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Tuesday, July 15

Senior Menu: Lemon baked cod, parsley. buttered potato, broccoli, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
Amateurs host Aberdeen, 6 p.m.
Legion at Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Softball: U14U18 hosts Claremont, 6 p.m. (DH); U14 at Warner, 6 p.m. (DH)
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, July 16

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzine, green beans, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.
Legion hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m.
Jr. Legion hosts Clark, 7:30 p.m.
Softball: U8B hosts Webster 6 p.m. (DH); U8G hosts Webster, 6 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.
ProAm Golf Tourney at Olive Grove



City Council Meeting
July 15, 2025, 7 p.m.

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD



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1440

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

Grand Canyon Wildfires

Firefighters in Arizona are battling a pair of fast-moving wildfires (w/map) in and near the Grand Canyon. As of this writing, the Dragon Bravo Fire and the White Sage Fire have burned more than 55,000 acres of land together—roughly the size of Washington, DC.

The Dragon Bravo Fire, started by lightning on July 4, has destroyed up to 80 structures, including a historic lodge and a wastewater treatment plant, which caused a chlorine gas leak. The blaze also forced the closure of the Grand Canyon's North Rim (a less popular area that draws in fewer than 10% of tourists) for the rest of the year. It has burned around 5,700 acres. The White Sage Fire, also caused by lightning, began July 9 about 35 miles north of the Dragon Bravo Fire and has burned around 50,000 acres. Both fires are 0% contained as of this writing.

Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs (D) has called for an independent investigation into federal wildfire management after reports that the Dragon Bravo Fire was initially treated as a "controlled burn" amid extremely dry, windy conditions.

Crypto Week Kickoff

The US House of Representatives will begin considering three cryptocurrency-related bills today. The legislative push, dubbed "Crypto Week," is expected to yield the country's first major crypto legislation. Bitcoin hit an all-time high yesterday, at one point trading above \$123K amid promises of clearer regulations.

The first of the three bills—the GENIUS Act—passed the Senate last month and is expected to clear the House before President Donald Trump signs it. The bill aims to regulate stablecoins, which are easy and cheap to transfer but differ from bitcoins in that they are dollar-pegged. A second bill regulates the broader digital currency market, dividing oversight between the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. A third bill limits the Federal Reserve's ability to create a central bank digital currency.

Trump has positioned himself as a crypto-friendly president; his crypto investments are estimated to make up roughly 10% of his net worth.

Tesla Autopilot Trial

The first federal jury trial against Tesla began in a Miami court yesterday involving its Autopilot driver-assistance system, designed to perform basic maneuvers and alert drivers to upcoming obstacles. Most previous lawsuits against Tesla were either dismissed or settled out of court.

The case centers on a 2019 crash in which a man was driving his Tesla Model S with Autopilot engaged. As he bent to retrieve a dropped phone, the Tesla hit a parked SUV, killing 22-year-old Naibel Benavides Leon and severely injuring her boyfriend, Dillon Angulo. Benavides' family and Angulo are pursuing punitive damages against Tesla, alleging Autopilot malfunctioned and Tesla overpromised drivers about the technology's capabilities. Tesla's lawyers are expected to argue the driver was responsible for supervising the system and present data showing his foot was on the accelerator before the crash.

The trial comes as Tesla aims to expand its self-driving taxi service nationwide and faces a second year of declining sales, with last quarter's deliveries falling 13.5% year over year.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2025 MLB All-Star Game set for tonight (8 pm ET, FOX); see roster breakdown and preview.

2025 MLB Draft wraps; see full tracker of all 615 picks.

John Elway won't face charges in the April death of his friend and agent Jeff Sperbeck, who died from injuries sustained after falling off a golf cart driven by Elway.

Animated children's show "Bluey" is most streamed US show in first half of 2025 with 25 billion minutes viewed.

HBO's "Harry Potter" TV series begins production, sets 2027 release date.

"Superman" flies to \$122M in its opening weekend to lead US domestic box office.

Science & Technology

Defense Department awards contracts worth up to \$200M to Google, Anthropic, xAI, and OpenAI to develop AI systems for unspecified national security applications.

Astronomers detect the largest merger of two black holes to date via measuring gravitational waves; collision produced a single black hole roughly 225 times the mass of the sun.

Photonic quantum device—systems that use light to perform quantum computing tasks—integrated into a commercial electronic chip for the first time; marks a key step toward manufacturing light-based quantum computers.

Microplastics: Today's 1440 Science & Technology newsletter explores the tiny particles found everywhere on Earth. Email comes out at 8:30 am ET—sign up here to receive!

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.1%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +0.3%) as investors continue to monitor trade talks and look ahead to second quarter earnings reports.

Cognition AI to acquire coding startup Windsurf in deal with undisclosed financial terms; follows failed acquisition by OpenAI and \$2.4B licensing deal between Google and Windsurf last week.

Amazon's Prime Day event drove over \$24B in e-commerce sales—the equivalent of two Black Fridays—with traffic from generative AI products increasing 3,300% year over year.

Starbucks employees ordered to work in person four days a week by October or take payouts; some leaders must also relocate to headquarters within 12 months.

Politics & World Affairs

Supreme Court clears the Trump administration to lay off over 1,300 employees at the Department of Education, functionally eliminating the agency.

Two dozen states sue the federal government for withholding \$6.8B in education funds.

President Donald Trump announces plan to sell Patriot air defense systems, other weapons to Ukraine, paid for by European allies; Trump threatens tariffs on Russian goods if a peace deal is not reached within 50 days.

Former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo launches independent mayoral bid after Democratic primary loss to Zohran Mamdani.

Food and Drug Administration approves blue color additive derived from gardenia fruit as part of larger push to remove synthetic dyes from American diets.

Dozens of ice cream makers, representing roughly 90% of the US market, pledge to stop using artificial dyes by 2028.

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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

July 15, 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. City Map Update - IMEG
4. Open Sealed Bids for Baseball Concessions and Bathrooms Building Project
5. Transfer of Property at 105 N 3rd Street to Groton Development Corporation
6. First Reading of Ordinance No. 790 – Supplemental Appropriations
7. June Finance Report
8. Minutes
9. Bills
10. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
11. Adjournment

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BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 15, 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 Richmond Lake Assn. Temporary Alcohol Permit for Special Event
5. First Reading of the following Ordinances:
 - a. Ord. #304 – Dawn Weismantel – Rezone
 - b. Ord. #305 – Earl & Amanda Maier – Rezone
 - c. Ord. #306 – Matthew Olson - Rezone
6. Patricia Kendall, Dacotah Prairie Museum Director
 - a. Building Campaign Update
7. Dave Lunzman, Brown County Sheriff
 - a. Quote for Padded Cell
8. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes for July 8, 2025
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Lease Agreements
 - e. Travel Request
 - f. Lottery Permit
 - g. Claim Assignments
 - h. Auditor's Report of Account for May
9. Other Business
10. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
11. 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** - 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>

2026 Budget Work Session following the Commission Meeting

AGENDA

BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025 – 7:00 PM
BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS TO BASEMENT)

- I. **Call to Order:** for Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission
- II. **Roll Call:** Stan Beckler - Chairman, David North - Vice Chair, Patrick Keatts, Dale Kurth, James Meyers, Carrie Weisenburger, County Commissioner Mike Gage and Alternate Paul Johnson.
- III. **Appointment SDCL 11-2-2,** The County Planning Commission is appointed and approved by the Board of Brown County Commissioners. The County Planning Commission is known as the County Planning/Zoning Commission. The County Zoning Commission also serves as the County Zoning Board of Adjustment.
- IV. **Contracts with municipalities SDCL 11-2-7.** Contracts to provide planning and zoning services to municipalities--Municipal powers exercised by County Board. The governing body of any municipality may contract with the Board for Planning and Zoning services to be provided by the county, and the contract may provide that the municipality shall pay such fees as are agreed for the services performed. Under the provisions of the contract the municipal governing body may authorize the County Planning and Zoning Commission, on behalf of the municipality, to exercise any of the powers otherwise granted to municipal planning and zoning commissions under chapters [11-4](#) and [11-6](#).
Source: SL 1967, ch 20, § 9; SL 1975, ch 113, § 2; SL 1992, ch 60, § 2; SL 1998, ch 76, § 2
 1. Columbia: May 5, 1981, by Resolution.
 2. Verdon Village: April 17, 1981, by Resolution.
 3. Town of Claremont: April 6, 1981, by Resolution.
 4. Town of Stratford: April 6, 1981, by Resolution.
- V. **Opportunity for Public Comment if any.**
- VI. **Approval of July 15, 2025, Agenda:** Motion: 1st _____ 2nd _____
- VII. **Approval of June 17, 2025, Minutes:** Motion: 1st _____ 2nd _____

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

- VIII. **Old Business:**
 1. **Sign-up sheet:** On the table by the door entrance, there is a Sign-up Sheet. Please legibly sign in and mark YES or NO if you want to speak to the Board on any Agenda Item.
 2. **Permits:** Anyone that has submitted a Variance Petition (VP) or a Conditional Use Petition (CUP) to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) is still required to get their required PERMITS from the

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Zoning Office before starting their project if their Petition gets approved. Penalties may be assessed per Ordinance when starting projects without proper permits in place.

IX. New Business: Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA).

1. **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as the E1/2 of the NE1/4 of Section 10-T124N-R64W, except land platted, of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (approx. 38581 125th Street; Lincoln Twp.).
2. **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in a Lake Front Residential District (R-3) described as Lots 1 thru 5, "Prairie Point First Elm Lake Addition" in the S1/2 of the SE1/4 of Section 8-T128N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (37590, 37592, 37594, 37596 & 37598 Pelkofer Drive, Palmyra Twp.).
3. **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in a proposed Highway Commercial District (HC) described the 500' west of the east 700' of the north 658' in the NW1/4 of Section 11-T123N-R64W, except highway R.O.W. and except H-1, of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (1421 24th Avenue NW, Aberdeen Twp.).
4. **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in a proposed Highway Commercial District (HC) described the 500' west of the east 700' of the north 658' in the NW1/4 of Section 11-T123N-R64W, except highway R.O.W. and except H-1, of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (1421 24th Avenue NW, Aberdeen Twp.).

X. Other Business:

Completed as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) & going to Planning Commission

AGENDA

BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025 – 7:00 PM

BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS TO BASEMENT)

PLANNING COMMISSION

I. Old Business: Discussion on Amendments to Brown County Ordinance Title 4 for Chapters 4.22 through Chapter 4.29 on Administrative Rules and Enforcement are still postponed until further notice, by Ross Aldentaler, Deputy States Attorney. We are not continuing to put this on the Agenda or Minutes until something is presented to the Planning/Zoning Commission for proposed changes.

1. **Rezone Petition** for properties described as the 500' west of the east 700' of the north 658' in the NW1/4 of Section 11-T123N-R64W, except highway R.O.W. and except H-1, and Lot C, Block 12, "Wylie Park Estates 5th Addition" in the N1/2 of Section 11-T123N-R64W of the 5th P.M., Brown

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County, South Dakota (1421 24th Avenue NW & 1920 N Hwy 281 ; Aberdeen Twp.) to be rezoned from Residential District (R-1) to Highway Commercial District (HC).

II. **New Business:** *Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as [Planning Commission](#).*

10. **Rezone Petition** for s property described as Lot 1, "Brick Subdivision" in the SE1/4 of Section 31-T122N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (14177 375th Avenue; Highland Twp.) to be rezoned from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG).
11. **Rezone Petition** for properties described as proposed Lot 1 thru 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, Block 1; Lot 1, Block 2; Lot 1 thru 6, Block 3, all of "Mina Lake Northeast Addition" in the S1/2 of Section 7-T123N-R65W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (13147, 13151, 13155, 13159, 13163, 13167, 13174, 13178, 13182, 13186 N Sunrise Drive; 37344 & 37345 Dusk Drive; 13135, 13184 & 13193 Feickert Drive; 37344 132nd Street; Mercier Twp.) to be rezoned from Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG) to Lake Front Residential (R-3), Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (AG-P) and Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Lake Front Residential (R-3).
12. **Preliminary & Final Plat** for development purposes on a property described as "WW Rentals First Addition to the City of Columbia" in the NE1/4 of Section 29-T125N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (22 N James Street; Columbia City).

III. **Other Business:**

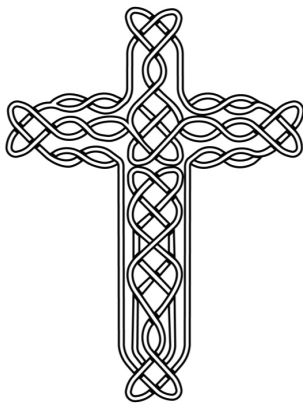
1. Executive Session if requested.

IV. **Motion to Adjourn:** 1st _____ 2nd _____

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



The Life of Donald C. Kurtz



Donald 'Don' C. Kurtz, 85, of Groton, SD, died Friday, July 11, 2025, at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Aberdeen, SD.

A private family graveside service will be held at Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Aberdeen. Arrangements by Spitzer-Miller Funeral Home, 1111 South Main Street.

Donald Charles Kurtz was born July 14th, 1939 to Otto and Gladys Caroline Rose (Haase) Kurtz in Webster SD. He grew up in the Stratford area working his way through high school for Bill and Penny Jark and Bob Hanson as a farm hand helping support his parents and siblings. He graduated in 1957 from Stratford High school and started working at the South Dakota Wheat Growers Association in 1957 making his way from Manager to Line Superintendent. He enjoyed hunting, spending time watching all the grandkids' sporting events, mowing his yard on his model A tractor, and cooking for his family.

He married Dixie Lee Hitchcock at the United Church of Christ in Brentford SD on June 9th 1962. They made their home in Columbia, SD where they welcomed 3 children, Randy, Kristi and Ryan. Don continued to live in Columbia after Dixie died in 1988 until moving to Groton in 2011. Through the years Don always considered Columbia his home and loved going back to look at crops and visiting with friends.

Grateful for sharing his life are his children: Randy (Lynne) Kurtz, Kristi (Paul) Eckrich, and Ryan (Diane) Kurtz; his grandchildren: Wyatt (Megan) Kurtz, Clayton (Aimee) Kurtz, Nick (Emily) Johnson, Landon Johnson, Jeremy Johnson, Kasey (Bri) Kurtz, Courtney (Matt) Kolbeck, Kaden Kurtz and Camryn Kurtz; great-grandchildren: Wrenley Jade Kurtz, Jorie Quinn Kurtz, and Jett Kolbeck; and one brother: Gary (Marilyn) Kurtz.

Preceding Don in death are his parents, Otto and Gladys, wife, Dixie, sister Barbara Urbanski, brother, David Kurtz, his great-granddaughter, Gracie Johnson, half brothers Edward and Orville Kurtz, and half sister Margaret Ranger.

www.spitzerfuneralhome.com

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2025 Columbia Comet PeeWee's

Three Rivers League Runner Up

Back Row: Coaches Cole Kampa, Collin Eichler, Josh Larson

Middle Row: Lillian Davis, Kason Hofer, Arthur Eichler, Cooper Zemlicka, Parker Glaspell, Shane Richey

Front Row: Landon Zemlicka, Saylor Gilchrist, Bryton Larson, Briggs Eichler, Paxton Eichler, Dawson Kampa. (Courtesy Photo)

Groton Jr. Teeners Earn Walk-Off Win Over Britton Jr. Teeners

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Teeners took Monday's game in dramatic fashion, with a 4-3 walk-off victory over Britton Jr. Teeners. The game was tied at three in the bottom of the ninth when Zach Fliehs doubled, scoring one run.

Jordan Schwan struck out 10 batters on the day. The pitcher also allowed zero hits and two runs over five innings while walking three.

Groton Jr. Teeners got on the board in the bottom of the third inning after Noah Scepaniak grounded out, and Asher Zimmerman singled to left field, each scoring one run.

Britton Jr. Teeners captured the lead, 3-2, in the top of the sixth after Chaz Vietor walked, Max Suther singled down the right field line, and Bowen Micko singled down the right field line, each scoring one run.

Lincoln Shilhanek singled down the left field line, which helped Groton Jr. Teeners tie the game at three in the bottom of the seventh.

Wesley Borg earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners. The reliever allowed three hits and one run over four innings, striking out two and walking two. Levi Mills stepped on the bump first for Britton Jr. Teeners. The starter surrendered two hits and two runs over two and two-thirds innings, striking out three and walking none.

Groton Jr. Teeners tallied 11 hits in the game. Zimmerman, Schwan, Borg, and Shilhanek each collected two hits for Groton Jr. Teeners. Scepaniak, Zimmerman, Fliehs, and Shilhanek each drove in one run for Groton Jr. Teeners.

Suther, Vietor, and Micko each collected one hit for Britton Jr. Teeners. Suther and Micko were tough to handle back-to-back in the lineup, as each drove in one run for Britton Jr. Teeners. Britton Jr. Teeners turned two double plays in the game.

Second-Inning Spurt Leads Groton Jr. Teeners Past Britton Jr. Teeners

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Teeners scored seven runs in the second inning, which helped them defeat Britton Jr. Teeners 10-3 on Monday. Trayce Schelle grounded out, scoring one run, Jordan Schwan singled, scoring one run, Kolton Antonsen drew a walk, scoring one run, Wesley Borg drew a walk, scoring one run, Sam Crank singled, scoring one run, and Kyson Kucker singled, scoring two runs.

Britton Jr. Teeners were the first to get on the board in the first when Max Suther grounded out, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners took the lead, 3-1, in the bottom of the first thanks to three walks.

Kucker earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners. The righty gave up zero hits and three runs (zero earned) over three innings, striking out three and walking five. Bladen Downs opened the game for Britton Jr. Teeners. The righty gave up one hit and three runs over two-thirds of an inning, striking out none and walking three.

Asher Zimmerman, Schwan, Crank, Kucker, and Lincoln Shilhanek each collected one hit for Groton Jr. Teeners. Kucker led Groton Jr. Teeners with two runs batted in. The pitcher went 1-for-1 on the day. Groton Jr. Teeners had patience at the plate, tallying nine walks for the game. Tucker Leicht and Borg led the team with two free passes each.

Britton Jr. Teeners turned one double play in the game. Britton Jr. Teeners were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Levi Mills made the most plays with two.

Groton Jr. Teeners will travel to Smittys 13U 2025 Aberdeen for their next game on Wednesday.

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Groton Area Clay Target League places ninth in nation

The Groton Area Clay Target League placed nine in the nation with a total score of 490/500. Pictured left to right are Wesley Morehouse, Paisley Mitchell, Jaeger Kampa, Turner Thompson and Payton Mitchell. (Courtesy photo)

South Dakota Ends Fiscal Year with \$63 Million Operating Surplus

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Larry Rhoden announced South Dakota closed the state fiscal year 2025 budget year with an operating surplus of \$63 million.

"South Dakota is a leader in our nation – especially when it comes to disciplined financial management," said Governor Larry Rhoden. "We will continue to be careful stewards of taxpayer dollars by making wise long-term investments, maintaining conservative fiscal policies, and only spending within our means."

The surplus included \$41 million in excess revenues and \$22 million in spending below what was budgeted.

The Bureau of Finance and Management (BFM) also published "South Dakota: A Model of Fiscal Strength," a document highlighting South Dakota's accomplishments as one of the best financially managed states.

"South Dakota's disciplined financial management, low debt levels, conservative budgeting practices, AAA credit rating, and fully funded pension system helped achieve our distinction as a leader in fiscal strength," said BFM Commissioner Jim Terwilliger. "This document puts all these accomplishments and more in one convenient place."

Unforeseen unclaimed property receipts were the biggest driver of excess revenues; the state received more than \$47 million in unexpected unclaimed property receipts since the 2025 legislative session. Beginning in FY2026, such windfalls will be dedicated to a trust fund via SB 155, which Governor Rhoden signed into law.

South Dakota's largest revenue source, the state sales tax, finished the year \$3.7 million lower than recent estimates and 0.6% lower than collections from the previous year.

During the 2025 legislative session, Governor Rhoden and legislative leadership agreed to keep \$106 million left unspent on the bottom line to help cover the costs of a future prison. Between the \$63 million surplus and the \$106 million left unspent by the Legislature, \$169 million will flow to the state's two primary reserve funds under state law.

The state's reserve funds now total \$492 million or 19.9% of the FY2026 budget.

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Softball given the go-ahead by Groton school board, budget reviewed during first public meeting of the 25-26 fiscal year

By Elizabeth Varin

As Groton softball players aged 10 to 14 took to the diamond at Northern State University's Koehler Hall of Fame field, the Groton Area School Board addressed the future of the sport within the district.

The board's decision? To invest in a high school team, working to lead the northeast South Dakota region in fast pitch softball at a varsity level.

The district has already made some steps, reaching out to regional schools to discuss scheduling games and setting up coaching salary rates. However, approval to start a team wasn't official until Monday night.

The board reviewed preliminary equipment costs (about \$8,850 in equipment and a similar amount in salaries for a coach and assistant coach), as well as the number of girls participating in summer softball this year.

There would also be some other expenses, including travel costs, payments for umpires and more, said board member Marty Weismantel, who recently finished his tenure as chairman of the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors. That's a big issue the activity association faced when discussing sanctioning baseball for high school play.

"Money's tight. How do we justify adding something," he said, relaying some of the conversations at the state level. "To me, (softball) is different. ...I've been fortunate to be at the three state tournaments, and it's been great.

"...Now we just need to get some teams up here involved," he added.

The district estimates at least 20 high school players would be interested, based on numbers involved in the summer league. Another 13 middle schoolers are also getting involved in fast pitch summer ball.

A high school team would need 16 players, and there seems to be more than enough ready to play. High school Principal Shelby Edwards added that more high schoolers might join as well if they knew they could continue playing fast pitch softball.

More than 80 girls have signed up for summer recreation fast ball, said Amanda Bisbee, coach of the U14 team. She asked the board to consider allowing for a high school varsity team.

"If a varsity team is not approved tonight, my concern is where do we go from here," she said.

For some of her recreation team players, this week would mark the end of their fast pitch playing, as they would age out of playing in the fast pitch league with slow pitch as the only next step.

"Give them a chance to play," Bisbee implored. "Give them the same memories I had on that softball field and continue to have coaching them."

While there would be costs associated with creating the team, money has already been temporarily earmarked for the program pending board action, said Business Manager Becky Hubsch.

Superintendent Joe Schwan added the school could work with the city and baseball/softball foundation to use their equipment as the program begins at the high school.

There could also be other funding options, Weismantel said.

"I think the benefits will be well worth it," he said. "I know one team, we talked to a guy whose wife passed away last year. They used memorial funds to buy new uniforms. There's always something out there."

In addition to this milestone, the board conducted a public hearing to discuss the proposed budget for the upcoming 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Business Manager Becky Hubsch told the board some of the initial estimates for capital outlay funds have changed, including an increased quote for curriculum updates and donations coming in for the new crows nest.

However, the board approved requesting the same tax levy that was proposed in May.

Superintendent Joe Schwan updated the board on some financial issues that could be coming down the line, including uncertainty about Title I funding. While Groton doesn't receive a substantial amount, one fund allocation has already dropped, from about \$45,000 last year to about \$13,000 for the upcoming year.

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With budgets tightening all around, "any amount of money is a significant amount of money," he said. Schwan added he doesn't think there are any immediate impacts to special education or school lunch program funding, but it's something to keep an eye on as budget tighten.

Monday's meeting not only wrapped up the 2024-25 school year, but also served as Samantha Weber's first meeting as a board member. She fills outgoing board member Deb Gengerke's seat.

- The board held its reorganization vote, with President Grant Rix and Vice President Nick Strom keeping their roles on the board. Board member Heather Lerseth-Fliehs will join the infrastructure and building ad hoc committee with TJ Harder and Tigh Fliehs, while Samantha Weber will join the policy committee with Nick Strom. Grant Rix and Marty Weismantel will continue on the negotiations ad hoc committee.
- The board approved a bid to purchase diesel/gas from MJ Sinclair. It was the only bid received by the district.
- The board opened bids and named the Groton Independent as the official newspaper for fiscal year 2025-2026. It was the only bid the district received.

GROTON COMMUNITY APPRECIATION MEAL



Walking
Tacos!

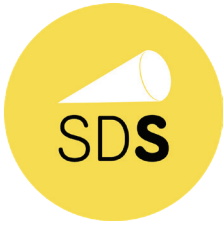
TUES., JULY 22

11 AM - 2:00 PM

7 E. US Hwy 12 | Groton

DACOTAH BANK

MEMBER
FDIC



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lawmakers will bring criminal justice and property tax committees to Rapid City

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 14, 2025 2:04 PM

Two legislative groups will meet in Rapid City this week to discuss South Dakota's criminal justice system and property taxes. The public is invited to testify at both meetings.

Criminal justice committee

The Initial Incarceration, Reentry Analysis, and Comparison of Relevant States Interim Committee will meet at 9 a.m. Mountain time on Wednesday — with public testimony scheduled at noon — in the Surbeck Center's Beck Ballroom on the South Dakota Mines campus. The group is studying the makeup of the state prison population, comparing incarceration rates and sentencing laws in similar states, and identifying barriers to inmates' reintegration into society.

In addition to taking public testimony, the committee will hear a presentation from the National Conference of State Legislatures' Civil and Criminal Justice Program, and a presentation about ways to "enhance community re-entry" from a government consulting firm. Lawmakers will also hear from the Pennington County state's attorney and public defender's offices and from Sioux Falls-based business management consultant Think 3D Solutions.

The committee's first meeting in Sioux Falls was sparsely attended. The committee discussed the overrepresentation of Native Americans in state prisons, a lack of rehabilitation programming, and a need for more intervention to keep people out of prison.

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

Property tax committee

The Comprehensive Property Tax Task Force will meet at 9 a.m. Mountain on Thursday, also in the Beck Ballroom at Mines. The group aims to cut the average South Dakota homeowner's property taxes by at least 50%.

The task force is scheduled to take public testimony at 10:15 a.m., and the agenda also includes a presentation from the Legislative Research Council about local government tax limitation opt-outs, tax increment financing districts and the property tax discretionary formula.

The task force is exploring local government spending as a potential way to cut property tax burdens by reducing local government budgets. The group is also discussing an optional county-level sales tax of a half-percent to offset participating counties' property taxes on owner-occupied homes, and a new state sales tax of 1% dedicated to education funding. The 1% tax would apply to most of the products and services that are currently exempted from sales taxes, and would stack on top of the existing state sales tax rate of 4.2% for other transactions.

Earlier this year, lawmakers adopted Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden's proposal to slow property tax increases with multifaceted reforms including a five-year, countywide 3% cap on growth in owner-occupied home assessments. That new law took effect July 1.

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.

South Dakota legislators take fewer taxpayer funded out-of-state trips

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 14, 2025 7:20 AM

PIERRE — South Dakota lawmakers spent less taxpayer money attending out-of-state conferences and events during the recently concluded fiscal year.

When one legislator attends an out-of-state event, that's counted as one trip. Members of the Legislature took 23 out-of-state trips that cost a total of \$38,250 during the 2025 fiscal year, which ended June 30. That's down from 66 trips for \$103,500 during the prior fiscal year and 60 trips for \$83,800 during the 2023 fiscal year.

Out-of-state travel is approved by the Legislature's Executive Board. The Legislative Research Council maintains records of each approved request, including the destination, event name and cost.

Senate President Pro Tempore Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls, said an increasing volume of work during the legislative offseason is likely driving down the number of out-of-state trips. The Legislature meets from January to March every year at the Capitol in Pierre, and some committees continue meeting the rest of the year — including special summer committees that study issues for potential future legislation.

This year, there are five summer study committees involving 52 total positions studying topics ranging from property taxes to incarceration rates, plus a Project Prison Reset task force appointed by the governor, involving legislators and non-legislators studying potential prison construction. In 2024, two summer study committees had a total of 26 positions, and in 2023, two committees had 28 positions.

"You can only allocate so much of your life to this," Karr said. "Between the new prison and property tax task forces, and the various committee meetings, I think fewer lawmakers simply have the time."

House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach, R-Spearfish, had a different take on what's driving down the number of out-of-state trips. He said that "with conservative leadership, the members are behaving a bit more conservatively." Republicans replaced their leadership team last fall after 14 incumbent Republican legislators lost in the June primary election.

Among the most frequented gatherings over the last three fiscal years were the National Conference of State Legislators summit (17 trips), the International Legislators Forum (16), and the Council of State Governments conference (15). The events are billed as bipartisan opportunities for lawmakers to share policy ideas and improve interstate cooperation.

"The return on investment for the public is there," Karr said. "You get to see how things are done in other states, and can bring that back. Better lawmakers make better laws."

The events are hosted in different states each year, ranging from Kentucky and Louisiana to Indiana and Hawaii. Two lawmakers who went on a Hawaii trip in December 2022 suffered criticism because they knew at the time that they would not be returning to office in 2023. Both of those lawmakers were back in the Legislature this year.

Since the 2023 fiscal year, several Republican lawmakers attended events hosted by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a conservative policy organization. Other ideologically themed events attended by South Dakota legislators included a Pro-Family Legislator Conference hosted by Wallbuilders, a group that supported recent failed legislation to require the Ten Commandments to be displayed and taught in South Dakota public schools, and the Statesmen Academy hosted by the Family Policy Alliance Foundation, which aims to "equip Christian leaders for impactful service."

Those events are also hosted in a variety of states, ranging from Arizona and Colorado to Florida and Texas.

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.

US Supreme Court allows Trump to carry out plan to dismantle Education Department for now

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - JULY 14, 2025 5:22 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Trump administration, for now, to proceed with mass layoffs and a plan to dramatically downsize the Education Department ordered earlier this year.

The decision from the nation's highest court marks a major victory for President Donald Trump, who has sought to overhaul the federal role in education.

The order was unsigned, while Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented, indicating a 6-3 decision.

The dissent, authored by Sotomayor, was scathing.

"The majority is either willfully blind to the implications of its ruling or naive," she wrote. "But either way the threat to our Constitution's separation of powers is grave."

The Supreme Court's order temporarily suspends lower court orders that: forced the agency to reinstate more than 1,300 employees gutted from a reduction in force, or RIF, effort; blocked the department from carrying out Trump's executive order to dismantle the department; and barred the agency from transferring some services to other federal agencies.

In a statement Monday, Education Secretary Linda McMahon celebrated the decision, saying "today, the Supreme Court again confirmed the obvious: the President of the United States, as the head of the Executive Branch, has the ultimate authority to make decisions about staffing levels, administrative organization, and day-to-day operations of federal agencies."

"While today's ruling is a significant win for students and families, it is a shame that the highest court in the land had to step in to allow President Trump to advance the reforms Americans elected him to deliver using the authorities granted to him by the U.S. Constitution," she said.

"The U.S. Department of Education will now deliver on its mandate to restore excellence in American education. We will carry out the reduction in force to promote efficiency and accountability and to ensure resources are directed where they matter most — to students, parents, and teachers."

A coalition of teachers, unions and school districts that sued over Trump's order to eliminate the department and the mass layoffs said they were "incredibly disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision to allow the Trump-Vance administration to proceed with its harmful efforts to dismantle the Department of Education while our case moves forward."

"This unlawful plan will immediately and irreparably harm students, educators and communities across our nation. Children will be among those hurt the most by this decision. We will never stop fighting on behalf of all students and public schools and the protections, services, and resources they need to thrive," they added.

Challenge from Democratic state AGs, unions

The labor and advocacy coalition and a slew of Democratic attorneys general each sued in March over some of the administration's most consequential education initiatives.

One of the lawsuits comes from a coalition of Democratic attorneys general in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington state and Wisconsin.

The other lawsuit was brought by the American Federation of Teachers, its Massachusetts chapter, AF-SCME Council 93, the American Association of University Professors, the Service Employees International Union and two school districts in Massachusetts.

A Massachusetts federal judge consolidated the lawsuits and granted the states' and groups' preliminary injunction in May.

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The administration appealed that decision, leading to a June decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit keeping in place the district court's order.

The Trump administration then asked the Supreme Court to intervene.

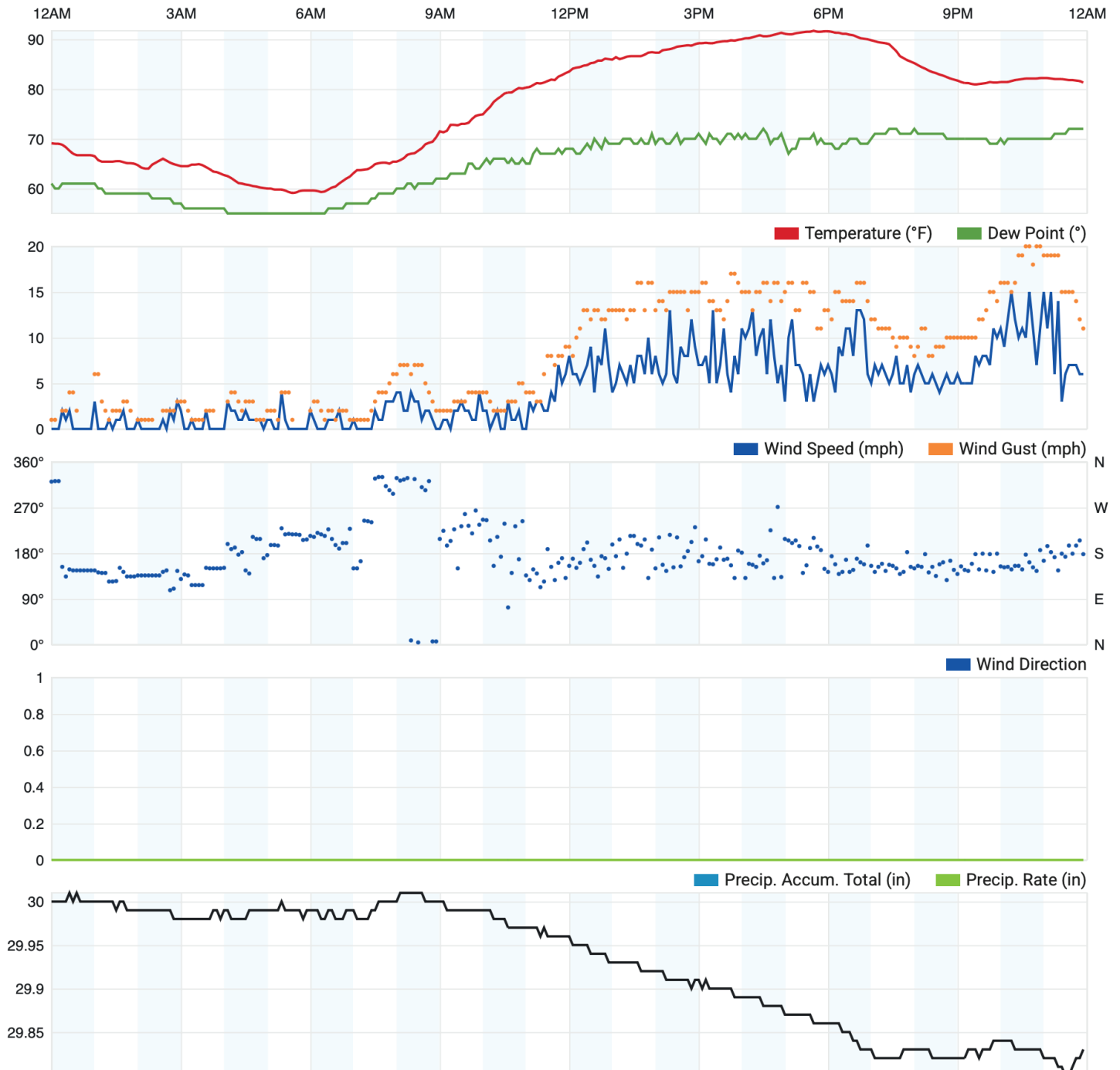
Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

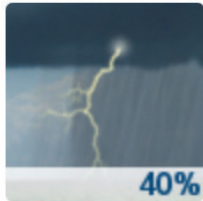
July 14, 2025



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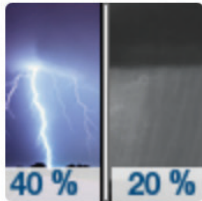
Today



High: 74 °F ↓↓

Chance
T-storms

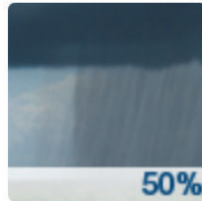
Tonight



Low: 56 °F

Chance
T-storms and
Breezy then
Slight Chance

Wednesday



High: 65 °F

Chance
Showers

Wednesday
Night



Low: 47 °F

Slight Chance
Showers

Thursday



High: 73 °F

Sunny

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Scattered to Widespread
Severe Storms Possible

This Afternoon to
Early Evening

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS



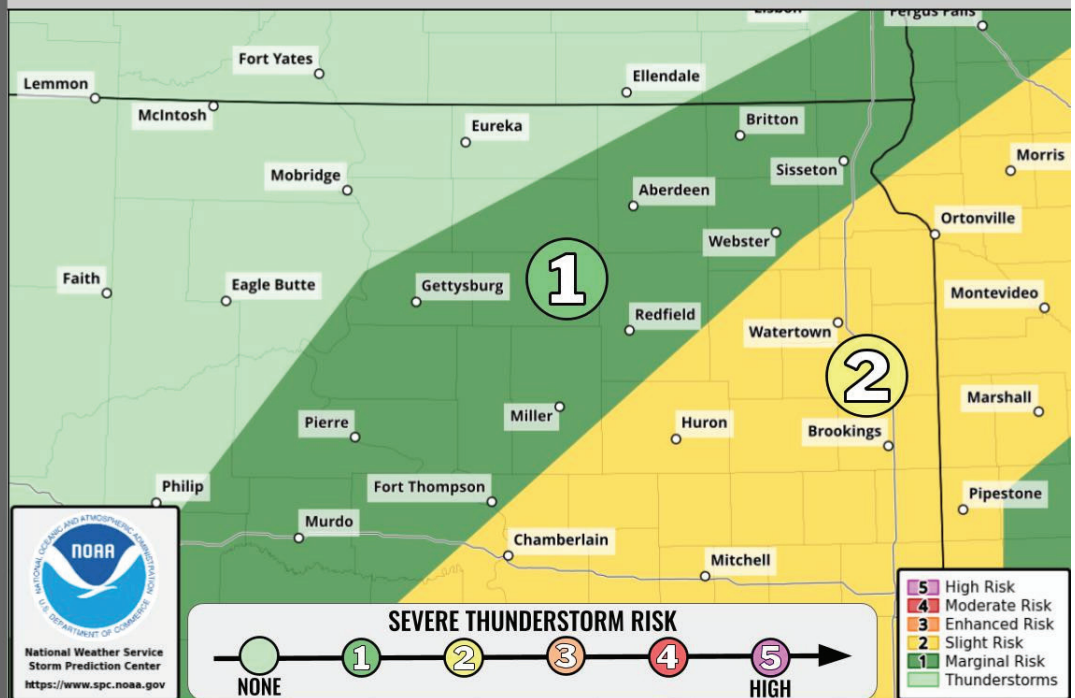
LARGE HAIL

SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY
RAINFALL

Slight Risk For Severe Storms This Afternoon & Evening



Scattered to widespread severe storms are possible this afternoon and evening from central to eastern South Dakota into western MN. The Storm Prediction Center has issued a slight risk (level 2 out of 5) for the eastern and southeastern half of SD into west central MN with the main threats including large hail (1"+ in diameter) and 60 to 70 mph wind gusts. Heavy rain is also a threat.

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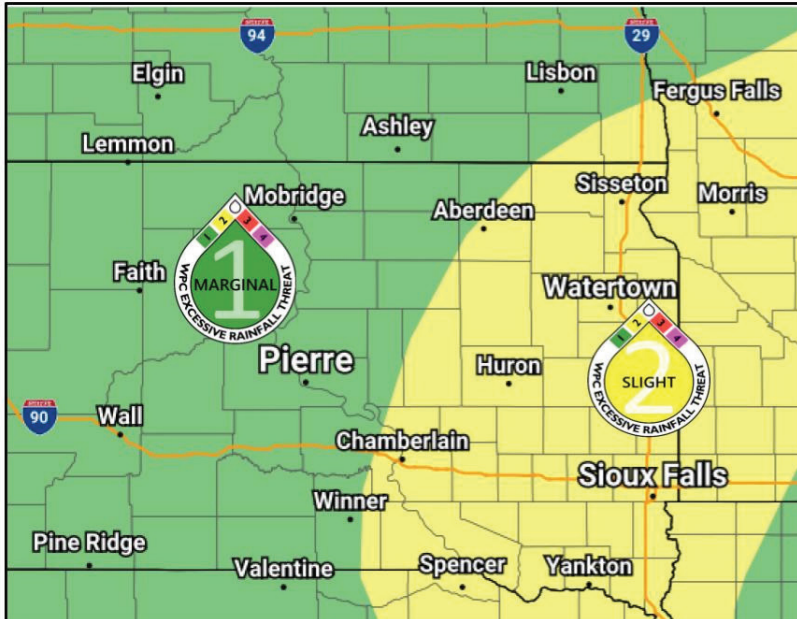


Heavy Rain Potential Today

July 15, 2025

3:49 AM

This Afternoon and Evening Thunderstorms Mainly Impacting Eastern SD/Western MN



- Weather Prediction Center has issued Slight Risk and Marginal Risk areas for Excessive Rainfall this afternoon & evening.
- Localized areas could exceed 2+” over portions of northeastern and eastern South Dakota/Western Minnesota.
- **Both Flash Flooding and River Flooding are possible, especially for already saturated areas.**

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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Localized areas could exceed 2+” over portions of northeastern and eastern South Dakota/Western Minnesota due to the threat of slow moving storms and for locations where storms could move over the same area. Both Flash Flooding and River Flooding are possible, especially for already saturated areas.

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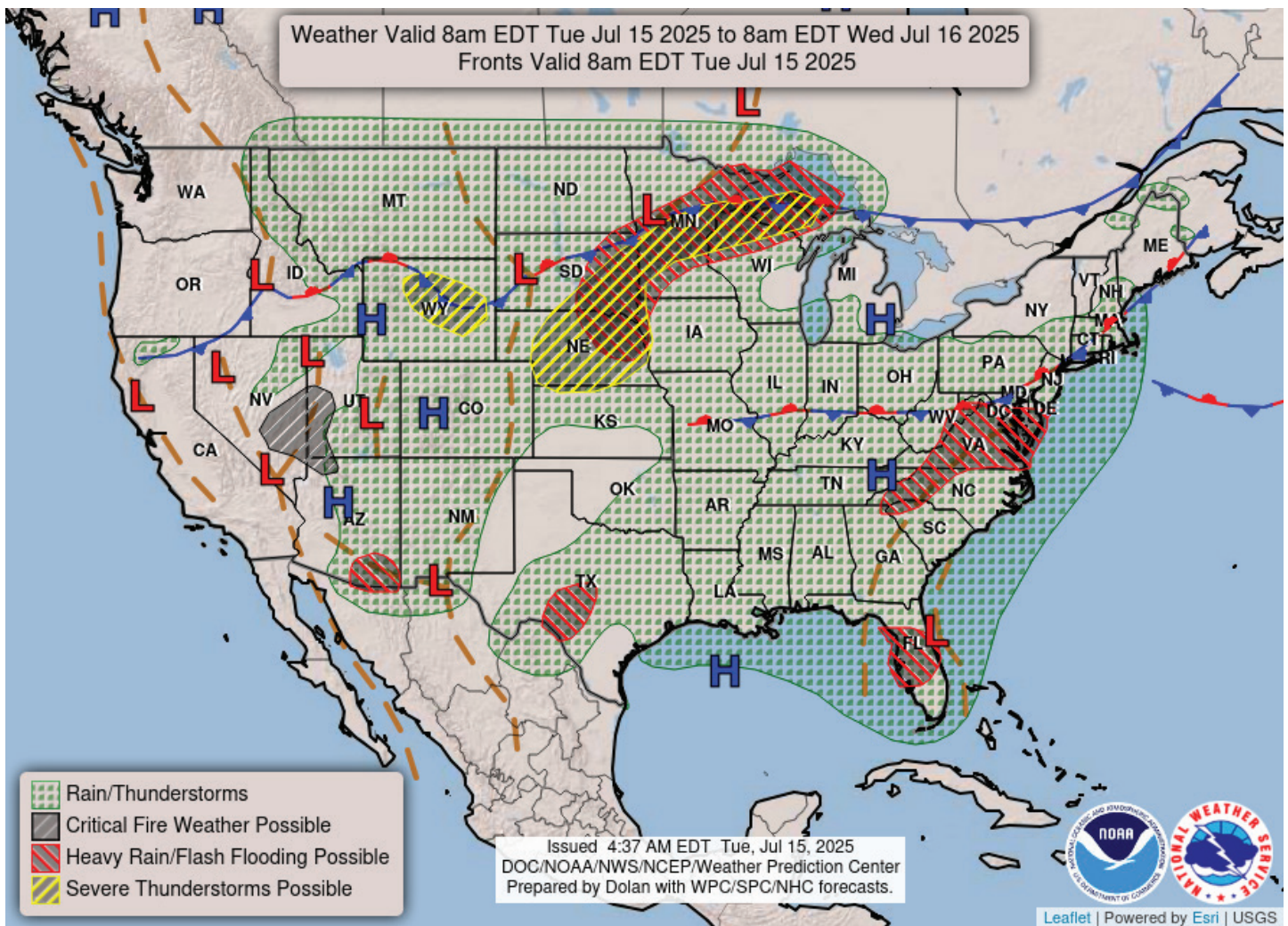
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 92 °F at 5:39 PM
Heat Index: 100 °F at 5:00 PM
Low Temp: 59 °F at 5:37 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 10:34 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 22 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 114 in 1931
Record Low: 41 in 1912
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 1.69
Precip to date in July: 2.60
Average Precip to date: 12.70
Precip Year to Date: 12.72
Sunset Tonight: 9:19:35 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:58:17 am



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Today in Weather History

July 15, 1885: The first of three damaging tornadoes hit 7 miles NNE of Highmore, Hyde County, and moved to the northeast. Two small homes were destroyed before the funnel turned to the east, then northeast and north before lifting. This tornado was estimated to have an F2 strength and was seen in all directions for 20 miles. The second tornado appeared to be motionless 3 miles east of Harrold, and then moved east to Holabird, in Hyde County, where it destroyed two homes and dissipated. A third tornado, this one with an estimated F3 strength, formed to the west of Highmore and moved east into town, then lifted about 4 miles east of town. Three homes were destroyed, and about 20 other buildings were damaged at Highmore. A farmer was killed 2 miles east of town. Losses totaled about \$55,000, which included many new buildings, including a church and a skating rink.

July 15, 1986: Thunderstorms brought locally heavy rainfall to portions of Walworth to Marshall Counties. Three inches of rain in an hour and a half was reported in extreme northwest Marshall County. The highest rainfall amount was seven inches southeast of Bowdle. The rains caused lowland flooding, with water over several roads in Marshall County, including Highway 10, two miles east of Britton. In Britton, 3.86 inches of rain was reported.

July 15, 2006: Record heat occurred across central and north central South Dakota and into parts of northeast South Dakota. Afternoon high temperatures ranged from 105 to as high as 120 degrees. Record highs were set at Pierre, Mobridge, Kennebec, and Timber Lake. Pierre set a new all-time record high of 117 degrees, and Mobridge tied their all-time record high of 116 degrees. Kennebec and Timber Lake both hit a record high temperature of 112 degrees. The coop observer station 17 miles west-southwest of Fort Pierre tied the state record high temperature with 120 degrees. Other high temperatures for the day were 116 degrees at Onida and Mission Ridge, 114 degrees at Murdo, 112 degrees at Redfield and Blunt, 111 degrees at Stephan, 110 degrees at Conde and Gann Valley, and 109 degrees at Aberdeen.

July 15, 2011: A large upper-level high-pressure area built over the region bringing sweltering and humid conditions. This heat was the worst to hit the area since July 2006. Beginning on Friday, July 15th and persisting through Wednesday, July 20th, many locations experienced high temperatures in the 90s to lower 100s, with low temperatures in the 70s at night. Also, humidity levels rose to extreme levels. Surface dew point temperatures in the 70s and lower 80s brought extreme heat index values of up to 110 to 125 degrees. The dew points were some of the highest ever recorded in the region on July 17th. The dew point at Aberdeen tied the previous record with 82 degrees. Sisseton also tied their record with 83 degrees. Watertown came a degree shy of matching their record with 80 degrees.

The prolonged heat took its toll on livestock with fifteen hundred cattle perishing during the heat. Numerous sports and outdoor activities were canceled. Some of the highest heat index values included; 110 degrees at Mobridge; 111 degrees at Watertown; 113 degrees at Miller and Gettysburg; 114 degrees at Wheaton and Faulkton; 116 degrees at Pierre; 118 degrees at Sisseton; and 121 degrees at Aberdeen. The highest heat index value occurred at Leola with a temperature of 98 degrees and a dewpoint of 82 degrees, and the heat index hit 125 degrees. [Click HERE](#) for more information.

1888: The Bandai volcano erupts on the Japanese island of Honshu on this day in 1888, killing hundreds and burying many nearby villages in ash.

1901: The city of Marquette, Michigan set their all-time record high temperature with 108-degree reading.

1916 - A dying South Atlantic Coast storm produced torrential rains in the southern Appalachian Mountains. Altapass, NC, was drenched with more than 22 inches of rain, a 24 hour rainfall record for the state. Flooding resulted in considerable damage, particularly to railroads. (David Ludlum)

1954 - The temperature at Balcony Falls, VA, soared to 110 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1983 - The Big Thompson Creek in Colorado flooded for the second time in seven years, claiming three lives, and filling the town of Estes Park with eight to ten feet of water. (The Weather Channel)

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HOW TO RECOGNIZE A FOOL

No one that I know wants to be called a "fool." But, this term is used fifty times in Proverbs. Obviously, God must want us to know who qualifies for this title, and how those who are "fools" can develop a new identity.

To begin with, the word used here for "fool" has nothing to do with one's mental capacity. It would not be God-like to call someone a "fool" if they had no control over their thoughts and behavior. Instead, it has to do with a person's chosen outlook on life. This person's view is set, and nothing or no one will ever be able to change it.

This "fool" is one who has no desire to invest any time in searching for wisdom. It's thought to be a product that can be purchased online or in a bookstore. Solomon clarified this when he wrote, "Why does a fool offer the sage a fee, when he has no mind to learn." We can't buy wisdom!

Since this is true, only reliable and dependable wisdom comes from God. Therefore, it must then be spiritual and not mental. A fool has no reverence or respect for truth. Unfortunately, the "fool" is very comfortable with things as they are. This person refuses to "fear the Lord" and rejects His counsel. The "fool" is satisfied to live life without God.

Whatever we know of God, think of God, understand about God, and believe about God, comes to us from God as He reveals Himself to us. Atheists deny God, and agnostics say they are searching for proof of God. Until a person is willing and open to see God as He has revealed Himself in His world, His Word, and His Son, he will remain a fool.

Prayer: Lord, open the eyes of those who refuse to see, and the ears of those who refuse to hear Your Wisdom. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.11.25

12 23 24 31 56 1

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$90,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 29 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.14.25

9 30 35 43 49 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,800,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 44 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.14.25

19 21 26 40 48 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 59 Mins 9 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.12.25

5 14 15 19 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$55,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 59 Mins 9 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.14.25

9 14 38 39 41 25

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 28 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.14.25

8 12 45 46 63 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$264,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 28 Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

Jr. Legion Baseball Region Tournament

Locke/Karst Field, Groton

Monday, July 28 starting at Noon

Sisseton vs. Redfield

Groton vs. Redfield

Clark vs. Groton

Tuesday, July 29 starting at 2 p.m.

Sisseton vs. Groton

Sisseton vs. Clark

Redfield vs. Clark

If no one is undefeated, or there is no clear winner, a formula is used to determine who will advance to state tournament August 8-10 in Milbank.

News from the **AP** Associated Press

India orders airlines to inspect certain Boeing models after Air India crash

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's aviation regulator ordered on Monday airlines operating several Boeing models to examine fuel control switches, days after an investigation into last month's Air India plane crash found they were flipped off, starving both engines of fuel.

India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation stated the directive would apply to Boeing 787 Dreamliners and select Boeing 737 variants and that airlines must complete inspections and submit their findings to the regulator by July 21.

A preliminary report into the Air India crash that killed 260 people in the northwestern city of Ahmedabad found that the switches shifted within one second of each other, cutting off fuel supply to both engines. The report, released last week, did not offer any conclusions as to why the plane crashed. It also did not say how the switches could have flipped from run position to the cutoff during the flight.

The movement of the fuel control switches allows and cuts fuel flow to the plane's engines.

The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed on June 12 shortly after takeoff. It killed all but one of the 242 people on board as well as 19 people on the ground.

The report, issued by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, noted a 2018 advisory from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, recommending airlines operating Boeing models to inspect the locking feature of fuel cutoff switches.

According to the report, cockpit voice recordings captured a moment of confusion between the pilots, with one asking the other why he cut off the fuel. "The other pilot responded that he did not do so," the report said.

Some aviation experts in India speculated the crash was caused due to human error based on the preliminary report. At least two commercial pilots' associations have rejected such claims.

The Indian Commercial Pilots' Association in a statement on Sunday said it was "deeply disturbed by speculative narratives ... particularly the reckless and unfounded insinuation of pilot suicide."

Air India CEO Campbell Wilson on Monday said the preliminary report into the crash of the London-bound plane found no mechanical or maintenance issues with the aircraft and its engines.

In an internal memo to airline staff seen by The Associated Press, Wilson said the report stated that all mandatory maintenance tasks of the aircraft had been completed.

"There was no issue with the quality of fuel and no abnormality with the take-off roll. The pilots had passed their mandatory pre-flight breathalyser and there were no observations pertaining to their medical status," he said in the note.

After the crash, Indian authorities ordered deeper checks of Air India's entire Boeing 787 Dreamliner fleet to prevent future incidents. Air India has 33 Dreamliners in its fleet.

Syria announces ceasefire after sectarian violence

By GHAITH ALSAYED Associated Press

BUSRA AL-HARIR, Syria (AP) — Syria's defence minister announced a ceasefire shortly after government forces entered a key city in Sweida province on Tuesday.

The announcement came a day after sectarian clashes that killed dozens, and after a state-run news agency report that Israel had launched a strike in the area.

Defense Minister Murhaf Abu Qasra said in a statement that after an "agreement with the city's notables and dignitaries, we will respond only to the sources of fire and deal with any targeting by outlaw groups."

The clashes began with a series of tit-for-tat kidnappings and attacks between members of local Sunni

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Bedouin tribes and Druze armed factions in the southern province, a center of the Druze community.

Government security forces that were sent in on Monday to restore order also clashed with Druze armed groups. During the day, Israel struck Syrian government military tank and said it was acting to protect the Druze religious minority.

In Israel, the Druze are seen as a loyal minority and often serve in the armed forces.

State-run news agency SANA did not give any details about Tuesday's strike. However, the Britain-based war monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Israel struck a tank belonging to the Syrian military as forces began to move in deeper into Sweida city. There was no immediate statement from the Israeli military.

Earlier Tuesday, religious leaders of the Druze community in Syria called for armed factions that have been clashing with government forces to surrender their weapons and cooperate with authorities as they entered the provincial capital of Sweida. One of the main religious authorities later released a video statement retracting the call.

The initial statement called for armed factions in Sweida to "cooperate with the forces of the Ministry of Interior, not to resist their entry, and to hand over their weapons to the Ministry of Interior." The statement also called for "opening a dialogue with the Syrian government to address the repercussions of the events."

The commander of Internal Security in Sweida Governorate, Brig. Gen. Ahmad al-Dalati, welcomed the statement and called for "all religious authorities and social activists to adopt a unified national stance that supports the Ministry of Interior's measures to extend state authority and achieve security throughout the province."

Sheikh Hikmat Al-Hijri, a Druze spiritual leader who has been opposed to the government in Damascus, said in a video message that the previous statement by Druze leaders had been issued after an agreement with the authorities in Damascus but "they broke the promise and continued the indiscriminate shelling of unarmed civilians."

"We are being subjected to a total war of annihilation," he said.

Some videos on social media had showed armed fighters with Druze captives, inciting sectarian slogans and beating them.

The Druze religious sect is a minority group that began as a 10th-century offshoot of Ismailism, a branch of Shiite Islam. More than half the roughly 1 million Druze worldwide live in Syria. Most of the other Druze live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast War and annexed in 1981.

Clashes have on several occasions broken out between forces loyal to the government and Druze fighters since the fall of President Bashar Assad in early December in a lightning rebel offensive led by Sunni Islamist insurgent groups.

The latest round of fighting has raised fears of another spiral of sectarian violence. In March, an ambush on government security forces by fighters loyal to Assad triggered days of sectarian and revenge attacks. Hundreds of civilians were killed, most of them members of the minority Alawite sect that Assad belongs to. A commission was formed to investigate the attacks but has not made its findings public.

The conflict has also raised concerns about escalating Israeli intervention.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said Monday that the Israeli military "attacked targets in Syria as a message and a clear warning to the Syrian regime — we will not allow harm to the Druze in Syria."

While many Druze in Syria have said they do not want Israel to intervene on their behalf, factions from the Druze minority have also been suspicious of the new authorities in Damascus, particularly after the attacks on Alawites and other minority groups.

Netanyahu's coalition is rattled as ultra-Orthodox party announces exit over military draft law

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — An Israeli ultra-Orthodox party that has been a key governing partner of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said early Tuesday it was leaving the coalition government, threatening to destabilize the Israeli leader's rule at a pivotal time in the war in Gaza.

United Torah Judaism's two factions said they were bolting the government over disagreements surrounding a bill that would codify broad military draft exemptions for their constituents, many of whom study Jewish texts instead of enlisting to the military. The issue has long divided Jewish Israelis, most of whom are required to enlist, a rift that has only widened since the war in Gaza began and demands on military manpower grew.

"After the government repeatedly violated its commitments to ensure the status of Jewish seminary students," the Degel HaTorah faction said in a statement, its lawmakers announced "their resignation from the coalition and the government."

The departure of a party that has long served as a kingmaker in Israeli politics doesn't immediately threaten Netanyahu's rule. But, once it comes into effect within 48 hours, it will leave the Israeli leader with a slim majority in a government that could now more heavily rely on the whims of two far-right parties. Those parties oppose concessions in ceasefire negotiations with Hamas and have themselves quit or threatened to quit the government over moves to end or even pause the war in Gaza.

The political shake-up comes as Israel and Hamas are discussing the terms of a truce for the 21-month war in Gaza. Despite heavy pressure by the U.S., Israel's top ally, and mediators Egypt and Qatar, there is no breakthrough yet in the talks. A recurring sticking point has been whether the war ends as part of any truce and Netanyahu's far-right coalition allies oppose ending the war while Hamas remains intact.

United Torah Judaism's departure has a window of 48 hours before becoming official, meaning Netanyahu can still find ways to satisfy the party and bring it back into the coalition. But Shuki Friedman, vice president of the Jewish People Policy Institute, said the gaps between the draft law currently on the table and the demands of the party are still wide, making a compromise unlikely during that time.

Friedman said the party's departure doesn't immediately put Netanyahu's rule at risk. A vote to dissolve parliament that would bring down the government and trigger new elections can't be brought by the opposition until the end of the year because of procedural reasons. And a summer recess for Parliament, beginning later this month and stretching until October, gives Netanyahu another attempt to bridge the gaps and bring the party back into the coalition.

Cabinet Minister Miki Zohar, from Netanyahu's Likud party, said he was hopeful the party could be coaxed back to the coalition. "God willing, everything will be fine," he said.

A Likud spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Nvidia's CEO says it has US approval to sell its H20 AI computer chips in China

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Nvidia's CEO Jensen Huang says the technology giant has won approval from the Trump administration to sell its advanced H20 computer chips used to develop artificial intelligence to China.

The news came in a company blog post late Monday and Huang also spoke about the coup on China's state-run CGTN television network in remarks shown on X.

"The U.S. government has assured Nvidia that licenses will be granted, and Nvidia hopes to start deliveries soon," the post said.

"Today, I'm announcing that the U.S. government has approved for us filing licenses to start shipping H20s," Huang told reporters in Beijing. He noted that half of the world's AI researchers are in China.

"It's so innovative and dynamic here in China that it's really important that American companies are able

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to compete and serve the market here in China," he said.

Huang recently met with Trump and other U.S. policymakers and this week is in Beijing to attend a supply chain conference and speak with Chinese officials.

The broadcast showed Huang meeting with Ren Hongbin, the head of the China Council for Promotion of International Trade, host of the China International Supply Chain Expo, which Huang was attending. Nvidia is an exhibitor.

Nvidia has profited enormously from rapid adoption of AI, becoming the first company to have its market value surpass \$4 trillion last week. However, the trade rivalry between the U.S. and China has been weighing heavily on the industry.

Washington has been tightening controls on exports of advanced technology to China for years, citing concerns that know-how meant for civilian use could be deployed for military purposes. The emergence of China's DeepSeek AI chatbot in January renewed concerns over how China might use the advanced chips to help develop its own AI capabilities.

In January, before Trump began his second term in office, the administration of President Joe Biden launched a new framework for exporting advanced computer chips used to develop artificial intelligence, an attempt to balance national security concerns about the technology with the economic interests of producers and other countries.

The White House announced in April that it would restrict sales of Nvidia's H20 chips and AMD's MI308 chips to China.

Nvidia had said the tighter export controls would cost the company an extra \$5.5 billion, and Huang and other technology leaders have been lobbying President Donald Trump to reverse the restrictions. They argue that such limits hinder U.S. competition in a leading edge sector in one of the world's largest markets for technology.

They've also warned that U.S. export controls could end up pushing other countries toward China's AI technology.

Nvidia's U.S. traded shares slipped 0.5% in afterhours trading Monday, but its shares traded in Frankfurt, Germany, jumped 3.2% early Tuesday.

A wildfire that destroyed historic Grand Canyon Lodge spread after being allowed to burn for days

By ROSS D. FRANKLIN and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, Ariz. (AP) — A wildfire that tore through a historic Grand Canyon lodge and raged out of control Monday had been allowed to burn for days before erupting over the weekend, raising scrutiny over the National Park Service's decision not to aggressively attack the fire right away.

The wildfire along the canyon's more isolated North Rim, where most visitors don't venture, was burning quickly with no containment, fire officials said. No injuries had been reported, but more than 70 structures were lost, including a visitors center and several cabins.

At first, the fire didn't raise alarms after igniting from a lightning strike on July 4. Four days later, the Park Service said the fire was being allowed to burn to benefit the land and fire crews were keeping close watch.

"There are no threats to infrastructure or public safety at this time," the park said on Facebook.

Then three days later, on Friday, fire officials and the park service sent out warnings to "evacuate immediately" as the fire grew by nearly eight times within a day to more than 1.4 square miles (3.6 square kilometers).

Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs called for a federal investigation into the park service's handling of the fire.

"The federal government chose to manage that fire as a controlled burn during the driest, hottest part of the Arizona summer," the governor said in a social media post Sunday.

She will be meeting with leadership in the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior soon to learn more about the decisions made in managing the wildfire, Hobbs' spokesperson Christian Slater said in an email.

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Authorities first used a “confine and contain” strategy but shifted to aggressive suppression as the fire — one of two that firefighters are dealing with on the North Rim — rapidly grew because of hot temperatures, low humidity and strong wind gusts, fire officials said.

The Associated Press left phone and email messages Monday with a park service spokesperson seeking comment about how the fire was managed.

Historic lodge destroyed

The fire destroyed the Grand Canyon Lodge, the only lodging inside the park’s North Rim, along with employee housing and a wastewater treatment plant, park Superintendent Ed Keable said Sunday.

Park officials have closed access for the rest of the year to the North Rim, a less popular area that draws only about 10% of the Grand Canyon’s millions of annual visitors.

Hikers in the area were evacuated and rafters on the Colorado River, which snakes through the canyon, were told to bypass Phantom Ranch, an outpost of cabins and dormitories. Trails to the area from the canyon’s North and South rims also were closed.

From the air, plumes of black smoke could be seen rising above the canyon walls and haze filled parts of the park. From the park’s South Rim, visitors took pictures on Monday of the smoke blanketing the canyon in the distance.

The fire flared up Saturday night, fueled by high winds. Firefighters managed to make progress, using aerial fire retardant drops near the lodge before they had to pull back because of a chlorine gas leak at the water treatment plant, the park service said.

Hikers also were evacuated over concern that the poisonous, heavier-than-air gas could sink downhill, into the canyon.

U.S. Sens. Mark Kelly and Ruben Gallego sent a letter Monday to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum asking among other things how the administration planned to track wildfire decision-making under a recent executive order to consolidate federal firefighting forces into a single program.

Fire season in the Western US

Across the West, about three dozen fires were burning uncontained and another 80 fires were being managed to clear out vegetation that has clogged the landscape, according to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

So far this year, nearly 2.5 million acres (1 million hectares) have burned. That’s slightly below the 10-year average, the center said Monday.

A wildfire burning in southwestern Colorado closed Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and forced evacuations nearby. It had burned about 5.7 square miles (14.8 square kilometers) as of Monday. The fire was started by lightning Thursday on the park’s south rim, a dramatic, deep gorge carved by the Gunnison River.

Fire officials said the brush and trees were very dry and there was only a minimal chance for rain in the coming days. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis issued a disaster declaration because of the fire and others in western Colorado.

Along the Grand Canyon’s North Rim, the Dragon Bravo Fire that destroyed the lodge and other buildings spread to nearly 9 square miles (23 square kilometers) Monday.

The White Sage Fire also grew significantly over the past day, now having charred 77 square miles (199 square kilometers) of terrain with no containment. Officials reported progress in battling the fire.

The fires came three years after two errant prescribed fires conducted by the U.S. Forest Service sparked the Hermit’s Peak-Calf Canyon Fire, which burned more than 530 square miles (1,373 square kilometers) of the Rocky Mountain foothills and destroyed hundreds of homes.

History of the Grand Canyon Lodge

The Grand Canyon Lodge, known for its huge ponderosa beams, massive limestone facade and a bronze statue of a donkey named “Brighty the Burro,” was perched on the edge of the North Rim and offered sweeping views of the canyon.

“It was like you’re looking at this movie all the time,” said Erik Ammerlann, who lived in Arizona for most

of his adult life and stayed at the lodge nearly 10 years ago. "You're really just one with nature."

Caren Carney was staying there last week with her husband, parents and 12-year-old son when a park ranger knocked on their door Thursday and told them to evacuate.

She was heartbroken Sunday to hear that such a "magical place" had burned down. After evacuating, the family from Georgia went to the South Rim and could see the blaze across the canyon.

"I'm so glad we got to have one final look at it in the present before it was lost," Carney said.

Aramark, the company that operated the lodge, said all employees and guests were safely evacuated.

An original lodge burned down from a kitchen fire in 1932, four years after construction was completed, according to the Grand Canyon Historical Society. The redesigned lodge using the original stonework opened in 1937.

Israel strikes military tanks in southern Syria, where government forces clash with Druze militias

By OMAR SANADIKI, GHAITH ALSAYED and ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BUSRA AL-HARIR, Syria (AP) — Israel's army said Monday it struck military tanks in southern Syria, where government forces and Bedouin tribes clashed with Druze militias in the latest escalation in the Middle East country struggling for stability after a 13-year civil war.

Dozens of people have been killed in the fighting between local militias and clans in Syria's Sweida province. Government security forces that were sent to restore order Monday also clashed with local armed groups.

Syria's Interior Ministry has said more than 30 people have died and nearly 100 others have been injured. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a U.K.-based war monitor, reported at least 99 dead, including two children, two women and 14 members of the security forces.

The clashes in Syria initially broke out between armed groups from the Druze and Sunni Bedouin clans, the observatory said, with some members of the government security forces "actively participating" in support of the Bedouins.

Syrian Interior Ministry spokesperson Nouredine al-Baba said government forces entered Sweida in the early morning to restore order.

"Some clashes occurred with outlawed armed groups, but our forces are doing their best to prevent any civilian casualties," he told the state-run Al-Ikhbariya TV.

Clashes fundamentally 'not sectarian' in nature

Al-Baba told The Associated Press that the "clashes are fundamentally not sectarian in nature."

"The real conflict is between the state and bandits and criminals, not between the state and any Syrian community," he said. "On the contrary, the state views the Druze community in Sweida as a partner in advancing the national unity project."

Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the observatory, said the conflict started with the kidnapping and robbery of a Druze vegetable seller by members of a Bedouin tribe who set up a checkpoint, leading to tit-for-tat attacks and kidnappings.

The Interior Ministry described the situation as a dangerous escalation that "comes in the absence of the relevant official institutions, which has led to an exacerbation of the state of chaos, the deterioration of the security situation, and the inability of the local community to contain the situation."

U.N. Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi expressed "deep concern" over the violence and urged the government and local groups to "take immediate steps to protect civilians, restore calm, and prevent incitement."

She said in a statement the clashes underscored the "urgent need for genuine inclusion, trust-building, and meaningful dialogue to advance a credible and inclusive political transition in Syria."

Israel sees Druze as a loyal minority

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement that the Israeli military "attacked targets in Syria as a message and a clear warning to the Syrian regime — we will not allow harm to the Druze in Syria."

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In Israel, the Druze are seen as a loyal minority and often serve in the armed forces.

While many Druze in Syria have said they do not want Israel to intervene on their behalf, factions from the Druze minority have also been suspicious of the new authorities in Damascus after former President Bashar Assad fled the country in December during a rebel offensive led by Sunni Islamist insurgent groups. On several occasions, Druze groups have clashed with security forces from the new government or allied factions.

In May, Israeli forces struck a site near the presidential palace in Damascus, in what was seen as a warning to Syrian interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa. The strike came after dozens were killed in fighting between pro-government gunmen and Druze fighters in the town of Sahnaya and the Druze-majority Damascus suburb of Jaramana.

Over half of the roughly 1 million Druze worldwide live in Syria. Most other Druze live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast War and annexed in 1981.

A group led by Sheikh Hikmat Al-Hijri, a Druze spiritual leader who has been opposed to the new government in Damascus, on Monday issued a statement calling for "international protection" and accused government forces and General Security agency of "supporting takfiri gangs" — using a term for extremist Sunni militants.

Syria's Foreign Ministry called for "all countries and organizations to respect the authority of the Syrian Arab Republic and refrain from supporting any separatist rebel movements." In a statement, it called for Syrians to "cease acts of violence, surrender illegal weapons and thwart those seeking to dismantle the Syrian social fabric and sow discord and division."

'Like unwrapping an onion'

The Druze religious sect is a minority group that began as a 10th-century offshoot of Ismailism, a branch of Shiite Islam. In Syria, they largely live in the southern Sweida province and some suburbs of Damascus, mainly in Jaramana and Ashrafiyat Sahnaya to the south.

The Druze developed their own militias during the country's nearly 14-year civil war, during which they sometimes faced attacks by the Islamic State group and other militant groups.

Israel has taken an aggressive stance toward Syria's new leaders since Assad's fall, saying it does not want Islamic militants near its borders. Israeli forces earlier seized a U.N.-patrolled buffer zone on Syrian territory along the border with the Golan Heights and have launched hundreds of airstrikes on military sites in Syria.

The Trump administration has been pushing for the new Syrian government to move toward normalization with Israel. Syrian officials have acknowledged holding indirect talks with Israel to attempt to defuse tensions, but have not responded to reports that the two sides have also held direct talks.

U.S. envoy to Syria Tom Barrack told The Associated Press last week that he believes normalizing ties will happen "like unwrapping an onion, slowly."

Mike Waltz to face grilling over Signal chat at Senate hearing for UN role

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Mike Waltz, President Donald Trump's nominee for U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, will face questioning from lawmakers Tuesday for the first time since he was ousted as national security adviser in the weeks after he mistakenly added a journalist to a private Signal chat used to discuss sensitive military plans.

The former Republican congressman is set to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for his confirmation hearing, with Trump looking to fill his remaining Cabinet position after months of delay, including the withdrawal of the previous nominee.

The hearing will provide senators with the first opportunity to grill Waltz over revelations in March that he added The Atlantic editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg to a private text chain on an unclassified messaging

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app that was used to discuss planning for strikes on Houthi militants in Yemen.

Waltz took responsibility even as criticism mounted against Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who shared the sensitive plans in the chat that included several other high-level national security officials. Hegseth shared the same information in another Signal chat that included family, but Trump has made clear Hegseth has his support.

Waltz was removed as national security adviser in May — replaced by Secretary of State Marco Rubio — and nominated for the U.N. role.

Trump praised Waltz in the announcement, saying, "From his time in uniform on the battlefield, in Congress and, as my National Security Advisor, Mike Waltz has worked hard to put our Nation's Interests first." The United Nations is facing major changes

If confirmed, Waltz would be coming to the U.N. at a moment of great change. The world body is reeling from Trump's decision to slash foreign assistance — affecting its humanitarian aid agencies — and it anticipates U.S. funding cuts to the U.N. annual budget.

Under an "America First" foreign policy realignment, the White House has asserted that "some of the U.N.'s agencies and bodies have drifted" from their founding mission and "act contrary to the interests of the United States while attacking our allies and propagating anti-Semitism."

With America being the largest United Nations donor, cutting U.S. funding to the U.N. budget would greatly impair operations.

Facing financial instability, the U.N. has spent months shedding jobs and consolidating projects while beginning to tackle long-delayed reforms. The U.N. is also facing growing frustration over what critics describe as a lack of efficiency and power in delivering on its mandate to end conflict and prevent wars.

John Bolton, a former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. who was also national security adviser during Trump's first term, was critical of the current state of the U.N.

"It's probably in the worst shape it's been in since it was founded," Bolton, now an outspoken Trump critic, recently told The Associated Press.

Waltz has been meeting with senators

Waltz spent the last several weeks meeting with Democrats and Republicans on the Foreign Affairs committee.

Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth said Monday that she and Waltz discussed a wide range of issues, including whether the Trump administration would use the U.N. to strengthen alliances and combat Chinese influence.

"I asked him questions about 'Signalgate,' but I also talked to him about how we are going to sway other nations within the United Nations to our side, in light of how much influence the PRC is having on other nations," the Illinois senator said, using an acronym for the People's Republic of China.

Even with Democratic opposition, Waltz only needs a majority in the 53-47 Senate, which Republicans control.

"He'll be fine. Mike won't have any issues," said Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla. "I mean, the Democrats are gonna do their thing. Whatever. Mike's used to taking incoming fire."

It is unclear how Waltz would approach the job. Trump's first nominee, Rep. Elise Stefanik, had built a track record in Congress of criticizing the U.N. She vowed during her confirmation hearing in January to combat what she called antisemitism at the world body and lead a review of U.S. funding.

She was expected to be confirmed, but Trump abruptly withdrew her nomination in March, citing risks to the GOP's historically slim House majority.

At the time, the loss of a mere handful of seats could have swung the House majority to Democrats and derailed their recently successful efforts to enact Trump's sweeping agenda.

Waltz is still on the White House payroll

Waltz, whose Florida House seat was filled during a special election earlier this year, has spent the last few months on the White House payroll despite being removed as national security adviser. The latest list of White House salaries, current as of July 1, includes Waltz earning an annual salary of \$195,200.

A White House official, granted anonymity to discuss personnel matters, said Waltz stayed on to "ensure

a smooth and successful transition given the extreme importance of the role of NSA.”

Waltz was the first Green Beret elected to the House and easily won reelection for a fourth term in November before Trump asked him to join the administration.

U.S. inflation may have worsened last month as Trump’s tariffs start to bite

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation likely accelerated in June as sweeping tariffs on nearly all imports may have pushed up prices for electronics, appliances, and other goods, economists forecast.

Consumer prices probably rose 2.6% last month from a year ago, up from an annual increase of 2.4% in May, according to data provider FactSet. The Labor Department will issue its inflation report at 8:30 a.m. eastern. On a monthly basis, prices likely rose 0.3% from May to June, the largest increase since January, economists project.

Worsening inflation could pose a political challenge for President Donald Trump, who promised during last year’s presidential campaign to immediately lower costs. The sharp inflation spike of 2022-2023 was the worst in four decades and soured most Americans on former president Joe Biden’s handling of the economy.

Faster price increases would also likely underscore the Federal Reserve’s reluctance to cut its short-term interest rate, as Trump is loudly demanding.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, inflation is forecast to have risen 3% in June from a year earlier, up from a 2.8% rise in May. On a monthly basis, it is also expected to have picked up 0.3% from May to June, according to FactSet. Economists closely watch core prices because they typically provide a better sense of where inflation is headed.

Trump has imposed sweeping duties of 10% on all imports, plus 50% levies on steel and aluminum, 30% on goods from China, and 25% on imported cars. Just last week the president threatened to hit the European Union with a new 30% tariff starting Aug. 1.

So far, the tariffs haven’t noticeably pushed up inflation, which has been mild for the past four months. Core inflation has fallen from 3.3% in January to 2.8% in May, though that is still above the Fed’s 2% target. If inflation in June is much weaker than economists forecast, Trump will likely renew his demands that Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell immediately reduce borrowing costs.

Powell and other Fed officials have emphasized that they want to see how the economy evolves as the tariffs take effect before cutting their key short-term rate. The Fed chair has said that the duties could both push up prices and slow the economy, a tricky combination for the central bank since higher costs would typically lead the Fed to hike rates while a weaker economy often spurs it to reduce them.

Trump on Monday said that Powell has been “terrible” and “doesn’t know what the hell he’s doing.” The president added that the economy was doing well despite Powell’s refusal to reduce rates, but it would be “nice” if there were rate cuts “because people would be able to buy housing a lot easier.”

Last week, White House officials also attacked Powell for cost overruns on the years-long renovation of two Fed buildings, which are now slated to cost \$2.5 billion, roughly one-third more than originally budgeted. While Trump legally can’t fire Powell just because he disagrees with his interest rate decisions, the Supreme Court has signaled, he may be able to do so “for cause,” such as misconduct or mismanagement.

While inflation was mild in May, there were already signs in last month’s report that tariffs were starting to have some impact. The cost of furniture, appliances, toys, and tools rose, though those increases were offset by falling prices for fares, hotels, and muted rises in rental costs.

Some companies have said they have or plan to raise prices as a result of the tariffs, including Walmart, the world’s largest retailer. Automaker Mitsubishi said last month that it was lifting prices by an average of 2.1% in response to the duties, and Nike has said it would implement “surgical” price hikes to offset tariff costs.

But many companies have been able to postpone or avoid price increases, after building up their stockpiles of goods this spring to get ahead of the duties. Other companies may have refrained from lifting prices while they wait to see whether the U.S. is able to reach trade deals with other countries that lower the duties.

Murder trial begins for Colorado dentist accused of poisoning wife's protein shakes

By JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — The murder trial of a Colorado dentist accused of killing his wife by poisoning her protein shakes and later trying to pay someone to kill the lead investigator on the case will begin with opening arguments Tuesday.

James Craig, 47, allegedly used cyanide and tetrahydrozoline, an ingredient in over-the-counter eye drops, to kill his wife of 23 years, Angela Craig, two years ago in suburban Denver.

Craig has pleaded not guilty to several charges, including first-degree murder.

Prosecutors say that Craig allegedly purchased arsenic around the time of his wife's symptoms — dizziness and headaches that perplexed doctors — and that after his initial attempts to poison her failed, he ordered potassium cyanide.

They also said Craig searched Google for "how to make a murder look like a heart attack" and "is arsenic detectable in an autopsy," and that he tried to make it appear his wife had killed herself.

Angela Craig, 43, who had six children with James Craig, was hospitalized several times. After the first time, she can be seen on home surveillance video accusing her husband of implying to medical staff that she was suicidal.

"It's your fault they treated me like I was a suicide risk, like I did it to myself, and like nothing I said could be believed," she said to her husband on the video.

After Craig's arrest in 2023, prosecutors alleged that he offered a fellow jail inmate \$20,000 to kill the case's lead investigator and offered someone else \$20,000 to find people to falsely testify that Angela Craig planned to die by suicide.

In addition to first-degree murder, Craig has pleaded not guilty to the other charges, including solicitation to commit murder and solicitation to commit perjury.

Craig's attorneys have questioned the reliability of the inmate's claims, said the police were biased against the dentist and that tests of the protein shake containers didn't reveal signs of poison.

Around the time of his arrest, prosecutors said Craig was experiencing financial difficulties and appeared to be having an affair with a fellow dentist, though they have not yet described a motive in his wife's death.

Craig remains in custody, according to jail records.

Flames tear through assisted-living facility in Massachusetts, killing 9 and trapping residents

By MICHAEL CASEY, KIMBERLEE KRUESI, PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

FALL RIVER, Mass. (AP) — Flames roared through an assisted-living facility in Massachusetts, killing nine people and trapping residents inside, including some who leaned out of windows and screamed for help, authorities said Monday. At least 30 people were hurt.

A firefighters union said inadequate staffing hindered the response to the blaze and contributed to the death toll, though the mayor criticized that characterization, and the fire chief suggested no number of first responders would have been enough. Meanwhile, several residents who praised firefighters and police for heroic rescue efforts said staff members did little to help.

"They didn't knock on one door," Robert Cabral said. "They just ran."

Firefighters responded to the Gabriel House facility in Fall River, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of Boston, at about 9:50 p.m. Sunday and were met with heavy smoke and flames at the front of the build-

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ing. The Bristol County district attorney's office said in a statement that the fire's cause "does not appear to be suspicious at this time." Its origin remains under investigation, authorities said.

Lorraine Ferrara, one of about 70 residents at the facility, awoke to a neighbor pounding on her door. She tried to make her way through the smoke in the hallway but retreated to her room as the sprinkler system shot hot water onto her back.

As her room filled with smoke, Ferrara opened her window and yelled. A firefighter broke the window and carried her down the ladder, she said.

"I really thought I was going to die," she said. "I thought there was no way out."

That fear mixed with anger as she watched two employees run from the building.

"They left us alone and ran out into the parking lot," she said. "I was hanging out the window — 'Help! Help!' and they just kept running."

The dead ranged in age from 61 to 86, authorities said. The Bristol County district attorney's office identified seven of the deceased as Rui Albernaz, 64; Ronald Codega, 61; Margaret Duddy, 69; Robert King, 78; Kim Mackin, 71; Richard Rochon, 78; and Eleanor Willett, 86. The office said a 70-year-old woman and 77-year-old man were still pending notification of family.

Mackin's nephew, Austin Mackin, in an emailed statement from family members, described his aunt as "gifted beyond words."

"We will all miss Kimmy," the statement read. "Beyond being exceptionally kind, few knew that she was a brilliant musician."

She received a full ride scholarship to the Manhattan School of Music and after graduating, she toured around the world as first chair viola, the statement said. During the latter part of her career as an instrumentalist, she played in the Boston Philharmonic.

Gabriel House opened in 1999 and has 100 units, according to Massachusetts Executive Office of Aging and Independence. Its website promotes studio apartments "for those seniors who cannot afford the high end of assisted living" as well as group adult foster care within walking distance of shopping, restaurants and churches.

"If an emergency occurs, no matter the time, there will be someone ready to help," the website states.

Dennis Etzkorn, the facility's owner, declined to comment Monday, but officials said he was cooperating with what Fire Chief Jeffrey Bacon called "a very extensive investigation."

District Attorney Tom Quinn called the fire a "terrible tragedy" in a statement that also commended first responders "bringing many of the residents to safety while being confronted with very difficult circumstances."

Firefighters union decries lack of staff, equipment

About 50 firefighters responded to the scene, including 30 who were off-duty. Police also helped break down doors and carried about a dozen residents to safety. Five injured firefighters were released from the hospital Monday.

Officials with the firefighters union said the closing of fire companies and cutbacks on staff have been a problem for decades.

If staffing had been at the nationally recommended level, eight more firefighters would have been at the scene, said Edward Kelly, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters union.

Capt. Frank O'Reagan said there was no breathing equipment available when he arrived, so he started going door to door on the third floor without an air tank until the smoke got to him.

O'Reagan's brother and fellow firefighter Michael O'Reagan said he was shocked that 40 minutes after firefighters arrived, a large part of the building had not been searched.

"We did the best we could with what we had, and what we had was not enough," said Michael O'Reagan, president of the Fall River firefighters union.

Mayor Paul Coogan said the fire department is staffed based on the recommendation from the fire chief.

"We staff the fire department at the number the chief asked for," he said. "We're not even 24 hours into this and that's going to be a priority, not the families?"

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Joe Alves, who lives several houses down from the facility, said he saw officials pulling bodies, people in wheelchairs and injured pets out of the building, with some pouring water bottles on burns.

"It was terrible," he said, choking up slightly.

Clever Parra, who lives behind the facility, said he joined several other neighbors to help evacuate residents through the windows. The 40-year-old construction worker described going up a ladder and seeing a man inside attempting to open a window to escape the flames. After trying on his own, Parra turned to a firefighter to break the window.

The firefighter "sent the guy to me feet first and I take the guy out and bring him down," he recalled.

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey offered state assistance to the city's mayor, condolences to the families of those who died and gratitude to first responders.

Brian Doherty, president of the Massachusetts Assisted Living Association, said state officials were working with long-term care facilities to find homes for displaced residents.

Paul Lanzikos, a former Massachusetts Secretary of Elder Affairs and co-founder of the advocacy group Dignity Alliance, said the group was concerned by what has been reported about the lack of fire drills, low number of staff for a highly dependent population and safety issues such as a broken elevator and air conditioners in the windows.

"It's a terrible tragedy that should have never happened," Lanzikos said.

City is one of the poorest in Massachusetts

With about 94,000 residents, Fall River is the state's 10th-largest city and one of its poorest.

The blue-collar community in southern Massachusetts was once a global center for textile manufacturing, but it suffered population loss and economic hardship as the industry declined. Recent decades have seen some new development and investment, but the city has also been rocked by scandal. Former Mayor Jasiel Correia was convicted in a corruption trial and sentenced to six years in prison in 2021.

Survivors of the fire were ushered to a temporary housing center about half a mile (0.8 kilometers) from their former home, many of them in shock after losing most of their belongings.

Some broke down in tears, others threw out names — desperate to know who was still alive. Staffers handed out sandwiches, beverages and even canes for those who did not have time to grab their medical equipment in the smoke and flames.

Neal Beck, who had lived at Gabriel House for six years, said he was rescued by ladder from his bathroom window.

"I've been homeless before," Beck said. "I guess I'll be homeless again."

Head cook Paul Ferreira was off the clock Sunday night but rushed to the scene and watched as bodies were removed from the building. He grew emotional describing the community of people who have long struggled to find affordable housing.

"Not knowing it was the last time I was cooking for them, it's sad. They become part of your family," Ferreira said. "Some of these people have no family members. Where are they going to go now?"

A designer dressed Chappell Roan with seaweed.

But don't expect to find the approach in stores — yet

By KIKI SIDERIS and MELINA WALLING Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — At her kitchen stove, fashion designer Caroline Zimbalist looks like an alchemist at work as she stirs a pot full of corn starch and a thickener made from seaweed. The peppermint-scented mixture glitters as she carefully pours it into silicone molds of hearts and leaves.

When the material hardens, Zimbalist will stitch it into unique, made-to-order dresses that she sells on her website. She hopes her designs, which have been worn by celebrities including Chappell Roan, will put a spotlight on materials that aren't sourced from planet-polluting fossil fuels, such as oil.

"It's almost like a vessel to show the world," she said.

Other small-scale designers are testing out tapioca, gelatin and other kitchen-shelf ingredients. Meanwhile, big names such as Adidas and Hermes have experimented with mushroom leather, while the Lycra

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brand is incorporating a new largely corn-based material into stretch fabric. Some experts are skeptical that these textiles — commonly referred to as biomaterials — will go mainstream, but designers such as Zimbalist hope their experiments will set an example for larger brands to follow.

Over 60% of clothing comes from petroleum-based synthetics like polyester, according to Textile Exchange, a nonprofit that promotes sustainable fashion. Manufacturing those materials creates emissions. Synthetic garments can also shed microplastics during washing. And as fast-fashion brands pump out new clothes for customers who expect new designs every few weeks, many garments end up in landfills.

Zimbalist's designs gained attention in 2024 when Roan wore one on "The Tonight Show." The New York-based designer has since dressed stars such as comedian Atsuko Okatsuka and actors Anna Lore and Reneé Rapp. She takes commissions for custom clothing pieces, which cost between \$150 and \$1,200, via her website, which notes her "unique recipe of biodegradable and natural materials."

As to whether her approach could be reproduced at a larger scale, Zimbalist says her materials could most practically be used to replace plastic hardware such as buttons and zippers. She acknowledges they can be sticky if not dried correctly, stinky if not treated and melty if exposed to extreme heat.

"Even incorporating it in small ways to start would be really strong," she said.

Why biomaterials are hard to find

Fossil-fuel derived fabrics are ubiquitous because they're cheap and made from plentiful raw materials, said Dale Rogers, an Arizona State University professor who studies supply chains.

Many clothes are also made of materials that come from plants or animals such as cotton, silk, wool and cashmere. But some have environmental impacts. Cotton uses a lot of water. Sheep and goats burp out methane.

Some biomaterials have gotten closer to widespread use. Mycelium leather, made from mushrooms, has been used to create luxury shoes, accessories and handbags by brands such as Stella McCartney, Lululemon, Adidas and Hermes.

Still, Rogers said he's not convinced there's enough demand for alternative materials to overcome companies' aversion to the higher costs of producing them at a large scale.

"Honestly, in the end, cost drives almost all decisions," he said.

Wrinkles in aiming for sustainability

Getting larger companies to use alternative materials depends on whether they will pay more for a fabric that matches their values, said Jon Veldhouse, the CEO of Qore LLC.

His company makes a product called Qira that replaces about 70% of the fossil-derived components of elastic synthetic fabrics with a corn-based material. The Lycra Company, which sells its stretchy material to major brands, initially expects to incorporate Qira in around 25 percent of its Spandex business, said Lycra chief brand and innovation officer Steve Stewart. But that option will be more expensive, and they haven't yet announced any takers.

It can also be hard to measure the sustainability of farming practices that go into producing raw materials for new fabrics. Cargill is Qore's partner and corn supplier, and it gets its grain from farmers in the vicinity of their processing plant. Veldhouse said many already plant cover crops or reduce tilling to lower environmental impact, but he couldn't provide data on how many use those approaches.

Sarah Needham, a senior director at Textile Exchange, said it's great to see a large organization such as Lycra making its production systems more sustainable. But she also stressed the industry needs to reduce its overreliance on virgin materials, perhaps considering agricultural waste as a source of fabric.

The role of experimental designers

Needham said experimental designers are often the ones coming up with those alternatives to virgin materials and building appetite for new approaches.

But small designers might not have the resources to test the biodegradability of their materials, which often do involve processing, even if it's by hand, said Ramani Narayan, an engineering professor at Michigan State University.

"If I take something — like seaweed or whatever it is — and I apply a process to it, then I can no longer

call it natural," he said.

Zimbalist, the New York designer, acknowledges that her materials aren't ready to replace conventional fabrics and that her work is more of "a piece that leads to larger conversations."

Rogers, of Arizona State, thinks the fashion industry is a long way from meaningful change, but that "it's incredibly valuable" for artists and specialty manufacturers to try new materials.

"What they're doing is likely to have long-term benefit, maybe even after their lifetimes," he added.

14 million children did not receive a single vaccine in 2024, UN estimates

LONDON (AP) — More than 14 million children did not receive a single vaccine last year — about the same number as the year before — according to U.N. health officials. Nine countries accounted for more than half of those unprotected children.

In their annual estimate of global vaccine coverage, released Tuesday, the World Health Organization and UNICEF said about 89% of children under 1 year old got a first dose of the diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccine in 2024, the same as in 2023. About 85% completed the three-dose series, up from 84% in 2023.

Officials acknowledged, however, that the collapse of international aid this year will make it more difficult to reduce the number of unprotected children. In January, U.S. President Trump withdrew the country from the WHO, froze nearly all humanitarian aid and later moved to close the U.S. AID Agency. And last month, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said it was pulling the billions of dollars the U.S. had previously pledged to the vaccines alliance Gavi, saying the group had "ignored the science."

Kennedy, a longtime vaccine skeptic, has previously raised questions the diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccine — which has proven to be safe and effective after years of study and real-world use. Vaccines prevent 3.5 million to 5 million deaths a year, according to U.N. estimates.

"Drastic cuts in aid, coupled with misinformation about the safety of vaccines, threaten to unwind decades of progress," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

U.N. experts said that access to vaccines remained "deeply unequal" and that conflict and humanitarian crises quickly unraveled progress; Sudan had the lowest reported coverage against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. The data showed that nine countries accounted for 52% of all children who missed out on immunizations entirely: Nigeria, India, Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Yemen, Afghanistan and Angola.

WHO and UNICEF said coverage against measles rose slightly, with 76% of children worldwide receiving both vaccine doses. But experts say measles vaccine rates need to reach 95% to prevent outbreaks of the extremely contagious disease. WHO noted that 60 countries reported big measles outbreaks last year.

The U.S. is now having its worst measles outbreak in more than three decades, while the disease has also surged across Europe, with 125,000 cases in 2024 — twice as many as the previous year, according to WHO.

Last week, British authorities reported a child died of measles in a Liverpool hospital. Health officials said that despite years of efforts to raise awareness, only about 84% of children in the U.K. are protected.

"It is hugely concerning, but not at all surprising, that we are continuing to see outbreaks of measles," said Helen Bradford, a professor of children's health at University College London. "The only way to stop measles spreading is with vaccination," she said in a statement. "It is never too late to be vaccinated — even as an adult."

Supreme Court allows Trump to lay off nearly 1,400 Education Department employees

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is allowing President Donald Trump to put his plan to dismantle the Education Department back on track — and to go through with laying off nearly 1,400 employees.

With the three liberal justices in dissent, the court on Monday paused an order from U.S. District Judge Myong Joun in Boston, who issued a preliminary injunction reversing the layoffs and calling into question the broader plan. The layoffs “will likely cripple the department,” Joun wrote. A federal appeals court refused to put the order on hold while the administration appealed.

The high court action enables the administration to resume work on winding down the department, one of Trump’s biggest campaign promises.

In a post Monday night on his social media platform, Trump said the high court “has handed a Major Victory to Parents and Students across the Country.” He said the decision will allow his administration to begin the “very important process” of returning many of the department’s functions “BACK TO THE STATES.”

The court did not explain its decision in favor of Trump, as is customary in emergency appeals. But in dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor complained that her colleagues were enabling legally questionable action on the part of the administration.

“When the Executive publicly announces its intent to break the law, and then executes on that promise, it is the Judiciary’s duty to check that lawlessness, not expedite it,” Sotomayor wrote for herself and Justices Ketanji Brown Jackson and Elena Kagan.

The secretary of education lauds the decision

Education Secretary Linda McMahon said it’s a “shame” it took the Supreme Court’s intervention to let Trump’s plan move ahead.

“Today, the Supreme Court again confirmed the obvious: the President of the United States, as the head of the Executive Branch, has the ultimate authority to make decisions about staffing levels, administrative organization, and day-to-day operations of federal agencies,” McMahon said in a statement.

A lawyer for the Massachusetts cities and education groups that sued over the plan said the lawsuit will continue, adding no court has yet ruled that what the administration wants to do is legal.

“Without explaining to the American people its reasoning, a majority of justices on the U.S. Supreme Court have dealt a devastating blow to this nation’s promise of public education for all children. On its shadow docket, the Court has yet again ruled to overturn the decision of two lower courts without argument,” Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward, said in a statement.

The Supreme Court has handed Trump one victory after another in his effort to remake the federal government, after lower courts have found the administration’s actions probably violate federal law. Last week, the justices cleared the way for Trump’s plan to significantly reduce the size of the federal workforce. On the education front, the high court has previously allowed cuts in teacher-training grants to go forward.

Separately on Monday, more than 20 states sued the administration over billions of dollars in frozen education funding for after-school care, summer programs and more.

Education Department employees are on leave

Education Department employees who were targeted by the layoffs have been on paid leave since March, according to a union that represents some of the agency’s staff.

Joun’s order had prevented the department from fully terminating them, though none had been allowed to return to work, according to the American Federation of Government Employees Local 252. Without Joun’s order, the workers would have been terminated in early June.

The Education Department had said earlier in June that it was “actively assessing how to reintegrate” the employees. A department email asked them to share whether they had gained other employment, saying the request was meant to “support a smooth and informed return to duty.”

The current case involves two consolidated lawsuits that said Trump’s plan amounted to an illegal closure of the Education Department.

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One suit was filed by the Somerville and Easthampton school districts in Massachusetts along with the American Federation of Teachers and other education groups. The other legal action was filed by a coalition of 21 Democratic attorneys general.

The suits argued that layoffs left the department unable to carry out responsibilities required by Congress, including duties to support special education, distribute financial aid and enforce civil rights laws.

Cuomo stays in NYC mayor's race despite losing the Democratic primary to Mamdani

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

Former Gov. Andrew Cuomo launched an independent run for New York City mayor on Monday, restarting his campaign after a bruising loss to progressive Zohran Mamdani in the Democratic primary.

In a video, Cuomo announced he would remain in the race to combat Mamdani, a democratic socialist state lawmaker, while previewing a strategic reset that would bring a more personal approach to a campaign that had been criticized as distant from voters.

"The fight to save our city isn't over," Cuomo said. "Only 13% of New Yorkers voted in the June primary. The general election is in November and I am in it to win it."

Critics of Mamdani's progressive agenda, which includes higher taxes on the wealthy, have called on donors and voters to unite behind a single candidate for the November election. Instead, Cuomo joins a crowded field that also includes current Mayor Eric Adams, who is also a Democrat running as an independent. These candidates now face a complex task in cobbling together enough voters in an overwhelmingly Democratic city where Mamdani has amassed significant momentum.

In a statement, Jeffrey Lerner, a spokesperson for Mamdani, criticized Cuomo and Adams while emphasizing that the Democratic nominee "is focused on making this city more affordable for New Yorkers."

Cuomo's decision to press on is the latest chapter in his comeback attempt, launched almost four years after he resigned as governor in 2021 following a barrage of sexual harassment allegations. He denied wrongdoing during the campaign, maintaining that the scandal was driven by politics.

The former governor was the presumed frontrunner for much of the primary. His juggernaut campaign drew heavily on his deep political experience, universal name recognition and a powerful fundraising operation, but at the same time limited media interviews, held few unscripted events and avoided mingling with voters.

The guarded strategy was in heavy contrast with Mamdani's energetic run, which was centered around making the city a more affordable place to live and amassed a legion of volunteers, all while the candidate's savvy social media persona won him national acclaim.

Mamdani's massive win sent a lightning bolt through the Democratic party, energizing young progressives but also unnerving moderates who worried the candidate's criticisms of Israel and socialist label could alienate centrist voters.

Cuomo, in his video Monday, appeared to acknowledge his campaign's shortcomings, splicing his latest pitch to return to the political stage with clips of him shaking hands with people and a vow to run a more grounded campaign.

"Every day I'm going to be hitting the streets meeting you where you are, to hear the good and the bad, problems and solutions," he said, "because for the next few months it's my responsibility to earn your vote."

Mamdani had been relatively unknown when he launched his mayoral candidacy but picked up heavy momentum before trouncing the former governor by more than 12 percentage points. Cuomo conceded the race on the night of the election.

Despite the loss, Cuomo had qualified to run on an independent ballot line in November under a party he created called "Fight and Deliver."

Cuomo began losing support from traditional allies as he weighed whether to remain in the race, with key labor unions and political leaders starting to line up behind Mamdani. Rev. Al Sharpton, an influential Black leader, has urged Cuomo to step aside.

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Some deep-pocketed contributors have meanwhile aligned behind Adams. Although he's still a Democrat, Adams pulled out of the primary shortly after a federal judge dismissed a corruption case against him at the request of President Donald Trump's Justice Department, arguing that the case had sidelined him from campaigning.

Adams, in a statement released by his campaign, said "Cuomo is wasting time and dividing voters."

"The people spoke loudly — he lost. Yet he continues to put himself over the number one goal — beating Mamdani and securing our city future," said Adams.

Jim Walden, a former prosecutor, is also running as an independent candidate. Curtis Sliwa, founder of the 1970s-era Guardian Angels anti-crime patrol, is on the Republican line.

Cuomo's campaign released a statement later Monday that said the former governor had agreed to a proposal by Walden that "in mid-September, we will determine which candidate is strongest against Mamdani and all other candidates will stand down, rather than act as spoilers and guarantee Mamdani's election."

Both Adams and Sliwa have insisted they would not drop out of the race.

Suspected Kentucky church shooter had a domestic violence hearing the next day

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

The man accused of killing two women in a shooting rampage at a Kentucky church after wounding a state trooper had been expected in court for a domestic violence hearing on Monday, a local official said.

In a chilling account of Sunday's attack, Star Rutherford, a relative of the two slain women, said Guy House went to the Lexington-area church looking for one of her sisters but was told she wasn't there.

He declared: "Well I guess someone's going to have to die then," and shot her mother, 72-year-old Beverly Gumm, in the chest. Rutherford spoke to the Lexington-based broadcaster WKYT-TV. House later killed Christina Combs, who media reports said was another of Rutherford's sisters. Two men were also critically wounded, police said Monday.

House went to Richmond Road Baptist Church seeking the mother of his children but his domestic violence hearing did not involve her, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported, citing Rachael Barnes. She identified Gumm and Combs, 34, as her mother and sister.

Matt Ball, a deputy clerk for family court in Fayette County, confirmed to The Associated Press that House had been scheduled for the domestic violence hearing on Monday.

Authorities have offered no motive and the investigation was ongoing.

Officers confronted House, 47, in a rear parking lot after the shootings at the close-knit rural church where many members are related or close friends. At least three Lexington police officers fired, striking House and resulting in his death, authorities said.

The trooper is in stable condition, and authorities have not identified the wounded.

Sunday's violence began when House shot the trooper during a traffic stop near Lexington's airport, police said. House then fled, forcibly stole a vehicle and opened fire at the church about an hour later, police said.

The trooper stopped House after receiving a "license plate reader alert," police said. House had active arrest warrants and he shot the trooper as the officer interacted with people in the vehicle, Kentucky State Police Sgt. Matt Sudduth said Monday. The others in the vehicle were not involved in the shooting, did not flee and have cooperated with investigators, he said.

A woman who witnessed that shooting said it initially appeared to be a routine traffic stop, with the trooper talking through an open window.

"And as we were driving by, I heard, 'pop, pop' and I knew it was gunshots," Larissa McLaughlin told WLEX-TV in Lexington.

Police credited several people for coming to the trooper's aid immediately.

"Without the assistance of several Good Samaritans, this likely could have been a very life-threatening injury," Sudduth said. He didn't offer details on what aid was provided and said police were working to identify them.

Officers tracked the stolen vehicle to the church about 16 miles (26 kilometers) from where the trooper was shot, police said.

"Please pray for everyone affected by these senseless acts of violence," Gov. Andy Beshear said Sunday, "and let's give thanks for the swift response by the Lexington Police Department and Kentucky State Police."

State Attorney General Russell Coleman said Sunday that detectives with his office were ready to support local and state agencies, saying, "Today, violence invaded the Lord's House."

Trump threatens Russia with tariffs and boosts US weapons for Ukraine

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday threatened Russia with steep tariffs and announced a rejuvenated pipeline for American weapons to reach Ukraine, hardening his stance toward Moscow after months of frustration about unsuccessful negotiations for ending the war.

The latest steps reflect an evolving approach from the Republican president, who promised to swiftly resolve the war started by Russian President Vladimir Putin when he invaded Ukraine three years ago. Trump once focused his criticism on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whom he described as unwilling to compromise, but more recently has expressed growing irritation toward Putin.

"My conversations with him are very pleasant, and then the missiles go off at night," Trump said. He complained that "it just keeps going on and on and on."

Trump said he would implement "severe tariffs" unless a peace deal is reached within 50 days. He provided few details on how they would be implemented, but he described them as secondary tariffs, meaning they would target Russia's trading partners in an effort to isolate Moscow in the global economy.

In addition, Trump said European allies would buy "billions and billions" of dollars of U.S. military equipment to be transferred to Ukraine, replenishing the besieged country's supplies of weapons. He made the announcement in the Oval Office alongside NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte.

Included in the plan are Patriot air defense systems, a top priority for Ukraine as it fends off Russian drones and missiles.

Doubts were recently raised about Trump's commitment to supply Ukraine when the Pentagon paused shipments over concerns that U.S. stockpiles were running low.

Rutte said Germany, Finland, Canada, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Denmark would be among the buyers to supply Ukraine. He said "speed is of the essence here," and he suggested that some weapons would be rushed to Ukraine and later replaced with purchases from the U.S.

Later Monday, Zelenskyy posted about having spoken with Trump by phone and said he "discussed the necessary means and solutions with the President to provide better protection for people from Russian attacks and to strengthen our positions."

Zelenskyy added that Trump had "agreed to catch up more often by phone and coordinate our steps in the future."

Trump exasperated with Putin

Trump has long boasted of his friendly relationship with Putin, and he repeatedly asserted that Russia was more willing than Ukraine to reach a peace deal. He also accused Zelenskyy of prolonging the war and called him a "dictator without elections."

But Russia's relentless onslaught against civilian areas of Ukraine wore down Trump's patience. In April, Trump urged Putin to "STOP!" launching deadly barrages on Kyiv, and the following month said in a social media post that the Russian leader "has gone absolutely CRAZY!"

While Rutte was in Washington, Trump's special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, met with Zelenskyy in Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said he had "a productive conversation" with Kellogg about strengthening Ukrainian air defenses, joint arms production and purchasing U.S. weapons in conjunction with European countries, as well as the possibility of tighter international sanctions on the Kremlin.

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"We hope for the leadership of the United States, because it is clear that Moscow will not stop unless its ... ambitions are stopped by force," Zelenskyy said on Telegram.

Talks on sending Patriot missiles

Russia has pounded Ukrainian cities, including the capital, Kyiv, with hundreds of drones and cruise and ballistic missiles that Ukraine's air defenses are struggling to counter. June brought the highest monthly civilian casualties of the past three years, with 232 people killed and 1,343 wounded, the U.N. human rights mission in Ukraine said.

At the same time, Russia's bigger army is making a new effort to drive back Ukrainian defenders on parts of the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line.

Trump confirmed the U.S. is sending Ukraine more badly needed Patriot air defense missiles and that the European Union will pay the U.S. for the "various pieces of very sophisticated" weaponry.

A senior Russian lawmaker, Konstantin Kosachev, said Trump's plan had "only one beneficiary — the US military-industrial complex."

Germany has offered to finance two Patriot systems, government spokesperson Stefan Kornelius said Monday in Berlin. The country has already given three of its own Patriot systems to Ukraine.

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius was traveling to Washington on Monday to meet with Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

"We are determined to assume greater responsibility for Europe's deterrence and defense, while recognizing that the contribution of the United States of America remains indispensable to our collective security," Pistorius told reporters.

'Weapons flowing at a record level'

A top ally of Trump, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, said Sunday that the conflict is nearing an inflection point as Trump shows growing interest in helping Ukraine fight back against Russia's full-scale invasion.

Although Trump had previously dismissed the effort as a waste of U.S. taxpayer money, Graham told CBS' "Face the Nation" that "you'll see weapons flowing at a record level."

"One of the biggest miscalculations Putin has made is to play Trump," he said. "And you just watch, in the coming days and weeks, there's going to be a massive effort to get Putin to the table."

Kirill Dmitriev, Putin's envoy for international investment who took part in talks with U.S. officials in Saudi Arabia in February, dismissed what he said were efforts to drive a wedge between Moscow and Washington.

"Constructive dialogue between Russia and the United States is more effective than doomed-to-fail attempts at pressure," Dmitriev said in a post on Telegram. "This dialogue will continue, despite titanic efforts to disrupt it by all possible means."

Economic pressure

Although Trump proposed targeting Russia with new tariffs, he expressed doubts about bipartisan legislation to punish the country even further.

"I'm not sure we need it," he said. "It could be very useful. We'll have to see."

The legislation increases sanctions and places 500% tariffs on products imported from countries that buy Russian oil, gas and other exports. Trump on Monday proposed unilaterally implementing 100% tariffs.

"I use trade for a lot of things," he said. "But it's great for settling wars."

Since Dec. 5, 2022, when the European Union banned Russian oil, China has bought 47% of Russia's crude oil exports, followed by India at 38%. Turkey and the EU have each accounted for 6%, according to the Centre for Research and Clean Air, a Finnish nonprofit that tracks the energy industry.

Zongyuan Zoe Liu, a senior fellow in China studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, doubted that tariffs would change the course of the war.

"Oil is fungible, and Russia has developed a nimble shadow fleet," he said. "So enforcement would be a challenge."

However, the tariffs could still have a dramatic effect, depending on how they're implemented.

Adding a 100% tariff on China, on top of import taxes already in place, would essentially halt trade between the United States and China, the world's two largest economies.

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In a joint statement, the co-sponsors of the sanctions package working its way through Congress, Graham and Democratic Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, praised Trump for having "made a powerful move." They also defended their legislation, noting, "The benefit of our approach is that it blends congressional authorization of tariffs and sanctions with flexibility for presidential implementation, making it rock solid legally and politically."

More than 20 states sue Trump administration over frozen after-school and summer funding

By BIANCA VÁZQUEZ TONESS AP Education Writer

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — More than 20 states sued President Donald Trump's administration on Monday over billions of dollars in frozen education funding for after-school care, summer programs and more.

Some of the withheld money funds after-school and summer programming at Boys & Girls Clubs, the YMCA or public schools, attended by 1.4 million children and teenagers nationwide. Congress set aside money for the programs to provide academic support, enrichment and child care to mostly low-income families. But Trump's administration recently froze the funding, saying it wants to ensure programs align with the Republican president's priorities.

Led by California, the lawsuit alleges withholding the money violates the Constitution and several federal laws. Many low-income families will lose access to after-school programs if the money isn't released soon, according to the suit. In some states, school restarts in late July and early August. The Department of Education did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

After-school programs for the fall are in jeopardy

Darleen Reyes drove through a downpour last week to take her son to a free Boys & Girls Club day camp in East Providence, Rhode Island. She told camp administrators the flash flood warning would have kept her away, but her son insisted on going.

Before kissing his mother goodbye, Aiden Cazares, 8, explained to a reporter, "I wanted to see my friends and not just sit at home." Then he ran off to play.

In Rhode Island, the state stepped in with funding to keep the summer programs running, according to the East Providence club, and the state has joined the federal lawsuit. Other Boys & Girls Clubs supported by the grants have found ways to keep open their summer programs, said Sara Leutzinger, vice president for communications for the Boys & Girls Club of America. But there isn't the same hope for the after-school programming for the fall.

Some of the 926 Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide that run summer and after-school programs stand to close if the Trump administration doesn't release the money in the next three to five weeks, Leutzinger said. The clubs receive funding from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

The YMCA and Save the Children say many of the centers they run are also at risk of shuttering.

"Time is of the essence," said Christy Gleason, executive director of the political arm of Save the Children, which provides after-school programming for 41 schools in rural areas in Washington state and across the South, where school will begin as soon as August. "It's not too late to make a decision so the kids who really need this still have it."

Rural and Republican-led areas especially affected

Schools in Republican-led areas are particularly affected by the freeze in federal education grants. Ninety-one of the 100 school districts that receive the most money per student from four frozen grant programs are in Republican congressional districts, according to an analysis from New America, a left-leaning think tank. New America's analysis used funding levels reported in 2022 in 46 states.

Republican officials have been among the educators criticizing the grant freeze.

"I deeply believe in fiscal responsibility, which means evaluating the use of funds and seeking out efficiencies, but also means being responsible — releasing funds already approved by Congress and signed

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by President Trump," said Georgia schools superintendent Richard Woods, an elected Republican. "In Georgia, we're getting ready to start the school year, so I call on federal funds to be released so we can ensure the success of our students."

The Office of Management and Budget said some grants supported left-wing causes, pointing to services for immigrants in the country illegally or LGBTQ+ inclusion efforts.

But Congress' appropriation of the money was in a bill signed by Trump himself, said Maurice "Mo" Green, North Carolina's Democratic superintendent of public education. "To now suggest that, for some reason, this money is somehow or another needing review because of someone's agenda, I think is deeply troubling," Green told reporters Monday after North Carolina joined the federal lawsuit.

In North Carolina, about 40 schools are already in session, so the state is already trying to figure out ways to keep programs going, using state and local money, along with some federal money that has not expired.

The freeze affects programs including mental health services, science and math education, and support for students learning English, North Carolina Attorney General Jeff Jackson said, with the most severe effects in smaller, rural school districts. The freeze could also lead to approximately 1,000 teachers and staff being laid off, Jackson said.

Summer clubs provide instruction for children

At the East Providence summer camp, Aiden, a rising third grader, played tag, built structures with magnetic tiles, played a fast-paced game with the other kids to review addition and subtraction, learned about pollination, watched a nature video and ate club-provided chicken nuggets.

Veteran teachers from his school corrected him when he spoke without raising his hand and offered common-sense advice when a boy in his group said something inappropriate.

"When someone says something inappropriate, you don't repeat it," teacher Kayla Creighton told the boys between answering their questions about horseflies and honeybees.

Indeed, it's hard to find a more middle-of-the road organization in this country than the Boys & Girls Club.

Just last month, a Republican and a Democrat sponsored a resolution in the U.S. House celebrating the 165-year-old organization as a "beacon of hope and opportunity." The Defense Department awarded the club \$3 million in 1991 to support children left behind when their parents deployed for the Persian Gulf. And ever since, the Boys & Girls Club has created clubs on military installations to support the children of service members. Military families can sign up their kids for free.

"I suspect they will realize that most of those grants are fine and will release them," said Mike Petrilli, president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a conservative education policy think tank, speaking of the Trump administration's review of the 21st Century Community Learning Center grants.

But not everyone is so sure.

Families see few affordable child care alternatives

Aiden's mother has started looking into afternoon child care for September when kids return to school in Rhode Island.

"It costs \$220 a week," Reyes said, her eyes expanding. "I can't afford that."

The single mother and state worker said she'll probably ask her 14-year-old son to stay home and watch Aiden. That will mean he would have to forgo getting a job when he turns 15 in the fall and couldn't play basketball and football.

"I don't have any other option," she said.

At home, Aiden would likely stay inside on a screen. That would be heartbreaking since he's thrived getting tutoring and "learning about healthy boundaries" from the Boys & Girls Club program, Reyes said.

Fernande Berard learned about the funding freeze and possible closure from a reporter after dropping off her three young boys for summer camp. "I would be really devastated if this goes away," said the nurse. "I honestly don't know what I would do."

Her husband drives an Uber much of the day, and picking up the kids early would eat into his earnings. It's money they need to pay the mortgage and everything else.

If her boss approves, she'd likely have to pick up her children from school and take them to the rehabilitation center where she oversees a team of nurses. The children would have to stay until her work day ends. "It's hard to imagine," she said.

MAGA faithful are angry about the Epstein case. Here's what to know

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON, MEG KINNARD and ED WHITE Associated Press

A broken promise to release more information about the Jeffrey Epstein case has sparked outrage among some of President Donald Trump's loyal supporters.

The Justice Department last week said Epstein, who was facing charges of sex trafficking, did not leave behind a "client list." Attorney General Pam Bondi suggested in February it was on her desk, though she later said she was referring to the overall case file.

Bondi also said officials were poring over a "truckload" of previously withheld evidence. The Justice Department concluded, however, that public disclosure would not be appropriate and that much of the material was placed under seal by a judge. That has angered right-wing influencers who were once bolstered by Trump's own claims on this case, but are now feeling their demands are being squelched by his administration.

Figures like commentator Tucker Carlson, right-wing activist Laura Loomer, and former Trump adviser Steve Bannon claim the government's handling of the case shows a lack of transparency. Anger over the case threatens to divide the MAGA faithful.

Here's a look at the Epstein sex trafficking case, how the Trump administration has handled it and how his supporters have reacted to recent developments.

What is the Epstein case?

Epstein was a wealthy financier arrested in 2019 on federal sex trafficking charges. His former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, was charged with helping him abuse teenage girls.

Epstein was found dead in his cell at a federal jail in New York City about a month after he was arrested. Investigators concluded he killed himself. Maxwell later was convicted at trial and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The case attracted attention because of Epstein and Maxwell's links to famous people, including royals, presidents and billionaires. It also led to some of the biggest conspiracy theories animating Trump's base.

Conservatives, led by key figures in the MAGA movement, have pressed unsubstantiated claims that Epstein was murdered and that "deep state" actors in the government are hiding lists of his clients, videos of crimes being committed and other evidence. Trump himself suggested there was a cover-up.

What are the 'Epstein Files'?

Trump lately has tried to change the subject, but the Epstein matter commands attention because of the words and actions from his administration.

In February, far-right influencers were invited to the White House and provided with binders marked "The Epstein Files: Phase 1" and "Declassified." The binders contained documents that had largely already been in the public domain.

Bondi said in May there were "tens of thousands of videos of Epstein with children or child porn." That fueled a belief that details about powerful figures had been suppressed.

"It's a new administration and everything is going to come out to the public," Bondi said at one point.

Multiple people who participated in the criminal cases of Epstein and Maxwell told The Associated Press that they had not seen and did not know of a trove of recordings along the lines of what Bondi had referenced.

What happened last week?

The Justice Department on July 7 acknowledged that Epstein did not have a list of clients and said no more files related to Epstein's case would be made public.

A two-page memo that bore the logos of the FBI and Justice Department, but that was not signed by

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any individual, said the DOJ determined that no "further disclosure would be appropriate or warranted." It said 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."

It was a huge retreat from what Bondi and others had previously claimed. And it prompted anger — and more suspicion and conspiracy theories — from the MAGA faithful.

Some MAGA world influencers, including Loomer and Glenn Beck, have explicitly called on Bondi to resign. Former Fox News personality Megyn Kelly, who is now a podcaster, called Bondi "either lazy or incompetent."

What had Trump said about Epstein before his second term?

As far back as 2019, Trump suggested that Epstein's death was a cover-up and called for a full investigation.

In retweeting a post by conservative pundit and comedian Terrance K. Williams, who suggested that former President Bill Clinton may have been involved, Trump wrote that Epstein "had information on Bill Clinton & now he's dead."

When asked about his retweet, Trump said he was merely "demanding" a full investigation, a day after then-Attorney General Bill Barr said there had been "serious irregularities" at the prison where Epstein was being held.

In a 2023 interview, Trump told Carlson he believed that Epstein had committed suicide. But he couched his response, saying it was also "possible" that he had been murdered, a theory he said "many people" believed.

Last year, Trump was asked on Fox News whether he would declassify documents regarding the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and he answered "yeah." He was then asked about the "Epstein files," and he said "yeah, yeah, I would," but then added "I think that less so because you don't want to affect people's lives if it's phony stuff in there, because it's a lot of phony stuff with that whole world. But I think I would."

What has Trump said recently?

In a Cabinet meeting last week, Trump called it "unbelievable" and a "desecration" that people were still talking about "this creep," given other pressing matters, including the catastrophic flooding in Texas.

In a social media post on Saturday, he expressed support for Bondi.

"What's going on with my 'boys' and, in some cases, 'gals?'" Trump wrote. "They're all going after Attorney General Pam Bondi, who is doing a FANTASTIC JOB! We're on one Team, MAGA, and I don't like what's happening."

BBC Gaza documentary narrated by Hamas official's son breached editorial guidelines, review says

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's media regulator said Monday it will investigate a BBC documentary about children's lives in Gaza, after a review concluded that the narrator's father has Hamas links and the program therefore breached editorial guidelines on accuracy.

The broadcaster removed the program, "Gaza: How To Survive A Warzone," from its streaming service in February after it emerged that the 13-year-old narrator, Abdullah, is the son of Ayman Alyazouri, who has worked as Hamas's deputy minister of agriculture.

Ofcom, the media regulator, said that it was launching an investigation under rules that state factual programs must not materially mislead the audience.

That came after a review by the broadcaster found that the independent production company that made the program didn't share the background information regarding the narrator's father with the BBC. It said that the production company, Hoyo Films, bears most responsibility for the failure, though it didn't "intentionally" mislead the BBC.

The review, conducted by the corporation's director of editorial complaints, found no other breaches of editorial guidelines, including impartiality. There was no evidence of "outside interests" impacting on the

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program, it said.

Earlier this year, U.K. Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy questioned why no one at the BBC had lost their job over the program's airing.

The broadcaster's Director-General Tim Davie had told lawmakers that the BBC received hundreds of complaints alleging that the documentary was biased against Israel — as well as hundreds more criticizing the program's removal from its streaming service.

Directors Ken Loach and Mike Leigh and actor Riz Ahmed were among 500 media figures who signed a letter published by Artists for Palestine UK saying a "political" campaign to discredit the program risked dehumanizing Palestinian voices in the media.

Davie said that the report identified "a significant failing" in relation to accuracy in the documentary. Hoyo Films apologized for the mistake. Both firms said they would prevent similar errors in the future.

Separately, more than 100 BBC journalists wrote a letter to Davie earlier this month criticizing its decision not to air another documentary, "Gaza: Medics Under Fire." They expressed concerns that the broadcaster wasn't reporting "without fear or favor" when it comes to Israel.

The decision suggested that the BBC was an "organization that is crippled by the fear of being perceived as critical of the Israeli government," that letter said.

The BBC has been under intense scrutiny for its coverage touching on the war in Gaza. Last month, Prime Minister Keir Starmer and others condemned the broadcaster for livestreaming a performance by rap punk duo Bob Vylan, who led crowds at Glastonbury Festival in chanting "death" to the Israeli military.

The Israel-Hamas war started after the militant group led an attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage. Most of the hostages have been released in earlier ceasefires. Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed more than 58,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry, under Gaza's Hamas-run government, doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count. The U.N. and other international organizations see its figures as the most reliable statistics on war casualties.

Most teens — and girls especially — see college as key to jobs and life skills, AP-NORC poll says

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Most American teenagers say it is important to them to graduate from college, with girls especially describing it as a key step for accomplishing their life goals, according to a new poll.

Teenagers also generally are more upbeat than adults on college despite concerns about tuition costs, soaring student loan debt and the politicization of many issues in higher education.

Overall, about 6 in 10 teens say it's "extremely" or "very" important to them to graduate from college, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which was conducted this spring among teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17. That compares with about 4 in 10 adults who said the same in a UChicago Harris/AP-NORC poll from 2022.

The survey also found that many teens think it will be harder for them to achieve major life milestones — like owning a home, raising a family or reaching a good standard of living — than it was for their parents.

For Ry-n Uyeda, 17, the biggest concern about college is the prospect of being away from her home in Waianae, Hawaii. Uyeda is already taking college-level courses in high school and hopes to play softball at a university on the West Coast.

Uyeda said she wants to develop time management skills and endurance to handle the pressures of being a student-athlete. But she hopes the college experience does not change who she is.

"I want to remember where I came from and the values that I've learned from here," said Uyeda, who attends Waianae High School. "Going to a new place with new people in a new environment, I just want to still be myself."

Far more girls than boys see value in college

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Seven in 10 teenage girls in the survey said it was at least “very” important to them to graduate from college, compared with 54% of teenage boys.

The disparity reflects a growing gender gap in college degree completion. In 1995, young men and women were equally likely to hold a bachelor’s degree. Since then, a gap has emerged, with 47% of U.S. women ages 25-34 completing a bachelor’s degree compared with 37% of men, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of census data.

Teens raised in households with higher incomes and parents who went to college themselves also are more likely to view higher education as important.

Jalena Crawford, a 16-year-old high school junior, said she hopes to attend Grand Canyon University or Arizona State University to become a professional American Sign Language interpreter. She said her plans have been encouraged by relatives with college degrees and it would be “weird” not to consider higher education.

“I didn’t really start thinking about college until I started liking ASL. I was trying to figure out what I was going to do,” Crawford said.

Most teens see a college education as a vital step for their future career prospects, although they see other benefits as well.

About 7 in 10 teenagers said completing college is “extremely” or “very” important for getting good jobs, and about 6 in 10 teenagers say a degree is valuable in learning necessary life skills. About half of teens see college as key for either becoming a more informed member of society or forming their personal identity, according to the survey.

Teens think life milestones will be harder for them to achieve

Teenagers have many of the same life goals as adults, such as owning a home and raising a family, the poll found. About 8 in 10 teenagers value being able to pursue what they enjoy, having a good standard of living and having a successful career.

But few teenagers believe those goals have gotten easier to achieve for their generation compared with their parents.

About 7 in 10 teenagers believe owning a home has become harder to achieve for them compared with their parents, according to the poll. Just over half of teenagers say it’s become more challenging for their generation to raise a family. About half say that about having a good standard of living, having a successful career or traveling the world. Fewer, about 4 in 10, say it’s grown harder to graduate from college or be able to pursue what they enjoy.

Evarist Bego, 22, graduated earlier this year from the University of Southern California with a joint degree in business and film. He said he recalls wanting to go to college and then work his way up in his chosen industry but “that’s just not how it works anymore.”

It’s harder than he anticipated to find a job, which he said may owe partly to the creative industry he chose. He sees mostly temporary positions, like internships or fellowships.

“So many jobs that I see are entry-level, but then they require three-plus years of experience. I have interned in school, I had some experience, but it’s not enough,” he said.

Nursing homes struggle with Trump’s immigration crackdown

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Nursing homes already struggling to recruit staff are now grappling with President Donald Trump’s attack on one of their few reliable sources of workers: immigration.

Facilities for older adults and disabled people are reporting the sporadic loss of employees who have had their legal status revoked by Trump. But they fear even more dramatic impacts are ahead as pipelines of potential workers slow to a trickle with an overall downturn in legal immigration.

“We feel completely beat up right now,” says Deke Cateau, CEO of A.G. Rhodes, which operates three nursing homes in the Atlanta area, with one-third of the staff made up of foreign-born people from about three dozen countries. “The pipeline is getting smaller and smaller.”

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Eight of Cateau's workers are expected to be forced to leave after having their Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, revoked. TPS allows people already living in the U.S. to stay and work legally if their home countries are unsafe due to civil unrest or natural disasters and during the Biden administration, the designation was expanded to cover people from a dozen countries, including large numbers from Venezuela and Haiti.

While those with TPS represent a tiny minority of A.G. Rhodes' 500 staffers, Cateau says they will be "very difficult, if not impossible, to replace" and he worries what comes next.

"It may be eight today, but who knows what it's going to be down the road," says Cateau, an immigrant himself, who arrived from Trinidad and Tobago 25 years ago.

Nearly one in five civilian workers in the U.S. is foreign born, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but as in construction, agriculture and manufacturing, immigrants are overrepresented in caregiving roles. More than a quarter of an estimated 4 million nursing assistants, home health aides, personal care aides and other so-called direct care workers are foreign born, according to PHI, a nonprofit focused on the caregiving workforce.

The aging of the massive Baby Boom generation is poised to fuel even more demand for caregivers, both in institutional settings and in individuals' homes. BLS projects more growth among home health and personal care aides than any other job, with some 820,000 new positions added by 2032.

Nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home health agencies and other such businesses were counting on immigrants to fill many of those roles, so Trump's return to the White House and his administration's attack on nearly all forms of immigration has sent a chill throughout the industry.

Katie Smith Sloan, CEO of LeadingAge, which represents nonprofit care facilities, says homes around the country have been affected by the immigration tumult. Some have reported employees who have stopped coming to work, fearful of a raid, even though they are legally in the country. Others have workers who are staying home with children they have kept out of school because they worry about roundups. Many others see a slowdown of job applicants.

"This is just like a punch in the gut," she says.

Rachel Blumberg, CEO of the Toby and Leon Cooperman Sinai Residences in Boca Raton, Florida, has already lost 10 workers whose permission to stay in the U.S. came under a program known as humanitarian parole, which had been granted to people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. She is slated to lose 30 more in the coming weeks with the end of TPS for Haitians.

"I think it's the tip of the iceberg," says Blumberg, forecasting further departures of employees who may not themselves be deported, but whose spouse or parent is.

Blumberg got less than 24 hours' notice when her employees lost their work authorization, setting off a scramble to fill shifts. She has already boosted salaries and referral bonuses but says it will be difficult to replace not just aides, but maintenance workers, dishwashers and servers.

"Unfortunately, Americans are not drawn to applying and working in the positions that we have available," she says.

Front-line caregivers are overwhelmingly female and a majority are members of minority groups, according to PHI, earning an average of just \$16.72 hourly in 2023.

Long-term care homes saw an exodus of workers as COVID made an already-challenging workplace even more so. Some facilities were beginning to see employment normalize to pre-pandemic levels just as the immigration crackdown hit, though industry-wide, there is still a massive shortage of workers.

Some in the industry have watched in frustration as Trump lamented how businesses including farming and hospitality could be hurt by his policies, wondering why those who clean hotel rooms or pick tomatoes deserve more attention than those who care for elders. Beyond rescinded work authorizations for people living in the U.S., care homes are having difficulty getting visas approved for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses they recruit abroad.

What used to be a simple process now stretches so long that candidates reconsider the U.S. altogether, says Mark Sanchez, chief operating officer of United Hebrew, a nursing home in New Rochelle, New York.

"There are lines upon lines upon lines," says Sanchez, "and now they're saying, 'I'm going to go to Canada'

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and I'm going to go to Germany and they're welcoming me with open arms."

Looking around a facility with a majority-immigrant staff, the son of Filipino immigrants wonders where his future recruits will come from.

"I don't have ICE coming in my door and taking my people," Sanchez says, "but the pipeline that was flowing before is now coming in dribs and drabs."

Long-term care workers are routinely lured away not just by hospitals and doctors' offices, but restaurants, stores and factories. Half of the average nursing home's staff turns over each year, according to federal data, making the attraction and retention of every employee vital to their operation.

Robin Wolzenburg of LeadingAge in Wisconsin began working to place an influx of people from Afghanistan after the U.S. pulled out its final troops four years ago and thousands of refugees arrived in her state. Care homes began hiring the refugees and were so delighted with them, some facilities began hiring refugees who arrived from Ukraine, Somalia and Congo. Though many homes had employee retention rates around 30%, Wolzenburg said the figure was above 90% with refugees.

Trump has halted most refugee admissions, meaning Wolzenburg's successful outreach program has no new arrivals to target.

"It's been really devastating," Wolzenburg says. "Our communities that were actively working with the resettlement agencies are not seeing those referrals to long-term care like we were. There's no refugees coming in."

Lynne Katzmann, the founder of Juniper Communities, which runs 21 facilities across five states, says it's hard enough to find the right workers with a passion for older adults. Now, just as homes gird for an influx of residents brought on by the country's demographic shift, they're facing another challenge to a stable workforce.

"The work is hard. It's not always been the highest paying job that one can get," she says. "But many of the immigrants who actually have chosen this work consider caregiving a noble profession."

Police say 4 people were killed in a small plane crash at London Southend airport

LONDON (AP) — All four people aboard a small plane that crashed shortly after taking off from London Southend Airport are dead, police said Monday.

Essex Police said work continued to formally identify the victims of Sunday's crash. "At this stage, we believe all four are foreign nationals," Police Chief Superintendent Morgan Cronin told reporters.

Britain's national news agency, PA, reported that a document listing passengers indicated that two Dutch pilots and a Chilean nurse were among those aboard.

The Beechcraft B200 Super King Air operated by Dutch firm Zeus Aviation had flown from Athens, Greece, to Pula in Croatia before heading to Southend. It was due to return to its home base of Lelystad in the Netherlands on Sunday evening.

The 12-meter (39-foot) turboprop plane came down moments after takeoff and burst into flames.

"At this stage, it is too early to speculate on what may have caused this tragic accident," said Lisa Fitzsimons of Britain's Air Accidents Investigation Branch, which said it sent a "multi-disciplinary team including inspectors with expertise in aircraft operations, human factors, engineering and recorded data" to the airport.

London Southend is a relatively small airport, around 45 miles (72 kilometers) east of the British capital, used for short-haul flights. The airport remained closed on Monday with no word on when it would reopen.

Zeus Aviation operates medical evacuation and transplant flights as well as aerial mapping and private charters, according to its website. The company said that "our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with the victims, their families, and loved ones during this incredibly difficult time."

The Beechcraft B200 Super King Air, first built in the 1970s, is an aviation workhorse used in a wide variety of roles around the world.

In 2017, a plane of the same model crashed into the roof of a shopping mall in Melbourne, Australia, moments after takeoff, killing the pilot and four American tourists.

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In his words: Trump's rhetoric about Zelenskyy and Putin has evolved

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump repeatedly said during his campaign that, if elected to a second term, he would be able to end the war between Russia and Ukraine "in 24 hours." But since his Jan. 20 inauguration, the road to a peace deal has been fraught with changing dynamics between the U.S. leader, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump's rhetoric toward both Zelenskyy and Putin has evolved since the beginning of the year. On Monday, Trump said he'll punish Russia with tariffs if there isn't a deal to end the war in Ukraine within 50 days, the latest example of his growing frustration with Putin.

At the outset of his second term, Trump was conciliatory toward Putin, for whom he has long shown admiration. But in recent days the Republican leader has expressed increasing exasperation with Putin, criticizing the Russian leader for his unbudging stance on U.S.-led peace efforts and for prolonging the war.

Until recently, Trump had repeatedly said Russia seemed more willing than Ukraine to get a deal done.

Trump appears to have softened toward Zelenskyy after a February blowout in the Oval Office. And, in a reversal, has promised to send badly needed Patriot air defense missiles to Ukraine amid Russia's stepped up aerial attacks.

Russia's bigger army is pressing hard on parts of the 620-mile (1,000-kilometer) front line, where thousands of soldiers on both sides have died since the Kremlin ordered the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

June brought the highest monthly civilian casualties of the past three years, with 232 people killed and 1,343 wounded in Ukraine, the U.N. human rights mission in Ukraine said Thursday.

Here's a look at what Trump has said so far during his second term:

Jan. 31

"We want to end that war. That war would have not started if I was president."

Trump says his new administration has already had "very serious" discussions with Russia and that he and Putin could soon take "significant" action toward ending the conflict.

Feb. 19

"A Dictator without Elections, Zelenskyy better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left."

Trump's harsh words for Zelenskyy on his Truth Social platform drew criticism from Democrats and even some Republicans in the United States, where defending Ukraine from Russian aggression has traditionally had bipartisan support. Zelenskyy said Trump was falling into a Russian disinformation trap — and he was quickly admonished by Vice President JD Vance about the perils of publicly criticizing the new president.

Feb. 28

"You're gambling with World War III. And what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country that's backed you far more than a lot of people said they should have."

Trump and Vance berated Zelenskyy over the war in Ukraine, accusing him of not showing gratitude after he challenged Vance on the question of diplomacy with Putin. The argument in the Oval Office was broadcast globally. It led to the rest of Zelenskyy's White House visit being canceled and called into question the U.S. support of Ukraine in its defense against Russia's 2022 invasion. A few days after the blowup, Trump temporarily paused military aid to Ukraine to pressure Zelenskyy to seek peace.

March 30

"I don't think he's going to go back on his word. You're talking about Putin. I don't think he's going to go back on his word. I've known him for a long time. We've always gotten along well."

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, the U.S. president said he trusts the Russian president to hold up his end of a potential peace deal. The comments were among the last positive remarks Trump made about Putin this year.

April 24:

"I am not happy with the Russian strikes on KYIV. Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP! 5000 soldiers a week are dying. Lets get the Peace Deal DONE!"

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In a Truth Social post, Trump was reacting to Russia attacking Kyiv with an hourslong barrage of missiles and drones. It was the first of his rare criticism of Putin amid increased Russian attacks on Ukraine. April 29

"A lot of his people are dying. They're being killed, and I feel very badly about it."

Trump addressed the toll on Ukrainians during an interview with ABC News after he met with Zelenskyy on the sidelines of Pope Francis' funeral. It was the first time the two leaders had met since the Oval Office spat, and signaled a shift in Trump's attitude toward the Ukrainian president.

May 25

"I've always had a very good relationship with Vladimir Putin of Russia, but something has happened to him. He has gone absolutely CRAZY!"

Trump's Truth Social post made it clear he was losing patience with Putin as Moscow pounded Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities with drones and missiles in stepped-up aerial attacks.

June 25

"He was very nice actually. We had a little rough times, sometimes. He was ... Couldn't have been nicer. I think he'd like to see an end to this, I do."

Trump had a closed-door meeting with Zelenskyy during a NATO summit in The Hague. Trump's comments to reporters later also opened the possibility of sending Patriot air-defense missiles to Ukraine.

July 8

"We get a lot of bull---t thrown at us by Putin, if you want to know the truth. He's very nice all the time, but it turns out to be meaningless."

Trump also said he's "not happy" with his Russian counterpart and that Moscow's war in Ukraine is "killing a lot of people" on both sides. Trump's comments during a Cabinet meeting came a day after he said the United States would send more weapons to Ukraine. It was a dramatic reversal after earlier announcing a pause in the delivery of previously approved firepower to Kyiv, a decision that was made amid concerns that America's military stockpiles had declined too much.

July 13

"I am very disappointed with President Putin, I thought he was somebody that meant what he said. He'll talk so beautifully and then he'll bomb people at night. We don't like that."

Trump's remarks to reporters came as Russia has intensified its aerial attacks against Ukraine.

July 14

"I don't want to say he's an assassin, but he's a tough guy. It's been proven over the years. He's fooled a lot of people before."

Trump pushed harder against Putin during an Oval Office meeting with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte. He said if there was no deal to end the war within 50 days, the U.S. would impose "secondary tariffs," meaning taxes would target Russia's trading partners in an effort to isolate Moscow.

Trump and Rutte also discussed a rejuvenated pipeline for U.S. weapons. European allies plan to buy military equipment and then transfer it to Ukraine.

More elderly Americans are choking to death. Are these devices the answer?

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It was the scariest choking incident David Palumbo had ever seen.

The 88-year-old man had been dining at a Providence, Rhode Island, Italian restaurant in September 2019. Now he was unconscious, with a piece of bread lodged in his windpipe. Precious minutes went by as first responders were unable to help him with CPR or the Heimlich maneuver.

In an ambulance on the way to the hospital, the elderly man's skin was blue, and firefighters worried he was going to die. Palumbo — a fire department captain — used a scissors-like device called Magill forceps to pull the bread from the man's throat.

"We get a lot of calls in the city for choking," many of which are resolved before emergency responders

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even get there, Palumbo added. "This was by far the worst one I've been on in my career."

Fortunately, the man survived and made a full recovery, he said.

But many elderly people do not. Each year, choking claims the lives of more than 4,100 Americans who are 65 or older. It's the most vulnerable age group, accounting for about three-quarters of U.S. choking deaths, according to federal health statistics.

The death rate has been relatively steady, but the number has risen, as the size of the nation's retirement-age population grows.

In response, a number of companies are marketing antichoking devices to the elderly. Medical professionals have been debating whether to endorse the products, sold under the names LifeVac, SaveLix, VitalVac and the Dechoker.

Dr. Nathan Charlton, a University of Virginia professor of emergency medicine who advises the American Red Cross on first aid, said there is limited evidence for the products and that the Red Cross is still evaluating them.

Here's a look at choking and the best ways to prevent choking deaths.

Choking is a danger to older adults

Choking occurs when food or some other object partially or totally blocks the windpipe, preventing oxygen from reaching the lungs.

Telltale signs include someone reaching for their neck and losing the ability to speak normally. Brain damage can occur after four minutes, and death can come just a few minutes later.

Older adults are at higher risk for a number of reasons. As people get older, mouth and throat muscles can weaken. Older people also make less saliva. Some chronic diseases and medications can make swallowing even harder. Dentures can be a choking risk.

The best ways to stop choking

Choking risk can be reduced by cutting food into small pieces, chewing food slowly, drinking plenty of liquids with meals, and not laughing or talking at the same time you are chewing and swallowing.

When someone is choking, you can try perhaps the oldest form of first aid: back slaps.

There's also the Heimlich maneuver, named after the doctor credited with devising it in the 1970s. It involves standing behind the choking person, wrapping your arms around their abdomen and — with a balled fist — thrusting inward and upward. The idea is that it forces air out of the lungs, and the obstruction with it.

The American Red Cross recommends alternating back blows and abdominal thrusts in sets of five.

That's for situations in which someone is around to help a choking victim. But what if they are alone?

It is possible for someone to self-administer a Heimlich by thrusting their abdomen against the back of a chair, Charlton said.

Makers of some the newer anti-choking devices say that's where their products can make a difference.

"Elderly people probably are not capable of diving on a chair or counter," said Arthur Lih, the founder and chief executive of LifeVac.

Antichoking devices aren't always risk-free

They vary in design, but generally the devices look like a face mask attached to a tube or bellows, with a handle at the end. They typically sell for around \$30 to \$100.

A choking person dons the mask, pushes down on the handle and then pulls up. That is supposed to create a suction that would pull out the blockage.

Some research suggests at least certain devices can injure the tongue or cause bleeding and swelling in the throat. And the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has reports that some products did not generate enough suction and left people with bruising around the face, lips, and mouth.

An injury report led the FDA to do an inspection and issue a warning letter to Dechoker in 2021.

Manufacturers note their products are registered with the FDA, but that's not the same as an endorsement. Indeed, the agency last year issued a notice to consumers that said it has not approved antichoking devices sold over the counter, because their safety and effectiveness haven't been established.

Lih said the FDA action was in response to the proliferation of antichoking devices entering the market

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that vary in design and quality.

More research is needed, choking expert says

Right now, the consensus — even among antichoking device manufacturers — is that back blows and abdominal thrusts should always be tried first. (The forceps that Palumbo used are not recommended for the general public.)

Lih said thousands of nursing homes and emergency response agencies have purchased the newer antichoking devices.

One example: The police department in Acworth, Georgia, bought about 75 LifeVac devices after an officer last year used her personal device to save an elderly woman. They are now in every patrol car, said Sgt. Eric Mistretta.

Manufacturers claim the products have saved thousands of lives across multiple countries, but it's tricky to document how well they actually work, said Dr. Cody Dunne, a University of Calgary researcher who has tried.

The early evidence has come from case reports or small studies that used mannequins and cadavers.

"I think the case is definitely being built," he said, but more rigorous research is needed. For example, a larger study could compare what happened during choking incidents at nursing homes that stock the devices with those that don't.

Dunne noted, however, that evidence for the Heimlich maneuver and back slaps is evolving, too. He co-authored a study last year that found back blows worked better than the Heimlich or chest compressions.

"We're only now getting good evidence on the old choking techniques, let alone these new ones," he said.

'Who's got next?' Democrats already lining up for 2028 presidential race in early voting states

By STEVE PEOPLES, MEG KINNARD and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

SENECA, S.C. (AP) — The first presidential primary votes won't be cast for another two and a half years. And yet, over the span of 10 days in July, three Democratic presidential prospects are scheduled to campaign in South Carolina.

Nearly a half dozen others have made recent pilgrimages to South Carolina, New Hampshire and Iowa — states that traditionally host the nation's opening presidential nomination contests. Still other ambitious Democrats are having private conversations with officials on the ground there.

The voters in these states are used to seeing presidential contenders months or even years before most of the country, but the political jockeying in 2025 for the 2028 presidential contest appears to be playing out earlier, with more frequency and with less pretense than ever before.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom was referred to as a presidential candidate at one stop in his two-day South Carolina tour last week. Voters shouted "2028!" after he insisted he was there simply to strengthen the party ahead of the 2026 midterms. South Carolina has virtually no competitive midterm contests.

Term-limited Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who acknowledges he's considering a 2028 bid, will spend two days touring South Carolina this week. He will focus on union members in addition to the state's Black community in a speech that could draw an implicit contrast with Newsom on cultural issues, according to excerpts of his planned remarks obtained by The Associated Press.

California Congressman Ro Khanna, a progressive aligned with the Bernie Sanders' wing of the Democratic Party, will target Black voters when he's in the state a few days later with the son of a civil rights leader.

And former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is having private conversations with key South Carolina Democrats, including presidential primary kingmaker Rep. Jim Clyburn, in which Emanuel indicated strong interest in a presidential run. That's according to Clyburn himself, who said he's also had direct contact with Beshear and Khanna after appearing alongside Newsom last week and Maryland Gov. Wes Moore in May.

"That's what candidates have to do: position themselves and be ready when lightning strikes," Clyburn said.

Democrats look to turn the page from 2024

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The unusually early jockeying is playing out as the Democratic Party struggles to repair its brand, rebuild its message and fill a leadership vacuum after losing the White House and both chambers of Congress in 2024.

Democrats are decidedly more optimistic about 2028.

Republicans will not have the advantage of incumbency in the next presidential contest; the Constitution bars President Donald Trump from seeking a third term. And the race for the Democratic nomination appears to be wide open, even as 2024 nominee Kamala Harris and running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, have left open the possibility of running again.

With no clear front-runner, some Democratic operatives believe upwards of 30 high-profile Democrats could ultimately enter the 2028 primary — more than the party's overpacked 2020 field.

And as Democrats struggle to stop Trump's power grabs in Washington, some report a real sense of urgency to get the 2028 process started.

Texas Rep. Jasmine Crockett, a rising Democratic star, told the AP earlier this year that presidential prospects "need to be more visible earlier" as party officials look to take cues from a new generation of leaders.

"What freaks most Democrats out is not really understanding who's up next. Like, who's got next?" she said. "And I think that that is really what people want most; they want their presidential nominee now."

A Kentucky Democrat steps into the conversation

Beshear, Kentucky's 47-year-old two-term governor, is scheduled to make his first visit to South Carolina on political grounds on Wednesday and Thursday.

He'll start by addressing the AFL-CIO before promoting his appeal among red-state moderates and Black voters in a Thursday speech hosted by the Georgetown County Democrats in a region that voted three times for Trump and has a large Black population.

"Democrats have a huge opportunity to seize the middle and win back the voters who have been increasingly skeptical of the Democratic brand. But it's going to take focus and discipline," Beshear is expected to say, according to speech excerpts obtained by the AP.

There are no direct jabs at Newsom in the excerpts, but Beshear is expected to continue drawing contrasts with the California governor, who earlier this year suggested his party went too far in embracing "woke" priorities. In his prepared remarks, Beshear doesn't shy away from such progressive cultural issues.

He will note he made Juneteenth an executive branch holiday for the first time in Kentucky, signed an executive order that prohibits discrimination against state workers for how they wear their hair and ordered the removal of a statue of Jefferson Davis, who served as the president of the Confederacy during the Civil War.

"The current federal administration wants to make diversity a dirty word," Beshear plans to say. "They want people to believe that equity means everyone isn't worthy of opportunities."

Who else is stepping up?

Already this year, Walz of Minnesota and Moore of Maryland have addressed South Carolina Democrats. Biden Cabinet member Pete Buttigieg, a 2020 presidential candidate, hosted a town hall in Iowa in May. The month before, Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker headlined a Democratic fundraiser in New Hampshire.

Others are moving more cautiously.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro has avoided any early state travel this year, focusing instead on his 2026 reelection. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has also focused largely on her day job. Both would be top-tier presidential candidates should they decide to run.

Khanna has been working to build his national profile since before the last election with frequent trips to New Hampshire, among other early voting states.

The California congressman is scheduled to host two town-hall style meetings in South Carolina this weekend with Illinois Rep. Jonathan Jackson, the son of civil rights leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Khanna casts his lower profile — at least compared to potential competitors like Newsom and Shapiro — as an asset when asked about his party's early 2028 field.

"I think it's very different than in the past when you've had clear defined leaders of the party. I think

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that's healthy. There is no status quo person," Khanna said. "My guess is the last thing the party is going to want is more of the same."

Newsom's South Carolina dance

Newsom spent much of last year denying interest in a presidential run. But with his final term as governor set to expire at the end of next year, his 2028 ambitions are starting to emerge more publicly.

During his recent South Carolina tour, Newsom only smiled when voters shouted "2028!" after he referenced his focus on the 2026 midterms.

Clyburn said openly what the California governor would not. Appearing with Newsom, Clyburn encouraged local Democrats to be energized by the visits of "presidential candidates" coming early and often to their state.

Newsom looked around, seemingly seeking the object of Clyburn's remark, as the crowd laughed.

In an interview afterward, Clyburn said he doesn't have an early favorite in the 2028 Democratic nomination contest.

New Hampshire remains a player

Pritzker headlined a key state fundraiser in New Hampshire in May. And state Democratic leaders are privately encouraging other 2028 prospects to visit the state.

Unlike South Carolina, New Hampshire features two competitive House races and a top-tier Senate election next year.

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, campaigned Friday in the state with Rep. Chris Pappas, who is expected to represent Democrats on the Senate ballot next fall.

In a brief interview, she insisted her only purpose was backing Pappas' campaign.

"I am here to help my friend," she said. "I know a lot of people here and I want to put it to use in a good way."

What do the voters say?

It may be early, but some Democratic voters and local officials say they're ready to get the cycle started.

Jody Gaulin, the Democratic chair of a deep-red South Carolina county, is hoping the energy that comes along with potential candidates could boost her party's ranks.

"This is exactly what we've been waiting for," Gaulin said.

It's much the same in New Hampshire.

Democrat Jane Lescynski, who works at the manufacturing facility Klobuchar toured Friday, had a quick answer when asked her thoughts about the 2028 presidential election.

"I can't wait," she said.

Curveballs are disappearing in MLB as velocity obsession reshapes pitching landscape

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Curveballs have been thrown a curve by a modern game valuing velocity over variety, disappearing from the major leagues by more than 20,000 annually.

The Athletics have thrown curves on just 2.5% of pitches this season. The overall big league figure dropped from 10.7% in 2019 to 8.1% last year, the lowest since MLB starting tracking in 2008, before rising slightly to 8.5% this season.

There were 22,962 fewer curveballs in 2024 than five years earlier.

"You don't really see a lot of people throwing 12-6 curveballs anymore," Tampa Bay pitcher Shane Bieber said. "They'd rather have a hard cutter/slider. It's a lot easier for guys to throw a sweeper than it is a 12-6 curveball."

Bieber's 28.1% is seventh in curveball use among those who have thrown at least 1,000 pitches this season. Baltimore's Charlie Morton, first at 39%, learned to throw a hook from his dad.

"He was reading some article or maybe he was reading some pitching book," Baltimore's 41-year-old

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right-hander said. "You basically throw it like you're re-throwing a knife."

Curveballs have been around for a century and a half

Hall of Famer Candy Cummings, a 145-game winner, is credited with inventing the curveball in 1863 when he was 14, discovering the movement when he threw sea shells into the Atlantic Ocean. Some attribute the curve to amateur pitcher Fred Goldsmith in 1870.

With an average velocity of 80.2 mph, curves are the slowest and loopyest of breaking pitches, often disrupting the timing of batters set for smoke. The phrase "thrown a curveball" has become part of the English language, much like "screwball," more a phrase than a pitch these days.

Sandy Koufax, Nolan Ryan and Clayton Kershaw were among the consummate curveballers, bamboozling batters as balls they gave up on dropped like hang gliders into the strike zone.

"It's become an industry of throwing over pitching," New York Yankees senior adviser Omar Minaya said. "When you pitch, you use different pitches. What we're seeing in the industry as a whole, especially with showcases, is people are looking more at velocity than pitchability — as a scout, I said that unfortunately."

Former pitcher Dallas Braden, now a broadcaster, longs for those days of deception.

"You almost sympathize with the hitter in the moment because you're like: Damn, I couldn't have hit that. He couldn't hit that. Nobody could have hit that," Braden said. "The eephus is now almost like as close as we get, when a position player is on the mound, to an aesthetically pleasing pitch like that, just the visual presentation of the pitch starting in the clouds and ending up at the ankles."

Nike's "Chicks Dig the Long Ball" commercial defined baseball in the Steroids Era. These days the slogan might as well be: "Velo Rules!" There were just 214 pitches of 100 mph or more in 2008. There were a record 3,880 two years ago and this year is on track for 3,252.

In tandem, starting pitcher use has dropped. Starters have averaged just under 5 1/3 innings this season, down from 6 1/3 innings in the 1980s. Their pitch count averages 85.7, down from 97 in 2010

Throw as hard as you can for as long as you can is the mantra

Average four-seam fastball velocity is a record 94.4 mph this season, up from 91.9 mph when MLB started tracking in 2008. But fastballs — four-seam, two-seam and cutters, have dropped from 62.1% to 55%.

Those missing hooks and heaters have been replaced by sliders, sweepers and slurve. They are 22.6% of pitches this year, up from 13.9% in 2008, and their average velocity has risen to 84.8 mph from 83.4 mph.

Colorado throws curves the most often at 15.6%, not that it has brought any success to a team that entered the break at 22-74, on track for a 37-125 finish and the post-1900 record for losses.

The Athletics haven't thrown 10% curveballs since 2017.

"If you look around the game, swing and miss has taken more of a priority, so guys are trying to throw more sweepers with more horizontal movement, or they're trying to throw the slider really hard at the bottom of the zone," Athletics pitching coach Scott Emerson said. "They're worried about contact with the curveball."

Generational change in the 2020s

Veteran pitchers note the curve's decline as youngsters integrate into staffs.

"As you're an amateur going to the big leagues guys are looking at velo. Guys are just looking at stuff," Yankees ace Gerrit Cole said. "Velo is important and it pays."

Maybe because the pitchers who throw curves are committed, batters have a .225 average this season on curves, down from .263 on fastballs and up slightly from .222 on sliders, sweepers and slurve.

"That's just how the game is trending: to throw it as hard as you can, spin it the best you can and hope the hitter doesn't hit it," Emerson said. "The hitters are up there trying to swing as hard they can. If they hit it with hard contact, make 27 swings that are really hard, you got a chance to hit a homer here and there. And it's taken away from the contact-type pitchers."

Suspect kills 2 women in Kentucky church after shooting state trooper, police say

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

Two women died Sunday at a church in Lexington, Kentucky, in a shooting rampage that began when a state trooper was wounded after making a traffic stop, police said. The suspect in both shootings was also killed.

The suspect carjacked a vehicle after the traffic stop near Lexington's airport and fled to Richmond Road Baptist Church, where he opened fire, city Police Chief Lawrence Weathers said. Killed in the shootings at the church were a 72-year-old woman and a 32-year-old woman, the local coroner said.

Two other people were wounded at the church and taken to a local hospital, the police chief said. One victim sustained critical injuries and the other was in stable condition, Weathers said.

The suspect was shot by police and died at the scene, he said. The suspect was not immediately identified pending notification of family, he said.

"Preliminary information indicates that the suspect may have had a connection to the individuals at the church," the police chief said at a news conference.

The trooper stopped the vehicle after receiving a "license plate reader alert" and was shot about 11:30 a.m., Weathers said. The trooper was in stable condition, he said.

Police tracked the carjacked vehicle to the Baptist church, the police chief said. The church is about 16 miles (26 kilometers) from where the trooper was shot.

The shootings remain under investigation, Weathers said.

Fayette County Coroner Gary Ginn said the church is home to a small, tight-knit congregation.

"Please pray for everyone affected by these senseless acts of violence, and let's give thanks for the swift response by the Lexington Police Department and Kentucky State Police," Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said in a social media post.

State Attorney General Russell Coleman said detectives with his office were ready to support local and state agencies. "Today, violence invaded the Lord's House," Coleman said in a statement. "The attack on law enforcement and people of faith in Lexington shocked the entire Commonwealth."

Astronauts from India, Poland and Hungary head back to Earth after private space station mission

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The International Space Station's first visitors from India, Poland and Hungary headed back to Earth on Monday, wrapping up a private mission and catching a ride home with SpaceX.

Their capsule undocked from the orbiting lab and aimed for a splashdown the next morning in the Pacific off the Southern California coast.

The short, privately financed mission marked the first time in more than 40 years that India, Poland and Hungary saw one of their own rocket into orbit. The three astronauts were accompanied by America's most experienced space flier, Peggy Whitson, who works for Axiom Space, which chartered the flight. They launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center on June 25.

India's Shubhanshu Shukla, Poland's Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski and Hungary's Tibor Kapu conducted dozens of experiments during their stay. They also fielded calls from their countries' prime ministers as well as schoolchildren.

"We will spread the word in our countries that these things are within our reach. These things are possible even for smaller countries like ours," Kapu said during Sunday's farewell ceremony, which ended in an emotional group hug.

Shukla noted that "it's truly a miracle" when humanity comes together for a common goal.

"The sky is no longer the limit. We can explore space," added Uznanski-Wisniewski.

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Uznanski-Wisniewski took special pride in the first pierogies in space. He took up the cabbage and mushroom-stuffed dumplings, which were freeze-dried in advance for easy cooking in zero gravity.

Their three countries shared the cost of the mission, paying more than \$65 million apiece.

It was Axiom's fourth station trip since 2022. The Houston company's clientele includes the wealthy as well as countries seeking representation in space. NASA embraces commercial spaceflight, helping to set the stage for private space stations in the works by Axiom and others, as well as lunar landers.

The space station's seven full-time residents remain behind in orbit, representing the U.S., Russia and Japan. Four of them will be replaced in a few weeks by a fresh crew launched for NASA by SpaceX.

"Safe journey home to the best planet in the solar system," the space station's Anne McClain radioed as the private crew departed.

A Senate vote this week will test the popularity of DOGE spending cuts

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans will test the popularity of Department of Government Efficiency spending cuts this week by aiming to pass President Donald Trump's request to claw back \$9.4 billion in public media and foreign aid spending.

Senate Democrats are trying to kill the measure but need a few Republicans uncomfortable with the president's effort to join them.

Trump's Republican administration is employing a rarely used tool that allows the president to transmit a request to cancel previously approved funding authority. The request triggers a 45-day clock under which the funds are frozen. If Congress fails to act within that period, then the spending stands. That clock expires Friday.

The House has already approved Trump's request on a mostly party line 214-212 vote. The Senate has little time to spare to beat the deadline for the president's signature. Another House vote will be needed if senators amend the legislation, adding more uncertainty to the outcome.

Here's a closer look at this week's debate.

Public media on the chopping block

Trump has asked lawmakers to rescind nearly \$1.1 billion from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which represents the full amount it's due to receive during the next two budget years.

The White House says the public media system is politically biased and an unnecessary expense.

The corporation distributes more than two-thirds of the money to more than 1,500 locally operated public television and radio stations, with much of the remainder assigned to National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System to support national programming.

The potential fallout from the cuts for local public media stations has generated concerns on both sides of the political aisle.

Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., said he's worried about how the rescissions will hit radio stations that broadcast to Native Americans in his state. He said the vast majority of their funding comes from the federal government.

"They're not political in nature," Rounds said of the stations. "It's the only way of really communicating in the very rural areas of our state, and a lot of other states as well."

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Ala., said that for the tribal radio stations in her state, "almost to a number, they're saying that they will go under if public broadcasting funds are no longer available to them."

To justify the spending cuts, the Trump administration and Republican lawmakers have cited certain activities they disagree with to portray a wide range of a program's funding as wasteful.

In recent testimony, Office of Management and Budget Director Russ Vought criticized programming aimed at fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. He said NPR aired a 2022 program entitled "What 'Queer Ducks' can teach teenagers about sexuality in the animal kingdom." He also cited a special town hall that CNN held in 2020 with "Sesame Street" about combatting racism.

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Targeting humanitarian aid

As part of the package, Trump has asked lawmakers to rescind about \$8.3 billion in foreign aid programs that aim to fight famine and disease and promote global stability.

Among the targets:

- \$900 million to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and strengthen detections systems to prevent wider epidemics.
- \$800 million for a program that provides emergency shelter, water and sanitation and family reunification for those forced to flee their own country.
- \$4.15 billion for two programs designed to boost the economies and democratic institutions in developing and strategically important countries.
- \$496 million to provide humanitarian assistance such as food, water and health care for countries hit by natural disasters and conflicts.

Some of the health cuts are aimed at a program known as PEPFAR, which President George W. Bush, a Republican, began to combat HIV/AIDS in developing countries. The program is credited with saving 26 million lives and has broad bipartisan support.

On PEPFAR, Vought told senators "these cuts are surgical and specifically preserve life-saving assistance." But many lawmakers are wary, saying they've seen no details about where specifically the administration will cut.

The administration also said some cuts, such as eliminating funding for UNICEF, would encourage international organizations to be more efficient and seek contributions from other nations, "putting American taxpayers first."

U.S. leaders have often argued that aiding other nations through "soft power" is not just the right thing to do but also the smart thing.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told Vought there is "plenty of absolute nonsense masquerading as American aid that shouldn't receive another bit of taxpayer funding," but he called the administration's attempt to root it out "unnecessarily chaotic."

"In critical corners of the globe, instead of creating efficiencies, you've created vacuums for adversaries like China to fill," McConnell told Vought.

Trump weighs in

The president has issued a warning on his social media site directly aimed at individual Senate Republicans who may be considering voting against the cuts.

He said it was important that all Republicans adhere to the bill and in particular defund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

"Any Republican that votes to allow this monstrosity to continue broadcasting will not have my support or Endorsement," he said.

For individual Republicans seeking reelection, the prospect of Trump working to defeat them is reason for pause and could be a sign the package is teetering.

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., opted to announce he would not seek reelection recently after the president called for a primary challenger to the senator when he voted not to advance Trump's massive tax and spending cut bill.

Getting around a filibuster

Spending bills before the 100-member Senate almost always need some bipartisan buy-in to pass. That's because the bills need 60 votes to overcome a filibuster and advance. But this week's effort is different.

Congress set up a process back when Republican Richard Nixon was president for speedily considering a request to claw back previously approved spending authority. Under those procedures, it takes only a simple Senate majority to advance the president's request to a final vote.

It's a rarely employed maneuver. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush, a Republican, had some success with his rescissions request, though the final bill included some cuts requested by the president and many that were not. Trump proposed 38 rescissions in 2018, but the package stalled in the Senate.

If senators vote to take up the bill, it sets up the potential for 10 hours of debate plus votes on scores

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of potentially thorny amendments in what is known as a vote-a-rama.

Democrats see the president's request as an effort to erode the Senate filibuster. They warn it's absurd to expect them to work with GOP lawmakers on bipartisan spending measures if Republicans turn around a few months later and use their majority to cut the parts they don't like.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer offered a stern warning in a letter to colleagues: "How Republicans answer this question on rescissions and other forthcoming issues will have grave implications for the Congress, the very role of the legislative branch, and, more importantly, our country," Schumer said.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., took note of the warning.

"I was disappointed to see the Democrat leader in his recent Dear Colleague letter implicitly threaten to shut down the government," Thune said.

The Trump administration is likening the first rescissions package to a test case and says more could be on the way if Congress goes along.

Today in History: July 15, discovery of the Rosetta Stone

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 15, the 196th day of 2025. There are 169 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 15, 1799, the Rosetta Stone, a key to deciphering ancient Egyptian scripts, was found at Fort Julien in the Nile Delta during the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt.

Also on this date:

In 1834, the Spanish Inquisition was abolished more than 350 years after its creation.

In 1870, Georgia became the last Confederate state to be readmitted to the Union.

In 1913, Democrat Augustus Bacon of Georgia became the first person elected to the U.S. Senate under the terms of the recently ratified 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing for popular election of senators.

In 1916, The Boeing Company, originally known as Pacific Aero Products Co., was founded in Seattle.

In 1975, three American astronauts blasted off aboard an Apollo spaceship hours after two Soviet cosmonauts were launched aboard a Soyuz spacecraft for a mission that included a linkup of the two ships in orbit.

In 1976, a 36-hour kidnap ordeal began for 26 schoolchildren and their bus driver as they were abducted near Chowchilla, California, by three gunmen and imprisoned in an underground cell. (The captives escaped unharmed; the kidnappers were caught.)

In 1996, MSNBC, a 24-hour all-news network, made its debut on cable and the internet.

In 1997, fashion designer Gianni Versace, 50, was shot dead outside his Miami Beach home; suspected gunman Andrew Phillip Cunanan (koo-NAN'-an), 27, was found dead eight days later, a suicide. (Investigators believed Cunanan killed four other people before Versace in a cross-country rampage that began the previous March.)

In 2002, John Walker Lindh, an American who'd fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan, pleaded guilty in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, to two felonies in a deal sparing him life in prison.

In 2006, Twitter (now known as X) was launched to the public.

In 2019, avowed white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. was sentenced by a state court to life in prison plus 419 years for killing one and injuring dozens when he deliberately drove his car into a crowd of anti-racism protesters during a rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. (The previous month, Fields received a life sentence on 29 federal hate crime charges.)

In 2020, George Floyd's family filed a lawsuit against the city of Minneapolis and the four police officers charged in his death, alleging the officers violated Floyd's rights when they restrained him and that the city allowed a culture of excessive force, racism and impunity to flourish in its police force. (The city would agree to pay \$27 million to settle the lawsuit in March 2021.)

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Today's Birthdays: Actor Patrick Wayne is 86. R&B singer Millie Jackson is 81. Singer Linda Ronstadt is 79. Author Richard Russo is 76. Musician Trevon Horn is 76. Arianna Huffington, co-founder of The Huffington Post, is 75. Former professional wrestler and Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura is 74. Actor Terry O'Quinn (TV: "Lost") is 73. Rock drummer Marky Ramone is 73. Rock musician Joe Satriani is 69. Model Kim Alexis is 65. Actor Willie Aames is 65. Actor-director Forest Whitaker is 64. Actor Brigitte Nielsen is 62. Rock drummer Jason Bonham is 59. TV personality Adam Savage (TV: "MythBusters") is 58. Actor-comedian Eddie Griffin is 57. Actor-screenwriter Jim Rash (TV: "Community") is 53. Actor Scott Foley is 53. Actor Brian Austin Green is 52. Singer Buju Banton is 52. Actor Diane Kruger is 49. Actor Lana Parrilla (LAH'-nuh pa-REE'-uh) is 48. Actor Travis Fimmel is 46. Actor-singer Tristan "Mack" Wilds is 36. Actor Iain Armitage (TV: "Young Sheldon") is 17.