

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Wednesday, Sept. 17

School Breakfast: Omelets.  
School Lunch: Mac and cheese peas.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 5:30 p.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

## Thursday, Sept. 18

School Breakfast: Biscuits.  
School Lunch: Burrito. Bowl, corn.  
Cross Country at Lee Park, Aberdeen, 11 a.m.  
Volleyball at Clark ((7th-5, 8th-4; C-5, JV-6, V-7:15))





Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

Varsity  
Volleyball

Groton at Clark/Willow Lake  
Thursday., Sept. 18, 7:15 p.m.

**GDILIVE**

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



## Friday, Sept. 19

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.  
School Lunch: Cheese pizza, green beans.  
Football at Deuel, 7 p.m.

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

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# 1440

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

## Gaza City Operation

Israel launched a ground offensive yesterday in Gaza City, where Israeli officials estimate 2,000 to 3,000 Hamas militants remain. The operation in the Gaza Strip's largest city has led hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to flee south; the United Nations estimated Monday that over 220,000 people have left northern Gaza since mid-August.

The new operation coincided with the publication of a UN report that concluded Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza since October 2023. An independent panel found Israel committed four of five internationally recognized genocidal acts, including imposing living conditions intended to destroy a group. A separate UN-affiliated report published last month declared famine in Gaza. Israel has rejected both accusations and reiterated its intention to control Gaza City.

Separately, families of Israeli hostages protested (w/video) outside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's home over concerns that the ground offensive could further endanger the 20 hostages believed to be alive.

## Robert Redford Dies

Robert Redford, the Oscar-winning actor and director who founded the Sundance Institute, has died at his Utah home at age 89, his representatives said. No cause of death was provided.

Born Charles Robert Redford Jr. on Aug. 18, 1936, in Santa Monica, California, he became one of Hollywood's defining figures over a career spanning six decades. His performances included major roles in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," "The Way We Were," "The Great Gatsby," and "All the President's Men." He won an Academy Award for best director for the 1980 film "Ordinary People." In 1981, he established the Sundance Institute, a nonprofit that sponsors the Sundance Film Festival, which helped launch the careers of several independent filmmakers, including Quentin Tarantino.

Redford received the National Medal of Arts in 1996, an honorary Oscar in 2002, the Kennedy Center Honors in 2005, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2016. He was also a lifelong environmental advocate.

## LimeWire Catches Fyre

File-sharing platform LimeWire announced yesterday it has purchased the rights to Fyre Festival for \$245K, outbidding actor Ryan Reynolds' production company on eBay. The company says it will unveil a reimagined version of the infamous Fyre brand in the coming months.

LimeWire became popular in the 2000s for music streaming, at one point boasting more than 50 million monthly users. Years after being shut down for copyright infringement, the company relaunched in 2022 as a file-sharing service specializing in NFTs. Today, it is among the most-downloaded platforms on the social media app Discord, with over 2 million active users.

The company has not yet revealed what it plans to do with Fyre Festival, which, in 2017, launched a failed music event in the Bahamas that is the subject of multiple documentaries. Organizer Billy McFarland was convicted of wire fraud in 2018 and sentenced to six years in prison (he was released early in 2022).

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Justin Bieber joins Sabrina Carpenter and Karol G as headliners announced for 2026 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival (April 10-19)

League Phase of the 2025-26 UEFA Champions League kicks off.

Dallas Wings' Paige Bueckers named 2025 WNBA Rookie of the Year.

Terence Crawford-Canelo Álvarez fight hauls in 41 million viewers on Netflix.

Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone breaks 19-year-old American record in 400-meters at Track and Field World Championships.

## Science & Technology

OpenAI to launch ChatGPT experience with parental controls and age-prediction technology as company faces federal probe into chatbots' effects on kids.

Researchers generate electricity by bending salt-infused ice, pointing to the modified ice's potential as a renewable energy source.

Divers recover artifacts from nearly 400-foot-deep wreck of Britannic, Titanic's sister ship, over a century after luxury cruise liner sank in Aegean Sea.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close down (S&P 500 -0.1%, Dow -0.3%, Nasdaq -0.1%) as traders wait for Federal Reserve's interest rate decision today.

President Donald Trump extends deadline to Dec. 16 for TikTok's Chinese parent, ByteDance, to divest the platform's US operations and avoid nationwide ban.

Microsoft to invest \$30B in AI infrastructure, operations in the UK through 2028 as part of plans to build the country's largest supercomputer.

## Politics & World Affairs

Suspect in Charlie Kirk's murder appears virtually in court, is charged with aggravated murder, obstruction of justice, and other counts.

FBI Director Kash Patel discusses Kirk shooting, Jeffrey Epstein case before Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday; hearing before House committee is today.

President Donald Trump files \$15B defamation lawsuit against The New York Times, Penguin Random House over articles in the lead-up to the 2024 election, which Trump says were intended to harm his reputation, candidacy.

New York judge tosses state terrorism charges against man accused of killing UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson.



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## Johnson Leads Groton at Redfield Meet

REDFIELD — Groton's boys golf team battled through a tough course on Tuesday in Redfield, finishing fifth overall with a team score of 354.

Jace Johnson led the way with a steady round of 77, carding a 36 on the front nine and a 41 coming in. Johnson's consistency shone through, highlighted by several clutch pars that kept him just seven strokes over par.

Jarrett Erdmann turned in a pair of 43s for an 86 total, showing balance across both sides of the course. Jayden Schwan followed closely behind, shooting 45 on the front and 44 on the back to finish at 89.

Liam Johnson rounded out the group, posting 51s on both nines for a 102 overall, grinding through the longer par 5s and tricky par 3s.

In the team standings, Watertown claimed the top spot with a 329 (+49), followed by Sioux Valley (338, +58) and Sisseton (338, +58). Aberdeen Roncalli placed fourth at 340 (+60), just ahead of Groton.

Host Redfield finished seventh at 363 (+83), while Aberdeen Central closed out the leaderboard at 377 (+97).

Despite the stiff competition, Groton's total of 354 (+74) showcased their consistency and placed them firmly in the middle of the pack. With Johnson leading the way and the rest of the squad improving, the Tigers are aiming to climb higher in the standings as the season continues.

Yardage	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	410	192	324	475	130	364	353	300	165	2713	5426
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Par	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	35	70
4. Jace Johnson	5	4	5	4	3	4	3	4	4	36	8	3	3	5	4	5	5	4	4	41	77
16. Jarrett Erdmann	6	5	5	6	4	3	5	4	5	43	6	4	4	8	4	5	4	5	3	43	86
20. Jayden Schwan	7	4	6	5	4	6	6	4	3	45	6	5	5	7	3	5	6	5	2	44	89
33. Liam Johnson	9	4	5	10	5	6	4	5	3	51	7	4	5	6	5	6	6	5	7	51	102



**Pictured are Jace Johnson, Jarrett Erdmann, Jayden Schwan and Liam Johnson.** (Courtesy photo)

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## Storage unit project denied after tense discussion Tuesday night

A proposed storage unit project brought some drama to Tuesday night's city council meeting.

The project, located at 9 East Railroad Avenue, would include building 16 storage units on the property that used to house Teddy Bear Daycare. Mark Abeln purchased the property and took down the distressed building. He requested a special exception to the city's zoning ordinance in order to build the commercial buildings on the property zoned residential.

The Planning and Zoning Committee denied the special exception request, and Abeln appealed the decision to the City Council.

Residents from the block northeast of the intersection of North Broadway Street and East Railroad Avenue voiced strong opposition to having commercial development built on their block.

Councilman Brian Bahr, who sits as a non-voting representative on the planning and zoning board, started the discussion, saying Abeln has said he is willing to compromise on a number of issues of concern for area residents.

Bahr added, though, that the property has been used as a commercial business in that residential area for many years. Teddy Bear Daycare was not an in-home daycare, he said, as no one lived in the house that was on the lot.

Councilwoman Karyn Babcock responded.

"I feel like Teddy Bear Daycare was an in-home daycare, even if it was commercial, because it was in a home," she said.

Babcock said she would be concerned if she lived there as well, and she wouldn't want to look out the window and see storage units.

"If you put something there that doesn't sync with residential, I wouldn't want it," she said. "I get where you're going. I agree that we need more storage. I don't think putting it there is the right place."

Residents in the area expressed concerns about increased vehicle and foot traffic, the look of storage units in their neighborhood and possible noise issues at all hours.

The council was divided on the issue, with three council members (Bahr, Kevin Nehls and Jon Cutler) siding to allow the project and three other council members (Babcock, Mike Shilhanek and Jason Wambach) standing by the neighbors' concerns.

Cutler said that it is hard not to listen to the people in the area, but he doesn't see an issue changing that lot to commercial. It has been done for other properties in town, including two blocks north of the proposed project, which now houses Lavish Luxury Salon Suite.

"I personally don't see an issue with it," he said.

Many council members said it was a tough decision.

Wambach said that while he loves to see progress in town, a majority of the neighbors are against it. That led him to voting against the project.

Wambach, Babcock and Shilhanek voted to deny changing the property to allow for the project, while Bahr, Nehls and Cutler voted to allow the project to move forward.

With a tie vote, Mayor Scott Hanlon was tasked with making the tie-breaker vote.

"I guess that's going to make me have to make the final decision," he said. "I have to respect the Planning and Zoning Commission and the neighbors, so I am going with 'no.'"

Following the tense vote, Hanlon urged everyone not to let the disagreement create lasting division.

"Let's not hold this against anybody," he said. "Let's see if we can work with everybody to get something there."

"...Let's not let this tear us apart," he added. "The bottom line is let it make us stronger."

- Swimming pool co-managers Tricia Keith and Kami Lipp discussed the end of the summer season, as well as equipment requests that will be sent in. The equipment request includes a new pool rule sign, equipment to repair the pool vacuum, two new signs warning about tempered glass goggles and possibly a new backboard.

- The council discussed an offer to purchase steel roofing material. The contractor the city worked with for hail damaged city roof repairs had ordered supplies from the Aberdeen Builders FirstSource but had not paid for them. After the contractor ghosted the city, Builders FirstSource reached out with the supply list that had been ordered. City officials plan to reach out to the structural building supply company, asking to hold off until the city rebids the project and a new contractor is brought on to the project.

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## Girls Soccer: Dakota Valley 3, Groton Area 1

Groton Area fell 3-1 to a well-rounded Dakota Valley squad Tuesday night.

Scoring summary:

First half: Dakota Valley struck early, with Ava Buck netting a goal at 14:05 and Sophia Meyer adding another at 9:40 to give DV a 2-0 halftime lead.

Second half: Groton responded with grit as Mia Crank scored at 11:15, cutting into the deficit. Dakota Valley answered back when Lexi Stusse found the net at 32:11 to secure the win.

In goal: Jaedyn Penning recorded 3 saves for the Tigers.

Coach Matt Baumgartner's comments:

"Hats off to Dakota Valley—they are a very well-rounded team. They do the right things right a lot of the time and make it frustrating to strategize against. Evenly, us and them are very well matched up. We just need to do the right things correctly as well for a full 80 minutes.

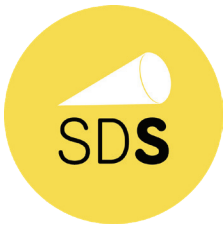
The effort to fight back in the second half was seen and I'll respect that. But this is the game that will be the turning point here. We either collapse or climb back into the ring for another round—and our team would prefer the latter."

The Tigers now head into a 10-day break before their next matchup and another road test with 5-3-1 West Central Saturday, Sept. 27 at 2:30 pm.



**Everyone is always obsessed with sunset photos, so I thought I would get one of the sunrise a couple of mornings ago.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **New state public defense office has taken 43 cases so far** **Office of Indigent Legal Services handling appeals for felony crimes, abuse and neglect cases**

**BY: JOHN HULT-SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 5:25 PM**

South Dakota's first state public defender and his staff of four have taken on 43 cases since taking their first this winter.

Lawmakers created and funded the Office of Indigent Legal Services in 2024 to address the ballooning cost of lawyers for people who have a constitutional right to one but can't afford it.

The state convened a task force to address that issue in 2023, spurred in part by the doubling of county-paid public defense bills in the space of 10 years.

As of two years ago, South Dakota was one of only two states in the U.S. to collar counties with the full cost of indigent defense. A state-level office, the task force concluded, could begin to relieve some of that pressure.

The resulting Office of Indigent Legal Services doesn't represent clients at trial — counties still pay area lawyers for that — but instead handles appeals of felony convictions and rulings against parents and guardians in abuse and neglect cases.

Lawmakers put \$1.4 million in the office's budget for the current fiscal year, which began in July. The office was expected to save counties \$2.1 million overall and bring a net savings of \$600,000 to taxpayers.

#### **Leader hired in 2024**

Christopher Miles was hired to head up the office. He's since welcomed three additional attorneys and a paralegal, and is on the hunt for one more attorney.

The office took on its first cases in February, when the doors opened for appeals from the Sioux Falls and Rapid City areas. In July, it began to take appeals from the rest of the state.

The state office's team is now working on appeals from Roberts, Hughes and Lawrence counties, on top of its caseload from the metro areas.

Miles and the other three lawyers each have about 10 cases to handle. Thirteen of them involve abuse and neglect. The rest involve felony convictions.

"We're probably picking up a case every week," Miles said.

The team has an office in Sioux Falls and one team member in Rapid City.

The only appellate court in South Dakota's court system is the state Supreme Court. None of the appeals handled by the office have reached the Supreme Court for oral arguments, and the high court has yet to rule for or against the state's public defenders in cases where they presented arguments on a client's behalf.

Three cases have been resolved. Two defendants dropped their appeals after consultations with the public defense office. In the third case, the office found no appealable issues and told the state's high court as much, but the client exercised their right to file their own appeal statement. The Supreme Court dismissed the client's case by summary judgment, a short statement that doesn't address specific legal issues.

"We don't have any wins yet, but we don't have a lot of cases that have made it through to the point where we'd be expecting an opinion, either," Miles said.

#### **Scope of work**

An appeal doesn't involve new evidence or new witnesses.

Rather, it involves scouring the existing trial court record to find some error, such as ineffective assistance from a trial court lawyer, erroneous rulings from a judge or a sentence that falls into the unconstitutional

category of cruel and unusual.

If there's an issue for his office to address, Miles said, it's got to be present within the four corners of the case record, which would include transcripts from hearings or a trial. A win at the state Supreme Court could reopen parts of a case.

Inmates will contact the office at times with hopes of adding new evidence, Miles said, but "we do our best to explain what the restrictions are."

### Future goals

Minnehaha County Public Defender Traci Smith has been pleased so far.

Miles was once part of Smith's staff of 45 lawyers, paralegals and others, and appeals were his only job.

"Now, we don't have to have an attorney assigned to appeals," Smith said.

Smith was a task force member, and manages one of three county-level public defenders' offices in the state. Her hope is that the state office serves as a stepping stone to address other issues surrounding indigent defense in South Dakota, as outlined in a report on the issue from the Sixth Amendment Center.

Among those challenges were a dearth of experienced criminal defense attorneys in rural areas, and funding for high-profile cases in low-budget counties.

"There are a lot of priorities, but the real progress will come by focusing on a few key goals at a time and building momentum step by step," Smith said.

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

## Pipeline opponents call for Iowa regulators to reject Summit's proposed permit changes

**Company seeks to remove conditional language referencing the Dakotas**

**BY: ROBIN OPSAHL-SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 5:58 PM**

The Iowa chapter of the Sierra Club and some landowners called Tuesday for the Iowa Utilities Commission to reject Summit Carbon Solutions' petition to amend its pipeline permit.

The petition, filed Monday, requests changes to the initially proposed route and pipe size for the carbon sequestration pipeline project, which had been approved by the IUC in 2024. That approval came with requirements that Summit could not begin construction until it received route permission from North Dakota and South Dakota, and storage permission in North Dakota.

Since the IUC's initial approval, South Dakota has enacted a law preventing the use of eminent domain in CO2 pipeline projects, and has denied two of Summit's permit requests. In North Dakota, Summit's permits were approved, but are facing legal challenges.

In light of these actions in other states, Summit has requested to amend the permit in Iowa, changing language to reflect that "additional options for storage and pathways to storage are developing and may provide a better solution." The request would remove language referencing North Dakota and South Dakota, changing the petition to state construction cannot begin until it has "secured access to one or more sequestration sites and permits or agreements to allow it to reach such storage."

Landowners and advocates who oppose the pipeline project or the use of eminent domain in gaining land easements necessary to complete the route, released statements Tuesday calling for the IUC to reject the proposed language change.

Though Summit said in its petition that the move away from state-specific language would not diminish "protections against a 'pipeline to nowhere'" in the permit, people opposed to the project said the shift is too substantial of a change to be approved as an amendment, while criticizing the business for not providing further details on a new route or storage options.

"This isn't an amendment, this is a last-ditch effort and half-baked proposal for an entirely new project because South Dakota said no," Wally Taylor, attorney for the Sierra Club Iowa Chapter, said in a state-



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ment. "Summit needs to realize that Iowa is saying no, too."

Brian Jorde, an attorney with Domina Law Group representing landowners with Bold Education Fund's Iowa Easement Team, called for Summit to withdraw its application for the "Phase 2" route in Iowa. He also said the company should surrender its permit approvals in Iowa and North Dakota, "which were predicated on a plan and route that no longer exists."

"If Summit truly wants a 'fresh start,' they need to come clean with the public, regulators, and landowners about their plans, and start the application process over with a viable route that identifies specific sequestration sites and any 'industrial use' partners," Jorde said in a statement.

Iowa Renewable Fuels Association Executive Director Monte Shaw criticized the comments from Jorde and the Sierra Club in a statement while expressing support for Summit's petition.

"As we noted when South Dakota changed their law, there are many places to sequester carbon and there are many ways to get to those locations that do not involve South Dakota," Shaw said. "It seems to us that Summit's permit request simply reflects that."

Though there has been opposition to the project, Shaw said a "super majority of impacted landowners have expressed their support for the project through voluntary easements," and said the IRFA will continue to support "fair treatment" for carbon capture projects while supporting the protection of landowners rights.

"The demand for ultra-low carbon ethanol is expanding around the world, and we do not want Iowa left out," Shaw said. "When the carbon sequestration project in Nebraska begins operations this fall, Iowa will lose its 25-year crown as the world's most profitable place in the world to turn corn into ethanol. There are serious economic ramifications that will follow if that is allowed to last. IRFA will work to ensure Iowa returns to the top while Sierra Club relishes the thought that Iowa's rural economy will be further diminished."

In addition to the petition to amend the Iowa permit, Summit announced a community and landowner-ship partnership program Monday, including updated commitments related to safety, transparency and increased benefits for landowners and counties where the pipeline route is planned.

"We're fully committed to making this project work the right way going forward," the letter, sent to county supervisors, county emergency managers and landowners, said. "We also realize our significant investment will only be successful if it's built on genuine partnership, and we know that success depends on working side-by-side with communities and landowners along our route."

But some landowners opposed to the project, including Kim Junker of Butler County, said Tuesday the newly announced incentives are an attempt to "sweeten and distract from our biggest concerns about the project."

"Summit is still trying to place a dangerous pipeline near our homes. Summit is still trying to abuse our property rights through the use of eminent domain. Summit is still aiming to take our tax dollars for their privately-owned project. Summit is still threatening our land and our water," Junker said in a statement. "Nothing about that has changed. This project is still all risk and no reward."

This story was originally produced by Iowa Capital Dispatch, which is part of States Newsroom, a non-profit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

*Robin Opsahl is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering the state Legislature and politics. Robin has experience covering government, elections and more at media organizations including Roll Call, the Sacramento Bee and the Wausau Daily Herald, in addition to working on multimedia projects, newsletters and visualizations. They were a political reporter for the Des Moines Register covering the Iowa caucuses leading up to the 2020 presidential election, assisting with the Register's Iowa Poll, and reporting on Iowa's 4th District elections.*

## Property tax task force to meet in Pierre with opportunity for public comment

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 4:59 PM

A legislative task force aiming to reduce property taxes for South Dakota homeowners will meet in Pierre next week with an opportunity for public comment.

The Comprehensive Property Tax Task Force will meet at 9 a.m. Central time on Monday at the South Dakota State Capitol. Public comment is scheduled for 11:15 a.m.

The agenda also includes breakout discussions among the task force members and presentations from:

- The state Department of Revenue on property tax relief programs and tax increment financing.
- Joseph Santos, economist and academic director of South Dakota State University's Ness School of Management and Economics, on the effects of taxation on the housing market.
- Pierre Republican Sen. Jim Mehlhaff on his proposal to replace school property taxes with an additional sales tax.

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

*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.*

## US Senate Dems push GOP for extension of expiring health care subsidies

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA-SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 5:48 PM

WASHINGTON — A trio of Senate Democrats urged Republican lawmakers at a Tuesday press conference to extend and make permanent the enhanced Affordable Care Act tax credits set to expire at the end of 2025.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, along with Sens. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, warned that the expiration of these credits would lead to "skyrocketing" costs for millions of enrollees unless the GOP-controlled Congress takes action.

The credits are used by people who buy their own health insurance through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace.

### Stopgap spending bill

The extension is among congressional Democrats' broader health care demands in order to back any stopgap funding bill to avert a government shutdown before the next fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

House GOP leadership did not negotiate with Democrats on the seven-week stopgap funding bill released on Tuesday.

Schumer, alongside House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York, said in a joint statement Tuesday that "the House Republican-only spending bill fails to meet the needs of the American people and does nothing to stop the looming healthcare crisis."

They added that "at a time when families are already being squeezed by higher costs, Republicans refuse to stop Americans from facing double-digit hikes in their health insurance premiums."

At the press conference, Baldwin called for legislation she and Shaheen introduced earlier this year that would make the enhanced premium tax credits permanent to be included in the stopgap government funding bill.

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"Time is of the essence — families and businesses are planning for next year, and we need to get this done," Baldwin said. "The only question is whether Republicans will join us and stand for lower costs for families or not."

Shaheen said that "as we near the deadline for government funding, I hope that our colleagues here in Congress will join us, that they will act to extend these tax credits and to keep health insurance affordable for millions of Americans."

## **Premiums expected to soar without action**

The enhanced premium tax credits, established by Democrats in 2021 as part of a massive COVID-19 relief package, were extended in 2022 through the Inflation Reduction Act. They are set to expire at the end of 2025.

Premiums, on average, for enrollees would soar by more than 75% if the credits expire, according to the nonpartisan health research organization KFF.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said Tuesday at a press conference that "Republicans have concerns" about the credits because they have no income cap and certain high-income people can qualify for them. He also said Congress has until the end of the year to decide what to do.

At the Democrats' press conference, Schumer said President Donald Trump "has taken a meat ax to our health care system," adding that "it's vicious, it's cruel, it's mean" and pointing to some of the repercussions of the GOP's mega tax and spending cut law on Medicaid recipients.

Meanwhile, open enrollment begins in November, meaning Congress would have to act before the end of the calendar year to avoid premium spikes.

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

## **Government shutdown looms Oct. 1 as Congress struggles with stopgap spending plan**

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 2:47 PM**

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Republican leaders released a seven-week stopgap government funding bill Tuesday that's intended to avoid a shutdown when the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

But GOP leaders opted not to negotiate the legislation with Democrats, who may be needed to approve the bill in the House and will be required to get past the Senate's 60-vote legislative filibuster.

Democrats for weeks have called on Republicans to address what they view as critical health care issues, including the expiration of expanded Affordable Care Act tax credits at the end of the calendar year and the effects of the GOP's "big, beautiful" law on Medicaid recipients.

Speaker Mike Johnson said during a press conference shortly before the bill was released that he views the ACA tax credits as "a December policy issue, not a September funding issue," even though open enrollment begins in November.

"They don't expire until the end of the year and so we have until the end of December to figure all that out," Johnson said. "But I can tell you that there's real concern. I have concerns. Republicans have concerns about those policies."

"If you look at how much they've been abused, in my estimation, in some ways. There's no income cap on it. People who make \$600,000 a year get a government subsidy for their health care. I don't think that's going to be a popular measure when people understand how that works. There's a relatively small number of people that are affected by it. But that policy has real problems."

The tax credits are used by people who purchase their own health care coverage through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace.

## **Schumer: Republicans 'want to shut things down'**

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said during a floor speech before the bill was publicly



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released that GOP leaders shouldn't expect Democrats to help them advance any legislation they didn't negotiate in a bipartisan way.

"They can try and play the blame game, but their actions tell a different story. Their actions show clearly they want to shut things down because they don't want to negotiate with Democrats," Schumer said. "And it's more than that. It means Republicans don't want to help the American people with the crisis they've created raising people's costs, particularly their health care costs."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said the stopgap spending bill, which would keep the government running through Nov. 21, is needed to give lawmakers more time to work out final, bipartisan versions of the dozen full-year government funding bills.

"The goal here should be to fund the government the way it was intended to be funded — through the normal appropriations process," Thune said.

House Appropriations Committee ranking member Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., and Senate Appropriations ranking member Patty Murray, D-Wash., issued a joint statement shortly after the bill's release, saying they're ready to keep working with their Republican counterparts — House Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., and Senate Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine — on a bipartisan stopgap spending bill.

"Instead of continuing to work through important issues with us on the continuing resolution and government funding to help the middle class and the working class, House Republican leadership has walked away from negotiations and are now threatening a shutdown by trying to jam through a funding bill on their terms alone," DeLauro and Murray wrote.

## Security for members of Congress

The 91-page stopgap spending bill also includes \$30 million in additional funds to bolster safety and security for members of Congress following an increasingly violent year that included the killing of conservative commentator Charlie Kirk, the killing and attempted killing of Democratic state lawmakers in Minnesota as well as some of their family members and arson at the Democratic Pennsylvania governor's mansion.

Members of Congress, their staff and their families are subject to thousands of threats each year, according to data from the U.S. Capitol Police.

Johnson told reporters shortly after his press conference that he views the member security funding as a start and that there will be "more to come" in the full-year Legislative Branch funding bill.

Johnson said he expects the House will vote on the stopgap bill before Friday, when both chambers of Congress are set to leave on a week-long break for the Rosh Hashanah holiday week.

Lawmakers aren't expected to return to Capitol Hill until Sept. 29, with just hours to avoid a partial government shutdown if they cannot approve a stopgap bill in the days ahead.

The legislation includes an additional \$30 million for the U.S. Marshals Service, which is responsible for the safety of federal judges and courthouses, as well as \$28 million "for the protection of the Supreme Court Justices." A GOP summary of the bill says the Marshals Service funding will go toward "Executive Branch protective services."

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

## Appeals court says Trump can't remove Federal Reserve's Lisa Cook

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA-SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 11:18 AM

WASHINGTON — An appeals court late Monday rejected the Trump administration's request to move ahead with firing Federal Reserve board member Lisa Cook, as the president tries to pressure the independent board to lower interest rates.

The 2-1 decision will allow Cook to partake in Tuesday's Federal Reserve meeting, where the board will vote on whether to adjust interest rates.

The Trump administration is likely to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

If Trump is successful in removing Cook and is able to nominate a replacement, he could have a majority

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of Fed members who are aligned with his desire to lower interest rates to boost the economy.

## **Trump nominee approved**

Cook, appointed by former President Joe Biden, is the first Black woman appointed to the Fed, and she has consistently voted against lowering interest rates since joining the board in 2022. Her term ends in 2038.

Late Monday, the U.S. Senate also approved Trump's nominee for an open spot at the Fed, Stephen Miran, in a 48-47 vote.

While the Fed is an independent agency, Miran will continue to serve as the head of the White House's Council of Economic Advisers.

In a social media post Monday, the president called out Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, and pressed that he "MUST CUT INTEREST RATES, NOW, AND BIGGER THAN HE HAD IN MIND. HOUSING WILL SOAR!!!."

## **Appeals court splits**

In the appeals court decision on Cook, D.C. Circuit Judge Gregory G. Katsas, whom Trump appointed in 2017, split with Judges J. Michelle Childs and Bradley N. Garcia, both appointed by Biden.

Last week a federal judge ruled to keep Cook in her position, determining that Trump administration allegations of mortgage fraud lacked evidence and did not meet the threshold for removing Cook under "just cause."

Katsas agreed with the Trump administration's argument that the president has the right to remove a Fed member for "just cause."

"This broad definition 'give[s] the President more removal authority than other removal provisions' imposed by Congress or reviewed by the Supreme Court," Katsas wrote in his dissent.

Childs and Garcia did not address the "just cause" argument but said the lack of due process Cook received in her removal warranted blocking Trump's attempt to fire her.

"Because Cook's due process claim is very likely meritorious, there is no need to address the meaning of 'for cause' in the Federal Reserve Act in this emergency posture," the majority wrote in the opinion.

A Trump official referred Cook to the Department of Justice, accusing her of improperly filing paperwork about her residence that allowed her to get a more favorable mortgage rate. Reuters obtained Cook's paperwork and found no evidence of tax rule violations.

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

## **Summit petitions Iowa regulators to remove Dakotas requirement from pipeline permit**

**BY: CAMI KOONS-SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 9:09 AM**

Summit Carbon Solutions has filed a petition to amend its pipeline permit with the Iowa Utilities Commission.

The petition, filed on Monday, requests route and pipe-size modifications to add an ethanol plant to the route and to "amend the conditions regarding North Dakota and South Dakota."

In the IUC's approval of the CO2 pipeline permit through Iowa, it noted Summit could not begin construction until it had received route and storage permission from North Dakota — where the pipeline is slated to deposit the sequestered carbon in an underground rock formation — and route permission from South Dakota.

South Dakota enacted a law earlier this year to stop the use of eminent domain on carbon sequestration pipelines, and has denied Summit's permit requests twice. Summit's permits were approved in North Dakota, but have been tied up in litigation.

In the petition to the IUC, Summit said its request to change the language was not meant to change the "protections against a 'pipeline to nowhere.'" Summit said this change would reflect that "additional

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options for storage and pathways to storage are developing and may provide a better solution.”

Summit asked that the state-specific language be removed from the order to instead read:

“Summit Carbon Solutions, LLC, shall not commence construction on any segment of pipe in Iowa until it has secured access to one or more sequestration sites and permits or agreements to allow it to reach such storage ... and has filed proof of such approvals with the Commission.”

The other requested changes, according to the petition, would account for ease of building the pipeline around railroads and roads, and to facilitate connections to sequestration sites that have since been added to the project.

This story was originally produced by Iowa Capital Dispatch, which is part of States Newsroom, a non-profit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

*Cami Koons is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering agriculture and the environment. She previously worked at publications in Kansas and Missouri, covering rural affairs.*

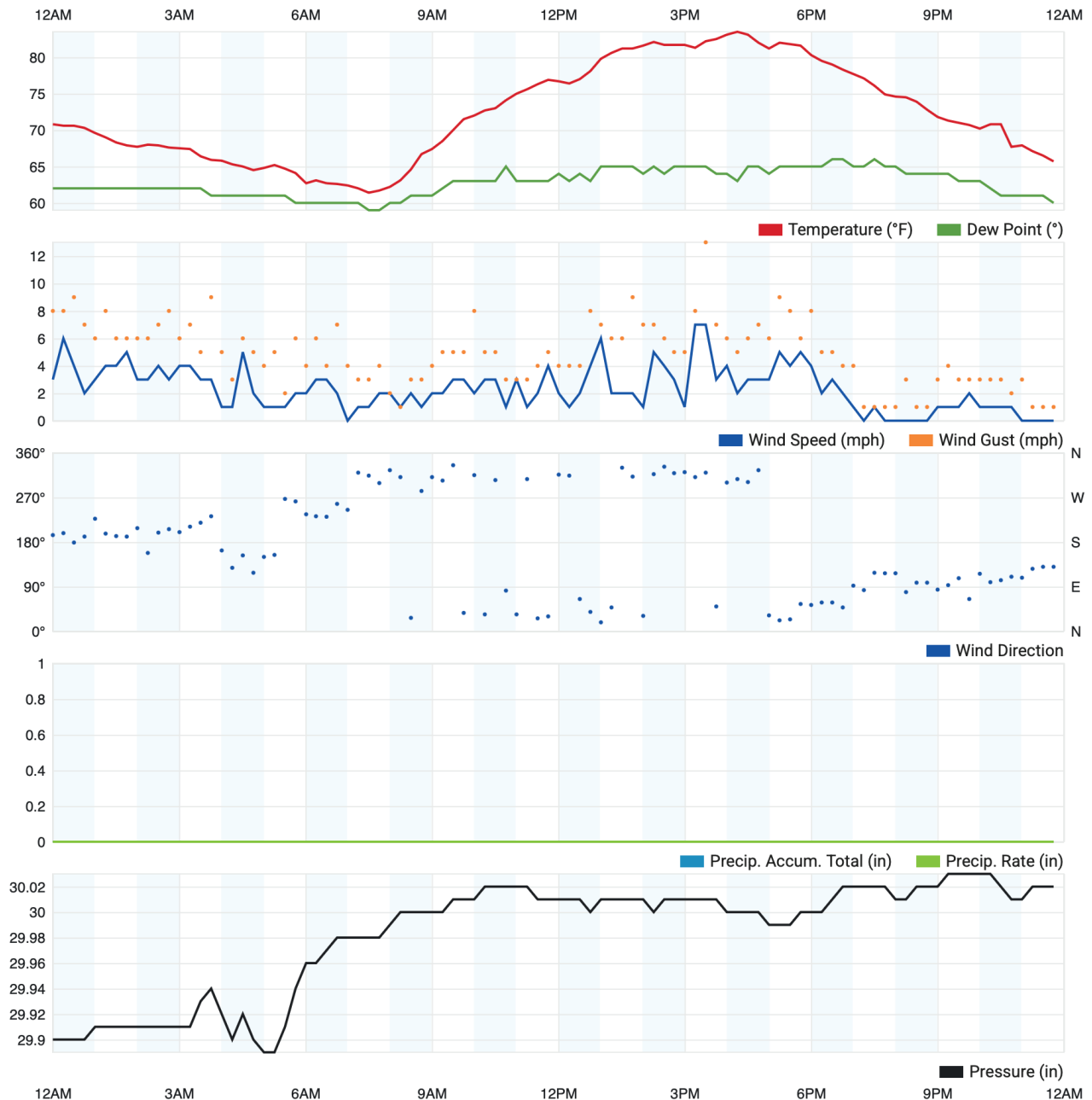


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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

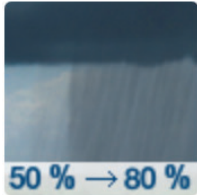
September 16, 2025



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Today

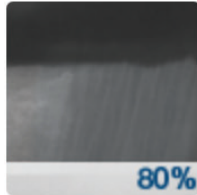


50 % → 80 %

High: 72 °F

Chance  
Showers then  
Showers

Tonight

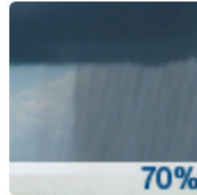


80%

Low: 59 °F

Showers

Thursday

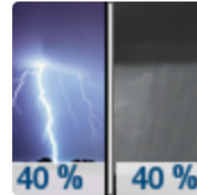


70%

High: 70 °F

Showers  
Likely

Thursday  
Night



40 % 40 %

Low: 58 °F

Chance  
T-storms then  
Chance  
Showers

Friday



40%

High: 70 °F

Chance  
Showers



## Extended Period of Rainfall Ahead

September 17, 2025

3:01 AM

Timing of Rainfall Chances Through Friday

### Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)

	9/17 Wed					9/18 Thu					9/19 Fri				
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am
Aberdeen	50	75	80	70	70	85	65	75	75	75	70	70	40	40	30
Britton	30	45	55	55	60	80	70	70	70	75	75	75	45	45	40
Chamberlain	60	75	85	85	75	75	60	65	65	65	60	60	35	35	30
Clark	60	75	85	70	80	70	45	50	50	60	60	60	30	30	20
Eagle Butte	75	85	80	85	90	90	85	80	80	80	65	65	40	40	35
Eureka	65	75	80	60	75	90	85	85	85	85	70	70	50	50	40
Gettysburg	80	90	90	90	90	90	75	80	80	80	70	70	35	35	35
McIntosh	65	80	80	80	75	80	80	85	85	85	75	75	50	50	30
Milbank	20	55	70	70	70	75	65	55	45	65	65	65	45	45	30
Miller	70	75	90	85	80	65	65	60	60	60	55	55	25	25	20
Mobridge	70	80	80	75	85	85	90	85	85	85	75	75	40	40	35
Murdo	75	75	85	80	75	70	70	60	60	60	50	50	20	25	25
Pierre	80	85	85	90	85	80	75	65	65	65	50	50	25	25	25
Redfield	70	75	80	75	80	70	55	65	65	65	60	60	30	30	25
Sisseton	20	40	65	60	80	85	65	65	60	70	70	70	45	45	35
Watertown	40	70	75	65	75	70	50	40	40	60	60	60	35	35	30
Webster	35	70	75	65	75	80	65	60	60	65	65	65	35	35	35
Wheaton	15	25	50	55	70	70	70	65	50	70	70	70	50	50	40

### Key Messages:

- Rain gradually increasing in coverage today.
- Occasionally accompanied by thunderstorms.
- Rainfall totals in excess of:
  - 1 inch (70 - 90%)
  - 2 inches (20 - 50%)
  - 3 inches (5 - 20%)
- Drier and milder weather for the weekend.



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Rain and thunderstorms will gradually continue to sweep into the region. This slow moving system means ample opportunity for moisture along with cooler temperatures. Milder and drier conditions do return for the weekend however.

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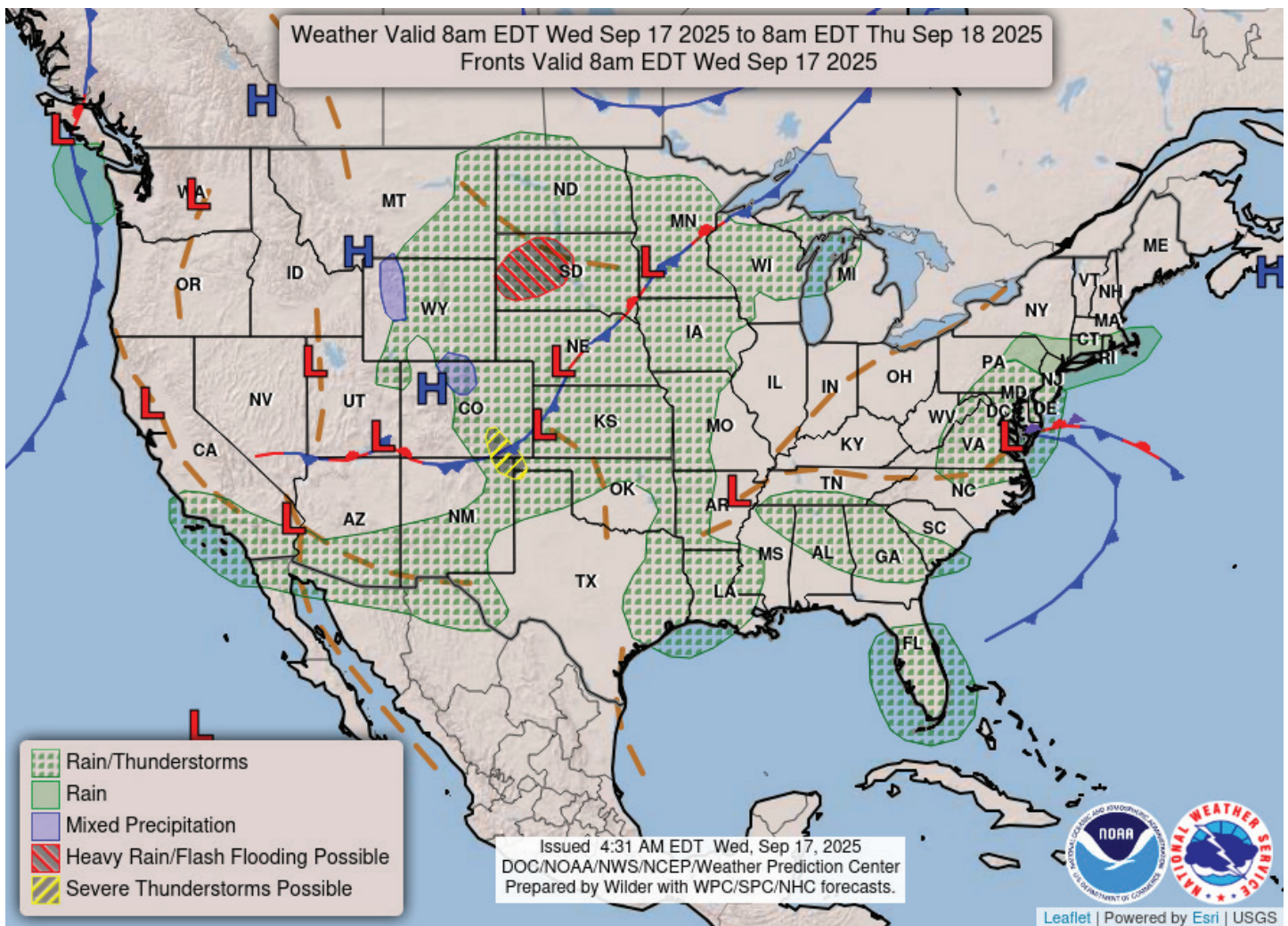
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp:** 84 °F at 4:10 PM  
**Heat Index:** 86 °F at 4:15 PM  
**Low Temp:** 61 °F at 7:36 AM  
**Wind:** 13 mph at 3:26 PM  
**Precip:** : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1955  
Record Low: 28 in 1903  
Average High: 75  
Average Low: 46  
Average Precip in Sept.: 1.14  
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.28  
Average Precip to date: 17.48  
Precip Year to Date: 20.58  
Sunset Tonight: 7:40 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:14 am





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## Today in Weather History

September 17, 1911: Pipestone, Minnesota is hit with baseball-sized hail that smashes numerous windows at the Calumet Hotel and high school. The local observer measured hail three inches deep. Click [HERE](#) for an image of the Pipestone school following the hailstorm.

September 17, 1969: In the late afternoon 16 miles east of Pierre in Hughes County, 60 mph wind-driven penny size hail-damaged crops and buildings in the area. Unofficial amounts of 5 to 6 inches of rain also occurred with the storms.

September 17, 1975: Heavy rain and hail fell in the Pierre area during the night flooding streets and some basements. The high winds downed power lines. The damage estimate was more than 100,000 dollars.

September 17, 1975: Lightning started a grass fire in western Stanley County in the early morning hours of the 17th. With the arid and windy conditions, the fire quickly spread and consumed 25,000 acres of grassland before it was under control. Smoke from the fire was seen from 40 miles away. The fire also destroyed six outbuildings and an old unoccupied farmhouse. Some roads had to be closed due to the fire and smoke. Several electrical poles were also burned. Many residents were notified of possible evacuations. The fire was finally put out in the early morning hours of the 18th.

1829: A typhoon, Japan's most catastrophic storm, inflicts widespread damage over much of the country. On the southern island of Kyushu, the storm surge off the Ariake Sea kills over 10,000. The German physician Philipp Franz von Siebold was present during this storm and succeeded in taking barometric pressure readings around Nagasaki at the risk of drowning.

1923: A devastating fire threatens the University of California at Berkeley on this day. This fire killed two and caused \$10 million in damages. While the exact cause is unknown, the fire began in the dry forest northeast of Berkeley. Strong northeasterly winds blew cinders into the air which lead to the rapid-fire growth.

1932 - Concord NH was drenched with 5.97 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a record for that location (16th- 17th). (The Weather Channel)

1963 - Nearly two and a half inches of rain fell at Yuma AZ in 24 hours. It was the most intense rain for Yuma during the period between 1950 and 1977. (The Weather Channel)

1965 - A storm produced a band of heavy snow across parts of Wyoming. Totals of 23 inches at Rawlins and 20.7 inches at Lander easily surpassed previous snowfall record totals for so early in the season. (15th-17th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced large hail, damaging winds, and heavy rain in the northeastern U.S. Heavy rain in southwestern Pennsylvania forced evacuation of twenty homes along Four Mile Run Creek, near Darlington. Harrisburg PA established a record for the date with 2.11 inches of rain. A cold front in the central U.S. brought freezing temperatures to parts of Montana and Wyoming. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Early in the morning a tornado hit Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX, injuring three persons and causing twenty-eight million dollars damage. A second tornado on the northwest side of San Antonio caused six million dollars damage, and a third tornado in Bexar County killed one person and injured another. Thunderstorms associated with Hurricane Gilbert spawned a total of forty-seven tornadoes in a two day period, with forty of those tornadoes in central and south central Texas. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Hurricane Hugo hit the Virgin Islands, producing wind gusts to 97 mph at Saint Croix. Hurricane Hugo passed directly over the island of Saint Croix causing complete devastation and essentially cutting off the island from communications. A storm surge of five to seven feet occurred at Saint Croix. The only rain gauge left operating, at Caneel Bay, indicated 9.40 inches in 24 hours. Hurricane Hugo claimed the lives of three persons at Saint Croix, and caused more than 500 million dollars damage. A ship, Nightcap, in the harbor of Culebra, measured wind gusts as high as 170 mph. A cold front brought high winds to the Great Basin and the Rocky Mountain Region, and thunderstorms along the cold front produced wind gusts to 66 mph at Yellowstone Park WY. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2004 - The remnants of Hurricane Ivan submerged Pittsburgh in 5.95 inches of rain in one day. That is the most rainfall Pittsburgh has seen in a 24-hour period since records began in 1876.

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**We need someone  
who will force us to  
seek God's  
wisdom...**

"A friend is someone who likes you in spite of anything you do and will do everything possible to keep you from making a mistake." Everyone needs someone like that in their lives. There have been times in my life when, if a friend had been available, my decisions would have been different and not ended up in disaster.

"The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out." A friend gives us a place to begin when we are making difficult choices, serious decisions, or intricate plans. More often than not we have stored feelings and thoughts, ideas and memories deep within our hearts. Over time we have forgotten them and their importance.

Perhaps we have pushed them deep inside of us because we did not realize they would ever be important. Solomon calls them deep waters or wells of wisdom that have been covered up over time.

A man of understanding or a good friend who understands us will draw them out of us — much like bringing up a bucket of cold, refreshing water from a deep well. This friend or man of understanding forces us to examine our motives or unclear thoughts — whatever is within us — in light of God's own wisdom. Our friend will not allow us to do what we intended to do without challenging our desires to make certain that they are pure, wholesome, and God-honoring.

This man of understanding must first admit that he is not the man of understanding. While that may sound contradictory, it isn't. This friend must first listen to God's wisdom before he can impart it to another friend. Then, there is the requirement to pray for and with us as we seek and listen for God's guidance. This man of understanding receives his understanding from God.

We all need a man or woman of understanding in our lives. We need someone who will force us to seek God's wisdom. We can all recall times, sadly, when we refused to do this.

Today's Prayer: Lord, grant us one friend who will force us to examine our motives and goals and make certain that they are consistent with Your truth. We all need Your insight. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out." Proverbs 20:5

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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.16.25

10 14 34 40 43 5

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$423,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 7 Mins  
17 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.15.25

14 16 17 33 43 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,890,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 22 Mins 17  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.16.25

7 17 22 27 32 8

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 37 Mins 17  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.13.25

8 19 24 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$23,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 37 Mins 17  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.15.25

7 19 42 53 56 4

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 6 Mins 17  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.15.25

14 15 32 42 49 1

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$81,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 6 Mins 17  
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 Associated Press

### PREP VOLLEYBALL

Arlington def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-19, 25-20, 25-21  
Brandon Valley def. Brookings, 25-17, 25-20, 25-23  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Freeman, 25-15, 25-15, 25-27, 25-16  
Burke def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-12, 25-19, 25-16  
Castlewood def. Deuel, 25-14, 25-17, 25-22  
Chester def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-11, 25-16, 25-9  
Clark-Willow Lake def. Florence-Henry, 25-9, 25-14, 25-11  
Colman-Egan def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-1, 25-22, 26-24  
Crow Creek Tribal School def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 16-25, 25-18, 25-23, 26-24  
DeSmet def. Sioux Valley, 25-21, 25-27, 19-25, 25-21, 15-10  
Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-14, 25-18, 25-18  
Dell Rapids def. Canton, 25-7, 25-18, 25-18  
Edgemont def. Hemingford, Neb., 25-18, 25-23, 25-23  
Estelline-Hendricks def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-19, 25-21, 25-22  
Faulkton def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-6, 25-17, 25-17  
Garretson def. Flandreau, 25-16, 25-18, 25-23  
Hanson def. Canistota, 25-18, 16-25, 25-12  
Harding County def. Belfield, N.D., 25-14, 25-13, 25-14  
Highmore-Harrold def. Gettysburg, 25-23, 25-22, 24-26, 26-24  
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Aberdeen Christian, 27-25, 22-25, 27-25, 25-17  
Jones County def. White River, 25-23, 25-21, 19-25, 25-16  
Lennox def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 26-24, 25-16, 25-12  
Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud def. St. Francis Indian, 25-12, 25-10, 25-11  
Milbank def. Waubay/Summit, 25-23, 15-25, 13-25, 27-25, 15-5  
Mitchell Christian def. Marty, 25-20, 23-25, 25-6, 25-18  
Mobridge-Pollock def. Timber Lake, 25-21, 25-15, 26-24  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Redfield, 20-25, 25-23, 25-21, 25-15  
Newell def. Bison, 25-17, 20-25, 25-18, 25-22  
North Central def. Langford, 25-14, 25-12, 25-16  
Parker/Marion def. Beresford, 25-21, 23-25, 25-13, 25-20  
Parkston def. Gregory, 18-25, 25-16, 21-25, 25-12, 15-3  
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Wessington Springs, 25-13, 25-14, 25-17  
Scotland def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-20, 25-23, 17-25, 23-25, 15-5  
Sioux Falls Christian def. Vermillion, 25-10, 25-11  
Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Tea, 25-22, 25-17, 25-18  
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Aberdeen Central, 25-23, 25-21, 25-18  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Watertown, 25-20, 25-18, 25-17  
Sioux Falls Washington def. T F Riggs High School, 25-20, 25-9, 25-9  
Spearfish def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-9, 25-11, 25-17  
St Thomas More def. Custer, 25-16, 25-21, 25-18  
Takini def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-19, 25-23, 25-16  
Todd County def. Chamberlain, 25-16, 27-25, 22-25, 25-21  
Wagner def. Avon, 25-16, 25-16, 25-22  
Wall def. Dupree, 25-16, 25-17, 25-13  
Warner def. Ipswich, 25-13, 25-10, 25-16

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Webster def. Sisseton, 25-13, 25-16, 25-20

West Central def. Baltic, 25-21, 17-25, 16-25, 25-20, 15-11

Winner def. Lyman, 25-23, 25-21, 25-18

Yankton def. Huron, 25-21, 25-14, 25-20

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

## The Latest: Israel military presses on with its new ground offensive on Gaza City

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli forces pressed on with a new ground offensive in Gaza City Wednesday as strikes overnight across the Palestinian territory killed at least 16 people, including women and children, hospital officials said.

Hundreds of thousands remained in the city, the territory's largest and already in ruins from nearly two years of war and struggling with a famine.

The latest Israeli operation, which started Tuesday, further escalates a conflict that has roiled the Middle East and likely pushes any ceasefire farther out of reach. The Israeli military, which says it wants to "destroy Hamas' military infrastructure" hasn't given a timeline for the offensive, but there were indications it could take months.

Many have been attempting to relocate from the city, where 1 million people once lived, to the southern Gaza Strip following Israeli military calls for a full evacuation.

Here's the latest:

Pope Leo XIV issues an urgent call for a ceasefire in Gaza

The pope expressed his "profound" solidarity with Palestinians and demanded Israel respect international humanitarian law as it pushes its new offensive in Gaza.

"Before the Almighty Lord who commanded 'Thou shalt not kill' and before all of human history, every person always has an inviolable dignity that must be respected and protected," Leo said Wednesday.

The first American pope was interrupted by applause when he referred to Gaza at the end of his weekly general audience. He invited all to join his calls for a ceasefire, the release of hostages, a diplomatic solution to the conflict and "full compliance with international humanitarian law."

Israel's military says it's opening a road south for people to leave Gaza City

The Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesperson, Col. Avichay Adraee, said on social media that a new route along Gaza's coastline will open at noon Wednesday for those residents heading south. He says it will remain open for two days.

But many Palestinians in the north have been cut off from the outside world. The Palestinian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, based in the occupied West Bank, said Israeli strikes on the main network lines in northern Gaza had collapsed internet and telephone services Wednesday morning.

The Associated Press tried unsuccessfully to reach many people in Gaza City.

10 critically ill children from Gaza arrive in the UK

The World Health Organization says it has supported the medical evacuation of the children, who arrived with about 50 companions. The British government said it was working to make sure the families receive "appropriate support" during their stay.

"Every child deserves the chance to heal, to play, to simply be able to dream again," Health and Social Care Secretary Wes Streeting said.

More children are expected to arrive in the coming weeks. The British government has hardened its stance over Israel's military activities in Gaza and its anticipated announcement next week at the U.N. General Assembly recognizing the state of Palestine.

Qatar condemns Israel's ground offensive

Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement Wednesday saying they condemned "in the strongest terms" Israel's ground offensive in Gaza.



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The ministry wrote on X that the operation marked an "extension of the war of genocide" against the Palestinians.

Qatar is incensed over an Israeli strike last week that killed five Hamas members and a local security official.

Israeli strikes overnight kill at least 16 across the Gaza Strip

Gaza hospital officials said Wednesday that women and children were among the 16 killed in overnight on the territory.

More than half of the dead were killed in strikes on Gaza City, including a child and his mother at their apartment in the Shati refugee camp, according to officials from the Shifa Hospital, which received the casualties.

In central Gaza, the Al-Awda Hospital said an Israeli strike hit a house in the urban Nuseirat refugee camp, killing three, including a pregnant woman. Two parents and their child were also killed when a strike hit their tent in the Muwasi area west of the city of Khan Younis, said officials from the Nasser Hospital, where the bodies were brought.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the strikes.

Aid groups call for pressure on Israel to stop the Gaza City offensive

A coalition of leading aid groups urged the international community Wednesday to take stronger measures to stop Israel's offensive on Gaza City after a commission of UN experts found Israel was committing genocide in Gaza.

A statement from the aid groups said countries "must use every available political, economic, and legal tool at their disposal to intervene" and that this moment "demands decisive action."

The message was signed by leaders of over 20 aid organizations operating in Gaza, including the Norwegian Refugee Council, Anera and Save the Children.

Rushing to save Gaza's archeological items

Ahead of Israel's anticipated new ground offensive focusing on Gaza City, aid workers last week managed to save thousands of priceless archaeological artifacts in Gaza from destruction after Israel targeted a warehouse building in a strike.

Israeli military said Hamas used the building for intelligence. It contained items from over 25 years of excavations, including from a 4th-century Byzantine monastery.

International aid groups negotiated with the Israeli military for a delay to move the artifacts. Workers rushed to pack the items in trucks, but some were broken or left behind. The artifacts are now in a safer location but remain in danger, housed outside, as the Israeli offensive widens.

The UN chief warns there can be no Mideast peace without a two-state solution

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says the alternative, one state under which Palestinians would be deprived of their land and rights, would be "absolutely intolerable."

The Palestinians hope at least 10 countries will recognize a state of Palestine at a session during the upcoming U.N. General Assembly meeting.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposes a two-state solution and is boycotting the session, along with close ally the United States.

"Without a two-state solution," Guterres warned on Tuesday "there will be no peace in the Middle East, and extremism will expand everywhere in the world with the consequences that I consider extremely, extremely negative."

He says the international community must "make sure the two-state solution prevails."

## Israeli troops press forward into Gaza City as Palestinians flee

By JULIA FRANKEL and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli troops and tanks were pushing deeper into Gaza City on Wednesday, the second day of a ground offensive that was widely condemned internationally, as Palestinians fled the devastated area en masse.

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Israel's military said that air force and artillery units had struck the city over 150 times in the last few days, ahead of ground troops moving in. The strikes have toppled high-rise towers in areas densely populated by tent camps where thousands of Palestinians are sheltering. Israel claims the towers are being used by Hamas to surveil troops.

Overnight strikes killed at least 16 people, including women and children, hospital officials reported. The death count in Gaza is nearing 65,000 Palestinians since the war began Oct. 7, 2023, with a Hamas-led attack on Israel, according to health officials in the enclave.

Meanwhile, Palestinians streamed out of the city — some by car, others on foot. Israel pledged to open another corridor along a road hugging Gaza's coastline for two hours Wednesday to allow more people to evacuate.

Children and parents among the latest fatalities

More than half of the Palestinians killed in overnight Israeli strikes were in famine-stricken Gaza City, including a child and his mother who died in their apartment in the Shati refugee camp, according to officials from Shifa Hospital, which received the casualties.

In central Gaza, Al-Awda Hospital said an Israeli strike hit a house in the urban Nuseirat refugee camp, killing three, including a pregnant woman. Two parents and their child were also killed when a strike hit their tent in the Muwasi area west of the city of Khan Younis, said officials from Nasser Hospital, where the bodies were brought.

The Israeli military said it was looking into the deadly strikes, but in the past it has accused Hamas of building military infrastructure inside civilian areas.

The military's Arabic-language spokesman, Col. Avichay Adraee, wrote on social media that a new route, along the Salah al-Din street along Gaza's coastline, will open for those heading south for two days starting at noon Wednesday.

But many Palestinians in the north were cut off from the outside world. The Palestinian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, based in the occupied West Bank, said Israeli strikes on the main network lines in northern Gaza had collapsed internet and telephone services Wednesday morning. The Associated Press tried unsuccessfully to reach many people in Gaza City.

An estimated 1 million Palestinians were living in the Gaza City region before warnings to evacuate began ahead of the offensive, and the Israeli military estimates 350,000 people have left the city. The U.N. estimates that more than 238,000 Palestinians of some 1 million believed living in the city have fled northern Gaza over the past month. Hundreds of thousands more have stayed behind.

Aid groups and Qatar condemn offensive

A coalition of leading aid groups Wednesday urged the international community to take stronger measures to stop Israel's offensive on Gaza City. It came a day after a commission of U.N. experts found Israel was committing genocide in the Palestinian enclave. Israel denies the allegation.

"What we are witnessing in Gaza is not only an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, but what the U.N. Commission of Inquiry has now concluded is a genocide," read the statement from the aid groups. "States must use every available political, economic, and legal tool at their disposal to intervene. Rhetoric and half measures are not enough. This moment demands decisive action."

The message was signed by leaders of over 20 aid organizations operating in Gaza, including the Norwegian Refugee Council, Anera and Save the Children.

Also Wednesday, Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement saying they condemned "in the strongest terms" Israel's ground offensive in Gaza. The ministry wrote on X that the operation marked a "extension of the war of genocide" against the Palestinians.

Qatar is incensed over an Israeli strike last week that killed five Hamas members and a local security official.

Israel's return to Gaza City

An Israeli military graphic suggested its troops hope to control all of the Gaza Strip except for a large swath along the coast by the end of the current operation.

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Israeli forces have carried out multiple large-scale raids into Gaza City over the course of the war, causing mass displacement and heavy destruction, only to see militants regroup later. This time, Israel has pledged to take control of the entire city, which experts say is experiencing famine.

An Israeli military official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with military guidelines, said Tuesday they believe there are 2,000 to 3,000 Hamas militants left in Gaza City, as well as tunnels used by the group. Hamas' military capabilities have been vastly diminished. It now mainly carries out guerrilla-style attacks, with small groups of fighters planting explosives or attacking military outposts before melting away.

The war has killed more than 64,900 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants. The ministry, which is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals, says women and children make up around half the dead.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251 others. Forty-eight hostages, fewer than half believed to be alive, remain in Gaza.

## The Federal Reserve wrestles with how many interest rate cuts to make and how fast

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — With the Federal Reserve widely expected Wednesday to reduce its key interest rate by a quarter-point to about 4.1%, economists and Wall Street investors will be looking for signals about next steps: How deeply might the Fed cut in the next few months?

There are typically two different approaches the central bank takes to lowering borrowing costs: Either a measured pace that reflects a modest adjustment to its key rate, or a much more rapid set of cuts as the economy deteriorates in an often-doomed effort to stave off recession.

For now, most economists expect it will take the first approach: What many analysts call a "recalibration" of rates to keep the economy growing and businesses hiring. Under this view, the Fed would reduce rates as many as five times by the middle of next year, bringing its rate closer to a level that neither stimulates or slows the economy.

Wall Street traders expect three reductions this year and then two more by next June, according to futures pricing tracked by CME Fedwatch.

A rate cut Wednesday would be the first in nine months. The Fed, led by Chair Jerome Powell, reduced borrowing costs three times last year. But it then put any further cuts on hold to evaluate the impact of President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on the economy.

As recently as their last meeting in late July, Powell described the job market as "solid" and kept rates unchanged as officials sought to take more time to see how the economy evolved.

Since then, however, the government has reported a sharp slowdown in hiring, and previous government data has been revised much lower. Employers actually cut back slightly on their payrolls in June, shedding 13,000 jobs, and added just 22,000 in August.

The government also said last week that its estimate of job gains for the year ended in March 2025 would likely be revised down by 911,000, a sharp reduction in total employment. Powell and other Fed officials had previously pointed to a robust job market as a key reason that they could afford to keep rates unchanged. But with businesses pulling back on hiring, the economic case for a rate cut — which can spur more borrowing and spending — is stronger.

The downward revision of nearly a million jobs is a "huge downgrade," said Talley Leger, chief market strategist at the Wealth Consulting Group. "If that doesn't light a fire under the Fed just from an economic perspective I don't know what will."

Still, inflation remains stubbornly elevated, partly because tariffs have lifted the cost of some goods, such as furniture, appliances and food. Prices rose 2.9% in August from a year earlier, the government said last week, up from 2.7% a month earlier.

Persistent inflation could keep the Fed from cutting too rapidly. The central bank will release its quarterly economic projections after the meeting Wednesday, and many economists forecast they will show that officials expect three total reductions this year and at least two more next year.

Five reductions would bring the Fed's key rate down to just above 3%. Many economists think that is roughly the rate that would neither stimulate nor slow the economy.

If Fed officials began to worry the economy would slip into recession, they would likely cut rates more quickly. But for now, most economists don't see rapid cuts as necessary.

"We're not at a break-glass moment," said Vincent Reinhart, chief economist at BNY Investments. "This is a recalibration."

## Timeline in the investigation of the disappearance of Madeleine McCann

SEHNDE, Germany (AP) — A German man under investigation as a suspect in the 2007 disappearance of British girl Madeleine McCann has been released after serving his sentence in an unrelated case.

It's the latest turn in the 18-year mystery over what happened to the 3-year-old, who disappeared while her family was on vacation in the Algarve region of southern Portugal.

The case has received attention around the world with each development, numerous suspects being named and erroneous reports of sightings.

Here's a timeline of events in the disappearance:

May 3, 2007: Madeleine is reported missing from a vacation apartment in the town of Praia da Luz in the Algarve resort region. Her parents, Kate and Gerry McCann, left her asleep with two smaller siblings while they had dinner at a nearby restaurant, and said they checked frequently on the children. They say Madeleine was kidnapped.

May 6, 2007: Police say there is evidence the girl was abducted, and appeal for her return.

May 11, 2007: David Beckham and other soccer stars appeal for Madeleine's safe return. Police in Portugal scale down local searches, saying the case has become an international investigation.

May 12, 2007: Madeleine McCann's fourth birthday.

May 13, 2007: Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling pledges a contribution to a \$3 million reward for the safe return of the child.

May 18, 2007: A website set up to help find Madeleine receives 65 million visitors in two days.

May 30, 2007: The McCanns meet with Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican to discuss their ordeal. The pontiff pledges to pray for her safe return.

Aug. 3, 2007: Authorities in Belgium investigate a reported sighting of the child in the town of Tongeren. Police issue a drawing of a Dutch-speaking man reportedly seen with the girl and an English-speaking woman at a table outside a pub. Authorities eventually carry out DNA tests on a milkshake bottle from the pub, but the girl's DNA isn't found.

Aug. 7, 2007: Portuguese media report that search dogs found traces of blood in the hotel room where Madeleine went missing. The forensic evidence is sent to Britain for testing.

Aug. 11, 2007: Police say new evidence prompts them to consider the possibility the girl is dead 100 days after her disappearance.

Sept. 7, 2007: Gerry and Kate McCann are called in for questioning by police and named as suspects. They aren't charged and are allowed to leave Portugal.

March 19, 2008: British tabloids the Daily Express and the Daily Star print front page apologies to the McCanns as part of a 1 million pound (\$1.24 million) settlement in a libel case. They acknowledged there was no evidence to support claims they caused their daughter's death.

July 21, 2008: Portuguese authorities halt their investigation and say the McCanns are no longer suspects.

May 12, 2011: Kate McCann publishes a book about the disappearance on what would be her daughter's eighth birthday.

April 25, 2012: British police say they believe Madeleine could still be alive and release a picture of what



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she might look like as a 9-year-old.

July 4, 2013: British police say they have launched Operation Grange, after two years of reviewing the investigation. Police say they identified 38 people of interest, including 12 Britons.

Oct. 24, 2013: Portuguese police reopen case based on new evidence.

June 3, 2014: Search dogs and investigators search an area of scrubland near where Madeleine went missing.

April 28, 2015: A Portuguese judge awards the parents 500,000 euros (\$539,000) in a libel action against the detective who published a book alleging they were involved in their daughter's disappearance.

July 29, 2015: Australian authorities say DNA tests rule out Madeleine McCann in efforts to identify the decomposed remains of a young girl found in a suitcase dumped in bushes near Adelaide.

Sept. 16, 2015: The U.K. says its investigation into the disappearance has cost more than 10 million pounds (\$12.4 million). A month later, police reduce the number of officers working on the case from 29 to four.

April 19, 2016: An appeals court in Portugal overturns the libel verdict against the former detective who alleged the parents were responsible for Madeleine's disappearance.

April 30, 2017: In an interview before the 10-year anniversary since their daughter's disappearance, the parents say they're still holding out hope she'll be found alive. Gerry McCann said it was "devastating" not to have found her, but added: "No parent is going to give up on their child, unless they know for certain their child is dead."

June 3, 2020: Investigators in Germany announce that Madeleine is presumed dead and a German man convicted of a rape committed in Portugal in 2005 is a suspect.

July 29, 2020: German police complete a search for Madeleine at a garden plot outside Hannover.

May 4, 2021: The McCanns post a statement on the Find Madeleine website saying they still cling to the hope of seeing their daughter again as they prepare to mark her 18th birthday.

April 21, 2022: The German inmate, identified by media as Christian Brückner, is named as a formal suspect by Portuguese authorities. He was in the area where Madeleine disappeared in 2007.

May 25, 2023: Police end a three-day search for clues in the case around a dam some 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the Praia da Luz.

Feb. 16, 2024: Brückner goes on trial in Germany over several unrelated sexual offenses that prosecutors allege he committed in Portugal between 2000 and 2017.

Oct. 8, 2024: The Braunschweig state court acquits Brückner in his trial on charges unrelated to the McCann case. The presiding judge says the evidence was insufficient and the court was dealing with unreliable witnesses. The defendant remains in prison because he is still serving a seven-year sentence stemming from his 2019 conviction for the rape of a 72-year-old American woman in Portugal.

June 4, 2025: Police launch a new round of searches for possible evidence in southern Portugal. Investigators give no details of any findings.

Sept. 17, 2025: Brückner is released from a prison in Sehnde, Germany after serving his sentence.

## King Charles III prepares to welcome Trump for historic second state visit at Windsor Castle

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

WINDSOR, England (AP) — It's the sort of experience you just can't buy.

The carriages have been polished, the family silver is being laid out, and diamonds are being dusted off as King Charles III prepares to offer a royal welcome to Donald Trump on Wednesday for what will be the highlight of the U.S. president's unprecedented second state visit to Britain.

Hundreds of soldiers, gardeners and chefs are putting the finishing touches on their preparations to make sure the president and first lady Melania Trump get the full royal treatment. But it's a spectacle with a purpose: to bolster ties with a world leader known for a love of bling at a time when his America First policies are putting pressure on trade and security arrangements globally.

Trump arrived in London late Tuesday and said he loved being back in the United Kingdom, calling it a

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"very special place." Asked if he had a message for Charles, he said the king was a longtime friend of his and well-respected.

The backdrop for day one will be Windsor Castle, an almost 1,000-year-old royal residence with gilded interiors, crenelated towers and priceless artworks.

It's a scene that has seemed to enchant Trump, who ditched his trademark bluster and described the invitation to Windsor as "a great, great honor."

"I think that also is why he seems so visibly excited about the second meeting, because it isn't an invitation given to (just) anyone," said George Gross, an expert on the British monarchy at King's College London.

From pomp to politics

After a day of royal pomp, Trump will hold talks Thursday with Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who will tout a new U.K.-U.S. technology deal. The British government hopes the deal, and billions in investment from U.S. tech firms, will help show that the trans-Atlantic bond remains strong despite differences over Ukraine, the Middle East and the future of NATO.

Starmer also hopes to avoid awkward questions about Jeffrey Epstein. Days before the state visit, Starmer fired Britain's ambassador to the U.S., Peter Mandelson, over the envoy's past friendship with the convicted sex offender.

On Tuesday, the campaign group Led By Donkeys projected an image of Trump and Epstein on a tower at Windsor Castle, a reminder of the president's relationship with the disgraced financier. Police said they arrested four people over the stunt.

While Britain's royals long ago gave up political power, their history, tradition and celebrity give them a cachet that means presidents and prime ministers covet an invitation to join them. That makes the invitations, handed out at the request of the elected government, a powerful tool to reward friends and wring concessions out of reluctant allies.

State banquet

No U.S. president, or any other world leader, has ever had the honor of a second U.K. state visit. That won't be lost on a president who often describes his actions with superlatives and has made no secret of his fondness for Britain's royals.

The day will begin when the king and Queen Camilla formally welcome the Trumps to Windsor Castle.

That will be followed by a horse-drawn carriage ride through the estate — 6,400 hectares (15,800 acres) of farms, forest and open space that includes a one-time royal hunting ground, still home to 500 red deer.

Back at the castle, a military band will play "God Save the King" and "The Star-Spangled Banner" before Trump and the king inspect an honor guard of soldiers in traditional scarlet tunics and tall bearskin hats.

After a private lunch and a visit to an exhibit of documents and artwork illustrating the ties between Britain and the U.S., it will be time for the glitz and glamour of a state banquet.

Tiaras and medals will be on display as up to 160 guests gather around a 50-meter long mahogany table set with 200-year-old silver to honor the president. Charles will deliver a speech, then the king and president will offer toasts.

Trump won't, however, have the chance to address a joint session of Parliament as French President Emmanuel Macron did in July during his state visit, because the House of Commons is in recess. The president also missed out on that honor during his first state visit amid opposition from then-Speaker of the House John Bercow.

Protection from protests

Most state visits are staged in London, against the grand backdrop of Buckingham Palace and the broad, flag-lined boulevard known as The Mall. But this one is taking place in the cozier confines of Windsor, a historic town of just over 30,000 people about 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of central London.

That makes it easier to control protests and protect the president at a time of increased international tensions, especially after the fatal shooting of Trump ally Charlie Kirk last week in Utah. British police have mounted a massive police operation to ensure the president's safety.

When Trump was in London on his first state visit in 2019, he was met by thousands of protesters who filled the streets outside the Houses of Parliament as a balloon shaped like a giant, diaper-wearing baby

Trump floated overhead.

Historian Robert Lacey, a consultant on the Netflix television series "The Crown," said Windsor is also a more "photogenic setting" for a state visit than London.

"Buckingham Palace has got its balcony, it's got its façade," he said. But "inside it's very dreary and it's currently being renovated, which is one reason why Mr. Trump will not be staying there. Windsor is a proper castle."

## **German suspect in Madeleine McCann disappearance is released after serving time in unrelated case**

By DANIEL NIEMANN and MARKUS SCHREIBER Associated Press

SEHNDE, Germany (AP) — A German national who is under investigation in the disappearance of British toddler Madeleine McCann 18 years ago was released from prison Wednesday after serving his sentence in an unrelated case, police said.

The man, who has been identified by media as Christian Brückner, had been serving a seven-year sentence that stemmed from his 2019 conviction for the rape of a 72-year-old American woman in Portugal.

A car accompanied by several police vans drove out of the prison at Sehnde, near Hannover, in northern Germany, on Wednesday morning. Police confirmed that the man had left.

In June 2020, German prosecutors said the man was being investigated on suspicion of murder in connection with McCann's disappearance on May 3, 2007, from an apartment complex in the Portuguese resort of Praia da Luz. They said they assumed the girl was dead.

Police have since carried out more searches in Portugal. But the suspect, who has denied any involvement in her disappearance, has not been charged in the case. The investigation is not affected by his release. He also remains a suspect in an investigation into McCann's disappearance being conducted by Britain's Metropolitan Police, who say he refused their request for an interview.

His lawyer, Friedrich Fülcher, has said charges would have been filed against his client long ago if there had been sufficient evidence.

The 48-year-old spent many years in Portugal, including in the Algarve resort of Praia da Luz around the time of Madeleine's disappearance.

Investigators in the U.K., Portugal and Germany are still piecing together what happened on the night 3-year-old Madeleine disappeared. She was in the same room as her brother and sister — 2-year-old twins — while their parents, Kate and Gerry, had dinner with friends at a nearby restaurant.

The suspect was tried last year over several unrelated sexual offenses he was alleged to have committed in Portugal between 2000 and 2017 and was acquitted in October. The presiding judge said the evidence was insufficient for a conviction, that the court heard from unreliable witnesses and that some had been influenced by media reports on the defendant.

The state court in Hildesheim has said it cannot legally disclose whether he will have to fulfill any conditions after his release. But Fülcher confirmed to regional public broadcaster NDR that his client will be required to wear an electronic foot tag, report regularly to probation services and give up his passport. German weekly Der Spiegel first reported on that decision, without naming sources.

He still faces an Oct. 27 court date in Oldenburg in northwestern Germany in a case in which he is accused of insulting a prison employee. A district court in the city sentenced him to six weeks in prison for that, but the defense has appealed.

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## Fonda, DiCaprio, Streisand and more mourn the death of Robert Redford

By The Associated Press undefined

Hollywood figures and fans of the movies mourned the death of Robert Redford, expressing affection and admiration for the actor, Oscar-winning director and Sundance Film Festival founder.

Actor Colman Domingo said Redford had an "everlasting impact" on movies and director Ron Howard called his Sundance Film Festival a "game changer." "Reservation Dogs" director Sterlin Harjo said Redford empowered filmmakers. Both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump said they admired his work.

Redford died Tuesday "at his home at Sundance in the mountains of Utah — the place he loved, surrounded by those he loved," publicist Cindi Berger said.

The marquee of the Egyptian Theater in Park City, Utah, was changed Tuesday to read: "Applause for Bob Redford! Thank you Sundance Kid!"

Here's a roundup of some notable reaction to Redford's death and his legacy.

Jane Fonda

"It hit me hard this morning when I read that Bob was gone. I can't stop crying. He meant a lot to me and was a beautiful person in every way. He stood for an America we have to keep fighting for." — in a statement.

Leonardo DiCaprio

"It was a huge loss to our community. Not only was he an incredible actor — we all know his work — but his ability, as a director too, films like "Quiz Show." He was one of the first guys to do political thrillers - "Three Days of the Condor," "All the President's Men" — ... he paved the way for films like this but more so than anything, he was a staunch environmental leader and was a member of the NRDC, like me, and fought for Indigenous rights — the list goes on and on. We lost a legend today." — in an interview with The Associated Press.

Jason Bateman

"He's always been an inspiration for me, as I'm sure he is for many, many other actors, but also just in the way that he turned his set experience as an actor into being a really accomplished director as well, and all the philanthropic stuff he did. I would love to live as long as he had and accomplish all the things that he's done and be as respected as he was. What a life." — in an interview with the AP.

Troy Kotsur

"I'm so grateful for all of his work and the accumulation of all of this hard work and we still talk about him. Even after he passes away, his impact will live on and we'll really miss him." — in an interview with the AP.

Barbra Streisand

"Every day on the set of 'The Way We Were' was exciting, intense and pure joy. We were such opposites: he was from the world of horses; I was allergic to them! Yet, we kept trying to find out more about each other, just like the characters in the movie. Bob was charismatic, intelligent, intense, always interesting — and one of the finest actors ever. The last time I saw him, when he came to lunch, we discussed art and decided to send each other our first drawings. He was one of a kind and I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with him." — on Instagram.

Martin Scorsese

"Bob was a unique artist, in front of and behind the camera. He was also a dedicated member of The Film Foundation board, and he gave the world of American cinema something irreplaceable and lasting with Sundance. It saddens me to know that I won't be seeing him again. And I'll never forget my time with him." — in a statement.

Ethan Hawke

"Robert Redford, our ultimate champion of independent film, relentless advocate for authentic storytelling and fiercely passionate environmentalist. Robert's legacy remains ingrained in our culture, transformed by his artistry, activism and the founding of Sundance Institute and Film Festival." — on Instagram.

Marlee Matlin



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"Our film, 'CODA,' came to the attention of everyone because of Sundance. And Sundance happened because of Robert Redford. A genius has passed. RIP Robert." — on X.

Ron Howard

"#RIP & thank you Robert Redford, a tremendously influential cultural figure for the creative choices made as an actor/producer/director & for launching the Sundance Film Festival which supercharged America's Independent Film movement. Artistic Gamechanger." — on X.

Bob Woodward

"He will be remembered as one of the greatest storytellers in our country's history. He elevated stories beyond mainstream. He not only cared about the environment, but he took all conceivable actions to protect it." — on Instagram.

Kerry Washington

"He was not just a visionary who transformed American cinema, he was a generous and kind soul who taught those of us in his orbit, endless lessons about art, culture, nature, storytelling, fame and family." — on Instagram

Sterlin Harjo

"My career and path as a young man was defined by his commitment to supporting independent cinema and especially his commitment to empower Native film and storytellers." — on Instagram.

Reese Witherspoon

"What an incredible artist and champion for art, culture and independent film. I will be forever grateful for my days at Sundance & the Sundance filmmakers lab where I learned so much from so many fellow filmmakers. Thank you Robert Redford for sharing your passion for movies with so many of us." — on Instagram.

Samuel L. Jackson

"It was a dream come true to work on screen with Mr Redford. Sometimes your heroes don't disappoint & truly are as Great as you imagined." — on Instagram.

Topher Grace

"To this day, I've never met a bigger icon, nor someone more open in sharing their wisdom. This is his legacy — from a one-on-one dinner, to the thousands empowered by the Sundance Film Festival and Sundance Institute, to the millions moved by his films — we should all be grateful for the time we had with him." — on Instagram.

Octavia Spencer

"From Butch Cassidy to Sundance, he blended art and activism in ways few have. His quiet strength will live in every frame he directed, every festival he championed and every artist he encouraged." — on Instagram.

Donald Trump

"Robert Redford was great. He had a series of years where there was nobody better." — to reporters.

Antonio Banderas

"Robert Redford leaves us, an icon of cinema in every sense. Actor, director, producer, and founder of the Sundance Festival. His talent will continue to move us forever, shining through the frames and in our memory. RIP." — on X.

Stephen King

"Robert Redford has passed away. He was part of a new and exciting Hollywood in the 70s and 80s. Hard to believe he was 89." — on X.

Mark Ruffalo

"This is what a real American Hero looks like. A man who brought people together, lived and practiced empathy, and created good and useful organizations that made peoples lives better and included anyone who had an interest. Please remember him well." — on Instagram.

Hillary Clinton

"I always admired Robert Redford, not only for his legendary career as an actor and director but for

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what came next. He championed progressive values like protecting the environment and access to the arts while creating opportunities for new generations of activists and filmmakers. A true American icon.” — on Instagram.

Morgan Freeman

“There are certain people you know that you’re going to click with. After working with Robert Redford on Brubaker in 1980, we instantly became friends. Working with him again in ‘An Unfinished Life’ was a dream come true. Rest peacefully, my friend.” — on Instagram.

James Gunn

“I grew up with his movies: his quiet, unforced performances and ever-present grace. He was THE movie star, and will be greatly missed.” — on Instagram.

Colman Domingo

“With love and admiration. Thank you Mr. Redford for your everlasting impact. Will be felt for generations. R.I.P.” — on X.

Ry Russo-Young

“So much of Redford’s work-on screen and off- has been about making challenging, truthful and meaningful movies. Sundance Film Festival, which he founded, was the creative home for so many of us in independent film. Grateful for all he’s given.” — on Instagram.

Utah Gov. Spencer Cox

“Decades ago, Robert Redford came to Utah and fell in love with this place. He cherished our landscapes and built a legacy that made Utah a home for storytelling and creativity. Through Sundance and his devotion to conservation, he shared Utah with the world.” — in a statement.

Cary Elwes

“There weren’t that many towering legends that loomed large in our home growing up as a kid but Robert Redford was certainly one of them.” — on Instagram.

Sundance Institute

“Bob’s vision of a space and a platform for independent voices launched a movement that, over four decades later, has inspired generations of artists and redefined cinema in the U.S. and around the world.” — in a statement.

Amy Sedaris

“One of a kind. Beautiful man inside and out. Oh this is just so very sad. He really was in his own category so was Paul Newman.” — on Instagram.

## A rushed rescue saves Gaza archeological items before an Israeli strike on a warehouse

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Nine hours of frantic negotiation with the Israeli military. A last-minute scramble to find trucks in a devastated Gaza Strip, where fuel is in short supply. Six hours of frantic packing, carefully stacking cardboard boxes on open flatbed trucks.

With an Israeli airstrike looming, aid workers carried out a last-minute rescue mission to salvage thousands of priceless artifacts from a Gaza warehouse before the building was flattened.

The warehouse contained artifacts from over 25 years of excavations, including items from a 4th-century Byzantine monastery designated as a World Heritage Site by the U.N. cultural organization UNESCO, and some of the oldest known evidence of Christianity in Gaza. The Israeli military said the building housed Hamas intelligence installations and planned to demolish it as part of their expanded military operation in Gaza City.

“It’s not just about Palestinian heritage or Christian heritage, it’s something important to the world heritage here, protected by UNESCO,” explained Kevin Charbel, the emergency field coordinator for Première Urgence Internationale, a humanitarian organization which has worked in Gaza since 2009. PUI is a health organization that also works toward the protection of Gaza’s cultural heritage.

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Negotiating against the clock

COGAT, Israel's defense body in charge of humanitarian aid, notified PUI of the demolition plan last Wednesday morning. The warning was triggered by a notification system managed by the international NGOs to let the Israeli military know that a specific area is a sensitive site such as a school, hospital, or warehouses holding humanitarian aid.

Charbel, who is based in Gaza City on a temporary humanitarian rotation, spent nine hours furiously negotiating with the Israeli military for a delay to allow workers to move the artifacts to a safer location. But the challenge was larger than just holding off the military. As Israel expands its operation in Gaza City, other organizations were in disarray, and no one could locate trucks to transport the artifacts at such short notice.

"Five minutes before I had to accept this was going to be evaporated in front of us, another actor offered us transport," said Charbel. PUI worked with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to move the artifacts to a safer location in Gaza City that is not being disclosed for security reasons.

The French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem, a venerated archaeological institution in the region which oversaw the Dead Sea Scrolls excavation in Israel, was responsible for the storage of about 80 square meters (860 sq ft) of archaeological artifacts in the Al-Kawthar high-rise building in Gaza City. PUI was providing security for the site.

Dozens of ancient archaeological sites have been found in Gaza, including temples, monasteries, palaces, churches, mosques and mosaics. Many of them have been lost to urban sprawl and looting. UNESCO is struggling to preserve some of those that remain. Some of the sites date back 6,000 years, when Gaza was a central stop on trade routes between Egypt and the Levant, and the emergence of urban societies began to transform farming villages.

The artifacts rescued this week include ceramic jugs, mosaics, coins, painted plasterwork, human and animal remains, and items excavated from the Saint Hilarion Monastery, one of the oldest known examples of Christian monastic communities in the Middle East, according to UNESCO.

No time for normal preparation

Starting just after sunrise on Thursday, workers rushed to pack five flatbed trucks with as many delicate artifacts as they possibly could in the space of six hours. Artifacts, which had been carefully stored and documented in the warehouse, were hurriedly packed in cardboard boxes, with nearly 2,000-year-old pottery resting on the sandy ground.

Charbel noted that transporting such old artifacts usually requires intense preparation and special provisions to protect delicate objects, something that wasn't possible in this instance. The Israeli military does not allow the use of closed container trucks, exposing the artifacts to additional dangers. Several items were broken en route and others had to be left behind. Israel destroyed the building on Sunday, claiming Hamas had positioned observation posts and intelligence-gathering infrastructure within it.

Over the past week, Israel has demolished multiple high-rise buildings in Gaza City, part of its dramatic warnings to civilians to evacuate ahead of the ground offensive, which began on Tuesday morning.

As Israel's ground operation expands, the artifacts are being held in a different location in Gaza City. However, they are outside, exposed to the elements, and remain in grave danger as strikes intensify.

UNESCO said Israel has damaged at least 110 cultural sites across the Gaza Strip, including 13 religious sites, 77 buildings of historical or artistic interest, one museum, and seven archaeological sites, since the beginning of the war in October 2023.

During the archaeological rescue, Charbel said, he and other aid workers also wrestled with deeper questions. Did it make sense to direct so many resources, including desperately needed fuel and trucks, risking the lives of multiple people who worked under constant threat of bombardment, for inanimate historical objects, when the humanitarian situation is so dire? Charbel said he was worried about spending so much time arguing over the archaeological artifacts when they also needed to negotiate with COGAT about life-saving water, food, and medicine.

"But we accepted to do this, because it's so valuable, this stuff, it's of such importance to world history

and also Palestinian history,” said Charbel. “Destroying early examples of Christian history in Palestine would erase it forever.”

## Prosecutors already have dropped nearly a dozen cases from Trump’s DC crime surge, judge says

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 50 people have faced federal charges in Washington, D.C., since President Donald Trump’s emergency law-and-order surge began last month. Already, prosecutors have dropped at least 11 of those cases, an unusually high collapse rate that judges say is wasting court resources.

The dismissals highlight the risks of Trump’s emergency surge strategy: an unprecedented flood of arrests that has produced headline-grabbing numbers but faltered under judicial scrutiny, with some of the most serious cases — from assaults on federal agents to gun charges — unraveling before they ever reach trial.

On Tuesday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Matthew Sharbaugh dismissed two felony assault cases at the request of U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro’s office. He delivered a blunt warning from the bench as he questioned whether prosecutors are making charging decisions before cases are properly investigated and vetted.

“That’s not the way it’s supposed to work, and it has real-world consequences,” Sharbaugh said. “This is becoming a real concern for the court just given the sheer numbers.”

Judges aren’t the only ones pushing back. Grand juries have refused to return indictments at least eight times in six separate cases, an extraordinarily rare rebuke that underscores skepticism about the strength of the evidence in surge prosecutions.

Trump claims his emergency 30-day deployment of federal agents and National Guard members is making the streets safer for District of Columbia residents.

One of the cases Sharbaugh dismissed involved Scott Pichon, accused of spitting on two members of the South Carolina Army National Guard outside Union Station on Aug. 22. Prosecutors dropped the felony assault count and instead charged him with misdemeanors in D.C. Superior Court, which handles local criminal matters.

The other case was against Paul Nguyen, accused of assaulting a federal agent who tried to break up a street fight on Aug. 23. Prosecutors abandoned that felony entirely, and Nguyen isn’t facing any new charges.

Nguyen, who appeared in court wearing a sling, said his arm was broken during his arrest and that he spent five nights in jail before being released.

“It was the scariest experience of my life,” he told reporters.

During separate hearings, Sharbaugh has asked prosecutors to explain why they were abandoning the felony charges against the two men. Prosecutors in both cases said the decision to drop the charges was made after reviewing the evidence. They didn’t specify any particular problems with the evidence.

The White House says over 2,000 people have been arrested since the federal intervention started on Aug. 7. At least 52 people arrested on surge-related offenses have been charged in district court, according to an Associated Press review of court records. Many more surge cases have been filed in Superior Court.

“U.S. Attorney Pirro and her office, in charging over 1,700 cases, follow the evidence wherever it leads, constantly evaluating each case as it develops to rigorously follow the law and to bring swift justice — including a dismissal when it is in the interest of justice,” office spokesperson Tim Lauer said in a statement.

Sharbaugh, who was appointed last October, is one of four magistrate judges presiding over initial court appearances and detention hearings for people charged with surge-related offenses in district court.

Earlier this month, Magistrate Judge Zia Faruqui said leaders of Pirro’s office have tarnished its reputation with how they are handling the deluge of cases. He said Pirro’s office is routinely bringing cases that don’t belong in federal court and needlessly keeping people in jail for days while they evaluate charges.

Pirro, a former Fox News host who was appointed by Trump in May, responded by accusing Faruqui, a former federal prosecutor, of allowing his personal politics to cloud his judicial judgment. She also criticized



grand juries that separately refused to indict two people who were charged last month with threatening to kill Trump.

"The system here is broken on many levels," Pirro said in a statement.

## Foreign disinformation about Charlie Kirk's killing seeks to widen US divisions

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia moved to amplify online conspiracy theories about Charlie Kirk's killing just hours after it happened, seeding social media with the frightening claim that America is slipping into civil war.

Chinese and pro-Iranian groups also spread disinformation about the shooting, with those loyal to Iran's interests backing antisemitic conspiracy theories while bots linked to Beijing claimed that Kirk's death shows that the United States is violent, polarized and dysfunctional.

America's adversaries have long used fake social media accounts, online bots and disinformation to depict the U.S. as a dangerous country beset with extremism and gun violence. Kirk's killing has provided another opportunity for those overseas eager to shape public understanding while inflaming political polarization.

"Charlie Kirk's Death and the Coming Civil War," tweeted Russian ultranationalist Alexander Dugin, whose influence earned him the moniker "Putin's brain," referring to Russia's president. Pro-Russian bots blamed Democrats and predicted more violence. Russian state media published English-language articles with headlines claiming a conspiracy orchestrated by shadowy forces: "Was Charlie Kirk's Killer a Pro?"

Foreign disinformation makes up a tiny fraction of the overall online discussion about Kirk's death, but it could undermine any efforts to heal political divisions or even spur further violence.

"We've seen multiple Russian campaigns attempting to exploit" Kirk's killing, said Joseph Bodnar, senior research manager at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue. In many cases, the campaigns aren't adding new claims but are recycling ones that emerged from American users. "They're picking up domestic actors and amplifying them."

Adversaries tailor disinformation

In each case, those spreading the disinformation have tailored it for their own ends. Chinese propaganda has focused on the violent nature of Kirk's death, painting the U.S. as a nation of violent gun owners and political extremists.

Russian voices have tried to tie Kirk's death to U.S. support for Ukraine, even spreading a conspiracy theory that the Ukrainian government killed Kirk because of his criticism of that aid.

Pro-Iranian groups took a different tack, claiming Israel was behind Kirk's death and that the suspect was set up to take the fall. This conspiracy theory caught on with white supremacist groups in the U.S., showing how corrosive claims can easily spread online despite oceans and linguistic and cultural barriers.

False and misleading claims can spread quickly following big news events as people go online to look for information. Artificial intelligence programs that can create lifelike video and audio can make it even harder to find the truth, as can AI chatbots that routinely offer up false information.

It happened again following Kirk's killing, when misinformation about the shooting and the suspect quickly spread online.

In recent years, groups looking to spread confusion or distrust have seized on hurricanes, wars, the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, the COVID-19 pandemic and other disasters, as well as the attempted assassinations of President Donald Trump.

The details vary, but the conspiracy theories pushed by foreign adversaries all suggest American institutions — the government, the media, law enforcement, health care — are failing and can no longer be trusted, and that more violence is likely.

Calls for social media companies to crack down

Regardless of the source of the information, social media companies should do more to stop both foreign disinformation and domestic calls for violence, said Imran Ahmed, CEO of the Center for Countering

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Digital Hate, which tracks online disinformation.

Posts calling for retaliatory violence following Kirk's death have been seen 43 million times on X alone, according to the center's research, though it can't say which posts came from foreign sources.

Platforms like X "are failing catastrophically to limit the reach of posts that celebrate murder and mayhem," Ahmed said.

Russia, China and Iran have all denied targeting Americans with disinformation. Officials in China have specifically pushed back on claims that Chinese social media bots are being used to amplify false claims about the Kirk shooting.

"China condemns all unlawful and violent acts. That said, we firmly oppose some US politicians accusing China of 'instilling disinformation and encouraging violence,'" a spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry posted on X.

For foreign adversaries looking to sow discord in the U.S., disinformation can be highly effective — and cheap. For authorities trying to keep the public informed, the false claims about Kirk's death are a potentially dangerous effort to hijack American discourse.

"There is a tremendous amount of disinformation we are tracking," Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, a Republican, said at a recent press conference about Kirk's killing. "What we are seeing is our adversaries want violence. We have bots from Russia, China, all over the world that are trying to instill disinformation and encourage violence."

Cox urged people to ignore bogus claims that seem designed to elicit fear — and suggested that Americans log off social media and spend time with family instead.

## Trump's threat to target 'radical left' after Kirk killing raises fears he's trying to silence foes

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, LISA MASCARO and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is escalating threats to crack down on what he describes as the "radical left" following Charlie Kirk's assassination, stirring fears that his administration is trying to harness outrage over the killing to suppress political opposition.

Without establishing any link to last week's shooting, the Republican president and members of his administration have discussed classifying some groups as domestic terrorists, ordering racketeering investigations and revoking tax-exempt status for progressive nonprofits. The White House pointed to Indivisible, a progressive activist network, and the Open Society Foundations, founded by George Soros, as potential subjects of scrutiny.

Although administration officials insist that their focus is preventing violence, critics see an extension of Trump's campaign of retribution against his political enemies and an erosion of free speech rights. Any moves to weaken liberal groups could also shift the political landscape ahead of next year's midterm elections, which will determine control of Congress and statehouses across the country.

"The radical left has done tremendous damage to the country," Trump told reporters on Tuesday morning when leaving for a state visit to the United Kingdom. "But we're fixing it."

Trump has sometimes made similar threats without following through. But now there's renewed interest fueled by anger over the killing of Kirk, a conservative activist who was a prominent supporter of Trump and friends with many of his advisers.

White House blames 'terrorist networks'

Authorities said they believe the suspect in Kirk's assassination acted alone, and they charged him with murder on Tuesday.

However, administration officials have repeatedly made sweeping statements about the need for broader investigations and punishments related to Kirk's death.

Attorney General Pam Bondi blamed "left-wing radicals" for the shooting and said "they will be held accountable." Stephen Miller, a top policy adviser, said there was an "organized campaign that led to this assassination."

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Miller's comments came during a conversation with Vice President JD Vance, who was guest-hosting Kirk's talk show from his ceremonial office in the White House on Monday.

Miller said he was feeling "focused, righteous anger," and "we are going to channel all of the anger" as they work to "uproot and dismantle these terrorist networks" by using "every resource we have."

Vance blamed "crazies on the far left" for saying the White House would "go after constitutionally protected speech." Instead, he said, "We're going to go after the NGO network that foments, facilitates and engages in violence."

Asked for examples, the White House pointed to demonstrations where police officers and federal agents have been injured, as well as the distribution of goggles and face masks during protests over immigration enforcement in Los Angeles.

There was also a report that Indivisible offered to reimburse people who gathered at Tesla dealerships to oppose Elon Musk's leadership of the Department of Government Efficiency. Sometimes cars were later vandalized.

Indivisible's leadership has said "political violence is a cancer on democracy" and said that their own organization has "been threatened by right-wingers all year."

**Nonprofits brace for impact**

Trump's executive actions have rattled nonprofit groups with attempts to limit their work or freeze federal funding, but more aggressive proposals to revoke tax-exempt status never materialized.

Now the mood has darkened as nonprofits recruit lawyers and bolster the security of their offices and staff.

"It's a heightened atmosphere in the wake of political violence, and organizations who fear they might be unjustly targeted in its wake are making sure that they are ready," said Lisa Gilbert, co-president of the government watchdog group Public Citizen.

Trump made retribution against political enemies a cornerstone of his comeback campaign, and he's mobilized the federal government to reshape law firms, universities and other traditionally independent institutions. He also ordered an investigation into ActBlue, an online liberal fundraising platform.

Some nonprofits expect the administration to focus on prominent funders like Soros, a liberal billionaire who has been a conservative target for years, to send a chill through the donor community.

Trump recently said Soros should face a racketeering investigation, though he didn't make any specific allegations. The Open Society Foundations condemned violence and Kirk's assassination in a statement and said "it is disgraceful to use this tragedy for political ends to dangerously divide Americans and attack the First Amendment."

Sen. Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, wrote on social media that "the murder of Charlie Kirk could have united Americans to confront political violence" but "Trump and his anti-democratic radicals look to be readying a campaign to destroy dissent."

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said "it is disingenuous and false for Democrats to say administration actions are about political speech." She said the goal is to "target those committing criminal acts and hold them accountable."

**Republicans back Trump's calls for investigations**

Trump's concerns about political violence are noticeably partisan. He described people who rioted at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as "hostages" and "patriots," and he pardoned 1,500 of them on his first day back in the Oval Office. He also mocked House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi after an attack on her husband.

When Trump condemned Kirk's killing in a video message last week, he mentioned several examples of "radical left political violence" but ignored attacks on Democrats.

Asked on Monday about the killing of Minnesota state Rep. Melissa Hortman over the summer, Trump said "I'm not familiar" with the case.

"Trump shrugs at right-wing political violence," said Ezra Levin, the co-executive director of Indivisible, in a newsletter.

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Some conservative commentators have cheered on a potential crackdown. Laura Loomer, a conspiracy theorist with a long record of bigoted comments, said "let's shut the left down." She also said that she wants Trump "to be the 'dictator' the left thinks he is."

Katie Miller, the wife of Stephen Miller and a former administration spokeswoman, asked Bondi whether there would be "more law enforcement going after these groups" and "putting cuffs on people."

"We will absolutely target you, go after you, if you are targeting anyone with hate speech," Bondi said. "And that's across the aisle."

Her comments sparked a backlash from across the political spectrum, since even hate speech is generally considered to be protected under the First Amendment. Bondi was more circumspect on social media on Tuesday morning, saying they would focus on "hate speech that crosses the line into threats of violence."

Trump is getting more support from Republicans in Congress. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and others proposed legislation that would enable the Justice Department to use racketeering laws, originally envisioned to combat organized crime, to prosecute violent protesters and the groups that support them.

Rep. Chip Roy of Texas wants the House to create a special committee to investigate the nonprofit groups, saying "we must follow the money to identify the perpetrators of the coordinated anti-American assaults being carried out against us."

## **Suspect left note saying he planned to kill Charlie Kirk, later confessed in texts, prosecutor says**

By JESSE BEDAYN, HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

PROVO, Utah (AP) — Prosecutors brought a murder charge Tuesday against the man accused of assassinating Charlie Kirk and outlined evidence, including a text message confession to his partner and a note left beforehand saying he had the opportunity to kill one of the nation's leading conservative voices "and I'm going to take it."

DNA on the trigger of the rifle that killed Kirk also matched that of Tyler Robinson, Utah County Attorney Jeff Gray said while outlining the evidence and announcing charges that could result in the death penalty if Robinson is convicted.

The prosecutor said Robinson, 22, wrote in one text that he spent more than a week planning the attack on Kirk, a prominent force in politics credited with energizing the Republican youth movement and helping Donald Trump win back the White House in 2024.

"The murder of Charlie Kirk is an American tragedy," Gray said.

Kirk was gunned down Sept. 10 while speaking with students at Utah Valley University. Prosecutors allege Robinson shot Kirk in the neck with a bolt-action rifle from the roof of a nearby building on the campus in Orem, about 40 miles (64 kilometers) south of Salt Lake City.

Robinson appeared briefly Tuesday before a judge by video from jail. He nodded slightly at times but mostly stared straight ahead as the judge read the charges against him and said he would appoint an attorney to represent him. Robinson's family has declined to comment to The Associated Press since his arrest.

Was Charlie Kirk targeted over anti-transgender views?

Authorities have not revealed a clear motive in the shooting, but Gray said that Robinson wrote in a text about Kirk to his partner: "I had enough of his hatred. Some hate can't be negotiated out."

Robinson also left a note for his partner hidden under a keyboard that said, "I had the opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk and I'm going to take it," according to Gray.

The prosecutor declined to answer whether Robinson targeted Kirk for his anti-transgender views. Kirk was shot while taking a question that touched on mass shootings, gun violence and transgender people.

"That is for a jury to decide," Gray said.

After the news conference, Utah's Department of Public Safety Commissioner, Beau Mason, said about the texts and other investigative threads, "We are starting to get a picture of where his mind was."

Robinson was involved in a romantic relationship with his roommate, who investigators say was trans-



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gender, which hasn't been confirmed. Gray said the partner has been cooperating with investigators.

Robinson's partner appeared shocked in the text exchange after the shooting, according to court documents, asking Robinson "why he did it and how long he'd been planning it."

Parents said their son became more political

While authorities say Robinson hasn't been cooperating with investigators, they say his family and friends have been talking.

Robinson's mother told investigators that their son had turned left politically in the last year and became more supportive of gay and transgender rights after dating someone who is transgender, Gray said.

Those decisions prompted several conversations in the household, especially between Robinson and his father. They had different political views and Robinson told his partner in a text that his dad had become a "diehard MAGA" since Trump was elected.

Mason added that the family's views "differed quite significantly," and the conversations were at times controversial between parents and son.

Robinson's mother recognized him when authorities released a picture of the suspect and his parents confronted him, at which time Robinson said he wanted to kill himself, Gray said.

The family persuaded him to meet with a family friend who is a retired sheriff's deputy, who persuaded Robinson to turn himself in, the prosecutor said.

Robinson was arrested late Thursday near St. George, the southern Utah community where he grew up, about 240 miles (390 kilometers) southwest of where the shooting happened.

Robinson detailed movements after the shooting

In a text exchange with his partner released by authorities, Robinson wrote: "I had planned to grab my rifle from my drop point shortly after, but most of that side of town got locked down. Its quiet, almost enough to get out, but theres one vehicle lingering."

Then he wrote: "Going to attempt to retrieve it again, hopefully they have moved on. I haven't seen anything about them finding it." After that, he sent: "I can get close to it but there is a squad car parked right by it. I think they already swept that spot, but I don't wanna chance it."

He also was worried about losing his grandfather's rifle and mentioned several times in the texts that he wished he had picked it up, according to the texts shared in court documents, which did not have timestamps. It was unclear how long after the shooting Robinson was texting.

"To be honest I had hoped to keep this secret till I died of old age. I am sorry to involve you," Robinson wrote in another text to his partner.

Prosecutor says Robinson told partner to delete texts

Robinson discarded the rifle and clothing and asked his roommate to conceal evidence, Gray said.

Robinson was charged with felony discharge of a firearm, punishable by up to life in prison, and obstructing justice, punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

He also was charged with witness tampering because he had directed his partner to delete their text messages and told his partner to stay silent if questioned by police, Gray said.

Kash Patel says investigators will look at everyone

FBI Director Kash Patel said Tuesday that agents are looking at "anyone and everyone" who was involved in a gaming chatroom on the social media platform Discord with Robinson. The chatroom involved "a lot more" than 20 people, he said during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in Washington.

"We are investigating Charlie's assassination fully and completely and running out every lead related to any allegation of broader violence," Patel said in response to a question about whether the Kirk shooting was being treated as part of a broader trend of violence against religious groups.

The charges filed Tuesday carry two enhancements, including committing several of the crimes in front of or close to children and carrying out violence based on the subject's political beliefs.

Gray declined to say whether Robinson's partner could face charges or whether anyone else might face charges.

Kirk, a dominant figure in conservative politics, became a confidant of President Donald Trump after founding Arizona-based Turning Point USA, one of the nation's largest political organizations. He brought

young, conservative evangelical Christians into politics.

In the days since Kirk's assassination, Americans have found themselves facing questions about rising political violence, the deep divisions that brought the nation here and whether anything can change.

Despite calls for greater civility, some who opposed Kirk's provocative statements about gender, race and politics criticized him after his death. Many Republicans have led the push to punish anyone they believe dishonored him, causing both public and private workers to lose their jobs or face other consequences at work.

## **Social media has us in its grip and won't let go. The Charlie Kirk killing is a case study**

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

Charlie Kirk's mastery of social media was key to his rise as an influence in conservative politics. So the extent to which his death and its aftermath have played out on those forums shouldn't come as a surprise.

In a microcosm of life today, social media is where Americans have gone to process last week's killing in Utah and is the chief tool his supporters are using to police those they feel aren't offering proper respect. Investigators are probing the time the man accused of killing Kirk, Tyler Robinson, spent in the "dark corners of the internet" — anti-social media, if you will — leading up to when he allegedly pulled the trigger.

On the other side of the world, as the Kirk story preoccupied Americans, Nepal reeled from a spasm of violence that erupted when the government tried to ban social media platforms.

All of this is forcing a closer look at the technologies that have changed our lives, how they control what we see and understand through algorithms, and the way all the time we spend on them affects our view of the world.

Cox emerges as a powerful spokesman against social media

Utah's governor, Republican Spencer Cox, believes "cancer" isn't a strong enough word to describe social media. "The most powerful companies in the history of the world have figured out how to hack our brains, get us addicted to outrage ... and get us to hate each other," Cox said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Democratic Sen. Brian Schatz of Hawaii, urged Americans via social media to "pull yourself together, read a book, get some exercise, have a whiskey, walk the dog or make some pasta or go fishing or just do anything other than let this algo pickle your brain and ruin your soul."

Chilling videos of Kirk's Sept. 10 assassination immediately overwhelmed sites like X, TikTok and YouTube, and companies are still working to contain their spread. Confrontational material and conspiracy theories are pushed into social media feeds because they do precisely what they're designed to do — keep people on the platforms for longer periods of time.

"I do think we're in a moment here," said Laura Edelson, a Northeastern University professor and expert on social media algorithms. "Our country is being digitally mediated. Where we interact with other people, how we interact with broader society, that is more and more happening over feed algorithms. This is the most recent in a long line of ways that society has been changed by media technology."

Divisive content and the proliferation of the video of Kirk's death may not have been the goal but are the direct result of decisions made to maximize profits and cut back on content moderation, Edelson said.

"I don't think there are people twirling their mustaches saying how great it is that we've divided society, except the Russian troll farms and, more and more, the Chinese troll farms," she said.

X owner Elon Musk posted on his site this past week that while discourse can become negative, "it's still good there is a discussion going." President Donald Trump, who created his own social platform, was asked about Cox's comments Tuesday before leaving for a trip to the United Kingdom. He said that while social media can create "deep, dark holes that are cancerous," it wasn't all bad.

"Well, it's not a cancer in all respects," he told reporters. "In some respects, it is great."

Conservative media star Ben Shapiro, who considered Kirk a friend, admired how Kirk was willing to go to different places and talk to people who disagreed with him, a practice all too rare in the social media era.

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"How social media works is a disaster area, fully a disaster area," Shapiro said in an interview with Bari Weiss on a Free Press podcast. "There's no question it's making the world a worse place — and that's not a call for censorship."

How people act on social media is a bipartisan problem, said Shapiro. The most pervasive one is people who use the third-person plural — "they" are doing something to "us," he said. That's been the case when many people discuss Kirk's death, although the shooter's motives haven't become clear and there's no evidence his actions are anything other than his own.

Collecting inflammatory posts from both sides

The liberal MeidasTouch media company has collected inflammatory social posts by conservatives, particularly those who suggest they're at "war." Meanwhile, several conservatives have combed social media for posts they consider negative toward Kirk, in some cases seeking to get people fired. The Libs of TikTok site urged that a Washington state school district be defunded because it refused to lower flags to half staff.

GOP Rep. Randy Fine of Florida asked people to point out negative Kirk posts from anyone who works in government, at a place that receives public funding or is licensed by the government — a teacher or lawyer, for instance. "These monsters want a fight?" he wrote on X. "Congratulations, they got one."

A Washington Post columnist, Karen Attiah, wrote Monday that she was fired for a series of Bluesky posts that expressed little sympathy for Kirk. But she wrote on Substack that "not performing over-the-top grief for white men who espouse violence was not the same as endorsing violence against them." A Post spokeswoman declined to comment.

So much of what people use to talk about politics — algorithmically driven social media sites and cable television — is designed to pull Americans apart, said James Talarico, a Democratic state lawmaker in Texas who recently announced a bid for the U.S. Senate. "We've got to find our way back to each other because that's the only way we can continue this American experiment," he said on MSNBC.

Among the most persistent examples of those divisions are the lies and misinformation about elections that have spread for years through online social channels. They have undermined faith in one of the country's bedrock institutions and contributed to the rage that led Trump supporters to violently storm the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Whether meaningful change is possible remains an open question. Nepal's unrest illustrated the dangers of government involvement: Social media sites were shut down and users protested, suggesting it had been a way to stop criticism of the government. Police opened fire at one demonstration, killing 19 people.

Persuading social media sites to change their algorithms is also an uphill battle. They live off attention and people spending as much time as possible on them. Unless advertisers flee for fear of being associated with violent posts, there's little incentive for them to change, said Jasmine Enberg, a social media analyst at Emarketer.

Young people in particular are becoming aware of the dangers of spending too much time on social media, she said.

But turn their phones off? "The reality of the situation," Enberg said, "is that there's a limit to how much they can limit their behavior."

## Trump's UK visit will mix trade and tech talks with royal pomp

By JILL LAWLESS and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump arrived in the United Kingdom on Tuesday for a state visit during which the British government hopes a multibillion-dollar technology deal will show the trans-Atlantic bond remains strong despite differences over Ukraine, the Middle East and the future of the Western alliance.

State visits in Britain blend 21st-century diplomacy with royal pageantry. Trump's two-day trip comes complete with horse-drawn carriages, military honor guards and a glittering banquet inside a 1,000-year-old castle — all tailored to a president with a fondness for gilded splendor.

King Charles III will host Trump at Windsor Castle on Wednesday before talks the next day with Prime Minister Keir Starmer at Chequers, the British leader's rural retreat.

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Starmer's office said the visit will demonstrate that "the U.K.-U.S. relationship is the strongest in the world, built on 250 years of history" — after that awkward rupture in 1776 — and bound by shared values of "belief in the rule of law and open markets." There was no mention of Trump's market-crimping fondness for sweeping tariffs.

The White House expects the two countries will strengthen their relationship during the trip and celebrate the upcoming 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, according to a senior White House official who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. It was unclear how the U.K. was planning to mark that chapter in their shared history.

"The trip to the U.K. is going to be incredible," Trump told reporters Sunday. He said Windsor Castle is "supposed to be amazing" and added: "It's going to be very exciting."

Trump's second state visit

Trump is the first U.S. president to get a second state visit to the U.K.

The unprecedented nature of the invitation, along with the expectation of lavish pomp and pageantry, holds dual appeal to Trump. The Republican president has glowingly praised the king's late mother, Queen Elizabeth II, and spoken about how his own Scotland-born mother loved the queen and the monarchy.

Trump, as he left the White House on Tuesday, noted that during his past state visit he was hosted at Buckingham Palace.

"I don't want to say one is better than the other, but they say Windsor Castle is the ultimate," Trump said.

He also called the king "an elegant gentleman" and said "he represents the country so well."

The president is also royally flattered by exceptional attention and has embraced the grandeur of his office in his second term. He has adorned the normally more austere Oval Office with gold accents, is constructing an expansive ballroom at the White House and has sought to refurbish other Washington buildings to his liking.

Foreign officials have shown they're attuned to his tastes. During a visit to the Middle East this year, leaders of Saudi Arabia and Qatar didn't just roll out a red carpet but dispatched fighter jets to escort Trump's plane.

Starmer has already shown he's adept at charming Trump. Visiting Washington in February, he noted the president's Oval Office decorating choices and decision to display a bust of Winston Churchill. During Trump's private trip to Scotland in July, Starmer visited and praised Trump's golf courses.

Efforts to woo the president make some members of Starmer's Labour Party uneasy, and Trump will not address Parliament during his visit, like French President Emmanuel Macron did in July. Lawmakers will be on their annual autumn recess, sparing the government an awkward decision.

The itinerary in Windsor and at Chequers, both well outside London, also keeps Trump away from a planned mass protest against his visit.

"This visit is really important to Keir Starmer to show that he's a statesman," said Leslie Vinjamuri, president of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. "But it's such a double-edged sword, because he's going to be a statesman alongside a U.S. president that is not popular in Europe."

Troubles for Starmer

Preparations for the visit have been ruffled by political turmoil in Starmer's center-left government. Last week, Starmer sacked Britain's ambassador to Washington, Peter Mandelson, over his past friendship with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Mandelson had good relations with the Trump administration and played a key role in securing a U.K.-U.S. trade agreement in May. His firing has put Epstein back in British headlines as Trump tries to swerve questions about his own relationship with the disgraced financier.

Mandelson's exit came just a week after Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner quit over a tax error on a home purchase. A senior Starmer aide, Paul Ovensen quit Monday over tasteless text messages he sent years ago. Fourteen months after winning a landslide election victory, Starmer's position at the helm of the Labour Party is fragile and his poll ratings are in the dumps.

But he has found a somewhat unexpected supporter in Trump, who has said Starmer is a friend, despite



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being "slightly more liberal than I am."

Starmer's government has cultivated that warmth and tried to use it to get favorable trade terms with the U.S., the U.K.'s largest single economic partner, accounting for 18% of total British trade.

The May trade agreement reduces U.S. tariffs on Britain's key auto and aerospace industries. But a final deal has not been reached over other sectors, including pharmaceuticals, steel and aluminum.

As he left the White House on Tuesday, Trump said U.K. officials wanted to continue trade negotiations during his visit.

"They'd like to see if they can get a little bit better deal, so we'll talk to them" he said.

Nvidia chief executive Jensen Huang and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman are expected to be among the business leaders in the U.S. delegation. Trump and Starmer are set to sign a technology partnership – which Mandelson was key to striking – accompanied by major investments in nuclear power, life sciences and Artificial Intelligence data centers.

The leaders are also expected to sign nuclear energy deals, expand cooperation on defense technology and explore ways to bolster ties between their financial hubs, according to the White House official.

Ukraine on the agenda

Starmer has also tried to use his influence to maintain U.S. support for Ukraine, with limited results. Trump has expressed frustration with Russian President Vladimir Putin but has not made good on threats to impose new sanctions on Russia for shunning peace negotiations.

Last week's Russian drone incursion into NATO member Poland drew strong condemnation from European NATO allies, and pledges of more planes and troops for the bloc's eastern flank. Trump played down the incident's severity, musing that it "could have been a mistake."

Starmer also departs from Trump over Israel's war in Gaza, and has said the U.K. will formally recognize a Palestinian state at the United Nations later this month.

Vinjamuri said Starmer "has kept the United States speaking the right language" on Ukraine, but has had little impact on Trump's actions.

"On China, on India, on Israel and Gaza and Hamas, and on Vladimir Putin – on the really big important things – the U.K. hasn't had a huge amount of influence," she said.

## **Pennsylvania governor says US must 'turn the tide' against political violence, reject vengeance**

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania said Tuesday that the nation's leaders must "turn the tide" against political violence and reject vengeance, and accused President Donald Trump of failing the moment's test of leadership.

Shapiro, a Democrat, delivered remarks as the keynote speech at the Eradicate Hate Global Summit in Pittsburgh, days after the assassination of conservative political activist Charlie Kirk, and later, while answering reporters' questions.

Shapiro said political leaders must condemn all forms of political violence and reject the "rhetoric of vengeance."

"It is all wrong, and it makes us all less safe. During moments like these, I believe we have a responsibility to be clear and unequivocal in calling out all forms of political violence, making clear it is all wrong," Shapiro said. "That shouldn't be hard to do."

In April, Shapiro and his family fled the governor's official residence in the middle of the night after an alleged arsonist broke in and set it on fire in an attempt to kill Shapiro.

The governor, who is considered a potential White House contender in 2028's presidential election, had been asleep with his wife, children and extended family after celebrating the Jewish holiday of Passover there.

Violence must not be used as a pretext for more violence or to prosecute constitutionally protected speech, he said, saying that political violence not only injures or kills, but affects everyone because it ter-

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rorizes, silences and "tears at the fabric of American society."

Shapiro has criticized Trump as using the "rhetoric of rage" in the wake of Kirk's killing, and on Tuesday, he again pointedly singled out the president while speaking to reporters.

Trump and some of his allies are "cherry-picking certain violence that is OK and certain violence that is not OK, that is making everyone less safe and it's raising the temperatures instead of lowering the temperatures," Shapiro said.

Americans should be united in saying it's wrong to celebrate Kirk's killing and to stand up to people who are calling for vengeance and revenge.

"I don't care if it's coming from the left or the right. We need to be universal in our condemnation. And the president has once again failed that leadership test, failed the morality test, and it makes us all less safe," Shapiro said.

Trump has repeatedly blamed Kirk's killing on "the radical left" or said the problem of political violence "is on the left."

The White House responded in a statement Tuesday that Trump — as the survivor of assassination attempts and a close friend of Kirk — understands the dangers of political violence better than anyone.

The White House said Trump has urged Americans to "commit themselves to the American values for which Charlie Kirk lived and died" — such as free speech and the rule of law — but that he and his administration maintain that "radical leftists" have inspired left-wing violence by calling political opponents "Nazis and Fascists."

"It must end," the White House said.

In his remarks, Shapiro said too many people don't believe government and the nation's institutions can solve problems. Instead, they find refuge on the internet where their frustration is taken advantage of and used to foment hate, he said.

"It leads to a belief among some that the only way they can address their problems is through violence," Shapiro said. "They find online those who glorify violence and urge it on."

That, he said, "is dangerous for our democracy, and we need to turn the tide."

The Eradicate Hate conference, in its fifth year, was started after a gunman attacked and killed 11 worshippers at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue in 2018 in the deadliest attack on Jews in U.S. history.

## Israeli military begins its ground offensive in Gaza City as thousands of Palestinians flee

By MELANIE LIDMAN, JON GAMBRELL and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel launched its offensive in Gaza City on Tuesday, vowing to overwhelm a city already in ruins from nearly two years of war as thousands of Palestinians fled in vehicles strapped with mattresses and other belongings that clogged a coastal road.

The operation into the largest Palestinian city escalated a conflict that has roiled the Middle East and likely pushed any ceasefire with Hamas farther out of reach. The military would not offer a timeline for the offensive that aims to crush the militant group's ability to fight, but Israeli media suggested it could take months.

"Gaza is burning," Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz declared as the operation began. Heavy bombardment pounded the city, and troops began moving in from the outskirts after weeks of airstrikes and buildup toward the renewed assault.

The offensive began the same day that independent experts commissioned by the United Nations Human Rights Council accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza. Israel rejected the allegation, calling the report "distorted and false."

One woman, Saud al-Sakani, said her daughter, son-in-law and their children were killed in a strike that flattened their home with about 40 people inside. "An entire family!" she cried, weeping over their bodies at Shifa Hospital's morgue. "Many are still under the rubble."

On a brief visit to the region, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that there was a "very short

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window of time in which a deal can happen" to end the war.

The new assault did not deter another invitation to the U.S for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He said Tuesday that President Donald Trump invited him to the White House on Sept. 29, after the Israeli leader addresses the United Nations General Assembly. It will mark Netanyahu's fourth visit since Trump took office in January.

Meanwhile, a missile fired by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen set off rocket sirens in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The Israeli military said it was working to intercept the projectile, which was fired after Israel carried out airstrikes on the rebel-held port city of Hodeida in Yemen.

The Houthis have regularly fired drones and missiles at Israel in what they say is solidarity with the Palestinians. The vast majority have been intercepted or landed in open areas without causing casualties or damage. Israel has carried out waves of retaliatory strikes on Yemen.

**Palestinians flee Gaza City**

Israeli forces have carried out multiple large-scale raids into Gaza City over the course of the war, causing mass displacement and heavy destruction, only to see militants regroup later. This time, Israel has pledged to take control of the entire city, which experts say is experiencing famine.

An Israeli military official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with military guidelines, said the "main phase" of the Gaza City operation had begun and troops had started moving.

The official said the Israeli military believes there are 2,000 to 3,000 Hamas militants left in Gaza City, as well as tunnels used by the group. Hamas' military capabilities have been vastly diminished. It now mainly carries out guerrilla-style attacks, with small groups of fighters planting explosives or attacking military outposts before melting away.

Ismail Zaydah, 39, said he fled from his home in Gaza City's Sheikh Radwan neighborhood to an area near the coastal road. He said trucks carrying people south to an Israeli-designated humanitarian zone charge around \$1,000, even as many families in Gaza City are starving.

"We fled with nothing but a few pieces of clothing. People are pitching their tents in western Gaza City, and they are sleeping among human waste because there is no place for them to go," he said.

An estimated 1 million Palestinians were living in the Gaza City region before warnings to evacuate began ahead of the offensive, and the Israeli military estimates 350,000 people have left the city.

A U.N. estimate on Monday said that over 220,000 Palestinians have fled northern Gaza over the past month. But hundreds of thousands more have stayed behind.

By the end of the current operation, an Israeli military graphic suggested its troops hope to control all of the Gaza Strip except for a large swath along the coast.

**At least 69 Palestinians killed in city**

Palestinian residents reported heavy strikes across Gaza City on Tuesday morning, with hospitals in the city recording at least 69 deaths.

"A very tough night in Gaza," Dr. Mohamed Abu Selmiya, the director of Shifa Hospital, told The Associated Press. "The bombing did not stop for a single moment."

Several women gathered at the hospital's morgue, where AP footage showed many dead in body bags.

Shifa received the bodies of 49 people, including 22 children, according to Dr. Rami Mhanna, a hospital official, who said dozens of wounded had also come into the facility. Al-Ahli Hospital received 17 bodies, and Al-Quds three.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the deadly strikes but in the past has accused Hamas of building military infrastructure inside civilian areas.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Forty-eight hostages, fewer than half believed to be alive, remain in Gaza.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 64,900 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants. The ministry, which is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals, says women and children make up around half the dead.

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Families of hostages beg Netanyahu to halt the operation

Overnight, families of the hostages still being held in Gaza gathered outside Netanyahu's residence, imploring him to stop the offensive.

"Netanyahu gave the order to bomb my child," said Anat Angrast, whose son is held in Gaza. "He knows that Matan is in immediate danger due to the Gaza operation, yet he decided to bomb him to death. He is the only one who will decide whether Matan lives or dies."

Israel believes around 20 of the hostages are alive. Hamas has said it will only free remaining captives in return for Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

On a visit to Israel, Rubio suggested that there might still be time for a negotiated end to the war.

"At some point, this has to end. At some point, Hamas has to be defanged, and we hope it can happen through a negotiation," he said. "But I think time, unfortunately, is running out."

He continued to Qatar, where he met with its ruling emir. Qatar is incensed over an Israeli strike last week that killed five Hamas members and a local security official.

Rubio thanked Qatar, which has been a key negotiator in efforts to reach a ceasefire, for playing that role, according to a statement from his office, which did not directly acknowledge the Israeli strike. He also highlighted the countries' close ties.

Arab and Muslim nations denounced the strike at a summit Monday but stopped short of any major action targeting Israel.

## Wall Street edges back from its record heights

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks edged back from their record heights on Tuesday as the countdown ticked toward what Wall Street expects will be the first cut of the year to interest rates by the Federal Reserve.

The S&P 500 fell 0.1% from its latest all-time high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 125 points, or 0.3%, while the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.1% from its own record set the day before.

Stocks have run to records on expectations that the Fed will announce the first of a series of cuts to rates on Wednesday in hopes of giving the economy a boost. The job market has slowed so much that traders believe Fed officials now see it as the bigger danger for the economy than the threat of higher inflation because of President Donald Trump's tariffs.

The Fed has been holding off on cuts to rates because inflation has remained above its 2% target, and easier interest rates could give it more fuel.

A report on Tuesday said shoppers increased their spending at U.S. retailers by more last month than economists expected. A chunk of that could be due to shoppers having to pay higher prices for the same amount of stuff. But it could also indicate solid spending by U.S. households could continue to keep the economy out of a recession.

The data did little to change traders' expectations for a cut to interest rates on Wednesday, followed by more through the end of the year and into 2026.

Such high expectations have sent stocks to records, but they can also create disappointment if unfulfilled. That's why more attention will be on what Fed Chair Jerome Powell says about the possibility of upcoming cuts in his press conference following Wednesday's decision than on the decision itself.

Fed officials will also release their latest projections for where they see interest rates and the economy heading in upcoming years, which could provide another potential flashpoint.

For now, global fund managers are tilting their portfolios toward stocks at the highest level in seven months, according to the latest survey by Bank of America. That's even though a record 58% of them are also saying that stocks look too expensive at the moment.

On Wall Street, Dave & Buster's fell 16.7% after the entertainment chain reported a weaker profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

New York Times Co. fell 1.6% after Trump filed a \$15 billion defamation lawsuit against the newspaper and four of its journalists on Monday. The lawsuit points to several articles and a book written by Times



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journalists and published in the lead up to the 2024 election as "part of a decades-long pattern by the New York Times of intentional and malicious defamation against President Trump."

On the winning end of Wall Street was Steel Dynamics, which climbed 6.1% after it said it's seeing improved earnings across its three business units. It credited strong demand for steel from the non-residential construction and auto industries, among other things.

Chipotle Mexican Grill added 1.9% after its board said the company could buy back an additional \$500 million of its stock. Such a move can send cash directly to investors and boost per-share results.

Oracle rose 1.5% on speculation that it could be part of a deal that would keep TikTok operating in the United States.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 8.52 points to 6,606.76. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 125.55 to 45,757.90, and the Nasdaq composite sank 14.79 to 22,333.96.

In stock markets abroad, indexes fell in Europe following a mixed showing in Asia.

Japan's Nikkei 225 added 0.3% to finish at another record. The rally comes despite political uncertainty after Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said he is stepping down. An election within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to pick a new leader is expected Oct. 4.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 4.03% from 4.05% late Monday.

## Democrats stake out opposition to spending bill, raising threat of a shutdown

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic leaders lashed out Tuesday at a short-term spending bill to avoid a partial government shutdown at the end of the month, warning Republicans they will not support a measure that doesn't address their concerns on the soaring cost of health insurance coverage for millions of Americans.

House Republicans unveiled the spending bill Tuesday. It would keep federal agencies funded through Nov. 21, buying lawmakers more time to work out their differences on spending levels and policy for the coming fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. Republicans said that they were providing exactly what Democrats have insisted upon in past government shutdown battles — a clean funding bill free of partisan policy riders.

"It'll be a clean, short-term continuing resolution, end of story," House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters. "And it's interesting to me that some of the same Democrats who decried government shutdowns under President Biden appear to have no heartache whatsoever at walking our nation off that cliff right now. I hope they don't."

The bill would generally fund agencies at current levels, with a few limited exceptions, including an extra \$88 million to boost security for lawmakers and members of the Supreme Court and the executive branch. The proposed boost comes as lawmakers face an increasing number of personal threats, with their concerns heightened by last week's assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries have been asking their Republican counterparts for weeks for a meeting to negotiate on the bill, but they say that Republicans have refused. Any bill needs help from at least seven Democrats in the Senate to overcome procedural hurdles and advance to a final vote.

The two Democratic leaders issued a joint statement Tuesday after Republicans unveiled the short-term funding bill, saying that by "refusing to work with Democrats, Republicans are steering our country toward a shutdown."

"The House Republican-only spending bill fails to meet the needs of the American people and does nothing to stop the looming healthcare crisis," Schumer and Jeffries said. "At a time when families are already being squeezed by higher costs, Republicans refuse to stop Americans from facing double-digit hikes in their health insurance premiums."

The House is expected to vote on the measure by Friday. Senate Majority Leader John Thune said he would prefer the Senate take it up this week as well. But any bill will need some Democratic support and

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it's unclear whether that will happen.

In past budget battles, it has generally been Republicans who've been willing to engage in shutdown threats as a way to focus attention on their priority demands. That was the situation during the nation's longest shutdown in the winter of 2018-19, when President Donald Trump insisted on money to build the U.S.-Mexico border wall. A 16-day shutdown in 2013 occurred as Republicans demanded significant changes to then-President Barack Obama's health care overhaul in exchange for funding the government and permitting Treasury the borrowing latitude to pay the nation's bills.

This time, however, Democrats are facing intense pressure from their base of supporters to stand up to Trump. They have particularly focused on the potential for skyrocketing health care premiums for millions of Americans if Congress fails to extend enhanced subsidies, which many people use to buy insurance on the Affordable Care Act exchange. Those subsidies were put in place during the COVID crisis, but are set to expire.

Some people have already received notices that their premiums — the monthly fee paid for insurance coverage — are poised to spike next year. Insurers have sent out notices in nearly every state, with some proposing premium increases of as much as 50%. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the number of people without insurance would rise by 2.2 million in 2026, and by 3.7 million the following year, if Congress does not extend the enhanced tax credits.

Johnson called the debate over health insurance tax credits a December policy issue, not something that needs to be solved in September. And Thune said that almost every Democratic lawmaker voted for the short-term continuing resolutions when Joe Biden was president and Schumer was majority leader.

"I'm sure you're all asking the question, are we or are we not going to have a Schumer shutdown?" Thune asked reporters Tuesday. "And it sounds like, from what he is indicating, that very well may happen."

## **Robert Redford, Oscar-winning director, actor and indie patriarch, dies at 89**

By BOB THOMAS Associated Press

Robert Redford, the Hollywood golden boy who became an Oscar-winning director, liberal activist and godfather for independent cinema under the name of one of his best-loved characters, died Tuesday at 89.

Redford died "at his home at Sundance in the mountains of Utah — the place he loved, surrounded by those he loved," publicist Cindi Berger said in a statement. He died in his sleep, but no cause was provided.

After rising to stardom in the 1960s, Redford was one of the biggest stars of the '70s with such films as "The Candidate," "All the President's Men" and "The Way We Were," capping that decade with the best director Oscar for 1980's "Ordinary People," which also won best picture in 1980. His wavy blond hair and boyish grin made him the most desired of leading men, but he worked hard to transcend his looks — whether through his political advocacy, his willingness to take on unglamorous roles or his dedication to providing a platform for low-budget movies.

His roles ranged from Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward to a mountain man in "Jeremiah Johnson" to a double agent in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and his co-stars included Jane Fonda, Meryl Streep and Tom Cruise. But his most famous screen partner was his old friend and fellow activist and practical joker Paul Newman, their films a variation of their warm, teasing relationship off screen. Redford played the wily outlaw opposite Newman in 1969's "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," a box-office smash from which Redford's Sundance Institute and festival got its name. He also teamed with Newman on 1973's best picture Oscar winner, "The Sting," which earned Redford a best-actor nomination as a young con artist in 1930s Chicago.

Film roles after the '70s became more sporadic as Redford concentrated on directing and producing, and his new role as patriarch of the independent-film movement in the 1980s and '90s through his Sundance Institute. But he starred in 1985's best picture champion "Out of Africa" and in 2013 received some of the best reviews of his career as a shipwrecked sailor in "All is Lost," in which he was the film's only performer. In 2018, he was praised again in what he called his farewell movie, "The Old Man and the Gun."

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"I just figure that I've had a long career that I'm very pleased with. It's been so long, ever since I was 21," he told The Associated Press shortly before the film came out. "I figure now as I'm getting into my 80s, it's maybe time to move toward retirement and spend more time with my wife and family."

Sundance is born

Redford had watched Hollywood grow more cautious and controlling during the 1970s and wanted to recapture the creative spirit of the early part of the decade. Sundance was created to nurture new talent away from the pressures of Hollywood, the institute providing a training ground and the festival, based in Park City, Utah, where Redford had purchased land with the initial hope of opening a ski resort. Instead, Park City became a place of discovery for such previously unknown filmmakers as Quentin Tarantino, Steven Soderbergh, Paul Thomas Anderson and Darren Aronofsky.

"For me, the word to be underscored is 'independence,'" Redford told the AP in 2018. "I've always believed in that word. That's what led to me eventually wanting to create a category that supported independent artists who weren't given a chance to be heard.

"The industry was pretty well controlled by the mainstream, which I was a part of. But I saw other stories out there that weren't having a chance to be told and I thought, 'Well, maybe I can commit my energies to giving those people a chance.' As I look back on it, I feel very good about that."

Sundance was even criticized as buyers swarmed in looking for potential hits and celebrities overran the town each winter.

"We have never, ever changed our policies for how we program our festival. It's always been built on diversity," Redford told the AP in 2004. "The fact is that the diversity has become commercial. Because independent films have achieved their own success, Hollywood, being just a business, is going to grab them. So when Hollywood grabs your films, they go, 'Oh, it's gone Hollywood.'"

By 2025, the festival had become so prominent that organizers decided they had outgrown Park City and approved relocating to Boulder, Colorado, starting in 2027. Redford, who had attended the University of Colorado Boulder, issued a statement saying that "change is inevitable, we must always evolve and grow, which has been at the core of our survival."

Redford's affinity for the outdoors was well captured in "A River Runs Through It" and other films and through his decades of advocacy for the environment, inspired in part by witnessing the transformation of Los Angeles into a city of smog and freeways. His activities ranged from lobbying for such legislation as the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act to pushing for land conservation in Utah to serving on the board of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Redford was married twice, most recently to Sibylle Szaggars. He had four children, two of whom have died — Scott Anthony, who died in infancy, in 1959; and James Redford, an activist and filmmaker who died in 2020.

Redford's early life

Robert Redford was born Charles Robert Redford Jr. on Aug. 18, 1936, in Santa Monica, a California boy whose blond good looks eased his way over an apprenticeship in television and live theater that eventually led to the big screen.

Redford attended college on a baseball scholarship and would later star as a middle-aged slugger in 1984's "The Natural," the adaptation of Bernard Malamud's baseball novel. He had an early interest in drawing and painting, then went on to study at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, debuting on Broadway in the late 1950s and moving into television on such shows as "The Twilight Zone," "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" and "The Untouchables."

After scoring a Broadway lead in "Sunday in New York," Redford was cast by director Mike Nichols in a production of Neil Simon's "Barefoot in the Park," later starring with Fonda in the film version. Redford did miss out on one of Nichols' greatest successes, "The Graduate," released in 1967. Nichols had considered casting Redford in the part eventually played by Dustin Hoffman, but Redford seemed unable to relate to the socially awkward young man who ends up having an affair with one of his parents' friends.

"I said, 'You can't play it. You can never play a loser,'" Nichols said during a 2003 screening of the film

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in New York. "And Redford said, 'What do you mean? Of course I can play a loser.' And I said, 'OK, have you ever struck out with a girl?' and he said, 'What do you mean?' And he wasn't joking."

Indie champion, mainstream star

Even as Redford championed low-budget independent filmmaking, he continued to star in mainstream Hollywood productions himself, scoring the occasional hit such as 2001's "Spy Game," which co-starred Brad Pitt, an heir apparent to Redford's handsome legacy whom he had directed in "A River Runs Through It."

Ironically, "The Blair Witch Project," "Garden State," "Napoleon Dynamite" and other scrappy films that came out of Sundance sometimes made bigger waves — and more money — than some Redford-starring box-office duds like "Havana," "The Last Castle" and "An Unfinished Life."

Redford also appeared in several political narratives. He satirized campaigning as an idealist running for U.S. senator in 1972's "The Candidate" and uttered one of the more memorable closing lines, "What do we do now?" after his character manages to win. He starred as Woodward to Hoffman's Carl Bernstein in 1976's "All the President's Men," the story of the Washington Post reporters whose Watergate investigation helped bring down President Richard Nixon.

With 2007's "Lions for Lambs," Redford returned to directing in a saga of a congressman (Tom Cruise), a journalist (Meryl Streep) and an academic (Redford) whose lives intersect over the war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

His biggest filmmaking triumph came with his directing debut on "Ordinary People," which beat Martin Scorsese's classic "Raging Bull" at the Oscars. The film starred Donald Sutherland and Mary Tyler Moore as the repressed parents of a troubled young man, played by Timothy Hutton, in his big screen debut. Redford was praised for casting Moore in an unexpectedly serious role and for his even-handed treatment of the characters, a quality that Roger Ebert believed set "the film apart from the sophisticated suburban soap opera it could easily have become."

Redford's other directing efforts included "The Horse Whisperer," "The Milagro Beanfield War" and 1994's "Quiz Show," the last of which also earned best picture and director Oscar nominations. In 2002, Redford received an honorary Oscar, with academy organizers citing him as "actor, director, producer, creator of Sundance, inspiration to independent and innovative filmmakers everywhere."

"The idea of the outlaw has always been very appealing to me. If you look at some of the films, it's usually having to do with the outlaw sensibility, which I think has probably been my sensibility. I think I was just born with it," Redford said in 2018. "From the time I was just a kid, I was always trying to break free of the bounds that I was stuck with, and always wanted to go outside."

## New York judge tosses terrorism charges against Luigi Mangione, lets murder count stand

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York judge on Tuesday threw out terrorism charges against Luigi Mangione, rejecting the Manhattan district attorney's theory in a state murder case that the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson was "intended to evoke terror."

Judge Gregory Carro kept other charges in place, including a second-degree murder count that requires prosecutors to prove Mangione intended to kill Thompson but not that he was doing so as an act of terrorism.

The ruling eliminated the top two charges in Mangione's state case, sparing him the possibility of a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole. The 27-year-old Ivy League graduate is also facing a parallel federal death penalty prosecution. Carro said the defense's argument that the dueling prosecutors amounted to double jeopardy was premature.

Mangione, a cause célèbre for people upset with the health insurance industry, appeared in good spirits and raised his eyebrows at supporters as police officers led him out of the brief hearing after Carro issued his ruling.

In a written decision, the judge said that although there isn't any doubt that Thompson's killing last De-



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ember was no ordinary street crime, state law in New York doesn't consider something terrorism simply because it was motivated by ideology.

"While the defendant was clearly expressing an animus toward UHC, and the health care industry generally, it does not follow that his goal was to 'intimidate and coerce a civilian population,' and indeed, there was no evidence presented of such a goal," Carro wrote.

The judge also said there was insufficient evidence that Mangione intended to influence or affect government policy by intimidation or coercion — another element of the terrorism charges. He noted that federal prosecutors hadn't charged Mangione with terrorism offenses even though the federal terrorism statute was a model for the state law.

But in keeping the second-degree murder charge, Carro ruled there was sufficient evidence that Mangione "murdered Brian Thompson in a premeditated and calculated execution." That charge carries a potential penalty of 15 years to life in prison, with the possibility of parole.

Afterward, Mangione lawyer Marc Agnifilo told TMZ: "It's a big win and it's the first of many."

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office issued a brief statement, saying, "We respect the Court's decision and will proceed on the remaining nine counts."

Carro scheduled pretrial hearings in the state case for Dec. 1, just days before Mangione is next due in court in his federal case.

Mangione handcuffed and shackled for court appearance

Mangione, who has been locked up since his arrest, arrived in court in beige jail garb, handcuffs and ankle shackles. Making his first appearance in Carro's courtroom since February, he was mostly silent, quietly conferring with his lawyers as the judge outlined his decision.

Echoing the scene at his last hearing, a few dozen supporters — mostly women — packed three rows in the rear of the courtroom gallery. Some were dressed in green, the color worn by the Mario Bros. video game character Luigi. One woman sported a "FREE LUIGI" T-shirt. Across the street from the courthouse, cheers erupted from a pro-Mangione rally as news spread that the judge had dismissed his terrorism charges.

Mangione pleaded not guilty late last year to multiple counts of murder, including murder as an act of terrorism. Surveillance video showed a masked gunman shoot Thompson from behind on Dec. 4, 2024, as the executive arrived at a midtown Manhattan hotel for his company's annual investor conference. Police say the words "delay," "deny" and "depose" were scrawled on the ammunition, mimicking a phrase commonly used to describe how insurers avoid paying claims.

Mangione was arrested five days later in Altoona, Pennsylvania, about 230 miles (370 kilometers) west of New York City.

Judge rejects 'double jeopardy' argument

Mangione's lawyers have argued that the simultaneous state and federal prosecutions violate double jeopardy protections meant to prevent people from being tried multiple times for the same crime. But Carro rejected that argument, saying it would be premature to make such a determination because neither case has gone to trial.

Bragg's office contended that there are no double jeopardy issues, in part because the state and federal prosecutions involve different legal theories. The federal charges allege that Mangione stalked Thompson and do not involve terrorism allegations.

Mangione's lawyers said the two cases have created a "legal quagmire" that makes it "legally and logistically impossible to defend against them simultaneously."

Diary writings had been a basis for the terrorism charges

U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi in April said she was directing federal prosecutors to seek the death penalty against Mangione for "an act of political violence" and a "premeditated, cold-blooded assassination that shocked America."

Bragg's office quoted extensively from Mangione's handwritten diary as they sought to uphold the terrorism charges. In a June court filing, they highlighted his desire to kill an insurance honcho and his praise for the late Theodore Kaczynski, the convicted murderer known as the "Unabomber."

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In the writings, prosecutors said, Mangione mused about rebelling against “the deadly, greed fueled health insurance cartel” and said killing an industry executive “conveys a greedy bastard that had it coming.” They also cited a confession they say he penned “To the feds,” in which he wrote “it had to be done.”

Mangione’s “intentions were obvious from his acts, but his writings serve to make those intentions explicit,” prosecutors said. The writings, which they sometimes described as a manifesto, “convey one clear message: that the murder of Brian Thompson was intended to bring about revolutionary change to the healthcare industry.”

Carro noted in his ruling that terrorism “has been famously difficult to define.” He knocked prosecutors for emphasizing Mangione’s use of the phrase “revolutionary anarchism” in their attempt to bolster their claim that he intended to influence government by intimidation or coercion.

“Not only does this stretch the import of a two-word phrase beyond what it can carry, but it ignores other, more explicit excerpts from defendant’s writings in which he states that his goal is to spread a ‘message’ and ‘win public support’ about ‘everything wrong with our health system,’” the judge wrote.

## Robert Redford embodied an American ideal, and often lived the part, too

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Born during the Great Depression with sun-kissed California looks, Robert Redford never failed to epitomize something quintessential and hopeful about the American character.

Redford, who died Tuesday at the age of 89, left a movie trail etched into land. He seemed to reside as much across the American landscape as he did on movie screens. He was in the Rocky Mountains of “Jeremiah Johnson,” the Wyoming grasslands of “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,” the Washington, D.C., alleyways of “All the President’s Men” and the Montana streams of “A River Runs Through It.”

“From the time I was just a kid, I was always trying to break free of the bounds that I was stuck with, and always wanted to go outside,” Redford told The Associated Press in 2018.

Redford, a movie-star paragon, was surely savvy with how he played with and used his all-American image. No one who starred in the baseball drama “The Natural” (1984) and gave Bernard Malamud’s novel a storybook ending couldn’t have some sense of self-mythology. But it was one of Redford’s greatest feats that, despite his fame, he remained innately connected to some aspirational American ideal. Redford, an open-air actor of easy, rugged charm, evoked the kind of regular guy decency that stars like Jimmy Stewart did before him — only Redford did it through an era of distrust and disillusionment.

“He was to me a throwback to the actors that I was nuts about when I was growing up and going to movies: real, classical, traditional, old-fashioned movie stars who were very, very redolent of some kind of American essence,” said Sydney Pollack, who directed Redford in “Jeremiah Johnson,” “The Way We Were” and “Three Days of the Condor,” in 1993. “They were very much a part of the American landscape and they were heroic in a kind of understated way.”

Underscore ‘independence’

That was most true, perhaps, in Utah. Wanting to escape paved-over Los Angeles, Redford first began buying land there early in his career. In Utah, he would fight to protect both untrampled wilderness and a spirit of moviemaking that had grown increasingly difficult in Hollywood. As a longtime trustee of the Natural Resources Defense Council, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group, Redford was an outspoken environmentalist. In the 1970s, he successfully opposed a pair of rural Utah proposals: a six-lane highway and coal-fired power plant.

In the Utah mountains, Redford also launched the Sundance Institute. Beyond Sundance’s annual festival for independent film, the institute has been a lifeblood young filmmakers. Its year-round laboratory — the part of Sundance that Redford was most proud of — has helped nurture some of the most vital voices in American cinema for decades.

“For me, the word to be underscored is ‘independence,’” Redford once said of his legacy. “I’ve always

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believed in that word. That's what led to me eventually wanting to create a category that supported independent artists who weren't given a chance to be heard. The industry was pretty well controlled by the mainstream, which I was a part of. But I saw other stories out there that weren't having a chance to be told."

That spirit of independence often infused his films, too. When Redford wanted to make "All the President's Men," the seminal 1976 film directed by Alan Pakula about Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's Watergate investigation, few in the film industry thought there was much drama to be found in a story that was then several years old.

"Nixon had already resigned, and the held opinion (in Hollywood) was 'No one cares. No one wants to hear about this,'" Redford, who also co-produced the film, said in 2006. "And I said, 'No, it's not about Nixon. It's about something else. It's about investigative journalism and hard work.'"

If "All the President's Men," one of the greatest newspaper movies, detailed the hard-earned revelations of Watergate, "Three Days of the Condor" — one of the greatest political thrillers — captured the paranoia and disillusionment that followed. If anyone was completely unfamiliar with why Redford was so good, "Three Days of the Condor" would be a good place to start.

As a bookish CIA employee code-named Condor, he returns from lunch to his office to find, as he soon reports, "Everybody is dead." Condor, untrained for such lethal spy activities, is left dangling in the wind.

"Will you bring me in, please?" he pleads by phone to his superiors. "I'm not a field agent. I just read books."

Not so different from his Woodward of "All the President's Men," Redford is a fresh-faced novice thrown into a high-stakes scheme where few, including those in the government, can be trusted. No one has ever been better at playing the regular guy trying to think fast on his feet, and make sense of an ever-darker world.

A politician only on screen

Though some called for him to, Redford never entered politics, himself. He remained outspoken — he's in some way the model for the modern Hollywood activist — on a wide range of issues, including Indigenous and LGBTQ+ rights. The closest he came to running for office was Michael Ritchie's 1972 satire "The Candidate," in which Redford played an idealistic lawyer enlisted to challenge a highly favored incumbent Republican senator. Redford's candidate ultimately wins, but not without sacrificing his principles and seeing much of what he stands for diluted.

Redford's place, instead, was outside politics. The perfect bookend to his '70s movies is "Sneakers," Phil Alden Robinson's absurdly underrated 1992 caper starring Redford as a former '60s radical now living under a false moniker and leading a band of security specialists. They stumble into possession of a computer device that brings the attention of the NSA, CIA, FBI and many others, forcing Redford to, yet again, try to figure out what's moral in a dangerous (and now newly digital) America.

The world that Redford's films often presciently depicted seemed to push him further into the wilderness, on screen and off. He largely retreated into retirement over the last decade. When Redford died, he was at his home in the Utah mountains, outside Provo. One of his last films was 2015's "A Walk in the Woods," playing Bill Bryson ambling along the Appalachian Trail.

The most fitting and elegiac swan song, though, was J.C. Chandor's "All Is Lost," a near-wordless 2013 drama about an old man at sea. Redford plays a solo mariner whose sailboat collides with a shipping container. Though terse, the movie reverberates with economic and ecological metaphor. A visibly older and weathered Redford — no longer the golden, freckled face of his youth — suffers through increasingly rough and stormy seas, improvising his survival.

For an actor who had covered so much ground, "All Is Lost" was one last frontier. Redford's unnamed character was credited only as "Our Man."

## FDA takes aim at Hims & Hers, weight loss drugs in new advertising blitz

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the first time, federal health officials are taking aim at telehealth companies promoting unofficial versions of prescription drugs — including popular weight loss medications — as part of the Trump administration's crackdown on pharmaceutical advertising.

The Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday posted more than 100 letters to various drugmakers and online prescribing companies, including Hims & Hers, which has built a multibillion-dollar business centered around lower-cost versions of blockbuster obesity injections.

The FDA warned the company to remove "false and misleading" promotional statements from its website, including language claiming that its customized products contain "the same active ingredient" as FDA-approved drugs Wegovy and Ozempic. The formulations cited by regulators are produced by specialty compounding pharmacies and aren't reviewed by the FDA.

"Your claims imply that your products are the same as an FDA-approved product when they are not," states the warning letter, dated Sept. 9.

Hims said Tuesday that it "looks forward to engaging with the FDA."

"Our website and our customer-facing materials note that compounded treatments are not approved or evaluated by the FDA," the company said in a statement.

It's the first FDA attempt to directly police online platforms like Hims, which have long argued they're not subject to traditional drug advertising rules.

The FDA also posted separate warning letters to manufacturers of the so-called GLP-1 drugs, taking issue with a 2024 infomercial featuring Oprah Winfrey. Regulators said the 42-minute TV segment from Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk gave a "misleading impression" about the safety of Zepbound, Wegovy and similar "drugs with multiple serious, potentially life-threatening risks."

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has long been a critic of the pharmaceutical industry, including GLP-1 drugs, and previously suggested Americans can reverse obesity with diet and exercise alone.

A memo signed by President Donald Trump last week directed Kennedy and the FDA to ensure that pharmaceutical ads on TV, social media and other websites are "truthful and non-misleading."

The new FDA letters each contain "cease and desist" language. That's a different approach for the agency, which typically drafts its letters in highly bureaucratic language citing specific FDA regulations.

Hims has been under scrutiny from Washington for some time.

Earlier this year, a Super Bowl ad from the company touted the benefits of its weight-loss medications but didn't list any of their side effects or potential harms. FDA rules require advertisements to present a balanced picture of drug risks and benefits.

Makary singled out the ad in last week's Journal of the American Medical Association, calling it a "brazen" example of how advertising is "contributing to America's culture of overreliance on pharmaceuticals for health."

Hims and similar companies initially sold cheap generic versions of drugs for hair loss, erectile dysfunction and other health issues. But booming demand for obesity medications opened the door to selling cheaper copies.

The FDA permits so-called compounding, or customized production, when there is a shortage of the official versions of FDA-approved medications.

FDA recently determined that GLP-1 drugs no longer met the criteria for a shortage. That should have ended the compounding, but there is an exception: The practice is still permitted when a prescription is customized for the patient.

Hims and other companies have taken to offering "personalized" dosages and formulations for certain patients, arguing they offer extra benefits.

Shares of San Francisco-based Hims & Hers Health Inc. fell more than 6.47% in trading Tuesday.

The letters posted Tuesday come from FDA's drug center.



A letter posted last week from FDA's vaccine division took issue with a TV ad for AstraZeneca's FluMist vaccine, saying the spot's "background music and visual distractions" detract from information about side effects. The letter was signed by FDA vaccine chief Dr. Vinay Prasad, an ally of Kennedy who recently returned to his job at the agency after briefly being forced to step aside.

Researchers and consumer advocates have long complained that the upbeat TV images of patients enjoying life with family and friends often overshadow discussions of side effects.

Additionally, studies have shown that patients exposed to drug ads are more likely to ask their doctors about the medication, even if they don't fit the prescribing criteria. The American Medical Association, the nation's largest physician group, came out in support of a ban in 2015, citing TV advertising's role in "inflating demand for new and more expensive drugs."

## Senate Democrats raise concerns over Pentagon plan to use military lawyers as immigration judges

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some Democratic senators say they are deeply concerned that a Pentagon plan to allow military lawyers to work as temporary immigration judges will violate a ban on using service members for law enforcement and affect the military justice system.

The letter, sent to the military services and provided to The Associated Press, comes two weeks after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth approved sending up to 600 military lawyers to the Justice Department to serve as temporary immigration judges. It is part of the steps the Trump administration has taken to use the military in broader ways than previously seen, particularly in its immigration crackdown, including sending the National Guard into American cities and deploying active duty troops to the U.S.-Mexico border.

"These military officers would serve under the command and control of the Attorney General and would execute administrative determinations at the direction of the Attorney General," according to the letter signed by 12 Democrats on the Senate Armed Services Committee. It added that "these actions are inherently law enforcement actions that may not be performed by members of the armed forces."

"We remain extremely disturbed about the impacts on readiness of using military personnel to perform what are traditionally Department of Justice functions," the letter says.

The nation's immigration courts — with a backlog of about 3.5 million cases — have become a key focus of President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration enforcement efforts. Since Trump returned to office, dozens of immigration judges have been fired, while others have resigned or taken early retirement.

The senators' letter, sent to the offices of the top military lawyers for the four services on Monday, is asking the Pentagon to say where the roughly 600 lawyers will be coming from and for insight into what legal analysis the military has conducted into whether the move would violate the Posse Comitatus Act. That law prevents the military from conducting law enforcement outside of extreme emergencies.

A Pentagon memo that described the plan said the lawyers should not be detailed for longer than half a year. The memo also showed that Pentagon officials were cognizant of the possibility for conflict with that law and said the Justice Department would be responsible for ensuring that the military lawyers do not violate it.

The Democratic senators said they were "deeply concerned" that pulling those lawyers away would have an impact on service members who are going through the military's judicial system.

"These reassignments come at a time only shortly after Congress completely overhauled how the military investigates and prosecutes serious 'covered' criminal offenses ... by establishing the Offices of Special Trial Counsel (OSTCs) in each of the Services," the letter read.

Those offices were set up by Congress in 2022 as part of an effort to reform the military justice system by moving decisions on the prosecution of serious military crimes, including sexual assault, to independent military attorneys, taking that power away from victims' commanders.

The offices began taking cases at the end of last year.

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The letter asks the Pentagon what it will do to “preserve the OSTC’s progress in building specialized trial capacity” and what the services will do to “ensure that diversion of OSTCs, trial counsels, and defense counsels does not create delays or diminish quality in court-martials.” The senators say that the plan is a demonstration of how “the Trump administration views skilled personnel as pawns to be traded between agencies, rather than as professionals essential to their core missions, in order to advance misguided immigration policies.”

## **Dallas Wings star Paige Bueckers is WNBA Rookie of the Year**

By ANDREW SELIGMAN AP Sports Writer

Dallas Wings star Paige Bueckers was a runaway choice for WNBA Rookie of the Year after one of the best debut seasons in league history.

Bueckers received 70 of the 72 votes from sports writers and broadcasters in balloting announced by the league on Tuesday. The other two went to Washington Mystics guard Sonia Citron.

Bueckers, who in a whirlwind week last spring went from leading UConn to its 12th national championship to being drafted with the No. 1 overall pick, was a bright spot on a team that tied the Chicago Sky with a league-worst 10-34 record. The AP Rookie of the Year, she averaged 19.2 points on 47.7% shooting along with 3.9 rebounds, 5.4 assists and 1.6 steals.

But those numbers don’t tell the complete story.

Her 692 points and 194 assists were the third most by a WNBA rookie. The highlight was when she scored 44 in a loss to the Los Angeles Sparks on Aug. 20.

It was the WNBA’s highest point total this season and the most ever by a rookie. She also became the first player in league history to score 40 or more while shooting 80% in a game. That performance came near the end of a 30-game double-digit streak, the third longest to start a career behind A’ja Wilson’s 33 games in 2018 and Candace Parker’s 32 games in 2008.

Though Bueckers was widely expected to receive rookie of the year honors, the way she was presented the trophy was a surprise — ahead of an appearance on The Jennifer Hudson Show. She was walking through the program’s Spirit Tunnel when Commissioner Cathy Engelbert stopped her.

“I bet I’m the last person you thought you’d see on this cool spirit tunnel,” she said before handing the trophy to a grinning Bueckers. “But I’m here to present you with the 2025 Kia WNBA Rookie of the Year Award. Congratulations.”

The crew chanted “Rookie of the Year! Rookie of the Year!” as Bueckers headed toward the studio. She turned and thanked them.

Bueckers made an immediate impact when she arrived at UConn in 2020. She was the consensus national player of the year as a freshman and became a three-time All-American. She played just 17 games her second season and sat out the 2022-23 campaign with a torn ACL.

## **Oscar winner Robert Redford, who became a champion of independent film, dies at 89**

By BOB THOMAS Associated Press

Robert Redford, the Hollywood golden boy who became an Oscar-winning director, liberal activist and godfather for independent cinema under the name of one of his best-loved characters, died Tuesday at 89.

Redford died “at his home at Sundance in the mountains of Utah — the place he loved, surrounded by those he loved,” publicist Cindi Berger said in a statement. No cause of death was provided.

Redford was one of the biggest stars of the ‘70s with such films as “The Candidate,” “All the President’s Men” and “The Way We Were,” capping that decade with the best director Oscar for 1980’s best picture winner, “Ordinary People.”

His wavy blond hair and boyish grin made him the most desired of leading men, but he worked hard to transcend his looks — whether through his political advocacy, his willingness to take on unglamorous roles

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or his dedication to providing a platform for low-budget movies.

His roles ranged from Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward to a double agent in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and his co-stars included Jane Fonda, Meryl Streep and Tom Cruise. But his most famous screen partner was his old friend Paul Newman, their films a variation of their warm, teasing off-screen relationship. Redford played the wily outlaw opposite Newman in 1969's "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," a box-office smash from which Redford's Sundance Institute and festival got its name.

He also teamed with Newman on 1973's best picture Oscar winner, "The Sting," which earned Redford a best actor nomination as a young con artist in 1930s Chicago.

Film roles after the '70s became more sporadic as Redford concentrated on directing and producing and his new role as patriarch of the independent-film movement.

He starred in 1985's best picture champion "Out of Africa" and in 2013 received some of the best reviews of his career as a shipwrecked sailor in "All is Lost," in which he was the film's only performer. In 2018, he was praised again in what he called his farewell movie, "The Old Man and the Gun."

"I figure now as I'm getting into my 80s, it's maybe time to move toward retirement and spend more time with my wife and family," he told The Associated Press at the time.

Redford had watched Hollywood grow more cautious and controlling during the 1970s and wanted to recapture the creative spirit of the early part of the decade. Sundance was created to nurture new talent away from the pressures of Hollywood. The institute and festival based in Park City, Utah, became a place of discovery for such previously unknown filmmakers as Quentin Tarantino, Steven Soderbergh, Paul Thomas Anderson and Darren Aronofsky.

"For me, the word to be underscored is 'independence,'" Redford told the AP in 2018. "I've always believed in that word. That's what led to me eventually wanting to create a category that supported independent artists who weren't given a chance to be heard."

By 2025, the festival had become so prominent that organizers approved relocating to Boulder, Colorado, starting in 2027.

Redford's affinity for the outdoors was well captured in "A River Runs Through It" and other films and through his decades of advocacy for the environment, inspired in part by witnessing the transformation of Los Angeles into a city of smog and freeways. His activities ranged from lobbying for the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act to serving on the board of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Born in Aug. 18, 1936 in Santa Monica, California, Redford attended college on a baseball scholarship and would later star as a middle-aged slugger in 1984's "The Natural," the adaptation of Bernard Malamud's novel. He had an early interest in drawing and painting and studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He debuted on Broadway in the late 1950s before moving into television on such shows as "The Twilight Zone," "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" and "The Untouchables."

Redford was married twice, most recently to Sibylle Szaggars. He had four children, two of whom have died — Scott Anthony, who died in infancy, in 1959; and activist and filmmaker James Redford, who died in 2020.

Redford also appeared in several political narratives. He satirized campaigning as an idealist running for U.S. senator in "The Candidate" and uttered one of the more memorable closing lines, "What do we do now?" after his character manages to win. He starred as Woodward to Dustin Hoffman's Carl Bernstein in 1976's "All the President's Men," the story of the Washington Post reporters whose Watergate investigation helped bring down President Richard Nixon.

His biggest filmmaking triumph came with his directing debut on "Ordinary People," which beat Martin Scorsese's classic "Raging Bull" at the Oscars.

Redford's other directing efforts included "The Horse Whisperer," "The Milagro Beanfield War" and 1994's "Quiz Show," the last of which also earned best picture and director Oscar nominations.

"The idea of the outlaw has always been very appealing to me. If you look at some of the films, it's usually having to do with the outlaw sensibility, which I think has probably been my sensibility. I think I was just born with it," Redford said in 2018. "From the time I was just a kid, I was always trying to break free of the bounds that I was stuck with, and always wanted to go outside."

## Georgia Supreme Court declines to hear Fani Willis' appeal of her removal from Trump election case

By KATE BRUMBACK and JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's highest court has declined to consider Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis' appeal of her removal from the Georgia election interference case against President Donald Trump and others.

Citing an "appearance of impropriety" created by a romantic relationship Willis had with special prosecutor Nathan Wade, whom she had hired to lead the case, the Georgia Court of Appeals in December ruled that Willis and her office could not continue to prosecute the case.

Trump hailed the court's ruling as "a great decision" and called Willis' prosecution of him and others for their attempts to overturn Trump's 2020 election loss in Georgia "a rigged case to start off with."

"What Fani Willis did to innocent people, patriots that love our country, what she did to them by indicting them and destroying them, she should be put in jail," Trump told reporters.

Ashleigh Merchant, who exposed Willis' romantic relationship with Wade as defense attorney for Trump co-defendant Michael Roman, said: "We hope this will finally close this chapter."

Willis' office will clear the way for a new prosecutor

Willis said she disagreed with the court's decision, but would direct her office to make the case file and evidence available to the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia so it can appoint a new prosecutor to replace her.

"I hope that whoever is assigned to handle the case will have the courage to do what the evidence and the law demand," Willis said in an emailed statement.

Willis in January asked the Georgia Supreme Court to review that ruling, and the high court on Tuesday declined in a 4-3 decision to take up the case. One judge didn't participate and one judge was disqualified.

That means it will be up to the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council to find another prosecutor to take the case. The council's executive director, Pete Skandalakis, said Tuesday he will begin searching for a new prosecutor to replace Willis but didn't know how long that might take.

Skandalakis said that once the new prosecutor is appointed it is "up to him or her what to do with the case."

That person could continue on the track that Willis has taken, decide to pursue only some charges or dismiss the case altogether. It could be difficult to find a prosecutor willing to take the case, given its complex nature and the resources required.

It's unlikely that Trump could now be prosecuted since he's president

Even if a new prosecutor wants to continue on the path charted by Willis, it seems unlikely that Trump could be prosecuted now that he's the sitting president. But there are 14 other defendants who still face charges in the case.

One of those defendants is former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani. An attorney for Giuliani, Arthur Aidala, said he's hopeful that whoever is ultimately appointed as the new prosecutor will abandon the case entirely.

"We're cautiously optimistic that they will choose not to go forward," Aidala told reporters in New York.

A grand jury in Atlanta indicted Trump and 18 others in August 2023, using the state's anti-racketeering law to accuse them of participating in a wide-ranging scheme to illegally try to overturn Trump's narrow 2020 presidential election loss to Democrat Joe Biden in Georgia. The alleged scheme included Trump's call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger urging him to help find enough votes to beat Biden. Four people have pleaded guilty.

The case was among 4 criminal cases brought in 2023 vs. Trump

The Georgia case was one of four criminal cases brought in 2023 against Trump. Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith abandoned two federal prosecutions after Trump won the November election. In his hush money case in New York, Trump was convicted on 34 counts but received a sentence of no punishment.

Willis had asked the Georgia high court to consider whether the lower appeals court was wrong to dis-



qualify her "based solely upon an appearance of impropriety and absent a finding of an actual conflict of interest or forensic misconduct." She also asked the state Supreme Court to weigh whether the Court of Appeals erred "in substituting the trial court's discretion with its own" in this case.

"No Georgia court has ever disqualified a district attorney for the mere appearance of impropriety without the existence of an actual conflict of interest," Willis' filing says. "And no Georgia court has ever reversed a trial court's order declining to disqualify a prosecutor based solely on an appearance of impropriety."

Lawyers for Trump had argued in a court filing that the lower appeals court got it right and that Willis' "disqualification is mandated because it is the only remedy that could purge the taint of impropriety."

## Retail sales up 0.6% in August from July even as tariffs hurt jobs and lead to price hikes

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Shoppers increased their spending at a better-than-expected pace in August from July, helped by back-to-school shopping, even as President Donald Trump's tariffs start to hurt the job market and lead to price increases.

Retail sales rose 0.6% last month from July, when sales were up a revised 0.6%, according to the Commerce Department's report. In June, retail sales rose 0.9%, the government agency said.

The August performance, announced Tuesday, was also likely helped by the continued efforts by Americans to keep pushing up purchases ahead of expected price increases.

The sales increases followed two straight months of spending declines in April and May.

Excluding auto sales, which have been volatile since Trump imposed tariffs on many foreign-made cars, retail sales rose 0.7% in August. Sales at auto vehicle and parts dealers rose 0.5%.

The data showed solid spending across various other outlets. Business at electronics and appliance stores was up 0.3%, while online retailers saw a 2% increase. Business at clothing and accessories retailers rose 1%.

And business at restaurants, the lone services component within the Census Bureau report and a barometer of discretionary spending, rose 0.7%. Business at furniture and home furnishings stores was down 0.3%.

A category of sales that excludes volatile sectors such as gas, cars, and restaurants rose last month by 0.7% from the previous month. The figure feeds into the Bureau of Economic Analysis's consumption estimate and is a sign that consumers are still spending on some discretionary items.

"This is further evidence that we shouldn't underestimate the strength of the consumer," Bankrate senior industry analyst Ted Rossman wrote in a note Tuesday. "Back-to-school shopping was a key theme in August, as evidenced by the strong clothing and electronics sales."

Government retail data isn't adjusted for inflation, which rose 0.4% from July to August, according to the latest government report. That was faster than the 0.2% pace the previous month. So that could have inflated the sales figures as well.

Consumer prices increased 2.9% in August from a year earlier, the Labor Department said last week, up from 2.7% the previous month and the biggest jump since January. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 3.1%, the same as in July. Both figures are above the Federal Reserve's 2% target.

Stronger-than-expected retail sales, coupled with higher inflation as well as data showing soaring applications for unemployment aid, all create a complicated picture of the economy. Such data put the Federal Reserve in an increasingly tough spot as it prepares to cut rates at its meeting this week, economists said.

Earlier this month, the Labor Department reported that U.S. employers — companies, government agencies and nonprofits — added 22,000 jobs last month, down from 79,000 in July and well below the 80,000 that economists had expected.

Carl B. Weinberg, chief economist at High Frequency Economics, noted the retail sales increase "will not be enough of a surprise to stop the Fed from cutting rates this week, but it should support a hawkish

message from the Fed Chair that a knock-on rate cut is not assured."

Major retailers including Walmart, Macy's and Best Buy recently reported their quarterly results, underscoring that shoppers are still buying, but are choosy. Some have raised prices, but many have described the hikes as modest.

Still, so far, shoppers haven't felt the big sting as some economists predicted earlier in the year as many retailers ordered goods ahead of tariffs and absorbed a big chunk of the costs as they came in, worried about passing on any hefty price increases.

The price gains have also been gradual enough to mute changes in consumer behavior, Walmart CEO Doug McMillon told analysts last month.

But Walmart and others said they expect to see costs increase as they replenish inventory at post-tariff levels.

Jewelry maker Pandora hasn't announced specific price increases, but Pandora CEO Alexander Lacik said in a call with analysts last month that the company is monitoring the scenario.

He noted that "the U.S. consumer will eventually have to bear the brunt of these tariffs," but added, "it's not just on jewelry, it's on many product categories. So the big question mark is, what happens with inflation in the U.S., unemployment rates, all sorts of other macro drivers, and I think this is ahead of us."

Matt Priest, president and CEO of trade group Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America, told reporters Monday that members are starting to pass along price increases to shoppers. Its members had previously paid a total of \$3 billion in tariffs annually for years; that number is now on track to hit \$5 billion by year-end. He warned that women's shoes will be affected first.

"Women's shoes are more fashion-oriented," Priest said. "Our ability to front-load women's product based on fashion trends was limited, and so we are seeing that those increases start to hit consumers first."

## **After rescinding protections, ICE is moving to deport more immigrants who were victims of crime**

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

MUSCATINE, Iowa (AP) — Days after he nearly died when an assailant shot him during a robbery attempt, Felipe de Jesus Hernandez Marcelo went to an Iowa police station hoping to get his belongings back.

The police in Muscatine, Iowa had his car and the cash he was carrying when he was shot and nearly killed on June 21. Hernandez, 28, recalled in court testimony that the department said he couldn't have those items back. Instead, police arrested him on an old warrant for failing to pay a traffic ticket.

Within hours, Hernandez was turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He's been detained ever since pending removal proceedings, having entered the country illegally from his native Mexico in 2021.

Hernandez is one of a growing number of crime victims and relatives who have been arrested and indefinitely detained during the Trump administration's crackdown on illegal immigration.

ICE has rescinded a policy that had shielded many victims from detention and removal. The number of people applying for visas that allow some victims and their families to remain in the country appears to have plummeted. Others are being detained as they go through the lengthy application process. Of those detained, many have been declared ineligible for release under another ICE policy change.

Critics say the outcome is not only cruel to victims and their families but is harming public safety by making those who are in the U.S. illegally unlikely to report crimes and cooperate with police.

"This type of thing is now the new normal. This scenario is happening every day in every city," said Dan Kowalski, a retired attorney and expert on immigration law. "Any contact with any level or kind of state or federal law enforcement, civil or criminal, puts you in danger of detention by ICE."

ICE removed protections for crime victims in January

In January, ICE rescinded a policy that called on agents to generally avoid detaining and seeking to remove immigrants who have been crime victims. It protected those carrying so-called U and T visas that allow crime and human trafficking victims and their relatives to remain in the country. The protections extended to those who had applied for such visas and were awaiting decisions, which can take years to process.

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Hernandez is seeking to apply for a U visa, and would appear to be eligible as the victim of a felony assault and key witness against the two charged in the attack. But the Muscatine County prosecutor Jim Barry has yet to certify his eligibility, according to Hernandez's attorney. Barry didn't respond to messages.

The Biden-era policy called on ICE agents to look for signs immigrants had been victimized and to consider that as "a positive discretionary factor" when deciding whether to detain them. The goal was to avoid discouraging immigrant victims from cooperating with police in reporting and solving crimes.

But some conservatives have argued that victimization alone should not entitle immigrants to a benefit.

The new policy allows ICE agents to detain crime victims, including the U and T visa holders, as long as they check with police "to ensure criminal investigative and other enforcement actions will not be compromised." Agents aren't required to look for any evidence of victimization.

Applications for visas for crime victims dropped in first months of 2025

The number of applications for U visas dropped by nearly half in the quarter that ended in March, which included the first 2½ months of the new Trump administration, according to data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Some immigration lawyers say the drop reflects concerns that an application by itself will put someone on the government's radar for potential removal.

Immigration lawyer Bethany Hoffmann said one of her clients, whose wife had been a kidnapping victim, was arrested by ICE when he showed up to an appointment to be fingerprinted as part of the U visa application process.

"I have been practicing for 17 years and I have never seen that before," she said, adding that the man had no criminal history but was subject to a 10-year-old removal order.

Court documents show other U visa applicants across the country have been taken into custody by ICE, including a woman detained in Maine who had been assaulted and kidnapped in 2021.

ICE is indefinitely detaining many who would have previously been out on bond

Compounding the impact is another new practice in which ICE and immigration judges have required the indefinite detention of anyone who entered the country without permission.

Over the past 30 years, immigration lawyers say many such detainees would have been able to be released pending removal proceedings as long as they were deemed not to be a flight risk or danger to the community. With a steady job, local relatives and a minimal criminal history, Hernandez would have been a candidate for release.

But instead, he has been at the Muscatine County Jail in ICE detention for nearly three months.

Hernandez has been apart from the 9-year-old son he was raising as a single father, unable attend medical appointments critical for recovering from his gunshot wounds, and unable to work the construction job that paid his family's bills.

He said he was denied medicine for the first five days as he suffered in excruciating pain, he said.

"I was locked in a single cell for several days. It felt like forever," Hernandez recalled this month in court testimony.

A federal judge ruled on Sept. 10 that ICE's detention of Hernandez without a bond hearing was illegal, and ordered an immigration court to hold one within seven days. She found that he was suffering "irreparable harm" in the meantime. A hearing is scheduled for Wednesday.

## **Endangered pink river dolphins face a rising mercury threat in the Amazon**

By STEVEN GRATTAN Associated Press

PUERTO NARINO, Colombia (AP) — A flash of pink breaks the muddy surface of the Amazon River as scientists and veterinarians, waist-deep in the warm current, patiently work a mesh net around a pod of river dolphins. They draw it tighter with each pass, and a spray of silver fish glistens under the harsh sun as they leap to escape the net.

When the team hauls a dolphin into a boat, it thrashes as water streams from its pink-speckled sides and

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the crew quickly ferries it to the sandy riverbank where adrenaline-charged researchers lift it onto a mat. They have 15 minutes — the limit for how long a dolphin can safely be out of the water — to complete their work.

Fernando Trujillo, a marine biologist leading the effort, kneels beside the animal's head, shielding its eye with a small cloth so it can't see what's happening. He rests his hand gently on the animal and speaks in low tones.

"They've never felt the palm of a hand. We try to calm them," said Trujillo, sporting a pink dolphin bandana. "Taking a dolphin out of the water, it's a kind of abduction."

One person counts the dolphin's breaths. Another wets its skin with a sponge while the others conduct multiple medical tests that will help show how much mercury is coursing through the Amazon's most graceful predators.

Mercury threat spreads through the Amazon food chain

Trujillo directs the Omacha Foundation, a conservation group focused on aquatic wildlife and river ecosystems, and leads health evaluations of river dolphins. It's a painstaking operation involving experienced fishermen, veterinarians and locals that takes months of planning and happens a couple of times a year.

"We take blood and tissue samples to assess mercury," Trujillo told The Associated Press from the Colombian riverside town of Puerto Narino. "Basically, we're using dolphins as sentinels for the river's health."

Mercury contamination comes mainly from illegal gold mining — a growing industry across the Amazon Basin — and forest clearing that washes mercury that naturally occurs in soil into waterways.

The miners use mercury to separate gold from sediment, then dump the sludge back into rivers, where it enters fish eaten by people and dolphins. Rising global gold prices have fueled a mining boom, and mercury pollution in remote waterways has increased.

Mercury can damage the brain, kidneys, lungs and immune system and cause mood swings, memory loss and muscle weakness in people, according to the World Health Organization and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Pregnant women and young children are most at risk, with prenatal exposure linked to developmental delays and reduced cognitive function.

"The maximum any living being should have is 1 milligram per kilogram," Trujillo said. "Here, we're seeing 20 to 30 times that amount."

In previous years, his team found 16 to 18 milligrams per kilogram of mercury in dolphins, which can suffer the same neurological damage, organ damage and other problems as humans. In Colombia's Orinoco River, levels in some dolphins have reached as high as 42, levels scientists say are among the most extreme ever recorded in the species.

Trujillo said it's difficult to prove the toxin is directly killing dolphins. Further studies are underway, he added, noting that "any mammal with a huge amount of mercury will die."

When Trujillo and his team tested their own blood three years ago, his results showed more than 36 times the safe limit — 36.4 milligrams per kilogram — a level he attributes to decades working in mercury-affected areas and a diet heavy in fish. With medical assistance, his levels have dropped to about 7 milligrams.

"Mercury is an invisible enemy until it builds up to a sufficient amount, then it starts to affect the central nervous system," Trujillo told AP after his team managed to capture and test four pink dolphins. "We're already seeing evidence of it in Indigenous communities."

A series of scientific studies and reports — including work by the International Pollutants Elimination Network and academic researchers — have found high mercury exposure among Indigenous peoples across the Amazon, including in Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Suriname and Bolivia. Hair samples showed averages well above WHO's safe threshold of 1 part per million, with one Colombian community registering more than 22 milligrams per kilogram.

Dolphin populations in this part of the Amazon have plunged, with Trujillo's monitoring showing a 52% decline in pink dolphins and a 34% drop in gray river dolphins, a different species, in recent decades. The International Union for Conservation of Nature listed the pink dolphin as endangered in 2018. Trujillo said exact numbers for the Amazon are unknown, but his organization estimates 30,000 to 45,000 across the basin.



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Pink river dolphins also face threats from overfishing, accidental entanglement in nets, boat traffic, habitat loss and prolonged drought.

Colombia says it's tackling illegal mining and mercury pollution. It banned mercury use in mining in 2018, ratified the Minamata Convention aimed at reducing mercury in the environment and submitted an action plan in 2024. Authorities cite joint operations with Brazil and recent enforcement sweeps, but watchdogs say efforts remain uneven and illegal mining persists across much of the country.

Other Amazon nations say they're stepping up. Brazil has launched raids and moved to restrict satellite internet used by illegal gold-mining camps that use mercury, aiming to disrupt logistics and supply lines. Peru recently seized a record 4 tons of smuggled mercury. Ecuador, Suriname and Guyana have filed action plans to cut mercury use in small-scale gold mining.

A delicate operation to test dolphins safely

The dolphin testing operation relies on José "Mariano" Rangel, a charismatic former fisherman from Venezuela. He leads the charge when it's time to haul the animals — which can weigh as much as 160 kilograms (about 353 pounds) — into the small boats. It's a moment that can end with a stinging blow to the jaw as the dolphins thrash to break free.

"The most difficult part of the captures is enclosing the dolphins," Rangel said.

A portable ultrasound machine scans lungs, heart and other vital organs for disease. The team checks for respiratory problems, internal injuries and signs of reproduction, photograph the animals' skin and scars, swab blowholes and genital openings for bacterial cultures, and collect tissue for mercury testing. Microchips are implanted so researchers can identify each animal and avoid duplicating tests.

Omacha has recorded antimicrobial resistance — bacteria that can't be killed by common medicines — and respiratory problems. They have also identified possible emerging diseases, such as papilloma virus, that could pose risks to both dolphins and humans.

After a long morning hauling and testing dolphins, the scientists return to a laboratory in Puerto Narino that's covered with posters of dolphins and manatees and the bones and skulls of dolphins and other animals. They test some samples, prepare others to send to larger facilities and end their day repairing nets and refilling kits to do it all again at dawn.

For Trujillo, each capture, scan and blood test is part of a larger fight.

"We are one step away from being critically endangered and then extinct," Trujillo said.

## **Today in History: September 17, U.S. Constitution signed**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 17, the 260th day of 2025. There are 105 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 17, 1787, the Constitution of the United States was completed and signed by a majority of delegates attending the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.

Also on this date:

In 1862, more than 3,600 men were killed in the Civil War Battle of Antietam (an-TEE'-tum) in Maryland.

In 1908, Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge of the U.S. Army Signal Corps became the first person to die in the crash of a powered aircraft, the Wright Flyer, at Fort Myer, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. The pilot, Orville Wright, was seriously injured but survived.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied paratroopers launched Operation Market Garden, landing behind German lines in the Netherlands.

In 1978, after 12 days of meetings at the U.S. presidential retreat of Camp David, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) signed the Camp David Accords, a framework for a peace treaty.

In 1980, former Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza was assassinated in Paraguay.

In 2001, six days after 9/11, stock prices nosedived but stopped short of collapse in an emotional, flag-waving reopening of Wall Street.

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In 2011, a demonstration calling itself Occupy Wall Street began in New York, prompting similar protests around the U.S. and the world.

In 2021, a Los Angeles jury convicted New York real estate heir Robert Durst of killing his best friend 20 years earlier. (Durst, who was sentenced to life in prison, died in 2022.)

Today's Birthdays: Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, is 92. Mountaineer-explorer Reinhold Messner is 81. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Phil Jackson is 80. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is 75. Actor Cassandra Peterson ("Elvira, Mistress of the Dark") is 74. Director-actor Paul Feig is 63. Film director Baz Luhrmann is 63. Singer BeBe Winans is 63. Actor Kyle Chandler is 60. Rapper Doug E. Fresh is 59. Author Cheryl Strayed is 57. Actor Matthew Settle is 56. Designer-TV personality Nate Berkus is 54. NASCAR driver Jimmie Johnson is 50. NHL forward Alexander Ovechkin (oh-VECH'-kin) is 40. Actor Danielle Brooks is 36. NFL quarterback Patrick Mahomes is 30.