

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, Sept. 21

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School 10:15 a.m.; Choir 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Groton Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.



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

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

Monday, Sept. 22

FIRST DAY OF AUTUMN

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, potluck at Noon

Cross Country at Deuel, 4 p.m.

3rd-6th GBB Skills, 6-8 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 23

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets mashed potatoes.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

JH/JV Football at Langford vs. Britton-Hecla. JH at 4:30, JV at 5:30

Volleyball at Warner: (Welke: 7th-5:15, 8th-6:30; Arena: C-5:15, JV-6:30, V-7:45))

Groton Daily Independent

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We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

Constitution Day 2025: Our Troubled Soul, Battered by Domestic Violence

Our battered Constitution, the victim of domestic violence inflicted by current governmental officials who wield daily tortuous blows to its structure, vital principles and psychology, presents a slumping posture, worn down by abuse, robbed of its dignity and traumatized by the indifference of former friends and allies who refuse to defend it and offer up lame excuses for their failure to provide aid and comfort. On the 238th anniversary of its adoption by the Constitutional Convention on September 17, 2025, our Constitution, the soul of the nation, is more troubled than at any moment in our history since the Civil War. Worse, remedies seem remote.

The essential vulnerability of the U.S. Constitution, hailed by English Prime Minister, William Gladstone, in 1878, as "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man," lies in the fact that it is not a machine that goes by itself. It's canny, even brilliant, governing mechanisms—separation of powers, enumeration of powers and checks and balances—require at the helm, men and women of integrity, lest the exquisite ballast be lost, as it has been, to executive usurpation and abuse of power, abject acquiescence in, and surrender to, a plebiscitary presidency by the GOP-controlled Congress, and a Supreme Court that provides judicial succor to the authoritarian values and principles of President Donald Trump.

The magnificent Bill of Rights, envisioned by its framers as an instrument to protect the great rights of mankind from governmental abuse of its authority, through a barrage of attacks by the Trump Administration on the essential liberties of the citizenry, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press and due process of law. Trump's ongoing assault on the independence of the judiciary, critical to the preservation of the rule of law, constitutes yet another effort to remove protections of Americans' rights.

Many Americans, but still too few, have been rushing to the defense of the Constitution. Despite nationwide protests of Trump's lawless acts that defy the Constitution, there is yet missing a breathless urgency among a majority of the people, the sort that raises to a fever pitch the fear inspired by the pending loss of constitutional government. We should recall Judge Learned Hand's "Spirit of Liberty" speech, his reminder that liberty "lies in the hearts of men and women" and that while constitutions, laws and courts are important, they cannot save us if they die within the people. Hand's words echoed Benjamin Franklin's declaration that the framers had created a republic, and that its continuation depended on the people themselves. "A Republic," he said, "if you can keep it."

The rising concerns of the second coming of McCarthyism—enemies lists, loyalty oaths, suppression of left-wing speech and "naming names"—spawned in part by the Trump Administration's reaction to the tragic murder of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, but which, in truth had preceded that horrific moment, has been manifested in threats and pledges from White House officials warning that they will crackdown on the "liberals" responsible for the death of Kirk, even though all evidence points to the actions of a single gunman.

For a short, painful moment on September 16, U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi, threatened to "go after" those who, while denouncing the murder of Charlie Kirk, nonetheless criticized his politics. She said the justification for targeting Kirk's critics was their engagement in what she called "hate speech," until conservative lawyers and journalists corrected her misunderstanding of First Amendment law and pointed out that criticism of Kirk's positions was, indeed, protected speech under the First Amendment. If Kirk's death is to mean anything to our nation, it must stand for his commitment to freedom of speech. The White House should protect, not repress, the essential constitutional right of free speech.

Fear and grief characterize Constitution Day 2025, but it could be the day we recognize a "Turning Point" in the life of America and renew our commitment to defending the Constitution. Members of the GOP majority in both Houses of Congress should reassert the doctrine of checks and balances and reclaim their constitutional powers. American citizens should, immediately, renounce violence and retribution as illegitimate and futile means of redressing acts of violence, for that path ensures nothing but an endless spiral of death and destruction. "There is no way to peace," Gandhi said, "because peace is the way."



**Emily Kappes and Lori Giedt
with their pharmacy award**

Two Groton Pharmacists Earn Statewide Recognition

The South Dakota Pharmacists Association has recognized two pharmacists for their contributions to patient care and leadership in the profession.

Lori Giedt, RPh, owner of Lori's Pharmacy, received the Bowl of Hygieia Award. The honor is one of the profession's most respected recognitions, given to pharmacists who demonstrate outstanding community service and dedication to patient health.

"Lori's commitment to her patients and her community has been unwavering," said a spokesperson for the South Dakota Pharmacists Association. "She embodies what the Bowl of Hygieia represents—service, compassion, and leadership."

Emily Kappes, PharmD, was named the Distinguished Young Pharmacist of the Year. The award recognizes an early-career pharmacist who has shown exceptional leadership and promise in the field.

"Emily has already made a tremendous impact early in her career," the spokesperson said. "Her passion for patient care and her leadership in advancing the profession show that the future of pharmacy in South Dakota is in very good hands."

The awards were presented as part of the association's annual recognition program. Leaders emphasized that the honors highlight the essential role pharmacists play in improving access to care and supporting public health across the state.

Groton Opens Hamlin Tournament With Sweep of Sisseton



Rylee Dunker
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Groton Area Tigers started the Hamlin Tournament on a strong note Saturday morning, defeating Sisseton in straight sets, 25-10 and 28-26.

The Tigers came out hot in the first set, racing to a 9-0 lead before finishing off a dominant 25-10 win. Rylee Dunker powered the attack with seven kills in the opening set, helping Groton establish control early. "We came out firing on all cylinders in that first set," play-by-play announcer Paper Paul noted during the broadcast.

The second set, however, had a much different feel. Groton built a 15-10 lead midway through, but Sisseton battled back to tie things at 18. From there, the crowd was treated to a back-and-forth battle featuring eight ties and four lead changes. The set eventually went into extra points before Groton prevailed, 28-26, to seal the match.

Head Coach Chelsea Hanson credited Dunker and her teammates for holding strong but also pointed out areas for improvement.

"Rylee had an awesome first set — really a great match overall," Hanson said. "But when you hit that hard and score that easily, it's not super sustainable. We definitely made more errors than we should have, and that's what made the second set a little rougher."

Groton's balanced effort showed up in the stat sheet. Dunker finished with a match-high 11 kills, while Tevan Hanson added 6 and Taryn Traphagen chipped in 5. Chesney Weber set the pace with 28 assists to go along with 3 kills, 1 ace, and 4 digs. Jayden Penning contributed across the board with 5 kills, 2 assists, and 8 digs.

Defensively, Jerica Locke anchored the back row with 15 digs and 2 assists, while Sydney Locke added 10 digs and 1 ace. McKenna Tietz picked up 8 digs and 1 ace. At the net, Kella Tracy added 4 kills and 1 dig. Talli Wright had 1 assist.

At the service line, the Tigers finished 46-of-52 with 4 aces, led by Weber, Sydney Locke, McKenna Tietz, and Penning. On the attack, Groton went 72-of-93 with 34 kills, while recording 32 assists as a

team.

Sisseton was led by Elliot Hortness with 4 kills and Saylor Langager with 3 kills.

Despite the tense second set, Hanson said she wasn't overly worried about it going to a third.

"Honestly, I never really thought we would lose," she said. "The girls were just frustrated because things weren't going as smoothly as in the first set. Tournament play is different — it's early, the mindset is different, but at the end of the day, a win is a win. Doesn't matter how ugly it is."

Next up for the Tigers is a matchup against Del Rapids, one of the top teams in the state. Hanson said it's a challenge she and her players welcome.

"I'm excited to play Del Rapids," Hanson said. "They've got one of the best players in the state and play with a ton of energy. If we can compete with them, we're in a good place. If not, then we know we've got work to do. But we can't play scared — we just have to show up and play hard."

All three matches were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Groton Legion, Heartland Energy, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge and The MeatHouse in Andover.

Groton Area battles Dell Rapids Quarriers in competitive match



Tevan Hanson

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Groton Area Tigers went toe-to-toe with one of the state's top volleyball teams Thursday but came up just short, as the Dell Rapids Quarriers won 2-0 in straight sets.

The first set was a thriller. Groton jumped out to an early lead before Dell Rapids pushed ahead 8-7 and extended the gap to 16-8. The Tigers clawed their way back, tying the score at 23 and even taking a 24-23 lead. But the Quarriers closed strong, taking the final three points for a 26-24 win.

The second set saw Dell Rapids take control. After two ties early on, the Quarriers stretched the margin to 17-10 and finished the match with a 25-17 victory.

Despite the loss, Groton head coach Chelsea Hanson came away pleased.

"It was fun volleyball, wasn't it? It's fun to play good teams. It brings out the best in both sides," Hanson said. "For us to come out and just even be competitive with them is a win for us."

Hanson praised her team's poise against a talented Quarriers squad that featured several Division I and Division II athletes.

"You can't scout teams like that because the decisions have to be made in a split second," Hanson explained. "I told the girls, you just have to go out and play. I thought they did a

really good job. I was really happy with how they played."

The Tigers showed balance across the board. Tevan Hansen and Taryn Traphagen each finished with four kills, while Rylee Dunker added four kills, one ace, two digs, and one block. Kella Tracy chipped in three kills, and Jaedyn Penning tallied three kills and four digs. McKenna Tietz served one ace and recorded three digs. Sydney Locke contributed two aces and two digs, while Chesney Weber turned in one block, two aces, and six digs. Jerica Locke anchored the defense with 11 digs and one assist.

As a team, Groton collected 28 digs, 18 kills, and 18 assists, while serving 37-of-39 with six aces.

Hanson said the team's balance is one of its biggest strengths.

"That's what you have to do against good teams, because if you put the ball in one spot multiple times, it just makes it too easy," Hanson said. "We're getting kills from different places, touches on blocks, and our defense is everywhere."

Dell Rapids was led by Madeline Henry with 10 kills and two ace serves, Payton Hohn with eight kills, and Syela Sykes with six kills.

Even though the Tigers dropped the match, Hanson saw value in the experience.

"I would rather play 10 games like that—even if you go 0-10—than play a match where you don't have to play very good," she said. "If we could play teams like Dell Rapids every day, that would completely catapult our team, because you have to learn to adapt and play at a high level."



Chesney Weber

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Groton takes third at Hamlin Tournament with win over Castlewood



Taryn Traphagen
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Groton Area Tigers wrapped up the Hamlin Volleyball Tournament with a 2-0 win over Castlewood in the third-place match on Saturday, finishing the day with a 2-1 record.

In the first set, Groton came out strong, building a 10-2 lead and extending it to 18-8 on the way to a 25-12 victory.

The second set was much tighter, featuring 10 ties and four lead changes. The score was knotted early at 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 before Castlewood pulled ahead 9-6. Groton rallied to tie the score at 11 and then regained the lead. Castlewood kept battling, evening the set at 14, 20 and 24 before taking a 25-24 advantage. The Tigers responded with the final three points to close out a 27-25 win and the sweep.

McKenna Tietz had 3 digs for Groton. Tevan Hanson recorded 7 kills and 1 dig, while Sydney Locke added 2 digs. Taryn Traphagen tallied 3 kills along with 2 solo blocks and 1 assisted block. Chesney Weber finished with 4 kills, 3 assisted blocks, 5 digs and 20 assists. Kella Tracy had 1 kill. Jerica Locke paced the back row with 16 digs and added 1 assist. Rylee Dunker contributed 6 kills, 4 digs, 1 assist and 2 assisted blocks. Jaedyn Penning added 4 kills, 1 ace serve, 4 digs and 2 assists.

As a team, Groton collected 35 digs, went 44 of 49 from the service line with 1 ace, and converted 56 of 70 attacks with 24 kills. The Tigers also finished with 24 assists and 5 blocks.

Castlewood was led by Cassidy Kirwan with 5 kills.

Coach Chelsea Hanson said the Tigers came out sharp in the opener, but knew Castlewood would respond.

"First match, I think they had 12 errors, so we kind of expected the second set would be a little closer," Hanson said. "Honestly, they just had to come off of an absolute emotional roller coaster, and you could tell they were out of gas. Their pool was really tough, and they had to go three sets, while we got off the floor quicker."

Hanson credited her team's defense for making the difference in Groton's matches.

"The big difference for us was just the play of defense," she said. "When we played Del Rapids, it was point-score, point-score, but against Castlewood we were able to dig balls and then turn them into points. That was really good to see."

She also said she was encouraged by how the team responded after Thursday's loss to Clark-Willow Lake.

"I was really happy with how they bounced back after that tough one," Hanson said. "We talked about not hanging our heads, not pouting, but making sure we learn from it. Today they came out and played hard, and that was a big step forward for us."

Groton now turns its focus to a tough road test at Warner on Tuesday.

"I'm looking forward to it," Hanson said. "It's always a battle when we play Warner, but I think we'll go in with a lot of confidence after what we did today."



Jerica Locke
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Boys soccer team plays Freeman Academy to a tie game

The Groton Area boys soccer team battled Freeman Academy to a 1-1 draw on Saturday in a matchup of two of the state's top-rated programs.

Becker Bosma provided the Tigers' lone goal off an assist from Karson Zak, while goalkeeper Gage Sippel anchored the defense with 14 saves. The tie keeps Groton right in the mix near the top of the standings as the regular season winds down.

Freeman Academy entered the contest ranked third in the state at 9-1-1, while Groton is close behind in fourth with a 6-3-1 record.

The Tigers have just three regular season games remaining. They will host No. 1-ranked James Valley Christian (7-1-0) on Thursday in Groton at 4 p.m. On Saturday, Groton travels to West Central (3-6-1) for a 4:30 p.m. kickoff, before closing the season at home against Dakota Valley (0-6-1) on Monday, September 29.

The postseason begins with first-round playoff action on October 7, giving the Tigers little margin for error as they look to secure a strong seed.

Wolves Football ignites early in Gypsy Days win

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University football team trounced Concordia-St. Paul on Saturday in the annual Gypsy Days game, defeating the Golden Bears by 21. The Wolves controlled the game early, leading the contest in 29-of-37 statistical categories. NSU tallied season highs in rushing yards and total offense in the win.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 31, CSP 10

Records: NSU 2-1 (2-1 NSIC), CSP 1-3 (1-2 NSIC)

Attendance: 7011

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern led for the entirety of the contest, scoring 14 points in the first, seven in the second, and ten in the third

Brock Bagozzi and Hank Kraft connected on the Wolves first drive of the contest for a 30-yard receiving touchdown at 11:05 in the first

CSP responded with a 44-yard field goal mid-way through the quarter, however the Wolves were not finished in the opening frame

Bagozzi added his second rushing touchdown of the season at the 4-minute mark, a 9-yard run to the goal line

It was Kraft again as NSU closed out the half, with a 4-yard rushing touchdown and the Wolves led 21-3

Jeremy Caruso and Zach Kraft scored the ten third quarter points for Northern State

Caruso sent a 47-yarder through the uprights at 11:17 and Kraft pulled in a Bagozzi ball for 46-yards and his third touchdown of the season

The Golden Bears added a touchdown with 5:02 remaining in the contest on an 11-yard pass from Lincoln Graf to Charlie Snoreck

The NSU offense recorded 25 first downs, 246 yards rushing, 270 yards passing, and 516 yards of total offense in the win

They converted 4-of-8 on third down and 2-of-3 on fourth down, and completed 25-of-31 passing attempts with one interception

Northern averaged 8.2 yards per rush and 8.7 yards per reception, while Concordia averaged 6.2 yards per rush and 5.7 yards per reception

The Wolves defense held CSP to 143 yards rushing and 183 yards passing; making eight stops on third down and recording three sacks in the win

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Bagozzi threw for 197 yards with a pair of touchdowns, completing 17-of-20 attempts, while Daniel Britt added 73 yards passing

Hank Kraft had a day for the Wolves, rushing for 104 yards and a touchdown and receiving for 51 yards and a touchdown

Zach Kraft led the receiving core with 70 yards and a touchdown

Jake Adams led the defense for the third straight game with nine tackles, breaking the career tackles record (NCAA DII era) with his eighth of the day

Elijah Jopp added seven tackles, while Max Van Landingham and Gabe Gutierrez combined for the teams three sacks for a total loss of 16 yards

Lorenzo Jones Jr. was one of three Wolves to record four tackles and led the team with three pass breakups

Caruso scored seven points in the win and tallied 352 yards on kickoffs, averaging 58.7 yards per kick

DJ Smith and Cooper Eisenbeisz notched 28 and 21 yards respectively on a punt and kick return

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Brock Bagozzi: 197 yards passing, 17-of-20, 2 TD, 9 yards rushing

Hank Kraft: 104 yards rushing, 1 TD, 51 yards receiving, 1 TD

Zach Kraft: 70 yards rushing, 1 TD

Jake Adams: 9 tackles

Max Van Landingham: 4 tackles, 2.0 sacks

Jeremy Caruso: 1 field goal, 47-yards, 4-for-4 PAT

BEYOND THE BOX SCORE

Adams captured the Northern State career record for tackles in the NCAA Division II era, finishing the contest with 256 in his career thus far

The previous NCAA Division II era career tackle record holder was Logan Dosch with 254 from 2009-13

Kendall Titze continues to hold the all-time career tackle mark with 383 from 1979-82

UP NEXT

Northern hits the road for two weekends starting at the University of Mary next Saturday. Kick-off is set for 2 p.m. versus the Marauders in Bismarck. NSU will then face Bemidji State on October 4.

Fall River County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 18, mile marker 44, four miles east of Hot Springs, SD

When: 7:04p.m., Friday, September 19, 2025

Driver 1: 62-year-old male from Hot Springs, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2007 Harley Davidson Night Train

Helmet Used: No

Passenger 1: 43-year-old female from Hot Springs, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Helmet Used: No

Fall River County, S.D.- Two people were injured last night, one fatally, when their motorcycle struck a deer, four miles east of Hot Springs, SD.

The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates a motorcycle with two riders was traveling westbound on US Highway 18 near mile marker 48 when a deer ran into the roadway. The motorcycle struck the deer, tipped over, and the driver and passenger were separated from the motorcycle.

The driver was transported to a Rapid City hospital where he died from his injuries. The passenger was transported to Fall River Health Services with serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*You examine the Scriptures
because you think that
in them you have eternal life;
and it is those very Scriptures
that testify about Me...*

JOHN 5:39



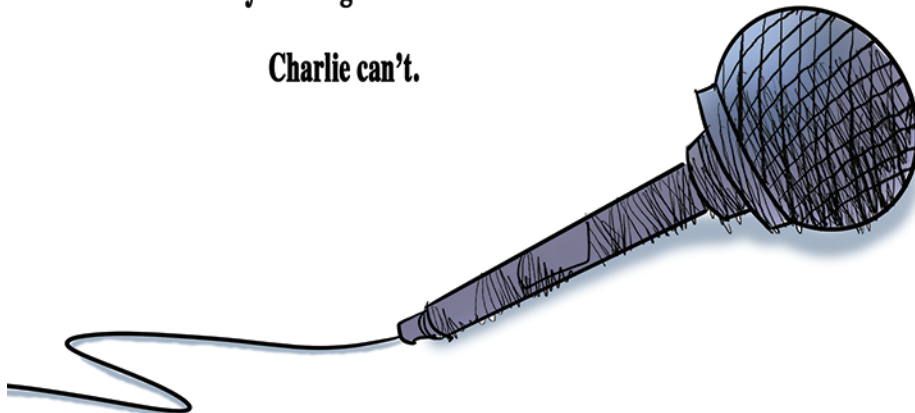
"Woman Reading" by Rembrandt (1634)

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**Charlie Kirk did what editorial cartoonists do:
express opinions that some people will hate.**

**The difference is cartoonists can go home at the end
of the day and hug their loved ones.**

Charlie can't.



THE FIRST AMENDMENT IS UNDER ATTACK
©2025 DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE
email: WaltersWork54@gmail.com **KIRK**

BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Galatians (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From Judges 7, who had the vision of a barley cake tumbling into an army camp overturning a tent? *Shepherd, Soldier, Peasant, Steward*

3. Which book could be summarized, "Pay attention, God has a master plan in the works we need to be a part of"? *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel*

4. After an angel delivered them from a Jerusalem prison, where did the apostles go? *Temple, Fields, Mountaintop, River*

5. Who had his servants set barley crops on fire because he refused to meet with Absalom? *Job, Joab, Jethro, Jehoshabeath*

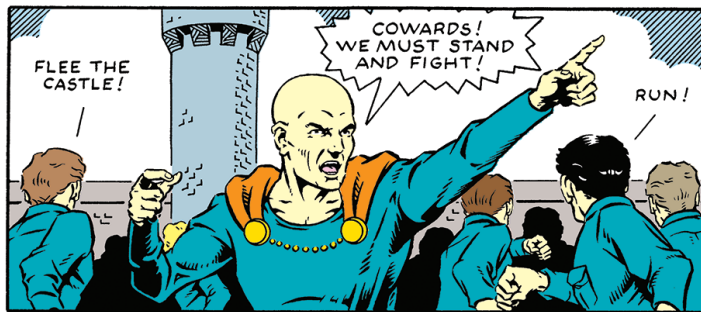
6. From Acts 12, where did Peter encounter an angel? *Tent door, Prison, City gate, By a stream*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Soldier, 3) Isaiah, 4) Temple, 5) Joab, 6) Prison

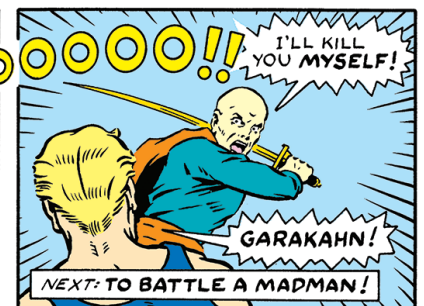
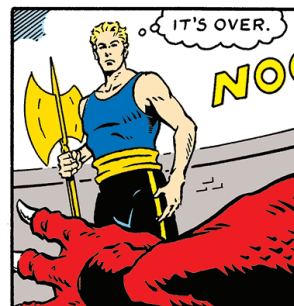
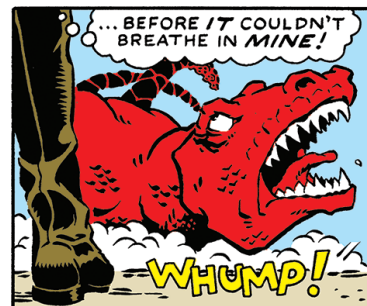
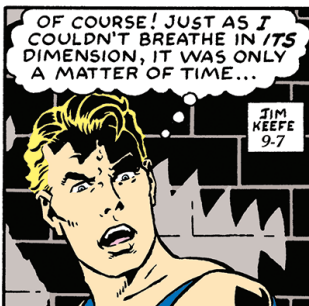
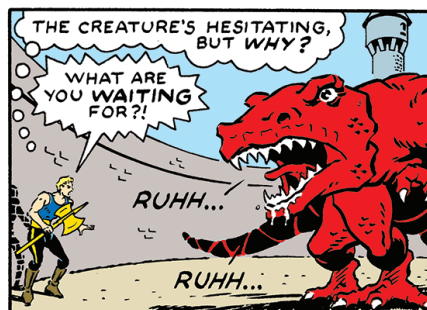
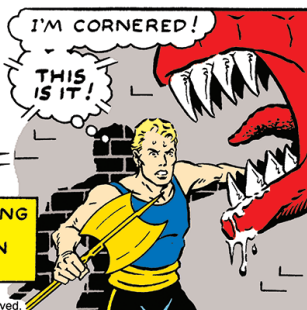
Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at www.patreon.com/triviaguy. FREE TRIAL!

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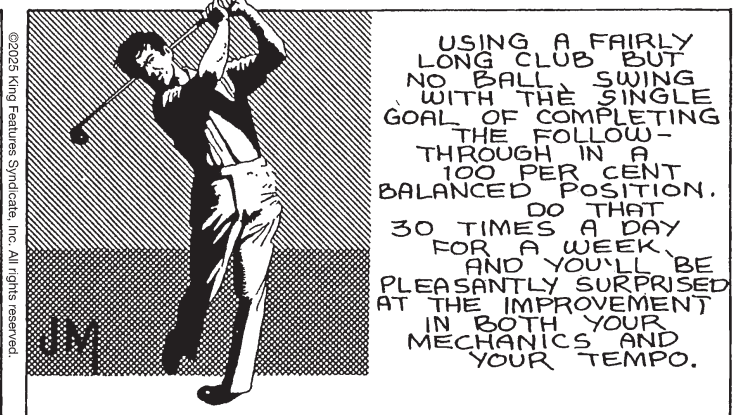
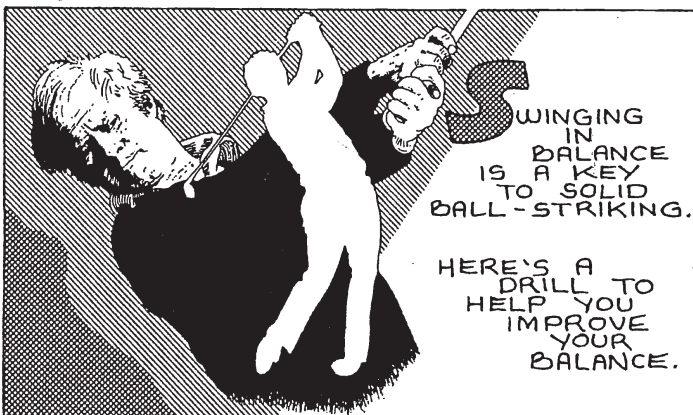
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WITH GARAKAHN'S MEN HAVING FLED, THE CREATURE ONCE AGAIN TURNS ITS ATTENTION TOWARDS FLASH!



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Here Are Changes People Can Make Now To Avoid Dementia Later

DEAR DR. ROACH: The females in my family on my mother's side seem to develop dementia/Alzheimer's on a fairly regular basis. It seems to become noticeable once the women are in their mid-70s or so. We girls are concerned as we head toward our elderly years and wondered which sort of diet or supplemental changes we should look into? There seems to be so many articles and opinions that it's hard to know where to start.

On the positive side, our father's side of the family seems healthy and robust well into their 80s and 90s. Our extended family has females ranging from their mid-30s to 71 years of age. Are we being overly concerned? Could this be a genetic thing? Any suggestions would be helpful in calming

some real fears that we have. -- E.J.

ANSWER: I don't think supplements are going to be the answer for dementia. I haven't seen any good data to support any of the supplements I see that are touted to prevent, slow, treat or cure dementia.

I do think that diet may help slow dementia, and one of the best diets according to the studies that have been done so far remains a Mediterranean-style diet. This includes plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes, fish (especially fatty fish), limited amounts of red meat, and minimally processed foods. Alcohol is increasingly likely to be problematic, and I recommend against more than occasional alcohol use for people who want to minimize their risk of dementia.

Regular moderate exercise has a pretty clear protective effect. Although cognitive exercises like games and puzzles help improve memory short-term, it's not clear that they are preventing or delaying the onset of dementia.

Advanced imaging, such as PET scans, are beginning to show the ability to diagnose Alzheimer's dementia in people with early symptoms. Early treatment to attack amyloids in the brain with lecanemab or donanemab slows the progression of dementia by approximately 25% to 30%.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I cared for my ailing mother, and even though I tried to minimize my stress, I gained a lot of weight and still have my "cortisol belly." I need to get healthy! -- D.H.

ANSWER: Taking care of a family member is always stressful. Taking care of yourself as well is hard, and most of us aren't able to eat, sleep, exercise, and take good care of ourselves as well as we should during a period of time when we are taking care of others. Most of us have other demands, including family and work.

Although I often see the term "cortisol belly," it isn't the slightly elevated level of stress hormones that causes the abdominal weight gain. (People who have Cushing's syndrome develop a particular type of abdominal weight gain as a result of dramatically elevated cortisol levels, as a result of a tumor, or by taking high doses of steroids.) In your case, it's more likely that the result of not having healthy behaviors lead to your weight gain.

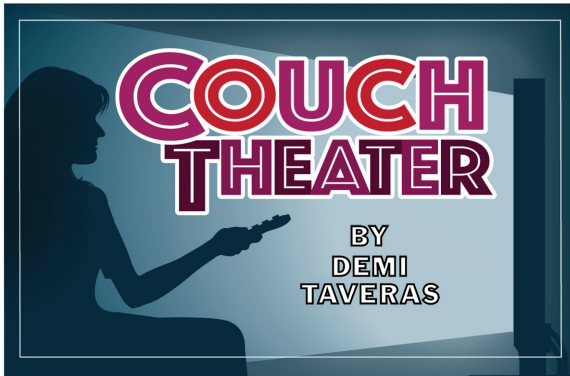
Losing abdominal weight is achieved through the same ways you would lose weight anywhere. I won't ever say it's easy, but a combination of a healthy diet and regular exercise is going to improve your health, whether you lose a pound or not. I don't recommend medication treatment to lose weight unless a person is very overweight ("morbidly obese" is the precise medical term) or has medical complications related to their weight.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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"The Fantastic Four: First Steps" (PG-13) -- Marvel Studios had a good start with the first film in Phase Six of their Marvel Cinematic Universe, bringing in \$518.8 million at the box office after an over \$200 million cost. It also became the ninth highest-grossing film of the year. Led by Pedro Pascal ("The Last of Us"), Vanessa Kirby ("Napoleon"), Joseph Quinn ("Gladiator II"), and Ebon Moss-Bachrach ("The Bear"), "First Steps" picks up as the Fantastic Four as they celebrate their fourth anniversary as a superhero team. In addition, Reed Richards, aka Mister Fantastic, and Sue Storm, aka Invisible Woman, are expecting a child and are left to wonder about their child's future and superpower capability. The cherry on top is a threat to Earth from the planet-devouring Galactus, who has selected Earth as his next meal. Rent it now! (Fandango at Home)



Jessica Chastain stars in "The Savant." (Courtesy of AppleTV+)

"Hotel Costiera" (TV-MA) -- Jesse Williams ("Grey's Anatomy" and "Station 19") found his latest starring role as Daniel "DD" De Luca in this action-drama series that hits streaming on Sept. 24. DD is a former Marine and half-Italian, so he decides to return to Italy, "the land of his childhood," and takes on a new job as a luxury hotel "fixer." Since DD acts as half-concierge and half-bodyguard, he's immediately tasked with finding the hotel owner's daughter after she suddenly gets kidnapped. Known more for using his fists than his words, DD is more than up to the task and even has an eccentric team behind him to help him save the day. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Savant" (TV-MA) -- This new crime-thriller series is inspired by a story that ran in Cosmopolitan and featured a woman nicknamed "The Savant," who attempted to infiltrate hate groups online to prevent domestic terrorism attacks. In the eight-episode series, the title character is portrayed by Academy Award winner Jessica Chastain ("George & Tammy"), who goes by the name of Jodi Goodwin. During the day, Jodi is the average suburban mom to most, but by night, she's diving deep into the "darkest corners of the internet" to scour information from people who are actively planning attacks. A hunch drives Jodi to track down a man named Jason (Pablo Schreiber), who seems to be orchestrating something more major than her previous cases. But infiltrating further might lead Jodi down a dark road that comes with horrible sacrifices. The first episode premieres Sept. 26, with new episodes dropping every Friday. (Apple TV+)

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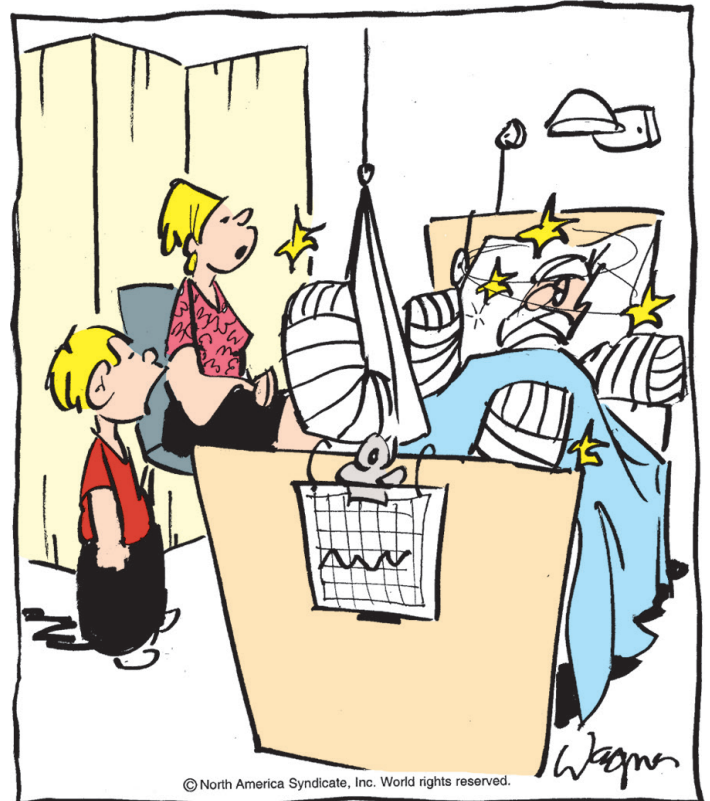
1. Who had a No. 1 hit with "Indian Reservation"?
2. "Moon River" was used in which film?
3. Name the duo that released "You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'."
4. Which group released "Get Off of My Cloud"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "The stars won't come out if they know that you're about, Cause they couldn't match the glow of your eyes."

Answers

1. Paul Revere & The Raiders, in 1971. The song was originally released in 1959 under the title "The Pale Faced Indian."
2. "Breakfast at Tiffany's" in 1961, and sung by Audrey Hepburn. Andy Williams covered the song later, and his version went into the National Recording Registry in 2022.
3. The Righteous Brothers, in 1964. Producer Phil Spector had the wrong time printed on the label so DJs would think the song was shorter and give it more airtime.
4. The Rolling Stones, in 1965.
5. "Candida," by Tony Orlando and Dawn, in 1970. Orlando was hesitant to release the song because he was working for a different publishing house and was afraid of losing his job. To keep his secret, the song was released as being done only by Dawn.

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



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"None of the other dads had the nerve to try that, Pop!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



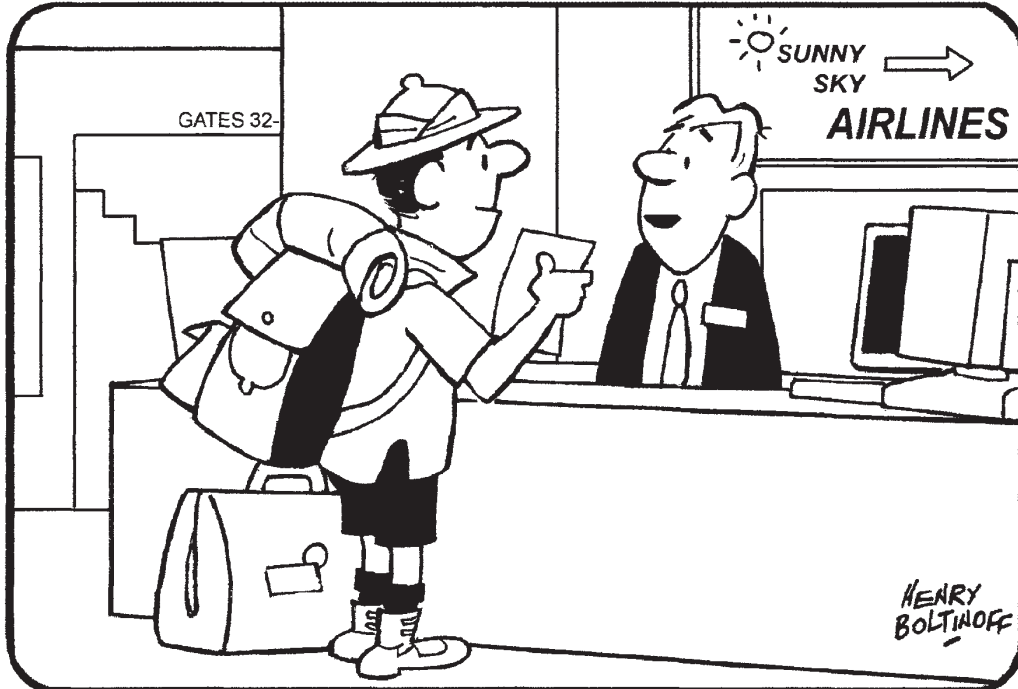
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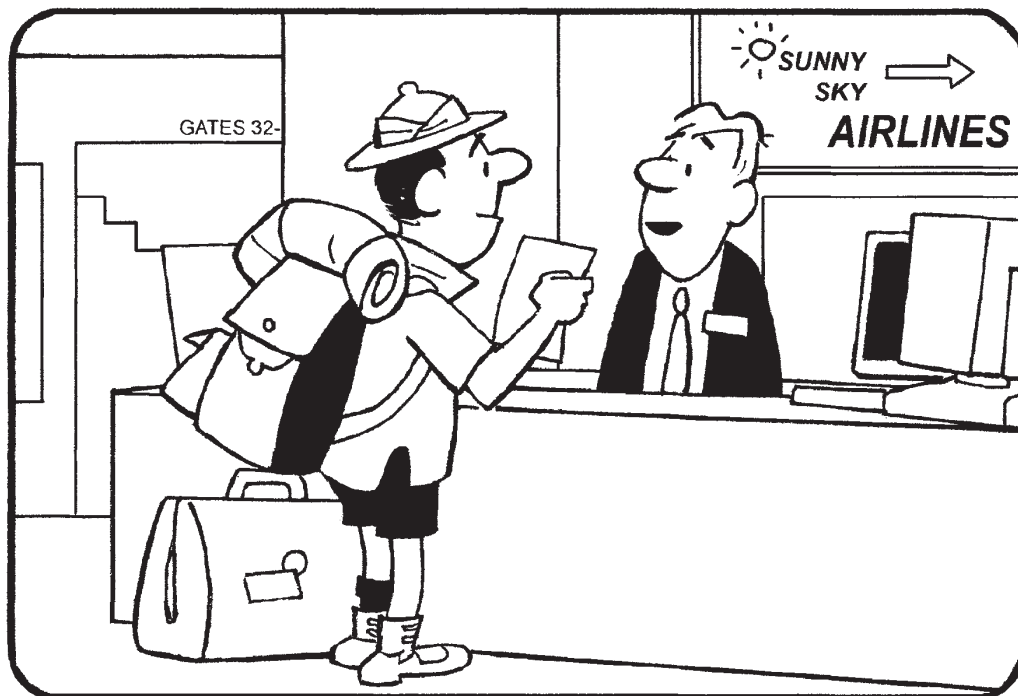
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Shorts are shorter. 2. Suitcase is moved. 3. Thumb is moved. 4. Hat is smaller. 5. Flap on backpack is smaller. 6. Sock is missing.

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* "To remove spots from suede, try using an art gum eraser."
-- J.C. in Florida

* Wet weather can affect your outdoor appliances, making rust a problem sometimes. This even happens to the metal end of a lightbulb in an outdoor fixture. Coat threads of the light bulb with petroleum jelly to keep it from rusting and becoming hard to remove.

* To remove scuffs from your linoleum floors, simply cut a small "X" into a tennis ball and push the tip of your broom handle into it. When you come across a sticky spot while sweeping, flip the broom and rub the spot with the tennis ball.

* "As you pack away your pool supplies, you might want to save the water wings for this cruise/duty-free alcohol hack: Use

blow-up arm floaties to protect your liquor bottles while being transported in luggage. Use one or a set depending on the size of the bottle." -- T.T. in Georgia

* Boots will be coming out of storage soon, or new boots will be purchased, while the pool supplies will be packed away for the winter. Save your pool noodles to keep boots sitting upright. Simply cut a pool noodle to the height of the boot top and insert. Lo and behold, the boots won't flop over. This extends the life of the boot.

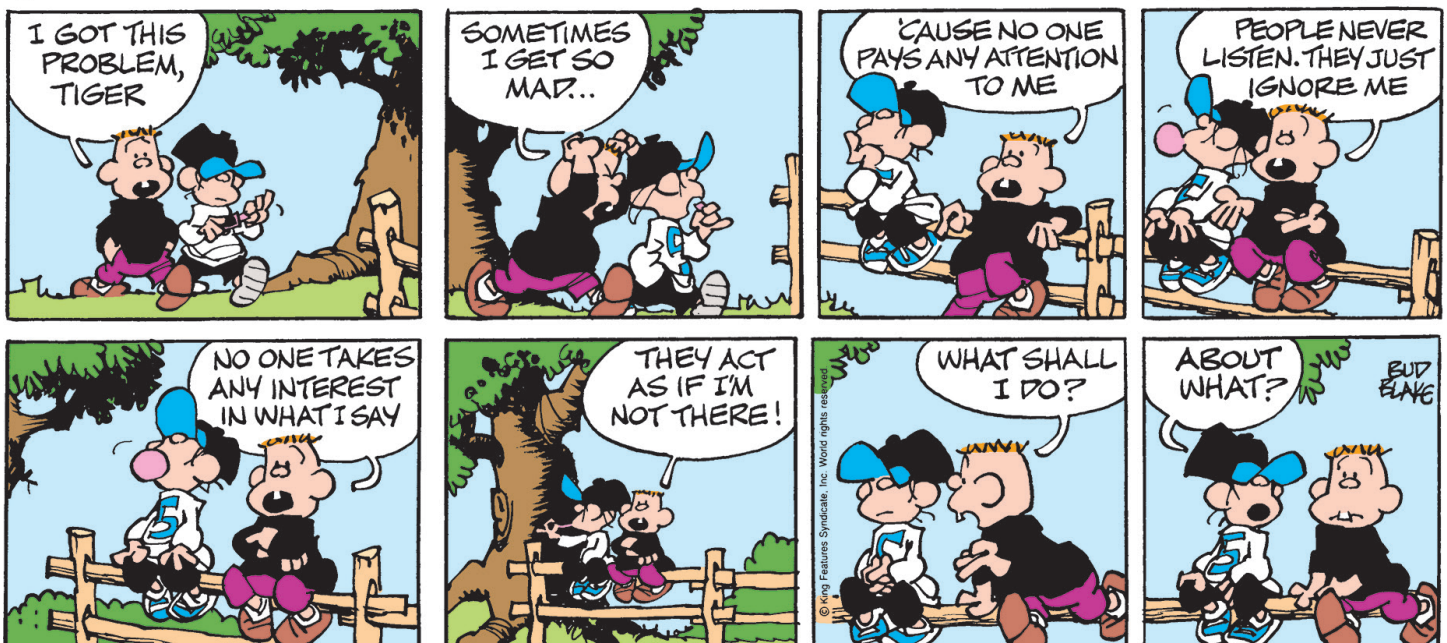
* "For troublesome-to-open jars -- pickles and such -- use a pair of standard dishwashing gloves. It's a great gripper, especially if your hands are the least bit moist." -- D.L. in Indiana

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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TIGER

by **BUD BLAKE**



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Antiquing aid
5 McCourt
memoir
8 Alphabet
quartet
12 Houston org.
13 "I love," to
Ovid
14 Chaste
15 Floor cleaners
17 "Got it"
18 Plum relatives
19 Raw bar mol-
lusk
21 Numbered
rds.
24 "Eureka!"
25 River block-
ers
28 Rich soil
30 Prattle

- 33 Debtor's note
34 Elegance
35 Swiss canton
36 Golfer Ernie
37 Plucked
instrument
38 Slightly
39 Brewed drink
41 Bygone jets
43 Jerry of the
Grateful Dead
46 Part of
42-Across
50 Sweet sand-
wich
51 Nike slogan
54 Use a rotary
phone
55 Santa —
winds

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15				16					17			
18							19	20				
			21		22	23		24				
25	26	27			28		29			30	31	32
33				34						35		
36				37					38			
		39	40			41		42				
43	44				45			46		47	48	49
50					51	52	53					
54					55				56			
57					58				59			

- 56 Part of Q.E.D.
57 "Maureen"
singer
58 Abolish
59 Missile shel-
ter

DOWN

- 1 Common
conjunctions
2 Old France
3 Canadian gas
brand
4 Critics, often
5 Eastern path
6 Little rascal
7 Mediocre
8 Gorilla-like
9 Work very
hard

- 10 Manitoba
tribe
11 Woodland
grazer
16 Rockies hrs.
20 Candied veg-
gies
22 First lady of
scat
23 Flies high
25 Conk out
26 MSN rival
27 Highly-
ecommended
book
29 Nile vipers
31 Football's
Parseghian
32 eBay offer
34 Spiced

- 39-Across
38 Stage com-
ments
40 Paris school
42 Stick with a
kick
43 Pantheon
members
44 Met melody
45 Slightly open
47 Actress
Spelling
48 Iranian money
49 "Beetle
Bailey" dog
52 Numerical
prefix
53 Melancholy

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King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

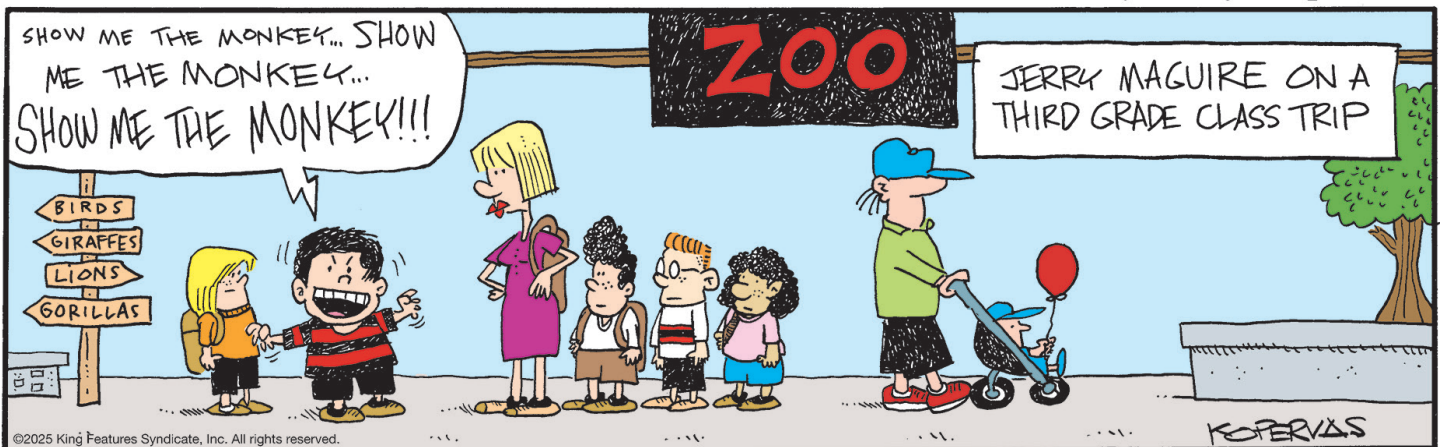
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D	U	S	T	M	O	P	S		I	S	E	E
S	L	O	E	S			O	Y	S	T	E	R
			R	T	E	S		A	H	A		
D	A	M	S		L	O	A	M		G	A	B
I	O	U		C	L	A	S	S		U	R	I
E	L	S		H	A	R	P		A	T	A	D
		T	E	A		S	S	T	S			
G	A	R	C	I	A			N	I	T	R	O
O	R	E	O		J	U	S	T	D	O	I	T
D	I	A	L		A	N	A		E	R	A	T
S	A	D	E		R	I	D		S	I	L	O

Olive



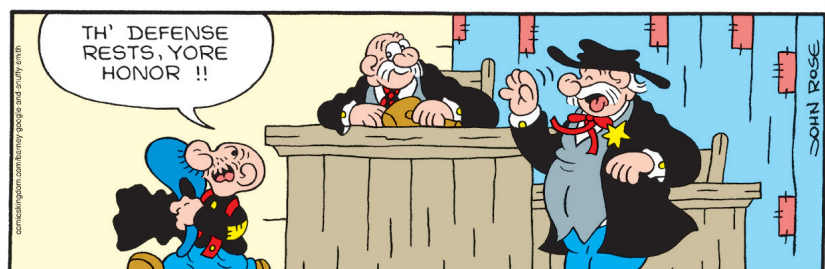
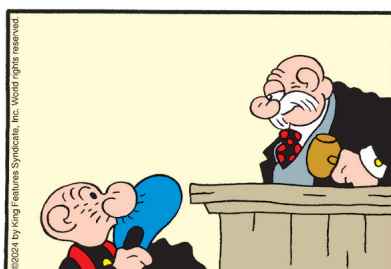
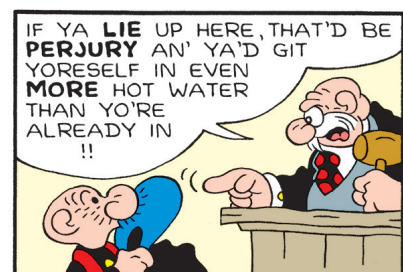
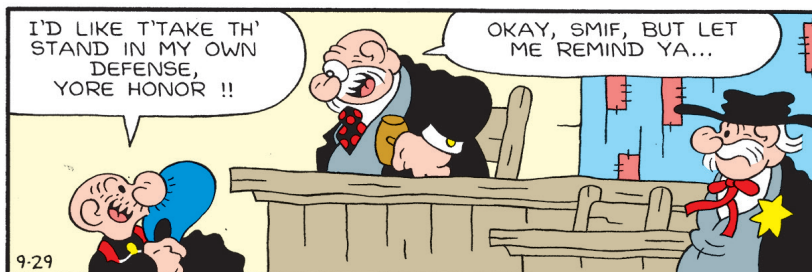
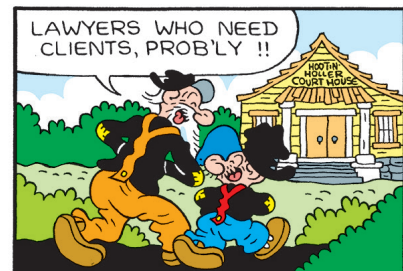
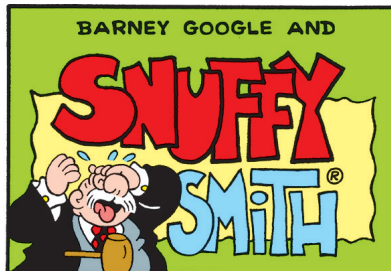
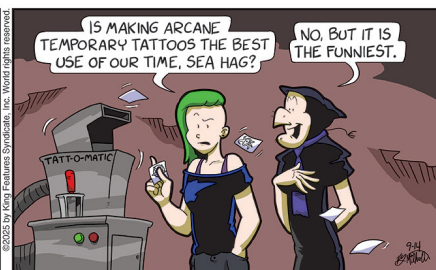
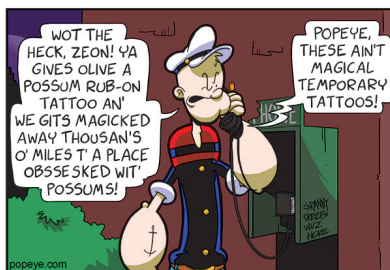
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



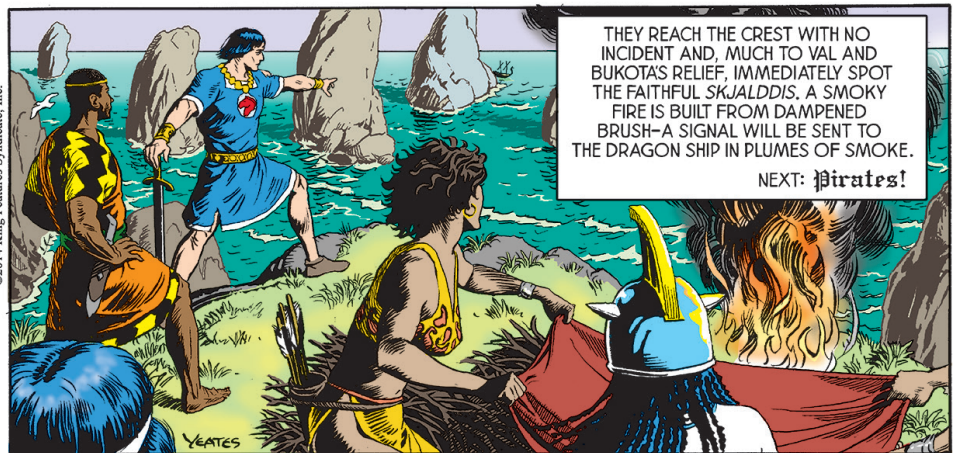
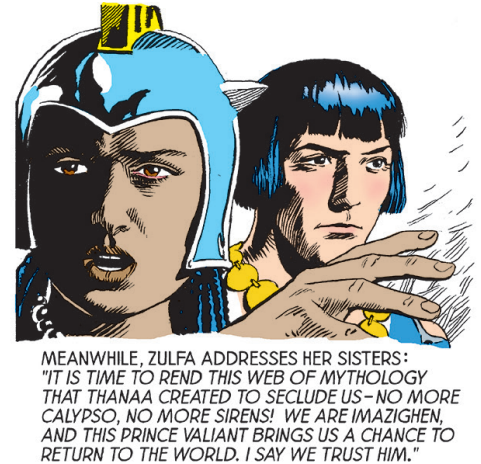
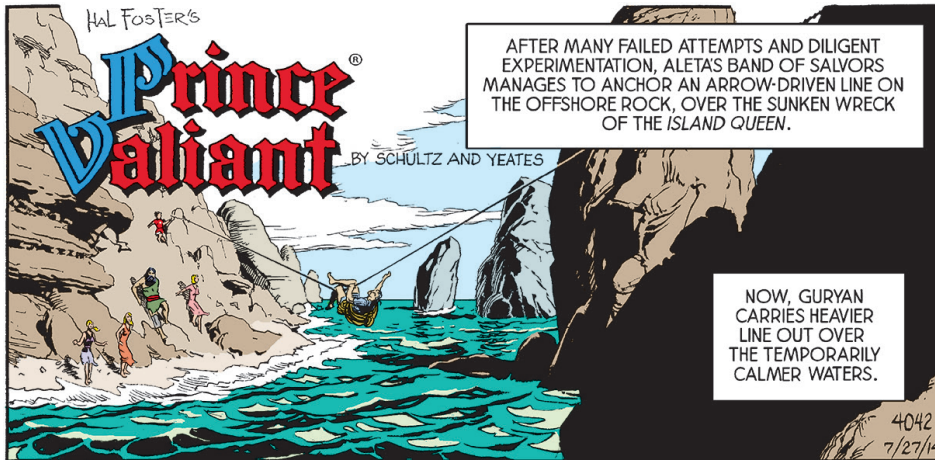
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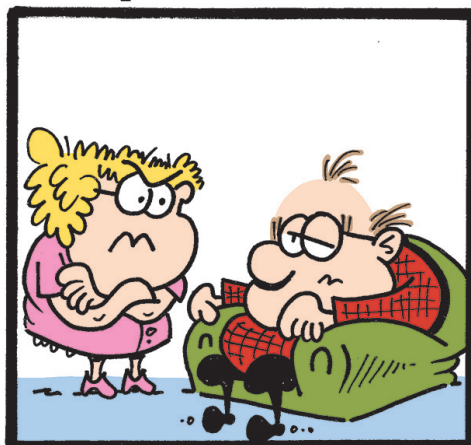
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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Seniors and social media

The list of scams against seniors keeps getting longer and longer. Just when we have a handle on the various types of fraud, here come new ones. But there's one area where we do have some control: social media.

One place I've always been concerned about (and therefore have never joined) is the small neighborhood social media chat groups. So much gets talked about, and people generally feel safe because, after all, they're chatting with their neighbors. But you never really know who's watching online. And you never really know what small piece of information could be the one that puts you at risk -- especially if a thief has been following the group and assembling your innocent chat as clues.

Beware what you say online. If you announce on social media that you're about to take a vacation, that's a clue to a thief that your house will be empty at a certain time. Or if you announce online that you'll be joining an art class every Tuesday morning, or if you post your unlisted phone number in reply to someone's question, etc.

Another place that's jam-packed with information is newspaper funeral notices that are posted on social media. The "survived by" information is gold for thieves. With those names, plus the date and time of the funeral, thieves know when a house is likely to be empty.

Friend requests are another source of concern with social media. Beware, and be selective. Be certain you know who you're letting in.

Never click a link in social media, or anywhere else. Just don't. You don't really know where it goes.

Before you take your first step into social media, be certain you know how it works. Get good advice on how to fix your privacy settings so you're not as vulnerable.

Remember: Seniors are targets.

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1. Former NFL quarterbacks and brothers David and Derek Carr both played football for what college team?

2. American biophysicist, biochemist and inventor Britton Chance won a gold medal at the 1952 Helsinki Summer Olympics competing in what sport?

3. What forced the cancellation of the 1919 Stanley Cup Final series after five games between the Montreal Canadiens and the Seattle Metropolitans?

4. Name the NBA player with the Seattle SuperSonics (1973-78) who was known for his shaved head and his off-center headband.

5. Sepang International Circuit, site of a Formula 1 Grand Prix race from 1999-2017, is located in what country?

6. Who became the first (and still only) American man to win an Olympic gold medal in the javelin throw when he did it at the 1952 Helsinki Summer Games? (Hint: He shares a name with a baseball legend.)

7. First presented in 2015, the annual award given to the best power forward in men's college basketball is named after what Basketball Hall of Famer?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. The Fresno State Bulldogs.

2. Sailing.

3. An outbreak of Spanish flu.

4. Slick Watts.

5. Malaysia.

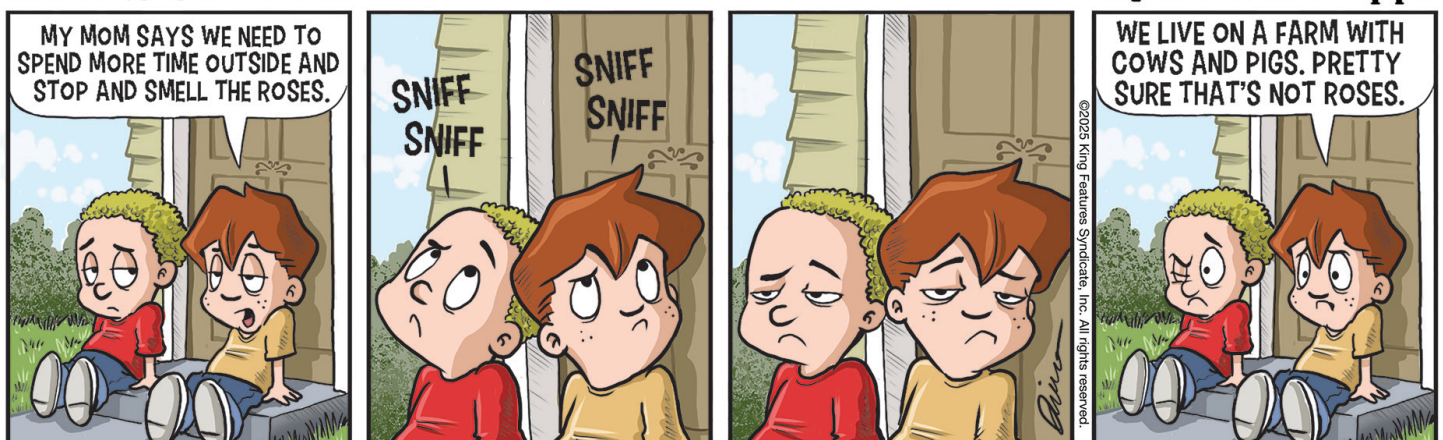
6. Cy Young.

7. Karl Malone.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Why your dog's leash matters

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Your recent column about the dog being allowed to walk onto a neighbor's lawn to pee and poop had me wondering. Why was this dog not on a leash in the first place? Too often, I see people in my neighborhood who allow their dogs to run loose in the front yard, with no apparent barrier to them running into traffic. Too often, I see poor leash discipline, with dogs pulling far away from owners on a retractable leash -- too far for them to reel the dog back if they bound into an intersection. Can you at least tell people how to walk their dogs properly? -- Gary in Atlanta, Georgia

DEAR GARY: Those are great observations. It's not unusual to see owners who let their dogs pull ahead or wander onto lawns and into shrubbery. My guess is that

most feel their pets deserve a little freedom.

But dogs need structure and routine. Halfway leash discipline creates a half-obedient dog. When you and your dog are walking, you are walking. Not playing, not exploring.

I'm all for allowing dogs to run and explore -- but the time and place are important. Running free at a dog park or in a well-fenced yard is OK. Zig-zagging all over the sidewalk and into the street ... not so much.

And as you pointed out, poor leash discipline is a huge safety issue. Owners must be able to control their dog. A sturdy, fixed leash is recommended for walking dogs of all sizes. A retractable leash is helpful at parks where dogs must be leashed but have space to safely explore. But I don't recommend them for walking or training purposes.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

* Sloths might be the only mammals that don't fart.

* Austrian-American composer Arnold Schoenberg feared the number 13 so intensely that he deliberately misspelled his opera "Moses und Aron" to have 12 letters instead of 13. He also died on July 13, 1951, which would seem to confirm his phobia.

* The first round of women's golf was played in 1811 -- four centuries after the sport was invented.

* Almost all of the first major television networks -- NBC, ABC and CBS -- still exist today, but the second network to get off the ground, the DuMont Television Network, is mostly forgotten, though it aired the first two seasons of "The Honeymooners" and "Mary Kay and Johnny," which is widely considered to be the first sitcom.

* Believe it or not, May is Zombie Awareness Month, which celebrates zombie media and recognizes ways to prepare for a zombie apocalypse. Participants are encouraged to wear gray ribbons to spread awareness of the potential dangers of the undead.

* In 2023, North Dakota was named the best state for surviving a zombie apocalypse.

* We obtain 60% of our energy intake from just three plant species -- rice, wheat and maize.

* Spiders recycle webs by eating them.

* The sitcom "30 Rock" was known for its fast-pace writing, with one reporter calculating in 2014 that there was an average of 7.44 jokes per minute.

* After "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" first aired in 1966, Charles Schulz's California office was inundated with shipments of candy sent from kids who were upset that Charlie Brown only got rocks in his Halloween goodie bag.

Thought for the Day: "Liberty means responsibility. That is why most people dread it." -- George Bernard Shaw

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The Garden Bug

Sometimes called roly-poly or woodlouse, *Armadillidium vulgare* are more closely related to shrimp and crayfish than insects. They are nocturnal, feeding on algae, fungus, moss, bark and all kinds of decaying plant and animal material. The females lay 100-200 eggs per brood, typically having 1-3 broods per year. The



Pill bugs

eggs are carried in a pouch on her belly. The babies hatch after 3-4 weeks, and may stay in the pouch for 2 more weeks to grow a little more. A pill bug can live up to 2 years.

- Brenda Weaver

Source: alabamawildlife.org



by Freddy Groves

The VA health and benefits mobile app

The VA Health and Benefits mobile app is very well done, and having the app can make it a lot easier for veterans to manage VA business directly from a phone or tablet. Many apparently agree, because by this summer there were over 3 million downloads of the app and 1.4 million use it every month.

There are several tools in the app, with the one for health care possibly being the most valuable. With the health care tool, you can send (and receive) secure messages to and from your health care team, see your appointments and put them on your calendar, get your records for vaccines and refill your prescriptions.

The benefits tools portion of the app can help you review your claim and appeal status, submit more evidence for your claims and check your disability rating.

The payments tool will let you see the payments the VA has sent you and update your direct deposit information.

If you have VA-related travel (mileage only) claims, you can now do that right on the phone. Coming soon: lab and test results viewable right on your phone.

But the tools aren't the only things you'll find on the app. Being able to show your status as a veteran can come in handy if you're in a store that gives a discount to veterans -- you'll have the proof right there on your phone. You can locate the VA facilities near you and quickly access the VA's crisis line. You'll have secure sign-in with fingerprint or face recognition for access.

For more info about the app, see mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-and-benefits. You'll find the download links for both iOS and Android. On that page you'll also find a few short videos done by veterans who talk about their experiences with the app. If you want more information about the app, put "VA benefits app" in a search engine.

If you need help with the app, call 800-698-2411. They're available 24/7.

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Wishing Well®

7	5	7	4	7	2	5	2	3	8	2	8	4
V	A	I	E	S	F	N	O	A	Y	R	O	M
8	7	5	7	6	7	5	2	5	6	3	2	3
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6	4	7	4	2	3	6	4	3	8	4	3	6
R	R	L	U	E	L	E	N	L	H	H	S	D
8	7	4	2	7	4	8	7	8	4	8	7	8
E	A	I	S	C	G	O	E	D	H	D	S	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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1. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: The children's novel "Black Beauty" is about what kind of animal?

2. MOVIES: Which actor narrates the 1980s film "Stand by Me"?

3. GEOGRAPHY: Which world city is home to Saint Basil's Cathedral?

4. U.S. CITIES: Which major U.S. city sits on top of a working salt mine that has been operating since 1910?

5. LITERATURE: What is the name of the country where "The Hunger Games" takes place?

6. MATH: How many sides does a trapezoid have?

7. ASTRONOMY: How long does it take for light from the Sun to reach Earth?

8. ANIMAL KINGDOM: How many legs does a lobster have?

9. TELEVISION: Which TV drama always begins with a meeting and the warning, "Let's be careful out there"?

10. LANGUAGE: How many letters are in the English alphabet?

Answers

1. A horse.
2. Richard Dreyfuss.
3. Moscow, Russia.
4. Detroit, Michigan.
5. Panem.
6. Four.
7. 8 minutes, 20 seconds.
8. 10.
9. "Hill Street Blues."
10. 26.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Investing in Public Safety

Government isn't very good at solving problems. You might find that rich coming from someone who's served in public office for 20 plus years, but it's true – it isn't government that solves our problems. Even when bills get passed by the Legislature, it's citizen legislators – elected by their neighbors – who come to Pierre for a short amount of time, do the people's work, then go home and live with the new laws that they passed.

On the other hand, there are a few problems that are absolutely government's problem to solve. And in those situations, we should do so to the absolute best of our ability. Public safety is top of that list.

At the state level, one aspect of keeping our communities safe has been in the headlines a lot lately: the state prison. We are on the cusp of passing a new facility – but will be far more than just a prison. It's an investment in the next 100 years of public safety in South Dakota.

For that reason, all of South Dakota's major law enforcement associations and Attorney General Jackley are fully onboard with building this new facility.

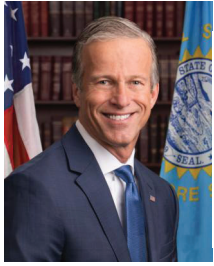
If we get this done, we can immediately get to work constructing a facility that is far safer. For starters, it won't be crumbling like the current "Hill" in Sioux Falls. Even the design and layout of the facility will be a tremendous enhancement in safety for both staff and inmates. We aren't cutting corners on sturdiness and security.

Perhaps more importantly, the new facility will quadruple the amount of space that we have available for programming. This will include vocational training, behavioral and drug counseling, faith-based rehabilitation, and Native American-focused programs – all aimed at making sure that inmates can reenter society better able to contribute, to care for their families, and to embody the values that make South Dakota great.

Over the next several years as construction moves forward, we'll have the opportunity to focus on programming. Following the passage of the new prison, I'll be forming a Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force that will focus on expanding programs that work and diving into other opportunities to do impactful rehabilitation.

Legislators deserve major credit for working to get this plan put together – so does my Lieutenant Governor Tony Venhuizen and all the professionals who worked with the prison task force. I'm also grateful for the contractors who are swallowing additional risk to guarantee that South Dakota taxpayers won't pay a penny more than \$650 million for this facility. This plan strikes the right balance between public safety and fiscal responsibility. And once we have it accomplished, we are going to be creating a real impact of the public safety of South Dakotans for decades – up to 100 years.

This is the right plan. This is the right approach to deliver public safety for South Dakotans – and to do so to the very best of our ability. Time to get it done!



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

A Secure Southern Border

Things look very different at the southern border these days than they did last year. President Trump wasted no time ending the chaos he inherited. Illegal immigrant encounters at the southern border have dropped precipitously, falling as low as 7,832 migrants in July. Border Patrol agents are on the line enforcing our laws; the wall is being built; and criminal illegal aliens are being arrested, detained, and deported.

Compare that to the southern border under President Biden. Customs and Border Protection was encountering more than 100,000 illegal immigrants per month – and sometimes many more. Many of those individuals were ultimately allowed to take up residence in the United States. Border communities, and even places far from the border, were overwhelmed by the influx of illegal immigrants.

Border Patrol's El Paso Sector is emblematic of the progress that's been made under President Trump. The sector chief there says they currently see about 40 to 50 people crossing per day, compared to 2,700 per day not long ago. The number of known gotaways – illegal immigrants who Border Patrol saw but was unable to apprehend – has fallen to nine per day. It was 400 per day last summer. And one has to wonder how dangerous some of these individuals were who were avoiding law enforcement, considering that a lot of illegal immigrants – encouraged by catch-and-release policies – actually sought out Border Patrol during the Biden years.

Today, the situation at the southern border has been turned around. We've made an incredible amount of progress, and we need to sustain that progress for the long term. That's why Republicans made a generational investment in border security this summer. We provided funding to finish the border wall, hire more Border Patrol and ICE agents, and expand detention space and deportation capacity. We also provided funding to hire more immigration judges to address the massive backlog in immigration cases. All of these resources will help to secure the gains we've made and maintain the security of America's borders.

The chaos at the southern border under the Biden administration was a danger to everyone. Open border policies were an invitation to criminals, terrorists, and other dangerous individuals to enter our country. It placed an incredible burden on Border Patrol agents to deal with the influx. And it put illegal immigrants at the mercy of human smugglers and the cartels, who profited off of the open southern border.

We have a responsibility to keep America safe, and that starts with security at our borders. President Trump takes that responsibility seriously. He acted swiftly to end the chaos and restore order. And Congress has acted to support that mission and make the success we've seen these last few months the new normal. That work continues, and I'm grateful to the men and women on the front lines carrying out the important work of enforcing the law and keeping America safe.

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From Coast to Coast BIG News

The Constitution grants Congress legislative authority to oversee Washington, D.C. After years of violent crime, the House voted to strengthen law enforcement measures in the nation's capital. Currently, under Washington, D.C. laws, a juvenile is defined as anyone under the age of 25. This means a 24-year-old accused of carjacking could be tried as a juvenile. I voted to change the juvenile age to 18.

I also supported legislation to restore the ability of D.C. police officers to protect their communities. Current D.C. Council regulations require officers to meet 14 different factors before allowing the vehicular pursuit of a fleeing suspect in a motor vehicle. The bill I supported would put that decision back in the hands of law enforcement. It's time D.C. lets officers do their jobs.

Soft-on-crime policies protect repeat criminal offenders. I'm working to make our communities safer for everyone..

BIG Update

This week, the application opened for states to apply for assistance from the Rural Health Transformation Fund. These dollars are the largest single investment in rural health care in history. It provides \$50 billion for workforce development, incentives for innovative care and technology, and ensures sustainable health care access for rural South Dakotans..

BIG Idea

All Americans depend on strong ocean shipping supply chains to buy and sell the products that fuel their lives—from groceries to energy sources to clothes and Christmas presents. I know how vital this shipping method is, especially for South Dakotans who export their crops. I'm leading the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) Reauthorization Act to improve and strengthen our supply chain and down on China's anticompetitive business trade practices.

The FMC Reauthorization Act passed the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee with bipartisan support, and I look forward to seeing it pass the House soon, so American imports and exports compete on a level playing field..

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September 8-14, 2025



Welcome back to another Weekly Round[s] Up. Last week was a terrible week for our nation as Charlie Kirk was assassinated at an event in Utah. Charlie Kirk dedicated his life to bringing people of differing opinion together around civil discussions. Above all else, he was a

follower of Christ, a father to two beautiful children, a devoted husband and son, and an American who wanted to make this country a better place to call home. We continue to pray for his family and all who knew and loved him.

This past week, I met with several groups of South Dakotans who were in Washington. I also attended a few hearings and briefings, as well as attending other meetings with groups from across the country. We took several votes on the Senate floor, including one to speed up all of the nominees who are awaiting confirmations. More on my week in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: Crystal Enstad from Oncology Nursing Society; South Dakota Farmers Union; Michelle Powers, CEO of Northern Hills Training Center; members of South Dakota Auto Dealers; Rick Williamson, Legislative Chairman of the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars; Annette and Matt Brandt, Angels in Adoption Honorees; Major General Mark R. Morrell, who serves as the Adjutant General of the South Dakota National Guard; leaders from South Dakota Credit Unions; leaders from R-CALF USA; and members of Growth Energy. I also had the opportunity to meet with the South Dakota National Guard members who are currently deployed to Washington, D.C. Their work and the work of everyone deployed to DC has made a noticeable difference in cleaning up the city.

Met with South Dakotans from: Aberdeen, Britton, Clark, De Smet, Gary, Gregory, Groton, Huron, Ipswich, Lemmon, Madison, Oacoma, Parade, Pierre, Rapid City, Reliance, Reva, Salem, Sioux Falls, Spearfish, Sturgis and Yankton.

Other meetings this past week: Dr. Todd Golub, Director of the Broad Institute; Rhode Island Business and Community Leaders; Marianne Lake, CEO of Consumer and Community Banking at JPMorgan Chase & Co; and Derrick Anderson, nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict.

We had our Senate Bible Study on Tuesday morning. The verse of the week was Genesis 1:28. I also attended prayer breakfast on Wednesday, where Senator Andy Kim of New Jersey was our speaker.

Hearings: I attended three hearings this week: one hearing in the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to vote on a nominee for Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs; one hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee to hear from our nominee to serve as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and a hearing with the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs titled "Evaluating Perspectives on Deposit Insurance Reform".

Following the Banking hearing, I introduced legislation to modernize outdated rules on reciprocal deposits. Reciprocal deposits allow community banks to offer customers full FDIC insurance while keeping those dollars working in local communities. This legislation updates current statutory thresholds to make it easier for community and regional banks to receive non-brokered treatment for reciprocal deposits. [Read more here.](#)

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Classified Briefings: I attended four classified briefings this week: one as part of my work on SASC's Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee, and two briefings in the Select Committee on Intelligence. I also hosted our biweekly cyber education seminar.

Votes taken: 13 – We voted on several Trump administration nominees. These nominees were for US District Judges in Florida and Missouri, as well as positions in the Department of Homeland Security.

In addition, we voted to change the rules of the Senate to speed up confirmation on all of the nominees being held up by Democrats. As I said last week, we are facing historic obstruction from the other side of the aisle. The Senate is required to approve over 1,300 nominees. If we spend our time in DC taking procedural votes on each one, we'll never get to the important legislation that Americans need, such as the NDAA or appropriations. We must get back to the business of running the country instead of allowing Senate Democrats to hold the Senate hostage by taking advantage of a broken system. Leader John Thune did a great job of addressing our frustrations with Senate Democrat leadership on the Senate floor last week, which you can watch a clip of [here](#). We look forward to continuing to get these nominees through the Senate and into their positions working for the American people.

Academy nominations: My office is currently accepting nominations from high school seniors who are looking to attend a U.S. service academy after graduation. By attending an academy, not only will students have the opportunity to serve our nation and help lead the best military in the world, but they will receive an excellent education at a top-notch institution. I encourage young South Dakotans looking to answer the call of duty to consider applying to one of our service academies. [Read more here](#).

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen, Brandon, Howard, Mitchell, Pierre, Sioux Falls, Watertown and Winner.

Steps taken: 46,949 steps or 21.16 miles.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

If it wasn't for grandparents

Some jobs carry a lot of prestige, glamour and worldwide recognition. A few, however, are not too interested in those sorts of things. We do not care who knows what we do, as long as we know what we are doing and why we are doing it, which is all right with us.

Our entire country honors the military forces, and such we should for the fine job they do protecting our country. In just about every community, emergency personnel are honored for the wonderful job they do in keeping our homes safe. What would we do without these wonderful people and the great job they are doing for us.

I do not have a jealous bone in my body, I am glad these people get their due recognition and I would not want it take a sliver of it for myself. I revel in my incognito and enjoy what I am doing without recognition.

I posed a simple question. Where would all these good people be without their grandparents? I am too humble to suggest that grandparents are the backbone of this wonderful country of ours. It is true. But you did not hear it from me.

Just think of where this country would be if it were not for grandparents?

Parents have a hard time, especially in today's culture and economy. If they have a job their priority is to keep that job whether they like it or not. Sometimes, when these weary parents come home from work they are a tad grouchy. Who's to blame them? They sure have a tough time of it.

Then there is the end of the month when they have more month than money and are trying to figure out what to pay and what to postpone. This in and of itself is enough to make the most jovial person cranky. There never is enough time or money for a family to do what they would like to do.

Enter the grandparents. Grandparents are God's solution to cranky and grouchy parents. God does everything he can to protect these innocent children so he has given to them grandparents.

The job of a grandparent is totally different from the parent's. Grandparents have an edge on this because they raised those parents and know them inside out. Therefore, every grandparent knows how to get around their grandchildren's parents and help those darling little grandchildren to have some fun.

I personally believe that the purpose of childhood is to exploit fun. No child has the ability to take full advantage of this kind of exploitation on their own. They need help. Who better to help them than grandparents?

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Of the two grandparents it is the grandfather who has to come to the rescue more times than not. Grandmothers just do not have what it takes all the time to help the grandchildren exploit a situation to the fullest extent of fun.

It is not the grandmother's fault. After all, she is a woman first. Women, as everybody knows, are rather addicted to rules.

For example. Grandmothers insist on enforcing the rules established by the children's parents. Those rules usually include, an established bedtime every night, a limit on how much candy should be consumed at any one time, and always finishing everything on your dinner plate. Then grandmothers have this thing about doing chores around the house.

For this reason, God put his best thinking cap on and come up with an antidote to grandmothers. The remedy for all of this nonsense is simply grandfathers.

It is the grandfather's responsibility to intercede on the grandchildren's behalf and make sure they have as much fun as possible.

When it comes to rules, grandfathers are quite flexible.

One of the best rules from the Grandfather Rulebook has to do with bedtime. According to the rulebook, no grandchild should go to bed with the singular purpose of going to sleep. Bedtime is not a time to sleep but rather a time to practice aerobics on the bed. It would be a disgrace if a child ever reached his or her teenage years and was not an expert at bed calisthenics.

Also, according to this rulebook, dinnertime is not so much a time to be but rather a time to learn new jokes. Woe be unto the child who has dinner their grandparents without learning one new joke. Cleaning your dinner plate is not as nearly important as wearing yourself out with laughter. After all, if God really wanted us to clean up our dinner plate why did he invent the refrigerator?

This rulebook further states that any grandfather worth his membership in the grandfather union must be amply supplied with jellybeans. There is a hefty fine involved for running out of jellybeans.

When grandmother says, "I think the children have had enough sugar for the evening," grandfather must take charge. There is no such thing, according to the Grandfather Rulebook, of any grandchild having too much sugar.

It is not that grandfathers violate the rules; they just operate from a different rulebook than grandmothers.

The Bible says, "The hoary [gray] head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:31-32 KJV).

The Christian grandfather is the fulfillment of this Scripture.

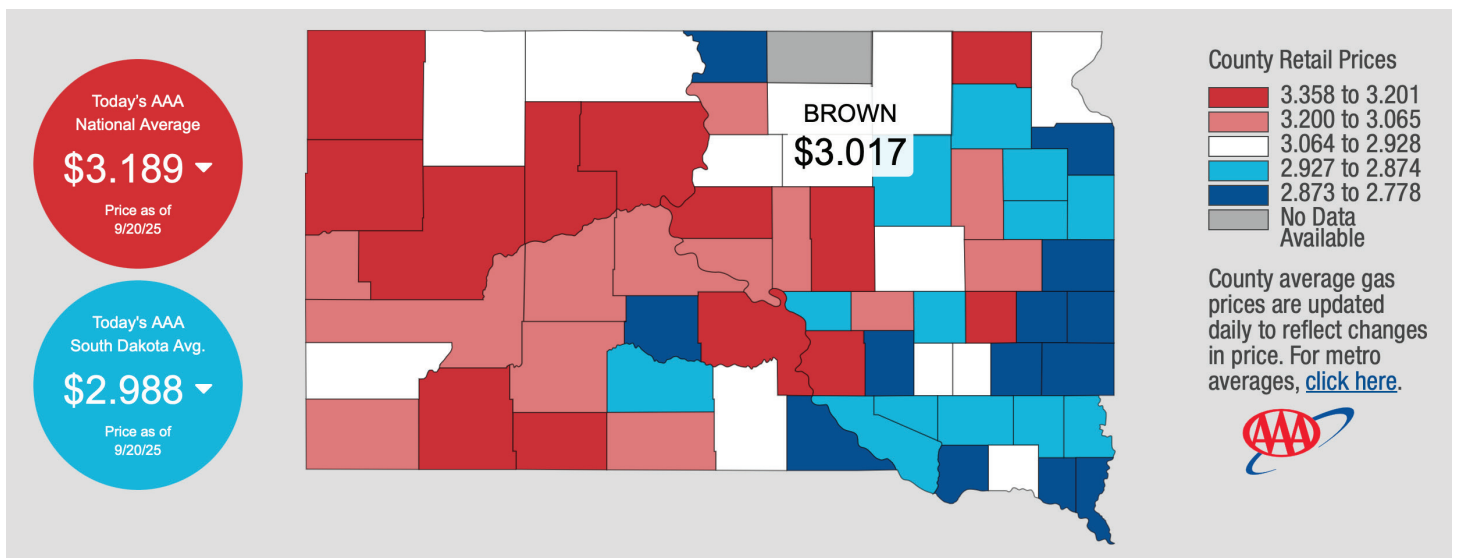
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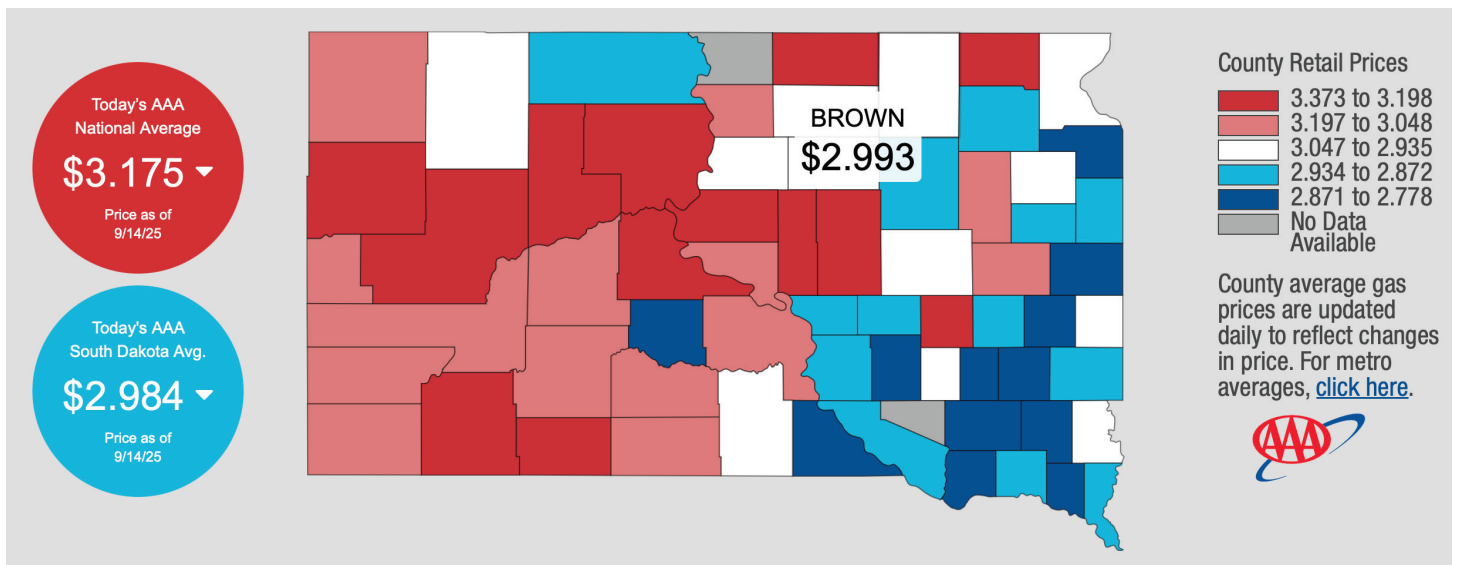
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.988	\$3.168	\$3.629	\$3.406
Yesterday Avg.	\$2.990	\$3.181	\$3.644	\$3.416
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.991	\$3.173	\$3.637	\$3.402
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.978	\$3.156	\$3.622	\$3.375
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.092	\$3.282	\$3.712	\$3.285

This Week



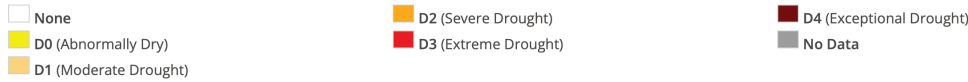
Last Week



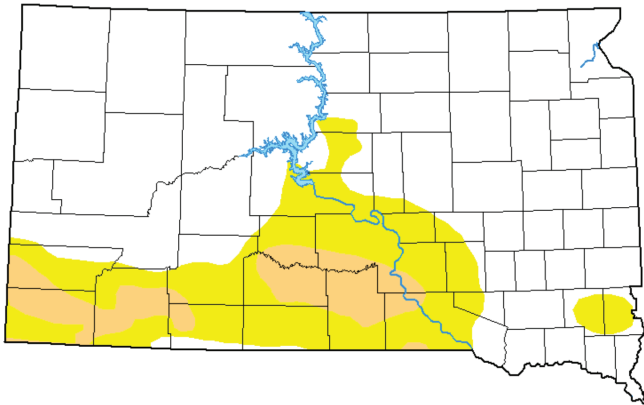
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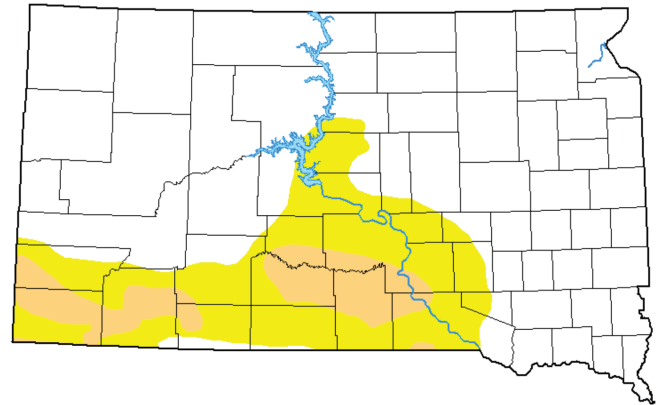
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



Sept. 16



Sept. 9

Widespread rainfall overspread western Kansas, Nebraska, western South Dakota, and North Dakota during the past week, resulting in modest reductions of abnormal dryness (D0) and moderate drought (D1) across western Kansas and central Nebraska. The highest rainfall totals fell across the Dakotas in regions that are currently drought-free. Drier conditions and warm temperatures prevailed across portions of eastern Kansas and northeastern Nebraska, with declining SPI values warranting some expansion of abnormal dryness (D0). Across Colorado and Wyoming, widespread precipitation fell across the mountainous regions, prompting some drought relief across northwestern Wyoming and much of western Colorado, including reductions in coverage of extreme to severe (D3 to D2) drought conditions.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: How do 3D-printed houses stack up against conventional ones with regard to sustainability, both during construction and then in use?

-- J. Homes, via email

3D printed homes are fast gaining traction as a sustainable alternative to traditional building. Proponents say they use less material, create less waste, and hold promise for efficient long term performance. The question is whether all this adds up in real life when compared to conventionally built houses.

3D printing offers several clear advantages. The additive process builds walls layer-by-layer using only what's needed, drastically reducing waste. According to Bay Management Group, 3D methods can cut process waste and over engineering significantly, creating a shorter supply chain and a more eco friendly outcome. Unlike conventional framing which discards off cuts and excess materials, printed homes use nearly all the feedstock. Realistically that can reduce overall material consumption by up to 90 percent.

And there's speed. A community of 100 3D printed homes built in Wolf Ranch, Texas was completed in just four to six weeks per home: a fraction of the six to eight months typical for wood frame builds. That means fewer machine hours, fewer diesel trucks hauling materials, and less energy burned on site. In Melbourne, Australia, company Luyten recently built a 3D printed house in just three weeks total.

Sustainability claims also hinge on materials used. Some 3D homes use advanced concrete mixes like Lavacrete, which provide strength and reduce carbon emissions. Others experiment with bio based feeds like wood waste with corn resin. Habib Dagher of the Advanced Structures and Composites Center described one model called BioHome3D as "100 percent renewable, because it is really bio based." The pellets used in printing can be recycled and reused multiple times while retaining material properties. Also, many 3D printed homes deliver superior thermal mass thanks to concrete walls, which improve insulation and reduce heating and cooling needs. Companies like Mighty Buildings now integrate ultra low GWP (global warming potential) insulation to further reduce carbon footprint during operation.

There are challenges. Printing still relies heavily on concrete, which has high embodied carbon unless offset or replaced with greener materials. Many finished homes still need traditional tradespeople to install plumbing, wiring, windows and interior finishes. Zoning codes and building rules also limit adoption in many markets. But once integrated with renewable energy and better materials, these homes could match or exceed conventional sustainability standards in both construction and ongoing use.



3D-printed homes, like these at Wolf Ranch in Texas, use less material and create less waste and are fast gaining traction as a sustainable alternative to traditional building. Credit: Wolf Ranch.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Over 400,000 turkeys killed in response to SD's bird flu outbreak; ducks identified as carriers

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

The number of turkeys killed at South Dakota farms in response to recent detections of avian influenza has risen to 419,650, continuing the state's status as the national epicenter of this season's outbreak.

The numbers come from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which reports bird flu detections in eight commercial South Dakota flocks and one backyard flock in the state during the last 30 days.

Meanwhile, South Dakota State Veterinarian Beth Thompson said blue-winged teal, a species of duck, have been identified as carriers of this season's virus. John Cooper, a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agent and former state Game, Fish and Parks secretary, said it makes sense that the state would find itself combating bird flu early this year if teal are carrying it.

"Teal are traditionally our first migrators," Cooper said.

Detections this early in the fall season are troubling, according to Thompson. The peak avian influenza seasons typically happen later during the fall and spring migration of wild birds, which can carry the virus without becoming sick.

In a statement to South Dakota Searchlight, the state Department of Health said "bird flu has the potential to be transmitted to humans from wild birds" but emphasized the risk to people remains low.

The department pointed to federal guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which offers steps for hunters to reduce risks:

Gut and de-feather game birds in the field rather than at home and practice good hygiene to prevent disease spread.

Use dedicated tools for cleaning game, do not use the same tools around poultry, and wash and disinfect all tools and work surfaces afterward.

Wear gloves, a mask and eye protection when handling game birds.

Throw away the gloves and facemask afterward and wash hands with soap and water.

Cook meat to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

Commercial turkey products remain safe to eat thanks to existing food safety protocols in the industry, according to Thompson.

The bird flu depopulation process is federally mandated and involves killing all birds at affected sites to prevent the virus from spreading to nearby farms. Thompson said "foaming" is the most common method in turkey barns, where foam is sprayed atop turkeys inside the barn to suffocate them.

She said the process is carried out with assistance from federal and state officials who oversee the work, with the federal government offering compensation for losses through indemnity payments. Those payments have totaled more than \$1 billion nationally since 2020, according to an analysis by CBS News, including about \$130 million in South Dakota.

Recent avian influenza detections in South Dakota

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture lists the following detections of avian influenza during the past 30 days in commercial or backyard flocks in South Dakota. The list includes the number of birds killed in response to contain the spread of the disease.

Sept. 16: Commercial turkey meat bird in Beadle County, 53,000 birds affected.

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Sept. 13: Commercial turkey meat bird in McPherson County, 70,100 birds affected.

Sept. 11: Commercial turkey meat bird in Jerauld County, 44,500 birds affected, poultry in Spink County, 750 birds affected.

Sept. 10: Commercial turkey meat bird in Beadle County, 74,100 birds affected.

Sept. 9: Commercial turkey meat bird in Beadle County, 42,300 birds affected.

Sept. 4: Commercial turkey breeder hens in McPherson County, 26,900 birds affected.

Sept. 2: Commercial turkey meat bird in Beadle County, 52,600 birds affected.

Aug. 28: Commercial turkey meat bird in Faulk County, 55,400 birds affected.

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

COMMENTARY

School cellphone debate makes local control an early casualty of governor race

by Dana Hess

The beauty of South Dakota's public school system is that each school district is different. Each has its own funding challenges. Some may put an emphasis on college preparation while others may seek to get students ready for the workforce. The beauty of local control is that it allows the school district patrons, through their school board, to decide how students should be educated.

That individuality is apparent in the way districts have approached student use of cellphones in the classroom. According to a South Dakota Searchlight survey and analysis of school district policies, about 60% of school districts in the state restrict cellphone use for at least part of the school day. About a third of districts take the further step of locking away students' cellphones for at least a portion of the day.

While some schools may restrict student cellphone use in an effort to keep them from being distractions, in Wilmot the students are allowed to keep their phones as a way to teach them a lesson in responsibility. This contrasts quite a bit with the policy in other districts including Dupree, where high school students are required to put their cellphones in containers during the school day.

It's that kind of difference, from school district to school district, that helps reflect the philosophy of educators, the needs of the individual communities and the strength of local control.

"There's never going to be a one-size-fits-all," said Dupree School District superintendent Brent Mareska. Well, hold the phone.

One policy for every school district is exactly what three of the five candidates for governor are proposing. U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, a Republican candidate for governor, said in a South Dakota Searchlight story that he would back a statewide prohibition on student access to cellphones during classes.

"The state government setting a broad-stroke policy and then having the execution of that strategy and management done at the local level will give us the best of both worlds," Johnson said.

Of course, one of those worlds, in Pierre, would set the policy for all the school districts. Those districts, whether they like it or not, would have to carry it out, without regard for their current cellphone policy. A policy that may be working just fine for them.

South Dakota House Speaker Jon Hansen, another Republican candidate, would also support a statewide policy as a way for students to focus "on learning, not on distractions." Democrat Robert Arnold, a 20-year-old college student who plans to run for governor, said a statewide policy would benefit students.

Another Republican candidate, Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden, said the decision on cellphone policy should be left up to school boards, though his approach seems more like a Mafia don than a governor: "As governor, I would absolutely lean on our local school boards to ban cellphones from the classroom."

While Doeden would make school districts an offer they can't refuse, Gov. Larry Rhoden, who has yet

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to declare his candidacy, is quizzing school leaders about whether they want their policy to come from the local level or the state. Some schools may welcome a state law, allowing them to put what could be an unpopular policy in place, all the while laying the blame at the feet of the Legislature.

Judging by the performance of the Legislature in 2025, it would be wise to leave decisions about education to school districts. A completely unscientific search of the Legislative Research Council website found that the Legislature considered 59 education bills this year. Among them were such winners as a failed requirement to display and add to the curriculum the Ten Commandments, a withdrawn effort to defund the Huron School District because of its bathroom policy, and a failed requirement to display the state seal.

A track record like that doesn't inspire confidence in a Legislature or a governor who wants to make a one-size-fits-all cellphone policy. Obviously school districts are getting by just fine without a mandate from the state about how to regulate cellphones in the classroom. That's how local control is supposed to work.

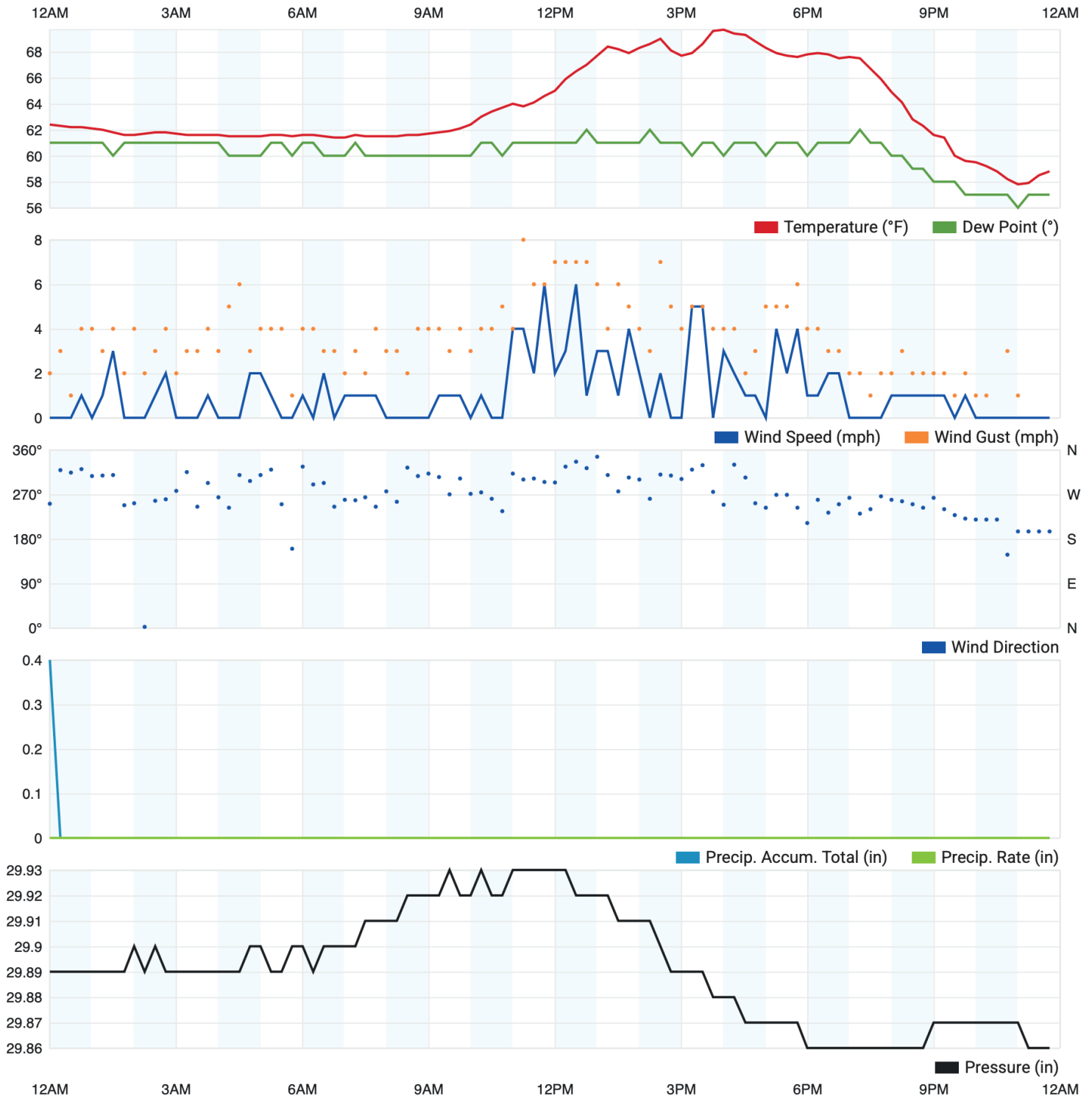
Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 20, 2025



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Today



High: 73 °F

Areas Fog
then Sunny

Tonight



Low: 49 °F

Mostly Clear

Monday



High: 75 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

Monday Night



Low: 52 °F

Mostly Clear

Tuesday



High: 76 °F

Sunny

Today



Highs: 70-78°

There will be areas of patchy fog this morning. 20-30% chance for scattered showers and storms over portions of east central SD

Upcoming Weather

Mon

Tues



70-78°

20-30% chance for evening scattered showers and storms over south central SD



72-77°

September 21, 2025 3:55 AM

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



weather.gov/abr

Some areas of lower visibilities are occurring from patchy fog across parts of central and northeastern SD and west central MN this morning and should clear up once the sun has risen. Then it should be mostly sunny through the day, with 20-30% chance of scattered showers and storms over portions of east central SD this afternoon and evening. Monday will be partly cloudy, with 20-30% chance for showers and storms over south central SD during the evening. This should clear out by Tuesday, leaving sunny skies behind.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 3:59 PM

Low Temp: 58 °F at 10:54 PM

Wind: 9 mph at 11:04 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 99 in 1937

Record Low: 22 in 1893

Average High: 73

Average Low: 45

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.40

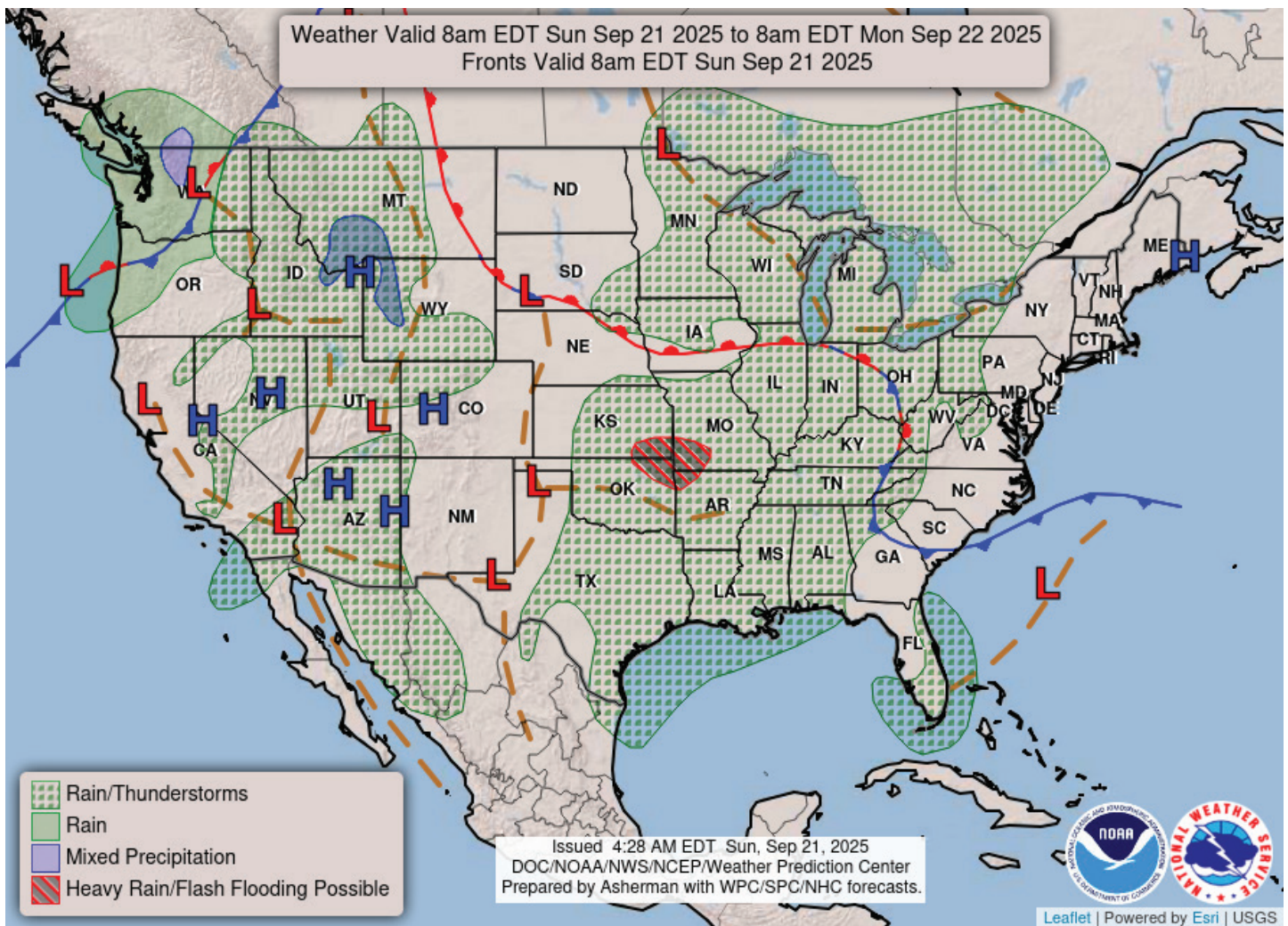
Precip to date in Sept.: 2.62

Average Precip to date: 17.74

Precip Year to Date: 22.92

Sunset Tonight: 7:32 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:19 am



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Today in Weather History

September 21, 1960: In the morning hours of September 21st, lightning struck and caused structural damage to a home in Clear Lake, Deuel County. Lightning also hit a home in Clark in Clark County, and two telephone poles near Milbank in Grant County. Power was also interrupted for a short time by lightning near Britton.

1894: A late season severe weather outbreak occurred across northwest Iowa, south central Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin during the late evening hours. Several communities were impacted by this outbreak with an estimated 55 to 65 deaths, and in additional 300 injuries. The strongest tornado was an estimated F5, which tore through the counties of Kossuth, Hancock, Winnebago in Iowa, and Faribault in Minnesota.

1894 - A heavy chicken house, sixteen by sixteen feet in area, was picked up by a tornado and wedged between two trees. The hens were found the next day sitting on their eggs in the chicken house, with no windows broken, as though nothing had happened. (The Weather Channel)

1924: A couple of tornadoes, one rated F4 and the other F5, tore paths of devastation through Eau Claire, Clark, and Taylor Counties in Wisconsin. The death toll was 18 and 50 people were injured.

1938 - A great hurricane smashed into Long Island and bisected New England causing a massive forest blowdown and widespread flooding. Winds gusted to 186 mph at Blue Hill MA, and a storm surge of nearly thirty feet caused extensive flooding along the coast of Rhode Island. The hurricane killed 600 persons and caused 500 million dollars damage. The hurricane, which lasted twelve days, destroyed 275 million trees. Hardest hit were Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Long Island NY. The "Long Island Express" produced gargantuan waves with its 150 mph winds, waves which smashed against the New England shore with such force that earthquake-recording machines on the Pacific coast clearly showed the shock of each wave. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1954 - The temperature at Deeth, NV, soared from a morning low of 12 degrees to a high of 87 degrees, a record daily warm-up for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Tropical Storm Emily, which formed in the Caribbean the previous afternoon, caused considerable damage to the banana industry of Saint Vincent in the Windward Islands. Unseasonably hot weather continued in Florida and the western U.S. Redding CA and Red Bluff CA, with record highs of 108 degrees, tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced high winds and locally heavy rain in the southwestern U.S. One thunderstorm in west Texas produced wind gusts to 86 mph at Dell City completely destroying an airport hangar. A Cessna 150 aircraft housed within the hangar was flipped over and snapped in two. Thunderstorms produced large hail in east central Utah, while snow blanketed some of the higher elevations of the state. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Hurricane Hugo slammed into the South Carolina coast about 11 PM, making landfall near Sullivan's Island. Hurricane Hugo was directly responsible for thirteen deaths, and indirectly responsible for twenty-two others. A total of 420 persons were injured in the hurricane, and damage was estimated at eight billion dollars, including two billion dollars damage to crops. Sustained winds reached 85 mph at Folly Beach SC, with wind gusts as high as 138 mph. Wind gusts reached 98 mph at Charleston, and 109 mph at Shaw AFB. The biggest storm surge occurred in the McClellanville and Bulls Bay area of Charleston County, with a storm surge of 20.2 feet reported at Seewee Bay. Shrimp boats were found one half mile inland at McClellanville. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

There are many things in the Bible that we do not understand. There are other things in the Bible that we think we understand. There are many things in the Bible that we cannot understand. But there are many things in the Bible that we do understand but simply choose to do nothing about.

So, what's the problem?

If we want to know a person, we must spend time with that one. And more than anything else the Bible is about a Person. So, if we want to know that Person, we must spend time in the Bible. Now, there are two vital facts here. The Bible was given to us by men who God inspired to write it. Because it is God's inspired Word, we need His Spirit to illuminate it for us. But we cannot expect Him to illuminate it for us unless we are willing to allow His Spirit to open our eyes to see Him as He is in His Word.

A child was born blind and spent years unable to see the world around him. Researchers finally found a way to restore his sight. Not knowing what the outcome would be, the surgeons were cautious not to give him too much hope. The day finally arrived when they were to remove his bandages. They led him to a window that overlooked a flower garden. When the bandages were removed, he stood in amazement and said, "Mom, why didn't you tell me how beautiful the flowers are?"

"I tried," she said, "but you have to see them for yourself." So, it is with God. We must see Him for ourselves.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to see You as You are - in all Your loveliness - as we find You in Your Word. Open our eyes to really see. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:18

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: 09.19.25

2 22 27 42 58 8

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$451,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.20.25

2 13 17 36 42 8

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$3,240,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.20.25

11 16 31 34 38 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 53 Mins 13 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.20.25

1 5 21 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$29,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.20.25

2 22 34 57 66 25

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.20.25

15 29 64 66 67 4

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$113,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

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

Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-18, 25-17, 25-18

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Rapid City Stevens, 19-25, 25-21, 25-23, 13-25, 15-9

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Brookings, 25-14, 25-14, 25-16

Tea def. T F Riggs High School, 25-19, 25-18, 25-23

Bon Homme Cavalier Clash=

Corsica/Stickney def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-18, 25-20

Lennox def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-13, 25-13

Parker/Marion def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-22, 25-22

Parker/Marion def. Avon, 25-16, 21-25, 25-22

Parkston def. Parker/Marion, 21-25, 25-22, 25-13

West Central def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-16, 25-18

Bridgewater-Emery Tournament=

Bridgewater-Emery def. Canistota, 25-5, 25-15

Bridgewater-Emery def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-8, 25-14

Canistota def. Centerville, 15-25, 25-18

Centerville def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-13, 25-20

Ethan def. Menno, 25-13, 25-7

Ethan def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 23-25, 25-21, 25-21

Freeman def. Centerville, 25-20, 23-25, 25-23

Freeman def. Howard, 25-14, 25-11

Hanson def. Menno, 25-10, 26-24

Howard def. Bridgewater-Emery, 25-5, 25-15

Howard def. Canistota, 25-19, 18-25, 25-18

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Hanson, 28-26, 26-24

Championship=

Bridgewater-Emery def. Ethan, 20-25, 25-22, 25-22

Durango Fall Classic, Las Vegas=

Harrisburg def. Mira Costa, Calif., 25-21, 25-22

Harrisburg def. Skyview, Idaho, 25-15, 22-25, 25-21

SA Cornerstone, Texas def. Harrisburg, 19-25, 25-23, 25-18

Torrey Pines, Calif. def. Harrisburg, 25-17, 25-9

Hamlin Invitational=

Groton def. Castlewood, 25-12, 27-25

Castlewood def. Miller, 25-21, 25-21

Dell Rapids def. Hamlin, 19-25, 25-22, 25-19

Dell Rapids def. Sisseton, 25-12, 25-12

Dell Rapids def. Groton, 26-24, 25-17

Miller def. Hamlin, 25-23, 27-29, 25-23

Miller def. Sisseton, 25-11, 25-7

Groton def. Sisseton, 25-10

Ipswich Subway Invitational=

Herreid-Selby def. Langford, 25-14, 25-14

Herreid-Selby def. North Central, 25-13, 25-20

Ipswich def. Herreid-Selby, 24-26, 25-21, 25-22

Ipswich def. Lemmon High School, 25-13

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Ipswich def. Milbank, 25-14, 25-10
Langford def. North Central, 25-22, 25-23
Langford def. Timber Lake, 25-16, 25-12
Lemmon High School def. Langford, 25-15, 25-21
Lake Preston Tournament=
DeSmet def. Flandreau, 25-16, 25-20
Estelline-Hendricks def. DeSmet, 25-20, 25-19
Iroquois-Lake Preston def. Sioux Valley, 0-25, 25-0, 25-0
Sioux Valley def. DeSmet, 18-25, 25-22, 25-17
Waverly-South Shore def. Waubay/Summit, 28-26, 25-18

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

Phillips Jr. puts himself in record book again, FCS No. 15 South Dakota defeats Drake 42-21

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — L.J. Phillips Jr. scored a career-high four rushing touchdowns and had 143 yards rushing on 19 carries as FCS No. 15 South Dakota rolled past Drake, 42-21 on Saturday.

Phillips Jr.'s performance tied him for third in a single game for South Dakota (2-2), putting his name into the record books for a second straight week after a 301-yard performance against Northern Colorado.

Aidan Bouman threw for 226 yards on 13-of-20 passing and had two touchdowns. He connected with Lorenzo Fenner twice, 70-yard and 31-yard touchdown throws, on back-to-back drives. Mikey Munn had a career-high two interceptions.

The Coyotes are on a 10-game winning streak at home, have won six straight against Drake, and are 10-11 against the Bulldogs.

Jackson Voth had six receptions for 85 yards for the Bulldogs (1-2). Logan Inagawa was 15-of-19 passing for 164 yards, one touchdown pass and two interceptions, and added 73 yards rushing with two scores.

Israel kills 34 people in Gaza, say health officials, ahead of UN meeting

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Israeli strikes killed at least 34 people in Gaza City overnight, including children, said health officials on Sunday, as Israel presses ahead with its offensive in the famine-stricken city and several countries prepare to recognize a Palestinian state.

Health officials at Shifa Hospital, where most of the bodies were brought, said the dead included 14 people killed in a late-night strike Saturday, which hit a residential block in the southern side of the city. Health staff said a nurse who worked at the hospital was among the dead, along with his wife and three children.

Israel did not comment on the strikes.

The latest Israeli operation, which began this week, further escalates a conflict that has roiled the Middle East and likely pushes any ceasefire further out of reach. The Israeli military, which has told Palestinians to leave, hasn't given a timeline for the offensive, but there were indications it could take months. Israel says the operation is meant to pressure Hamas into freeing hostages and surrendering.

Several countries to recognize a Palestinian State

Saturday night's strikes come as some prominent Western countries prepare to recognize Palestinian statehood at the gathering of world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly on Monday. They include the U.K., France, Canada, Australia, Malta, Belgium and Luxembourg. Portugal's Foreign Affairs Ministry said it will recognize a Palestinian state on Sunday.

Ahead of the U.N. assembly, peace activists in Israel have hailed the planned recognition of a Palestinian state. On Sunday, a group of more than 60 Jewish and Arab organizations representing about 1,000 activ-

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ists, including some veteran organizations promoting peace and coexistence, known as It's Time Coalition, called for an end to the war, the release of the hostages and the recognition of a Palestinian state.

"We refuse to live forever by the sword. The UN decision offers a historic opportunity to move from a death trap to life, from an endless messianic war to a future of security and freedom for both peoples," said the coalition in a video statement.

On Saturday night, tens of thousands of people in Israel protested, calling for an end to the war and a hostage deal.

Yet a ceasefire remains elusive. Israeli bombardment over the past 23 months has killed more than 65,000 people in Gaza, destroyed vast areas of the strip, displaced around 90% of the population and caused a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with experts saying Gaza City is experiencing famine.

Israel claims killing a Hamas sniper

In a statement Sunday, the military stated it killed Majed Abu Selmiya, who it said was a sniper for Hamas' military wing and was preparing to carry out more attacks in the Gaza City area, without providing evidence.

Majed was the brother of the director of Shifa hospital, Dr. Mohamed Abu Selmiya, who called the allegations a lie and said Israel was trying to justify the killing of civilians. Dr. Selmiya told The Associated Press that his brother, 57, suffered from hypertension, diabetes and had vision problems.

As the attacks continue, Israel has ordered hundreds of thousands of Palestinians sheltering in Gaza City to move south to what it calls a humanitarian zone and opened another corridor south of the city for two days this week to allow more people to evacuate.

Palestinians were streaming out of Gaza City by car and on foot, though many are unwilling to be uprooted again, too weak to leave or unable to afford the cost of moving.

Along the coastal Wadi Gaza route, those too exhausted to continue stopped to catch their breath and give their children a much-needed break from the difficult journey.

Aid groups have warned that forcing thousands of people to evacuate will exacerbate the dire humanitarian crisis. They are appealing for a ceasefire so aid can reach those who need it.

Pope Leo XIV denounces Palestinians' 'forced exile'

Pope Leo XIV blasted what he called the "forced exile" of Palestinians from their homes in Gaza, saying there was no future for the "martyred" Gaza Strip based on violence and vendetta.

During his Sunday noon blessing, Leo issued another appeal for peace and expressed appreciation for the work of Catholic organizations active in helping Palestinians, which had representatives present in St. Peter's Square.

Families of hostages still held by Hamas have accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of condemning their loved ones to death by continuing to fight rather than negotiating an end to the war.

Rome's airport opens luxurious dog hotel with pampering services

By FRANCESCO SPORTELLI Associated Press

FIUMICINO, Italy (AP) — Dog owners often face a dilemma before traveling: leave your beloved pet with a sitter or at a kennel? Both require quite some planning and logistics, which can be stressful and time-consuming for fur parents.

Rome's Fiumicino International Airport has sought to streamline the process by opening one of the first on-site hotels at a major European airport, following a similar initiative in Frankfurt. Dog Relais' workers even retrieve pups from the terminal so travelers can proceed straight to their flight.

"This project is fitting into a strategy to provide a very immersive experience to passengers," said Marilena Blasi, chief commercial officer at Aeroporti di Roma, the company that manages Italian capital's two airports. "In this case, we provide services to dogs and the owners of the dogs."

Basic rooms at the dog hotel cost about €40 (\$47) and feature temperature-controlled floors and private gardens. More timid or solitary dogs can be placed in kennels at the edge of the facility, where they interact with staff rather than other dogs in the common grass pens. At night, ambient music that has a frequency with a low, soft tone — 432 hertz — designed for relaxation is piped in through the rooms' speakers.

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There are optional extras that range from the usual grooming, bathing and cleaning teeth services, to the more indulgent, such as aromatherapy with lavender or peppermint scents to help induce calm, or arnica cream rubbed into aching muscles and joints.

Owners unsatisfied with standard-issue webcams for checking in on their canines from afar can spring for a €60 (about \$70) premium room equipped with a screen for round-the-clock videocalls. They can even pamper their pet by tossing a treat via an application connected to a dispenser.

The facility not only provides its services to travelers, but also to dog owners who need daycare.

Working in human resources for Aeroporti di Roma, Alessandra Morelli regularly leaves her 2-year-old, chocolate-colored Labrador Retriever there.

"Since I've been able to bring Nina to this dog hotel, my life, and the balance between my personal and professional life have changed because it allows me to enjoy my working day and my personal travels in total peace and tranquility," said Morelli, 47.

Dario Chiassarini, 32, said he started bringing his Rottweiler puppy, Athena, to Dog Relais for training, another service on offer, because it's clean, well-organized and its location was easily accessible. And he said he plans to check his beloved pup into the hotel whenever he and his girlfriend need to travel.

"We will rely on them without hesitation and without doubt — both because we got to know the people who work here, which for us is essential, and because of the love they have for animals and the peace of mind of knowing who we are entrusting Athena to," said Chiassarini, who works in car sales. "It is certainly a service that, if we should need it, we will make use of."

The dog hotel has proved popular so far. All 40 rooms were occupied in August, when Italians take their customary summer vacation and millions of passengers come through Fiumicino. Occupancy averaged almost 2/3 since doors opened in May, said Blasi.

The same month the dog hotel opened, Italy's commercial aviation authority changed rules to allow large dogs to fly inside plane cabins for domestic flights, provided they are inside secured crates. The first such flight will take off on Sept. 23, according to transport minister, Matteo Salvini.

Salvini admits that while many are happy with having their pups on the plane, others may feel annoyed. However, at a pet conference on Sept. 16, he said: "We always have to use judgment, but ... for me it's a source of pride, as well as a step forward from the point of view of civilization."

Polls open in Guinea in a referendum that could allow junta leader to run for president

By MONIKA PRONCZUK Associated Press

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) — Polls opened in Guinea on Sunday for a referendum on a draft constitution that could allow the leader of the country's junta, who took power by force four years ago, to run for the presidency.

The referendum, a key step in the country's transition from military to civilian rule, is being closely monitored in the coup-battered region, with critics calling it a power grab. Elections are expected to follow in December.

Guinea is one of a growing number of West African countries, including Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, where the military has taken over. Some say Sunday's referendum is a way for Gen. Mamadi Doumbouya to seek the presidency and legitimize his military rule.

There are 6.7 million eligible voters and the referendum needs a turnout of at least 50% to pass.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. local time and are expected to close at 6 p.m.

A campaign with the opposition missing

Dozens of residents wearing their best clothes were lining up in central Conakry before dawn, waiting for a polling station to open.

"We came early, before the crowds come," said Albert Nabi Youlla, a 55-year-old middle school teacher. "We are here to fulfill our civic duty," he said, adding that the draft constitution "worked" for him.

In contrast to the festive atmosphere inside the polling stations, tanks and military barricades in the

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streets were a stark reminder of the junta's rule.

In the last days of the campaign, Conakry, Guinea's capital, was buzzing with activity. There were Quran readings, reggae concerts and prayers held in support of Doumbouya. Supporters wearing T-shirts and boubous — traditional West African flowing garments — printed with Doumbouya's face, gathered at neighborhood rallies. Only one thing was missing: the opposition.

Campaigning was banned on Friday and Saturday, but the referendum remained omnipresent. Public and private buildings in Conakry remained plastered with "Yes" campaign billboards calling for approval of the referendum. At a concert held Friday night in one of Conakry's bars, band members sang a song about Doumbouya, repeatedly chanting "Oui! Oui! Oui!" or "Yes! Yes! Yes!" in French, the country's official language.

The military regime had silenced critics and last year dissolved more than 50 political parties in a move it claimed was to "clean up the political chessboard." Weeks before the referendum, it suspended the three main opposition parties, making it impossible for them to organize rallies and speak to the population.

Mabinty Kalabane, a 23-year-old baker, voted on Sunday for the first time. She came to the polling station in central Conakry in a golden brown dress, a gift from her mother. "I feel proud. I feel 100% Guinean, thanks to this card," she said, referring to the voting card she held in her hand. She was going to vote "yes" after reading parts of the draft constitution and finding it was "in our advantage."

More than half of Guinea's population cannot read or write, which means they only get information about the new constitution from the "yes" camp, said Rafiou Sow, president of the opposition Renewal and Progress Party, one of the suspended political entities, who called for the boycott of the referendum.

"Our activists and supporters have no knowledge of this constitution. The moment we were excluded, they were excluded," he said. "We, who were supposed to help Guineans understand what is written in it, we are forbidden even to speak."

Junta leader is the campaign's central figure

When Doumbouya seized control in 2021 after ousting President Alpha Conde, he said he acted to prevent the country from slipping into chaos and chastised the previous government for broken promises.

Despite rich natural resources, over half of Guinea's population of 15 million people is experiencing "unprecedented levels of poverty and food insecurity," according to the World Food Program.

Doumbouya initially said he would not run for the presidency. But the draft constitution allows junta members to run for office and extends the presidential mandate from five to seven years, renewable twice.

"Today, clearly the question is about the referendum vote," said Gen. Amara Camara, Secretary-General to the Presidency, after The Associated Press asked him whether Doumbouya would seek the top post. "When the time comes, we will talk about it."

Although Doumbouya has not spoken publicly about whether he would run in December's election, he remains the main figure of the referendum campaign.

Tiguidanké Guirassy, a 20-year-old university graduate who attended a rally on Thursday evening in central Conakry, said she was "inspired" by Doumbouya to vote in favor of the constitution.

"In my neighborhood, we didn't have roads," she said. "Now, he took care of that, we have roads. He has made a lot of progress for Guinea and I hope he will continue on this path."

Critics denounce a power grab

If adopted, the constitution would introduce several changes, including creating the Senate and allowing independent candidates to stand in the election.

Fanta Conte, a member of Guinea's National Transition Council, said the referendum was not about Doumbouya, but about the new constitution, which would give more power to the legislative branch of government.

Analysts said that while the direction of the new constitution was good, the changes were not necessary.

"We've always had constitutions that enshrined balance of powers and democratic and even modern institutions," said Kabinet Fofana, head of the Conakry-based Guinean Association of Political Sciences. "But the problem is not the constitution — it is rather respect (for it), its applicability, and rule of law."

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Critics denounced the referendum as a way to legitimize the military coup.

Since coming to power, the military junta has been tightening its grip on independent media and the opposition, according to rights organizations. Human Rights Watch accused the military regime of disappearing its opponents and silencing critical media voices. Reporters Without Borders said that journalists have faced attacks and arrests, with information sites and radio stations interrupted or suspended.

But many Guineans, disillusioned with previous regimes, have been seduced by Doumbouya's vision of a prosperous, developed Guinea, which would finally benefit all.

"We have seen many regimes here, but since the arrival of (Doumbouya), there has been change," said Ben Daouda Sylla, a 30-year-old lawyer. "He is doing everything possible to ensure that Guinea moves forward."

Fallout from cyberattack on check-in systems at 3 European airports continues for 2nd day

BRUSSELS (AP) — Fallout from a cyberattack that affected check-in systems at several European airports extended into a second full day on Sunday, as passengers faced dozens of cancelled and delayed flights and airport teams scrambled to limit the damage to travel plans.

Starting late Friday, major airports in Brussels, London and Berlin were hit by disruptions to electronic systems that snarled up check-in and sent airline staffers trying options like hand-writing boarding passes or using backup laptops. Many other European airports were unaffected.

It was not immediately clear who might be behind the cyberattack, but experts said it could turn out to be hackers, criminal organizations, or state actors.

The cyberattack affected software of Collins Aerospace, whose systems help passengers check in, print boarding passes and bag tags, and dispatch their luggage. The U.S.-based company on Saturday cited a "cyber-related disruption" to its software at "select" airports in Europe.

While departure boards for London's Heathrow and Berlin's Brandenburg airports were showing signs of smoother arrivals and departures on Sunday, Brussels Airport was still facing considerable issues.

Ihsane Chioua Lekhli, a spokesperson for Brussels Airport, said 45 outbound and 30 inbound flights were cancelled on Sunday, more than double the number a day earlier: 25 departures and 13 arrivals cancelled.

The cyberattack affected only computer systems at check-in desks, not self-service kiosks, she said, and teams were turning to alternative backup systems and pulling out laptop computers to help cope with the impact.

It remained unclear when the situation would be fixed, she said: "For now, we have no idea on the timing, we're taking it day by day."

The airports advised passengers to check the status of their flights before traveling to the airports, and using alternative check-in methods.

"Work continues to resolve and recover from Friday's outage of a Collins Aerospace airline system that impacted check-in," a Heathrow statement said. "We apologize to those who have faced delays, but by working together with airlines, the vast majority of flights have continued to operate."

A rolling message Sunday on the Brandenburg Airport's web page said: "Due to a systems outage at a service provider, there are longer waiting times. Please use online check-in, self-service check-in and the fast bag drop service."

Collins, an aviation and defense technology company that is a subsidiary of RTX Corp., formerly Raytheon Technologies, said Saturday it was working to resolve the issue.

"The impact is limited to electronic customer check-in and baggage drop and can be mitigated with manual check-in operations," it said in a statement.

Man is arrested and charged in New Hampshire country club shooting

By MICHAEL CASEY and PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

NASHUA, N.H. (AP) — A gunman opened fire in a New Hampshire country club on Saturday as a wedding was taking place, killing one person and wounding two others, authorities said.

The person who died at the Sky Meadow Country Club in Nashua was a 59-year-old man identified as Robert Steven DeCesare, according to New Hampshire Attorney General John Formella and Nashua Police Chief Kevin Rourke.

Authorities identified the suspect as Hunter Nadeau, age 23, and said he had been arrested and charged with one count of second-degree murder for knowingly shooting DeCesare.

"Additional charges likely will be brought, including for the additional shooting victims," Formella and Rourke said in a statement. They said they expect Nadeau to be arraigned at the Ninth Circuit Court in Nashua on Monday.

Authorities had initially thought there could be two shooters but later said that was mistaken and there was only one. Police said there was no further danger to the public.

Investigators were still working to determine a motive, New Hampshire Senior Assistant Attorney General Peter Hinckley said.

Information on the wounded victims' conditions was not immediately available.

Tom Bartelson of Pepperell, Massachusetts, who was at the country club, described a chaotic scene that unfolded near his nephew's wedding. He said he heard the shooter say "the children are safe" and "free Palestine" and appeared to be targeting someone.

"Getting together for a dance for the bride and groom and then all chaos went off," he said. "We heard about six shots and everybody ducked for cover and next thing you know we're rushed into safe spots and things like that."

He said some people dropped to the ground and attempted to get away from the scene. There was a lot of panic, he said.

"We were trying to keep family members safe," he said. "Keep everybody down and try to find safe spots."

The mother of DeCesare, the man who was killed, had earlier described not being able to find her son after he was shot.

"He went down. My daughter in law and granddaughter escaped ... They saw my son go down and they saw blood," the mother, Evie O'Rourke of Salem, New Hampshire, said.

Emily Ernst, who was at the scene, said she saw a gunman in all black.

"He had a mask on. We just saw him raise the gun and then we ran," Ernst said. "I ran through the kitchen for my life."

Aerial video from WMUR-TV showed multiple emergency responders heading to the scene. Later, Nashua Mayor Jim Donchess said he had faith in police to "get to the bottom of this and bring the perpetrator to justice."

He added: "I think the message is for every community out there is that no matter how unlikely it seems it can happen where you live."

U.S. Rep. Maggie Goodlander said in a statement that she was "closely monitoring the tragic reports of a shooting tonight at Sky Meadow Country Club in Nashua" and that her heart was with the victims, their families and the community.

Nashua is about 45 miles (70 kilometers) northwest of Boston, just across the Massachusetts border.

US lawmakers push for military dialogue in a rare China visit

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers pushed for more military-to-military dialogue in a meeting Sunday with China's Premier Li Qiang, a rare congressional visit since the U.S.-China relations

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soured.

The last trip by a group of senators was in 2023, and Sunday's delegation was the first from the House of Representatives to visit Beijing since 2019.

Li welcomed the delegates led by Rep. Adam Smith and called it an "icebreaking trip that will further the ties between the two countries."

"It is important for our two countries to have more exchanges and cooperation, this is not only good for our two countries but also of great significance to the world," Li said.

Smith, a Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said both sides were in agreement on the overarching aim of the visit.

"Certainly, trade and economy is on the top of the list ... (but also) we're very focused on our military-to-military conversations," he said in opening remarks. "As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I'm deeply concerned that our two militaries don't communicate more."

The delegation also included Michael Baumgartner, a Republican member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as Ro Khanna and Chrissy Houlahan, both Democrats on the House Armed Services Committee. The lawmakers are in China until Thursday.

U.S.-China relations have taken a downturn since President Donald Trump's first term and have been hobbled by trade tensions, the status of the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, Beijing's support for Russia and China's vast claims in the disputed South China Sea.

"China and the U.S. are the two most powerful and influential countries in the world, it's really important that we get along, and we find a way to peacefully coexist in the world," Smith said. "I really welcome your remarks about wanting to build and strengthen that relationship."

Trump said he would meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping at a regional summit taking place at the end of October in South Korea and will visit China in the "early part of next year," following a lengthy phone call between the two on Friday.

The Taliban reject Trump's bid to retake Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan

JALALABAD, Afghanistan (AP) — The Taliban government on Sunday rejected U.S. President Donald Trump's bid to retake Bagram Air Base, four years after America's chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan left the sprawling military facility in the Taliban hands.

It is unclear what conversations the U.S. has had with Afghan officials about returning to the country. But Trump hinted that the Taliban, who have struggled with an economic crisis, international legitimacy, internal rifts and rival militant groups since their return to power in 2021, could be open to allowing the U.S. military back.

The chief Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, rejected Trump's assertions and urged the U.S. to adopt a policy of "realism and rationality." Afghanistan had an economy-oriented foreign policy and sought constructive relations with all states on the basis of mutual and shared interests, Mujahid posted on X.

It had been consistently communicated to the U.S. in all bilateral negotiations that Afghanistan's independence and territorial integrity were of the utmost importance, he said.

"It should be recalled that, under the Doha Agreement, the United States pledged that 'it will not use or threaten force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Afghanistan, nor interfere in its internal affairs,'" he said. The U.S. needed to remain faithful to its commitments, he added.

Mujahid did not reply to questions from The Associated Press about conversations with the Trump administration regarding Bagram and why Trump believed the U.S. could retake it.

In August last year, the Taliban celebrated the third anniversary of their takeover at Bagram with a grand military display of abandoned U.S. hardware, catching the eye of the White House. Trump has repeatedly criticized his predecessor, Joe Biden, for his "gross incompetence" during the withdrawal of U.S. forces after the country's longest war.

UK set to recognize Palestinian state despite opposition from the US

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. is expected to recognize a Palestinian state later Sunday despite opposition from the U.S., after judging that Israel has not met conditions it set over the war in Gaza.

Though the anticipated move is largely symbolic, the U.K. hopes that it could increase diplomatic pressure for an end to the conflict in Gaza as well as help pave the way for a long-lasting peace based on two states living side-by-side.

Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, who was foreign secretary until earlier this month, said an announcement on the recognition of a Palestinian state will come later Sunday from Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

"Any decision to recognise a Palestinian state, if that were to take place later on today, does not make a Palestinian state happen overnight," he told Sky News.

He suggested that recognition would help keep the prospect of a two-state solution alive, and stressed that identifying the Palestinian people with Hamas was a false narrative.

Road map to recognition

In July, in the wake of intense pressure within his governing Labour Party, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the U.K. would recognize a Palestinian state unless Israel agreed to a ceasefire in Gaza, allowed the U.N. to bring in aid and took other steps toward long-term peace.

The anticipated move comes ahead of the U.N. General Assembly this week, where other nations, including Australia, Canada and France, are also readying to recognize a Palestinian state. Portugal is expected to do so later Sunday.

More than 140 countries have already taken the step to recognize a Palestinian state, but the decisions by France and Britain are significant as they are both members of the Group of Seven and the U.N. Security Council.

Not universally popular

The U.K.'s expected recognition of a Palestinian state comes just days after a state visit from U.S. President Donald Trump, during which he voiced his disapproval of the plan.

"I have a disagreement with the prime minister on that score," Trump said.

Critics, including the U.S. and the Israeli government, which has shown no interest in a two-state solution, have condemned the plans, saying it rewards Hamas and terrorism. As well as arguing that recognition is immoral, critics argue that it's an empty gesture given that the Palestinian people are divided into two territories — the West Bank and Gaza — with no recognized international capital.

Starmer has insisted that Hamas will have no role in the future of the governance of the Palestinian people and must release the Israeli hostages it still holds from the attacks on Oct. 7, 2023.

Historical overlay

France and the U.K. have a historic role in the politics of the Middle East over the past 100 years, having carved up the region following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

As part of that carve-up, the U.K. became the governing power of what was then Palestine. It was also author of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which backed the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people."

However, the second part of the declaration has been largely neglected over the decades. It noted "that nothing shall be done, nothing which may prejudice the civil and religious rights" of the Palestinian people.

Lammy, who will represent the U.K. at the U.N. this week, said in July that this had not been upheld and represented "a historical injustice which continues to unfold."

The Palestinian head of mission in the U.K. Husam Zomlot told the BBC that recognition would right a colonial-era wrong.

"The issue today is ending the denial of our existence that started 108 years ago, in 1917," he said. "And I think today, the British people should celebrate a day when history is being corrected, when wrongs are

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being righted, when recognition of the wrongs of the past are beginning to be corrected.”

Change of tack

The U.K. has for decades supported an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, but insisted recognition must come as part of a peace plan to achieve a two-state solution.

However, the government has become increasingly worried that such a solution is becoming all but impossible – not only because of the razing of Gaza and displacement of most of its population during nearly two years of conflict, but because Israel’s government is aggressively expanding settlements in the West Bank, land Palestinians want for their future state. Much of the world regards Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, which is ostensibly run by the Palestinian Authority, as illegal.

“We are working to reform the Palestinian Authority, and we have to keep two states alive for the children of both Gaza and the West Bank and East Jerusalem,” said Lammy.

French mayors to fly Palestinian flags despite government orders

PARIS (AP) — Several French mayors plan to fly Palestinian flags on town halls in defiance of government orders, as France prepares to formally recognize a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly.

It’s unclear how many cities will join the initiative on Monday after Socialist leader Olivier Faure’s call to fly the flags, despite warnings from the Interior Ministry against such displays in a country with both Europe’s largest Jewish and Muslim populations.

But the call has been gaining momentum as Palestinian flags have been more and more visible in France over the nearly two-year war in Gaza. Palestinian banners were on display in demonstrations this week during a big day of protests across the country that criticized several policies by French President Emmanuel Macron and his government.

The war in Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict are expected to be at the top of the agenda of world leaders at their annual gathering at the U.N. General Assembly starting Monday.

The Palestinians had said they hope at least 10 more countries will recognize the state of Palestine, adding to the more than 145 countries that already do.

Mathieu Hanotin, the mayor of Saint-Denis, the Paris suburb hosting the national soccer stadium, said he will fly the Palestinian flag from the city town hall in a solidarity gesture with the Palestinian people. In western France, the city of Nantes also plans to raise the Palestinian flag on the city hall building, Mayor Johanna Rolland, a Socialist, told France information.

“For municipalities that wish to join, through a symbolic gesture, France’s recognition of the state of Palestine, I believe it makes sense. I will do so without hesitation,” she said.

In a note sent to the State’s representative in regions, France’s Interior Ministry instructed them to oppose the display of Palestinian flags on town halls and other public buildings, citing the risks of importing an ongoing international conflict onto national territory.

“The principle of neutrality in public service prohibits such displays,” the Interior Ministry said, adding that any decisions by mayors to fly the Palestinian flag should be referred to administrative courts.

“The front of a town hall is not a billboard. Only the tricolor flag — our colors, our values — has the right to be represented in what remains, for us, a common home,” Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau said on Saturday.

Ian Brossat, a spokesman for the French Communist Party, accused Retailleau of contradicting France’s official position.

“The interior minister disagrees with French diplomacy. He does not support the recognition of a Palestinian state, unlike the president,” Brossat told BFM TV. “By asserting his personal beliefs instead of upholding the position of the French Republic, which is to recognize a Palestinian state, he is taking France and its diplomacy hostage.”

In June, Nice city mayor Christian Estrosi, who had put on display Israeli flags on the Riviera city’s town hall to show his support for hostages held by Hamas, was forced by a court decision to remove them.

The Socialist mayor of Paris suburb Saint-Ouen, Karim Bouamrane, said he would display both the Israeli

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and Palestinian flags on the facade of his town hall in a bid to carry a message of peace.

"We are one community, the republican community," he told RMC radio. "The community I stand for is that of peace: I do not want to pit Muslims against Jews, nor activists against Hamas supporters and those against (Benjamin) Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister."

AP Top 25 Preview: Texas Tech and Indiana set to rise in poll after upset wins

By MAURA CAREY AP Sports Writer

Six AP Top 25 teams, all within the top 15, watched college football from the comfort of their dormitories or homes with an early bye week. Nineteen ranked teams and plenty of hopefuls took the field on Saturday in a slate featuring three ranked matchups.

No. 17 Texas Tech won the turnover battle in a 34-10 road victory against No. 16 Utah. Texas Tech made a convincing argument to move up in the poll. The highest-ranked Big 12 team, No. 12 Iowa State, had a bye week, giving Texas Tech a shot to leap over the Cyclones in the rankings.

No. 11 Oklahoma handed former Sooners' quarterback Jackson Arnold and No. 22 Auburn a 24-17 loss. Oklahoma scored a touchdown and notched a safety in the final five minutes of the game, putting the Sooners on top of a close one.

No. 24 Notre Dame earned its first win of the season after a heartbreaker to No. 10 Texas A&M, beating Purdue 56-30.

The Big Ten delivered the most shocking outcome of the day as No. 19 Indiana rolled past No. 9 Illinois 63-10.

Look for them to move up

Texas Tech is sure to move up after beating Big 12 foe Utah. The Red Raiders maintained the lead throughout the game and held the edge in total yards, first downs and time of possession. Even more impressive, they did it with backup quarterback Will Hammond after Behren Morton exited early with an injury.

Indiana is on its way up after a 63-10 win against Illinois. Fernando Mendoza completed all but two passes, throwing for 267 yards and five touchdowns. It was Mendoza's second-straight five touchdown outing and Indiana's first win over a top 10 team in five years. The Hoosiers are on the way to their highest ranking of the season.

Look for them to drop

Turnovers hurt Utah all afternoon. Utes quarterback Devon Dampier threw for 162 yards and two interceptions, and Ryan Davis and Wayshawn Parker each fumbled once. The Utes are likely to fall after an uninspiring performance at home.

Illinois is expected to take a hard hit and could fall out of the rankings entirely after a stunning 63-10 loss to Indiana, the worst loss of Coach Bret Bielema's tenure.

Wild card

No. 21 Michigan could go either way after beating an unranked Nebraska team. Nebraska is a credible opponent that has been closing in on the Top 25 for weeks, but a narrow win against an unranked challenger might not be enough in voters' eyes to move Michigan out of the 20s.

Knocking on the door

Syracuse delivered a well-rounded 34-21 win over Clemson in Death Valley, bumping the Tigers to 1-3 and 1-2 at home. Quarterback Steve Angeli continued to impress, throwing for 244 yards and two touchdowns. Syracuse's defense forced a fumble, an interception and made Clemson punt four times. The Orange made a strong case, but is a win against an unranked team enough?

TCU beat a once-ranked SMU team 35-24 on Saturday. The Horned Frogs have been knocking on the door for weeks, most recently receiving 67 votes in the poll. Could they cross the finish line this week?

Trump and MAGA movement will honor Charlie Kirk at Arizona memorial

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

GLENDAL, Ariz. (AP) — President Donald Trump and prominent members of his “Make America Great Again” movement will pay tribute Sunday to conservative activist Charlie Kirk, whose slaying has marked a signal moment in America’s fraught political atmosphere.

The memorial service for Kirk, whom Trump credits with playing a pivotal role in his 2024 election victory, is expected to draw tens of thousands of mourners, including Vice President JD Vance, senior White House officials and young conservatives shaped by the 31-year-old firebrand.

Kirk’s assassination at a Sept. 10 appearance on a Utah college campus has set off a fierce debate about violence, decency and free speech in an era of deep political division. The shooting also has stirred fear among some Americans that Trump is trying to harness outrage over the killing as justification to suppress the voices of his critics and political opponents.

The service will take place at State Farm Stadium, the home of the NFL’s Arizona Cardinals west of Phoenix, where Kirk’s Turning Point organization is based. Security is expected to be tight, with a similar level of federal law enforcement presence as for the Super Bowl or other high-profile event.

Comments about Kirk have become a Trump administration target

Trump has blamed the “radical left” for Kirk’s death and threatened to go after liberal organizations and donors or others whom he feels are maligning or celebrating Kirk’s death.

He criticized House Democrats who voted against a House resolution that praised “the life and legacy” of Kirk, which passed the Republican-controlled House on Friday.

“Who could vote against that? All (Republicans) were saying was ‘Please condemn the assassination of a human being,’” Trump told reporters. “And (Democrats) said, ‘No, no, we’re not going to do that.’”

Dozens of people, from journalists to teachers, already have lost their jobs as prominent conservative activists and administration officials target comments about Kirk that they deem offensive or celebratory. The retaliation has in turn ignited a debate over the First Amendment as the Trump administration promises retribution against those who air what are seen as disparaging remarks in the wake of Kirk’s death.

ABC pulled Jimmy Kimmel’s late-night show off the air indefinitely following backlash from affiliated broadcasters and the Trump-appointed head of the Federal Communications Commission over the comedian’s remarks about Kirk.

The State Department also has warned it would revoke the visas of any foreigners who celebrated Kirk’s assassination.

A 22-year-old Utah man, Tyler Robinson, has been charged with killing Kirk and faces the death penalty if convicted of the most serious charges. Authorities have not revealed a clear motive in the shooting, but prosecutors say Robinson wrote in a text to his partner following the shooting that he “had enough” of Kirk’s hatred.

Kirk’s legacy of conservative political influence

Turning Point, the group Kirk founded to mobilize young Christian conservatives, became a multimillion-dollar operation under his leadership with enormous reach.

The tens of thousands expected to fill the stadium in Glendale for Kirk’s memorial is a testament to the massive influence he accumulated in conservative America.

Kirk was a provocateur who at times made statements that some called racist, misogynistic, anti-immigrant and transphobic. That has drawn backlash from conservatives who view the criticism as cherry-picking a few select moments to insult the legacy they see of an inspirational conservative leader.

Kirk was a MAGA celebrity with a loyal following that turned out to support or argue with him as he traveled the country for the events like the one at Utah Valley University, where he was fatally shot. Kirk grew the organization, in large part, through the force of his personality and debating chops.

Arizona is the adopted home state of Kirk, who grew up outside Chicago and founded Turning Point there before moving the organization to Phoenix. Vance, who has said Kirk’s advocacy was a big reason

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Trump picked him to serve as vice president, transported Kirk's casket from Utah to Arizona aboard Air Force Two the day after his death, and he later served as a guest host of Kirk's podcast.

Scheduled speakers at the service include Trump, Vance, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Donald Trump Jr., right-wing commentator Tucker Carlson and White House aides Stephen Miller and Sergio Gor also are slated to speak.

Longtime worship leader Chris Tomlin will provide music, along with other big names in contemporary Christian music, including Brandon Lake, Phil Wickham, and husband-and-wife duo Kari Jobe Carnes and Cody Carnes.

Kirk's widow, who has been named Turning Point's new leader, also will speak. Erika Kirk pledged in an emotional speech days after his death that "the movement my husband built will not die."

Pentagon steps up media restrictions, now requiring approval before reporting even unclassified info

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

The Pentagon says it will require credentialed journalists at the military headquarters to sign a pledge to refrain from reporting information that has not been authorized for release — including unclassified information.

Journalists who don't abide by the policy risk losing credentials that provide access to the Pentagon, under a 17-page memo distributed Friday that steps up media restrictions imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump.

"Information must be approved for public release by an appropriate authorizing official before it is released, even if it is unclassified," the directive states. The signature form includes an array of security requirements for credentialed media at the Pentagon.

Advocates for press freedoms denounced the non-disclosure requirement as an assault on independent journalism. The new Pentagon restrictions arrive as Trump expands threats, lawsuits and government pressure as he remakes the American media landscape.

"If the news about our military must first be approved by the government, then the public is no longer getting independent reporting. It is getting only what officials want them to see," said National Press Club President Mike Balsamo, also national law enforcement editor at The Associated Press. "That should alarm every American."

Hegseth says no more permission to 'roam the halls'

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, a former Fox News Channel personality, highlighted the restrictions in a social media post on X.

"The 'press' does not run the Pentagon — the people do. The press is no longer allowed to roam the halls of a secure facility," Hegseth said. "Wear a badge and follow the rules — or go home."

The Pentagon this year has evicted many news organizations while imposing a series of restrictions on the press that include banning reporters from entering wide swaths of the Pentagon without a government escort — areas where the press had access in past administrations as it covers the activities of the world's most powerful military.

The Pentagon was embarrassed early in Hegseth's tenure when the editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, Jeffrey Goldberg, was inadvertently included in a group chat on the Signal messaging app where the Defense secretary discussed plans for upcoming military strikes in Yemen. Trump's former national security adviser, Mike Waltz, took responsibility for Goldberg being included and was shifted to another job.

The Defense Department also was embarrassed by a leak to The New York Times that billionaire Elon Musk was to get a briefing on the U.S. military's plans in case a war broke out with China. That briefing never took place, on Trump's orders, and Hegseth suspended two Pentagon officials as part of an investigation into how that news got out.

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Media organizations clap back

On Saturday, the Society of Professional Journalists also objected to the Pentagon's move, calling it "alarming."

"This policy reeks of prior restraint — the most egregious violation of press freedom under the First Amendment — and is a dangerous step toward government censorship," it said in a statement Saturday. "Attempts to silence the press under the guise of 'security' are part of a disturbing pattern of growing government hostility toward transparency and democratic norms."

And Matt Murray, executive editor of The Washington Post, said in the paper's columns Saturday that the new policy runs counter to what's good for the American public.

"The Constitution protects the right to report on the activities of democratically elected and appointed government officials," Murray said. "Any attempt to control messaging and curb access by the government is counter to the First Amendment and against the public interest."

Trump says he will award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Ben Carson

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

President Donald Trump said Saturday that he will award Ben Carson the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, the third such award he's announced this month.

"Congratulations, Ben. He didn't know this," Trump said in a speech during an event at Mount Vernon for American Cornerstone Institute, founded by Carson. "He didn't know it. I hope he's happy."

A former neurosurgeon who ran against Trump for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, Carson, 74, went on to serve as Housing and Urban Development secretary during Trump's first administration.

The one-time rivals developed a strong bond, and Carson — seen at one point as among the top contenders for Trump's running mate in the 2024 campaign — served as Trump's national faith chairman during last year's race.

A staunch social conservative who has opposed abortion rights and same-sex marriage, Carson has become a popular conservative speaker and author.

The Medal of Freedom, established in 1963, is awarded to individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, or cultural or other significant public endeavors.

Trump bestowed the honor on 24 people during his first term and has already announced two other recipients since his return to the White House. Trump mentioned no date for giving the honor to Carson, but other honorees are already in the pipeline.

Earlier this month, Trump said he would bestow the award on former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, two days after his longtime political ally was seriously injured in a car crash.

During a Sept. 11 commemoration event at the Pentagon, Trump announced that he would posthumously give the award to conservative activist Charlie Kirk, who was assassinated earlier this month and whose memorial service Trump plans to attend Sunday in Arizona.

Trump nominates White House aide to be top US prosecutor for office probing Letitia James

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday that he would be nominating senior White House aide Lindsey Halligan to serve as the top federal prosecutor for the Virginia office that was thrown into turmoil when its U.S. attorney was pushed out Friday.

In a social media post just after he departed the White House for an event at Mount Vernon, Trump wrote he was nominating Halligan as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, writing that she

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"will be Fair, Smart, and will provide, desperately needed, JUSTICE FOR ALL!"

The announcement came as Trump pressed Attorney General Pam Bondi to move forward with pursuing cases against some of his political opponents, part of a vow for retribution that has been a theme of his return to the White House.

The nomination would place one of the president's legal defenders in charge of an office in tumult over political pressure by administration officials to criminally charge New York Attorney General Letitia James, a longtime foe of Trump, in a mortgage fraud investigation.

Erik Siebert, who had been the office's top prosecutor, resigned amid a push by Trump administration officials to bring charges in the investigation, which stems from allegations of paperwork discrepancies on James' Brooklyn townhouse and a Virginia home.

The Justice Department has spent months investigating, and there's been no indication that prosecutors have managed to uncover any degree of incriminating evidence necessary to secure an indictment. James' lawyers have vigorously denied any allegations and characterized the investigation as an act of political revenge.

Halligan has been part of Trump's legal orbit for the last several years, including serving as one of his attorneys in the early days of the FBI's investigation into Trump's retention of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. She has more recently been enlisted in a White House effort to remove what the administration contends is "improper ideology" from Smithsonian properties.

Earlier Saturday, Trump posted to social media what appeared to be somewhat of an open letter to Bondi, saying he had "reviewed over 30 statements and posts" that he characterized as criticizing his administration for a lack of action on investigations, including the one into James' dealings. Trump's message mentioned former FBI Director James Comey, Trump's longtime foil whom he fired during his first term amid the Russia election interference investigation.

The FBI acknowledged this summer that it was investigating Comey, who was interviewed by the Secret Service after an Instagram post that Republicans insisted was a call for violence against Trump. Comey has said he did not mean the post as a threat and removed it once he realized how it was being interpreted.

Asked as he departed the White House if he was criticizing Bondi, Trump said he just wanted action.

"We have to act fast — one way or the other," Trump said. "They're guilty, they're not guilty — we have to act fast. If they're not guilty, that's fine. If they are guilty or if they should be charged, they should be charged. And we have to do it now."

In announcing Halligan's nomination soon after on social media, Trump said that Bondi was "doing a GREAT job."

The selection of Halligan came just hours after another conservative lawyer, Mary "Maggie" Cleary, said in an email to staff that she had been named acting U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, according to a copy viewed by The Associated Press.

"While this appointment was unexpected, I am humbled to be joining your ranks," Cleary, a conservative lawyer who has said she was falsely accused of being at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, told employees in the email.

While Siebert said in an email to colleagues Friday evening that he had submitted his resignation, Trump said in a social media post: "He didn't quit, I fired him!" Trump noted he was backed by the state's two Democratic senators, Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, adding: "Next time let him go in as a Democrat, not a Republican."

160-mile march for democracy arrives in Washington from Philadelphia

By MIKE PESOLI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Over the span of 14 days, nearly 200 people marched from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., in defense of democracy.

From children to the elderly, members of the We Are America march arrived in the nation's capital on a

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warm and sunny Friday afternoon, tired but joyous, where they were greeted with hugs and cheers from supporters and members of Congress.

The mission of their sprawling walk was to unite a movement strong enough to hold America's leaders accountable in the face of mass firings at government agencies, the federal takeover of the District of Columbia's law enforcement and myriad disagreements with actions made by the Trump administration and the president himself.

Marchers from across the country gathered in Philadelphia, then trekked through Newark, Delaware; Wilmington, Delaware; Baltimore and beyond. Along the way they were housed in churches, where they slept in pews, or at people's homes. One night the group camped outdoors.

Founding member Maggie Bohara said the marchers were warmly greeted in every community they entered, given food, water and shelter.

"It really showed that there are people who believe in what we believe in and that we're not alone in this," Bohara said.

80-year-old Dianne Shaw-Cummins and her son Ted Regnaud were members of the march. Shaw-Cummins, who lives in Arizona but spends the summer in Minnesota with Regnaud, said one morning her son asked how she felt about walking from Philadelphia to Washington, to which she replied, "I can do that."

"I want better for my grandchildren. I want better for my children. I want better for all people that live and breathe in the United States of America," she said.

Speaking to the marchers shortly after their arrival, Rep. Al Green, D-Texas, likened the march to Bloody Sunday, the day in 1965 when civil rights activists marched from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, and were attacked by law enforcement on the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

"You marched on 160 miles, and today you are now bringing the Edmund Pettus Bridge moment to Washington, D.C. You're bringing it to fruition," Green said.

The marchers carried a version of the U.S. Constitution with them that was created by children from across the country. They gifted it to Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., after they arrived in Washington. Van Hollen sprang into the national spotlight in April when he flew to El Salvador to meet with his constituent, Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who was wrongly deported by the Trump administration in March.

Founding We Are America member MJ Tune said they carried the Constitution to remind elected officials of their oath to defend it against enemies, both foreign and domestic.

"We also wanted to build a sense of community on this March. Right now we feel like so many people in America have lost a sense of community, and community is essential to creating a movement that can sustain long-term nonviolent action, which is our ultimate goal," Tune said.

Emerging TikTok deal with China ensures US control of board and crucial algorithm, White House says

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An emerging TikTok deal with China will ensure that U.S. companies control the algorithm that powers the app's video feed and Americans will hold a majority of seats on a board overseeing U.S. operations, the White House said Saturday.

A central question to the tug of war between Washington and Beijing has been whether the popular social video platform would keep its algorithm after the potential divestment of Chinese parent company ByteDance.

Congress passed legislation calling for a TikTok ban to go into effect in January, but President Donald Trump has repeatedly signed orders that have allowed TikTok to keep operating in the United States as his administration tries to reach agreement for ByteDance to sell its U.S. operations.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said tech giant Oracle would be responsible for the app's data and security and that Americans will control six of the seven seats for a planned board. Oracle did not respond to a request for comment.

"We have great American patriots that are buying it — very, very substantial people, people that love our

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country," Trump told reporters on Saturday evening, the day after discussing the TikTok deal with China's Xi Jinping in a lengthy phone call. "And they're very smart technologically, and they will not let anything bad happen to TikTok."

Leavitt, in a Fox News "Saturday in America" interview, said "the algorithm will also be controlled by America as well," offering more detail about how the deal, at least in the eyes of the White House, is taking shape.

TikTok's algorithm fuels what users see on the app. American officials have warned the algorithm is vulnerable to manipulation by Chinese authorities, who can use it to shape content on the platform in a way that's difficult to detect.

"We are 100% confident that a deal is done, now that deal just needs to be signed and the president's team is working with their Chinese counterparts to do just that," Leavitt said.

Trump said after his call with Xi that American investors were lined up and that the Chinese leader has been "a gentleman" about the matter. The Republican president was vague on the crucial question of whether China would control the algorithm.

"It's all being worked out," Trump said. "We're going to have very good control."

A statement from the Chinese government after that phone call did not clarify what Xi had agreed to regarding a sale of a controlling stake by TikTok's Chinese parent company to avoid a U.S. ban.

Leavitt said Trump "recognized the need to protect Americans' privacy and data while also keeping this app open," adding that "TikTok is a vital part of our democratic process."

A recent Pew Research Center survey found that about one-third of Americans said they supported a TikTok ban, down from 50% in March 2023. Roughly one-third said they would oppose a ban, and a similar percentage said they weren't sure.

Among those who said they supported banning the social media platform, about 8 in 10 cited concerns over users' data security being at risk as a major factor in their decision, according to the report.

Leavitt expressed confidence that the agreement would be finalized soon. "Now we just need this deal to be signed," she said. "And that will be happening, I anticipate, in the coming days."

Democratic leaders in Congress demand a meeting with Trump as government shutdown looms

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — As a possible federal shutdown looms, the Democratic leaders of Congress are demanding a meeting with President Donald Trump to negotiate an end to what they call "your decision" to shutter government offices if no action is taken by the end-of-the month deadline.

Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries said Saturday that Republicans, at Trump's insistence, have refused to enter talks. Democrats are pushing to preserve health care programs as part of any deal to keep government running past the Sept. 30 funding deadline.

"We write to demand a meeting in connection with your decision to shut down the federal government because of the Republican desire to continue to gut the healthcare of the American people," the two New York Democrats wrote.

"Democrats have been clear and consistent in our position," they said. "We are ready to work toward a bipartisan spending agreement that improves the lives of American families and addresses the Republican healthcare crisis."

Trump, in an exchange with reporters on Saturday evening, suggested that he remains open to a potential meeting but was dismissive of the Democratic leadership.

"I'd love to meet with them, but I don't think it's going to have any impact," he said.

Congress, which is controlled by Republicans, failed to address the funding issue before lawmakers left town Friday for a break.

The House approved a Republican proposal to keep the federal government funded into November, but the measure failed in the Senate. A Democratic proposal that would have boosted health care funds also

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failed.

It all leaves Congress and the White House with no easy way out of the standoff that threatens a shut-down in less than two weeks when the current budget year and funding expires. Trump's first term in office saw a monthlong shutdown, the longest in federal history, in 2018-2019.

Trump predicted Friday that there could be "a closed country for a period of time." He said the government will continue to "take care" of the military and Social Security payments in a closure.

Republicans have insisted they are not to blame for any possible shutdown, turning it back on Democrats.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., have put forward the short-term measure, which is a typical way that Congress resolves such logjams. That would keep government operations running at current levels as talks get underway.

While the House was able to narrowly pass the temporary funding measure on a mostly party-line vote, in the Senate the process can require a higher 60-vote threshold that means support is needed from Republicans and Democrats.

Democrats are working to protect health care programs. The Democratic proposal would extend enhanced health insurance subsidies set to expire at the end of the year, plus reverse Medicaid cuts that were included in Republicans' big tax break and spending cut bill enacted earlier this year.

Republicans have said the Democrats' demands to reverse the Medicaid changes are a nonstarter, but they have also said there is time to address the health insurance subsidy issue in the months ahead.

Marchers gather in worldwide protest of financial institutions 'profiting off the climate crisis'

By MELINA WALLING Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Thousands of activists marched down Park Avenue and turned down Billionaires' Row toward Trump Tower in New York Saturday to "Make Billionaires Pay," calling for climate justice, democracy, free speech, gender equality, a stop to the Trump's immigration crackdown and a ceasefire in Gaza.

Their signs and reasons for taking to the streets were diverse, but many said the march highlighted a common theme behind the issues they stood for: that a small, elite class of the wealthy and powerful consistently prioritized profits over people's lives.

"I don't see them as movements. I don't see them as organizations. I just see humanity. We are all on this Earth. This is our mother," said Mahaishuwea, whose name means Eagle Woman in the language of the Hidatsa tribe, which is based in North Dakota.

As marchers gathered, she spoke about her personal experiences growing up on the Fort Berthold Indian reservation, where she survived cancer. Standing in front of investment management company Blackstone's headquarters, she connected the violent history of colonization and resource extraction on Indigenous lands to the present-day greed of the powerful. "They have a sickness," she said.

Demonstrations have been planned around the world this week ahead of the United Nations General Assembly and New York Climate Week. Despite years of international conferences, negotiations and treaties, countries have continued to increase their emissions of carbon dioxide and other planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions, fueling more frequent and intense extreme weather events. 2024 was the hottest year on record, and the Trump administration has been working to roll back foundational environmental rules. This has freed the way for oil and coal industries to pollute more while presenting more roadblocks to wind and solar energy development.

Tamika Middleton, managing director of the Women's March, said that although it sometimes can be challenging to bring together people who are passionate about different causes, this year the intersections between them felt clearer. "The climate crisis, economic fights and immigrant fights are all really one big fight," she said.

The crowd stretched for over four city blocks and passed by luxury stores like Louis Vuitton, Bergdorf Goodman and Tiffany & Co. Some carried enormous papier-mache puppets of Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg. Several grabbed the edges of a 160-foot "climate polluters bill" calling out the economic

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damages wrought by extreme weather events made worse by the carbon emissions of major polluting companies.

Others dressed as the Statue of Liberty, rang cowbells and waved flags with the Star Wars character Princess Leia or homemade signs inked in sharpie and paint. One simply read: "Free Kimmel."

Tatiana Cruz was one of the people holding up the puppet of Elon Musk. "Eat the rich, that's the main message," she said, smiling. But she also explained that this was her first year actively protesting more after two of her friends were deported after being detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Since then, she has gotten more involved in movements for migrant rights, Palestinian liberation and fighting climate change.

"The monster up top is similar in a lot of different scenarios," she said.

Julia Donahue-Wait had come out from the South Bronx with a group of families who had started organizing together and also described the many causes present at the march as interconnected. Her young daughter Eurydice has grown up on picket lines and helped with the poster painting. Behind her, another protester held a sign: "Our work is love," it read.

"It's all people without power taking it back," Donahue-Wait said. "What we say to the kids is, we have safety and we need to stand up for people who don't have safety."

Mahaishuwea said although many people are scared, she thought it was important to show up.

Her 12-year-old daughter is back at home. But she wants to teach future generations how to speak up, and "to show people we're not afraid," she said.

At the end of the march, protesters held a five-minute moment of silence during which they sat in front of the Trump International Hotel and Tower.

White House says \$100K H-1B visa fee won't apply to existing holders as Trump move stirs anxiety

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, SEUNG MIN KIM and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's latest plan to overhaul the American immigration system has left some immigrant workers confused, forcing the White House on Saturday to scramble to clarify that a new \$100,000 fee on visas for skilled tech workers only applies to new applicants and not to current visa holders.

The president on Friday, with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick by his side, signed a proclamation that will require the new fee for what are known as H-1B visas — meant for high-skilled jobs that tech companies find hard to fill.

"Those who already hold H-1B visas and are currently outside of the country right now will NOT be charged \$100,000 to re-enter," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a posting on X. "This applies only to new visas, not renewals, and not current visa holders."

The fee takes effect at 12:01 a.m. ET Sunday. It is scheduled to expire after a year. But it could be extended if the government determines that is in the interest of the United States to keep it.

The White House in a social media post also sought to make clear the new rule "does not impact the ability of any current visa holder to travel to/from the U.S."

But immigration attorneys said that the White House move threatened to upend the lives of many skilled workers and has far-reaching impact on American business.

Kathleen Campbell Walker, an immigration attorney with Dickinson Wright based in El Paso, Texas, said in a posting on LinkedIn that the White House move "inserts total chaos in existing H-1B process with basically a day's notice."

Lutnick on Friday told reporters that the fee would be an annual cost for companies.

But a White House official said Saturday that it's a "one-time fee." Asked if Lutnick's comments sowed confusion, the official, who was not authorized to comment publicly about the matter and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the new fee "currently does not apply to renewals but that policy is under discussion."

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Meanwhile, India's government expressed concern Saturday that the Trump administration move would dramatically raise the fee for visas that bring tech workers from there and other countries to the United States.

Trump also rolled out a \$1 million "gold card" visa for wealthy individuals. The moves face near-certain legal challenges amid widespread criticism he is sidestepping Congress.

To be certain, if the moves survive legal muster, they will deliver staggering price increases. The visa fee for skilled workers would jump from \$215.

India's Ministry of External Affairs said Saturday that Trump's plan "was being studied by all concerned, including by Indian industry." The ministry warned that "this measure is likely to have humanitarian consequences by way of the disruption caused for families. Government hopes that these disruptions can be addressed suitably by the U.S. authorities."

More than 70% of H-1B visa holders are from India.

Critics say the H-1B visas undercut American workers

H-1B visas, which require at least a bachelor's degree, are meant for high-skilled jobs that tech companies find difficult to fill. Critics say the program undercuts American workers, luring people from overseas who are often willing to work for as little as \$60,000 annually. That is well below the \$100,000-plus salaries typically paid to U.S. technology workers.

Trump on Friday insisted that the tech industry would not oppose the move. Lutnick, meanwhile, claimed "all big companies" are on board.

Representatives for the biggest tech companies, including Amazon, Apple, Google and Meta, did not immediately respond to messages for comment. Microsoft declined to comment.

"We're concerned about the impact on employees, their families and American employers," the U.S. Chamber of Commerce said. "We're working with the Administration and our members to understand the full implications and the best path forward."

Lutnick said the change will likely result in far fewer H-1B visas than the 85,000 annual cap allows because "it's just not economic anymore."

"If you're going to train people, you're going to train Americans," Lutnick said on a conference call with reporters. "If you have a very sophisticated engineer and you want to bring them in ... then you can pay \$100,000 a year for your H-1B visa."

Trump also announced he will start selling a "gold card" visa with a path to U.S. citizenship for \$1 million after vetting. For companies, it will cost \$2 million to sponsor an employee.

Trump offers 'Platinum Card'

The "Trump Platinum Card" will be available for \$5 million and allows foreigners to spend up to 270 days in the U.S. without being subject to U.S. taxes on non-U.S. income. Trump announced a \$5 million gold card in February to replace an existing investor visa — this is now the platinum card.

Lutnick said the gold and platinum cards would replace employment-based visas that offer paths to citizenship, including for professors, scientists, artists and athletes.

Critics of H-1Bs visas who say they are used to replace American workers applauded the move. U.S. Tech Workers, an advocacy group, called it "the next best thing" to abolishing the visas altogether.

Doug Rand, a senior official at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services during the Biden administration, said the proposed fee increase was "ludicrously lawless."

"This isn't real policy — it's fan service for immigration restrictionists," Rand said. "Trump gets his headlines, and inflicts a jolt of panic, and doesn't care whether this survives first contact with the courts."

Lutnick said the H-1B fees and gold card could be introduced by the president but the platinum card needs congressional approval.

Visas doled out by lottery

Historically, H-1B visas have been doled out through lottery. This year, Amazon was by far the top recipient of H-1B visas with more than 10,000 awarded, followed by Tata Consultancy, Microsoft, Apple and Google. Geographically, California has the highest number of H-1B workers.

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Critics say H-1B spots often go to entry-level jobs, rather than senior positions with unique skill requirements. And while the program isn't supposed to undercut U.S. wages or displace U.S. workers, critics say companies can pay less by classifying jobs at the lowest skill levels, even if the specific workers hired have more experience.

As a result, many U.S. companies find it cheaper to contract out help desks, programming and other basic tasks to consulting companies such as Wipro, Infosys, HCL Technologies and Tata in India and IBM and Cognizant in the U.S. These consulting companies hire foreign workers, often from India, and contract them out to U.S. employers looking to save money.

After cuts to food stamps, Trump administration ends government's annual report on hunger in America

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is ending the federal government's annual report on hunger in America, stating that it had become "overly politicized" and "rife with inaccuracies."

The decision comes two and a half months after President Donald Trump signed legislation sharply reducing food aid to the poor. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the tax and spending cuts bill Republicans muscled through Congress in July means 3 million people would not qualify for food stamps, also known as SNAP benefits.

The decision to scrap the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Household Food Security Report was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

In a press release Saturday, the USDA said the 2024 report, to be released Oct. 22, would be the last. "The questions used to collect the data are entirely subjective and do not present an accurate picture of actual food security," the USDA said. "The data is rife with inaccuracies slanted to create a narrative that is not representative of what is actually happening in the countryside as we are currently experiencing lower poverty rates, increasing wages, and job growth under the Trump Administration."

The Census Bureau reported earlier this month that the U.S. poverty rate dipped from 11% in 2023 to 10.6% last year, before Trump took office.

Critics were quick to accuse the administration of deliberately making it harder to measure hunger and assess the impact of its cuts to food stamps.

"Trump is cancelling an annual government survey that measures hunger in America, rather than allow it to show hunger increasing under his tenure," Bobby Kogan, senior director of federal budget policy at the left-leaning Center for American Progress, said on social media. "This follows the playbook of many non-democracies that cancel or manipulate reports that would otherwise show less-than-perfect news."

Israeli strikes kill 14 in Gaza City as some countries prepare to recognize Palestinian state

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Scores of Palestinians, many pushing carts of belongings or carrying their possessions on their backs, fled Gaza City on Saturday as Israel ramped up its offensive, including with strikes that health officials said killed at least 14 people overnight.

Later in Israel, thousands joined the families of hostages still being held by Hamas to demand that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu negotiate an end to the war.

There were protests in Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv, where a large black banner was unfurled imploring U.S. President Donald Trump to help end the war, with "SAVE THEM!" in yellow letters.

The latest military strikes come as some prominent Western countries prepare to recognize Palestinian statehood at the gathering of world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly next week. They include the U.K., France, Canada, Australia, Malta, Belgium and Luxembourg.

In a statement Friday, Portugal's Foreign Affairs Ministry said it will recognize a Palestinian state on

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Sunday. The Iberian country had previously announced its plans to do so but now set an official date.

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

Israeli bombardment over the past 23 months has killed more than 65,000 people in Gaza, destroyed vast areas of the strip, displaced around 90% of the population and caused a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with experts saying Gaza City is experiencing famine.

Hospital director's relatives among the dead

Dr. Rami Mhanna, the managing director of Shifa Hospital, where some of the bodies were brought, said the dead included six people from the same family after a strike hit their home early Saturday morning. They were relatives of the hospital's director, Dr. Mohamed Abu Selmiya, he said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said five others were killed in another strike close to Shawa Square.

Israel's military said it couldn't comment on the specific strikes without more information, but that it was "operating to dismantle Hamas military capabilities" and "takes feasible precautions to mitigate civilian harm."

Palestinians flee again

Israel has been urging hundreds of thousands of Palestinians sheltering in Gaza City to move south to what it calls a humanitarian zone and opened another corridor south of Gaza City for two days this week to allow more people to evacuate.

Palestinians were streaming out of Gaza City by car and on foot, though many in the famine-stricken city are unwilling to be uprooted again, too weak to leave or unable to afford the cost of moving.

Along the coastal Wadi Gaza route, those too exhausted to continue stopped to catch their breath and give their children a much-needed break from the difficult journey.

"No water, electricity, or internet. People are forced to leave with nothing," said Seif Abu Oomsan. "They target us with things you wouldn't imagine, like science fiction. They target us with missiles that we have never heard of."

"We are headed toward the unknown. Nobody knows where they are going," said Faris Swafiri.

Aid groups have warned that forcing thousands of people to evacuate will exacerbate the dire humanitarian crisis. They are appealing for a ceasefire so aid can reach those who need it.

Families of hostages speak out

Families of hostages still held by Hamas accused Netanyahu of condemning their loved ones to death by continuing to fight rather than negotiate an end to the war.

"The blood of our loved ones is, for him, nothing more than a political tool to cling to power," they said in a statement read outside Netanyahu's residence. "As long as there is war, Netanyahu has a government."

Hanna Cohen, whose niece Inbar Hayman was kidnapped and killed in captivity and whose remains are still in Gaza, said: "It's hard to believe another Rosh Hashanah (Jewish new year) is coming and our Inbar isn't with us."

"There is no greater pain than parents who lose a child in such a cruel way and don't even have a grave to visit."

Speaking at the Jerusalem protest, freed hostage Iair Horn asked: "What kind of country will we be if we abandon our own? What happens to our nation if we're willing to sacrifice the hostages?"

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

Meanwhile, an Israeli-American held hostage in Gaza for 584 days before being released in May said he will return to Israeli military service next month. Edan Alexander, 21, was kidnapped by Hamas from a base near the Gaza border and was the last living Israeli hostage freed from captivity.

"We cannot forget them," he said Friday. "We cannot stop until they are all home."

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UNICEF trucks robbed

On Friday, UNICEF said lifesaving therapeutic food meant for thousands of children in Gaza was stolen from four of its trucks. The statement said armed people approached the trucks outside their compound in Gaza City and held the drivers at gunpoint while the food was taken.

"They were intended to treat malnourished children in Gaza City where famine is declared ... it was a life-saving shipment amid the severe restrictions on aid delivery to Gaza City," said Ammar Ammar, a spokesperson for UNICEF.

In a statement Friday, Israel's army blamed Hamas for stealing the food.

Israel accuses Hamas of siphoning off aid and using it to fund its military activities, without providing evidence. The U.N. says there are mechanisms in place that prevent any significant diversion of aid.

Gaza's Health Ministry says the death count in Gaza has surpassed 65,100 since the attack by Hamas that triggered the war. The ministry, part of a Hamas government, does not say how many of the dead were civilians or militants. Its figures are seen as a reliable estimate by the U.N. and many independent experts.

Trump's economic promises to Black voters fall short after a modest shift in support for him in 2024

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — At one of his final rallies before the 2024 election, then-candidate Donald Trump warned that Black Americans were losing their jobs in droves and that things would get even worse if he did not return to the White House.

"You should demand that they give you the numbers of how many Black people are going to lose their job," Trump said. "The African American population, they're getting fired at numbers that we have never seen before."

But with Trump back in office since January, an already fragile financial situation for Black Americans has worsened. Upset by inflation and affordability issues, Black voters had shifted modestly toward the Republican last year on the promise that he could boost the economy by stopping border crossings and challenging foreign factories with tariffs. Yet a recent spate of economic data instead shows a widening racial wealth gap.

Black unemployment has climbed from 6.2% to 7.5% so far in 2025, the highest level since October 2021. Black homeownership has fallen to the lowest level since 2021, according to an analysis by the real estate brokerage Redfin. Earlier this month, the Census Bureau said the median Black household income fell 3.3% last year to \$56,020, which is roughly \$36,000 less than what a white household earns and evidence of a bad situation becoming worse.

That creates a major political risk for the president as well as an economic danger for the nation because job losses for Black Americans have historically foreshadowed a wider set of layoffs across other groups.

"Black Americans are often the canary in the coal mine," said Angela Hanks, a former official at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Labor Department who is now at The Century Foundation, a liberal think tank.

The Trump White House stressed that some of these downward trends, such as a relative decline in Black wealth, began under Democratic President Joe Biden. It emphasized that the "diversity, equity and inclusion" policies pushed by Democrats failed to deliver economic gains.

"Despite his lunatic obsession with DEI, Joe Biden's disastrous economic agenda reduced the Black share of household wealth by nearly 25%," said White House spokesman Kush Desai. "His inflationary policies caused interest rate hikes that froze Americans out of homeownership, and his open borders policies flooded the country with tens of millions of illegals who drove down wages."

Some Black voters see Trump's policies as doing more to hurt than help

Some Black voters who stayed on the sidelines in 2024 feel they need to be more engaged politically.

Josh Garrett, a 30-year-old salesperson in Florida, said he could not find a candidate last year with whom he agreed. He is frustrated by Trump's layoffs of federal workers and sees a government more geared

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toward billionaires than the middle class.

"I don't understand how you could be for the American people and have Americans lose their jobs when they have families, have bills," Garrett said.

While the financial outlook for Black Americans is deteriorating, the net worth of white households is largely holding steady or increasing, largely due to stock market performance.

Hanks notes that the "chaotic effects" of Trump's tariffs and spending cuts are hitting more vulnerable populations right now but that the damage could soon spread beyond.

Black leaders see Trump's policies as discriminatory based on race

The federal layoffs appear to have disproportionately hit Black Americans because they make up a meaningful share of the government workforce. The administration maintains that its income tax cuts, tariffs and deportations of immigrants who are in the United States illegally will help Black Americans, but there is little evidence so far in the data of that.

At the same time, Trump has said that he would like to deploy the National Guard to Chicago, New Orleans, Baltimore and Memphis, Tennessee — cities led by Black mayors. The president has called for redrawing congressional districts to favor Republicans, which could dilute the ability of Black voters to shape elections. He has sought to diminish the legacy of slavery and segregation from the Smithsonian museums.

"The message that they are sending is very clear: In these places, these people are incapable of governing themselves," Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott said. "They are incapable of helping to solve their own issues. And make no mistake about it, it's partly due to how we look."

The Democrat warned that the mounting economic challenges could contribute to crime in the future, reversing progress that cities have made in recent years to lower homicide rates.

Trump might not be able to afford alienating Black voters

Black Americans are the dominant core of the Democratic base, though Trump has improved his standing with them. In 2024, Trump won 16% of Black voters, doubling his 2020 share, according to AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of the electorate. One of the key differences appeared to be frustration over inflation and affordability.

Roughly one-third of Black voters (36%) in the 2024 presidential election said the economy and jobs was the most important issue facing the country, up from 11% in 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic was the top issue.

In a July poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, about half of Black adults (52%) said the amount of money they get paid was a "major" source of stress in their life right now, slightly higher than for U.S. adults overall (43%) and significantly higher than for white adults (37%).

When it comes to incomes, some associated with the conservative movement suggest that Black households are more vulnerable because fewer of them are in married families, which generally tend to have higher incomes.

Delano Squires, a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said the "connection between family structure and financial stability is one that is fairly consistent across time."

The immediate political reality is that Trump had a mandate to improve the economy for the middle class, including Black voters. But many of those voters now see an administration more focused on deporting immigrants and expanding its own grip on power, possibly threatening Republicans' chances of holding onto the House and key Senate seats in next year's elections.

"We're in a new era," said Alexis Rodgers, political director at the Black to the Future Action Fund. "There are people who obviously believed his promises, that Trump was going to do something about the cost of eggs, the cost of housing. They've seen the focus instead is on ICE raids and downsizing the government."

Russian jets over Estonia ignored signals from NATO pilots, officials say

By EMMA BURROWS AP European Security Correspondent

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Russian pilots ignored signals from Italian jets responding from NATO's Baltic

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Air Policing Mission when they violated Estonian airspace, a senior Estonian military official said Saturday. The 12-minute incursion was the latest test of the alliance's ability to respond to Russian airborne threats after around 20 Russian drones entered Polish airspace on Sept. 10.

Russia's Defense Ministry on Saturday denied its aircraft flew into Estonia's airspace, after Tallinn reported three fighter jets crossed into its territory on Friday without permission.

Estonian officials dismissed the denial, saying the violation was confirmed by radar and visual contact and suggested it could be a tactic to draw Western resources away from Ukraine.

The Russian MIG-31 fighters entered Estonian airspace between 9:58 a.m. and 10:10 a.m. local time Friday in the area of Vaindloo, a small island located in the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea, the Estonian military said. A ministry statement said it was the fourth airspace violation by Russia this year.

It still "needs to be confirmed," if the border violation was deliberate or not, Col. Ants Kiviselg, the commander of Estonia's Military Intelligence Center, told The Associated Press. Regardless, he said, the Russian jets "must have known that they are in (Estonian) airspace."

The Russian pilots didn't pose a "military threat," Kiviselg said.

But although they acknowledged communication from the Italian pilots flying F-35 fighter jets, they apparently ignored it and "didn't actually follow the signs," which is partly why they were in Estonian airspace for so long, he added.

"Why they didn't do it, that's a question for the Russian pilots," Kiviselg said.

'It could be big trouble'

The Russian jets came from an airfield near the city of Petrozavodsk, in northwestern Russia, and were heading to Kaliningrad, the Russian exclave on the Baltic Sea sandwiched between Lithuania and Poland. They were tracked by two Finnish fighter jets before being escorted by the two Italian jets, which took off from Estonia's Ämari Air Base and followed them into international skies, Kiviselg said.

U.S. President Donald Trump responded Friday by telling reporters he will be briefed by aides on the incursion. "I don't love it," he said, adding: "I don't like when that happens. It could be big trouble, but I'll let you know later."

Margus Tsahkna, Estonia's foreign minister, told AP the incident was "a very serious violation of NATO airspace." The last time Estonian airspace was violated for so long was in 2003, he said, "just before Estonia joined NATO."

Estonia's government responded by saying it would request consultations under Article 4 of NATO's treaty which allows a member to formally consult with allies whenever their territorial integrity, political independence or security is threatened. Poland also used the mechanism after its airspace was violated by Russian drones and, after that, NATO launched its Eastern Sentry mission to boost defenses along its eastern flank.

Posting on X, Lithuania's Defense Minister Dovilė Šakalienė suggested NATO member "Turkey set an example" of how to respond to such incidents in 2015 when it shot down a Russian fighter jet which violated its airspace for around 17 seconds.

But that situation was "totally different," Hanno Pevkur, Estonia's defense minister said, adding that the "Russians actually killed Turks," when Moscow used fighter jets to target what they said were militant groups near the Syrian border with Turkey.

During Friday's incident, Estonia and its allies observed the Russian jets' route, communication and reaction from the pilots as well as the weapons systems they were carrying and were "very confident that there is no need to shoot them down," Pevkur said.

Czech President Petr Pavel said Saturday that NATO must respond adequately to Russian violations, including potentially by shooting down Russian jets, the Czech News Agency reported. "Russia will realize very quickly that they have made a mistake and crossed the acceptable boundaries. Unfortunately, this is teetering on the edge of conflict, but giving in to evil is simply not an option," Pavel said.

Estonian officials maintained Saturday that there was no need to trigger Article 5, NATO's collective defense clause, despite the repeated violations by Russian jets and drones as well as allegations from

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Western officials that Moscow is waging a hybrid war against the West including a sabotage campaign, cyberattacks and influence operations.

Radars and visual identification

In an online statement published Saturday, Russia's Defense Ministry said its fighter jets had kept to neutral Baltic Sea waters more than 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) from Vaindloo Island.

It said the three MiG-31 jets "completed a scheduled flight from Karelia to an airfield in the Kaliningrad region" and "did not violate the borders of other states."

Pevkur dismissed the statement, saying Estonia and its NATO allies have "multiple" radars and visual identification which confirm the Russian jets entered the country's airspace.

He suggested the "root cause" for the air violations, hybrid war and cyberattacks was to distract Western attention from Ukraine.

Moscow, Pevkur said, may be trying to provoke NATO nations into sending additional air defense assets to Estonia in the hope that Kyiv's allies do more "about our own defense," and less to support Kyiv.

In battles over free speech, comedians are often center stage

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bassem Youssef, the Egyptian satirist whose "Daily Show"-like program was canceled after the military seized the once pro-democracy government, watched the suspension of Jimmy Kimmel with an immediate sense of familiarity.

"My Fellow American Citizens," Youssef wrote on X. "Welcome to my world."

Youssef's show skewering public figures led to a criminal investigation in 2013 after complaints that he had insulted then-President Mohammed Morsi. When a military coup followed, pressure on Youssef intensified. He announced that the climate in Egypt was "not suitable for a political satire program." Youssef fled the country and resettled in the United States.

In all the stunning things about ABC's swift removal of Kimmel, its longtime late-night host and Oscars-hosting face of the network, perhaps the least surprising was that a comedian was at the center of a battle over free speech.

As long as jokes have been told, comedians have drawn the ire of the powerful. That has often put comedians on the front lines of free-speech battles, from George Carlin violating obscenity laws to a satirical puppet show trying to exist in Vladimir Putin's Russia. In authoritarian regimes, crackdowns on speech usually make comedy a target.

"Comedy doesn't change the world, but it's a bellwether. We're the banana peel in the coal mine," Jon Stewart said in 2022 at the Kennedy Center, with Kimmel looking on from the audience. "When a society is under threat, comedians are the ones who get sent away first."

Kimmel's indefinite suspension followed comments he made about the Republican response to Charlie Kirk's killing. Conservatives said Kimmel misrepresented the political beliefs of Tyler Robinson, who is accused of assassinating Kirk.

Federal Communications Commission chairman Brendan Carr responded to Kimmel's comments with the threat: "We can do this the easy way or the hard way." After a group of ABC-affiliated stations said they wouldn't air "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" The Walt Disney Co. pulled the show Wednesday just before air, prompting a firestorm of debate over free speech. Comedians have been among the passionate protesters.

"If you have any concern or belief in real freedom or the Constitution and free speech, this is it," said the stand-up comedian and podcaster Marc Maron. "This is the deciding moment. This is what authoritarianism looks like right now."

Late-night hosts, current and former, rushed to Kimmel's defense. Jay Leno, the longtime host of "The Tonight Show," shrugged to reporters Thursday: "It's a comedian talking." On Thursday night's "The Late Show," Stephen Colbert — whose own show will end in May over what CBS called financial reasons but Colbert has called "a big fat bribe" to Trump — mocked Carr, the FCC chairman, for declaring that programming should represent "community values."

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"Well, you know what my community values are, buster?" Colbert said. "Freedom of speech."

Punch lines with power

Since before Charlie Chaplin mocked Adolf Hitler in the 1940s film, "The Great Dictator," comedy has served as one of the most unfiltered expressions of free speech and a reliable metric of a democratic republic's health. On Wednesday, MSNBC's Chris Hayes noted: "The countries where comedians can't mock the leader on late-night TV are not really ones you want to live in."

Outside the U.S., media control has often meant policing comedy. Thin-skinned leaders and autocrats have taken punch lines as genuine threats.

Shortly after Putin became president of Russia in 2000, armed operatives raided the offices of NTV, the network that aired "Kukly," a satirical puppet show that often lampooned Putin. NTV owner Vladimir Gusinsky was jailed on embezzlement charges and "Kukly" disappeared in 2002.

Zeinab Mousavi, one of the first Iranian women to do stand-up comedy in her country, was charged last month with making statements that were "contrary to public morality."

In India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, political comedy has grown increasingly off-limits. In March, a performance by the popular comedian Kunal Kamra included a Bollywood song parody that indirectly made apparent reference to a local politician. Government employees ransacked the comedy club.

Kamra pledged to cooperate with police and then added: "But will the law be fairly and equally deployed against those who have decided that vandalism is the appropriate response to being offended by a joke?"

'A massive shift'

The Kimmel situation isn't as extreme as those international examples, let alone countries like China and Hungary, where curbs on expression have all but extinguished comedy. But it bears similarities. Trump, who has long chafed at late-night hosts' jokes at his expense, warned broadcasters on Thursday that run negative commentary of him.

"I would think maybe their license should be taken away," Trump said.

Carr has said Kimmel is just the beginning. "This is a massive shift that's taking place in the media ecosystem," he said. "I think the consequences are going to continue to flow."

For some, a so-called "consequence culture" has replaced "cancel culture."

Roseanne Barr reacted with irony after Kimmel's suspension. In 2018, ABC pulled the plug on her sitcom, "Roseanne," after Barr made a racist barb on Twitter about Valerie Jarrett, a former aide to former President Barack Obama, referring to her as the child of the Muslim Brotherhood and the "Planet of the Apes" movies.

"Yeah imagine an administration putting pressure on a television channel to fire a comedian they didn't like," Barr said Wednesday on X.

Conservatives have long railed against so-called "cancel culture" ruining comedy. At the Conservative Political Action Conference in February, Elon Musk lamented: "They wanted to make comedy illegal. You couldn't make fun of anything so comedy sucked. Legalize comedy!"

Some of those same "anti-woke" comedians, though, have come out in support of Kimmel. Tim Dillon, the comedian and podcaster, wrote on Instagram: "I am against Kimmel being taken off the air and against people being shot for their opinions. See how easy it is?"

Others took a more ironic approach.

The Onion republished an editorial from several years ago. It read: "Today, the path forward could not be clearer. Simply put, we need mass censorship now."

Sonny Curtis, Crickets member who penned 'Mary Tyler Moore Show' theme, dies at 88

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

Sonny Curtis, a vintage rock 'n' roller who wrote the raw classic "I Fought the Law" and posed the enduring question "Who can turn the world on with her smile?" as the writer-crooner of the theme song to "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," has died at 88.

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Curtis, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a member of The Crickets in 2012, died Friday, his wife of more than a half-century, Louise Curtis, confirmed to The Associated Press. His daughter, Sarah Curtis, wrote on his Facebook page that he had been suddenly ill.

Curtis wrote or co-wrote hundreds of songs, from Keith Whitley's country smash "I'm No Stranger to the Rain" to the Everly Brothers' "Walk Right Back," a personal favorite Curtis completed while in Army basic training. Bing Crosby, Glen Campbell, Bruce Springsteen and the Grateful Dead were among other artists who covered his work.

Early days with Buddy Holly

Born during the Great Depression to cotton farmers outside of Meadow, Texas, Curtis was a childhood friend of Buddy Holly's and an active musician in the formative years of rock, whether jamming on guitar with Holly in the mid-1950s or opening for Elvis Presley when Elvis was still a regional act. Curtis' song-writing touch also soon emerged: Before he turned 20, he had written the hit "Someday" for Webb Pierce and "Rock Around With Ollie Vee" for Holly.

Curtis had left Holly's group, the Crickets, before Holly became a major star. But he returned after Holly died in a plane crash in 1959 and he was featured the following year on the album "In Style with the Crickets," which included "I Fought the Law" (dashed off in a single afternoon, according to Curtis, who would say he had no direct inspiration for the song) and the Jerry Allison collaboration "More Than I Can Say," a hit for Bobby Vee, and later for Leo Sayer.

Meanwhile, it took until 1966 for "I Fought the Law" and its now-immortal refrain "I fought the law — and the law won" to catch on: The Texas-based Bobby Fuller Four made it a Top 10 song. Over the following decades, it was covered by dozens of artists, from punk (the Clash) to country (Johnny Cash, Nanci Griffith) to Springsteen, Tom Petty and other mainstream rock stars.

"It's my most important copyright," Curtis told The Tennessean in 2014.

'The Mary Tyler Moore Show'

Curtis' other signature song was as uplifting as "I Fought the Law" was resigned. In 1970, he was writing commercial jingles when he came up with the theme for a new CBS sitcom starring Moore as a single woman hired as a TV producer in Minneapolis. He called the song "Love is All Around," and used a smooth melody to eventually serve up lyrics as indelible as any in television history:

"Who can turn the world on with her smile? / Who can take a nothing day, and suddenly make it all seem worthwhile? / Well it's you girl, and you should know it / With each glance and every little movement you show it."

The song's endurance was sealed by the images it was heard over, especially Moore's triumphant toss of her hat as Curtis proclaims, "You're going to make it after all." In tribute, other artists began recording it, including Sammy Davis Jr., Joan Jett and the Blackhearts and Minnesota's Hüsker Dü. A commercial release featuring Curtis came out in 1980 and was a modest success, peaking at No. 29 on Billboard's country chart.

Curtis would recall being commissioned by his friend Doug Gilmore, a music industry road manager who had heard the sitcom's developers were looking for an opening song.

"Naturally I said yes, and later that morning, he dropped off a four-page format — you know 'Girl from the Midwest, moves to Minneapolis, gets a job in a newsroom, can't afford her apartment etc.,' which gave me the flavor of what it was all about," said Curtis, who soon met with show co-creator (and later Oscar-winning filmmaker) James L. Brooks.

"James L. Brooks came into this huge empty room, no furniture apart from a phone lying on the floor, and at first, I thought he was rather cold and sort of distant, and he said 'We're not at the stage of picking a song yet, but I'll listen anyway,'" Curtis recalled. "So I played the song, just me and my guitar, and next thing, he started phoning people, and the room filled up, and then he sent out for a tape recorder."

Curtis would eventually write two versions: the first used in Season 1, the second and better known for the remaining six seasons. The original words were more tentative, opening with "How will you make it on your own?" and ending with "You might just make it after all." By Season 2, the show was a hit and the lyrics were reworked. The producers had wanted Andy Williams to sing the theme song, but he turned it

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down and Curtis' easygoing baritone was heard instead.

Later life

Curtis made a handful of solo albums, including "Sonny Curtis" and "Spectrum," and hit the country Top 20 with the 1981 single "Good Ol' Girls." In later years, he continued to play with Allison and other members of the Crickets. The band released several albums, among them "The Crickets and Their Buddies," featuring appearances by Eric Clapton, Graham Nash and Phil Everly. One of Curtis' more notable songs was "The Real Buddy Holly Story," a rebuke to the 1978 biopic "The Buddy Holly Story," which starred Gary Busey.

Curtis settled in Nashville in the mid-1970s and lived there with his wife, Louise. He was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1991 and, as part of the Crickets, into Nashville's Musicians Hall of Fame and Museum in 2007. Five years later, he and the Crickets were inducted into the Rock Hall, praised as "the blueprint for rock and roll bands (that) inspired thousands of kids to start up garage bands around the world."

Cyberattack disrupts check-in systems at major European airports

By PAN PYLAS and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A cyberattack targeting check-in and boarding systems disrupted air traffic and caused delays at several of Europe's major airports on Saturday.

While the impact on travelers appeared to be limited, experts said the intrusion exposed vulnerabilities in security systems.

The disruptions to electronic systems initially reported at Brussels, Berlin's Brandenburg and London's Heathrow airports meant that only manual check-in and boarding was possible. Many other European airports said their operations were unaffected.

"There was a cyberattack on Friday night 19 September against the service provider for the check-in and boarding systems affecting several European airports including Brussels Airport," said Brussels Airport in a statement, initially reporting a "large impact" on flight schedules.

Airports said the issue centered around a provider of check-in and boarding systems — not airlines or the airports themselves.

Collins Aerospace, whose systems help passengers check themselves in, print boarding passes and bag tags and dispatch their luggage from a kiosk, cited a "cyber-related disruption" to its MUSE (Multi-User System Environment) software at "select airports."

'A very clever cyberattack'

It was not immediately clear who might be behind the cyberattack, but experts said it could turn out to be hackers, criminal organizations, or state actors.

Travel analyst Paul Charles said he was "surprised and shocked" by the attack that has affected one of the world's top aviation and defense companies.

He said "it's deeply worrying that a company of that stature who normally have such resilient systems in place have been affected."

"This is a very clever cyberattack indeed because it's affected a number of airlines and airports at the same time — not just one airport or one airline, but they've got into the core system that enables airlines to effectively check in many of their passengers at different desks at different airports around Europe," he told Sky News.

As the day wore on, the fallout appeared to be contained.

Brussels Airport spokesperson Ihsane Chioua Lekhli told broadcaster VTM that by mid-morning, nine flights had been canceled, four were redirected to another airport and 15 faced delays of an hour or more. She said it wasn't immediately clear how long the disruptions might last.

Axel Schmidt, head of communications at the Brandenburg airport, said that by late morning, "we don't have any flights canceled due to this specific reason, but that could change." The Berlin airport said operators had cut off connections to affected systems.

Heathrow, Europe's busiest airport, said the disruption has been "minimal" with no flight cancellations

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directly linked to the problems afflicting Collins. A spokesperson would not provide details as to how many flights have been delayed as a result of the cyberattack.

The airports advised travelers to check their flight status and apologized for any inconvenience.

Frustration at the counters

Some passengers voiced annoyance at the lack of staff. With many, if not most, checking in individually, airlines have reduced the number of people operating at the traditional check-in counters.

Maria Casey, who was on her way to a two-week backpacking holiday in Thailand with Etihad Airways, said she had to spend three hours at baggage check-in at Heathrow's Terminal 4.

"They had to write our baggage tabs by hand," she said. "Only two desks were staffed, which is why we were cheesed off."

Collins, an aviation and defense technology company that is a subsidiary of RTX Corp., formerly Raytheon Technologies, said it was "actively working to resolve the issue and restore full functionality to our customers as quickly as possible."

"The impact is limited to electronic customer check-in and baggage drop and can be mitigated with manual check-in operations," it said in a statement.

Airline industry is vulnerable through the use of third-party platforms

Still, experts said the attack pointed to vulnerabilities — ones that hackers are increasingly trying to exploit.

Charlotte Wilson, head of enterprise at cybersecurity firm Check Point, said the aviation industry has become an "increasingly attractive target" for cybercriminals because of its heavy reliance on shared digital systems.

"These attacks often strike through the supply chain, exploiting third-party platforms that are used by multiple airlines and airports at once," she said. "When one vendor is compromised, the ripple effect can be immediate and far-reaching, causing widespread disruption across borders."

Experts said it was too early to tell who might be behind the attack, and were trying to read some clues.

"It looks almost more like vandalism than extortion, based on the information we have," said James Davenport, a professor of information technology at the University of Bath in England. "I think significant new details would have to emerge to change this view."

ICE denies using excessive force as it broadens immigration arrests in Chicago

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

PARK RIDGE, Ill. (AP) — It was 3:30 a.m. when 10 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers gathered in a parking lot in the Chicago suburbs for a briefing about a suspect they were hoping to arrest. They went over a description of the person, made sure their radios were on the same channel and discussed where the closest hospital was in case something went wrong.

"Let's plan on not being there," said one of the officers, before they climbed into their vehicles and headed out.

Across the city and surrounding suburbs, other teams were fanning out in support of "Operation Midway Blitz." It has unleashed President Donald Trump's mass deportations agenda on a city and state that has had some of the strongest laws preventing local officials from cooperating with immigration enforcement.

ICE launched the operation on Sept. 8, drawing concern from activists and immigrant communities fearful of the large-scale arrests or aggressive tactics used in other cities targeted by the Republican president. They say there has been a noticeable uptick in immigration enforcement agents, although a military deployment to Chicago has yet to materialize.

The Associated Press went on a ride-along with ICE in a Chicago suburb — much of the recent focus — to see how that operation is unfolding.

A predawn wait, then two arrests

A voice came over the radio: "He got into the car. I'm not sure if that's the target."

Someone matching the description of the man that ICE was searching for walked out of the house, got

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into a car and drove away from the tree-lined street. Unsure whether this was their target, the officers followed. A few minutes later, with the car approaching the freeway, the voice over the radio said: "He's got the physical description. We just can't see the face good."

"Do it," said Marcos Charles, the acting head of ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations.

Agents in multiple vehicles soon overtook the car and boxed it in. After talking to the man, they realized he was not the person being sought for but that he was in the United States illegally, so they took him into custody.

Eventually, a little after dawn broke on the one- and two-story brick houses, the man they were looking for came out of the house and got into a car. ICE officers closed in. The man got out of the car and was arrested. ICE said both men were in the country illegally and had criminal records.

Charles called it a "successful operation."

"There was no safety issues on the part of our officers, nor the individuals that we arrested. And it went smoothly," he said.

'ICE does not belong here'

Activists and critics of ICE say that's increasingly not the norm in immigration operations.

They point to videos showing ICE agents smashing windows to apprehend suspects, a chaotic showdown outside a popular Italian restaurant in San Diego, and arrests like that of a Tufts University student in March by masked agents outside her apartment in Somerville, Massachusetts, as neighbors watched.

Charles said ICE is using an "appropriate" amount of force and that agents are responding to suspects who increasingly are not following commands.

There has been "an uptick in people that are not compliant," he said, blaming inflammatory rhetoric from activists who, he said, are encouraging people to resist.

Alderman Andre Vasquez, who chairs the Chicago City Council's committee on immigrant and refugee rights, strenuously objected to that description, faulting ICE for any escalation.

"We're not here to cause chaos. The president is," Vasquez. He accused immigration enforcement agents of trying to provoke activists into overreacting in order to justify calling in a greater use of force such as National Guard troops. "ICE does not belong here."

Shooting death of immigrant by ICE officer heightens tensions

Chicago was already on edge when a shooting Sept. 12 heightened tensions even more.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said an ICE officer fatally shot Silverio Villegas González, a Mexican immigrant who tried to evade arrest in a Chicago suburb by driving his car at officers and dragging one of them. The department said the officer felt his life was threatened and had opened fire, killing the man.

Charles said he could not comment because there is an open investigation. But he said he met with the officer in the hospital, saw his injuries and felt that the force used was appropriate.

The officer was not wearing a body camera, Charles said.

Gov. JB Pritzker, D-Ill., has demanded "a full, factual accounting" of the shooting. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum condemned the death and said Mexico is demanding a thorough investigation.

"These tactics have led to the loss of life of one of our community members," said Democratic state Rep. Norma Hernandez.

In another use of force incident under "Midway Blitz" that has drawn criticism, a U.S. citizen was detained by immigration agents alongside his father and hit by a stun gun three times Tuesday in suburban Des Plaines, the man's lawyer said.

Local advocates have also condemned ICE agents for wearing masks, failing to identify themselves, and not using body cameras — actions that starkly contrast with Chicago Police Department policy.

'It was time to hit Chicago'

Charles said there is no timeline for the ICE-led operation in the Chicago area to end. As of Thursday, immigration enforcement officials have arrested nearly 550 people. Charles said 50% to 60% of those are targeted arrests, meaning they are people whom immigration enforcers are specifically trying to find.

He pushed back on criticism that ICE randomly targets people, saying agents weren't "going out to Home

Depot parking lots" to make indiscriminate arrests.

Charles said ICE has brought in more than 200 officers from around the country for the operation.

He said that for too long, cities such as Chicago that limited cooperation with ICE had allowed immigrants, especially those with criminal records, to remain in the country illegally. It was time to act, he said.

"It was time to hit Chicago."

Crime victims' families say Chicago violence is a problem, but sending in troops isn't the answer

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

Delphine Cherry knows as well as anyone how intractable violent crime is in Chicago. In 1992, her teenage daughter was gunned down in one of the city's toniest neighborhoods — a bystander caught up in a gang shootout. Twenty years later in a suburb just south of the city, it claimed her son.

"You don't think it's going to happen twice in your life," she said.

Chicago has been bracing for weeks for President Donald Trump's promised deployment of National Guard troops to the nation's third-largest city. Although Trump said the troops would help fight crime in a city he described as a "hellhole," his administration has been tightlipped about the operation's details, including when it would start, how long it would last, how many troops would be used and what role they would play in civilian law enforcement.

Trump has also veered back and forth on sending troops to Chicago — at times insisting he would act unilaterally to deploy them and at other points suggesting he would rather send them to New Orleans or some other city in a state where their governor "wants us to come in." Most recently, he said this week that Chicago is "probably next" after National Guard troops are sent to Memphis.

Although Chicago has had one of the highest rates of gun violence of any major American city for some time, city and state leaders overwhelmingly oppose the planned operation, calling it political theater. And even those most directly affected, including people who have lost loved ones to violent crime, wonder how sending in troops would have any lasting effect on the fight against it.

In Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., troops acted as guards

With plans for the Chicago deployment unknown, the ways National Guard troops have been used in Los Angeles and Washington this summer might offer clues.

In June, Trump deployed thousands of Guard troops to Los Angeles amid protests over his administration's immigration crackdown there. Although the troops initially were assigned to guard federal property, they also provided protection for immigration agents during raids and took part in a show of force at a park in a heavily immigrant neighborhood of LA that local officials believe was meant to sow fear.

In August, Trump announced he was placing Washington's police force under his control and mobilizing federal forces to reduce crime and homelessness there. The troops who were deployed have patrolled around Metro stations and in the most tourist-heavy parts of the nation's capital. But they have also been spotted picking up trash and raking leaves in city parks.

The White House reported that more than 2,100 arrests had been made in Washington in the first few weeks after Trump announced he was mobilizing federal forces. And Mayor Muriel Bowser credited the federal deployment with a drop in crime, including an 87% decline in carjackings, but also criticized the frequent immigration arrests by masked ICE agents. However, an unusually high rate of cases being dropped has some, including at least one judge, wondering whether prosecutors are making charging decisions before cases are properly investigated and vetted.

Washington is unique in that it is a federal district subject to laws giving Trump power to take over the local police force for up to 30 days. The decision to use troops to try to fight crime in other Democratic-controlled cities would represent an important escalation.

Chicago leaders call for more funding instead

Although the Trump administration hasn't said what the troops would be doing and what parts of Chi-

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Chicago they would operate in, they have explicitly promised a surge of federal agents targeting immigration enforcement. The city's so-called sanctuary policies are among the country's strongest and bar local police from cooperating with federal immigration enforcement.

Chicago isn't the only Democratic-led city in Trump's sights — he's also mentioned Baltimore as a likely target. But Trump seems to harbor particular scorn for the Windy City, warning in an "Apocalypse Now"-themed social media post earlier this month: "I love the smell of deportations in the morning. Chicago about to find out why it's called the Department of WAR."

The president's criticism, though, is more often focused on how the city's and state's Democratic leaders deal with crime.

Mayor Brandon Johnson and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker have repeatedly pointed to a drop in crime in Chicago and have asked for more federal funding for prevention programs instead of sending in the National Guard.

Last year, the city had 573 homicides, or 21 per every 100,000 residents, according to the Rochester Institute of Technology. That's 25% fewer than in 2020 and was a lower rate than several other major U.S. cities. Like most big cities, violent crime isn't evenly spread out in Chicago, with most shootings happening on the South and West sides.

"If it was about safety, then the Trump administration would not have slashed \$158 million in federal funding for violence prevention programs this year," said Yolanda Androzzo, executive director of gun violence prevention nonprofit One Aim Illinois.

Victims of violent crime doubt troops can make lasting change

After Cherry's 16-year-old daughter, Tyesa, was killed in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood by a stray bullet that a 14-year-old fired at rival gang members, the devastated mother moved her family to Hazel Crest, a suburb just south of the city.

"We were planning for prom. She was going on to college to be a nurse," Cherry said.

Her son, Tyler, was fatally shot in the driveway of the family's suburban home in 2012, 20 years after Tyesa was killed.

Although her children's deaths have made Cherry an antiviolence advocate — she sits on One Aim Illinois' board — she doesn't believe bringing in troops will do anything to fight crime in Chicago, and that it could making the streets more dangerous.

"They're not going to ask questions," Cherry said of the National Guard. "They are trained to kill on sight."

Trevon Bosley, who was 7 years old when his 18-year-old brother, Terrell, was shot and killed in 2006 while unloading drums outside of a Church before band rehearsal, also thinks sending in troops isn't the answer.

"There is so much love and so much community in Chicago," said Bosley, whose brother's killing remains unsolved. "There are communities that need help. When those resources are provided, they become just as beautiful as downtown, just as beautiful as the North Side."

Like Johnson, Pritzker and other critics of the promised troop deployment, Bosley thinks better funding would make a real positive difference in parts of the city with the highest crime and poverty rates.

"It's not like we have a police shortage," Bosley said. "The National Guard and police show up after a shooting has occurred. They don't show up before. That's not stopping or saving anyone."

Russia launches a large-scale attack on Ukraine, killing 3 and wounding dozens

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched a large-scale missile and drone attack targeting regions across Ukraine early Saturday, killing at least three people and wounding dozens more, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the attacks took place across nine regions, including Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, Zaporizhzhia, Poltava, Kyiv, Odesa, Sumy and Kharkiv.

"The enemy's target was our infrastructure, residential areas and civilian enterprises," he said, adding

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that a missile equipped with cluster munitions struck a multistory building in the city of Dnipro.

"Each such strike is not a military necessity but a deliberate strategy by Russia to intimidate civilians and destroy our infrastructure," Zelenskyy said in a statement on his official Telegram account.

Elsewhere, Ukrainian drones overnight slammed into an energy facility in Samara, southwestern Russia, according to the local governor and Ukraine's General Staff.

Russia's Defense Ministry on Saturday said its forces intercepted 149 Ukrainian drones during the night.

Zelenskyy said he expects to meet U.S. President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly next week. He also said the first ladies of Ukraine and the United States would likely hold separate talks focused on humanitarian issues involving children.

At least 30 people were wounded in the attack in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region, local Gov. Serhii Lysak said. Several high-rise buildings and homes were damaged in the eastern city of Dnipro.

In the Kyiv region, local authorities reported strikes in the areas of Bucha, Boryspil and Obukhiv. A home and cars were damaged. In the western region of Lviv, Gov. Maxim Kozytsky said two cruise missiles were shot down.

Russia launched 619 drones and missiles, Ukraine's air force said, of which 552 drones, two ballistic missiles and 29 cruise missiles were shot down or neutralized.

'We expect sanctions'

Zelenskyy said that Ukraine and its partners have laid the groundwork for long-term security guarantees and that he hopes to gauge how close they are to finalizing such commitments during next week's meetings in New York.

He said European nations are prepared to move forward with a framework if the United States remains closely engaged. He noted that discussions have taken place at multiple levels, including among military leadership and general staffs from both Europe and the U.S.

"I would like to receive signals for myself on how close we are to understanding that the security guarantees from all partners will be the kind we need," Zelenskyy said.

He said sanctions against Russia must remain on the table if peace efforts stall, and that he plans to press the issue in talks with Trump.

"If the war continues and there is no movement toward peace, we expect sanctions," he said, adding that Trump is looking for strong steps from Europe.

Ukraine targets Russia's oil sector

Ukraine on Saturday claimed its drones struck the Novokuibyshevsk Refinery, a major producer of jet fuel that is operated by Russian oil major Rosneft. It said the strike resulted in explosions and a fire.

Samara's regional governor, Vyacheslav Fedorishchev, said unspecified fuel and energy facilities were targeted. He later reported that four people had died in the attack, but did not immediately say who they were or describe any damage.

Ukraine's General Staff also said a second Russian oil refinery was hit overnight, in the city of Saratov. The city lies in a region of the same name, southwest of Samara.

Russian and Ukrainian Telegram channels published videos of what they said was a strike near of the Saratov refinery. They show blasts and a fiery glow against the night sky, with air sirens wailing in the background.

Local Gov. Roman Busargin did not immediately comment on claims that the refinery was hit. He said a woman was hospitalized following nighttime drone strikes on Saratov, and residential buildings were damaged.

Ukrainian drones also struck Russian pumping stations of the Kuibyshev-Tikhoretsk oil pipeline, an intelligence official told The Associated Press on Saturday. They spoke on condition of anonymity to disclose sensitive information.

The pipeline leads to the export terminal in the port of Novorossiysk.

Explosions were recorded several stations in various regions of Volgograd and Samara, according to the intelligence official.

Ukraine "continues its successful work on introducing drone sanctions against Russian refineries and oil

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pumping stations. It is this infrastructure that brings petrodollar surpluses to the Russian budget, which fuels the war against Ukraine. Work on blocking these money flows will continue," they told AP.

Russia denies violating Estonia's airspace

Russia's Defense Ministry denied its aircraft violated Estonia's airspace, after Tallinn reported three fighter jets crossed into its territory on Friday without permission and remained there for 12 minutes.

The incident, described by Estonia's top diplomat as an "unprecedentedly brazen" incursion, happened just over a week after NATO planes downed Russian drones over Poland, heightening fears that Moscow's war on Ukraine could spill over.

In a statement early Saturday, Moscow stressed its fighter jets had kept to neutral Baltic Sea waters more than 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) from Estonia's Vaindloo Island in the Gulf of Finland.

"On September 19, three MiG-31 fighter jets completed a scheduled flight from Karelia to an airfield in the Kaliningrad region," it said, referencing the Russian enclave sandwiched between Polish and Lithuanian territory. Estonia, Poland and Lithuania belong to NATO.

"The flight was conducted in strict compliance with international airspace regulations and did not violate the borders of other states, as confirmed through objective monitoring," the statement said without providing details about the monitoring operation.

On Friday, Estonia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it had summoned a Russian diplomat to lodge an official protest over the airspace violation. Officials said Tallinn also moved "to start consultations among the allies" under NATO's Article 4, which states that parties would confer whenever the territorial integrity, political independence or security is threatened.

On Saturday, Poland's Operational Command said Polish and allied aircraft were deployed again overnight in response to Russian long-range airstrikes in neighboring Ukraine. In a later post on X, the Operational Command described the deployment as "preventive" and "aimed at securing the airspace in areas adjacent to the threatened zone."

Last week, fellow NATO member Romania said it deployed two F-16 jets to intercept a drone that briefly entered its airspace.

Luigi Mangione's lawyers want death penalty off the table in UnitedHealthcare CEO murder case

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Luigi Mangione's lawyers urged a judge on Saturday to bar federal prosecutors from seeking the death penalty in the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson, arguing that authorities prejudiced his case by turning his arrest into a "Marvel movie" spectacle and by publicly declaring their desire to see him executed.

Fresh from a legal victory that eliminated terrorism charges in Mangione's state murder case, his lawyers are now fighting to have his federal case dismissed, seizing on U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi's declaration prior to his April indictment that capital punishment is warranted for a "premeditated, cold-blooded assassination that shocked America."

Bondi's statements and other official actions — including a highly choreographed perp walk that saw Mangione led up a Manhattan pier by armed officers, and the Trump administration's flouting of established death penalty procedures — "have violated Mr. Mangione's constitutional and statutory rights and have fatally prejudiced this death penalty case," his lawyers argued in a court filing.

Mangione's defense team, led by former Manhattan prosecutor Karen Friedman Agnifilo, implored U.S. District Judge Margaret Garnett, an appointee of President Joe Biden, "to correct the errors made by the government and prevent this case from proceeding as a death penalty prosecution."

Defense says 'politics, not merit' drove death penalty decision

Bondi announced in April that she was directing Manhattan federal prosecutors to seek the death penalty for Mangione. It was the first time the Justice Department said it was bringing a capital case after

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President Donald Trump returned to office Jan. 20 with a pledge to revive federal executions, which his predecessor Biden had put on hold.

Mangione's lawyers argue that Bondi's announcement — which she followed with Instagram posts and a TV appearance — showed the decision was "based on politics, not merit" and, they said, her remarks tainted the grand jury process that resulted in his indictment a few weeks later.

Trump, who oversaw an unprecedented run of 13 executions at the end of his first term, offered his own opinions about Mangione on Thursday — despite court rules that prohibit any pretrial publicity that could interfere with a defendant's right to a fair trial.

"Think about Mangione. He shot someone in the back, as clear as you're looking at me or I'm looking at you. He shot — he looked like a pure assassin," Trump told Fox News.

"There is a high bar to dismissing an indictment due to pretrial publicity," Mangione's lawyers wrote in their 114-page filing. "However, there has never been a situation remotely like this one where prejudice has been so great against a death-eligible defendant."

Federal prosecutors have until Oct. 31 to respond. Mangione is due back in court in the federal case Dec. 5, days after the start of pretrial hearings in his state case. No trial date has been set for either case.

Mangione, 27, has pleaded not guilty to state and federal murder charges.

Dueling prosecutions, dismissed charges and a devoted following

Surveillance video showed a masked gunman shooting Thompson, 50, from behind on Dec. 4, 2024, as he arrived to a Manhattan hotel for his company's annual investor conference. Police say "delay," "deny" and "depose" were scrawled on the ammunition, mimicking a phrase used to describe how insurers avoid paying claims.

Mangione, the Ivy League-educated scion of a wealthy Maryland family, was arrested five days later in Altoona, Pennsylvania, about 230 miles (about 370 kilometers) west of Manhattan. Authorities say he had a 9 mm handgun and a notebook describing his intent to "wack" an insurance executive.

Mangione's lawyers contend the simultaneous prosecutions amount to double jeopardy.

In the federal case, Mangione is charged with murder through use of a firearm, which carries the possibility of the death penalty, as well as stalking and gun offenses.

On Tuesday, the judge in his state case threw out terrorism charges that carried the possibility of a mandatory life sentence without parole. But Judge Gregory Carro rejected the defense's request to dismiss the state prosecution entirely, saying the double jeopardy argument is premature because neither case has gone to trial or resulted in a guilty plea.

The state case will proceed with other charges, including an intentional murder count that carries a potential punishment of 15 years to life in prison, with the possibility of parole. Unlike the federal system, New York does not have the death penalty.

Mangione has attracted a cult following as a stand-in for frustrations with the health insurance industry.

A few dozen supporters — mostly women — packed three rows in the rear of the courtroom gallery at his hearing Tuesday in state court. Some wore green, the color of the Mario Bros. video game character Luigi, and one woman sported a "FREE LUIGI" T-shirt.

Members of Congress take steps to tighten their own security after Kirk's killing

By MATT BROWN and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As House Speaker Mike Johnson gathered lawmakers this week to mourn Charlie Kirk, he summed up the grief felt by many on Capitol Hill — and the pervasive fear.

"For so many of us, it has felt as if the ground was shaken," said Johnson, R-La.

The killing of Kirk, the prominent conservative activist and Turning Point USA founder, has unnerved lawmakers in both parties, amplifying their long-standing concerns about safety in a heated political climate where threats against political rivals and calls to violence have become frighteningly common.

Responding to those concerns, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., on Thursday night engineered

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unanimous passage of a measure that will allow senators to use money designated for their offices and staff for security purposes. Members of the House are pushing for increased security funding as well.

It's all part of significant shift for lawmakers who increasingly feel that their engagement in public life requires the same kinds of security precautions long reserved for the president and members of the Cabinet.

"If you go back several years ago, people were like, 'Yeah, I understand there's a risk.' But now it's different. Our families are coming to us and saying, 'OK, what are we gonna do?' Our staff are coming to us and saying, 'What are we gonna do?'" said Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla.

What security do lawmakers have?

Unlike the president and other top executive branch officials, rank-and-file lawmakers are often unaccompanied by security agents when they are off Capitol Hill, which is guarded by the U.S. Capitol Police. Some members of Congress pay for private security out of private or campaign funds.

"Members of Congress receive much less security than many of the local officials back at home or judges," said Rep. Greg Casar, D-Texas. "Oftentimes, we have been the least secure."

He said that "political violence is meant to silence us. And we can't be silenced for the sake of democracy. And so, providing some level of safety and security for our members, I think, is key."

The number of threat assessment cases handled by the Capitol Police has grown steadily over the past four years. The department says it tracked more than 9,000 cases of reported threats in 2024 and is on track to handle roughly 14,000 by the end of this year.

A push to increase security funding

"This is a national security issue. This is a big deal and we're taking it very seriously," said Florida Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, who was in a group of GOP lawmakers who met with Johnson multiple times this week to push for more security money in a package to fund the federal government.

Luna said many of the lawmakers have faced security threats — to themselves or their loved ones — that are the subject of law enforcement investigations. Lawmakers say they now routinely face death threats, "swatting" calls, bomb scares and vandalism at their offices.

"We've been needing this," Luna said. "The fact that it took for this to happen to even address this is crazy to me, but it needs to be dealt with."

The government funding bill passed by the Republican-controlled House on Friday would add about \$88 million in security money for lawmakers and members of the Supreme Court and executive branch.

A temporary program that offers a monthly stipend for House members doubled its funding to \$10,000 per member from \$5,000. The House Administration Committee launched the program in July after the assassination of Minnesota state Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband.

Through the program, House lawmakers are also allowed to spend up to \$20,000 on in-home security equipment.

The cash infusion does not affect the president, who is protected by a separate budget for the Secret Service, or the Capitol Police, which guards the Capitol complex — the Capitol, Supreme Court, the Library of Congress and scores of offices staffed by government and political officials.

"Federal judges have marshals. Obviously, the executive has federal law enforcement. Members of Congress are unprotected," said Rep. Maxwell Frost, D-Fla. "We're in a heightened time of political violence," Frost said, adding that he thought it was "ridiculous" that lawmakers had to use their personal or campaign funds to protect themselves.

Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tenn., criticized the GOP leaders for not providing more security money. He questioned whether they appreciate the situation facing elected officials today.

"I just think it's tough for leadership to understand they're in their little protective bubble with security details and (Chevrolet) Suburbans. They don't have to stand in line, they're not in crowds, and then we're out basically on our own with our families, and that's a very scary proposition right now," Burchett said.

Rep. Derrick Van Orden, R-Wis., said the FBI was investigating multiple death threats against his family and he argued that such cases should be prosecuted as terrorism. "We have security, but we need enhanced security," he said.

Utah Rep. Blake Moore, vice chair of the House Republican Conference, cited "large bicameral, bipartisan

agreement that there needs to be more done." He added: "It's just finding that sweet spot to be fiscally responsible, but also make sure that we're in a good spot."

Working with local law enforcement

Moore noted that local law enforcement had been especially responsive in stepping up to protect lawmakers in their districts and he commended that support.

Lawmakers said they often coordinate with law enforcement agencies in their districts so that there are officers at local events, but as they travel between their home districts and Washington, they often feel vulnerable.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., is calling for a "comprehensive" security plan for all House members, including security personnel who would travel with the lawmakers.

She said that in the past she had hesitated to increase security because it puts a barrier between her and constituents. But the recent high-profile killings of political figures, as well as the shooting of her friend, then-Rep. Gabby Giffords, D-Ariz., in 2011, has convinced her that the protection is necessary.

"It's really to me become a necessity to protect our constituents, to protect us, to protect our staff, our family members," Wasserman Schultz said. "The risk is too great."

How to get a COVID-19 shot and ensure it's covered by your insurance

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Drugstores are ready to deliver updated COVID-19 vaccines this fall and insurers plan to pay for them, even though the shots no longer come recommended by an important government committee.

On Friday, vaccine advisers picked by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. declined to specifically recommend the shots but said people could make individual decisions on whether to get them.

The recommendations from the advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention require sign-off by the agency's director, but they are almost always adopted.

Those recommendations normally trigger several layers of insurance coverage and allow drugstores in many states to deliver the shots. But insurers and government officials have said coverage will continue, and several states have allowed for vaccine access through pharmacies, the most common place to get shots.

Many people start seeking vaccinations in the late summer or early fall to get protection against any winter surges in cases.

Here's a closer look at the issue.

Will insurers cover these shots?

Many are expected to do so, but you still may want to check with yours.

The Department of Health and Human Services said Friday that the committee vote "provides for immunization coverage through all payment mechanisms." An HHS spokesperson said that includes Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, commercial coverage sold through health insurance marketplaces and the federal Vaccines for Children program, which pays for roughly half of childhood vaccinations in the U.S. each year.

The VFC program normally automatically covers any vaccines recommended by the CDC committee.

The trade group America's Health Insurance Plans said earlier this week that its members will continue to cover the shots at no cost to patients through 2026.

That group includes every major insurer except UnitedHealthcare. And that insurer has said it will continue covering the vaccine at no cost for its standard commercial coverage, which includes plans offered for individuals and through small businesses.

One caveat: Large employers that offer coverage will make their own decisions on the vaccines.

They may be motivated to continue coverage: The vaccines can help ward off expensive hospital bills from people who develop a bad case of COVID-19.

Where people can get vaccinations

About two-thirds of adults get COVID-19 shots at pharmacies, and around 30% receive them at doctors'

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offices, according to CDC data.

Access to the shots has grown after a clunky start to vaccine season that saw some people travel to nearby states when they couldn't make appointments at pharmacies closer to home.

Drugstore chains like CVS say their locations are stocked with the latest vaccines, and they now are able to deliver vaccinations in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Prescriptions are required in D.C. and a handful of states, including Florida and Georgia, CVS Health spokeswoman Amy Thibault said.

Walgreens also requires prescriptions in a few states, a company spokesperson said.

Who can get the shot

Until now, the U.S. has recommended yearly COVID-19 shots for everyone age 6 months and older.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved the shots for all people age 65 and older, and for younger adults and children with conditions that put them at high risk for catching a bad case of COVID-19.

The CDC maintains a long list of conditions that would put someone at high risk, including asthma, cancer, heart or lung problems, obesity, depression and a history of smoking. It also includes those who are physically inactive, and the agency notes that this list is not conclusive.

Patients can consult with their doctor or care provider to decide whether they are high risk if they don't have a condition on that list.

Both CVS and Walgreens representatives say their companies will ask patients under age 65 if they have any of these factors. They won't require proof.

"In simplest terms, if a patient says they're eligible, they will get the vaccine," said Thibault, the CVS Health spokeswoman.

Trump's peace efforts falter as conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza escalate

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A month after an Alaskan summit with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, President Donald Trump still seems surprised that his gambit did not pay off with peace in Ukraine.

"He's let me down," Trump said this week. "He really let me down."

There has been no more progress in the Middle East, where Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is beginning a new offensive in Gaza City and lashing out across the region.

"They have to be very, very careful," Trump said after Israel targeted Hamas inside Qatar, a U.S. ally that has been hosting diplomatic negotiations.

Trump's disappointment and frustration is much different from the confidence and dominance he tries to project on the international stage, especially as he trumpets his diplomatic efforts and campaigns for the Nobel Peace Prize. Asked about his goals for the upcoming U.N. General Assembly, the president said "world peace." But the most high-profile conflicts appear to be escalating instead of winding down.

"This whole last nine months of peace efforts was just a merry-go-round," said Max Bergmann, a State Department official under Democratic President Barack Obama who now works at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Bold gestures, but reaching peace deals is hard

Although Trump prizes bold gestures — a stealth bomber strike in Iran, a sweeping tariff announcement — solving a global jigsaw puzzle is a far bigger struggle.

The fundamental truth, Bergmann said, is "trying to reach peace agreements is very hard," and that Trump has not surrounded himself with experienced diplomats and foreign policy experts.

"It's like if you were to tell me, 'Go do a hotel deal,'" Bergmann said. "It would be a terrible deal. I would lose a lot of money."

In Trump's defense, the White House has pointed to comments from European leaders who have praised his efforts working to forge peace agreements. Trump often notes that he hires "only the best people."

Matt Kroenig, a senior policy adviser at the Pentagon during Trump's first term, said the president's

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brashness can get results, such as when he demanded increased defense spending from European allies. Trump, however, can end up spinning his wheels on more challenging issues and eventually give up, such as when he tried to persuade Kim Jong Un to end North Korea's nuclear program.

When it comes to making peace in Ukraine and Gaza, Kroenig wondered, "At what point does he say, 'This is too hard, let's move on to other issues.'"

Foreign policy is usually a team sport for presidential administrations, requiring extensive coordination among agencies through the National Security Council. But Trump has dramatically slashed the council's staff, and Marco Rubio serves as both secretary of state and national security adviser.

"It's one person setting the strategy and everyone else is waiting to see," Kroenig said.

Mideast is increasingly in turmoil

In the Middle East, Trump is getting caught in the middle of an increasingly combustible situation. He has visited Arab nations, including Qatar, this year to strengthen ties, and he has backed Israel's military operations in Gaza and Iran.

But now Israel, emboldened by its battlefield success, is striking more widely throughout the region, including the recent attack targeting Hamas officials in Qatar. That jeopardized negotiations that the United States has been trying to push along and rattled Arab leaders' faith in Trump's ability to influence, let alone rein in, Netanyahu.

Some of them now view Israel, not Iran, as their primary security threat, according to three Arab diplomats familiar with conversations at the last summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council in Doha. It's a noticeable shift after Israel and Arab nations grew closer during Trump's first term, when the Republican president championed the Abraham Accords. The diplomats were not authorized to publicly discuss the private conversations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

U.S. officials have tried to assuage doubts by pointing to Trump's expressions of displeasure with Netanyahu's latest moves, to recent meetings held with Qatar's prime minister and to discussions of enhanced security arrangements.

During next week's annual high-level gathering at the General Assembly, Rubio and Trump special envoy Steve Witkoff can expect to hear a chorus of criticism, with Arab nations seeking a more fundamental shift in how the U.S. approaches the region.

For example, the U.S. has tried to ensure that Israel has a military edge over its Arab neighbors. But now that Israel has attacked Qatar with U.S.-supplied weapons — a strike that Qatar was unable to counter with its own U.S.-supplied defenses — Arab diplomats are considering demanding stronger support.

Such a move would likely be politically untenable, at least for now, with support for Israel strong among Republicans who control Congress.

Trump's equivocal approach to Putin

In Europe, Trump has frustrated his critics with his equivocal approach to Putin, sometimes suggesting that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is just as responsible for the war that Moscow started with its 2022 invasion.

Trump recently insisted that his meeting with Putin "accomplished a lot," but "it takes two to tango."

"You know those are two people, Zelenskyy and Putin, that hate each other," he said.

Fears that the war in Ukraine could spill over have been heightened by recent Russian military incursions into the airspace of NATO members Poland and Estonia. After three Russian fighter jets entered Estonian airspace on Friday, Trump said it could signal "big trouble."

During a news conference in the United Kingdom on his state visit, Trump said he was dedicated to stopping the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine. Then he turned philosophical.

"You never know in war. You know, war is a different thing," he said. "Things happen that are very opposite of what you thought."

Zohran Mamdani's been called a communist who'll defund the police. Here's where he actually stands

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

President Donald Trump calls him a "communist." His critics say he wants to defund the police. Zohran Mamdani insists he's just a guy trying to make New York City more affordable.

Mamdani's meteoritic rise to become the Democratic nominee for New York City mayor has put his past and present policy positions under close scrutiny. If elected, he would be the city's first Muslim and Indian American mayor. He'd be the city's most liberal mayor in generations.

But as he tries to broaden his support ahead of the November election, the state lawmaker has shifted more to the center on certain issues — while distancing himself from other potentially damaging political stances.

Mamdani's opponents — two Democrats, former Gov. Andrew Cuomo and incumbent Mayor Eric Adams, and a Republican, Curtis Sliwa — have cast themselves as moderate alternatives to the 33-year-old.

Some top New York Democrats, including U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, have been slow to endorse Mamdani. A few, including the state Democratic Party chair and some suburban members of Congress, have said they won't back him. But more notable names have thrown their weight behind him in recent days, including Gov. Kathy Hochul and the state's top two legislative leaders.

Here's where he actually stands:

He's a democratic socialist, not a communist

While Trump and other opponents keep calling Mamdani a communist, he identifies as something different: a democratic socialist. He believes government should play a role in reducing economic disparity, but he doesn't advocate for a communist system where property is collectively owned.

Mamdani does favor raising taxes on the wealthy to fund proposals he argues would make the city more affordable. That includes free bus service, universal child care, and his signature issue: a freeze on rent increases for the city's 1 million rent-regulated apartments. Opponents say a rent freeze would harm landlords, who have also been hit hard by inflation.

Perhaps nowhere has the "communist" label come up more than in relation to Mamdani's proposal to set up a pilot program for city-run grocery stores. Billionaire John Catsimatidis, who owns grocery chains Gristedes and D'Agostino Supermarkets, said the program would "drag us down a path toward the bread lines of the old Soviet Union."

In an interview with The Bulwark, Mamdani framed his proposal for five stores that would sell products at wholesale prices as a modest experiment. He said if it doesn't work, "C'est la vie, then the idea was wrong."

He has also faced criticism over comments he made on NBC's "Meet The Press," in which he said that in an economically just world, "I don't think that we should have billionaires." But Mamdani said that as mayor, he would be happy to work with billionaires to solve the city's problems.

He no longer supports defunding the police

After the police killing of George Floyd in Minnesota in 2020, Mamdani was among a number of New York Democrats who advocated slashing the police department's budget, and who frequently railed against police brutality.

In one social media post, Mamdani called the department "racist, anti-queer & a major threat to public safety." In another, Mamdani wrote, "Defund this rogue agency" on a post sharing video of NYPD pummeling a man who had argued with a police officer.

During his mayoral campaign, Mamdani has distanced himself from these prior calls to reduce department funding, saying they don't represent his current agenda. Mamdani said he would maintain the NYPD's staffing levels but also create a new "Department of Community Safety" that would deploy mental health care teams, rather than armed officers, to handle certain emergency calls involving people in psychiatric crisis.

And he has softened his overall rhetoric around law enforcement. In a recent New York Times interview, he answered "yes" when asked if he owed officers an apology for calling the department racist, saying his 2020 comments were made "at the height of frustration."

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Mamdani's opponents have been skeptical of his shift. Adams, a former police captain, says Mamdani changed his position on law enforcement because voters wouldn't support defunding the department. Cuomo has said Mamdani is flip-flopping and hasn't given voters a clear picture of who he really is.

He's criticized Israel and defended Palestinian civil rights

Mamdani is a vocal defender of Palestinian civil rights and has accused the Israeli government of committing a genocide in Gaza.

He supports an economic boycott of Israel and has promised that if Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, visited New York City he would honor a warrant from the International Criminal Court and have Netanyahu arrested for war crimes. The U.S. is not a member of the court and Israel denies it is engaging in genocide or war crimes.

Mamdani has repeatedly condemned the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, calling the militant group's slaughter of 1,200 "deplorable." He has also said he believes Israel has a right to exist, though without a hierarchy that favors Jewish citizens over others.

That hasn't assuaged critics who characterize such condemnations of Israeli policy as antisemitic.

Before the primary, Mamdani was asked whether he would disavow the phrase "globalize the intifada," a slogan some see as a call to violence against Israeli civilians. At the time, Mamdani described it as reflecting "a desperate desire for equality and equal rights in standing up for Palestinian human rights."

But Mamdani — who has not employed the phrase during his campaign — now says he would discourage others from using the slogan.

Is he connected to DSA

Mamdani is a member of the New York City and national chapters of the Democratic Socialists of America, an activist group that advocates for a universal health care system, immigrants' rights, tuition-free higher education, nationwide rent regulation, a 32-hour workweek, and getting rid of mandatory jail time for some types of crimes, among other issues.

Cuomo, Adams and Sliwa have all heaped scorn on Mamdani for his association with the group. Mamdani says he is running on his own, distinct platform — not DSA's — and that being part of a group doesn't mean you agree with all of its goals.

Asked by reporters about his previous support for decriminalizing prostitution, Mamdani didn't give a direct answer but said: "What I want to do is look at the ways in which the previous administration addressed this issue," referring to former Mayor Bill de Blasio, under whom arrests for related charges decreased.

Today in History: September 21, Nairobi shopping mall attack

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Sept. 21, the 264th day of 2025. There are 101 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 21, 2013, an attack by armed militants in the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya left 67 people dead and hundreds injured.

Also on this date:

In 1792, the National Convention of France issued a proclamation announcing the abolition of the French monarchy.

In 1898, in response to a letter from 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon, the New York Sun newspaper wrote an editorial containing the famous line "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus."

In 1915, Cecil Chubb purchased Stonehenge for £6,600; the last private owner of the site, Chubb donated it to the British people three years later.

In 1922, President Warren Harding signed the Lodge-Fish Resolution, a Congressional resolution endorsing the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

In 1937, "The Hobbit," by J.R.R. Tolkien, was first published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd. of London.

In 1938, a hurricane made U.S. landfall, striking parts of New York and New England while causing widespread damage and claiming some 700 lives.

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In 1939, Romanian Prime Minister Armand Călinescu was assassinated by members of the fascist Iron Guard movement.

In 1955, at Yankee Stadium in New York, boxer Rocky Marciano completed his undefeated professional career by knocking out Archie Moore in the ninth round of their title fight.

In 1970, Monday Night Football made its debut on ABC, with the Cleveland Browns defeating the New York Jets 31-21.

In 1981, the Senate unanimously confirmed the nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor to become the first female justice on the Supreme Court.

In 1989, Hurricane Hugo crashed into South Carolina; the storm was blamed for 56 deaths in the Caribbean and 29 in the United States.

In 2022, Russia's Vladimir Putin ordered a mobilization of reservists for the first time since World War II, nearly seven months after invading Ukraine.

Today's Birthdays: Producer Jerry Bruckheimer is 82. Musician Don Felder is 78. Author Stephen King is 78. Basketball Hall of Famer Artis Gilmore is 76. Actor-comedian Bill Murray is 75. Race car driver Arie Luyendyk is 72. Filmmaker Ethan Coen is 68. Basketball Hall of Famer Sidney Moncrief is 68. Actor-comedian Dave Coulier is 66. Actor David James Elliott is 65. Actor Nancy Travis is 64. Actor Rob Morrow is 63. Actor Angus Macfadyen is 62. Actor Cheryl Hines is 60. Country singer Faith Hill is 58. Actor-talk show host Ricki Lake is 57. Actor Billy Porter is 56. Actor Alfonso Ribeiro (rih-BEHR'-oh) is 54. Actor Luke Wilson is 54. Musician Liam Gallagher (Oasis) is 53. TV personality Nicole Richie is 44. Actor Maggie Grace is 42. Actor Joseph Mazzello is 42. Rapper Wale (WAH'-lay) is 41. Singer Jason Derulo is 36. Cyclist Tadej Pogačar is 27.