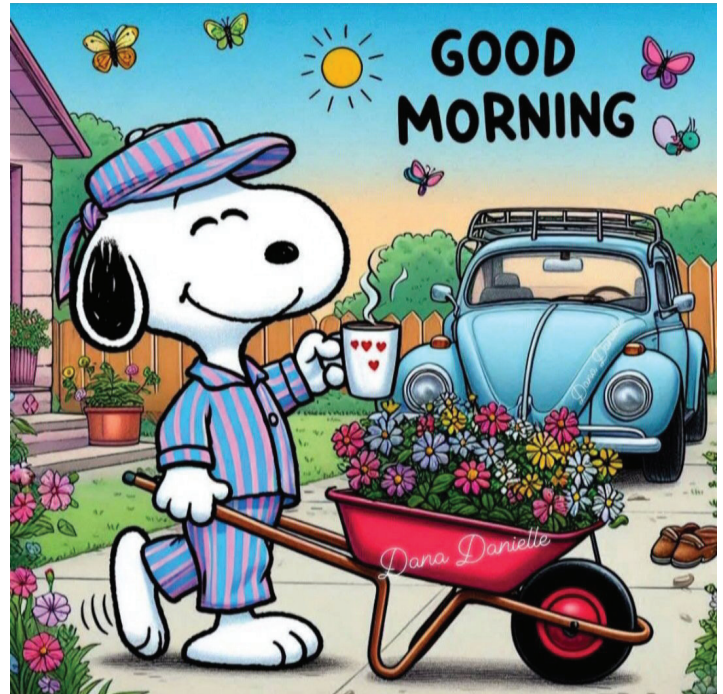


Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 1 of 75

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Harry Implement Ad](#)
- [5- Common Cents Thrift Store Help Wanted Ad](#)
- [6- SD Mosquito Update](#)
- [7- Celebration in the Park ad](#)
- [8- Conde Municipal Building Restoration Fundraiser](#)
- [9- Angel Tree Ad](#)
- [10- Groton Dairy Queen Ad](#)
- [11- Adult Mosquito Control](#)
- [12- SD News Watch: SDSU loses \\$86M in federal research funding](#)
- [15- Jr. Teeners drop pair to MVP](#)
- [16- Amatuers lose to Redfield](#)
- [18- SD SearchLight: Para-to-teacher program produces 41 educators across 31 districts](#)
- [19- SD SearchLight: Senator reintroduces AI regulation bill during first hearing as chair of sub-committee](#)
- [20- SD SearchLight: New federal school voucher program poses a quandary for states: Opt in or opt out?](#)
- [23- SD SearchLight: 'Half-baked' USDA relocation irritates members of both parties on US Senate Ag panel](#)
- [25- SD SearchLight: Epstein files must be released by Trump administration under obscure law, Democrats contend](#)
- [27- Weather Pages](#)
- [31- Daily Devotional](#)
- [32- Subscription Form](#)
- [33- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [34- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [35- News from the Associated Press](#)



Thursday, July 31

Senior Menu: Pork chop, sweet potato, corn, chocolate pudding with banana, whole wheat bread.

Aug. 1-5: Legion State B Tourney at Milbank

Aug. 8-10: State Jr. Legion at Milbank

Aug. 8-10: State Jr. Teener at Volga

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 2 of 75

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.

Tariffs Deadline Tonight

President Donald Trump announced a slew of tariff-related updates yesterday. The changes come as most countries will face rates of 15% to 20% beginning overnight, at 12:01 am ET.

Trump yesterday said India will face 25% tariffs and an added penalty for purchasing Russian oil. Brazil will face 50% tariffs next week; Trump separately announced 50% tariffs on all copper imports. The US will also end the global de minimis exemption later this month, which allowed packages valued below \$800 to enter duty-free.

Some countries negotiated lower tariffs in the lead-up to tonight's deadline. South Korea negotiated a baseline of 15% in exchange for investing hundreds of billions of dollars in the US. Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, the UK, Vietnam, and the European Union also reached revised deals. Pakistan is expected to finalize a deal shortly.

The average effective tariff rate is estimated to rise to 18.4%, the highest level since 1933. Clothing and shoes will be especially affected, with prices predicted to rise roughly 40% in the short term.

DC Plane Crash Hearing

Hearings began yesterday in the federal probe into January's fatal midair collision of an American Airlines jet and an Army Black Hawk in Washington, DC. Sixty-seven people were killed in the plane crash—the US' deadliest since November 2001.

The National Transportation Safety Board opened hearings with an animation showing the aircrafts' flight path before they crashed over Reagan National Airport. The Black Hawk's barometric altimeter, built in the 1970s, misread the helicopter's altitude by 80 to 100 feet, ultimately flying above the 200 feet altitude limit. Army pilots reportedly also missed air traffic control instructions to pass behind the jet.

A March investigation flagged concerns over small separation distances between helicopters and planes in Reagan's airspace, citing 85 near misses between October 2021 and December 2024. Documents revealed yesterday indicated air traffic controllers had sought to change the helicopter route, but ultimately abandoned the effort.

World's Deepest Ecosystem

Chinese researchers have identified fields of underwater creatures nearly 6 miles below sea level, the deepest complex ecosystem ever discovered, a study published yesterday in *Nature* reveals.

The ecosystem spans over 1,500 miles across the Kuril-Kamchatka and Aleutian trenches—depressions in the Pacific Ocean seafloor between Russia and Alaska. Through 23 dives in a three-person submersible, researchers found fields of brightly colored marine tube worms, mollusks, and clams.

With no access to sunlight, the organisms appear to rely on liquid methane and hydrogen sulfide for energy in a process known as chemosynthesis. Researchers think the methane comes from microbes in the seafloor—and that these ecosystems may be more widespread than previously thought.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 3 of 75

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

NFL preseason kicks off tonight (8 pm ET, NBC) with the Los Angeles Chargers taking on the Detroit Lions in the 2025 Pro Football Hall of Fame Game.

Laura Dahlmeier, two-time Olympic gold medal-winning biathlete, dies at age 31 following a climbing accident in northern Pakistan.

NBA sets up 2026 regular season matchups in Berlin (Jan. 15) and London (Jan. 18) featuring the Orlando Magic and Memphis Grizzlies.

USA Track and Field championships begin today from Eugene, Oregon.

Science & Technology

Joint US-India mission to deploy satellite capable of capturing changes on the Earth's surface with resolution of a single centimeter; NISAR mission can image the same spot on Earth every 12 days.

Chronic disrupted sleep modifies blood vessels in the brain known as pericytes, can lead to impaired cognitive function and higher dementia risk.

Dormant cancer cells can be reawakened by viral respiratory infections, including the flu or COVID-19; study suggests acute inflammation in the lungs may trigger cells to reactivate.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.1%, Dow -0.4%, Nasdaq +0.2%).

Federal Reserve keeps interest rates steady for fifth consecutive meeting, faces dissents from two officials seeking rate cuts.

The US economy grew at an annual rate of 3% in Q2, a better-than-expected pace.

Microsoft tops \$4T in market cap in after-hours trading after beating Q4 earnings and revenue; reports revenue from Azure and cloud services for first time, with sales exceeding \$75B for fiscal 2025.

Meta shares rise over 10% in after-hours trading after topping Wall Street estimates, raises full-year forecast.

Ford says Q2 results took \$800M hit from tariffs.

Robinhood beats Q2 earnings and revenue, saw revenue rise 45% year over year to \$989M.

Politics & World Affairs

Evacuations in Hawaii downgraded, with tsunami threat to US West Coast receding after 8.8-magnitude earthquake struck Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula; earthquake is tied as sixth strongest ever recorded and biggest since 2011 quake that hit Japan.

Texas Republicans release proposed new congressional map aimed at flipping five Democratic seats by redrawing district lines in Austin, Dallas, Houston, and South Texas.

US Senate Democrats invoke rare "Rule of Five" to force Justice Department to release Jeffrey Epstein files.

Canada to recognize a Palestinian state in September, Prime Minister Mark Carney says.

Brown University reaches deal with Trump administration to restore over \$500M in funding, resolve nondiscrimination review findings.

Cub Cadet®

ZERO-TURN LEADER.



ULTIMA SERIES™ ZTS™



ULTIMA SERIES™ ZT™



ULTIMA SERIES™ ZTX™



ULTIMA SERIES™ ZTXS™



Ultima™ ZT1 54P ZERO-TURN

- 23 HP^{††} Kawasaki® FR691VV-twin OHV engine
- 54" AeroForce™ fabricated triple-blade deck
- Dual Hydro-Gear® EZT-2200™ transmission

\$3,999*



CC30H RIDING LAWN MOWER

- 10.5 HP[†] Briggs & Stratton engine
- 30" mowing deck
- Hydrostatic transmission

\$2,229*



Ultima™ ZT1 46 ZERO-TURN

- 21.5 HP^{††} Kawasaki® FR691VV-twin OHV engine
- 46" AeroForce™ fabricated twin-blade deck
- Dual Hydro-Gear® EZT-2200™ transmission
- Continuous 2" x 2" tubular steel frame with protective e-coat on lower end

\$3,499*

FOR FULL PRODUCT SPECS **Cub Cadet** VISIT CUBCADET.COM

HARRY IMPLEMENT INC
FERNEY, SD 57439
www.harrysinc.com
605-395-6421

*Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes are additional and vary by location. Freight and PDI charges may be additional and vary by dealer. Models subject to limited availability. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or unit specifications. † As rated by Kohler, all power levels are stated in gross horsepower at 3600 RPM per SAE J1940 as rated by engine manufacturer. †† As required by Kawasaki, horsepower tested in accordance with SAE J1995 and rated in accordance with SAE J2723 and certified by SAE International. **See operator's manual for warranty details and information. Certain restrictions apply. Kohler® is a registered trademark of Kohler Co. Kawasaki® is a registered trademark of KAWASAKI JUKOGYO KABUSHIKI KAISHA.
© 2025 Cub Cadet



**Help Lead a Cause that
Gives Back!**



COMMON CENTS THRIFT STORE

**is Seeking a Volunteer
Manager + Assistants!**

Are you passionate about community, organizing, and helping others? Common Cents is looking for **A Volunteer Manager and Volunteer Assistants** to help lead our team and keep the store running smoothly.

Positions Available:



Volunteer Store Manager – Help coordinate volunteers, organize donations, and oversee daily operations.



Volunteer Assistants – Help sort items, stock shelves, greet shoppers, and create a welcoming space!

209 N MAIN STREET, GROTON, SD
Need more info? Call 605-216-2350

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 6 of 75

South Dakota Mosquito



SD WNV (as of July 30):

7 human cases (Brookings, Hamlin, Marshall, Minnehaha, Spink) and 1 death

1 human viremic blood donor (Brown)

7 counties with positive mosquito pools (Beadle, Brown, Brookings, Codington, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha)

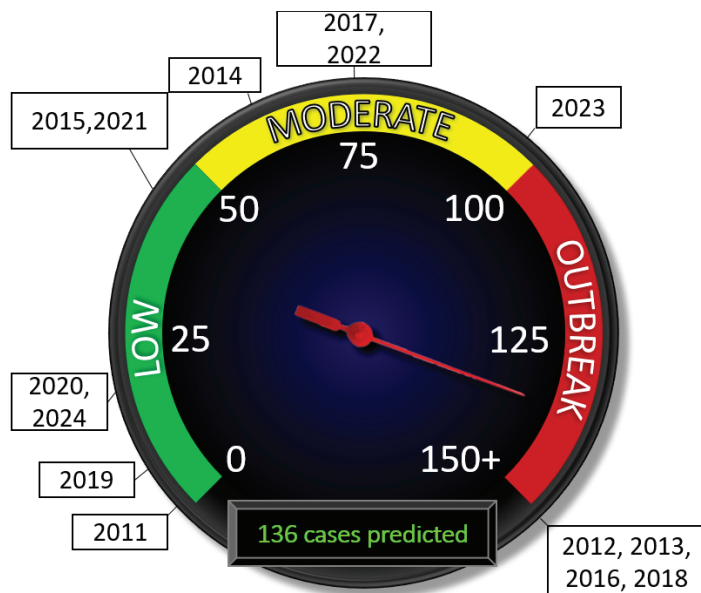
US WNV (as of July 29): 98 cases (AL, AZ, CA, CO, GA, IL, IN, KS, LA, MN, MO, MS, ND, NE, NY, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WI)

WNV Prediction Model – Total Number of Cases Projected for 2025, South Dakota (as of July 30)

Total sites collecting mosquitoes: 57

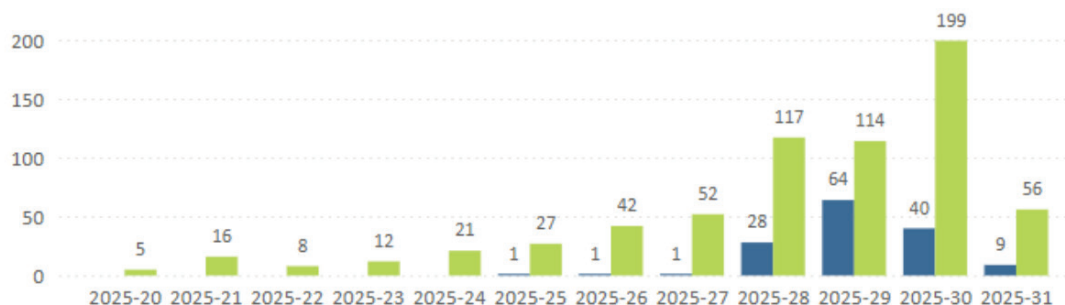
Total mosquito pools tested: 813

% positivity: 17.71%

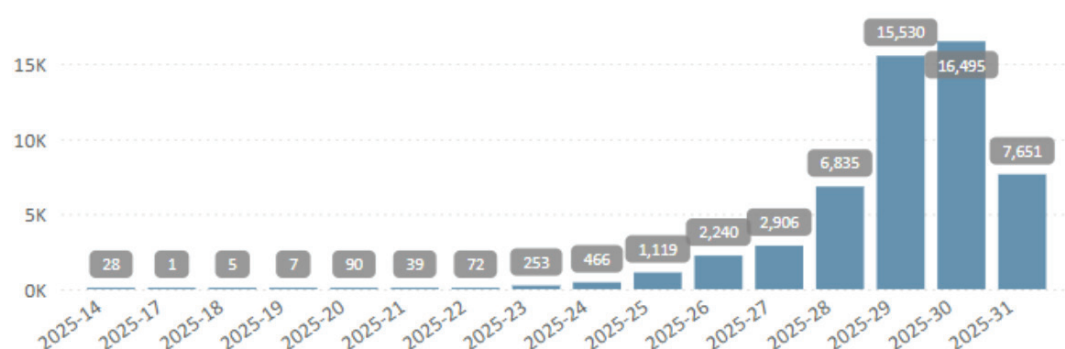


Number of Mosquito Pools Tested by MMWR Week and Status

Test Status: ● Positive ● Negative



Culex Mosquitoes Collected by MMWR Week



2ND ANNUAL CELEBRATION IN THE PARK

SAT, AUG 2ND

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 8AM RIB TEAM CHECK-IN
- 9:30AM RIB TEAM RULES MEETING
- 1PM LIONS START SERVING LUNCH
- 1PM CORNHOLE REGISTRATION
- 2PM CORNHOLE TOURNEY
- 1-3PM HUB CITY RADIO LIVE BROADCAST
- 1-4:30PM KIDS ACTIVITIES
 - WATER BALLONS AT 4:30PM
- **5PM RIB TASTING \$1/RIB (LIMIT 10 PER PERSON) WHILE SUPPLIES LAST**
- 6-9PM B&M TUNES KARAOKE



Enjoy karaoke and a chance to win—two split pot drawings will be held!

Groton City Park

FUNDRAISER EVENT DAY
SATURDAY, AUGUST 9TH, 2025
RESTORE OUR HERITAGE



Municipal Building

Join us for a fun-filled day at our **Municipal Building Restoration Fundraiser**! Participate in a poker run, enjoy delicious food from a food truck, listen to live music from two local bands, and bid on amazing items at our live auction. Your support helps preserve our community's heritage and brings us one step closer to restoring our beloved building. Come make a difference! Support our community and have fun!

EVENT SCHEDULE

2:30pm - Poker Run Registration at Conde Park (ATV, UTV, Motorcycle, Car, Golf Cart, Bicycle...Whatever you want to ride!)

Ride begins at 3:00pm and ends at 5:00pm with 4 stops in town

2:30pm - 12:30am - Food Truck (Burgers, Roast Beef Sandwiches, Brats, Hot Dogs, Potato Salad, Macaroni Salad and Chips served by Trixy Schwabe)

6:00pm - 8:30pm - Music by Bob Styles

9:00pm - 12:00am - Music by The Barstool Prophets



**The Live Auction will be held at 8:30 **



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 9 of 75



Walking Taco and a drink
Free Will Donation
Proceeds go to Groton's Angel Tree
15 N Main, St. #103
Groton Daily Independent
Suggested Donation: \$5

Family Fun Fest -Thursday, Aug. 7 ~ 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 10 of 75

Today Is . . .



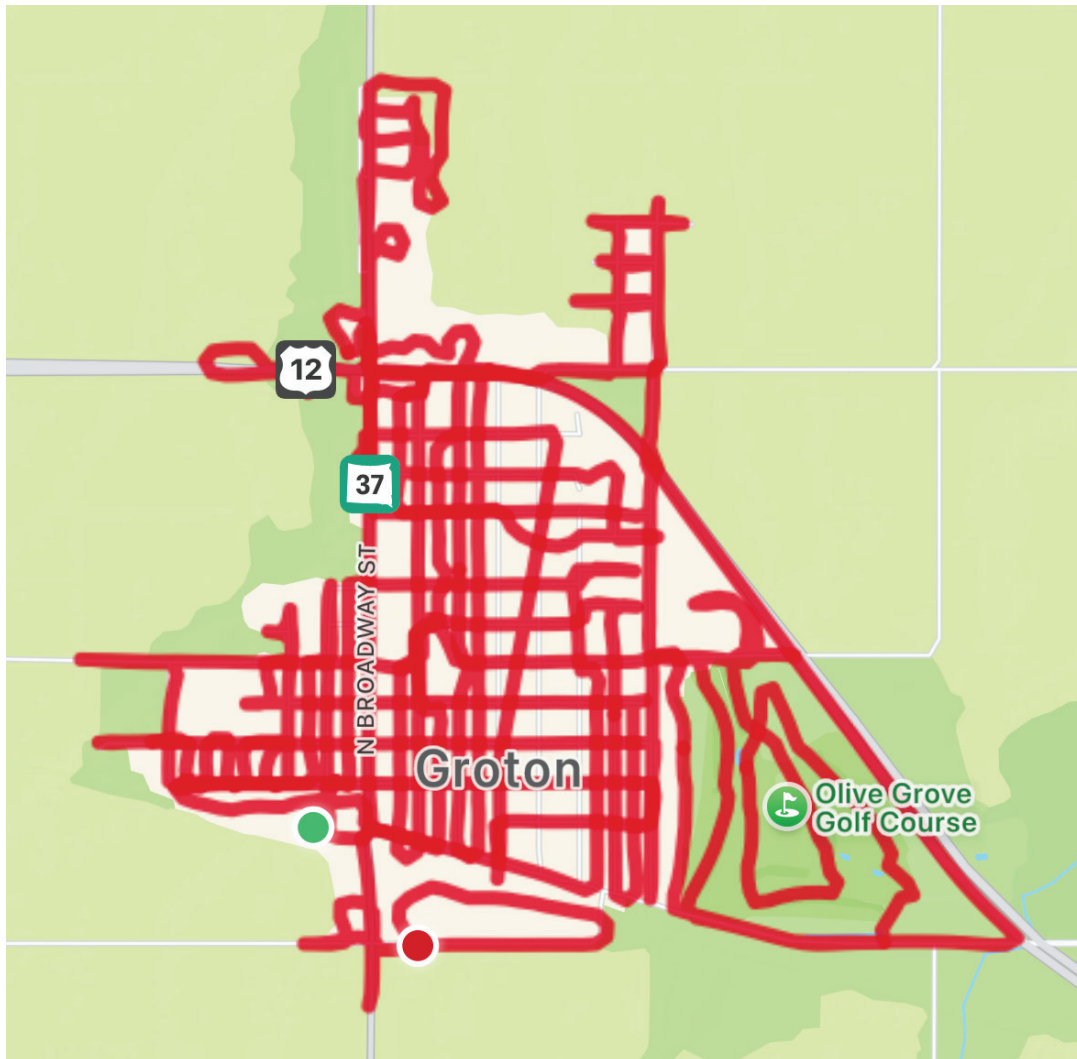
...the sweetest day of the year!
100% of the net proceeds from every Blizzard® sold on July 31, and coupon sold today, will help care for kids at Sanford Children's Hospital, the region's only Children's Miracle Network Hospital.

Stop on out at the **Groton Dairy Queen Today. You know you will eat blizzards throughout the year, so why not stock up on the coupons today - enjoy a treat later knowing you helped a kid at Sanford Children's Hospital!**



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 11 of 75



Adult Mosquito Control

The City of Groton conducted adult mosquito control last night. The temperature was 63-68 degrees with the wind out of the NE 2-7 mph. 10.7 gallons of MasterLine Kontrol 4-4 (with 4.6% Permethrin. Travel time was 2 hours and 52 minutes with a distance of 35.47 miles. During my travels I saw 15 rabbits, 8 cats and 2 horses. Total cost of the application was around \$630. (Note - I accidentally hit the pause button which stopped recording when I did Third Street and Fourth Street and alleys in that area.)



**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

SDSU loses \$86M in federal research funding

By Emily DeCock

South Dakota News Watch

BROOKINGS, S.D. – South Dakota State University lost an \$86 million livestock research grant as part of recent federal spending cuts, making South Dakota the state with the highest per student loss of research grants, the Center for American Progress reported.

However, without that grant, the overall impacts of the Trump administration's cuts to higher education in South Dakota are relatively minimal.

The state's high average loss can be attributed to relatively low numbers of undergraduate and graduate students in South Dakota as well as the one large grant rescinded earlier this year.

The other South Dakota schools that had research funding cut include the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City and Oglala Lakota College in Kyle. Combined, they lost around \$1.6 million in unused funds, according to the report.

More than \$1,700 per student, which includes the SDSU grant, was "targeted for termination" by the Trump administration in South Dakota, according to the report.

"Targeted for termination" means grants the administration intends to terminate, said Greta Bedekovics, co-author of the article and associate director of democracy policy at the Center for American Progress, a policy institute focused on conservation.

The list of grants was compiled by cross-referencing lists of cancelled or rescinded grants from doge.gov, a spreadsheet of canceled grants from the U.S. Health and Human Services and the U.S. Treasury Department's usaspending.gov, Bedekovics said.

Daniel Scholl, vice president for research and economic development at SDSU, told News Watch the research funding situation is ever-changing, and exact impacts are unknown as the federal government prepares the 2026 budget.

"There are a lot of different ways it could shake out, so the pathway is not clear," he said.

"The things that are going on in the federal events are how to handle changes in the current fiscal year's budget. That affects what's available to us to support students and to carry out research," Scholl said. "Secondly, what are they going to do with the FY26 budget? It all reduces to those two things."

Here are the specific cuts:

- South Dakota State University: An \$86 million U.S. Department of Agriculture grant that aimed to support beef and bison producers in grazing techniques to have a positive environmental impact. \$68.5 million was unused.
- University of South Dakota: A \$150,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant to use artificial intelligence to create tags for digitized cultural heritage materials at USD. Around \$106,000 was unused.
- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology: SDSMT had four grants that were terminated: One nearly \$1 million National Science Foundation grant, which had \$188,987 unused; a \$1.25 million grant from the South Dakota Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control that had \$1 million in unused funds; and two Institute of Museum and Library Services grants totaling \$267,099, with more than \$104,000 unused funds.
- Oglala Lakota College: A \$205,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that would have gone to cataloging and digitizing interviews with Lakota elders from four reservations. Over \$201,000 was unused.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 13 of 75

SDSU project would have supported beef, bison producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture gave \$2.8 billion to fund 70 projects for the climate-smart commodities initiative grant in 2023. The Center of Excellence in Bison Studies at SDSU's West River Research and Extension facility in Rapid City received \$86 million, one of the largest sums of money that was given in the initiative.

The SDSU project was intended to support beef and bison producers in grazing and land management strategies, said Kristi Cammack, director of SDSU West River Research and Extension.

Much of the work from that grant has stopped, Scholl said.

"It has impacted people's plans for their research education in one way or another. And that's important, even if someone hasn't lost their job, but they've had to experience a change," Scholl said. "Even if it was an opportunity for them to shift their direction and shift gears, it's still disruption. And I think that's the important point. It's been disruptive to some people's career preparation and career growth."

Neither Scholl nor Cammack could comment on the direct impacts that losing the grant had on staffing. Around \$17.5 million was already spent of the grant.

Regents: 'Difficult financial times'

More than \$100 million of the Board of Regents' \$911 million budget comes from the federal government.

At the July 17 Board of Regents (BOR) meeting at SDSU, Heather Forney, BOR vice president of finance and administration, and the six public university presidents laid out their fiscal year 2027 requests. They asked for a nearly \$32 million increase of their base budget that starts in July 2026.

"We are very aware of the fiscal restraints that the state of South Dakota will be facing in fiscal year 27 and trying to be very conscious of that," Forney said at the meeting.

In anticipation of an unsure year of funding, the regental schools put together a concentrated request. No additional money for capital projects was requested for FY27.

The president of the South Dakota Board of Regents, Tim Rave, acknowledged the precarious state of funding in the July meeting as well.

"We are going to have some difficult financial times in the state this year, and so I really appreciate the solidarity and one voice to try and push these priorities through," Rave said.

"The revenue forecast for ongoing funding is not looking terribly stellar or positive," said Nathan Lukkes, executive director of the BOR. "There's a lot of great things and ideas on all of our campuses that we wish we had the ability to fund. That's just not realistic, looking at the revenue forecast for the state."

Low endowments could be troublesome

Data from The Associated Press shows the dollar amount of endowments of South Dakota's four-year public, private and tribal schools.

Endowments are meant to last in perpetuity and fund scholarships, support programs or whatever cause the donor delegates the money to.

Alissa Matt, assistant vice president for marketing and university relations at USD, said universities cannot take restricted funds and spend them "even when faced with fiscal pressures."

"As a fiduciary, the foundation is legally obligated to observe donor intent while administering endowments in partnership with USD," Matt said in an email. "In other words, endowments may not be repurposed, liquidated or 'tapped' in any manner inconsistent with donor intent or applicable legal requirements."

Here are the most recent details available on endowment amounts for South Dakota's public and private colleges and universities, according to the AP and schools that responded to a News Watch request for updated numbers.

Public

- University of South Dakota, Vermillion: fall 2024 enrollment, 10,619; endowment value as of June 30, \$338.6 million; endowment per student, \$31,886
- South Dakota State University, Brookings: fall 2023 enrollment, 11,498; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$215 million; endowment per student, \$18,699
- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City: fall 2023 enrollment, 2,158; endowment

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 14 of 75

value at start of FY2022-23, \$108 million; endowment per student, \$50,046

- Northern State University, Aberdeen: fall 2023 enrollment, 3,521; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$36 million; endowment per student, \$10,302
- Black Hills State University, Spearfish: fall 2025 enrollment, 3,475; endowment value as of FY25, \$33 million; endowment per student, \$9,490
- Dakota State University, Madison: fall 2023 enrollment, 3,508; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$17.4 million; endowment per student, \$4,972

Private

- Augustana University, Sioux Falls: fall 2023 enrollment, 2,158; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$108 million; endowment per student, \$50,046
- Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell: fall 2023 enrollment, 886; endowment value at start of FY2022-23: \$38.6 million; endowment per student, \$43,581
- University of Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls: fall 2023 enrollment, 1,509; endowment value at start of FY2022-23: \$32 million; endowment per student, \$21,211
- Mount Marty University, Yankton: fall 2023 enrollment, 1,314; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$30.8 million; endowment per student, \$23,471

Tribal

- Oglala Lakota College, Kyle: fall 2023 enrollment, 1,229; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$65.6 million; endowment per student, \$53,345
- Sinte Gleska University, Mission: fall 2023 enrollment, 683; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$2.9 million; endowment per student, \$4,276
- Sisseton Wahpeton College, Agency Village: fall 2023 enrollment, 215; endowment value at start of FY2022-23, \$1 million; endowment per student, \$5,072

Scholl said SDSU intends to continue to be a leading edge research university by continually improving how SDSU does research and provides students with "superior experiential learning opportunities."

"That's really what it's about. It's another way of teaching," Scholl said. "It's another way of educating and in giving students an opportunity to differentiate themselves in the job market by the kinds of experiences that they have here working with leaders in their fields."

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton hands Groton Jr. Teeners double loss in regional finale

After winning the first game on Tuesday at Plankinton, the Groton Jr. Teeners suffered a pair of losses to Mt. Vernon/Plankinton on Wednesday in the region finale played at Locke-Karst Field in Groton. The Titans won the first game, 16-2, and won the second game, 9-0. The Titans will advance to the state tournament.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Fall To MVP Titans 14U After Surrendering Big Sixth Inning **By GameChanger Media**

MVP Titans 14U defeated Groton Jr. Teeners 14U 16-2 on Wednesday at Groton SD thanks in part to 10 runs in the sixth inning.

MVP Titans 14U opened the scoring in the first after Mason DeGeest grounded out, scoring one run.

MVP Titans 14U added one run in the second. Carson Earl grounded out, making the score 2-0.

A single by Preston Nedved extended the MVP Titans 14U lead to 3-0 in the top of the third inning.

MVP Titans 14U scored 10 runs on five hits in the top of the sixth inning. Trysten Eide singled, scoring one run, Alex Rojas grounded out, scoring one run, an error scored one run, Brentley Nelson doubled, scoring two runs, Dreyton Hoffman drew a walk, scoring one run, Eide singled, scoring two runs, and an error scored two runs.

Nedved earned the win for MVP Titans 14U. The hurler surrendered three hits and two runs over five and two-thirds innings, striking out seven and walking five. Jordan Schwan took the loss for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher went five innings, surrendering six runs (three earned) on three hits, striking out four and walking four.

Keegan Kucker led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with one run batted in. The right-handed hitter went 2-for-3 on the day. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U had a strong eye at the plate, collecting six walks for the game. Asher Zimmerman and Zach Fliehs led the team with two bases on balls each. Fliehs and Schwan each stole multiple bases for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U ran wild on the base paths, tallying eight stolen bases for the game.

Eide set the tone at the top of the lineup, leading MVP Titans 14U with three hits in four at bats. Nedved collected two hits for MVP Titans 14U in four at bats. Hoffman paced MVP Titans 14U with four walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, amassing seven walks for the game. Rojas, Nedved, and Lucas Hanson each stole multiple bases for MVP Titans 14U. MVP Titans 14U ran wild on the base paths, piling up 12 stolen bases for the game. MVP Titans 14U were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Eide made the most plays with nine.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Stymied By MVP Titans 14U **By GameChanger Media**

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U had trouble keeping up with MVP Titans 14U in a 9-0 loss on Wednesday at Groton.

MVP Titans 14U got on the board in the top of the second inning after Lucas Hanson singled, Carson Earl grounded out, and Alex Rojas singled down the left field line, each scoring one run.

MVP Titans 14U added one run in the third after Groton Jr. Teeners 14U committed an error.

Mason DeGeest earned the win for MVP Titans 14U. The pitcher allowed two hits and zero runs over seven innings, striking out seven and walking two. Trayce Schelle took the loss for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher went four and two-thirds innings, allowing seven runs (five earned) on six hits, striking out three and walking four.

Schelle and Lincoln Shilhanek each collected one hit for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U turned two double plays in the game.

MVP Titans 14U tallied 11 hits in the game. Hanson led MVP Titans 14U with two runs batted in from the number seven spot in the lineup. The outfielder went 2-for-3 on the day. Preston Nedved, Teagan Bush, and Hanson each collected two hits for MVP Titans 14U. MVP Titans 14U had patience at the plate, amassing seven walks for the game. Trysten Eide and Earl led the team with two walks each. Hanson stole three bases. MVP Titans 14U stole seven bases in the game.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 16 of 75

Locke Electric Fall After Strong Showing By Redfield Dairy Queen

By GameChanger Media

Groton Locke Electric had trouble keeping up with Redfield Dairy Queen in a 15-5 loss on Wednesday at Faulkton.

Redfield Dairy Queen were the first to get on the board in the first when Ryan Groeblichhoff induced Peyton Osborn to hit into a fielder's choice, but two runs scored.

Redfield Dairy Queen extended their early lead with three runs in the bottom of the second thanks to RBI singles by Noah Hainy and Owen Osborn.

Redfield Dairy Queen scored seven runs on three hits in the bottom of the eighth inning. Osborn doubled, scoring one run, Keaton Rohlf's doubled, scoring two runs, and Hainy drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groeblichhoff stepped on the mound first for Groton Locke Electric. The pitcher surrendered 11 hits and 14 runs (seven earned) over seven and two-thirds innings, striking out four and walking six. Osborn started on the bump for Redfield Dairy Queen. The pitcher gave up 11 hits and five runs (four earned) over seven and one-third innings, striking out two and walking two.

Groton Locke Electric collected 11 hits in the game. Wyatt Locke led Groton Locke Electric with three runs batted in from the number eight spot in the lineup. The right-handed hitter went 2-for-4 on the day. Bradin Althoff, Brian Hansen, Locke, Ben Althoff, and Jonah Schmidt each collected two hits for Groton Locke Electric. Groton Locke Electric turned one double play in the game.

Redfield Dairy Queen accumulated 11 hits in the game. Bennett Osborn, Osborn, and Rohlf's each collected two hits for Redfield Dairy Queen. Osborn led Redfield Dairy Queen with three runs batted in. The second baseman went 2-for-4 on the day. Brent Osborn led Redfield Dairy Queen with three walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, collecting seven walks for the game. Redfield Dairy Queen ran wild on the base paths, tallying four stolen bases for the game.

Groton will play Faulkton on Thursday at Northville at 7 p.m.

Copyright © 2025 GameChanger, Inc. All rights reserved. Any reuse or republication of this story must include the preceding attribution and is subject to the Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. Terms of Use, License Agreement, and Privacy Policy.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 17 of 75

Groton Locke Electric 5 - 15 Redfield Dairy Queen

📍 Away 📅 Wednesday July 30, 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	R	H	E
GRTN	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	5	11	7
RDFL	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	7	15	11	1

BATTING

Groton Locke Electric	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T Sieber #24 (LF)	3	0	0	0	2	0
R Groebli... #0 (P)	5	0	0	0	0	1
A Morris #13 (SS)	4	1	1	0	0	0
J Schmidt #21 (CF)	4	1	2	0	0	0
B Hansen #18 (1B)	4	2	2	0	0	0
B Althoff #27 (RF)	4	1	2	0	0	1
B Althoff #1 (3B)	4	0	2	2	0	0
W Locke #38 (2B)	4	0	2	3	0	0
B Richter #19 (C)	3	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	35	5	11	5	3	3

2B: B Althoff, J Schmidt, **TB:** A Morris, B Hansen 2, W Locke 2, B Althoff 3, J Schmidt 3, B Althoff 2, **LOB:** 9

Redfield Dairy Queen	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
N Gall #17 (CF)	4	2	1	0	1	0
O Osborn #5 (2B)	4	2	2	3	1	2
B Osborn #29 (3B)	4	3	2	0	1	0
P Osborn #15 (P)	5	1	0	1	0	1
C Hainy #19 (SS)	5	0	1	2	0	0
K Rohlfs #10 (LF)	5	2	2	2	0	0
B Osborn #3 (RF)	2	2	1	0	3	0
N Hainy #22 (C)	4	1	1	2	1	0
N Hainy #26 (1B)	3	2	1	0	0	1
Totals	36	15	11	10	7	4

2B: K Rohlfs, O Osborn, B Osborn, **TB:** K Rohlfs 3, O Osborn 3, N Hainy, N Gall, B Osborn, C Hainy, N Hainy, B Osborn 3, **HBP:** N Hainy, **SB:** K Rohlfs, O Osborn, N Gall, C Hainy, **LOB:** 6

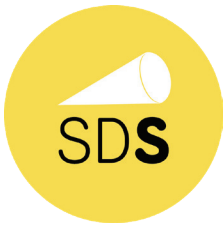
PITCHING

Groton Locke Electric	P	IP	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Groebli... #0	7.2	11	14	7	6	4	0
W Locke #38	0.0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Totals	7.2	11	15	7	7	4	0

L: R Groeblinghoff, **P-S:** W Locke 11-4, R Groeblinghoff 151-84, **WP:** W Locke, **HBP:** R Groeblinghoff, **BF:** W Locke, R Groeblinghoff 43

Redfield Dairy Queen	P	IP	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
P Osborn #15	7.1	11	5	4	2	2	0
N Hainy #22	0.2	0	0	0	1	1	0
Totals	8.0	11	5	4	3	3	0

W: P Osborn, **P-S:** N Hainy 14-9, P Osborn 89-60, **BF:** N Hainy 3, P Osborn 35



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Para-to-teacher program produces 41 educators across 31 districts

South Dakota Education Department announces third cohort with 80 paraprofessionals

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 30, 2025 5:36 PM

Of the 59 graduates so far from a two-year-old teacher apprenticeship program, 41 have signed teaching contracts and are filling vacancies across 31 public school districts and three private schools in South Dakota, according to the state Education Department.

The program, started in 2023, allows full-time paraprofessionals — sometimes called teacher's aides — to pursue a teaching degree online through Dakota State University in elementary or special education, or through Northern State University in secondary education, at a steep discount while retaining their position.

South Dakota Department of Education Secretary Joe Graves said in a news release announcing the third cohort that the program has been an "incredible success" to address the teacher shortage by combining graduates' paraprofessional experience with their new education to fill vacancies.

Statewide, 144 positions were unfilled as of last month, weeks before the school year starts, according to the Associated School Boards of South Dakota. That's the lowest number in recent years: there were 202 unfilled positions in July 2024, 256 in 2023, 225 in 2022 and 174 in 2021.

The program does not contractually require graduates to stay in the teaching profession or in South Dakota. The assumption is that paraprofessionals who've worked in the profession for years care about the children in their school, have built their lives in the community where they work, and will stay close to home.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for both the paraprofessionals and for their communities," Graves said, "and it ultimately benefits our South Dakota students."

Another 80 candidates from 50 school districts and private schools were selected for the third cohort, the department announced recently. The second cohort included 70 participants, five of which dropped out.

Thirteen participants in the first cohort are still participating in the program and are expected to graduate in December, while 18 dropped out of the program.

Most contracted graduates will teach in elementary classrooms and special education, according to the department. It is likely that other graduates have signed contracts but have not reported doing so to DSU or NSU, according to the state Department of Education.

The program was started by the department but is currently funded through the state Department of Labor and Regulation with a combination of state and federal grants to reimburse universities for the



Jaimie Bartmann, a special education teacher for the Canistota School District, poses for a photo in her classroom on April 4, 2025. She was one of the first seven graduates of a program helping paraprofessionals become teachers.

(Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

discounted portion of tuition and other programming.

School districts pay \$1,000 a year per apprentice. Apprentices are responsible for up to \$1,000 a year in tuition, books and state assessments.

Graves, with the Education Department, told South Dakota Searchlight earlier this year that the future of the program is uncertain.

It was originally intended as a one-time effort, using \$815,000 in federal funds and about \$446,000 in state funds.

The program launched its second cohort under the state Department of Labor and Regulation in 2024 due to demand after the Legislature appropriated \$800,000 of state funds for the program. The second cohort cost another \$410,000 in funding from the department and \$9,000 from the federal government.

A spokeswoman for the state Department of Labor and Regulation said earlier this year that the exact funding needs for the third cohort will be determined after the apprentices start their coursework.

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.

Senator reintroduces AI regulation bill during first hearing as chair of subcommittee

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JULY 30, 2025 6:04 PM



U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, speaks Aug. 12, 2024, at the David Lust Accelerator Building in Rapid City about federal housing funds awarded to the Black Hills area. (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, reintroduced legislation Wednesday that he said would create "a safe space for experimentation" with artificial intelligence in the financial services industry.

He made the remarks during his first hearing as chairman of the Senate Banking Committee's Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance and Investments. He framed the day's discussion around "guardrails and growth."

"We need regulatory frameworks that both support innovation and protect consumers," Rounds said.

The legislation is the Unleashing AI Innovation in Financial Services Act. Rounds said the bipartisan bill would "create a venue for financial institutions and regulators to work together to test AI projects for deployment."

"By creating a safe space for experimentation, we can help firms innovate and regulators learn, without applying outdated rules that don't fit today's technology," Rounds said.

Witnesses at the hearing included leaders from Aon, NASDAQ, and IBM Research, who discussed how AI is transforming how firms analyze data, assess risk and detect fraud.

Rounds gave several examples of that. He said firms in the capital markets are using AI to analyze trading patterns and financial disclosures, to guide investment decisions, to execute trades more efficiently and to reduce costs.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 20 of 75

In insurance, said Rounds, who has a history in the industry, AI is reshaping how companies assess risk and deliver coverage, particularly in underwriting businesses. Insurers are using machine learning to analyze claims histories, industry benchmarks and other data to better understand a company's risk profile. The tools are helping insurers price policies more accurately, Rounds said, to speed up underwriting decisions and expand coverage to companies that previously may have been too complex or too risky to evaluate.

In the area of fraud prevention, Rounds cited Card Policy Council reports indicating one major credit card network's AI-driven security enhancements have boosted its fraud detection rates by up to 300% and prevented over \$50 billion in fraud in the past three years.

"This is exactly the kind of progress we should be encouraging," Rounds said.

New federal school voucher program poses a quandary for states: Opt in or opt out?

A tax credit in Trump's signature law leaves states to sort out rules, funding and oversight

BY: ROBBIE SEQUEIRA - JULY 30, 2025 11:17 AM

When President Donald Trump signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, he gave state leaders — not federal regulators — the power to decide whether and how to participate in the first-ever national tax credit scholarship program.

That decision now looms largest in blue states, where Democratic governors and lawmakers must weigh whether to reject the law outright on ideological grounds — or try to reshape it into something that reflects their own values.

"This isn't the federal voucher program we were worried about five years ago," said Jon Valant, a senior fellow in governance studies at the left-leaning Brookings Institution who testified before Congress on earlier versions of the bill. "It still has serious problems — but states now have tools to mold it into something they might actually support."

The final law gives states wide discretion, he said. They can opt out entirely. They can opt in passively, leaving the program to operate as written. Or, as Valant suggests, they can try to redraw its footprint — focusing less on private school tuition and more on public school supports like tutoring, transportation and enrichment services in underserved districts.

"My hope is that blue states take a hard look and ask: Can this be used to address our own needs?"

For progressives and education advocates who are wary of school vouchers, the decision is fraught. Opting in could draw criticism for approving what many see as a vehicle for privatization of K-12 education. But opting out could mean turning down federal dollars — education money that states with budding or robust private school voucher infrastructures, such as Arizona and Florida, will gladly take.

"There's money on the table, and it can be used for more than just private school tuition," Valant said. "If



A Sioux Falls School District student walks to the bus.

(Courtesy of Sioux Falls School District)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 21 of 75

blue states want to keep that money from reinforcing inequality, they'll have to get creative, and act fast."

Since 2020, private school choice programs — once limited to low-income or special needs students — have rapidly expanded.

In 2023, \$6.3 billion was spent nationwide on private school choice programs — less than 1% of total public K-12 operational spending, according to EdChoice, a nonprofit that advocates for school choice measures. From 2023-24 to 2024-25, participation in universal private school choice programs surged nearly 40%, growing from roughly 584,000 to 805,000 students in just one school year.

By 2026-27, about half of all U.S. students will be eligible, according to estimates by FutureEd, an independent think tank at Georgetown University.

These trends, combined with new federal tax credit, could fundamentally reshape the education funding landscape across state governments, experts say.

"States will need to decide whether to encourage the redirection of funding to support private and religious schools — either by expanding existing voucher programs or, if they don't have one, by introducing such a program for the first time," said Sasha Pudelski, director of advocacy for AASA, The School Superintendents Association. The group opposes the national voucher plan.

State regulations

As of this May, 21 states operated tax credit scholarship programs with varying degrees of funding and oversight. According to the EdChoice Friedman Index, the states of Florida, Arkansas, Arizona and Alabama rank highest in private school access, with 100% of students eligible for school choice programs.

Some states, like Florida and Arizona, already have extensive tax credit scholarship systems. Others, including Texas, are building new infrastructure such as statewide voucher programs and education savings accounts, known as ESAs.

States with no current programs face decisions about participation, regulation and equity, but without clear federal guardrails, education advocates told Stateline.

The federal policy builds on existing state-level tax credit scholarship programs — such as Alabama's — but significantly expands eligibility, removes scholarship caps and broadens allowable uses to include not just tuition, but also tutoring, therapy, transportation and academic support services. Beginning in 2027, scholarships will be excluded from federal taxable income.

Valant, of Brookings, told Stateline that some of his initial concerns were addressed in the version of the bill signed into law.

"There was a very realistic scenario in the earlier version of the bill where a small number of very wealthy people could essentially make money off this," Valant said. "That was mostly addressed."

The enacted version eliminates stock donations and caps individual tax credits at \$1,700. And with states that opt in having the power to shape their own program, Valant said that gives them the chance to establish their own guardrails, such as income eligibility caps or nondiscrimination policies for participating schools.

The scholarship-granting organizations, known as SGOs, would then be subject to new state regulations about where the money can go.

"States could say SGOs can't give money to schools that discriminate based on sexual orientation. ... There's quite a lot of room here for state regulation," he said.

Looking ahead, Valant said he'll be watching how states interpret their regulatory powers — and how effective scholarship-granting organizations are at fundraising under the new rules, which prohibit large stock gifts and rely instead on millions of smaller donations.

"Now it's a strange pitch: 'Can you front me \$300 to give to the SGO? I swear the IRS will give it back,'" he said. "It's going to take time to figure out how to sell this to families."

Concerns over transparency and equity remain. The program allows donors, scholarship-granting organizations and families to direct funds with little public accountability, critics say. And in states without robust oversight, Valant warns that funds could be misused — or channeled to institutions that exclude students based, for example, on identity or beliefs about sexual orientation.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 22 of 75

He also emphasized that early participation is likely to skew toward families already in private schools, particularly in wealthier ZIP codes — mirroring patterns seen in programs in Arizona, Florida and Georgia. “One big risk is that the funds will disproportionately flow to wealthier families — just like we’ve seen in many ESA programs,” Valant said.

What do these programs look like across the country?

FutureEd studied eight states — Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Oklahoma and West Virginia — where 569,000 students participated in school choice programs at a cost to taxpayers of \$4 billion in 2023-24.

The FutureEd analysis found significant differences among the states in design, funding and oversight. Arizona’s ESA program was the first of its kind in 2011, and also the first to shift toward universal eligibility in 2022.

Florida operated the largest and most expensive program, with broad eligibility, no caps or accreditation requirements, and a major influx of higher-income families, though it mandated some university-led performance reviews. Iowa fully funded ESAs and, like other states, saw mostly existing private school families benefit.

Arkansas had a cautious rollout due to legal delays and geographic clustering of participants, while West Virginia allowed spending across state lines with no performance reporting.

Newcomer North Carolina began with income-based prioritization but quickly expanded under political pressure or demand, while Alabama and Louisiana will launch ESA programs in 2025-26 using general state revenues.

Utah enacted a universal voucher program in 2023, providing up to \$8,000 per student for private school or homeschool expenses. A state teachers union sued, arguing that participating schools were not “free and open to all children” and that the program diverted public school funds. A state court this April ruled the program was unconstitutional.

As the new federal law opens the door for tax-credit-funded tuition support, Texas is building its first universal school voucher program, aided through ESAs to begin in the 2026-27 school year. The program is funded with \$1 billion over two years, with \$10,000-\$11,000 per student — up to \$30,000 for students with disabilities and \$2,000 for homeschoolers.

The Texas comptroller will oversee the program, and private schools must be open for at least two years to be eligible for funds.

Voucher programs can drain state budgets, and budget wonks predict the cost for Texas could rise to around \$4.8 billion by 2030, The Texas Tribune reported.

A spokesperson for the Texas comptroller’s office said that details are still being finalized; the state has issued a request for proposals due Aug. 4 to select eligible educational assistance organizations that would help funnel scholarship dollars to schools.

Other states may be more cautious. The Missouri National Education Association filed a lawsuit this summer to block \$51 million in state appropriations to private school scholarships through the MOScholars program. The suit argues that using general revenue rather than private donations violates the state constitution and undermines public education funding.

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

'Half-baked' USDA relocation irritates members of both parties on US Senate Ag panel

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - JULY 30, 2025 6:10 PM

Members of both parties on the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee chastised a U.S. Department of Agriculture official Wednesday for not consulting Congress before proposing to shift thousands of jobs out of the Washington, D.C., area.

USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Alexander Vaden defended the sweeping proposal, which Secretary Brooke Rollins announced with a five-page memo last week, saying it would help bring the department closer to the people the government oversees and lower the cost of living for federal workers, while pledging to work with members of the committee over the next month of planning.

"The secretary's memorandum was the first step, not the last step," Vaden told Minnesota's Amy Klobuchar, the top Democrat on the panel, who criticized several aspects of the plan.

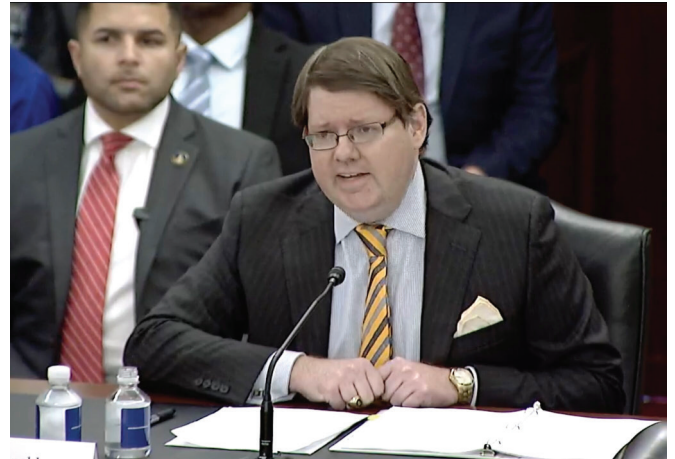
The proposal calls for cutting 2,600 of the 4,600 USDA jobs in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia and expanding the department's footprint in five regional hubs: Raleigh, North Carolina; Indianapolis; Kansas City, Missouri; Fort Collins, Colorado; and Salt Lake City.

Klobuchar said moving workers out of the capital region hurts the constituencies USDA serves. Agency officials should be nearby to meet with members of Congress, other executive branch offices and trade groups that are based in the nation's capital, she said.

"Whittling down USDA's resources to do this crucial work puts rural America at a disadvantage when they don't have people in the room where it happens," Klobuchar said.

"We have differences across the aisle," she continued. "But I think every one of my colleagues understands that you need people that can meet with you, you need people that can go over to the White House so that you don't have people that don't have the interests of rural America in mind making all the decisions."

Vaden said the USDA would keep employees in all of the department's mission areas in the Washington area.



U.S. Deputy Agriculture Secretary Stephen Alexander Vaden testifies before the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee on July 30, 2025. (Photo via committee livestream)

No advance notice

Even Republicans who said they generally agreed with the aims of the proposal indicated they did not appreciate the lack of notice before it was announced.

"I support finding cost savings where you can, I support the idea of moving people out of the D.C. area and out into the field and closer to the farmer," North Dakota Republican John Hoeven said. "We support the goals, but we want it to be a process where you work with Congress, with the Senate, both the authorizing committee and the Appropriations Committee on it, and we achieve those results together. And I think that'll help garner a lot more support for the effort."

In an opening statement, Chairman John Boozman, an Arkansas Republican, thanked Vaden for being available for the hearing on "very, very short notice"

Klobuchar took issue with that description.

"The reason it's short notice is because the administration put out a half-baked plan with no notice and without consulting agricultural leaders," she said.

Interest groups were not told ahead of the announcement, Vaden told Klobuchar, though the White

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 24 of 75

House Office of Management and Budget did receive notice.

In response to complaints about the lack of engagement with Congress, Vaden said that lawmakers were notified at the same time as USDA employees, shortly before the announcement was public, and he emphasized that the announcement started a 30-day engagement period that would involve Congress.

He also compared the reorganization plan to the remote work that the department's workforce used well past the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"From January 2021 to January 2025, the Biden administration, 2,200 employees left Washington, D.C.," he said. "There was no congressional notice, there was no outcry, there was no committee hearing. For more than 1,700 days, extending well beyond any fair definition of the COVID pandemic, USDA was on a maximum telework footing."

Midwest Republicans miffed

Some Republicans on the panel offered hearty endorsements to the proposal, including Jim Justice of West Virginia, who used his time to promote the plan instead of questioning Vaden.

"I don't have any questions," Justice said. "All I'm telling you is, we absolutely need to move and do the very best that we can for these great people."

But the issue transcended party lines in several cases. Some Republicans whose states were passed over in selecting the proposed hubs had sharp questions for Vaden, while some Democrats who would gain a federal presence under the proposal were less critical.

Hoeven questioned the proposed siting selections, noting Fargo, North Dakota, didn't have a hub within 600 miles. Fargo is "in the heart of ag country," Hoeven said.

"What's magic about five hubs?" he asked. "How much agriculture is there in the state of Utah? We can go through all those things and whether, in fact, it's actually easier or better for our farmers and our ranchers in North Dakota, given the five hubs you've selected."

Utah ranked 37th in total agricultural income, according to the USDA's 2023 statistics.

No Nebraska hub

Nebraska Republican Deb Fischer said she had discussed with Vaden, prior to his confirmation hearing this year, the possibility of moving some of the USDA's workforce outside the Beltway, and advocated for Nebraska as a suitable location.

Because of that, she was underwhelmed by the proposal and its introduction.

"I would have liked to see a process that allowed for Nebraska to demonstrate its strong value proposition," she said. "So while I do agree with the overreaching goal here, I have to express disappointment in how this has been rolled out and the lack of engagement with Congress prior to the announcement."

Meanwhile, Colorado Democrat Michael Bennet, whose state would see a regional hub that would also house a consolidated U.S. Forest Service office, said he agreed with the plan's goals.

"I have long called for the idea of trying to relocate people from Washington, D.C., to parts of the country, to partly to get out of the insulation of this place, to just be closer to, in this case, producers, but others as well," Bennet said. "So philosophically, that's where I've been."

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

Epstein files must be released by Trump administration under obscure law, Democrats contend

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - JULY 30, 2025 2:53 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senate Democrats on Wednesday began charting a little-known legal path to force President Donald Trump's administration to release the investigative files on the now deceased Florida sex offender and financier Jeffrey Epstein.

In a letter to Attorney General Pam Bondi, Democratic members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, along with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, requested the "full and complete Epstein files" by Aug. 15.

"After missteps and failed promises by your Department regarding these files, it is essential that the Trump Administration provide full transparency. In 2024, President Trump stated on the campaign trail that he would declassify the Epstein files, with his political account on X stating, 'President Trump says he will DECLASSIFY the 9/11 Files, JFK Files, and Epstein Files,'" according to the three-page letter led by Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan, the committee's top Democrat.

"We call on you to fulfill those promises of transparency," the letter, dated July 29, continued.

In addition to Schumer, other co-signers included Sens. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire, John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, Elissa Slotkin of Michigan, Andy Kim of New Jersey and Ruben Gallego of Arizona.



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speaks during a news conference with Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee member Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., demanding the release of the Epstein files at the U.S. Capitol on July 30, 2025 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/

Getty Images)

Five senators

The senators are invoking a nearly century-old law that compels the executive branch to comply if at least five senators on the committee sign on to a request, Schumer told reporters at a Wednesday press conference.

"While protecting the victim's identities can and must be of top importance, the public has a right to know who enabled, knew of or participated in one of the most heinous sex trafficking operations in history," Schumer said.

Blumenthal added that any notes and recordings of Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche's interviews last week in Tallahassee, Florida, with Ghislaine Maxwell should also be made public. Maxwell was convicted in 2021 and is now serving a 20-year sentence in a Florida federal prison for conspiring with Epstein to secure and transport minors for sexual abuse.

Along with requesting all investigative materials by mid-August, the senators also demanded a briefing for committee staff by Aug. 29.

Schumer said committee Democrats are "still talking" to Republican colleagues to urge them to join the request.

"And that may help get this public, but if not, there's recourse in the courts. This is the law," Schumer said.

A Justice Department spokesperson confirmed to States Newsroom that it received the letter but declined to comment further.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 26 of 75

Ghislaine Maxwell subpoenaed

The Justice Department's decision in early July to keep what are described as the Epstein files out of public view sparked uproar and division among Republicans in Congress, administration officials and Trump's base.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chair James Comer, a Kentucky Republican, issued a subpoena for an Aug. 11 deposition with Maxwell. Committee leadership rejected the convicted sex trafficker's request Tuesday for the condition of immunity, according to media reports.

The continued noise led House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican and Trump ally, to release members early for the six-week August break to avoid votes related to compelling the release of Epstein material.

The DOJ's unsigned memo on July 7 stated that a review of the files did not reveal an "incriminating 'client list'" and that no further disclosure of the investigative materials "would be appropriate or warranted."

Since the memo's release, the Wall Street Journal revealed that Bondi briefed Trump in May that his name appeared in the Epstein materials. The context in which his name appears remains unknown.

The Journal also reported the existence of a 50th-birthday greeting that Trump drew and wrote for Epstein that featured the outline of a naked woman with Trump's signature as pubic hair. Trump has denied he made the drawing and sued the Wall Street Journal.

The reports have further fueled calls for the files to be released.

Falling-out between Trump and Epstein

Trump told reporters Tuesday that he had a falling-out with Epstein after the financier began "taking" spa workers, whom Trump said were young women, from his Mar-a-Lago estate. Trump said Epstein "stole" Virginia Giuffre who worked at the Palm Beach, Florida, resort in 2000 at age 16, according to a 2016 deposition.

Giuffre alleged Maxwell and Epstein trafficked her as a teen for illegal sex with influential men, including Britain's Prince Andrew, who settled with Giuffre and stepped down from his royal duties.

Giuffre became an advocate for victims of sex trafficking. She died by suicide in April.

The Justice Department concluded Epstein harmed more than 1,000 victims.

Epstein was found hanged in August 2019 in his New York City jail cell, where he was awaiting trial on federal sex trafficking charges.

This story mentions suicide. If you or a loved one are suffering with thoughts of suicide, call or text 988. An online chat option is also available at 988lifeline.org.

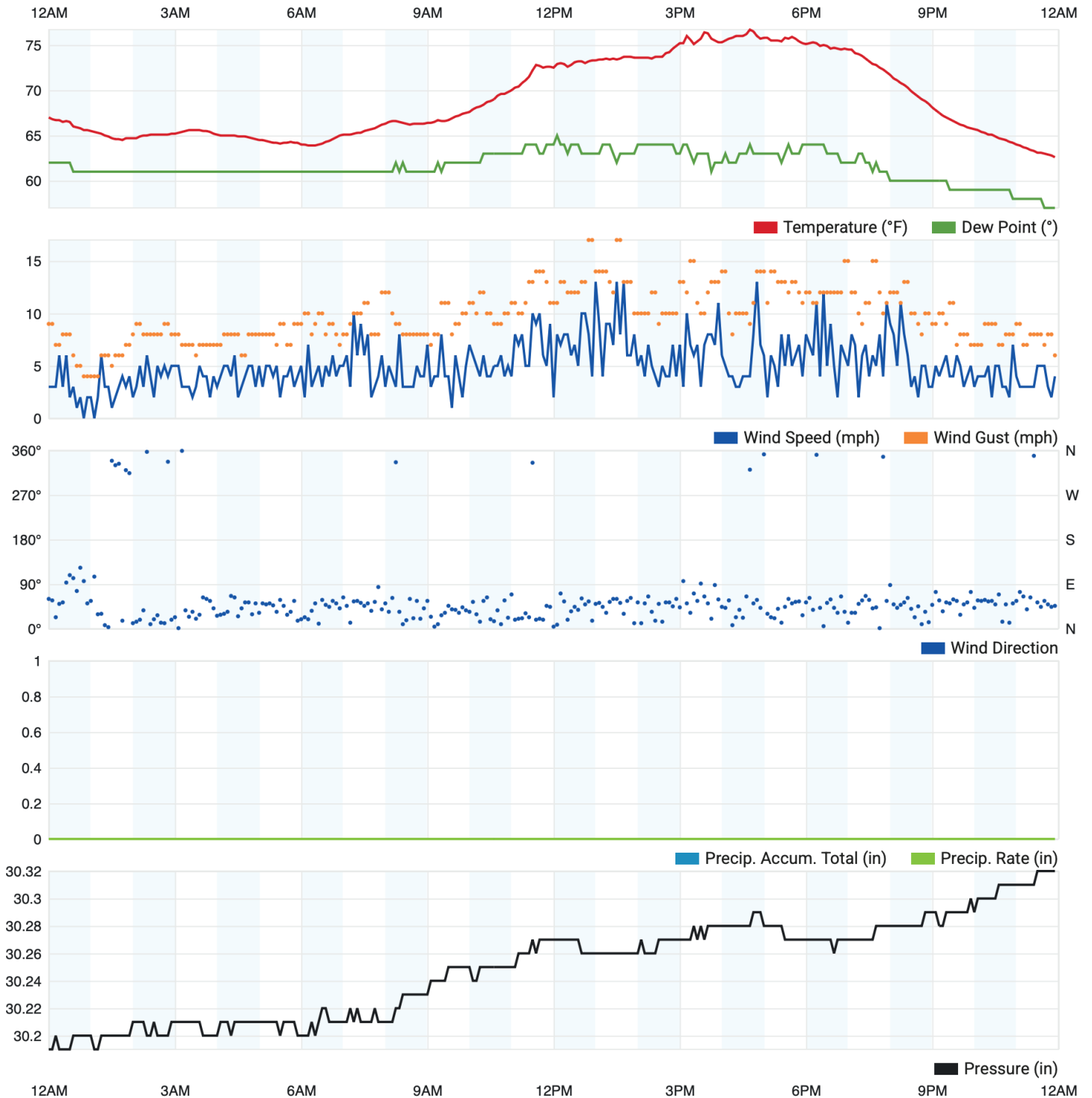
Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 27 of 75

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 30, 2025



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 28 of 75

Today



High: 78 °F

Areas Smoke

Tonight



Low: 58 °F

Areas Smoke

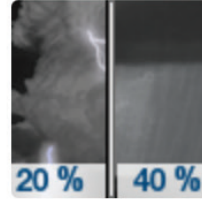
Friday



High: 76 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Slight Chance
T-storms

Friday Night



Low: 58 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Chance
Showers

Saturday



High: 74 °F

Chance
Showers

Air Quality and Health

Exposure to air pollutants such as particulate matter and ground-level ozone can cause:



Headaches



Difficulty breathing



Irritated eyes,
sinuses



Chest pains,
asthma attacks



Fatigue



Irritated throat,
increased coughing

Poor air quality can be hazardous to anyone, and it can aggravate health problems such as asthma, heart disease, and lung disease.

Seniors, children and those with compromised immune systems are especially at risk.

Air Quality Index values from smoke... <https://fire.airnow.gov/>

weather.gov



Exposure to air pollutants can cause headaches, irritated eyes/sinuses, fatigue, difficulty breathing, chest pain/asthma attacks, and irritate the throat increasing coughing. Poor air quality can be hazardous to anyone, and it can aggravate health problems such as asthma, heart disease, and lung disease. Seniors, children, and those with compromised immune systems are especially at risk. Poor air quality can be hazardous. The latest Air Quality Index values from the EPA can help plan how you will react.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 29 of 75

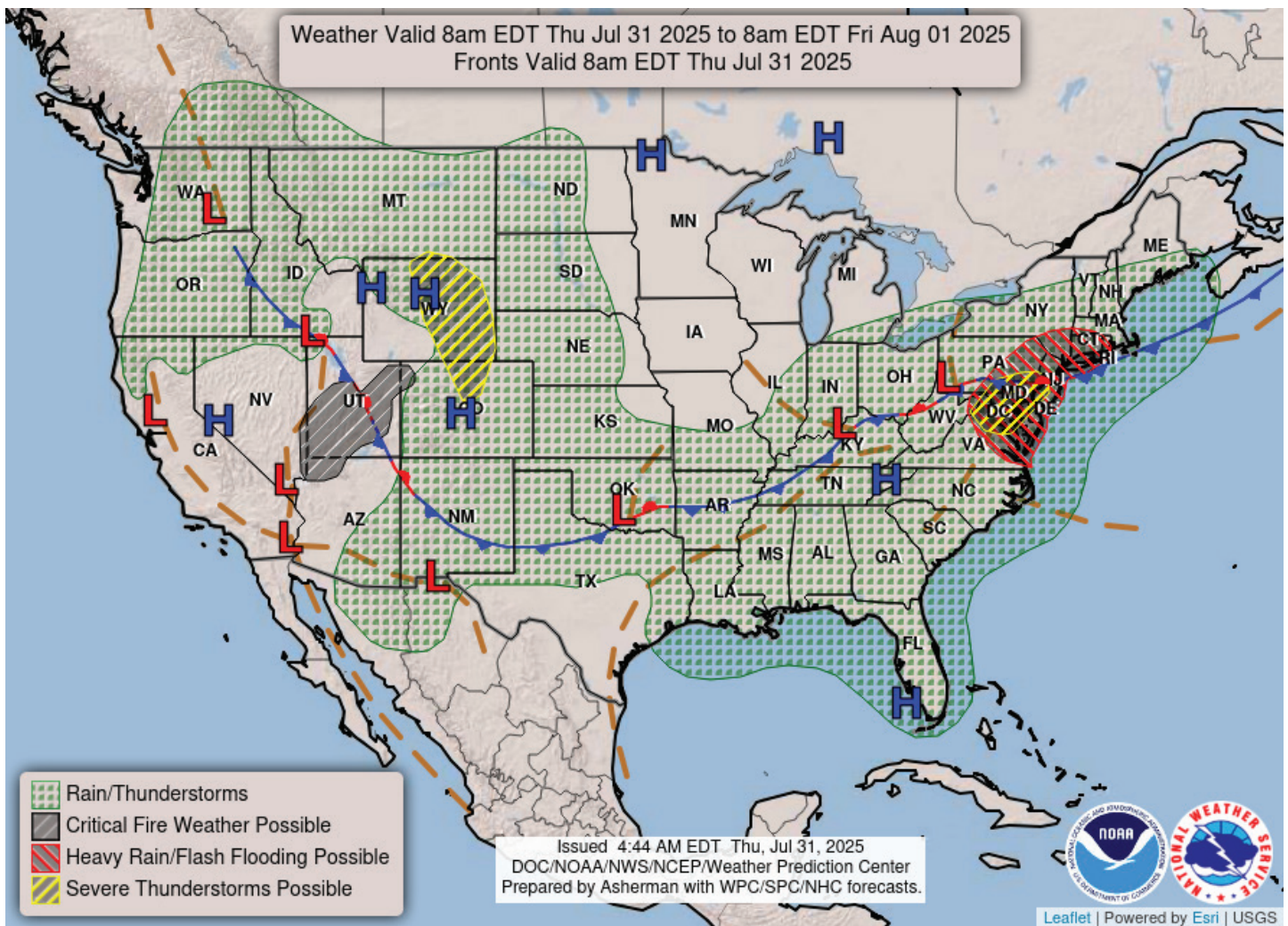
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 77 °F at 4:39 PM
Heat Index: 78 °F at 3:45 PM
Low Temp: 63 °F at 11:27 PM
Wind: 18 mph at 1:29 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 48 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1987
Record Low: 42 in 1903
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 3.09
Precip to date in July: 6.91
Average Precip to date: 14.10
Precip Year to Date: 15.07
Sunset Tonight: 9:03:08 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:15:35 am



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 30 of 75

Today in Weather History

July 31, 1966: A deadly, estimated F3 tornado moved southeast, passing south of Ashley, North Dakota, destroying buildings on five farms with near F4 damage to one farm house. Another tornado with F2 strength occurred north of Long Lake where two adults were killed, and three children were injured as a car was thrown 500 feet from Highway 101. A second estimated F2 tornado moved ENE just south of Aberdeen. A trailer was demolished, killing a man and injuring his wife. Seven airplanes were also had damage. Property damage was estimated at a quarter million dollars. An estimated 90 mph wind gust was also reported northeast of Aberdeen.

July 31, 2008: In the early morning hours of the 31st, a line of storms originating in North Dakota began to expand and surge southeast into northeast South Dakota. As the storms moved southeast, they started to tap into warmer, more humid air and rapidly evolve into a line of severe thunderstorms. Widespread damage occurred in a broad swath extending from Long Lake in McPherson County all the way into eastern Grant County and southern Big Stone County in Minnesota. The most extensive damage was found along and near US Highway 12 from Aberdeen to Milbank. Several observing stations in the path of this system measured wind speeds ranging from 70 mph to over 115 mph. Estimated wind speeds from damage surveys indicated even stronger winds with peak speeds of 120 mph.

Over fifty communities in northeast South Dakota and the surrounding rural areas received minor to major tree, and structural damage as straight-line winds from 70 to 120 mph raced across the area. Webster and Waubay received the most extensive damage from the storms. Thousands of trees were snapped or uprooted, hundreds of grain bins were damaged or destroyed, hundreds of homes, businesses, and outbuildings were damaged or destroyed along with many power poles and miles of power lines downed. Many mobile homes, campers, and boats were damaged or destroyed along with many road and business signs.

Fallen trees also damaged countless homes, vehicles, and campers. Thousands of acres of crops were also damaged or destroyed by the winds and hail. The most significant crop damage occurred in the Roslyn, Grenville, Eden, and Pickerel Lake areas in Marshall and Day counties. Many acres of corn were blown down and not able to come back. The large hail combined with the strong winds also broke out many windows in homes and vehicles along with damaging the siding on houses. Thousands of people were left without power for up to several days. Large hay bales were moved up to 700 yards by the high winds. A semi was overturned on Highway 12 near Webster, injuring the driver. Near Milbank on Highway 12, two other semis were blown off the road resulting in injuries to both drivers. A State Forestry Specialist said it was one of the worst tree damage events he has ever seen in the Webster area. A fifty-eight-year-old man died two miles north of Waubay during the cleanup after the storms when he was pinned between a backhoe and a tree.

1715: Spanish treasure ships, returning from the New World to Spain, encountered a hurricane during the early morning hours on this day. Eleven of the twelve ships were lost near present-day Vero Beach, Florida.

1949: Lightning struck a baseball field at Baker, Florida during a game. The shortstop and third baseman were killed instantly.

1976 - A stationary thunderstorm produced more than ten inches of rain which funneled into the narrow Thompson River Canyon of northeastern Colorado. A wall of water six to eight feet high wreaked a twenty-five mile path of destruction from Estes Park to Loveland killing 156 persons. The flash flood caught campers, and caused extensive structural and highway damage. Ten miles of U.S. Highway 34 were totally destroyed as the river was twenty feet higher than normal at times. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1986 - The temperature at Little Rock, AR, soared to 112 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. Morrilton, AR, hit 115 degrees, and daily highs for the month at that location averaged 102 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1987: The second deadliest tornado in Canadian history occurred in Edmonton, Alberta. An F4 tornado killed 27 people, injured over 300, and caused a quarter of a billion dollars in damage.

1997: South Pole, Antarctica recorded their coldest July ever. The average temperature of -86.8 degrees broke the previous record of -83.6 degrees set in July 1965.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 31 of 75



IN FEAR AND TREMBLING

George Fox is recognized as the founder of the religious movement known as "the Quakers." They were given this name because they would "quake" if they sinned, had a sinful thought, or saw someone who they thought was a sinner. Their reputation for holy living was well known. Once, while appearing before a judge for his beliefs, Fox admonished the judge: "Tremble before the Word of the Lord." The judge mocked him and called him a "Quaker."

In Psalm 4:4 David said, "Stand in awe, and sin not." Another way to translate this phrase is simply, "Tremble, and sin not."

Today, however, many do not understand what sin is or its very real consequences. We live in a culture that does not recognize nor respect the value of life. We live in a world that focuses on pleasure and entertainment, wealth and the abundance of things. The moral compass of many individuals is spinning out of control and has no reference point to direct people to what is right or wrong, good or bad, decent or destructive, helpful or harmful.

In this psalm David uses the word "meditate" – which means "to consider, to reflect." Too often the only time we spend with God is to tell Him what we want. We demand things from Him as though He is our slave. Perhaps if we were willing to "consider" or "reflect" on His Word, we would realize that the sin in our lives separates us from Him, and we need His forgiveness.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be sensitive to the sin in our lives and our need for forgiveness. May we wait before You patiently as we seek Your blessing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Psalm 4:4

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 32 of 75

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

- ☐ Black & White\$48.99/year
- ☐ Colored\$79.88/year
- ☐ Colored\$42.60/6 months
- ☐ E-Weekly*\$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- ☐ 1 Month\$15.98
- ☐ 3 Months.....\$26.63
- ☐ 6 Months.....\$31.95
- ☐ 9 Months.....\$42.60
- ☐ 12 Months.....\$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 33 of 75



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.29.25

17 30 34 63 67 11

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$140,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 25 Mins
14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.30.25

9 13 26 43 51 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$3,740,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 40
Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.30.25

2 5 22 33 40 12

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 55 Mins 13
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.30.25

2 8 10 25 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$75,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 55
Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.30.25

13 32 65 66 68 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 24
Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.30.25

4 15 35 50 64 8

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$410,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 24
Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 34 of 75

Upcoming Groton Events

CANCELLED: Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove

08/02/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9 pm

08/07/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm

08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove

09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm

09/6-7/25 Fly in/Drive in at Groton Municipal Airport

09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm

09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove

10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am

10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park

10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm

11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm

11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.

12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Arkansas teacher charged with killing couple who were hiking in Devil's Den with their kids

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas police charged a 28-year-old schoolteacher in the killing of a married couple who were hiking with their children at Devil's Den State Park, finding him in a nearby city after a five-day search and public pleas for trailgoers to look through their photos.

State Police arrested Andrew James McGann at a barbershop in Springdale, said Col. Stacie Rhoads, commander of the department's criminal investigation division. He was charged with two counts of capital murder and was being held Thursday in the state's Washington County jail.

Police announced the arrest at a Wednesday night news conference but would not discuss a motive. McGann had been hired at Springdale Public Schools as a teacher candidate for the upcoming year but had not yet come into contact with any of its families or students, the district said in a statement.

A lawyer couldn't be located for McGann, and a message was left for a number listed for him. It was not immediately clear when his first court appearance was.

"If you commit a violent, senseless act here in our state, our law enforcement will hunt you down and bring you to justice, because that's what the people of Arkansas frankly deserve," Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters.

Springdale is roughly 30 miles (48.28 kilometers) north of the state's remote Devil's Den park, where trails have remained closed since Saturday's killings.

Police flooded with tips

Clinton David Brink, 43, and Cristen Amanda Brink, 41, were found dead on a walking trail at Devil's Den. Their daughters, who are 7 and 9, were not hurt and are being cared for by family members, authorities have said.

The State Police have released few details about the investigation, including how the couple was killed. In the days after the attack, police released a composite sketch and then a photo of a person of interest that showed them only from behind. Authorities urged trailgoers who had been at the park to check their camera rolls for photos or video that might help point to a suspect.

Rhoads said the public's help and video footage they received was instrumental in capturing McGann. Tips came in from as far away as Washington state, she said.

"It was overwhelming," she said.

Suspect taught in Oklahoma before Arkansas job

McGann was a teacher at a small Oklahoma school district until May and then resigned to take a job in another state, according to a statement from Sand Springs Public Schools, which is near Tulsa. It added that McGann had passed all background checks.

McGann had not yet started his new job in Arkansas at Springdale Public Schools, said Jared Cleveland, the district superintendent. He said the district could not provide more information, citing the investigation.

"Our entire team extends our deepest condolences to the Brink family. Their children are especially in our thoughts and prayers," Cleveland said.

Sierra Marcum said three years ago, her son was a student in McGann's fourth grade classroom in Flower Mound, Texas, and described him as the "most standoff teacher she had ever met." Her son's yearbook includes a photo of McGann.

"Pretty cold. You could ask him a question and he would give you a one word response," she said. "Overall just pretty disinterested in his students."

Victims had recently moved before hike

Clinton and Cristen Brink had just moved from South Dakota to the small city of Prairie Grove in northwest Arkansas. Their water had been connected less than two weeks ago, Mayor David Faulk said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 36 of 75

Clinton Brink had been scheduled to start a job as a milk delivery driver Monday in the nearby Fayetteville area, according to Hiland Dairy, his employer. Cristen Brink had been licensed as a nurse in Montana and South Dakota before moving to Arkansas.

The Brink family said the couple died "heroes protecting their little girls."

"Our entire state is grieving for the tragic loss and senseless and horrific crime that's taken place in this area," Sanders said.

Devil's Den is a 2,500-acre (1,000-hectare) state park near West Fork, about 140 miles (220 kilometers) northwest of Little Rock, the state capital.

The park is known for its hiking trails and rock formations, and it is a short drive from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and Walmart's Bentonville headquarters.

It was selected as a state park site in the 1930s and the park's trails lead to the surrounding Ozark National Forest.

Ranchers say expanding herds to take advantage of record retail beef prices isn't so simple

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — In a period when retail beef prices are at an all-time high and consumers are still willing to pay, South Dakota rancher Calli Williams would love to cash in. But it's not so simple.

Williams and her husband, Tate, raise about 70 cow-calf pairs near Letcher in southeastern South Dakota, roughly 18 miles (29 kilometers) north of Mitchell. They own about 80 acres (32 hectares) and rent additional pasture.

Between the drought that hit cattle country hard over the last few years, still being maxed out on the grass available to feed their animals, and with land prices rising, she said, they simply can't yet make the financial investments that they'd need to raise production.

"It is a goal of ours to expand," she said. "I'm just not sure if that will be in the 10-year plan or even longer."

Biology is a barrier to expansion

Farmers and ranchers across the U.S. would love to take greater advantage of the high prices, but with the U.S. herd at record lows, they can't meet the demand quickly. It's basic biology.

"It takes three years to get more cows — between making a decision, having that gestation period, having the calf born, raising the calf until it, too, can have a calf," said Michael Swanson, chief agricultural economist for the Wells Fargo Agri-Food Institute in Minneapolis.

Drought has eased but the impacts persist

The Williamses' county was hard hit by drought over the previous few seasons. Because of the lack of their grass and uneconomically high hay prices, they had to sell all their young females last year that could have produced more calves for them this year, she said.

Their area has caught some rain lately, though. It has improved to just "abnormally dry" in recent U.S. Drought Monitor reports. But Williams said they're simply playing catch-up.

Swanson said some of the main cattle areas in North America — from Saskatchewan and Manitoba in Canada down to Texas in the U.S. — are just naturally prone to drought. It's often boom or bust.

Colin Woodall, CEO of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said a lot of cattle country has had good rain this summer, but it's a cyclical business.

"Sometimes we have good times, and sometimes we don't," Woodall said. "And we are just coming off what was a pretty significant negative hit to the cattle industry in '19, '20 and '21, with the height of the pandemic. So we have a lot of producers who are still trying to pay off bills from those times."

Fear of future drought is also a factor

And Woodall said his members are still leery. They're asking how long the better weather will last.

"We're getting some good moisture now. But will it be that way in the fall? Will it be that way next year?" he said. "Because the last thing you want to do is pay to rebuild your herd and then just have to liquidate

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 37 of 75

them again in six months to a year.”

Although it's difficult to attribute any single weather event, such as a drought, directly to climate change, scientists say that rising temperatures stoked by climate change are increasing the odds of both severe droughts and heavier precipitation, which wreak havoc on people and the environment.

When extreme weather collides with tight margins, farmers and ranchers feel the squeeze.

The economics: Prices have soared to record highs

Retail beef prices have hit record highs with no relief for consumers in sight. Ground beef rose to an average of \$6.12 per pound in June, up nearly 12% from 2024. The average price of all steaks rose 8% to \$11.49 per pound.

And the average prices that producers receive for cattle and calves have increased from \$1.51 per pound in May 2020 to \$4.05 in May of this year.

But herds have still shrunk

The total U.S. cattle herd is the smallest it has been at midyear since the government began keeping those figures in 1973, and probably since the 1950s. There were few signs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture data released last Friday that producers have begun rebuilding herds.

As of July 1, the U.S. had 94.2 million cattle and calves, down from the last midyear peak in 2019 of nearly 103 million. Critical for the future supply, 2025 calf production is projected at 33.1 million head, down 1% from last year.

Derrell Peel, a livestock marketing specialist at Oklahoma State University, said if producers were planning to grow their herds, the USDA reports would have shown them keeping heifers — female cows that haven't given birth yet.

Yet consumer demand remains high

While retail prices are high, consumers so far have been willing to pay them.

Glynn Tonsor, who leads the Meat Demand Monitor at Kansas State University, said taste is the most important consideration when shoppers choose proteins — and beef remains the favorite.

The late June report found that consumers were willing to fork out \$17.62 a pound for rib-eye steaks and \$8.82 for a pound of ground beef. That's more than the \$7.13 they'd pay for pork chops, \$6.19 for bacon, or \$8.55 for chicken breasts.

A major reason, Woodall offered, is that the beef industry has focused on the eating experience.

“The kind of beef that we are producing today is some of the highest quality, best tasting beef that we've ever produced in history here in the United States,” he said. “So, things such as USDA prime graded steaks that at one point in time you could only get in a restaurant, you can now get that in a grocery store.”

For consumers who balk at costs, the marketing specialist Peel said, pork and poultry are “abundant and quite favorably priced.”

Meanwhile, back at the ranch

The Williamses, who are both 34, built their TW Angus business from scratch. Tate Williams started buying cattle when he was in high school, and they bought their land in 2015. They sell bulls in the spring and keep heifers when they can. They also raise steers in their own feedlot and sell the meat directly to consumers.

“We would really like to expand our operation,” Calli Williams said. “We have a goal of being able to pass this on to the next generation,” Williams said, meaning their sons Jack, 7, and Tommy, nearly 4.

But recalling a friend's words, she said ranchers are a resilient bunch.

“We're optimistic that if Mother Nature — she wreaked havoc on us, whether that was a drought or a flood — that next year she'll be kinder to us,” she said. “Or, if the markets weren't on our side, we're optimistic that the markets will be on our side next time.”

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 38 of 75

Russian missile and drone attack hits Ukrainian capital Kyiv, killing 7 people and wounding 82

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia attacked Ukraine's capital with missiles and drones overnight, killing at least seven people, including a 6-year-old boy, and wounding 82 others, Ukrainian authorities said Thursday.

Ten children, the youngest being a 5-month-old girl, were among the injured, Kyiv City Military Administration head Tymur Tkachenko said. A large part of a nine-story residential building collapsed after it was struck, he said.

Rescue teams were at the scene searching for people trapped under the rubble.

Yana Zhabborova, 35, a resident of the damaged building, woke up to the sound of thundering explosions, which blew off the doors and windows of her home.

"It is just stress and shock that there is nothing left," said Zhabborova, a mother of a 5-month-old infant and a 5-year-old child.

Russia fired 309 Shahed and decoy drones, and eight Iskander-K cruise missiles overnight, the Ukrainian air force said. Ukrainian air defenses intercepted and jammed 288 strike drones and three missiles. Five missiles and 21 drones struck targets.

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defense said Thursday that it had shot down 32 Ukrainian drones overnight.

A drone attack had sparked a blaze at an industrial site in Russia's Penza region, local Gov. Oleg Melnichenko said. He didn't immediately give further details other than to say that there were no casualties.

In the Volgograd region, some trains were also halted after drone wreckage fell on local railway infrastructure, state rail operator Russian Railways said.

Russia's Defense Ministry also said that its forces took full control of the strategically important city of Chasiv Yar in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

Ukrainian officials, who typically don't confirm retreats, didn't immediately comment.

Russian and Ukrainian troops have battled for control of Chasiv Yar for nearly 18 months. It includes a hilltop from which troops can attack other key points in the region that form the backbone of Ukraine's eastern defenses.

A report on Thursday from Ukraine's Army General Staff said there were seven clashes in Chasiv Yar in the past 24 hours. An attached map showed most of the town as being under Russian control.

DeepState, an open-source Ukrainian map widely used by the military and analysts, showed early Thursday that neighborhoods to the south and west of Chasiv Yar remained as so-called gray zones, or uncontrolled by either side.

The attack targeted the Kyiv, Dnipro, Poltava, Sumy, Mykolaiv regions, with Ukraine's capital being the primary target, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram.

"Today, the world once again saw Russia's answer to our desire for peace with America and Europe," Zelenskyy said. "New demonstrative killings. That is why peace without strength is impossible."

He called on Ukraine's allies to follow through on defense commitments and pressure Moscow toward real negotiations.

Plumes of smoke emanating from a partially damaged building and debris strewn on the ground. The force of the blast wave was powerful enough to leave clothes hanging limply from trees.

At least 27 locations across Kyiv were hit by the attack, Tkachenko said, with the heaviest damage seen in the Solomianskyi and Sviatoshynskyi districts. More than 100 buildings were damaged in Kyiv, including homes, schools, kindergartens, medical facilities and universities, he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he's giving Russian President Vladimir Putin a shorter deadline — Aug. 8 — for peace efforts to make progress, or Washington will impose punitive sanctions and tariffs.

Western leaders have accused Putin of dragging his feet in U.S.-led peace efforts in an attempt to capture more Ukrainian land.

Trump announces 25% tariff on India and unspecified penalties for buying Russian oil

By JOSH BOAK and RAJESH ROY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States will impose a 25% tariff on goods from India, plus an additional import tax because of India's purchasing of Russian oil, President Donald Trump said Wednesday.

The new tariffs were part of a flurry of trade activity that included a series of executive actions regarding Brazil, copper and shipments of goods worth less than \$800, as well as a reduced 15% tax on imports from South Korea, including its autos. It was all a prelude to Friday when Trump's new tariff regime is scheduled to start, an event the White House has portrayed as a testament to Trump's negotiating skills even as concerns persist about the taxes hurting growth and increasing inflationary pressures.

India "is our friend," Trump said on his Truth Social platform announcing the taxes, but its tariffs on U.S. products "are far too high."

The Republican president added India buys military equipment and oil from Russia, enabling Moscow's war in Ukraine. As a result, he intends to charge an additional "penalty" starting on Friday as part of the launch of his administration's revised tariffs on multiple countries.

Trump told reporters on Wednesday the two countries were still in the middle of negotiations on trade despite the tariffs slated to begin in a few days.

"We're talking to India now," the president said. "We'll see what happens."

The Indian government said Wednesday it's studying the implications of Trump's tariffs announcement.

India and the U.S. have been engaged in negotiations on concluding a "fair, balanced and mutually beneficial" bilateral trade agreement over the last few months, and New Delhi remains committed to that objective, India's Trade Ministry said in a statement.

Trump on Wednesday also signed separate orders to tax imports of copper at 50% and justify his 50% tariffs on Brazil due to their criminal prosecution of former President Jair Bolsonaro and treatment of U.S. social media companies. Trump also signed an order saying that government now had the systems in place to close the tariff loophole on "de minimis" shipments, which had enabled goods priced under \$800 to enter America duty-free, largely from China.

The South Korea agreement will impose a 15% tariff, instead of the 25% Trump had threatened. South Korea would also buy \$100 billion in energy resources from the U.S. and provide \$350 billion for "investments owned and controlled by the United States, and selected by myself, as president," Trump said.

There is also an agreement with Pakistan that includes the development of its oil reserves. Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent briefed Trump on trade talks with China.

Trump's view on tariffs

Trump's announcement comes after a slew of negotiated trade frameworks with the European Union, Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia — all of which he said would open markets for American goods while enabling the U.S. to raise tax rates on imports. The president views tariff revenues as a way to help offset the budget deficit increases tied to his recent income tax cuts and generate more domestic factory jobs.

While Trump has effectively wielded tariffs as a cudgel to reset the terms of trade, the economic impact is uncertain as most economists expect a slowdown in U.S. growth and greater inflationary pressures as some of the costs of the taxes are passed along to domestic businesses and consumers.

There's also the possibility of more tariffs coming on trade partners with Russia as well as on pharmaceutical drugs and computer chips.

Kevin Hassett, director of the White House National Economic Council, said Trump and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer would announce the Russia-related tariff rates on India at a later date.

Tariffs face European pushback

Trump's approach of putting a 15% tariff on America's long-standing allies in the EU is also generating pushback, possibly causing European partners as well as Canada to seek alternatives to U.S. leadership on the world stage.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Wednesday in the aftermath of the trade framework that Europe

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 40 of 75

"does not see itself sufficiently" as a global power, saying in a cabinet meeting that negotiations with the U.S. will continue as the agreement gets formalized.

"To be free, you have to be feared," Macron said. "We have not been feared enough. There is a greater urgency than ever to accelerate the European agenda for sovereignty and competitiveness."

Seeking a deeper partnership with India

Washington has long sought to develop a deeper partnership with New Delhi, which is seen as a bulwark against China.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has established a good working relationship with Trump, and the two leaders are likely to further boost cooperation between their countries. When Trump in February met with Modi, the U.S. president said that India would start buying American oil and natural gas.

The new tariffs on India could complicate its goal of doubling bilateral trade with the U.S. to \$500 billion by 2030. The two countries have had five rounds of negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement. While U.S. has been seeking greater market access and zero tariff on almost all its exports, India has expressed reservations on throwing open sectors such as agriculture and dairy, which employ a bulk of the country's population for livelihood, Indian officials said.

The Census Bureau reported that the U.S. ran a \$45.8 billion trade imbalance in goods with India last year, meaning it imported more than it exported.

At a population exceeding 1.4 billion people, India is the world's largest country and a possible geopolitical counterbalance to China. India and Russia have close relations, and New Delhi has not supported Western sanctions on Moscow over its war in Ukraine.

The new tariffs could put India at a disadvantage in the U.S. market relative to Vietnam, Bangladesh and, possibly, China, said Ajay Sahai, director general of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations.

"We are back to square one as Trump hasn't spelled out what the penalties would be in addition to the tariff," Sahai said. "The demand for Indian goods is bound to be hit."

'Just a jumble of bones.' How a baby grave discovery has grown to haunt Ireland

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

TUAM, Ireland (AP) — This story begins with a forbidden fruit.

It was the 1970s in this small town in the west of Ireland when an orchard owner chased off two boys stealing his apples.

The youngsters avoided being caught by clambering over the stone wall of the derelict Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home. When they landed, they discovered a dark secret that has grown to haunt Ireland.

One of the boys, Franny Hopkins, remembers the hollow sound as his feet hit the ground. He and Barry Sweeney pushed back some briars to reveal a concrete slab they pried open.

"There was just a jumble of bones," Hopkins said. "We didn't know if we'd found a treasure or a nightmare."

Hopkins didn't realize they'd found a mass unmarked baby grave in a former septic tank — in a town whose name is derived from the Irish word meaning burial place.

It took four decades and a persistent local historian to unearth a more troubling truth that led this month to the start of an excavation that could exhume the remains of almost 800 infants and young children.

The Tuam grave has compelled a broader reckoning that extends to the highest levels of government in Dublin and the Vatican. Ireland and the Catholic Church, once central to its identity, are grappling with the legacy of ostracizing unmarried women who they believed committed a mortal sin and separating them from children left at the mercy of a cruel system.

An unlikely investigator

Word of Hopkins' discovery may never have traveled beyond what is left of the home's walls if not for the work of Catherine Corless, a homemaker with an interest in history.

Corless, who grew up in town and vividly remembers children from the home being shunned at school, set out to write an article about the site for the local historical society.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 41 of 75

But she soon found herself chasing ghosts of lost children.

"I thought I was doing a nice story about orphans and all that, and the more I dug, the worse it was getting," she said.

Mother and baby homes were not unique to Ireland, but the church's influence on social values magnified the stigma on women and girls who became pregnant outside marriage.

The homes were opened in the 1920s after Ireland won its independence from Britain. Most were run by Catholic nuns.

In Tuam's case, the mother and baby home opened in a former workhouse built in the 1840s for poor Irish where many famine victims died.

It had been taken over by British troops during the Irish Civil War of 1922-23. Six members of an Irish Republican Army faction that opposed the treaty ending the war were executed there in 1923.

Two years later, the imposing three-story gray buildings on the outskirts of town reopened as a home for expectant and young mothers and orphans. It was run for County Galway by the Bon Secours Sisters, a Catholic order of nuns.

The buildings were primitive, poorly heated with running water only in the kitchen and maternity ward. Large dormitories housed upward of 200 children and 100 mothers at a time.

Corless found a dearth of information in her local library but was horrified to learn that women banished by their families were essentially incarcerated there. They worked for up to a year before being cast out — most of them forever separated from their children.

So deep was the shame of being pregnant outside marriage that women were often brought there surreptitiously.

Peter Mulryan, who grew up in the home, learned decades later that his mother was six months pregnant when she was taken by bicycle from her home under the cover of darkness. The local priest arranged it after telling her father she was "causing a scandal in the parish."

Mothers and their children carried that stigma most of their lives.

But there was no accountability for the men who got them pregnant, whether by romantic encounter, rape or incest.

More shocking, though, was the high number of deaths Corless found.

When she searched the local cemetery for a plot for the home's babies, she found nothing.

Long-lost brothers

Around the time Corless was unearthing the sad history, Anna Corrigan was in Dublin discovering a secret of her own.

Corrigan, raised as an only child, vaguely remembered a time as a girl when her uncle was angry at her mother and blurted out that she had given birth to two sons. To this day, she's unsure if it's a memory or dream.

While researching her late father's traumatic childhood confined in an industrial school for abandoned, orphaned or troubled children, she asked a woman helping her for any records about her deceased mom.

Corrigan was devastated when she got the news: before she was born, her mother had two boys in the Tuam home.

"I cried for brothers I didn't know, because now I had siblings, but I never knew them," she said.

Her mother never spoke a word about it.

A 1947 inspection record provided insights to a crowded and deadly environment.

Twelve of 31 infants in a nursery were emaciated. Other children were described as "delicate," "wasted," or with "wizened limbs."

Corrigan's brother, John Dolan, weighed almost 9 pounds when he was born but was described as "a miserable, emaciated child with voracious appetite and no control over his bodily functions, probably mental defective." He died two months later in a measles outbreak.

Despite a high death rate, the report said infants were well cared for and diets were excellent.

Corrigan's brother, William, was born in May 1950 and listed as dying about eight months later. There

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 42 of 75

was no death certificate, though, and his date of birth was altered on the ledger, which was sometimes done to mask adoptions, Corrigan said.

Ireland was very poor at the time and infant mortality rates were high. Some 9,000 babies — or 15% — died in 18 mother and baby homes that were open as late as 1998, a government commission found.

In the 1930s and 1940s, more than 40% of children died some years in the homes before their first birthday.

Tuam recorded the highest death percentage before closing in 1961. Nearly a third of the children died there.

In a hunt for graves, the cemetery caretaker led Corless across the street to the neighborhood and playground where the home once stood.

A well-tended garden with flowers, a grotto and Virgin Mary statue was walled off in the corner. It was created by a couple living next door to memorialize the place Hopkins found the bones.

Some were thought to be famine remains. But that was before Corless discovered the garden sat atop the septic tank installed after the famine.

She wondered if the nuns had used the tank as a convenient burial place after it went out of service in 1937, hidden behind the home's 10-foot-high walls.

"It saved them admitting that so, so many babies were dying," she said. "Nobody knew what they were doing."

A sensational story

When she published her article in the Journal of the Old Tuam Society in 2012, she braced for outrage. Instead, she heard almost nothing.

That changed, though, after Corrigan, who had been busy pursuing records and contacting officials from the prime minister to the police, found Corless.

Corrigan connected her with journalist Alison O'Reilly and the international media took notice after her May 25, 2014, article on the Sunday front page of the Irish Mail with the headline: "A Mass Grave of 800 Babies."

The article caused a firestorm, followed by some blowback. Some news outlets, including The Associated Press, highlighted sensational reporting and questioned whether a septic tank could have been used as a grave.

The Bon Secours sisters hired public relations consultant Terry Prone, who tried to steer journalists away.

"If you come here you'll find no mass grave," she said in an email to a French TV company. "No evidence that children were ever so buried and a local police force casting their eyes to heaven and saying, 'Yeah a few bones were found — but this was an area where famine victims were buried. So?'"

Despite the doubters, there was widespread outrage.

Corless was inundated by people looking for relatives on the list of 796 deaths she compiled.

Those reared with the stain of being "illegitimate" found their voice.

Mulryan, who lived in the home until he was 4½, spoke about being abused as a foster child working on a farm, shoeless for much of the year, barely schooled, underfed and starved for kindness.

"We were afraid to open our mouths, you know, we were told to mind our own business," Mulryan said. "It's a disgrace. This church and the state had so much power, they could do what they liked and there was nobody to question them."

Then-Prime Minister Enda Kenny said the children were treated as an "inferior subspecies" as he announced an investigation into mother and baby homes.

When a test excavation confirmed in 2017 that skeletons of babies and toddlers were in the old septic tank, Kenny dubbed it a "chamber of horrors."

Pope Francis acknowledged the scandal during his 2018 visit to Ireland when he apologized for church "crimes" that included child abuse and forcing unmarried mothers to give up their children.

It took five years before the government probe primarily blamed the children's fathers and women's families in its expansive 2021 report. The state and churches played a supporting role in the harsh treatment, but it noted the institutions, despite their failings, provided a refuge when families would not.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 43 of 75

Some survivors saw the report as a damning vindication while others branded it a whitewash.

Prime Minister Micheál Martin apologized, saying mothers and children paid a terrible price for the nation's "perverse religious morality."

"The shame was not theirs — it was ours," Martin said.

The Bon Secours sisters offered a profound apology and acknowledged children were disrespectfully buried.

"We failed to respect the inherent dignity of the women and children," Sister Eileen O'Connor said. "We failed to offer them the compassion that they so badly needed."

The dig

When a crew including forensic scientists and archaeologists began digging at the site two weeks ago, Corless was "on a different planet," amazed the work was underway after so many years.

It is expected to take two years to collect bones, many of which are commingled, sort them and use DNA to try to identify them with relatives like Corrigan.

Dig director Daniel MacSweeney, who previously worked for the International Committee of Red Cross to identify missing persons in conflict zones in Afghanistan and Lebanon, said it is a uniquely difficult undertaking.

"We cannot underestimate the complexity of the task before us, the challenging nature of the site as you will see, the age of the remains, the location of the burials, the dearth of information about these children and their lives," MacSweeney said.

Nearly 100 people, some from the U.S., Britain, Australia, and Canada, have either provided DNA or contacted them about doing so.

Some people in town believe the remains should be left undisturbed.

Patrick McDonagh, who grew up in the neighborhood, said a priest had blessed the ground after Hopkins' discovery and Masses were held there regularly.

"It should be left as it is," McDonagh said. "It was always a graveyard."

A week before ground was broken, a bus delivered a group of the home's aging survivors and relatives of mothers who toiled there to the neighborhood of rowhouses that ring the playground and memorial garden.

A passageway between two homes led them through a gate in metal fencing erected to hide the site that has taken on an industrial look.

Beyond grass where children once played — and beneath which children may be buried — were storage containers, a dumpster and an excavator poised for digging.

It would be their last chance to see it before it's torn up and — maybe — the bones of their kin recovered so they can be properly buried.

Corrigan, who likes to say that justice delayed Irish-style is "delay, deny 'til we all go home and die," hopes each child is found.

"They were denied dignity in life, and they were denied dignity and respect in death," she said. "So we're hoping that today maybe will be the start of hearing them because I think they've been crying for an awful long time to be heard."

The Latest: Tsunami warnings lifted in most places

By The Associated Press undefined

A tsunami sent waves into parts of Russia, Japan, Hawaii and the U.S. West Coast after an 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck off the Russian Far East early Wednesday.

The quake was one of the biggest ever recorded. Several people were injured, but none gravely. No major damage has been reported.

The danger appeared to be subsiding in most places, but Chile kept alerts at the highest level for most of its lengthy Pacific coast while New Zealand renewed a warning to avoid the water.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 44 of 75

Here's the latest:

New Zealand renews warnings

Authorities in New Zealand renewed an advisory late in the afternoon local time that urged people to stay out of the water and off beaches.

Officials said rebounding tsunami activity from South America meant that strong and unusual currents could continue for another 24 hours, a directive from authorities said.

In the latest alert, officials removed a stretch of the country's coastline from the area affected by rough seas caused by tsunami waves.

No large tsunami waves have been recorded in New Zealand, which is about 6,000 miles from the quake's epicenter, but some areas registered surges 30 to 40 cm (12 to 16 inches) bigger than usual. Two thirds of New Zealanders live within 3 miles of the ocean.

Those responsible for New Zealand's national warning system, which broadcasts alerts to every cell phone in the country with a loud siren sound, defended its use Thursday after a glitch caused one alert to be sent in error repeatedly throughout the night. Emergency Management Minister Mark Mitchell said the system's shortcomings would be investigated.

Tsunami alerts lowered in much of South America

In South America, three of the four countries with coastlines on the Pacific lifted the tsunami warnings.

Authorities in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru on Wednesday announced the tsunami alerts were dropped. In Chile, the country with the largest Pacific coastline in South America, the government kept the alert along most of the coastline while lifting it in some areas where authorities said there are no longer risks.

Chile's Interior Minister, Álvaro Elizalde, said late Wednesday that evacuation orders remain in place in areas with remaining alerts and classes will continue canceled on Thursday.

He said that waves reached a height of 1.1 meters (3.6 feet) in some places, and in one location reached 2.5 meters (8.2 feet).

Chile is highly vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis.

1 died and 10 injured in Japan as people rushed to shelter

In Japan, one person died and 10 others — most of them in Hokkaido — were injured while heading shelter following the tsunami alert, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said Thursday. A woman in her 50s died after falling from a cliffside road while driving to an evacuation center in central Japan's Mie Prefecture, Hayashi said.

Separately, 11 people were taken to hospital after developing symptoms of heatstroke while taking shelter in hot weather, with temperatures rising to around 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in some places.

New Zealand says tsunami activity has begun

Emergency management officials say coastlines of New Zealand are experiencing strong currents and wave surges as tsunami activity reaches shores.

It's early morning Thursday in New Zealand. An alert broadcast to every cell phone says the threat is likely to remain in place until at least midday. Evacuations haven't been ordered. But people throughout the South Pacific island nation are warned to stay out of the water and away from beaches, shorelines, harbors, rivers and estuaries.

New Zealand is about 6000 miles (9,656 kilometers) from the quake's epicenter. Officials warn that the first tsunami waves might not be the largest to arrive and people should treat the threat as real until the alert is canceled.

Tsunami advisory is canceled for Oregon, Washington state

The tsunami advisory is canceled for Oregon and Washington state.

Experts say it's challenging to know exactly when all of the tsunami alerts and advisories will be dropped.

"It's kind of hard to predict because this is such an impactful event and has created so many of these waves passing by. It's hard to say exactly when they're going to be done," said Dave Snider, tsunami warning coordinator for the National Tsunami Warning Center in Alaska.

Snider said tsunami advisories are still in effect for Hawaii, parts of Alaska and parts of California.

In Alaska, 'we didn't feel a thing'

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 45 of 75

A spokesperson for Alaska's state emergency management agency, Jeremy Zidek, says in a text that no damage has been reported.

The community of Adak recorded the largest tsunami wave in Alaska at 2.7 feet, or less than a meter.

"I think what really surprised us, given the magnitude of that earthquake on Kamchatka, is that we didn't feel a thing," Adak City Manager Breck Craig said. "The bad thing is, that it might be our turn next."

Colombia orders evacuation of beaches

Officials in Colombia have ordered the complete closure and evacuation of beaches and low-tide areas along the country's Pacific coast.

Maritime traffic is also being restricted. Officials say strong currents and tsunami waves were possible in two coastal states, including one that borders Ecuador.

Threat to US 'has passed completely'

U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem said the threat of a major tsunami hitting the United States "has passed completely."

Noem, speaking in Chile where she is attending meetings with officials, told reporters in the capital, Santiago: "We're in really good shape right now. We were fully deployed and ready to respond if necessary, but grateful that we didn't have to deal with the situation that this could have been."

Chile raises tsunami warning to highest level

Chile has upgraded its tsunami warning to its highest level.

The red alert covers most of its 6,400-kilometer (4,000-mile) Pacific coastline, from Arica and Parinacota near its northern border to Magallanes in the far south.

The Education Ministry also canceled classes along much of the coast.

Explosions and lava flows on Russian volcano

Lava has begun to flow from the largest active volcano in the northern hemisphere Wednesday following the earthquake off Russia's far eastern coast.

The Klyuchevskaya Sopka — which last erupted in 2023 — stands at 4,750 meters (15,584 feet) in the east of Russia's Kamchatka region.

Observers heard explosions and saw streams of lava on the volcano's western slopes, the Kamchatka branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences' geophysical service said.

Scientists have anticipated an eruption, with the volcano's crater filling with lava for several weeks and the mountain spitting out plumes of ash.

Sometimes described as the "land of fire and ice," Kamchatka is one of the most active volcanic regions in the world. It has about 300 volcanoes, of which 29 are active, according to NASA Earth Observatory.

California city urges people to stay away from beaches

Officials warned people to stay away from beaches and waterways in Crescent City, California, which has observed dozens of tsunamis since the 1930s, including one that killed 11 people and destroyed hundreds of buildings in the city in 1964.

The warning came after a 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck off Russia's Far East coast on Wednesday. The U.S. National Weather Service's Eureka office reported tsunami waves with a maximum height of 3.6 feet (1.1 meters) in Crescent City — enough to create minor coastal flooding and inundation.

The 1964 event, considered the worst tsunami disaster recorded in the United States, began with a 9.2 magnitude earthquake in Alaska, according to the Crescent City website. Three smaller waves caused little damage, but then a big wave — nearly 21 feet (more than 6 meters) — devastated 29 city blocks and killed 11.

The city's downtown was mostly rebuilt and today a walking tour highlights high-water marks posted on surviving buildings, objects pushed by waves and memorials to those who died.

Japan downgrades last tsunami alert

Japan has downgraded its last remaining tsunami alert, which was in the country's north.

Tsunami advisories remain in place for its Pacific coast following the 8.8 magnitude earthquake that struck off Russia's Far East on Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 46 of 75

Russian authorities cancel tsunami warnings for 2 regions

Russian authorities on the Kamchatka Peninsula and Kuril Islands have canceled their tsunami warnings but say the risk of aftershocks and waves remains.

The regional branch of Russia's Emergency Ministry on Kamchatka warned that scientists expect aftershocks at magnitudes of up to 7.5. It said that more tsunamis are possible in the Avacha Bay where the regional capital of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky is located.

Russia says regional authorities were prepared

The Kremlin said that regional authorities on Kamchatka were well prepared for the quake.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov noted that the warnings were issued timely and people were quickly evacuated from dangerous areas. He added that the buildings proved resilient to shocks.

Tsunami-driven tides build in northern California

Tsunami activity continued to build in northern California as high tide approached Wednesday morning with maximum confirmed heights along the coast of 3.6 feet (1.1 meters) in Crescent City, 3.0 feet (.9 meters) in Arena Cove and 1.2 feet (.4 meters) in Humboldt Bay, according to the National Weather Service office in Eureka.

The measurements in Crescent City and Arena Cove were high enough to create minor coastal flooding and inundation, the weather service said on social media, adding that tsunami activity will persist and people should avoid beaches and harbors.

Crescent City officials warned on social media that higher surges could arrive around high tide and could affect lower lying areas. They asked people to stay away from beaches and waterways.

Hawaii and parts of Japan downgrade tsunami warnings

Hawaii and parts of Japan downgraded tsunami warnings, with Hawaii lifting evacuation orders across the state while leaving a tsunami advisory in place.

Officials in Hawaii said residents who had evacuated could return to their homes.

Maj. Gen. Stephen Logan, the Adjutant General of the State of Hawaii Department of Defense, said an advisory means there is the potential for strong currents and dangerous waves, as well as flooding on beaches or in harbors.

Russia declares state of emergency in areas hit by earthquake

The Russian authorities declared a state of emergency on the Kuril Islands and in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the main city on the Kamchatka peninsula.

They earlier reported that several tsunami waves flooded the fishing port of Severo-Kurilsk, the main city on the islands, and cut power supplies to the area. Russia's Oceanography Institute said tsunami waves that hit the city topped 6 meters (19 feet).

Japan asserts territorial rights to the four Pacific islands it calls the Northern Territories. They were taken by the Soviet Union in the final days of World War II, and the dispute has kept the countries from signing a peace treaty.

8.8-magnitude quake was among the strongest this century

Wednesday's 8.8-magnitude quake was among the four strongest earthquakes this century, and among the eight strongest since 1900, according to the USGS.

The earthquake occurred along the Pacific Ring of Fire, the ring of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes occur.

The 2011 Japan quake and the 2004 earthquake off Indonesia were 9.1 magnitude, and a 2010 earthquake in Chile also was recorded at 8.8 magnitude.

Japanese official warns evacuees they might not be able to return home by day's end

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told evacuees in the tsunami-affected areas that they might not be able to return home by the end of the day on Wednesday.

Hayashi said waves could remain high for at least one day, and he urged evacuees to take precautions and stay well hydrated in the summer heat.

Damage and minor injuries reported in Russian Far East

Local authorities on Russia's Kamchatka peninsula said several people were injured during the massive

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 47 of 75

quake, but didn't give an exact number.

Oleg Melnikov, head of the regional health department, said a few people hurt themselves while rushing to leave buildings and a hospital patient received an injury while jumping out of a window. Melnikov said that all injured people were in satisfactory condition.

A video released by Russian media outlet showed a team of doctors at a cancer clinic on Kamchatka holding a patient and clutching medical equipment as the quake rocked an operating room, before continuing with surgery after the shaking stopped. Officials said the doctors will receive decorations.

In Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Kamchatka's regional capital, the quake damaged a local kindergarten, which was not in operation due to ongoing repair work.

Water recedes at Hawaii beaches as tsunami reaches Oahu

Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said officials observed water receding by 20 to 30 feet (6 to 9 meters) at Haleiwa Harbor on Oahu, the state's most populous island, an indication tsunami waves will arrive. The waves pulling out left boats to lay on dry rock and sand. "That gave us pause," Green said.

So far no damage has been recorded, but it will take two to three hours of observation before authorities will be able to determine whether the event has passed, Green said.

Pacific island nations urge people to avoid coastlines

Authorities in a number of small island nations in the South Pacific Ocean urged people to stay away from coastlines, familiarize themselves with evacuation routes and await further guidance from officials, but did not order evacuations.

Some tiny and low-lying Pacific island chains are among the world's most imperiled by tsunamis and rising seas.

Cautions to stay away from beaches until any wave surges passed late Wednesday were issued by officials in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Federated States of Micronesia and Solomon Islands.

Nearly 2 million people under evacuation advisories in Japan

Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency said nearly 2 million residents are now under evacuation advisories in more than 220 municipalities along the Pacific coast as of midday Wednesday.

It added that one person was slightly injured on the northern island of Hokkaido when a woman in her 60s fell while rushing to evacuate. She was taken to a hospital.

Governor says Hawaii is ready for evacuations

Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said data from Midway Atoll, which is part of the way between Japan and Hawaii, measured tsunami waves from peak to trough of 6 feet (1.8 meters).

He said waves hitting Hawaii could be bigger or smaller and it was too early to tell how large they would be. A tsunami of that size would be akin to a three foot (90 centimeter) wave riding on top of surf, he said.

Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said data from Midway Atoll, which is part of the way between Japan and Hawaii, measured tsunami waves from peak to trough of 6 feet (1.8 meters).

He said waves hitting Hawaii could be bigger or smaller and it was too early to tell how large they would be. A tsunami of that size would be akin to a three foot (90 centimeter) wave riding on top of surf, he said.

He told a new conference that a wave that size could move cars and throw fences around.

"It can dislodge trees, that's why you can't just be out there. The impact is at great speed," Green said. "Any any structure that gets loose and strikes the individual could take them out. And people can drown quite easily with the force of that kind of wave."

Green said Black Hawk helicopters have been activated and high-water vehicles were ready to go in case authorities need to rescue people.

"But please do not put yourself in harm's way," he said.

Tsunami sirens sound in remote California city

The small Northern California community of Crescent City turned on its tsunami sirens to warn residents about possible waves.

"You are hearing a Tsunami Siren. We are under a Tsunami Warning. Please stay away from beaches and waterways. A predicted wave may hit at 11:55 pm. We are waiting on additional information about

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 48 of 75

any level of evacuation," read a post from the City Hall Facebook account.

The city in rural Northern California has roughly 6,000 residents.

A tsunami in 1964 caused by an earthquake in Alaska caused a wave 21 feet (6.4 meters) high to hit the city, killing 11 people and destroying its downtown.

Lines form at Honolulu gas stations

There were long lines at gas stations near downtown Honolulu, with standstill traffic even in areas away from the shoreline.

A Texaco gas station in the Nuuanu-Punchbowl neighborhood closed early so that workers could go home. The workers set out cones at pumps and turned away motorists.

Jimmy Markowski, on a family vacation from Hot Springs, Arkansas, ended up at the closed Texaco station after fleeing their Waikiki beach resort in a caravan of three cars carrying 15 people.

"All we're trying to do is just figure out what we're going to do for the next three or four hours," he said. "We've got water, we got some snacks ... we're going to stay elevated. This is our first tsunami warning ever. So this is all new to us."

Tsunami evacuations ordered in South America, but worst risk appears to pass for US after huge quake

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Fears of a devastating tsunami across the Pacific faded Wednesday after one of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded struck off a sparsely populated Russian peninsula, but communities along South America's Pacific coast carried out evacuations and closed beaches.

Warnings in the first hours after the 8.8 magnitude quake sent people fleeing to rooftops in Japan and forced tourists out of beachfront hotels in Hawaii, snarling island traffic. One death was reported in Japan, and in Russia, several people were hurt while rushing out of buildings, including a hospital patient who jumped from a window.

Millions of people were told to move away from the shore or seek high ground because they were potentially in the path of the tsunami waves, which struck seaside areas of Japan, Hawaii and the U.S. West Coast but did not appear to cause any major damage.

The dire warnings following the massive quake early Wednesday off Russia's Kamchatka peninsula evoked memories of catastrophic damage caused by tsunamis this century.

In Japan, people flocked to evacuation centers, hilltop parks and rooftops in towns on the Pacific coast with fresh memories of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that caused a nuclear disaster.

Cars jammed streets and highways in Honolulu, with traffic at a standstill even far from the sea.

"We've got water, we got some snacks ... we're going to stay elevated," said Jimmy Markowski, whose family from Hot Springs, Arkansas, fled their Waikiki beach resort before evacuation orders were lifted. "This is our first tsunami warning ever. So this is all new to us."

U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem said the worst had passed. Later Wednesday, tsunami advisories for Hawaii, Alaska, Oregon and Washington state were canceled but remained for parts of northern California, where authorities warned to stay away from beaches and advised that dangerous currents should be expected through Thursday morning.

Experts say it's challenging to know when to drop advisories, which signal the potential for strong currents, dangerous waves and flooding.

"It's kind of hard to predict because this is such an impactful event and has created so many of these waves passing by," said Dave Snider, tsunami warning coordinator for the National Tsunami Warning Center in Alaska.

Among the world's strongest recorded quakes

The earthquake was the strongest recorded since the 9.1 magnitude earthquake off Japan in 2011 caused a massive tsunami and meltdowns at a nuclear power plant. Japan's nuclear plants reported no

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 49 of 75

abnormalities this time.

Wednesday's quake occurred along the "Ring of Fire," a series of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean. It was centered offshore, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Kamchatka's regional capital. Multiple aftershocks as strong as 6.9 magnitude followed.

Russia's Oceanology Institute said tsunami waves of less than 6 meters (20 feet) were recorded near populated areas of the peninsula.

Lava flowed Wednesday from the Northern Hemisphere's largest volcano in a remote area of Kamchatka, the Russian Academy of Sciences' geophysical service said.

3 countries in South America lift tsunami warnings

In South America, three of the four countries with coastlines on the Pacific lifted their tsunami warnings.

Authorities in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru announced that tsunami alerts were removed. In Chile, the country with the largest Pacific coastline in South America, the government kept the alert along most of the coastline but lifted it in some areas where authorities said there was no longer a risk.

Chile's Interior Minister Alvaro Elizalde said late Wednesday that evacuation orders remain in force in areas with alerts in place, and that schools will be closed again on Thursday.

He said a wave in one location measured 8.2 feet (2.5 meters), while in other areas they reached a height of 3.6 feet (1.1 meters).

Chile is highly vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis.

Hawaii downgrades to tsunami advisory

Authorities in Hawaii downgraded the state to a tsunami advisory, and evacuation orders on the Big Island and Oahu, the most populated island, were lifted.

"As you return home, still stay off the beach and stay out of the water," said James Barros, administrator of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency.

In northern California, tsunami waves of 3.6 feet (1.1 meters) were recorded in Crescent City, which has a history of tsunami disasters.

Even waves of just several feet high might pose a significant risk.

"It might only be 3 feet, but it's a wall of water that's 3 feet and spans hundreds of miles. Three feet of water can easily inundate inland and flood a couple blocks inland from the beach," said Diego Melgar, director of Cascadia Region Earthquake Science Center at the University of Oregon.

Russian regions report limited damage

In Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the quake damaged a kindergarten that was unoccupied.

A video released by a Russian media outlet showed doctors at a cancer clinic on Kamchatka holding a patient and clutching medical equipment as the quake rocked an operating room.

Authorities on the sparsely populated Kuril Islands reported several waves flooded the fishing port of Severo-Kurilsk, the main city on the islands, and cut power supplies to the area. The port's mayor said no major damage was recorded.

Hot weather affected Japan's evacuations

Japan reported one death, and other people were injured or suffered heat-related illnesses during its tsunami evacuations.

A woman in her 50s died after falling from a cliffside road while driving to an evacuation center in the Mie prefecture in central Japan, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said Thursday. Another 10 people, most of them in Hokkaido, were injured while heading to take shelter.

Separately, 11 others were taken to a hospital after developing symptoms of heat illness while taking shelter in the hot weather, with temperatures rising to around 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in some places in the country.

A tsunami of 2 feet (60 centimeters) was recorded in Hamanaka town in Hokkaido and Kuji port in Iwate, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency.

In Iwaki, a city in Fukushima prefecture, which was the epicenter of the 2011 tsunami and quake, residents gathered at a hilltop park after a community siren sounded and breakwater gates were closed.

Workers at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, severely damaged in 2011, took shelter on higher ground

while remotely monitoring operations, the operator said.

Hours later, Japan downgraded its tsunami alert but left an advisory in place along the Pacific coast.

Shohei Ohtani leaves the mound with cramping vs. Reds but hopes to make next start

By JOE REEDY AP Sports Writer

CINCINNATI (AP) — Los Angeles Dodgers two-way superstar Shohei Ohtani is hopeful that he will be able to make his next mound start after his outing Wednesday night was cut short by cramping in his right hip.

Ohtani was scheduled to go four innings on a hot, humid night against the Cincinnati Reds, but he left without recording an out in the fourth after he threw six straight balls, including two consecutive wild pitches.

The 31-year old reigning NL MVP said he started to cramp in the first inning.

"Just tried to work around it. I was able to do so up until the third and it didn't quite work out in the fourth," Ohtani said through an interpreter after the Dodgers' 5-2 loss.

Ohtani and manager Dave Roberts both blamed the cramping on the weather. The temperature at first pitch was 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius) with a heat index near 100.

Roberts went out with the trainer after Ohtani threw a 86.3 mph sweeper that was low and outside the strike zone for a 2-0 count to Spencer Steer. After a conference on the mound, Ohtani left with the trainer.

"I just saw a funky throw. The follow-through just didn't look right. And then he threw another pitch and I just didn't see the finish the right way," Roberts said. "It was very concerning because I didn't know what it was. He said it was his hip. I talked to him and he said it was the humidity. So I feel better knowing that."

Ohtani — who leads the NL with 38 home runs — remained in the game at designated hitter, but went 0 for 5, a day after he struck out four times. He hit a line drive to Cincinnati center fielder Will Benson for the final out.

"I don't play defense. That helped, but at the same time we were playing a close game and I wanted to help the team win," Ohtani said.

This was Ohtani's seventh mound start in his comeback from Tommy John surgery on his right elbow, which occurred after the 2023 season. He did not pitch at all last season, his first for the Dodgers after signing a 10-year, \$700 million contract, but he starred at DH — finishing with 54 homers and 59 stolen bases — and won his third MVP award.

Even though it was cut short, it still was Ohtani's longest outing of his pitching comeback.

He threw 51 pitches, 32 for strikes, and allowed two runs on five hits in three-plus innings. He struck out four and walked two.

"A good thing about today's outing is my pitch count was where I wanted it to be. I think this is a step forward in a sense," said Ohtani, who has a 2.40 ERA in 15 innings. "I didn't feel great to be honest physically the past couple days."

Ohtani has allowed four runs, three in the first inning. He has faced 63 batters, striking out 17 and walking five.

Ohtani's most-used pitch in his first six outings was the fastball (49%), followed by the sweeper (25%). Against the Reds, he threw only 14 fastballs and 29 sweepers. All eight of the Reds' swing-and-misses came on the sweeper.

"Rather than pitch type it was manipulating the way I was throwing. Just not trying to get too deep on my delivery. Just trying to focus on mechanics," Ohtani said.

Noelvi Marte led off the Reds' fourth with a single and advanced to third on Ohtani's two wild pitches to Tyler Stephenson, who then walked.

Ohtani threw two balls to Steer and was replaced by Anthony Banda, who walked Steer and gave up Will Benson's sacrifice fly that tied the game at 2-all.

As long as everything checks out, Ohtani's next start would be Aug. 6 against St. Louis at Dodger Stadium.

"He'll have a week and it will be at home, so there won't be humidity to deal with," Roberts said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 51 of 75

Ohtani might start having second thoughts though about facing the Reds on the mound. Prior to Wednesday, his last pitching appearance against Cincinnati was Aug. 23, 2023, for the Los Angeles Angels. He left in the second inning with a torn ligament in his elbow, an injury that led to his second Tommy John surgery.

Birmingham gives an emotional farewell to Ozzy Osbourne as tearful family lead tributes

By HILARY FOX and PAN PYLAS Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, England (AP) — Ozzy Osbourne returned to the “home of metal” for the last time on Wednesday as an emotional Birmingham honored one of its most cherished sons.

Thousands of Black Sabbath fans paid their respects to the band’s frontman as his hearse made its way through the city center followed by his tearful wife and children.

The hearse carrying Osbourne, who died last Tuesday at the age of 76, went down Broad Street, one of the city’s major thoroughfare, to the Black Sabbath bench, which was unveiled on the Broad Street canal bridge in 2019.

“Ozzy, Ozzy, Ozzy, oi, oi, oi,” fans screamed.

Six vehicles carrying the Osbourne family followed the hearse, accompanied by police motorcycle riders and a police car.

The family emerged briefly to inspect the array of tributes, with his wife of 43 years, Sharon, visibly moved and wiping away tears.

And long after the hearse had moved on for the private funeral, the city, which has embraced its reputation as the citadel of heavy metal, was pounding to the beat of Black Sabbath.

It was in Birmingham, where he grew up, that the world-conquering heavy metal band was formed in 1968.

Osbourne embraced the city in central England as much as it embraced him, as was evident on the streets.

Long-time fan Antony Hunt said it has been an “emotional” day and that he wanted to be in the city to pay his respects.

“What’s amazing is there’s so many, such a wide variety of age groups, from little, little children, teenagers to people in their 60s, 70s, so it’s great to see that,” he said.

Katie Brazier, head of events at Birmingham City Council, said Osbourne meant “everything” to the city.

“He never forgot where he came from,” she said. “You could still hear that Brummie accent wherever he was, you know, I think some people have hidden away from the fact that they are from Birmingham and they’ve got that accent but he kept it all the way through.”

Osbourne and his Black Sabbath bandmates — Terence Butler, Tony Iommi and Bill Ward — were recently awarded the Freedom of the City in recognition of their services to Birmingham.

Black Sabbath’s story began in Birmingham in 1968 when the four original members were looking to escape a life of factory work. Without doubt, the sound and fury of heavy metal had its roots in the city’s manufacturing heritage. Osbourne never forgot his working-class roots.

The band has been widely credited with defining and popularizing the sound of heavy metal — aggressive, but full of melodies.

Osbourne was Black Sabbath’s frontman during its peak period in the 1970s. His antics, on and off stage, were legendary, and often fueled by drink and drugs. He was widely known as the “Prince of Darkness.”

The band’s eponymous debut album in 1970 made the U.K. top 10 and paved the way for a string of hit albums, including 1971’s “Master of Reality” and “Vol. 4” a year later. It went on to become one of the most influential and successful metal bands of all time, selling more than 75 million albums worldwide.

At the final show on July 5, 42,000 fans watched the band perform for the first time in 20 years at Villa Park, home of the city’s biggest soccer club, Aston Villa, with Osbourne seated on a black throne. Osbourne had been in poor health in recent years, especially after being diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 2019.

Osbourne, who also had a successful solo career, found a new legion of fans in the early 2000s reality show “The Osbournes” in which he starred alongside Sharon and two youngest children, Kelly and Jack.

Dozens killed while seeking food in Gaza as US envoy heads to Israel

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and SALLY ABOU ALJOUD Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — At least 48 Palestinians were killed and dozens were wounded Wednesday while waiting for food at a crossing in the Gaza Strip, according to a hospital that received the casualties. The latest violence around aid distribution came as the U.S. Mideast envoy was heading to Israel for talks.

Israel's military offensive and blockade have led to the "worst-case scenario of famine" in the coastal territory of some 2 million Palestinians, according to the leading international authority on hunger crises. A breakdown of law and order has seen aid convoys overwhelmed by desperate crowds.

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff, who has led the Trump administration's efforts to wind down the nearly 22-month war and release hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack that sparked the fighting, will arrive in Israel on Thursday for talks on the situation in Gaza.

Wooden carts ferry the wounded as survivors carry flour

Shifa Hospital in Gaza City said the dead and wounded were among crowds massed at the Zikim Crossing, the main entry point for humanitarian aid to northern Gaza. It was not immediately clear who opened fire and there was no immediate comment from the Israeli military, which controls the crossing.

Associated Press footage showed wounded people being ferried away from the scene of the shooting in wooden carts, as well as crowds of people carrying bags of flour.

Al-Saraya Field Hospital, where critical cases are stabilized before transfer to main hospitals, said it received more than 100 dead and wounded. Fares Awad, head of the Gaza Health Ministry's emergency service, said some bodies were taken to other hospitals, indicating the toll could rise.

Israeli strikes and gunfire had earlier killed at least 46 Palestinians overnight and into Wednesday, most of them among crowds seeking food, health officials said. Another seven Palestinians, including a child, died of malnutrition-related causes, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on any of the strikes. It says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas, because the group's militants operate in densely populated areas.

Israel has eased its blockade but obstacles remain

Under heavy international pressure, Israel announced a series of measures over the weekend to facilitate the entry of more international aid to Gaza, but aid workers say much more is needed.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, the leading world authority on hunger crises, has stopped short of declaring famine in Gaza but said Tuesday that the situation has dramatically worsened and warned of "widespread death" without immediate action.

COGAT, the Israeli military body that facilitates the entry of aid, said over 220 trucks entered Gaza on Tuesday. That's far below the 500-600 trucks a day that U.N. agencies say are needed, and which entered during a six-week ceasefire earlier this year.

The United Nations is still struggling to deliver the aid that does enter the strip, with most trucks unloaded by crowds in zones controlled by the Israeli military. An alternative aid system run by the Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, or GHF, has also been marred by violence.

More than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire while seeking aid since May, most near sites run by GHF, according to witnesses, local health officials and the U.N. human rights office. The Israeli military says it has only fired warning shots at people who approach its forces, and GHF says its armed contractors have only used pepper spray or fired warning shots to prevent deadly crowding.

International airdrops of aid have also resumed, but many of the parcels have landed in areas that Palestinians have been told to evacuate while others have plunged into the Mediterranean Sea, forcing people to swim out to retrieve drenched bags of flour.

Deaths from malnutrition

A total of 89 children have died of malnutrition since the war began in Gaza. The ministry said that 65

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 53 of 75

Palestinian adults have also died of malnutrition-related causes across Gaza since late June, when it started counting deaths among adults.

Israel denies there is any starvation in Gaza, rejecting accounts to the contrary from witnesses, U.N. agencies and aid groups, and says the focus on hunger undermines ceasefire efforts.

Hamas started the war with its attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, in which militants killed around 1,200 people and abducted 251 others. They still hold 50 hostages, including around 20 believed to be alive. Most of the rest of the hostages were released in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 60,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Its count doesn't distinguish between militants and civilians. The ministry operates under the Hamas government. The U.N. and other international organizations see it as the most reliable source of data on casualties.

NYC gunman bought his rifle from his boss in Las Vegas

By JENNIFER PELTZ and DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man who killed four people at a Manhattan office building bought the rifle he used in the attack and the car he drove across country from his supervisor at a Las Vegas casino, authorities said Wednesday.

Shane Tamura, 27, fatally shot three people Monday in the building lobby before taking an elevator to the 33rd floor, killing a fourth victim and then ending his own life, according to police. The building housed the National Football League's headquarters and other corporate offices.

In a note found on his body, Tamura assailed the NFL's handling of concerns about chronic traumatic encephalopathy, and the former high school football player claimed he himself had the degenerative brain disease, according to police. Known as CTE, it has been linked to concussions and other head trauma.

At Tamura's Las Vegas studio apartment, investigators found a note with a different troubled message, police said Wednesday. They said the note expressed a feeling that his parents were disappointed in him and included an apology to his mother.

Police said they also found a psychiatric medication, an epilepsy drug and an anti-inflammatory that had been prescribed to Tamura.

Investigating his movements as well as his mindset, detectives learned that he purchased the rifle and car from his supervisor at a job in the surveillance department at the Horseshoe Las Vegas, the New York Police Department said.

The supervisor legally bought the AR-15-style rifle he sold to Tamura for \$1,400, police said, adding that they had erred in saying earlier that the supervisor supplied only parts of the rifle. It wasn't immediately clear whether the gun sale was legal.

Police didn't identify the supervisor, who has been forthcoming with them and hasn't been charged with any crimes. Tamura had alluded to him, apologetically, in the note found in the gunman's wallet after the rampage, police said.

Victims' funerals begin

As investigators worked in both New York and Las Vegas, one of the victims, real estate firm worker Julia Hyman, was buried after a packed, emotional Wednesday service at a Manhattan synagogue.

Her uncle, Rob Pittman, said the 27-year-old lived "with wide open eyes" and "courage and conviction."

Hyman had worked since November at Rudin Management, which owns the building and has offices on the 33rd floor. A 2020 graduate of Cornell University, she had been the captain of Riverdale Country School's soccer, swimming and lacrosse teams in her senior year, school officials said.

Relatives and colleagues of another victim, security guard Aland Etienne, remembered him at a gathering at his union's office. The unarmed Etienne, who leaves a wife and two children, was shot as he manned the lobby security desk.

"We lost a hero," younger brother Smith Etienne said. "He didn't wear no cape. Had no fancy gear. He wore a security officer's uniform."

Police were preparing for a funeral Thursday for Officer Didarul Islam. A member of the force for over

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 54 of 75

three years, he was killed while working, in uniform, at a department-approved second job providing security for the building.

Funeral arrangements for Etienne and the fourth victim, investment firm executive Wesley LePatner, haven't been made public.

An NFL employee who was badly wounded in the attack is expected to survive.

Detectives scour for clues in Las Vegas

Teams of New York City detectives continued working Wednesday in Las Vegas, where they had a warrant to search Tamura's locker at the Horseshoe casino and were awaiting warrants to search his phone and laptop, police said. They also planned to speak to his parents.

Besides the note and medication at his apartment, they found a tripod for his rifle, a box for a revolver that was found in his car in New York, and ammunition for both guns, the police department said.

Police have said Tamura had a history of mental illness, but they haven't given detail. In September 2023, he was arrested on a misdemeanor trespassing charge after allegedly being told to leave a suburban Las Vegas casino and becoming agitated at being asked for his ID. Prosecutors later dismissed the case.

His psychiatric history would not have prevented him from legally purchasing the revolver just last month.

Nevada is among 21 states with a red-flag law that allows for weapons to be taken from people if courts determine they pose a risk to themselves or others. First, relatives or law enforcement must seek a so-called extreme risk protection order.

A new state law, effective this month, also lets officers confiscate firearms in the immediate vicinity of someone placed on a mental health crisis hold.

"These laws only work if someone makes use of them," said Lindsay Nichols, policy director of the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

Brown University strikes agreement with Trump administration to restore lost federal funding

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brown University will pay \$50 million to Rhode Island workforce development organizations in a deal with the Trump administration that restores lost federal research funding and ends investigations into alleged discrimination, officials said Wednesday.

The university also agreed to several concessions in line with President Donald Trump's political agenda. Brown will adopt the government's definition of "male" and "female," for example, and must remove any consideration of race from the admissions process.

Brown President Christina H. Paxson said the deal preserves Brown's academic independence. The terms include a clause saying the government cannot dictate curriculum or the content of academic speech at Brown.

"The University's foremost priority throughout discussions with the government was remaining true to our academic mission, our core values and who we are as a community at Brown," Paxson wrote.

It is the latest deal between an Ivy League school and the Trump administration, which has used its control of federal funding to push for reforms at colleges Trump decries as overrun by liberalism and antisemitism. The administration also has launched investigations into diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, saying they discriminate against white and Asian American students.

The Brown deal has similarities with one signed last week by Columbia University, which the government called a roadmap for other universities. Unlike that agreement, however, Brown's does not include an outside monitor.

The three-year agreement with Brown restores dozens of suspended grants and contracts. It also calls for the federal government to reimburse Brown for \$50 million in unpaid federal grant costs.

The settlement puts an end to three federal investigations involving allegations of antisemitism and racial bias in Brown admissions, with no finding of wrongdoing. In a campus letter, Paxson anticipated questions

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 55 of 75

about why the university would settle if it didn't violate the law. She noted Brown has faced financial pressure from federal agencies along with "a growing push for government intrusion" in academics.

Signing the agreement resolves the government's concerns without sacrificing university values, she said. "We stand solidly behind commitments we repeatedly have affirmed to protect all members of our community from harassment and discrimination, and we protect the ability of our faculty and students to study and learn academic subjects of their choosing, free from censorship," she wrote.

Brown agreed to several measures aimed at addressing allegations of antisemitism on its campus in Providence, Rhode Island. The school said it will renew partnerships with Israeli academics and encourage Jewish day school students to apply to Brown. By the end of this year, Brown must hire an outside organization — to be chosen jointly by Brown and the government — to conduct a campus survey on the climate for Jewish students.

Education Secretary Linda McMahon said Brown's deal ensures students will be judged "solely on their merits, not their race or sex."

"The Trump Administration is successfully reversing the decades-long woke-capture of our nation's higher education institutions," McMahon said in a statement.

The settlement requires Brown to disclose a wealth of data on students who apply to and are admitted to the university, with information about their race, grades and standardized test scores. The data will be subject to a "comprehensive audit" by the government.

It bars Brown from giving preference to applicants because of their race. A 2023 Supreme Court decision already forbids such consideration, but the deal appears to go further, stopping Brown from using any "proxy for racial admission," including personal statements or "diversity narratives."

The \$50 million in payments to local workforce development organizations agreed to by Brown are to be paid over 10 years.

That's "a step forward" from paying a fine to the government, as Columbia agreed to do, said Ted Mitchell, president of the American Council on Education, an organization of major universities. Still, Mitchell said, it remains unclear whether Brown and other universities are clear of governmental pressure.

"Let's remember, these are deals. These are not policies," Mitchell said. "I had hoped that the Trump administration, when it came in, was going to be interested in having serious policy discussions about the future of higher education. They've yet to do that."

Columbia last week agreed to pay \$200 million to the government as part of its settlement. In negotiations with Harvard, the Trump administration has been pressing for the Cambridge, Massachusetts, school to pay far more.

In another agreement, the University of Pennsylvania pledged to modify school records set by transgender swimmer Lia Thomas, a deal that included no fine. ____

Associated Press writer Cheyanne Mumphrey contributed to this report.

Colorado dentist convicted of murder, gets life sentence for lacing wife's shakes with poison

By JESSE BEDAYN and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

CENTENNIAL, Colo. (AP) — A Colorado dentist was sentenced to life in prison Wednesday after being convicted of killing his wife by lacing her protein shakes with poison before delivering a fatal dose of cyanide when she was in the hospital.

District Judge Shay Whitaker sentenced James Craig to life without the possibility of parole, the mandatory sentence for a first-degree murder conviction in Colorado. He was convicted of murder and other charges by a jury, which rejected his claim that he had helped his wife kill herself after he said he wanted a divorce following his repeated extramarital affairs.

Prosecutors said at trial that James Craig poisoned his wife Angela Craig over 10 days in March 2023. When those attempts failed, prosecutors said, the dentist gave his wife a final dose of cyanide as she was hospitalized in suburban Denver with symptoms that puzzled doctors. She was declared brain dead soon

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 56 of 75

after.

Craig stood in a hushed courtroom Wednesday afternoon as the jury delivered a litany of guilty verdicts. His sentencing followed tearful testimony by Angela Craig's relatives about the impact of losing her, including one of the couple's six children who cast her father as a villain.

Angela Craig's older sister, Toni Kofoed, lamented the loss of phone calls, texts and trips with her sister where they could laugh and talk through the night.

"You have taken away our opportunity to grow old together," Kofoed said.

"Her life was not yours to take," Kofoed said in turning to the defendant. "Angela had a love and a passion for life. She loved her children and, unfortunately, she loved you."

James Craig appeared to shake with tears as his oldest daughter spoke about how much she missed being able to talk to her mother about her life and how she felt betrayed by her father.

"I was supposed to be able to trust my dad; he was supposed to be my hero, and instead he'll forever be the villain in my book," the daughter, Miriam "Mira" Meservy, said, inhaling through tears. As Meservy spoke, Craig's attorney patted the defendant's back.

The couple's son Toliver Craig said he and his mother didn't always get along. But two weeks after she died, he set an alarm on his phone that still goes off every night at 10 p.m. It just says "Mom."

"I'm sad there's not more time with her," he said.

James Craig declined to make any statement before being sentenced. Afterward, he was handcuffed and led out of court.

In court, James Craig's family members sat on his side of the room and Angela Craig's family on the other. But afterward, they hugged each other and shook hands, many wiping tears from their eyes.

Besides murder, James Craig also was found guilty of trying to cover up the killing by asking others to fake evidence and testimony that would make it appear that Angela Craig had killed herself or wanted to frame him for her death. He was found guilty of asking another daughter to make a fake video of her mother asking to be poisoned and of trying to get one fellow jail inmate to kill the lead detective investigating his wife's death, among other things.

James Craig himself didn't testify during the two-week trial, and his attorneys didn't present other witnesses. The defense had suggested earlier that Angela Craig may have taken her own life and faulted police for focusing solely on James Craig as a suspect.

However, prosecutors said the dentist had offered other conflicting explanations for her death to other people.

Toxicology tests determined Angela Craig, 43, died of poisoning from cyanide and tetrahydrozoline, an ingredient commonly found in over-the-counter eye drops, according to the coroner.

Prosecutors argued Craig wanted to kill his wife to get out of a marriage he felt trapped in, adding he didn't want a divorce so he could protect his money and image.

They said photos from a hospital security camera shown in court depict Craig holding a syringe before he entered Angela Craig's room. After administering the fatal dose through her IV, Craig walked out and texted a fellow dentist with whom he was having an affair, Senior Chief Deputy District Attorney Michael Mauro told jurors in closing arguments Tuesday. His wife's condition quickly worsened.

Speaking after sentencing wrapped up, Mauro said Craig clearly wanted out of his marriage but gave in to "greed and cowardice" with murder.

"The jury said it loudly: Angela was not suicidal. She had no knowledge of or participation in what happened to her," the prosecutor said.

Malta says it will recognize the state of Palestine, joining France and possibly Britain

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Canada and Malta announced Wednesday they will recognize the state of Palestine in September, joining France and the United Kingdom in stepping up pressure to end the nearly

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 57 of 75

80-year Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney made the announcement after a Cabinet meeting. Christopher Cutajar, the permanent secretary at Malta's Foreign Ministry, made his country's announcement earlier at the U.N. General Assembly's meeting on a two-state solution to the conflict which was extended to a third day because of the high number of countries wanting to speak.

Cutajar said Malta has long supported self-determination for the Palestinian people, and "as responsible actors, we have a duty to work to translate the concept of a two-state solution from theory into practice."

"It is for this reason that the government of Malta has taken the principled decision to formally recognize the state of Palestine at the upcoming U.N. General Assembly in September," he said.

Carney said Canada will also make its announcement at the annual gathering of world leaders which starts Sept. 23. He said the intention is predicated on the Palestinian Authority "holding general elections in 2026 in which Hamas can play no part, and to demilitarize the Palestinian state." Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas made those promises in a June 10 letter and it's unclear what more Carney is seeking.

Malta says it wants a 'lasting peace' in Mideast

Malta's Prime Minister Robert Abela earlier announced the decision by his country, a former British colony, to recognize a Palestinian state on Facebook, saying it is part of the nation's efforts "for a lasting peace in the Middle East."

The Mediterranean island nation and European Union member will join more than 145 countries, including over a dozen European nations, in recognizing the state of Palestine.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced ahead of this week's meeting that his country will recognize the state of Palestine at the annual gathering of world leaders at the 193-member General Assembly which starts Sept. 23.

United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced Tuesday that Britain would recognize the state of Palestine before September's meeting, but would refrain if Israel agrees to a ceasefire and long-term peace process in the next eight weeks.

France and Britain are the biggest Western powers and, with Canada, three members of the Group of Seven major industrialized nations have now made such a pledge.

Israel opposes a two-state solution and is boycotting the meeting along with its closest ally, the United States.

Israel's U.N. ambassador, Danny Danon, on Tuesday sharply criticized about 125 countries participating in the conference and new recognitions of a Palestinian state, saying "there are those in the world who fight terrorists and extremist forces and then there are those who turn a blind eye to them or resort to appeasement."

"While our hostages are languishing in Hamas terror tunnels in Gaza, these countries choose to engage in hollow statements instead of investing their efforts in their release," Danon said. "This is hypocrisy and a waste of time that legitimizes terrorism and distances any chance of regional progress."

Malta's Cutajar countered that "recognition is not merely symbolic – it is a concrete step towards the realization of a just and lasting peace."

Quick action is urged

High-level representatives at the U.N. conference on Tuesday urged Israel to commit to a Palestinian state and gave "unwavering support" to a two-state solution, and they urged all countries that haven't recognized the state of Palestine to do so quickly.

The seven-page "New York Declaration" sets out a phased plan to end the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the ongoing war in Gaza. The plan would culminate with an independent, demilitarized Palestine living side by side peacefully with Israel, and their eventual integration into the wider Mideast region.

A separate one-page statement titled the "New York Call" approved late Tuesday by 15 Western nations says they have recognized, "expressed or express the willingness or the positive consideration ... to recognize the state of Palestine, as an essential step towards the two-state solution, and invite all countries that have not done so to join this call."

It included six that have recognized the state of Palestine and nine, including Malta and Canada, that

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 58 of 75

had not. The seven that still haven't are Andorra, Australia, Finland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Portugal and San Marino.

Saudi Arabia's U.N. ambassador, Abdulaziz Alwasil, suspended the meeting "until further notice" after the 128th and final speaker, saying an outcome document has been sent to all 193 U.N. member nations. States have until the beginning of September to endorse the document.

Unsettled by NYC shooting, companies wonder if their offices are safe

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and MATT SEDENSKY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Businesses around the country are reevaluating security after a brazen shooting at a New York City office building raised questions about what it takes to keep workplaces safe.

The attack on a seemingly secure building — in a gilded part of Manhattan where the rich live in sprawling apartments and tourists window-shop designer stores — has rattled workers and prompted managers to examine whether they are adequately protected.

"What should we be doing different?" clients are asking, said Brian Higgins, founder of Group 77, a Mahwah, New Jersey, security company that is among those getting peppered with an influx of calls. "How can we prevent something like this?"

The gut reaction of some companies, Higgins said, is to buy the latest technology and blanket their workplace in cameras. But, he cautioned, that's only only effective if paired with consistency and long-term monitoring.

"If you're going to add a security measure ... you have to make sure you maintain it," said Higgins, a former police chief who teaches security at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Four people were killed in the shooting Monday before the gunman died by suicide. Images of the shooter, toting a long rifle on a street in the biggest U.S. city, then terrorizing an office building, have companies desperate to do something to keep the scene from repeating.

"People are frightened, people are asking questions," said Dave Komendat, the Seattle-based chief security officer at Corporate Security Advisors, where calls are also spiking.

With the U.S. locked in a pattern of gun violence virtually unparalleled in the world, security firms are used to the rhythms of the business. While attacks at a corporate office are less commonplace, a major shooting or an attack on an executive focuses attention back on security for a time, before receding.

"Give it a couple weeks, a month or so, it'll go back," Higgins said of the increased call volume. "When security issues don't happen for a while and companies start reexamining their budget, security is one of those things that companies cut."

Gene Petrino, CEO of Survival Response in Coral Springs, Florida, has also seen an uptick in calls from potential new customers, but expects it to be fleeting.

"When things are calm it's seen as an expense they don't need right away," he said, "and then when a tragedy happens it's a priority again."

Petrino said companies can make changes that aren't intrusive like using cameras with artificial intelligence capabilities to identify weapons. Sometimes, it may just be a matter of improving lighting in a hallway or putting up convex mirrors to see around a corner.

"Everything doesn't have to be bulletproof and locked with security cameras everywhere," he said. "You don't have to be Fort Knox. You can have very basic things."

Michael Evanoff, chief security officer of Verkada, a building security company based in San Mateo, California, said technology like AI-enabled cameras to help identify threats have become even more important amid a shortage of guards.

"It's harder than many realize to find and retain trained personnel," Evanoff said. "That makes it even more essential that guards are equipped with technology that can extend their reach."

Security at 345 Park Avenue, the site of the shooting, included a New York Police Department officer working a uniformed security assignment. He was among those killed.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 59 of 75

Rudin, the leasing company that manages the building, did not respond to a query about when the building will reopen or whether new security measures will be implemented. No matter what, though, every workplace has vulnerabilities.

"The security team has to be perfect to 100% of the time," said Komendat, a former chief security officer for Boeing. "Someone like this just needs to be lucky once."

FACT FOCUS: No, Oprah Winfrey didn't block access to a private road amid tsunami warning evacuations

By ITZEL LUNA Associated Press

Even as the threat of a tsunami swamping Hawaii had passed on Wednesday, social media posts were still circulating claims that Oprah Winfrey had refused immediate access to a private road that would allow residents a shorter evacuation route.

The warnings followed one of the century's most powerful earthquakes, an 8.8 magnitude quake that struck off a Russian peninsula and generated tsunami warnings and advisories for a wide swath of the Pacific. Posts on X and TikTok contended Winfrey refused to open her private road, or was slow to do so during the evacuation.

But the roadway does not actually belong to Winfrey, and efforts to open the road to the public started soon after the tsunami warning was issued.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

CLAIM: Winfrey owns the private road and refused to allow public access for residents trying to reach higher ground, only relenting following public pressure.

FACT: This is false. Despite being commonly known as "Oprah's road," the portion of Kealakapu Road is privately owned — but not by Winfrey. It belongs to Haleakala Ranch, which also owns the land surrounding the road, its president Scott Meidell told The Associated Press. Winfrey has an easement agreement with the ranch, which allows her to use and make certain improvements to the road, her representative told the AP in a statement. Winfrey has paved the road as part of the agreement, Meidell said.

The decision to open the road to the public is principally up to the landowner, Winfrey's representative noted. Meidell said Haleakala Ranch "had conversations with Ms. Winfrey's land management staff during this process. So, they're consulted to be sure."

Haleakala Ranch contacted the local fire department and the Maui Emergency Management Agency just after 3 p.m. local time, shortly after the tsunami warning went into effect, Meidell said. The road was made accessible shortly after 5 p.m., he said, and ranch personnel assisted in the evacuation of around 150 to 200 vehicles until the final group of cars were escorted up the road at 7 p.m.

Maui County officials said in a press release shortly after 7 p.m. Tuesday that "Oprah's road" was accessible to the public, an advisory repeated in a 9:30 p.m. update. But Meidell said further evacuations weren't necessary after 7 p.m. because police had confirmed "at that point the highway was completely empty of traffic."

Maui police and the Maui Emergency Management Agency did not immediately return the AP's requests for comment.

"As soon as we heard the tsunami warnings, we contacted local law enforcement and FEMA to ensure the road was opened. Any reports otherwise are false," a representative for Winfrey wrote in a statement first disseminated to news outlets Tuesday night. The decision to open the road was made quickly "when the warning was issued to evacuate, working with local officials and Oprah's Ranch," the representative added in a statement Wednesday.

Cars were escorted in separate caravans that each "had a lead vehicle and a sweep vehicle to make sure that there weren't any incidents on the mountain road," Meidell said.

Haleakala Ranch encompasses nearly 30,000 acres of open space from the southern shoreline to Upcountry Maui, according to its website, and has been family-owned and operated since the late 1800s. The private road connects a public roadway with a highway on the island's oceanside.

Some Hawaii residents have long expressed frustration with the large swaths of land that wealthy public figures like Winfrey own on Maui and have advocated against short-term rentals that dot the region and worsen the already low housing supply. The islands have faced a chronic housing shortage only exacerbated in 2023 when a deadly wildfire destroyed most of Lahaina, a town on Maui and the historic former capital of the Hawaiian kingdom. The wildfire was the deadliest in U.S. history in a century that left more than 100 people dead.

Users claimed with no evidence then that Winfrey had hired private firefighters to protect her land before the fires started, and hired security to keep others off her land during the evacuations. Some X users also spread false claims linking Winfrey to the cause of the blaze. Winfrey teamed up with Dwayne Johnson to launch the People's Fund for Maui and committed \$10 million to help residents who lost their homes in the wildfires. The fund raised almost \$60 million as of April 2024.

In 2019, Winfrey confirmed on X, then Twitter, that county officials were given permission to use the private road immediately after a brush fire started on Maui's southern area. The road ultimately was not used, Maui County spokesperson Chris Sugidono told the AP at the time.

Trump administration is launching a new private health tracking system with Big Tech's help

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration announced it is launching a new program that will allow Americans to share personal health data and medical records across health systems and apps run by private tech companies, promising that will make it easier to access health records and monitor wellness.

More than 60 companies, including major tech companies like Google, Amazon and Apple as well as health care giants like UnitedHealth Group and CVS Health, have agreed to share patient data in the system. The initiative will focus on diabetes and weight management, conversational artificial intelligence that helps patients, and digital tools such as QR codes and apps that register patients for check-ins or track medications.

"For decades America's health care networks have been overdue for a high tech upgrade," President Donald Trump said during an event with company CEOs at the White House on Wednesday. "The existing systems are often slow, costly and incompatible with one another, but with today's announcement, we take a major step to bring health care into the digital age."

The system, spearheaded by an administration that has already freely shared highly personal data about Americans in ways that have tested legal bounds, could put patients' desires for more convenience at their doctor's office on a collision course with their expectations that their medical information be kept private.

"There are enormous ethical and legal concerns," said Lawrence Gostin, a Georgetown University law professor who specializes in public health. "Patients across America should be very worried that their medical records are going to be used in ways that harm them and their families."

Officials at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, who will be in charge of maintaining the system, have said patients will need to opt in for the sharing of their medical records and data, which will be kept secure.

Those officials said patients will benefit from a system that lets them quickly call up their own records without the hallmark difficulties, such as requiring the use of fax machines to share documents, that have prevented them from doing so in the past.

"We're going to have remarkable advances in how consumers can use their own records," Dr. Mehmet Oz, who leads the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said during the White House event.

Popular weight loss and fitness subscription service Noom, which has signed onto the initiative, will be able to pull medical records after the system's expected launch early next year.

That might include labs or medical tests that the app could use to develop an AI-driven analysis of what might help users lose weight, CEO Geoff Cook told The Associated Press. Apps and health systems will also have access to their competitors' information, too. Noom would be able to access a person's data

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 61 of 75

from Apple Health, for example.

"Right now you have a lot of siloed data," Cook said.

Patients who travel across the country for treatment at the Cleveland Clinic often have a hard time obtaining all their medical records from various providers, said the hospital system's CEO, Dr. Tomislav Mihaljevic. He said the new system would eliminate that barrier, which sometimes delays treatment or prevents doctors from making an accurate diagnosis because they do not have a full view of a patient's medical history.

Having seamless access to health app data, such as what patients are eating or how much they are exercising, will also help doctors manage obesity and other chronic diseases, Mihaljevic said.

"These apps give us insight about what's happening with the patient's health outside of the physician's office," he said.

CMS will also recommend a list of apps on Medicare.gov that are designed to help people manage chronic diseases, as well as help them select health care providers and insurance plans.

Digital privacy advocates are skeptical that patients will be able to count on their data being stored securely.

The federal government, however, has done little to regulate health apps or telehealth programs, said Jeffrey Chester at the Center for Digital Democracy.

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and those within his circle have pushed for more technology in health care, advocating for wearable devices that monitor wellness and telehealth.

Kennedy also sought to collect more data from Americans' medical records, which he has previously said he wants to use to study autism and vaccine safety. Kennedy has filled the agency with staffers who have a history of working at or running health technology startups and businesses.

CMS already has troves of information on more than 140 million Americans who enroll in Medicare and Medicaid. Earlier this month, the federal agency agreed to hand over its massive database, including home addresses, to deportation officials.

The new initiative would deepen the pool of information on patients for the federal government and tech companies. Medical records typically contain far more sensitive information, such as doctors' notes about conversations with patients and substance abuse or mental health history.

"This scheme is an open door for the further use and monetization of sensitive and personal health information," Chester said.

The Trump administration tried to launch a less ambitious electronic record program in 2018 that did not get finalized during his first term, but it did not have buy in from major tech companies at the time.

American Eagle's 'good jeans' ads with Sydney Sweeney spark a debate on race and beauty standards

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. fashion retailer American Eagle Outfitters wanted to make a splash with its new advertising campaign starring 27-year-old actor Sydney Sweeney. The ad blitz included "clever, even provocative language" and was "definitely going to push buttons," the company's chief marketing officer told trade media outlets.

It has. The question now is whether some of the public reactions the fall denim campaign produced is what American Eagle intended.

Titled "Sydney Sweeney has great jeans," the campaign sparked a debate about race, Western beauty standards, and the backlash to "woke" American politics and culture. Most of the negative reception focused on videos that used the word "genes" instead of "jeans" when discussing the blonde-haired, blue-eyed actor known for the HBO series "Euphoria" and "White Lotus."

Some critics saw the wordplay as a nod, either unintentional or deliberate, to eugenics, a discredited theory that held humanity could be improved through selective breeding for certain traits.

Marcus Collins, an assistant professor of marketing at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, said the criticism could have been avoided if the ads showed models of various races making the "genes" pun.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 62 of 75

"You can either say this was ignorance, or this was laziness, or say that this is intentional," Collins said. "Either one of the three aren't good."

Other commenters accused detractors of reading too much into the campaign's message.

"I love how the leftist meltdown over the Sydney Sweeney ad has only resulted in a beautiful white blonde girl with blue eyes getting 1000x the exposure for her 'good genes,'" former Fox News host Megyn Kelly wrote Tuesday on X.

American Eagle didn't respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

A snapshot of American Eagle

The ad blitz comes as the teen retailer, like many merchants, wrestles with sluggish consumer spending and higher costs from tariffs. American Eagle reported that total sales were down 5% for its February-April quarter compared to a year earlier.

A day after Sweeney was announced as the company's latest celebrity collaborator, American Eagle's stock closed more than 4% up. Shares were volatile this week and trading nearly 2% down Wednesday.

Like many trendy clothing brands, American Eagle has to differentiate itself from other mid-priced chains with a famous face or by saying something edgy, according to Alan Adamson, co-founder of marketing consultancy Metaforce.

Adamson said the Sweeney campaign shares a lineage with Calvin Klein jeans ads from 1980 that featured a 15-year-old Brooke Shields saying, "You want to know what comes in between me and my Calvins? Nothing." Some TV networks declined to air the spots because of its suggestive double entendre and Shields' age.

"It's the same playbook: a very hot model saying provocative things shot in an interesting way," Adamson said.

Billboards, Instagram and Snapchat

Chief Marketing Officer Craig Brommers told industry news website Retail Brew last week that "Sydney is the biggest get in the history of American Eagle," and the company would promote the partnership in a way that matched.

The campaign features videos of Sweeney wearing slouchy jeans in various settings. She will appear on 3-D billboards in Times Square and elsewhere, speaking to users on Snapchat and Instagram, and in an AI-enabled try-on feature.

American Eagle also plans to launch a limited edition Sydney jean to raise awareness of domestic violence, with sales proceeds going to a nonprofit crisis counseling service.

In a news release, the company noted "Sweeney's girl next door charm and main character energy – paired with her ability to not take herself too seriously – is the hallmark of this bold, playful campaign."

Jeans, genes and their many meanings

In one video, Sweeney walks toward an American Eagle billboard of her and the tagline "Sydney Sweeney has great genes." She crosses out "genes" and replaces it with "jeans."

But what critics found the most troubling was a teaser video in which Sweeney says, "Genes are passed down from parents to offspring, often determining traits like hair color, personality and even eye color. My jeans are blue."

The video appeared on American Eagle's Facebook page and other social media channels but is not part of the campaign.

While remarking that someone has good genes is sometimes used as a compliment, the phrase also has sinister connotations. Eugenics gained popularity in early 20th century America, and Nazi Germany embraced it to carry out Adolf Hitler's plan for an Aryan master race.

Civil rights activists have noted signs of eugenics regaining a foothold through the far right's promotion of the "great replacement theory," a racist ideology that alleges a conspiracy to diminish the influence of white people.

Shalini Shankar, a cultural and linguistic anthropologist at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, said she had problems with American Eagle's "genes" versus "jeans" because it exacerbates a limited concept of beauty.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 63 of 75

"American Eagle, I guess, wants to rebrand itself for a particular kind of white privileged American," Shankar said. "And that is the kind of aspirational image they want to circulate for people who want to wear their denim."

A cultural shift in advertising

Many critics compared the American Eagle ad to a misstep by Pepsi in 2017, when it released a TV ad that showed model Kendall Jenner offer a can of soda to a police officer while ostensibly stepping away from a photo shoot to join a crowd of protesters.

Viewers mocked the spot for appearing to trivialize protests of police killings of Black people. Pepsi apologized and pulled the ad.

The demonstrations that followed the 2020 killing of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis pushed many U.S. companies to make their advertising better reflect consumers of all races.

Some marketers say they've observed another shift since President Donald Trump returned to office and moved to abolish all federal DEI programs and policies.

Jazmin Burrell, founder of brand consulting agency Lizzie Della Creative Strategies, said she's noticed while shopping with her cousin more ads and signs that prominently feature white models.

"I can see us going back to a world where diversity is not really the standard expectation in advertising," Burrell said.

American Eagle's past and future

American Eagle has been praised for diverse marketing in the past, including creating a denim hijab in 2017 and offering its Aerie lingerie brand in a wide range of sizes. A year ago, the company released a limited edition denim collection with tennis star Coco Gauff.

The retailer has an ongoing diversity, equity and inclusion program that is primarily geared toward employees. Two days before announcing the Sweeney campaign, American Eagle named the latest recipients of its scholarship award for employees who are driving anti-racism, equality and social justice initiatives.

Marketing experts offer mixed opinions on whether the attention surrounding "good jeans" will be good for business.

"They were probably thinking that this is going to be their moment," Myles Worthington, the founder and CEO of marketing and creative agency WORTH1. "But this is doing the opposite and deeply distorting their brand."

Melissa Murphy, a marketing professor at Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business, said she liked certain parts of the campaign but hoped it would be expanded to showcase people besides Sweeney for the "sake of the brand."

Other experts say the buzz is good even if it's not uniformly positive.

"If you try to follow all the rules, you'll make lots of people happy, but you'll fail," Adamson said. "The rocket won't take off."

Former Vice President Kamala Harris says she will not run for California governor in 2026

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Former Vice President Kamala Harris will not run for California governor next year, leaving open the possibility that she could mount a third run for the White House in 2028.

"Over the past six months, I have spent time reflecting on this moment in our nation's history and the best way for me to continue fighting for the American people and advancing the values and ideals I hold dear," Harris said in a statement released by her office Wednesday.

"I have given serious thought to asking the people of California for the privilege to serve as their governor. I love this state, its people and its promise. It is my home. But after deep reflection, I've decided that I will not run for Governor in this election," she said.

Harris' decision extends a guessing game about her political future that started after she lost last year's presidential election to Donald Trump. Harris spent months privately considering whether to run for gov-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 64 of 75

ernor, stage another run for the White House or step away from electoral politics altogether after her bruising defeat by Trump.

She has not ruled out another run for president, after unsuccessful bids in 2020 and 2024. It's not known when she will make that decision.

Harris didn't mention Trump directly in her statement, but said "our politics, our government, and our institutions have too often failed the American people, culminating in this moment of crisis."

Remaining in the fight

"For now, my leadership — and public service — will not be in elected office. I look forward to getting back out and listening to the American people, helping elect Democrats across the nation who will fight fearlessly, and sharing more details in the months ahead about my own plans," Harris said.

"In the United States of America, power must lie with the people. And We, the People must use our power to fight for freedom, opportunity, fairness and the dignity of all. I will remain in that fight," the statement said.

Harris would have entered the crowded contest to replace term-limited Gov. Gavin Newsom as a front-runner given her widespread name recognition, fundraising prowess and track record of winning statewide elections. Before serving as U.S. senator and vice president, she was elected state attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco.

But after years in Washington on the national and international stage, it was never clear if Harris was interested in returning to the less-glamorous world of statehouse politics in Sacramento.

Young voters

Democratic strategist Sean Clegg, a longtime Harris adviser, said the former vice president was tempted to make a gubernatorial run but decided to explore other options. Among the possibilities she has considered: starting a nonprofit to engage younger voters.

"She's been in elective office for 22 straight years, she's been in public service since she got out of law school," Clegg said. "Having spent her entire life inside the system, she's more motivated, more excited by the opportunity to make change outside of the system."

"Her decision, at the end of the day, it was just a gut decision," Clegg added. "She asked herself, 'Do I want to go back into the system as the top elected official in California, or do I want to try to do something completely different?'"

Another White House run?

Outside California, Harris' political career has been marked by historic firsts but also disappointments.

Harris sought the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, but dropped out of the race before the leadoff Iowa caucuses — the first defeat of her political career. After Joe Biden chose her as his running mate, she made history as the first woman, Black person or person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president. In 2024, Harris became the Democratic presidential nominee after Biden left the race months before Election Day and endorsed her. She lost that race to Trump, who won every swing state.

Harris faces some uncertainty if she chooses to make another White House run.

Harris would have to convince national Democrats that she's the face of the party's future, despite losing to Trump last fall. She also carries the baggage of being tied to Biden, whom Democrats have increasingly criticized for seeking a second term rather than stepping aside. Biden's legacy was tarnished as he left office, and since then new questions have swirled about his physical and mental abilities as his term ended.

The 2028 presidential contest is expected to attract a large field, which could potentially include Newsom. Any candidate will have to unify a fractious Democratic Party with low approval ratings that is struggling to slow Trump's agenda in Washington.

In her most extensive public remarks since leaving office in January, Harris said in a San Francisco speech that Trump's leadership represented a "wholesale abandonment" of American ideals.

Harris' decision not to seek the governorship keeps the contest to replace Newsom wide open. The Democratic field includes former U.S. Rep. Katie Porter, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, former Biden administration health secretary Xavier Becerra and a handful of state officeholders.

In a statement, Villaraigosa speculated that Harris' political career was not over. Her decision, he said,

"reflects her continued commitment to serving at the highest levels of government."

Fed's Powell sticks with patient approach to rate cuts, brushing off Trump's demands

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell gave little indication on Wednesday of bowing anytime soon to President Donald Trump's frequent demands that he cut interest rates, even as signs of dissent emerged on the Fed's governing board.

The Fed left its key short-term interest rate unchanged for the fifth time this year, at about 4.3%, as was expected. But Powell also signaled that it could take months for the Fed to determine whether Trump's sweeping tariffs will push up inflation temporarily or lead to a more persistent bout of higher prices. His comments suggest that a rate cut in September, which had been expected by some economists and investors, is now less likely.

"We've learned that the process will probably be slower than expected," Powell said. "We think we have a long way to go to really understand exactly how" the tariffs will affect inflation and the economy.

There were some signs of splits in the Fed's ranks: Governors Christopher Waller and Michelle Bowman voted to reduce borrowing costs, while nine officials, including Powell, favored standing pat. It is the first time in more than three decades that two of the seven Washington-based governors have dissented. One official, Governor Adriana Kugler, was absent and didn't vote.

The choice to hold off on a rate cut will almost certainly result in further conflict between the Fed and White House, as Trump has repeatedly demanded that the central bank reduce borrowing costs as part of his effort to assert control over one of the few remaining independent federal agencies.

Powell has in the past signaled during a news conference that a rate move might be on the table for an upcoming meeting, but he gave no such hints this time. The odds of a rate cut in September, according to futures pricing, fell from nearly 60% before the meeting to just 45% after the press conference, the equivalent of a coin flip, according to CME Fedwatch.

"We have made no decisions about September," Powell said. The chair acknowledged that if the Fed cut its rate too soon, inflation could move higher, and if it cut too late, then the job market could suffer.

Major U.S. stock indexes, which had been trading slightly higher Wednesday, went negative after Powell's comments.

"The markets seem to think that Powell pushed back on a September rate cut," said Lauren Goodwin, chief market strategist at New York Life Investments.

Powell also underscored that the vast majority of the committee agreed with a basic framework: Inflation is still above the Fed's target of 2%, while the job market is still mostly healthy, so the Fed should keep rates elevated. On Thursday, the government will release the latest reading of the Fed's preferred inflation gauge, and it is expected to show that core prices, excluding energy and food, rose 2.7% from a year earlier.

Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial, says he expects the tariffs will only temporarily raise inflation, but that it will take most of the rest of this year for that to become apparent. He doesn't expect the Fed to cut until December.

Trump argues that because the U.S. economy is doing well, rates should be lowered. But unlike a blue-chip company that usually pays lower rates than a troubled startup, it's different for an entire economy. The Fed adjusts rates to either slow or speed growth, and would be more likely to keep them high if the economy is strong to prevent an inflationary outbreak.

Earlier Wednesday, the government said the economy expanded at a healthy 3% annual rate in the second quarter, though that figure followed a negative reading for the first three months of the year, when the economy shrank 0.5% at an annual rate. Most economists averaged the two figures to get a growth rate of about 1.2% for the first half of this year.

The dissents from Waller and Bowman likely reflect jockeying to replace Powell, whose term ends in May

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 66 of 75

2026. Waller in particular has been mentioned as a potential future Fed chair.

Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan Chase, said in a note to clients this week if the pair were to dissent, "it would say more about auditioning for the Fed chair appointment than about economic conditions."

Bowman, meanwhile, last dissented in September 2024, when the Fed cut its key rate by a half-point. She said she preferred a quarter point cut instead, and cited the fact that inflation was still above 2.5% as a reason for caution.

Waller said earlier this month that he favored cutting rates, but for very different reasons than Trump has cited: Waller thinks that growth and hiring are slowing, and that the Fed should reduce borrowing costs to forestall a rise in unemployment.

There are other camps on the Fed's 19-member rate-setting committee — only 12 of the 19 actually vote on rate decisions. In June, seven members signaled that they supported leaving rates unchanged through the end of this year, while two suggested they preferred a single rate cut. The other half supported more reductions, with eight officials backing two cuts, and two — widely thought to be Waller and Bowman — supporting three reductions.

The dissents could be a preview of what might happen after Powell steps down, if Trump appoints a replacement who pushes for the much lower interest rates the White House desires. Other Fed officials could push back if a future chair sought to cut rates by more than economic conditions would otherwise support.

Overall, the committee's quarterly forecasts in June suggested the Fed would cut twice this year. There are only three more Fed policy meetings — in September, October, and December.

When the Fed cuts its rate, it often — but not always — results in lower borrowing costs for mortgages, auto loans and credit cards.

Some economists agree with Waller's concerns about the job market. Excluding government hiring, the economy added just 74,000 jobs in June, with most of those gains occurring in health care.

"We are in a much slower job hiring backdrop than most people appreciate," said Tom Porcelli, chief U.S. economist at PGIM Fixed Income.

Along with a strong second quarter rebound for the US economy, some red flags

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy expanded at a surprising 3% annual pace from April through June, bouncing back at least temporarily from a first-quarter drop that reflected disruptions from President Donald Trump's trade wars.

Still, details of the report suggested that U.S. consumers and businesses are wary about the economic uncertainty arising from Trump's radical campaign to restructure the American economy by slapping big taxes — tariffs — on imports from around the world.

"Headline numbers are hiding the economy's true performance, which is slowing as tariffs take a bite out of activity," Nationwide chief economist Kathy Bostjancic wrote.

America gross domestic product — the nation's output of goods and services — rebounded after falling at a 0.5% clip from January through March, the Commerce Department reported Wednesday. The first-quarter drop, the first retreat of the U.S. economy in three years, was mainly caused by a surge in imports — which are subtracted from GDP — as businesses scrambled to bring in foreign goods ahead of Trump's tariffs.

The bounceback was expected but its strength was a surprise: Economists had forecast 2% growth from April through June.

From April through June, a drop in imports — the biggest since the COVID-19 outbreak — added more than 5 percentage points to growth. Consumer spending registered lackluster growth of 1.4%, though it was an improvement over the first quarter's 0.5%.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 67 of 75

Private investment fell at a 15.6% annual pace, biggest drop since COVID-19 slammed the economy. A drop in inventories — as businesses worked down goods they'd stockpiled in the first quarter — shaved 3.2 percentage points off second-quarter growth.

A category within the GDP data that measures the economy's underlying strength weakened in the second quarter, expanding at a 1.2% annual pace, down from 1.9% from January through March and the weakest since the end of 2022. This category includes consumer spending and private investment but excludes volatile items like exports, inventories and government spending.

Federal government spending and investment fell at a 3.7% annual rate on top of a 4.6% drop in the first quarter.

Wednesday's GDP report showed inflationary pressure easing in the second quarter. The Federal Reserve's favored inflation gauge — the personal consumption expenditures, or PCE, price index — rose at an annual rate of 2.1% in the second quarter, down from 3.7% in the first. Stripping out volatile food and energy prices, so-called core PCE inflation rose 2.5%, down from 3.5% in the first quarter.

On his Truth Social media platform, Trump heralded the GDP gain and stepped up his pressure on the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates: "2Q GDP JUST OUT: 3%, WAY BETTER THAN EXPECTED! "Too Late" MUST NOW LOWER THE RATE. No Inflation! Let people buy, and refinance, their homes!"

Trump sees tariffs as a way to protect American industry, lure factories back to the United States and help pay for the massive tax cuts he signed into law July 4.

But mainstream economists — viewed with disdain by Trump and his advisers — say that his tariffs will damage the economy, raising costs and making protected U.S. companies less efficient. They note that tariffs are paid by importers in the United States, who try to pass along the cost to their customers via higher prices. Therefore, tariffs can be inflationary — though their impact so far has been modest.

Hoffa legend endures 50 years after ex-Detroit union leader's disappearance

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — It was September 2012 and dozens of residents looked on as police cordoned off the area around a shed just northeast of Detroit.

Low whispers about what — or who — officers were searching for grew to more excited chatter when the name Jimmy Hoffa started floating around the normally quiet street.

By that time, the name had become sort of mythical in and around Detroit.

Wednesday marks 50 years since the iron-fisted former Teamsters union boss disappeared from a restaurant about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of the city. Presumed dead long before being legally declared deceased in 1982, Hoffa's remains were not found beneath the concrete shed floor in Roseville in 2012.

Nor were they uncovered eight years earlier, below floorboards in a Detroit house. Neither were they found in 2013 at a horse farm miles northwest of the city.

In 2013, digging equipment found mostly dirt as authorities excavated a field in Oakland Township, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of Detroit. And no signs of Hoffa were found in 2022 during a search of land beneath the Pulaski Skyway in New Jersey.

Who was Jimmy Hoffa?

Hoffa, the son of a coal miner who died when he was 7, was born in Brazil, Indiana, but moved with his mother to Detroit while still a boy. He quit school at 14 and went to work, landing a job on a grocery warehouse loading dock.

In 1932, Hoffa led a workers' strike over poor labor conditions and unfair treatment of workers by the store, according to a post about him on the International Brotherhood of Teamsters website.

He joined the union a year later and became a business agent for Local 299 in Detroit, the website said.

Hoffa was elected the local's president in 1937 and would become a union organizer. He often found himself on the other end of the law. In 1937, he was convicted of assault and battery. In 1940, he pleaded

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 68 of 75

no contest to charges of conspiring with unionized waste-paper companies to prevent non-union competitors from selling their products. Seven years later, he was arrested for attempted extortion. Each time, Hoffa only received fines.

He continued to rise in the union's ranks. From 1957 to 1971, he served as the Teamsters general president.

Hoffa had a history of associating with organized crime. In the late 1960s, he was convicted of fraud, conspiracy and jury tampering. He was sent to federal prison in 1967. President Richard Nixon commuted Hoffa's 13-year sentence in 1971.

On July 30, 1975, Hoffa, now 62, was to meet reputed Detroit mob enforcer Anthony "Tony Jack" Giacalone and alleged New Jersey mob figure Anthony "Tony Pro" Provenzano at the Machus Red Fox restaurant in Oakland County's Bloomfield Township.

Hoffa called his wife, Josephine, about 2:15 p.m. from a pay phone to tell her no one showed up for the meeting. He has not been seen or heard from since despite scores of tips and multiple searches spanning several states.

A grand jury later was convened in Detroit, but no one ever has been directly charged in Hoffa's disappearance or death.

The FBI's Detroit office on Wednesday said the Hoffa case "remains one of the most well-known missing person investigations in FBI history."

"Regardless of the age of the case, the FBI Detroit Field Office remains committed to following all credible leads and is seeking information to assist in moving this case forward," the agency said in a release. "The Hoffa investigation remains active, and our office continues to urge anyone with information to come forward."

From missing to legendary

Whoever is responsible went to great lengths to keep such information hidden, even after five decades.

"I think it confirms in my mind ... somebody did a pretty good hit job on him," Wayne State University educator Marick Masters said of Hoffa.

Masters, professor emeritus at the university's Mike Ilitch School of Business in Detroit, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Hoffa was considering getting back into Teamsters' leadership at the time of his disappearance.

"He still, obviously, was very much passionately involved in the union and he wanted to find a way of moving forward in it," Masters said. "Whatever the circumstances were, he was tragically prevented from doing that."

Hoffa was inducted into Labor's International Hall of Fame in 1999, according to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which refers to Hoffa on its website as "a worker's hero."

"He was viewed as a very passionate champion of the Teamsters," Masters said. "On the other hand, he had problematic associations which besmirched the image of organized labor. He was a very controversial figure. He was capable of accomplishing things and also capable of having associations that raised questions about his integrity."

Epstein and Maxwell grand juries did not hear directly from victims, prosecutors tell judges

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

The federal grand juries that indicted Jeffrey Epstein and his former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell on sex trafficking charges did not hear directly from any of the alleged victims in the case, Justice Department officials said in support of their request to unseal transcripts of the usually secret proceedings. Just two witnesses testified before the panel and both were law enforcement officials, the officials said.

In a court filing late Tuesday, the officials again urged the court to release the records, citing huge public interest, but they also sought to assure the judges that making them public wouldn't harm victims of the couple's crimes.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 69 of 75

While the memo didn't detail what was in the grand jury testimony, it dampened expectations that the transcripts would contain new revelations, saying that "certain aspects and subject matters" contained in them became public during Maxwell's trial in 2021 and that other details have been made public through many years of civil lawsuits filed by victims.

The Justice Department described the grand jury witnesses in response to questions from two judges who would have to approve the release of the transcripts. Grand jury transcripts are rarely released by courts, unless they need to be disclosed in connection with a judicial proceeding. The papers filed Tuesday cite a 1997 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that said judges have wide discretion and public interest alone can justify releasing grand jury information.

The Epstein grand jury heard from just one witness, an FBI agent, when it met in June and July 2019, the government disclosed. The Maxwell grand jury heard from the same FBI agent and a New York Police Department detective when it met in June and July 2020 and March 2021, according to the submission.

It isn't unusual for law enforcement officials to be the only witnesses before grand juries, which have a limited role and don't need to decide whether a person is guilty of a crime.

The memorandum was signed by Jay Clayton, the interim U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and included the names of Attorney General Pam Bondi and Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche.

Trump supporters want to see the evidence

The request to unseal the transcripts came after the Justice Department enraged parts of President Donald Trump's base of supporters when it announced in early July it wouldn't be making public any more investigative files related to Epstein, who was accused of paying underage girls for sexual acts.

The decision not to make additional materials public shocked some Trump supporters because members of his administration had hyped the expected release and stoked conspiracies around the well-connected financier.

Epstein took his own life in a federal jail in August 2019, weeks after his arrest on sex trafficking charges, but his case has generated endless attention and conspiracy theories because of his and Maxwell's links to famous people, such as royals, presidents and billionaires, including Trump.

Maxwell is serving a 20-year prison sentence after her December 2021 conviction on sex trafficking charges that accused her of luring teenage girls to be sexually abused by Epstein. Last week, she sat for 1 1/2 days of interviews with Justice Department officials in Florida, answering questions "about 100 different people," her attorney said. Maxwell was being interviewed because of Trump's directive to gather and release any credible evidence about others who may have committed crimes, the deputy attorney general said.

Trump keeps being questioned about Epstein

Trump has denied prior knowledge of Epstein's crimes and claimed he had cut off their relationship long ago. But he faces ongoing questions about the Epstein case, overshadowing his administration's achievements. When reporters last week pressed the Republican president about possibly pardoning Maxwell, he deflected, emphasizing his administration's successes.

After the request to unseal grand jury records, two former prosecutors in Manhattan told The Associated Press the transcripts would be relatively short and contain only the testimony of law enforcement witnesses talking about evidence that tracks information in the indictments.

The court memorandum filed Tuesday said many of the victims whose accounts of being exploited by Epstein and Maxwell were discussed before the grand jury by the FBI agent and the NYPD detective later testified at Maxwell's public trial.

'Increasing calls for additional disclosures'

The government said no Epstein or Maxwell family members have come forward to express an interest in the request to unseal the grand jury transcripts, although Maxwell has indicated she will file a position with the court.

The memorandum says the request to unseal the transcripts is "consistent with increasing calls for additional disclosures in this matter."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 70 of 75

"There is undoubtedly a clearly expressed interest from the public in Jeffrey Epstein's and Ghislaine Maxwell's crimes," it says. "Beyond that, there is abundant public interest in the investigative work conducted by the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation into those crimes."

Under a 2008 nonprosecution agreement, Epstein pleaded guilty in Florida to state charges of soliciting and procuring a minor for prostitution. That allowed him to avert a possible life sentence, instead serving 13 months in a work release program. He was required to make payments to victims and register as a sex offender.

Epstein was later charged by federal prosecutors in Manhattan for nearly identical allegations in 2019.

A submersible finds sea creatures thriving in the deepest parts of the ocean

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — An underwater voyage has revealed a network of creatures thriving at the bottom of deep-sea ocean trenches.

In these extreme environments, the crushing pressure, scant food and lack of sunlight can make it hard to survive. Scientists know that tiny microbes prosper there, but less is known about evidence of larger marine life.

Researchers traveling along the Kuril–Kamchatka and Aleutian trenches in the northwest Pacific Ocean used a submersible to find tubeworms and mollusks flourishing at over 31,000 feet (9.5 kilometers) deep. The deepest part of the ocean goes down to about 36,000 feet (11 kilometers).

Scientists had surveyed this area before and had hints that larger creatures might live at such depths. The new discovery confirms those suspicions and shows just how extensive the communities are, said Julie Huber, a deep sea microbiologist with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

"Look how many there are, look how deep they are," said Huber, who was not involved with the research. "They don't all look the same and they're in a place that we haven't had good access to before."

The findings were published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*.

In the absence of light to make their own food, many trench-dwellers big and small survive on key elements like carbon that trickle down from higher in the ocean.

Scientists think microbes in this new network may instead be capitalizing on carbon that's accumulated in the trench over time, processing it to create chemicals that seep through cracks in the ocean floor. The tubeworms and mollusks may survive by eating those tiny creatures or living with them and snacking on the products of their labor, scientists said.

With this discovery, future studies will focus on how these deep-sea creatures adapted to survive in such extreme conditions and how exactly they harness chemical reactions for food, study authors Mengran Du with the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Vladimir Mordukhovich with the Russian Academy of Sciences said in a statement.

Their existence challenges "long-standing assumptions about life's potential at extreme depths," the authors said.

Medicaid was signed into law 60 years ago. Trump's big bill is chiseling it back

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — On this day in 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation into law that launched Medicaid, creating a U.S. health care safety net for millions of low-income Americans in what would become one of the crowning achievements of his domestic legacy.

A year earlier, he did the same for food stamps, drawing on President John F. Kennedy's first executive order for the development of "a positive food and nutrition program for all Americans."

This summer, with the stroke of a pen, President Donald Trump began to chisel them back.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 71 of 75

The Republican Party's big tax and spending bill delivered not just \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks for Americans but some of the most substantial changes to the landmark safety net programs in their history. The trade-off will cut more than \$1 trillion over a decade from federal health care and food assistance, largely by imposing work requirements on those receiving aid and by shifting certain federal costs onto the states.

While Republicans in Congress argue the trims are needed to rightsize the federal programs that have grown over the decades and to prevent rising federal deficits, they are also moving toward a long-sought GOP goal of shrinking the federal government and the services it provides.

"We're making the first changes to the welfare state in generations," House Speaker Mike Johnson said in a recent podcast interview.

As the tax breaks and spending cuts law begins to take shape, it is unleashing a new era of uncertainty for the safety net programs that millions of people in communities across the nation have grown to depend on, with political ramifications to come.

Big safety net changes ahead

Polling shows most U.S. adults don't think the government is overspending on the programs. Americans broadly support increasing or maintaining existing levels of funding for popular safety net programs, including Social Security and Medicare, according to the poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Local governments are scrambling to figure out how they will comply with the new landscape, calculating whether they will need to raise their own taxes to cover costs, trim budgets elsewhere or cut back the aid provided to Americans.

"The cuts are really big, they are really broad and they are deeply damaging," said Sharon Parrott, president of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a research institute in Washington.

"The consequences are millions of people losing health care coverage," she said. "Millions of people losing food assistance. And the net result of that is higher poverty, more hardship."

At the same time, certain people who receive aid, including parents of teenagers and older Americans up to age 64, will have to prepare to work, engage in classes or do community service for 80 hours a month to meet new requirements.

All told, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates 10 million more people will end up without health insurance. Some 3 million fewer people will participate in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, known as SNAP.

"People are really concerned what this means for their fiscal health," said Mark Ritacco, chief governmental affairs officer at the National Association of Counties, which held its annual conference the week after Trump signed the bill into law.

The organization had pushed senators to delay the start dates for some Medicaid changes, and it hopes that further conversations with lawmakers in Congress can prevent some of them from ever taking hold. At its conference, questions swirled.

"We're talking about Medicaid and SNAP — these are people's lives and livelihoods," Ritacco said.

GOP bill trims back health care and food aid

Republicans insist the law is adhering to Trump's vow not to touch Medicaid as the changes root out waste, fraud and abuse. A memo from the House GOP's campaign arm encourages lawmakers to focus on the popularity of its new work requirements and restrictions on benefits for certain immigrants.

"Those safety nets are meant for a small population of people — the elderly, disabled, young pregnant women who are single," the House speaker said on "The Benny Show."

He said the years since the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, came into law, "everybody got on the wagon."

"All these young, able-bodied, young men who don't have dependents, riding the wagon," the speaker said.

Medicaid then and now

When President Johnson established Medicaid alongside Medicare — the health care program for seniors — as part of the Social Security Amendments of 1965, it was meant for low-income families as well

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 72 of 75

as the disabled.

And it quickly took off. Almost every state signed on to participate in Medicaid by 1970, according to the KFF, an organization focused on health policy. It soon went beyond covering its core population to include pregnant women, school-age children and not just the very poor but also those with incomes just over the federal poverty limit, which is now about \$15,650 annually for a single person and \$26,650 for a family of three.

In the 15 years since the Affordable Care Act became law under President Barack Obama, Medicaid has grown substantially as most states opted to join the federal expansion. Some 80 million adults and children are covered.

While the uninsured population has tumbled, the federal costs of providing Medicaid have also grown, to more than \$880 billion a year.

"There are a lot of effects Medicaid has on health, but the most stark thing that it does is that it saves lives," said Bruce D. Meyer, an economist and public policy professor at the University of Chicago who co-authored a pivotal study assessing the program.

The law's changes will certainly save the federal government "a substantial amount of money," he said, but that will come at "substantial increases in mortality. And you have to decide what you value more."

Food stamps, which had been offered toward the end of the Great Depression but were halted during World War II amid rationed supplies, launched as a federal program when Johnson signed the Food Stamp Act of 1964 into law.

Today, SNAP provides almost \$200 in monthly benefits per person to some 40 million recipients nationwide.

Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who delivered the longest speech in House history while trying to stall the bill, said the changes will hurt households and communities nationwide.

"Who are these people?" Jeffries said. "Ripping health care away from the American people. The largest cuts in Medicaid in American history. Ripping food out of the mouths of children, seniors and veterans who are going to go hungry as a result of this one big, ugly bill."

What to know about the shaky truce after 5 days of combat between Thailand and Cambodia

By GRANT PECK, JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI and SOPHENG CHEANG Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thailand and Cambodia have reaffirmed their ceasefire intended to end five days of armed combat along their border after the accord got off to a shaky start.

The agreement to stop fighting was reached Monday when Thailand's Acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet arranged an "immediate and unconditional" ceasefire that took effect at midnight that same day.

It was some of the worst modern fighting between the two countries, which have clashed before over a longstanding territorial dispute. It left at least 41 soldiers and civilians dead on both sides, with 260,000 people displaced.

Thailand alleged sporadic violations by Cambodia shortly after the agreement took effect and added more complaints Wednesday.

Trump credited with bringing together warring leaders

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, this year's chair of the regional Association of Southeast Asian Nations, pressed for a ceasefire early but there was little headway until U.S. President Donald Trump intervened with economic pressure.

In a social media post Saturday, Trump said he spoke to the Thai and Cambodian leaders and warned the U.S. would not move forward with trade agreements if the hostilities continued.

Both countries face economic difficulties and neither had reached tariff deals with the U.S., though most of their Southeast Asian neighbors have done so.

Ken Lohatepanont, a political analyst and University of Michigan doctoral candidate, said Thailand has been "racing to negotiate" with the U.S. for a favorable tariff rate to help its underperforming, export-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 73 of 75

oriented economy.

"President Trump's decision to condition a successful conclusion to these talks on a ceasefire likely played a significant role in ensuring that both sides came to the negotiating table when they did," Lohatepanont said in an email.

Casey Barnett, president of American Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia, said Trump's intervention was appreciated as Cambodia faced economic and military disadvantages.

A land mine blast triggered fighting

Tensions had simmered since May when a Cambodian soldier was shot dead by Thai troops in another contested border area. The growing dispute was marked by border crossing restrictions and cross-border boycotts and bans of goods and services.

A July 23 land mine explosion in one of the disputed areas injured five Thai soldiers, including one who lost a leg. It was the second such incident in a week and the proximate cause of the armed conflict.

The immediate blowback was diplomatic, with Thailand withdrawing its ambassador from Cambodia, expelling Cambodia's envoy and shutting border crossings.

Skirmishes and artillery duels broke out in several areas, with infantry fighting mostly in disputed areas. Both countries employed artillery and Cambodia made frequent use of truck-mounted rockets. Thailand retaliated with airstrikes carried out by U.S.-made F-16 and Swedish Gripen jet fighters.

Thailand and Cambodia are old enemies

Thailand and Cambodia have a history of enmity over centuries and experience periodic tensions along their land border of more than 800 kilometers (500 miles).

Their competing territorial claims stem largely from a 1907 map drawn when Cambodia was under French colonial rule, which Thailand has argued is inaccurate.

The International Court of Justice in 1962 awarded sovereignty to Cambodia over an area that included the 1,000-year-old Preah Vihear temple, which still riles many Thais.

A mob burned down the Thai Embassy in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh in 2003 after a rumor spread that a Thai actress had claimed Cambodia's famous Angkor Wat temple belonged to Thailand.

Cambodia went back to the International Court of Justice in 2011 following several clashes between its army and Thai forces over Preah Vihear temple that killed about 20 people and displaced thousands. The court reaffirmed its ruling in 2013, generating more Thai resentment.

Cambodia in June proposed returning to the international court to sort out the border in the disputed areas. Thailand firmly rejected the proposal.

Underlying problems remain

The recent ceasefire did not deal with the underlying disputes and made only a sketchy mention of arranging truce monitors.

Paul Chambers, an American scholar on Thailand's military who recently fled the country after legal threats from the army, said the ceasefire represents a positive sign.

"However, it is not sustainable unless credible and third-party representatives, such as those from ASEAN, are allowed to monitor facts on the ground," he said. "If a ceasefire holds, each government can claim 'success' and can possibly entrench their hold on power, undergirded by nationalistic support that is drummed up by each state."

Thailand's leader blundered under pressure

Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra made a misguided effort to patch things up in June by making a call to Cambodia's former Prime Minister Hun Sen, calling him "uncle" and criticizing Thai military leadership.

Hun Sen served for 38 years as Cambodia's prime minister before handing over the job in 2023 to his eldest son Hun Manet.

Hun Sen leaked the phone call with Paetongtarn, who was suspended from her duties for alleged ethical violations. Her remarks were framed as disrespectful to national sovereignty while critics recalled the much-publicized friendship between Hun Sen and her father, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who has since disavowed the relationship.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 74 of 75

Paetongtarn's Pheu Thai party has been left with just a thin majority in Parliament after the major partner in the ruling coalition dropped out.

The events increased the Thai army's political influence at the elected government's expense, Chambers said.

"One thing is for sure in Thailand: the military, following this crisis, has enhanced its authority over civilians," he said.

Puangthong Pawakapan, a political scientist at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, said it will likely make long-awaited reforms to curb the army's political power even more difficult.

"The military has emerged as the winner, being hailed as heroes, while the Pheu Thai government is losing," she said.

In Cambodia, she said, "I don't think the power of the Hun family will be shaken at all."

China promises to help companies slammed by tariffs, as talks with the US left in limbo

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — China's top leaders have pledged to help companies slammed by higher U.S. tariffs but held back on major moves after trade talks with the U.S. this week kept businesses and planners in limbo.

At their summer economic planning meeting, the powerful Politburo of the ruling Communist Party pledged to stabilize foreign trade and investment.

"We must assist foreign trade enterprises that have been severely impacted, strengthen financing support, and promote the integrated development of domestic and foreign trade," the official Xinhua News Agency said in reporting the closed door meeting. It mentioned export tax rebates and free trade pilot zones but gave no other specifics.

The inconclusive outcome of two days of trade talks in Stockholm, Sweden, leaves open the question of higher tariffs on Chinese exports to the United States.

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng said the two sides had agreed to work on extending a deadline for higher tariffs. The U.S. side said the extension was discussed, but not decided.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told reporters after the talks that President Donald Trump would decide whether to extend the Aug. 12 deadline for reaching an agreement or to let tariffs that have been paused for 90 days to "boomerang" back to a higher level.

"We haven't given the sign-off," Bessent said, though he emphasized that the talks had been "very constructive."

China remains one of the biggest challenges for the Trump administration after it has struck deals over elevated tariff rates with other key trading partners — including Britain, Japan and the European Union.

Many analysts had expected that the Stockholm talks would result in an extension of current tariff levels, which currently stand at a U.S. tariff of 30% on Chinese goods and a Chinese tariff of 10% on U.S. products, far lower than the triple-digit percentage rates raised in April.

The truce in the tariffs war to allow time for talks, agreed on in early May to allow time for negotiations, allowed exporters and other traders to ramp up shipments in hopes of beating any higher tariffs that might follow.

The meeting headed by Chinese leader Xi Jinping mostly reiterated Beijing's priorities for the year, including a need to "unleash domestic demand" which has lagged, leading to a surge of exports by industries unable to find growth at home. It also stressed the need to promote jobs and prevent a "large scale relapse into poverty."

The economy "has demonstrated strong vitality and resilience," the Xinhua report said. But it acknowledged many risks and challenges. That includes reining in brutal competition that has led to damaging price wars among automakers and some other manufacturers and managing excess capacity in some industries, it said.

China's economy expanded at a 5.2% annual pace in April-June, slowing slightly from the previous quar-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 018 ~ 75 of 75

ter. But analysts have said actual growth may have been significantly slower.

Even with the hiatus in higher tariffs, companies are feeling a pinch. Industrial profits in China fell 1.8% in the first half of the year and 4.3% in June, according to data released earlier this week.

It's unclear what level of tariffs might eventually be imposed on Chinese exports to the United States.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said Thursday that Beijing hopes the U.S. side would follow through on the "important consensus" reached between Trump and Xi in a phone call to promote stable relations between the world's two largest economies.

But Guo reiterated China's stance on its U.S. objections to its purchases of oil and gas from Russia, which Bessent raised during the talks in Stockholm, threatening more tariffs.

"China will take reasonable measures to ensure energy security in accordance with its national interests," Guo said. "There are no winners in a tariff war. Coercion and pressure will not solve the problem. China will resolutely safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests."

Today in History: July 31, Phelps sets Olympic medal record

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, July 31, the 212th day of 2025. There are 153 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On July 31, 2012, at the Summer Olympics in London, swimmer Michael Phelps won his 19th Olympic medal, becoming the most decorated Olympian of all time. (He would finish his career with 28 total Olympic medals, 23 of them gold.)

Also on this date:

In 1715, a fleet of Spanish ships carrying gold, silver and jewelry sank during a hurricane off the east Florida coast; of some 2,500 crew members, more than 1,000 died.

In 1777, the 19-year-old Marquis de Lafayette received a commission as major general in the Continental Army by the Second Continental Congress.

In 1919, Germany's Weimar Constitution was adopted by the republic's National Assembly.

In 1945, Pierre Laval, premier of the pro-Nazi Vichy government in France, surrendered to U.S. authorities in Austria; he was turned over to France, which later tried and executed him.

In 1957, the Distant Early Warning Line, a system of radar stations designed to detect Soviet bombers approaching North America, went into operation.

In 1964, the U.S. lunar probe Ranger 7 took the first close-up images of the moon's surface.

In 1971, Apollo 15 crew members David Scott and James Irwin became the first astronauts to use a lunar rover on the surface of the moon.

In 1972, vice-presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton withdrew from the Democratic ticket with George McGovern following disclosures that Eagleton had received electroshock therapy to treat clinical depression.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) in Moscow.

In 2020, a federal appeals court overturned the death sentence of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, saying the judge who oversaw the case didn't adequately screen jurors for potential biases. (The Supreme Court reimposed the sentence in 2022.)

Today's Birthdays: Jazz composer-musician Kenny Burrell is 94. Actor Geraldine Chaplin is 81. Former movie studio executive Sherry Lansing is 81. Singer Gary Lewis is 79. International Tennis Hall of Famer Evonne Goolagong Cawley is 74. Actor Michael Biehn is 69. Rock singer-musician Daniel Ash (Love and Rockets) is 68. Entrepreneur Mark Cuban is 67. Rock musician Bill Berry (R.E.M.) is 67. Jazz guitarist Stanley Jordan is 66. Actor Wesley Snipes is 63. Musician Fatboy Slim is 62. Author J.K. Rowling is 60. Actor Dean Cain is 59. Actor Jim True-Frost is 59. Actor Ben Chaplin is 56. Actor Eve Best is 54. Football Hall of Famer Jonathan Ogden is 51. Country singer-musician Zac Brown is 47. Actor-producer-writer B.J. Novak is 46. Football Hall of Famer DeMarcus Ware is 43. NHL center Evgeni Malkin is 39. NASCAR driver Kyle Larson is 33. Hip-hop artist Lil Uzi Vert is 30. Actor Rico Rodriguez (TV: "Modern Family") is 27.