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Saturday, Aug. 23

Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove
Soccer at NSU. Girls vs. St. Thomas More at 11 a.m.; Boys vs. St. Thomas More at 1 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 24

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

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

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

Monday, Aug. 25

Senior Menu: Lemon baked cod, au gratin, Italian blend, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Beef stroganoff, rice.

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

Senior Citizens meet with potluck dinner at noon, Groton Community Center

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1440

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

FBI Raids Ex-Trump Adviser

The FBI yesterday executed a court-authorized search of the Maryland home and Washington, DC, office of John Bolton, a first-term Trump administration national security adviser turned critic of the president. The raid was reportedly part of an investigation into whether Bolton mishandled classified information. Bolton has not been arrested or charged with any crimes as of this writing.

After his time as President Donald Trump's national security adviser from April 2018 to September 2019, Bolton wrote a memoir critical of Trump's administration. The Justice Department under Trump unsuccessfully opened a lawsuit and criminal investigation to block the book's 2020 release on the grounds that the book contained classified material. Regarding yesterday's raid, Trump told reporters he had no prior knowledge of the operation.

Meanwhile, yesterday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth authorized some National Guardsmen patrolling Washington, DC, to begin carrying firearms this weekend. Trump suggested his administration may take similar measures in other major cities, including Chicago and New York.

Federal Reserve may soon cut interest rates.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell signaled possible interest rate cuts in a speech yesterday at the central bank's annual meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Powell cited a recent slowdown in monthly job growth as a reason for potential rate cuts. The Federal Reserve will meet next in September; it has kept rates unchanged for five consecutive meetings since December. US stock markets closed higher (S&P 500 +1.5%, Dow +1.9%, Nasdaq +1.9%).

Intel to give US government nearly 10% stake.

Approximately \$8.9B in federal grants awarded but not yet paid to Intel under the 2022 CHIPS Act and the Pentagon's Secure Enclave program will be converted to equity. Under the deal, the government will become Intel's largest shareholder but will not take a board seat or have decision-making rights. The government could get another 5% stake if Intel's ownership of its contract manufacturing business drops below 51%. The chipmaker's shares closed up 5.5% on the news.

DOJ releases recent Ghislaine Maxwell interviews.

The Justice Department yesterday released interviews conducted last month between Maxwell—convicted of aiding Jeffrey Epstein's sex trafficking operation—and Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche. Maxwell said she never saw President Donald Trump engage in inappropriate behavior, former President Bill Clinton never visited Epstein's private island, and she did not believe Epstein died by suicide, among other claims.

Little League World Series enters homestretch.

The final four teams compete in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania, today for a spot in tomorrow's championship game (3 pm ET, ABC). Nevada and Connecticut face off in the US bracket final at 3:30 pm ET today after Chinese Taipei takes on Aruba in the international bracket final at 12:30 pm ET. All players are between the ages of 10 and 12, and the games typically have six innings, as opposed to Major League Baseball's nine.

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Canada to drop retaliatory tariffs on many US goods.

Prime Minister Mark Carney announced yesterday Canada will remove 25% counter-tariffs on US products covered under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement by Sept. 1. The move matches American policy, which exempts Canada's USMCA-compliant goods from US tariffs, and came after the nation's leaders spoke by phone Thursday. Canada's 25% levies on US autos, steel, and aluminum will hold.

UN-backed body confirms famine in Gaza.

After 22 months of war, over half a million people in the Gaza City region are experiencing famine, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. The global authority on hunger yesterday raised its food insecurity assessment in the area to its highest level. The initiative expects famine to hit the southern Gaza Strip within weeks if Israel does not end restrictions on humanitarian aid deliveries.

Judge orders wind-down of Alligator Alcatraz.

A US district judge ordered Florida and the federal government to stop sending immigrants to a detention center in the Everglades, known as "Alligator Alcatraz," and to dismantle much of the center within 60 days (read previous write-up). The judge sided with environmentalists and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, who argued the facility was built without proper environmental reviews. Florida filed notice of its intent to appeal.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Roni P. in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

"While vacationing at Point Pleasant Beach, my daughter, grandson, and I stopped at Salty's Inlet Ice Cream. We had never been there before but it looked inviting with nice outdoor seating. We were eating our ice cream, which was delicious, and the sky became quite dark and the wind started blowing. The owner came out to close the umbrellas and asked if we needed help to our car with the stroller. When we said we walked, he insisted his wife drive us home."

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Anthony Tracy starts the football season off with the opening kickoff. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Tigers Dominate in Season Opener, Shut Out Webster 54-0

The Groton Area Tigers opened their football season in emphatic fashion Friday night, rolling past Webster 54-0 in a one-sided contest that ended on the mercy rule.

Both teams struggled to find their footing early, trading punts and turnovers. Groton fumbled twice in the opening minutes, but Webster failed to capitalize, punting the ball away. Momentum shifted late in the first quarter when Karter Moody scooped up a fumble and punched it in from a yard out with 2:36 on the clock. The point-after attempt was blocked, but Groton led 6-0.

Just moments later, Webster coughed up the ball again, and Gavin England made them pay, returning it for another short touchdown. Asher Johnson connected with Ryder Johnson on the conversion, and suddenly Groton had a 14-0 lead. The Tigers defense wasn't done—the next Webster possession ended in a safety when quarterback Jaren McCreary was sacked in the end zone. Groton had scored 10 points in just 29 seconds, and closed the quarter ahead 16-0.

Groton wasted no time in the second quarter. On the first possession, Asher Johnson capped a drive with an 8-yard touchdown run and then found Anthony Tracy for the two-point pass to make it 24-0. After a Ryder Schelle interception, Skyler Godel added a 4-yard touchdown run, and Schelle himself ran in the conversion. Minutes later, Keegen Tracy broke loose for an 18-yard score, pushing the advantage to 40-0.

The Tigers continued to pour it on. Another Webster turnover gave Groton the ball at the 7-yard line, and Schelle scored on a one-yard plunge. Johnson again hooked up with Johnson—Asher to Ryder—for the conversion, making it 48-0 before halftime.

The final score came in the third quarter after yet another Webster fumble. Godel finished the short drive with a one-yard run at the 4:28 mark. With a running clock in effect, the Tigers coasted to the 54-0 final.

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Ryder Johnson gets a four yard run early in the game. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Freshman Asher Johnson gets ready to pass the ball. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Groton Legion, Heartland Energy, John Sieh Agency, Jungle, Krueger Brothers, Poet and The MeatHouse. Justin Olson provided the play-by-play with Jeslyn Kosel running the camera and Paul Kosel with the technology.

- Story compiled by ChatGPT based off of Paper Paul's notes

Groton racked up 12 first downs and 207 total yards of offense, spreading the scoring around. Tracy had three carries for 35 yards and a touchdown, Godel added two scores on 31 yards rushing, Schelle ran for 24 yards and a touchdown, and Johnson tallied 22 yards and another score on the ground. Through the air, Johnson was efficient, completing 10 of 15 passes for 81 yards. Ryder Johnson hauled in five receptions for 26 yards, while Tracy added two catches for 37 yards.

Defensively, the Tigers forced five Webster fumbles, recovering three, and picked off one pass. Moody and England each had a key takeaway, while Jordan Schwan and Schelle each added an interception. Tucker Hardy and Ben Hoeft anchored the defense with five tackles apiece. Moody and Tucker Hardy each had a sack.

Webster, meanwhile, mustered only two first downs and 20 rushing yards on 24 carries. Gage Bumgarn led the way with 22 yards on 12 carries. The Bearcats completed just one pass for three yards and turned the ball over four times.

With the win, Groton opens the season 1-0 and will travel to Mobridge next Friday for a Battle of the Tigers matchup. Webster (0-1) will look to regroup on the road at McCook Central.



Wyatt Locke and Ryland Strom were being interviewed on GDILIVE.COM by Paper Paul. The wind had picked up so a paper shield had to be used to cut down on the wind noise.

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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The team huddle after the game. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------|
| First Downs | Groton Area | Webster Area |
| Rushing | 12 | 2 |
| | 23-126 | 24-20 |
| | Keegen Tracy 3-35-1 TD | Gage Baumgarn 12-22 |
| | Skyler Godel 4-31-2 TD | Jack Shoemaker 8-3 |
| | Ryder Schelle 6-24-1 TD | |
| | Asher Johnson 6-22-1TD | |
| | Anthony Tracy 3-10 | |
| | Ryder Johnson 1-4 | |
| Passing: | Asher Johnson 10-15-81 | Jack Shoemaker 1-5-3 |
| Receivers: | Keegen Tracy 2-37 | Jeron McCreary 1-3 |
| | Ryder Johnson 5-26 | |
| | Ryder Schelle 1-12 | |
| | Anthony Tracy 2-6 | |
| Fumbles | Had 2, lost 2 | Had 5, lost 3 |
| Penalties: | 3-15 | 5-30 |
| Defensive Leaders | Tucker Hardy: 5 tackles, 1 sack | Jack Shoemaker: 6 tackles |
| | Ben Hoeft: 5 tackles | Henry Witt: 4 tackles |
| | Jordan Schwan: 4 tackles, 1 interception | |
| | Gavin Englund: 1 fumble recovery | |
| | Karter Moody: 1 fumble recovery | |
| | Ryder Schelle: 1 interception | |

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Groton Sweeps Belle Fourche on the Soccer Field

The Groton Area soccer teams put on a dominating display Thursday, with both the boys and girls squads earning victories over Belle Fourche.

Girls Game

The Lady Tigers lit up the scoreboard with an 8-0 shutout win, overwhelming Belle Fourche with a relentless attack. Groton struck early in the first half as Jerica Locke found the net in the 4th minute and added another just two minutes later off a feed from McKenna Tietz. That gave Groton a 2-0 halftime cushion.

The second half was all Groton, as Locke poured in four more goals to finish with five on the night. She also handed out two assists, setting up teammates along the way. Tietz added a goal in the 60th minute, while Brenna Imrie and Sydney Locke each found the net late to round out the scoring. Assists also came from Mia Crank and Addison Hoffman.

Groton's explosive second-half surge secured the 8-0 win, giving them strong momentum heading into the weekend.

Boys Game

The boys earned a hard-fought 2-1 victory to complete the sweep. Easton Weber and Karson Zak each tallied goals for the Tigers, with Drake Peterson contributing an assist. In goal, Gage Sippel was outstanding, turning away 16 shots to preserve the win.

Looking Ahead

Both teams return to action today at the NSU Pavilion in Aberdeen, facing St. Thomas More. Game times are 11 a.m. for the girls and 1 p.m. for the boys, and admission is free.

- Story compiled by ChatGPT



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Congressman speaks in support of data centers in SD, calling anti-development rhetoric 'un-American'

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

SIOUX FALLS — The United States can win the "AI race," but not without the infrastructure and data centers necessary to develop the emerging technology, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson told members of the Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce on Friday.

The artificial intelligence race is a competition between the United States and other countries, including China, to dominate the technology. Johnson, a South Dakota Republican, painted a bleak future economically and democratically if the U.S. doesn't win. President Donald Trump signed an executive order in July to facilitate construction of data centers with incentives including loans, grants and tax breaks.

Data centers are massive facilities needed to house servers and other computing infrastructure required by AI.

Johnson said he is "befuddled" by blanket opposition to economic development, including data centers and other large projects. He said South Dakota leaders need to be "visionary" and bring new industries to the state "or we are saying that our children will have diminished opportunities." That, Johnson said, is "absolutely unacceptable."

"It's un-American and it's not at all capitalist," he said.

While it's important for community members to ask questions, not all projects should be rejected outright, he added.

"I think there is a great opportunity for us to do as President Trump has said and to win the battle for AI," Johnson said. "We cannot do it if the only answer in front of us is, 'No, always no.'"

Johnson is South Dakota's lone U.S. representative and is running for the Republican nomination for governor in 2026. The other two declared Republican gubernatorial candidates are Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden and South Dakota House Speaker Jon Hansen. Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden is also expected to run.

There are no massive data centers in South Dakota, but there are proposals to build them. A multi-billion-dollar data center was proposed for Deuel County earlier this year. Earlier this month, the Sioux Falls City Council took a step toward allowing construction of a new data center between Sioux Falls and Brandon. Two South Dakota electricity providers, Black Hills Corp. and NorthWestern Energy, announced a merger this week and cited future demand from data centers as a reason for the deal.

Representatives with both of the data center projects have said they might not land in South Dakota with-



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, speaks to the Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce on Aug. 22, 2025, in Sioux Falls. (Makenzie

Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

out competitive incentives from the state. The state Senate narrowly rejected legislation in February that would have provided tax refunds for data centers.

Opponents to the legislation cited concerns about tax fairness if the state offers incentives for companies to build in South Dakota, as well as concerns about water and energy demands to operate and cool data center systems.

Johnson said the projects create new jobs for South Dakotans who have the skills to run the operations and are "good customers" to utility companies, because they provide a steady demand for energy and can run on generators when there is too much demand. But he said the projects are threatened by opposition that goes beyond the philosophy of "Not In My Backyard."

"Forget the NIMBYs, we've got BANANAs: 'Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything,'" Johnson said. "It is a disease that's metastasizing."

In an interview with South Dakota Searchlight after the public discussion, Johnson said communities and states "need to step up" and present incentives that "work for the community and state." He said building data centers could also generate new property taxes that would lessen the burden on other property taxpayers, which is a focus of the Legislature this year.

"If we want to reduce property taxes, we need to grow the property tax base," Johnson said. "Obviously there is some role for government efficiency, but that's not going to get us as far as we need."

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.

New Mitchell processing plant could bring farmers 'more stability' amid tariffs, ag leader says

South Dakota's U.S. senators respond to concerns about Trump's trade policies

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

MITCHELL — U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune was blunt in his opening remarks during a Dakotafest policy discussion on Wednesday about the state of agriculture.

While South Dakota farmers in parts of the state can expect bumper yields due to good weather this season, he said, "commodity prices are in the tank."

"Input costs are at an all-time high, and the margin for farmers across South Dakota is upside down," added Thune, a Republican.

Increasing demand for agricultural products through opening markets and trade is a component to improving profitability for farmers, Thune said. South Dakota exports about 60% of its soybeans.

But export markets to some coun-



The High Plains Processing plant is expected to open in mid-October south of Mitchell. (Photo courtesy of Janelle Atyeo)

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tries like China and in southeast Asia have slowed in recent months as President Donald Trump's trade and tariff policies play out. The American Soybean Association sent a letter to Trump this week saying that soybean farmers can't survive a "prolonged trade dispute" with China – the country's largest soybean customer.

South Dakota Soybean Processors CEO Tom Kersting boasted about another option for South Dakota soybean farmers in the wake of tariffs: the High Plains Processing plant expected to open in mid-October near Mitchell.

Kersting participated in a panel discussion on Wednesday about the new plant before South Dakota's congressional delegation took the stage. The \$500 million plant is expected to process up to 37 million bushels a year – roughly 16% of the state's 2024 soybean production, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data.

The processing plant will include a refining operation and offer byproducts such as soybean meal and hulls as well as lecithin, which has uses ranging from food to lubricants.

The plant aims to fill growing demand in the U.S. for biofuels, Kersting said. The processing plant will offer "more stability in an uncertain future," Kersting told South Dakota Searchlight after the presentation.

"This will kind of take the place of that export problem and uncertainty out of the marketplace that farmers are facing right now," Kersting added. "We're there every day. These export customers come and go."

South Dakota Soybean Association President Kevin Deinert told South Dakota Searchlight after the panel discussion the operation will allow producers to become less dependent on whole soybean exports to China. Local processing will encourage more use locally, Deinert said, and open markets to other countries.

Kersting added that the processing plant is the first of its kind in South Dakota, with equipment to process seeds from other plants like camolina, canola and sunflowers. Canola and camelina seeds have up to 40-45% oil content, versus the 18-22% present in soybeans.

"Whatever the market demands or takes, we'll make the most of our money," Kersting told attendees. "This flexibility was driven off of the increasing demand, not just in the U.S. but globally, for vegetable oils."

That demand is for biofuels that have "transformed oil markets." A decade ago, most soybean oil went into food, but about 46% of soybean oil in 2022 and 2023 went toward biofuel production.

Republican U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds said during the policy panel that "the jury is out" on whether tariffs will help or hurt agriculture. If trading partners who normally buy farm and ranch products impose retaliatory tariffs, then that's a concern.

On the other hand, the tariffs or trade deals arising from tariff threats could force countries to increase their imports of U.S. goods. Some countries in the Pacific Rim are interested in purchasing U.S. ethanol because of the tariffs, Rounds said. That means "at least part of the ethanol that we've got right now is going to benefit from those tariffs being imposed," Rounds said.

"We've absolutely got to be adding value to every single product we've got here in South Dakota," Rounds said. "That means running it through as many times as we can. The ethanol plants have got to be able to maximize as much as they possibly can."

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Attorney general, Department of Social Services at odds over opioid settlement money

Jackley wants money for Sioux Falls, Rapid City, but DSS says his facts are wrong

BY: JOHN HULT



From left, Rapid City Mayor Jason Salamun, Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken and South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley appear at a press conference on Aug. 20, 2025, in Sioux Falls. (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

Rapid City Mayor Jason Salamun.

The opioid money, split 70% for the state and 30% for local governments, will arrive in chunks over the next 18 years. It comes from a series of nationwide settlements with the makers and sellers of the opioid painkillers that contributed to a spike in drug addiction and overdoses.

The state has collected \$31.5 million of its share of the settlement dollars since 2022, Jackley said Wednesday, and he asserted that state government has spent almost none of its share.

That's not accurate, according to Department of Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff. The \$31.5 million figure is the total amount received since 2022. What's left right now is about \$17 million, because \$14 million has been spent or obligated.

The Sioux Falls and Rapid City areas have both gotten a significant chunk of the money, the statement said. That's because 30% of the dollars are distributed directly to local governments, which are then required to tell the DSS, on an annual basis, how the money is spent.

Last year alone, the statement read, the cities of Sioux Falls and Rapid City and the counties of Minnehaha, Lincoln and Pennington got a combined \$3.9 million in opioid settlement money.

"As of Dec. 31, 2024, over \$3 million of those funds were reported to the state as unspent," Althoff's statement said.

Cities and counties will need to report how they've used their local shares for 2025 by Jan. 31, 2026.

Local governments can also ask for additional money by requesting grants, paid for from the state's 70% share, Althoff said. Sioux Falls and Rapid haven't asked for extra.

South Dakota's state lawyer picked a fight this week with the Department of Social Services over the agency's handling of a \$79 million pool of opioid settlement money.

Attorney General Marty Jackley wants the bulk of the dollars to land in Sioux Falls and Rapid City for addiction treatment, and says he'll ask lawmakers to disband the state's opioid settlement oversight committee if its members disagree.

But the Department of Social Services — the agency designated as the settlement money manager by the Legislature — says neither city has applied for opioid grant money, and the current pool of available funding isn't as large as Jackley asserts.

The department also said Jackley did not reach out about his concerns before holding a press conference on the topic Wednesday in Sioux Falls.

Jackley spoke to reporters that day from a lectern at Sioux Falls City Hall, flanked by Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken and

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Jackley: Spend the money now

Jackley argued Wednesday, however, that the two major cities would be best suited to decide where the money goes.

Using the money to bolster existing addiction treatment options, Jackley said, "presents that opportunity for us to be able to get ahead of the problem, to address the crisis" of drug addiction.

The settlement money is received and managed by the Department of Social Services, but its uses are overseen by the state's Opioid Advisory Committee.

The advisory committee's public plan for settlement dollars puts a large portion of the money into an interest-bearing account for distribution as grants. That's the wrong approach, Jackley told reporters this week.

It could also cause the state to lose 15% of the settlement dollars, he told reporters in Sioux Falls, because the settlement agreement dings states that place money in an endowment.

"Why would we want to lose 15% of \$79 million?" said Jackley, who later told Sioux Falls Live's Patrick Lalley that he'd be concerned that lawmakers would raid the fund for purposes beyond opioid programming, such as property tax relief.

The national settlement specifies that no more than 15% of any states' dollars can be spent on administration of the funds, and that 85% must go to opioid-related programs.

The Department of Social Services, in its statement, maintains that the state has not used the dollars for an endowment that would pay for things outside of opioid crisis mitigation.

The law that created South Dakota's fund for opioid dollars says the money can "only be used for purposes relating to opioid abuse treatment, prevention, and recovery programs."

On Thursday, Jackley said he'd spoken with DSS officials about the fund, who allayed his concerns.

"I commend DSS's commitment to not place the funds into an endowment, which is a disfavored use under the settlements," Jackley said.

Even so, his Thursday statement doubled down on criticisms of the speed of disbursements from the state's share of settlement money.

"In the three years since DSS has administered the fund, it has reported expending only \$634,000 of state funds on opioid remediation, and we must act now to address the addiction crises of today," Jackley said in a follow-up statement Thursday, citing the 2024 annual report on the fund.

The DSS did not offer a detailed breakdown of its own opioid fund spending, but spokeswoman Emily Richardt said Thursday that the department has distributed around \$1.6 million so far, all in grants to local organizations. The \$634,000 figure Jackley cited from the last annual report is short 15 months of spending. The next annual report is expected to be released within the next few months.

A statewide needs assessment, set to be completed by next spring, is meant to guide state-level spending beyond the local grant awards.

Mayors: Needs are great

Avera's juvenile treatment center is one example of the kind of treatment infrastructure that needs help in Sioux Falls, Mayor Paul TenHaken said at the press conference. It has eight beds and "they've been full since they opened," he said, citing a conversation he had with health system representatives on Tuesday.

"The need there is great," said TenHaken.

He also pointed to the city's mental health and addiction triage partnership with the county and health systems known as The Link.

"It takes several million dollars every year from the city and the county and our health care systems to run, and so dollars are needed," TenHaken said.

The Department of Social Services, in a statement sent Thursday, noted that a total of \$825,569 in the Sioux Falls area's local share of opioid money had been reported as dedicated to the Link through 2024.

In response, TenHaken said Thursday that the city intends to spend its remaining local allocation of opioid funds for The Link.

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"Based on guideline interpretations on how funding can be spent, the city plans to have all anticipated balances spent by 2036, which is intended to support The Link's Opioid Response Program," the statement said.

The mayor's statement did not address the question of a lack of grant requests from Sioux Falls for shares of the state's allotment of opioid dollars.

TenHaken's Rapid City counterpart referenced operations similar to The Link in the West River population center during Wednesday's press conference. Mayor Salamun said addiction often fuels crime, and that it tears up families and communities even when it doesn't.

"So many of us know people who battle with addiction to whatever it may be, and we know it destroys lives," Salamun said, pointing to his own family's experiences. "It is the true enemy."

Salamun, in a Thursday statement, did not address his Rapid City's unspent funds.

"The question is not whether some of the opioid settlement dollars have been distributed, but how we can use them more effectively," the statement read. "We commend the state's efforts so far and believe that allocating these funds more strategically toward effective treatment and rehabilitation could have a greater impact."

Jackley said he wants to offer treatment "before people are convicted of a drug felony," and said that allowing the mayors to make connections can make that happen quickly.

He also said he's willing to work with the opioid committee on the plan, but that he's ready to ask lawmakers to dissolve it if the group continues to bank settlement dollars instead of spend them.

Jackley: Committee framework unfortunate

South Dakota first signed on to the opioid litigation during Jackley's first term in office, which began in 2009. He left the post in 2019, after a loss to Kristi Noem in the 2018 GOP gubernatorial primary. By the time he'd returned to the Attorney General's Office, in 2023, lawmakers had designated the Department of Social Services as the opioid money administrator and passed legislation creating the advisory committee.

On Wednesday, Jackley said he'd have fought to maintain control of the money, had he been in charge at the time. The office of former Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg supported the 2022 bill that put the dollars in the care of the department and committee.

Even as Jackley said the money should've been managed by the attorney general, he said he understood why lawmakers created an oversight committee.

"When you're talking north of \$79 million, perhaps it makes sense that there's additional oversight over the attorney general," he said. "I'm respectful of that, but I'm passionate that these dollars need to get to use now."

DSS: Press conference misleading, inaccurate

Althoff's statements, sent on Wednesday evening and Thursday afternoon, contradicted Jackley. Beyond saying that money had been allocated to local governments, it said the attorney general had misstated the amount of money the state has received so far.

The proposal from Jackley for a Sioux Falls and Rapid City opioid money disbursement "appears to be for \$31 million from a fund that has \$17 million," Althoff's statement said.

He said the money already spent using the funds, for efforts like a \$350,000 investment in 20,000 overdose-reversal kits and overdose follow-up programming, is making a difference.

"South Dakota continues its trend of low rates of opioid prescriptions and the lowest rate of deaths by opioid overdose due, in part, to this comprehensive work," the statement said.

Althoff said his department "stands ready" to work with any local government that needs help battling opioid addiction.

"If these particular elected officials are interested in working with DSS on this issue, it would be more effective to reach out to us, rather than calling a press conference without ever having done so," it says.

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

Pentagon approves National Guard to carry weapons in D.C. as federal takeover extends

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has authorized the thousands of National Guard troops deployed to the District of Columbia to carry their weapons as they patrol the city, the Pentagon said Friday.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump said he is considering declaring a “national emergency” to keep troops in the nation’s capital for longer than the 30 days allowed under the law, and also said he’s eyeing the Democratic-led cities of Chicago, New York and San Francisco for additional military deployments.

Carrying weapons would be a significant escalation in the show of force for the troops in the district.

“At the direction of the Secretary of Defense, (Guard) members supporting the mission to lower the crime rate in our Nation’s capital will soon be on mission with their service-issued weapons, consistent with their mission and training,” a Defense Department official said in a statement to States Newsroom.

The final decision will be made by Brig. Gen. Leland Blanchard II, who is the interim commanding general of the D.C. National Guard, and any coordination will occur with D.C. Metropolitan Police and federal law enforcement, the Defense Department official said.

There are 800 D.C. National Guard members now in the district, joined by more than 1,260 members from six GOP states called to assist Trump’s federal takeover of the 62 square miles of the district that is home to 700,000 residents.

National Guard members from the Republican-led states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia began arriving in the district this week.

It’s unclear if the 2,060 National Guard members will carry their “service-issued weapons” while on duty. The change comes days before students in the district return to school.

The Pentagon did not respond to States Newsroom’s question on what type of weapons the National Guard members would be carrying, such as rifles or hand guns.

Typically a standard-issue weapon for most of the U.S. military is a M4 assault rifle, which is a variant of the AR-15.



Tourists pass by members of the National Guard stationed outside Union Station in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 18, 2025. (Photo by Jane Norman/States Newsroom)

More cities for military force

The president told reporters Friday in the Oval Office that Chicago, New York and San Francisco could be next for military deployment, similar to the federal takeover of the district.

“After we do this, we’ll go to another location and we’ll make it safe also,” Trump said. “Chicago is a mess...And we’ll straighten that one out probably next. That’ll be our next one after this.”

Because the district is not a state, the president has the sole authority over its National Guard members. State governors have control over their National Guard members, but the president earlier this summer

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federalized California's National Guard to respond to immigration protests — a test case for use of the state-based military forces. The Guard has since left Los Angeles.

Trump declared a "crime emergency" in the district on Aug. 11, even though violent crime in the district is at a 30-year low.

The president also invoked the district's Home Rule Act in order to use the Metropolitan Police Department's 3,400-member police force for immigration enforcement.

National Guard troops have been sent to patrol Metro stations, the tourist-heavy National Mall and near federal buildings across the district.

"The D.C. National Guard remains committed to safeguarding the District of Columbia and serving those who live, work, and visit the District," the Department of Defense official said.

Potential Trump declaration of 'national emergency'

It's unclear how long the National Guard will remain in the district and the president Friday said he is considering declaring a "national emergency" to keep troops in the nation's capital.

Troops are currently staying in local hotels around the district, according to a Joint Task Force-District of Columbia spokesperson.

"If I have a national emergency, I can keep the troops there as long as I want," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

Earlier Friday, Trump had said he was unsure of how long he would keep National Guard members in the district.

"The big question is how long do we stay? Because we want to make sure it doesn't come back," Trump said at another back-and-forth with reporters. "So we have to take care of these criminals and get them out."

On Thursday, Trump visited a U.S. Park Police facility in a district neighborhood known as Anacostia, where he addressed local and federal law enforcement officials as well as National Guard members.

"You're incredible people," Trump said. "You make the country run."

He thanked them for their service and had White House officials hand out hamburgers he said were cooked at the White House and pizza from a local restaurant.

Louisiana Illuminator Reporter Wes Muller contributed to this story.

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

Will states take on more FEMA duties? Congress, Trump council debate agency's fate

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The Federal Emergency Management Agency could look significantly different by next year's hurricane season, with state and local governments shouldering more of the responsibility for natural disaster response and recovery.

Members of both political parties have long criticized FEMA, but a bipartisan bill moving along in Congress combined with President Donald Trump's disdain for the agency may provide momentum for a big shift in emergency management.

Trump has said repeatedly he doesn't support FEMA's current structure and wants to see a special review council he put together propose a complete overhaul of the agency, possibly eliminating it entirely. That's provoked deep concern among some local and state officials who don't see how they would have the funding or background to handle a sudden natural disaster.

"We want to wean off of FEMA and we want to bring it down to the state level," Trump said in June. "We're moving it back to the states so the governors can handle it. That's why they're governors. Now, if they can't handle it, they shouldn't be governor."

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Trump's FEMA Review Council, a 12-member board led by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, has until mid-November to write a report detailing its recommendations for the president.

But, as Noem has noted several times during the group's two public meetings, Congress holds authority over FEMA and would need to sign off on any major changes.

Lawmakers, some of whom have spent years working on federal emergency management issues, aren't waiting for the review council's report to get started.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves, R-Mo., ranking member Rick Larsen, D-Wash., Florida Republican Rep. Daniel Webster and Arizona Democratic Rep. Greg Stanton released their bill in late July, before the review council held its second meeting. It does not aim to eliminate FEMA.

"FEMA is in need of serious reform, and the goal of the FEMA Act of 2025 is to fix it," Graves wrote in a statement. "This bill does more than any recent reforms to cut through the bureaucracy, streamline programs, provide flexibility, and return FEMA to its core purpose of empowering the states to lead and coordinating the federal response when it's needed."

Separately, a U.S. House spending committee is recommending a substantial boost in FEMA funding for the next fiscal year.



The FEMA Disaster Recovery Center at Weaverville Town Hall on March 29, 2025 in Weaverville, North Carolina. (Photo by Allison Joyce/Getty Images)

Make FEMA a Cabinet-level agency?

Stanton said during an interview with States Newsroom on Wednesday the Transportation Committee's bill "recognizes the challenges we have learned from past disasters; that sometimes the rules and regulations in place make it very difficult for victims of natural disasters to get the help that they need, whether it be housing or even financial assistance."

The legislation, he said, focuses on four broad improvements:

Making FEMA a Cabinet-level agency instead of housing it within the Department of Homeland Security;

Emphasizing mitigation projects that lessen the impact of natural disasters;

Streamlining processes that have become too complex over the years; and

Adding flexibility so states can choose the type of housing or other support that best helps their residents following a natural disaster.

Stanton does not support Trump's inclination to eliminate FEMA, arguing the federal government should help when local and state governments are overwhelmed by the scale of a natural disaster.

"That's the whole point of it, that Americans help our fellow Americans at their point of greatest need," he said.

But Stanton added he's willing to read through the FEMA Review Council's report once it's released and

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work with its members to improve the agency.

"I'm open-minded," Stanton said. "If they have good ideas that actually will strengthen FEMA, I'm all ears."

The bill, while a sign of bipartisan progress in an increasingly polarized Congress, still has several steps to go before reaching Trump's desk. To gain his signature, lawmakers may need to blend in some of the review council's recommendations later this year.

A handful of outside groups, including the National Emergency Management Association, sent the committee a letter applauding the bipartisan group for its work so far but hinting they expect changes in the coming months.

"We recognize and appreciate that the legislation is part of an ongoing effort to modernize FEMA and ensure its programs reflect current and emerging challenges," the four organizations wrote. "In that spirit, we also await the work of the FEMA Review Council and understand that its recommendations may inform refinements to the legislation."

'We're going to have to turn to our own resources'

The review council's two public meetings so far haven't included much debate. The members have mostly shared general statements about grievances with FEMA and issued some warnings for state governments that rely heavily on the federal government.

Phil Bryant, former Republican governor of Mississippi, said that states should prepare to begin spending much more on natural disasters.

"We're going to have to turn to our own resources," Bryant said. "States are going to have to develop that emergency response fund, take some of their rainy day funds or funds that they may want to use for musical events and put it into disaster recovery."

Larger states or those with strong economies may be able to absorb some of the cost that the federal government has carried for years, but other members of the council have cautioned their colleagues against going too far.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin said the committee will need to clearly explain what costs state and local governments will be responsible for and which will be covered by the federal government.

He also highlighted the challenges of completely reshaping FEMA while it's in the middle of responding to natural disasters ranging from hurricanes to wildfires to tornadoes.

"We're going to be changing the tires on this car while this car is barreling 100 miles an hour," Youngkin said.

Jane Castor, mayor of Tampa, Florida, signaled the panel's recommendations should take into consideration that many small or rural areas won't be able to raise the amount of funds they've received from FEMA.

"The locals should be prepared to respond to these incidents in the immediate aftermath," Castor said. "But as was stated before, there are some — London, Kentucky, and Asheville, North Carolina — (where) this is probably the first time that they've probably experienced anything like this. And so we have to be there to help them through the worst of their time."

Noem has been blunt in her assessment of FEMA, calling the agency "disastrous" and "incompetent."

She's also been clear that Trump doesn't expect incremental changes but an entirely new approach to how the federal government responds to natural disasters.

"The president's vision is that FEMA would not be in the long-term recovery model," Noem said. "He wants the state and local governments and emergency management directors to lead response immediately when something happens in a state or jurisdiction and for us to be in a supporting role; a financial role that would be there much in a state block grant model."

A wary eye on Trump panel

Local and state officials throughout the country are keeping a close eye on the Trump administration's review council, wary of the implications a loss in federal disaster response would have on local and state governments.

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Houston, Texas, Controller Chris Hollins said on a call with reporters in August the city has typically put away between \$25 million and \$30 million for natural disasters with the expectation that FEMA would help with additional costs.

After Trump proposed eliminating FEMA, Hollins began encouraging city leaders "to take a broader look at what's going to be necessary to be self-reliant. But that's an incredibly tall task."

"If we're all on our own, it's going to put our individual finances in an extreme state of turmoil, because we're either going to have to tax our citizens and our residents at extremely high rates to have enough money to be prepared, or we're going to intentionally roll the dice and run the risk of being unprepared when these moments come," Hollins said. "And you know, both of those are unacceptable predicaments."

Minnesota Auditor Julie Blaha said on the same call that some communities will need years or even decades to build up the type of reserve needed to cover just one major natural disaster.

"In a small town it's going to be pretty hard to put away millions of dollars, and by the time you can get a reserve of millions of dollars, you are likely to have another disaster," Blaha said. "The only way to respond to that, you have to go into debt, and you have again increased costs."

Two committees and a funding boost

Congress has a two-track system for determining the size and scope of federal departments like FEMA — authorizing committees, which set policy and generally determine each agency's mission, and the appropriations committees that provide funding through annual bills.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's bipartisan bill represents a significant step on the authorizing side. But the legislation still has to make it through committee debate, the House floor and the Senate before it could reach Trump's desk.

Separately, the House Appropriations Committee released a partisan bill earlier this summer that would provide a robust \$31.8 billion for FEMA during the next fiscal year, \$4.5 billion higher than the agency's current spending level.

During debate on the legislation, Florida Democratic Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz proposed an amendment that would have blocked any federal funding from being used to eliminate FEMA.

"Yes, FEMA needs fixes but FEMA helps all of our communities and we can make it better and should be making it better without killing it," Wasserman Schultz said. "The states cannot handle the responsibilities of FEMA in the aftermath of a storm on their own. That is simply not possible."

Republicans opposed the amendment, arguing the spending panel shouldn't do anything that would tie the hands of the review council, the authorizing committees, or Trump.

Oklahoma Republican Rep. Stephanie Bice sharply criticized FEMA during debate, saying the agency "isn't working anymore" and has "become bloated."

But Bice also made the point that federal funding is necessary, saying she was trying to address issues within her district "where FEMA hasn't paid for disaster debris removal for two years."

"These communities cannot afford the huge costs of debris removal for two years or more when FEMA doesn't pay them, reimburse them for the services that they have provided," Bice said. "This can't continue."

Dems say Congress in charge

Democrats on the committee, including Maryland Rep. Steny Hoyer, urged their GOP colleagues to support the amendment, pressing for any changes to FEMA to be made solely by Congress.

"If FEMA needs reforming, and I may certainly agree with that, we are the reformers," Hoyer said.

North Carolina Republican Rep. Chuck Edwards, who represents western sections of the state devastated by Hurricane Helene, said he opposed the amendment because he wanted to see a complete overhaul of FEMA — though he appeared to back the idea that lawmakers should decide what changes and when.

"There are few people in this room that have more up close and personal interaction with FEMA over the last eight months than I," Edwards said. "Up until Sept. 27, FEMA was nothing more than a line item on a budget for me. Since Sept. 27, I've very much been getting an education."

"I can tell you that FEMA needs major reform and Congress is best suited to do that."

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

FBI raids Maryland home of Trump critic John Bolton

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — FBI agents raided the home and office of former Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton, a one-time adviser to President Donald Trump who has become a frequent critic of the president, to investigate Bolton's handling of classified documents, according to multiple media reports.

The raid on a former Trump adviser's house represents an escalation from the Justice Department in targeting critics of Trump, whom he vowed to go after should he return to the White House for a second term.

Speaking to reporters Friday, Trump said he was not briefed on the raid of Bolton's house in the wealthy suburb of Bethesda, Maryland, and office in Washington, D.C., according to White House pool reports.

But the president noted his longstanding feud with his former adviser.

"I'm not a fan of John Bolton," Trump said. "He's a real sort of a low life. He could be a very unpatriotic guy. We're going to find out."

Earlier this year, the president revoked the security detail for Bolton, who served as Trump's national security advisor from 2018 to 2019 and as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations during the George W. Bush administration in 2005 and 2006.

Following his time in the Trump administration, Bolton, who was an important member of the Bush administration's national security team that favored active military involvement in the Middle East, emerged as a chief Republican foreign policy critic of Trump, authoring a 2020 book that blasted the president and widened the public rift between the two men.

Bolton has not been charged with a crime and is not in custody, according to The Associated Press, which cited a person familiar with the matter.

The first Trump administration launched an investigation into Bolton to probe if he improperly used sensitive information in his book. The current search involves federal officials investigating Bolton's actions over the last four years, according to the New York Times, which cited a federal law enforcement official.



Then-White House National Security Advisor John Bolton (R) listens to President Donald Trump as he and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte talk to reporters in the Oval Office at the White House July 18, 2019. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Trump documents case

Trump himself was prosecuted for mishandling classified documents after the FBI raided his Florida

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golf course and main residence of Mar-a-Lago in 2022. A federal judge dismissed the resulting criminal charges against Trump.

FBI Director Kash Patel wrote on social media that "NO ONE is above the law," and that FBI agents were "on mission."

The FBI declined to comment.

In 2020, the Department of Justice opened a criminal investigation into Bolton's book and tried to block its publication, but were stymied in court.

Patel also wrote a 2023 book where he lists Bolton, along with a dozen other people, as members of the "deep state" who are working against Trump, according to the Times.

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

Football Scores From Friday

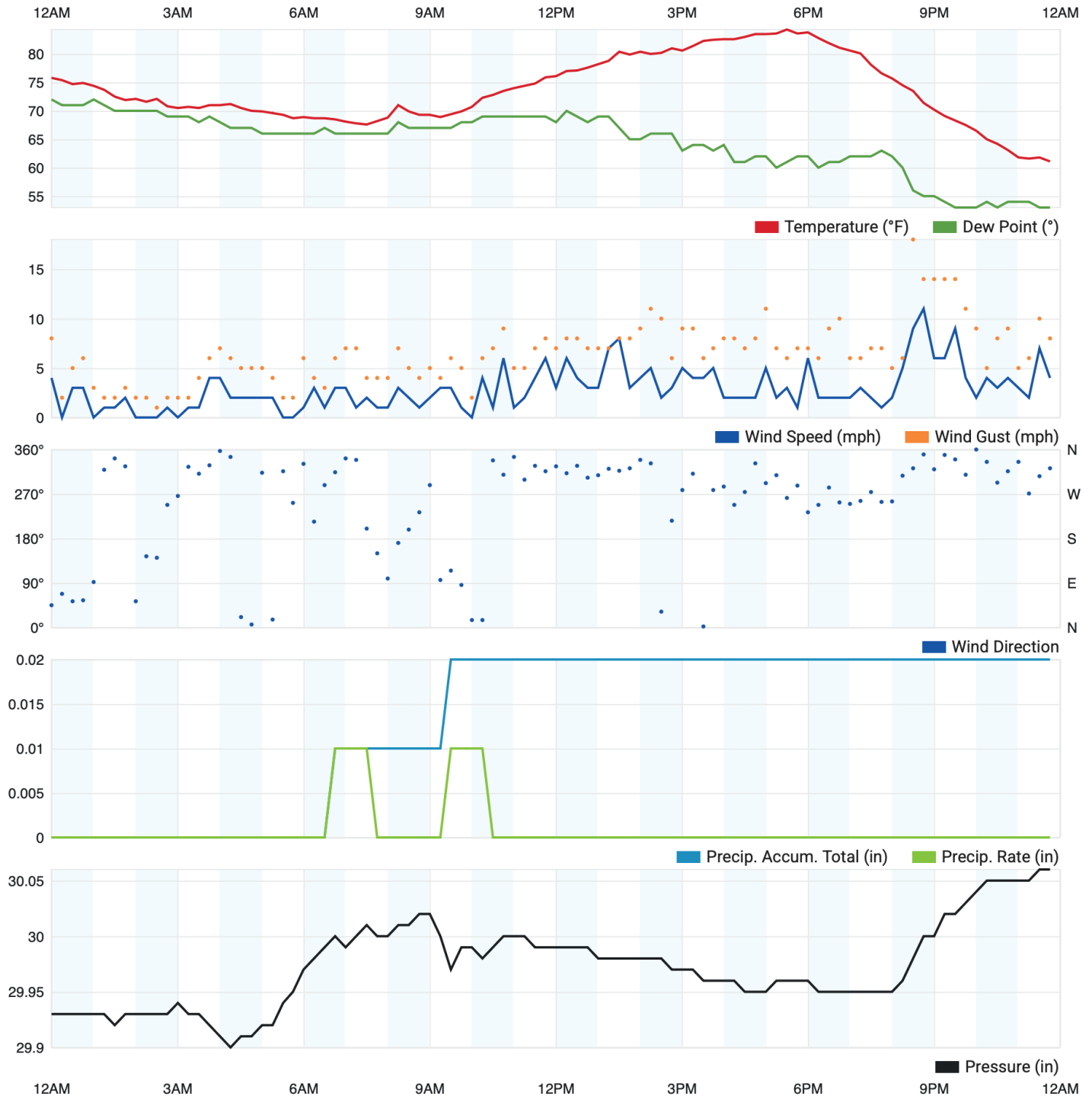
| | |
|--|---|
| Alcester-Hudson 40, Howard 29 | Hanson 50, Garretson 7 |
| Arlington 40, Sunshine Bible 0 | Harding County 44, Gettysburg 12 |
| Avon 38, Colman-Egan 0 | Herreid-Selby 50, Faith 0 |
| Bennett County 46, Jones County 12 | Hill City 72, Stanley County 32 |
| Beresford 27, Baltic 12 | Ipswich 34, Timber Lake 0 |
| Bon Homme 51, Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes | Iroquois-Lake Preston 22, Wilmot 14 |
| Central/Dakota Christian 0 | Kimball-White Lake 36, De Smet 34 |
| Burke 55, Colome 0 | Lemmon 14, North Central 13 |
| Centerville 28, Deubrook 8 | Leola-Frederick 54, Redfield 22 |
| Clark-Willow Lake 38, Aberdeen Roncalli 0 | Lyman 42, Dupree 6 |
| Corsica-Stickney 42, Hitchcock-Tulare 6 | Mt. Vernon-Plankinton 38, McCook Central-Mon- |
| Dell Rapids St. Mary's 58, Oldham-Ramona- | trose 16 |
| Rutland 6 | Platte-Geddes 52, Gayville-Volin 12 |
| Deuel 18, Flandreau 6 | Sioux Falls Lutheran 52, Irene-Wakonda 20 |
| Elk Point-Jefferson 61, Parker/Marion 19 | St. Thomas More 28, Sioux Valley 14 |
| Elkton-Lake Benton 59, Waubay-Summit 8 | Sully Buttes 36, Northwestern 0 |
| Esteline-Hendricks 50, Wolsey-Wessington 20 | Viborg-Hurley 50, Canistota 0 |
| Freeman-Marin-Freeman Academy 20, Parkston 6 | Wagner 45, Chamberlian 12 |
| Great Plains 28, Waverly-South Shore 6 | Wall 54, Philip 6 |
| Gregory 48, Scotland/Menno 38 | Warner 23, Castlewood 14 |
| Groton Area 54, Webster Area 0 | Winner 18, Hot Springs 14 |
| Hamlin 36, Britton-Hecla 0 | Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central |
| | 13, Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 12 |

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 22, 2025



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Today



High: 71 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 48 °F

Mostly Clear

Sunday



High: 68 °F

Sunny

Sunday Night



Low: 43 °F

Mostly Clear

Monday



High: 69 °F

Sunny



Weekend Outlook

August 23, 2025
4:01 AM

Today



- Pt. Cloudy, Breezy, PM Sprinkles East
- Highs in the upper 60s to mid 70s
- Winds: Eastern SD: NW 15-25 mph
Central SD: NW 10-20 mph

Tonight



- Clear to Partly Cloudy, Cool
- Lows in the upper 40s to low 50s
- Winds: Eastern SD: NW 10-15 mph
Central SD: N 5-15 mph

Sunday



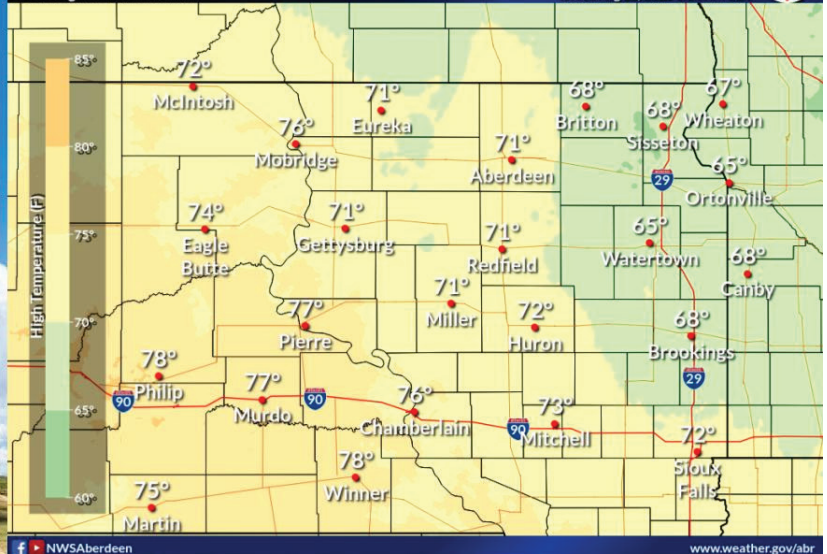
- Mostly Sunny
- Highs mid 60s to mid 70s
- Winds: Eastern SD: N-NW 10-20 mph
Central SD: N-NE 10-15 mph

High Temperatures Saturday

10-15 degrees below normal!

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD

Issued Aug 23, 2025 3:34 AM CDT



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Dry and cool Canadian high pressure will continue to gradually build into the region through the weekend. This will deliver a more comfortable and cooler air mass into the area that's projected to stick around for at least a few days. Temperatures will run about 10-15 degrees below normal for high temperatures and about 5-10 degrees below normal for lows this weekend.

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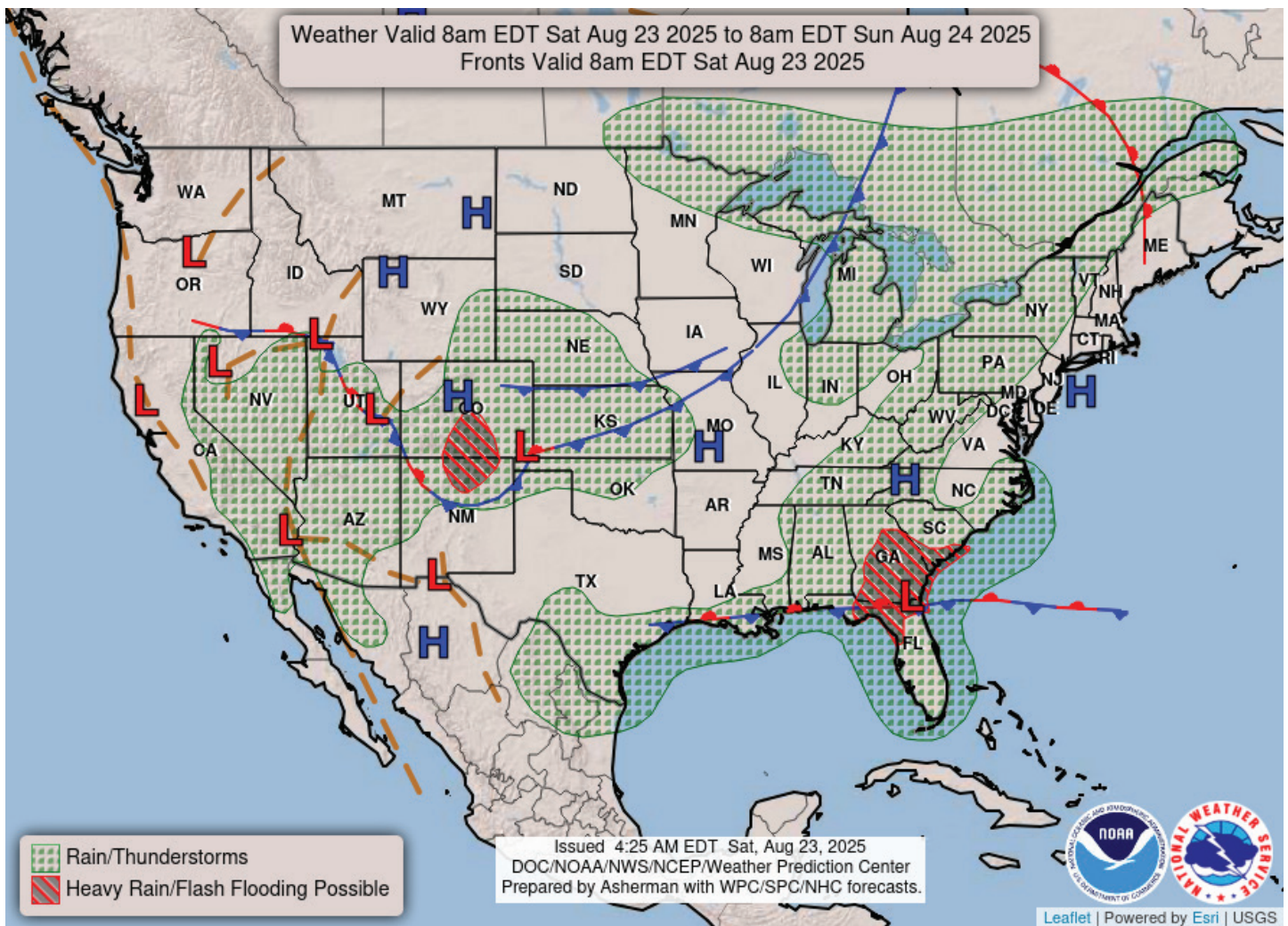
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 5:27 PM
Heat Index: 85 °F at 4:00 PM
Low Temp: 61 °F at 11:06 PM
Wind: 18 mph at 8:21 PM
Precip: : 0.02

Day length: 13 hours, 45 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 2003
Record Low: 39 in 1987
Average High: 82
Average Low: 55
Average Precip in August.: 1.67
Precip to date in August: 4.42
Average Precip to date: 15.77
Precip Year to Date: 20.30
Sunset Tonight: 8:26 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:44 am



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Today in Weather History

August 23, 1960: Lightning and damaging winds caused damage to occur from Hand and Sanborn Counties to Marshall and Roberts Counties. A small airplane was destroyed, and the high winds broke windows in Miller. Also, roofs, TV antenna, utility lines, and trees were damaged in Kingsbury and Marshall Counties.

August 23, 1998: Winds gusting to 65 mph in and around Milbank, in Grant County, took the roof off a mobile home and wrapped it around a utility pole. The people inside the mobile home were uninjured. The Summit Dairy Barn had sustained significant damage. The high winds also blew a shed and a large tennis court fence down. Several trees along with many large tree branches were down all over town. Strong winds were also reported in Day and Roberts Counties. Winds of 60 mph also downed many tree branches north of Watertown.

1724: An event is known as the "Great Gust of 1724" occurred on this day. Almost all tobacco and much of the corn crops were destroyed by this violent tropical storm, which struck the Chesapeake Bay. Intense floods of rain and a huge gust of wind were seen on the James River. Some homes were wrecked, and several vessels were driven ashore. The storm was likely followed by a second hurricane just five days later causing rain for many straight days that caused the Virginia floods of 1724.

1906 - Thunderstorms deluged Kansas City, MO, with six inches of rain during the early morning, including nearly three inches in thirty minutes. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1921 - Denver, CO, was drenched with 2.20 inches of rain in one hour, a record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1933: A hurricane made landfall near Nags Head, North Carolina and tracked up the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake-Potomac hurricane moved over Norfolk, Virginia, and Washington, DC. A seven-foot tide flooded businesses in Norfolk, Virginia. Described in the American Meteorological Society's August 1933 weather review as "one of the most severe storms that have ever visited the Middle Atlantic Coast."

1970 - Dry thunderstorms ignited more than one hundred fires in the Wenatchee and Okanogan National Forests of Washington State. Hot, dry, and windy weather spread the fires, a few of which burned out of control through the end of the month. More than 100,000 acres burned. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought autumn-like weather to the Northern and Central Plains Region. Afternoon highs were in the 50s and 60s across parts of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska that just two days earlier were in the 90s or above 100 degrees. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rain in New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced hail an inch in diameter, wind gusts to 64 mph, and 2.62 inches of rain at Tucson AZ resulting in three million dollars damage. Cool weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S. Hartford CT reported a record low of 42 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain with flash flooding in West Virginia. Pickens, WV, reported 4.80 inches of rain in 24 hours. Evening thunderstorms in Mississippi deluged Alta Woods with 4.25 inches of rain in less than an hour. Thunderstorms also produced heavy rain in southeastern Kentucky, and flooding was reported along Big Creek and along Stinking Creek. The Stinking Creek volunteer fire department reported water levels 12 to 14 feet above bankfull. Fort Worth TX hit the 100 degree mark for the first time all year. Strong winds ushering cool air into northwest Utah gusted to 70 mph, raising clouds of dust in the salt flats. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: While South Florida residents were preparing for Hurricane Andrew, folks in western Montana were dealing with early season snowfall. Some snowfall amounts include 8.3" in Great Falls, 6.2" in Helena, and 5.1" in Cut Bank. This snowfall is the first significant snowfall on record in western Montana in August.

2005: Hurricane Katrina formed from Tropical Depression Twelve over the southeastern Bahamas. Katrina would become the costliest (\$81.2 billion) and one of the most deadly hurricanes (1,836 lives) in U.S. history.

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An anxious college student approached a respected businessman and asked,
"I need your guidance. You're so successful, and I know your advice will be worthwhile."

The man smiled and said, "I'll share three words of wisdom but you should know, they all come from the Bible. I've found them to be very reliable."

Anything. Anywhere. Any cost.

Anything – Be willing to do any task God places before you. Nothing is beneath you when it comes to serving Him. His plans never set us up for failure—only for growth, purpose, and eternal impact.

Anywhere – Be ready to go wherever He leads. God's will won't take you to a place His grace cannot sustain you. If He calls you, He will equip you.

Any cost – No sacrifice made for God is ever wasted. Whatever you surrender to Him will be returned in ways far greater than you can imagine. Give up everything for Christ, but never give Him up for anything.

Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow Me." To be His disciple means we say yes to anything, anywhere, at any cost.

And the best part? Every opportunity He gives comes with a guarantee: If you follow Him, He will provide the strength to succeed—His way.

God's Word is meant to be shared. If this encouraged you, share it with someone else who could use a touch of His grace today.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.22.25

18 30 44 48 50 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$253,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.20.25

3 12 27 35 39 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,300,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 26 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.22.25

8 19 26 27 29 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 41 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.20.25

5 13 29 30 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 41 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.20.25

16 17 23 46 52 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 10 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.20.25

31 59 62 65 68 5

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$700,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 10 Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

08/09/2025 Groton Legion 30th Anniversary Celebration
08/07/2025 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm
08/11/2025 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 3:30-6pm
08/23/2025 Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/06-07/25 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
09/07/2025 Couples Sunflower Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
09/07/2025 9th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2025 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/15/2025 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving 11:30am-1:30pm Community Center (Thanksgiving)
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

The Menendez brothers were denied parole.

They have to wait at least 18 months for their next chance

By JAIMIE DING Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Erik and Lyle Menendez were denied parole by a California board this week after decades in prison for killing their parents in 1989 at their Beverly Hills mansion.

During two days of hearings, the brothers were each questioned by panels of two commissioners and asked to speak with complete candor on the abuse they suffered in childhood, their mindsets leading up to and after the murders and various prison transgressions.

The brothers were sentenced to life in prison in 1996 for fatally shooting Jose and Kitty Menendez. The case has long captivated true crime enthusiasts, with the brothers amassing public support in the past year after shows on Netflix renewed interest.

The hearings marked the closest they have come to freedom since their convictions. Despite each receiving three-year denials, they will be eligible to request an administrative review in one year. If granted, they could appear before the parole board again as early as 18 months from now.

Here are takeaways from the hearings:

Having prohibited cellphones is not a minor prison infraction

While it might not seem like a big deal to the nonincarcerated public, commissioners emphasized to the brothers that their use of illicit cellphones cast a shadow on their positive achievements while behind bars.

Cellphones can be used to order hits, move drugs in prison and coordinate attacks on officers, they noted. Their presence meant a correctional officer had to smuggle them in, and a prison gang may have benefited by charging a tax on it, commissioner Robert Barton told Erik Menendez.

"What I got in terms of the phone and my connection with the outside world was far greater than the consequences of me getting caught with the phone," Erik Menendez said. He said he used it to speak with his wife, watch YouTube, listen to music and watch pornography.

In denying him parole, Barton said his behavior was "selfish," a sign he believes the rules do not apply to him and the "ends justify the means."

Lyle Menendez also had two recent cellphone infractions, including one in March.

He said correctional staffers were monitoring his communications with his wife and family and selling their content to tabloids, so he saw cellphones as a privacy measure.

There was "a lot of stress" in his marriage around the time he transferred to the prison in San Diego, and he wanted to stay in touch with his wife, he said.

"I had convinced myself that this wasn't a means that was harming anyone but myself in a rule violation," Lyle Menendez said. "I didn't think it really disrupted prison management very much."

They have not been model prisoners as some believed

Of the two, Erik Menendez committed more serious rules infractions.

Commissioners questioned why he associated himself with a prison gang called the Two Fivers and helped them with a tax scheme around 2013.

Menendez said he was trying to survive an "extremely violent yard" where close friends were stabbed or raped.

"I was in tremendous fear," he said. "When the Two Fivers came and asked for help, I thought this was a great opportunity to align myself with them and to survive."

Menendez told commissioners that he prioritized protecting himself over the rules because at the time, he had no hope of ever getting out.

He used drugs and alcohol in his early years behind bars but became sober in 2013 on his mother's birthday, he said.

While Lyle Menendez committed fewer violations, commissioner Julie Garland said he still demonstrated

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"antisocial personality traits like deception, minimization and rule breaking that lie beneath that positive surface."

Prisoners who break rules are more likely to do so in society as well, she said.

Why they killed their mother remains a sticking point

Commissioners expressed concerns over the killing of Kitty Menendez, with Barton saying he found that it showed Erik Menendez was "devoid of human compassion" at the time.

"I can't put myself in your place. I don't know that I've ever had rage to that level, ever," Barton said. "But that is still concerning, especially since it seems she was also a victim herself of the domestic violence."

Barton said the brothers were not in imminent fear for their lives and should have sought help from other family members or gone to the police.

As for Lyle Menendez, Garland said shooting Kitty Menendez one final time was extremely "callous." She also highlighted his actions in covering up the crime, such as lying to the police and trying to avoid prosecution.

Parole denials are not unheard-of for prisoners with 'moderate risk'

Gov. Gavin Newsom previously ordered the California parole board to conduct a risk assessment of the brothers in response to a clemency request.

While it was never made public, LA County District Attorney Nathan Hochman revealed in May that both brothers were deemed "moderate risk."

Barton said he deemed that assessment to be neutral, as far as he considered it at all.

A 2022 analysis by the Prison Policy Initiative showed that California prisoners with "moderate risk" were granted parole 22% of the time. The nonprofit ranked the state as among the most difficult for obtaining parole.

Family members back the brothers

More than a dozen relatives spoke at the two hearings to advocate for their release.

Aunt Teresita Menendez-Baralt, Jose Menendez's sister, said she is dying from Stage 4 cancer and wishes to welcome them home.

"I want to make clear that although I love my brother, I have fully forgiven Erik," she said. "Erik carries himself with kindness, integrity and strength that comes from patience and grace."

Natascha Leonardo, Kitty Menendez's great-niece, promised the parole board that she would provide a home of "unconditional love and stability" for him in Colorado, where he could spend time with family and nature.

Family members said in a statement that while they are disappointed parole was denied, they are not discouraged.

"We know they are good men who have done the work to rehabilitate and are remorseful," they said. "We love them unconditionally and will continue to stand by them on the journey ahead."

Female political prisoners in Belarus face abuse, humiliation and threats of losing parental rights

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Antanina Kanavalava says her four years in a Belarusian penal colony as a political prisoner were filled with a fear and anguish that still haunts her.

She nearly lost parental rights to her two young children when she was initially arrested. Her eyesight deteriorated from sewing military uniforms in a dimly lit room. Denied access to even basic needs like feminine hygiene products, she used rags or whatever she could find amid unsanitary conditions.

"Women in prison go through hell and can't even complain to anyone," Kanavalava, 37, told The Associated Press after her release in December. "The head of the prison told me straight out that people like me should be put against the wall and shot."

Belarus has nearly 1,200 political prisoners. While all endure harsh conditions like unheated cells, isolation and poor nutrition and health care, human rights officials say the 178 women behind bars are particularly

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vulnerable.

Pavel Sapelka, a lawyer with the Viasna human rights center, says women are often singled out for abuse and humiliation, threatened with losing their children, and having medical problems ignored.

Sapelka cited the case of Hanna Kandratsenka, 30, who died of cervical cancer in February, months after getting her freedom. She was diagnosed in prison but denied early release for treatment, he said.

Independent experts appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council describe "appalling" conditions for women in Belarusian prisons, with "a blatant lack of accountability for the ill treatment."

Authoritarian President Lukashenko has ruled Belarus for over three decades, living up to his nickname of "Europe's last dictator" by silencing dissent and extending his rule through elections the West calls neither free nor fair. A harsh crackdown followed a disputed 2020 vote, when hundreds of thousands took to the streets. Over 65,000 people were arrested, thousands were beaten by police and hundreds of independent media outlets and nongovernmental organizations were closed and outlawed.

Opposition figures are either imprisoned or have fled abroad. Among those behind bars is Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski, the founder of Viasna, and Maria Kolesnikova, an opposition leader. Although Lukashenko has freed over 300 political prisoners in the last year, still others are arrested in a revolving door of repression.

U.S. President Donald Trump said last week on social media that he spoke with Lukashenko and encouraged him to release more. On Friday, Lukashenko responded: "Take them, bring them over there."

Of the harsh conditions, Lukashenko says Belarus treats inmates "normally," adding that "prison is not a resort."

The government has refused to allow international monitors and independent observers into the prisons.

A mother's trauma

Kanavalava was a confidant of opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who challenged Lukashenko in the 2020 election but later fled the country amid the subsequent protests.

With her husband also jailed, Kanavalava was convicted of "participating in mass riots" and sentenced to 5 1/2 years. Authorities threatened to send her 6-year-old son, Ivan, and 4-year-old daughter, Nasta, to an orphanage at the start of her sentence.

"For a mother not to see her children for four years is real torture," she told AP. "The authorities know this and rub salt into this maternal wound every day, demanding I sign confessions and cooperate."

The U.N. experts said female prisoners in Belarus were subject to "arbitrary punishment, including solitary confinement and incommunicado detention without contact with their children."

Kanavalava likened it to being a "hostage," saying she was forced to cooperate with authorities because "I wanted to survive for the sake of my children." Their grandmother ultimately took them to Warsaw, where they were reunited with their mother following her pardon and early release in January,

Washing with warm tea

Former political prisoner Palina Sharenda-Panasiuk, 50, spent more than four years behind bars in several detention centers and penal colonies, serving 270 days in solitary confinement.

Held in a KGB detention center with no hot water, she used warm tea that she was served to wash herself, Sharenda-Panasiuk said, describing unsanitary conditions where illnesses "become chronic due to the constant cold."

"The authorities deliberately exploit women's vulnerabilities to humiliate them and create unbearable conditions," she added.

Physical abuse and hunger strikes

The U.N. experts expressed particular concern for Viktoryia Kulsha, who was initially sentenced to 2 1/2 years for moderating a Telegram messaging channel that urged drivers to block streets during the 2020 protests. Four more years were tacked on for allegedly disobeying prison officials.

Human rights groups say the 43-year-old has gone on at least six hunger strikes protesting abuses in Penal Colony No. 24 in Zarechcha. The U.N. experts said in May her condition "has been life-threatening for some time now."

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Sharenda-Panasiuk, who was in the same penal colony, said she saw a guard in 2023 punch Kulsha in the back, causing her to fall. The same guard later choked her by grabbing her from behind, she added.

"Viktoria slit her veins and went on hunger strikes in protest against the tyranny of the prison authorities and this slaughterhouse, but it kept getting worse and they are driving her to the brink," Sharenda-Panasiuk said. "Her illnesses have worsened. ... She has problems with her breasts, with the thyroid gland."

Conditions in Penal Colony No. 24 are among the harshest, she said, describing stints in solitary confinement as torture. Women often work 12–14 hours a day, including Sundays, to meet quotas. They are under 24-hour surveillance, are not allowed walks outside, must wear the same clothes constantly and often have no opportunity to bathe.

Strip searches are conducted by both male and female employees, Sharenda-Panasiuk said, and "during a transfer from place to place, it was mainly men who searched me."

Stints in a 'shame cage'

Natallia Dulina was arrested in 2022, convicted of extremism — a common charge for dissidents — and sentenced to 3 1/2 years. She was pardoned and released in June with 13 other political prisoners, and taken to neighboring Lithuania following a visit to Minsk by U.S. special envoy Keith Kellogg.

The 60-year-old Italian teacher at Minsk State Linguistic University described particularly harsh treatment at Penal Colony No. 4, including the installation of a "shame cage" in the courtyard. Women are forced to stand in the cage for hours, in all weather, to punish them for disciplinary violations, she said.

No such cages exist in men's penal colonies, Sapelka said, and "the authorities will come up with new ways to abuse women in particular."

U.N. experts called this punishment "inhuman and degrading."

"I decided that if someone ever tries to put me in this cage, I simply will not go there — I'll go straight into solitary confinement," Dulina said in an interview from Vilnius.

She described arbitrary punishment, adding she once lost visitation rights for feeding bread to a pigeon. Despite the harsh conditions, she said she refused to admit guilt or request a pardon.

Lasting effects for freed prisoners

Kanavalava, who lives in Warsaw with her family, admits that "prison is not over yet" for her because her husband still has nearly two years left on his sentence.

Neither is the anxiety. She said "the fear of losing my own children haunts me even in my dreams."

"It is impossible to get used to the tyranny of the Belarusian authorities, but it is even harder to explain to children and to yourself the high price that Belarusians pay for their desire to be free," Kanavalava said.

Iran confers with European nations on its nuclear program as sanctions deadline nears

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran said Friday its foreign minister spoke by phone with his French, German and British counterparts to avoid the reimposition of U.N. sanctions over Tehran's nuclear program, just days ahead of a European deadline.

The call by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi came as the three countries threatened to invoke the "snap-back" provision of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal by month's end, allowing any party to reimpose sanctions if they find Iran out of compliance with requirements such as international monitoring of its nuclear program.

The Europeans' concern over the Iranian program, which had been enriching uranium to near weapons-grade levels before the 12-day Iran-Israel war in June saw its atomic sites bombed, has only grown since Tehran cut off all cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in the conflict's wake. That has left the international community further blinded to Iran's program — as well as the status of its stockpile of uranium enriched to 60% purity, a short, technical step to weapons-grade levels of 90%.

Iran has long insisted its program is peaceful, though it is the only non-nuclear-armed nation enriching uranium at that level. The U.S., the IAEA and others say Iran had a nuclear weapons program up until 2003.

After the call, a statement released on Araghchi's behalf via Telegram said he criticized the countries'

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"legal and moral qualifications" to threaten to reinstate the sanctions, but insisted talks would continue. "The Islamic Republic of Iran, just as it acts authoritatively in self defense, has never abandoned the path of diplomacy and is ready for any diplomatic solution that guarantees the rights and interests of the Iranian people," the statement said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot confirmed on the social platform X that the talks took place, and said another round of discussions would happen next week.

"We have just made an important call to our Iranian counterpart regarding the nuclear program and the sanctions against Iran that we are preparing to reapply," he said. "Time is running out."

That was echoed by British Foreign Secretary David Lammy and the European Union's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas. Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said "time is very short."

"Iran needs to engage substantively in order to avoid the activation of snapback," he wrote on X. "We have been clear that we will not let the snapback of sanctions expire unless there is a verifiable and durable deal."

European letter set deadline

In a letter Aug. 8, the three European nations warned Iran it would proceed with "snapback" if Tehran didn't reach a "satisfactory solution" to the nuclear issues. That deadline would be Aug. 31, in nine days, leaving little time for Iran to likely reach any agreement with the Europeans, who have grown increasingly skeptical of Iran over years of inconclusive negotiations over its nuclear program.

Restoring the IAEA's access is a key part of the talks. Iran has blamed the war with Israel in part on the IAEA, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, without offering any evidence. The IAEA issues quarterly reports on Iran's program and the 2015 deal gave the agency greater access to keep track of it. Its Board of Governors voted to find Iran out of compliance with its obligations to the agency the day before the Iran-Israel war began.

Iran has also threatened its director-general, Rafael Mariano Grossi, with arrest if he comes to Iran, further complicating talks. Grossi is considering running to become the U.N.'s secretary-general, something Tehran has seized on as well in its criticisms of the Argentine diplomat.

Alongside the European call with Iran, IAEA officials in Vienna met with Iranian officials, a diplomat close to the agency told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door meeting. Those talks were a continuation of a discussion held during an Aug. 11 visit to Tehran by Massimo Aparo, a deputy to Grossi, the diplomat added. Iranian state television also acknowledged the meeting.

Iran tries to downplay 'snapback' threat

Araghchi has sought to downplay the threat that "snapback" poses. In his statement after the call, he said Iran would discuss the "snapback" threat with its friends, likely meaning China and Russia.

The "snapback" power in the nuclear accord expires in October, also putting pressure on the Europeans to potentially use it as leverage with Iran before losing that ability.

Under "snapback," any party to the deal can find Iran in noncompliance, reimposing the sanctions. After it expires, any sanctions effort could face a veto from U.N. Security Council members China and Russia, two nations that have provided some support to Iran in the past but stayed out of the June war.

Epstein's former girlfriend told Justice Department she did not see Trump act in 'inappropriate way'

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL R. SISAK and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jeffrey Epstein's imprisoned former girlfriend repeatedly denied to the Justice Department witnessing any sexually inappropriate interactions with Donald Trump, according to records released Friday meant to distance the Republican president from the disgraced financier.

The Trump administration issued transcripts from interviews that Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche conducted with Ghislaine Maxwell last month as the administration was scrambling to present itself as transparent amid a fierce backlash over an earlier refusal to disclose a trove of records from the sex-

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trafficking case.

The records show Maxwell repeatedly showering Trump with praise and denying under questioning from Blanche that she had observed Trump engaged in any form of sexual behavior. The administration was presumably eager to make such denials public at a time when the president has faced questions about a long-ago friendship with Epstein and as his administration has endured continued scrutiny over its handling of evidence from the case.

The transcript release represents the latest Trump administration effort to repair self-inflicted political wounds after failing to deliver on expectations that its own officials had created through conspiracy theories and bold pronouncements that never came to pass. By making public two days worth of interviews, officials appear to be hoping to at least temporarily keep at bay sustained anger from Trump's base as they send Congress evidence they had previously kept from view.

After her interview with Blanche, Maxwell was moved from the low-security federal prison in Florida to a minimum-security prison camp in Texas to continue serving a 20-year sentence for her 2021 conviction on allegations that she lured teenage girls to be sexually abused by Epstein. Her trial featured sordid accounts of the sexual exploitation of girls as young as 14 told by four women who described being abused as teens in the 1990s and early 2000s at Epstein's homes.

Neither Maxwell's lawyers nor the federal Bureau of Prisons have explained the reason for the move, but one of her lawyers, David Oscar Markus, said in a social media post Friday that Maxwell was "innocent and never should have been tried, much less convicted."

'Never inappropriate'

"I actually never saw the President in any type of massage setting," Maxwell said, according to the transcript. "I never witnessed the President in any inappropriate setting in any way. The President was never inappropriate with anybody. In the times that I was with him, he was a gentleman in all respects."

Maxwell recalled knowing about Trump and possibly meeting him for the first time in 1990, when her newspaper magnate father, Robert Maxwell, was the owner of the New York Daily News. She said she had been to Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, sometimes alone, but hadn't seen Trump since the mid-2000s.

Asked if she ever heard Epstein or anyone else say Trump "had done anything inappropriate with masseuses" or anyone else in their orbit, Maxwell replied, "Absolutely never, in any context."

Maxwell was interviewed over the course of two days last month by Blanche at a Florida courthouse. She was given limited immunity, allowing her to speak freely without fear of prosecution for anything she said except for in the event of a false statement.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department on Friday began sending to the House Oversight Committee records from the investigation that the panel says it intends to make public after removing victim's information.

High-profile contacts

The case had long captured public attention in part because of the wealthy financier's social connections over the years to prominent figures, including Prince Andrew, former President Bill Clinton and Trump, who has said he had a falling-out with Epstein years ago and well before Epstein came under investigation.

Maxwell told Blanche that Clinton was initially her friend, not Epstein's, and that she never saw him receive a massage — nor did she believe he ever did. The only times they were together, she said, were the two dozen or so times they traveled on Epstein's plane.

"That would've been the only time that I think that President Clinton could have even received a massage," Maxwell said. "And he didn't, because I was there."

She also spoke glowingly of Britain's Prince Andrew and dismissed as "rubbish" the late Virginia Giuffre's claim that she was paid to have a relationship with Andrew and that he had sex with her at Maxwell's London home.

Maxwell sought to distance herself from Epstein's conduct, repeatedly denying allegations made during her trial about her role. Though she acknowledged that at one point Epstein began preferring younger women, she insisted she never understood that to "encompass children."

"I did see from when I met him, he was involved or -- involved or friends with or whatever, however you

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want to characterize it, with women who were in their 20s," she told Blanche. "And then the slide to, you know, 18 or younger looking women. But I never considered that this would encompass criminal behavior."

Epstein was arrested in 2019 on sex-trafficking charges, accused of sexually abusing dozens of teenage girls, and was found dead a month later in a New York jail cell in what investigators described as a suicide.

A story that's consumed the Justice Department

The saga has consumed the Trump administration following a two-page announcement from the FBI and Justice Department last month that Epstein had killed himself despite conspiracy theories to the contrary, that a "client list" that Attorney General Pam Bondi had intimated was on her desk did not actually exist, and that no additional documents from the high-profile investigation were suitable to be released.

The announcement produced outrage from conspiracy theorists, online sleuths and Trump supporters who had been hoping to see proof of a government coverup. That expectation was driven in part by comments from officials, including FBI Director Kash Patel and Deputy Director Dan Bongino, who on podcasts before taking their current positions had repeatedly promoted the idea that damaging details about prominent people were being withheld.

Patel, for instance, said in at least one podcast interview before becoming director that Epstein's "black book" was under the "direct control of the director of the FBI."

The administration had an early stumble in February when far-right influencers were invited to the White House in February and provided by Bondi with binders marked "The Epstein Files: Phase 1" and "Declassified" that contained documents that had largely already been in the public domain.

After the first release fell flat, Bondi said officials were poring over a "truckload" of previously withheld evidence she said had been handed over by the FBI and raised expectations of forthcoming releases.

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

Faced with fury from his base, Trump sought to quickly turn the page, shutting down questioning of Bondi about Epstein at a White House Cabinet meeting and deriding as "weaklings" supporters who he said were falling for the "Jeffrey Epstein Hoax."

The Justice Department has responded to a subpoena from House lawmakers by pledging to turn over information.

Hegseth fires general whose agency's intel assessment of damage from Iran strikes angered Trump

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, MARY CLARE JALONICK and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has fired a general whose agency's initial intelligence assessment of U.S. damage to Iranian nuclear sites angered President Donald Trump, according to two people familiar with the decision and a White House official.

Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Kruse will no longer serve as head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, according to the people, who spoke Friday on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it publicly.

Hegseth also fired Vice Adm. Nancy Lacore, who is chief of the Navy Reserve, as well as Rear Adm. Milton Sands, a Navy SEAL officer who oversees Naval Special Warfare Command, another U.S. official said.

No reasons were given for their firings, the latest in a series of steps targeting military leaders, intelligence officials and other perceived critics of Trump, who has demanded loyalty across the government. The administration also stripped security clearances this week from additional current and former national security officials.

Taken together, the moves could chill dissent and send a signal against reaching conclusions at odds with Trump's interests.

Trump decried agency's initial findings on US strikes on Iran

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Kruse's firing comes two months after details of a preliminary assessment of U.S. airstrikes against Iran leaked to the media. It found that Iran's nuclear program has been set back only a few months by the military effort, contradicting assertions from Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Republican president, who had pronounced the Iranian program "completely and fully obliterated," rejected the report. His oft-repeated criticism of the DIA analysis built on his long-running distrust of intelligence assessments, including one published in 2017 that said Russia interfered on his behalf in the 2016 election.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence — which is responsible for coordinating the work of 18 intelligence agencies, including the DIA — has been declassifying years-old documents meant to cast doubt on those previous findings.

Following the June strikes on three Iranian nuclear sites, Hegseth lambasted the press for focusing on the preliminary assessment but did not offer any direct evidence of the destruction of the facilities.

"You want to call it destroyed, you want to call it defeated, you want to call it obliterated — choose your word. This was a historically successful attack," Hegseth said at a news conference at the time.

Democrats raise concerns about implications of key firing

While the Pentagon has offered no details on the firings, Democrats in Congress have raised alarm over the precedent that Kruse's ouster sets for the intelligence community.

"The firing of yet another senior national security official underscores the Trump administration's dangerous habit of treating intelligence as a loyalty test rather than a safeguard for our country," said Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Rep. Jim Himes of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, called on the administration to show why Kruse was fired or "otherwise, we can only assume that this is another politically motivated decision intended to create an atmosphere of fear" within the intelligence community.

Trump has a history of removing government officials whose data and analysis he disagrees with. Earlier this month, after a lousy jobs report, he fired the official in charge of the data. His administration also has stopped posting reports on climate change, canceled studies on vaccine access and removed data on gender identity from government sites.

Trump administration makes series of military and intelligence changes

The new firings culminate a week of broad Trump administration changes to the intelligence community and new shake-ups to military leadership.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence announced this week that it would slash its staff and budget and revoked more security clearances, a tactic the administration uses against those it sees as foes. The Pentagon also said the Air Force's top uniformed officer, Gen. David Allvin, planned to retire two years early.

Hegseth and Trump have been aggressive in dismissing top military officials, often without formal explanation.

The administration has fired Air Force Gen. CQ Brown Jr. as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as the Navy's top officer, the Air Force's second highest-ranking officer, and the top lawyers for three military service branches.

In April, Hegseth dismissed Gen. Tim Haugh as head of the National Security Agency and Vice Adm. Shoshana Chatfield, who was a senior official at NATO.

No public explanations have been offered by the Pentagon for any of the firings, though some of the officers were believed by the administration to endorse diversity, equity and inclusion programs. Trump has demanded government agencies purge DEI efforts.

The ousters of Kruse, Lacore and Sands were reported earlier by The Washington Post.

AP analysis shows Texas and California redistricting efforts could mess with rare partisan balance

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

As Texas Republicans and California Democrats redraw U.S. House districts to their advantage ahead of next year's elections, they're potentially disrupting a rare partisan balance in American politics.

The 220-215 majority that Republicans won over Democrats in last year's elections almost perfectly aligns with the share of the vote the two parties received in districts across the U.S., according to an Associated Press analysis. Although the overall outcome was close to neutral, the AP's analysis shows that Democrats and Republicans each benefited from advantages in particular states.

The AP used a mathematical analysis designed to measure how many more U.S. House seats political parties won in each state beyond what would have been expected from the share of the vote they received. The analysis showed a significant political tilt in one-third of the states' congressional districts, with either Democrats or Republicans winning at least one more seat than expected.

Where do Democrats hold the biggest edge?

In California, Democrats won 43 of the 52 seats last year — about six more seats than would have been expected based on the average share of the vote for U.S. House candidates of each party. That was the biggest gain among all states.

At the urging of Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, California lawmakers on Thursday approved a plan to redraw the district lines created by an independent citizens commission after the 2020 census. Their goal is to give Democrats a better shot at winning five additional seats in next year's elections — countering a similar move in Texas backed by President Donald Trump.

California's redistricting plan still requires approval in a special election.

The AP's analysis found that Democrats won about three more seats than expected in Illinois last year and about two more seats each in Washington, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

Where do Republicans hold the largest advantage?

In Texas, districts were drawn after the census by the Republican-led Legislature and approved by GOP Gov. Greg Abbott. Republicans won 25 of the 38 House seats last year — nearly two more seats than would have been expected based on their average share of the vote.

At the prodding of President Donald Trump, the Legislature is drawing new House districts giving Republicans a shot at winning five more seats in the 2026 midterm elections.

Elsewhere, the AP's analysis found that Republicans won about two-and-a-half seats more than expected last year in both Florida and North Carolina and nearly two extra seats in Wisconsin.

How has partisan advantage changed over time?

The number of states with congressional districts tilted toward one party or another was higher last year than in either of the past two presidential elections. But those state-by-state advantages essentially canceled each other out.

When adding results from all states, the AP's analysis showed that Democrats nationwide won about one-half seat more than expected last year. Because congressional seats aren't allotted by fractions, the net result was that each party's share of House seats essentially aligned with their share of the votes.

"If you look at the actual congressional results, that map looks pretty darn good at the national level," said Chris Warshaw, a political scientist at Georgetown University who is an expert in analyzing legislative districts for partisan advantage.

That's a sharp contrast with other recent elections. In 2020, Republicans won about 10 more House seats than expected based on their share of the vote in that year's election. In 2016, Republicans won about 25 more seats than expected. Both of those elections were held under congressional maps drawn after the 2010 census.

Districts redrawn based on the 2020 census were first used in 2022 and normally would remain in effect until after the 2030 census. But in some states, there is nothing that prevents politicians from redrawing

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districts in the middle of a decade, as Texas and California are doing.

How does one party gain an edge over another in House districts?

In many states, U.S. House districts are drawn by the state legislature and subject to approval by the governor. If a political party controls both the legislature and governor's office — or has such a large legislative majority that it can override vetoes — it can effectively draw districts to its advantage. This is referred to as gerrymandering.

The legislative author of Texas' new congressional districts, Republican state Rep. Todd Hunter, made that point clear during debate: "The underlying goal of this plan is straightforward — improve Republican political performance," he said.

One common method of gerrymandering is for a majority party to draw maps that pack voters who support the opposing party into a few districts, thus allowing the majority party to win a greater number of surrounding districts. Another tactic is for the majority party to dilute the power of an opposing party's voters by spreading them so thinly among multiple districts that it's extremely difficult for their preferred candidates to win.

Political advantages also can develop naturally. When politically like-minded voters live in the same area — such as urban Democrats or rural Republicans — it can create an edge for the parties even if there is no intent to gerrymander districts.

California's citizen redistricting commission did not use political data when drawing districts yet still ended up with a U.S. House map favoring Democrats.

"Unless you kind of hardwire in some metric of fairness that has to be met by the plan, a process could easily produce a partisan outcome, even if it wasn't intended to," said Eric McGhee, senior fellow at the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California.

The AP's analysis of partisan advantage in congressional districts was based on a model developed by McGhee and Nick Stephanopoulos, a law professor at Harvard University.

Texas redistricting fight shakes up battle lines for both parties in key US Senate race

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON, LEKAN OYEKANMI and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Just as Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Colin Allred was holding a town hall near the Mexican border as part of an "unrig Texas" campaign tour, the state's Democratic fundraising powerhouse Beto O'Rourke rallied support in Austin for lawmakers who left the state to delay a redistricting plan led by President Donald Trump. The next morning, one of those wayward lawmakers, James Talarico, stood in the pulpit at former President Barack Obama's old church in Chicago to say he and his fellow legislators had simply taken a leap of faith.

All three Democrats are either declared or potential contenders for the Senate seat on the ballot in next year's midterm elections. In what would typically be a quiet period in Texas politics, Republicans have roiled the state's 2026 Senate campaign with their rush to redraw congressional maps to give Trump more allies in Congress. The turmoil impacts contenders in both parties and gives Democrats fresh hope that they can capture a long-elusive seat, where an upset would dramatically improve their chances of regaining Senate control in Washington.

For Democrats, the GOP power play offers a new way to stand out as fighters against Trump and his Make America Great Again movement.

For Republicans, including incumbent Sen. John Cornyn, it's a Trump loyalty test. Cornyn publicly called for involving the FBI in rounding up the defiant Democrats. His main primary challenger, state Attorney General Ken Paxton, used his current office to ask state courts to remove departed lawmakers from office and to jail O'Rourke for raising funds to support the Democratic legislators. The clash has also been a welcome distraction from recent questions about Paxton's private life.

Trump, meanwhile, had his eyes on the U.S. House when he openly prodded Texas Republicans this summer to give him five more GOP seats in a state he won handily last year. He hoped to avoid losing a

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slim House majority, as he did during his first term in 2018.

Democrats nationwide condemned the effort to alter the playing field, in part because it comes before the typical 10-year timeline for redrawing congressional districts based on census results.

Texas Democrats walked out for two weeks, denying Republicans the quorum they needed. They ended the walkout this week, but only after California Gov. Gavin Newsom countered with a redistricting push in his state, a Democratic stronghold.

"We've got to stand up to them. These people are thugs," O'Rourke said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Giving in or seeking compromise, or trying to make concessions in the hopes that they'll stop pursuing you, that stuff clearly does not work. The only thing that works is fighting."

O'Rourke, a former congressman and onetime presidential candidate who has run and lost against U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, said he has not decided whether he will launch a senatorial bid.

Republicans flex their muscle for Trump

Paxton has assumed the role as the Left's chief antagonist, a good look during a primary campaign aimed at drawing the most devout Republicans. He asked courts to expel the lawmakers who walked out, brought lawsuits to declare their seats vacant and sought to jail O'Rourke, arguably the state's most well-known Democrat, accusing him of illegally raising money to help defray costs for the Democratic lawmakers who left.

A judge granted a temporary restraining order, ordering O'Rourke to cease and handing Paxton a victory.

"We are pursuing every legal remedy at our disposal to hold these rogue legislators accountable," Paxton said in a statement. "Texas deserves representatives who do their jobs instead of running away at the behest of their billionaire handlers."

Cornyn, a fourth-term incumbent, faces pressure

Cornyn used his federal role to ask the FBI to help bring Democratic lawmakers who fled the state back to Texas.

After first criticizing Paxton for being on vacation in Europe when the redistricting drama began, Cornyn used the moment to question Paxton's tactics.

"It seems like both are doing what each of them can do, given their own public office," said Roy Bailey, a wealthy Republican donor from Dallas.

Cornyn's own polling shows him trailing Paxton. Cornyn's campaign and groups that support him, including a pro-Cornyn super PAC and the Washington-based Senate Leadership Fund, have spent more than \$7.5 million in advertising since July, mainly criticizing Paxton.

Republicans affiliated with the Senate majority in Washington, including the Senate Leadership Fund, have argued that if Paxton wins the Republican Senate primary, it would cost the party at least \$100 million more to win the open seat in Texas. Although the map of states with Senate elections next year favors Republicans, the party can afford to lose no more than four seats and still hold the majority.

Redistricting gives Democrats a platform

O'Rourke has rallied around the state and raised money to support the dozens of Texas House Democrats who left the state earlier this month.

"At a time that so many who have the power to fight are instead bending the knee to Donald Trump," he said, "the country really needed to see someone stand and fight."

The redistricting drama has also inspired Allred, a former congressman and voting rights attorney who launched his bid for the Democratic nomination last month, to travel for a series of town halls on redistricting.

Allred told The Associated Press the fight is energizing organizers and voters. He said a pastor in a Black church in Dallas compared the situation to a bully only being able to take it so far before victims start fighting back.

"If this had passed as quickly as it looked like it was going to, I think many folks wouldn't have known what was happening," Allred said after a Houston town hall. "There certainly wouldn't have been the national attention on what's happening here in Texas, but that attention has built and built, and the awareness has also built and built, and so this means to me that ultimately there also will be a backlash against

these folks who are trying to rig the elections.”

Redistricting clash boosts young Texas lawmaker’s profile

The clash in Texas has elevated the profile of Talarico, a 36-year-old legislator from Austin. He was among those who packed their bags and headed to Chicago. Talarico has appeared on network television and last month was interviewed by conservative podcaster Joe Rogan.

Talarico’s social media following has expanded to more than 1 million on Instagram and TikTok. He has said he is considering a Senate run but hasn’t decided yet. O’Rourke had high praise for Talarico but said the young lawmaker’s plans wouldn’t affect his decision.

“I think this is one of those moments where Democratic voters are looking at who’s fighting and who’s folding. And that to me is the primary dividing line in our party right now,” Talarico told the AP. “It’s not really progressive versus moderates. It’s fighters versus folders.”

In his sermon Sunday at Obama’s old church in Chicago, Talarico referred to himself as one of the “Texas outlaws” who walked out, prompting loud cheers and applause.

“This is not just a political struggle,” he told them. “It’s a spiritual struggle.”

Congo’s prosecutor asks for the death penalty for former President Kabila for war crimes

By JUSTIN KABUMBA Associated Press

GOMA, Congo (AP) — Congo’s public prosecutor on Friday asked for the death penalty for former President Joseph Kabila, who is being tried in absentia in a treason case that includes war crimes charges related to his ties to the M23 rebel group.

Kabila, who led Congo from 2001 to 2019, has been on trial since July, charged with war crimes, murder and rape. He took office at the age of 29 — after his father and former President Laurent Kabila was assassinated — and extended his mandate by delaying elections for two years after his term ended in 2017.

He is accused by the Congolese government of supporting the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels who have seized major cities and towns in the country’s east in the past months.

Kabila had been in self-imposed exile since 2023 until April, when he arrived in the rebel-held city of Goma following its seizure in a rapid rebel offensive.

His supporters say the trial is politically motivated. Kabila’s presidential immunity was revoked in May. His current location is unknown.

In court on Friday, Gen. Lucien René Likulia representing the prosecution, also asked, in addition to the death penalty, for a 20-year-sentence for Kabila’s alleged condoning of war crimes and 15 years for conspiracy. The general did not elaborate on those charges or say what they referred to.

No date has yet been set for the announcement of the verdict.

Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi last year accused Kabila of backing the rebels and “preparing an insurrection” with them, a claim Kabila denies.

Ferdinand Kambere, a former minister under Kabila and current head of his party, the PPRD, said revoking Kabila’s immunity as senator-for-life was the start of the campaign against him.

“What we saw was truly a disgrace for the Republic,” Kambere told The Associated Press by phone.

Henry-Pacifique Mayala, a researcher and coordinator of the Kivu Security Tracker, told the AP that the prosecution’s demands seem to be “more of a settling of scores session than a quest for truth.”

Kilauea’s eruption is back as the Hawaii volcano shoots lava for the 31st time since December

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii’s Kilauea volcano resumed erupting Friday by shooting an arc of lava 100 feet (30 meters) into the air and across a section of its summit crater floor.

It was Kilauea’s 31st display of molten rock since December, an appropriately high frequency for one of

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the world's most active volcanoes.

The north vent at the summit crater began continuously spattering in the morning, and then lava overflowed a few hours later. The vent started shooting lava fountains in the afternoon.

The eruption was contained within the summit crater, and no homes were threatened.

A few lucky residents and visitors will have a front-row view at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. If the past is a guide, hundreds of thousands more will be watching popular livestreams made possible by three camera angles set up by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Whenever she gets word the lava is back, Park Service volunteer Janice Wei hustles to shoot photos and videos of Halemaumau Crater — which Native Hawaiian tradition says is the home to the volcano goddess Pele. She said that when the molten rock shoots high like a fountain, it sounds like a roaring jet engine or crashing ocean waves. She can feel its heat from over a mile away.

"Every eruption feels like I am sitting in the front row at nature's most extraordinary show," Wei said in an email.

Kilauea is on Hawaii Island, the largest of the Hawaiian archipelago. It's about 200 miles (320 kilometers) south of the state's largest city, Honolulu, which is on Oahu.

Here's what to know about Kilauea's latest eruption:

Towering fountains of molten rock

A lower magma chamber under Halemaumau Crater is receiving magma directly from the earth's interior at about 5 cubic yards (3.8 cubic meters) per second, said Ken Hon, scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory. This blows the chamber up like a balloon and forces magma into an upper chamber. From there it gets pushed above ground through cracks.

Magma has been using the same pathway to rise to the surface since December, making the initial release and subsequent episodes all part of the same eruption, Hon said.

Many have featured lava soaring into the air, in some cases more than 1,000 feet (300 meters). The fountains are generated in part because magma — which holds gases that are released as it rises — has been traveling to the surface through narrow, pipelike vents.

The expanding magma supply is capped by heavier magma that had expelled its gas at the end of the prior episode. Eventually enough new magma accumulates to force the degassed magma off, and the magma shoots out like a Champagne bottle that was shaken before the cork was popped.

This is the fourth time in 200 years that Kilauea has shot lava fountains into the air in repeated episodes. There were more episodes the last time Kilauea followed this pattern: The eruption that began in 1983 started with 44 sessions of shooting fountains. Those were spread out over three years, however. And the fountains emerged in a remote area, so few got to watch.

The other two occurred in 1959 and 1969.

Predicting Kilauea's future

Scientists don't know how the current eruption will end or how it may change. In 1983 magma built enough pressure that Kilauea opened a vent at a lower elevation and started continuously leaking lava from there rather than periodically shooting out of a higher elevation. The eruption continued in various forms for three decades and ended in 2018.

Something similar could happen again. Or the current eruption could instead stop at the summit if its magma supply peters out.

Scientists can estimate a few days or even a week ahead of time when lava is likely to emerge with the help of sensors around the volcano that detect earthquakes and minuscule changes in the angle of the ground, which indicate when magma is inflating or deflating.

"Our job is like being a bunch of ants crawling on an elephant trying to figure out how the elephant works," Hon said.

The lava fountains have been shorter lately. Steve Lundblad, a University of Hawaii at Hilo geology professor, said the vent may have gotten wider, leaving molten rock less pressurized.

"We're still gonna have spectacular eruptions," he said. "They're just going to be wider and not as high."

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Carrying stories of Pele

Some people may see lava flows as destructive. But Huihui Kanahele-Mossman, the executive director of the Edith Kanaka'ole Foundation, said lava is a natural resource that hardens into land and forms the foundation for everything on Hawaii Island.

Kanahele-Mossman's nonprofit is named after her grandmother — the esteemed practitioner of Hawaiian language and culture and founder of a noted hula halau, or school. Hālau o Kekuhi is celebrated for its mastery of a style of hula rooted in the stories of Pele and her sister, Hi'iaka.

Kanahele-Mossman has visited the crater a few times since the eruption began. She initially watches in awe and reverence. But then she observes more details so she can go home and compare it to the lava in the centuries-old tales that her school performs. While at the crater, she also delivers a chant prepared in advance and places offerings. Recently she presented awa, a drink made with kava, and a fern lei.

"You as the dancer, you are the storyteller and you carry that history that was written in those mele forward," she said, using the Hawaiian word for song. "To be able to actually see that eruption that's described in the mele, that's always exciting to us and drives us and motivates us to stay in this tradition."

Visiting the volcano

Park visitation has risen all eight months of the year so far, in part because of the eruption. In April there were 49% more visitors than the same month of 2024.

Park spokesperson Jessica Ferracane noted that the last several episodes have only lasted about 10 to 12 hours. Those wanting to go should sign up for U.S. Geological Survey alert notifications because the eruption could be over before you know it, she said.

She cautioned that visitors should stay on marked trails and overlooks because unstable cliff edges and cracks in the earth may not be immediately apparent, and falling could lead to serious injury or death. Young children should be kept close.

Volcanic gas, glass and ash can also be dangerous. Nighttime visitors should bring a flashlight.

Texas lawmakers give final approval to redrawn congressional map favoring GOP, send to governor

By JIM VERTUNO, JOEY CAPPELLETTI and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas Senate gave final approval to a new, Republican-leaning congressional voting map early Saturday, sending it to Gov. Greg Abbott for his signature.

President Donald Trump has pushed for the map to help the GOP maintain its slim majority in Congress in the 2026 midterm elections. It has five new districts that would favor Republicans.

Abbott, a Republican, is expected to quickly sign it into law, though Democrats have vowed to challenge it in court.

The effort by Trump and Texas' Republican-majority Legislature prompted state Democrats to hold a two-week walkout and kicked off a wave of redistricting efforts across the country.

Democrats had prepared for a final show of resistance, with plans to push the Senate vote into the early morning hours in a last-ditch attempt to delay passage.

State Sen. Carol Alvarado, leader of the Senate Democratic caucus, announced on social media that she planned to filibuster the bill with a long speech and intended to speak for several hours. But just when she expected to start, the Senate broke for a long dinner break.

When members returned, Alvarado never had a chance to filibuster because Republicans accused her of breaking Senate rules by attempting to fundraise off the coming filibuster.

Sen. Charles Perry said it "appears to be potentially unlawful, at least unethical, using state resources for a campaign purpose."

A spokesperson for Alvarado did not immediately respond to an email and phone call from The Associated Press.

"Shutting down a filibuster over a fundraising email is unprecedented," Democratic Sen. Sarah Eckhardt

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said in a post on social media platform X. "It exposes the hypocrisy of Republicans, who will turn around and raise millions off stealing Texans' votes while silencing their voices."

The weekslong showdown has roiled the Texas Legislature, marked by a Democratic walkout and threats of arrest from Republicans. Much of the drama unfolded in the House, where the map ultimately passed Wednesday.

Democrats had already delayed the bill's passage during hours of debate, pressing Republican Sen. Phil King, the measure's sponsor, on the proposal's legality, with many alleging that the redrawn districts violate the Voting Rights Act by diluting voters' influence based on race.

King vehemently denied that accusation, saying, "I had two goals in mind: That all maps would be legal and would be better for Republican congressional candidates in Texas."

"There is extreme risk the Republican majority will be lost" in the House if the map does not pass, King said.

The showdown has also inflamed a broader, state-by-state redistricting battle, with governors from both parties pledging to redraw congressional maps.

California Democrats approved legislation Thursday calling for a special election in November for residents to vote on a redrawn congressional map designed to help Democrats win five more House seats next year. Gov. Gavin Newsom quickly signed it.

"This is not something six weeks ago that I ever imagined that I'd be doing," Newsom said. "This is a reaction to an assault on our democracy in Texas."

California's map needs voter approval because, unlike in Texas, a nonpartisan commission normally draws the map to avoid the sort of political battle that is playing out.

On Friday, Abbott called California's redistricting "a joke" and asserted that Texas' new map is constitutional but California's would be overturned.

Battle for the House waged via redistricting

On a national level, the partisan makeup of existing districts puts Democrats within three seats of a majority. The incumbent president's party usually loses seats in the midterms.

The Texas redraw is already reshaping the 2026 race, with Democratic Rep. Lloyd Doggett, the dean of the state's congressional delegation, announcing Thursday that he will not seek reelection to his Austin-based seat if the new map takes effect. Under the proposed map, Doggett's district would overlap with that of another Democratic incumbent, Rep. Greg Casar.

The president has pushed other Republican-controlled states including Indiana and Missouri, to also revise their maps to add more winnable GOP seats. Ohio Republicans were also already scheduled to revise their maps to make them more partisan.

"Republicans are not finished in the United States," Abbott said.

Redistricting typically occurs once a decade, immediately after a census. While some states have their own limitations, there is no national impediment to a state trying to redraw districts in the middle of the decade.

The U.S. Supreme Court has said the Constitution does not outlaw partisan gerrymandering, only using race to redraw district lines.

'Fight fire with fire'

More Democratic-run states have commission systems like California's or other redistricting limits than Republican ones do, leaving the GOP with a freer hand to swiftly redraw maps. New York, for example, cannot draw new maps until 2028, and even then only with voter approval.

Republicans and some Democrats championed a 2008 ballot measure that established California's nonpartisan redistricting commission, along with a 2010 one that extended its role to drawing congressional maps.

Both sides have shown concern over what the redistricting war could lead to.

California Assemblyman James Gallagher, the Republican minority leader, said Trump was "wrong" to push for new Republican seats elsewhere. But he warned that Newsom's approach, which the governor has dubbed "fight fire with fire," is dangerous.

"You move forward fighting fire with fire, and what happens?" Gallagher asked. "You burn it all down."

First Erik Menendez, then Lyle denied parole by California board that says they pose safety risk

By JAIMIE DING Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lyle Menendez was denied parole Friday by the same board that a day earlier rejected his brother Erik's appeal for freedom after serving decades in prison for killing their parents in 1989 at their Beverly Hills mansion. The reason was the same: misbehavior behind bars.

A panel of two commissioners denied Lyle Menendez parole for three years after a daylong hearing. Commissioners noted the older brother still displayed "anti-social personality traits like deception, minimization and rule-breaking that lie beneath that positive surface."

"We do understand that you had very little hope of being released for years," said commissioner Julie Garland. "Citizens are expected to follow the rules whether or not there is some incentive to do so."

She also said the panel found his remorse genuine and that he has been a "model inmate in many ways who has demonstrated the potential for change."

"Don't ever not have hope," she told Menendez.

The brothers were sentenced to life in prison in 1996 for fatally shooting their father, Jose Menendez, and mother, Kitty Menendez, in their Beverly Hills mansion almost exactly 36 years ago on Aug. 20, 1989. While defense attorneys argued that the brothers acted out of self-defense after years of sexual abuse by their father, prosecutors said the brothers sought a multimillion-dollar inheritance.

A judge reduced their sentences in May, and they became immediately eligible for parole. The parole hearings marked the closest they have come to winning freedom since their convictions almost 30 years ago.

Erik Menendez, who is being held at the same prison in San Diego, was denied parole Thursday after commissioners determined his misbehavior in prison made him still a risk to public safety.

A day later, Lyle Menendez told the parole board details about the abuse he suffered under his parents. He cried, face reddened, while delivering his closing statement. He seemed to still want to protect his "baby brother," telling commissioners he took sole responsibility for the murders.

"I will never be able to make up for the harm and grief I caused everyone in my family," he said. "I am so sorry to everyone, and I will be forever sorry."

The state corrections department chose a single reporter to watch the videoconference and share details with the rest of the press.

Lyle Menendez describes abuse

The panel began by asking how abuse impacted decision-making in his life.

The older brother described how his father physically abused him by choking, punching and hurting him using a belt.

"I was the special son in my family. My brother was the castaway," he said. "The physical abuse was focused on me because I was more important to him, I felt."

He also said his mother also sexually abused him. He appeared uncomfortable discussing this with the panel, who asked why he didn't disclose his mother's abuse in a risk assessment conducted earlier this year. Commissioners asked if one death made him more sorrowful than the other.

"My mother. Because I loved her and couldn't imagine harming her in any way," he said. "I think also I learned a lot after about her life, her childhood, reflecting on how much fear maybe she felt."

Later, he broke down in tears when recounting how they confronted their mother about Jose Menendez's abuse of his younger brother.

"I couldn't wrap my mind around the fact that she knew," he said.

Hearing focuses on crime, over achievements in prison

Lyle Menendez's parole lawyer, Heidi Rummel, was more outspoken during his hearing than the one for Erik Menendez on Thursday.

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She quarreled with the commissioners over several lines of questioning and whether the panel had access to trial evidence in the case.

The panel asked Lyle Menendez whether the murders were planned, and about the brothers buying guns. "There was zero planning. There was no way to know it was going to happen Sunday," he said, referring to buying the guns as "the biggest mistake."

"I no longer believe that they were going to kill us in that moment," he said. "At the time, I had that honest belief."

Garland asked him about the "sophistication of the web of lies and manipulation you demonstrated afterward," referring to having witnesses lie for them in court — and attempts to destroy his father's will.

Menendez maintained that there was no plan, only that he was "flailing in what was happening" and didn't want to go to prison and be separated from his brother.

In closing, Rummel expressed frustration that the hearing spent almost no time on Menendez's achievements in prison or his efforts to build positive relationships with correctional staff. She noted he never touched drugs or alcohol inside.

"How many people with an LWOP sentence come in front of this board with zero violence, despite getting attacked, getting bullied, and choose to do something different?" she said.

More than a dozen of their relatives attended Friday's hearing via videoconference, but many did not testify citing privacy concerns after learning audio from Erik Menendez's hearing Thursday was published online.

"I want my nephew to hear how much I love him, and believe in him," said his aunt, Teresita Menendez-Baralt. "I'm very proud of him and I want him to come home."

Cellphones in prison

Similar to his brother's hearing the day before, the panel zeroed in on Menendez's use of cellphones in prison as recent as March 2025.

"I had convinced myself that this wasn't a means that was harming anyone but myself in a rule violation," Menendez said.

He said correctional staff were monitoring his communications with his wife and family and selling them to tabloids, so he saw cellphones as a way to protect his privacy. There was "a lot of stress in his marriage" around the time he transferred to the prison in San Diego, and he wanted to stay in close touch with his wife, he said.

Commissioner Patrick Reardon applauded him for starting a prison beautification project and mentorship programs. However, he questioned if the cellphone violations tainted those accomplishments.

"I would never call myself a model incarcerated person," Menendez said. "I would say that I'm a good person, that I spent my time helping people. ... I'm the guy that officers will come to to resolve conflicts."

The panel noted that a psychologist found that Menendez is at "very low" risk for violence upon release.

According to previous court documents, Menendez has not gotten into any fights in his time in prison. He said nonviolence was a promise he made to his grandmother.

"My life has been defined by extreme violence," he said. "I wanted to be defined by something else."

The brothers still have a pending habeas corpus petition filed in May 2023 seeking a review of their convictions based on new evidence supporting their claims of sexual abuse by their father.

FBI searches home and office of ex-Trump national security adviser John Bolton

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI on Friday searched the Maryland home and Washington office of former Trump administration national security adviser John Bolton as part of a criminal investigation into the potential mishandling of classified information, a person familiar with the matter said.

Bolton, who emerged as an outspoken critic of President Donald Trump after being fired in 2019 and fought with the first Trump administration over a scathing book he wrote documenting his time in the White House, was not in custody Friday and has not been charged with any crimes, said the person who

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was not authorized to discuss the investigation by name and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

The searches, seemingly the most significant public step the Justice Department has taken against a perceived enemy of the president, are likely to elicit fresh concerns that the Trump administration is using its law enforcement powers to target the Republican's foes. They come as the Trump administration has moved to examine the activities of other critics, including by authorizing a grand jury investigation into the origins of the Trump-Russia probe that dogged Trump for much of his first term, and as FBI and Justice Department leaders signal their loyalty to the president.

Speaking to reporters during an unscheduled visit to the White House Historical Association, Trump said he had seen news coverage of Friday's searches and expected to be briefed about it by the Justice Department but also insisted he didn't "want to know about it."

"I could know about it. I could be the one starting it. I'm actually the chief law enforcement officer. But I feel that it's better this way," Trump said.

Bolton had said in interviews this year that he was mindful that he could be scrutinized, telling the AP in January shortly before Trump took office, "Anybody who ever disagrees with Trump has to worry about retribution. It's a pretty long list."

An FBI search like the one at Bolton's properties requires authorization from a federal magistrate judge. It wasn't immediately clear what information authorities submitted to demonstrate that they had probable cause of a crime, though the Justice Department years ago launched an investigation into whether Bolton improperly disclosed classified information in a book manuscript he had written. The inquiry was later closed.

Vice President JD Vance denied in an NBC News interview on Friday that Bolton was being targeted because of his criticism of Trump, "If there's no crime here, we're not going to prosecute it. If there is a crime here, of course, Ambassador Bolton will get his day in court. That's how it should be."

Bolton was in his office building at the time

Bolton was not home for the search of his home, but after it started, he was spotted Friday morning standing in the lobby of the Washington building where he keeps an office and talking to two people with "FBI" visible on their vests. He left a few minutes later and appeared to have gone upstairs in the building. Agents were seen taking bags into the office building through a back entrance.

Messages left with a spokesperson for Bolton were not immediately returned, and a lawyer who has represented Bolton had no immediate comment.

The Justice Department had no comment, but leaders appeared to cryptically refer to the searches in a series of social media posts Friday morning.

FBI Director Kash Patel, who included Bolton on a list of "members of the Executive Branch Deep State" in a 2023 book he wrote, posted on X: "NO ONE is above the law... @FBI agents on mission." Attorney General Pam Bondi shared his post, adding: "America's safety isn't negotiable. Justice will be pursued. Always."

The Justice Department is separately conducting mortgage fraud investigations into Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff of California and New York Attorney General Letitia James, who brought a civil fraud lawsuit against Trump and his company, and ex-Trump prosecutor Jack Smith faces an investigation from an independent watchdog office. Schiff and James have vigorously denied any wrongdoing through their lawyers.

The Bolton searches also unfolded against the backdrop of a 2022 search for classified documents at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, an action that produced since-dismissed criminal charges but remains the source of outrage for the president and supporters who insist he was unjustly targeted despite the retrieval of top-secret records.

Patel said in a Fox Business Channel interview this week that the Mar-a-Lago search represented a "total weaponization and politicization" of the bureau, and Trump himself referenced it on Friday, telling reporters: "I guess his house was raided today, but my house was raided, also."

Trump and Bolton have been at odds for years

Bolton served as Trump's third national security adviser for 17 months and clashed with him over Iran,

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Afghanistan and North Korea.

He faced scrutiny during the first Trump administration over a book he wrote about his time in government that officials argued disclosed classified information. To make its case, the Justice Department in 2020 submitted sworn statements from senior administration officials, including then-National Security Agency Director Paul Nakasone, asserting that Bolton's manuscript included classified information that could harm national security if exposed.

Bolton's lawyers have said he moved forward with the book after a White House National Security Council official, with whom Bolton had worked for months, said the manuscript no longer contained classified information.

The Biden administration Justice Department in 2021 abandoned its lawsuit and dropped a separate grand jury investigation, with Bolton's lawyer calling the effort to block the book "politically motivated" and illegitimate.

Bolton's harshly critical book, "The Room Where It Happened," portrayed Trump as grossly ill-informed about foreign policy and said he "saw conspiracies behind rocks, and remained stunningly uninformed on how to run the White House, let alone the huge federal government."

Trump responded by slamming Bolton as a "crazy" warmonger who would have led the country into "World War Six."

Bolton served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under President George W. Bush and also held positions in President Ronald Reagan's administration. He considered running for president in 2012 and 2016.

Trump, on his first day back in office this year, revoked the security clearances of more than four dozen former intelligence officials, including Bolton. Bolton was also among a group of former Trump officials whose security details were canceled by Trump earlier this year.

In 2022, an Iranian operative was charged in a plot to kill Bolton in presumed retaliation for a 2020 U.S. airstrike that killed the country's most powerful general.

The handling of classified information by top government officials has been a politically loaded topic in recent years. Besides Trump, the Justice Department also investigated whether then-President Joe Biden, a Democrat, mishandled classified information after serving as vice president in the Obama administration, and the FBI also recovered what it said were classified documents from the home of former Trump Vice President Mike Pence. Neither man was charged.

Tour bus rollover kills 5 on interstate highway in western New York

By ED WHITE and DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

A tour bus returning to New York City from Niagara Falls with 54 people aboard crashed and rolled on its side Friday on an interstate highway, killing five passengers and injuring many others, authorities said.

The driver apparently became distracted, lost control and overcorrected before the bus went into the right shoulder and flipped over shortly before 12:30 p.m. on the eastbound side of Interstate 90 in Pembroke, New York, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Buffalo, state police Maj. Andre Ray said at an evening news conference. He did not say how the driver became distracted, adding that the cause remains under investigation.

Ray said the passengers ranged in age from 1 to 74. Multiple people were ejected from the bus during the crash, and five people — all adults — were pronounced dead at the scene, Ray said. Many others became entrapped in the wreck and were rescued. Dozens were taken to hospitals. Ray said it didn't appear any other people had life-threatening injuries.

"An absolute tragedy took place," Ray said. "And first and foremost, our thoughts, prayers and hearts go out to those involved, their friends and their families."

State police said most of the passengers on the bus were of Indian, Chinese and Filipino ethnicity, and authorities brought in translators to help with the emergency response.

Ray said a preliminary investigation ruled out mechanical failure or driver impairment. The driver survived

the crash and was cooperating with police, officials said. No charges had been filed as of Friday evening, Ray said.

The National Transportation Safety Board said it was sending a team to New York to investigate the crash.

The Mercy Flight medical transport service said its three helicopters and three more from other services transported people from the crash site. Hospitals in the region said they evaluated or treated more than 40 people. Injuries ranged from head trauma to broken arms and legs.

Two people who needed surgery at Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo were expected to recover, said Dr. Jeffrey Brewer, chief of surgery.

State police said the bus was owned by M&Y Tour Inc. in the New York City borough of Staten Island. A message seeking comment was left at a phone listing for the company.

M&Y Tour has a "satisfactory" safety rating and no record of accidents or fatalities over the past two years, according to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Officials inspected the company's buses and drivers 60 times over the past two years, the agency said.

At an earlier news conference, Trooper James O'Callaghan said it appeared most people on the bus were not wearing seat belts.

In response to another bus crash in New York in 2023, a state law requires seat belt use on charter buses built on or after Nov. 28, 2016. The age of the bus in Friday's crash wasn't immediately known.

The New York State Thruway Authority said a lengthy stretch of the roadway had been shut down in both directions and drivers were being urged to avoid the area. The westbound lanes were reopened later in the day.

People who saw the aftermath of the wreck said glass and people's belongings were scattered on the highway.

"It was certainly heartbreaking to see," Powell Stephens, of Medina, told WHAM-TV after he drove by the crash. "There was a lot of people embracing each other. It looked like people were breaking down."

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul called the accident a tragedy in a post on the social platform X. She said she was briefed on the crash and that her office was working with police and local officials.

"Our hearts are with their loved ones during this difficult time," the governor said of the victims.

For the first time, the world's food crises authority announces a famine in Gaza

By SAM MEDNICK and WAFAA SHURAFIA Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — The world's leading authority on food crises said Friday the Gaza Strip's largest city is gripped by famine, and that it's likely to spread across the territory without a ceasefire and an end to restrictions on humanitarian aid.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, said famine is happening in Gaza City, home to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and could spread south to Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis by the end of next month.

The determination comes after months of warnings by aid groups that Israel's restrictions of food and other aid into Gaza, and its military offensive, were causing starvation among Palestinian civilians, particularly children.

Israel rejected the report, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calling it an "outright lie."

Gaza City offensive could exacerbate hunger

The grim milestone — the first time the IPC has confirmed a famine in the Middle East — is sure to ramp up international pressure on Israel, which has been fighting Hamas since the militant group's Oct. 7, 2023, attack. Israel says it plans to seize Gaza City and other Hamas strongholds, an escalation experts say will exacerbate the hunger crisis.

The IPC said hunger has been driven by fighting and the blockade of aid, and magnified by widespread displacement and the collapse of food production in Gaza, pushing hunger to life-threatening levels across

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the entire territory after 22 months of war.

More than half a million people in Gaza, about a quarter of its population, face catastrophic levels of hunger, with many at risk of dying from malnutrition-related causes, the IPC report said.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said the findings show a "human-made disaster, a moral indictment, and a failure of humanity itself" and appealed for an "immediate ceasefire."

Israel disputes the report

Netanyahu denies there's hunger in Gaza, calling reports of starvation "lies" promoted by Hamas. "The IPC report is an outright lie. Israel does not have a policy of starvation," his office posted on X.

The U.S. State Department also sought to cast doubt on the report. It said the humanitarian situation in Gaza "is a serious concern," but blamed Hamas and looters for the difficulties in delivering aid.

After the publication of images of emaciated children in Gaza and reports of hunger-related deaths in recent weeks, Israel announced measures to let more humanitarian aid in. Yet the United Nations says what's entering is far below what's needed.

The Israeli military agency in charge of transferring aid to the territory, known as COGAT, called the report "false and biased." It said significant steps had been taken to expand the amount of aid entering the strip in recent weeks.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said more than 100,000 trucks of aid have entered Gaza since the start of the war, including a massive influx in recent weeks. But experts say Gaza is still reeling from the tightening of the blockade from early March until mid-May, when Israel barred the import of all food, medicine and other goods.

"A rapidly increasing number of people, especially young children, are dying preventable deaths from starvation and disease because Israel made starvation a core part of its campaign to control the strip," said Chris Newton, an analyst for the International Crisis Group.

Netanyahu says more military pressure is needed to achieve Israel's goals of freeing the hostages held by Hamas and eliminating the militant group altogether.

How a famine is determined

Formal famine determinations are rare. The IPC says a famine exists in an area when all three of the following conditions are confirmed:

At least 20% of households have an extreme lack of food, or are essentially starving. At least 30% of children 6 months to 5 years old suffer from acute malnutrition or wasting, based on a weight-to-height measurement; or 15% of that age group suffer from acute malnutrition based on the circumference of their upper arm. And at least two people, or four children under 5, per 10,000 are dying daily due to starvation or the interaction of malnutrition and disease.

The data analyzed between July 1 and Aug. 15 showed clear evidence that thresholds for starvation and acute malnutrition have been reached. Gathering data for mortality has been harder, but the IPC said it is reasonable to conclude from the evidence that the necessary threshold has likely been reached.

The IPC warned that a third of Gaza's population could face catastrophic levels of hunger by the end of September, and that this is probably an undercount.

Alex de Waal, author of "Mass Starvation: The History and Future of Famine" and executive director of the World Peace Foundation, said that had Israel allowed the IPC better access to collect data, a famine might have been determined months ago, which would have raised global awareness sooner.

"It seems that it's necessary for experts to shout 'famine!' before the world takes notice, by which time it is too late," he said.

Israel has restricted aid to varying degrees throughout the war. It says there's currently no limit on how many aid trucks can enter Gaza. It also pushed ahead with a new U.S.-backed aid delivery system that requires Palestinians to travel long distances and pass through Israeli military lines to get aid.

The traditional, U.N.-led aid providers say deliveries have been hampered by Israeli military restrictions and incidents of looting, while criminals and hungry crowds overwhelm entering convoys.

Witnesses, health officials and the U.N. rights office say hundreds of people have been killed by Israeli

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forces while seeking aid from both providers, while Israel says it has only fired warning shots and that the toll is exaggerated.

A parent in Gaza City watches his children waste away

On the eve of the war, Gaza City was home to some 700,000 people, about the population of Washington.

Throughout the conflict, it has been the focus of regular Israeli bombardment and ground operations. Several neighborhoods have been almost completely destroyed. Hundreds of thousands fled under Israeli evacuation orders at the start of the war but many returned during a ceasefire earlier this year.

Doctors and nurses in Gaza in recent weeks have seen rising numbers of visibly malnourished patients.

Kirsty Blacka, an Australian emergency nurse who worked in Gaza City's Al-Quds hospital through June, said emaciated men with no preexisting conditions were coming in looking like teenagers because they were starving.

She said the lack of food has been compounded by contaminated water causing diarrhea and infections, and that diseases are harder to recover from when people are malnourished. Thousands will be too weak to evacuate the city ahead of the planned offensive, said Blacka.

Families in Gaza City say they're watching their loved ones waste away.

Yousef Sbeteh's two teenage children were wounded by an Israeli airstrike in June and have spent the last two months in the hospital. While there, they've both lost weight because there hasn't been enough food, he said, adding that he can't afford to buy more because prices at markets have soared. Doctors say the teenagers had no preexisting conditions.

His 15-year-old daughter, Aya, lost nearly 20 kilograms (44 pounds), or about 30% of her body weight, according to her doctors. Her 17-year-old brother Ahmad has lost about 15 kilograms (33 pounds). The lack of nutritional supplements and healthy food is slowing their recovery, doctors say.

"Doctors say she needs protein, meat and fish," Sbeteh said while sitting beside his frail daughter. "But I can't provide that now."

Israeli defense minister warns of Gaza City's destruction unless Hamas yields to his country's terms

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAM METZ Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel's defense minister warned Friday that Gaza's largest city could be destroyed unless Hamas yields to his country's terms, as the world's leading authority on food crises said the city is gripped by famine from fighting and an Israeli blockade.

A day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would authorize the military to mount a major operation to seize Gaza City, Defense Minister Israel Katz warned that it could "turn into Rafah and Beit Hanoun," areas largely reduced to rubble earlier in the war.

"The gates of hell will soon open on the heads of Hamas' murderers and rapists in Gaza — until they agree to Israel's conditions for ending the war," Katz wrote in a post on X.

He restated Israel's ceasefire demands: the release of all hostages and Hamas' complete disarmament.

Hamas issued a statement that called Katz's comments "a confession of committing a crime that amounts to ethnic cleansing." The militant group has said it would release captives in exchange for ending the war, but it rejects disarmament without the creation of a Palestinian state.

U.S. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, expressed frustration with Hamas' stance in long-running ceasefire talks, suggesting the militant group was less interested in making deals to release hostages with so few left alive in captivity.

"The situation has to end. It's extortion, and it has to end," Trump told reporters Friday. "And we'll see what happens. I actually think (the hostages are) safer in many ways if you went in and you really went in fast and you did it."

Netanyahu on Thursday said he had instructed officials "to begin immediate negotiations" to release hostages and end the war on Israel's terms. It was not immediately clear if that meant Israel would return to long-running talks mediated by Egypt and Qatar after Hamas said earlier this week that it accepted a

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new proposal from the mediators.

Gaza City offensive could begin within days

With ground troops already active in strategic areas, the wide-scale operation in Gaza City could start within days.

Israel says Gaza City is still a Hamas stronghold, with a network of militant tunnels, after several previous large-scale raids. The city is also home to hundreds of thousands of civilians, some of whom have fled from other areas, and it contains some of the territory's critical infrastructure and health facilities.

Israel could also accept the latest ceasefire proposal, which would forestall the offensive. The proposal calls for a phased deal involving hostage and prisoner exchanges and a pullback of Israeli troops, while talks continue on a longer-term cease-fire. Israeli leaders have resisted such terms since abandoning a similar agreement earlier this year under pressure from Netanyahu's far-right coalition allies.

Many Israelis fear an assault could doom the roughly 20 hostages who have survived captivity since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack. Aid groups and international leaders warn that renewed fighting would worsen Gaza's humanitarian crisis.

The logistics of evacuating civilians are expected to be daunting. Many residents say repeated displacement is pointless since nowhere in Gaza is safe, while medical groups warn that Israel's call to move patients south is unworkable, with no facilities to receive them.

Netanyahu has argued that the offensive is the surest way to free captives and crush Hamas.

"These two things — defeating Hamas and releasing all our hostages — go hand in hand," Netanyahu said Thursday while touring a command center in southern Israel.

Since 251 people were taken hostage more than 22 months ago, ceasefire agreements and other deals have accounted for the vast majority of the 148 who were released, including the bodies of eight dead hostages.

Israel has managed to rescue only eight hostages alive and to retrieve the bodies of 49 others. Fifty hostages remain in Gaza, about 20 of whom Israel believes to be alive.

Report says famine could spread beyond Gaza City

The world's leading authority on food crises said Friday that Gaza City is gripped by famine that is likely to spread if fighting and restrictions on humanitarian aid continue.

A report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification says nearly half a million people in Gaza, about one-fourth of the population, face catastrophic hunger that leaves many at risk of dying.

Netanyahu's office denounced the IPC report as "an outright lie."

Israel says it has allowed enough aid to enter during the war, and it eased its blockade in recent weeks after images of emaciated children sparked international outrage. But U.N. agencies say it's not nearly enough, especially after Israel imposed a complete ban on food imports from early March to mid-May.

Airstrike hits area ahead of broader offensive

Gaza City's Shifa Hospital said at least 17 Palestinians were killed Friday as Israel escalated activity in the lead-up to its broader planned offensive.

An Israeli airstrike hit a school in Sheikh Radwan, a Gaza City neighborhood where Palestinians shelter in makeshift tents in the schoolyard. At least seven people died, according to an eyewitness and hospital records.

The Israeli military said it wasn't aware of a strike in the area but in a statement said troops were operating on the outskirts of Gaza City and in the Zeitoun neighborhood.

Amal Aboul Aas, who is sheltering in Gaza City after being displaced four times, said the explosions were so intense she couldn't sleep, yet she couldn't leave either.

"We do not have the money, the resources or the energy to evacuate again. I just wish for a quick death right where I am here because I am not going anywhere. Eventually one of these missiles will hit me," she told The Associated Press.

Meanwhile, sirens sounded in central Israel late Friday when a missile fired from Yemen appeared to break apart in mid-air, prompting reports of falling shrapnel, the Israeli military said. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

Yemen's Houthi rebels said they launched the missile, targeting Israel's largest airport, in retaliation for "genocide and starvation" in Gaza.

The Gaza Health Ministry said Friday that at least 62,263 Palestinians have been killed in the war. The total number of malnutrition-related deaths rose by two to 273, including 112 children, the ministry said.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. It does not say whether those killed by Israeli fire are civilians or combatants, but it says around half were women and children. The U.N. and many independent experts consider its figures to be the most reliable estimate of wartime casualties. Israel disputes its toll but has not provided its own.

Hamas-led militants started the war when they attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking hostages.

A judge has ordered 'Alligator Alcatraz' in Florida to wind down operations. What happens now?

By MIKE SCHNEIDER and CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge has put a stop to further expansion of the immigration detention center built in the Florida Everglades and dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," ordering that its operations wind down within two months.

U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams in Miami wrote in her 82-page order late Thursday that Florida officials never sufficiently explained why an immigration detention center needed to be located in the middle of sensitive wetlands cherished by environmentalists and outdoors people.

She also said that state and federal authorities never undertook an environmental review as required by federal law before Florida officials hastily built the detention camp which they championed as a model for President Donald Trump's immigration policies. That failure adversely affected the "recreational, conservation, and aesthetic interests" of the environmental groups and Miccosukee Tribe which brought the lawsuit, she said.

Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis on Friday reacted to the ruling, saying he would not be deterred by "an activist judge."

"We knew this would be something that would likely happen," DeSantis said at a news conference in Panama City. "We will respond accordingly. You either have a country or you don't."

Here's what to know about the situation and what might come next:

What did the judge say?

Williams said she expected the population at the facility to drop within 60 days by transferring detainees to other facilities. Once that happens, fencing, lighting, gas, waste, generators and other equipment should be removed from the site. No additional detainees can be sent to the facility, and no more additional lighting, fencing, paving, buildings or tents can be added to the camp. The only repairs that can be made to the existing facility are for safety purposes. However, the judge allowed for the existing dormitories and housing to stay in place as long as they are maintained to prevent deterioration or damage.

Here's where detainees might end up

During court hearings, lawyers said at one point there were fewer than 1,000 detainees at the facility, which state officials had planned to hold up to 3,000 people. Although the detainees could be sent to other facilities out of state, Florida has other immigration detention centers including the Krome North Processing Center in Miami, the Broward Transitional Center in Pompano Beach and the Baker County Detention Center managed by the local sheriff's office. Earlier this month, DeSantis announced plans for a second state-initiated immigration detention facility dubbed "Deportation Depot" at a state prison about 43 miles (69 kilometers) west of downtown Jacksonville. State officials say it is expected to hold 1,300 immigration detention beds, though that capacity could be expanded to 2,000 beds.

How does this decision impact the other "Alligator Alcatraz" lawsuit?

Civil rights lawyers had filed a second lawsuit over practices at "Alligator Alcatraz," claiming that detainees weren't able to meet with their attorneys privately and were denied access to immigration courts.

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Another federal judge in Miami dismissed part of the lawsuit earlier this week after the Trump administration designated the Krome North Processing Center as the court for their cases to be heard. The judge moved the remaining counts of the case from Florida's southern district to the middle district. Eunice Cho, the lead attorney for the detainees, said Friday that the decision in the environmental lawsuit won't have an impact on the civil rights case since there could be detainees at the facility for the next two months.

"Our case addresses the lack of access to counsel for people detained at Alligator Alcatraz, and there are still people detained there," Cho said.

Status of the hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts

No one has said publicly what will happen to the hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts involved in the facility. DeSantis' administration in July signed contracts with private vendors to pay at least \$245 million to set up and run the center, according to a public database. That amount — to be fronted by Florida taxpayers — was in line with the \$450 million a year officials have estimated the facility was going to cost. The governor's office and the Florida Division of Emergency Management on Friday didn't respond to questions about whether Florida taxpayers would still be on the hook for the contracts if the facility is shuttered.

Is this a final decision?

No. This case will continue to be litigated. The state of Florida filed a notice of appeal Thursday night, shortly after the ruling was issued. As its name suggests, a preliminary injunction is only an initial action taken by a judge to prevent harm while a lawsuit makes its way through the court process and when it appears that one side has a good chance of succeeding based on the merits of the case.

Trump frustrated after thinking he made headway on Russia-Ukraine talks only to see Putin balk

By AAMER MADHANI and DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump started the week declaring a diplomatic breakthrough in his bid to prod Moscow and Kyiv closer to peace, announcing he had begun arranging for direct talks between Russia's Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Four days later, the Republican president's optimism has diminished. Russia's top diplomat made it clear Friday that Putin won't meet with Zelenskyy until the Ukrainians agree to some of Moscow's longstanding demands to end the conflict.

It's a stinging setback for Trump, who had been touting his diplomatic blitz as resulting in indisputable momentum for a deal to halt a conflict he vowed as a candidate to end on Day One in office.

Trump said Friday he expected to make a decision on his next actions in two weeks if direct talks aren't scheduled. He raised the possibility of imposing new sanctions or tariffs on Russia, a threat he has previously floated but not followed through on.

"We're going to see whether or not they have a meeting," Trump told reporters in an Oval Office appearance. "It'll be interesting to see. If they don't, why didn't they have a meeting, because I told them to have a meeting. But I'll know what I am going to do in two weeks."

Trump has touted a breakthrough that wasn't

Trump announced Monday that he had begun making the arrangements for a Putin-Zelenskyy meeting soon after concluding White House talks with Zelenskyy and European leaders as well as speaking by phone with Putin.

European leaders cheered the president's tone at the White House meeting, when he made vague promises to back European security guarantees for postwar Ukraine.

Trump also appeared to ease European anxiety heightened by his comments after his Alaska summit with Putin days earlier, when he appeared to tilt toward the Russian leader's demand for Ukraine to give up land seized by Russia. The European leaders even offered guarded optimism that Trump was making headway after he announced his plans for direct talks, followed potentially by three-way negotiations involving him.

But uncertainty has grown in recent days about Putin's commitment to Trump's peace-making efforts as

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Russian officials raised objections about cornerstones of the nascent proposals on the negotiating table.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Putin is ready to meet with Zelenskyy to discuss peace terms but only after key issues first are worked out by senior officials. That could involve a protracted negotiating process because the two sides remain far apart.

"There is no meeting planned," Lavrov said in a taped interview for NBC's Sunday show "Meet the Press with Kristen Welker." "Putin is ready to meet with Zelenskyy when the agenda is ready for a summit, and this agenda is not ready at all."

Russia injects uncertainty into any headway on security guarantees

Ukraine wants Western security guarantees to deter any postwar Russian attack, and U.S. and European officials are scrambling to come up with detailed proposals of how that might work. But Lavrov said earlier this week that making security arrangements for Ukraine without Moscow's involvement was pointless.

Putin, meanwhile, on Friday made a visit to Sarov, a closed city about 370 kilometers (230 miles) east of Moscow that has served as a base for Russia's nuclear weapons program since the late 1940s. The visit offered a not-so-subtle reminder that Russia is one of the world's foremost nuclear powers.

"He hasn't moderated his position in any significant way," said Nigel Gould-Davies, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and former British ambassador to Belarus.

Even as Trump touted his plan for peace talks, Russia on Thursday launched one of its biggest aerial assaults so far this year, focusing on western Ukraine in the barrage of 574 drones and 40 ballistic and cruise missiles.

"The Russians are trying to do anything to avoid the (summit) meeting. The issue is not the meeting itself, the issue is that they do not want to end the war," Zelenskyy said Friday alongside NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who was visiting Kyiv.

Rutte said Trump wants to "break the deadlock" with Putin and engage the United States in providing security guarantees for Ukraine.

Rutte explained that guarantees under discussion would rest on two "layers." The first, to take place after a peace deal or long-term ceasefire, would focus on making the Ukrainian armed forces "as strong as possible." The second would involve security commitments provided by Europe and the United States.

Europe's chief diplomat warns of Putin 'trap'

The European Union's foreign policy chief said Friday that the possibility of Ukraine ceding land to Russia as part of a peace deal to end their three-year war is "a trap" set by Putin.

The Russian leader is demanding Ukrainian concessions in return for halting his army's invasion, but granting him those demands would amount to rewarding the country that started the fighting, Kaja Kallas said.

The recent talk about handing Putin concessions is "exactly the trap that Russia wants us to walk into," Kallas said in an interview with the BBC.

"I mean, the discussion all about what Ukraine should give up, what the concessions that Ukraine is willing to (make), whereas we are forgetting that Russia has not made one single concession and they are the ones who are the aggressor here, they are the ones who are brutally attacking another country and killing people," she said.

"Russia is just dragging feet. It's clear that Russia does not want peace," Kallas said. "President Trump has been repeatedly saying that the killing has to stop and Putin is just laughing, not stopping the killing, but increasing the killing."

Kilmar Abrego Garcia is freed from Tennessee jail so he can rejoin family in Maryland to await trial

By TRAVIS LOLLER and KRISTIN M. HALL Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Kilmar Abrego Garcia was released from jail in Tennessee on Friday so he can rejoin his family in Maryland while awaiting trial on human smuggling charges.

The Salvadoran national's case became a flashpoint in President Donald Trump's immigration agenda after he was mistakenly deported in March. Facing a court order, the Trump administration brought him

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back to the U.S. in June, only to detain him on criminal charges.

Although Abrego Garcia was deemed eligible for pretrial release, he had remained in jail at the request of his attorneys, who feared the Republican administration could try to immediately deport him again if he were freed. Those fears were somewhat allayed by a recent ruling in a separate case in Maryland, which requires immigration officials to allow Abrego Garcia time to mount a challenge to any deportation order.

On Friday, Abrego Garcia walked out of the Putnam County jail wearing a short-sleeved white button-down shirt and black pants and accompanied by defense attorney Rascoe Dean. They did not speak to reporters but got into a white SUV and sped off.

The release order from the Tennessee court requires Abrego Garcia to travel directly to Maryland, where he will be in home detention with his brother designated as his custodian. He is required to submit to electronic monitoring and can only leave the home for work, religious services and other approved activities.

An attorney for Abrego Garcia in his deportation case in Maryland, Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, said in a statement Friday his client had been "reunited with his loving family" for the first time since he was wrongfully deported to a notorious El Salvador prison in March.

"While his release brings some relief, we all know that he is far from safe," Sandoval-Moshenberg said. "ICE detention or deportation to an unknown third country still threaten to tear his family apart."

Meanwhile, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem slammed the decision to free Abrego Garcia.

"Activist liberal judges have attempted to obstruct our law enforcement every step of the way in removing the worst of the worst criminal illegal aliens from our country," Noem said in a statement. She called ordering his release a "new low" by a "publicity hungry Maryland judge," apparently referring to the judge overseeing his original deportation case rather than the Tennessee judge who ordered him freed.

"We will not stop fighting till this Salvadoran man faces justice and is OUT of our country," Noem said.

Earlier this week, Abrego Garcia's criminal attorneys filed a motion asking the judge to dismiss the smuggling case, claiming he is being prosecuted to punish him for challenging his removal to El Salvador.

In a statement Friday, defense attorney Sean Hecker called the charges a "vindictive attack on a man who had the courage to fight back against the Administration's continuing assault on the rule of law."

Abrego Garcia has pleaded not guilty to the smuggling charges, which stem from a 2022 traffic stop in Tennessee for speeding. Body camera footage from a Tennessee Highway Patrol officer shows a calm exchange with Abrego Garcia. There were nine passengers in the car, and the officers discussed among themselves their suspicions of smuggling. However, Abrego Garcia was allowed to continue driving with only a warning.

A Department of Homeland Security agent testified he did not begin investigating the traffic stop until this April, when the government was facing mounting pressure to return Abrego Garcia to the U.S.

Abrego Garcia has an American wife and children and has lived in Maryland for years, but he immigrated to the U.S. illegally. In 2019, an immigration judge granted him protection from being deported back to El Salvador, where he faces a "well-founded fear" of violence, according to court filings. He was required to check in yearly with Immigration and Customs Enforcement while Homeland Security issued him a work permit.

Although Abrego Garcia can't be deported to El Salvador without violating the judge's order, Homeland Security officials have said they plan to deport him to an unnamed third country.

Wall Street soars on hopes for lower interest rates as the Dow surges 846 points to a record

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street rallied to its best day in months on Friday after the head of the Federal Reserve hinted that cuts to interest rates may be on the way, along with the kick they can give the economy and investment prices.

The S&P 500 leaped 1.5% for its first gain in six days and finished just shy of its all-time high set last week.

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The Dow Jones Industrial Average soared 846 points, or 1.9%, to its own record after topping its prior high from December. The Nasdaq composite jumped 1.9%.

"Ka-Powell" is how Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management, described the reaction to Jerome Powell's highly anticipated speech in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. "The Fed isn't going to be the party-pooper."

The hope among investors had been that Powell would hint that the Fed's first cut to interest rates of the year may be imminent. Wall Street loves lower rates because they can goose the economy, even if they risk worsening inflation at the same time.

President Donald Trump has angrily been calling for lower rates, often insulting Powell while doing so. And a surprisingly weak report on job growth this month pushed many on Wall Street to assume cuts may come as soon as the Fed's next meeting in September.

Powell encouraged them on Friday after saying he's seen risks rise for the job market. The Fed's two jobs are to keep the job market healthy and to keep a lid on inflation, and it often has to prioritize one over the other because it has just one tool to fix either.

But Powell also would not commit to any kind of timing. He said the job market looks OK at the moment, even if "it is a curious kind of balance" where fewer new workers are chasing after fewer new jobs. Inflation, meanwhile, still has the potential to push higher because of Trump's tariffs.

In sum, Powell said that "the stability of the unemployment rate and other labor market measures allows us to proceed carefully as we consider changes to our policy stance."

Treasury yields tumbled in the bond market as bets built that the Fed would cut its main interest rate in September. Traders see an 83% chance of that, up from 75% a day earlier, according to data from CME Group.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.25% from 4.33% late Thursday. The two-year Treasury yield, which more closely tracks expectations for Fed action, sank to 3.69% from 3.79% in a notable move for the bond market.

On Wall Street, stocks of smaller companies led the way. They can benefit more from lower interest rates because of their need to borrow money to grow. The smaller stocks in the Russell 2000 index surged 3.9% for its best day since April and more than doubled the S&P 500's rally.

Homebuilders jumped on hopes that easier interest rates could encourage more people to buy homes. Lennar, PulteGroup and D.R. Horton all rose more than 5%.

Travel companies, meanwhile, climbed amid hopes that easier interest rates could help U.S. households spend more. Norwegian Cruise Line rallied 7.2%, Delta Air Lines flew 6.7% higher and Caesars Entertainment rose 7%.

Shares of Nio, a Chinese electric-vehicle maker, that trade in the United States leaped 14.4% after it began pre-sales of its flagship premium SUV model, the ES8.

Intel climbed 5.5% after Trump said the chip company has agreed to give the U.S. government a 10% stake in its business.

Nvidia rose 1.7% to trim its loss for the week. The company, whose chips are powering much of the world's move in to artificial-intelligence technology, had seen its stock struggle recently amid criticism that it and other AI superstars shot too high, too fast and became too expensive.

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang said Friday that the company is discussing a potential new computer chip designed for China with the Trump administration. The chips are graphics processing units, or GPUs, a type of device used to build and update a range of AI systems. But they are less powerful than Nvidia's top semiconductors today, which cannot be sold to China due to U.S. national security restrictions.

All told, the S&P 500 jumped 96.74 points to 6,466.91. The Dow Jones Industrial Average leaped 846.24 to 45,631.74, and the Nasdaq composite rallied 396.22 to 21,496.53.

In stock markets abroad, Germany's DAX returned 0.3% after government data showed that its economy shrank by 0.3% in the second quarter compared with the previous three-month period.

Indexes rose across much of Asia, with stocks climbing 1.4% in Shanghai and 0.9% in South Korea.

Erin weakens to post-tropical cyclone, moving out to sea as it batters East Coast with wind, waves

By ALLEN G. BREED, JOHN SEEWER and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

RODANTHE, N.C. (AP) — Strong winds and waves battered Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard and dangerous rip currents threatened from the Carolinas to New England as Hurricane Erin made its way farther out to sea.

The storm was forecast to cause possible coastal flooding into the weekend along the East Coast but was also expected to gradually lose strength. The National Hurricane Center in Miami reported Friday evening that Erin had weakened into a post-tropical cyclone, with maximum sustained winds of 90 mph (150 kph), and was located about 375 miles (605 kilometers) south-southeast of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Despite being twice the size of an average hurricane, Erin so far has managed to thread the needle through the Atlantic between the East Coast and several island nations, limiting its destructiveness.

Massachusetts-based meteorologist Caitlyn Mench said Friday that Erin's high wind field caused it to be felt widely along the East Coast: "On a positive note, it passed all offshore," she said, of the New England area, which experienced some minor coastal flooding due to the storm.

Nantucket's airport recorded winds of up to 45 mph (72 kph) overnight into Friday. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority announced Friday that it was canceling ferry service to and from the Boston area cities of Lynn, Quincy, and Winthrop. Several oceanside beaches along Cape Cod's National Seashore also closed to swimmers and other recreation due to high surf and rip currents.

On North Carolina's Outer Banks, waves breached dunes in the town of Kill Devil Hills on Thursday evening, and water and sand pooled on Highway 12.

Although damage assessments were still underway, the low-lying islands appeared to have dodged widespread trouble.

A tropical storm warning was lifted for Bermuda, where residents and tourists had been told to stay out of the water through Friday. Warnings along the coasts of North Carolina and Virginia were also discontinued.

The National Weather Service issued coastal flood warnings for places as far north as the Mid-Atlantic and New England coasts, saying that some roads could be made impassable.

On Thursday night, local news outlets reported that firefighters rescued more than 50 people from cars, restaurants and bars after tidal flooding in Margate City, New Jersey.

Beaches were closed to swimming Thursday in New York City, but more than a dozen surfers still rode waves at Rockaway Beach in Queens. Scott Klossner, who lives nearby, said conditions were great for experienced surfers.

"You wait all year round for these kinds of waves. It's challenging, really hard to stay in one place, because there's a heavy, heavy, heavy rip," he said. "But this is what surfers want — a hurricane that comes but doesn't destroy my house? I'll take that."

The Outer Banks — essentially sand dunes sticking out of the ocean a few feet above sea level — are vulnerable to erosion. Storm surges can cut through them, washing tons of sand and debris onto roads and sometimes breaking up pavement and creating new inlets.

The dunes and beach took a beating the last two days, but Dare County Manager Bobby Outten said there have been no new inlets with Erin or significant structural damage to homes or businesses.

"All in all, it's not as bad as it could have been," Outten said.

Erin has fluctuated in intensity since forming nearly a week ago but remained unusually large, stretching across more than 600 miles (965 kilometers).

So-called Cape Verde hurricanes like Erin, which originate near those islands off the west coast of Africa, cross thousands of miles of warm ocean and are some of the most dangerous to North America.

Canada will match US tariff exemptions under USMCA trade pact, Prime Minister Carney says

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada is dropping many of its retaliatory tariffs to match U.S. tariff exemptions for goods covered under the United States-Mexico-Canada trade pact, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced Friday.

Carney said Canada will include the carve-out that the U.S. has on Canadian goods under the 2020 free trade deal that shields the vast majority of goods from the punishing duties, easing Canada's previous stance on holding the line on punitive tariffs until U.S. President Donald Trump relents more on those imposed by the U.S.

Some Canadian politicians and union leaders characterized Carney's move as capitulation, but the prime minister accentuated what he considered Canada's favorable position so far and said that the exemptions would jump-start further trade talks with Washington.

"Canada currently has the best trade deal with the United States. And while it's different from what we had before, it's still better than that of any other country," Carney said.

Carney and Trump spoke on the phone Thursday, and Carney met with his Cabinet on Friday before making the announcement.

"We had a very good call," Trump said Friday in the Oval Office. "We are working on something. We want to be very good to Canada. I like Carney a lot. I think he's a very good person." He also said: "I am fighting for the United States, and Canada and Mexico have taken a lot of our business over the years."

Carney said Trump told him that lifting the tariffs would reset trade negotiations. The United States-Mexico-Canada trade pact, or USMCA, is up for review in 2026, and Carney called the pact a unique advantage for Canada at a time when it is clear that the U.S. is charging for access to its market.

Carney said the commitment of the U.S. to the core of USMCA means that over 85% of Canada-U.S. trade continues to be free of tariffs. He said the U.S. average tariff rate on Canadian goods is 5.6% and remains the lowest among all its trading partners.

Canadian and Mexican companies can claim preferential treatment under the USMCA.

Canada and China are the only countries that have retaliated against Trump in his trade war. Canada imposed 25% tariffs on a long list of American goods in March, including oranges, alcohol, clothing and shoes, motorcycles and cosmetics.

Former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau initially put on retaliatory tariffs in response to U.S. tariffs, but before the U.S. tariffs were applied the Trump administration exempted goods covered by the free trade deal.

Most imports from Canada and Mexico are still protected by the USMCA, but U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has said, "I think the president is absolutely going to renegotiate USMCA."

Preserving the free trade pact will be critical for Canada and Mexico. More than 75% of Canada's exports go to the U.S. while more than 80% of Mexico's exports go there.

Trump has announced some sector-specific tariffs that do apply for Canada despite the USMCA — known as 232 tariffs — which are having an impact on the Canadian economy. There is a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum imports, for example.

"Canada and the United States have reestablished free trade for the vast majority of our goods," Carney said. "Canada will retain our tariffs on steel, aluminum and autos as we work intensively to resolve the issues there."

Carney previously rescinded Canada's plan to tax U.S. technology firms after Trump said he was suspending trade talks with Canada over those plans, which he called "a direct and blatant attack on our country."

The prime minister disputed any notion that Canada is appeasing Trump, noting that Canada is matching what the U.S. is doing.

"The president and I had a long conversation," Carney said. "There is a review of the free trade agreement in the spring. We're starting our preparations."

Lana Payne, president of Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union, characterized Carney's announce-

ment as Canada backing down, and said the country shouldn't back down unless the U.S. drops all punitive tariffs.

"Trump's attacks on auto, steel, aluminum, and forestry sectors are hurting Canadian workers in real time," she posted on social media. "Walking back counter-tariffs isn't an olive branch. It only enables more U.S. aggression."

Opposition Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre called it a capitulation by Carney. Poilievre said he would have gone to the U.S. president and asked him respectfully to remove all the tariffs.

"Any small tariff on Canada, any amount, by the United States has an outsized effect because more than 20% of our economy is exports to the U.S.," he said.

Former Sri Lankan President Wickremesinghe arrested on allegations of misusing state funds

By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Police in Sri Lanka arrested former President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday over allegations that the senior opposition politician misused public funds during his presidency, police said.

Wickremesinghe, who was president from 2022 to 2024, is accused of using the funds to attend his wife's graduation ceremony in London after an official visit to the United States, police spokesman Fredrick Wootler told The Associated Press.

Wickremesinghe appeared for a lengthy hearing before a magistrate court in the capital, Colombo, and was ordered to be kept in custody until Aug. 26. He didn't comment during the hearing, and there was no immediate statement from his office. A large crowd of Wickremesinghe's supporters gathered outside the court to protest his arrest.

Wickremesinghe is the first Sri Lankan former head of state to be arrested and the most prominent leader under investigation for corruption under the government of President Anura Kumara Disanayake, who came to power last year on an anti-corruption platform.

Disanayake won the presidential election in September when voters rejected an old guard accused of leading the country into an economic crisis. Two months later, his party won a landslide victory in the parliamentary election that enabled him to form a strong government.

Already more than a dozen former high government officials and political leaders are under investigation for alleged wrongdoing.

Wickremesinghe became president after Sri Lanka's economic upheaval led to a political crisis that forced then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign in 2022.

Wickremesinghe was credited with stabilizing the crumbling economy. Under his leadership, inflation fell, the local currency strengthened and foreign reserves increased. But he faced public backlash over his government's stringent austerity measures, including raising taxes and utility rates, imposed as part of a bailout package with the International Monetary Fund.

Powell signals Fed may cut rates soon even as inflation risks remain

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

JACKSON HOLE, Wyo. (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Friday opened the door ever so slightly to lowering a key interest rate in the coming months but gave no hint on the timing of a move and suggested the central bank will proceed cautiously as it continues to evaluate the impact of tariffs and other policies on the economy.

In a high-profile speech closely watched at the White House and on Wall Street, Powell said that there are risks of both rising unemployment and stubbornly higher inflation. Yet he suggested that with hiring sluggish, the job market could weaken further.

"The shifting balance of risks may warrant adjusting our policy stance," he said, a reference to his con-

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cerns about weaker job gains and a more direct sign that the Fed is considering a rate cut than he has made in previous comments.

Still, Powell's remarks suggest the Fed will proceed carefully in the coming months and will make its rate decisions based on how inflation and unemployment evolve. The Fed has three more meetings this year, including next month, in late October, and in December, and it's not clear whether the Fed will cut at all those meetings.

"The stability of the unemployment rate and other labor market measures allows us to proceed carefully as we consider changes to our policy stance," Powell said. That suggests the Fed will continue to evaluate jobs and inflation data as it decides whether to cut rates.

The stock market jumped in response to Powell's remarks, with the broad S&P 500 index rising 1.5% in midday trading.

"We see Powell's remarks as consistent with our expectation of" a quarter-point cut to the Fed's short-term rate at its Sept. 16-17 meeting, economists at Goldman Sachs wrote in a note to clients. The Fed's rate currently stands at 4.3%.

Powell spoke with the Fed under unprecedented public scrutiny from the White House, as President Donald Trump has repeatedly insulted Powell and has urged him to cut rates, arguing there is "no inflation" and saying that a cut would lower the government's interest payments on its \$37 trillion in debt.

Trump also says a cut would boost the moribund housing market. A rate cut by the Fed often leads to lower borrowing costs for mortgages, car loans, and business borrowing, but it doesn't always.

While Powell spoke, Trump elevated his attacks, telling reporters in Washington, D.C. that he would fire Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook if she did not step down over allegations from an administration official that she committed mortgage fraud.

If Cook is removed, that would give Trump an opportunity to put a loyalist on the Fed's governing board. The Fed has long been considered independent from day-to-day politics. The president can't fire a Fed governor over disagreements on interest rate policy, but he can do so "for cause," which is generally seen as malfeasance or neglect of duty.

Later Friday, Trump told reporters, referring to Powell, "We call him too late for a reason. He should have cut them a year ago. He's too late."

Powell spoke at the Fed's annual economic symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, a conference with about 100 academics, economists, and central bank officials from around the world. He was given a standing ovation before he spoke.

Cook, who is also attending the conference, declined to comment on the president's remarks.

In his remarks, the Fed chair underscored that tariffs are lifting inflation and could push it higher in the coming months.

"The effects of tariffs on consumer prices are now clearly visible. We expect those effects to accumulate over coming months, with high uncertainty about timing and amounts," Powell said.

Inflation has crept higher in recent months though it is down from a peak of 9.1% three years ago. Tariffs have not spurred inflation as much as some economists worried, but they are starting to lift the prices of heavily imported goods such as furniture, toys, and shoes.

Consumer prices rose 2.7% in July from a year ago, above the Fed's target of 2%. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 3.1%.

Powell added that higher prices from tariffs could cause a one-time shift to prices, rather than an ongoing bout of inflation. Other Fed officials have said that is the most likely outcome and as a result the central bank can cut rates to boost the job market.

The Fed chair said it is largely up to the central bank to ensure that tariffs don't lead to sustained inflation.

"Come what may, we will not allow a one-time increase in the price level to become an ongoing inflation problem," he said, suggesting deep rate cuts, as Trump has demanded, are unlikely.

Regarding the job market, Powell noted that even as hiring has slowed sharply this year, the unemployment rate remains low. He added that with immigration falling sharply, fewer jobs are needed to keep

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unemployment in check.

Yet with hiring sluggish, the risks of a sharper downturn, with rising layoffs, has risen, Powell said.

Powell also suggested the Fed would continue to set its interest-rate policy free from political pressure.

Fed officials "will make these decisions, based solely on their assessment of the data and its implications for the economic outlook and the balance of risks. We will never deviate from that approach."

Powell dedicated the second half of his speech to announcing changes to the Fed's policy framework that was issued in August 2020. The framework, which has been blamed for delaying the Fed's response to the pandemic inflation spike, provides guidelines on how the Fed would respond to changes in inflation and employment.

In 2020, after a decade of low inflation and low interest rates following the financial crisis and Great Recession in 2008-2009, the Fed changed its framework to allow inflation to top its 2% target temporarily, so that inflation would average 2% over time.

And after unemployment fell to a half-century low in 2018, without pushing up inflation, the 2020 framework said that the Fed would focus only on "shortfalls" in employment, rather than "deviations." That meant it would cut rates if unemployment rose, but wouldn't necessarily raise them if it fell.

The Fed reviewed its framework this year and concluded that it was tied too closely to the pre-pandemic economy, which has since shifted. Inflation spiked to a four-decade high in 2022 and the Fed rapidly boosted interest rates afterward.

"A key objective has been to make sure that our framework is suitable across a broad range of economic conditions," Powell said.

Trump embraces tough-on-crime mantra amid DC takeover as he and Democrats claim political wins

By STEVE PEOPLES and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump stood among several hundred law enforcement officers, National Guard troops and federal agents at a U.S. Park Police operations center in one of Washington, D.C.'s most dangerous neighborhoods. As the cameras rolled, he offered a stark message about crime, an issue he's been hammering for decades, as he thanked them for their efforts.

"We're not playing games," he said. "We're going to make it safe. And we're going to then go on to other places."

The Republican president is proudly promoting the work of roughly 2,000 National Guard troops in the city, loaned by allied governors from at least six Republican-led states. They're in place to confront what Trump describes as an out-of-control crime wave in the Democratic-run city, though violent crime in Washington, like dozens of cities led by Democrats, has been down significantly since a pandemic high.

Trump and his allies are confident that his stunning decision to dispatch troops to a major American city is a big political winner almost certain to remind voters of why they elected him last fall.

Democrats say this is a fight they're eager to have.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, an Army veteran, cast Trump's move as a dangerous political stunt designed to distract the American people from his inability to address persistent inflation, rising energy prices and major health insurance cuts, among other major policy challenges.

"I'm deeply offended, as someone who's actually worn the uniform, that he would use the lives of these men and women and the activation of these men and women as political pawns," Moore told The Associated Press.

Trump's extraordinary federal power grab comes as the term-limited president has threatened to send troops to other American cities led by Democrats, even as voters voice increasing concern about his authoritarian tendencies. And it could be a factor for both sides in elections in Virginia and New Jersey this fall — and next year's more consequential midterms.

Inside the White House strategy

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The president and White House see Trump's decision to take over the D.C. police department as a political boon and have been eager to publicize the efforts.

The White House offered a livestream of Trump's Thursday evening appearance, and on Wednesday, Vice President JD Vance and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth made a surprise visit to Union Station, D.C.'s busy transit hub, to thank members of the National Guard over Shake Shack burgers.

Each morning, Trump's press office distributes statistics outlining the previous night's law enforcement actions, including total arrests and how many of those people are in the country illegally.

The strategy echoes Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration, which has often forced Democrats to come to the defense of people living in the country illegally, including some who have committed serious crimes.

A White House official, speaking on background to discuss internal deliberations, dismissed concerns about perceptions of federal overreach in Washington, saying public safety is a fundamental requirement and a priority for residents.

Trump defended his efforts during an interview on "The Todd Starnes Show" Thursday.

"Because I sent in people to stop crime, they said, 'He's a dictator.' The real people, though, even Democrats, are calling me and saying, 'It's unbelievable' how much it has helped," he said.

The White House hopes to use its actions in D.C. as a test case to inspire changes in other cities, though Trump has legal power to intervene in Washington that he doesn't have elsewhere because the city is under partial federal control.

"Everyday Americans who support commonsense policies would deem the removal of more than 600 dangerous criminals from the streets of our nation's capital a huge success," said White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers. "The Democrats continue to be wildly unpopular because they oppose efforts to stop violent crime and protect law-abiding citizens."

Democrats lean in

Moore, Maryland's Democratic governor, suggested a dark motivation behind Trump's approach, which is focused almost exclusively on cities with large minority populations led by Democratic mayors of color.

"Once again, we are seeing how these incredibly dangerous and biased tropes are being used about these communities by someone who is not willing to step foot in them, but is willing to stand in the Oval Office and defend them," Moore said.

Even before Trump called the National Guard to Washington, Democratic mayors across the country have been touting their success in reducing violent crime.

Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, who leads the Democratic Mayors Association, noted that over half of the 70 largest Democratic-led cities in the country have seen violent crime decrease so far this year.

"He's stoking racial division and stoking fear and chaos," Bibb said. "We need someone who wants to be a collaborator, not a dictator."

Democratic strategists acknowledge that Trump's GOP has enjoyed a significant advantage in recent years on the issues of crime and immigration — issues Trump has long sought to connect. But as Democratic officials push back against the federal takeover in Washington, party strategists are offering cautious optimism that Trump's tactics will backfire.

"This is an opportunity for the party to go on offense on an issue that has plagued us for a long time," said veteran Democratic strategist Daniel Wessel. "The facts are on our side."

A closer look at the numbers

FBI statistics released this month show murder and nonnegligent manslaughter in the U.S. in 2024 fell nearly 15% from a year earlier, continuing a decline that's been seen since a coronavirus pandemic-era crime spike.

Meanwhile, recent public polling shows that Republicans have enjoyed an advantage over Democrats on the issue of crime.

A CNN/SSRS poll conducted in May found that about 4 in 10 U.S. adults said the Republican Party's views were closer to their own on crime and policing, while 3 in 10 said they were more aligned with Democrats' views. About 3 in 10 said neither party reflected their opinions. Other polls conducted in the past few years found a similar gap.

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Trump also had a significant edge over Democrat Kamala Harris on the issue in the 2024 election. About half of voters said Trump was better able to handle crime, while about 4 in 10 said this about Harris, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the American electorate.

At the same time, Americans have expressed more concern about the scope of presidential power since Trump took office for a second time in January.

An AP-NORC poll conducted in April found that about half of U.S. adults said the president has "too much" power in the way the U.S. government operates these days, up from 32% in March 2024.

The unusual military presence in a U.S. city, which featured checkpoints across Washington staffed in some cases by masked federal agents, injected a sense of fear and chaos into daily life for some people in the nation's capital.

At least one day care center was closed Thursday as childcare staff feared the military action, which has featured a surge in immigration enforcement, while local officials raised concerns about next week's public school openings.

Moore said he would block any push by Trump to send the National Guard into Baltimore.

"I have not seen anything or any conditions on the ground that I think would justify the mobilization of our National Guard," he said. "They think they're winning the political argument. I don't give a s--- about the political argument."

Immigrants from Central Asia find hostility and violence in Russia

By KATIE MARIE DAVIES Associated Press

The immigrant worker from Uzbekistan entered the bank in Moscow, but when he reached the teller, she refused to serve him and she wouldn't say why.

For him and others from impoverished countries across Central Asia who seek better lives in Russia, such hostility is woven into everyday life. Sometimes it bursts into outright violence.

"Mostly you notice it when you go to the hospital, a clinic, a government office: You stand in line and everyone shoots you dirty looks," said the man, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he feared repercussions.

Such xenophobia clashes with economic realities at a time when Russia has a labor shortage, primarily due to its war in Ukraine. In the first quarter of 2025, over 20% of Russian businesses said they were hindered by a lack of workers, according to the Central Bank.

But rather than welcoming laborers, Russian officials are fomenting anti-migrant sentiment and increasing restrictions on immigrants, which the government says number 6.1 million, but is probably higher. The government is tracking their movement, clamping down on their employment and impeding their children's rights to education.

A massacre and a backlash

The continued crackdown comes as a trial began this month for four Tajik nationals who are accused of the shooting and arson attack at a Moscow concert hall in March 2024 that killed 149 people. The four were arrested within hours of the attack and appeared in court with signs of being severely beaten. An Islamic State group claimed responsibility but Russia sought to blame Ukraine for the bloodshed.

Anti-migrant rhetoric had been growing in Russia since the early 2020s. But the massacre in particular launched a wave of "terrible violence" against immigrants, said lawyer Valentina Chupik, who has worked with the immigrant community for over 20 years. In the eight days after the killings, she received 700 reports of injuries to immigrants, including "faces smashed against the doors of police stations," she said.

Parliament speaker Vyacheslav Volodin captured the public mood after the massacre, saying "migration control is extremely important" to ensure foreign nationals carrying out "illegal activity" could be deported without a court order.

The violence drew concern from human rights groups.

"Central Asian migrants seeking work in Russia due to dire economic conditions in their countries of origin today face ethnic profiling, arbitrary arrests, and other harassment by police in Russia," Human Rights

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Watch said in a report on the anniversary of the attack.

"The heinous massacre cannot justify massive rights abuses against Central Asian migrants in Russia," said its author, Syinat Sultanalieva.

Raids, roundups and restrictions

While some violence has subsided, it hasn't disappeared. In April, police raided a Kyrgyz-run bathhouse in Moscow with video showing masked men forcing half-naked bathers to crawl across the floor and deliberately stepping on them before covering the lens of a security camera.

Police also reportedly rounded up immigrants in raids on warehouses, construction sites and mosques, then coerced them into joining the military to fight in Ukraine. Some are threatened with having their residency documents withheld, while others are recently naturalized citizens who failed to register for military service. In such cases, serving in the military is presented as the only alternative to prison or deportation. For others, a fast track to Russian citizenship is offered as an incentive for enlisting.

Speaking in St. Petersburg in May, Alexander Bastrykin, head of Russia's Investigative Committee, said "20,000 'young' citizens of Russia, who for some reason do not like living in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan (and) Kyrgyzstan" were serving in Ukraine.

Those immigrants who have avoided violence still are subject to new anti-migrant laws. Much of this is targeted specifically toward workers from Central Asia.

In 2024, 13 Russian regions banned immigrants from certain jobs, including in hospitality, catering and finance, and even as taxi drivers. A pilot program starting in September in the Moscow region requires migrants who enter Russia without a visa to be tracked via an app. Those failing to comply are added to a police watchlist, impeding access to services like banking, and subjecting them to a possible cutoff of cellphone and internet connectivity.

A nationwide law banned children of immigrants from attending school unless they could prove they could speak Russian. Less than six weeks after the law came into force, officials told local media that only 19% of children who applied for the language test were able to take it, and the most common reason for rejection was incomplete or inaccurate documents.

Another man from Uzbekistan who has worked in Russia for almost two decades and lives in St. Petersburg said he's had to wait in line for over seven hours to get needed residency documents. The man, who also spoke to AP on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals, hopes to stay in Russia but says the climate has worsened.

"It's hard to get paperwork," he said. "There just isn't the time."

The oppressive laws sometimes force immigrants to resort to paying bribes. Chupik, the lawyer, believes that Russia's system results in "violations that cannot be avoided."

"This is exactly what this mass regulation is striving for: not for all migrants to be here legally, but for everyone to be illegal," she said. "That way, they can extract bribes from anyone at any moment and deport anyone who resists."

Encouraging anti-migrant sentiment

Anti-migrant sentiment is unlikely to diminish anytime soon, mostly because it's encouraged by authorities like the Investigative Committee's Bastrykin, who said immigrants "physically occupy our territory, not just with their ideology but with specific buildings" — referring to sites such as mosques.

Ultra-nationalist lawmaker Leonid Slutsky said foreign workers "behave aggressively, causing conflicts and potentially dangerous situations."

Migrants are an easy scapegoat for many social ills, and not just in Russia, said Caress Schenk, an associate professor of political science at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan.

"Closing borders, conducting migrant raids and tightening policies are all tools that are easy go-tos for politicians the world over," she said. "It goes in cycles that are sensitive to geopolitical pressures, as we're seeing now, but also things like election campaigns and domestic political rivalries."

A surge of "anti-migrant propaganda" has dwarfed previous rhetoric of recent years, according to the Moscow-based Uzbek immigrant who was ignored by the bank teller.

"If every person paying attention to the TV, the radio, the internet is only told that migrants are 'bad,

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bad, bad,' if they only show bad places and bad people, of course, that's what people are going to think," he said.

Such anti-migrant rhetoric has become part of the nationalist narrative from President Vladimir Putin and others used to justify the 2022 invasion of Ukraine — that Russia is under constant threat.

"Russia has started lumping together all of 'the external enemies' that it's created over the years for itself: the migrants, the Ukrainians, the West," said Tajik journalist Sher Khashimov, who focuses on migration, identity and social issues. "It all becomes this part of this single narrative of Russia being this castle under siege, and Putin being the only person who is on the lookout for ordinary Russians."

The Uzbek immigrant in Moscow said Russia has created conditions "supposedly to help people, to help migrants."

"But the rules do not work,' he added. "Special barriers are created that migrants cannot pass through on their own."

Today in History: August 23, farm workers' "Salad Bowl strike"

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 23, the 235th day of 2025. There are 130 days left in the year.

On Aug 23, 1970, the Salad Bowl strike began, organized by farm labor leader Cesar Chavez; between 5,000 to 10,000 laborers walked off the job, leading to the largest farm worker strike in U.S. history.

In 1305, Scottish rebel leader Sir William Wallace was executed by the English for treason.

In 1775, Britain's King George III proclaimed the American colonies to be in a state of "open and avowed rebellion."

In 1914, Japan declared war against Germany in World War I.

In 1927, amid worldwide protests, Italian-born anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed in Boston for the murders of two men during a 1920 robbery. (On the 50th anniversary of their executions, then-Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis issued a proclamation that Sacco and Vanzetti had been unfairly tried and convicted.)

In 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to a non-aggression treaty, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in Moscow.

In 2000, A Gulf Air Airbus crashed into the Persian Gulf near Bahrain, killing all 143 people aboard.

In 2003, former priest John Geoghan (GAY'-gun), the convicted child molester whose prosecution sparked the sex abuse scandal that shook the Roman Catholic Church nationwide, died after another inmate attacked him in a Massachusetts prison.

In 2011, a magnitude-5.8 earthquake centered near Mineral, Virginia, the strongest on the East Coast since 1944, caused cracks in the Washington Monument and damaged Washington National Cathedral.

In 2013, a military jury convicted Maj. Nidal Hasan in the deadly 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, that claimed 13 lives; the Army psychiatrist was later sentenced to death.

In 2020, a white police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin, shot a Black man, Jacob Blake, seven times as officers tried to arrest Blake on an outstanding warrant; the shooting left Blake partially paralyzed and triggered several nights of violent protests.

In 2022, a jury convicted two men of conspiring to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2020, a victory for prosecutors in a plot that was broken up by the FBI and described as a rallying cry for a U.S. civil war by anti-government extremists.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Vera Miles is 96. Actor Barbara Eden is 94. Football Hall of Famer Sonny Jurgensen is 91. Ballerina Patricia McBride is 83. Former Surgeon General Antonia Novello is 81. Singer-songwriter Linda Thompson is 78. Author and motivational speaker Rudy Ruettiger is 77. Actor Shelley Long is 76. Actor-singer Rick Springfield is 76. Noor al-Hussein (Queen Noor of Jordan) is 74. Film composer Alexandre Desplat is 64. Actor Jay Mohr is 55. Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer is 54. Actor Ray Park is 51. Actor Scott Caan is 49. Rock singer Julian Casablancas (The Strokes) is 47. Actor Joanne Froggatt is 45. Olympic gold medal swimmer Natalie Coughlin Hall is 43. Musician Lil Yachty is 28.