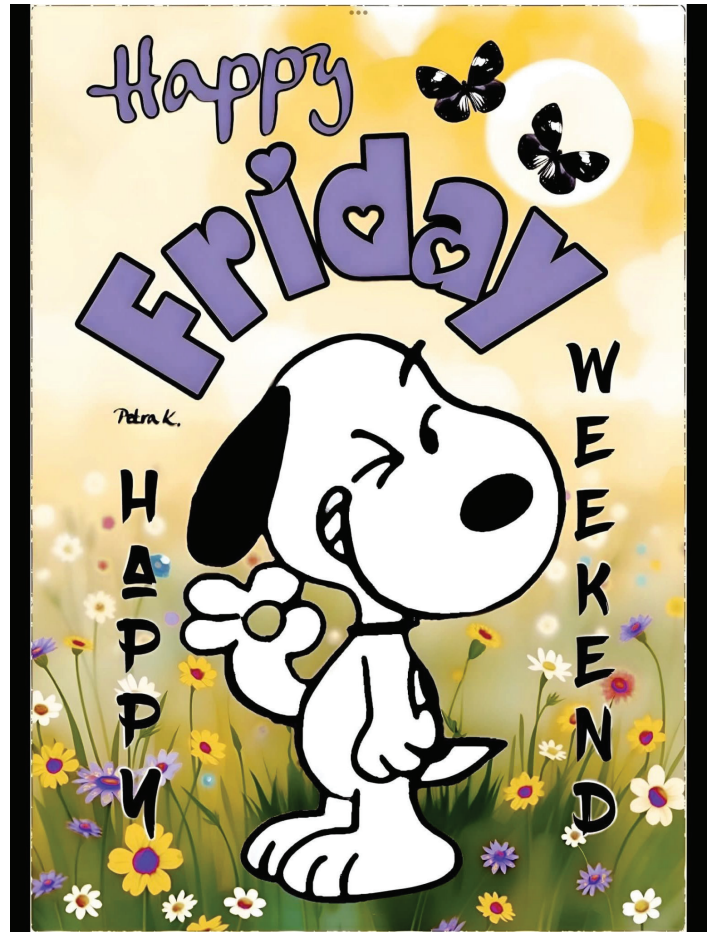


# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 1 of 57

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- This week on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [4-Schuelke Bridal Shower](#)
- [5- Adult Mosquito Control](#)
- [6- Tigers Earn 4-1 Win, Prepare for Big Road Test in Mitchell](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: Grant program for tribal radio stations will start in October, Rounds says](#)
- [8- SD SearchLight: Economic advisers say growing crop supply and weakened foreign demand are hurting SD's economy](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: Sioux Falls Democrat announces bid for U.S. House seat](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: US Senate health committee leaders question CDC tumult](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Fed Governor Cook sues Trump, blasts attack on central bank's autonomy](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: South Dakota political leaders grieve death of state representative](#)
- [14- Weather Pages](#)
- [19- Daily Devotional](#)
- [20- Subscription Form](#)
- [21- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [22- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [23- News from the Associated Press](#)



## Friday, Aug. 29

NO SCHOOL

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe, cucumber salad, green beans, fruit.

Football at Mobridge, 7 p.m.

## Saturday, Aug. 30

C Volleyball Tournament at Matchbox Sport Recreation Center, Aberdeen, 8 a.m.

## Sunday, Aug. 31

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.

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.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 2 of 57

# 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.**

## Katrina's 20th Anniversary

Today marks the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall in Buras, Louisiana, about 60 miles southeast of New Orleans. The Category 3 storm was the costliest in US history, totaling \$125B, and among the deadliest—killing nearly 1,400 people.

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin (D) issued a mandatory evacuation order 21 hours before landfall. Although 80% of the city's population managed to flee, 100,000 to 150,000 remained. When the storm struck, it breached levees guarding the city (see interactive timeline). Storm surge and 10 inches of rain placed 20% of the city underwater within hours, and 80% within days. The Louisiana Superdome, serving as a shelter for tens of thousands of residents, was beset by resource failures.

Katrina caused the largest US migration since the 1930s Dust Bowl, with the city's population down 20% from 2000. See a documentary [here](#).

## Europe's Snapback Sanctions

France, Germany, and the UK yesterday began a 30-day process to reimpose sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program. The penalties—including asset freezes and travel bans—were lifted by a 2015 nuclear deal the US has since left.

The snapback is intended to spur negotiations with Tehran, which suspended cooperation with the UN's nuclear watchdog after US and Israeli strikes on nuclear facilities in June. Days earlier, the watchdog had reported Iran possessed enough uranium and facilities to build several weapons in violation of the 2015 deal. Europe is calling for Iran to expand UN access to facilities, resume talks with the US, and disclose the location of uranium it is accused of covertly moving this summer.

Iran called yesterday's move unlawful and threatened to end discussions about resuming UN inspections after this week, permitting the first facility visit since the strikes. The sanctions would further pressure Iran's struggling economy (w/video).

## College Football Kicks Off

The 2025 college football season kicks into full swing this weekend, featuring three games between top 10 teams—the most such matchups this early in a season in the sport's history.

The marquee game takes place tomorrow in Columbus, Ohio (12 pm ET, FOX), where the defending national champion No. 3 Ohio State Buckeyes will face the No. 1 Texas Longhorns. At night, No. 4 Clemson hosts No. 9 LSU (7:30 pm ET, ABC), while Sunday features No. 6 Notre Dame traveling to No. 10 Miami (7:30 pm ET). The first game showcases one of the season's top storylines—the full-time debut of Arch Manning, scion of the dynasty that includes NFL greats Peyton and Eli. Also to watch are eight-time Super Bowl-winning coach Bill Belichick's first season at North Carolina, whether Alabama can return to the playoffs, and more.

Finally, tomorrow marks legendary analyst Lee Corso's last appearance on "College GameDay."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 3 of 57

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Ariana Grande announces dates for her first tour in seven years.

Ryan Gosling, Amy Adams, and Aaron Pierre tapped to star in "Star Wars: Starfighter," set to premiere in May 2027.

The 2025 US Open tennis championships continues.

UEFA Champions League draw announced with the league phase for the 36-team tournament set to begin Sept. 16.

Inter Miami to take on Seattle Sounders on Sunday (8 pm ET, Apple TV+, Univision) for the Leagues Cup championship.

## Science & Technology

CDC Director Susan Monarez removed from post by President Donald Trump after refusing order from Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.; four top agency officials have departed in recent days, RFK Jr.'s deputy appointed acting director.

Engineers develop self-assembling electrolyte that easily breaks apart at the end of its life; marks a key advance toward cost-efficient recycling of electric vehicle batteries.

Researchers combine two decades of satellite data to create most detailed map of global seasonal cycles to date, identifying regional hot spots where seasons are out of sync.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +0.5%) following fresh economic data; S&P 500, Dow hit new records.

US economy expanded at an annual rate of 3.3% in Q2, up from initial estimate of 3%; growth comes after US gross domestic product shrank 0.5% in Q1.

Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook sues President Donald Trump to block his move to dismiss her over mortgage fraud allegations; judge sets hearing for today.

## Politics & World Affairs

Minneapolis communities hold memorial services for victims of Wednesday's attack on Annunciation Catholic School.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth bars Microsoft from continuing to hire Chinese citizens to manage the Pentagon's cloud services.

Newark Liberty International Airport temporarily grounds flights amid air traffic control communication issues,

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 4 of 57

## Today on GDILIVE.COM



Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

Football  
Groton at Mobridge-Pollock  
Friday, Aug. 29th  
7:00



**GDILIVE**

 YouTube

A production of the  
**Groton Daily Independent**

For more info: [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM)

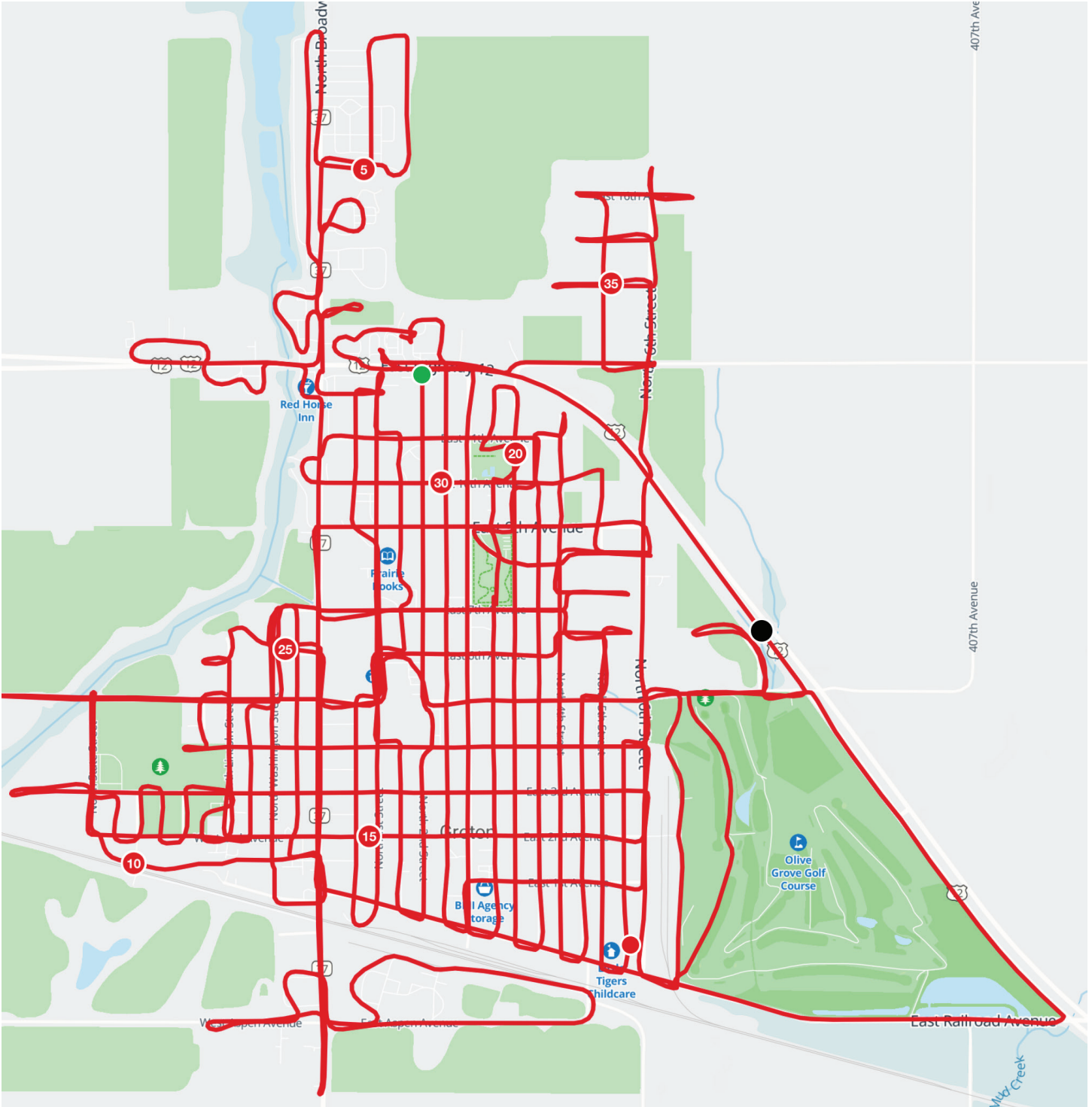
## Bridal Shower

Come and Go Shower for Madeline Schuelke from 2-4 on Saturday, September 6 at Olde Bank and Cafe. MK is the bride of Matthew Sterud. Please bring a Christmas ornament or decoration that Madeline can use during the holidays.



# Groton Daily Independent

**Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 5 of 57**



## Adult Mosquito Control

The City of Groton conducted adult mosquito control last night. The temperature was 70-75 degrees . The wind was easterly, sometimes ESE and others ENE from 1-2 mph. 10.2 gallons of MasterLine Control 4-4 (with 4.6% Permethrin). Travel time was 2 hours and 54 minutes with a distance of 35.48 miles. Total cost of the application was around \$609.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 6 of 57

## Tigers Earn 4-1 Win, Prepare for Big Road Test in Mitchell

The Groton Area Tigers girls soccer team secured a 4-1 victory Friday, improving to 4-1 on the season. But Head Coach Matt Baumgartner said there's still plenty of room for growth as the schedule toughens.

"It's a win, and that's important," Baumgartner said after the match. "But we didn't play 80 minutes the way we know we can. Toward the end it was a little too much boom-ball, and that's not the kind of team we want to be. We'll take some things from this game and flush it, but we'll also learn from it."

Groton got on the board early when Jerica Locke scored with 32:14 left in the first half for a 1-0 lead. The Tigers extended their advantage to 2-0 at the 27:24 mark, converting on a penalty kick taken from near midfield.

Garretson pulled one back when Lydia Frerk scored with 8:45 left in the half, but Groton answered quickly. Just 35 seconds later, Sydney Locke found the back of the net to make it 3-1 at halftime. The Tigers sealed the win in the second half when McKenna Tietz scored with 24:15 remaining, giving Groton the 4-1 final.

Baumgartner credited his team's depth, especially after key players battled injuries. "We had to move some people around, but I thought the girls adjusted well. The first 10 or 12 minutes we were peppering shots, and when Jerica went down, we had to find out who was going to be the playmaker. It was good to see others step up."

The win keeps Groton in the mix at the top of the state standings, where they are currently ranked No. 2.

"We've got a little bit of a target on our back, but that's a good thing," Baumgartner said. "We want to be sharp and playing our best soccer come October."

The Tigers will now turn their attention to a big road matchup on Labor Day at Mitchell. The girls play at 11 a.m., followed by the boys at 1 p.m., before both teams return home for coronation festivities that evening.

"It'll be a long day, but hopefully we come back with two wins and can celebrate together," Baumgartner said with a smile.

Meanwhile in the first game, the Groton boys battled from being down 2-0 to tie the game late in the contest with final 2-2 tie against Freeman Academy. Lesther Artica Rocha scored both goals for the Bobcats, one with 6:10 left in the first half and the other with 30:56 left in the game. Groton rallied as Ryder Schwan scored with 25:46 left in the game and Karson Zak found the net with 4:29 left in the game to end the game in a tie.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Grant program for tribal radio stations will start in October, Rounds says

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-AUGUST 28, 2025 5:12 PM



**U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, answers questions during a Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce event on Aug. 28, 2025.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

SIOUX FALLS — Native American radio stations will receive stopgap funding promised to them in a handshake deal with the Trump administration, U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds said Thursday in response to concerns expressed earlier this week by tribal leaders.

The South Dakota Republican answered questions about the issue Thursday during and after a public appearance with the Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce.

Tribal radio stations across the country said they haven't heard from the Trump administration about the amounts or timing of grants needed to operate their stations over the next year, causing worry among managers and forcing them to seek other funding options.

Rounds voted for the cancellation of \$1.1 billion in previously approved funds for public broadcasting in July, but only

after he secured a handshake deal with the Trump administration to provide \$9.4 million for tribal broadcasting. The informal deal wasn't written into the bill that Congress passed and President Trump signed.

"My goal was to try to find a resource so that these folks, who definitely would shut down if we didn't do it, at least have a fighting chance," Rounds said.

"The writing was clearly on the wall" that the broader funding would be rescinded, Rounds said, but the loss would be more detrimental to tribal stations because more than 90% of their funding came from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which is shutting down after losing congressional funding.

Tribal station programming focuses on language and cultural programs in addition to music and news segments. The stations also provide emergency alerts.

Rounds told South Dakota Searchlight after the chamber's Inside Washington event that the grant program should be up and running by October. The program will be administered through the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Indigenous Connectivity and Technology, according to Rounds' staff.

Rounds added that the grant amounts should be a replacement of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting funding and equal to what stations received previously. According to an Interior Department spokesperson, the department will distribute the \$9.4 million among 37 stations.

"We know how important these stations are for public safety and are moving quickly to get the money



out," a department statement read. "Before we can set a timeline, we need to coordinate with the stations, tribes and other partners to ensure the funds are delivered efficiently and meet the needs of Indian Country. We will share updates when we have more to share publicly."

Four tribal stations in South Dakota received a collective \$820,760 in federally funded radio community service grants in fiscal year 2024:

- \$207,744 for KDKO in Lake Andes, serving the Yankton Sioux Reservation.
- \$214,991 for KLND in McLaughlin, serving the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations.
- \$198,408 for KILI in Porcupine, serving the Pine Ridge Reservation.
- \$199,617 for KOYA in Rosebud, serving the Rosebud Reservation.

The temporary funding will allow his office and other lawmakers to seek a permanent funding source for tribal broadcasting, Rounds said.

*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.*

## Economic advisers say growing crop supply and weakened foreign demand are hurting SD's economy

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR



**Corn grows in a field in southeastern South Dakota in August 2023.** (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

Farmers across South Dakota are seeing healthy crops, but abundant supply and weakening foreign demand are driving prices down, some of the state's economic advisers said during a Thursday virtual meeting.

Karl Adam, South Dakota Bankers Association president and a Governor's Council of Economic Advisors member, said many farmers have a great crop but are looking at losses of "\$125 to \$200 per acre" for their corn, due to prices falling from above \$7 per bushel several years ago to less than \$4 per bushel currently.

"On the ag side, I think we're going to see a lot of balance sheets contract," he said.

Evert Van der Sluis, a council member and South Dakota State University economics professor, said the declining profitability of crops is likely why the S&P Global growth

forecast for South Dakota's 2025 gross domestic product — the sum of all goods and services produced within its borders — is 0.4%. National growth is projected to be 1.7%.

Van der Sluis warned that labor shortages in agriculture and construction could worsen the situation as federal immigration policies tighten and deportations increase. Several participants pointed to other federal policies as compounding the uncertainty, including tariffs pursued by the Trump administration.

A tariff is a tax paid by an entity importing foreign goods, with the cost often passed along in prices charged to domestic consumers, Van der Sluis said. He said the Trump administration's approach to tariffs and international relations has hurt the U.S. on the global stage.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 9 of 57

Roughly half of U.S. soybeans typically go to China, but buyers there have shifted some purchases to Brazil, which has rapidly converted land to agriculture and improved ports and rail infrastructure, according to council member John Hemmingstad of Elk Point, a director of Avalon Capital Group.

"China's still eating and buying. They're just not buying from us," Hemmingstad said.

From June 2024 to June 2025, U.S. agricultural exports to China declined by 39%, according to an Investigate Midwest report citing data from the Census Bureau's USA Trade Online database.

Despite the downturn in crop prices, farmland values remain strong, buoyed by investor confidence that federal lawmakers will step in with financial support, Hemmingstad said. But with a lot of industries suffering the effects of tariffs, he added, "there's no guarantee we'll get that same safety net."

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

## Sioux Falls Democrat announces bid for U.S. House seat

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

Sioux Falls nonprofit executive Billy Mawhiney announced Thursday he is running for South Dakota's lone U.S. House of Representatives seat.

Mawhiney is the executive director for the South Dakota Afterschool Network and has lived in South Dakota for nearly 20 years, after moving from his home state of Missouri. He is a member of the Wyandotte Nation, a Native American tribe in Oklahoma, and has two children with his husband. He said in a news release that he is dedicated to strengthening rural communities, nonprofits and after-school programs.

The Democrat is the first from his party to publicly announce a bid for the House seat. Attorney General Marty Jackley declared his candidacy for the Republican nomination earlier this summer, and state Rep. Casey Crabtree, R-Madison, has filed a statement of candidacy with the Federal Election Commission. The House seat will be up for grabs in next year's election because Republican U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson is running for governor.

Mawhiney said in a news release that he believes "folks are tired of politics." He's running because he intends to give South Dakota families a stronger voice in Washington, D.C.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 10 of 57



**Billy Mawhiney, a Democrat from Sioux Falls, has announced his candidacy for the U.S. House.** (Courtesy

of Billy Mawhiney)

*of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.*

"I believe we deserve someone who understands our daily lives — someone who will always put people ahead of politics," Mawhiney said. "I represent the families who have entrusted their children with the programs I've led and the communities who've never had someone like them at the table."

Two Sioux Falls Democrats voiced support in the announcement: former South Dakota state Rep. Linda Duba and state Senate Minority Leader Liz Larson.

"From his advocacy alongside tribal voices to his leadership on child care and education, I am confident South Dakotans can rely on him to show up," Larson said. "He understands rural communities in a way that is so rare."

Besides Crabtree and Jackley, James Bialota, who describes himself as a small business owner and real estate investor, has said on Facebook that he plans to run as a Republican for the U.S. House.

A Democrat named Scott Schlagel has also filed paperwork with the Federal Election Commission to run for the seat.

*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*

## US Senate health committee leaders question CDC tumult

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — Bipartisan leaders of a U.S. Senate committee dealing with health policy expressed alarm with the direction of the country's top public health agencies after President Donald Trump fired the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other high-level officials resigned.

Louisiana Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy — chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee — posted on social media late Wednesday that the "high profile departures will require oversight by the HELP Committee."

Cassidy separately called on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to indefinitely postpone its September meeting.

"Serious allegations have been made about the meeting agenda, membership, and lack of scientific process being followed for the now announced September ACIP meeting," Cassidy wrote in a statement.



**U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman Bill Cassidy speaks with Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. after Kennedy's confirmation hearing on Jan. 30, 2025.** (Photo by

Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 11 of 57

"These decisions directly impact children's health and the meeting should not occur until significant oversight has been conducted. If the meeting proceeds, any recommendations made should be rejected as lacking legitimacy given the seriousness of the allegations and the current turmoil in CDC leadership."

Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders, ranking member on the committee, called for a bipartisan investigation into the reasons Trump fired Susan Monarez as CDC director less than a month after she received Senate confirmation.

Sanders said that Health and Human Services Director Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Monarez and the handful of high-ranking CDC officials who resigned this week should be able to testify publicly about what's happening inside the agency.

"We need leaders at the CDC and HHS who are committed to improving public health and have the courage to stand up for science, not officials who have a history of spreading bogus conspiracy theories and disinformation," Sanders wrote.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said during a briefing that Trump had every right to fire Monarez and that he expects to pick a new nominee "very soon."

"Her lawyers' statement made it abundantly clear themselves that she was not aligned with the president's mission to make America healthy again," Leavitt said. "The secretary asked her to resign. She said she would and then she said she wouldn't. So the president fired her, which he has every right to do."

Kennedy is scheduled to testify before the Senate Finance Committee next week, that panel's chairman, Idaho Republican Mike Crapo, announced Thursday.

Kennedy "has placed addressing the underlying causes of chronic diseases at the forefront of this Administration's health care agenda," Crapo wrote on X. "I look forward to learning more about @HHSGov's Make America Healthy Again actions to date and plans moving forward."

Cassidy key vote for RFK

Cassidy was an essential vote to confirm Kennedy as director of HHS, which oversees the CDC, though he expressed concerns throughout that process that Kennedy's past statements about vaccines weren't rooted in reputable medical research.

Cassidy said during a floor speech in February after voting to advance Kennedy's nomination that Kennedy assured him he will protect "the public health benefit of vaccination."

"If Mr. Kennedy is confirmed, I will use my authority of the Senate committee with oversight of HHS to rebuff any attempt to remove the public's access to life-saving vaccines without ironclad causal scientific evidence that can be accepted and defended before the mainstream scientific community and before Congress," Cassidy said at the time. "I will watch carefully for any effort to wrongly sow public fear about vaccines between confusing references of coincidence and anecdote."

*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.*



## Fed Governor Cook sues Trump, blasts attack on central bank's autonomy

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — Lisa Cook, a Federal Reserve governor, sued President Donald Trump Thursday, calling his move to fire her an “unprecedented and illegal attempt” that jeopardizes the independence of the board.

The suit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, sets up a fight between the Federal Reserve and the president who has tried to pressure the independent board to lower interest rates. The challenge could go all the way to the Supreme Court.

The suit argues that the president’s Monday decision to remove her was political and violated her due process rights because she had no chance to respond to the allegations of mortgage fraud a Trump appointee lodged against her. Cook has not been charged with any crime.

“It is clear from the circumstances surrounding Governor Cook’s purported removal from the Federal Reserve Board that the mortgage allegations against her are pretextual, in order to effectuate her prompt removal and vacate a seat for President Trump to fill and forward his agenda to undermine the independence of the Federal Reserve,” according to the suit.

The suit also emphasized the importance of the Fed’s independence from elected officials.

“The operational independence of the Federal Reserve is vital to its ability to make sound economic decisions, free from the political pressures of an election cycle,” according to the suit.

The case is assigned to Jia M. Cobb. Former President Joe Biden appointed Cobb in 2021.

The suit asks the district court to allow Cook to continue serving on the Fed as she challenges her removal. In a statement to States Newsroom, White House spokesperson Kush Desai defended the president’s decision to remove Cook.

“The President determined there was cause to remove a governor who was credibly accused of lying in financial documents from a highly sensitive position overseeing financial institutions,” Desai said. “The removal of a governor for cause improves the Federal Reserve Board’s accountability and credibility for both the markets and American people.”

Rift highlights policy differences

Cook, the first Black woman appointed to the Fed, has consistently voted against lowering interest rates since joining the board in 2022. Her term ends in 2038.

If Trump is successful in removing her and is able to nominate a replacement, he could have a majority of Fed members who are aligned with his desire to lower interest rates to boost the economy.

Despite Trump’s long-running pressure campaign, the Fed has kept rates steady amid concerns that the president’s tariffs will produce price hikes.



**Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell administers the oath of office to Lisa Cook to serve as a member of the Board of Governors at the Federal Reserve System during a ceremony at the William McChesney Martin Jr. Building of the Federal Reserve May 23, 2022, in Washington, D.C.** (Photo by Drew Angerer/Getty Images)



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 13 of 57

The allegations of mortgage fraud stem from Bill Pulte, the director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency. Pulte accused Cook of making a false statement on a mortgage application to obtain a more favorable rate on her second home. He referred the matter to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution.

The suit does not address the merits of the allegations.

Pulte has made similar mortgage fraud accusations against two other political enemies of Trump's: New York Attorney General Letitia James, who investigated the president's business dealings and won a finding of fraud in state court, and California U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff, who led the investigation into Trump's first impeachment inquiry.

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

## South Dakota political leaders grieve death of state representative

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF**

South Dakota political leaders are honoring the memory of Rep. Richard Vasgaard, R-Centerville.

Vasgaard died this week at age 75 in a farm accident, according to multiple media reports. Republican House leaders issued a statement Wednesday evening.

Speaker of the House Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, said Vasgaard brought "humility, wisdom, and a steady voice" to the House chamber.

"His service was marked by an unwavering dedication to the citizens he represented," Hansen said, "and to the agriculture industry he and his family worked in."

House Speaker Pro Tempore Karla Lems, R-Canton, served alongside Vasgaard in District 16, which includes land in Lincoln, Turner and Union counties.

"While the experience and steady perspective he brought to Pierre will be missed, it is an irreplaceable loss to District 16 and his Turner County community," Lems said.

House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach, R-Spearfish, added that Vasgaard was "liked and respected by everybody."

"His love for farming and for South Dakota was as strong as anybody I've ever seen," Odenbach said. "He will truly be missed."

On Thursday, Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden ordered that flags be flown at half-staff statewide from sunrise until sunset on Tuesday, Sept. 2. A funeral service will be at 10:30 a.m. Central time that day at Scandia Lutheran Church in Centerville.

"Representative Vasgaard was an honorable, God-fearing man who served our state with unwavering commitment. Sandy and I are devastated by his loss," Rhoden said in a news release Thursday. "He left a lasting impact on South Dakota, and his leadership will be deeply missed."

Vasgaard served in the state House from 2021 to 2022, and again this year.



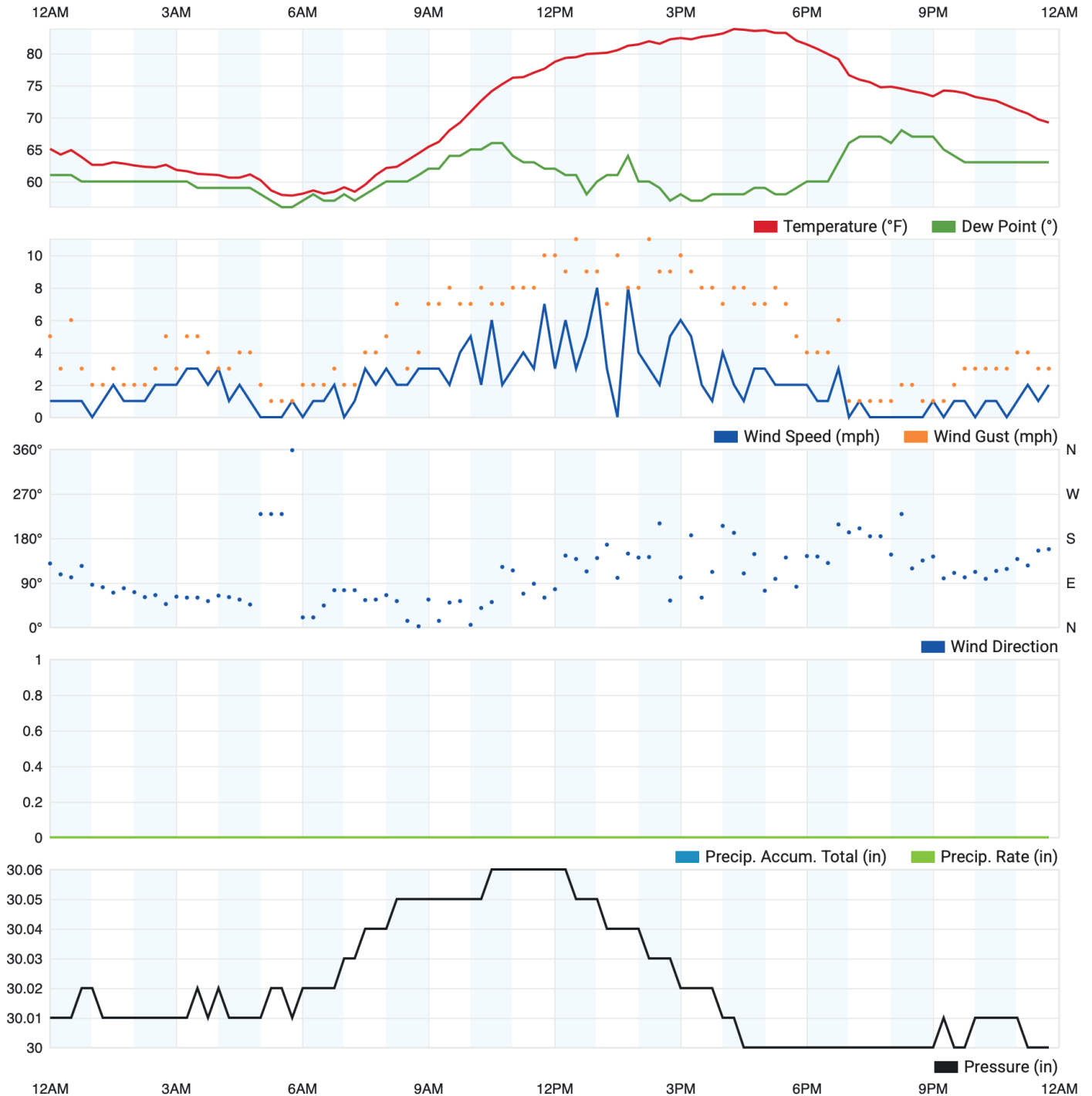
**Rep. Richard Vasgaard, R-Centerville, speaks to lawmakers on the South Dakota House floor in Pierre on Feb. 25, 2025.** (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 14 of 57

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 28, 2025



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 15 of 57

Today



High: 78 °F

Partly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 61 °F

Mostly Cloudy

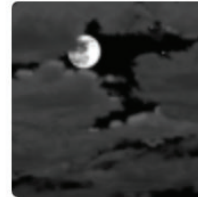
Saturday



High: 76 °F

Mostly Cloudy  
then Slight  
Chance  
T-storms

Saturday Night



Low: 57 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Sunday



High: 78 °F

Slight Chance  
Showers then  
Slight Chance  
T-storms



## Holiday Weekend Forecast

August 29, 2025  
4:34 AM

- Day-time highs within a few degrees of “normal”, until next Wednesday
- Night-time lows within a few degrees of “normal”, until next Wednesday

### Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	8/29 Fri	8/30 Sat	8/31 Sun	9/1 Mon	9/2 Tue	9/3 Wed	9/4 Thu	9/5 Fri
Aberdeen	79	76	79	79	79	66	70	73
Miller	76	69	71	74	77	65	68	72
Mobridge	77	77	77	81	78	67	73	76
Murdo	77	69	72	79	82	68	74	78
Ortonville	77	75	75	73	73	61	63	66
Pierre	78	72	75	81	83	71	76	79
Sisseton	79	76	77	75	75	62	66	69
Watertown	76	74	74	72	75	62	64	68

### Minimum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	8/29 Fri	8/30 Sat	8/31 Sun	9/1 Mon	9/2 Tue	9/3 Wed	9/4 Thu	9/5 Fri
Aberdeen	59	57	57	56	57	49	42	45
Miller	61	58	57	56	57	50	43	48
Mobridge	60	60	56	55	57	50	44	48
Murdo	60	60	59	55	56	52	44	49
Ortonville	58	58	58	58	59	50	44	48
Pierre	62	62	57	57	59	53	47	51
Sisseton	58	58	58	58	57	49	44	48
Watertown	58	58	58	56	57	49	42	46

Daytime temperatures will reach into the 70s to low 80s through Labor day. Then, behind a cold front's passage on Tuesday, cooler daytime temperatures in the 60s and 70s will set up.



# Groton Daily Independent

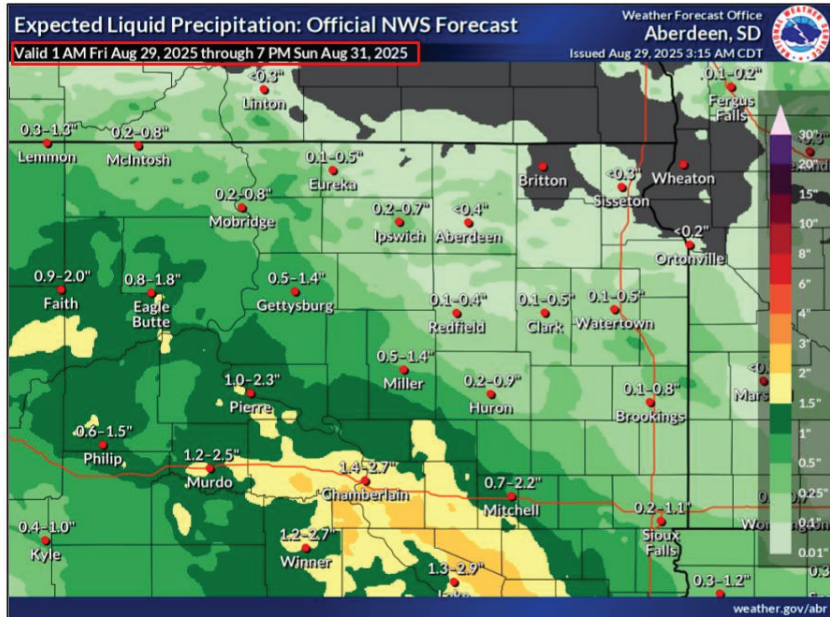
Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 16 of 57



## Precipitation Forecast Today Through Sunday

August 29, 2025  
4:44 AM

Localized Heavy Rainfall Possible Mainly Over Portions of central/south central South Dakota



- Showers to persist off and on especially over central SD today and tonight
  - ◆ Highest chances (50-70%) for more than an 1.00in of rainfall over central and south central SD through tonight
  - ◆ A weak thunderstorm is possible
    - No severe weather anticipated
- Precipitation is forecast to spread eastward through Saturday night
  - ◆ Highest chances (50-75%) for 0.50in or more continue over central SD
  - ◆ Lower chances (15-45%) for 0.10in or more over northeast SD/west central MN
- Highest probability (20-50%) of 2.00in or more this morning through Sunday evening is over central/south central SD



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Showers and sub-severe thunderstorms will persist off and on, especially over central and south central South Dakota today and tonight. The low pressure system responsible for the precipitation will continue to generate rain chances Saturday, and possibly Sunday, with the highest probabilities for rainfall centered over central and south central South Dakota.



# Groton Daily Independent

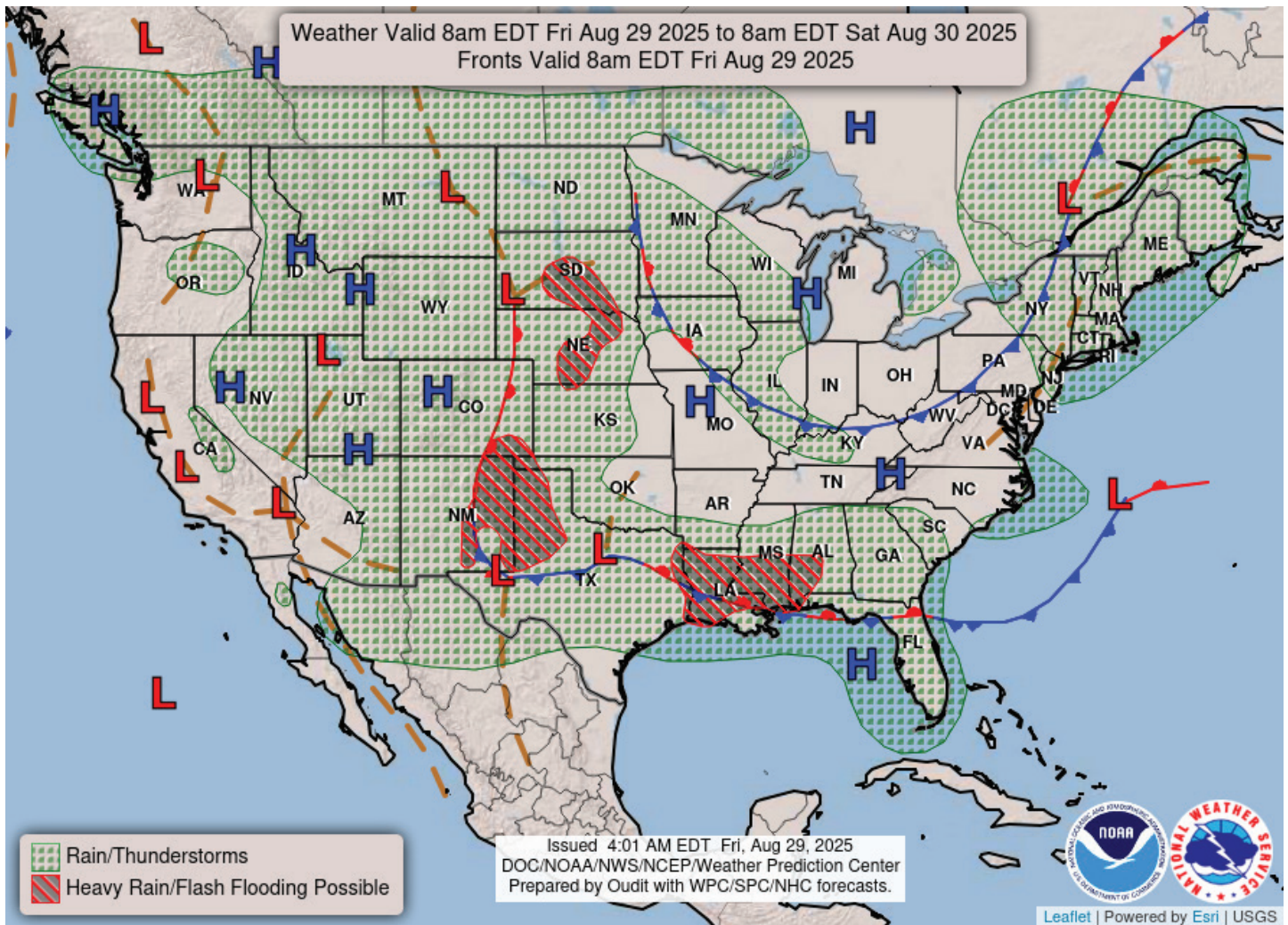
Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 17 of 57

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp:** 84 °F at 4:23 PM  
**Heat Index:** 84 °F at 4:15 PM  
**Low Temp:** 58 °F at 5:43 AM  
**Wind:** 12 mph at 1:48 PM  
**Precip:** : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1961  
Record Low: 30 in 1893  
Average High: 81  
Average Low: 53  
Average Precip in August.: 2.10  
Precip to date in August: 4.42  
Average Precip to date: 16.20  
Precip Year to Date: 20.30  
Sunset Tonight: 8:16 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:51 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 18 of 57

## Today in Weather History

August 29, 1983: A devastating hail storm struck portions of central South Dakota. In a small part of Faulk County, hail pounded the area for two straight hours. At times, the hail was the size of baseballs. Of course, this incredible hailstorm devastated crops in the area and took out windows in area buildings. In one home, the windows were shattered, the curtains shredded, and glass shards and water ruined much of the upper floor. On some houses, the paint was peeled off by the continual pounding of the hail. Also, funnel clouds were reported just east of Lake City, and near Langford and Veblen in Marshall County. In Veblen, a pole barn was blown over, and shingles were torn off.

August 29, 1993: A severe thunderstorm hit Groton with hail, damaging lightning, and 3.43 inches of rain which flooded some basements. At the high school, lightning spits a 30-foot chimney which fell through a large skylight and sections of the roof.

1960: The storm that would become Hurricane Donna forms near Cape Verde off the African coast. It would go on to cause 150 deaths from Puerto Rico to New England over the next two weeks.

1962 - Hackberry, LA, was deluged with twenty-two inches of rain in 24 hours, establishing a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1965 - A national record for the month of August was established when 2.5 inches of snow fell atop Mount Washington NH. Temperatures in New England dipped to 39 degrees at Nantucket MA, and to 25 degrees in Vermont. For many location it was the earliest freeze of record. (David Ludlum)

1983 - A devastating hail storm struck portions of central South Dakota. In a small part of Faulk County, hail pounded the area for two straight hours. At times, the hail was the size of baseballs. Of course, this incredible hailstorm devastated crops in the area and took out windows in area buildings. In one home, the windows were shattered, the curtains shredded, and glass shards and water ruined much of the upper floor. On some houses, the paint was peeled off by the continual pounding of the hail. Also, funnel clouds were reported just east of Lake City, and near Langford and Veblen in Marshall County. In Veblen, a pole barn was blown over, and shingles were torn off.

1987 - Some of the most powerful thunderstorms in several years developed over the piedmont of North Carolina, and marched across central sections of the state during the late afternoon and evening hours. Baseball size hail was reported around Albemarle, while thunderstorm winds downed giant trees around High Falls. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Cool air invaded the north central U.S. Ten cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Bismarck ND with a reading of 33 degrees. Deerfield, a small town in the Black Hills of South Dakota, reported a low of 23 degrees. The remnants of Tropical Storm Chris drenched eastern Pennsylvania with up to five and a half inches of rain, and produced high winds which gusted to 90 mph, severely damaging a hundred boats in Anne Arundel County MD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Evening thunderstorms produced destructive lightning in West Virginia. The lightning caused widespread damage, particularly in Doddridge County. Numerous trees were downed closing many roads. Fire companies had a difficult time tending to the many homes and trailers on fire. Anchorage AK reported a record 9.60 inches of rain for the month of August. The average annual precipitation for Anchorage is just slightly more than fifteen inches. Three day rainfall totals in northwest Missouri ranged up to 8.20 inches at Maryville. (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Plaquemines Parish in southeastern Louisiana early on the 29th with maximum sustained winds near 125 mph, a strong category-three, and the third most-intense landfalling hurricane in U.S. history. The center of the hurricane passed just east of New Orleans, where winds gusted over 100 mph. Widespread devastation and unprecedented flooding occurred, submerging at least 80 percent of the city as levees failed. Farther east, powerful winds and a devastating storm surge of 20-30 feet raked the Mississippi coastline, including Gulfport and Biloxi, where Gulf of Mexico floodwaters spread several miles inland. Rainfall amounts of 8-10 inches were common along and to the east of the storm's path. Katrina weakened to a tropical storm as it tracked northward through Mississippi and gradually lost its identity as it moved into the Tennessee Valley on the 30th





## LET HIM IN!

He'd been away at school for several months. When he arrived home, it was one o'clock in the morning. But he was anxious to see his fiancée. After all, he drove for many hours with a box of candy and a large bouquet of flowers next to him on the front seat.

When he arrived at his fiancée's home, he ran up the steps - flowers and candy tucked under his arm - and rang the doorbell. From a window in her room upstairs she shouted, "Go away. Come back in the morning. I've been asleep for hours."

Anger swept over him. First, he rammed his fist through the window in the door. Then he stuffed the candy and flowers through the broken window. Still, in a rage, he started his car and drove it into the front of her house. Finally, when there was no response, he left.

Our Lord is much different. He gently knocks at the door of our hearts wanting to enter into our lives. "Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me." While the Lord stands at the door of our heart and gently knocks, He will not force His way in nor leave in anger.

The Psalmist wrote, "Judah became His sanctuary." What a beautiful picture! Their hearts became His very own holy place. God redeems us because He wants to dwell within us, that we might become His holy place!

He wants to make our hearts His home, but we must invite Him in. He will never force His way into our lives.

Prayer: Come, Heavenly Father, and make our heart Your home and allow us to become Your Holy Place. Abide in us and teach us to abide in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: – Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion. Psalm 114:2

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 20 of 57

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# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 21 of 57



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.26.25

7 12 30 40 69 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$277,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 21 Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.27.25

12 13 25 40 52 9

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,450,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 14 Hrs 36 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.28.25

8 10 17 23 33 2

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 51 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.27.25

2 6 7 29 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 14 Hrs 51 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.27.25

12 19 26 51 62 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 20 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.27.25

9 12 22 41 61 25

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$950,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 20 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

# Groton Daily Independent

**Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 22 of 57**

## **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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 23 of 57

## News from the Associated Press

### PREP VOLLEYBALL

Belle Fourche def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-22, 24-26, 25-20, 14-25, 16-14  
Bon Homme def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-15, 25-18, 25-13  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-14, 25-17, 25-15  
Britton-Hecla def. Tiospa Zina, 25-10, 25-5, 25-16  
Brookings def. Hamlin, 20-25, 25-23, 15-25, 25-23, 15-10  
Canton def. Canistota, 25-19, 21-25, 25-18, 25-22  
Centerville def. Menno, 25-13, 25-13, 25-21  
Chester def. Ethan, 25-11, 25-13, 25-17  
Clark-Willow Lake def. Sioux Valley, 19-25, 25-21, 19-25, 25-19, 16-14  
Dakota Valley def. Yankton, 25-10, 25-8, 25-7  
DeSmet def. Deubrook, 25-20, 25-17, 25-21  
Dell Rapids def. West Central, 25-19, 25-16, 25-16  
Gayville-Volin High School def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-20, 25-23, 25-19  
Great Plains Lutheran def. Florence-Henry, 25-18, 23-25, 22-25, 25-9, 15-8  
Harrisburg def. Brandon Valley, 22-25, 25-12, 25-22, 25-15  
Irene-Wakonda def. Scotland, 25-17, 25-23, 25-16  
Kadoka def. Little Wound, 25-8, 25-12, 25-9  
Madison def. Flandreau, 25-8, 25-16, 25-16  
Miller def. Winner, 25-19, 24-26, 19-25, 25-21, 15-9  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-20, 25-20, 19-25, 23-25, 15-3  
North Central def. Gettysburg, 25-12, 25-15, 25-15  
Northwestern def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-19, 25-17, 25-14  
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland def. Howard, 25-18, 25-13, 25-19  
Parkston def. Chamberlain, 25-19, 21-25, 25-8, 25-10  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-13, 25-8, 25-18  
St Thomas More def. Hot Springs, 25-19, 25-19, 25-19  
Wagner def. Vermillion, 25-18, 25-21, 21-25, 25-7  
Warner def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-14, 25-13, 25-13  
Watertown def. Sioux Falls Washington, 23-25, 25-19, 24-26, 25-23, 15-8  
Waverly-South Shore def. Wilmot, 25-19, 25-13, 25-20  
Webster def. Deuel, 25-14, 25-18, 25-17  
Hanson Early Bird Tournament=  
Championship=  
Freeman def. Parker/Marion, 23-25, 25-22, 26-24  
Consolation Semifinal=  
Hanson def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-10, 25-12  
Fifth Place=  
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Hanson, 16-25, 25-19, 25-21

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

## Father of 8-year-old boy killed in Minneapolis church shooting wants him remembered for his love

By STEVE KARNOWSKI, MARK VANCLEAVE and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — As the families of the two Catholic school students fatally shot while celebrating Mass at a Minneapolis church continue to wrestle with their grief, the father of the 8-year-old boy killed tearfully urged the community to remember his son for his love of family, fishing and cooking.

"Please remember Fletcher for the person he was and not the act that ended his life," Jesse Merkel said Thursday.

Fletcher Merkel and 10-year-old Harper Moyski were killed and more than a dozen of their schoolmates were wounded Wednesday when a shooter, identified as 23-year-old Robin Westman, fired 116 rifle rounds through the church's stained-glass windows.

Surveillance video captured the attack during the first week of classes at the Annunciation Catholic School and showed the shooter never entered the church and could not see the children while firing, said Minneapolis police Chief Brian O'Hara.

Harper's parents said they want to see their daughter's memory bring about changes when it comes to gun violence and mental health issues.

"Change is possible, and it is necessary — so that Harper's story does not become yet another in a long line of tragedies," Michael Moyski and Jackie Flavin said in a statement.

Fifteen children between the ages of 6 and 15 were injured, along with three parishioners in their 80s, according to city officials. Only one person — a child — was in critical condition.

O'Hara said Westman was armed with a rifle, shotgun and pistol, and died by suicide.

Authorities try to determine a motive

Acting U.S. Attorney Joe Thompson said videos and writings the shooter left behind show that Westman "expressed hate towards almost every group imaginable."

Investigators recovered hundreds of pieces of evidence from the church and three residences, the police chief said. They found more writings from the shooter, but no additional firearms or a clear motive for the attack on the church Westman once attended. Westman had a "deranged fascination" with mass killings, O'Hara said.

FBI Director Kash Patel said on X that the attack was an act of domestic terrorism motivated by hate-filled ideology, citing the shooter's statements against multiple religions and calls for violence against President Donald Trump.

Westman, who once attended the school and whose mother worked for the parish before retiring in 2021, left behind several videos and page upon page of writings describing a litany of grievances. One read: "I know this is wrong, but I can't seem to stop myself."

What appears to be a suicide note to family contains a confession of long-held plans to carry out a shooting and talk of being deeply depressed.

Videos of weapons and ammunition

On a YouTube channel, videos that police say may have been posted by the shooter show weapons and ammunition scrawled with "kill Donald Trump" and "Where is your God?" along with the names of past mass shooters.

The now-deleted videos also show the person filming the video pointing to two windows in what appears to be a drawing of the church. The person then stabs it with a long knife.

There also were hundreds of pages written in Cyrillic, a centuries-old script still used in Slavic countries. In one, Westman wrote, "When will it end?"

Lily Kletter, who graduated from Annunciation, recalled that Westman joined her class at some point in middle school and once hid in the bathroom to avoid going to Mass.

"I remember they had a crazy distaste for school, especially Annunciation, which I always thought was pretty interesting because their mom was on the parish board," she said.

Federal officials referred to Westman as transgender, and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey decried hatred being directed at "our transgender community." Westman's gender identity wasn't clear. In 2020, a judge approved a petition, signed by Westman's mother, asking for a name change from Robert to Robin, saying



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 25 of 57

the petitioner "identifies as a female and wants her name to reflect that identification."

No criminal record

There were no past arrests or anything in the shooter's background that would have prevented Westman from being able to legally purchase a firearm, investigators said Thursday.

In response to a request for any records of police contact with the shooter in the last decade, the Eagan Police Department sent two documents, both heavily redacted. The first from 2018 is listed as a mental health call and welfare check for a child with parents Mary Grace Westman and James Westman. The case was listed as closed and the narrative was redacted after the officer wrote she responded to the woman's address.

A second report from 2016 involving a criminal complaint was entirely redacted.

Police chief says officers rescued children who hid

The police chief said the first officer ran into the church four minutes after the initial 911 call and that more officers rendered first aid and rescued some of the children.

Tess Rada said her 8-year-old daughter hasn't said much about the shooting so she doesn't know exactly what she saw. Loud noises and sirens have bothered her since the attack, Rada said.

One of the children killed was her daughter's friend.

"It's kind of impossible," Rada said "to wrap your head around how to tell an 8-year-old that her friend has been killed."

## Peace efforts in limbo as Ukraine's capital mourns 23 dead after Russian attack

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The death toll in a major Russian missile and drone strike on the Ukrainian capital rose to 23, including four children, officials said Friday, as U.S.-led efforts to end the three-year war remain stuck in apparent limbo.

Authorities in the Kyiv region declared Friday an official day of mourning. Flags flew at half-staff and all entertainment events were canceled after Russia hammered Ukraine with almost 600 drones and more than 30 missiles overnight from Wednesday to Thursday, including rare strikes on downtown Kyiv.

Rescue workers pulled 17 people from the rubble after the Kyiv attack, among them four children, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said. The youngest victim was a 2-year-old girl. Some bodies have yet to be identified, and eight people remain unaccounted for, authorities said. More than 50 people were wounded.

"Thousands of personnel from the Interior Ministry's agencies and units worked at the strike sites in Kyiv, rotating every few hours," Klymenko said of the 30-hour rescue operation.

Efforts to stop the fighting with a ceasefire and end Europe's biggest conflict since World War II through a comprehensive peace settlement have made no progress despite intense diplomatic maneuvering.

European Union defense ministers expressed outrage Friday over Russia's continuing onslaught in Ukraine and vowed to exert more pressure on Moscow.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha said that, at the request of Ukraine, the U.N. Security Council was due to hold an emergency meeting Friday in response to the latest Russian aerial attack.

Putin set to attend summit in China with Iran, North Korea

U.S. President Donald Trump has bristled at Russia's stalling on an American proposal for direct peace talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Trump said a week ago he expected to decide on next steps in two weeks if direct talks aren't scheduled.

Trump complained last month that Russian President Vladimir Putin "talks nice and then he bombs everybody." But the latest attack on Kyiv drew no public condemnation from the Trump administration, with White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt noting that Ukraine has been striking Russian oil refineries.

Putin is due to attend a summit meeting in China from Sunday that will also include Iran and North Korea, countries which like Beijing have aided Russia's war effort, according to the United States.

From Sept. 9, world leaders are expected to attend the U.N. General Assembly, where Russia's invasion will likely be discussed.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 26 of 57

Senior Ukrainian officials in New York for talks with US

Meanwhile, Western officials are still working on security guarantees for Ukraine that aim to deter another Russian invasion if a peace deal is signed.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko and the head of the presidential office, Andriy Yermak, were in New York on Friday to discuss the possible guarantees and further cooperation, according to a Ukrainian official.

Zelenskyy noted Friday that Russia hasn't budged from its terms for stopping its invasion. Ukraine, on the other hand, has accepted an American proposal for a ceasefire and a meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy.

Russia has repeatedly raised objections about the peace proposals. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said Friday that security guarantees should be the result of peace negotiations rather than a prerequisite for talks to take place.

"The provision of security guarantees is not a condition, but rather the result of a peaceful settlement that eliminates the root causes of the crisis in Ukraine," Zakharova said. "That in turn will guarantee the security of our country," she said.

Zelenskyy wants more international pressure on Moscow

Zelenskyy urged countries to crank up the pressure on Russia's economy through sanctions and tariffs.

"Russia refused to stop the killing — they even said 'no' to President Trump. We're seeing negative signals from Russia regarding a possible leaders' summit," Zelenskyy said in a social media post. "Honestly, we think Putin is still interested only in continuing this war."

The Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank, noted that recent American presidents have shied away from taking a tougher line with Putin for fear of a potential nuclear conflict.

"Putin knows that Washington and its allies have more than enough capacity to reverse his gains in Ukraine, but it is nearly certain that he doubts the United States has the will to do so," the Atlantic Council said in an assessment this week.

It added that "the second Trump administration has repeatedly signaled that the United States has no vital interests at stake in this war."

## Israel declares Gaza's largest city a combat zone as the bodies of 2 hostages are recovered

By WAFSA SHURFA, SAM METZ and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel on Friday declared Gaza's largest city a dangerous combat zone and said it was in the "initial stages" of a planned offensive as grief spread over the return of two hostages' bodies.

As the military announced the resumption of around-the-clock fighting, aid groups and a church sheltering people said they would stay, refusing to abandon the hungry and displaced who depend on them.

The shift comes weeks after Israel first announced plans to widen its offensive in Gaza City, where hundreds of thousands of displaced people are sheltering and enduring famine.

The military said it suspended midday pauses to fighting, which had allowed food and aid supplies to enter from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., while also reporting it had recovered the bodies of two hostages and vowed its military offensive would return more.

Friday's announcement marks the latest escalation after Israel has reported strikes in some of the city's key neighborhoods and called up tens of thousands of reservists.

"We will intensify our strikes until we bring back all the kidnapped hostages and dismantle Hamas," Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee said.

Adraee, the Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesperson, has for days urged Palestinians in Gaza City to flee south, calling the evacuation "inevitable," even as aid groups warn of severe obstacles.

Some refuse to leave as Gaza City assault begins

The United Nations said Thursday that 23,000 people had evacuated over the past week, but many Palestinians in Gaza City have said they are exhausted after multiple displacements and questioned leaving

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 27 of 57

when there is nowhere safe and any journey is costly.

The Holy Family Church of Gaza City told The Associated Press on Friday that the roughly 440 people sheltering there would remain along with members of the clergy who would assist them.

Farid Jubran said the church had left the decision up to the people even though they had few recourse to insulate themselves from fighting.

"When we feel danger, people get closer to the walls or whatever, it's more protected," he said, noting the church had few specific defenses.

The UN's humanitarian agency said its staff and NGOs also would remain on the ground.

The group said in a statement that it was "deeply concerned" by the military's announcement and predicted the offensive would have a "horrific impact on people already exhausted, malnourished, bereaved, displaced, and deprived of basics needed for survival."

'Initial stages' of Gaza City offensive begin

Israel introduced "tactical pauses" in Gaza City, Deir al-Balah and Muwasi last month as it faced global condemnation over the humanitarian conditions in the besieged strip. As it suspended them on Friday in Gaza City, the military did not say whether they had notified residents or aid groups of the impending declaration ahead of the 11:30 a.m. announcement.

Norwegian Refugee Council, which coordinates a coalition of aid groups active in Gaza, said it had not received notification that Israel's "tactical pauses" would be suspended.

Israel has in the past called Gaza City a Hamas stronghold, with a network of tunnels that remain in use by militants after several previous large-scale raids.

The city also is home to some of the territory's critical infrastructure and health facilities. The United Nations said Thursday the besieged strip could lose half of its hospital bed capacity if Israel invades as planned.

The suspension of the pause also comes one week after the world's leading food security authority declared Gaza City was being gripped by famine after months of warnings.

Bodies of hostages recovered

Israel on Friday said its military had recovered the bodies of two hostages, including an Israeli man who was killed in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that sparked the war.

The bodies of Ilan Weiss of Kibbutz Be'eri and another unnamed hostage were returned to Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said.

"The campaign to return the hostages continues continuously. We will not rest or be silent until we return all of our hostages home — both the living and the dead," Netanyahu said.

Of the 251 hostages taken by Hamas-led militants almost 22 months ago, roughly 50 remain in Gaza including 20 that Israel believes to be alive.

Israel's Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which has organized large-scale protests demanding a ceasefire to return the hostages, mourned the losses and said Israeli leaders should prioritize a deal to return both the living and the dead.

"We call on the Israeli government to enter negotiations and stay at the table until every last hostage comes home. Time is running out for the hostages. Time is running out for the people of Israel who carry this burden," it said in a statement.

## Fed governor Cook to seek court order blocking her firing by Trump

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

A case that could provide the Trump administration with new and expansive power over the traditionally independent Federal Reserve will get its first court hearing Friday.

Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook has requested an emergency injunction to block President Donald Trump's attempt to fire her over allegations that she committed mortgage fraud when she purchased a home and condo in 2021. She was appointed to the Fed's board by former president Joe Biden in 2022.

If her firing is allowed to stand, it would likely erode the Fed's longstanding independence from day-to-day



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 28 of 57

politics. No president has ever fired a Fed governor in the agency's 112-year history. Economists broadly support Fed independence because it makes it easier for the central bank to take unpopular steps such as raising interest rates to combat inflation.

Cook has asked the court to issue an emergency order that would block Trump's firing of her and enable her to remain on the seven-member board of governors while her lawsuit seeking to overturn the firing makes its way through the courts. Many observers expect her case will end up at the U.S. Supreme Court.

The law governing the Fed says the president can't fire a governor just because they disagree over interest rate policy. Trump has repeatedly demanded that the Fed, led by Chair Jerome Powell, reduce its key interest rate, which is currently 4.3%. Yet the Fed has kept it unchanged for the last five meetings.

But the president may be able to fire a Fed governor "for cause," which has traditionally been interpreted to mean inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance. Cook's lawyers argue that it also refers only to conduct while in office. They also say that she was entitled to a hearing and an opportunity to rebut the charges.

"The unsubstantiated and unproven allegation that Governor Cook 'potentially' erred in filling out a mortgage form prior to her Senate confirmation — does not amount to 'cause,'" the lawsuit says.

Trump has moved to fire a number of leaders from a host of independent federal regulatory agencies, including at the National Transportation Safety Board, Surface Transportation Board, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Nuclear Regulatory Commission, as well as the Fed.

The Supreme Court declined to temporarily block the president from firing directors of some independent agencies earlier this year while those cases move through the courts. Legal experts say the high court this year has shown more deference to the president's removal powers than it has in the past.

Still, in a case in May, the Supreme Court appeared to single out the Fed as deserving of greater independence than other agencies, describing it as "a uniquely structured, quasi-private entity." As a result, it's harder to gauge how the Supreme Court could rule if this case lands in its lap.

As a governor, Cook votes on all the Fed's interest rate decisions and helps oversee bank regulation. The Fed has substantial power over the economy by raising or cutting its key interest rate, which can then influence a broad range of other borrowing costs, including mortgages, car loans, and business loans.

Bill Pulte, Trump's appointee to the agency that regulates mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, first leveled the accusation against Cook that she has committed mortgage fraud.

It's a charge he has also made against two of Trump's biggest political enemies, California Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff and New York Attorney General Letitia James, who has prosecuted Trump. Pulte has ignored a similar case involving Ken Paxton, the Texas attorney general who is friendly with Trump and is running for Senate in his state's Republican primary.

Cook's lawsuit responds by arguing that the claims are just a pretext "in order to effectuate her prompt removal and vacate a seat for President Trump to fill and forward his agenda to undermine the independence of the Federal Reserve."

If Trump can replace Cook, he may be able to gain a 4-3 majority on the Fed's governing board. Trump appointed two board members during his first term and has nominated a key White House economic adviser, Stephen Miran, to replace Adriana Kugler, another Fed governor who stepped down unexpectedly Aug. 1. Trump has said he will only appoint people to the Fed who will support lower rates.

## Trump suggests more US cities need National Guard but crime stats tell a different story

By ED WHITE and CHRISTOPHER L. KELLER Associated Press

President Donald Trump has threatened to deploy the National Guard to Chicago, New York, Seattle, Baltimore, San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, to fight what he says is runaway crime. Yet data shows most violent crime in those places and around the country has declined in recent years.

Homicides through the first six months of 2025 were down significantly compared to the same period in 2024, continuing a post-pandemic trend across the U.S.

Trump, who has already taken federal control of police in Washington, D.C., has maligned the six Democratic-run cities that all are in states that opposed him in 2024. But he hasn't threatened sending in the Guard to any major cities in Republican-leaning states.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 29 of 57

John Roman, a data expert who directs the Center on Public Safety & Justice at the University of Chicago, acknowledged violence in some urban neighborhoods has persisted for generations. But he said there's no U.S. city where there "is really a crisis."

"We're at a remarkable moment in crime in the United States," he said.

Public sees things differently

Trump might be tapping somewhat into public perception when he describes cities such as Chicago as a "killing field." The vast majority of Americans, 81%, see crime as a "major problem" in large cities, according to a survey released this week by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, though there is much less support, 32%, for federal control of police.

The public was reminded this week that shootings remain a frequent event in the U.S. In Minneapolis, which has seen homicides and most other crime fall, a shooter killed two children attending a Catholic school Mass Wednesday and wounded 17 a day after three people died in separate shootings elsewhere in the city.

Still, over time, the picture is encouraging, according to numbers from AH Datalytics, which tracks crimes across the country using law enforcement data for its Real-Time Crime Index.

Aggravated assaults — which includes nonfatal shootings — through June were down in Chicago, Portland, Seattle, Baltimore and San Francisco and were virtually unchanged in New York. Reports of rape were up in New York and Chicago during the first half of the year, but down in the other cities, including a 51% drop in San Francisco.

The crime index also showed that property crimes, such as theft, burglary and motor vehicle theft, were mostly down in those six cities in the first six months of 2025. Theft crimes rose from 2020 to 2024 in four of the six cities analyzed by AP.

Cities defend safety strategies

Trump exaggerated and misstated facts about crime in Washington when his administration took over the D.C. police department and flooded the capital with federal agents and the National Guard. He referred to Baltimore, 40 miles (64 kilometers) away, as a "hellhole" during a Cabinet meeting and has said he might "send in the 'troops.'"

"I'm not walking in Baltimore right now," Trump said.

Yet Baltimore has shown drops in major crime, according to the crime index. Homicides and rapes were down 25% or more in the first half of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. Homicides were down for three consecutive years through 2024 and were 35% lower when compared to 2018.

"Deploying the National Guard for municipal policing purposes is not sustainable, scalable, constitutional, or respectful," Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, a Democrat, said on social media site X.

Baltimore has found ways to reduce violence by offering mentorship, social services and job opportunities to young people likely to commit crimes, said Michael Scott, director of the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing at Arizona State University and a former police chief in Florida.

"That approach has resulted in more significant reductions in shootings and homicides than any other strategy I've seen in the over 50 years I've been in the field," Scott said.

Tales of different cities

Trump doesn't seem to disparage big cities in states that favor Republicans. Charlotte, North Carolina, had 105 homicides in 2024 compared to 88 in 2023. The rate of vehicle thefts per 100,000 people more than doubled there from 2020 through 2024. Indianapolis had a homicide rate of 19 per every 100,000 residents in 2024 — more than four times higher than New York's.

Amy Holt, 48, who recently moved to Charlotte from a gated community in northern Virginia, said someone tried to steal her husband's car in their new city. She also found bullets on the ground while walking with dogs.

There's no discussion about sending the National Guard to Charlotte. Holt believes most cities should be trusted to be in charge of public safety, adding that troops in uniforms would be "alarming" and "scary."

Democratic elected officials in cities targeted by Trump have publicly rejected suggestions that their residents need the National Guard. "Crime is at its lowest point in decades, visitors are coming back, and San Francisco is on the rise," Mayor Daniel Lurie said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 30 of 57

Experts question just how effective the National Guard would be and where troops would be deployed in cities.

"It's going to make residents think: Things must be much worse than I realize to have the military in my neighborhood. What's going on?" Scott said. "It's more likely to generate undue fear and apprehension than it will lead to perceptions of reassurance and safety."

## Wife of ousted president Yoon, and ally, indicted by special prosecutors

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The wife of South Korea's jailed ex-President Yoon Suk Yeol and his former prime minister were indicted Friday as part of investigations into his administration and his attempt to overcome opposition by declaring martial law.

Yoon set off South Korea's most serious political crisis in decades when he attempted to overcome an opposition-dominated legislature that blocked his agenda by abruptly declaring martial law. His decree lasted only hours but triggered months of turmoil that paralyzed politics, disrupted foreign policy and rattled the economy.

Yoon was impeached, then removed from office in April and rearrested last month after his conservative party lost a special election to choose his successor. The new government has appointed three special prosecutors to investigate both the period of martial law and suspicions of corruption that dogged Yoon through his term in office.

Yoon's wife, ex-prime minister becomes the latest figures to be indicted

A team led by Special Prosecutor Min Joong-ki said it charged Yoon's wife, Kim Keon Hee, with violating financial market and political funding laws and receiving bribes, about two weeks after she was arrested.

A separate team led by Special Prosecutor Cho Eun-suk said former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo was charged with abetting Yoon's imposition of martial law, which investigators say amounted to a rebellion, as well as falsifying and destroying official documents, and lying under oath.

Dozens of people have been arrested or investigated over Yoon's martial law debacle, corruption allegations involving his wife, and other controversies from his three years in office, including an alleged cover-up of a marine's drowning death during a 2023 flood rescue operation.

Key suspects include former Defense Minister Kim Yong Hyun, who has been accused of planning martial law with Yoon and sending troops to the National Assembly in an unsuccessful attempt to block lawmakers from voting to lift it. More than 60 people were separately indicted for rioting at a Seoul court which issued the warrant for Yoon's first arrest in January.

Assistant special prosecutor Park Ji-young told a televised briefing that Han was the highest official who could have blocked Yoon's attempt to impose martial law. Park said Han still played an "active" role in Yoon's martial law declaration by trying to get Yoon's decree passed through a Cabinet Council meeting as a way to give "procedural legitimacy" to it.

Han has maintained he conveyed to Yoon that he opposed his martial law plan.

Cho's team earlier requested the Seoul Central District Court to issue a warrant to arrest Han. But the court on Wednesday dismissed that request, saying it determined that there were little chances that Han would flee or destroy evidence.

Kim is the first former first lady to be jailed in Korea

While Yoon's self-inflicted downfall extended a long streak of South Korean presidencies ending badly, Kim is the first former first lady to be arrested and indicted.

Nearly every former South Korean president, or their family members and aides, have been mired in scandals near the end of their terms or after they left office.

The last two presidents elected from earlier iterations of Yoon's party — Park Geun-hye and Lee Myung-back — were both sentenced to lengthy prison terms over corruption charges before being pardoned and released.

Yoon's surprising but poorly-planned martial law imposition came amid an intense standoff with the liberals, but many critics have speculated Yoon's move was mainly likely an attempt to frustrate then an

opposition-led push to open an independent investigation into his wife's allegations.

Kim and Yoon are suspected of exerting undue influence on the conservative People Power Party to nominate a favored candidate in a 2022 legislative by-election, allegedly at the request of election broker Myung Tae-kyun. Myung is accused of conducting free opinion surveys for Yoon that used manipulated data, possibly helping him win the party's presidential primaries before his election as president in March 2022.

Before her arrest, Kim apologized for causing public concern but also hinted she would deny the allegations against her, portraying herself as "someone insignificant."

In a statement released through her lawyers on Friday, Kim didn't make specific comments about her charges, but said the media was reporting suspicions as though they were "confirmed fact" and that she plans to "quietly attend the trials."

Han, who was appointed prime minister, the country's No. 2 post, by Yoon, was South Korea's acting leader after Yoon was impeached in mid-December.

After Yoon was formally dismissed as president in a Constitutional Court decision, Han was supposed to continue to head the caretaker government until the June presidential election, but resigned to run for the election. He withdrew from the race after failing to win the People Power Party's nomination.

## **Oregon could join Hawaii in mandating pay-per-mile fees for EV owners as gas tax projections fall**

By CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

Oregon could become the second U.S. state to require electric vehicle owners to enroll in a pay-per-mile program as lawmakers begin a special session Friday to fill a \$300 million transportation budget hole that threatens basic services like snowplowing and road repairs.

Legislators failed earlier this year to approve a transportation funding package. Hundreds of state workers' jobs are in limbo, and the proposal for a road usage charge for EV drivers was left on the table.

Hawaii in 2023 was the first state to create a mandatory road usage charge program to make up for projected decreases in fuel tax revenue due to the growing number of electric, hybrid and fuel-efficient cars. Many other states have studied the concept, and Oregon, Utah and Virginia have voluntary programs.

The concept has promise as a long-term funding solution, experts say. Others worry about privacy concerns and discouraging people from buying EVs, which can help reduce transportation emissions.

"This is a pretty major change," said Liz Farmer, an analyst for The Pew Charitable Trusts' state fiscal policy team, noting "the challenge in enacting something that's dramatically different for most drivers."

Oregon's transportation woes

Oregon's transportation department says the budget shortfall stems from inflation, projected declines in gas tax revenue and other spending limits. Over the summer, it sent layoff notices to nearly 500 workers and announced plans to close a dozen road maintenance stations.

Democratic Gov. Tina Kotek paused those moves and called the special session to find a solution. Republican lawmakers say the department mismanaging its money is a main issue.

Kotek's proposal includes an EV road usage charge that is equivalent to 5% of the state's gas tax. It also includes raising the gas tax by 6 cents to 46 cents per gallon, among other fee increases.

The usage charge would phase in starting in 2027 for certain EVs and expand to include hybrids in 2028. Should the gas tax increase be approved, EV drivers either would pay about 2.3 cents per mile, or choose an annual flat fee of \$340. Drivers in the program wouldn't have to pay supplemental registration fees.

Drivers would have several options for reporting mileage to private contractors, including a smartphone app or the vehicle's telematics technology, said Scott Boardman, policy adviser for the transportation department who works on the state's decade-old voluntary road usage charge program.

As of May, there were over 84,000 EVs registered in Oregon, about 2% of the state's total vehicles, he said.

Hawaii launches program

Under Hawaii's program, which began phasing in last month, EV drivers can pay \$8 per 1,000 miles driven, capped at \$50, or an annual fee of \$50.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 32 of 57

In 2028, all EV drivers will be required to enroll in the pay-per-mile program, with odometers read at annual inspections. By 2033, the program is expected to expand to all light-duty vehicles.

Questions about privacy and fairness

In past surveys commissioned by Oregon's transportation department, respondents cited privacy, GPS devices and data security as concerns about road usage charges.

Oregon's voluntary program has sought to respond to such concerns by deleting mileage data 30 days after a payment is received, Boardman said. While plug-in GPS devices are an option in the program, transportation officials anticipate moving away from them because they're more expensive and can be removed, he added.

Still, not everyone has embraced a road usage charge. Arizona voters will decide next year whether to ban state and local governments from implementing a tax or fee based on miles traveled after the measure was referred to the ballot by the Republican-majority Legislature.

Many people don't realize that "both your vehicle and your cellphone capture immense amounts of data about your personal driving habits already," said Brett Morgan, Oregon transportation policy director for the nonprofit Climate Solutions.

Morgan added that road usage charges exceeding what drivers of internal combustion engines would pay in gas taxes could dissuade people from buying electric and hybrid cars. Already, federal tax incentives for EVs are set to expire under the tax and spending cut bill recently passed by the GOP-controlled Congress.

"We are definitely supportive of a road usage charge that has EVs paying their fair share, but they should not be paying extra or a penalty," Morgan said.

## New Orleans marks 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina with memorials and brass band parade

By JACK BROOK Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Twenty years after Hurricane Katrina crashed into the Gulf Coast, New Orleans is set to commemorate the anniversary Friday with memorials, performances and a parade to honor those who were affected.

Katrina, which was a Category 3 hurricane when it made landfall in southeast Louisiana on Aug. 29, 2005, remains the costliest U.S. storm on record, with damage estimated at upward of \$200 billion when adjusted for inflation, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. About 1,400 people died in five states.

The failure of the federal levee system inundated about 80% of the city in floodwaters that took weeks to drain. Thousands of people clung to rooftops to survive or waited for evacuation in the sweltering, under-provisioned Superdome stadium.

Survivors and city leaders are set to gather in the Lower Ninth Ward, a predominantly Black community where a levee breach led to devastating flooding that was exacerbated by a delayed government response.

The event, sponsored by Katrina Commemoration Inc. and Hip Hop Caucus, will feature prayers and prominent local artists like Dawn Richard and Mia X. Organizers say it is also intended to draw attention to the sinking city's poor infrastructure, gentrification and vulnerability to climate change.

Thousands of attendees are expected to join a brass band parade known as a second line. The beloved New Orleans tradition has its roots in African American jazz funerals, in which grieving family members march with the deceased alongside a band and trailed by a second line of dancing friends and bystanders.

A parade has been staged on every Katrina anniversary since local artists organized it in 2006 to help neighbors heal and unite the community.

"Second line allows everybody to come together," said the Rev. Lennox Yearwood, president of Hip Hop Caucus. "We're still here, and despite the storm, people have been strong and very powerful and have come together each and every year to continue to be there for one another."

Other commemorations include a wreath-laying ceremony at a memorial for dozens of unidentified storm victims and a minute of silence, to be observed at 11:20 a.m.

There are also museum exhibitions, documentary screenings and city-organized discussions Saturday on the future of New Orleans' culture, infrastructure and ongoing recovery.

City leaders are pushing for the anniversary to become a state holiday.

Katrina's impact still felt

The city's population, nearly half a million before Katrina, is now 384,000 after displaced New Orleanians scattered across the nation. Many ended up in Atlanta, Dallas and Houston.

In the aftermath, the levee system was rebuilt, public schools were privatized, most public housing projects were demolished and a hospital was shuttered. About 134,000 housing units were damaged by Katrina, according to The Data Center, a nonprofit research agency.

The storm had a disproportionate impact on the city's Black residents. While New Orleans remains a majority Black city, tens of thousands of Black residents were unable to return after Katrina. A botched and racially biased federal loan program for home rebuilding, coupled with a shortage of affordable housing, have made it harder for former residents to come back.

"(Katrina) wasn't just a New Orleans moment," Yearwood said. "It was a national moment, and it's a time for reflection and commitment to a better way of how we're handling these issues moving forward."

## Police say Minneapolis church shooter was filled with hatred and admired mass killers

By STEVE KARNOWSKI, MARK VANCLEAVE and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The shooter who killed two Catholic school students and wounded more than a dozen youngsters sitting in the pews of a Minneapolis church once attended the same school and was "obsessed" with the idea of killing children, authorities said Thursday.

The shooter, identified as 23-year-old Robin Westman, fired 116 rifle rounds through stained-glass windows while the children celebrated Mass during the first week of classes at the Annunciation Catholic School, said Minneapolis police Chief Brian O'Hara.

"It is very clear that this shooter had the intention to terrorize those innocent children," O'Hara said.

Acting U.S. Attorney Joe Thompson said videos and writings the shooter left behind show that the shooter "expressed hate towards almost every group imaginable."

The only group Westman did not hate was "mass murderers," Thompson said. "In short, the shooter appeared to hate all of us."

Investigators recovered hundreds of pieces of evidence from the church and three residences, the police chief said. They found more writings from the suspect, but no additional firearms or a clear motive for the attack on the church the shooter once attended. Westman had a "deranged fascination" with mass killings, O'Hara said.

"No evidence will ever be able to make sense of such an unthinkable tragedy," he said.

Surveillance video captured the attack and showed the shooter never entered the church and could not see the children while firing through windows lined up with the pews, the police chief said.

Grieving families speak of painful loss

Family members described one of the victims, 8-year-old Fletcher Merkel, as a boy who loved his family, fishing, cooking, and any sport he was allowed to play.

"We will never be allowed to hold him, talk to him, play with him and watch him grow into the wonderful young man he was on the path to becoming," his father, Jesse, said while tearfully reading a statement outside the church on Thursday.

The parents of the other victim, 10-year-old Harper Moyski, said in a statement that she was a bright and joyful child.

"Our hearts are broken not only as parents, but also for Harper's sister, who adored her big sister and is grieving an unimaginable loss," said Michael Moyski and Jackie Flavin. "As a family, we are shattered, and words cannot capture the depth of our pain."

They said they hope her memory helps drive leaders "to take meaningful steps to address gun violence and the mental health crisis in this country."

The Hennepin County Medical Examiner's office said they both died of gunshot wounds.

City officials on Thursday increased to 15 the number of injured children, who are ages 6 to 15. Three

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 34 of 57

parishioners in their 80s also were injured. Only one person — a child — was in critical condition.

Westman, whose mother worked for the parish before retiring in 2021, left behind several videos and page upon page of writings describing a litany of grievances. One read: "I know this is wrong, but I can't seem to stop myself."

O'Hara said Westman was armed with a rifle, shotgun and pistol, and died by suicide.

On a YouTube channel, videos that police say may have been posted by the shooter show weapons and ammunition, and list the names of mass shooters. What appears to be a suicide note to family contains a confession of long-held plans to carry out a shooting and talk of being deeply depressed.

Student shielded by a friend who was shot

Rev. Dennis Zehren, who was inside the church with the nearly 200 children, said the responsorial psalm — which spoke of light in the darkness — had almost ended when he heard someone yell, "Down down, everybody down," and gunshots rang out.

Fifth-grader Weston Halsne said he ducked for the pews, covering his head, shielded by a friend who was on top of him. His friend was hit, he said.

"I was super scared for him, but I think now he's OK," the 10-year-old said.

Authorities try to determine a motive

FBI Director Kash Patel said on X that the attack was an act of domestic terrorism motivated by hate-filled ideology, citing the shooter's statements against multiple religions and calls for violence against President Donald Trump.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Thursday sent state law enforcement officers to schools and churches in Minneapolis, saying no child should go to school worried about losing a classmate or gunshots erupting during prayer.

On a YouTube channel titled Robin W, the person filming the video points to two windows in what appears to be a drawing of the church, then stabs it with a long knife.

The now-deleted videos also show weapons and ammunition, scrawled with "kill Donald Trump" and "Where is your God?" along with the names of past mass shooters.

There also were hundreds of pages written in Cyrillic, a centuries-old script still used in Slavic countries. In one, Westman wrote, "When will it end?"

Lily Kletter, who graduated from Annunciation, recalled that Westman joined her class at some point in middle school and once hid in the bathroom to avoid going to Mass.

"I remember they had a crazy distaste for school, especially Annunciation, which I always thought was pretty interesting because their mom was on the parish board," she said.

Federal officials referred to Westman as transgender, and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey decried hatred being directed at "our transgender community." Westman's gender identity wasn't clear. In 2020, a judge approved a petition, signed by Westman's mother, asking for a name change from Robert to Robin, saying the petitioner "identifies as a female and wants her name to reflect that identification."

No criminal record

There were no past arrests or anything in the shooter's background that would have prevented Westman from being able to legally purchase a firearm, investigators said Thursday.

In response to a request for any records of police contact with the shooter in the last decade, the Eagan Police Department sent two documents, both heavily redacted. The first from 2018 is listed as a mental health call and welfare check for a child with parents Mary Grace Westman and James Westman. The case was listed as closed and the narrative was redacted after the officer wrote she responded to the woman's address.

A second report from 2016 involving a criminal complaint was entirely redacted.

Police chief says officers rescued children who hid

The police chief said the first officer ran into the church four minutes after the initial 911 call and that more officers rendered first aid and rescued some of the children.

Annunciation's principal Matt DeBoer said teachers and children alike responded heroically.

"Children were ducked down. Adults were protecting children. Older children were protecting younger children," he said.

Vincent Francoual said his 11-year-old daughter, Chloe, survived by running downstairs and hiding in a

room with a table pushed against the door. He said she is struggling to communicate clearly about the traumatizing scene and that she thought she was going to die.

Tess Rada said her 8-year-old daughter also hasn't said much about the shooting so she too doesn't know exactly what she saw. Loud noises and sirens have bothered her since the attack, Rada said.

One of the children killed was her daughter's friend.

"It's kind of impossible," Rada said "to wrap your head around how to tell an 8-year-old that her friend has been killed."

## Parents of students killed in Minneapolis church shooting share emotional pleas

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press/Report For America

The parents of the two schoolchildren fatally shot in a Minneapolis church spoke out for the first time on Thursday afternoon, with some imploring the shaken community to address the root causes of shootings that target schools.

Fletcher Merkel, 8, and Harper Moyski, 10, were killed on Wednesday morning when a shooter opened fire at a Mass that hundreds of students at Annunciation Catholic School attended.

City officials increased to 15 the number of injured children, who are ages 6 to 15. Three parishioners in their 80s also were injured. Only one person — a child — was in critical condition.

### A call to action

In a statement released Thursday, Moyski's parents described Harper as "a bright, joyful, and deeply loved 10-year-old" who was "adored" by her younger sister.

"As a family, we are shattered, and words cannot capture the depth of our pain," the statement read.

The 10-year-old's parents said that they were focused on healing in the wake of the shooting, but added that they hoped Harper's memory would fuel action that might prevent shootings going forward.

"No family should ever have to endure this kind of pain," Harper's parents wrote. "We urge our leaders and communities to take meaningful steps to address gun violence and the mental health crisis in this country."

### Remembered by his life, not death

Fletcher Merkel's father, Jesse Merkel, tearfully read a statement on Thursday outside of the church where his son was killed, saying the eight-year-old loved his family and friends and enjoyed fishing, cooking and playing any sport.

Because of the shooter's actions, Merkel said, "we will never be allowed to hold him, talk to him, play with him and watch him grow into the wonderful young man he was on the path to becoming."

"Please remember Fletcher for the person he was and not the act that ended his life," Merkel said.

Even as Merkel mourned the loss of his son, he said he was thankful for the "swift and heroic actions" of adults and students inside the church without whom "this could have been a tragedy of many magnitudes more."

### Acts of heroism

Minneapolis doctors and law enforcement echoed Merkel's sentiment throughout the day on Thursday, describing the grueling escape children and teachers endured, as well as the heroic rescue efforts that saved countless lives.

When one of the students who was injured during the shooting went in for a CT scan on Wednesday, she was visibly distressed.

Without hesitation, a nurse at the hospital who was not assigned to respond to the mass casualty event sat with the young girl throughout the procedure — even though safety protocols stipulate that medical staff should clear the room to prevent radiation exposure.

The nurse "put a little lead on, stayed there and held her hand and held her hair while she went through scanners so she didn't have to go through alone," Dr. Jon Gayken, one of the head trauma surgeons at Hennepin County Medical Center, said.

Several medical first responders — many of whom were stationed just blocks away from the church —



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 36 of 57

have children enrolled at the Catholic school, officials announced on Thursday.

"Those are the types of things we witnessed yesterday," Gayken said.

Despite the unimaginable tragedy of the day, Gayken said, there were far less casualties than there could have been.

Children follow active shooter training

Marty Scheerer, the chief of Hennepin County Emergency Medical Services, credited "unrecognized heroes," like the children and teachers in the church who followed their active shooter safety trainings, despite the chaotic and incessant hail of gunfire.

Children "protecting other children" often "laid on the floor and covered each other up" while teachers ushered kids to safety.

"That was key," Scheerer said.

The first police officer entered the church "without hesitation" just minutes after the 911 call reported the shooting, Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara said.

Parishioners told O'Hara that it was "the first time that the children and others there had any sense that they might be safe and survive."

When officers entered the church, they encountered children "that had blood on them from not because they were injured, but because of blood pressure from other kids," O'Hara said at a separate news conference later in the day.

"There's going to be countless lessons of bravery, from young children all the way up to elders," O'Hara said.

## UN food agency chief says women and children are starving in Gaza and pressed Netanyahu on aid

By SAM MEDNICK and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — The head of the U.N. food agency said Thursday that it was "very evident" during her visit to Gaza this week that there isn't enough food in the Palestinian territory and that she spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the urgent need for more aid.

The world's leading authority on food crises said last week the Gaza Strip's largest city is gripped by famine, and that it was likely to spread across the territory without a ceasefire and an end to restrictions on humanitarian aid.

Cindy McCain, the World Food Program's executive director, told The Associated Press that starvation was underway in Gaza.

"I personally met mothers and children who were starving in Gaza," she said. "It is real and it is happening now,"

Netanyahu, she said, was "obviously very concerned that people aren't getting enough food." In the past, he has denied that there is famine in Gaza and said the claims about starvation are a propaganda campaign launched by Hamas.

"We agreed that we must immediately redouble our efforts to get more humanitarian aid in. Access and security for our convoys is critical," McCain said.

Pressure on Israel

The famine declaration has increased international pressure on Israel, which has been fighting Hamas since the militant group's deadly Oct. 7, 2023, attack. Israel now says it plans to seize Gaza City and other Hamas strongholds, and there have been no public signs of progress on recent efforts for a ceasefire.

Israel rejects the declaration — issued by the authority on food crises known as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC — and on Wednesday asked for a formal retraction.

The Israeli military agency in charge of transferring aid to the territory, known as COGAT, said Thursday that more than 300 humanitarian aid trucks enter Gaza every day, most of them carrying food.

But aid groups say it's not nearly enough after 22 months of fighting, the blockade of aid earlier this year and the collapse of food production in Gaza. McCain spent most of Tuesday on a tour of Gaza speaking to displaced families living in tents and facing hunger.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 37 of 57

"I got to meet a family who had come from the North, there were 11 of them, and they'd come from the North and they literally had not had enough food at all and they still don't have enough food," she said.

McCain said her program is getting more food in to Gaza, but said a surge in food supplies was needed.

'A present-day catastrophe'

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said famine in Gaza is "a present-day catastrophe" and the start of expanded Israeli military operations present "a new and dangerous phase."

He said it will have "devastating consequences" and force hundreds of thousands of traumatized and exhausted civilians to flee again.

"Gaza is piled with rubble, piled with bodies, and piled with examples of what may be serious violations of international law," he said.

Mediators Egypt and Qatar were still waiting for Israel's response to a 60-day ceasefire proposal in Gaza, which has been accepted by Hamas, Qatari foreign minister said Thursday.

The proposal, which Egyptian and Qatari mediators delivered to Israel earlier this month, calls for a 60-day ceasefire in exchange for the release of 10 living hostages and the handover of bodies of 18 dead ones, according to Arab mediators. It also calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces to a buffer zone on Gaza.

Exchanges with Yemen's Houthi rebels

Also Thursday, Israeli airstrikes hit the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, in response to attacks by the Arab country's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who have launched missiles and drones toward Israel and targeted ships in the Red Sea for over 22 months. The Houthis say the attacks are in solidarity with Palestinians.

Nearly 63,000 people have been killed in Gaza since the war began, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza. The agency reported that 71 people were killed by Israeli strikes over the past day, while scores more were injured. While the ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants, it says more than half of the dead were women and children.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The United Nations and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on war casualties. Israel disputes its figures but has not provided its own.

Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people and killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. Most of the hostages have been released in ceasefires or other deals. Of the 50 remaining in Gaza, Israel believes around 20 are alive.

The U.N. chief said Israel, as the occupying power, has obligations to protect civilians, facilitate far greater humanitarian access and meet their essential needs.

The systematic dismantling of systems that provide food water and healthcare, Guterres said, "are the result of deliberate decisions that defy basic humanity."

## Micah Parsons traded to the Green Bay Packers from the Cowboys after contract dispute

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

Micah Parsons is headed to the Green Bay Packers after a blockbuster trade on Thursday, leaving the Dallas Cowboys following a lengthy contract dispute.

The Packers gave up first-round picks in 2026 and 2027 along with three-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle Kenny Clark to get the two-time All-Pro edge rusher, who agreed to a contract extension with Green Bay.

A person with knowledge of the details told The Associated Press the Packers are giving Parsons a record-setting \$188 million, four-year contract that includes \$136 million guaranteed. Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said he offered Parsons more guaranteed money. The person, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the terms weren't announced, said that wasn't accurate.

Parsons becomes the highest-paid non-quarterback in NFL history.

"I never wanted this chapter to end, but not everything was in my control," Parsons wrote in a statement he posted on X. "My heart has always been here, and still is. Through it all, I never made any demands. I never asked for anything more than fairness. I only asked that the person I trust to negotiate my contract be part of the process."

Jones declined to discuss Parsons' deal with agent David Mulugheta, who represents Parsons along with

# Groton Daily Independent

**Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 38 of 57**

Andre Odom for Athletes First. Instead, Jones spoke directly to Parsons and insisted they had agreed on the parameters of a new contract.

"I really like Micah. ... He's a great player," Jones said. "There's no question I could've signed him in April. We all know to have agreements, all parties have to agree. I did make Micah an offer. It wasn't acceptable and I honor the fact that it wasn't done the way he wanted to do it through an agent. There's not an ounce of vindictiveness. There's no bad feelings on my part."

Jones, who is also the team's general manager, insisted he made a deal that helps the team win now, citing the need to improve the run defense.

"We did think it was in the best interest of our organization not only for the future but for this season as well," Jones said. "We gained a Pro Bowl player in an area we had big concerns in, on the inside of our defense."

With Parsons, the Cowboys were 29th against the run last season and never higher than 16th. Dallas was 1-3 in the playoffs with Parsons, who had one sack in those four games — the last one on Tom Brady.

"This gives us a better chance to be a better team than we have been the last several years since Micah has been here," Jones said. "Not any negative on Micah, but we're trying to get better, to stop the run and stay in the hunt."

The Packers and Cowboys face off in Week 4 in Dallas.

The 26-year-old Parsons has 52 1/2 sacks, recording at least 12 in each of his four seasons while making the Pro Bowl each year.

Parsons provides a huge boost for a franchise that has reached the playoffs five of the past six years but hasn't made it to the NFL championship game since Aaron Rodgers led them to their fourth Super Bowl title 15 years ago.

Parsons bolsters a defense that was inconsistent at getting to opposing quarterbacks last season, when the Packers went 11-7 and lost to Philadelphia in the NFC wild-card round. The Packers had 45 sacks last season to tie for eighth place in the NFL, but more than half of those sacks came in just four games.

In seven of their 17 games, the Packers had no more than one sack.

Green Bay ranked 16th in pressure rate, which calculates the number of hurries, knockdowns and sacks for each team divided by an opponent's drop-back attempts.

Now, the Packers add one of the game's elite pass rushers while the Cowboys lose their best player because of a power struggle with Jones.

Even with Parsons, who missed four games because of injury last season, Dallas finished 28th in defense and the team went 7-10. The Cowboys have a healthy Dak Prescott returning but this is a devastating blow for the defense.

The Packers haven't had anyone get 12 sacks in a season since Za'Darius Smith had 12½ in 2020.

Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst spoke Wednesday about the philosophy of taking a "big swing" to land a superstar.

"I think every opportunity that's out there to help your football team, we've always taken a look at try to see how it affects us right now, how does it affect us in the future and make the best decision we can," Gutekunst said. "Sometimes we've been right, sometimes we're wrong. Sometimes we've taken risks that really worked out for us. Sometimes it didn't."

"Sometimes we didn't take risks, and we look back and wish we would have and sometimes, you know, as (former general manager) Ted (Thompson) used to say, you know, God helps those that can't help themselves a little bit sometimes. So sometimes the best deals you make are the ones you don't, you know. And so you just kind of, I think you weigh everything, and you weigh what is in the moment and what is in the future as well."

The Packers, who once signed Reggie White in free agency, just took their biggest swing in decades. White helped a Green Bay team led by Brett Favre win a Super Bowl and reach another on his way to the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

## New trial ordered for 3 Memphis ex-officers in connection with the beating death of Tyre Nichols

By ADRIAN SAINZ and JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — A judge ordered a new trial Thursday for three former Memphis police officers who were convicted of federal charges in the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols, after defense lawyers argued that another judge who presided over their trial was biased in his belief that at least one of the men was in a gang.

U.S. District Judge Sheryl H. Lipman issued the order for a new trial for Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith, who were found guilty in October 2024 of obstruction of justice through witness tampering.

The ruling marks the latest setback for prosecutors in a case that shocked the country when videos were released showing officers violently kicking and punching Nichols during a traffic stop. The officers who have been granted a new trial in the federal case were acquitted of state murder charges in May. And last year federal prosecutors were unable to secure convictions on the most severe counts against Bean and Smith.

Two other officers charged, Emmitt Martin and Desmond Mills Jr., pleaded guilty before the federal trial. Lipman took over the case in June after U.S. District Judge Mark S. Norris, who presided over the case and the trial, recused himself days before the sentencings for the five officers.

In a statement shared by his judicial office Thursday, Norris said, "Because of the code of judicial conduct, I cannot make a statement on this matter."

**New trial based on judge's comments**

In her order, Lipman cited a notice filed by the U.S. Attorney's Office saying Norris expressed a theory that at least one of the officers was in a gang.

The notice discussed an incident in which Norris' law clerk was shot during a car theft days after the trial ended. The clerk was staying at the home of another law clerk who had previously worked for Norris on the Nichols case, it said.

The notice also said police investigators believed some juveniles committed the shooting; that Norris wanted those responsible held accountable; and that he "evidenced reasonable frustration with the police investigation."

Norris met with the U.S. Attorney's Office and an FBI agent, who explained why no federal charges would be brought in the clerk's shooting.

Norris indicated that he believed at least one of the former officers was in a gang and that it was responsible for the shooting, the notice said. It also said the U.S. Attorney stated that Norris told those present that the clerk "had been seen by one or more of the Defendants during the trial."

An assistant U.S. attorney who attended the May 30 meeting also said she remembered that Norris told her he could not meet with police to give a statement because the department was "infiltrated to the top with gang members," the notice said.

**Allegations of bias**

Bean, Haley, and Smith filed motions seeking a new trial, arguing that Norris was biased and violated their rights to due process by presiding over the case.

Smith's lawyer said there was no "suggestion or one hint in the federal discovery process or the federal trial that any defendant or any member of the Memphis Police Department was in any way affiliated with an illegal street gang either through membership or relationship."

Haley's lawyer wrote that "Judge Norris made the gang statements on at least two occasions, demonstrating that it is a firmly held belief, not an off-hand remark."

Lipman also unsealed several filings made before and after Norris recused himself. In one of them, federal prosecutors argued that there was no evidence that he "harbored any bias before or during trial, let alone the type of extreme bias that would warrant the extraordinary remedy of a new trial."

Lipman found that while a review showed Norris' decisions throughout the trial were "sound, fair, and grounded firmly in the law," a new trial is necessary "because the risk of bias here is too high to be constitutionally tolerable."

A date for the retrial has not been set. Lipman ordered lawyers to submit positions on what charges they believe need to be tried.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 40 of 57

Smith's attorney, Martin Zummach, said Lipman "did the right thing." Bean's lawyer declined to comment, and Haley's attorney did not immediately respond to a request. Memphis police also declined to comment. Mixed verdict in 2024 trial

Bean, Haley and Smith were found guilty of trying to cover up the beating by failing to say that they or their colleagues punched and kicked Nichols and broke police department rules when they did not include complete and accurate statements about what type of force they used.

Bean and Smith were acquitted of more serious civil rights charges, however.

Haley was found guilty of violating Nichols' civil rights by causing bodily injury and showing deliberate indifference to medical needs and also conspiracy to tamper with witnesses.

Bean, Haley and Smith were acquitted in May of all state charges, including second-degree murder. Haley is in federal custody, but Bean and Smith are on limited release.

Martin and Mills pleaded guilty in federal court last year to violating Nichols' civil rights by causing death and conspiracy to witness tamper. They did not stand trial in federal court with their former colleagues.

Martin and Mills also avoided a state court trial after reaching agreements to plead guilty.

The officers were part of a crime suppression team called the Scorpion Unit that was disbanded weeks after Nichols died. The team targeted illegal drugs, guns and violent offenders, and it sometimes used force against unarmed people.

The Tyre Nichols case

On Jan. 7, 2023, officers yanked Nichols from his car and then pepper-sprayed and hit the 29-year-old Black man with a Taser. Nichols fled, and when the five officers, who also are Black, caught up with him, they punched, kicked and hit him with a police baton. Nichols called out for his mother during the beating, which took place steps from his home.

He died three days later.

Video of the beating captured by a police pole camera also showed the officers milling about, talking and laughing as Nichols struggled with his injuries.

It prompted intense scrutiny of police in Memphis, nationwide protests and renewed calls for police reform.

Norris is a former Republican state senator who was confirmed as a U.S. district judge in West Tennessee in October 2018 after being nominated by President Donald Trump.

## Trump administration asks military base near Chicago for support on immigration operations

By JOHN O'CONNOR and SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The Trump administration asked a military base outside of Chicago for support on immigration operations this week, offering a clue of what an expanded law enforcement crackdown might look like in the nation's third-largest city.

The Department of Homeland Security asked Naval Station Great Lakes for "limited support in the form of facilities, infrastructure, and other logistical needs to support DHS operations," Matt Mogle, spokesperson for the base 35 miles (56 kilometers) north of Chicago, said Wednesday.

The request came weeks after the Republican administration deployed National Guard troops to Washington, D.C., to target crime, immigration and homelessness, and two months after it sent troops to Los Angeles.

Although details of the administration's plans for Chicago are scarce, city leaders said Thursday that they are preparing for multiple possible scenarios, from troops assisting in immigration arrests to patrolling in the streets.

"We don't want to raise any fears," Police Superintendent Larry Snelling told reporters. "We don't want to create any speculation around what's going on."

Chicago leaders want more communication

City leaders said Thursday that the White House hadn't contacted them about its plans, and a spokesman for the Illinois National Guard said the base hadn't received requests regarding a Chicago mobilization.

Mogle, the base spokesman, said no decisions had been made on the request, and that the base hadn't received an official request to support a National Guard deployment. The Chicago Sun-Times first reported

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 41 of 57

on the request to the Navy base.

DHS did not confirm whether it had asked to use the base. But it said in a statement Thursday that it was working to make "our streets and cities safe again."

Mayor Brandon Johnson and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker have pushed back against a possible mobilization, saying crime has fallen in Chicago and that the city doesn't want or need the military's help. They are planning to sue.

City leaders said workers were circulating know-your-rights cards in neighborhoods with heavy immigrant populations, which offer tips on what to do in case of an encounter with an immigration agent. Other workers were checking in on Chicago's homeless encampments and providing information about shelters since Trump has pushed to move homeless people far from Washington.

Snelling asked for more communication on plans involving law enforcement.

"To make sure that we're not stoking fears through neighborhoods and we don't have people running scared and it doesn't create chaos on our streets, we're willing to have those conversations," Snelling said.

Many Chicagoans are on edge about the rumored deployment. Former President Barack Obama, who is from Chicago, weighed in Thursday, posting on X: "The erosion of basic principles like due process and the expanding use of our military on domestic soil puts the liberties of all Americans at risk, and should concern Democrats and Republicans alike."

Former President Joe Biden's transportation secretary, Pete Buttigieg, a former U.S. Naval Reserve intelligence officer who trained at Great Lakes, said in a post on X that he never imagined the station could be used "for surveillance and enforcement activity on American soil. Our military was not set up to cater to the whims of a would-be American dictator."

The politics of a deployment

Pritzker, a potential 2028 Democratic presidential contender, has spent days showcasing parts of the city where crime has fallen and said there is no emergency in Chicago requiring military intervention. He told The Associated Press that the presence of troops could worsen the situation.

Speaking to reporters Thursday, he suggested that it's a political ploy, not a law enforcement strategy, that Trump will pull out during next year's elections.

"This is a part of his plan to do something really nefarious, which is to interfere with elections in 2026," Pritzker said. "He wants to have troops on the ground to stop people from voting, to intimidate people from going to the voting booth."

Trump has often singled out Chicago, likening it to a war zone and "hellhole." Chicago's long-held status as a so-called sanctuary city has irked the Trump administration, which used Chicago to kick off a nationwide crackdown on immigration weeks after Trump's second inauguration.

Pritzker and Trump, who has zeroed-in on Democrat-led cities, have traded barbs over the issue for days.

"The people are desperate for me to STOP THE CRIME, something the Democrats aren't capable of doing," Trump posted Thursday on his Truth Social network.

In recent days, the administration has been pointing out recent shootings in the city, including at Thursday's White House press briefing when press secretary Karoline Leavitt listed crime statistics.

"This is JB Pritzker's legacy, by the way," she said.

Crime in Chicago

Violent crime has dropped significantly in Chicago in recent years, but it remains a persistent problem in parts of the city.

Chicago had a homicide rate of 21.7 per 100,000 residents in 2024, according to analysis of federal data by the Rochester Institute of Technology. Seven other major U.S. cities -- St. Louis, New Orleans, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Indianapolis and Richmond, Virginia -- had higher rates than Chicago.

Still, Chicago reported 573 homicides in 2024, the most of any U.S. city that year. At the same time, violent crime dropped significantly in the first half of this year, representing the steepest decline in over a decade, according to city data. In the first six months of 2025, total violent crime dropped by more than 22% compared with the first half of 2024.

In Illinois there are roughly 10,000 members of the Illinois Army National Guard and 3,000 Air National Guard. They routinely mobilize at armories around the state, including nearly a dozen in Chicago and its suburbs. But they are state-owned property and if the federal government mobilizes the Guard without the

governor's blessing, the armories aren't available for use.

## **CDC gets new acting director as leadership turmoil leaves agency reeling**

By MIKE STOBBE, AMANDA SEITZ and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The nation's top public health agency was left reeling Thursday as the White House worked to expel the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director and replace her with Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. 's current deputy.

The turmoil triggered rare bipartisan alarm as Kennedy tries to advance anti-vaccine policies that are contradicted by decades of scientific research.

Two administration officials said Jim O'Neill, the second-in-command at the Department of Health and Human Services, would supplant Susan Monarez, a longtime government scientist. O'Neill, a former investment executive who also served at the federal health department under President George W. Bush, does not have a medical background. The officials, who confirmed the change, requested anonymity to discuss personnel decisions before a public announcement.

A flashpoint is expected in the coming weeks as a key advisory committee, which Kennedy has reshaped with vaccine skeptics, is expected to issue new recommendations on immunizations. The panel is scheduled to review standard childhood shots for measles, hepatitis and other diseases.

Two Republican senators called for congressional oversight and some Democrats said Kennedy should be fired. He is scheduled to testify on Capitol Hill on Sept. 4.

No explanation given for CDC director's ouster

Kennedy has not explained the decision to oust Monarez less than a month after she was sworn in, but he warned that more turnover may be ahead.

"There's a lot of trouble at the CDC and it's going to require getting rid of some people over the long term, in order for us to change the institutional culture," Kennedy said at a news conference in Texas.

The White House has only said that Monarez was "not aligned with" President Donald Trump's agenda.

Monarez's lawyers said she refused "to rubber-stamp unscientific, reckless directives and fire dedicated health experts." She is fighting her dismissal, saying the decision must come directly from Trump, who nominated her in March. The president has not said anything publicly about the matter.

It's unclear if O'Neill, who was just sworn in as HHS' deputy secretary, will remain in both roles as acting CDC director.

Monarez tried to block political interference, departing CDC officials say

The saga began Wednesday night with the administration's announcement that Monarez would no longer lead the CDC. In response, three officials — Dr. Debra Houry, Dr. Demetre Daskalakis and Dr. Daniel Jernigan — resigned from senior roles at the agency.

The officials returned to the office Thursday to collect their belongings, and hundreds of supporters gathered to applaud them as they left the Atlanta campus. There were bouquets of flowers, cheers and chants of "USA not RFK."

Daskalakis, who resigned as head of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said, "I fear that children will be hurt by poor decision making around vaccines."

"You cannot dismantle public health and expect it to still work," he said.

Jernigan stepped down as director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases and Houry quit her post as the agency's deputy director and chief medical officer.

Houry told The Associated Press that Monarez had tried to guard against political meddling in scientific research and health recommendations.

"We were going to see if she was able to weather the storm. And when she was not, we were done," Houry said.

Dr. Richard Besser, a former CDC acting director, said Monarez told him that she had refused orders to fire her management team. He also said she refused to automatically sign off on any recommendations from Kennedy's handpicked vaccine advisers.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 43 of 57**

"Dr. Monarez was one of the last lines of defense against this administration's dangerous agenda," said Besser, now president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which helps support The Associated Press Health and Science Department.

Health agencies have faced turmoil since Trump took office

The CDC has long been the target of controversy, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the agency struggled to balance politics and public health.

The strife only increased this year with Kennedy elevating unscientific ideas at the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the CDC, while pushing waves of layoffs.

Earlier this month, a police officer was killed when a man opened fire at the agency's headquarters because of anger over COVID-19 vaccines, which have been the subject of falsehoods and conspiracy theories. A memorial to the officer remains outside the building, close to where staff members gathered Thursday.

Monarez stands to become the shortest-serving director since the CDC was founded in 1946, exacerbating a leadership vacuum that has persisted since Trump took office. He initially chose David Weldon, a former Florida congressman who is a doctor and vaccine skeptic, but yanked the nomination in March.

Monarez was tapped next to lead the \$9.2 billion agency while serving as its interim director. However, questions immediately emerged within Kennedy's circle about her loyalty to the "Make America Healthy Again" movement, especially given her previous support of the COVID-19 vaccines that Kennedy has routinely criticized.

Vaccine panel changes prompt demands for new oversight

Kennedy rarely mentioned Monarez by name in the way he did other health agency leaders such as Mehmet Oz of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services or Marty Makary of the Food and Drug Administration.

One issue has been Kennedy's handling of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, a group of outside experts who make recommendations to the CDC director on how to use vaccines. The recommendations are then adopted by doctors, school systems, health insurers and others.

The panel is expected to meet next month, and Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said any recommendations issued then will be "lacking legitimacy."

"Serious allegations have been made about the meeting agenda, membership, and lack of scientific process being followed," said Cassidy, who heads the Senate committee overseeing Kennedy's department. He added that "these decisions directly impact children's health and the meeting should not occur until significant oversight has been conducted."

Cassidy, a doctor, provided crucial support for Kennedy's nomination after saying Kennedy had assured him that he would not topple the nation's childhood vaccination program.

And yet, according to a government notice, the committee on Sept. 18 will take up votes on vaccines that have been settled fixtures for children, including shots to protect against hepatitis B and a combination shot against measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox.

Kennedy is a longtime leader in the anti-vaccine movement, and in June, he abruptly dismissed the entire panel, accusing members of being too closely aligned with manufacturers. He replaced them with a group that included several vaccine skeptics and then he shut the door to several doctors organizations that had long helped form vaccine recommendations.

Departing CDC officials worry science will be compromised

Houry and Daskalakis said Monarez had tried to make sure scientific safeguards were in place.

For example, she tried to replace the official who coordinated the panel's meetings with someone who had more policy experience. Monarez also pushed to have slides and evidence reviews posted weeks before the committee's meetings and have the sessions open to public comment, Houry said.

HHS officials nixed that and called Monarez to a meeting in Washington on Monday, Houry said.

Daskalakis described the situation as untenable.

"I came to the point personally where I think our science will be compromised, and that's my line in the sand," he said.

Medical and public health organizations said they worried about the future without Monarez in charge.

"The scientific community is beginning to draw a line in the sand and say, 'No way,'" said Dr. Georges



Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

## Departures roil the CDC leadership. What's next for the agency?

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

The firing of the director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the resignation of several high-profile agency leaders pose immediate challenges to the operations of the nation's premiere public health agency, experts said.

It could take "several months" to identify and confirm a replacement for CDC Director Susan Monarez, who was terminated Wednesday after less than a month on the job, said Dr. Georges Benjamin, director of the American Public Health Association. And it could take more time to fill at least four key vacated positions that oversee disease outbreaks, vaccines and public health data.

"The whole chain of command has just been disrupted," Benjamin told The Associated Press. "It's like getting rid of your generals in the middle of a war."

Health experts said Americans could see immediate effects, from confusion over the availability of COVID-19 vaccines to delayed responses to outbreaks of infectious diseases such as measles or foodborne illnesses caused by germs such as E. coli or listeria.

"The average American should worry about their safety and their health and whether information coming out of Health and Human Services is reliable or trustworthy," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, former principal deputy director of the CDC, who left the agency in 2021.

Here's what you need to know about the sudden changes at the CDC.

What happened this week?

The White House ousted Monarez on Wednesday after apparent clashes between the CDC director and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. over changes to the nation's vaccine policy.

Officials at the White House said Monarez was dismissed because she was not aligned with President Donald Trump's agenda and refused to resign.

That action coincided with the resignation this week of at least four top CDC agency leaders: Dr. Debra Houry, the agency's deputy director; Dr. Daniel Jernigan, leader of the agency's work on emerging infectious diseases; Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, a top vaccine official; and Dr. Jennifer Layden, who led public health data efforts.

What happens next?

Monarez was the first CDC director to require Senate confirmation under a law that took effect in 2023. Replacing her would require Trump to nominate a new director, who would then need to be considered and confirmed by the Senate. On Thursday, Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy said the high-profile departures will "require oversight" of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which he chairs.

In the meantime, Jim O'Neill, a top adviser to Kennedy, was tapped Thursday to serve as acting CDC director, according to an administration official who requested anonymity to discuss a personnel change that has not been formally announced. O'Neill was serving as the deputy secretary of HHS.

Replacing the leaders in the other positions, including those who held the jobs for years, will be difficult, Schuchat said.

"The four people who resigned led important parts of the agency and had the respect of the nation and the world," she said.

In an appearance on "Fox & Friends," Kennedy declined to directly comment on the CDC shake-up. But he said he is concerned about CDC officials adhering to the administration's view of health policies.

"So we need to look at the priorities of the agency, if there's really a deeply, deeply embedded, I would say, malaise at the agency," Kennedy said. "And we need strong leadership that will go in there and that will be able to execute on President Trump's broad ambitions."

How could the changes affect average Americans?

The clash at CDC was apparently triggered by conflict over changes in policy regarding recommendations for COVID-19 vaccinations that could make getting a shot more complicated for people.

The Food and Drug Administration approved updated COVID-19 shots on Wednesday but limited their use for many Americans — and removed one of the two vaccines available for young children. The new

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 45 of 57

jabs from three manufacturers are approved for all seniors, but the FDA narrowed their use for adults and children to those with high-risk health conditions, such as asthma or obesity.

The FDA approval is typically reviewed by a CDC vaccine advisory committee, which makes recommendations for use. Monarez said she would not automatically sign off on recommendations of the committee, which was handpicked by Kennedy, according to Dr. Richard Besser, a former CDC acting director. (Besser is now president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which helps support The Associated Press Health and Science Department.)

The changes present new barriers to access for millions of Americans, who would have to prove their risk, and others who may want the shots but suddenly no longer qualify. The vaccines were previously recommended for Americans 6 months and older.

"These decisions, made without supporting evidence, reflect a troubling pattern by HHS of interfering in the relationship between patients and their healthcare providers and limiting access to vaccines — public health tools proven to save lives and reduce costs," said Michael Osterholm, a University of Minnesota infectious disease researcher.

In addition, the disruption at the CDC could jeopardize many local health services undergirded by the agency's support and expertise, Schuchat noted. That could mean tracking a simmering infectious disease outbreak, such as measles, or outbreaks of foodborne illness.

"It's the water that you drink, the lead in your pipes. Look around your community," she said. "If people are doing well and healthy, it's probably partly because of the CDC."

## A major Russian drone and missile attack on Kyiv kills at least 21 people

By HANNA ARHIROVA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched a major air attack on Kyiv early on Thursday that included a rare strike on the center of Ukraine's capital, killing at least 21 people, wounding 48 and damaging European Union diplomatic offices, authorities said.

The bombardment of drones and missiles was the first major Russian attack on Kyiv in weeks as U.S.-led peace efforts to end the three-year war struggled to gain traction. Britain said the attack sabotaged peace efforts, while top EU diplomat Kaja Kallas summoned Russia's EU envoy to Brussels over the strikes that damaged EU offices.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on airstrikes against Ukraine on Friday afternoon at the request of Ukraine and the five European council members — Britain, France, Slovenia, Denmark and Greece. Two of Ukraine's top envoys were set to meet Friday with the Trump administration regarding mediation.

The Kremlin said Russia remained interested in continuing peace talks despite Thursday's air attack, which was one of the war's biggest since it began in 2022.

Among the dead were four children between 2 and 17, said Tymur Tkachenko, the head of Kyiv's city administration. He said more people could still be under the rubble, and search and rescue efforts continued on Thursday evening.

Also Thursday, the Trump administration approved a \$825 million arms sale to Ukraine that will include extended-range missiles and related equipment to boost its defensive capabilities as U.S. efforts to broker peace between Ukraine and Russia appear to have stalled. The State Department said Ukraine would use funding from NATO allies Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway in addition to U.S. foreign military financing to pay for the equipment.

Rare attack on center of Kyiv

The attack was one of the few times Russian drones and missiles have penetrated the heart of Kyiv since the start of the full-scale invasion.

Ukraine's Air Force said Russia launched 598 strike drones and decoys and 31 missiles of different types across the country early Thursday, most of them striking targets in Kyiv.

At least 33 locations across all 10 of the city's districts were directly hit or damaged by debris, Tkachenko said. Thousands of windows shattered as nearly 100 buildings were damaged, including a shopping mall

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 46 of 57

in the city center.

Oleksandr Khilko arrived at the scene after a missile hit the residential building where his sister lives in the capital's Darnytsia district. He heard screams from people who were trapped under the rubble and pulled out three survivors, including a boy.

"It's inhuman, striking civilians," Khilko said, his clothes covered in dust and the tips of his fingers black with soot. "With every cell of my body I want this war to end as soon as possible. I wait, but every time the air raid alarm sounds, I am afraid."

Sophia Akylina said her home in Kyiv's Holosiivskyi district was damaged.

"It's never happened before that they attacked so close," the 21-year old said. "Negotiations haven't yielded anything yet, unfortunately people are suffering."

EU and UK summon Russian envoys after strikes hit their buildings

European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen said two strikes landed 20 seconds apart about 50 meters (165 feet) from the EU Mission to Ukraine building in Kyiv. She said no staff were injured in the strike.

"No diplomatic mission should ever be a target. In response, we are summoning the Russian envoy in Brussels," Kaja Kallas, the European Union's top diplomat, said Thursday in a post on X.

The British Council, which promotes cultural relations and educational opportunities, also said its Kyiv office had been "severely damaged" in the attack and was closed to visitors until further notice.

The organization posted a photo showing the building with its windows and entrance smashed open and surrounded by glass and debris. A guard was injured and is "shaken but stable," council chief executive Scott McDonald posted on X.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Russian President Vladimir Putin was "sabotaging" hopes of peace following the "senseless" strikes. The Russian ambassador to London was summoned to the foreign office.

Diplomatic efforts to reach peace have stalled

Thursday's attack is the first major combined Russian mass drone and missile attack to strike Kyiv since U.S. President Donald Trump met with Putin in Alaska earlier this month to discuss ending the war in Ukraine.

"Russia chooses ballistics instead of the negotiating table," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on X following the attack. "We expect a response from everyone in the world who has called for peace but now more often stays silent rather than taking principled positions."

While a diplomatic push to end the war appeared to gain momentum shortly after that meeting, few details have emerged about the next steps.

Western leaders have accused Putin of dragging his feet in peace efforts and avoiding serious negotiations while Russian troops move deeper into Ukraine. This week, Ukrainian military leaders conceded Russian forces have broken into an eighth region of Ukraine seeking to capture more ground.

Zelenskyy hopes for harsher U.S. sanctions to cripple the Russian economy if Putin does not demonstrate seriousness about ending the war. He reiterated those demands following Thursday's attack.

Trump bristled this week at Putin's stalling on an American proposal for direct peace talks with Zelenskyy. Trump said Friday he expects to decide on next steps in two weeks if direct talks aren't scheduled.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Thursday said it was "clear that a meeting between President Zelenskyy and President Putin will not take place."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt criticized both Putin and Zelenskyy after the Thursday attack on Kyiv.

She said that Trump "was not happy about this news, but he was also not surprised" by Russia's Thursday air assault on the Ukrainian capital.

Leavitt noted that Ukraine has also launched effective assaults on Russia's oil industry in recent weeks.

"Perhaps both sides of this war are not ready to end it themselves," Leavitt said. "The president wants it to end, but the leaders of these two countries ... must want it to end as well."

Russia says it targeted 'military-industrial complex'

Russia's Defense Ministry said it carried out a strike against military air bases and companies "within Ukraine's military-industrial complex" using long-range weapons, including Kinzhal missiles.

"All designated objects were hit," the ministry said in a statement.

Ukraine has ramped up domestic arms production to fight Russia's invasion. Many weapons factories operate covertly, with some embedded in civilian areas with superior air defenses. Indiscriminate Russian attacks claiming to target Ukraine's defense industry have killed many civilians.

The Russian Defense Ministry also said it shot down 102 Ukrainian drones overnight, mostly in the country's southwest. A drone attack sparked a blaze at the Afipsky oil refinery in the Krasnodar region, local officials said, while a second fire was reported at the Novokuibyshevsk refinery in the Samara region.

Ukrainian drones have repeatedly struck refineries and other oil infrastructure in recent weeks in an attempt to weaken Russia's war economy, causing gas stations in some Russian regions to run dry and prices to spike.

Ukraine's national railway operator, Ukrzaliznytsia, reported damage to its infrastructure in the Vinnytsia and Kyiv regions, causing delays and requiring trains to use alternative routes.

## UK, France and Germany initiate 'snapback' sanctions on Iran over status of nuclear program

By FARNOUSH AMIRI, JON GAMBRELL and STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — France, Germany and the United Kingdom moved Thursday to reimpose United Nations sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program, further isolating Tehran after its atomic sites were repeatedly bombed during a 12-day war with Israel.

The process, termed a "snapback" by the diplomats who negotiated it into Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, was designed to be veto-proof at the U.N. and could take effect in a month.

It would again freeze Iranian assets abroad, halt arms deals with Tehran and penalize any development of Iran's ballistic missile program, among other measures, further squeezing the country's reeling economy.

The move starts a 30-day clock for sanctions to return, a period that likely will see intensified diplomacy from Iran, whose refusal to cooperate with inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, started the crisis. Iran will also probably emerge as a top focus of the U.N. General Assembly when it meets next month in New York.

The British, French and German foreign ministers suggested that they viewed the snapback as a way to spur negotiations with Tehran.

"This measure does not signal the end of diplomacy: we are determined to make the most of the 30-day period that is now opening to engage in dialogue with Iran," French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot wrote on the social platform X.

But Iran immediately decried the move, with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi saying it was "unjustified" and "lacking any legal basis" in a call with his European counterparts.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will respond appropriately to this unlawful and unwarranted measure," he said. Hours later, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the move by the European countries will "gravely undermine" its ongoing cooperation with the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency.

In the past, Iran has threatened to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, potentially following North Korea, which abandoned the treaty in 2003 and then built atomic weapons.

Europeans warned Iran about return of sanctions

The three European nations warned Aug. 8 that Iran could trigger the snapback when it halted inspections by the IAEA after Israeli strikes at the start of the two countries' 12-day war in June. The Israeli attacks killed Tehran's top military leaders and chased Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei into hiding.

The European nations triggered the sanctions process through a letter to the U.N. Security Council. France and the U.K. also requested that the 15-member council hold closed consultations Friday to discuss Iran's noncompliance, according to a diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss still-private information.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio praised the Europeans' decision and said America "remains available for direct engagement with Iran." "Snapback does not contradict our earnest readiness for diplomacy; it only enhances it," Rubio said in a statement.

Using the snapback mechanism will likely heighten tensions between Iran and the West in a region still



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 48 of 57

burning over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. As the measure was announced, Israel launched strikes targeting Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

"Iranian leaders perceive a sanctions 'snapback' as a Western effort to weaken Iran's economy indefinitely and perhaps stimulate sufficient popular unrest to unseat Iran's regime," the New York-based Soufan Center think tank said Thursday.

Iran appears resigned

After Europe's warning, Iran initially downplayed the threat of renewed sanctions and engaged in little visible diplomacy for weeks, but it did take part in a brief diplomatic push in recent days, highlighting the chaos gripping its theocracy.

In Tehran on Thursday, Iran's rial currency traded at over 1 million to \$1. At the time of the 2015 accord, it traded at 32,000 to \$1, showing the currency's precipitous collapse over the last decade.

Outside a currency shop in Tehran, resident Arman Vasheghani Farahani told The Associated Press that "many of us feel a deep sense of uncertainty and desperation" over the currency collapse sparked by the nuclear tensions.

"Should we keep trying, or is it time to give up? And how long will this situation last?" he asked. "No official seems willing to take responsibility for what's happening."

At issue is Iran's nuclear enrichment

Before the war in June, Iran was enriching uranium up to 60% purity — a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%. It also built a stockpile containing enough highly enriched uranium to build multiple atomic bombs, should it choose to do so.

Iran has long insisted its program is peaceful, though Western nations and the IAEA assess that Tehran had an active nuclear weapons program until 2003. It remains unclear just how much the Israeli and U.S. strikes on nuclear sites during the war disrupted Iran's program.

Under the 2015 deal, Iran agreed to allow the IAEA even greater access to its nuclear program than the agency has in other member nations. That included permanently installing cameras and sensors at nuclear sites.

But IAEA inspectors, who faced increasing restrictions on their activities since the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from Iran's nuclear deal in 2018, have yet to access those sites. Meanwhile, Iran has said it moved uranium and other equipment out before the strikes — possibly to new, undeclared sites that raise the risk that monitors could lose track of the program's status.

On Wednesday, IAEA inspectors were on hand to watch a fuel replacement at Iran's Bushehr nuclear reactor, which is run with Russian technical assistance.

Despite inspectors returning to Iran, the head of the IAEA, Rafael Grossi, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that regaining access to crucial nuclear facilities is still "a work in progress."

Russia and China try to buy Iran time

The snapback mechanism will expire Oct. 18. After that, any sanctions effort would face a veto from U.N. Security Council members China and Russia — nations that have provided some support to Iran in the past but stayed out of the June war. China has remained a major buyer of Iranian crude oil, something that could be affected if snapback happens.

Russia announced Thursday that Moscow and Beijing introduced a draft resolution to the Security Council, offering a six-month extension of the U.N. sanctions relief. Russia is also due to take the presidency of the council in October, which is likely to put additional pressure on the Europeans to act.

## Fed official sues Trump over attempt to fire her, challenging his power over the independent agency

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook has sued the Trump administration in an effort to overturn the president's attempt to fire her, launching an unprecedented legal battle that could significantly reshape the Fed's longstanding political independence.

The lawsuit seeks an emergency injunction to block her firing and "confirm her status" as a member of the Fed's governing board.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 49 of 57

"The President's effort to terminate a Senate-confirmed Federal Reserve Board member is a broadside attack on the century-old independence of the Federal Reserve System," Cook's lawyer, Abbe David Lowell, wrote in a court filing.

The case could become a turning point for the 112-year old Federal Reserve, which was designed by Congress to be insulated from day-to-day political influence. Economists prefer independent central banks because they can more easily take unpopular measures, such as lifting interest rates to combat inflation, than elected officials can.

The case was assigned to Judge Jia Cobb, an appointee of former President Joe Biden. A hearing was scheduled for Friday.

Many economists worry that if the Fed falls under the control of the White House, it will keep its key interest rate lower than justified by economic fundamentals to satisfy President Donald Trump's demands for cheaper borrowing. That could accelerate inflation and could also push up longer-term interest rates, such as those on mortgages and car loans. Investors may demand a higher yield to own bonds to offset greater inflation in the future, lifting borrowing costs throughout the economy.

"If Cook wins, she stays in place and we achieve some semblance of stability," said Peter Conti-Brown, a professor of financial regulation at the University of Pennsylvania and Fed historian, in a Substack post. "If she loses ... that's the end of Fed independence as it has been constructed and reconstructed over 112 years."

If Trump can replace Cook, he may be able to gain a 4-3 majority on the Fed's governing board. Trump appointed two board members during his first term and has nominated a key White House economic adviser, Stephen Miran, to replace Adriana Kugler, another Fed governor who stepped down unexpectedly Aug. 1. Trump has said he will only appoint people to the Fed who will support lower rates.

No president has sought to fire a Fed governor before until Trump posted a letter on media late Monday saying that Cook was fired. Trump said the reason for her removal were allegations that she committed mortgage fraud in 2021, before she was appointed to the board. Most observers expect the case to end up at the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court has signaled that the president can't fire Fed officials over policy differences, but can do so "for cause," typically meaning misconduct or neglect of duty. Cook has not been charged with any crime.

The lawsuit argues that the allegations don't involve misconduct by Cook while in office and haven't been proven. Cook should also have been given a chance to answer the charges, the suit says.

"The unsubstantiated and unproven allegation that Governor Cook 'potentially' erred in filling out a mortgage form prior to her Senate confirmation — does not amount to 'cause,'" the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit also denies the charges against Cook, without providing supporting detail.

"Neither the type of 'offense' the President cited nor the threadbare evidence against Governor Cook would constitute 'cause' for removal even if the President's allegations were true—which they are not," the lawsuit said.

"The President determined there was cause to remove a governor who was credibly accused of lying in financial documents from a highly sensitive position overseeing financial institutions," White House spokesperson Kush Desai said. "The removal of a governor for cause improves the Federal Reserve Board's accountability and credibility for both the markets and American people."

The president's decision comes as he has repeatedly attacked Fed Chair Jerome Powell and the other members of the Fed's interest-rate setting committee for not cutting the short-term interest rate they control more quickly. It currently stands at 4.3%, after Fed policymakers reduced it by a full percentage point late last year. Trump has said he thinks it should be as low as 1.3%, a level that no Fed official and few economists support.

The suit argues that the allegations of mortgage fraud are simply a pretext to fire Cook because she hasn't voted to lower interest rates: "The mortgage allegations against her are pretextual, in order to effectuate her prompt removal and vacate a seat for President Trump to fill and forward his agenda to undermine the independence of the Federal Reserve."

"The President cannot rely on brute force or clever shortcuts to circumvent Congress to bend the insti-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 50 of 57

tution to his will," Lowell wrote in a request for an emergency order blocking the firing. "History provides no sanction for an attempt to short-circuit 'for cause' removal protections by conjuring up unfounded allegations of past wrongdoing.

The lawsuit also seeks to block the Federal Reserve from accepting the firing and asks the court to require the Fed and Powell to "treat Governor Cook as a member of the Board of Governors."

Powell signaled last week that the central bank was leaning toward cutting its rate at its next meeting Sept. 16-17. Still, it's likely that the Fed will cut its key rate more slowly than Trump wants, and perhaps to as low as 3.25% or so — higher than Trump would prefer.

Cook is the first Black woman to serve as a governor. She was a Marshall Scholar and received degrees from Oxford University and Spelman College, and prior to joining the board she taught at Michigan State University and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

## What to know after the US deports more migrants to Africa

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Rwanda has become the third African nation to receive deportees from the United States as the Trump administration expands its program to send migrants to countries they have no ties with.

A Rwandan government spokesperson said Thursday that seven deportees arrived in the East African country earlier this month. No announcement was made at the time.

Rwanda did say in early August that it had agreed to take up to 250 deportees but declined then to say when the first would arrive.

Two other African nations, South Sudan and Eswatini, have already accepted a small number of deportees from the U.S. in what have also been secretive deals, while Uganda said last week it has an agreement in principle to take deportees.

Here's what we know about the deportations of migrants from the U.S.

Rwanda

Rwandan government spokesperson Yolande Makolo said the seven deportees are being visited by representatives from the United Nations' migration agency and Rwandan social services.

Three of them want to return to their home countries while the other four "wish to stay and build lives in Rwanda," she said. The Rwandan government didn't say where the deportees are being held.

There was no information on their identities, nationalities or if they have criminal records.

Deportees previously sent to South Sudan and Eswatini were all described by U.S. authorities as dangerous criminals.

Rwanda's deal with the U.S. follows a contentious migrant agreement it reached with the U.K. in 2022 that collapsed and was ruled unlawful by Britain's Supreme Court. That deal was meant to see people seeking asylum in the U.K. sent to Rwanda, where they would stay if their asylum applications were approved.

Uganda

Uganda, which borders Rwanda, said it would accept deportees from the U.S. as long as they don't have criminal records or are unaccompanied minors.

The U.S. has said it wants to deport Kilmar Abrego Garcia, whose case has become a flashpoint in U.S. President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, to Uganda.

Like the other countries, Uganda didn't give any other details of its deal with the U.S. or what it might gain from accepting deported migrants. African nations might get a range of benefits for accepting deportees and improving their relations with the Trump administration.

"We are sacrificing human beings for political expediency, in this case because Uganda wants to be in the good books of the United States," Ugandan human rights lawyer Nicholas Opio said when his country announced it was seeking a deal with the U.S.

South Sudan

The U.S. sent eight men from South Sudan, Cuba, Laos, Mexico, Myanmar and Vietnam to South Sudan in July after their deportations were held up by a legal challenge. That led to them being kept for weeks in a converted shipping container at an American military base in nearby Djibouti.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 51 of 57

U.S. officials said the men had been convicted of violent crimes in the U.S.

South Sudan's government said it would ensure their "safety and well-being" but has declined to say where the men are being held and what their fate might be.

South Sudan has been wracked by conflict since it gained independence from Sudan in 2011 and is teetering on the edge of civil war again.

Eswatini

Two weeks after the South Sudan deportations, the U.S. announced that it had sent five other men — citizens of Vietnam, Jamaica, Cuba, Yemen and Laos — to the small kingdom of Eswatini, in southern Africa.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security described them as violent criminals whose home countries had refused to take them back.

Eswatini's government said the men would be held in solitary confinement until their repatriation, and later said that might take up to a year.

A human rights lawyer in Eswatini has taken the authorities to court alleging the men are being denied legal representation while being held in a maximum-security prison.

Eswatini, which borders South Africa, is one of the world's last absolute monarchies. King Mswati III has ruled since he turned 18 in 1986 and authorities under him are accused of violently subduing pro-democracy movements.

## Israeli airstrikes hit Yemeni capital, but no casualties reported

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Israeli airstrikes on Thursday rocked the Yemeni capital of Sanaa, which is under the control of the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, the Houthis and the Israeli military said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The strikes hit densely populated areas of Sanaa, including a neighborhood on the western side of the city where resident Hussein Salem said he saw plumes of smoke rising.

"It's like an earthquake," Salem said.

The Israeli military said it hit a Houthi "military target" in Sanaa without offering further details.

Thursday's attack came after the Israeli military said earlier in the day that it had intercepted a drone launched toward Israel by the rebels, the third such strike in the past week.

Israeli airstrikes on the Yemeni capital on Sunday killed at least 10 people. Those strikes hit a military site near the presidential palace, a power plant and an oil facility controlled by the Houthis, according to the Houthis and the Israeli military.

Tensions in the region were high Thursday as France, Germany and the United Kingdom started a process to reimpose U.N. sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program.

The mechanism, known as "snapback," could freeze Iranian assets abroad, halt arms deals, and put renewed sanctions on its ballistic missile program. It is designed to be veto-proof at the U.N. and is likely to go into effect.

Iran condemned the European nations' move as "unjustified, illegal, and lacking any legal basis."

The Houthis have launched missiles and drones toward Israel and targeted ships in the Red Sea throughout Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza. The rebels say their attacks are in solidarity with Palestinians.

In response to the Houthi attacks, Israel and a United States-led coalition pounded the rebels-held areas in Yemen, including Sanaa and the strategic coastal city of Hodeida, with heavy strikes for months. Israeli strikes knocked the Sanaa airport out of service in May.

The Trump administration announced a deal with the Houthis to end the airstrikes in return for an end to attacks on shipping in May. The rebels, however, said the agreement did not include halting attacks on targets it believed were aligned with Israel.



## What polling shows about Trump's pivot from immigration to crime

By JILL COLVIN and AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's recent focus on crime in Washington and other big cities came as views of his handling of immigration — the early focus of his second term — had been souring, a new analysis by The Associated Press shows.

Trump's approach to crime is now a clear strength for him, according to a new poll from The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. It found about half of U.S. adults, 53%, approve of his approach, higher than support his handling of immigration, the economy or the Russia-Ukraine war. That's despite outcry from Washington residents and Democratic leaders over his takeover of the city's police department and his deployment of the National Guard and the fact that violent crime is down both in Washington and across the nation following a coronavirus pandemic-era spike.

Trump's tough-on-crime turn happened alongside a small boost in his overall approval rating. Just under half, 45%, of Americans now approve of his performance as president, up from 40% in July.

It's another case of Trump shifting the national conversation to his advantage, often by seizing on Americans' most deep-seated fears and using hyperbolic language and shock-and-awe tactics that push legal bounds. The businessman and reality TV star-turned-politician has deftly used the tactic throughout his political career to dominate news cycles and redirect public attention from sometimes politically damaging topics.

Crime has traditionally been one of Republicans' stronger issues, "so it's not a real surprise that he has pushed that to the top of the agenda and that people favor him," said veteran Republican pollster Whit Ayres.

The AP-NORC poll found that crime in large cities is a "major" concern for 81% of U.S. adults as the topic has become a top story in both conservative and mainstream news outlets.

"He's elevated it as an issue," Ayres said. "And if you're in the White House you'd much rather be talking about crime than tariffs or inflation or a stalemate in Ukraine or than Jeffrey Epstein."

The public appears to sour on Trump's immigration push

It was clear early in Trump's second term that immigration was one of his strengths, as it had been during the 2024 campaign.

In March, an AP-NORC poll found about half of U.S. adults approved of the way he was handling immigration — putting it above other key issues like the economy.

But that advantage had disappeared by the summer, when a July AP-NORC poll found only 43% of U.S. adults approved of his approach. Other polls found the same, suggesting that Americans might be souring on his aggressive action amid headlines about college students being whisked off city streets by masked federal agents and men who were alleged to be gang members wrongly sent to a notorious Salvadorian prison with no due process.

A July CNN/SSRS poll found that 55% of Americans said that Trump had gone too far on deporting immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, up 10 points in February.

In the latest AP-NORC poll, Trump's standing on immigration remains underwater, as does his handling of the economy, which has risen slightly, from 38% in July to 43% now. But both of those issues are now dwarfed by his advantage on crime — including among key groups like independents.

Trump's pivot to crime

While Trump had long threatened a federal takeover of Washington, which has limited autonomy because it is not a state, his focus on the city came after one of the most prominent members of the Department of Government Efficiency was the victim of an attempted carjacking and beating earlier this month.

After Edward Coristine, nicknamed Big Balls, was assaulted by a group of teenagers, Trump threaten to seize control of a city he deemed "out of control."

Days later he posted photos of homeless encampments and garbage strewn across city streets after a Sunday morning motorcade ride to his Sterling, Virginia golf course and announced he would be holding a news conference the next day to unveil his takeover plans.

"Be prepared! There will be no "MR. NICE GUY." We want our Capital BACK." he wrote on Truth Social.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 53 of 57

Trump's takeover of the city's police department and his activation of the National Guard wasn't his first such action. In early June, he ordered the deployment of about 4,000 California National Guard troops and 700 active-duty Marines in early June to respond to protests against immigration raids in and around the city.

It's not his first pivot to crime at a politically challenging moment. During the 2020 campaign, Trump activated federal agents to fight crime in Chicago and Albuquerque and warned suburbanites of rising crime as he struggled with a flagging approval rating.

Trump's overall approval remains steady

Trump's ability to change the conversation may have helped him weather controversy over the years. His presidential approval numbers remained within a relatively narrow band during his first term, according to AP-NORC polling, a pattern that's persisted so far in his second. And even when he was out of office, his favorability rating remained remarkably stable.

Tim Roemer, 59, a lifelong Democrat who lives in Utica, New York, is opposed to the president's efforts to take over city police departments and Trump's use of the National Guard, given that crime numbers are down across the nation.

He said it seemed Trump was seizing on an issue and taking credit for improvements to help himself politically in upcoming elections.

"I think he's trying to keep his numbers up because he knows the 2026 midterms are coming up and he knows it's going to hurt him if his numbers are down," he said. "He knows how to win people over, unfortunately."

A campaign promise

At the same time, Trump and the White House have not abandoned their unprecedented focus on immigration. The Republican administration still frequently talks about the issue, and the president's rhetoric on crime and immigration are closely tied.

As part of the Washington takeover, federal authorities have set up checkpoints across the city, where they have asked people about their immigration status and detained them. According to the White House, of the 1,170 people arrested since the takeover began, at least 319 were related to immigration issues.

The American Immigration Council, a nonprofit that advocates for immigrants' rights, has called the Washington deployment a "Backdoor for Immigration Enforcement" and noted the administration has used its takeover to force the district's police to cooperate with immigration enforcement in an unprecedented way.

The White House also disputed the idea that Trump had shifted focus. During his campaign, they noted, he spoke often about crime, accusing then-President Joe Biden and other Democrats of having "turned our once great cities into cesspools of bloodshed and crime," even though statistics refute that claim.

His campaign released a pair of policy videos in which he pledged to "End Crime and Restore Law and Order" and "the Nightmare of the Homeless, Drug Addicts, and Dangerously Deranged on American Streets" and threatened to "send in federal assets including the National Guard."

"Making America Safe Again was a key campaign promise for President Trump – he has long talked about addressing violent crime, especially in our nation's capital, and ensuring all Americans feel safe in their communities," White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson said.

## Floods displace nearly 250,000 people and affect 1.2 million in eastern Pakistan

By BABAR DOGAR and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

NAROWAL, Pakistan (AP) — Rescuers in boats raced to reach stranded families in Pakistan's populous eastern Punjab province Thursday, after three major rivers burst their banks because of heavy rain and the release of water from overflowing dams in neighboring India.

The floods displaced nearly 250,000 people and officials said more than 1 million people were affected, with crops and businesses destroyed and many unable to leave their homes.

At least 15 people were killed a day earlier in Gujranwala district and nearby villages, according to police. Forecasters said more rain was expected Friday, after a two-day pause, and could continue into next week.

Marriyum Aurangzeb, senior minister of Punjab province, said floods hit 1,432 villages located along the

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 54 of 57

Ravi, Sutlej and Chenab rivers, affecting about 1.2 million people and displacing 248,000 others.

Nearly 700 relief and 265 medical camps have been set up in the flood-hit areas, she said, adding that food and other essential supplies are being delivered to flood-hit areas.

Floods have killed more than 800 people in Pakistan since late June.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan is "among the countries most vulnerable to natural disasters" and ranks among the 10 most affected by climate change.

"We must keep in mind that this trend will continue in the coming years. It now depends on us how we confront this challenge," he said after visiting flood-hit areas. Sharif announced that Pakistan would build more water storage to control future floods.

In Indian-controlled Kashmir's Jammu region, some of the heaviest rains in decades for the month of August have wrought havoc, triggering flash floods and landslides that also hit two Hindu pilgrimage routes in the Himalayan areas.

Homes have been submerged and roads and bridges damaged, forcing Indian authorities to evacuate thousands of people living in flooded areas. At least 115 people have been killed and scores injured.

In Pakistan, it is also the first time in 38 years that the Ravi, Sutlej and Chenab rivers have been in high flood simultaneously, forcing rescue workers to intensify operations across multiple districts, according to the provincial irrigation department.

Some families said they were still waiting for government help.

"My family on the rooftop of our house waited for two days for the arrival of a boat," said Zainab Bibi, 54, as she sat along a road surrounded by floodwater in Narowal district. She admitted to ignoring an earlier government alert because she thought floods would never hit her village, located kilometers (miles) away from the river.

Farmer Mohammad Saleem, 47, said floods from across the Indian border swept away his home and belongings before his family could escape their village in Narowal district. His 38-year-old wife, Kaneez Bibi, said the floods swept away the dowry she had prepared for their eldest daughter's wedding planned for November.

In Pakistan's Punjab province, mass evacuations began earlier this week after heavier-than-usual monsoon rains and the release of water from overflowing dams in India triggered flash floods in low-lying border regions.

In a statement, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif credited "timely evacuations" with saving lives. She said advance preparations and the demolition of illegally-built structures along waterways had helped prevent large-scale casualties in what officials describe as the province's worst flood emergency in decades.

"No displaced person should be without food and medical help in the flood-hit areas," she told officials during a meeting to review the situation. "Try your best to prevent the spread of water-borne disease among the flood-affected people," she warned.

Pakistan's Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, on a visit to the flood-hit city of Narowal, accused India of deliberately releasing excessive amounts of water from its dams without timely warnings. He said New Delhi violated a key water treaty that it suspended earlier this year after the killing of 26 tourists in Indian-controlled Kashmir. India blamed Pakistan-based militants for the attack, an accusation Islamabad denied.

Iqbal said "The release of water in such an enormous volume amounts to water aggression, and India did it, and we are seeing flood devastations."

There was no immediate comment from New Delhi.

Floods in Narowal also submerged the shrine of Guru Nanak, located near the Indian border, but rescuers evacuated the staff and pilgrims quickly.

In 2022, catastrophic floods linked to climate change killed nearly 1,700 people in Pakistan.

## A look into the Bleak House auction items Guillermo del Toro had the hardest time letting go of

By ITZEL LUNA Associated Press

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) — Guillermo del Toro is an acclaimed master of horror and has built a huge memorabilia collection throughout his decades-long career. A close brush with California's devastating wildfires has led him to do what was once unthinkable — auction some of the 5,000 items in his prized collection.

The Mexican-born filmmaker is auctioning hundreds of items ranging from works by comic luminaries like Jack Kirby and Richard Corben to exclusive items from his own classics like "Cronos" and "Hellboy."

Online bidding opened Thursday for the Sept. 26 auction, which is the first of a three-part series with Heritage Auctions.

"Whoever buys or gets it is going to love it as much," del Toro said while showing off some of the items up for sale to The Associated Press during a tour of his so-called Bleak House. "That's all you can do with your kids — sort of plan for them to have a good life after you."

Here's a look at the pieces del Toro says he struggled the most to let go of.

**Bernie Wrightson's "Frankenstein"**

When del Toro's Bleak Houses were endangered by wildfires, he focused on securing just a few items: his diaries, some of his awards — and Bernie Wrightson's "Frankenstein" illustrations.

The collector is auctioning two original art pieces from the 50 pen-and-ink drawings that Wrightson created for the 1983 illustrated version of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein."

The possibility of those items perishing in a fire "weigh so heavily on me, because that's his masterpiece," del Toro said.

"Frankenstein" marked the start of del Toro's lifelong passion for monsters. The filmmaker adapted the classic horror story for Netflix and it will arrive on the streaming platform in November.

One of Wrightson's pieces, with a starting bid of \$200,000, depicts the creature hiding near a stream. The other, starting at \$100,000, portrays Victor Frankenstein's pursuit of the creature.

"My eyes are going to start twitching," he said. "Those two were pretty brutal."

**Mike Mignola's "Hellraiser"**

There was only one item that Mike Mignola — a celebrated comic book writer and del Toro's longtime friend — didn't know was a part of the Bleak House collection. It happened to be one of his own.

Del Toro is parting with an original pinup artwork that Mignola drew in the late 1980s for "Hellraiser #2," Clive Barker's comic series, before they were adapted into movies in the 1990s.

The director said he was a fan of the "Hellraiser" comics, and this particular piece was the precursor that led to Hellboy, a superhero that Mignola created in the 1990s. Del Toro later wrote and directed the "Hellboy" movies.

The item, with a starting bid of \$40,000, is described in the auction catalog as "one of the greatest artworks" in del Toro's collection. It was also one that took the longest to secure, he said.

"There's a few items that are very hard to find. The Hellraiser cover was exceedingly hard."

**The art behind "Pan's Labyrinth"**

Before the reality of budget constraints set in, the film sets for the 2006 dark fantasy "Pan's Labyrinth" spread much wider in the minds of del Toro and the illustrators he works with.

He has long kept a tight hold on this art. Now, more than a dozen preproduction art pieces, which have never been up for sale, will be available to the wider public.

The mill compound, which was the heart of the dark fairy tale, for instance, existed on a much larger scale on paper than what made it on screen. That concept sketch drawn by Raúl Monge — one of del Toro's favorites — has a starting bid of \$6,000.

**Paint master behind the ghost in "The Devil's Backbone"**

Del Toro had a clear image in mind when developing Santi, the haunting ghost of a murdered orphan that anchors his 2001 horror "The Devil's Backbone." He envisioned the ghost's skull to be cracked like broken porcelain, with haunting eyes and ashen skin, according to the auction catalog.

The production makeup paint master that helped bring his vision to life is being auctioned with a start-



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 56 of 57

ing bid of \$6,000.

Santi is a "signature creature, that I think actually set precedence for a lot of creatures," del Toro told the AP.

"Hellboy" memorabilia

Over 40 pieces of memorabilia from del Toro's "Hellboy" movies are being sold. Amid the dozens of illustrations and concept sketches are two one-of-a-kind pieces.

The iconic hero jacket, worn by Ron Perlman, who played Hellboy in the films, went straight from the actor's back into del Toro's arms, he said, and is now heading elsewhere with a starting bid of \$40,000.

Also up for sale is "Big Baby," Hellboy's signature six-round shotgun, which starts at \$50,000.

"We couldn't have many duplicates so the Big Baby is a hero hero hero piece," del Toro said. "That one hurt."

Original H.R. Giger artwork for "The Tourist"

One of the highest priced pieces in the auction is H.R. Giger's concept design for an unproduced science fiction and horror script, "The Tourist." Giger was a Swiss surrealist artist known for blending human and machine in his work.

The Giger piece is a star in del Toro's collection and has a starting price of \$150,000.

"It was always a really good point in touring the collection to say very casually, and this is a Giger," del Toro said. "It was a big flex, you, know. Letting go of that big flex is not easy."

Replica of "Cronos" device

"Cronos" was del Toro's critically acclaimed filmmaking debut in 1992. He began creating sketches for the movie in the 1980s and one is included in the auction, which he said is likely the only preproduction drawing for the movie he will part with.

The early concept sketch for a skeletal, muscular vampire holding a small pocket watch has a starting bid of \$4,000. The pocket watch was later developed into the Cronos device, which gives an elderly man immortality in the film.

"It's very beautiful to be able to say look this is a 'Cronos' design I made when nobody knew what 'Cronos' was," del Toro said.

## Today in History: August 29, Hurricane Katrina strikes Louisiana

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Aug. 29, the 241st day of 2025. There are 124 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the U.S. Gulf Coast in southeast Louisiana, breaching levees and spurring floods that devastated New Orleans. Katrina caused nearly 1,400 deaths and an estimated \$200 billion in damage.

Also on this date:

In 1814, during the War of 1812, Alexandria, Virginia, formally surrendered to British military forces, which occupied the city until September 3.

In 1825, the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro was signed by Portugal and Brazil, officially ending the Brazilian War of Independence.

In 1862, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began operations at the United States Treasury.

In 1944, 15,000 American troops of the 28th Infantry Division marched down the Champs-Élysées in Paris as the French capital continued to celebrate its liberation from the Nazis.

In 1958, the U.S. Air Force Academy opened in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In 1966, the Beatles concluded their fourth American tour with their last public concert, held at Candlestick Park in San Francisco.

In 2004, marathoner Vanderlei de Lima was attacked by a spectator during the running of the Olympic marathon in Athens; de Lima, who was leading the race at the time, eventually finished third and received the Pierre de Coubertin medal for sportsmanship in addition to his bronze medal.

In 2008, Republican presidential nominee John McCain picked Sarah Palin, a maverick conservative who had been governor of Alaska for less than two years, to be his running mate.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Friday, August 29, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 086 ~ 57 of 57**

In 2013, in a sweeping new policy statement, the Justice Department said it would not stand in the way of states that wanted to legalize, tax and regulate marijuana as long as there were effective controls to keep marijuana away from children, the black market and federal property.

In 2021, Hurricane Ida blasted ashore in Louisiana as one of the most powerful storms ever to hit the U.S., knocking out power to all of New Orleans, blowing roofs off buildings and briefly reversing the flow of the Mississippi River.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Elliott Gould is 87. Former U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin is 87. Olympic gold medal sprinter Wyomia Tyus is 80. Olympic gold medal long jumper Bob Beamon is 79. Animal behaviorist and autism educator Temple Grandin is 78. Dancer-choreographer Mark Morris is 69. Actor Rebecca De Mornay is 66. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch is 58. Singer Me'Shell NdegeOcello (n-DAY'-gay-OH'-chehl-oh) is 57. Actor Carla Gugino is 54. Actor-singer Lea Michele is 39. MLB pitcher Noah Syndergaard (SIHN'-dur-gahrd) is 33.