

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 1 of 61

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- City Council Agenda](#)
- [5- WELCA Ad](#)
- [6- Brown County Commission Agenda](#)
- [7- School Board Agenda](#)
- [7- Groton Legion Post 39 Looks To Continue Strong Play Against Sisseton Post 50 18U](#)
- [8- Jr. Teeners beat Lake Norden twice](#)
- [9- Groton Legions splits with Webster](#)
- [10- SD News Watch: SD attorneys vote in favor of mandatory ongoing education](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Rule for round-the-clock nurses at nursing homes delayed a decade by 'big, beautiful bill'](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: Republican South Dakota lawmaker removes 'white boy summer' social media post after criticism](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: Noem ends protected status for Honduras, Nicaragua](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: Trump floats high tariffs on Japan, Korea and more countries by Aug. 1](#)
- [19- Weather Pages](#)
- [23- Daily Devotional](#)
- [24- Subscription Form](#)
- [25- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [26- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [27- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Tuesday, July 8

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

Legion hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m.  
Jr. Legion hosts Sisseton, 7:30 p.m.  
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.  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

## Wednesday, July 9

Senior Menu: Hot pork sandwich, creamy noodles, peas and carrots, pineapple.

**Groton Daily Independent**

**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**

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

## A True Friend

doesn't care if you're  
broke, upset, what you  
weigh, if your house  
is a mess, what car  
you drive or if your  
family is full of crazy  
people.



**They love you for who you are.**

Legion hosts Lisbon, 6 p.m.

Softball: U8B at Redfield, 5:30 p.m.; U8G at Warner, 5:30 p.m.; U10B at Redfield, 5:30 p.m.; U10G at Warner, 5:30 p.m.; U12 at Redfield 6:30 p.m. (DH)  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

Legion Auxiliary Salad Buffet and Dessert Bar, 11 a.m.

## Thursday, July 10

Senior Menu: Chicken cordon bleu hot dish, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Legion at Clark Tourney

Jr. Teeners hosts Watertown 13U, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Softball: U8G hosts Mellette, 6 p.m. (DH)

T-Ball G&B Scrimmage, 6 p.m.

Groton Lions Club Meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main

## Friday, July 11

Senior Menu: Chicken strips au gratin, mixed vegetables, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Legion at Clark Tourney

VFW Class B U12 State Baseball Tourney in Groton

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 2 of 61

# 1440

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

## Tariff Goalposts Move

The US is set to impose a 25% blanket tariff on all imports from Japan and South Korea, effective Aug. 1, according to an announcement yesterday from President Donald Trump. He also disclosed new rates for 12 other countries, including Malaysia (25%), Kazakhstan (25%), South Africa (30%), Bangladesh (35%), Laos (40%), and Myanmar (40%). The upcoming measures were communicated through formal letters to the countries' leaders, which Trump shared on social media.

Trump yesterday also signed an executive order delaying so-called reciprocal tariffs on dozens of countries from tomorrow to Aug. 1. The tariffs had initially been postponed from April to July to give countries more time to negotiate agreements; the US has so far reached deals with the UK and Vietnam, as well as a preliminary framework with China.

The latest trade updates from the White House reflect the administration's broader strategy of pressuring trading partners into new bilateral deals and reducing the US trade deficit.

## Measles Cases Rise

US measles cases are at the highest level since 1992, before the disease was considered eliminated in 2000. The annual measles tally is 1,277 confirmed cases across 38 states and Washington, DC. At least 155 people have been hospitalized, and three deaths have been confirmed—two children in Texas and one adult in New Mexico.

Measles is among the world's most contagious diseases. About 0.2% of measles cases result in death, mainly in children. In 10% of cases, patients experience ear infections that can lead to hearing loss. Measles vaccines are estimated to have saved roughly 94 million lives over the past 50 years. However, vaccination rates have dropped since the COVID-19 pandemic amid skepticism over safety.

Separately, six medical organizations sued the Department of Health and Human Services and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. yesterday over the decision to remove the COVID-19 vaccine from the list of recommended immunizations for healthy children and pregnant women.

## Mushroom Murders Verdict

An Australian woman was convicted yesterday of murdering three relatives and attempting to murder a fourth using one of the world's deadliest mushrooms.

Erin Patterson, a mother of two who faces a potential life sentence, hosted her estranged husband's parents, aunt, and uncle for a home-cooked lunch in July 2023. She served beef Wellington laced with death cap mushrooms, which contain amatoxins that cause organ failure and account for 90% of mushroom poisoning deaths. Her in-laws and husband's aunt died within a week; the uncle survived and testified as one of over 50 witnesses.

Prosecutors didn't specify a motive during the nine-week trial but suggested familial tensions. Evidence included Patterson's search history and death cap mushroom residue in a food dehydrator she initially denied owning. Testifying in her own defense, Patterson insisted the deaths were an accident.

Jurors were sequestered during deliberations last week to avoid outside influence as the trial garnered widespread public attention.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 3 of 61**

## **Sports, Entertainment, & Culture**

2025 FIFA Club World Cup semifinals kick off with Fluminense taking on Chelsea tonight (3 pm ET, DAZN) and Paris Saint-Germain pitted against Real Madrid tomorrow (3 pm ET, DAZN).

Brad Pitt's "F1" nears \$300M at global box office, becoming highest-grossing Apple-produced theatrical film ever.

2025 Wimbledon quarterfinals begin today; see updated scores, schedule, and brackets for women's and men's tournaments.

## **Science & Technology**

Twitter and Block founder Jack Dorsey launches Bitchat, a WhatsApp-style messaging service that works entirely over Bluetooth; application doesn't use centralized servers or require personal information.

Researchers enhance a key molecule involved in photosynthesis in plants, boosting its chemical reaction efficiency by up to 25%; results may lead to improved crop yields in certain species.

Oldest known pterosaur in North America discovered; the reptiles coexisted with dinosaurs, current specimen pushes their timeline back to about 209 million years ago.

## **Business & Markets**

US stock markets close down (S&P 500 -0.8%, Dow -0.9%, Nasdaq -0.9%) after President Donald Trump announces a slew of new tariffs taking effect Aug. 1.

Tesla shares drop 6.8% after Elon Musk announces plans to form a new political party.

Amazon Prime Day begins today and runs through Friday, July 11, extending to four days for the first time; shoppers expected to spend nearly \$24B.

AI company CoreWeave to acquire data center infrastructure provider Core Scientific for about \$9B; shares subsequently drop 3.3% and 17.6%, respectively.

ExxonMobil and Qatar Energy find new natural gas deposit off the coast of Cyprus, bolstering the region's energy exporting potential.

## **Politics & World Affairs**

Death toll from Texas floods rises to at least 104 people, including at least 28 children.

Twenty-seven-year-old gunman killed after opening fire at US Border Patrol facility in McAllen, Texas, injuring police officer.

Justice Department finds no evidence the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein kept a so-called "client list" or blackmailed high-profile associates; department confirms he died by suicide, citing video footage near Epstein's prison cell.

President Donald Trump meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss potential ceasefire in Gaza.

Lebanon signals openness to disarming Hezbollah in exchange for Israeli withdrawal.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 4 of 61**

## **Groton City Council Meeting Agenda**

July 8, 2025 – 7:00pm  
City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY  
CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Senior Citizen Meals – Marla Kiesz
4. Department Reports
5. Authorization to Bid Electric Metering System
6. Authorization to Surplus 1982 International S1900 Truck and Establish Bid Opening Date
7. Establish Bid Opening Date for 2017 Ford Interceptor SUV
8. Approval of Special Event Liquor Licenses for Groton Amateur Baseball on July 15 and July 20, 2025
9. Approval of Special Event Liquor License for Celebration in the Park on August 2, 2025
10. Soccer Gates
11. Transfer of Property at 105 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to Groton Development Corporation
12. Appoint Banks – Dacotah Bank & SD FIT
13. Appoint Newspaper – The Groton Independent
14. Minutes
15. Bills
16. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
17. Adjournment



Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

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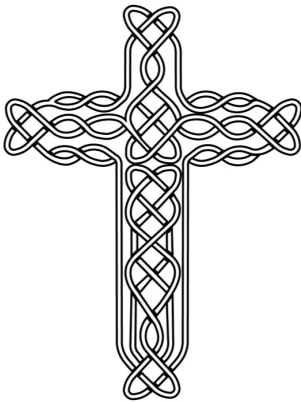
**City Council Meeting**  
**July 8, 2025, 7 p.m.**



## 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





# Broton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 6 of 61**



## BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA

### GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2025, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS

COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
  - ❖ *Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes or at Boards Discretion. Presentations will be limited to 3 minutes.*
4. Public Hearing for Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Temporary Alcohol Permit for Special Event
5. Bid Opening for Padded Cell for Jail
6. Consent Calendar
  - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes for July 1, 2025
  - b. Claims
  - c. HR Report
  - d. Travel Requests
  - e. Landfill Tonnage Report for June
  - f. Claim Assignment
7. Other Business
8. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
9. Adjourn

You can join the Brown County Commission Meeting via **your computer, tablet, or smartphone** at <https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

**You can also dial in using your phone.** United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311) - Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

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**2026 Budget Work Session following the Commission Meeting**

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 7 of 61

## GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

### Special School Board Meeting

July 9, 2025 – 9:00 AM – GHS Conference Room

#### AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

#### POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

#### OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

1. School Board Training and Development – Associated School Boards of South Dakota

#### ADJOURN

## Groton Legion Post 39 Looks To Continue Strong Play Against Sisseton Post 50 18U

By GameChanger Media

Groton Legion Post 39 have been playing well lately, going 8-2 in their last 10 games. They'll put that strong play to the test when they go up against Sisseton Post 50 18U on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. The Jr. Legion game will follow.

#### Last Time Out:

Brevin Fliehs collected three hits to lead Groton Legion Post 39 over Webster 19-2 at Webster. Sisseton Post 50 18U lost to Post 9 16-4.

#### Player Highlight:

Gavin Englund hits and pitches for Groton Legion Post 39. Englund primarily plays third base on the field. Englund has driven in a run in the past seven games. The third baseman has hit 6-21 and driven in 10 runs during the streak. Englund has an on-base percentage of 0.441 this season thanks in part to a 0.269 average and 12 walks. Englund gets ahead in the count fast on the bump. Englund has thrown first pitch strikes to 62 of the 120 batters they've faced this season.

#### About Groton Legion Post 39:

Groton Legion Post 39 has played well lately, going 8-2 in their last 10 games. They have a 17-5 record overall. Fliehs's 1.272 OPS leads Groton Legion Post 39. The shortstop has a 0.505 OBP and a 0.766 slugging percentage this season. Nick Morris leads Groton Legion Post 39 with 28 and two-thirds innings pitched. The starting pitcher has a 1.47 ERA this season. Karsten Fliehs leads Groton Legion Post 39 with 141 total fielding chances this season. Fliehs's primary position is catcher.

#### About Sisseton Post 50 18U:

Sisseton Post 50 18U has a record of 6-7 this season. LJ Crooks's 1.031 OPS leads Sisseton Post 50 18U. The infielder has a 0.531 OBP and a 0.500 slugging percentage this season. Rylan Anderson leads Sisseton Post 50 18U with 58 total fielding chances this season. Anderson's primary position is catcher.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 8 of 61

## Groton Jr. Teeners Beat Lake Norden 14U

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Teeners bested Lake Norden 10-8 on Monday.

A sacrifice bunt by Kobe Stevenson put Lake Norden on the board in the top of the first.

Groton Jr. Teeners made the score 3-1 in the bottom of the first after Jordan Schwan tripled, scoring two runs, and Sam Crank singled, scoring one run.

Lake Norden flipped the game on its head in the top of the second, scoring five runs on three hits to take the lead, 6-3. The biggest blow in the inning was a double by Caleb Drenth that drove in three.

Groton Jr. Teeners took the lead in the bottom of the third inning after Zach Fliehs singled to the left side of the infield, Wesley Borg singled down the left field line, Keegan Kucker singled to the right side of the infield, and Groton Jr. Teeners scored on a wild pitch, each scoring one run.

Trayce Schelle earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners. The starting pitcher surrendered five hits and six runs over five innings, striking out six and walking four. Drenth took the loss for Lake Norden. The pitcher went three and two-thirds innings, allowing nine runs (seven earned) on seven hits, striking out five and walking four. Kolton Antonsen collected the save.

Groton Jr. Teeners collected 12 hits in the game. Schwan drove the middle of the lineup, leading Groton Jr. Teeners with three runs batted in. The number three hitter went 2-for-4 on the day. Groton Jr. Teeners's Borg, the number eight hitter, led Groton Jr. Teeners with three hits in three at bats. Kucker collected two hits for Groton Jr. Teeners in three at bats. Asher Zimmerman paced Groton Jr. Teeners with two walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, tallying six walks for the game. Schwan and Schelle each stole multiple bases for Groton Jr. Teeners. Groton Jr. Teeners ran wild on the base paths, amassing seven stolen bases for the game.

Drenth led Lake Norden with four runs batted in. The pitcher went 2-for-4 on the day. Evan Schultz and Trig Heinrich each stole multiple bases for Lake Norden. Lake Norden ran wild on the base paths, piling up 10 stolen bases for the game.

## Jr. Teeners Surge Past Lake Norden Thanks To Big First Inning

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Teeners defeated Lake Norden 12-6 on Monday thanks in part to eight runs in the first inning. Trayce Schelle singled, scoring one run, Jordan Schwan singled, scoring one run, Lincoln Shilhanek singled, scoring one run, Sam Crank doubled, scoring two runs, Gavin Hanten drew a walk, scoring one run, and Asher Zimmerman singled, scoring two runs.

A double by Trig Heinrich on a 3-0 count put Lake Norden on the board in the top of the first.

Groton Jr. Teeners added one run in the second after Lake Norden committed an error.

Groton Jr. Teeners added one run in the third after Schwan grounded out.

Wesley Borg earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners. The right-handed pitcher surrendered eight hits and six runs over five innings, striking out four and walking four. Emmitt Aho took the loss for Lake Norden. The starting pitcher went one-third of an inning, giving up eight runs (five earned) on four hits, striking out one and walking three.

Tucker Leicht, Hanten, Zimmerman, Schwan, Crank, Schelle, and Shilhanek each collected one hit for Groton Jr. Teeners. Zimmerman and Crank each drove in two runs for Groton Jr. Teeners. Groton Jr. Teeners had a strong eye at the plate, tallying nine walks for the game. Zimmerman and Kolton Antonsen led the team with two bases on balls each. Groton Jr. Teeners turned one double play in the game. Groton Jr. Teeners were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Crank had the most chances in the field with five.

Heinrich provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Lake Norden with two runs batted in. The cleanup hitter went 2-for-3 on the day. Evan Schultz and Heinrich each collected two hits for Lake Norden. Lake Norden turned one double play in the game.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 9 of 61

## Strong Hitting Not Enough As Groton Legion Falls To Webster

By GameChanger Media

Groton Legion Post 39 fell 6-4 to Webster on Monday at Webster despite out-hitting them six to four. Teylor Diegel and Gavin Englund each collected two hits for Groton Legion Post 39.

A wild pitch put Webster on the board in the bottom of the second.

In the top of the third inning, Groton Legion Post 39 went back into the lead after Brevin Fliehs tripled down the right field line, and Webster committed an error, each scoring one run.

Webster made the score 4-2 in the bottom of the third after Brent Bearman doubled, scoring two runs, and Jack Shoemaker singled, scoring one run.

Sheldon Schmeig earned the win for Webster. The hurler allowed six hits and four runs (three earned) over five innings, striking out one and walking none. Englund took the loss for Groton Legion Post 39. The hurler went two and one-third innings, giving up five runs (zero earned) on four hits, striking out seven and walking one. Jarrett Erdmann led things off on the mound for Groton Legion Post 39. The starting pitcher gave up zero hits and one run (zero earned) over one and two-thirds innings, striking out two and walking one.

Fliehs, Englund, and Korbin Kucker each drove in one run for Groton Legion Post 39. Diegel stole two bases.

Bearman drove the middle of the lineup, leading Webster with two runs batted in. The outfielder went 1-for-2 on the day. Shoemaker, Martin Dorsett, Bearman, and Dylan Carlson each collected one hit for Webster.

## Brevin Fliehs A Difficult Out As Groton Legion Defeat Webster

By GameChanger Media

Brevin Fliehs collected three hits in five at bats, as Groton Legion Post 39 defeated Webster 19-2 on Monday at Webster. Fliehs tripled in the fifth inning, singled in the fourth inning, and singled in the fifth inning.

Groton Legion Post 39 got on the board in the top of the first inning after Nick Morris drew a walk, scoring one run, Braxton Imrie singled, scoring two runs, Nick Groeblichhoff singled, scoring two runs, and Lincoln Krause doubled, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 scored five runs on five hits in the top of the fourth inning. Fliehs singled, scoring one run, Gavin Englund drew a walk, scoring one run, Morris singled, scoring two runs, and Imrie singled, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 scored eight runs on six hits in the top of the fifth inning. Fliehs tripled, scoring one run, an error scored one run, Alex Abeln singled, scoring one run, Krause singled, scoring one run, Teylor Diegel doubled, scoring two runs, Fliehs singled, scoring one run, and Carter Simon drew a walk, scoring one run.

Kellen Antonsen earned the win for Groton Legion Post 39. The starting pitcher allowed six hits and two runs over five innings, striking out six and walking none. Dylan Carlson took the loss for Webster. The pitcher went four innings, allowing 11 runs on nine hits, striking out two and walking six.

Groton Legion Post 39 tallied 15 hits in the game. Diegel and Fliehs each collected three hits for Groton Legion Post 39. Morris, Imrie, and Fliehs each drove in three runs for Groton Legion Post 39. Krause and Korbin Kucker each collected multiple hits for Groton Legion Post 39. Groton Legion Post 39 had a strong eye at the plate, tallying nine walks for the game. Englund and Simon led the team with three bases on balls each. Groton Legion Post 39 turned one double play in the game.

Ian Lesnar led Webster with one run batted in. The catcher went 2-for-3 on the day.

Groton Legion Post 39 welcome Lisbon on Wednesday for their next game.

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**SOUTH DAKOTA  
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

## SD attorneys vote in favor of mandatory ongoing education

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

South Dakota attorneys have voted to impose a first-ever requirement on themselves to undergo regular continuing legal education, taking a big step toward joining 46 other states that have similar mandates for lawyers.

A majority of the membership of the State Bar of South Dakota, the professional group for lawyers, voted on June 20 to support a proposal that would require attorneys to receive at least 20 hours of training every two years starting in 2027.

Unlike numerous other professions in South Dakota, there is no requirement for attorneys to receive ongoing training in order to maintain their licenses. There's also no way to know if working lawyers are staying up to date or improving their knowledge of the law.

Seamus Culhane, a Watertown lawyer who supports mandatory continuing legal education, said some attorneys work hard to stay current on the law and legal techniques while others might need a requirement to do so.

"It's always frustrating when you have to force people to do things," said Culhane, a partner at Turbak Law Office in Watertown. "But given what's at stake here, with people's lives, possible imprisonment or financial well being and everything else, it's pretty important for lawyers to get some continuing education."

A lawyer walks through the Pennington County Courthouse in Rapid City, S.D., on May 12, 2025. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

Culhane said the law and legal landscape are constantly changing, so attorneys need to stay current in order to represent their clients as best they can.

"I'm looking forward to improving my own continuing education and creating an environment for other people to do the same," he said. "The constant approach to learning has suited our family and firm very well over the years."

### After 'divisive' discussion, an affirmative vote

According to South Dakota laws and regulations, numerous other professions require ongoing education in order to maintain a license or certification in the field.

Medical and counseling providers certified with the Department of Social Services must complete 40 hours of training every two years. Training hours are required every year or two years to maintain licensure in real estate, electrical, insurance, accounting, engineering, education, plumbing and even for cosmetology instructors.

Attorney Robert J. Rohl attended the June 20 bar association business meeting in Rapid City where the CLE proposal was considered and said the discussion was somewhat "divisive."



**A lawyer walks through the Pennington County Courthouse in Rapid City, S.D., on May 12, 2025.**

(Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 11 of 61

Rohl said the bar committee that studied the matter and ultimately supported imposition of mandatory CLE gave a presentation before a debate took place.

"There were certainly some people who were pretty sternly against it," said Rohl, a Rapid City attorney who is president of the South Dakota Trial Lawyers Association.

Opposition largely came from rural attorneys who often work alone and were concerned about time and financial constraints that could make compliance a challenge, Rohl said.

"Some others seemed to think we're already doing a good enough job of policing ourselves and that this was unnecessary," he said.

Rohl said he favors mandatory continuing education as a way for lawyers to remain updated on new laws, legal issues and techniques that can help them constantly improve.

"I'm strongly in favor of it because I think the reasons to have it greatly outweigh the reasons not to," he said.

He also pointed out that the current proposal calls for online training that should not create an undue travel or time barrier to completion.

Rohl said the vote of about 200 bar members present revealed that about 65% of attendees — a "clear majority" — voted in favor of the mandatory CLE requirement.

Any plan to implement mandatory CLE would still require approval from the South Dakota Supreme Court, which regulates the legal profession.

Alisa Bousa, spokeswoman for the South Dakota Unified Judicial System, said the Supreme Court will consider any education requirement only after the bar association provides the justices with a draft rule proposal.

At that point, she said, the high court will likely hold a public hearing and accept public comment on the proposed rules before make a decision on implementation. There is no deadline for that process to occur, she said.

## Bar committee studied issue and gave support

In 2023, the bar created a committee to study whether the state should join the 46 other states that require ongoing training. In February 2024, the bar sent a survey to its roughly 2,600 members, about 2,000 of whom are actively practicing in the state.

More than 1,100 members responded, with 47% opposed to mandatory CLE and 53% in favor or neutral on the topic, according to a summary of the committee's work.

The committee report notes that "the lack of mandatory continuing education requirements for South Dakota attorneys may affect public perception of our Bar (association)."

The report also said mandatory education requirements align with the bar's strategic plan, which contains a goal to "foster a legal community that exemplifies professional excellence, wellbeing and civility."

In February, the committee voted to recommend adoption of mandatory CLE requirements and proposed that attorneys be required to receive 20 hours of training every two years starting in 2027. The training could be taken online, and the bar association would offer free seminars in order to keep participant costs low. Attorneys would be responsible for tracking compliance with the training requirements.

An attorney exits the Pennington County Courthouse in Rapid City, S.D., on May 12, 2025. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

On its website, the state bar association has a page devoted to promoting opportunities for continuing education. However, under a heading of "Upcoming CLE events," the site lists "No Results." The website does have a link to a YouTube channel with roughly a dozen videotaped discussions on the law and legal issues.

The training page includes a link to "sexual harassment prevention training for attorneys," though Culhane said that session was geared more to proper workplace behavior than toward any deeper understanding of the law.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 12 of 61

## **SD would catch up to other states, professions**

Neil Fulton, dean of the University of South Dakota Knudson School of Law in Vermillion, said he supports mandatory CLE training. Fulton pointed out that he spoke with News Watch as a licensed attorney in South Dakota and not as a representative of USD or the Board of Regents. Fulton served on the bar's CLE committee.

"I just don't think you can practice without continuing to grow, be updated and know about legal developments," Fulton said. "We really are on the outside looking in among professions for not having continuing education in South Dakota and compared with the overall legal profession in the United States."

South Dakota attorney Neil Fulton, shown in 2022, said he supports mandatory ongoing education for lawyers in South Dakota because the law is always changing. ((Photo: Courtesy University of South Dakota)

Fulton said he believes any opposition to mandatory CLE would be related to the potential costs of money and time, the logistical challenges posed to solo operators and whether the training is valuable and professionally presented.

"Are there some people who just don't want to do it? I'm sure there are," Fulton said. "But I think the lawyers I interact with want to be competent. They want to stay current. It's just really a question of how people weigh out the imposition of this obligation on them with the other obligations they have of work, family and all that."

In the end, however, Fulton said requiring some level of continuing education will help lawyers in South Dakota, their clients and the profession as a whole.

"I mean, you don't graduate law school knowing everything you need to know to sustain you in a career over decades," he said.

*This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at [sdnewswatch.org](https://sdnewswatch.org) and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Contact Bart Pfankuch at [bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org](mailto:bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org).*





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Rule for round-the-clock nurses at nursing homes delayed a decade by 'big, beautiful bill'

BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 7, 2025 5:45 PM

Health care industry representatives voiced concerns to lawmakers Tuesday in Pierre regarding newly finalized federal staffing standards for nursing homes.

"This is an unfunded mandate being placed on nursing homes," said Tammy Hatting, chief operating officer of the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations.

She called the new requirements a threat to nursing homes nationwide.

"We have to start talking about, 'How do we prepare for this threat?' Because the clock is ticking, the deadlines are out," Hatting said. Her comments came during a hearing conducted at the Capitol by the Legislature's budget committee.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services finalized the new rules for Medicare- and Medicaid-certified long-term care facilities in April. The agency said the rules "affirmed its commitment to hold nursing homes accountable for providing safe and high-quality care."

The new rules say nursing homes must complete a facility assessment by Aug. 8.

By May 10, 2026, for urban facilities and May 10, 2027, for rural facilities, there must be enough staff to give each resident 3.48 hours of care daily, and at least one registered nurse on-site 24/7.

By May 10, 2027, for urban facilities and May 10, 2029, for rural facilities, at least 0.55 of the 3.48 hours of daily care per resident must come from a registered nurse and 2.45 hours must come from a certified nurse assistant.

The rules define areas with a population of 10,000 or more as urban. Hatting said her organization is seeking clarity about how areas are defined and is lobbying to raise the population threshold defining an area as urban.

Hatting said the requirement to have a registered nurse on-site 24/7 is the biggest immediate concern. She said the state had 1,232 open registered nurse jobs as of April 24, and 15.1% of registered nurses are expected to retire in the next five years.

Hatting said 18 nursing homes in the state closed from 2015 to 2023, many due to a caregiver shortage.

A new health care industry-led analysis found that 96% of South Dakota's nursing homes don't meet the new rules. They will need to hire 299 more staff members, which will cost about \$19.7 million. Nursing



**The Good Samaritan Society Sioux Falls Center nursing home in June 2025.** (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)



homes might limit new residents, reduce their number of beds or close down, according to the report. South Dakota Health Care Association Executive Director Mark Deakshared his concerns about the staffing requirements with legislators.

"Where on earth would we find these people?" he said.

Hatting said various congressional bills have been introduced with aims ranging from stopping the rules to providing up to \$400 million per year in grant funding to states for long-term care workers.

Health care industry officials said they're urging South Dakota's congressional delegation to take action, and asking the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to reconsider and roll back some of the rules.

*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.*

## Republican South Dakota lawmaker removes 'white boy summer' social media post after criticism

**Democratic legislators ask for apology and say language is 'rooted in white supremacy'**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 7, 2025 4:41 PM**

A South Dakota lawmaker removed a social media post that some fellow lawmakers described as "a direct expression of racism and sexism."

Meanwhile, a legislative leader declined to act on the post and criticized the legislators who complained about it.

Aberdeen Republican Rep. Logan Manhart posted a photo of himself Friday on Instagram captioned, "It's a white boy summer and the boys are back in charge. #MAGA," according to screenshots of the post, some of which were shared by people condemning it. The post has since been removed.

Manhart did not respond to a message from South Dakota Searchlight. He wrote Monday on Facebook that criticisms of the post described him as racist, sexist and antisemitic, and he said those descriptions "could not be further from the truth."

"I love our state, our nation, and all of our people," Manhart wrote on Facebook. "God bless each and every one of you and your families. Have a wonderful and festive SOUTH DAKOTA SUMMER."

Manhart's Facebook post did not include an apology.

Five Democratic state representatives, including House Minority Leader Erin Healy, D-Sioux Falls, sent a letter to House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach and House Speaker Jon Hansen, both Republicans, on Sunday calling on Manhart to apologize and urging legislative leaders to "address this with the serious-



**State Rep. Logan Manhart, R-Aberdeen, speaks on the South Dakota House floor on Jan. 22, 2025.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 15 of 61

ness it demands.”

“This is not a joke. It is a direct expression of racism and sexism, rooted in white supremacy and patriarchal power,” the letter said. “For an elected official to celebrate the return of ‘white boys’ being ‘in charge’ is a disgraceful signal that our government should belong to a narrow, privileged group — rather than to all South Dakotans.”

“White Boy Summer” became popular in 2021 as a meme and rap song by Chet Hanks, son of actor Tom Hanks. The song references drug use and other sexual acts, and is a play on the 2019 song “Hot Girl Summer” by rapper Megan Thee Stallion.

“White boy summer was created to be fun, playful and a celebration of fly white boys who love beautiful queens of every race,” Hanks wrote last year.

The Global Project Against Hate and Extremism reports that the phrase “white boy summer” has been co-opted by extremist groups and has “escalated into a powerful global call-to-action for far-right recruitment, protest and violence.”

“Several extremist groups including the Proud Boys, White Lives Matter, the Identitarian movement in Europe and neo-Nazi Active Clubs are all using ‘White Boy Summer’ to spread propaganda, recruit new members and facilitate targeted hate campaigns including acts of vandalism and hate incidents,” the group wrote.

Manhart’s post caught the attention of social media users across the nation, including Toby Morton, a former writer for the TV show “South Park” who posted that Manhart “forgot to buy his own domains” and that Manhart is “about to find out what public records and petty people can do with a .com.”

The letter from the Democratic lawmakers said South Dakota is “a state rich with diversity and strength,” including Native Americans whose land was “taken through broken treaties, displacement, and violence.”

“To ignore that truth, or the continued harm experienced by Indigenous communities and other marginalized people, is not just a moral failure — it is a betrayal of our public duty,” the letter said.

Manhart represents District 1, which includes the Lake Traverse Reservation and tribal land of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate.

Dismissing Manhart’s remarks “would send a chilling message that hate and exclusion are welcome in our Capitol,” the letter added.

Majority Leader Odenbach responded to the letter in an email to lawmakers, which was shared with South Dakota Searchlight, saying it would be impossible to police and respond to social media posts of all state representatives, or “to divine their underlying meaning.”

He added that he rejects the “insinuation that South Dakota is a state founded by racist oppressors, or that our great citizens of today are the cause” of continued harm to Native Americans and other marginalized groups.

“This is an outrageous slur on our fellow South Dakotans, whether living or dead,” Odenbach said, addressing the signers of the letter. “You can and must do better.”

Healy told South Dakota Searchlight that she and her Democratic colleagues “raised the issue because we’d be complicit in letting harmful rhetoric go unchallenged” otherwise. She added that “acknowledging truths about our history is not an attack on South Dakota” or its residents.

Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden, who is running for the 2026 Republican nomination for governor, said in a text message that he saw Manhart’s post, and saw that Manhart wore a “Toby Doeden for South Dakota” jacket in the post.

“I don’t really get it. I am not at all sure what he was trying to convey,” Doeden said. “Seemed like a pretty stupid use of words if you ask me.”

*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.*

## Noem ends protected status for Honduras, Nicaragua

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JULY 7, 2025 4:36 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem ended temporary protections Monday for nationals from Nicaragua and Honduras, opening up roughly 76,000 people to deportations by early September.

The move is the latest effort by President Donald Trump's administration to wind down legal statuses, such as Temporary Protected Status, amid an immigration crackdown and pledge to carry out mass deportations.

So far, the Trump administration has moved to end legal statuses, including work authorizations and deportation protections, for more than half a million immigrants.

TPS has been used since the 1990s and is granted to nationals from countries deemed too dangerous to return to due to violence, natural disasters or other unstable conditions.

Roughly 72,000 Hondurans and 4,000 Nicaraguans had temporary protections since 1999 following Hurricane Mitch, a Category 5 storm that destroyed parts of Central America and killed more than 10,000 people.

"Temporary Protected Status was never meant to last a quarter of a century," the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement.

Noem determined that conditions in Nicaragua and Honduras had improved and TPS for the two countries is no longer needed, DHS said.

In late June, Noem traveled to Honduras, where she met with President Xiomara Castro de Zelaya regarding the repatriation of Hondurans from the U.S.

"It is clear that the Government of Honduras has taken all of the necessary steps to overcome the impacts of Hurricane Mitch, almost 27 years ago," Noem said Monday. "Honduran citizens can safely return home, and DHS is here to help facilitate their voluntary return."

Noem has also ended TPS for nationals of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Haiti, Nepal and Venezuela.

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



**U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem delivers remarks to staff at the Department of Homeland Security headquarters on Jan. 28, 2025 in Washington, D.C.** (Photo

by Manuel Balce Ceneta-Pool/Getty Images)



## Trump floats high tariffs on Japan, Korea and more countries by Aug. 1

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JULY 7, 2025 3:51 PM

President Donald Trump on Monday threatened tariffs from 25% to 40% on all goods from seven countries, including major U.S. trade partners Japan and South Korea.

The tariffs would go into effect Aug. 1, rather than Wednesday, which was the deadline Trump already extended once from an initial April date, Trump wrote in a series of letters to the countries' leaders that he posted on his social media platform.

Countries that will see 25% tariffs are Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Kazakhstan, with South Africa subject to a 30% rate and Laos and Myanmar seeing a 40% tariff rate.

The letters are nearly identical and begin by acknowledging the United States faces a trade deficit with the other country.

"Nevertheless, we have decided to move forward with you, but only with more balanced, and fair, TRADE," Trump wrote in the letters. "We have had years to discuss our Trading Relationship with (your country), and have concluded that we must move away from these longterm, and very persistent, Trade Deficits."

The economy-wide tariffs would apply above any sector-specific levies, Trump wrote.

The administration would respond to any effort by the other country to place a reciprocal tariff on the U.S. by setting a new tariff rate on that country that equaled whatever rate it set, plus 25%, Trump said.



**President Donald Trump is displayed on a television screen as traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on April 7, 2025 in New York City. Markets around the world fell dramatically as global leaders, businesses and economies tried to understand and come to terms with Trump's tariff policy.** (Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

### Letters on the way

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Monday about 14 countries would receive similar letters. "These new rates that will be provided in this correspondence to these foreign leaders will be going out the door within the next month, or deals will be made," Leavitt said. "Those countries continue to negotiate with the United States. We've seen a lot of positive developments in the right direction, but the administration, the president and his trade team want to cut the best deals for the American people and the American worker."

The administration has used tariffs aggressively to reset trade relationships with every partner. The new threats are part of a push to reach trade deals with individual countries.

Trump set a goal of reaching 90 deals within 90 days of his April 2 announcement, but only two — Vietnam and the U.K. — had materialized by that deadline.

Trump will also sign an executive order further extending to Aug. 1 the deadline for tariffs on every country without a one-to-one trade agreement with the U.S., Leavitt said.

Trump shook the global economy when he imposed wide-reaching levies on nearly every country on April 2. The president walked them back just seven days later, announcing a 90-day pause on staggering tariffs that reached nearly 50% on some major U.S. trading partners and, briefly, 125% on Chinese imports.

The U.S. Court of International Trade struck down Trump's emergency tariffs May 28. The following day,

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 18 of 61**

an appeals court temporarily restored the tariffs and as of Monday they remain in place while the court case is being heard.

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

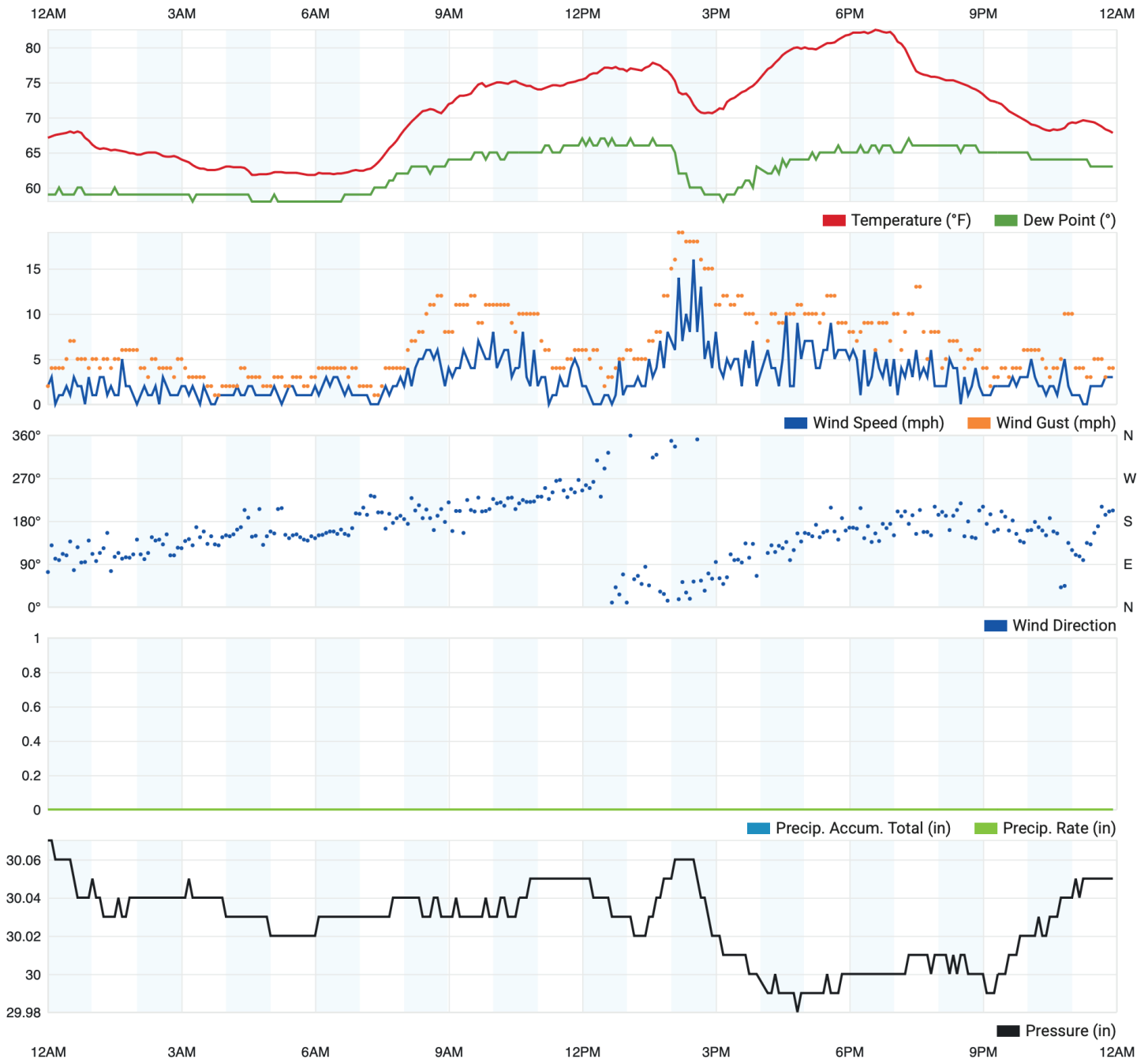


# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 19 of 61

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 7, 2025



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 20 of 61

Today

Tonight

Wednesday

Wednesday  
Night

Thursday



High: 81 °F

Patchy Fog  
then Sunny



Low: 59 °F

Mostly Clear



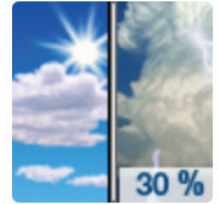
High: 90 °F

Hot



Low: 67 °F

Chance  
T-storms



High: 89 °F

Mostly Sunny  
then Chance  
T-storms

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

### HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:  
Isolated to Scattered Severe  
Storms Possible

### TIMING

Wednesday Evening and  
Overnight

### PRIMARY THREATS



LARGE HAIL  
(1.00-1.75in)



DAMAGING  
WIND  
(55-65+mph)

### SECONDARY THREATS

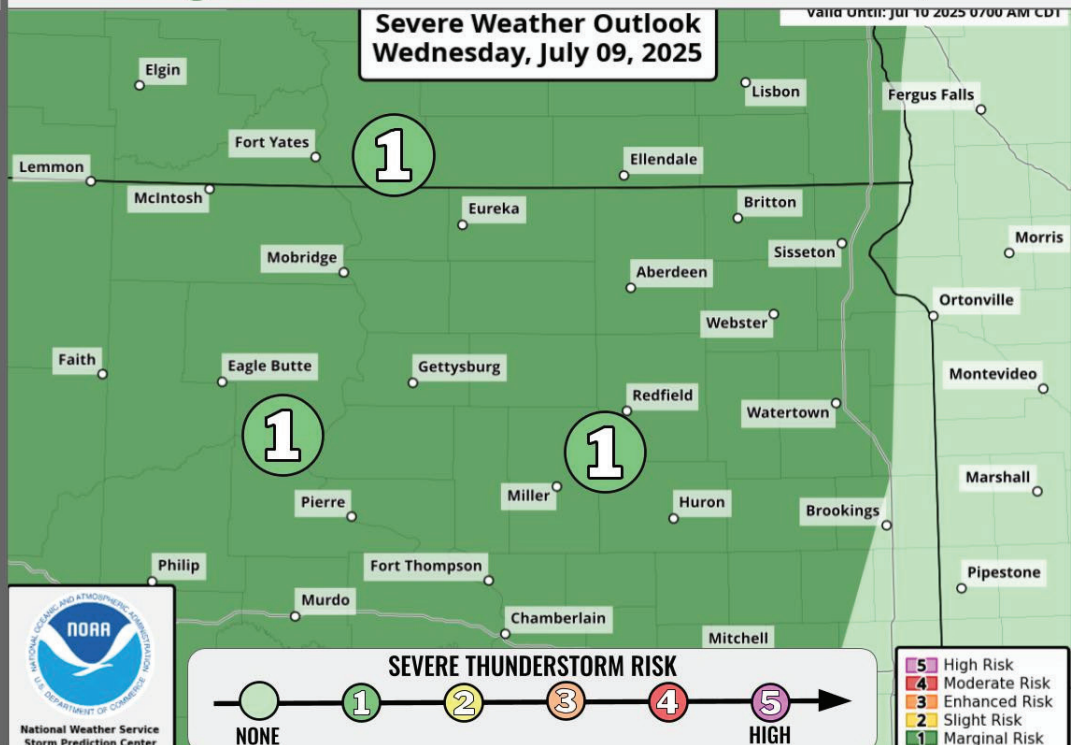


HEAVY RAIN

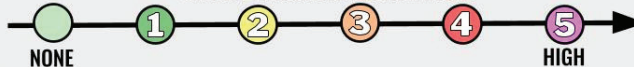
## Marginal Risk for Severe Storms on Wednesday

Severe Weather Outlook  
Wednesday, July 09, 2025

Valid Until: Jul 10 2025 0700 AM CDT



### SEVERE THUNDERSTORM RISK



5 High Risk  
4 Moderate Risk  
3 Enhanced Risk  
2 Slight Risk  
1 Marginal Risk

Dry conditions are expected today through most of Wednesday. Then, another area of low pressure moving into the area will produce a 25-45% chance of storms from Wednesday evening into early Thursday morning. Some storms may become severe, capable of producing large hail and damaging wind gusts.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 21 of 61

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 83 °F at 6:37 PM**

**High Heat Index: 85 °F at 6:45 PM**

**Low Temp: 62 °F at 4:35 AM**

**Wind: 20 mph at 2:09 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 32 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1936

Record Low: 43 in 1905

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 0.94

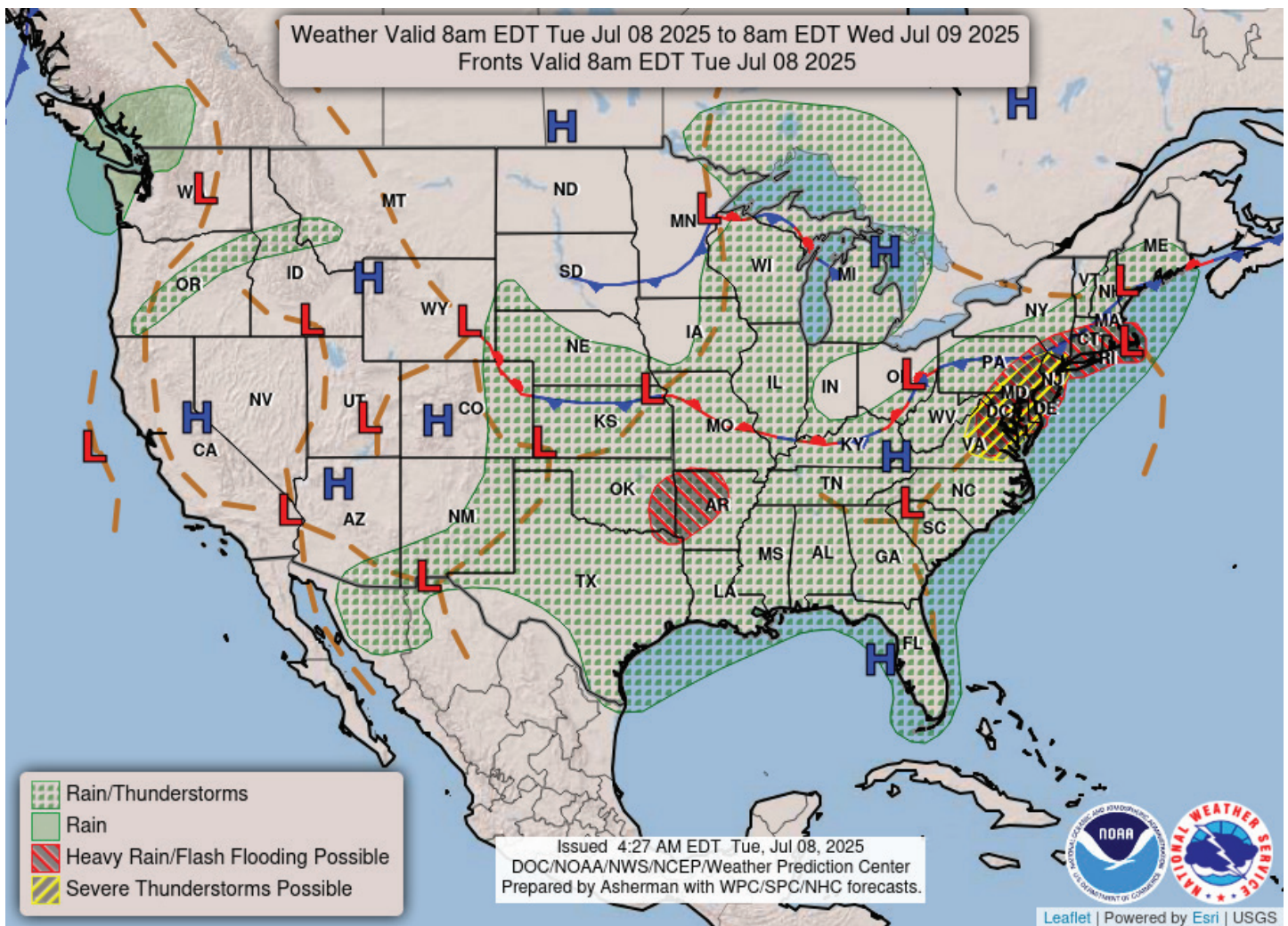
Precip to date in July: 1.71

Average Precip to date: 11.95

Precip Year to Date: 11.83

Sunset Tonight: 9:23:57 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:52:02 am





# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 22 of 61**

## Today in Weather History

July 8, 1922: Two tornadoes occurred near the southern border of South Dakota, with one at St. Charles in Gregory County, and the other on the south shore of Lake Andes, in Charles Mix County. The distance apart was about 30 miles. The tornado in Gregory County missed the town of Lake Andes. However, it destroyed about 29 cottages and five large barns. Fifteen people were injured, but no one was killed.

July 8, 1951: An F2 touched down in open country and moved northeastward, passing three miles northwest of Corona in Roberts County. Thirteen buildings were destroyed on a farm with only the house left standing. Three cows and 20 pigs were killed.

July 8, 2009: A tornado passed through the city of Dickinson, ND, on the far south side, mainly just south of the Heart River. From their eyewitness accounts, and from video obtained from the Dickinson Police Department, it is likely that this was a rain-wrapped tornado, and very difficult if not impossible to see. The tornado occurred before sunset, yet it was described as being as dark as night during the event. Over 450 structures were damaged, of which nearly 100 were declared destroyed or beyond repair. Numerous vehicles were damaged or destroyed; some were on their roofs. From that, it was determined that peak wind speeds in the tornado were on the order of 150 mph. [Click HERE](#) for more information.

July 8, 2011: Historical releases on the Oahe Dam of 160,000 CFS kept the Missouri River from Pierre to Chamberlain at record flood levels throughout July. Extensive sandbagging and levee building had been done earlier to hold back the river. Residents in the Pierre, Fort Pierre, and Oacoma areas continued to be the most affected by the river. Many homes, along with roads, crop, and pastureland remained flooded throughout the month. The Missouri River at Pierre continued from 5 to 6 foot above flood stage throughout July. The Missouri River at Chamberlain reached a record stage of 75.1 feet on July 8th. Flood stage at Chamberlain is 65 feet. The flooding on the river began in late May and continued into August.

July 8, 2013: A thunderstorm complex moving across central and north central South Dakota produced gusty winds up to 70 mph. These strong winds brought down several tree branches around the area with Dewey County the hardest hit location. In Timber Lake, downed tree branches fell on houses and vehicles causing damage.

1680: The first confirmed tornado death in the United States occurred in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The funnel was filled with, stones, bushes, and other things. The tornado also unroofed a barn and snapped many large trees.

1816 - Frost was reported in low places throughout New England. (David Ludlum)

1950 - The town of York, NE, was deluged with 13.15 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1975 - Three people were killed and six others were injured when lightning struck a walnut tree near Mayo, FL. The nine people were stringing tobacco under a tin shed when the bolt hit the nearby tree. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in the central U.S. produced wind gusts to 90 mph at Waterloo, IA, 6.38 inches of rain at Tescott, KS, and twenty-five minutes of ping-pong ball size hail at Drummond, OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Sixteen cities in the central and western U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 103 degrees at Denver, CO, equalled their record for July, and a 110 degree reading at Rapid City, SD, equalled their all-time record high. Denver reported a record five straight days of 100 degree heat, and Scottsbluff, NE, reported a record eight days in a row of 100 degree weather. (The National Weather Summary)

2003: What may be the world's highest dew point temperature was recorded at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in the Persian Gulf. A dew point of 95 degrees was recorded at 3 PM while the air temperature was 108 degrees. The apparent temperature at that time would have been 172 degrees.

2009: An intense cold front brings heavy snow, hail, high winds and unusually cold temperatures to southern Peru. The severe conditions were blamed for the deaths of more than 246 children due to cold-related illnesses.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 23 of 61



God created us to live in relationships with others. In fact, it is difficult for many to go through a day without speaking to someone about something. Friends are very important and can bring "good things to life." However, the opposite can also be true. Some friendships bring healing, help and hope into our lives while others bring us trouble, turmoil and tragedy.

No doubt Solomon had his share of friendships that were not what he expected and brought the unwanted and unexpected into his life. So, he issued us a warning: "A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray."

Righteous in the Old Testament always refers to meeting God's standards of what is right and just. If our relationship with God is as He wants it to be, then we must be "cautious" about our relationships with others. Unfortunately, being close friends with a person whom we admire and respect, but who has no time or concern for godly things is very dangerous. The influence that person has on our life can lead us astray and destroy us. That is why we must be "cautious." Our relationship with God is more important than any relationship with any other person.

But how cautious are we to be? Very! The meaning of that word includes "duties" like instigate, spy out or search out. "How foolish," some might say. Not really. If we want the best God has to offer us, we must be cautious.

Today's Prayer: Lord, may we guard our relationship with You and strengthen it through reading Your Word and prayer. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray." Proverbs 12:26

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



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 24 of 61

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# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 25 of 61



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.04.25

17 20 24 41 42 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$70,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 25 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.07.25

8 18 27 31 41 9

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,650,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 40 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.07.25

3 12 24 40 42 13

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 55 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.05.25

1 2 14 19 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$48,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 55 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.07.25

14 17 49 52 68 7

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 24 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.07.25

33 35 58 61 69 25

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$216,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 24 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 26 of 61**

## **Upcoming Groton Events**

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

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

### **Appeals court rules against North Dakota tribes in voting rights case that could go to Supreme Court**

By JACK DURA and STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal appeals court won't reconsider its decision in a redistricting case that went against two Native American tribes that challenged North Dakota's legislative redistricting map, and the dispute could be headed for the U.S. Supreme Court.

The case has drawn national interest because of a 2-1 ruling issued in May by a three-judge panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that erased a path through the federal Voting Rights Act for people in seven states to sue under a key provision of the landmark federal civil rights law. The tribes argued that the 2021 map violated the act by diluting their voting strength and ability to elect their own candidates.

The panel said only the U.S. Department of Justice can bring such lawsuits. That followed a 2023 ruling out of Arkansas in the same circuit that also said private individuals can't sue under Section 2 of the law.

Those rulings conflict with decades of rulings by appellate courts in other federal circuits that have affirmed the rights of private individuals to sue under Section 2, creating a split that the Supreme Court may be asked to resolve. However, several of the high court's conservative justices recently have indicated interest in making it harder, if not impossible, to bring redistricting lawsuits under the Voting Rights Act.

After the May decision, the Spirit Lake Tribe and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians asked the appeals court for a rehearing before all 11 judges. Attorneys general of 19 states, numerous former U.S. Justice Department attorneys, several voting rights historians and others also asked for a rehearing.

But in a ruling Thursday, the full court denied the request, which was filed by the Native American Rights Fund and other groups representing the tribes. Three judges said they would have granted it, including Circuit Chief Judge Steven Colloton, who had dissented in the previous ruling.

The majority opinion in May said that for the tribes to sue under the Voting Rights Act, the law would have had to "unambiguously" give private persons or groups the right to do so.

Lenny Powell, a staff attorney for the fund, said in a statement that the refusal to reconsider "wrongly restricts voters disenfranchised by a gerrymandered redistricting map" from challenging that map.

Powell said Monday that the tribes are now considering their legal options.

Another group representing the tribes, the Campaign Legal Center, said the ruling is "contrary to both the intent of Congress in enacting the law and to decades of Supreme Court precedent affirming voters' power to enforce the law in court."

The office of North Dakota Secretary of State Michael Howe did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

The groups said they will continue to fight to ensure fair maps. The North Dakota and Arkansas rulings apply only in the states of the 8th Circuit: Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. In the wake of the Arkansas decision, Minnesota and other states have moved to shore up voting rights with state-level protections to plug the growing gaps in the federal law.

The North Dakota tribes filed their lawsuit in 2022. The three-judge panel heard appeal arguments last October after Republican Secretary of State Michael Howe appealed a lower court's November 2023 decision in favor of the tribes.

In that ruling, U.S. District Judge Peter Welte ordered creation of a new district that encompassed both tribes' reservations, which are about 60 miles (97 kilometers) apart. In 2024, voters elected members from both tribes, all Democrats, to the district's Senate seat and two House seats.

Republicans hold supermajority control of North Dakota's Legislature.

## Yemen's Houthi rebels attack a ship in the Red Sea after claiming they sunk another

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Yemen's Houthi rebels continued an hourslong attack Tuesday targeting a Liberian-flagged cargo ship in the Red Sea, authorities said, after the group claimed to have sunk another vessel in an assault that threatens to renew combat across the vital waterway.

The Greek-owned Eternity C remains "surrounded by small craft and is under continuous attack," the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center warned Tuesday. At least two people on board the ship were reported to be hurt and two others missing.

The bulk carrier had been heading north toward the Suez Canal when it came under fire by men in small boats and by bomb-carrying drones Monday night. The security guards on board also fired their weapons. The European Union anti-piracy patrol Operation Atalanta and the private security firm Ambrey both reported those details.

While the Houthis haven't claimed the attack, Yemen's exiled government and the EU force blamed the rebels for the attack.

The Houthis separately attacked the Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carrier Magic Seas on Sunday with drones, missiles, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire, forcing its crew of 22 to abandon the vessel. The rebels later said it sank in the Red Sea.

The two attacks and a round of Israeli airstrikes early Monday targeting the rebels raised fears of a renewed Houthi campaign against shipping that could again draw in U.S. and Western forces, particularly after U.S. President Donald Trump's administration targeted the rebels in a major airstrike campaign.

The attacks come at a sensitive moment in the Middle East, as a possible ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war hangs in the balance, and as Iran weighs whether to restart negotiations over its nuclear program following American airstrikes targeting its most sensitive atomic sites during the Israel-Iran war in June.

The Houthi rebels have been launching missile and drone attacks against commercial and military ships in the region in what the group's leadership has described as an effort to end Israel's offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Between November 2023 and January 2025, the Houthis targeted more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two of them and killing four sailors. Their campaign has greatly reduced the flow of trade through the Red Sea corridor, which typically sees \$1 trillion of goods move through it annually. Shipping through the Red Sea, while still lower than normal, has increased in recent weeks.

The Houthis paused attacks until the U.S. launched a broad assault against the rebels in mid-March. That ended weeks later and the Houthis hadn't attacked a vessel until this weekend, though they did continue occasional missile attacks targeting Israel.

## Trump sets 25% tariffs on Japan and South Korea, and new import taxes on 12 other nations

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday set a 25% tax on goods imported from Japan and South Korea, as well as new tariff rates on a dozen other nations that would go into effect on Aug. 1.

Trump provided notice by posting letters on Truth Social that were addressed to the leaders of the various countries. The letters warned them to not retaliate by increasing their own import taxes, or else the Trump administration would further increase tariffs.

"If for any reason you decide to raise your Tariffs, then, whatever the number you choose to raise them by, will be added onto the 25% that we charge," Trump wrote in the letters to Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung.

The letters were not the final word from Trump on tariffs, so much as another episode in a global economic drama in which he has placed himself at the center. His moves have raised fears that economic



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 29 of 61

growth would slow to a trickle, if not make the U.S. and other nations more vulnerable to a recession. But Trump is confident that tariffs are necessary to bring back domestic manufacturing and fund the tax cuts he signed into law last Friday.

He mixed his sense of aggression with a willingness to still negotiate, signaling the likelihood that the drama and uncertainty would continue and that few things are ever final with Trump.

"It's all done," Trump told reporters Monday. "I told you we'll make some deals, but for the most part we're going to send a letter."

South Korea's Trade Ministry said early Tuesday that it will accelerate negotiations with the United States to achieve a mutually beneficial deal before the 25% tax on its exports goes into effect.

Imports from Myanmar and Laos would be taxed at 40%, Cambodia and Thailand at 36%, Serbia and Bangladesh at 35%, Indonesia at 32%, South Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina at 30% and Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Tunisia at 25%.

Trump placed the word "only" before revealing the rate in his letters to the foreign leaders, implying that he was being generous with his tariffs. But the letters generally followed a standard format, so much so that the one to Bosnia and Herzegovina initially addressed its woman leader, Željka Cvijanović, as "Mr. President." Trump later posted a corrected letter.

## Trade talks have yet to deliver several deals

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump, by setting the rates himself, was creating "tailor-made trade plans for each and every country on this planet and that's what this administration continues to be focused on."

Following a now well-worn pattern, Trump plans to continue sharing the letters sent to his counterparts on social media and then mailing them the documents, a stark departure from the more formal practices of all his predecessors when negotiating trade agreements.

The letters are not agreed-to settlements but Trump's own choice on rates, a sign that the closed-door talks with foreign delegations failed to produce satisfactory results for either side.

Wendy Cutler, vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute who formerly worked in the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, said the tariff hikes on Japan and South Korea were "unfortunate."

"Both have been close partners on economic security matters and have a lot to offer the United States on priority matters like shipbuilding, semiconductors, critical minerals and energy cooperation," Cutler said.

Trump still has outstanding differences on trade with the European Union and India, among other trading partners. Tougher talks with China are on a longer time horizon in which imports from that nation are being taxed at 55%.

The office of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a statement that the tariff rates announced by Trump mischaracterized the trade relationship with the U.S., but it would "continue with its diplomatic efforts towards a more balanced and mutually beneficial trade relationship with the United States" after having proposed a trade framework on May 20.

## Higher tariffs prompt market worries, more uncertainty ahead

The S&P 500 stock index was down 0.8% in Monday trading, while the interest charged on 10-year U.S. Treasury notes increased to nearly 4.39%, a figure that could translate into elevated rates for mortgages and auto loans.

Trump has declared an economic emergency to unilaterally impose the taxes, suggesting they are remedies for past trade deficits even though many U.S. consumers have come to value autos, electronics and other goods from Japan and South Korea. The constitution grants Congress the power to levy tariffs under normal circumstances, though tariffs can also result from executive branch investigations regarding national security risks.

Trump's ability to impose tariffs through an economic emergency is under legal challenge, with the administration appealing a May ruling by the U.S. Court of International Trade that said the president exceeded his authority.

It's unclear what he gains strategically against China — another stated reason for the tariffs — by chal-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 30 of 61**

lenging two crucial partners in Asia, Japan and South Korea, that could counter China's economic heft.

"These tariffs may be modified, upward or downward, depending on our relationship with your Country," Trump wrote in both letters.

Because the new tariff rates go into effect in roughly three weeks, Trump is setting up a period of possibly tempestuous talks among the U.S. and its trade partners to reach new frameworks.

"I don't see a huge escalation or a walk back — it's just more of the same," said Scott Lincicome, a vice president at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank

Trump initially roiled the financial markets by announcing tariff rates on dozens of countries, including 24% on Japan and 25% on South Korea. In order to calm the markets, Trump unveiled a 90-day negotiating period during which goods from most countries were taxed at a baseline 10%. So far, the rates in the letters sent by Trump either match his April 2 tariffs or are generally close to them.

The 90-day negotiating period technically ends Wednesday, even as multiple administration officials suggested the three-week period before implementation is akin to overtime for additional talks that could change the rates. Trump signed an executive order Monday to delay the official tariff increases until Aug. 1.

Congressionally approved trade agreements historically have sometimes taken years to negotiate because of the complexity.

Administration officials have said Trump is relying on tariff revenues to help offset the tax cuts he signed into law on July 4, a move that could shift a greater share of the federal tax burden onto the middle class and poor as importers would likely pass along much of the cost of the tariffs. Trump has warned major retailers such as Walmart to simply "eat" the higher costs, instead of increasing prices in ways that could intensify inflation.

Josh Lipsky, chair of international economics at The Atlantic Council, said a three-week delay in imposing the tariffs was unlikely sufficient for meaningful talks to take place.

"I take it as a signal that he is serious about most of these tariffs and it's not all a negotiating posture," Lipsky said.

## **Trade gaps persist, more tariff hikes are possible**

Trump's team promised 90 deals in 90 days, but his negotiations so far have produced only two trade frameworks.

His outline of a deal with Vietnam was clearly designed to box out China from routing its America-bound goods through that country, by doubling the 20% tariff charged on Vietnamese imports on anything traded transnationally.

The quotas in the signed United Kingdom framework would spare that nation from the higher tariff rates being charged on steel, aluminum and autos, though British goods would generally face a 10% tariff.

The United States ran a \$69.4 billion trade imbalance in goods with Japan in 2024 and a \$66 billion imbalance with South Korea, according to the Census Bureau. The trade deficits are the differences between what the U.S. exports to a country relative to what it imports.

According to Trump's letters, autos would be tariffed separately at the standard 25% worldwide, while steel and aluminum imports would be taxed on 50%.

This is not the first time Trump has tangled with Japan and South Korea on trade — and the new tariffs suggest his past deals made during his first term failed to deliver on his administration's own hype.

In 2018, during Trump's first term, his administration celebrated a revamped trade agreement with South Korea as a major win. And in 2019, Trump signed a limited agreement with Japan on agricultural products and digital trade that at the time he called a "huge victory for America's farmers, ranchers and growers."

Trump has also said on social media that countries aligned with the policy goals of BRICS, an organization composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, would face additional tariffs of 10%.

## Trump says US must send more weapons to Ukraine, days after ordering pause in deliveries

By ILLIA NOVIKOV and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Monday the U.S. will have to send more weapons to Ukraine, just days after ordering a pause in critical weapons deliveries to Kyiv.

The comments by Trump appeared to be an abrupt change in posture after the Pentagon announced last week that it would hold back delivering to Ukraine some air defense missiles, precision-guided artillery and other weapons because of what U.S. officials said were concerns that stockpiles have declined too much.

"We have to," Trump said. "They have to be able to defend themselves. They're getting hit very hard now. We're going to send some more weapons — defensive weapons primarily."

The pause had come at a difficult moment for Ukraine, which has faced increasing — and more complex — air barrages from Russia during the more than three-year-long war. Russian attacks on Ukraine killed at least 11 civilians and injured more than 80 others, including seven children, officials said Monday.

### The US turnaround on weapons for Ukraine

The move last week to abruptly pause shipments of Patriot missiles, precision-guided GMLRS, Hellfire missiles and Howitzer rounds and weaponry took Ukrainian officials and other allies by surprise.

The Pentagon affirmed late Monday that at Trump's direction, it would resume weapons shipments to Ukraine "to ensure the Ukrainians can defend themselves while we work to secure a lasting peace and ensure the killing stops." Still, spokesman Sean Parnell added that its framework for Trump to evaluate military shipments worldwide continues as part of "America First" defense priorities.

Trump, speaking at the start of a dinner he was hosting for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Monday, vented his growing frustration with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump has struggled to find a resolution to the war in Ukraine but maintains he's determined to quickly conclude a conflict that he had promised as candidate to end of Day One of his second term.

He has threatened, but held off on, imposing new sanctions against Russia's oil industry to try to prod Putin into peace talks.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said last week that Trump has given him the go-ahead to push forward with a bill he's co-sponsoring that calls, in part, for a 500% tariff on goods imported from countries that continue to buy Russian oil. The move would have huge ramifications for China and India, two economic behemoths that buy Russian oil.

"I'm not happy with President Putin at all," Trump said Monday.

### Russia's transport minister is found dead

Separately, Russia's transport minister was found dead in what authorities said was an apparent suicide — news that broke hours after the Kremlin announced he had been dismissed by Putin.

The firing of Roman Starovoit followed a weekend of travel chaos — airports grounded hundreds of flights due to the threat of drone attacks from Ukraine. Russian officials did not give a reason for his dismissal.

Hundreds of flights were canceled or delayed at airports in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but Russian commentators said the air traffic disruptions have become customary amid frequent Ukrainian drone raids and were unlikely to have triggered his dismissal.

Starovoit, 53, served as Russia's transport minister since May 2024. Russian media have reported that his dismissal could have been linked to an investigation into the embezzlement of state funds allocated for building fortifications in the Kursk region, where he served as governor before being appointed transportation minister.

The alleged embezzlement has been cited as one of the reasons for deficiencies in Russia's defensive lines that failed to stem a surprise Ukrainian incursion in the region launched in August 2024.

Russia fired more than 100 drones at civilian areas of Ukraine overnight, authorities said.

Russia recently has intensified its airstrikes on civilian areas. In the past week, Russia launched some 1,270 drones, 39 missiles and almost 1,000 powerful glide bombs at Ukraine, Ukrainian President Volody-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 32 of 61

myr Zelenskyy said Monday.

Russia's bigger army also is trying hard to break through at some points along the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620 miles) front line, where Ukrainian forces are severely stretched.

## **Ukraine calls for more military aid**

The strain of keeping Russia's invasion at bay, the lack of progress in direct peace talks and last week's halt of some promised U.S. weapons shipments have compelled Ukraine to seek more military help from the U.S. and Europe.

White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said Monday that the pause in weapons to Ukraine came as part of a "standard review of all weapons and all aid" that the U.S. "is providing all countries and all regions around the world. Not just Ukraine."

Leavitt said Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered the global review to ensure that "everything that's going out the door aligns with America's interests."

Zelenskyy says Ukraine has signed deals with European allies and a leading U.S. defense company to step up drone production, ensuring Kyiv receives "hundreds of thousands" more this year.

"Air defense is the main thing for protecting life," Zelenskyy wrote Monday on Telegram.

That includes developing and manufacturing interceptor drones that can stop Russia's long-range Shahed drones, he said.

Extensive use of drones also has helped Ukraine compensate for its troop shortages on the front line.

One person was killed in the southern city of Odesa, another person was killed and 71 were injured in northeastern Kharkiv, and falling drone debris caused damage in two districts of Kyiv, the capital, during nighttime drone attacks, Ukrainian authorities said.

Russian short-range drones also killed two people and injured two others in the northern Sumy region, officials said. Sumy is one of the places where Russia has concentrated large numbers of troops.

Also, nine people were injured and seven killed in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, regional head Vadym Filashkin said.

More Russian long-range drone strikes Monday targeted military mobilization centers for the third time in five days, in an apparent attempt to disrupt recruitment, Ukraine's Army Ground Forces command said.

Regional officials in Kharkiv and southern Zaporizhzhia said at least 17 people were injured.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry said Monday that its troops shot down 91 Ukrainian drones in 13 Russian regions overnight, as well as over the Black Sea and the Crimean Peninsula, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014.

## **Troops and federal agents briefly descend on LA's MacArthur Park in largely immigrant neighborhood**

By TARA COPP and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Federal officers and National Guard troops fanned out around a mostly empty Los Angeles park in a largely immigrant neighborhood on foot, horseback and military vehicles on Monday for about an hour before abruptly leaving, an operation that local officials said seemed designed to sow fear.

The Department of Homeland Security wouldn't say whether anyone had been arrested during the brief operation at MacArthur Park. Federal officials did not respond to requests for comment about why the park was targeted or why the raid ended abruptly.

About 90 members of the California National Guard were present to protect immigration officers, defense officials said.

"What I saw in the park today looked like a city under siege, under armed occupation," said Mayor Karen Bass, who showed up at the park alongside activists.

She said there were children attending a day camp in the park who were quickly ushered inside to avoid seeing the troops. Still, Bass said an 8-year-old boy told her that "he was fearful of ICE."

## **Federal officers descend on MacArthur Park**



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 33 of 61

The operation occurred at a park in a neighborhood with large Mexican, Central American and other immigrant populations and is lined by businesses with signs in Spanish and other languages that has been dubbed by local officials as the "Ellis Island of the West Coast."

Sprawling MacArthur Park has a murky lake ringed by palm trees, an amphitheater that hosts summer concerts and sports fields where immigrant families line up to play soccer in the evenings and on weekends. A thoroughfare on the east side is often crammed with food stands selling tacos and other delicacies, along with vendors speaking multiple languages and hawking T-shirts, toys, knickknacks and household items.

Among those who spoke with Bass were health care outreach workers who were working with homeless residents Monday when troops pointed guns at them and told them to get out of the park.

Photos show federal officers riding on horseback toward a mostly empty soccer field. Other heavily armed authorities stood guard around the area alongside armored vehicles.

"The world needs to see the troop formation on horses walking through the park, in search of what? In search of what? They're walking through the area where the children play," Bass said.

Eunisses Hernandez, a council member whose district includes MacArthur Park said "it was chosen as this administration's latest target precisely because of who lives there and what it represents."

## Operation escalates Trump's immigration crackdown

The operation in the large park about 2 miles (3.2 km) west of downtown LA included 17 Humvees, four tactical vehicles, two ambulances and the armed soldiers, defense officials said. It came after President Donald Trump deployed thousands of Guard members and active duty Marines to the city last month following protests over previous immigration raids.

Trump has stepped up efforts to realize his campaign pledge of deporting millions of immigrants in the United States illegally and shown a willingness to use the nation's military might in ways other U.S. presidents have typically avoided.

In response to questions about the operation in MacArthur Park, the Department of Homeland Security said in an email that the agency would not comment on "ongoing enforcement operations."

More than 4,000 California National Guard and hundreds of U.S. Marines have been deployed in Los Angeles since June — against the wishes of California Gov. Gavin Newsom. Last week, the military announced about 200 of those troops would be returned to their units to fight wildfires.

Newsom called the events at the park "a spectacle."

Two defense officials told reporters that what happened at MacArthur Park on Monday was not a military operation but acknowledged that the size and scope of the Guard's participation could make it look like one to the public. That is why the officials spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details about the raid that were not announced publicly. The primary role of the service members would be to protect the immigration enforcement officers in case a hostile crowd gathered, one of the officials said.

"It's just going to be more overt and larger than we usually participate in," that official said.

## Local officials say feds are sowing fear

"This morning looked like a staging for a TikTok video," said Marqueece Harris-Dawson, president of the Los Angeles City Council, adding if Border Patrol wants to film in LA, "you should apply for a film permit like everybody else. And stop trying to scare the bejesus out of everybody who lives in this great city and disrupt our economy every day."

Chris Newman, legal director for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, said he received a credible tip about the operation Monday.

"It was a demonstration of escalation," Newman said. "This was a reality TV spectacle much more so than an actual enforcement operation."

Since federal agents have been making arrests at Home Depot parking lots and elsewhere in Los Angeles, Newman said fewer people have been going to the park and immigrant neighborhoods near the city's downtown.

Betsy Bolte, who lives nearby, came to the park after seeing a military-style helicopter circling overhead. She said it was "gut-wrenching" to witness what appeared to be a federal show of force on the streets

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 34 of 61

of a U.S. city. "It's terror and, you know, it's ripping the heart and soul out of Los Angeles," she said. "I am still in shock, disbelief, and so angry and terrified and heartbroken."

## Trump and Netanyahu take a victory lap to mark strikes on Iran nuclear facilities

By AAMER MADHANI, TIA GOLDENBERG and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told President Donald Trump he was nominating the U.S. leader for a Nobel Peace Prize as the two took a victory lap Monday to hail their recent joint strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities as an unmitigated success.

The two leaders sat down with their top aides for a dinner in the White House Blue Room to mark the Iran operation and discuss efforts to push forward with a 60-day ceasefire proposal to pause the 21-month conflict in Gaza.

"He's forging peace as we speak, one country and one region after the other," Netanyahu said as he presented Trump with a nominating letter he said he sent the Nobel committee.

The call for the peace prize comes after the Israeli leader for years had pressed Trump and his predecessors to take military action against Iran's nuclear program. Trump ordered U.S. forces to drop "bunker-buster" bombs and fire a barrage of Tomahawk missiles on three key Iranian nuclear sites.

It also allowed Netanyahu to further ingratiate himself with Trump, who for years has made little secret of the fact that he covets a Nobel Peace Prize and sees himself as a capable peacemaker. He's trumpeted recent truces that his administration facilitated between India and Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, and Israel and Iran.

"Coming from you in particular, this is very meaningful," Trump told Netanyahu as the prime minister handed him the nomination letter.

Netanyahu's outwardly triumphant visit to the White House, his third this year, was dogged by Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza and questions over how hard Trump will push for an end to the conflict.

But in an exchange before reporters before the dinner got underway, both leaders expressed optimism that their success in Iran would mark a new era in the Middle East.

"I think things are going to be really settled down a lot in the Middle East," Trump said. "And, they respect us and they respect Israel."

### Trump says Iran wants to restart talks, but Iran hasn't confirmed that

Trump indicated anew that Iranian officials have reached out to the U.S. to schedule talks about Iran's nuclear program. Negotiations had started in April but were scuttled after Israel began its operations last month.

"We have scheduled Iran talks, and they want to," Trump told reporters. "They want to talk." He said last week that the talks would restart soon.

Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, sitting at the table with Trump, said the meeting would be soon, perhaps in a week.

Tehran has yet to confirm that it has agreed to restart talks with the U.S.

But Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian in an interview published Monday said the U.S. airstrikes so badly damaged his country's nuclear facilities that Iranian authorities still have not been able to access them to survey the destruction.

Pezeshkian added in the interview with conservative American broadcaster Tucker Carlson that Iran would be willing to resume cooperation with the U.N. nuclear watchdog but cannot yet commit to allowing its inspectors unfettered access to monitor the sites.

"We stand ready to have such supervision," Pezeshkian said. "Unfortunately, as a result of the United States' unlawful attacks against our nuclear centers and installations, many of the pieces of equipment and the facilities there have been severely damaged."

### Pushing for a new ceasefire proposal in Gaza

Trump has made clear that following last month's 12-day war between Israel and Iran he would like to

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 35 of 61

see the Gaza conflict end soon. The meeting between Trump and Netanyahu may give new urgency to a U.S. ceasefire proposal being discussed by Israel and Hamas.

White House officials are urging Israel and Hamas to quickly seal a new ceasefire agreement that would bring about a 60-day pause in the fighting, send aid flooding into Gaza and free at least some of the remaining 50 hostages held in the territory, 20 of whom are believed to be living.

Leavitt announced Monday that Witkoff will travel later this week to Doha, Qatar, for ceasefire and hostage talks.

But a sticking point is whether the ceasefire will end the war altogether. Hamas has said it is willing to free all the hostages in exchange for an end to the war and a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Netanyahu says the war will end once Hamas surrenders, disarms and goes into exile — something it refuses to do.

"We'll work out a peace with our Palestinian neighbors, those that don't want to destroy us," Netanyahu said. "We'll work out a peace in which our security, the sovereign power of security, always remains in our hands."

Trump has been pressuring Israel and Hamas to wrap up the conflict, which has killed more than 57,000 Palestinians, ravaged Gaza, deepened Israel's international isolation and made any resolution to the broader conflict between Israel and the Palestinians more distant than ever.

But the precise details of the deal are still in flux. In the days before Netanyahu's visit, Trump seemed to downplay the chances for a breakthrough.

Asked Friday how confident he was a ceasefire deal would come together, Trump told reporters, "I'm very optimistic — but you know, look, it changes from day to day."

## **Trump and Netanyahu are more in sync than ever**

After Trump's decision to get involved in Israel's war in Iran, the two leaders are more in sync than ever. But that's not always been the case.

As recently as Netanyahu's last visit to Washington in April, the tone was markedly different.

Trump used the photo op with Netanyahu to announce that the U.S. was entering into negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program — appearing to catch the Israeli leader off guard and, at the time, slamming the brakes on any Israeli military plan.

Trump, whose policies have largely aligned with Israel's own priorities, pledged last week to be "very firm" with Netanyahu on ending the war, without saying what that would entail. Pressure by Trump has worked on Netanyahu in the past, with a ceasefire deal having been reached right as the president was taking office again.

Netanyahu has to balance the demands of his American ally with the far-right parties in his governing coalition, which hold the key to his political survival and oppose ending the war.

But given the strong U.S. support in Israel's war against Iran, highlighted by joint airstrikes on a fortified underground Iranian nuclear site, Netanyahu may have a tough time saying no.

Trump also may be expecting something in return for his recent calls for Netanyahu's corruption trial to be canceled — a significant interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state.

"Trump thinks that Netanyahu owes him," said Eytan Gilboa, an expert on U.S.-Israel affairs at Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv. "And if Trump thinks that he needs to end the war in Gaza, then that is what he will need to do."

## **What to know about the flash floods in Texas that killed over 100 people**

KERRVILLE, Texas (AP) — Flash floods in Texas killed more than 100 people over the Fourth of July holiday weekend and left others still missing, including girls attending a summer camp. The devastation along the Guadalupe River, outside of San Antonio, has drawn a massive search effort as officials face questions over their preparedness and the speed of their initial actions.

Here's what to know about the deadly flooding, the colossal weather system that drove it in and around

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 36 of 61**

Kerr County and ongoing efforts to identify victims.

## **Massive rain hit at just the wrong time, in a flood-prone place**

The floods grew to their worst at the midpoint of a long holiday weekend when many people were asleep. The Texas Hill Country in the central part of the state is naturally prone to flash flooding due to the dry dirt-packed areas where the soil lets rain skid along the surface of the landscape instead of soaking it up. Friday's flash floods started with a particularly bad storm that dropped most of its 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain in the dark early morning hours.

After a flood watch notice midday Thursday, the National Weather Service office issued an urgent warning around 4 a.m. that raised the potential of catastrophic damage and a severe threat to human life. By at least 5:20 a.m., some in the Kerrville City area say water levels were getting alarmingly high. The massive rain flowing down hills sent rushing water into the Guadalupe River, causing it to rise 26 feet (8 meters) in just 45 minutes.

## **Death toll is expected to rise and the number of missing is uncertain**

In Kerr County, home to youth camps in the Texas Hill Country, searchers have found the bodies of 84 people, including 28 children, Sheriff Larry Leitha said Monday afternoon. Fatalities in nearby counties brought the total number of deaths as of Monday afternoon to at least 104.

Ten girls and a counselor were still unaccounted for at Camp Mystic, a Christian summer camp along the river.

For past campers, the tragedy turned happy memories into grief.

Beyond the Camp Mystic campers unaccounted for, the number of missing from other nearby campgrounds and across the region had not been released.

Gov. Greg Abbott on Sunday had said that there were 41 people confirmed to be unaccounted for across the state and more could be missing.

Kerrville City Manager Dalton Rice said Monday he couldn't give an estimate of the number of people still missing, saying only "it is a lot."

Search-and-rescue crews at one staging area Monday said over 1,000 volunteers had been directed to Kerr County.

## **Officials face scrutiny over flash flood warnings**

Survivors have described the floods as a "pitch black wall of death" and said they received no emergency warnings.

Kerr County Judge Rob Kelly, who lives along the Guadalupe River, said Saturday that "nobody saw this coming." Officials have referred to it as a "100-year-flood," meaning that the water levels were highly unlikely based on the historical record.

Local officials have known for decades, however, that flooding posed serious a risk in the region, and a county government report last year warned the threat was worsening.

Officials also determined that another flood was likely in the next year and that "future worst-case flood events" could be more severe than those of the past, according to the report.

Additionally, officials have come under scrutiny about why residents and youth summer camps along the river were not alerted sooner than 4 a.m. or told to evacuate.

Rice said Monday that he did not immediately know if there had been any communication between law enforcement and the summer camps between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. on Friday. But Rice said various factors, including spotty cell service in some of the more isolated areas of Kerr County and cell towers that might have gone out of service during the weather, could have hindered communication.

Rice said officials want to finish the search and rescue and then review possible issues with cell towers, radios and emergency alerts.

Officials noted that the public can grow weary from too many flooding alerts or forecasts that turn out to be minor.

Kerr county officials said they had presented a proposal for a more robust flood warning system, similar to a tornado warning system, but that members of the public reeled at the cost.



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 37 of 61

## Monumental clearing and rebuilding effort

The flash floods have erased campgrounds and torn homes from their foundations.

"It's going to be a long time before we're ever able to clean it up, much less rebuild it," Kelly said Saturday after surveying the destruction from a helicopter.

Other massive flooding events have driven residents and business owners to give up, including in areas struck last year by Hurricane Helene.

President Donald Trump said he plans to visit the flood zone Friday.

AP photographers have captured the scale of the destruction, and one of Texas' largest rescue and recover efforts.

## Ship attacked in the Red Sea after a bulk carrier sinking claimed by Yemen's Houthi rebels

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A Liberian-flagged cargo ship came under fire from Houthi rebels Monday in the Red Sea, with two on board reported to be hurt and two others missing in an assault a day after the Yemen-based rebels sunk another vessel.

The attack on the Greek-owned bulk carrier Eternity C in the crucial maritime route came after the Houthis attacked the Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carrier Magic Seas with drones, missiles, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire Sunday, forcing its crew of 22 to abandon the vessel.

The two attacks and a round of Israeli airstrikes early Monday targeting the rebels raised fears of a renewed Houthi campaign against shipping that could again draw in U.S. and Western forces, particularly after U.S. President Donald Trump's administration targeted the rebels in a major airstrike campaign.

The attacks come at a sensitive moment in the Middle East, as a possible ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war hangs in the balance, and as Iran weighs whether to restart negotiations over its nuclear program following American airstrikes targeting its most sensitive atomic sites during the Israel-Iran war in June.

## Ship attacks strike Red Sea

The European Union anti-piracy patrol Operation Atalanta and the private security firm Ambrey reported the latest attack. They said the Eternity C had been heading north toward the Suez Canal when it came under fire by men in small boats and by bomb-carrying drones. The security guards on board also fired their weapons.

Operation Atalanta said the Eternity C had a crew of 21 Filipinos and one Russian, plus three security personnel. The EU force said the ship had not requested an escort.

The EU force also said the Houthis carried out the attack.

Moammar al-Eryani, the information minister with Yemen's internationally recognized government that opposes the Houthis and is based in southern Yemen, also blamed the rebels for the Eternity C attack. The Houthis control the northern half of Yemen and its capital, Sanaa.

The attack on the Eternity C happened in the same area as the attack Sunday on the Magic Seas, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) southwest of the port of Hodeida, Yemen, which is held by the Houthis.

An armed security team on the vessel had returned fire against an initial attack of gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades, though the vessel later was struck by projectiles. Operation Atalanta, said 22 mariners had been on board the Magic Seas, with the United Arab Emirates saying an Abu Dhabi Ports vessel rescued the sailors.

Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, the Houthis' military spokesman, claimed Sunday's attack on the Magic Seas. Saree later said the vessel sunk.

The Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel noted the later attack Monday, but the rebels didn't claim that assault. They routinely wait hours or even days after an attack to do so.

## Israeli strikes target Houthi-held ports

The Israeli military said that it struck Houthi-held ports early Monday at Hodeida, Ras Isa and Salif, as

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 38 of 61

well as the Ras Kanatib power plant. It released footage showing an F-16 launching from Israel for the strike, which came after the Israeli military issued a warning for the area.

"These ports are used by the Houthi terrorist regime to transfer weapons from the Iranian regime, which are employed to carry out terrorist operations against the state of Israel and its allies," the Israeli military said.

The Israeli military also said it struck the Galaxy Leader, a vehicle-carrying vessel that the Houthis seized back in November 2023 when they began their attacks in the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war.

"Houthi forces installed a radar system on the ship and have been using it to track vessels in the international maritime arena to facilitate further terrorist activities," the Israeli military said.

The Bahamas-flagged Galaxy Leader was affiliated with an Israeli billionaire and had been operated by a Japanese firm, NYK Line.

The Houthis acknowledged the strikes, but gave no damage assessment.

Israel has repeatedly attacked Houthi areas in Yemen, including a naval strike in June. Both Israel and the United States have struck ports in the area in the past — including an American attack that killed 74 people in April — but Israel is now acting alone in attacking the rebels as they continue to fire missiles at Israel.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz threatened to launch further strikes.

"What's true for Iran is true for Yemen," Katz said in a statement. "Anyone who raises a hand against Israel will have it cut off. The Houthis will continue to pay a heavy price for their actions."

## **Houthi attacks came over the Israel-Hamas war**

The Houthi rebels have been launching missile and drone attacks against commercial and military ships in the region in what the group's leadership has described as an effort to end Israel's offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Between November 2023 and January 2025, the Houthis targeted more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two of them and killing four sailors. Their campaign has greatly reduced the flow of trade through the Red Sea corridor, which typically sees \$1 trillion of goods move through it annually. Shipping through the Red Sea, while still lower than normal, has increased in recent weeks.

The Houthis paused attacks until the U.S. launched a broad assault against the rebels in mid-March. That ended weeks later and the Houthis haven't attacked a vessel, though they have continued occasional missile attacks targeting Israel.

## **Epstein 'client list' doesn't exist, Justice Department says, walking back theory Bondi had promoted**

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jeffrey Epstein did not maintain a "client list," the Justice Department acknowledged Monday as it said no more files related to the wealthy financier's sex trafficking investigation would be made public despite promises from Attorney General Pam Bondi that had raised the expectations of conservative influencers and conspiracy theorists.

The acknowledgment that the well-connected Epstein did not have a list of clients to whom underage girls were trafficked represents a public walk-back of a theory that the Trump administration had helped promote, with Bondi suggesting in a Fox News interview earlier this year that such a document was "sitting on my desk" for review.

Even as it released video from inside a New York jail meant to definitively prove that Epstein killed himself, the department also said in a memo that it was refusing to disclose other evidence investigators had collected. Bondi for weeks had suggested more material was going to be revealed — "It's a new administration and everything is going to come out to the public," she said at one point — after a first document dump she had hyped angered President Donald Trump's base by failing to deliver revelations.

That episode, in which far-right influencers were invited to the White House in February and provided with

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 39 of 61**

binders marked "The Epstein Files: Phase 1" and "Declassified" that contained documents that had largely already been in the public domain, has spurred conservative internet personalities to sharply criticize Bondi.

After the first release fell flat, Bondi said officials were poring over a "truckload" of previously withheld evidence she said had been handed over by the FBI. In a March TV interview, she claimed the Biden administration "sat on these documents, no one did anything with them," adding: "Sadly these people don't believe in transparency, but I think more unfortunately, I think a lot of them don't believe in honesty."

But after a months-long review of evidence in the government's possession, the Justice Department determined that no "further disclosure would be appropriate or warranted," the memo says. The department noted that much of the material was placed under seal by a court to protect victims and "only a fraction" of it "would have been aired publicly had Epstein gone to trial."

"One of our highest priorities is combating child exploitation and bringing justice to victims," the memo says. "Perpetuating unfounded theories about Epstein serves neither of those ends."

The two-page memo bore the logos of the Justice Department and the FBI but was not signed by any individual official.

Conservatives who have sought proof of a government cover-up of Epstein's activities and death expressed outrage Monday over the department's position. Far-right influencer Jack Posobiec posted: "We were all told more was coming. That answers were out there and would be provided. Incredible how utterly mismanaged this Epstein mess has been. And it didn't have to be."

Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones wrote that "next the DOJ will say 'Actually, Jeffrey Epstein never even existed,'" calling it "over the top sickening." Elon Musk shared a series of photos of a clown applying makeup appearing to mock Bondi for saying the client list doesn't exist after suggesting months ago that it was on her desk.

The client list hubbub began when Bondi was asked in a Fox News interview whether the department would release such a document.

She replied: "It's sitting on my desk right now to review."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt and Justice Department spokesperson Chad Gilmartin said Monday that Bondi was referring to the overall Epstein case files.

Among the evidence that the Justice Department said Monday it has in its possession, and will not be releasing, are images of Epstein, "images and videos of victims who are either minors or appear to be minors," and more than 10,000 "downloaded videos and images of illegal child sex abuse material and other pornography."

The memo does not explain when or where the videos were located, who and what they depict and whether they were newly found as investigators scoured their collection of evidence or were known for some time to have been in the government's possession.

The Associated Press published a story last week about unanswered questions surrounding possible video evidence after Bondi cited the existence of "tens of thousands" of videos that she said showed Epstein "with children or child porn."

Multiple people who participated in the criminal cases of Epstein and socialite former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell told AP that they had not seen and did not know of a trove of recordings along the lines of what Bondi had referenced. Indictments and detention memos also don't allege the existence of video recordings and neither Epstein nor Maxwell were charged with possession of child sex abuse material even though that would have been easier for prosecutors to prove than the sex trafficking counts they faced.

The AP did find reference in a filing in a civil lawsuit to the discovery by the Epstein estate of videos and pictures that could constitute child sex abuse material, but lawyers involved in that case said a protective order prevents them from discovering the specifics of that evidence and the Justice Department did not respond to a detailed list of questions from AP about the videos Bondi was referencing.

Epstein was found dead in his jail cell in August 2019, weeks after his arrest on sex trafficking charges, in a suicide that foreclosed the possibility of a trial.

The department's disclosure that Epstein took his own life is hardly a revelation even though conspiracy

theorists have continued to challenge that conclusion.

In November 2019, for instance, then-Attorney General William Barr told the AP that he had reviewed security footage that revealed that no one entered the area where Epstein was housed on the night he died, and expressed confidence that Epstein's death was a suicide.

More recently, FBI Director Kash Patel and Deputy Director Dan Bongino have insisted in television and podcast interviews that the evidence was clear that Epstein had killed himself.

## What to know about the troops and federal agents in LA's MacArthur Park

By JULIE WATSON and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — U.S. military troops and federal immigration officers made a brief but mighty show of force Monday at a Los Angeles park in a neighborhood dubbed the "Ellis Island of the West Coast" for its large immigrant population.

The operation left local officials and organizers with many questions. Here is a look at what we know.

### What happened and was anyone arrested?

About 90 National Guard troops and dozens of federal officers descended on MacArthur Park in the morning. But it was nearly empty, since word spread of a potential raid. Mayor Karen Bass said she pulled over on her way to City Hall to witness officers on horseback and soldiers in tactical gear walking past a playground as children at a summer day camp were rushed indoors so they would not be traumatized.

The troops and officers left after about an hour.

The Department of Homeland Security did not say whether anyone was arrested. Associated Press journalists who arrived as the troops and agents entered the park did not see anyone detained. Some activists showed up to take videos and record the scene.

When asked about the appearance in MacArthur Park, the DHS said in an email that the agency would not comment on "ongoing enforcement operations." The Defense Department referred all questions to DHS.

Bass and Gov. Gavin Newsom called it a political stunt and spectacle meant to intimidate the city's immigrant communities.

### What's the history of MacArthur Park?

The park dates back to the late 19th century when the city received a mudhole and trash dump spanning 35 acres in a land swap, according to the Los Angeles Conservancy. After a "generous application of fertilizer," it said the area was turned into Westlake Park with a small boating lake. In 1942, the name was changed to MacArthur Park for Army General Douglas MacArthur, who fought in WWII.

Since the 1980s, the Westlake neighborhood has evolved into a densely populated immigrant neighborhood with the settlement of Indigenous people from Mexico and Central America and other groups. It is also home to several immigrant rights organizations and legal aid offices.

Eunisses Hernandez, a council member whose district includes MacArthur Park said the park "was chosen as this administration's latest target precisely because of who lives there and what it represents: Resilience, diversity and the American dream. It is no coincidence that the president would target a place that so clearly embodies the values he has spent his time in office trying to destroy."

In recent years, the park has drawn homeless encampments. Outreach teams work there regularly, treating people with drug addiction.

In 2007, the park was the site of large May Day rallies to demand amnesty for immigrants without legal status that ended with police firing rubber bullets at protesters. Demonstrators later sued the city and received a \$12.8 million settlement.

### What did the Guard do?

Defense officials had said 90 National Guard troops and over a dozen military vehicles were sent to protect immigration officers.

The defense officials told reporters that it was not a military operation but acknowledged that the size



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 41 of 61

and scope of the Guard's participation could make it look like one to the public. That is why the officials spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details about the raid before it happened.

The operation in the large park about 2 miles (3.2 km) west of downtown LA included 17 Humvees, four tactical vehicles, two ambulances and the armed soldiers, defense officials said.

The decision to have the soldiers provide security on the raids moves troops closer than ever before to carrying out law enforcement actions such as deportations, as President Donald Trump has promised as part of his immigration crackdown.

## **Why were military troops in Los Angeles?**

Trump ordered the deployment of about 4,000 California National Guard troops and 800 active duty Marines against the wishes of Newsom in early June to respond to a series of protests against Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids in Los Angeles.

The federal troops' domestic deployment has raised multiple legal questions, including whether the administration would seek to employ emergency powers under the Insurrection Act to empower those forces to conduct law enforcement on U.S. soil, which they are not permitted to do except in rare circumstances.

The Marines are primarily assigned to protect federal buildings while hundreds of the National Guard troops accompany agents on immigration operations.

Newsom has sued the administration over the deployment and the case is ongoing.

## **How did the community react?**

Immigration advocates urged people to avoid the area before the heavily armed troops and federal officers arrived in armored vehicles.

Betsy Bolte, who lives nearby, came to the park after seeing a military-style helicopter circling overhead.

She said it was "gut-wrenching" to witness what appeared to be a federal show of force on the streets of a U.S. city. "It's terror and, you know, it's ripping the heart and soul out of Los Angeles," she said. "I am still in shock, disbelief, and so angry and terrified and heartbroken."

Chris Newman, legal director for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, said he received a credible tip about the operation Monday.

The park is normally busy with families picnicking and vendors hawking food and toys but since federal agents have been making arrests around Los Angeles, Newman said fewer people have been going out.

"The ghost town-ification of LA is haunting, to say the very least," he said.

## **The Latest: Trump meets with Netanyahu for private dinner at the White House**

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump held a private dinner with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday as families of hostages held in Gaza pushed for any ceasefire agreement to include the release of all remaining hostages.

As the two leaders meet for the third time this year, the outwardly triumphant visit will be dogged by Israel's 21-month war against Hamas in Gaza and questions over how hard Trump will push for an end to the conflict.

Here's the Latest:

### **Netanyahu talks of peace with 'entire Middle East' under Trump**

Netanyahu said he thinks Israel can work out a peace with the "entire Middle East" with Trump's leadership.

That would include allowing Palestinians power to govern themselves while keeping security matters forever in Israel's control, Netanyahu said.

### **Trump says US will send more weapons to Ukraine**

The announcement came days after the administration ordered a pause on deliveries of critical weapons to Ukraine.

Trump said, "we have to send" more weapons because "they have to be able to defend themselves."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 42 of 61

He said Ukraine is getting hit "very, very hard" by Russia.

## **Trump says he has agreed to an Iranian request to meet with US officials**

The request comes in the wake of the U.S. bombing of Iran's nuclear sites.

"We have scheduled Iran talks, and they want to," Trump told reporters. "They want to talk."

Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, sitting at the table with Trump, said the meeting would be soon, perhaps in a week.

## **Trump says he wants Russia to end war in Ukraine because 'I hate to see people killed'**

Trump says it doesn't matter that the people losing their lives in the conflict aren't American.

What's happening between Russia and Ukraine is a "horrible thing, and I'm not happy" with Russian President Vladimir Putin, he said. "I'm not happy with President Putin at all."

The president said thousands of Russians and Ukrainians are losing their lives every week.

"I'm stopping wars and I hate to see people killed," he said.

## **Netanyahu nominates Trump for Nobel Peace Prize and gives him a copy of nominating letter**

The honor was "well-deserved," Netanyahu told Trump.

Trump has long called himself a master peacemaker and made clear his desire for the Nobel Prize.

Trump, speaking in front of reporters, said the nomination was news to him.

"Coming from you, this is very meaningful," he told the Israeli leader.

## **Trump confirms Friday visit to flood-ravaged Texas**

Trump said the administration is trying to help and "make it as comfortable as possible for" Texas.

He said the state was "so badly hurt by something that was a big surprise."

Trump confirmed the visit during a White House appearance with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

## **Veterans Affairs says it won't need a larger reduction of staff**

The Department of Veterans Affairs said Monday that it has eliminated the need for a large-scale reduction in staff after retirements, buyouts and hiring freezes that will amount to nearly 30,000 fewer employees.

The figure is far less than the 80,000 job cuts the sprawling agency that provides health care and other services to millions of veterans had planned this spring, according to an internal memo obtained by The Associated Press in March.

That memo had instructed top-level staff to prepare for an agencywide reorganization and called for officials to work with the White House's Department of Government Efficiency.

The agency said in a news release Monday that it had considered a reduction of up to 15% — about 72,600 workers — of its 484,000 employees in January. But the agency said it will instead have 29,000 — or 6% — fewer staff members by this fiscal year's end on Sept. 30.

## **Netanyahu meets with Rubio and Witkoff ahead of Trump dinner**

The Israeli prime minister is scheduled to have a private dinner with Trump at the White House tonight, but first he held separate meetings with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Trump special envoy Steve Witkoff, according to the prime minister's office.

The talks were held at Blair House, the presidential guest house near the White House.

## **Judge temporarily blocks spending cuts affecting Planned Parenthood**

A judge late Monday temporarily blocked a provision in the newly signed Republican tax and spending cut bill that would have ended Medicaid payments to abortion providers for one year.

The lawsuit against Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was filed earlier in the day in Boston by Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its member organizations in Massachusetts and Utah.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani issued a temporary restraining order that prevents the defendants from enforcing the cuts and requiring them to ensure "Medicaid funding continues to be disbursed in the customary manner and timeframes to Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its members."

Plaintiffs argue that allowing the provision to take effect will have devastating consequences nationwide,

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 43 of 61

including increased rates of undiagnosed and untreated sexually transmitted diseases and cancer, as well as unplanned pregnancies and abortions.

## **About 400 AmeriCorps employees will be reinstated after judge's order**

A court order issued Monday by U.S. District Judge Matthew Maddox reinstates the union workers after they were placed on administrative leave in April as part of Trump administration and Department of Government Efficiency efforts to trim the federal workforce.

The local union sued the agency in May alongside several nonprofit organizations.

AmeriCorps is a 30-year-old agency that facilitates volunteer service across the country, sending hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of thousands of people to serve in communities.

In a separate case, U.S. District Judge Deborah L. Boardman granted a temporary block on the agency's cancellation of grants and early discharge of corps members in the states that sued the administration in April.

## **Retooling of student loan forgiveness program concerns some advocates**

President Donald Trump is reshaping the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, sparking concerns it could become a tool for political retribution.

The program cancels student loans for public sector and nonprofit workers after 10 years of payments.

A draft proposal from the Education Department suggests excluding organizations involved in "illegal activities," with definitions targeting immigration, transgender issues and terrorism.

Advocates have raised concerns it would give the department subjective authority to decide if an organization is engaged in anything illegal — a power that could be used to remove entire hospital systems or state governments from the program.

The agency is preparing a formal proposal that will undergo a public comment period before it's finalized.

## **California rejects Trump administration proposal on transgender athletes**

The proposal would have required the state to apologize and restore awards to girls who lost sports titles to trans athletes. It also would've required the state to notify school sports programs that receive federal funding that Title IX, a federal law banning sex discrimination in education, prohibits trans girls from participating in girls sports.

U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon posted on X Monday that the California Department of Education and the California Interscholastic Federation, a governing body for high school sports, said they would not agree to the recommendations. The state education department did not immediately respond to a request for comment and the federation said it does not comment on legal matters.

The Trump administration unveiled the proposal last month after determining California policies allowing trans girls to compete on sports teams that align with their gender identity violated Title IX. The federal government gave the state 10 days to change its policies or "risk imminent enforcement action."

McMahon said Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, who earlier this year questioned the fairness of trans girls competing in girls sports, would hear from U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi.

"Turns out Gov. Newsom's acknowledgment that 'it's an issue of fairness' was empty political grandstanding," McMahon said.

## **Iran's president says his country cannot access nuclear sites damaged by US strikes**

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian says that U.S. airstrikes so badly damaged three of his country's nuclear facilities last month that Iranian authorities have still not been able to access them to survey the destruction.

Pezeshkian said in an interview published Monday with conservative American broadcaster Tucker Carlson that Iran would be willing to resume cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog but cannot yet commit to allowing them unfettered access to monitor the sites.

"We are ready to hold talks over it," Pezeshkian said. "We have never been the party that has run away from verification. We stand ready to have such supervision, unfortunately, as a result of the United States' unlawful attacks against our nuclear centers and installations, many of the pieces of equipment and the facilities there have been severely damaged. Therefore, we don't have any access to them, we cannot

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 44 of 61

see. And this access will have to wait for that.”

## **Israelis rally for Gaza hostage release, end to wire outside US Embassy**

Israelis rallied outside the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv on Monday as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu began a U.S. visit.

Demonstrators held signs demanding an end to the Gaza war, and demanding Israel win the release of hostages held in the Palestinian territory.

“Hostages are waiting,” the message on one banner declared.

## **To take over or not to take over Gaza?**

During Monday’s briefing, Leavitt was asked about Trump’s idea for the United States to take over Gaza and lead its rebuilding.

The press secretary responded by saying the question was inaccurate.

“As for the ‘take over’ of Gaza,” she said, raising her fingers to make an air quote gesture, “I don’t believe the president ever said that. I think he discussed a rebuilding of Gaza once this war is over.”

In fact, Trump had said exactly that back in February.

“The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it, too,” the president said at a press conference alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Then Trump went a step further — “we’ll own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site.”

Leavitt did not immediately return a request for comment.

## **Israeli families come to Washington seeking freedom of all hostages as part of any Gaza ceasefire**

Families of hostages held in Gaza have come to Washington for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s visit here, pushing the U.S. and Israel to demand release of all remaining hostages as part of any ceasefire deal.

Netanyahu says 50 people remain hostage in Gaza. The Israeli leader says only 20 of them are believed still alive — many believed in Hamas tunnels under Gaza — after 21 months of war between Israel and the armed group.

Families of some of the hostages gathered outside the U.S. Capitol on Monday with signs and photos of their loved ones.

“We cannot accept a deal for a partial release,” said Ilan Dalal, father of Guy Gilboa-Dalal. “A partial deal would mean that some of the hostages will stay in the tunnels for more time and this would be a death sentence.”

## **Trump administration revokes protections from US deportation of migrants from Honduras and Nicaragua**

Leavitt says the Trump administration is ending protections that have allowed migrants from Honduras and Nicaragua to live and work in the U.S. for decades.

Tens of thousands of migrants from both countries had been shielded from deportation under a program known as Temporary Protected Status. The move is part of Trump’s sweeping effort to increase deportations.

Leavitt said the program “is temporary by definition. It is not meant to be a permanent path to residency or citizenship.” She said migrants from both countries began qualifying for protected U.S. status after the devastation across Central America of Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

“That doesn’t sound very temporary to me,” Leavitt said.

## **White House won’t say if Texas flooding will delay Trump’s plans to scrap FEMA**

The White House won’t say if Trump will be rethinking phasing out the Federal Emergency Management Agency after the deadly flooding in Texas.

Asked if Trump may delay his promise to close FEMA and leave disaster response up to the states, Leavitt said, “The president has always said he wants states to do as much as they can.”

She added that Texas officials are doing a “tremendous job” in response to the flooding.

Pressed in a subsequent question about phasing out FEMA, Leavitt said she’d already answered the



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 45 of 61

question — even though she hadn't.

## **Trump envoy to head Qatar this week for ceasefire-related talks**

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt says Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff will head to Qatari capital later this week as the Trump administration continues its push for a ceasefire and hostage deal in the 21-month war in Gaza.

"The utmost priority for the president right now in the Middle East is to end the war in Gaza and to return all of the hostages," Leavitt said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to have a private dinner with Trump on Monday at the White House this evening. Before his meeting with Trump on Monday, the prime minister is scheduled to meet separately with Witkoff and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

## **Doctors and public health organizations sue Kennedy over vaccine policy changes**

The groups are suing the U.S. government over the decision to stop recommending COVID-19 vaccinations for children and pregnant women.

The plaintiffs include the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association — along with an unnamed pregnant doctor who works in a hospital.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services officials did not immediately comment.

In late May, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced he was removing COVID-19 shots from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations for healthy children and pregnant women. Many health experts accused Kennedy of disregarding the scientific review process.

## **Leavitt says many media outlets haven't blamed Trump cuts for hindering Texas flood response**

The White House press secretary is continuing to dispute suggestions that Trump administration cuts to the federal workforce may have hindered federal response to the deadly Texas flooding.

She said some Democrats have suggested that, but noted that many media outlets have not followed suit. She didn't name any specific officials making those claims.

Trump's Department of Government Efficiency has spent months working to slash the size of government, but it is unclear what impact those efforts might have had on the federal response to the flooding in Texas.

## **Trump to sign order for tariff hikes to take place on Aug. 1**

President Donald Trump is signing an executive order on Monday to delay that tariff increase deadline by roughly three weeks to Aug. 1, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said at the news briefing.

The 90-day negotiating period on trade was set to expire on July 9, causing tariffs to increase from the baseline 10% rate to the generally higher levels set by Trump on April 2. But the order would allow the new rates being announced by Trump on Monday and Tuesday to be imposed starting on Aug 1.

Trump posted letters to the leaders of South Korea and Japan saying imports of their goods will be taxed at 25%. Leavitt said approximately a dozen other countries will receive letters.

## **Trump to tour flood-devastated Texas later this week**

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt says the president will be visiting devastating flooding "later this week."

She called what happened a "once in a generation national disaster" and urged "everyone in the area to remain vigilant, listen to all warnings and respond accordingly."

Leavitt said the visit would likely come Friday, but that no final decision had been made.

She also bristled at suggestions that deep Trump administration cuts to federal services may have affected authorities' response to the flooding.

She blamed Democrats and said that faulting "President Trump for these floods is a depraved lie" and insisted that the National Weather Service "did its job" in spreading warnings about possible catastrophic flooding.

## **White House says Trump will likely visit Texas on Friday**

Leavitt said the president wants to go "at the most appropriate time" as the state recovers from deadly flooding.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 46 of 61

## **Planned Parenthood sues Trump administration**

Planned Parenthood sued the Trump administration Monday over a provision in the newly signed Republican tax and spending cut bill that would end Medicaid payments to abortion providers for one year.

The lawsuit against Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was filed in Boston by Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its member organizations in Massachusetts and Utah.

They argue allowing the provision to take effect will have devastating consequences nationwide. According to their complaint, many of Planned Parenthood's 1 million Medicaid patients will lose access to health care altogether, clinics will lay off staff and curtail services for all patients, and a substantial number of clinics will shut down.

The result will be increased rates of undiagnosed and untreated sexually transmitted diseases and cancer, as well as unplanned pregnancies and abortions, the plaintiffs argue.

## **Displaced Palestinians hope Trump-Netanyahu meeting leads to a truce**

Hungry, displaced Palestinians in the Gaza Strip hope Monday's meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will lead to a ceasefire.

The two are set to meet as negotiations continue on a plan for a 60-day truce, the release of some hostages held by Hamas and an influx of humanitarian aid.

"Displacement is death," said Majid Farwana, who lives in a tent camp in central Gaza. "We're suffering every minute as we try to find food, water and tenting, and we struggle with hot weather."

Mohammed Abu Awda, who was displaced from northern Gaza, said that if he returns to find his home destroyed, he will set up a tent on the rubble.

The 21-month war, ignited by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack, has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and driven around 90% of Gaza's population from their homes. Hunger is widespread, with aid groups saying they have struggled to bring in food because of Israeli restrictions and the breakdown of law and order.

## **The tariff letters are finally getting sent**

Trump has been talking for a while about ending trade negotiations and sending out letters informing countries about their tariff rates.

On Friday, the president told reporters that "I signed some letters and they'll go out on Monday, probably 12." (Two have been released so far.)

The letters, issued on White House stationery, have Trump's typical flourishes and capitalization. "We invite you to participate in the extraordinary Economy of the United States, the Number One Market in the World, by far," he wrote to the leaders of South Korea and Japan.

He ends both of the letters by saying, "Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

## **Trump sets 25% tariffs on imports from Japan and South Korea**

The higher taxes begin on Aug. 1.

The president announced the decision on Truth Social, where he posted copies of letters that he sent to the leaders of each country.

Trump has been eager to escalate tariffs on American trading partners after pausing his plans earlier this year.

## **Speaker Johnson to meet Netanyahu**

Netanyahu is also expected to meet while he's in Washington with the U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson. Johnson, a Republican who has aligned the House GOP lawmakers closer to Israel, plans to meet with Netanyahu on Tuesday.

## **Trump: former Brazilian leader should be left alone after plotting to overturn his 2022 election loss**

President Donald Trump posted on social media that Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro is subject to a "WITCH HUNT" and should be left alone by that country's judiciary.

Trump in a Monday post on Truth Social channeled his own experiences with regard to Bolsonaro, who was charged in February for plotting to stay in power after losing the 2022 election in an ongoing Brazilian Supreme Court Case.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 47 of 61

"He is not guilty of anything, except having fought for THE PEOPLE," Trump said. "I have gotten to know Jair Bolsonaro, and he was a strong Leader, who truly loved his Country — Also, a very tough negotiator on TRADE. His Election was very close and now, he is leading in the Polls. This is nothing more, or less, than an attack on a Political Opponent — Something I know much about!"

Trump last month called for throwing out the corruption trial of Netanyahu, who is visiting the White House on Monday.

## **Former Librarian of Congress takes on new role in fight for public knowledge**

The former Librarian of Congress is back with a new gig after Trump abruptly fired her in May.

Carla Hayden joined the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Monday as a senior fellow, the humanities grant-maker exclusively told The Associated Press.

Her duties include advising the country's largest philanthropic supporter of the arts on efforts to advance public knowledge through libraries and archives. Hayden noted existing threats to "the free exchange of ideas" in a statement.

"Together, we will work to strengthen the public knowledge ecosystem and ensure that the transformative power of information remains accessible to all," she said.

## **Pressure from Trump for trade deals before Wednesday deadline**

The Trump administration is stepping up pressure on trading partners to quickly make new deals before a Wednesday deadline, with plans for the United States to start sending letters Monday warning countries that higher tariffs could kick in Aug. 1.

That furthers the uncertainty for businesses, consumers and America's trading partners, and questions remain about which countries will be notified, whether anything will change in the days ahead and whether President Donald Trump will once more push off imposing the rates. Trump and his top trade advisers say he could extend the time for dealmaking but they insist the administration is applying maximum pressure on other nations.

Kevin Hassett, director of the White House National Economic Council, told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday that Trump would decide when it was time to give up on negotiations.

## **Trump signs tax breaks and spending cuts into law on Fourth of July**

Trump signed his package of tax breaks and spending cuts into law Friday in front of Fourth of July picnickers after his cajoling produced almost unanimous Republican support in Congress for the domestic priority that could cement his second-term legacy.

Flanked by Republican legislators and members of his Cabinet, Trump signed the multitrillion-dollar legislation at a desk on the White House driveway, then banged down a gavel gifted to him by House Speaker Mike Johnson that was used during the bill's final passage Thursday.

Against odds that at times seemed improbable, Trump achieved his goal of celebrating a historic — and divisive — legislative victory in time for the nation's birthday, which also was his self-imposed deadline for Congress to send the legislation to his desk. Fighter jets and stealth bombers streaked through the sky over the annual White House Fourth of July picnic.

## **Death toll from catastrophic flooding in Texas over the July Fourth weekend surpasses 100**

By JIM VERTUNO, NADIA LATHAN and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

KERRVILLE, Texas (AP) — The death toll from catastrophic flooding in Texas over the July Fourth weekend surpassed 100 on Monday as search-and-rescue teams continued to wade into swollen rivers and use heavy equipment to untangle trees as part of the massive search for missing people.

Authorities overseeing the search for flood victims said they will wait to address questions about weather warnings and why some summer camps did not evacuate ahead of the flooding that killed at least 104.

The officials spoke only hours after the operators of Camp Mystic, a century-old all-girls Christian summer camp in the Texas Hill Country, announced that they lost 27 campers and counselors to the floodwaters.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 48 of 61**

Kerr County officials said Monday 10 campers and one counselor have still not been found.

Searchers have found the bodies of 84 people, including 28 children, in the county home to Camp Mystic and several other summer camps, officials said.

With additional rain on the way, more flooding still threatened saturated parts of central Texas. Authorities said the death toll was sure to rise.

The raging flash floods — among the nation's worst in decades — slammed into camps and homes along the edge of the Guadalupe River before daybreak Friday, pulling sleeping people out of their cabins, tents and trailers and dragging them for miles past floating tree trunks and cars. Some survivors were found clinging to trees.

Piles of twisted trees sprinkled with mattresses, refrigerators and coolers littered the riverbanks Monday. The debris included reminders of what drew so many to the campgrounds and cabins in the Hill Country — a volleyball, canoes and a family portrait.

Nineteen deaths were reported in Travis, Burnet, Kendall, Tom Green and Williamson counties, local officials said.

Among those confirmed dead were 8-year-old sisters from Dallas who were at Camp Mystic and a former soccer coach and his wife who were staying at a riverfront home. Their daughters were still missing.

## **Calls for finding why warnings weren't heard**

Authorities vowed that one of the next steps would be investigating whether enough warnings were issued and why some camps did not evacuate or move to higher ground in a place long vulnerable to flooding that some local residents refer to as "flash flood alley."

That will include a review of how weather warnings were sent out and received. One of the challenges is that many camps and cabins are in places with poor cellphone service, Kerrville City Manager Dalton Rice said.

"We definitely want to dive in and look at all those things," he said. "We're looking forward to doing that once we can get the search and rescue complete."

Some camps were aware of the dangers and monitoring the weather. At least one moved several hundred campers to higher ground before the floods.

Sen. Ted Cruz, a Texas Republican, said recent government spending cuts to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service did not delay any warnings.

"There's a time to have political fights, there's a time to disagree. This is not that time," Cruz said. "There will be a time to find out what could be done differently. My hope is in time we learn some lessons to implement the next time there is a flood."

The weather service first advised of potential flooding on Thursday and then sent out a series of flash flood warnings in the early hours of Friday before issuing flash flood emergencies — a rare step that alerts the public to imminent danger.

Authorities and elected officials have said they did not expect such an intense downpour, the equivalent of months of rain. Some residents said they never received any warnings.

President Donald Trump, who signed a major disaster declaration for Kerr County, said he plans to visit the state on Friday. He had said Sunday that he does not plan to rehire any of the federal meteorologists who were fired this year.

"This was a thing that happened in seconds. Nobody expected it," the president said.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said local and federal weather services provided sufficient warnings.

## **Crews search for dozens of people**

More than three dozen people were unaccounted for across the state and more could be missing, Gov. Greg Abbott said Sunday.

Search-and-rescue crews at one staging area said Monday that more than 1,000 volunteers had been directed to Kerr County.

Kerrville city officials urged people to stop flying drones over the area after they said a private drone



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 49 of 61**

operating illegally Monday afternoon collided with a helicopter involved in emergency operations. The helicopter was forced to make an emergency landing and is out of service until further notice.

Little time to escape floods

Reagan Brown said his parents, in their 80s, managed to escape uphill as water inundated their home in the town of Hunt. When the couple learned that their 92-year-old neighbor was trapped in her attic, they went back and rescued her.

"Then they were able to reach their tool shed up higher ground, and neighbors throughout the early morning began to show up at their tool shed, and they all rode it out together," Brown said.

Elizabeth Lester, a mother of children who were at Camp Mystic and nearby Camp La Junta during the flood, said her young son had to swim out his cabin window to escape. Her daughter fled up the hillside as floodwaters whipped against her legs.

## **Flooding from Chantal's remnants forces dozens to flee homes in North Carolina**

By ALLEN G. BREED AP National Writer

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — Floodwaters from the remnants of Tropical Storm Chantal swept a woman in her car from a rural road and forced dozens of people to flee their homes, officials in North Carolina said Monday.

Parts of central North Carolina experienced hazardous conditions overnight including 3 to 8 inches (8 to 20 centimeters) of rain, according to North Carolina Emergency Management. Multiple water rescues were conducted in Alamance, Orange, Chatham and Durham counties overnight, and several areas have declared local states of emergency, officials said.

About 120 roads were closed Monday across the state, but several major roads had reopened, including parts of Interstate 40 and 85 in Alamance County, according to Gov. Josh Stein's office.

An 83-year-old woman from Pittsboro was killed when her car was swept off a rural Chatham County road by floodwaters Sunday night, according to the North Carolina State Highway Patrol. Responding troopers found the submerged vehicle about 100 feet (31 meters) from the road, and the woman was found dead inside, officials said.

The Chapel Hill Fire Department and neighboring agencies completed more than 50 water rescues, many of them in areas where floodwaters entered or threatened to enter apartments, officials said. More than 60 people were displaced. After helping with rescues in Chapel Hill, the Durham Fire Department said in a social media post that its crews performed more than 80 more rescues in the Old Farm area.

Alesia Ray, 65, stood on a second-floor staircase at her apartment building in Chapel Hill for five hours, clicking a flashlight, until rescuers in a rubber boat got her out. Below her, floodwaters wrecked her home.

"It was really scary," she said Monday as she and fiancé Thomas Hux worked to salvage some of their belongings. "I've never experienced anything like that. I don't want to go through that again."

Floodwaters inundated Chapel Hill's Eastgate Crossings shopping center, where the red-framed glass doors of a Talbots store were blown in and debris-specked white mannequins littered the floor. Next door, at the Great Outdoor Provision Co., manager Chad Pickens said kayaks ended up 30 feet (9 meters) from where they had been on display, and shelves in the shoe room were toppled like dominoes.

What happened there pales in comparison to the floods in Texas, he said.

"The bottom line is these are just things, and while it hurts to lose things, it's a lot different to losing people," Pickens said.

A large brown dumpster had smashed into the outdoor dining area of a Shake Shack in the shopping center. The windows were blown out and chairs and cups were strewn everywhere.

Hua Jiang said he put in an order at the Shake Shack around 8:45 p.m. Sunday. and about 10 minutes later, water started flowing through the doors. After about five minutes, employees said they should make a run for it, he said. Jiang's Toyota RAV4 was already flooded in the parking lot, so he went to a Chipotle on higher ground.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 50 of 61**

"It's unfortunate, but that's life," Jiang said, wiping sweat from his brow Monday morning.

After seeing photos of flooding on Lake Hyco in Person County, Kevin Nickerson traveled from Durham to check on the boathouse he and his wife own.

Whole boathouses were floating in the lake when he arrived. The lake rose about 6 feet (2 meters) from the week prior, he said. At the Nickersons' boathouse, water had pushed the retired couple's boat up to the ceiling and their fridge was drifting inside. They have to wait for the water to subside to fully assess the damage.

"This isn't something that we had really thought about, so we will find out, you know, how good our insurance is," Sandy Nickerson said.

Several solid-waste trucks and police cars were also totaled from rushing floodwaters at a facility used to service local government vehicles in Carrboro, a town near Chapel Hill, the town's public works director, Kevin Belanger, said at a news conference Monday.

In Chatham County, authorities were searching for two canoers who went missing during the storm on Jordan Lake, according to a county sheriff's office statement.

The Eno River crested early Monday at Durham at 25.6 feet (7.8 meters), surpassing the previous record of 23.6 feet (7.2 meters), according to the National Water Prediction Service's website.

The Haw River crested early Monday at 32.5 feet (9.9 meters), the second highest river stage ever recorded at the Town of Haw River. That level was only eclipsed by Hurricane Fran in 1996 when the stage reached 32.8 feet (10 meters), according to a post from the National Weather Service's Raleigh office.

Tropical Storm Chantal was downgraded to a depression Sunday after making landfall near Litchfield Beach, South Carolina, early Sunday, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

By late Monday afternoon, the storm was off Delaware's coast, with maximum sustained winds of 25 mph (40 kph). It was moving northeast at about 21 mph (34 kph). Forecasters warned of dangerous surf and rip currents at beaches from northeastern Florida to the mid-Atlantic states for the next couple of days.

## **Wall Street falls as Trump pressures trading partners with new tariffs**

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

Stocks on Wall Street closed broadly lower Monday as the White House stepped up pressure on major trading partners to make deals before punishing tariffs imposed by the U.S. take effect.

The S&P 500 fell 0.8% for its biggest loss since mid-June. The benchmark index remains near its all-time high set last week.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gave back 0.9%. The Nasdaq composite also finished 0.9% lower, not too far from its own record high.

The losses were widespread. Decliners outnumbered gainers by nearly 4-to-1 on the New York Stock Exchange.

Tesla tumbled 6.8% for the biggest drop among S&P 500 stocks as the feud between CEO Elon Musk and President Donald Trump reignited over the weekend. Musk, once a top donor and ally of Trump, said he would form a third political party in protest over the Republican spending bill that passed last week.

The selling accelerated after the Trump administration released letters informing Japan and South Korea that their goods will be taxed at 25% starting on Aug. 1, citing persistent trade imbalances with the two crucial U.S. allies in Asia.

"If for any reason you decide to raise your Tariffs, then, whatever the number you choose to raise them by, will be added onto the 25% that we charge," Trump wrote in the letters to Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and South Korean President Lee Jae-myung.

Trump also announced new tariff rates on Malaysia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Laos and Myanmar.

Just before hefty U.S. tariffs on goods imported from nearly every country around the globe were to take effect in April, Trump postponed the levies for 90 days in hopes that foreign governments would be more willing to strike new trade deals. That 90-day negotiating period was set to expire before Wednesday.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 51 of 61**

On Sunday, Trump said he would impose an additional 10% in tariffs against the BRICS bloc of developing nations, which had condemned tariffs increases at its summit in Brazil. In addition to Brazil, the BRICS countries also include Russia, India, China and South Africa.

This latest phase in the trade war heightens the threat of potentially more severe tariffs that's been hanging over the global economy. Higher taxes on imported goods could hinder economic growth, if not increase recession risks.

"Just bringing back that meaty topic back into focus, after a strong week last week, has given a little bit of a pause in the market," said Bill Northey, senior investment director at U.S. Bank Asset Management.

The near-term outlook will likely hinge on several key factors like the extent to which trading partners are included in Trump letters, the rate of tariffs, and the effective date of such tariffs, according to analysts at Nomura.

Last week, the Trump administration announced that it reached a deal with Vietnam that would allow U.S. goods to enter the country duty-free, while Vietnamese exports to the U.S. would face a 20% levy. That was a decline from the 46% tax on Vietnamese imports he proposed in April.

"The type of deal struck with Vietnam may be a blueprint for similar countries in the region with economies heavily reliant on large trade deficits with the U.S.," said Jason Pride, chief of investment strategy and research at Glenmede.

Monday's market sell-off came on the first day of trading in the U.S. after a holiday-shortened week.

Nearly all of the sectors in the S&P 500 index closed in the red, with technology, financial and consumer-related stocks among the biggest weights on the market.

Apple fell 1.7%, JPMorgan Chase dropped 1.4% and Home Depot slid 1.1%.

Molina Healthcare fell 2.9% after the insurer lowered its profit guidance due to rapidly accelerating costs. UnitedHealth Group also recently reported a spike in costs that forced it to cut its forecast, sending its stock tumbling in April.

In deal news, software company CoreWeave agreed to acquire cryptocurrency mining company Core Scientific in an all-stock transaction valued at about \$9 billion. Shares in Core Scientific sank 17.6%, while CoreWeave fell 3.3%.

Bond yields mostly rose. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.39% from 4.34% late Thursday.

The downbeat start to the week follows a strong run for stocks, which pushed further into record heights last week after a better-than-expected U.S. jobs report.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 49.37 points to 6,229.98. The Dow lost 422.17 points to 44,406.36, and the Nasdaq slid 188.59 points to 20,412.52.

Stock indexes in Europe ended mostly higher. Asian markets closed mostly lower.

Oil prices fluctuated after OPEC+ agreed on Saturday to raise production in August by 548,000 barrels per day.

U.S. benchmark crude settled 1.4% higher at \$67.93 per barrel, while Brent crude, the international standard, rose 1.9% to settle at \$69.58 per barrel.

This week will be relatively light on economic data. On Wednesday the Federal Reserve will release minutes from its policymaking committee's meeting last month.

The Fed's chair, Jerome Powell, has been insisting that the central bank wants to wait and see how Trump's tariffs affect the economy and inflation before making its next move on interest rates. While lower rates give a boost to the economy by making it easier to borrow money, they can also give inflation more fuel. That could be dangerous if the Trump administration's tariffs send inflation higher.

## **A classical drive: Road rumble strips play Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in UAE emirate of Fujairah**

By GABE LEVIN Associated Press

FUJAIRAH, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The humble road rumble strip, used around the world to alert drifting drivers to potential hazards or lane departures, can play Beethoven on a mountain highway in the

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 52 of 61

far reaches of the United Arab Emirates.

For nearly a kilometer (a half mile) along the E84 highway — also known as the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Road — motorists in the right-hand lane coming into the city of Fujairah can play Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony where the rubber meets the road.

"The 'Street of Music,' of course, is an art project that exists in some countries ... but we wanted this project to be in our country," said Ali Obaid Al Hefaiti, the director of Fujairah Fine Arts Academy, which recently wrapped up the project in collaboration with local authorities.

"I think that the project is focused on spreading the art culture. The combination of music in our lives and our normal lives," he added.

For drivers coming into Fujairah, the rumble strip initially looks like a larger, rectangular version of the dash lines separating the three-lane highway. That's until you hit the first block, and the grooves of the road combine with the speed of the vehicle to make music.

Driving over each block sounds out the best-known parts of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony — the final movements known commonly as the tune "Ode to Joy," or in its more modern form, the official anthem of the European Union. Al Hefaiti recommended motorists hit the blocks at around 100 kph (60 mph) to get the tune just right.

The road has become a social media sensation, bringing visitors to one of the lesser-known emirates in the UAE along its eastern coast with the Gulf of Oman.

Drivers have been spotted slowing down to experience the musical road as they come into the city. Passers-by can get the same effect from standing on the side of the road, though motorists often come in quickly.

The concept isn't new — there have been so-called "singing shoulders" deployed in other countries including across the Persian Gulf in Iran. But Al Hefaiti believes this is the first one in the Arab world. Beyond it going viral, Al Hefaiti thinks it will bring classical music into everyday life and "raise awareness about the importance of art culture."

As for why an Emirati fine arts school picked a European composer born in the 18th century to represent Fujairah, Al Hefaiti said that he always encourages his students to explore different cultures.

## Man with an assault rifle killed after shooting at a Border Patrol facility in Texas

By VALERIE GONZALEZ and SARA CLINE Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — A man with an assault rifle fired dozens of rounds at federal agents and a U.S. Border Patrol facility in Texas on Monday, injuring a police officer, before authorities shot and killed him.

Authorities identified the shooter as Ryan Louis Mosqueda, believed to be 27, who they said shot at agents exiting the building, which is near the U.S.-Mexico border. McAllen Police Chief Victor Rodriguez said Mosqueda had a "utility vest" in addition to the rifle when federal agents returned fire.

Hours before the attack in McAllen, Mosqueda's father was stopped by Weslaco police around 2:30 a.m. for a traffic violation, according to police spokesperson Heriberto Caraveo. The father told police that he was looking for his son, who he said had psychological issues and was carrying weapons in his car, Caraveo told The Associated Press.

Police say the white two-door sedan that Mosqueda drove to the facility had letters painted — possibly in Latin — on the driver's side door.

"What it means, or whether or not it is an underlying reason for him being here, I do not know," Rodriguez said when asked about the graffiti.

After Mosqueda was killed, law enforcement found other weaponry, ammunition and backpacks inside the vehicle.

"There are many, many more rounds of ammunition in his backpack," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said his department received a call about the shooting around 5:50 a.m. One officer who responded to the shooting, a 10-year veteran, was injured after being struck in the knee. Rodriguez said



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 53 of 61

it was unclear if the injury was from shrapnel or a bullet.

Police say Mosqueda was linked to a Michigan address, but was reported missing from a Weslaco, Texas, address around 4 a.m. Monday. Weslaco is about 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the Border Patrol facility.

"An hour and a few minutes later, he was at this particular location opening fire on the federal building and our federal agents," Rodriguez said.

The exact details of the missing person report were not immediately shared with the media.

Rodriguez said there is no ongoing threat to the public, but it is unknown if any other people were involved in the attack. He said the motive and events leading up to the attack are part of the ongoing investigation, which the FBI is taking the lead on.

The attack comes as President Donald Trump's administration ramps up deportations, which will be turbocharged by a massive spending bill that became law last week. Stephen Miller, the president's deputy chief of staff and chief architect of his immigration policies, recently set a target of at least 3,000 immigration arrests a day, up from about 650 a day during the first five months of the administration.

## Elon Musk says he's formed a new political party. But it's not clear if he actually has

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

Elon Musk has said that he's formed a new political party, but it's unclear what steps — if any — he's taken to do so, or how the effort might affect upcoming elections.

Musk has not yet released any additional information. Spokespeople for Musk and his political action committee, America PAC, didn't immediately comment Monday.

While there are many recent federal elections filings that reference the Tesla and SpaceX CEO or his companies, Musk himself has even gone on his social media platform batting down at least one filing as fake.

The possible new political party marks another development in the rift between Musk and President Donald Trump over the Republican's sweeping tax cuts law, which the tech billionaire has called "insane."

The fissures between Trump and his one-time top surrogate and Department of Government Efficiency cost-cutter-in-chief have exposed not only the fragile nature of relations between two of the country's most visible personalities but also the potential political consequences of disagreeing with the priorities of either man. The squabble could be particularly costly for Musk, whose businesses rely on billions of dollars in government contracts, and whose publicly traded company Tesla has taken a market hit.

Here's what we know — and what we don't — about Musk's new political party:

### Musk says he's formed the America Party

Musk said Saturday on X that he had formed the America Party "to give you back your freedom." He'd teased the move for days, threatening to make his own party if "this insane spending bill passes" Congress. He spent part of Sunday taking feedback from X users about the party, which he indicated he'd use to get involved in the 2026 midterm elections.

Some new Musk-related parties seem fishy

The Federal Election Commission database has teemed with newly formed political entities that make reference either to Musk or one of his companies, but there are details that cast doubts on their authenticity.

As of Monday afternoon, there were multiple political parties listed in the Federal Election Commission database formed in the hours since Musk's Saturday X post, with versions of "America Party" or "DOGE" or "X" in the name, or Musk listed among people affiliated with the entity.

But none appeared to be real, listing contacts for the organization as email addresses such as "wents-nowboarding@yahoo.com" or untraceable Protonmail addresses. Several listed Vaibhav Taneja — the chief financial officer of Tesla — as a contact for the party, along with a Texas address for a building affiliated with X. Several pointed to a home in Maryland.

When a Musk supporter posted screengrabs of one of the formation documents to X, Musk took to X Sunday to say that the "filing is false and has been reported as such to the FEC."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 54 of 61

## What could Musk do with a new party?

While indicating earlier this year that he might play less of a role in elected politics moving forward, Musk — the world's richest man who spent at least \$250 million supporting Trump in the 2024 election — could use a new party to try to do the opposite.

New political parties are often formed but typically struggle to pull any significant support away from the Republican and Democratic parties. But Musk could impact next year's elections determining control of Congress if he is willing to spend significant amounts of money — through a new party or existing ones.

During the tax cuts debate, Musk pledged to work toward supporting primary challengers for members of Congress who backed the bill. He also said he would support Rep. Thomas Massie, a Kentucky Republican targeted by Trump for opposing the measure.

## What has Trump said about Musk's new party?

Trump on Sunday called Musk's proposition "ridiculous," going on to tout "tremendous success with the Republican Party."

Trump later posted on social media that he was "saddened to watch Elon Musk go completely 'off the rails,' essentially becoming a TRAIN WRECK," saying the only thing third parties are good for "is the creation of Complete and Total DISRUPTION & CHAOS."

## What does it take to make a new political party?

There are official steps, like setting up a tax identification number, bank account and treasurer, who can be held liable if future paperwork isn't filed properly.

According to the FEC, any new party that intends to operate in federal elections has to register with the commission "when they raise or spend money over certain thresholds in connection with a federal election." Federal campaign finance laws and regulations govern how political parties can take in money. Parties have to file regular reports with the FEC.

But even a federally designated political party has to gain access to ballots state by state, making the entire process, according to University of Richmond School of Law professor Carl Tobias, "complicated and expensive."

## Debate erupts over role job cuts played in weather forecasts ahead of deadly Texas floods

By MICHAEL BIESECKER and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former federal officials and outside experts have warned for months that President Donald Trump's deep staffing cuts to the National Weather Service could endanger lives.

After torrential rains and flash flooding struck Friday in the Texas Hill Country, the weather service came under fire from local officials who criticized what they described as inadequate forecasts, though most in the Republican-controlled state stopped short of blaming Trump's cuts. Democrats, meanwhile, wasted little time in linking the staff reductions to the disaster, which is being blamed for the deaths of at least 80 people, including more than two dozen girls and counselors attending a summer camp on the banks of the Guadalupe River.

The NWS office responsible for that region had five staffers on duty as thunderstorms formed over Texas Thursday evening, the usual number for an overnight shift when severe weather is expected. Current and former NWS officials defended the agency, pointing to urgent flash flood warnings issued in the pre-dawn hours before the river rose.

"This was an exceptional service to come out first with the catastrophic flash flood warning and this shows the awareness of the meteorologists on shift at the NWS office," said Brian LaMarre, who retired at the end of April as the meteorologist-in-charge of the NWS forecast office in Tampa, Florida. "There is always the challenge of pinpointing extreme values, however, the fact the catastrophic warning was issued first showed the level of urgency."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 55 of 61

## Questions linger about level of coordination

Questions remain, however, about the level of coordination and communication between NWS and local officials on the night of the disaster. The Trump administration has cut hundreds of jobs at NWS, with staffing down by at least 20% at nearly half of the 122 NWS field offices nationally and at least a half dozen no longer staffed 24 hours a day. Hundreds more experienced forecasters and senior managers were encouraged to retire early.

The White House also has proposed slashing its parent agency's budget by 27% and eliminating federal research centers focused on studying the world's weather, climate and oceans.

The website for the NWS office for Austin/San Antonio, which covers the region that includes hard-hit Kerr County, shows six of 27 positions are listed as vacant. The vacancies include a key manager responsible for issuing warnings and coordinating with local emergency management officials. An online resume for the employee who last held the job showed he left in April after more than 17 years, shortly after mass emails sent to employees urging them to retire early or face potential layoffs.

Democrats on Monday pressed the Trump administration for details about the cuts. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer demanded that the administration conduct an inquiry into whether staffing shortages contributed to "the catastrophic loss of life" in Texas.

Meanwhile, Trump said the job eliminations did not hamper any weather forecasting. The raging waters, he said Sunday, were "a thing that happened in seconds. No one expected it. Nobody saw it."

## Former officials warn that job cuts could hamper future forecasts

Former federal officials and experts have said Trump's indiscriminate job reductions at NWS and other weather-related agencies will result in brain drain that imperils the federal government's ability to issue timely and accurate forecasts. Such predictions can save lives, particularly for those in the path of quick-moving storms.

"This situation is getting to the point where something could break," said Louis Uccellini, a meteorologist who served as NWS director under three presidents, including during Trump's first term. "The people are being tired out, working through the night and then being there during the day because the next shift is short staffed. Anything like that could create a situation in which important elements of forecasts and warnings are missed."

After returning to office in January, Trump issued a series of executive orders empowering the Department of Government Efficiency, initially led by mega-billionaire Elon Musk, to enact sweeping staff reductions and cancel contracts at federal agencies, bypassing significant Congressional oversight.

Though Musk has now departed Washington and had a very public falling out with Trump, DOGE staffers he hired and the cuts he sought have largely remained, upending the lives of tens of thousands of federal employees.

## Cuts resulted from Republican effort to privatize duties of weather agencies

The cuts follow a decade-long Republican effort to dismantle and privatize many of the duties of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the agency within the Commerce Department that includes the NWS. The reductions have come as Trump has handed top public posts to officials with ties to private companies that stand to profit from hobbling the taxpayer-funded system for predicting the weather.

Project 2025, the conservative governing blueprint that Trump distanced himself from during the 2024 campaign but that he has broadly moved to enact once in office, calls for dismantling NOAA and further commercializing the weather service.

Chronic staffing shortages have led a handful of offices to curtail the frequency of regional forecasts and weather balloon launches needed to collect atmospheric data. In April, the weather service abruptly ended translations of its forecasts and emergency alerts into languages other than English, including Spanish. The service was soon reinstated after public outcry.

NOAA's main satellite operations center briefly appeared earlier this year on a list of surplus government real estate set to be sold. Trump's proposed budget also seeks to shutter key facilities for tracking climate change. The proposed cuts include the observatory atop the Mauna Loa volcano in Hawaii that

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 56 of 61

for decades has documented the steady rise in plant-warming carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere from burning fossil fuels.

On June 25, NOAA abruptly announced that the U.S. Department of Defense would no longer process or transmit data from three weather satellites experts said are crucial to accurately predicting the path and strength of hurricanes at sea.

"Removing data from the defense satellite is similar to removing another piece to the public safety puzzle for hurricane intensity forecasting," said LaMarre, now a private consultant. "The more pieces removed, the less clear the picture becomes which can reduce the quality of life-saving warnings."

## **Trump officials say they didn't fire meteorologists**

At a pair of Congressional hearings last month, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick called it "fake news" that the Trump administration had axed any meteorologists, despite detailed reporting from The Associated Press and other media organizations that chronicled the layoffs.

"We are fully staffed with forecasters and scientists," Lutnick said June 4 before a Senate appropriations subcommittee. "Under no circumstances am I going to let public safety or public forecasting be touched."

Despite a broad freeze on federal hiring directed by Trump, NOAA announced last month it would seek to fill more than 100 "mission-critical field positions," as well as plug holes at some regional weather offices by reassigning staff. Those positions have not yet been publicly posted, though a NOAA spokesperson said Sunday they would be soon.

Asked by AP how the NWS could simultaneously be fully staffed and still advertise "mission critical positions" as open, Commerce spokesperson Kristen Eichamer said the "National Hurricane Center is fully staffed to meet this season's demand, and any recruitment efforts are simply meant to deepen our talent pool."

"The secretary is committed to providing Americans with the most accurate, up-to-date weather data by ensuring the National Weather Service is fully equipped with the personnel and technology it needs," Eichamer said. "For the first time, we are integrating technology that's more accurate and agile than ever before to achieve this goal, and with it the NWS is poised to deliver critical weather information to Americans."

Uccellini and the four prior NWS directors who served under Democratic and Republican presidents criticized the Trump cuts in an open letter issued in May; they said the administration's actions resulted in the departures of about 550 employees — an overall reduction of more than 10 percent.

"NWS staff will have an impossible task to continue its current level of services," they wrote. "Our worst nightmare is that weather forecast offices will be so understaffed that there will be needless loss of life. We know that's a nightmare shared by those on the forecasting front lines — and by the people who depend on their efforts."

NOAA's budget for fiscal year 2024 was just under \$6.4 billion, of which less than \$1.4 billion went to NWS.

## **Experts worry about forecasts for hurricanes**

While experts say it would be illegal for Trump to eliminate NOAA without Congressional approval, some former federal officials worry the cuts could result in a patchwork system where taxpayers finance the operation of satellites and collection of atmospheric data but are left to pay private services that would issue forecasts and severe weather warnings. That arrangement, critics say, could lead to delays or missed emergency alerts that, in turn, could result in avoidable deaths.

D. James Baker, who served as NOAA's administrator during the Clinton administration, questioned whether private forecasting companies would provide the public with services that don't generate profits.

"Would they be interested in serving small communities in Maine, let's say?" Baker asked. "Is there a business model that gets data to all citizens that need it? Will companies take on legal risks, share information with disaster management agencies, be held accountable as government agencies are? Simply cutting NOAA without identifying how the forecasts will continue to be provided is dangerous."

Though the National Hurricane Center in Miami has been largely spared staff reductions like those at regional NWS offices, some professionals who depend on federal forecasts and data greeted the June start of the tropical weather season with profound worry.

In an unusual broadcast on June 3, longtime South Florida TV meteorologist John Morales warned his viewers that the Trump administration cuts meant he might not be able to provide as accurate forecasts



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 57 of 61

for hurricanes as he had in years past. He cited staffing shortfalls of between 20% and 40% at NWS offices from Tampa to Key West and urged his NBC 6 audience in greater Miami to call their congressional representatives.

"What we are starting to see is that the quality of the forecasts is becoming degraded," Morales said. "And we may not know exactly how strong a hurricane is before it reaches the coastline."

## Russia's transportation minister found dead in what officials say was an apparent suicide

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian's transport minister was found dead from a gunshot wound in an apparent suicide, investigators said Monday — news that broke hours after the Kremlin announced he had been dismissed by President Vladimir Putin.

The Kremlin did not give a reason for the firing of Roman Starovoit, who served as transport minister since May 2024, and it was unclear when exactly he died and whether it was related to an investigation into alleged corruption, as some Russian media suggested.

Russia's Investigative Committee, the top criminal investigation agency, said the body of Starovoit, 53, was found with a gunshot wound in his car parked in Odintsovo, a neighborhood just west of the capital where many members of Russia's elite live. A gun previously presented to him as an official gift was reportedly found next to his body.

A criminal probe was launched into the death, and investigators saw suicide as the most likely cause, according to committee's spokesperson Svetlana Petrenko, who did not say when Starovoit died.

Law enforcement agents were seen carrying Starovoit's body from the site Monday evening.

Andrei Kartapolov, a former deputy defense minister who heads a defense committee in the lower house of parliament, told news outlet RTVI that Starovoit killed himself "quite a while ago," and some Russian media alleged that he may have taken his life before the publication of Putin's decree firing him. Starovoit was last seen in public Sunday morning, when an official video from the ministry's situation room featured him receiving reports from officials.

### Speculation swirls over reasons for Starovoit's dismissal

Russian media have reported that Starovoit's dismissal could have been linked to an investigation into the embezzlement of state funds allocated for building fortifications in the Kursk region, where he served as governor before becoming transportation minister.

The alleged embezzlement has been cited as one of the reasons for deficiencies in Russia's defensive lines that failed to stem a surprise Ukrainian incursion in the region launched in August 2024. In the stunning attack, Ukraine's battle-hardened mechanized units quickly overwhelmed lightly armed Russian border guards and inexperienced army conscripts. Hundreds were taken prisoner.

The incursion was a humiliating blow to the Kremlin — the first time the country's territory was occupied by an invader since World War II.

The Russian military had announced its troops had fully reclaimed the border territory in April — nearly nine months after losing chunks of the region.

Starovoit's successor as Kursk governor, Alexei Smirnov, stepped down in December and was arrested on embezzlement charges in April. Some Russian media have alleged that Starovoit also could have faced charges as part of the investigation.

His dismissal also followed a weekend of travel chaos as Russian airports were forced to ground hundreds of flights due to Ukrainian drone attacks. Most commentators said, however, that the air traffic disruptions have become customary amid frequent Ukrainian drone raids and were unlikely to have triggered his dismissal.

Shortly after Putin's decree on Starovoit was published, Andrei Korneichuk, an official with a state railways agency under his ministry, collapsed and died during a business meeting, Russian news reports said. They said he died of an apparent heart attack.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 58 of 61

## Other high-level corruption cases pressed

An official order releasing Starovoit from his post was published on the Kremlin's website Monday morning without giving a reason for his dismissal.

Shortly before the news of Starovoit's death broke, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov praised Starovoit's replacement, Andrei Nikitin, and refused to comment on the reasons behind the move.

Russian authorities have investigated a slew of cases of high-level corruption that was widely blamed for military setbacks in Ukraine.

On Monday, Khalil Arslanov, a former deputy chief of the military's General Staff, was convicted on corruption charges and sentenced to 17 years in prison. Arslanov is a former member of the military brass close to former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. Several of them were targeted in a far-ranging probe into alleged military graft.

Last week, Shoigu's former deputy, Timur Ivanov, was convicted on charges of embezzlement and money laundering and handed a 13-year prison sentence.

Shoigu, a veteran official with personal ties to Putin, survived the purges of his inner circle and was given the high-profile post of secretary of Russia's Security Council.

In another move Monday, the Investigative Committee announced the arrest of Viktor Strigunov, the former first deputy chief of the National Guard. It said Strigunov was charged with corruption and abuse of office.

## American kids have become increasingly unhealthy over nearly two decades, new study finds

By LAURA UNGAR and JONEL ALECCIA Associated Press

The health of U.S. children has deteriorated over the past 17 years, with kids today more likely to have obesity, chronic diseases and mental health problems like depression, a new study says.

Much of what researchers found was already known, but the study paints a comprehensive picture by examining various aspects of children's physical and mental health at the same time.

"The surprising part of the study wasn't any with any single statistic; it was that there's 170 indicators, eight data sources, all showing the same thing: a generalized decline in kids' health," said Dr. Christopher Forrest, one of the authors of the study published Monday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has brought children's health to the forefront of the national policy conversation, unveiling in May a much-anticipated "Make America Healthy Again" report that described kids as undernourished and overmedicated, and raised concerns about their lack of physical activity. But the Trump administration's actions — including cuts to federal health agencies, Medicaid and scientific research — are not likely to reverse the trend, according to outside experts who reviewed Monday's study.

"The health of kids in America is not as good as it should be, not as good as the other countries, and the current policies of this administration are definitely going to make it worse," said Dr. Frederick Rivara, a pediatrician and researcher at the Seattle Children's Hospital and UW Medicine in Seattle. He co-authored an editorial accompanying the new study.

Forrest and his colleagues analyzed surveys, electronic health records from 10 pediatric health systems and international mortality statistics. Among their findings:

- Obesity rates for U.S. children 2-19 years old rose from 17% in 2007-2008 to about 21% in 2021-2023.
- A U.S. child in 2023 was 15% to 20% more likely than a U.S. child in 2011 to have a chronic condition such as anxiety, depression or sleep apnea, according to data reported by parents and doctors.
- Annual prevalence rates for 97 chronic conditions recorded by doctors rose from about 40% in 2011 to about 46% in 2023.
- Early onset of menstruation, trouble sleeping, limitations in activity, physical symptoms, depressive symptoms and loneliness also increased among American kids during the study period.

— American children were around 1.8 times more likely to die than kids in other high-income countries from 2007-2022. Being born premature and sudden unexpected death were much higher among U.S. infants, and firearm-related incidents and motor vehicle crashes were much more common among 1-19-year-old American kids than among those the same age in other countries examined.

The research points to bigger problems with America's health, said Forrest, who is a pediatrician at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

"Kids are the canaries in the coal mine," he said. "When kids' health changes, it's because they're at increased vulnerability, and it reflects what's happening in society at large."

The timing of the study, he said, is "completely fortuitous." Well before the 2024 presidential election, Forrest was working on a book about thriving over the life span and couldn't find this sort of comprehensive data on children's health.

The datasets analyzed have some limitations and may not be applicable to the full U.S. population, noted Dr. James Perrin, a pediatrician and spokesman for the American Academy of Pediatrics, who wasn't involved in the study.

"The basic finding is true," he said.

The editorial published alongside the study said while the administration's MAHA movement is bringing welcome attention to chronic diseases, "it is pursuing other policies that will work against the interests of children." Those include eliminating injury prevention and maternal health programs, canceling investments in a campaign addressing sudden infant death and "fueling vaccine hesitancy among parents that may lead to a resurgence of deadly vaccine-preventable diseases," authors wrote.

Officials from the U.S. Health and Human Services Department did not respond to a request for comment.

Forrest said risks highlighted by the MAHA report, such as eating too much ultra-processed food, are real but miss the complex reality driving trends in children's health.

"We have to step back and take some lessons from the ecological sustainability community and say: Let's look at the ecosystem that kids are growing up in. And let's start on a kind of neighborhood-by-neighborhood, city-by-city basis, examining it," he said.

## **Israel and Hamas are inching toward a new ceasefire deal for Gaza. This is how it might look**

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in Washington Monday to meet U.S. President Donald Trump, who has been pushing for a ceasefire that might lead to an end to the 21-month war in Gaza.

Israel and Hamas are considering a new U.S.-backed ceasefire proposal that would pause the war, free Israeli hostages and send much-needed aid flooding into Gaza. It also aims to open broader talks about ending the conflict.

Negotiations have repeatedly stalled over Hamas' demands for an end to the war and complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, while Israel wants Hamas to surrender and disarm before it ends the war.

While the final details have yet to be agreed to by the sides, The Associated Press obtained a copy of the proposal sent by mediators to Hamas.

Here is a look at how the truce might look, according to that draft:

- The truce would last 60 days.
- 10 living hostages and the remains of 18 would be released in phases throughout the truce.
- Palestinian prisoners held by Israel will be released in exchange for the hostages, although precise numbers were not detailed.
- Humanitarian aid entering Gaza would be ramped up significantly and would be distributed by the United Nations. The proposal makes no mention of the U.S.- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.
- Israeli forces would withdraw to a buffer zone along Gaza's borders with Israel and Egypt. Israel has seized large swaths of the territory since ending a previous ceasefire in March.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 60 of 61**

— On the first day of the truce, the sides are expected to begin negotiations toward an end to the war, but no timeline is mentioned.

— The mediators — the U.S., Egypt and Qatar — will serve as guarantors to make sure the sides negotiate in good faith.

— While there is no guarantee the war would end, the proposal states that Trump insists the talks during the truce “would lead to a permanent resolution of the conflict.”

— If the negotiations toward ending the war are not complete after 60 days, the ceasefire may be extended.

— The proposal says Trump will personally announce the ceasefire deal once it is reached.

## **Today in History: July 8, Thai cave rescue**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 8, the 189th day of 2025. There are 176 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 8, 2018, divers rescued four of the 12 boys who’d been trapped in a flooded cave in northern Thailand with their soccer coach for more than two weeks. (The remaining eight boys and their coach were rescued over the next two days.)

Also on this date:

In 1776, Col. John Nixon gave the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, outside the State House (now Independence Hall) in Philadelphia.

In 1853, an expedition led by Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Edo Bay, Japan, on a mission to seek diplomatic and trade relations with the Japanese.

In 1889, the first issue of The Wall Street Journal was published.

In 1947, a New Mexico newspaper, the Roswell Daily Record, quoted officials at Roswell Army Air Field as saying they had recovered a “flying saucer” that crashed onto a ranch; officials then said it was actually a weather balloon.

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman named Gen. Douglas MacArthur commander-in-chief of United Nations forces in Korea. (Truman would fire MacArthur for insubordination nine months later.)

In 1972, the Nixon administration announced a deal to sell \$750 million in grain to the Soviet Union. (However, the Soviets were also engaged in secretly buying subsidized American grain, resulting in what critics dubbed “The Great Grain Robbery.”)

In 1994, Kim Il Sung, North Korea’s communist leader since 1948, died at age 82.

In 2000, Venus Williams beat Lindsay Davenport for her first Grand Slam title, becoming the first Black female champion at Wimbledon since Althea Gibson in 1958.

In 2010, the largest spy swap between the U.S. and Russia since the Cold War unfolded as 10 people accused of spying in suburban America pleaded guilty to conspiracy and were ordered deported to Russia in exchange for the release of four prisoners accused of spying for the West.

In 2011, the 135th and final space shuttle mission began when space shuttle Atlantis launched from Kennedy Space Center.

In 2021, President Joe Biden said the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan would end on Aug. 31; in a speech in the White House East Room, Biden made an impassioned argument for exiting the nearly 20-year war without sacrificing more American lives, but acknowledged that there would be no “mission accomplished” moment to celebrate.

In 2022, former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated on a street in western Japan by a gunman who opened fire on him from behind as he delivered a campaign speech.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor Jeffrey Tambor is 81. Drummer Jaimoe Johanson (The Allman Brothers Band) is 81. Actor Kim Darby is 78. Children’s musician Raffi is 77. Celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck is 76. Actor Anjelica Huston is 74. Writer Anna Quindlen is 73. Author and politician Marianne Williamson is 73. Pro



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 378 ~ 61 of 61**

Football Hall of Famer Jack Lambert is 73. Actor Kevin Bacon is 67. Singer Joan Osborne is 63. Actor Lee Tergesen (TV: "Oz") is 60. Actor Billy Crudup is 57. Actor Michael Weatherly (TV: "NCIS") is 57. Musician Beck is 55. Actor Kathleen Robertson is 52. Christian rock musician Stephen Mason (Jars of Clay) is 50. Actor Milo Ventimiglia (MEE'-loh vehn-tih-MEEL'-yuh) is 48. Actor Lance Gross (TV: "Tyler Perry's House of Payne") is 44. Actor Sophia Bush is 43. Actor Maya Hawke is 27. Actor Jaden Smith is 27.