS.

Sioux Falls plans to follow PFAS guidance from the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said Sioux Falls Public Works Director Mark Cotter. It'll continue its monthly PFAS testing, Cotter added in an email, "which shows Sioux Falls' drinking water is well within all health-based limits" set at the state and federal level.

The city expects to receive several more payments over the next decade from the 3M settlement, as well as chemical manufacturers DuPont, Tyco and BASF. The payments will be listed in the city's monthly financial reports.

The state of South Dakota plans to open its own drinking water testing laboratory, and South Dakota State University researchers plan to test surface water and environmental samples, including animal tissue and plant material, to understand how the chemicals work their way through the food chain. The state is currently sampling South Dakota surface waters for PFAS, after the East Dakota Water Development District and South Dakota Mines found PFAS along the Big Sioux River watershed in the eastern part of the state last year. It is also offering free PFAS cleanup to local fire departments and schools throughout the state.

The Sioux Falls Regional Airport Authority also sued companies behind the firefighting foam in 2019, seeking damages for the cost of investigating and addressing the contamination. Dan Letellier, executive director, said the airport is part of a group of property and landowners set to go to trial or potentially settle.

Ellsworth, Box Elder continue investigation and mitigation of PFAS contamination

Other South Dakota communities have experienced PFAS contamination, including Box Elder near Ellsworth Air Force Base and wells at National Guard facilities near Custer and in Rapid City.

Ellsworth is one of many military installations throughout the country with PFAS contamination, South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority Business Operations Manager Howie Aubertin told South Dakota Searchlight.

Groundwater and soil at Ellsworth Air Force Base were contaminated at a rate of up to 551,000 parts-per-trillion as of 2016, according to analysis of military records by Northeastern University and the Environmental Working Group.

The contamination affected dozens of families living near the base and on the western edge of Box Elder city limits. The property owners were provided bottled water, treatment systems for private wells or were hooked up to a waterline from the base.

Box Elder, Ellsworth Development Authority and Rapid City partnered to build a pipeline to transport water from Rapid City to about 35 impacted properties. Construction on the \$12.5 million project, funded by the U.S. Air Force, began last year and is expected to finish by the end of the year, Aubertin said. The Air Force provided additional funding to widen the system and provide for the base's future growth.

The base is still studying the extent of PFAS in non-drinking water sources around and near the base with plans to remedy the contamination.

"The issue of PFAS at Ellsworth is not solved, and the Air Force recognizes that," Aubertin said. "It is still

in its investigative and exploratory phase.”

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.

Acres enrolled in public land access initiative double with 30,000-acre sign-up

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 3, 2025 10:06 AM

Pheasants Forever has enrolled a new landowner in its Public Access to Habitat (PATH) program that will open nearly 30,000 new acres of private land to public hunting and recreation in northwestern South Dakota.

Pheasants Forever is a nonprofit conservation group that works to improve habitat and expand public access to hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts. The group's Ziebach County project is the largest single enrollment of the PATH initiative, which launched in South Dakota and Nebraska in 2023.

With this addition, the program has opened 62,581 acres of privately owned land to public access across South Dakota through 59 contracts in 31 counties.

The program complements the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Walk-In Area program, which pays landowners \$1.50 to \$2 per acre to open land for public access.

Public Access To Habitat offers landowners up to an additional \$25 per acre to further incentivize high-quality habitat to be enrolled in the state's Walk-In Area program. Landowners must enroll eligible acres in PATH for 10 years.

Habitats — including shelterbelts, wetlands, conservation easements and grasslands — enrolled in the program must remain untouched, except for necessary management tasks (such as emergency grazing for livestock). Biologists work with landowners to ensure enrolled acres are productive for wildlife.

South Dakota Tourism and onX Hunt, a hunting GPS service, funded the initiative's first year in the state with a \$250,000 grant. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and onX continue to support the project.

The newly enrolled 29,725 acres of rolling plains support pheasants, grouse, deer and pronghorn, according to Pheasants Forever.

“Since we launched PATH in South Dakota, the program has proven we can have a profound impact on the quality of both access and habitat across the entire state,” said Casey Sill, a spokesman for Pheasants Forever.

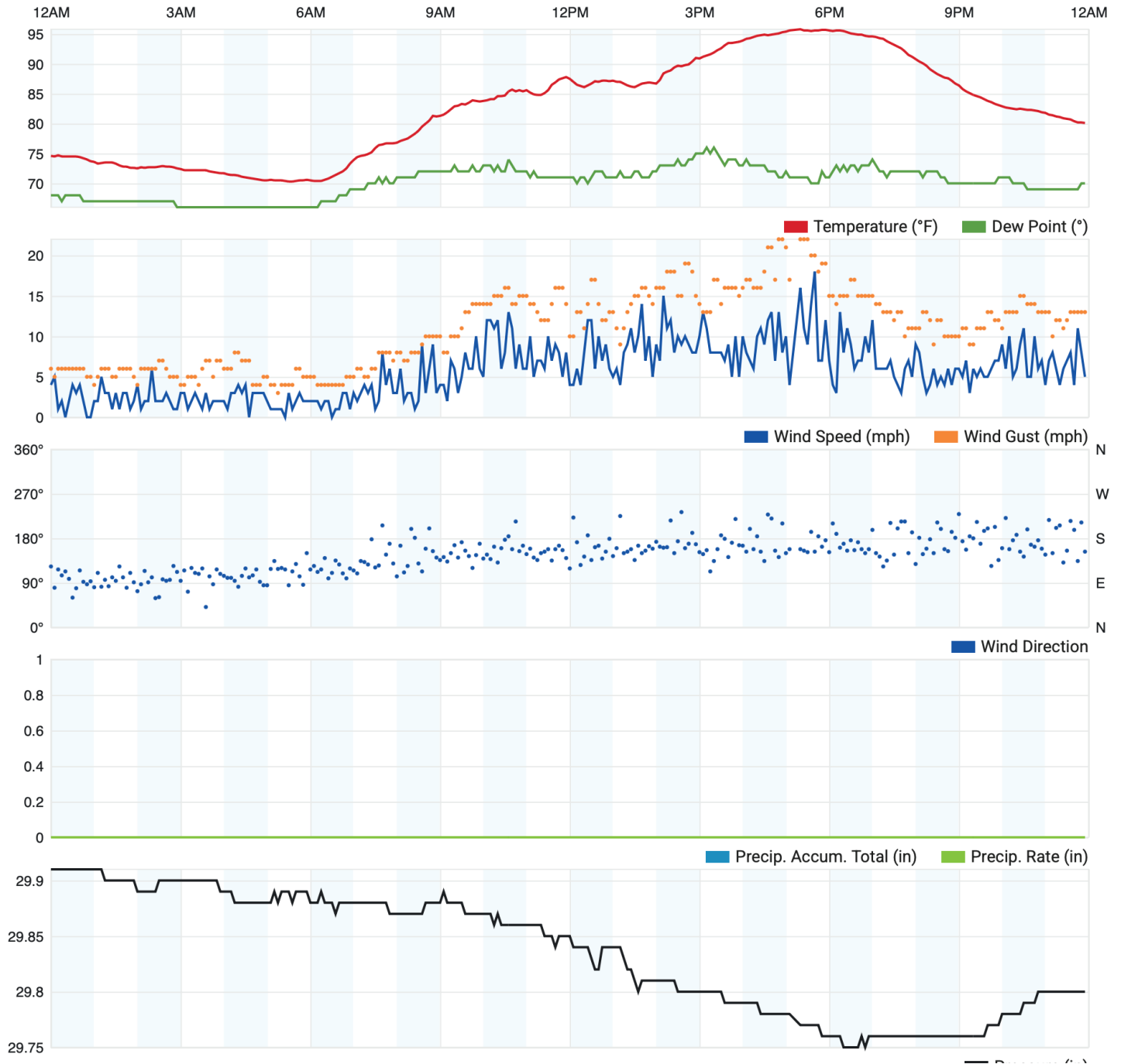
Acres enrolled in South Dakota's Walk-In Area program can be found on Game, Fish and Parks' Public Hunting Atlas.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Independence Day



High: 94 °F

Breezy.
Mostly Sunny
then Showers
Likely

Tonight



Low: 67 °F

T-storms

Saturday



High: 82 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Chance
Showers

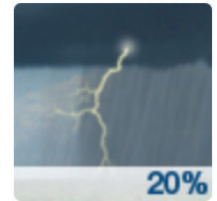
Saturday Night



Low: 57 °F

Mostly Clear
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

Sunday



High: 76 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Scattered Severe Storms
possible

TIMING

This Afternoon Through
the Overnight Hours

PRIMARY THREATS



HEAVY RAIN



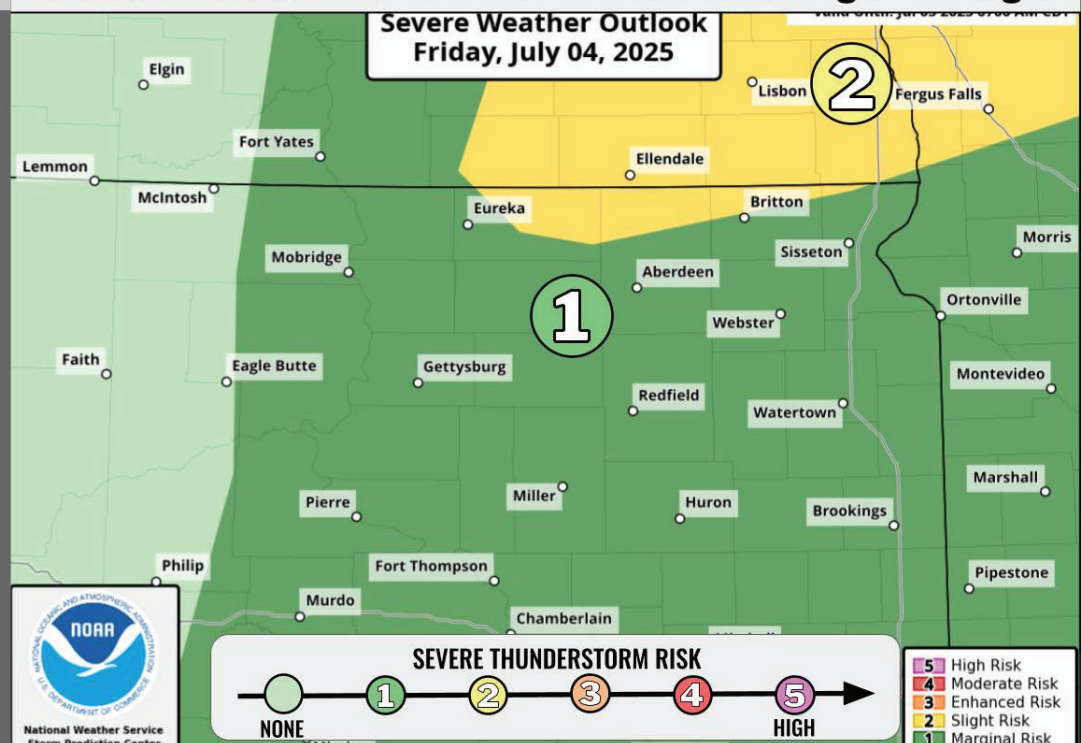
DAMAGING
WIND

SECONDARY THREATS



SMALL HAIL

SEVERE STORMS Possible This Afternoon through Overnight



Hot & humid conditions will continue today until storms and a cold front start to move through. There is a Slight risk (level 2 of 5) for severe storms over northeastern SD and a Marginal risk (level 1 of 5) over central and eastern SD this afternoon into the overnight. The main threat will be strong wind gusts up to 60 mph and heavy rainfall that could cause flooding in some areas.

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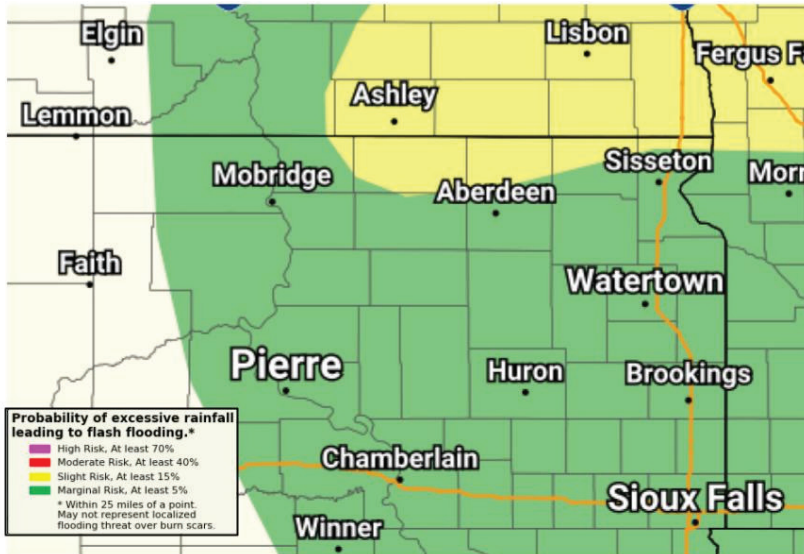


Rain/Storm Chances for the 4th of July

July 4, 2025

4:09 AM

This Afternoon to evening will see best chances (60-80%) for rainfall



- Showers/storms develop over central SD this afternoon and spread east into northeast SD/west central MN in the evening.
 - 1-2" rainfall possible. Localized areas could exceed 2" over portions of northeastern South Dakota.
- The Weather Prediction Center has issued a Slight Risk for Excessive Rainfall for locations in yellow today.
- Due to recent heavy rainfall, northeastern South Dakota in particular may be more likely to experience flooding.
 - Both Flash Flooding and River Flooding are possible with this incoming rainfall.

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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Heavy rainfall (1-2"+) is possible across eastern SD into west central MN this afternoon and overnight. Northeast SD and west central MN is in a slight risk, while the rest of the area remain in a marginal risk for excessive rainfall.



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

4th of July Forecast

Highs : 85-95°

Very Warm and Humid
S-SW / W-NW wind 15 to 25 mph
w/gusts to 25-35 mph

Scattered Thunderstorms likely, mainly across central SD during the afternoon then shifting east into northeast SD/west central MN in the evening

weather.gov/abr

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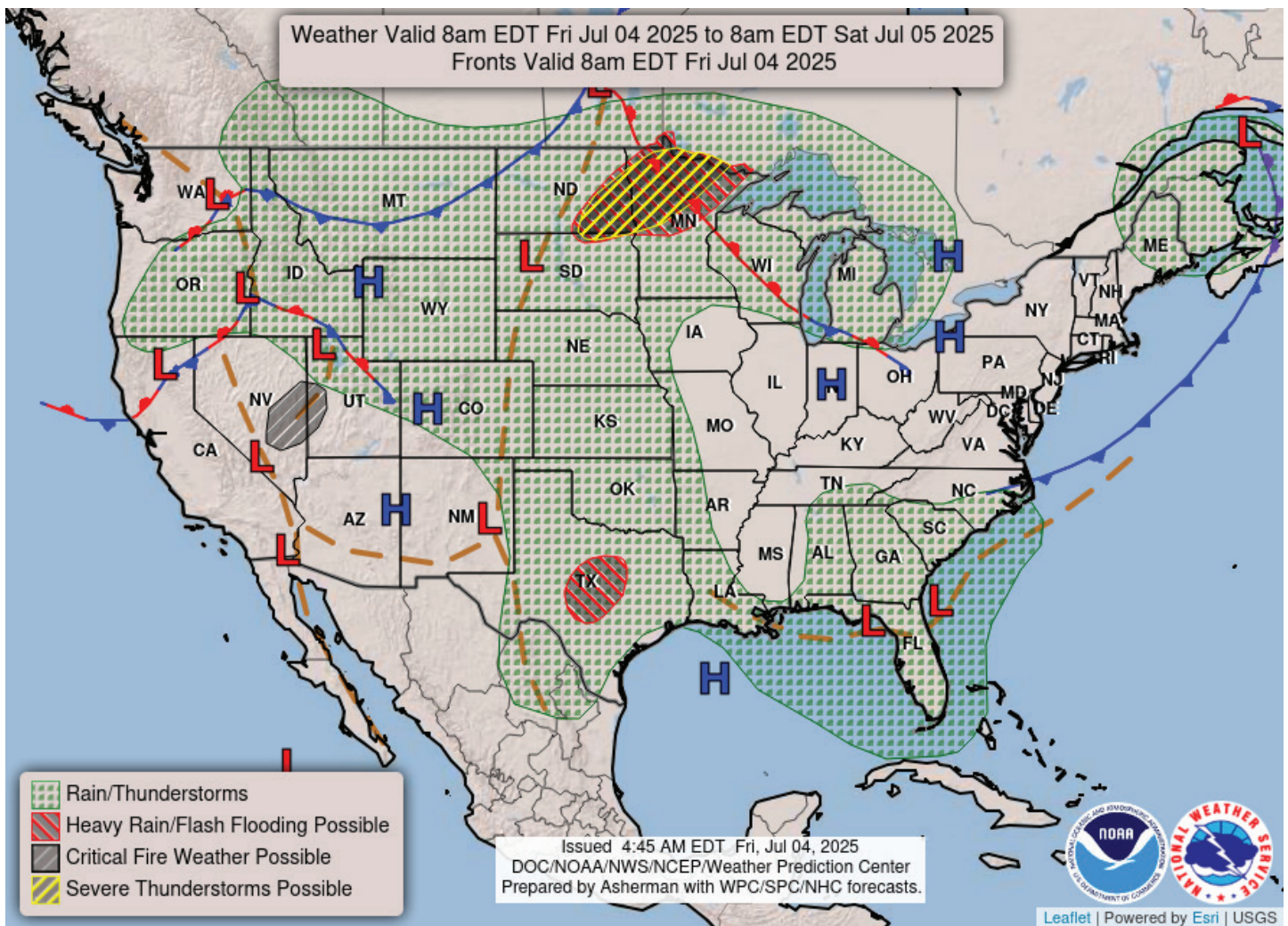
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 96 °F at 5:19 PM
Heat Index: 106 °F at 4:00 PM
Low Temp: 70 °F at 5:26 AM
Wind: 22 mph at 4:49 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 37 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1988
Record Low: 40 in 1967
Average High: 84
Average Low: 59
Average Precip in July.: 0.47
Precip to date in July: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 11.48
Precip Year to Date: 9.36
Sunset Tonight: 9:25:35 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:48:59 am



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Today in Weather History

July 4, 1936: Several record highs were seen on this day, including; 113 degrees 4NW of Gann Valley; 111 in Murdo; 107 in Castlewood; 106 in Clark and Highmore; 105 near Onida; 104 in Faulkton and Miller; 103 degrees 6SE of McIntosh; 101 in Pollock.

July 4, 1988: Several record highs were set on this day, including; 103 degrees in Ipswich and Britton; 102 in Webster; 101 in Summit and Artichoke Lake, MN; 99 in Leola; 98 degrees in Clear Lake and Waubay.

1776: Thomas Jefferson purchased a thermometer from a local merchant before signing the Declaration of Independence. According to his weather memorandum book, at 1 PM it was cloudy and 76 degrees.

1911: Record temperatures are set in the northeastern United States as a deadly heat wave hits the area that would go on to kill 380 people. In Nashua, New Hampshire, the mercury peaked at 106 degrees. Other high-temperature records were set all over New England during an 11-day period.

1956 - A world record for the most rain in one minute was set at Unionville, MD, with a downpour of 1.23 inches. (The Weather Channel) (The National Severe Storms Forecast Center)

1987 - Thunderstorms around the country provided extra fireworks for Independence Day. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 82 mph at Clearwater, KS, eight inches of rain in four hours at Menno SD, and three inches of rain in just fifteen minutes at Austin, KY. Morning thunderstorms drenched Oneonta AL with 8.6 inches of rain, their greatest 24 hour total in thirty years of records. The heavy rain caused mudslides and serious flooding, claiming two lives. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain over the Central Gulf Coast Region for the second day in a row. Monroe, LA, was deluged with 3.75 inches in two hours. Aberdeen and Rapid City, SD, reported record high temperatures for the date, with readings of 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Independence Day was hot as a firecracker across parts of the country. Nineteen cities, mostly in the north central U.S., reported record high temperatures for the date, including Williston ND with a reading of 107 degrees. In the southwestern U.S., highs of 93 at Alamosa, CO, 114 at Tucson, AZ, and 118 at Phoenix, AZ, equalled all-time records for those locations. (The National Weather Summary)

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Solomon makes no apology for the wicked and their lifestyle. In fact, his choice of words leaves no doubt about what they do and how to recognize them.

For example:

"A man cannot be established through wickedness; the advice of the wicked is deceitfulness; the words of the wicked lie in wait for blood; wicked men are overthrown and are no more; men with warped minds are despised."

And, in the end: "The Lord condemns a crafty man."

However, the righteous:

"Cannot be uprooted; the plans of the righteous are just; the speech of the righteous rescues them; the house of the righteous stands forever; the house of the righteous stands firm."

And ultimately: "A good man finds favor with the Lord."

It is most interesting to note that the wicked have a completely different approach to life than the righteous. They have a single focus: "How will what I am doing benefit me?"

This opens the door to being deceitful and dishonest, cunning, and waiting for the right moment to take advantage of the weak, the uninformed, the less educated—those looking for someone they can trust—the vulnerable.

When we look at the righteous, we see the exact opposite: what they do is steadfast, open, will stand the test of time and God's scrutiny. They seek to be just and fair as God is just and fair. Whatever they do, ultimately, will be right and just in the eyes of God and man.

The final reward? God's blessings or condemnation. What are you living for?

Today's Prayer: Lord, how we live and how we get what we have reflects our attitude toward and our relationship with You. May what we do always honor You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "The wicked die and disappear, but the family of the godly stands firm." Proverbs 12:7

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.01.25

19 28 31 39 54 5

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$60,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 20 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

8 19 20 21 39 7

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,550,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 35 Mins
DRAW: 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.03.25

12 29 30 42 45 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 50 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

1 6 20 25 27

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$46,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 50 Mins
DRAW: 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

10 18 21 37 40 10

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 19 Mins
DRAW: 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

7 19 21 54 63 21

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$190,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 19 Mins
DRAW: 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

World shares are mostly down as Trump's tariff deadline looms, while US stocks set records

By TERESA CERJOJANO Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — World shares mostly fell on Friday even as U.S. stocks climbed further into record heights as the clock ticks on President Donald Trump's July 9 tariff deadline.

In early trading in Europe, Germany's DAX shed 0.8% to 23,730.61, while the CAC 40 in Paris fell 1.1% to 7,666.91. Britain's FTSE 100 was down 0.4% to 8,790.21. The futures for S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial average were both 0.5% lower.

In Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 recovered early losses, gaining 0.1% to 39,810.88, while South Korea's KOSPI index was fell 2% to 3,054.28.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index lost 0.6% to 23,916.06 while the Shanghai Composite index added 0.3% to 3,472.32.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.1% to 8,603.00 while India's Sensex index shed 0.1% to 83,148.45.

"Asian markets slipped into Friday like someone entering a dark alley with one eye over their shoulder — because while US equities danced higher on a sweet spotted post-payroll sugar rush, the mood in Asia was far less celebratory," Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management, wrote in a commentary.

"The reason? That familiar, twitchy unease every time Trump gets near the tariff trigger," he added.

Mizuho Bank Ltd. said countries may be receiving letters from Trump stating tariff levels as early as Friday. Countries will have to brace for volatility, it said.

On Thursday, after a report showed a U.S. job market stronger than Wall Street expected, the S&P 500 rose 0.8% and set an all-time high for the fourth time in five days. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 344 points, or 0.8%, and the Nasdaq composite gained 1%.

Many of Trump's stiff proposed taxes on imports are currently on pause, but they're scheduled to kick in next week unless Trump reaches deals with other countries to lower them.

Elsewhere Friday, U.S. benchmark crude was down 45 cents to \$66.55 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, shed 53 cents to \$68.27 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar slid to 144.34 Japanese yen from 144.92 yen. The euro edged higher to \$1.1773 from \$1.1761.

A strike by air traffic controllers is disrupting travel to, from and over France

PARIS (AP) — About 40% of flights were canceled Friday at all Paris airports and tens of thousands of passengers were rearranging plans at the height of the summer travel season because of a strike by French air traffic controllers seeking better working conditions.

Disruptions started hitting airports around France on Thursday and intensified Friday. The national civil aviation authority asked airlines to cancel 40% of flights Friday at Charles de Gaulle, Orly and Beauvais airports serving Paris, half of flights in Nice and 30% of flights in Marseille, Lyon and some other cities.

Despite the preventive cancelations, the authority warned in a statement that "disruptions and long delays are to be expected at all French airports."

Ryanair was among airlines that announced widespread disruptions, saying in a statement it canceled more than 400 flights affecting 70,000 passengers. The company said the strike affects all its flights over French airspace, as well as traffic in and out of French airports, and urged the European Union to reform air traffic rules.

One of the two unions leading the strike, UNSA-ICNA, said in a statement there are not enough employees to handle surging air travel and that inflation is eating away at salaries. The unions also are protesting new reform measures aiming to more tightly monitor their work, prompted by a near-collision at the

Bordeaux airport.

Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot called the union demands — and their decision to strike just as French schools close for the summer and many families head on vacation — “unacceptable.”

Russia hammers Kyiv in largest missile and drone barrage since war in Ukraine began

By HANNA ARHIROVA By Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Waves of drone and missile attacks targeted Kyiv overnight into Friday in the largest aerial assault since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began more than three years ago, officials said, amid a renewed Russian push to capture more of its neighbor's land.

The barrage injured at least 23 people and inflicted severe damage across multiple districts of the capital in a seven-hour onslaught. Blasts lit up the night sky and echoed across the city as air raid sirens wailed. The blue lights of emergency vehicles reflected off high-rise buildings, and debris blocked city streets.

“It was a harsh, sleepless night,” Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Russia has been stepping up its long-range attacks on Ukrainian cities. Less than a week ago Russia launched what was then the largest aerial assault of the war. That strategy has coincided with a concerted Russian effort to break through parts of the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where Ukrainian troops are under severe pressure.

Russia launched 550 drones and missiles across Ukraine during the night, the country's air force said. The majority were Shahed drones, but Russia also launched 11 missiles in the attack.

Alya Shahlai, a 23-year-old Kyiv wedding photographer, said her home was destroyed in the attack.

“We were all in the (basement) shelter because it was so loud, staying home would have been suicidal,” she told The Associated Press. “We went down 10 minutes before and then there was a loud explosion and the lights went out in the shelter, people were panicking.”

Trump ‘not happy’ with Russia's attacks

The attack on Kyiv began the same day a phone call took place between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Zelenskyy called the timing of the strikes a deliberate signal that Moscow has no intention of ending the war.

Trump said he would call Zelenskyy on Friday. U.S.-led international peace efforts have been fruitless so far. Recent direct peace talks have led only to sporadic exchanges of prisoners of war and fallen soldiers.

When asked if he made any progress with Putin on a deal to end the fighting in Ukraine, he said: “No, I didn't make any progress with him today at all.”

“I'm not happy about that. I'm not happy about that,” Trump said of Russia's war in Ukraine. “I don't think he's looking to stop” the war, Trump said later of Putin.

According to Yuri Ushakov, Putin's foreign affairs adviser, the Russian leader emphasized that Moscow will seek to achieve its goals in Ukraine and remove the “root causes” of the conflict.

“Russia will not back down from these goals,” Ushakov told reporters after the call.

Russia's army crossed the border on Feb. 24, 2022, in an all-out invasion that Putin sought to justify by falsely saying it was needed to protect Russian-speaking civilians in eastern Ukraine and prevent the country from joining NATO. Zelenskyy has repeatedly called out Russian disinformation efforts.

Pentagon halts deliveries of air defense missiles

The U.S. has paused some shipments of military aid to Ukraine, including crucial air defense missiles. Ukraine's main European backers are considering how they can help pick up the slack. Zelenskyy says plans are afoot to build up Ukraine's domestic arms industry, but scaling up will take time.

Throughout the night, Associated Press journalists in Kyiv heard the constant buzzing of drones overhead and the sound of explosions and intense machine gun fire as Ukrainian forces tried to intercept the aerial assault.

“Absolutely horrible and sleepless night in Kyiv,” Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha wrote on social media platform X. “One of the worst so far.”

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Ukraine's Economy Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko described "families running into metro stations, basements, underground parking garages, mass destruction in the heart of our capital."

"What Kyiv endured last night, cannot be called anything but a deliberate act of terror," she wrote on X. Kyiv was the primary target of the countrywide attack. At least 14 people were hospitalized, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

Russia strikes 5 Ukrainian regions

Ukrainian air defenses shot down 270 targets, including two cruise missiles. Another 208 targets were lost from radar and presumed jammed.

Russia successfully hit eight locations with nine missiles and 63 drones. Debris from intercepted drones fell across at least 33 sites.

In addition to the capital, the Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Kyiv regions also sustained damage, Zelenskyy said.

Emergency services reported damage in at least five of the capital's 10 districts. In Solomianskyi district, a five-story residential building was partially destroyed and the roof of a seven-story building caught fire. Fires also broke out at a warehouse, a garage complex and an auto repair facility.

In Sviatoshynskyi district, a strike hit a 14-story residential building, sparking a fire. Several vehicles also caught fire nearby. Blazes were also reported at non-residential facilities.

In Shevchenkivskyi district, an eight-story building came under attack, with the first floor sustaining damage. Falling debris was recorded in Darnytskyi and Holosiivskyi districts.

Ukraine's national railway operator, Ukrzaliznytsia, said drone strikes damaged rail infrastructure in Kyiv.

Rural hospitals brace for financial hits or even closure under Republicans' \$1 trillion Medicaid cut

By MARGERY A. BECK and SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Tyler Sherman, a nurse at a rural Nebraska hospital, is used to the area's aging farmers delaying care until they end up in his emergency room.

Now, with Congress planning around \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts over 10 years, he fears those farmers and the more than 3,000 residents of Webster County could lose not just the ER, but also the clinic and nursing home tied to the hospital.

"Our budget is pretty heavily reliant on the Medicaid reimbursement, so if we do see a cut of that, it'll be difficult to keep the doors open," said Sherman, who works at Webster County Community Hospital in the small Nebraska town of Red Cloud just north of the Kansas border.

If those facilities close, many locals would see their five-minute trip to Webster County hospital turn into a nearly hour-long ride to the nearest hospital offering the same services.

"That's a long way for an emergency," Sherman said. "Some won't make it."

Already struggling hospitals would be hit particularly hard

States and rural health advocacy groups warn that cutting Medicaid — a program serving millions of low-income and disabled Americans — would hit already fragile rural hospitals hard and could force hundreds to close, stranding some people in remote areas without nearby emergency care.

More than 300 hospitals could be at risk for closure under the Republican bill, according to an analysis by the Cecil G. Sheps Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which tracks rural hospital closures. Even as Congress haggled over the controversial bill, a health clinic in the southwest Nebraska town of Curtis announced Wednesday it will close in the coming months, in part blaming the anticipated Medicaid cuts.

Bruce Shay, of Pomfret, Connecticut, fears he and his wife could be among those left in the lurch. At 70, they're both in good health, he said. But that likely means that if either needs to go to a hospital, "it's going to be an emergency."

Day Kimball Hospital is nearby in Putnam, but it has faced recent financial challenges. Day Kimball's

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CEO R. Kyle Kramer acknowledged that a Senate bill passed Tuesday — estimated to cut federal Medicaid spending in rural areas by \$155 billion over 10 years — would further hurt his rural hospital's bottom line. Roughly 30% of Day Kimball's current patients receive Medicaid benefits, a figure that's even higher for specific, critical services like obstetrics and behavioral health.

"An emergency means I'm 45 minutes to an hour away from the nearest hospital, and that's a problem," Shay said. And he and his wife wouldn't be the only ones having to make that trip.

"You've got, I'm sure, thousands of people who rely on Day Kimball Hospital. If it closed, thousands of people would have to go to another hospital," he said. "That's a huge load to suddenly impose on a hospital system that's probably already stretched thin."

Experts say the bill's \$50 billion fund for rural hospitals isn't enough

Rural hospitals have long operated on the financial edge, especially in recent years as Medicaid payments have continuously fallen below the actual cost to provide health care. More than 20% of Americans live in rural areas, where Medicaid covers 1 in 4 adults, according to the nonprofit KFF, which studies health care issues.

President Donald Trump's \$4.5 trillion tax breaks and spending cuts bill, which passed Thursday, would worsen rural hospitals' struggles by cutting a key federal program that helps states fund Medicaid payments to health care providers. To help offset the lost tax revenue, the package includes \$1.2 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and other social safety net programs — cuts they insist only root out fraud and waste in the system.

But public outcry over Medicaid cuts led Republicans to include a provision that will provide \$10 billion annually to buttress rural hospitals over the next five years, or \$50 billion in total. Many rural hospital advocates are wary that it won't be enough to cover the shortfall.

Carrie Cochran-McClain, chief policy officer with the National Rural Health Association, said rural hospitals already struggle to break even, citing a recent American Hospital Association report that found that hospitals in 2023 got nearly \$28 billion less from Medicaid than the actual cost of treating Medicaid patients.

"We see rural hospitals throughout the country really operating on either negative or very small operating margins," Cochran-McClain said. "Meaning that any amount of cut to a payer — especially a payer like Medicaid that makes up a significant portion of rural provider funding — is going to be consequential to the rural hospitals' ability to provide certain services or maybe even keep their doors open at the end of the day."

Kentucky is expected to be hit especially hard

A KFF report shows 36 states losing \$1 billion or more over 10 years in Medicaid funding for rural areas under the Republican bill, even with the \$50 billion rural fund. No state stands to lose more than Kentucky.

The report estimates the Bluegrass State would lose a whopping \$12.3 billion — nearly \$5 billion more than the next state on the list. That's because the bill ends Kentucky's unique Medicaid reimbursement system and reduces it to Medicare reimbursement levels.

Kentucky currently has one of the lowest Medicare reimbursement rates in the country. It also has one of the highest poverty rates, leading to a third of its population being covered by Medicaid.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, a two-term Democrat widely seen as a potential candidate for president in 2028, said the bill would close 35 hospitals in his state and pull health care coverage for 200,000 residents.

"Half of Kentucky's kids are covered under Medicaid. They lose their coverage and you are scrambling over that next prescription," Beshear said during an appearance on MSNBC. "This is going to impact the life of every single American negatively. It is going to hammer our economy."

Foreign medical residents fill critical positions at US hospitals, but are running into visa issues

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN and DEVI SHASTRI Associated Press

Some hospitals in the U.S. are without essential staff because international doctors who were set to start their medical training this week were delayed by the Trump administration's travel and visa restrictions.

It's unclear exactly how many foreign medical residents were unable to start their assignments, but six medical residents interviewed by The Associated Press say they've undergone years of training and work only to be stopped at the finish line by what is usually a procedural step.

"I don't want to give up," said a permanent Canadian resident who matched to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Harrisburg but had her visa denied because she is a citizen of Afghanistan. She requested to remain anonymous for fear of reprisal. "But the situation also seems so helpless."

Initially, the medical community was worried that hundreds of positions — many in hospitals in low-income or rural areas of the U.S. — could be affected. The pause on interviews for J-1 visas for approved work or study-related programs was lifted in mid-June.

The national nonprofit that facilitates the residency match process said the visa situation is resolving, but it will take weeks to know with confidence how many medical residents have had the start of their careers derailed because they got their visa too late or were blocked by President Donald Trump's travel ban on 12 countries, according to people who coordinate the residents' training.

Four foreign medical residents told the AP that U.S. embassies have been slow to open up interview slots — and some have not opened any.

"You lose out on the time you could have used to treat patients," said one resident from Pakistan, who matched to an internal medicine program in Massachusetts and requested to remain anonymous for fear of reprisal.

Thousands of foreign medical residents fill gaps in U.S. hospitals

The U.S. is projected to face a physician shortage in the next 11 years, per the Association of American Medical Colleges, and foreign medical residents fill critical gaps in the health care system. More than 6,600 foreign-born international medical residents matched into U.S. programs in 2025 — the highest on record — and another 300 filled positions that were vacant after the match process was complete.

Not all of those residents were affected by visa issues or the travel ban on foreign nationals from countries including Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan.

International medical graduates often take jobs in places where U.S. medical trainees tend not to go, said Donna Lamb, president of the National Resident Matching Program.

"It's not just that they're coming in and they want to work in big, flashy centers on the coast," Lamb said. "They're truly providing health care for all of America."

Foreign medical residents work in specialties that U.S. applicants aren't as eager to apply to. For example, international candidates make up almost 40% of residents in internal medicine, which specializes in the prevention and treatment of chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

"The residents are the backbone of the entire hospital," said Dr. Zaid Alrashid from Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in New York, which has medical residents from almost every continent. Most received their visas prior to the pause but a few were caught up in delays.

Two residents from India who spoke on condition of anonymity have not been able to get an appointment at any U.S. embassies there despite the J-1 visa pause being lifted.

Another resident from Egypt just secured a visa appointment for mid-August but is worried her program may not be willing to wait for her. She's already paid her security deposit for an apartment in Texas to live during her residency.

"I don't know when this situation will be resolved," said the resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, adding she hasn't been eating or sleeping well.

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Hospitals waiting for residents to arrive

In California, leaders at two graduate medical education programs said they have a small number of residents caught up in J-1 visa delays. Both spoke on condition of anonymity due to concerns for the doctors who are still trying to get visas.

A residency leader at one large health care system said two doctors in its 150-resident program are delayed, adding they could start late or defer to next year. A 135-person program at a California public health system told the AP that one resident has yet to arrive, though he was finally scheduled for a visa interview.

"We are not going to breathe easy until he's here in our hospital," the second leader said.

As of Wednesday, Lamb's matching program had received fewer than 20 requests to defer or cancel residency contracts.

Worried about losing their spots if they defer, many foreign medical residents may keep trying to get to the U.S. and start their residencies late, said Dr. Sabesan Karuppiah, a past member of the American Medical Association's International Medical Graduates Governing Council and former director of a large residency program.

Some hospitals may struggle at this point to replace the residents who don't make it, leaving fewer people to care for the same number of patients, said Kimberly Pierce Burke, executive director of the Alliance of Independent Academic Medical Centers.

Foreign medical trainees who've made it into the U.S. remain on edge about their situations, Karuppiah said.

"I can tell you the word on the street is: 'Do not leave the country,'" he said, adding that people are missing out on important events, seeing sick parents or even getting married. "Everybody's scared to just leave, not knowing what's going to happen."

North Korean crosses the heavily fortified border to South Korea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — An unidentified North Korean man crossed the heavily fortified land border separating the two Koreas and is in South Korean custody, the South's military said Friday.

The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the military identified and tracked the individual near the central-west section of the military demarcation line and conducted a "guiding operation" before taking the person into custody Thursday night.

It said authorities plan to investigate the border crossing and did not immediately say whether they view the incident as a defection attempt.

The Joint Chiefs said it notified the U.S.-led United Nations Command about the incident and had not detected any immediate signs of unusual military activity by the North.

According to the Joint Chiefs, a South Korean military team approached the unarmed North Korean man after detecting him and, after identifying themselves as South Korean troops, guided him safely out of the mine-strewn Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas.

Border tensions have flared in recent months as the two Koreas traded Cold War-style psychological warfare, with North Korea sending thousands of trash-filled balloons toward the South and South Korea blasting anti-Pyongyang propaganda through loudspeakers.

Since taking office last month, South Korea's new liberal President Lee Jae Myung has made efforts to rebuild trust with North Korea, halting the frontline loudspeaker broadcasts and moving to ban activists from flying balloons carrying propaganda leaflets across the border.

In April, South Korean troops fired warning shots to repel about 10 North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the military demarcation line. The South's military said the soldiers returned to North Korean territory without incident and that the North didn't return fire.

In June last year, North Korean troops crossed the border three times, prompting South Korea to fire warning shots. Experts suggested these crossings may have been accidental, occurring as North Korean

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troops added anti-tank barriers, planted mines and carried out other work to bolster border defenses amid escalating tensions between the Koreans.

Diplomacy between the war-divided Koreas has derailed since the collapse of denuclearization talks between Washington and Pyongyang in 2019, which prompted North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to accelerate the expansion of his military nuclear program and threaten nuclear conflict toward Washington and Seoul. South Korea's previous conservative government responded by strengthening its combined military exercises with the United States and Japan, which the North condemned as invasion rehearsals.

Trump kicks off a yearlong celebration of America's 250th anniversary in Iowa

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — President Donald Trump turned a heartland festival for the United States' upcoming 250th anniversary into a celebration of himself, basking in a crowd of supporters Thursday night shortly after Congress approved tax cut legislation that he championed.

On the eve of the July 4th holiday, Trump said "there could be no better birthday present for America than the phenomenal victory we achieved just hours ago, when Congress passed the one big beautiful bill to make America great again."

The Republican president plans to sign the legislation Friday during a picnic at the White House, while stealth bombers and fighter jets that participated in recent airstrikes in Iran fly overhead, a symbolic synthesis of the overwhelming force that he's deployed to reshape Washington and the country.

"We've saved our country," he boasted after taking the stage, pumping his fists while singer Lee Greenwood belted out Trump's campaign trail anthem "God Bless the USA." In addition to tax breaks, the legislation boosts funding for deportations while cutting back on healthcare and food assistance for low income people.

The event at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines was the opening act for a yearlong birthday party to mark two and a half centuries of American independence. The plans will culminate next summer with a massive fair on the National Mall in Washington featuring exhibits from every state.

Organizers see the coming year of festivities as a way to help unite a polarized nation and bridge political divides. But Trump left no doubt during his speech that he views patriotism as inseparable from his own agenda, saying Democrats who voted against his legislation "hate our country."

U.S. Ambassador Monica Crowley, Trump's liaison to the organizing group, America250, said in an interview that the anniversary events are "something that I think that all Americans can come together to celebrate and honor our history as well as our present and our future."

However, when she took the stage to introduce the president, she delivered an ode to Trump, describing him as the inheritor of the country's original revolutionary spirit.

"I don't know what more people expect or want from an American president," Crowley said. "He is literally fulfilling the entire job description, and so much more."

A few thousand spectators waited for Trump for hours in 90-plus degree Fahrenheit (32 degree Celsius) heat. The audience was awash in Trump paraphernalia, including "Make America Great Again" hats, shirts that said "Ultra MAGA" and a stuffed monkey with its own miniature Trump shirt.

During the speech, Trump heard what sounded like fireworks. The anniversary of his attempted assassination in Butler, Pennsylvania, was only ten days away.

"It's only fireworks, I hope," he said. "Famous last words."

Unlike a year ago, Trump was speaking from behind thick bulletproof glass.

"You always have to think positive," he said. "I didn't like that sound either."

The reminder of one of the darkest moments in recent political history did little to dampen Trump's political euphoria. He boasted about the recent U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, the declining price of eggs, the lower number of migrants crossing the southern border with Mexico and his election victories.

"We got great marks in the first term, and this is going to blow it away," Trump said. He said he likes

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calling his wife Melania “first lady” because “it reminds me that I’m president.”

Trump has occasionally mused about the fortuitous timing of serving in the White House during the country’s 250th anniversary, a chronological overlap that only became possible because he lost his initial bid for a second term — a defeat he’s never accepted.

He promised during last year’s campaign to create an epic series of festivities and convene a task force to coordinate with state and local governments. On Thursday night, he announced plans for the “Patriot Games,” sports contests featuring high school athletes from across the country “to show off the best of American skill, sportsmanship and competitive spirit.”

Trump also suggesting hosting UFC matches at the White House.

A recent Gallup poll showed the widest partisan split in patriotism in over two decades, with only about a third of Democrats saying they are proud to be American, compared with about 9 in 10 Republicans.

About 4 in 10 U.S. adults approve of Trump’s performance as president, according to a June AP-NORC poll, while about 6 in 10 disapprove.

The Trump administration’s own cost-cutting moves this year threaten to complicate the celebrations. Reduced funding led the National Endowment for the Humanities to send letters to state humanities councils across the country saying their federal grants had been terminated. Many of those councils had been working on programming to commemorate the 250th anniversary and had already dedicated some of their federal grants for events at libraries, schools and museums.

Gabrielle Lyon, executive director of Illinois Humanities and chair of the Illinois America 250 Commission, said the cuts already have curtailed some of the planned programs, including community readings of the Declaration of Independence.

“It is very hard to understand how we can protect and preserve people’s ability locally to make this mean something for them, and to celebrate what they want to celebrate, if you’re not funding the humanities councils,” Lyon said.

What’s in Trump’s big bill that passed Congress and will soon become law

By KEVIN FREKING and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans muscled President Donald Trump’s tax and spending cut bill through the House on Thursday, the final step necessary to get the bill to his desk by the GOP’s self-imposed deadline of July 4th.

At nearly 900 pages, the legislation is a sprawling collection of tax breaks, spending cuts and other Republican priorities, including new money for national defense and deportations.

Democrats united against the legislation, but were powerless to stop it as long as Republicans stayed united. The Senate passed the bill, with Vice President JD Vance casting the tiebreaking vote. The House passed an earlier iteration of the bill in May with just one vote to spare. It passed the final version 218-214.

Here’s the latest on what’s in the bill and when some of its provisions go into effect.

GOP bill includes reductions for businesses and new tax breaks

Republicans say the bill is crucial because there would be a massive tax increase after December when tax breaks from Trump’s first term expire. The legislation contains about \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts.

The existing tax rates and brackets would become permanent under the bill, solidifying the tax cuts approved in Trump’s first term.

It temporarily would add new tax deductions on tip, overtime and auto loans. There’s also a \$6,000 deduction for older adults who earn no more than \$75,000 a year, a nod to his pledge to end taxes on Social Security benefits.

It would boost the \$2,000 child tax credit to \$2,200. Millions of families at lower income levels would not get the full credit.

A cap on state and local deductions, called SALT, would quadruple to \$40,000 for five years. It’s a provision important to New York and other high tax states, though the House wanted it to last for 10 years.

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There are scores of business-related tax cuts, including allowing businesses to immediately write off 100% of the cost of equipment and research. Proponents say this will boost economic growth.

The wealthiest households would see a \$12,000 increase from the legislation, and the bill would cost the poorest people \$1,600 a year, mainly due to reductions in Medicaid and food aid, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office analysis of the House's version.

GOP bill funds the border wall, deportations and a missile shield

The bill would provide some \$350 billion for Trump's border and national security agenda, including for the U.S.-Mexico border wall and for 100,000 migrant detention facility beds, as he aims to fulfill his promise of the largest mass deportation operation in U.S. history.

Money would go for hiring 10,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, with \$10,000 signing bonuses and a surge of Border Patrol officers, as well. The goal is to deport some 1 million people per year.

To help pay for it, immigrants would face various new fees, including when seeking asylum protections.

For the Pentagon, the bill would provide billions for ship building, munitions systems, and quality of life measures for servicemen and women, as well as \$25 billion for the development of the Golden Dome missile defense system. The Defense Department would have \$1 billion for border security.

Medicaid, SNAP face deep cuts to fund bill's tax breaks and spending

To help partly offset the lost tax revenue and new spending, Republicans aim to cut back on Medicaid and food assistance for people below the poverty line.

Republicans argue they are trying to rightsize the safety net programs for the population they were initially designed to serve, mainly pregnant women, the disabled and children, and root out what they describe as waste, fraud and abuse.

The package includes new 80-hour-a-month work requirements for many adults receiving Medicaid and food stamps, including older people up to age 65. Parents of children 14 and older would have to meet the program's work requirements.

There's also a proposed new \$35 co-payment that can be charged to patients using Medicaid services.

More than 71 million people rely on Medicaid, which expanded under Obama's Affordable Care Act, and 40 million use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Most already work, according to analysts.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 11.8 million more Americans would become uninsured by 2034 if the bill became law and 3 million more would not qualify for food stamps, also known as SNAP benefits.

Republicans are looking to have states pick up some of the cost for SNAP benefits. Currently, the federal government funds all benefit costs. Under the bill, states beginning in 2028 will be required to contribute a set percentage of those costs if their payment error rate exceeds 6%. Payment errors include both underpayments and overpayments.

But the Senate bill temporarily delays the start date of that cost-sharing for states with the highest SNAP error rates. Alaska has the highest error rate in the nation at nearly 25%, according to Department of Agriculture data. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, had fought for the exception. She was a decisive vote in getting the bill through the Senate.

The 'big beautiful' bill slashes clean energy tax credits

Republicans are proposing to dramatically roll back tax breaks designed to boost clean energy projects fueled by renewable sources such as energy and wind. The tax breaks were a central component of President Joe Biden's 2022 landmark bill focused on addressing climate change and lowering health care costs.

Democratic Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden went so far as to call the GOP provisions a "death sentence for America's wind and solar industries and an inevitable hike in utility bills."

A tax break for people who buy new or used electric vehicles would expire on Sept. 30 of this year, instead of at the end of 2032 under current law.

Meanwhile, a tax credit for the production of critical materials will be expanded to include metallurgical coal used in steelmaking.

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The bill creates 'Trump Accounts' — and funds a national hero garden

A number of extra provisions reflect other GOP priorities.

The bill creates a new children's savings program, called Trump Accounts, with a potential \$1,000 deposit from the Treasury.

The Senate provided \$40 million to establish Trump's long-sought "National Garden of American Heroes."

There's a new excise tax on university endowments and a new tax on remittances, or transfers of money that people in the U.S. send abroad. The tax is equal to 1% of the transfer.

A \$200 tax on gun silencers and short-barreled rifles and shotguns was eliminated.

One provision bars for one year Medicaid payments to family planning providers that provide abortions, namely Planned Parenthood.

Another section expands the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, a hard-fought provision from GOP Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, for those impacted by nuclear development and testing.

Billions would go for the Artemis moon mission and for the exploration of Mars, while \$88 million is earmarked for a pandemic response accountability committee.

Additionally, a provision would increase the nation's debt limit, by \$5 trillion, to allow continued borrowing to pay already accrued bills.

State AI regulations cut from bill after a GOP uproar

The Senate overwhelmingly revolted against a proposal meant to deter states from regulating artificial intelligence. Republican governors across the country asked for the moratorium to be removed and the Senate voted to do so with a resounding 99-1 vote.

A provision was thrown in at the final hours that will provide \$10 billion annually to rural hospitals for five years, or \$50 billion in total. The Senate bill had originally provided \$25 billion for the program, but that number was upped to win over holdout GOP senators and a coalition of House Republicans warning that reduced Medicaid provider taxes would hurt rural hospitals.

The amended bill also stripped out a new tax on wind and solar projects that use a certain percentage of components from China.

Final price tag: GOP bill could add \$3.3 trillion to deficit

Altogether, the Congressional Budget Office projects that the bill would increase federal deficits over the next 10 years by nearly \$3.3 trillion from 2025 to 2034.

Or not, depending on how one does the math.

Senate Republicans are proposing a unique strategy of not counting the existing tax breaks as a new cost because those breaks are already "current policy." Republican senators say the Senate Budget Committee chairman has the authority to set the baseline for the preferred approach.

Under the alternative Senate GOP view, the bill would reduce deficits by almost half a trillion dollars over the coming decade, the CBO said.

Democrats say this is "magic math" that obscures the true costs of the tax breaks. Some nonpartisan groups worried about the country's fiscal trajectory are siding with Democrats in that regard. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget says Senate Republicans were employing an "accounting gimmick that would make Enron executives blush."

The House gives final approval to Trump's big tax bill in a milestone for his second-term agenda

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK, LEAH ASKARINAM and MATT BROWN Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans propelled President Donald Trump's big multitrillion-dollar tax breaks and spending cuts bill to final passage Thursday in Congress, overcoming multiple setbacks to approve his signature second-term policy package before a Fourth of July deadline.

The tight roll call, 218-214, came at a potentially high political cost, with two Republicans joining all Democrats opposed. GOP leaders worked overnight and the president himself leaned on a handful of skeptics to drop their opposition. Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York delayed voting for more than eight

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hours by seizing control of the floor with a record-breaking speech against the bill.

Trump celebrated his political victory in Iowa, where he attended the kickoff for a year of events marking the country's upcoming 250th anniversary.

"I want to thank Republican congressmen and women, because what they did is incredible," he said. The president complained that Democrats voted against the bill because "they hate Trump — but I hate them too."

Trump said he plans to sign the legislation on Friday at the White House.

The outcome delivers a milestone for the president and for his party. It was a long-shot effort to compile a lengthy list of GOP priorities into what they called his "one big beautiful bill," at nearly 900 pages. With Democrats unified in opposition, the bill will become a defining measure of Trump's return to the White House, aided by Republican control of Congress.

"You get tired of winning yet?" said House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., invoking Trump as he called the vote.

"With one big beautiful bill we are going to make this country stronger, safer and more prosperous than ever before," he said.

Republicans celebrated with a rendition of the Village People's "Y.M.C.A.," a song the president often plays at his rallies, during a ceremony afterward.

Tax breaks and safety net cuts

At its core, the package's priority is \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks enacted in 2017 during Trump's first term that would expire if Congress failed to act, along with new ones. This includes allowing workers to deduct tips and overtime pay, and a \$6,000 deduction for most older adults earning less than \$75,000 a year.

There's also a hefty investment, some \$350 billion, in national security and Trump's deportation agenda and to help develop the "Golden Dome" defensive system over the U.S.

To help offset the lost tax revenue, the package includes \$1.2 trillion in cutbacks to the Medicaid health care and food stamps, largely by imposing new work requirements, including for some parents and older people, and a major rollback of green energy tax credits.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the package will add \$3.3 trillion to the deficit over the decade and 11.8 million more people will go without health coverage.

"This was a generational opportunity to deliver the most comprehensive and consequential set of conservative reforms in modern history, and that's exactly what we're doing," said Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Texas, the House Budget Committee chairman.

Democrats united against the big 'ugly bill'

Democrats unified against the bill as a tax giveaway to the rich paid for on the backs of the working class and most vulnerable in society, what they called "trickle down cruelty."

Jeffries began the speech at 4:53 a.m. EDT and finished at 1:37 p.m. EDT, 8 hours, 44 minutes later, a record, as he argued against what he called Trump's "big ugly bill."

"We're better than this," said Jeffries, who used a leader's prerogative for unlimited debate, and read letter after letter from Americans writing about their reliance of the health care programs.

"I never thought that I'd be on the House floor saying that this is a crime scene," Jeffries said. "It's a crime scene, going after the health, and the safety, and the well-being of the American people."

And as Democrats, he said, "We want no part of it."

Tensions ran high. As fellow Democrats chanted Jeffries' name, a top Republican, Rep. Jason Smith of Missouri, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, called his speech "a bunch of hogwash."

Hauling the package through the Congress has been difficult from the start. Republicans have struggled mightily with the bill nearly every step of the way, quarreling in the House and Senate, and often succeeding only by the narrowest of margins: just one vote.

The Senate passed the package days earlier with Vice President JD Vance breaking the tie vote. The slim majority in the House left Republicans little room for defections.

"It wasn't beautiful enough for me to vote for it," said Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky. Also voting no was

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Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania, who said he was concerned about cuts to Medicaid.

Once Johnson gave the tally, Republicans cheered "USA!" and flashed Trump-style thumbs-up to the cameras.

Political costs of saying no

Despite their discomfort with various aspects of the sprawling package, in some ways it became too big to fail — in part because Republicans found it difficult to buck Trump.

As Wednesday's stalled floor action dragged overnight, Trump railed against the delays.

"What are the Republicans waiting for???" the president said in a midnight-hour post.

Johnson relied heavily on White House Cabinet secretaries, lawyers and others to satisfy skeptical GOP holdouts. Moderate Republicans worried about the severity of cuts while conservatives pressed for steeper reductions. Lawmakers said they were being told the administration could provide executive actions, projects or other provisions in their districts back home.

The alternative was clear. Republicans who staked out opposition to the bill, including Massie of Kentucky and Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, were being warned by Trump's well-funded political operation. Tillis soon after announced he would not seek reelection.

Rollback of past presidential agendas

In many ways, the package is a repudiation of the agendas of the last two Democratic presidents, a chiseling away at the Medicaid expansion from Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, and a pullback of Joe Biden's climate change strategies in the Inflation Reduction Act.

Democrats have described the bill in dire terms, warning that cuts to Medicaid, which some 80 million Americans rely on, would result in lives lost. Food stamps that help feed more than 40 million people would "rip food from the mouths of hungry children, hungry veterans and hungry seniors," Jeffries said.

Republicans say the tax breaks will prevent a tax hike on households and grow the economy. They maintain they are trying to rightsize the safety net programs for the population they were initially designed to serve, mainly pregnant women, the disabled and children, and root out what they describe as waste, fraud and abuse.

The Tax Policy Center, which provides nonpartisan analysis of tax and budget policy, projected the bill would result next year in a \$150 tax break for the lowest quintile of Americans, a \$1,750 tax cut for the middle quintile and a \$10,950 tax cut for the top quintile. That's compared with what they would face if the 2017 tax cuts expired.

Mexican boxer Julio César Chávez Jr. arrested by ICE for deportation, federal officials say

By JAIMIE DING and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Famed Mexican boxer Julio César Chávez Jr. has been arrested for overstaying his visa and lying on a green card application and will be deported to Mexico, where he faces organized crime charges, U.S. federal officials said Thursday.

The arrest came only days after the former middleweight champion lost a match against influencer-turned-boxer Jake Paul in Anaheim, California. The Department of Homeland Security said officials determined Chávez should be arrested on June 27, a day before the fight. It was unclear why they waited to act for days after the high-profile event.

The boxer was riding a scooter when agents detained him.

The 39-year-old boxer, according to his attorney Michael Goldstein, was picked up Wednesday by a large number of federal agents while he was riding a scooter in front of a home where he resides in the upscale Los Angeles neighborhood of Studio City near Hollywood.

"The current allegations are outrageous and simply another headline to terrorize the community," Goldstein said.

Many people across Southern California are on edge as immigration arrests have ramped up, prompting

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protests and the federal deployment of National Guard troops and U.S. Marines to downtown Los Angeles.

Goldstein did not know where Chávez was being detained as of Thursday morning, but said he and his client were due in court Monday in connection with prior gun possession charges.

Chávez's family issued a statement Thursday afternoon in support of him, the Los Angeles Times reported.

"We have full confidence in his innocence," the statement said. "We firmly believe that the proper course is to allow the competent authorities to carry out their work without external pressure or speculation."

Before his recent bout, Chavez fought once since 2021

Before his bout with Paul on Saturday, Chávez had fought just once since 2021, having fallen to innumerable lows during a lengthy boxing career conducted in the shadow of his father, Julio César Chávez, one of the most beloved athletes in Mexican history and a member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame who won championships in several weight classes.

The son, who has battled drug addiction for much of his career, has been arrested repeatedly. In 2012, he was convicted of drunk driving in Los Angeles and sentenced to 13 days in jail and in January 2024 he was arrested on gun charges. Police said he possessed two AR-style ghost rifles. He was later freed on a \$50,000 bond and on condition he went to a residential drug treatment facility. The case is still pending, with Chávez reporting his progress regularly.

He split his time between both countries. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers detained Chávez for overstaying a tourist visa that he entered the U.S. with in August 2023 and expired in February 2024, the Department of Homeland Security said.

The agency also said Chávez submitted multiple fraudulent statements when he applied for permanent residency on April 2, 2024, based on his marriage to a U.S. citizen, Frida Muñoz. She is the mother of a granddaughter of imprisoned Sinaloa cartel kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

U.S. officials said he is believed to be an affiliate of the powerful Sinaloa Cartel that is blamed for a significant portion of Mexico's drug violence.

Federal officials called Chavez a public safety threat

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services flagged Immigration and Customs Enforcement about Chávez on Dec. 17, saying he "is an egregious public safety threat," and yet he was allowed back into the country without a visa on Jan. 4 under the Biden administration, the agency said.

Mexico's Attorney General's Office said that an arrest warrant against "Julio "C" was issued in Mexico in March 2023 in an investigation of organized crime and arms trafficking allegations and that Mexico on Thursday initiated extradition proceedings.

A federal agent who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter confirmed to The Associated Press that "Julio C" is Chávez. The agent declined to explain why Chávez was not arrested earlier in Mexico despite going back and forth between the two countries multiple times.

In Mexico, mixed feelings followed the arrest

In Mexico, word of U.S. agents arresting a well-known athlete prompted mixed feelings.

Martín Sandoval Peñaloza, a newspaper seller in Mexico City, said he believes President Donald Trump wanted to make him an example.

"I think that the U.S. government - in this case, Trump - is up to something," he said, adding that it was "to attract media attention."

Oscar Tienda, a Mexico City storekeeper, said he wasn't surprised given the boxer's troubles.

"I think it was predictable because he has had a lifetime of drug use," he said.

Despite widely being criticized for his intermittent dedication to the sport, Chávez still rose to its heights. He won the WBC middleweight title in 2011 and defended it three times. Chávez shared the ring with generational greats Canelo Álvarez and Sergio Martínez, losing to both.

Chávez claimed to be clean for the Paul fight. He looked in his best shape in years while preparing for the match.

Chávez said in an interview with the Los Angeles Times ahead of his fight with Paul that he and his

trainers were shaken by the immigration arrests.

"There are a lot of good people, and you're giving the community an example of violence," Chávez said. "After everything that's happened, I wouldn't want to be deported."

Strikes kill 94 Palestinians in Gaza, including 45 people waiting for aid, authorities say

By MELANIE LIDMAN and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli airstrikes and shootings killed 94 Palestinians in Gaza late Wednesday and Thursday, including 45 who were attempting to get much-needed humanitarian aid, hospitals and the Health Ministry said Thursday.

Families wept over the bodies from a strike that hit a tent camp during the night as displaced people slept in southern Gaza. At least 13 members of a single family were killed, including at least six children under 12.

"My children, my children ... my beloved," wailed Intisar Abu Assi, sobbing over the bodies of her son and daughters and their young children. Another woman kissed the forehead of a dead little girl wrapped in a blanket on the floor of the morgue at Nasser Hospital in the city of Khan Younis.

In central Gaza, a boy stroked the face of his dead sister, 6-year-old Heba Abu Etiwi, in a morgue at Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Hospital. The girl and another of her brothers were among eight people killed when a strike Wednesday evening hit near a stand selling falafel.

A separate strike on a school in Gaza City sheltering displaced people also killed 15 people.

The toll from strikes emerged as more Palestinians were killed in near-daily shootings while trying to obtain aid.

Five were killed on the roads leading to food-distribution sites run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, the newly created, secretive American organization backed by Israel to feed the Gaza Strip's population. Another 40 were killed while waiting for trucks carrying U.N. aid in several locations around Gaza, according to hospital officials.

Witnesses have said Israeli troops regularly unleash barrages on crowds of Palestinians trying to reach the GHF sites. Witnesses have also reported troops opening fire when crowds of people mass near military-run zones of Gaza, waiting for U.N. trucks to enter.

More than 500 Palestinians have been killed and hundreds more wounded since the food-distribution sites opened in May.

The Israeli military, whose forces are deployed on the roads leading to the sites, says it fires warning shots to control crowds or at Palestinians who approach its troops. Armed U.S. contractors guard the sites.

Amnesty says Israel using starvation as a weapon

Amnesty International on Thursday issued a report saying Israel was continuing to "use starvation of civilians as a weapon of war ... as part of its ongoing genocide."

It said the GHF distribution system appeared intended only to "placate international concerns" even as Israel allows in only a small amount of food for the U.N. to distribute separately.

"By maintaining a deadly, dehumanizing and ineffective militarized 'aid' scheme, Israeli authorities have turned aid-seeking into a booby trap for desperate starved Palestinians," it said.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry denounced the Amnesty report, saying the organization has "joined forces with Hamas and fully adopted all of its propaganda lies."

Israel has rejected allegations it is committing genocide in Gaza in the war with Hamas, and it is challenging the accusation filed by South Africa at the International Court of Justice.

Amnesty accused Israel last year of committing genocide, saying it has sought to deliberately destroy Palestinians by mounting deadly attacks, demolishing vital infrastructure and preventing the delivery of food, medicine and other aid.

Israel intends for GHF to replace the U.N. humanitarian network, which has delivered massive amounts

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of aid to Palestinians throughout the war. Israel contends that Hamas siphons off large amounts of aid from that system, a claim that the U.N. and aid groups deny. They have rejected GHF, saying it cannot deliver enough aid, endangers Palestinians and is being used by Israel to carry out its war goals.

Israel cut off all food and other supplies to Gaza for more 2 ½ months this year, driving its population toward famine, in what it said was a move to push Hamas to make concessions in negotiations and release hostages.

It eased the blockade in March. The Foreign Ministry and COGAT, the Israeli defense body in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, said Wednesday that Israel has facilitated the entry of over 3,000 aid trucks into the Gaza Strip since May 19.

That amounts to around 28 trucks a day, a fraction of the hundreds of trucks a day aid workers say are needed.

In a statement Tuesday, GHF rejected criticism of its operations and said it has delivered the equivalent of more than 52 million meals. GHF distributes boxes of food staples such as lentils and rice, saying one box holds the equivalent of more than 50 meals.

Witnesses have reported scenes of chaos at GHF sites as desperate crowds race to pick up food boxes, with some taking more than one while many others go empty-handed. Much of the food is sold in markets at astronomical prices.

Work continues on elusive ceasefire

The Gaza Health Ministry said the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza has passed 57,000 since the war began on Oct. 7, 2023. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its death count but says more than half of the dead are women and children.

The deaths come as Israel and Hamas inch closer to a possible ceasefire that would end the 21-month war.

Trump said Tuesday that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and urged Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen. Hamas' response emphasized its demand that the truce lead to an end to the war.

The Israeli military blames Hamas for the civilian casualties because it operates from populated areas. The military said it targeted Hamas militants and rocket launchers in northern Gaza that fired toward Israel on Wednesday.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking roughly 250 hostages.

The war has left the coastal Palestinian territory in ruins, with much of the urban landscape flattened in the fighting. More than 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million population has been displaced, often multiple times.

Michael Madsen, 'Reservoir Dogs' and 'Kill Bill' star, dies at 67

By ANDREW DALTON and ITZEL LUNA Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Michael Madsen, the actor best known for his coolly menacing, steely-eyed, often sadistic characters in the films of Quentin Tarantino including "Reservoir Dogs" and "Kill Bill: Vol. 2," has died.

Madsen was found unresponsive in his home in Malibu, California, on Thursday morning and pronounced dead, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Watch Commander Christopher Jauregui said. He is believed to have died of natural causes and authorities do not suspect any foul play was involved. Madsen's manager Ron Smith said cardiac arrest was the apparent cause. He was 67.

Madsen's career spanned more than 300 credits stretching back to the early 1980s, many in low-budget and independent films. He often played low-level thugs, gangsters and shady cops in small roles. Tarantino would use that identity, but make him a main character.

His torture of a captured police officer in Tarantino's 1992 directorial debut "Reservoir Dogs," in which Madsen's black-suited bank robber Vic "Mr. Blonde" Vega severs the man's ear while dancing to Stealers Wheel's "Stuck in the Middle with You" was an early career-defining moment for both director and actor.

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Madsen told the Associated Press in 2012 that he hated having to do the scene, especially after the actor playing the officer, Kirk Baltz, ad-libbed a line where he begged for his life because he had children.

"I just said, 'Oh my God,' I couldn't do it, I didn't want to do it," Madsen said. "Acting is such a humiliating profession."

He would become a Tarantino regular. He had a small role as the cowboy-hatted desert dweller Budd, a member of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad, in 2003's "Kill Bill: Vol. 1," then a starring role the following year in the sequel, in which he battles with Uma Thurman's protagonist The Bride and buries her alive.

Madsen also appeared in Tarantino's "The Hateful Eight" and "Once Upon a Time... In Hollywood." He was an alternate choice to play the hit man role that revived John Travolta's career in 1994's "Pulp Fiction." The character, Vincent Vega, is the brother of Madsen's "Reservoir Dogs" robber in Tarantino's cinematic universe.

His sister, Oscar-nominated "Sideways" actor Virginia Madsen, was among those paying him tribute on Thursday.

"He was thunder and velvet. Mischief wrapped in tenderness. A poet disguised as an outlaw. A father, a son, a brother—etched in contradiction, tempered by love that left its mark," she said in a statement. "I'll miss our inside jokes, the sudden laughter, the sound of him. I'll miss the boy he was before the legend. I miss my big brother."

His "Hateful Eight" co-star and fellow Tarantino favorite Walton Goggins celebrated him on Instagram. "Michael Madsen... this man... this artist... this poet... this rascal..." Goggins wrote. "Aura like no one else. Ain't enough words so I'll just say this.... I love you buddy. A H8TER forever."

James Woods, Madsen's co-star in two films, wrote on X, "I was always touched by his sweet nature and generosity, the absolute opposite of the 'tough guys' he portrayed so brilliantly."

Madsen was born in Chicago to a family of three children.

He performed on stage with the city's Steppenwolf Theatre Company alongside actors including John Malkovich.

During a handprint ceremony at the TCL Chinese Theatre in November 2020, Madsen reflected on his first visit to Hollywood in the early 1980s.

"I got out and I walked around and I looked and I wondered if there were someday some way that that was going to be a part of me. And I didn't know because I didn't know what I was going to do at that point with myself," he said. "I could have been a bricklayer. I could have been an architect. I could have been a garbage man. I could have been nothing. But I got lucky. I got lucky as an actor."

His first film role of any significance was in the 1983 hacker thriller "WarGames" with Matthew Broderick. The following year he played pro baseball player Bump Bailey alongside Robert Redford in "The Natural."

He spent much of the rest of the 1980s doing one-off guest roles on television dramas including "Miami Vice" and "Quantum Leap."

1991 would bring a career boost with roles in "The Doors," where he played a buddy of Val Kilmer's Jim Morrison, and "Thelma and Louise" where he played the boyfriend of Susan Sarandon's Louise.

Then would come "Reservoir Dogs."

In 1995, he played a black ops mercenary in the sci-fi thriller "Species" and in 1997 he was third billed after Al Pacino and Johnny Depp as a member of a crew of gangsters in "Donnie Brasco."

He occasionally played against type. In the 1993 family orca adventure "Free Willy" he was the foster father to the orphan protagonist.

Madsen would return to smaller roles but worked constantly in the final two decades of his career.

Madsen had six children. He had struggled in recent years after the 2022 death of one of his sons, Hudson. "Losing a child is the hardest and most painful experience that can happen in this world," Madsen said in an Instagram post last year.

He said the loss put a strain on his marriage to third wife, DeAnna Madsen. He was arrested on suspicion of domestic battery last year, but was not charged. He filed for divorce, but asked that the filing be dismissed just weeks later.

He had previously been arrested twice on suspicion of DUI, most recently in 2019, when he pleaded no

contest to a misdemeanor.

"In the last two years Michael Madsen has been doing some incredible work with independent film including upcoming feature films 'Resurrection Road,' 'Concessions and 'Cookbook for Southern Housewives,' and was really looking forward to this next chapter in his life," his managers Smith and Susan Ferris and publicist Liz Rodriguez said in a statement. "Michael was also preparing to release a new book called 'Tears For My Father: Outlaw Thoughts and Poems' currently being edited."

The memoir includes a foreword from Tarantino.

Supreme Court clears way for deportation to South Sudan of several immigrants with no ties there

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday cleared the way for the deportation of several immigrants who were put on a flight in May bound for South Sudan, a war-ravaged country where they have no ties.

The decision comes after the court's conservative majority found that immigration officials can quickly deport people to third countries. The majority halted an order that had allowed immigrants to challenge any removals to countries outside their homeland where they could be in danger.

The court's latest decision makes clear that the South Sudan flight can complete the trip, weeks after it was detoured to a naval base in Djibouti. There, the migrants who had previously been convicted of serious crimes were held in a converted shipping container.

It reverses findings from federal Judge Brian Murphy in Massachusetts, who said his order on those migrants still stands even after the high court lifted his broader decision.

Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said federal authorities would complete the trip to South Sudan by the next day.

The Supreme Court majority wrote that their decision on June 23 completely halted Murphy's ruling and also rendered his decision on the South Sudan flight "unenforceable." The court did not fully detail its legal reasoning on the underlying case, as is common on its emergency docket.

Two liberal justices, Sonia Sotomayor and Ketanji Brown Jackson, dissented, saying the ruling gives the government special treatment. "Other litigants must follow the rules, but the administration has the Supreme Court on speed dial," Sotomayor wrote. Justice Elena Kagan wrote that while she disagreed with the original order, it does countermand Murphy's findings on the South Sudan flight.

The eight migrants could face "imprisonment, torture and even death" in South Sudan, where escalating political tensions have threatened to devolve into another civil war.

"We know they'll face perilous conditions, and potentially immediate detention, upon arrival," Trina Real-muto, executive director of the National Immigration Litigation Alliance, said Thursday.

The push comes amid a sweeping immigration crackdown by Trump's Republican administration, which has pledged to deport millions of people who are living in the United States illegally. The Trump administration has called Murphy's finding "a lawless act of defiance."

McLaughlin said the Supreme Court's intervention is "a win for the rule of law, safety and security of the American people." Attorney General Pam Bondi called Murphy a "rogue district court judge" and said the justices had rebuked him.

Authorities have reached agreements with other countries to house immigrants if authorities can't quickly send them back to their homelands. The eight men sent to South Sudan in May had been convicted of crimes in the U.S. and had final orders of removal, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials have said.

Murphy, who was nominated by Democratic President Joe Biden, didn't prohibit deportations to third countries. But he found migrants must have a real chance to argue they could be in danger of torture if sent to another country, even if they've already exhausted their legal appeals.

The men and their guards have faced rough conditions on the naval base in Djibouti, where authorities detoured the flight after Murphy found the administration had violated his order by failing to allow them

a chance to challenge the removal. They have since said they're afraid of being sent to South Sudan, Realmuto said.

Trump says US has given Ukraine too many weapons in first public comments on pause in shipments

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump complained Thursday that the United States provided too many weapons to Ukraine under the previous administration, his first public comments on the pause in some shipments as Russia escalates its latest offensive.

Speaking to reporters before boarding Air Force One for a flight to Iowa, Trump said former President Joe Biden “emptied out our whole country giving them weapons, and we have to make sure that we have enough for ourselves.”

Air defense missiles, precision-guided artillery and other weapons are among those being withheld from Ukraine. The country suffered a new barrage overnight, with warnings of ballistic missiles followed by explosions in Kyiv. The sound of machine gun fire and drone engines could be heard across the capital.

Trump, who also spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday, suggested he wasn't completely cutting off American assistance to Ukraine.

“We've given so many weapons,” he said, adding that “we are working with them and trying to help them.”

Trump said he had a “pretty long call” with Putin that “didn't make any progress” in resolving the war, which the Republican president had promised to swiftly bring to a conclusion.

“I'm not happy about that,” he said.

The Kremlin described the conversation as “frank and constructive” — the sixth publicly disclosed chat between the two leaders since Trump returned to the White House.

While discussing the situation around Iran and in the broader Middle East, Putin emphasized the need to resolve all differences “exclusively by political and diplomatic means,” said Yuri Ushakov, his foreign affairs adviser.

The leaders agreed that Russian and U.S. officials will maintain contact on the issue, he added.

The United States struck three sites in Iran on June 22, inserting itself into Israel's war aimed at destroying Tehran's nuclear program.

On the conflict in Ukraine, Ushakov said Trump emphasized his push for a quick halt to the fighting, and Putin voiced Moscow's readiness to pursue talks with Kyiv, noting the previous rounds in Turkey yielded humanitarian results.

At the same time, the Russian leader emphasized that Moscow will seek to achieve its goals in Ukraine and remove the “root causes” of the conflict, Ushakov said.

“Russia will not back down from these goals,” Ushakov told reporters after the call.

Putin has argued he sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022 to fend off a threat to Russia posed by Ukraine's push to join NATO and to protect Russian speakers in Ukraine — arguments rejected by Kyiv and its allies. He insisted that any prospective peace deal must see Ukraine abandon its NATO bid and recognize Russia's territorial gains.

Ushakov said a suspension of some U.S. weapons shipments to Ukraine wasn't discussed in the Trump-Putin call.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in Denmark after meeting with major European Union backers that he may talk to Trump in the coming days about the suspension.

“I hope that maybe tomorrow, or close days, these days, I will speak about it with President Trump,” he said.

The previous publicly known call between Trump and Putin came June 14, a day after Israel attacked Iran.

The resumed contact between Trump and Putin appeared to reflect their interest in mending U.S.-Russian ties that have plummeted to their lowest point since the Cold War.

Ushakov said the leaders discussed developments in Syria and expressed interest in pursuing bilateral

projects in the energy sector and space exploration, during what he described as “frank, businesslike and concrete conversation.”

The Kremlin adviser added that Putin even suggested that the U.S. and Russia could exchange movies promoting “traditional values shared by us and the Trump administration.”

On Tuesday, Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron held their first direct telephone call in almost three years.

Guardians’ Luis Ortiz subject of MLB gambling investigation, placed on leave, AP sources say

By JOE REEDY AP Sports Writer

Cleveland Guardians pitcher Luis Ortiz is the subject of a Major League Baseball gambling investigation and was placed on non-disciplinary leave Thursday, two people with knowledge of the investigation told The Associated Press.

The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity due to the nature of the investigation.

The investigation is related to in-game prop bets on two pitches thrown by Ortiz that received higher activity than usual during his starts at Seattle on June 15 and his recent outing against St. Louis on June 27. The gambling activity on the pitches was flagged by a betting-integrity firm and forwarded to MLB.

ESPN reported the firm IC360 recently also sent an alert to sportsbook operators regarding Ortiz.

The Athletic was the first to report that Ortiz’s suspension was related to gambling.

MLB said Ortiz’s paid leave is through the end of the All-Star break, when players return to their teams July 17 and games resume the following day. It can be extended if the investigation remains ongoing.

Chris Antonetti, Cleveland’s president of baseball operations, said before Thursday night’s game at the Chicago Cubs that the team can continue to have contact with Ortiz, but he can’t enter any of the Guardians’ facilities. Ortiz returned to Cleveland on Wednesday night.

Ortiz was slated to be the starting pitcher for Thursday night’s series finale. Instead, left-hander Joey Cantillo was recalled from Triple-A Columbus. Cantillo is 1-0 with one save and a 3.81 ERA in 21 appearances this season.

“We learned very little last night, but knew we needed to get someone here today to start today’s game, and that really was our focus,” Antonetti said. “A lot has come out today, and that’s far more information than we have.”

“Our focus is we’ll let the investigative process play out. To the extent Major League Baseball or anyone needs our support in that, we will obviously cooperate. But beyond that, there’s really not much we can do.”

Manager Stephen Vogt said he and Antonetti addressed the team about Ortiz’s situation and tried to answer questions the best they could.

It is another setback for a Guardians squad that has dropped a season-high six straight games and is 9-18 since May 1.

“Honestly, when I got the news yesterday I didn’t know how to feel,” Vogt said. “There’s so much unknowns with this, but you know what? Every team goes through adversity, maybe different kinds, but this is a resilient group. I’ve been through situations similar to this before in my career as a player, and what would I have wanted to hear? How would I want the manager to have reacted, and that’s what I’m trying to do.”

The 26-year old Ortiz is in his first season with Cleveland after he was acquired in a trade with Pittsburgh last December. The right-hander is 4-9 with a 4.36 ERA and 96 strikeouts in 16 starts this season. The nine losses are tied for the most in the American League.

In four big-league seasons, Ortiz is 16-22 with a 4.05 ERA and one save.

The investigation into Ortiz comes a little more than a year after MLB suspended five players for gambling, including a lifetime ban for San Diego Padres infielder Tucupita Marcano. MLB said Marcano placed 387 baseball bets totaling more than \$150,000 with a legal sportsbook in 2022 and 2023.

Athletics pitcher Michael Kelly and three minor leaguers — San Diego pitcher Jay Groome, Arizona pitcher

and Philadelphia infielder José Rodríguez — received one-year suspensions.

Umpire Pat Hoberg was fired by Major League Baseball in February for sharing his legal sports gambling accounts with a friend who bet on baseball games and for intentionally deleting electronic messages pertinent to the league's investigation.

Guilty plea by Kohberger doesn't end quest for more details in Idaho college student slayings

By ED WHITE Associated Press

With a series of "yes" replies to a judge, a man accused of killing four Idaho college students pleaded guilty in exchange for life in prison and no death penalty. But left untold so far: What motivated Bryan Kohberger to commit the middle-of-the-night knife attacks and why those victims?

More details could emerge when Kohberger returns to court for his sentence on July 23. Some answers could also be in the hundreds of documents filed by prosecutors and defense lawyers that have been under seal and out of public view starting in 2022.

"It is important that a full record be available, as if the matter and the evidence was exposed at trial, if we're going to have a complete understanding of what went on," said David Leroy, former Idaho attorney general.

Kohberger's hearing in a Boise, Idaho, courtroom was finished in less than an hour Wednesday. A trial where loads of details would have been revealed was expected to have lasted at least three months.

"We deserve to know when the beginning of the end was," the family of victim Kaylee Goncalves said in a Facebook post.

Horror near the University of Idaho

Goncalves, Ethan Chapin, Xana Kernodle and Madison Mogen were stabbed multiple times after 4 a.m. at a rental home in Moscow, Idaho, on Nov. 13, 2022.

Kohberger first killed Mogen and Goncalves and then killed Kernodle, who was still awake at the time, and Chapin, who was asleep, said Bill Thompson, the Latah County prosecutor. Two other people in the house were not harmed.

The 30-year-old killer was pursuing an advanced degree in the criminology program at Washington State University in Pullman, 10 miles (16 kilometers) away. Thompson said there was no evidence that Kohberger had previous contact with the victims, but he noted that phone data showed him in the neighborhood nearly two dozen times.

A knife sheath left at the crime scene turned out to be crucial evidence for investigators. A search of trash at Kohberger's parents' home in Pennsylvania was critical, too: It produced a Q-tip that was used to match his genetic material on the sheath.

No sunshine on many court filings

Since 2022, there have been more than 200 orders to seal court filings in the Kohberger case, typically at the request of lawyers, including at least 103 this year alone, The Associated Press found.

Those documents included trial briefs filed by each side, witness lists, jury instructions, evidence exhibits and the defense team's "alternate perpetrators" of the murders.

Idaho court rules allow a judge to seal or redact records to "preserve the right to a fair trial."

On a separate issue, Wendy Olson, an attorney for news organizations, including the AP, asked a judge to lift a gag order that has greatly restricted what the prosecutor and defense lawyers can say to reporters.

"There is no need to preserve Mr. Kohberger's 'right to a fair trial' because he has already admitted guilt," Olson said in a court filing.

Leroy, the former attorney general, said he believes additional information about the crimes would be important to the victims' families, law enforcement, experts and the general public.

"I'm very interested in knowing, to the extent we can, what combination of the attempt to commit the perfect crime or attempt to deal with his demons drove Mr. Kohberger to these acts," Leroy said.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs' lawyers say he is a changed man. Will that spare him from more time behind bars?

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In rejecting Sean "Diddy" Combs' release on bail, a federal judge confronted the hip-hop impresario with a disturbing aspect of his criminal case that his lawyers couldn't deny: his history of violence.

Combs' defense lawyers claimed he is a changed man. But Judge Arun Subramanian on Wednesday let the Bad Boy Records founder know that his hopes for freedom soon are slim — even after the jury acquitted him on racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking charges that could have put him in prison for life.

Subramanian's words signaled how he may approach sentencing Combs for his convictions on two lesser prostitution-related charges, which each carry a maximum punishment of 10 years in prison.

The judge, citing a now-infamous video of Combs beating a former girlfriend and photographs showing injuries to another ex-girlfriend, made clear that he plans to hold Combs accountable for the years of violence and bullying behavior that were exposed at his eight-week trial.

Combs' punishment is Subramanian's decision alone, and the judge will have wide latitude in determining a sentence. While judges often adhere to the federal judiciary's formulaic guidelines meant to prevent disparity in sentences for the same crimes, they are not mandatory.

Combs' lawyers want less than the 21 to 27 months in prison that they believe the sentencing guidelines recommend. Prosecutors contend that the guidelines, when properly calculated to include Combs' crimes and violent history, call for at least four to five years in prison.

After tentatively setting Combs' sentencing for October, the judge said he is open to a defense request that it happen as soon as possible, with further discussions expected at a conference Tuesday.

Combs' violent past keeps him locked up for now

Combs, his family and his defense team were overjoyed by the verdict, some of them tearing up at the result. Combs pumped his fist in celebration and mouthed "thank you" to jurors. He hugged his lawyers and, after the jury exited, fell to his knees in prayer.

But, by the end of the day, Combs was deflated — his dream of going home after more than nine months in jail thwarted by a judge throwing his own lawyers' words back in their faces.

"We own the domestic violence. We own it," Subramanian said, reading from a transcript of Combs lawyer Marc Agnifilo's closing argument to the jury last week. "If he was charged with domestic violence, we wouldn't all be here having a trial, because he would have pled guilty, because he did that."

The judge noted the jury had seen a video of Combs viciously attacking then-girlfriend Casandra "Cassie" Ventura in a Los Angeles hotel in March 2016.

He also noted that another former Combs' girlfriend — a woman who testified under the pseudonym "Jane" — was left with visible evidence of bruises and injuries after Combs hit her repeatedly in June 2024. That was a few months after federal agents raided two of his homes and "when he should have known that he needed to stay clean."

The judge said that the beating, which Jane said happened before Combs forced her to have a sexual encounter with a male sex worker, was part of the prostitution-related offenses — violations of the federal Mann Act — that resulted in a conviction.

"This highlights a disregard for the rule of law and the propensity for violence," he said.

Combs is 'working on himself,' lawyer says

Agnifilo, who had asked the judge to release Combs on a \$1 million bond, insisted to Subramanian that Combs had changed dramatically in the last year. As he pleaded with the judge, Combs sat by his side and scribbled notes on small pieces of paper, occasionally handing them to the lawyer.

The attorney said Jane had written a supportive note to get Combs into a domestic violence intervention program. At sentencing, he said, the defense plans to have someone from the program tell the judge how Combs did.

"He is a man who's in the process of working on himself," the lawyer said. "He's been a model prisoner."

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Agnifilo said Combs had "been given his life back" by the jury and "would be nothing short of a fool" to do anything to spoil that.

The prospect of a life sentence, the maximum if Combs were convicted of racketeering or sex trafficking, prompted "all sorts of the darkest conversations one can imagine about what your life could have been and what your life became," Agnifilo said.

But Subramanian was unmoved by what Agnifilo called his "heart strings" argument.

"Having conceded the defendant's propensity for violence in this way, it is impossible for the defendant to demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that he poses no danger to any other person or the community," the judge said.

Prosecutors also want violence factored into sentencing

Agnifilo indicated the defense will argue at sentencing that Combs' violent acts are not part of the charges for which he was convicted and shouldn't factor into his punishment.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Maurene Comey made it clear that prosecutors will argue the opposite.

Combs is "an extremely violent man with an extraordinarily dangerous temper," Comey told the judge Wednesday. He "has shown no remorse and no regret for his violence toward multiple victims."

Subramanian noted that Combs will be credited for the time he has already served.

But by rejecting bail, the judge indicated that he will likely reject a defense request for Combs to be freed in the next year.

Witnesses implore judge to keep Combs locked up

Deonte Nash, a former stylist for Combs and Cassie who reluctantly testified during the trial, told the judge in a letter that bail would "send a dangerous message: that wealth and influence can shield someone indefinitely from accountability."

Cassie, through her lawyer, also encouraged Subramanian to keep Combs in jail.

"Ms. Ventura believes that Mr. Combs is likely to pose a danger to the victims who testified in this case, including herself, as well as to the community," Cassie's lawyer, Douglas Wigdor, wrote.

Organization denies AP report that US contractors at its Gaza food distribution sites used live ammo

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, an Israeli-backed American organization running a new aid program in Gaza, on Thursday denied a report by The Associated Press that American contractors guarding the foundation's aid sites inside Gaza were using live ammunition and stun grenades as hungry Palestinians scrambled for food.

AP's story, released Wednesday, is based on accounts from two U.S. contractors who spoke anonymously because they were revealing internal operations of their employer. They said they were coming forward because they were disturbed by what they considered irresponsible and dangerous practices. It draws also on text messages, internal reports and videos filmed by one of the contractors.

The GHF said it launched an "immediate investigation" when it was first contacted by the AP for comment.

"Based on time-stamped video footage and sworn witness statements, we have concluded that the claims in the AP's story are categorically false," they wrote. "At no point were civilians under fire at a GHF distribution site," the GHF wrote.

GHF, Israeli military disagree

In its statement Thursday, GHF said the fire heard in videos obtained by The AP came from Israel's military, located "outside the immediate vicinity" of the aid sites themselves. It offered no evidence.

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an army spokesman, told the AP Thursday that the army is "not within the sites" and "not in the immediate proximity to the sites."

GHF said the gunfire in the videos obtained by the AP "was not directed at individuals, and no one was shot or injured." The AP's initial report included photos taken by the contractor showing a woman lying on

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a donkey cart after the contractor said she was hit in the head with a stun grenade, a Palestinian crying after the contractor said he was tear gassed and videos where the sound of live ammunition can be heard.

Men dressed in grey — people whom the contractor who filmed the video identified as his colleagues — can be seen lobbing multiple stun grenades toward crowds of Palestinians squeezed into a narrow, fenced-in lane leading to one of the sites. The stun grenades flash as they land, and Palestinians are engulfed in thick clouds. The contractors said they deployed pepper spray regularly.

The contractors also told the AP that Israel's military was not stationed at the sites or in their immediate vicinity.

The GHF called the AP's decision not to share the videos filmed by the contractor with them ahead of publication "troubling." It claimed that the "primary source" in the story was a "disgruntled former contractor who was terminated for misconduct weeks before this article was published."

AP decided not to share videos before publication

The AP reached out to the GHF, Safe Reach Solutions, the company subcontracted to handle logistics for GHF, and UG Solutions, the company that hired the security contractors, a week before publication.

The AP described the videos in detail in an email to UG but decided not to share the videos to protect sources' safety during the lead-up to publication. The AP thoroughly vetted both contractors who provided testimony and verified the videos using geolocation, confirming they were filmed at the aid sites, and sought audio analysis from forensic experts who determined the gunfire came from within 50-60 meters in most videos and within 115 meters in one.

The AP has asked to visit the GHF sites numerous times and had not been granted access. Journalists have been unable to visit the GHF sites, located in Israeli military-controlled zones.

The GHF also said in its statement that it had already removed one contractor seen "shouting" in a video published by the AP.

In the case of one video, the contractor who filmed it said he witnessed two other contractors firing in the direction of Palestinians leaving the site after collecting their food. He said the contractors were egging each other on.

In the video, English-speaking men say "I think you hit one," and "Hell yeah, boy!" after a burst of gunfire sounds, but who is shooting and what is being shot at is obscured. The contractor filming said he watched a man amid a group of Palestinians leaving the site drop to the ground, in the same direction of the bullets being fired.

The contractor who filmed the video says he doesn't know whether anyone was hit or injured in that instance. GHF did not address that account in its statement Thursday but said "no one was shot or injured."

Hakeem Jeffries took his 'sweet time' holding the floor to delay Trump's tax bill

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — There's no filibuster in the House, but Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries essentially conducted one anyway.

Jeffries held the House floor for more than eight hours Thursday, taking his "sweet time" with a marathon floor speech that delayed passage of Republicans' massive tax and spending cuts legislation and gave his minority party a lengthy spotlight to excoriate what he called an "immoral" bill.

As Democratic leader, Jeffries can speak for as long as he wants during debate on legislation — hence its nickname on Capitol Hill, the "magic minute," that lasts as long as leaders are speaking.

He began the speech at 4:53 a.m. EDT and finished at 1:37 p.m. EDT, 8 hours, 44 minutes later, breaking the record set by then-Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California in 2021, when he was the GOP leader. McCarthy spoke for 8 hours, 32 minutes when he angrily criticized Democrats' "Build Back Better" legislation, breaking a record set by Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., when she spoke about immigration for 8 hours, 7 minutes in 2018.

"I feel an obligation, Mr. Speaker, to stand on this House floor and take my sweet time," Jeffries said

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as he opened.

The speech pushed a final vote on Republican President Donald Trump's tax bill, initially expected in the early morning, into the daylight hours. The New York Democrat used the time to criticize the bill's health care and food aid cuts, tax breaks for the wealthy and rollbacks to renewable energy programs, among other parts of the bill that Democrats decry.

He also killed time by riffing on hip-hop, King George III and his own life story, among other diversions. He called out Republicans who have voiced concerns about the bill, read stories from people concerned about their health care from those GOP lawmakers' districts and praised his own members, some of whom sat behind him and cheered, clapped, laughed and joined hands.

"This reckless Republican budget is an immoral document, and that is why I stand here on the floor of the House of Representatives with my colleagues in the House Democratic caucus to stand up and push back against it with everything we have," Jeffries said.

He ended the speech in the cadence of a Sunday sermon, with most of the Democratic caucus in a tight huddle around him. One colleague called out, "Bring it home, Hakeem!"

"We don't work for President Donald Trump," Jeffries said, as a handful of Republicans across the aisle sat silent and occasionally snickered at the leader as he kept talking.

He invoked the late John Lewis, a civil rights activist in the 1960s and longtime Democratic congressman from Georgia. "Get into good trouble, necessary trouble," Jeffries said. "We're going to press on until victory is won."

Jeffries sneaked small bites of food and drank liquids to boost his energy, but did not leave the chamber or his podium. The speech would be over if he did.

Democrats were powerless to stop the huge bill, which Republicans are passing by using an obscure budget procedure that bypasses the Senate filibuster. So they were using the powers they do have, mostly to delay. In the Senate, Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York forced Senate clerks to read the bill for almost 16 hours over the weekend.

Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., similarly gained attention in April when he spoke for more than 25 hours on the Senate floor about the first months of Trump's presidency and broke the record for the longest continuous Senate floor speech in the chamber's history. Booker was assisted by fellow Democrats who gave him a break from speaking by asking him questions on the Senate floor, but Jeffries' "magic minute" did not allow for any interaction with other members.

Republicans who were sitting on the floor when Jeffries started trickled out, leaving half the chamber empty. When the speech was over, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jason Smith, R-Mo., called it "a bunch of hogwash."

The speech "will not change the outcome that you will see very shortly," Smith said.

After the bill passed, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise said that Democrats "wanted to speak for hours and hours and break records because they wanted to stand in the way of history."

First immigration detainees arrive at Florida center in the Everglades

By CURT ANDERSON and KATE PAYNE Associated Press

The first group of immigrants has arrived at a new detention center deep in the Florida Everglades that officials have dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," a spokesperson for Republican state Attorney General James Uthmeier told The Associated Press.

"People are there," Press Secretary Jae Williams said, though he didn't immediately provide further details on the number of detainees or when they arrived.

"Next stop: back to where they came from," Uthmeier said on the X social media platform Wednesday. He's been credited as the architect behind the Everglades proposal.

"Stood up in record time under @GovRonDeSantis ` leadership & in coordination with @DHSgov & @ICEgov, Florida is proud to help facilitate @realDonaldTrump `s mission to enforce immigration law," the

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account for the Florida Division of Emergency Management posted to the social media site X on Thursday. Requests for additional information from the office of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis and FDEM, which is building the site, were not returned early Thursday afternoon.

The facility, at an airport used for training, will have an initial capacity of about 3,000 detainees, DeSantis said. The center was built in eight days and features more than 200 security cameras, 28,000-plus feet (8,500 meters) of barbed wire and 400 security personnel.

Immigrants who are arrested by Florida law enforcement officers under the federal government's 287(g) program will be taken to the facility, according to an official in President Donald Trump's administration. The program is led by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and allows police officers to interrogate immigrants in their custody and detain them for potential deportation.

The facility is expected to be expanded in 500 bed increments until it has an estimated 5,000 beds by early July.

A group of Florida Democratic state lawmakers headed to the facility Thursday to conduct "an official legislative site visit," citing concerns about conditions for detainees and the awarding of millions of dollars in state contracts for the construction.

"As lawmakers, we have both the legal right and moral responsibility to inspect this site, demand answers, and expose this abuse before it becomes the national blueprint," the legislators said in a joint statement ahead of the visit.

Federal agencies signaled their opposition Thursday to a lawsuit brought by environmental groups seeking to halt operations at the detention center. Though Trump applauded the center during an official tour earlier this week, the filing on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security seemed to try to distance his administration from the facility, and said no federal money to date has been spent on it.

"DHS has not implemented, authorized, directed, or funded Florida's temporary detention center. Florida is constructing and operating the facility using state funds on state lands under state emergency authority and a preexisting general delegation of federal authority to implement immigration functions," the U.S. filing says.

Human rights advocates and Native American tribes have also protested against the center, contending it is a threat to the fragile Everglades system, would be cruel to detainees because of heat and mosquitoes, and is on land the tribes consider sacred.

It's also located at a place prone to frequent heavy rains, which caused some flooding in the tents Tuesday during a visit by President Donald Trump to mark its opening. State officials say the complex can withstand a Category 2 hurricane, which packs winds of between 96 and 110 mph (154 and 177 kph), and that contractors worked overnight to shore up areas where flooding occurred.

According to images shared with the AP, overnight Wednesday, workers put up new signs labeled "Alligator Alcatraz" along the sole highway leading to the site and outside the entrance of the airfield that has been known as the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport. State officials seized the county-owned land where the facility is located using emergency powers authorized by an executive order issued by the governor.

DeSantis and other state officials say locating the facility in the rugged and remote Florida Everglades is meant as a deterrent — and naming it after the notorious federal prison of Alcatraz, an island fortress known for its brutal conditions, is meant to send a message. It's another sign of how the Trump administration and its allies are relying on scare tactics to try to persuade people in the country illegally to leave voluntarily.

State and federal officials have touted the plans on social media and conservative airwaves, sharing a meme of a compound ringed with barbed wire and "guarded" by alligators wearing hats labeled "ICE" for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The Republican Party of Florida has taken to fundraising off the detention center, selling branded T-shirts and beer koozies emblazoned with the facility's name.

Finnish police say stabbing that wounded 4 people at mall in Tampere not a terror or racist attack

HELSINKI (AP) — A stabbing attack that wounded four people Thursday outside a mall in Finland wasn't believed to be a terror or racist attack, police said.

A suspect was arrested and there was no longer a threat to the public in the southern city of Tampere, police said.

No details were provided about the suspect or a motive, but Finnish news media said that a man was arrested. The condition of the wounded wasn't immediately clear.

Workers used pressure washers to clean up blood stains outside the mall, Finnish public broadcaster Yle reported. A large pool of blood was visible outside a restaurant and blood trailed from the mall to a nearby highway.

Police initially blocked all doors of the Ratina shopping mall and people weren't allowed to enter or leave the center. But by early evening, police said they had lifted a lockdown and left the scene.

Tampere, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of Helsinki, is known as the sauna capital of the world.

Supreme Court will take up a new case about which school sports teams transgender students can join

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court agreed Thursday to hear a case over state restrictions on which school sports teams transgender students can join.

Just two weeks after upholding a ban on gender-affirming care for transgender youth, the justices said they will review lower court rulings in favor of transgender athletes in Idaho and West Virginia. The case will be argued in the fall.

The nationwide battle over the participation of transgender girls on girls sports teams has played out at both the state and federal levels as Republicans have leveraged the issue as a fight for athletic fairness for women and girls.

More than two dozen states have enacted laws barring transgender women and girls from participating in certain sports competitions. Some policies have been blocked in court.

At the federal level, the Trump administration has filed lawsuits and launched investigations over state and school policies that have allowed transgender athletes to compete freely. This week, the University of Pennsylvania modified a trio of school records set by transgender swimmer Lia Thomas and said it would apologize to female athletes "disadvantaged" by her participation on the women's swimming team, part of a resolution of a federal civil rights case.

Separately, Senate Democrats in March blocked a Republican push for a national ban.

Republican President Donald Trump also has acted aggressively in other areas involving transgender people, including removing transgender troops from military service. In May, the Supreme Court allowed the ouster of transgender service members to proceed, reversing lower courts that had blocked it.

A recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about 7 in 10 U.S. adults think transgender female athletes should not be allowed to participate in girls and women's sports at the high school, college or professional level. That view was shared by about 9 in 10 Republicans and roughly half of Democrats.

West Virginia is appealing a lower-court ruling that found the ban violates the rights of Becky Pepper-Jackson, who has been taking puberty-blocking medication and has publicly identified as a girl since she was in the third grade. Pepper-Jackson sued the state when she was in middle school because she wanted to compete on the cross country and track teams.

This past school year, Pepper-Jackson qualified for the West Virginia girls high school state track meet, finishing third in the discus throw and eighth in the shot put in the Class AAA division.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled for Pepper-Jackson in two areas, under the Constitution's

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equal protection clause and the landmark federal law known as Title IX that forbids sex discrimination in education.

"It's a great day, as female athletes in West Virginia will have their voices heard. The people of West Virginia know that it's unfair to let male athletes compete against women; that's why we passed this commonsense law preserving women's sports for women," state Attorney General John McCuskey said in a statement.

Lawyers for Pepper-Jackson, who had urged the court to reject the appeal, said they stand ready to defend the lower-court rulings.

"Like any other educational program, school athletic programs should be accessible for everyone regardless of their sex or transgender status. Trans kids play sports for the same reasons their peers do—to learn perseverance, dedication, teamwork, and to simply have fun with their friends," the American Civil Liberties Union's Joshua Block said in a statement. Lambda Legal, which advocates for LGBTQ rights, also is representing Pepper-Jackson.

Idaho in 2020 became the first state in the nation to ban transgender women and girls from playing on women's sports teams sponsored by public schools, colleges and universities.

The ACLU and the women's rights group Legal Voice sued Idaho on behalf of Lindsay Hecox, who hoped to run for Boise State University. A Boise-area athlete who is not transgender also joined the lawsuit because she fears the law could force her to undergo invasive tests to prove her biological sex if someone questions her gender.

The state asked for Supreme Court review after lower courts blocked the state's ban while the lawsuit continues.

The justices did not act on a third case from Arizona that raises the same issue.

U.S. labor market surprises with 147,000 new jobs last month. Here are the big takeaways

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. labor market delivered another upside surprise last month, churning out a surprisingly strong 147,000 jobs. The unemployment rate ticked down unexpectedly, too.

But the headline numbers masked some weaknesses as the U.S. economy contends with fallout from President Donald Trump's economic policies, especially his sweeping import taxes and the erratic way he rolls them out.

Here are five key takeaways from the jobs report the Labor Department released on Thursday.

The headline jobs numbers looked good

June hiring was up modestly from May's 144,000 increase in payrolls and beat the 118,000 jobs economists had forecast for last month. The unemployment rate slipped to 4.1% from 4.2% in May as the ranks of the unemployed fell by 222,000. Forecasters had expected the jobless rate to inch up to 4.3%.

Labor Department revisions added 16,000 jobs to April and May payrolls.

Average hourly wages came in cooler than forecasters expected, rising 0.2% from May and 3.7% from a year earlier. The year-over-year number is inching closer to the 3.5% considered consistent with the Federal Reserve's 2% inflation target.

Healthcare jobs increased by 39,000. State governments added 47,000 workers and local governments 33,000.

A closer look reveals weakening in the job market

"On net, it was a good report," said Sarah House, senior economist with Wells Fargo, "But when you dig underneath the surface, it was another jobs report that didn't look quite as good as first meets the eye."

Private companies, for instance, hired just 74,000 workers last month, about half the 137,000 they hired in May. And it was the fewest hires since last October, when there were significant labor disruptions from hurricanes.

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State and local governments added nearly 64,000 education jobs last month – a total that may have been inflated by seasonal quirks around the end of the school year.

The U.S. labor force — the count of those working and looking for work — fell by 130,000 last month on top of a 625,000 drop in May.

Economists expect Trump's immigration deportations — and the fear of them — to push foreign workers out of the labor force. A falling labor force can keep the unemployment rate lower than it would be otherwise. That is because jobseekers need time to find employment and can show up as unemployed in the interim.

A good job can be hard to find

With unemployment low, most Americans enjoy job security. But as hiring has cooled over the past couple of years it's become harder for young people or those re-entering the workforce to find jobs, leading to longer job searches or longer spells of unemployment.

The Labor Department said the number of discouraged workers, who believe no jobs are available for them, rose by 256,000 last month to 637,000.

When he was laid off earlier this year from his job as a communications manager for a city government in the Seattle area, Derek Wing braced for the worst. "The word I would use is: 'terrifying'" to describe the experience, he said. Lots of big local employers like Microsoft continue to cut jobs. And he'd heard horror stories of people applying for jobs and then — crickets. "I had a couple of experiences where I would apply for a job and just feel like it was going out into the ether and never hearing back," he said.

But Wing's fortunes turned quickly. He applied for an opening with Gesa Credit Union. Six weeks later — "superfast in this economy" -- he had a job as a communications strategist for Gesa.

The Fed is likely to stay put

The upside surprise in June payrolls likely will encourage the Fed to continue its wait-and-see policy of leaving rates unchanged until it has a better idea of how Trump's tariffs and other policies will affect inflation and the job market.

The Fed raised its benchmark interest rate 11 times in 2022 and 2023 to combat an outburst of inflation. As price pressures eased last year, the Fed reversed course and cut rates three times in 2024. More cuts were expected.

But the central bank has turned cautious this year. "Today's results are more than positive enough to reduce expectations for Fed rate cuts in the wake of tariffs and policy chaos, at least for now," Carl Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics, wrote in a commentary.

After the jobs data was released Thursday, yields on U.S. Treasuries spiked immediately.

Traders in the futures market now see less than a 7% chance that the Fed could cut its main interest rate at its next meeting later this month. That's down sharply from the nearly 24% chance they saw just a day earlier, according to data from CME Group.

The outlook is cloudy

Employers are now contending with fallout from Trump's policies, especially his aggressive use of import taxes — tariffs.

Mainstream economists say that tariffs raise prices for businesses and consumers alike and make the economy less efficient by reducing competition. They also invite retaliatory tariffs from other countries, hurting U.S. exporters.

Trump has increased the anxiety by imposing tariffs in an unpredictable way — announcing and then suspending them, then coming up with new ones. The uncertainty has left businesses bewildered and hesitant to make decisions about hiring and investment.

House at Wells Fargo expects monthly job growth to fall below 100,000 in the second half of the year. "We're bracing for a much lower pace of job growth," she said. "There's still a lot of policy uncertainty."

Takeaways from AP report on company that sold 200,000 carbon credits to remove CO2 from ocean

By HELEN WIEFFERING Associated Press

Formed three years ago, Gigablue says it has designed particles that when released in the ocean will trap carbon at the bottom of the sea. Gigablue says its work will do nothing less than save the planet.

But outside scientists frustrated by the lack of information released by the company say serious questions remain about whether the technology works as the company describes. Their questions showcase tensions in an industry built on little regulation and big promises.

Here are highlights from The Associated Press' reporting:

What is Gigablue?

Gigablue, founded by a group of entrepreneurs in Israel, was originally named "Gigaton" after the one billion metric tons of carbon dioxide most scientists say will be necessary to remove from the atmosphere each year to slow global warming.

The company began trials in the South Pacific Ocean last year, and says it will work with country authorities to create a "sequestration field" — a dedicated part of the ocean where "pulses" of particles will be released on a seasonal basis.

The company announced earlier this year that it reached a historic milestone: selling 200,000 carbon credits. It's the largest sale to date for a climate startup operating in the ocean, according to the tracking site CDR.fyi, making up more than half of all ocean-based carbon credits sold last year.

How do the carbon credits work?

Carbon credits, which have grown in popularity over the last decade, are tokens that symbolize the removal of one metric ton of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. On paper, companies that buy credits achieve a smaller carbon footprint without needing to reduce their own emissions — for instance, by paying another vendor to plant trees or capture carbon dioxide from the air.

Only a few countries have required local industries to purchase carbon credits. Most companies that buy them do so voluntarily.

The credits have helped fund a band of startups like Gigablue that are eager to tackle the climate crisis, but they are also unevenly regulated, scientifically complex, and have in some cases been linked to fraud.

Gigablue's 200,000 credits are pledged to SkiesFifty, a newly formed company investing in greener practices for the aviation industry.

Gigablue wouldn't reveal what it earned in the sale, and SkiesFifty's team declined to be interviewed. Most credits are sold for a few hundred dollars each — but a chart on Gigablue's website suggests its prices are lower than almost any other form of carbon capture on the market.

How does Gigablue's technology work?

The particles Gigablue has patented are meant to capture carbon in the ocean by floating for a number of days and growing tiny algae, before sinking rapidly to the ocean floor.

Algae has long been attractive to climate scientists because it absorbs carbon dioxide from the surrounding water as it grows. If the algae sinks to the deep sea or ocean floor, Gigablue expects the carbon to be trapped there for hundreds to thousands of years.

The ultimate goal is to lower carbon dioxide levels so drastically that the ocean rebalances with the atmosphere by soaking up more CO2 from the air. It's a feat that would help slow climate change, but one that is still under active study by climate scientists.

What are Gigablue's particles made of?

While Gigablue has made several commercial deals, it has not yet revealed what its particles are made of. Partly this is because the company says it will build different particles tailored to different seasons and areas of the ocean.

"It's proprietary," said chief technology officer Sapir Markus-Alford.

Documents provide a window into the possible ingredients. According to information on the permit,

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Gigablue's first New Zealand trial last year involved releasing particles of pure vermiculite, a porous clay often used in potting soil.

In the second New Zealand trial, the company released particles made of vermiculite, ground rock, a plant-based wax, as well as manganese and iron.

A patent published last year hints the particles could also be made of scores of other materials, including cotton, rice husks or jute, as well as synthetic ingredients like polyester fibers or lint.

The company said it had commissioned an environmental institute to verify that the particles are safe for thousands of organisms, including mussels and oysters.

What do outside scientists say?

Several scientists not affiliated with Gigablue interviewed by the AP said they were interested in how a company with so little public information about its technology could secure a deal for 200,000 carbon credits. The success of the company's method, they said, will depend heavily on how much algae grows on the particles, and the amount that sinks to the deep ocean. So far, Gigablue has not released any studies demonstrating those rates.

Thomas Kiørboe, a professor of ocean ecology at the Technical University of Denmark, and Philip Boyd, an oceanographer at the University of Tasmania who studies the role of algae in the Earth's carbon cycle, said they were doubtful algae would get enough sunlight to grow inside the particles.

It's more likely the particles would attract hungry bacteria, Kiørboe said.

The rates at which Gigablue says its particles sink — up to a hundred meters (yards) per hour — might shear off algae from the particles in the quick descent, Boyd said.

It's likely that some particles would also be eaten by fish — limiting the carbon capture, and raising the question of how the particles could impact marine life.

Boyd is eager to see field results showing algae growth, and wants to see proof that Gigablue's particles cause the ocean to absorb more CO₂ from the air.

In a statement, Gigablue said that bacteria does consume the particles but the effect is minimal, and its measurements will account for any loss of algae or particles as they sink.

The company noted that a major science institute in New Zealand has given Gigablue its stamp of approval. Gigablue hired the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, a government-owned company, to review several drafts of its methodology.

In a recent letter posted to Gigablue's website, the institute's chief ocean scientist said his staff had confidence the company's work is "scientifically sound" and the proposed measurements for carbon sequestration were robust.

An Israeli startup says its new technology will save the planet. Scientists have doubts

By HELEN WIEFFERING Associated Press

The startup Gigablue announced with fanfare this year that it reached a historic milestone: selling 200,000 carbon credits to fund what it describes as a groundbreaking technology in the fight against climate change.

Formed three years ago by a group of entrepreneurs in Israel, the company says it has designed particles that when released in the ocean will trap carbon at the bottom of the sea. By "harnessing the power of nature," Gigablue says, its work will do nothing less than save the planet.

But outside scientists frustrated by the lack of information released by the company say serious questions remain about whether Gigablue's technology works as the company describes. Their questions showcase tensions in an industry built on little regulation and big promises — and a tantalizing chance to profit.

Jimmy Pallas, an event organizer based in Italy, struck a deal with Gigablue last year. He said he trusts the company does what it has promised him — ensuring the transportation, meals, and electricity of a recent 1,000-person event will be offset by particles in the ocean.

Gigablue's service is like "an extra trash can" where Pallas can discard his unwanted emissions, he said. "Same way I use my trash can — I don't follow where the truck that comes and picks up my trash brings

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it to," he said. "I'll take their word for it."

'Hundreds of thousands of carbon credits'

Gigablue has a grand vision for the future of carbon removal. It was originally named "Gigaton" after the one billion metric tons of carbon dioxide most scientists say will be necessary to remove from the atmosphere each year to slow global warming.

The company began trials in the South Pacific Ocean last year, and says it will work with country authorities to create a "sequestration field" — a dedicated part of the ocean where "pulses" of particles will be released on a seasonal basis.

Gigablue says its solution is affordable, too — priced to attract investors.

"Every time we go to the ocean, we generate hundreds of thousands of carbon credits, and this is what we're going to do continuously over the upcoming years and towards the future, in greater and greater quantities," co-founder Ori Shaashua said.

Carbon credits, which have grown in popularity over the last decade, are tokens that symbolize the removal of one metric ton of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. On paper, companies that buy credits achieve a smaller carbon footprint without needing to reduce their own emissions — for instance, by paying another vendor to plant trees or capture carbon dioxide from the air.

Only a few countries have required local industries to purchase carbon credits. Most companies that buy them, including Microsoft and Google, do so voluntarily.

The credits have helped fund a band of startups like Gigablue that are eager to tackle the climate crisis, but they are also unevenly regulated, scientifically complex, and have in some cases been linked to fraud.

Gigablue's 200,000 credits are pledged to SkiesFifty, a newly formed company investing in greener practices for the aviation industry. It's the largest sale to date for a climate startup operating in the ocean, according to the tracking site CDR.fyi, making up more than half of all ocean-based carbon credits sold last year.

And it could beckon a rapid acceleration of the company's work. Gigablue hopes to reach a goal this year of capturing 10 metric tons of carbon dioxide for each ton of particles it deploys, Shaashua said. At that rate, Gigablue would disperse at least 20,000 tons of particles in the ocean.

Gigablue wouldn't reveal what it earned in the sale, and SkiesFifty's team declined to be interviewed for this story. Most credits are sold for a few hundred dollars each — but a chart on Gigablue's website suggests its prices are lower than almost any other form of carbon capture on the market.

A mission to save the world

The startup is the brainchild of four entrepreneurs hailing from the tech industry. According to their LinkedIn profiles, Gigablue's CEO previously worked for an online grocery startup, while its COO was vice president of SeeTree, a company that raised \$60 million to provide farmers with information on their trees.

Shaashua, who often serves as the face of Gigablue, said he specializes in using artificial intelligence to pursue positive outcomes in the world. He co-founded a data mining company that tracked exposure risks during the COVID-19 pandemic, and led an auto startup that brokered data on car mileage and traffic patterns.

"Three years ago, I decided to take the same formula, so to say, to climate," Shaashua said.

Under his guidance, he said, Gigablue created an AI-driven "digital twin" of the ocean based on dozens of metrics to determine where to release the particles.

Chief technology officer Sapir Markus-Alford earned a bachelor's degree in earth and environmental sciences from Israel's Ben-Gurion University in 2021, shortly before founding Gigablue.

Markus-Alford said she began her studies and eventual path to Gigablue after seeing bleached coral reefs and other impacts of warming waters on a series of diving trips around the world.

"I understood that the best thing we could do for the ocean is to be able to remove CO₂," Markus-Alford said.

A spokesperson for Gigablue did not answer whether the other co-founders have graduate degrees in oceanography or environmental science, but said the company's broader team holds a total of 46 Ph.D.s with expertise in biology, chemistry, oceanography, and environmental science. Markus-Alford said that

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figure includes outside experts and academics and “everyone that supports us.”

The company’s staffing has expanded from Israel to hubs in New York and New Zealand, Shaashua said.

In social media posts advertising open jobs, Gigablue employees encouraged applicants to “Join Our Mission to Save the World!”

Trapping carbon at the bottom of the ocean

The particles Gigablue has patented are meant to capture carbon in the ocean by floating for a number of days and growing tiny algae, before sinking rapidly to the ocean floor.

“We are an elevator for carbon,” Shaashua said. “We are exporting the carbon from the top to the bottom.”

Algae — sometimes referred to as phytoplankton — has long been attractive to climate scientists because it absorbs carbon dioxide from the surrounding water as it grows. If the algae sinks to the deep sea or ocean floor, Gigablue expects the carbon to be trapped there for hundreds to thousands of years.

The ultimate goal is to lower carbon dioxide levels so drastically that the ocean rebalances with the atmosphere by soaking up more CO₂ from the air. It’s a feat that would help slow climate change, but one that is still under active study by climate scientists.

Gigablue’s founders have said the company’s work is inspired by nature and “very, very environmentally safe.” The company’s particles and sinking methods simply recreate what nature has been doing “since forever,” Shaashua said.

Gigablue ran its first trial sinking particles in the Mediterranean in March last year.

Later, on two voyages to the South Pacific, the company released 60 cubic meters — about two shipping containers — of particles off the coast of New Zealand.

Materials kept a mystery

While Gigablue has made several commercial deals, it has not yet revealed what its particles are made of. Partly this is because the company says it will build different particles tailored to different seasons and areas of the ocean.

“It’s proprietary,” Markus-Alford said.

Documents provide a window into the possible ingredients. According to information on the permit, Gigablue’s first New Zealand trial last year involved releasing particles of pure vermiculite, a porous clay often used in potting soil.

In the second New Zealand trial, the company released particles made of vermiculite, ground rock, a plant-based wax, as well as manganese and iron.

A patent published last year hints the particles could also be made of scores of other materials, including cotton, rice husks or jute, as well as synthetic ingredients like polyester fibers or lint. The particles contain a range of possible binding agents, and up to 18 different chemicals and metals, from iron to nickel to vanadium.

Without specifying future designs, Markus-Alford said Gigablue’s particles meet certain requirements: “All the materials we use are materials that are natural, nontoxic, nonhazardous, and can be found in the ocean,” she said. She wouldn’t comment on the possible use of cotton or rice, but said the particles won’t include any kind of plastic.

When asked about vermiculite, which is typically mined on land and heated to expand, Markus-Alford said rivers and erosion transport most materials including vermiculite to the ocean. “Almost everything, basically, that exists on land can be found in the ocean,” she said.

The company said it had commissioned an environmental institute to verify that the particles are safe for thousands of organisms, including mussels and oysters. Any materials in future particles, Gigablue said, will be approved by local authorities.

Shaashua has said the particles are so benign that they have zero impact on the ocean.

“We are not changing the water chemistry or the water biology,” Shaashua said.

Ken Buesseler, a senior scientist with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution who has spent decades studying the biological carbon cycle of the ocean, says that while he’s intrigued by Gigablue’s proposal, the idea that the particles don’t alter the ocean is “almost inconceivable.”

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"There has to be a relationship between what they're putting in the ocean and the carbon dioxide that's dissolved in seawater for this to, quote, work," Buesseler said.

Buesseler co-leads a nonprofit group of scientists hoping to tap the power of algae in the ocean to capture carbon. The group organizes regular forums on the subject, and Gigablue presented in April.

"I left with more questions than answers," Buesseler said.

Scientists raise questions

Several scientists not affiliated with Gigablue interviewed by The Associated Press said they were interested in how a company with so little public information about its technology could secure a deal for 200,000 carbon credits.

The success of the company's method, they said, will depend on how much algae grows on the particles, and the amount that sinks to the deep ocean. So far, Gigablue has not released any studies demonstrating those rates.

Thomas Kiørboe, a professor of ocean ecology at the Technical University of Denmark, and Philip Boyd, an oceanographer at the University of Tasmania who studies the role of algae in the Earth's carbon cycle, said they were doubtful algae would get enough sunlight to grow inside the particles.

It's more likely the particles would attract hungry bacteria, Kiørboe said.

"Typical phytoplankton do not grow on surfaces, and they do not colonize particles," Kiørboe said. "To most phytoplankton ecologists, this would just be, I think, absurd."

The rates at which Gigablue says its particles sink — up to a hundred meters (yards) per hour — might shear off algae from the particles in the quick descent, Boyd said.

It's likely that some particles would also be eaten by fish — limiting the carbon capture, and raising the question of how the particles could impact marine life.

Boyd is eager to see field results showing algae growth, and wants to see proof that Gigablue's particles cause the ocean to absorb more CO₂ from the air.

"These are incredibly challenging issues that I don't think, certainly for the biological part, I don't think anyone on the planet has got solutions for them," he said.

James Kerry, a senior marine and climate scientist for the conservation group OceanCare and senior research fellow at Australia's James Cook University, has closely followed Gigablue's work.

"What we've got is a situation of a company, a startup, upfront selling large quantities of credits for a technology that is unproven," he said.

In a statement, Gigablue said that bacteria does consume the particles but the effect is minimal, and its measurements will account for any loss of algae or particles as they sink.

The company noted that a major science institute in New Zealand has given Gigablue its stamp of approval. Gigablue hired the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, a government-owned company, to review several drafts of its methodology.

In a recent letter posted to Gigablue's website, the institute's chief ocean scientist said his staff had confidence the company's work is "scientifically sound" and the proposed measurements for carbon sequestration were robust.

Whether Gigablue's methods are deemed successful, for now, will be determined not by regulators — but by another private company.

A new market

Puro.earth is one of several companies known as registries that serve the carbon credit market.

Amid the lack of regulation and the potential for climate startups to overstate their impact, registries aim to verify how much carbon was really removed.

The Finnish Puro.earth has verified more than a million carbon credits since its founding seven years ago. But most of those credits originated in land-based climate projects. Only recently has it aimed to set standards for the ocean.

In part, that's because marine carbon credits are some of the newest to be traded. Dozens of ocean startups have entered the industry, with credit sales catapulting from 2,000 in 2021 to more than 340,000,

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including Gigablue's deal, last year.

But the ocean remains a hostile and expensive place in which to operate a business or monitor research. Some ocean startups have sold credits only to fold before they could complete their work. Running Tide, a Maine-based startup aimed at removing carbon from the atmosphere by sinking wood chips and seaweed, abruptly shuttered last year despite the backing of \$50 million from investors, leaving sales of about 7,000 carbon credits unfulfilled.

In June, Puro.earth published a draft methodology that will be used to verify Gigablue's work, which it designed in consultation with Gigablue. Once finalized, Gigablue will pay the registry for each metric ton of carbon dioxide that it claims to remove.

Marianne Tikkanen, head of standards at Puro.earth, said that although this methodology was designed with Gigablue, her team expects other startups to adopt the same approach.

"We hope that there will be many who can do it and that it stimulates the market," she said.

The road ahead

It remains to be seen whether New Zealand officials will grant permission for the expanded "sequestration field" that Gigablue has proposed creating, or if the company will look to other countries.

New Zealand's environmental authority has so far treated Gigablue's work as research — a designation that requires no formal review process or consultations with the public. The agency said in a statement that it could not comment on how it would handle a future commercial application from Gigablue.

But like many climate startups, Gigablue was involved in selling carbon credits during its research expeditions — not only inking a major deal, but smaller agreements, too.

Pallas, the Italian businessman, said he ordered 22 carbon credits from Gigablue last year to offset the emissions associated with his event in November. He said Gigablue gave them to him for free — but says he will pay for more in the future.

Pallas sought out carbon credits because he sees the signs of climate change all around him, he says, and expects more requirements in Italy for businesses to decarbonize in coming years. He chose Gigablue because they are one of the largest suppliers: "They've got quantity," he said.

How authorities view Gigablue's growing commercial activity could matter in the context of an international treaty that has banned certain climate operations in the ocean.

More than a decade ago, dozens of countries including New Zealand agreed they should not allow any commercial climate endeavor that involves releasing iron in the ocean, a technique known as "iron fertilization." Only research, they said, with no prospect of economic gain should be allowed.

Iron is considered a key ingredient for spurring algae growth and was embedded in the particles that Gigablue dispersed in October in the Pacific Ocean. Several scientific papers have raised concerns that spurring iron-fueled algae blooms on a large scale would deplete important nutrients in the ocean and harm fisheries.

The startup denies any link to iron dumping on the basis that its particles don't release iron directly into the water and don't create an uncontrolled algae bloom.

"We are not fertilizing the ocean," Markus-Alford said.

"In fact, we looked at iron fertilization as an inspiration of something to avoid," Shaashua said.

But the draft methodology that Puro.earth will use to verify Gigablue's work notes many of the same concerns that have been raised about iron fertilization, including disruptions to the marine food web.

Other scientists who spoke with AP see a clear link between Gigablue's work and the controversial practice. "If they're using iron to stimulate phytoplankton growth," said Kerry, the OceanCare scientist, "then it is iron fertilization."

For now, scientific concerns don't seem to have troubled Gigablue's buyers. The company has already planned its next research expedition in New Zealand and hopes to release more particles this fall.

"They mean well, and so do I," said Pallas, of his support for Gigablue. "Sooner or later, I'll catch a plane, go to New Zealand, and grab a boat to see what they've done."

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for all content.

Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq to hand over weapons in first step toward disarmament

By SALAR SALIM and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — A Kurdish militant group that has waged a long-running insurgency in Turkey announced Thursday its fighters in northern Iraq will begin handing over their weapons, marking the first concrete step toward disarmament as part of a peace process.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, announced in May it would disband and renounce armed conflict, ending four decades of hostilities. The move came after PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been imprisoned on an island near Istanbul since 1999, urged his group in February to convene a congress and formally disband and disarm.

Öcalan, 76, continues to wield significant influence in the Kurdish movement despite his 25-year imprisonment. His call to end the fighting marked a pivotal step toward ending the decades-long conflict that has claimed tens of thousands of lives since the 1980s.

In the latest development, "a group of guerrilla fighters will come down from the mountains and will bid farewell to their arms in an effort to declare their good will for peace and democratic politics," the PKK said in a statement Thursday.

The ceremony, which is expected to take place between July 10 and July 12 in the city of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, will be the first concrete move toward disarmament.

Zagros Hiwa, a PKK spokesperson, said the fighters will destroy their weapons "under the supervision of civil society institutions and interested parties." The number of fighters who will take part has not yet been determined but might be between 20 and 30, he said.

For the PKK to take further steps toward disarmament, he said "the regime of isolation" imposed on Öcalan in prison has to be abolished and constitutional, legal and political must be taken to "ensure that the guerrilla who have abandoned the strategy of armed struggle could be reintegrated into democratic politics in Turkey."

An Iraqi Kurdish official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly, said that an agreement was reached to carry out a "symbolic destruction of some light weapons, in order to reassure the Turks," in the presence of representatives from the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The regional government is dominated by two parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, with the KDP overseeing the regional capital, Irbil, and the city of Dohuk. The PUK governs Sulaymaniyah.

The KDP has good relations with Turkey and has been at odds with the PKK, while the PUK is closer to the PKK.

In Turkey on Monday, Omer Celik, a spokesperson for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, or AKP, said the PKK could begin handing over arms "within days," but did not provide details. Celik added that Erdogan would meet with members of the pro-Kurdish party next week to discuss the peace effort.

There was no immediate statement from Turkey's government on Thursday's announcement.

The PKK has long maintained bases in the mountains of northern Iraq. Turkish forces have launched offensives and airstrikes against the PKK in Iraq and have set up bases in the area. Scores of villages have emptied as a result.

The Iraqi government in Baghdad last year announced an official ban on the separatist group, which has long been prohibited in Turkey.

A volunteer finds the Holy Grail of abolitionist-era Baptist documents in Massachusetts

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

GROTON, Mass. (AP) — Jennifer Cromack was combing through the American Baptist archive when she uncovered a slim box among some 18th and 19th century journals. Opening it, she found a scroll in pristine condition.

A closer look revealed the 5-foot-long (1.5-meter-long) document was a handwritten declaration titled "A Resolution and Protest Against Slavery," signed by 116 New England ministers in Boston and adopted March 2, 1847. Until its discovery in May at the archives in Groton, Massachusetts, American Baptist officials worried the anti-slavery document had been lost forever after fruitless searches at Harvard and Brown universities and other locations. A copy was last seen in a 1902 history book.

"I was just amazed and excited," Cromack, a retired teacher who volunteers at the archive, said. "We made a find that really says something to the people of the state and the people in the country. ... It speaks of their commitment to keeping people safe and out of situations that they should not be in."

The document offers a glimpse into an emerging debate over slavery in the 18th century in the Northeast. The document was signed 14 years before the start of the Civil War as a growing number of religious leaders were starting to speak out against slavery.

Split over slavery

The document also shines a spotlight on a critical moment in the history of the Baptist church.

It was signed two years after the issue of slavery prompted southern Baptists to split from northern Baptists and form the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination. The split in 1845 followed a ruling by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society prohibiting slave owners from becoming missionaries. The northern Baptists eventually became American Baptist Churches USA.

"It comes from such a critical era in American history, you know, right prior to the Civil War," said the Rev. Mary Day Hamel, the executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

"It was a unique moment in history when Baptists in Massachusetts stepped up and took a strong position and stood for justice in the shaping of this country," she said. "That's become part of our heritage to this day, to be people who stand for justice, for American Baptists to embrace diversity."

A risky declaration

Deborah Bingham Van Broekhoven, the executive director emerita of the American Baptist Historical Society, said many Americans at the time, especially in the North, were "undecided" about slavery and weren't sure how to respond or were worried about speaking out.

"They thought it was a southern problem, and they had no business getting involved in what they saw as the state's rights," Van Broekhoven said. "Most Baptists, prior to this, would have refrained from this kind of protest. This is a very good example of them going out on a limb and trying to be diplomatic."

The document shows ministers had hoped "some reformatory movement" led by those involved in slavery would make their action "unnecessary," but that they felt compelled to act after they "witnessed with painful surprise, a growing disposition to justify, extend and perpetuate their iniquitous system."

"Under these circumstances we can no longer be silent," the document states. "We owe something to the oppressed as well as to the oppressor, and justice demands the fulfillment of that obligation. Truth and Humanity and Public Virtue, have claims upon us which we cannot dishonor."

The document explains why the ministers "disapprove and abhor the system of American slavery."

"With such a system we can have no sympathy," the document states. "After a careful observation of its character and effects and making every deduction with the largest charity can require, we are constrained to regard it as an outrage upon the rights and happiness of our fellow men, for which there is no valid justification or apology."

Who signed the document?

The Rev. Diane Badger, the administrator of the American Baptist Church of Massachusetts who oversees

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the archive, teamed up with the Rev. John Odams of the First Baptist Church in Boston to identify what she called the "Holy Grail" of abolitionist-era Baptist documents. Her great-grandfather was an American Baptist minister.

Since its discovery, Badger has put all the ministers' names on a spreadsheet along with the names of the churches where they served. Among them was Nathaniel Colver, of Tremont Temple in Boston, one of the first integrated churches in the country, now known as Tremont Temple Baptist Church. Another was Baron Stow, who belonged to the state's anti-slavery society.

Badger also is working to estimate the value of the document, which is intact with no stains or damage, and is making plans to ensure it is protected. A digital copy could eventually be shared with some of Massachusetts' 230 American Baptist churches.

"It's been kind of an interesting journey and it's one that's still unfolding," Badger said. "The questions that always come to me, OK, I know who signed it but who didn't? I can go through my list, through my database and find who was working where on that and why didn't they sign that. So it's been very interesting to do the research."

The Rev. Kenneth Young — whose predominantly Black Calvary Baptist Church in Haverhill, Massachusetts, was created by freed Blacks in 1871 — called the discovery inspiring.

"I thought it was awesome that we had over hundred signers to this, that they would project that freedom for our people is just," Young said. "It follows through on the line of the abolitionist movement and fighting for those who may not have had the strength to fight for themselves against a system of racism."

One Tech Tip: Get the most out of ChatGPT and other AI chatbots with better prompts

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — If you're using ChatGPT but getting mediocre results, don't blame the chatbot. Instead, try sharpening up your prompts.

Generative AI chatbots such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini and Anthropic's Claude have become hugely popular and embedded into daily life for many users. They're powerful tools that can help us with so many different tasks.

What you shouldn't overlook, however, is that a chatbot's output depends on what you tell it to do, and how. There's a lot you can do to improve the prompt — also known as the request or query — that you type in.

Here are some tips for general users on how to get higher quality chatbot replies, based on tips from the AI model makers:

Be more specific in your prompt

ChatGPT can't read your mind. You need to give it clear and explicit instructions on what you need it to do.

Unlike a standard Google search, you can't just ask for an answer based on some keywords. And you'll need to do more than just tell it to, say, "design a logo" because you'll end up with a generic design. Flesh it out with details on the company that the logo is for, the industry it will be used in and the design style you're going for.

"Ensure your prompts are clear, specific, and provide enough context for the model to understand what you are asking," ChatGPT maker OpenAI advises on its help page. "Avoid ambiguity and be as precise as possible to get accurate and relevant responses."

Refine and rewrite your request

Think of using a chatbot like holding a conversation with a friend. You probably wouldn't end your chat after the first answer. Ask follow-up questions or refine your original prompt.

OpenAI's advice: "Adjust the wording, add more context, or simplify the request as needed to improve the results."

You might have to have an extended back-and-forth that elicits better output. Google advises that you'll need to try a "few different approaches" if you don't get what you're looking for the first time.

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"Fine-tune your prompts if the results don't meet your expectations or if you believe there's room for improvement," Google recommends in its prompting guide for Gemini. "Use follow-up prompts and an iterative process of review and refinement to yield better results."

Consider the persona and audience

When making your request, you can also ask an AI large language model to respond in a specific voice or style.

"Words like formal, informal, friendly, professional, humorous, or serious can help guide the model," OpenAI writes.

You also tell the chatbot the type of person the response is aimed at.

These parameters will help determine the chatbot's overall approach to its answer, as well as the tone, vocabulary and level of detail.

For example, you could ask ChatGPT to describe quantum physics in the style of a distinguished professor talking to a class of graduate students. Or you could ask it to explain the same topic in the voice of a teacher talking to a group of schoolchildren.

However, there's plenty of debate among AI experts about these methods. On one hand, they can make answers more precise and less generic. But an output that adopts an overly empathetic or authoritative tone raises concerns about the text sounding too manipulative.

Add more context and examples

Give the chatbot all the background behind the reason for your request.

Don't just ask: "Help me plan a weeklong trip to London."

ChatGPT will respond with a generic list of London's greatest hits: historic sites on one day, museums and famous parks on another, trendy neighborhoods and optional excursions to Windsor Castle. It's nothing you couldn't get from a guidebook or travel website, but just a little better organized.

But if, say, you're a theatre-loving family, try this: "Help me plan a weeklong trip to London in July, for a family of four. We don't want too many historic sites, but want to see a lot of West End theatre shows. We don't drink alcohol so we can skip pubs. Can you recommend mid-range budget hotels where we can stay and cheap places to eat for dinner?"

This prompt returns a more tailored and detailed answer: a list of four possible hotels within walking distance of the theater district, a seven-day itinerary with cheap or low-cost ideas for things to do during the day, suggested shows each evening, and places for an affordable family dinner.

Put limits around your request

You can tell any of the chatbots just how extensive you want the answer to be. Sometimes, less is more.

Try nudging the model to provide clear and succinct responses by imposing a limit. For example, tell the chatbot to reply with only 300 words, or to come up with five bullet points.

Want to know all that there is to know about quantum physics? ChatGPT will provide a high-level "grand tour" of the topic that includes terms like wavefunctions and qubits. But ask for a 150-word explanation and you'll get an easily digestible summary about how it's the science of the tiniest particles that also underpins a lot of modern technology like lasers and smartphones.

Indonesia rescuers searching for 29 missing people after ferry sinks near Bali

By FIRDIA LISNAWATI, EDNA TARIGAN and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

GILIMANUK, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian rescuers were searching for 29 people who remained missing Thursday after a ferry sank and six people died the previous night near Indonesia's resort island of Bali.

A 3-year-old boy and his mother were the most recent victims whose bodies were recovered on Thursday afternoon. The six bodies located by rescuers will be taken to their families in Banyuwangi, officials said.

As of Thursday, 30 people had been rescued from the ferry's 53 passengers and 12 crew members, Mohammad Syafii, head of Indonesia's National Search and Rescue Agency, told Metro TV.

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The KMP Tunu Pratama Jaya sank almost half an hour after leaving Ketapang port in the East Java town of Banyuwangi late Wednesday for a trip of about 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) to Bali's Gilimanuk port, authorities said.

A helicopter and 15 boats searched for survivors with assistance from fishermen and people onshore. The overnight search operation focused on the northern part of a travel lane for ships, but the water current changed from midnight to morning and many victims were found in the southern area, Syafii said.

"The condition of this ship is fully submerged, so there is a possibility that there are people inside the ferry. But right now we are focusing on the surface of the water first," Surabaya Search and Rescue head Nanang Sigit said.

Weather was a significant factor in the search effort. Strong waves up to 2 meters (6.5 feet) high and darkness hampered emergency responders overnight. While conditions improved Thursday morning, Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency indicated waves reached up to 2.5 meters (8.2 feet) with strong currents and winds Thursday afternoon.

"For today's search we are focusing on searching on the water, as the initial victims were found in the water between the location of the accident toward Gilimanuk port," Sigit said in a statement Thursday morning.

An officer at the port witnessed the sinking before rescuers could be alerted.

"The ferry could not be contacted via radio from the beginning. Then it could be contacted by other ships from the same company. But the ship was already in a tilting condition," Sigit said.

Many of those rescued were unconscious after drifting in choppy waters for hours, Banyuwangi Police Chief Rama Samtama Putra said.

Survivors were treated at Bali's Jembrana Regional Hospital and the port office in Gilimanuk. Some family members arrived at the port in a panic or weeping as they sought information about their loved ones.

Indonesian authorities are investigating the cause of the accident. Survivors told rescuers there appeared to be a leak in the engine room of the ferry, which was carrying 22 vehicles including 14 trucks.

"When the ferry started to tilt, I initially intended to jump into the sea, but the ship quickly sank, so I did not jump any more but sank with the water entering the ship, maybe about 7 meters (23 feet) deep, so I immediately climbed up to the top," said Supardi, 64, a survivor at the hospital.

He and three other people grouped together in the water and used life jackets to stay afloat, he said.

Ferry tragedies are common in Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, where ferries are often used as transport and safety regulations can lapse.

Today in History: July 4, Declaration of Independence adopted in Philadelphia

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, July 4, the 185th day of 2025. There are 180 days left in the year. This is Independence Day.

Today in History:

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by delegates to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

Also on this date:

In 1802, the United States Military Academy officially opened at West Point, New York.

In 1817, construction of the Erie Canal began in Rome, New York.

In 1826, 50 years to the day after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, former presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died.

In 1831, the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, died in New York City at age 73.

In 1855, the first edition of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" was published.

In 1863, the Civil War Siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi, ended as a Confederate garrison surrendered to

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Union forces.

In 1910, in what was billed as "The Fight of the Century," Black world heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson defeated white former champ "Gentleman" Jim Jeffries in Reno, Nevada; race riots across the country following the fight killed more than 20 people.

In 1912, the 48-star American flag, recognizing New Mexico and Arizona statehood, was adopted.

In 1939, Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees delivered his famous farewell speech in which he called himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

In 1946, the United States and the Philippines signed the Treaty of Manila, recognizing Philippine independence from the US.

In 1960, the current 50-star version of the US flag was adopted.

In 1976, America celebrated its bicentennial with daylong festivities; President Gerald R. Ford made stops in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, Independence Hall in Philadelphia and New York, where more than 200 ships paraded up the Hudson River in Operation Sail.

In 1987, Klaus Barbie, the former Gestapo chief known as the "Butcher of Lyon," was convicted by a French court of crimes against humanity and sentenced to life in prison (he died in September 1991).

In 1995, the space shuttle Atlantis and the Russian space station Mir parted after spending five days in orbit docked together.

In 2012, scientists at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva cheered the apparent end of a decades-long quest for a new subatomic particle called the Higgs boson, or "God particle."

In 2013, the Statue of Liberty reopened on the Fourth of July, eight months after Superstorm Sandy shuttered the national symbol of freedom, damaging its docks.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Eva Marie Saint is 101. Queen Sonja of Norway is 88. Actor Karolyn Grimes ("It's a Wonderful Life") is 84. Broadcast journalist Geraldo Rivera is 82. Funk/jazz trombonist Fred Wesley is 82. Vietnam War veteran and peace activist Ron Kovic is 79. Singer John Waite is 73. International Tennis Hall of Famer Pam Shriver is 63. Christian rock singer Michael Sweet (Stryper) is 61. Actor-playwright-screenwriter Tracy Letts is 60. Actor Becki Newton is 47. TV personality Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino is 43. R&B singer Melanie Fiona is 42. Singer and rapper Post Malone is 30. Malia Obama is 27.