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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

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Groton Area Falls in "Battle of the Tigers" to Mobridge-Pollock

MOBRIDGE — The annual "Battle of the Tigers" lived up to its name Friday night in Mobridge, but it was the home Tigers who came away with the victory. Behind a dominant performance from running back Max Saxon, Mobridge-Pollock pulled away to a 29–8 win over Groton Area.

Early Setbacks

Groton Area actually had the ball first, but on just the second play of the game, Caige Yellow intercepted a pass to swing momentum to Mobridge-Pollock. Just three plays later, Saxon burst through the line for a 26-yard touchdown. Although the two-point attempt failed, Mobridge-Pollock had the upper hand at 6–0 just two minutes in.

Penalties hurt Groton on its next drive, forcing a punt. Mobridge-Pollock quickly struck again when quarterback Shooter Frederick hit Kale Knudson for a seven-yard touchdown late in the quarter. Frederick added the extra point to extend the lead to 13–0.

Groton had its chances. Ryder Johnson intercepted a tipped pass and later ripped off a 34-yard gain, but the Groton offense couldn't finish drives. Just before the quarter ended, Easton Eisemann returned the favor with a pick for Mobridge-Pollock, halting Groton's momentum.

"We knew coming in that we'd be facing a pretty experienced group," Groton head coach Shaun Wanner said. "They've got their skill kids back, and Saxon's a tough runner. We've got a lot of young guys playing in big spots, and you could see that early."

Turnovers Dominate First Half

The second quarter was much the same — Groton's defense producing stops but the offense struggling to capitalize. Saxon added a 41-yard touchdown run midway through the period to push the lead to 19–0.

Groton forced more turnovers — Jordan Schwan had a good sack that led to Logan Warrington falling on a fumble and Johnson picked off his second pass of the night. But each time, Groton's offense stalled, often due to penalties or sacks. The halftime horn sounded with Mobridge-Pollock firmly in front, 19–0.



Ryder Johnson won the battle over Mobridge-Pollock's Luke Olson on this catch. Johnson had a 34 yard catch. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Coach Shaun Wanner (middle) talks with this team at halftime. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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At the break, Groton statistician Tom Woods, in his 39th year on the sideline, noted the youth of this year's team. "We've got three freshmen starting, and while they're playing well, they're going to have growing pains," Woods said. "But they'll get better. You can see the work ethic. These kids are learning fast, and that will pay off later in the season."

He also reflected on the long rivalry: "The first game between these schools was back in 1985, and Groton won that one 27-26. It's always been competitive, and tonight was no different — even if the score got away, our boys battled."

Second-Half Fight

Mobridge-Pollock opened the third quarter with a drive capped by a booming 41-yard field goal from Frederick to stretch the lead to 22-0. Groton responded with its most sustained drive of the night, moving deep into Mobridge territory on the running of Keegan Tracy, but came up short on a fourth-down sack.

Finally, the breakthrough came in the fourth quarter. After Hunter Aden recovered a fumble, Johnson found Connor Glines on a 10-yard touchdown pass with 8:28 remaining.

Johnson then connected with Tracy on the conversion, cutting the deficit to 22-8 and giving Groton life.

But Saxon quickly answered, slicing through the defense for his third touchdown — this one from 26 yards — to make it 29-8 and seal the outcome.

"Positives? Our kids played hard the whole way," Wanner said. "Even when we were down three scores, they didn't quit. That's what we asked of them at halftime. We're not going to get better if we don't compete, and they showed fight. Now it's about cleaning up the mistakes."

Wanner also pointed to the reality of a young roster. "We've got a freshman quarterback, a freshman defensive end, even some freshmen at tight end and linebacker. They're being asked to grow up fast against seniors who have been at this for three years. That's a big difference, but they'll catch up if we keep working."

Woods' Words of Wisdom

At the end of the halftime interview, Woods offered his usual blend of stats and perspective. "You know, whatever you do in this life, just find your joy," he said with a smile. "There's plenty of negativity out there, but these kids are playing hard, and that's something to celebrate. Encourage your neighbors, encourage the people around you, and be kind."

Looking Ahead

Groton drops to 1-1 on the season and now turns its focus to a Homecoming matchup Friday against perennial power Winner. Mobridge-Pollock, meanwhile, improves to 1-0 and will host Miller/Highmore-Harrold.



Keegan Tracy gains a few yards on this run. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Statistician Tom Woods is being interviewed by Paper Paul at halftime.

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Game Stats

Team Totals

First Downs: Groton 8, Mobridge-Pollock 13

Rushing Yards: Groton 23 carries, 21 yards; Mobridge-Pollock 39 carries, 210 yards

Passing Yards: Groton 134; Mobridge-Pollock 64

Turnovers: Groton 3 INTs, 1 fumble lost; Mobridge-Pollock 2 INTs, 1 fumble lost

Penalties: Groton 4 for 45 yards; Mobridge-Pollock 5 for 40 yards

Groton Area Leaders

Rushing: Ryder Schelle 7-11, Asher Johnson 7-9, Keegan Tracy 3-2, Anthony Tracy 2-2, Keegan Woltjer 1-0, Skyler Godel 3-3

Passing: Asher Johnson 10-25, 134 yds, 1 TD, 3 INTs

Receiving: Keegan Tracy 6-65, Ryder Johnson 2-41, Connor Glines 2-28, 1 TD

Tackles: Tucker Hardy 10, Ben Hoeft 8

Turnovers: Ryder Johnson 2 INTs; Hunter Aden FR; Logan Warrington FR

Mobridge-Pollock Leaders

Rushing: Max Saxon 15-172, 3 TDs; Easton Eisemann 8-26; Tyler Schmeichel 5-29; Trueth Crow Ghost 4-2; Shooter Frederick 4-27; Dylan Fjeldheim 2-7

Passing: Frederick 5-10, 64 yds, 1 TD, 2 INTs

Receiving: Kale Knudson 4-60, 1 TD; Eisemann 1-4

Defense: Kellen Pfitzer 7 tackles; Wyatt Ziegler 6 tackles

Special Teams: Frederick FG 41, 2 PATs

Records: Groton Area 1-1, Mobridge-Pollock 1-0

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



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.

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PREP FOOTBALL

Alcester-Hudson 26, Centerville 21
Arlington 20, Wilmot 18
Avon 62, Sioux Falls Lutheran 20
Bennett County 44, New Underwood 6
Brandon Valley 28, Sioux Falls Washington 7
Britton-Hecla 36, Leola-Frederick 6
Canistota 20, Colman-Egan 12
Canton 27, Rapid City Christian 6
Castlewood 36, Chester 7
Chamberlain 27, Aberdeen Roncalli 0
Colome 52, Platte-Geddes 0
Crazy Horse 58, Crow Creek 6
Dell Rapids 28, Dakota Valley 7
Dell Rapids St. Mary's 52, Irene/Wakonda 0
Deubrook 42, Wolsey-Wessington 8
Dupree 36, North Central 28
Elkton/Lake Benton 43, Viborg-Hurley 0
Flandreau 20, Baltic 12
Freeman/Marion/Freeman Academy 55, Bon Homme 7
Hamlin 29, Hanson 23
Garretson 35, De Smet 24
Great Plains Lutheran 36, Waubay/Summit 6
Gregory 51, Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian 0
Herreid-Selby 42, Northwestern 0
Hill City 43, Lemmon/McIntosh 6
Howard 58, Estelline-Hendricks 8
Humboldt 35, Spencer 13
Ipswich 34, Faulkton Area 30
Iroquois-Lake Preston 40, Hitchcock-Tulare 16
Jefferson 51, Watertown 7
Jones County 50, Faith 14
Kadoka 18, Lyman 14
Kimball-White Lake 55, Redfield 0
Lennox 35, Vermillion 18
Little Wound 40, St. Francis 12
Madison 35, Belle Fourche 0
Mahpiya Luta 32, Pine Ridge 6
McCook Central/Canistota/Montrose 42, Webster 8
Milbank 64, Lakota Tech 0
Miller/Highmore/Harrold 13, Hot Springs 10
Mitchell 57, Douglas 0
Mobridge-Pollock 29, Groton 6
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 46, Sunshine Bible Academy 8
Omaha Nation, NE 20, Tiospa Zina 6
Parker 28, Beresford 6
Parkston 40, Stanley County 0
Pierre 9, Aberdeen Central 6
Platte-Geddes 52, Colome 0
Rapid City Central 23, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 7
Scotland-Menno 44, Corsica-Stickney 30
Sioux Falls Christian 24, West Central 0
Sioux Falls Lincoln 62, Rapid City Stevens 14
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 25, Harrisburg 24
Sioux Valley 22, Clark-Willow Lake 8
St. Thomas More 39, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 8
Sturgis 26, Brookings 21
Sully Buttes 62, Burke 7
Tea Area 22, Spearfish 14
Tri-Valley 53, Custer 3
Todd County 50, Lower Brule 22
Waverly/South Shore 22, Florence/Henry 18
Wagner 34, Winner 20
Wall 73, Harding County 20
Warner 41, Gettysburg 0
White River 52, Marty 0
Winnebago 55, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte/Tiospaye Topa 0
Yankton 41, Huron 24

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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

September 2, 2025 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

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

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Department Reports
4. Planning and Zoning Appeal – Approved Variance – 112 N 1st Street
5. Stop Sign at 1st Street and 2nd Avenue
6. Quotes for Permanent Radar Signs on HWY 12 and HWY 37
7. Accept Resignation of Douglas Hamilton from Groton Planning and Zoning Commission
8. Authorization to Bid Lease for Groton Municipal Airport Land
9. Quote for Interior Painting of Community Center
10. Minutes
11. Bills
12. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
13. Authorization to Re-Bid 2025 City Roof Repair Project
14. Adjournment

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BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2025, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS

COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
 - ❖ *Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes or at Boards Discretion. Presentations will be limited to 3 minutes.*
4. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign SD Surface Water Discharge Permit Renewal Application for Landfill
5. Public Hearing for FY 2026 Provisional Budget
6. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. Set Hearing Date for Highway 5-year Plan
 - b. Department Update
7. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes for August 26, 2025
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Lease Agreements
 - e. Travel Requests
 - f. Claim Assignments
8. Other Business
 - a. No Commission Meeting on September 9th due to attending 2025 SD County Convention
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. Adjourn

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

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

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

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

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**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

State of South Dakota media

Latest newspaper, radio and TV developments demonstrate the fast-pace of change in how people are informed.

**By Carson Walker
South Dakota News Watch**

Not too long ago, most people's local and state-wide media choices were largely limited to three TV stations, a newspaper or two and a slew of radio stations offering a variety of programming.

Recent developments in South Dakota illustrate how changing reader habits are rewriting the state's media landscape.

"There was a time when it took 20 years to happen what's happened in the past couple of weeks in South Dakota," said Dave Bordewyk, executive director of the South Dakota NewsMedia Association.

Here are recent changes in the state's media landscape, which includes legacy organizations as well as so-called digital-first organizations like South Dakota News Watch. It is not exhaustive and does not delve into the financial and audience habits that led to the changes.

SDPB people and programming cuts

South Dakota Public Broadcasting last week announced that it will reduce its staff by 25% across its programs and services in response to a \$2.2 million annual cut in federal funding.

The radio program "In the Moment" and TV program "South Dakota Focus" were eliminated, and output of "Dakota Life" on TV and educational resources will be reduced.

SDPB said it will prioritize news of open government and access to the Legislature. And it will continue its coverage of high school athletic championships and fine arts events. The network will also keep all its TV and radio transmitters to maintain 98% of statewide coverage.

"This is the hardest decision we've ever had to make," said Julie Overgaard, SDPB executive director, adding that she hopes to restore some of the staff through fundraising efforts.

Four newspapers saved by new owner

As the SDPB changes unfolded, four newspapers that were abruptly shuttered weeks earlier found new life when a new owner bought the properties.

Champion Media, a family-owned community newspaper company based in North Carolina, said it was acquiring and restarting The Brookings Register, Huron Plainsman, Redfield Press and Moody County Enterprise at Flandreau.

"Every community deserves a newspaper and a voice and we feel fortunate to be able to help provide that," said CEO Scott Champion.



KOTA Territory's studios and towers on Dec. 23, 2024, in Rapid City, S.D. (Photo: Carson Walker/ South

Dakota News Watch)

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Other newspaper changes

The challenges of delivering a printed product have increased significantly recently because the U.S. Postal Service now processes much of South Dakota's mail in surrounding states.

Some newspaper subscribers wait a week or more for editions printed only a few miles away, Bordewyk said.

"So it's making that ad worthless and causing advertisers to pull away," he said, adding that skyrocketing costs for labor, newsprint and other expenses also weigh on bottom lines.

About 75 of the roughly 100 newspapers in the state have reported delivery problems.

Larger, corporate-owned newspapers have had to cut resources because of heavy debt loads, but the issue for most smaller operators is razor-thin margins, Bordewyk said.

"I fear their delivery is being changed in such a way to the point where they won't be able to restore it," he said.

When a local news source closes, the impact is twofold, Bordewyk said.

"Connectivity: Connecting people to know what is going on in the community and to have a trusted, reliable source for news. Accountability: Having an independent source of journalism that reports about local government, what the school board and city council (are) doing and reporting to the community. If you don't have those two things, I believe a community will suffer," he said.

About 40 South Dakota newspapers closed over the past 30 years, but the state still has one of the highest number per capita.

SDNA changed its bylaws a few years ago to allow new media organizations like South Dakota News Watch and another statewide nonprofit, South Dakota Searchlight, to join.

Other startups include three newspapers that publish both online and print editions where Gannett-owned papers still operate: The Dakota Scout in Sioux Falls, started by two former Sioux Falls Argus Leader reporters, and the Aberdeen Insider and Watertown Current, owned by Aberdeen businessman Troy McQuillen.

TV news

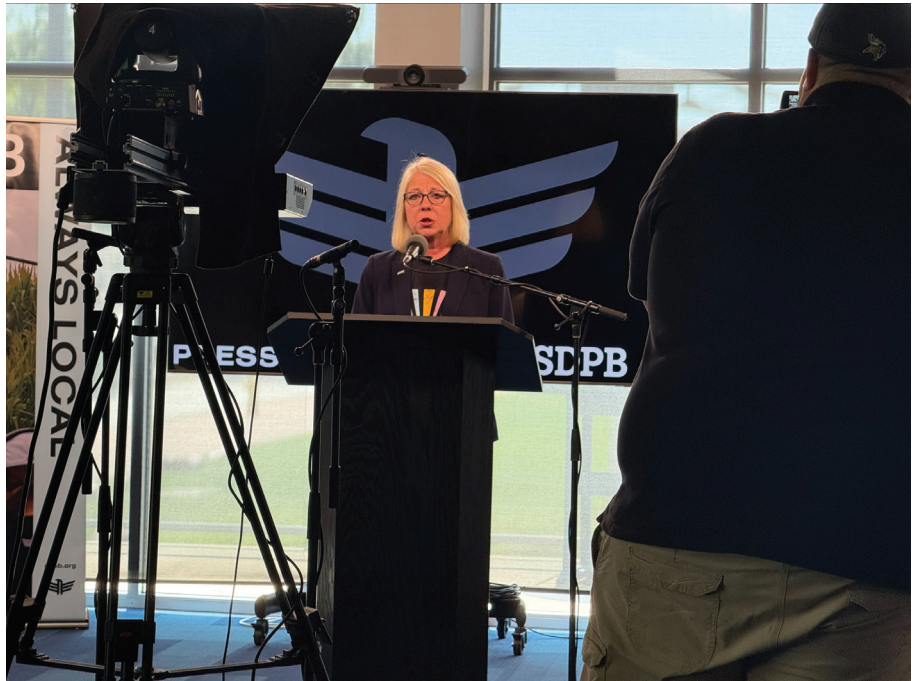
In commercial television, Nexstar Media Group Inc., which owns KELO-TV in Sioux Falls, said it plans to acquire Tegna Inc. to form a new company that would serve 80% of U.S. households, if approved. (Tegna is comprised of Gannett's former broadcast and digital division.)

Besides the CBS affiliate that serves the entire state, KELO operates keloland.com, South Dakota's top news website. Nexstar also provides local news from KCAU-TV, the ABC station in Sioux City, Iowa.

Nexstar said the merger would help ensure local news and programming from trusted, local sources and a diversity of local voice and opinion.

Local TV streaming

KELO also has started streaming more programming on its website, a smartphone app and services like Roku, Fire TV and Apple TV.



Julie Overgaard, executive director of South Dakota Public Broadcasting, announced layoffs Aug. 21, 2025, during a news conference at SDPB studios in Sioux Falls, S.D. (Photo: SDPB)

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"What you see a lot of broadcast companies trying to do is meet the viewer where they are," said Gary Weitman, Nexstar's chief communications officer. "It's not designed to replace or move anything off broadcast."

South Dakota's other major local TV news provider, Gray Media, broadcasts on KSFY-TV (ABC), KDLT-TV (NBC) and KTTW-TV (FOX) in Sioux Falls under Dakota News Now, on KOTA-TV (ABC) and KEVN-TV (FOX) in Rapid City as KOTA Territory News and on KTIV-TV (NBC) in Sioux City.

Chris Gross, KOTA Territory general manager, said his stations are adding to their streaming efforts to include more detailed coverage of news stories and severe weather.

"We can be live on there more in depth without breaking into over-the-air programming," he said.

KNBN-TV, the NBC affiliate in Rapid City, was bought last year by North Dakota-based Forum Communications Co., which previously purchased two Sioux Falls stations, KWSD-TV (now KSFL-TV) and KCWS-TV.

Forum also operates the Mitchell Republic newspaper and a printing plant in Sioux Falls as well as Sioux Falls Live, an online news and sports site.

Forum's latest acquisition was MetroSports TV, which it has rebranded Midwest Sports+ to provide shows and live-streamed play-by-play of high school and college games, including University of Sioux Falls football and basketball.

KNBN doesn't have a separate news app, but some sports from KNBN and KSFL will feed into Midwest Sports+, said Mary Jo Hotzler, Forum's chief content officer.

"It's all very interconnected with what we're doing. You'll see (sports writer) Matt Zimmer on Sioux Falls Live and he'll have stories and columns covering the Jackrabbits, but you'll also see him on Midwest Sports+," she said.

Commercial radio

Another company innovating how it delivers content is The HomeSlice Media Group.

It runs six Black Hills radio stations and the state's largest podcast network and launched The Rapid City Post, a digital newspaper with more than 16,000 email subscribers that will soon have a print edition, said Brad "Murdoc" Jurgensen, chief revenue officer and executive producer.

"Our primary vision of The Rapid City Post is free, ad-supported, locally staffed community media with strong journalistic standards, available to everyone as they like to digest it," he said.

Looking ahead

"The news ecosystem in South Dakota, as it is everywhere, is at an inflection point," Bordewyk said.

"The traditional models for gathering news and advertising, that model has been broken up in large part. And these new ways to provide that news and information, streaming and through apps that replace the traditional model, it's really in some respects, it's exciting," he said. "Not to mention what AI (artificial intelligence) is going to do.

"Opportunities exist, and how communities respond and engage will be fascinating."

Carson Walker worked in radio, television, newspapers and at The Associated Press and now is CEO of South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization that produced this story. Read more stories and donate at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Contact him at carson.walker@sdnewswatch.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

One-third of SD school districts remove or lock away student phones

Less restrictive policies teach 'digital citizenship,' other superintendents say

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-AUGUST 29, 2025 3:36 PM

Groton Area School District 06-6

High school: Phone use is not allowed during classes, but students can keep their devices in their backpacks or lockers and use them between classes or during lunch periods.

Middle school: Phone use is not allowed during classes, but students can keep their devices in their backpacks or lockers and use them between classes or during lunch periods.

Year policy last changed: 2019 & older

Langford School District 45-5

High school: Phone use is not allowed at school, but students can keep their devices in their lockers or backpacks out of sight.

Middle school: Phone use is not allowed at school, but students can keep their devices in their lockers or backpacks out of sight.

Year policy last changed: 2024

Based on handbook posted online.

Warner School District 06-5

High school: Phone use is dependent on classroom policies, and teachers might allow students to use phones during instruction.

Middle school: Phone use is dependent on classroom policies, and teachers might allow students to use phones during instruction.

Year policy last changed: 2019 & older

Platte-Geddes Superintendent Joel Bailey remembers an "eerily quiet" lunch room when his students were still allowed to use their cell-phones during the school day.

"We decided that since the kids are in class the majority of the day, they need to talk to one another during lunch. We want that social interaction," Bailey said. "Albeit, it's a noisier lunch room now, at least they're talking and interacting."

During the 2022-23 school year, the district became one of the first in the state to require all students' phones to be locked away during school hours. Bailey said the district realized it had been "losing the battle" with students who were making "poor decisions with social media."

Many other South Dakota school districts have since adopted new cell-phone rules, according to a South Dakota Searchlight survey of superintendents and analysis of published policies. As classes begin this fall, nearly all districts in the state have a phone policy or guidelines for students. About 60% of districts do not allow cellphones for at least part of the school day, although in some schools, students can keep the devices in their backpacks or lockers. About one-third of the districts in the state remove or lock away high school students' cellphones for at least part of the school day.

While some schools lock phones away for the entire day, others require students to place phones in containers during class. Some of those allow students to use their phones during lunch or between class periods.

School districts implementing a locked phone policy for high school students throughout the entire school day this year include De Smet, Dupree,

Ethan, Florence, Henry, Iroquois, Oglala Lakota, Rosholt and Waverly. Highmore-Harold will consider a locked phone policy at its September school board meeting.



A person shields a cellphone with their arm while reading a book. (Photo illustration by Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Aberdeen School District 06-1

High school: Phone use is not allowed at school, but students can keep their devices in their lockers or backpacks out of sight.

Middle school:

Year policy last changed:

Britton-Hecla School District 45-4

High school: Phone use is not allowed at school, but students can keep their devices in their lockers or backpacks out of sight.

Middle school: Phone use is not allowed at school, but students can keep their devices in their lockers or backpacks out of sight.

Year policy last changed:

Based on student handbook posted online.

Webster School District 18-5

High school: Phone use is not allowed during classes, but students can keep their devices in their backpacks or lockers and use them between classes or during lunch periods.

Middle school: Phone use is not allowed during classes, but students can keep their devices in their backpacks or lockers and use them between classes or during lunch periods.

Year policy last changed: 2019 & older

Clark School District 12-2

High school: Phones are removed from student access using lock boxes, pouches or giving them to administration.

Middle school: Phones are removed from student access using lock boxes, pouches or giving them to administration.

Year policy last changed: 2024

The Dupree School District spent about \$300 to purchase clear, locked boxes with slots for high schoolers to place their cell phones during the school day, Superintendent Brent Mareska said. Elementary and middle school students give their cellphones to their first period teacher at the start of the school day, but the devices aren't placed in locked boxes.

The school tried using a door hanging pouch – such as for shoes or calculators – for high school students last year with access during lunch and between classes, but Mareska said administrators and teachers “didn’t see the results we wanted.”

“It’s never going to be a one-size fits all,” Mareska said. “The goal is to keep improving our kids’ education. With not only staff but most Americans hooked on their cellphones, it’s affecting education more than we know.”

Wall School District implemented a pouch system last year, but purchased new pouches that block cell phone signals to watches or earbuds this year. Students will still be able to use phones between periods and during lunchtime, Superintendent Sally Crowser said.

“Our cellphones are a problem, but I’m not ready for a full ban,” Crowser said.

State legislators, Education Department explore ‘best practices’

South Dakota Department of Education Secretary Joseph Graves told South Dakota Searchlight in an emailed statement that he is “pleased” to see school districts set local policies that meet their needs, adding that research shows smartphones have a “direct impact on student learning and the classroom culture.”

“We will be watching closely as schools develop rules and strategies to combat the negative effects of smartphones,” Graves said.

The state Legislature passed a resolution in February encouraging school boards to implement policies limiting cell phone use during instruction. Twenty-six states have laws or policies banning or limiting cellphones in classrooms.

Lawmakers on South Dakota’s Teacher Compensation Review Board recommended in August that the state Department of Education prepare a report about the “best practices” on smartphones and personal technology in schools. The recommendation passed unanimously.

Graves said during the meeting he interpreted the recommendation as instructing the department to survey school districts on their policies, analyze how other states are crafting policies and identify relevant



The Platte-Geddes School District used Yondr locked pouches before switching to another company this year. Gettysburg School District will continue to use Yondr pouches. (Courtesy of Platte-Geddes School District)

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Northwestern Area School District 56-7

High school: Phones are removed from student access using lock boxes, pouches or giving them to administration.

Middle school: Phones are removed from student access using lock boxes, pouches or giving them to administration.

Year policy last changed: 2024

Redfield School District 56-4

High school: Phones are removed from student access during class using pouches, lock boxes or given to the teacher. But phones can be used in between classes or during lunch periods.

Middle school: Phone use is not allowed at school, but students can keep their devices in their lockers or backpacks out of sight.

Year policy last changed: 2025

Cell phone pouches used at the high school level during class periods.

Frederick Area School District 06-2

High school: Phone use is not allowed during classes, but students can keep their devices in their backpacks or lockers and use them between classes or during lunch periods.

Middle school: Phone use is not allowed during classes, but students can keep their devices in their backpacks or lockers and use them between classes or during lunch periods.

Year policy last changed: 2019 & older

research on the impact of such technology in schools.

School districts with locked phones continue, adjust practices

In interviews with South Dakota Searchlight, superintendents with experience enforcing locked-away phone policies said student engagement and interaction increased. Teachers didn't have to spend as much time policing student phone use, either.

Gettysburg Superintendent Amber Mikkelsen surveyed teachers and students at the end of the last school year, after the district's first year of a locked phone policy. Most teachers who responded thought the change was positive and led to more engagement among students.

Of the one-third of students who responded to the survey, most said the device-free policy helped them focus more in class. Half of students who responded said they felt just as stressed or distracted without their devices, and most students said they didn't notice a difference in their engagement with other students.

The locked pouches cost the district about \$4,400, and they've lasted through the second year of use, Mikkelsen said.

Mikkelsen said the district will allow cellphones during lunch for high school students this year, hoping to bring students back to the school lunch program. Students who left for open lunch were allowed to take their phones.



Starting this school year, students at Waverly-South Shore High School in the Waverly School District place their phones in a slotted, locked box that corresponds with their last period teacher's name. The boxes are brought to the classrooms at the end of the school day. (Courtesy of Waverly School District)

It cost Platte-Geddes \$2,000 to purchase 100 new pouches this school year. It has cost the district a couple thousand dollars every few years to purchase new pouches and update equipment, said Bailey, the superintendent.

He hopes students don't look at the locked-phone policy as a punishment, but as a break from distractions and the world outside the classroom.

"We're not experts on this. But it's worked," Bailey said. "I would not hesitate to make the same decision again."

Neither district has tracked whether the policies have had an impact on academic success.

Cellphone policies reflect difference in digital education philosophy

The Waverly School District spent about \$1,000 purchasing 14 lock boxes for the new school year. Prior to the change, students weren't allowed to use their cellphones during class periods but could have them in their backpacks or pockets.

Under that policy, students took frequent and lengthy bathroom breaks, said Superintendent Jon Meyer.

But many South Dakota school districts have retained that same cell phone policy for years and plan to keep it in the years to come. While it might be a hassle at times to keep students off their phones, some superintendents say it's the school's duty to teach students to be responsible digital users.

Wilmot Superintendent Nicholas Olson said his district strengthened consequences for using cellphones during class, but still allows students to keep their phones on them. The district also stopped letting students take their phones with them for bathroom breaks or other out-of-classroom visits.

"With public schools specifically, a lot of things we do center around preparing students to be contributing members of society," Olson said. "That's in a lot of school district mission statements, and we have to uphold that. Digital citizenship is something extremely important and part of that mission, though ever-changing."

Meyer said he hopes more school districts implement locked phone policies. Schools shouldn't be solely responsible for teaching healthy digital habits, he said, and younger students shouldn't be on social media.

The Wilmot district considered a door hanger pouch system, but officials worried that if a student took another's phone and damaged or destroyed it, the school could be found liable.

"Hopefully next year we can learn and grow," Olson said, "and make a decision that benefits students and staff in our district."

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.

Crow Creek MMIP walk raises awareness of gun violence

Despite a 2023 state of emergency declaration from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, violence on the reservation continues

BY: AMELIA SCHAFER, ICT-AUGUST 29, 2025 8:13 AM

FORT THOMPSON — It's been two years since Garrett Hawk was murdered in front of his home on the Crow Creek Reservation in central South Dakota.

Like many other Indigenous families in South Dakota, Hawk's family has gone years without answers, and violence on the small Crow Creek Reservation has continued, despite a 2023 emergency declaration from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe asking for increased police forces.

"My brother Garrett, he was my rock," said Shaynna Wounded Knee, Hawk's cousin who he grew up with like a sibling. "When I lost Garrett it really hit me. It's been hard, but with everyone's support we're getting through it."

Hawk's family has taken to advocating not just for his justice, but justice for all Missing and Murdered Indigenous People through annual walks on the Crow Creek Reservation.

Led by Hawk's cousin, Shaynna Wound-



Garrett Hawk, Crow Creek Dakota, was killed outside his home in Crow Creek two years ago. On Aug. 15, 2025, his family and community walked for him and other Missing and Murdered Indigenous People. (Amelia Schafer/ICT)

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ed Knee, who was like a sister to him, around 50 people joined together to walk on Aug. 15, from the Missouri River through the Crow Creek powwow grounds and into the community center.

This year's walk featured a call to end gun violence, happening just five days after two young men, Teron Sazue, 23, and Tayshawn Battese, 22, were shot and killed on the Lower Brule Reservation just across the river following the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe's annual powwow.

Two 18-year-old men, Jami Johnson Jr. and Kingston Bagola, have been indicted and charged with second-degree murder, assault with a dangerous weapon and using and carrying a firearm following the August 10 shooting.

"Every young life lost to gun violence is an unspeakable tragedy," said Frank Star Comes Out, Oglala Sioux Tribe president, in an Aug. 15 press statement. "We cannot allow this to become normal."

Photos of Sazue and Battese lined tables at the community center following the walk, surrounded by banners calling for an end to gun violence, alongside photos of other Native people lost to domestic and gun violence.

"Gun violence, it's going on on both sides (of the river)," Wounded Knee said. "It's a whole other range of violence and it's killing people."

In South Dakota, Native people are 12 times more likely to die by gun violence than White people, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

In August 2024, Tom Thunder Hawk was shot and killed at the annual Oglala Nation Wacipi, a powwow on the Pine Ridge Reservation in southwestern South Dakota.

The Rosebud, Oglala, Standing Rock and Crow Creek Sioux tribes have all issued separate state-of-emergency declarations throughout the past year over violence on their respective reservations. After Sazue's and Battese's deaths, Star Comes Out issued a state of emergency for all Oceti Sakowin lands (Lakota, Dakota and Nakota) within South Dakota.

"Our children deserve safe streets, safe schools and a future free from fear," he said.

Gun violence isn't the only source of violence for the community. Domestic violence, which can include child abuse, is a big issue. Over 25 percent of women and roughly 25 percent of men in South Dakota experience domestic violence during their lifetimes, and for many it can be deadly.

Lynette Shields and her great niece Olivia have joined Wounded Knee on the walk since it started in 2024. The family walks in memory of C.J. Shields, Olivia's grandfather and Lynette's younger brother.

Olivia never got to meet her grandfather, who was killed nearly 10 years ago on Sept. 4, 2015, by his girlfriend, Whitney Renae Turney, stabbed 25 times in their apartment in Oacoma.

"It's hard," Lynette said. "Because you still think about him. You see the bridge where he was dumped when you're driving out of town. He was so badly decomposed. ... They had to send him to Rapid City (for identification)."

In 2016, Turney pled guilty to first-degree murder, sentenced to 25 years in prison. Turney had left C.J. in her apartment for weeks before moving him to the reservation over 25 miles away.

"People saw his body laying there (in the apartment)," Lynette said. "They said they couldn't handle it (guilt) anymore, so they told us it was him."

But on Christmas Eve 2022, then-Gov. Kristi Noem commuted Turney's sentence, allowing her to spend the rest of it at home with her family. Lynette said she and the rest of the family were not consulted about the decision, and it felt horrible.

"The judge said, 'She has a daughter to raise,' but he had two daughters that won't ever get to visit with him, will never grow up with him," Lynette said. "So it was OK for her to go and kill him, and get out of prison as if it was all OK. He has grandbabies (now), seven. The youngest one, she wasn't even a year old (when he died)."

Several of the MMIP posters at the community center following the walk were of children, one of Mateo Tuberquia, a 5-year-old boy beaten to death. Tuberquia would have been 11 on Aug. 24.

These walks give grieving families space to be seen and heard, Wounded Knee said. She plans to continue these walks and continue to provide a safe space for families.

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"It's basically a support group for each other," she said.

Wounded Knee said she plans to create a solid support group for families, somewhere to pray and share a meal. Her goal is for next year's walk to be even better than the last two. Wounded Knee plans to request that tribal employees are given administrative leave so they can participate in the walk as well.

By next year, the family may also have answers about what happened to Hawk. Wounded Knee said recently law enforcement gave the family names of who the shooter may be. For now, everything is at a standstill.

"It's a lengthy investigation because of the different parties that were involved," she said. "And the thought that it may be connected to other incidents that have happened."

Amelia Schafer is the Indigenous Affairs reporter for ICT and is based in Rapid City. She is of Wampanoag and Montauk-Brothertown Indian Nation descent.

Appeals court upholds ruling rejecting sweeping Trump tariffs

BY: JACOB FISCHLER-AUGUST 29, 2025 7:18 PM

The economy-wide tariffs President Donald Trump placed on nearly every U.S. trading partner are illegal, a federal appeals court said Friday.

The International Economic Emergency Powers Act does not give the president the power to impose tariffs, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled in a 7-4 decision upholding a May decision from the U.S. Court of International Trade and dealing a blow to Trump's signature trade policy.

The unsigned majority opinion said the tariffs "exceed the authority delegated to the President by IEEPA's text."

However, the judges delayed their ruling from going into effect until October, providing the Trump administration an opportunity to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The ruling also does not affect other tariffs Trump issued under different authorities, including industry- or material-specific tariffs on automobiles, steel and aluminum.

In a post to social media, Trump said he would appeal to the Supreme Court, where he predicted victory, and repeated his claim that tariffs were an essential economic tool.

"If these Tariffs ever went away, it would be a total disaster for the Country," he wrote shortly after the decision was published. "It would make us financially weak, and we have to be strong.... If allowed to stand, this Decision would literally destroy the United States of America. At the start of this Labor Day weekend, we should all remember that TARIFFS are the best tool to help our Workers, and support Companies that produce great MADE IN AMERICA products."

Several Democratic states challenged the IEEPA tariffs. Oregon Solicitor General Benjamin Gutman argued on their behalf on July 31. The 11 judges on the appeals court expressed skepticism of both sides during those arguments.

In a statement Friday, Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield called the ruling "a huge win for Americans."

"Every court that has reviewed these tariffs has agreed that they are unconstitutional," he said. "This ruling couldn't come at a better time as people are walking into their local stores and seeing price increases for school supplies, clothes, and groceries."



The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, pictured July 31, 2025. (Photo by Ashley Murray/States

Newsroom)

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

Appeals court backs Venezuelan migrants' effort to keep protected status

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA-AUGUST 29, 2025 3:48 PM

WASHINGTON — A three-judge panel of a federal appeals court unanimously ruled Friday the Trump administration likely acted unlawfully when it revoked extensions for temporary protections for more than 600,000 Venezuelans.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit panel agreed with the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California's March decision to block Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem's decision to vacate two extensions of Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, to the group until October 2026 that the Biden administration put in place early this year.

One of the groups of Venezuelans had their TPS expire in April and the second is set to expire in September. The three-judge panel found that the Trump administration's decision to end TPS in April is also likely unlawful.

The panel said Noem did not have the authority to revoke the TPS extensions granted by then-DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

Judges Kim McLane Wardlaw, appointed by former President Bill Clinton, Salvador Mendoza Jr. and Anthony Johnstone, who were both appointed by former President Joe Biden, reached the decision.

The judges ruled that the law creating TPS, which grants work visas and deportation protections to nationals from a country deemed too dangerous to return to, was designed to create "predictable periods of safety and legal status for TPS beneficiaries" and the administration's cancellation of the extension contradicted that goal.

"Sudden reversals of prior decisions contravene the statute's plain language and purpose," they wrote. "Here, hundreds of thousands of people have been stripped of status and plunged into uncertainty. The stability of TPS has been replaced by fears of family separation, detention, and deportation."

"Congress did not contemplate this, and the ongoing irreparable harm to Plaintiffs warrants a remedy pending a final adjudication on the merits," they continued.

A spokesperson for DHS did not return a message seeking comment Friday.

The U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Trump administration in May to end TPS for the group of 350,000 Venezuelans that expired in April. It is unclear how Friday's order will affect that group.

The roughly 250,000 Venezuelans in another group are set to have their TPS expire Sept. 10 after the DHS revoked the extension.



U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem delivers remarks to staff at the Department of Homeland Security headquarters in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 28, 2025. (Photo by Manuel Balce Ceneta-Pool/Getty Images)

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

Trump moves to revoke \$5 billion of approved foreign aid spending

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA-AUGUST 29, 2025 12:29 PM

WASHINGTON — The White House budget office moved Friday to yank nearly \$5 billion in foreign aid already approved by Congress in a controversial maneuver meant to bypass lawmakers.

The so-called pocket rescission, which a top congressional watchdog and the Republican chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee have called illegal, would pull funding that Congress has already approved for the State Department to fulfill overseas commitments.

The nonpartisan Government Accountability Office has deemed such actions to circumvent Congress unlawful. And Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins said Friday that “any effort to rescind appropriated funds without congressional approval is a clear violation of the law.”

“Given that this package was sent to Congress very close to the end of the fiscal year when the funds are scheduled to expire, this is an apparent attempt to rescind appropriated funds without congressional approval,” the Maine Republican said in a statement.

According to a summary provided by Senate Appropriations ranking Democrat Patty Murray, the move would claw back \$3.2 billion from the State Department’s Development Assistance account that funds food security programs, works to limit irregular migration to the U.S. and to strengthen the market for U.S. companies involved in climate issues to expand overseas.

It would also remove \$913 million in U.S. treaty dues to the United Nations to support peacekeeping missions; \$445 million in security assistance from the State Department’s Peacekeeping Operations, particularly in Africa; and \$322 million from the Democracy Fund, according to Murray’s office.

The White House Office of Management and Budget did not respond to a message seeking the request.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement that President Donald Trump is “using his authority under the Impoundment Control Act to deploy a pocket rescission, cancelling \$5 billion in foreign aid and international organization funding that violates the President’s America First priorities.”

“None of these programs are in America’s interest, which is why the President is taking decisive action to put America and Americans first,” Rubio said.

Frustration from Congress

When the White House makes a request to Congress to claw back funding already approved, the payments are withheld for 45 days while lawmakers make a decision to approve the rescission or not. Because there are fewer than 45 days before the end of the current fiscal year, funding is essentially paused indefinitely, regardless if Congress approves the move.

As lawmakers face an Oct. 1 deadline in order to avoid a government shutdown, the rescission has already drawn frustration on Capitol Hill.

Murray, of Washington state, blasted the rescission request.

“Donald Trump wants to zero out more bipartisan investments in our national security and global leadership,” Murray said in a statement. “This time, however, he is attempting to do an end run around Congress altogether. No lawmaker should accept this absurd, illegal ploy to steal their constitutional power to determine how taxpayer dollars get spent.”

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer slammed the Trump administration for withdrawing funds ap-



White House budget director Russell Vought speaks with reporters inside the U.S. Capitol on July 15, 2025. (Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

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proved on a bipartisan basis.

"As the country stares down next month's government funding deadline on September 30th, it is clear neither President Trump nor Congressional Republicans have any plan to avoid a painful and entirely unnecessary shutdown," the New York Democrat said in a statement.

Pennsylvania Democrat Brendan Boyle, who is the top Democrat on the U.S. House Budget Committee, said in a statement the rescission wasn't "worth the paper it's printed on," and criticized Trump and White House budget director Russell Vought by name.

"It is deeply alarming, plainly illegal, and a blatant abuse of power," Boyle said. "Congress approved this funding on a bipartisan basis, and the Constitution is clear: it is Congress—not the President—that holds the power of the purse. With this illegal power grab, Donald Trump and Russell Vought are driving us toward a government shutdown."

This is the Trump administration's second rescissions request to Congress. The first, which Congress approved, yanked \$9 billion in congressionally approved funding. That included about \$1.1 billion for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, such as National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service, for two fiscal years. It also clawed back \$8 billion of foreign aid.

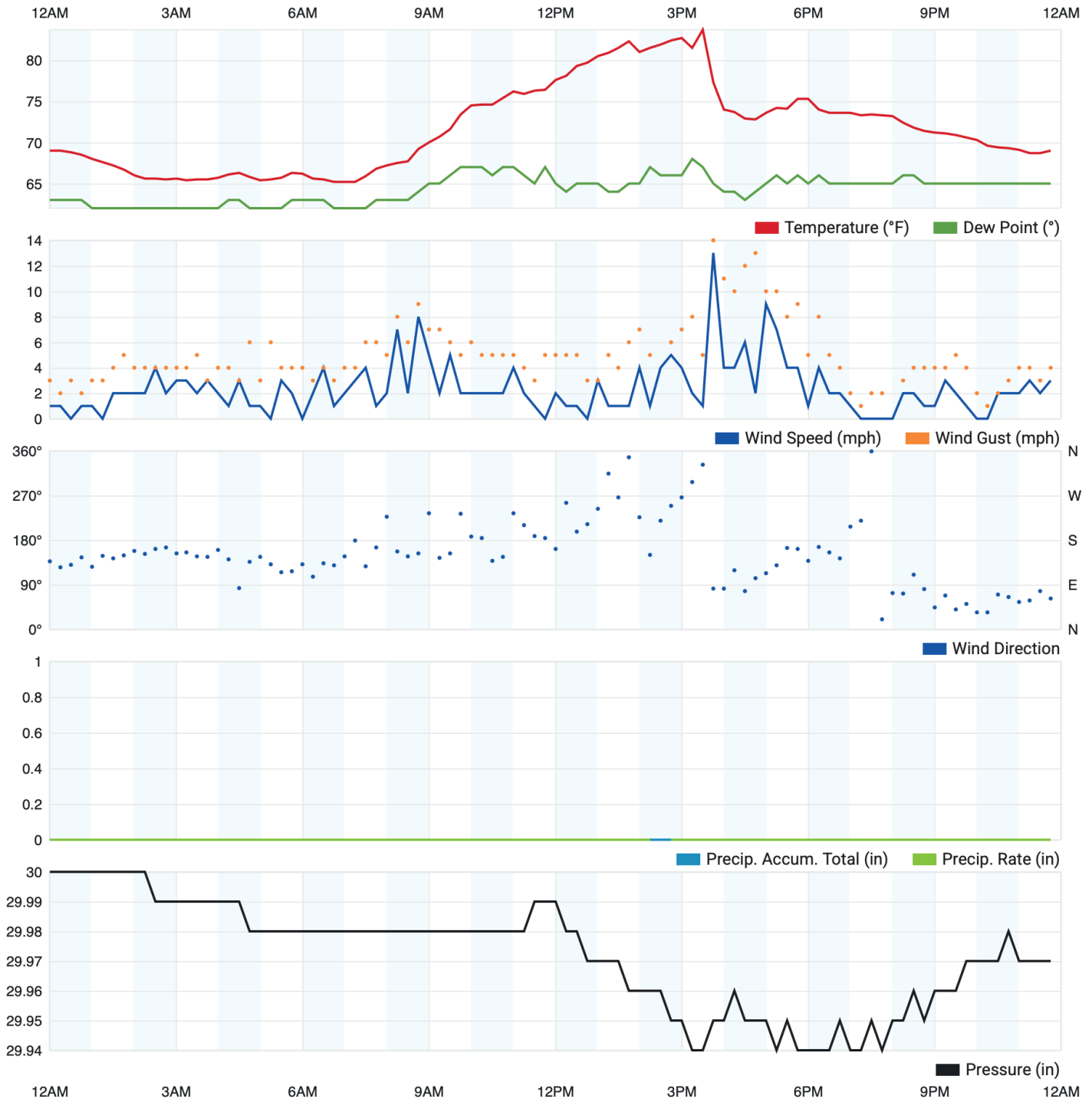
Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

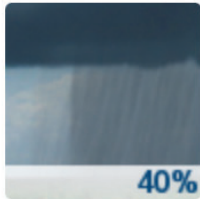
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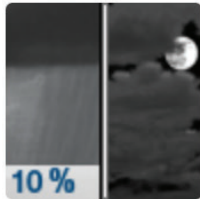
Today



High: 78 °F

Chance
Showers

Tonight



Low: 59 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Mostly Cloudy

Sunday



High: 77 °F

Chance
Showers

Sunday Night



Low: 57 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Slight Chance
Showers

Labor Day



High: 77 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Chance
T-storms



Holiday Weekend Forecast

August 30, 2025
3:50 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)

	8/30 Sat	8/31 Sun	9/1 Mon	9/2 Tue	9/3 Wed	9/4 Thu	9/5 Fri
Aberdeen	78	77	77	77	66	72	73
Miller	73	72	74	75	65	69	72
Mobridge	74	78	80	77	67	75	75
Murdo	67	71	77	80	70	75	77
Ortonville	76	74	74	72	60	64	68
Pierre	71	76	80	82	71	77	79
Sisseton	76	76	76	74	62	68	70
Watertown	75	74	73	74	62	65	69

Minimum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	8/30 Sat	8/31 Sun	9/1 Mon	9/2 Tue	9/3 Wed	9/4 Thu	9/5 Fri
Aberdeen	59	57	56	57	48	42	45
Miller	59	57	56	57	49	44	47
Mobridge	58	56	56	57	49	44	47
Murdo	62	58	54	55	51	45	48
Ortonville	59	58	58	59	49	44	46
Pierre	63	57	57	58	53	47	50
Sisseton	59	58	58	58	48	44	47
Watertown	60	58	57	58	48	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. Low temperatures Thursday morning are being watched closely, as for some, lows could potentially dip into the upper 30s!

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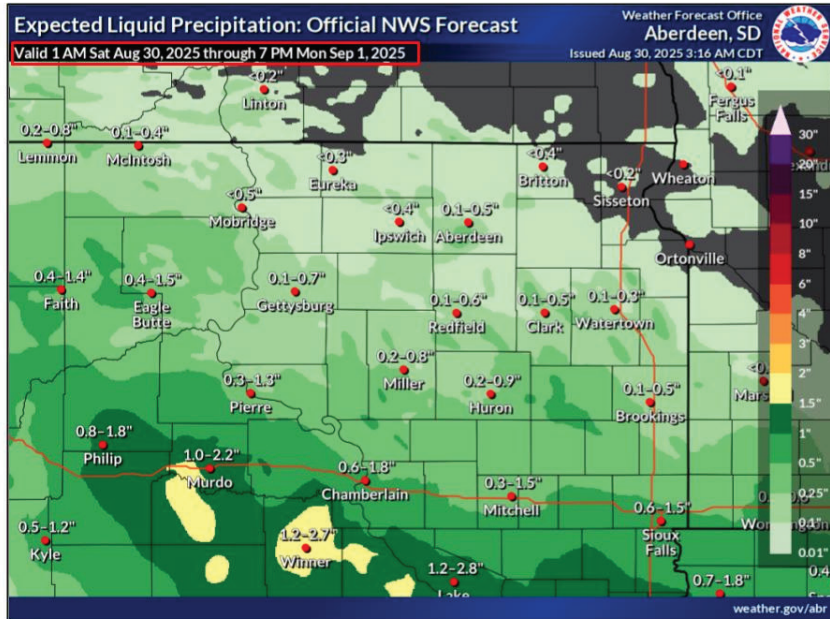
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Precipitation Forecast Through Monday

August 30, 2025
3:53 AM

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



- Showers persist off and on especially over central SD today and tonight
 - ◆ Highest chances (50-80%) for more than an 1.00in of rainfall is over central and south central SD through tonight
 - ◆ Weak thunderstorms are possible
 - No severe weather anticipated, though a cold air funnel or two might develop this afternoon
- Precipitation potential lingers into Sunday
 - ◆ Highest chances (30-70%) for 0.25in or more on Sunday reside south of U.S. Highway 212
 - ◆ Lower chances (10-30%) for 0.25in or more on Sunday reside across north central and northeast SD/west central MN



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A slow moving low pressure system over central SD will continue to cause showers and weak thunderstorms through the weekend as it slowly heads toward north central Nebraska. Central and south central SD stand the highest chance of receiving more than half an inch of additional rainfall. Eastern SD will also see some on and off showers and storms during this time, though precipitation coverage and amounts will be less than what central and south central SD receives.

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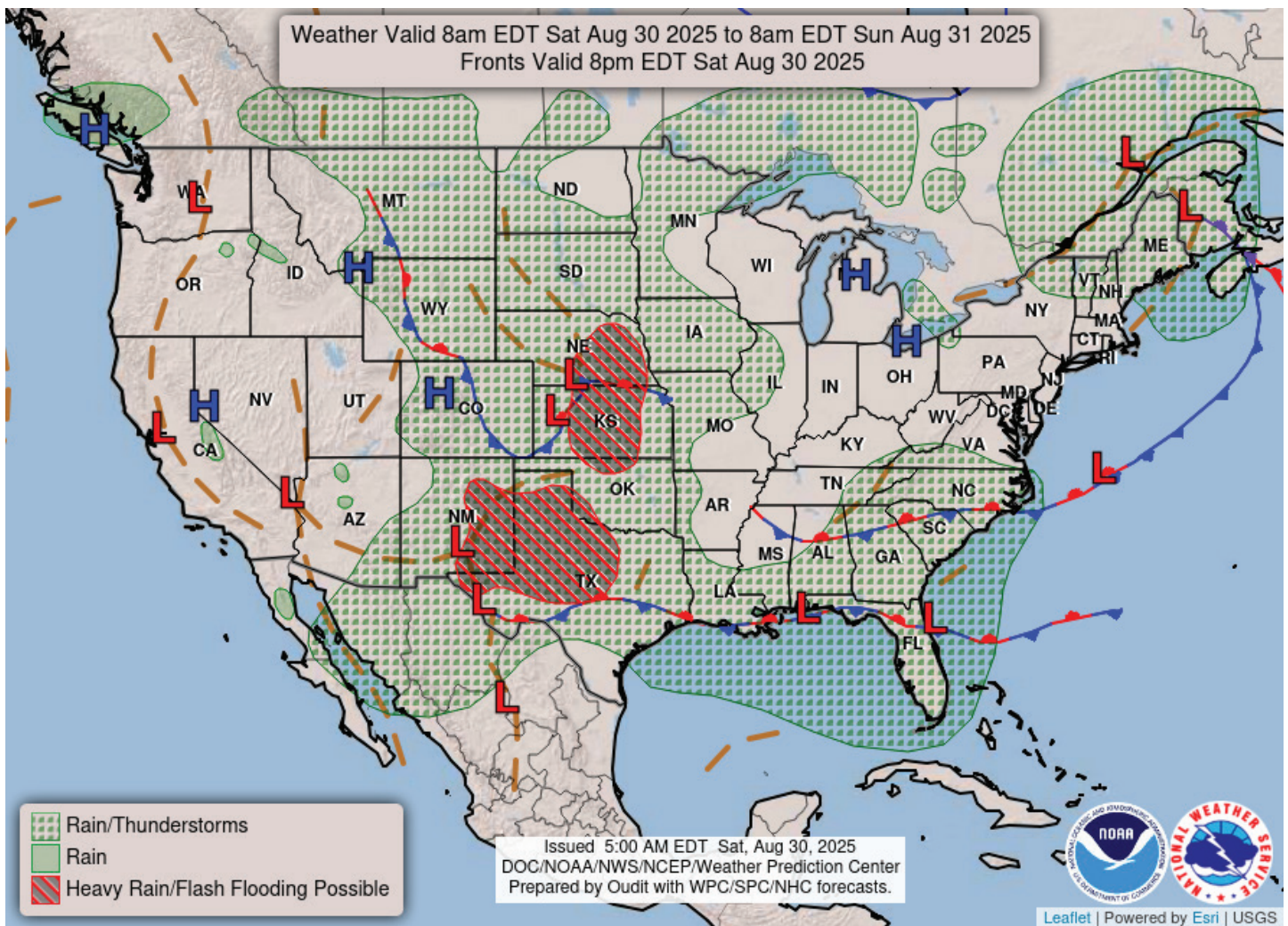
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 3:31 PM
Heat Index: 87 °F at 3:30 PM
Low Temp: 65 °F at 6:48 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 3:50 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1898
Record Low: 37 in 2003
Average High: 80
Average Low: 53
Average Precip in August.: 2.17
Precip to date in August: 4.42
Average Precip to date: 16.27
Precip Year to Date: 20.30
Sunset Tonight: 8:14 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:53 am



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Today in Weather History

August 30, 1979: A thunderstorm rolled over Ellsworth Air Force Base bringing almost 60 mph winds to the area.

1776 - General Washington took advantage of a heavy fog to evacuate Long Island after a defeat. Adverse winds kept the British fleet from intervening. (David Ludlum)

1838 - A major tornado, possibly the worst in Rhode Island history, passed south of Providence. It uprooted and stripped trees of their branches, unroofed or destroyed many houses, and sucked water out of ponds. The tornado barely missed a local railroad depot, where many people were waiting for a train. The tornado injured five people.

1839 - A hurricane moved from Cape Hatteras NC to offshore New England. An unusual feature of the hurricane was the snow it helped produce, which whitened the Catskill Mountains of New York State. Considerable snow was also reported at Salem NY. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - A tropical depression brought torrential rains to portions of southern Texas. Up to twelve inches fell south of Houston, and as much as eighteen inches fell southeast of Austin. The tropical depression spawned fourteen tornadoes in three days. (David Ludlum) Record cold gripped the northeastern U.S. Thirty-one cities in New England reported record lows, and areas of Vermont received up to three inches of snow. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Eight cities in California and Oregon reported record high temperatures for the date, including Redding CA and Sacramento CA where the mercury hit 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms drenched Georgia and the Carolinas with heavy rain, soaking Columbia, SC, with 4.10 inches in three hours. Fresno CA was the hot spot in the nation with a record high of 109 degrees. Duluth MN tied their record for the month of August with a morning low of 39 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced large hail in Montana and North Dakota during the evening and early nighttime hours. Hail three inches in diameter was reported 20 miles south of Medora ND, and thunderstorms over Dawson County MT produced up to three inches of rain. Thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail at Roundup MT, Dazey ND and Protection KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002: Typhoon Rusa dumps torrential rains across South Korea, causing widespread flooding from the 30th through September 1st. Typhoon Rusa was the most powerful typhoon to hit South Korea since 1959. Nearly 90,000 people were evacuated. The province of Gangwon was hit the hardest, where an estimated 36 inches of rain fell in less than 48 hours. The torrential rains flooded nearly 36,000 homes. The Korean Defense Ministry reported flood waters submerged 16 jet fighters and 622 military buildings and facilities at Kangnung airbase.

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He did not ask for anything except prayer...

Holy Bible

It was just before noon when Joseph walked into my office. His clothes were dirty and wrinkled. He must have been cold from the driving rain and winter wind.

"I know I look nasty," he said. "I've been sleeping in a barn for the past three nights. There's no heat, and it's been hard to stay warm. Mind if I sit in your chair over in the corner? It really looks comfortable. This soft drink is all I've had for two days. I'm a diabetic and need to eat but I'm drinking this drink as slowly as I can until I find someone who can help me. I was thrown out of my home on Christmas Day because I couldn't pay the rent. Do you have any money you can give me? I'll have some

by Friday and can pay you back then."

Our offices are located on a state highway, and many folks like Joseph stop by daily. Cal stopped by Monday. His mother, along with his two-month-old daughter, was killed by a drunk driver the day before. He was on his way to Florida to make funeral arrangements before he deployed to Iraq with his Marine unit. He did not ask for anything except prayer.

"I saw your Chapel," he said, "and I knew I could find someone here who could pray for me. That's really all I need."

It is difficult to remember a day when no one has stopped by for help. Their stories are compelling, often even heartbreaking. Occasionally they are untrue. In the end, however, they answer to God for what they do.

"He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker."

Today's Prayer: Help us, Father, to help those who are poor and in need. You've sent them our way for a reason. May we show Your love, mercy, and grace to those in need. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker." Proverbs 17:5a

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

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

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City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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Password _____

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paypal.me/paperpaul

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.29.25

13 31 32 44 45 21

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$302,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

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: 10 Hrs 36 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.29.25

8 14 22 24 30 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 10 Hrs 15 Mins 36 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.27.25

2 6 7 29 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 10 Hrs 15 Mins 36 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.27.25

12 19 26 51 62 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 10 Hrs 44 Mins 36 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.27.25

9 12 22 41 61 25

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$1,000,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 10 Hrs 44 Mins 36 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

08/09/2025 Groton Legion 30th Anniversary Celebration
08/07/2025 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm
08/11/2025 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 3:30-6pm
08/23/2025 Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/06-07/25 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
09/07/2025 Couples Sunflower Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
09/07/2025 9th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2025 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/15/2025 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving 11:30am-1:30pm Community Center (Thanksgiving)
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Central def. Rapid City Central, 25-11, 19-25, 25-23, 22-25, 15-10

McLaughlin def. Wakpala, 25-14, 25-21, 25-23

Mitchell def. Sturgis Brown High School, 22-25, 25-16, 25-14, 25-16

Rapid City Stevens def. T F Riggs High School, 25-12, 25-10, 25-13

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

Israeli airstrike kills Houthi rebel prime minister in Sanaa

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The Houthis said Saturday an Israeli airstrike killed the prime minister of the rebel-controlled government in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, the most senior Houthi official killed in the Israeli-U.S. campaign against the Iranian-backed rebels.

Ahmed al-Rahawi was killed in a Thursday strike in Sanaa along with a number of ministers, the rebels said in a statement. Other ministers and officials were wounded, the statement added without providing further details.

The premier was targeted along with other members of his Houthi-controlled government during a "routine workshop held by the government to evaluate its activities and performance over the past year," the Houthi statement said.

Thursday's Israeli strike occurred as the rebels-owned television station was broadcasting a speech for Abdul Malik al-Houthi, the secretive leader of the rebel group where he was sharing updates on the latest Gaza developments and vowing retaliation against Israel. Senior Houthi officials used to gather to watch al-Houthi's pre-recorded speeches.

On Thursday, The Israeli military said that it "precisely struck a Houthi terrorist regime military target in the area of Sanaa in Yemen." The military had no immediate comment on Saturday's announcement of the prime minister's killing.

The prime minister hailed from the southern province of Abyan, and was an ally to former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh. He allied himself with the Houthis when the rebels overran Sanaa, and much of the north and center of the country in 2014, initiating the country's long-running civil war. He was appointed as prime minister in August 2024.

Al-Rahawi is the most senior Houthi official to be killed since the United States and Israel began their air and naval campaign in response to the rebels's missile and drone attacks on Israel and on ships in the Red Sea.

The Houthis launched a campaign targeting ships in response to the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, saying they were doing so in solidarity with the Palestinians. Their attacks over the past two years have upended shipping in the Red Sea, through which about \$1 trillion of goods passes each year.

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

Trump taps federal agents to tackle local policing.

That's not always helpful, critics say

By BYRON TAU and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a scene that has played out on the streets of Washington and Los Angeles since President Donald Trump declared a crime emergency in the nation's capital and ramped up deporta-

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tions nationwide: Federal agents, some in masks, grabbing someone off the street, bundling the person into a car and driving away, ignoring questions from bystanders.

In an executive order signed this month, Trump said the District of Columbia government's "failure to maintain public order and safety has had a dire impact on the Federal Government's ability to operate" and that it was his duty as president to use federal agents to restore order. He has threatened to expand those operations — law enforcement duties traditionally reserved for local police — to other cities.

Urban leaders, police officials and civil rights advocates say federal agents are not the best equipped for this type of policing. They also are concerned the strategy will erode the delicate relationship that local police have with the communities they serve.

Here are some key things to know about the differences in how federal authorities and local police operate:

Federal agents typically don't patrol cities

Federal agents have not historically played much of a role in everyday policing. The job of federal marshal was created in 1789, but the agency's numbers are small and largely focused on carrying out the work of federal courts. Other U.S. investigative agencies have mostly focused on major interstate crimes and national security matters.

Federal agents "are usually doing major investigations. They're not navigating day-to-day contact with the public the way that police do," said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has more traditionally done nationwide work tracking down immigrants who are in the United States illegally but has ramped up operations since Trump took office in January.

Federal agencies are wary of body cameras

After protests over the deaths of Black men at the hands of police in recent years, many cities made policy changes to enhance accountability and transparency.

Most large police departments, for example, require officers to wear cameras on patrol. Many agencies release the footage upon request or under their state public records law. Federal agencies have not embraced such change, despite some tentative steps to keep pace with their local counterparts.

In 2022, Democratic President Joe Biden issued an executive order requiring federal law enforcement agencies to adopt body-camera policies for officers who are on patrol, making arrests and or conducting searches. Trump rescinded that directive, and agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Border Patrol have ended their usage.

Body-worn cameras "have been good for everybody," said Lauren Bonds, executive director of the National Police Accountability Project. Bonds said such policies protect officers from meritless citizen complaints and make it easier for the public to get justice if they have been wronged. "Across the board, I would say it's an equally beneficial tool for police and for the public," she said.

Most local police don't wear masks

Washington's mayor, Democrat Muriel Bowser, has questioned why so many of the federal officers flooding the city's streets are covering their faces.

"Why do they need masks?" Bowser asked. "They are federal officials. They're paid by the taxpayers. They should be doing their jobs in a way that's lawful and constitutional."

Civil rights advocates have complained that such tactics erode trust between communities and law enforcement and make holding individual officers to account for abuses more difficult. Administration officials say masks are needed to protect federal agents.

Troy Edgar, deputy DHS secretary, wrote in an op-ed for Fox News that mask-wearing protects federal law enforcement officers from doxing and harassment. ICE has seen a sharp rise in assaults, with officials targeted on a "near weekly basis," he wrote.

He said DHS agents clearly identify themselves during arrests by stating their names, showing badges and wearing identifiers on their gear. But photos and videos reviewed by The Associated Press do not show agents always wearing clear badges, tags or other identifiers during encounters with the public.

Masks were once largely forbidden on the federal level unless an agent was working undercover, said

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Michael Bouchard, a former assistant director at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives who retired in 2007. Being clearly identifiable builds trust and allows people to report any issues they might have with a particular officer, Bouchard said.

"If you're doing the right thing," he said, "if you're acting within the law, what do you have to hide from?" Federal authorities do not provide detailed information on arrests.

Most local arrest reports are a matter of public record. Some local agencies even disclose such information to citizens in email groups or on social media websites.

Getting access to basic arrest details from the federal government has proved far harder. Administration officials have been releasing daily arrest totals and some of the charges that people are facing, but information on which agency made which arrests and who is facing what charges has been difficult to find.

Those seeking details about federal arrests are frequently directed to file a request under the Freedom of Information Act. Most agencies have large backlogs of such requests.

"When the agencies doing the policing have backlogs that measure in years or sometimes decades, FOIA is completely ineffective at getting policing records in any kind of useful time frame," said Kel McClanahan, an attorney at the firm National Security Counselors who frequently works on public information issues.

Once a loved one is arrested, especially by immigration authorities, families can face a grueling task of trying to find them.

In June, for example, Rosa Soto scrambled to find where a longtime family friend, Martin Guzman, was taken after he was detained by immigration authorities at a Home Depot in Chino, California. It took her days to track him down.

"It feels like the systems you're supposed to be able to trust and the due process you're supposed to be able to trust in is no longer existent," Soto said. "I can't imagine for someone who knows very little about our justice system to truly be able to navigate it."

Federal tactics raise concerns about communities losing trust in police.

Civic leaders said they fear the federal crackdown could erode uneven progress police have made in building trust with the communities they serve.

"We are getting some violent people off the streets -- but in the long run, at what cost?" Jaron Hickman, a senior police commander in Washington, said at a public forum Tuesday.

Norm Nixon, 62, an associate minister at Union Temple Baptist Church in Washington's historically Black Anacostia neighborhood, said federal operations were changing the way residents felt about the city's police force.

"Now, with these federal guys coming in, people just see them all as law enforcement," Nixon said. "Some of the young people I talk to feel like the local police officers are traitors now, that they are really against us and out to get us."

Israel soon will halt or slow aid into northern Gaza as military offensive grows

By JULIA FRANKEL and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel will soon halt or slow humanitarian aid into parts of northern Gaza as it expands its military offensive against Hamas, an official said Saturday, a day after Gaza City was declared a combat zone.

The decision was likely to bring more international condemnation of Israel's government as frustration grows in the country and abroad over the dire conditions for both Palestinians and remaining hostages in Gaza after nearly 23 months of war.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media, told The Associated Press that Israel will stop airdrops over Gaza City in the coming days and reduce the number of aid trucks arriving in the territory's north as it prepares to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people south.

Israel on Friday ended recently imposed daytime pauses in fighting to allow aid delivery, describing Gaza

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City as a Hamas stronghold and alleging that a tunnel network remains in use, despite previous large-scale raids on the area. The United Nations and partners have said the pauses, airdrops and other recent measures fell far short of the 600 trucks of aid needed daily in Gaza.

AP video footage overnight showed several large explosions across Gaza. In recent days, Israel's military has increased strikes on the outskirts of Gaza City, where famine was recently documented and declared by global food security experts.

It was not clear when the pause or halt in aid deliveries would begin. By Saturday there had been no airdrops for several days across Gaza, a break from the almost daily drops over the past few weeks.

Israel's army didn't respond to a request for comment about the airdrops or say how it would provide aid to Palestinians during another major shift in Gaza's population of over 2 million people.

Red Cross warns against Israel's evacuation of Palestinians

"Such an evacuation would trigger a massive population movement that no area in the Gaza Strip can absorb, given the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure and the extreme shortages of food, water, shelter and medical care," Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said in a statement Saturday.

It's impossible that a mass evacuation of Gaza City can be done in a safe and dignified way, she said.

Hundreds of residents have begun leaving Gaza City, piling their few remaining possessions onto pickup trucks or donkey carts. Many have been forced to leave their homes more than once.

Also Saturday, Israeli gunfire killed four people trying to get aid in central Gaza, according to health officials at Al-Awda Hospital, where the bodies were taken. Gaza's Health Ministry said 15 people were killed and at least 206 others wounded seeking aid over the past 24 hours.

The Health Ministry also said 10 people died as a result of starvation and malnutrition over the past 24 hours, including three children. It said at least 332 Palestinians have now died from malnutrition-related causes during the war, including 124 children.

At least 63,371 Palestinians have died in Gaza during the war, said the ministry, which does not say how many of the dead are fighters or civilians but says around half have been women and children. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on war casualties. Israel disputes its figures but has not provided its own.

"There is no food and even water is not available. When it is available, it is not safe to drink," said Amer Zayed, as he waited for food from a charity kitchen in the southern city of Deir Al-Balah on Friday.

"The suffering gets worse when there are more displaced people," he added.

Israelis will rally again to demand truce and freedom for hostages

Israelis waited to hear the identity of the remains of a hostage that Israel on Friday said had been recovered in Gaza. It also said it recovered the remains of hostage Ilan Weiss.

Forty-eight hostages now remain in Gaza of the over 250 seized in the Hamas-led attack on Oct. 7, 2023, that sparked the war. Israel had believed 20 of the hostages are still alive.

Their loved ones fear the expanding military offensive will put them in even more danger, and they prepared to rally again Saturday evening to demand a ceasefire deal to bring everyone home.

Federal judge issues order blocking Trump effort to expand speedy deportations of migrants

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge has temporarily blocked the Trump administration from carrying out speedy deportations of undocumented migrants detained in the interior of the United States.

The move is a setback for the President Donald Trump's efforts to expand the use of the federal expedited removal statute to quickly remove some migrants in the country illegally without appearing before a judge first.

Trump promised to engineer a massive deportation operation during his 2024 campaign if voters returned

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him to the White House. And he set a goal of carrying out 1 million deportations a year in his second term.

But U.S. District Judge Jia Cobb suggested the administration's expanded use of the expedited removal of migrants is trampling on individuals' due process rights.

"In defending this skimpy process, the Government makes a truly startling argument: that those who entered the country illegally are entitled to no process under the Fifth Amendment, but instead must accept whatever grace Congress affords them," Cobb wrote in a 48-page opinion issued Friday night. "Were that right, not only noncitizens, but everyone would be at risk."

The Department of Homeland Security announced shortly after Trump came to office in January that it was expanding the use of expedited removal, the fast-track deportation of undocumented migrants who have been in the U.S. less than two years.

The effort has triggered lawsuits by the American Civil Liberties Union and immigrant rights groups.

DHS in a statement said Cobb's "ruling ignores the President's clear authorities under both Article II of the Constitution and the plain language of federal law." It said Trump "has a mandate to arrest and deport the worst of the worst" and that "we have the law, facts, and common sense on our side."

Before the administration's push to expand such speedy deportations, expedited removal was only used for migrants who were stopped within 100 miles of the border and who had been in the U.S. for less than 14 days.

Cobb, who was nominated by Democratic President Joe Biden, didn't question the constitutionality of the expedited removal statute, or its application at the border.

"It merely holds that in applying the statute to a huge group of people living in the interior of the country who have not previously been subject to expedited removal, the Government must afford them due process," she wrote.

She added that "prioritizing speed over all else will inevitably lead the Government to erroneously remove people via this truncated process."

Cobb earlier this month agreed to temporarily block the administration's efforts to expand fast-track deportations of immigrants who legally entered the U.S. under a process known as humanitarian parole. The ruling could benefit hundreds of thousands of people.

In that case the judge said Homeland Security exceeded its statutory authority in its effort to expand expedited removal for many immigrants. The judge said those immigrants are facing perils that outweigh any harm from "pressing pause" on the administration's plans.

Since May, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have positioned themselves in hallways to arrest people after judges accept government requests to dismiss deportation cases. After the arrests, the government renews deportation proceedings but under fast-track authority.

Although fast-track deportations can be put on hold by filing an asylum claim, people may be unaware of that right and, even if they are, can be swiftly removed if they fail an initial screening.

Russian mass drone and missile attack on southern Ukraine kills 1 and wounds dozens

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched a mass attack on southern Ukraine, local officials said, two days after a rare airstrike on central Kyiv killed 23 and damaged European Union diplomatic offices as U.S.-led efforts to end Moscow's three-year war on its neighbor staggered.

Among other locations hit, the assault overnight into Saturday struck a five-story residential building, killing at least one civilian and wounding 28 people, including children, in the Zaporizhzhia region, Gov. Ivan Fedorov reported.

Russia launched 537 strike drones and decoys, as well as 45 missiles, according to Ukraine's Air Force. Ukrainian forces shot down or neutralized 510 drones and decoys and 38 missiles, the force reported.

The Kremlin on Thursday said Russia remained interested in continuing peace talks, despite the air attack on Kyiv that day that was one of the largest and deadliest since Moscow's full-scale invasion in 2022.

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Thursday's strike was one of the few times Russian drones and missiles have penetrated the heart of the Ukrainian capital. Children were among the dead, and search and rescue efforts continued for hours to pull people from the rubble.

Hours after the attack, the United States approved an \$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.

Ukraine hits more Russian oil refineries

Separately, Ukraine has continued to strike oil refineries inside Russia that it says have supplied Moscow's war effort, the Ukrainian General Staff reported Saturday. It said two facilities were hit overnight: in the Krasnodar region near occupied Crimea, and the Samara region further northeast.

Falling drone debris sparked a fire at a refinery in the city of Krasnodar, regional Russian authorities confirmed Saturday. They later said the blaze had been extinguished, damaging one of the facility's processing units but causing no casualties. The Krasnodar refinery produces approximately 3 million tons per year of petroleum products such as gasoline, diesel and aviation fuel.

A separate drone strike caused a fire at the Syzran Oil Refinery in the Samara province, according to the Ukrainian General Staff.

Gas stations have run dry in some regions of Russia after Ukrainian drones struck oil infrastructure in recent weeks, with motorists waiting in long lines and officials resorting to rationing or cutting off sales altogether. To try to ease the shortage, Russia has paused gasoline exports, with officials Wednesday declaring a full ban until Sept. 30 and a partial ban affecting traders and intermediaries until Oct. 31.

Analysts expect the gasoline crisis to ease by late September as demand subsides and the annual summer maintenance for many refineries is finished. Still, the shortages have highlighted a vulnerability on the home front that Ukraine could exploit further as drone warfare evolves.

Former Ukrainian parliament speaker shot dead

In a separate development, Ukraine's former parliament speaker and a prominent pro-Western politician was shot dead in the city of Lviv on Saturday, according to statements by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and local authorities.

Little is known so far about the perpetrator, or why Andriy Parubiy was targeted. Zelenskyy on Saturday decried Parubiy's "terrible murder," and promised an investigation.

Parubiy, 54, was a lawmaker from the Lviv region who participated in Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2004 and led self-defense volunteer units during the Maidan protests of 2014, which forced pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich from office. He was parliament speaker from 2016 to 2019.

3 dead after mob sets fire to Indonesian regional parliament building

By NINIEK KARMINI and ANDI JATMIKO Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — An angry mob set fire to a local parliament building in an Indonesian provincial capital, leaving at least three people dead and five others hospitalized, officials said.

The blaze in Makassar, the capital city of South Sulawesi province, began late Friday. Television reports showed the provincial council building ablaze overnight, causing the area to turn an eerie orange color.

Rescuers retrieved three bodies by Saturday morning, while five people were hospitalized with burns or with broken bones after jumping from the building, said Fadli Tahar, a local disaster official.

Protesters in West Java's Bandung city also set a regional parliament ablaze on Friday, but no casualties were reported. In Surabaya, Indonesia's second-largest city, protesters stormed the regional police headquarters after destroying fences and torching vehicles. Security forces fired tear gas and used water cannons, but demonstrators fought back with fireworks and wooden clubs.

Foreign embassies in Jakarta, including the U.S., Australia and Southeast Asian countries, have advised their citizens in Indonesia to avoid demonstration areas or large public gatherings.

Calm largely returned to Indonesia's capital on Saturday as authorities cleaned up burned-out cars,

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police offices and bus shelters that were set ablaze by angry protesters.

Five days of protests began in Jakarta on Monday, sparked by reports that all 580 lawmakers receive a monthly housing allowance of 50 million rupiah (\$3,075) in addition to their salaries. The allowance, introduced last year, is almost 10 times the Jakarta minimum wage.

Critics argue the new allowance is not only excessive but also insensitive at a time when most people are grappling with soaring living costs and taxes and rising unemployment.

The protests grew wider and more violent following the death of 21-year-old ride-hailing driver Affan Kurniawan. A video on social media apparently showing his death during a rally in the capital Jakarta on Thursday shocked the nation and spurred an outcry against the security forces.

Kurniawan was reportedly completing a food delivery order when he was caught in the clash. Witnesses told local television that the armored car from the National Police's Mobile Brigade unit suddenly sped through the crowd of demonstrators and hit Kurniawan, causing him to fall. Instead of stopping, the car ran over him.

On Saturday, hundreds of ride-hailing drivers and students in Bali staged a solidarity demonstration over Kurniawan's death in a rare protest on the tourist island. They called for police reform and the release of those arrested during the protests.

Protesters marched to Bali's regional police headquarters and riot police fired rounds of tear gas at them to push back those who tried to reach the heavily guarded compound. Protesters responded by throwing rocks, bottles and flares.

Clashes between riot police and protesters erupted in multiple cities across Indonesia on Friday, including in Medan, Solo, Yogyakarta, Magelang, Malang, Bengkulu, Pekanbaru and Manokwari in easternmost Papua region.

Some 950 people were arrested in rallies in Jakarta alone by Thursday, according to the National Commission on Human Rights, or Komnas HAM.

Authorities said about 25 officers were hospitalized with serious injuries after being attacked by protesters in Jakarta. The Komnas HAM believed that the number of injured people on the community side is much bigger.

Amnesty International criticized Indonesia's government Saturday, saying it suppresses free speech with crackdowns on public protests.

"No one should lose their lives for exercising their right to protest," said Usman Hamid, the Executive Director of Amnesty International Indonesia. "The authorities must immediately and unconditionally release anyone detained solely for exercising their rights," he said.

2 civilians indicted for their role in a Pearl Harbor fuel spill that sickened 6,000 people in 2021

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A grand jury has indicted two civilian workers on charges they caused the Navy to provide the Hawaii Department of Health with false information about jet fuel that spilled from a Pearl Harbor storage facility before it later seeped into drinking water and sickened 6,000 people over Thanksgiving in 2021.

The indictments are the first to result from the fuel spill that angered Hawaii residents, lawmakers and military service members and their families. The military decided to close the aging World War II-era fuel tanks after the spill.

A Navy investigation in 2022 found shoddy management and human error caused the leak at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The Defense Department's inspector general last year found Navy officials lacked sufficient understanding of the risks of maintaining massive fuel storage tanks on top of a Pearl Harbor drinking water well. The Navy issued written reprimands to three retired military officers for their roles in the fuel spill.

The indictment returned Thursday alleges John Floyd and Nelson Wu provided the Navy with inaccurate

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information about a May 2021 spill that occurred six months before the fuel got in the drinking water. The indictment says they caused the Navy to mislead the Hawaii Department of Health about how much fuel leaked from one of the tanks and reassured officers that their information was accurate.

This caused the Navy to tell the department in the months after May that 1,618 gallons (6,125 liters) leaked instead of 20,000 gallons (75,700 liters) and failed to report that it was unable to find 18,000 gallons (68,000 liters), prosecutors say. The indictment alleges Floyd and Wu redacted data from records provided. Floyd and Wu were each indicted on one count of conspiracy and one count of making false statements.

Floyd was the Fuels Department deputy director at Red Hill while Wu was the Fuels Department supervisory engineer.

The federal public defender's office, which is representing Floyd, didn't immediately return a phone call seeking comment. Wu's attorney, Alen Kaneshiro, said he didn't have a comment at this time.

The Navy's investigation found fuel gushed from a ruptured pipe on May 6, 2021. Most of it flowed into a fire suppression drain system, where it sat unnoticed for six months until a cart rammed a sagging line holding the liquid and caused fuel to pour out. Crews believed they mopped up most of this fuel, but they failed to get it all and some flowed into a drain and drinking water well that supplied water to 90,000 people at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

Wayne Tanaka, the director of the Sierra Club of Hawaii, said culpability extended beyond the alleged actions of the two civilians. He said in a statement the Navy's own investigation showed officials knew some 20,000 gallons were unaccounted for after the May incident and yet it didn't inform the community or regulators. He said Navy leaders sidelined a whistleblower who sounded alarms about the mismanagement of Red Hill.

Fuel leaks at Red Hill had occurred before, including in 2014, prompting the Sierra Club of Hawaii and the Honolulu Board of Water Supply to ask the military to move the tanks to a place where they wouldn't threaten Oahu's water. But the Navy refused, saying the island's water was safe.

Boy wounded in Minnesota church shooting asks doctor:

'Can you say a prayer with me?'

By STEVE KARNOWSKI, JOHN SEEWER and MARK VANCLEAVE Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Moments after rifle blasts reverberated inside a Minneapolis church, Catholic school children wearing plaid jumpers and green polo shirts ducked into pews, some jumping atop friends to protect them from the carnage.

One girl, Lydia Kaiser, was struck shielding her "little buddy" while her father, the school's gym teacher, helped usher children to safety and reunite them with their parents, according to a family friend organizing fundraising for the family.

A 13-year-old boy named Endre, who was shot twice and rushed into surgery, asked the doctor, "Can you say a prayer with me?" his aunt said in a GoFundMe posting. Endre's aunt said he's now recovering, and the surgeon told the family that Endre had inspired their medical team.

Despite the horror carried out Wednesday by a shooter whose journal entries detail weeks of preparation and a fixation on harming children, stories of bravery and tragedy have emerged as families share their accounts. At least five children and one adult remained hospitalized Friday after the shooter fired 116 rifle rounds through the church's stained-glass windows. The attack left two students dead and 20 people wounded, nearly all of them children.

The first few seconds felt like minutes

Doctors and first responders in Minneapolis this week called the students and teachers at Annunciation Catholic School heroes for protecting each other and following their active shooter training as the barrage of gunfire erupted during the first Mass of the school year.

Matthew Stommes, who had just walked his 12-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son into the church that morning, was sitting in a back pew when he saw flashes of gunfire and children screaming and covering their ears.

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"We didn't know what was going on for those first few seconds that seemed like minutes," he said. "We could see the leaders in the church from the front starting to tell everyone to get down. But those leaders in the church here, our priest, our deacon, our principal, they were not ducking."

His own children were unscathed, but two of their friends remained hospitalized. Stommes and other parents were among those who carried injured children out of the church as emergency responders arrived.

Some of those who showed up to help didn't know their children were among the injured.

A pediatric critical care nurse at Hennepin Healthcare arrived at work Wednesday morning to help treat shooting victims. It was then that she found out her 12-year-old daughter, Sophia Forchas, was among the wounded, the family wrote on a GoFundMe page.

The girl, whose younger brother also was at the school but not wounded, underwent emergency surgery and was in critical condition, a spokesperson for the hospital confirmed Thursday.

"Her road ahead will be long, uncertain, and incredibly difficult — but she is strong, and she is not alone," the fundraiser says.

Weeks of preparation

In the weeks before the attack, the shooter, identified as Robin Westman, 23, wrote in journals about running drills at a shooting range and borrowing money from family to buy guns. The preparation was spelled out across hundreds of pages written in Cyrillic, a centuries-old script still used in Slavic countries.

An entry in July describes the school as an "easy" target, but cautions about avoiding parents, who could have guns and fight back. The shooter also writes about waiting until school starts to be able to attack a large group of children.

Although investigators have not found a clear motive for the attack, the shooter's connections to the school and church are clear: Westman, whose mother worked for the parish before retiring in 2021, once attended Annunciation Catholic School.

New law enforcement documents revealed Friday also show the shooter went through a romantic breakup not long before showing up at the church with a pump-action shotgun, a 9 mm pistol and a semiautomatic rifle.

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.

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."

Father wants his son remembered for his love

The father of the 8-year-old boy who was killed tearfully urged others 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.

The parents of 10-year-old Harper Moyski, who also died in the shooting, 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.

The shooting has renewed calls for gun safety legislation. But getting that done may be difficult in Minnesota, a state closely split along partisan lines.

Colleges face financial struggles as Trump policies send international enrollment plummeting

By LUENA RODRIGUEZ-FEO VILEIRA, MAKIYA SEMINERA and COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

One international student after another told the University of Central Missouri this summer that they couldn't get a visa, and many struggled to even land an interview for one.

Even though demand was just as high as ever, half as many new international graduate students showed up for fall classes compared to last year.

The decline represents a hit to the bottom line for Central Missouri, a small public university that operates close to its margins with an endowment of only \$65 million. International students typically account for nearly a quarter of its tuition revenue.

"We aren't able to subsidize domestic students as much when we have fewer international students who are bringing revenue to us," said Roger Best, the university's president.

Signs of a decline in international students have unsettled colleges around the U.S. Colleges with large numbers of foreign students and small endowments have little financial cushion to protect them from steep losses in tuition money.

International students represent at least 20% of enrollment at more than 100 colleges with endowments of less than \$250,000 per student, according to an Associated Press analysis. Many are small Christian colleges, but the group also includes large universities such as Northeastern and Carnegie Mellon.

The extent of the change in enrollment will not be clear until the fall. Some groups have forecast a decline of as much as 40%, with a huge impact on college budgets and the wider U.S. economy.

International students face new scrutiny on several fronts

As part of a broader effort to reshape higher education, President Donald Trump has pressed colleges to limit their numbers of international students and heightened scrutiny of student visas. His administration has moved to deport foreign students involved in pro-Palestinian activism, and new student visa appointments were put on hold for weeks as it ramped up vetting of applicants' social media.

On Wednesday, the Department of Homeland Security said it will propose a rule that would put new limits on the time foreign students can stay in the U.S.

The policies have introduced severe financial instability for colleges, said Justin Gest, a professor at George Mason University who studies the politics of immigration.

Foreign students are not eligible for federal financial aid and often pay full price for tuition — double or even triple the in-state rate paid by domestic students at public universities.

"To put it more dollars and cents-wise, if an international student comes in and pays \$80,000 a year in tuition, that gives universities the flexibility to offer lower fees and more scholarship money to American students," Gest said.

A Sudanese student barely made it to the US for the start of classes

Ahmed Ahmed, a Sudanese student, nearly didn't make it to the U.S. for his freshman year at the University of Rochester.

The Trump administration in June announced a travel ban on 12 countries, including Sudan. Diplomatic officials assured Ahmed he could still enter the U.S. because his visa was issued before the ban. But when he tried to board a flight to leave for the U.S. from Uganda, where he stayed with family during the summer, he was turned away and advised to contact an embassy about his visa.

With the help of the University of Rochester's international office, Ahmed was able to book another flight.

At Rochester, where he received a scholarship to study electrical engineering, Ahmed, 19, said he feels supported by the staff. But he also finds himself on edge and understands why other students might not want to subject themselves to the scrutiny in the U.S., particularly those who are entirely paying their own way.

"I feel like I made it through, but I'm one of the last people to make it through," he said.

Colleges are taking steps to blunt the impact

In recent years, international students have made up about 30% of enrollment at Central Missouri, which

has a total of around 12,800 students. In anticipation of the hit to international enrollment, Central Missouri cut a cost-of-living raise for employees. It has pushed off infrastructure improvements planned for its campus and has been looking for other ways to cut costs.

Small schools — typically classified as those with no more than 5,000 students — tend to have less financial flexibility and will be especially vulnerable, said Dick Startz, an economics professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Lee University, a Christian institution with 3,500 students in Tennessee, is expecting 50 to 60 international students enrolled this fall, down from 82 the previous school year, representing a significant drop in revenue for the school, said Roy Y. Chan, the university's director of graduate studies.

The school already has increased tuition by 20% over the past five years to account for a decrease in overall enrollment, he said.

"Since we're a smaller liberal arts campus, tuition cost is our main, primary revenue," Chan said, as opposed to government funding or donations.

The strains on international enrollment only add to distress for schools already on the financial brink.

Colleges around the country have been closing as they cope with declines in domestic enrollment, a consequence of changing demographics and the effects of the pandemic. Nationwide, private colleges have been closing at a rate of about two per month, according to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.

The number of high school graduates in the U.S. is expected to decline through 2041, when there will be 13% fewer compared to 2024, according to projections from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

"That means that if you lost participation from international students, it's even worse," Startz said.

Late crime-busting sheriff Buford Pusser inspired Hollywood. Investigators say he killed his wife

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

A late Tennessee sheriff who inspired a Hollywood movie about a law enforcement officer who took on organized crime killed his wife in 1967 and led people to believe she was murdered by his enemies, authorities said Friday.

Authorities acknowledged that the finding will likely shock many who grew up as Buford Pusser fans and watched 1973's "Walking Tall," which immortalized him as a tough but fair sheriff with zero tolerance for crime. The movie was remade in 2004, and many officers joined law enforcement because of his story, according to Mark Davidson, the district attorney for Tennessee's 25th judicial district.

There is enough evidence that if Pusser, the McNairy County sheriff who died in a car crash seven years after his wife's death, were alive today, prosecutors would present an indictment to a grand jury for the killing of Pauline Mullins Pusser, Davidson said. Investigators also uncovered signs that she suffered from domestic violence.

Prosecutors worked with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, which began reexamining decades-old files on Pauline's death in 2022 as part of its regular review of cold cases, agency director David Rausch said. Agents found inconsistencies between Buford Pusser's version of events and the physical evidence, received a tip about a potential murder weapon and exhumed Pauline's body for an autopsy.

"This case is not about tearing down a legend. It is about giving dignity and closure to Pauline and her family and ensuring that the truth is not buried with time," Davidson said in a news conference streamed online. "The truth matters. Justice matters. Even 58 years later. Pauline deserves both."

Evidence does not back up sheriff's story

The case dates to Aug. 12, 1967. Buford Pusser got a call in the early morning hours about a disturbance. He reported that his wife volunteered to ride along with him as he responded. Buford Pusser said that shortly after they passed New Hope Methodist Church, a car pulled up and fired several times into the

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vehicle, killing Pauline and injuring the sheriff. Buford Pusser spent 18 days in the hospital and required several surgeries to recover. The case was built largely on his own statement and closed quickly, Rausch said.

During the reexamination of the case, Dr. Michael Revelle, an emergency medicine physical and medical examiner, studied postmortem photographs, crime scene photographs, notes made by the medical examiner at the time and Buford Pusser's statements. He concluded that Pauline was more likely than not shot outside the car and then placed inside it.

He found that cranial trauma suffered by Pauline didn't match crime scene photographs of the car's interior. Blood spatter on the hood outside the car contradicted Buford Pusser's statements. The gunshot wound on his cheek was in fact a close-contact wound and not one fired from long range, as Buford Pusser described, and was likely self-inflicted, Revelle concluded.

Pauline's autopsy revealed she had a broken nose that had healed prior to her death. Davidson said statements from people who were around at the time she died support the conclusion that she was a victim of domestic violence.

Brother says investigation gave him closure

Pauline's younger brother, Griffon Mullins, said the investigation gave him closure. He said in a recorded video played at the news conference that their other sister died without knowing what happened to Pauline and he is grateful he will die knowing.

"You would fall in love with her because she was a people person. And of course, my family would always go to Pauline if they had an issue or they needed some advice and she was always there for them," he said. "She was just a sweet person. I loved her with all my heart."

Mullins said he knew there was some trouble in Pauline's marriage, but she wasn't one to talk about her problems. For that reason, Mullins said he was "not totally shocked."

Asked about the murder weapon and whether it matched autopsy findings, Rausch recommended reading the case file for specifics.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation plans to make the entire file, which exceeds 1,000 pages, available to the public by handing it over to the University of Tennessee at Martin once it finishes with redactions. The school will create an online, searchable database for the case. Until then, members of the public can make appointments to review it in person or can purchase a copy, said university Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr.

The Latest: Trump blocks \$4.9 billion in foreign aid approved by Congress

By The Associated Press undefined

In a letter sent Thursday to Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson, President Donald Trump said he would not be spending \$4.9 billion in congressionally approved foreign aid — effectively cutting the budget without going through the legislative branch. The letter was posted Friday morning on the X account of the White House Office of Management and Budget.

Trump's move rests on a tool not used in nearly 50 years, known as a pocket rescission: A president submits a request to Congress to not spend approved funds toward the end of the fiscal year so that Congress can't act on the request in the 45-day time frame, and the money goes unspent as a result. The fiscal year draws to a close at the end of September.

Such a move, if standardized by the White House, could effectively bypass Congress on key spending choices and potentially wrest some control over spending from the House and the Senate.

Here's the latest:

EPA fires some employees who signed letter criticizing the agency

The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday fired at least eight employees who signed a letter criticizing the agency's leadership under Administrator Lee Zeldin and Trump.

The declaration of dissent, signed by more than 170 employees in late June, "contains inaccurate infor-

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mation designed to mislead the public about agency business," an EPA spokesperson said.

"Thankfully, this represents a small fraction of the thousands of hard-working, dedicated EPA employees who are not trying to mislead and scare the American public," the spokesperson said.

EPA declined to say how many employees were disciplined, but the agency's largest union said at least six probationary employees who signed the letter were fired, along with at least two career employees.

The union, part of the American Federation of Government Employees, condemned the firings as "an assault on labor and free-speech rights."

As Trump threatens more National Guard troops in US cities, here's what the law allows

Since sending the National Guard to Los Angeles and Washington, the president has openly mused about sending troops to some of the nation's most Democratic cities — including Chicago and Baltimore — claiming they are needed to crack down on crime.

Though most violent crime has fallen in recent years in the cities he has called out, Trump said Democratic Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker "should be calling me, and he should be saying, 'Can you send over the troops please?' It's out of control."

Whether Trump can repeat what he's done in LA and the nation's capital — call up the National Guard and have it assist a surge of federal law enforcement and immigration officers — is an open question and likely to become a point of contention should he press forward.

Trump's new CDC chief: A Washington health insider with a libertarian streak

Jim O'Neill, a former investor, critic of health regulations and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s deputy, is taking control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention following a tumultuous week in which its director was forced out.

O'Neill was picked to be interim director, supplanting Susan Monarez, a longtime government scientist who been director for less than a month. Her lawyers said she refused "to rubber-stamp unscientific, reckless directives and fire dedicated health experts."

A former associate of billionaire tech entrepreneur Peter Thiel, O'Neill previously helped run one of Thiel's investment funds and later managed several other projects. He has no training in medicine or health care and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in humanities.

O'Neill said Friday on social media that he looks forward to working with CDC staff and "announcing additions to the senior leadership in the weeks ahead." He is to remain as HHS deputy.

Kilmar Abrego Garcia's lawyers worry he can't get a fair trial and request gag order for top US officials

Abrego Garcia's attorneys' concerns are related to his human smuggling case in Tennessee.

They say administration officials keep attacking him with prejudicial and false statements and are asking a federal judge to order officials involved with his case to hold back on their comments. Those would include Attorney General Pam Bondi and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

Abrego Garcia became a flashpoint over Trump's immigration policies when he was wrongfully deported to El Salvador.

The Republican administration is trying to deport him again, this time to Uganda.

The Justice Department and the acting U.S. attorney who is prosecuting the human smuggling case declined to comment.

DHS said in a statement: "If Kilmar Abrego Garcia did not want to be mentioned by the Secretary of Homeland Security, then he should have not entered our country illegally and committed heinous crimes."

Social Security whistleblower who says DOGE mishandled sensitive data resigns

Charles Borges, chief data officer, said in a letter to Social Security Administration Commissioner Frank Bisignano that he is resigning due to the agency's actions against him since he filed his whistleblower complaint this week.

"I have suffered exclusion, isolation, internal strife, and a culture of fear, creating a hostile work environment and making work conditions intolerable," Borges wrote.

The Project Government Accountability Office, which is representing him in his whistleblower case,

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posted the letter on its website.

Borges' attorney said he "no longer felt that he could continue to work for the Social Security Administration in good conscience, given what he had witnessed." It added that he would continue to work with the proper oversight bodies.

Borges alleged that more than 300 million Americans' Social Security data was put at risk by Department of Government Efficiency officials who uploaded sensitive information to a cloud account not subject to oversight.

The SSA declined to comment.

Trump administration approves more arms sales to Ukraine

The administration has approved \$329 million in arms sales to Ukraine for equipment and services to keep up its Patriot air defense systems and Starlink satellite internet platform.

The State Department said Friday that it notified Congress of the sales, including \$179.1 million in equipment and other support for the air defense systems, which are crucial to knocking down stepped-up Russian airstrikes.

Another \$150 million sale is for satellite communications services for Starlink terminals, which were provided by Elon Musk's SpaceX company and help facilitate battlefield communications and power drones.

The previous day the U.S. announced an additional \$825 million sale to Ukraine, including extended-range missiles and related equipment to boost defensive capabilities.

Democratic senator applauds court's tariffs ruling, criticizes GOP lawmakers

Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon said in a statement: "Federal Courts have repeatedly done what Republican senators won't do — say in black-and-white that Donald Trump's tariff spree is illegal and cannot continue."

Wyden said the sweeping tariffs are causing prices to rise for all manner of essential goods and Democrats intend to force votes on repealing them whenever possible.

"Ultimately Congress must seize back power over trade," he added, "and make clear that Trump can't pay for billionaire tax cuts on the backs of working families."

Guatemala tells US it can take in hundreds of migrant children

Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos Martínez said his government is willing to receive hundreds of Guatemalan minors who arrived unaccompanied and are being held in U.S. facilities.

The Central American nation is particularly concerned about minors who could age out of facilities for children and be sent to adult detention centers, he said. The exact number of children to be returned remains in flux, but the figure officials are currently discussing is a little over 600.

That would be almost double what Guatemala previously agreed to. The head of the country's immigration service said last month that the government was looking to repatriate 341 unaccompanied minors who were being held in U.S. facilities.

Martínez said no date has been set yet for the return of the children.

Trump vows appeal of court ruling that his sweeping tariffs are unconstitutional

"If allowed to stand, this Decision would literally destroy the United States of America," the president said on his social media platform.

Appeals court finds Trump's sweeping tariffs unconstitutional but leaves them in place for now

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled that the president had no legal right to impose the sweeping tariffs but left in place for now his effort to build a protectionist wall around the economy.

The court found that Trump was not legally allowed to declare national emergencies and impose import taxes on almost every country, largely upholding a decision by a specialized federal trade court.

But the court tossed out a part of that ruling striking down the tariffs immediately, allowing the administration time to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The decision complicates Trump's ambitions to upend decades of trade policy unilaterally. Trump has alternative laws for imposing import taxes, but they would limit the speed and severity with which he

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could act.

His tariffs — and their erratic rollout — have shaken global markets, alienated trading partners and allies and raised fears of inflation and slower economic growth.

Missouri's Republican governor orders redraw of US House districts as redistricting fight expands

Gov. Mike Kehoe is calling Missouri lawmakers into a special session to redraw the state's districts as part of a growing national battle between Republicans and Democrats seeking an edge in next year's congressional elections.

Kehoe's announcement Friday came just hours after Texas GOP Gov. Greg Abbott signed into law a new congressional voting map designed to help Republicans gain five more seats in the midterm elections.

It marked a win for President Donald Trump, who has been urging Republican-led states to reshape districts to give the party a better shot at retaining control of the House.

Republican-led Texas took up the task first and was quickly countered by Democratic-led California. Missouri would become the third state to pursue an unusual mid-decade redistricting for partisan advantage.

Missouri is represented in the House by six Republicans and two Democrats. Republicans hope to gain one more seat.

The special session is to begin Sept. 3.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has US visa revoked

Abbas and 80 other Palestinian Authority officials had their visas revoked by Secretary of State Marco Rubio ahead of next month's annual high-level meeting of the U.N. General Assembly.

That's according to a State Department official who spoke on condition of anonymity Friday to discuss visa issues that are normally confidential.

The State Department said earlier in a statement that the move was in "our national security interests" and accused the officials of "undermining the prospects for peace."

The Palestinian Authority said it "expressed its deep regret and astonishment" at the visa decision, which "contravenes international law and the Headquarters Agreement, especially since the State of Palestine is an observer member of the United Nations."

— Matthew Lee

Senator says Trump administration plans to remove 700 Guatemalan children

A U.S. Senator says the Trump administration is planning to remove nearly 700 Guatemalan children who had come to the U.S. without their parents.

Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon said in a letter to the Office of Refugee Resettlement that according to reports from unidentified whistleblowers the office has finalized a plan to deport the children in their custody back to Guatemala.

Wyden said the removals would violate the office's "child welfare mandate and this country's long-established obligation to these children."

The office within the Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for migrant children who arrive in the U.S. alone.

The White House and the Department of Health and Human Services did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the latest move, which was first reported by CNN. The Guatemalan government declined to comment.

US warns Russia to move toward peace and meet with Ukraine or face possible sanctions

A senior U.S. diplomat at the United Nations delivered the warning at a U.N. Security Council meeting on Ukraine saying Russia's latest drone and missile attacks resulting in numerous civilian casualties "cast doubt on the seriousness of Russia's desire for peace."

"These strikes must stop immediately," Minister-Counselor John Kelley said. "Russia must decide now to move toward peace. The leaders of Russia and Ukraine must agree to meet bilaterally."

Kelley noted President Donald Trump's warning that the U.S. could take "further economic measures ... if Russia instead chooses to continue this war, measures which could have far-reaching impact on Russia's

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future economic prosperity.”

“The United States calls on the Russian Federation to avoid these consequences by stopping the violence and engaging constructively to end the war,” said Kelley, who is the U.S. Mission’s political coordinator.

Trump administration tells states to change sex ed lessons or lose funding

The Department of Health and Human Services this week told 40 states to change parts of sex ed lessons that focus on LGBTQ+ issues.

If they don’t comply in 60 days, they’ll lose federal money for the lessons.

The money comes through the Personal Responsibility Education Program and is aimed at teaching homeless students, those in foster programs, minorities and those in rural areas and places with high rates of teen pregnancy.

The push to change the lessons is part of a broader effort to eliminate what Trump calls “gender ideology.”

But some states have laws that require teaching about LGBTQ+ issues.

Administration cancels grants for offshore wind, continuing attack on industry Trump hates

The Transportation Department on Friday canceled \$679 million in federal funding for a dozen offshore wind projects.

The move was the latest attack by the Trump administration on the reeling U.S. offshore wind industry and comes days after the administration abruptly halted construction last week of a nearly complete wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island and Connecticut.

Funding for projects in 11 states was rescinded, including \$435 million for a floating wind farm in Northern California and \$47 million to boost an offshore wind project in Maryland that the Interior Department has pledged to cancel.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said that under Trump, “we are prioritizing real infrastructure improvements over fantasy wind projects that cost much and offer little.”

UN says US withholding over \$1 billion will make finances challenging

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the United Nations will follow up with U.S. authorities to get more details on Friday’s White House announcement.

Trump said in a letter he would not be spending \$4.9 billion in foreign aid approved by Congress including \$520 million for the U.N. regular budget and other U.N. agencies and \$838 million for international peacekeeping.

“What can I tell you?” Dujarric said. “This is going to make our budget situation, our liquidity situation that much more challenging.”

Appeals court blocks Trump administration from ending legal protections for 600,000 Venezuelans

A federal appeals court on Friday blocked the Trump administration’s plans to end protections for 600,000 people from Venezuela who have had permission to live and work in the United States.

A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court’s ruling that maintained temporary protected status for Venezuelans while the case proceeded through court.

U.S. District Judge Edward Chen of San Francisco found in March that plaintiffs were likely to prevail on their claim that the administration overstepped its authority in terminating the protections and were motivated by racial animus in doing so. Chen ordered a freeze on the terminations, but the Supreme Court reversed him without explanation, which is common in emergency appeals.

It is unclear what effect Friday’s ruling will have on the estimated 350,000 Venezuelans whose protections expired in April. Protections for another group of 250,000 Venezuelans are set to expire Sept. 10.

Court finds Trump's tariffs an illegal use of emergency power, but leaves them in place for now

By PAUL WISEMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal appeals court ruled Friday that President Donald Trump had no legal right to impose sweeping tariffs on almost every country on earth but left in place for now his effort to build a protectionist wall around the American economy.

The ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit found Trump overstepped his authority under an emergency powers law, a major legal blow that largely upheld a May decision by a specialized federal trade court in New York.

"It seems unlikely that Congress intended to ... grant the President unlimited authority to impose tariffs," the judges wrote in a 7-4 ruling.

But they did not strike down the tariffs immediately, allowing his administration until mid-October to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The president vowed to do just that. "If allowed to stand, this Decision would literally destroy the United States of America," Trump wrote on his social media platform.

White House spokesman Kush Desai said Trump had acted lawfully, and "we look forward to ultimate victory on this matter."

An attorney for small businesses affected by the tariffs, meanwhile, said the ruling shows Trump doesn't have unlimited power to impose tariffs on his own. "This decision protects American businesses and consumers from the uncertainty and harm caused by these unlawful tariffs," said Jeffrey Schwab, director of litigation at the Liberty Justice Center.

Still, it remains unclear whether businesses will see any effects from the decision, said National Foreign Trade Council President Jake Colvin.

"If these tariffs are ultimately struck down, it ought to serve as a wake up call for Congress to reclaim its constitutional mandate to regulate duties and bring some long-term certainty for U.S. businesses and relief for consumers," Colvin said.

Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon said he plans to force votes on "repealing these harmful, regressive taxes at every opportunity."

Putting pressure on allies

The ruling complicates Trump's ambitions to upend decades of American trade policy completely on his own. Trump has alternative laws for imposing import taxes, but they would limit the speed and severity with which he could act. His tariffs — and the erratic way he's rolled them out — have shaken global markets, alienated U.S. trading partners and allies and raised fears of higher prices and slower economic growth.

But he's also used the levies to pressure the European Union, Japan and other countries into accepting one-sided trade deals and to bring tens of billions of dollars into the federal Treasury to help pay for the massive tax cuts he signed into law July 4.

"The administration could lose a pillar of its negotiating strategy," Ashley Akers, senior counsel at the Holland & Knight law firm and a former Justice Department trial lawyer, said before the appeals court decision.

A dissent from the judges who disagreed with Friday's ruling clears a possible legal path for Trump, concluding that the 1977 law allowing for emergency actions "is not an unconstitutional delegation of legislative authority under the Supreme Court's decisions," which have allowed the legislature to grant some tariff authorities to the president.

The government has argued that if the tariffs are struck down, it might have to refund some of the import taxes that it's collected, delivering a financial blow to the U.S. Treasury.

Revenue from tariffs now totals \$159 billion, more than double what it was at the same point the year before. Indeed, the Justice Department warned in a legal filing this month that revoking the tariffs could mean "financial ruin" for the United States.

"For all the tariffs that have been collected under IEEPA, you're going to see folks request refunds and more refunds," said trade attorney Ryan Majerus, a partner at King & Spalding and a former White House

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economic adviser.

Attorney General Pam Bondi, meanwhile, accused the judges of interfering with the president's central role in foreign policy and vowed to appeal.

What tariffs are in question

The ruling involves two sets of import taxes, both of which Trump justified by declaring a national emergency under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA):

— The sweeping tariffs he announced April 2 — “Liberation Day,” he called it — when he imposed “reciprocal” tariffs of up to 50% on countries with which the United States runs trade deficits and a “baseline” 10% tariff on just about everyone else. Those tariff rates have since been revised by Trump, in some cases after trade negotiations, and generally went into effect Aug. 7.

The national emergency underlying the tariffs, Trump said, was the long-running gap between what the U.S. sells and what it buys from the rest of the world. The president started to levy modified tariff rates in August, but goods from countries with which the U.S. runs a surplus also face the taxes.

— The “trafficking tariffs” he announced Feb. 1 on imports from Canada, China and Mexico and later refined. These were designed to get those countries to do more to stop what he declared a national emergency: the illegal flow of drugs and immigrants across their borders into the United States. The Constitution gives Congress the power to impose taxes, including tariffs. But over the decades, lawmakers have ceded authority to the president, and Trump has made the most of the power vacuum.

But Trump's assertion that IEEPA essentially gives him unlimited power to tax imports quickly drew legal challenges — at least seven cases. No president had ever used the law to justify tariffs, though IEEPA had been used frequently to impose export restrictions and other sanctions on U.S. adversaries such as Iran and North Korea.

The plaintiffs argued that the emergency power law does not authorize the use of tariffs.

They also noted that the trade deficit hardly meets the definition of an “unusual and extraordinary” threat that would justify declaring an emergency under the law. The United States, after all, has run trade deficits — in which it buys more from foreign countries than it sells them — for 49 straight years and in good times and bad.

Emergency powers

The Trump administration argued that courts approved President Richard Nixon's emergency use of tariffs in a 1971 economic crisis that arose from the chaos that followed his decision to end a policy linking the U.S. dollar to the price of gold. The Nixon administration successfully cited its authority under the 1917 Trading With the Enemy Act, which preceded and supplied some of the legal language used in IEEPA.

In May, the U.S. Court of International Trade in New York rejected the argument, ruling that Trump's Liberation Day tariffs “exceed any authority granted to the President” under the emergency powers law. In reaching its decision, the trade court combined two challenges — one by five businesses and one by 12 U.S. states — into a single case.

In the case of the drug trafficking and immigration tariffs on Canada, China and Mexico, the trade court ruled that the levies did not meet IEEPA's requirement that they “deal with” the problem they were supposed to address.

The court challenge does not cover other Trump tariffs, including levies on foreign steel, aluminum and autos that the president imposed after Commerce Department investigations concluded that those imports were threats to U.S. national security.

Nor does it include tariffs that Trump imposed on China in his first term — and President Joe Biden kept — after a government investigation concluded that the Chinese used unfair practices to give their own technology firms an edge over rivals from the United States and other Western countries.

Trump could potentially cite alternative authorities to impose import taxes, though they are more limited. Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974, for instance, allows the president to tax imports from countries with which the U.S. runs big trade deficits at 15% for 150 days.

Likewise, Section 301 of the same 1974 law allows the president to tax imports from countries found to have engaged in unfair trade practices after an investigation by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representa-

tive. Trump used Section 301 authority to launch his first-term trade war with China.

Appeals court rules against Trump's plans to end legal protections for 600,000 Venezuelan migrants

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal appeals court on Friday ruled against President Donald Trump's plans to end temporary protections for 600,000 Venezuelans who have permission to live and work in the U.S., meaning that migrants whose protections have expired or are about to expire might be allowed to stay.

A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously upheld a lower court ruling that maintained temporary protected status designations for Venezuelans while they challenge actions by Trump's administration in court.

The 9th Circuit judges found that plaintiffs were likely to succeed on their claim that Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem had no authority to vacate or set aside a prior extension of temporary protected status because the governing statute written by Congress does not permit it. Then-President Joe Biden's Democratic administration had extended temporary protected status, commonly known as TPS, for people from Venezuela.

"In enacting the TPS statute, Congress designed a system of temporary status that was predictable, dependable, and insulated from electoral politics," U.S. Circuit Judge Kim Wardlaw, who was nominated by President Bill Clinton, wrote for the panel in a decision joined by two other judges also nominated by Democratic presidents.

But it is unclear what effect Friday's ruling will have on the estimated 350,000 Venezuelans in the group of 600,000 whose protections expired in April. Their lawyers say some have already been fired from jobs, detained in immigration jails, separated from their U.S. citizen children and even deported.

Protections for the remaining 250,000 Venezuelans are set to expire Sept. 10.

U.S. District Judge Edward Chen of San Francisco found in March that plaintiffs were likely to prevail on their claim that the administration had overstepped its authority in terminating the protections. Chen postponed the terminations, but the Supreme Court reversed him without explanation, which is common in emergency appeals.

In an email, a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security blasted Friday's decision as more obstruction from "unelected activist" judges.

"For decades the TPS program has been abused, exploited, and politicized as a de facto amnesty program," the email read. "While this injunction delays justice and undermines the integrity of our immigration system, Secretary Noem will use every legal option at the Department's disposal to end this chaos and prioritize the safety of Americans."

Congress authorized temporary protected status, or TPS, as part of the Immigration Act of 1990. It allows the secretary of DHS to grant legal immigration status to people fleeing countries experiencing civil strife, environmental disaster or other "extraordinary and temporary conditions" that prevent a safe return to that home country. The terms are for six, 12 and 18 months.

The appellate judges said the guaranteed time limitations were critical so people could gain employment, find long-term housing and build stability without fear of shifting political winds.

In ending the protections soon after Trump took office, Noem said conditions in Venezuela had improved and it was not in the U.S. national interest to allow migrants from there to stay on for what is a temporary program. It's part of a broader move by Trump's administration to reduce the number of immigrants who are in the country either without legal documentation or through legal temporary programs.

"What is really significant now is that the second court unanimously recognized that the trial court got it right," said Emi MacLean, a senior staff attorney with the ACLU Foundation of Northern California representing plaintiffs.

She added that while the decision might not benefit immediately those people who have already lost their status or are about to lose their status, Friday's ruling "should provide a path for the administration's

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illegal actions related to Venezuela and TPS to finally be undone.”

A court declaration provided by plaintiffs showed the turmoil caused by the Trump administration and Supreme Court decision.

A Washington woman who worked in restaurants was deported in June along with her daughters, 10 years and 15 months old, after ICE officers told her to bring her children to an immigration check-in. The father of the baby, who is a U.S. citizen, remains in the U.S. while the woman tries to figure out what to do.

Also in June, a FedEx employee appeared in uniform at his required immigration check-in only to be detained, the court declaration states. He slept for about two weeks on a floor, terrified he would be sent to El Salvador’s notorious CECOT prison. His wife cannot maintain the household on her earnings.

“I am not a criminal,” he said in the declaration, adding that “immigrants like myself come to the United States to work hard and contribute, and instead our families and lives are being torn apart.”

Millions of Venezuelans have fled political unrest, mass unemployment and hunger. Their country is mired in a prolonged crisis brought on by years of hyperinflation, political corruption, economic mismanagement and an ineffectual government.

Attorneys for the U.S. government argued the Homeland Security secretary’s clear and broad authority to make determinations related to the TPS program were not subject to judicial review. They also denied that Noem’s actions were motivated by racial animus.

But the appellate judges said courts clearly had jurisdiction in cases where the actions were unlawful. They declined to address whether Noem was motivated by racial animus.

Missouri is next to answer Trump’s call for redrawn maps that boost GOP in 2026

By DAVID A. LIEB and ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo (AP) — Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe said Friday that he is calling Missouri lawmakers into a special session to redraw the state’s U.S. House districts as part of a growing national battle between Republicans and Democrats seeking an edge in next year’s congressional elections.

Kehoe made the announcement just hours after Texas GOP Gov. Greg Abbott signed into law a new congressional voting map designed to help Republicans gain five more seats in the 2026 midterm elections. It marked a win for President Donald Trump, who has been urging Republican-led states to reshape district lines to give the party a better shot at retaining control of the House.

Missouri is the third state to pursue an unusual mid-decade redistricting for partisan advantage. Republican-led Texas took up the task first but was quickly countered by Democratic-led California, where Gov. Gavin Newsom is asking voters to approve a map aimed at giving his party five more seats.

Kehoe scheduled Missouri’s special session to begin Sept. 3. He released a proposed new map that targets Democratic Rep. Emanuel Cleaver’s Kansas City-area district by stretching it eastward into rural Republican-leaning areas.

His agenda also includes another Republican priority — a proposed constitutional amendment that would make it harder to approve citizen-initiated ballot measures, such as abortion-rights and marijuana legalization amendments adopted in recent years.

Kehoe cast both items as a defense against liberal politicians and activists.

“Missouri’s conservative, common-sense values should be truly represented at all levels of government,” he said in a statement.

Democrats were quick to express outrage. Missouri state House Minority Leader Ashley Aune called Kehoe a “Trump puppet” attempting to “steal a congressional seat for Republicans” and gut the ballot initiative process.

It “marks the worst threat to the integrity of our state government since pro-slavery lawmakers voted for Missouri to join the Confederacy in 1861,” Aune said in a statement.

Missouri is represented in the U.S. House by six Republicans and two Democrats — Cleaver and Rep.

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Wesley Bell in St. Louis.

Cleaver called the proposed redistricting an attack on democracy perpetrated by Trump.

"This attempt to gerrymander Missouri will not simply change district lines, it will silence voices. It will deny representation," Cleaver said in a statement while vowing not to concede the seat.

Missouri Democrats have little ability to prevent Republican lawmakers from enacting a new map. Unlike in Texas, where Democrats left the state for two weeks to delay a vote, Missouri Democrats' absence would not prevent a quorum for business. And although Democrats could filibuster in the Senate, Republicans could use procedural maneuvers to shut that down, as they did earlier this year to pass a proposed constitutional amendment restricting abortion.

Republicans won a 220-215 House majority over Democrats in 2024, an outcome that aligned almost perfectly with the share of the vote won by the two parties in districts across the U.S., according to a recent Associated Press analysis. Although the overall outcome was close to neutral, the AP's analysis shows that Democrats and Republicans each benefited from advantages in particular states stemming from the way districts were drawn.

Democrats would need to net three seats in next year's election to take control of the chamber. The incumbent president's party tends to lose seats in the midterm elections, as was the case for Trump in 2018, when Democrats won control of the House and subsequently launched investigations of Trump. Seeking to avoid a similar situation in his second term, Trump has urged Republican-led states to fortify their congressional seats.

In Texas, Republicans already hold 25 of the 38 congressional seats.

"Texas is now more red in the United States Congress," Abbott said in a video he posted on X of him signing the legislation.

Newsom, who has emerged as a leading adversary of Trump on redistricting and other issues, tauntingly labeled Abbott on X as the president's "#1 lapdog" following the signing. Democrats already hold 43 of California's 52 congressional seats.

Voting rights groups filed a lawsuit this week ahead of Abbott's signing the bill, saying the new map weakens the electoral influence of Black voters. Texas Democrats have also vowed to challenge the new map in court.

Some Missouri Republicans had pushed for a map that could give them a 7-1 edge when redrawing districts after the 2020 census. But the GOP legislative majority ultimately opted against it. Some feared the more aggressive plan could be susceptible to a legal challenge and could backfire in a poor election year for Republicans by creating more competitive districts that could allow Democrats to win three seats.

Republican officials in Florida, Indiana and elsewhere also are considering revising their U.S. House districts, as are Democratic officials in Illinois, Maryland and New York.

In Utah, a judge recently ordered the Republican-led Legislature to draw new congressional districts after finding that lawmakers had weakened and ignored an independent commission established by voters to prevent partisan gerrymandering. Republicans have won all four of Utah's congressional seats under the map approved by lawmakers in 2021.

Zelenskyy seeks talks with Trump and European leaders on slow progress of peace efforts with Russia

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday that Ukrainian officials want to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump and European leaders next week to discuss recent developments in efforts to end the three-year war with Russia.

The proposed meetings appeared designed to add momentum to the push for peace, as Zelenskyy expressed frustration with what he called Russia's lack of constructive engagement in the process while it continues to launch devastating aerial attacks on civilian areas.

Trump has bristled at Russian leader Vladimir Putin's stalling on an U.S. proposal for direct peace talks

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with Zelenskyy, and 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 Putin "talks nice and then he bombs everybody." But he has also chided Ukraine for its attacks.

At an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council on Friday, the United States warned Russia to move toward peace and meet with Ukraine or face possible sanctions. The meeting was called after a major Russian missile and drone attack on Ukraine overnight from Wednesday to Thursday that killed at least 23 people.

John Kelley, the U.S. mission's minister-counselor, said the strikes "cast doubt on the seriousness of Russia's desire for peace" and demanded they stop. He said Putin and Zelenskyy must agree to meet, and reiterated Trump's warning that the U.S. could impose sanctions on Russia if the war continues.

Zelenskyy's top adviser meets Trump's special envoy in New York

Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential office, met on Friday in New York with Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff to discuss preparations for upcoming meetings.

"The key priority is to push forward real diplomacy and ensure the implementation of all the agreements reached at the Washington summit," Yermak said in a social media post. "We are coordinating our efforts."

Yermak said he had briefed Witkoff on Russia's latest attacks on Ukraine and lamented that Putin had shown no willingness to engage in peace efforts despite his meeting with Trump in Alaska this month.

"Unfortunately, Russia is failing to fulfill anything necessary to end the war and is clearly dragging out the hostilities," Yermak wrote in a lengthy post on X. "Ukraine supports President Trump's firm resolve, as well as that of all partners, to achieve a lasting peace as soon as possible. Ukraine welcomes all peace initiatives put forward by the United States. But unfortunately, each of them is being stalled by Russia."

Of the meeting, a White House official said only that Yermak and Sergiy Kyslytsya, Ukraine's ambassador extraordinary, gave Witkoff a status update on the war and Russia's strikes on Kyiv this week. The official was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Zelenskyy told reporters in Kyiv that he expected "several meetings at different venues" with European leaders next week.

Ukrainian negotiators have been trying to move the peace process forward in talks in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Switzerland and the United States, he said.

Ukraine has accepted a U.S. proposal for a ceasefire and a meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy, but Moscow has raised objections.

Ukraine wants leaders involved

Zelenskyy accused Russia of dragging out negotiations, including by putting off a Russia-Ukraine summit with the argument that the groundwork for a possible peace settlement must be thrashed out first by lower officials before leaders meet.

That reasoning, Zelenskyy said, is "artificial ... because they want to show the United States that they are constructive, but they are not constructive."

"In my opinion, leaders must urgently be involved to reach agreements," Zelenskyy added.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov on Friday reiterated Moscow's long-held position that Putin "doesn't rule out" meeting Zelenskyy, but only after progress is made "at the expert level."

A summit "must be well prepared so that it can finalize the work that must first be carried out at the expert level," Peskov told reporters during his daily conference call.

"At this point we can't say that the expert work is in full swing, so to speak. No, unfortunately, not. We maintain our interest and our readiness for these negotiations," he said.

Zelenskyy says more weapons are crucial for security

Zelenskyy urged swift secondary sanctions on countries that trade with Russia and thereby support its war economy.

He said the possible postwar security guarantees being assessed by Western countries to deter another Russian invasion in the future must include a secure supply of weapons for Ukraine, either through do-

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mestic production or Western provision, and U.S. weapons paid for by Europe.

Zelenskyy's comments came after the death toll in a major Russian missile and drone strike on the Ukrainian capital rose to 23, including four children, officials said Friday. Ukraine needs more sophisticated Western air defense systems to counter such attacks.

Kyiv region observes a day of mourning

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 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.

More diplomatic moves lie ahead

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

The war in Ukraine is certain to be a top issue at the annual gathering of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly from Sept. 22 to Sept. 29.

The Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank, noted that recent U.S. 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."

What states are doing in the battle for partisan advantage in US House redistricting maps

By DAVID A. LIEB and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

A battle between Texas Republicans and California Democrats to bolster their party's advantage in the U.S. House has led politicians in other states to consider ways they, too, could leverage partisan power to rack up more victories in the 2026 congressional elections.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on Friday signed into law a new U.S. House map sought by President Donald Trump that could help Republicans in their quest to keep control of the chamber. Hours later, Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe announced that he was calling a special session to also redraw House districts in Republicans' favor.

California Democrats already have launched a counteroffensive, asking voters to approve revised House districts designed to boost Democrats' prospects.

Redistricting typically occurs once a decade, immediately after a census. But in some states, there is no prohibition on a mid-cycle map makeover. The U.S. Supreme Court also has said there is no federal prohibition on political gerrymandering, in which districts are intentionally drawn to one party's advantage.

The redistricting efforts could play a role in determining control of the U.S. House and, with it, the prospects for Trump's policy goals in the latter half of his term.

Here is a rundown of what states are doing.

Texas Democrats walked out, but Republicans prevailed

Democratic state House members left Texas for two weeks to scuttle a special session on redistricting by preventing a quorum needed to do business. But after that session ended, Abbott quickly called another one — and Democrats returned, satisfied that they had made their point and that California was proceeding with a counter plan.

Republicans currently hold 25 of the 38 congressional seats in Texas. A revised map passed Aug. 23 is intended to give Republicans a shot at picking up five additional seats in next year's elections. Abbott's

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signature made the map final.

Missouri lawmakers to meet in a special session on redistricting

Kehoe scheduled a special legislation session on redistricting to start Sept. 3 and released a proposed new congressional map that targets a seat held by Democratic U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver. The plan would give Republicans a chance at winning the seat by stretching the Kansas City-based district into rural Republican-leaning areas.

Republicans currently hold six of Missouri's eight congressional seats.

Unlike in Texas, Missouri Democrats can't prevent a quorum for business by walking out. And although Democrats could filibuster in the Senate, Republicans could use procedural maneuvers to shut that down and pass a new congressional map.

California Democrats seek to counter Texas

Democrats already hold 43 of the 52 congressional seats in California. But similar to Texas, a revised map passed Aug. 21 by the state Legislature is aimed at giving Democrats a chance to gain five additional seats in the 2026 elections.

Unlike Texas, California has an independent citizens' commission that handles redistricting after the census, so any changes to the commission's map would need to win approval from voters. A referendum on the revised map is scheduled for Nov. 4.

Indiana Republicans meet with Trump about redistricting

Indiana's Republican legislative leaders met privately with Trump to discuss redistricting while in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 26. Some also met with Vice President JD Vance.

Several Indiana state legislators came out in support of a mid-cycle map change following the meetings. But others have expressed hesitation about joining Trump's push to remake districts in Republicans' favor. It remains unclear if Indiana will hold a legislative session on redistricting.

Republicans hold a 7-2 edge over Democrats in Indiana's congressional delegation. All incumbent GOP congressional representatives have said they support redistricting.

Louisiana Republicans looking at times for a special session

Louisiana lawmakers are being told to keep their calendars open between Oct. 23 and Nov. 13. The U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to hear arguments Oct. 15 over a challenge to the state's congressional map.

Republican state Rep. Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, who chairs a House committee that oversees redistricting, told the AP that the idea is to have lawmakers available to come back to work in case the Supreme Court issues a ruling quickly.

Republicans currently hold four of Louisiana's six congressional seats.

Ohio must redraw its maps before the 2026 midterms

Because of the way its current districts were enacted, the state constitution requires Republican-led Ohio to adopt new House maps before the 2026 elections. Ohio Democrats are bracing for Republicans to try to expand their 10-5 congressional majority when they meet later this year to redraw maps.

Democrats don't have much power to stop it. But "we will fight, we will organize, we will make noise at every step of the process," Ohio Democratic Party Chair Kathleen Clyde said.

New York Democrats try to change state law

New York, similar to California, has an independent commission that redraws districts after every census. But state Democrats have introduced legislation to allow mid-decade redistricting.

Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul had said that if Texas proceeded, "we must do the same."

But the soonest new maps could be in place would be for the 2028 elections. That is because the proposal would require an amendment to the state constitution, a change that would have to pass the Legislature twice and be approved by voters.

Maryland Democrats planning a response to Texas

Democratic state Sen. Clarence Lam already has announced he is filing redistricting legislation for consideration during the 2026 session. Democratic House Majority Leader David Moon also has said he will sponsor legislation triggering redistricting in Maryland if Texas or any other state conducts mid-decade

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redistricting. Democrats already control seven of Maryland's eight congressional seats.

Florida's governor pledges support for redistricting

Florida Republican state House Speaker Daniel Perez said his chamber will take up redistricting this year through a special committee. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has reiterated his support for the state to join the redistricting fray, calling on the federal government to conduct a new Census count and claiming that the Trump administration should "award" the state another congressional seat.

Florida has 28 U.S. House seats, 18 of them currently occupied by Republicans.

Kansas Republicans haven't ruled out redistricting

Republican state Senate President Ty Masterson didn't rule out trying to redraw the state's four congressional districts, one of which is held by the state's sole Democratic House representative. The Legislature's GOP supermajority could do so early next year, which would put the new lines in place before the June 1 candidate filing deadline.

A court orders Utah to redraw its districts

Utah Republicans hold all four of the state's U.S. House seats under a map the GOP-led Legislature approved after the 2020 census. But a judge ruled Aug. 25 that the map was unlawful because the Legislature had circumvented an independent redistricting commission established by voters to ensure districts don't deliberately favor one party.

The judge gave lawmakers until Sept. 24 to adopt a map that complies with voter-approved standards. A new map could increase Democrats' chances of winning a seat.

Israel declares Gaza's largest city a combat zone as death toll surpasses 63,000

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAM METZ and JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel declared Gaza's largest city a combat zone and recovered the remains of two hostages on Friday as the army launched the start of a planned offensive that has drawn international condemnation.

As the military announced the resumption of fighting, health officials said the death toll in Gaza has risen to 63,025, with 59 deaths reported by hospitals over the last 24 hours. Aid groups and a church sheltering people said they would stay in Gaza City, refusing to abandon the hungry and displaced.

The shift comes weeks after Israel first announced plans to widen its offensive in the city, where hundreds of thousands are sheltering while enduring famine. In recent days, the military has ramped up strikes on the city's outskirts.

Plumes of smoke and thunderous blasts could be seen and heard across the border in southern Israel on Friday morning.

Israel has called Gaza City a Hamas stronghold, alleging that a network of tunnels remain in use despite several previous large-scale raids on the area throughout nearly 23 months of war.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that Israel needs to cripple Hamas' capabilities in the city to avoid a repeat of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war.

While United Nations agencies and aid groups condemned the offensive, people in Gaza City said it made little difference.

"The massacres never stopped, even during the humanitarian pauses," resident Mohamed Aboul Hadi said in a text message from Gaza City.

Some who fled south were putting together tents Friday in the central Gaza Strip, west of the Nuseirat refugee camp. They spoke of the miserable conditions they have endured.

"We are thrown in the streets like, what would I say? Like dogs? We are not like dogs. Dogs are better than us," said Mohammed Maarouf standing in front of a shelter for him and his family of nine.

More than 63,000 Palestinians have been killed since the war started, the Gaza Health Ministry said Friday. The ministry's count — 63,025 — does not distinguish between fighters and civilians. It also said five people had died from malnutrition-related causes over the past 24 hours, raising the toll to 322, including

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121 children, since the war began.

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

Some refuse to leave as Gaza City assault begins

Facing international criticism, Israel instituted what it called "tactical pauses" in Gaza City and two other populated areas last month. That paused fighting from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. to allow more aid to get through, though aid groups have said deliveries remained challenging due to blockade, looting and Israeli restrictions.

Midday Friday, the military changed course, marking the latest escalation after weeks of preparatory strikes in some of the city's neighborhoods and calling up tens of thousands of reservists.

"We will intensify our strikes until we bring back all the kidnapped hostages and dismantle Hamas," said Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee, who urged Palestinians in Gaza City to flee south, calling evacuation "inevitable."

Hundreds of residents began that journey on Friday, piling their few remaining possessions onto pickup trucks or donkey carts. Many have been forced to leave their homes more than once.

The U.N. said Thursday that 23,000 people had evacuated this past week, but many in Gaza City say there is nowhere safe to go.

"We cannot find any place in the west nor in the south. Conditions are difficult. Where are we going? We don't know," said Saddam Yazigi as he prepared to leave.

About 440 people sheltering at the Holy Family Church of Gaza City planned to remain there, along with clergy assisting them, although the church has few defenses.

"When we feel danger, people get closer to the walls or whatever, it's more protected," Farid Jubran told The Associated Press.

The UN's humanitarian agency also planned to keep its staff and NGOs on the ground.

Aid groups say they weren't notified

The Israeli military did not say whether it had notified residents or aid groups of its plans to resume daytime fighting before Friday's 11:30 a.m. announcement.

The Norwegian Refugee Council, which coordinates a coalition of aid groups in Gaza, said it had no advance notice. The U.N. feared the area could lose half of its hospital bed capacity.

"We cannot provide health services to 2 million people besieged in the south," said Zaher al-Wahidi, a spokesperson for Gaza's Health Ministry.

The renewed attacks also come a week after the world's leading food security authority declared a famine in Gaza City.

An Israeli military official said Israel would keep trying to facilitate aid delivery, but offered no details on how they might accomplish that amid the fighting.

"This will have a horrific impact on people already exhausted, malnourished, bereaved, displaced, and deprived of basics needed for survival," the UN's humanitarian agency said in a statement.

Remains of hostages recovered

Israel on Friday said its military had recovered the remains of two hostages — Ilan Weiss and another left unnamed.

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

Abu Obeida, a spokesperson for Hamas' armed wing, said fighters in Gaza City were ready. He said the group would try to keep the hostages alive, but said fighting is expected in the areas where they are being held.

Weiss, 55, was killed in the attack on Kibbutz Be'eri, one of the communities near Gaza that was stormed on Oct. 7.

For the families, the return of remains brings some closure, but also a reminder of the hostages still being held.

"At least they have closure," said Rubi Chen, whose son was abducted during the Oct. 7 attack and is

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believed to be dead. "There are still 49 families waiting to have that closure."

Nearly 50 of the 251 hostages remain in Gaza, including 20 thought by Israel to be alive. Militants also killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack. Most of the hostages have been released in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel's Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which has organized large-scale protests demanding a ceasefire to return the hostages, 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," it said in a statement.

Labor Day weekend has arrived. What to know about the holiday

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — From barbecues to getaways to shopping the sales, many people across the U.S. mark Labor Day — the federal holiday celebrating the American worker — by finding ways to relax.

The holiday with activist roots is celebrated on the first Monday of September, creating a three-day weekend that marks the unofficial end of summer.

Over 17 million passengers and crew were expected to be screened for air travel from Thursday through Wednesday, according to the Transportation Security Administration, with Friday being the day with the most travelers. AAA said that according to its booking data, top destinations for the weekend include Seattle, New York and Orlando, Florida.

Here's what to know about Labor Day:

Labor Day's origins date to the Gilded Age

Activists first sought to establish a day to pay tribute to workers in the late 1800s.

The first Labor Day celebration in the U.S. took place in New York City on Sept. 5, 1882, when some 10,000 workers marched in a parade organized by the Central Labor Union and the Knights of Labor.

Workers' quality of life was declining as they transitioned from artisan to factory jobs, while factory owners' quality of life was "just skyrocketing," said Todd Vachon, an assistant professor in the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations.

In the years that followed, a handful of cities and states adopted laws recognizing Labor Day. President Grover Cleveland signed a congressional act in 1894 making it a federal holiday.

That was the same year that workers for the Pullman Palace Car Company went on strike after the railcar-maker cut wages without reducing rent in the company-owned town where workers lived near Chicago, Vachon said. Over 12 workers were killed after Cleveland sent federal troops to crush the strike, he said.

Cleveland's move to establish Labor Day as a federal holiday is seen by some historians as a way for him "to make peace" with the working class, Vachon said.

Labor Day has become the unofficial end of summer

Travelers crowd airports and highways for end-of-summer escapes, and backyard chefs prepare cookouts for family and friends.

Barbecuing has been a part of Labor Day celebrations from the start, said Robert F. Moss, food writer, culinary historian and author of "Barbecue: The History of an American Institution."

He said it was already such an entrenched tradition in the U.S. that when the labor movements developed in the late 19th century, it was natural to way to celebrate as large groups gathered. In the 20th century, the holiday's barbecues moved more toward gatherings of friends and family in backyards, he said.

"It still has a lot of that same communal sense, gathering around the grill, eating together," he said.

How the labor movement has evolved over the decades

When Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894, unions in the U.S. were largely contested and courts would often rule strikes illegal, leading to violent disputes, Vachon said. It wasn't until the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 that private sector employees were granted the right to join unions.

Later into the 20th century, states also began passing legislation to allow unionization in the public sec-

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tor. But even today, not all states allow collective bargaining for public workers.

In recent years, Vachon said, there's been a resurgence in labor organizing, activism, interest and support.

The connection between fashion and Labor Day

The adage that one shouldn't wear white after Labor Day is a "rule" that's broken with fashionable results, but where did it originate?

Fashion experts say it likely goes back to the Gilded Age — the same period that spawned Labor Day. The cool, white frocks worn by wealthy New Yorkers summering in places such as Newport, Rhode Island, would be packed away upon their return to the city with its dirt-packed streets.

Christy Crutsinger, a professor in merchandising and digital retailing at University of North Texas, heard the adage from generations of women in her family. But "the fashion world's not working that way anymore," she added.

"People think it, say it, but don't abide by it," she said.

Still, fashion is on the mind of many around Labor Day, thanks to back-to-school shopping and a switch by many business people from a more relaxed summer dress code, said Daniel James Cole, adjunct assistant professor in fashion history at the Fashion Institute of Technology and co-author of "The History of Modern Fashion."

The holiday, he said, "is kind of this hinge" between summertime dress and fun to going "back to more serious pursuits."

New Orleans marks 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina with solemn memorials, uplifting music

By JACK BROOK Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Twenty years after Hurricane Katrina devastated the U.S. Gulf Coast with catastrophic storm surge and flooding, New Orleans marked the storm's anniversary Friday with solemn memorials, uplifting music and a parade that honored the dead, the displaced and the determined survivors who endured and rebuilt.

Dignitaries and longtime residents gathered under gray skies at the memorial to Katrina's victims in a New Orleans cemetery where dozens who perished in the storm but were never identified or claimed are interred.

"We do everything to keep the memory of these people alive," said Orrin Duncan, who worked for the coroner when Katrina hit. He comes to the memorial every year, opening the cemetery gate and making sure the grass is cut.

A Category 3 hurricane when it made landfall in Louisiana on Aug. 29, 2005, Katrina inflicted staggering destruction. The storm killed nearly 1,400 people across five states and racked up an estimated \$200 billion in damage, flattening homes on the coast and sending ruinous flooding into low-lying neighborhoods.

Two decades later, it remains the costliest U.S. hurricane on record, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The failure of New Orleans' 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 football stadium.

In New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward, a predominantly Black community ravaged by flooding when parts of the protective levee collapsed, hundreds watched Friday as an ensemble of white-clad children atop the levee wall sang a song of sorrow and survival.

"We are the children of the ones who did not die," they sang. "We are the children of the people who could fly. And we are the children of the ones who persevered."

Mayor says New Orleans came back 'better and stronger'

At the cemetery memorial, revered jazz clarinetist Michael White played "When the Saints Go Marching In" as a procession carried several wreaths to lay beside mausoleums of the storm victims. Mayor LaToya Cantrell recalled the city's sacrifices and projected optimism for its future.

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"New Orleans still stands," Cantrell said. "New Orleans came back better and stronger than ever before."

But other community leaders said the decades after the storm have deepened the city's challenges: growing gentrification and an affordable housing crisis, ailing infrastructure and ongoing disregard for the city's poorest neighborhoods like the Lower Ninth Ward, where a community Katrina memorial had fallen into disrepair. After public outcry earlier this month, a work crew had finally been dispatched to restore it and was laying bricks as anniversary events commenced.

Still, a sense of exuberance and communion filled the streets where hundreds joined a brass band parade known as a second line. The beloved New Orleans tradition has its roots in African American jazz funerals, in which bands accompanied grieving families marching beside a loved one's casket, followed by friends and bystanders.

Second line parades have been a staple of Katrina anniversaries since 2006. On Friday, people on bikes and stilts moved among dancers in bedazzled outfits marching to the snap of snare drums and the brassy thump of tubas.

Michael Jenkins painted his face and wore his black-and-gold feathered Mardi Gras costume to march in the parade as part of the city's famous Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. He fled New Orleans as the storm bore down 20 years ago and wasn't able to return for two years.

"It's a joyful time, but it's also a somber time because we remember that we overcame a lot," Jenkins said. "By the grace of God, we're still here."

In the Lower Ninth Ward, a minute of silence in front of the levee was followed by defiant speeches from community leaders recalling the delayed government response to Katrina that exacerbated suffering in New Orleans. They warned that if President Donald Trump followed through on dismantling the Federal Emergency Management Agency, there would have grave consequences.

"Government neglect killed us," local civil rights attorney Tracie Washington said. "We will never forget it."

Katrina's impact still felt

In Mississippi, where hundreds perished as Katrina's storm surge demolished homes overlooking the Gulf, residents and officials gathered to mark the anniversary in Gulfport.

Haley Barbour, Mississippi's governor when the hurricane struck, recalled the "utter obliteration" he witnessed from a helicopter after the storm passed.

"It looked like the hand of God had wiped away the coast," Barbour said.

The population of New Orleans, nearly half a million before Katrina, is now 384,000 after displaced residents scattered across the nation. While New Orleans remains a majority Black city, the exodus disproportionately affected its Black residents. Tens of thousands were unable to return after Katrina. A federal rebuilding program favored the city's predominantly white and wealthy neighborhoods and failed to reach many in need.

After the storm, the levee system was rebuilt, public schools were privatized, most public housing projects were demolished and a public hospital known for serving the city's poor was shuttered.

New Orleans resident Gary Wainwright said never misses the cemetery memorial service on Katrina's anniversary. On Friday he wore a frayed red necktie, covered with the phrase "I love you." He salvaged it from his battered home in the storm's aftermath.

"It's a little bit tattered, like the city," Wainwright said. "But it's still beautiful."

US revokes visas of Palestinian president and other officials ahead of UN General Assembly

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Marco Rubio has revoked the visas of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and 80 other officials ahead of next month's annual high-level meeting of the U.N. General Assembly, a step the Palestinian Authority decried as against international law.

A State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss visa issues that are normally confidential, disclosed Friday that Abbas and other officials from the Palestinian Authority were among

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those affected by new visa restrictions. Palestinian representatives assigned to the U.N. mission, however, were granted exceptions.

The move is the latest in a series of steps the Trump administration has taken to target Palestinians with visa restrictions and comes as the Israeli military declared Gaza's largest city a combat zone. The State Department also suspended a program that had allowed injured Palestinian children from Gaza to come to the U.S. for medical treatment after a social media outcry by some conservatives.

The State Department said in a statement that Rubio also ordered some new visa applications from Palestinian officials, including those tied to the Palestine Liberation Organization, be denied.

"It is in our national security interests to hold the PLO and PA accountable for not complying with their commitments, and for undermining the prospects for peace," the statement said.

It said that to be considered partners for peace, the groups "must consistently repudiate terrorism, and end incitement to terrorism in education, as required by U.S. law and as promised by the PLO."

The Palestinian Authority denounced the visa withdrawals as a violation of U.S. commitments as the host country of the United Nations and urged the State Department to reverse its decision.

It said in a statement that the Palestinian presidency "expressed its deep regret and astonishment" at the visa decision, which "contravenes international law and the Headquarters Agreement, especially since the State of Palestine is an observer member of the United Nations."

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the world body would be seeking clarification from the State Department.

"We obviously hope that this will be resolved," he said. "It is important that all member states, permanent observers be able to be represented."

The State Department said representatives assigned to the Palestinian Authority mission at the United Nations would be granted waivers under the U.S. host country agreement with the U.N. so they can continue their New York-based operations.

The Trump administration has pursued a crackdown on some of those who have legal permission to come to the U.S., and at times the standard for releasing once-privileged information on canceled visas seems to have been relaxed to make a public point.

For instance, the State Department's No. 2 diplomat posted on social media when the U.S. pulled visas for British punk-rap duo Bob Vylan after they led crowds in chanting "death" to the Israeli military.

The Palestinian ambassador to the U.N., Riyad Mansour, told reporters Friday that Abbas had planned to lead the delegation to the U.N. meetings and had been expected to address the General Assembly — as he has done for many years.

He also had been expected to attend a high-level meeting co-chaired by France and Saudi Arabia on Sept. 22 about a two-state solution, which calls for Israel living side-by-side with an independent Palestine.

Trump ends ex-Vice President Harris' Secret Service protection early after Biden had extended it

By SEUNG MIN KIM and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has revoked former Vice President Kamala Harris' Secret Service protection that otherwise would have ended next summer, senior Trump administration officials said Friday.

Former vice presidents typically get federal government protection for six months after leaving office, while ex-presidents do so for life. But then-President Joe Biden quietly signed a directive, at Harris' request, that had extended protection for her beyond the traditional six months, according to another person familiar with the matter. The people insisted on anonymity to discuss a matter not made public.

Trump, a Republican, defeated Harris, a Democrat, in the presidential election last year.

His move to drop Harris' Secret Service protection comes as the former vice president, who became the Democratic nominee last summer after a chaotic series of events that led to Biden dropping out of the contest, is about to embark on a book tour for her memoir, titled "107 Days." The tour has 15 stops,

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including visits abroad to London and Toronto. The book, which refers to the historically short length of her presidential campaign, will be released Sept. 23, and the tour begins the following day.

A recent threat intelligence assessment the Secret Service conducts on those it protects, such as Harris, found no red flags or credible evidence of a threat to the former vice president, said a White House official who also insisted on anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. The administration found no reason Harris' protection should go beyond the standard six-month period for former vice presidents, the official said.

Trump's vice president from his first term, Mike Pence, did not have extended Secret Service protection beyond the standard six months.

Still, it is not unusual for Secret Service protection to continue well beyond the statutory six-month window, particularly when former officials face credible and ongoing threats. But Trump's decisions to revoke the protection have stood out both for timing and for targets.

During Trump's second presidency, he repeatedly has cut off security for adversaries and figures who have fallen from favor, including his onetime national security adviser John Bolton and members of Biden's family, including the former president's adult children. Outgoing presidents can extend protection for those who might otherwise not be eligible; Trump did so for his family after leaving office in 2021.

The decision to strip Harris of protection is certain to raise alarms among security experts who view continuity of protection as essential in a polarized climate.

A senior Trump administration official said an executive memorandum was issued Thursday to the Department of Homeland Security ending Harris' security detail and security services. Those had been extended from six to 18 months by the Biden administration, so they would have ended in July 2026, but now they will be terminated on Monday.

Harris lives in the Los Angeles area. The city's Democratic mayor, Karen Bass, called Trump's decision "another act of revenge following a long list of political retaliation" and warned that it would endanger Harris. Bass said she plans to work with California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a fellow Democrat, to ensure the former vice president's safety, and she and Harris have already been in touch about the issue, according to a person with knowledge of the discussions.

While she lost to Trump last November, Harris is seen as a potential candidate for 2028, and she has already announced she will not run for California governor in 2026. Harris is also a former senator, California attorney general and San Francisco district attorney.

Last year was a particularly politically charged environment with Trump facing two assassination attempts, and the Secret Service played a crucial role in protecting the now-president. While questions remain about how the agency prepared for a July 2024 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, a Secret Service counter sniper shot a gunman dead after he fired eight shots, killing an attendee, wounding two others and grazing Trump's right ear. Trump chose one of the agents who rushed to the stage to shield him, Sean Curran, to lead the agency earlier this year.

The news of the security revocation was first reported by CNN.

Trump blocks \$4.9B in foreign aid Congress OK'd, using maneuver last seen nearly 50 years ago

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has told House Speaker Mike Johnson that he won't be spending \$4.9 billion in congressionally approved foreign aid, effectively cutting the budget without going through the legislative branch.

Trump, who sent a letter to Johnson, R-La., on Thursday, is using what's known as a pocket rescission — when a president submits a request to Congress to not spend approved funds toward the end of the fiscal year, so Congress cannot act on the request in a 45-day timeframe and the money goes unspent as a result. It's the first time in nearly 50 years a president has used one. The fiscal year draws to a close at the end of September.

The letter was posted Friday morning on the X account of the White House Office of Management and

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Budget. It said the funding would be cut from the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, an early target of Trump's efforts to cut foreign aid.

If the White House standardizes this move, the president could effectively bypass Congress on key spending choices and potentially throw into disarray efforts in the House and the Senate to keep the government funded when the next fiscal year starts in October.

The use of a pocket rescission fits part a broader pattern by the Trump administration to exact greater control over the U.S. government, eroding the power of Congress and agencies such as the Federal Reserve and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among others. The administration has already fired federal workers and imposed a historic increase in tariffs without going through Congress, putting the burden on the judicial branch to determine the limits of presidential power.

A White House official, who insisted on anonymity on a call with reporters to discuss the move, declined to say how the administration might use pocket rescissions in the coming years or what the upper limits of it might be as a tool. The official expressed confidence the administration would prevail in any legal challenges and said a goal of the proposed spending cuts was to make the cleanest case possible for these types of clawbacks.

Winding down USAID

Secretary of State Marco Rubio posted on X that USAID is essentially being shuttered and congratulated White House budget director Russ Vought for managing the process.

"USAID is officially in close out mode," Rubio said. "Russ is now at the helm to oversee the closeout of an agency that long ago went off the rails."

The 1974 Impoundment Control Act gives the president the authority to propose canceling funds approved by Congress. Congress can within 45 days vote on pulling back the funds or sustaining them, but by proposing the rescission so close to Sept. 30 the White House argues that the money won't be spent and the funding lapses.

What was essentially the last pocket rescission occurred in 1977 by Democratic then-President Jimmy Carter, and the Trump administration argues it's a legally permissible tool despite some murkiness as Carter had initially proposed the clawback well ahead of the 45-day deadline.

Pushback against pocket rescissions

The move by the Trump administration drew immediate backlash in parts of the Senate over its legality.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said in a statement that the Constitution "makes clear that Congress has the responsibility for the power of the purse" and any effort to claw back funds "without congressional approval is a clear violation of the law."

"Instead of this attempt to undermine the law, the appropriate way is to identify ways to reduce excessive spending through the bipartisan, annual appropriations process," Collins said. Congress approves rescissions regularly as part of this process."

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York warned that Trump's use of the pocket veto could undermine the normal funding process and risk "a painful and entirely unnecessary shutdown." After all, any budget agreements reached in the Senate could lack authority if the Trump White House has the power to withhold spending as it sees fit.

Schumer said in a statement that Republican leaders have yet to meet with Democrats on a path to fund the government after the fiscal year ends on Sept. 30 just as Trump tries an "unlawful gambit to circumvent the Congress all together."

"But if Republicans are insistent on going it alone, Democrats won't be party to their destruction," Schumer said.

'No exceptions'

Eloise Pasachoff, a Georgetown University law professor and expert on federal spending issues, has written that the Impoundment Control Act allows rescissions only if Congress acts within 45 days, meaning the the White House alone cannot decide to not spend the funds.

"This mandatory language admits no exceptions, indicating that Congress expects the funds to be used

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as intended before the end of the fiscal year if it does not approve the proposed rescission," Pasachoff wrote in an academic paper last year.

What's in the funding?

The funds in the pocket rescission package include \$3.2 billion in development assistance grants, \$520 million for the United Nations, \$838 million for international peacekeeping operations and \$322 million to encourage democratic values in other countries.

Trump had previously sought to get congressional backing for rescissions and succeeded in doing so in July when the House and the Senate approved \$9 billion worth of cuts. Those rescissions clawed back funding for public broadcasting and foreign aid.

The Trump administration has made deep reductions to foreign aid one of its hallmark policies, despite the relatively meager savings relative to the deficit and possible damage to America's reputation abroad as foreign populations lose access to food supplies and development programs.

In February, the administration said it would eliminate almost all of USAID's foreign aid contracts and \$60 billion in overall assistance abroad. USAID has since been dismantled, and its few remaining programs have been placed under State Department control.

The Trump administration appealed to the Supreme Court on Wednesday to stop lower court decisions that had preserved foreign aid, including for global health and HIV and AIDS programs, that Trump has tried to freeze. But on Friday, the administration withdrew its appeal to the Supreme Court, after a favorable appeals court ruling late Thursday.

The New York Post first reported the pocket rescission.

Appeals court blocks Trump administration from ending legal protections for 600,000 Venezuelans

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal appeals court on Friday blocked President Donald Trump's plans to end protections for 600,000 people from Venezuela who have had permission to live and work in the United States, saying that plaintiffs are likely to win their claim that the Republican administration's actions were unlawful.

A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously upheld a lower court ruling that maintained temporary protected status for Venezuelans while TPS holders challenge actions by Trump's administration in court.

The 9th Circuit judges found that plaintiffs were likely to succeed on their claim that Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem had no authority to vacate or set aside a prior extension of temporary protected status because the governing statute written by Congress does not permit it. Then-President Joe Biden's Democratic administration had extended temporary protected status for people from Venezuela.

"In enacting the TPS statute, Congress designed a system of temporary status that was predictable, dependable, and insulated from electoral politics," Judge Kim Wardlaw, who was nominated by President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, wrote for the panel. The other two judges on the panel were also nominated by Democratic presidents.

In an email, a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security blasted the decision as more obstruction from "unelected activist" judges.

"For decades the TPS program has been abused, exploited, and politicized as a de facto amnesty program," the email read. "While this injunction delays justice and undermines the integrity of our immigration system, Secretary Noem will use every legal option at the Department's disposal to end this chaos and prioritize the safety of Americans."

Congress authorized temporary protected status, or TPS, as part of the Immigration Act of 1990. It allows the secretary of DHS to grant legal immigration status to people fleeing countries experiencing civil strife, environmental disaster or other "extraordinary and temporary conditions" that prevent a safe return

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to that home country. The terms are for six, 12 and 18 months.

The appellate judges said the guaranteed time limitations were critical so people could gain employment, find long-term housing and build stability without fear of shifting political winds.

But in ending the protections soon after Trump took office, Noem said conditions in Venezuela had improved and it was not in the U.S. national interest to allow migrants from there to stay on for what is a temporary program. It's part of a broader move by Trump's administration to reduce the number of immigrants who are in the country either without legal documentation or through legal temporary programs.

U.S. District Judge Edward Chen of San Francisco found in March that plaintiffs were likely to prevail on their claim that the administration had overstepped its authority in terminating the protections. Chen postponed the terminations, but the Supreme Court reversed him without explanation, which is common in emergency appeals.

It is unclear what effect Friday's ruling will have on the estimated 350,000 Venezuelans in the group of 600,000 whose protections expired in April. Their lawyers say some have already been fired from jobs, detained in immigration jails, separated from their U.S. citizen children and even deported.

Protections for the remaining 250,000 Venezuelans are set to expire Sept. 10.

"What is really significant now is that the second court unanimously recognized that the trial court got it right," said Emi MacLean, a senior staff attorney with the ACLU Foundation of Northern California representing plaintiffs.

She added that while the decision might not benefit immediately those people who have already lost their status or are about to lose their status, Friday's ruling "should provide a path for the administration's illegal actions related to Venezuela and TPS to finally be undone."

A court declaration provided by plaintiffs showed the turmoil caused by the Trump administration and Supreme Court decision.

A Washington woman who worked in restaurants was deported in June along with her daughters, 10 years and 15 months old, after ICE officers told her to bring her children to an immigration check-in. The father of the baby, who is a U.S. citizen, remains in the U.S. while the woman tries to figure out what to do.

Also in June, a FedEx employee appeared in uniform at his required immigration check-in only to be detained, the court declaration states. He slept for about two weeks on a floor, terrified he would be sent to El Salvador's notorious CECOT prison. His wife cannot maintain the household on her earnings.

"I am not a criminal," he said in the declaration, adding that "immigrants like myself come to the United States to work hard and contribute, and instead our families and lives are being torn apart."

Millions of Venezuelans have fled political unrest, mass unemployment and hunger. Their country is mired in a prolonged crisis brought on by years of hyperinflation, political corruption, economic mismanagement and an ineffectual government.

Attorneys for the U.S. government argued the Homeland Security secretary's clear and broad authority to make determinations related to the TPS program were not subject to judicial review. They also denied that Noem's actions were motivated by racial animus.

But the appellate judges said courts clearly had jurisdiction in cases where the actions were unlawful. They declined to address whether Noem was motivated by racial animus.

Lebanese army plans to carry out 'sensitive missions' amid US-backed Hezbollah disarmament plan

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's military will soon carry out "sensitive missions," the country's army chief said Friday, in an apparent reference to the Lebanese government's U.S.-backed plan to disarm the Hezbollah militant group by the end of the year.

Lebanon's military will take necessary steps to ensure the missions' success while preserving peace among the civilian population in the crisis-hit nation, Gen. Rodolphe Haykal said in a statement. Lebanon has a U.S.-backed plan to disarm Hezbollah as well as Palestinian weapons in the country's refugee camps.

The Lebanese government asked the army in early August to come up with a plan to disarm Hezbollah

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by the end of the month. The prime minister's office said in a statement Friday the Cabinet will hold a meeting to discuss the plan on Sept. 5.

Hezbollah's leadership has vowed not to disarm, saying the national government's decision to remove the Iran-backed group's weapons by the end of the year serves Israel's interests.

"The army is taking major responsibilities at all levels," Haykal was quoted as saying by an army statement. He made his comments during a meeting with the military's top generals.

Haykal added that the army is approaching a "delicate stage during which it will carry out sensitive missions and will take all the steps needed to make these missions successful taking into consideration the preservation of civil peace and internal stability."

Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem said earlier this month that the government is to blame if the situation gets out of control and leads to internal conflict in the small nation.

Since the 14-month Israel-Hezbollah war ended in November 2024 with a U.S.-brokered ceasefire, Hezbollah officials have said the group will not discuss its disarmament until Israel withdraws from five hills it controls inside Lebanon and stops almost daily airstrikes. Those strikes have killed or wounded hundreds of people, most of them Hezbollah members.

On Friday, the Israeli military said it killed an official with Hezbollah's elite Radwan Forces in south Lebanon. Lebanese state media reported that one person was killed in a drone strike in the village of Sir el-Gharbiyeh.

Haykal was quoted by the army statement as saying that the military is in contact with Syrian authorities to control the border between the two countries.

Before the fall of Syrian President Bashar Assad in December, Hezbollah received much of its weapons from Iran through Syria.

Fed governor Cook seeks court order blocking her firing by Trump

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writers

A lawyer for Lisa Cook on Friday urged a U.S. judge to let the Federal Reserve governor keep her job while she fights President Donald Trump's attempt to fire her in a stunning assault on the central bank's independence.

The case in the U.S. District Court in Washington D.C. could provide Trump with expansive power over the Fed, which has traditionally been shielded from political pressure as it makes tough, complicated decisions about whether to raise interest rates to fight inflation or lower them to encourage hiring and economic growth.

Trump has sought to fire Cook over allegations that she committed mortgage fraud when she purchased a home and condo in 2021, the year before President Joe Biden appointed her to the Fed's governing board.

Trump has repeatedly criticized the Fed — and its chair, Jerome Powell — for refusing to cut interest rates. The central bank has left its benchmark rate unchanged this year, partly because it is waiting to see whether the big taxes — tariffs — that Trump is slapping on foreign products will push inflation higher. Cook has voted against a cut, along with most board members.

Arguments in the court Friday centered on what constitutes "cause," which in this case are the unproven accusations of mortgage fraud.

In an exchange with U.S. District Judge Jia Cobb, Cook's lawyer, Abbe David Lowell, said Trump's motivations are clear. "He's already said he wants a majority (on the Fed board). He's bragged that he's going to get it."

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

Cook has asked the court to issue an emergency order that would prevent her firing and enable her to remain on the seven-member board of governors while her lawsuit to overturn the firing makes its way through the courts. The case may end up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

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The district court ruling is not expected until after Labor Day — although Judge Cobb said she would seek to expedite the case.

In court Friday, the Justice Department's Yaakov Roth, who represented the Trump administration at the hearing, complained that Cook had not offered an explanation for anything questionable in her mortgage documents or a defense against the fraud allegations.

The allegations remain just that, leveled by Bill Pulte, Trump's appointee to the agency that oversees mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

And late Thursday, Pulte, said that Cook had allegedly committed fraud on a third property, a condominium in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in April 2021.

Pulte said in a social media post that Cook classified the condo as a "second home," but in financial disclosure documents filed in 2022 through 2025 with the government, she described it as an "investment/rental" property. Pulte added that mortgage rates and down payments for second homes can be lower than for investment properties.

Pulte also alleged, without evidence, that Cook may have rented out two properties in Ann Arbor, Mich. and Atlanta, which were the focus of a criminal referral he made last week and which he said she has claimed as her principal residence.

In a statement, Cook's lawyer, Lowell, decried "an obvious smear campaign aimed at discrediting Gov. Cook ... Nothing in these vague, unsubstantiated allegations has any relevance to Gov. Cook's role at the Federal Reserve, and they in no way justify her removal from the Board."

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 reduce its key rate, which is currently 4.3%. Yet the Fed left it unchanged for the last five meetings.

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 attempted 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.

Pulte's charge that Cook has committed mortgage fraud is one 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.

Gym owner says she reported grooming concerns about coach years before arrest in sex abuse case

By RYAN J. FOLEY and EDDIE PELLIS Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — Long before his banishment from gymnastics and arrest after accusations he abused girls he coached, warning signs about Sean Gardner were coming from several directions — his former boss, his gymnasts and their parents.

The former boss says she brought her concerns about Gardner's "grooming" behavior to USA Gymnastics, the sport's national governing body. The parents and girls described telling coaches of inappropriate behavior at Gardner's new job, an academy that produced Olympians and is owned by renowned coach Liang "Chow" Qiao.

Yet Qiao not only kept Gardner on the job — he promoted him.

Associated Press interviews with four parents whose daughters trained under Gardner and a letter obtained by the AP from Gardner's former employer to clients at her gym revealed that concerns about the coach were reported to gymnastics authorities as far back as 2018 — four years before he was kicked out of the sport.

One girl told Qiao during a meeting in 2020 that she had been touched inappropriately by Gardner during training but Qiao said any such contact was inadvertent and intended to save athletes from injury, a parent told AP.

"She felt totally invalidated," the parent said of the response from Qiao, who built his reputation coaching Olympic gold medalists Shawn Johnson and Gabby Douglas and China's women's national team.

The watchdog responsible for investigating wrongdoing in Olympic sports confirmed to AP that Qiao and several other coaches were privately sanctioned for failing to report sexual misconduct allegations against Gardner after learning about them.

Qiao did not return AP emails and phone messages seeking comment. Gardner, 38, has been jailed since his Aug. 14 arrest pending federal court proceedings in Mississippi. He hasn't entered a plea, and court records don't indicate if he has a lawyer. He did not return AP messages seeking comment before his arrest.

Concerns at Chow's Gymnastics were first raised in 2019

One parent recalled attending a 2019 meeting with the parents of two other girls with Qiao to discuss their daughters' concerns, including that Gardner was making them uncomfortable in the way he touched them while spotting and by talking about inappropriate subjects.

The parent, like the others, spoke to AP on condition of anonymity to protect their daughters. The AP generally does not identify sexual abuse victims.

The meeting came more than a year after Gardner's former employer at a gym in Purvis, Mississippi, Candi Workman, said she discussed concerns with a USA Gymnastics attorney about "troubling behavior" involving Gardner's "coaching and grooming behavior."

Gardner was removed from the sport in July 2022 after the U.S. Center for SafeSport received a sexual abuse complaint and issued a temporary ban — a move it called "the only reason Gardner was barred from coaching young athletes" until his arrest.

The center forwarded that information to Iowa police, and it was another three years before the FBI arrested Gardner on charges of child sexual exploitation. Among the most damning evidence were allegations that he installed a hidden camera in the bathroom of the Mississippi gym to record girls as young as 6 undressing.

Gardner's rise and the sport's inability to root him out came even as news of Larry Nassar's decades-long sexual abuse of gymnasts was in the headlines and gyms were implementing safeguards to better protect athletes. It was the inability of USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic Committee to police predators, along with inaction by the FBI after learning of the abuse, that led to SafeSport's founding in 2017.

"This is the same type of behavior where girls aren't believed. They are cast aside. They are tamped down," said Megan Bonanni, a lawyer who helped secure a \$138.7 million settlement for Nassar's victims over the FBI's failures.

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"What we're seeing with Gardner, it's multiple institutions failing to act with the urgency that child safety demands. ... Local police, SafeSport, USA Gymnastics and this gym. All of them."

Former boss says she reported 'troubling behavior' in 2018

In her first comments on the case, Workman, the Mississippi gym owner, told gymnasts and their parents in a recent letter that she reported "troubling behavior" by Gardner to then-USA Gymnastics lawyer Mark Busby in January 2018.

Workman wrote that her concerns were related to "grooming," which USA Gymnastics defines as a process where a person builds trust and emotional connections with a child for the purpose of sexually abusing them.

Workman did not elaborate on what she reported and hasn't returned messages from AP seeking comment. Busby, whose job at the time related to athlete safety and is now in private practice, declined to comment when reached by AP.

The SafeSport center said it was notified by USA Gymnastics in January 2018 that one of its affiliated gyms had resolved a report involving Gardner. But the center said it didn't investigate further because the report was not related to sexual misconduct and it did not receive detailed information.

Despite that, Gardner was able to leave Mississippi for a better job in another USA Gymnastics-affiliated facility — Chow's Gymnastics and Dance Institute, the West Des Moines, Iowa, gym that had become a mecca for top gymnasts.

Despite concerns at Chow's, Gardner was promoted

Chow's Gymnastics said Gardner passed a standard USA Gymnastics background check when he was hired in 2018.

Concerns about his behavior in the gym began soon after, yet Gardner was consistently given more responsibility. Girls in one training group pushed for other adults to intervene, which resulted in the 2019 meeting between parents and Qiao.

But not long after that meeting, Chow's Gymnastics promoted Gardner in January 2020 to head coach of a key girls' team, telling parents in an email obtained by AP: "He has demonstrated the leadership and put good effort to do his job well." Gardner was also director of the Chow's Winter Classic, a meet that draws hundreds of gymnasts to Iowa every year.

Chow's Gymnastics kept Gardner on the payroll after he was arrested in August 2021 for second-offense drunken driving, a crash in which he ran another car off the road and his blood alcohol content recorded more than three times the legal limit for driving. Gardner was sentenced to a week in jail and two years of probation.

In a statement, Chow's Gymnastics said it acted "promptly, responsibly and in full compliance" after it received notice in April 2022 that Gardner was to be barred from one-on-one or unsupervised contact with athletes while SafeSport investigated unspecified misconduct.

Chow's Gymnastics said that it enforced those measures and removed Gardner as head coach. The gym said it fired Gardner in July 2022 after SafeSport strengthened Gardner's restrictions to a temporary suspension from coaching and all contact with athletes.

"Although there had been no finding of misconduct at that time, Chow's Gymnastics chose to err on the side of protecting its athletes," the statement said.

SafeSport said the sanctions in 2022 against Qiao and the other coaches who failed to report sexual misconduct allegations included warnings, required education, probation, and suspension in one case.

The center does not normally comment about specific cases but said in a statement to AP that it has "the ability to correct the record in light of the recent public letter issued by Chow's Gymnastics and Dance Institute."

Gym's claim of prompt response infuriates parents

The gym's statement infuriated some parents and former Chow's pupils who said concerns about Gardner had been widely known. Several of Gardner's students left the gym beginning in 2019 in what parents called a mass exodus.

The parents of one gymnast recalled witnessing Gardner touch another girl's buttocks while standing

behind her during practice. Gardner told the parents that his hand slipped by accident, and the father recalled warning Gardner that there "would be no accidents with my daughter."

When that girl eventually quit the gym due in part to Gardner's conduct, the father recalled restraining himself when Gardner came out to the parking lot to say he was sorry.

Bonanni, the attorney for survivors of Nassar's abuse, said she is troubled by the slow response in the Gardner case and expects more victims to come forward.

"The damage caused by this kind of abuse is permanent, and it's really long-lasting," she said. "It changes the trajectory of a young person's life."

Employers have used E-Verify for years. ICE's arrest of a Maine police officer raises new questions

By PATRICK WHITTLE and MAE ANDERSON Associated Press

OLD ORCHARD BEACH, Maine (AP) — The case of a Maine police officer arrested by immigration authorities even though he was vetted by a government system called "E-Verify" has raised questions about what employers can do to make sure they're employing people who can legally work.

E-Verify is an online system that compares information entered by an employer from an employee's documents with records available to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration. It's used to determine the employment eligibility of citizens and noncitizens.

Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security Tricia McLaughlin accused Old Orchard Beach, Maine, of "reckless reliance" on the E-Verify program when it hired Jamaica national Jon Luke Evans, who was later detained and agreed to leave the country earlier this month.

But it's the government's own program. And experts say there's not a whole lot more employers can do in terms of vetting.

"I think employers are between a rock and a hard place," said Madeline Zavodny, an economics professor at the University of North Florida. "Even an employer who is trying to comply with the law can have difficulty doing it."

What is E-Verify?

Before 1986, it was essentially legal for employers to hire people regardless of their immigration status. Then came the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which involved a large-scale immigrant legalization program that was paired with a requirement that employers no longer hire people who weren't legally authorized to work in the U.S.

Employers then had to fill out a form called an I-9, which required workers to present documents showing that they were authorized to work. But it was difficult to verify if the documents were valid. As part of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, the E-Verify system was established to help verify those documents.

Unlike I-9 forms, which are federally required for every employer, E-Verify is mandated on a state-by-state basis, otherwise it is voluntary. According to an Equifax tally, about 23 states require E-Verify for at least some public and/or private employers.

Zavodny said the system is generally accurate in terms of matching documents, but there are flaws. For example, if an employee's right to work is revoked after it has already been verified — perhaps if their visa expires — it doesn't automatically notify the employer.

A lack of biometrics also hinders the process. If there's a photo in the E-Verify system, manual photo matching by the employer helps. But a lot of times, there's no photo in the system.

And the system is not without critics. A 2021 review of E-Verify by the Office of the Inspector General concluded that until U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services addresses the system's shortcomings, "it cannot ensure the system provides accurate employment eligibility results."

Trump pushed for more E-Verify use

The federal government's disagreement with Old Orchard Beach over E-Verify's reliability came despite pushes by President Donald Trump and his allies to bring the system into wider use. Project 2025, the

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blueprint for Trump's second term, calls for it to be mandatory.

Use of the system isn't widespread. About a fifth of U.S. employers use it, though some huge businesses do, including Walmart, Starbucks and Home Depot.

Language calling for mandatory nationwide E-Verify was dropped from budget proposals during the first Trump administration. The system has also faced criticism from some employers.

An Omaha, Nebraska, food packaging company owner said a raid of his business by immigration officials this year came despite his use of E-Verify for employees. Glenn Valley Foods owner Gary Rohwer said in June that the business "did everything we could possibly do" to hire eligible workers.

Rohwer didn't respond to requests for comment this month. Old Orchard Beach officials declined to comment on the town's recent troubles. DHS officials also didn't respond.

Others say they've had good experiences with the system. Kyle Sobko, CEO of SonderCare, a Calgary, Alberta-based company that makes hospital beds for the home, has a staff of 50, including 20 in the U.S.

He uses E-Verify and said he hasn't had any problems.

"We trust the system for its reliability and integration with our hiring process," he said.

Sobko said the situation in Old Orchard Beach raises some concerns about the system's limitations. But he doesn't plan on making any changes since the warning about "reckless reliance" on E-Verify.

Experts say reliance is not reckless

Despite the system's flaws, characterization of E-Verify use as "reckless" is an "outrageous" claim, said Kathleen Campbell Walker, a Texas attorney who is a former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Walker described the process as "not a get out of jail free card" for prospective employees, but as one that has evolved over the years and become more robust in its ability to provide accurate background checks.

Walker said McLaughlin's description of "reckless reliance" on E-Verify should give employers pause.

"The whole idea is that I'm supposed to rely on E-Verify to show my good faith and to have a more secure workforce," she said. "Not that reliance upon it is somehow irresponsible."

Advocates for the rights of immigrants have said instances in which employees clear the E-Verify system but end up arrested by immigration officials anyway point to a broken immigration system.

"We have an immigration system that is not functioning to the extent that a federal system would both clear someone to work and at the same time, they could somehow get onto ICE's radar," said Molly Curren Rowles, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Maine, referring to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Going beyond E-Verify can be risky

Small businesses are in a tough spot since they don't necessarily have the resources or motivation to do more than what is required to verify employment eligibility status.

"Businesses should not be in the business of being the paperwork investigator for the federal government," said Frank Knapp Jr., president & CEO of the South Carolina Small Business Chamber of Commerce. "The federal government ought to be doing that."

Knapp has pushed back on his state's mandate for E-Verify because he said it puts too much of the onus on small business owners.

"It's an extra layer of administration just to do the E-Verify for small businesses, and the federal government is saying, oh, you do this because you want to verify that somebody is in this country legally," he said. "But now their own administration is saying, 'Oh, no, no. That's not enough.'"

James M. Cooney, a labor and employment law expert in the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations in New Jersey, said it can be tricky to go beyond the basics of what's required to verify identification without running the risk of a discrimination charge.

"If an employer tries to do more than what is permitted under the I-9 and E-Verify, that will very often be seen as illegal discrimination," he said. "And so that really puts employers at a tough spot."

Abrego Garcia's lawyers worry he can't get a fair trial and request gag order for top US officials

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

Lawyers for Kilmar Abrego Garcia say they are concerned he can't get a fair trial in his human smuggling case because Trump administration officials keep attacking him with "highly prejudicial, inflammatory, and false statements."

The attorneys are asking a federal judge in Tennessee to order U.S. government officials involved with his case — including Attorney General Pam Bondi and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem — to hold back on their comments.

"For months, numerous representatives of the same federal government that is responsible for prosecuting this case have publicly disparaged Mr. Abrego's character and reputation," his attorneys wrote in a filing on Thursday night, adding that officials have "expressed the opinion that he is guilty of the crimes charged and far worse."

The Salvadoran national and former Maryland construction worker became a lightning rod over President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration policies when he was wrongfully deported in March to a notorious prison in El Salvador. Trump's Republican administration claimed he was an MS-13 gang member, which he has repeatedly denied and for which he wasn't charged.

Facing a U.S. Supreme Court order, the Trump administration returned Abrego Garcia in June, but only to face the federal human smuggling charges in Tennessee. Abrego Garcia has pleaded not guilty, while his attorneys have called the case preposterous and vindictive.

The Trump administration is trying to deport Abrego Garcia again, this time to the African country of Uganda. He was taken into immigration custody on Monday after a federal judge in Tennessee released him from jail, determining he's not a flight risk or a danger to the community.

The Trump administration alleges Abrego Garcia is a danger and is trying to deport him before trial, which is scheduled for January. Abrego Garcia's immigration attorneys said this week that he'll request asylum in the U.S.

In Thursday's filing, Abrego Garcia's attorneys in Tennessee referred to statements from officials that label him as someone who's committed various crimes, even though he hasn't been convicted. For instance, they cited statements from Noem that he is an MS-13 gang member and "a horrible human being and a monster."

The attorneys also cited statements from Bondi, who told Trump this week that Abrego Garcia "needs to be in prison, he doesn't need to be on the streets like all these liberals want him to be. ... We are going to keep America safe from all of these foreign terrorist organizations, including Abrego Garcia."

This isn't the first time his attorneys have raised such concerns. They asked a federal judge in Tennessee to intervene earlier this summer.

In late July, U.S. District Judge Waverly Crenshaw Jr. issued an order to lawyers involved with the case, saying they must "ensure that any proper public communications include that the Indictment only contains allegations."

"Our Constitution requires that Abrego is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury," the judge wrote.

Thursday's filing asks the judge to issue an order for "officials that are involved in this case, and all officials in their supervisory chain, including Attorney General Bondi and Secretary Noem."

The Justice Department declined to comment on the matter in an email to The Associated Press. Acting U.S. Attorney Robert E. McGuire in Tennessee, who is prosecuting the human smuggling case, also declined to comment.

The Department of Homeland Security said in an emailed statement that the media has peddled a sob story about Abrego Garcia that has "completely fallen apart."

"If Kilmar Abrego Garcia did not want to be mentioned by the Secretary of Homeland Security, then he should have not entered our country illegally and committed heinous crimes," the statement said.

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Today in History: August 30, Shackelton's Endurance crew rescued

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 30, the 242nd day of 2025. There are 123 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 30, 1916, on his fourth attempt, explorer Ernest Shackelton successfully returned to Elephant Island in Antarctica to rescue 22 of his stranded crew members, who had survived on the barren island for four and a half months after the sinking of their ship, the Endurance.

Also on this date:

In 1941, during World War II, German forces approaching Leningrad cut off the remaining rail line out of the city.

In 1945, U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrived in Japan to set up Allied occupation headquarters.

In 1963, the "Hot Line" communications link between Washington and Moscow went into operation.

In 1967, the Senate confirmed the appointment of Thurgood Marshall as the first Black justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 2005, a day after Hurricane Katrina hit, floods covered 80 percent of New Orleans, looting continued to spread and rescuers in helicopters and boats picked up hundreds of stranded people.

In 2021, the United States completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan, ending America's longest war with the Taliban back in power, as Air Force transport planes carried a remaining contingent of troops from Kabul airport. After watching the last U.S. planes disappear into the sky over Afghanistan, Taliban fighters fired their guns into the air, celebrating victory after a 20-year insurgency.

In 2022, Mikhail Gorbachev, who was the last leader of the Soviet Union, and waged a losing battle to salvage a crumbling empire but produced extraordinary reforms that led to the end of the Cold War, died at age 91.

Today's Birthdays: Investor and philanthropist Warren Buffet is 95. Actor Elizabeth Ashley is 86. Actor John Kani is 83. Cartoonist Robert Crumb is 82. Olympic gold medal skier Jean-Claude Killy is 82. Comedian Lewis Black is 77. Basketball Hall of Famer Robert Parish is 72. U.S. Senator Thom Tillis, R-N.C., is 65. Actor Michael Chiklis is 62. Actor Cameron Diaz is 53. TV personality/journalist Lisa Ling is 52. Former MLB pitcher Adam Wainwright is 44. Former professional tennis player Andy Roddick is 43. Singer-songwriter Bebe Rexha is 36.