

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 1 of 76**

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Perfect Weather, Perfect Performances at Lake Region Marching Festival](#)
- [5- Today on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [6- Groton Chamber Ad](#)
- [7- GFP Commission Holds October Meeting](#)
- [8- Names Released in Spink County Fatal Crash](#)
- [8- Name Released in Meade County Fatal Crash](#)
- [9- Minnehaha County Fatal Crash](#)
- [10- 'Legends and Legacies in South Dakota Sports' published in time for football season](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Noem's South Dakota neighbors hit with an immigration audit that decimates their workforce](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: South Dakota needs modernization, not a DOGE project](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: Trump pledges additional 100% tariffs on China by Nov. 1](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: Despite widespread interest, only 3 states passed license plate reader laws this year](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: Trump undertakes a MAGA-centric makeover of US civics education](#)
- [20- SD SearchLight: 'Substantial' layoffs of federal workers launched by Trump administration amid shutdown](#)
- [23- Weather Pages](#)
- [28- Daily Devotional](#)
- [29- Subscription Form](#)
- [30- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [31- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [32- News from the Associated Press](#)

## **Saturday, Sept. 11**

Second Round Soccer Playoffs: Girls soccer at Dakota Valley, 2 p.m.  
Junior High Volleyball Tournament at Warner  
Pumpkin Fest, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
United Methodist Charge Conference with lunch, noon.



## **Sunday, Oct. 12**

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

St. John's Lutheran: Worship St. John's, 9 a.m., and Zion, 11 a.m.

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

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.

1st Grade GBB, 3:30 p.m.

2nd Grade GBB Practice, 6 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

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

© 2025 Groton Daily Independent

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 2 of 76

# 1440

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

## **MIT Rejects Trump Pact**

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology yesterday became the first university to respond to the Trump administration's offer of priority access to federal funding in exchange for campus reforms, rejecting the pact. The 10-point proposal, sent to nine schools last week, calls for measures including international student enrollment caps, bans on considering gender and race in admissions and hiring, and tuition freezes.

In an open letter to the Department of Education, MIT President Sally Kornbluth expressed concern that the compact could limit the university's freedom of expression and independence. She said MIT already upholds many of the compact's principles—such as rewarding merit and promoting free speech—but argued tying funding to anything other than scientific merit conflicts with the research institution's core values. The eight other schools are still reviewing the compact. The White House has given them until Oct. 20 to provide limited feedback and until Nov. 21 to make a decision.

The Trump administration this year has frozen billions in federal funding to several schools, citing anti-semitism and DEI initiatives.

## **China hits US ships with retaliatory port fees.**

Beginning Tuesday, US-owned, operated, and affiliated vessels will be required to pay a docking fee in China. The Chinese Ministry of Transportation declared the move Friday in response to a similar US port fee on Chinese ships, also set to take effect next week. The Trump administration announced the fee earlier this year in an effort to curb China's dominance in freight ship manufacturing and boost the US industry.

## **... and Trump to impose 100% tariffs on Chinese goods.**

President Donald Trump cited new rare earth export controls announced Thursday by China's commerce ministry as the reason for the new US tariffs, which are expected to begin by Nov. 1 and supersede existing duties. Trump also said he would place export controls on critical software. China leads global mining and processing of rare earth minerals, which are critical to advanced technologies, such as computer chips. US stock markets fell Friday (S&P 500 -2.7%, Dow -1.9%, Nasdaq -3.6%).

## **Tennessee explosives plant accident leaves several dead, missing.**

As of this writing, 19 people are missing and feared dead after an explosion at a military munitions plant in rural Tennessee Friday. Emergency crews initially couldn't enter due to ongoing detonations, but the site is now secure and officials say there is no further risk. The cause remains unknown, and the investigation could take days, according to the local sheriff.

## **Trump administration begins laying off federal workers.**

The White House said yesterday that it began mass firings as part of its ongoing effort to reduce the federal workforce. The departments of Homeland Security, Education, and Energy are among the impacted agencies; it remains unclear how many employees were affected. A federal employees union has asked a federal judge to halt the firings, alleging they are intended to punish workers and pressure Democratic lawmakers during the ongoing government shutdown.

## **Peru ousts president, swears in new one amid crime surge.**

Peruvian lawmakers voted 122-8 early Friday to remove President Dina Boluarte from office. Boluarte, an independent who leans conservative, faced mounting accusations of corruption and failure to curb rising crime; her approval rating has hovered between 2% and 4%. Congress Chief José Jeri, a conservative, will serve as president until Peru's April general elections.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 3 of 76

## **Savannah Bananas' new baseball league grows.**

Two new teams—the Loco Beach Coconuts and Indianapolis Clowns—will join the Banana Ball Championship league for its inaugural 2026 season. They'll compete with the Savannah Bananas, Party Animals, Texas Tailgaters, and Firefighters in a 75-stadium, 45-state schedule, expected to attract roughly 3.2 million fans. Read about Banana Ball's history and gameplay [here](#).

## **No Doubt announces Sphere residency.**

The 1990s American rock band No Doubt will reunite for a six-night residency at Las Vegas' Sphere in May. The announcement comes after the quartet reunited for the first time in nearly a decade to perform both weekends of Coachella 2024. The residency will make No Doubt the first female-fronted act to headline the \$2.3B high-tech venue since it opened in 2023.

## **Humankind(ness)**

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Michelle P. in Farmington, CT.

"My husband and I attended a wedding celebration yesterday. My husband excused himself to go to the restroom, and all the other couples at the table got up to go to the dance floor. So, I was seated by myself. One of the bride's good friends from high school (whom I'd never met before, sat down, noting that I was by myself. She introduced herself and initiated pleasant small talk. We figured out how we shared common bonds with the wedding couple. It was such a lovely gesture. She stayed until my husband returned. She is the bride's age, and I am the bride's mother's age."

## Perfect Weather, Perfect Performances at Lake Region Marching Festival

GROTON — The annual Lake Region Marching Festival took place Saturday in Groton under perfect fall weather, drawing a good crowd and showcasing the talents of 18 bands and 1,020 student musicians from across the region.

The event featured both middle school and high school divisions, along with a combined division. Spectators lined the streets to enjoy the music, color, and synchronized precision from bands representing communities throughout northeastern South Dakota.

### Judges

This year's panel of judges included Terry Beckler and Audrey Miller, both from Northern State University, and John Patzlaff from Aberdeen Central. Their combined experience and musical expertise brought valuable perspective to each band's performance, evaluating elements such as tone quality, marching precision, and overall showmanship.

### Middle School Division

In the Middle School Division, Milbank captured top honors with the Band of Distinction award, earning first place with their performance of "Crunch Time." Holgate-Simmons Middle School followed with Band of Merit, securing the runner-up spot with their performance of "Conquista."

### High School Division

The High School Division saw impressive competition as well. Warner took home Band of Honor for third place with their performance of "Houdini," Northwestern claimed Band of Merit for second place, with their performance of "Superman Overture," and T.F. Riggs from Pierre, the state capital, earned Band of Distinction as the first-place high school band and their performance was "Cheyenne."

### Combined Middle School/High School Division

In the combined category, Hoven received Band of Merit for second place, with their performance of "Estancia," while Aberdeen Roncalli swept first with Band of Distinction honors. Their performance was "Let's Get Loud."

### Special Awards and Grand Champion

Aberdeen Roncalli continued its outstanding showing by capturing several of the day's top individual awards. The Cavaliers earned the Outstanding Winds Award, Best Percussion, and ultimately took home the title of Grand Champion of the Day.

T.F. Riggs was recognized for its leadership and precision with the Outstanding Drum Major Award, rounding out a day filled with strong performances from every level of competition.

Festival organizers and spectators alike praised the event for its smooth coordination, enthusiastic crowd, and perfect weather that allowed every band to shine at its best.

"It's one of those days where everything just comes together — great weather, great music, and great kids showing what they can do," one festival volunteer said. "You couldn't ask for better."



**The judges were talking into their recorders as each band walked by. They are John Patzlaff, Terry Beckler and Audrey Miller.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 5 of 76



Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

## GDILIVE



A production of the  
**Groton Daily Independent**

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

Girls Soccer  
State Semifinal  
at Dakota Valley  
2 p.m., Sat., Oct. 11



to the Groton Area Girls  
Soccer Team at Dakota  
Valley on Saturday!  
From these  
**GDILIVE.COM** sponsors:

Avartara Groton  
Basekamp Lodge  
Bierman Farm Service  
BK Custom Ts & More  
Blocker Construction  
Dacotah Bank  
Groton Ag Solutions  
Groton Chamber of Commerce  
Groton American Legion  
Groton Dairy Queen  
Harry Implement of Ferney  
Ken's Food Fair  
KR Body Shop of Andover  
Lori's Pharmacy  
The Meat House of Andover  
Spanier Harvesting  
Sun and Sea Travel  
Weismantel Agency of Columbia



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 6 of 76

## Groton's Events



**Nov. 11: Veteran's Day Program,  
2 p.m.**



**Dec. 5: Tour of Trees at Wage  
Memorial Library, 3:30-5:30 p.m.**



**Nov. 27:  
Community  
Thanksgiving  
at the  
Community  
Center,  
11:30 a.m.  
to 1:30 p.m.**



**Dec. 6: Olive Grove Holiday  
Party, 6 p.m.**

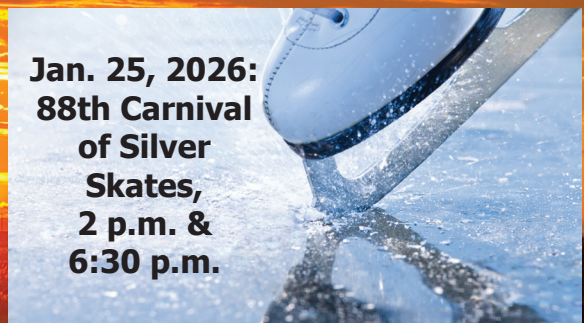
### **Snow Queen Festival**

**Nov. 30: Groton Snow Queen  
Contest, 4 p.m.**

**Nov. 15:  
Legion Post  
#39 Turkey  
Party,  
6:30 p.m.**



**Jan. 25, 2026:  
88th Carnival  
of Silver  
Skates,  
2 p.m. &  
6:30 p.m.**



**Jan. 25, 2026:  
Groton Robotics  
Pancake Feed at  
the Community  
Center,  
10 am. to 1 p.m.**



# GROTON

**Chamber of Commerce**

**120 N Main, Groton, SD 57445**

**605/397-8422 ~ GrotonChamber.com**

## GFP Commission Holds October Meeting

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission held their October meeting at the Beeler Community Center in Lemmon, October 9.

### PROPOSALS

#### Custer State Park Buffalo Season

At their September meeting the Commission accepted a petition desiring an increase in the percentage of resident licenses offered for Custer State Park (CSP) bison tags. This petition has now become an official proposal and will continue through the rule promulgation process.

The proposal would make CSP Trophy Bison and Non-Trophy Bison licenses available with 60% of licenses available for residents only in the first draw, then the remaining 40% of the licenses available to both residents and nonresidents for the first draw.

The proposal would also set a maximum number of licenses at:

15 Trophy Buffalo Licenses; and,

30 Non-Trophy Buffalo Licenses.

Annual license allocation would be determined by forage and population conditions. Previously the allocation allowed for a maximum of 10 Trophy Buffalo licenses and 20 Non-Trophy Buffalo licenses.

#### Public Comments Being Accepted

To hear the discussion on these proposals, audio from the meeting is available through South Dakota Public Broadcasting and will soon be available on the GFP website as part of the meeting archive.

To see these proposals in their entirety, visit [gfp.sd.gov/commission/information](http://gfp.sd.gov/commission/information).

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CDT on November 2.

The next GFP Commission meeting will be held in Rapid City on November 6.



## **Names Released in Spink County Fatal Crash**

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 37, near SD Highway 28, 19 miles north of Huron, SD

When: 11:36 a.m., Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Driver 1: Thomas Joseph Wempe, 65-year-old male from Fort Pierre, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 1: 2003 Ford F150 pulling a camper

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 1a: Laurel Jean Wempe, 63-year-old female from Fort Pierre, SD, minor injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: Alfredo Vasquez-Iraola, 44-year-old male from Huron, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2012 Freightliner FM2

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Spink County, S.D.- Three people were injured, one fatally, in a two-vehicle crash Tuesday morning 19 miles north of Huron, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Thomas Joseph Wempe, the driver of a 2003 Ford F150 who was pulling a camper, was traveling northbound on SD Highway 37. At the same time, Alfredo Vasquez-Iraola, the driver of a 2012 Freightliner box truck, was traveling southbound on Highway 37 and collided with the Ford in the northbound lane. The Ford came to rest in the east ditch. The Freightliner came to rest on the shoulder of the northbound lane.

Wempe sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries and his passenger, Laurel Jean Wempe, received minor injuries. Vasquez-Iraola died from his injuries.

## **Name Released in Meade County Fatal Crash**

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: Sturgis Road and Freedom Lane, Summerset, SD

When: 3:14 p.m., Friday, Oct. 3, 2025

Driver 1: Anthony Arthur Grenstiner, 70-year-old male from Sturgis, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 1961 Chevrolet Biscayne

Seat belt Used: Vehicle not equipped with seatbelts

Meade County, S.D.- A Sturgis man died Sunday from injuries related to a single vehicle crash Friday, Oct. 3 in Summerset, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Anthony Arthur Grenstiner, the driver of a 1961 Chevrolet Biscayne, was traveling westbound on Sturgis Road and left the roadway to the right near Freedom Lane, striking a road sign. The vehicle continued into the ditch, striking a telephone pole.

After being taken to a Rapid City hospital with life-threatening injuries, Grenstiner died on Sunday.

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

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



## **Minnehaha County Fatal Crash**

What: Fatal vehicle crash

Where: Interstate 90 and Cliff Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD

When: 5:32 p.m., Thursday, October 9, 2025

Driver 1: 66-year-old male Absarokee, MT, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2010 Ford F350 with bed camper

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 1a: 68-year-old female from Absarokee, MT, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: 42-year-old female from Colton, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 2: 2017 Toyota Sienna

Seat belt Used: Yes

Minnehaha County, S.D.- One man died and his passenger was injured in a crash in Sioux Falls early Thursday evening.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2010 Ford F350 was traveling west on Interstate 90 when it struck a 2017 Toyota Sienna then exited the interstate at Cliff Avenue, went over a barrier and rolled, coming to rest in an open field.

The driver of the Ford sustained fatal injuries. His passenger was transported to a Sioux Falls hospital with serious, non-life-threatening injuries. The driver of the Toyota was not injured.

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.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 10 of 76

## 'Legends and Legacies in South Dakota Sports' published in time for football season

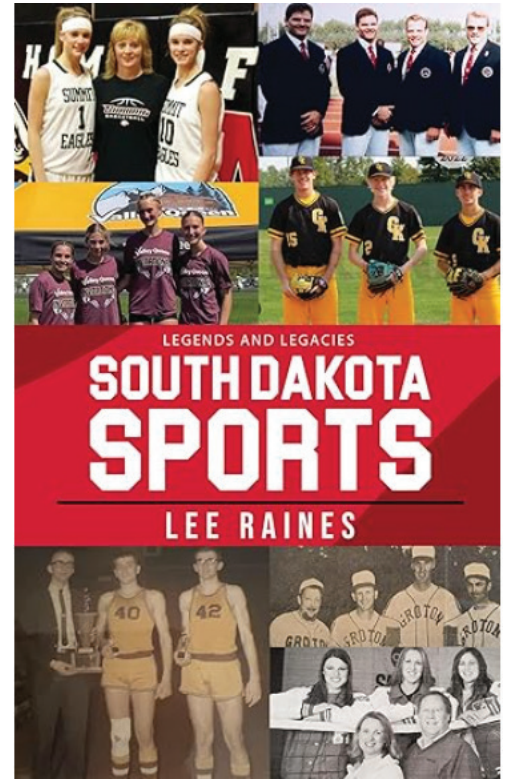
**Groton native Lee Raines' 6th book can be purchased online**

Lee Raines' 6th book, "Legends and Legacies in South Dakota Sports," has been published and is now available for purchase in paperback or on Kindle on Amazon. All of Raines' books can be found on [leeraines.com](http://leeraines.com).

Growing up in the South Dakota public school system, Lee Raines knew the bearing of sports on the legacy of the state: Many of the athletes from high school became coaches and teachers who positively affected the lives of thousands of students. After years of research, including multitudes of newspaper clippings of the sporting events themselves, interviews with surviving family members and narratives from various sports accolades, Raines illustrates the influence and contribution to education by these families. In the process, he has identified brothers, sisters, and members of the related family trees that made an impact on South Dakota sports over the past century.

Though he has lived in Texas since the late 1980s, Lee Raines considers his early years in Groton, SD, as formative and influential on his values and success today. He was born in Britton, SD, in 1953, grew up in Groton, graduating from Groton High School in 1971. During his school years, Raines participated in all the high school sports available. While he played alongside family members of the legacies mentioned in the book, he would be the first to claim his greatest talent was as a spectator. For the past 25 years, he has lived in Austin, Texas.

All of Raines' books are available for purchase on [leeraines.com](http://leeraines.com).





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Noem's South Dakota neighbors hit with an immigration audit that decimates their workforce

**Dairy owner says fears are spreading in the industry that 'we've turned off the tap' with no plan to help or replace lost workers**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-OCTOBER 10, 2025 6:00 AM**

LAKE NORDEN — The names on the list included some of Dorothy Elliott's best employees: hardworking, reliable, honest.

Most had been working at Drumgoon Dairy for years. Some worked there for nearly two decades, playing a role in the operation's expansion and success.

But after an audit of the dairy at the end of May by the federal Department of Homeland Security, 38 of those employees are gone.

The department said they each had inaccurate, outdated or incomplete proof of U.S. citizenship or permission to work in the country.

Elliott co-owns the farm near Lake Norden, 5 miles from Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem's eastern South Dakota home. Elliott asked the affected employees for updated documentation but ultimately had to fire those who weren't able to adequately resolve the problems with their documents. One person returned home because his visa was expiring, and another quit.

The audit decimated Elliott's workforce, once more than 50 employees, dropping it to just 16.

Audits at dairy farms under the Trump administration's escalated immigration enforcement efforts have "created unrest" among workers and owners, Elliott said. It's made for a tough summer in an industry that was flourishing after decades of support from state government.

Elliott's remaining employees have been working without breaks, she said. Without a pathway or plan to create a sustainable workforce in agriculture and by "removing everyone working in it," she worries some agricultural operations will go out of business. She hopes Drumgoon isn't one of them.

"Basically, we've turned off the tap, but we've done nothing to create a solution as to how we find employees for the dairy industry," she said.

#### **Never previously audited**

Elliott is required to file I-9 forms with documentation proving her workers' identity and eligibility to work in the U.S. It puts employers in a difficult position, said Scott VanderWal, president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau, because applicants may present fraudulent documents an employer doesn't catch. Yet employers could also be sued for mistakenly rejecting valid documents.

"If employers are presented with documentation that looks real and legitimate, they're obligated to accept it," VanderWal said. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services offers similar guidance, saying employers must accept documentation if it "reasonably appears to be genuine."

Elliott could use the federal government's web-based system, E-Verify, that allows employers to confirm their employees' eligibility to work in the country. But E-Verify is not mandated for new hires in South Dakota, and Elliott said she doesn't use it because of "unreliable results." Organizations ranging from the libertarian-leaning Cato Institute to the American Civil Liberties Union have opposed the use of E-Verify, citing reasons including errors that cost people jobs because the system wrongly flagged them.

So Elliott evaluates applicants' documents herself. If their IDs are out of date or if they have a visa and are applying from another farm without returning home, she passes on hiring them. She's turned people away a dozen times over the years, she said.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 12 of 76**

Drumgoon was never audited before. In her past dealings with the Department of Homeland Security during nearly two decades of running the dairy, Elliott said, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents would merely tell her they were searching for a person and ask for a notification if the person applied for a job.

This time was different. After an audit, employers are required to terminate unauthorized workers who can't prove their employability, according to a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson. Audits — which are distinct from raids or other immigration enforcement operations — are meant to ensure businesses comply with federal employment laws.

Elliott does not know where her 38 former employees went. They could be working at other dairies in the U.S. They could have left the country. They could be anywhere.

Because the dairy is near a farm owned by Noem, the former governor of South Dakota, and because Noem was in the state during the month of the audit to receive an honorary degree, South Dakota Searchlight asked the Department of Homeland Security if Noem had a direct role in the audit. The department didn't respond to the question.

Elliott declined to talk about Noem, saying she recognizes that federal immigration authorities "have a job to do."

South Dakota Farmers Union President Doug Sombke called federal dairy audits "stupid," because they needlessly displace workers.

"Why the heck can't we continue to use them there as an intern or apprentice or whatever you want to call it and make it legal? Why is it so important we grab them and call them a criminal? No one wants those jobs," Sombke said. "I don't understand why you'd cripple or cause problems for a labor shortage when all you have to do is get them legalized."

## **Immigrants hiring immigrants**

Elliott's connection to immigrants isn't limited to her employees. She was born in the United States but married her husband, Rodney, in Northern Ireland, where they had their children.

Elliott worked in health care and her husband operated their 140-cow dairy farm in Northern Ireland when a newspaper ad, "Wanted: Dairy farmers in South Dakota," caught their attention. Moving to America meant fewer regulations, cheaper land, cheaper feed and the ability to grow their business, she said.

The couple used the EB-5 investment-for-visa program to secure backers for their operation, opened the dairy in 2006, paid off the investors within a few years and have been expanding ever since. They started with about 1,500 cows in 2006 and have grown to 6,500.

Elliott's children got their citizenship shortly after moving to the U.S., and her husband became a citizen about eight years after they moved. That experience helps her empathize with her workers, many of whom are Hispanic. She said everything they're doing is to support their families back home, even though many aren't able to see their families for years at a time.

"All they're guilty of is working and doing a job that isn't currently being filled by an American," Elliott said.

Taneeza Islam advocates for immigrants as executive director of South Dakota Voices for Peace. She's spoken to immigrant workers in other industries who were scared and confused after being terminated due to stricter immigration enforcement.

"We have two very separate worlds right now: the community that's impacted and worried about getting detained and deported, and the community that doesn't know this is happening here," Islam said.

## **State recruited dairies**

The Elliotts are among many new South Dakotans who've helped the dairy industry boom in the last two decades. Then-governor and now-U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, a Republican, focused on supporting the industry in the early 2000s, which included efforts to recruit farmers from overseas.

In 2010, South Dakota's dairy industry had an economic impact of \$1.27 billion. By 2023, that had grown to \$5.67 billion.

"We've achieved our goals we set out for ourselves: build a dairy, milk cows and grow the dairy industry in South Dakota," Elliott said. "Is it a sustainable goal if there's nobody to work on these dairies? No. So all the time, money, effort, investment and hard work that has gone into it will be null and void if there



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 13 of 76

isn't a workforce."

Sombke, the state Farmers Union president, said the state's investment in dairy "has been a good thing," but he isn't surprised by the recent disruption in the industry.

South Dakota Searchlight requested the number of audits conducted in South Dakota so far in 2025, but a Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said the department "does not disclose specific data on audits or enforcement actions by state or industry."

Sombke said dairy audits are "way up" in the state compared to last year. He said nobody should be surprised to find workers at dairies without permission to be in the country.

"What do you expect? The unemployment rate is less than 2% in the state," Sombke said. "You're going to be looking for labor anywhere you can find it."

## Aftermath of an audit

Drumgoon Dairy's remaining employees have made mistakes because of the long hours they've had to cover — like reversing a payloader into a manure pond — or because they're new to working on the farm.

"Some of them only get one or two days off in a 15-day period," Elliott said. "But what else do you do? Do you just let cows starve or calves die because there's no one there to take care of them?"

Some nearby farms sent workers to help at Drumgoon for a couple of days at a time this summer after the audit. Elliott and her husband have spent over \$110,000 on recruiters and transportation so far to hire 22 visa workers from Mexico. But the visas come with restrictions on the types of jobs workers can do, so Elliott hired a dozen or so new employees locally, and still wants to hire another 10 to 15 people to replace terminated staff.

Elliott is struggling to find local applicants, which she is required by law to attempt before hiring visa workers.

"If raising wages even more will bring Americans to work on the farm, we can try it," Elliott said, "but there is a limit to how high you can raise wages when you don't get to set the price of milk. Can I afford to pay a milker \$25 an hour? At some point, you'd produce milk for more than you're receiving for it."

## Trump could lead immigration reforms, Thune says

After a panel discussion at the annual Dakotafest agricultural trade show in Mitchell in August, U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, told South Dakota Searchlight that he believes President Donald Trump is interested in legal immigration and work visa reforms.

"If we can find some willing partners in the Democrats, some sort of an immigration policy or a piece of legislation that we could pass is not outside the realm of possibility," Thune said. "Ultimately, that's the best long-term solution, and I've heard him talk about it."

Sen. Rounds told Searchlight that as more people are deported and industries are disrupted, "we will get enough support from the administration to begin looking at a legal system again."

Republican U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, who is running for South Dakota governor next year, said some visa programs should be modified to meet the needs of the dairy industry. Some visas are seasonal programs that require participants to return home after a few months. The programs don't fit the needs of dairy operations that require workers year-round.

Elliott has broached the issue for years to Thune, Johnson, Rounds and other federal officials.

"All I hear is, 'I'll mention that. We'll talk about that.' But nothing," Elliott said. "What we hear is there is absolutely no passion for any kind of change to the status quo."

## Farmers suggest solutions

Lynn Boadwine of Boadwine Farms in Baltic has "run out of gas" trying to advocate for visa and immigration policy changes to support the dairy industry. But he was heartened to hear the congressional delegates' comments.

"There's rhetoric, but are you really working on it?" Boadwine said. "I hope they are, because the clock is really ticking on all of these issues and we're going to start to run out of people."

Boadwine shared immigration reform ideas with congressional offices but hasn't heard back on the topic. His hope is to modernize and simplify the H-2A visa program for dairies. His proposal would remove the

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 14 of 76

seasonality requirement and allow workers in the country without legal permission to transition to guest-worker status. Long-term guest workers would have a path toward permanent residency by proving they are law-abiding, hardworking employees.

VanderWal, with the South Dakota Farm Bureau, said he met this spring with Noem in Washington, D.C., in his capacity as vice president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. He urged Noem and the Trump administration to back off on audits in the agricultural industry in hopes that Congress would "fix the system."

"We wanted to impress upon the administration that if they started removing illegal workers up and down the food chain, from production to processing to transportation to grocery stores to restaurants, we'd see a disaster worse than the pandemic," VanderWal said.

The administration has since "backed off ag," VanderWal said, but the consequences linger for producers like the Elliotts and their employees. He said that unless President Trump "gets real forceful and goes after it," he doesn't expect Congress to undertake legal immigration reforms.

## Economic consequence predicted

At Drumgoon Dairy, Elliott has tried automating aspects of her operation. She and her husband put in 20 robots a few years ago with the expectation they could hire students from nearby Lake Area Technical College's robotics program to maintain them.

They posted robotics maintenance positions to attract graduates, but the response was deflating.

"To date, no one," Elliott said.

She plans to remove the robots because the cost of running and servicing them is too expensive. So far, they've sold three. If the cost of technology continues to be prohibitive or there aren't reforms to workforce visa or immigration programs, she said, "I wonder how we will become a sustainable industry."

Elliott fears there will be consequences and higher prices for milk and other consumer dairy products without action at the federal level. Boadwine agreed.

"If we keep down this road we'll have no choice but to import more food," Boadwine said, "and the reason we'd import more is because it's gotten so much more expensive here because we crippled ourselves."

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

## COMMENTARY

### South Dakota needs modernization, not a DOGE project

**State leaders propose cuts that starve local governments while the real reform lies in consolidation, technology and accountability**

by JOE KIRBY

South Dakota's fiscal debates usually circle the same questions: whether to cut taxes, which ones, and who pays the price. Lately, rapid growth in residential property values has thrown the property-tax formula out of balance. Instead of commissioning a serious study of how to fix it, some state leaders and candidates have floated proposals to cap or even eliminate property taxes. The idea sounds attractive on paper, but in practice it would destabilize the institutions most South Dakotans depend on: local schools, city services and county governments.

At the heart of the matter is a misunderstanding of the causes of the pain some homeowners are experiencing. There is little indication that total property taxes have taken an inordinate jump in recent years. Instead, an increase in home values has apparently distorted the formula for allocating property taxes between residential, ag and commercial property.

Meanwhile, state government lives mostly on sales taxes and federal transfers. Yet it is state officials and politicians, some with little to no experience in local governance, who are calling for property tax cuts

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 15 of 76

while leaving their own revenue streams untouched.

This disconnect raises a larger question: What kind of reform does South Dakota really need? Businessman Toby Doeden, a political newcomer who wants to be governor, has suggested that he would "DOGE" state government, an acronym for Department of Government Efficiency that evokes the idea of slashing wasteful programs. But while such rhetoric resonates nationally, it misses the mark in South Dakota.

Unlike Washington, South Dakota's state government isn't awash in bloated agencies or ridiculous programs. Instead, it more closely resembles a struggling family-run shop: lean, underfunded, reliant on dated systems, and often vulnerable to inefficiencies or fraud. What the state lacks is not austerity but modernization. Outdated processes slow delivery of services. Fragmented structures increase costs. And the absence of coordinated, professional oversight leaves opportunities for improvement untapped.

A more constructive project would look less like DOGE and more like modernization and consolidation. Imagine a task force of seasoned executives from some of South Dakota's best-run companies taking a hard look at state operations. With a mandate to find efficiencies, improve service delivery, and apply modern technology, such a group could identify changes that truly move the needle. The likely results: streamlined systems, smarter spending, and improved outcomes for citizens.

That is why proposals like Gov. Larry Rhoden's 2024 bill to cap property-tax growth, which is now state law, or Doeden's talk of eliminating property taxes feel misguided. These measures target the wrong level of government. Property taxes sustain local governments, which must balance budgets each year while maintaining schools, roads, and public safety.

When Pierre restricts their revenue without offering alternatives, the result is predictable: local officials are forced to cut programs or raise fees, shifting the burden in less transparent ways.

There is, of course, a more obvious option, one that almost no politician dares to talk about. South Dakota has too many governments. With 66 counties, hundreds of townships, and more than 150 school districts, the state maintains a costly system of governments with redundant and unnecessary facilities and employees. Consolidation of counties or school districts could lower administrative costs and deliver services more efficiently. Yet such structural reform demands courage, political will, and a willingness to confront entrenched local loyalties.

For now, state leaders and politicians prefer easier sound bites: cutting property taxes without tackling the underlying system. The contradiction is glaring. While protecting their own sales-tax revenue, state officials are restricting the lifeblood of local governments. The unanswered questions loom large: When revenues fall short, will the state step in with replacement funding? Or will school boards and city councils be left to close libraries, shorten school years, or defer infrastructure repairs?

Perhaps the better path for local government outsiders would be to first gain hands-on experience in local government. Let them run a school district or a county commission, grapple with balancing budgets, and decide which programs to cut when dollars run thin. Only then will they appreciate the complexities behind the talking points.

The real opportunity in South Dakota is not to starve local governments of revenue but to rethink how government at all levels operates. Modernization, efficiency, and consolidation, not blunt tax cuts, hold the key to a stronger, leaner state. What South Dakota needs is not a DOGE project, but a serious conversation about how to align its government structure with the realities of the 21st century.

*Joe Kirby, of Sioux Falls, formerly led Western Surety Company and worked as an accountant and lawyer. He helped lead a successful effort to modernize Sioux Falls city government in the 1990s and continues to advocate for government reform. He blogs at [SiouxFallsJoe.com](http://SiouxFallsJoe.com).*

## Trump pledges additional 100% tariffs on China by Nov. 1

BY: JACOB FISCHLER-OCTOBER 10, 2025 6:07 PM

President Donald Trump threatened to add a 100% tariff rate on Chinese goods Friday, saying in a social media post he was responding to export controls from the world's second-largest economy.

"China has taken an extraordinarily aggressive position on Trade in sending an extremely hostile letter to

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 16 of 76**

the World, stating that they were going to, effective November 1st, 2025, impose large scale Export Control on virtually every product they make, and some not even made by them," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

The United States would respond with the 100% tariff on Chinese goods, also starting Nov. 1, he said. The tariffs would be stacked onto existing tariffs his administration has imposed on the country, he said.

Trump added that he would impose his own export controls "on any and all critical software."

"It is impossible to believe that China would have taken such an action, but they have, and the rest is History," he wrote.

Trump left open the possibility of scrapping or adjusting the additional tariffs before November, saying in the Oval Office late Friday that "We're gonna have to see what happens."

"That's why I made it Nov. 1," he said. "We'll see what happens."

He told reporters he has not canceled a planned meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, at an international economic conference in South Korea this week, but raised some doubt that the meeting would take place.

"I don't know that we're going to have it," he said. "But I'm going to be there regardless, so I would assume we might have it."

## **Tariffs a main part of Trump policy**

Trump has used tariffs, taxes paid by the importer of foreign goods, as the central tool of his trade policy, applying broad tariffs on U.S. allies and adversaries alike, with a particular focus on China.

The two countries imposed escalating trade barriers on one another since Trump announced wide-ranging tariffs in early April. The U.S. tariff rate for Chinese goods peaked at 145% before the two sides negotiated an end to the trade war.

## **Chinese goods still see a base tariff rate of 30%.**

Trump invoked emergency authority to raise tariffs on China, arguing that the tariffs were a putative measure for China's inability to control fentanyl supplies flowing into the U.S., but federal courts are still deciding the legality of that move.

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

## **Despite widespread interest, only 3 states passed license plate reader laws this year**

BY: MADYSON FITZGERALD-OCTOBER 10, 2025 4:09 PM

Lawmakers in at least 16 states this year introduced bills to regulate the use of automated license plate readers responsible for collecting large amounts of data on drivers across the country.

But just three states — Arkansas, Idaho and Virginia — enacted laws this session that establish or amend rules for law enforcement agencies using the high-tech camera systems and the manner in which license plate data should be stored. And this month, California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed a bill that would have restricted use of such data.

The new Arkansas law, which was signed by Republican Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders in April, also allows nongovernmental entities, such as private landowners and commercial business owners, to use license plate cameras on the condition that the data is deleted after 60 days. State agencies and parking enforcement can store license plate data for up to 150 days.

Measures in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania are still under consideration. While the Pennsylvania bill outlines a permitting process for state agencies interested in installing license plate cameras, the measures in Massachusetts and New Jersey aim to strengthen privacy protections by ensuring only authorized employees can access driver data.

Automated or automatic license plate readers, also known as ALPRs, are high-speed camera and computer software systems that automatically capture license plate information as vehicles drive by. These



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 17 of 76

readers, which are typically mounted on street poles or the roofs of police cars, also record the location, date and time that license plates are captured.

ALPRs have been used by law enforcement agencies for more than 20 years. The camera systems are typically used as a tool for traffic accident and crime investigations.

Despite the technology's popularity, privacy and technology groups have raised concerns over data storage and appropriate uses of ALPRs.

License plate readers collect and store large amounts of data, which is susceptible to data breaches and hacking, according to a report from the Brennan Center for Justice. Several law enforcement agencies and officers have also used the technology to target immigrants and could track people seeking reproductive health care, according to an analysis from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit digital rights group.

Lawmakers in at least 10 states — Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas and Utah — introduced ALPR legislation this year that didn't advance.

This month, Newsom vetoed a measure that would have restricted how and when police agencies use and share data collected by ALPRs. The bill, which was approved by the legislature amid reports police were misusing the data, also would have required agencies to undergo random audits by the state and to delete some collected data within 60 days.

In his veto message, Newsom said the measure "does not strike the delicate balance between protecting individual privacy and ensuring public safety," citing examples of how the bill's provisions could impede criminal investigations.

In New Jersey, Democratic legislators introduced another bill in June that would prohibit law enforcement agencies and individuals from sharing license plate information during interstate investigations into people seeking reproductive health care services, such as abortion, that are legal in New Jersey.

*Stateline reporter Madyson Fitzgerald can be reached at [mfitzgerald@stateline.org](mailto:mfitzgerald@stateline.org).*

*This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.*

*Madyson Fitzgerald is a content producer and staff writer for Stateline.*

## Trump undertakes a MAGA-centric makeover of US civics education

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA-OCTOBER 10, 2025 2:27 PM

WASHINGTON — A slew of conservative groups will lead a new coalition to spur civics education and push the subject in a more patriotic direction, the U.S. Education Department announced last month, raising alarms for some traditional civics and education groups that were not included in the initiative.

The America First Policy Institute, a think tank with close ties to the president, is organizing and coordinating the America 250 Civics Education Coalition made up of more than 40 national and state-based groups, including prominent conservative advocacy organizations such as the Heritage Foundation and Turning Point USA.

The vast majority of the groups in the coalition promote a vision of U.S. identity that downplays historical wrongs associated with race and gender and projects the country as an exceptional force for good. Many are well-known conservative groups that have promoted President Donald Trump's political agenda.

The coalition lacks many of the more traditional civics education groups who say their nonpartisanship is a fundamental element of civics education, leading to concerns from those groups.

"Our organization serves students in every state and over 80% of counties," said Shawn Healy, the chief policy and advocacy officer at iCivics, a group that promotes public support for civics education. "You can't do that if your curriculum is shaded red or blue — it has to be fiercely nonpartisan."

The coalition will have nothing to do with school curricula, a department official said last month, acknowledging that the agency legally cannot dictate what schools teach. And it will not receive any federal funding from the department, the official added.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 18 of 76

But the agency has taken other steps that appear designed to steer curricula in a more partisan direction. The same day the coalition launched, the department announced it would be prioritizing “patriotic education” when it comes to discretionary grants. The agency said patriotic education “presents American history in a way that is accurate, honest, and inspiring.”

Earlier in September, the department said it would invest more than \$160 million in American history and civics grants — a \$137 million increase in the funds Congress previously approved.

## Civics as cultural battleground

Civics — a branch of social studies that focuses on rights and obligations of citizenship and the basic mechanics of government — has been a bipartisan priority, though it’s become a hot-button issue within education culture wars regarding how and what is taught as America grapples with its complicated history.

Many on the political right, including Trump, have long bristled at how that history is taught. Going back to his first presidency, Trump has sought to exert control over the subject.

After retaking office in January, he reestablished the 1776 Commission — an advisory committee meant “to promote patriotic education.”

“Despite the virtues and accomplishments of this Nation, many students are now taught in school to hate their own country, and to believe that the men and women who built it were not heroes, but rather villains,” notes the executive order first establishing the commission during his first term.

The commission released a 41-page report in January 2021 that drew criticism from historians and educators, including the American Historical Association.

In a statement signed by 47 other organizations, the association wrote that the report makes “an apparent attempt to reject recent efforts to understand the multiple ways the institution of slavery shaped our nation’s history.”

Trump formed the commission after The New York Times published the 1619 Project, which aimed to “reframe the country’s history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of our national narrative.”

## Heritage Foundation, Turning Point USA sign up

In its September announcement, the department said the coalition “is dedicated to renewing patriotism, strengthening civic knowledge, and advancing a shared understanding of America’s founding principles in schools across the nation.”

The coalition will include more than 100 events and programs across the country over the next year as part of the administration’s celebration of the country’s 250th anniversary.

The coalition is set to feature a 50-state “Trail to Independence Tour,” a “Fundamental Liberties College Speaker Series” as well as “Patriotic K-12 Teacher Summits and Toolboxes” aimed at supporting “patriotic teaching nationwide.”

The America 250 Civics Education Coalition includes right-wing organizations like the Heritage Foundation — the architect of the sweeping conservative policy agenda known as Project 2025 — as is America First Legal, a conservative advocacy group founded by Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff.

Turning Point USA, co-founded by conservative activist Charlie Kirk, who was assassinated in September, is also part of the initiative. PragerU, a conservative nonprofit that has drawn questions among researchers and scholars regarding the accuracy of its content, was also listed as a member of the coalition.

Education Secretary Linda McMahon was the chair of the board of the America First Policy Institute between her roles in the first and second Trump administrations. She had to sign an ethics waiver to participate in the coalition, according to the department official, who did not provide further details on what exactly this entailed.

## ‘News to us’

While conservative political organizations were made part of the coalition, leading civics education groups were not even aware of it before its public launch.

“Certainly, it was news to us about this coalition being formed,” Healy, of iCivics, said.

Healy added that his group encourages the America 250 Civics Education Coalition “to be more pluralistic

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 19 of 76

in orientation” and that the organization is “eager” to have a conversation with the coalition about what they’re doing.

iCivics, a nonpartisan organization founded in 2009 by the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, launched CivxNow. The latter group describes itself as the country’s “largest cross-partisan coalition working to prioritize civic education in the United States.”

CivxNow’s nearly 400 members comprise a broad swath of mainstream civics education groups.

“It’s our fundamental belief, both as an organization and as a coalition, that civic education has to be fiercely nonpartisan and nonideological,” Healy said.

But only one group — Constituting America — is a member of both CivxNow and the America 250 Civics Education Coalition.

## Momentum for civics

iCivics and others in the civics education field said the added attention the initiative brings to the subject will be positive.

The coalition “provides an opportunity for everyone interested in civic education and patriotic education to do something right now,” said Donna Phillips, the president and CEO of the nonpartisan Center for Civic Education, pointing to “decades where there hasn’t been enough, or any, attention to civic education.”

Phillips, whose organization is a member of CivxNow, said she hopes “the civic education field more widely can benefit from the momentum behind the need for this and that we can all find a place within this momentum and this moment.”

Hans Zeiger, president of the nonpartisan Jack Miller Center, described the administration’s initiative as the “latest development in what we take to be a growing movement for civics in the country.”

Zeiger, whose organization aims to empower college professors to work on civics education and is a member of CivxNow, said his group is “very interested in growing the national civics movement, and glad that there are people all across the political spectrum getting involved in the push for civic education.”

“It is always a good thing to have national dialogue on civics education,” the National Council for the Social Studies said in a statement.

The council, part of CivxNow, added that they “strive for balanced conversations that will continue to elevate high quality social studies standards.”

## Teachers unions criticize coalition

The two major teachers unions, which are politically aligned with Democrats, blasted the coalition as unserious, and noted the lack of traditional civics groups.

“We have decades of research on what works in civic education,” Mary Kusler, senior director at the National Education Association’s Center for Advocacy, said in a statement to States Newsroom. “The proposal they are peddling lacks the rigor and respect our students deserve — which is evident by the lack of any respected civics or civil rights organizations as signers.”

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said in a statement the 250th anniversary of the nation should have been “an opportunity for parents, teachers, historians and students to learn, celebrate, critique and think critically about our democracy.”

“Instead, Education Secretary Linda McMahon and the America 250 Civics Education Coalition rushed to create programming based on a single Trump-approved, ideological narrative, excluding the very people who know our history best: civics teachers and historians,” she said.

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

## **'Substantial' layoffs of federal workers launched by Trump administration amid shutdown**

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-OCTOBER 10, 2025 2:16 PM

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration announced Friday it had begun mass layoffs of federal employees, a step not taken during previous government shutdowns and one that could significantly reshape the size and scope of government.

White House budget director Russ Vought posted on social media mid-day that Reductions in Force, the technical name for layoffs, had started.

"The RIFs have begun," Vought wrote.

Vought didn't share any other details on social media and a budget office spokesperson only said that the layoffs would be "substantial" after States Newsroom asked for information about how many federal workers and which departments would be impacted.

The Trump administration outlined its current layoff plans later in the day in a filing required in a federal court case brought by labor unions.

- Commerce: 315 employees
- Education: 466 employees
- Energy: 187 employees
- Health and Human Services: between 1,100 and 1,200 employees
- Housing and Urban Development: 442 employees
- Homeland Security: 176 employees
- Treasury: 1,446 employees

The Environmental Protection Agency has sent 20 to 30 employees "intent to RIF" notices, though officials have "not made a final decision as to whether or when to issue RIF notices" to those employees, according to the court filing.

Other federal agencies are considering whether to implement layoffs, but the court filing says "those assessments remain under deliberation and are not final."

### **A 'bloated bureaucracy'**

Earlier in the day, spokespeople for the Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Treasury departments said some of their employees will be affected by layoffs, including at DHS' Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

"RIFs will be occurring at CISA. During the last administration CISA was focused on censorship, branding and electioneering," a DHS spokesperson said. "This is part of getting CISA back on mission."

Andrew Nixon, communications director at HHS, said "employees across multiple divisions have received reduction-in-force notices as a direct consequence of the Democrat-led government shutdown."

"HHS under the Biden administration became a bloated bureaucracy, growing its budget by 38% and its workforce by 17%," Nixon wrote. "All HHS employees receiving reduction-in-force notices were designated non-essential by their respective divisions. HHS continues to close wasteful and duplicative entities, including those that are at odds with the Trump administration's Make America Healthy Again agenda."

The Education and Treasury Department spokespeople didn't provide any additional details.

The government shutdown began on Oct. 1 after Congress failed to pass a short-term spending bill and is expected to continue at least into next week, with the Senate not scheduled to return until Tuesday.

### **Unions react**

Labor unions that represent federal workers indicated they plan to let the judicial system determine whether the layoffs are legal.

American Federation of Government Employees National President Everett Kelley wrote in a statement that it "is disgraceful that the Trump administration has used the government shutdown as an excuse to illegally fire thousands of workers who provide critical services to communities across the country."

"In AFGE's 93 years of existence under several presidential administrations – including during Trump's



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 21 of 76**

first term – no president has ever decided to fire thousands of furloughed workers during a government shutdown,” Kelley wrote. “AFGE is currently challenging President Trump’s illegal, unprecedented, abuse of power and we will not stop fighting until every reduction-in-force notice is rescinded.”

AFGE represents about 820,000 federal and D.C. government workers.

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, more commonly known as the AFL-CIO, posted on social media that “America’s unions will see you in court.”

Several labor unions — including AFGE; AFL-CIO; and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees — filed a lawsuit in late September in the Northern District of California challenging the legality of any layoffs during a shutdown and later asking the judge for a temporary restraining order.

Judge Susan Illston gave the Trump administration until the end of Friday to provide details of any planned or in-progress Reductions in Force, “including the earliest date that those RIF notices will go out.”

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, released a statement opposing “Vought’s attempt to permanently lay off federal workers who have been furloughed due to a completely unnecessary government shutdown caused by Senator Schumer.”

“Regardless of whether federal employees have been working without pay or have been furloughed, their work is incredibly important to serving the public,” Collins wrote. “Arbitrary layoffs result in a lack of sufficient personnel needed to conduct the mission of the agency and to deliver essential programs, and cause harm to families in Maine and throughout our country.”

## **Layoffs, funding cuts, loss of back pay threatened**

President Donald Trump has signaled for the last couple weeks that if Democrats didn’t help Republicans advance the stopgap funding bill in the Senate, he would take action.

“I’ll be able to tell you that in four or five days if this keeps going on,” Trump said Tuesday. “If this keeps going on it’ll be substantial and a lot of those jobs will never come back.”

Trump said Thursday that he would cut funding approved by Congress for programs he believes are supported by or generally benefit Democrats, but he didn’t provide any more details during a Cabinet meeting.

Trump has also floated the idea of not providing back pay for furloughed federal employees, though he hasn’t made any firm determinations about whether he may try to reinterpret a 2019 law that guarantees back pay for all federal workers after a shutdown ends.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated before the shutdown began that some 750,000 federal employees would be furloughed. Others have continued working but without pay.

## **Thune blames ‘far-left activist base’ for shutdown**

Vought’s announcement came just as House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., wrapped up a joint press conference on Capitol Hill, where they called on Democrats to vote to reopen the government.

“We have a majority of United States senators — 55 out of 100 senators are voting to open up the government,” Thune said. “We need five bold, courageous Democrats with a backbone who are willing to take on their far-left activist base and join us in passing this.”

Thune largely rejected the idea floated by some Republican lawmakers that the chamber should get rid of the 60-vote threshold for advancing major legislation, which has so far blocked the House-passed stopgap spending bill from moving toward final passage.

“There are folks out there that think that is the way we ought to do things around here, simple majority,” Thune said. “But I can tell you that the filibuster through the years has been something that has been a bulwark against a lot of bad things happening to the country.”

Thune added the legislative filibuster, which is different from the talking filibuster that most people are familiar with, is necessary to protect the rights of the minority political party and give it a voice in running the government.

## **Johnson nixes vote again on military pay**

Johnson, R-La., remained consistent during an earlier press conference that he will not bring the House back into session to vote on a bill to ensure on-time pay for military members during the shutdown. He’s

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 22 of 76

repeatedly said the best way to avoid delayed paychecks for federal workers is for Democrats to advance the House-passed stopgap spending bill.

The stalemate over government funding largely revolves around whether congressional leaders will be able to find bipartisan compromise and enact legislation to extend enhanced tax credits for people who buy their health insurance through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace, which are set to expire at the end of the year.

Democrats argue lawmakers need to broker an agreement now, before open enrollment begins on Nov. 1. Republican leaders contend they're willing to talk after the government reopens, but they haven't provided any commitments and have been tight-lipped about what they'd be willing to consider.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., said during a morning press conference before the layoff announcement that Republicans must compromise on health care.

"What we've said to our Republican colleagues is we have to address the health care crisis that they've created decisively — that means legislatively and that means right now," Jeffries said.

## Energy projects canceled

Trump's action to block funding for projects in the states has drawn objections from Democrats.

Thirty-seven Democrats sent a letter to Energy Secretary Chris Wright Thursday rebuking the administration for "unlawfully cancelling \$8 billion in federal investments in 223 energy projects."

"For the 21 states with impacted projects, your cancellations will mean thousands of lost jobs for Americans, many of whom had every reason to rely on the stability of their jobs before these cancellations and all of whom will face uncertain job markets in our increasingly slowing economy," they wrote.

The letter was signed by Democratic Sens. Angela Alsobrooks and Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper of Colorado, Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy of Connecticut, Lisa Blunt Rochester and Chris Coons of Delaware, Cory Booker and Andy Kim of New Jersey, Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray of Washington, Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen of Nevada, Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin of Illinois, Ruben Gallego and Mark Kelly of Arizona, Kirsten Gillibrand and Chuck Schumer of New York, Maggie Hassan and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico, Mazie Hirono and Brian Schatz of Hawaii, Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith of Minnesota, Edward Markey and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden of Oregon, Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff of California, Bernie Sanders and Peter Welch of Vermont and Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island.

*Ariana Figueroa contributed to this report.*

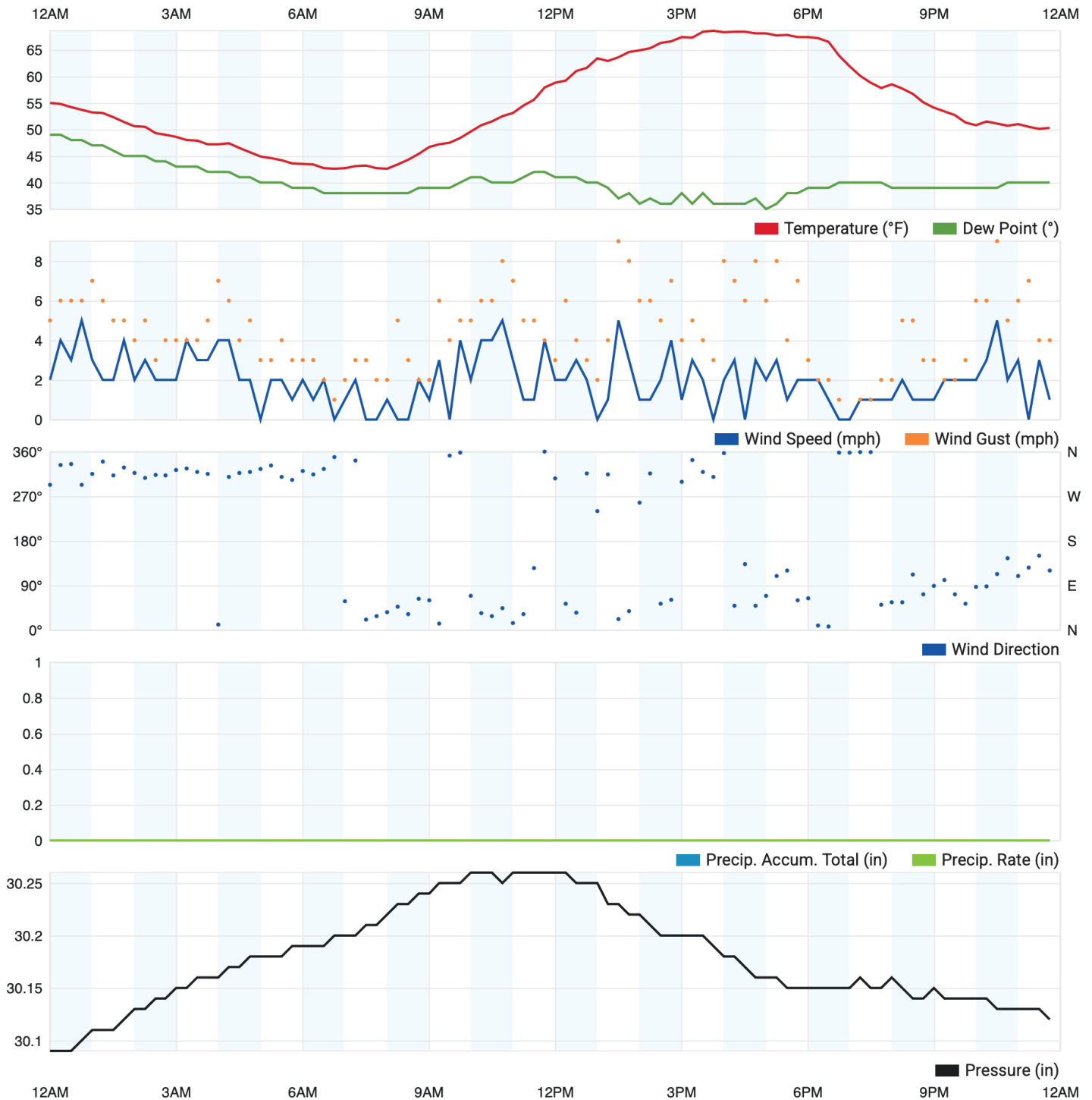
*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 23 of 76

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

October 10, 2025



# Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 24 of 76

Today



High: 68 °F

Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy

Tonight



Low: 56 °F

Showers  
Likely and  
Breezy

Sunday



High: 77 °F

Slight Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy

Sunday Night



Low: 35 °F

Partly Cloudy  
and Breezy  
then Mostly  
Clear

Columbus Day



High: 55 °F

Areas Frost  
then Sunny



## Showers Moving Through This Weekend

October 11, 2025  
5:59 AM

Accumulations expected to be light, except over northeast SD and west central MN

### Key Messages:

- Multiple waves of rain expected:

- #1: Today over eastern SD, but rain will run into our existing dry air and limit the intensity
- #2: Starts this evening in central SD and spreads northeastward through the night. Best opportunity for rain.
- #3: Sunday as a cold front moves east across the area

- Rainfall Accumulations:

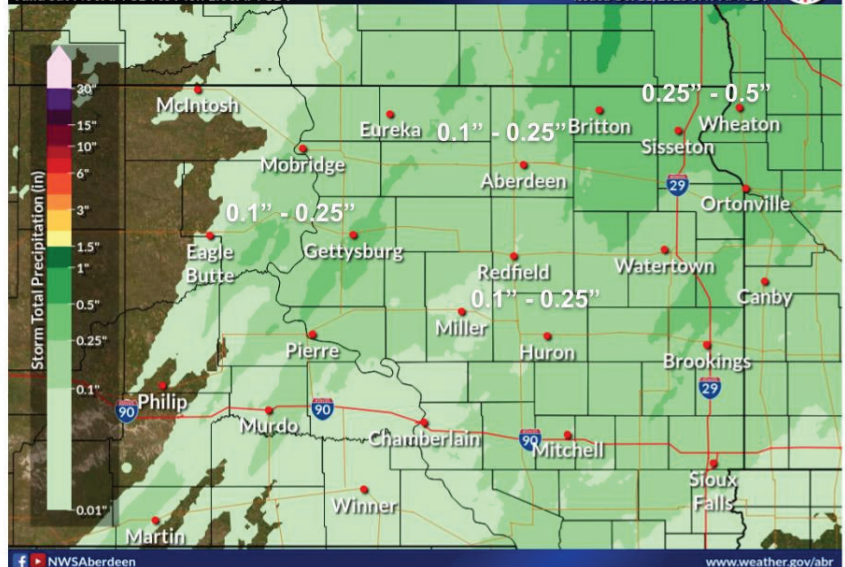
- Generally 0.10in - 0.25in expected
- Pockets of heavier showers may bring totals over 0.50in across parts of northeast SD into west central MN (30-50% chance)

### Expected Rainfall: Official NWS Forecast

Valid Sat 7:00AM CDT to Mon 1:00AM CDT

Weather Forecast Office  
Aberdeen, SD

Issued Oct 11, 2025 5:49 AM CDT



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

There will be several waves of rain showers moving through the area this weekend. First today over eastern SD, then tonight over central SD before spreading across the rest of the area, and finally over eastern SD again on Sunday ahead of and along the cold front. Rainfall amounts for most locations will be between 0.1" and 0.25", but higher amounts are possible in northeast SD and west central MN.



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 25 of 76



## Windy Throughout the Weekend

October 11, 2025

3:54 AM

Gusts of 30 to 45 mph expected

### Key Messages:

- **Today and Tonight:** Southerly wind gusts from **30 - 45 mph**
- **Elevated Fire Weather Conditions in west central MN**, due to lower relative humidity values.
- **Sunday:** A cold front passage will shift winds to the west-northwest, but still gusting from **30 - 45 mph**, strongest over north central SD.
- **Winds diminish** Sunday night into Monday.

	Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)																
	10/11 Sat					10/12 Sun								10/13 Mon			
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am
Aberdeen	31	33	35	33	33	32	35	38	38	33	33	31	32	25	21	15	16
Britton	31	33	37	36	37	36	40	44	44	38	37	39	40	31	25	18	18
Chamberlain	33	37	38	36	36	35	33	31	32	36	37	35	26	22	17	14	16
Clark	32	36	38	38	39	39	40	43	41	38	37	33	28	25	23	18	18
Eagle Butte	36	37	37	35	30	25	24	30	40	43	44	41	37	30	24	18	15
Eureka	37	41	43	37	37	35	33	33	35	40	43	41	39	32	26	20	17
Gettysburg	36	38	39	36	33	32	31	30	33	38	40	37	35	28	23	18	17
McIntosh	40	40	40	36	31	28	26	31	40	45	47	45	40	30	24	18	15
Milbank	23	26	29	30	29	28	30	33	35	33	30	30	28	24	21	17	18
Miller	36	37	38	37	36	36	37	39	39	36	37	33	31	25	18	15	17
Mobridge	37	40	39	36	33	31	30	30	35	39	40	41	38	30	24	17	16
Murdo	36	37	38	35	31	29	28	29	37	40	41	38	32	23	18	14	15
Pierre	33	36	37	35	32	29	26	28	35	38	40	38	33	26	20	14	14
Redfield	35	37	39	38	36	35	37	39	39	35	37	33	30	23	18	16	17
Sisseton	25	29	31	30	31	30	33	37	38	35	32	35	35	29	25	20	18
Watertown	29	31	35	35	36	36	38	41	41	38	36	35	29	26	23	18	18
Webster	31	35	37	36	37	36	38	40	40	38	38	33	32	28	26	21	18
Wheaton	25	28	29	30	31	31	33	36	36	33	29	32	32	28	25	20	18

1015202530354045505560657075808590100110120140

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

Created: 3 am CDT Sat 10/11/2025 | Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

In addition to the showers expected, windy conditions will also be felt this weekend. Southerly winds gusting from 30 to 45 mph will occur through tonight. A cold front will then move through the region on Sunday, switching winds around to the west and northwest. Colder temperatures are in store for the beginning of next week, with highs in the 50s Monday and Tuesday. Frost/freeze conditions are possible as well.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 26 of 76

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 3:39 PM

Low Temp: 42 °F at 7:54 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 10:29 PM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 93 in 2015

Record Low: 16 in 1935

Average High: 62

Average Low: 36

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.83

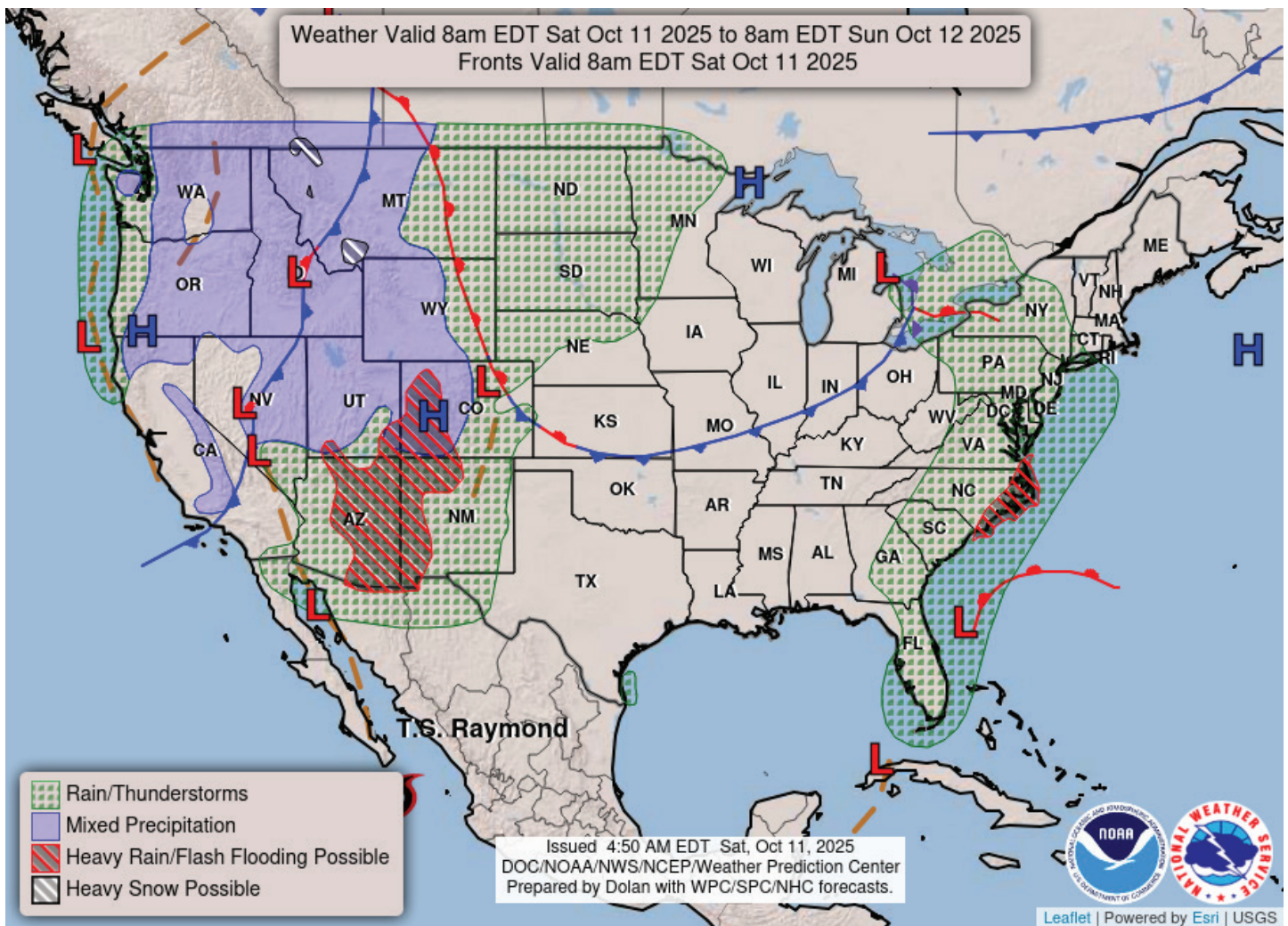
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 19.16

Precip Year to Date: 22.92

Sunset Tonight: 6:54 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:44 am



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 27 of 76**

## **Today in Weather History**

October 11, 1997: High winds and hail caused nearly \$20,000 in damage to rural Meade County homes.

1846: A major hurricane, possibly a Category 5, moved through the Caribbean Sea. This Great Havana Hurricane struck western Cuba on 10 October. It hit the Florida Keys on 11 October, destroying the old Key West Lighthouse and Fort Zachary Taylor.

1906: Games 1 and 2 of all Chicago World Series were played amid snow flurries. Snow would not happen again in a World Series until 1997. The high temperature for game 3 played on this day was 43 degrees.

1925 - Widespread early season snows fell in the northeastern U.S., with as much as two feet in New Hampshire and Vermont. The heavy snow blocked roads and cancelled football games. (David Ludlum)

1954 - A deluge of 6.72 inches of rain in 48 hours flooded the Chicago River, causing ten million dollars damage in the Chicago area. (9th-11th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - More than thirty cities in the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date, including Waterloo IA and Scottsbluff NE where the mercury dipped to 16 degrees. Tropical Storm Floyd brought heavy rain to southern Florida, moisture from Hurricane Ramon produced heavy rain in southern California, and heavy snow blanketed the mountains of New York State and Vermont. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Low pressure brought gale force winds to the Great Lakes Region, with snow and sleet reported in some areas. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the north central U.S. The mercury hit 84 degrees at Cutbank MT and Worland WY. The temperature at Gunnison CO soared from a morning low of 12 degrees to a high of 66 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Much of the nation enjoyed "Indian Summer" type weather. Nine cities in the central U.S. reported record highs for the date as temperatures warmed into the 80s and 90s. Record highs included 90 degrees at Grand Island NE and 97 degrees at Waco TX. Strong winds along a cold front crossing the Northern High Plains Region gusted to 80 mph at Ames Monument WY during the early morning. (The National Weather Summary)

2005: A tropical depression, formerly Hurricane Vince, became the first tropical cyclone to make landfall in Spain since 1842.





## When Storms Come

### How do you respond when facing challenges?

Matthew 14:22-33: Jesus Walks on the Water

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

29 "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Storms are inevitable. In nature, powerful tempests leave a changed landscape behind them. Similarly, challenging circumstances can alter the topography of our life.

When difficulties arise, how do you respond? Do you say to the Lord, "I am doing what You asked, so why is this happening?" Such thinking assumes that being in the center of God's will exempts us from problems. In Matthew 14, we learn that Jesus instructed the disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the opposite shore. While they were obeying Him, high winds and waves developed. Storms can arise even when we are exactly where God wants us to be (John 16:33).

Another question we sometimes ask is, "Father, what have I done wrong?" God does use trials to correct us, but not all situations come from our mistakes. He may allow troubles to perfect us—that is, to mature us and grow us into Christ's likeness.

God uses different things to train and equip us, because He wants each of His children to become a strong, vital servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Realize that nothing can happen to a believer unless God allows it. Instead of keeping our head bent low against the struggles of life, let's look up to the Lord and seek His purposes in our challenges.

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



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 29 of 76

## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

### Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

- ☐ Black & White .....\$48.99/year
- ☐ Colored .....\$79.88/year
- ☐ Colored .....\$42.60/6 months
- ☐ E-Weekly\* .....\$31.95/year

\* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to [paperpaul@grotonsd.net](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent

[www.397news.com](http://www.397news.com)

### Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- ☐ 1 Month .....\$15.98
- ☐ 3 Months.....\$26.63
- ☐ 6 Months.....\$31.95
- ☐ 9 Months.....\$42.60
- ☐ 12 Months.....\$53.25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

[paypal.me/paperpaul](https://paypal.me/paperpaul)

Pay with Venmo: [@paperpaul](#) Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 30 of 76



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.10.25

3 18 23 32 56 8

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$600,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.08.25

4 10 15 17 19 10

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$4,520,000**

NEXT 14 Hrs 36 Mins 28  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.10.25

5 35 39 40 45 6

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 14 Hrs 51 Mins 28  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.08.25

1 16 21 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$45,000**

NEXT 14 Hrs 51 Mins 28  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.08.25

8 13 19 34 53 24

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 20 Mins 29  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.08.25

8 10 44 48 54 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$244,000,000**

NEXT 15 Hrs 20 Mins 29  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 31 of 76**

## **Upcoming Groton Events**

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 32 of 76

News from the **AP** Associated Press

## PREP FOOTBALL

Avon 68, Scotland/Menno 14  
Belle Fourche 18, Custer 14  
Bon Homme 26, Platte-Geddes 0  
Brandon Valley 49, Mitchell 7  
Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 57, Sioux Falls Christian 6  
Britton-Hecla def. Wilmot, forfeit  
Canistota 22, Chester 20  
Castlewood 38, Estelline-Hendricks 8  
Centerville 51, Gayville-Volin High School 0  
Clark-Willow Lake 44, Mobridge-Pollock 6  
Colman-Egan 50, Arlington 0  
Corsica/Stickney 54, Burke 22  
DeSmet 36, Great Plains Lutheran 0  
Dell Rapids 28, Canton 27  
Dell Rapids St Mary's 34, Alcester-Hudson 20  
Deuel 43, Webster 8  
Dupree 42, Lemmon High School 20  
Elk Point-Jefferson 46, Flandreau 6  
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Deubrook, forfeit  
Faulkton 51, Hitchcock-Tulare 0  
Florence-Henry 24, Redfield 0  
Freeman-Marion-FA 54, Irene-Wakonda 0  
Harding County 60, Faith 6  
Herreid-Selby 22, Sully Buttes 20  
Hill City 51, Kadoka 16  
Howard 42, Garretson 27  
Huron 39, Aberdeen Central 0  
Ipswich 32, Leola-Frederick High School 6  
Iroquois-Lake Preston 72, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 46  
Jones County 20, New Underwood 16  
Kimball-White Lake 50, Gregory 20  
Madison 44, Lennox 19  
McCook Central-Montrose 39, Baltic 14  
Milbank 38, Aberdeen Roncalli 0  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 24, Miller 0  
Philip 48, Lyman 44  
Rapid City Christian 33, Lead-Deadwood 10  
Sioux Falls Jefferson 31, Harrisburg 28  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 55, Rapid City Central 28  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 30, Rapid City Stevens 22  
Sioux Falls Washington 20, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 17  
Sioux Valley 46, Beresford 6  
Spearfish 56, Douglas 6  
St Thomas More 27, Hot Springs 0  
T F Riggs High School 44, Sturgis Brown High School 0



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 33 of 76**

TDAACDC 62, Colome 0  
Timber Lake 46, Gettysburg 6  
Tri-Valley 36, Vermillion 21  
Viborg-Hurley 28, Hanson 6  
WWSSC 20, Chamberlain 8  
Wall 50, Bennett County 0  
Warner 43, North Central 6  
Watertown 15, Tea 7  
West Central 47, Dakota Valley 21  
Winner 64, Lakota Tech 0  
Yankton 14, Brookings 7

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

## **PREP VOLLEYBALL**

Mitchell def. Rapid City Central, 25-11, 25-10, 26-24  
Rapid City Stevens def. Huron, 25-16, 25-19, 25-19  
Dakota Oyate Challenge=  
Pool A=  
Lakota Tech def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-6, 25-9  
Takini def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-11, 25-17  
Wakpala def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-18, 25-18  
Pool B=  
Dupree def. Crazy Horse, 25-20, 25-13  
Dupree def. Flandreau Indian, 25-18, 25-18  
Dupree def. Tiospa Zina, 25-15, 26-24  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Crazy Horse, 25-6, 25-3  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Flandreau Indian, 25-18, 25-16  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Little Wound, 25-14, 25-8  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Tiospa Zina, 25-10, 25-11

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

## **Tunnel farming helps South Dakota farmers extend growing season by up to 4 months**

By BART PFANKUCH/South Dakota News Watch South Dakota News Watch

When snow covers the frozen ground, and most South Dakota farmers have sold or stored their products for the season, the operators of Cedar Creek Gardens are still able to grow vegetables and harvest a lucrative crop.

Located in a remote area southwest of Murdo, about 12 miles south of Interstate 90, the sprawling farm is one of dozens in the state that utilize what are called farm tunnels to extend the planting and growing seasons.

The tunnels are fortified above-ground hoop buildings covered in plastic that capture heat from the sun, creating a greenhouse effect. Many of the tunnels at Cedar Creek are covered with two separated layers of plastic and have fans that circulate warm air between the layers, creating even warmer growing conditions.

The tunnels differ from greenhouses in that crops are grown directly into the soil rather than in raised boxes or beds, and they are watered from the ground up instead of from above.

Cedar Creek is run by Peggy Martin and Bud Manke, who are business partners and good friends. Martin

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 34 of 76**

and Manke were some of the first South Dakota farmers to install tunnels after reading about them online in the early 2000s.

"At first, we were just going to grow food for our families," Martin said. "But it's become a passion, and they (the tunnels) have helped us grow to what we are now."

Beyond extending the growing season by up to four months each year, the controlled weather conditions and targeted water use also allow them to produce top-quality, organically grown vegetables.

One-pound tomatoes that are firm, filled with nutrients and free of blemishes. Banana peppers as long as bananas and so crisp they snap. Sweet onions the size of softballs. Kale plants that top 5 feet in height.

Tunnels part of a diversified operation

On their farm, they grow crops on 14 acres, have about 1,400 free-range laying chickens, and Manke raises cattle. The farm is dotted with about a dozen tunnel buildings, the largest of which are up to 14 feet tall, 30 feet wide and 200 feet long.

Martin said the tunnels have enabled them to expand their farm and its output over the past 25 years and help them grow into the largest South Dakota specialty farming operation west of the Missouri River.

Martin, Manke and the farmhands they hire grow a wide variety of seasonal produce, including tomatoes (the primary cash crop) as well as pumpkins, melons, sweet and green onions, red and green peppers, kale, cabbage, broccoli, sugar-snap peas, radishes, lettuce and zucchini.

The foods they grow and raise are sold at area farm stands and farmer's markets but also through a weekly wholesale business that serves West River grocery stores, restaurants and a buyer's group.

The tunnels have allowed them to plant vegetables as early as March and maintain growth of some hearty varieties for picking as late as mid-December. The first frost date in their region is typically around Sept. 15, Manke said.

"There can be snow out here in the wintertime and it's 20 degrees when the sun comes up, but it can be 100 degrees inside the tunnels," Manke said. "It can actually get too hot sometimes, so we have to be careful and open things up."

Higher productivity, higher profits

Martin did the math to show how the tunnels can increase productivity and profits.

In a 200-foot tunnel, they can place three rows of 100 tomato plants, each of which can produce 40 pounds of fruit, more than double a typical household tomato plant, she said. At an average of \$2.25 per pound, and even with 20% waste, that single tunnel can produce \$21,600 of tomatoes in a single grow-out.

Rachel Lawton, the South Dakota urban conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, runs the federal program that provides financial assistance to qualified individuals and operations that want to install tunnel farms.

Lawton, based in Sioux Falls, said the tunnels aren't suitable for high-production farms that raise thousands of bushels of corn, soybeans or wheat. But they work well for specialty crop farmers or backyard gardeners who want to produce a stable, almost year-round crop of vegetables, she said.

"The season extension with high tunnels is beneficial, but it's even more beneficial when you look at the quality of produce they're producing while also getting protection from wind, hail, frost, chemical drift and pests," she said.

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance in development of tunnel gardens each fall, with recipients receiving up to 75% of the cost of a project, Lawton said. In addition, successful applicants receive NRCS help in developing a wider-ranging conservation plan for their commercial farms or home gardening projects, she said.

Interest in tunnels growing in South Dakota

Lawton said she has seen increased interest in tunnel farming in South Dakota in recent years.

In recent years, the agency has provided funding for about 10 to 15 tunnels projects a year with money from the USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program, or EQIP.

The largest tunnels, up to about 3,000 square feet, can cost more than \$20,000, though smaller tunnels with fewer amenities cost far less, Lawton said. Tunnels cannot be used for equipment storage or livestock

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 35 of 76**

handling, and NRCS applicants must own or rent land, be U.S. citizens and make less than \$900,000 a year, she said.

Lawton cautioned that people who consider construction of a tunnel should be aware that they require frequent maintenance and are susceptible to damage from the elements.

"As wonderful and as cool as they are, I wouldn't say they are the solution to everything," she said. "There can be a lot of pitfalls and a lot of work if you aren't an experienced grower."

Martin now a 'resident expert' on tunnels

The tunnels come in three basic sizes, from "high tunnels" that are the tallest and widest to "caterpillar tunnels" that are shorter and more narrow to "low tunnels" which are light enough to lift and change positions quickly.

Lawton refers to Martin as South Dakota's "high tunnel resident expert" because she has more high tunnels than most South Dakota farmers and because she has more than two decades of operating them.

Martin likens the tunnels to "problematic 2-year-old kids" that require patience and wisdom to manage properly. "You can't just plant them and then leave home," she said. "If there's bad weather coming, you have to roll down the sides and get them buttoned up."

But for those who accept the hard work and risk, the payoff in extended growing time, improved quality of products and protection of natural resources can far outweigh those drawbacks, Lawton said. Conservation benefits include soil conservation and reduced water, pesticide and electricity use, she said.

"You can do multiple successions of crops, and you have a better growing environment, which essentially translates into dollars because you can grow more and sell more or grow more food for your own family," Lawton said. "It all starts with conservation, but the end product is something that is more efficient, more productive and more financially beneficial all at the same time."

This story was originally published by South Dakota News Watch and distributed through a partnership with The Associated Press.

## **Power restored to 800,000 in Kyiv after major Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy grid**

By The Associated Press undefined

Power was restored to over 800,000 residents in Kyiv on Saturday, a day after Russia launched major attacks on the Ukrainian power grid that caused blackouts across much of the country, and European leaders agreed to proceed toward using hundreds of billions of frozen Russian assets to support Ukraine's war effort.

Ukraine's largest private energy company, DTEK, said Saturday that "the main work to restore the power supply" had been completed, but that some localized outages were still affecting the Ukrainian capital following Friday's "massive" Russian attacks.

Russian drone and missile strikes wounded at least 20 people in Kyiv, damaged residential buildings and triggered blackouts across swaths of Ukraine early Friday.

Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko described the attack as "one of the largest concentrated strikes" against Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Russia's Defense Ministry on Friday said the strikes had targeted energy facilities supplying Ukraine's military. It did not give details of those facilities, but said Russian forces used Kinzhal hypersonic missiles and strike drones against them.

The energy sector has been a key battleground since Russia launched its all-out invasion more than three years ago.

Each year, Russia has tried to cripple the Ukrainian power grid before the bitter winter season, apparently hoping to erode public morale. Winter temperatures run from late October through March, with January and February the coldest months.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly address Friday that Russia was taking ad-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 36 of 76**

vantage of the world being “almost entirely focused on the prospect of establishing peace in the Middle East,” and called for strengthening Ukraine’s air defense systems and tighter sanctions on Russia.

“Russian assets must be fully used to strengthen our defense and ensure recovery,” he said in the video, posted to X.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said in a joint statement on Friday they were ready to move toward using “in a coordinated way, the value of the immobilised Russian sovereign assets to support Ukraine’s armed forces and thus bring Russia to the negotiation table.”

The statement added they aimed to do this “in close cooperation with the United States.”

Ukraine’s budget and military needs for 2026 and 2027 are estimated to total around 130 billion euros (\$153 billion). The European Union has already poured in 174 billion euros (about \$202 billion) since the war started in February 2022.

The biggest pot of ready funds available is through frozen Russian assets, most of which is held in Belgium – around 194 billion euros (\$225 billion) as of June – and outside the EU in Japan, with around \$50 billion, and the U.S., U.K. and Canada with lesser amounts.

Ukraine’s air force said Saturday that its air defenses intercepted or jammed 54 of 78 Russian drones launched against Ukraine overnight, while Russia’s defense ministry said it had shot down 42 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory.

## **Two powerful quakes strike off southern Philippines, killing at least 7 people**

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Two powerful offshore earthquakes struck the same region in the southern Philippines hours apart on Friday with the first 7.4 magnitude temblor killing at least seven people, setting off landslides and prompting evacuations of coastal areas nearby because of a brief tsunami scare.

The second one had a preliminary 6.8 magnitude and also sparked a local tsunami warning by authorities. It was caused by movement in the same fault line, the Philippine Trench, at a depth of 37 kilometers (23 miles) off Manay town in Davao Oriental province, Philippine Institute of Seismology and Volcanology chief Teresito Bacolcol said.

“The second one is a separate earthquake, which we call a doublet quake,” Bacolcol told The Associated Press. “Both happened in the same area but have different strengths and epicenters.”

Bacolcol and other authorities expressed fears that the second nighttime earthquake could further weaken or collapse structures already undermined by the first one.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., facing his latest natural disaster after a recent deadly quake and back-to-back storms, said the potential damage was being assessed and rescue teams and relief operations were being prepared and would be deployed when it was safe to do so.

### **Quake toll**

The first quake was centered at sea about 43 kilometers (27 miles) east of Manay town and was caused by movement in the Philippine Trench at a depth of 23 kilometers (14 miles), government seismologists said.

At least seven people were killed, including two patients who died of heart attacks at a hospital during the first earthquake and a resident who was hit by debris in Mati city in Davao Oriental, Ednar Dayanghirang, regional director of the government’s Office of Civil Defense, told The AP.

Three villagers died and several others were rescued with injuries by army troops and civilian volunteers in a landslide set off by the first quake in a remote gold-mining village in Pantukan town in Davao de Oro province near Davao Oriental, Dayanghirang said.

Another resident died because of the first quake in the port city of Davao, disaster mitigation officials said without providing other details. They added that a few hundred residents were injured in the city.

### **Damage assessment**



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 37 of 76**

Office of Civil Defense deputy administrator Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV said that several buildings sustained cracks in their walls, including an international airport in Davao city, but it remained operational without any flights being canceled.

"I was driving my car when it suddenly swayed and I saw power lines swaying wildly. People darted out of houses and buildings as the ground shook and electricity came off," Jun Saavedra, a disaster-mitigation officer of Governor Generoso town in Davao Oriental, told The AP.

Schools evacuated

"We've had earthquakes in the past, but this was the strongest," Saavedra said, adding that the intense ground swaying caused cracks in several buildings, including a high school, where about 50 students were brought to a hospital by ambulance after sustaining bruises, fainting or becoming dizzy because of the first quake.

Governor Generoso is a town about 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Manay, where school classes in all levels were also suspended.

Children evacuated schools in Davao city, which has about 5.4 million people and is the biggest city near the epicenter, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) west of Davao Oriental province.

Tsunami fears

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Honolulu said that small waves were detected on the coasts of the Philippines and Indonesia before the threat passed about two hours after the first quake. It said that small sea fluctuations may continue.

A tsunami warning that set off evacuations in six coastal provinces near Davao Oriental was later lifted without any major waves being detected, Bacolcol said.

Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency said that small tsunami waves were detected in North Sulawesi province with heights ranging from 3.5 to 17 centimeters (1.3 to 6.7 inches) in Melonguane, Beo, Essang and Ganalo in Talaud Islands districts.

History of quakes and storms

The Philippines is still recovering from a Sept. 30 earthquake with a 6.9 magnitude that left at least 74 people dead and displaced thousands of people in the central province of Cebu, particularly in Bogo city and outlying towns.

The archipelago also is lashed by about 20 typhoons and storms each year, making disaster response a major task of the government and volunteer groups.

Also Friday, an earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 6.0 struck Friday off the coast of Papua New Guinea. The U.S. Geological Survey said that it was centered in the Bismarck Sea 414 kilometers (257 miles) northeast of Lae, the South Pacific island nation's second-most populous city.

Lae police official Mary Jane Huafilong said that no damage was reported.

## **Luigi Mangione's lawyers seek dismissal of federal charges in assassination of UnitedHealthcare CEO**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawyers for Luigi Mangione asked a New York federal judge Saturday to dismiss some criminal charges, including the only count for which he could face the death penalty, from a federal indictment brought against him in the December assassination of UnitedHealthcare's chief executive.

In papers filed in Manhattan federal court, the lawyers said prosecutors should also be prevented from using at trial his statements to law enforcement officers and his backpack where a gun and ammunition were found.

They said Mangione was not read his rights before he was questioned by law enforcement officers, who arrested him after Brian Thompson was fatally shot as he arrived at a Manhattan hotel for an investor conference.

They added that officers did not obtain a warrant before searching Mangione's backpack.

Mangione, 27, has pleaded not guilty to state and federal charges in the fatal shooting of Brian Thompson

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 38 of 76**

on Dec. 4 as he arrived at a Manhattan hotel for his company's annual investor conference.

The killing set off a multi-state search after the suspected shooter slipped away from the scene and rode a bike to Central Park, before taking a taxi to a bus depot that offers service to several nearby states.

Five days later, a tip from a McDonald's about 233 miles (375 kilometers) away in Altoona, Pennsylvania, led police to arrest Mangione. He has been held without bail since then.

Last month, lawyers for Mangione asked that his federal charges be dismissed and the death penalty be taken off the table as a result of public comments by U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi. In April, Bondi directed prosecutors in New York to seek the death penalty, calling the killing of Thompson a "premeditated, cold-blooded assassination that shocked America."

Murder cases are usually tried in state courts, but prosecutors have also charged Mangione under a federal law on murders committed with firearms as part of other "crimes of violence." It's the only charge for which Mangione could face the death penalty, since it's not used in New York state.

The papers filed early Saturday morning argued that this charge should be dismissed because prosecutors have failed to identify the other offenses that would be required to convict him, saying that the alleged other crime — stalking — is not a crime of violence.

The assassination and its aftermath has captured the American imagination, setting off a cascade of resentment and online vitriol toward U.S. health insurers while rattling corporate executives concerned about security.

After the killing, investigators found the words "delay," "deny" and "depose," written in permanent marker on ammunition at the scene. The words mimic a phrase used by insurance industry critics.

## **Israel rejects freeing from prison the most popular Palestinian leader**

By LEE KEATH, JULIA FRANKEL and JALAL BWAITAL Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — The most popular and potentially unifying Palestinian leader — Marwan Barghouti — is not among the prisoners Israel intends to free in exchange for hostages held by Hamas under the new Gaza ceasefire deal.

Israel has also rejected freeing other high-profile prisoners whose release Hamas has long sought, though it was not immediately clear if a list of around 250 prisoners issued Friday on the Israeli government's official website was final.

Senior Hamas official Mousa Abu Marzouk told the Al Jazeera TV network that the group insists on the release of Barghouti and other high-profile figures and that it was in discussions with mediators.

Israel views Barghouti as a terrorist leader. He is serving multiple life sentences after being convicted in 2004 in connection with attacks in Israel that killed five people.

But some experts say Israel fears Barghouti for another reason: An advocate of a two-state solution even as he backed armed resistance to occupation, Barghouti could be a powerful rallying figure for Palestinians. Some Palestinians view him as their own Nelson Mandela, the South African anti-apartheid activist who became his country's first Black president.

With the ceasefire and Israeli troop pullback in Gaza that came into effect Friday, Hamas is to release about 20 living Israeli hostages by Monday. Israel is to free some 250 Palestinians serving prison sentences, as well as around 1,700 people seized from Gaza the past two years and held without charge.

The releases have powerful resonance on both sides. Israelis see the prisoners as terrorists, some of them involved in suicide bombings. Many Palestinians view the thousands held by Israel as political prisoners or freedom fighters resisting decades of military occupation.

Many to be released were jailed 2 decades ago

Most of those on the Israeli prisoner list are members of Hamas and the Fatah faction arrested in the 2000s. Many of them were convicted of involvement in shootings, bombings or other attacks that killed or attempted to kill Israeli civilians, settlers and soldiers. After their release, more than half will be sent to Gaza or into exile outside the Palestinian territories, according to the list.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 39 of 76**

The 2000s saw the eruption of the Second Intifada, a Palestinian uprising fueled by anger over continued occupation despite years of peace talks. The uprising turned bloody, with Palestinian armed groups carrying out attacks that killed hundreds of Israelis, and the Israeli military killing several thousand Palestinians.

One prisoner who will be freed is Iyad Abu al-Rub, an Islamic Jihad commander convicted of orchestrating suicide bombings in Israel from 2003-2005 that killed 13 people.

The oldest and longest imprisoned to be released is 64-year-old Samir Abu Naama, a Fatah member who was arrested from the West Bank in 1986 and convicted on charges of planting explosives. The youngest is Mohammed Abu Qatish, who was 16 when he was arrested in 2022 and convicted of an attempted stabbing.

Hamas has long sought Barghouti's freedom

Hamas leaders have in the past demanded that Israel release Barghouti, a leader of the militant group's main political rival, Fatah, as part of any deal to end the fighting in Gaza. But Israel has refused in previous exchanges.

Israel fears history could repeat itself after it released senior Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in a 2011 exchange. The long-serving prisoner was one of the main architects of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that ignited the latest war in Gaza, and he went on to lead the militant group before being killed by Israeli forces last year.

One of the few consensus figures in Palestinian politics, Barghouti, 66, is widely seen as a potential successor to President Mahmoud Abbas, the aging and unpopular leader of the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority that runs pockets of the West Bank. Polls consistently show Barghouti is the most popular Palestinian leader.

Barghouti was born in the West Bank village of Kobar in 1959. While studying history and politics at Bir Zeit University, he helped spearhead student protests against the Israeli occupation. He emerged as an organizer in the first Palestinian uprising, which erupted in December 1987.

Israel eventually deported him to Jordan. He returned to the West Bank in the 1990s as part of interim peace agreements that created the Palestinian Authority and were meant to pave the way for a state.

After the Second Intifada broke out, Israel accused Barghouti -- then head of Fatah in the West Bank -- of being the leader of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a loose collection of Fatah-linked armed groups that carried out attacks on Israelis.

Barghouti never commented on his links to the Brigades. While he expressed hopes for a Palestinian state and Israel side by side in peace, he said Palestinians had a right to fight back in the face of growing Israeli settlements and the military's violence against Palestinians.

"I am not a terrorist, but neither am I a pacifist," he wrote in a 2002 editorial in The Washington Post.

Soon after, he was arrested by Israel. At trial he opted not to defend himself because he didn't recognize the court's authority. He was convicted of murder for involvement in several Brigades' attacks and given five life sentences, while acquitted over other attacks.

A unifying figure throughout his imprisonment

In 2021, Barghouti registered his own list for parliamentary elections that were later called off. A few years earlier, he led more than 1,500 prisoners in a 40-day hunger strike to call for better treatment in the Israeli prison system.

Barghouti showed he could build bridges across Palestinian divisions even as he reached out to Israelis, said Mouin Rabbani, non-resident fellow at Democracy for the Arab World Now and co-editor of Jadaliyya, an online magazine focusing on the Middle East.

Barghouti is "seen as a credible national leader, someone who can lead the Palestinians in a way Abbas has consistently failed to," he said.

Israel is "keen to avoid" that, since its policy for years has been to keep Palestinians divided and Abbas' administration weak, Rabbani said, adding that Abbas also feels threatened by any Barghouti release.

Barghouti is not connected to the corruption that has plagued Abbas' Palestinian Authority and turned many against it, said Eyal Zisser, the vice rector of Tel Aviv University and an expert in Arab-Israeli relations.

His popularity could strengthen Palestinian institutions, a terrifying thought for Israel's right-wing government, which opposes any steps toward statehood, Zisser said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 40 of 76

Barghouti was last seen in August, when Israel's far-right national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, posted a video of himself admonishing Barghouti inside a prison, saying Israel will confront anyone who acts against the country and "wipe them out."

## Who are the hostages Israel believes are still alive?

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Their faces stare down from every street corner in Israel on posters now sun-faded and ripped. Their stories, told by anguished family members, are almost as well-known as celebrities. They are civilians and soldiers, fathers and sons. Some were at the Nova music festival, where almost 400 people were killed and dozens kidnapped.

The latest ceasefire, which began Friday, marks a key step toward ending a ruinous two-year war that was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, when some 1,200 people were killed and 251 kidnapped.

The fighting has killed 67,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants but says around half the deaths were women and children, and displaced around 90% of the Gaza population of some 2 million. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government, and the United Nations and many independent experts consider its figures to be the most reliable estimate of wartime casualties in Gaza.

There are currently 48 hostages being held in Gaza, including the body of one soldier from a previous war. Israel has determined that at least 25 of the hostages were killed on Oct. 7, 2023, or died while in captivity. It is unclear how many of the remaining around 20 hostages are still alive and will return to Israel. There is only one remaining female hostage, who Israel believes was killed in captivity.

With the start of the ceasefire on Friday, the remaining hostages are expected to be released within 72 hours. Israel is set to release around 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in exchange.

Here is a look at 22 hostages Israel believes are still alive.

Matan Angrest, 22

Matan Angrest, an Israeli soldier, was kidnapped from his military tank in southern Israel. He is the oldest of four children from Kiryat Bialik, outside of Haifa. His family has been among the most vocal protesters and very critical of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. On Tuesday's two-year anniversary of the Oct. 7 attack, his mother, Anat Angrest, addressed her son at a rally. "I know you're in pain, and I can't hug you. I hear you whisper, 'Come for me, Mom,' and I can't protect you," she said.

Gali Berman & Ziv Berman, 28

The fraternal twins were taken from their homes in kibbutz Kfar Aza, on the border with Gaza, during the Oct. 7 attack. Seventeen others were also abducted from Kfar Aza, but the Berman twins are the only hostages from the kibbutz who remain in captivity. The family has heard from hostages who returned in a previous deal that, as of February, the brothers were alive but being held separately. Liran Berman, their older brother, said it's the longest the two have ever spent apart. In Kfar Aza, the twins lived in apartments across from each other. Gali is more outgoing, while Ziv is more reserved and shy with a sharp sense of humor, their brother said.

Elkana Bohbot, 36

Elkana Bohbot was kidnapped from the Nova music festival. In the past year, Hamas has published multiple videos of Bohbot, filmed under duress, including one where he has a fake telephone conversation with his wife, Rivka; their son, Reem; his mother and his brother — pleading with them to help him get out of Gaza. His son made binoculars in kindergarten which he often uses to go out and "look for his father," according to Bohbot's mother, Ruhama.

Rom Braslavski, 21

Braslavski was working as a security guard at the Nova festival. He attempted to help festival goers



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 41 of 76**

evacuate and was wounded in both hands before being kidnapped, witnesses said. In August, the Islamic Jihad militant group released a video of a skeletal Braslavski sobbing and pleading for his life, adding that injuries to his foot prevent him from standing. The videos of Braslavski and Evyatar David digging his own grave horrified Israelis, sparking some of the largest attendance in months at weekly protests. His father, Ofir, said Rom is usually a strong, happy-go-lucky kid, and that video is the first time he's seen his son cry.

Nimrod Cohen, 21

Nimrod Cohen was kidnapped from a tank where he was stationed as a soldier in southern Israel. Cohen is obsessed with Rubik's cubes, his family said, and a burned Rubik's cube was found in the tank he was abducted from. This year, his mother, Viki Cohen, illustrated a Passover haggadah, the text laying out the rituals and story recited during the Passover holiday, in honor of hostages, partly because her family has stopped celebrating holidays since the attack. "We don't gather as a family, because it reminds us how much he is missing," Cohen said. The only time the extended family gathers is at protests, she said.

Ariel Cunio, 28

The youngest of four Cunio brothers, Ariel was kidnapped from the Nir Oz kibbutz with his girlfriend, Arbel Yehoud, and her brother, Dolev, a married father of four who was later killed in captivity. According to news reports, Cunio and Yehoud had returned from an extended trip to South America weeks before the attack and had just adopted a puppy. Yehoud was released during the ceasefire in January.

David Cunio, 35

David Cunio, brother of Ariel Cunio, was kidnapped with his wife, Sharon, and their 3-year-old twins from the Nir Oz kibbutz. Sharon's sister Danielle and her 5-year-old daughter, who were visiting, also were kidnapped. All were released in November, except for David Cunio. In July, Sharon shared a photo of the twins marking their fifth birthday, their second without their father, writing on Facebook that the girls have changed so much while he's been in captivity that "they're not the same little girls he knew."

Evyatar David, 24

Evyatar David was taken hostage at the Nova music festival along with his childhood friend, Guy Gilboa-Dalal. In August, Hamas released a video of David, gaunt and pale, who said he was digging his own grave. The condition of the hostages in the videos horrified Israelis and led tens of thousands of protesters to take to the streets and demand a ceasefire deal, in one of the largest turnouts for the weekly hostage protests in months.

Guy Gilboa-Dalal, 24

Guy Gilboa-Dalal was among those abducted from the Nova music festival, while his brother managed to escape. In the past year, he's appeared in two videos released by Hamas. In one, he appears alongside his childhood friend, David, with militants filming them pleading for their freedom in a vehicle while they watch three other hostages on stage being released to the Red Cross.

Maksym Harkin, 37

Maksym Harkin was abducted from Nova, which was the first festival he had ever attended, according to his family. Harkin was born in Ukraine and moved to Israel with his family, where he lived in Tirat HaCarmel in the north. He has a 3-year-old daughter and was the primary provider for his mother and 11-year-old brother. Just before he was taken, his mother said he sent a final text message that said, "I love you." In July, Hamas released a video of him filmed under duress several months prior.

Eitan Horn, 38

Eitan Horn, originally from Kfar Saba, was visiting his brother Iair at the Nir Oz kibbutz on Oct. 7. Both were kidnapped. For most of the war, the two were held with three other hostages in a filthy cell underground. In early February, militants filmed the emotional interaction between the brothers as they were told that Iair would be released and Eitan would stay in Gaza. Since his release, Iair Horn has campaigned for his brother and the other hostages, flying frequently to the United States and meeting with politicians.

Bipin Joshi, 24

Bipin Joshi arrived in Israel from his native Nepal a month before the attack. He is the only non-Israeli hostage believed to be alive in Gaza. He came to Israel on a student exchange to work and study agriculture at kibbutz Alumim on the Gaza border. Ten of the 17 Nepali students in the program were killed

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 42 of 76**

during the attack. Joshi, who was able to throw a number of live grenades out of the bomb shelter where they were hiding, was injured and kidnapped. Joshi's sister, 17-year-old Pushpa Joshi, regularly travels eight hours each direction on buses to Kathmandu from her home in western Nepal to lobby officials to secure her brother's release. In August, his family traveled to Israel to meet with President Isaac Herzog and join families demonstrating in Tel Aviv's Hostage Square.

Segev Kalfon, 27

Segev Kalfon was kidnapped from the Nova music festival, where he was last seen attempting to flee militants along the highway. Before the attack, he worked at his family's bakery in Dimona, in southern Israeli. The middle child of three, Kalfon had recently been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, a condition his family has highlighted in urging his release. Kalfon's family received a sign of life from him after the last ceasefire, when some of the hostages said they were held with him for months. Kalfon's family has focused on religious rituals in their fight for his release, including traveling to the grave of prominent rabbis and dedicating a Torah scroll in his honor.

Bar Kupershtein, 23

Bar Kupershtein was working at the Nova festival as a security guard when he was abducted. Witnesses said Kupershtein stayed at the festival to try to provide first aid to people who had been shot and injured. Kupershtein was the main financial support for his family after his father was severely injured in an accident several years ago, his aunt, Ora Rubinstein, told reporters. She said that his father worked with a physical therapist to regain the ability to speak, so he could meet with politicians to advocate for his son's release. He has told the family that he will walk again when his son comes home, she said.

Omri Miran, 48

Omri Miran was kidnapped from the Nahal Oz kibbutz. During the attack, militants held his family, including his two daughters, ages 2 and 6 months, hostage in the kitchen of a neighbor's house and then broadcast it on Facebook Live. Miran and the father of the other family, Tsachi Idan, were kidnapped. Idan's body was released during the last hostage exchange after he was killed in captivity. Lishay Miran Lavi, Miran's wife, said their younger daughter knows "daddy Omri" only through photos and videos, and doesn't really understand what a father is.

Eitan Mor, 25

Eitan Mor was working as a security guard at the Nova music festival, where he helped evacuate people injured in the attack. Mor's parents helped found the Tikva Forum, a loosely organized group of hostage families. They advocated for military pressure, not an immediate ceasefire or hostage release deal, as the best chance for bringing the hostages home. That stance has put Mor's father at odds with many of the other families of hostages.

Tamir Nimrodi, 20

Tamir Nimrodi was kidnapped from Erez, a crossing on the northern border of Gaza that had been the main route for people entering and leaving the territory. He had been serving with the Israeli defense body overseeing humanitarian aid in Gaza. Nimrodi was kidnapped with two other soldiers by militants who walked them to the Gaza gate and forced them to cross. Israel confirmed the deaths of the two soldiers who were kidnapped with Nimrodi. There has been no sign of life from Nimrodi in the two years since he was seen in footage walking into Gaza in shorts and a T-shirt without his glasses. Herut Nimrodi, his mother, has said she doesn't know what is worse: to think he has been killed in captivity, or that he's alive but being held in terrible conditions. "I'm scared to even imagine," she said.

Yosef-Chaim Ohana, 25

Yosef-Chaim Ohana was kidnapped from the Nova music festival, where he was working as a bartender. Witnesses saw him attempting to help others escape before he was kidnapped. He is the oldest of three brothers, one of whom previously died from an illness.

Alon Ohel, 24

Alon Ohel, who also has German and Serbian citizenship, was kidnapped at the Nova music festival from a mobile bomb shelter along with Hersch Goldberg-Polin, an American-Israeli who was killed in captivity

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 43 of 76**

in August 2024. A talented pianist, his family has placed pianos across Israel and several sites around the world to raise awareness of his plight. Three other hostages who had been held with Ohel for more than a year were released during the previous ceasefire, including Eli Sharabi, who said Ohel was like his adopted son. Sharabi said they were kept chained for the entire period of their captivity and subsisted on a moldy pita per day. Ohel has shrapnel in his eye from the attack on the bomb shelter and his family is worried he may be partially blind.

Avinatan Or, 32

Avinatan Or was kidnapped from the Nova music festival along with his girlfriend, Noa Argamani, who was rescued by Israeli forces in June 2024. On Oct. 7, Hamas released a video of the pair that has become one of the most well-known videos from that day. It showed Argamani on an all-terrain vehicle crying, "Don't kill me!" and reaching out her arms to Or, who is being marched away from her by militants. Or worked in hi-tech in Tel Aviv before his abduction.

Matan Zangauker, 25

Matan Zangauker was kidnapped from kibbutz Nir Oz along with his girlfriend, Ilana Gritzewsky. The two met while working on a medical cannabis farm there. Gritzewsky was released after 55 days and has since advocated tirelessly for his release, wearing a hat of Zangauker's she rescued from their burned home. His mother, Einav, has been a constant presence at protests, giving impassioned speeches and even being hoisted in a cage above the crowd to draw attention to the hostages' plight. Zangauker, who said she was previously a Netanyahu supporter, has emerged as one of his harshest critics.

## **Officials investigate blast at Tennessee explosives plant that left 18 missing and feared dead**

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

McEWEN, Tenn. (AP) — Officials were investigating a blast that leveled an explosives plant in rural Tennessee, as families of the 18 people missing and feared dead waited anxiously Saturday for answers.

The explosion Friday morning at Accurate Energetic Systems, which supplies and researches explosives for the military, scattered debris over at least a half-mile (800-meter) area and was felt by residents more than 15 miles (24 kilometers) away, said Humphreys County Sheriff Chris Davis.

Aerial footage showed the company's hilltop location smoldering and smoky Friday, with just a mass of twisted metal, burned-out shells of cars and an array of debris left behind.

Davis, who described it as one of the worst scenes he's ever seen, said multiple people were killed. But he declined to say how many, referring to the 18 missing as "souls" because officials were still speaking to family.

"What we need right now is we need our communities to come together and understand that we've lost a lot of people," he said.

The company's website says it processes explosives and ammunition at an eight-building facility that sprawls across wooded hills in the Bucksport area, about 60 miles (97 kilometers) southwest of Nashville. It's not immediately known how many people work at the plant or how many were there when the explosion happened.

Davis said investigators are trying to determine what happened and couldn't say what caused the explosion.

Accurate Energetic Systems, based in nearby McEwen, said in a post on social media on Friday that their "thoughts and prayers" are with the families and community impacted.

"We extend our gratitude to all first responders who continue to work tirelessly under difficult conditions," the post said.

The company has been awarded numerous military contracts, largely by the U.S. Army and Navy, to supply different types of munitions and explosives, according to public records. The products range from bulk explosives to landmines and small breaching charges, including C4.

When the explosion occurred, residents in Lobelville, a 20-minute drive from the scene, said they felt

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 44 of 76

their homes shake, and some people captured the loud boom of the explosion on their home cameras.

The blast rattled Gentry Stover from his sleep.

"I thought the house had collapsed with me inside of it," he told The Associated Press. "I live very close to Accurate and I realized about 30 seconds after I woke up that it had to have been that."

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee posted on the social platform X that he is monitoring the situation and asked "Tennesseans to join us in prayer for the families impacted by this tragic incident."

A small group gathered for a vigil Friday night at a nearby park, clutching candles as they prayed for the missing and their families and sang "Amazing Grace."

The U.S. has a long history of deadly accidents at workplaces, including the Monongah coal mine explosion that killed 362 men and boys in West Virginia in 1907. Several high-profile industrial accidents in the 1960s helped lead President Richard Nixon to sign a law creating the Occupational Safety and Health Administration the next year.

In 2019, Accurate Energetic Systems faced several small fines from the U.S. Department of Labor for violations of policies meant to protect workers from exposure to hazardous chemicals, radiation and other irritants, according to citations from OSHA.

In 2014, an explosion occurred at another ammunition facility in the same small community, killing one person and injuring at least three others.

## A long-lost ancient Roman artifact reappears in a New Orleans backyard

By JACK BROOK Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A New Orleans family cleaning up their overgrown backyard made an extremely unusual find: Under the weeds was a mysterious marble tablet with Latin characters that included the phrase "spirits of the dead."

"The fact that it was in Latin that really just gave us pause, right?" said Daniella Santoro, a Tulane University anthropologist. "I mean, you see something like that and you say, 'Okay, this is not an ordinary thing.'"

Intrigued and slightly alarmed, Santoro reached out to her classical archaeologist colleague Susann Lusnia, who quickly realized that the slab was the 1,900-year-old grave marker of a Roman sailor named Sextus Congenius Verus.

"When I first saw the image that Daniella sent me, it really did send a shiver up my spine because I was just floored," Lusnia said.

Further sleuthing by Lusnia revealed the tablet had been missing from an Italian museum for decades.

Sextus Congenius Verus had died at age 42, of unknown causes, after serving for more than two decades in the imperial navy on a ship named for the Roman god of medicine, Asclepius. The gravestone calls the sailor "well deserving" and was commissioned by two people described as his "heirs," who were likely shipmates since Roman military could not be married at the time, Lusnia said.

The tablet had been in an ancient cemetery of around 20 graves of military personnel, found in the 1860s in Civitavecchia, a seaside in northwest Italy about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from Rome. Its text had been recorded in 1910 and included in a catalog of Latin inscriptions, which noted the tablet's whereabouts were unknown.

The tablet was later documented at the National Archeological Museum in Civitavecchia prior to World War II. But the museum had been "pretty much destroyed" during Allied bombing and took several decades to rebuild, Lusnia said. Museum staff confirmed to Lusnia the tablet had been missing for decades. Its recorded measurements — 1 square foot (0.09 square meters) and 1 inch (2.5 centimeters) thick — matched the size of the tablet found in Santoro's backyard.

"You can't have better DNA than that," Lusnia said.

She said the FBI is in talks with Italian authorities to repatriate the tablet. An FBI spokesperson said the agency could not respond to requests for comment during the government shutdown.



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 45 of 76**

A final twist to the story suggests how the tablet made its way to New Orleans.

As media reports of the find began circulating this week, Erin Scott O'Brien says her ex-husband called her and told her to watch the news. She immediately recognized the hunk of marble, which she had always seen as a "cool-ass piece of art." They had used as a garden decoration and then forgot about it before selling the home to Santoro in 2018.

"None of us knew what it was," O'Brien said. "We were watching the video, just like in shock."

O'Brien said she received the tablet from her grandparents — an Italian woman and a New Orleans native who was stationed in the country during World War II.

Perhaps no one would be more thrilled by the tablet's rediscovery than Sextus himself. Grave markers were important in Roman culture to uphold legacies, even of everyday citizens, Lusnia said.

"Now Sextus Congenius Verus is being talked about so much," Lusnia said. "If there's an afterlife and he's in it and he knows, he's very happy because this is what a Roman wants — to be remembered forever."

## **What to know about National Guard deployments in Memphis and other cities**

By The Associated Press undefined

Judges have stalled President Donald Trump's plans to deploy the National Guard in Chicago and in Portland, Oregon, but troops are now patrolling in Memphis, Tennessee, with the blessing of the state's governor.

The troops, dressed in Guard fatigues and protective vests, with guns in their holsters, patrolled at a Bass Pro Shops store and a nearby tourist welcome center beside the Mississippi River on Friday. It was unclear how many troops have been deployed to Memphis.

Trump has sent or discussed sending troops to other cities as well, including Baltimore; the District of Columbia; New Orleans; and the California cities of Oakland, San Francisco and Los Angeles. The federal government says the troops support immigration agents and protect federal property.

The Guard troops in Memphis remain under the command of Republican Gov. Bill Lee, who supports their use to further a federal crackdown on crime.

By contrast, Trump has attempted to deploy National Guard troops — including some from Texas and California — in Portland and Chicago after taking control of them himself, over objections from state and local leaders who say such interference violates their sovereignty and federal law. Federal courts in Illinois and Oregon this week blocked Trump's efforts to send troops out in those cities.

Here's where things stand:

What's happening in Memphis

Trump announced Sept. 15 that he intended to deploy the Guard to Memphis, and Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, a Republican, embraced the plan to bolster law enforcement operations there.

Mayor Paul Young, a Democrat who did not request the deployment, said he hopes the task force will target violent offenders rather than scare, harass or intimidate residents.

Federal officials say agents from the FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the U.S. Marshals Service have made hundreds of arrests and issued more than 2,800 traffic citations since the task force began operating in Memphis on Sept. 29.

Illinois senators denied entry to ICE building

Illinois Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth said they were denied access Friday to the ICE facility in Broadview, Illinois, a site of confrontations between protesters and federal agents.

"It is appalling that two United States senators are not allowed to visit this facility," Duckworth said. "What are you afraid of?"

The senators said they have congressional oversight authority.

"Something is going on in there they don't want us to see," Durbin said. "I don't know what it is."

Illinois judge blocks troop deployment

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 46 of 76**

A federal judge on Thursday blocked the deployment of troops in Chicago for at least two weeks. The Justice Department appealed the next day.

U.S. District Judge April Perry in Chicago said the Trump administration violated the 10th Amendment, which grants certain powers to states, and the 14th Amendment, which assures due process and equal protection, when he ordered National Guard troops to the city.

In a written order Friday explaining her rationale, Perry noted the nation's long aversion to having military involvement in domestic policing.

"Not even the Founding Father most ardently in favor of a strong federal government" — Alexander Hamilton — "believed that one state's militia could be sent to another state for the purposes of political retribution," Perry wrote.

Hamilton called that notion "preposterous."

"The court confirmed what we all know: There is no credible evidence of a rebellion in the state of Illinois. And no place for the National Guard in the streets of American cities like Chicago," Gov. JB Pritzker said.

Oregon judge also blocks Trump efforts

Another court battle in Oregon earlier delayed a similar troop deployment to Portland. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in that case Thursday.

Lt. Cmdr. Theresa Meadows, a spokesperson for U.S. Northern Command, said the troops sent to Portland and Chicago are "not conducting any operational activities at this time."

Troops patrol outside Chicago

Five hundred guard members from Texas and Illinois arrived this week at a U.S. Army Reserve Center in Elwood, southwest of Chicago, and have been activated for 60 days.

They started patrolling Thursday morning behind portable fences outside the ICE Broadview facility.

A federal judge late Thursday ordered ICE to remove a separate 8-foot-tall (2.4-meter) fence outside the Broadview facility after the Village of Broadview said it illegally blocks a public street.

Also Thursday, another federal judge in Illinois temporarily ordered federal agents to wear badges and banned them from using certain riot control weapons against peaceful protesters and journalists outside the ICE facility, about 12 miles (19 kilometers) west of Chicago.

In Chicago, federal prosecutors have obtained a grand jury indictment against a woman and man accused of using their vehicles to strike and box in a Border Patrol agent's vehicle last Saturday.

The agent exited his car and fired five shots at Marimar Martinez, 30, who was treated at a hospital. The indictment filed Thursday formalizes charges of assaulting a federal officer with a dangerous weapon — a vehicle. Anthony Ruiz, 21, is also charged.

## **New Orleans is electing a new mayor and a wide field is pledging change after indictments**

By JACK BROOK Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — New Orleans voters on Saturday are picking a new mayor to replace two-term incumbent LaToya Cantrell, whose indictment on corruption charges has left a wide field of candidates promising change to city hall.

It is the first of several high-profile mayoral races in the coming weeks in the U.S., including elections in New York and Detroit in November.

The election also comes as President Donald Trump has suggested that New Orleans could be one of his next targets to send the National Guard to fight crime. Republican Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry has asked for a deployment but the Trump administration has yet to make an announcement on the request.

More than 10 mayoral hopefuls in New Orleans are vying to succeed Cantrell, a Democrat, who cannot run again because of term limits. She's also kept a low profile since federal prosecutors in August accused her of a yearslong scheme to hide a romantic relationship with her former bodyguard, Jeffrey Vappie.

Cantrell has pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiracy, fraud and obstruction. Prosecutors say Cantrell and Vappie went on more than a dozen trips, including wine-tasting at vineyards, billing taxpayers for

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 47 of 76**

personal time together and later seeking to cover-up the evidence.

She's far from the first city official indicted on corruption charges. Former Mayor Ray Nagin was sentenced in 2014 to 10 years in prison for bribery, money laundering, fraud and tax crimes stemming from his two terms as mayor from 2002 to 2010.

Most of the mayoral candidates have largely framed their messages around restoring stability to a tumultuous city hall.

Among the leading contenders to succeed Cantrell are Helena Moreno, the city council's vice president and a former television reporter, who has raised more than \$3.4 million, the most money in the race. State Sen. Royce Duplessis and veteran city councilman Oliver Thomas have also raised large sums. Thomas served 37 months in prison after pleading guilty in 2007 to accepting bribes.

Any candidate who receives more than 50% of the vote will win outright, otherwise the top two candidates will advance to a runoff on Nov. 15.

Moreno, the daughter of a petrochemical industry executive whose family moved to the U.S. from Mexico during her childhood, has campaigned on a platform of improving public safety, city services and economic development. Thomas has said he will focus on representing underserved communities, while Duplessis has directed appeals to Black voters in a majority-Black city and positioned himself as an outsider who would fix what he describes as a dysfunctional municipal government.

Also on the ballot is Orleans Parish Sheriff Susan Hutson, who oversaw the jail where 10 inmates brazenly escaped in May and is seeking re-election. The final escapee, convicted murder Derrick Groves, was captured in Atlanta earlier this week. Challengers have lined up against Hutson, whose management of the jail has been broadly criticized.

And a typically sleepy race for clerk of criminal court has become contentious and drawn attention beyond New Orleans.

Challenger Calvin Duncan spent nearly 30 years in a Louisiana prison for a murder conviction before he was released in 2011 after he obtained new evidence of his innocence. Duncan said he fought for decades to obtain the records that helped secure his freedom and hopes to improve the city's criminal court records system.

But incumbent clerk Darren Lombard and Louisiana's attorney general have asserted that Duncan was not exonerated because of a plea deal he accepted. In 2021, his convictions were vacated by a judge, and he is listed in the National Registry of Exonerations, an archive of wrongful convictions run by several universities.

## **Blast at a Tennessee explosives plant leaves 18 missing and feared dead, sheriff says**

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

McEWEN, Tenn. (AP) — A blast leveled an explosives plant Friday in rural Tennessee, leaving behind a mass of twisted metal, burned-out shells of cars and at least 18 people missing and feared dead, authorities said.

"There's nothing to describe. It's gone," Humphreys County Sheriff Chris Davis said of the blast site at Accurate Energetic Systems, which supplies and researches explosives for the military.

He said it was one of the worst scenes he's ever seen and especially gut-wrenching because he knows three families connected to the tragedy. Davis said multiple people were killed, but he declined to say how many, referring to the 18 missing as "souls" because officials were still speaking to family.

Officials had originally said 19 people were missing, but Humphreys County Emergency Management Agency updated that number Friday night after they said one person believed to be on site was found safe at home.

The blast occurred at about 7:45 a.m., Davis said. Aerial footage showed the company's hilltop location smoldering and smoky. Debris was scattered over at least a half-mile area, and people more than 15 miles (24 kilometers) away felt the explosion, he said.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 48 of 76**

The company's website says it processes explosives and ammunition at an eight-building facility that sprawls across wooded hills in the Bucksport area, about 60 miles (97 kilometers) southwest of Nashville. It's not immediately known how many people worked at the plant or how many were there when the explosion happened.

Davis said investigators are trying to determine what happened and couldn't say what caused the explosion. Emergency crews were initially unable to enter the plant because of continuing detonations, said Hickman County Advanced EMT David Stewart.

By Friday afternoon, there was no further danger of explosions, and the scene was under control, said Grey Collier, a spokesperson for the Humphreys County Emergency Management Agency.

Accurate Energetic Systems, based in nearby McEwen, said in a post on social media that their "thoughts and prayers" are with the families and community impacted.

"We extend our gratitude to all first responders who continue to work tirelessly under difficult conditions," the post said.

The company has been awarded numerous military contracts, largely by the U.S. Army and Navy, to supply different types of munitions and explosives, according to public records. The products ranged from bulk explosives to landmines and small breaching charges, including C4.

When the explosion occurred, residents in Lobelville, a 20-minute drive from the scene, said they felt their homes shake, and some people captured the loud boom of the explosion on their home cameras.

The blast rattled Gentry Stover from his sleep.

"I thought the house had collapsed with me inside of it," he told The Associated Press. "I live very close to Accurate and I realized about 30 seconds after I woke up that it had to have been that."

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee posted on the social platform X that he is monitoring the situation and asked "Tennesseans to join us in prayer for the families impacted by this tragic incident."

State Rep. Jody Barrett, from the neighboring town of Dickson, was worried about the possible economic impact because the plant is a key employer in the area.

"We absolutely heard it at the house," Barrett said. "It sounded like something going through the roof of our house."

A small group gathered for a vigil Friday night at a nearby park, clutching candles as they prayed for the missing and their families and sang "Amazing Grace."

The U.S. has a long history of deadly accidents at workplaces, including the Monongah coal mine explosion that killed 362 men and boys in West Virginia in 1907. Several high-profile industrial accidents in the 1960s helped lead President Richard Nixon to sign a law creating the Occupational Safety and Health Administration the next year.

In 2019, Accurate Energetic Systems faced several small fines from the U.S. Department of Labor for violations of policies meant to protect workers from exposure to hazardous chemicals, radiation and other irritants, according to citations from OSHA.

In 2014, an explosion occurred at another ammunition facility in the same small community, killing one person and injuring at least three others.

## **Thousands of Palestinians return to what's left of their homes as Gaza ceasefire takes effect**

By ABDEL KAREEM HANA, WAFAA SHURAF and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

WADI GAZA, Gaza Strip (AP) — Tens of thousands of Palestinians headed back to the heavily destroyed northern Gaza Strip on Friday as a U.S.-brokered ceasefire came into effect in a deal that raised hopes for ending the Israel-Hamas war. All the remaining hostages were set to be released within days.

Questions remain over who will govern Gaza as Israeli troops gradually pull back and whether Hamas will disarm, as called for in U.S. President Donald Trump's ceasefire plan. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who unilaterally ended a ceasefire in March, hinted that Israel might renew its offensive if Hamas does not give up its weapons.



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 49 of 76**

The latest truce nevertheless marks a key step toward ending a ruinous two-year war that was triggered by Hamas' 2023 attack on Israel. The fighting has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and displaced around 90% of the Gaza population of some 2 million, often multiple times. Many of them will find fields of rubble where their homes once stood.

The military confirmed the start of the ceasefire Friday, and the remaining 48 hostages, around 20 of them believed to be alive, are to be released by Monday. Palestinians said heavy shelling in parts of Gaza earlier on Friday had mostly stopped after the military's announcement.

Netanyahu said in a televised statement Friday that the next stages would see Hamas disarm and Gaza demilitarized.

"If this is achieved the easy way — so be it. If not — it will be achieved the hard way," Netanyahu said.

The Israeli military has said it will continue to operate defensively from the roughly 50% of Gaza it still controls after pulling back to agreed-upon lines.

Aid shipments to begin Sunday

Meanwhile, the United Nations was given the green light by Israel to begin delivering scaled-up aid into Gaza starting Sunday, a U.N. official said. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet made public.

The aid shipments are meant to address severe malnutrition and famine conditions triggered by Israeli offensives and restrictions on humanitarian help. The International Criminal Court is seeking the arrest of Netanyahu and his former defense minister for allegedly using starvation as a method of war. Israeli officials deny the accusations.

The aid will include 170,000 metric tons that have already been positioned in neighboring countries such as Jordan and Egypt as humanitarian officials awaited permission from Israeli forces to restart their work.

U.N. officials and Israeli authorities have engaged in a series of discussions in Jerusalem over the last 24 hours about the volume of aid humanitarian organizations can bring in and through which entry points.

U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters Friday that fuel, medical supplies and other critical materials have started flowing through the Kerem Shalom crossing. U.N. officials want Israel to open more border crossings and provide safe movement for aid workers and civilians who are returning to parts of Gaza that were under heavy fire until only recently.

In the last several months, the U.N. and its partners have been able to deliver only 20% of the aid needed in the Gaza Strip, according to U.N. humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher.

People on the move

A steady stream of people, the vast majority on foot, crammed onto a coastal road in the central Gaza Strip, heading north to see what might remain of their homes. It was a repeat of emotional scenes from an earlier ceasefire in January. Others headed to different parts of the Palestinian territory in the south.

The destruction they find this time will be even greater, after Israel waged a new offensive in Gaza City, in the north, in recent weeks. The military bombed high-rises and blew up homes in what it said was an attempt to destroy Hamas' remaining military infrastructure.

Palestinians have expressed relief that the war may end, tempered with concern about the future and lingering pain from the staggering death and destruction.

"There wasn't much joy, but the ceasefire somewhat eased the pain of death and bloodshed, and the pain of our loved ones and brothers who suffered in this war," said Jamal Mesbah, who was displaced from the north and plans to return.

In Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis, hundreds of Palestinians returning to their homes found wrecked buildings, rubble and destruction after Israeli troops withdrew.

"There was nothing left. Just a few clothes, pieces of wood and pots," said Fatma Radwan, who was displaced from Khan Younis. People were still trying to retrieve bodies from under the rubble, she added.

Many buildings were flattened, and none was undamaged, as people went back to search for their belongings. Hani Omran, who was also displaced from Khan Younis, said: "We came to a place that is unidentifiable ... Destruction is everywhere."

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 50 of 76

and taking 251 hostage.

In Israel's ensuing offensive, more than 67,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and nearly 170,000 wounded, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants but says around half the deaths were women and children. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government, and the United Nations and many independent experts consider its figures to be the most reliable estimate of wartime casualties.

The war has also triggered other conflicts in the region, sparked worldwide protests and led to allegations of genocide that Israel denies.

How the agreement is expected to unfold

Israel is set to release around 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the remaining hostages. A list Israel published Friday did not include high-profile prisoner Marwan Barghouti, the most popular Palestinian leader and a potentially unifying figure. Israel views him and other high-profile prisoners as terrorists and has refused to release them in past exchanges.

Khalil al-Hayya, a senior Hamas official and lead negotiator, said Thursday evening that all women and children held in Israeli jails will be freed.

The hostage and prisoner releases are expected to begin Monday, two Egyptian officials briefed on the talks and a Hamas official said, though another official said they could occur as early as Sunday night. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to be publicly named speaking about the negotiations.

A relative of one of the Israeli hostages believed to have died in captivity says the family hopes that his body will be returned for burial.

"It's a measured sense of hope in all hostage families," said Stephen Brisley, whose sister, Lianne Sharabi, and her two teenage daughters were killed in the Oct. 7 attack.

Lianne's husband, Eli Sharabi, was eventually released, but his brother, Yossi, is believed to have died in an airstrike in January 2024. The family hopes to give him a dignified burial.

"We hold our hope lightly because we've had our hopes dashed before," Brisley told The Associated Press from his home in South Wales.

The Trump plan calls for Israel to maintain an open-ended military presence inside Gaza, along its border with Israel. An international force, comprised largely of troops from Arab and Muslim countries, would be responsible for security inside Gaza. The U.S. would lead a massive internationally funded reconstruction effort.

The plan envisions an eventual role for the Palestinian Authority — something Netanyahu has long opposed. But it requires the authority, which administers parts of the West Bank, to undergo a sweeping reform program that could take years.

The Trump plan is even more vague about a future Palestinian state, which Netanyahu firmly rejects.

## President Donald Trump is in 'exceptional health,' his doctor says, after visit to Walter Reed

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is in "exceptional health," his physician said Friday after he underwent a checkup that included lab tests and preventive health assessments at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Trump spent roughly three hours at the Bethesda, Maryland, hospital earlier Friday for what his doctor, Navy Capt. Sean Barbabella, called a "scheduled follow-up evaluation" that was a "part of his ongoing health maintenance plan." While there, Trump also got his yearly flu shot, as well as a COVID-19 booster vaccine.

"President Donald J. Trump remains in exceptional health, exhibiting strong cardiovascular, pulmonary, neurological and physical performance," Barbabella wrote in a one-page memo released Friday night by the White House. The doctor noted in the memo that the evaluation helped prepare for Trump's upcoming overseas trips and included advanced imaging, lab testing and preventive health assessments.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 51 of 76**

The president is traveling to the Middle East this weekend and is scheduled to fly to Asia at the end of this month.

Barbabella also said he evaluated Trump's cardiac age, which was about 14 years younger than his chronological age. Trump is 79 and was the oldest U.S. president at his inauguration.

The White House this week initially described Trump's Walter Reed visit as a "routine yearly checkup," although Trump had his annual physical in April. The president then called it a "semiannual physical."

Trump's April physical found that he was "fully fit" to serve as commander in chief. The three-page summary of the exam done by Barbabella then said he had lost 20 pounds (9 kilograms) since a medical exam in June 2020 and said he has an "active lifestyle" that "continues to contribute significantly" to the well-being of the president.

In July, the White House announced that Trump had recently undergone a medical checkup after noticing "mild swelling" in his lower legs and was found to have a condition common in older adults that causes blood to pool in his veins. Tests by the White House medical unit showed that Trump has chronic venous insufficiency, which occurs when little valves inside the veins that normally help move blood against gravity gradually lose the ability to work properly.

At the April physical, Trump also passed a short screening test to assess different brain functions.

Presidents have large discretion over what health information they choose to release to the public. Trump's summary from his April exam included information about his weight, body mass index, past surgeries, mental health screenings, cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

When spokesperson Karoline Leavitt discussed the results of his chronic venous insufficiency diagnosis from the briefing room, she noted that the White House was disclosing details of the checkup to dispel rumors about Trump's health. At the time, Trump was frequently observed with bruising on his hand.

The Republican president has also repeatedly used the issue of health as a political cudgel. He repeatedly questioned the mental and physical health of his Democratic predecessor, President Joe Biden, and pointed out that he has undergone cognitive testing that Biden hadn't.

Biden has brushed aside those criticisms and said he was fit to serve, but he dropped out of the 2024 race for the White House after a disastrous debate with Trump raised doubts about his fitness for office.

## **Two jurors claim they were bullied into convicting Harvey Weinstein and regret it, his lawyers say**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two jurors who voted in June to convict Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault said they regret the decision and only did so because others on the panel bullied them, the former movie mogul's lawyers said in a newly public court filing.

Weinstein's lawyers are seeking to overturn his conviction for first-degree criminal sex act, arguing in papers unsealed Thursday that the guilty verdict was marred by "threats, intimidation, and extraneous bias," and that the judge failed to properly deal with it at the time.

In sworn affidavits included with the filing, two jurors said they felt overwhelmed and intimidated by jurors who wanted to convict Weinstein on the charge, which accused him of forcing oral sex on TV and film production assistant and producer Miriam Haley in 2006.

One juror said she was screamed at in the jury room and told, "we have to get rid of you." The other juror said anyone who doubted Weinstein's guilt was grilled by other jurors and that if he could have voted by secret ballot, "I would have returned a not guilty verdict on all three charges."

"I regret the verdict," that juror said. "Without the intimidation from other jurors, I believe that the jury would have hung on the Miriam Haley charge."

Weinstein, 73, was acquitted on a second criminal sex act charge involving a different woman, Polish psychotherapist and former model Kaja Sokola. The judge declared a mistrial on the final charge, alleging Weinstein raped former actor Jessica Mann, after the jury foreperson declined to deliberate further.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 52 of 76

It was the second time the Oscar-winning producer was tried on some of the charges. His 2020 conviction, a watershed moment for the # MeToo movement, was overturned last year. Now his defense team, led by attorney Arthur Aidala, is fighting to eliminate his retrial conviction and head off another retrial on the undecided count.

Judge Curtis Farber gave Manhattan prosecutors until Nov. 10 to conduct its own investigation and file a written response before he rules on Dec. 22. That means a decision and a possible retrial or sentencing won't come until after Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is up for reelection on Nov. 4.

Jurors said they feared for their safety

In the affidavits, which blacked out juror names and identifying numbers, the two jurors said they feared for their safety and the foreperson's safety. They said that when the foreperson asked for civility, another juror got in his face, pointed a finger and told him: "You don't know me. I'll catch you outside."

One of the jurors said deliberations were poisoned by a belief among some jurors that a member of the panel had been paid off by Weinstein or his lawyers. That claim, which has not been supported by any evidence, shifted the jury of seven women and five men "from an even 6-6 split to a sudden unanimous verdict," the juror said.

Some of what was said in the affidavits echoed acrimony that spilled into public view during deliberations. As jurors weighed charges for five days, one juror asked to be excused because he felt another was being treated unfairly.

Later, the foreperson complained that other jurors were pushing people to change their minds and that a juror yelled at him for sticking to his opinion and suggested the foreperson would "see me outside."

After the jury returned a verdict on two of the three charges, Farber asked the foreperson whether he was willing to deliberate further. The man said no, triggering a mistrial on the rape count.

After the trial, two jurors disputed the foreperson's account. One said no one mistreated him. The other said deliberations were contentious, but respectful.

Jurors spoke with the judge

When jurors came forward with concerns, Farber was strict about respecting the sanctity of deliberations and cautioned them not to discuss the content or tenor of jury room discussions, transcripts show. In their affidavits, the two jurors said they didn't feel the judge was willing to listen to their concerns.

When jurors were asked if they agreed with the guilty verdict, one of the jurors noted in her affidavit that she paused "to try and indicate my discomfort in the verdict." Afterward, when Farber spoke with jurors, she said she told him "the deliberations were unprofessional."

Weinstein denies all the charges. The first-degree criminal sex act conviction carries the potential for up to 25 years in prison, while the unresolved third-degree rape charge is punishable by up to four years — less than he already has served.

He has been behind bars since his initial conviction in 2020, and he later also was sentenced to prison in a separate California case, which he is appealing.

## Firings of federal workers begin as White House seeks to pressure Democrats in government shutdown

By SEUNG MIN KIM and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House budget office said Friday that mass firings of federal workers have started, an attempt by President Donald Trump's administration to exert more pressure on Democratic lawmakers as the government shutdown dragged into a 10th day.

Russ Vought, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, said on the social media site X that the "RIFs have begun," referring to reduction-in-force plans aimed at reducing the size of the federal government.

In a court filing, the budget office said well over 4,000 employees would be fired, though it noted that the funding situation was "fluid and rapidly evolving."

The firings would hit the hardest at the departments of the Treasury, which would lose over 1,400 em-



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 53 of 76**

ployees, and Health and Human Services, with a loss of over 1,100. The Education Department and Housing and Urban Development each would lose over 400 staffers. The departments of Commerce, Energy and Homeland Security and the Environmental Protection Agency were all set to fire hundreds of more employees. It was not clear which particular programs would be affected.

The aggressive move by Trump's budget office goes far beyond what usually happens in a government shutdown and escalates an already politically toxic dynamic between the White House and Congress. Talks to end the shutdown are almost nonexistent.

Typically, federal workers are furloughed but restored to their jobs once the shutdown ends, traditionally with back pay. Some 750,000 employees are expected to be furloughed during the shutdown, officials have said.

Democrats — and some Republicans — criticize the administration's actions

In comments to reporters in the Oval Office on Friday night, Trump said many people would be losing their jobs, and that the firings would be focused on Democrat-oriented areas, though he didn't explain exactly what that meant.

"It'll be a lot, and we'll announce the numbers over the next couple of days," he said. "But it'll be a lot of people."

Trump said that, going forward, "We're going to make a determination, do we want a lot? And I must tell you, a lot of them happen to be Democrat oriented."

"These are people that the Democrats wanted, that, in many cases, were not appropriate," he said of federal employees, eventually adding, "Many of them will be fired."

Still, some leading Republicans were highly critical of the administration's actions.

"I strongly oppose OMB Director Russ Vought's attempt to permanently lay off federal workers who have been furloughed due to a completely unnecessary government shutdown," said Maine Sen. Susan Collins, the chair of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, who blamed the federal closure on Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski called the announcement "poorly timed" and "yet another example of this administration's punitive actions toward the federal workforce."

For his part, Schumer said the blame for the layoffs rested with Trump.

"Let's be blunt: nobody's forcing Trump and Vought to do this," Schumer said. "They don't have to do it; they want to. They're callously choosing to hurt people — the workers who protect our country, inspect our food, respond when disasters strike. This is deliberate chaos."

Notice of firings has already begun at several federal agencies

The White House had previewed its tactics shortly before the government shutdown began on Oct. 1, telling all federal agencies to submit their reduction-in-force plans to the budget office for its review.

It said reduction-in-force plans could apply to federal programs whose funding would lapse in a government shutdown, are otherwise not funded and are "not consistent with the President's priorities."

On Friday, the Education Department was among the agencies hit by new layoffs, a department spokesperson said. A labor union for the agency's workers said the administration is laying off almost all employees below the director level at the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, while fewer than 10 employees were being terminated at the agency's Office of Communications and Outreach.

Notices of firings have also taken place at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, which leads federal efforts to reduce risk to the nation's cyber and physical infrastructure, according to DHS, where CISA is housed. The agency has been a frequent Trump target over its work to counter misinformation about the 2020 presidential election and the COVID-19 pandemic. DHS said the layoffs were "part of getting CISA back on mission."

Federal health workers were also being fired, though an HHS spokesman did not say how many or which agencies were being hit hardest. A spokesperson for the EPA, which also has an unspecified number of layoffs, blamed the Democrats for the firings and said they can vote to reopen the government anytime.

Threats of more cuts across the federal workforce

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 54 of 76**

An official for the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents federal workers and is suing the Trump administration over the firings, said in a legal filing Friday that the Treasury Department is set to issue layoff notices to 1,300 employees.

The AFGE asked a federal judge to halt the firings, calling the action an abuse of power designed to punish workers and pressure Congress.

"It is disgraceful that the Trump administration has used the government shutdown as an excuse to illegally fire thousands of workers who provide critical services to communities across the country," AFGE President Everett Kelley said in a statement.

Democrats have tried to call the administration's bluff, arguing the firings could be illegal, and had seemed bolstered by the fact that the White House had not immediately pursued the layoffs once the shutdown began.

But Trump signaled earlier this week that job cuts could be coming in "four or five days."

"If this keeps going on, it'll be substantial, and a lot of those jobs will never come back," he said Tuesday.

Workforce cuts appear unhelpful to bipartisan shutdown negotiations

Meanwhile, the halls of the Capitol were quiet on Friday, the 10th day of the shutdown, with both the House and the Senate out of Washington and both sides digging in for a protracted shutdown fight. Senate Republicans have tried repeatedly to cajole Democratic holdouts to vote for a stopgap bill to reopen the government, but Democrats have refused as they hold out for a firm commitment to extend health care benefits.

Some Republicans on Capitol Hill have suggested that Vought's threats of mass layoffs have been unhelpful to bipartisan talks.

And the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, said in a statement that the "shutdown does not give Trump or Vought new, special powers" to lay off workers.

"This is nothing new, and no one should be intimidated by these crooks," she added.

Still, there was no sign that the top Democratic and Republican Senate leaders were even talking about a way to solve the impasse. Instead, Senate Majority Leader John Thune continued to try to peel away centrist Democrats who may be willing to cross party lines.

"It's time for them to get a backbone," Thune, a South Dakota Republican, said Friday.

The Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan organization that tracks federal service, says more than 200,000 civil servants have left since the start of this administration in January due to earlier firings, retirements and deferred resignation offers.

"These unnecessary and misguided reductions in force will further hollow out our federal government, rob it of critical expertise and hobble its capacity to effectively serve the public," said the organization's president and CEO, Max Stier.

## **Wall Street tumbles to its worst day since April after Trump threatens more tariffs on China**

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A monthslong calm on Wall Street shattered Friday, and U.S. stocks tumbled after President Donald Trump threatened to crank tariffs much higher on China.

The S&P 500 sank 2.7% in its worst day since April. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 878 points, or 1.9%, and the Nasdaq composite fell 3.6%.

Stocks had been heading for a slight gain in the morning, until Trump took to his social media platform and said he's considering "a massive increase of tariffs" on Chinese imports. He's upset at restrictions China has placed on exports of its rare earths, which are materials that are critical for the manufacturing of everything from consumer electronics to jet engines.

"We have been contacted by other Countries who are extremely angry at this great Trade hostility, which came out of nowhere," Trump wrote on Truth Social. He also said "now there seems to be no reason" to meet with China's leader, Xi Jinping, after earlier agreeing to do so as part of an upcoming trip to South

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 55 of 76

Korea.

The ratchet higher in tensions between the world's largest economies led to widespread drops across Wall Street, with roughly six out of every seven stocks within the S&P 500 falling. Nearly everything weakened, from Big Tech companies like Nvidia and Apple to stocks of smaller companies looking to get past uncertainty about tariffs and trade.

The market may have been primed for a slide. U.S. stocks were already facing criticism that their prices had shot too high following the S&P 500's nearly relentless 35% run from a low in April. The index, which dictates the movements for many 401(k) accounts, is still near its all-time high set earlier in the week.

Critics say the market looks too expensive after prices rose much faster than corporate profits. Worries are particularly high about companies in the artificial-intelligence industry, where pessimists see echoes of the 2000 dot-com bubble that imploded. For stocks to look less expensive, either their prices need to fall, or companies' profits need to rise.

Levi Strauss dropped 12.6% for one of the market's larger losses, even though it reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Its forecast for profit over the full year was also within range of Wall Street's estimates, but the jeans and clothing company could simply be facing the challenge of heightened expectations after a big run. Its stock price came into the day with a surge of nearly 42% for the year so far.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 182.60 points to 6,552.51. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 878.82 to 45,479.60, and the Nasdaq composite sank 820.20 to 22,204.43.

Some of Friday's strongest action was in the oil market, where the price of a barrel of benchmark U.S. crude sank 4.2% to \$58.90.

It fell as a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect in Gaza. An end to the war could remove worries about disruptions to oil supplies, which had kept crude's price higher than it otherwise would have been.

Losses accelerated following Trump's tariff threat, which could gum up global trade and lead the economy to burn less fuel. Brent crude, the international standard, dropped 3.8% to \$62.73 per barrel.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury sank to 4.05% from 4.14% late Thursday.

It had already been lower before Trump made his threats, as a report from the University of Michigan suggested that sentiment among U.S. consumers remains in the doldrums.

"Pocketbook issues like high prices and weakening job prospects remain at the forefront of consumers' minds," according to Joanne Hsu, director of the Surveys of Consumers. "At this time, consumers do not expect meaningful improvement in these factors."

The job market has slowed so much that the Federal Reserve cut its main interest rate last month for the first time this year. Fed officials have penciled in more cuts through next year to give the economy additional breathing room. But Chair Jerome Powell has also said they may change course if inflation stays high. That's because lower interest rates can push inflation even higher.

One potentially encouraging signal from the University of Michigan's preliminary survey said consumers' expectations for inflation in the coming year edged down to 4.6% from 4.7% the month before. While that's still high, the direction of change could help the Fed and limit upward pressure on inflation.

In stock markets abroad, indexes fell across much of Europe and Asia.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 1.7%, and France's CAC 40 dropped 1.5% for two of the bigger moves. But South Korea's Kospi leaped 1.7% after trading reopened following a holiday.

## Trump threatens tech export limits, new 100% tariff on Chinese imports starting Nov. 1 or sooner

By JOSH BOAK and DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday threatened to place an additional 100% tax on Chinese imports starting on Nov. 1 or sooner, potentially escalating tariff rates close to levels that in April fanned fears of a global recession.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 56 of 76**

The president expressed frustration with new export controls placed on rare earth elements by China — and said on social media that “there seems to be no reason” to meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping as part of an upcoming trip to South Korea.

Trump later told reporters he had not canceled his meeting. “But I don’t know that we’re going to have it,” he said during an Oval Office appearance on another subject. “I’m going to be there regardless, so I would assume we might have it.”

Trump also suggested there may be time to ratchet down his steep new tariff threat. “We’re going to have to see what happens. That’s why I made it Nov. 1,” he said.

China’s new restrictions

On Thursday, the Chinese government restricted access to rare earth minerals, requiring foreign companies to get special approval for shipping the metallic elements abroad. It also announced permitting requirements on exports of technologies used in the mining, smelting and recycling of rare earths, adding that any export requests for products used in military goods would be rejected.

On social media, Trump described the export controls as “shocking” and “out of the blue.” He said China is “becoming very hostile” and that it’s holding the world “captive” by restricting access to the metals and magnets used in electronics, computer chips, lasers, jet engines and other technologies.

Trump said in a post that “starting November 1st, 2025 (or sooner, depending on any further actions or changes taken by China), the United States of America will impose a Tariff of 100% on China, over and above any Tariff that they are currently paying.” The president also said the U.S. government would respond to China by putting its own export controls “on any and all critical software” from American firms.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

Trump is known for using threats as a tactic

The S&P 500 tumbled 2.7% on worries about the rising tensions between the world’s largest economies. It was the market’s worst day since April when the president last bandied about import taxes this high. Still, the stock market closed before the president spelled out the terms of his threat.

Not only could the global trade war instigated by Trump be rekindled, but import taxes being heaped on top of the 30% already being levied on Chinese goods could, by the administration’s past statements, cause trade to break down between the U.S. and China in ways that could cause growth worldwide to slump.

While Trump’s wording was definitive, he is also famously known for backing down from threats. Earlier this year, some investors began engaging in what the Financial Times called the “TACO” trade, which stands for “Trump Always Chickens Out.”

The prospect of tariffs this large could compound the president’s own political worries, potentially pushing up inflation at a moment when the job market appears fragile and the drags from a government shutdown are starting to compound with layoffs of federal workers.

The United States and China have been jostling for advantage in trade talks, after the import taxes announced earlier this year triggered the trade war. Both countries agreed to ratchet down tariffs after negotiations in Switzerland and the United Kingdom, yet tensions remain as China has continued to restrict America’s access to the difficult-to-mine rare earths needed for a wide array of U.S. technologies.

There is already a backlog of export license applications from Beijing’s previous round of export controls on rare earth elements, and the latest announcements “add further complexity to the global supply chain of rare earth elements,” the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China said in a statement.

There are other flashpoints in the trade relationship, including U.S. restrictions on China’s ability to import advanced computer chips, sales of American-grown soybeans and a series of tit-for-tat port fees being levied by both countries starting on Tuesday.

Analysts say there’s time to de-escalate

Trump did not formally cancel the meeting with Xi, so much as indicating that it might not happen as part of a trip at the end of the month in Asia. The trip was scheduled to include a stop in Malaysia, which is hosting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit; a stop in Japan; and a visit to South Korea,



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 57 of 76**

where he was slated to meet with Xi ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

Sun Yun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, said Beijing's move was a reaction to U.S. sanctions of Chinese companies this week and the upcoming port fees targeting China-related vessels — but said there's room for de-escalation to keep the leaders' meeting alive. "It is a disproportional reaction," Sun said. "Beijing feels that de-escalation will have to be mutual as well. There is room for maneuver, especially on the implementation."

Gracelin Baskaran, director of the Critical Minerals Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., said China holds leverage because it dominates the market for rare earths with 70% of the mining and 93% of the production of permanent magnets made from them, which are crucial to high-tech products and the military.

"These restrictions undermine our ability to develop our industrial base at a time when we need to. And then second, it's a powerful negotiating tool," she said.

Craig Singleton, senior director of the China program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a think tank, said Trump's post could "mark the beginning of the end of the tariff truce" that had lowered the tax rates charged by both countries.

"Mutually assured disruption between the two sides is no longer a metaphor," Singleton said. "Both sides are reaching for their economic weapons at the same time, and neither seems willing to back down."

## **Things to know about the Qatar training facility planned for an Idaho Air Force base**

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — When U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced Friday morning that the federal government had reached an agreement with Qatar to build a facility at an Air Force base in Idaho, social media posts began popping up online from people across the political spectrum expressing outrage at the concept of a foreign military base on American soil.

But the facility being built at the Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho isn't a separate base at all — it is a group of buildings that will be built to handle training and maintenance for Qatari troops — and the agreement with Qatar has been in the works for years.

"What we expect is it to be squadron operations and hangars for the F-15QA, because that's the Qatari version of the jet that they bought through foreign military sales," Air Force spokesperson Ann Stefanek said. "It is definitely still a U.S. Air Force base."

In fact, on-site training agreements with allies are common in the U.S. The Republic of Singapore 428th Fighter Squadron Buccaneers have been hosted at the base since 2008. German forces trained at the Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico for decades. New facilities to train international F-35 fighter pilots were completed at Ebbing Air Force Base in Arkansas last year.

Here are some things to know about international training agreements and the Mountain Home Air Force base.

Where is the Mountain Home Air Force Base?

The base is roughly 50 miles (80.47 kilometers) southeast of Boise, which is the state's capital and primary population hub. It sits on a high desert tundra plateau tucked between two mountain ranges. The spot is ideal for fighter pilot training because there is a lot of space around the base to practice maneuvers.

The base is just outside of the town of Mountain Home, which is home to about 17,000 people. The new facilities will be built by local construction crews, and local workers will likely be employed at the base to support the training operations, Stefanek said. The construction and other associated expenses will be funded by Qatar.

Security at the base will continue to be handled by U.S. Air Force personnel, she said, and anyone going to the base will still have to show the proper credentials in order to enter.

What is the mission of the base?

The base — nicknamed the "gunfighter" base — houses the 366th Fighter Wing and more than 50 F-15E

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 58 of 76**

Strike Eagle aircraft. It aims to "provide mission-ready Gunfighters to conduct military operations anytime, anywhere," according to its website.

Three fighter squadrons are located there: The 389th Fighter Squadron Thunderbolts, the 391st Fighter Squadron Tigers, and the Singaporean 428th Fighter Squadron Buccaneers. An Air Control squadron and Air National Guard squadron are also housed at the base.

All told, the fighter wing includes about 5,100 military and civilian members, as well as 3,500 family members, according to the website.

When was the Qatar agreement conceived?

Qatar decided to buy the F-15QA aircraft from a U.S. government program called Foreign Military Sales in 2017, and discussions to train Qatari troops in the use of the jets began shortly thereafter, Stefanek said.

Work got started on an environmental assessment to determine the possible impact on the area surrounding the Mountain Home Air Force Base began around 2020, and the assessment was completed in 2022.

Why are some upset by the announcement?

Right-wing influencer Laura Loomer — a close Trump ally — called the plan "an abomination."

"No foreign country should have a military base on US soil. Especially Islamic countries," Loomer wrote in a social media post after Hegseth's announcement.

Similar training agreements have faced criticism in the past. In 2019, a Saudi Air Force officer training at the Pensacola Naval Air Station in Florida killed three U.S. service members and wounded several others in a mass shooting. After investigating, the U.S. sent home 21 Saudi military students after investigators said they had expressed jihadist or anti-American sentiments on social media or had "contact with child pornography" online.

Others suggested the training facility was prompted by Qatar's gift to Trump of a \$400 million jumbo jet to use as Air Force One, though the possibility of a training agreement predated the gift.

What does the U.S. get out of the agreements to host foreign troops?

The U.S. sells defense equipment and services to other countries as a foreign policy tool. A federal law called the Arms Export Control Act details when those sales can take place. But generally speaking, it is when the president determines that doing so will boost the security of the U.S. or promote peace around the world.

The U.S. military often works in conjunction with other allied or friendly nations on deployment, so well-trained allies can help keep U.S. troops safe.

"This partnership will provide advanced training opportunities and foster combined operational readiness for our two countries," Stefanek said.

## **National Guard stands down in Illinois while troops patrol in Memphis with local police**

By ADRIAN SAINZ and CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — National Guard troops patrolled in Tennessee's second-largest city for the first time Friday while soldiers in Illinois were engaged only in planning and training after a judge handed a loss to the Trump administration and blocked their deployment to the Chicago area.

At least nine armed Guard members began their patrol at the Bass Pro Shops located at the Pyramid, an iconic Memphis landmark, about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from historic Beale Street and FedEx Forum, where the NBA's Grizzlies play.

They also were at a nearby tourist welcome center along the Mississippi River. Wearing Guard fatigues and protective vests labeled "military police," the troops were escorted by a local police officer and posed for photos with visitors.

Meanwhile, in Illinois, Democratic U.S. Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth said they were barred from visiting an immigration enforcement building near Chicago. For weeks it's been home to occasional clashes between protesters and federal agents.

"What are you afraid of?" Duckworth told reporters, referring to the government. "You don't hide, you

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 59 of 76**

don't run away when you're proud of what you're doing."

In Memphis, Mayor Paul Young, a Democrat, said he never requested that the Guard come to his city. But after President Donald Trump made the Sept. 15 announcement and Republican Gov. Bill Lee agreed, Young and others said they wanted the task force to focus on targeting violent offenders rather than use their presence to scare, harass or intimidate the general public.

Police Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis said she hoped Guard personnel would help direct traffic and have a presence in "retail corridors," but not be used to operate checkpoints or anything similar.

It was unclear how many Guard members were on the ground Friday or were expected to arrive later. Lee previously said troops would not make arrests and would not be armed unless local law enforcement officials request it.

For years, Memphis, whose population exceeds 600,000, has dealt with high violent crime, including assaults, carjackings and homicides. While this year's statistics show improvement in several categories, including murders, many acknowledge that violence remains a problem.

Federal officials say hundreds of arrests and more than 2,800 traffic citations have been made since a federal task force began operating in Memphis on Sept. 29. Arrest categories include active warrants, drugs, firearms and sex offenses, according to the U.S. Marshals Service. Four arrests have been made on homicide charges, the Marshals Service said.

Some residents said the Guard is not what Memphis needs.

"Totally useless, worthless, not called for because the money that they're gonna spend on that — if they would give it to us to let us do improvements in our city," said Loretta Davis, who emphasized that young people need more options.

An ongoing legal battle

Friday's development comes after U.S. District Judge April Perry blocked deployment of troops in the Chicago area for at least two weeks.

The on-again, off-again deployments stem from a political and legal battle over Trump's push to send the Guard to several U.S. cities. His administration claims crime is rampant in those cities, despite statistics not always supporting that.

If a president invokes the Insurrection Act, they can dispatch active duty military in states that fail to put down an insurrection or defy federal law. However, Perry said she found no substantial evidence that a "danger of rebellion" is brewing in Illinois during Trump's immigration crackdown.

She followed up Friday with an opinion that cites a mix of law and history, including the Federalist Papers, which were written in 1787-88 to support ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

"There has been no showing that the civil power has failed," Perry said. "The agitators who have violated the law by attacking federal authorities have been arrested. The courts are open, and the marshals are ready to see that any sentences of imprisonment are carried out. Resort to the military to execute the laws is not called for."

The judge said there was significant evidence that federal agents have been able to carry out their work, noting "huge increases in arrests and deportations."

The court order was a victory for Democratic officials who lead the city and state and who have called the deployments unnecessary and illegal.

The order is set to expire Oct. 23 at 11:59 p.m. Perry set an Oct. 22 hearing to determine if it should be extended for another 14 days. The federal government is appealing.

The 500 Guard members from Texas and Illinois were mostly based at a U.S. Army Reserve Center in Elwood, southwest of Chicago. A small number were sent to a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building in Broadview, the site where Durbin and Duckworth tried to visit.

Lt. Cmdr. Theresa Meadows, a spokeswoman for U.S. Northern Command, said soldiers were conducting planning and training in Illinois but no "operational activities," following the court order.

Deployment in Portland remains on hold

A federal appeals court heard arguments Thursday over whether Trump had the authority to take control of 200 Oregon Guard troops. The president had planned to deploy them in Portland, where there have

been small nightly protests outside an ICE building.

A judge last Sunday granted a temporary restraining order blocking the move. Trump had mobilized California troops for Portland just hours after the judge first blocked him from using Oregon's Guard.

## Immigration crackdown stirs unease ahead of this weekend's Chicago Marathon

By SARAH RAZA Associated Press

Michael Guidotti will have his driver's license on him when he runs the Chicago Marathon, just as he did during every training run since summer.

After the Trump administration escalated its immigration crackdown in the city, runners like Guidotti, 31, are worried they could become a target during Sunday's race.

"Just knowing that I do come from a Hispanic background and also that I am somewhat darker, and that these individuals do seem to be targeting people of that demographic as well," Guidotti said. "So it's just an extra precaution that I'm taking that I have my driver's license with me at all times."

Questions have been swirling for weeks over whether Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents might target the marathon, which draws thousands of runners from around the world each year. Reflecting the unease, event organizers sent an email to participants Wednesday that referred to an immigration "Know Your Rights" page on the city's website.

An ICE spokeswoman, Tanya Roman, said rumors that agents will be at the race are false.

"It's absolutely ridiculous to ascertain that ICE would conduct immigration enforcement to intentionally disrupt the Chicago marathon," she said in a statement. "These are the kind of rumors that fan the flames of dissent and result in unwarranted and dangerous riots like those in Portland, Chicago and Los Angeles."

When asked whether its officers might target the marathon, Customs and Border Protection, which has also been highly active during the immigration crackdown, was noncommittal, saying that people in the country legally need not worry.

Such assurances might not calm the fears of some participants, though.

Asked last week by a podcaster whether there would be "ICE enforcement" at the Super Bowl in February in California, Kristi Noem, who runs ICE's and CBP's parent agency, the Department of Homeland Security, said immigration officers would be "all over" the event.

DHS always heads the security effort at the Super Bowl, which is a bigger event. But Chicago has become a top target of the Trump administration, which has escalated immigration enforcement in the city through aggressive raids and tactics. Protesters at immigration facilities have been arrested, and President Donald Trump deployed the National Guard there to protect federal property and federal law enforcement, including ICE agents.

The Chicago Marathon is a major tourism draw for the city and one of the biggest races in the U.S., with 52,150 finishers last year. There were 15,000-plus international participants in 2024, according to race organizers, who didn't respond to requests for comment. Among foreign countries, Mexico was best represented, with 3,790 participants. It was followed by the U.K. (2,814), Canada (2,442) and Brazil (1,811).

The course winds through 29 neighborhoods, and more than a million people line the streets to support the runners.

Pilsen, a predominantly Latino neighborhood, is known for the energy that locals bring, with loud cheering and mariachi music blasting. But Enrique Rivera, who leads the neighborhood's Venados Running Club and will be watching this year's race, isn't expecting the same energy.

"I'm absolutely sure that people are going to stay home," he said. "There's street vendors that aren't out on the street doing their sales that impact their life. I'm sure they're also going to be able to cut off recreational activities like cheering on runners."

Rivera said his club is encouraging runners to stay informed, keep a list of important contacts on hand, and run in groups. Some club members have discussed what documentation they should bring.

"There is something in the air that says, 'No, it doesn't feel right,'" he said.



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 61 of 76

Critics say the immigration crackdown, which has swept up people who are legally living in the country, including U.S. citizens, is a sweeping government overreach, and that ICE engages in racial profiling.

Participant Amar Shah, 31, said that even though he was born and raised in the Chicago suburbs, he's worried that his Indian heritage could make him vulnerable.

"I shouldn't have any concerns from a legality standpoint, but I am a brown man. I have a beard," he said. "I could be seen as someone who fits the stereotype of folks who are being targeted right now."

Michael Rodriguez, the alderman for Chicago's 22nd ward, which is home to a large Latino community, said businesses are "hurting" amid concerns about ICE, and this year's race may bring less economic activity to the city than usual.

"I'm worried about those hundreds, maybe thousands of individuals from out of town, who come from internationally and throughout the nation to run," Rodriguez said. "The hotel rooms they stay in, the restaurants they dine in, the money they spend in our city is going to be negatively impacted."

"Some people might not come, others may choose not to spend their money," he said.

Mayor Brandon Johnson expressed confidence this week that the marathon would go off without a hitch, noting that roughly 3,000 runners from Mexico have signed up, "and I want them all to come."

"I feel strongly about our ability to be able to hold large-scale events, and the strategic security measures that we're putting in place are to ensure we continue to hold a reputation of hosting large-scale events," the mayor said.

## **María Corina Machado, a symbol of the political resistance in Venezuela and now Nobel winner**

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and JORGE RUEDA Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — María Corina Machado has long been the face of resistance to Venezuela's 26-year ruling party. Now, she may become a symbol of peace, too.

Machado, the Venezuelan opposition powerhouse who prompted millions of Venezuelans to reject President Nicolás Maduro in last year's election, on Friday was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work "to achieve a just and peaceful transition" of power in the South American country. The award also recognized the seasoned politician for being a "unifying figure" in the fractured opposition.

The award, however, is being granted at a time when opposition supporters are questioning her leadership, including her embrace of U.S. President Donald Trump's Venezuela policy, which has seen Venezuelan migrants sent to an infamous prison in Central America and deadly U.S. military strikes in the Caribbean.

Sandra Martínez, 32, called Machado a "great woman" as she waited at a bus stop in Caracas, but said she's not sure if the prize will have any effect on her country. "I don't know what can be done with that to improve the situation, but she deserves it," Martínez said.

Engineer-turned-politician

Machado, an industrial engineer and daughter of a steel magnate, began challenging the ruling party in 2004, when the non-governmental organization she co-founded, Súmate, promoted a referendum to recall then-President Hugo Chávez. The initiative failed, and Machado and other Súmate executives were charged with conspiracy.

She drew the anger of Chávez and his allies the following year for her Oval Office meeting with then-U.S. President George W. Bush. Chávez considered Bush an adversary.

Her full transformation into a politician would come in 2010, when she was elected to a seat in the National Assembly, receiving more votes than any aspiring lawmaker ever. It was from this position that she boldly interrupted Chávez as he addressed the legislature and called his expropriation of businesses theft.

"An eagle does not hunt a fly," he responded. The exchange is seared in voters' memories.

Presidential aspirations

Machado, 58, sought Venezuela's presidency for the first time in 2012, but she finished third in the primary race to be the presidential candidate for the Democratic Unity Roundtable.

The ruling party-controlled National Assembly ousted Machado in 2014 and, months later, the Comp-

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 62 of 76

troller General's Office barred her from public office for a year, citing an alleged omission on her asset declaration form. That same year, the government accused her of being involved in an alleged plot to kill Maduro, who succeeded Chávez after his 2013 death.

Machado, a free-market firebrand, denied the charge, calling it an attempt to silence her and opposition members who had called tens of thousands of people to the streets in anti-government protests that at times turned violent.

She kept a low profile for the next nine years, supporting some anti-Maduro initiatives and election boycotts and criticizing opposition efforts to negotiate with the government. By the time she announced a new bid for the presidency in 2023, her careful messaging had softened her image as an elitist hard-liner, allowing her to connect with skeptics on both sides.

She won the opposition's presidential primary with more than 90% of the vote, unifying the faction — as noted by the Nobel Prize committee. But ruling-party loyalists who control the country's judiciary kept her from appearing on the ballot, which forced her to throw her support behind former diplomat Edmundo González.

She hiked overpasses, walked highways, rode motorcycles, sought shelter in supporters' homes and saw her closest collaborators be arrested as she kept campaigning across Venezuela. She repeatedly joined thousands of supporters chanting in unison "Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!" in rallies and asked them to vote for González, a virtual unknown who had never run for office.

Brutal repression

González crushed Maduro by a more than two-to-one margin, according to voting machine records collected by the opposition and validated by international observers. Still, Venezuela's National Electoral Council, loyal to the ruling party, declared Maduro the winner of the July 28, 2024, contest.

People protested the results across the country, and the government responded with full force, arresting more than 2,000 people and accusing them of plotting to oust Maduro and sow chaos. Most were released over the following months, but the government simultaneously arrested dozens of people who actively participated in Machado's efforts last year.

Some of Machado's closest collaborators, including her campaign manager, avoided prison by sheltering for more than a year at a diplomatic compound in Caracas, where they remained until May, when they fled to the U.S.

González went into exile in Spain after he became the subject of an arrest warrant, and Machado has not been seen in public since January, when she joined people protesting Maduro's planned swearing-in ceremony. Her and González's inability to stop Maduro from taking the oath of office again led to a decline in support.

People's trust has eroded since then, primarily over Machado's unquestionable support for Trump, including the large U.S. maritime deployment in the Caribbean that has carried out deadly strikes off the coast of Venezuela. This has led to fresh divisions within the opposition, but she remains undeterred.

"I believe that we are very close to achieving, finally, freedom for our country and peace for the region," Machado said in a call with the Norwegian Nobel Institute, adding that "even though we face the most brutal violence, our society has resisted."

"I believe that the world will now understand how urgent it is to finally, you know, succeed," she said.

## What we know about the fraud case against New York attorney general Letitia James

BY PHILIP MARCELO and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York Attorney General Letitia James, a longtime political foe of President Donald Trump, was indicted by a federal grand jury Thursday on mortgage fraud charges.

It's a case she says is bogus, cooked up by the Justice Department to cater to Trump, who had pushed for the Democrat to be prosecuted for something and ousted a federal prosecutor who resisted bringing charges.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 63 of 76**

It's also a turnabout for James, who spent years investigating and suing the Republican president. She won a staggering judgment — later reversed on appeal — in a lawsuit alleging he defrauded banks by overstating the value of his real estate holdings on financial statements.

Here's what to know about the case against James:

The allegations

James paid \$137,000 in 2020 for a house in Norfolk, Virginia, where she has family.

Under the terms of her mortgage, the house was supposed to be primarily for her "personal use and enjoyment" for a period of one year, after which she was free to do whatever she liked with the property. The indictment brought by a federal prosecutor in Virginia said James never intended to live there and instead used it as an investment property, renting it to a family of three.

Prosecutors say that if James had been truthful with the bank about the home's intended use, she likely would have had to pay a slightly higher interest rate on her mortgage, costing her about \$19,000 over the life of the loan.

"No one is above the law," Lindsey Halligan, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, said in a statement. "The charges as alleged in this case represent intentional, criminal acts and tremendous breaches of the public's trust."

James' response

James and her lawyers haven't answered questions yet about the home purchase.

In a statement, though, James said the charges are "baseless" and decried the indictment as "nothing more than a continuation of the president's desperate weaponization of our justice system."

Trump pushed for months to charge James, posting on social media without citing any evidence that she's "guilty as hell" and telling reporters at the White House, "It looks to me like she's really guilty of something."

Last month, the Trump administration pushed out Erik Siebert, who led the U.S. attorney's office investigating James, after he resisted pressure to file charges. He was replaced with Halligan, a former White House aide and ex-Trump lawyer who had never previously served as a federal prosecutor.

What comes next

James hasn't been arrested. She is scheduled to make an initial appearance in a federal court in Virginia on Oct. 24.

It is likely to be months before the matter comes to trial, during which James is likely to remain free and can continue to serve as New York's attorney general. In that role, she represents the state in legal disputes, regulates charities and certain business matters, and is involved in prosecuting some crimes.

What happens if James is convicted or pleads guilty?

Legal experts say she would automatically relinquish her office.

Under New York law, a felony conviction or guilty plea by a public office holder triggers an immediate vacancy, according to Rachael Fauss, a senior policy advisor at Reinvent Albany, a good government group. The state Legislature would then pick someone to fill the role until a special election is called.

A Trump foe

James has been a needle in Trump's side for years.

In 2022, she filed a lawsuit claiming Trump and his companies had repeatedly lied to banks and others about his wealth as he built the real estate empire that launched him to stardom and the presidency.

A judge ultimately ruled that Trump had committed fraud, but the legal battle is still going.

Last month, an appeals court threw out the judge's financial penalty, which had grown to more than \$500 million with interest, but affirmed a lower-court finding that Trump committed fraud.

James is now asking the state's highest court to reinstate the penalty, while Trump, who has denied any wrongdoing, is seeking to have other non-monetary punishments lifted.

Since taking office in 2019, James has also brought dozens of lawsuits against the Trump administration seeking to block or reverse his policies.

Other Trump foes who face charges

James' indictment comes two weeks after former FBI Director James Comey was indicted on charges he lied to Congress.

The Justice Department also has been investigating mortgage-related allegations against Federal Reserve Board member Lisa Cook, another Black woman official, using the probe to demand her ouster.

And, the department has been investigating U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat whose lawyer has called the allegations "transparently false, stale, and long debunked."

## **What to know about the blast at a Tennessee explosives plant that claimed lives**

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press

First responders searched the rubble for missing people Friday after a powerful blast ripped through an explosives manufacturing plant in rural Tennessee, sending plumes of smoke into the air and shaking homes miles away.

Humphreys County Sheriff Chris Davis said 19 people were still missing and feared dead Friday afternoon. "This has probably been one of the most devastating situations that I've been on in my career," Davis said through tears.

Here is what to know as officials try to determine what caused the explosion:

Search ongoing

Rescuers had to wait for hours to begin their search because of the burning field of debris and risks of secondary explosions at the site southwest of Nashville, authorities said. The area is now secure and there is no longer a risk.

There are casualties and injuries related to the explosion, but the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency hasn't shared any numbers because the Department of Health hasn't confirmed them, spokesperson Kristin Coulter said by telephone.

It is currently unknown how many people were inside of the building at the time.

The strength of the blast at Accurate Energetic Systems was felt by residents in Lobelville, which is a 20-minute drive away.

"I thought the house had collapsed with me inside of it," Gentry Stover told The Associated Press by phone. "I live very close to Accurate and I realized about 30 seconds after I woke up that it had to have been that."

Davis said he expected that the investigation would go on for days to re-create what could have caused the explosion just before 8 a.m. He cautioned that there wouldn't be a "short term explanation."

Contracts with the military

Public records show that the company sold numerous types of weapons to the U.S. military and has been awarded military contracts to manufacture a variety of munitions and explosives.

The contracts, which were awarded largely by the Army and Navy, were for a variety of products that ranged from bulk explosives and landmines to small breaching charges used to get through doors.

Massive operation for research

The manufacturing plant sits on 1,300 acres in Bucksport, Tennessee, an unincorporated rural community approximately 60 miles (96 kilometers) southwest of Nashville. There are eight plant buildings that manufacture, store and research explosives for customers beyond just the military, including aerospace, oil and other commercial demolition industries.

The company also uses the sprawling campus to test explosives, according to its website, measuring the velocity of explosions as well as their impact on surrounding areas under varying environmental conditions.

The company's website noted that it "rigorously adheres to the stringent security standards" of Defense Department security and safety protocols.



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 65 of 76

## How Bill Pulte learned the art of the attack, from his own family to Letitia James

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Before Bill Pulte started targeting President Donald Trump's political enemies, he practiced on his own family.

He accused his grandfather's widow of insider trading. He was allegedly the driving force behind a website trashing an aunt as a "fake Christian." And he publicly blasted another relative as "a fat slob," "weirdo" and "grifter," according to court records from a bitter legal feud pursued by Pulte that ensnared PulteGroup, the multibillion-dollar homebuilding giant his grandfather founded.

In any other administration, that background could foreclose the possibility of landing a top government post. But in Trump's Washington, the attention-seeking and hyper-online millennial has unexpectedly become a major player. The latest measure of his influence came this week when New York Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat who angered Trump with her courtroom pursuits of him, was indicted on bank fraud charges following a protracted campaign by Pulte.

Pulte's official job is director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, where he's entrusted with the dull but critical task of ensuring the soundness of the mortgage market. He has instead transformed the position into a megaphone to denigrate Trump's perceived political foes. In addition to referring James to the Justice Department for investigation — which Pulte widely publicized — he has probed Sen. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, and Lisa Cook, a Federal Reserve governor appointed by President Joe Biden. Both are now under federal criminal investigation.

James, Schiff and Cook all deny any wrongdoing and say the investigations against them were politically motivated.

After The Associated Press sought comment for this story from Pulte last week, he excoriated the news organization.

"The AP, because we expose alleged Mortgage Fraudsters, is writing a hit piece, filled with falsehoods," Pulte, 37, wrote on X to his 3 million followers before deleting the post.

A White House spokesman said in a statement that "anyone who engages in criminal activity should be held accountable. No one is above the law. President Trump's only retribution is success and historic achievements for the American people."

Members of Pulte's family and company officials for PulteGroup did not respond to requests for comment.

### Pulte's rise to power

Pulte's rise to power and affluence was set in motion in the 1950s when his namesake grandfather William J. Pulte founded Pulte Homes, now known as PulteGroup, near Detroit. By the time Bill Pulte was born in 1988, the publicly traded company was one of the largest homebuilders in the U.S., and his grandfather was on his way to becoming a billionaire.

Pulte grew up in Florida and attended a private high school before enrolling at Northwestern University. When he lost the race for student body president in 2009, he quipped to The Daily Northwestern newspaper: "I guess I can go back to running my helicopter business." A year after graduating in 2010, he founded his own eponymous investment firm.

But for much of Pulte's adult life, his identity has been closely intertwined with his family's legacy company. It's been a rocky relationship.

In 2016, Pulte and his grandfather led a corporate shakeup that resulted in Pulte being appointed to the company's board while still in his 20s.

### Pulte becomes very online

Pulte has not been shy about his plans for power. He has portrayed himself as the head of his family and claimed to be the only true heir to the legacy of his grandfather, who died in 2018, according to court records. He took credit for the company shakeup they led together, predicting that it would "be studied for decades, and maybe, centuries."

His boasts and online conduct were an area of concern for company officials, according to court records.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 66 of 76**

In 2019, Pulte began building a massive following on Twitter by giving away money to strangers, actions that drew him a retweet from Trump and fawning press coverage.

However, he soon had a bitter falling out with a veteran's charity and amassed detractors who called him a charlatan. Company officials requested that Pulte give up his Twitter handle — @Pulte — and correct misperceptions that he ran the company, according to an internal corporate memo produced in litigation. The memo stated that "negativity toward the company has continued in synch with Bill's activities."

His dispute with the veteran's charity was one of several incidents related to Pulte's Twitter philanthropy that drew him unwanted attention.

In 2019, Pulte offered to help a Marine veteran seeking help to purchase an expensive service dog for his special needs son. When Pulte didn't follow through, the veteran was upset and made public his correspondence with Pulte.

Pulte accused the veteran on Twitter of exposing his personal information and suggested that he was part of a group of "scammers" targeting him. An attorney representing Pulte threatened legal action, demanding that the veteran delete his post and cease publishing "defamatory statements," according to a 2019 text message reviewed by AP. The attorney did not respond to a request for comment.

That same year, Pulte gave \$3,000 to a Twitter user whose account soon began making sexually explicit posts, including at least one that spoke approvingly of incest.

Pulte also fell for a scam that was orchestrated by a former business associate of Kanye West, the rapper now known as Ye, the Chicago Tribune later reported. Pulte ended up wiring the former associate \$250,000 that was premised, in part, on the associate falsely promising that Ye would provide financial and public support for Pulte's online philanthropy, court records show.

"Giving away \$250k of Kanye West's money here on Twitter Philanthropy," Pulte tweeted in July 2019.

Pulte got his money back and the former West associate was indicted on a federal wire fraud charge, though the case was later dropped.

Pulte's representatives declined to provide details about the extent of his charitable giving. In 2019, Pulte tweeted that he would "give away \$1 million dollars on Twitter" after reaching 1 million followers.

An archived copy of a spreadsheet that Pulte once made publicly available states that his Twitter philanthropy donated more than \$1 million, including \$474,000 given away the year he made his million-dollar pledge.

But he regularly solicited contributions from others and it's not clear from the data how much was given directly by Pulte. Team Pulte, a nonprofit he founded for his online charity, also collected contributions from others and gave away about \$400,000, according to tax filings made between 2020 and 2023, the most recent year that they are available for the organization.

Responding to questions from the AP, Pulte's agency described the coming story as a "hit piece" and asserted that "Mr. Pulte did give away \$1 million on Twitter."

Pulte's feud with company boils over

By 2020, company officials had lost patience with Pulte. When the Pulte family's equity stake dropped to a point where they were no longer guaranteed a board spot, company officials moved fast and booted the scion.

Pulte did not take it well. He sold his stock, accused his grandfather's widow of insider trading and blamed the CEO for damaging the company, records show.

The parties appeared to reach a détente nearly a year later when Pulte received a plaque and a letter of thanks, court records state. It was short lived.

A handful of anonymous Twitter accounts started to troll Pulte. The posts, many made as replies to Pulte's tweets, were not widely read and often deleted, according to court records.

"This Bill Pulte has nothing to do with Pulte Homes," one of the accounts tweeted in 2021. "He trades in his grandfather's legacy as if he had something to do with it."

Another post: "Pulte Family is kind of a mess. Money does that."

One of the handles on Twitter was "Ghost of Bill Pulte," a reference to Pulte's deceased grandfather.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 67 of 76**

That flip reference outraged Pulte.

He hired an investigative firm — and filed a defamation suit against Brandon Jones, a PulteGroup executive whom Pulte had previously blocked from receiving a promotion.

Jones, who was fired and admitted to operating the accounts, did not respond to requests for comment.

Pulte saw a wider-ranging conspiracy involving top PulteGroup executives, who he accused of participating in a “nefarious smear campaign” aimed at “stalking, harassing, and defaming” him.

Though his lawsuit was against Jones, his attorneys broadened their campaign, bombarding the company and its officials with subpoenas and deposition requests. Pulte solicited “whistleblower” tips and helped finance lawsuits brought by others.

His Twitter feed became a running commentary of case updates and grievances, including accusations that the former PulteGroup executive who trolled him was “a bag man” for the company’s CEO and would “not get away with attacking me and my grandpa! Believe me, we will get to the bottom of (this) harassment scheme and run down any of the conspirators!”

A judge rebuked Pulte and ordered him to stop posting comments that could intimidate witnesses. Even so, Pulte repeated the behavior during appearances on Fox Business Network, which led a company official to warn the network against allowing him to air “false grievances.”

His aggressive — and very public — campaign against the company concerned some family members.

The Pulte Family Charitable Foundation issued a statement in 2023 warning that Pulte’s comments “may suggest that he speaks on behalf of the entire Pulte family.”

In fact, the charity said, Pulte “does not represent, nor is he a spokesman for all members of the Pulte family, in any capacity.”

Pulte fired back, blasting his aunt — the charity’s president — as a “phony Catholic.” He alleged the aunt, Nancy Pulte Rickard, was working on behalf of PulteGroup’s CEO and was “petty, basically broke.” He also sought to depose her in the lawsuit.

Articles attacking her appeared on conservative news sites. A website popped up that called her a “Fake Christian” who was “misusing charity funds to smear her own family members” and suggested she was guilty of financial crimes.

Pulte Rickard did not reply to requests for comment. In court filings, her attorney’s described the attacks as part of a campaign of “degrading and threatening harassment” by her nephew.

Pulte’s step aunt — whom he called a “fat slob,” “weirdo” and “grifter” — alleged that Pulte himself was behind the site, according to a legal filing she submitted after Pulte tried to depose her.

Pulte’s representatives would not address whether he was behind the website.

“Mr. Pulte enjoys a great relationship with the majority of his wide family,” the FHFA said.

Trump chooses Pulte for administration job

Then the attacks abruptly ended. After Trump won the 2024 election, Pulte deleted thousands of social media posts and withdrew his defamation lawsuit several months later.

The moves coincided with a new cause: a job in the Trump administration.

Pulte, who along with his wife has donated about \$1 million to Trump’s political efforts, was confirmed by the Senate to his FHFA post in March.

Since taking the job, he’s helped spearhead Trump’s retribution campaign, focusing on potential instances of mortgage fraud by Trump’s rivals, which he often posts about rapid-fire on X. Meanwhile, he’s refused to comment on similar conduct by several members of Trump’s cabinet, as well as Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Trump ally.

After James’ indictment Thursday, he took to X for a victory lap, reposting commentary from conservative commentators who lauded him and the case he helped build.

“If you know of anyone who has committed mortgage fraud, please send any and all tips to [FraudTips@fhfa.gov](mailto:FraudTips@fhfa.gov),” Pulte posted.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 68 of 76

## Many unresolved questions remain as a ceasefire begins in Gaza

By SAMY MAGDY and LEE KEATH Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Bombardment stopped and Israeli troops pulled back in Gaza on Friday under a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. But will the agreement lead, as U.S. President Donald Trump proclaimed, to “a Strong, Durable, and Everlasting Peace”?

It took pressure on Israel and Hamas from the United States, Arab countries and Turkey, each saying it was time to end a two-year war that has devastated the Gaza Strip, killed tens of thousands of Palestinians, sparked other conflicts around the region and increasingly isolated Israel.

That push sealed an agreement on a first phase that is to free the remaining living Israeli hostages within days in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

But it left unanswered a long list of questions over what happens next.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage.

Israel wants to ensure that Hamas disarms. Hamas wants to ensure Israel pulls its troops completely out of Gaza and is not allowed to restart the war. At the same time, a postwar government for Gaza must be worked out to replace Hamas’ rule. Without that, reconstruction is unlikely, leaving Gaza’s more than 2 million people in continued misery.

With no trust between the sides, much relies on continued pressure from the U.S., Egypt, Qatar and Turkey. Any hitch in working out those intertwined issues could unravel everything and potentially lead to Israel resuming its campaign to destroy Hamas.

Here is what we know about the deal.

The first steps begin

The ceasefire took effect at noon Friday. The Israeli military said it had pulled back its troops to lines inside Gaza agreed on for the first day, withdrawing from much of Gaza City, the southern city of Khan Younis and other areas. Troops remain in most of the southern city of Rafah, towns of Gaza’s far north and the wide strip along Gaza’s border with Israel.

The military said Palestinians displaced to the south would be able to move back to their homes in the north. Thousands were filling roads heading north.

Israel has given the United Nations the green light by Israel to begin delivering scaled-up aid into Gaza starting Sunday, a U.N. official said. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet made public.

By Monday, Hamas is to begin releasing the remaining 48 hostages, around 20 of them believed to be alive. Israel will release around 2,000 Palestinians, including several hundred serving prison sentences and others seized from Gaza during the war.

Negotiations for the next phases would then begin.

Troop withdrawal

Hamas had long insisted it would not release its last hostages unless Israeli troops leave Gaza completely. After agreeing to free them first, Hamas says it is relying on guarantees from Trump that the full withdrawal will happen.

How long it will take — weeks, months, years — is unknown.

An initial 20-point plan issued by Trump last week called for Israel to maintain a narrow buffer zone within Gaza along their shared border, and Israel has also spoken of keeping hold of the Philadelphi corridor, a strip of land on Gaza’s border with Egypt.

Israel is unlikely to relinquish those areas unless Hamas disarms and the void left in running Gaza is filled by a body that Israel deems palatable.

Trump’s plan also called for an Arab-led international security force to move into Gaza, along with Palestinian police trained by Egypt and Jordan. It said Israeli forces would leave areas as those forces deploy.

It is not known whether that system will be followed or an alternative will be negotiated.

Disarmament

Hamas long refused to give up its weapons, saying it had a right to armed resistance until Israel’s oc-



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 69 of 76

cupation of Palestinian territories ends.

For Israel, disarmament is a key demand. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said its campaign will not end until Hamas' military capabilities are dismantled, including the network of tunnels built around the territory.

There are signs, however, that Hamas could agree to a "decommissioning" of its offensive weapons, handing them over to a joint Palestinian-Egyptian committee, according to the Arab officials with direct knowledge of the negotiations who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Future government

Israel has said it wants Gaza purged of Hamas influence. But it has also rejected giving any role to the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority or any arrangement that could lead to the creation of a Palestinian state.

Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007, has agreed to step down from governing the territory and hand over governance to a body of Palestinian technocrats.

What takes its place is uncertain.

Under Trump's plan, an international body will govern. The Council of Peace and Board of Peace have both been floated as names for the body.

It would hold most power while overseeing the administration of Palestinian technocrats running day-to-day affairs. It would also hold the commanding role of directing reconstruction in Gaza. Trump's initial 20-point plan called for former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to lead the body.

Hamas has so far not agreed, saying Gaza's government should be worked out among Palestinians.

The stakes

Israelis celebrated the agreement announced overnight after three days of talks in the Egyptian resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh. For much of the Israeli public, freeing the last of the hostages held for two years has been their top priority.

But Palestinians in Gaza were more uncertain. There was relief that the relentless bombardment and ground offensives may stop for a time and aid may flow in. But there was also skepticism and worry over how long any pause in fighting would last, whether hundreds of thousands will be able to return to their homes, and whether Gaza — its cities largely in ruins — will ever be rebuilt.

Many Palestinians fear Israel will take any breakdown in the talks as a chance to resume its assault. For months, Netanyahu and his hard-line allies have insisted they will keep long-term direct security control over Gaza and have spoken of pushing out its Palestinian population, ostensibly on a "voluntary" basis. In Gaza, many believe that remains Israel's objective.

Pressure from the U.S. and its allies — if it continues after hostages are out — could prevent Israel from relaunching a full-fledged war.

But there is another, murkier scenario.

If Hamas and Israel cannot reach a final deal or negotiations drag on inconclusively, Gaza could slide into an unstable limbo, with Israeli troops still holding parts of it and Hamas still active. In that case, Israel would be unlikely to allow significant reconstruction, leaving Gaza's population languishing in tent camps or shelters.

## MIT president says she 'cannot support' proposal to adopt Trump priorities for funding benefits

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said Friday she "cannot support" a White House proposal that asks MIT and eight other universities to adopt President Donald Trump's political agenda in exchange for favorable access to federal funding.

MIT is among the first to express forceful views either in favor of or against an agreement the White House billed as providing "multiple positive benefits," including "substantial and meaningful federal grants." Leaders of the University of Texas system said they were honored its flagship university in Austin was

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 70 of 76**

invited, but most other campuses have remained silent as they review the document.

In a letter to Trump administration officials, MIT President Sally Kornbluth said MIT disagrees with provisions of the proposal, including some that would limit free speech and the university's independence. She said it's inconsistent with MIT's belief that scientific funding should be based on merit alone.

"Therefore, with respect, we cannot support the proposed approach to addressing the issues facing higher education," Kornbluth said in a letter to Education Secretary Linda McMahon and White House officials.

The higher education compact circulated last week requires universities to make a wide range of commitments in line with Trump's political agenda on topics from admissions and women's sports to free speech and student discipline. The universities were invited to provide "limited, targeted feedback" by Oct. 20 and make a decision no later than Nov. 21.

Others that received the 10-page proposal are: Vanderbilt, the University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth College, the University of Southern California, the University of Arizona, Brown University and the University of Virginia. It was not clear how the schools were selected or why.

Colleges have faced mounting pressure to reject the proposal

University leaders face immense pressure to reject the compact amid opposition from students, faculty, free speech advocates and higher education groups. Leaders of some other universities have called it extortion. The mayor and city council in Tucson, home of the University of Arizona, formally opposed the compact, calling it an "unacceptable act of federal interference."

Even some conservatives have dismissed the compact as a bad approach. Frederick Hess, director of education policy at the American Enterprise Institute, called it "profoundly problematic" and said the government's requests are "ungrounded in law."

At the University of Virginia, officials invited campus feedback on the proposal this week. A message from university leaders said it would be "very difficult" to accept certain terms of the arrangement and said the decision will be guided by "principles of academic freedom and free inquiry."

Democrats in the Virginia Senate threatened to cut the university's funding if it signed the deal. In a letter to the university's leaders on Tuesday, top Democrats called the compact a trap and said the state would not "subsidize an institution that has ceded its independence to federal political control."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, issued a similar ultimatum to USC last week.

At Brown, which already struck an agreement with the White House in July to resolve a series of investigations, university president Christina H. Paxson said Friday she is seeking campus input to decide how or whether to respond to the new proposal.

The compact marks a new tactic to seek reforms

In its letter to universities, the administration said the compact would strengthen and renew the "mutually beneficial relationship" between universities and the government. That bond faces unprecedented strain as the White House cuts billions of dollars in research funding from campuses it accuses of antisemitism and liberal bias.

The compact is a proactive attempt at reform even as the government continues enforcement through other means, the letter said. The nine universities were invited to become "initial signatories."

Kornbluth's letter did not explicitly decline the compact but suggested that its terms are unworkable. Still, she said MIT is already aligned with some of the values outlined in the deal, including prioritizing merit in admissions and making college more affordable.

Kornbluth said MIT was the first to reinstate requirements for standardized admissions tests after the COVID-19 pandemic and admits students based on their talent, ideas and hard work. Incoming undergraduates whose families earn less than \$200,000 a year pay nothing for tuition, she added.

"We freely choose these values because they're right, and we live by them because they support our mission," Kornbluth wrote.

As part of the compact, the White House asked universities to freeze tuition for U.S. students for five years. Those with endowments exceeding \$2 million per undergraduate could not charge tuition at all for students pursuing "hard science" programs.

It asked colleges to require the SAT or ACT for all undergraduate applicants and to eliminate race, sex

and other characteristics from admissions decisions. Schools that sign on would also have to accept the government's binary definition of gender and apply it to campus bathrooms and sports teams.

Much of the compact centers on promoting conservative viewpoints. To make campuses a "vibrant marketplace of ideas" campuses would commit to taking steps including "transforming or abolishing institutional units that purposefully punish, belittle, and even spark violence against conservative ideas."

## **Some Palestinians pack up and move north toward their homes in Gaza after ceasefire goes into effect**

By ABDEL KAREEM HANA and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

WADI GAZA, Gaza Strip (AP) — Tens of thousands of Palestinians displaced by the war in Gaza started walking north Friday toward homes they were forced to flee — or what remains of them — after the Israeli military announced a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas had gone into effect.

Eager for the killings, displacement and destruction to stop, many Palestinians in Gaza were relieved to hear that Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire to the devastating two-year war. But it was mixed with pain from staggering losses and concern about what comes next.

"We packed our stuff as we may return home. But we are still suffering from the same struggles," said Jamal Mesbah, who was displaced from northern Gaza.

"There isn't much joy, but the ceasefire somewhat has eased the pain we feel psychologically from death and bloodshed, and our loved ones and relatives who suffered immensely in this war."

The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas went into effect in Gaza on Friday, the Israeli military said, hours after Israel's Cabinet approved a deal to pause the fighting and exchange the remaining hostages for Palestinian prisoners. It marks a key step toward ending the ruinous two-year war.

Still, the broader plan advanced by U.S. President Donald Trump includes many unanswered questions, including who will govern Gaza.

Israel's offensive in Gaza, launched in response to Hamas' deadly attack into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and caused vast destruction, displacement and suffering in Gaza. The war also brought famine to parts of the territory.

On Friday, a steady stream of people, the vast majority on foot, crammed onto a coastal road in the central Gaza Strip, heading north. Some carried backpacks and other belongings as they walked past tents overlooking the sea. Others sped by on bicycles and motorcycles. Horns sounded and some cars tried to weave through the crowds.

Ala Khandour said he no longer had a home to return to. Still, he wanted to go back north.

"I want to go and find a place to shelter in with my children," he said. "We wish to go back and find a place in a school or a camp to live there."

Some wondered how they could afford the trip back or if their homes were still standing. Others said they were not yet certain it was safe enough for them to immediately return.

"I will wait in Khan Younis until I am confident that all is safe for me and my family," said Rana Saleh, who fled her home in September.

Similarly, Mahmoud Sharkawy was waiting in the Nuseriat refugee camp in central Gaza.

"I am planning to return to Gaza City, but not now," said Sharkawy, who fled Gaza City in late August. "I will wait a few days to make sure it is safe to return."

The war began after Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage.

In Israel's ensuing offensive, more than 67,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and nearly 170,000 wounded, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants but says around half the deaths were women and children. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government, and the United Nations and many independent experts consider its figures to be the most reliable estimate of wartime casualties in Gaza.

On Friday, hundreds of Palestinians also tried to return to homes in Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis,

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 72 of 76

only to find wrecked buildings, rubble and destruction.

"There was nothing left, just a few clothes, pieces of wood, and pots," said Fatma Radwan who was displaced from eastern Khan Younis. There was destruction everywhere, she said, adding that efforts were ongoing to retrieve bodies from under the rubble.

For some, the destruction has meant having no choice but to stay where they are.

"We want the truce to last. This is what we are hoping for. Enough displacement," said Nawal Aboul Deeb. "Have some mercy on us. Have some mercy for all that we have witnessed."

## Fear and vigilance rise as attacks on houses of worship intensify worldwide

By DAVID CRARY, PETER SMITH and TIFFANY STANLEY Associated Press

Every week hundreds of millions of people around the world gather to worship in peace. But for some, there comes a day when deadly violence invades their sacred spaces and shatters that sense of sanctuary and safety.

It happened recently at a synagogue in England and two churches in the U.S. Before that, there were high-profile attacks at mosques in New Zealand, a synagogue in Pennsylvania and a Sikh temple in Wisconsin. This violence can intensify anxiety and outright fear among clergy and worshippers worldwide.

Security measures have been bolstered, congregants have been placed on alert, and yet the key question lingers: Can believers feel safe — and at peace — continuing to worship together?

The Oct. 2 attack on a synagogue in Manchester, England, left two congregants dead and, according to police, was carried out by a man who had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. Two days later, a mosque in an English coastal town was targeted with a suspected arson attack.

Following those two attacks, "there is real fear," said a Church of England bishop, the Right Rev. Toby Howarth. "People must feel safe in going to places of worship."

How to instill that feeling is a constant challenge. In Germany, in response to several attacks, many synagogues have been surrounded by barriers and guarded by heavily armed police. In the United States, most synagogues — and many non-Jewish houses of worship — employ layered security strategies. These can involve guards, cameras, and various systems for controlling access to events through ticketing, registration or other forms of vetting.

Seeking security without heightening anxiety

The deadliest attack on Jews in the United States occurred in October 2018, when a gunman killed 11 worshippers from three congregations at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue.

Eric Kroll, deputy director of community security at the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, said synagogues there had begun systemic security trainings before the attack.

Some of the training recommendations — such as keeping a phone on hand for emergencies even on the Sabbath, when observant Jews normally wouldn't use a phone — helped save lives during that attack, he said. The federation continues to evaluate attacks such as the one in Manchester to prepare for assailants' evolving tactics.

"The wounds still run deep here in Pittsburgh for a lot of people," said Kroll, adding that preparations help them to worship together confidently.

"It's so easy to talk about all these things and be frightened," he said. "But if you teach ways to respond to those things, it empowers people to go and live their lives."

A similar tone was sounded by Bishop Bonnie Perry, leader of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, in a letter to her congregations two days after a gunman killed four people inside The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Michigan's Grand Blanc Township on Sept. 29.

"Many of us feel grief, fear, and deep unease," Perry wrote. "It is natural to wonder whether the places where we pray and gather are safe."

She proceeded to detail a balanced approach to security, rejecting suggestions to lock church doors during worship but encouraging greater vigilance and preparedness, including formation of emergency



# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 73 of 76**

response teams at the diocese's churches.

"We do not want our churches to feel like fortresses; they are houses of prayer for every person," she wrote. "At the same time, love of neighbor includes readiness to act swiftly should danger appear. ... Our goal is not to shut people out but to keep everyone safe while maintaining the radical hospitality of the Gospel."

Differences over guns in church

While some Christian pastors in the U.S. encourage congregants to bring firearms to church as an extra security measure, numerous denominations and individual houses of worship forbid this. After the Grand Blanc attack, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirmed that it prohibits carrying firearms and other lethal weapons inside its meetinghouses and temples, except for current law enforcement officers.

Black churches in the U.S. have withstood a long history of violent attacks, from decades of church burnings and bombings to the murder of nine Bible study participants in 2015 at Mother Emanuel AME in Charleston, South Carolina. The perpetrator of that attack, now on death row, posted selfies with a Confederate flag to flaunt his racist rationale for shooting Black churchgoers.

A member of Metropolitan AME in Washington, D.C., Khaleelah Harris, 29, said the threat of violence is often on her mind.

"It can be difficult to be a part of a worship service, and you look around and five police officers are in the service because somebody just walked in, and they look a little suspicious. It shifts the atmosphere," said Harris, who is in the AME ordination process.

Her church won a lawsuit earlier this year against the Proud Boys, after the far-right group vandalized the church's property in 2020. The congregation has increased security, at one point paying \$20,000 per month.

It's a struggle to balance being a welcoming congregation with tightened security protocols, Harris said. "How does welcoming all and not being quote-unquote judgmental prevent someone from using their discernment or engaging security measures?"

A worldwide problem

In various forms, attacks on houses of worship have occurred through history. At present, attacks on individual houses of worship in places like the United States and Western Europe tend to draw the international spotlight more than attacks that are part of broader ongoing conflicts — such as Christian churches burned by Islamic militants in parts of Africa or the destruction of many mosques in Gaza through Israeli strikes mounted in its war against Hamas.

Attacks on mosques — usually blamed on Islamic militants with rival ideologies — have taken place in other Middle Eastern countries.

Egypt reeled in 2017 from the killing of more than 300 people in a militant attack on a mosque in Sinai frequented by Sufis, followers of a mystic movement within Islam. On March 4, 2022, an Afghan suicide bomber struck inside a Shiite mosque in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar, killing at more than 60 worshippers. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility.

Between those attacks was a day of horror in Christchurch, New Zealand, when a white supremacist gunman killed 51 worshippers at two mosques during Friday prayers in 2019. It prompted new laws banning an array of semiautomatic firearms and high-capacity magazines. They also prompted global changes to social media protocols after the gunman livestreamed his attack on Facebook.

During a wave of antisemitic incidents in Australia, a synagogue in Melbourne was firebombed in December 2024. Australian authorities have accused Iran of directing that attack.

Australia is among several countries, including South Africa and Britain, that have engaged with the U.S.-based Secure Community Network to share information regarding possible antisemitic threats, according to SCN's national director, Michael Masters. The network provides security advice and training to Jewish institutions across North America.

"We act more like Interpol than we'd like to," Masters told The Associated Press. "So many of these bad actors and their ideologies cross borders. So all of us have recognized that we are stronger when we work together."

## Next steps

In the United States, religious leaders are urging Congress to expand the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. It helps nonprofits and houses of worship pay for security system upgrades and emergency planning.

In Britain, after the recent Manchester attack, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said more police resources would be deployed at synagogues.

From both the Jewish and Muslim communities in Britain, there are calls for authorities and civic leaders to curtail antisemitic or anti-Muslim vitriol that might incite future attacks.

Dave Rich of the Community Security Trust, a charity providing security to the Jewish community, told the BBC, "There is an inability to recognize antisemitism or a reluctance to deal with incitement in ways that have just allowed it to grow."

"I think a lot of Jewish people will be saying OK, the sympathy is great, but where's the action?" Rich added.

Wajid Akhter, secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain, said expanded police deployment is only a partial answer.

"There must be a reckoning with the hate being stoked in our public discourse," he said. "The safety of British Muslims, and of all faith communities, depends on it."

## **New York Attorney General Letitia James charged in fraud case after pressure campaign by Trump**

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — New York Attorney General Letitia James was indicted Thursday in a mortgage fraud case that President Donald Trump urged his Justice Department to bring after vowing retribution against some of his biggest political enemies.

James, a Democrat who infuriated Trump after his first term with a lawsuit alleging that he built his business empire on lies about his wealth, was charged with bank fraud and making false statements to a financial institution in connection with a home purchase in Norfolk, Virginia, in 2020.

The top federal prosecutor for the Eastern District of Virginia, a former Trump aide, personally presented the case to the grand jury weeks after she was thrust into the role amid the administration's pressure to deliver charges.

The indictment, two weeks after a separate criminal case charging former FBI Director James Comey with lying to Congress, is the latest indication of the Trump administration's norm-busting determination to use the law enforcement powers of the Justice Department to pursue the president's political foes and public figures who once investigated him.

In a lengthy statement, James decried the indictment as "nothing more than a continuation of the president's desperate weaponization of our justice system."

"These charges are baseless, and the president's own public statements make clear that his only goal is political retribution at any cost. The president's actions are a grave violation of our Constitutional order and have drawn sharp criticism from members of both parties," she added.

Both the Comey and James cases followed a strikingly unconventional path toward indictment. The Trump administration last month pushed out Erik Siebert, the veteran prosecutor who had overseen both investigations for months and had resisted pressure to file charges, and replaced him with Lindsey Halligan, a White House aide who has worked as lawyer for Trump but had never previously served as a federal prosecutor.

Halligan presented the James case to the grand jury herself, as she did in the case against Comey, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. The person was not authorized to discuss the matter by name and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

James called the decision to fire Siebert and replace him with a prosecutor who is "blindly loyal" to the president "antithetical to the bedrock principles of our country," and she said she stood by her investigation of Trump and his company as having been "based on the facts and evidence — not politics."

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 75 of 76**

Abbe Lowell, James' lawyer and a prominent attorney representing multiple Trump targets, said James "flatly and forcefully denies these charges." James is scheduled to make an initial appearance in the federal court in Norfolk, Virginia, on Oct. 24.

"We are deeply concerned that this case is driven by President Trump's desire for revenge," Lowell said in a statement. "When a President can publicly direct charges to be filed against someone — when it was reported that career attorneys concluded none were warranted -- it marks a serious attack on the rule of law. We will fight these charges in every process allowed in the law."

James, 66, has been attorney general since 2019 after becoming the first Black woman to be elected to statewide office in New York. She cruised to reelection in 2022 after abandoning a short-lived run for governor.

The indictment pertains to James' purchase of a modest house in Norfolk, where she has family. During the sale, she signed a standard document called a "second home rider" in which she agreed to keep the property primarily for her "personal use and enjoyment for at least one year," unless the lender agreed otherwise.

Rather than using the home as a second residence, the indictment alleges, James rented it out to a family of three. According to the indictment, the misrepresentation allowed James to obtain favorable loan terms not available for investment properties.

In a post on X shortly after the indictment was handed up, Attorney General Pam Bondi wrote, "One tier of justice for all Americans."

"No one is above the law," Halligan, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, said in a statement. "The charges as alleged in this case represent intentional, criminal acts and tremendous breaches of the public's trust. The facts and the law in this case are clear, and we will continue following them to ensure that justice is served."

Trump has been advocating charging James for months, posting on social media without citing any evidence that she's "guilty as hell" and telling reporters at the White House, "It looks to me like she's really guilty of something, but I really don't know."

The Justice Department has also been investigating mortgage-related allegations against Federal Reserve Board member Lisa Cook, using the probe to demand her ouster, and Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., whose lawyer called the allegations against him "transparently false, stale, and long debunked."

But James is a particularly personal target. As attorney general, she sued the Republican president and his administration dozens of times. Last year, she won a staggering judgment against Trump and his companies in a lawsuit alleging he defrauded banks by overstating the value of his real estate holdings on financial statements.

An appeals court overturned the fine, which had ballooned to more than \$500 million with interest, but upheld a lower court's finding that Trump had committed fraud.

The indictment comes a day after Comey made his first court appearance in his case, accusing him of lying to Congress in 2020. Comey's lawyer told the judge that the defense plans to push to have the case dismissed ahead of trial, arguing that it is a vindictive prosecution brought at the direction of the president.

## **Today in History: October 11, Anita Hill testifies at Clarence Thomas hearings**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Oct. 11, the 284th day of 2025. There are 81 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 11, 1991, Anita Hill accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee; Thomas denounced the proceedings as a "high-tech lynching" and was confirmed on Oct. 15 by a 52-48 vote.

Also on this date:

In 1906, the San Francisco Board of Education ordered the city's Asian students segregated into their own

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 129 ~ 76 of 76**

school. (The order was later rescinded at the behest of President Theodore Roosevelt, who in exchange promised to curb future Japanese immigration to the United States.)

In 1968, Apollo 7, the first crewed flight of the Apollo program, was launched with astronauts Walter Schirra Jr., Donn F. Eisele and R. Walter Cunningham aboard.

In 1984, Challenger astronaut Kathryn D. Sullivan became the first American woman to walk in space as she and fellow Mission Specialist David C. Leestma spent 3 1/2 hours outside the shuttle.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev opened two days of talks in Reykjavik, Iceland, concerning arms control and human rights.

In 1987, the AIDS Memorial Quilt was first displayed during the Second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights on the National Mall.

In 2002, former President Jimmy Carter won the Nobel Peace Prize for his and The Carter Center's work to resolve international conflicts and advocate for human rights.

In 2017, the Boy Scouts of America announced that it would admit girls into the Cub Scouts starting the following year and establish a new program for older girls based on the Boy Scout curriculum.

In 2021, Jon Gruden resigned as coach of the Las Vegas Raiders following reports about messages he wrote years earlier that used offensive terms to refer to Blacks, gays and women; Gruden later filed a lawsuit, still pending, against the NFL and Commissioner Roger Goodell, alleging a "malicious and orchestrated campaign" to destroy his career.

In 2024, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Nihon Hidankyo, a Japanese organization of survivors of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II, for its activism against nuclear weapons.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry is 98. Actor Amitabh Bachchan is 83. Singer Daryl Hall (Hall and Oates) is 79. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Washington, is 75. Actor David Morse is 72. Football Hall of Famer Steve Young is 64. Actor Joan Cusack is 63. Actor Jane Krakowski is 57. Rapper MC Lyte is 55. Actor Emily Deschanel is 49. Golfer Michelle Wie is 36. Rapper Cardi B is 33.