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Friday, Oct. 24

Senior Menu: Parmesan chicken, creamy noodles, California blend, fruit cocktail.
School Breakfast: Egg wraps.
School Lunch: Cheese pizza, green beans.
Volleyball at Redfield: (Aux. Gym: 7th-5, 8th-6; Greeno Gym: C-5, JV-6, V-7:15)

Saturday, Oct. 25

State Cross Country Meet at Huron.

Sunday, Oct. 26

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School 10:15 a.m.; Choir 6 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., and Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.;



at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

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

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

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

4th-6th GBB hosts Britton-Hecla, 2 p.m.

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

5th Grade GBB Practice, 4 p.m.

2nd Grade GBB Practice, 4 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 27

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, potluck at noon.

4th Grade GBB Practice, 4 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Faulkton: (JV-6, V-7:15)

Groton Daily Independent
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1440

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

Courtside Crime Ring

Portland Trail Blazers coach Chauncey Billups and Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier were among over 30 people arrested yesterday as part of two multimillion-dollar gambling schemes.

Federal prosecutors charged both men with wire fraud conspiracy and money laundering. Billups allegedly conspired with La Cosa Nostra—the five-family crime network known as the Mafia—to fix high-stakes poker games. He allegedly did so using X-ray tables, premarked cards, and hidden cameras. Rozier is accused of coordinating gameplay decisions (like leaving a game early) to rig sports bets. Both men were placed on leave yesterday, days into the 2025-26 season.

Separately, collegiate athletes and team staff will be allowed to bet on professional sports beginning next month. The rule change and federal indictments come as the American sports betting industry posted a record \$13.71B in revenue last year, and 43% of Americans say legal sports betting is bad for society, up 9% from 2022.

Binance Founder Pardoned

President Donald Trump pardoned Binance cofounder and former CEO Changpeng “CZ” Zhao yesterday. The move clears a path for one of the world’s richest men (valued at over \$80B) to regain control of his company.

Binance is the world’s leading cryptocurrency exchange, processing over one-third of all digital currency transactions. In November 2023, Zhao pleaded guilty to money laundering charges after failing to prevent terrorist organizations—including al-Qaida and Hamas—from using his platform. As part of a \$4.3B plea deal, Zhao stepped down as CEO and served four months in a California prison. Today, the billionaire lives in the United Arab Emirates, where he has retained a majority stake in Binance.

The move comes two months after The Wall Street Journal reported Binance struck a deal to promote digital coins from World Liberty Financial, a cryptocurrency startup cofounded by Trump and his sons.

World Series Begins

The Los Angeles Dodgers will take on the Toronto Blue Jays tonight in Game 1 of the World Series. The Dodgers seek to become the first team to win back-to-back titles since the New York Yankees accomplished the feat from 1998 to 2000.

The Blue Jays return to the Fall Classic for the first time since 1993 after overcoming a 3-2 deficit to defeat the Seattle Mariners in seven games. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. powered Toronto’s offense with six home runs in the postseason, tying the Blue Jays’ franchise postseason home run record. Across the diamond, Los Angeles arrives with momentum, having swept the Milwaukee Brewers last weekend. Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani had a historic Game 4 performance, notching 10 strikeouts while blasting three home runs in what some have called the greatest playoff performance.

Game 1 is tonight at the recently renovated Rogers Centre in Toronto (8 pm ET, Fox).

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

King Charles III and Pope Leo XIV pray together in the first joint service between Church of England and Catholic Church leaders in 500 years.

Broadway's musicians union reaches tentative labor deal with commercial producers, averting strike that threatened to halt 23 shows.

"Stranger Things" series finale to premiere on Netflix and over 350 movie theaters Dec. 31 to Jan. 1, marking first Netflix series theatrical release.

Athletics Integrity Unit bans women's marathon world record-holder Ruth Chepngetich from competing for three years after positive doping test.

Science & Technology

Google Earth expands artificial intelligence features, enhancing ability to identify infrastructure and communities at risk from severe weather.

Two Florida coral reef species deemed functionally extinct after 2023 heat wave.

Paleontologists unearth well-preserved dinosaur remains, mummified by microorganisms for over 66 million years.

Researchers discover Alzheimer's disease disrupts the circadian rhythms of plaque-clearing brain cells, suggesting correcting these rhythms as potential Alzheimer's treatment.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.6%, Dow +0.3%, Nasdaq +0.9%) as traders await release of delayed September US inflation report today.

US existing home sales rise 1.5% month-over-month in September to seven-month high; median home price of \$415,200 is up 2.1% from a year ago and the highest price for any September on record.

Average US 30-year fixed mortgage rate falls to lowest level in more than a year.

EV-maker Rivian to cut over 600 jobs, roughly 4% of workforce.

Apple loses UK class-action lawsuit over excessive fees charged to app developers.

Politics & World Affairs

Senate votes down competing bills to pay active-duty military members, essential workers amid standoff over federal government shutdown.

President Donald Trump says he will back off plans to deploy the National Guard to San Francisco after speaking with tech leaders, including CEOs of Nvidia, Salesforce.

Sudan's military intercepts drone attack on main international airport from Rapid Support Forces; the paramilitary group targeted Khartoum International Airport one day after it reopened to passenger flights.

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Clark-Willow Lake Eliminates Groton Area 35–0 in First-Round Playoff

CLARK — The Clark-Willow Lake Cyclones opened the Class 11B football playoffs Thursday night with a decisive 35–0 win over the Groton Area Tigers, ending Groton's season with a 3–6 record.

The Cyclones controlled the early momentum, scoring on their opening possession when Joey Reis capped a methodical drive with a 7-yard touchdown run. Emerson Larson added the two-point conversion for an 8–0 lead.

Groton responded with an impressive march of its own. Quarterback Asher Johnson connected with Keegen Tracy, and both Keegen and Anthony Tracy moved the chains with key runs. The Tigers reached the Clark-Willow Lake 1-yard line before a costly fumble changed everything — Lincoln Riedburn picked up the loose ball and sprinted 79 yards for a defensive touchdown. Jacob Steen ran in the conversion to make it 16–0 with 1:44 left in the first quarter.

Clark-Willow Lake added to its lead in the second quarter when Talen Huber scored on a 1-yard run. The pass attempt for the conversion failed, giving the Cyclones a 22–0 lead at halftime.

Halftime Reflections — Tom Woods on Football and Legacy

At the break, Tiger statistician Tom Woods joined the GDI broadcast crew to deliver his halftime update — a blend of stats, storytelling, and perspective that has become a trademark of Groton broadcasts.

"Even though we're down 22–0, our Tigers have done really, really well," Woods said. "We moved the ball, and that defensive touchdown was just a tough break. Because it was a pass behind the line, it goes down as a fumble, and they took it 79 yards the other way. That's football — one bounce can change the whole game."

He reviewed halftime numbers showing Groton with seven first downs, 49 rushing yards, and 52 passing yards, praising Johnson's poise under pressure and Tracy's hands on the edge.

But as always, Woods brought the focus back to the broader story.

"You know, folks, life's about the stories we make," Woods said. "And they only live on if we tell them. That's why I love looking through those old papers — because those stories remind us who we are."

He noted that Thursday's game marked the 75th meeting between Groton and Clark-Willow Lake, a rivalry that dates back to 1924.

"It's only the second time in history these two have met twice in one season," Woods said. "Our old rivalry's been played in sunshine, snow, and mud, and it's always been about pride — kids giving everything for their towns."

Woods also reflected on the connection between past and present players and the importance of preserving Groton's history.

"I had a gentleman tell me about his dad playing for Coach Perry W. Doney back in the 1930s — the man this field was named after," Woods said. "Coach Doney won 75 percent of his games over five years. You hear that, and it gives you chills, because those stories still mean something today."

Before signing off, Woods left listeners with one of his familiar reminders:

"We're down 22–0, but these are our kids, and we're going to cheer for them until the very end. Keep telling the good stories about life. Go Tigers."

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The final huddle for the 2025 Groton Area Football Team.

Second Half — Tigers Keep Fighting

The Tigers opened the third quarter with renewed determination, driving deep into Cyclone territory. Johnson, Schelle, and Tracy each contributed first downs, and Groton advanced to the Clark 10-yard line before being stopped on fourth down.

Clark-Willow Lake punted for the first time on its next drive, but the Tigers' next series ended with a punt as well. The Cyclones took over near midfield and continued to control the clock with their balanced rushing attack, carrying a 22-0 lead into the final quarter.

Early in the fourth, Ernie Garcia finished off a steady drive with a 2-yard touchdown run. The extra point attempt hit the upright, keeping the score 28-0 with 10:27 remaining.

Groton kept fighting, picking up another first down on their next possession before turning it over on downs. The Cyclones later added one final score — a 30-yard touchdown pass from Kaden Wookey to Jackson Stormo with 1:41 left in the game. Levi Atkins tacked on the PAT for the final margin of 35-0.

Despite the loss, the Tigers continued to play hard through the final whistle, earning praise from both their coach and the Groton faithful.

Coach Wanner Reflects on the Season

After the game, Head Coach Shaun Wanner spoke about his team's effort, attitude, and growth throughout the season.

"We had two nice drives in the first half; they just made plays and we made a couple mistakes," Wanner said. "That's kind of been our year — needing a bit more consistency. But I'm proud of the kids. They never quit and they played hard."

He credited the team's leadership and work ethic, especially among the senior class and Langford Area players who joined the co-op.

"Those Langford kids were always on the bus, never complained, always showed up ready to work," Wanner said. "That's what this program is about — commitment and attitude."

Wanner said this group of seniors helped establish a positive culture for future Tigers.

"This senior class has had success in basketball, track, wrestling — they've set the tone," he said. "It's not just about football; it's about how they carry themselves in everything they do."

He also shared a perspective that extends beyond the field.

"Life's going to be tougher than winning or losing football games," Wanner said. "But how these kids handled adversity this season — that's what will serve them later in life."

Wanner finished by tipping his cap to Clark-Willow Lake.

"They're a good football team," he said. "They've got a lot of experience and talent back from last year's

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quarterfinal run. We had our chances — if one of those drives finishes in the end zone, it's a much different ballgame."

Game Summary

Groton Area Tigers — 12 first downs; 29 carries for 76 yards; 10-of-19 passing for 129 yards.

Asher Johnson: 18 carries for 58 yards; 10-of-19 passing for 129 yards

Keegen Tracy: 8 receptions for 110 yards

Anthony Tracy: 1 reception for 9 yards

Ryder Schelle: 1 reception for 10 yards

Defensive leaders: Tucker Hardy (10 tackles), Logan Warrington (8), Connor Glines (6), Gavin England (6), Ryder Johnson (4 + INT)

Clark-Willow Lake Cyclones — 18 first downs; 35 carries for 164 yards; 9-of-15 passing for 101 yards and one touchdown.

Jacob Steen: 12 carries for 81 yards

Emerson Larson: 10 carries for 47 yards

Jackson Stormo: 1 catch for 30 yards and a touchdown

Ernie Garcia: 2 catches for 26 yards, 1 rushing TD

Lincoln Riedburn: 3 catches for 24 yards; 79-yard fumble return TD

Talen Huber: 2 catches for 24 yards, 1 rushing TD

Defensive leader: Michael Severson (7 tackles)

The Cyclones improved to 8–1 and will host Winner next Thursday in the Class 11B quarterfinals. The Tigers close their season at 3–6, having shown steady growth and resilience throughout the fall.



A good crowd was on hand for the football game at Clark Thursday night.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bary Keith at Harr Motors, BaseKamp Lodge, Bierman Farm Service, Dacotah Bank, Doug Abeln Seed Company, Farmers Union Co-op, Greg Johnson Construction, Groton Ag Solutions, Groton American Legion, Groton Dairy Queen, Groton Ford, Hanlon Brothers, Harry Implement, John Sieh Agency, Ken's Food Fair, Lori's Pharmacy, Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc., Poet, Professional Management Services, Rix Farms/R&M Farms, S & S Lumber, Spanier Harvesting & Trucking and The MeatHouse. Justin Olson provided the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel ran the technology.

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State Minimum Wage to Increase Jan. 1

PIERRE, S.D. – The state minimum wage for non-tipped employees will increase from \$11.50/hour to \$11.85/hour effective Jan. 1, 2026.

The minimum wage is adjusted annually based on increases in the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index published by the U.S. Department of Labor.

South Dakota adjusts its minimum wage annually as established by SDCL 60-11-3.2, a law enacted by the state legislature and effective since Jan. 1, 2016.

The hourly minimum wage for tipped employees will be \$5.925/hour, effective Jan. 1, 2026, half the minimum wage for non-tipped employees. Wages and tips combined must equal at least the minimum wage.



GT on **Varsity Volleyball**
Groton Area at Redfield
Fri., Oct. 24
7:00 p.m.

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE
YouTube
A production of the
Groton Daily Independent
For more info: GDILIVE.COM

The advertisement features a black background with a large yellow and white 'GT' logo on the left. To the right of the logo is the text 'Varsity Volleyball' in white, followed by 'Groton Area at Redfield' and 'Fri., Oct. 24 7:00 p.m.' in white. A blue and white bird logo is in the top right corner. In the bottom left, it says 'Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD'. In the bottom center, there is a red 'GDILIVE' logo, a YouTube icon, and the text 'A production of the Groton Daily Independent'. At the bottom, it says 'For more info: GDILIVE.COM'. On the right side, there is a detailed illustration of a tiger's head in orange and white.



Fact brief: Has SD ever held a vote to eliminate daylight saving time?

by Michael Klinski
investigative reporter
michael.klinski@sdnewswatch.org

Yes.

South Dakota voters shot down an attempt to eliminate daylight saving time in a referendum in 1968, with 59% voting against the measure.

Two states – Hawaii and Arizona – observe standard time year-round. Nineteen states have voted to permanently observe daylight saving time year-round, but federal law only allows for standard time to be permanent.

South Dakota state Rep. Carl Perry, R-Aberdeen, introduced legislation to permanently end daylight saving time in the state in 2025, but a committee rejected the plan 8-1.

Supporters of the proposal said it would improve sleep, health, public safety and avoid students having to adjust to the new time and losing focus at school.

Rep. John Sjaarda, R-Valley Springs, opposed the plan, saying daylight saving time is better for farmers.

Daylight saving time this year, where clocks “fall back” an hour to standard time, ends on Nov. 2.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

American ranchers hit with 'gut punch' as Trump follows through on Argentina beef import pledge

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR-OCTOBER 23, 2025 5:51 PM

Two days after a U.S. senator from South Dakota said he was encouraged by the desire of President Donald Trump to "do right" by American ranchers, Trump outraged many of them by rolling out a policy to import more beef from Argentina.

A White House official told Reuters on Thursday that the Trump administration will quadruple the amount of beef that can be imported from Argentina at a lower tariff rate.

Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, said in response to a reporter's question at a White House briefing Thursday that Trump "loves our ranchers and he also loves American consumers, and he wants to do right by both."

"So the immediate solution to the problem of the rising cost of beef — the president wants to bring that down — is we have to increase our supply, and so that's what he's doing with respect to these imports," Leavitt said.

The policy announcement came amid a sudden and rapidly escalating feud between Trump and ranchers — many of whom are Trump supporters — after Trump said Sunday that buying more Argentinian beef would "bring our beef prices down." The average price of ground chuck is up by more than \$1 per pound so far this year.

U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, issued a statement Tuesday that he'd met with the president and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and came away "encouraged by the desire of President Trump and Secretary Rollins to do right by the American producer."

"We agree that we need an America First game plan that prioritizes American ranchers," Rounds said at the time.

Wednesday, as criticism mounted against Trump in cattle country, the president posted on social media that "Cattle Ranchers, who I love, don't understand that the only reason they are doing so well, for the first time in decades, is because I put Tariffs on cattle coming into the United States, including a 50% Tariff on Brazil," adding "It would be nice if they would understand that."

Thursday, after the news broke that Trump was following through on his suggestion to import more Argentinian beef, Rounds' office did not offer a comment and told South Dakota Searchlight he was unavailable for an interview.

Cattle industry representative calls action 'ludicrous'

Ranchers and their trade-industry representatives in South Dakota, which has more than 3 million cattle and gave Trump 63% support in the last election, did not hold back.

Craig Bieber, vice president of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, said the messaging from Trump landed hard.

"This has all been a bit of a gut punch to producers. I mean, I really feel like producers are shocked because we've supported him consistently," Bieber said. "We finally got prices that we can make some headway on, and it just seems ludicrous that President Trump thinks that now that we're finally at good prices, he needs to do something about it."

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, and seven of his House Republican colleagues sent a letter to Trump on Wednesday, urging the administration to ensure that any future trade decisions are made with "full transparency, sound science, and a firm commitment to the U.S. cattle industry."

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"I understand the president's efforts to strengthen trade and keep food affordable, but those efforts should not undermine the farmers and ranchers who put dinner on our tables," Johnson said in a statement at the time.

Thursday, Johnson's office sent Searchlight an updated statement: "I've been public about my concerns with this plan. The best way to lower prices at the meat counter is through more American beef, not more Argentinian beef."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, said Thursday that he is concerned and wants a say in how the import policy is implemented.

"We're paying close attention to it, and we've been in touch with the White House, Department of Agriculture, U.S. trade rep on all this stuff, trying to figure out where it's headed," Thune told reporters, according to Reuters.

'Suite of actions' welcomed, but seen as insufficient

In addition to Trump's social media post Wednesday, the White House announced what it called "a suite of actions to strengthen the American beef industry." They include boosting access to federal grazing lands, expanding indemnity payments for livestock lost to predators, strengthening "Product of USA" labeling, increasing funding and loans for small meat processors, reducing inspection fees, encouraging schools to buy locally raised beef, and working to open additional export markets.

Rancher and South Dakota state Rep. Liz May, R-Kyle, said the proposals will help, but won't solve all the problems in the cattle industry.

"You can nibble around the edges, or you can go to the big issue: breaking up the monopoly structure that lets meatpackers dictate markets," she said. "Restore true market competition."

May said it's simple: "Enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act and dust off the Sherman and Clayton Antitrust Acts." The first law is designed to prevent unfair, deceptive and anti-competitive practices in the livestock and meatpacking industries, and the latter are intended to prevent monopolistic practices.

"Do that and the rest will take care of itself," May said.

Amanda Radke, a rancher near Mitchell and co-owner of Radke Cattle Co., made similar observations while saying she is excited about a number of the Trump administration's "suite of actions" to strengthen the beef industry.

"We have a packer monopoly where 85% of our beef supply is held captive by four major players, two that are foreign-owned," she said. "Ranchers don't want a handout — they just want a free and fair market."

Packer concentration, as many ranchers describe it, has worsened in recent decades. In 1980, the top four beef packers accounted for about 35% of cattle purchases.

May, Radke and others in the cattle industry have said greater imports of beef from Argentina are unlikely to push down retail prices.

"The packers will benefit from this, not consumers," May said.

Parade-area rancher and Democratic former state lawmaker Oren Lesmeister said Trump's comments on social media show an ignorance of cattle industry economics.

Lesmeister said prices are high because cattle numbers have declined due to droughts, ranchers aging out of the business and other factors. The Agriculture Department's own Wednesday announcement said the national herd is at a 75-year low while consumer demand for beef has grown 9% over the past decade.

Lesmeister said he hopes ranchers take the moment to reflect and see that it's Democratic politicians working to break up monopolies, not Trump.

Lesmeister also said an unpredictable president who seems indifferent to the effects of his words on markets "makes it really tough to operate." He said beef prices have traditionally been influenced by weather, production and the export market.

"Now, it doesn't matter. It's, 'What's the president going to say tomorrow?'" Lesmeister said.

Soybean farmers also angry about Argentina aid

Ranchers aren't the only members of the agriculture community upset with Trump's efforts to help Argentina.

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Trump has praised Argentina's Libertarian president, Javier Milei, including at Mar-a-Lago last year and during a White House meeting this month. Trump has also pledged \$20 billion worth of aid to bolster the country's collapsing currency and has discussed increasing the figure to \$40 billion.

Meanwhile, Argentina and the U.S. are rival soybean producers, and Argentina is reportedly increasing its soybean exports to China while that country boycotts U.S. soybean purchases in retaliation for Trump-imposed tariffs.

National Farmers Union President Rob Larew said the Trump administration was already hurting American agricultural producers while helping Argentinians.

"The last thing we need is to reward them by importing more of their beef," Larew said in a statement.

Shauneen Miranda of States Newsroom's D.C. Bureau contributed to this report.

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

Aberdeen-area couple sue carbon pipeline company for trespassing

New lawsuit says surveys should've waited until state Supreme Court ruled in previous landowner lawsuit

BY: JOHN HULT-OCTOBER 23, 2025 5:46 PM

A South Dakota couple want an Iowa carbon pipeline company to pay them for surveying their land against their will.

Jared and Tara Bossly, of rural Aberdeen, filed a trespassing lawsuit this week in Brown County against Summit Carbon Solutions and a handful of affiliated companies they say acted as agents of the company.

That Iowa-based company hopes to build a multi-state underground pipeline to collect carbon dioxide from ethanol plants for transport and sequestration. Fierce opposition to the project by some South Dakota landowners helped spur the ballot box repeal of a law seen as too friendly to pipeline companies in 2024 and to the passage of a law barring the use of eminent domain by carbon pipeline companies this year. Summit has also been denied a permit by South Dakota's Public Utilities Commission.

Eminent domain is the right to access private property for projects that benefit the public, with compensation determined by a court.

The Bossly family, whose land was included in Summit's original pipeline path, have been vocal opponents of Summit since 2022. The family was among several to sue Summit in an attempt to block it from using eminent domain to survey land or use it for the pipeline project.

The landowners won at the South Dakota Supreme Court level in August of 2023.

Two months before that, however, Summit arrived at the Bossly property to survey it. At that point, a circuit court judge had twice issued rulings allowing such surveys to take place, but the landowners had an appeal pending before the state's high court.

In the Bosslys' new lawsuit, the family says Summit's actions on the day of the survey amounted to trespass because the company knew of the pending appeal.

The lawsuit says Jared Bossly was a "prisoner on his own land" as the surveying took place in June of 2023, because private security guards and sheriff's deputies prevented him from being within 300 feet of the surveyors.

"I would never want anyone else to feel that way on their own land," Bossly said in a press release on the lawsuit. "We are bringing this case in hopes a Brown County jury will do justice by finding Summit and the other defendants liable for what they did."

The lawsuit seeks monetary damages for the June 2023 surveying, for what the case says was permanent property damage from drilling and surveying. The Bosslys are alleging the company trespassed, acted as a nuisance, and was negligent in training its employees.

The Bosslys are also seeking damages based on a visit to the Bossly farm in May of 2023, a day on

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which they say company representatives unlawfully entered an outbuilding while Jared Bossly was away and frightened his wife Tara Bossly by hollering into their house while she was inside taking a shower.

A representative from Summit said the company does not comment on pending litigation.

Ed Fischbach, another vocal pipeline opponent who lives near the Bosslys, arrived at the Bossly farm before Jared on the day of the June survey. He said he hopes the case will "send the message that what Summit has done is wrong."

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

South Dakota technical colleges report enrollment growth

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER-OCTOBER 23, 2025 2:26 PM

South Dakota's four technical colleges continue to see increased enrollment in both full-time and dual credit programs, according to the 2025 fall enrollment report.

The state Board of Technical Education reviewed the report during its online meeting on Thursday.

Total enrollment increased 367 over last year, or 5%, with 7,774 students enrolled either as full-time or dual credit students (high-schoolers can take dual credit courses for high school and college credit). Jenna Reis, policy and data analyst for the board, said the increase is a "strong indicator that outreach and program investments on campuses are paying off."

That increase contrasts with a fall enrollment report for South Dakota public universities with flat enrollment system-wide. The university system's dual credit enrollment increased by 167, or just above 3%, with 5,335 students enrolled this year, said South Dakota Board of Regents spokeswoman Shuree Mortenson.

Dual credit enrollment at technical colleges grew by 127 students, up to 1,474 — a 9.4% increase.

At Lake Area Technical College in Watertown, dual credit enrollment includes more than 500 students from 78 South Dakota high schools, and 11 seniors are attending full-time, according to a news release from the school.

Health services remain the most popular programs at technical colleges, while agriculture, information technology and manufacturing all decreased in system-wide enrollment — by 62, 50 and 29, respectively.

Those decreased enrollments could be attributed to economic factors, especially regarding agriculture, board members and college presidents suggested. Trade policies, especially tariff discussions with China, continue to impact prices and profitability for farmers after a high crop production season in the state.

For Lake Area — the only college where information technology program enrollment increased — President Tiffany Sanderson credited the increase to a business and information technology partnership with Dakota State University, which specializes in computer science and information technology fields.

The partnership allows students to "climb the education ladder seamlessly from Watertown to Madison" in those fields, she said.

The other technical colleges are in Sioux Falls, Mitchell and Rapid City.

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.

Trump press secretary defends White House ballroom project amid East Wing teardown

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT-OCTOBER 23, 2025 3:18 PM

WASHINGTON — Workers this week demolished the East Wing of the White House, originally built in 1942, to make room for construction of a ballroom that President Donald Trump had said wouldn't impact the building.

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White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt defended the roughly \$300 million project during a Thursday briefing, saying it is the next in a long line of additions and renovations to the campus that have taken place throughout the country's history.

"Just trust the process," Leavitt said. "This is going to be a magnificent addition to the White House for many years to come and it's not costing the taxpayers anything."

The project is being fully financed by Trump and several private donors, including Amazon, Apple, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Caterpillar Inc., Comcast Corporation, Google, Lockheed Martin, Meta Platforms, Microsoft, T-Mobile, Union Pacific Railroad, investors Cameron Winklevoss and Tyler Winklevoss, among others.

Trump said later in the day that he plans to allocate "millions of dollars" to the ballroom and has spent his own money on other White House projects, including floors and lighting in the Palm Room.

"I spent millions of dollars on this building, taking care of it," he said. "It was not properly maintained and now it's starting to gleam like it should. It should really gleam."

Photos from The Associated Press appeared to show the ballroom demolition, which was first reported Monday, complete.

Leavitt said tearing down the East Wing did not need approval from the National Capital Planning Commission, according to a legal opinion from that organization, an executive-branch agency responsible for managing federal construction projects in and around Washington, D.C.

"Their general counsel has said when it comes to phase one of this project, the tearing down of the current East Wing structure, a submission is not required legally for that," Leavitt said. "Only for vertical construction will a submission be required and that's a legal opinion from them and we are following that legal opinion."

Design modified

Trump said in late July that construction of the ballroom "won't interfere with the current building" and ballparked the price at \$200 million.

"It will be near it but not touching it. And pays total respect to the existing building, which I'm the biggest fan of," Trump said at the time. "It's my favorite. It's my favorite place. I love it."

Leavitt, when pressed Thursday why the president didn't tell Americans he would need to demolish the entire East Wing, said designs were modified throughout the process.

"The plans changed when the president heard counsel from the architects and the construction companies, who said that in order for this East Wing to be modern and beautiful for many, many years to come, for it to be a truly strong and stable structure, this phase one that we're now in was necessary," Leavitt said.

She didn't offer an explanation for why the price had increased by \$100 million, repeatedly saying no taxpayer money would go toward the ballroom.

Security plans, official name unknown

Leavitt declined to say whether the project will include upgrades to the bunker that sits below the East Wing, known as the president's emergency operations center, citing security concerns.

"Like any security enhancements that are made on the White House grounds, those will be made and maintained by the United States Secret Service," she said.

Trump is also deciding what exactly to name the new ballroom, though Leavitt declined to detail what he's considering.

"There will be an official name," she said. "I will let the president announce that once he firmly decides on it."

Trump is not currently considering any other major construction or renovation projects on the White House grounds, though Leavitt didn't rule out that could happen during the remainder of his term, which will last until Jan. 20, 2029.

"Not to my knowledge, no," Leavitt said. "But he is a builder at heart, clearly. And so his heart and his mind is always churning about how to improve things here on the White House grounds. But at this point in time, of course, the ballroom is really the president's main priority."

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Call for preservation

The nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation sent a letter earlier this week urging an immediate halt to demolition of the East Wing "until plans for the proposed ballroom go through the legally required public review processes, including consultation and review by the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, and to invite comment from the public."

President and CEO Carol Quillen wrote the 90,000-square-foot ballroom could easily dwarf the 55,000-square-foot White House.

"As we approach the 250th Anniversary of our country's founding, the preservation of historic places that represent our nation's history has never been more relevant or important," Quillen wrote. "We urge you to take into account the deep reverence that all Americans hold for this iconic place, and to initiate the review process that can ensure the preservation of the historic White House for future generations."

The National Capital Planning Commission could not be reached for comment Thursday since it is closed due to the ongoing government shutdown. The Commission of Fine Arts did not immediately return a request for comment.

The White House Historical Association writes on its website that the East Wing was constructed in 1942 "to house additional staff and offices, reflecting the growing complexity of the federal government during World War II."

"The East Wing's construction was highly controversial due to its timing during wartime," the website states. "Congressional Republicans labeled the expenditure as wasteful, with some accusing (President Franklin D.) Roosevelt of using the project to bolster his presidency's image. The secretive nature of the construction, tied to military purposes, further fueled suspicions. However, the East Wing's utility in supporting the modern presidency eventually quieted critics."

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.

US Senate fails to move ahead on bills extending pay to federal workers during shutdown

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA AND ASHLEY MURRAY-OCTOBER 23, 2025

WASHINGTON — The Senate Thursday failed to advance a Republican measure and rejected unanimous agreements on two related bills from Democrats that would have paid federal employees and contractors who have continued to work amid the government shutdown, which entered day 23.

The stalemate constituted the latest example of how dug in to their arguments both parties are as the shutdown that began Oct. 1 drags out, as well as the heightened political tensions in the upper chamber when it comes to striking a deal to resume government funding.

Most federal employees will miss their first full paycheck on Friday or early next week. More than 42 million Americans, some 40% under the age of 17, are also at risk of delayed food assistance if Congress doesn't address a funding shortfall expected by Nov. 1 in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

Senate Democrats Wednesday sent a letter to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins over concerns that the agency has warned states to hold off on processing SNAP benefits. They contended the agency has the resources to keep payments flowing.

"We were deeply disturbed to hear that the USDA has instructed states to stop processing SNAP benefits for November and were surprised by your recent comments that the program will 'run out of money in two weeks,'" according to the letter. "In fact, the USDA has several tools available which would enable SNAP benefits to be paid through or close to the end of November."

Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., introduced a bill Wednesday to continue SNAP funding through the shutdown. During Thursday's briefing, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said the administration would "absolutely support" the legislation.

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Deadlock on federal worker pay

In the Senate, a measure from Wisconsin GOP Sen. Ron Johnson on a 54-45 vote did not reach the 60-vote threshold needed to advance in the chamber. Its failure means that federal employees who have continued to work will not be paid until the shutdown ends.

Democratic senators who agreed to the measure included Pennsylvania's John Fetterman and Georgia's Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock. Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota changed his vote in order to reconsider the measure.

"I don't think it makes sense to hold these federal workers hostage," Warnock told States Newsroom in an interview on his vote Thursday. "If I could have a path to give some of these folks relief while fighting for health care, that's what I decided to do."

A separate measure from Maryland Democratic Sen. Chris Van Hollen also failed to move forward after Johnson objected. Van Hollen requested unanimous consent to approve his bill that would have also protected federal workers from mass Reductions in Force, or RIFs, that President Donald Trump has attempted during the shutdown.

A second Democratic bill, from Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., was narrower, only including pay for federal workers. But when he requested unanimous approval for his measure, it was also blocked by Johnson.

Senators then left Capitol Hill for the weekend. On Wednesday, the Senate took a failed 12th vote to provide the federal government and its services with flat funding through Nov. 21.

Senate Republicans have pressed Senate Democrats to approve the GOP-written stopgap measure. But Democrats have maintained that they will not support the House measure because it does not extend tax credits that will expire at the end of the year for people who buy their health insurance through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace.

Layoffs cited by Van Hollen

Van Hollen argued his bill would protect workers from the president's targeting of certain federal agencies and programs.

"We certainly shouldn't set up a system where the president of the United States gets to decide what agencies to shut down, what they can open, who to pay and who not to pay, who to punish and who not to punish," Van Hollen said on the Senate floor before asking for unanimous consent to move the bill forward.

Johnson objected to including Van Hollen's provision to ban federal worker layoffs during a shutdown. President Donald Trump's efforts to lay off thousands of federal workers during the shutdown have been on hold since last week, after a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order that was later expanded.

However, Johnson said he was willing to add into his own bill the provision from Van Hollen to pay furloughed workers.

"I'm more than happy to sit down with you. Maybe we should do that later today," Van Hollen told Johnson during their debate on the floor.

Shortly after, Peters introduced a near-mirror version of Van Hollen's bill, except that his measure would not prohibit layoffs — essentially what Johnson told Van Hollen he would agree to.

"We all say we agree on this, so let's just pass this bill now," the Michigan Democrat said before asking for unanimous consent to advance the legislation.

Johnson also objected to that proposal.

"It only solves a problem temporarily. We're going to be right back in the same position," Johnson said in an interview with States Newsroom about why he rejected Peters' proposal.

Johnson said he talked with Peters and Van Hollen after the vote and "we'll be talking beyond this."

'Waste of time' for House to meet

Even if the Senate passed the bill sponsored by Johnson or Van Hollen, it's unlikely the House, which has been in recess since last month, would return to vote on either measure.

At a Thursday morning press conference, House Speaker Mike Johnson argued that Republicans already passed a stopgap measure to pay federal workers and that Senate Democrats should support that legislation.

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Johnson said bringing back the House would be a “waste of time,” noting that Democrats would not vote on the Republican proposal.

“If I brought everybody back right now and we voted on a measure to do this, to pay essential workers, it would be spiked in the Senate,” said the Louisiana Republican. “So it would be a waste of our time.”

Duffy warns of flight delays due to shutdown

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy joined Johnson and House Republicans during their press conference. He said that flight delays have increased due to staffing shortages.

More than 50,000 TSA agents and more than 13,000 air traffic controllers have continued to work without pay during the government shutdown.

“They’re angry,” Duffy said of air traffic controllers. “I’ve gone to a number of different towers over the course of the last week to 10 days. They’re frustrated.”

Next Tuesday, air traffic controllers will not receive their full paycheck for their work in October, Duffy said. He added that the agency is already short-staffed — by up to 3,000 air traffic controllers.

“When we have lower staffing, what happens is, you’ll see delays or cancellations,” Duffy said.

The FlightAware tracker said there were 2,132 delays within, into or out of the United States of unspecified length reported by Thursday afternoon, compared to 4,175 on Wednesday, 3,846 on Tuesday and 6,792 on Monday.

A shortage of air traffic controllers helped play a role in ending the 2019 government shutdown, which lasted 35 days, after thousands of commercial flights were ground to a halt.

Ariana covers the nation’s capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.

Ashley Murray covers the nation’s capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Trump’s National Guard deployments raise worries about state sovereignty

The decision to send troops across state lines without a governor’s consent is unprecedented

BY: JONATHAN SHORMAN-OCTOBER 23, 2025 7:00 AM

As President Donald Trump prepares to send National Guard troops — from either Oregon, California or possibly Texas — into Portland, Oregon, entrepreneur Sarah Shaoul watches with deep concern.

A three-decade resident of the Portland area, Shaoul leads a coalition of roughly 100 local small businesses, including many dependent on foot traffic. Armed troops could spook customers and, she fears, trigger a crisis where none exists.

“I don’t want this to be a political conversation but, I mean, the fact you bring people from other states who maybe have different politics — I think it shows an administration that’s trying to pit people against other people,” Shaoul said.

Trump’s campaign to send the National Guard into Democratic-leaning cities he describes as crime-ridden has so far reached Los Angeles; Washington, D.C.; Memphis, Tennessee; Chicago and Portland. He has federalized — taken command of — hundreds of active-duty guard members to staff the deployments.

But in the two most recent attempted deployments to Portland and the Chicago area, the Trump administration has turned to out-of-state National Guard troops, the part-time soldiers who often respond to natural disasters.

National guards are usually under the control of state governors, with state funds paying for their work. But sometimes the troops can be called into federal service at federal expense and placed under the president’s control.

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In addition to federalizing some members of the Oregon and Illinois National Guard within those states, the president sent 200 Texas National Guard troops to the Chicago area and plans to send California National Guard members to Portland. A Pentagon memo has also raised the possibility of sending some Texas troops to Portland.

Presidents who have federalized National Guard forces in the past, even against a governor's will, have done so in response to a crisis in the troops' home state. That happened to enforce school desegregation in Arkansas in 1957 and Alabama in 1963.

But the decision to send one state's National Guard troops into a different state without the receiving governor's consent is both extraordinary and unprecedented, experts on national security law told Stateline.

The cross-border deployments evoke concerns stretching back to the country's infancy, when the Federalist Papers in 1787-1788 grappled with the possibility that states could take military action against one another. While the recent cross-state deployments have all included troops under Trump's command, Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has been an enthusiastic supporter of Trump ordering his state's National Guard to Chicago.

The troop movements raise questions of state sovereignty and how far the president can go in using the militia of one state to exercise power in another. At stake is Trump's ability to effectively repurpose military forces for domestic use in line with an August executive order that called for the creation of a National Guard "quick reaction force" that could rapidly deploy nationwide.

"It's really like ... a little bit like invading another country," said Claire Finkelstein, a professor of law and philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania who studies military ethics and national security law.

The Trump administration has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to allow it to proceed with the Chicago-area deployment, which is currently blocked in federal court. On Monday, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals allowed the deployment in Portland to move forward, overruling a district court judge, but additional appeals are expected.

The deployments come as Trump has repeatedly threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act to expand his ability to use the military for law enforcement. Presidents are generally prohibited from deploying the military domestically, but the Insurrection Act, which dates back to 1792, could be used to bypass restrictions and potentially allow National Guard members to make immigration-related arrests.

For now, Trump has federalized National Guard members under a federal law known as Title 10, which allows the president to take command of National Guard members in response to invasion, rebellions against the United States and whenever the president is unable to execute federal laws with "regular forces."

He has characterized illegal immigration as an invasion and sought to station National Guard members outside of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, facilities and other federal property.

While Chicago and Portland fight Trump's moves in court, other cities are bracing for the arrival of troops in anticipation that the deployments will continue to expand. Washington state went so far as to enact a new law earlier this year intended to prevent out-of-state National Guard members from deploying in Washington. The new state law doesn't pertain to federalized troops, however, only to those that might be sent by another governor.

"I'm incredibly concerned but not necessarily surprised by the president's method of operation, that there seems to be a theme of fear, intimidation, bullying without a clear plan," Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell said in an interview with Stateline.

Harrell, who is running for reelection to the nonpartisan office in November, said Seattle officials are monitoring what's happening in other cities. Any deployment of guard members — whether they were from Washington or elsewhere — would be concerning, he said.

"At the end of the day, they would be following orders with some level of military precision, so my concern isn't so much out-of-state or in-state. I just oppose any kind of deployment."

Courtroom fights

Whether the out-of-state status of National Guard members matters legally is up for debate. Experts in national security law are split over whether sending federalized troops across state lines poses constitu-

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tional and legal problems, even as they broadly agree the move is provocative.

Joseph Nunn, a counsel in the left-leaning Brennan Center's Liberty and National Security Program, doubts the cross-state deployment of federalized troops is itself a legal issue.

Still, he criticized the decision to send in out-of-state National Guard and, speaking about Chicago, called the underlying deployment unlawful and unjustified. In ordering troops to Illinois, Nunn said, Trump was abusing his presidential power, regardless of the servicemembers' home state.

"It is unnecessarily inflammatory," Nunn said of that choice. "It is, I think, insulting to say we're going to send the National Guard from one state into another."

Democrats, especially in cities and states targeted by Trump, condemn the deployments as an abuse of presidential power, regardless of where the troops are from. Republicans have largely supported or stayed silent about Trump's moves, though Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, who chairs the National Governors Association, has criticized the sending of Texas troops to Illinois.

Abbott wrote on social media in early October that he had "fully authorized" Trump to call up 400 Texas National Guard members. Abbott's office didn't respond to Stateline's questions.

"You can either fully enforce protection for federal employees or get out of the way and let Texas Guard do it," Abbott wrote on X.

In the Chicago area and in Portland, the Trump administration wants the National Guard outside ICE facilities where small protests have taken place in recent weeks. Dozens of people have been arrested in Portland since June, but there's been no sign of widespread violence. A Stateline analysis of U.S. Census Bureau and federal crime data found that Trump's National Guard deployments have not, with a single exception, targeted the nation's most violent cities.

For weeks federal courts have kept National Guard troops off the streets of Portland and the Chicago area as legal challenges play out, but that could be changing. The Trump administration on Friday asked the U.S. Supreme Court to allow it to deploy National Guard troops in the Chicago area. If the court sides with the administration, the decision could clear the way for additional deployments elsewhere.

In the Friday filing to the Supreme Court, U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote: "This case presents what has become a disturbing and recurring pattern: Federal officers are attempting to enforce federal immigration law in an urban area containing significant numbers of illegal aliens. The federal agents' efforts are met with prolonged, coordinated, violent resistance that threatens their lives and safety and systematically interferes with their ability to enforce federal law."

The U.S. Department of Defense didn't directly answer questions from Stateline about whether further cross-state deployments are planned, saying only that it doesn't speculate on future operations.

U.S. District Court Judge Karin Immergut wrote in an order blocking deployment of the National Guard in Portland that a handful of documented episodes of protesters clashing with federal law enforcement during September were "inexcusable," but added that "they are nowhere near the type of incidents that cannot be handled by regular law enforcement forces."

But on Monday, a divided three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Trump had "lawfully exercised his statutory authority" to deploy Oregon National Guard servicemembers to Portland. Lawyers for Oregon and Portland are seeking a review by the full appeals court, a move that would put the case in front of 11 appellate judges.

Shaoul, the Portland business leader, said the presence of troops would itself risk creating "drama" at the expense of taxpayers.

"Tell me how that's helping anybody to go in and intimidate a bunch of people who are dressed up in friggin' costumes, playing music," Shaoul said. "I mean, if nothing else illustrates what a joke this is, that should tell you right there."

10th Amendment concerns

Top Republicans have long telegraphed their desire to use the National Guard to aid immigration enforcement.

In December, before Trump took office, 26 GOP governors — at the time, every Republican governor

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except Vermont's Phil Scott — signed a statement promising to provide their national guards to help.

Since Trump's inauguration, at least 11 Republican governors have ordered National Guard members to help ICE, typically by providing logistical support. At least four states — Florida, Louisiana, Texas and West Virginia — have entered into federal agreements that allow ICE to delegate some immigration enforcement duties, potentially including arrests, to National Guard members.

Trump's decision to federalize National Guard members goes further, placing troops under the president's command. The cross-state deployments represent the next step in testing his authority to command guard members.

Finkelstein, the national security law professor, said sending one state's National Guard into another state raises serious legal issues under the 10th Amendment. The amendment reserves for the states or the people powers not specifically granted to the federal government — the idea at the core of federalism.

A president and governor may reasonably disagree about whether federalization is necessary to help their state, Finkelstein said, but "even that fig leaf" isn't available when troops are sent to another state. California gets nothing out of the deployment of its National Guard to Oregon, she said. And unless it's California's governor — rather than the president — making the choice to deploy guard members elsewhere, it's a "very real problem" that undermines state autonomy, she said.

Washington state Rep. Jim Walsh, who chairs the Washington State Republican Party, has been monitoring the attempted deployment in Portland, as well as the possibility of a deployment to Seattle. He said Trump has broad discretion under federal law to federalize National Guard members.

Still, Walsh said federalizing the National Guard gives him pause and is something that a hypothetical president — "leave this one out of the equation" — might overuse. But he argued state and local leadership in cities where the National Guard has been deployed have brought the situation on themselves by allowing a breakdown in law and order.

Asked about cross-state deployments, Walsh largely dismissed any legal concerns.

"I guess they would know the area better," Walsh said of troops deployed in their home state. "But this is kind of a specious argument. ... The president, whoever he or she is, can federalize National Guard units."

Walsh said he doesn't see a situation at the moment that would necessitate a Guard deployment within Washington state.

But Seattle isn't taking any chances.

Harrell, the Seattle mayor, signed two executive orders in October, one that pushes back on the practice of federal agents making immigration arrests while wearing masks, and another that seeks to maintain control over local law enforcement resources if the National Guard is deployed in the city.

"I'm critically concerned about what can occur as a reaction," Harrell said. "That's exactly what Trump's goal is, to raise tension and create chaos and to use blue cities as scapegoats."

Editor's note: This story has been updated to correct the year, 1957, that President Dwight D. Eisenhower federalized National Guard troops to enforce desegregation in Arkansas. Stateline reporter Jonathan Shorman can be reached at jshorman@stateline.org.

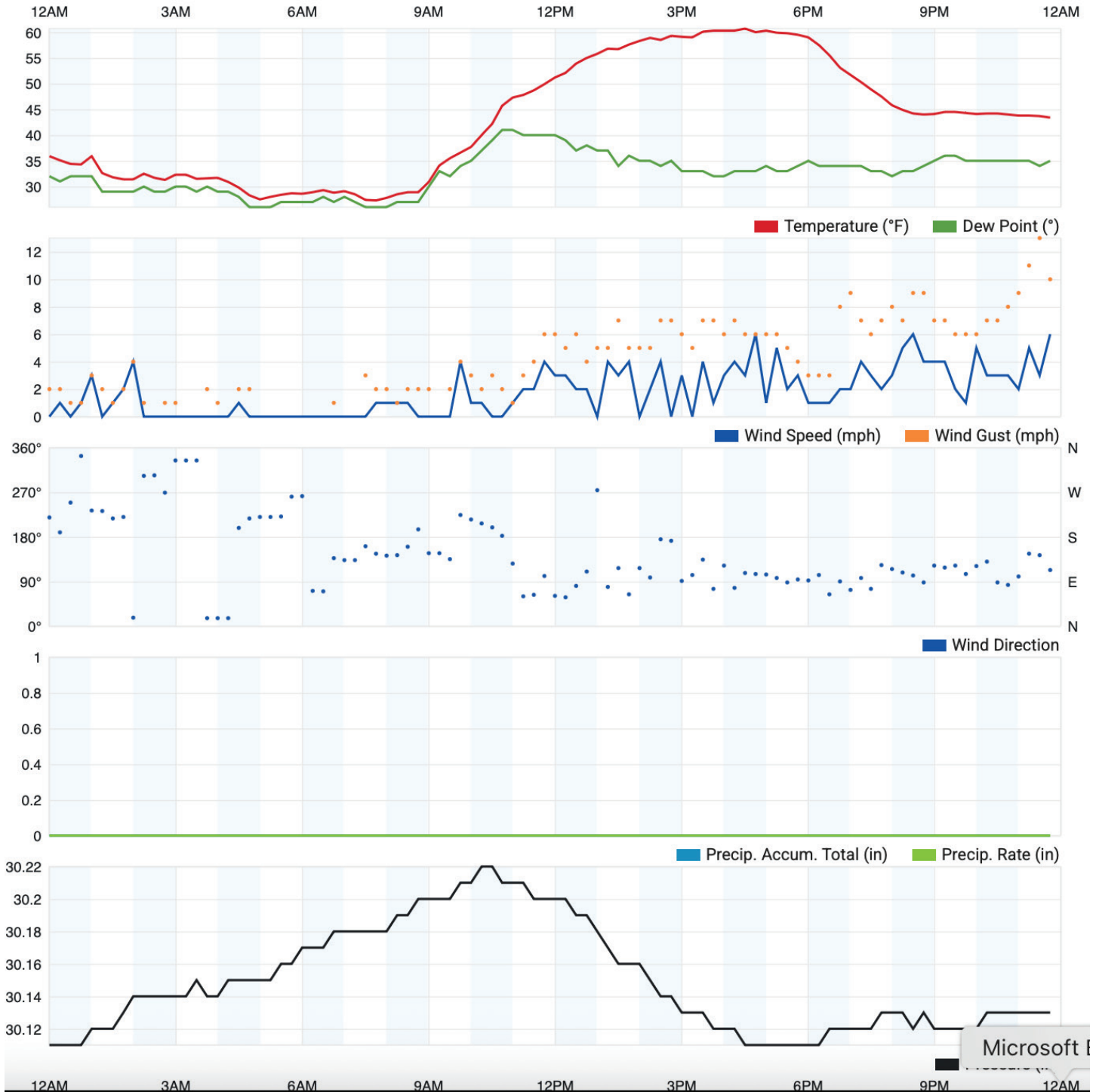
This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

Jonathan Shorman covers democracy for Stateline, including elections, voting rights, fights over state vs. federal power, civil liberties and more.

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Today



High: 64 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 41 °F

Mostly Clear

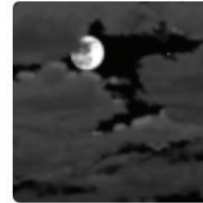
Saturday



High: 63 °F

Mostly Sunny

Saturday Night



Low: 48 °F

Increasing
Clouds

Sunday



High: 62 °F

Mostly Cloudy
and Breezy

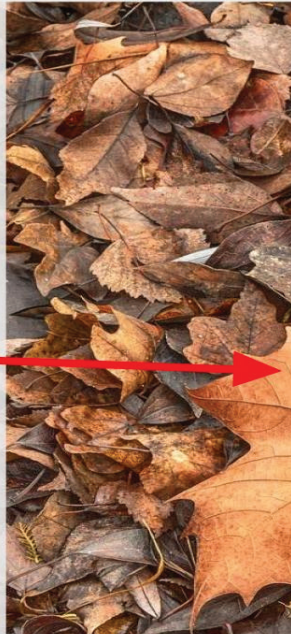


Windy Weekend Ahead

October 24, 2025
4:22 AM

Gusts of 30-40 mph possible Sunday

- Gusty southerly winds are expected over central and northeastern SD, with **gusts of 30 to 40 mph** possible Sunday
- Rain returns late Sunday night into Monday



Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	10/25 Sat				10/26 Sun							
	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	
Aberdeen	26	28	24	24	25	28	30	35	35	36	29	
Britton	26	28	25	25	25	29	32	36	36	37	31	
Chamberlain	26	29	28	28	26	26	29	32	36	36	31	
Clark	28	29	25	26	26	29	31	33	36	36	32	
Eagle Butte	28	31	30	32	31	32	31	31	30	29	23	
Eureka	30	31	29	31	31	32	35	37	38	37	29	
Gettysburg	29	31	29	30	30	31	32	35	36	35	28	
McIntosh	31	35	32	33	32	33	32	32	31	30	24	
Milbank	22	23	21	21	20	20	22	26	29	29	26	
Miller	28	29	26	26	28	30	32	36	37	37	29	
Mobridge	28	30	30	32	32	33	33	35	35	32	25	
Murdo	28	31	31	32	31	31	31	32	32	32	28	
Pierre	26	30	30	30	29	29	31	32	31	31	29	
Redfield	30	30	26	25	25	29	32	37	39	39	32	
Sisseton	23	24	23	22	21	23	25	30	31	31	29	
Watertown	25	25	23	24	24	24	28	31	32	32	30	
Webster	26	28	24	25	26	28	29	33	36	36	31	
Wheaton	23	23	23	22	23	24	26	29	30	29	28	

Winds are forecast to start increasing Saturday into Sunday, with wind gusts of 30 to 40 mph possible Sunday. Rain chances return to central and northeastern SD late Sunday night into Monday.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 61 °F at 4:30 PM

Low Temp: 27 °F at 7:41 AM

Wind: 13 mph at 11:30 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 83 in 1989

Record Low: 6 in 1917

Average High: 55

Average Low: 30

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.77

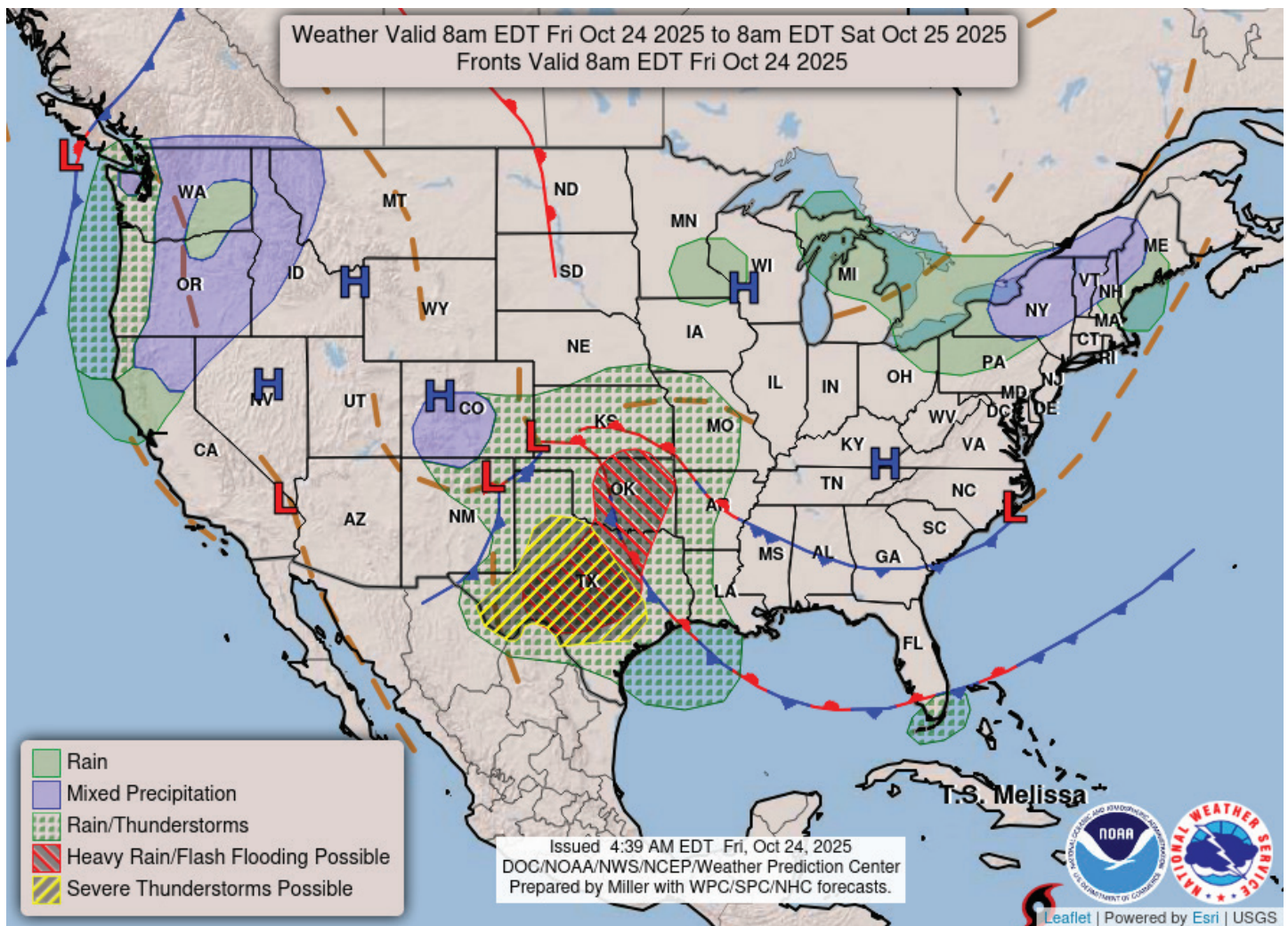
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.48

Average Precip to date: 20.10

Precip Year to Date: 23.40

Sunset Tonight: 6:31 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:02 am



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Today in Weather History

October 24, 1989: A storm in the western U.S. produced up to three feet of snow in the mountains around Lake Tahoe, with 21 inches reported at Donner Summit. Thunderstorms in northern California produced 3.36 inches of rain at Redding to establish a 24 hour record for October, and bring their rainfall total for the month to a record 5.11 inches. Chiefly "Indian Summer" type weather prevailed across the rest of the nation. Fifteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 70s and 80s. Record highs included 74 degrees at International Falls, Minnesota and 86 degrees at Yankton, South Dakota. Record highs also occurred across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. The record highs were 80 degrees at Mobridge and Sisseton, 83 degrees at Aberdeen, and 84 degrees at Pierre.

1785 - A four day rain swelled the Merrimack River in New Hampshire and Massachusetts to the greatest height of record causing extensive damage to bridges and mills. (David Ludlum)

1878: The Gale of 1878 was an intense Category 2 hurricane that was active between October 18 and October 25. It caused extensive damage from Cuba to New England. Believed to be the strongest storm to hit the Washington - Baltimore region since hurricane records began in 1851.

1937 - A snow squall in Buffalo NY tied up traffic in six inches of slush. (David Ludlum)

1947 - The Bar Harbor holocaust occurred in Maine when forest fires consumed homes and a medical research institute. The fires claimed 17 lives, and caused thirty million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1951 - Sacramento, CA, reported a barometric pressure of 29.42 inches, to establish a record for October. (The Weather Channel)

1969 - Unseasonably cold air gripped the northeastern U.S. Lows of 10 degrees at Concord, NH, and 6 degrees at Albany NY established October records. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Snow fell across northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin overnight, with five inches reported at Poplar Lake MN and Gunflint Trail MN. Thunderstorm rains caused flash flooding in south central Arizona, with street flooding reported around Las Vegas NV. Strong northwesterly winds gusting to 50 mph downed some trees and power lines in western Pennsylvania and the northern panhandle of West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Strong winds circulating around a deep low pressure centered produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region, with six inches reported at Ironwood MI. Wind gusts to 80 mph were reported at State College PA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A storm in the western U.S. produced up to three feet of snow in the mountains around Lake Tahoe, with 21 inches reported at Donner Summit. Thunderstorms in northern California produced 3.36 inches of rain at Redding to establish a 24 hour record for October, and bring their rainfall total for the month to a record 5.11 inches. Chiefly "Indian Summer" type weather prevailed across the rest of the nation. Fifteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 70s and 80s. Record highs included 74 degrees at International Falls MN, and 86 degrees at Yankton SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005 - Hurricane Wilma reached the U.S. coastline near Everglades City in Florida with maximum sustained winds near 120 mph. The hurricane accelerated across south Florida and the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area, exiting the coast later the same day. There were 10 fatalities in Florida, and nearly 6 million people lost power, the most widespread power outage in Florida history. Preliminary estimates of insured losses in Florida were over \$6 billion, while uninsured losses were over \$12 billion.

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Daily Devotion

When Facing Life's Mountains

When you feel like giving up, ask God for the wisdom and energy needed to accomplish His will.

Zechariah 4:1-9: The Gold Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

4 Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. 2 He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. 3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

4 I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"

5 He answered, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I replied.

6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

7 "What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"

8 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you.

Wouldn't it be great if doing God's will was always easy? But at times we encounter obstacles. When Zerubbabel felt this way, the Lord sent the prophet Zechariah with a word of encouragement.

Zerubbabel was given the task of rebuilding the temple. The first temple had been built during a time of peace and prosperity—under Solomon, the treasures were overflowing and the workforce was huge. But the situation was quite different when the Jews returned after 70 years of Babylonian captivity. Now they were few in number, their enemies kept attacking, Jerusalem was in ruins, and resources were limited. In today's reading, Zechariah's message to Zerubbabel (4:1-9) contained two principles that strengthened him:

We are to face our tasks in the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 6). The Lord's work can never be done with human strength. His indwelling Spirit must empower us with the wisdom and energy to accomplish His will in our life.

When God calls us to a task, He assumes the responsibility for removing any hindrances (vv. 7-9). When we're tempted to give up, it's time to look up and see the obstacle through His eyes.

Is the Lord asking you to do something that seems impossible? Ask Him to supply the hope and strength to persevere.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.21.25

2 18 27 34 59 18

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$680,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 49 Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

4 15 28 33 35 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$5,380,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 4 Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.23.25

12 30 33 39 40 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 19 Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

3 4 7 18 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$59,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 19 Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

23 37 43 60 64 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 48 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.22.25

18 37 52 54 60 12

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$344,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 48 Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL

Brookings 22, Huron 14
Custer 50, Lakota Tech 0
Lennox 34, Dell Rapids 14
Madison 20, Milbank 6
Rapid City Central 36, Rapid City Stevens 6
Rapid City Christian 21, Belle Fourche 20, OT
Sioux Falls Christian 40, Dakota Valley 9
Sioux Falls Jefferson 24, Brandon Valley 21
Sioux Falls Lincoln 56, Harrisburg 49
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 42, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 9
Sioux Falls Washington 27, Tea 7
Sturgis Brown High School 13, Spearfish 9
T F Riggs High School 49, Douglas 0
Tri-Valley 33, Canton 23
Watertown 33, Aberdeen Central 27, OT
West Central 34, Vermillion 10
Yankton 40, Mitchell 7
SDHSAA Playoffs=
Class 9A=
First Round=
Alcester-Hudson 36, Deubrook 0
Castlewood 46, Dupree 12
Estelline-Hendricks 36, Philip 8
Howard 52, Centerville 32
Ipswich 58, Harding County 8
Platte-Geddes 42, Lyman 30
Wall 55, Lemmon High School 0
Warner 42, Timber Lake 12
Class 9AA=
First Round=
Bon Homme 48, Gregory 28
Elkton-Lake Benton 49, DeSmet 0
Freeman-Marion-FA 59, Garretson 7
Hamlin 57, Scotland/Menno 0
Hanson 52, Viborg-Hurley 34
Hill City 53, Great Plains Lutheran 0
Kimball-White Lake 14, Britton-Hecla 7
Parkston 55, Bennett County 22
Class 9B=
First Round=
Avon 50, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 0
Colman-Egan 50, Arlington 0
Corsica/Stickney 38, Kadoka 36
Dell Rapids St Mary's 72, Irene-Wakonda 6
Faulkton 61, Burke 22

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Herreid-Selby 22, Canistota 0
Sioux Falls Lutheran 48, Iroquois-Lake Preston 6
Sully Buttes 42, Hitchcock-Tulare 8
Class 11B=
First Round=
Clark-Willow Lake 35, Groton 0
Deuel 36, McCook Central-Montrose 20
Elk Point-Jefferson 42, Flandreau 14
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 40, Mobridge-Pollock 12
Sioux Valley 24, Parker/Marion 16
St Thomas More 38, Hot Springs 7
Wagner 33, Chamberlain 0
Winner 20, WWSSC 12

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

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Bison def. Hettinger-Scranton, N.D., 25-23, 25-19, 26-24
Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud def. Little Wound, 25-6, 25-14, 24-26, 25-16
McLaughlin def. Wakpala, 25-16, 25-15, 25-8
Takini def. Oelrichs, 25-17, 19-25, 25-15, 25-21

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

Survival bunker renters sue owner of former South Dakota munitions bunkers over lease, amenities

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

A new class-action lawsuit, if successful, could require the California owner of former military munitions bunkers near Edgemont to pay more than \$17 million to people who rent the so-called igloos for use as homes or shelters to protect them in the case of a global catastrophe.

The lawsuit filed in Fall River County Circuit Court alleges on a basic level that Vivos xPoint Investment Group, the owner of the Vivos xPoint bunker complex, uses an illegal lease that is unenforceable and violates the rights of the bunker residents.

The lawsuit is similar in its claims to an earlier case filed by an individual former resident of the Vivos complex that challenged the legality of the bunker lease. That claim was upheld by a circuit court judge but has been appealed by the complex owner and is awaiting a hearing before the South Dakota Supreme Court.

The new lawsuit also alleges that the investment group made "deceptive and misleading statements" by promising to provide numerous amenities at the bunker complex, most of which have never been built. It seeks a return of all money paid to Vivos by more than 150 tenants.

Where weapons once sat, people now live

The Vivos xPoint community includes hundreds of above-ground, earth-covered concrete bunkers that were used by the U.S. military from 1942 to 1967 to store conventional and chemical munitions in a town once known as Igloo.

A large portion of the former Black Hills Army Depot munitions facility was purchased and developed in 2016 by California businessman Robert Vicino. The 2,200-square-foot bunkers are now rented as residences, mostly to survivalists, or "preppers," who want to live off the grid and be positioned to survive a global catastrophe.

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According to prior reporting by News Watch, the residential community located on windswept prairie land 8 miles south of Edgemont has been beset by conflicts between residents and employees, numerous lawsuits, several complaints to the state attorney general's office and a near-fatal shooting of a complex employee by a tenant in 2024.

After a grand jury review, the tenant was not charged.

News Watch interviewed more than a dozen people, reviewed hundreds of pages of court records, examined emails and internal Vivos communications, filed three open-records requests and visited the Vivos site to understand the unrest that exists within the community.

Records in the South Dakota Secretary of State's office show the investment group is licensed to Vicino. He is also the owner of a parent company called Vivos Group, which states on its Vivos Global Shelter Network website that it provides access to bunker complexes in South Dakota as well as at other sites in the U.S. and Europe.

Vicino did not return a call from News Watch seeking comment, and his attorney, Eric Schlimgen of Spearfish, also did not return calls or an email seeking comment.

In a prior interview, Vicino told News Watch that those who complain at Vivos xPoint are "bad apples" and that most tenants are happy with their treatment.

Lease signed by tenants at heart of lawsuits

People who live in the bunkers or have them ready to occupy do not buy them outright. Instead, they pay an upfront fee of up to \$55,000 and sign a 99-year lease that governs the landlord-tenant relationship.

The 14-page lease and an accompanying long list of community rules became the subject of lawsuits after they were used as the basis to evict several bunker residents who then lost the right to occupy the bunkers despite paying the upfront fees and a monthly service fee.

The lease requires tenants to use their own money to make the bunkers habitable, including installing basic utilities.

The lease then allows Vivos to evict tenants while retaining the value of those improvements, said J. Scott James, a Custer attorney representing plaintiffs.

James previously told News Watch that Vivos finds ways to evict tenants and then re-leases their bunkers with a requirement that new tenants still pay the upfront and monthly fees.

James said the class-action lawsuit is a natural progression in the legal claims against Vivos xPoint, so far upheld in court, that now makes it possible for all bunker renters to seek financial remedies.

The case was filed prior to the ruling by the Supreme Court on the first case because Scott said tenants told him that the complex ownership was offering or was about to offer tenants a new lease that would have reduced or eliminated their rights to sue.

Just as in the case before the Supreme Court, the class-action lawsuit argues that the Vivos lease is illegal because it is "illusory," a legal term that essentially means the complex ownership can change the contract at any time without consideration or approval of the tenants.

"The unfettered ability of Vivos to unilaterally change material provisions of the lease, as well as the ability to evict (tenants) ... makes the lease illusory, unlawful and unenforceable," the lawsuit states.

The case makes a further separate argument that the lease is invalid because it does not comply with a South Dakota law that requires landlords to provide basic utilities, services and upkeep.

The existing lease, which requires tenants to install their own electricity, water, plumbing, sewer and communication services, would therefore be illegal under state law, James said.

Amenities promised but not provided

The new lawsuit also raises consumer protection arguments in that Vivos has failed to follow through on promises made to tenants before they signed the lease, James said.

"The way Vivos marketed this development and these bunkers to these folks contained a lot of deceptive material, and so they were made a lot of promises," he said. "People were given tours and told that there's a medical facility, and there's not a medical facility. They were told, 'You're going to get a gymnasium and a laundry, and all this kind of stuff is going to happen.'"

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James said none of those amenities have been provided, even several years after the promises were made. He added that trash pickup, security services and road maintenance have been spotty over the years.

The new lawsuit was filed Sept. 16 on behalf of six people who leased bunkers in the complex, including two who live there and four others who live elsewhere but lease a bunker to be ready if needed.

If class-action status is granted, as many as 150 bunker lessees would qualify for settlement money unless they specifically opt out, James said.

He said that as word of a possible class-action case spread through the Vivos complex, he has already heard from more than 40 tenants interested in knowing more about it.

Millions in remedies sought for tenants

The lawsuit seeks a return of all money paid to Vivos by tenants, including the up-front lease fees ranging from \$25,000 to \$55,000 per tenant, the money tenants spent on improving the bunkers to make them habitable and the monthly common area amenity fees. It also calls for payment of attorney fees and possible punitive damages.

After doing a rough calculation, James estimated Vivos could have to pay the tenants more than \$17 million if the lawsuit is upheld, which would be in addition to any attorney fees or damages.

If Vivos cannot pay, the lawsuit contends that the tenants would then be allowed to take ownership of the leased bunkers and land beneath them, James said.

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

Alaska Airlines resumes operations after an IT outage grounded its flights for hours

SEATTLE (AP) — Alaska Airlines said its operations have resumed Friday after it had to ground its planes for hours because of an information technology outage.

The airline said in a statement that 229 flights were canceled because of the outage and that more flight disruptions were expected as it worked to “reposition aircraft and crews.”

Alaska Airlines said it is working on getting travelers affected by the disruption to their destinations.

It asked that passengers check their flight status before heading to the airport.

The grounding Thursday affected Alaska Air and Horizon Air flights.

Hawaiian Airlines, which was bought by Alaska Air Group last year, said its flights were operating as scheduled.

In July, Alaska grounded all of its flights for about three hours after the failure of a critical piece of hardware at a data center.

There has been a history of computer problems disrupting flights in the industry, though most of the time the disruptions are only temporary.

Tropical Storm Melissa stationary in the Caribbean as forecasters warn it will quickly intensify

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Tropical Storm Melissa was stationary in the central Caribbean early Friday, with forecasters warning it could soon strengthen and brush past Jamaica as a powerful hurricane while unleashing potentially “catastrophic” flash flooding and landslides in southern Haiti.

The erratic storm was expected to drop copious rain on Jamaica and the southern regions of Haiti and the Dominican Republic through the weekend.

“The rainfall is a huge risk with the storm,” said Michael Brennan, director of the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami. “Rainfall has historically been the biggest cause of loss of life of tropical storms and hurricanes in the Caribbean.”

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Early Friday, the storm was stationary about 165 miles (260 kilometers) southeast of Kingston, Jamaica, and about 275 miles (445 kilometers) southwest of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It had maximum sustained winds of 45 mph (75 kph), the U.S. center said. It was expected to begin to drift northeast or north later in the day before turning west over the weekend.

A hurricane watch and a tropical storm warning were in effect for Jamaica and the southwestern peninsula of Haiti.

Melissa was expected to slowly begin moving closer to Jamaica over the weekend. It was expected to strengthen into a hurricane by Saturday and become a major hurricane by the end of the weekend, possibly reaching Category 4 status by Tuesday.

Forecasters said Jamaica's eastern region could get up to 14 inches (36 centimeters) of rain that could lead to flooding and landslides because the ground is already saturated from recent heavy rains unrelated to the storm.

Schools, health centers and government offices closed across Jamaica on Thursday, with authorities warning that all airports would close within 24 hours if a hurricane warning is issued.

"The situation is indeed serious," said Matthew Samuda, Jamaica's minister of economic growth and job creation, as he warned people not to be fooled by the storm's current pace and strength. "Be very attentive, because it can change in a moment's notice."

Up to 14 inches (36 centimeters) of rain also was forecast for southern Haiti and the southern Dominican Republic, with higher amounts possible through Sunday.

Melissa was blamed for one death in southern Haiti, and five other people in the country's central region were injured in flooding, authorities said. The U.N. announced Thursday that it was preparing more than 100 emergency shelters in Haiti's southern region.

The storm also knocked out dozens of water supply systems in the neighboring Dominican Republic, affecting more than half a million customers. It also downed trees and traffic lights and unleashed a couple of small landslides.

All public schools across the Dominican Republic would close Friday, while government offices in 12 provinces under alert would do the same, officials said.

"This is an event that we should be following minute by minute," said Juan Manuel Méndez García, emergency operations director in the Dominican Republic. He noted that evacuations in areas under alert were mandatory.

Melissa is the 13th named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, and the first named storm to form in the Caribbean this year.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration had predicted an above-normal season with 13 to 18 named storms. Of those, five to nine were forecast to become hurricanes, including two to five major hurricanes, which pack winds of 111 mph (178 kph) or greater.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30.

Zelenskyy to meet European leaders in London for talks on military aid for Ukraine

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is due in London on Friday for talks with two dozen European leaders who have pledged military help to protect his country from future Russian aggression if a ceasefire stops the more than three-year war.

The meeting hosted by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is also due to discuss ways of helping protect Ukraine's power grid from Russia's almost daily drone and missiles attacks as winter approaches, enhancing Ukrainian air defenses, and supplying Kyiv with longer-range missiles that can strike deep inside Russia.

The talks aim to step up pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin, adding momentum to measures in recent days that have included a new round of sanctions from the United States and European countries

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that take aim at Russia's vital oil and gas export earnings.

Putin has so far resisted efforts to push him into negotiating a peace settlement with Zelenskyy and has argued that Russia's all-out invasion of its smaller neighbor is legitimate. Russia has also been adept at finding loopholes in Western sanctions.

That unbudging stance has exasperated Western leaders. "Time and again we offer Putin the chance to end his needless invasion, to stop the killing and recall his troops, but he repeatedly rejects those proposals and any chance of peace," Starmer said in written comments ahead of Friday's meeting.

Ukraine's Western allies need to resolve some big questions about the future part they will play as Europe's biggest conflict since World War II heads toward its fourth anniversary next February.

The uncertainties include how they can help fund war-devastated Ukraine, what postwar security guarantees they might be able to provide it, and nail down what Washington's commitments to future security arrangements might be.

Zelenskyy and Starmer are expected to be joined at the Foreign Office in London by NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof. About 20 other leaders are to join via video link in the meeting of the group dubbed the Coalition of the Willing.

Details of the potential future "reassurance force" are scant, and the London meeting seeks to further develop the idea — even though any peace agreement appears at the moment to be only a distant possibility.

The force is likely to consist of air and naval support rather than Western troops deployed in Ukraine, according to officials. U.K. Defense Secretary John Healey says it would be "a force to help secure the skies, secure the seas, a force to help train Ukrainian forces to defend their nation."

Its headquarters is expected to rotate between Paris and London for 12-month periods.

The war has shown no sign of subsiding, as a front-line war of attrition kills thousands of soldiers on both sides while drone and missile barrages cause damage in rear areas.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Friday its forces downed 111 Ukrainian drones over several regions overnight, with debris causing damage to homes and infrastructure.

One drone hit an apartment building in Krasnogorsk on Moscow's northwestern edge, injuring five people, including a child, according to Andrei Vorobyov, the governor of the Moscow region.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin reported that air defenses downed three drones heading to Moscow, which forced flights to be suspended at two Moscow airports.

Three other Russian airports briefly suspended flights because of the drone attacks.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian authorities said Russian artillery struck a residential block in the southeastern city of Kherson on Friday, killing two people and injuring 11 others, including a 16-year-old.

Ukraine's rail company, Ukrzaliznytsia, announced train delays and route changes in three regions caused by "massive shelling" that damaged infrastructure, which Russian forces have targeted in recent months.

Ukraine's Air Force reported intercepting and jamming 72 out of 128 Russian strike and decoy drones fired at Ukraine overnight.

New York Attorney General Letitia James will make first court appearance in mortgage fraud case

By BEN FINELY and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — New York Attorney General Letitia James is set to make her first court appearance in a mortgage fraud case on Friday, the third adversary of President Donald Trump to face a judge on federal charges in recent weeks.

James was indicted earlier this month on charges of bank fraud and making false statements to a financial institution in connection with a 2020 home purchase in Norfolk, Virginia. The charges came shortly after the official who had been overseeing the investigation was pushed out by the Trump administration and the president publicly called on the Justice Department to take action against James and other of his political foes.

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James, a Democrat who has sued Trump and his administration dozens of times, has denied wrongdoing and decried the indictment as “nothing more than a continuation of the president’s desperate weaponization of our justice system.”

The indictment stems from 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.

James drew Trump’s ire when she won a staggering judgment against the president 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.

James’ indictment followed the resignation of Erik Siebert as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia after he resisted Trump administration pressure to bring charges. Siebert was replaced with Lindsey Halligan, a White House aide and former Trump lawyer who had never previously served as a federal prosecutor and presented James’ case to the grand jury herself.

On Thursday, lawyers for James asked for an order prohibiting prosecutors from disclosing to the news media information about the investigation, or materials from the case, outside of court.

The motion followed the revelation from earlier this week that Halligan contacted via an encrypted text messaging platform a reporter from Lawfare, a media organization that covers legal and national security issues, to discuss the James prosecution and complain about coverage of it. The reporter published the exchange that she and Halligan had.

“The exchange was a stunning disclosure of internal government information,” lawyers for James wrote.

They added: “It has been reported that Ms. Halligan has no prosecutorial experience whatsoever. But all federal prosecutors are required to know and follow the rules governing their conduct from their first day on the job, and so any lack of experience cannot excuse their violation.”

The motion also asks that the government be required to preserve all communications with representatives of the media as well as to prevent the deletion of any records or communications related to the investigation and the prosecution of the case.

Separately on Thursday, defense lawyers said they intended to challenge Halligan’s appointment, a step also taken this week by attorneys for former FBI Director James Comey in a different case filed by Halligan.

A third Trump adversary, former national security adviser John Bolton, pleaded not guilty last week to charges against him of emailing classified information to family members and keeping top secret documents at his Maryland home.

The Justice Department has also been investigating mortgage fraud allegations against Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff, whom Trump has called to be prosecuted over allegations related to a property in Maryland. In a separate mortgage investigation, authorities have been probing allegations against Federal Reserve Board member Lisa Cook, who is challenging a Trump administration effort to remove her from her job.

Trump says he’s ending trade talks with Canada over TV ads

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said late Thursday that he was ending “all trade negotiations” with Canada because of a television ad opposing U.S. tariffs that he said misstated the facts and called “egregious behavior” aimed at influencing U.S. court decisions.

The post on Trump’s social media site came after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said he aims to double his country’s exports to countries outside the U.S. because of the threat posed by Trump’s tariffs. Trump’s call for an abrupt end to negotiations could further inflame trade tensions that already have been

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building between the two neighboring countries for months.

Trump posted, "The Ronald Reagan Foundation has just announced that Canada has fraudulently used an advertisement, which is FAKE, featuring Ronald Reagan speaking negatively about Tariffs."

"The ad was for \$75,000. They only did this to interfere with the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, and other courts," Trump wrote on his social media site. "TARIFFS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY, AND ECONOMY, OF THE U.S.A. Based on their egregious behavior, ALL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITH CANADA ARE HEREBY TERMINATED."

Carney's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. The prime minister was set to leave Friday morning for a summit in Asia, while Trump is set to do the same Friday evening.

Earlier Thursday night, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute posted on X that an ad created by the government of Ontario "misrepresents the 'Presidential Radio Address to the Nation on Free and Fair Trade' dated April 25, 1987." It added that Ontario did not receive foundation permission "to use and edit the remarks."

The foundation said it is "reviewing legal options in this matter" and invited the public to watch the un-edited video of Reagan's address.

Carney met with Trump earlier this month to try to ease trade tensions, as the two countries and Mexico prepare for a review of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement — a trade deal Trump negotiated in his first term, but has since soured on.

More than three-quarters of Canadian exports go to the U.S., and nearly \$3.6 billion Canadian (US\$2.7 billion) worth of goods and services cross the border daily.

Trump said earlier this week that he had seen the ad on television and said that it showed that his tariffs were having an impact.

"I saw an ad last night from Canada. If I was Canada, I'd take that same ad also," he said then.

In his own post on X last week, Doug Ford, the premier of Ontario, posted a link to the ad and the message: "It's official: Ontario's new advertising campaign in the U.S. has launched."

He continued, "Using every tool we have, we'll never stop making the case against American tariffs on Canada. The way to prosperity is by working together."

A spokesperson for Ford didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday night. But Ford previously got Trump's attention with an electricity surcharge to U.S. states. Trump responded by doubling steel and aluminum tariffs.

The president has moved to impose steep U.S. tariffs on many goods from Canada. In April, Canada's government imposed retaliatory levies on certain U.S. goods -- but it carved out exemptions for some automakers to bring specific numbers of vehicles into the country, known as remission quotas.

Trump's tariffs have especially hurt Canada's auto sector, much of which is based in Ontario. This month, Stellantis said it would move a production line from Ontario to Illinois

One family fled Afghanistan. Then US deportations scattered them across the world

By MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

As they walked up to the thick metal pillars of the border wall dividing Tijuana and San Diego, the Husaini siblings carried nothing from their lives in Afghanistan than a hazy fantasy of what awaited them on the other side.

Amir, 21, and his sisters, Suraiya, 26, and Bano, 27, arrived in northern Mexico with an appointment for Jan. 24, four days after U.S. President Donald Trump took office.

That was the day they were supposed to enter the U.S. and make their case, marking what they thought would be an end to the repression by the Taliban after the withdrawal of American troops in 2021, and to their 17,500-mile journey by foot, canoe, bus and plane across the world.

That was all before the door to asylum slammed shut along the U.S. southern border moments after Trump took office. Trump's victory was based in no small part on support from voters who embraced his

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hard-line immigration views. Within days, his administration had transformed what it meant to seek refuge in the U.S., casting aside an ethos of helping the persecuted that is nearly as old as the country itself.

Families such as the Hussainis are suffering the cascading consequences of larger political shifts as countries tighten asylum policies and turn away refugees. In Afghanistan, whose tumultuous history is intertwined with American military and foreign policy, the expulsion carried an added sting because the Hussainis believed they would find safe harbor in the U.S.

Instead, Amir watched his sisters being torn away from him by American border agents under the harsh fluorescent lights of a detention facility. It was the last time he saw them.

Half a year later, the family has been dispersed to different countries as part of the administration's push to send immigrants and refugees to far-flung, unfamiliar and often dangerous places. One sister is trying to navigate life in the far reaches of South America. The second is marooned in Central America. Amir is back in Afghanistan, plagued by fear in the very country the family fled.

"We had reached the end of our journey ... and our hopes were completely shattered," Suraiya said. "I can't necessarily call it a betrayal, but the fact that they didn't interview us, ask about our fears or why we fled our country. It all seemed very cruel."

Watching a future in Afghanistan dissolve

For most of their lives, even as their homeland was riven by war, Suraiya and her siblings never dreamed of leaving.

But as the years rolled on, they watched the life they were building dissolve. That was when they turned to the U.S., which once funneled hundreds of billions of dollars in humanitarian and military aid into Afghanistan, as the place that could offer them a new life.

The Hussainis grew up in an area run by local gangs on the fringes of Kabul, the capital, after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Their father was a metalworker. Their mother could not attend school but wanted everything for her children.

After centuries of targeted massacres and persecution, the Hussainis' ethnic minority group, the Hazaras, felt a respite with the Taliban out of power. For women, the doors to education and work finally were opened.

"I never thought I would go to America. I hadn't even seen American soldiers up close until they left and the Taliban came back" four years ago, Suraiya said. "My family was in Afghanistan. I just wanted to be here doing the things my parents were never able to do."

Amir, an aspiring musician with thick, curly black hair and an optimistic smile that crinkles the corners of his eyes, would spend weekends working as a wedding DJ. Suraiya, his more reserved older sister, studied computer science in a public university sitting side by side with men.

Suraiya dreamed of a career, but that changed in her third semester in college in 2021, when the Taliban-led government resumed a yearslong effort to systematically exclude women from much of society.

Taliban officials came to her classes and told women they were no longer allowed to attend school alongside men. She was transferred to a Taliban-run school, where women were only allowed to study dentistry. Ultimately, women were banned from higher education.

For Amir, work evaporated when the Taliban prohibited most forms of music, which they said was against the teachings of Islam. In 2023, authorities announced that religious police would scour wedding halls in Kabul to enforce the ban. In 2024, they announced they had "seized and destroyed" over 21,000 instruments.

"The Taliban told me I had to quit my job a number of times. But if I gave it up, I would have lost everything – my work, my livelihood, my entire way of life," Amir said.

Under the new government, some of Afghanistan's millions of Hazaras have been killed in raids and attacks as part of a campaign of violence and discrimination. Suraiya became increasingly scared to go outside. The home she shared with her parents and five siblings felt more like a prison.

"We were considered nothing just because we were Hazaras," she said.

The Hussainis felt they had no choice but to leave.

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The Taliban government did not respond to a request for comment about criticisms of human rights concerns about their treatment of Hazaras and women under its rule.

Crossing continents

To finance their journey to the U.S., the three siblings sold everything they owned in 2023, including a family home.

Along with Bano and her husband, the siblings traveled to neighboring Iran, where they spent a year applying for a humanitarian visa to Brazil. While they waited, Bano gave birth to her first daughter.

In Iran, the family and the baby lived in a ramshackle home in Tehran, eluding detection to avoid being swept up in deportations by Iran's government. In spring of 2024, their spirits lifted when they boarded a flight to Brazil with new humanitarian visas. A world of possibilities seemed to await.

The airport in Sao Paulo is the starting point for many migrants traveling to reach the U.S. In a span of months, the Hussaini family crossed 11 countries, winding their way north by bus through the high-altitude deserts of Bolivia and the dense forests of the Andes.

Suraiya carried a hair clip her mother had given her and a few totems from friends. Then, in Ecuador, those small pieces of her former life were stolen.

The siblings joined more than a million people who crossed the Darien Gap between 2022 and 2024. Controlled by criminal gangs, the perilous stretch of jungle dividing Colombia and Panama has turned into a migratory highway for those fleeing economic crisis, repression and war.

Suraiya remembers the pouring rain and the crying of her sister's baby as they trudged through the rainforest. By the time they climbed out of the jungle days later, their shoes were in tatters.

Only able to speak their native Dari, they did their best to learn small words like "amigo" and basic questions to communicate.

One night, she heard that three people, including a 6-year-old child, had drowned in the river next to where they were sleeping.

For the first time, she wondered if they had made a mistake.

"Nothing was as difficult as the jungle. ... I had never seen anything like it," she said. "There was this feeling of regret, but there was no way to go back."

Asylum contracting globally

As they were traveling, access to asylum was constricting globally. In September, the United Nations refugee agency warned that governments around the world, namely the U.S. and European countries, were increasingly undermining the global convention on refugees and asylum-seekers.

"The institution of the asylum worldwide is under more threat now than it has ever been," Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, assistant high commissioner for protection at the agency, told reporters.

Experts describe the shift as "protection fatigue" triggered by rising rates of displacement around the world.

By the end of 2024, 123.2 million people worldwide – approximately 1 in 67 people – were living forcibly displaced from their homes, according to the U.N.

"Governments have gotten much less tolerant of asylum," said Susan Fratzke, a senior policy analyst at Migration Policy Institute. "Rather than trying to solve these problems within their asylum systems, they're increasingly turning to measures that really push the boundaries of what's legal."

Democratic President Joe Biden's administration had already been cutting access to asylum and trying to slow the flow of migrants before the 2024 election. Under Republican Trump, access to asylum along the U.S-Mexico border has virtually disappeared.

Governments from Europe to Australia to Asia have heightened restrictions and even imposed laws criminalizing asylum-seekers.

Nigel Farage, the head of the United Kingdom's far-right party, promised to carry out mass deportations if it wins elections next year, regardless of the dangers that asylum-seekers may face back home.

"We cannot be responsible for all the sins that take place around the world," Farage said.

'No other country will take you'

Amir, Suraiya, Bano and her husband and daughter arrived in Mexico in the fall of 2024. Like many asy-

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lum-seekers, they spent nearly half a year in limbo waiting for the chance to make their case to American authorities.

They would wake up and immediately apply for an appointment on a Biden-era app, known as CBP One, a daily lottery under which more than 900,000 people entered the U.S. without a visa for up to two years, with eligibility for a work permit and a shot at getting asylum through immigration courts. It was a game of chance and patience more than circumstance.

To pay for a small room they shared with other migrants, they cleaned the streets of Mexico City for coins. They went to bed each night unsure of their fate.

In January, they received word that their names were selected. As they made their way to the Tijuana-San Diego border, their once-vague ambitions gave way to imaginings of returning to college, finding work and building a life in the U.S.

But the date of their appointment was Jan. 24, four days after Trump took office. Their plan to seek asylum disappeared when his new administration shut down the app and canceled all appointments, stranding tens of thousands of people like the Hussainis in Mexico.

Desperate, the family decided to cross the border illegally and present themselves to authorities as refugees in early February. American and international law allows vulnerable populations to seek asylum regardless of whether they enter legally, but under Trump that has virtually disappeared.

The family crossed a muddy Alamar River running along the border. Reeking of sewage, they were detained by Border Patrol agents who brought them to a detention center near San Diego that was wedged between farms along the border fence.

The few belongings — phones, passports and a small packet of medicine — they had left were seized and the family was torn apart.

Locked in the concrete facility for more than a week and wearing the same grimy clothes, the siblings begged authorities to see each other or to call family in Afghanistan and in the U.S. for help.

It was all in vain. They were not told where they were going and were not permitted to present their asylum case.

"You have no options," Suraiya remembers being told by U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers. "Because you have been in prison here in the U.S., no other country will take you."

Within weeks, the Hussaini siblings were loaded onto three separate planes that would scatter them overseas, setting each on very different paths.

Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said their case was a "sob story" and that reporting on their separation was "pure garbage." She did not answer multiple questions inquiring why the siblings were separated and sent to other countries. She said those seeking humanitarian protection should ask at official border crossings, not enter illegally, even as that path has become largely impossible under Trump.

"These are grown adults who made a choice to try and enter our country illegally," she said.

A family torn apart

Amir felt utterly alone.

It was March. He had spent two sleepless days and nights aboard commercial airlines with no hint where he was headed.

His plane stopped in Dubai, where he stepped out into the white halls and flashing lights of the airport. Armed guards met him, soon confirming his suspicion that he would be returned to Afghanistan.

He sobbed for hours in a cell at the airport and begged guards not to send him back. He went to the restroom and tore up documents confirming his asylum appointment and deportation papers, anything that could provide evidence to the Taliban that he had sought asylum in the U.S.

Shortly after, he said he was forced aboard a plane to Kabul.

"At first there were two soldiers, then there were four. I kept refusing to board and they dragged me onto the plane while I cried," he said.

The stories of people like the Hussainis are mostly lost in the headlines about U.S. Immigration and

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Customs Enforcement raids and deportations, which have only accelerated.

ICE averaged 710 arrests a day during Trump's first six months in office, up from 311 a day during the final budget year under Biden, according to agency data obtained by Deportation Data Project, based at University of California, Berkeley and analyzed by The Associated Press.

Less visible is the human toll of the policies and what is in store for those denied asylum when they return home.

Migrants are often dropped back into the circumstances that forced them to flee, and they also often face a combination of economic deprivation, physical danger and social exile.

In Afghanistan, with no political opposition, the Taliban wield unchecked power and have targeted everything from civil society to musicians, while extremist groups attack Hazara minorities.

The U.N. has urged member nations not to deport anyone, even those who have been denied asylum, to Afghanistan.

In a July report, the U.N. warned that people being returned to Afghanistan increasingly face "threats, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and ill-treatment" only exacerbated by closing pathways out of the country. As a result, they are forced into hiding.

Despite that, ICE arrests of Afghans in the U.S. have jumped along with that of people of other nationalities since Trump took office, compared with arrests during the final year of the Biden administration.

Living in the shadows in Afghanistan

Back in Afghanistan's capital of 5 million people, fear follows Amir like a shadow.

When he returned, he walked through the Kabul airport with his eyes cast downward, terrified he would be targeted.

"The dangers I face are these: If I am arrested, I will be questioned about why I left the country. Secondly, I might be accused of being a spy because I came back from America," he said. "Simply fleeing the country is itself considered a threat."

Every night, he tries to sleep in a new place, often with friends or extended family, though many of them have cast him away, worried they could become targets.

"Most nights I am alone. I try not to communicate with many people," he said.

After he had his phone searched at a police checkpoint, Amir began to delete messages and contacts in his phone. He wants to work, but worries that returning to the same place every day could draw attention. That's only been exacerbated by soaring unemployment and instability fueled by mass-expulsions of Afghans from nearby countries.

His money gone, Amir has been left to ask friends for assistance.

He awakens each day to shrinking options. Sleep eludes him, fear grips him, hunger torments him. He tries to not let hopelessness overwhelm him.

"I've lost everything," he said. "You lose hope in life."

Dropped in a legal 'black hole' in Central America

Amir's sisters tried to track him down and search for help, writing aid groups and anyone they could for help or more details on his whereabouts. That was when Suraiya first messaged The Associated Press, and when months of correspondence with journalists began. AP later spoke to Suraiya from a migrant refuge in Panama, with Amir over the phone as he hid away in Kabul, and maintained contact with them in their native Dari since.

The sisters struggled to aid their brother as they struggled in their own world of precarity.

In early February, his sisters were awakened by officials in the morning in their cells in the California detention center and loaded onto separate flights to Central America.

Bano, her husband and 1-year-old daughter were sent to Costa Rica. Suraiya was sent alone to Panama, part of a larger deal struck with the U.S. government.

They were sent with 400 other people fleeing war and repression in Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, China and Sudan, and were among the first to be deported from the U.S. and dropped in third countries. Others have been sent to El Salvador, South Sudan, Eswatini and Mexico.

Human rights groups have argued that those deportees have been dropped into a legal "black hole,"

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part of a punitive strategy by the administration to dissuade others from attempting the journey north. Panama's then-vice foreign minister told the AP that the government was detaining deportees such as Suraiya to help the Trump administration "send a signal of deterrence."

In October, the chief of the U.N.'s refugee agency suggested that Trump's deportations practices were breaking international law.

Without speaking Spanish or English or having the money to pay for a lawyer, people deported to third countries often lack basic legal protections and have few ways out.

The increasing use of such deportations have fueled concern that the governments are creating a roving population of migrants with few safeguards.

In a September AP-NORC poll, three in four of those polled said the U.S. opening its doors to refugees fleeing violence in their own countries should be a high or moderate priority, marking a slight warming by Americans toward refugee populations since just before Trump took office. Nearly half of Americans maintain that Trump's deportation efforts have gone too far, an opinion split along partisan lines.

'We cannot stay here'

Suraiya stepped out of the military plane into thick tropical air feeling disoriented. She tried to figure out where she was. Then she saw guards with uniforms that said "Panama," the same place she had passed through months before.

She and some 200 migrants were locked into hotel rooms in the country's capital. While some deportees held up signs reading "help," Suraiya peered down at the city from her window, held a hand up to her head and cried.

"It was a feeling of hopelessness and heartbreak, like being beaten down," she said. "After all the hardships, after the long journey and the struggles of the jungle, they brought us back."

One late February night, she said Panamanian officials took them from their beds and drove them to a remote camp in the Darien Gap, where their phones were seized.

In jungle heat, guards threatened to send them back to their home countries, and fed the detainees rotten food, Suraiya, other detainees and human rights groups said. Officials refused to provide an increasing number of sick people medicine unless they paid, detainees said.

Facing international criticism, Panamanian authorities dropped Suraiya and others on the streets of Panama City. Human rights groups later offered them shelter in a former school.

It was there, in the small brick gymnasium, that she heard from her siblings for the first time in weeks.

In Costa Rica, Bano and her family were bused with hundreds of others to a former factory that was turned into a migrant detention facility along the Panama border.

The hundreds of migrants, including 81 children, were barred from leaving the facility for months. That led to a lawsuit by a human rights group arguing that the government had subjected the kids to "inhuman treatment."

Later released and given temporary protections in Costa Rica, Bano and her family have spent the past months applying for asylum in Canada and Switzerland. She said the countries refused.

"In Costa Rica, we have no one from our country, no friends, no family, and no money," Bano said. "We cannot stay here."

What weighs on Suraiya most, though, is her brother.

She spends her days glued to her phone in a sparsely furnished room she shares with other Afghan deportees, checking on Amir and writing to human rights organizations. A small fan cuts through the afternoon heat.

"From afar, I can't help my brother at all," she said. "I saw with my own eyes everything he went through on our journey. I knew his goals, his dreams. But when he was deported to Afghanistan, I knew that was all gone."

Finding refuge in one country willing to open its doors

In September, Suraiya finally found some relief as she boarded a plane out of the Panama City airport. After months of humanitarian groups searching and herself going door to door to foreign consulates

with other Afghans in a push to find any place that would accept them, Chile agreed to open its doors.

As she looked out on the Andean mountains towering over the Chilean capital, Santiago, and wandered the streets of her new city, she allowed herself to wonder what her new life would look like.

Perhaps she would return to school. She thought first of getting Amir out of Afghanistan, then of her sister stranded in Costa Rica, then her younger sisters whose studies had been cut off just like hers. She thought of the future she could finally build.

When she arrived at her new home and called her parents, the first thing she said was, "All I want is for you to come so we can build a life together."

Trump-Kim meeting speculation flares ahead of US president's visit to South Korea

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

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The last time U.S. President Donald Trump visited South Korea in 2019, he made a surprise trip to the border with North Korea for an impromptu meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to revive faltering nuclear talks.

Now, as Trump is set to make his first trip to Asia since his return to office, speculation is rife that he may seek to meet Kim again during his stop in South Korea. If realized, it would mark the two's first summit since their last meeting at the Korean border village of Panmunjom in June 2019, and fourth overall.

Many experts say prospects for another impromptu meeting aren't bright this time but predict Trump and Kim could eventually sit down for talks again in coming months. Others dispute that, saying a quick resumption of diplomacy isn't still likely given how much has changed since 2019 — both the size of North Korea's nuclear program and its foreign policy leverage.

Talks of fresh diplomacy

Trump has repeatedly expressed his desire to restore diplomacy with Kim as he boasted of his relationship with the North Korean leader and called him "a smart guy." Ending his silence on Trump's outreach, Kim last month said he held "good personal memories" of Trump and suggested he could return to talks if the U.S. drops "its delusional obsession with denuclearization" of North Korea.

Both Washington and Pyongyang haven't hinted at any high-profile meeting ahead of the Oct. 31-Nov. 1 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in South Korea. But South Korea's Unification Minister Chung Dong-young told lawmakers in mid-October that it was possible for Trump and Kim to meet at Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone again when the U.S. president comes to South Korea after visiting Malaysia and Japan.

"We should see prospects for their meeting have increased," said Ban Kil Joo, assistant professor at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy in Seoul. He cited the recent suspension of civilian tours to the southern side of Panmunjom and Kim's comments about a possible return to talks.

If the meeting doesn't occur, Ban said Kim will likely determine whether to resume diplomacy with Trump when he holds a major ruling party conference expected in January.

No notable logistical preparations that imply an impending Kim-Trump meeting have been reported, but observers note that the 2019 get-together was arranged only a day after Trump issued an unorthodox meeting invitation by tweet.

Kim's greater leverage

Since his earlier diplomacy with Trump fell apart due to disputes over U.S.-led sanctions on North Korea, Kim has accelerated the expansion of an arsenal of nuclear-capable missiles designed to strike the U.S. and its allies. He has also strengthened his diplomatic footprint by aligning with Russia over its war in Ukraine and tightening relations with China.

Subsequently, Kim's sense of urgency for talks with the United States could be much weaker now than it was six years ago, though some experts argue Kim would need to brace for the end of the Russia-Ukraine war.

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"Considering the current situation, it seems difficult to imagine Kim Jong Un coming over for talks," said Kim Tae-hyung, a professor at Seoul's Soongsil University.

With an enlarged nuclear arsenal, stronger diplomatic backing from Russia and China and the weakening enforcement of sanctions, Kim has greater leverage and clearly wants the U.S. to acknowledge North Korea as a nuclear power, a status needed to call for the lifting of U.N. sanctions. But that would run counter to the U.S. and its allies' long-held position that sanctions would stay in place unless North Korea fully abandons its nuclear program.

"If a meeting with Kim Jong Un happens, Trump would brag of it and boast he's the one who can resolve Korean Peninsula issues as well, so he has something to gain ... But would the U.S. have something substantial to give Kim Jong Un in return?" said Chung Jin-young, a former dean of the Graduate School of Pan-Pacific International Studies at South Korea's Kyung Hee University.

Koh Yu-hwan, a former president of South Korea's Institute of National Unification, said that any meeting between Trump and Kim around the APEC meeting is unlikely to produce meaningful results. To get Kim back to talks, Koh said Trump would have to bring something enticing him to the table this time around.

North Korea's evolving threats

Even if they don't meet this month, there are still chances for Trump and Kim to resume diplomacy later. Kim may see Trump as a rare U.S. leader willing to grant concessions like the nuclear state status, while Trump would think a meeting with Kim would give him a diplomatic achievement in the face of various domestic woes.

There are both hopes and worries about potential dialogue between Trump and Kim.

Some call for the role of diplomacy to ease the danger of North Korea's enlarged nuclear arsenal. But others caution against Trump settling for rewarding North Korea with an extensive relaxing of sanctions in return for limited steps like freezing its unfinished long-range missile program targeting the U.S. Such deals would leave North Korea with already-built, short-range nuclear missiles targeting South Korea.

Kim Taewoo, another former head of the Institute of National Unification, said "such a small deal" would still benefit South Korea's security because decades-long efforts to achieve a complete denuclearization of North Korea have made little progress.

"If North Korea possesses an ability to strike the U.S., can the U.S. freely exercise its extended deterrence pledge in the event that North Korea attacks South Korea?" Kim Taewoo said, referring to a U.S. promise to mobilize all military capabilities to protect South Korea. The country has no nuclear weapons of its own and is under the so-called U.S. "nuclear umbrella" protection.

Chung, the former university dean, said there are virtually no chances for North Korea to give up its nuclear program. But he said that giving North Korea sanctions relief in return for partial denuclearization steps would trigger calls in South Korea and Japan for their countries to also be allowed to have nuclear weapons.

NBA head coach and player charged in sprawling sports betting and Mafia-backed poker schemes

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER, TIM REYNOLDS and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The head coach of the Portland Trail Blazers and a player for the Miami Heat were arrested Thursday along with more than 30 other people in a takedown of two sprawling gambling operations that authorities said leaked inside information about NBA athletes and rigged poker games backed by Mafia families.

Portland coach Chauncey Billups was charged with participating in a conspiracy to fix high-stakes card games tied to La Cosa Nostra organized crime families that cheated unsuspecting gamblers out of at least \$7 million. Heat guard Terry Rozier was accused in a separate scheme of exploiting private information about players to win bets on NBA games.

The two indictments unsealed in New York create a massive cloud for the NBA — which opened its season this week — and show how certain types of wagers are vulnerable to massive fraud in the growing,

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multibillion-dollar legal sports-betting industry. Joseph Nocella, the top federal prosecutor for the Eastern District of New York, called it "one of the most brazen sports corruption schemes since online sports betting became widely legalized in the United States."

"My message to the defendants who've been rounded up today is this: Your winning streak has ended," Nocella said. "Your luck has run out."

Both men face money laundering and wire fraud conspiracy charges. Also charged was former NBA assistant coach and player Damon Jones, who stands accused of participating in both schemes.

"The fraud is mind boggling," FBI Director Kash Patel told reporters. "We're talking about tens of millions of dollars in fraud and theft and robbery across a multiyear investigation."

The alleged fraud, however, paled in comparison to the riches the athletes earned on the court. Billups, who was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame last year, had about \$106 million in earnings over his 17-year career. Rozier made about \$160 million in his stops in Boston, Miami and Charlotte.

Billups and Rozier have been placed on leave from their teams, according to the NBA, which said it is cooperating with authorities.

"We take these allegations with the utmost seriousness, and the integrity of our game remains our top priority," the NBA said in a statement.

Hours after his arrest, Rozier appeared in a federal court in Orlando, Florida, wearing a Charlotte Hornets sweatshirt, handcuffs and shackles. Billups appeared before a judge in Portland, Oregon. Both men were ordered released from custody on certain conditions.

Billups' attorney, Chris Heywood, issued a statement Thursday evening denying the allegations, calling his client a "man of integrity." "To believe that Chauncey Billups did what the federal government is accusing him of is to believe that he would risk his Hall-of-Fame legacy, his reputation and his freedom. He would not jeopardize those things for anything, let alone a card game," Heywood said.

Rozier's lawyer, Jim Trusty, said in a statement that his client is "not a gambler" and "looks forward to winning this fight." Trusty criticized authorities for not allowing his client to surrender on his own and accused officials of wanting "the misplaced glory of embarrassing a professional athlete with a perp walk."

Messages were left Thursday at a phone number and email address listed in public records for Jones.

Roughly 20 other defendants appeared in federal court in Brooklyn, where most of them pleaded not guilty. Many of those charged with violent crimes or with lengthy criminal records and ties to organized crime were detained.

Mafia families profited off gambling scheme, officials say

The poker scheme lured unwitting players into rigged games with the chance to compete against former professional basketball players like Billups and Jones. The games were fixed using sophisticated cheating technology, such as altered card-shuffling machines, hidden cameras in poker chip trays, special sunglasses and even X-ray equipment built into the table to read cards, authorities allege.

The scheme often made use of illegal poker games run by New York crime families that required them to share a portion of their proceeds with the Gambino, Genovese and Bonnano crime families, according to court papers. Members of those families, in turn, also helped commit violent acts, including assault, extortion and robbery, to ensure repayment of debts and the continued success of the operation, officials said in court documents.

Athletes accused of leaving games early

In the sports betting scheme, Rozier and other defendants are accused of accessing private information from NBA players or coaches that could affect a player's performance and giving that information to others so they could place wagers. Players sometimes altered their performance or took themselves out of games early to rig prop bets — a type of wager that allows gamblers to bet on whether a player will exceed a certain statistic, such as a total number of points, rebounds or assists, according to the indictment.

In one instance, Rozier, while playing for the Charlotte Hornets in 2023, told people he was planning to leave the game early with a supposed injury, allowing gamblers to place wagers earning them tens of thousands of dollars, authorities said. That game against the New Orleans Pelicans raised eyebrows at the time. Rozier played the first 9 minutes and 36 seconds of the game before leaving, citing a foot issue.

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He did not play again that season.

Posts still online from March 23, 2023, show that some bettors were furious with sportsbooks that evening when it became evident that Rozier was not going to return to the game after the first quarter, with many turning to social media to say that something “shady” had happened regarding the prop bets involving his stats for that night.

The indictments contain the descriptions of several unnamed NBA players whose injury status and availability for certain games were the source of betting activity. Those players are not accused of any wrongdoing, and there is no indication that they would have even known what was being said about their status for those games.

Those players include LeBron James, Anthony Davis and Damian Lillard. Their identities are clear based on a review of corresponding injury reports surrounding games mentioned in the indictment. The indictments show that certain defendants shared information about the availability of those players in a game on March 24, 2023, involving the Portland Trail Blazers, and two games in 2023 and 2024 involving the Los Angeles Lakers.

The NBA had investigated Rozier previously. He was in uniform as the Heat played the Magic on Wednesday in Orlando, Florida, in the season opener for both teams, though he did not play in the game.

US military flew supersonic B-1 bombers up to the coast of Venezuela

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military flew a pair of supersonic, heavy bombers up to the coast of Venezuela on Thursday, a little over a week after another group of American bombers made a similar journey as part of a training exercise to simulate an attack.

The U.S. military has built up an unusually large force in the Caribbean Sea and the waters off of Venezuela, raising speculation that President Donald Trump could try to topple Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Maduro faces charges of narcoterrorism in the U.S.

Adding to the speculation, the U.S. military since early September has been carrying out lethal strikes on vessels in the waters off Venezuela that Trump says are trafficking drugs.

According to flight tracking data, a pair of B-1 Lancer bombers took off from Dyess Air Force Base in Texas on Thursday and flew through the Caribbean and up to the coast of Venezuela. A U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military operations, confirmed that a training flight of B-1s took place in the Caribbean.

The B-1 bomber can carry more bombs than any other plane in the U.S. inventory.

A similar flight of slower B-52 Stratofortress bombers was conducted in the region last week. The bombers were joined by Marine Corps F-35B stealth fighter jets — a squadron is currently based in Puerto Rico — for what the Pentagon called a “bomber attack demo” in photos online.

When Trump was asked about Thursday’s B-1 flight and if it was meant to ramp up military pressure on Venezuela, he said, “it’s false, but we’re not happy with Venezuela for a lot of reasons. Drugs being one of them.”

The U.S. force in the Caribbean includes eight warships, P-8 maritime patrol aircraft, MQ-9 Reaper drones and an F-35 fighter squadron. A submarine has also been confirmed to be operating in the waters off South America.

Trump on Wednesday said he has the “legal authority” to carry out the strikes on the alleged drug-carrying boats and suggested similar strikes could be done on land.

“We will hit them very hard when they come in by land,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. “We’re totally prepared to do that. And we’ll probably go back to Congress and explain exactly what we’re doing when we come to the land.”

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said Wednesday that the military had conducted its ninth strike, killing three people in the eastern Pacific Ocean. It followed a strike Tuesday night, also in the eastern Pacific,

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that killed two people and brought the overall death toll from the strikes to at least 37.

The latest pair of strikes expanded the Trump administration's campaign against drug trafficking in South America from the waters of the Caribbean to the eastern Pacific.

Hegseth has drawn a direct comparison between the war on terrorism that the U.S. declared after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the Trump administration's crackdown.

"Our message to these foreign terrorist organizations is we will treat you like we have treated al-Qaeda," Hegseth told reporters on Thursday at the White House.

"We will find you, we will map your networks, we will hunt you down, and we will kill you," he added.

How cheaters rigged high-stakes poker games with the mob and sports pros, according to authorities

By ANDREW DALTON Associated Press

The indictments announced Thursday of a poker cheating ring involving NBA figures and backed by the mafia emphasized their alleged high-tech cheating methods. But the con tactics they described are as old as poker itself, familiar from heist movies and James Bond films.

Shady shuffles came not from quick-handed card sharks, but tricked-out machines. Instead of mirrors or guys in the corner peeking over shoulders, there were X-ray tables and high-tech contact lenses. Low-tech signals between players and old-fashioned beatings for debtors allegedly were used too.

Here's a look at how the alleged fraudsters rigged the games, according to an unsealed indictment and the announcement from federal officials.

The poker

The underground games were illegal by their very existence, and operated by mafia families. So the indictments go out of their way to emphasize that these were extra illegal — as opposed to "straight" illegal games where at least the poker itself is legit. Texas Hold 'em was the poker they played, like most games these days. It involves very few cards — just five face-up public cards and two for each player. That potentially simplifies the scamming.

The victims and the 'face cards'

Rich targets known as "fish" were brought in by the allure of playing for high stakes in posh secret spots in Manhattan with names like "The Lexington Avenue Game," the indictment said. They were also attracted by the prospect of playing with pro athletes and coaches, including Portland Trail Blazers coach and Hall-of-Fame NBA player Chauncey Billups. The operators called these "face cards."

Billups was charged with participating in a conspiracy to fix high-stakes card games tied to La Cosa Nostra organized crime families that cheated unsuspecting gamblers out of at least \$7 million. Also charged was former NBA assistant coach and player Damon Jones.

Authorities gave no hints about the identity of the victims other than to say they were usually wealthy people who lost tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cheaters.

The "face cards" and everyone else at the table who was not a target was in on the scam.

The cheating tactics

The shuffling machine did most of the work. Using machines is common, but the advanced tech on these ones could determine the exact order of cards after a shuffle, and who was holding what once they were dealt. That information was transmitted wirelessly to someone off-site, who would send the identity of the player with the winning hand to the phone of a player at the table, known as "the quarterback."

Then it got low-tech. The "quarterback" would use classic subtle signals like touching certain chips to pass the information to the fellow cheaters. They'd all bet accordingly.

The other cheating methods

The shuffling machine con was apparently the main tactic, but the conspirators supposedly tried other gadgetry, some of it similar to the tech used to identify players' hands on poker telecasts. Authorities didn't go into detail about them, but they included:

-An X-ray table that could identify the face-down cards used in Texas Hold 'em from underneath.

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-Hidden cameras built into the trays that hold players' chips that could identify cards.

-Customized contact lenses and glasses that could detect special marks on cards.

The postgame

The cheating winners would share a percentage of their take with the game operators. The victims were often told to wire money to shell companies that laundered it. And the organizers sometimes used robbery, extortion and assault to get debtors to pay. Authorities said two game operators used their fists to extract payment from one cheated player.

Also charged was former NBA assistant coach and player Damon Jones, who stands accused of participating in a separate scheme of exploiting private information about players to win bets on NBA games.

Billups made his first court appearance Thursday before a judge in Portland, Oregon. His attorney, Chris Heywood, declined to comment after the hearing.

A message was left at a phone number and email address listed in public records for Jones.

White House East Wing demolished as Trump moves forward with ballroom construction, AP photos show

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JACQUELYN MARTIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The entire White House East Wing has been demolished as President Donald Trump moves forward with construction of a ballroom, according to photos taken Thursday by The Associated Press.

The East Wing, where first ladies created history, planned state dinners and promoted causes, is now history itself. The two-story structure of drawing rooms and offices, including workspace for first ladies and their staffs, has been turned into rubble, demolished as part of the Republican president's plan to build a ballroom nearly twice the size of the White House at an updated cost of \$300 million.

Trump said Wednesday that keeping the East Wing as is would have "hurt a very, very expensive, beautiful building," referring to the ballroom that he said presidents have wanted for years. He said he "and some friends of mine" will pay for the ballroom at no cost to taxpayers.

Higher tab for the new ballroom

The proposed ballroom was announced as a \$200 million project in July, a cost Trump publicly updated to \$250 million last week. On Thursday, he put the price tag "in the neighborhood" of \$300 million.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt attributed the demolition and higher building cost to changes that happen with any construction.

"The plans changed when the president heard counsel from the architects and the construction companies who said that in order for this East Wing to be modern and beautiful for many, many years to come, for it to be a truly strong and stable structure, this phase one that we're now in was necessary and the president wants to do right by the 'People's House,'" Leavitt said at her press briefing Thursday.

Trump said later Thursday that some \$350 million had been raised for the project, but he remained vague about his personal contribution.

"I won't be able to tell you until I finish," he told reporters, "but I'll donate whatever is needed."

White House chafes at criticism of Trump's plan

The White House has been pushing back against criticism of the ballroom plan and elimination of the East Wing by noting the history of add-ons to the Executive Mansion during its more than 200-year existence. Trump aides argue that the president's plan follows that history, even though the proposed ballroom would be the biggest of all the modifications to the White House.

Trump on Wednesday lashed out at a journalist who questioned him about criticism that he has not been transparent about what he's doing to one of the most recognized buildings in the world.

"I've shown this to everybody that would listen," he said in the Oval Office, referring to copies of renderings of the ballroom he was holding.

Leavitt said the public would continue to be apprised of changes but encouraged everyone to "just trust the process." She said a more modern East Wing would be built along with the ballroom.

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Demolition of the East Wing came as a surprise

Trump allowed the East Wing demolition to begin without advance warning Monday and despite not having approval from the relevant government agencies with jurisdiction over construction on federal buildings.

Preservationists had urged the Trump administration to halt the demolition, for which approval was not required, Leavitt said Thursday, until plans for the 90,000-square-foot (8,361-square-meter) ballroom could go through the required public review process.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation said the review process, which includes public comment, would "provide a crucial opportunity for transparency and broad engagement — values that have guided preservation of the White House under every administration going back to the public competition in 1792 that produced the building's original design."

In a letter, the Trust also expressed concern to the National Capital Planning Commission, the National Park Service and the Commission of Fine Arts that the size of the proposed ballroom will overwhelm the Executive Mansion, which stands at 55,000 square feet (5,109 square meters) "and may permanently disrupt the carefully balanced classical design of the White House."

Both commissions have jurisdiction over changes to the White House. The Park Service manages the White House grounds and has a role in the process as several trees on the South Lawn have been cut down as part of the construction. Both agencies currently are closed because of the government shutdown. Trump installed top aide Will Scharf as chairman of the planning commission.

The National Park Service said in August, after the White House announced the ballroom project, that it had provided historic preservation guidance and support as part of a broader consultation process. It said final decisions are made by the Executive Office of the President.

East Wing history

The East Wing, which is across East Executive Avenue from the Treasury Department, has been the traditional base of operations for the first lady and her staff, along with the social office, military office and the visitors office, among others. Those operations have been temporarily relocated to workspace elsewhere on the White House campus.

The East Wing is where visitors entered for public tours and to attend events, such as White House state dinners, holiday and other receptions, and events featuring the president. Tours were halted in late summer in preparation for the ballroom construction.

The wing also sat atop an emergency bunker and wrapped around the first lady's garden, which is named after Jacqueline Kennedy.

Some tourists reacted positively to the project.

"It's his house. He can do with it, you know, he's spending his money and not my taxpayer money. It's OK with me," Erich Habelt, of California, said. "And as with any old house, things need to be renovated."

The White House actually is government property, not Trump's house.

Herb Hutchison, of Alabama, pointed out that past presidents had added to the White House. Hutchison said friends who visit Washington talk often "about the need for a bigger meeting space or a hall close to the White House, and it sounds like this is going to do it. So, I don't see it as any more than making something better than it was before."

Black enrollment is waning at many elite colleges after affirmative action ban, AP analysis finds

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — After decades of gradual growth, the number of Black students enrolling at many elite colleges has dropped in the two years since the Supreme Court banned affirmative action in admissions, leaving some campuses with Black populations as small as 2% of their freshman class, according to an Associated Press analysis.

New enrollment figures from 20 selective colleges provide mounting evidence of a backslide in Black

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enrollment. On almost all of the campuses, Black students account for a smaller share of new students this fall than in 2023. At Princeton and some others, the number of new Black students has fallen by nearly half in that span.

Princeton sophomore Christopher Quire said he was stunned when a recent welcome event for Black freshmen filled just half the room. Last year, it filled up so quickly that they needed to find extra chairs.

"If this trend continues, in three years this campus will be as Black as it was in the Civil Rights era," said Quire, a member of the campus' Black Student Union. "It feels like tying our feet together and telling us to restart."

Some colleges downplayed trends spanning just two years, yet it raises questions about who should get a spot at elite campuses that open doors to the upper echelons of American life. It also emerges as the Trump administration unleashes a new campaign to police colleges it believes have quietly factored race into admissions decisions in defiance of the 2023 high court ruling.

Under scrutiny, colleges have been slower to release data

The AP analysis offers a view into 20 campuses that have released enrollment figures this fall. The national picture remains unclear as more colleges delay the release of their figures amid federal scrutiny. The AP requested data from dozens of the nation's most selective colleges, but many that had released figures by this time last year declined to share them.

Many campuses have also seen decreases in Hispanic enrollment, though they have been more scattered and less pronounced. Trends among white and Asian American students were mixed.

Yet the erosion of Black enrollment has been clear.

Among the 20 campuses, just one — Smith College — had a larger percentage of Black students in this year's freshman class than in 2023. Tulane University's numbers stayed flat. The others saw sizable dips over two years, driving down Black enrollments that were often only 7% or 8% of the student body. By contrast, Black students account for about 14% of America's high school graduates.

At the California Institute of Technology and Bates College, students who identified as Black accounted for only about 2% of freshmen this year.

At Harvard University, new figures released Thursday show a second straight year of waning Black enrollment, going from 18% of freshmen in 2023 to 11.5% this fall. Latino enrollment is also down at the Ivy League campus, while Asian American figures ticked up.

This year's admissions decisions at Swarthmore College were made the same way they were last year, but fewer Black students applied and ultimately enrolled, said Alisa Giardinelli, a college spokesperson. She said the decrease "reflects the new legal landscape, one in which we expected to see these numbers fluctuate."

Students notice dramatic changes

Princeton University appeared to weather the turmoil last year when its racial makeup remained about level. But this fall, the number of Black students fell to 5% of the new class, down from 9% last year. The last time Black students represented such a small share of new students was 1968, according to The Daily Princetonian, a student newspaper.

Princeton spokesperson Jennifer Morrill said it's the result of natural fluctuations in the application pool, adding that Princeton has "scrupulously adhered" to the court's requirements.

Some students say it can't be ignored. Quire, the sophomore, said it threatens decades of progress at a campus that has become a stepping stone for social mobility.

"We're very confused as to what changed and whether we should be expecting this to be a fluke," Quire said.

Trump ramps up oversight of college admissions

Other factors could be contributing to the swings, said James Murphy, a director at the Education Reform Now think tank who is tracking fallout from the affirmative action ruling. The Biden administration's troubled rollout of a new federal financial aid form could have played a role, he said, and some colleges may be backing away from diversity initiatives the Trump administration has sought to eliminate.

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"Not too many institutions of higher education have stepped up and pushed back against the White House," Murphy said. "I do expect that there will be increased pressure to come up with the numbers that the Trump administration wants."

President Donald Trump escalated his scrutiny of college admissions in August, ordering schools to divulge vast troves of admissions data each year. It's aimed at catching colleges that he accuses of using "racial proxies" to sway admissions decisions, including diversity statements that invite students to discuss their backgrounds.

Conservative organizations have also kept close watch. Last year, Students for Fair Admissions threatened to sue Princeton, Yale and Duke universities when their Asian American enrollments fell after the ruling — an outcome the organization said was "not possible under true race neutrality." The group argued Black, Latino and white students were being admitted to elite colleges over more qualified Asian American students.

Some still see ways to build campus diversity

On average, the decreases don't appear to be as steep as some college leaders predicted, said Richard Kahlenberg, a researcher at the Progressive Policy Institute. And he believes colleges can still do more to promote racial diversity, such as giving greater preference to students from lower-income families and eliminating legacy preferences that tend to benefit wealthy, white students.

"I wouldn't want people to draw from the data a conclusion that the situation is hopeless," he said.

Earlier this month, Princeton junior Kennedy Beal was walking across campus with her older brother, who was visiting, when he asked a question she couldn't answer: "Where are all the Black men?" They had been wandering around campus for more than two hours and saw none.

Beal said it sends the message that Black students don't belong there. With few Black students on campus to begin with, it feels like her sense of community is being stripped away, she said.

"It feels like we're being set back in time a little bit, and it's heartbreaking to see. But at the same time, I still have faith that we will persevere," Beal said. "We will continue to demonstrate our excellence in these institutions."

Trump administration finalizes plan to open pristine Alaska wildlife refuge to oil and gas drilling

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — The Trump administration on Thursday finalized plans to open the coastal plain of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to potential oil and gas drilling, renewing a long-simmering debate over whether to drill in one of the nation's environmental jewels.

U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum announced the decision Thursday that paves the way for future lease sales within the refuge's 1.5 million-acre (631,309 hectare) coastal plain, an area that's considered sacred by the Indigenous Gwich'in. The plan fulfills pledges made by President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans to reopen this portion of the refuge to possible development. Trump's bill of tax breaks and spending cuts, passed during the summer, called for at least four lease sales within the refuge over a 10-year period.

Burgum was joined in Washington, D.C., by Alaska Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy and the state's congressional delegation for this and other lands-related announcements, including the department's decision to restore oil and gas leases in the refuge that had been canceled by the prior administration.

A federal judge in March said the Biden administration lacked authority to cancel the leases, which were held by a state corporation that was the major bidder in the first-ever lease sale for the refuge held at the end of Trump's first term.

Leaders in Indigenous Gwich'in communities near the refuge consider the coastal plain sacred, noting its importance to a caribou herd they rely upon, and they oppose drilling there. Leaders of Kaktovik, an Iñupiaq community within the refuge, support drilling and consider responsible oil development to be key to their region's economic well-being.

"It is encouraging to see decisionmakers in Washington advancing policies that respect our voice and

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support Kaktovik's long term success," Kaktovik Iñupiat Corp. President Charles "CC" Lampe said in a statement.

A second lease sale in the refuge, held near the end of President Joe Biden's term, yielded no bidders but critics of the sale argued it was too restrictive in scope.

Meda DeWitt, Alaska senior manager with The Wilderness Society, said that with Thursday's announcement the administration "is placing corporate interests above the lives, cultures and spiritual responsibilities of the people whose survival depends on the Porcupine caribou herd, the freedom to live from this land and the health of the Arctic Refuge."

The actions detailed Thursday are consistent with those laid out by Trump on his return to office in January, which also included calls to speed the building of a road to connect the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay.

Burgum on Thursday announced completion of a land exchange deal aimed at building the road that would run through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. King Cove residents have long sought a land connection through the refuge to the all-weather airport at Cold Bay, seeing it as vital to accessing emergency medical care. Dunleavy and the congressional delegation have supported the effort, calling it a life and safety issue.

Conservationists vowed a legal challenge to the agreement, with some tribal leaders worried a road will drive away migratory birds they rely on. The refuge, near the tip of the Alaska Peninsula, contains internationally recognized habitat for migrating waterfowl. Past land exchange proposals have been met with controversy and litigation.

The Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental group, said the latest land agreement would exchange about 500 acres (202 hectares) of "ecologically irreplaceable wilderness lands" within the refuge for up to 1,739 acres (703.7 hectares) of King Cove Corp. lands outside the refuge. Tribal leaders in some communities further north, in Yup'ik communities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region, have expressed concerns that development of a road would harm the migratory birds important to their subsistence ways of life.

"Along with the Native villages of Hooper Bay and Paimiut, we absolutely plan to challenge this decision in court," said Cooper Freeman, the center's Alaska director.

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, told reporters she has been fighting for the land access for King Cove throughout her tenure and has been to both the community and the refuge. She called the refuge a "literal bread basket" for many waterfowl and said it was in everyone's interest to ensure that a road is built with minimal disturbance.

"I think it's important to remember that nobody's talking about a multi-lane paved road moving lots of big trucks back and forth," she said. "It is still an 11-mile, one-lane, gravel, noncommercial-use road."

Here's how indictment says Terry Rozier shared information that paid off for bettors

By ED WHITE Associated Press

NBA guard Terry Rozier was averaging nearly 21 points per game for the Charlotte Hornets as the 2022-23 season neared an end. But during a game against the New Orleans Pelicans, he scored only 5 and played less than 10 minutes before claiming he was hurt.

The injury? It was fake and the fix was in as part of a scheme to help sports bettors, according to a federal grand jury indictment unsealed Thursday in New York.

That episode is at the heart of a stunning scandal that is rocking the NBA. Rozier, a pal and others were charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and money laundering.

Here's how authorities say the alleged scheme went down:

Explaining prop bets and how feds say they were used

Those placing prop bets don't wager on the outcome of a game. Rather, they put money on individual player statistics, such as whether a player finishes over or under a certain total of points, rebounds or

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assists.

The indictment reveals how the widely popular bets can be exploited with inside information from locker rooms.

Before the Hornets-Pelicans game, Rozier told a longtime friend that he was "going to prematurely remove himself from the game in the first quarter due to a supposed injury and not return," the indictment states.

That meant bettors who knew Rozier was staying on the bench could easily wager that his point total would be under his typical average. On the flip side, gamblers who took the "over" with no inside information were out of the money when they bet that he would score more than 21 points.

How inside information was allegedly shared

Rozier's friend, Deniro "Niro" Laster, shared the information with others, who placed more than \$250,000 in prop bets — and it paid off, according to the indictment.

Laster collected tens of thousands of dollars from people who cashed in on the inside information and then drove to Rozier's home in Charlotte, North Carolina, where they "counted the money" a week later, the indictment says.

The indictment also has descriptions of several unnamed NBA players whose availability for certain games was the source of betting activity. Their identities are clear based on a review of injury reports for games mentioned in the indictment. Those players are not accused of wrongdoing, and there is no indication that they would have even known what was being said about their game status. They include LeBron James, Anthony Davis and Damian Lillard.

Damon Jones, who was an unofficial assistant coach for the Los Angeles Lakers in 2022-23, was also charged. He's accused of sharing non-public information about the status of players in two Lakers games in 2023 and 2024.

In the 2023 game, Jones is accused of texting others that a certain player who was not on the injury report still would miss the game with a lower body injury. James, who had earlier been listed as questionable, did not play because of ankle issues.

"Get a big bet on Milwaukee tonight before the information is out!" Jones said in a text, according to the indictment.

Rozier's attorney, Jim Trusty, said Rozier is "not a gambler" and "looks forward to winning this fight."

It wasn't immediately known if Laster or Jones had lawyers who could comment on the allegations.

Trump backs off planned surge of federal agents into San Francisco after talking to the mayor

By TERRY CHEA and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday that he's backing off a planned surge of federal agents into San Francisco to quell crime after speaking to the mayor and several prominent business leaders who said they're working hard to clean up the city.

Trump had been threatening to send the National Guard to San Francisco, a move Mayor Daniel Lurie and Gov. Gavin Newsom said was unnecessary because crime is on the decline. Separately, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents began arriving at a Coast Guard base in the region earlier Thursday for a possible ramp up of immigration enforcement, a move that drew several hundred protesters.

It was not clear if the president was canceling a National Guard deployment or calling off immigration enforcement by CBP agents. At his news conference, Lurie said he could not clarify and could only repeat what the president had told him. Lurie said Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem "reaffirmed" Trump's commitment on Thursday morning. DHS oversees CBP agents as well as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"The Federal Government was preparing to 'surge' San Francisco, California, on Saturday, but friends of mine who live in the area called last night to ask me not to go forward with the surge," Trump posted on social media. "I spoke to Mayor Lurie last night and he asked, very nicely, that I give him a chance to see if he can turn it around."

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Specifically, Trump said he heard from Salesforce CEO Mark Benioff and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang. He said the federal government could handle crime better than city leaders, and he indicated he could still send agents in the future.

At an afternoon news conference, Lurie said he welcomes the city's "continued partnership" with the Drug Enforcement Agency and other federal authorities to get illegal narcotics off the streets and contribute to San Francisco's falling crime rates.

"But having the military and militarized immigration enforcement in our city will hinder our recovery," the mayor said. Trump's assertions of out-of-control crime in the city of roughly 830,000 have baffled local and state leaders, who point to statistics showing that many crimes are at record lows.

Newsom's office said on X: "Trump has finally, for once, listened to reason — and heard what we have been saying from the beginning. The Bay Area is a shining example of what makes California so special, and any attempt to erode our progress would damage the work we've done."

Protesters assembled just after dawn at Coast Guard Island in Alameda, California, where CBP agents were arriving before Trump made his remarks. Several hundred people stood outside the facility, with many singing hymns and carrying signs saying, "Protect our neighbors" and "No ICE or troops in the Bay."

Police used at least one flash-bang grenade to clear a handful of demonstrators from the entrance as CBP vehicles drove onto the base. Organizers urged protesters to remain peaceful, as a line of Coast Guard officers in helmets watched from just outside the entrance.

Protester Gala King participated in an interfaith vigil against the federal crackdown and in support of immigrants.

"The Bay Area is a beautiful place full of diversity, and we are here to protect that," King said. "Our faith traditions, our interfaith traditions, call on us to stand on the side of justice, to stand on the side of those that are most marginalized, that are most targeted right now."

Coast Guard Island is an artificial island formed in 1913, and the Coast Guard first established a base there in 1926. The island is owned by the federal government and is not open to the general public, so escorts or specific government ID cards are required for visitors. The Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Trump has deployed the Guard to Washington, D.C., and Memphis, Tennessee, to help fight what he says is rampant crime. Los Angeles was the first city where Trump deployed the Guard, arguing it was necessary to protect federal buildings and agents as protesters fought back against immigration arrests.

He has also said they are needed in Chicago and Portland, Oregon. Lawsuits from Democratic officials in both cities have so far blocked troops from going onto city streets.

States worry about how to fill the gap in food aid ahead of a federal benefits halt

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Officials in Louisiana, Vermont and Virginia pledged Thursday to keep food aid flowing to recipients in their states, even if the federal program is stalled next month because of the government shutdown.

The fate of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which helps about 1 in 8 Americans buy groceries, is becoming a deep concern as it gets closer to Nov. 1, when the benefits could dry up without either a resolution of the federal government shutdown or other action.

Other states have explored using their own funds to prop up the program but have run into technical roadblocks, and it wasn't clear whether the three newly announced plans have answers for those. Legislative officials in Vermont said they're waiting word from the state administration on how the benefit would be delivered.

Here's what to know.

Some states are announcing plans, but details have been scarce

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, said he was declaring a state of emergency to provide food benefits to SNAP beneficiaries. A spokesperson said details on how it would work are coming later.

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Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry, another Republican, said he was making it a top priority to make sure “seniors, individuals with disabilities, and children who rely on food stamps do not go hungry in Louisiana,” but he has also not detailed how.

New Hampshire officials announced a plan to increase access to food through food banks and mobile pantries. It would require approval of a legislative committee in the GOP-controlled state.

Vermont lawmakers also said Thursday they intend to have the state cover both the food aid and heating fuel assistance that’s at risk.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, said this week that he would deploy the National Guard to help food banks. “This is serious, this is urgent – and requires immediate action,” he said.

States have limited ability to help

Officials from Alaska, New Mexico and North Dakota have said that they’ve considered using state money to keep the food aid flowing but fear a federal government directive may make that impossible.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees SNAP, told states earlier this month not to send information to the vendors who provide the debit cards because of uncertainty about whether the program would be funded in November.

Officials in the states say that federal control of the system appears to stand in the way of their attempts to fund the program on their own.

“Without action from USDA, I think it is highly unlikely that any states would issue November SNAP benefits,” Carolyn Vega, a policy analyst at the advocacy group Share Our Strength, said in an email. “On top of the technical challenges, states can’t shoulder that cost, especially with the risk it wouldn’t be refunded.”

It’s not certain the program will be paused, but it’s looking likely

Lower-income families who qualify for SNAP receive debit cards loaded each month by the federal government that work only for groceries at participating stores and farmers markets.

The average monthly benefit is \$187 per person. Most beneficiaries have incomes at or below the poverty level.

Time is running short to keep benefits flowing in November.

Congress and President Donald Trump could strike a deal to end the federal shutdown that started Oct. 1.

It’s also possible that the Trump administration would allocate money for the program even if the shutdown continues. The liberal Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that about \$5 billion is available in a contingency fund and is calling on the administration to use that for partial benefits in November, but it’s not clear if that’s being seriously discussed.

Forty-six of the 47 Democrats in the U.S. Senate sent a letter Thursday to Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins calling on her to release the contingency money.

The USDA has not answered questions from The Associated Press about whether those funds might be tapped.

States have also indicated that there could be a delay in benefits even if a deal is struck to fund SNAP for November.

Losing SNAP could mean tough choices for beneficiaries

Sylvia Serrano gets \$100 every month to help buy groceries for herself and the four grandchildren she’s raising in Camden, New Jersey.

Two of her grandkids have autism, and because of their aversions to certain textures they eat only certain foods that are unlikely to be available at food banks.

The act of getting food could also be harder for her without SNAP. She now does her shopping while the kids are at school, using a grocery store that’s close to home due to her not-so-reliable car.

She says that with SNAP, she can mostly stay up on her other expenses. Without it? “I would have to send less payment into a bill or something in order to cover the needs and then the bills are going to get behind,” Serrano said.

Some states are encouraging stocking up and seeking other help

Some states are telling SNAP recipients to be ready for the benefits to stop.

Arkansas is advising recipients to identify food pantries and other groups that might be able to help, and

to ask friends and family for aid.

It's unclear whether any benefits left on recipients EBT cards on Nov. 1 will be available to use. Arkansas officials suggest people who have balances on their cards to use it this month on shelf-stable foods.

Missouri and Pennsylvania officials, on the other hand, expect previous benefits will remain accessible and are telling beneficiaries to save for November if they can.

Oklahoma is encouraging people who receive benefits to visit a state website that connects people with nonprofits, faith-based groups, Native American tribes and others that may be able to help with food.

Food banks could be the fallback for many beneficiaries

Separate federal program cuts this year have already put food banks that supply food pantries in a tough spot, said George Matysik, the executive director of Share Food Program in Philadelphia.

So dealing with an anticipated surge in demand could be tough.

Matysik said it's especially acute for his organization and others in Pennsylvania, where a state government budget impasse has meant at least a pause in another funding stream. He said the group has had to cut about 20% of its budget, or \$8.5 million, this year.

"Any time we have a crisis, it's always the working class that feels the pain first," he said.

Trump pardons Binance founder Changpeng Zhao, high-profile cryptocurrency figure

By WILL WEISSERT and ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has pardoned Binance founder Changpeng Zhao, who created the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange and served prison time for failing to stop criminals from using the platform to move money connected to child sex abuse, drug trafficking and terrorism.

The pardon caps a months-long effort by Zhao, a billionaire commonly known as CZ in the crypto world and one of the biggest names in the industry. He and Binance have been key supporters of some of the Trump family's crypto enterprises.

"Deeply grateful for today's pardon and to President Trump for upholding America's commitment to fairness, innovation, and justice," Zhao said on social media Thursday.

Zhao served four months in prison after reaching a deal with the Justice Department to plead guilty to charges of enabling money laundering at Binance. But, in explaining the pardon, Trump said of Zhao, "He was recommended by a lot of people."

"A lot of people say that he wasn't guilty of anything," Trump said. "He served four months in jail and they say that he was not guilty of anything."

The president added that he didn't believe he'd ever met Zhao personally, but had "been told" he "had a lot of support, and they said that what he did is not even a crime." He said Zhao had been "persecuted by the Biden administration."

"I gave him a pardon at the request of a lot of very good people," Trump said.

It's the latest move by a president who has flexed his executive power to bestow clemency on political allies, prominent public figures and others convicted of crimes.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt announced the pardon in a statement and later told reporters in a briefing that the White House counsel's office "thoroughly reviewed" the request. She said the administration of Democratic President Joe Biden pursued "an egregious oversentencing" in the case, was "very hostile to the cryptocurrency industry" and Trump "wants to correct this overreach."

The crypto industry has also long complained it was subject to a "regulation by enforcement" ethos under the Biden administration.

Trump's pardon of Zhao fits into a broad pattern of his taking a hands-off approach to an industry that spent heavily to help him win the election in 2024. His administration has dropped several enforcement actions against crypto companies that began during Biden's term and disbanded the crypto-related enforcement team at the Justice Department.

Former federal prosecutor Mark Bini said Zhao went to prison for what "sounds like a regulatory offense,

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or at worst its kissing cousin.”

“So this pardon, while it involves the biggest name in crypto, is not very surprising,” said Bini, a white collar defense lawyer who handles crypto issues at Reed Smith.

Zhao was released from prison last year after being sentenced for violating the Bank Secrecy Act. He was the first person ever sentenced to prison time for such violations of that law, which requires U.S. financial institutions to know who their customers are, to monitor transactions and to file reports of suspicious activity. Prosecutors said no one had ever violated the regulations to the extent Zhao did.

The judge in the case said he was troubled by Zhao’s decision to ignore U.S. banking requirements that would have slowed the company’s explosive growth.

“Better to ask for forgiveness than permission,” was what Zhao told his employees about the company’s approach to U.S. law, prosecutors said. Binance allowed more than 1.5 million virtual currency trades, totaling nearly \$900 million, that violated U.S. sanctions, including ones involving Hamas’ al-Qassam Brigades, al-Qaida and Iran, prosecutors said.

“I failed here,” Zhao told the court last year during sentencing. “I deeply regret my failure, and I am sorry.”

Zhao had a remarkable path to becoming a crypto billionaire. He grew up in rural China and his family immigrated to Canada after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. As a teenager, he worked at a McDonald’s and became enamored with the tech industry in college. He founded Binance in 2017.

In addition to taking pro-crypto enforcement and regulatory positions, the president and his family have plunged headfirst into making money in crypto.

A stablecoin launched by World Liberty Financial, a crypto project founded by Trump and sons Donald Jr. and Eric, received early support and credibility thanks to an investment fund in the United Arab Emirates using \$2 billion worth of World Liberty’s stablecoin to purchase a stake in Binance. Stablecoins are a type of cryptocurrency that are typically tied to the value of the U.S. dollar.

A separate World Liberty Finance token saw a huge spike in price on Thursday shortly after news of the pardon was made public, with gains that far outpaced any other major cryptocurrency, according to data from CoinMarketCap.

Zhao said earlier this year that his lawyers had requested a pardon.

It is not immediately clear what impact Trump’s pardon of Zhao may have on operations at Binance and Binance.US, a separate arm of the main exchange offering more limited trading options to U.S. residents.

Putin deplores US sanctions as ‘unfriendly’ while EU joins in heaping restrictions on Russia

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union on Thursday heaped more economic sanctions on Russia, adding to U.S. President Donald Trump’s new punitive measures the previous day against the Russian oil industry. Russian President Vladimir Putin called Washington’s move an “unfriendly act” that could backfire by spiking global oil prices.

The American and European sanctions are intended as part of a broadened effort to choke off the revenue and supplies that fuel Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, compelling Putin to negotiate an end to the war.

Speaking to reporters in Moscow, Putin acknowledged that the “serious” U.S. sanctions will have “certain consequences” for Russia, but maintained that they will not significantly impact its economy.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has long campaigned for the international community to punish Russia more comprehensively for attacking his country, hailed the new restrictions.

“We waited for this. God bless, it will work. And this is very important,” Zelenskyy said in Brussels, where EU countries attending a summit announced the latest round of Russia sanctions.

Despite U.S.-led peace efforts in recent months, the war shows no sign of ending after nearly four years, and European leaders are increasingly concerned about the threat from Russia.

Ukrainian forces have struggled to stem slow but steady advances by Russia’s bigger army along a roughly 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line that snakes along eastern and southern Ukraine. Almost daily Russian

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long-range strikes have taken aim at Ukraine's power grid before the bitter winter, while Ukrainian forces have targeted Russian oil refineries and manufacturing plants.

Targeted sanctions

Energy revenue is the linchpin of Russia's economy, allowing Putin to pour money into the armed forces without worsening inflation and avoiding a currency collapse.

International crude prices jumped more than \$2 per barrel Thursday on news of the new U.S. sanctions against Russia's oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil.

Putin said he warned Trump that an attempt to curb Russian oil exports will destabilize global oil markets and backfire against the United States. "A sharp reduction in the amounts of our oil and oil products sent to global markets will lead to price increases," he said, adding that consumers at U.S. gas stations will feel the impact.

The sanctions don't take effect for almost a month, until Nov. 21, potentially giving Putin a chance for a change of heart.

Chris Weafer, CEO of the Macro-Advisory Ltd. consultancy, said "that's a window where they hope Russia will more seriously engage, and if it does, then those sanctions could be suspended."

"You can be sure that every oil buyer in Asia today is trying to find anything that floats that they can buy Russian oil before that sanction kicks in," Weafer told The Associated Press from London. "And therefore, Russia will sell a lot of oil in the next 30 days, which probably will help the budget for a few months."

He also noted that, unlike the European sanctions, the U.S. measures carry the threat of secondary penalties against anyone violating them. China and India are major importers of Russian oil.

The effectiveness of economic sanctions in forcing Putin's hand is questionable, analysts say. Russia's economy has proved resilient so far, although it is showing signs of strain.

The new EU measures also target Russian oil and gas. They ban imports of Russian liquefied natural gas into the bloc, and add port bans on more than 100 new ships in the Russian shadow fleet of hundreds of aging tankers that are dodging sanctions. The latest sanctions bring the total number of such ships to be banned to 557.

The measures also target transactions with a cryptocurrency increasingly used by Russia to circumvent sanctions; prohibit operations in the bloc using Russian payment cards and systems; restrict the provision of artificial intelligence services and high-performance computing services to Russian entities; and widen an export ban to include electronic components, chemicals and metals used in military manufacturing.

A new system for limiting the movement of Russian diplomats within the 27-nation EU will also be introduced.

Trump-Putin dynamics

The U.S. sanctions came after Trump said that his plan for a swift meeting with Putin in Budapest was on hold because he didn't want it to be a "waste of time." It was the latest twist in Trump's hot-and-cold efforts to end the war as Putin refuses to budge from his demands.

Putin deplored the U.S. sanctions as an "unfriendly act" that would damage relations with Washington and said that Moscow wouldn't yield to pressure.

"Such action by the U.S. administration certainly damage Russia—U.S. relations," he said. "It's an attempt to exert pressure on Russia, but no self-respecting country and self-respecting people make any decisions under pressure."

The Russian leader warned that any attempt by Ukraine to strike deep inside Russia with longer-range weapons supplied by the West will mark an escalation and trigger a "very serious not to say stunning" response from Russia. "Let them think about it," he said.

Commenting on Trump's decision to put the planned summit on hold, Putin emphasized that it was the U.S. that proposed holding it and added that it should be well prepared.

"It would be a mistake for me and the U.S. president to take it lightly and come out after the meeting without an expected result," he said. "A dialogue is always better than confrontation."

In a separate development, a Russian drone killed two Ukrainian journalists in the Donetsk region

Thursday, according to regional administration head Vadym Filashkin. The journalists, Olena Hubanova and Ievhen Karmazin, worked for Ukraine's Freedom TV channel in Ukraine.

Vance calls Israel's parliament vote on West Bank annexation an 'insult'

By RENATA BRITO and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — U.S. Vice President JD Vance on Thursday criticized a symbolic vote in Israel's parliament the previous day about annexing the occupied West Bank, saying that it amounted to an "insult" and went against the Trump administration policies.

Hard-liners in the Israeli parliament had narrowly passed a preliminary vote in support of annexing parts of the West Bank — an apparent attempt to embarrass Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu while Vance was still in the country.

The bill, which required only a simple majority of lawmakers present in the house on Wednesday, passed with a 25-24 vote. But it was unlikely to pass multiple rounds of voting to become law or win a majority in the 120-seat parliament. Netanyahu, who is opposed to it, also has tools to delay or defeat it.

Before departing Israel, Vance also unveiled new details about U.S. plans for Gaza, saying he expected reconstruction to begin soon in some " Hamas-free " areas of the territory. But he warned that rebuilding the territory after a devastating war, which began on Oct. 7, 2023, could take years.

"The hope is to rebuild Rafah over the next two to three years and theoretically you could have half a million people live (there)," he said, referring to the Gaza Strip's southernmost city.

That would account for about a quarter of the territory's population of roughly 2 million, 90% of whom were displaced from their homes during the war. Out of every 10 buildings that stood in Gaza before the war, eight are either damaged or flattened. An estimated cost of rebuilding Gaza is about \$53 billion, according to the World Bank, the U.N. and the European Union.

Vance's rebuke

The Israeli parliament's vote has stirred widespread condemnation, with more than a dozen countries — including Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia — rebuking it in a joint statement that called all Israeli settlements in the West Bank a violation of international law.

Netanyahu's office said in a statement that the "vote on annexation was a deliberate political provocation by the opposition to sow discord."

Netanyahu is struggling to stave off an early election as cracks grow more apparent between factions in Israel's right-wing parties, some of whom were upset over the ceasefire and the security sacrifices it required of Israel.

Vance said that if the Knesset's vote was a "political stunt, then it is a very stupid political stunt."

"I personally take some insult to it," Vance said. "The policy of the Trump administration is that the West Bank will not be annexed by Israel."

The deputy Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, Majed Bamyá, told the U.N. Security Council on Thursday that Palestinians "appreciate the clear message" that the Trump administration has sent in opposition to annexation.

While many members of Netanyahu's coalition, including his Likud Party, support annexation, they have backed off those calls since U.S. President Donald Trump said last month that he opposes such a move.

The Palestinians seek the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, for a future independent state. Israeli annexation of the West Bank would all but bury hopes for a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians — the outcome supported by most of the world.

Analysts like Amichai Cohen, a senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute, say that a "de facto annexation of very large parts" of the West Bank is already underway, referring to the growing number of Israelis living in settlements in the Palestinian territory — even without any law supporting annexation.

U.S. peace push

Earlier this week, Vance announced the opening of a civilian military coordination center in southern

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Israel where around 200 U.S. troops are working alongside the Israeli military and delegations from other countries planning the stabilization and reconstruction of Gaza.

The United States is seeking support from other allies, especially Gulf Arab nations, to create an international stabilization force to be deployed to Gaza and train a Palestinian force.

"We'd like to see Palestinian police forces in Gaza that are not Hamas and that are going to do a good job, but those still have to be trained and equipped," U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said before his trip to Israel.

Rubio met with Netanyahu on Thursday and, like other U.S. officials and envoys visiting Israel this week, struck a tone of optimism about progress that has been made since the ceasefire began, while noting the challenges that lie ahead.

"No one is under any illusions. We've already done the impossible once and we intend to keep doing that," he said.

Israeli media referred to the parade of American officials visiting to ensure Israel holds up its side of the fragile ceasefire as "Bibi-sitting." The term, utilizing Netanyahu's nickname of Bibi, refers to an old campaign ad when Netanyahu positioned himself as the "Bibi-sitter" whom voters could trust with their kids.

Medical needs

In the first medical evacuation since the ceasefire began on Oct. 10, the World Health Organization's director-general said Thursday that the group has evacuated 41 critical patients and 145 companions out of the Gaza Strip.

In a statement posted to X, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called on nations to show solidarity and help around 15,000 patients who are still waiting for approval to receive medical care outside Gaza.

His calls were echoed by an official with the U.N. Population Fund who on Wednesday described the "sheer devastation" that he witnessed on his most recent travel to Gaza, saying that there's no such thing as a "normal birth in Gaza now."

Andrew Saberton, an executive director at UNFPA, told reporters how difficult the agency's work has become because of the lack of functioning or even standing health care facilities.

Another major challenge since the ceasefire began has been getting enough aid into Gaza — and distributed — to meet the huge demand.

"We expected Gaza to be flooded with aid the moment the ceasefire began. But that's not what we're seeing," said Bushra Khalidi, who oversees the Palestinian territories division at Oxfam, a nonprofit focused on global poverty.

More crossings into Gaza need to be opened in order to allow in more trucks, said Antoine Renard, head of the World Food Program in the Palestinian territories.

"With only two crossings that are open, you are facing clearly congestion," he said.

The WFP has 36 distribution centers operating in Gaza, and aims to increase that to 145. Since Oct. 11, the U.N. tracking system has recorded 949 aid trucks that were offloaded in Gaza.

A Florida teenager is in an Israeli prison. Why his family and advocates say he should be released

By CURT ANDERSON, JULIA FRANKEL and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — A Florida family already grieving the beating death of a 20-year-old relative is now pleading with U.S. leaders to help free the dead man's cousin, a 16-year-old Palestinian-American from Florida who has been held in an Israeli prison for eight months.

Relatives, advocacy groups and some Congress members have been seeking the release of Mohammed Ibrahim since he was taken into custody when he was 15 by the Israeli military in February. Mohammed's 20-year-old cousin, Sayfollah Musallet, was beaten to death by settlers in the West Bank village of Al Mazra as-Sharqiya earlier this year.

"This is really about two American sisters, one who just buried her son and her older sister going to give her support and also praying that her son doesn't join the club of Americans killed overseas," said

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Mohammed's uncle, Zeyad Kadur. "They're going through this together."

"It's basically made our family numb," said Kamel Musallet, Sayfollah's father and Mohammed's uncle. "It's been over three months and there's not a day me and my wife don't cry."

Jailed while visiting family

Mohammed, of Palm Bay, Florida, was visiting family in the West Bank with his parents in February, according to the Council on American-Islamic Relations. He was arrested on Feb. 15 at a family home in their village near Ramallah for allegedly throwing rocks at Israeli settlers in the West Bank, according to the group and several members of Congress.

Israel's military has conducted regular arrest raids in the West Bank during the Israel-Hamas war, taking unprecedented numbers of Palestinians into prisons where inmates have reported poor treatment and conditions. Israel says the mass arrests are to root out militancy. But civilians and stone-throwers have been caught up in the raids — and Palestinian-Americans like Mohammed have been among them.

Israel treats stone-throwers as militants, while Palestinians widely see the practice as legitimate resistance to Israeli occupation.

The teen could get up to 20 years in prison for the alleged offense, for which his supporters say there is scant evidence.

In an affidavit provided by Kadur, Mohammed is documented as telling his Palestinian lawyer that he was assaulted by Israeli soldiers using rifle butts when he was arrested and only confessed to stone-throwing after he was threatened by interrogators with another beating.

"Initially, I refrained from confessing, but the interrogator threatened that if I did not comply, he would instruct the soldiers to beat me. Out of sheer fear, I ultimately confessed," the affidavit quotes the teen as saying.

Family says they have been kept in the dark

More than 100 U.S. faith-based, human rights and civil rights organizations have sent a joint letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio urging action to obtain Mohammed's release.

In addition, in a letter sent Tuesday to Rubio and the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, 15 U.S. senators and 12 U.S. representatives said they have "grave concern" over Mohammed's situation. They urged Rubio and Huckabee to intervene by "engaging the Israeli government directly to secure the swift release of this American boy."

Musallet said that Huckabee visited the family in July, following his son's death, raising their hopes that Mohammed would be released.

"We said, 'alhumdulillah,' at least some good has come out of it and Mohammed was going to come out of prison," Musallet said, using an Arabic phrase giving praise to God. "And 3 1/2 months later, still nothing."

Mohammed's family has been barred by the Israeli military from direct contact with their son since his arrest and has relied on sporadic reports about his condition at Israel's Megiddo and Ofer prisons from the U.S. Embassy in Israel, his advocates say.

"We hope he knows we're doing everything we can to get him out," said Zaher Ibrahim, Mohammad's father.

Kadur said Mohammed, who turned 16 while in prison, was "abducted in the middle of the night and handcuffed and blindfolded."

For his parents, "the last time they saw their son was when he was thrown in the back of a Jeep" in February, Kadur said.

"He's not even an adult," the teen's uncle said. "He's a minor and in our eyes as a family, we also believe he's a hostage because a 15-year-old taken from his bedroom at gunpoint, blindfolded and handcuffed doesn't describe the word prisoners."

Abysmal conditions described in Israel prisons

In the affidavit provided to the family by his lawyer, the teen said that cells are overcrowded, with some prisoners sleeping on mattresses on the floor, according to the affidavit.

Mohammed has lost weight and suffered a scabies infection, according to reports from the US Embassy

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shared with his family and obtained by The Associated Press.

"His health, mentally and physically, are a big question for the family," Kadur said. In April, a teenager from the West Bank who was held for six months without charge in Megiddo prison, where Mohammed spent time, became the first Palestinian under 18 to die in Israeli detention, collapsing in the prison's yard.

Defense for Children International-Palestine, whose lawyer met with Mohammed, said inmates at Ofer are given meager portions of food at breakfast and lunch, no dinner and no fresh fruit. Showers are provided but only for a short time for a group of prisoners and not everyone gets a shower, the group said.

Mohammed's mother and father remain in the West Bank, hoping to return to the U.S. with him, the group said, adding that they fear if they leave, Israel will not let them return.

Israel's military, police and Shin Bet domestic security agency did not respond to AP requests for comment about Mohammed's case. The Israel Prison Service said it does not comment on individual inmates or provide information regarding their identity, legal status, location, or charges, due to privacy, operational and security considerations.

The U.S. State Department said in a statement that it is tracking Mohammed's case closely and working with the Israeli government on the matter. It said it had no further comment due to privacy and other concerns.

Among the Palestinians apprehended during Israel's West Bank raids, some are released within days. But others, including teens, have been held without charge or trial for months. Other Americans have faced extended Israeli military detention. And at least four Palestinian Americans have been killed by the Israeli military or settlers since the war's start.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories for a future independent state.

At Ofer Prison, where Mohammed is currently held, detainees who spoke to the AP have reported meager rations of food, overcrowding and regular beatings by guards.

The teen's affidavit says he spent the first month of his incarceration being interrogated in Ofer Camp — a facility Israel's military developed during the war to house Gaza detainees that has drawn criticism for inhumane conditions.

Kadur, the teen's uncle, said he doubted other American citizens would be treated this way.

"I have to ask the question to our elected officials on any level, if his name wasn't Mohammed, if he wasn't Palestinian-American, would he still be there?" Kadur said.

"The real question is why is a 16-year-old starved and with a skin infection still there instead of back home going to a football game or getting his drivers permit?"

Backing Israel was considered mandatory for New York politicians. Then came Zohran Mamdani

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A few weeks before his stunning loss to Zohran Mamdani in the Democratic mayoral primary, former Gov. Andrew Cuomo put forth a political calculus long accepted as fact in New York: "Being a Democrat," he said, "it's synonymous that you support Israel."

Mamdani, who would be the city's first Muslim mayor, could be on the cusp of shattering that convention.

An unstinting supporter of Palestinian rights, the 34-year-old democratic socialist has accused Israel of genocide in Gaza, backed the movement to boycott the country's goods and pledged to have Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrested if he sets foot in New York.

In a city with the largest Jewish population outside of Israel, where mayors have long been expected to make the long pilgrimage to the Jewish state, Mamdani identifies proudly as an "anti-Zionist."

While he says he supports Israel's right to exist, he describes any state or social hierarchy that favors Jews over others as incompatible with his belief in universal human rights.

City officials, Mamdani often points out, have no say in American foreign policy. And he has consistently

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and emphatically rejected claims that his criticism of Israel amounts to antisemitism, promising to work closely with those whom he doesn't agree with if elected.

But as Cuomo and others have framed the race as a referendum on Israel, political observers say a Mamdani victory could reverberate far beyond New York, offering permission for Democrats to speak out on an issue long seen as a third rail of politics.

"This race is a proxy for where the party goes from here in terms of support for Israel — and that's causing a lot of consternation," said Basil Smikle, a former chief executive of the state's Democratic Party. "We're treading in territory that we've not really dealt with before."

The 'most important' issue in the race

From the beginning, Cuomo has staked much of his political comeback on painting himself as a defender of Jewish security, both in New York and the Middle East.

Shortly before launching his campaign, he announced that he had joined Netanyahu's legal defense team to defend the prime minister against war crimes charges brought by the International Criminal Court. He cast antisemitism as the "most important" issue facing the city and himself as a "hyper aggressive supporter of Israel."

Mamdani's own views, he said, presented an "existential" threat to New Yorkers.

Other candidates quickly rushed to burnish their own pro-Israel credentials, including Mayor Eric Adams, who announced he would run on an "EndAntisemitism" ballot line.

As they competed for support among Brooklyn's prominent rabbis and other Jewish voters, each equated protests for Palestinian rights with support for terrorism and backed a contentious definition of antisemitism that includes certain criticism of Israel.

Days before dropping out last month, Adams shared a smiling photo with Netanyahu.

The strategy appeared willfully ignorant of polls showing growing public disapproval in the U.S. of Israel's prosecution of the war in Gaza, according to Alyssa Cass, a longtime Democratic strategist.

She said a handful of deep-pocketed campaign donors and some city news outlets "created an impression that you could not ever question Israel, and that impression was completely divorced from reality."

"The unique dynamics in New York were masking a broader, larger migration in public opinion that had been brewing for some time," Cass added. "They didn't realize that the ground beneath them had shifted."

Shifting political winds

Still, with less than two weeks to go before the election, Cuomo has only leaned into the issue, claiming at Wednesday's debate that Mamdani had "stoked the flames of hatred against the Jewish people."

The broadsides have won support from the Anti-Defamation League and pro-Israel donors, like the hedge fund billionaire Bill Ackman. But there is little indication that the strategy is working among ordinary New Yorkers.

In a Quinnipiac University poll conducted in early October, 41% of likely voters in New York City said Mamdani's views on Israel aligned closest with their own, compared to 26% for Cuomo.

A Fox News poll conducted in mid-October found that 50% of registered voters in New York said they identified more with the Palestinians in the Middle East conflict, compared to 44% who identified more with the Israelis.

Those numbers have alarmed some Jewish leaders, who have laid at least some of the blame at Mamdani's feet. In an open letter circulated this week, 650 rabbis warned that his candidacy has contributed to "rising anti-Zionism and its political normalization."

Amy Spitalnick, the chief executive of the Jewish Council on Public Affairs, cautioned against drawing a direct link between Mamdani's popularity and his pro-Palestinian stance.

She noted that most Jewish voters remain strong supporters of Israel, lamenting the fact that neither Mamdani nor Cuomo had articulated "the liberal nuanced perspective that most New York Jews hold."

"Mamdani's views on Israel matter, but it's not the issue on which the majority of New Yorkers are voting," she added. "If he wins, it's because he ran a compelling campaign on making this city more affordable."

Weaponization and authenticity

In debates and interviews, where Mamdani often faces a barrage of questions about his views on the

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Israel-Hamas war, he is quick to shift the focus to his platform, which includes freezing the rent for regulated apartments, making buses free and lowering the cost of child care.

"I have denounced Hamas again and again," an exasperated Mamdani said during a debate last week. "It will never be enough for Andrew Cuomo."

At Wednesday's debate, Mamdani again spoke of his proposal to increase funding for hate crime prevention and his recent outreach to Jewish voters about their fears of antisemitism.

"They deserve a leader who takes it seriously, who roots it out of these five boroughs, not one who weaponizes it as a means by which to score political points on a debate stage," he added.

But despite months of vitriolic backlash, Mamdani has stood firm on his core criticism of Israel. In his statement marking the anniversary of the Oct. 7 attacks on Israel, he condemned both Hamas' "horrific war crimes" and Israel's occupation, apartheid and "genocidal war" in Gaza.

Whether or not those views are shared by the broader electorate, the consistency of the message has served as "proxy for authenticity" in the minds of voters, according to Peter Feld, a progressive political consultant.

And it has offered a sharp contrast with not only Cuomo, but other pro-Israel Democrats in New York, including Sen. Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries. Both have spent weeks rebuffing questions about whether they will endorse Mamdani, indicating they were still meeting and speaking with the Democratic nominee.

"The allies divided up Europe in fewer meetings," scoffed Cass. "At this point, they're ignoring the majoritarian view of their voters, and there's no way around that."

In recent weeks, Feld said he had spoken to several potential candidates weighing primary challenges to other pro-Israel Democratic incumbents.

"Mamdani changed how candidates and donors think about what is politically possible," Feld said. "We've seen that siding with Palestine over Israel doesn't make you radioactive. It shows voters that you'll stick to your principles."

What to know about the tumultuous Maine Senate primary

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — After days of posting multiple apology videos, showing off his chest to reveal a covered-up tattoo that had been connected with a Nazi symbol and distancing himself from old online comments, Maine Democrat Graham Platner says he's only further committed to his U.S. Senate campaign.

Platner, an oyster farmer and first-time political candidate, is vying to flip a Senate seat that has been held by Republican Susan Collins for nearly 30 years. But first he must emerge from a primary field that includes Gov. Janet Mills.

Platner, 41, made a splashy jump into the senate race in August as a progressive candidate. But it wasn't until after Mills, 77, jumped in the race that news outlets began reporting on his old Reddit posts, forcing him to issue a lengthy apology. He made a separate apology video when questions began swirling around a chest tattoo he got nearly 20 years ago.

He is trying to forge using a playbook similar to one followed by President Donald Trump, who has found success amid disclosures that might have ended campaigns only a decade ago.

Here's what to know about the Senate primary.

Old comments, tattoo come to haunt new candidate

Platner has not disputed that he wrote a wide range of Reddit comments between 2013 and 2021 that appeared to endorse political violence and dismiss rape in the military, use homophobic slurs and criticize both police officers and rural America.

He has maintained that the posts were made after leaving the Army in 2012 when he "still had the crude humor, the dark, dark feelings, the offensive language that really was a hallmark of the infantry when I was in it." He also said that he was struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. He has credited moving back to his hometown in Maine, going to therapy and spending more time in his com-

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munity as helping him evolve and change his world views.

Then, a tattoo on Platner's chest quickly became the new target of scrutiny. Critics pointed out that the image resembled a specific symbol of Adolf Hitler's paramilitary Schutzstaffel, or SS, which was responsible for the systematic murders of millions of Jews and others in Europe during World War II.

Platner covered up the chest tattoo earlier this week with a new design, nearly 20 years after getting the tattoo with some fellow Marines in Croatia. He has said no one pointed out the tattoo's connotations until a few weeks ago.

Platner pivots to attack 'establishment'

Platner has largely accused his opponents of being behind the leaks of his past online comments and raising questions about his tattoo. In an interview with The Associated Press, Platner said he was warned not to get into the race. He said he has no plans to back down.

Later, at a town hall on Wednesday, Platner told a packed crowd that the establishment was "trying to destroy my life" and added it is "not trying to get out there and talk about issues" but rather "trying to figure out if I said something stupid on the internet 13 years ago."

"The establishment is spooked, and I'll say this — If they thought that this was going to scare me off. If they thought that ripping my life to pieces, trying to destroy it, was going to make me think that I shouldn't undertake this project, they clearly have not spent a lot of time around Marines," Platner said to cheers.

Supporters staying strong

Platner's backers, which include Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Martin Heinrich, D-N.M, Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., and the United Auto Workers, have continued to show their support.

"I'm not overly impressed by a squad of media running around saying, 'What do you think about the tattoo on Graham Platner's chest,'" Sanders told Axios in an interview explaining his endorsement.

Mills has remained mum on Platner's revelations. But another primary candidate, Jordan Wood, a one-time chief of staff to former U.S. Rep. Katie Porter, D-Calif., has said Platner should drop out because "Democrats need to be able to condemn Trump's actions with moral clarity" and Platner "no longer can."

Election heating up, primary months away

Maine's primary election is not until June 2026, so the candidates have seven more months to make their case to voters.

Mark Brewer, chair of the political science department at University of Maine, said the controversy surrounding the tattoo and the internet postings could still damage Platner's campaign. Platner has weathered the storm for now, Brewer said, but whether he can remain in the race for the long haul remains to be seen.

"It was much better to be Graham Platner three weeks ago than it is right now," Brewer said.

Rare dinosaur mummies help scientists recreate their prehistoric lives

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Researchers have unearthed a spooky pair of dinosaur mummies that seem to have been preserved in an unexpected way.

These dinosaur remains are different from the wrapped mummies of Egypt or natural human mummies that get accidentally preserved in bogs or deserts. Mummified dinosaurs are so old that their skin and soft tissues fossilize. Scientists use these rare remnants, along with dinosaur bones, to recreate what these prehistoric creatures may have looked like.

Scientists have been uncovering dinosaur mummies for over a century. Some were buried quickly after dying, while others sank into bodies of water or dried out.

Many of them — including a duck-billed dinosaur mummy discovered in 1908 — hail from an area in eastern Wyoming. In the new study, scientists returned to this so-called mummy zone and found new remains, including the mummy of a duck-billed dinosaur that was only a few years old when it died.

"This is the first juvenile of a dinosaur that really is mummified," said Paul Sereno, a University of Chicago paleontologist who was involved in the discovery.

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Surprisingly, the new mummies seem to have been preserved without any evidence of fossilized skin. Instead, they left impressions of their skin and scales on a thin layer of clay that hardened with help from microbes.

This style of mummification has preserved other organisms before, but scientists didn't think it could happen on land. It's possible that other mummies found at the Wyoming site could have formed in a similar way, Sereno said.

Scientists used these clay templates to paint a clearer picture of what the duck-billed dinosaurs might have looked like when they were alive, including spikes on their tail and hooves on their feet. The new findings were published Thursday in the journal *Science*.

Understanding how dinosaur mummies form can help scientists uncover more of them. It's important to look not just for dinosaur bones, but also for skin and soft tissue impressions that could go unstudied or even picked away, said Mateusz Wosik, a Misericordia University paleontologist who wasn't involved with the discovery.

More mummies offer more insights into how these creatures grew and lived.

"Every single time we find one, there's such a treasure trove of information about these animals," said Stephanie Drumheller, a vertebrate paleontologist at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, who wasn't part of the study.

Where the jewels stolen from the Louvre Museum might end up

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and R.J. RICO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Just days after a stunning heist at the Louvre Museum in Paris, speculation is growing around where the lavish, stolen jewels that once adorned France's royals might end up.

A handful of experts warn that the artifacts valued at more than \$100 million (88 million euros) could soon — if not already — be melted or broken into parts. If done successfully, some say those smaller pieces could later go up for sale as part of a new necklace, earrings or other jewelry, without turning too many heads.

"You don't even have to put them on a black market, you just put them in a jewelry store," said Erin Thompson, an art crime professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. "It could be sold down the street from the Louvre."

Thompson and others say that this has become increasingly common with stolen jeweled and metal goods, noting that it's a way thieves can try to cover their tracks and make money. It's not like someone could publicly wear one of France's Crown Jewels stolen on Sunday — and finding a market to sell the full artifacts would be incredibly difficult after "everyone and their sister" has seen photos of them over the last week, said Christopher Marinello, a lawyer and founder of Art Recovery International.

The jewels may be hard to monetize

"By breaking them apart, they will hide their theft," Marinello said, adding that these items could become even more "traceless" if they're taken out of France and through jewel cutters and robust supply chains in other countries.

Still, such pieces are often sold for a fraction of the value of what was stolen — due to their smaller size, but also because melting or breaking down high-profile items removes the historical worth.

It isn't a simple process.

"The real art in an art heist isn't the stealing, it's the selling," explained Robert Wittman, former senior investigator of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's art crime team. Wittman, who has since formed his own private practice, said that the individuals behind such heists are typically "better criminals or thieves than they are businessmen."

Unlike others, Wittman is skeptical about Sunday's thieves successfully monetizing the artifacts they stole from the Louvre — which include an emerald necklace and earrings, two crowns, two brooches, a sapphire necklace and a single earring worn by 19th-century royals. He notes the gems may still be identifiable by their clarity, for example, and gold that was refined when the pieces were made hundreds of years ago

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is not as pure as what's typically in demand today.

"Because of what they are, there's really no point destroying them," Wittman said, while pointing to the risks of selling such high-profile stolen goods.

Scott Guginsky, executive vice president of the Jewelers' Security Alliance, a nonprofit trade association focused on preventing jewelry crime, also notes the age and quality of the artifacts' diamonds. He suspects they're probably not graded.

"It's not something that you can move on the open market. It's nothing that can go through an auction house," said Guginsky, who used to run the New York Police Department's organized theft squad.

Given the amount of preparation that the thieves likely put into this, Guginsky believes they have a plan for selling the jewels, even if they might first decide to "sit on" the jewelry and wait out suspicion.

"I can't see them stealing it without having an idea what they want to do," he said. "There's always a person willing to buy stolen jewelry. No matter what it is, somebody will buy it."

Sara Yood, CEO and general counsel of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee, notes most jewelry businesses implement anti-money laundering programs and look out for red flags like unusual orders, repeated purchases and requests for secrecy.

Still, she and others say the age of some jewels — if broken down effectively — could actually make it harder to track. Newer gemstones, for example, sometimes carry a laser inscription inside that can be evaluated in a lab. But "because these are historical pieces, it's rather unlikely that it has those identifying features," noted Yood.

Experts like Thompson say bigger gems can be recut to a point that they're unrecognizable. A challenge is finding people who have the skill to do that and don't ask too many questions — but it's possible, she said.

Whether the people behind Sunday's heist had those contacts or certain buyers lined up is unknown. But it's important to also note that "the guys who actually enter the museums are usually all hired hands, and they're almost always caught in these cases," Thompson added.

Chances of recovery look dim

She and others say that museums have increasingly faced a rash of similar thefts over recent years. Thompson notes that stealing from storage can go undetected for longer: the British Museum in London, which has accused a former curator of stealing artifacts and selling them online, is still trying to recover some of the 2,000 items stolen.

Some past thieves have made ransom demands for stolen artwork overall, or wait for a potential "no questions asked" reward from an insurance company — which can amount to about a 10% cut for some insured pieces in Europe, Thompson says. The jewels stolen from the Louvre Sunday, however, were reportedly not privately insured.

Sometimes government offers of a reward for information about a high-profile heist can also quicken the investigation, although the French government has yet to publicize such an incentive. If that changes, or promising leads are uncovered from the evidence left behind at the Louvre, experts like Wittman note it could increase the chances of recovering the artifacts.

Still, as more time passes, others feel that the fate of finding the historic jewels looks dim.

"I think they're going to catch the criminals," said Marinello. "But I don't think they'll find them with the jewels intact."

Misty Copeland hangs up her pointe shoes after performing for adoring crowd at retirement show

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Misty Copeland took one last spin on her pointe shoes Wednesday, showered with golden glitter and bouquets as she retired from American Ballet Theatre after a trailblazing career in which she became an ambassador for diversity in an overwhelmingly white art form.

Copeland, who a decade ago became the first Black female principal dancer in the company's 75-year history, was feted at its star-studded fall gala at Manhattan's Lincoln Center. Oprah Winfrey and Debbie

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Allen were among those who gave speeches of praise.

Winfrey spoke of the power of young people of color seeing Copeland lead iconic ballets like "Swan Lake." "Misty didn't just perform ballet," Winfrey said of the ballerina who has achieved a unique crossover fame. "She changed it. She redefined who belongs, who gets to be seen, and who gets to lead."

In a way, the gala was both a return and a departure for Copeland, 43. She was dancing with the company for the first time in five years. During that time, Copeland has been raising a son, Jackson, with her husband. The 3-year-old came onstage to hug his mother during curtain calls, wearing a tuxedo.

Copeland has also been continuing her career as an author — the second volume of her "Bunheads" series appeared in September — and working to increase diversity in the dance world with her namesake foundation, including "Be Bold," an afterschool program designed for young children of color.

But she decided to dust off the pointe shoes so she could have one last spin on the ABT stage — including as Juliet, one of the most passionate roles in ballet and her personal favorite. Copeland's Romeo in the balcony pas de deux was Calvin Royal III, who in 2020 became ABT's first Black male principal dancer in two decades.

The duo later reappeared for another duet, this time a modern one, in "Wrecka Stow," by Kyle Abraham. For Copeland's final performance of the night, she performed Twyla Tharp's "Sinatra Suite" with another of her favorite partners, Herman Cornejo.

The night, which also celebrated ABT's 85th anniversary and was curated in large part by Copeland herself, included speeches and film clips about her career. And her fellow dancers performed excerpts of ballets in her honor. At the end, a beaming Copeland was given a quintessential ballet farewell, as colleagues, teachers, friends and family came out to greet her, one by one, with hugs and bouquets while glittery confetti poured from the rafters.

On to the next stage

Though Copeland has not closed the door on dancing altogether, it's clear an era is ending.

"It's been 25 years at ABT, and I think it's time," she told The Associated Press in an interview in June, when she announced her retirement. "It's time for me to move to the next stage."

She added: "You know, I've become the person that I am today, and have all the opportunities I have today, because of ballet, (and) because of American Ballet Theatre. I feel like this is me saying 'thank you' to the company. So it's a farewell. (But) it won't be the end of me dancing. ... Never say never."

On the carpet Wednesday before her performance, she said: "I feel good. I feel ready to take this next step." She noted that she would be continuing her work promoting diversity: "There's so much work and effort that has to be continuous."

Allen told reporters that Copeland had "helped to redefine the face of ballet. She's inspired millions of people around the world and hopefully, American Ballet Theatre will not wait another 50 years before they have another beautiful Black principal dancer."

The evening at Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater was streamed live to nearby Alice Tully Hall across the plaza, with attendance free to the public — another sign of Copeland's unique brand of fame in the dance world.

Copeland was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in San Pedro, California, where she lived in near poverty and through periods of homelessness as her single mother struggled to support her and five siblings.

For a future professional dancer, she came to ballet relatively late — at 13 — but soon excelled and went on to study at the San Francisco Ballet School and ABT on scholarship opportunities. After a stint in the junior company, Copeland joined ABT as a member of the corps de ballet in April 2001, becoming a soloist six years later.

In June 2015, Copeland was promoted to principal dancer. Unlike other promotions, which are announced quietly, Copeland's was announced at a news conference — a testament to her celebrity. Only days before, she'd made a triumphant New York debut in "Swan Lake" in the starring role of Odette/Odile, drawing a diverse and enthusiastic crowd to the Metropolitan Opera House.

Trying times for DEI efforts

In the AP interview, Copeland acknowledged that it's striking that when she leaves ABT, there will no

longer be a Black female principal dancer at the company.

"It's definitely concerning," Copeland said. "I think I've just gotten to a place in my career where there's only so much I can do on a stage. There's only so much that visual representation ... can do. I feel like it's the perfect timing for me to be stepping into a new role, and hopefully still shaping and shifting the ballet world and culture."

She also noted this is an especially trying moment for anyone working in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion.

"It's a difficult time," she said. "And I think all we can really do is keep our heads down and keep doing the work. There's no way to stop the people that feel passionate about this work. We will continue doing it."

Senate rejects bills to pay federal workers during government shutdown

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Thursday rejected dueling partisan bills to pay federal workers during the government shutdown, with both Republicans and Democrats deflecting blame as many employees are set to miss their first full paycheck at the end of this week.

With unpaid staff and law enforcement standing nearby, Republicans objected as Democrats proposed a voice vote on their legislation to pay all federal workers and prevent President Donald Trump's administration from mass firings. Democrats then blocked a Republican bill to pay employees who are working and not furloughed, 54-45.

The back and forth on day 23 of the government shutdown comes as the two parties are at a protracted impasse with no signs of either side giving in. Democrats say they won't vote to reopen the government until Republicans negotiate with them on extending expiring subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Republicans say they won't negotiate on the subsidies until Democrats vote to reopen the government. Trump is mostly disengaged and headed to Asia in the coming days.

Dueling bills to pay workers

The Republican bill by Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin would pay "excepted" workers who still have to come to work during the current government shutdown and any future shutdowns. The bill would "end this punishing federal workers for our dysfunction forever," Johnson said.

But Democrats say the legislation is unfair to the workers who are involuntarily furloughed and could give Cabinet secretaries too much discretion as to who gets paid.

Johnson's bill is "nothing more than another tool for Trump to hurt federal workers and American families and to keep this shutdown going for as long as he wants," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said ahead of the votes.

The Democratic bills would have paid a much larger swath of workers as most federal workers are set to miss paychecks over the next week.

"It seems like everyone in this chamber agrees we should pay federal workers," Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., said ahead of the vote. But because of the shutdown, "they are paying a price."

Essential services start to dwindle

As Congress is unable to agree on a way forward, money for essential services could soon reach a crisis point.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Thursday that his message to air traffic controllers during the government shutdown is "come to work, even if you do not get a paycheck."

Duffy said that air traffic controllers will miss their first full paycheck on Tuesday and that some are having to make choices to pay the mortgage and other bills, at times by taking a second job.

"I cannot guarantee you your flight is going to be on time. I cannot guarantee your flight is not going to be cancelled," Duffy said.

Payments for federal food and heating assistance could also run out soon, along with funding for Head Start preschool programs, several states have warned.

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Open enrollment approaches

Another deadline approaching is Nov. 1, the beginning of open enrollment for people who use the marketplaces created by the Affordable Care Act.

Democrats are holding out for negotiations with Republicans as they seek to extend subsidies that started in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and expire at the end of the year. But any solution would be hard to put in place once people start purchasing their plans.

Some Republicans are open to extending the tax credits, with changes, and lawmakers in both parties have been talking behind the scenes about possible compromises. But it's unclear whether they will be able to find an agreement that satisfies both Republicans and Democrats — or if leadership on either side would be willing to budge.

"Republicans have been perfectly clear that we're willing to have a discussion about health care, just not while government funding is being held hostage," Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said Thursday.

What Americans think about legal sports betting, according to recent polls

By AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As legalized sports betting expands, recent polling suggests that Americans have become increasingly critical of its role in U.S. society and sports — although they're more tolerant of it for professional sports.

Betting scandals have multiplied since a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in May 2018 struck down a federal law that barred sports betting in most states. That includes a wave of incidents involving athletes and officials. Most recently, dozens of people, including Portland Trail Blazers head coach Chauncey Billups and Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier, were arrested in connection with a federal investigation into sports betting and illegal gambling, authorities said Thursday.

In the years since the Supreme Court's ruling, sports betting has brought revenue to state governments, but it's also prompted concerns about the potential for wrongdoing, as well as the impact on athletes.

Here's what Americans think about the impact of legal sports betting, according to recent polling:

More think legal sports betting has a negative impact on sports and society than in 2022

Americans are more skeptical of legal sports betting than they were a few years ago, according to a Pew Research Center poll conducted over the summer. The survey found that about 4 in 10 U.S. adults say the fact that sports betting is now legal in much of the country is "a bad thing" for society and sports, up from about one-third in July 2022.

Many Americans continue to say sports betting is "neither a good nor bad" thing for sports and society, while few say it's "a good thing" for either.

Young men are particularly likely to have soured on sports betting's social impact. About half of men under age 30 now say legal sports betting is a bad thing for society, up from 22% in 2022.

At the same time, young men are more likely than older adults to say they've bet money on sports in the past year. But 34% of people who have placed a sports bet in the past year still say legal sports betting is bad for society, up from 23% three years ago.

Most say betting should be legal for professional sports but not college

Many Americans distinguish between betting on professional and college sports, according to an AP-NORC poll from February.

That survey shows that about 6 in 10 Americans think gambling on professional sports should be legal in their state, but only about 4 in 10 U.S. adults say the same thing about legalized wagering on college sports. More than half oppose legal betting on college sports.

A Quinnipiac poll from June found, similarly, that 60% of U.S. adults think legal betting on college sports is a bad thing, while 47% say this about legal betting on professional sports.

The Pew poll shows that awareness of sports betting has grown over the past few years — 63% say they've heard or read "a lot" or "a little" about the fact that sports betting is now broadly legal, up from

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56% in 2022. But that hasn't led to an uptick in support for legalization. Americans are about as likely to say betting on professional or college sports should be legal as they were in 2019, according to the AP-NORC survey.

Who's betting on sports?

Younger adults are more likely than older adults to have bet money on sports in the past year, according to the Pew poll, with about 3 in 10 adults under age 30 saying this, compared with only 12% of adults age 65 or older.

Black and Hispanic adults are also more likely than white or Asian adults to have placed a bet, although the gap isn't as wide.

The AP-NORC poll found that while about 14% of U.S. adults say they "frequently" or "occasionally" place bets on college or professional sports online using betting or fantasy sports websites or apps, it's more common in casinos. About one-quarter of U.S. adults say they have bet on sports in person at casinos at least "occasionally."

The latest scandal

Billups and Rozier were arrested along with more than 30 other people in two criminal cases alleging sprawling schemes to rake in millions of dollars by rigging sports bets and poker games involving Mafia families, authorities said.

Rozier's lawyer, Jim Trusty, accused the FBI of aiming for "misplaced glory" by embarrassing the professional athlete with a perp walk, rather than allowing him to self-surrender. He previously told ESPN that Rozier met with NBA and FBI officials in 2023 and was told that an initial investigation determined he did nothing wrong, the sports network reported.

A message seeking comment was left Thursday morning with Billups.

Trump mulls asking Israel to free Palestinian leader Barghouti as US looks to Gaza's post-Hamas rule

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is suggesting he could call on Israel to release imprisoned Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, the most popular and potentially unifying Palestinian leader, as the United States aims to fill a leadership vacuum in postwar Gaza.

Trump, in an interview published Thursday, said he has discussed the potential for Barghouti's release with White House aides.

"I was literally being confronted with that question about 15 minutes before you called," Trump told Time magazine interview when asked about Barghouti. "So I'll be making a decision."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment about Trump's deliberations on the matter. But the president's acknowledgment of the internal discussions underscores the difficult task of finding credible political figures to oversee governance in Gaza as the U.S. and Israel say they are committed to preventing Hamas from continuing to rule the territory.

Barghouti was not among prisoners Israel agreed to release this month in exchange for hostages under the Gaza ceasefire deal, despite Hamas officials reportedly calling for his freedom.

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.

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.

One of the few consensus figures in Palestinian politics, the 66-year-old Barghouti is widely seen as a potential successor to 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.

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Barghouti headed Fatah in the West Bank when the second intifada, or Palestinian uprising against Israel, broke out. Israel accused him 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.

Soon after, he was arrested by Israel. At trial he opted not to defend himself because he did not 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.

Most of those released by Israel under the ceasefire this month are members of Hamas and the Fatah faction arrested in the 2000s. Many 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 were sent to Gaza or into exile outside the Palestinian territories.

The 2000s saw the eruption of the second intifada, 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. The Israeli military killed several thousand Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Vice President JD Vance, winding down a three-day visit to Israel, said Thursday that Gaza reconstruction in areas free of Hamas could begin soon.

"We could start reconstruction of the areas that are free of Hamas very quickly. We think that we could potentially get hundreds of thousands of Gazans living in that area very quickly," Vance said. "But again, this is all still pretty early. But that's the basic idea."

Vance added that it will take to two years to three years to rebuild the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Rafah's population surged early in the war as many Palestinians were displaced by Israeli operations elsewhere in the territory. By this past spring, Rafah was also largely decimated by the fighting.

Federal agents sent to San Francisco area, which mayor says is meant to incite 'chaos and violence'

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The U.S. Coast Guard said Wednesday it is providing a base of operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents in the San Francisco area as part of its effort to support federal efforts to track down immigrants in the country illegally and provide border and maritime security.

The San Francisco Chronicle, citing an anonymous source with knowledge of the operation, reported more than 100 CBP and other federal agents will begin arriving Thursday at the base in Alameda, a move immediately condemned by San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie and California Gov. Gavin Newsom. The two Democrats said the surge is meant to provoke violent protests.

CBP did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press. A statement provided to media by the Coast Guard said in part that "through a whole of government approach, we are leveraging our unique authorities and capabilities to detect, deter, and interdict illegal aliens, narco-terrorists, and individuals intent on terrorism or other hostile activity before they reach our border."

Soon after the deployment was first reported, Lurie livestreamed a nine-minute statement from City Hall, flanked by other elected officials, and cautioned against giving federal officials working from "a playbook" any excuse to crack down. President Donald Trump has repeatedly said he plans to deploy National Guard troops to the city to quell crime, but his administration hasn't offered a timeline for doing so.

"In cities across the country, masked immigration officials are deployed to use aggressive enforcement tactics that instill fear so people don't feel safe going about their daily lives," Lurie said. "These tactics are designed to incite backlash, chaos and violence, which are then used as an excuse to deploy military personnel."

As is his custom, Lurie did not refer to the president or address him by name.

Trump has deployed the Guard to Washington, D.C., and Memphis, Tennessee, to help fight what he says

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is rampant crime. Los Angeles was the first city where Trump deployed the Guard, arguing it was necessary to protect federal buildings and federal agents as protesters fought back against mass immigration arrests.

He has since said they are needed in Chicago and Portland, Oregon, as well, although lawsuits by Democratic officials in both cities have so far blocked troops from going out on city streets.

Trump recently renewed his musings about sending the Guard to San Francisco, saying in a Fox News interview Sunday that the city "was truly one of the great cities of the world" before it went "wrong" and "woke."

His assertions of out-of-control crime in the city of roughly 830,000 has baffled local and state leaders who point to statistics showing that many crimes are at record lows.

Newsom's administration said it would push back forcefully on any deployment, as it did when Trump first ordered the guard into Los Angeles against the governor's wishes. California Attorney General Rob Bonta vowed to "be in court within hours, if not minutes" if there is a federal deployment, and San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu has promised the same.

At a news conference Wednesday, Newsom held up what he said was a lawsuit the state would file if Trump sends troops to San Francisco.

"We're going to be fierce in terms of our response," said Newsom, a former mayor of San Francisco. "This is the lawsuit that I will file within a nanosecond of any efforts to send the military to one of America's great cities."

The Coast Guard base in Alameda that is hosting the CBP agents is between Oakland and San Francisco, both sanctuary cities that do not cooperate with the federal government on civil immigration operations. A Homeland Security statement said the agency is "targeting the worst of the worst criminal illegal aliens — including murderers, rapists, gang members, pedophiles, and terrorists."

Lurie urged the public to protest peacefully. He said he had just signed an executive directive to coordinate the city's response to a potential federal deployment and provide support for immigrants.

Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee issued a statement saying: "Real public safety comes from Oakland-based solutions, not federal military occupation."

Takeaways from AP's report on the growing dangers of heat on pregnant agriculture workers

By DORANY PINEDA, MELINA WALLING and ANNIKA HAMMERSCHLAG Associated Press

Agricultural workers are already among the most vulnerable to extreme heat. For pregnant workers, those risks are higher because the body must work harder to cool down and requires more liquids, making it more easily dehydrated. While protections exist, experts say they need better enforcement and more are needed. The Associated Press interviewed four agricultural workers who recounted experiences of working in extreme heat while pregnant.

Here are takeaways from AP's story:

How much are temperatures rising?

Average temperatures are increasing globally, including in the U.S.'s most agriculturally-productive states. Since the start of the 20th century, California temperatures have increased almost 3 F (1.67 C). Warming has accelerated, and seven of the past eight years in that state through 2024 have been the warmest on record. In Florida, average temperatures have increased by more than 2 F (1.11 C).

When it comes to how the body reacts to heat, even small temperature increases can be significant.

One study found that agricultural workers had more than 35 times the risk of heat-related deaths than other workers. In the U.S., an estimated one-third of farmworkers are women — an increasing share of the farm workforce.

How are pregnant farmworkers more at risk?

Pregnancy increases the risks of extreme heat because the body has to work harder to cool down. Heat exposure has been linked to increased risk of miscarriages, stillbirths, preterm births, low birth weight and birth defects.

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Combining pregnancy and heat with physical labor can more quickly overwhelm the body's cooling system, increasing the likelihood of dehydration, heat illness and heat stroke.

Farmworkers are also less likely to demand employers provide adequate shade, water or rest, or speak out when they're feeling overheated for fear of being fired or having immigration enforcement officials called on them.

Pregnant farmworkers in rural areas generally have less access to maternity care because clinics are farther away. Other times, they can't miss hours of work or aren't given time off. Many also don't get employer-sponsored medical care or paid leave.

Compounding these risks is the Trump administration's immigration crackdown. Health care providers have reported seeing fewer walk-ins, patients delaying prenatal care and more pregnant patients whose first doctor's visit was for labor and delivery, according to research by the group Physicians for Human Rights. Others have reported an increase in no-shows and canceled appointments.

What protections are in place?

No federal heat protections exist, although the Trump administration appears to be moving forward with a proposed rule. Some states, including California, have their own protections, while others, like Florida, have barred local governments from implementing their own. In states with protections, advocates say they're not adequately enforced and pointed to a widespread distrust of reporting systems.

More than 30 states and cities have laws requiring employers to provide accommodations for pregnant workers. Most recently, 2023's federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act requires employers to provide "reasonable accommodations" to pregnant workers, those who recently gave birth or have medical conditions related to birth or pregnancy. Other laws make it illegal to fire or discriminate due to those factors.

Even so, some experts said there aren't enough legal protections for pregnant workers. "It's probably one of the reasons why we have some of the highest rates of maternal and infant mortality in high-income countries in the world," said Ayana DeGaia, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Washington in Harborview.

Others said it's also unclear how some of these protections are enforced in agriculture and how they benefit women farmworkers.

In Florida, a top U.S. producer of indoor plants and tropical foliage, the nursery industry's mostly women workers have joined a fight for heat protections. In California, workers have been advocating for guaranteed compensation when they lose wages due to heat waves and other extreme weather events, as well as extra pay when they work during dangerous weather conditions.

Trump allies, undeterred by setbacks in courts and Congress, push anew for citizenship proof to vote

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — A documentary proof-of-citizenship requirement for voting in U.S. elections hasn't been able to pass Congress and has been blocked by the courts, so allies of President Donald Trump's administration are pursuing another avenue to try to impose the idea — asking a little-known federal agency to do it.

By a deadline earlier this week, the independent U.S. Election Assistance Commission had received more than 380,000 public comments reacting to a petition to add the requirement. The proposal is being pushed by America First Legal, a conservative group co-founded by Stephen Miller, the Republican president's deputy chief of staff.

The group is asking the commission, composed of two Republicans and two Democrats, to add the mandate to the federal voter registration form. It says requiring people to produce documents proving their citizenship is "essential to enhance the integrity and reliability of voter registration processes, ensuring that only eligible U.S. citizens are permitted to register and vote in federal elections." A group of Republican U.S. senators and representatives described it as "simple, common-sense reform," little different from showing

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ID to board an airplane or open a bank account.

Voting rights groups characterize such a requirement as unnecessary, cumbersome and a potential tool for voter disenfranchisement.

Noncitizen voting is illegal and extremely rare

The gambit before the Washington-based election commission is the latest attempt by conservatives to push a nationwide proof-of-citizenship requirement while raising the specter of noncitizen voting as a significant problem, when in fact it is extremely rare. Making claims about noncitizens voting was a major part of the Republican playbook during the 2024 presidential election, even though it is already illegal and punishable as a felony.

The petition to the Election Assistance Commission comes after Trump sought to force the body to enact an identical provision through an executive order on elections he issued in March. That order has been temporarily blocked by two federal courts, which found the action unconstitutionally exceeded his presidential authority. The Constitution gives states and Congress the power to set election rules.

In its petition, America First Legal dismissed those losses: "This premise remains contested in court, but it also leaves this Commission with the freedom to take commonsense election integrity measures on its own volition."

What does the federal voter form require?

The federal voter form already requires registrants to affirm their U.S. citizenship under penalty of perjury. Violating it is a felony that can lead to imprisonment, fines and deportation. Congress deemed that approach adequate when it approved the Help America Vote Act, which established the commission in 2002.

The commission has discretion to make changes to the form, but there's disagreement over whether that includes being able to unilaterally impose such a significant new requirement on voters across the country. A spokesperson for the commission is on furlough during the federal government shutdown and did not respond to a request for comment.

America First Legal told the commissioners they have sufficient authority to act under a provision of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. But Jonathan Diaz, director of voting advocacy and partnerships for the Campaign Legal Center, said the election commission first would need to determine that requiring documentation of citizenship is "necessary" to determine people's eligibility.

"In my view, asking for information is one thing. Asking for additional documents and evidence beyond the information the form collects is another thing," he said.

The consequences of noncitizen voting

Susannah Goodman, director of election security for the good-government group Common Cause, said cases of noncitizens voting in U.S. elections remain "extraordinarily rare" because the risks outweigh the rewards.

"The consequences of doing it are so great and citizenship is so precious, we don't believe that this is the problem that they are trying to solve. Numbers don't prove it out," she said. "There is no threat to our democracy from noncitizens voting."

In its petition, America First Legal said enforcement of the perjury provision is "nearly non-existent" and a system dependent "entirely on the honesty of applicants" is a recipe for fraud. The organization did not respond to an interview request.

"States are relying on a broken 'trust but don't verify' system for registering voters," Justin Riemer, president of the nonprofit Restoring Integrity and Trust in Elections, which filed public comment in support of the proposal, said in a statement. "The EAC's registration form ties the hands of states trying to ensure that only citizens register and vote. That must change."

Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla of California and Rep. Joseph Morelle of New York, outspoken proponents of voting rights, said adding such a requirement was unnecessary.

"States already have multiple systems in place to ensure that only eligible Americans vote in elections; states already determine voters' citizenship statuses without the burdensome requirement requested in the petition," they said in comments to the commission.

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Legislation imposing a proof-of-citizenship requirement — the SAVE Act — passed the U.S. House earlier this year but has stalled in the Senate in the face of bipartisan opposition. Similar efforts also have run into obstacles when introduced in the states.

What kind of ID would be acceptable?

America First Legal's petition lists four types of documentation that would meet the requirement: a U.S. passport; a state-issued REAL ID-compliant driver's license that lists citizenship status; a military ID that indicates citizenship status; or a valid federal or state photo ID that either indicates citizenship or is "accompanied by proof of United States citizenship."

Of the four, only a passport would be a universally reliable form of qualifying identification, although only about half of Americans have one. Only five states offer REAL ID driver's licenses that indicate citizenship, and military IDs often don't. Those invoking the other forms of federal and state photo ID that lack a citizenship indicator would need to present other documentation that's not listed, such as a birth certificate.

Diaz, of the Campaign Legal Center, said women who change their last name when they marry might have to present their birth certificate, their marriage certificate and a valid government identification. That was shown to be a barrier for some women who voted in a primary election earlier this year in New Hampshire, which was imposing a similar requirement for the first time.

"It's just creating hurdle after hurdle after hurdle for eligible U.S. citizens to be able to vote," Diaz said.

The commission's next step is to review the comments and determine by a majority vote whether to proceed on the petition. Approval would be followed by more formal proceedings, including another comment period and public hearings.

Health care compromise appears far off as the government shutdown stalemate persists

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government shutdown has reopened debate on what has been a central issue for both major political parties in the last 15 years: the future of health coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

Tax credits for people who get health insurance through the marketplaces created by the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, expire at the end of the year.

Democrats say they won't vote to reopen the government until Republicans negotiate an extension of the expanded subsidies. Republicans say they won't negotiate until Democrats vote to reopen the government. Lawmakers in both parties have been working on potential solutions behind the scenes, hoping that leaders will eventually start to talk, but it's unclear if the two sides could find compromise.

As Congress circles the issue, a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about 6 in 10 Americans are "extremely" or "very" concerned about their health costs going up in the next year. Those worries extend across age groups and include people with and without health insurance, the poll found.

A look at the subsidies that are expiring, the politics of the ACA and what Congress might do:

Enhanced premium help during the pandemic

Passed in 2010, the ACA was meant to decrease the number of uninsured people in the country and make coverage more affordable for those who don't have private insurance. The law created state by state exchanges, some of which are run by the individual states, to try to increase the pool of the insured and bring down rates.

In 2021, when Democrats controlled Congress and the White House during the COVID-19 pandemic, they expanded premium help that was already in the law. The changes included eliminating premiums for some lower-income enrollees, ensuring that higher earners paid no more than 8.5% of their income and expanding eligibility for middle-class earners.

The expanded subsidies pushed enrollment to new levels and drove the rate of uninsured people to a

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historic low. This year, a record 24 million people have signed up for insurance coverage through the ACA, in large part because billions of dollars in subsidies have made the plans more affordable for many people.

If the tax credits expire, annual out-of-pocket premiums are estimated to increase by 114% — an average of \$1,016 — next year, according to an analysis from KFF.

Democrats push to extend subsidies

Democrats extended those tax credits in 2022 for another three years but were not able to make them permanent. The credits are set to expire Jan. 1, with Republicans now in full control.

Lacking in power and sensing a political opportunity, Democrats used some of their only leverage and forced a government shutdown over the issue when federal funding ran out on Oct. 1. They say they won't vote for a House-passed bill to reopen the government until Republicans give them some certainty that the subsidies will be extended.

Democrats introduced legislation in September to permanently extend the premium tax credits, but they have suggested that they are open to a shorter period.

"We need a serious negotiation," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer has repeatedly said.

Republicans try to scale the ACA back, again

The Democratic demands on health care have reignited longstanding Republican complaints about the ACA, which they have campaigned against for years and tried and failed to repeal in 2017. Many in the party say that if Congress is going to act, they want to scrap the expanded subsidies and overhaul the entire law.

The problem is not the expiring subsidies but "the cost of health care," Republican Sen. Rick Scott of Florida said Tuesday.

In a virtual briefing Tuesday, the libertarian Cato Institute and the conservative Paragon Health Institute branded the subsidies as President Joe Biden's "COVID credits" and claimed they've enabled fraudsters to sign people up for fully subsidized plans without their knowledge.

Others have pitched more modest proposals that could potentially win over some Democrats. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., has said he is open to extending the subsidies with changes, including lower income limits and a stop to auto-enrollment that may sign up people who don't need the coverage.

The ACA is "in desperate need of reform," Thune has said.

House Republicans are considering their own ideas for reforming the ACA, including proposals for phasing out the subsidies for new enrollees. And they have begun to discuss whether to combine health care reforms with a new government funding bill and send it to the Senate for consideration once they return to Washington.

"We will probably negotiate some off-ramp" to ease the transition back to pre-COVID-19 levels, said Maryland Rep. Andy Harris, the head of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, during a virtual town hall Tuesday.

Is compromise possible?

A number of Republicans want to extend the subsidies. Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., said most people who are using the exchanges created by the ACA "don't really have another option, and it's already really, really expensive. So I think there are things we can do to reform the program."

Hawley said he had been having conversations with other senators about what those changes could be, including proposals for income limits, which he said he sees as a "very reasonable."

Bipartisan groups of lawmakers have been discussing the income limits and other ideas, including making the lowest-income people pay very low premiums instead of nothing. Some Republicans have advocated for that change to ensure that all enrollees are aware they have coverage and need it. Other proposals would extend the subsidies for a year or two or slowly phase them out.

It's unclear if any of those ideas could gain traction on both sides — or any interest from the White House, where President Donald Trump has remained mostly disengaged. Despite the public stalemate, though, lawmakers are feeling increased urgency to find a solution as the Nov. 1 open enrollment date approaches.

Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire has been talking to lawmakers since the shutdown

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began, trying to find areas of compromise. On Tuesday, she suggested that Congress could also look at extending the enrollment dates for the ACA since Congress is stalled on the subsidies.

"These costs are going to affect all of us, and it's going to affect our health care system," she said.

Today in History: October 24, the United Nations officially launches

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Oct. 24, the 297th day of 2025. There are 68 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 24, 1945, the United Nations formally came into existence as the Charter of the United Nations, ratified by 51 nations, took effect. The date is now observed as United Nations Day.

Also on this date:

In 1537, Jane Seymour, the third wife of England's King Henry VIII, died 12 days after giving birth to Prince Edward, later King Edward VI.

In 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph message was sent by Chief Justice Stephen J. Field of California from San Francisco to President Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C.

In 1929, a massive sell-off at the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange led to chaos as stock-brokers couldn't keep up with trade requests. Though the market recovered some losses by the end of the day, "Black Thursday" marked the beginning of the Wall Street Crash of 1929.

In 1931, the George Washington Bridge, connecting New York City with New Jersey, was dedicated. It was the world's longest suspension bridge at the time.

In 1952, Republican presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower vowed to go to Korea as he promised to end the ongoing conflict there. (Eisenhower would indeed visit Korea in December, after winning the election but before his inauguration.)

In 2002, authorities arrested John Allen Muhammad and teenager Lee Boyd Malvo near Myersville, Maryland, in the Washington-area sniper attacks that killed 10 people and wounded three that month. (Malvo was later sentenced to life in prison. Muhammad was sentenced to death and executed in 2009.)

In 2003, a British Airways flight from New York to London marked the final commercial flight of the supersonic Concorde jet.

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy roared across Jamaica and headed toward Cuba on its way to the eastern United States; what became known as Superstorm Sandy was a combination of the hurricane and other storms that struck New York and surrounding areas, killing 147 people, 72 in the eastern U.S.

In 2024, the owner and manager of the cargo ship Dali agreed to pay more than \$102 million in cleanup costs to settle a federal government lawsuit stemming from the 2023 collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. The Dali had crashed into a supporting column, destroying the 1.6-mile span and killing six members of a roadwork crew.

Today's Birthdays: Rock musician Bill Wyman is 89. Actor F. Murray Abraham is 86. Actor Kevin Kline is 78. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., is 71. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., is 69. Actor B.D. Wong is 65. English soccer manager and former star midfielder Wayne Rooney is 40. Singer Monica Arnold is 45. Fashion designer Zac Posen is 45. Singer-rapper Drake is 39. Actor Ashton Sanders is 30. NBA All-Star Jaylen Brown is 29. Actor Hudson Yang is 22.